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Celebrating Twenty Years of the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*

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This special edition celebrates twenty years of continuous publication by the *JBE* and includes a collection of invited papers to mark the occasion. Some of these papers have been published before in the *JBE*, some are new, and others have been selected from sources outside the journal because of their importance to the field. Taken together they are a representative selection of the quality, scope and subject matter of the material that has appeared in the virtual pages of the journal since it was launched back in 1993.

When we decided to found the *JBE* we had no idea how it would be received. At that time the concept of an electronic journal was completely novel and colleagues struggled with the notion of a journal with no paper copy. There was nothing like it in Buddhist Studies, and almost nothing in the broader field of Religious Studies. Nor was there any precedent for a journal dealing with Buddhist ethics. In both of these ways the *JBE* was a “first” and we had no idea whether lacking the resources and credibility provided by an established publisher and an established constituency of readers and contributors it would flourish or simply be a short-lived novelty. Fortunately, the new journal seemed to

meet a need, and with the support of the distinguished members of its editorial board soon established itself as a permanent feature in the landscape of Buddhist Studies. Nowadays, with a much more internet-savvy audience of readers and contributors, the idea of electronic publication barely raises an eyebrow. Cyberspace is now crowded with Buddhist blogs and websites, but thanks to the quality that has always been the hallmark of the *JBE* and the rigorous process of peer review to which all articles are subject, the journal has remained a leading and trusted resource for publications in the field.

It was always our intention that the journal should be a free and open resource serving the interests of the discipline rather than a privately managed concern. For this reason in 2006 the founding editors handed it over to a new editorial team consisting of Daniel Cozort, Barbara Clayton and Christopher Ives. Subsequently, under the inspiring leadership of Daniel Cozort, now General Editor, the administrative structure of the journal was reorganized and expanded. Former Book Reviews Editor Mark Shields is now Associate Editor and Ananda Reed is Assistant Editor. Sarah Haynes has taken over book reviews, where she coordinates the efforts of five Area Editors who have responsibility for different parts of the Buddhist world, and seven copy editors share the work of turning the submissions accepted for publication into the *JBE* house style for final publication. Membership of the *Journal's* Editorial Board has increased to twenty-three, including many of the most distinguished scholars in Buddhist Studies. (The names of all the individuals currently involved in the journal's operation and management can be found on its home page.) Increased functionality has been added to the journal's website, including a "tag cloud" and the facility for readers to make comments on articles and reviews published and for authors to provide feedback should they wish to do so.

In a broader context, the *JBE* has been a contribution to a new model of academic publication, one in which academic authors share their work with their peers without the financial and legal constraints imposed by conventional publishers. Perhaps the future will see further developments along these lines such as authors publishing directly on academia.edu and colleagues providing feedback and critique on pub-peer.com. The function of a journal like the *JBE* would then simply be to collate and link to those articles relevant to the journal's field that in the opinion of the editor (with the advice of appropriate experts) were of sufficient academic quality to merit inclusion. Readers of the journal would then have access to a free "one-stop" resource to the best in each field at a fraction of the cost, manpower and time currently expended in conventional journal publishing. We are not there yet but perhaps things will have evolved to this point when the *Journal* celebrates its anniversary in another twenty years.

We hope you will enjoy the articles you will find in this special section as well as the others that will be forthcoming in the course of the *Journal's* normal output in the coming year.