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**The Western Origins of Modern Japanese Buddhism:  
An Aspect of the History of Exchanges between Japan and Europe in the  
Nineteenth Century**

In many respects, Japanese Buddhism changed dramatically during the first half of the Meiji Period, i.e. between the 1860s and the 1890s. No longer guaranteed an automatic livelihood through state patronage in the form of the temple-registration system, priests now had to address individual followers with a convincing religious message. The practice of Buddhist homiletics boomed, but a host of other changes also ensued: Japanese Buddhists went abroad to proselytize for the first time, transsectarian catechisms were written, social welfare institutions and schools were established, and the consciousness of being part of a world religion blossomed. In part, these changes can be traced to the influence of the West, be it through the exchange of ideas or the impact of the Christian mission in Japan. This impact is generally acknowledged, but rarely investigated in detail. The lecture will do just that, by focusing on those Japanese Buddhists that went abroad in the 1870s and 1880s and personally experienced the international exchange of ideas and practices. The legacies they left behind both in Japan and in Europe will be the subject of the lecture.