



An American Buddhist Life: Memoirs of a Modern Dharma Pioneer

Charles Prebish

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From the beginning of Charles Prebish's involvement with Buddhism in 1965, Buddhism has made huge inroads on the North American continent, and world-wide, both in terms of its scholarship and globalization. He has been fortunate enough to know and work with an incredible group of brilliant scholars who remain alive: Luis Gómez, Lewis Lancaster, Donald Swearer, Frank Reynolds, Stanley Weinstein, Jeffrey Hopkins, Robert Thurman and others. Unfortunately, none of these great scholars seems as yet to have shared their reminiscences of these exciting times with readers. Equally, because of his pioneering work in studying Western forms of Buddhism, Dr. Prebish was able to meet not only the many Asian Buddhist teachers who appeared in North America after the change in immigration law in 1965, but virtually all of their first and second generation Dharma heirs. His friendships with Chogyam Trungpa and John Daido Looi Roshi, for example, gave him insights into the rapid development of what he began calling "American Buddhism" in the 1970s. In the nearly half century that he has been involved with the Buddhist tradition, an enormous number of major events have occurred in North America (and worldwide), and he has been involved with almost all of them. Apart from being the leading pioneer in the study of Western forms of Buddhism, as mentioned above, he was the leading advocate for establishing this new and exciting avenue of inquiry as a valid and important sub-discipline in the larger discipline of Buddhist Studies. Now there are many dozens of courses devoted to this topic, and it has become one of the most vibrant areas of scholarly publication in Buddhist Studies. When technology began to creep into academe, he was there to found, with Damien Keown in 1994, the online Journal of Buddhist Ethics, which was the first online peer-reviewed scholarly journal in the field of Religious Studies. Five years later, with Martin Baumann, he began the Journal of Global Buddhism. In 1996, he and Keown founded the Routledge "Critical Studies in Buddhism" series which published more than sixty scholarly titles under their editorship over the next 10 years. In other words, Dr. Prebish has been involved in virtually everything exciting in the Buddhist world over the past forty-five years. Because of his unique involvement and longevity, he has an incredible historical record to document and share, and a huge number of stories to tell. These stories allow us to share his incredible personal journey, and provide a true "insider's" viewpoint. It even gives us a rare and largely unknown snapshot into the world of sport, where he became a nationally respected Olympic-style wrestling official and one of the leading, early scholarly proponents of the exploration of the relationship between sport and religion. Chuck's stories are kind and compassionate. *An American Buddhist Life: Memoirs of a Modern Dharma Pioneer* makes for a great read!

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