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OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
BUDDHIST STUDIES

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Volume 6

1983

Number 2

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ises that do not accord with there being nothing but physical particles, and their properties and relations, and must reject—as he will very likely do with horror—conclusions that reject the notion of reincarnation and nirvana as either absurdly false or else totally meaningless, the materialist is tied by no such restrictions, since the scientific method frees one from appealing to the teachings of supposed Holy Men.”

These hypothetical comments play about as fairly with Buddhism as do Blofeld's with Christianity (and, by implication, any monotheistic tradition). In fact, within Christendom (as within “Buddhadom,” if one may use this term to refer to that rich mixture of cultures and traditions in which Buddhist thought plays a significant role) one can find various degrees of sensitivity to evidence, willingness to listen to alternatives and to weigh arguments, and the like. Christianity, Buddhism, and indeed any tradition, includes beliefs; not all such beliefs can be true. The Preface favors one perspective toward this fact; the Introduction illustrates another. The Preface, I hope, resembles the future; the Introduction, I fear, resembles the past (and that part of the past which this sort of book is an effort to overcome).

Keith E. Yandell

A Meditator's Diary, by Jane Hamilton-Merritt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1979. pp. 156 Price: £1.00 (U.K.)

Contemplative habits and mental discipline are valued in all schools of Buddhism. Yet the stress laid on them is strongest in the Theravāda form of this religion; for here, the supreme goal of emancipation itself is represented as a prize to be won through a process of self-culture which entails in a central way the disciplining of one's faculties. Buddhist works of Theravāda inspiration therefore contain some of the best theoretical elaborations on meditation. And, equally significant, monastic communities that belong to this tradition have tended to preserve among themselves the esoteric techniques that relate to the actual practice of meditation. Jane Hamilton-Merritt's *A Meditator's Diary* offers an intimate and eminently readable account of an encounter with meditation in one such Theravāda environment, namely, the *wats* of Thailand. Through an autobiographically oriented presentation, the author reaches a number of conclu-

sions: meditative practices rooted in Theravāda Buddhism are uniquely fulfilling, useful in everyday living, and, most important, cultivable.

However, it was only through arduous effort (and expert instruction from monks) that Hamilton-Merritt came to recognize these things. Being not only a Westerner, but also a woman, she had difficulty gaining access to the world of Theravāda meditation. Yet she overcame the obstacles in her way: living as an acolyte in the spare cell of a Thai teaching *wat* she learns about the intricacies of mind control by personal experience. Though the outer circumstances of her quest have an element of adventure (and are often sensitively narrated), the most absorbing parts of the book are those in which the meditative process itself—its initiation, accompaniments and effects—are detailed. In addition to their evident religious value, Hamilton-Merritt says much about the meditations that has a distinct phenomenological significance. Indeed, she provides the reader with first hand descriptions of a very rare kind—and in everyday language—about the *state of the experient* who is disengaged from the world and is absorbed instead in the deeper forms of meditative activity.

Concentration is the key to meditation; hence the author's initial efforts are directed towards the practice of mindful breathing (*ānāpānāsati*). On acquiring an adeptness in this ancient technique she is transported, as it were, into a supernormal realm of visual images, shapes and symbols. Pulsating lights, kaleidoscopic colour displays and the silhouette of a Buddha are among the "sights" recorded. The fruits of concentration, however, are not these but, rather, the calm and tranquil states of mind which supervene. The further refinement of these very qualities takes place in the course of the author's subsequent initiation into the more advanced insight (*vipassanā*) meditation. The focus of attention here is on the stomach's rising and falling as one breathes. And the practice of this type of concentration is in turn accompanied by subjective experiences of an extraordinary order (cf. pp. 106–108). But, it is emphasized again that the real compensations for the efforts are to be found elsewhere—in the ineffable sense of inner peace that comes to be felt.

Not surprisingly, Hamilton-Merritt views meditation as a mind expanding procedure which enables one—without, significantly, the use of harmful drugs—to go beyond what is traditionally considered to be reality. Though her own introduction to the practice of meditation took place in a Buddhist setting

amidst a fairly clear recognition of the principal emphases of Buddhist philosophy, she has no doubt as to the possibility of cultivating mental concentration in other, different circumstances. "One can watch the breath at any time," she says, adding: "being mindful can be done while waking, riding the train to work, doing routine work like raking leaves, pulling weeds, washing dishes, scrubbing floors." (p. 140) The resultant benefits, it is observed lastly, are considerable. For a controlled mind, among other things, conserves its energies and is thus better placed to produce "more acute realizations." (p. 142)

A Meditator's Diary deserves notice because it succeeds in showing in a striking way that Theravāda Buddhist meditation is indeed a teachable, experiential discipline. But, it would be well to observe that the conception of the *uses* of meditation that is projected here might not meet with full acceptance everywhere: there is room to argue that it is perhaps somewhat overly secularized. In any event, one must not forget that though even the orthodox Theravāda believer might recognize mundane uses for meditation, he or she would no doubt value it finally because it is an indispensable aid in the quest for salvation.

Vijitha Rajapakse

The Roof Tile of Tempyō by Yasushi Inoue, translated by James T. Araki. University of Tokyo Press: Tokyo, 1982, pp. xvii + 140.

This book is a narrative account of the perilous journey to Tang China of four Japanese Buddhist monks who go to that country to study and who subsequently convince prominent Chinese monks to come to Japan to establish there the proper ordination procedures for Buddhist priests. The book is broadly based upon historical fact, but the narrative fleshes out the bare bones of history and presents an engaging and readable story. Araki's translation is excellent, for at no point is one made aware that the original is not English.

In his preface Araki notes that, although this book was the recipient of the Japanese Ministry of Education Prize in 1958, it has been considered until now to be too "Japanese" for successful introduction to a Western audience (p. xiii). Araki highlights a few of the aspects that characterize its uniquely Japanese cultural heritage. However, it would seem that the main difficulty