

Berkwitz, Stephen C., Juliane Schober and Claudia Brown (Eds), *Buddhist Manuscript Cultures: Knowledge, Ritual, and Art* [Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism 52] (London: Routledge, 2009), xviii + 211 pp., £85.00, ISBN 978 0 415 77616 5.

The volume under review collects 10 papers presented at a conference, “Buddhist Objects: Knowledge, Ritual and Art,” held at Arizona State University in 2006, a conference held to coincide with the gift of a collection of Sinhala Buddhist palm leaf manuscripts to the same university, materials briefly discussed by one of the editors, Berkwitz. The papers concentrate on South and Southeast Asia, with the exceptions noted below, and chronologically range from the earliest period of Buddhist writing to the present.

The introduction, which one would expect to set forth the rationale for the volume and provide the glue which holds it together, is a disappointment. Credited to the three editors jointly, two of whom do not otherwise contribute to the volume, it seems to assume little prior knowledge of Buddhism, manuscripts or text criticism. It also appears that the editors have paid insufficient attention even to what is written by their own contributors. For example, the very first page of the introduction states that some of the sects which developed from the divisions of the Buddhist community “developed their own canons or collections of scriptures. Some of these canons survive intact.” Had they taken the trouble to read Peter Skilling’s note 18 on p. 74, they would have learned from its first sentence that “Only one Tripiṭaka—the Pāli canon, transmitted by the Mahāvihāravāsin Theravādins, has survived intact . . .” (*sic* the mistaken punctuation). In the same introduction, after referring to John Dagenais’s notion of “manuscript culture” with the ungrammatical definition “the world around which written manuscripts refer to and impact” (and are there also non-written manuscripts?!), they offer a short section discussing materiality, followed by a section on “Scholarship on Buddhist manuscripts.” Unfortunately, the reading of the editors (which is, perhaps needless to say, almost if not entirely in English) is idiosyncratic to say the least. Are two pages from a 1907 book of Ellsworth Huntington really the best reference for the four German Turfan expeditions (which the authors themselves date to 1902–1914)? And given the wealth of materials on Dunhuang today, is it really best to refer to three pages from a 1966 article by Fujieda Akira published in a journal (*Zinbun*) which can be found only in specialized research libraries? (On the German expeditions one might instead see the nice discussion at http://idp.bl.uk/pages/collections_de.a4d;

the same site's discussions of other Silk Road collections are a highly accessible and reliable source of information on Dunhuang and the Silk Road.) The editors think it worth informing readers that "Research articles may also be used to discuss some preliminary findings related to a manuscript or group of manuscripts that are not well known," referring to an article on Sri Lankan medical manuscripts. This is followed by the even more unexpected news that "Also, scholars occasionally publish short editions or translations of material found only in manuscripts," citing as examples an article by Charles Hallisey on a Pāli sutta not edited previously by the PTS, and a short paper on a Tibetan text. One hardly knows what to say. It is almost as if we should be impressed (?) to know that scholars occasionally—and let us hope this happens only "occasionally"!—refer to primary sources which have not yet been printed.

In their apologia for the volume, "Why 'Buddhist Manuscript Cultures'" (without a question mark), the editors begin: "As a collection, the contributions to *Buddhist Manuscript Cultures* expand upon scholarly research on Buddhist manuscripts by shifting the focus from particular texts to the cultural contexts in which manuscripts were created and used. It is our conviction that Buddhist manuscripts not only contain significant textual material, but they also point to religious notions concerning textuality and reveal aspects of broader social, cultural, and ritual realities." Later on the same page, the editors refer to the chapters of their book as making "an intervention in traditional studies of Buddhist manuscripts." One sense of 'intervention' is something akin to 'deprogramming,' forcing someone to confront and hence overcome an addiction. Now, it may be that philology—"traditional studies of Buddhist manuscripts"—needs some shaking up, and some assumptions need questioning. But the program laid out in this introduction does not bode well for the remedy apparently advocated by the editors. Thankfully, most of the papers are not as bad as the introduction might lead one to expect.

The first contribution is by Richard Salomon, "Why did the Gandhāran Buddhists bury their manuscripts?" Herein Salomon discusses, in his usual comprehensive but accessible manner, the hypothesis that at least some of the manuscripts recently brought to light from the region of Gandhāra were ritually interred. He summarizes as follows (p. 31): "the ritual interment of manuscripts was definitely a common practice during the heyday of Gandhāran Buddhism in the early centuries of the Christian era, and the currently attested and reported instances of the practice undoubtedly represent some tiny fraction of the total number of manuscripts that were

buried in antiquity.” He proposes four possible reasons for this interment, carefully indicating the lack of certainty about any and all of them: 1) new MSS may have been treated like *dharmāśarīra* and interred for merit; 2) they may be old MSS replaced by better copies (the so-called Genizah hypothesis); 3) the MSS may have belonged to monks, and been buried with them; 4) they may have been ‘sent forward’ against the future decline of the dharma, as were sūtras buried in Japan, or those incised on rock in China. Appended to the article is an up-to-date and very convenient single-page table “Summary of the four main Gandhāran manuscript collections,” listing for each the name of collection, its location of origin and estimated date, its contents, its condition, the nature of the container in which it was found, if known, any accompanying inscription, and finally references to relevant publications.

The second paper is by one of the co-editors, Stephen C. Berkwitz: “Materiality and merit in Sri Lankan Buddhist manuscripts.” The author begins with two observations: “First, historical encounters with Buddhist texts were highly circumstantial affairs where finding manuscripts that were complete and consistent could hardly have been taken for granted. Second, the actual process of producing palm leaf manuscripts involved a great deal of physical labor and generated certain expectations about their value as material objects and their efficacy for realizing a variety of religious goals.” The author attempts to make a case that the materiality of the manuscripts can teach us “how people in earlier centuries encountered and read Buddhist texts.” The evidence for this seems to be primarily that, as fragile and ‘hand-made’ objects, the manuscripts were valuable, as well as given to damage and frequently incomplete. The author writes (p. 40):

Indeed since it is entirely possible that complete collections of the Pāli Tipiṭaka were uncommonly found in monastic libraries and since manuscript versions of canonical texts could be incomplete or missing, we can presume that readers often had to resort to commentaries and translations as substitutes for the original texts. Also, given the unwieldy size and nature of certain canonical texts like the Vinaya, Buddhists apparently often chose to consult the diverse numbers of summaries and compendiums composed by later scholars in place of the longer (and denser) original texts that may have still been available And thus while the idea of a complete and fixed canon of Buddhist texts may have been important for the self-definition of a universalist Theravāda orthodoxy, as Steven Collins rightly points out . . . , the contingent and varied nature of manuscript holdings in any given library suggests that people’s access to texts and their subsequent interpretations of the Dharma would have been much more particular and locally determined.

I find this reasoning curiously partial. What readers does the author have in mind? Who might have had access to a monastic library? And—and this is a point remarkably absent from the author’s considerations—should we not assume that there were (also) oral transmissions, and that one would be likely to learn Buddhist lore from one’s teachers, even in preference to reading a manuscript by oneself? The author goes so far as to speculate (p. 43) “Thus, the often ad hoc quality of palm leaf manuscripts wherein several seemingly unrelated texts were bound together may also have resulted in a kind of ad hoc knowledge about the Dharma where, beyond the requisite texts in the monastic curricula, people would have resorted to whatever works were at hand.” Really? Was every reader required to rediscover or reinvent Buddhism on his own, on the insufficient basis of fragile palm leaves?

The author goes on to suggest the following: “While Sri Lankan palm leaf manuscripts inevitably gave rise to contingent and circumstantial readings based upon the unique characteristics of any given text, they also often contain revealing evidence about the religious imagination and aspirations of their writers.” His evidence for this is what he calls ‘paratextual’ additions: 1) blessings (*āsīrvāda*), 2) affirmations about the benefits associated with Buddhist texts (*dharmānisamsa*), and 3) aspirations (*prārthanā*). While wanting to claim that such additions “often ... express individual aims,” the author is compelled to acknowledge that (he says “at times”) such things are utterly formulaic. Two paragraphs below, the author uses the word “often” to characterize the appearance of “highly conventional and formulaic” additions. His discussion here again demonstrates his bias against non-written traditions. He writes “Certain words and statements can appear in different manuscript editions and titles with considerable regularity, despite the lack of specific guidelines for copying manuscripts in Sri Lanka.” I should have thought that the regular appearance of such things would argue precisely for the existence of guidelines, perhaps, albeit, orally transmitted among those who copy texts. His approach to scribal additions shows a similar tone-deafness. Referring to the addition of expressions such as *siddhir astu* (curiously written, along with the other examples, in roman script without gap between the words), he writes that “these words ... evince the scribe’s desired outcomes from having finished copying a Buddhist text.” I don’t think they evince anything of the kind; these are the words one writes on a manuscript, and the scribes write them because that is what is done. How do the scribes know this? Because they have teachers, and because they look at other manuscripts. There is nothing necessarily personal about it whatsoever. A final instance on the very same page

(44) once again demonstrates the author's view of the primacy of identifiable text over more fluid means of knowledge: "My research into more than two dozen manuscript versions of the Pāli and Sinhala *Thūpavaṃsas* revealed that scribes often wrote one or two *gāthās*, wholly unrelated to the main text, on the first leaf of a manuscript One verse is the well-known excerpt from the *Dhammapada*: 'Refraining from all that is unwholesome, the cultivation of the wholesome, the purification of one's mind, this is the instruction of the Buddhas.'" "Excerpt from the *Dhammapada*"? In what sense does the author believe that this verse, which he writes is "taken by many Sri Lankans as a summary statement of the entire Dharma," is, because it is found in the *Dhammapada*, then elsewhere understood as an 'excerpt' from that text?

The third paper is due to Peter Skilling: "Redaction, recitation, and writing: Transmission of the Buddha's teaching in India in the early period." The paper does not begin auspiciously:

The transmission of the Buddha's teaching, the Dharma, evidently started during the Buddha's lifetime with the "first sermon," the "Turning the Wheel of the Dharma" (*Dharmacakrapravartanasūtra*). The transmission continued throughout his teaching career, during which the practice of commentary began. During the forty-five years of the Buddha's career, the nuns and monks—and also laywomen and laymen—helped to teach the Dharma, sometimes in his presence, sometimes in the same city, and sometimes in distant towns or cities. Even during the lifetime of the Master, his disciples spread over a large area, and administratively independent monasteries were established.

This is presented as if it were history. Considering that several pages on Skilling clearly makes the point that "when a description of an event is accepted by a tradition as authentic, the account takes on the force of 'history' within that tradition, even when, in modern historicist terms, it is not at all historical," it is curious that he begins with such a clearly legendary account, seemingly presented as 'historical.'

The main thrust of Skilling's paper is the relation between texts and councils, the meetings at which the canonization of Buddhist literatures is traditionally thought to have taken place. When Skilling turns, however, to early inscriptions, treating for instance the inscriptions at Bharhut as "written scriptural texts," he treads on softer ground. What sense does it make to speak (p. 69) of "the inscribed scenes as the earliest extant version of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*"? To maintain that some scenes from the Buddha's legendary last journey are depicted visually, and labeled with

identifying inscriptions, is one thing; the claim that such scenes—only the visual depictions can be meant by the word here—are a version of a scripture seems to me absurd.

Skilling has gathered, as he usually does, a number of interesting references, but whether they all fit together in the way he presents them is another question. In particular, while label inscriptions from sites such as Bharhut are certainly a kind of ‘text,’ this is a far cry from considering them to be scripture. And if they are not scripture, Skilling has not justified his bringing them into the discussion of the “redaction, recitation and writing” down of Buddhist scriptures.

The next paper, Vesna A. Wallace’s “Diverse aspects of the Mongolian Buddhist manuscript culture and realms of its influence,” switches gears considerably. Wallace offers an interesting overview of the materiality and history of Buddhist scriptures in Mongolia, not only those in Mongolian language but, as she points out, for the most part actually in Tibetan, including locally composed works for which the prestige and preferred language was indeed Tibetan. Herein we learn much of the history and materiality of these materials, including (p. 83) such appetizing information as that black paint can be made of an animal’s raw brain, soot and glue.

Next comes Jens-Uwe Hartmann’s “From words to books: Indian Buddhist manuscripts in the first millennium CE.” After sketching what we can know, and suppose, about early Buddhist literature, with special attention to its written incarnations, Hartmann considers a small fragment of text contained in what may have been an amulet, recovered by German archaeologists from the ruins of the smaller destroyed Bamiyan Buddha in 2006. Unfortunately, he has relatively little to say about this, but apparently more recently Hartmann himself has been able to study these materials, and we should look forward to a fuller treatment elsewhere. In a paragraph representing Hartmann’s effort briefly to try to provide some context for the Bamiyan text fragments, we find (p. 102) “We do not know when written texts were first used in rituals, but it was an established practice by the middle of the first millennium. The best-known and most widespread example is probably the Tibetan formula, *ye dharmā*, which is also the shortest of its genre.” I find it hard to believe that these are Hartmann’s words and not those of a misguided meddling editor, for Hartmann as well as anyone on earth knows that the *ye dharmā* is not a “Tibetan formula.”

Next we find Natasha Heller’s “Between Zhongfeng Mingben and Zhao Mengfu: Chan letters in their manuscript context.” Heller makes a brave attempt to somehow suggest that what she is doing by looking at letters

which survive, as examples of iconic calligraphy, in manuscript belongs in a study of Buddhist Manuscript Culture. But at least as conceived by the editors of this volume, in so far as one can find a clear trajectory, there is little here that fits well with other papers in the collection. It almost seems that the argument is that anything a Buddhist writes by hand is ipso facto a Buddhist manuscript. At the very least, it would have been much appreciated if the author had offered some considerations on the differences between the writing of scriptures and the writing of letters, even religiously edifying ones that are intended, as she points out, not for consumption only by the putative addressee but also by a wider audience. (In this context, of course, it would make sense not only to refer, as does the author, to literature on correspondence in China, but also to that on the Biblical epistles, for example.)

Justin McDaniel's paper, titled "Two Buddhist librarians: The proximate mechanisms for Northern Thai Buddhist history," which as he states (137n1) is a "recasting of material" from his own 2008 book *Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words* (University of Washington Press), concentrates on monastic libraries and their collections in the Lan Na kingdom. Inter alia, the author is rightly concerned to emphasize the importance of materials written not necessarily in Pāli but also in the vernacular. The author introduces two monks, the nineteenth century Krūpā Kañcana (we must read 4 pages about him before we learn that he was born in 1789) and the seventeenth century Phra Kesarapañño, men responsible for the preservation of considerable manuscript collections in Northern Thailand. From legends about these two figures, and what seem to be minimal historical facts, the author draws conclusions about monastic education which, however, do not seem very dramatic, as e.g., (p. 136) "The training at these monasteries was nonstandardized. Orthography, colophon styles, votive declarations, choice of what texts to copy or sponsor, and vocabulary in manuscripts all point to highly independent teachers and students whose training was more organic than systematic. There seems to have been no standard as to when a novice or monk was considered 'trained.' There seems to have been no standard examination system, and there is no evidence of social events like 'graduation.'" (Here, incidentally, we find the sole reference in the article to the studies of Oskar von Hinüber on Thai manuscripts, but the footnote's reference [139n14] is not to be found in the bibliography at the end of the book: "Chips from Buddhist Workshops: Scribes and Manuscripts from Northern Thailand," *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 22 [1996] 35–57.)

There are some traces here of the transformation of the book extract into an article, one of which appears in the following paragraph which serves—or fails to serve, rather—as the summation of the entire article (p. 137):

Not only do these colophons reflect fear of loss, the collective production, and the connection between monasteries, but they also indicate that manuscripts were not only for the education of the audience (in this case, instruction on performing a regular monastic ritual, *kammavācā*, and an explanation of why it was performed), but also to help students practice writing and for compensation. It sounds like a science fair project or a book report popular in modern American schools—a student is given an assignment to teach others about a basic scientific law or about a good book, while doing this project, he learns about the book or law herself/himself and possibly wins a prize.

The problem here is that no case has previously been discussed, and the “in this case” therefore has no antecedent. Moreover, this paragraph seems to have little to do with the author’s central arguments concerning, largely, the history of the formation of manuscript collections in Northern Thailand.

Christoph Emmrich’s “Emending perfection. Prescript, postscript and practice in Newar Buddhist manuscript culture” is a story of a philologist’s nightmare. A contemporary Newar community which venerates the Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 lines (*Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*) ritually repairs its originally twelfth or thirteenth century manuscript (there are differences over the proper date in the colophon, p. 142) at, apparently, increasingly frequent intervals. In the past the scribes referred to other copies of the sūtra in making their repairs to illegible or damaged spots. But at least since 2001, the calligraphists, as the author calls them, refer to—and here the philologist must bravely hold on to his or her lunch—Vaidya’s 1960 printing of the sūtra which, whatever Emmrich might like to call it, is certainly no “critical edition.” Even if it were, for philologists to confront the fact that scribes “repair” an early (or any!) manuscript with reference to a modern printed text should serve as a warning to us, and perhaps even ask us to rethink our ideas behind textual transmission. For is there a difference between referring to other manuscripts and referring to a printed text, save that high esteem is (wrongly, we would say) accorded the printed text by those very copyists? But I cannot agree with the assumption of the author when he, in passing and seemingly without attaching any blame whatsoever, identifies the guilty parties here (p. 150): “It is on the institutional level that such important figures such as [*sic*] the activist Min Bahadur Shakya and his Nāgārjuna Institute, the late Herakaji Bajracharya

and excellent young scholars such as Manik Bajracharya affiliated with the Lotus Research Centre have managed not only to establish an awareness of the value of western philological work, but to communicate and institutionalize both their own efforts in this direction and the advantages that the appreciation and implementation of these methods and products can have on concrete Buddhist practice.” Here we see the sociological background of the horror: some who have just enough learning to be dangerous manage, perhaps through the prestige which modernity confers, to poison the well, as it were, by attributing authority to an unworthy object. This does not by any means constitute “an awareness of the value of western philological work.” Such an awareness means more than that one knows that people make editions; it also necessarily includes an appreciation of what such editions represent. It is worth pointing out that this Newari example is far from the only case of such things, and we have more than a few examples of “editions” of Sanskrit texts, Buddhist and otherwise, based, wholly or in part, on previous printed editions. This is one thing, but I cannot help but feel that to rewrite a manuscript upon this basis is perhaps another. Further related studies from the viewpoint not only of socioreligious dynamics but also philological practice would be welcome.

Bilinda Devage Nandadeva offers next a study on “Flowers for the Dhamma: Painted Buddhist palm leaf manuscript covers (*kamba*) of Sri Lanka.” The central argument, for which, at least to this reader, more impressionistic than concrete evidence is offered, is that flower patterns on manuscript covers intend to represent the floral offerings presented to objects of worship, and that the manuscript itself, embodying the *dhammakāya*, is treated in this manner as an altar is treated by devotees. Unfortunately, although as the author claims (p. 169) this is “plausible,” there is no further evidence that this is the case. In particular, the identification of the manuscript as embodying the *dhammakāya* is asserted rather than argued for. The author notes that art historians generally have treated the design in question as an ornament. Further proof will be required to overturn this understanding. Incidentally, in the verses quoted on p. 171n6 (in reverse order from their translation on p. 163), most sources I have seen read *ca hotu* for *labhāmi*; it would also have made sense to write *'nena* instead of simply *nena*, and to split *metena* into *me tena*.

The final paper is M.L. Pattaratorn Chirapravati’s “From text to image: Copying as Buddhist practice in late fourteenth-century Sukhothai.” This paper may well be of interest to art historians and others, but unfortunately for its placement in the present volume, the ‘copying’ of its title has nothing

whatsoever to do with writing, and refers instead to images. In a single sentence the author seems to recognize this, when she says (p. 186) “It is evident that manuscripts were not the only objects copied and transmitted across Buddhist manuscript cultures. Buddhist artisans also engaged in copying images and artistic styles.” This is, in sum, an interesting paper which has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the theme of the volume.

Finally, a word or two must be said about the production of this book. The number and type of errors almost makes one wonder if the editors are trying to make a very subtle reflexive point about print and manuscript. For the volume displays many of the types of errors the editor Berkwitz attributes to fragile palm leaves, copying and editing errors, omissions and the like. In Salomon’s paper, were one to look for the references to Matsuda and Glass forthcoming or Salomon forthcoming (p. 27, and the table on 33) in the bibliography, one would find them only if one thought to imagine them as listed under Braarvig as the first author. He is in fact only the editor of the volume in which the Matsuda and Glass paper is to appear. In the bibliography the last item on page 190 is:

Braarvig, J. (gen. ed.) (2000–2006) *Buddhist Manuscripts*. Volumes I–III. Oslo: Hermes Publishing.

This is immediately followed on the top of p. 191 by:

- Braarvig, J. (gen. ed.) (forthcoming) *Buddhist Manuscripts IV*. Oslo: Hermes Publishing.
- , (ed.) (2006) *Buddhist Manuscripts III*, Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection, Oslo: Hermes Publishing.
- , Matsuda, K. and Glass, A. (forthcoming) “Kharosthi fragments of a Gandhari version of the Bhadrakalpika-sutra,” in Braarvig (forthcoming).
- , Salomon, R. (forthcoming a) “Gandharan Reliquary Inscriptions,” in David Jongeward, ed., *Gandharan Buddhist Reliquaries*.
- , Salomon, R. (forthcoming b) “Observations on the Reliquary Slab Inscription of Gomitra,” *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism*.
- , Salomon, R. (forthcoming c) “Thirty Fragments Written by Bamiyan Kharosthi Scribe 7,” in Braarvig (forthcoming).

There is, perhaps needless to say, no entry elsewhere under Jongeward, while under the name entry Salomon no items are listed as forthcoming. The diacritical marks here have also fallen victim to some gnome. Elsewhere

in the bibliography: Bu-ston Rin-chen Grab > Grub; in the item “Lutz, A. (1991) *Der Tempel der Drei Pagoden von Dali: Sur buddhistischen Kunst des Nanzhao- und Dali-Königreichs in Yunnan, China*,” the title does not contain the (French?) word *sur*, but rather German *zur*; and Mitra’s edition of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* was not published in 1988 (!).

In some places in the main texts, words have disappeared, or something drastic happened in the editing (my corrections in brackets): 31: “So here too, we can only suspect the existence [of] this practice in India by way of retroactive extrapolation from later practices in other parts of the Buddhist world.”; 87, caption to Figure 5.3: read *poṭhi* (or *poṭi*?); 88: “one finds the illustrated Buddhist texts containing the miniature paintings of Buddhist deities that accompany the exultations of deities’ virtues and edify [ing] illustrations and diverse types of ...”; 93n12: “In order to use [the] *Stellera* plant for making paper, they had first to boil it, harden it on [> in] the sun, ...”; 113: “distinguishing personal letters from those meant for a wider readership, suggest[ing] that if ...”; 130 nQk > nōk and XalQng > Xalōng; 132: “was a well-known center [of] monastic education ...”; 134: “Colophons show that students, scribes (both lay and ordained) [and?] traveled ...”; 135: “(... upon further investigation these texts are actually bilingual texts which start with a line in Pāli and are followed by a vernacular explanation), [, > ;] they also contain ‘secular’ texts like medical (*tamrā yā*), astrological (*horasāt*) [these are adjectives, the following words nouns], romances, and adventures (*nithān*), and these secular texts are ...”; 136: “Indeed, like the Vatican Library collection, the libraries of the great Orthodox monasteries along the Aegean, or the Cathedral of Durham collection, many manuscript collections of the Buddhist monasteries of Northern Thailand and Laos are secular and vernacular texts that may seem out of place at a place of religious training.” This is simply incoherent; 152: design > design; 177: the second full paragraph should be an indented block quotation; 181: “There are [> is] only a handful ...”

The plates, all printed on regular paper in black and white, are generally very legible. However, one must wonder why both the Tibetan text on p. 85 and the Mongolian text on p. 91 were printed sideways (both would have even been a bit bigger oriented the right way). Hartmann’s Sanskrit manuscript leaf is printed sideways on p. 99, but this may have been done to make it bigger. The photos usually do not take all the available space, which may have been a design decision, but renders them harder to see.

When one is asked to pay £ 85 for a book, one thing one expects is editorial quality. There is a great deal to be said about Buddhist manuscripts,

and Buddhist manuscript culture. Most papers in this volume make some contribution to this discussion in some way, and the discussions at the conference which spawned it may have been interesting (although nowhere are such discussions referred to, nor do the contributors refer to the contributions of their fellow conference participants). But the presentations in this volume do not, in the end, cohere, and having read this book one is not left with any clear picture of the next steps the contributors believe are to be taken in the study of “Buddhist manuscript cultures.”

JONATHAN SILK
Leiden University