

Linda Learman

*Buddhist Missionaries in the Era of Globalization.*

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005, 245 pp.

Surveys of religious affiliation indicate that only about six percent of the global population can be identified as Buddhist. Nevertheless, historically the tradition has exercised a significant missionary effort to spread itself, resulting in the great background influence it has had throughout large parts of Asia. Today, new missionizing activities are being conducted by a variety of lines of Buddhism in a variety of countries around the world, suggesting that the post-WWII period is seeing one of the major episodes of the spread of the religion.

This solid, straightforward volume, based on a conference held in 2000 at Boston University, presents in its nine richly detailed chapters the work of nine researchers who focus historically and sociologically on the recent activities of Buddhists from specific traditions or in specific regions or both. All of these cases in the book involve the current expansion of some form or forms of Buddhism to regions of the world where the form was not present traditionally: Theravada to Nepal, Japanese Buddhism to the United States and Brazil (which has turned out to be a region of notable importance), Chinese Buddhism to the ethnic Chinese diaspora, and Tibetan Buddhism to the United States.

The introduction, by Linda Learman, reviews academic controversy which has occurred over the extent and nature of Buddhist missionizing in premodern times. Most scholars concur that various types of efforts to spread Buddhism are ancient in the tradition, but that recent constructions of missionizing retain this independence only against the influence of the challenges posed by world Christian missions. In addition current Buddhism is influenced by diverse globalization phenomena including colonialism, economic integration, travel, mass media, and so on.

Steven Kemper's "Dharmapala's *Dharmaduta* and the Buddhist Ethnoscape" argues that the world travels of Dharmapala (1864-1933) set the pattern for much modern Buddhist missionizing afterwards. It was especially influential with regard to the attitudes of diaspora Sinhalese (Sinhalese outside of Sri Lanka, referred to by the author as the Sinhalese ethnoscape). Although *dharmaduta* means messenger of the dharma, Dharmapala's contradictory, complex model was deeply affected by Christianity, British colonialism and Sri Lankan ethnic nationalism.

Sarah Levine describes "The Theravada Domestic Mission in Twentieth-Century Nepal," in which a modern Buddhist revival in that country has been more successfully led by international Theravada influences than by the geographically closer Tibetan traditions. An unexpected effect has been a surge of Nepali women's monasticism despite the weakness of men's monasticism there.

George J. Tanabe, Jr.'s analysis in "Grafting Identity: The Hawaiian Branches of the Bodhi Tree" uses intriguing biological metaphors. Despite creeping assimilation to the nonethnic secular culture and a steadily declining overall Japanese Buddhist membership in Hawaii, a significant element of ethnic Buddhism stubbornly retains

its cultural separateness. This is because adaptations to American life have involved grafting new elements (such as claims for a globalized ideal human equality) onto a highly conservative static rootstock culture (a deep ancestralist religion). The approach has not involved fundamental cross-pollination or hybridization with the surrounding non-Japanese culture. This modernist tradition has produced a tightly-bounded community which understands itself as universalistic, triumphalist, and ethnocentrically sectarian all at the same time.

Richard K. Payne's "Hiding in Plain Sight: The Invisibility of the Shingon Mission to the United States" discusses how, despite the publicity given to Tibetan tradition, the "other tantrism" offered by Shingon has not achieved similar media recognition. The fundamental explanation remains Shingon's orientation to serving an ethnic community (after World War II Shingon even subjected itself to pseudo-Christianization) versus the Tibetan drive to appeal to a broader nonethnic public (often through conscious exoticization and romanticization).

Peter B. Clarke's treatment of "Globalization and the Pursuit of a Shared Understanding of the Absolute: The Case of Soka Gakkai in Brazil" indicates that the new religion's activities in Brazil (where it has created the world's largest SGI branch outside of Japan) have pushed its members' thinking towards open-mindedness, flexibility and experimentation, in contrast to the rigidity and exclusivism formerly characteristic of the organization.

Cristina Rocha examines "Being a Zen Buddhist Brazilian: Juggling Multiple Identities in the Land of Catholicism." In Brazil (somewhat as in North America) conflicts of purposes in Zen temples between ethnic Japanese members (seeking ancestral religion) and newer non-Japanese members (seeking meditation and social status) have led to institutional conflicts. However the overall presentation of Buddhism in Brazil has increasingly become creatively "creolized" (inserting Buddhist "vocabulary" into a Brazilian "religious grammar") and there are strong indications of the success of this process in introducing Buddhist ideas to Brazil's dominantly Catholic but spiritually bubbling society.

Stuart Chandler in "Spreading Buddha's Light: The Internationalization of Foguang Shan" describes the global outreach to diaspora Chinese of one of Taiwan's most prominent new Buddhist organizations. However, despite the humanistic idealism of the group's founder Master Xingyun, the visionary transcendence of Chinese cultural boundaries proposed by the organization remains problematic.

C. Julia Huang's "The Compassion Relief Diaspora" concerns the activities of the large Taiwanese grassroots lay movement Ciji Gongde Hui (founded in 1966), which is known in English as Compassion Relief. Although it retains a clear Buddhist identity, it focuses on secular social welfare work and has become the first major international humanitarian organization originating in a Chinese society. Like Foguang Shan, it displays an ongoing tension between its ethnic and its universalistic orientations.

Finally, Gray Tuttle's "Uniting Religion and Politics in a Bid for Autonomy: Lamas in Exile in China and America" examines Tibetan representatives spreading their traditions (and pursuing their political agendas) in the West. The lamas have

tended to rely on old teaching models which developed without Western influence in the premodern Tibetan-Chinese sphere and which emphasize the effects of tantric ritual.

The study of missionizing provides fascinating additional angles of view on difficult questions of what constitutes membership, religious identity, ethnicity, conversion, and social activism in Buddhism. It also provides another body of social studies data about intercultural boundary-crossing and relationship-building. This excellent multidimensional volume does not suggest overarching conclusions about these processes in Buddhism but provides outstanding stimulation to the continuation of the research. A list of contributors and index are supplied at the end, along with extensive bibliographic information throughout.

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Mark R. Mullins, ed.

*Handbook of Christianity in Japan.*

Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 5, Vol. 10.

Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003, 423 pp.

The aim of this book is, according to the editor's introduction, to "provide students and scholars of religion and Asian studies with a guide to research on Christianity within this larger context of Japanese religions, culture, and society." (vii) Following this principle, the nineteen contributions contained in this volume are divided into three parts, "Christianity in Japanese History," "Christianity in Japanese Society and Culture," and "Resources for the Study of Christianity in Japan."

The historical part begins with articles on the Roman Catholic mission during the 16. and 17. centuries and on the subsequent Kakure Kirishitan tradition, both authored by Miyazaki Kentarō. The next contributions treat various phases and themes of the modern period. The first Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox missions during the Meiji Period are introduced by Helen Ballhatchet, and the Japanese church during the time of imperialism and nationalism (1895-1945) is treated by Hamish Ion. Thomas Hastings analyzes the relationship between Protestant schools and churches in the context of contemporary mission theory and practice, whereas Ikegami Yoshimasu provides an overview of Holiness, Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in modern Japan. Mark Mullins introduces indigenous Christian movements, and Michael Sherrill treats the churches in the postwar period. The first part is concluded by an article on theology in Japan authored by Nelson Jennings, and one on Bible translations by Bernardin Scheider, OFM. The contributions in the first part of this volume provide a fairly comprehensive treatment of Christian history in Japan.