

## **Buddhism and the Body (2023) — by Ken Holloway**

Buddhism and the Body was published in the Studies in Somaesthetics series at Brill. This is important for the study of Buddhist philosophy because it demonstrates the ability of somaesthetics to highlight important organic elements that connect diverse studies of Buddhism. Comparative philosophy often struggles to demonstrate its value in assisting the reader in obtaining a deeper understanding of Asian sources, but I believe that this book has been successful in this area. In my introduction I detail the historical reasons why the bodies of Buddhist practitioners are often overlooked by scholars, which then made this volume necessary. As far as scholarly contributions, I believe that the volume is important to the study of both Buddhist philosophy and religion as a bodily practice.

My thinking about the study of Buddhism has been influenced by being a practitioner under the guidance of Venerable Master Hsing-yun since 2005. Humanistic Buddhism has struggled to make inroads into the scholarly world so my thinking was that a conference on entitled "Bodies of Buddhism: Somaesthetic Explorations" would attract research that was inherently humanistic even if they were unaware of the specifics of this approach. In my introduction I explore my own experience of group chanting as a meditative practice. Although the unification of Pure Land and Chan goes back to Yongming Yanshou (永明延壽 904-975) the influence of 20<sup>th</sup> century Zen has meant that this approach is not widely appreciated by practitioners. This is one of several ways that I believe this book will be appreciated by practitioners.

This book began through many years of collaboration with Dr. Richard Shusterman who is the Dorothy F. Schmidt Eminent Scholar in the Humanities at Florida Atlantic University, where I also teach. This collaboration has resulted in us co-organizing international conferences on Somaesthetics every year for quite some time now. On February 27-28 of 2020 we decided to hold a conference entitled "Bodies of Buddhism: Somaesthetic Explorations." One presenter from the UK was unable to attend because of concern he would be turned away when he landed in the US. Despite this there was good attendance with scholars coming from the US, Canada, and Japan. The presenters came from diverse fields including Theravada, Japanese Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism, the study of dreams, women's studies, and visual arts. Somaesthetics provided the scholarly framework to connect these very different scholarly approaches and I feel that this resulted in the edited volume having a great deal of coherence. Finally, it was because of the COVID pandemic that I was not using much of the funds I have for research as Levenson Chair. Because of this I was able to use these funds to make the book open access. The book includes a range of scholars from a Ph.D. candidate through assistant and full professors, so I felt that enabling the book to reach a broader audience through the open access program was an important contribution to the field.

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