

Budda no fukuin

The Deployment of Paul Carus's *Gospel of Buddha*
in Meiji Japan

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Why did the Rinzai Zen abbot Shaku Sōen publish a Japanese translation of the life of the Buddha that had been written by an American philosopher to promote Christian monism? In seeking to answer this question, this paper examines first Paul Carus's mission to overcome the perceived conflict between Christianity and science in the late nineteenth century. It then considers how his introduction to Mahāyāna Buddhism through the delegation of Japanese priests to the World's Parliament of Religions, Chicago 1893, resulted in a book that aimed to popularize his vision. Finally, it positions the translation of this book (Budda no fukuin) in the discursive contexts of Meiji Japan for the ideological future of the modern nation to show how it served the aims of the Meiji Buddhist revival.

WITHIN MONTHS OF ITS American release, Paul Carus's *The Gospel of Buddha* had been translated by D. T. Suzuki and published in Japan with a preface and endorsement by Rinzai Zen abbot Shaku Sōen.¹ This book, *Budda no fukuin*, a conscientiously literal translation of the original text, was imbued with the political concerns of Meiji Japan. Contrary to the assumption of Carus's biographers, the reason for the publication was not that Carus was "one to whom Buddhists throughout the world looked for source material and instruction in their own religion" (FADER 1982, p. 141), but rather its strategic value in the discourse on Meiji religion. The content of the book, though of use to the reform movement, was of secondary importance to the publication's strategic function in the cause of Buddhist revival.

Carus's work was archetypically orientalist, appropriating Buddhism

¹ *Budda no fukuin* was first published in January 1895, though it was apparently ready as early as November 1894 when Shaku Sōen sent a copy to Carus. The second edition, November 1901, is reprinted in *Suzuki Daisetsu zenshū* (The Complete Works of Suzuki Daisetsu), Vol. 25 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), pp. 271-590, henceforth referred to as *Fukuin*.

to promote his post-Kantian Christian monism, and, as will be shown later, there is no question that Japanese reform Buddhists were fully aware of the shortcomings of the work as a representation of Buddhism. Its value to them lay in attracting the attention of the Western-educated elite of the nation, introducing them to Buddhist ideas presented in a form acceptable by Western standards, and reassuring them of Western intellectual interest in and approval of their indigenous religion. A most important feature of the book was the Western status of its author. As a German philosopher he illustrated reform claims that Western intellectuals were finding Christianity inadequate and were turning to Japanese Buddhism as the religion of the modern world.

The relationship between Paul Carus and Shaku Sōen 釋宗演, and the intellectual consequences of this on the work of D. T. Suzuki, are well documented, but tend to focus on Suzuki's later career. This early event in the history of Suzuki's connection with Carus is relevant in illustrating its political origins. My own research focus is the discursive interaction between Japan and the West in the formation of Western knowledge of Buddhism. The Asian publication of Carus's work—it was also published in a number of other Buddhist countries—was a major factor in the enduring reputation of the book and its author, and the principal reason the book is still circulating as a source of popular knowledge of Buddhism to this day. Every copy, every notice or review from 1895 to the current edition carries the testimony: "The best evidence that this book characterizes the spirit of Buddhism correctly can be found in the welcome it has received throughout the entire Buddhist world" (CARUS 1973, p. vi). This paper first characterizes Carus's book, then describes its function in the Meiji Buddhist revival to explain its apparent endorsement by Japanese Buddhists.

Paul Carus and "The Gospel of Buddha"

Paul Carus was an American philosopher, editor, and publisher, remembered now as a pioneer in introducing Oriental religion to America and for his incidental role in the transmission of Zen to the West through his connection with D. T. Suzuki.² He was born in Germany to a devout Christian family. He obtained his Ph.D. in mathematics and philosophy in Tübingen. In 1887 he migrated to the United States, where he became editor and publisher of the *Open Court*. From the time he arrived in America Carus devoted his life to his mission of resolving the religious crisis of the nineteenth century: the perceived conflict between religion and science. His solution was

² For a biography of Carus see JACKSON 1968 and MEYER 1962.

to restructure Christianity around a new conception of the nature of self, a psychological and scientific conception that he described in his book *The Soul of Man* (1890). He founded *The Open Court*, a weekly journal, with the intention of propagating these ideas. As the mast-head of the journal tells us, it was "Devoted to the Work of Conciliating Religion and Science." This project was his life's work. In 1890 he founded a second journal, *The Monist*, which presented similar material at a more philosophical and technical level. Carus himself contributed regularly. His personal output was prodigious. He wrote more than a thousand articles and about fifty book-length monographs covering a wide range of subjects, all without exception related to his mission of reconciling religion and science. While he was working on *The Gospel of Buddha*, Carus published a number of articles, such as "Karma and Nirvāna" and "Buddhism and Christianity," explicitly making these connections. The popularization of these ideas was the task of *The Gospel of Buddha*. The book was therefore an archetypical example of orientalism, the appropriation of the orient—Buddhism and the life of the Buddha—to support a decidedly Western and Christian project.

Carus declared in the preface that the book was not intended to popularize Buddhism. It had been written "to set the reader a-thinking about the religious problems of today and become a factor in the formation of the future." In spite of its title, *The Gospel of Buddha* was written to propagate Carus's post-Kantian Christian religion of science. Carus believed that it was the duty of all true believers to proselytize. There are two reasons for this, both characteristically scientific. The first was his conviction that universal truth would be revealed by comparison. The second was based on evolutionary theory. Since evolution depended on the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, Carus believed that progress toward the ultimate universal religion would be hastened by bringing protagonists into greater proximity through active missionary work. He was particularly interested in Buddhism because he genuinely admired it and had no doubt that it was the only possible contender against Christianity for the role of the religion of the future. Comparison and competition with Buddhism in the minds of a Christian audience would force the evolution of Christianity to its inevitable and ultimate perfection.

However, Carus principally appreciated Buddhism because he recognized his own monistic ideas in several Buddhist concepts. From the nineteenth-century orthodox Christian viewpoint both monism and Buddhism were accused of being nihilistic since they challenged the Christian conception of soul and the nature of God, upon which the major religious issues of free will, ethics, and morality depended.

Carus used Buddhism to argue the viability of this alternative world-view, to unsettle the “popular conceptions of a Creator God and an ego soul” that were considered “the indispensable foundations of all religion” (CARUS 1890, p. 419). One problem was that Carus’s monism was unquestionably Christian. He had to argue, therefore, that Buddhism and Christianity were essentially the same. His most radical declaration of this identity was his hypothesis that Jesus Christ was actually Maitreya, the Buddha of the future. To substantiate his argument, Carus used a Chinese reference that predicted the coming of the Buddha Maitreya 5,000 years after Sakyamuni.³ Since Sakyamuni is believed to have lived in the sixth century B.C., by slipping a zero—thereby making the prediction 500 years—Carus concluded that the advent of the Christian Messiah coincided closely enough to fulfill this prophesy. “Christians may be said to worship Maitreya under the name of Christ” (CARUS 1897, p. 195).

Carus’s vision of Sakyamuni was equally unorthodox. The Buddha was not only the prototypical Christ, he was also the world’s first logical positivist, the first humanist, the first teacher of the religion of science. However, the point is not to indicate errors of scholarship but to demonstrate the author’s remarkable control of the text in pursuit of his purpose. The full title, *The Gospel of Buddha, Compiled from old records, as told by Paul Carus*, presented the book as nothing more than a short version of the Buddhist canon; the truth of the life of the Buddha—the gospel truth with all the colloquial connotations of the term—in the same way that the Christian Gospels, upon which the text was modeled, was the truth of the life of Christ. The religious nature of the work was signaled to his Christian audience by the familiar form of chapter and verse, and the King James style of language he purposely adopted.

The Preface, like the title, attempted to efface the presence of the author, stressing the book’s reliance on the canon, claiming that many passages, indeed the most important ones, were literally copied. It admitted to modifications, the “trimming of needless repetitions and adornments,” but reassured the reader that there was nothing in the book for which prototypes could not be found in the traditions of Buddhism. Carus scandalized his academic contemporaries by dipping indiscriminately into texts ranging over about 2,000 years and belonging to several different cultural traditions.

However, the claim that the book is merely a compilation hardly does justice to what is in fact a most ingenious original composition, a

³ Carus refers to EITEL 1888, p. 92.

skillfully articulated deployment of a very idiosyncratic interpretation. Carus's claim that the most important passages are copied is not exactly incorrect—just misleading. Carus used the Buddhist texts in a number of ways. Some chapters of the *Gospel* are extensively copied from Buddhist sources, but often with a revised ending that attaches a new lesson to the familiar story. Other chapters begin with a short quote from a canonical text, which is then developed by Carus to form the body of the chapter. Again the lesson is Christian monist rather than Buddhist. Elsewhere, various passages from assorted books are strung together like words in a vocabulary creating totally new statements.

This incredible patchwork is nevertheless beautifully stitched into a continuous narrative, a work in prose that consciously aimed to rival Edwin Arnold's famous poem, *The Light of Asia*.⁴ Arnold's epic, based on the life of the Buddha, had been spectacularly popular, but it had no authority as the truth of Buddhism. Carus wanted to write a book that would appeal to the general reader, as Arnold's poem did, but with the academic validation that Arnold's work lacked. Hence his stress on the book's reliance on the canon, and the pseudoacademic trappings appended by the author. The biblical format precluded footnotes, but to compensate for this the author appended a "Table of Reference" in which the canonical sources for each chapter of the *Gospel* are indicated by an abbreviation. This is decoded in another table a few pages over. A casual glance reassures the reader that each chapter has a textual reference; that its truth is pinned to the Buddhist texts. But how many readers would have gone on to discover that E. A., the reference for some of the most outstanding passages, stands for "Explanatory Additions" and designates Carus's own original contributions?⁵ One imaginative passage carries the reference E. H., which decoding reveals as Eitel's *Handbook of Buddhism*. Few nonspecialist readers would have recognized that this was actually a dictionary and that consequently this reference, an explanation of the meaning of one word, is used to validate a whole chapter as canonical. The Table of Reference not only claimed academic legitimation, it concealed the author's considerable personal contribution. The Glossary performs a similar function and it is here, along with the definitions of Buddhist names and terms, complete with diacritical marks, that we find the entry "Mahāse'tu, the great bridge. A name invented by the author of the present book to designate the importance of Christianity compared to the

⁴ *The Light of Asia* by Sir Edwin Arnold was first published in London in 1889.

⁵ Cf. references to M.V, which indicates *Mahāvagga*; and D.P., *Dhammapada*.

Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna of Buddhism” (CARUS 1898, p. 279).

Carus’s control of his text is exemplified by the chapter entitled “Maitreya,” which is based on the dialogue between the Buddha Sakyamuni and his disciple Ananda on the eve of the Parinirvāna.⁶ The references for the chapter are “MPNv, 1–14, concerning Maitreya see E. H. s.v. Rh. DB. pp. 180, 200; Old; G.p 153 etc.” This decodes to fourteen verses from T. W. Rhys Davids’s *Buddhist Sutras*, another definition from Eitel’s dictionary, two pages of T. W. Rhys Davids’s *Buddhism*, and one page of Hermann Oldenberg’s *Budda, sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde*. The “etc.” is presumably intended to suggest that such ideas may be widely found. The chapter supports Carus’s conviction that Christ is the Buddha. It opens following the *Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta* closely. Verses 1–3 of the *Gospel* correspond to verses 3–6. Verses 7–14, that is, the rest of the verses referred to, concern gods and spirits, and have been trimmed as “apocryphal adornments.” Carus has used three verses to establish the scene and characters of his own chapter. The content of the chapter thereafter diverges completely except for the repetition of Ananda’s question “Who shall teach us when thou art gone?” (96:12), which Carus uses to allow the Blessed One of his *Gospel* to predict the coming of the Buddhist Christ.

There was, however, a direct connection between the writing of this book and Japanese Buddhism. Carus had been deeply impressed by the Japanese delegates to the World’s Parliament of Religions and their presentation of Eastern Buddhism.⁷ The delegates, four Buddhist priests and two laymen, were representatives of the Meiji Buddhist revival movement.⁸ The Buddhism they presented was a product of this movement, shaped by the imperatives of the institutional, social, and political crises of the early Meiji period, and the need to

⁶ See chapter 96.

⁷ The World’s Parliament of Religions, Chicago 1893, was one of the Auxiliary Congresses held in conjunction with the Columbian Exposition. The representation of Japan and of Japanese Buddhism at this event is the subject of my doctoral thesis (University of Sydney, History Department, 1995). There is now considerable literature available on this subject but the two most outstanding works are SEAGER 1995 for the significance of the event in the United States, and KETELAAR 1991, on the Japanese delegation.

⁸ The Buddhist priests were Shaku Sōen (Rinzai), Toki Hōryū 土宜法龍 (Shingon), Ashizu Jitsuzen 蘆津実全 (Tendai), Yatsubuchi Bunryū 八淵燐龍 (Jōdo Shinshū). The two lay speakers were the *koji* (lay) Buddhists Hirai Kinzō 平井金三 and Noguchi Zenshirō 野口善四郎. All of these delegates had been actively involved in the Buddhist revival and Buddhist nationalist movements of the previous years. The delegation was deliberately transectarian and was supported by Buddhist reform leaders. The most prominent among them are listed as CONCERNED BUDDHISTS, in an open letter calling for official recognition and support for the delegation. *Shūkyō*, 5 April 1893, pp. 294–99, henceforth referred to as *Manifesto*.

produce an interpretation of Buddhism appropriate for the new society. By the early 1890s, this Buddhism (*shin bukkyō*) was further determined by the links between Buddhist revival and emerging nationalism. The representation of Buddhism at Chicago, as the delegates planned it, was a strategic statement in the discourse of Buddhist nationalism and was given shape by the tactics and strategies implicit in this project. The Buddhism they presented, Eastern Buddhism as they called it to distance it from the existing Western constructs of Northern and Southern Buddhism, was a rationalized, secular, transsectarian, lay-oriented Buddhism consciously packaged to emphasize its compatibility with science and philosophy—especially philosophic idealism—and to emphasize the life-affirming and humanitarian aspects of Buddhism. It is no surprise, given Carus's own position, that he was particularly impressed by Shaku Sōen's paper. Its title, "The Law of Cause and Effect As Taught by the Buddha," signaled the reconciliation of religion and science; its content, an introduction to the concept of *inga rihō* 因果理法 (Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*), deliberately challenged orthodox Christian arguments for the necessity of a Creator God (SHAKU Sōen 1893).⁹ It argued that human morality did not depend on the external authority of "divine wrath" but on self-discipline. This overlap of interests was the basis of the relationship between Carus and Shaku Sōen that led to D. T. Suzuki's presence in the United States working as Carus's assistant. Their friendship alone does not explain, however, why Shaku Sōen, chief abbot of an important Rinzai Zen temple complex and Buddhist scholar of some considerable standing,¹⁰ should apparently endorse Carus's interpretation of Buddhism.

"Budda no fukuin": The Japanese Publication

Budda no fukuin was published as a conscientiously literal translation of the original, with a preface added by Shaku Sōen, a biography of Carus by D. T. Suzuki, and a bibliography of works on Buddhism in Western languages derived from Carus's Table of Reference. In his Preface, Shaku Sōen lists three reasons for the publication:

⁹ For a slightly different version see SHAKU 1894. Carus had himself presented a paper called "Science as a Religious Revelation." CARUS 1893.

¹⁰ Shaku Sōen, like many of the priests prominent in Meiji reform, was a Buddhist scholar. FURUTA 1967 details his extensive Buddhist studies, which led to him being one of the four editors of *The Essentials of Buddhist Teachings* (1890), a five-volume work intended to promote Buddhist unity. He also studied Western philosophy at Keio University. Fukuzawa Yukichi is listed as among the subscribers supporting his trip to Ceylon to study Pali Buddhism. SHAKU Sōen 1941.

Firstly, to make our readers know how much our Buddhism is understood by Western scholars; secondly, to point out a short road for studying Buddhism for the younger generation; thirdly, through the life of Sakyamuni, to sow widely the seeds of the great teaching of Buddhism. (SHAKU 1895a, p. 280)¹¹

The first of these reasons is the most compelling: it is a statement uncommitted to the quality of the work, suggesting "Let the book speak for itself," and carrying the dual implication that this is evidence of the strength of Western interest in our religion, and of the limit of Western understanding on the subject. The second and third reasons indicate that the audience targeted by the publication was the young Western-educated elite who were seeking a religion compatible with modern science and modern Western thought. In other words the book was intended precisely for those who had been interested in Christianity in the earlier decades of the Meiji era, but who were now looking for an indigenous answer to their spiritual needs. These were Japanese in search of the national spirit, who saw the future of Japan in terms of increasing nationalism. Japan was to be recognized as equal to the West in scientific, technological, and intellectual development, but as distinctly non-Western. The Western authorship of the *Gospel* was essential to the force of its communication, and testimony to the truth of Shaku Sōen's claims that "there are signs that the West might welcome Buddhism," even if "there is doubt attached" to whether or not Western scholars have fully understood the "essential principles of Buddhism" (SHAKU 1895a, p. 280).

The importance of Western interest in Buddhism in the Meiji context of rivalry between Japanese Christians and Buddhists is shown in the address made to the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) of Yokohama by Shaku Sōen and other delegates to the World's Parliament of Religions shortly after their return from Chicago:

The Parliament was called because the Western nations have come to realise the weakness and folly of Christianity, and they really wished to hear from us of our religions and to learn what the best religion is. The meeting showed the great superiority of Buddhism over Christianity, and the mere fact of calling the meetings showed that the Americans and other Western peoples had lost their faith in Christianity and were ready to accept the teachings of our superior religion.¹²

¹¹ Substantial passages from Shaku Sōen's "Preface" from *Budda no fukuin* were translated by D. T. Suzuki and published in *The Open Court* 9: 4405. References to *Fukuin* are my own translations. Suzuki's translation is referenced as SUZUKI 1895.

¹² *Open Court* 11: 47, quoting a newspaper report from *New York Independent*, 1895. The

The existence of the *Gospel of Buddha* was further evidence of these claims, which were repeated, though rather more subtly, in Shaku Sōen's Preface. There he connected the achievements of modern science, which had "made the truth more and more clear," with the fact that "there are many signs in the Western civilization that it will welcome Buddhism." Scientific developments were preparing Western minds to receive the truth of Buddhism. Shaku Sōen mentioned the current interest in oriental literature, history, and fine art, and the "new and powerful interest in comparative religion" as indications that "the time is at hand in which Western scholars begin to see how brilliantly our Buddhism shines in all its glory." Shaku further writes that "the World's Parliament of Religions held in America the previous year was a great achievement that was proof of the westward advance of Buddhism" (SUZUKI 1895).¹³

It is apparent from the address to the YMBA that Western interest in Buddhism was not only claimed as proof of the value of Buddhism, but was also construed by these Buddhists to imply the failure of Christianity to meet the needs of the modern world. Suzuki's biography of Carus presented him as a specific example of this, relating how Carus, the son of a prominent Christian clergyman, rejected Christianity in favor of Buddhism. The very existence of the *Gospel* was proof of the claim. Moreover, Suzuki's identification of Carus as a German philosopher and man of science challenged the position of those Japanese converts who had turned to Christianity as the natural concomitant of modernization and Westernization.¹⁴

Carus's book, concerned as it was with the "religion of science," was particularly valuable in Meiji religious debate because it presented Buddhism as the religion of the modern world, a claim that was the foundation of the Buddhist revival movement.¹⁵ The *Gospel* served the

YMBA (*Dainihon bukkō seinenkai*), a network of youth organizations, was formalized in 1894. See TAMAMURO 1967, p. 352.

¹³ This is modified in the English version of *The Open Court*, which reads, "This was partly shown..."

¹⁴ See SCHEINER 1970 on the Confucian bases of Christian conversion in early Meiji, in particular the adoption of Christianity as the spiritual, ethical root of Western civilization; see SCHWANTES 1953 on the importance of science—the paradigm of modernity—in religious debates of mid-Meiji.

¹⁵ This is not the place to repeat the history of the early Meiji persecutions of *haibutsu kishaku* 廃仏毀釈 that so devastated Buddhist institutions that there were real fears for their survival in the early 1870s, nor to recount the details of the reform initiatives over the following three decades that defined Buddhism in distinction from other aspects of Japanese religiosity and recreated its function in society. For a well-researched and insightful treatment of the reconstitution of Buddhism in the second half of the nineteenth century see KETELAAR 1990.

Buddhist reform project in several ways. Carus had declared that the aim of the *Gospel* was not “to present Buddhism in its cradle” but to present “Buddhism up to date” in its “nobler possibilities.” “It has been written to set the reader a-thinking on the religious problems of today”; it was intended “to become a factor in the formation of the future.” This was precisely the aim of reform Buddhists, to establish a place for Buddhism in the modern Japanese state. The *Gospel* supported this project because it presented Buddhism as a religion suited to the modern scientific worldview represented by the West, and most importantly, its Western authorship verified the claims that had been made by Japanese scholars such as Inoue Enryō for some years.¹⁶

Moreover, Carus had made these comments in defense of his use of Mahāyāna sources. The book therefore had added value for Japan in that it accepted the Mahāyāna sutras as part of the Buddha’s “gospel.” Shaku Sōen remarked on this as a particular feature of the work (SHAKU 1895a, p. 280). Western interest in Buddhism, upon which the benefit to the nation in taking Buddhism to the West depended, was at this stage exclusively focussed on the construct of Western Pali scholarship (SNODGRASS 1996). Inoue had argued that this was because Westerners so far knew nothing of Japanese Mahāyāna, and that they could not fail to be impressed with its superior truth if it were presented to them. For their part, the delegation to Chicago had presented Japanese Buddhism as Eastern Buddhism, a new category that distanced it from the charges of nihilism leveled at Southern Buddhism by its critics, as well as from the much maligned Northern Buddhism of China and Tibet. To validate their claims that Eastern Buddhism was taught by Sakyamuni during his lifetime—the definition of what could be accepted as Buddhism under the prevailing laws of Western scholarship—they followed Inoue in referring to the Tendai teaching of the *goji* (the Five Periods of the Buddha’s teachings), which established that not only were Mahāyāna sutras indisputably the Buddha’s teachings, directly transmitted to the world by Sakyamuni, but that they were his first teaching, his last teaching, and the only complete teaching of his Truth. Pali Buddhism in this scheme is not only secondary, it is also preliminary and associated

¹⁶ On Inoue Enryō’s part in Buddhist revival see STAGGS 1983; SNODGRASS 1997. In his influential work *Bukkyō katsuron joron*, INOUE linked the developments of the Buddhist revival taking place within specialist circles to the rapidly growing nationalist sentiments of the early Meiji 20s (1887). Inoue, aware of the interest in Buddhism among Western thinkers seeking an alternative ethical system to orthodox Christianity—a system compatible with a scientific worldview and contemporary philosophy—called upon patriots to revive Buddhism as Japan’s gift to the world. It was presented as the one thing that Japan could export that could win international prestige.

with less intellectually developed societies, people of less ability to comprehend the higher truths (INOUE 1887).¹⁷ The question of the relationship of Mahāyāna Buddhism to the historical existence of the Buddha was contentious, and the charge that Japanese Buddhism was not really Buddhism was used by Christians, both foreign and Japanese, to discredit Buddhism (KETELAAR 1990, pp. 3–42).¹⁸ In his summary of the achievements of the delegation, Shaku Sōen mentioned his sense of satisfaction that “the mistaken idea that Mahāyāna Buddhism was not actually the Buddha’s teaching had been put to rest” (SHAKU 1895b, p. 6). Nevertheless, Western denigration of Mahāyāna Buddhism was a problem, and Carus’s support most welcome.

The quality of Carus’s representation of Buddhism was of secondary relevance in establishing the issue of Western interest in Buddhism. The points of doctrine presented in the *Gospel* that were important, however, were Carus’s defense of Buddhism against the common charges of nihilism, skepticism, and atheism. The content of the *Gospel* also validated Shaku Sōen’s specific claim that the delegation had shown “that Buddhism closely corresponds to modern science and philosophy” (SHAKU 1895a, p. 5). In general it strengthened the Buddhist position against Christian criticism and provided evidence of an improved Western sympathy for Buddhism, but the value of this went just so far. In his introduction to the second edition of *Fukuin* Suzuki expressed misgivings about the quality of the work: “The book, which was not intended for Japanese hands, was unsatisfactory.” One problem was its simplicity. It had been written in uncomplicated language that made it accessible to “anyone with a junior high school education,” but as a consequence there were “many immature words” that, Suzuki was concerned, might hinder understanding. This was

¹⁷ Also see translation in STAGGS 1979, p. 399. Based on the *Lotus Sutra*, the doctrine of the Five Periods as Inoue explained it records that right after achieving *bodhi* the Buddha first preached the *Avatamsaka sutra* (*Kegongyō* 華嚴經), which revealed the truth of the Mahāyāna, but realized that the truth of this revelation was beyond the comprehension of his audience. Therefore he explained the superficial doctrines of the Hinayāna (*agonji* 阿含時). This accomplished, he was then able to teach the third stage in the gradual revelation of the truth, which is explained in the the Vaipulya sutras (*hōdōji* 方等時); and as the understanding of his audience increased he was able to progress towards the Mahāyāna sutras of the final two periods, the *hannyaji* 般若時 and the *hokke-nehanji* 法華涅槃時. At Chicago Ashizu, Toki, and Yatsubuchi addressed this doctrine; it is mentioned by all the delegates and by each of them more than once (BARROWS 1893; HOUGHTON, 1894).

¹⁸ This charge, originally used by the *Kokugakusha* in the Tokugawa period to discredit Buddhism in favor of Shinto, had been appropriated by the Christians in the Meiji period. Christians, such as the Kumamoto band from Dōshisha who formed the Japanese Christian contingent to the Parliament, knew very little about Buddhism, since they had been brought up and educated in a strongly Confucian, anti-Buddhist tradition.

not his only complaint:

In the translator's view, there are not a few passages where there are omissions or where there are revisions. This is the work of a Westerner, and from my personal view, it has the odour of a Westerner about it. (SUZUKI 1970, p. 281)

Shaku Sōen, referring to the works of major orientalist, explained how each produced an incomplete and idiosyncratic interpretation: "Swedenborg came to Buddhism through his interest in mysticism; [Edwin] Arnold through his elegant poetic vision; Olcott through his interest in superior intellect; Max Muller through his interest in the refined Sanskrit language" (SHAKU 1895a, p. 279). Although each of them is excellent in his own field, he concluded, "as for attaining the essential meaning of the noble truths of Buddhism, there is reason to doubt whether these scholars had penetrated the secret" (SHAKU 1895a, p. 279). If these great leaders of Eastern scholarship had failed in the task, what was Shaku Sōen suggesting his readers should expect of Carus?

In spite of whatever shortcomings he may have seen in the work, Shaku Sōen compared the arrival of Carus's book to "the rainbow and clouds after a serious drought." This was because "an eager demand for a concisely compiled work on Buddhism has arisen throughout the country, which it is our duty to satisfy" (SHAKU 1895a, p. 279). As though foreseeing the assumptions of Carus's Western biographers, Shaku Sōen was explicit that it was neither absence of information on Buddhism nor a falling off in Buddhist scholarship that led to the publication of the book. As his preface explained, "here [in Japan] the tradition is not disappearing; the writings are accumulating at a vast rate, and there is an exceedingly great superabundance of books"; "the Buddhist tradition that had existed in Japan for more than a thousand years was not disappearing; we have the complete Tripitaka, specialist teachers of the Sutras, and the Commentaries." The problems were rather that the literature, already so vast, continued to accumulate, and that canonical texts required a profound skill to master. "The characters are difficult and the sentences scholarly and intricate" (SHAKU 1895a, p. 279). Hence the scholars of today "are at a loss how to begin the study of the Tripitaka, the 'perfection of the ancients'." These "scholars of today," the "up-and-coming young Buddhists" to whom *Fukuin* was directed, were the growing class of Western-educated young moderns who did not have the classical training needed to cope with the special difficulties of Buddhist texts that are not only written in Chinese, but are also further removed from even the educated general reader by specialist technical terms. For the benefit of this audience Suzuki translated the *Gospel* into "a very easy style."

Buddhist reformers recognized that there was a need for a Buddhist equivalent to the translations in Japanese of works on Christian thought and Western philosophy through which an educated reader might gain access to knowledge of Buddhism without the mediation of religious specialists. There were already some introductory books in modern language available in Japan. One of the earliest was INOUE Enryō's *Bukkyō katsuron joron* written specifically to meet the needs of this audience (1887). In 1891 Shaku Sōen, together with fellow Parliamentary delegates Toki Hōryū and Ashizu Jitsuzen, had worked with Shimaji Mokurai to compile an outline of Buddhist doctrine, a five-volume work intended to promote Buddhist unity (SHAKU et al. 1896). Though this work was probably not suitable for the general distribution that Shaku Sōen envisaged for *Fukuin*, it does contradict the assumption that Japanese Buddhists went to Carus for knowledge of their religion. There were also at least three short introductions to Buddhism that had been written in Japanese before being translated into English for distribution at the Chicago World's Fair. These works were included in Carus's bibliography.¹⁹ There had also been books on the life of Sakyamuni.²⁰ The fact that Shaku Sōen also saw a use for *Fukuin* as a primer of Buddhism does not detract from its primary function as a sign of Western recognition of the superiority of Buddhism as a religion for the future.²¹

One advantage of Carus's *Gospel* was that a book on Buddhism by a Western scholar could be expected to reach a wider audience than these previous works. The Buddhist content of Carus's *Gospel* was not new to Japan. The audience for a book by a Western author, however, would presumably consist of the already pro-Buddhist audience of Inoue et al., pro-Western Japanese, and also those who were curious to find out what outsiders had to say about them. Just as Carus had

¹⁹ Carus's bibliography lists KURODA 1893, the title page of which carries the assurance that the book had been "carefully examined by the scholars of Tendai, Shingon, Rinzai, Sōtō, and Shin sects.... for circulation among the members of the Parliament of Religions to be held in Chicago in connection with the World's Fair." He also lists AKAMATSU 1893. Lay delegate Noguchi Zenshirō, under the name of Tokunaga, translated and distributed a work based on the lectures of Kiyozawa Manshi (KIYOZAWA 1955). The original Japanese version of KIYOZAWA 1955 was published in 1892 and a year later the first English version was published.

²⁰ According to KISHIMOTO 1956, p. 159, Inoue Tetsujirō wrote the first historical analysis of the life of the Buddha in 1889. INOUE 1897 was published by Inoue Enryō's Tetsugaku Shoin. This work was reprinted in *Shūkyō*, vol. 9 of *Meiji bunka zenshū*, edited by Meiji Bunka Kenkyūkai, 377–416. Tokyo: Tōyō University, 1954.

²¹ See Ketelaar's discussion of the importance of "Buddhist Bibles" in giving form to the ideal of doctrinal unity within the Buddhist revival. The first was Nanjō Bun'yū's *Bukkyō seiten*, which appeared in 1905, four years after the second edition of *Fukuin* (KETELAAR 1990, pp. 207–12).

used the book to extend his message to the general public, beyond the restricted and intellectual readership of his journals, so Shaku Sōen's preface to *Fukuin* could popularize and extend the audience for Buddhist reform arguments. Shaku Sōen has been described by Furuta Shokin as the founder of lay Zen in Japan, but his work was only part of the more general movement of *koji* (lay) Buddhism, bringing Buddhism out of the institutions and into the lives of the lay community. Carus's book, which was intended to introduce Buddhism/monism to the general public in America, was put to a similar task in Japan.

Validating the Chicago Mission

The Gospel of Buddha was also a sign of the success of the Japanese delegation to Chicago, a reply to conservative critics who had withheld official endorsement.²² It was spelled out in both the preface and the biography of Carus, which Suzuki appended to *Fukuin*, that the book had been the consequence of the meeting between the Japanese Buddhist delegation and the author. The existence of the *Gospel*—especially the fact that exposure to Eastern Buddhism had inspired Carus to write it—justified the initiative taken by the delegation, since it was proof that they had advanced Buddhist understanding by their attendance in Chicago.

In Shaku's *Bankoku shūkyō taikai ichiran* (Outline of the World's Parliament of Religions), where he listed the achievements of the delegation, he concluded modestly that "we have simply fulfilled our mission in spreading the wisdom of the Buddha and we will not make an announcement of this to the public" (SHAKU 1895b, p. 6). This "private memento" was nevertheless published repeatedly in a number of editions. These, as well as addresses such as that to the YMBA, the Buddhist journals, and local newspapers, made much of the success and achievements of the delegation. The delegates became the champions of Buddhism²³ and *Fukuin* became evidence for the Japanese public of the success of the delegation, proof of the argument in the *Manifesto* that

Quite simply, now is not the time to be conservative. It is a

²² The delegation had been unsuccessful in attempting to gain the endorsement of the All Sects Council (*Kakushū kyokai*), supposedly because of fears among conservatives that the Parliament was "a Christian conspiracy" organized to discredit the claims of other religions.

²³ KETELAAR 1991 argues that the main function of the trip to Chicago was to provide the opportunity for this interpretation. While I most certainly concur with the importance Ketelaar gives the delegation to Chicago as a platform for the battle over the future religion in Meiji Japan, my principal concern is with the interaction of this delegation with Western knowledge of Buddhism at this time.

time to take positive action. In other words, we should not try passive resistance to the invasion of the foreign religion, but actively plan for the future of Buddhism. If we continue the conservative trend of the present over the next ten years, we must view the future of Buddhism pessimistically. The Parliament offers Buddhism the opportunity of external expansion and provides the means to achieve it. Why shouldn't we make a great effort and attempt the surprising strategy of expansion?

(CONCERNED BUDDHISTS 1893, p. 295)

The delegation to Chicago had been a strategy in the defense of Buddhism against Western encroachment in Japan, and it had achieved its initial, modest purpose: "It is beyond our expectations to achieve an immediate positive result from sending one or two delegates to the Conference.... what is important is simply to make a step in the grand design for future progress." Though Christian investment in Japan was inefficient in that their immense effort had not been compensated, the *Manifesto* argued, it was nevertheless undeniable that "Christianity had built up a great latent force in our society," through this activity. Thus, the argument ran, Buddhists should also be willing to take action. Reviewing the achievements of the delegation, dealing less with transmission of doctrine than with the conversion of a New York businessman, and the cooperation of an expatriate Japanese businessman in funding extra lectures at the Exposition, Shaku Sōen mused on the possibilities for Buddhism if the wider Buddhist community could be moved to such action: "It would be a marvelous event that would change the face of the country" (SHAKU 1895b, p. 5). The *Gospel* was an indication of the possibilities.

Creating Space for Discussion

Shaku Sōen's endorsement of the book lent it authority among Buddhist readers, but his disclaimer on the accuracy of Western understanding of Buddhism suggests that the book could have created a space for the discussion of the place of Buddhism in the modern world. Since it was written by a non-Japanese, a Buddhist sympathizer but not an educated Buddhist priest, the ideas it presented were open to freer discussion in Japan than if it had been written by Shaku Sōen himself, for example, with the responsibility his position called for within the Buddhist establishment.

The careers of the two extremely influential Meiji Buddhist scholars, Inoue Enryō and Murakami Senshō, show some of the difficulties. Inoue, though a graduate of the Buddhist Ōtani University, resigned

from the Honganji institution to remain in the intellectually less restricted climate of the academic world. Murakami Senshō, whose writings also contributed to a deeper understanding among non-Buddhists, particularly intellectuals and statesmen, remained a priest but controversy caused by his scholarship forced him to resign from the Ōtani sect in 1901 (KISHIMOTO 1956, pp. 150, 164). Although he always maintained his belief in the doctrinal superiority of Mahāyāna, Murakami's study of Buddhism using Western academic methods led him to question whether Japanese Buddhism had actually been taught by the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni. Some issues of importance if Buddhism was to conform to Western criteria for acceptance as truth were simply not open for discussion by institutional clergy.

In Japan Carus was respected as an authority on the West and on Western philosophy. The title page identified him as *Doitsu tetsugaku hakushi*—not just a German Ph.D. but one whose doctorate was in the discipline of philosophy—claiming for him a share in the high esteem in which German philosophy was held among Japanese intellectuals. Shaku Sōen could enthusiastically endorse him for his goodwill in wishing to promote Buddhism, and for his achievement in avoiding some of the errors of other Western scholars, but his opinions on Japan and Buddhism could be questioned without upsetting orthodoxy. They could be easily dismissed as yet another example of the inadequacy of foreign understanding. The foreign origin of the book was signaled by the title, *Budda no fukuin*, where “*fukuin*” was the word coined by Christian missionaries in Japan to designate the Christian Gospels. The Japanese rendering of the characters is “glad tidings” corresponding to the etymology of the English “gospel,” and current Japanese-English dictionaries indicate its close association with Christian evangelism.²⁴

Shaku Sōen apparently did not choose to transmit Carus's emphasis on the similarities between Christianity and Buddhism, as *Fukuin* does not include the “Table of Reference” that showed these parallels. The “List of Abbreviations” that accompanied this was transformed into a bibliography, effectively a statement of the extent of Western scholarship on Buddhism, again an endorsement of the claims of the reformers. The bibliography was presented in both English and in Japanese, showing the extent and nature of Western scholarship in Japanese, and providing a source of reference for the Western-educated.

²⁴ Sōgo 1985, p. 498, confirms its evangelical Christian origins.

"Budda no fukuin" in Buddhist Nationalism

Paul Carus's *The Gospel of Buddha* was deployed in Japan as a sign of increasing Western approval of Buddhism as the most appropriate religion for the modern, scientific world. This idea was fundamental to Meiji Buddhist reform, but by no means the total issue. It is no surprise that Shaku Sōen's preface also spoke on other issues in the discourse: the reinstatement of Buddhism as a state religion, and the benefits Buddhist teaching bestows upon the nation.

The Preface opened with a message of hope for Buddhism in overcoming its present problems, which included Buddhism's strength in adversity and its adaptability. "The strength of Buddhism is like fire... the more you beat it, the more it burns... if attacked it becomes more and more aroused" (SHAKU 1895a, p. 277). Arguing from history, it described how in ancient India Buddhism survived the dissension of ninety-six heretical sects; in China, it survived the opposition it faced from the two competing religions and oppressive rulers; over the hundreds, thousands of years of its eastward advance, Buddhism had survived crushing attacks and calumny, but its real character had not been diminished in the least. The Preface suggested that the state of Buddhism in Meiji Japan, which was stripped of its power and under attack by Christians, was nothing new. Buddhism had survived greater adversity and not only had survived, but had emerged stronger for the purification. "Now, once again, although we met the crushing attack of *hai ki*²⁵ Buddhism's real character had not been decreased in the least."

The Preface then retold the story of an interview between an ancient Chinese emperor and a Buddhist sage who argued the virtues of Buddhism, its benefits for beings of all rank, and its benefits to the state. The emperor, convinced by the sage of Buddhism's superiority, converted to Buddhism and established it within his kingdom. The lesson of this sermon-like section of the Preface was that "the Buddha is truly the Sage of complete wisdom and virtue, and the dharma that he preached is the true principle of *all ages and all countries, East and West*" (emphasis added). The unspoken conclusion is clearly that the Buddha Dharma, the future universal religion, must also be the true principle to guide Meiji Japan. In short, the Preface argued that Buddhism was the solution to the questions of Meiji religion, the search for an ideological base for modern Japan, a religion to assure the welfare of the nation. It also continued the campaign to reestablish the relationship between Buddhism and the state.

²⁵ *Haibutsu kishaku*, or calumny?

The Two Prefaces: The Extension of the Parliament Project

This paper so far has discussed the deployment of *The Gospel of Buddha* in the discourse of Meiji religion in Japan. But Shaku Sōen's Preface to *Budda no fukuin* was published in two versions. The second, which purported to be the English translation of the original, was reproduced in Carus's journal, *The Open Court* (CARUS 1895b). This "translation" shared a few paragraphs with the original but was essentially rewritten for the American journal, suggesting that Shaku Sōen also realized the opportunity offered by the publication of *Budda no fukuin* to intervene in the Western discourse on Buddhism. In effect it was an extension of the project of the Japanese Buddhist delegates at the World's Parliament of Religions; an attempt to gain Western respect and appreciation for Buddhism, to satisfy a Buddhist missionary ideal, but more importantly, as the *Manifesto* indicated, to strengthen the position of Buddhism in Japan.

Shaku Sōen's statement of the achievements of the delegation began with the statement that "we drew the attention of both foreigners and Japanese to the following points at least..." indicating his awareness that by speaking in Chicago he was also addressing a certain local audience. The Japanese and American discourses intersected for a Western-educated Japanese elite, a number of whom contributed to *The Monist* and *The Open Court* and to liberal magazines such as *Arena* and *Forum*.²⁶ Even non-English speaking Japanese were brought into contact with articles of particular interest in English journals, which were translated and republished in Japan. In *The Open Court* 9, 1895, for example, a letter from Mr. K. Ohara of Japan reported that he had published a translation of the "Triangular Debate on Christian Missions," an article from *The Monist*, in his journal the *Shi-Do-Kwai-Ko-Koku*. The article in *Arena* by Chicago delegate Hirai Kinzō was also translated and republished in Japan (HIRAI 1893).²⁷ After Carus's contact

²⁶ For example, Kishimoto Nobuta, Christian delegate to the Parliament, contributed articles on Japanese religion in general in *The Open Court*, 8:33 (16 August 1894): "Buddhism in Japan," "Northern and Southern Buddhism," "Sacred Literature," "Present Condition," "The Zen and the Shin Sects," and "The Influence of Buddhism on the People." The scope of these articles prefigured his future work on comparative religion with Anezaki Masaharu. See SUZUKI Norihisa 1970.

²⁷ Hirai Kinzō and Noguchi Zenshirō accompanied the delegation as translators and *koji* representatives of the Meiji Buddhist reform movement. Hirai, who apparently spoke English well, delivered this highly emotional speech on the inequities of Japan's treaties under the title of "Christianity in Japan." *The Japan Weekly Mail*, 5 August 1893, noted a paper on Japanese Buddhism by Hirai had been translated and published in *Bukkyō*. *The Mail* described Hirai's paper, originally written in English and published in *Arena* as "Religious Thought in Japan," as "the best thing yet written on Japanese Buddhism." *The Mail* refers to

with the Japanese delegation, *The Monist* regularly noted the contents of the Japanese journals it received. It was not unreasonable to assume that an article on Japanese Buddhism in *The Open Court* or *The Monist* would reach members of this particular elite, either directly or by report. Indeed, certain parts of the Preface seem directed more particularly to these readers than to a Western audience. The “translation” of the Preface to *Fukuin*, therefore, like the delegation to Chicago before it, was a strategic intervention in both discourses. Shaku Sōen not only appropriated Carus’s text for deployment in the contest over the religious future of Meiji Japan, he also took the opportunity of the Japanese publication of his preface to continue his participation in the formation of Western knowledge of Buddhism.

The Preface in Open Court: A Message to the West

The version of Shaku Sōen’s Preface to *Budda no fukuin* reproduced in *Open Court* differed from the original in both omissions and additions. The initial historical paragraph illustrating the resilience and adaptability of Buddhism in the face of adversity, and the discussion between the emperor and the sage, was omitted, possibly as a result of Carus’s editing. The sections dealing with the westward advance of Buddhism, orientalist scholarship, and the reasons for the Japanese publication were reproduced more or less completely. There were, however, significant additions that had no parallel in the original, and these we must attribute to Japanese authorship.

The opening paragraph stressed the Buddhist belief that the Dharma predates the historical Sakyamuni, challenging the Western assumption that Buddhism was originally a secular philosophy, the creation of a historical person, an assumption that underlies Carus’s vision of the Buddha as the first humanist, first positivist, etc. The Preface stated emphatically that “Sakyamuni was born in India about three thousand years ago, but Buddhism existed long before his birth.... Buddhism is not an invention of Sakyamuni, but the Truth of the world” (CARUS 1895b, p. 4404). Though Shaku Sōen’s equation of Buddhism with the Truth of the world has a superficial coincidence with Carus’s representation of Buddhism as the “religion of truth” presented in the *Gospel*, there is a fundamental difference. In Carus’s vision, Buddhism and Christianity shared equally in the Truth, the results of parallel

the author as “Kinza Hirai of Los Angeles, California.” The translator was Noguchi Zen-shirō. The association of these two men with Buddhist reform activities goes back at least to the organization of Henry Steel Olcott’s first tour of Japan. Hirai initiated the correspondence for this trip, and Noguchi was sent to accompany Olcott from India.

evolution, issuing in the same truth adapted to two different cultural and historical environments. For Shaku Sōen, Buddhism, the Truth of the world, was the fulfillment of all world religions. Using a fashionably scientific metaphor, he described Buddhism as the center of the solar system of religion and relegated Christianity to a position among all other religions, one of “the larger or smaller planets revolving around this brilliant sun of the Truth” (CARUS 1895b, p. 4405).

The difference here is profound. The friendship between Carus and Shaku Sōen was apparently based on their shared commitment to the principles of the Parliament: universal religious tolerance and dedication to the search for truth. Carus wrote to Shaku Sōen that “all religions contain more or less truth, and all Bibles and sacred books more or less error. What we want is the best of them, the truth without the error, the good without the evil” (DORNISH 1969, p. 23). This statement seems in remarkable accord with Shaku Sōen’s lecture to a meeting of Japanese religious leaders, Christian and Buddhist:

In both Buddhism and in Christianity, truth and untruth are, without doubt, mingled.... We are a people with a strong belief in truth, therefore we must search for whatever glimmer of truth there is, even amongst the rubbish, even amongst the excrement, we are willing to bow before it and rejoice.

(SHAKU 1896, p. 175)

However, the coincidence of aim between Carus and Shaku Sōen was not as close as it first appeared. Shaku Sōen advocated religious tolerance and coexistence, but he had no doubts about the relative status of the ultimate rewards of Buddhism and Christianity. In the religious crisis of Meiji Japan, he called upon both the Christian and Buddhist communities to drop their rivalry and prejudice in order to cooperate for the good of the nation.

The doctrinal arguments of philosophers cannot be reconciled... but men of religion should disregard this and adopt the basic position of nondiscriminating, impartial benevolence... Christians and Buddhists both together must meet the urgent task of today through carrying out philanthropic work.

(SHAKU 1896, p. 175)

There were for him, however, undeniable differences in belief. Both believed in the imperative of the search for truth, and both believed it was present in all religions. For Shaku Sōen, however, the unity of Buddhism and Christianity was not to be found at the level of the highest truth, which Buddhism alone possessed, but in the common belief in charity, benevolence, and compassion.

Those who have the aptitude to believe in Christianity can follow Christianity and obtain consolation. Those who are born to follow Buddhism can accept Buddhism and attain liberation. (SHAKU 1896, p. 176)

To return to the Preface of *Fukuin*: Shaku Sōen described there his vision of their interrelationship on the basis of this firm conviction of the superiority of Buddhism in the hierarchy of world religions. Confucius is, he wrote, “a Bodhisattva that appeared in China; and Jesus and Mohammed are Arhats in the West.” Here again Shaku Sōen differed from Carus. He granted Jesus a high spiritual status, but not that of a Buddha. Shaku Sōen further argued that the function of each of these great teachers was to prepare their followers to receive Buddhism, and although “some religious doctrines are inferior to and less deep than others... as far as they are consistent with the Truth, they may freely find their place within our Buddhist doctrines” (CARUS 1895b, p. 4405).

This is more than a restatement of the encompassing tolerance of Buddhism. In this scheme the preexistence of an established religion is a necessary condition for the entry of Buddhism into a nation: “If Brahmanism had not arisen in India, Buddhism would never have come into existence.” Similarly, the existence of Confucianism in China and Shinto in Japan made it possible for Buddhism to be introduced into those countries. Without the Arhats of the West, Jesus and Mohammed, there would be no Buddhism in the countries where those religious teachers are worshiped. “For all these religions, I make bold to say, are nothing but so many conductors through which the ‘White Light’ of Buddha is passing into the whole universe.”

Kitagawa sees the use of this typically Christian formula of fulfillment by Asian religious reformers as a legacy of the Parliament, a lesson learned from Christians (KITAGAWA 1984, p. 187). Though this may be the case for the Indian delegates he quotes, the idea has a much earlier origin in Japan. Edward J. Reed recorded an interview with Akamatsu Renjō, a Honganji priest who had accompanied Shimaji Mokurai to England for two and a half years from 1873. Akamatsu believed, said Reed, that his sect of Buddhism contained all that was good and true in the Christian religion, and that the people of England were ripe for the reception of Buddhism (REED 1880, pp. 214–15). Akamatsu’s statement predates the Parliament by two decades.

How did Shaku Sōen expect a Western audience to respond to this Buddhist appropriation of Carus’s concept of the “religion of truth” and its claim of Asian priority? I don’t believe that his argument was intended to attract converts to Buddhism. On the one hand the Preface

attempted to dispute Carus's representation of Buddhism. It also challenged the Christian and Western assumption of natural superiority. On the other hand it assured Japan's pro-Western generation that Buddhism already has all that the modern West was striving for. The publication of this statement in *The Open Court* was a form of Western endorsement.

Shaku Sōen's Preface, recomposed for American publication, was a minor strategy in Western discourse, but Carus and his American readers gave no sign of noticing Shaku Sōen's vision of Buddhism as the fulfillment of Christianity and his opposition to Carus's position on Truth and the relationship of Buddhism and Christianity, or of noticing his doubts on the success of orientalists in understanding Buddhism. What was communicated to the Western reader and entered Western discourse was that Shaku Sōen, a high-ranking Buddhist, propagated Carus's work in Japan. As Carus himself put it, "Whether or not it faithfully represents the Buddhist doctrine, it is for Buddhists to say" (CARUS 1895b, 4733). As recently as 1973 the work was republished with the reassurance that, "The best evidence that this book characterizes the spirit of Buddhism correctly can be found in the welcome it has received throughout the entire Buddhist world" (CARUS 1973, p. vi).

As we have seen, however, *Gospel* was welcomed in Japan, in spite of the fact that Shaku Sōen and D. T. Suzuki both expressed doubts about the author's understanding of Buddhism. The Japanese translation was only the first of more than thirteen different editions that appeared in the author's lifetime (FADER 1982, p. 141). Japanese reform Buddhists anticipating missions into the Chinese mainland started on a Chinese translation in 1895, and reportedly tested it out on prisoners of the Sino-Japanese war. An edition was published by nationalists in Ceylon to replace the Bible used in government schools to teach English language, the key to obtaining positions within the colonial bureaucracy. It continued to be used for this purpose until the middle of the present century (PEIRIS 1973, p. 327). In Ceylon, as in Japan, the *Gospel* owed its publication to reasons beyond its reliability as a source of knowledge concerning Buddhism.

Fukui was of considerable strategic value in the campaign for a Buddhist revival. The fact that such a book had been written was itself worth bringing to public attention: it demonstrated the existence of interest in Buddhism among Western intellectuals and thus gave weight to claims that Japanese Buddhism was the religion of modernity. It also provided a vehicle to carry Shaku Sōen's plea for the reestablishment of Buddhism in the modern state beyond an existing pro-Buddhist readership. As Carus's *Gospel* was a direct consequence of

the delegation to Chicago, it endorsed this initiative and encouraged support for further assertive action. The content of the book was also not without value, since it confirmed claims of the compatibility of Buddhism with science and modern philosophy, and since it promoted Buddhism as the religion of the future. It also defended Buddhism against charges of nihilism, and recognized the authenticity of Mahāyāna teachings. In its Japanese translation *Budda no fukuin* met the need for a short introductory text on Buddhism for the general reader, a need that appears to have become even more urgent by the turn of the century. For example, in Suzuki's introduction to the second edition in 1901 he apologized for the shortcomings of the work and begged his readers to understand that it was merely a first step, just one ten-thousandth part of the way towards carrying out his "earnest desire" to produce a "readable compendium of universal Buddhism," a book containing "the essence plucked from the Chinese, Indian, Tibetan, and other Buddhist texts that have been bequeathed to us." It seems that in another discursive twist across time and cultures, Carus's eclectic mixing of Buddhist texts that was a point of vulnerability in the West, now proved a point in *Fukuin*'s favor, supporting the idea that Eastern Buddhism encompassed all other teachings and that Japan was the storehouse of the Buddhist knowledge of the world. *Budda no fukuin*, as it was deployed in Japan, owed its publication and proliferation to its strategic value in the discourse of Meiji religion.

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