Reviews

Metaphor and Literalism in Buddhism: The Doctrinal History of Nirvana,
Soonil Hwang (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. xiii + 160, £65.00.
ISBN 0 415 35550 8

This work is based on a D.Phil. thesis written at the University of Oxford, and is unusually broad in its outlook. The immediate importance is in relation to understandings of the concept of *nirvāṇa*: not only does it examine the relationship between the 'contingent' (*ābhiprāyika*) elucidation of the *sūtra*s and the 'definitive' (*lākṣanika*) expositions of the *abhidhamma*, it also examines later developments of the concept among diverse Buddhist schools up to the fifth century, and draws on sources in Pāli, Sanskrit and Chinese. In addition, the work's broader contribution is highlighting the ways in which misinterpretations of metaphorical language, or 'unintentional literalism' (p. 2), can prompt doctrinal developments.

Chapter 1, 'Nirvana and its Reference', is very brief and examines the etymology for *nirvāṇa*, as well as the frame of reference it originally had. Chapter 2, 'The Two Nirvana Theory in the Early Canon', moves on to the theory of *nirvāṇa* during life (*saupādisesa nibbāna/sopadhiśeṣa nirvāṇa,* which Hwang translates as 'nirvana with a remainder of clinging') and *nirvāṇa* at death (*anupādisesa nibbāna/nirupadhiśeṣa nirvāṇa*, translated as 'nirvana without a remainder of clinging'; p. 14). In order to clarify the different expositions of this theory, Hwang focuses on the concept of *upādi* (Pāli) or *upadhi* (Skt), both etymologically and in relation to its 'subjective and objective meanings' (p. 16), as well as within the term *upādisesa.* He draws out the many context-defined meanings, and also disentangles 'non-returner' from the framework of the two-*nirvāṇa* theory.

Chapter 3, 'Developments of the Two Nirvana Theory', traces the development of the concept of *nirvāṇa* through both the Pāli *abhidhamma* and Chinese *abhidharma* traditions. Following on from the previous chapter, the attention then turns to the two *nirvāṇa* theory as presented in the Sarvāstivādin *Jñānaprasthāna* and the Theravāda exegetical traditions, including Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga.* In relation to the latter, Hwang examines the possibility that Buddhaghosa – 'a northerner' (p. 46) – may have imported a North-Indian concept of *nirvāṇa* into Theravāda, while also tracing his interpretation back to the *Nettippakaraṇa* and *Peṭakopadesa.*

Chapter 4, 'Nirvana in the Theravāda Buddhist Tradition', begins by examining the question of what happens to the *Tathāgata* after death, which forms one of the questions left unanswered by the Buddha, and has thus been answered instead by many scholars, with varying degrees of persuasion. Hwang in particular argues against the view that the metaphor of a fire extinguished contained within it the common Indian view that a fire that goes out is not annihilated but returns to a non-manifest state. Hwang counters this with the Buddha's frequent reference to 'thinking according to the cause' (Hwang's translation of *yoniso manasikāra*; p. 51), especially in his conversation with Vacchagotta, and argues that this demonstrates that the Buddha meant that a fire that goes out does so because of a lack of causes. The chapter then moves on to a detailed discussion of *nirvāṇa*

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in the Pāli tradition, in particular the view unique to Theravāda that *nirvāṇa* is the only 'unconditioned' (*asaṃskṛta*).

Chapter 5, 'Nirvana in Northern Buddhist Schools', turns our attention to the ontological issues surrounding *nirvāṇa*, particularly in the works of the Sautrāntikas and Sarvāstivādins. Hwang examines how the developed *abhidharma* of each school led to the necessity of different interpretations of the two *nirvāṇa* theory. The chapter ends with a discussion of how Anuruddha's simile ('his mind was liberated like the going out of a lamp') forms a focus for this debate, as each school attempts to find a way to fit the metaphor to the concept of *nirvāṇa* made necessary by their own *abhidharma.*

In the conclusion (Chapter 6), Hwang neatly summarises his findings, and notes that he hopes his study may provide a foundation for further examination of Mahāyāna concepts of *nirvāṇa.* The conclusion is followed by 'Part 2', which might be mistaken for an appendix, containing as it does annotated translations of some relevant passages from a variety of texts: 'The unconditioned element (*asaṅkhata dhātu*) in the *Sammohavinodanī*', 'The exegesis of the two nirvana theory in the *Mahāvibhāṣāśāstra*', 'The debate on nirvana in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*', and 'The interpretation of Anuruddha's verse in the *Nyāyānusāraśāstra'.*

The book is neatly structured and clearly presented, with sundry tables to illustrate particular points. It is a mere 125 pages (not including notes or bibliography), and although one might wish for more pages considering the high price, one has to congratulate the author on fitting such wide-reaching contents into so concise a volume.

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Buddhism, Conflict and Violence in Modern Sri Lanka, edited by Mahinda Deegalle (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. xv + 277, £75.00 (Cloth). ISBN 0 415 35920 1

Deegalle's edited collection is superbly produced and each piece in it is well-written. Its contributors are: Mahinda Deegalle, Richard Gombrich, John C. Holt, Mahinda Palihawadana, P. D. Premasiri, Peter Schalk, Alvappillai Veluppillai, Ananda Wickremeratne, Gananath Obeyesekere, Bardwell Smith, R. A. L. H. Gunawardana, Chandra R. De Silva, Asanga Tilakaratne and George Bond. The volume is an outcome of the 'International Conference on Buddhism and Conflict in Sri Lanka' held at Bath Spa University, 28-30 June 2002, although seven of the fifteen essays were specially commissioned after the conference.

In the work, both canonical and cultural resources are applied to the study of contemporary Sri Lanka's ethnic conflicts. Some main ideas are as follows. Causes of violence, such as not distributing wealth to the poor, are discussed. Of course Buddhist texts do not recommend violence, but the question of how to defend against aggression is an important issue both theoretically and practically. The ideal code of Buddhist monasticism is separable from historical tradition of politics and societies. Opposition to war on the theoretical plane is surely a part of Buddhism, while those who make political use of religion may sometimes extol it. Conflict is often understood in Buddhist texts as the result of an unenlightened response to one's sensory involvement. In Buddhism leaders may conquer territory through morality but not through brute force, and there is no concept of a 'just war' in Buddhist texts. Sharing territory can be one way of overcoming hatred by love. However, in the Pāli Chronicles such as the *Mahāvaṃsa* there are aggres-

sive sensibilities reported wherein non-believers and non-humans are linked. Indeed, a 1979 government act against terrorism may also be used against Tamils. The burning of the Jaffna Library has shaken the confidence of Tamil ethnic minorities that the government protects all citizens. Within the Buddhist *Saṅgha*, doctrinal, social, educational and economic differences have contributed to instability when Buddhist monastic tradition prizes unity. Recognition of realities and threats to Buddhist religion through invasions has brought the *Saṅgha* together at times. The choice for Buddhists is for dispassionate inaction or compassionate action.

In view of Sri Lanka's history of Buddhists being impacted on by both Islam and Christianity, the rise of 'Buddhist fundamentalism' is understandable even if not justifiable. Albeit a truism in theory that hatred ceases by love and not by more hatred, the haunting question that remains for the Buddhist community is: what if anything should be done when aggressive force cannot in practice be changed through a Buddhist message of love combined with Gandhian non-violent strategies without waiting indefinitely for change? In response to those who elevate the political use of religion over religion's sublime principles, is the call to dispassionate inaction or is it to compassionate action? The Buddhist community has much on which to reflect in dialogue with the distinguished contributors whose papers constitute Mahinda Deegalle's new volume. This reviewer was deeply impressed with the range, depth and consistent quality of the papers. The wider scholarly community can ill afford to ignore this timely and important work. This book is brilliantly conceived and executed: it is a veritable 'must' for all researchers and their libraries where questions of community, violence and peace matter.

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The Path of Compassion: The Bodhisattva Precepts. The Chinese Brahma's Net Sutra. Introduced and translated by Batchelor (Lanham: Altamira Press 2004), pp. xi + 128. US$19.95. ISBN 0 7591 0517 0

The Path of Compassion is not merely a further translation of the Chinese version of the *Brahmajala Sūtra*, but also a helpful discussion of the contents of a text that is still valued and followed in the East Asian Buddhist community. Batchelor provides a lively version of this Mahāyāna text on ethics and moral etiquette, stressing its relevance in the contemporary Buddhist world. The author's key concern is reflected in her saying, 'It would be interesting to ponder and reflect on what kind of bodhisattva ethics could be created today to help us deal compassionately and wisely with this modern world, which though benefiting from technology and scientific progress is also deeply flawed, with too many ways to kill and hurt sentient beings and possibly to destroy our planet' (p. 22).

Pleasant to read and easy to understand, the translation is based on Korean vernacular texts and the Chinese versions. First edited by Stephen Batchelor in 1983, this translation has been revised *vis-à-vis* other Western translations, which are listed in the bibliography. The translation of Tibetan Buddhist vows in the appendix is by Lama Zopa Rimpoche. This was first published in 1974, and is included here with a few emendations by Martine Batchelor.

The work provides new insights, and is outstanding in clarity and approach. The inclusion of useful introductory notes provides an interesting and useful guide to the reader and constitues the most useful part of the book. Having lived as a Buddhist nun in Korea

for ten years, Batchelor writes as someone with an insider's experience as well as with a scholarly approach to the text. The result is a theoretical discourse on compassion and wisdom that is enriched by continuous references to its concrete application in the contemporary world.

The book is divided into four parts: an introduction on history and teachings of this Buddhist scripture (pp. 1–44), the translation of the text (pp. 47–93), the appendix on 'The Tibetan Bodhisattva Vows' (pp. 95–104) and a glossary (pp. 109–25). The foreword by the Dalai Lama (pp. viii–ix) echoes the message that will be recurrent throughout the volume: 'meditation and practical application mutually complement each other' (p. viii).

Throughout, Batchelor stresses the contemporary adoption and valuation of the *Bodhisattva* precepts in a living tradition, which thus are seen as enduring values in the Buddhist tradition. Although the starting focus is on Korea, reflecting Batchelor's personal experience, parallels and/or comparison to the situations in China, Japan and Tibet are constantly made. Historical comparisons are also made throughout. First of all, Batchelor analyses the development of the figure, identity and role of the *Bodhisattva* from the beginning of Buddhism onwards. She then affirms the Mahāyāna identity of the text: 'The Mahayana is characterized by an affirmation of the world and of life, lofty religious ideals, a complex cosmology and mythology, and new or radically developed philosophical positions, all of which are apparent in the *Brahma's Net Sutra*' (p. 6). On the included Tibetan *Bodhisattva* vows, considered here as the last development of the doctrine of the *Bodhisattva* precepts, Batchelor holds that, 'In terms of wisdom and compassion, the bodhisattva precepts of the *Brahma's Net Sutra* and the Tibetan Buddhist bodhisattva vows are basically similar, but on matters of detail they are quite different' (p. 22). 'The Stages on the Path' conveys the whole scheme of the *Bodhisattva* career, according to the classification proposed in the *Brahma's Net Sutra*. Batchelor provides a list and an easy explanation of the ten initial stages, the ten development stages, the ten diamond stages and the ten grounds. The Mahāyāna *Bodhisattva* ideal is also linked to the doctrine of emptiness and the feature of equality in 'A universal doctrine'.

The theme of the sinicization of Buddhism is treated in a discussion of its Chinese reception, adaptation and transformation. Batchelor gives a clear summary of the entrance of Buddhism into China and considers how the *Brahma's Net Sutra* may be a Chinese apocrypha. She particularly discusses how the Confucian value of filial piety (*xiao*) often appears in the text, which seems to stress that 'Buddhist ethical conduct is compatible with, if not equal to, the concepts of filial piety and obedience that are the basis of Confucian ethics' (p. 27).

In 'Ethics', Batchelor discusses the lay and monastic rules of conduct as followed in Tibet, China, Korea and Japan. She holds that, in the text, 'ethics is no longer a discipline but arises spontaneously out of inner compassion and wisdom' (p. 17). In 'Buddhism and the State', Batchelor affirms that the text's main relevance to modern life is that, 'the path of ethics is expressed as compassion in action and the path of compassion is based on an ethical attitude' (pp. 37–8). This is the key phrase of the book, and its main theme is to attempt to apply the *Brahma's Net Sutra* and the *Bodhisattva* precepts concretely to our modern life. She sees this as a key root of 'Engaged Buddhism', and shows how Mahāyāna Buddhism has become a socially engaged tradition in parts of East Asia, discussing figures such as the nun Zhengyan (and her Tzu Chi Foundation) in Taiwan, and Venerable Kwangou and Pang Kwihi in Korea.

In the translation section, the part on 'The Ten Major and the Forty-Eight Secondary Precepts' (pp. 57–88) is preceded by two parts: 'The Preparation' (pp. 47–51), and 'The

Origin of the Bodhisattva Precepts as Taught in the Brahma's Net Sutra', from the Chinese by Kumarajīva (pp. 53–6), and followed by 'The Conclusion' (pp. 88–91) and 'The Apology and the Dedication' (p. 93). Thus, besides the important meaning of the precepts, the ceremony of transmission and confirmation of the vows are also reported, and consequently both the doctrinal and ritual aspects of the *Bodhisattva* precepts are represented and illustrated in detail.

The glossary includes selected terminology used in the *Brahma's Net Sutra*. Clear and basic English explanations, enriched with the Sanskrit and/or Chinese equivalents, help the reader to fully understand the exact significance and implications of each *Bodhisattva* precept.

The bibliography includes the classical and essential Western scholarship of the text and of the *Bodhisattva* precepts. Nevertheless, it would have been helpful to more advanced readers to also include the Chinese and Korean texts. It would also have been helpful to have more of a discussion of the Tibetan *Bodhisattva* vows in the appendix, in addition to the few notes provided in the introduction, and there could have been more on the Japanese tradition of the *Bodhisattva* precepts.

The work is a basic and simple account, a fundamental aid only for beginners in the field. Its strong points include the many references to the text as adopted in contemporary Korea and to practice in East Asia (Korea, China, Taiwan and Hong Kong), and comparisons between the different Chinese and Korean versions of the text.

As a brief, easy and clear volume, in both content and style, I can highly recommend this book to undergraduate students in departments of Chinese or East Asian Studies, or the Study of Religion. Graduate students and advanced scholars should see it as a successful attempt to simplify Buddhist doctrine and practice in a Mahāyāna context, as a potential textbook for foundation courses on Buddhism, and an aid to understanding the theoretical and doctrinal roots of 'Engaged Buddhism' in East Asia.

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Murōji: Rearranging Art and History at a Japanese Buddhist Temple. Sherry D. Fowler (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), pp. xiv + 293. US$55.00. ISBN 0824827929

Sherry Fowler's book is a detailed study of the Japanese Buddhist temple of Murōji, founded in the eighth century and located in a dramatic mountain setting. The book aims to elicit the 'various histories' (p. 7) of Murōji by applying a range of approaches to a wide variety of visual and documentary evidence. Two of the book's central themes are 'plurality of practice' (p. 2) and the changing nature of '"sectarian" or school affiliations' (p. 3) at Murōji. Fowler's sensitive treatment of these closely interconnected themes permits the recovery of such aspects of the multifaceted story of Murōji as the relationship between Murōji and Kōfukuji, the importance of the Hossō and Tendai traditions, and the significance of relics and of the belief in a dragon. The wealth of Murōji's art and architecture makes it possible to demonstrate convincingly how changing emphases in religious practice, together with political considerations, have manifested themselves in the structures and art of the temple.

Chapter 1 considers the topography of Mt. Murō, paying close attention to natural features of the landscape, particularly the area's caves, which marked Mt. Murō as a sacred

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area. This leads into an examination of how the belief in a dragon, held to dwell in Mt Murō's caves and to be capable of controlling rainfall, was crucial in establishing Murōji's reputation as a site for prayers to control rain. The earliest of Murōji's records, *Ben'ichizan nenbun dosha sōjō* (Mt Benichi's petition for a yearly ordinand), dating to 937, is of particular relevance here as it discusses the Dragon King and prayers on Mt Murō for rain. Fowler helpfully provides a translation of the *Ben'ichizan nenbun dosha sōjō* as an appendix to the book. The chapter also addresses the issue of hidden and buried relics, which invest Murōji and its environs with sacred power in a similar way to how the claimed presence of the dragon does. Fowler's discussion of relics includes the manner in which they are viewed as jewels, the importance of their association with Kūkai (774–835), the founder of the Shingon school, and an analysis of small *stūpas* known as *momitō*. The mutually reinforcing connections between the dragon, Buddhist relics and Murōji's perceived power as a centre for controlling rainfall (and by extension fertility and agriculture) are shown to have been used to promote Buddhist authority on Mt Murō. The chapter ends with an examination of the Autumn Ryuketsu Shrine Festival, which illustrates the current relationship between Murōji and the Ryuketsu Shrine, and how worship of the dragon has largely fallen under the jurisdiction of the shrine since the 1868 government policy of separating Shinto and Buddhism. One of the book's stated aims is to return the dragon to its important place in the narrative of Murōji (p. 207).

An examination of different school affiliations at Murōji, and the complex shifts these have undergone over the centuries, is undertaken in Chapter 2. Fowler observes that, while the *Ben'ichizan nenbun dosha sōjō* considers Murōji to have been founded by the monk Kengyō (714–793) as a subtemple of Kōfukuji (a temple that stressed Hossō teachings), Murōji's sectarian affiliation was only properly established in 1700 (p. 43). The temple's fluid sectarian affiliations are initially addressed by examining how the careers of early religious figures were interpreted in order to assert the authority of different schools at Murōji. This constructive approach is not, however, extended to include monks of the Kamakura-period, as the author herself acknowledges (p. 82). Thus, the Kōfukuji monk Shuen (769?–835) had been used to promote the authority of Kōfukuji, although this necessitated downplaying the connections he also had to the Tendai and Shingon traditions. Conversely, the figure of Ken'e (d. 860s?) is reinterpreted in ways conducive to establishing Shingon authority, while the problem of lacking a Shingon founder of Murōji predating the Kōfukuji monk Kengyō is solved by promoting the semi-legendary En no Gyōja as a 'proto-Shingon monk' (p. 44) and founder figure. It becomes evident from the narrative that the looseness of sectarian affiliations in Murōji's earlier history lent itself well to the later writing of retrospective histories. In the seventeenth century, Kōfukuji and Shingon monks at Murōji competed for control of the temple, with both sides submitting histories of Murōji to the Shrine and Temple Magistrate to support their respective cases. Although an initial ruling found in favour of Kōfukuji, this was later reversed, and Murōji was officially registered as a Shingon temple in 1700. Fowler's examination of the eighteenth-century *Murōji engi* (Legend of Murōji), which appears to be an abbreviated copy of an earlier document designed to support the Shingon case, reveals a history of Murōji structured to establish Shingon authority. This chapter also looks at the reputation of Murōji as Nyonin Kōya (Mt Kōya for Women), although Fowler argues that the laity primarily promoted this reputation, and that the association of Murōji with women lacks the ancient roots commonly assumed (p. 66).

Chapter 3 follows on from the previous chapter's consideration of school affiliations at Murōji by examining how such changing affiliations, in particular the increasing domi-

nance of the Shingon tradition from the fourteenth century onwards, have been manifested in four of Murōji's main buildings. In her examination of the pagoda (*c.* 800), which suffered typhoon damage in 1998, Fowler compares past and present restoration projects, and considers evidence, in the form of the deity-images enshrined in the pagoda, for the later dominance of the Shingon tradition at Murōji. The thirteenth-century Maitreya Hall (*mirokudō*) and its central image of Maitreya point to influence from Kōfukuji, as the worship of Maitreya at Murōji mirrors what was a contemporary practice of great importance at Kōfukuji. Nevertheless, the Maitreya Hall also demonstrates the shift to Shingon dominance through its image of En no Gyōja, who, as noted earlier, served as a 'proto-Shingon' figure. Fowler shows how Murōji's Main Hall (*hondō*) and Founder's Portrait Hall (*mieidō*), both dating from the fourteenth century, testify to the increasing ascendancy of the Shingon school. For instance, the Main Hall's structure is designed to facilitate the performance of Shingon esoteric rituals, while the Founder's Portrait Hall has an image of Kūkai as its focus of worship.

The primary concern of Chapter 4 is a detailed examination of five ninth- to tenth-century sculptures found in the ninth-century Golden Hall (*kondō*) of Murōji, currently designated as Eleven-headed Kannon Bosatsu, Monju Bosatsu, Shaka Nyorai, Yakushi Nyorai, and Jizō Bosatsu (Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, Śākyamuni Tathāgata, Bhaiṣajya-guru Tathāgata and Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva), together with an analysis of their wooden mandorlas (*ita kōhai*). Fowler explains how the largest sculpture, which she refers to as the Main Image (*honzon*), was thought to be stylistically unique, until it was discovered that a sculpture of Jizō, in the nearby area of Sanbonmatsu, matched it in style. Based on its striking similarities with the Main Image, the author contends that this sculpture, known as the Sanbonmatsu Jizō, was originally housed in Murōji's Golden Hall.

The focus on the five central images of the Golden Hall is continued in Chapter 5, with a variety of evidence being employed to show that the Golden Hall's Main Image, currently designated as Shaka, was previously identified as Yakushi. Fowler goes on to argue that the Golden Hall originally housed a triad consisting of the Golden Hall's Main Image, representing Yakushi, flanked by the Sanbonmatsu Jizō and an image of Kannon, possibly the Eleven-headed Kannon currently in the Golden Hall. While admitting that such a triad is unusual in Japan, Fowler points to precedents for it in China, such as representations of the triad in the caves of Dunhuang, and instances of Kannon and Jizō being combined in Korea and Japan. Turning to explain how the current pentad may have come about, Fowler relies on the concept of *honji suijaku*, whereby Buddhist deities serve as the original ground from which native deities (*kami*) are manifested. According to this system, the five *kami* of the Kasuga Shrine, which formed a temple-shrine complex with Kōfukuji, had, in hierarchical order, Shaka, Yakushi, Jizō, Eleven-headed Kannon, and Monju as their corresponding Buddhist deities. Fowler argues that the current Golden Hall pentad was created in the seventeenth century in an attempt to assert Kōfukuji authority at Murōji, through aligning the Buddhist deities of Murōji's Golden Hall with the five *kami* of the Kasuga Shrine. Such a process required that the identity of the Main Image be changed from Yakushi to Shaka, in order to match the hierarchical sequence of the Buddhist deities corresponding to the Kasuga Shrine deities, and that the images of Yakushi and Monju be added to complete the pentad.

This book convincingly demonstrates, through the various stories and perspectives it recovers from the multi-layered history of Murōji, that there is no such thing as a single definitive history of the temple. Thus, the author's introductory statement that, 'This book is a tale of Murōji's various histories' (p. 7) is fully justified. The structure of the book is

orderly and logical, and the illustrations it provides form an integral part of the work, enabling us to experience something of the visual culture of the temple. The volume's in-depth consideration of Murōji allows us to develop a real familiarity with this one particular temple, while at the same time encouraging us to reflect on how other temples must have 'various histories' of their own waiting to be revealed. I would recommend this authoritative book to anyone interested in the study of Japanese art and architecture, or religion, or indeed of Buddhism in general.

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