

BOOK REVIEWS

is generally welcome. The Sanskrit equivalencies of the Chinese names of the mythological figures have been supplied (with a few inadequacies, e. g. p. 25, p. 54), though they were absent from the Japanese book. A mistaken addition is to locate Kumano in Kyoto (p. 126).

Concerning this tedious question of the location of the Japanese works of art, let us suggest to the Editors of the whole series not to follow strictly the Japanese way. Whenever an ambiguous geographical term appears like Kyoto, Nara, Osaka (City? Prefecture?), the location should be made clear. Too many readers could imagine that Osaka City possesses such a treasure as the Kanshinji (Plate 10) of Kawachi Nagano, Osaka Prefecture, or would look with despair on a map of Kyoto City for the location of the Matsu-no-o-dera (Plate 121), which is located in Kyoto Prefecture, close to the Japan Sea.

HUBERT DURT

MUDRA. By Chogyam Trungpa. Shambala Publications Inc: Berkeley and London, 1972, 105 pp.

This little book on Tibetan Buddhism contains translations, songs, poems, an essay, a commentary on the Zen oxherding pictures, and a glossary of terms. These, the author, now a teacher of meditation in America, uses as a medium to convey his spiritual experience to the world.

Originally the Sanskrit word "mudra" meant "seal," then when adopted by Tantric Buddhism it became applied to the hand symbols assumed by Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and other heavenly beings. The fundamental object of the mudra is to demonstrate externally the original oath or aspiration, or virtues, which are internally possessed by the respective Buddhist heavenly beings. Thus the hand symbol or mudra is like a king's royal seal in that the power represented by it can only be implemented by someone duly authorized to act in the king's name. Thus in Tantric Buddhism, or Mantrayana, mudra is extremely important and mystically highly significant. From being a hand symbol it has developed a much wider cosmic sense or gesture of action. When the worshipper through correct procedures assumes the mudra of a holy being, he can see the true body of the holy being and become identified with its true nature, also. Its meaning becomes self-evident when understood, or rather, experienced correctly. The rich symbolism of Tantric Buddhism is likely to be rather baffling

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to someone not brought up in that tradition, but there is no doubt that the language of symbols is much more effective for conveying the content of religious experience than a description in abstract terms. If one tries to express it in terms of the latter, what the author essentially seems to be saying about our life in this world, is that there are two possible modes of action: either to immerse oneself in one's potentiality to become this or that, according to karmic cause and effect, in which case one ceases to be true to oneself; or to immerse oneself in the infinite "nowness" of intuitive Being-in-itself and thus be true to oneself, which latter is expressed by Maha Ati or Mahamudra.

It has to be remembered that Chōgyam Trungpa is trying to express very high states of consciousness which are really ineffable, because of this some of what he attempts to convey may seem cryptic. However his poems and songs, a number of which have a particularly moving quality, certainly do convey the message of the Dharma. Teachings really only remain secret due to the lack of capacity of the recipient.

The author includes the series of Zen oxherding pictures with a concise commentary according to the Tibetan school of Buddhism. This is an interesting, helpful addition to the already existing commentaries.

The glossary at the end of the book contains information and useful material. However, although it is not usually provided in anthologies of poems, it might possibly have been helpful if short explanatory notes regarding some of the poems and songs had been included.

It is to be hoped that there will be further books and articles from the author. Previously he has published *Born in Tibet* and *Meditation in Action*.

WILLIAM J. H. COLLINS

LES MAITRES DU ZEN AU JAPON. By Shibata Masumi. G.-P. Maisonneuve & Larose: Paris, 1969, 246 pp.

The first part of *Les Maitres du Zen au Japon*, about three-fourths of the whole, sets about to delineate the developments and range of the uniquely Japanese manifestations of Zen in brief biographical sketches of some twenty of its best known figures. With the aid of quotations selected from their works, Mr. Shibata begins with the thirteenth century Yōsai, sometimes called the father of Japa-