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Christopher argues that peacemakers will elicit the enmity of those intent upon protecting national interests. The nonviolence of the early Christian movement was directed against the combination of political, military, and religious power represented by the cult of the emperor. It is in this context that Jesus' message of active nonviolence must be placed. The call to love one's neighbor as oneself and to love one's enemies is a direct challenge to the culture that worships power and so must eliminate enemies. Hence, the Christian movement was one of "political atheism" which could not be ignored either by the Romans in the first century or similar religious nationalists in the twentieth.

In a parallel with Milgrom's work, Smith-Christopher reads the "Old Testament" texts against their use by Christians to "defend nationalist patriotism and military bravado" when it serves the religious and political interests of the state (p. 148). Hence, Smith-Christopher challenges Christian nationalism as Milgrom challenges Jewish nationalism. Further, the dire warnings about militaristic nationalism within the biblical tradition are ignored. Finally, the strong peace tradition within both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament are simply dismissed by Christians as irrelevant to the demands of power politics. Therefore, the Christian followers of nonviolence are "atheists who stand against the religion of military gods" (p. 160).

The epilogue nicely connects particular features in each chapter to show how "the world's religions have made significant contributions to the ideals of peace and non-violence" (p. 167). The author, Donald Swearer of Swarthmore College, is author of numerous works on Buddhism, including a comparative work, *For the Sake of the World: The Spirit of Buddhist and Christian Monastics*. His interest in comparative religion stands out here. As I read this conclusion, it helped me see that those concerned with nonviolence within their distinct traditions have friends throughout all traditions. No matter that such individuals may feel isolated within their own faith, there are powerful resources for peacemaking within all religious traditions. I will use this book in my courses, and I hope that many others will use it to "subvert hatred."

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LE SŪTRA D'AMIDA PRÊCHÉ PAR LE BUDDHA. *By Jérôme Ducor.*
Schweizer Asiatische Studien: Monographien; Vol. 29. Bern: Peter Lang, 1998.
216 pp. Paper. \$35.95 (in U.S.A.; available from the New York office of the publisher)

It is immediately clear that this edition of the Smaller Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra must be regarded as the standard work on it in a European language. Ducor is both a scholar (at the University of Lausanne and at the Museum of Ethnography in Geneva) and a practitioner (an ordained minister of the Honganji branch of Jōdo Shin-

shū) and he combines his skills to produce a well-rounded and balanced treatment that demonstrates, by comparison, the limitations of the standard Buddhological approach to Sūtra studies.

The methodology of sutra translation is, I believe, a Buddhist-Christian problem, since, ostensibly Buddhist, it often proceeds along crypto-Christian lines. Why do we translate sutras at all? Or, rather, why are the sutras *as a rule* translated nude, as it were, quivering in the scholar's spotlight, bereft of their seemly covering of śāstras? Sutras are, by themselves, largely unintelligible. They are nuggets of Dharma, to be, on the one hand, digested by the teachers so that they might (to paraphrase St. Bernard of Clairvaux) proffer the milk of nourishing discourses to their disciples and, on the other hand, chanted in mystifying, often artificial, languages, for their meritorious and pacifying effect. When chanted, it is the sound that matters, not the meaning. It is said that a pigeon was reborn as a monk because Asaga compassionately chanted out loud the texts that he was studying. We are to suppose that the fortunate pigeon was not well versed in Sanskrit, yet it benefited remarkably from the chanting. Ducor is aware of this traditional use of the sutras and includes a discussion on "The Amida Sūtra in Liturgical Practice" (pp. 131–137). He cites Gyōyo, writing in fifteenth-century Japan, to the effect that the incomprehensible Sino-Japanese "preserves multiple meanings: the masses, on hearing them, mysteriously, according to their capacities, achieve enlightenment," whereas the Japanese translation "bears only a single sense" and therefore "for normal chanting it is best to chant in the Sino-Japanese pronunciation" (p. 134).

But Eurocentric, especially Anglophone, Buddhologists have insisted on translating only the sutras and ignoring their attendant śāstras. Often enough the translations are done from an archaic or even an invented version which is never used in practice but is preferred simply because it is in Sanskrit. The scholar then searches, in the presumed "more original" text, for precisely that single meaning against which Gyōyo warns us. Something seems familiar. Can it be Martin Luther whom we spy lurking behind our Monier Williams? Are we still in thrall to Max Müller, who, even after having naturalized as British, was *evangelisch* to the core and fought in the Academy under the banner of *sola scriptura*, believing, with Luther, that a sacred text, because it is revealed, is most truly interpreted by reference to itself, and that its meaning would only be obscured by a human, and therefore fallible, commentary? Perhaps: for the bionic Belgian Buddhologists, we note, were more Catholic in their approach, and translated the *summa* of the great Buddhist scholastics.

The point is that a sutra can only be said to have been properly presented for our study when it is displayed in its native context, that is, with full reference to the commentarial tradition. Ducor does this. He opens with a translation from the *rufubon* (the *textus receptus* or "vulgate" as he calls it) version of the Chinese, attributed to Kumārajīva, and follows it with notes on Kumārajīva, on the principal doctrines of the sutra, and on the place of the sutra in the trilogy (*sambukyō*) tradition in Japan. Then he repeats the translation, interspersing it with references to the commentaries in China, Korea, and Japan. This is followed by detailed textual notes on the Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese versions, an essay on the pivotal importance of Shan-tao for the

development of the tradition, and the aforementioned discussion of the sutra's liturgical use. He then gives a translation from the Sanskrit, revised from that used in a seminar given by his teacher, Jacques May. Typical editions of the Chinese, Sanskrit, and Tibetan texts are reproduced, and the book concludes with an extensive bibliography of works in European and Asian languages.

The production of the book is excellent. I only found one typographical error, and the Chinese characters are printed in the text, where they should be. Peter Lang Publishing are to be commended in not following the lazy lexicographer tradition which relegates all *kanji* to a glossary.

Ducor's work invites comparison with the recently published translations and studies of the Larger and Smaller Sukhāvativyūha sutras by Luis Gómez (*Land of Bliss*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), yet the comparison is not entirely fair, for Gómez has only brought out the first of his promised three volumes. Volume one is what Gómez calls his "free" translation and it is to be followed by more technical studies. Even at this early stage, however, we can discern some trends. Gómez, although (ironically!) brought up in a Hispanic and Roman Catholic tradition, has been unable, so far, to liberate himself from the Lutheran presuppositions of Anglophone Buddhology, and he tries to make the text present itself as, in and of itself, intelligible, by inserting his interpretive comments right in the text, without warning. "[T]he present study seeks to make these sutras from ancient India accessible to a modern audience" (p. x). This may achieve his stated goal of keeping his undergraduate students awake, but has he not, in the process, reinforced their naive belief in Buddhist sutras as a sort of Lutheran Bible?

One comes back to Ducor's book with a sense that something more solid has been achieved, a feeling that one has met the sutra in its fullness, particularly with a new understanding of how later Pure Land teachers are, as they claimed, part of a lineage and not radical innovators discontinuous with the tradition. For instance, Shinran's startling claim that "One who has faith in the Pure Land, even if it be impure and faulty, already has a heart identical with the Tathāgata [because] his heart already dwells in the Pure Land" (p. 37, quoting *Mattōshō*) is, Ducor argues, based on the sutra's teaching of an equivalency between becoming an irreversible Bodhisattva and being only one birth away from liberation, because one's progress from the eighth to the tenth stage is spontaneous (Jp.: *jinen*). Again, the short but valuable section on Shan-tao demonstrates his importance to the later concentration on *nien-fo* (invocation of Amita) as *the* Pure Land practice, to the exclusion of all others.

I have only one small regret. Ducor consistently renders Dharma as *loi*, thus perpetuating a mistake of our predecessors. Of the many possible meanings of Dharma, *Law* is, in a Buddhist text, one of the least likely. It seems best to follow the growing custom of leaving it untranslated.

There is no longer any excuse for embarrassing readers with nude sutras. Ducor has shown how noble they are when properly appared.

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