

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

TIBETAN BUDDHISM: Reason and Revelation. Edited by Steven D. Goodman and Ronald M. Davidson. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992, pp. ix + 215, ISBN 0-7914-0785-3

IN THE MIRROR OF MEMORY: Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism. Edited by Janet Gyatso. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992, pp. vii + 307, ISBN 0-7914-1077-3

These collections of papers on Tibetan and Indian Buddhism are two of the unnumbered but very numerous volumes in the SUNY Series in Buddhist Studies. Although they are organized in very different ways, the two books are similar in that they consist largely of the work of a recent generation (particularly in the case of *Tibetan Buddhism*) of mostly North American scholars, two of whom, Janet Gyatso and Matthew Kapstein, have contributed to both volumes. The collections also contain a number of papers by prominent older scholars who have been influential in training this younger generation. On the whole, the papers exhibit an extensive familiarity with original texts as well as a concern for philological accuracy. And in both collections, one can see the progress that has been made by this generation: many more important texts are being studied; Tibetan scholars are being consulted in more fruitful ways; and there is a greater interest in, and sophistication concerning, non-Buddhist philosophy.

Tibetan Buddhism consists of eight papers on a variety of topics that have little in common other than a deliberate inclination away from texts and historical figures associated with the dGe-lugs-pa school. The editors have, as the title suggests, divided the book into two sections: "Philosophical Explorations" and "Visionary Explorations," the second comprising about three-quarters of the whole.

Herbert Guenther opens the first section with "Some Aspects of *rdzogs-chen* Thought." On the basis of a number of texts by the famous rÑin-ma philosopher, kLoñ-chen rab-'byams-pa, he discusses the *rdzogs-chen* emphasis on process rather than substance or essence, which he characterizes as static, but he cautions us not to misunderstand: "Maybe we have to learn to think in terms of 'both-and', instead of the habitual 'either-or', and beyond that, even think holistically (*rdzogs-chen*)—an opening-up process which allows for the play of the static and dynamic" (p. 14).

In "What is Buddhist Logic?" Kennard Lipman refers to Lambert Schmithausen's criticism of D. S. Ruegg for favoring the dGe-lugs-pa interpretation of *tathāgatagarbha* on the grounds that the dGe-lugs-pas illegitimately

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“harmonize” the conflicting doctrines of *śūnyatā* and *tathāgatagarbha*. Relying on the work of mDo-sñags bsTan-pa'i ñi-ma, a modern Tibetan scholar, Lipman finds a way to contextualize the discussion of these two notions in a rÑiñ-ma criticism of the system of epistemological evaluation or validation (*tshad-ma*) employed by the dGe-lugs-pas.

Karen Lang's “A Dialogue on Death,” the last philosophical article, is an account of the discussion of death in the first chapter of Āryadeva's *Catuhśataka* and the reaction to it in four Tibetan commentaries, two by noted scholars of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Red-mda'-ba gZon-nu blo-gros and rGyal-tshab Dar-ma rin-chen, and two by modern rÑiñ-ma scholars, gZan-dga' gZan-phan chos-kyi-snañ ba and Bod-pa sprul-sku mDo-sñags bstan-pa'i ñi-ma.

The first paper of the second section, “A Ch'an Text from Tun-huang,” is an analysis of a text from the Pelliot 116 Tibetan manuscript collection entitled *Cig-char yan-dag-pa'i phyi-mo'i tshor-ba* (translated by the authors as “Sudden Awakening to Fundamental Reality”). Kenneth Tanaka and Raymond Robertson summarize this eighth- or ninth-century meditational text, review the history of the transmission of Ch'an to Tibet, and discuss the relationship between Ch'an and rDzogs-chen. They conclude that, despite the superficial similarities between the two traditions, rDzogs-chen teachings were not borrowed from Ch'an, as Tucci has suggested.

In “Remarks on the *Mañi bKa'-'bum*,” Matthew Kapstein investigates the compilation of the *Mañi bKa'-'bum* and its relation to the Avalokiteśvara cult in Tibet. He speculates that most of the texts contained in the *Mañi bKa'-'bum* were completed by 1250 A.D., and he suggests that the syncretism of Avalokiteśvara teachings and rÑiñ-ma doctrine that characterizes this important collection has become widely accepted in the devotional practices of Tibetan Buddhism. Kapstein's translations of numerous passages from the *Mañi bKa'-'bum* are unusually clear and readable.

Janet Gyatso, in “Genre, Authorship, and Transmission in Visionary Buddhism,” first explains the system whereby three classes of texts not traceable to Indian originals are accepted as scripture by the movement in Tibetan Buddhism that she describes as “visionary Buddhism.” She then explores the corpus of works associated with the tradition of Thañ-stoñ rGyal-po and shows that only a small portion of these can actually be attributed to this eccentric figure, while the texts that most directly convey his particular visionary experiences are likely to be anonymous. Gyatso's article is a valuable addition to Western scholarship on *gter-ma* literature as well as a provocative discussion of authorship in a Buddhist context.

Ronald Davidson's “Preliminary Studies on Hevajra's *Abhisamaya* and the *Lam-'bras Tshogs-bśad*” is an analysis, based largely on Nor-chen Kun-dga'

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bzañ-po's *gNad kyi zla zer*, of the Sa-skya meditation on Hevajra. Davidson also describes in detail the transmission of this meditation to the large gathering of monks (*Tshogs-bśad*) at the famous Sa-skya monastery, Nor E-waṃ chos-ldan, and he provides lineages of both the *Tshogs-bśad* and the *sLob-bśad* (transmission to a small group of close students) transmissions. In a postscript, Davidson regrets that Tibetan Buddhist ritual has not received as much attention as it should; the second half of his paper will provide a useful model for scholars who wish to remedy this situation.

Finally, Steven Goodman, consulting a wide variety of texts, outlines the life of a famous eighteenth-century rÑin-ma scholar in "Rig-'dzin 'Jigs-med gliñ-pa and the *kLoñ-Chen sÑin-Thig*." Goodman discusses the "discovery" of the hidden text (*gter ma*) entitled *kLoñ-Chen sÑin-Thig*, which he sees as the most important achievement of 'Jigs-med gliñ-pa's career.

Despite the generally high quality of the individual contributions to *Tibetan Buddhism*, I have several criticisms, mostly with regard to the book as a whole. The most serious problem is the fact that the conference at which the original versions of these papers were read took place in 1980, twelve years before the publication of the collection. Although the editors refer to expansions and improvements that were made to the papers in the interim, the authors of at least two of the articles, "A Ch'an Text from Tun-huang" and "Remarks on the *Mañi bKa'-'bum*," felt obliged to acknowledge pertinent material that has appeared since the papers were originally written and that apparently has not been incorporated in the published versions. In the case of "A Ch'an Text from Tun-huang," the new publications are both numerous and of great importance. The past twelve years have seen great progress in Tibetan studies in general (to give just one example, the three-volume Tibetan-Tibetan-Chinese dictionary, *Bod rgya tshig-mdzod chen-mo*, was published in 1985), and the reader cannot be confident that everything in *Tibetan Buddhism* is up to date as of 1992.

As for the notes, the State University of New York Press will receive no thanks from any serious reader of this book. First of all, the notes are placed, not at the bottom of the page, which would have been ideal, nor at the end of each article, which would have been acceptable, but at the end of the entire volume, which is most inconvenient. To make matters worse, they are not identified by the title of the paper to which they belong, but rather by the "chapter" number; this means one must memorize the number of each "chapter" (and of course they really are not chapters, but rather separate articles) in order to find the proper notes. Furthermore, the running head of each page of the notes simply says "Notes" and gives no indication of the page number, the title, or even the "chapter" number to which the notes on that page correspond; as a result, I spent an inordinate amount of time fumbling around

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looking for notes. SUNY Press must realize that most readers of a book like this will be concerned with the scholarly apparatus that supports it.

With regard to scholarly apparatus, I cannot understand why translations from Tibetan are accompanied by the original Tibetan in some articles and not in others. Unlike, for example, texts in the Taishō edition of the Chinese canon, Tibetan texts, particularly those not included in the Peking Tripiṭaka, are not universally accessible, and it would be useful if the original were always provided.

Finally, the proofreading, especially of the Tibetan, was a little sloppy (e.g., p. 172 n. 10: *thamscad* for *thams cad*, and *gter nes* for what was surely *gter nas*). The most egregious example is the appearance of *rKzogs-chen* instead of *rDzogs-chen* in the running head on each odd-numbered page of Guenther's paper.

The second book, *In the Mirror of Memory*, is a collection of papers on roughly a single topic. It contains eleven articles on widely diverse aspects of memory as it is discussed (or neglected) in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist texts, as well as a very substantial introduction by the editor, Janet Gyatso. She points out that memory includes both the recollective function, with which we usually associate it, and a number of non-recollective functions, and she shows how various types of memory are important in Buddhist contexts. In doing so, and by discussing how the contents of the articles are related, she prepares the reader to appreciate the volume as a whole. This introduction adds considerably to the value of the book and should not be overlooked.

The Buddha's knowledge of former abodes (*pūrvanivāsānusmṛtijñāna*) is the subject of the first paper, Donald Lopez's "Memories of the Buddha." After critically summarizing the Buddhological scholarship on this topic, Lopez turns to Freud's theory of "screen memories" in an attempt to understand how the memory of past lives functions in the Buddha's attainment of, and in Buddhist practitioners' quest for, enlightenment.

In "*Smṛti* in the Abhidharma Literature and the Development of Buddhist Accounts of Memory of the Past," P. S. Jaini traces the development of the term *smṛti* from its early Buddhist meaning of "mindfulness," which is preserved in the Theravādin Abhidhamma, to a later meaning of "memory of the past," which Vasubandhu elaborates in the *Pudgalaviniścaya* of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. Somewhere in between he places another definition by Vasubandhu, this one from *Pañcaskandhaka*, which preserves the language used to describe mindfulness while specifying a past object. Jaini notes the similarity between this definition and Sthiramati's in *Triṃśikābhāṣya*; as we shall discover in Paul Griffiths' contribution, this is the classical Yogācāra definition.

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More than forty years ago, Nyanaponika Thera, writing from within the Theravādin tradition, attempted to locate morally neutral memory, as opposed to “right mindfulness” (*sammāsati*), in the Theravādin *dharma* system. His conclusion, which Jaini does not accept, is that its function is included in *saññāskandha*. It was a good idea to reprint here Nyanaponika’s very short, but provocative article, “The Omission of Memory in the Theravādin List of Dhammas: On the Nature of *Saññā*”; however, it would have been more logical to place it before Jaini’s paper, in which it is cited.

On the basis of an extensive examination of the *āgamas* and *nikāyas* and Abhidharma texts in both Sanskrit and Chinese, Collett Cox too discusses the apparent bifurcation in meaning of the term *smṛti*. In “Mindfulness and Memory: The Scope of *Smṛti* from Early Buddhism to the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma,” she shows that the later Abhidharma explanations of recollection of the past are heavily dependent on the concept of mindfulness in practice. Thanks to Cox’s meticulous scholarship, the notes to this article will be invaluable for anyone interested in pursuing the subject of *smṛti* in the original *sūtras* and *śāstras*.

At the end of her article, Cox refers to the theory of seeds, which she says is the basis for the Yogācāra understanding of recollection. In the next contribution, “Memory in Classical Indian Yogācāra,” Paul Griffiths takes up where Cox leaves off and, referring to the more explicit Abhidharma sources, tries to coax a theory of recollection based on seeds and *ālayavijñāna* from Yogācāra *śāstras*, such as *Mahāyānasamgraha* and *Triṃśikābhāṣya*, which, as he points out, do not address the issue directly. He ends his paper by suggesting that, for Buddhists, conventional recollective memory is an obstacle to obtaining enlightenment and that, therefore, Buddhist philosophers are not particularly interested in what he calls “the phenomenology of remembering.”

Alex Wayman, in “Buddhist Terms for Recollection and Other Types of Memory,” identifies a number of technical terms that designate various types of memory, among them: *anusmṛti*, which is used in the context of the Buddha’s memory of previous lives¹; *medhā*, translated by Wayman as “adroit memory,” which, according to the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra*, is conducive to *prajñā*; and *anusmaraṇavikalpa*, translated as “the recollecting type of discursive thought.” In the final section of his paper, Wayman discusses the denial of memory (*smṛti*, *smaraṇa*, *parāmarśa*) as an authority (*pramāṇa*) in the Dignāga-Dharmakīrti system of Buddhist logic.

In a different vein, Rupert Gethin examines the numerical lists of topics (the

¹ According to Wayman, *anusmṛti* was eventually replaced by other expressions in order to avoid confusion with the practice of *buddhānusmṛti*, about which Paul Harrison writes later in the volume.

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four noble truths, the five *khandhas*, etc.) that originate in the *nikāyas* and that, although preserved in the Abhidhamma of only the Pāli canon, must have been used to organize the Sanskrit Abhidharma texts, as well. As the title, “The *Mātikās*: Memorization, Mindfulness, and the List,” suggests, the point of this article is to show that the *mātikās* were not only a device to facilitate the memorization of Buddhist doctrine, but were also used meditatively to cultivate a correct understanding of it. Gethin, using primarily Pāli sources in a most interesting way, sheds light on the formation and practical use of both the Pāli and the Sanskrit Abhidharmas.

Gyatso’s “Letter Magic: A Peircean Perspective on the Semiotics of Rdo Grub-chen’s *Dhāraṇī* Memory” is one of the two papers that deal with native Tibetan sources. Gyatso, referring extensively to the Indian background, first reviews the various meanings of the term *dhāraṇī* and the relationships between these formulas and what they represent, which can range from a scriptural passage, the recollection of which is aided by the *dhāraṇī*, to a profound doctrine, such as emptiness, of which the *dhāraṇī* reminds the practitioner. The bulk of her paper is concerned with a study of *dhāraṇī* by a modern rÑin-ma-pa scholar, Rdo Grub-chen, whose work Gyatso approaches through, and compares with, the semiological theory of the American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce.

In “Commemoration and Identification in *Buddhānusmṛti*,” Paul Harrison explores the practice in which Buddhists, by calling to mind the Buddha’s qualities (or, in the case of East Asian Pure Land Buddhism, simply his name), aspire to become like the Buddha and to establish their communal identity with other Buddhists. He shows that, in this context, the word *anusmṛti* cannot mean “recollection,” and he suggests that “commemoration of the Buddha” is the most satisfactory translation of *buddhānusmṛti*.

The second study of memory in a Tibetan Buddhist context is “The Amnesic Monarch and the Five Mnemic Men: Memory in Great Perfection (Rdzogs-chen) Thought” by Matthew Kapstein. According to Kapstein, the rÑin-ma-pa tradition of *rdzogs-chen* uses the word *dran-pa*, usually translated as “memory,” to indicate not only mundane recollection and spiritual mindfulness, but also the “immediate recovery of the self-presenting awareness of the dharmakāya” (p. 246). His title is drawn from a parable found in a tantric text (*’Khrul-pa rtsad-gcod-kyi rgyud*); this story, translated in full, illustrates the special *rdzogs-chen* use of *dran-pa* in the sense of what Kapstein designates as “mnemic engagement.” Kapstein again deserves praise for incorporating his extensive and skillful translations into his well-argued discussion.

In the final essay, “Remembering Resumed,” Edward Casey, a philosopher who has published a phenomenological study of memory, responds to the first ten papers from a Western philosophical perspective. He finds parallels be-

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tween Buddhist notions of memory, described in these papers, and the ideas of Western thinkers as diverse as William James, Edmund Husserl, Plato, Descartes, and John Locke. Like the other contributors, Casey is concerned with differentiating, and yet somehow identifying the connection between, ordinary recollection and the various types of practice and realization to which Buddhists have given one form or another of the name "memory."

All of the articles in *Mirror of Memory* are serious and, particularly those of the younger contributors, more pleasurable to read than the average scholarly paper found in this kind of collection. The same issues reappear in different contexts from one paper to the next, thus giving the volume a satisfying intellectual unity. Furthermore, the authors have read and respond to each other's work, a very good feature for which, I suspect, Janet Gyatso can take credit.

The production of *In the Mirror of Memory* is somewhat better than that of *Tibetan Buddhism*: notes follow the articles; original texts are much more generously provided; and there seem to be fewer typographical errors (however, once again *rdzogs-chen* is victimized, appearing as Rdzog-chen in the first line of Kapstein's paper; could there be a vindictive dGe-lugs-pa on SUNY Press' proofreading staff?). Nevertheless, in a volume as dense as this, the lack of an index is felt. Several collections of essays (e.g., *Paths to Liberation*, edited by Robert Buswell and Robert Gimello, and *Sudden and Gradual*, edited by Peter Gregory) in the Kuroda Institute *Studies in East Asian Buddhism* series, published by the University of Hawaii Press, present a good model in this respect, and one that SUNY Press should follow.

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