

EDITORIAL

Happy 40th Birthday, *Buddhist Studies Review*!

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Although not everyone loves a birthday, celebration can be augmented or evanesced with occasion for reflection, and taking stock. I'm pleased to be writing this editorial for *Buddhist Studies Review*, 40.1, to celebrate forty years of the journal. At the time of writing, we continue on with the successes of the journal, and the organization that manages it, the UK Association for Buddhist Studies. This year, our UKABS conference will take place at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. This will be very first time we have hosted a conference at this university, and indeed this will be one of the first Buddhist Studies conferences to have taken place at the University of St Andrews. The university has a long, illustrious history, being the third oldest university in the UK and, according to many recent university guides and league tables, currently having the accolade of being ranked the best university in the UK. The conference then, represents the combining of the old and the new, Buddhist Studies finding a place within an established university with its own grand history and modern legacy.

Similarity, within the covers of this issue we can see the old and the new in effortless synchronicity. The articles in this issue cover topics which could very easily have been topics addressed in the first issue: Two of the articles are concerned with Buddhist notions of self and no-self, and another is on the question of the language(s) in which the teachings were first transmitted, and that were the languages or language spoken by the Buddha himself. These are the same questions we have been grappling with for many more than the forty years these journal pages have been full of them. But we shall not cease from exploration, as every new translation, investigation and examination continues to advance our knowledge and understanding still further.

The first article in this issue is by Marcus Bingenheimer, and is entitled, "A Late Mahāyāna Text on Being without Self—With Special Reference to the Chinese Versions of the *Nairātma-paripṛcchā* (T846, T1643)." The precise title tells us a great deal. The article's focus is a late, post-seventh century text, the

Nairātma-paripṛcchā “Questions regarding No-Self.” Bingenheimer provides an annotated translation of one of the Chinese versions of the text (T1643), as well as a review of previous research, and a discussion of dates and some debated features. He begins with this rumination:

It was as if the Dharma had come full circle. In the eleventh century, when after some 1500 years the production of Buddhist texts in India slowly came to an end, one more Indian monk from Nālanda went to China and translated a short text on early Buddhism’s perhaps most creative contribution to Indian thought—the idea that persons have no essential self.

Notions of selfhood, and the autonomy of the self, are key in the works of the Chinese Buddhist, Dharma Master Taixu (1890–1947). Taixu’s thought is the topic of the second article in this issue. This article is authored by Jan Vrhovski, a scholar from Ljubljana University in Slovenia. Vrhovski sets out to cast new light on the origins and foundation of Buddhist modernity in East Asia with an assessment and review of Taixu’s work. This he attempts not through an historical lens but rather with a philosophical focus on the intricates of Taixu’s thought. He analyses the key concepts of “human life,” “freedom,” and “karma” in Taixu’s work, and how these related to modern society, politics, and in particular developing notions of science and scientific paradigms during Taixu’s time. The title of this article is “The Subject’s Guide to the Realms of Karma—Notes on Reading the Work of Dharma Master Taixu.”

Our final article in this issue moves away from philosophy but circles back to texts. This is Bryan Levman’s “Dravidian Buddhism.” Levman has become renowned for his work on languages and linguistics and continues, in this article, with another thoroughgoing investigation into specific features—vocabulary, structure and derivation—of selected Indic languages, and what they might reveal to us about the time of the Buddha. There are two parts to the article: The first part looks at what is known of the practice and spread of Buddhism among Dravidian-speaking peoples during the life of the Buddha and after his passing. The second part focuses on one text to provide examples. In this part, Levman assesses and discussed fifty-one non-Indo-Aryan words in the Buddhist *Pāṭimokkha*, noting even that the word *pāṭimokkha* itself may be of Dravidian origin. Whilst acknowledging that there are obstacles blocking attempts to take forward this field of research into Buddhism amongst Dravidian speakers, Levman concludes that more is still possible. A fitting conclusion, also, to *Buddhist Studies Review*’s birthday meditations. Here’s to another forty years!