

East and West of the Tsukiji Honganji

日本仏教における近代化を理解するために、最近の研究では日本と西洋の関係に限られていた焦点を拡大すること、そして同時にアジア諸国で日本人の仏教僧侶及び学者によって発展されたネットワークや文化交流も含めることの必要性が強調されている。また、新しい宗教の解釈方法が国境と時代区分を超え、様々な地域と時代にわたる概念と人の流れの研究を促進しようとしている。本論は東京における築地本願寺の歴史と今日の活動に焦点を当て、そしてそれを前述の日本とアジアの結びつきの代表的な例として解釈している。それに、築地本願寺が日本とアメリカの仏教徒の交流の中心としての役割を果たしていることを強調している。

Interpreting the Modern History of a Peculiar Jōdo Shinshū Temple through Translocative Analysis and Intercultural Mimesis

The Tsukiji district in Tokyo is synonymous with the famous fish market, a popular destination for the foreign tourists who visit it early in the morning in order to experience the lively tuna auction and taste freshly fished seafood. But just a few minutes from the fish market, there is a place which is less popular among foreigners, though it attracts a number of Japanese visitors: the Tsukiji Honganji. Walking out of the Tsukiji Station, it is impossible to overlook the unique architectural style of this Jōdo Shinshū temple laying just across the street. Instead of the traditional wooden structure typical of Japanese Buddhist temples, the Tsukiji Honganji presents a marble white façade decorated with stupas and columns, as well as animal sculptures and a roof that is clearly evocative of South Asian architectural motifs. Stepping inside the main hall, the visitor will balance the exotic visual experience of the façade with the familiar interior design of Japanese Jōdo Shinshū temples. Nevertheless, even the inside at Tsukiji Honganji offers some surprise: no need to take off shoes at the entrance, chairs to help elderly people and foreigners not used to Japanese *seiza* sitting, as well as a large pipe organ. The visitor unaware of the history of such a peculiar building will probably feel a sense of estrangement mixed with curiosity and marvel for the grandeur of the exotic exterior.

The analysis of the history, as well as considerations concerning current use of the Tsukiji Honganji, will help us to go beyond the first visual experience, and make sense of stylistic and structural choices. This paper interprets the Tsukiji Honganji as a symbol for two essential elements in the construction of the international image of modern and contemporary Japanese Buddhism: the recovery of the centrality of the Indian roots of Buddhism through the mediation of European Buddhist Studies, as well as the international network built by Jōdo Shinshū institutions in the Pacific context by means of two-way exchanges with Japanese-American buddhists of Hawai'i and California. In order to make sense of a history that implies contact with European culture, travel into the Buddhist past of India, and back-and-forth exchange with the Japanese immigrant community in North America, a flexible and nuanced theoretical framework is required.

Crossing, Meeting and Dwelling. A Theoretical Premise.

The distinguishing characteristic of Tsukiji Honganji is its Indian style, the product and visible representation of a discourse about the Indian roots of Buddhism which was developing since the travels of Japanese Buddhist monks and scholars to South Asia in the early Meiji period. The way those travelers experienced the sacred sites mentioned in the biographies of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni was inevitably mediated by their encounter with European scholarship on Buddhism, which was based on a textual approach and prioritized the search for a meaning as close as possible to the original message of Śākyamuni. This means that in order to analyze the history of the Tsukiji Honganji, we have to take into consideration orientalist assumptions which may involve the triangular relation between Japanese Meiji Buddhists, European Buddhist scholarship and Indian Buddhist sites. Thus, a theoretical paradigm which stresses agency in a dynamic way is required.

Since the 1980s the study of Buddhism has been reconsidered through the lens of post-orientalist critique.¹ Though the positive result of such reflection is a greater attention paid to assumptions and biases in the way Western Buddhist scholars look at Asian religious traditions, the risk run by overstating the role of the observer is the negation of any agency given to the observed, in our case those 19th century Asian Buddhists that were providing European scholars with texts and data about Buddhism. While it is true that a post-orientalist analysis of European discourses about Buddhism reveal much about the debate on religion and research approaches in 19th century Western scholarship, it also ends up assigning to the observed the passive role of a mirror, where the observer can project his expectations and form an idea of Buddhism which exists only in the West.

In the 1990s a series of scholarly works have developed useful paradigms for the interpretation of modern discourses on Buddhism which return agency to the observed. In particular, Bernard Faure uses the term “second degree Orientalism” to underline how some of the ideas produced in the context of colonialist Buddhist Studies have been absorbed and accepted by Asian societies and have become part of their mainstream discourse on Buddhism.² In the same work, Faure also points out how orientalist notions have been not only accepted, but deliberately appropriated by Asian Buddhists and used as a tool against the threaten of Christian missionary expansion, as well as to build an identity and fight against dominant colonial culture. The term which defines this more active view of the same process is “inverted Orientalism.” This shift of focus from the agency of the observer to the observed reveals that it is not only the Orient to be imagined, but also the Occident. Within the study of modern Japanese Buddhism, James Ketelaar has defined the same process of appropriation of orientalist constructions as “strategic Occidentalism”, stressing the political interests which lie at the base of this strategy.³

A further paradigm that can be used to make sense of episodes in the encounter of European scholars and Japanese Buddhists is Charles Hallisey’s “intercultural mimesis.”⁴ While Faure and

¹ For my considerations about post-orientalist critique applied to Buddhism, I particularly follow Richard King’s approach. See Richard KING, *Orientalism and religion* (London: Routledge, 1999).

² Bernard FAURE, *Bouddhismes, philosophies et religions* (Paris : Flammarion, 1998) 14-22.

³ See James E. KETELAAR, “Strategic Occidentalism: Meiji Buddhists at the World’s Parliament of Religions”, *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 11 (1991), 37-56.

⁴ Charles HALLISEY, “Roads Taken and not Taken in the Study of Theravāda Buddhism” in *Curators of the Buddha: the Study of Buddhism Under Colonialism*, edited by Donald Lopez (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995) 31-61.

especially Ketelaar's paradigms stress the political nature of orientalist discourses on Buddhism, Hallisey's intercultural mimesis tries to make sense of the multiplicity of interests in such a process. Focusing on examples from South Asian Buddhist contexts, Hallisey tries to go beyond the dichotomy of East-West opposition and reciprocal image-construction by considering the heterogeneity of interests in each community involved in the encounter, as well as reminding how cultures are "different but also connected."

We should consider occasions where it seems that aspects of a culture of a subjectified people influenced the investigator to represent that culture in a certain manner. Such an exercise would not challenge but rather nuance Said's argument that the links between knowledge and inequalities of power provided some basic conditions of Orientalist discourse.⁵

A balanced use of these models of interpretation can be useful in understanding those moments of interaction between Western scholarship and Japanese modern Buddhism. In this paper, I will particularly refer to the intercultural mimesis paradigm when considering the birth and development of modern Buddhist Studies in Japan in interaction with European scholarship, and also in the context of Japanese-American Jōdo Shinshū networks which shaped the architectural style and current activities at Tsukiji Honganji.

The temple which constitutes my case study becomes a symbol for ideas about Buddhism, whose dynamic dimension as product of travel I want to stress and analyze through a theory that values such dynamics. Travel is a main key to understand the history of Tsukiji Honganji, and this is one of the reasons why I have chosen to use Thomas Tweed's "translocative theory" in addition to intercultural mimesis in order to make sense of such history. In *Crossing and Dwelling. A Theory of Religion*, he defines theories as "embodied travels, positioned representations and proposed routes."⁶ While pointing out the fact that the observer-theorist himself is located in a particular site and in motion together with what he observes, Tweed stresses the need to avoid static models of interpretation. The focus on flowing ideas and people and the use of aquatic metaphors can be found again in Tweed's definition of religion:

Religions are confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries.⁷

In this paper I am not concerned with defining the religious dimension of the events which led to the building and current use of Tsukiji Honganji. Therefore, I will use the initial and final elements in this definition, which are more directly linked to the concept of theory as travel, and which describe how religion works and how it should be analyzed. Tweed describes religion in a functional way, using the metaphor of "watch and compass"⁸: religions orient in time and space, they help the believer to make a home, which constitutes both individual identity as well as collective-national identities. At the same time, religions are also migrants, when they contribute to make sense of

⁵ Ibid., 33.

⁶ Thomas TWEED, *Crossing and Dwelling: a Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 2006) 9.

⁷ Ibid., 54.

⁸ Ibid., 85-98.

people's crossing boundaries.⁹

Thomas Tweed describes his analysis as a “translocative” one. He agrees with Richard Jaffe¹⁰ in stressing that transnational exchanges cannot be interpreted as unidirectional, which also matches with my interpretation of Hallisey's intercultural mimesis.¹¹ In this paper, I will refer to translocative analysis and try to follow the five axioms suggested by Tweed to use this kind of approach: 1. “Follow the flows,” turning an apparently static object of study, such as the Tsukiji Honganji, into motion in order to excavate the layers of history it is made of; 2. “Notice all figures crossing,” especially asking who is absent in such motion; 3. “Attend to all senses and all religion's components,” the focus will include visual elements, as well as auditory and tactile ones; 4. “Consider varying scales,” the temporal span will be extended from the Meiji-Taishō to the post-war period, while geographically the Tsukiji Honganji will be considered in its connections to Oxford and Bodhgaya from one side and to Honolulu and California on the other; 5. “Notice how flows start, stop and shift,” the role played by institutions in negotiating power while regulating the flows of religion will be taken into consideration.¹²

The main aim of this paper is an attempt to apply both intercultural mimesis and translocative theory to the case of Tsukiji Honganji, putting into motion the temple through its history and turning it into a representative place where flows of ideas and people meet.

Travelling West. The Indian architecture of Tsukiji Honganji and the development of modern Japanese Buddhist Studies.

After introducing the theoretical background of the paper, it is now time to turn our attention to the object of our study, the Tsukiji Honganji. Following the above described third axiom of Tweed's translocative theory, my narration starts from a visual sensory observation. Naturally, the first thing that strikes the visitor to the temple is its Indian style exterior. Expecting a wooden Jōdo Shinshū temple, the eyes are surprised to meet with the white marble of the hondō, the large stair conducting to the main entrance and the two stupa-shaped structures which frame the two extremities of the building. The sculptures of lions and elephants that decorate the façade and pillars are different from the traditional representation of the Japanese *komainu* or the elephant that accompanies images of *Fugen Bosatsu*. The more realistic aspect of such animals contribute to the general sense of exoticism produced by the architecture. The religious compass, using Tweed's expression, represented by the Tsukiji Honganji seems spatially disorienting to the visitor or to the faithful who is used to Japanese traditional Buddhist temple architecture. The observer is not only spatially disoriented, projected into exotic South Asian countries, but also temporally, as noted by the historian of architecture Fujimori Terunobu: “Standing today in front of this work, it is not possible to stop a strong sense of marvel and of anachronism.”¹³ The clock function of religion materialized in

⁹ Ibid., 75.

¹⁰ Richard Jaffe's work on modern Japanese travel to India quoted here by Tweed will be mentioned more in detail in the next paragraph.

¹¹ Thomas TWEED, “American Occultism and Japanese Buddhism. Albert J. Edmunds, D. T. Suzuki, and Translocative History”, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 32/2 (2005), 268.

¹² The five axioms of translocative analysis are described in Thomas TWEED, “Theory and Method in the Study of Buddhism: Toward ‘Translocative’ Analysis” *Journal of Global Buddhism* 12 (2011), 24-26.

¹³ FUJIMORI Terunobu 藤森照信, *Nihon no Kindai Kenchiku* 日本の近代建築 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten,

the building seems to break down, as it does not apparently harmonize with the surrounding modern structures of the Ginza district, nor with the expected pre-modern style of Japanese Buddhist temples. What was the purpose of the architect who planned the Tsukiji Honganji and of the Honganji-ha authorities who oversaw its realization? In order to make sense of the exotic aspect of the Tsukiji Honganji, I am going to follow Tweed's advice to set into motion the imposing static nature of a temple by following its history.

The official name of the temple is Jōdo Shinshū Honganji-ha Tsukiji Betsuin (浄土真宗本願寺派築地別院). The origins of the temple date back to the early Tokugawa period (1617), when it was established in the Yokoyama-chō area near nowadays Asakusa as the Edo branch of the main headquarter temple of Honganji-ha, the Nishi Honganji in Kyoto. At that time, the temple was commonly known as Edo Asakusa Gobō. During the great Meireki fire of 1657, the temple burnt down and the bakufu decided to relocate it on a piece of land recently reclaimed from the sea. The area was accordingly called Tsukiji, which literally means "built-up land," and the new temple was known as Tsukiji Gobō. The structure that can be admired today though dates back to a more recent period, the early 1930s, and it is the consequence of another disaster that hit the Tokyo bay area: the Great Kantō Earthquake of September 1st, 1923. The structure was not destroyed by the earthquake itself, which happened at noon, but by the following fire that spread from the neighboring Ginza area, reaching the complex late in the afternoon. Despite the nearby presence of Sumida river, it was not possible to save the wooden structures from burning, and by 10 in the evening, the hondō was leveled to the ground.¹⁴

The reconstruction of the Tsukiji Honganji and the style chosen for the new building became an occasion of expression for two ongoing parallel processes: the search for a modern identity in Japanese architecture and the definition of modern Japanese Buddhism. The two key figures whose collaboration resulted in the temple that we can admire today were the architect Itō Chūta and Ōtani Kōzui, the 22nd head of the Nishi Honganji. The two shared a similar experience of travelling West: first to Europe to learn Western architecture, Buddhist Studies and Sanskrit, then back to Japan through India and Central Asia, from where they brought to their homeland new inspiration for the construction not only of the Tsukiji Honganji, but of Japanese modern identity.

The initial purpose of Itō Chūta's travel to Europe was to look for evidence for his theory that the original inspiration for the architectural structure of the 7th century Hōryūji temple in Nara was to be found in ancient Greek temples.¹⁵ His research can be interpreted as the expression of the need to redefine the history of Japanese art and architecture through the encounter and confrontation with Western culture in the Meiji period. Itō decided to follow the thread of Buddhist iconology and temple architecture which linked Japan to India, and from there, through the recently spread knowledge about Indo-Greek sculpture, back to the classical sources of Western art. During his journey in 1903, he met some members of the first expedition to Central Asia (1902-1904) organized by the young Ōtani Kōzui. This would be the occasion which started an important collaboration, which counts the style of the Tsukiji Honganji among its fruits. After learning Sanskrit and the history of Buddhism, Ōtani, the son and heir of the head of the Honganji-ha, in a similar way to Itō, started travelling extensively throughout Asia in order to reconstruct the path which brought

1993) 28.

¹⁴ *Shinshū Tsukiji Betsuin Shi* 新修築地別院史(Tokyo: Honganji Tsukiji Betsuin, 1985) 357-358.

¹⁵ FUJIMORI, *Nihon no Kindai Kenchiku*, 7.

Buddhist monks from the original birthplace of the historical Buddha to East Asia.¹⁶ The interest in linking Japanese Buddhism to its Asian background had not only a historical or philological nature. While Ōtani was actually looking for the remains of ancient Buddhist centers along the Silk Road and for Buddhist texts that were still unknown both in Japanese temples and in Western universities, those expeditions were fuelled by the pan-Asian ideology which was developing alongside Japanese colonial expansion. Kōzui was encouraging of Japanese expansionism in Asia, he collaborated with groups and publications which supported such view and was also directly involved as a councilor for the Great East Asia Construction Council during World War II.¹⁷ As the head of the Honganji-ha, he also engaged in the expansion of the Jōdo Shinshū sect in East Asia.¹⁸ In this ideological context, Buddhism became an essential element shared by the different Asian cultures which Japanese expansionism was trying to unify, as well as a clear element of opposition to Western Christianity. The pan-Asian view of Buddhism found its visual expression in temple architecture. After their first meeting in China, Ōtani Kōzui became an important patron for Itō Chūta, who was influenced by his view of a modern Japanese identity at the forefront of a broader Asian identity. Paraphrasing Fujimori, Itō gave to Ōtani's pan-Asian ideology the material shape of architecture.¹⁹

The Indian style chosen in the early 1930s for the construction of the new Tsukiji Honganji is therefore the product of the personal encounter of Itō Chūta and Ōtani Kōzui in the broader context of pan-Asian ideology. The aim of the architecture was to recall the historical origins of Buddhism in ancient India, while at the same time stress the role of Buddhism as a shared cultural element among contemporary Asian countries under the rule of Imperial Japan. Itō's view of pan-Asian ideology inspired an architectural style suitable for the modern Japanese identity, one which could not be limited to a simple imitation of the ancient Buddhist sites visited in India, but enriched with a more cosmopolitan view, inevitably including European elements. Itō's reference was to the Indo-Saracenic style, which developed during the British colonization of India by blending Islamic, Hindu and Western elements, and which was introduced in Japan by architect Josiah Conder.²⁰ While nationalist ideologies stress the purity of a culture, the pan-Asian view expressed in Itō's Tsukiji Honganji as well as in other works is a cosmopolitan product, where the ancient sources of Japanese Buddhism in India are imagined through the mediation of modern Western architecture.

This means that we should interpret the Tsukiji Honganji Indian style as the visible product of a flow of ideas that link modern Japan to Asia through the mediation of Europe. The way in which Ōtani Kōzui imagined the Indian origins of Japanese Buddhism, as well as the way in which Itō Chūta gave tangible shape to such images, passed through the filter of Western Buddhist Studies. The development of modern Buddhist Studies in Japan, and particularly the role played in it by ancient Indian Buddhism, followed the same travel route of Itō and Ōtani, from Japan to the centers of European culture, then back to Japan through India.

¹⁶ on Ōtani Kōzui, see SHIBATA Mikio 柴田幹夫, *Ōtani Kōzui to Ajia. Shirarezaru Ajishugisha to Kiseki* 大谷光瑞とアジア: 知られざるアジア主義者の軌跡 (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2010) 22-59.

¹⁷ Richard M. JAFFE, "Buddhist Material Culture, "Indianism," and the Construction of Pan-Asian Buddhism in Pre-War Japan" *Material Religion* 21 /3 (2006) 272.

¹⁸ On the relationship between Ōtani Kōzui and the missionary activities of Nishi Honganji, see SHIBATA, *Ōtani Kōzui to Ajia*, 317-336.

¹⁹ FUJIMORI, *Nihon no Kindai Kenchiku*, 30.

²⁰ JAFFE, "Buddhist Material Culture, ...", 274-275. On the broader context of temple reconstruction in Meiji Japan, see also Patricia J. GRAHAM, *Faith and power in Japanese Buddhist art, 1600-2005* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 177-187.

I will now follow the same path in the company of four representative Buddhist monks and scholars that experienced India and attempting an interpretation of those travels under the light of the above mentioned theoretical framework. Shimaji Mokurai (1838-1911), is considered the first Japanese monk to visit India. A member of the same Honganji-ha of the Tsukiji, he was sent to Europe in 1872 in order to study the religious situation there and take inspiration for the modernization of Jōdo Shinshū in his homeland, especially to respond to the spread of Christian missionary activities. In order to protect Buddhism from the risk of further persecution after the *haibutsu kishaku* movement, as well as to balance the stronger position assigned to Shintō by the Meiji government after the *shinbutsu bunri* split from Buddhism, he brought back the principle of separation between religion and politics. He visited Sri Lanka on his journey to Europe, and India on his way back to Japan. After his negative impact with Sri Lankan Buddhism, his great expectations about India do not find an echo in his travel account, where he dedicates little space to Indian Buddhist sites.²¹ The place occupied by India in his experience is still limited insofar as: first, the aim of his journey was not to absorb European Buddhist Studies, though he acknowledged the striking collection of Buddhist texts available to European scholars. Second, the archeological research on Buddhist sites in India was not yet fully developed at the time he visited the country. Using a translocative theory axiom to interpret Shimaji's experience, we can here notice the role played by institutional pressure in directing religious flow. Shimaji's expedition to Europe is part of the plan of Nishi Honganji institutions to save Buddhism from Meiji persecution and from Christian aggressive proselytism. Although the focus on India as cradle of Buddhism is still absent, Shimaji's idea that India was the source of civilization and influenced ancient Greece and Egypt, the basis of Western culture,²² would become instrumental in the later discourse against Western cultural superiority.

The focus on India is more stressed in Kitabatake Dōryū's travel account.²³ Another Jōdo Shinshū priest educated at the Nishi Honganji academy, he travelled to Europe and America between 1881 and 1884, and at the end of his trip he sojourned in India for about one month. As Jaffe points out,²⁴ in the publications where he described his journey, Kitabatake dedicated particular attention to his pilgrimage to the Buddhist sacred sites in India. While Shimaji claimed to be the first Japanese Buddhist to travel to India, Kitabatake was the first to visit places such as Bodhgaya, that he mistakenly described as Śākyamuni's tomb. This element shows how a decade after Shimaji's visit, the excavation of Buddhist archeological sites had reached a level sufficient for foreign pilgrims to pay homage to them, though the Japanese monk confused the place of enlightenment with that of the historical Buddha's death. The special relation which links Japanese Buddhists to India's holy sites changed the power relation between Japanese, Westerners and Indians: Japanese Buddhists may have still needed to catch up with European knowledge of Sanskrit texts, but their faith gave them a more intimate understanding of the Buddhist sites in India, while their role as the keepers of Buddhist faith in Asia turned them into mediators between contemporary Indians and the traces of

²¹ KOYAMA Satoko 小山聡子, "Shimaji Mokurai" 島地黙雷 in *Kindai Nihon no Bukkyōsha. Ajia Taiken to Shisō no Henyō 近代日本の仏教者。アジア体験と思想の変容* edited by OGAWARA Masamichi 小川原正道 (Tokyo: Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010) 7-8.

²² KOYAMA, "Shimaji Mokurai", 11-12.

²³ Richard M. JAFFE, "Seeking Shakyamuni: Travel and the Reconstruction of Japanese Buddhism", *Journal of Japanese Studies* 30/1 (2004) 70-79.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

the country's Buddhist past.²⁵

One notices a more in-depth understanding of Indian Buddhism in the travel accounts of Nanjō Bunyū. He was the first monk to go to Europe (1876), sent by his institution, the Higashi Honganji, to cover the gap between Western and Japanese knowledge of Buddhism perceived by earlier Buddhist travelers. He studied Sanskrit at Oxford under the direction of the philologist and scholar of religion Max Müller, and after getting a Master degree, he returned to Japan in 1884.²⁶ He fulfilled his wish to visit the cradle of Buddhism in 1887.²⁷ Although he was aware of the absence of practiced Buddhism in India, his travel accounts are full of feelings of disappointment for the conditions of Buddhist holy sites and of nostalgia for the glorious Buddhist past of India:

At last I could fulfill my long-lasting deep desire, and visiting Gaya and the Deer Park I felt nostalgia for the ancient times when the Doctrine of the Buddha was still alive. [...] I could travel to India, but the teachings of the Buddha were long ago rejected and only the temples remain to recall in vain the vestiges of that time.²⁸

Nanjō also noticed how the management of the Buddhist sites by Hindu Brahmins generated problems.²⁹ Though he did not expect to find Buddhist communities, also his academic intentions were disappointed: he did not find new Buddhist texts and he could not improve his knowledge of Sanskrit, as its teaching in India was limited to Brahman families. Nanjō's journey to Europe and India can be interpreted as a key example of intercultural mimesis. His mission in Oxford was an expression of the religious situation in Meiji Japan, when a number of Buddhist institutions started to send their monks and scholars to the West to learn from cutting-edge Buddhist research.³⁰ On the other side, Nanjō's teacher Müller is representative of the 19th century dominant orientalist view of East Asian Buddhism as fundamentally distant from the original teachings of the Buddha, which were to be found in Pāli and Sanskrit texts. Nevertheless, the master-disciple relationship between the two should not be seen in a one-way direction: although we can see how Nanjō's wish to find new texts in India as driven by Müller's influence, it is also true that the reason why European scholars started to accept Japanese disciples was because they needed their knowledge of Chinese, as the importance of East Asian canons became gradually more evident. Nanjō Bunyū's publication of the Catalogue of Chinese Translations of the Buddhist Tripitaka in 1883 represents the product of his collaboration with Max Müller, but also the first Japanese contribution to modern Buddhist scholarship.³¹ In addition, Nanjō's experience of India went beyond the academic: following Ogawara's interpretation, it is possible to argue that the disappointment felt by the monk at the sight of the contemporary situation of Buddhism in India triggered his later efforts in spreading Buddhist knowledge and education in Japan, the only country where Buddhism was still correctly

²⁵ Ibid., 78.

²⁶ OGAWARA, *Kindai Nihon no Bukkyōsha ...*, 140-141.

²⁷ NANJŌ BUNYŪ 南条文雄, *Nanjō Bunyū Jijoden 南条文雄自叙伝* (Tokyo: Ozorasha, 1993) 54-56.

²⁸ NANJŌ BUNYŪ 南条文雄, *Kaikyūroku 懐旧録* (Tokyo: Daiyūkaku, 1927) 279.

²⁹ NANJŌ BUNYŪ, *Kaikyūroku*, 277-278.

³⁰ For a clear table of the early Japanese Buddhist missions to the West, see HORIGUCHI Ryoichi, "Léon de Rosny et les premières missions bouddhiques Japonaises en Occident" *Cipango: cahiers d'études japonaises* 4(1995) 125.

³¹ TAMURA Kōyū 田村晃祐, *Kindai Nihon no Bukkyōshatachi 近代日本の仏教者たち* (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan Kyōkai, 2005) 166-170.

practiced.³²

The fourth and last figure in this analysis of the development of modern Buddhist Studies in Japan is Takakusu Junjirō, whose experience of India will bring us back to the period of the Tsukiji Honganji reconstruction. After studying at Nishi Honganji schools, he completed his education in Germany and England (1894-98), where he followed Nanjō Bunyū's steps as a student of Max Müller. His visit to India was required by the Ministry of Culture. Although Takakusu received the same kind of education as Nanjō, and he had the same feeling of disappointment at the sight of current conditions of Buddhism in India, his experience presents a number of differences. First, the institutional context: by 1912 Buddhist Studies were established in Japanese universities and his journey to India was not the product of Buddhist sects effort, but of cultural policy of early Taishō government. Buddhist research was no more limited to monks, but also involved lay scholars.³³ In addition, 25 years after Nanjō's travel, there was a clear awareness among scholars of the fact that unknown Buddhist ancient texts could be found in Nepal, Tibet and Central Asia rather than in India, and that Buddhism as a practiced religion was absent in contemporary India. This is why Takakusu expressed a lack of interest towards the current religious situation in Indian society, and focused on the excavated Buddhist sites.³⁴ His focus on the archaeological remains may have been fuelled by his philological education at Oxford, but the emotions Takakusu felt at the Buddhist holy sites made him express also a religious purpose for visiting India:

There are two purposes for which Japanese people should travel to India. The first one from an academic perspective is to do research on ancient India, but the second one from a religious point of view has a peculiar relation to Japanese civilization [...]. Surveying the ancient remains of Buddhism, people can be reminded of the past, when Buddhism was alive [in India].³⁵

Such emotions explain why he suggested that all Japanese Buddhists should visit India at least once in their life.³⁶

Takakusu's experience of India and contribution to modern Japanese Buddhist Studies can be interpreted in the context of Taishō and early Shōwa Japan rising to the status of world military and cultural power. Together with Watanabe Kaigyoku, he edited the *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, the most complete collection of Chinese Buddhist scriptures which still constitutes a fundamental reference for scholars of Buddhism worldwide. This publication represents the triumph of Japanese Buddhist scholarship in overcoming the 19th century orientalist prejudice against Mahāyāna Buddhism.³⁷ In his later work on Indian Buddhism, Takakusu stressed the dichotomy between the materialist core of Western culture present since its ancient origins in Greece, and the spiritual essence of an Oriental civilization that could be found in the Buddhist past of India. Japan was the natural heir of Indian

³² OGAWARA, *Kindai Nihon no Bukkyōsha ...*, 157-160.

³³ Jackie STONE, "A Vast and Grave Task: Interwar Buddhist Studies as an Expression of Japan's Envisioned Global Role" in *Culture and Identity: Japanese Intellectuals during the Interwar Years*, edited by Thomas J. RIMER (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014) 220-221.

³⁴ OGAWARA, *Kindai Nihon no Bukkyōsha ...*, 351-356.

³⁵ TAKAKUSU Junjirō 高楠順次郎, "Indo ryokō danwa" "印度旅行談話" *Fujin Zasshi* 28/8 (1913) 7.

³⁶ TAKAKUSU, "Indo ryokō danwa", 11.

³⁷ STONE, "A Vast and Grave Task ...", 226.

Buddhism, and at the same time the country had proved its ability to absorb the highest scientific and technical achievements of Western culture.³⁸ In such a view it is possible to see how Indian Buddhism became part of the nationalist and imperialist discourse about Japan in the Taishō and early Shōwa periods.

With Takakusu's nationalist turn in the interpretation of Buddhist history, we come back to the 1930s and end our westward trip by returning to the Tsukiji Honganji. By "putting into motion" the Indian architecture of the temple, the unfolding of the development of Buddhist Studies in modern Japan gives a new meaning to Itō Chūta and Ōtani Kōzui's stylistic choice. At first sight the Tsukiji Honganji may be perceived as disorienting for the observer, but once we place it in the flows of its peculiar history, we can confirm the role of "watch and compass" in this material expression of Buddhism. The Indian style orients modern Japanese Buddhists in time, making them aware that their faith has a long history which dates back to ancient India. The direct link to the original sources symbolized here responds to the orientalist critique of East Asian Buddhism as a degenerate and popular form of Śākyamuni's doctrine. On the other side, the Tsukiji Honganji oriented the 1930s visitor in space, stressing shared cultural past between Japan and Asia, and indirectly justifying expansionist pan-Asian views. If nowadays the nationalist and imperialist elements of the discourse may no more be perceived by the Japanese observer, the Indian style still suggests the idea of a modern Buddhism as cosmopolitan and international. Nevertheless, we should consider the way the temple peculiar style is perceived nowadays not only limiting to traditional Japan-Europe cultural confrontation. The pan-Asian inspired style may become the visual symbol for the debate over the contemporary place of Japan in the Asian continent and the contribution Buddhism may give to such debate. It is of interest to notice how the 50th anniversary of the reconstruction of the hondō, as well as other occasions, have been celebrated by the parishioners of Tsukiji Honganji with a pilgrimage to the sacred Buddhist sites of India.³⁹ Such episodes may indicate how Buddhism could be used as a cultural bridge among Asian countries in the 21st century.

Travelling East: Western Elements inside Tsukiji Honganji and Intercultural Mimesis across the Pacific.

After making sense of the visual disorienting experience of the Tsukiji Honganji exterior, let's now step inside the hondō. What the eyes find there is the reassuring traditional style of Jōdo Shinshū temples, with wooden structures and the altar of Amida. Nevertheless, we are presented with another kind of sensory disorientation. Once again following translocative analysis axioms, let's extend our observation beyond visual perception. First, our feet will not directly touch tatami mats, because it is possible to walk inside the hondō wearing shoes, which is quite a unique case in Japanese temples. Second, there is no need to sit on the ground in the traditional Japanese *seiza*, because the interior is furnished with chairs, another Western style element. Shifting the focus of

³⁸ OGAWARA, *Kindai Nihon no Bukkyōsha ...*, 362-365.

³⁹ *Shinshū Tsukiji Betsuin Shi*, 84 and 86. In the same way, the importance of the Indian Buddhist pilgrimage sites for Tsukiji Honganji parishioners may be shown by the photographic reportage series published in the Tsukiji Shinpō monthly magazine between May 1996 and July 1998. It would be interesting to develop further research on the way in which material culture, such as the Indian architecture of the Tsukiji Honganji, affects contemporary Japanese Buddhists, as Jaffe does in his work on Buddhist material culture and pan-Asian ideology: JAFFE, "Buddhist Material Culture, ...".

our attention from touch to hearing, if we are lucky enough to visit the Tsukiji on the last Friday of the month at lunchtime, or during a wedding ceremony, we'll have the chance to listen to the solemn sound of a pipe organ, more common in Christian churches than in Buddhist temples. If we instead come on the fourth Saturday of the month in afternoon, we will be invited to assist in a service and listen to a Dharma talk in fluent English. These features make the Tsukiji Honganji more welcoming towards English-speaking international visitors. Such peculiarities, especially the pipe organ music and the English services, can be understood by putting the history of the temple into motion, this time eastward across the Pacific. The pipe organ was donated in 1970 by the Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai (the Society for the Promotion of Buddhism),⁴⁰ which was founded by Yehan Numata, the head of an important multinational corporation who was born in a Jōdo Shinshū family and educated in Hawai'i and California. The Society itself represents a link across the Pacific, as it sponsors many research projects on Buddhism in North American universities.⁴¹ The ministers who lead the Saturday afternoon English services at Tsukiji are very often living examples of such cross-Pacific historical boundaries, as most of them are of Japanese-American descent. As these examples show, relocating the history of Tsukiji Honganji in the broader context of Buddhist-based Japanese-American relations will help situate some of its contemporary features. I will briefly trace back the history of such relations focusing on direct links to our case study temple.

Starting from the early Meiji period, Japanese immigrants began to move to Hawai'i and then to California. Although many of them planned to return to their homeland after a period of work in the United States, many settled down permanently and brought their families with them. This process raised the need to respond to their religious needs: officiating funerals of those who died abroad, as well as the life-cycle rituals of a settled community. By 1889 the first Honganji-ha missionaries were sent to Hawai'i, a move imitated in the following decade by other Japanese Buddhist denominations.⁴² Although the original motivation of some of the Japanese missionaries could have been based on the idea of continuing the eastward travel of Buddhism from India to Japan (*bukkyō tōzen*), by spreading it among Americans (*kaikyō* – opening the Dharma), their actual function was to provide spiritual guidance and community building among Japanese immigrants (*tsuikyō* – teaching the Dharma following [immigrants]).⁴³ In this phase, the function of religion is to make sense of the relocation of Buddhists abroad.

The trend in missionary Buddhism across the Pacific gradually changed towards the end of the 19th century and up to World War I. In order to integrate Japanese immigrants into their new country and to respond to the perceived alien character of Buddhism in that context, Japanese missionaries tried to stress the *kaikyō* element of their activities, reaching out to broader sections of American society. An example of this change is the “middle way” approach between Americanization and Japanese tradition taken by the Honpa Hongwanji bishop of Honolulu, Yemyō Imamura, who encouraged use of English and stressed the democratic and pacific characters of Buddhism.⁴⁴

The effort towards *kaikyō* cannot be interpreted in a one-way direction as the effect of policy change among Buddhist institutions and missionaries, since it is a multi-sided product. Missionaries

⁴⁰ *Shinshū Tsukiji Betsuin Shi*, 81.

⁴¹ <http://www.bdk.or.jp/index.html> accessed on May 1, 2015.

⁴² Duncan Ryūken WILLIAMS and Tomoe MORIYA, *Issei Buddhism in the Americas* (Urbana : University of Illinois Press, 2010), xi.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, xiii.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 121-125.

such as Imamura were educated in Japan in facilities which reflected the renovations brought about by the *shinbukkyō* movement, which in its turn was affected by colonialism and the 19th century orientalist discourse on Buddhism. The same orientalist image of Buddhism was present in English language Buddhist publications in America, such as the Honganji-ha edited *The Light of Dharma*. Such publications, rather than speaking to Japanese-Americans, were aimed at including Japanese Buddhism into the international modernist discourse and at making it more understandable and less alien to Euro-American readers.⁴⁵ It is possible to place Itō Chūta's stylistic choice for the Tsukiji Honganji in such flow of orientalist ideas about Buddhist modernism. This has a precedent in the Indian style used for the Honolulu Honganji built in 1918 under the supervision of Imamura.⁴⁶ While in Tōkyō the Indian style may have encouraged imperialist perceptions of Japan, in Honolulu it was used to offer Euro-Americans a more familiar image of Buddhism, nourished by their orientalist readings.⁴⁷

The tendency to stress *kaikyō* and to offer a modern and universalized image of Buddhism seemed to fail in the period after World War I. Growing anti-Japanese sentiments in the United States brought on the 1924 Immigration Act, which stopped immigration from East Asia. On the other side of the Pacific, Japanese nationalism and expansionism fuelled such sentiments. In this context, Japanese immigrant communities in North America strengthened their sense of unity to face the hostility of outside society, and Buddhism played an identification role, linking those communities to Japan. Jōdo Shinshū in America became gradually associated with Japanese family system and social hierarchical structure, and instead of a universal religion appealing to Euro-Americans it turned into a conservative and ethnocentric worldview.⁴⁸ Attempts at internationalization and integration produced opposite results: when in the 1920s and 1930s second generation Japanese-Americans were sent to Japan in order to get ordination and create the basis for local English-speaking religious leadership, the Japanese language instruction received at the Jōdo Shinshū headquarters influenced their orientation back in America towards conservatism. Our case study temple in Tōkyō is involved indirectly in this phase: the tighter links between Japanese immigrant communities in America and their homeland can be testified by the donations with which the Hawaiian Honganji-ha parishioners contributed to the reconstruction of the Tsukiji Honganji after the 1923 earthquake.⁴⁹

The two tendencies described above, one towards conservatism and ethnocentric link to traditional Japanese culture, the other towards universalizing and opening towards integration with non-Japanese society, characterize the debate over contemporary status and future development of Jōdo Shinshū outside Japan, as stressed by Kenneth Tanaka.⁵⁰ As in the case of many ethnic Buddhist communities in non-Asian contexts, the dynamics of conservatism and reformism are essential in defining the identity of such groups and to assure their survival in societies where they represent a minority. The case of Jōdo Shinshū in North America can be interpreted as an example of

⁴⁵ Ibid., 87-93.

⁴⁶ JAFFE "Buddhist Material Culture ...", 281-282.

⁴⁷ Cherie WENDELKEN, "Pan-Asianism and the Pure Japanese Thing: Japanese Identity and Architecture in the Late 1930s" *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 8/3 (2000), 827-828.

⁴⁸ Alfred BLOOM, "Shin Buddhism in America: A Social Perspective" in *The Faces of Buddhism in America*, edited by Charles S. PREBISH and Kenneth K. TANAKA (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) 38.

⁴⁹ See *Shinshū Tsukiji Betsuin Shi*, 377-378.

⁵⁰ See Kenneth K. TANAKA, "Issues of Ethnicity in the Buddhist Churches of America", in *American Buddhism. Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship*, edited by Duncan R. WILLIAMS and Christopher S. QUEEN (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999) 3-19.

intercultural mimesis which balances the interests of two communities. From one side, the Japanese-American Buddhist institutions, such as the Buddhist Churches of America,⁵¹ find in the opening to Euro-American society the chance of creating a supportive group of converts who can mediate with the rest of society and confirm the capacity of Buddhism to become a mainstream religion in the country. On the other side, Euro-American converts find in their recognition by religious authorities affiliated to traditional Japanese Buddhist institutions a way to legitimate their identity.

Returning to the Tsukiji Honganji, I will analyze how the above mentioned flowing of Buddhist ideas and people across the Pacific are reflected in the activities of the temple. This is particularly evident in the Saturday English service. This feature distinguishes the Tsukiji Honganji from other Buddhist temples even in the international metropolis of Tōkyō. Today such services are mostly aimed at foreign visitors attracted by Buddhism and by the unique architecture of the temple. Their origins must be found in post-World War II American occupation: the strong presence of American troops of Japanese descent who belonged to Jōdo Shinshū communities in their country but did not understand Japanese made it necessary to offer rituals and spiritual direction in English. This is the reason why in 1949 the International Buddhist Association (IBA) was founded by Japanese-American ministers who had studied in Kyōto but were based in California and Hawai'i.⁵² They gathered every Sunday at the Tsukiji Honganji for services in English meant for the Japanese-American soldiers and their families. The presence of such group has interacted with mainstream Honganji-ha in Japan and affected some of the features used towards internationalization of the Buddhist sect. For example, the use of a choir and of music services introduced by IBA members became popular among young Japanese Buddhists. The nature of the group though gradually changed, due to the return to the United States of many Japanese-American soldiers and ministers. This explains why the ritual-centered weekly services turned into monthly gatherings, which include lectures that are led not only by Japanese-American ministers but also by Buddhist studies scholars. The change can be interpreted as a reorientation of the English services, which have been appropriated by the Honganji-ha and used to improve the international image and appeal of Jōdo Shinshū. This is further confirmed by the advertisement of the services through NHK programs meant for foreigners and through a well-designed and informative English website.⁵³ The English-language community Tsukiji Honganji is trying to build is no longer locally based, but spread out and reachable through television and the internet.

The Saturday English service can be interpreted as another example of intercultural mimesis which involves mainstream Japanese Jōdo Shinshū, the Buddhist Churches of America and the international community of people interested in Buddhism. While the latter finds in the Tsukiji Honganji a visually and linguistically welcoming form of Japanese Buddhism, the Buddhist Churches of America confirm through their relation to the Tsukiji Honganji their tight link to Japan, as testified by the sermons of the ministers, very often focused on their ancestry and family-inspired religious feelings. Finally, the traditional Honganji-ha institutions in Japan find a way to internationalize the image of Jōdo Shinshū as a base to attract foreign Buddhist sympathizers who are more acquainted

⁵¹ The Buddhist Churches of America is the American branch of the Honganji-ha. Initially called Buddhist Mission in North America, it was renamed to avoid the charge of proselytizing during the period of strong anti-Japanese feeling.

⁵² *Tsukiji Shinpō* 築地新報 June 2010, 3-6.

⁵³ <http://www.tsukijihonganji.jp/eng/?fr=navi> last accessed on May 1, 2015.

with Zen Buddhism, as well as Japanese younger generations.⁵⁴ Are they successful in such endeavor? Following Thomas Tweed's advice of "noticing all figures crossing, also those who are absent,"⁵⁵ we can try to answer to such question. The Saturday English services are attended mostly by middle-aged and senior Japanese people, both young and foreign are scarce in number. At tea after the Dharma talk on a Saturday I attended the service, a young foreign visitor asked about the possibility of practicing sitting meditation. Such a question, as well as the absence of young Japanese or foreigners, suggest that Jōdo Shinshū is still little known abroad among the general public, while the interest in Japanese Buddhism is still strongly linked to the popularity of Zen .

Conclusion: the Indian Style that Suits East and West.

Standing outside of the Tsukiji Honganji to fully admire the Indian style architecture, we travelled West following Buddhist monks and scholars on their journey to European universities and Buddhist holy sites in India. Inside the hondō, while listening to the pipe organ music we travelled East following Japanese immigrants and missionaries crossing back and forth the Pacific. In the conclusion, we are going to link the outside and inside of the temple, metaphorically climbing the marble stairs and crossing the threshold. We will do it by following a Japanese woman dressed in a Western style white wedding dress. She is not inappropriately dressed, because one of the peculiarities of the Tsukiji Honganji is that it is possible to have one's Buddhist wedding ceremony while wearing Western style wedding dresses.

While traditionally it is more common for a Japanese couple to get married with a Shintō ceremony, since 1885 the Buddhist wedding ceremony (*butsuzenkekkonshiki*, literally wedding ceremony in front of the Buddha) has been officially recognized. The first such ceremony held at the Tsukiji Honganji was in May 1946.⁵⁶ In addition to the use of pipe organ music, there are two peculiarities in the wedding ceremonies held at this temple. The first one, as we have already mentioned, is the fact that both the bride and the groom are allowed to wear Western style wedding dresses instead of the traditional Japanese ones. The second one is that the central and most important moment of the ceremony, when the couple receives the *nenju*, the Jōdo Shinshū rosary, can be enriched by adding the ring exchange.⁵⁷

It is quite obvious to interpret such innovations in the wedding ceremony as an attempt by the Tsukiji Honganji managers to attract more young Japanese couples, as the Christian style wedding is so popular that agencies hire foreigners to act as priests and officiate those. Nevertheless, it is interesting to notice how the feeling of *iwakan* (being out of place, unharmonious) that can be produced by a Western style wedding dress in a Buddhist temple is softened not only by the church-like elements of the Tsukiji Honganji, such as the pipe organ music or the stained glass windows, but also by the Indian style architecture. In the article which advertises the wedding ceremony, the

⁵⁴ Concerning Tsukiji Honganji attempts to attract young Japanese generations, I will briefly mention a curious though sad fact which makes this temple popular. The Tsukiji Honganji hosted in 1998 the funeral of the rock star Hideto Matsumoto of the popular heavy metal band "X Japan." The ceremony was attended by crowds of young Japanese and still today inside the main hall it is possible to see a little memorial altar dedicated to the star.

⁵⁵ TWEED, "Theory and Method in the Study of Buddhism ...", 25.

⁵⁶ *Shinshū Tsukiji Betsuin Shi*, 565.

⁵⁷ See the special article with the description of the ceremony "Butsuzen Kekkonsiki. Tsukiji Honganji" "仏前結婚式。築地本願寺" *Rekishi Tokuhon 歴史読本* 55/10 (2010) 142-147.

caption under the picture which shows the bride climbing the entrance stairs in her Western style gown reads “Both Japanese dress and Western dress suit the Indian-style hondō.”⁵⁸

The Buddhist wedding ceremony at the Tsukiji Honganji, in the same way as the architecture chosen by Itō Chūta and Ōtani Kōzui, can be interpreted as elements of religion that orient the believer towards a “*modan*”, modern view of Japanese Buddhism. Both the ceremony and the architecture recall traditional elements that are rooted in the Buddhist identity and history (the *nenju* which links to faith in Amida, and the Indian origins of Buddhism), while at the same time introducing Western elements to build a modern and cosmopolitan image. Thinking of them as the products of moments of intercultural mimesis, as well as of layers of ideas which travelled across national boundaries, contribute to a more dynamic understanding.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 143.