

protect their temples. The local stele inscriptions can help us verify how political events and imperial decrees affected society as a whole. The stele records supply us valuable information on the secularization of Buddhism in Sichuan.

The rich records also offer us information about the stone grottoes in Sichuan. The earliest grottoes were made in the third year of Yanchang (514 CE). Huangze Temple (皇澤寺) is known for having received its name as well as donations from Empress Wu Zetian (武則天 r. 684 – 704). The inscriptions on the steles indicate that Guangyuan (廣元) was an important base for Buddhism in northern Sichuan Province. Other records also add to our knowledge of the Giant Buddha in Leshan 樂山. Wei Gao (韋臯 745 – 805), Governor of Sichuan region, noted that it was in the early years of Emperor Xuanzong (玄宗 r. 712 – 755) that monks started carving the huge mountain into a 72 meter tall Maitreya Buddha. The notes written by Wei Gao were carved on a stone near the Giant Buddha in the year 803. When the stone inscriptions were worn out, they were re-carved in 1481 and 1945. With these records, we know that monks spent almost ninety years carving this world-famous Giant Buddha instead of the seventy-two years described in *Fozu Tongji* (《佛祖統紀》 Taisho 49. No.2035.p.374c).

The editors collected 1182 inscriptions from Buddhist temples and also records in *Quan Tang Wen* (《全唐文》 Collected Works in the Tang Dynasty 618 – 907), *Quan Song Wen* (《全宋文》 Collected Works in the Song Dynasty 960 – 1279), and *Songdai Shuwen Jicun* (《宋代蜀文輯存》 The Extant Works on Sichuan Province Written by Song Scholars), in addition to similar works in the various dynasties, stone inscriptions, local gazetteers and local records. The earliest stone inscriptions were written during the period of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317 – 420 CE). A few inscriptions carved in the Republican Period (1912 – 1949) were also collected in this huge book. The editors compiled their collections of the inscriptions and records chronologically. Where the stones are extant, the editors made field investigations into their status quo and recorded what they observed.

The editors have written a short note on each inscription, including the information about its origin, author, the date and history of key temples. The four indexes list the names of

temples, inscriptions without names of the temple, names of authors, and inscriptions without authors' names. Thus, readers can easily check the information available in the book.

This huge collection of stele inscriptions in Buddhist temples in Sichuan Province will be a good reference book for researchers who wish to investigate how Buddhism developed in Sichuan as well as in China.

--Darui Long

The Historical Buddha: The Times, Life and Teachings of the Founder of Buddhism

By H.V. Schuman
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi,
2004
ISBN 81-208-1817-2

This reprint of the 1982 English translation of the German original published in Germany in 1989 is one of the latest additions to Motilal Banarsidass' Buddhist Tradition Series, ably edited by the late lamented Professor Alex Wayman. The passing away of this great Buddhist scholar leaves a vacuum which may not be easily filled. Alex Wayman introduces Schuman's masterly study of the times and life of the Buddha in following terms:

This book is a splendid contribution on the scholarship about Gautama Buddha, using various Buddhist and non-Buddhist sources. The scholarship includes date on the Buddha's era, his relatives etc; the local king of his city Kapilavasthu; the Buddha's enlightenment; monuments as in Sarnath; what the city Benares was known for; the conversion of King Bimbisara of Magadha; and when Sariputta and Moggallana became disciples. Then a synopsis of the Buddha's doctrine, his order, and the laity, followed by psychological aspects of Gautama (or Gotama), then his later years, his last journey; his

Parinibbana plus a little of the
Afterwards, including his relics.

H.W. Schuman was a scholar and a diplomat. With a Ph. D. in Buddhist Studies from Bonn University, he was a lecturer at the Hindu University of Benares and joined the diplomatic service of the Federal Republic of Germany. Due to his deep knowledge and understanding of Eastern Culture, he spent a major part of his career—nearly twenty years—in Kolkata (Calcutta), Yangon (Rangoon) and Colombo and retired as the German Consul-General in Mumbai (Bombay). The translator, M. O'C. Walshe, himself a reputed Buddhist scholar, has succeeded in producing a lucid, readable rendering.

As a whole, this is a book which should be a *must* for every student of Buddhism. I have not come across a comparable work to gain insights into the life and times of the historical Buddha. It is comprehensive in coverage, precise and methodical in analysis and remarkably informative.

Schuman is no doubt a thorough scholar with an eye for details. He does not include any images of the Buddha because the Buddha was not presented in human form for at least four and a half centuries after his death. He investigates the controversy on the location of Kapilavatthu and arrives at a conclusion which justifies the claims of both Nepal and India. He examines the Buddhist chronology in the light of recent theories of Eggermont, Richard Gombrich and Heinz Bechert but leaves it open as yet undecided. He quotes copiously from original texts of the Pali Canon and constructs objectively the biography of the Buddha as a historical person, avoiding faith-based accretions of later times. He uses statistical tables to analyze the distribution of the Buddha's disciples to show that 48.2% of monks and 38.4% of nuns were from the Brahman caste whereas only 9.6% of monks and 2.6% of nuns were casteless or Sudras.

As one reads the easy-flowing narrative, one comes across interesting snippets of

observations and comments which display the superior perspicacity of the author. Schuman has produced a remarkable biography of the Buddha. There is much to learn from it.

--Ananda W. P. Guruge

The Two Truths in Chinese Buddhism

By Chang-qing Shih
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, New
Delhi
ISBN 81-208-2035-5

Another volume in the Buddhist Tradition Series, edited by Alex Wayman for Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, this 400 pages publication is a revised version of the Ph. D dissertation of the author, completed in 1998 at Bristol University of Britain, under the guidance and assistance of the distinguished British Buddhist scholars Prof. Paul Williams, Dr. Rupert Gethin and Prof. Brian Bocking, Alex Wayman introduces it as follows:

The Two Truths in Chinese Buddhism is a critical study of Chi-tsang's (549-623 AD) theory of two truths, namely worldly truth (*shih-ti*) and the truth of supreme meaning (*ti-yi-i-ti*). The former refers to "an existent which is empty" (*K'ung-yu*) and the latter to "emptiness of an existent" (*yu-K'ung*). The author by way of the analysis of the two truths concludes that Chi-tsang's understanding of Buddhism is based on the Doctrine of Dependent Origination developed by Chung-lun in China; and is in agreement with the Madhyamika tradition transmitted there by an Indian Buddhist scholar Kumarajiva in the fifth century. Further, the author asserts that Chi-tsang was influenced not only by Seng-chao but also Nargajuna's Indian thought.