brings us much closer to a fuller and more nuanced understanding of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Nattier has once again distinguished herself as one of "a few good scholars."

Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism. Richard K. Payne and Taigen Dan Leighton, eds. New York: Routledge (Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism), 2006. 288 pages. $120.00 cloth, ISBN 0-415-35917-1.

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Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism provides glimpses at the contours of religious discourse in medieval Japan from a variety of perspectives. This collection of essays, consciously moving away from an explication of the fundamental doctrines of both the established and the newly-arising schools of Buddhism of the Heian and Kamakura periods, examines both the role and the conception of language in the doctrinal innovations of the period. Because of the broad range of topics covered by the authors of the work, it is difficult to make a statement that accurately reflects the concerns and arguments of each essay presented there. The authors seem to share a constellation of concerns—including the modes of discourse, the linguistic innovations, and the philosophies of language in the religious thought of the period—which each brings to bear on their disparate objects of study.

In the introduction, Richard Payne and Taigen Dan Leighton attempt to lay out the theoretical foundations that inform all the essays in the work. Drawing on the thought of Kocku von Stuckrad, Robert Wuthnow, and other theorists, Payne sketches the outlines of the terms "discourse" and "ideology" as employed in the text, taking up both concepts as essential to a method that transcends the limitations of the one-dimensional, formulaic constructions that have informed much of the preceding scholarship on the religious landscape of medieval Japan. Describing the vast aspiration that underlies the work, Payne states, "One of our goals for this collection is to focus on what Buddhism—its practices and doctrines, its traditions and institutions—meant for Japanese peoples themselves, rather than what it means for ourselves in the present day. . . . [This] means attempting to view medieval Japanese Buddhist praxis in terms of its own social, historical, and cultural location" (pp. 5–6). Although this is an enormous task that a single book cannot possibly complete, *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism* is a necessary first step in this process of interpreting medieval Japanese Buddhism from a perspective that emphasizes the concerns of the historical actors themselves, rather than the concerns of modern scholars.

In "Metaphor and Theory of Cultural Change," Dale Wright examines the role the creation of new metaphors plays as an impetus for cultural change. First, he describes the three primary sources of cultural change within a society to be "novel experience, inferential reasoning, and metaphorical extension" (p. 21). He then moves on to a detailed presentation of the manner in which metaphor evokes changes in a culture.

Mark Blum analyzes the works of several medieval Buddhist authors to clarify the position of the concepts of *sangoku* (the three Buddhist countries of India, China, and Japan) and *mappō* (the latter days of the Dharma) in the medieval Japanese world-view. Blum argues that these two concepts lay at the basis of the formation of a Japanese national identity and view of history in the medieval period. Each of the authors that he examines interprets the significance of these two ideas in a different manner. However, due to the fact that one or both of the concepts are central to the thought of each author, Blum claims that the "*sangoku-mappō* construct" was deeply embedded in the discourse of the period. Blum raises the question of how the problem inherent in the teaching of *mappō* (the idea that the Japanese have inherited a "degenerate Dharma," which is no longer capable of bringing about true liberation) was faced and overcome (or completely ignored) by the respective thinkers. He also describes the use of the concept of *sangoku* as a basis for the assertion of Japanese equality with, and in some cases superiority over, China and India and intimates the significance of the omission of other Buddhist countries, particularly Korea, from the *sangoku* scheme. Blum clearly demonstrates the importance of these two concepts in the formation of the Japanese national and historical consciousness, while at the same time showing the plurality of interpretations of these concepts that flourished in the medieval period.

Fabio Rambelli discusses the multiple roles that religious texts played in medieval Japanese society in his article "Texts, Talismans, and Jewels." First arguing that the modern perception of a text as an object to be read for meaning was perhaps not the primary understanding of religious texts in medieval Japan, he then gives several examples of uses of texts in the medieval period that differ greatly from the uses of texts in the contemporary period. For example, having a text was often proof of a certain degree of religious attainment or understanding. Indeed, he states that in the medieval period, "receiving a text was not an encouragement to read more, but the certification that one had read enough" (p. 55). The majority of Rambelli's article focuses on analyzing the *Reikiki*, a Shinto text that is heavily influenced by esoteric Buddhism. The twelfth fascicle of this work was understood by commentators to be a heavenly talisman that was transmitted to the emperor Daigo by a deity and played a central role in the performance of initiation rites (*kanjō*) in certain Shinto traditions. Rambelli sees this heavenly talisman in the *Reikiki* as exemplifying one of the standard attitudes toward religious texts in medieval Japan. That is, sacred texts often were used as talismans, being employed primarily for ritual purposes, such as

in consecration or initiation rituals. His article closes with a description of Kukai's understanding of textuality which transcends the modern conception of texts as vehicles of meaning.

In "Awakening and Language," Richard Payne seeks the sources of the attitude toward language in Japanese esoteric Buddhism in various schools in India. In an attempt to overcome "the stereotypical image of Buddhism as seeking mystical silence" (p. 80), Payne shows that the use of extraordinary language in the Shingon tradition indicates an attitude that language is not an obstacle to the realization of religious truth, but a vehicle for that realization. He points to the Hindu grammarian Bhartṛhari, the Śaiva siddhanta school, and the Spanda school as examples of the intellectual milieu in which the fundamental sutras of the Shingon tradition were written. In these tantric philosophies of language, *mantra* play a central role in liberation that results from ritual practice. Payne then turns to an examination of several Buddhist philosophies of language, finding both skeptical and conventionalist attitudes toward language in the early Buddhist scriptures and also a strand in esoteric thought that argues for the identity of the *mantra* and, in the example cited, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. In this interpretation—which takes the Indian concept of the identity of words and things as its basis—*mantra*, as speech acts, are taken to be effective means for liberation. Payne's analysis points out a plurality of attitudes regarding language in the Buddhist tradition which has often been ignored in previous scholarship.

James Ford, in his article, "Buddhist Ceremonials (*Kōshiki*) and the Ideological Discourse of Established Buddhism in Early Medieval Japan," discusses a mode of discourse popular among the established schools of the Kamakura period. *Kōshiki*, a literary, or liturgical, genre, played an important role in the fundraising efforts and in the propagation of Buddhism by the established schools of the Kamakura period. Although their form and content vary, *kōshiki* "served as the liturgical basis for popular rituals designed to foster devotion to a particular Buddha, bodhisattva, patriarch, or even sacred text" (p. 97). After a brief review of the history of the *kōshiki* genre, Ford presents a detailed analysis of a *kōshiki* dedicated to Miroku by the Hossō scholar Jōkei, one of the most prolific authors of this literary form. In this five-part text, Jōkei strongly urges his audience to repent their sins, rely on Miroku, and aspire for birth in his realm, the Tosotsu heaven. Jōkei also extols the virtues of achieving birth, which is treated as a step on the path to enlightenment. Ford highlights Jōkei's sectarian agenda in his treatment of Miroku, who is considered as a patriarch of the Hossō school. Ford then broadens the scope of his analysis to consider Jōkei's ideological agenda in more detail. Ford describes five themes in Jōkei's thought that receive much attention in his *kōshiki*: 1) the central position of Śākyamuni in the Buddhist tradition, 2) the promotion of aspiring for birth in realms other than Amida's Pure Land, such as Miroku's Tosotsu and Kannon's Mt. Fudaraku, 3) the recognition of a need to rely on a power other than the self to attain spiritual prog-

ress, 4) the importance of self-cultivation on the Buddhist path, and 5) an attitude of pluralism regarding both practices and objects of devotion that is based on the differences in the capacities of each individual practitioner. These themes highlight Jōkei's conscious attempt to offer an attractive alternative to the newly-arising schools of the period, particularly the Pure Land schools.

In "The Body of Time and the Discourse of Precepts," Mark Unno considers five types of time at work in Myōe Kōben's thought and his advocacy of strict adherence to the precepts in the difficult historical situation of *mappō*. Unno argues that through recourse to time other than historical time, Myōe was able to overcome the predicament of *mappō* and come into direct contact with buddhas and bodhisattvas who worked outside the confines of historical time. Unno first describes "modified historical time" in Myōe's works. He argues that rather than accepting the image of a steady decline since the passing of Śākyamuni that is prevalent in *mappō* thought, Myōe envisioned Buddhist history as a series of fluctuations, or ups and downs, and believed that through a strict adherence to the precepts, one would be able to connect directly with Śākyamuni. Unno then discusses the roles of cosmic, visionary, and oneiric time in Myōe's works. The use of these types of time allowed Myōe to transcend the confines of historical time and directly experience a world in which the realization that was thought to take thousands of eons could be achieved in an instant. Unno then considers archeological time in relation to Myōe's worship of the relics of Śākyamuni. Because Myōe considered these relics to be the concrete form of the Buddha himself, relic worship allowed him to overcome the vast historical gap that separated him from Śākyamuni. Unno then turns to a discussion of the intersection of several of these strands of time in one event in Myōe's life: the oracle that he received from the Kasuga deity, admonishing him to abandon his plans to travel to India. Unno argues that, because this deity, while being an incarnation of Śākyamuni, was also the central deity of Myōe's clan, the oracle can be considered as an expression of the call of his familial ties to remain in Japan. Unno clearly describes the problem Myōe faced in the doctrine of *mappō* and illuminates the variety of ways in which Myōe manipulated concepts of time in order to overcome this problem.

Ryūichi Abé considers the significance of another event in Myōe's life, the severing of his own ear, in "Swords, Words, and Deformity." Abé first depicts several instances in Myōe's youth when he attempted to fulfill the bodhisattva ideal of giving either one's own life or a part of one's own body for the sake of saving suffering sentient beings. Although these attempts of Mōye to discard his body (*shashin*) for the sake of others failed, he clearly had a desire to fulfill the bodhisattva ideal from an early age. Abé shows how this desire finally culminated in Myōe's bold act of severing his right ear. He then discusses the social implication of this act, particularly focusing on the practice in medieval Japan of severing the body parts of criminals as punishment. Abé shows that Myōe's loss of his ear not only deeply affected

his view of himself as a non-person (*hinin*), or social outcast, but also allowed him to work closely with groups that fell outside the bounds of medieval Japanese society, including lepers, beggars, and other outcasts. Abé draws a parallel between Myōe's work and that of other outcasts who, while considered to be polluted, served the function of removing pollution from society and argues that Myōe's position as a self-sentenced outcast greatly increased his ability to work in the interests of those who had violated the social order.

In "Not Mere Written Words," Jacqueline Stone discusses three views of the language of the *Lotus Sutra* in order to "highlight aspects of the doctrinal, institutional, and ritual contexts of medieval Japanese Buddhist discourses about language" (p. 162). She first considers two medieval Tendai texts which, based on the difference in their understanding of the nature of the phenomenal world, present two contrasting views of the language of the *Lotus Sutra*. In the *Sanze shobutsu sōkanmon kyōsō hairyū*, she finds that while the language of the *Lotus Sutra* is given precedence over other sutras in terms of soteriological function, language itself, including that of the *Lotus Sutra*, is fundamentally treated skeptically as the "language of dreams." The other text that she examines, the *Kankō ruijū*, presents a positive view of language in its assertion that "words and letters are liberation." She places these two texts in the context of two currents of doctrinal interpretation in medieval Tendai original enlightenment thought: "one that sees phenomena as mind-produced and therefore ultimately illusory, and another that sees concrete phenomena as instantiating ultimate reality just as they are" (p. 168). Stone then considers the debate over the new doctrine that calming and contemplation surpasses the *Lotus Sutra* (*shikan shō hokke*), which became popular among Tendai scholars of the Kantō region, through an examination of several sources. Finally, Stone turns to a discussion of a letter by Nichiren, in which he argues that the words of the *Lotus Sutra* are capable of instilling buddhahood into inanimate objects, while other sutras and religious language, such as *mantra*, lack this power. Nichiren argues that the *Lotus Sutra* should be used in rituals to consecrate buddha images. He also argues that the sutra has the power to induce the realization of enlightenment in the body of the recently deceased. Through her analysis, Stone reveals a variety of attitudes in the Tendai and Nichiren schools toward the language of the *Lotus Sutra*.

Taigen Dan Leighton suggests that the discourse of the *Lotus Sutra* served as a source of Dōgen's discursive style. Leighton first examines three of Dōgen's dharma hall discourses that reflect the self-referential style of the *Lotus Sutra*. In these three discourses, Dōgen speaks of a dharma that he never explicitly preaches, which, Leighton argues, is similar to the style of the *Lotus Sutra*, which is full of praises of a wondrous dharma that is never explicated. He then moves to a discussion of the "self-reflexive" nature of the parables in the *Lotus Sutra*, which can also be seen in Dōgen's works. Leighton also argues that Dōgen's use of fantastic imagery was inspired in part by the imagery and use of parables in the *Lotus Sutra*.

Steven Heine examines several aspects of Dōgen's *kōan* strategies in his article "Empty-Handed, but not Empty-Headed," showing that Dōgen "reinterprets *kōan* to support several different didactic and metaphysical positions concerning the doctrines, rituals and practices of Zen monastic life" (p. 222). Heine describes several instances in which Dōgen changes the narrative structure or the outcome of a *kōan* in order to express an understanding that differs from the traditionally accepted one. Heine also shows how Dōgen extends or inverts the word play of a *kōan* to drive home a point. Heine's analysis reveals the creative strategies that Dōgen employed to rework existing Chan literature into his own original expressions of doctrine. Heine's explication of Dōgen's reinterpretations of a variety of *kōan* vividly depicts Dōgen's stance on issues such as supranormal powers, gender, the role of ritual, the importance of work in monastic life, and the central position of discourses on the dharma in Zen training.

Nasu Eishō, in his article "Rely on the Meaning, not on the Words," discusses Shinran's creative reinterpretation of the grammar and word order of several texts that he quotes in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, arguing that Shinran was employing a method called the *kanjin*-style of reading Chinese texts, which was popular in some Tendai circles, particularly the Eshin school. Starting with a brief description of the historical conditions, such as the persecution of Hōnen's followers in the Karoku persecution (1227), that lay in the background of the composition of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Nasu then examines five passages in which Shinran significantly altered the meaning of the original text through a creative application of Japanese grammar to the Chinese original. Nasu's analysis focuses on Shinran's reinterpretation of the concept of merit-transference to lay the doctrinal foundations for Hōnen's teaching of "no-merit-transference." Shinran's readings of these texts make the subject of merit-transference Amida, or the bodhisattva Dharmākara. Unfortunately, while Nasu offers what he terms the "standard reading" of these passages, he fails to offer a source for this standard reading. However, his presentation clearly details several of the most important passages that Shinran reworked to express his thought.

The topics discussed in the articles in *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism* cover a wide range of personages, sects, and systems of thought. Each author presents a detailed analysis of their respective objects of study while remaining true to the goal expressed by Payne in the introduction. The book skillfully presents snapshots of the religious landscape of Japan in the late Heian and Kamakura periods. The focus of each author on some aspect of the religious language and discourse of the period gives the work a high degree of continuity in spite of the disparate subjects treated there. By presenting such a variety of examples of the religious discourse of the era, the book allows the reader to get a sense of some of the contours of the discursive field in which the religious thinkers—and the religious practitioners—of medieval Japan operated.