

BOOK REVIEWS

Critical Reflections on Buddhism and Buddhist Studies

The last thirty years or so have seen an increasing awareness of the effects of social location on the interpretation and explanation of historical events and social processes. This has led for example to examinations of the social history of science and technology, as well as to reconsidering the colonialist assumptions built into representations of the exotic other. Buddhism is one of the exotic others that has been frequently represented in Western popular and scholarly discourse. To varying degrees the ways in which Buddhism has been represented have been influenced both by the unexamined assumptions and the ideological agendas of those doing the representing. This has been the case whether the underlying attitudes have been critical of Buddhism or critical of Western society.

At the same time, the study of ideology has led to questioning religious doctrines in terms of their ethical effects. To take just two examples, religion has been used to justify both the enslavement and the liberation of African Americans, and to justify both the imposition of gender defined roles and the equal treatment of women. From this perspective religion loses its former role as the arbiter of ethics, and becomes itself the object of ethical inquiry.

These topics were explored in a panel at the March, 1998, meeting of the Western Region of the American Academy of Religions, which was held at the Claremont schools. Contributors to the panel spoke on recent publications that dealt with the topic. These included John Thompson on *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm over Critical Buddhism*, Taline Goorjian on *Rude Awakenings*, and Geoff Foy on *Curators of the Buddha*. In addition we have added a review of the Winter 1995 (volume 18, no. 2) issue of the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, which complements these other works, being a special issue on method in the study of Buddhism.

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Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm over Critical Buddhism. Edited by Jamie Hubbard & Paul L. Swanson. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997. 515 pages. Hardcover: \$45.00; paperback: \$22.95.

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Pruning the Bodhi Tree: the Storm over Critical Buddhism explores serious issues regarding the understanding of Buddhism in the academy, the role of the scholar, and the possibility of objective scholarship. It thus is part of the recent self-critical trend in Buddhist Studies exemplified in other works such as *Curators of the Buddha* and *Rude Awakenings*. *Pruning the Bodhi Tree* focuses on a contemporary movement in Japanese Buddhist Studies led by Matsumoto Shirō and Hakamaya Noriaki, scholars and practitioners of Sōtō Zen. Matsumoto and Hakamaya call into question basic tenets of much of East Asian Buddhism, especially the doctrines of *tathāgata-garbha* ("womb/embryo of Buddhahood") and "original enlightenment" (*hongaku*). According to both scholars, these doctrines are "un-Buddhist." They claim such teachings promote sloppy thinking, embrace "no-thought" at the expense of logical rigor and all-too easily dismiss language's capacity to convey truth. Matsumoto and Hakamaya call this type of thinking "topical" and argue that it leads to a naive tolerance that often masks discriminatory, totalitarian, and ethnocentric agendas. In its stead, they advocate a "Critical Buddhism" based on the doctrines of *anatta* (no-self) and *pratītya-samutpāda* (dependent origination) that stresses clear thinking and compassionate action. A distinctly political agenda informs both Matsumoto and Hakamaya's work, one running counter to the prevailing *Nihonjinron* atmosphere in Japan during the 1980s and '90s. Their work also echoes Western Postmodern discourse in questioning the possibility of objective, "value-free" scholarship.

Pruning the Bodhi Tree is divided into three sections, each containing essays by Matsumoto and Hakamaya with responses from other scholars. Part One, "The What and Why of Critical Buddhism," centers on the distinction between "critical" and "topical" thinking, a division Hakamaya traces to 17th century scholar Giambattista Vico and his "debate" with Rene Descartes (pp. 56–63). [N.B., this debate never actually occurred since Descartes died 18 years before Vico's birth]. Part Two, "In Search of True Buddhism," concerns Matsumoto and Hakamaya's extensive critique of the *tathāgata-garbha* tradition. Matsumoto terms this teaching "*dhātu vāda*," equating it with "original enlightenment" thought so prevalent in Japanese Buddhism. Matsumoto is adamant that this teaching is not "true Buddhism" (pp. 165–173). Part Three, "Social Criticism," highlights the

political aspects of "Critical Buddhism." The authors show how the theory of "original enlightenment" works to maintain the status quo, and argue that *hongaku* promotes strong ethnocentric sentiments glorifying the unique Japanese "essence," a notion that has often served to support totalitarianism and militarism.

Each of the essays in *Pruning the Bodhi Tree* has something to recommend it. Matsumoto and Hakamaya's essays are insightful and show both scholars' vast erudition to good avail (both studied with Yamaguchi Zuihō, Japan's leading Tibetologist). Hakamaya's "Critical Philosophy versus Topical Philosophy" and "Scholarship as Criticism," along with Matsumoto's "The Doctrine of *Tathagata-garbha* Is Not Buddhist" and "Buddhism and the Kami: Against Japanism" present both scholars' main points clearly and strongly. These essays make clear that "Critical Buddhism" is not a search for an "original Buddhism" (*pace* Rhys Davids) and draw a sharp contrast between "critical" and "topical" thought. Perhaps most importantly, they highlight disturbing aspects of Japanese politics that "Critical Buddhism" is protesting.

Most of the essays by other contributors to *Pruning the Bodhi Tree* take Matsumoto and Hakamaya to task for their claims. Among the best of these are Sallie King's "Buddha Nature is Impeccably Buddhist" (pp. 174–192), in which she argues that "Buddha Nature" thought may not imply a monistic ontology, and that its teachings can have positive social repercussions, and Peter Gregory's "Is Critical Buddhism Really Critical?" (pp. 286–297), in which Gregory notes that Hakamaya's account greatly oversimplifies doctrinal and historical developments. Other contributions are equally worthy, however; Paul Swanson's "Why They Say Zen Is Not Buddhism" (pp. 3–29) is highly recommended for the balanced overview it gives of the whole Critical Buddhist movement.

Pruning the Bodhi Tree encourages critical responses so it is no surprise that I have many of my own. I will be brief due to constraints of space. First, is Critical Buddhism really new? It seems to me that a "critical" spirit consistently appears in the history of Buddhism and many contributors to *Pruning the Bodhi Tree* argue the same point. Second, why favor Critical over Topical Buddhism? Hakamaya's assertions that "Topical philosophy" is morally impoverished and irrational may hit the mark in some cases, but I doubt "Critical philosophy" will always be better. Third, must "original enlightenment" thought lead to social discrimination? Although Matsumoto and Hakamaya are justifiably outraged at social problems in Japan (and Buddhism's supporting role in their formation), they nowhere make a convincing case that Topical Buddhism will always lead to institutionalized social discrimination. Finally, I doubt that either Matsumoto or Hakamaya have an adequate understanding of "religion" since both stress that "True Buddhism" entails belief in basic teachings rather than ritual participation or community membership. Frankly, such uncritical accep-

tance of nineteenth century Protestant notions of “religions” are no longer viable in Religious Studies these days.

All such criticisms aside, *Pruning the Bodhi Tree* is an important book for bringing major issues in Japanese Buddhist scholarship to a greater audience. The book’s dialogical structure, thought-provoking analyses and controversial claims promote active engagement on the reader’s part. For these reasons it is excellent even if problematic. Matsumoto and Hakamaya are to be commended for forcing us to consider how Buddhist discourse may be shaped by political agendas. At the very least the last section of Matsumoto’s essay “The *Lotus Sutra* and Japanese Culture” (pp. 388–403) should be required reading in all courses on East Asian Religions if only to counter overly romanticized views such as Suzuki presents in *Zen and Japanese Culture*.

On a final note, the provocative tone both Matsumoto and Hakamaya assume (it comes through even in translation and recalls the style of Neo-Pragmatist Richard Rorty) makes for an entertaining read. Although some readers might be offended, I often found their comments amazingly trenchant. I think my favorite is Hakamaya’s likening of Sino-Japanese Buddhism to a parasite feeding off a lion. As he puts it, “In China and Japan the parasite fattened and grew strong by taking the form of the philosophy of original enlightenment, debilitating the lion almost to the point of killing it.” (p. 136) However, Matsumoto’s characterization of a particular Japanese scholar—“From beneath the flutter of the monk’s robes the glint of polished armor quickly catches the eye” (p. 358)—runs a close second. Such remarks are sure to arouse a variety of responses from their readers. I leave it to others to decide whether these passages are instances of *upāya* designed to further our own understanding of Dharma or just nasty jibes tossed out by a couple of irascible academics.

***Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism.* Edited by James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo. (Nanzan Studies in Religion and Culture.) Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994. 390 pages. Hardcover: \$ 42.00; paperback: \$ 21.95.**

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Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism is an important contribution to contemporary trends in Critical Buddhism. This text is a product of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and

Culture, centered at Nanzan University, a Catholic school in Nagoya, Japan, and it is edited by John Maraldo and James Heisig, a Catholic priest and director of the Nanzan Institute. The Nanzan Institute is dedicated to translating and transmitting Japanese philosophy and religion, such as the works of the Kyoto school, into Western languages. *Rude Awakenings* is a collection of fifteen papers presented at the international Kyoto Zen Symposium funded by the Taniguchi Foundation in March, 1994 at Santa Fe, New Mexico. At this gathering, participants from Japan, the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Belgium shared their diverse and often conflicting conclusions about nationalistic tendencies of Zen priests, intellectuals, and Kyoto school philosophers during the first half of this century. Compounding the spectrum of perspectives presented in this collection is the broad range of ground that it covers. The essays within *Rude Awakenings* address such topics as the active support that Zen priests exercised toward Japan's military endeavors, the *nihonjinron* ("Japanese exceptionalism") rhetoric of early internationally-minded intellectuals such as D. T. Suzuki, and the question of whether the so-called Kyoto school thinkers were responsible for providing the philosophical underpinnings for Japanese imperialism. *Rude Awakenings* is organized into four interrelated sections: Questioning Zen, Questioning Nishida, Questioning Modernity, and Questioning the Kyoto School.

For those more familiar with Buddhism than the Kyoto school, this so-called 'school' refers to a group of intellectuals centered on the professor Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945), often referred to as the founder of modern Japanese philosophy. These scholars, most of whom were affiliated with Kyoto Imperial University, sought to synthesize Eastern and Western thought, with a focus on the philosophy of history. Discussing the role of nationalism among the members of Zen and the Kyoto school, the articles of this text do well in providing an adequate view of the historical context and background against which their topics are framed. Especially useful for anyone interested in modern Japanese history is the wealth of detailed information that the contributors to *Rude Awakenings* provide regarding the domestic and international events engaging Japan from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.

The question of nationalism in Japan, as Jan Van Bragt points out, technically begins with the dismantling of the Tokugawa feudal system during the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and the concurrent establishment of an imperial-based government by which Japan sought to define its own status as a nation-state alongside the other nation-states of the world. With the initiation of radical modernization—or as some would say, Westernization—during the mid-nineteenth century, Japan began adopting Western science and technology at rapid pace. Fueled by slogans such as "Civilization and Enlightenment" and "Enrich the country, Strengthen the military" the Japanese people of the Meiji period took pains to assert them-

selves as a representative nation of the East which could stand up against the impending force of Western imperialism. Viewing European and American colonialism looming around them, the Japanese started using military aggression to push Japan's boundaries outwards into Asia under the auspices of the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere." Justifying their own assumed imperialist control over these surrounding areas under the need to liberate Asia from the West, Japan eventually expanded its empire to a tremendous size.

It was within this sequence of events, during which Japan transformed itself from a newborn nation-state into a great international power, that the intellectual undercurrents of nationalism discussed in *Rude Awakenings* were formed. Before considering whether or not the advocates of Zen and the Kyoto school did appropriate these new nationalistic trends, let us take a critical look at the term 'nationalism,' which otherwise might be easily thrown around as a derogatory but hollow catchphrase. In order to do this I will present the definitions of this term provided by three of the contributors.

Robert Sharf, in his article "Whose Zen?: Zen Nationalism Revisited," delineates nationalism as a strictly modern phenomena. According to Sharf's explanation, the context of modern nationalism is globalization, which is largely coextensive with the spread of Western science and technology. Nationalism then arises as a reactionary attempt to preserve native tradition and culture in the face of foreign cultural hegemony. However, he asserts,

Ironically, nationalist discourse cannot escape the ground from which it grew: nationalism is very much the product of modernity and the modernist episteme. That is to say, as nationalist representations of self are inevitably constructed in dialectical tension with the foreign "other," the nationalist promise to restore cultural "purity" is always necessarily empty (p. 47).

In his article, "Kyoto School—Intrinsically Nationalistic?," Jan Van Bragt identifies Japanese nationalism as a type of cultural particularism that developed in Japanese history before its modern nation-state status, as a strategy of self-preservation under the threat of outside forces. Van Bragt identifies this cultural particularism with what he describes in Japan as "a remarkably flexible notion of the family that was able to radiate from the center of the 'Imperial Family'" (p. 237). He also points out that Japan's modern nationalism, generally taken as a reaction to European and American culture, is modeled after an earlier pattern of nationalism that developed in response to intimidation by China, the neighboring country to which Japan owes much of its cultural heritage (p. 238).

In his contribution "Questioning Nationalism Now and Then: A Critical Approach to Zen and the Kyoto School," John Maraldo states, "in broad

terms, we may define nationalism as the assertion of self-identity by a specific people made over against other people or states as a declaration of the right to preserve and advance its own identity in an international world" (p. 334). Maraldo also points out that some critics differentiate types of nationalism according to their 'object of loyalty,' such as ethnic nationalism, cultural nationalism, and state nationalism (ibid.).

With these definitions of nationalism in mind, we may proceed to the question of whether the works of Japanese Zen and Kyoto school intellectuals may be accurately known as nationalistic. Regarding this difficult query, the range of opinions presented by the contributors to *Rude Awakenings* is surprisingly diverse. Most critiques are not simply leveled at a one-dimensional 'Hooray for our team!' enthusiasm. Instead, what we find in this book are highly sophisticated analyses of historical fact and philosophical speculation that attempt to dig deep into the foundation of thought expressed by some of the pioneers of modern Japanese philosophy and Zen Buddhism, such as Nishida Kitarō and Suzuki Teitarō (1870–1966). Three general responses to the question of these scholars' nationalism are put forth by the authors of *Rude Awakenings*. These are the (1) negative responses by those who claim these men were not nationalistic, (2) the ambiguous responses by those who claim that they were positioned on a middle territory between nationalism and anti-nationalism, and (3) the positive responses by those contributors who agree that they had actively participated in the popular trends of the day and had attempted to universalize the Japanese perspective. Such responses will be discussed here in this order, from the most defensive to the most accusatory.

Looking into the personal letters and interviews of the scholars in question, many contributors to *Rude Awakenings* conclude that the early Zen and Kyoto school leaders were quite opposed to Japanese involvement in war and military aggression abroad. Ueda Shizuteru relates a particularly moving account of how Nishida reacted to the news that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor. At that time, the seventy-year old Nishida was hospitalized for rheumatism, where he was told the news of the bombing by his student Aihara Shinsaku.

I will never forget the expression on his face when I told him what was in the articles prominently displayed in the special editions of the newspapers. It was a face filled with grave concern and anxiety over the terrible force that had been let loose. There was nothing in him of the excitement over a great victory that most people felt. At that moment, his whole body had become one mass of sadness. . . . As Japan chalked up one victory after another and euphoria spread among the public at large, his mood seemed only to deepen in the opposite direction (p. 86).

Nishida, Suzuki, and their colleagues are frequently shown by these authors to be opposed to the increased militarism and ultra-nationalism during the Pacific War, even risking their lives by speaking out against the Army's squeeze on the imperial government and their curtailing of academic freedom. Because the very nature of their scholastic mission was an explicit attempt to reconcile and put into dialogue the voice of Eastern thought with that of Western philosophy and religion, these scholars were regarded at that time as the cutting edge of international scholarship. In contrast with the nationalism of which he is now accused, Yusa Michiko, in her essay "Nishida and Totalitarianism: A Philosopher's Resistance," claims that "the vision he [Nishida] proposes is of a pluralistic community of nations within which each nation is able to maintain its own identity" (p. 111).

However, such apologists do not overlook that these thinkers also occasionally expressed themselves in the popular rhetoric of national polity endorsed by the Army they seemingly opposed, appearing to celebrate such cathected notions as "the Imperial Way" and "Japanese Spirit." In their defense, contributors such as Ueda Shizuteru and Yusa Michiko suggest that there was a deliberate tug-of-war over meaning taking place between the intelligentsia and the Army, and it was through this semantic struggle that scholars such as Nishida sought to redefine catchphrase terminology and empower this rhetoric with more constructive, pluralistic value.

While certain contributors to *Rude Awakenings* seek to defend the members of the Kyoto school and Zen circles from their critics, most authors concur that these men were positioned on some type of middle ground with regard to an advocacy of Japanese nationalism. Such responses claim that it is the very ambiguity of this middle territory which gives rise to current questioning of them. According to this strain of argumentation, it is also such a middle stance that left them open to critique by the ultra-nationalists and militarists during the war and by the ultra-liberalists and Marxists after the war. As the prominent Kyoto school scholar Nishitani Keiji once remarked, "During the war we were struck on the cheek from the right; after the war we were struck on the cheek from the left" (p. 291). Some contributors have pointed out that the ambiguity of their middling posture is related to the ideological importance of "emptiness" for Zen and "absolute nothingness" for the Kyoto school. Although these concepts are not equivalent, Zen was an important influence on the Kyoto school, having been embraced personally by Nishida Kitarō and many of his students, and its doctrine of emptiness informed of the Kyoto doctrine of absolute nothingness.

However, the doctrines of emptiness and nothingness are not just evidence for the position that these scholars took a middle stance with regard to nationalism. According to those contributors who claimed that

these Japanese intellectuals were in fact nationalists, the theories of emptiness and absolute nothingness were an important means by which these men promoted the Japanese point of view. According to some contributors to *Rude Awakenings*, emptiness and absolute nothingness were taken up, along with the idea of "pure experience," by Suzuki and Kyoto school leaders as a uniquely Eastern claim to a universalist rationale comparable to the universalist claims of Western scientific theory. Likewise, some claim that these Japanese thinkers, who were the first to attempt to represent the "East" in East-West dialogue, used the theories of emptiness and nothingness to essentialize their own positions as the standard of a universal truth, while subsuming the subjectivity of the West within this stance. In contrast with contemporary scholastic trends toward respect for pluralism among traditions, such a universalist tendency is rather easily targeted by critics as nationalistic.

According to those who assert the nationalism of Zen and Kyoto school scholars, taking a stance based on emptiness, suchness and nothingness led these intellectuals toward a tendency of collapsing the distinction between the actual and the ideal, the phenomenal state and the absolute, the is and the ought. Christopher Ives, while summarizing Ichikawa Hakugen's critique, points out the Taoist influence on this tendency in the context of Zen, which he describes as a way to "give up resistance to, and then accept and accord with, the actuality around oneself. To promote this 'accord with the principles of things as a kind of naturalism,' one restrains from judgmental discrimination and thereby removes oneself from the psychological basis of preferences, struggle, and resulting anguish" (p. 19). Accepting the actual as emptiness or suchness, an approach witnessed in the oft-quoted Zen dictum from the *Record of Lin-chi* "Make yourself master of every situation, and wherever you stand is the true [place],"¹ becomes ethically precarious during a time of war, when the ideal might be something much different than the socio-political actuality with which a person has accorded (p. 19).

In addition to the problematic of equating "the is and the ought," critics have found that the negating function of emptiness and absolute nothingness leaves no position for an individual self to assert his or her human rights in the face of injustice. Furthermore, there is no foundation by which to ground an ethos of behavior toward other persons, who are also denied their own substantial position. The following is one statement about nothingness by Nishitani that certain contributors have found particularly troublesome. "We have to kill the self absolutely . . . , breaking through the field where self and other are discriminated from one another and made relative to one another. The self itself returns to its own home-ground by killing every 'other,' and, consequently, killing itself"² (p. 253). While Nishitani's formulation may be a rather pointed formulation of emptiness,

and even a healing antidote for those who are mentally stuck in a substantialist paradigm, as Van Bragt points out, his speculation on the symmetrical negation of I and Thou is problematic with regard to practical action in the world, especially at a time when his fellow citizens and students were being sent off to war (p. 254).

Although some authors have shown that these scholars of Zen and the Kyoto school expressed opposition to Japan's involvement in military aggression, their reliance on the notions of emptiness and absolute nothingness left these men open to critique on all sides. By asserting such doctrines, Suzuki and Nishida hoped to contribute a universalist philosophy to an international community that had already staked claims to the rights of a universal rationale. However, the very attempt to propose a universalist position that was born from uniquely Japanese roots is what today's critics are inclined to label as 'nationalistic.' At a time when European and American civilization were seeking to dominate the globe through colonialism, and as some would say, cultural hegemony, these scholars' attempts to assert an Eastern alternative may not be so reprehensible. Unfortunately, globalization was still a new development in world history at that time, and Japan, just like many other Western nations, also tried to subsume the plurality of the East under their own universalist, totalitarian force. Today, when essentializing rhetoric that asserts singular norms for either the East or the West has become a virtual relic of past scholarship, the Zen and Kyoto school intellectuals who sought after a universalist philosophy more readily appear to have embraced the nationalist trend, especially in light of the socio-political situation of Japan at that time.

In conclusion, I want to address the question, "why is it important to know whether or not these Zen and Kyoto school philosophers were nationalistic?" And, furthermore, "what does it mean for us to be questioning these Japanese scholars of the past, most of whom are deceased and have no chance to defend themselves?" With regard to the first question, which points to the value of critical scholarship, honest discernment of the political involvements of these early scholars and transmitters of Japanese philosophy and religion to the West provides an essential framework for the study of both Buddhism and Kyoto school philosophy. This information brings to light the social and political agendas underlying their work, and responsible scholarship recognizes text in context, rather than abstracted from historical particularity. For example, Suzuki's emphasis on Zen experience, which was probably influenced by his personal friend Nishida's theory of pure experience, resonated with contemporary Western interest in mystical experience as propagated by William James. However, while the notion of direct experience in Zen was especially marketable to the Western audience at that time, Suzuki stressed this successful topic to the neglect of the important historical role that monasticism plays

in the Zen tradition, and it is now clear, as contributor Kirita Kyohide has pointed out, that “Suzuki was the first Zen Buddhist deliberately to distinguish between Zen experience and Zen thought, and to recognize the importance of the latter . . .” (p. 67). Therefore, critical scholarship will not merely accept Suzuki’s view of the centrality of experience for Zen without accounting for the particular political agendas informing this view.

With regard to the second query, which addressed the retrospective mode of modern critique, I find it valuable to point out that our own critical research into the nationalism of others also requires that we turn this critical eye back toward ourselves in order to reckon with the underlying assumptions that we too have brought into our own scholarship. While it is interesting and perhaps necessary to clarify the ideological frameworks of those scholars whose work we study, it is also important for us to use the same critical faculties with regard to our own agendas so as to responsibly account for our own position as we evaluate the works of others.

In my opinion, nationalism is only one symptom of a fundamental and tenacious human tendency to promote the well-being and interests of oneself over and above those of others in the world. While it may be easier for us today, who are not involved in a world-scale war, to identify the nationalism of Zen or Kyoto school advocates, it is not as if the same self-centeredness that leads to such an ideology has already been extinguished from the world. While I am extremely impressed with the meticulous scholarship put forth by the authors of *Rude Awakenings*, I hope that its readers will not simply accept it as a condemnation of these Japanese men of the past, but rather, that we will be able to use it as a tool to finetune our own critical faculties in order to become more aware of our own ideologies and tendencies to do harm to others in the quest to promote ourselves.

Notes

1. This quote was adapted by Ives from Ruth Fuller Sasaki, trans., *The Record of Lin-chi* (Kyoto: Institute for Zen Studies, 1975), pp. 17 and 27.
2. Van Bragt draws this quote from Nishitani Keiji, *Religion and Nothingness*, translated by Jan Van Bragt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 263.

***Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism Under Colonialism.* Edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995. vi, 298 pages. Hardcover: \$ 56.00; paperback: \$ 18.00.**

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The contributors to *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism Under Colonialism* base their examination of Buddhist Studies on the critical study of Edward Said's work *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978). Said's study is an examination of French, British, and American colonialist perspectives which have influenced Western academic research and political movements in the last two and half centuries. According to Said, the colonialist attitudes of 18th and 19th century Europe constitute a cultural phenomenon, which he calls "Orientalism," thus the title of his book. Of course, Said's word choice is quite deliberate due to its connection to the Western notion of the "Orient," implying, among other things, the dialectical relationship between the "Occident" and the "Orient," or the "West" and the "East." Accordingly, the general meaning of "Orientalism," from Said's theory, "is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and . . . the 'Occident'" (*Orientalism*, p. 2). Essentially, what Said claims in his work is that both terms are human inventions originating from 18th and 19th century academic and political discourse. Moreover, the terms actually have much more to do with epistemology than ontology. For example, the "Orient" does not designate a physical locale, but rather a way of knowing and portraying physical places and real people. Consequently, Orientalism has more to do with "our" world than with the world of the "other" (*Orientalism*, p. 12). In the world of academics, then, Orientalism is a type of discourse which takes away the power of representation from the culture being studied and gives it to the learned scholar (the "Orientalist"), the one who declares what documents are worthy of study and which texts are deserving of the honorable title, "normative" (*Orientalism*, p. 94). The purpose of Said's critical study, which he makes quite clear, is to "criticize—with the hope of stirring discussion—the often unquestioned assumptions" with which the Orientalist predicates his or her study of the "dark," "mysterious," "undiluted," yet often "nefarious," Oriental (*Orientalism*, p. 51).¹

In effect, the authors of the *Curators of the Buddha* are engaged in a synonymous task: by drawing upon the ideas and methodology of Edward Said, the contributors set out to delineate the conceptions and methods that have created a "tradition of misrepresentation" in the history of Buddhist Studies. "The question," Donald Lopez explains, "is not one of the ethics of

scholarship but of the logics of representation, the question is not one of how knowledge is tainted but of how knowledge takes form" (p. 11).

All the entries in this collection raise provocative examples of how Buddhism has been, or could be, misrepresented despite the scholarly work that went into the formulation of such depictions. In order to reveal the characteristics of a "Critical Buddhist Studies," it will suffice to highlight selected essays from this collection.

In Charles Hallisey's article, "Roads Taken and Not Taken in the Study of Theravada Buddhism" (pp. 31–62), the issue of representation arises to the surface through the author's analysis of the textual studies of T.W. Rhys Davids, R. Spence Hardy, Paul Bigandet, and Adhemard Leclere. Hallisey historically reconstructs the methodologies of these early "Orientalists" in order to show how Buddhism underwent a process of "textualization," the program of signifying certain texts as authoritative in their re-presentation of a living tradition called "Buddhism" (p. 37). Hallisey argues that the textualization of Buddhism produced the beginnings of a "professional" field of study that favored texts in classical languages, such as Sanskrit, and, in some cases, texts in vernacular languages (pp. 41–43). In either case, Hallisey shows that the European scholars constructed a framework to legitimize their textual translations and theories as authoritative while circumscribing the opinions and work of local Asian scholars (p. 37). As a consequence, European scholars created a "normative" Buddhism that was skewed in its representation because of a heavy bias on "original Buddhism" via classical texts (pp. 41–42).

Hallisey argues that despite the biases that existed within this scholarly framework, there were the beginnings of a "postorientalist" approach to Buddhist Studies (see especially pp. 33 and 49). In his discussion of Leclere's work in particular, Hallisey shows that a process of "intercultural mimesis," the influence of a subjectified people on the researcher's reconstruction of a cultural tradition, is noticeable in the scholar's own writings (pp. 49–52). According to Hallisey, Leclere was attentive to "the production of meaning in local contexts" (p. 52). As a contemporary Buddhist scholar, Hallisey wants to benefit from this insight and assist Buddhist Studies to remain vigilant in its search for all legitimate sources of information. Yet, Hallisey is aware that the criterion for claiming certain sources more authoritative than others need to be clarified. He believes that further investigation into the criteria used by early Orientalists can assist current researchers with the task.

The question of authoritative representation is also addressed in Robert H. Sharf's contribution, "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism" (pp. 107–160). Sharf critiques the "New Buddhist" movement of Japan during the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning decades of the 20th. Sharf calls into question the representations of Zen by figures such as D.T. Suzuki and Nishida Kitarō. Sharf deciphers at length their claims that Zen

enlightenment is a “transcultural experience” (p. 108) authentically Japanese yet transcendent of any limits that local manifestations might claim. The orthodoxies of modern Rinzai or Sōtō monasticism, as Sharf contends, do not figure into the theoretical framework of Suzuki or Nishida. Consequently, Sharf considers their version of Zen distorted and misleading.

This becomes a complicated matter for Buddhist Studies scholars; they must decide how to handle the brand of Zen that originates from Suzuki and others. As most readers are aware, Suzuki’s writings on Zen have been a major source of data for Western thinkers. For that matter, many students of Buddhism received their introduction to the Buddhist tradition through Suzuki’s popularized accounts. On the one hand, then, the popularity of Buddhism in the West has a lot to owe Suzuki. Yet, on the other hand, Sharf’s critique strongly suggests that what the West has received is a gross misrepresentation of one particular Buddhist tradition that has been universalized to the point of being simultaneously associated with the word “Buddhism.”

The article by Donald Lopez, Jr., “Foreigner at the Lama’s Feet” (pp. 251–296) confronts the issue of representation in Buddhist Studies in a different manner than the previous two; he offers his critique through a self-reflexive account. By placing himself in a line of scholars seeking to preserve a mystified, lost Tibet,² Lopez recounts in rich detail his experience of studying texts under a lama exiled in India. Lopez admits that a part of what he was engaged in was the creation of his own text through the exploitation of a lama-disciple relationship (p. 286). Lopez’s intention was to do textual analysis with the “voice” of the experienced scholar-monk along his side (pp. 270 and 279). Yet he couldn’t escape the struggle within himself that he was trying to write an authoritative text which would eventually supercede the authority of the lama—all for the sake of preserving the tradition of the lama. The circularity of the dilemma is compounded by Lopez’s use of two methods: textual analysis of a historical document and the ethnography of a contemporary Buddhist practitioner. Lopez considers the combination of the two as legitimate, but he recognizes that it is not always clear when the researcher is a historian and when he/she is an ethnographer (pp. 282–83). Moreover, the role of the scholar-practitioner in the preservation of a text, and how that fits within an entire tradition, is also in question.

In all the articles of this anthology the authors attempt to recover the “Orientalism” within the cultural history of Buddhist Studies. It is true that as much as the authors are aware of the cultural biases which exist among the founders of Buddhist Studies, they are also cognizant of their own predisposition toward composing prejudiced assumptions of what constitutes legitimate Buddhist Studies. This kind of consciousness is evident in Luis O. Gomez’s warning that “all of us aspiring scholars must heed the danger signs of crypto-Orientalism—the willingness to bask in the glory of

our texts and then use them to our own ends, the desire to tell our subjects what they really think, and the compulsion to deny any sympathetic involvement" (p. 229).

Lopez's article is another good example of a "postorientalist" analysis—a critic's self-criticism involving an honest inquiry into one's own theories and methods. While exploring his subject he readily pauses to assess his actions. It is this articulation of the self-critical process that constitutes the preeminent contribution of these authors to Buddhist Studies. Others include Hallisey's acknowledgment of the importance of local meaning for constructing a "representative" conception of Buddhism, Sharf's willingness to engage his critics in his postscript in order to reassess his representation of D.T. Suzuki, and Lopez's insightful "conversation" with the ethnography and hermeneutics of Buddhist texts.

An important point to mention is that this anthology of critical studies is only the beginning. The authors readily admit the confines of their research and the limits of their theories. Their work covers many principle issues, but there are a few specifics that are left for subsequent studies. For example, as Hallisey stated in his article, there is a need for recovering more texts in vernacular languages, whether translations of sutras or commentaries (p. 49). There is also the question Sharf's article implies of how to study Buddhist expressions in the West, such as the phenomenon of "American Zen." Who decides its legitimacy or, for that matter, its illegitimacy? What kind of questions should be asked when studying it? And in relation to Lopez's article, one could ask about the significance of his ethnographic experience for the future of Buddhist Studies in the academy. What should the basic requirements be for a prospective Buddhologist? Of course, these are just a few questions and concerns out of the many which these authors contend with. Yet there still remains one pressing question: what is meant by the term "Buddhism"? By dispelling some of the myths created by "Orientalism," the authors of *Curators of the Buddha* have given present and future students of Buddhism a framework to address this question.

Notes

1. My use of these terms is not without warrant considering the literature Said reviews; see especially his comments on the same page about Raymond Schwab's *La Renaissance Orientale*.
2. Hallisey cites Rhys Davids' entries in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as examples.
3. Lopez explains that because of the "genealogy of urgency" which he shared with others scholars (Ippolitio Desideri, Alexander Csoma de Koros, and L. Austine Waddell), Tibet became "a threatened abode of western construction, a fragile site of origin and preserve, still regarded from the periphery as a timeless center" (p. 269).

“On Method,” special issue of the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2 (Winter 1995)

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While it may seem odd to include a journal in a set of book reviews, this special issue “On Method” is an outstanding landmark in the field of critical reflection on Buddhist Studies. The issue comprises six articles, and here we can only highlight some of the important topics raised and points made with the hope of guiding the interested reader to the original sources.

D. Seyfort Ruegg’s “Some Reflections on the Place of Philosophy in the Study of Buddhism” opens the issue. Ruegg argues that philosophy is integral to Buddhism. He directly addresses those classic texts that are cited as grounds for making of Buddhism a tradition that rejects philosophic reflection, such as the story of the man shot by an arrow. Through a careful analysis of the actual texts, he concludes that “What is rejected, then, is disputing for the sake of disputing, rather than useful discussion and analysis” (p. 152). Ruegg also discusses one of the familiar styles of the philosophic study of Buddhism, the comparative approach. He says that often such an approach proves “to be of rather restricted heuristic value, and methodologically it turns out to be more problematical and constraining than illuminating” (p. 154). The difficulties inherent in such projects lead to a discussion that also appears in other papers in this issue. This is the apparent conflict between approaches which place philosophic insights within specific intellectual, historical, social, and cultural contexts, and those which attempt to understand such insights as transcending their contexts of origin and applying universally. For example, consider the claim that everything that exists does so only as the result of causes and conditions. This is itself a universal claim, yet it arises in a particular intellectual environment. Crudely paraphrased, Ruegg’s answer is that an adequate understanding is dependent upon first placing a philosophic insight within its context of origin so as to avoid reading onto it our own conceptions, and only then comparing it with other insights from other times and places.

Ruegg is internationally renowned for his studies of the *tathāgatagarbha* theory, and one of the issues that this essay takes up is the “critical Buddhism” of Hakamaya and Matsumoto (see the review of *Pruning the Bodhi Tree* included in this issue). Hakamaya and Matsumoto have criticized *tathāgatagarbha* and buddha-nature theories as contravening the teaching of interdependence, and therefore not Buddhist. Ruegg points out that they have failed to take into account the many Buddhist thinkers outside Japan who accepted both the *tathāgatagarbha* theory and the foundational character of interdependence.

Also worth noting is Ruegg's treatment of the mismatch between the conception of authority in Western philosophy and that of *pramāṇa*, which is often translated as authority, in Buddhist philosophy. In Western thought authority is not considered to be a very dependable source of knowledge. However, in Buddhism the authority of a buddha is based on possession of "immediate knowledge of reality" (p. 176). This mismatch reveals just how essential it is to adequately comprehend a philosophic concept in its context of origin.

The second essay is "Unspoken Paradigms: Meanderings through the Metaphors of a Field" by Luis O. Gómez. He points out that refusal to consider the issues of theory and method in the study of Buddhism does not mean that one thereby becomes "magically divested of a method, a theory, and a particular choice of perspective" (p. 184). While contemporary Buddhist Studies is expanding through interaction with the new historicism, and literary and critical theory, the field is still structured by and continues to require the older methods of classical philology and historical positivism.

Additionally, Gómez calls attention to the relation between the scholar and the various audiences for his/her work. While some scholars might only consider their academic colleagues as their audience, the field of Buddhist Studies also has several other audiences. These include the contemporary religious communities that constitute Buddhism in the present, as well as institutional authorities and interested members of society generally. The effect of the social environment on Buddhist Studies is also reflected in the difference between the way in which Christian Studies has developed as an integral part of Western, Christian social and intellectual history. For Buddhist Studies, however, the "methods and expectations of our scholarship and our audiences have been shaped by a cultural history very different from that of Buddhist traditions" (p. 190). Gómez points out that the Buddhist tradition has its own critical intellectual resources that have as yet not been brought to bear by contemporary scholars in their inquiries into Buddhism itself.

In one section Gómez outlines four different styles of Buddhist Studies which have been influenced by their object, i.e., by Buddhism itself. These are the classic philological method, which gives primacy to the etymology of words and sees Buddhism as primarily embodied in texts; the scholastic method of examining systems of thought as orderly, complete wholes; the doxological method of examining doctrines, either as a matter of personal commitment or as an object of critical inquiry. The fourth method is the creation of histories on the basis of textual chronologies. This has the danger of unconsciously recreating organizing systems that originally served a polemic purpose, whether cast as progressive development ("culminationist") or as devolution and decay from an originally pure, pristine teaching.

The third essay is "Buddhist Studies as a Discipline and the Role of Theory" by José Ignacio Cabezón. Cabezón examines some of the differing ways in which Buddhist Studies has recently been critiqued. Some find traditional Buddhist Studies as overly focused on India, marginalizing other Buddhist cultures, such as Tibet, China, Korea, and Japan. Others critique the focus on texts that excludes other kinds of Buddhist praxis, such as ritual, meditation, social and institutional organization, artistic and aesthetic forms. Critiques have been leveled both at what is studied and at how it is studied. The critique of traditional philology seems to threaten any unity that Buddhist Studies might have hoped to maintain, any hope of disciplinary identity. Cabezón is quite careful, however, to avoid being misunderstood as suggesting that some other method should displace philology as the unifying model for Buddhist Studies. Rather, he suggests that what will assure "the stability and longevity of the discipline is . . . embracing heterogeneity" (p. 240).

From the current of conflicting stereotypes of different styles of Buddhist Studies—European, North American, Taiwanese, Japanese, etc.—Cabezón draws out two general positions which he identifies as positivist and interpretivist. In his usage, positivists focus on texts, seeing for example the reconstruction of texts as the end of scholarship. On the other hand, interpretivists for Cabezón see texts as basic, as the starting point for further inquiry. One of the presumptions that Cabezón discusses is typical of the North American style of scholarship, the view which holds that "true research . . . contains an element of novelty" (p. 254). In other words, purely philological work is not in itself adequate. Rather, research in this style

requires the full involvement of the scholar not only in the text, but beyond it as well, utilizing the text as an object of interpretation with the goal of achieving results that are broad and general in scope (p. 254).

Cabezón also explains the rationale for the expansion of Buddhist Studies from a strictly textual project to one that includes all other aspects of Buddhism: "doctrine itself cannot be fully understood independently of culture in the broad sense of the term" (p. 263). This is more than simply an argument for an examination of the context of a text, but rather entails a redefinition of the character of Buddhism itself. Not solely the philosophic reflections of monastic intellectuals, but the living religion of peasants and kings, of mothers and fathers, of artisans and poets. From this perspective, other issues, such as the relation between Buddhist institutions and social, political, and economic power, open up for examination.

Cabezón portrays an extreme of the philological approach as one in which "scholars can and should be devoid of—or rather, since this is

something that must be cultivated, ‘void themselves of’—all bias and prejudice, allowing the text to speak for itself” (p. 251). This portrayal is directly confronted by Tom J.F. Tillemans in his “Remarks on Philology,” the fourth essay in this issue. He asserts that no philologist actually undertakes his/her work in this fashion. None would have so narrow a view as to ignore “the history, institutions, context and preoccupations of an author and his milieu” (p. 269). The goal in Tillemans’s view is not to “allow the text to speak for itself,” but rather to gain an understanding of an author’s thought. His argument appears to be basically one against solipsism: if we can claim to understand the thought of a contemporary, and the thought of someone living a decade ago, then it is only a matter of degree to claim that one can understand the thought of a medieval Indian such as Dharmakīrti. Granted, as temporal and cultural distance increases, such understanding becomes more difficult. However, this only means that one needs to be willing to apply greater effort.

Tillemans rejects the assertion frequently heard in some contemporary academic circles that it is impossible to get outside of one’s own cultural conditioning, in a word, that all texts are simply mirrors in which we can only see our own reflection.

. . . we can often get rid of mistaken ideas about what texts and authors thought by means of rational argumentation and by meticulous analysis, so that it just won’t do to say baldly that we read our own baggage of cultural prejudices into a text (p. 272).

Although Tillemans does not belabor the fact, his argument is effective because it turns the assertion back upon itself. Any convincing exemplification of the assertion, such as demonstrating that Stcherbatsky’s understanding of certain key Buddhist philosophic concepts was unduly influenced by neo-Kantian thought, only works because we are able to demonstrate a better understanding by “means of rational argumentation and by meticulous analysis.”

In his essay, “A Way of Reading” C.W. Huntington, Jr., implicitly agrees with Tillemans when he asserts that “grammar and vocabulary are in themselves not enough” (p. 280). Initially, Huntington critiques a view of comparative philosophy which seeks to read philosophic works from other traditions as part of a “denaturalized discourse” (p. 282, the term is Paul Griffiths’). Approaching, for example, Nāgārjuna from the perspective of a denaturalized discourse seeks “to peel back from Nāgārjuna’s writing the layers of cultural baggage (everything that has to do with the period and place in which these texts were composed) and uncover a core of timeless philosophic truth” (p. 281). Thus, where Cabezón critiques the view that we must remove all of our own cultural baggage, and Tillemans

critiques the view that it is impossible for us to know anything other than that baggage, Huntington critiques the view that we can understand by removing the cultural baggage from the hands of the other.

Huntington points out that our own conception of philosophic discourse—such as talk of persuasion, argument, grounds, and theory—is itself far from denaturalized, but rather arises “not only from later Indian and Tibetan commentaries but from our own deeply embedded preconceptions about what constitutes legitimately ‘philosophic’ language” (p. 282). Rather than reading Nāgārjuna within the framework of our own preconceptions of philosophy, mistakenly believing that conception of philosophy to be transcendent, or denaturalized, Huntington suggests that Nāgārjuna be read as an instance of apophatic discourse. “At the center of apophatic discourse is the effort to speak about a subject that cannot be named” (p. 283). On this reading the argumentation found in Nāgārjuna is not the sole criteria for defining his intentions, for “even the most rigorous logical form can be exploited for a variety of literary and rhetorical effects” (p. 283).

Rather than argumentation, Huntington suggests reading Nāgārjuna in terms of the religious imagination. Approaching the language of religious writings in this way,

the task of the theological critic is to interpret the significance of such language not as a function of whether it is true or false, but rather to seek to uncover the vitality of the text as a vehicle for religious transformation (p. 296).

On this pragmatic view, it is not necessary to abstract out some ultimate truth from the cultural context of a religious text, but rather to understand how that text works to produce religious transformation in exactly that cultural context.

The final essay in the issue, Jamie Hubbard’s “Upping the Ante: budstud@millenium.end.edu,” discusses the societal context of contemporary Buddhist Studies, specifically the impact of computers on the ways in which research and teaching are done. In large part a survey of recent history, including efforts such as BUDDHA-L and an electronic conference hosted by the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, Hubbard identifies three general areas in which computers have transformed the way in which scholarship had been done. These are word processing, electronic communication, and large scale electronic archives of textual and visual materials. These in turn have wrought further changes, including the use of electronic media in teaching, the extension of intellectual community, the effect of differing levels of access to technology on tenure, promotion, and publishing, the possible infringement on intellectual property rights, and the pressure to

improve the quality of scholarly work. All of these involve additional investment of both finances and professional time, hence the title phrase “upping the ante.”

Together these essays identify the important methodological issues facing Buddhist Studies, presenting different views on those issues in such a fashion as to stimulate the reader’s own creative reflection. On the one hand Buddhism itself is being redefined in a variety of ways. On the other, those different ways in which Buddhism is understood entail different ways of studying it.

The Sound of Liberating Truth: Buddhist Christian Dialogues in Honor of Frederick J. Streng. Edited by Sallie B. King and Paul O. Ingram. (Curzon Critical Studies in Buddhism, 12). Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999. xxxii, 276 pp. Hardcover: \$55.00

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“What is the sound of liberating truth?” This is the question that Frederick Streng posed to Paul Ingram in Honolulu at the Sixth East-West Philosophers Conference just three years before his death. Streng described this question as his “life’s koan,” and two years later, made it public, going on to say that whatever form the solution to that koan might take, it must involve “ultimate transformation.” Streng was not interested in simple descriptions of reality or detached, diplomatic interreligious dialogue. Rather, as a historian of religions, he wanted to show that all religions have a transformative power at their core, and that this power lies at the heart of all human life. Streng advocated engaged interaction, conversation in community, but did not limit this interaction to one or two particular topics. Instead, he worked on a grander scale, encouraging dialogue in several different areas, each of which supported and informed the others. This book seeks to honor both his memory and his work by engaging in the multi-faceted, mutually transformative dialogue he sought all his life to engender.

The essays in this collection fall under five categories: Interreligious Dialogue, Ultimate Reality, Nature and Ecology, Social and Political Issues of Liberation, and Ultimate Transformation or Liberation. Each part consists of four chapters, written by two authors, one Buddhist and one Christian. Each author has written both an essay and a response to the other author’s essay. In this way, the book seeks to emulate Streng’s love of dialogue, providing not only different religious perspectives on a particular theme, but a genuine engagement as well. David Chappell and Winston King discuss the topic of interreligious dialogue. Bonnie Thurston and Malcolm David Eckel consider the concept of ultimate reality. Alan Sponberg and Paula Coeey reflect on nature and ecology. Sallie King and John Keenan exchange views on social and political issues of liberation. Thomas Kasulis and Ruben Habito review the idea of ultimate transformation or liberation. The book concludes with two epilogues, one by Taitetsu Unno and the other by John Cobb.

There are several main themes that run throughout the majority of the different essays, resurfacing at different points, refracted through a variety of lenses. Not surprisingly, given the nature of Streng’s work, one of the main concepts of the essays is emptiness. I found the various discussions

of emptiness helpful, not for their depth, but for their breadth. The concept of emptiness is elaborated under the heading of ultimate reality, brought to bear on the Buddhist notion of ecology, discussed from a Christian perspective, and described both as a goal and a process. These varying interpretations are useful for getting a sense of the way in which the understanding of emptiness has developed over the course of time in various contexts.

Of course, the topic of interreligious dialogue is also at the fore of all the essays, but what is of particular interest is the way in which methodology and boundaries are discussed. What I mean by this is the fact that in many of the essays, the conversation goes beyond discussion about this or that specific topic and treats the very structure of the dialogue itself. Different motives for dialogue, for both Christians and Buddhists are advanced, and, in some cases, the definition of what actually constitutes dialogue is challenged. For example, in David Chappell's essay, "Buddhist Interreligious Dialogue: To Build a Global Community," he suggests three forms of dialogue: intellectual doctrinal discussion, joint religious practice, and joint social action. Winston King, however, in his essay, "Interreligious Dialogue," endorses only the first as a legitimate form of dialogue, and by definition, concludes that almost exclusively, it will be the religious "professionals" who will actually engage in dialogue, and even of them, only a few. This exchange is important because, in my experience, there is precious little of this type of self-reflection occurring among dialogue partners, and its absence is conspicuous. This fact makes the reflections on the act of interreligious dialogue found here of particular importance.

Another important aspect of the interreligious dialogue that occurs in this book is the foregrounding of the authors' specific backgrounds and traditions. Often in interreligious dialogue, the talk is between some idealized form of Buddhism or Christianity that does not seem to have roots in any specific community. In these essays, the authors without exception take care to articulate their own particular faith communities and/or academic disciplines. For example, in her essay, "Creation, Redemption, and the Realization of the Material Order," Paula Cooley makes it clear that she is speaking from a Reformed Protestant position, and uses her work on Jonathan Edwards to inform her stance. This assists the reader enormously in understanding her argument and enables us to concretize her point of view. From there, we are better equipped to either agree or disagree with her opinion, knowing we are making an informed decision either way.

As should be obvious, one of the great strengths of this book is the wide variety of authors who are represented here. For those readers who are new to the field of interreligious dialogue, this book provides an excellent introduction both to different scholars working in the area as well to different topics that are frequently discussed. However, this book is not

only for the beginner. Among the various authors, there is no across the board agreement on anything, and thus it is useful to see on which points the Buddhists and Christians disagree among themselves, and on which points they agree. There is no chance of being led astray by the single opinion of any one author, because there are so many other opinions on similar topics. As Paul Ingram mentions in the introduction, all the essays are, to a greater or lesser degree, interrelated, and the insights from one set of essays informs the discussion of all the others. The interplay allows the reader to see old ideas in a new light, familiar concepts filling different roles, and staid positions in fresh locations. In this way, this book is an asset for those seasoned scholars working in interreligious dialogue as well.

Lastly, a word about methodology. Clearly, there is no one method of dialogue that characterizes all of the essays, and the methodological diversity of the articles is another advantage of the book. I want to just mention a few of the most interesting approaches. John Keenan's essay, "The Mind of Wisdom and Justice in the Letter of James," is an excellent example of the "Buddhist exegesis" he has popularized in his earlier books, *The Meaning of Christ: A Mahāyāna Theology*, and *The Gospel of Mark: A Mahāyāna Reading*. Thomas Kasulis, in his essay, "Under the Bodhi Tree: An Idealized Paradigm of Buddhist Transformation and Liberation," discusses the way in which the story of Gautama's enlightenment functions as a "spiritual heuristic," rather than a *modus operandi*. Finally, Alan Sponberg uses the Buddhist understanding of "self" to articulate a Buddhist position on ecology in his essay, "The Buddhist Conception of an Ecological Self."

It is the rare book that lives up to the promise of its table of contents, but this is one book that, upon further exploration, does not disappoint. There are worthy talking points in each and every essay, and ideas of interest for both Buddhists and Christians alike. It is an honorable and estimable tribute to an influential, stimulating scholar, and we the readers are the ones who benefit from the contributors' labor of love.

***Consciousness at the Crossroads: Conversations with the Dalai Lama on Brain Science and Buddhism.* Edited by Zara Houshmand, Robert B. Livingston and B. Alan Wallace. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1999. 183 pages. Paperback: \$15.95.**

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This work is a record of the second Mind and Life Conference, held in 1989. These conferences are held once every two years and were initiated in response to the Dalai Lama's lifelong interest in establishing a serious

dialogue between Buddhism and Western sciences. This conference focused on the study of mind, brain and cognition, and included a number of the leading figures in contemporary cognitive science.

The work reflects the structure of the conference in which a somewhat formal presentation by one of the participants set the ground for an open discussion. These presentations provide a valuable summary of the issues of contemporary cognitive science. Included are:

“Toward a Natural Science of the Mind” by Patricia Churchland;

“Mapping Brain Functions: The Evidence of Damage to Specific Brain Regions” by Antonio Damasio;

“Steps toward an Anatomy of Memory” by Larry Squire;

“Brain Control of Sleeping and Dreaming States” by Allan Hobson;

“Psychiatric Illnesses and Psychopharmacology” by Lewis Judd.

Two additional sections add greatly to the value of the work as a whole. These are two chapters of clarification by B. Alan Wallace, who also served as one of the translators and editors. Both of these provide commentary from the Madhyamaka perspective on issues raised in the course of the discussions. These comments are both informative and well-balanced, seeking to further the dialogue rather than asserting the superiority of one tradition over another.

Taken together these presentations themselves provide a very accessible overview of contemporary cognitive science without falling into a simplistic popularization of the issues. While the conversational tone of the presentations and discussions has been preserved, the work is not simply a transcript of the conversation. Yet, the editing has been so carefully and skillfully done that the result is almost seamless.

Churchland’s presentation begins with the reflections of the Greek thinkers Plato and Aristotle that gave rise to inquiry into consciousness, particularly the unity of perception—visual perceptions of shape and color are experienced as parts of the unity of an object: there is unity across the sense modalities such as seeing and touching what is perceived to be the same object, and there is unity of an object over time. A majority of the presentation and discussion is devoted Cartesian mind-body dualism, called “substance dualism.”

Three critiques of substance dualism are presented, two negative and one positive. The first is the problem of interaction—how can there be any kind of interaction between two entirely distinct kinds of being, physical and mental? Second is the point that things often seem different from the way they really are, “Critics argued that even though our experience seems to be very different from the behavior of brain cells, that doesn’t mean they *are* different. Seeming to be different is not in fact evidence for things

actually being different" (p. 25). The third critique is the dependence of mental states upon the physical conditions of the brain. Chemicals, electrical stimuli and physical damage all directly effect mental experience. On the basis of these criticisms of substance dualism, Churchland asserts a materialist view in which the mind is simply a state of the brain. In this view, there is a one way causal relation: changes in brain state produce different mental conditions, while there is no reverse effect of thoughts on brain states.

The subsequent chapter, "A Buddhist Response" by B. Alan Wallace, skillfully demonstrates the common assumptions underlying both Cartesian mind-body dualism and the materialist monism maintained by Churchland. The argument basically has been that Descartes proposed an explanation of mind involving two kinds of substance, one of which can be shown to not exist, therefore, the other is the sole explanation. However, dualism and materialist monism are not the only two options. Idealist monism is so out of favor as to not even receive any mention. What Wallace develops, however, is not another option bound within the terms of this approach. Rather, he presents the Madhyamaka view which denies the substantial character of both the mental and the physical.

Damasio's presentation discusses the issue of just how different specific mental functions are from one another, and how they are very uniquely localized in the brain. For example, there is one area on each hemisphere of the brain which are jointly responsible for color vision. Damage of one of these leaves shape and depth perception unaffected, but one half the visual field is seen in black and white.

Squires' discussion focuses on the mechanisms of memory. He identifies two foundational problems for neuroscience: "there is the problem of the initial organization of connections among nerve cells in the brain, and there is the problem of how these original connections can be altered" (p. 78). Where Damasio's presentation dealt with the first problem, the question of memory must deal with the second.

Hobson presents a discussion of how the brain acts differently in the three primary states of consciousness—waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep. This topic drew particular attention to the possibilities and significance of lucid dreaming and dream yoga. The fact that dream contents are highly suggestible leads, however to a problem. It has been shown "that we can teach subjects to dream anything they want to dream about. Therefore, if the dream is taken as important evidence for a psychological or philosophical theory, we encounter the problem of a circular loop. The subject may be dreaming what he expects to dream about in order to prove the theory, and this does not constitute scientific evidence of anything" (p. 101).

Judd's presentation focuses primarily on the physical origins of mental disorders, which he indicates are much more widely prevalent than is commonly believed. The development of detailed diagnostic procedures

has allowed for more effective psychopharmacological interventions. One of the key issues raised in the following discussion is the complex causal situation for a mental disorder such as major depression. It is neither purely a physiological matter, nor purely experiential, but rather involves both “a genetic vulnerability and an environmental stressor. Major depression is a complex interaction between one’s inherited constitutional givens, and environmental events that elaborate and precipitate manifestations of the depressive disorder” (p. 129).

One of the most important issues for contemporary cognitive science is raised by Robert Livingstone in the discussion. This is the issue of the persistent and perhaps unavoidable use of metaphors for describing the workings of the mind. The metaphors employed always draw on the forms of technology current at the time that the analysis of mind is made. Livingstone mentions Descartes’ use of the metaphor of hydraulic systems. Numerous other examples could be given as well. For instance Plato uses the metaphor of a carriage to describe a three part model of mind. An argument could also be made that Kant’s model of mind—though not explicit—is the factory. That such metaphors are very powerful is demonstrated by Churchland’s insistence that the mind really is a kind of computer. Livingstone asserts, however, that “I think Western neuroscientists are inclined to believe that there is no model that is entirely appropriate, as yet, for the brain” (p. 30). Metaphors can, however, be very useful as heuristics for analysis. As such they can only be judged by how fruitful they are, and not as to whether they are true or false. Computation is just as much a metaphor for understanding the mind as is Descartes’ hydraulics, though it may be a more fruitful one.

Over the course of the presentations and discussions a variety of different issues and topics came under consideration. One of these topics is different kinds of knowledge. It is interesting to observe in the course of the discussion how easily the scientists involved adopt the categories introduced by the Dalai Lama—direct perception, inference and testimony. These three are, of course, based on classic Indian epistemology. Not only were the categories accepted without discussion, but the goal of knowing exclusively by means of direct perception was accepted. This is in turn a reflection of the Gelugpa interpretation of Madhyamaka that awakening is achieved through the direct perception of emptiness—not simply an intellectual grasp of the concept of emptiness.

While the implication that Buddhism as an entirety holds that direct perception is the highest form of knowledge needs greater nuancing, there is another issue that is more relevant to the issue of the interaction between Buddhism and contemporary thought—arguably the concern of the work stated broadly. Just as cognitive science and Buddhism may mutually benefit from engaging in conversation, so also may Buddhism and contemporary epistemology.

The problem is exemplified when the Dalai Lama asserts that one can today directly perceive that the earth is round rather than flat by looking at pictures taken from outer space. This is reinforced by a version of the “ignorance of our forebears” argument—that centuries ago belief that the earth was flat was based solely on testimony (p. 118). This argument ignores the fact that it is we who have learned to ignore the direct perception of our senses in favor of a highly testimony-laden (i.e., theory-laden) acceptance of a photograph as revealing a “higher” truth. Antonio Damasio, one of the participants, although apparently in agreement with the idea that direct perception is the highest form of knowledge, actually points out the inescapable bonds between theory, observation and knowledge, when he says that in science “The process is always shifting, based on better observations, better technology, and better theory” (p. 117).

B. Alan Wallace picks up this thread in his concluding reflections, pointing out that both science and Buddhism necessarily rely on all three forms of knowledge (p. 170). He goes on to point out the circularity involved in determining authoritative testimony, “By what criteria does one judge who is and who is not an authority who can provide reliable testimony? In other words, whose direct observations are to be deemed trustworthy?” (p. 172). (For an extended discussion of this question in relation to the Buddha as an authoritative source, see Roger Jackson’s *Is Enlightenment Possible?: Dharmakirti and Rgyal Tshab Rje on Knowledge, Rebirth, No-Self and Liberation*, Snow Lion Publications, 1993).

One of the issues that appears repeatedly, though perhaps not centrally, throughout the discussions is that of reincarnation, or metempsychosis. A case of twin sisters who remember people, places and objects from their immediate past life is discussed in terms of its implications for there being extremely subtle (by which is not meant higher or more sophisticated, but rather less obvious) aspects of mind which are not dependent upon the material structure of the brain. One may question, however, just how vital an element this is for Buddhism as a whole. It is certainly central to the institutionalized authority structures of Tibetan Buddhism in which deceased monastic leaders are replaced by themselves in another incarnation (the tulku system). Other cultural forms of Buddhism in which institutional continuity is not dependent upon such a system of reincarnations do not place such great emphasis on the concept. The centrality of karma per se to Buddhism generally does not entail the problematics of reincarnation.

Perhaps the most important point of agreement found in this entire discussion is the conventional nature of the self. Here, Buddhist insight and compassion complement cognitive science, providing a personal value and significance to the shared view: “the Madhyamikas add that while none of us exist as independent things, we do exist in interrelationship with

each other. Thus, we do not exist in alienation from other sentient beings and from our surrounding environment; rather we exist in profound interdependence, and this realization is said to yield a far deeper sense of love and compassion than that which is conjoined with a reified sense of our individual separateness and autonomy" (p. 173).

One of the issues facing contemporary cognitive science is terminological. This is evident in the disagreement over how far to extend the term conscious, e.g., are fetuses conscious?, are animal conscious? This is a definitional rather than an objective question. While these specific questions may not have been raised in the history of Buddhist psychology, there is a well-established terminology in Sanskrit and Tibetan detailing a variety of mental states. The value of this Buddhist psychological terminology, however, will continue to be limited until a standardized set of translation equivalents can be established.

For the relation between Buddhist thought and cognitive science one of the most important issues is also one of the subtlest. It is not directly expressed, but rather is revealed in the nuanced way in which the conversation has been structured. It would be very easy—and entirely misleading—to simply assume that the questions of contemporary cognitive science can be directly addressed to Buddhist psychology and coherent answers received. Not only are the terms of the two discourses not univocal, but the underlying assumptions are also vastly different. This work is informed by an awareness of this issue and is the better for it.

If Buddhism is to continue to develop as a living tradition, it is necessary that interaction of this kind be continued. There is much that is of value in traditional Buddhist psychology, but an ongoing process of discerning and replacing outdated physiological concepts is needed. At the same time it is also essential that some common, but mistaken preconceptions about cognitive science held by contemporary Buddhists be overcome as well.

The Collected Works of Shinran. 2 vols. Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997. xii, 706 pages (volume 1); viii, 364 pages (volume 2). Hardcover: \$ 50.00.¹

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Although Shinran (1173–1262) is known to have advised his followers that his teaching is “the true teaching easy to practice for small, foolish beings; it is the straight way easy to traverse for the dull and ignorant (*The Collected Works of Shinran* [hereafter, *CWS*], vol. 1, p. 3),” his writings are

nevertheless known for their difficulty even for modern educated Japanese readers (Kakehashi Jitsuen, *Seidoku Bukkyō no kotoba: Shinran*, [Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku, 1999], p. 247). Shinran wrote both in *kanbun* (Classical Sino-Japanese, or *kango shōgyō*) and *wabun* (Classical Japanese, or *wago shōgyō*). Reading his *kanbun* writings usually requires that the serious student spend years just to learn the Japanized transformed *kanbun* popular during the Kamakura period (1192–1333). Shinran's writings in *wabun*, which include various styles and forms of text, e.g., prose, verses, hymns (in *imayō*), letters, commentaries, and notes, are in no way easier. Even works written in plain *wabun* are typically loaded with highly technical Buddhist Chinese terminology and concepts, regardless of Shinran's saying that "I write only that foolish people may easily grasp the essential meaning" (*CWS*, vol. 1, pp. 469 and 490).

Considering these preexisting difficulties in the original texts, the completion of the *CWS* is a monumental achievement in the study of Shinran's thought. The *CWS* not only presents an accurate and readable English translation of Shinran's works (vol. 1), but also provides readers with academically sound and scholarly intriguing introductions to all translated texts, a handy glossary with a list of terms, and other reference materials, such as "Notes on Shinran's Readings," and "Names and Titles Cited" in the *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* with cross references to the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* and *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (vol. 2).

From the perspective of bookmaking, the structure of the *CWS* in two volumes seems a little bit odd. Readers may wonder why the publication committee decided to place the introductions to all texts together in the second volume (pp. 11–169), rather than placing them in front of each translation. However, I have actually used the *CWS* in graduate level reading courses, and the two-volume style turns out to be very handy when students need to look up terms or find references in other texts within the first volume. With all the introductions in one place, the second volume by itself could in fact be used independently as an excellent reader for an introductory course on Shinran's thought. Although not explicitly stated in the *CWS*, the publication committee seems to have prepared the second volume not simply as a collection of supplementary reference materials. For graduate students interested in Shinran's thought or instructors who need to discuss Shinran's thought in college level courses, I strongly recommend the second volume as a must-read text.

The *CWS* is no doubt the best and most complete translation of Shinran's writings currently available in English. Even in an excellent work, however, there is always room for future improvement. There are of course a few mistakes here and there, and I was left with some unanswered questions. The most puzzling thing about the *CWS* is its lack of an explanation why the translation committee adopted the Japanese word *shinjin* as the translation of three different words, *shin*, *shinjin*, and *shingyō*,

in Shinran's writings. The issue and policy of the selective adaptation of the words *shinjin* and "entrusting" for *shingyō* are sporadically mentioned in the *CWS*, once in the footnotes of the *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* (vol. 1, p. 77), and once in the introduction to *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* (vol. 2, p. 42); they are also partially explained in the "Glossary of Shin Buddhist Terms," under the entries "Entrusting, *shinjin*" (vol. 2, p. 182) and "Shinjin" (vol. 2, p. 206). However, the reason for substituting *shinjin* for *shin* is not mentioned anywhere in the *CWS*.

The translation committee perhaps believe that their convention of using the word *shinjin* in order to avoid using an English/Christian word, such as "faith," has been accepted by readers as a result of their more than twenty-year publication project, and that therefore no further explanation is necessary. This may be true among practicing Shin followers. However, the issue of whether to use the word *shinjin* as is or to translate it as "faith" is far from settled in scholarly discussions. Rather, the debate seems to be expanding and getting more lively recently (see, for example, Hee-Sung Keel, *Understanding Shinran: A Dialogical Approach* [Fremont, Calif.: Asian Humanity Press, 1995], pp. 80–119, especially footnote 6, pp. 82–83). Given this continuing debate, it would have been helpful had the translation committee included an explanation on this issue as they did previously in the *Notes on the Inscriptions of Sacred Scrolls* (Shin Buddhism Translation Series, 1981, pp. 77–82).

To be fair to the translation committee, I should point out that they do attempt to differentiate their use of *shinjin* for the word *shingyō*. If readers are careful enough to read all the above mentioned notes and entries in the glossary before delving into the *CWS*, they will discover that the translation committee decided to mark the word *shinjin* "with an asterisk when used to render the term *shingyō*" (vol. 1, p. 77). From a stylistic point of view, however, this convention looks a bit odd. The reader must also be careful because the asterisks are occasionally missing in the translation (vol. 1, pp. 3 and 67).

Whether Shinran's original words *shin* and *shingyō* should be replaced with another Japanese word or translated into English is up to the translators' doctrinal interpretation. Yet, if the translators decided to adopt such an unconventional method to translate some of Shinran's most important ideas, at least they should more clearly inform readers at the beginning of the translation. It is also interesting to see that the word "faith" miraculously survives in the translation of the titles of *Yuishinshō mon'i* (Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone', vol. 1, p. 451) and *Yuishinshō* (Essentials of Faith Alone, vol. 1, p. 685), regardless of the committee's effort to purge the word "faith" from the English translation of Shinran's thought.

Another problematic policy set by the translation committee is their rather anachronistic adherence to what they call the doctrinal integrity of

the *Mattōshō* (Lamp for the Latter Ages) in editing Shinran's letters. In the *CWS*, Shinran's letters are first presented in accordance with the order of the *Mattōshō* (vol. 1, pp. 523–555), then supplemented with other collected letters as well as six letters which do not appear in any of the early collections (vol. 1, pp. 559–584). In the introduction to the *Letters* (vol. 2, pp. 156–165), this *Mattōshō* centered editorial policy is justified by reference to the fact that the majority of Shinran's letters are not fully dated and therefore are impossible to present in accurate chronological order. More importantly, they defend their conservative stance by stating, "Preserving the integrity of the early collections is useful for readers concerned chiefly with understanding Shinran's thought, though the principles of compilation may differ from the historical orientation of modern scholarship" (vol. 2, p. 156).

From the perspective of historical studies of Shinran's letters, however, these two reasons are no longer very convincing. It is true that the dates of more than half of Shinran's letters remain unidentifiable, but at least the dates of sixteen (or fourteen according to the edition in *Mattōshō*) out of forty-three letters have already been identified. Furthermore, modern philological studies have discovered that, although the *Mattōshō* is still the most popular collection of Shinran's letters, the date of compilation is later (1333) than other collections, and some of the letters in the *Mattōshō* are less authoritative than earlier ones. This problem is partially acknowledged by the translation committee of the *CWS*, who say, "Where the original letters of *Mattōshō* survive in Shinran's own hand (*Letters* 2, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15) or in the hand of the original transcriber (*Letter* 5), we have followed the originals" (vol. 2, p. 165).

The translation committee tries to play down the problems existing in the *Mattōshō* by saying "The only major variation occurs in Shinran's reply in *Letter* 7" (p. 165). However, given new information brought into light by recent philological studies of Shinran's letters, for example, scholars agree that *Letter* 19 (vol. 1, pp. 550–552) was originally three different letters (or more precisely one letter [vol. 1, pp. 550–551, l. 17] and two other parts [p. 551, l. 18–l. 30 and pp. 551, l. 31–552, l. 11] which were most likely postscripts Shinran attached to now unknown letters).

The translation committee's policy to neglect the "historical orientation of modern scholarship" to preserve "the integrity of the early collections," is therefore regrettably not always "useful for readers concerned chiefly with understanding Shinran's thought." In fact, this *Mattōshō* centered view of Shinran's *Letters* has been abandoned not only by academics but even by the Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, which happens to be the same organization producing this English translation, more than a decade before the publication of the *CWS*.

Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha has published two editions of Shinran's works in Japanese: one, a critical academic edition of the collection of Jōdo Shinshū scriptures, *Jōdo Shinshū seiten: Gentenban* in 1985; the other, a

popular edition, *Jōdo Shinshū seiten: Chūshakuban* in 1988 (both edited by Shinshū Seiten hensan iinkai and published by Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto). In these publications, Shinran's letters were edited according to the authenticity of the source texts and placed in chronological order as best as possible. Since these editions of the *Jōdo Shinshū seiten*, especially the *Chūshakuban*, are gaining recognition as standard editions of the Jōdo Shinshū scriptures among Japanese readers, in future editions of the *CWS*, the editorial committee should reconsider their *Mattōshō* centered editorial policy and revise the translations of Shinran's *Letters* to follow the order of the *Jōdo Shinshū seiten*, which is based on more reliable sources and solid philological studies of the letters.

The translation committee's disinterest in the "historical orientation of modern scholarship" seems to prevail beyond Shinran's *Letters*. In the introduction to the *Teaching, Practice, and Realization*, the committee says, "Many readers tend to place Shinran in the history of Buddhism that begins with Śākyamuni, and view *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* as the product of that historical flow. Shinran himself, however, stands on the Buddha-ground of Amida's Vow, which transcends history" (vol. 2, p. 25). I do not disagree with this statement as a Shin believer's view. But, in order to create a fruitful discussion in modern academic environment, such an absolutist statement is not very helpful for the reader.

In the same introduction, the committee continues their surprisingly hostile attitude to the modern historical approach, stating, "The modern perspective, while standing within history and viewing Śākyamuni, the Pure Land masters, and Shinran historically, seeks to come to the Vow-mind that transcends history through them. This is precisely the opposite of Shinran's perspective, and a true grasp of Shinran is extremely difficult from such an approach" (vol. 2., p. 26). I agree that Shinran did not write the *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* as a historical text, but perhaps they should leave it up to the readers to decide if a modern historical approach makes it more difficult for them to understand Shinran.

The committee seems to misunderstand what constitutes a modern historical approach to religious texts. Particularly troubling is the following statement, which seems to be merely a caricature of the historical approach: "The first step in understanding Shinran is to respect his alterations of the readings of quoted passages, which have been criticized from a perspective within history as 'completely arbitrary and audacious in the extreme.' To contradict his notes and read the quoted passages in *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* according to the literal meaning is to read his work as an historical document" (vol. 2, p. 26). Although very occasionally we still encounter such "bad" historicism, the modern academic approach—to read Shinran's work as an historical document—is precisely opposite to the committee's concern. In order to read Shinran's work historically, it is essential to read his writings as accurately as possible.

Philological studies of Shinran's work as medieval Japanese literature will also help solve many questions which are insoluble through a doctrinal approach only. Unfortunately, the translation committee of the *CWS* does not seem to appreciate the more significant developments in recent "good" historical studies of Shinran's works.

Another historical problem in the *CWS* is that, regarding the manuscript of *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* in the possession of Nishi Hongwanji, the translation committee refuses to concede that the manuscript is not by Shinran's own hand, stating, "The traditional ascription of this manuscript to Shinran has been questioned, however, and at present nothing is known of its provenance" (vol. 2, p. 73). Through meticulous philological and historical studies of the manuscript (e.g., by Shigemi Kazuyuki, *Kyōgyōshinshō no kenkyū* [Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1981], pp. 101–139), modern scholars have already proven that this manuscript is a very close copy of the Bandō manuscript, which is established as Shinran's own hand writing, and was probably completed in 1275, thirteen years after Shinran's death.

A final point concerns the episode in which Shinran received his name from Hōnen. Again, the translation committee overlooks modern scholarship that clarifies the incident. In the postscript of the *Teaching, Practice, and Realization*, Shinran's *bōgō*, Zenshin, is added in brackets by the translators as the new name given to Shinran (then Shakkū) by Hōnen (1133–1212) in 1205.

Further, since my name 'Shakkū' had been changed in accord with a revelation in a dream, on the same day he wrote the characters of my new name [Zenshin] in his own hand. (vol. 1, p. 290)

Although this agrees with the tradition of the *Shūi kotokuden* (in *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* [henceforth, *SSZ*], vol. 3, p. 731) compiled by Kakunyo (1270–1351), the third head priest of the Hongwanji, and the *Rokuyōshō* (*SSZ*, vol. 2, pp. 206 and 440) by Kakunyo's son Zonkaku (1290–1373), modern Japanese historians of Jōdo Shinshū, such as Hiramatsu Reizō, have pointed out that this new name cannot be Zenshin (Hiramatsu Reizō, *Seiten seminar: Shinran Shōnin eden*, [Kyoto: Hongwanji Shuppansha, 1997], pp. 104–105 and 116–119).² According to the custom of the Kamakura period, Hiramatsu explains, Buddhist priests usually had two names, a conventional name (*kemyō*, also called a residential name, *bōgō*), and a real name (*jitsumyō*, also called a reserved name, *imina*). The *kemyō*, or *bōgō*, was the name used publicly to identify a priest. The *jitsumyō*, or *imina*, was an official name used only sparingly (e.g. signing official documents) out of respect to the priest. For example, Hōnen's *jitsumyō* is Genkū but his disciples or followers commonly identified him with his *bōgō*, Hōnen, or Hōnen-bō.

In the case of Shinran, Zenshin or Zenshin-bō is his *kemyō* and before he changed it in 1205, Shakkū was his *jitsumyō*, which is proven by his signature in a document called the *Shichikajō kishōmon* (Seven Article Pledge), co-signed by Hōnen and his major disciples and issued in 1204. The postscript of the *Teaching, Practice, and Realization* says the name Shakkū, his *jitsumyō*, has been changed, but it cannot have been changed to Zenshin, which is his *kemyō*. Hiramatsu concludes that, although the name is mistakenly identified as changed to Zenshin by Kakunyo and Zonkaku, the new *jitsumyō* which Hōnen approved must be Shinran.

Whether the translation committee likes the “historical orientation of modern scholarship” or not, modern scholarship continues to provide objective and useful information. Even though they believe that “a true grasp of Shinran is extremely difficult from such an approach,” at least, in order to avoid these unnecessary problems, the committee needs to become more aware of the recent historical and philological studies on Shinran’s writings.

Despite the problems mentioned above, the translations and introductory materials provided in the *CWS* are, over all, of excellent quality. The accuracy and readability of the translated texts are very close or often better than the modern Japanese renditions of Shinran’s works (e.g., Ishida Mizumaro, *Shinran zenshū*, 5 vols. [Tokyo: Shūnjūsha, 1985–87]). The *CWS* is additionally valuable for the amount of new materials it renders into the English corpus of translations of Shinran’s works. With the translation of the remaining letters of Shinran, as well as the shorter works, the entirety of Shinran’s works are now available in English. *Gutoku’s Notes* is especially a most welcome addition in the *CWS*. Although the text merely looks like a collection of cryptic and sketchy fragments, *Gutoku’s Notes* systematically outlines Shinran’s view of the classification of Buddhist teaching and is an indispensable guide for scholars and students of Shinran’s thought.

Although the *CWS* collects all of Shinran’s works, it might also be helpful to translate the letters of Shinran’s wife, Eshinni. These rare and very insightful first hand observations of Shinran’s life help us to understand the socio-historical and cultural aspects of Shinran’s thought and the early Jōdo Shinshū community.

Although I find the translation committee’s general indifference to modern historical studies problematic, their twenty-year project has established a very high standard for English translations of Shinran’s works and the results are crucial for scholars of religion and students who learn to read Shinran’s work through English translations. In the future, even Japanese students may need to study the English version of Shinran’s works to understand his thought.

Notes

1. This review is based on the author's presentation for a Japanese Religions Group panel, "Intellectual and Pedagogic Reflections on *The Collected Works of Shinran*," at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion (Boston, Massachusetts), November, 1999.
2. It is also noteworthy that the *CWS* and Hiramatsu's book on Shinran's biography were, coincidentally, published by the same publisher, Hongwanji Shuppansha, in the same year. Hiramatsu further elaborates his theory in his recent historical study on Shinran's life (Hiramatsu Reizō, *Shinran* [Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1998], pp. 124–128). Hiramatsu's view is also supported by Satō Masahide, another modern scholar of Shinran (Satō Masahide, *Shinran nyūmon* [Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1998], pp. 74–76).