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Review Of "Buddhist Monastic Discipline: The Sanskrit Pratimoksa Sutras Of The Mahasamghikas And Mulasarvastivadins" By C. S. Prebish

Donald K. Swearer
Swarthmore College, dswear1@swarthmore.edu

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is handsomely produced and has only few typographical errors. Despite the editor's own admission that the entire project was conceived and completed in little over a year, the book never gives the impression of being rushed. *Sri Lanka: A Survey* is a handy reference for the specialist and an invaluable introduction for the beginner as well as for the general reader. However, at \$22.50 it may be beyond the reach of those who would find it most useful.

TISSA FERNANDO

University of British Columbia

Buddhist Monastic Discipline: The Sanskrit Prātimokṣa Sūtras of the Mahā-sāṃghikas and Mūlasarvāstivādins. By CHARLES S. PREBISH. University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975. 156 pp. Notes, Appendix, Bibliography. \$13.00.

Charles Prebish has established himself as one of the most knowledgeable American authorities on Buddhist Vinaya, in particular the *pratimokṣa*. The volume under consideration, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline*, is based on his University of Wisconsin doctoral dissertation (1971) and is properly supplemented by his articles on Vinaya and early Buddhist sectarianism in the *JAS* (August 1973, February 1974), the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (April–June 1974), and *History of Religions* (February 1977). In all his work, Prebish demonstrates diligence as a student of Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit texts, as well as knowledge of the extensive European scholarship on his subject matter.

Although the general focus of this study is the earliest strata of Vinaya literature, its particular purpose is to provide facing translations of two Sanskrit *pratimokṣas*, the *Mahāsāṃghika* and the *Mūlasarvāstivāda*. It is to be regretted that the volume does not include the original language texts; that would have greatly enhanced its usefulness to students of Buddhist Sanskrit. Partial compensation is provided by a concordance of key terms arranged according to the eight divisions of the *Pratimokṣa Sūtras* of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda*, *Mahāsāṃghika*, *Sarvāstivāda*, and *Theravāda*. The book also contains a brief introductory overview of the rise of Buddhist monasticism.

Prebish is thoroughly conversant with earlier work in this field by W. Pachow, La Vallée Poussin, S. Levi, J. Jaworski, L. Finot, and Gustav Roth, referring to them throughout his introduction and commentary. While respectful of W. Pachow's earlier comparative *pratimokṣa* study, he accepts Roth's criticism of editing errors in Pachow and Mishra's published text of the *Pratimokṣa Sūtra* of the *Mahāsāṃghika*. Also following Roth, he accepts the Sanskrit of this text as "the Prakrit-cum-quasi-Sanskrit of the Ārya Mahāsāṃghika-Lokuttaravādins." Furthermore, the similarities between the language of the *Mahāvastu*, the *Bhikṣuṇī Vinaya* with which Roth worked, his own studies in the *Bhikṣu Pratimokṣa Sūtra*, and the Mathura inscriptions edited by Luders and Janett lead him to the conclusion that this text should be dated between the first century B.C. to the end of the first century A.D.

The *Mūlasarvāstivāda Bhikṣu Pratimokṣa Sūtra* used by Prebish was one of the texts in the Gilgit discoveries, and was edited by A. C. Banerjee. Prebish also referred to a second manuscript edited by L. Chandra. Grammatically, this text is less influenced by the Prakrit, leading Prebish to conclude that it must have been

written after the beginning of the Sanskrit renaissance in the second century A.D. in the Middle Indic regions. As the text was written in Gupta characters of the fifth or sixth century, Prebish conservatively surmises that its final redaction would date between A.D. 100 and A.D. 600.

Professor Prebish's translation follows as closely as possible the structure of the texts. This means that he attempts to preserve their ritualistic, formal, repetitive nature. This approach raises the interesting question as to whether the elimination of repetition from the translation of religious texts, especially those of a ritualistic nature, violates the nature of the texts. Broadly, if we translate a text for its ideas or its substance and abbreviate or otherwise alter its form, are we endangering its inherent meaning in any way? While such questions are beyond the scope of this review, I would applaud Prebish's decision, less perhaps on grounds of accuracy of translation than in the context of the *Weltanschauung*, *sitz-im-leben*, and *gestalt* issues raised by historical criticism and hermeneutics.

Students of early Buddhist institutional history and practice will find Professor Prebish's dual translation a very helpful resource. We look forward to the time when he will turn his attention to even more widely ranging historical issues than he has tackled up to this point, perhaps even modifying some of Sukumar Dutt's contentions which inform his first chapter.

DONALD K. SWEARER
Swarthmore College

The Perfect Generosity of Prince Vessantara: A Buddhist Epic. Translated from the Pali and illustrated by unpublished paintings from Sinhalese temples by MARGARET CONE and RICHARD F. GOMBRICH. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977. xlvii, 111 pp. Illustrations, Appendixes, Bibliography. \$24.95.

Margaret Cone and Richard Gombrich have combined their labor to present a book of considerable value for South Asian Studies, Religious Studies, Buddhist Studies, and Comparative Literature. Cone made the translation of the *Vessantara Jātaka* (pp. 1-96) and "Translation of 'The Long Description of the Forest'" (Appendix I, pp. 97-102), incorporating a few suggestions from Gombrich. Gombrich wrote the introduction (pp. xv-xlvii) and provided about half of the photographs used as illustrations; the other portion of photographs that are used as illustrations were taken by Y. P. Jayatissa. Apparently both Cone and Gombrich provided "Emendations to Fausbøll's Text" (Appendix II, pp. 103-8) and the bibliography (pp. 109-11). The authors acknowledge their indebtedness to the work of Professor L. Alsdorf for numerous emendations and general stratification of the text.

The authors make the point that in working from the Pali text they are dealing with the oldest surviving version of the Vessantara story. Their approach is distinctive. "Text and illustrations," they explain in a prefatory note, "are intended to enhance each other, for we hope that by showing how one Buddhist society has pictured the story to itself we have added a dimension to our readers' understanding of what Vessantara means to ordinary Buddhists" (p. v). Leaving aside the difficulty of determining what constitutes an "ordinary Buddhist," these authors have rendered a splendid service in providing evidence that this ancient story has been found to be ever new and eminently worth remembering.

Gombrich is in the forefront of Western scholars presently working in Theravāda Buddhist Studies concentrating on Sri Lanka. One might quibble about his