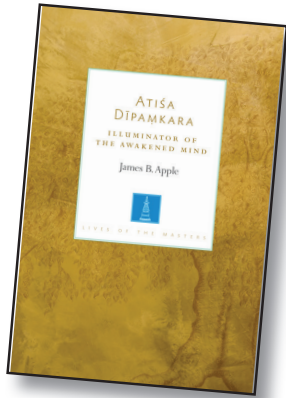


Book Reviews



Atiśa Dipaṅkara: Illuminator of the Awakened Mind.

James B. Apple. Boulder: Shambhala, 2019. 303 pages. ISBN 9781611806472.

Reviewed by Renée L. Ford

To know Atiśa (982–1054) is to catch a crucial sliver in the complex system of Tibetan Buddhism. Modern readers are fortunate to have an opportunity to read James B. Apple's *Atiśa Dipaṅkara: Illuminator of the Awakened Mind* as an introduction to Atiśa's life, writings, and Buddhism in Tibet during the 10th century.

This publication offers biographical information on Atiśa and translations of several of Atiśa's writings, including selections of *Stages of the Path to Awakening*, which has not been seen in modern scholarship (p. 193). Apple primarily bases his biography on two Tibetan sources, *The Extensive Biography* by Ja Dülzin Tsöndrū (1091–1166 or 1100–1174) and *The Universally Known Biography* by Chim Namkha

Drak (1210–1285) (p. 4). The second half of this book offers a wide range of selections from Atiśa's teachings including *Lamp for the Summary of Conduct*, *Lamp for the Path to Awakening*, selections on Tārā, the Savioress, and *Essential Condensed Summary of the Special Instructions on Coemergent Union*, collectively demonstrating Atiśa's breadth of knowledge and teaching topics.

Atiśa was born in the city of Vikramapura in the east Indian region of Sahor which is present-day Maushiganj district of Bangladesh (p. 11). He descends from the same royal lineage as Śāntarakṣita (725–788), who established monasticism in Tibet in the 8th century (p. 11). At the age of 10, Atiśa renounced palace life and in 994, arrives at the Indian monastic learning institution, Nālandā, and meets Bodhibhadra. Atiśa studies with Viḍyākoka, who descended from the Madhyamaka lineage of Candrakīrti and Nāgārjuna. Eventually, Atiśa is ordained as a Mahāsāṃghika at 29 in Matī-vihāra in Bodh Gaya (p. 15). The book continues with Atiśa's travels throughout Tibet.

Apple opens his second chapter with Atiśa arriving in Tibet in the same vein as Śāntarakṣita's journey. "The horsemen were wearing only white clothes and were adorned with ornaments. Among the horsemen were four government ministers named Lha Wangchuk, Lha Drodrö, Lha Sherap, and Lha Sidzin. The ministers encouraged Atiśa and his retinue to spread the Buddha's

teaching in Tibet" (p. 35). In West Tibet, monks met Atiśa and heard his assertions on his preference for Madhyamaka teachings over Cittamātra views. Readers learn of Atiśa's journeys throughout Tibet and highlights of meeting key figures, events, and teachings shared with local monasteries.

Perhaps the most noteworthy section of Apple's book is his chapter that bridges Atiśa's life and teachings called "The Buddhism of Atiśa Dipaṅkaraśrījñāna." This section clarifies the Buddhist philosophical contexts Atiśa encountered and taught throughout his life. Apple gives particular attention in explaining two separate discussions: the debate between Madhyamaka and Yogācāra and the presentations on the differentiations between what Apple calls "the Common Vehicle of the Perfection Path" and Secret Mantra. Also, each topic, such as cause and effect, awakening mind, and "Great Madhyamaka," of the succeeding selections from Atiśa's teachings receive clarifying explanations. The author summarizes the breadth of topics as he states, "the themes within Atiśa's teachings focusing on the primacy of ethics, the significance of ritually taking and properly maintaining vows, the focus on generating and increasing the awakening mind and implementing an orderly and harmonious system of practice in which the Perfection Path and the ways of the Secret Mantra Vehicle are complementary have shaped the beliefs and practices of

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Ford on *Illuminator of the Awakened Mind*

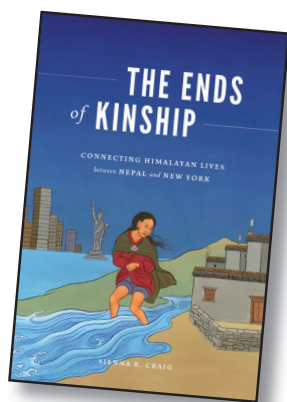
Tibetan Buddhists up to the present day” (pp. 93–94).

The final section is a collection of fine translations of Atiśa’s various teachings. Apple introduces each text with a summary. Every translation reads easily and smoothly, allowing even fledglings to Buddhism opportunities to come to understand Atiśa’s teachings and the topics found within each text.

James B. Apple’s book is part of Shambhala publication’s *Lives of the Masters Series* which as described, “offers engaging introductions to the lives, works, and legacies of key Buddhist teachers, philosophers, contemplatives, and (https://www.shambhala.com/lives-of-the-masters).” The reader reaps vast rewards through Apple’s extensive scholarship on Atiśa and his talents for writing an easily accessible work. The author strikes this balance so that readers find the book enjoyable and knowledgeable. This work is a must-read for anyone with a desire to understand the influence Atiśa had on Tibetan Buddhism and to further navigate the various presentations found within Buddhist philosophical narratives in Tibet.

Renée L. Ford is a part-time lecturer at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and a project assistant for The Oral History of Tibetan Studies at the University of Oxford. Renée’s research focuses on how devotion and faith function epistemologically and philosophically in the Nyingma Great Completeness tradition. She received her

PhD at Rice University under the tutelage of Dr. Anne C. Klein.



The Ends of Kinship: Connecting Himalayan Lives between Nepal and New York.

Sienna R. Craig. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020. 304 pages. ISBN 9780295747699.

Reviewed by Tashi W. Gurung and Phurwa D. Gurung

Drawing on nearly three decades of anthropological inquiry and friendship, Sienna Craig documents the migration of Mustangis between Nepal and New York City (NYC) asking: How do migration and new forms of mobilities shape and transform traditions and kinship networks? How do Mustangis make sense of, adapt to, reformulate, and rely on global migratory networks and translocal kinship relations across time and space?

Craig takes inspiration from Tibetan Buddhist concepts and practices of

kora (*skor ba*) or circumambulation, and *khorwa* (*'khor ba*), the cyclic world of suffering, and uses the English gloss “khora” to conceptualize a circular understanding of migration, belonging, identity, and place-making that weave together individuals, households, and communities between Mustang, Kathmandu, and NYC. *Khora*, she argues, not only takes indigenous concepts seriously but also challenges linear ways of explaining migration. Migration here can be interpreted as a form of *khora*—the cyclic rhythms of transnational mobility, kinship and world-making (though “khora” sounds a bit awkward in Tibetan or Loba parlance).

The book is structured following a circular life course from birth to death and the transformations connecting them. The distinctive feature of the book is her innovative and creative interpellation of short fiction and narrative ethnography that supplement each other to tell layered stories in ways that do more justice to the complexity of embodied realities. The choice to foreground collaborators and include the methodology at the end deviates from the usual academic practice of acknowledgement, citation, and references. The result is a remarkable ethnography of connection across geographical, temporal, socio-cultural, political, and economic borders.

Craig’s relationship with Mustang and its people is centered on friendship and long-term collaboration. This