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Editorial

Richard Gombrich

When I started this journal, I hoped that its pages would carry some controversy and debate. While in other respects it has met, or even exceeded, my expectations, so far there has been no debate. But here at last we have some. After reading the book *Buddhism: an Introduction* by our assistant editor Alexander Wynne, Douglass Smith sent us an article disagreeing with his presentation of the Buddha’s fundamental metaphysical position, and Alex accepted the challenge and began to write a reply.

At about the same time, our assistant editor specialising in early Buddhist philosophy, Noa Ronkin, decided, to our regret, that she should resign, and John Holder kindly agreed to take her place on the editorial board. John gave Douglass some suggestions how he might clarify his position, and Douglass accepted them.

I wrote in my editorial to vol.4 that there are matters on which scholars disagree, and in such cases “it is the editor’s clear duty to publish what the author wants to say, even if it is not his/her own view.” I have here followed my own advice, and have not intervened in this exchange.

It is a coincidence that while this pair of articles was being prepared for the press, Geoff Bamford offered me a short article which likewise deals with a fundamental point of the Buddha’s teaching – indeed, one which could be said to be related to what Douglass and Alex are discussing. Geoff takes issue with an interpretation currently being offered by the famous Stephen Batchelor – and he has just had time to show Stephen the piece. I hope therefore that this too will lead to further discussion.

Even though there has been no shortage of interpretations of the Buddha’s ideas, their breadth and their subtlety ensure that there remains a great deal to say and to ponder over.