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Coming of Age: Buddhist Studies in the United States from 1972 to 1997*

Historical Overview.

During the early stages in the development of modern-style Buddhist Studies in the 19th century and the first five to six decades of the 20th century, very little first rate Buddhist studies scholarship was generated in the United States. For example, when Edward CONZE reviewed the history and then-present state of Buddhist studies in the 1960's, he identified three basic approaches that had been developed in the western world. These three he labeled, following an earlier classification by Constantin REGAMEY, the Franco-Belgian, the Anglo-German and the Russian. Only a few Buddhist studies scholars in the United States had, up to that point, attained a level where they received serious recognition in international circles.¹

During the 1950's and 1960's, however, three developments began to gather steam – developments that constituted the background and subsequently the context for a rapid expansion and up-grading of Buddhist studies in the United States. The first was a rapidly increasing interaction between Buddhism on the one hand, and American religion, culture and society on the other. With the emergence and extension of multi-cultural sensitivities, long established communities of Buddhist immigrants gradually gained greater visibility and voice. Over the years

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1. "Recent Progress in Buddhist Studies" in Edward CONZE, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press 1968), pp. 1-32.

many new communities of Buddhist immigrants have been established in many different parts of the country. As these immigrant groups have become more integrated into the American mainstream, they have begun to produce and support Buddhist studies scholars.

At the individual level many Asian Buddhist scholars have taken up residence in the United States and have taught, either temporarily or permanently, at many American universities. Asian philanthropic groups such as the Japanese Numata foundation have supported Buddhist studies programs, including the funding of visiting professorships at various American universities. Beyond the university Zen Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, and Theravāda Buddhism have all had powerful representatives of Asian origin who have made an important impact on the American scene. These representatives have attracted significant numbers of committed practitioners, and have evoked considerable interest among many other well-positioned individuals as well. Several of these converts and sympathizers have become Buddhist studies professionals. Many others have provided an interested (and often very supportive) audience.

These increasing and multifaceted incursions of Buddhism into American religion, culture and society have contributed to the rapid emergence of Buddhist studies in universities and colleges all across the country. But in order to gain a more adequate understanding of the process that has occurred we must also take into account two very important institutional / structural developments that have occurred in higher education in the United States beginning in the 1950's and the 1960's.

The first of these two institutional / structural changes is closely associated with the appearance, following the end of the second world war, of a new kind of American concern and involvement in world affairs. Fueled by the cold war, this new interest led to the establishment of a number of Asian area studies centers at major American universities. These centers were generously funded by the U.S. government and by major private foundations. Especially important is the fact that these centers have provided – along with their admittedly strong emphasis on the social sciences – a great deal of support for the teaching and study of modern Asian languages.

In a significant number of cases these new Asian studies centers meshed with previously established “orientalist” programs that focused primarily on the study of classical languages and classical texts. In many of these rapidly developing Asian studies contexts, classically oriented

Buddhist studies scholars found a new academic home that provided a level of material support that greatly facilitated their research. In this situation many of these Buddhist studies scholars were challenged to branch out into important new areas of research. As a result of this same interaction, many contemporary oriented social scientists came to recognize the importance and relevance of the materials and issues that concerned their Buddhist studies colleagues.

The second major development in American higher education that has influenced both the expansion and the character of Buddhist studies scholarship has been the emergence of the study of religion as a significant, broadly recognized academic discipline. This process was actually initiated by the establishment of a number of university level positions in the comparative / historical study of religion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. But until the 1960's progress was very slow, if indeed the term progress is appropriate at all.

In 1963, a major turning point came when the United States Supreme Court rendered an important decision regarding religious instruction. Though the actual facts are much more complicated, the decision came to be broadly understood as one in which a fundamental distinction was made between teaching *of* religion (which was confessional in character and therefore prohibited in any state supported school because it violated the prohibition against the government establishment of religion), and teaching *about* religion (which was allowed in state supported institutions and acceptable in private schools that sought to maintain their secular identity). Armed with an understanding of this problematic but important distinction between the teaching *of* religion and the teaching *about* religion, the discipline of religious studies developed very rapidly.²

As new religious studies programs and departments began to expand, they needed to clearly demonstrate that they were not teaching in a confessional vein. As a result they found it useful as well as appropriate to give an important place to the study of religions other than those that were the dominant traditions in the West. In this situation many of these new programs and departments incorporated a significant Buddhist

2. See Frank REYNOLDS and Sheryl BURKHALTER, eds., *Beyond the Classics? Essays in Religious Studies and Liberal Education* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press 1990). This collection contains an important essay by W. Royce CLARK entitled "The Legal Status of Religious Studies Programs in Public Higher Education" (pp. 109-141).

studies component. Over the course of time, these programs and departments have become major sites at which Buddhist studies scholars are being trained. Even more important, religious studies programs and departments have come to provide the institutional and intellectual contexts in which the great majority of U.S. Buddhist studies scholars spend their academic careers. Clearly the religious studies ethos and disciplinary orientation have had a very profound influence on the way in which Buddhist studies in the United States has come to be understood and implemented.³

Before turning attention to the more specific developments that have taken place in Buddhist studies during the past twenty five years, it will be useful to reflect on the extent of the expansion that has taken place, and on the general character of the intellectual transformation that can be discerned. The extent of the expansion can perhaps best be measured by noting the rapid growth of Buddhist studies participation in two major professional associations – the Association for Asian Studies which is the primary professional association for scholars involved in area studies focused on various Asian regions, and the American Academy of Religion which is the primary professional association for scholars involved in the study of religion.

In the early 1970's Buddhist studies was represented in both associations by a very small number of individual scholars. Moreover, these small groups of scholars had virtually no organizational presence. Though I have not had the time to carry through any kind of full scale study of the process of expansion, I have spoken to Matthew KAPSTEIN, the Chair of the Buddhist Studies Development Committee of the Association for Asian Studies, and to John STRONG, the Co-Chair of the Buddhist Studies Committee of the American Academy of Religions.

KAPSTEIN estimates that there are now approximately 200 active Buddhist studies scholars who participate in the Association for Asian Studies. He reports that his Committee each year organizes a major panel that is presented at the national meeting, and that in recent years that panel has regularly drawn an audience of approximately 80 people. He adds that at each year's national meeting four to five other area-

3. In order to avoid distracting repetition I will, from this point forward, use the term Buddhist studies to refer to Buddhist studies as carried out in the United States from *ca.* 1972 to the present. When I use the term in a different or broader sense, this will be specifically indicated in the text.

studies panels are presented that deal primarily with Buddhist studies issues.⁴

STRONG reports the development of an even stronger Buddhist studies presence in the American Academy of Religion. The Buddhist Studies Committee which he co-chairs publishes a newsletter to which about 250 members of the AAR subscribe. (Since many Buddhist scholars belong to both associations, it is difficult to determine the total number who participate in at least one. My own very rough estimate is approximately 300). According to STRONG, the Buddhist Studies Committee received over twenty excellent proposals for panels to be presented at the AAR's annual meeting in November 1997. Since the Committee presently has a quota of five panels, only one fourth of the proposals that were competitive could actually be selected. STRONG expects that, given the quality and popularity of the presentations that have been made in recent years, the AAR governing council will soon increase the number of panels that the Buddhist Studies Committee is allowed to sponsor.⁵

Turning from the extent of the expansion of Buddhist studies to the intellectual profile of the field, the kind of change that has occurred is equally dramatic. The tradition of modern Buddhological studies that was dominant in the early 1970's – a tradition that had developed primarily in Europe and Japan over the period from the early 1800's to the 1970's – had several rather easily identifiable characteristics. There were a number of Buddhologists who worked within this inherited tradition whose research orientation and conclusions deviated from the general norm.⁶ And it also true that some intimations of future trends were already visible on the horizon.⁷ However there was a broadly accepted

4. Personal communication, November 13, 1997.

5. Personal communication, Nov. 2, 1997.

6. Perhaps the most important Buddhologist who – during the first six decades of the 20th century – worked at the edges of the dominant paradigm is the great French scholar Paul MUS. In the 1960's, during the last stages of his long and illustrious career, MUS taught for half the academic year at Yale University in the United States. MUS's Buddhological work, much of which was published in the late 1920's and early 1930's, anticipates many of the themes and emphases that have been taken up by U.S. Buddhist scholars in the 1980's and 1990's.

7. Three American scholars whose contribution in this regard should be noted are Winston KING, Melford SPIRO and Holmes WELCH. In 1964 KING published *In Hope of Nibbana: An Essay on Theravāda Buddhist Ethics* (La Salle, Il.: Open Court) and *A Thousand Lives Away: Buddhism in Contemporary Burma* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press). In 1970 Melford SPIRO's *Buddhism*

paradigm that had been inherited from the past, and a widespread emphasis on the kind of research that was considered worthwhile.

This traditional paradigm is quite familiar in Buddhist studies circles. It is a paradigm that places a strong emphasis on the study of texts and the intention of their presumed author; on the search for origins; on the primacy of the South Asian Sanskrit / Pali traditions; on the central importance of doctrines and scholastic systems; and on special attentiveness to the voices of monastic and social elites. Methodologically this traditional paradigm privileges a language-centered philological approach, gives little attention to the historical context and usage of texts, emphasizes the production of authoritative critical editions and translations, and tends toward a positivistic view of historical methods and historical facts.

In the early 1970's when Buddhist studies in the United States began to gain momentum, this paradigm still retained a dominant position. However it soon became apparent that new developments were in the making. New questions were being asked, new aspects of the tradition were being explored, and new approaches were being developed. It is certainly true that over the past twenty five years many aspects of the inherited Buddhological paradigm have persisted, and that the modes of scholarship that this paradigm encourages have been further honed and advanced. But it is also the case that much of the most interesting and important work in Buddhist studies has been generated by scholars who have set out in new directions.⁸ In the following review I will try to maintain a balance between these two trends that in the U.S. context have come to coexist in an uneasy but creative tension.⁹

and Society: A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes was published in New York by Harper and Row). For WELCH's important late 1960's work on Chinese Buddhism, see footnote 19.

8. Some of the relevant items that are included in this essay are also cited in J. W. DE JONG, *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America* (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company 1997). However the understanding of Buddhist studies that DE JONG employs is more closely attuned to the Buddhist studies approach that has been maintained in Europe than to the more expansive approach that has taken shape in the U.S..
9. Constraints of space seriously limit the range of materials that can be covered in the discussions that follow. In adjusting to these limits I have tried to achieve relatively equal coverage for various Buddhist areas of the world and various historical time periods. I have also tried to achieve a balance between mentioning books published at various periods within the twenty five year time span that is

Manuscripts and Translations

From the very beginnings of modern Buddhist studies in Europe in the early 19th century the collection and editing of manuscripts, and the translation and interpretation of important texts have been foundational for the entire enterprise. As Buddhist studies has taken root in the United States, American scholars have joined in the task. The following are a few examples taken from various regional / linguistic contexts.¹⁰

Among the most interesting manuscript projects is one that is presently being conducted by Richard SALOMON and Collett COX at the University of Washington. This project focuses on a collection of manuscript fragments that have recently been discovered in the Gandhara region in the northwestern segment of the Indian sub-continent. These fragments, which are the earliest Buddhist manuscript materials that we possess (1st century C.E.), include segments of scholastic texts, *abhidharma* commentaries, *avadānas*, and *sūtra* commentaries. The project involves transcription, translation and efforts to provide a context for interpretation.¹¹

Translations of Buddhist texts have been numerous and very diverse. Turning first to the Buddhist scholarship on South Asia, Buddhist studies scholars have translated highly philosophical treatises as well as more accessible narrative texts. For an instance of the former, see Malcolm David ECKEL's *Jñānagarbha's Commentary on the Distinction Between the Two Truths* (Albany: SUNY Press 1987). John STRONG's *Legend of King Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1983) provides an example of the latter.

Scholars who specialize in the study of Theravāda Buddhism have also translated a number of important texts produced within particular Theravāda traditions. John Ross CARTER, working with Mahinda

being surveyed, and focusing attention on books that are still of more than historical interest. I am well aware that, as a result, my survey is far from complete, and apologize for any important imbalances or omissions that the reader may note.

10. In the discussions that follows I will – with the exception of several references to journal articles in the concluding section – refer only to books. The books that will be mentioned have been produced by scholars who – whether or not they were born and / or trained in the U.S. – have held (and if they remain active continue to hold) long-term, full-time appointments in U. S. colleges and universities. I will also include references to books produced by some younger scholars from other countries who are presently residing in the U.S.
11. Personal communication from Collett Cox, September 1997.

PALIHAWADANA, has produced an innovative translation of the “canonical” *Dhammapada* along with portions of the very ancient *Dhammapada Commentary* (Paperback Edition; New York: Oxford University press 1998). An example from medieval Sri Lanka is Ranjini OBEYESEKERE’s *Jewels of the Doctrine: Stories of the Saddharma Ratnavaliya* (Albany: SUNY 1991).

Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Thai Buddhist Cosmology has been translated by Frank and Mani REYNOLDS (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press 1982). Bonnie BRERETON’s translation of several Thai versions of the *Phra Malai Sutta* was published in 1996 in Tempe by the Program in Southeast Asian Studies at Arizona State University. Two of the most important translations of contemporary Theravāda texts are also renditions from the Thai. They are Donald SWEARER’s translation of selected essays of Bhikkhu BUDDHADASA (*Me and Mine* published in Albany by SUNY Press in 1989) and Grant OLSON’s English version of the first edition of *Buddhadhamma* written by Ven. Prayudh PAYUTO (Albany: SUNY Press 1995).

During the past twenty five years, as Tibetan Buddhist studies have expanded, a number of Tibetan Buddhist texts have been translated. Robert THURMAN’s *Tsong kha pa’s Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1984) makes available in English a text authored by the 15th century reformer who established the dominant Dge-lugs-pa order. Jose CABEZÓN has followed with an annotated translation of another foundational Dge-lugs-pa text (see *Dose of Emptiness* published in Albany by SUNY Press 1992). An otherwise rather neglected Tibetan tradition is represented by the translation of a relatively recent sectarian history by Matthew KAPSTEIN in cooperation with Gyurme DORJE (*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* in 2 volumes published in Boston by Wisdom books 1991).

Luis GÓMEZ is involved in a major project that centers around the translation of both the Sanskrit and the Chinese versions of the Sukhavāvīyūha Sūtras. The first of three projected volumes contains an introduction to the Sanskrit and the Chinese versions, and what GÓMEZ calls “free” translations of both. Entitled *The Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light*, this book was published in Honolulu by the University of Hawaii Press 1996. The second volume will provide the Sanskrit text accompanied by a technical translation complete with detailed annotations. The third volume, which will employ the

same kind of specialist-oriented format, will present and translate the Chinese version.

In the 1990's Columbia University Press (New York) has published two important translations of Chinese texts by Burton WATSON, *The Lotus Sutra* (1993) and *The Vimalakīrti Sutra* (1997). Texts drawn from a very different genre of Chinese Buddhist literature have been translated by Kathryn Ann TSAI in *Lives of the Nuns: Biographies of Chinese Nuns from the Fourth to Sixth Centuries* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press 1994).

Robert BUSWELL has published *The Korean Approach to Zen* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1983) which contains an extended introduction followed by lengthy translations of the collected works of Chinul. A basic Japanese Zen text, *Dogen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community*, has been translated by Taigan Daniel LEIGHTON and Shohaku OKUNURA (Albany: SUNY 1996). Yoshito HAKEDA's *Kukai: Major Works* (New York: Columbia University Press 1972) remains to this day a basic source for the study of the Japanese Shingon tradition.

Most anthologies of translations that have been published have been designed as introductions. An important exception, however, is Donald LOPEZ, ed., *Buddhism in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1995). Because of its focus on previously neglected texts dealing with religious practice, LOPEZ' collection makes a distinctive and timely contribution.

Thus it is quite clear that during the past twenty five years American scholars have produced many important works that fall within the dominant paradigm in European Buddhological studies. They have carried on the task of basic textual research and translation. They have given significant attention to the advancement of "classical" studies. And they have broken new ground both geographically (focusing more than their predecessors on texts that were produced in so-called peripheral areas) and temporally (moving the center of gravity of their work forward into more recent phases in the history of various Buddhist traditions.)

South and Southeast Asia

Though it is very difficult to construct the appropriate categories to use in organizing a review of Buddhist studies, there is an obvious linguistic justification for distinguishing studies of Buddhist traditions in South and Southeast Asia as a relatively discreet unit for discussion. The fact that Sanskrit and Pali have been the primary sacred languages used by

Buddhists throughout the South / Southeast Asian region establishes a special kind of continuity among the traditions themselves. In addition, that same commonality of sacred languages helps to facilitate more intensive interaction among the scholars who study these traditions.¹²

Within the South Asia area a strong emphasis on doctrinal and meditation-oriented studies has been maintained. In the Theravāda context noteworthy monographs include John Ross CARTER: *Dhamma: Western Academic and Sinhalese Buddhist Interpretations* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press 1978) and George BOND: *The Word of the Buddha: The Tripiṭaka and Its Interpretation in Theravāda Buddhism* (Colombo: Gunasena Publishers 1982). A particular ethical strand of the canonical tradition has been identified and analyzed by Grace BURFORD in *Desire, Death and Goodness: The Conflict of Ultimate Values in Theravāda Buddhism* (New York: Peter Lang 1991). A rather different component has been explored by Winston KING in *Theravāda Meditation: The Buddhist Transformation of Yoga* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University press 1980).¹³

The teachings of other Hīnayāna schools have also received serious attention. Collet COX, Bart DESSEIN and Charles WILLEMEN have collaborated to produce a major work on *Sarvāstivādin Buddhist Scholasticism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1997). Focusing on a more particular theme, Jan NATTIER has contributed an intriguing book that bears the equally intriguing title *Once Upon a Future Time: Studies in a Buddhist Prophecy of Decline (Nanzan Studies in Asian Religions I; Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press 1991)*.

A number of doctrinal studies treat both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna materials. Randy KLOETZLI has published an innovative discussion of *Buddhist Cosmology: From Single World System to Pure Land: Science*

12. It is important to note that the older Buddhological paradigm in which leading figures in the field were expected to know and use a broad range of classical languages (usually Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, Chinese, and sometimes Japanese) has in recent years become less dominant. This is largely due to the fact that many Buddhist studies scholars are now seriously engaged with work in one or more disciplines beyond Buddhology itself; and it is also closely related to the fact that many Buddhist studies scholars find it necessary / useful to learn the vernacular language(s) of the area(s) in which they do their specialized work.

13. I have not included a reference to Steven COLLINS' *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravāda Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1982). At the time this book was published, COLLINS was still teaching in England.

and *Theology in the Images of Motion and Light* (Delhi: Motilal Barnasidass 1983). A very different topic has been explored by Paul GRIFFITHS in a philosophically sophisticated study entitled *On Being Mindless: Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem* (LaSalle, Il.: Open Court 1986).

Among the various doctrinal studies that focus more directly on Mahāyāna texts, many different approaches are represented. In 1986 David KALUPAHANA published a controversial study of *Nāgārjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way* (Albany: Suny Press). Three years later C. W. HUNTINGTON (with Geshe NAMGYAL) contributed *The Emptiness of Emptiness: An Introduction to Early Indian Madhyamika* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press).

Paul GRIFFITHS, in *On Being Buddha: The Classical Doctrine of Buddhahood* (Albany: SUNY Press 1994), combines a consideration of Mahāyāna Buddhology with an important discussion of the use of doctrine as a comparative category in the study of religion. Malcolm David ECKEL, in *To See the Buddha: A Philosopher's Quest For the Meaning of Emptiness* (San Francisco: Harper 1992), generates a number of original insights by highlighting the role of the senses in understanding and appropriating Buddhist philosophical teachings.

Buddhist studies scholars working on South Asian materials have, in addition to their interpretations of doctrines and meditational patterns, also produced numerous studies of various aspects of Buddhist community life. For example, the monastic ideals of different Buddhist schools have received considerable attention. Charles PREBISH contributed a study of *Buddhist Monastic Discipline: The Sanskrit Prātimokṣa Sūtras of the Mahāsāṃghikas and Mūlasarvāstivādins* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press 1975). John HOLT, focusing on the Pali / Theravāda tradition, has provided a more interpretative and still useful study of *Discipline: The Canonical Buddhism of the Vinayaṭṭaka* (Delhi: Motilal Barnasidass 1981).

Reginald RAY's *Buddhist Saints in India* (New York: Oxford University Press 1994) is a large, richly documented historical study that focuses on the specifically religious dynamics of the development of the Buddhist community in India. In this book RAY mounts a strong argument for his thesis that forest monks were at the heart of the earliest Buddhist community. He also argues very forcefully that it was the later bearers of this forest monk tradition who, in their resistance to Hīnayāna

monasticism, developed specifically Mahāyāna approaches to Buddhist teaching and practice.

Gregory SCHOPEN's *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks* (*Studies in the Buddhist Traditions Series*; Honolulu: University of Hawaii 1997) is a collection of twelve historically focused essays published at various times over the past fifteen years. In this provocative collection of essays SCHOPEN sharply challenges the validity of using primarily textual evidence to reconstruct South Asian Buddhist history, particularly monastic history. He calls instead for an approach that takes archæological and epigraphic evidence as primary. Using this strategy, SCHOPEN demonstrates (among many other things) a deep monastic involvement in activities such as merit making, image worship, and the like that other scholars have associated primarily if not exclusively with the laity.¹⁴

Although much of the best work on South Asian Buddhist art is available only in the form of articles, several important books have been published. Sheila WEINER's *Ajanta: Its Place in Buddhist Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1977) is one of the best examples from the 1970's. More recently Geri MALANDRA has contributed *Unfolding a Mandala: The Buddhist Cave Temples at Ellora* (Albany: SUNY Press 1993). In this important study MALANDRA argues, on the basis of art historical evidence, that there existed at Ellora an early (7th / 8th century C.E.) form of Tantric Buddhism that was subsequently disseminated throughout South Asia and beyond.

During the twenty five year period that we are considering, literary and historical studies focused on women and gender in South Asian Buddhism have become increasingly common. Liz WILSON's *Charming Cadavers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1996) explores a South Asian monastic story tradition in which male desire is extinguished through horrific encounters with deformed female bodies and corpses. Diana PAUL's *Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in Mahāyāna Tradition* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press 1979. 2nd ed., Berkeley: University of California Press 1985) covers materials not only from South Asia, but from East Asia as well.

14. Donald LOPEZ, in his Preface to *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, indicates that a second collection of SCHOPEN's essays will soon be published in the same series. This collection, which will be at least as innovative and challenging as the first, will have as its theme the rise of the movement(s) that have come to be classified as Mahāyāna.

Paula RICHMAN has made a different kind of contribution with her study of *Women, Branch Stories and Religious Rhetoric in a Tamil Buddhist Text* (South Asia Series #12; Syracuse: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Foreign Affairs 1988). The text that she presents and analyzes narrates a complex and fascinating story in which a Buddhist nun is the protagonist. Miranda SHAW's highly controversial *Passionate Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1994) makes the claim that – contrary to the received scholarly tradition – women played a central role in founding the Buddhist Tantric movement; and that these women and their successors made major contributions to the Tantric Buddhist understanding of enlightenment on the one hand, and of gender and sexuality on the other.

Many Buddhist studies scholars have focused their attention on particular aspects of the long and on-going history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Already in 1972 Gananath OBEYESEKERE, Frank REYNOLDS and Bardwell SMITH – in a coauthored book, *Two Wheels of Dhamma: Essays on the Theravāda Tradition in India and Ceylon* (Chambersburg, Pa.: American Academy of Religion 1972) – called attention to the early and persistent presence of a Buddhist ideal of religio-political authority. Several years later Bardwell Smith edited a follow-up volume entitled *Religion and the Legitimation of Power in Sri Lanka* (Chambersburg, Pa.: Anima Books 1978).

In 1984 Gananath OBEYESEKERE published a study of *The Cult of The Goddess Pattani* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) in which he describes the incorporation of an ancient goddess cult into the Sinhalese Buddhist tradition. John HOLT's *Buddha in the Crown* (New York: Oxford University Press 1991), a winner of a prestigious American Academy of Religion book prize, traces the role that the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara and his various transformations have played, and continue to play, in the history of Sinhalese Buddhism.¹⁵ HOLT has also contributed *The Religious World of Kirti Sri* (New York: Oxford 1996) in which he demonstrates the role of art and “visual liturgy” in the religio-political activity of an important Sri Lankan king who ruled in the 18th century.

During the last two years two younger scholars have entered the discussion. In 1996 Jonathan WALTERS came on the scene with a short but

15. The award was given for the best historically oriented study of religion published by an American scholar in 1991.

important book on *The History of Kelaniya* (Colombo: Social Science Association) in which he generates new insights into important aspects of Sri Lankan Buddhist history by placing that history within a broader South Asian geo-political and religio-political context. In 1997 Kevin TRAINOR followed with a more practice-oriented historical discussion entitled *Relics, Ritual and Representation in Buddhism: Rematerializing the Sri Lankan Theravāda Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997).

A number of religio-historical and anthropological studies deal with different aspects of modern Buddhist developments in Sri Lanka. Two books that provide rather different survey treatments are George BOND's *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka: Tradition, Reinterpretation and Response* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press 1988) and *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka* written by Gananath OBEYESEKERE in cooperation with Richard GOMBRICH (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1988) The revival of the early Buddhist tradition of female renunciation is described by Tessa BARTHOLOMEUSZ in *Women under the Bo Tree: Buddhist Nuns in Sri Lanka* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1994).

The development of modern, Buddhist-oriented nationalism in Sri Lanka has attracted the attention of a number of historians and anthropologists. Much important background is provided by Steven KEMPER in *The Presence of the Past: Chronicles, Politics and Culture in Sinhala Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1991). A treatment of this topic that has aroused a great deal of controversy is Stanley TAMBIAH's *Buddhism Betrayed?: Religion, Politics and Violence in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1992).

As we move from South Asia to Southeast Asia, four books provide highly useful bridges. John STRONG, in *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta: Sanskrit Buddhism in North India and Southeast Asia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1992), combines literary, historical and ethnographic approaches to identify important connections between northern India on the one hand, and neighboring areas of Southeast Asia on the other. Steven COLLINS' *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998) explores what he calls the Pali *imaginaire*. Drawing his materials from all across the Theravāda world, COLLINS integrates an insightful interpretation of Theravāda doctrine on the one hand, and an equally insightful interpretation of Theravāda imagery and narrative on the other.

Two other especially significant books that bridge the South / Southeast Asia divide are collections of essays. The first, edited by Donald SWEARER and Russell SIZEMORE, is entitled *Ethics, Wealth, and Salvation: A Study of Buddhist Social Ethics* (Columbia: University of South Carolina 1990). The second, edited by Juliane SCHOBBER, recounts and analyzes *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii 1997). Both volumes contain some essays on South Asian traditions, some that focus on Southeast Asian materials, and some that deal with narratives and correlated issues that cut across both areas.¹⁶

Though contributions by U.S. scholars to the early history of Buddhism in Southeast Asia have been minimal, two books deserve mention. *Barabudur: History and Significance of a Buddhist Monument* edited by Luis GÓMEZ and Hiram WOODWARD (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press 1981) contains a number of useful essays. But clearly the most significant work on early Buddhist developments in Southeast Asia is Robert BROWN's *The Dvaravati Wheels of the Law and the Indianization of Southeast Asia* (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1996). Utilizing primarily art historical sources, BROWN makes a strong argument for the distinctiveness of the first expressions of Buddhism that can be identified in the Cambodian/Thai regions on which his research is focused.

Donald SWEARER's *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia* (Albany: SUNY Press 1995) provides a well balanced introduction to later developments in the region. *Buddhism and the Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos and Burma* edited by Bardwell SMITH (Chambersburg, Pa.: Anima Books 1978) contains a number of important essays that deal with religio-political dynamics that were operative during the medieval and modern periods. Michael MENDELSON's *Sangha and State in Burma: A Study of Monastic Sectarianism and Leadership* edited by John FERGUSON (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press 1974) concentrates on similar issues. For an in depth, multi-dimensional study of single Theravāda temple, see Donald SWEARER's *Wat Haripunjaya: A Study of the Royal Temple of the Buddha's Relic, Lamphun, Thailand*

16. Both of these edited volumes contain essays by a least one scholar who is not a part of the U.S. Buddhist studies community. In the decision to refer to these volumes – and to other edited volumes that will be mentioned below – the criteria that I have used to justify their inclusion is that the editor(s) and the majority of contributors are U.S. scholars in the sense described in footnote 10.

(*AAR Studies in Religion*, No. 10, Missoula, Mont.: Scholar's Press 1976).

During the twenty five year period that concerns us in the present essay, Stanley TAMBIAH has published two major books on modern Thai Buddhism: *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1976) and *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets: a Study in Charisma, Hagiography, Sectarianism, and Millennial Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1984). This last book, which utilizes a basically state-centered approach to the study of the forest monk tradition, has an interesting counterpoint in the "view from the periphery" provided by Kamala TIYAVANICH in *Forest Recollections: Wandering Monks in Twentieth Century Thailand* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1997).

Tibet, East Asia, and the West

The textual traditions of Buddhism in Tibet display both continuity and discontinuity with the textual traditions that had developed in the Indian Buddhist monasteries toward the end of the first and the beginning of the second millennium C.E.. Three studies that specifically explore the development of this Indo-Tibetan tradition are Alex WAYMAN's *The Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esoterism* (New York: Samuel Weiser 1973); Donald LOPEZ' *The Heart Sutra Explained: Indian and Tibetan Commentaries* (Albany: SUNY 1988); and LOPEZ' more contextualized rendition of that same textual trajectory in *Elaborations on Emptiness: Uses of the Heart Sutra* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1996).

Other studies that explore this Indo-Tibetan tradition are Georges DREYFUS, *Recognizing Reality: Dharmakīrti's Philosophy and Its Tibetan Interpretation* (Albany: SUNY 1997); John MAKRANSKY, *Buddhahood Embodied: Sources of Controversy in India and Tibet* (Albany: SUNY Press 1997); and Janet GYATSO, ed. *In the Mirror of Memory: Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism* (Albany: SUNY Press 1992).

Among the scholars who have focused on the study of Tibetan Buddhism itself, the great majority have, at least until very recently, been primarily concerned with Tibetan Buddhist philosophy. To be even more specific, these scholars have devoted their primary attention to the

scholastic texts produced and preserved by the dominant Dge-lugs-pa school.

One of the major publications of Jeffrey HOPKINS, who has been a prime mover in this effort, is *Meditation on Emptiness* (London: Wisdom Publications 1983). Daniel PERDUE has contributed a detailed study of *Debate in Tibetan Buddhism* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications 1992) which includes the translation of a basic training text as well as an extensive introduction and commentary. In addition to single-authored volumes, collections of essays also contain useful material. See, for example, R. DAVIDSON and S. GOODMAN, eds. *Tibetan Buddhism: Reason and Revelation* (Albany: SUNY Press 1992).

From the point of view of a comparativist, the most interesting book devoted to Tibetan Buddhist thought is Jose CABEZÓN's *Buddhism and Language: A Study of Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism* (Albany: SUNY Press 1994). In this study of Dge-lugs-pa philosophy CABEZÓN combines a nuanced treatment of Buddhist materials with a careful clarification and exploration of scholasticism as a religious studies category.

First rate studies of Tibetan Buddhism as a religion that has been practiced "on the ground" have been less numerous. However two useful books were published in 1978: Steven BEYER's *Magic and Ritual in Tibet* (Berkeley: University of California Press) and Sherry ORTNER's *Sherpas through Their Rituals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).¹⁷ A more recent and quite distinctive contribution has been made by Rebecca FRENCH in *The Golden Yoke: The Legal Cosmology of Buddhist Tibet* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1995). Working primarily with legal texts, oral histories taken from Tibetan refugees, and a Tibetan instructor who was a former legal practitioner, FRENCH reconstructs both the theory and the practice of the Buddhist tradition of secular law that was operative in Tibet prior to the Chinese invasion of 1959.

Since the Chulalongkorn conference for which the original version of this paper was written, two important books have appeared that deal with Tibetan Buddhism. The first is Janet GYATSO's *Apparitions of the Self: The Secret Autobiography of a Tibetan Visionary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1998). The second, edited by Matthew KAPSTEIN and Melvyn GOLDSTEIN, is a well balanced collection of

17. ORTNER's book was based on field work done in a Tibetan community actually located in Nepal.

essays on the very timely and highly contested topic, *Buddhism in Contemporary Tibet* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1998)

The East Asian group of Buddhist traditions is extremely complex, encompassing as it does the Buddhisms of China, Korea, much of Vietnam and Japan. Despite some important cross-over activity, most American Buddhist studies scholarship on East Asia can be classified in terms of a focus on China, Korea or Japan. Unfortunately American scholars have done very little work on Buddhist traditions in Vietnam. (For a recent exception, see Cuong Tu NGUYEN, *Zen in Medieval Vietnam: A Study and Translation of the Thien Uyen Tap Anh* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1997).)

The long-standing Buddhological interest in the acculturation of Buddhism in China has persisted in U.S. Buddhist studies. An important book that has tackled this problem from a doctrinal / philosophical perspective is Peter GREGORY's *Tsung-Mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1991). A more unusual approach to the topic has been developed by Victor MAIR in his groundbreaking work on *Painting and Performance: Chinese Picture Recitation and Its Indian Genesis* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1988).

Particular doctrinal aspects of Chinese Buddhism are discussed by Francis COOK in *Hua-Yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press 1977). Doctrinal issues as well as matters of practice are explored by contributors to two collections edited by Peter GREGORY – *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought* and *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1987 and 1996). Quite different issues concerning text and authority have been investigated in a collection of essays edited by Robert BUSWELL under the title *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1990).

Chan is by all odds the Chinese Buddhist school that has received the most attention from Buddhist studies scholars. The many excellent studies of Chan include John MCRAE, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1986), and two books by Bernard FAURE -*The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan / Zen Buddhism* and *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1991 and 1993). FAURE's analyses are organized around the distinctive interplay between

Chan / Zen's characteristic rhetorical emphasis on the immediacy of Buddhist experience on the one hand, and its usage of a broad and fascinating range of mediating practices and modes of knowing on the other. Analytically erudite, with many comparative references, these books make a significant contribution not only to Buddhist studies, but to the history of religions more generally.

Among other books on Chinese Buddhism that are especially concerned with "religion on the ground" there are four that I find especially interesting. John KIESCHNICK's *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1997) provides important insight into the behavioral norms that were operative within at least some medieval monastic communities.¹⁸ Steven TEISER, in *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1988) and *Scripture of the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1994), explores the operative beliefs and practices of large segments of the Chinese Buddhist community, both monastic and lay. Daniel OVERMYER's *Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1976) remains a useful source concerning an often neglected dimension of Chinese Buddhism.

The important topic of Buddhism and the Chinese political establishment has been addressed by Stanley WEINSTEIN in *Buddhism under the T'ang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987). Turning to a later period when Buddhism had lost much of its political influence, Chun-fung Yu has contributed a highly informative study of *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press 1981). This is a book that clearly demonstrates the resilience of Chinese Buddhism and its persistence in Chinese religious and cultural life. The Chinese Buddhist experience in the modern period is explored by Holmes WELCH in *Buddhism Under Mao* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1972).¹⁹

18. KIESCHNICK's book can be usefully paired with Kathryn Ann TSAI's *The Lives of Nuns* mentioned in the section on "Manuscripts and Translations."
19. *Buddhism Under Mao* is the third book in a trilogy that includes *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism: 1900-1950* and *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1967 and 1968). Since these two earlier books were published prior to the time period covered by the present essay, they are not included in the main body of the text. Nevertheless it is worth noting that, taken

It is safe to say that scholarship on Korean Buddhism has not been especially rich. Robert BUSWELL, who has been by far the most prolific scholar in this field, followed his book on Chinul (see the “Manuscript and Translation” section above) by publishing *The Formation of Ch’an Ideology on China and Korea: The Vajrasamādhi Sūtra, A Buddhist Apocryphon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1989) and *Zen Monastic Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1992). Though Sun Bae PARK takes a very different approach in his *Buddhist Faith and Sudden Enlightenment* (Albany: SUNY Press 1983), his attention is also focused on the Chan segment of the Korean tradition.

The only really high quality Buddhist studies book on Korean Buddhism that is not explicitly oriented toward Chan is Francisca CHO BANTLY’s *Embracing Illusion: Truth and Fiction in The Dream of the Nine Clouds* (Albany: SUNY Press 1996). In this study of a famous 17th century novel, CHO BANTLY deftly defends her innovative and challenging thesis that the author of *The Dream of the Nine Clouds* uses fiction as an effective mode – perhaps the most effective mode – of expressing key Buddhist attitudes toward reality and illusion.

Buddhist studies scholars in the area of Japanese Buddhism have been both numerous and productive. In 1974 and 1976 Daigan and Alicia MATSUNAGA published *Foundations of Japanese Buddhism* (Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International), a two volume set that deals with the history of Japanese Buddhism through the medieval period. A more recent and much different insight into medieval Japanese Buddhism is provided by William LAFLEUR in *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1983). LAFLEUR’s book remains to this day a classic.

Over the years Buddhist studies scholars have produced a number of books focused on particular sectarian traditions. As in the case of China and Korea, the Chan / Zen tradition has received a disproportionate amount of attention. Four studies that stand out in different ways are: Thomas KASULIS, *Zen Person, Zen Action* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1981); Carl BIELEFELDT, *Dogen’s Manuals of Zen Meditation* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1988); William BODIFORD, *Soto Zen in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: Hawaii University

together, WELCH’s three books remain unrivaled resources for anyone interested in exploring the persistence and crises of Chinese Buddhism during the first six decades of the 20th century.

Press 1993); and Martin COLLCUTT, *Five Mountains: The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1981).

In the late 1970's Minoru KIYOTO published *Shingon Buddhism: Theory and Practice* (Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International 1978). More recently James DOBBINS has focused on important aspects of the Pure Land tradition in *Jodo Shinshu: Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1989).

Other scholars working on Japanese Buddhism have concentrated their attention on individual Buddhist figures. In 1984 Paul GRONER contributed *Saicho: the Establishment of the Japanese Tendai School* (Berkeley: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of California at Berkeley, Institute of Buddhist Studies). George TANABE followed with *Myoe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism* (Harvard: Harvard University Press 1992). Finally, in 1996, Bernard FAURE published *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), a rich interpretation of the mental world of a Soto Zen patriarch who lived in the late 13th / early 14th centuries.

Other topics that have received some attention are the ways in which Buddhist texts have been employed, and the role of Buddhist art. In 1989 George and Willa TANABE published an edited collection of essays on *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press). In 1992 Susan TYLOR presented a fascinating look at visual symbolism in *The Cult of Kasuga Seen Through Its Art* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan).

The Buddhist experience in early modern / modern Japan has been treated in many publications covering many different topics. Certain aspects of the religio-political experience of Buddhism have been depicted and analyzed in an exciting new way by James KETELAAR in *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1990). Later religio-political aspects were taken up in a well attended panel on "Buddhism and Imperialism" that was presented at the November 1997 meeting of the American Academy of Religion. The members of this panel documented a wide range of Buddhist involvements in the Japanese nationalist chauvinism that developed during the first half of the 20th century.

At least two books that extend beyond the explicitly religio-political domain deserve to be included in any overall survey. A Buddhist-

oriented “new religion” is described and analyzed by Helen HARDACRE in *Lay Religion in Contemporary Japan: Reiyukai Kyodan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1984). Focusing on a very different subject William LAFLEUR – in *Liquid Life: Abortion and Buddhism in Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1992) – does a masterful job of describing and analyzing the historical background and contemporary character of Buddhist involvement in the Japanese abortion debate, and in the creation of Buddhist practices related to the memorialization of aborted fetuses. *Liquid Life* makes an ethics-oriented contribution to Buddhist studies research that is virtually unique. At the same time, it addresses issues that concern a much wider audience as well.

During the 19th and 20th centuries Buddhism has become firmly established in the West and has had particular success in the United States. However serious book-length studies of the processes through which this success has been achieved and of the communities that have been established are few and far between. Among the books that appeared early on in the twenty five year period we are considering, the most comprehensive overview of the American Buddhist scene was provided by Emma MCCLOY LAYMAN in her *Buddhism in America* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers 1976). In 1992 Rick FIELDS published the third edition of his informative survey entitled *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America* (Boston: Shambala Publications 1992).²⁰

In the last two years two books have been published that break important new ground. The first is Paul David NUMRICH’s sociologically based study of *Old Wisdom in the New World: Americanization in Two Immigrant Theravāda Buddhist Temples* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press 1996.) The second is Donald LOPEZ’ *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1998).

20. For an interesting book that correlates developments in America and Sri Lanka in the late 19th century see Stephen PROTHERO’s *The White Buddhist: The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steel Olcott* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press 1996).

Concluding Reflections

Like any appropriate framework that might have been adopted, the area-by-area structure that has been employed in organizing the present essay has made it possible to highlight certain crucial aspects of the topic under consideration. From the discussion that has been developed using this area-by-area strategy, at least three important conclusions can be drawn.

Clearly our review of U.S. Buddhist studies scholarship over the past twenty five years has demonstrated that American scholars have increasingly shied away from any attempt to identify the origins of Buddhism (Ray's book is a notable exception), or to postulate any kind of pure or uniquely authentic Buddhist tradition.²¹ The correlate of this turn away from concerns with matters of origin and essence has been an increasing emphasis on the study of the later phases of Buddhist history, and on the almost infinite diversity of Buddhist beliefs, practices and modes of communal life.

It is also evident that during this same time period there has been a move away from a primary interest in purely philological methods and doctrinal issues toward a much greater emphasis on many various forms of Buddhist expression, including especially those that have been most deeply implicated in the everyday life of ordinary Buddhist practitioners. These other forms include narrative and story-telling, artistic and iconographic expressions, ritual performances (both monastic and lay), and the involvement and influence of Buddhism in various forms of political, economic, and social activity.

Our discussion has also highlighted a strong surge in the production of feminist scholarship. This is apparent in the growing corpus of works that deal with the role that feminine dimensions and symbols have played in the structure and dynamics of Buddhist doctrine, meditation, narrative and teaching. It is even more evident in the extensive attention that has been given to the achievements of women (especially but not exclusively female renunciants), and to the roles that women have played in the life of the Buddhist community.

21. In recent years the long-standing debate between those who consider the history of Buddhism to be the story of a degeneration from a pure (Theravāda or Theravāda-like) origin, and those who see that history as the story of a progressive development culminating in one or another form of Mahāyāna or Vajrayāna has virtually disappeared from the American Buddhist studies scene.

But at the same time that this area-by-area organizational strategy has facilitated the identification of a number of significant developments, other important trends have been left in the shadows. In order to round out the discussion, it will be useful to consider four dimensions of recent American Buddhist studies scholarship that this area-by-area approach has tended to hide from view.

The first of these innovative developments is the increasing use of computer technology for facilitating more rapid communication within the U.S. and beyond, and for generating new resources for research. An example of the more formalized use of computer technology for scholarly communications is the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* – an electronic publication founded by Charles PREBISH and Dameon KEOWN that has its primary base of operations at Pennsylvania State University.

American Buddhist studies scholars have also taken the initiative in the development of computerized data bases that include not only textual materials, but visual and audial materials as well. Here the most active and productive scholar on the American scene has been Lewis LANCASTER, the chair of the American Academy of Religions Electronic Publications Committee. Prof. LANCASTER has been actively involved in several data base projects designed to make available different Buddhist “canonical” collections. Working in cooperation with Mahidol University, LANCASTER has already facilitated the production of a CD Rom that contains all of the items that are included in the Thai version of the Pali canon. This CD Rom is now available from Scholars Press, Atlanta Ga..

The second of these four dimensions of recent Buddhist studies scholarship that has been neglected is the production of communally generated research and publications that provide a counter-weight to the tendency to emphasize and isolate area-defined patterns of specialization. The basic publication genre in which these efforts to resist the fragmentation of Buddhist studies scholarship have been implemented is the edited volume. Three well crafted examples of this genre are: Donald LOPEZ, ed., *Buddhist Hermenutics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1988); Robert BUSWELL and Robert GIMELLO, eds., *Paths to Liberation: The Marga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*

(Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1992); and Jose CABEZÓN, ed. *Buddhism, Sexuality and Gender* (Albany: SUNY Press 1992),²²

Somewhat different cross-area topics are considered in Helen Hardacre and Alan Sponberg, eds., *Maitreya: The Future Buddha* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1988) and in an *On Mandalas* special issue of the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* (Vol. 19, no. 2 published in Winter 1996). This latter collection of essays, generated from a University of Chicago conference entitled "Mandalas on the Move: 750-850 C.E.," contains essays dealing with roughly 8th/9th century Buddhist materials from India, Indonesia, China, and Japan. Also in 1996 Chris QUEEN and Sallie KING published an edited collection of essays that examine a variety of widely separated contemporary developments that fit under the rubric *Socially Engaged Buddhism* (Albany: SUNY Press).

The third trend that our area-by-area approach has kept in the shadows is the emergence of serious Buddhist studies scholarship that is primarily concerned to generate new kinds of Buddhist understandings that are directly and explicitly related to contemporary issues of religious practice and social involvement. It is difficult to differentiate between normatively oriented modes of study and those that are descriptively oriented. And it is also not easy to draw a clear distinction between scholarship that is intellectually distanced and critical, and that which is primarily confessional and/or apologetic. However that may be, it is certainly the case that in the United States an increasing number of Buddhist studies books are being produced that combine an explicitly normative (and often activist) orientation with a high level of scholarly competence and sophistication.

Serious Buddhist studies scholarship of this particular kind is being carried on with special intensity by Buddhist practitioners who have strong interests in inter-religious dialogue, in feminist causes, and in ethical issues related to the environment and social justice. Examples that immediately come to mind are Joanna MACY, *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory: The Dharma of Natural Systems* (Albany: SUNY Press 1991) and *Dharma and Development* West Hartford, Ct.: Kumarien Press 1983); Rita GROSS, *Buddhism After*

22. Those interested in the issues raised in the CABEZÓN volume should also consult Bernard FAURE's recent *Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1998)

Patriarchy (Albany: SUNY Press 1993); and Anne KLEIN, *Great Bliss Queen: Buddhists, Feminists and the Art of Self* (Boston: Beacon Press 1995).²³

The last of the recent trends that I wish to highlight is a crucial though belated recognition of the importance of theory and method. The best known and most influential book that represents this trend, particularly as it is expressed in a critique of various forms of orientalist scholarship, is Donald LOPEZ, ed. *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1995). In an earlier study Andrew TUCK provided a critical examination of western interpretations of the Buddhist philosophy attributed to Nāgārjuna (see *Comparative Philosophy and the Philosophy of Scholarship: On the Western Interpretation of Nāgārjuna* published in New York by Oxford University Press in 1990). Galen AMSTUTZ has subsequently carried the discussion forward in his study entitled *Interpreting Amida: History and Orientalism in the Study of Pure Land Buddhism* (Albany: SUNY Press 1997).

The *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, in its Winter 1995 issue (Vol. 18, no. 2), published two thought provoking essays that raised a related but rather different set of theoretical and methodological issues. These essays, written by two of the leading figures in the American Buddhist studies community, address the urgent need to explore the problems and possibilities of conceptualizing Buddhist studies as a full fledged academic “field” or “discipline.” The first, written by Luis GÓMEZ, is entitled “Unspoken Paradigms: Meanderings through the Metaphors of a Field” (pp. 183-230). The second, by Jose CABEZÓN, considers “Buddhist Studies as a Discipline and the Role of Theory” (pp. 231-268). These two essays mark an important new stage in the maturation of American Buddhist studies scholarship.

It should be evident from all that has been reported that the Buddhist studies community in the United States has, over the past twenty five years, made remarkable progress. Clearly it has grown immensely in

23. Due to limitations of space, works devoted to Buddhist-Christian dialogue have not been included in this essay. However it is important to note that this kind of dialogical scholarship has been and is being pursued by many U.S. scholars. One of the more important institutional settings for the systematic cultivation of scholarship devoted to Buddhist-Christian dialogue are the Religious Studies program at Temple University and the Society for Buddhist / Christian Studies.

terms of the number of scholars involved and the volume and quality of the research that is being produced. Buddhist studies has assumed an important place in the U.S. academy, not only as a significant component in its own right, but also as an important contributor to a wide range of other academic disciplines. And it has also taken on a significant role within the international community of Buddhist studies scholars. Given this evidence of growth and progress, it seems reasonable to conclude that Buddhist studies in the United States has, after a long period of marginal existence, finally "come of age."