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Daniel Boucher. *Bodhisattvas of the Forest and the Formation of the Mahāyāna: A Study and Translation of the Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā-sūtra.* Studies in the Buddhist Traditions Series. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008. xxiii + 287 pp. $54.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8248-2881-3.

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Forest Monks and Early Mahāyāna

This valuable book provides an excellent overview of the connections between bodhisattva monks who lived in the forest and a clearly discernible current of early Mahāyāna. It is a fully updated work on the *Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā-sūtra* (short: *Rāṣṭrapāla*), an important primary source *for insights into* Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism of the early and middle phases. In the introduction, the author reframes the discussion on the origins of Mahāyāna that has been taking place in the last few decades, concluding that Mahāyāna probably became a Pan-Indian phenomenon in a short space of time.

Part 1 comprises four chapters and deals with particular aspects of asceticism and the glorification of the Buddha's body in order to set the *Rāṣṭrapāla* as accurately as possible into its Indian context. The first chapter, "The Physiognomy of Virtue," starts with the section "Bodily Perfection in the Mainstream Tradition," in which the author introduces the reader to the idea that, in Buddhism, the moral virtue of a spiritually developed being has its physical counterpart mainly in the thirty-two auspicious marks of the Buddha, the *mahāpuruṣa-lakṣaṇa*. The next section, "Bodily Perfection in the Mahāyāna Sources," gives a very well-considered choice of extracts from various Mahāyāna sources: the *Vimaladattāparipṛcchā-sūtra*, the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*, the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, and the *Ugraparipṛcchā-sūtra*. The selected passages illustrate how, according to these Mahāyāna texts, the physical attributes of spiritual maturation are intrinsically related to the bodhisattva ideal. In "The Glorification of the Buddha's Body in the *Rāṣṭrapāla*," the author presents a selection of laudatory passages from the *Rāṣṭrapāla* that describe the beauty of the Buddha's marks of virtue, his light radiation as well as his golden body. While the followers of the *Rāṣṭrapāla* and other similar texts were engaged in spreading the idea that the Buddha's career could and should be emulated, there were, probably in the same time period, also monks who regarded Buddhahood as beyond reach.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the "Former Life Narratives and the Bodhisattva Career" and commences with the section "*Jātaka* Narratives in Art and Literature," which serves as an excellent overview on this major issue of the bodhisattva path. The section treats one of the most central facets of the bodhisattva path, namely "The Gift of the Body," a concept that has clearly influenced the doctrinal views and ascetic practices presented in the *Rāṣṭrapāla*. For the sake of a complete outline of the *Rāṣṭrapāla*'s perception of self-sacrifice and asceticism, in the section "Restraining the Gift," the author also discusses the opposite view, namely, how other sources criticize extreme self-sacrificing practices.

Chapter 3, "Wilderness Dwelling and the Ascetic Disciplines," begins with "The Institutional Status of the Early Mahāyāna." This section outlines the most relevant hypotheses of modern scholarship regarding the emergence of the Mahāyāna movement. The author discusses Étienne Lamotte's and Akira Hirakawa's views on the possible lay origins, as well as those of Gregory Schopen and Paul Harrison, and concludes in favor of the latter's position that the strong emphasis laid in early Mahāyāna on ascetic practices does not support the lay hypothesis. The *Rāṣṭrapāla* clearly promulgates the ideal of rigorous ascetic practices in the wilderness. The next section provides a synthesis of "The *Dhutaguṇas* in the Mainstream Literature," in which the author suggests that wilderness dwellers devoted to the practice of the *dhutaguṇas* were always monks, contrary to the hypothesis by Reginald Ray, who proposed that those who carried out ascetic practices in the forest were disconnected from the sedentary monastic communities. The next section, "The Devadatta Cycle," explains to what extent the Devadatta followers witnessed by the ancient Chinese pilgrims fol-

lowed a more disciplined lifestyle than "ordinary monks," adhering, for example, to stricter dietary rules. One of the austere rules Devadatta advocated for all monks, namely, forest dwelling, does not seem to have been put into practice by his later followers whom the Chinese pilgrims met in India. They are thus excluded from the list of potential propagators of the wilderness asceticism covered in the next section: "Asceticism in the *Rāṣṭrapāla*." Most of this section is devoted to the misogynous attitude found in the *Rāṣṭrapāla* as well as in other early Mahāyāna texts.

In "Wilderness Dwelling and the *Dhutaguṇas* in Other Mahāyāna Texts," the author discusses other Mahāyāna sūtras, such as the *Ratnarāśi*, the *Kāśyapaparivarta*, and the *Ugraparipṛcchā*, which share a similar pro-wilderness ideology as the *Rāṣṭrapāla*. In parts, the *Rāṣṭrapāla* equates the obtainment of the "fearless state" by a bodhisattva with the attainment of *bodhi*, an interpretation that shows its militant character. In other Mahāyāna sūtras, however, wilderness dwelling does not appear to be of any central importance; in certain texts, it even appears as a mere motif.

"Opponents of Wilderness Dwelling" is dedicated to texts that openly oppose and criticize this practice, for example, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and the *Sarvadharmāpravṛtti-nirdeśa*. The first text can be classified as early Mahāyāna literature but belongs to a different kind than the *Rāṣṭrapāla*. It states that forest dwellers solely devoted to forest dwelling might miss their spiritual goal, and might be led astray by Māra. The other text maintains that it is highly meritorious for monks to go to villages and towns to preach the dharma to ordinary people, whereas to stay away from people, instead favoring meditative isolation, will lead to hell. The section "The Dialectic of Tradition" is concerned to show an ongoing tension in Buddhism between sedentary monasticism tied to lay needs and ascetic reclusion emphasizing spiritual realization. According to the *Rāṣṭrapāla*, ascetics living in the wilderness were monks who felt that the conditions in the monasteries made it impossible for them to live as real monks.

Chapter 4 discusses "Profit and Honor" and presents the harsh critiques the *Rāṣṭrapāla* authors addressed to the sedentary monks, whose conceit and hypocrisy were seen as responsible for the decline and ruin of the Buddha's teaching. The section "The Mainstream Monastic Background" gives an account of the corruption and the socioeconomic entanglements that the authors of the *Rāṣṭrapāla* were criticizing and trying to escape. Their exhortations might have reflected minority voices, but similar views are also found in old collections, such as the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* and the *Theragāthā*. The criticism against corrupt monks almost invariably appeared alongside calls for restoration and with complaints about the imminent decline and disappearance of the correct teaching. The next section "Relations between Bodhisattvas and Their Co-religionists" is dedicated to the question why the monks who were inclined toward asceticism, instead of just devoting themselves to the practices they approved, were specifically drawn to Mahāyāna. The *Rāṣṭrapāla* as well as the *Ratnarāśi* belong to a particular kind of polemical Mahāyāna text that complains about the ongoing discrimination against their teachings while professing a doctrinal orientation that is conservative if not reactionary. Neither living alone in the forest nor hardly anything else preached in these texts is new or revolutionary. They favor the bodhisattva vehicle without discriminating against the other vehicles. There certainly also existed forest dwellers who did not necessarily see themselves as Mahāyāna followers. Mainstream Buddhism probably did not find disfavor with the Mahāyāna bodhisattva ascetics because of their differing spiritual goals, but rather because of the ascetic's polemics against the gift-seeking and blameful practices of certain sedentary monks. In "The Sociology of the *Rāṣṭrapāla*," the author analyzes the sectarian and schismatic components of the changes advocated in the text, concluding that, as is often the case with sectarian movements, its proponents were trying to reestablish something old. At the same time, there existed also other, different Mahāyāna movements, some of which were indeed promulgating new ideas. Mainstream Buddhism itself was not a homogenous phenomenon. Further, the section discusses the problem, which insiders as well as outsiders (patrons) encountered when trying to differentiate false ascetics from true ones. Finally, the author also tackles the difficult task of dating the first major successes of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Part 2 of the book, "Indian Buddhism Through a Chinese Lens," focuses on "Dharmarakṣa's Translation of the *Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā-sūtra*" into Chinese. Chapter 5 is devoted to "The Role of Translation in Reconstructing the Early Mahāyāna" and starts with the section "Translation in the Indian Context." In sum, the two Indian Buddhist groups that have received the most scholarly attention, the Theravāda and the Mahāyāna, are ironically probably among the least influential for most of the history of Indian Buddhism. Texts of other schools are mostly preserved in Chinese and Tibetan translations. In the case of early Mahāyāna, the earliest available versions are Chinese translations. Com-

parisons between these texts and newer sources in Indic languages reveal examples of amendments made by a later orthodoxy. In "Translation in the Chinese Context," the author provides us with a general picture of the difficult circumstances under which the first translations of Indic Buddhist texts into Chinese took place. In-depth analyses of Chinese translations can generate data on the history of formation of the Indic text. In the present Chinese canon, we have a large corpus of very early translations made by Dharmarakṣa, the translator who also produced the earliest Chinese translation of the *Rāṣṭrapāla*. Daniel Boucher is certainly one of the leading specialists on Dharmarakṣa worldwide, and the present work shows the great value of such studies. The next section provides insight into "The Translation Process" during Dharmarakṣa's lifetime. Colophons to a certain number of texts translated by Dharmarakṣa have come down to us in the Chinese catalogues. Although there is no colophon to the *Rāṣṭrapāla*, we have those that belong to the *Suvikrāntacintidevaputraparipṛcchā*, the *Yogācārabhūmi-sūtra*, and the *Lotus*, all texts translated by Dharmarakṣa. The colophons to these scriptures are presented in full translation. The author further provides two examples of errors found in Dharmarakṣa's translation of the *Rāṣṭrapāla* that point toward an Indic original in *kharoṣṭhī* script, one of the causes for a certain number of misinterpretations.

Chapter 6 deals with "Mistranslation and Missed Translation" and is divided into two sections. "Dharmarakṣa's Source Text and the 'Gāndhārī Hypothesis"' discusses, by means of various text samples, the high probability that the script of Dharmarakṣa's manuscript was *kharoṣṭhī*. Dharmarakṣa's Indic text of the *Rāṣṭrapāla* almost certainly came from Greater Gandhāra, but the exact language, i.e., its regional characteristics and its degree of Sanskritization, cannot be defined yet. Dharmarakṣa's version is shorter than the other versions and it lacks certain passages, such as eulogies (in prose and verses), *jātaka* allusions, and reproaches of corrupt monks. In "Dharmarakṣa's Translation and the Evolution of the Indic Text," the author suggests that if we take the information given in the various source materials at face value, we will find that the forest dwelling monks, for whom the *Rāṣṭrapāla* represented an important scriptural source, were probably confronted with an increasingly hostile environment between the third and sixth centuries CE.

Part 3 contains an excellent annotated translation of the *Rāṣṭrapāla* in an easily readable but nevertheless refined language. Those passages that correspond to Dharmarakṣa's version have been differentiated by bold type. The footnotes appended to the translation include a detailed critical apparatus. A large bibliography and an index complete this exemplary work. I hope that it will inspire and encourage young scholars engaged in the field of Mahāyāna studies to focus increasingly on Chinese translations and to acquire the necessary language skills at an early stage of their academic path. Boucher's work represents the most up-to-date state of research on the *Rāṣṭrapāla* and is a contribution of high relevance to the ongoing study of the emergence of Mahāyāna trends among groups of monks practicing forest asceticism as bodhisattvas.

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