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dom of the Dharmadhātu, Vairocana Buddha, the Dharmadhātu body of space." P. 106, 1. 13 reads "These sūtras explain the samādhi which makes possible the instant realization of the inconceivable superpowers." However, I prefer the translation (p. 383b, 1.22). "These sūtras explain the *samādhi* of swift power and inconceivable superpowers." The last line of page 383 (compare Kiyota, p. 108, 1.18) reads "Also, (when) the *Kongōchōgyō* says [the *Kongōchōgyō* does not necessarily mean the *Tattvasaṃgraha-sūtra* as Kiyota translates but any number of texts in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* lineage] 'the retinue of sixteen Mahābodhisattvas, like Vajrasattva, products of the *svabhāva*' down to 'each produces countless Dharmakāya thunderbolts, etc.,' it also means this."

There were numerous misspellings throughout this work, some of which I will give: v, 1.30, Prudent→Pruden; vi. 1. 2, stura; vi. 1.22 descrbing; vi. 1. 24 becuase; vii.1.9, implictly; p. 7 1.24 becuase; p. 24, 1.16 whomb; p. 40 1.1 Rayu→Raiyu; p. 51 1.10 buddahood.

Most of the problems I have mentioned above could have been avoided by better editing. Overall, I recommend this work, with its helpful glossary, to students of Shingon Buddhism. Although it repeats material in the author's earlier work, *Shingon Buddhism,* it is a good introduction to the "Shingon" theory of *bodhicitta* as given in the three works translated.

Dale Todaro

Zen and Western Thought, by Masao Abe, Edited by William R. LaFleur. Foreword by John Hick. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985. xxiii + 308 pages, notes, index and glossary of Sino-Japanese Characters.

This volume makes available sixteen of Professor Abe's more important occasional papers. All were written during the last two decades, some composed originally in Japanese and some in English, and all except one have already appeared in English (the sole exception is the fifteenth essay in the collection entitled "Sovereignty Rests with Mankind"). Both the author and the editor, William LaFleur, deserve our gratitude for making this collection, since it brings together significant pieces by one of the most influential and sophisticated interpreters of Zen to the

Western academic community, pieces which until now have been hard to find outside specialist libraries.

The volume is divided into four sections: "Zen and its Elucidation" (pp. 1–80); "Zen, Buddhism, and Western Thought" (pp. 81–202); "Three Problems in Buddhism" (pp. 203–228); "Religion in the Present and in the Future" (pp. 229–275). Abe's style—and indeed his subject-matter—make summarising his thought difficult; for Abe, style and substance are inextricable, and his writing is rich, complex and allusive. Whether one finds this frustrating or delightful depends on one's literary and philosophical tastes. Abe alludes continually to Hegel, Heidegger and Spinoza, and often uses such allusions as the framework for his exposition of key Buddhist thinkers (this is especially true in his treatment of Dōgen). Within such a framework he often undertakes complex and precise textual analysis and exegesis, leavening the whole with the usual iconoclastic Zen stories. The flavour of all this cannot be captured in a short review, so in what follows this reviewer will simply offer brief comments on the major themes discussed, without attempting a systematic summary.

The three essays in the first section circle around the problem of making conceptual and verbal sense out of a tradition which claims, in some sense, to be about (non-referentially about, so, presumably, instrumental in the production of?) a realization "wherein . . . all possible conceptualization and objectification, *positive* and *negative*, are completely overcome" (p. 14—author's emphases). In the first essay (pp. 3–24) Abe deals with this question by interpreting Wei-hsin's famous 'three understandings', in the second (pp. 25–68) by analyzing Dogen's views on Buddha-nature, and in the third (pp. 69–80) by considering D.T. Suzuki's understanding of Zen. From these essays it emerges that: each of us really is (rather than has) a "true Self" (14ff and passim); that this is true not only of each human person, but also of the entire universe (pp. 34–36; 40–42); that this true Self is the same thing as Buddha-nature (pp. 36–41); that this Buddha-nature may be allowed to emerge as it really is through a process of double negation: initially of uncritically objectified dualistic experience and then of the emptied non-dualistic experience which results from the first negation (pp. 11–14; 42–46); and that the term Buddha-nature (and its synonyms, "emptiness" and so forth) refers to a dynamic non-substantial impermanent reality (pp. 48–55). None of these theses will be unfamiliar to afficionados of either Zen or the Kyoto school, and this is not the

place for a full discussion of them. Suffice it to say that Abe nowhere offers systematic arguments for them: in this he is fully representative of both Zen and the Kyoto school.

The pivotal essay in the second part is that entitled "Zen and Western Thought" (pp. 83–120). In this piece the whole of Western and Eastern thought is interpreted through the tension and opposition between the matched pair of categories *ji* and *ri*, which Abe identifies provisionally as the "immanent" and the "transcendent" (p. 84). It should come as no surprise that Abe judges Zen to be the only genuine provider of the solution to this tension. In outlining this position he offers some stimulating if almost completely unsubstantiated and unsubstantiatable *obiter dicta*: for example, that "Aristotle, Kant, and Nāgārjuna, while differing in time and place, have each in their own way arrived at some kind of absolute realization" (pp. 86–87); that the concept of nothingness never became a "basic metaphysical principle" in the West as it did for Buddhists (p. 99); that Nāgārjuna "formulated . . . a profoundly metaphysical position" (p. 101); and that "Mahāyāna Buddhism's position of 'Emptiness' . . . has . . . *essentially* transcended Aristotelian 'Being' . . ." (p. 108). Aristotle, and with him the whole of Western metaphysics, is dismissed summarily and almost contemptuously in several places, especially when compared with Buddhism (pp. 110; 119-120; 131), and in his explicit discussions of Christianity (pp. 170–185; 186–202) Abe often sounds more concerned to score debating points than to engage in philosophical analysis.

This reviewer is left with the impression that Abe finds the whole of Western (and especially Christian) metaphysical thought faintly amusing, rather like the admirable but necessarily inferior efforts of a student in a beginning logic class. The questions Abe raises are important, but they cannot be resolved or even any longer fruitfully discussed simply by trotting out *śūnyatā* as the answer to Christian substantivism and essentialism. Did Nāgārjuna, and after him the practitioners and theorists of the Zen tradition, really *show* that all concepts of enduring substance issue in incoherence? For that is what needs to be established, and established by argument, if Abe's passionate defences of *mu* and *śūnyatā* are to stand. It cannot be assumed.

Professor Abe represents a style of Buddhist cross-cultural philosophizing which now seems oddly dated. Its representatives tend to see Western thought as a series of metaphysical errors mitigated only by Kant (who was critical but didn't go quite far enough), Nietzsche (who was at least anti-essentialist and icono-

clastic), Whitehead (who rightly rejected substance and permanence) and Heidegger (who was gnomic and probably would have liked koans). They nowhere engage in the kind of complex and demanding argument necessary to establish their positions, and when pressed retreat to a kind of esoteric experientialism. It is possible to see all of this in Abe's work, and yet to admire his literary style and his desire to communicate across cultural boundaries: if the future of cross-cultural philosophy lies with those concerned to argue rather than to assert, this collection of Professor Abe's work is one of the best available representations of its past.

Paul J. Griffiths