

its Indian roots, to its institutionalization in China, Korea, and Japan, ending with the tradition's transmission to Western countries. Following this insightful historical outline, the author gives detailed information on the texts translated in the first part. In addition to a short description of each text, he provides the reader with a selection of their editions, a list of existing translations into Western languages, and literature for further reading.

With this book, Kleine manages to bring together translations of some of the representative texts of the Japanese Pure Land tradition. His outline of the development of Pure Land Buddhism over the centuries through different countries does not give new insights to the informed reader, but is nonetheless an excellent introduction for those not yet familiar with the topic.

It could be asked why the author overwhelmingly focuses on texts that were either written by Hōnen or Shinran, or important for their line of Pure Land Buddhism. It certainly would have been interesting for the reader to get a broader picture of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, as would have been possible if the author also translated texts from the Tendai or Shingon Pure Land traditions. Of course, it is not possible to represent the plethora of Pure Land Buddhism with just a few texts, even if one concentrates solely on Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. It is therefore not really appropriate to criticize the author for this. Kleine has done an admirable job of presenting different genres of Pure Land literature.

*Theravada-buddhismen: Introduktion og tekster.* By Ole Holten Pind and Esben Andreasen. Forlaget Univers: Højbjerg, 2015. 257 pages. Hardcover: ISBN 978-8-7916-6849-4.

MICHAEL PYE

This book, intended for the general reader, schools, and colleges, offers a clear and accessible introduction to Theravada Buddhism. Its appearance is the result of a fine cooperation between one of Denmark's few Pali specialists, Ole Holten Pind, and Esben Andreasen, a well-known Danish writer in the field of religious education. To Pind must be credited the translations from Pali into Danish, which make up about four-fifths of the book, and to Andreasen the skilful introduction and overall editing.

Why Theravada Buddhism? The reasons given (p. 45) are twofold. This tradition is one of the oldest forms of Buddhism, though only one, while

at the same time its canon of texts is in fact still available today. It is also pointed out that while Theravada Buddhism is present in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar, its traditional center is in Sri Lanka, to where it was first transmitted from India under the rule of king Mahinda. Thus the tradition that Theravada Buddhism best represents what we know of early Buddhism is reasserted here, carefully but undogmatically.

Andreasen's introduction is an easily accessible but very judicious balance between essential historical information and key points in the early Buddhist system of teaching, meditation, and ritual practice. So, students are introduced to background elements of Indian religious tradition such as Jainism and yoga, the beginnings of Buddhism against this background, and the special role of King Aśoka for its further development and expansion. The story of the Buddha himself is regarded, not incorrectly, as being essentially legendary in the available form, while yet important in its paradigmatic function. The onward view towards the emergence of the Mahayana is also briefly mentioned, so the historical window towards those more complex later developments is left open.

The main part of the book is taken up by the texts themselves, the selections all running over just a few pages each. They are distributed under the headings "Buddha," "Dhamma," and "Saṅgha," with one more section containing three Jātaka tales. The canonical tripartite division is therefore not followed; but for educational purposes this is quite acceptable. These translations were previously published by Pind under the title *Buddhismen: Tekster fra Theravāda-Traditionen*<sup>1</sup> in an academic format, but a plan to make a paperback edition available morphed into the present work, which is justifiably a hardback for long-term and library use. A companion volume for Mahayana Buddhism would be welcome, but without a pre-existing representative anthology of authoritatively translated sources (in Danish) such as we have here, it would be difficult to achieve. In sum, this joint project is very successful and will serve a generation of Danish students very well.

<sup>1</sup> Ole Holten Pind, *Buddhismen: Tekster fra Theravāda-traditionen* (Århus: Systime Academic, 2005).