

BOOK REVIEWS

Reviewed by Patricia Ordóñez de Pablos, Universidad de Oviedo, Oviedo, Spain

Mindfulness in Early Buddhism: New Approaches through Psychology and Textual Analysis of Pali, Chinese and Sanskrit Sources
Tse-fu Kuan

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234 pp.

\$160.00

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In this book, Tse-fu Kuan, an assistant professor at the General Education Centre, National University of Kaoshiung (Taiwan), presents a revised version of his doctoral thesis focused on mindfulness in early Buddhism. It is not a book for all kind of readers. Its deep analysis of the mindfulness concept using different sources (Chinese, Pali, Sanskrit), would make readers without previous knowledge of Buddhism to have problems to fully understand the ideas developed.

The book starts with the discussion of the concept of “sati” (mindfulness) and its role in practices and philosophy in early Buddhism. This first chapter analyses mindfulness and its links with sannā (apperception, conception), cognition, emotion and the path to liberation. The second chapter addresses the types of mindfulness—simple awareness, protective awareness, and introspective awareness—and its functions. Next chapter studies the role of

mindfulness in methodical meditation (insight meditation, serenity meditation). Chapter four explores mindfulness directed to the experience. It clarifies the term Kāyagatā sati (usually translated as mindfulness of the body), proposes a reconstruction of a previous version of the Kāyagatāsati Sutta and elaborated other meanings of the term Kāyagatā sati. Finally chapter 5 analyses various versions of the Satipatthāna Sutta, a discourse much venerated in Theravāda Buddhism.

The book includes 3 interesting appendices with annotated translations of the Sarvāstivāda (it is the name of an ancient Buddhist school) version of the Satipatthāna Sutta and the Kāyagatāsati Sutta (“mindfulness of the body”), respectively, as well as a comparison of the Pali and Chinese versions of the Satipatthāna Sutta. Satipatthāna, according to the author of the book, can mean “bringing about of mindfulness” or “establishment of mindfulness” (p. 104).

The added value of the analysis presented in this book is that it offers new approaches through a comparative study of Buddhist works in different languages (Chinese, Pali and Sanskrit). The book includes a brief glossary with Pali and Sanskrit terms as well.

Mipham's Dialectics and the Debates on Emptiness

Karma Phuntscho

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304 pp.

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Karma Phuntsho, the author of the book, was trained as “Khenpo”, a Bhutanese term to refer to a Tibetan Buddhist monastic abbot. Research Associate at the Mongolia and Inner Asian Studies Unit, Department of Social Anthropology, Cambridge His background provides this book “insider” views on the topics analyzed.

The book explores a central Buddhist concept, Emptiness. It is structured into five chapters. First chapter examines the significance of the Buddhist concept of Emptiness from different perspectives: soteriological, doctrinal, ontological and historical. Second chapter offers an historical view on the debate of emptiness (controversies, critiques). The third chapter addresses the concept of emptiness in the Mādhyamika system, which involves the process of negation and reasoning known as “the reasoning scrutinizing the ultimate”. The chapter discusses the knowability and affability of emptiness. Ju Mipham Namgyal Gyatso (1846-1942) has diverse writings, especially the debates he had with his Gelupka opponents. The author presents Mipham’s criticisms of the Gelupka understanding of emptiness as well as its contributions to this concept. He also addresses Mipham’s discussions on three key issues: the delimitation of the negandum, the theory of the ultimate and the knowability and affability of emptiness. Chapter four analyzes Mipham’s views about the ultimate reality. Finally last chapter examines important terms such as conceptuality, non-conceptuality and emptiness.

Pro-Poor Growth and Liberalization in Developing Economies: The Case of Nepal
Sanjaya Acharya

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The author of the book, Sanjay Acharya, currently works as professor of Economics at the Ritsumeikan University (Japan). The book is organized into six chapters that analyze economic growth and liberalization in Nepal, a developing and transition economy. Chapter 1 presents some introductory questions that will be analyzed in the depth in the rest of the chapters. It addresses the relation between liberalization and distribution, liberalization and globalization, growth and poverty objectives. Chapter 2 studies the geopolitical situation of Nepal, its trade regime and its relation with NTO. Chapter 3 discusses liberalization reforms and poverty and describes trends of inequality and poverty in Nepal. Chapter 4 presents the social accounting matrix (SAM) of Nepal and describes the Nepalese economy, using this major database. Nepalese SAM has eight accounts: activities, commodities, factors, households, governments, firms, national capital and the rest of the world. Chapter 5 performs simulations of the effects of liberalization and reform policies in Nepal under different scenarios. The chapter discusses the long terms effect of the devaluation of the Nepalese currency too. Finally last chapter proposes some policy implications after the review of the topics of the previous chapters.

Patricia Ordóñez de Pablos is a Professor in the Department of Business Administration and Accountability in the Faculty of Economics of the University of Oviedo, Spain. Her teaching and research interests focus on the areas of strategic management, knowledge management, intellectual capital measuring and reporting, organisational learning and human resources management. She serves as Executive Editor of the International Journal of Learning and Intellectual and the International Journal of Strategic Change Management. She also serves as Associate Editor of Behaviour and Information Technology.