

Bernard Faure, Columbia University

Abstract of "**Incorporated Buddhism: Organic and Symbolic Bodies in Medieval Japanese Buddhism**"

Buddhism is often seen as a world-renouncing religion, and therefore as a "spiritual" teaching that denies the body. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the body plays a major role in Buddhist practice. One way to deal with this problem has been to develop a discourse on the symbolic body, at the risk of eliminating many concrete physical aspects. The paper will examine the symbolic discourse of Buddhism about the body, and the ways in which some of the expurgated aspects (sexuality, animality, excrement) returned with a vengeance.