5-1-1998

Review of The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development, edited by J. Foard, M. Solomon, and R.K. Payne

Paul K. Nietupski
John Carroll University, pnietupski@jcu.edu

intended to benefit Soviet Russia, since it could in no way benefit the nonexistent CCP" (p. 75). In another reach, Elleman supposes that had the real nature of Soviet diplomacy been known from the beginning, the "legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party would have been seriously undermined [which] raises grave doubts about whether the CCP would have later been able to rally the Chinese people under its leadership" (p. 248).

Finally, Elleman states that the CCP "was not cognizant of the truth underlying Sino-Soviet relations, and during the summer and fall of 1949, Mao continued to claim that only the Soviet government could provide "genuine and friendly help," and that China should ally with the Soviet Union 'in order to wage a life-and-death struggle against imperialism and its running dogs'" (p. 247). After spending some 200 pages detailing the distance between "myth and reality" in Sino-Soviet relations, it was somewhat surprising that Elleman should take Chinese propaganda at face value and not wonder if Mao had doubts about Soviet credibility even in 1949.

To say that the propaganda of the Karakhan Manifesto would have been counterbalanced by knowledge of Soviet Russia's real actions in China during this period overlooks the self-interest of those Chinese who were searching for alternatives to Western diplomatic traditions. The fact that Soviet propaganda succeeded in finding "receptive harbors" in Chinese audiences cannot be attributed to any one cause. Giving Soviet propaganda more impact than it perhaps had is the best evidence of the power of words to shape perceptions. In conclusion, the overall theme of Soviet duplicity in international affairs is well delineated and Elleman sheds new light on previously murky episodes in a watershed era in Sino-Soviet relations.

JULIAN CHANG
Stanford University

The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development. Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series 3. Edited by JAMES FOARD, MICHAEL SOLOMON, and RICHARD K. PAYNE. Berkeley: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1996. x, 548 pp. $45.00.

The twelve essays in this volume were written by leading scholars of Pure Land and Buddhist studies who bring together first-rate scholarship in their respective academic specialties. They demonstrate linguistic competence and familiarity with the primary and secondary literature in each of their respective concentrations. The essays are arranged in the chronological order of their contents, and by geographical region, beginning with Pure Land antecedents in ancient India, the development of the tradition in China, and the institutional manifestations in Japan up to modern times.

Generally, the volume presents an accurate and often thought-provoking overview of Pure Land Buddhist origins and development. It is clearly designed for audiences familiar with the languages, scriptures, and Buddhist traditions of China, Japan, and to a lesser extent, India. The Character List at the end of the volume is a valuable reference tool for work with the Chinese and Japanese texts. In addition to the precise scholarship on the texts and institutional histories of the Pure Land tradition the volume includes information on two important subjects: the phenomenology of Pure Land practices and how these developed in the contexts of and in fusion with other Buddhist systems over the centuries.

This seems like a lot of material to cover in a single volume, precisely one of the shortcomings of the project as a whole, which it obviously shares with many other similar collections. The wide-ranging methodological approaches include analytical assessment of primary texts, intellectual history, social and political history, phenomenology, and comparative religious studies. Some of the authors have updated their articles since 1981, the intended publication date, some have included disclaimers, and some have provided further annotations and more recent bibliographic citations.

The first essay in the volume is in fact a "summary adaption" of a long landmark study of Pure Land Buddhism written in 1970 by Fujita Kōtatsu in Japanese, summarized and translated in 1981 by Taitetsu Unno. Fujita Kōtatsu has written four articles on the subject since the current translation, which are listed at the end of this chapter. This is an excellent beginning to the volume, with a perhaps prescriptive but nevertheless intelligent methodological agenda that traces the roots of Pure Land to India. In addition to being an important contribution in its own right, it mentions many of the issues that are dealt with later in the volume.

The first and several of the following essays deal with the problem of the origins of Pure Land. The assertion is that "Our task is to . . . elucidate . . . the history of early Pure Land within the development of early Buddhism and in the larger context of Indian religious history" (p. 5). Early here means during the lifetime of Śākyamuni Buddha, though "[i]n early Buddhism there is, of course, no mention of Amida, or Pure Land, or birth therein. . . . And [yet] the term Pure Land Buddhism shall apply to the period when the doctrine arose in India that man can attain Buddhahood by being born in the Pure Land of Amida Buddha, until the time when . . . the original form of the Pure Land sūtras came to be finalized" (p. 5). Fujita Kōtatsu and others in this volume support this assertion with detailed descriptions of the primary Pure Land texts and with explanations of Pure Land doctrines in Mahāyāna Buddhist terms. The authors show how Pure Land practices are based on early Buddhism and defined and refined by later Mahāyāna ideas and ideals in India, China, and Japan. The essays include comments about gender roles, syncretism, philosophical value of visualizing, remembering, or reciting the name of the Buddha (*buddhānusmṛti*), and some innovative reflections about the definitions of Indian Buddhist technical terms (*śraddhā*, *adhimukti*, *prasāda*).

Some of the highlights of the volume are Roger Corless's piece on T'an-luan (c. 488–c. 554), which includes a review of T'an-luan's writings and an assessment of his influence on the early Pure Land tradition (p. 111). He mentions the role of women in the system (p. 119), resonances with Buddhist tantrism (p. 125), and T'an-luan's use of Madhyamaka and "proto-Yogācāra" ideas (p. 131). David Chappell's contribution focuses on Tao-ch'o (562–645) and Shan-tao (613–81). The method of this essay, institutional and intellectual history, is a shift from the text-critical approach in the previous chapter. Chappell emphasizes that Pure Land devotionalism was the most important religious institution in seventh-century China (p. 140). He notes that lay and ordained men and women practiced Pure Land Buddhism (pp. 140–41).

In the fifth chapter Whalen Lai uses Sung Dynasty records of people "reborn in the Pure Land" (173–75) as a starting point for a detailed historical and doctrinal overview of Pure Land practices. His essay is much more broad than the previous chapters, covering a long historical period and very diverse ideas. Lai traces the development of lay Buddhism through the T'ang, noting that Chinese Buddhists were "reformed by Mahāyānist sensibilities of the T'ang" (p. 196), and describes the evolution of Buddhist monasticism from the T'ang to the Sung, when the path of

faith became predominant. He includes Buddha recitation (*nien-fo*) diagrams at the end of the chapter (pp. 221–22). Lai makes the interesting observation that from his perspective "[a] religious practice totally divorced from philosophic reflection faces the danger of degenerating into an aimless ritual, too amenable to magical needs and mixed goals" (p. 219). Richard K. Payne's article is an analysis of the "Rebirth Treatise" attributed to Vasubandhu (p. 233). Payne identifies the text and describes its philosophical and soteriological program. He finds a reliance on Yogācāra philosophy (pp. 234, 241, 250–52), unlike other scholars (p. 240), a systematic practice (*sādhana*) in the structure of the text, and parallels to Buddhist tantra (pp. 245–47, 262).

At this point the volume turns to Japanese Pure Land tradition with an overview of the tradition in Japan by Shigematsu Akihisa and translated from Japanese by Michael Solomon. The first of the chapters is a summary of Japanese Pure Land luminaries and texts from the Nara to Kamakura periods. The chapter identifies the Yogācāra roots of Pure Land, includes mention of gender issues, and is very nearly a bibliographical summary of leading Pure Land figures and texts.

The eighth of the twelve articles, by Taitetsu Unno, focuses on the original works of Hōnen (1133–1211) and Shinran (1173–1263) from the perspective of Buddhist doctrine and practice. Unno, like others in this volume, points out the philosophical value of Pure Land tenets. Shinran's system was universalist, accepting men and women, lay and ordained. Unno explains that "other power" is not really "other"; rather "all is other" (pp. 320, 327–29), and, as Unno explains Shinran, "rebirth is of two kinds—now in this life and after death" (p. 341).

The ninth essay, by James H. Foard, is a social and historical study of Japanese "wandering holy men" (*hijiri*) that focuses on Ippen (1239–89) in the Kamakura period. Foard describes the sources of Ippen's beliefs and practices, stating that Ippen and people like him were unordained charismatic figures who emerged from the native shamanistic tradition and embellished their power with those of Buddhist esotericism and Taoist immortals (p. 358).

Michael Solomon's contribution is the tenth chapter, a very careful study of the Pure Land Honganji order and its founder, Rennyo (1415–99) (p. 399). Unlike Shinran, his spiritual predecessor, Rennyo was an institution founder (p. 400) and an active political figure. The present study is a history of social-political institutions, not of texts or doctrines, which describes Pure Land as an ideology of resistance, focusing on the relationship between Rennyo's Honganji and the state (p. 421).

Minor L. Rogers's approach to Rennyo is text- (e.g, Rennyo's *ofumi* or memoirs) and doctrine-based, describing Rennyo as the "second founder" of Shinshu (p. 429). It includes a summary of Rennyo's biographical data and his doctrines in the context of Pure Land thought, again asserting the theory that "this world is a Pure Land" (p. 433).

The last article in the volume is Chiba Jōryu's summary of the institutional, doctrinal, and political history of Japanese Pure Land from its origins to the modern period. The author discusses the development of sectarian movements (pp. 463–64) and the changing demographics in Japanese religions (p. 469). The chapter includes remarks on the inclusion of *kami* worship in Japanese Pure Land.

These twelve articles were written and prepared well over twenty-five years prior to their publication. Though this volume was partially updated, scholars of Pure Land studies should consult newer work by others like James Sanford, Julian Pas, and so on. Additionally, reference to more recent studies on T'ang dynasty religions and early Tibetan religions will complement the current volume. Still, the opinion of the editors

is implicit in their publication of the volume—the essays are uniformly well-researched pieces that merit consideration and the attention of scholars of Chinese and Japanese religions, and several of them are landmark, authoritative studies that make the volume an important reference tool.

PAUL NIETUPSKI
John Carroll University

Mount Lu Revisited: Buddhism in the Life and Writings of Su Shih. By BEATA GRANT. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994. vii, 249 pp. $36.00.

Su Shih (1037–1101) is one of the greatest and most interesting literary and cultural figures of traditional China, and *Mount Lu Revisited* makes significant contributions to our knowledge of him. This book is not superseded by Ronald Egan's fine *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi* (Harvard University Press, 1994), for although Egan's comprehensive study contains important reflections on Su Shih's Buddhism, Beata Grant's narrower focus allows her to trace more thoroughly the relationship between different layers of Buddhist ideas in Su's writings and the various schools and sutras from which they came. Her chapter on "Buddhism in Eleventh-Century China" alone should ensure a place for this study on the shelves of any scholar of Northern Sung literature. There and throughout the book, Grant draws on her remarkable breadth of scholarship to delineate in Su Shih's writings an increasingly sophisticated awareness of ultimate truths, tempered with a need to ground his thinking and practice in those sutras that either present a consoling vision of an underlying stability in an uncertain world or offer coherence through the interdependence between emptiness and phenomena.

Grant includes a masterful demonstration of how these themes confirm some of the characteristics Peter Bol (in *This Culture of Ours*, Stanford University Press, 1992) has noted in Su's Confucian thought: Su Shih's preference for a middle position between extremes, for example, or his insistence that there is no single practice that can apply to all persons are as evident in his Buddhist writings as in his other writings, perhaps even more so.

Grant's translations are usually very good, no small feat when one is dealing with texts that refer implicitly or explicitly to the enormous universe of the Buddhist textual tradition. Many of the difficult poems she includes have been passed over in silence by modern Su Shih scholars in China and Japan. When it comes to the prose pieces, I believe that in many cases she is the first person ever to publish an interpretation in any language. Perhaps it is inevitable, then, that *Mount Lu Revisited* contains its share of errors of omission and commission in translation or contextualization. The following comments address some of these.

Grant sometimes thinks Su Shih is expressing his own state of mind when the poem is really about someone else. On pages 62–63, Grant discusses three of nine verses Su Shih wrote in 1073 to match a set from his brother Su Ch'e, but they concern people and artifacts in distant Lo-yang, where Su Ch'e had gone the previous year to administer (not "sit for") an examination. I would therefore suggest that the poet is writing from Su Ch'e's point of view, or even performing an epideictic exercise that is more intellectual than expressive of a personal perspective.

Similarly, the poem on pages 166–67 makes more sense as praise of the abbot to whom the poem is addressed than as a description of Su Shih's own state of mind.