

## BOOK REVIEWS

*THE LOTUS SUTRA*. Translated by Burton Watson. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993. xix, 352 with glossary, index. ISBN 0 231 08160 X (cloth)

THERE ARE ALREADY several English translations of Kumārajīva's version of the Lotus Sutra (cf. the selected bibliography in the translation of the Lotus Sutra by KUBO Tsugunari and YUYAMA Akira, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1993, p. 343). Burton Watson is a well-known translator of many Chinese and Japanese works. His translation is the first by a sinologist of repute. In his 'Translator's note' he remarks that he hopes to have given some sense of the rich literary appeal of the Lotus Sutra. In this respect he has been very successful. His translation is remarkable both for the fidelity to the original text and the lucidity of the style. For the benefit of readers who have no special background in Buddhism Watson has added a detailed glossary which explains names of persons, of places and technical terms.

There is one particularity of the translation which may puzzle the reader, namely, his treatment of numbers. For instance, on p. 23 Watson translates: "A Buddha has personally attended a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a million, a countless number of Buddhas." This translation creates the impression that the numbers are being listed rather than multiplied. Kubo and Yuyama translate: "The Buddhas have closely attended innumerable hundred of thousands of myriads of koṭis of other Buddhas." In other places Watson leaves out the commas, cf. p. 107: "three thousand billion Buddhas" (Kubo and Yuyama: "three hundred myriads of koṭis of Buddhas"); p. 123: "five hundred ten thousand million lands"; p. 161: "a hundred thousand million Buddhas." There is no doubt that the successive numbers indicate a multiplication and not an enumeration of increasingly higher numbers. Watson always renders *yi* 億 by 'million', Kubo and Yuyama by 'koṭi' (ten million). However, the meaning of *yi* is 'a hundred thousand'.

It is only rarely that Watson's translation is not entirely correct. For instance, p. 49: "How greatly have I been deceived" (cf. Taishō vol. IX, p. 11a3: 我爲自欺誑). Kubo and Yuyama have, "Because I have been deceiving myself" (*op. cit.*, p. 55). On p. 173 Watson translates: "great jeweled incense was burning" (p. 33a12: 燒大寶香). Here also the translation of Kubo and Yuyama is to

be preferred: "A very precious incense was burning" (*op. cit.*, p. 182). On p. 57 Watson leaves out part of the text and translates: "they are likely to be burned in the fire" (p. 12b27: 或當墮落爲火所燒). Here Hurvitz has: "They may fall victim to the fire and be burnt" (*Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, New York, 1976, p. 59). Kubo and Yuyama translate: "They may fall into danger and be burnt by the fire" (*op. cit.*, p. 63). On p. 58 Watson is rather free in translating: "a white ox . . . pulling the carriage smoothly and properly at a pace fast as the wind" (p. 12c23 行步平正·其疾如風). More precise would be: "whose gait is even and straight and whose speed is like the wind." On p. 72 Watson translates: "To wipe out all suffering—this is called the third rule" (p. 15a29: 滅盡諸苦名第三諦). Here the translation 'truth' is certainly to be preferred to that of 'rule'. Watson himself explains in his glossary the 'four noble truths', and not the 'four rules'. On p. 77 Watson translates: "Camel, donkey, pig, dog—these will be the forms he will take on" (p. 16a1: 駝驢猪狗是其行處). The Chinese text has: "these will be his domain." Kubo and Yuyama render this well: "They will live among camels, mules, boars and dogs" (*op. cit.*, p. 83). It would be possible to quote a few more passages in which Watson's translation is not entirely satisfactory but they are very few compared to the many passages in which his translation is both more precise and elegant than those of his predecessors. His beautiful rendering of the Lotus Sutra is to be highly recommended.

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*HÖBŌGIRIN. Dictionnaire encyclopédique du bouddhisme d'après les sources chinoises et japonaises. Septième volume: Daijō-Daishi.* Paris-Tokyo, 1994. pp. 767-1034; planches XLVI-LV. Supplément au septième volume du Hōbōgirin, 41 pp.

WORK ON THE *Hōbōgirin* began in Tokyo in 1926 and the first two fascicles were published in 1929 and 1931. The materials for these fascicles were collected mainly by Japanese scholars and translated into French. The third fascicle was prepared in Paris by Paul Demiéville and appeared in 1937. Whereas the first two fascicles contained many brief articles which were far from exhaustive (see, for instance, the article on *araya*, skt. *alaya*, pp. 35a-37a), the third fascicle (pp. 189-298) comprised some very long articles based upon original research. Demiéville's long article on *Byō* (Malady), pp. 224b-265a is well-known and often cited and has been translated into English by Mark Tatz (*Buddhism and Healing*, Boston: University Press of America, 1985).