

BOOK REVIEWS

Mahāyāna Buddhism, Chinese and Tibetan, rather than Sanskrit Buddhism, the above-mentioned facts might be neglected altogether.

The criticisms noted above should by no means detract from the vital significance and invaluable merit of this book. Its contents show a remarkably high standard, and as stated above, it is undoubtedly a great contribution to the studies in this field. Its copious and detailed notes supplementary to the main content are indeed a wondrous accomplishment in themselves, and the index at the end could almost serve as a kind of dictionary of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Our hearty appreciation is due to the author's great and original contributions.

MITSUYOSHI SAIGUSA

ZEN PAINTING. By Yasuichi Awakawa, translated by John Bester. Kodansha International Ltd., 1970, 184 pp.

The present work covers a chronological period extending from the tenth century Chinese forerunner Shih K'o to the Japanese priest Nantenbō, who died in 1925. The great majority of the paintings reproduced are Japanese works from the 15th through the 19th centuries. The Chinese painters represented include Liang K'ai, Yū Chien, Mu Ch'i, Chih Weng and Yin-t'o-lo, whose paintings are to be found in greatest numbers in Japanese, mostly temple, collections. We may assume that there, since the Kamakura Period, they have been hung, admired, studied and sometimes copied, and that they, perhaps more than any other external factor, were instrumental in shaping the subsequent tradition of Zen painting in Japan.

It is regrettable this style of painting is not better known in the West. Works in western languages have been few; exceptions being Dr. Suzuki's various pamphlets on Sengai, and Kurt Brasch's book *Hakuin und die Zen-Malerrei*, none of which are easily obtainable at present. Of course, for the Japanese, who possess a great many of the treasures of Zen painting, it is a natural subject for study, and there is an abundance of material, much of it quite new.

For western students of Buddhism and of Oriental art, Dr. Awakawa's book is valuable if only because it makes available a selection of reproductions of Zen paintings which, with the exception of the Chinese examples, have largely been accessible only in Japanese language editions. The contribution of the text is more difficult to assess. It is not an introduction to the subject as one might have expected in such a book, but a series of short, informative essays, each reflecting the author's wide knowledge of Zen painting. They should on the whole be very useful in aiding the reader to arrive at some measure of understanding regarding this intriguing genre of Buddhist art. This is indeed a hard task, for, as Dr. Awakawa writes: "... critics are ordinarily accustomed to using their impressions of an artist's work as their means of appraising the man. With Zenga, however, such appraisals must take into account the Zen content of the work, and the critic's insight in this case is contingent on his degree of Zen experience." This is the crucial point for one

writing about almost any aspect of Zen culture. Here the work would best be written, in the same way a true Zenga is drawn, by those who by a happy dispensation of nature, possess ideally a gift of profound religious experience in conjunction with an ability of being able to express that experience. That this is a high order may be seen clearly revealed in the exceedingly small number of people who have written well of Zen itself.

Obstacles to a full understanding of Zenga range from the comparatively insignificant one of Buddhist terminology through the metaphysical. And yet we may find they express elements kindred to those of our own time and experience. They are done unselfconsciously, in complete freedom, with an almost offhand facility. But those new to them must be admonished against underestimating them, where the vague and minimal treatment might give the impression of a certain awkwardness. The truth is that they are free, completely free, absolutely free, but that the freedom is, in Buddhist terminology, a "sportive *samadhi*" a concept well described by Dr. Suzuki as "the life of a Bodhisattva which is free from every kind of constraint and restraint. It is like the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field, and yet there is in him a great compassionate heart functioning all the time freely and self-sufficiently."

It might be added in passing that two other works, which will add greatly to our understanding of Zenga, are scheduled to appear soon. One is D.T. Suzuki's work on Sengai, which is promised for this year, the other is the English translation of Shin'ichi Hisamatsu's *Zen to Bijutsu* (Zen and Fine Arts), now being prepared for publication.

N. A. WADDELL

IN THE TRACKS OF BUDDHISM. By *Fritbjof Schuon*. Translated from the French by Marco Pallis. London: Allen & Unwin, 1968, 168 pp.

Mr. Schuon who is well known for his various works on religion and metaphysics (another recent contribution being UNDERSTANDING ISLAM: London, 1963) presents us with a highly subjective and stimulating interpretation of Buddhist thought and tradition. In his quest to explain Buddhism in its multifaceted development the author draws numerous comparisons from other mainstreams of religious thought: Vedānta, Hinduism, Islamism, Judeo-Christianity, Taoism and Shintō, as well as amply expressing his own philosophical and spiritual outlook. Three whole chapters on Shinto are especially worthy of note.

This reviewer's dissatisfaction with the book is anticipated in the "translator's preface" in which Mr. Pallis mentions, "considerable passages the subject-matter of which does not, at first sight, seem to come under a strictly Buddhist label." (p. 9). The publisher describes the present book as being "at once loosely and firmly connected by the thread of a common ideal." Its lack of total coherence and occasional repetition of ideas may be due to the fact that it was assembled from sources and articles written at various times, and not originally composed as a separate work.