The approach taken by Groner in this book will certainly inspire future scholars to examine other aspects of Japanese Buddhism using a similar methodology.

*Constituting Communities: Theravāda Buddhism and the Religious Cultures of South and Southeast Asia*. Edited by John Clifford Holt, Jacob N. Kinnard, and Jonathan S. Walters. Albany: State University of New York Press (SUNY Series in Buddhist Studies), 2003. ISBN 0-7914-5692-7, paperback, pp. viii + 224.

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*Constituting Communities* contains ten essays, "inspirited by and dedicated to Frank E. Reynolds." The essays examine Theravāda Buddhism from several perspectives, with an emphasis on communal experience, as stated in the introduction: "the personal and social natures of religion and religious experience are inextricably intertwined" (p. 1). The category "Theravāda Buddhism" is not defined, and the degree to which it is a valid marker for the subjects studied is not explored.

An introduction sets out the premises of the volume—communities are imagined and in a constant state of flux—and gives summaries of the essays. The first chapter, by Jonathan Walters, is entitled "Communal Karma and Karmic Community in Theravāda Buddhist History." It deals with "sociokarma" (an unfortunate term coined by the author: see p. 11) in contemporary Sri Lanka and "in Theravāda studies and in Theravāda history." The statement that according to the historical record "at least publicly none but a tiny handful of Theravādins has considered himself or herself a Bodhisatta, or has been so considered by others" (p. 27) is inaccurate. The public historical record, in the form of a large number of inscriptions and colophons of Southeast Asia, shows aspirations to become a Buddha in the future, expressed by monastics, kings, men, and women. Inscriptions, chronicles, and royal orders demonstrate amply that kings and princes of Ayutthaya and early Bangkok were considered to be bodhisattvas. The bodhisatta practice was a socially active ideology in the region throughout much of the second millennium of the Christian Era. (My examples are for Siam: for Sri Lanka see e.g., Walpola Rahula, *Zen and the Taming of the Bull: Towards the Definition of Buddhist Thought*, London: Gordon Fraser, 1978, p. 76.)

The remark that "from the beginning Theravādins have vehemently rejected the Mahāyāna claim that all Buddhists should and in fact do aspire to the Buddha-vehi-

cle" (p. 27) is unfounded. We do not know when or where "Theravādins" began; early records of "Theravādin" reactions to Mahāyāna claims are rare if they exist at all; and not all Mahāyāna texts "claim that all Buddhists [better, all beings] should and in fact do aspire to the Buddha-vehicle." The statement expresses modern reactions to early modern Western (mis)constructions of an ahistorical and homogeneous Mahāyāna.

John Strong, in "Toward a Theory of Buddhist Queenship: The Legend of Asandhimittā," examines queenship in terms of representations of Asandhimittā, one of Aśoka's queens. He confronts an interesting collection of narratives involving the queen; whether they add up to "a theory of Buddhist queenship" may be questioned. Strong draws on the *Mahāvaṃsa*, Pali commentaries, the *Trai Phum*, and other sources, including "the so-called Cambodian or Extended Mahāvaṃsa" (p. 43).

Here a note is in order on the misnomer "Cambodian Mahāvaṃsa," which deserves to be despatched to long overdue retirement. As long ago as 1937, the editor of the text noted that:

> While it is true that all the MSS. so far discovered are in Cambodian script or acknowledged to be copies from Cambodian MSS., nevertheless to call the work the 'Cambodian Mahāvaṃsa' might prejudice the study of its origin and authorship. I have, therefore, preferred the name 'Extended Mahāvaṃsa' (G.P. Malalasekera, *Extended Mahāvaṃsa*, Colombo: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1937, p. vi).

Confusion arises from the description of the script and manuscripts as "Cambodian." Varieties of the Khmer script were used in the Chao Phraya basin, now the heart of central Thailand, from the fourteenth century if not earlier. When used to record Pali, it was called Khom Pali; when used to record Thai, it was called Khom Thai. Many of the manuscripts in European and Sri Lankan collections came from the old Siamese capital of Ayutthaya, but, because their script was described as Cambodian or Khmer, they were often assumed to come from Cambodia. It is likely that the *Extended Mahāvaṃsa* is from central Siam; whether it was compiled before or after the foundation of Ayutthaya cannot be said, since, regrettably, "the study of its origin and authorship" has not progressed since the time of Malalasekera. I can only add that it was the *Extended Mahāvaṃsa* that was translated into Thai during the First Reign of the Bangkok Period (1782–1809), and that other texts related to the *Mahāvaṃsa* like the *Vaṃsamālinī* were composed in Siam. The title *Extended Mahāvaṃsa* is conventionally acceptable, although one might prefer "elaborated" or "revised."

Two contributors choose as their subjects famous disciples of the Buddha. Liz Wilson, in "Beggars Can Be Choosers: Mahākassapa as a Selective Eater of Offerings," focuses "on monastic begging as a means of unburdening others of neg-

ative karmic conditions" (p. 57). She discusses "Mahākassapa as an ambulatory altar," "Buddhist subversion of Vedic food hierarchies," and "impure offerings and the transfer of demerit." Julie Gifford focuses on another of the greats, Mahāmoggallāna, in "The Insight Guide to Hell: Mahāmoggallāna and Theravāda Buddhist Cosmology." Here the phrase "Theravāda Buddhist" is problematic. Moggallāna's role as cosmic traveller and thaumaturge is sanctioned by the narrative and technical literature of all Buddhist schools available to us: that is, it is a shared tradition, not only "Theravādin." A North Indian Sarvāstivādin tradition even maintains that Mahāmaudgalyāyana (to use the Sanskrit form of the name) was author of the *Prajñaptiśāstra*, a technical text which includes the long cosmological text *Lokaprajñapti*.

On pp. 80–81 the author paraphrases and cites Reginald Ray to the effect that saints teach others without regard for the scholarly considerations that attend textual study. Unfortunately tradition does not fit into such tidy packages. In the *Aṅguttaranikāya* and elsewhere, the Buddha praises monks and nuns like Kaccāyana or Khemā for their exemplary scholarship. Most Abhidharma schools trace their lineage to Sāriputta, and the *Prajñaptiśāstra*, as seen above, was ascribed to Mahāmaudgalyāyana. If in a certain sense Buddhist saints are stereotypes and role models, at the same time they are complex and at times contradictory characters. Gifford's article demonstrates one interesting aspect of Mahāmaudgalyāyana's character—his concern for a poor and elderly female donor.

Two contributions examine the evolution of the clash of representations of religious communities in India and Ceylon. In "When the Buddha Sued Viṣṇu," Jacob Kinnard discusses the struggle for control over the Mahābodhi temple at Bodh Gayā, examining colonial and post-colonial constructions of communal identity. (A thoughtful essay by Tara Doyle takes up the Mahābodhi issue more or less where Kinnard leaves off: see her "'Liberate the Mahabodhi Temple!': Socially Engaged Buddhism, Dalit Style," in Steven Heine and Charles S. Prebish [eds.], *Buddhism in the Modern World: Adaptations of an Ancient Tradition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 249–289.) John Holt, in "Minister of Defense? The Viṣṇu Controversy in Contemporary Sri Lanka," examines changes in the role of Viṣṇu in Sinhalese society, part of the complex of polarization and reformulation of ethnic and religious identities in Ceylon in the recent period.

Anne Blackburn's "Localizing Lineage: Importing Higher Ordination in Theravādin South and Southeast Asia" addresses "questions about the processes through which new Buddhist communities and institutions come to be localized" (p. 131). These are interesting questions. Since the bulk of our evidence for the premodern period relates to the formation or translation of new monastic communities—surviving records being largely monastic—her focus on the introduction of the Siamese ordination lineage from Siam to Ceylon in the eighteenth century is appropriate. She finds that "Saraṇaṃkara [the leading Ceylonese figure in the exchange]

and his colleagues showed a striking selectivity with respect to Siamese Buddhist practices... which suggests a sophisticated understanding of the arguments for lineage and authority created through Buddhist symbolic forms" (p. 136).

Two articles examine the role of preaching and texts in the dissemination of Buddhist ideals. Mahinda Deegalle, in "Preacher as Poet: Poetic Preaching as a Monastic Strategy in Constituting Buddhist Communities in Modern Sri Lanka and Thailand" takes up an important and generally neglected aspect of Buddhism, preaching. "Poetic preaching" is *kavi baṇa*, "the most recent innovation in the field of preaching in modern Sri Lanka" (p. 153). Carol Anderson, in "'For Those Who Are Ignorant': A Study of the *Bauddha Ādahilla*," deals with "a small handbook of instruction for young Buddhists, written in Sinhala." The book concludes with James Egge's "Interpretive Strategies for Seeing the Body of the Buddha." He proposes that "different narratives present two distinct interpretive strategies for seeing the Buddha's body, and that different sets of reliefs present two analogous interpretive strategies for viewing his body" (pp. 189–190).

It is encouraging that scholars of "Theravāda" are asking questions of a range of Pali and vernacular texts and historical sources. It is discouraging that the quality of the essays is uneven. The writing suffers from use of jargon and of appalling neologisms like "sociokarma," "politicokarma," or "bio-moral status." Typing errors, not only in Pali and Sanskrit (Mahākasyapa, p. 3, for Mahākāśyapa; Tissarakhā, twice on p. 49, for Tissarakkhā) but also in English (Jersuslam p. 4) exceed the respectable limit.