

Editorial

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This issue of *Buddhist Studies Review* begins with an obituary for Stefano Zacchetti, who passed away last Spring, penned by Antonello Palumbo. As Palumbo notes, many were first shocked and then saddened by the untimely passing one of our most esteemed scholars of Chinese Buddhism.

The article that begins this issue of *Buddhist Studies Review* is by Kirill Alekseev and is entitled, “Analysis of the *Ratnakūṭa* in the Mongolian Manuscript Kanjur.” As the title suggests, in this contribution Alekseev examines the *Mahāratnakūṭa* collection in its Mongolian forms. Whilst introducing us to the collection as a whole, and its different recensions and versions in Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan, Alekseev notes that Mongolian versions of the collection have not, to date, received much scholarly attention. Instead, they have been considered of only secondary importance. Alekseev’s investigation of the structure and content of the manuscripts, however, reveals not only important information about the ways in which textual transmission occurred within Tibeto-Mongolian cultural worlds but also more generally on canon formation and transmission. Through analysis of colophons and text titles in Mongolian manuscripts, Alekseev identifies that the Mongolian versions of the collection were likely mostly translated into Mongolian and became part of the canon during 1628–1629, a time in which it is well known that significant translation projects were occurring in Mongolia. Noting discrepancies with text titles and colophons, he concludes that the Mongolian *Mahāratnakūṭa* was likely developed from non-standard Tibetan and Chinese versions of the text that are no longer extant, thus demonstrating the caution with which we should view now-standard versions of works within Buddhist canons.

The next article is “A Computer-assisted Analysis of Zhu Fonian’s Original Mahāyāna Sutras,” by Lin Qian and Michael Radich. Lin and Radich focus in on the work of Zhu Fonian, known as one of the most important translators of Chinese Buddhist texts within the fourth and fifth centuries. Lin and Radich recapitulate Jan Nattier’s earlier assertion that one of Zhu Fonian’s “translations” is actually a forgery, being based on earlier Chinese texts. Using a new technique that allows

computer-assisted analysis of the structure and content of texts, Lin and Radich examine both the text investigated by Nattier and other of Zhu Fonian's acclaimed translations, four Mahāyāna texts—the *Shi zhu duan jie jing* T309, the *Pusa chu tai jing* T384, the *Zhongyin jin* T385, and the *Pusa yingluo jing* T656—and conclude that these were also compiled by Zhu Fonian himself. They intimate the possible reason being because, *pace* Nattier, he was being overshadowed by the translation work of Kumārajīva.

The next article, which is lengthy, is “A Dravidian poem translated into Pāli? *Apadāna-aṭṭhakathā/Visuddhajanavilāsini* (534¹³–537²⁸, vv 12–48)” by Bryan G. Levman. The discursive part of the paper is not itself overly long, but the whole piece comprises not only the discursive section, but also a substantial table detailing linguistic analysis and also a twenty-page glossary of non Indo-Aryan words from the text that examines their potential Dravidian origin. The focus in the article is a poem in the *Kāḷudāyittherāpadānavañṇanā* which expands on the poem attributed to Kāḷudāyī in the *Theraḡāthā*. The argument Levman makes, convincingly in my opinion, is that the text demonstrates some Dravidian linguistic substrata. This potentially has implications for that much-debated question of the languages the Buddha taught in, and the languages used for the early teaching and transmission of Buddhist doctrine and practice.

The final article in this issue is by Phibul Choompolpaisal. Choompolpaisal is well-known for his work on the meditation practice of *boran kammathan* in Thailand, and this article continues his research on this interesting, recent topic. The article is entitled “*Boran Kammathan* (Ancient Theravāda) meditation transmissions in Siam from late Ayutthaya to Rattanakosin periods.” As Choompolpaisal himself says, “the study of *boran kammathan* is still at an early stage and the details of its variety have barely been touched in the existing literature.” Hence, this article is concerned with just that, regional and other types of variation with regards to *boran kammathan* traditions. Choompolpaisal concentrates on “one corner” of transmission lineages, from Ayutthaya to Thonburi and Sri Lanka and investigates these via a selection of sources: scholarly, civil and intra-traditional. As two of the lineages are living lineages, he also includes insights gained via interviews and conversations with modern teachers.

The final item in this volume, before the book reviews, is a report on a new project began by Anna Sehnalova and Rachael Griffiths, The Oral History of Tibetan Studies Project. As Tibetan studies is a relatively new field, the project convenors felt that it would be of value to collect memories, reflections and recollections of individuals who have contributed to the establishment of Tibetan Studies as an academic discipline in the second half of the twentieth century. Through extensive audio and video interviews, and the collecting of fascinating photographs and other documents, an archive has been developed, that was launched this summer.