

behavior in the sense that virtues counteract deficiencies in character. Harris argues that one can conceive of virtues—such as self-love—that do not function as correctives and goes on to suggest that if Mencius' account of human nature is correct, then there are "inclinal virtues" that do not function as correctives (pp. 172–175). That is, the moral sprouts discussed in the *Mengzi* do not counteract deficiencies in character but function as natural inclinations toward virtuous behavior.

Lastly, Phillip J. Ivanhoe's contribution, "The Values of Spontaneity," presents two accounts of human spontaneity that developed in classical Chinese philosophy. Whereas Daoist spontaneity is raw and untutored action that flows out of natural dispositions, Confucian spontaneity is cultivated and can only be realized after the self has been refined through ritual mastery (*li*) and after a clear sense of what is appropriate in any given circumstance has been developed. He then concludes by observing that spontaneity has ethical import since it entails connecting the individual with processes or institutions that extend beyond the self, and this leads him to suggest that Western ethics can learn from the rich accounts of spontaneity presented in classical Chinese philosophy.

It is clear that the essays collected in this volume take Confucian ethics seriously as they articulate poignant and sustained reflections on current political issues in contemporary China, the tension between public and private, trust in government, the nature of the virtues, and so on. But the reader gains the sense that the essays fall primarily within the domain of theoretical ethics, which is curious since Confucian ethics traditionally emphasized application over theorizing, on living a good life rather than theorizing about it. Consequently, one wonders why the editors did not include essays that focus on the Confucian approach to current issues in bioethics, environmental ethics, and business ethics as well as more specific ethical issues such as animal rights, global justice, poverty, capital punishment, and the like. This is a legitimate question since, if one is to take Confucian ethics seriously, then one must ask how helpful the tradition can be in addressing such issues. Classical Western moral theories such as Utilitarianism, Deontology, Egoism, and Social Contract Theory can readily be applied to such issues, but it is not always apparent how helpful Confucian ethics is with regard to answering the difficult questions that arise within those discussions. Taking Confucian ethics seriously entails appreciating its philosophical merit, but it also entails considering how helpful it can be in guiding moral agents through the difficult moral decisions that they will likely encounter. With this said, the book clearly takes steps toward developing Confucian ethics.

*Buddhism as Philosophy: An Introduction.* By Mark Siderits. Aldershot, England: Ashgate; Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2007. Pp. ix + 232.

Reviewed by **Evan Thompson** University of Toronto

When I was an undergraduate in the 1980s studying Buddhism and Western philosophy, and then again when I was a graduate student in philosophy, I longed for a book

like Mark Siderits' *Buddhism as Philosophy*. Although there were excellent introductory texts on Indian philosophy, such as Karl Potter's *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies* and Eliot Deutsch's *Advaita Vedānta: A Philosophical Reconstruction*, there was no book written by a trained philosopher that explained the arguments of the major Indian Buddhist philosophers and analyzed those arguments in relation to Western philosophical debates in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. *Buddhism as Philosophy* ably and eloquently fills that gap. It is certain to become the standard bearer for the appropriation of Indian Buddhism into contemporary Western philosophical scholarship.

Siderits conceives of philosophy in broad terms as the "systematic investigation of questions in ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology . . . using analysis and argumentation in systematic and reflective ways" (p. 5). His approach to philosophy is thus analytical and oriented toward conceptual problem-solving rather than historical scholarship for its own sake. This conception of philosophy guides his presentation of the principal trends and schools of Indian Buddhist philosophy—early Buddhism, Abhidharma, Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, and Buddhist logic and epistemology—as well as his evaluation of the core Buddhist arguments for no-self, reductionism about persons, and promoting the welfare of others. Siderits also covers Abhidharma arguments for the unreality of wholes and the reality of impartite particulars, Sautrāntika arguments that perception is representational, Yogācāra arguments for the primacy of mind and the denial of physical objects, Madhyamaka arguments for emptiness, and Dignāga's and Dharmakīrti's analyses of perception, inference, and self-cognition. Finally, a helpful chapter on Nyāya realism is also included as background for understanding the debate between Nyāya and Buddhism over the existence versus non-existence of the self and the reality versus unreality of wholes.

*Buddhism as Philosophy* should be read by scholars and students alike. Siderits provides new translations of many key passages from Buddhist philosophical texts and reconstructs their arguments in ways that deserve scholarly attention. For example, his presentation of the Abhidharma arguments for mereological reductionism (wholes are unreal and only parts are real), as well as his interpretation of Madhyamaka as primarily a semantic theory of truth rather than a metaphysical theory of reality, will be of interest not only to Buddhist scholars and scholars of Indian philosophy but also to contemporary metaphysicians and philosophers of language. Yet he treats these difficult topics in a clear, accessible, and engaging way, addressing himself to student readers and encouraging them at every step to evaluate the arguments for themselves. *Buddhism as Philosophy* thus makes an excellent text for advanced undergraduate students (as I found when I used it in my fourth-year undergraduate philosophy of mind seminar on theories of the self and personal identity).

The other main strength of this book is the way it brings Indian Buddhist philosophy into active dialogue and debate with well-established currents of Anglo-American analytical philosophy, notably discussions of the self and personal identity. Here Siderits builds on his earlier groundbreaking work on the relation between Buddhist

views of no-self and contemporary Western reductionist views of persons.<sup>1</sup> In *Buddhism as Philosophy*, he again provides a strong case for the reductionist view and for mereological reductionism in general, while placing these topics within the wider context of the conceptual development of Indian Buddhist philosophy.

These admirable strengths of the book are also its main limitation. Siderits views Buddhist philosophy through the lens of analytical metaphysics and epistemology, with no connections made to the other main trend of modern Western philosophy, namely phenomenology. Yet phenomenology's central concern with intentionality and the structure of consciousness makes it also a vitally important Western dialogue partner for Buddhist philosophy, especially Abhidharma, Yogācāra, and the theories of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. Similarly, on the Buddhist side, Siderits focuses more on metaphysical issues about the self than on phenomenological and psychological issues about the structure and functioning of consciousness. For example, in his treatment of Yogācāra, he focuses on the Yogācāra arguments for the unreality of physical objects and says little about the Yogācāra concepts of the store consciousness and the afflictive-mind consciousness. Yet these concepts, arguably developed at least in part to account for the diachronic continuity of consciousness and the illusory sense of self-identity over time,<sup>2</sup> are central to the unique and innovative Yogācāra phenomenology of consciousness. They deserve to be examined in relation to Husserl's phenomenology as well as contemporary discussions of consciousness that span and interconnect Western phenomenology and analytical philosophy of mind. In this connection, it is also worth mentioning that Siderits deals exclusively with classical Indian Buddhist philosophy, so there is no treatment of relevant Tibetan and East Asian developments, notably developments in Yogācāra that bear discussion in relation to Western phenomenological and analytical treatments of consciousness.<sup>3</sup>

In mentioning what I take to be these limitations, my aim is in no way to qualify my praise for *Buddhism as Philosophy*. Rather, it is to point to areas where other Buddhist scholars and philosophers can build on what Siderits has accomplished in this fine book and thereby advance the treatment of Buddhism as philosophy.

#### Notes

- 1 – Mark Siderits, *Personal Identity and Buddhist Philosophy: Empty Persons* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2003).
- 2 – See William S. Waldron, *The Buddhist Unconscious: The Ālaya-Vijñāna in the Context of Indian Buddhist Thought* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).
- 3 – For two recent examples of writings in this area, see Christian Coseru, "Buddhist Foundationalism and the Phenomenology of Perception," *Philosophy East and West* 59 (2009): 409–443, and Georges Dreyfus, "Self and Subjectivity: A Middle Way Approach," in Mark Siderits, Evan Thompson, and Dan Zahavi, eds., *Self, No Self? Perspectives from Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian Traditions* (Clarendon: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 114–156.