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Buddha's Lions—The Lives of the Eighty-Four Siddhas, by James B. Robinson, Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1979. 404 + xv. p.

It is truly a pleasure to find that it is still possible for a good piece of Buddhological scholarship to be fun. The market has from its beginning allowed two unfortunate extremes in publication. One is the uninformed account aimed at a "lay audience" which, in the name of simplicity, ends up underestimating the capacity (and often times the gullibility) of the general reader. The other, under the guise of being "a study for the specialist," ends up confounding both specialist and lay reader alike with unnecessary complexities. Instead of indicating their author's expertise, they usually betray his lack of it. Professor Robinson's study, a translation of the *Catauraṣīti Siddha Pravṛtti* of Abhayadatta (from the Tibetan translation) manages most skillfully to avoid both of these pitfalls.

In his introduction, Dr. Robinson discusses some of the general issues relevant to a study of the *siddhas*. He treats such issues as the meaning of the term *siddha* and points out the similarities between one hagiography and the next, seeing a definite pattern to the way these accounts are structured. I would take exception, however, with his analysis of the origins of the *vajrayāna*, not because it is wrong but because it is speculative. He says:

For just as the Mahāyāna emerged to balance the scholasticism of the Hinayāna, so the tradition of the Vajrayāna came to the fore to balance the scholasticism of the Mahāyāna (P. 5).

Granted that the scholasticism of the Mahāyāna may have been one factor in the emergence of the Vajrayāna; but how can we be sure? Moreover, the implication that it was the sole or even the principal impetus for the rise of the Vajrayāna is altogether too simplistic to account for the sometimes radically different nature of the two systems. To conceive of the Vajrayāna as the practice-oriented side of the Mahāyāna, as Professor Robinson seems to, is in my view misguided. Not to be misunderstood, however, my main objection here is not that speculation concerning such very interesting issues be omitted, but that it either be substantiated (textually, art-historically, etc.)—in which case it ceases to be speculation—or simply be identified as speculative.

A very interesting philosophical issue that is just mentioned in passing by Dr. Robinson is perhaps worthy of mention here. He states that "the key factor is not whether one conforms or does not conform to a particular set of social norms; rather it is the state of mind with which one acts." This, though quite true from the point of view of Tantric Buddhism, can (and often is) misunderstood. It does not give the would-be *siddha* the right to cease moral-observance, nor does it make mere

non-conformity the path to liberation; and yet, Atiśa does make it quite clear that the yogin who has “seen reality” (*de nyid mthong*) incurs no moral faults (*nyes pa med*).

As regards the translation, it is unquestionably of a very high calibre, its greatest advantage being that the author has managed to evade the pitfalls of translating Tibetan into Tibglish, that linguistic no-man's-land fraught with curiously Tibetan syntactic structures lurking in a veritable jungle of English words. Dr. Robinson's translations reads like English, while at the same time being quite true to the originals. It is a monument to the fact that “literal” translations can be more than just cribs.

Still, I find that I must point out a few places in the text that could stand improvement. First let us consider the homage. The Tibetan text reads:

bla ma dam pa rnam la phyag tshal to : dus gsum sangs rgyas rnam dang brgyad pa'i bla ma mkha' spyod gshegs pa rnam : dugos kyi bla ma mchog gyi dugos grub brnyes pa mi 'jigs pa dpal la : lus ngag yid gsum dad pas zhabs kyi pad mo dag la gus btud nas : lu yi pa sogs grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi yang dag lo rgyas bri : (p. 312)

Dr. Robinson translates as follows:

Herein is written the true account of the eighty-four siddhas, Lūyipa and the others: eighty men who gained clear understanding and obtained siddhi, and four women who achieved clear understanding and won liberation. This assembly of eighty-four is indeed most welcome. (The yoginis Manibhadra, Mekhalā, kanakhalā, and Lakṣmikalā were objects of devotion for five generations of King Kungī's descendents.)

I would suggest the following translation:

Homage to the sacred gurus. Filled with faith, my body, speech and mind play homage to the lotus feet of the Buddhas of the three times, to the lineage gurus who have gone to the celestial realm, and to my glorious and fearless actual gurus who lead one to the highest *siddhi*. Having done so, I will write the true account of the eighty-four *siddhas*, Lūyipa and the rest.

It seems that while omitting the main body of the homage, the translator chooses to add a few lines concerning women which are totally absent in the text. Granted that the Vajrayāna is a step forward for women's spiritual rights; but statistically speaking, four out of eighty-four is not exactly a record of which to boast. Dr. Robinson's remarks both in the introduction (p. 15) and in the corpus of his translation imply a stress on the status of women that is missing in the actual text.

One other point that deserves mentioning and which seems to be the cause of repeated confusion concerns the distinctions between the

different kinds of effects. From Dr. Robinson's translation (pp. 39 and 91) one gets the impression that we are not dealing with technical matters at all (and under other sets of circumstances this would be a virtue), but the fact is that the terms *nam par smin pa'i bras bu*, *byed pa rgyu mthun gyi 'bras bu*, *dband gi 'bras bu*, *skyed ba byed pa'i 'bras bu*, and *smyong ba rgyu mthun gyi 'bras bu* have very specific meanings in a discussion of karma. To go into the details of these distinctions here would be beyond the scope of this evaluation. Suffice it therefore to refer the reader to a very adequate discussion of these very concepts in Geshe L. Sopa's *Lectures on Tibetan Religious Culture*.

I hope that by my bringing up these points the reader has not lost the forest for the trees. Despite minor discrepancies in the translations, the work is as a whole of superior quality. It should be a work that a general audience will find enjoyable reading. The inclusion of the Tibetan text and informative appendices will enhance its value to the specialist as well. All in all, James Robinson's *Buddha's Lions* will be a work that will find a wide range of appeal for many years to come.

José Cabezón

Tangles and Webs, by Padmasiri de Silva. Second edition. Foreword by Ninian Smart. Colombo: Lake House Investments LTD. 1976. 75 pp.

This rather slim tome has a more than ambitious task, namely, to offer a comparative analysis of Existentialism, Psychoanalysis, and Buddhism. One has to add here that de Silva means *Theravāda* Buddhism and all technical terms are given in the *Pāli* form. There are only six chapters: Existence, Pleasure, Tragedy, Anxiety, Alienation and Therapy; all but the last are key concepts in understanding Existentialism. The title *Tangles and Webs* comes from the *Antojaṭṭa Bahijāṭṭa* and de Silva says: "In the vast jungle of knots, tangles and webs, each man should clear up his own little mess" (p. 69). This notion is reinforced by a recent book in psychology: *Knots* by R. D. Laing, with which de Silva is familiar.

Indeed, the erudite de Silva is familiar with many schools of thought. In my opinion, he is most suited for writing this study, which has been influenced by his reading acquaintance of Ludwig Binswanger, a friend of Freud and the founder of the psychiatric school called "Existential Analysis." De Silva has already written a book on Freud, entitled *Buddhist and Freudian Psychology*, and a review of this book will be published presently in this same journal.

The main thesis of *Tangles and Webs* can be put succinctly: "The