

encounters with different religious traditions, either with believers or in the form of architecture or artwork. Some readers may be bothered by the intrusion of the first person pronoun into descriptive accounts of the subjective form of belief and objective expressions of belief in celebration, ritual, and worship, in architecture, art, and education. It has the affect of placing the reader, who assumes the author-position, at a distance from the objectified 'non-Western' faith. Notably those chapters in which the Ellwood does not make a personal appearance cover Judaism and Christianity, which are undoubtedly the most familiar to the American audience to whom the book is directly addressed. But if his purpose is to get at something of a total human experience, encountering what is foreign as if it were foreign, all the while retaining an understanding of a common humanity, would seem to fulfill this aim.

Novel additions to the ninth edition include extended discussions of the sorts of political authority to which each set of religious beliefs, through longstanding cultural-historical association, is most naturally acclimatized. In order to meet the changing demands of an interactive educational milieu, a CD containing short videos of explaining key figures and features has been added. Teachers and students are also offered access to online educational resources like prepared questions and study guides.

Even though his prose and writing style may at times leave something to be desired, Ellwood performs a valuable service by providing a credible systematic exposition of an impossibly broad and diffuse topic. Should the study of religion remain 'timely', this textbook stands a good chance of seeing a tenth edition.

Socially Engaged Buddhism

Sallie B. King. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009.

ISBN: 978-0824833510. Pp. xiii + 192.

Reviewed by Jordan Johnson, Arizona State University

Socially Engaged Buddhism is a very useful introduction to the contemporary movement of Buddhists who involve themselves with the variety of religious social activism that has come to be known as "Engaged Buddhism." In this rather slender volume, Sallie B. King does an admirable job of providing an effective overview of this nascent international movement that will be of particular value to those who wish to acquaint themselves with the tradition for the first time, as well as those seeking to "connect the dots" between individual instances of "Engaged Buddhist" activism and the transnational movement as a whole.

One of the central thrusts of the book consists of King's concern with demonstrating how it is that if one is to truly understand Engaged Buddhism, one must appreciate the myriad ways in which it is thoroughly *Buddhist*, rather than only nominally Buddhist in nature or, alternately, a Westernized distortion of some true "original" Buddhism. King brings her considerable expertise in Buddhist ethics to bear in demonstrating the ways in which Engaged Buddhists who engage in activities aimed toward peace-building, promoting social and economic justice, or protecting the natural environment understand themselves to be carrying traditional Buddhist premises about the nature of existence and ethical action to their natural conclusions in the modern world. The book succeeds on both descriptive and analytical levels, providing apt and interesting accounts of individual programs of Buddhist social activism throughout both Buddhist Asia and the West, while also including concise analyses of the underlying issues of Buddhist spirituality and ethical codes of conduct that inform these actions.

In the "Introduction" and the first several chapters of the book, King provides a brief summary of some of the key questions that have emerged in Engaged Buddhist Studies in recent years, such as: How "authentically Buddhist" is Engaged Buddhism? Is it a new movement, or has Engaged Buddhism always existed in some form? What role has the West played in the rise of this movement? What is the connection between social activism and internal spirituality? King takes a balanced view in addressing these questions. While she is unequivocal in her assertion that Engaged Buddhism must be understood as a *Buddhist* phenomenon first and foremost, and that Engaged Buddhists tend to argue that it is impossible to divorce attaining internal peace and tranquility from creating a just and peaceful external world, she is also careful to note that claims that Engaged Buddhism has always existed in its present form must be viewed with as much suspicion as characterizations of the tradition that portray it as a brand-new, mere product of Buddhism's encounter with the West. She notes that in order to understand Engaged Buddhism, it must be understood as emanating from a worldview that is simultaneously Buddhist and modern in orientation (terms which are decidedly *not* antithetical), and marked by both local and global concerns.

These early chapters are particularly admirable by virtue of King's effort to take the broad constellation of various individuals, groups, and organisations that together fall under the broad umbrella term of "Engaged Buddhism" and present the movement as a unified phenomenon that—while certainly harboring a considerable amount of diversity within itself—is organized around a coherent set of key Buddhist principles and unified by the common cause of expressing the ideals of Buddhism in practical action. In other recent publications on the subject, some efforts to sketch out the broad contours of the global phenomenon known as Engaged Buddhism have arguably been hindered by a tendency to focus too much attention on individual instances of the tradition, and too little on the global movement as a whole. King

avoids this by framing her discussion in terms of the underlying philosophical principles that Engaged Buddhists tend to share, and she is further aided by her willingness to define the parameters of what, precisely, she means by the term “Engaged Buddhism.” King argues that not any and all forms of Buddhist social activism should be defined as “Engaged Buddhism,” maintaining that nonviolence, for example, is a bedrock principle of the tradition that would preclude certain forms of militant, chauvinistic nationalism painted in Buddhist terms from inclusion in the category. In general, her discussion of the ways in which key Buddhist concepts such as no-self and interdependence play into Engaged Buddhist thinking and ground-level activism is excellent, and would be especially valuable to non-specialists.

Having established the definitional, philosophical, and theological parameters of Engaged Buddhism in the first half of the book, the chapters of the latter half are primarily devoted to examining the ways in which Buddhist principles have been put into practice throughout the world in the form of social activism. These chapters recount specific instances of both well-known and relatively obscure efforts on the part of Engaged Buddhists to bring an end to warfare and violence in places like Tibet and Vietnam, establish some measure of economic justice and equality in developing nations such as Thailand and Sri Lanka, defend against ecological degradation both in Buddhist Asia and the West, and promote respect for basic human rights in places such as Burma. One might argue that some of these accounts are too brief and lacking in appropriate context to provide a genuine understanding of the character of Buddhist activism in these regions, and that at times the juxtaposition of these divergent movements together tends to emphasize unity at the expense of downplaying legitimate differences that exist among these movements, but these criticisms are more a result of the introductory nature of the volume than they are a reflection of failure on the part of the author.

Socially Engaged Buddhism is an excellent introduction to the phenomenon of Engaged Buddhism that will serve as a particularly useful resource to both newcomers to the field and those from other disciplines who wish to familiarize themselves with modern Buddhist social activism.

Revolt of the Scribes: Resistance and Apocalyptic Origin

Richard Horsley. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009.

ISBN: 978-0800662967. Pp. 192.

Reviewed by Shlomo Mahn, McGill University

In *Revolt of the Scribes*, Richard Horsley assaults the developing academic field of Apocalypticism by proposing that this field is approaching the writings that he