

# keréknyomok

TÁRSADALMI, ORIENTALISZTIKAI ÉS BUDDHOLÓGIAI FOLYÓIRAT



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## Book Review

### *A KALEIDOSCOPIC INSIGHT THROUGH CBT*

#### *Common Buddhist Text:*

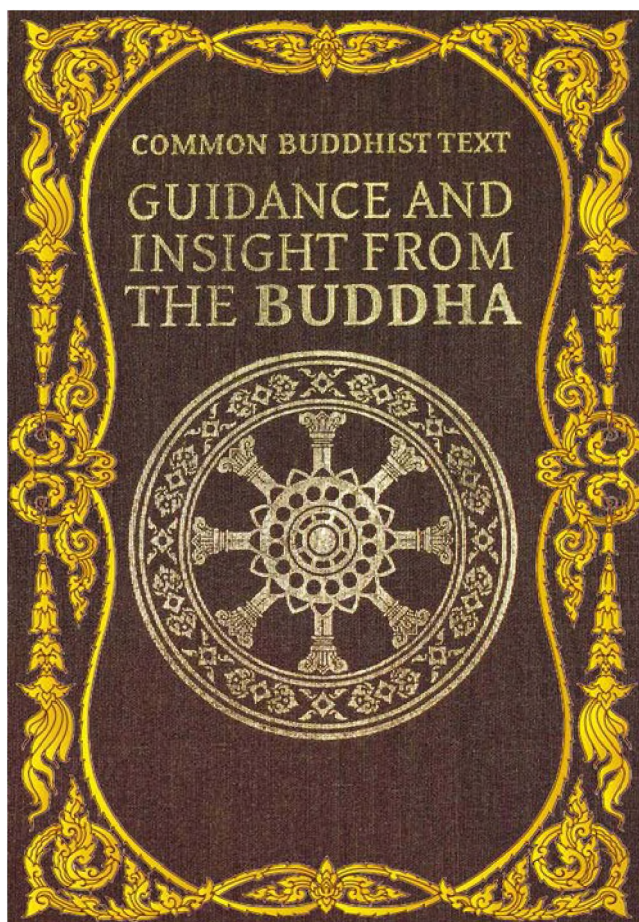
#### *Guidance and insight from the Buddha*

*Chief Editor: Most Venerable Phra Brahmmapundit*

*Editor: Peter Harvey*

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, Ayutthaya, Thailand, 2017

I-XIV+ 589 p., ISBN 978-616-300-320-1.



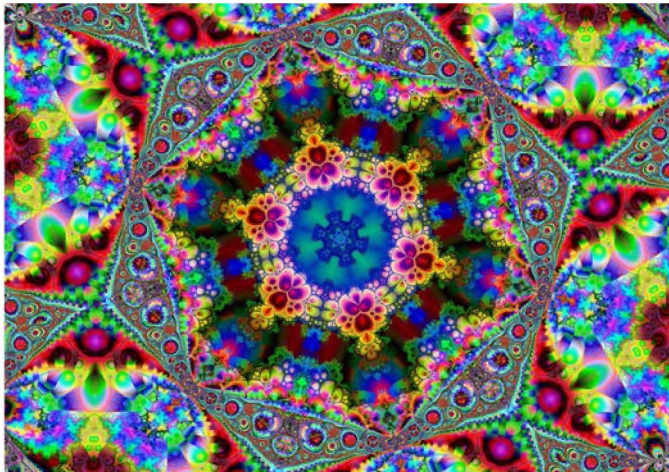
When I started reading through the complete text of *A Common Buddhist Text: Guidance and Insight from the Buddha* (CBT) sent me by Venerable Khammai Dhammasami on May 2, my original goal was to write a comprehensive overall description about the final product; to describe how impressed I was when I started to realize the richness of this kaleidoscopic view into the many facets of Buddhism.<sup>1</sup>

However, getting more and more involved in this task I found myself in the process of correcting first only a few of the misprints, typos and other minor errors. Then after a while I realized that it would be better to start over from the beginning. I think it is very important to present the final text to the general public in such a perfect form that no distracting factors can take away the attention of the readers from the message.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, I am fully aware that it is impossible to do justice to such an enormous work in the few words of a short review. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the organizers, editors, translators, and other participants with the generous support of the sponsors of this very important and unique project have achieved their main objective:

“to promote better understanding of Buddhist principles amongst the wider public by compiling a common Buddhist text, which will reflect the richness of the Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhist tradition as well as the needs of today’s society.”<sup>3</sup>

A kaleidoscope can show details and different aspects of the scene never seen before, but it also causes distortions; and these distortions are not accidental, they are essential part of the inner workings of the device.



A screenshot from *kaleidoskop.swf*<sup>4</sup>

1 These comments were read at the CBI-panel of the 12th International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak, with the title «A kaleidoscopic insight through CBT. Comments on the complete text of “A Common Buddhist Text: Guidance and Insight from the Buddha”». The conference was held at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok and Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Ayutthaya, May 28–30, 2015 [2558].

2 Most of the misprints, typos and other errors have disappeared from the final text.

3 Point 5 of the 6th Bangkok Declaration, United Nations Day of Vesak Conference, 2009.

4 Download from <http://ounodesign.com/2013/02/21/kaleidoscope/>.

A tradition – and a text belonging to it – is always local. It is crucial to see this point in our modern, globalized era. There are always such aspects of the texts, such connotations of the words that are naturally understood by the local people, but not so evidently noticed by members of a different school or lineage or by us. There is a Hungarian phrase “If everybody is your friend, you have no friend at all.”

A short excerpt from the *Aggivoacchagotta-sutta* or from the magnum opus of the great philosopher, Nāgārjuna, cannot do justice to the real depth of the texts, to their extraordinary vision. In the case of the *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* there is another important issue. Let me shed light on this by a note of the great western logician and philosopher, Alfred Nort Whitehead: ‘You understand a philosopher when you see the potentialities of his philosophy – his ‘logical chessboard,’ whether he makes good moves or bad is a minor detail.’<sup>5</sup> But how can you inform the reader about this “logical chessboard” by a half page long quotation from the author. Nevertheless, it is not an impossible task as the Introductory chapters of Katsura – Siderits 2013<sup>6</sup> show.

I think that it is a must to give the interesting reader as complete a background to the texts presented in the CBT as possible. To give them the opportunity to find quickly not only the full text where the excerpt is taken from, but also the context, and the background (geographical, social, cultural, etc.). The aim of the Hungarian initiative is exactly this.<sup>7</sup>

László Fórizs

5 Susanne K. Langer 1997. Notes on Whitehead’s Course on the Philosophy of Nature, ed. Rolf Lachmann. *Process Studies*, 26/1–2:128.

6 Mark Siderits and Shoryu Katsura 2013. *Nāgārjuna’s Middle Way: the Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

7 See the presentation of János Jelen and Péter Győri in this panel.