

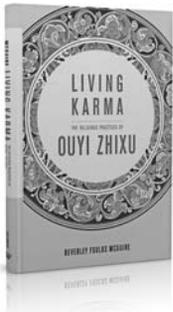
Harvard Divinity School praise her book fulsomely. This is what happens when scholars theorise on Vajrayana without practising it themselves. Recently it has been revealed in American and British courts that all these Ivy League Universities and some of the Russell groups of Universities indulge in quid pro quo practices. The online and offline praise that Jacoby has been able to get for herself shows why we should not hanker for Ivy League recognitions. All Jacoby's acolytes are members of the ivory-tower academia, where they probably practice armchair Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity. It is generally not the norm to write in the first person in academic reviews. But this reviewer is so nauseated by Jacoby's book that he has to end this review in the first person: 'I warn you of the real, palpable evil that is this book. It reeks of moral corruption and superficial jingoism.' Sera Khandro was certainly a mystic, but Jacoby's portrayal of Khandro is way off the mark.

Jacoby is aware that Atisha Dipamkara was against the kind of debased tantra that Sera Khandro dabbled in and yet Jacoby tautologically praises everything that Khandro did. This uncritical homage to Sera Khandro flies in the face of everything holy. It is the likes of Jacoby, who have destroyed the sacred discipline of tantra. This book should be considered a New Age tantra fad book and the discerning scholar and practitioner should turn to Georg Feuerstein's tantric corpus to understand even Vajrayana. *Prabuddha Bharata* brought out a special issue titled 'Reflections on Tantra' under the editorship of Swami Narasimhananda in January 2016. This annual issue should be consulted for all things tantric.

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Living Karma: The Religious Practices of Ouyi Zhixu
Beverley Foulks McGuire

Columbia University Press, 61 West 62 Street, New York, NY 10023, USA. Website: <https://cup.columbia.edu>. 2014. 240 pp. \$60.00. HB. ISBN 9780231168021.

Divination is not a very acceptable topic of discussion within any religion. And rarely do we come across a serious study of divination that is vital to both Buddhism and Hinduism. Beverley Foulks McGuire, to use Walter Pater's phrase in a very different context, in her hard gemlike monograph brings to life the archaeology of divination as is still practised in Hindu temples and of course, within Buddhism. She even gives a photograph of the wheel tops used in China.

In India, this reviewer has seen shells being used for the same purpose. Foulks McGuire uses the interpretation of the Chinese Buddhist *Divination Sutra* by the sixteenth-century commentator of the *Vinayas*, the Venerable Ouyi Zhixu. The monograph under review shows how Zhixu struggled to live an authentic life as a Buddhist monk who was troubled that he may not be good enough for being a Zen monastic. All his life, this Buddhist monk had questioned himself and his scholarship as falling short of the Buddhist monastic ideal. Even in his uses of divination, Zhixu only wanted nirvana.

McGuire has been able to weave Zhixu's life and his works in this tour de force in Chinese Buddhist scholarship. Zhixu indeed was interested in karma as the name of the monograph suggests, but it is unique because the monograph's author is able to overcome the structuralist stranglehold, which makes the scholarship of other experts in the field seem dry and devoid of all soul.

This is not a book that one usually reads in one sitting. But this reviewer read it in one sitting because of the book's wide-ranging scholarship and its beguiling lucidity. Yet the author has burnt a lot of midnight oil and therefore, we find the fourth endnote to Chapter Four in page 174 talking of the 1962 Harvard lectures of J L Austin on the differences between the locutionary and the illocutionary acts. This footnote then correctly moves on to David Gorman's problematisation of performativity within contemporary literary theory. These references are seamlessly connected to page 83 of this book, subtitled 'The Genre of Votive Texts: Imagining Future BodhiSattvahood' within the chapter 'Vowing to Assume the Karma of Others'.

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Ashrama): 900 saris from 25 December to 15 January. **Kothar**: 2,159 shirts and 1,786 trousers from 15 July to 2 September. **Koyilandy**: 10 saris on 14 January and 150 shirts and 150 trousers on 10 February. **Lucknow**: 7,500 shirts, 5,000 trousers, and 1,500 tops from 9 December to 14 January. **Malda**: 10 saris on 23 December. **Mangaluru**: 10,001 shirts and 10,001 trousers from 5 August to 12 February. **Medinipur**: 300 dhotis, 255 saris, 840 shirts, 1,160 trousers, and 1,000 tops from 10 December to 26 January. **Nagpur**: 368 T-shirts from 12 to 31 March. **Naora**: 88 school bags from 15 November to 4 January. **Narainpur**: 3,001 shirts, 2,715 trousers, 464 denims, 998 tops, 22 T-shirts, 57 tunics, 22 leggings 440, and other ladies' garments from 8 December to 29 January. **Nattarampalli**: 110 lungis, 140 saris, 600 plates of cooked food, 280 kg rice, 70 kg dal, 21 kg assorted spices, 70 kg jaggery, 28 kg vegetable oil, 7 kg dry fruits, 140 coconuts, 140 sugarcanes, and 280 pots on 15 and 16 January. **Puri Mission**: 1,000 shirts from 20 October to 16 December. **Rahara**: 5 dhotis, 92 saris, 262 bedsheets, 82 chaddars, 884 mosquito-nets, 57 packets of baby food, and 2 flasks on 28 December and 10 shirts, 10 trousers, some assorted clothes, and 60 mosquito-nets from 23 December to 28 January. **Rajarhat Bishnupur**: 500 shirts and 500 trousers from 11 to 16 February. **Rajkot**: 1,546 shirts, 1,928 T-shirts, and 3,237 trousers from 28 to 30 September. **Ramharipur**: 1,000 shirts and 1,000 trousers from 9 October to 24 November. **Saradapitha**: 3,000 shirts and 3,000 trousers from 17 December to 25 January. **Sargachhi**: 1,000 shirts and 1,000 trousers from 1 December to 3 February. **Shillong**: 1,502 shirts, 1,000 T-shirts, and 1,500 trousers from 7 October to 11 November. **Shimla**: 724 shirts and T-shirts and 830 trousers from 12 June to 24 December. **Shyamsayer, Bardhaman** (sub-centre of the Headquarters): 100 saris, 100 dhotis, and 100 uttariyas from 8 to 15 January. **Sikra-Kulingram**: 548 shirts and T-shirts, 3,250 notebooks, and 400

pens from 25 November to 12 January. **Sohra (Cherrapunjee)**: 15,934 tops, shirts and T-shirts and 2,084 trousers from 3 to 29 December. **Taki**: 45 saris, 25 shirts, and 25 trousers on 15 February. **Varanasi Advaita Ashrama**: 226 tops, 15 trousers, and 17 saris from 19 November to 30 December. **Bangladesh: Chittagong**: 220 saris, 35 bedsheets, 10 pillows, 5 mosquito-nets, 20 plates, 20 tumblers, 20 bowls, 20 spoons, 30 pots, 10 jugs, 10 mugs, and 10 buckets from 10 January to 18 February.

Notice

Swami Vrajamohananda, whose pre-monastic name is Prashanta, has recently left the Ramakrishna Order attached to Ramakrishna Math, Belur Math. He is not eligible, therefore, to raise funds or seek other help from our devotees and general public on behalf of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission.

General Secretary,
Ramakrishna Math and
Ramakrishna Mission



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In this subsection, the very next, or fifth endnote refers us to the Hebrew Bible. McGuire shows her characteristic easy acquaintance with the Bible in this footnote. This Buddhist work per se thus becomes a powerful statement for interreligious dialogue and process philosophies. McGuire teaches East Asian religions in the US, but she could easily teach Biblical studies and literary theory to seminarians and English literature students respectively, going by her scholarship in this book.

The two appendices at the end are essential but the second appendix, 'A Map of Ouyi's Life' is an original effort at cartographical reconstruction, which while occupying just one page must have taken her a lot of effort. Beverley Foulks McGuire is the scholar to turn to in the Western world for rigour, clarity, and originality in many fields. She surpasses the works of Koichi Shinohara in her holistic approach to the analyses of medieval Zen Buddhism.

Subhasis Chattopadhyay