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BOOK REVIEWS

***Immigrants to the Pure Land: The Modernization, Acculturation, and Globalization of Shin Buddhism, 1898–1941.* By Michihiro Ama. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011. 311 pages. \$47 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8248-3438-8.**

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Why do Shin Buddhists in the United States refer to their religious institution as a church? Why does a Shin Buddhist temple resemble an Anglo-Protestant church? Why do Shin Buddhists have Sunday services and boards of trustees that emulate Protestant services and organizational structures? These are the primary questions that guide Michihiro Ama's investigation on the history and development of Shin Buddhism in North America. Ama diverts from long held assumptions about Shin Buddhism's development in North America that argued for the centrality of ethnic solidarity or that contemporary structures and practices are evidence of cultural and institutional assimilation to the host society. Arguing against the one-way process of assimilation that assumes Shin Buddhism's development as a response to and emulation of Christianity in the West, Ama develops a cultural-historical narrative that is multi-site and multi-directional and that does not privilege Christianity. Instead, he defines Shin Buddhist acculturation as "a blending process consisting of the 'Japanization' and 'Americanization' of Jōdo Shinshū" (5).

The processes of Japanization and Americanization, although seemingly contradictory, reveal cultural and political formations between two nation-states. Japanization refers to the development of Shin Buddhism in Japan that focused on its “Japanese character” alongside the formation of Japan as a modern nation-state. The process included a conscious emphasis to deliberately make Shin Buddhism uniquely Japanese and its incorporation as “part of the state apparatus of Japan” (5). Likewise, Americanization refers to Shin immigrants’ adaptation to the host society, as well as a vexing relationship to American national identity. Ama’s interpretation of acculturation advances acculturation discourse that does not privilege the process unfolding on American soil and/or as a response to American cultural and historical forces. He writes, “Acculturation must be perceived as an extension of the modern development of Japanese Buddhism, but this process simultaneously intersects with the activities and concerns of Shin immigrants as well as Euro-American sympathizers, in this way diverging from tradition and emerging as a new form of Buddhism in North America” (189-190). Ama explores religious development at the site of the “religious ‘border’ ” between Japan and the United States, arguing that the acculturation of Shin Buddhism occurred on a “religious frontier,” created in Hawai’i, the mainland United States, and Canada. “Finding themselves in such a geographical position, Shin ministers reinterpreted doctrine, transformed rituals, and reconfigured institutional structures by incorporating some Protestant practices and the concept of democracy” (6). Whereas past studies on Shin Buddhism in North America focused on organizational and ritual developments and transformations, Ama brings attention to hermeneutics, and argues that “evidence shows that organizational and ritual changes preceded doctrinal adjustment” (7). Ama’s study compares Shin Buddhism’s development in Hawai’i, the continental US, and Canada, arguing that demographic distribution, diplomatic relationships, and socio-economic conditions of ethnic Japanese communities were distinctively different, which shaped and informed variations in Shin Buddhist developments. Furthermore, prewar diasporic religious developments occurred within contested and conflicted internal debates.

In chapter 1, Ama provides a backdrop to the entire study by introducing the history of modern Shin Buddhism in Japan. He provides, for the first time in English, material about the internal conflicts between the Higashi Honganji and the new government during the Meiji period.

The historical overview of modern Shin Buddhist history in Japan reveals a tradition's encounter with modernity in the early twentieth century that reflects and parallels conditions and transformations in North America.

The focus of chapter 2 is organizational. Here, Ama provides a historical analysis on the Honganji Mission of Hawaii (HHMH) and the Buddhist Mission of North America (BMNA). Both HHMH and BMNA were established as satellites of the Kyoto headquarters. The HHMH promoted their sectarian teaching to Japanese immigrants first with the secondary aim of introducing it to non-Japanese Euro-Americans. Working in a reverse fashion, the BMNA on the mainland wanted to spread the teachings of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni to Euro-Americans, while addressing the religious needs and demands of the Japanese immigrant communities. Overall, Ama argues that "the transformation of Shin Buddhist organizational structures entailed the processes of Americanization and Japanization" (58). This unfolds among multiple competing conflicts between the Kyoto headquarters and local communities; between clergy and laity; between Japanese language schools and the Buddhist churches over matters of curriculum and what to call their teachers (i.e., *sensei*, *goin-san*, or *jūshoku*, common terms referring to Buddhist priests in Japan); and between Buddhists and Christians.

Ama shifts to human subjects in chapter 3. In this chapter, he compares the developments of Shin Buddhist ministries in Hawaii and the mainland anchored in an analysis between the first (Issei) and second (Nisei) generation Japanese American ministers. Ama argues that the process of acculturation of the organization took place in the development of the Shin ministry. Although the status and position of the ministers in the new American context was weaker than in Japan (60), Shin ministry developed with second-generation Japanese American ministers in addition to Euro-American converts who were confirmed and ordained in rituals that deviated from tradition. Conflict developed with Euro-American ministers who had more affinity with the teachings of Śākyamuni than Shinran. "How well the Euro-Americans ministers understood the Shin Buddhist teaching is also unclear. Brodbeck, who took ordination under Bishop Uchida, made a vow of entrusting himself to Amida Buddha, yet emphasized the importance of keeping the precepts (a more Theravadin approach to praxis)" (75). Ama points out, "reciting Amida's name in gratitude for Buddha's compassion was

one of the orthodox Shin doctrines; however, keeping precepts was not” (75). Related to the development of Nisei and Euro-American ministers was the establishment of an English department in the HHMH and the BMNA that was an indicator of Americanization taking shape. In Hawai’i, Bishop Emyo Imamura provided effective leadership from 1900 to his death in 1932, after which the HHMH became stagnant, while the BMNA expanded under the leadership of Bishop Kenju Masuyama, who readily admitted Nisei and Euro-American converts to the ministry (59). Ama contends that issues of race were highlighted in two ways during this period: first, attempts were made by Euro-American ministers to address racial tensions and animosity toward Japanese communities during the prewar period by demonstrating similarities between Buddhism and Christianity that the Issei clergy may not have supported; second, the Kyoto headquarters and the BMNA office required Euro-American convert ministers to maintain Japanese cultural practices that some ministers found problematic because they were unsure of their Buddhist identity.

In chapter 4, Ama examines transformations in Shin Buddhist rituals, material culture, and architecture. In the arena of ritual and ritual adaption, the debate on whether to promote specifically Shin or general Buddhist teachings became a central issue. The alterations to Shin Buddhist rituals did, to a degree, reflect modeling and adapting to Christian forms, such as the sequence of Sunday service, pews, and church architecture (87). The development of Buddhist songs or hymns, known as *gāthās*, “demonstrates not only a two-way process of acculturation but also the re-importation of the hymnal to the Buddhist community in Japan and the BMNA’s borrowing of the hymnal from the HHMH” (87). New rituals were developed for Euro-American convert ministers that emulated Theravādin rituals. Ama illustrates the interplay between ritual adaption and invention *vis-à-vis* Shin Buddhist material culture in North America (e.g., hymnals, robes, and architecture). The adaption of the Christian architecture for Shin Buddhist temples began in the prewar period as nearly half of the institutions on the mainland before WWII were of Western-style architecture (100). Selecting Western-style architecture was one material and physical way for the Japanese-American community to deter anti-Japanese sentiment, thus avoiding negative reaction from Euro-American society. At times, the Western-style architecture was not a conscious decision but rather a reflection of the limits of financial

resources to remodel a Christian church that they purchased to use as their religious sacred site. Shin temple architecture in Hawai'i was not as simple, as evidenced by the multiple types and styles: plantation house style, traditional Japanese temple style, Hawai'ian eclectic style, Indian (Hindu) inspired style, and Western style.

The focus of chapter 5 is competing hermeneutics of Shin Buddhist doctrine, centered on works of three scholar-priests: Dr. Takeichi Takahashi, Reverend Itsuzo Kyogoku, and Bishop Emyo Imamura. Takahashi's work investigates Shinran's teaching through the appropriation of Christian concepts. Ama argues that Takahashi's interpretation represents the Americanization of Shin doctrine in that he links Shinran's teachings to John Dewey's instrumentalism and engages in a methodologically questionable comparative study with Christianity. Kyogoku of the BMNA reinterpreted Shin teaching in California, and developed a practical approach anchored in the quotidian activities of the Issei and Nisei. Kyogoku's interpretation, Ama contends, reflects the process of Japanization as he invoked Manshi Kiyozawa, a Higashi Honganji scholar-priest and Japan's first religious philosopher, to develop a spiritual activism informed by Kiyozawa's concept of "experiment." Imamura of HHMH focused on the social dimension of Jōdo Shinshū and discussed democracy from a Buddhist perspective, where he critiqued the exclusionist discourse on Americanization. These three figures all (re)interpreted Shin doctrine in a new light, albeit, pragmatically (110).

Ama traces the historical development of the Higashi Honganji in America in chapter 6, and illustrates the "simultaneous competition and cooperation between the two branches of the Honganji in North America" (145). The analysis compares communities in Japan, Hawai'i, and the US mainland. The propagation of the Higashi Honganji in America was racked with internal conflicts, legal contests, denominational competition and rapprochement, and personality differences, all of which framed how Higashi Honganji developed in North America. On the mainland, this development was "accidental" but in Hawai'i "intentional."

In chapter 7, Ama focuses on the politics of acculturation at the intersection of Americanization and Japanization. Ama argues that BMNA's acculturation reflects translocal activities, while the HHMH reflects local activities. Both local and translocal activities reveal nationalistic concerns, hence he juxtaposes their activities with

developments in Japan. The development of Shin Issei and Nisei identities is problematized with respects to Japan's colonial expansion and competing secular rules. Issei clergy, Ama argues, developed ambivalence about their identity because they straddled two nation-states, thus reflecting the sense of uncertainty they possessed. Issei clergy negotiated encounters with racial discrimination that conflicted with democratic ideals as well as cultural allegiance to Japan. "The ambiguity of the Issei clergy living between the nation-states of Japan and the United States and the rise of ethnic nationalism were critical factors in the acculturation of Shin Buddhism" (188).

In the conclusion, Ama situates acculturation discourse in the postmodern age of globalization and suggests that Shin Buddhism as a "global religion" might be a source of resistance against global capitalism, secularization, and national interests of a single nation-state. *Immigrants to the Pure Land* advances the discourse on acculturation in significant ways by providing an example of the transnational context by which the process unfolds and reveals that it does not occur in isolation. This reviewer would have liked to see more discussion on the intersection of race and Shin Buddhist development in North America. Overall, Ama provides, in meticulous details and thorough research, a social history of Shin Buddhism in North America. *Immigrants to the Pure Land* is recommended to anyone interested in the history of Buddhism, Japanese-American religiosity in the diaspora, and cultural encounters.

***Luminous Bliss: A Religious History of Pure Land Literature in Tibet.* By Georgios T. Halkias. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013. 368 pages. \$49 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8248-3590-3.**

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Georgios T. Halkias' *Luminous Bliss: A Religious History of Pure Land Literature in Tibet* is a unique contribution to the often overlooked study of Pure Land Buddhism. Whereas many studies on Pure Land Buddhism are often concentrated in East Asia, Halkias demonstrates how Pure Land is an unmistakable part of Tibetan Buddhism, despite the fact that there has never been a sectarian Pure Land movement in

Tibet. Instead, through his selection and examination of Tibetan texts, both canonical and otherwise, Halkias displays how Pure Land soteriology and Mahāyāna doctrine are interwoven with the mythology and history of Tibet and its people. The book is divided into three sections containing two chapters each, and is a valuable new resource for scholars of Buddhist studies.

The first chapter of the book discusses Mahāyāna developments in India that were foundational to the burgeoning soteriology of Pure Land Buddhism. The development of buddha fields, the Pure Land sutras and their subsequent commentaries, and the genealogies of Amitābha and Sukhāvatī are all briefly discussed. Although the majority of the chapter serves as a *de facto* summary of existing scholarship, the structure of the chapter is excellent. Halkias displays the organic development of Pure Land thought within the expanding framework of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which itself originated out of the syncretistic milieu of India and Central Asia. The chapter strengthens considerably once it moves to representations of Amitābha in Tibet. Within this discussion, Halkias identifies two areas in need of future research. First, although the Pure Land sutras use Amitābha and Amitāyus synonymously, they are visually differentiated in the Tibetan and Himalayan traditions (30). More work is necessary to determine whether there is some Indian precursor to this, or if it is unique to the Tibetans. Secondly, Tibetan iconic depictions of Amitābha bear close resemblance to the Indian sun deity, Sūrya. Halkias supplements this note with a brief discussion on the likely role of solar theology in early Amitābha worship. Evidence suggests that Indian Buddhists participated in worshipping the sun god, which may have been appropriated into a cult of Amitābha over some time. The popularity of solar theology and the various deities from several commingling civilizations may have been a catalyst for the spread of Pure Land Buddhism. Halkias closes the chapter by noting that despite the popularity in East Asia of Pure Land commentaries dubiously attributed to Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu, the texts were largely excluded in Tibet.

The second chapter begins with a discussion of the contentious relationship between the Tibetans and the Tang dynasty (618–907). Tibet's expansion into Central Asia from the seventh to the ninth centuries led to repeated clashes with the Tang. Over this period, the conflicts produced seven treaties between Tibet and the Tang, all of which were violated. Halkias focuses on the important Central Asian civilizations

the Tibetans encountered along the Tarim Basin during their military expansion. Buddhism was often at the center of these encounters, and the simplicity and deities of Pure Land Buddhism were relatively transferable. Halkias attributes the success of Pure Land Buddhism to the “nature of its doctrines,” which allayed the common fear of death (36). The soteriology inherent in Pure Land doctrine was an attractive and welcomed alternative. Five cultural centers of Buddhist activity in Central Asia—Kucha, Turfan, Miran, Khotan, and Dunhuang—are briefly highlighted. It is noted several times that these locations did not receive Buddhism from any one direction, but through a dynamic process that led to the existence of Śrāvakayāna, Mahāyāna, and tantric traditions within these Buddhist hubs. Tibetan Pure Land literature found in Central Tibet and throughout the Tarim Basin demonstrates that the Tibetans were not merely importing Buddhist literature, but producing and exporting it as well.

Halkias then turns his attention to the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet and the patronage of its Buddhist emperors. The first Buddhist emperor of Tibet was Srong-btsam-sgam-po (early seventh century to 649 CE), who began the institutionalization of Buddhism as state religion. Thus, Buddhist temples were constructed, and translations of Buddhist scriptures were encouraged. Srong-btsam-sgam-po was a *cakravartin* seen as an equal to the Pure Land bodhisattva, Avalokiteśvara. He was also given the title of Baowang 寶王—a title referring to Amitābha—by the Tang emperor Gaozang (628–683) in 649. His successors, including the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682), were also perceived as incarnations of Avalokiteśvara, and proclaimed it their mission to transform Tibet into the Pure Land of Amitābha (55).

Through these divine connections, the state became woven to Buddhism, and the Pure Land especially. Imperial registers document the production of state-sponsored translations of Buddhist literature. The sheer volume of translations produced indicates a highly organized, efficient, and well-funded leadership. Halkias uses this discussion to segue into an examination of Tibetan Pure Land literature, specifically the *dhāraṇī* genre. Important texts like *The Immeasurable Life and Wisdom Sutra* (*Aparimitāyur-jñāna-sūtra*), though mostly ignored by Western scholars, document the popularity of Pure Land belief in Tibet. The text comes from library cave seventeen in Dunhuang, and records indicate it was reproduced hundreds of times to bless the Tibetan emperor ‘Od-srung’s ascension to the throne during the ninth

century. Halkias suggests “that the *Aparimitāyur-sūtra* was copied in large numbers as part of a nationwide prayer for the birth and longevity of the ‘divine prince,’ or more likely, if copied during the reign of ‘Od-srung, for aiding [his deceased father’s] passage to Sukhāvātī” (69). The ubiquity of the text in both Chinese and Tibetan throughout the Tarim Basin suggests that there were many reasons to copy it, the greatest of which was likely the transference of merit.

The *Aparimitāyur-sūtra* focuses on Aparimitāyus, apparently an alternative designation of Amitāyus. The text is very similar to the style and setting of the shorter *Sukhāvativyūha*. These texts, which claimed practical benefits, almost certainly aided the popularity of Pure Land belief in a mostly illiterate Tibet. Halkias includes a translation of the text from the Tibetan. The chapter ends with another translation of a Tibetan poem aspiring for rebirth in Sukhāvātī that is translated to show how Pure Land beliefs were integrated into established Tibetan beliefs of death and the afterlife.

The second section of the book begins with an English translation of the shorter *Sukhāvativyūha-sūtra* from the Derge edition of the Tibetan Kanjur. The eight Kanjurs are discussed before moving to a brief examination of the contents of the short *Sukhāvativyūha-sūtra*. Halkias notes that the Tibetan and Sanskrit versions of the sutra “diverge from each other in important ways” (92). Unfortunately, he never mentions exactly what these differences might be. A cursory comparison of his translation from the Tibetan with Gomez’s translation from the Sanskrit (*The Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light, Sanskrit and Chinese Versions of the Sukhāvativyūha Sutras* [Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai’i Press, 1996]) produced little to no significant difference.

The fourth chapter surveys Tibetan Pure Land literature, while setting the stage for the book’s final section. Halkias focuses on a certain type of Tibetan Pure Land literature known as the *bde-smon* (aspirational prayers to Sukhāvātī), which seek rebirth in the Pure Land. Included in the genre are a variety of texts that synthesize meditative praxis with ethical principles as a preliminary for more advanced Vajrayāna practice (103). Although the timeframe is expedited, the goal of these texts remains the same—Sukhāvātī. The remainder of the chapter displays paradigmatic examples from the *bde-smon* genre. Halkias selects examples authored by imminent monks from many of the schools of Tibetan Buddhism including rNying-ma, dGe-lugs-pa, and the Sa-skya. While

some of the selections are fully translated, others are summarized or outlined. Similar to Pure Land commentarial literature from China or Japan, many of the Tibetan texts are concerned with assuring rebirth in Sukhāvātī. The commentary centers around the four causes explicated in Amitābha's nineteenth vow from the long *Sukhāvātīvyūhasūtra*, but often disagree as to their importance. The chapter concludes with perhaps the most interesting example of the genre, a manual for a sleep-meditation on Amitābha. The abridged translation excellently conveys how Pure Land belief was integrated into tantric practices like mind-fusion. The placement of the sleep-meditation is a clever transition into the final section of the book.

The two chapters in the third section concentrate on tantric techniques for encountering Amitābha and experiencing Sukhāvātī. Chapter five revisits the proto-Pure Land deity Aparimitāyus who was synonymous with Amitāyus in Tibet. Tibetan Pure Land *dhāraṇī* literature illustrates the apotropaic nature of faith in Aparimitāyus/Amitāyus, going so far as to protect the faithful from vampiric creatures (142). Another benefit of Amitāyus worship is the hope of extending life, and Halkias indicates that Tibetans practiced longevity rituals dedicated to Amitāyus apart from the soteriology of Pure Land belief (145). However, mortuary rituals were the highest concern, and it is within this category that Pure Land practice and belief are most apparent. These rites play a key role in determining where the deceased will be located in the next life. Halkias focuses on the most popular of these Tibetan postmortem rituals, the transference of consciousness through meditation (*phowa*). This advanced ritual can provide immediate buddhahood, but comes with a high degree of risk. *Phowa* involves a complex series of visualizations and breathing exercises in which one encounters and is absorbed into Amitābha. The deity then reproduces the recently deceased as a divine seed soon to be reborn from a lotus in Sukhāvātī (154). Halkias suggests that the Sukhāvātī *phowa*, which originated around the fourteenth century, could be an exclusive practice of Tibet. The chapter ends with a translation of a revealed treasure text entitled *The Standing Blade of Grass*, which is a foundational text for a popular Tibetan celebration involving *phowa*.

The final chapter surveys a series of texts called Celestial Teachings (*gnam-chos*) that were collected during the seventeenth century. The writings belong to the larger treasure literature genre in Tibet, which imply a revealed origin. The revelation in the Celestial Teachings

is considered “pure vision” since it occurred either in meditation, dreaming, or lucid waking. Treasure literature can appear miraculously, sometimes falling from the sky or literally written in the clouds. The Celestial Treasures originated through meditative encounters with various Buddhist deities. The ritual practices espoused in these texts are specifically focused on realizing Sukhāvātī. A seventeenth-century anthology of these rituals entitled *The Means of Attaining the Sukhāvātī Kṣetra from the Primordial Teaching of the Celestial Dharma: The Cycle of the Profound Whispered Lineage* appears to be the first of its kind in Tibet. Halkias includes translated excerpts involving cremation rituals, *phowa*, *sādhanā* prayers, and effigy rituals. The chapter concludes with a translation of *Invoking the Guardians of Sukhāvātī*, an intriguing supplementary text to *The Means of Attaining the Sukhāvātī Kṣetra* that is dedicated to the wrathful dharma protectors of Tibet. These deities offer protection of Pure Land teachings and adherents. The ritual involves visualization and supplication of these terrifyingly powerful beings so that they eliminate anything that could harm one’s path to Sukhāvātī.

Lastly, the epilogue draws some very strong and surprising conclusions. Halkias demonstrates how the mythology of Pure Land belief is incorporated into the mythology of famous Tibetan monks like Padmasambhava (literally translated as “Lotus Born”). Moreover, the land of Tibet itself is recognized as a gateway to Sukhāvātī, if not a direct manifestation of it. The special qualities of Tibet and its people, specifically in a Buddhist context, granted legitimation to the monasteries and justified their power in order to preserve the sacred identity of Tibet. Halkias notes, “In Tibet’s religious-political history, Pure Land themes enjoyed the prestige of an almost ‘atemporal antiquity’ that reemerged in the strategies of integration of secular and monastic powers invested in the institution of the Dalai Lama, the patron saint and living incarnation of Tibet’s ancestral bodhisattva” (192). Thus, a cycle in which the monasteries interpreted the soteriology inherent in Mahāyāna and Pure Land belief was superimposed onto the land and people of Tibet which perpetuated the legitimacy and power of the state.

The epilogue is surprising because Halkias rarely hints toward these conclusions in the earlier portions of the book. Furthermore, the introduction promotes the book as a religious history of Tibetan Pure Land literature, and does not foreshadow the conclusions in the

epilogue. Nevertheless, the epilogue is certainly a highlight that adds a new spin to the entire book to such a degree that, perhaps, its conclusions should have been introduced earlier in the book where more concrete examples could have been offered. As it is, the epilogue seems to indicate the next step for Halkias, and, if so, one that will be highly anticipated.

There is little to criticize about the book. Scholars familiar with Pure Land Buddhism will surely want more details regarding just how much dialogue occurred between Tibet and East Asia. The book is almost entirely devoid of important Pure Land concepts in East Asia such as *nianfo* and *mofa*, and their exclusion begs the question whether they are simply less important in Tibet, or whether Halkias deemphasized them to demarcate Tibetan Pure Land from East Asian Pure Land more clearly. Self-power (*jiriki*) and other-power (*tariki*) are mentioned in the discussion of Mi-pham, a late-nineteenth century Tibetan monk who encouraged a blending of these powers in order to reach the Pure Land (123). The book's inclusion of the Japanese translations of these concepts—Halkias does not mention whether Mi-pham ever used the Japanese—strengthens the desire to know how much dialogue and borrowing occurred between Tibet and East Asia.

As indicated several times above, there are a staggering number of translations, outlines, and summaries included in the book. Buddhist scholars will be thankful for the quantity and quality of these offerings. Additionally, Halkias includes three appendices that provide even more texts for interested readers. Finally, the text is copiously annotated and will reward future scholarship.

Luminous Bliss is a tremendous addition to the neglected field of Tibetan Pure Land Buddhism and Pure Land Buddhism in general. The book displays the malleability of Pure Land Buddhism through its usage in tantric rituals in Tibet. Furthermore, Halkias relays the richness of Tibetan Pure Land literature. The amount of texts discussed, outlined, or translated in the book is wholly admirable and ensures that *Luminous Bliss* will be an important resource for current and future scholars.

Living Karma: The Religious Practices of Ouyi Zhixu. By Beverley Foulks McGuire. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014. 240 pages. \$60 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-231-16802-1.

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Several decades ago it was common in Anglophone studies of Chinese Buddhism of the post-Song Imperial Era to focus on one of the tradition's self-identified "great men." This tendency is not as common as it once was, as approaches to Buddhist studies scholarship rooted in cultural studies have become more common, especially in the West. But the historiography of Chinese Buddhists themselves retains a strong focus on lineages of men (and to a lesser extent women) considered to be exemplars of religious thought and practice. There is thus much that new approaches to studying the lives of great men and women can still reveal about the nature and history of Late Imperial Chinese Buddhism. Beverley Foulks McGuire's book is a clear example of this potential. Rather than simply recount the biography and doctrinal positions of the Ming Buddhist master Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599–1655), Foulks McGuire uses his life to examine the role that karma played as a unifying theme in Chinese Buddhists' subjectivity, and as a narrative frame in which one's whole life as a Buddhist could be structured. This is a concise, coherent, and compelling work that tells us much about the centrality of karma in Ming-era Buddhist ritual and thought.

Asian and Western studies of the great monks of the Ming in general, and of Ouyi in particular, have tended to place their emphasis on doctrinal positions. While she does address these studies, Foulks McGuire's general position is that Ouyi was doctrinally eclectic, and that by trying to pigeonhole him as a Tiantai or Chan master, one misses an issue that was far more important for Ouyi: how to know, affect, and live with one's karma. In studying this issue, Foulks McGuire's book does not simply seek to fill in details about Ouyi's life so that we can have a better sense of who he was as an individual. Rather, she brings to bear sophisticated theoretical tools to tackle much larger issues in the study of Buddhism. Foremost among these is the role that karma plays in the lives and thought of Buddhists. While it is obvious that karma plays some kind of role, as the author notes, most of the scholarship on karma to date has been carried out using the tools of religious ethics,

which have sought to construct systems of ethics to determine the Buddhist views on certain actions. This focus on the objective system of karma, while important, neglects the subjective side: What does it feel like to live in a world influenced by karma? Foulks McGuire's book is aimed at how the belief that he had committed karmic misdeeds affected the entirety of Ouyi's Buddhism. In so doing she takes his seriously his own subjectivity, thus treating her subject with appropriate scholarly respect. She also raises important questions about the extent to which Buddhists have viewed karma as knowable and/or changeable.

In dealing with the primary source material for this study, Foulks McGuire also had to carry out several other theoretical interventions. She applies the concept of genre to her use of autobiography and "votive texts" (*yuanwen* 願文) to frame Ouyi's writings not as statements of fact, but as elements of a larger argument about his own future bodhisattvahood. Her openness to the discourses of Chinese Buddhism also allows her to treat the full range of Ming-era Buddhist religious practice, including ritual repentance, blood-writing, and the central role that bodhisattvas were believed to play in mediating karmic retribution. The devotional, theistic Buddhism she describes is much closer to the everyday Buddhism of even most monastics than one focused on doctrine. This is a hallmark of her theoretical interventions, which are never overbearing: she uses theory as a tool to better treat her material, and not to overwhelm the reader with her intellect. One sees this, for example, in her study of the role played by the body in Ouyi's thought. While it is certainly fashionable in religious studies at the moment to focus on the body, Foulks McGuire's discussions of how Ouyi viewed the body as the locus of enlightenment (both for oneself, and, as a bodhisattva, for others) fit seamlessly into her overall narrative and do not feel forced.

Her treatment of the religious role of the body is but one example of the narrative coherence of this book. At 131 pages of text, plus notes and two appendices, this is a modest book, and a welcome one. It is lucid, clearly focused, and avoids the pitfalls of a first book; it does not read as a retooled thesis. It centers on a clear central theme, that makes only interesting and necessary diversions. The author does not seek to overwhelm the reader with data, but instead provides clarifying examples. There is a lot of signposting in the work, and the book, each chapter, and each section are clearly introduced.

The book is comprised of five chapters, framed by an introduction and a conclusion. In the introduction, Foulks McGuire explains how she will treat Ouyi as a “moral subject” for whom karma served as an ethical guide, a hermeneutic, and a narrative device. For her source material she uses biographical writings, autobiographical writings, and many of Ouyi’s other works. Foulks McGuire is especially interested in ritual and Ouyi’s ideas about ritual efficacy. Rather than interpret Ouyi’s texts using Western ritual theory, she “focuses on the ritual theory implicit in Ouyi’s writings” (6). She highlights the three factors by which Ouyi believed ritual functioned to transform persons and their karma. These are (1) sympathetic resonance (*ganying* 感應); (2) the emotional state of the person during the ritual, with a special emphasis on shame and sincerity; and (3) the necessary interplay of the two factors of “principle” (*li* 理) and “practice” (*shi* 事) within ritual. The importance of the emotions of shame and contrition are especially interesting, given a tendency to see Chinese Buddhist rituals of repentance as somewhat formulaic affairs. In the introduction, Foulks McGuire also discusses the various views obtaining within Chinese Buddhism with regard to the comprehensibility of karma. While some in the Ming viewed karma as a rationalized system and produced ledgers for the tallying of one’s karmic “points,” Foulks McGuire places Ouyi in a tradition that saw the operation of karma as mysterious, and, more importantly, changeable.

After laying the theoretical groundwork for the book in the introduction, Foulks McGuire devotes the first chapter to framing her reading of Ouyi’s autobiography using the idea of genre. She disagrees with the Buddhist historiographic tradition and recent Buddhist studies scholarship in Asia and the West that is intent on categorizing Ouyi doctrinally, most often as a Tiantai partisan. She instead demonstrates Ouyi’s broad commitment to texts and practices from a range of Chinese Buddhist traditions, and even Confucianism and Daoism. More than simply being non-sectarian, Ouyi used dreams and other narrative structures “to ‘imagine a community’ that does not follow established lineages or restrict itself to particular traditions” (28). Throughout his autobiography, karma remains the central theme, and Ouyi’s “karmic activity largely consists of an engagement with texts: reading them, writing commentaries on them, or writing liturgical and philosophical texts based on them” (35). As with her observations about the role of emotions in repentance, the centrality of text for Ouyi’s engagement

with karma brings to light interesting questions about how we think about and present Chinese Buddhist praxis as a whole. What do we privilege, and why? Is it meditation, is it ritual, is it lineage?

Having established the importance of karma in Ouyi's self-narrative and his *oeuvre*, Foulks McGuire devotes one chapter each to questions related to Ouyi's working with karma. In chapter 2, she looks at Ouyi's efforts to understand the nature of his karma through techniques of divination. Contextualizing his practice within the history of Chinese Buddhist divination, she shows that divination was a very common activity for Ouyi, who seems to have been especially concerned with whether or not he was following the Buddhist precepts correctly (38–39). Keeping to her commitment to treat Ouyi as a “moral subject,” she shows that divination can both humble and embolden the Buddhist in their religious practice, in part because it can remove doubts (51).

Ouyi was not a karmic fatalist, and he believed that he could change his karma once he was aware of it. While he employed several means to do this, he favored rites of repentance. In chapter 3, Foulks McGuire one again provides historical context for Ouyi's ideas, especially within the tradition of Tiantai repentance rites. In addition to the role played by a correct emotional state, she highlights the role that bodhisattvas play in mediating karma in rituals of repentance. Ouyi placed particular emphasis on the Bodhisattva Dizang 地藏, whose title as “King of Vows” (Yuan Wang 願王) reflected the power he held through his vows and his *dhāraṇī* to help sentient beings overcome their karma. One particularly interesting observation she makes in this chapter is that Ouyi argued that in order to transform one's karma, one actually has to believe in the truth of samsara (69, 75).

She continues in chapter 4 her exploration of the role envisioned for bodhisattvas by Ouyi. There she focuses on bodhisattvas' vows to assume or alter the sentient beings of others. Rather than focus on their *upāya* of teaching and guiding, as is most commonly done, Foulks McGuire points to the Chinese Buddhist belief that bodhisattvas could actually eliminate the karma of other beings, or assume their karmic burdens by “substituting” (*dai shou* 代受) for them. In analyzing his “votive texts,” she shows that Ouyi believed he could activate the karma-quelling powers of bodhisattvas through repentance, or by offering himself as a karmic substitute for others, which would ignite the “sympathetic response” (*ganying*) of bodhisattvas (90–91) This is an interesting understanding of how bodhisattvas operate to limit the

suffering of others, and broadens our picture of the actual function of a bodhisattva in Chinese Buddhism.

In the fifth and final chapter, Foulks McGuire talks about the “somaticity” of Ouyi’s practice. Unified by the notion of the body as the vehicle for karma, she takes up the ideas of the cutting of one’s body for one’s elders, burning parts of one’s body as an offering, copying scriptures with one’s own blood, and even Ouyi’s final wishes for his body. In this chapter she thus brings to a close not only her recounting of Ouyi’s life, but of the cycle of karmic engagement that animated it, from Ouyi’s work to know his karma, to his efforts to change it, to the predictions he made in his votive texts about his own future bodhisattvahood, and the final acts aimed at karmic expiation.

While modest in size, this book puts forth ideas that are important well beyond the field of Chinese Buddhist studies. Foulks McGuire aims to show that Ouyi’s religious and literary life was centered on a belief in karma that was not fatalistic, and that was both highly personal and highly meaningful. She uses an approach that other scholars of Buddhism could apply to their study of both karma and Buddhist lives. Further scholarship on Buddhism, not only in its sinic forms but globally, could focus on karma as a narrative device, as a subjective experience, and a motivating factor. Just as we no longer naively accept that the *Vinaya* is a record of the behavior of Buddhist monks and nuns in India, Foulks McGuire makes the compelling case that we should not accept doctrinal statements on karma as descriptions of what it feels like to live with karma, nor to understand the lives of Buddhists without looking at their own narratives. Most broadly, this book raises interesting notions about subjectivity and the extent to which we deny it among people removed from us by time, culture, or geography. Ouyi’s writings place a great deal of emphasis on subjective affective states, and the sense of individual agency and self-conception that Foulks McGuire describes is downright modern. There is always the chance that this is an artifact of her reading of Ouyi, but, in the end, the evidence she presents in this book is strong and her overall argument well-articulated.

