

BOOK REVIEWS

TALKS ON BUDDHIST ART (佛教美術講話), by Professor Gemmyo Ono, of Shūkyō Daigaku, of the Jōdo Sect. 6 × 9 inches. 668 pages, with 200 hundred full-page and 84 smaller illustrations. Price, ¥ 9.00.

This was written, according to the author, who is an authority on Buddhist art or iconography, primarily as a contribution to the study of Oriental culture as was manifested in Buddhist art; but this was not his sole purpose, for he also wants through this medium to make the world gain a first step towards the proper appreciation of Buddhism which has been one of the main factors of civilisation in the East for more than two thousand years. The author calls the work "an humble booklet" on the subject and hopes to explain the Buddha's homely virtues which made such deep impressions on his immediate as well as early disciples. They could not content themselves with merely reciting the sutras and recording their Master's anecdotes, their feelings were to be expressed in art, in form appealing to their imagination religiously and esthetically. How they decorated their rock-temples with sculptures and paintings is eloquently illustrated in the artistic remains we have discovered throughout India. Professor Ono thinks the Mahāyāna is too full of abstractions and speculations which may appeal to the highly trained in philosophy and logic; for ordinary people not so interested in metaphysics, the intimate pictures of the life of the Buddha, the Jātaka tales, or the parables are just the thing, as these appeal to their unsophisticated minds more than anything else. When we see those sculptures, naïve in conception and sincere in expression, we feel so thoroughly purified of con-

ceits, egotistic desires, and defilements which make up so much of our daily life. Not the Mahāyānistic but rather the Hinayānistic, side of Buddhism, thinks the author, ought to be more popularly propagated.

The book is divided into seven parts: 1. The Life of the Buddha; 2. The *Jātaka* Tales; 3. Statues and Pictures of the Buddha; 4. The Universe and the Five Forms of Existence; 5. Scenes from the Pure Land; 6. The Mandalas; and 7. Various Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Gods, and Other Spiritual Beings. Each section is preceded by some introductory remarks and is filled with illustrations taken from various sources, India, China, Central Asia, and Japan. The "humble booklet" overflows with valuable informations and enlightening explanations. The author has purposely avoided to enter into detailed accounts of the subjects giving reasons for his conclusions, as the book is primarily for the general reader and not for the scholar. If the numerous half-tone illustrations were just a trifle finer and clearer, they would enhance the value of the book immensely, which are however good and clear enough for ordinary purposes.

HISTORY OF BUDDHIST THOUGHT IN CHINA (支那佛教思想史), by Yeshe Tachibana. 6×9 inches. 619 pages, with full index of 60 pages, and some illustrations.

This is a continuation work of the author's *History of Buddhist Thought in India*, published some years ago. Being a well-informed and an independent thinker, he refuses to follow the track of his predecessors, who, he thinks, have lost their freedom of thought by following too closely the traditional method of study. In his preface to the present work, he says in substance: "This is to study how Buddhism was understood and interpreted in China since its introduction there. The fundamental principles of Buddhism were sought in India

in the intellect, in philosophy, and the religion of emancipation was the outcome of their application in practical life. This was what made Buddhism universal, it was not confined in India, but overflowed the national boundaries spreading itself all over the world. Whereas in China Buddhism was not comprehended in this manner, the traditional mode of thinking which could not gain the height of pure metaphysics failed to interpret the true spirit of Buddhism. Chinese Buddhism therefore was not pure Buddhism but one so coloured with the thoughts characteristic of the Chinese people who have no inner psychological penetration. They failed to sound the depths of Buddhism as a religion of emancipation."