

of Vedānta in our imaginations, this volume reminds us that it too is best assessed in light of its most important, least appreciated counterpart, the Mīmāṃsā.

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The Self's Awareness of Itself: Bhatta Rāmakaṇṭha's Arguments against the Buddhist Doctrine of No-Self. By ALEX WATSON. Publications of the De Nobili Research Library, vol. 32. Vienna: INTER-PRESS CO. LTD., 2006. Pp. 443.

In this well-documented and carefully argued book, Alex Watson studies the arguments for the existence of a self formulated by Bhatta Rāmakaṇṭha (c. 950–1000 C.E.), the prolific and influential exegete of early Śaiva Siddhānta. Watson shows how Rāmakaṇṭha drew upon both arguments used by the Buddhists to deny the existence of a self posited by other schools of philosophy and the doctrine of the Buddhist Yogacāra epistemological school that cognition of objects includes self-awareness (*svasaṃvedana*), to argue that a self exists as permanent and unchanging cognition of objects. For this purpose Watson edits, translates, and explains a number of passages from the first chapter of Rāmakaṇṭha's *Nareśvaraparīkṣāprakāśa* (*NPP*), a commentary on Sadyojyoti's *Nareśvaraparīkṣā*, and a passage from his *Mataṅgavṛtti*. Although he chooses to base his study of Rāmakaṇṭha's assimilation of Buddhist doctrines on these texts, he also includes an appraisal of Rāmakaṇṭha's related discussions in other texts. In this book, which is a slightly modified version of his doctoral thesis, Watson displays an excellent command of the history of Indian philosophy and expertly handles the philological tools and philosophical theory needed for the study. His intention in the book, he tells us, is to introduce scholars and students of Indian philosophy to the Śaiva Siddhānta position in the history of the debate in India between the Buddhist and Brāhmanical schools concerning the existence of a self.

In the introduction (pp. 49–115) Watson (i) outlines the Buddhist-Brāhmanical controversy, (ii) corrects what he believes to be misconceptions about Śaiva Siddhānta, (iii) clarifies the place of *NPP* within Śaiva Siddhānta, (iv) contrasts Rāmakaṇṭha's theory of the self to the theories of the Brāhmanical schools, including the theory of the Sāṃkhyas, with which it has the greatest affinity, and (v) discusses the editions and manuscripts of the *NPP* and his editorial policy, the dates of Sadyojyoti's and Rāmakaṇṭha, and the difficulties of translation posed by Rāmakaṇṭha's prose.

After providing a synopsis of the contents of the first chapter of *NPP* (pp. 117–23), in chapter 1 (pp. 125–207) Watson translates and explains the passages in which Rāmakaṇṭha uses to his own advantage Buddhist arguments against some of the proofs offered in other schools for the existence of a self. First, he presents Rāmakaṇṭha's representation of exchanges between the Buddhists and the Naiyāyikas and between the Buddhists and Vaiśeṣikas in which the Buddhists are approvingly shown to reject their arguments for the existence of a self that is a separate subject of cognition. Then Rāmakaṇṭha has the Buddhists undermine the Sāṃkhya argument that a self that is pure consciousness must exist as a being for whose sake compounded phenomena exist. This argument is undermined, Watson tells us, in spite of the fact that it occurs in the earlier texts of the Śaiva tradition. Watson's chief concern in this chapter is to call our attention to Rāmakaṇṭha's use of the Buddhists' doctrines, that cognition rather than a subject of cognition explains the phenomena to which their opponents appeal in their arguments for the existence of a self that is a separate subject of cognition, and that cognition of objects is self-illuminating. He also makes forays into the history of the arguments used by the Naiyāyikas, Vaiśeṣikas, and Sāṃkhyas, and discusses the original arguments of Vasubandhu and Dharmakīrti upon which Rāmakaṇṭha seems to draw.

In chapter two (pp. 209–55) Watson translates and explains Rāmakaṇṭha's attempt to show that the Buddhists' acceptance of self-illuminating cognition commits them to the existence of a self that is a permanent and unchanging consciousness that "shines forth" in all cognitions. In the passages translated Rāmakaṇṭha attacks the Buddhist views that consciousness is momentary and that its appearance

of being permanent and unchanging is superimposed. Then he argues that the existence of a permanent and unchanging consciousness cannot be refuted. Watson explains that Rāmakaṇṭha's view is not that the self is self-awareness, but the object-cognition that self-awareness reveals.

In chapter three (pp. 257–332) Watson translates and explains Rāmakaṇṭha's account of Sadyojyotis' claim that we can perceive the self through I-cognition (*ahampratyaaya*). The account, however, faces a number of problems to which Watson calls attention. The main problem is that I-cognition would seem to be constituted by concepts and permeated by language, which would make its existence relative to particular individuals at specific times, while self-illuminating cognition of objects is not so relativized. Rāmakaṇṭha's account is further complicated by his interpreting Sadyojyotis' claim as a continuation of a previous discussion of what is taken to be a Buddhist's argument to the effect that external objects do not exist apart from being apprehended because they and their cognition are always apprehended together. After Watson discusses the versions of the argument used by the Buddhists and Sadyojyotis, he presents and explains that of Rāmakaṇṭha, who rejects the argument in his own version of it and then presents Sadyojyotis' claim that a self is known to exist because of I-cognition, as the claim that even if the object of cognition and its cognition always occurring together *were* to show that the object does not exist apart from its cognition, it would *not* show that there is no self, since the existence of the self is established by I-cognition. Watson reformulates Rāmakaṇṭha's account of Sadyojyotis' claim as the argument that, since a self is the referent of I-cognition, I-cognition and self-illuminating cognition always occur together, that, since this is so, their objects are of the nature of consciousness, from which it follows that they are both real. Watson argues that Rāmakaṇṭha adds this more complicated argument to his commentary on Sadyojyotis' claim not because he himself accepts it, but because he wishes to show that what he takes to be a Buddhist argument has the existence of a self as a consequence. Most of chapter three is taken up with Watson's analysis of Rāmakaṇṭha's use of this reformulated argument. After explaining Rāmakaṇṭha's attempts to answer three objections a Buddhist might make to the reformulated argument, Watson discusses the weaknesses of the argument. In the remainder of chapter 3 Watson translates and explains Rāmakaṇṭha's arguments for the implicit presence of I-cognition in all cognitions of objects and for the real existence of the agents and objects of verbal or conceptual cognitions.

In chapter four (pp. 333–82) Watson translates and explains Rāmakaṇṭha's defense of the claim that cognition of objects is not, as most other schools of Indian philosophy claim, momentary and changing, but permanent and unchanging. This is important, since the proof of the existence of a permanent and unchanging self on the basis of cognition's awareness of itself fails if the cognition itself is not permanent and unchanging. A Buddhist is represented in *NNP* as arguing that cognition is impermanent because the cognition of yellow is different from the cognition of blue, and Rāmakaṇṭha replies that just as one cognition at one time can illuminate different objects, one cognition at different times can illuminate different objects. If the Buddhist claims that a single cognition of many different objects is a conceptual cognition unifying many objects rather than a direct perception, Rāmakaṇṭha replies that the cognition cannot be conceptual because all of the objects are simultaneously apprehended, that no such conceptual cognition is apprehended, and that a single conceptual cognition, because it is one, cannot cause many different objects to appear if they are different by their very natures. He then argues that the sequential situation of cognition is not significantly different from the simultaneous cognition of many different objects. A debate ensues concerning whether the sequential and simultaneous illumination of different objects is in fact parallel. Watson points out that the debate turns on the facts that for the Buddhists illumination is differentiated by its objects, but for Rāmakaṇṭha it is not, and that for the Buddhists all phenomena are momentary in existence, while for Rāmakaṇṭha this is not so. Watson then presents and explains how, in *Mataṅgavṛtti*, Rāmakaṇṭha replies to the objection that cognition cannot be permanent and unchanging even if not momentary, since it is experienced as changing. Watson discusses Rāmakaṇṭha's explanation of the appearance of change in cognition as a change not in cognition itself, but a change in *buddhi*, whose change is illuminated by the self with the help of *vidya*, one of a group of *tattvas* accepted within the Śaiva cosmology.

Chapter four ends with a brief explanation of how Rāmakaṇṭha uses the distinction between the self and *buddhi* to differentiate two kinds of cognition. Only the cognition that is the essence of the self is true cognition, while cognition in *buddhi*, which is an unconscious evolute of *prakṛti* (as in

Śaṃkhyā), is what takes on the form of objects actually apprehended. Rāmakaṇṭha believes that in traditions other than Śaṃkhyā the mistake was made of identifying changes of the objects of cognition with changes of cognition.

After a brief conclusion (pp. 383–88) in which the argument of Rāmakaṇṭha's doctrine of self is summarized, Watson presents once again (pp. 389–415), but all in one place, all of the Sanskrit passages he translated earlier in the book, along with his textual glosses. Watson has very nicely placed most of the more detailed philological and historical material the book contains in footnotes so that readers not interested in that part of his study may skip over it.

This book is an excellent technical resource for scholars of Indian philosophy interested in Śaivism.

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The Mahā-Vairocana-Abhisambodhi Tantra with Buddhaguhya's Commentary. Translated by STEPHEN HODGE. New York: ROUTLEDGE CURZON, 2003. Pp. 572. \$150.

This book is devoted to translating and briefly commenting on not two (as suggested by the title), but four very important works of esoteric Buddhist literature: the *Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra*, its appendix tantra (*uttara-tantra*: what Hodge calls a "continuation tantra"), and two commentaries by the eighth-century author Buddhaguhya. The bulk of the work (pp. 43–392) is a translation of the large commentary of Buddhaguhya, with the scripture it comments upon set off in bold face. This is supplemented by a brief introduction (pp. 3–40) and translations of the appendix tantra (pp. 393–443) and of Buddhaguhya's shorter commentary (pp. 445–537). These translations are based largely upon the Tibetan translations found in four Kangyur and three Tengyur redactions, with occasional reference to significant variant readings in a Chinese translation of the *mūlasūtra* and an independent Chinese commentary. While the translation into English is, in general, very competently done, the book as a whole has not been produced in a manner that would make for the most effective contribution to scholarship on esoteric Buddhism.

Indeed, evaluating this work in this context is challenging, since it is not clear at all that it was meant primarily as a contribution to academic scholarship.¹ The lack of any substantial scholarly apparatus is perhaps the most striking thing about the book in this regard. Twenty-five pages of rather uneven endnotes (for a work of 572 pages) and a thirty-eight-page introduction are all the reader has to fall back upon in attempting to situate and interpret the work translated. The introductory material is cursory and thinly argued; no edition of the work translated has been provided (nor is systematic editorial work in evidence "behind the scenes"); there is no bibliography and no index; and the glossary is inadequate. To be charitable, the sheer magnitude of the translation may be largely to blame for these lacunae, considering that an edition alone would practically double the size of the (already large) book. However, given the challenges of research on esoteric Buddhism, to provide such a translation without more substantial interpretative writing and apparatus renders the work of limited—and almost entirely pedagogical—utility.

First and foremost, given the highly technical nature of Buddhist tantric literature, a stand-alone translation is arguably of little benefit as a contribution to scholarship. Those without substantial prior exposure to the traditions of esoteric Buddhism will likely find such a translation impenetrable, without an extensive introduction interpreting the work and explaining its rituals and its special terminology. Even those with such a background will inevitably face further difficulties due to the idiosyncrasies of any particular translator's chosen terminological choices. As such, a translation of an esoteric Buddhist

1. The introduction suggests (p. 3) that it was (at least in part) intended for "the growing band of Western Buddhists following the Tibetan tradition."