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BOOK REVIEW

Wild Geese: Buddhism in Canada. Edited by John S. Harding, Victor Sōgen Hori, and Alexander Soucy. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010. 464 pages. Hardcover, $95.00; paperback, $29.95.

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SCHOLARSHIP CONCERNING BUDDHISM in America, since the late 1970s, has produced a series of monographs and edited volumes. Buddhist studies scholarship from other non-Buddhist regions has emerged in Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, and England, each generating one to a handful of scholarly works. Canadian Buddhist scholarship is now poised to take the lead in conversations about global Buddhism. Scholars of Buddhism in Canada are aware of the newness of their work and have taken steps to continue their efforts through a number of venues. One of these steps is the recent edited volume, *Wild Geese: Buddhism in Canada*. This book makes a significant contribution toward creating and developing ideas on Buddhism in Canada and is related to other efforts such as national conferences and panels dedicated to the topic. Indeed, ideas for this book sprang from two sessions on Buddhism in Canada at the Canadian Asian Studies Association annual conference (CASA) in 2006. Thus this book is part of a larger effort to increase awareness of this sub-field of Buddhist studies as it has developed and continues to develop in this multicultural land. But the editors are only beginning in their creation of this scholarly niche—they have more conferences and volumes planned.

This volume clearly demonstrates that scholars of Buddhism in Canada are in dialogue with scholarship developed within American Buddhism. But the contributors of this volume are also advancing these conversations and issues about Buddhist developments in Western countries while considering the distinct nature of Buddhism in the

Canadian context. This is a large volume with fifteen contributions in four parts. With just over four hundred pages this book offers a hefty amount of theoretical and case study work on Buddhism in Canada and represents the vibrancy of this emerging field.

The book opens with vignettes of the current dynamism and diversity of Buddhism in Canada and offers an outline of the history of Canadian Buddhist scholarship that preceded this book. This history begins in 1999 with Janet McLellan's ethnographic study *Many Petals of the Lotus: Five Asian Buddhist Communities in Toronto* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1999). The next book concerning this topic was Bruce Matthews' *Buddhism in Canada* (New York: Routledge, 2006), which consisted of ten essays organized geographically. Building on these two diverse works the editors of *Wild Geese* intended to bring order to this field by exploring general themes that had not been addressed previously. They offer content in the categories of statistical analyses, historical surveys, global Buddhist movements, and biographical life stories, and use these to reflect on theoretical issues that will shape the field of Buddhism in Canada.

The first section of this volume, aptly titled "Openings," sets the theoretical aims of the book and presents two of the most provocative articles in the collection. The authors in later sections frequently refer to these two chapters, written by two of the editors. Victor Hori's "How Do We Study Buddhism in Canada?" aims to answer this question as well as the more specific question: "What do we need to do to ensure that this academic field accurately describes and explains Buddhism in Canada?" (p. 13). His rough guidelines to establish Buddhism in Canada as a field of study are to (1) resist the distinction between Asian/ethnic and Western/convert, (2) research statistical data and historical information, (3) write life stories of Canadian Buddhists, (4) reflect on appropriate theories and methods to apply to scholarship on Buddhism in Canada, (5) take into account globalization and modernization in Asia, and finally (6) create a new template for training graduate students with less philology and more fieldwork. The rest of the chapter expands on these ideas, many of which are discussed more fully throughout the book.

The second chapter of Part One, Alexander Soucy's "Asian Reformers, Global Organizations: An Exploration of the Possibility of a 'Canadian Buddhism,'" is perhaps the most significant chapter of the book. Therein, Soucy explores the nature of modern Buddhism

as it relates to Buddhism in the West and offers new theoretical ways of thinking about this relationship. By critiquing the notion of an American Buddhism Soucy makes the case that we should consider the question of whether there is such a thing as a Canadian Buddhism. He does this by looking at two global movements, Thich Nhat Hanh's Order of Interbeing and Shambhala International, founded by the late Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. Using these two examples he argues that the characteristics of American Buddhism reflect that of modern global Buddhism so that it is difficult to untangle the two. Thus he finds the characteristics of American Buddhism are really the features of something much broader, so we must move beyond the distinction between Western Buddhists and Asian Buddhists.

Part Two, "Histories and Overviews," answers Hori's call for historical overviews and statistical analysis with two articles focusing on historical communities—one on the early history of Japanese Buddhism in Canada and one more recent historical overview, along with one article analyzing Canadian census data on Buddhism. "Looking East: Japanese Canadians and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, 1905–1970" by Terry Watada focuses on early Japanese settlers in Canada and the establishment of Japanese religious institutions by Shin Buddhists. He uses interviews with Japanese-Canadians and archival research of early Japanese newspapers and newsletters in Canada. This is a tale of how these Buddhists overcame adversity, racism, and isolation; thus, it is a history not just of the developments in the religion but of the communities' troubles and triumphs.

Watada concludes his piece with the 1960s and 70s when other schools of Buddhism started to arrive on Canadian soil. Henry C. H. Shiu's "Buddhism after the Seventies" captures the next stage of history as Buddhism takes root among new immigrants and native-born Canadians. This chapter offers summaries of developments in Japanese, Chinese, Tibetan, and South and Southeast Asian Buddhist groups. Shiu also describes convert-oriented movements such as the Zen boom, the Vipassana movement, and Soka Gakkai International. The author looks at socially engaged Buddhism, new Buddhist movements, and Buddhist education in Canada. The article ends with a summary of Canada's 1971 Multiculturalism Act and how this policy is distinguished from American policy. The author concludes that Buddhism is becoming a mainstream religion and a choice within the cultural landscape of

Canada. Similar to the previous chapter, because of the rich and comprehensive data here, there is little room for analysis.

"Buddhism in Canada: A Statistical Overview from Canadian Censuses, 1981–2001" by Peter Beyer is the sole chapter focusing on statistics of Canadian Buddhists. The essay opens with statements on the futility of statistics and what they obscure. Beyer, however, also finds such data can be useful in explaining the national origin of Canadian Buddhists, as well as their gender, education, and region. Beyer notes significant trends within the population and ethnic composition of Canada's Buddhists, which he presents in a series of charts. Beyer finds that it is easier to understand the statistics related to the immigrant and ethnic populations as he admits trying to isolate Western Buddhists is fraught with difficulties. He is careful to state the limitations of statistics while at the same time offering some solid conclusions and arguments about the nature and use of such data.

"Part Three: From Global to Local" looks at local movements of global Buddhist organizations in Canada. There are articles here on Jōdo Shinshū and Lao Buddhist communities, Zen practice among converts, Shambhala International in Nova Scotia, and an international program from Taiwan's Fo Guang Shan called Woodenfish. This section is a highlight of the book as it offers interesting case studies of Buddhist life in Canada with an eye to larger global developments. "Jodo Shinshu in Southern Alberta: From Rural Raymond to Amalgamation" by John S. Harding details the history of an old church, a new temple, and the amalgamation of two Jōdo Shinshū communities in southern Alberta. Harding outlines the adaptations of these communities as successive generations alter their language and practices. Along with this come important issues of assimilation, integration, attraction, and retention. Harding also shows with this case study how the categories of Asian/ethnic and Western/convert break down as the new leaders of this community are no longer immigrants but still have ties to an ethnic Japanese identity.

"That Luang: The Journey and Relocation of Lao Buddhism to Canada" by Marybeth White is based on research as a participant-observer at Wat Lao Veluwanarm in the Greater Toronto Area as well as interviews with members of the community. The chapter opens with a description of That Luang, Laos' most renowned *stūpa* in Vientiane. She explains the journey of Lao Buddhism to Canada and the significance of That Luang as a symbol for this community. Using Thomas Tweed's

concept of "dwelling" throughout this chapter, White seeks to understand how Lao communities are creating a place in Canada for their religious tradition. Instead of building on Tweed's theory, however, the author allows her research to follow Tweed without any challenge. Only in the notes does she critique Tweed for not adequately describing the notion of permanent space that she feels Wat Lao Veluwanarm provides the community.

Based on ethnographic interviews with twelve members of the Zen Buddhist Temple of Toronto, "Transforming Ordinary Life: Turning to Zen Buddhism in Toronto" by Patricia Q. Campbell contributes to research on the appeal and attraction of Buddhist conversion. She asked members of the Zen Buddhist Temple of Toronto with non-Buddhist familial and cultural backgrounds how they came to Buddhism and points out the significant themes that arise within these stories. She also addresses the question of conversion and notes that many regard Buddhism as a nonexclusive religion so that even some long-term practitioners do not feel comfortable calling themselves Buddhist. This chapter provides solid ethnographic data looking at practitioners' experiences and perspectives on Buddhist identity.

"The Woodenfish Program: Fo Guang Shan, Canadian Youth, and a New Generation of Buddhist Missionaries" by Lina Verchery argues that contrary to scholars' conclusion that the Taiwanese organization Fo Guang Shan (FGS) has not attracted non-Chinese to their organization, their Woodenfish program successfully appeals to this demographic. The Woodenfish program is a one-month academic residency program held annually at FGS headquarters in southern Taiwan. Verchery argues that this program is central to FGS's promotion and creation of a "Westernized" or "localized" form of Buddhism. Throughout the chapter she examines ways FGS is modifying Chinese-style Buddhism and thus how the participants, mostly youth from North America, are changing the presentation of Buddhism in the West. With an interesting overview of this program and the changes and accommodations being made to the Western participants, Verchery successfully shows the mutual influence and global connections between FGS and the international participants.

Another noteworthy case study titled "Shambhala International: The Golden Sun of the Great East" by Lynn P. Eldershaw looks at the ideological adaptations within Shambhala International's presentation of Tibetan Buddhism. Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, the founder

of this group, created Shambhala Training as a secular program for non-Buddhists and Vajradhatu as a practice that was more closely tied to Tibetan religious traditions. These two strands of Shambhala International have merged under the leadership of Chögyam Trungpa's son, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. Eldershaw details the integration of these two paths as well as the adaptations that Shambhala International has made to accommodate contemporary Western lifestyles, and thus Shambhala is viewed from within the larger framework of Buddhism's adaptation and accommodation to non-Buddhist cultural contexts.

"Part Four: From Local to Global" examines another series of case studies but focuses on the links from Canada to larger global organizations in China and Tibet rather than from the global world to Canada. "Globalization and Modern Transformation of Chinese Buddhism in Three Chinese Temples in Eastern Canada" by Tannie Liu focuses on three Chinese Buddhist communities in Canada and argues that their presence has to be understood in the context of the wider global movement. To this end Liu offers a historical grounding of modern Chinese Buddhist history. She finds that Chinese Buddhism in Canada is not only adapting to a Western environment, but, following Soucy in this volume, it was the Chinese reforms during the mid-twentieth century that have affected Canadian Chinese Buddhism. In this theoretically significant chapter Liu finds that Chinese Buddhism in Canada does not serve to primarily help Chinese immigrants assert and maintain their identity but the temples in Canada are part of global movements aimed at the large migratory population of Chinese Buddhists.

Using materials from the Tzu Chi Merit Society, interviews with scholars and journalists, and visits to several branches of this organization, Andre Laliberte and Manuel Litalien, in "The Tzu Chi Merit Society from Taiwan to Canada," present the Tzu Chi Merit Society as a case study of contemporary Buddhist philanthropy and detail its obstacles for expansion in Canada. Limiting its expansion, the authors find, is its inability to attract members outside of Taiwanese origin. The authors conclude that non-Chinese hesitate to get involved when the dominant language of the members is not English or French. Similar themes emerge in this chapter such as adaptations to the Canadian context, and the retention and attraction of new members. Thus the vitality of this movement is being studied in this interesting if not crucial chapter.

"A Relationship of Reciprocity: Globalization, Skillful Means, and Tibetan Buddhism in Canada" by Sarah F. Haynes addresses one of the main themes of this volume—the relationship between ethnic and convert Buddhist communities. Specifically Haynes addresses Tibetan Buddhism and the process of globalization within developing communities in Canada. Haynes focuses on Tibetan refugee communities, which arrived in Canada in the 1970s, and their relationship with Western-based Tibetan Buddhist communities in Canada. The points of attraction of Tibetan Buddhism for Canadians is also examined here, through investigating the role of the media, the impact of Tibetan politics and the Dalai Lama, and the use of skillful means or appropriate action (*upāya-kauśalya*) in disseminating this newly globalized religion. In interviews with non-Canadian Tibetan Buddhists and careful media analysis, Haynes offers a significant contribution to ideas of global Buddhism through the lens of Tibetan Buddhist communities in Canada.

Part Five contains only two chapters but contributes to Hori's request for recordings of life stories of Canadian Buddhists. But a life story is only valuable if it furthers the conversation of Canadian Buddhism and relates to issues within this sub-field, as both of the essays in this section attempt to do. "Albert Low: A Quest for a Truthful Life" by Mauro Peressini is a study of British Zen Master Albert Low, who is now eighty years old and the long-time director of the Montreal Zen Center. Peressini composed this biography by reading Low's works, including an unpublished autobiography and filmed interviews. The story begins with Low's spiritual quest in adolescence and details Low's associations with Scientology, experiences of *kenshō* (momentary flashes of oneness/insight), as well as his family's immigration to Canada and subsequent formal discovery of Zen through Philip Kapleau. The most useful part of this chapter is Peressini's conclusions drawn from Low's life that can help to understand how Buddhism is taking root in Canada. To this end, Peressini discusses Low's perspectives on such issues as adaptation, lay practice, teacher-student relations, and Western individualism, which all relate to broader trends within Buddhism in the West.

"Suwanda H. J. Suganasiri: Buddhist" by Victor Hori and Janet McLellan tells the story of a lay Buddhist leader of Canadian Buddhism. The authors argue that Sugunasiri's life is a window onto the history of Buddhism in Canada as he has dedicated it to Canadian Buddhism's development. This chapter details Sugunasiri's passion for spreading

Buddhism in Canada through the many projects he has created as well as his participation in media and interfaith groups. The chapter also outlines his own theology regarding Buddhism and his take on Buddhism in the West. To conclude, this chapter looks at what Sugunasiri's life story reveals in relation to major issues within Buddhism in Canada. Specifically, the authors find that Sugunasiri represents the conservative end on the spectrum of adapting Buddhism to Canada, especially in comparison with Western-born Buddhist leaders. With these two essays it is clear that more scholarship on life stories will reveal different strategies and perspectives regarding the adaptation of Buddhism to the West.

Unlike most edited volumes, this one offers a "Conclusion" in order to discuss which direction the study of Buddhism in Canada should take from here. The editors highlight a number of false assumptions scholars often bring to the study of Buddhism in Canada, such as preconceived ideas about what is modern and what is traditional, the division of Buddhist communities into Asian/ethnic and Western/convert, and the nature of global and local influences. To counter these assumptions, the editors argue that Buddhism in Canada is not unique but only the latest development in the global movement of Buddhism that began during the Asian reforms in contact with Christian missionaries and Western colonialists. They also hope that scholars will see Buddhism in the West as a kind of ethnic Buddhism and that there is no inherent correlation between modern and Western and traditional and Asian. The editors also point to the continued global interactions and influences between Canadian and global Buddhist communities rather than a one-time adaptation and movement from Asia to Canada. The other conclusions suggest that scholars need to collect more factual data and, similar to Hori's introductory chapter, that universities need to train researchers in more developed programs for the study of Buddhism in Canada.

As is the case with edited volumes, some articles are stronger than others and contribute more fully to the purpose of the book. However, most of the authors signify their awareness of the intentions of the volume and refer to other articles within the book. Thus there is a coherency here that is rarely seen in such a large series of essays. The "Introduction" and "Conclusion" also add to this coherency. The "Introduction" presents ways to enhance the study of Buddhism in Canada and the volume follows by modeling this advice.

The "Conclusion" points the way forward to creating more valuable scholarship in the field. Therefore there is much to recommend in this volume for those interested in Buddhism in Western countries or global Buddhist movements. This book makes significant contributions to the study of Buddhism in Canada, marking it as a leading contributor to theories of Buddhism's global movements.