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fulness, this same concept is dealt with in a clear and simple statement, an example of which is beautifully demonstrated by the action and very words of Damayanti herself in a well-chosen portion of the Nala-Damayanti story.

The stories are divided into four broad categories, each of which is subdivided: Family Roles (Man, Woman, and Children); Social Roles (King, Teacher/Priest, and Ascetic); Lay Values (Courage, Purity, Generosity, Self-Sacrifice, and Truthfulness); and Monastic Values (Self-Control, Asceticism, Detachment, and Compassion). Clearly, some of the stories fit into more than one category, but they add up to a well-rounded view of traditional, orthodox, Buddhist and Hindu attitudes and morals.

In light of the type of translation, the critical approach to selection and interpretation, and the title, I should speculate that the book might serve well as suggested supplementary reading in an introductory course on Indian literature or religions.

Beth Simon

*The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-en*, by Judith A. Berling. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980. xv + 348 pp., appendices, notes, glossary, bibliography, index.

This work by Judith Berling of Indiana University is a careful and important study of an interesting Ming dynasty figure, Lin Chao-en (1519–1598), whose life and writings provide valuable insight into the dynamics of syncretism in this period of Chinese history and beyond. The book is composed of eight chapters, plus extensive appendices and notes. The first three chapters discuss “The Problems of Syncretism,” “Syncretism and Sectarianism in Early China,” and “The Heyday of Syncretism” (in the Sung and Ming dynasties). Chapter Four is a brief biography of Lin Chao-en. The next three chapters, examining Lin’s teachings and the movement which grew up around him during his life, are entitled “The System of Mind-cultivation,” “The Nine Stages,” and “The True Transmission of the Three Teachings.” Chapter Eight, on “The Legacy of Lin Chao-en,” examines the religious organization of this movement, the growth of a cult which followed his death, and its influence in the following centuries.

While the movement has its outcroppings even in the present century among some overseas Chinese, its principal interest for the historian of religion lies in the process whereby Lin Chao-en weaves

together elements of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism and in the ways in which he is both a creature and a fashioner of his times. Professor Berling shows at considerable length how Lin Tzu's syncretism was highly selective. Though he was fundamentally Confucian in orientation, his earliest writings depict him "as the defender of the true transmission of Confucius against the intellectualizing extremes of the Sung Neo-Confucians." Also, while open to the insights of Taoist and Buddhist thinking, especially where there were parallels to the Confucian system of self-cultivation, he was critical of Buddhism and Taoism in a variety of ways, particularly "their neglect of familial virtues in their vow of celibacy."

In the *San-chiao hui-pen* (Joint Chronicle of the Three Teachings) Lin "used his principles of syncretic selectivity to correct misconceptions and identify the core of truth" in each of the three traditions. Being fundamentally a religious teacher rather than a philosopher, he sought to lead people back to the correct Way. Berling spells out clearly his pedagogical methods and also gives appropriate attention to Lin's emphasis upon healing.

Aside from the competent manner in which Judith Berling analyzes the figure of Lin Chao-en and his writings, part of the value of this study is its direct discussion of the problem of religious syncretism itself. In her first chapter Berling defends "syncretism" as a useful category of analysis and spells out a convincing definition of what she means by the dynamics and impact of syncretism. While the phenomenology of syncretism is complex and needs considerable investigation, this work is an excellent case study of one particular figure in an era which was unusually rich in its religious interaction.

Bardwell L. Smith

*The Memoirs of a Modern Gnostic*, by Edward Conze. Part I, *Life and Letters* and Part II, *Politics, People and Places*. Sherborne (U.K.): The Samizdat Publishing Company, 1979. v + 160 and vi + 162 pages. Appendices and Index.

Edward Conze's privately-printed memoirs, written at the behest of Prof. J. W. de Jong a year before Conze's death, are in neither content nor tone a work of Buddhist scholarship, yet they are deserving of attention simply because their author was one of the pioneering Buddhologists of the twentieth century, editing and translating nearly all of the *prajñāpāramitā* literature and writing general accounts of