

Karl H. Potter, *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, vol. IX: Buddhist Philosophy from 350 to 600 A.D., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2003, pp. 762. ISBN 81-208-1968-3, Rs. 1295.00

Reviewed by Audrius Beinorius

Centre of Oriental Studies, Vilnius University

Initiated forty years ago, *The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies* is a project to assemble and summarize all that is currently known about the various systems (*darśana*) of Indian philosophy. The entire series is planned to consist of some 25 volumes; ten of them have already appeared. As Professor Karl H. Potter of the University of Washington, the general editor of this series, states, for the purposes of control, "Indian philosophical work" as understood for the project is confined to treatises which are: of philosophical interest throughout; theoretical rather than purely practical in their intended function; and polemical or at least expository in a context where defense of one view among alternatives is appropriate.

The present volume contains an *Introduction* by its editor, followed by summaries of all the philosophical texts of the system known to exist in Western language translations, or extant only in editions, or in a few cases available only in manuscript. In accordance with the other volumes, summaries are arranged in the chronological order in which the texts appear to have been written, and provide a guide to the literature together with a flowing account of the development of thought through the history of the system being covered. The summaries are solicited from specialists in the field from throughout the world, who have an intimate knowledge of the texts being summarized.

The ninth volume of the encyclopedia, a third to deal with Buddhist philosophy, attempts to cover the development of Buddhist ideas from approximately the time of Vasubandhu, i.e. from the middle of the fourth century A. D., to the end of the sixth. This limited period may be taken to represent the most fruitful and glorious time of Indian history in general, the peaceful time of the Gupta kings, when various philosophical Buddhist schools or sects succeeded in developing consistent system of thought. Regarding the traditional story of the four alternative schools (Sarvastivāda, Sautrāntika, Yogācāra and Madhya-mika), inherited from the Tibetan interpreters of Buddhism, the position of the editor is that there are not just four schools of Buddhism, and that the views associated with these four schools are not necessarily to be viewed as rival interpretations. "In this Volume we have not attempted to wield a strong editorial pen over references to Buddhist 'schools' and especially over references to these two [Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna] supposed great traditions within Buddhism" (p.21). Indeed, the relation between Buddhist ideas and schools is more complex.

Authors whose works are dealt in Volume Nine in relative chronological order are: Nāgārjuna, Vasumitra, Buddhaghosa, Buddhadatta, Vidyabhusana, Ullaṅgha, Sāramati, Sugandhara, Śamathadeva, Śuddhamati, Buddhapālita, Buddhasena, Dignāga, Triratnadāsa, Jina, Vasuvarman, Mahānāma, Vinītabhadra, Asvabhāva, Kambala, Guṇamati, Bhavya, Śāṅkarasvāmin, Ārya Vimuktisena, Dharmapāla, Paramārtha, Sthiramati, Vimalamitra, Śīlabhadra, Guṇaprabhā, Upasena, Yaśomitra, Īśvarasena, Bhadanta Vimuktisena. We know of the whereabouts and lives of only a few of them. However, the historical data are often sketchy and providing no challenging theoretical reflections, and certainly do not contribute to a better understanding of the historical development. The most important among them are, of course, Dignāga, Buddhapālita and Bhavya, being entirely responsible for exhaustive analysis of epistemic considerations and inferential reasoning in particular. No wonder that the three chapters of the Introduction deal with the analysis of the Dignāga's view on perception, inference, and language.

In his *Introduction* K. H. Potter distinguishes several themes of special importance in the historical period covered by Volume Nine. The first is development of further comprehensive surveys of Ābhidharmika notions by Buddhaghosa, Buddhadatta, Vimalamitra and Yaśomitra. The second development, crucial for the subsequent centuries of Buddhist thought, is found in the work of Dignāga who provided Buddhism with a detailed analytic epistemology, logical theory, and theory of language. The third is the foundation of the great Universities of Nālandā and Valabhī with rich philosophical traditions. The fourth aspect of the period under review comprises the interpretations of Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamika methods provided by Buddhapālita and Bhavya. The fifth theme is found in the development of Yogācāra thought, mainly via the commentaries of Sthiramati on Vasubandhu's Yogācāra works. The most important contribution, mostly in the religious context, is the vastly increased emphasis on the notion of a Bodhisattva, which that comes to supplement the ideal of the liberated Buddha.

It is worth noting that like in *Preface* to the previous Volume Eight, the editor made certain disclaimers concerning the limitations on his knowledge of the Buddhist authors and works. Having himself a solid background in Indology, K. Potter in the *Introduction* to the present volume heavily refers to other studies and provides the resumés of George Dreyfus, Richard Hayes, Eli Franco, Shoryu Katsura, Mark Siderits, B. K. Matilal, Christian Lindtner, giving long quotations from their works, especially in chapters dedicated to the epistemology and logic of Dignāga's philosophy. The most extensive summaries are given of *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa, *Abhidhammāvatāra* of Buddhadatta, *Pramāṇasamuccaya* of Dignāga, *Madhyamakahrdayakārikā* of Bhavya, *Abhidharmasamuccaya-bhāṣya* of Sthiramati, *Abhidharmakośa-sphuṭārthavyākhyā* of Yaśomitra.

As in earlier volumes of the Encyclopedia, the summaries are complemented by *Notes* and an extensive concluding *Glossary / Index* (pp. 621–762). There is still much work to do with the translation of the Buddhist texts belonging to this period. However, this is an impressive and indispensable summary, and it should find its way to the shelves of many libraries, serving as a comprehensive reference tool for all researches and students of Indian Buddhist philosophy, especially those not trained in Sanskrit / Pali.