

BOOK REVIEWS

Roskies guesses this to be an oblique commentary on the horror that ushered in the New Order. "Stop Thief!" by Taufiq Ismail begins with the comic scene of a man paying a Thieving Tax, his penalty for having been robbed. Out of this bureaucratic absurdity he walks into a parade swirling mindlessly around a woman in the throes of giving birth. This woman represents the national heroine, "Kartini Our Mother," who by the end of this violent, slap-stick tale has become a corpse, her body and that of her still-born infant transported away by a procession of shoeless children wearing white socks. Stories like these, Roskies notes, "make you feel in more ways than one that you are treading on eggshells" (p. 203).

Roskies, "trying to steer a course between the rocks of a too-literal rendition and a fanciful recreation" (p. xvi) aims "creatively to transform" the language of these stories (p. xvii). Without seeing the originals, I found that the translator's interpretive choices, especially the slang or idiomatic terms, often made me unduly curious about just which Indonesian or Javanese phrase he was glossing. His wording will certainly ring off-key in the ears of American students when he writes, for example, ". . . he'd done a flit" (p. 125), or "If it's kudos you're after, Son, good on you," and "She was cheesed off" (p. 165). Even when Roskies writes in his own voice, the prose sometimes made me stumble and run for the OED, such as this sentence: "Po-faced, the author sets about making his characters come a cropper" (p. 203).

Teachers who assign literature in introductory survey courses on Southeast Asia will probably not be able to use this collection. These

sophisticated stories, and their editorial commentary, may appeal to advanced undergraduates, perhaps those who are studying Bahasa Indonesia or who have returned from a study abroad program in Indonesia. Instructors who know Indonesian history and society in some depth will be best able to make classroom use of these fascinating, but sometimes abstruse, tales. Teachers and students in a position to study these stories, however, will be repaid with insider glimpses of the humor, horror, pathos and ironies of life in modern Indonesia, telling glimpses available only through literature or through the experience of living somewhere longer than most tourists care to stay. ■

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Buddhism in Practice

EDITED BY DONALD S. LOPEZ

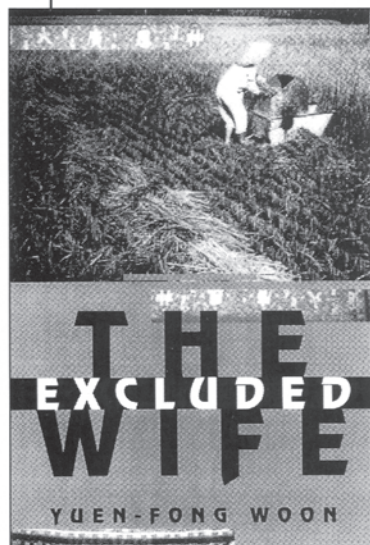
PRINCETON: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1995
XVI + 608 PAGES

Many new and some surprising English translations of texts have been collected in an anthology by Donald Lopez with thirty-nine contributors. In all there are forty-eight texts with extensive introductions. The impression gleaned from the variety reveals Buddhism as quite a varied and complex tradition.

Like an all-star professional athletic team, the contributors to this volume bring credentials as world famous scholars of Buddhism, if mostly in American institutions. A trust in the validity of the book may in part be dependent upon the respect one holds for the illustrious company who prepared this tome. At the same time, readers may still wonder what was the principle of selection of the texts which were included in the volume? Who found these texts? Did each contributor pick her own? Or did the text get chosen for them and sent to them to read and offer an introduction? Lopez explains in the introduction that the intent was "identifying areas of shared concern and continuity, as well as areas of contestation and conflict among the widely varied practices of different Buddhist communities." The volume certainly goes a long way in achieving such an aim.

One may wonder which of the forty-eight selections were originally complete texts or taken from longer works. Each seems to be treated in the volume as a complete and separate piece. The introductions are sometimes as long as the text which they introduce,

<http://www.mcgill.ca/mqup>



Based on the true stories of Chinese women who immigrated to Canada, Yuen-Fong Woon tells the riveting story of Sau-Ping who escaped civil war, famine and lawlessness in 1920s China only to be stopped at Canada's border by the Chinese Immigration (Exclusion) Act. Her husband was already here, but she like so many others, was *The Excluded Wife*.

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often showing different principles of hermeneutics from the scholar who presents the very next text. But such is the case in all-star games, as well.

Readers of this review are doubtless familiar with other anthologies of Buddhist texts such as Edward Conze.¹ But to compare the Lopez anthology is almost impossible. The process of selection was completely different. The intent of Lopez and his team seems to have been to give an array of texts from all over the world of Asia where the Buddha's teachings were taken. The anthology reveals little effort to show historical progression, or as indicated, any dependency or intertextuality. The anthology contains a variety that shatters the narrowness of previous collections of texts. It also appears that the intent is to show that recent texts can be just as important as those from antiquity. If that is true, it may take some of us who have taught Buddhism for several decades to revise our preconceptions and even discard our preconceptions. Nevertheless, this reader will without doubt order subsequent volumes in the series.

In any case, reading the translations offers a fascinating opportunity for ruminating through two thousand years of Buddhist texts. The organization of materials follows the vow of the three treasures: the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sanga. In turn, each of the three vehicles—*Theravada*, *Mahayana* and *Vajrayana*—were represented with at least nine selections. One may wonder if this was an intentional multiple of three. Further, of the many modern nations where Buddhism is to be found, texts from nine different nations were included.

There is no apparent historical ordering or much connection shown between any text in the volume and any other. Indeed, a text several hundred years old is published along side one two decades old. For example, in the first section on the Buddha, Donald Swearer introduced the ancient ceremony of "Consecrating the Buddha" preserved in a Chiang Mai monastery in Thailand from a palm leaf manuscript copied in 1576 listing the "achievements and boundless virtues of the Buddha" (pp. 52–58). In the same section we find Lopez's introduction and the text "A Prayer for the Long Life of the Dalai Lama" barely 20 years old which affirms "the auspicious sign that the teaching of the Subduer has spread in all directions (to) reach the peak of samsara and nirvana" (p. 174).² The reader must make the connection between these and other texts. Lopez's introduction of ten pages on "The Buddha" offers an excellent sketch of the historical Buddha and some hints at the variety in the section. Yet the sense of variety is majestic.

In the second section, "Dharma," one finds many interesting texts. Well known notions like the "Prophecy of the Death of the Dharma" are given fresh light by Jan Nattier who traces the teaching not from the Buddha but from a monk in the Second Century B.C.E. during the Greek, Saka, and Parthian invasions. As well, one can find the "Matsumoto Debate" from the Kamakura Era in Japan between representatives of two schools that resemble European disputations and their echoes in oral defenses of doctoral dissertations in some American universities today.

In the third section one may find a selection entitled "Daily Life in the Assembly" presented to Griffith Foulk which seems to best fit the title of the volume. There one finds the rules of a Chinese monastery and the protocol which would influence Dōgen as he established the Sōtō school in Japan. At this point one may won-

der, what about America? Was there no text that might have demonstrated that Zen Centers in San Francisco, for example, have modified versions of some of these same rules?

The third selection also seems a testimony to an open canon in Buddhism. We find the selection "Buddhist Chaplains in the Field of Battle" with an introduction by Sybil Thornton which gives a vivid sense of wars in Japan in 1331–33 C.E. in which the monks went out to chant the name of Amida but also to care for the wounded. Also to be found in this section is "Awakening Stories of Zen Buddhist Women" and an introduction by Sallie King. The account is about a woman just after World War II who lost her son and came to wonder "What is human life?" until she would "become constantly one with Kannon" (p. 524).

As a whole the volume, the second in a series of about a dozen to be edited by Lopez on the practice of many religions, will be a useful resource for those who may wish to revise lectures. Some teachers will hesitate to assign the whole volume to students in an introductory course. But individual texts could be assigned to students for reports to a class. Since some of the introductions deal with issues of language and contain Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese and Japanese terms (in transliteration), for advanced students, especially graduate courses, the book will prove a "gold mine," or perhaps a better image, a source of contemplation during the retreat in the rainy season. ■

NOTES

1. Edward Conze, *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages*, edited with I. B. Horner, D. L. Snellgrove and A. Waley (Oxford: Cassier, 1954) or Conze, *Buddhist Scriptures* (New York: Penguin, 1959).
2. A colleague to whom I read this prayer affirmed that the two recent films *Seven Years in Tibet* and *Kundun* may do as much as the prayer to insure that Tibetan Buddhism is spread "in all directions."

William Huntley

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