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Deutsche Buddhisten: Geschichte und Gemeinschaften. By Martin Baumann. Marburg: diagonal-Verlag, 1995, 465 pages, ISBN 3-927165-32-8 (paper), DM 58.

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There has been a growing interest over the past few decades in Buddhism's diffusion to Europe and North America. A little-known chapter of the history of Buddhism in the West is the establishment of various Buddhist schools in Germany. With this second, updated edition of Martin Baumann's 1993 Ph.D. dissertation, we now have what constitutes perhaps the most detailed and thorough study to date. Baumann's sensitive and careful work looks at the development of Buddhism in Germany from a number of methodological and theoretical angles, and his emphasis on historical and sociological perspectives will be of interest to humanists and social scientists alike. This is not to say, however, that his study is purely theoretical, because Baumann firmly grounds his work in empirical data collated from interviews done by the author, popular literature, and scholarly publications.

After explicating his approach in chapter one, Baumann begins his study in chapter two by surveying early German academic and philosophical interest in Buddhism; this chapter contains a short discussion of the works of Leibnitz, Schopenhauer, and Köppen, but serves mainly as a prelude to Baumann's real theme, which is the rooting of a popular understanding of Buddhism in German soil. Quite predictably, the survey begins with the impact of the Theosophical Society. At this stage, practical Buddhism in Germany had not yet been introduced, but Baumann points out that it was in reaction to Blavatsky and Olcott that Friedrich Zimmermann (1851-1917) brought out his *Buddhistischen Katechismus*. Zimmermann's catechism must have been an influential text, since by 1921 it had already gone through fourteen editions. Baumann correctly sees Zimmermann's text as a foundational document for German Buddhism, referring to it as the beginning of the second phase of reception (p. 50), a phase during which the work of Karl Eugen Neumann (1865-1915) also had a great impact. It was during their lifetimes also, in 1906, that Karl Seidenstücker organized the first German Buddhist Society in Leipzig, which led to the establishment of a number of other regional groups. This second phase leads into four others, during which numerous forms of Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Tibetan Buddhism became firmly established. As a result, the author later points out (p. 223), the number of Buddhist groups and centers multiplied by five during the 1970s and 1980s, a trend which is also observable in other Western countries.

In chapter three Baumann looks closely at the interpretive writings and lives of four influential German figures — Debes, Kruckenbergh, Müller, and Wetzell — who molded numerous philosophical, sociopolitical, and feminist understandings of Buddhism's role in the West. He then turns his attention to the emergence of German Buddhist communities and institu-

tions in chapters four and five respectively. Baumann's thesis that knowledge of Buddhism and the formation of Buddhist communities and orders in Germany must be understood as part of a broader Western dialogue with Buddhism is well-taken. His discussion of the Arya Maitreya Mandala (AMM) and its founder Lama Govinda (a.k.a. Ernst Lothar Hoffmann), for example, takes into account not only individual reasons for embracing Buddhism, but also the larger social and political factors which may have motivated personal decisions to do so. Through his combined use of interview materials and published documentation, Baumann makes a sensitive and balanced presentation that carefully steers away from any misrepresentations of the key players responsible for the development of this strand of Germany's religious history.

In the historical-sociological analysis of chapter six, Baumann looks at structural and statistical issues more closely, mapping spatial and temporal changes in the reception of Buddhism, and positing a typology of German Buddhist communities between 1975 and 1991. He is quite right in suggesting that German Buddhism is best understood as a plurality of Buddhisms, rather than as one monolithic and seamless tradition. In order to make sense of Buddhism's rise in Germany, the author turns his attention to "styles" of reception in chapter seven. Building on the data presented in the earlier chapters, Baumann deftly explores four modes of reception: rationalistic, sociopolitical, feminist, and integrative, the last referring to an ongoing endeavor to bring together and systematize the numerous schools coexisting in the country.

Baumann's concluding chapter situates his study solidly within the discipline of *Religionswissenschaft* by reviewing theories of religious change as processes of acculturation, adaptation, and transformation. His sophisticated analysis should make it quite clear to the reader that we cannot view the diffusion of a "foreign" religion into new lands as a static process; instead, we need to see such developments as a complicated process of dynamism, one that constantly changes in response to contemporary issues in the host society. In short, this reissue of *Deutsche Buddhisten* is a welcome addition to the academic literature on Buddhism in the West. It is thorough, systematic, well-documented, and clearly written. In my estimation, it will continue to serve as the definitive text on the topic, and could stimulate future studies of similar phenomena in other parts of the world.