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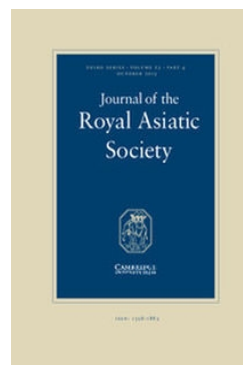
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## ***The Scientific Buddha: His Short and Happy Life: By Donald. S. Lopez pp. 148. Boston, Yale University Press, 2012.***

Andrew Robinson

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opportunity to contribute to an ongoing conversation on what constitutes Himalayan art that curators, critics, and scholars are equally engaged in.

These drawbacks aside, the author's nuanced descriptions, nearly 130 colour photographs, lucid glossary, detailed bibliography, accessible index, and clear lay out, make this monograph not only an exciting contribution to the field but also an ideal opening text for a broadly conceived postgraduate course on art and life in the Himalayas. With baited breath, we now await the publication of Hingorani's next book. [nachiket@umich.edu](mailto:nachiket@umich.edu)

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THE SCIENTIFIC BUDDHA: HIS SHORT AND HAPPY LIFE: By DONALD. S. LOPEZ, JR. pp. 148. Boston, Yale University Press, 2012.

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According to Albert Einstein, who reflected at various times in his career on the relationship between science and religion, "If there is any religion that would cope with modern scientific needs, it would be Buddhism". But wait a minute, says the well-known Buddhist scholar, Donald Lopez, Jr, in *The Scientific Buddha*—there is no source for this supposed remark by Einstein. Like some other well-known Einstein quotations (as this reviewer is only too well aware, as one of Einstein's many biographers), this particular remark would appear to have been attributed to Einstein and has gained currency in the contemporary world because it is felt to be appropriate to Buddhism.

What Einstein definitely did say about the Buddha, in 1937, is somewhat more surprising. He stated: "Humanity has every reason to place the proclaimers of high moral standards and values above the discoverers of objective truth. What humanity owes to personalities like Buddha, Moses, and Jesus ranks for me higher than all the achievements of the inquiring constructive mind". Lopez does not quote this genuine statement by Einstein: oddly, because it chimes well with his purpose in giving the Terry Lectures on Religion in the Light of Science and Philosophy at Yale University in 2008, on which his short but stimulating book is based.

Although Lopez's lectures cover much historical ground, their basic thrust is a critique of the late twentieth-century project—especially in the United States, where Lopez has spent his academic career—to claim Buddhism for science. This, he says, has its roots in the nineteenth-century philological reconstruction of the historical Buddha's thought started by his scholarly predecessors, for instance Monier Monier-Williams, Friedrich Max Müller and T. W. Rhys Davids, who founded the Pāli Text Society in 1881. By their time, "Buddhism was all but dead in India, and European scholars, many of whom never met a Buddhist or set foot in Asia, created a new Buddha, a Buddha made from manuscripts". While this philological reconstruction was both necessary and admirable, it prepared the way for something much less convincing, in Lopez's view, which he terms a 'Scientific Buddha', as science advanced and religion retreated in the western world. "Of all the things we have asked of the Buddha", writes Lopez with a touch of irritation, "must we also ask him to fulfil the dream of foreigners, a dream that has been dreamed in the West since at least the eighteenth century, the dream of something to believe in that does not make us have to choose between religion and science?"

A link between Buddhism and science, which is actively if cautiously encouraged by the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, has been claimed at several levels, ranging from the very general to the very specific. At the most general, the claim is that both scientists and the Buddha have arrived

at the knowledge of profound truths about the inner and the outer world using a method of sober and rational investigation. At the most specific, it is claimed that there are antecedents in the Buddha's teachings for certain scientific theories, including the mechanistic universe, the theory of evolution, the theory of relativity, some aspects of quantum theory and the Big Bang origin of the universe. It is even claimed that the knowledge obtained from technologies such as the microscope, the telescope, the spectrometer and, most recently, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)—a technology that has been extensively used by neuroscientists to measure the brain activity of meditating Buddhists—has confirmed what the Buddha had already discovered from his own introspection, without any external aid, in the first millennium BC.

Most of these scientific theories and technologies receive no more than cursory mention in the book. However, Lopez goes into some detail in comparing Darwin's theory of evolution, with its basis in random species mutation and survival of the fittest, with Buddhist beliefs, before rejecting the comparison as unsatisfying. "[R]ather than seeing Buddhism as compatible with evolution, why not see it as radically incompatible", he argues, "seeking extinction rather than survival, seeing persistence only in impermanence, stressing intention over compulsion, consciousness over matter?" He also examines at some length the history of Buddhist meditation, in order to distinguish the latter from some modern forms of meditation without any basis in Buddhism; but he cites none of the neuroscientific studies of meditation, notably the Harvard/MIT study, or the writings of western Buddhist meditators sympathetic to science, such as Matthieu Ricard and B. Alan Wallace. One senses that his own knowledge of science is quite limited when he refers to the chemist August Kekulé's celebrated (but virtually unique) conception of the structure of the benzene ring in a dream as somehow typical of "arriving at a new scientific discovery". Overall, he suggests, why not now retire the Scientific Buddha, and "allow the Buddha to remain beyond the world, completely at odds with the world, and with science".

The strength of this clear and sometimes entertaining book is its knowledge of Buddhist doctrine and the history of Buddhism. Its weakness, which may be inevitable, given its strength, is its relatively superficial knowledge of science. Nonetheless, *The Scientific Buddha* is much to be recommended as a salutary corrective to more fashionable attempts to integrate two very different approaches to understanding reality. [andrew.robinson33@virgin.net](mailto:andrew.robinson33@virgin.net)

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SHANGHAI SANCTUARY: CHINESE AND JAPANESE POLICY TOWARD EUROPEAN JEWISH REFUGEES DURING WORLD WAR II. By GAO BEI. pp.185. Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2013.  
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When doors began to slam shut on Jews fleeing Nazi persecution in Europe, the city of Shanghai (which could still be accessed without entry visas) became an unlikely haven for numerous desperate refugees. The treaty port would eventually shelter nearly twenty thousand European Jews between 1938 and 1941, although most of these individuals were herded by the Japanese into a ghetto area in the north of the city after the outbreak of the Pacific War. In her study of this little-known wartime sanctuary, Gao Bei paints a fascinatingly intricate picture of the political forces and fluxes which ultimately contributed to the arrival of these Jewish refugees in Shanghai. Her work is underpinned by an array of hitherto under-utilised Chinese and Japanese archival sources which provide several intriguing new insights into East Asian perceptions of Jews during the late 1930s and early 1940s.