

Book Reviews

Buddhism and Christianity in Japan: From Conflict to Dialogue, 1854-1899

by Notto R. Thelle. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987. xi + 356 pp., cloth.

Over the past few decades the dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity has evolved in the United States, Japan and a number of other countries. This tendency appears to be developing more and more like a great unstoppable current. As the world continues to shrink, the meeting of the two world religions representing the East and West, that is Buddhism and Christianity, is inevitable. Yet dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity is not an easy task because conflict, confrontation, even antagonism based on misunderstanding and apologetic motivation often take place in an interfaith relationship. How the convinced believers of two religions can engage in creative dialogue with open-mindedness is a crucial problem in our time.

Given this situation, Notto R. Thelle's book, *Buddhism and Christianity in Japan: From Conflict to Dialogue, 1854-1899* is highly welcome as a careful historical study of the complex relationship between Buddhism and Christianity in Japan, particularly in the period in which Japan openly encountered Western civilization and Christianity. The book suggests many things for the on-going dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity.

The first six chapters are of a more introductory character and give a historical perspective on the development of the relation between the two religions in nineteenth century Japan. In these chapters Thelle carefully describes how Christianity, combined with Western culture, caused ambivalent reactions among Japanese Buddhists and how Christian missionaries and the

leaders of Japanese Christians regarded Buddhism from the perspective of their own faith.

From Chapter Seven to Chapter Fourteen, the main body of the book, the author deals with the development of Buddhist-Christian relations, particularly from 1889-1899. To explain the reason, Thelle states:

Never before had such dramatic confrontations and radical changes in the relationship between the two religions occurred. Most of the attitudes and types of contact depicted in the previous pages can be observed also in the 1890s, but during this decade they were more intense and on a large scale; the confrontations were more violent and the mutual recognition more unreserved. So the 1890s can be regarded as the conclusion of almost four decades of development of Buddhist-Christian relations. (p. 95)

Although Thelle himself was a missionary-scholar for over fifteen years in Japan, his description and discussion is quite academic and objective, free from Christian bias. He also tries to clarify how Buddhist-Christian relations were influenced by the transformation of the entire Japanese society. This manner of interpretation of religious development within the framework of political and social

change is successful in giving a dynamic picture of Buddhist-Christian encounter in the Japanese society of that time.

The book includes nineteen illustrations which are reproductions of various scenes of Buddhist-Christian conflict from periodicals published in 1880. They all graphically convey the complex feelings between Buddhists and Chris-

tians in those days and are extremely interesting and useful in helping readers to understand the issues.

The book is highly recommended not only for those who are interested in Buddhist-Christian dialogue but also for students of Japanese culture and history.

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The Record of Tung-shan

Translated by William F. Powell. Honolulu: Kuroda Institute, University of Hawaii Press, 1986. Foreward by Robert Aitken, Preface by Shuya Sakurai. xii + 99 pp., paperback: \$10.50.

Published in the Kuroda Institute's "Classics in East Asian Buddhism" series, this is the first English translation of the *Jui-chou Tung-shan Liang-chieh ch'an-shih yü-lu* (The Discourse Record of Master Liang-chieh of Tung-shan in the Jui-chou era. T. 47). In addition to the translation, the book includes a forward and preface, a descriptive introduction, notes, a map of 9th century Ch'an sites in Southeast China, and an index of figures mentioned in the text, giving both Chinese and Japanese names. The text itself consists of 120 short anecdotes and poems, among them the famous "Gāthā of the Five Ranks," which was elaborated upon by Tung-shan's disciple Ts'ao-shan and became the basis for much later commentary and criticism.

As with most of the sources for this "middle period" of Ch'an history, the text originates from a Ming dynasty compilation, made in 1632. The translator notes, however, that many of the anecdotes are also preserved in the *Tsu-t'ang chi* (Collection from the Patriarchal Hall) com-

pleted in 952, slightly less than a century after Tung-shan's death, and also in the *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu* (The Transmission of the Lamp compiled during the Ching-te Era), completed in 1004.

Tung-shan (807-869) is identified as the founder of the Ts'ao-tung (Japanese: Sōtō) lineage, one of the "Five Houses" or major Ch'an lineages demarcated in the Sung dynasty. Aside from its intrinsic interest, the text is thus important for an understanding of Ch'an/Zen history. This is the lineage transmitted to Japan by Dōgen in the 13th century, and Tung-shan is mentioned frequently in the *Shōbōgenzō*.

The Record of Tung-shan is one of only a handful of English renditions of Ch'an classics. In making this translation of the record of such a pivotal figure both useful for scholars and accessible to a wider audience, William Powell has made a substantial contribution to the furtherance of Ch'an/Zen studies.

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Shingon Japanese Esoteric Buddhism

by Taikō Yamasaki, edited by Yasuyoshi Morimoto and David Kidd; translated and adapted by Richard and Cynthia Peterson. Foreward by Carmen Blacker. Boston and London: Shambhala, 1988. xviii + 244 pp., paperback: \$19.95.

This work is the first to appear in any Western language which combines a discussion of the origins, history, teachings and practices of the Japanese Shingon school of Tantric Buddhism. Much of the work is based on Professor Yamasaki's *Mikkyō Meisōho* (The Meditation Techniques of Shingon Buddhism, 1974) and *Mikkyō Meisō to Shinsō Shinri* (Shingon Meditation and Psychological Theories of Mind, 1981) but is also supplemented, as explained in the foreward, by other unnamed sources, presumably written in Japanese. The translators are to be commended for giving us a very lucid translation.

Taikō Yamasaki belongs to the *Shingi* branch of Shingon Buddhism, traced back to Kakuban (1095-1143 A.C.E.), and as is typical of his publications, this work is characterized by both an accurate historical narrative, referenced by original sources, as well as a personal style based on his own meditation experiences. Mr. Yamasaki alludes in his introduction to the early split in the Shingon tradition between those who concentrated on scholarly studies and those who emphasized meditation practice, and he contends both are necessary for a true understanding of Shingon. This translation reinforces his position that more should be published and explained about Shingon meditation practices. Taikō Yamasaki is abbot of Jokōin Temple in Kobe, Japan and is Dean of the Department of Esoteric Studies at Shuchiin University in Kyoto.

This work is divided into eight chapters and includes an appendix with Japanese names and terms with Sanskrit or Chinese equivalents and an index and footnotes. The eight chapters are as follows: 1) Origin and Development of Esoteric Buddhism in India and China; 2) Historical Back-

ground of Shingon Buddhism in Japan; 3) Mikkyō: the Esoteric Teaching; 4) The Ten Levels of Mind; 5) The Secret Activities of Body, Speech and Mind; 6) The Dynamic Mandala; 7) The Scope and Complexity of Shingon Ritual; 8) Concentrated Three-Secrets Practices.

Mr. Yamasaki's discussion of the history and teachings of Shingon does not especially break new ground or add appreciably to our knowledge of these topics. Similar information can be found in a variety of other sources.¹ In this section of his work he does, however, provide a concise but excellent discussion of the development of the Shingon sect in Japan up to the present and its historical relationship with Tendai, nembutsu practice, mountain worship, hijiri and popular beliefs (pp. 34-55).

This work's principal contributions are twofold. First, I would identify Yamasaki's attempt to restate and clarify, in as simple a manner possible, Shingon teachings and the two mandalas of the sect in relation to Shingon practices. Second, his discussion of Shingon meditation techniques based on long years of personal experience (Chapters 7 & 8, pp. 152-215). Anyone introduced to Shingon practices immediately is overwhelmed with their complexity and Yamasaki's purpose here is to make accessible their single but difficult goal of "knowing one's own mind as it truly is." "Because complicated forms of practice require considerable ability in visualization" (p. 191) Yamasaki focuses on simpler techniques (morning star meditation and A syllable visualization) for the benefit of the reader and would-be practitioner.

An appealing aspect of this work is that throughout it Yamasaki makes brief comments about the Shingon tradition which could only be

made by one intimate with the tradition. This enhances the overall value and attraction of the work. For example, he states "In general, Shingon has emphasized textual study of the *Dainichi-kyō* more than of the *Kongōchōgyō*" (p. 86). In his discussion of different types of Shingon initiation he notes that the initiation of scholarly practice (*gakushū kanjō*) "is still practiced on Kōyasan, but the debate aspect has become formalized today, since scholarly studies are largely pursued in Shingon universities" (p. 177). Needless to say, Yamasaki's explanation of the famous Morning Star Meditation, practiced by Kūkai throughout his life, and his account of his experience of it are a noteworthy precedent.

Yamasaki's somewhat detailed explanation of Shingon meditation techniques contributes to a small but growing number of such works now available in English. The first to appear were Taisen Miyata's *A Study of the Ritual Mudras in the Shingon Tradition* (1984), Dale Todaro's "A Study of the Earliest Garbha Vidhi of the Shingon Sect." (*JIAS*, 1986, Vol. 9, No. 2) and Richard K. Payne's *Feeding the Gods* (1985). The impetus for including these explanations is given in the author's introduction when he says:

"... Although it is not possible to disclose all of Shingon's secrets in this book, it seems equally impossible to withhold whatever might be of value to a wider audience." (p. xviii)

Much soul searching has occurred recently in the Shingon tradition and a trend to make some of the

"secret" practices more available to any interested and committed party has developed over the last ten years in Japan. In part, the tradition is responding to a widespread social and institutional need to re-emphasize the benefits of its traditional meditation techniques, both complex and abbreviated. Needless to say, these techniques are not suitable or attractive to everyone and the requirements of serious Shingon meditation will not be lost on the reader.

I recommend this work as the best overall introduction today on Japanese Shingon Buddhism. It is comprehensive, authoritative, easy to read and fully referenced to permit further detailed investigation. While repeating historical and doctrinal information found in other sources, it is the first work to combine somewhat detailed explanations of Shingon meditation techniques with Shingon doctrines on attaining enlightenment in the present body.

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1. Chou Yi-liang, "Tantrism in China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, VIII, 1045; Tajima Ryūjin, *Les Deux Grands Maṇḍalas et la Doctrine de L'esoterisme Shingon*, 1959; Hakeda Yoshito, *Kūkai Major Works*, 1972; Matsunaga Yūkei, "A History of Tantric Buddhism in India with Reference to Chinese Translations," *Buddhist Thought and Asian Civilizations Essays in Honor of Herbert V. Guenther on His Sixtieth Birthday* (1977); Matsunaga, Daigon & Alicia, *Foundations of Japanese Buddhism, Vols. 1 & 2* (1978); Kiyota Minoru, *Shingon Buddhism: Theory and Practice* (1978); etc.

The Merton Annual: Studies in Thomas Merton, Religion, Culture, Literature and Social Concerns, Vol. 1.

Edited by Robert E. Daggy, et al. New York: AMS Press, 1988. \$42.50.

The reviewer of *The Merton Annual* is confronted with a wide variety of tributes, themes, proposals, dialogues, speculations, personal notes, as well as a bibliographic survey, reviews and Merton's Zen-like drawings. Since there is more material than one can adequately discuss in such short space, I will just briefly mention each of the contributions in the order of their appearance, and insert a few markers to indicate what I take to be the key essays.

The first is the most significant — "The Zen Insight of Shen Hui," — an unpublished manuscript of Merton's written early in 1968. It was to have introduced Richard S. Y. Chi's translation of the writings of the Seventh Ch'an Patriarch which unfortunately never appeared. About it, Chi wrote in a letter to Merton: "It will be immortal, and the work of Shen Hui will also be immortalized by your introduction." In his essay Merton suggests that Shen Hui was a revolutionary figure in Ch'an, as important as Hui Neng, who taught that there is no *dharma* to teach, and that one cannot canonize the pure without also canonizing the impure along with it. What most matters to him, Merton writes, "is not a 'sign' of authenticity but authenticity itself." (12)

In the second essay, "Zen Influence on Thomas Merton's View of Self," Bonnie Thurston traces Merton's intra-religious views by rehearsing the dialogue between Buddhist Emptiness and Christian *knosis*. She is rightly convinced that Merton's theological anthropology was most influenced by the Zen process of ridding the self of self. In her view, Merton understood that in both Christianity and Zen, self-emptying is the context from which love arises.

The next two essays are more personal and biographical, and take us beyond Merton the thinker to Merton as artist, poet, romantic, dreamer. The first, "HARPO'S PROGRESS: Notes Toward an Understanding of Merton's Way" is by Robert Lax, a long-time friend and correspondence partner. HARPO, a pseudonym which Merton used in his anti-letters to Lax, is a creative attempt to recreate Merton's idiosyncratic ways. It is followed by a conversation with Matthew Kelty, O.C.S.O., called "Looking Back to Merton: Memories and Impressions/An Interview," edited by Dewey Weiss Kramer. Kelty was a novice under Merton for two and a half years. His remembrances and deft insights correct mistaken impressions which have circulated about Merton, for example Monica Furlong's suggestions in *Merton: A Biography* that he took himself very seriously, and that his relationship with his superior Dom James was often strained. Kelty, from an insider's-eye-view, very matter-of-factly re-focuses some of these impressions.

The next two essays construe what the authors claim to be Merton's central method and central message. William H. Shannon in "Thomas Merton and the Living Tradition of Faith" traces the development of Merton's concern for methodology from *The Sign of Jonas*, in which he moved from speculation to personal experience, to *No Man is an Island* and *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* in which tradition became a vital center of his creative activity. For Merton, he argues, tradition needed to be enriched and surpassed through an openness to the world of other faiths.

Next, James Conner, O.C.S.O., writes a pivotal though brief essay, "The Experience of God and the Experience of Nothingness in Thomas Merton," which he begins with Merton's own words: "Leave nothingness as it is. In it, he is present." For Conner these words express, or come near to expressing, Merton's central message — it is in and through utter self-emptying that disciples unite with the self-emptying of Christ. Brief though it is, when read alongside the Thurston essay, it provides readers with the context from which Merton could maintain his bold statement: "I see no contradiction between Buddhism and Christianity." (29)

The next two essays shift our attention to his prophetic dimension, to the issue of peace and peacemaking. In one of the finest, most provocative inclusions in the volume, itself prophetic, "The Peacemaker: Merton's Critique and Model" David Steindl-Rast, O.S.B., places Merton before us as a prophet. Skillfully he indicates that Merton's model of peacemaking is a "model-shattering model" (119) for there can be no model, least of all monasticism, for the shattering insight that God is the only peacemaker. Paul E. Dinter follows Brother David by suggesting in his "Merton, Non-violence and the Bishop's Pastoral" that Merton's writings, though earlier than the Bishops' Pastoral, *The Challenge of Peace* (1980), may be more prophetic (e.g., his views on the "just war teaching").

Three of the next four works relate primarily to Merton's poetry, and the fourth to his use of language. Patrick F. O'Connell's "The Geography of Solitude, Thomas Merton's 'Elias — Variations on a Theme'," David D. Cooper's "From Prophecy to Parody: Thomas Merton's cables to the Ace" and Gail Rainshaw's "The Pattern in Thoms Merton's cables to the Ace" discuss Merton's longer poetry. Michael Rukstelis, C.O., in "Thomas Merton's Understanding: The Claritas Strategy" explores Merton's attraction to William Blake's aesthetic spirituality. For

Rukstelis this became an important backdrop out of which Merton's contemplative insights emerged.

The next essay, "Merton's Journey from Seeds to New Seeds" by Ruth Fox, O.S.B., highlights the development of several fundamental themes (e.g., true self and false self, mercy and compassion, solitude and the world, and monastic virtues) from Merton's earlier *Seeds of Contemplation* (1949) to his *New Seeds of Contemplation* (1961). Rather than the word "change," which she uses to describe this development, I would have used the word "complementarity" to describe the parallels. What emerges in her essay is a picture of a monk on the move, yet in the stillness of the silence at the center of the turning world, and a monk who clearly anticipated Vatican II.

John Albert, O.C.S.O., in "Lights Across the Ridge: Thomas Merton and Henry David Thoreau," attempts to step inside Merton's environment in order to reanimate his spirit. A "second-generation Merton student," he visited Merton's Kentucky hermitage, Our Lady of Gethsemani, to develop creative connections between Merton and Thoreau. Keeping a journal of his observations, as Merton would have, he attempted "to see what Merton saw, looking for what he saw by first looking to the phenomenon of clouds and mist, of crows and jet planes, of light across the ridge ..." (294) This preoccupation, while at first enticing, tends to distract the reader from Merton to Albert's writing about Merton.

Aside from the essays, one of the outstanding contributions of this anthology is that it directs readers toward other resources. In what is to be a regular feature, Robert E. Daggy writes "The Merton Phenomenon in 1987: A Bibliographic Survey," an invaluable resource for serious students of Merton's development. The *Annual* concludes with six reviews of books on or about Merton along with notes on all the contributors.

Clearly one's response to *The Merton Annual* will be influenced and perhaps shaped by one's intellectual/spiritual resonance with the monk who spoke in so many tongues (autobiographical, theological, contemplative, lyrical, fictive, prophetic, and visual), and superbly in each. For those to whom Merton's life and work is an expression of the monastic archetype in everyone, and who are smitten by his spiritual eloquence, each selection will deepen and enrich the contours of that view. For those who are less sympathetic, cognizant of a seeming contradiction implicit in a monk's calling attention in writing to his spiritual practice, this volume will seem uneven. Its strengths I believe are the Merton-Zen connection, especially in the heretofore unpublished essay introducing the Seventh Patriarch Shen Hui, in Thurston and Conner's essays on Merton's Buddhism, in Shannon's, Rukstelis' and Fox's reflec-

tions on Merton's methodology, clearly in Brother David's empathetic description of Merton's "model-shattering model," in Daggy's extensive Bibliographic Survey (1987), and in the tasteful weave of Merton's drawings.

In summary, the first *Merton Annual* laudably achieves what it sets out to do — to reintroduce us to Merton's prophetic, mystical and artistic message. Its admirable assembly of essays allows the reader to become intimate with some of the deepest traces of Merton's monastic spirituality. How fitting, therefore, to close with a line from Merton's journal *The Sign of Jonas*: "The man who began this journal is dead." (328) Thomas Merton died twenty years ago today, December 10, 1968.

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Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought
Edited by Peter N. Gregory. Studies in East Asian Buddhism No. 5.
Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987. ix + 474 pp., hardback:
\$37.50.

The fifth book in the Kuroda Institute's ongoing series of works dealing with East Asian Buddhism, *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought* grew out of a conference organized by the Institute in May, 1981 dealing with the recurrent theme of the sudden/gradual polarity in Chinese thought. The book is divided into three parts and contains a total of ten essays. Part one provides a historical background of Western scholarly discussions on the topic. Part two covers the theme as it occurred in Chinese Buddhist thought. Part three deals with the impact of the topic in the cultural sphere.

The division of the book into three parts suggests a natural approach to reviewing it. I will cover one section at a time, describing its essays and evaluating its contents, and conclude with a few general thoughts on the book.

Part one is labeled "The Sudden and Gradual Debates." As mentioned above, this section provides a historical background to Western scholarly discussions on the theme of sudden and gradual in Chinese thought. The initial essay in this section is Paul Demiéville's 1947 article "The Mirror of the Mind." This is a good choice to introduce the topic. Demiéville's essay on the sudden/gradual polarity established the vocabulary for later discussions on the topic. As the title suggests, Demiéville traces the metaphor of mirror in different traditions, both East and West, showing how it operates to express the sudden transformation undergone in the mystical experience.

The second essay was written by R. A. Stein in response to Demiéville's article. In it he more closely examines the terminology employed in the sudden/gradual debates, showing that the sudden aspect of the Buddhist experience should be taken to mean simultaneous comprehension of

the absolute and the phenomenal, and not their instantaneous comprehension. In essence, he is refining Demiéville's work, bringing out further nuances of the subject. Like Demiéville's work, though dated, it provides further background to scholarly discussions on this topic in the West.

The last work in this historical survey brings the discussion up-to-date. Writing for this book, Luis Gómez further refines the discussion of the sudden/gradual polarity in his article on the metaphor of effort and intuition in Buddhist thought and practice. Through a number of examples, he shows how the subject of sudden and gradual is in truth multivalent in the Chinese tradition. There is no one set of doctrines that characterizes either the sudden or gradual position, nor any set of doctrines that can be used to distinguish these two positions universally. The language of the two camps overlap in many ways, reminding us that we have to approach this polarity with caution.

The principles of disciplining children are applicable in evaluating this section. In disciplining children the personality of the child needs to be separated from his or her action. In the same way these articles need to be distinguished between what they are and what they do. Although Demiéville and Stein's articles are seminal to the discussion of the sudden/gradual polarity in Chinese thought and so deserve inclusion in this book, what they actually do leaves room for consideration. Demiéville, in concentrating on the single metaphor of the mirror, glosses over the differences between the traditions on which he writes. So, even though he brings to light this important topic in Chinese Buddhism, the way he handles it leaves us hungering for the specifics. Stein attempts to provide some of those specifics, and his

conclusions do have some appeal. Unfortunately, his article focuses mostly on Tibetan Buddhism. Which leaves it up to Gómez to finally provide the perspective needed to discuss the issue of sudden and gradual in Chinese thought with any amount of precision. As such, it makes for a fitting conclusion to this section. Demiéville and Stein are needed for an understanding of where the discussion on sudden and gradual has been. Gómez is needed to show us where it should go, leading naturally into the second part of the book.

The subtleties in the sudden/gradual polarity in Chinese Buddhism are explored in part two. The section is arranged historically, starting with Tao-sheng (c.360-434) and Chih-i (538-597), moving to Shen-hui (684-758) and Tsung-mi (780-841) and finishing with *k'an-hua* meditation. It is a neat package, intelligently arranged to cover a broad spectrum of Chinese Buddhist thought. It is also the most rewarding part of the book. The articles in this section include:

Whalen Lai on Tao-sheng's theory of sudden enlightenment. Tao-sheng was one of the first thinkers in China to propose the theory of sudden enlightenment. Interestingly enough, at first he framed his argument about *Abhidharmic* literature and the One Vehicle doctrine (*ekayāna*) as found in the *Lotus Sūtra*. Only later, with the introduction of the *Nirvāna Sūtra* into China was he able to argue for sudden enlightenment on the basis of the all-prevailing Buddha-nature.

Neal Donner on Chih-i's conjoining of sudden and gradual. As might be expected, Chih-i tried to find a middle position between sudden and gradual. He taught that teaching and meditation are both sudden (that is, perfected) and gradual. Stages in the path are needed to avoid arrogance, he argued, and perfection to avoid self-deprecation. He did not want to downplay either pole, instead he sought to harmonize them, once again demonstrating the synthetic nature of Chih-i's thought.

John McRae on Shen-hui and the teaching of sudden enlightenment in early Ch'an. An excellent article, it puts Shen-hui's thought into

good perspective in two ways. First, it shows how Shen-hui's thinking did not differ all that much from already existing Ch'an thought. Second, it demonstrates that Shen-hui's polemics against the so-called Northern school of Ch'an established the slogans found in later Ch'an. The crux of the matter was Shen-hui's teaching style. He was more concerned with gaining converts than training disciples, so his rhetoric concentrated on a form of the religious experience which emphasized the religious experience at the time of conversion. That was the heart of the matter for Shen-hui, with the implication being that Shen-hui was not as interested in destroying Northern Ch'an as he was in trying to establish a style of rhetoric that avoided just those dangers in practice, especially dualism, that Northern Ch'an itself recognized.

Peter Gregory on Tsung-mi's notion of sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation. Another excellent article, it explores Tsung-mi's synthetic approach to sudden and gradual. To support the idea of sudden enlightenment in Buddhist practice, Tsung-mi argued that in the womb of the Tathāgata (*tathāgatagarbha*) enlightenment is the natural state of mind. But, saying enlightenment is the natural state of mind left Tsung-mi having to account for the presence of ignorance. He did so by employing the Yogācāra idea of the storehouse consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*), which is the seedbed of impurities, including ignorance. Tsung-mi stated the storehouse consciousness has two aspects, the enlightened and the unenlightened. Through an elaborate diagram, he illustrated how, through the storehouse consciousness, the suffering of karma comes to be and how it is put to an end. Using this scheme, Tsung-mi was able to preserve sudden enlightenment, by then the orthodoxy of Ch'an, while still accounting for gradual practice.

The last article in part two is Robert Buswell on the evolution of *k'an-hua* meditation in Ch'an Buddhism. Buswell analyzes the forces driving Ch'an towards *k'an-hua* practice, especially the need to put Buddhism in a form ame-

nable to the Chinese. Necessary elements included the Chinese emphasis on this world, the Chinese preference for substantiative metaphors, and the Chinese choice of suddenness as the preferred method of insight. Because these elements were indigenous, two consequences resulted. One, Ch'an made Buddhist spirituality more accessible to the Chinese, and two, *k'an-hua* meditation was the natural consummation of native forces which were at work all along in the Ch'an tradition.

As stated above, this is the most rewarding part of the book. The centrality and the malleability of the sudden/gradual polarity in Chinese Buddhism is brought to light through these articles. The polarity was central in that it proved a dominant metaphor in Chinese Buddhist discussions on the nature of enlightenment and how to attain it. This was true not only in Ch'an, the tradition most noted for employing this polarity, but also in Chih-i's T'ien-t'ai Buddhism, and even in such early Buddhist thinkers as Tao-sheng. The polarity was malleable in the number of ways it was used. Chih-i applied it to both teaching and practice, Shen-hui used it as a rhetorical device to inspire conversion, and Tsung-mi employed it to establish the ontological grounds for sudden enlightenment followed by gradual practice. This malleability in the use of the metaphor is a good object lesson in hermeneutics, clearly illustrating the diverse interpretations possible for a single idea. By showing the centrality of the sudden/gradual polarity, this section provides valuable insights into the nature of Chinese Buddhism; by illustrating the malleability of this polarity, it offers rich food for thought in the area of hermeneutics. Taken as a whole, this section forms the heart of the book; it pulses with intellectual vitality.

The third section on sudden and gradual in the cultural sphere provides a refreshing twist on the subject. This section is comprised of two articles, one by Richard Lynn examining the Ch'an-poetry analogy in poetic criticism, the other by James Cahill on Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's "Southern

and Northern Schools" in the history and theory of painting.

Lynn takes the overview approach in his article, opting for breadth rather than depth. Instead of dwelling on any one poet or school's use of sudden and gradual in poetic criticism, he provides a historical survey of the subject. Using this approach he is able to present the spectrum of Chinese thought, including Buddhist, Neo-Confucian, and Philosophic Taoism, that was employed to argue for and against the sudden/gradual polarity as it applied to poetry. Much of the argument centered around the issue of freedom versus rules in poetic composition, in much the same way that Buddhists argued the issue of sudden enlightenment versus gradual cultivation in their practice.

Cahill focuses on Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555-1636), an influential thinker in Chinese painting theory. Tung constructed an intricate theory of the difference between the "Southern" and "Northern" schools of painting, which included patriarchal lineages, theories of practice, and levels of enlightenment. When looked at more closely, however, his work served a polemical purpose more than anything else. Tung's theories were meant to defend amateurs working in free, spontaneous styles from professionals working in detailed, decorative, and academic styles. So Tung highlights the political uses for which the sudden/gradual polarity was employed in Chinese thought.

The interesting point of these two articles is that they offer insight into areas that are not normally taken into account in considerations of Chinese thought. A culture is judged on its artifacts as much as, if not more so, than on its thought. The interfusion of these two concerns come together nicely here, showing how thought can influence, justify, and direct artistic endeavors. As such, Lynn and Cahill's respective articles are a welcome addition to the book, which, after all, is supposed to be about sudden and gradual in Chinese thought in the first place, upon which note we are ready to turn our concluding remarks.

There are three areas that need to be evaluated in thinking about the quality of any given book. The first is the idea that informs the book as a whole. The second is the presentation of that idea. The third is the actual contents of the book. In each of these areas, *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought* succeeds quite admirably. The idea that informs the book, the sudden/gradual polarity, was of no small consequence in Chinese thought. It formed a centerpiece piece of intellectual dialogue throughout much of Chinese history. As such, the detailed treatment of that idea as found in this book makes for an exciting topic of investigation. The presentation of that idea is handled nicely, too. The division of the book into three parts makes for an effective package. The topics informing each section, as discussed above,

provides a well-rounded review of the subject, leaving one with a thorough grounding in the topic, not just in its Chinese manifestations, but in Western interpretations of the subject as well, something that is always helpful in putting essays of these types into perspective. Finally, the content of the book is of the highest caliber. On the whole, the essays are well thought-out and informative. New insights are offered into Chinese thought and culture, adding well to our store of knowledge in these respective areas. All-in-all, then, this is a solid book. Its contents and conclusions certainly deserve consideration in any discussion on the sudden/gradual polarity in Chinese thought.

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Nagarjuna's "Seventy Stanzas:" A Buddhist Psychology of Emptiness by David Ross Komito. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1987. 226 pp., paper: \$14.95.

Komito has set out to achieve two ends which are often seen as antagonistic to one another. On the one hand, he has attempted to make Nagarjuna's *Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness* (Sanskrit: *Shunyatasaptatikarikanama*) accessible to those who, while not scholars, are intent on understanding the thought of a figure so central to the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. On the other hand, he has attempted to provide scholars with a thorough treatment of a text which is an important component of the Nagarjuna corpus. It is a pleasure to say that he has accomplished the difficult task of speaking to both audiences within the confines of a single volume. The work itself consists of four parts: a foreword and three chapters. The foreword briefly retells one of the legends surrounding Nagarjuna, that of his visit to the realm of the nagas, the supposed origin of his name.

The first chapter, entitled "Buddhist Psychology," explains the book's subtitle. The Tibetan Buddhists attempted to integrate the mass of Buddhist material they received from India into a single coherent whole. As explained by Komito, this integration was organized around the subject—object relation of knowing. Within such an explanatory system, the import of Nagarjuna's work is understood to be that it demonstrates the emptiness of the object of consciousness. Nagarjuna's work is seen as a sort of therapeutic philosophy which, by developing wisdom about the nature of the object of consciousness:

results in a transformation of the karmic formations and so the entire perceptual process which depends upon them is also transformed. As the creation of objects in the perceptual process is

transformed, what had previously appeared as samsara now appears as nirvana. (pp. 67-8)

The second chapter is composed of two parts. First, a translation of the *Seventy Stanzas* into very readable English. The second part is much more complex and will appeal more to the expectations of scholars. It comprises the Tibetan text of the *Seventy Stanzas* rendered into Roman script, accompanied by notes as to variations between the Peking and sDe dge editions. Along with the Tibetan, the same text as appeared in the English translation of the *Seventy Stanzas* is repeated with a typographical discrimination between the literal text and the translator's insertions. This is done by italicizing the literal part of the translation, while printing the insertions in Roman. This presents a text more easily read than the more customary technique of demarcating insertions with parentheses. Last, there follows a new commentary of the *Seventy Stanzas* by Geshe Sonam Rinchen which, according to the linear notes, "was created expressly for the contemporary English reader." This commentary not only expands the otherwise terse text, but also assists the reader to follow the flow of the argument as Nagarjuna develops his position in dialogue with various opposing positions.

Third chapter is a brief summary of the place of the *Seventy Stanzas* in the corpus of Nagarjuna's works and a discussion of the history of its transmission to Tibet and its importance there. This chapter closes with a section on the history of the translation of this text into English. This includes a discussion of Komito's disagreement with Lindtner, who has himself done major work on Nagarjuna and the *Seventy Stanzas*.

Komito's approach to translating this text is not the only one possible. In sharp contrast to Komito's style is that of Lindtner, for example in his *Master of Wisdom: Writings of the Buddhist Master Nagarjuna* (Oakland: Dharma Press, 1986). Lindtner's translation is very literal, attempting to reproduce the extremely precise, but very condensed form of Nagarjuna's text as closely as possible. Here, for example, is Lindtner's rendering of the ninth stanza:

Permanent is not, impermanent
is not, not-self is not, self is not,
impure is not, pure is not, pleas-
ure is not, and suffering is not.
Therefore the perverted views
do not exist. (p. 97)

In contrast, Komito renders the ninth stanza as follows:

Because contaminated things
arise in dependence on one
another they do not exist inher-
ently as permanent phenomena
nor do they exist inherently as
impermanent phenomena; nei-
ther as phenomena with self-
nature nor without self-nature;
neither as pure nor as impure;
neither as blissful nor as suffer-

ing. It is thus that the four distor-
tions do not exist as qualities
which inhere in phenomena, but
rather as imputed to phenom-
ena. (p. 81)

For those of us who are not Nagarjuna scholars, what is important in comparing these two translations is not attempting to decide which is "right" or "best." Rather, it is that by having more than one translation we have more perspectives from which to see Nagarjuna and that our understanding is enriched thereby. Reading different translations in parallel can often clarify a text which is otherwise opaque.

Komito provides us with a very accessible translation of an important work by Nagarjuna. While the perspective from which this translation was prepared is that of the later, scholastic tradition of Tibet, Komito explains the significance of this interpretative orientation adequately. This allows the reader to see how this work influenced the history of Buddhist thought in its Tibetan development, as well as providing an interpretative orientation from which the work may be approached by contemporary students of the Dharma.

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