

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Jizang: Le sens des arcanes des Trois Traités; Contribution à l'étude du Mādhyamika dans le bouddhisme d'Extrême-Orient.* Edited and Translated by Jérôme Ducor and Henry W. Isler. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2022. 411 pages. Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-2-600-06383-8.

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*Jizang: Le sens des arcanes des Trois Traités* offers a richly annotated French translation of the *Sanlun xuanyi* 三論玄義 (Profound Meaning of the Three Treatises); a précis of the Sinitic Mādhyamika doctrine composed by Jizang 吉藏 (549–623), the Sino-Parthian scholar-monk of the Sui 隋 dynasty (581–618); a detailed prolegomenon to Jizang's treatise; and various informative appendices. The appendices include the Chinese text of the treatise as found in the modern Taishō 大正 edition and an index that lists the Chinese characters found in the text (pp. 257–88) according to the radical and number of strokes. This index also provides a concordance to the French translation of the Chinese text.

After Sengzhao 僧肇 (384–414?), Jizang is the most important proponent of Sinitic Mādhyamika, also known as the Sanlun 三論 tradition. The Sanlun tradition derives its name from the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Treatise on the Middle Way) of Nāgārjuna (fl. ca. 2nd–3rd c.) and the *Śataśāstra* (Hundred Verses Treatise) and \**Dvādaśamukhaśāstra* (Twelve Gates Treatise) ascribed to Āryadeva (mid 2nd–mid 3rd c.). The seminal Mādhyamika treatises of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, the Indic forebearers of the Sanlun tradition, were rendered into Chinese by Kumārajīva (344–413) during the fifth century. The *Śataśāstra* and \**Dvādaśamukhaśāstra* are extant only in the Chinese versions of Kumārajīva. The *Sanlun xuanyi* comprises, in concise form, Jizang's global exegesis of the founding treatises of the Sanlun tradition.

The *Sanlun xuanyi* is divided into two parts: the first is dedicated to “dispelling erroneous views” (*poxie* 破邪); the second is devoted to “making evident the correct explanations” (*xianzheng* 顯正). The first part takes the rival Buddhist and non-Buddhist (principally Confucian and Daoist) traditions to task by examining and dispelling doctrines considered erroneous from the perspective of the Sinitic Mādhyamika tradition held by Jizang. The second part consists of an exposition of the “correct exegesis” of

the doctrine of two truths—conventional truth (Skt. *saṃvṛtisatya*, Ch. *shisu di* 世俗諦) and ultimate truth (Skt. *paramārthasatya*, Ch. *zhendi* 真諦)—which is a foundational tenet of the Madhyamaka tradition as developed and expounded by Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva.

Ducor and Isler begin by contextualizing the work of Jizang historically and anchoring it within the broader scope of Buddhist history in China. In their introduction to the French translation, they provide a thick description of the historical background and socio-institutional contexts within which the *Sanlun xuanyi* was composed. Rather than focusing the bulk of their analysis on the doctrinal content and philosophical arguments of the *Sanlun xuanyi*, the authors situate the treatise within the specificities of Jizang’s life and career and his immediate social and historical contexts. In doing so, they illuminate the social-historical antecedents and backdrop to Jizang’s work, casting light on Jizang’s critiques of existing Chinese Buddhist institutions and scholarly traditions. They also show how Jizang takes umbrage with the status quo of Buddhist traditions in China, specifically the rigidity of the prevailing scholastic traditions that insufficiently address the penetrating critiques of the Buddhist models of doctrinal learning and praxis located within the Indic Mādhyamika tradition. Additionally, the authors offer a comprehensive catalogue of Jizang’s oeuvre and a chronology of his life and career. Ducor and Isler’s study of the traditional biographies of Jizang is of scholarly significance in that it stands as the most thorough treatment of these source materials in a Western language.

The extensive bibliography would have been enhanced by the inclusion of contemporary Japanese- and Korean-language scholarship that investigates the authenticity of various works traditionally attributed to Jizang. Several Japanese scholars (see Itō 1971, 1972; Okuno 2012) and the Korean scholar, Cho Yunkyöng (2014, 2023), are apprehensive about attributing the *Dasheng xuanlun* 大乘玄論 (Treatise on the Profundity of the Mahayana Teaching)—a treatise frequently cross-referenced within the authors’ annotations as exemplary of Jizang’s doctrinal stance (described as one of “the most convenient gateways to access Jizang’s thought” [p. 29])—to Jizang alone. These scholars regard this work as likely to have been compiled posthumously by his followers.

The French translation of Ducor and Isler contains lush annotations that offer thorough and accurate identifications of a myriad of Buddhist literary and doctrinal topoi, as well as allusions derived from classical Confucian and Daoist traditions found within the *Sanlun xuanyi*. The translators extensively document references to these topoi in the secondary scholarship. The annotations also illuminate places within the treatise wherein Jizang references sutras preserved in the Nikāya literature of the Pali canon and/or in the Āgamas that survive in Chinese translations. The authors enlist modern Western-language translations of the Indic sources, such as those of Lamotte and La Vallée Poussin, rather than available editions of the Sanskrit originals. While

the rich and detailed annotations identify the underlying doctrinal models involved in Jizang's work, one wish of this reviewer is that the annotations had further unpacked the philosophical argumentation that is advanced by Jizang in this work as well as offered and explicated alternative readings to difficult phrases and passages.

Despite such minor concerns about the bibliography and annotations, the book under review makes a significant contribution to the study of Chinese Buddhism. *Jizang: Le sens des arcanes des Trois Traités* will become required reading for any scholar studying Jizang and/or the tradition of Sinitic Mādhyamika that he inherited and advanced as one of its most prolific and philosophically astute exponents.

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*Precepts, Ordinations, and Practice in Medieval Japanese Tendai*. By Paul Groner. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2022. xvii + 377 pages. Hardcover. ISBN-13: 978-0-8248-9274-6.

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Paul Groner is the author of two well-known monographs in the field of Japanese Buddhist studies: *Saichō: The Establishment of the Japanese Tendai School* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2016), on Saichō 最澄 (767–822), founder of the Tendai 天台 school in Japan, and *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), on Ryōgen 良源 (912–985), chief abbot of Enryakuji 延暦寺, the main Tendai monastery in the tenth century. His latest volume, under review