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Book Reviews

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Editorial

Richard Gombrich

During my lifetime two publications stand out as contributions to our understanding of early Buddhism which in my opinion will for all time rank as milestones. One is the article by Joanna Jurewicz "Playing with fire: the *pratītyasamutpāda* from the perspective of Vedic thought" (*Journal of the Pali Text Society* 26, 2000, pp.77-103); the other is a book which came out earlier this year, *The Foundation History of the Nuns' Order* by Anālayo (*Hamburg Buddhist Studies* 6, 2016). Jurewicz's article was preceded by relevant articles on Vedic ideas and followed by a book, *Fire and Cognition in the Ṛgveda* (Warsaw 2010). Though the book is not about Buddhism, the review by László Fórizs, published below, both starts and ends by indicating its importance for Buddhology, while Jurewicz's discoveries have rarely been reviewed or taken into account by scholars of Buddhism, so I have thought it sensible to publicise them through this journal.

Jurewicz's work deserves to be understood and followed up by a wide public; Analayo's new book is aimed at an even wider audience, and since it is less technical it may achieve the fame it deserves. One can hardly deny that one of the Buddha's greatest achievements was to preach human equality. One can argue that through his doctrine of rebirth he preached the equality -- in the sense of equal value -- of all living beings, and the capacity of every one of them to attain Enlightenment. However, what is bound to concern us humans most is that he preached the equality of all human beings, regardless of social status (e.g., caste), age or gender. (In those more innocent days, nationality or ethnicity he never even mentioned.) The Buddha's followers are justly proud of his egalitarianism; and historians can observe how it has indeed played a considerable part in allowing Buddhism to spread across the globe and to capture and retain the allegiance of a wide range of populations.

However, there is one conspicuous fly in the ointment. According to the ancient texts – specifically to the canonical Vinaya – the Buddha was extremely reluctant to permit the foundation of an Order of Nuns, and when he had finally been persuaded to allow it, he did so on condition that nuns follow some extra disciplinary rules which made clear their subordination to monks; he also predicted that as a result of this concession, his teaching (the Sāsana) would endure on earth for only half as long as would otherwise have been the case. Even though he said nothing to suggest that women were less capable than men of attaining Enlightenment, he thus seemed not to be exempt from the view, so widespread in human societies, that males must retain the upper hand -- even within the Saṅgha.

Even though there are many passages in the Canon (as Anālayo has often pointed out) in which the Buddha has said that the community of Buddhists must include nuns and laywomen just as it does monks and laymen, Buddhist traditions throughout the world have followed the principle, which they claim goes back to the Buddha himself, that nuns have less authority than monks. Indeed, in the Theravāda tradition and in Tibet they have so interpreted the rules for the ritual of ordination that for many centuries now there can be no Buddhist nuns at all, in the strict sense, and conservative opinion remains that none can be created – a view which in some countries is even enforced by the state. In taking this view they not only rely on the misogynistic tradition just mentioned, but also ignore the Buddha's clear admonition that clinging to ritual forms (*sīla-bbata-parāmāso*) is one of the three main fetters that bind us to *saṃsāra*. This denial of equal religious rights to women is an enormous handicap to Theravāda Buddhism in the modern world, where many women are no longer prepared to put up with this kind of nonsense. It goes very far towards explaining why in most of the world Theravāda is lagging ever further behind the other Buddhist traditions; it also gives the whole of Buddhism a bad name. It has always been the case that people's behaviour often fails to live up to their stated ideals, but in today's conditions hypocrisy and outmoded prejudices are widely publicised, so that anyone who cares about the condition of Buddhism has to admit that the Buddhist treatment of women is often a disgrace.

Anālayo's book proves once and for all that for anyone who claims to follow the Buddha there is no justification for this failure to treat women as men's equals. The book offers a lifeline to those who say that if Buddhism is to have a future, it must have a change of heart and allow women to play a major part, perhaps even the leading part, in its reform. He shows that the texts betray

a gradual building up of a narrative which belittles the role of nuns, and in particular creates an account of the foundation of their Saṅgha which cannot reflect historical reality, because it conflicts with other, persuasive, evidence.

This is not the place to attempt a detailed summary of Anālayo's arguments; I intend to publish a proper review of the book in the next number of this journal. In his brief "Introduction" Anālayo says that he has "critically examined theories proposed by other scholars", "concluding that their failure to provide a satisfactory explanation is in part due to not taking into account all relevant canonical accounts." What this mainly means is that while Anālayo is first and foremost an expert on the Pali Canon (in my opinion surely as great an expert as anyone alive), he has also mastered the Chinese into which the early Buddhist texts were translated from Indian languages, so that he has at his command the many variant versions of texts which most of us can read only in Pali – or indeed in modern translations from the Pali. By scrupulously reading all variant versions of an account , and drawing conclusions from the differences between them, he builds up his story of how misogynists tampered with the original material.

I have stated the matter more bluntly than he does: misogyny does not appear in his index. Besides, he is careful to state: "[M]y intention is not to reconstruct what actually happened on the ground in ancient India, which in view of the limitation of the source material at our disposal would anyway be a questionable undertaking. Instead, my intention is to reconstruct what happened during the transmission of the texts that report this event. In short, I am not trying to construct a history. I am trying to study the construction of a story."

He is being too modest; no one should be misled by this disclaimer. His research shows that what the texts claim cannot be true, and that its incompatibility with what else we know about the Buddha makes it utterly implausible. Besides this, the precise details (unknowable as they are) of what actually happened pale into insignificance. In sum: there is no convincing evidence that the Buddha was reluctant to have a *bhikkhunī Saṅgha*, but quite the contrary.

The *Vessantara-Jātaka* and Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* Narrative

Anālayo

Abstract

In this paper I study a tale whose probably best-known version is the *Vessantara-jātaka* preserved in Pāli. My exploration is informed by an interest in the genesis of the basic trope and its function as a *Vinaya* narrative.

I begin by summarizing a version of the tale found in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* (1) and then turn to the topic of giving to brahmins (2) as well as to giving as one of the perfections (3). Next I take up aspects of the story from the viewpoint of normative Buddhist ethics (4) and from a historical-critical perspective (5), after which I explore its function as a *Vinaya* narrative (6).

1) The *Saṅghabhedavastu* Version

In keeping with a general tendency of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* to abound in stories, the *Saṅghabhedavastu* contains several tales that report past lives of Devadatta. These serve to provide a background to his activities at the Buddha's time. Besides attempts at assassinating the Buddha and creating a schism, according to this *Vinaya* he also killed an arhat nun.[1] From the viewpoint of Mūlasarvāstivada

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* I am indebted to Naomi Appleton, *bhikkhunī* Dhammadinnā, Richard Gombrich, Jonathan Silk, and Fumi Yao for commenting on a draft version of this article.

[1] Gnoli 1978: 255,1 or Dutt 1984: 227,9, D 1 *nga* 286b6 or Q 1030 *ce* 264a1, and T 1450 at T XXIV 148a12.

Vinaya reciters,[2] he thus committed three of the five severe crimes which bring immediate retribution (*ānantarya*).[3] The *Saṅghabhedavastu* reports that, on being informed that Devadatta had beaten an arhat nun to death, the Buddha delivered a story of a former life of Devadatta as an animal in which he acted similarly. This tale serves to show that Devadatta had a deep-seated tendency towards performing wicked deeds from his past lives and also explains why a relative of the Buddha, who even goes forth as a monk, could still go so far as to perform such evils.

The same pattern of portraying Devadatta as an evil character throughout many of his former lives leads the *Saṅghabhedavastu* to present its version of the tale of the prince Viśvantara, a former life of the Buddha. At the conclusion of the tale, the Buddha informs the listening monks that a merciless brahmin, who had brazenly asked for the children of Viśvantara, was a former life of Devadatta. The main story proceeds as follows:

Brahmins from a rival country ask the prince for the royal elephant, and he gives it to them. For this action he is exiled from his country; his wife Mādrī and his two children follow him. On his way into exile, a brahmin asks for his chariot, and this too he gives away.

When the family has settled down in a hermitage and Mādrī is absent gathering fruit, a brahmin asks for the two children to become his servants; the prince gives them to him. Indra/Śakra transforms himself into a brahmin and asks the prince for his wife Mādrī; her too he gives away. Indra/Śakra discloses his identity and returns Mādrī, admonishing the prince not to give her away again. The brahmin in the meantime tries to sell the children at the market in town. They are ransomed by the king, who then recalls the prince and Mādrī from exile.

This sketch of the main elements in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* equally well summarizes a tale found in the eleventh-century *Kathāsaritsāgara* by the Śaivite Somadeva. The resemblance is so close that, even though the name of the prince differs (which it also does in various Buddhist tellings of the story),[4] the name of his faithful spouse Mādrī remains the same.[5]

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[2] Devadatta's killing of a different nun is reported in EĀ 49.9 at T II 803c29, already noted by Mukherjee 1966: 125f.

[3] For a list of the five *ānantarya* cf., e.g. *Mahāvyutpatti* 2323–2328 (§122), Sakaki 1916/1962: 172, and for a discussion Silk 2007.

[4] For a survey of different names of the prince in Buddhist sources cf. Lamotte 1949/1981: 713f note 1.

[5] Cf. also the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* 18.211, Śivadatta and Parab 1901: 616,21.

The *Kathāsaritsāgara* shows that the tale summarized above can function meaningfully outside a Buddhist context. It follows that the identifications of the prince with the Buddha and the brahmin with Devadatta, found in several Buddhist versions of the story,[6] are not indispensable elements in the narrative. By implication the same holds for the idea that the various gifts made to brahmins are part of the pre-awakening path of cultivation required for reaching Buddhahood. Although this is a prominent element in Buddhist tellings, so much so that in one *jātaka* extant in Chinese translation the prince even proclaims that he aspires to the path of the Mahāyāna,[7] in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* the prince just explains that his giving is motivated by his desire to give to brahmins.[8]

2) Giving to Brahmins

The important role of brahmins as recipients of gifts emerges not only from the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, but can also be seen in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* version. Here the brahmin, on being congratulated by others on the wealth he has acquired by selling the children of the prince, affirms that this is his due, since being from the highest caste he is worthy of offerings.[9] This places the dramatic story of the gift of the children within the framework of the role of brahmins in ancient Indian society as worthy recipients of gifts, whose requests have to be met in order to avoid causing any offense. The need to avoid offending brahmins also finds explicit mention in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* version, where, in the episode that involves giving away the chariot, the prince tells his wife that one should never disparage a brahmin.[10]

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[6] The identification of the two is reported in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli 1978: 133,27, D 1 *nga* 200b5 or Q 1030 *ce* 189a2, and T 1450 at T XXIV 184b21, as well as in Jā 547 at Jā VI 593,25, the *Avadānakalpalatā* 23.53, Chandra Das and Vidyabhushaṇa 1888: 658,16 (Tibetan) and 659,15 (Sanskrit), the Gilgit manuscript *Viśvantarāvadāna*, Das Gupta 1978: 63,9 or Matsumura 1980: 158,2, T 152 at T III 11a18, and T 171 at T III 424a13.

[7] T 171 at T III 421b3: 欲求摩訶衍道; already noted by Durt 2000: 151.

[8] Durgāprasād and Parab 1930: 536,39 (§77): *na me sādhyaṃ kim apy asti vācchā tve tāvatī mama, prāṇān api sadā dadyāṃ brāhmaṇebhya iti dvija.*

[9] Gnoli 1978: 133,25: *uttamavarṇaprasūto 'haṃ, dakṣiṇīyo lokasya*, D 1 *nga* 200b4 or Q 1030 *ce* 189a1: *rigs mchog gi nang du skyes pas kho bo 'jig rten gyi yon gnas su gyur te* (Q: *to*), and T 1450 at T XXIV 184b18: 云我是最上, 是人之福田, 合得受供養 (translated in Durt 1999: 176).

[10] Gnoli 1978: 123,23: *na khalu bhavatyā brāhmaṇaḥ paribhāṣaṇīyaḥ*, D 1 *nga* 195a5 or Q 1030 *ce* 183b6: *khyod kyis bram ze ma spyo shig*, and T 1450 at T XXIV 182a26: 汝於婆羅門勿出惡言.

Jamison (1996: 164) reports that "the figure of the Exploited Host, who patiently and unquestioningly accedes to increasingly onerous and often humiliating demands, is almost a stock character in the Mahābhārata", "there are several similar stories in the Mahābhārata about … imperious and capricious visiting Brahmans who take over their host's households and even their lives."

According to Jamison (1996: 168f), "the host's duty of unfailing generosity to a visitor is not limited to the usual food and other accoutrements, but extends to the ceding of control over the persons of the hosting family." Such stories demonstrate "the value attached to yielding without complaint to any demand … no matter how bizarre or painful", providing "an incentive to practice unquestioning hospitality … as no doubt the Visiting Brahman lobby was well aware."

The notion that the requests of begging brahmins have to be met at all costs comes up also in the prologue to the *Pārāyana-vagga*. Having just completed a great sacrifice, Bāvari is unable to give to a visiting brahmin the sum of money the latter requests. The visiting brahmin threatens that after seven days Bāvari's head will split into seven pieces for having failed to satisfy his request.[11]

In the *Pārāyana-vagga* the claim by the begging brahmin is dismissed as deluded, exemplifying the early Buddhist attitude to the trope of the supposed duties of a host towards a visiting brahmin's unreasonable requests and the alleged dangers incurred by upsetting a brahmin.

The commentary to the *Pārāyana-vagga* reports that the begging brahmin had been sent on his mission by his young wife, who wanted him to get money from Bāvari and then buy a household servant who would relieve her of the housework.[12] Similarly, in the *Vessantara-jātaka* the brahmin who begs the children has been sent by his young wife, who wants to have the children as household servants to relieve her of the housework, in particular of having to fetch water.[13] This similarity in the narrative background of these two instances reflects the same basic tendency to ironical exaggeration by depicting a brahmin whose unreasonable demands are motivated by the wish to please his young wife. The portrayal of this brahmin in the *Vessantara-jātaka* in fact brims with a tendency to caricature.

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[11] Sn 983 and T 202 at T IV 432c22; on the trope of splitting the head cf., e.g., Hopkins 1932: 316, Insler 1989/1990, Witzel 1987, Black 2007: 80–88 and 2011: 154–158.

[12] Pj II 582,2.

[13] Jā 547 at Jā VI 523,23.

In contrast to this basic similarity in narrative mode and detail, the prologue to the *Pārāyana-vagga* and the *Vessantara-jātaka* exhibit a substantially different attitude towards the trope of having to oblige the demands of a begging brahmin. Here outright dismissal in the *Pārāyana-vagga* stands out against wholehearted compliance in the *Vessantara-jātaka*. This conveys the impression that the basic trope in the *Vessantara-jātaka* is perhaps more at home in the *Mahābhārata* than in Buddhist discourse.

The spotlight on having to oblige begging brahmins is a general feature of the tale in various other versions, where those who ask the prince for his possessions and family members are invariably actual brahmins (or Śakra disguised as a brahmin). Brahmins are even explicitly mentioned in rather brief references to the story. This holds for a *pūrvayoga* extant in a Gāndhārī fragment, which notes that the gift of the elephant was made to a brahmin.[14] Similarly brief references in the *Jātakastava* and the **Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* report that the prince gave his children to a brahmin.[15] That the elephant and the children were given away to brahmins also finds explicit expression in the description by the pilgrim Xuánzàng (玄奘) of his visit to the location where these events were believed to have taken place.[16]

The same can also be seen from a representation of the gift of the elephant from Goli in Andhra Pradesh (see next page image 1), which shows the prince ceremoniously pouring out water when giving the elephant to brahmins, recognizable as such by the pots they carry (the two behind the one who receives the elephant on their behalf also carry sticks, another signifier of brahmin identity in pictorial representation).[17]

In a *jātaka* collection extant in Chinese translation the children tell their father that, in spite of their youth, they have already heard that according to the Dharma of brahmins one should protect one's wife and children in order to be reborn in the Brahmā world.[18] This implies that for the prince to give away his children (and later his wife) to a brahmin is not in keeping with the very Dharma of brahmins. In fact the children qualify the one to whom they are being given as an "evil brahmin".[19]

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[14] Lenz 2003: 144 (§24): *hastinago bramanasa dite*.

[15] Dresden 1955: 444 (§161). T 1509 at T XXV 146b5: 以其二子布施婆羅門. In a footnote to his translation of this passage, Lamotte 1949/1981: 713f offers a detailed survey of various versions and representations of the tale; for another detailed survey cf. Schlingloff 2000: 198–201.

[16] T 2087 at T LI 881b9 and 881b19.

[17] Chennai Government Museum; courtesy of Monika Zin.

[18] T 153 at T III 60a13: 我雖幼稚亦曾聞說婆羅門法, 若有擁護妻子, 因緣得生梵天 (translated in Durt 1999: 160f).

[19] T 153 at T III 60a5: 此惡婆羅門. In the Gilgit manuscript *Viśvantarāvadāna*, Das Gupta 1978: 56,20 or Matsumura 1980: 149,15, the mother refers to him as a cruel brahmin.

Image 1: The Gift of the Elephant

The *Vessantara-jātaka*, Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*, and *jātaka* collections extant in Chinese translation go a step further. They report that one of the children tried to prevent their being given away by telling their father that the one who has asked for them is not a real brahmin, but an evil spirit.[20] Clearly the motif of having to give to begging brahmins whatever they demand is a central aspect of the various tellings of the story and explains the denouement of the main plot.[21]

Needless to say, brahmins are of course a recurrent feature in the wider *jātaka* and *apadāna* genre, so that their occurrence as such in the present tale is not in itself surprising. What is unusual, however, is the type of gifts they request and receive in the *Vessantara-jātaka*.

3) The Perfection of Giving

Whereas from the viewpoint of the need to fulfil one's obligation towards begging brahmins the basic story is well in line with other such tales in the *Mahābhārata*, as a *jātaka* the same narrative is extraordinary. As Shaw (2015: 513) points out, "in no other *jātaka* does the Bodhisatta make such gifts, encourage others to do so, or speak to his children in this way." Here it needs to be kept in mind that the trope of giving away part of one's body or the whole body differs, since making such offerings only requires directly inflicting harm on oneself, not on others. The challenge to understand and appreciate the gifts made by the bodhisattva in the *Vessantara-jātaka* is in fact a continuous theme in the Buddhist traditions, which can best be explored by taking up the Pāli version and its reception.

Already the *Vessantara-jātaka* itself voices criticism of the prince's generosity. After the gift of the elephant, the citizens point out that it would

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[20] Jā 547 at Jā VI 554,14: *na cāyaṃ brāhmaṇo tāta, dhammikā honti brāhmaṇā, yakkho brāhma-ṇavaṇṇena*, Kern 1891: 62,25 (9.65f): *na cāyaṃ brāhmaṇo ... yakṣo 'yaṃ brāhmaṇacchannā*, T 152 at T III 9c12: 彼是鬼也, 非梵志矣, T 171 at T III 422a19: 此非婆羅門, 為是鬼耳 (translated in Chavannes 1911: 382); cf. also T 2121 at T LIII 165c21: 此是鬼耳, 非梵志也. Although the corresponding part has not been preserved in the Sogdian version, the ensuing passages refer to the one to whom the prince had given his children as a brahmin who resembles a *yakṣa* or a brahmin *yakṣa*; cf. Benveniste 1946: 64 (§1044) and 66 (§1091). For a comparative study of the offering of the children and of Mādrī, with particular attention given to sources extant in Chinese, cf. Durt 1999 and 2000.

[21] The significance of the depiction of brahmins in the *Vessantara-jātaka* has already been noted by Gombrich 1985: 436 and the pervasiveness of this motif in the various versions by Durt 2000: 137.

have been proper for Vessantara to give food, drink, clothes and dwelling places to brahmins,[22] but not the royal elephant. When giving away his children, the son asks his father if his heart is made of stone.[23] When hearing of the gift of the children, the courtiers express their criticism (*garaha*), in that it is wrong for Vessantara to act like this; he can give away slaves, animals, or a chariot, but not his own children.[24]

A critical attitude finds expression again in the *Milindapañha*. Putting the dilemma in succinct terms, the question is: "if one gives a gift that inflicts suffering on others, does that gift result in happiness and lead to heaven?"[25] The allusion to rebirth in heaven reflects the position taken in the Pāli tradition that Vessantara was reborn in the Tusita realm, from where he then took birth as Gotama and became a Buddha.

The dilemma spotted by Milinda concerns basic ethical norms of early Buddhist thought. The point he makes is that, granted that Vessantara wishes to gain merit, he could have given himself as a gift, instead of inflicting harm on others by giving them away.[26] The problem is that, whereas Vessantara has the right to do with his own body whatever he wishes, the authority he has as a father over his children and as a husband over his wife comes together with the responsibility to take care of them.[27] At least from the viewpoint of early Buddhist ethics, he is not free to give them away in a manner that clearly involves harming them.

Given this conflict with basic ethical principles, it is no surprise that misgivings continue to be voiced by modern-day Theravādins.[28] Gombrich (1971/2008: 312) comments on Vessantara's giving away of his wife and children that this not only "strikes us as excessive. It strikes the Sinhalese

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[22] Jā 547 at Jā VI 490,24: *annapānañ ca yo dajjā, vatthasenāsanāni ca … etaṃ kho brāhma-ṇārahaṃ*; for a discussion of the placing of this criticism cf. Alsdorf 1957: 25f.

[23] Jā 547 at Jā VI 549,4: *asmā nūna te hadayaṃ āyasaṃ daḷhabandhanaṃ*?

[24] Jā 547 at Jā VI 575,14: *dukkaṭaṃ vata bho raññā … kathan nu puttake dajjā? … dāsaṃ dāsiñ ca so dajjā, assañ c' assatarī rathaṃ, hatthiñ ca kuñjaraṃ dajjā, kathaṃ so dajjā dārake ti*?

[25] Mil 276,14: *paraṃ dukkhāpetvā dānaṃ deti, api nu taṃ dānaṃ sukhavipākaṃ hoti sagga-saṃvattanikan ti*?

[26] Mil 275,27: *puññakāmena manujena kiṃ paradukkhāpanena, nanu nāma sakadānaṃ dātabbaṃ hotī ti*?

[27] The responsibility of a husband to ensure the wellbeing of his wife is reflected in DN 31 at DN III 190,4 and its parallels DĀ 16 at T I 71c26, T 16 at T I 251b18, T 17 at T I 254a25, and MĀ 135 at T I 641a22; cf. also SHT IV 412.27 R4–6, Sander and Waldschmidt 1980: 58.

[28] On my reasons for having no qualms in employing the term Theravāda cf. Anālayo 2013.

in the same way. The two monks with whom I brought up the subject both said that Vessantara was *wrong*."[29]

Gabaude (2016: 38) notes that "the story has confused and disoriented the East … in Thailand, it has generated hot debates among elite as well as common voices." One critique mentioned in Gabaude (2016: 40) turns in particular on Vessantara's failure to fulfil his moral duties, in that he is "'a king who fails to keep the morality of kings'; in other words, he fails to obey the national interest" by giving away the royal elephant. "Vessantara is 'a husband who fails to keep the morality of husbands': far from protecting his wife … he lets her slip into poverty and even gives her away to another man 'as if she were not a human being'. Vessantara is a 'father who fails to keep the morality of fathers': he does not protect his children … he accepts seeing them beaten in front of him."

Ladwig (2016: 63) reports from Laos the comment on Vessantara that, "the more he gives away, the more problematic and egoistic his generosity becomes. His drive for giving becomes a burden for other people and it produces considerable suffering. His excessive generosity is almost comparable to a kind of illness."

The contrast between the doctrinal framework of the perfections to be cultivated by a bodhisattva and the story line of the Vessantara tale becomes further accentuated by the circumstance that the Theravāda tradition reckons this particular life to be the last in the series of human existences of the Buddha-to-be. This positioning implies that, by the time of this life, the bodhisattva must have already reached a high level in his cultivation of the perfections.

The Theravāda list of the perfections includes *mettā* as well as truth-fulness, alongside giving. Yet it is not easy to conceive of Vessantara's acts as springing from the mind of one who has already perfected *mettā* and truthfulness. The problem is not merely the giving away of his innocent and crying children to a cruel brahmin who mistreats them in front of his eyes. According to the Pāli report, when confronted with his distraught wife, who worries what has happened to the children, Vessantara at first just remains silent for quite some time, and when he finally speaks to her he is portrayed as intentionally using "harsh speech" to make her give

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[29] Cf. also the argument raised by a Sinhalese catechist in the 19th century, reported in Young and Somaratna 1996: 148, that Vessantara's giving away his children and wife "was not a civilized act. Because of giving his children away, they were subjected to much suffering. What merit could one attain by making another suffer? Will any one of you in this audience give away your own wife to another just so that you could gain merit for yourself?"

up her sorrow.[30] Not only does he employ harsh speech on this occasion, but earlier Vessantara is on record as intentionally "deceiving" her.[31] Such depiction of his behaviour would be surprising if the story had originally been conceived as an illustration of a past life of the Buddha-to-be so close to his final lifetime that he had already accomplished the perfections of *mettā* and truthfulness to a high degree.

The commentary on the *Cariyāpiṭaka* (the root text of which also has a version of Vessantara's deeds) proclaims that all perfections without exception have as their characteristic the benefitting of others, and as their proximate cause compassion and skilful means.[32] Vessantara's generosity, however, seems to be carried out to benefit himself first of all, and any benefit to others would only result from his eventual attainment of Buddhahood in a future life. Compassion and the exercise of skilful means are certainly not conspicuous aspects of his conduct. In sum, the perfections to be cultivated by a bodhisattva do not seem to be the natural home for the arising of the story of Vessantara. If the original idea had been to portray the perfection of giving at its utmost extremes, this could still have been done without doing violence to the cultivation of the other perfections.

According to the *Lakkhaṇa-sutta*, the bodhisattva's exercise of truth-fulness in previous lives formed the condition for his gain of two of the thirty-two bodily marks with which as a Buddha he was endowed.[33] Another deed leading to his endowment with another of the thirty-two marks was that in previous lives he kept reuniting families, uniting mother with child and child with mother, etc.[34] Such descriptions do not sit too well with the Vessantara tale as a depiction of the Buddha's penultimate life as a human being.

Now the *Vessantara-jātaka* is at the same time "the last, longest, and most famous of the Pāli collection of Jātaka stories", as noted by Norman (1981/1991: 172). Two

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[30] Jā 547 at Jā VI 561,31: *kakkhaḷakathāya naṃ puttasokaṃ jahāpessāmī ti cintetvā imaṃ gātham āha.*

[31] Jā 547 at Jā VI 541,9 reports that, when Maddī tells Vessantara about a nightmare she just had, even though he clearly understands its implications, he intentionally deceives her to console and dismiss her, *mohetvā assāsetvā uyyojesi.* Collins 1998: 528 argues that actions of Vessantara seem to stand in contrast, at least to some extent, to each of the five precepts.

[32] Cp-a 280,16: *avisesena tāva sabbā pi pāramiyo parānuggahalakkhaṇā ... karuṇūpāya-kosallapadaṭṭhānā vā*; the Vessantara tale itself is found at Cp 7,1 (§9).

[33] DN 30 at DN III 170,15: *saccavādī saccasandho theto paccayiko avisaṃvādako lokassa.*

[34] DN 30 at DN III 160,18: *mātaram pi puttena samānetā ahosi, puttam pi mātarā samānetā ahosi.*

of the three aspects mentioned are closely interrelated, since the Pāli *Jātaka* collection proceeds from short to long *jātaka*s, wherefore the *Vessantara-jātaka* as the longest is inevitable also its last and therefore the final member of its ultimate group of tales, the *Mahānipāta*.

According to Appleton (2010: 73f), whereas "the position of the *Vessantara-jātaka* … is related merely to the number of the verses contained within it", "ideas of chronology and biography were introduced to the collection later, after the order of the stories was fixed. If, therefore, the popularity of the *Vessantara-jātaka* is due to its status as the antepenultimate birth of the Buddha, and this in turn is due to a purely mnemonic ordering, then an inability to explain in what way the story embodies the highest achievements of the Bodhisatta is unsurprising."

Appleton and Shaw (2015: 3f) explain that "the idea that *jātaka* stories illustrate the long path to Buddhahood is not found in the earliest layers of the text", thus "the association between *jātaka* stories and the perfections came relatively late in the compositional history of the *Jātakatthavaṇṇanā*." Appleton (2010: 147 and 149) points out that, although "*jātaka*s were not originally conceived of as demonstrating the gradual perfection of the Bodhisatta", "the framing as Bodhisatta-biography and Buddha-*dhamma* make the story more able to communicate Buddhist ideals such as the perfections, even where the central message of the story itself seems to be of little importance."

Thus it seems fair to conclude that the Vessantara tale quite probably shares with many other members of the *jātaka* collection that it is a final product of an integration of various fables, anecdotes and parables, taken from the ancient Indian repertoire and incorporated into Buddhist narrative lore.[35] Its popularity may at least to some degree be the outcome of the fruitful tension that arises between the denouement of the story and Buddhist ideals.

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[35] Cf., e.g., von Hinüber 1998: 190–192 and Anālayo 2010a: 55–71. Appleton and Shaw 2015: 28 explain that "the *jātaka*s are the product of a broader Indian narrative scene, and the *Mahānipāta* stories [of which *Vessantara* is the last] in particular appear to have a strong relationship with Indian epic sources"; on this topic cf. also Lüders 1897/1940 and 1904/1940 as well as Gombrich 1985. That the same pattern applies to the present case has already been suggested by Fick 1926: 147, who comments that "wir haben es bei der …Vessantara-Legende zweifellos mit einem gemeinindischen, im Volke weitverbreiteten und beliebten Stoff zu turn, der von Brahmanen wie von Buddhisten und Jainisten für ihre religiösen Zwecke verwertet, dichterisch weiterverarbeitet und mit Zügen ausgestattet wurde, die der Bearbeiter zum Teil aus anderen Sagenkreisen entlehnte."

Another argument supporting the impression that the Vessantara tale did not originate in a Buddhist frame of thought has been presented by Alsdorf (1957: 61), who points out the prominent role of indulging in intoxicating drink in several episodes of the tale. The royal palace is described as a place where one is woken up with meat and liquor.[36] When Vessantara departs for his exile, he has strong drink distributed on his behalf.[37] When he returns home, each village along the way is to prepare a hundred jars with liquor for distribution.[38] Such recurrent celebration of the consumption of alcohol confirms that several aspects of the tale did not originate in a setting imbued with Buddhist ethical values.

4) The 'Buddhist' Nature of the *Vessantara-jātaka*

Based on his detailed study, Alsdorf (1957: 70) then comes to the conclusion that the *Vessantara-jātaka* "is just as completely un-Buddhist or rather pre-Buddhist as the vast majority of the other Jātakas." This has been criticized by Collins (2016: 4), who sees this conclusion "as a kind of cartoon sketch of an outmoded Orientalism: the natives, in their blindness, have all-unknowingly preserved as their favorite Buddhist text something that in fact, as revealed by the dogged philological labors of the rationalist Herr Professor in his European library, has in itself nothing to do with them."

Although the formulation employed by Alsdorf is indeed too strong,[39] when considered in context it becomes clear that his statement is in reply to the suggestion by Winternitz that the *Vessantara-jātaka*'s "purely Buddhistic origin is unmistakeable", a quote with which Alsdorf introduces his assessment. Leaving aside the exaggerated expression "completely un-Buddhist", however, and without in any way wanting to advocate a return to Orientalism, the qualification of the basic story line as not originally Buddhist seems to me to offer a meaningful perspective for understanding the evolution of the tale. If we want to give a fair hearing to tradition, alongside the popularity of the *Vessantara-jātaka* the various instances of criticism, surveyed above, need to be

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[36] Jā 547 at Jā VI 483,5: *surāmaṃsappabodhane.*

[37] Jā 547 at Jā VI 502,11: *soṇḍānam detha.*

[38] Jā 547 at Jā VI 580,19: *sataṃ kumbhā merayassa surāya ca*, stressed again at Jā VI 580,23: *bahū surā.*

[39] Already Cone and Gombrich 1977: xxviii objected against Alsdorf's classification of the *Vessantara-jātaka* as "completely un-Buddhist"; Schlingloff 2000: 201 opts for the preferable expression "originally non-Buddhist". Alsdorf 1977: 25 again employs the expression "un-Buddhist", but without the qualification "completely", in a discussion of Jā 543.

taken serious as reflecting a continuous sense of unease with central elements of the tale.

Collins (2016: 4f) mentions the example of the "Buddhist virtue of *mettā*" to argue that "obviously the values of friendliness, kindness, beneficence, etc., can be found in any and every cultural context, both before and outside of Buddhist texts. So when a Buddhist acts in a kind, friendly manner toward a fellow human being, is he or she then being 'completely un-Buddhist or rather pre-Buddhist'?"

Now the Pāli discourses and their parallels do present *mettā* as something that had been practised long before the advent of the Buddha. A case in point is the tale of Sunetta, a seer of ancient times who cultivated *mettā* with sufficient success to be reborn in the Brahmā world.

The same tale is also of interest to the topic of the evolution of *jātaka*s in general, in as much as the relevant discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* does not identify Sunetta as a past life of the Buddha, an identification found in a *Madhyama-āgama* parallel.[40] This is one of several examples illustrating the same basic pattern, also evident in the *Vessantara* tale, of stories being not necessarily conceived of from the outset as former existences of the Buddha.

Whether or not Sunetta is explicitly identified as a past life of the Buddha, this tale does imply that tradition itself considered *mettā* to be "pre-Buddhist" in the sense that its practice was already known and practised before Gotama Buddha started to teach. Such recognition even takes the form of pointing out in what way the practice of *mettā* taught by Gotama Buddha differs from the cultivation of *mettā* by his contemporaries.[41] The decisive difference is found in yoking *mettā* to the arousing of the awakening factors. In this way the example of *mettā* illustrates that to conceptualize certain ideas or practices as "pre-Buddhist" or "not originally Buddhist" is very much in keeping with a position at times adopted by the tradition itself.

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[40] MĀ 8 at T I 429b29, reported after referring to his level of rebirth, which has a counterpart in AN 7.62 at AN IV 104,22; cf. also Anālayo 2010a: 70. A version in the Tibetan *Bhaiṣayavastu* can be found in D 1 *kha* 261b6 or Q 1030 *ge* 243a2; for a reference to a *Sunetra-jātaka* in the *Vyākhyāyukti-ṭīkā* cf. Skilling 2000: 343.

[41] A query in this respect by non-Buddhists is reported in SN 46.54 at SN V 116,29 and its parallels SHT IX 2051Vd, Bechert and Wille 2004: 69, and SĀ 743 at T II 197b27; cf. also the discussion in Gethin 1992: 177–182.

5) The *Vessantara-jātaka* in Historical-critical Perspective

Collins (2016: 5) continues his criticism of Alsdorf by stating that "much more important than the issue of unnecessary identity language is the fact that the search for an original ur-text, founded in Western classical scholarship on the written texts of Greek and Latin, misunderstands the narrative traditions of South and Southeast Asia, where a complex mixture and overlap of orality and literacy makes the search for origins quixotic at best."

I am not sure if we need to dismiss Alsdorf's study as being informed by a quest for the ur-text, or whether it could not rather be read as offering a historical-critical perspective that prevents mistaking the *Vessantara-jātaka* for an ur-text. An example is his suggestion that a misplacing in sequence of a verse seems to have led to the impression that, after the horses had been given away to begging brahmins, the chariot was still being drawn by draught animals. This then would have led to the arising of a prose narration according to which *deva*s intervened, taking the form of deer to draw the chariot.[42] The suggestion by Alsdorf seems to offer a reasonable hypothesis and has been accepted as such, for example, by Cone and Gombrich (1977: xxxii), who comment that "this explanation appears to us convincing. The supernatural incident generated by a chance misunderstanding appealed to contemporary sentiment, and became embedded in the tradition." The prose description resulting from this apparent error could then in turn have influenced Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*, which has a similar episode.[43]

With all due awareness granted to the complexity of the interrelations and cross-fertilizations between different tellings of this story in the oral and eventually in the written medium, it is still possible to discern in a broad manner stages of development, such as to propose that a mix-up in the sequence of the canonical verses could have led to a particular prose description in the *Jātaka* commentary.[44] The type of historical perspective

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[42] Alsdorf 1957: 36–38. The suggestion is that verse 215 has its proper place before 214; the prose description of the intervention by *deva*s is found in Jā 547 at Jā VI 512,14.

[43] Kern 1891: 59,6 (no. 9 §45); the parallelism in this respect between the *Jātakamālā* and the *Vessantara-jātaka* has already been noticed by Fick 1926: 153.

[44] Collins 2016: 11f also comments that it seems to him that "*jātaka* stories were originally in prose and verse combined (in Sanskrit called the *campū* style), which the later tradition has bifurcated into canonical verses and prose commentary." A close study of the *Udāna* collection as another text in the same *Khuddaka-nikāya* shows the existence of a versified nucleus accompanied

that emerges in this way shows that the *Vessantara-jātaka* is the product of a gradual evolution. In its present form the Pāli prose, and by implication also Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*, show the incorporation of a later element. Versions that do not have the intervention by *deva*s to pull the chariot stand a good chance of having preserved an earlier version of the account of the prince's journey into exile. This is helpful in so far as it counters a tendency, sometimes found even in contemporary scholarship, to conceive the Pāli version of a particular text as invariably the most original version at our disposition.[45]

This is in fact what Collins (2016: 6) does to some degree, when he refers to the *Vessantara-jātaka* as "the earliest and most prestigious telling we now have. But that does not make it an ur-text of which other tellings are versions or variants. Better than the chronological language of original and later versions is a distinction … between 'authoritative' and 'oppositional' tellings."[46]

It is hard for me to see how the *Vessantara-jātaka* could be considered the earliest telling we have.[47] There seems to be no *a priori* reason why the tale summarized above from the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, for example, or one of the other *jātaka* versions preserved in at times fairly early Chinese translations, might not have preserved more archaic elements. In fact none of these versions has the intervention of *deva*s to pull the horse-less chariot, making it reasonable to assume that, at least in this respect, they

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by a more fluctuating prose, which due to its later date of completion only became part of the canonical collection in some reciter traditions; cf. Anālayo 2009. Such a pattern, where a more fixed base text is accompanied by a commentary more open to variation and change, can also be seen at work in the relationship between the code of rules and the accompanying stories in *Vinaya* literature; cf. Schlingloff 1963. The same emerges from a comparative study of the early discourses; cf. Anālayo 2010b. In fact the same can even be discerned in the early stage of evolution of the Abhidharma; cf. Anālayo 2014a: 79–89. This pattern is so pervasive in Buddhist literature as to make it safe to conclude that the case of the *Jātaka* collection follows the same model, in that only the verses are canonical simply because they served as a more fixed base text whose more variable prose commentary only became fixed at a subsequent time, too late for it to become part of the canonical text.

[45] For a more detailed criticism of the assumption that the Pāli version must invariably be the earliest textual witness at our disposition cf. Anālayo 2016.

[46] Collins 2016: 19–23 offers a detailed survey of translations of different versions of the tale, showing that his assessment of the Pāli version as the earliest and most authoritative was made in awareness of the extant parallels.

[47] Already Lienhard 1978: 139 suggested that the *Vessantara-jātaka* is the oldest version we have.

offer an earlier account of the episode of the gift of the horses and/or the chariot than the Pāli version.[48]

Nor is the distinction between 'authoritative' and 'oppositional' tellings necessarily more relevant, since Mūlasarvāstivāda reciters in India need not even have been aware of the Theravāda *Vessantara-jātaka*. Even if they had been aware of it, which is not particularly probable, they would not have considered it as authoritative and quite likely also not as oppositional.

In short, it seems to me that adopting a historical-critical perspective is a useful approach to the study of a particular tale, enabling us to explore the probable framework of conditions that would have influenced the coming into being of the text in its present form.[49] The wish to avoid the quest for an ur-text need not lead us to the opposite stance of disregarding that there have been pre-versions to the text we have in hand. Such an opposite stance can easily led to ignoring historical layers in the development of a particular text, thereby potentially also ignoring the multiplicity of conditions, cross-fertilizations and other dynamics that have influenced the oral transmission of what we now access in the form of a written testimony of a particular instance of this complex process. Once the indeed unwarranted valorisation of anything early as intrinsically superior to later 'degenerations' has been left behind, the historical dimension as such offers an important tool for contextualization that should not be too easily dismissed.[50]

On this basis and without thereby in any way intending to turn a blind eye to the complexity of the range of conditions that would have influenced the genesis of the tale in its various manifestations, I propose the conclusion that the tale summarized at the beginning of this article quite probably originated in dialogue with the importance of unfaltering hospitality to brahmins. Its present form in the Buddhist traditions does appear to be comparable to the

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[48] The *Saṅghabhedavastu* reports only a single gift of chariot and horses together; cf. Gnoli 1978: 123,29, D 1 *nga* 195a6 or Q 1030 *ce* 183b8, and T 1450 at T XXIV 182b6 (on versions of this tale in the *Bhaiṣajyvastu* cf. the survey in Yao 2012: 1191 §11). In T 152 at T III 9a8 and T 171 at T III 420c15 the prince first gives away the horses and then pulls the chariot himself, before giving away the chariot as well. T 153 at T III 59b15 does not report that the prince departed into exile on a chariot drawn by horses, so that here the whole episode of giving these away is not found.

[49] With this I do not intend to take the position that there cannot be meaningful explorations of the *Vessantara-jātaka* apart from historical considerations, such as, e.g., the one recently offered by Shì 2015.

[50] On the unfortunate tendency to disregard the historical dimension in the academic study of Buddhism cf., e.g., Gombrich 2003: 4ff.

case of *mettā*, in that a practice or story has been adopted and imbued with Buddhist values by relating it to qualities concerned with awakening, be these the awakening factors in the case of *mettā* or the perfections in the case of the *jātaka* tale.

6) The Function of the Viśvantara Tale as a *Vinaya* Narrative

The suggestion that the tale of Viśvantara takes its basic plot from concern with hospitality to brahmins leads me to the question of its function in the Buddhist traditions. Whereas in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* the story serves to illustrate to the monks the evil nature of Devadatta, this is not the only context for this story to manifest in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*. Another telling can be found in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the same *Vinaya*.[51] In the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* the tale is addressed to a king and serves the function of illustrating the bodhisattva's practice of generosity undertaken for the sake of his full awakening.[52] As a result of this different setting, the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* concludes with the Buddha only identifying the generous prince as a past life of his, without any mention of Devadatta.[53]

The two settings conveniently illustrate how narratives can be put to different uses within a *Vinaya* framework. One such usage is to provide to the monks a narrative background to legal matters, here in particular schism, *saṅghabheda*. Another usage is for narratives to be employed when teaching laity the importance of generosity. Needless to say, for a mendicant community like the Buddhist monastic order both concerns are of considerable importance. Whereas stories

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[51] Durt 2000: 138 notes a difference between the two Chinese version, as in T 1448 at T XXIV 66a19 not only the brahmin asking for the prince's wife, but also the one who asks for the children is an apparition caused by Śakra. This creates an internal inconsistency, as later this brahmin brings the children to the town where they are going to be ransomed by their grandfather, something he does on being influenced by Śakra, so that in this episode the two are clearly different protagonists; cf. T 1448 at T XXIV 68a15. The idea that Śakra was the one to ask for the children can also be found in a Newar telling of the story, Emmrich 2016: 191, and according to Tucci 1949: 469 in a Tibetan painting. A conflation of these two episodes could naturally occur in art, given that in pictorial depiction there is a tendency to portray successive episodes in a single image (cf., e.g., Schlingloff 1981), which could easily have led to the Śakra motif being mistakenly related to the previous gift of the children as well.

[52] D 1 *kha* 219a6 or Q 1030 *ge* 206b2 and T 1448 at T XXIV 64c26. The Tibetan *Bhaiṣajyavastu* has a second telling of the tale, summarized in Yao 2012: 1190–1192; for corresponding Sankrit fragments cf. the survey in Yao 2015: 297.

[53] D 1 *kha* 227b2 or Q 1030 *ge* 214a2 and T 1448 at T XXIV 68b13.

of monastic misconduct would not have been apt for public consumption,[54] tales of the heroic exploits of the Buddha-to-be, like the Viśvantara narrative, would have furnished Mūlasarvāstivāda monastics with convenient material for preaching purposes.

Such uses explain why *Vinaya* literature can incorporate so many tales, a tendency particularly evident in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, but also apparent in the *Vinaya* texts of other schools. *Vinaya* texts as the source for rules to train monastics in behaviour and etiquette naturally lend themselves to the incorporation of other material considered relevant for training monastics, such as training their teaching skills. This almost inevitably leads to the integration of various stories, which not only serve to attract (and entertain) potential monastic reciters by providing narrative background to legal actions, but also equip them with material that can be employed in teaching activities.

Understood in this way, a legalistic discussion of a rule and a *jātaka* found side by side in a *Vinaya* text are not as surprising as this may seem at first sight, since they express closely related concerns. Thus a collection of tales like the *Mahāvastu*, as argued convincingly by Tournier (2012), is indeed a *Vinaya* text.

According to Haribhaṭṭa's *Jātakamālā*, the delivery of *jātaka*s falls into place, once a sermon has been given, by way of illustrating the teaching in additional detail, comparable to the light provided by a torch, thereby becoming a source of happiness for the audience.[55] This points to a function of *jātaka*s in order to flesh out abstract teachings and, needless to say, at the same time also entertain the audience. The edifying and entertaining aspects of *jātaka* literature are also noted by the Chinese pilgrim Yìjìng (義淨),[56] who is credited with translating the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* into Chinese.

In modern days, as pointed out by Ladwig (2016: 57), "'giving' moral precepts and explaining virtuous models of behavior … is considered one of the main tasks of a Buddhist monk. An important part of sermon making is its performance and aesthetics."

Combined with the setting in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu*, this helps to explain another dimension of the success of the Viśvantara tale in different Buddhist cultures.

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[54] The Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* explicitly states that *Vinaya* material is to be taught to monastics, not to laity; cf. T 1442 at T XXIII 672c4: 毘奈耶教是出家軌式, 俗不合聞.

[55] Hahn 2011: 4,27 (§8): *dhārmakathiko hy ārṣasūtram anuvarṇya paścād bodhisattvajātakānu-varṇanayā citrabhavanam iva pradīpaprabhayā sutarāṃ uddyotyati śrotrjanasya ca manasy adhikāṃ prītim utpādayatīti.*

[56] T 2125 at T LIV 227c29.

Such success does not appear to be in spite of its unusual encouragement of relentless giving, which has a more natural home in the *Mahābhārata*, but quite probably precisely because of this feature. Alongside the fruitful tension this depiction creates with Buddhist ethical values, the basic portrayal of the Buddha-to-be engaging in such giving can serve to encourage doing the same, albeit on a lesser scale.[57]

Cone and Gombrich (1977: xxv) note that "Buddhist monks replaced brahmins as an economically parasitic class". Thus a tale that portrays uncompromising willingness to give to brahmins can easily be employed to encourage generosity to Buddhist monastics as those who have replaced the brahmins in Buddhist societies. Regarding the need for monastics to encourage giving, Findly (2003: 337) explains that "several strategies are devised in order to capture donors' attention within the marketplace of current young religious movements, and to bind their attention to this particular movement for the long term. The most important of these strategies is the development of a doctrinal soteriology for householders that deals with proper acquisition and use of wealth and that provides a clear status-producing system of merit for those who give to the Saṅgha."

The suggested function of the tale that emerges from the type of setting depicted in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* accords with the results of research done on teachings of the *Vessantara-jātaka* in Theravāda societies. Spiro (1970/1982: 108) explains that "taught to every schoolboy, alluded to frequently in conversation, recounted repeatedly in sermons … the story of Prince Vessantara is probably the best known and most loved of all Buddhist stories. Its sacrificial idiom provides the charter for and reinforces the Burmese belief in the religious efficacy of giving." Ladwig (2016: 60) reports from Laos that "monks like to employ it in order to point out the meritorious character of giving, refer to the great rewards Vessantara received through his generosity, and motivate the laypeople to follow his example on a more moderate level and make regular donations to the temple."

Alongside an encouragement to generosity, the dramatic setting of the tale, as a result of a fertile friction between a Brahminical trope and Buddhist values,

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[57] Das Gupta 1978: 32 reasons that "even in its original pre-Buddhist form this legend must have been an excellent example of charity, and this was the fact which encouraged the Buddhist monks to adopt this legend for preaching charity. They not only adopted the existing tale, but also magnified the idea of charity prevailing already in this pre-Buddhist legend and developed it into a Buddhist legend by amalgamating it with the Buddha, bodhi and bodhisattva" notions.

also speaks to the audience at several levels. Emmrich (2016: 191) explains one of the functions of the story to be "to encourage the female listeners to picture themselves as Madrī and to put them into a position where they are forced to negotiate among the pressures of their own household duties, their own affective marital expectations, and the anxieties produced by the aspirations of their more or less bodhisattvalike husbands … the telling of this story is as much an appeal to domestic piety as an occasion when domestic unhappiness, its relentless and seemingly unchangeable nature, finds a public place of articulation." Heim (2003: 538) notes that "the text gives direct cues — and permission — to its hearer to feel apprehension and ambivalence".

These features taken together provide a meaningful background to the success of the tale in the Buddhist traditions. Besides being apt for popular teaching, however, the occurrence of the same tale in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* points to the fact that entertaining stories were not lost on the monastic reciters and their brethren.[58]

Here it also needs to be kept in mind that Mūlasarvāstivāda monastics would quite probably have perceived the story of Viśvantara as a factual account of something that actually happened, comparable to a background story in the *Vinaya* that purports to explain why the Buddha promulgated a particular *pārājika* rule. Both would have been experienced as equally "real".

In relation to the tale that depicts the promulgation of the first *pārājika* rule concerning celibacy, I have argued that the differences that emerge from a comparative study of this story in various *Vinaya*s show that this type of narration has to be understood in terms of their teaching function in the context of legal education, in the sense that such stories reflect the needs and concerns of those responsible for the teaching, transmission, and codification of the different *Vinaya*s, but not necessarily what actually happened on the ground.[59]

The present study, together with another study of the background narration to the *pārājika* on killing and assisting in suicide,[60] further confirms the need to consider *Vinaya* narrative on its own terms. Viśvantara's exploits form part of the narrative embedding of what for the early Buddhist monastic community

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[58] The attraction of entertainment evident in *Vinaya* narrative can fruitfully be related to art, where Zin 2015: 136 observes that "one of the main characteristics of early Buddhist art is the placement of … representations relevant for enlightenment … next to depictions of a merely auspicious nature, which are propitious for material prosperity but not for enlightenment."

[59] Anālayo 2012: 416 and 424.

[60] Anālayo 2014b.

appears to have been a major crisis: the schism attempt by Devadatta. It thus stands on a par with the narrations related to the *pārājika* rules on celibacy and killing. Nevertheless, the story of Viśvantara hardly gives us a historically accurate picture of events that took place in ancient India. What it does offer, instead, is a window on the concerns, needs, and attitudes of those responsible for the transmission and final shape of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, and by extension of *Vinaya* literature in general. It therefore seems to me vital that a mode of reading *Vinaya* narrative is found that proceeds beyond the naïve literalism with which at times this type of literature is approached and which is able to accommodate similarly the depiction of events leading to a monastic misdeed as well as a *jātaka* like the one studied in this paper.

Conclusion

Basic elements of the tale known in the Pāli tradition as the *Vessantara-jātaka* appear to reflect the influence of a setting imbued with brahminical values and stand in conversation with that, in particular with the trope, recurrent in the *Mahābhārata*, of the host's duty to provide all and everything a begging brahmin might ask for. The adoption of this story in the Buddhist tradition naturally finds its home within the scheme of perfections a bodhisattva is expected to achieve during the path to Buddhahood. As a result of this adoption, some aspects of the story contrast to the early Buddhist normative ethical perspective.

The popularity of the tale among monastic teachers would quite probably have been inspired by the potential of employing the tale's depiction of relentless generosity to encourage giving among lay supporters. The attraction held by the same tale among Buddhist audiences would to some extent be the result of the fertile field of friction caused by the transposition of the basic plot into the setting of the perfections, allowing room for the articulation of ambivalence and the cathartic experiencing of related emotions.

The employment of the tale in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* points to twin concerns of monastic story telling: fleshing out legal concerns through narrative embellishment and providing a convenient stock of tales for preaching purposes, especially for ensuring the continuity of a mendicant tradition by encouraging generosity. Together with the background narration to various rules, the occurrence of *jātaka* tales in *Vinaya* literature reflects related aspects in the training of monastics and alerts to the potential as well as the limitations of such tales for reconstructing the actual situation on the ground.

Abbreviations

AN	*Aṅguttara-nikāya*
Cp	*Cariyāpiṭaka*
Cp-a	*Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā*
D	Derge edition
DĀ	*Dīrgha-āgama*
DN	*Dīgha-nikāya*
EĀ	*Ekottarika-āgama*
Jā	*Jātaka*
MĀ	*Madhyama-āgama*
Mil	*Milindapañha*
Pj	*Paramatthajotikā*
Q	Peking edition
SĀ	*Saṃyukta-āgama*
SHT	Sanskrithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden
SN	*Saṃyutta-nikāya*
Sn	*Sutta-nipāta*
T	Taishō edition (CBETA)

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A Brief Criticism of the 'Two Paths to Liberation' Theory

Anālayo

Abstract

The present paper briefly points out problems with the assumption that the early Buddhist discourses are best read as reflecting a tension between two contrasting accounts of how liberating insight is gained, one of which involves a purely intellectual understanding of the four noble truths and the other relies on absorption attainment as productive of insight in and of itself.

Introduction

The present reflections are stimulated by an article by Grzegorz Polak published in the last issue of the *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies*.[1] In what follows I try to clear the ground for further discussion by taking up a theory advocated by previous scholars who believe they have discerned an irreconcilable conflict between the advocates of two distinct paths to liberation in early Buddhist discourse. I first briefly look at this theory, then demonstrate

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[1] Polak 2016. My original plan was to reply with a detailed criticism. However, personal contact with the author made me aware of his academically isolated situation, which explains what I perceived as a lack of acquaintance with relevant publications and a questionable methodology. Therefore in what follows I decided to focus more in general on problems that I see as being related to the main topics at issue.

problems with one of its main planks, the belief that the scheme of the four noble truths stands for an intellectual form of understanding only, and then argue that the consequent assumption that absorption attainment equals the gaining of liberating insight cannot be sustained in light of certain basic understandings of absorption in the early discourses.

The Two Paths Theory

The theory of two contrasting paths to liberation harkens back to an article published by de La Vallée Poussin in 1929, in which he argued that a discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (AN 6.46)[2] opposes meditators to those who reach liberation by mere reflection.[3] By way of background to his taking up this position, it could be pertinent that 1929 falls within the period in which de La Vallée Poussin would have been working on his annotated translation of the *Abhidharmakośa*, published in six volumes from 1923 to 1931.[4] This makes it fairly probable that his approach and thinking were influenced by Buddhist exegesis as expressed by scholars such as Vasubandhu.

A clear-cut division between tranquillity and insight of the type found regularly in Buddhist exegetical works — best known in this respect is probably the *Visuddhimagga* by Buddhaghosa — does not necessarily correspond to the situation in the early discourses. In such discourses *samatha* and *vipassanā* are rather interrelated qualities, instead of representing two separate meditation practices.[5] Needless to say, this does not mean that there could not be discernible differences and even tensions between an emphasis on tranquillity or on insight. The point I intend to make is only that the assumption of two conflicting approaches to liberation, the one requiring a mode of intellectual reflection and the other being based solely on ecstatic absorption, does not accurately reflect what emerges from the early discourses. Nor does such a position accord particularly well with the bulk of later exegesis, but this is not what the present article is concerned with, as my concern is only to contrast the notion of two paths to liberation with the position taken in the early discourses.

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[2] AN III 355,1.

[3] Cf. de La Vallée Poussin 1929. In a subsequent paper, de La Vallée Poussin 1936/1937: 189f then argued that "on peut … discerner dans les sources bouddhiques, anciennes ou scolastiques, deux théories opposées … la théorie qui fait du salut une œuvre purement ou surtout intellectuelle; la théorie qui met le salut au bout des disciplines ascétiques et extatiques."

[4] Cf. de La Vallée Poussin 1923/1971, 1924/1971, 1926/1971, 1925/1980a, 1925/1980b, and 1931/1980.

[5] Cf., e.g., Bergonzi 1980, Cousins 1984, Anālayo 2003: 88–91 and 2006, and Gangajot 2016.

Before moving on to that topic, however, it could briefly be mentioned that the mode of presentation in later tradition might be the result of an understandable attempt to standardize accounts of the path of practice, which the early discourses describe with some variations. Although such standardization yields neat theoretical presentations, a problem inevitably results from the fact that theoretical accounts can only describe one item at a time. There is therefore an inherent danger that cumulative and interrelated aspects of the path recede to the background, whereas its sequential aspects are foregrounded.[6] This might explain the variations found in path accounts in the early discourses, which could be read to exemplify that a single mode of description fails to do full justice to the complexity of actual practice. With the adoption of a unified and standardized mode of description, the interrelation between tranquillity and insight appears to have to some degree faded out of sight in substantial parts of Buddhist exegetical activity. This development would in turn have fuelled interpretations of the two paths to liberation type, such as those proposed by de La Vallée Poussin and by other scholars who have been influenced by his presentation. However, the position taken by these scholars goes considerably further and results in losing sight of the interrelation between tranquillity and insight to a much stronger degree than do the exegetical traditions.

The theory of two paths to liberation has by now met with recurrent criticism. After referring to de La Vallée Poussin's take on AN 6.46, Eliade (1958: 176, originally published in French in 1954) clarified that in this discourse both of "the two methods … are equally indispensable for obtaining arahantship", adding that "the 'experimental knowledge' given by the four *jhāna*s and the *samāpatti*s does not lead to *nirvāṇa* unless it is illuminated by 'wisdom'."

Swearer (1972: 369) noted that the position taken by La Vallée Poussin "that the 'intellectual' and the 'ecstatic' or 'rational' and 'mystical' are two opposing means to the ultimately real in Pāli Buddhism is severely challenged by an analysis of *viññāṇa* and *paññā*" (which he offers in his paper).

Cox (1992/1994: 66) highlighted the need to take into account the possibility that, instead of a tension between knowledge and meditative concentration, the "final goal … subsumes knowledge and concentration as equally cooperative means rather than mutually exclusive ends." Keown (1992/2001: 82) concluded that two type of meditation "techniques exist precisely because final perfection can only be achieved when both dimensions of psychic functioning, the emotional and the intellectual, are purified."

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[6] Cf. in more detail Anālayo 2016a.

Other papers with criticism of the assumptions underlying the two paths theory and/or with clarifications regarding the discourses quoted in its support have in the meantime been published by, e.g., Gómez (1999), Bodhi (2003),[7] and Cousins (2009).[8] Gethin (1992/2001: xiv) sums up that, "contrary to what is sometimes suggested, there are not two radically different conceptions of the Buddhist path vying with each other: there is no great struggle going on between the advocates of the way of 'calm' (*samatha*) and 'meditation' (*jhāna*) on the one hand, and the advocates of the way of 'insight' (*vipassanā*) and understanding (*paññā*) on the other. In fact it turns out that the characteristically early Buddhist conception of the path leading to the cessation of suffering is that it consists precisely in the combining of calm and insight." Again, Stuart (2013: 44) comments, in a discussion related to the attainment of cessation in particular, that "though there is a 'fundamental difference' between a mindless state of cessation and a mindful realization of the Four Noble Truths, the practice said to lead to these states may very well have originally been singular."

As far as I can see, the two paths theory has by now been successfully refuted and might best be set aside as an erroneous projection of the Western contrast between the thinker and the mystic onto material that does not warrant such an interpretation. Of course, others will not necessarily agree with my assessment. Yet, those who wish to uphold this theory or one of its two main assumptions need to engage seriously with the criticism that has been voiced, rather than ignoring it. At the very least, the notion of two conflicting paths can no longer be taken as representing scholarly consensus, but needs first to be argued by addressing in detail the different objections that have been raised.

Without rehearsing most of what has already been said in those publications, I here simply take up a few selected discourse passages to illustrate the shortcomings of the two main assumptions that I see as underlying the theory of two separate paths to liberation. These are: 1) the notion that in the early discourses the comprehension of the four noble truths is a matter of intellectual reflection only, and 2) the conviction that the attainment of absorption was considered as liberating in and of itself.

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[7] Cf. also Bodhi 2007 and 2009.

[8] Stuart 2015: 9 note 12 mentions also two unpublished papers by Rupert Gethin with criticism of the two paths theory. In Anālayo 2015: 12–15, I surveyed the main passages quoted in support of the two paths theory, arguing that none of these warrants such a reading.

In what follows, in addition to presenting material that in my view undermines such assumptions, I also hope to exemplify the type of methodological procedure that I deem to be required to establish a sound foundation for assessing early and later strata among the early discourses. This is the historical-critical procedure of comparative study of parallel versions. Such comparison reveals areas of agreement and variation between discourses transmitted by different reciter lineages and thereby offers a basis for assessing what forms the common ground among early Buddhist texts. In order to facilitate such study, I present translations of key passages from the Chinese *Āgama*s, so as to enable the reader to compare these with the Pāli parallels that are more readily available in English translation.

The Four Noble Truths

Polak (2016: 89f) notes that the four noble truths correspond to right view, which he rightly recognizes as forming a precondition for the cultivation of the noble eightfold path. He sees this precursory role as standing in contrast to passages that present the four noble truths as an expression of the attainment of the final goal of the path.

Here it needs to be kept in mind that a preliminary understanding of the four noble truths as a guiding principle for setting out on the practice of the noble eightfold path need not correspond to the level of insight into the four noble truths gained with awakening. The *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* and its Chinese parallels agree on presenting each of the four noble truths as a task that requires sustained practice, expressed in terms of three turnings applied to each truth. Here are excerpts from this exposition in the *Saṃyukta-āgama* parallel to the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, which sets in after the first "turning" of a basic understanding of the four noble truths has already been described:[9]

> The noble truth of *dukkha* should be further understood with knowledge … having understood the noble truth of the arising of *dukkha*, it should be eradicated … having understood this noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha*, it should be realized … having understood this noble truth of the path to the cessation of *dukkha*, it should be cultivated …

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[9] SĀ 379 at T II 103c17 to 104a1; for a survey of the parallels to this discourse cf. Anālayo 2012: 13–17.

> Having understood this noble truth of *dukkha*, it has to be understood completely … having understood this noble truth of the arising of *dukkha*, it has to be eradicated completely … having understood the noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha*, it has to be realized completely … having understood the noble truth of the path to the cessation of *dukkha*, it has to be cultivated completely …

In the above extract, for the sake of readability I have employed ellipses to dispense with a repeated occurrence of the expression "when I gave proper attention to it, vision, knowledge, understanding, and realization arose." This expression is found after each of the individual statements. The formulation reinforces what already emerges from the passage itself, namely the need to deepen one's understanding of the four noble truths. This clearly implies that there are different levels of profundity in understanding the four noble truths, which can span from the initial appreciation of one who has just embarked on the path all the way to the profound insight of one who has reached full awakening. The *Saṃyukta-āgama* version then concludes this part of its exposition with the Buddha's statement:[10]

> [So long as] in regard to these four noble truths in three turnings and twelve modes I had not given rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and realization, I had not yet attained … deliverance, release, and liberation.

From a comparative perspective, a difference in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* parallel is that, instead of applying one turning to all four truths and then moving on to the next turning, it rather applies all three turnings to one truth and then moves on to the next truth.[11] This is a recurrent difference among the parallel versions of the discourse with which, according to tradition, the Buddha set in motion the wheel of Dharma.[12] In fact one version found in the *Ekottarika-āgama* just mentions the three turnings and the resulting twelve modes, without working through them in detail.[13]

Alongside such variations, however, the basic notion of three turnings that

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[10] SĀ 379 at T II 104a2 to 104a4.

[11] SN 56.11 at SN V 422,3.

[12] For a survey of these different patterns cf. Anālayo 2013: 33.

[13] EĀ 24.5 at T II 619b3.

need to be applied to each of the four truths is clearly common heritage of the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* and its parallels. This implies that, from the time of what tradition regards as the first sermon given by the recently awakened Buddha, engagement with the four noble truths was clearly *not* presented as an intellectual exercise in reasoned understanding only. Rather, it was considered to involve a prolonged task, expressed with the metaphor of "three turnings". It is only with the completion of this prolonged task that according to the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* and its parallels the Buddha felt qualified to claim he had reached liberation.

Besides, judging from the above passage and its parallels, the four noble truths are not the actual content of the experience of awakening. That is, to describe the realization of awakening with the help of the scheme of the four noble truths does not necessarily imply that such realization takes place in a way that directly involves the formulations employed for describing these four noble truths.[14] In other words, the presentation in the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* and its parallels does not require us to imagine the Buddha at the moment of awakening mentally saying to himself: "This is *dukkha*, this is the arising of *dukkha*…" etc.

Instead of describing intellectual reasoning at the moment of awakening, the formulation of the four noble truths appears to be rather a retrospective description of what happened, based on a scheme apparently taken over from ancient Indian medical diagnosis.[15] The realization itself at the moment of awakening is the experience of Nirvāṇa. This finds expression in the circumstance that the three turnings described in the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* use the terminology of realization only in relation to the third truth. It is with the realization of Nirvāṇa that the cessation of *dukkha* is realized.

The terminology employed in the passage above clarifies also the relationship between the third noble truth and the other three. With the "realization" of the cessation of *dukkha*, *dukkha* is fully "understood" (by having once experienced its complete absence) = 1st truth; the arising of *dukkha* has been "eradicated" = 2nd truth; and the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha* has been "cultivated" to

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[14] This suggestion accords with the recognition by Polak 2016: 103 that the early Buddhist notion of liberating insight at the time of awakening needs to be understood as involving a "psychological mechanism which does not have to be deliberately and consciously practised" in the sense of intentional reflection, although such reflection can prepare the ground for the arrival at awakening by informing the cultivation of insight during the prior stages of the path.

[15] Cf. Anālayo 2011.

its fulfilment = 4th truth. Thus, what the entire set of the four noble truths points to is a realization experience, which is described by analogy with a medical scheme of diagnosis. This four-fold scheme serves to explain the implications of the realization and at the same time enables others to follow up and reach the same realization.

Understood in this way, the four noble truths can fulfil their diagnostic function at the outset of the path, when an initial appreciation of the fact of *dukkha*, its cause, the possibility of its cessation, and the vision of a practical path to this end motivates someone to set out to cultivate the path. They can continue to encapsulate the motivation and deepening insight of the one who walks the path, and they can eventually function as an expression of the arrival at the goal. But they are not the goal itself, just as the finger pointing at the moon is not the moon itself.

The Absorptions and Insight

Polak (2016: 85) introduces his paper by stating that he attempts "to present a model of liberating insight as an intrinsic quality of the *jhāna* meditative state".[16] The assumption that absorption in itself is productive of insight is difficult to reconcile with several early discourses which clearly point to the potential drawbacks of absorption. In what follows I take up two such passages by way of exemplification.

The first passage is found in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* which, in agreement with its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel, describes how a monk who is an attainer of absorption can subsequently get so overwhelmed by sensual desire that he disrobes. Here is the relevant passage from the *Madhyama-āgama* parallel:[17]

> Venerable friends, suppose there is a person who attains the first absorption. Having attained the first absorption, he in turn remains at ease himself and does not strive further with a wish to attain what he has not yet attained, with a wish to obtain what he has not obtained, with a wish to realize what he has not realized. Later he in turn associates frequently with laypeople, makes fun, becomes conceited, and engages in various types of impetuous conversations. As he associates frequently with laypeople, makes

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[16] Another attempt to argue this position is Arbel 2015; for a critical reply cf. Anālayo 2016b.
[17] MĀ 82 at T I 558b2 to 558b8, parallel to AN 6.60 at AN III 394,11.

fun, becomes conceited, and engages in various types of impetuous conversations, sensual desire in turn arises in his mind. Sensual desire having arisen in his mind, his body in turn becomes heated up [with passion] and his mind becomes heated up [with passion]. His body and mind having become heated up [with passion], he in turn gives up the precepts and quits the path.

Both discourses continue with the same assessment for the attainment of the higher absorptions. The two versions also agree in illustrating each such case with a simile, although they show some differences in the relationship they establish between a particular simile and the corresponding level of absorption. In the case of the first absorption, the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* discourse describes dust on a road that disappears after rain (a simile used in the *Madhyama-āgama* for the second absorption),[18] whereas the *Madhyama-āgama* discourse describes no longer seeing pebbles (etc.) in a pond that has become full of water after rain (a simile used in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* for the second absorption).[19] It seems that at some point during oral transmission the similes related to the first and second absorptions changed places in one of these two versions.

Alongside such variations, however, the two discourses clearly agree in their basic assessment that a monk who has attained absorption can subsequently become so overwhelmed with sensual desire that he will disrobe and give up the training. Such a presentation is hardly compatible with the idea that absorption is in itself productive of insight. Instead, it shows that absorption attainment needs to be combined with the cultivation of insight, that the temporary aloofness from sensuality gained during such absorbed experience does not suffice to ensure that sensual passion does not overwhelm the mind on a later occasion.

The other passage I like to take up stems from the *Brahmajāla-sutta*, of which besides the Pāli version several parallels are extant in Chinese and Tibetan translation. These show rather substantial differences in their presentation of the first part of the discourse, concerned with morality, and also have variations in their exposition of some of the different viewpoints.[20] Comparative study makes it fair to conclude that the long exposition on morality in the Pāli version, for example, is probably the outcome of a later expansion. Alongside such

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[18] AN 6.60 at AN III 394,15 and MĀ 82 at T I 558c2.

[19] AN 6.60 at AN III 395,5 and MĀ 82 at T I 558b8 (which has a slightly longer list of things to be seen in the pond, compared to those mentioned in AN 6.60).

[20] Cf. Anālayo 2009 and 2014.

variations, the parallel versions agree closely in presenting the attainment of absorption as a source for the arising of mistaken views.[21]

The *Brahmajāla-sutta*'s exposition on views is one of the few instances where a discourse is quoted by name in another Pāli discourse, a clear token of the *Brahmajāla-sutta*'s antiquity.[22] As far as textual evidence is concerned, the testimony of the exposition on views in this discourse has to be taken seriously as a representation of early Buddhist thought. The relevant passage in the *Dīrgha-āgama* version proceeds as follows:[23]

> When having left behind sensuality as well as evil and unwholesome states, with [directed] contemplation and [sustained] awareness, with joy and happiness born of seclusion, I attain the first absorption: this is reckoned *Nibbāna* here and now.

The *Brahmajāla-sutta* and its parallels continue in similar ways for the remaining three absorptions. As explained by Bodhi (1978/1992: 31f), this part of the discourse depicts "attainers of the four jhānas, who mistake the rapture, bliss and peacefulness of their attainments for the supreme good." The Buddha's assessment of such *jhāna*-attainers then takes the following form:[24]

> Recluses and brahmins who declare [of the first absorption] that: 'this is reckoned *Nibbāna* here and now', [do so] conditioned by feeling, which produces craving. Craving haven arisen, they do not realize by themselves that they are being defiled by attachment through craving and are under the power of craving.

This part of the discourse reflects what Katz (1982/1989: 150) has aptly called a "psychoanalysis of metaphysical claims". Far from being informed by doxographical concerns, the issue at stake in the different versions of the *Brahmajāla* is to lay bare the psychological underpinnings of the tendency to view formation. The central intent is not to present a survey of views held

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[21] DN 1 at DN I 37,1 and its parallels DĀ 21 at T I 93b20, a Tibetan discourse parallel in Weller 1934: 58,3 (§191), and discourse quotations in the *Śāriputrābhidharma*, T 1548 at T XXVIII 660b24, and in the *Abhidharmakośopāyika-ṭīkā*, D 4094 *ju* 152a4 or Q 5595 *tu* 175a8

[22] SN 41.3 at SN IV 287,12; the parallel SĀ 570 at T II 151a19 only mentions the different views, without giving the discourse's title.

[23] DĀ 21 at T I 93b20 to 93b22.

[24] DĀ 21 at T I 93c20 to 93c22 (the passage is abbreviated in the original and only gives the full treatment for the first of the sixty-two viewpoints).

in ancient India or elsewhere, but to show how clinging to any view has its basis in craving. Bodhi (1978/1992: 9) comments that "the primary focus … is not so much the content of the view as the underlying malady of which the addiction to speculative tenets is a symptom." Fuller (2005: 115) argues that "the *Brahmajāla-sutta* proposes neither a sixty-third view … nor the rejection of all views … but knowledge of the cessation of craving. This is right view."

Needless to say, such right view is not the automatic outcome of absorption attainment, as the above passage amply demonstrates. This brings me back to the four noble truths mentioned in the preceding section of this paper. It is precisely the understanding of the role of craving, as expressed in the second noble truth in particular, that is missing in the case of the absorption attainers described in the *Brahmajāla-sutta* and its parallels.

Conclusion

The assumption that the early Buddhist discourses are best read as reflecting a conflict between two competing visions of the path to liberation is, to my mind, the result of an unwarranted projection of the division between the thinker and the mystic as two mutually exclusive personas onto material that does not warrant being read in the light of this contrast. The few selected discourses taken up in this brief paper show that the four noble truths as a diagnostic scheme can encompass different levels of insight and that absorption attainment, in spite of its undeniable benefits for progress on the path, was not considered to be liberating in and of itself.

Abbreviations

AN	*Aṅguttara-nikāya*
D	Derge edition
DĀ	*Dīrgha-āgama* (T 1)
DN	*Dīgha-nikāya*
MĀ	*Madhyama-āgama*
Q	Peking edition
SĀ	*Saṃyukta-āgama*
T	Taishō edition

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The *Bhikkhunī* Revival Debate and Identity Problems:
An Ethnographic Inquiry

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Abstract

The *bhikkhunī* revival movement is a transnational or a global project that has affected alternative forms of female renunciation where *bhikkhunī*-hood had disappeared or was never established. The main objective of this study is to review the identity problems that have emerged due to this new monastic status of *bhikkhunī*-hood. This ethnographic study was conducted in 2011-2012 by interviewing *dasasilmātās*, including executive committee members of the *Silmātā Jāthika Maṇḍalaya* (SMJM), *bhikkhunīs*, and a government officer. Identity problems emerge in relation to the monastic robe, as it is a visible symbol indicating the transformation from one monastic identity to another. The next arena is the seniority or social hierarchy of monasticism. *Dasasilmātās* are not immediately amenable to changes in the monastic hierarchy. Resistance is common, but occasionally they show flexibility in adapting to the situation. Shifting identities have arisen as a new phenomenon due to the tension created by the new circumstances. These identity problems can be considered as new developments within this recent change in female monasticism, part of the complex nature of contemporary Sri Lankan Buddhism.

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Introduction[2]

The *bhikkhunī* revival movement is a transnational or a global project that has affected distant localities where the *bhikkhunī sāsanaya* had disappeared or was never established. On the one hand, it has reshaped the perception of Buddhist female clergy in terms of constructing a *bhikkhunī* ideal. On the other hand, it has led to a revaluation of other forms of female renunciation in Theravāda Buddhism, especially the monastic lifestyle without full ordination that can be undertaken by religious women, *dasa-silmātās* (ladies who take the ten vows). Although it is often assumed that the *dasasilmātās* are a muted group within the mainstream of monasticism, in reality they are a group that is highly affected by the *bhikkhunī* revival movement. Undoubtedly, this global project has an effect on fragmenting the existing alternative Buddhist female renunciants. By attempting to create homogeneity or sameness in these societies by implementing a transnational project, it has led to the fragmentation of monastic communities in several ways. Thus the very concept of the liberalized equality and freedom brought by the *bhikkhunī* revival movement is problematic in this regard. These fractions become evident only when scrutinized carefully, because these alternative female renunciants do not accept what is bestowed on them, but tend to pose counter arguments.

Although a number of studies have been done on the ongoing debate regarding *bhikkhunīs* in Sri Lanka, they have paid less attention to the consequences that have arisen due to the re-establishment of *bhikkhunī* movement, now almost twenty years ago. This research article will mainly focus on those consequences. In particular, I will examine how the *dasasilmātās'* monastic identity is affected by the renewed *bhikkhunī* movement. I begin with the most crucial areas of identity problems. First, I discuss the problems relating to the monastic robe: a visible symbol indicating the transformation from one monastic identity to another. I then examine the seniority system or social hierarchy of Sri Lankan monasticism. Even *dasasilmātās* resist the new changes in the monastic hierarchy, though occasionally they are flexible and willing to adapt. Due to these changes, female monastic identities have shifted.

The *Bhikkhunī* Revival Controversy

Scott M. Thomas, in his work *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International relations* (2005), argues that there has been a global "resurgence of religion". He has questioned the thesis that secularization is a more or less inevitable part of the process of modernization. In his view, religion is adapting to various contexts and continues to exist globally rather than disappearing or diminishing. Similarly, in *Formations of the Secular*: *Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (2003) Talal Asad has summarized the present portrayal of religion and its influences on society:

> The contemporary salience of religious movements around the globe, and the torrent of commentary on them by scholars and journalists, have made it plain that religion is by no means disappearing in the modern world. The "resurgence of religion" has been welcomed by many as a means of supplying what they see as a needed moral dimension to secular politics and environmental concerns. It has been regarded by others with alarm as a symptom of growing irrationality and intolerance in everyday life . . . if anything is agreed upon, it is that a straightforward narrative of progress from the religious to the secular is no longer acceptable. (1)

Feminist movements, including feminist scholarship on reclaiming women's right to freedom of religion, have arisen within the larger context of this global resurgence of religion. Feminist scholarship on religion and its claims have been from the outset mostly concerned with liberal notions of equity and freedom. The feminist struggle in promoting, and seeking to reclaim, the rights of religious women is not surprising. These rights were historically neglected and not adequately addressed. Achieving equal opportunity for the ordination of women has become more significant within those rights. Meredith McGuire writes,

> The issue of the ordination of women is one of the most controversial issues because of its great symbolic importance and because the role of the clergy is more powerful than lay roles. The significance of the ordination of women is that it presents an alternative image of women and an alternative definition of gender roles. (135-136)

The present debate about *bhikkhunī* higher ordination occurs within this context of reclaiming rights that have been eroded (in places such as Sri Lanka, India, and Burma) or never established (in places such as Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Tibet).

In the study of the interrelationship between Buddhism and feminism, less attention is paid to gender inequalities in Buddhism as compared to other major religions. Emma Tomalin thinks that this is ". . . perhaps underpinned by views that Buddhism is less gender unequal than other religions, or that Buddhist cultures are less oppressive environments for women" (108). However, the spread of Buddhism into the West has given rise to a renewed interest in questioning the inherent ambiguities of Buddhism and an intense interest in finding an equal place for female renunciation (*bhikkhunī* higher ordination) in Buddhism. From the outset, liberal feminist ideologies played a crucial role in shaping this *bhikkhunī* debate. However, although the *bhikkhunī* revival movement is sometimes stigmatized as a product of Western liberal feminism alone, in fact it is a product of multiple transnational *bhikkhunī* advocacy projects. South Korean and Taiwanese organizations played a prominent role in the Sri Lankan *bhikkhunī* ordinations.

The recent history of the *bhikkhunī* movement is unfolding and noticeable efforts to re-establish it were visible in the late 1990s. In 1996, ten Sri Lankan *dasasilmātās* travelled to Sarnath, India to participate in the dual higher ordination led by the Sri Lankan Ven. Mapalagama Wipulasara together with the Sri Lankan *bhikkhu saṅgha* and the Korean *bhikkhunī saṅgha*, led by the President of the Council of Korean *bhikkhunīs*, Kwang Woo Sunim. In 1998 twenty Sri Lankan *dasasilmātās* received *bhikkhunī* precepts at an International Higher Ordination arranged by Master Hsing Yun of Foguangshan at Bodhgaya in India together with 132 women from 22 countries (De Silva *Reclaiming the Robe* 128-129). In 1998 more Sri Lankan *dasasilmātās* received the dual higher ordination in their own country from Sri Lankan *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunīs*. On March 14, soon after the *bhikkhunīs* returned from Bodhgaya, Ven. Inamaluwe Sumangala organized and administered this ordination to 22 *dasasilmātās* who had completed their training at his center. With the assistance of the *bhikkhunīs* who had been ordained in Bodhgaya, five senior monks conducted a *bhikkhunīs'* ordination at the Rangiri Dambulla Monastery in the same hall where monks ordinarily receive their ordination (De Silva *Reclaiming the Robe* 129). This *bhikkhunī* ordination was the first to be held in Sri Lanka for 1000 years. According to *Sakyadhītā*, from 1996 to mid 2010 there were around 500 to 1000

bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka and many *sāmaṇeris* waiting to be qualified for Higher Ordination. An exact number cannot be given, as there is no record of it (http://www.sakyadhita-srilanka.org/index.php/Sakyadhita/History). In the year 2003, the first international *bhikkhunī* ordination took place in Sri Lanka. There are ordination ceremonies taking place regularly in Sri Lanka and internationally in which Sri Lankan female renunciants participate.

The new *bhikkhunī* revival movement is liable to controversy due to lack of recognition from *saṅgha* authorities and the government, because religious conservatives considered the very attempt to reestablish the *bhikkhunī* higher ordination (*upasampadā*) a violation of the law of the Buddha or a defilement of pure Buddhism. Nevertheless, the new *bhikkhunī* movement, empowered by its transnational Buddhist feminist networks, proved formidable. Premakumara De Silva has called these Buddhist feminist movements, which were sponsored by feminist scholarship and community, "an inevitable or unstoppable movement..." (25).

The *bhikkhunī* revival movement has become a transnational or a global project for constructing the ideal of the higher ordained *bhikkhunī*. Nirmala Salgado writes, "The ideal of the higher ordained nun . . . represents a homogeneous ideal that evokes the egalitarian vision of a sisterhood among Buddhist nuns across the globe" (*Buddhist Nuns* 211-213). Chandra Mohanty has also commented that the condition of women is universal. She write that "the homogeneity of women as a group is produced not on the basis of biological essentials but rather on the basis of secondary sociological universals. What binds women together is a historical notion of the sameness of their oppression and, consequently, the sameness of their struggles" (56). If we understand the global project of *bhikkhunī* revival in terms of Mohanty's argument, the dominant global ideal of *bhikkhunī*-hood has bridged the differences among female renunciants. In that sense, it has compelled everyone to accept the *bhikkhunī* as the female renunciate ideal. Although this project has the positive outcome of reclaiming women's religious rights, it sometimes fails to recognize the legitimacy of local conceptions of female renunciation. As Thomas Borchert observes, ". . . contemporary Buddhism is marked by a tension between the transnational and the national" (529).

It is important to examine the lives of female renunciants who may have disregarded such influences and how these alternative groups of non-*bhikkhunīs* view the consequences of the *bhikkhunī* revival movement. These groups include the *dasasilmātā* of Sri Lanka, *thila-shin* of Burma, *mae-chi* of Thailand,

donchee of Cambodia, and *maekhao* of Laos. *Dasasilmātās* wear orange or brown robes, the *thila shin* of Burma wear pink or brown, while the *donchee* of Cambodia, the *maekhao* of Laos, and the *maechee* of Thailand wear white (http://www.buddhistwomen.eu/EN/index.php/Texts/BuddhistNuns). These female renunciants mostly observe ten precepts and there are no commonly accepted ordination procedures. Therefore there are large variations in monastic procedures, practices and behaviour.

Non-*bhikkhunīs* are outnumbered in Theravāda countries where the *bhikkhunī* movement has already been established. Although many studies have been conducted on new *bhikkhunī*-hood, alternative forms of renunciants were to some extent regarded as a neglected, abandoned group or "peripheral category of the monastic community-in Thai *mae chee* tradition (quoted in Cook 152)" within the mainstream discussion (see more in Tambiah 1984). Therefore bringing the voices of non-*bhikkhunīs* to the forefront is a timely need within the *bhikkhunī* ordination controversy.

Identity Problems

According to McGuire, "Self-identity refers to each person's biographical arrangement of meanings and interpretations that form a somewhat coherent sense of 'who am I?' Often the question 'who am I?' is answered in terms of 'this is where I belong'" (52). Buddhist female renunciants form their self-identity in part by belonging to a specific monastic group, which also acquires a group identity. But often studies categorize these renunciants as belonging to a specific monastic group as a realm of power even though the renunciants themselves do not believe that they really belong to the said monastic group. For instance, a female renunciant who wanders in sacred premises or lives with her own family members in a separate room may not identify herself as a *dasasilmātā* but just as a renunciant.

Monastic identity is profoundly social because it is constructed through interaction with others. Monastic communities are constructed over time and space by interaction and competing with "the other", i.e., other types of female renunciants, the lay community, and the *bhikkhus*. These identities are defined by the teachings of a particular religion and what has been added through the evolved historical conjunctures. Although society seems to recognize *dasasilmātās* and *bhikkhunīs* as similar renunciants because of the similarities in their outer appearance, they in fact belong to groups that are distinct in terms of

their history, precepts, robe, seniority, etc. Therefore, the visibility of resistance and counter resistance from these two competing female monastic groups is not surprising. But at the same time, as a result of interacting with each other, *dasasilmātās* share the features of the new *bhikkhunī* identity where they see it as more convenient or an enhancement of their monastic vocation. The focus here will be on the identity problems of *dasasilmātās*, in terms of issues related to the monastic robe, hierarchy, and shifting identities. The presentation of counter arguments by the *bhikkhunīs* will be discussed in describing how even *bhikkhunīs* are affected by the same issues.

Bhikkhunī Robe (*kaḍa sivura*) and Pride

In her fieldwork, Cheng has recognized the importance for a bhikkhunī of bhikkhunī ordination and having a bhikkhunī robe. They confer on her the same level of status as the bhikkhu, apparently giving her a sense of equality and empowerment. As stated by a Sri Lankan bhikkhunī:For example, the Chinese SA 490 reports the wanderer Jambukṣadaka as asking Śāriputra thus:

> I have always believed that becoming a bhikkhunī is important . . . when you are a ten-precept nun, you are just like an ordinary lay person. But when you don the (bhikkhunī) robe, you have status, and people respect you better . . . because of the special robe, people know the difference between ten-precept nuns and bhikkhunī. Previously a nun's robe was an ordinary garment with trousers. But the bhikkhunī wear the same as the bhikkhu. And we can do the same works as the bhikkhu. So we are formal monastic members . . .. (Cheng 173-174)

Although the above quotation raises many controversial issues, it is interesting to look at whether is it possible to recognize the differences between *dasasilmātās* and *bhikkhunīs* from the appearance of their robes. According to many *dasasilmātās* who were interviewed for the present study, people do not seem to recognize the difference. Dhammabuddhi *silmātā* mentioned, "People do not care whether we are *dasasilmātās*, *sāmaṇerīs* or *bhikkhunīs*, but what we do is important to them." *Dasasilmātās* hold such a standpoint because they do not like to undermine their monastic vocation as *dasasilmātās*. All these female renunciants perform the same rituals like *bōdhi pūja*, *pirit* chanting, etc. for the laity, except that they do not participate in for *sāṅghika dāna* (alms giving for the

saṅgha) or accept *aṭa pirikara* (eight standard requisites used by the *saṅgha*). *Bhikkhunī* respondents agree to this point as stated by Kusalā *bhikkhunī*: "Most people do not see the difference between these two groups but this difference is seen mostly by their own *dāyakas* (lay devotees). But it should be so as the *bhikkhunī*s need more recognition." She thinks that the difference, not being easily identifiable, is an obstacle to a higher level of respect for *bhikkhunīs*. In other words, she says that there should be a difference and it should be identifiable as they are following *adhi sīlaya*.[3]

The main distinction of the bhikkhunī robe, kaḍa sivura, lies in the procedure through which the robe is produced.[4] Therefore this difference is not immediately noticeable. Dasasilmātās have been using the same colour robes as bhikkhunīs for many years. There was a controversy over dasasilmātās' using robes similar to those of bhikkhus in the 1980s. This was severely criticized by the bhikkhus who point out that they are not eligible to do so (Daily Mirror). According to Anulā silmātā,

> Our greatest *hāmu māṇiyō* (Sudharmacārī *silmātā*- the first *silmātā* in Sri Lanka) wore a white robe. Then the colour changed dramatically. Even *dasasilmātās* are using ocher robes today. It is wrong. But I myself never change this yellow robe. Because there should be a difference between the *bhikkhu* robe and ours.

The very purpose of using a variety of colours was to indicate the difference between *bhikkhus* and female renunciants. The colour of the robe is used to perpetuate the subordinate social status of female renunciants. Here Anulā *silmātā* seems to be an example of the internalization of such subordination. But now there is no agreement on the colours of the robes used by the *dasasilmātās*. Some groups of female renunciants use specific traditional colours. However, this causes confusion among outsiders.

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[3] *Sīlaya* is often synonymous with the precepts that Buddhist female renunciants have to follow. Here *sīlaya* also refers to the "virtue" and "morality" of Buddhist renunciants. For *dasasilmātās* it is ten precepts or *sikkhāpadas*; for *bhikkhunīs* it is 311 *pātimokkha* rules. These high numbers of *Vinaya* rules denote higher virtues or morality. Therefore it is called *adhi sīlaya*.

[4] ... The whole cloth used for the robe is first shredded into parts and then stitched together to appear segmented. This pattern the Buddha himself likened to the paddy fields of the Magadha region of India." This 'kada sivura' simply signifies the intricacies that one should encounter to withdraw any attachment and it would be thoroughly devalued item that which would not even motivate theft... (http://exploresrilanka.lk/2011/08/sivura-the-story-of-the-saffron-robe/).

Although *dasasilmātās* are not particularly concerned about the colours of their robes, there are occasions, when they have had to face problems regarding the different robes. For instance, Dhammakanthi *silmātā* highlighted an important issue faced by the young *dasasilmātās* in her district.

> Some of these *bhikkhunīs* are using the robe to show their power. There is no such worth in the robe . . . Our young *dasasilmātās* are worried about being rejected from some of the places (University), as they do not wear *bhikkhunī* robes. They are worried about their monastic status. Some of these young undergraduate *dasasilmātās* told me that they do not introduce themselves as *dasasilmātā*. Some of them, at sometimes, don *bhikkhunī* robes.

It seems that these young *dasasilmātās* use the *bhikkhunī* robe to temporarily escape from the difficulties they encounter (this is not the generalized picture of all the young *dasasilmātās)*. However, this is not the only example that can be cited to show the uses of the *bhikkhunī* robe by *dasasilmātās* while at the same time they reject the status of *bhikkhunī*-hood. For instance, Dhammakanthi *silmātā* told me that some *dasasilmātās* have worn the *bhikkhunī* robe when they have traveled to other countries. Some of these *dasasilmātās* know that there is more respect for the *bhikkhunī* status in foreign lands; they believe that these countries support the revival of the *bhikkhunī* movement. This creates a contradiction. Although rejecting *bhikkhunī*-hood, they want to garner its benefits. Therefore it can be seen that the *bhikkhunī* robe has a symbolic significance and this is used to indicate the worthiness of the monastic identity of *bhikkhunīs*.

On some special occasions, *dasasilmātās* have been asked to wear robes similar to the *bhikkhunī* robe. It was intended to identify *dasasilmātās* as *bhikkhunīs*. However, this made some participants uncomfortable.

> We were asked to wear that robe. I do not exactly know whether it is a *bhikkhunī* robe. We were not in a position to refuse. I did not like to wear that piece of covering strip. I felt uncomfortable when I wore it (interview with Dhammapradīpā *silmātā*).

It seemed that the organizers of the event wanted to show a common identity shared by student *dasasilmātā* and student *bhikkhunīs*. Perhaps the organizers

were not aware of the discomposure of the *dasasilmātās* or perhaps the resistance shown by the *dasasilmatās* was ignored/disregarded.

Apart from the *dasasilmātās* who were asked or even compelled to don the *bhikkhunī* robe, some other *dasasilmātās* do not care about the difference between the *bhikkhunī* robe and *dasasil* robe. For instance, Suwarnamālī *silmātā* said,

> I do not consider whether I am using a *bhikkhunī* robe or any other robe. It is worn to protect one from the hot and cold climate. Other than that, there is no such specialty. Sometime I wear a *kaḍa sivura* when I am in the *ārāmaya*. But I don a *dasasil* robe when I'm outside. Actually, we don what we receive. Can we ask our *dāyaka*s not to offer *bhikkhunī* robes? They do not understand the difference. I am not going to teach them the difference. If I do so, they will not offer us anything.

Although she says that she is not concerned with what she wears, she chooses to don the *bhikkhunī* robe when she is in the *ārāmaya* but not when she is outside. She has concerns about explaining this to the *dāyakas* as it might create problems with the offerings made to her. *Dasasilmātās* are compelled to act like this, as some of them do not get sufficient donations and offerings. In this sense, rather than following the practices of the *Vinaya* code, they are redefining and adapting to the circumstances of their day-to-day renunciate lives.

Although the *bhikkhunī* robe is an enhancement of their monastic status, *dasasilmātās* are anxious about it. According to them, sometimes *bhikkhunīs* misuse their monastic robe. Dhammacārī *silmātā* mentioned, "The *bhikkhunī* robe has become jewelry for them (*bhikkhunīs)*." Jewelry is a personal adornment used as a marker of a specific social status and personal status; it belongs to the laity. The *dasasilmātās* are concerned that such practices promote vanity and arrogance among *bhikkhunīs*. Dhammakaṇṭhī *silmātā* called this "giving into pride, in ignorance of the consequences." But instead of blaming the *bhikkhunīs*, she criticized the people who have created the problems or who have given the *bhikkhunī* ordination to renunciants. Her argument is that *bhikkhunīs* behave in such an arrogant manner because they are not correctly guided and neglect to nurture the spirit of renunciation. It indicates indirectly that female renunciants, whether they are *dasasilmātās* or *bhikkhunīs*, should always be guided. This again reflects the internalization of subordination by female renunciants.

However, some *dasasilmātās* are very displeased with the arrogance of *bhikkhunīs*. For instance, they call the ordination a "worthless thing" or "piece of board". On the other hand, they seem to pay reverence to their own monastic robes. One said, "We were given this *dasasilmātā* robe and it instilled respect and fear for it. Thus we never do anything unnecessary against it. But those youngsters who don *bhikkhunī* robe do not have *läjja-baya* (shame-fear)." According to Obeyesekere, "Practice of *läjja-baya*—to be ashamed of subverting norms of sexual modesty and proper behavior and to fear the social ridicule that results from such subversion— is instilled into Sinhala children through early childhood training" (505).The *dasasilmātā* who said this comes from a rural background, where she was brought up with a deep sense of *läjja-baya*, and she looks at the conditions in monastic life through the same lens. What she means by lack of *läjja-baya* is the forwardness of the *bhikkhunīs*. This will be elaborated in the following section.

Hierarchical troubles

The hierarchical problems among the Buddhist female renunciants can be identified in terms of the seniority of the monastic vocation. Seniority of monastic vocation is highly respected in the Buddhist monastic community. Seniority is based on the date of higher ordination. *Dasasilmātās* base seniority on the date of their renunciation of lay life. In that sense, *bhikkhunīs* are in a higher monastic position than the *dasasilmātās*. However, when it comes to practice, the situation is vastly different.

The emergence of *bhikkhunī*-hood created a status problem. Although *bhikkhunīs* think of themselves as higher in status than *dasasilmātās, dasasilmātās* do not seem to accept the seniority of newly ordained *bhikkhunīs*. For instance, Uttarā *silmātā* pointed out:

> We were frustrated by the behaviour of some *bhikkhunīs* in our district. There was a funeral ceremony of one of our *māṇiyō* (*dasasilmātā*) and they did not allow *bhikkhus* to perform rituals. They interfered and sabotaged it. The *bhikkhus* were tolerant and patient. We also had to put up with this conduct, as the *bhikkhus* did not seem to have any negative reactions. Not only that, but the same group behaved in an unpleasant way during the ceremony held on *dēvālaya* premises. Again, *bhikkhus* were not allowed to sit in the front seats. These *bhikkhunīs* came earlier and sat. All these things happen because of their arrogance.

I have myself noticed such an incident in an almsgiving (*dānaya*) for clergy in 2012. As a part of the almsgiving there was a *pirit* chanting. When the *bhikkhus* began to chant *pirit*, suddenly one chief *bhikkhunī* who had a microphone began to do the same. But her voice was louder than the *bhikkhus',* and the *bhikkhus'* voices were hardly heard. A leading *bhikkhu* advised all the *bhikkhunīs* not to let it happen again, warning them to be conscious of their position in the monastic hierarchy. It seemed that the *bhikkhunī* with the microphone felt no subordination to the *bhikkhus*. Symbolically the ceremony was an occasion for reconciliation to bring *bhikkhus*, *bhikkhunīs*, and *dasasilmātās* into the same forum. But in the *saṅgha* hierarchy, *bhikkhunīs* are expected to be mindful of their subordinate position, including their conduct, the place where they are, and whom they are with.

All of these examples involve *adhi sīlaya* (higher virtues) that are observed by *bhikkhunīs*. The establishment of the *bhikkhunī saṅgha* was contingent on women agreeing to follow many rules in addition to those laid down for *bhikkhus,* in particular rules of deference to the *bhikkhus*. *Bhikkhunīs* are expected to follow 311 *pātimokkha* rules, whereas *bhikkhus* are expected to observe 227 *pātimokkha* rules.

Although *bhikkhunīs* follow *adhi sīlaya,* some of the senior *dasasilmātās* do not wish to bow down to *bhikkhunīs* who have been ordained recently. For instance, one of the senior *dasasilmātā* was displeased as she had to follow junior *bhikkhunīs* at one of the almsgiving ceremonies. Her proposed solution was to organize two separate rows for *dasasilmātā*s and *bhikkhunīs*. This forced the organizers to have two separate alms givings for *bhikkhunīs* and *dasasilmātās* whereas their intention was to build a space for reconciliation between the parties where they could interact with each other. *Bhikkhunī* Sraddhā shared her views regarding this as follows.

> It is true that we sometimes felt uncomfortable about sitting at an almsgiving together, as they are not even ordained as *sāmaṇerī*. But in our district we do not have any problem. We never think of them as subordinate to us. Our *sīlaya* (virtue) is with us. We keep silence when there are such troubles. We never made any troubles for them. Because we were also *dasasilmātās* before we were ordained. Therefore we never degrade them.

When it comes to practice, it is not surprising that both groups feel uncomfortable in face-to-face interaction, as each group claims seniority over the other. Although some of them attempted to be reconciled, as *bhikkhunī* Sraddhā said, they are not always successful. Sumitrā *silmātā* stated that she and her pupils avoid *bhikkhunīs*. They never participate in almsgiving or any other event if they have to sit with *bhikkhunīs*.

However, there are some rare occasions on which both *dasasilmātās* and *bhikkhunīs* live together under the same roof of an *ārāmaya*. For instance, Tilakā *silmātā* lived with her *gōlayā* (pupil), who was ordained as a *bhikkhunī*. The pupil decided to become a *bhikkhunī* by obtaining the permission of Tilakā *silmātā*, but after the ordination she did not have any place to stay, so she stayed for some time with Tilakā *silmātā*. However, due to the practical problems that both of them encountered, the *bhikkhunī* is now living on her own in a separate small *ārāmaya*. The pupil was now senior in status due to her higher ordination, but neither wanted to worship the other. Moreover, Tilakā *silmātā* told me that after the higher ordination the pupil seemed to change. Thus Tilakā *silmātā* herself helped her to build a separate *ārāmaya*. The pupil often visits her.

> My *gōlayā* (pupil) is senior to me in terms of higher ordination.
> But I cannot offer any reverence (worship) to her, because I am her
> *dasasil* preceptor. Likewise she is unable to do so as she is now a
> *bhikkhunī*. Earlier I felt uncomfortable. But we have got used to it.
> She does not worship my feet, rather she seems to respect me.

Unlike some other cases, this relationship did not give rise to conflict. They seem to have a mutual understanding and a desire to continue their relationship. However, we cannot expect the same on other occasions (see more in Mrozik 8 and Salgado, *Buddhist Nuns* 153-159). In most cases, *dasasilmātās* do not accept the monastic seniority of *bhikkhunīs*. Tusitā *silmātā* added more in this regard:

> We could bow down to [*bhikkhunīs*] if they were in a high status of
> *sīlaya*. There is no such spiritual development, but some of them
> are just arrogant. Therefore we do not like even to sit for *dānaya*
> (almsgiving) with them. They often sit in the front seats. We are
> senior to them, so why should we sit behind them?

To avoid being degraded in front of *bhikkhunīs*, Tusitā *silmātā* seems to present her disinclination for *bhikkhunī*-hood as due to lack of virtue in *bhikkhunīs*. In other words, although *bhikkhunīs* follow 311 *pātimokkha* rules, this *dasasilmātā* does not think these *pātimokkha* rules have had an impact on the cultivation of spiritual development in *bhikkhunīs*, as they use the *pātimokkha* rules as a means of showing pride (a form of power) over *dasasilmātās*.

However, *bhikkhunī* Kusalā had a different response on this issue. "*Dasasilmātās* most probably do not participate at almsgivings with us, as they are incapable of accepting the *sāṅghika dāna* (almsgiving offered to *saṅgha*). Even we did not accept *sāṅghika dāna* when we were *dasasilmātās*." Theoretically, *dasasilmātās* are not allowed to accept *sāṅghika dāna* or *aṭapirikara* (eight standard requites offered to the *saṅgha*) or to participate in *pāṃsakūla* (funeral rites performed by the *saṅgha*). However, more and more often *dasasilmātās* are participating in these events. They are redefining the limitations and boundaries of the monastic sphere of *dasasilmātās*.

It is interesting to see how *dasasilmātās* define the precepts that they follow. They are the same set of *sikkhāpada* that *sāmaṇerīs* (female novices) observe.[5] But according to Dhammacārī *silmātā*, "We observe *sāmaṇera dasasil* because we were given *sil* (precepts) by a *bhikkhu* when we were ordained. That is not the *gahaṭṭha dasasil* (lay ten precepts). Thus we even can wear a *bhikkhunī* robe (*kaḍa sivura*)." What she wants to emphasize is that there is no real difference between *bhikkhunīs* and themselves, as they already follow the same code of discipline for novice renunciants (for more on this, see Salgado *Religious Identities* 935-953). But she also wants to contend that the *dasasilmātā* observation of the precepts goes beyond what laypeople do when they elect to observe the precepts.[6]

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[5] *Sāmaṇera sil* or precepts are the training precepts one should follow prior to becoming a *bhikkhunī*. *Sāmaṇeras* and *sāmaṇerīs* observe the ten precepts as their code of behavior.

[6] For instance, Sumedhā *silmātā* explained the differences between the *gahaṭṭha dasasil* and *sāmaṇera dasasil*. According to her, in terms of precepts, *dasasilmātās* have to follow precepts that are very similar to the precepts that *sāmaṇerīs* have to observe. But *dasasil* (ten precepts) can be observed even by a lay person. There is a difference between the manners of observing precepts. The *sāmaṇera sīlaya* is observed all together at once, whereas *dasasil* should be observed one by one. If someone breaks one precept of *sāmaṇera sīlaya* she/he has to observe all the ten precepts again, as they are observed together. *Sāmaṇera sīlaya* is often given by a *bhikkhu*.

Perhaps one might argue that this is purely a rhetorical strategy on the part of *dasasilmātās* to enhance their monastic status. However, Dhammacārī *silmātā*'s statement was accepted not only by *bhikkhunīs* but also by some *dasasilmātās* who said that they are strictly following the *gihi* or *gahaṭṭha dasasil* by even wearing the yellow *dasasil* robe.

These statements reflect diversity among *dasasilmātās* regarding the precepts they follow. They give different explanations about their practices based on their knowledge, prior experiences, and preceptors. Some of them have received the *sāmaṇera sil* from a *bhikkhu* although they call themselves *dasa-silmātās*; others observe *gahaṭṭha dasasil*. These differences are reflected in the way they wish to be addressed. Tusitā *silmātā* refused to be addressed as *dasasil māṇiyō*. Instead, she proposed the term *mehenin vahanse-* venerable ordained women (a term normally applied to a *bhikkhunī*). She added:

> If someone says simply *dasasilmātā* it indicates certain limitations. Although we follow the ten precepts, they are similar to precepts followed by a *sāmaṇera* (male novice). Sometimes I used to hear them calling us *sīlammā* or *upāsikammā*. At such times, I correct them. We are not *upāsikā* who only observe five precepts. We are Buddhist renunciants who have sacrificed our whole lives for the *sāsanaya*. We should be addressed as *mehenin vahanse.*

Her words indicate that she is totally against being addressed as *sīlammā* or *upāsikamm*a, terms generally used for Buddhist laywomen. Such an intermediary position between the status of laywomen and Buddhist renunciants would not give *dasasilmātās* the appropriate position in monasticism. On the contrary, it would place them in a subordinate position (Bartholemeuz uses the term "lay nun" for *dasasilmātās* to show their ambiguous position). Tusitā *silmātā* proposed *mehenin vahanse,* which is a term used generally for *bhikkhunīs*. In that sense, she claims a status equal to *bhikkhunīs*. Thus when encountering the tension of the monastic hierarchy, *dasasilmātās* claim their own monastic space, which is still controversial**.**

Shifting Identities

As we have seen, both *dasasilmātās* and *bhikkhunīs* have identity problems. Such identity problems have created tension among renunciants, especially among the young ones and particularly in situations where they need to decide their monastic status as *dasasilmātās* or *bhikkhunīs*. Young renunciants now face numerous difficulties in deciding their monastic path.

Meanwhile, I found that some of the renunciants who changed their monastic status had returned to their old monastic status. For instance, Nandasīlā *silmātā,* who was ordained as a *dasasilmātā* in 2001, was then ordained as a *sāmaṇerī* in 2007 with the ambition of becoming a *bhikkhunī*. But she remained a *sāmaṇerī* only for a few months. She encountered difficulties in adapting to the new environment into which she was ordained. After wandering in several places she went back to her *guru māṇiyō* (preceptor-*dasasilmātā*). It could be that she was simply uncomfortable with the new environment. Thus renunciants who decide to change their monastic status may face numerous troubles in doing so. They may be shocked by an unfamiliar setting -- staying with new inmates, new rituals, new way of daily living. If they fail to cope, there is no mechanism for taking care of them. They may become vulnerable and risk becoming destitute.

Uppalavaṇṇā *silmātā* explained that some renunciants who were ordained as *bhikkhunīs* came back within a few months to get ordained as *dasasilmātās*. In such instances, if local *dasasilmātās* are not in a position to solve these problems, higher level organizations of *dasasilmātās* (district or national) can assist. Most of the time, these renunciants were admitted after receiving strict advice. She added,

> Although they are motivated by the outward appearance of *bhikkhunī*s, soon they understand that, there is no such difference. They understand the "freedom of the religious life" we lead very well. Actually, they create problems by changing their monastic status. Sometimes we tell them not to rejoin the *dasasil* order.

Although she wishes to emphasize that there is no difference between the two monastic statuses, even though one could discern this in outward appearance, by saying "freedom of religious life" she unconsciously adds more value to the *bhikkhunī* vocation in indicating the effort one should make to stay as a *bhikkhunī*. However, *dasasilmātā* organizations are becoming stricter about shifting monastic status. Uppalavaṇṇā *silmātā* told me that these shifting

identities are going to be regulated in the near future. Undoubtedly, this will add more complexity to the practices of female renunciation.

Changing monastic status is not easy. It is a hard decision that can be influenced by societal pressures. Rather than thinking about spiritual development, some of these renunciants have to waste their time worrying about the certainty of the monastic vocation they follow. This makes even *bhikkhunīs* (who re-converted to revert to *dasasilmātā*) feel guilty. Their shifting identity makes them more vulnerable to being stigmatized as attention can be focused on them. Therefore both *dasasilmātās* who convert to *bhikkhunī*s and *bhikkhunīs* who convert to *dasasilmātās* face enormous challenges including ill-treatment, being stigmatized, etc. Thus shifting one's identity reflects the inner complexities and dilemmas taking place in the present female renunciant status. Finally, the above argument challenges the common assumption that conversion takes place in one direction only, while at the same time demonstrating how (re)conversion takes place.

Conclusion

The present status of Buddhist female monasticism in Sri Lanka is undergoing dramatic changes because of the newly emerged *bhikkhunī* movement. This article has attempted to look into the vicissitudes of identities of female renunciants who have been severely affected by the above conditions. While the *bhikkhunī* movement is a transnational project which values the liberal notion of homogeneity, it has created new issues relating to female renunciation.

In the Sri Lankan context, it appears that identity and the *bhikkhunī* robe are crucial issues. Al-though sometimes *dasasilmātās* are critical of the impact the new *bhikkhunīs* have on their day-to-day lives, they also seem to have adapted quite well to the renunciant everyday issues related to the robe. In terms of hierarchy, both *dasasilmātās* and *bhikkhunīs* have their own explanations and interpretations. The final discussion regarding shifting identities challenges the common assumption that conversion takes place in one direction only (*dasasilmātās* become *bhikkhunīs*), demonstrating how (re)conversion in the opposite direction also takes place.

This study concludes that *dasasilmātās* have not simply accepted the changes brought about by the newly ordained *bhikkhunīs*. A homogeneous ideal of the *bhikkhunī* would not work everywhere, as outsiders assume or expect. We have seen that *dasasilmātās* are not a muted group and their agency is a crucial factor in this conversation.

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'That *bhikkhu* lets go both the near and far shores': meaning and metaphor in the refrain from the *uraga* verses

Dhivan Thomas Jones

Abstract

The *uraga* ('serpent') verses are some early Buddhist stanzas, preserved in different versions, each with the refrain (in Pāli at Sn vv.1–17) *so bhikkhu jahāti orapāraṃ, urago jiṇṇam iva tacaṃ purāṇaṃ*, 'That *bhikkhu* lets go both the near and far shores, like a serpent its worn-out old skin'. The meaning of *orapāra*, 'near and far shores', has posed a problem for ancient and modern commentators, because according to the usual metaphor of 'crossing the flood' the *bhikkhu* lets go the 'near shore', which is saṃsāra, to reach the safety of the 'far shore', which is *nirvāṇa*. I discuss some commentarial and recent discussions of the refrain, before presenting two possible solutions to this problem: first in terms of the old binary cosmology, whereby the *bhikkhu* lets go the 'near shore' of this world and the 'far shore' of the other, and second in terms of the 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor, in which the *bhikkhu* lets go the 'near shore' of the subjective sense spheres and the 'far shore' of the objective sense spheres. I conclude with a consideration of metaphor in the *uraga* verses refrain, and how the refrain may be an example of early Buddhist non-dualism.

'to be good at metaphor is to perceive resemblances'
Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1459ᵃ

Introduction

The *uraga* ('serpent') verses are a collection of Buddhist *gāthā*s preserved in Pāli, Prakrit and Sanskrit versions. The existence of the verses in these different versions implies both that they were popular among Indian Buddhists and that they are testimony to an early period of Buddhist literature prior to the spread of versions translated into different dialects. Taking the Pāli version (Sn vv.1–17) as an exemplar, though without implying that the original was in Pāli, each of the stanzas ends with the following refrain:

> *so bhikkhu jahāti orapāraṃ*
> *urago jiṇṇam iva tacaṃ purāṇaṃ*

> that *bhikkhu* lets go both the near and far shores
> like a serpent its worn-out old skin.

This refrain presents the reader with a problem: what can it mean that the *bhikkhu* should let go of both the near and far shores? In early Buddhist literature, the 'near shore' is usually a metaphor for this dangerous and unsafe situation, *saṃsāra*, and the 'far shore' is a metaphor for the safety of *nirvāṇa*, so that the Buddhist path is a means of crossing from the near shore to the far shore. To let go of both seems not to make sense. The Theravādin commentary on the *uraga* verses tries to solve this problem by re-defining 'near and far shores' as 'near-shore', before going on to present several alternative explanations of the meaning of 'near shore' and 'far shore'. Modern commentators have come to different conclusions about the meaning of 'near and far shores'. In the following I present the views of old and new commentators before proposing two possible solutions to the problem of 'the near and far shores', both of which have support in the traditional commentary but are not very well explained there.

The uraga verses in early Buddhist literature

The Pāli version of the *uraga* verses consist in 17 *gāthā*s in *aupacchandāsika*,[1] a strict metrical form consisting in patterns of long and short syllables, giving the verses a strong, memorable rhythm. To take the first Pāli stanza as an example, we read:

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[1] Except for Sn v.7a, which is in *vaitālīya* (two measures shorter than *aupacchandāsika*). The Sanskrit parallel at Ud-V 32.77 is also in *vaitālīya*, so this appears to be deliberate.

yo uppatitaṃ vineti kodhaṃ
visataṃ sappavisaṃ va osadhehi
so bhikkhu jahāti orapāraṃ
urago jiṇṇam iva ttacaṃ² purāṇaṃ

One who controls anger when it has arisen
as if treating with remedies a snake's spread venom –
that *bhikkhu* lets go both the near and far shores
like a serpent its worn-out old skin.

The other *gāthā*s use a variety of metaphors to describe: the giving up of passion (*rāga*) (v.2); craving (*taṇhā*) (v.3); conceit (*māna*) (v.4); one who sees that existence has no essence (v.5); the giving up of irritation (*kopa*); (v.6); thoughts (*vitakkā*) (v.7); 'one who neither goes too far nor goes back' (vv.8–13); the giving up of underlying tendencies (*anusaya*) (v.14); distress (*daratha*) (v.15); desire (*vanatha*) (v.16); and the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) (v.17). The six stanzas whose first *pāda* (or verse) is 'one who neither goes too far nor goes back' are each accompanied by a second *pāda*, four of which differ by only one word. Word-substitution to create new stanzas appears to be a feature of this style of oral literature.³ It means that there are really only 11 distinct *gāthā*s in the Pāli collection.

While the Pāli version is to be found in the *Sutta-nipāta* of the Theravādin school, the other versions are included in *Dharmapada* collections associated with other Indian Buddhist schools (although the Sanskrit parallel to the *Dharmapada* is called the *Udānavarga*).⁴ I will briefly describe these parallel versions (following Roebuck 2010: xxviii–xxxiv) as I will refer to them further along:

(i) in the 'Patna *Dharmapada*' (abbreviated to PDhp), a *Dharmapada* collection in a mixed Pāli, Prakrit and Sanskrit dialect affiliated to the Sāmatiya sect of the Pudgalavādin school (Skilling 1997). A manuscript of this text was found in Tibet in the 1930s, dated to the 12th c. (Cone 1989: 103), and initially

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² Correcting *tacaṃ* in PTS to *ttacaṃ* for the sake of the metre (K. R. Norman 2001). In fact, Be reads *ttacaṃ*, and cf. *tvaya* in GDhp-K and *tvacaṃ* in Ud-V (see below for these versions).

³ Brough 1962: 197 comments, in his masterfully irreverent way, that this process of 'serial repetition' was 'highly esteemed as a mechanism for expanding the volume of sacred texts'.

⁴ The versions are usefully compared by Ānandajyoti 2004.

worked on from photographs kept in Patna in India (whence its name). The 17 *uraga* verses, edited by Margaret Cone (1989), comprise the *Uraga-vargga*, the final chapter, and are either identical or similar to the Pāli verses, with serial repetition of one *gāthā*.

(ii) in the *Gāndhārī Dharmapada* (GDhp), in Gāndhārī Prakrit, preserved in birch-bark manuscripts written in *kharoṣṭhi* script. The 'Khotan' version (GDhp-K) was found at Khotan in central Asia in 1890s, and has been edited by John Brough (1962). The 10 *uraga* verses are again identical or similar to the Pāli version. The 'London' version (GDhp-L) edited by Timothy Lenz (2003) consists of fragments of the *uraga* verses recently discovered in Afghanistan (see Salomon 1999 for details) and now kept in the British Library in London.

(iii) in Sanskrit, in a text called *Udānavarga* (Ud-V). Franz Bernhard (1965) has edited a version in classical Sanskrit from various manuscripts, containing 27 *uraga* verses, produced by serial repetition of several *gāthā*s. There is also a Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit version of the *Udānavarga* from a manuscript written on poplar wood from the Subaši monastery now in China (Nakatani 1987), with some different readings.

While the *uraga* verses have a chapter to themselves in PDhp, they are tacked onto the end of the *Bhikṣu-varga* (Chapter on the Monk) in GDhp and Ud-V. This suggests that the *uraga* verses were originally preserved as a separate collection before being added to existing collections (Brough 1962: 196; Norman 2001: xxxi–ii; Ānandajyoti 2004: 7). Although there is an element of chance in how Buddhist manuscripts survive, the number of versions of the *uraga* verses preserved suggests their popularity in that they appear to have been copied out many times as well as put into various Indian dialects. The question then is, what did the Indian Buddhists, who seemed to like these verses so much, think that the *uraga* verses meant?

The problem of 'the near and far shores'

The refrain of the *uraga* verses describes how the *bhikkhu* lets go of 'the near and far shores'. The word *bhikkhu* here does not necessarily refer only to a male member of the Buddhist monastic *saṅgha* but to any Buddhist spiritual

practitioner.[5] The problem with understanding this refrain arises because of the supposed reference of 'near and far shores' to the metaphor, very common in early Buddhist texts, of the spiritual life as the crossing from the near shore to the far shore of a flood or stream. An explicit presentation of this image appears in the well-known 'simile of the raft' in the Simile of the Water-Snake Discourse (M 22):[6]

> 'Monks, it is as if a person had been going along a main road. He might see a great river, the near shore dangerous and insecure, the far shore safe and secure, and for him there was neither a ferry boat nor the span of a bridge for going from the near to the far shore. And he might think: this is indeed a great river… that person, collecting grass, twigs, branches and leaves and making a raft, then relying on that raft, paddling with hands and feet, might cross over safely to the far shore.'[7]

In another discourse (S 35: 238), after a restatement of these same words, the Buddha is reported to have explained the image as follows:

> '"A great river," monks, is a designation for the fourfold flood (*ogha*): the flood of sensuality, the flood of existence, the flood of views, the flood of ignorance. "The near shore dangerous and insecure," monks, is a designation for identity (*sakkāya*).[8] "The far shore safe and secure," monks, is a designation for *nirvāṇa*. "A raft," monks, is

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[5] Dhp v.267: 'One who, here avoiding good and bad, living the spiritual life, | wanders the world contemplating – that one indeed is called a bhikkhu' (*yo'dha puññañ ca pāpañ ca bāhetvā brahmacariyavā | saṅkhāya loke carati sa ve bhikkhū'ti vuccati*). Nidd 1: 465, commenting on the word *bhikkhu* in verse at Sn v.810: 'a *bhikkhu* is either an ordinary person of good character or someone in monastic training' (*bhikkhuno'ti puthujjanakalyāṇassa vā bhikkhuno sekkhassa vā bhikkhuno*). For the gender-inclusivity of the word *bhikkhu* see Collett and Anālayo 2014.

[6] References to the *nikāya*s are given in two parts: firstly (e.g. M 33) to the *sutta* number as given in the English translation (see Abbreviations), to facilitate access for those who do not read Pāli; secondly (e.g. PTS M i.134–5) to the Pāli Text Society (PTS) edition of the Pāli text.

[7] PTS M i.134–5 *seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, puriso addhānamaggappaṭipanno. so passeyya mahantaṃ udakaṇṇavaṃ, orimaṃ tīraṃ sāsaṅkaṃ sappaṭibhayaṃ, pārimaṃ tīraṃ khemaṃ appaṭibhayaṃ; na cassa nāvā santāraṇī uttarasetu vā apārā pāraṃ gamanāya. tassa evam assa: ayaṃ kho mahā udakaṇṇavo… puriso tiṇakaṭṭhasākhāpalāsaṃ saṃkaḍḍhitvā, kullaṃ bandhitvā taṃ kullaṃ nissāya hatthehi ca pādehi ca vāyamamāno sotthinā pāraṃ uttareyya.*

[8] *Sakkāya* is here the contrary of *nibbāna*, and must mean 'the group (*kāya*) of existents (*sat*)', this world considered as really existent: discussed in Gombrich 2003.

a designation for the noble eightfold path, namely, right view… up to right concentration. "Paddling with hands and feet", monks, is a designation for making an effort.'[9]

This metaphor for the spiritual life as crossing over the flood to the safety of the far shore is found in poetry as well as prose. For instance, in the *Dhaniya-sutta,* immediately following the *Uraga-sutta* in the *Sutta-nipāta*, the Buddha tells Dhaniya (Sn v.21):

'One crossed to the far shore will overcome the flood,
and then there will be no need for a raft.'[10]

But while the metaphor of crossing the flood allows us to make sense of the idea of letting go of the near shore in order to reach the safety of the far shore (*nirvāṇa*), it is hard to understand what it would mean to let go of the far shore

The Pāli commentary's solutions

The Pāli commentary on the *Sutta-nipāta* records various interpretations of the meaning of *orapāra*, which appear to suggest that the Theravādins were unsure about the meaning of the refrain of the *uraga* verses. The commentary firstly attempts to re-define *orapāra* to mean simply 'near-shore', which would solve the problem by making it go away:

'That *bhikkhu* lets go both the near and far shores' should be taken as meaning that that *bhikkhu*, controlling anger in this way, and because anger is altogether let go of by the third stage of the path,[11] thus lets go of the so-called *orapāra* which are the five fetters connected with the near side (*ora*) of existence.[12] For, generally

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[9] PTS S iv.175 *mahā udakaṇṇavo'ti kho, bhikkhave, catunn'etaṃ oghānaṃ adhivacanaṃ – kāmoghassa, bhavoghassa, diṭṭhoghassa, avijjoghassa. orimaṃ tīraṃ sāsaṅkaṃ sappaṭibhayan'ti kho, bhikkhave, sakkāyass'etaṃ adhivacanaṃ. pārimaṃ tīraṃ khemaṃ appaṭibhayan'ti kho, bhikkhave, nibbānass'etaṃ adhivacanaṃ. kullan'ti kho, bhikkhave, ariyass'etaṃ aṭṭhaṅgikassa maggassa adhivacanaṃ, seyyathīdaṃ – sammādiṭṭhi ... pe ... sammāsamādhi. tassa hatthehi ca pādehi ca vāyāmo'ti kho, bhikkhave, vīriyārambhass'etaṃ adhivacanaṃ.*

[10] *tiṇṇo pāragato vineyya oghaṃ | attho bhisiyā na vijjati.*

[11] Meaning the stage of the non-returner.

[12] The five *pañcorabhāgiyasaṃyojanāni* are usually translated 'the five lower fetters', but the commentary is playing on the connection between *ora* ('what is nearer', 'near shore' as well as 'lower') and *ora-bhāgiya* (DOP i.583: 'connected with this side of existence, with the lower spheres of existences').

speaking, *pāra* is a word for a shore;[13] therefore wording it so that those [fetters] are both 'near' (*ora*) and are the 'shores' (*pāra*) of the ocean of *saṃsāra*, the verse says 'near-shore (*ora-pāra*)'.[14]

This shows nicely that the idea of letting go of both the near and the far shores was felt to be problematic, so much so that commentary, in this first part of its discussion, re-defines *orapāra* so that the expression no longer means 'near and far shores' but instead means '[fetters which are] the shore of the near [side of existence]'.

While this solution to the problem of the 'near and far shores' seems extreme, it may in fact be representative of a tendency found beyond the Theravāda Buddhist world. While the refrain of the GDhp and PDhp versions of the *uraga* verses are identical to the Pāli, the Sanskrit of the Ud-V reads quite differently:[15]

> *sa tu bhikṣur idaṃ jahāty apāraṃ*
>
> *hy urago jīrṇam iva tvacaṃ purāṇam*
>
> But that *bhikṣu* lets go this near shore
> indeed like the serpent its worn-out old skin.

It would appear that the composer of the Ud-V, while putting the *uraga* verses into classical Sanskrit, took the opportunity to remove the problem of the 'near and far shores' by changing the metaphor to the conventional one, that the Buddhist spiritual practitioner should abandon 'this shore', and, by implication, should cross over to the far shore.

The Theravādin commentaries, however, do not always present a single view on the meaning of the texts on which they comment; they often present several, sometimes contradictory, explanations of particular words

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[13] The commentator's analysis is borne out by MW s.v. *pāra*: 'the further bank or shore or boundary, *any bank or shore*, the opposite side, the end or limit of anything, the utmost reach or fullest extent' (my italics); if not by PED s.v. *pāra*: 'the other side, the opposite shore'.

[14] ᴘᴛꜱ Pj II 12–13: so bhikkhu jahāti orapāraṃ *so evaṃ kodhaṃ vinento bhikkhu yasmā kodho tatiyamaggena sabbaso pahīyati, tasmā orapārasaññitāni pañc'orambhāgiyasaṃyojanāni jahātī ti veditabbo, avisesena hi pāran ti tīrassa nāmaṃ, tasmā orāni ca tāni saṃsārasāgarassa pārabhūtāni cā ti katvā orapāran ti vuccanti.*

[15] Although in the Sanskrit of the Ud-V from Subaši the refrain reads *orapāraṃ*.

and phrases.[16] The commentary on the *uraga* verses, having taken the same approach as the composer of Ud-V, re-defining the problem away, then goes on to present six pairs of alternative and not entirely compatible interpretations of the words *ora* and *pāra*, now with their more general meanings of 'near' and 'far':

Alternatively, 'One who controls anger when it has arisen / as if treating with remedies a snake's spread venom', that *bhikkhu*, controlling anger completely through the third path, firm in the fruit of non-returning, lets go of the 'near' (*ora*) and the 'far' (*pāra*).[17] In this respect:

[1] the 'near' is one's own individual existence (*sakattabhāva*), the 'far' is one's next individual existence (*parattabhāva*);

[2] the 'near' is the six subjective spheres of perception, the 'far' is the six objective spheres of perception;

[3] in the same way, the 'near' is the world of human beings, the 'far' the world of gods;

[4] the 'near' is the sensual domain of experience (*dhātu*), the 'far' is the pure form domain and the formless domain;

[5] the 'near' is the sensual and the pure form state of existence (*bhāva*), the 'far' is the formless state of existence;

[6] the 'near' is individual existence (*attabhāva*), the 'far' is the means of happiness in individual existence.[18]

It is noticeable that some of these six alternatives are quite different from each other and sometimes incompatible among themselves. This, however,

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[16] Norman 1983 p.119. The commentaries represent a gathering of information from different sources and periods, hence preserving a record of ways the early texts had been understood.

[17] The implication being that a non-returner has let go of 'this world' but neither will he be reborn in the 'next world'.

[18] Pts Pj II 13: *atha vā, yo uppatitaṃ vineti kodhaṃ visataṃ sappavisaṃ va osadhehi, so tatiyamaggena sabbaso kodhaṃ vinetvā anāgāmiphale ṭhito bhikkhu jahāti orapāraṃ. Tattha oran ti sakattabhāvo, pāran ti parattabhāvo; oraṃ vā cha ajjhattikāyatanāni, pāraṃ cha bāhirāyatanāni; tathā oraṃ manussaloko, pāraṃ devaloko, oraṃ kāmadhātu, pāraṃ rūpārūpadhātu, oraṃ kāmarūpabhavo pāraṃ arūpabhavo, oraṃ attabhāvo pāraṃ attabhāvasukhūpakaraṇāni.*

is because these six alternatives in fact simply reproduce glosses found in the Niddesa, and should therefore be understood to be deferring to an earlier commentarial tradition.

The *Niddesa* is an early commentarial text that is included in the Pāli canon, mainly giving word-glosses on the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, the *Pārāyana*, and the *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta*, texts which were subsequently gathered into the *Sutta-nipāta*, along with the *Uraga-sutta* and others. The *Niddesa* has a repetitive style, giving standard comprehensive lists of glosses on words and phrases, glosses the elements of which are not always relevant to the context in which they are found. The six alternatives reproduced in our commentary on *orapāra* are found in the *Niddesa* as follows:

(i) at Nidd 1 60, in a gloss on Sn v.779 *lokam imaṃ parañ ca*, 'this world and the next'. The Niddesa glosses *imaṃ lokaṃ* ('this world') and *param lokaṃ* ('the next world') with nearly the same six pairs of interpretations as we find in the later commentary on the Uraga-sutta.[19]

(ii) at Nidd 1 109, in a gloss on Sn v.801 *idha vā huraṃ vā*, 'here or there'. The Niddesa glosses *idha* ('here') and *huraṃ* ('there', 'in the other world') in exactly the same way.

(iii) at Nidd 2 422b,[20] in a gloss on Sn v.1048 *parovarāni*, 'things far and near'. The compound can be understood as comprising para and *avara* = *ora*.[21] The Niddesa glosses *ora* ('near') and *para* ('far') in exactly the same way.

We can perhaps now better understand the Pāli commentary's strategy in reproducing six alternative explanations of *orapāra*. The commentary firstly assimilates the phrase *orapāra* to the the phrase *parovara*, to which it is similar,[22]

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[19] The gloss has *sakarūpavedanāsaññāsaṅkhāraviññāṇaṃ* ('one's own form, feeling, perceptions, formations and consciousness') as a gloss of *imaṃ lokaṃ*, and *pararūpavedanāsañ ñāsaṅkhāraviññāṇaṃ* ('one's next (?) form, feeling, perceptions, formations and consciousness') as a gloss of *param lokaṃ*, but does not have alternative [6] from Pj II 13.

[20] The reference is to entry 422(b) *paroparāni* on p.202 of the PTS ed.

[21] The phrase *parovara* alternates with *paropara* in all eds. (see PED 439), and occurs elsewhere with the meaning 'high and low', 'all kinds'.

[22] Pj II 590 on *parovarāni* at Sn v.1048 prefers option [1] above, taking *pāra* as 'one's next individual existence' and *ora* as 'one's own individual existence'. Norman 2001 p.406 interprets the commentary to mean 'the existences of others and one's own existence' but this would not seem to be correct.

and then reproduces the earlier gloss in the *Niddesa* on *parovara*. This gloss treats the *ora* and *para* of *parovara* as parallel to *imaṃ lokaṃ* and *paraṃ lokaṃ* and to *idha* and *huraṃ*, that is to say, as meaning 'this world' and 'the next world'. The *Niddesa*, followed by the later commentary, then provides a series of alternative explanations of the various pairs, *ora* and *pāra*, *idaṃ lokaṃ* and *paraṃ lokaṃ*, *idha* and *huraṃ*.

> The pairing of 'this world' and the 'next world' is found in early Buddhist poetry, such as the *Sutta-nipāta*, in place of the full rebirth cosmology of traditional Buddhism. I will explore this topic further below. For the moment I will conclude this discussion of the Pāli commentaries on *orapāra* with the observation that while the *Niddesa* implies that *orapāra* can be understood in terms of 'this world' and 'the next world', so that it offers alternative explanations of this pair, the later commentary appears to prefer to re-define *orapāra* as 'near-shore'.[23] No doubt the Pāli commentary is not so willing to allow that *orapāra* can mean 'the near and far shores' because this would conflict with the 'crossing the stream' metaphor. It is instructive in this regard to notice, however, that the phrase *orapāra* seems to occur in only one other passage in pre-commentarial Pāli literature,[24] in the *Milindapañha* (Miln 319), where it has to mean 'near and far shores'. Arguing that *nirvāṇa*, like the great ocean, is without a counterpart, Nāgasena tells King Milinda that:

'The great ocean is huge and without near and far shores (*an-orapāra*), and is not filled up by all the rivers flowing into it; and likewise, great king, *nirvāṇa* is huge and without near and far shores and is not filled by all the beings attaining it.'[25]

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[23] It would seem however that ultimately the commentary prefers its own interpretation of *orapāra* to mean 'near-shore', since it concludes: 'Thus, in reference to the *orapāra*, letting go of desire and passion through the fourth path [that of the *arahant*], it is said that he 'lets go this world and the next world (*orapāra*)'. In this respect, there is no desire and passion whatever towards individual existence and so on in this world for a non-returner, because his sensual passion has been given up. And yet nevertheless, it might be that, having compiled all these kinds of near and far things (*orapāra*), the sense of the explanation has an appearance like that of [those fetters let go of at] the third path and so on, therefore, through the letting go of desire and passion, the text says that "one lets go of the near-shore (*orapāra*)".'

[24] Based on a text search using the Digital Pali Reader (http://pali.sirimangalo.org).

[25] *mahāsamuddo mahanto anorapāro, na paripūrati sabbasavantīhi, evameva kho, mahārāja, nibbānaṃ mahantaṃ anorapāraṃ, na pūrati sabbasattehi.*

Modern translators and interpreters

Translating *so bhikkhu jahāti orapāra*, Fausbøll (1898) wrote, 'That *bhikkhu* leaves this and the further shore', hence not trying to solve the problem that the verse implies. Lord Chalmers (1932), however, addressed the problem, translating, 'An almsman sheds beliefs in this or after-worlds', the translation of *orapāra* as 'this or after-worlds' evidently taking into account the Pāli commentary. I.B. Horner criticised this interpretation as 'unnecessarily far-fetched' (1936: 291), in a discussion of what she calls 'the somewhat puzzling phrase *jahāti orapāraṃ*'. She proposes that *jahāti orapāraṃ* might be understood as a *bahuvrīhi* compound meaning 'he abandons what is beyond (*pāra*) this world (*ora*)',[26] meaning, 'he abandons the beyond of this world'. Horner goes on to explain her proposed meaning as follows: 'This suggestion would mean that it is not sufficient merely to attain to the beyond of this world; it is not the end of what man is potentially capable of attaining. For he can leave the beyond of this lower world to proceed ever further in development' (1936: 291). She goes on to favour Fausbøll's quite literal rendering, in that leaving this and the further shore means that the *bhikkhu* 'has set out on a journey whose end is not necessarily in sight' (1936: 292).

Going back to translations, Hare (1944) tried, 'That monk quits bounds both here and yon', which appears to incorporate I.B. Horner's thoughts on the matter. John Brough has been the most influential modern interpreter of *orapāra*, however. In his edition of GDhp-K he comments at length on the *uraga* verses. Disagreeing with I.B. Horner, he says 'it seems difficult to take *orapāraṃ* other than as a *dvandva*' (Brough 1962: 202), and he prefers Lord Chalmers' translation of *jahāti orapāraṃ*, although he comments: 'if we are to go so far as to see in the phrase "a shedding of beliefs" – which is altogether foreign to the Pāli commentator – then there is no need to strain the sense of *pāra* by taking it to mean "after-worlds". The latter is forced upon the Pāli commentator only because of the difficulty, in Theravāda terms, of "abandoning *nirvāṇa*".' (202)

Brough in fact takes a rather radical view of the meaning of *jahāti orapāraṃ*. He acknowledges the problem of the 'near and far shores', and the consequent difficulty for the Pāli commentator of making sense of the idea of letting go of *nirvāṇa*. But Brough solves the problem by supposing it is deliberate – he

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[26] That is to say, not a *dvandva* meaning 'the near shore and the far shore'. Brough (1962: 202) however points out that Horner must have meant *tatpuruṣa* rather than *bahuvrīhi*.

believes that the idea of 'letting go of the near and far shores' was 'intended to be paradoxical (since the 'further shore' is commonly the whole aim of religious endeavour)' (202), and that the verse thus appears to be recommending the 'shedding of beliefs' in the duality of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. He goes on to observe how such a paradox is:

> 'an early example of the pseudo-profundity so richly developed in later Mahāyāna literature… The 'higher wisdom' sees that *saṃsāra (ora)* and *nirvāṇa (pāra)* are one, and the perfected man is ultimately indifferent to both, since in effect neither exist, *paramārthataḥ* [i.e., ultimately]' (1962: 202).[27]

He can thus conclude that the Pāli commentator 'was clearly embarrassed by *orapāraṃ*, and presumably recognised in it a phrase with dangerously Mahāyānist tendencies.' (202) As I will go on to show, however, there is no need to suppose that the phrase *jahāti orapāraṃ* is paradoxical, and neither is it necessary to compare it to the use of paradox in Mahāyāna.

Nevertheless, Brough's views have proved influential. In some lectures, published as *A Philological Approach to Buddhism*, Prof. K.R. Norman explains that the Pāli commentary on the *uraga* verses recognised that the 'idea of leaving behind the far shore in the form of *nirvāṇa* was a Mahāyāna idea, which as a Theravādin he was very reluctant to accept' (Norman 2006: 215). But he goes on to ask if the Mahāyāna idea could have been in existence when the *uraga* verses were composed. He concludes that *orapāra* refers to 'this world' and 'the next world':

> 'My own belief is that the reference is not to *saṃsāra* and to the far shore of *saṃsāra*, i.e. *nibbāna*, but to this world and the next, and I believe that the verse was first formulated in a situation where the author was considering this world and the afterlife, rather than the endless stream of *saṃsāra*' (2006: 215).

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[27] Brough cites Nāgārajuna, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 25.3 as an example of the occurrence of the pseudo-profound paradox that *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are one. However, this verse from Nāgārjuna describes *nirvāṇa* as 'not abandoned' (*aprahīnaṃ*), 'not acquired' (*asamprāptaṃ*), and so on. The point is not that one should 'shed belief in *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*', but that one should recognize that the distinction between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* is a conventional truth that does not ultimately hold. In the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* ch.8 (Lamotte 1976: 193) the Bodhisattva Dāntamati teaches the non-duality of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. It should be noted however that non-duality is not the same as unity and that the *sūtra* does not say that the Bodhisattva should be indifferent.

Consequently, Norman's translation of *jahāti orapāraṃ* reads 'That *bhikkhu*… leaves this shore and the far shore', with a note explaining that *ora* refers to this world and *pāraṃ* to the next (Norman 2001: 147).[28]

Whether or not we can see in the Pāli commentary a worry about dangerous Mahāyāna tendencies in the *uraga* verses, we can observe that Norman's own belief about the meaning of *orapāra* is quite compatible with the traditional Buddhist one, in that, as we have seen, the Pāli commentary also implies in its explanations that *orapāraṃ* may refer to 'this world and the next'. To sum up: modern interpreters of the *uraga* verses have certainly seen a puzzle and a problem in the idea of letting go both the near and far shores. It has led I.B. Horner to analyse *orapāra* as 'the beyond of this world', and to guess that the *bhikkhu* should let go even of attachment to a state beyond this world as the object of his spiritual striving. It has led John Brough to denounce *orapāra* as a pseudo-profound paradox, a kind of cheap spiritual rhetoric. And it has led K.R. Norman to the belief that *ora* must refer, not to 'this shore', but to 'this world', and *pāra* not to 'the other shore', but to 'the next world', a belief already seen in the Pāli commentaries old and new. In short, then, no interpreter, old or new, seems to have been able to make sense of the surface meaning of *so bhikkhu jahāti orapāraṃ*, 'that *bhikkhu* lets go both the near and far shores'. Before I present a possible solution to this problem, based on canonical Buddhist teachings that preserve the surface meaning of the verse, I will consider what has turned out thus far to be the dominant interpretation of *orapāra*, as 'this world and the next world'.

The 'near and far shores' as 'this world and the next'

We have seen how the commentarial interpretation of *orapāra* takes *ora* and *pāra* in their more general meanings of 'near' and 'far' and hence takes them together as an equivalent of expressions meaning 'this world and the next'. To 'let go of this world and the next' would imply abandoning those factors responsible for continued existence here and beyond, a thought entirely congruent with the message of the *uraga* verses. The idea of a binary rebirth cosmology, in which people are reborn into 'the other world', and are reborn into this world from that, was a precursor to the more elaborate ethicized eschatology of early

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[28] Norman does not explain the reasons for his belief, though below I will present some canonical discourses in favour of it. Valerie Roebuck (2010: 88–92) follows Norman's approach in her translation of the *uraga* verses in an appendix to her translation of the *Dhammapada*.

Buddhism, in which people are reborn into one of five or six realms according to the ethical quality of their actions (Obeyesekere 2002: 72–149). Richard Gombrich has noted that, despite the developed cosmology of Buddhism, the idea of 'this world' and 'the next world' remained as an idiom, especially in poetry (Gombrich 2009: 35). An example is at Sn v.779:

> The sage, completely understanding perception,
> crosses the flood unsullied by grasping.
> With the arrow pulled out, living heedfully,
> he does not wish for this world or the next.[29]

We see in these verses how letting go of hope for further existence in this world and the next is said to be an equivalent to crossing the flood.

The theme of letting go of this world and the next is explicit in some discourses. Sāriputta gives teachings to the Buddha's devoted lay-follower Anāthapiṇḍika, who is on his deathbed, among them the following (M 143, PTS iii.261):

> 'Householder, you should train yourself in this way: "I shall not hold on to this world (*idhaloka*), and my consciousness shall not become reliant on this world"…'I shall not hold on to the other world (*paraloka*), and my consciousness shall not become reliant on the other world."'

This teaching is similar to a trope found in several discourses, in which the Buddha recommends a line of thought culminating in the realisation:

> 'When there is no death or rebirth, neither here (*idha*) nor there (*huraṃ*) nor in between exists. Just this is the end of suffering.'[30]

It is clear that not only is the idiom of 'this world' (or 'here') and 'the next world' (or 'there') found in early Buddhist teachings as a pair which summarises all the realms of rebirth in *saṃsāra*, but it is recommended that the Buddhist practitioner not hold on to them. Since likewise in the *uraga* verses the *bhikkhu* is enjoined to let go of the *orapāra*, it makes sense to interpret the

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[29] *saññaṃ pariññā vitareyya oghaṃ | pariggahesu muni nopalitto | abbhūḷhasallo caraṃ appamatto | nāsiṃsati lokam imaṃ parañ cā ti ||*

[30] *cutūpapāte asati nevidha na huraṃ na ubhayamantarena*: M 144, PTS iii.266 = S 35:87, PTS iv.59, with close parallels at Ud 1:10, Ud 8:4, S 12:40, S 35:87.

orapāra in terms of 'this world and the next', an interpretation thus implied by the traditional commentary and made explicit by K.R. Norman and others. However, the uncertainties involved in this interpretation leave room for a second interpretation of *orapāra*, which retains the surface meaning of *orapāra* as 'near and far shores', but understands these shores within a different metaphor.

The 'near and far shores' of the river of sense experience

According to this second interpretation, rather than referring to *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, as in the crossing the flood metaphor, *ora* and *pāra* are to be understood as referring to the near and far shores of the stream of the Dharma flowing to the ocean of *nirvāṇa*. This metaphor is the subject of *The Simile of the Great Tree-Trunk* discourse at S 35:241:[31]

> At one time the Blessed One was living at Kosambī, on the banks of the river Ganges. The Blessed One saw a large tree trunk being carried along by the current of the river Ganges. Seeing this he addressed the monks:
>
> 'Monks, do you see that large tree trunk being carried along by the current of the river Ganges?'
>
> 'Certainly, lord.'
>
> 'Monks, if that tree trunk does not go towards (*upagacchati*) the near bank (*orimaṃ tīraṃ*), does not go towards the far bank (*pārimaṃ tīraṃ*)… then that tree trunk will tilt, incline and tend towards the ocean. For what reason? Because, monks, the current of the river Ganges tilts, inclines and tends towards the ocean. Likewise, monks, if you do not drift over to the near bank, do not drift over to the far bank… you will tilt, incline and tend towards nirvāṇa. For what reason? Because, monks, right view tilts, inclines and tends towards nirvana.'
>
> When this had been said, a certain monk said this to the Blessed One:
>
> 'But what, lord, is the near bank? What is the far bank?...'

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[31] Found in PTS S iv.179–81, with two parallels in Chinese translation, according to https://suttacentral.net/sn35.241.

'Monk, "the near bank" is a designation for the six subjective spheres of perception (*ajjhattikāni āyatanāni*). "The far bank" is a designation for the six objective spheres of perception (*bāhirāni āyatanāni*)…

The elisions indicated by elipses are of further elements of the 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor that are not relevant here. In terms of this metaphor, the *bhikkhu* should indeed let go of the near and far shores, with the meaning of abandoning the subjective and objective spheres of perception. By letting go of these near and far shores, the *bhikkhu* will remain in the stream of the Dharma which will carry him or her to the ocean of *nirvāṇa*. The extended metaphor seems only to appear in this one discourse in the Pāli canon, but its components are found elsewhere.

The 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor contains four components: (i) near shore = subjective sense spheres; (ii) far shore = objective sense spheres; (iii) river = stream of the Dharma; (iv) ocean = *nirvāṇa*. Elements (iii) and (iv), the river flowing into the ocean, are found in a simile which recurs many times in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, for instance in reference to the eightfold path:

'Just as, monks, the river Ganges tilts, inclines and tends towards the ocean, likewise the monk developing and frequently practising the noble eightfold path tilts, inclines and tends towards *nirvāṇa*.'[32]

This river and ocean metaphor appears so often in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* that it is called the 'Ganges repetition' (*gaṅgāpeyyāla*), appearing not only in reference to the eightfold path (*aṭṭhaṅgika magga*) (S 45:91 *et seq.*), but also in reference to the factors of awakening (*bojjhaṅga*) (S 46: 131f.), to the establishments of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) (S 47:51 *et seq.*), to the spiritual faculties (*bodhindriya*) (S 48:71 *et seq.*), to the spiritual powers (*bala*) (S 50:55 *et seq.*), and to the bases for success (*iddhipāda*) (S 51:33f *et seq.*). Elsewhere it appears with reference to the disciples who are practising the Buddhist path. In M 73, after a long eulogy of the Buddha and his awakened disciples, Vacchagotta the wanderer concludes:

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[32] S 45:91 (PTS S v.38): *seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, gaṅgā nadī samuddaninnā samuddapoṇā samuddapabbhārā; evam eva kho, bhikkhave, bhikkhu ariyaṃ aṭṭhaṅgikaṃ maggaṃ bhāvento ariyaṃ aṭṭhaṅgikaṃ maggaṃ bahulīkaronto nibbānaninno hoti nibbānapoṇo nibbānapabbhāro.*

> 'Mr Gotama, just as the river Ganges tilts, inclines and tends toward the ocean and stays there, likewise this assembly of Mr Gotama, consisting in both wanderers and householders, tilts, inclines and tends towards nirvāṇa and stays there.'[33]

The comparison of the path to *nirvāṇa* to a river or stream is embedded in the category of the 'stream-entrant' (*sotāpanna*), the first category of awakened being, who has removed the first three fetters, and is now bound to gain awakening. The stream of Dharma that flows into the ocean of *nirvāṇa* is in several discourses compared to rain falling on the mountains, the water consequently filling streams, pools and rivers on the way to the ocean.[34]

Turning now to elements (i) and (ii) of the 'stream of Dharma' metaphor, it appears to be only in the *Simile of the Great Tree-Trunk Discourse*, given above, that the near bank of the river is compared to the subjective sense spheres, and the far bank of the river to the objective sense spheres. These 'subjective sense spheres' are the 'spheres of perception' (*āyatanāni*) which 'belong to oneself' (*ajjhattikāni*).[35] They are elsewhere elaborated in terms of the 'spheres' of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.[36] The 'objective sense spheres' are the 'spheres of perception' which are 'external' (*bāhira*), elaborated in terms of visual forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles and mental objects (*dhammā*). The distinction of 'subjective' and 'objective' amounts to the experiential distinction of 'what belongs to oneself' and 'what is external [to oneself]'. An uninstructed worldly person might regard what belongs to oneself as a really existing subjective self, with its feelings and passions; and what is external as an objective world worth holding on to. However, as is evident in the entire *Saḷāyatana-saṃyutta* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (S 35), the Buddha is said to have recommended that his followers observe the impermanent, unsatisfactory and insubstantial characteristics of both the subjective and the objective sense spheres in order to gain liberation.

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[33] PTS M i.493: *seyyathāpi, bho gotama, gaṅgā nadī samuddaninnā samuddapoṇā samuddapabbhārā samuddaṃ āhacca tiṭṭhati, evam evāyaṃ bhoto gotamassa parisā sagahaṭṭhapabbajitā nibbānaninnā nibbānapoṇā nibbānapabbhārā nibbānaṃ āhacca tiṭṭhati.* The *Madhyama-āgama* version contains similar metaphors (Anālayo 2011: 396–7).

[34] Especially S 55:38 (PTS S v.396), where the stream is compared to noble disciples who are stream-entrants.

[35] Definitions from DOP i.320 s.v. *āyatana*; DOP i.35 s.v. *ajjhattika*. The word *ajjhattika* can be analysed as *adhi* ('in regard to') + *atta* ('self') + *ika* (possessive suffix).

[36] Listed at D 33 (PTS D iii.243) among lists of six things rightly declared by the Blessed one.

When imagined as the 'near shore' and the 'far shore', the subjective and objective sense spheres therefore correspond to the dichotomy of self and world, viewed as really existing, and as the subject and objects respectively of craving. In terms of the Simile of the Great Tree-Trunk Discourse, the *bhikkhu* who does not 'go towards' (*upagacchati*) the near bank and the far bank does not mistake the subjective sense spheres for a permanent self nor mistake the objective sense spheres for a world worth holding on to.[37] To interpret the *uraga* verses in terms of this metaphor, the thought that 'that *bhikkhu* lets go both the near and far shores' (*so bhikkhu jahāti orapāraṃ*) can be understood to imply that the Buddhist practitioner abandons subjective and objective sense spheres, as an example of one important Buddhist spiritual exercise aiming at liberation.

The 'far and near shores' in Dhammapada v.385

This interpretation of *orapāra* in terms of the subjective and objective sense realms is given as an alternative explanation [2] in the Pāli commentaries discussed above, though without any elaboration. However, the commentary on another early Buddhist verse, *Dhammapada* v.385, also concerning the 'far and near shores', explicitly elaborates this interpretation. *Dhammapada* v.385 runs:

> *yassa pāraṃ apāraṃ vā pārāpāraṃ na vijjati*
> *vītaddaraṃ visaṃyuttaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ*[38]

> For whom exist neither far or near shores, nor both far shore and near shore,
> Without distress, without attachment – him I call a brāhmaṇa.

John Brough (1962: 202) claims that it is 'difficult to see how Dhp v.385 could be understood in any other way' than as a pseudo-profound metaphysical paradox akin to Mahāyāna thought like the refrain from the *uraga* verses. Norman (1997: 155) once again states his belief that the 'near shore' and the 'far shore' refer to this world and the next. Yet the Pāli commentary interprets the *gāthā* more or less as we would expect if we were to understand the 'near

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[37] S 35:71, for example, explains how seeing the subjective sense-spheres in terms of 'this is mine, this I am, this is my self' (*etaṃ mama, eso 'ham asmi, eso me attā*) leads to rebirth; in S 35:136, for instance, explains that so long as one sees the objective sense-spheres as permanent, and believes of visual forms (and so on) that 'it exists' (*atthi*), there is suffering.

[38] With close parallels in PDhp, GDhp and Ud-V (Ānandajyoti 2007: 171).

shore' and the 'far shore' in terms of the 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor:

> 'In this stanza, "the far shore" is the six subjective sense spheres. "The near shore" is the six objective sense spheres. "Far and near shore" is them both. "Does not exist" means that for whom, through the non-existence of grasping in terms of "I" or "mine", this "everything" does not exist, through the disappearance of afflictions and distress, that person is "without distress" and "without attachment" to all afflictions: I call that person a *brāhmaṇa* – that is the meaning.'[39]

I say 'more or less as we would expect', because the commentary appears to have exchanged the references of 'near shore' and 'far shore'. Assuming that this was not deliberate but was rather a mistake,[40] we see that, for the commentary, the juxtaposition of 'near shore' and 'far shore' is not a metaphysical paradox, nor a reference to this world and the next, but a reference to the 'stream of Dharma' metaphor as we also find it in the *Simile of the Great Tree Trunk* discourse. In relation to this metaphor, the commentary has to explain in what sense the near and far shores do not exist for the *brāhmaṇa* or spiritual person; the commentary does so by explaining that it is the grasping in terms of 'I' and 'mine' that does not exist, an interpretation that could also apply to the *uraga* verses refrain.

However, it is noticeable that the story prefixed to the commentary on the verse appears to understand the 'far shore' in terms of the 'crossing the flood' metaphor:

> 'For whom the far shore' – the teacher gave this Dharma-teaching while living in the Jeta grove, at the instigation of Māra. One day, appearing to be a person, he approached the teacher and asked: 'Lord, people say "the far shore, the far shore (*pāraṃ pāraṃ*)". What is it that is called "the far shore"? The teacher, knowing that it was Māra, said: 'Evil One, what have you to do with the far shore? It can only be attained by those without passion.' And he spoke this stanza…[41]

[39] Dhp-a iv.141: *tattha pāran ti ajjhattikāni cha āyatanāni. Apāran ti bāhirāni cha āyatanāni. Pārāpāran ti tadubhayaṃ. na vijjatīti yassa sabbam p'etaṃ ahan'ti vā maman'ti vā gahaṇābhāvena natthi, taṃ kilesadarathānaṃ vigamena vītaddaraṃ sabbakilesehi visaṃyuttaṃ ahaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ vadāmīti attho.*

[40] The error, if it is one, is preserved in both Be and PTS, so may not be recent; Brough (1962: 202) noticed the inconsistency.

[41] Dhp-a iv. 140–1: *yassa pāran ti imaṃ dhammadesanaṃ satthā jetavane viharanto māraṃ ārabbha kathesi. so kir' ekasmiṃ divase aññataro puriso viya hutvā satthāraṃ upasaṅkamitvā*

This suggests that it was by no means obvious to the composer of the story that the *gāthā* was to be interpreted in terms of the 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor; rather, the mention of the 'far shore' prompted the association with the 'crossing the flood' metaphor as the only one available. This may suggest that the story belonged to a different commentarial tradition from the word commentary.

The role of metaphor in the *uraga* verses

I have discussed two possible interpretations of *orapāra*, as meaning 'this world and the next', and as meaning 'the near and far shores', but within the 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor. There is no way to establish the original meaning of the *uraga* verses refrain, but I have tried to show how the *Simile of the Great Tree Trunk Discourse* and *Dhammapada* v.385 provide some evidence for the second interpretation. I will conclude this discussion of the meaning of *orapāra* with a reconstruction of the poetic purpose of the *uraga* verses refrain, based on this second interpretation, suggesting how the original hearers and reciters of the verses may have appreciated them. It implies that the composer(s) of the *uraga* verses assumed a knowledge of both the 'crossing the flood' metaphor and the 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor, and made use of their overlap for poetic effect.

It is curious to notice that a component of the 'crossing the flood' metaphor appears embedded in the imagery of the *uraga* verses. In v.15 of the Pāli version we read:[42]

> *yassa darathajā na santi keci*
> *oraṃ āgamanāya paccayāse…*
>
> In whom there aren't any [states] born of distress
> which are causes for returning to the near shore – [that *bhikkhu*…]

The word *ora* here has the unmistakable metaphorical connotation of *saṃsāra*. The commentary here (Pj II 24) glosses *ora* as 'personality' (*sakkāya*), quoting S 35: 238, already cited, in which the Buddha is said to explain the 'crossing the
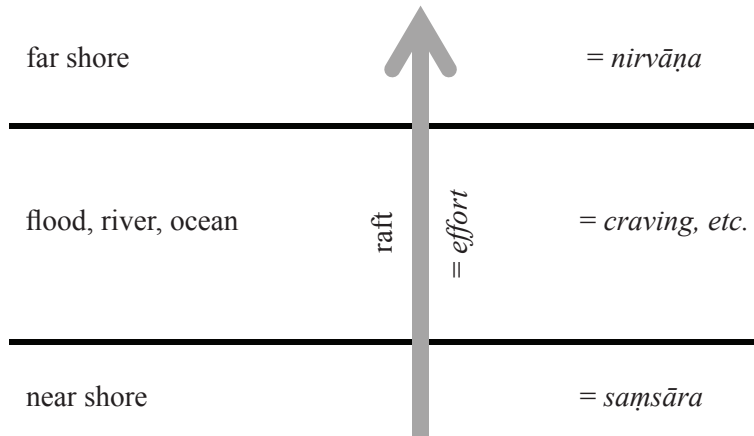
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pucchi bhante, pāraṃ pāran ti vuccati, kin nu kho etaṃ pāraṃ nāmā'ti. satthā māro ayan'ti viditvā, pāpima, kiṃ tava pārena, tañ hi vītarāgehi pattabban'ti vatvā imaṃ gātham āha… Also translated in Burlingame 1921: 277.

[42] Also at GDhp-K 88b, though with a first *pāda* corresponding to Pāli *yassānusayā na santi keci* = Sn v.14a.

flood' metaphor, saying that '"The near shore dangerous and insecure," monks, is a designation for personality.' Other components of the 'crossing the flood' metaphor also appear in the *uraga* verses, but without their meaning in that context. That *bhikkhu* cuts off craving 'having dried up a fast-flowing river':[43] the river of craving is akin to the flood of *saṃsāra*. That *bhikkhu* tears apart conceit 'like a great flood (*ogha*) a very weak pontoon made of reeds':[44] here the 'flood' does not represent *saṃsāra* but effort. Finally, that *bhikkhu* has 'crossed over (*tiṇṇa*) doubt',[45] where the image of 'crossing over' implies a flood to be crossed. The effect of these almost subliminal allusions to the 'crossing the flood' metaphor is to reinforce its presence in the mind of the reader. The metaphor is both spatial and dynamic, and its components together with its implication of movement between them can be represented diagrammatically as follows:

'crossing the flood' metaphor

far shore   = *nirvāṇa*

flood, river, ocean   raft   = *effort*   = *craving, etc.*

near shore   = *saṃsāra*

This metaphor was no doubt highly familiar to early Buddhists hearing or reciting the *uraga* verses, since it is ubiquitous in early Buddhist literature; and it has evidently remained familiar to later Buddhists and scholars.

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[43] *saritaṃ sīghasaraṃ visosayitvā* (Sn v.3); the *pāda* is also in GDhp-K 84, PDhp 410 and Ud-V 32.74. Norman 2001: 148 and Brough 1962: 200 read *va sosayitvā* for *visosayitvā*, 'as if drying up a fast-flowing river', which would be a preferable reading, though it is unattested.

[44] *naḷasetuṃ va sudubbalaṃ mahogho* (Sn v.4); the *pāda* is also in GDhp-K 85 and Ud-V 32.71.

[45] *tiṇṇakathaṃkatho* (Sn v.17); however, the parallel at Ud-V 32.76 reads *chinnakathaṃkatho* 'he has cut off doubt', and the parallel in GDhp-L 13, reconstructed by Lenz, reads *vidakasakasa* = Pāli *vītakathaṃkatho* 'without doubt'; Lenz (2003: 76) proposes that *vidakasakasa* should be adopted for the parallel at GDhp-K 90.

However, when one comes upon the refrain of the *uraga* verses, *so bhikkhu jahāti orapāraṃ*, 'that *bhikkhu* lets go both the near and far shores', the expectations produced by the association of the 'near shore' and 'far shore' with the 'crossing the flood' metaphor are suddenly thwarted. If the *bhikkhu* lets go of the far shore, he or she will thereby not 'cross the flood' of *saṃsāra* and will not reach *nirvāṇa*. The reader or reciter would thereby experience a cognitive dissonance, since the idea of letting go of the far shore as well as the near shore conflicts with the idea of letting go of the near shore in order to reach the far shore. This dissonance would, I suggest, initiate a process akin to puzzle-solving in the mind of the hearer, until he or she realised, either through familiarity or instruction, that the metaphorical context of the refrain was the 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor rather than the 'crossing the flood' one. The 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor is also spatial and dynamic and can be represented like this:

'stream of the Dharma' metaphor

far shore   = *objective sense spheres*

stream, river   flow   ocean

= *path*   = *nirvāṇa*

near shore   = *subjective sense spheres*
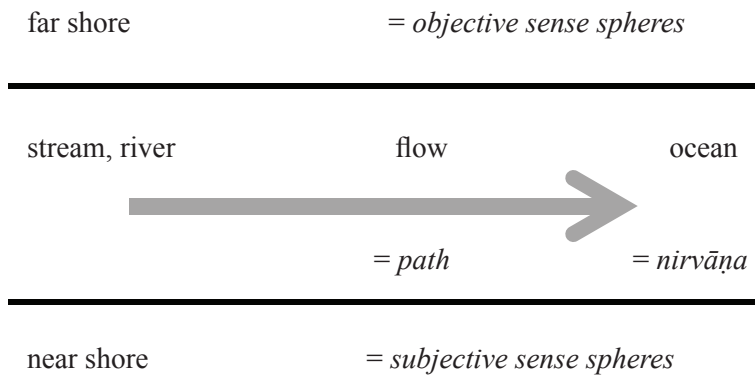
Once the hearer realizes the correct metaphorical context for the refrain 'that *bhikkhu* lets go both near and far shores', it suddenly makes sense: the *bhikkhu*'s letting go of the 'near and far shores' is precisely how he or she practises the path that leads, or rather flows, to nirvāṇa. And then, I suggest, there is confirmation of this understanding in the final verse of the refrain, which compares a *bhikkhu* letting go the near and far shores to a serpent shedding its skin. A diagrammatic representation of this image proves the point:

serpent shedding its skin

This diagram is not supposed to replace the imaginative effect of encountering the image of a serpent shedding its skin, which presumably would have been familiar to hearers and reader in ancient India through their experience of snakes in the natural world around them. Rather, the diagram makes explicit the dynamic similarity of the 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor to the image of a serpent shedding its skin. Recognising this similarity, even implicitly, the hearer would find that their interpretation of the refrain in terms of the 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor is confirmed. By contrast, not only does the image of a *bhikkhu* letting go of both near and far shores produce cognitive dissonance when understood in terms of the 'crossing the flood' metaphor, but the dynamism of this metaphor is not readily comparable with the image of a serpent shedding its skin.

It might thereby appear that the image of a serpent shedding its skin was merely a naturalistic image used to illustrate the 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor. I will conclude this section on the role of metaphor in the *uraga* verses by showing how the image of the serpent is integral to the poem's message. The word *uraga* means 'chest-going', but this beast should be distinguished from the snake (*sappa*) which appears in one of the *gāthā*s:[46]

> *yo uppatitaṃ vineti kodhaṃ*
> *visataṃ sappavisaṃ va osadhehi*
> *so bhikkhu jahāti…*
>
> One who controls anger when it has arisen
> as if with remedies a snake's spread venom –

Jayawickrama (1977: 15–16) explains the mysterious significance of the *uraga*. As the commentary (Pj II 13) tells us, some *uraga*s can change shape

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[46] Sn v.1, with parallels in PDhp 399–403, GDhp-K 84 and Ud-V 32.62–5.

at will, and may be creatures of land or water. Elsewhere the Buddha explains that one should respect the *uraga* that may bite unexpectedly, for 'The *uraga* moves in fierce glory in whatever guise it likes' (S 3:1).[47] Such semi-divine shape-shifters are related to the *nāga*s of Buddhist mythology, serpent-dragons of immense power and size (e.g. S 46:1; discussed in Sutherland 1991: 38f.). The *bhikkhu* who lets go of both near and far shores is thus compared to a shape-shifting semi-divine serpent, not merely to a snake.[48]

Conclusion: early Buddhist non-dualism

Nyanaponika Thera detects in the phrase *orapāra* an antithesis to be overcome, seeing the overcoming of opposites and the detachment from extremes as one of the recurrent themes of the *Sutta-nipāta* as a whole (1955: 235; 1977). Though Nyanaponika follows commentarial tradition in translating *orapāra* as 'the here and the beyond', his point is equally valid if we translate *orapāra* as 'the near and far shores', and if we interpret these as the subjective and objective sense spheres. Nyanaponika's interpretation suggests that the *uraga* verses point to an experience beyond antitheses or opposites, which we may call non-dual. However, the idea that we might express the goal of Buddhist practice in terms of a non-dual experience, or, in other words, in terms of the realization of reality as non-dual, is not part of the orthodox Theravāda worldview. Bhikkhu Bodhi, for instance, distinguishing the Theravāda approach from non-dual philosophies, writes that 'the Theravāda makes the antithesis of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa the starting point of the entire quest for deliverance' (Bodhi 1998).[49] This point is

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[47] PTS S i.69 *uccāvacehi vaṇṇehi urago carati tejasī.*

[48] The simile of an *uraga* shedding its skin in the *uraga* verses is to be distinguished from a superficially similar use of the simile in in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.4.7) we read 'As the cast-off skin of a snake lies dead on an ant-hill, given up, likewise lies this corpse. And this non-bodily immortal life-breath (*prāṇa*) is reality (*brahman*) indeed, is splendour indeed.' The simile is here used to illustrate the duality of mortal body (the snake's cast-off skin) and immortal true Self. The simile is used in the same way in the late-canonical Buddhist work, the *Petavatthu* (1.12.1): 'Just as the snake travels on, having let go of its worn out skin, its body, so does the departed his useless body once it has died.' But in the *uraga* verses, there is no dualism between body and spirit: instead there is an implied comparison between the serpent's skin and unwholesome mental and emotional states. Having shaken off such blemishes the *bhikkhu* slips free in the unfixed shape of a magical beast.

[49] He goes so far as to claim that: 'The teaching of the Buddha as found in the Pali canon does not endorse a philosophy of non-dualism of any variety, nor, I would add, can a non-dualistic perspective be found lying implicit within the Buddha's discourses' (Bodhi 1998).

evidently borne out by the Theravādin commentary on the *uraga* verses, which, as we have seen, attempt to characterise the meaning of the 'near and far shores' in terms of 'crossing the flood' of *saṃsāra* to the goal of *nirvāṇa*.

However, the 'near and far shores' of the *uraga* verses may be understood as referring to the 'stream of the Dharma' and not 'crossing the flood'. Once we go on to identify the 'near shore' with the subjective sense spheres and the 'far shore' with the objective sense spheres, and the *bhikkhu* as letting go of them both, it would appear that such a practitioner has let go of a fundamental duality found in unawakened experience. As the Buddha is reported to have said (S 35:92, PTS iv.67):

> 'Monks, I will teach you the duality (*dvaya*), so listen. What, monks, is the duality? Just the eye and forms, just the ear and sounds, just the nose and smells, just the tongue and tastes, just the body and tangibles, just the mind and mental objects. Monks, this is said to be the duality.'

Although the experience of such a monk is never described in terms of non-duality (*advaya*) in the Pāli discourses, such an experience is clearly implied by the *uraga* verses.

Later Buddhists made explicit what was thus left implicit in the early discourses. In the Mahāyāna *sūtra* called the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*, for instance, the Bodhisattva Pramati describes an 'approach to the Dharma-door of non-duality' (*advayadharmamukhapraveśa*) in terms of the duality of the subjective and objective sense-spheres:

> 'Eye and form are two. But clearly understanding the eye (*cakṣuparijñayā*) and not having either craving (*rāga*) for or hatred (*dveṣa*) for or delusion (*moha*) concerning form, this is calm (*śānta*). Equally, ear and sound, nose and odour, tongue and taste, body and tangible, mind and objects, are two-fold. But clearly understanding the mind and feeling neither craving for, nor hatred for, nor delusion concerning form, this is calm. Being thus established in calm is entering into non-duality.' (Lamotte 1976: 196–7, slightly altered)

While this is only one approach to the *sūtra*'s teaching of non-duality, and not even the highest,[50] it is suggestive of how the overcoming of the duality of

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[50] In fact, Mañjuśrī says that this, like the other such accounts, still implies duality, since it uses

the objective and subjective sense spheres constitutes a profound entry into the Dharma, characterised as non-dual. By implication, then, the *bhikkhu* who lets go both the near and far shores, and who has neither gone too far nor gone back, has entered into non-duality – in the image of a mysterious serpent which has shed its old skin.

We see then how the *uraga* verses, as an example of early Buddhist poetry, preserve a way of putting the Dharma (a *dhammapariyāya*) that was later excluded from the Theravāda, though it was preserved or revived in the Mahāyāna.[51] Of course, early Buddhist thought as it has been preserved in the *nikāya*s is dominated by a pragmatic, developmental model of spiritual life resting on a common-sense realist metaphysics. Yet the *uraga* verses also demonstrate the presence of a mystical poetry of non-duality at the very beginning of the Buddhist tradition.

Appendix: another problem in the *uraga* verses

Here I consider another problem in the *uraga* verses:, the meaning of the *pāda*, *naccasārī na paccasārī*, 'he has neither gone too far nor gone back'[52] (Sn v.8– 13).[53] This too has puzzled commentators. The problem is understanding what is meant by 'gone too far' and 'gone back'. Again, while commentators old and new have put forward various interpretations, there is no agreement on what the verse means. I propose, however, that it is possible to understand 'gone too far' and 'gone back' in relation to the metaphor of the stream of the Dharma: the *bhikkhu* should neither go too far, going towards the 'far shore', nor go back, going towards the 'near shore', but should remain in the flowing stream.

The Pāli commentator (Pj II 21) firstly re-defines the two terms:

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words, implying the duality of what is said and what is meant (Lamotte 1976: 202).

[51] Gomez 1976 has also identified 'proto-Mādhyamika' thought in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* of the *Sutta-nipāta*. But I would agree with Bhikkhu Bodhi that the denial of the duality of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* that is made in Mahāyāna is not to be found in the Pāli canon.

[52] *accasārī* and *paccasārī* are past-tense (aorist) forms of *ati-sarati* and *paṭi-sarati*. Grammatically this suggests verbal actions preceding the action of the present-tense verb *jahāti* 'lets go' in the refrain. However, the use of the past-tense form *samūhatāse* in Pāli Sn v.14b prompts the commentator (Pj II 23) to invoke a grammatical rule that a present-tense verb used in the same sentence as a past-tense form can be understood as denoting actions taking place at the same time: *vattamānasamīpe vattamānavacanalakkhaṇena* (discussed in Pind 1990: 193–6).

[53] The first *pāda* recurs in Sn v.8–13, and in PDhp 411–12, GDhp-K 86–7, Ud-V 32.55.

'Now "who has not gone too far" (*nāccasārī*)[54] in this context means "who has not run ahead (*atidhāvi*)".[55] "Who has not gone back" (*na paccasārī*)[56] means "has not been left behind (*ohīyi*)".'[57]

However, as Norman (1974: 175) points out, the verbs with which the commentary glosses *accasārī* and *paccasārī* are not synonyms but are reminiscent of another canonical passage at *Udāna* 2.22:

'Monks, overcome by two forms of speculative views, some gods and human beings fall behind (*olīyanti*), some run ahead (*atidhāvanti*), while those with vision see.'[58]

This gloss may not be limited to the Theravādin commentarial tradition, since the composer of the Ud-V has, once again, taken the opportunity to re-write the presumably incomprehensible *pāda* as *yo nātyasaraṃ na cātyalīyaṃ* (Ud-V 32.55a). While *nātyasaraṃ* would be the Sanskrit equivalent of Pāli *nāccasārī*, *cātyalīyaṃ* (i.e. *ca + ati+a+līyaṃ*), 'he has become slack',[59] would appear to be a Sanskrit word comparable to the Pāli *olīyati* of Ud 2.22, cited above. Having glossed *accasārī* and *paccasārī* in a way that, like Ud-V 32.55a, makes more sense in the context of canonical Buddhism, the Pāli commentary can further gloss them in terms of five pairs of extremes to be avoided:

'Why was this said? Because [1] one goes too far, falling into agitation through exerting excess effort; one goes back, falling into indolence through excess slackness. [2] Thus one goes too far distressing oneself through craving for existence; one goes back being devoted to sensual pleasure. [3] One goes too far through holding an eternalist view; one goes back by holding an annihilationist view. [4] One goes too far through regretting

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[54] DOP i.69 s.v. *atisarati* 'goes past, beyond; overlooks; goes too far, oversteps, transgresses'.

[55] DOP i.63 s.v. *atidhavati* 'runs past, outstrips; goes too far; goes against, transgresses'.

[56] PED 401 s.v. *paṭisarati* ¹ '[*paṭi + sṛ*] to run back, stay back, lag behind' (the latter def. from the comm.); *paṭisarati* ² '[*prati + smṛ*] to think back upon, to mention'. See also n.57 on this derivation.

[57] DOP i.599 s.v. *ohīyati* 'is left behind; falls behind; falls back; hangs back'.

[58] ᴘᴛs Ud 49 = Iti 49, ᴘᴛs Iti 43 *dvīhi bhikkhave diṭṭhigatehi pariyuṭṭhitā devamanussā olīyanti eke atidhāvanti eke cakkhumanto ca passanti*.

[59] Cf. BHSD 9 s.v. *atilīyate* '(cf. Pali *atilīna*) becomes slack'.

what has passed; one goes back by longing for what is to come. [5] One goes too far through speculation about the past; one goes back through speculation about the future. Therefore, one who, avoiding both these extremes, practises the middle way 'neither goes too far nor goes back' – for this reason this was said.'[60]

The commentarial strategy here is thus to re-define the two words *accasārī* and *paccasārī* in terms of different words, found elsewhere in the canonical literature, that present two extremes to be avoided; and then to gloss *accasārī* and *paccasārī* with meanings that would be appropriate if it were glossing those other familiar words.

John Brough takes issue with this strategy in his comments on GDhp-K 87–8, where the *pāda* appears in the form: *yo necasari na precasari*.[61] He points out that *precasari* (= *paccasārī*, from *paṭisarati*) does not actually mean 'one is left behind' (*ohīyi*), and points out that, while the two verbs, *accasārī* and *paccasārī*, must form some kind of antithesis, 'we may conclude that the commentator has demonstrated that he had no genuine information about the intended sense of the verse, which thus remains open to further conjecture' (Brough 1962: 201). He then argues that the antithesis that must have been intended between *atisarati* and *paṭisarati* was presumably similar to that between *ora* and *pāra*, which, as we have seen, he regards as rhetorically pseudo-profound. He goes on to discuss the possibility that *atisarati* would originally have been understood in the sense of 'transgress', and that *paṭisarati* may originally have been understood in the sense of 'to pay attention to something, to occupy one's mind with it',[62] and hence that the *pāda* should be understood:

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[60] PTS Pj II 21: *kiṃ vuttaṃ hoti: accāraddhaviriyena hi uddhacce patanto accāsarati, atisithilena kosajje patanto paccāsarati, tathā bhavataṇhāya attānaṃ kilamento accāsarati kāmataṇhāya kāmasukham anuyuñjanto paccāsarati, sassatadiṭṭhiyā accāsarati ucchedadiṭṭhiyā paccāsarati, atītaṃ anusocanto accāsarati anāgataṃ paṭikaṃkhanto paccāsarati, pubbantānudiṭṭhiyā accāsarati, aparantānudiṭṭhiyā paccāsarati, tasmā yo ete ubho ante vajjetvā majjhimaṃ paṭipadaṃ paṭipajjanto nāccasārī na paccasārī ti evaṃ vuttaṃ hoti.*

[61] The *e* in Gāndhārī Prakrit is merely a 'feature within the dialect itself, of palatalization in the neighbourhood of a palatal consonant' (Brough 1962: 201).

[62] Brough cites BHSD 472 s.v. *pratisarati* '(lit. returns to;) attends to, refers to'. Edgerton denies, *pace* PED, that *paṭisarati* could be from *prati-smṛ*.

'who has neither sinned nor paid any heed (to morality – since he is beyond good and evil); [but in addition the more fundamental sense] 'who has neither transcended (the world) nor regarded it', since, as the next line [of GDhp-K 86] says, 'he knows here and now (*loke*) that all this is unreal' (Brough 1962: 203).

Brough's analysis continues, exploring Tibetan and Chinese translations of the text, but these need not concern us here, since in any case I am going to propose a quite different interpretation.

K.R. Norman (1974: 175, 2001: 151) agrees with Brough's assessment of the Pāli commentary, but offers his own interpretation of the *pāda*. He does so in two steps. First he proposes that the Pāli *accasārī* should rather read *accasarī*, which would in fact be metrically correct, despite *accasārī* in all Pāli eds. The fact that PDhp 411–2 reads *nāccasarī* and that Ud-V 32.55 reads *nātyasaraṃ* provides support for this emendation of the Pāli *metri causa*. Second he proposes that we read *paccasārī* as *p'accasārī* (i.e. *pi accasārī*) so that we can read an antithesis between a simple verb stem *sar* and its causative stem *sār*. Hence we should read the *pāda* as *yo naccasarī na p'accasārī*; and taking *atisarati* in the sense of 'transgress' we should translate, 'who has not transgressed nor even (*pi*) caused [another] to transgress'.

Timothy Lenz, however, working with the recently discovered GDhp-L, has put forward the view that Norman's reading is incompatible with the Gāndhārī text, and therefore is most probably not correct. He re-states the problem of making sense of this *pāda* as well as Norman's proposed interpretation before drawing some conclusions. The GDhp-L fragment reads *(*yo ṇa a-) /// [ca]hari ṇa pracahari*, from which Lenz draws the following conclusion:

> 'Norman's proposal of *na p'accasārī* does not correspond with *ṇa pracahari* in the [GDhp-L]. The scribe of the [GDhp-L] does not use post-consonantal *r* promiscuously; whenever he writes *pr*, it is etymologically justified. Therefore, the second verb in verse 9a must be interpreted as having the prefix *prati* plus an *a* augment or *ā* prefix (Skt. *prati + a = pratya* > P *pacca*/G *praca* or *prati + ā = pratyā* > P *paccā*/G *praca*).' (Lenz 2003: 68)

Norman (1974: 175) had of course taken note of GDhp-K, which reads *na precasari*, but had hypthesised that 'the G[āndhārī] redactor misunderstood

his exemplar and produced a hyperform *prec-*'.[63] Despite the positive result of having shown that the Pāli form *na paccasārī* is to be understood as equivalent to GDhp-L *na precahari*, GDhp-K *na precasari* and PDhp *na preccasārī*, as well as Ud-V Subaši 517 *na pretyasārī*, and thus clarifying that the *pāda* should be read in terms of the antithesis of *atisarati* and *pratisarati*, Lenz concludes that the now-established content of the *pāda* does little to illuminate its meaning. He puts forward yet another tentative view about the meaning of the *pāda* as follows:

> 'one can interpret *(*a)[ca]hari* as "gone beyond"; the prefix *(*a)[ca]* = Skt. *ati* means "beyond", and the root *sṛ* can mean "go". *Pracahari* can be interpreted as meaning "moved toward"; the prefix *praca* = Skt. *prati + a* means "toward", and the root *sṛ* can also mean "move". Accordingly, it is possible to translate *(*yo ṇa a-) /// [ca] hari ṇa pracahari* as "[that monk] who has neither gone beyond [this world] nor moved toward it." Presumably, the sense here is something like "that monk who neither desires not shuns this world", which is consistent with the tenor of the verse as a whole.' (Lenz 2003: 69)

This interpretation agrees with that of Brough, while holding that Norman's interpretation cannot be correct, and thus all three modern commentators believe the Pāli commentator to be incorrect.

Yet another perspective on this difficult-to-understand *pāda* comes from considering the pair *accasārī–paccasārī* in terms of the echo-like effect produced by the repetition of similar sounds. Bryan Levman hypothesises that the Pāli *pāda* and its Prakrit parallels may be what he calls an 'echo-type construction' (Levman 2013: 151), typical of Indian languages like Pāli but not found in other Indo-European languages like Iranian. If this is the case, then *yo naccasārī na paccasārī* means 'who has not transgressed and the like' (Levman 2014: 512). There appears to be some evidence for this view in that we find a *Jātaka* verse (no. 439, PTS Ja iv.6) with a similar construction:

> *atisaro paccasaro mittavinda suṇohi me.*
>
> *cakkaṃ te sirasim āviddhaṃ na taṃ jīvaṃ pamokkhasi*

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[63] Neither Norman nor Lenz seem to have taken into account PDhp 411–12, which reads *na preccasārī*. Cone (1986: 630) follows Norman in his proposal to amend the *pāda*, and hence presumes PDhp *precca-*, GDhp-K *preca-*, and Ud-V Subaši *pretya-* to be misinterpretations of their exemplar.

While the commentator glosses *atisaro* here as 'who has gone too far (*atisarī*)' and 'who will go too far (*atisarissati*)' (Ja iv.6), he glosses *paccasaro* simply as a synonym of *atisaro* (*paccasaro 'ti tass' eva vevacanaṃ*).[64] This would support the idea that *paccasaro* is no more than an echo of *atisaro*.

However, there may be a simple solution to the problem of the meaning of *naccasārī na paccasārī*, based on the second interpretation of *orapāra* above. If we understand *atisarati* and *paṭisarati* quite straightforwardly in terms of their surface meanings of 'goes too far' and 'goes back', then we can see a connection with the extended 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor in the *Simile of the Great Tree-Trunk* discourse. There it was said that if a monk does not 'go towards' (*upagacchati*) the far bank of the river, nor go towards the near bank of the river, and avoids other obstacles, he will be carried to the ocean of *nirvāṇa*. Hence, relating *naccasārī na paccasārī* to this discourse we can make the following associations:

(i) the monk who *naccasārī* 'has not gone too far' can be related to the monk who *na upagacchati* 'does not go towards' the far shore (*pāra*);

(ii) the monk who *na paccasārī* 'has not gone back' can be related to the monk who *na upagacchati* 'does not go towards' the near shore (*ora*).

Correlating this surface meaning of *naccasārī na paccasārī* to the the 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor, we can therefore gloss the *pāda* as: 'Who has neither gone too far [towards the far shore] nor gone back [towards the near shore].'

I propose that a reader familiar with the 'stream of the Dharma' metaphor would associate *accasārī* with identification with and grasping at the objective sense spheres (*bāhirāni āyatanāni*), and *paccasārī* with identification with and grasping at the subjective sense spheres (*ajjhattikāni āyatanāni*). Therefore, *naccasārī na paccasārī*, on the surface level of meaning, recapitulates the meaning of *so bhikkhu jahāti orapāraṃ*. However, it does so with (at least) two additional levels of aural and verbal implication:

(i) the monk who *naccasārī na paccasārī* 'has not transgressed and the like' (following Levman's hypothesis that the *pāda* is an echo-type construction);

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[64] A translation of this obscure *gāthā* might go: 'Going too far, going too far, Mittavinda, listen to me: the wheel has whirled around your head, your life will not be freed.' For the strange story in which this stanza is embedded see Rouse 1901: 1–4.

(ii) the monk who *naccasārī na paccasārī* 'has neither gone beyond [this world] nor moved towards it' (following both Brough and Lenz in their interpretations).

With these additional levels of meaning, the *pāda* contributes to the density of association in the *uraga* verses as a whole as well as to its phonetic qualities.

This proposed solution to the problem of the meaning of *naccasārī na paccasārī* may be confirmed by an interpretation of the broader associations of the following *pāda* in Sn 8 (and in PDhp 411), *sabbaṃ accagamā imaṃ papañcaṃ*, '[who] has overcome all this proliferation…'. While this English translation leads the reader simply to hear the word 'all' (*sabbaṃ*) as an adjective qualifying 'this proliferation' (*imaṃ papañcaṃ*), a reader of the Pāli or Prakrit who was familiar with early Buddhist teachings may also have heard in *sabbaṃ* a pronoun connected to the metaphorical associations of near and far shores implied by the preceding *pāda*. At S 35:23 (PTS iv.15) the Buddha is reported to have said:

> 'Monks, I will teach you the all (*sabbaṃ*), so listen. And what is the all? Just the eye and forms, the ear and sounds, the nose and smells, the tongue and tastes, the body and tangibles, the mind and mental objects. This, monks, is called the all.'

That is to say, the subjective sense spheres together with the objective sense spheres are together called 'the all' (*sabbaṃ*), meaning, that the two sense spheres together constitute the entirety of the experienced world. And in the following *sutta*, S 35:24, the Buddha is said to 'teach the Dharma for the letting go of the all' (*sabbappahānāya dhammaṃ desessāmi*). With these associations in mind we can therefore gloss the implications of the surface level of meanings of Sn v.8 as follows:

> *yo nāccasārī na paccasārī*
>
> *sabbaṃ accagamā imaṃ papañcaṃ*
> *so bhikkhu jahāti orapāraṃ*
> *urago jiṇṇam iva ttacaṃ purāṇaṃ*

'Who has neither gone too far [towards the far shore, the objective sense spheres], nor come back [towards the near shore, the subjective sense spheres],

who has overcome the all [both the subjective and objective sense spheres], which is this proliferation [of emotions and views][65] – that *bhikkhu* lets go of the near and far shores [subjective and objective sense spheres, the all], like a serpent its worn-out old skin.' And this *bhikkhu*, attained to right view, thus continues in the stream of the Dharma towards the boundless ocean which is *nirvāṇa*.

Abbreviations

A	Aṅguttara-nikāya, translated as *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha* (Bodhi 2012); Pāli Text Society (PTS) ed. of Pāli vols.1–5 (Morris and Hardy 1885–1900)
BHSD	*Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* (Edgerton 1953)
D	Dīgha-nikāya: translated as *Long Discourses of the Buddha* (Walshe 1987), PTS eds. vol. 1 (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1889), vol. 2 (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1903), vol.3 (Carpenter 1910)
Dhp	Dhammapada (Hinüber and Norman 1994)
Dhp-a	Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā (H. C. Norman 1970)
DOP	*Dictionary of Pāli* vol.1 (Cone 2001) vol.2 (Cone 2010)
Ja	Jātaka (Fausbøll 1877–96)
M	Majjhima-nikāya, translated as *Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* (Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 1995), PTS eds. vol.1 (Trenckner 1888), vol.2 (Trenckner 1896), vol.3 (R. Chalmers 1899)
Miln	Milindapañha (Trenckner 1880)
Nidd 1	Niddesa I Mahāniddesa vols.1 & 2 (de la Vallée Poussin and Thomas 1916)
Nidd 2	Niddesa II Cullaniddesa (Stede 1918)
Pj II	Paramatthajotikā II vol.1 (Smith 1916) vol.2 (Smith 1917)
S	Saṃyutta-nikāya, translated as *Connected Discourses of the Buddha* (Bodhi 2000), PTS eds. vols.1–5 (Féer 1884–98)
Sn	Sutta-nipāta (Andersen and Smith 1913)

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[65] This is not the place to expand on the meaning of *papañca*, 'proliferation', but suffice to say that the commentary (Pj II 21) glosses *papañca* as 'the threefold proliferation reckoned as craving, conceit and views, with its source in feeling, perception and thought'.

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A Note on Refuge in Vedic and Pāli Texts

Brett Shults

Abstract

In this exploratory note I consider a few examples of refuge motifs in vedic and Pāli texts, including examples of the vedic motif of triple refuge. Concerned more with questions and suggestions than with definitive answers, the following is an attempt to think through some of the implications of "refuge" and "going for refuge" as these ideas appear in a selection of ancient and more recent texts.

I. "The Triple Gem," according to Nyanaponika Thera, "has objective existence as an impersonal idea or ideal as long as it is known and cherished. Even in that mode it is doubtlessly a persisting and active source of benefit for the world."[1] It was in the late 1940s that these remarks were first uttered,[2] and they were immediately followed by this elaboration on the Triple Gem, also known as the Triple Refuge:

> But it is transformed from an impersonal idea to a personal refuge only to the extent that it is realized in one's own mind and manifested in one's own life. Therefore, the existence of the Triple Gem in its characteristic nature as a refuge cannot be proved to others. Each must find this refuge in himself by his own efforts.[3]

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[1] From *The Threefold Refuge* by Nyanaponika Thera (2008, 8).

[2] When the paper that was eventually published as *The Threefold Refuge* was read in Colombo on March 20, 1948 (ibid., 1).

[3] Ibid., 8.

It would be an engrossing pastime to speculate about the above words and whether they could have been uttered without there having been a Protestant Reformation or the Christianity that preceded that mighty upheaval. For although the individual who became Nyanaponika Thera was born to a Jewish family,[4] he came of age in a Germany steeped in centuries of Christian and Protestant thought, a land, moreover, in which a formidable array of mystics, Romantic thinkers, and theologians had discovered with irrevocable certainty the highest truths of religion amid the shifting currents of personal feeling and inner experience.[5] Religion for such thinkers was not about dry theory, nor empty ceremonial, and, for Nyanaponika, neither was the act of "going for refuge." Nyanaponika explained that going for refuge "should be a conscious act, not the mere profession of a theoretical belief or a habitual rite of traditional piety."[6] Those who go for refuge finally do so in the fullest sense "by actually attaining to the refuge through their own inner realization."[7]

Nyanaponika's musings on what it means to go for refuge to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha might furnish the student of religion with any number of points for further consideration. But in this note I shall follow a line of thought suggested by Nyanaponika's insistence that going for refuge ideally amounts to a kind of "inner realization" congruent with developments in other aspects of the refugee's life.[8] I furthermore would like to suggest that something of what Nyanaponika calls for is illustrated in the following

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[4] See *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Buswell and Lopez 2014), s.v. "Ñāṇaponika Mahāthera," also known as Nyanaponika Mahathera, etc., born Siegmund Feniger (1901-1994).

[5] For introductory discussions of thinkers such as Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and Rudolph Otto (1869-1937), see Kessler (2012, 12-16, 79-84) and McCutcheon (2014, 168-171). Michael Ferber provides an accessible introduction to Romanticism vis-à-vis religion and philosophy (2010, 63-91); also helpful are the historically astute remarks of Taylor (2012, 58-63), the retrospective elements in Thomas (2006), and the more substantial treatment of Reardon (1999). Richard Tarnas (1991, 366-394) provides a contextualizing discussion of Romanticism with references to the *Confessions* of both Augustine and Rousseau.

[6] Nyanaponika Thera (2008, 7).

[7] Ibid., 8.

[8] Nyanaponika approvingly refers to "ancient devotees" who perceived the act of going for refuge "as a most momentous step decisive for life, entailing sacred responsibilities" (2008, 11). Nyanaponika also expounds four graduated methods or modes of going for refuge, "each entailing a different degree of commitment" (10) and each entailing physical, verbal, or mental activities, changes in attitude, etc. (11-14). On the idea of refuge in Theravāda Buddhism see also Carter (2006).

narrative about the female elder Sumanā from Dhammapāla's medieval commentary on *Therīgāthā* verse 16:

> Hearing the Master preach the doctrine to the King Pasenadi . . . she believed, and was established in the Refuges and the Precepts. Fain to leave the world, she put off doing so that she might take care of her grandmother as long as she lived. After the grandmother's death, Sumanā went, accompanied by the King, to the Vihāra, taking much treasure in carpets and shawls, and presenting them to the Order. And hearing the Master teach, she attained the fruit of the Path of No-return, and asked for ordination.[9]

What makes this account interesting for the student of religion is that in it one finds the story of a great discontinuity, at the heart of which is the certainty felt by one who becomes "established" (*patiṭṭhāya*) in the refuges (*saraṇesu*) of Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. Concomitant with this development there is moral improvement, registered in the account by mention of "the Precepts" (*sīlesu*).[10] In the wording of the account we are made to appreciate a sequence of events,[11] and how Sumanā's transformative experience manifests in other aspects of her life: she wishes to "leave the world," but above all the great discontinuity in Sumanā's life is symbolized by her transference of precious objects to the monastic establishment, and by her subsequent decision to seek ordination. Following in the wake of Romantic era thinkers and before them Augustine – whom so many of us follow without knowing it – we might think it fitting to speak of Sumanā's "change of heart."[12] In what follows I shall attempt

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[9] Rhys Davids (1909, 19-20). See Müller (1893, 22).

[10] The Pāli word *sīlesu* evokes a range of ideas: "in moral practices," "in the rules of behavior," etc. On the Buddhist meaning of *sīla* see Norman (2012, 198).

[11] In the translation as in the Pāli text, part of which reads: *desitaṃ dhammaṃ sutvā laddhapasādā saraṇesu sīlesu ca patiṭṭhāya pabbajitukāmā* (Müller 1893, 22). To recapitulate: after hearing the teaching that was preached, she had faith, and after becoming established in the [three] refuges and in moral behaviors, she wished to go forth, i.e. leave the worldly lifestyle.

[12] According to *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* (Ammer 2013), the phrase "change of heart" (s.v.) dates to the early 1800s. In the 1828 edition of Webster's *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, vol. 1, one definition of the word "conversion" (s.v.) begins: "In a *theological* or *moral sense*, a change of heart" (original italics). After noting that "the Romantic movement identified the heart of religion with feeling rather than with the conclusions of intellectual arguments," Henry Chadwick states: "Augustine was not in the least anti-intellectual, but he did not think that intellect had the last word and he pioneered a highly

to place the story of Sumanā and her change of heart in a somewhat wider perspective. I also would like to suggest that we cannot fully understand certain events depicted in Pāli texts unless we understand the vedic antecedents of going for refuge.

II. Some people in ancient India used the word *saraṇa*, as we read in Pāli texts, while others used the word *śaraṇa*, as we read in vedic texts.[13] But these refer to the same thing or to the same set of related ideas: refuge, shelter, protection, and that which provides the same. With this understanding in mind a Buddhist composer of a *sutta* could imagine *saraṇa* in the form of a true friend: "he is a refuge for the frightened" (*bhītassa saraṇaṃ hoti*).[14] The composer of *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra* 3.27, on the other hand, could imagine *śaraṇa* in connection with the intricacies of vedic recitation: "I resort to the meter which, Prajāpati, is your refuge" (*yat te prajāpate śaraṇaṃ*

positive evaluation of human feelings. We owe to him our use of the word 'heart' in this sense" (Chadwick 2001, 3-4). For other reasons too, "Augustine could well be called the first Romantic" (Brown 1973, 39). Augustine described the climactic events of his conversion (see *Confessions* viii 11.25-12.29) with repeated references to his "heart" (Latin: *cor*), drawing in part, according to Chadwick, on the language of Psalm 18:15 in Augustine's Latin Bible (*Confessions* viii 12.28, tr. Chadwick 2008, 152 – see also xxvi); cf. the Loeb edition of Augustine's *Confessions* (tr. Carolyn J.-B. Hammond 2014, esp. 406-407). At this pivotal moment and at other significant points in Augustine's career, the achievements and letters of the Apostle Paul were much on Augustine's mind (Brown 2000, 99-102, 106, 144, 201, 508-509; Fredriksen 1986, 20-28). And it is of course Paul's "conversion" experience (as told primarily in Acts) that remains for many the example *par excellence* of a change of heart. References to Paul's religious transformation in the undisputed letters of the Apostle are notoriously few and allusive; in those same letters Paul sometimes uses the word μετάνοια, "repentance, change of heart, turning from one's sins, changing one's ways" (*A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*, Newman 2014, s.v. μετά|νοια). In 2 Corinthians 7:10, for example, Paul writes of a "repentance that leads to salvation" (NRSV); see Douglas, Brown, and Comfort (1993, 637). A searching treatment of the evidence for Paul's conversion, as well as Augustine's reaction(s) to that evidence, can be found in Fredriksen (1986); cf. the response of Asiedu (2001).

[13] Or with accent: *śaraṇá*. Not all vedic texts are accented and in this note I use accented forms only in direct quotations. Also in this note I take a relatively broad view (basically following Witzel 2005) of the rubric "vedic texts," under which the early *Upaniṣad*s and *Śrautasūtra*s are included.

[14] See Carpenter (1911, 187) = DN iii 187. Carpenter lists the variant *paṭisaraṇaṃ* (187 n. 2). The phrase *bhītassa saraṇaṃ hoti* appears with other wording from DN iii 187 in commentaries on other texts. See, for example, Smith (1989, 73).

chandas tat prapadye).[15] The composer does not explain to our satisfaction the relationship between Prajāpati and *śaraṇa*,[16] but the association between *śaraṇa* and divine power was in any event an old one. Indeed, when composers of classic vedic texts thought of *śaraṇa* they often thought of the gods. The poet of *Ṛgveda Saṃhitā* 1.158.3, for example, could pray to the Aśvins, the twin gods: "may I gain your shelter and protection" (*úpa vām ávaḥ śaraṇáṃ gameyaṃ*).[17] Or, reading *śaraṇa* in this same passage adjectivally: "I would come to your sheltering help."[18] Either way, divine forms of refuge, shelter, and protection flourished in the minds of Ṛgvedic poets.[19] The poet of *Ṛgveda Saṃhitā* 6.49.7 could imagine Sarasvatī acting with other goddesses or divine ladies to hold up *śaraṇa* and spread it out like some kind of perfect canopy: "together with goddesses she will extend unbroken protection" (*gnā́bhir áchidraṃ śaraṇáṃ sajóṣā . . . yaṃsat*). The poet of *Ṛgveda Saṃhitā* 7.95.5 could imagine being in Sarasvatī's "dearest" protection or shelter (*śárman priyátame*), and build on that idea to evoke the image of an arboreal refuge: "may we stand nearby it like a sheltering tree" (*úpa stheyāma śaraṇáṃ ná vṛkṣám*).[20] The idea that Sarasvatī's protection is like a tree that provides shelter or refuge can be found in other vedic texts.[21] A different view of human beings going for refuge (*saraṇa*) to trees and other objects can be found in the *Dhammapada*:

> Men who are terrified by danger go to many a refuge,
> to mountains, and woods, to parks, trees and shrines.[22]

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[15] Translation based on Kashikar (2003, vol. 1, 175), with modifications. Sanskrit text from Kashikar (ibid., 174).

[16] Cf. *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* 1.327 *prajāpatir asi . . . brahmaṇaś śaraṇa tan mā pāhi iti* (Vira and Chandra 1986, 137), "You are Prajāpati . . . the protection of brahman, protect me" (tr. Bodewitz 1990, 186). On the interpretation of this part of JB 1.327 see Bodewitz (312 n. 25).

[17] From the translation by Griffith (1889, 271). All transliterated Sanskrit passages from the *Ṛgveda Saṃhitā* in this note are based on Aufrecht (1877).

[18] From the translation by Jamison and Brereton (2014, vol. 1, 336). In other passages too Jamison and Brereton, and other translators, sometimes translate *śaraṇa* adjectivally.

[19] As did terms for such ideas. See, for example, RV 1.114.5 *śárma várma chardír*, "shelter, covering, and protection" (tr. Jamison and Brereton 2014, vol. 1, 266).

[20] From the translation by Jamison and Brereton (2014, vol. 2, 1003).

[21] See, for example, *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 2.4.6.1 (Sastry 1921, 191).

[22] *Dhammapada* verse 188 translated by Norman (2000, 29). See Sūriyagoḍa Sumaṅgala Thera (1914, 28); Ānandajoti Bhikkhu (2011, 122).

In the following verse of the *Dhammapada* we are told that such things are not a "secure refuge" (*saraṇaṃ khemaṃ*), are not the "best refuge" (*saraṇam uttamaṃ*).[23] The Buddha would be a better refuge, as elsewhere in Pāli texts we are made to understand:

> Whoever have gone to the Buddha as a refuge –
> they will not go to the realm of perdition.
> Having abandoned the human body,
> they will fill out the company of the gods.[24]

Composers of Pāli texts delighted in representing not only human beings but also divine figures going to the Buddha for refuge. Thus the moon god pays homage to the Blessed One, and then says: "Be for me a refuge!" (*tassa me saraṇaṃ bhavā ti*).[25] The sun god says the same.[26] But in time the Buddhist tradition would come to agree that the best refuge for most people is the triple refuge (*tisaraṇa*) consisting of Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. Furthermore, as we have seen above, some Buddhists eventually would claim that going for refuge, if it were a going worthy of the name, ought to involve a kind of inner experience that manifests in one's life. The question for the student of religion is the following: is there support in the primary texts of the *suttapiṭaka* for such a position? To help stake out the conceptual territory of our inquiries we might consider the following verse, again from the *Dhammapada*:

> But whoever goes to the Buddha, the Doctrine and the Order as a
> refuge, he perceives with proper knowledge the four noble truths.[27]

Notable in this verse is the assertion that going to the triple refuge involves a kind of inner realization. Even so, the verse with its frankly gnostic sensibility may not speak adequately to the kind of inner experience that many would call a change of heart. For a stronger sense of the latter we must look elsewhere in Pāli texts. Before we do so, however, we must return to the corpus of vedic

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[23] Quotations from Norman (2000, 29). See Sūriyagoḍa Sumaṅgala Thera (1914, 28); Ānandajoti Bhikkhu (2011, 122).

[24] See Feer (1884, 27) = SN i 27.

[25] See Feer (1884, 50) = SN i 50.

[26] See Feer (1884, 51) = SN i 51.

[27] *Dhammapada* verse 190. Translation based on Norman (2000, 29), with modifications. See Sūriyagoḍa Sumaṅgala Thera (1914, 28); Ānandajoti Bhikkhu (2011, 123).

texts. For as even brief forays into the vedic corpus make clear, Buddhists had no monopoly on the idea of refuge, nor on the idea of a triple refuge. Indeed, if standard accounts and chronologies are correct,[28] composers of vedic texts arrived at the idea of a triple refuge long before the Buddhists.

III. An enigmatic instance of the triple refuge motif occurs in a hymn to Parjanya, a vedic god of thunder and rain, at *Ṛgveda Saṃhitā* 7.101.2. In the nineteenth century Ralph T. H. Griffith translated the key part of the verse as follows: "Vouchsafe us triple shelter for our refuge."[29] W. Norman Brown understood the text more or less in the same way, but reversed the terms: "provide a triple refuge as our shelter."[30] Wendy Doniger peered into the text and also saw "triple refuge." Her translation is shown here along with the verse in full:

> *yó várdhana óṣadhīnāṃ yó apā́ṃ yó víśvasya jágato devá ī́śe | sá tridhā́tu śaraṇáṃ śárma yaṃsat trivártu jyótiḥ svabhiṣṭy àsmé ||*

> The god who causes the plants to increase, and the waters, who rules over the entire world, may he grant us triple refuge and comfort, the triple light that is of good help to us.[31]

As one might expect, other translators have understood and translated the verse somewhat differently. Stephanie Jamison and Joel Brereton translate the verse as follows:

> The one who is the increaser of plants, who of the waters, who, as god, holds sway over the whole moving world, he will extend triply layered sheltering shelter, triply turned very superior light to us.[32]

In their introduction to the hymn Jamison and Brereton observe: "this hymn celebrates the fructifying rain in sometimes cryptic and riddling terms, which probably involve simultaneous natural and ritual reference."[33] The translators also point out that the number three is a "recurrent theme" in the hymn.[34] All in

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[28] See, for example: Witzel (1995); Witzel (1997); Olivelle (1998, 4-21); Witzel (2009).
[29] Griffith (1897, 95).
[30] Brown (1978, 12).
[31] Doniger (n.d., 174-175).
[32] Jamison and Brereton (2014, vol. 2, 1011).
[33] Ibid., 1010.
[34] Ibid.

all, it is by no means clear why the "triply layered sheltering shelter" (*tridhātu śaraṇaṃ śarma*) or in some translations the "triple refuge" (*tridhātu śaraṇaṃ*) is in fact *tridhātu*, consisting of three (*tri*) parts or elements (*dhātu*) and thus "triply layered" or "triple."[35] An interesting sidelight on the issue is cast, perhaps, by the way *tridhātu* was sometimes used to refer to the threefold nature of heaven and earth.[36] But however that may be, the meaning or evocative potential of a triple *śaraṇa* certainly was grasped by the composers of other texts.

Let us take *Ṛgveda Saṃhitā* 6.46.9 as an example. This verse occurs in a hymn that "concentrates on Indra as the helper of his praisers in contests and in battles."[37] The hymn is arranged in a series of two-verse *pragātha* strophic units.[38] Calling directly on the god, the poet addresses Indra thus:

> *índra tridhā́tu śaraṇáṃ trivárūthaṃ svastimát | chardír yacha maghávadbhyaś ca máhyaṃ ca yāváyā didyúm ebhyaḥ ||*

> O Indra, threefold refuge, triple-secure, providing well-being – extend [such] protection to the benefactors and to me. Keep the arrow away from those [39]

The verse ends, as it were, in mid-sentence; suffice it to say here that the latter part of the verse runs into the next verse and forms a prayer for keeping

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[35] Cf. RV 8.47.10 *śárma śaraṇáṃ . . . tridhā́tu yád varūthyàṃ*, "sheltering shelter . . . providing threefold defense" (tr. Jamison and Brereton 2014, vol. 2, 1127).

[36] See, for example, RV 1.34.7; 4.42.4; 7.5.4; 1.154.4. In the latter Jamison and Brereton translate *tridhā́tu pṛthivī́m utá dyā́m* as "heaven and earth in their three parts" (2014, vol. 1, 331); see Macdonell (2006, 34) on ways of construing *tridhātu* in the verse. Additional references to Indian tripartite cosmology can be found in Kirfel (1920, 3-5). Richard Gombrich has observed that in vedic cosmology the universe is held to be "bipartite" or "tripartite," with additional complications: "sometimes the two, sky and earth, sometimes the three, earth, atmosphere and sky, are said each to consist of three strata" (1975, 112). Could *tridhātu śaraṇaṃ* thus be understood as something like "(providing) refuge on all three cosmic levels"? The question stems from an exchange with Richard Gombrich (personal communication, August 2016), who also reminded me that Pāli Buddhism too divides the universe into three layers: *kāmadhātu* ("sphere of desire"), *rūpadhātu* ("sphere of form"), and *arūpadhātu* ("sphere of non-form"). On the latter scheme see Gombrich (1975, 133-134). See also *A Dictionary of Pāli* (Cone 2010), s.vv. *tedhātu*, *tedhātuka*.

[37] Jamison and Brereton (2014, vol. 2, 831).

[38] Ibid.

[39] Translation of RV 6.46.9 based on Jamison and Brereton (2014, vol. 2, 833), but I have incorporated elements of other translations or comments (in part to harmonize the translation with the translation of *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 5.1.21 – see below).

the right sort of people (the brave people, our people) safe from the arrow.[40]
Reflecting on the above verse, Royal W. Weiler noted: "Indra was implored to
grant a happy home, a triple protection (*śaraṇa*), triply strong."[41] W. Norman
Brown noted more simply: "Indra provides triple refuge."[42] In fact there is good
reason to regard RV 6.46.9 as the *locus classicus* of the triple *śaraṇa* motif.
This is because: (a) the verse is quoted in several other vedic texts; and (b)
those quotations indicate that the verse or the *pragātha* (verses 9-10) provided
important content for actual performances of rituals.[43]

   This can be seen in *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 5.1.21. This passage is part of a larger
textual unit dedicated to explaining elements of the ritual program, including
chants (*sāman*), carried out on the third day of the *pṛṣṭhya ṣaḍaha* rite:

> *indra tridhātu śaraṇam iti sāmapragāthas trivāṃs tṛtīye 'hani*
> *tṛtīyasyāhno rūpaṃ*

> "O Indra, threefold refuge" is the *pragātha* of the *sāman*. Containing
> [the word] "three" on the third day, it is a symbol of the third day.[44]

   The composer of the passage finds the wording of RV 6.46.9 to have a measure
of symbolic meaning. But what more such symbolism meant to the composer,
if it meant anything more at all, is something about which we can only wonder.
Perhaps the idea of "three" (*tri*-) on the third day of the ritual seemed amazing to
the composer, as if that liturgical detail were a precious window through which
one might glimpse the eternally valid but deeply mysterious nature of reality. Or
maybe not. The composer of this part of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* did not linger
on the topic or record for posterity additional thoughts on the matter, but like
a hurried traveler with much ground to cover, the composer quickly moved on
with more terse "discussions" of the scores of words and yet more words that
flow here like a torrent from the Ṛgvedic hymns into this, the composer's area
of responsibility. The performance extending across book five of the *Aitareya*

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[40] See Jamison and Brereton (2014, vol. 2, 833).

[41] Weiler (1962, 241).

[42] Brown (1978, 12), commenting on RV 7.101.2 with a reference to RV 6.46.9.

[43] See examples including but not limited to: *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 5.1.21; 5.20.21 (Aufrecht
1879, 123, 144); *Śānkhāyana Śrautasūtra* 6.13.3 (= 6.13.4 in Hillebrandt 1888, 70); *Jaiminīya
Brāhmaṇa* 2.391 (Vira and Chandra 1986, 330); *Āśvalāyana Śrautasūtra* 7.3.19 (Vidyāratna
1874, 559); *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* 22.4 (Lindner 1887, 98).

[44] AB 5.1.21. See Aufrecht (1879, 123). Translation based on Keith (1920, 224), with modifications.

Brāhmaṇa is surely impressive in its own way. But still we might wonder what it all finally meant to those long chains of transmitters and receivers in old India, the Brahmins, of whom it can be said truly: they did their duty.

IV. To the extent that the vedic passages mentioned above (and others) were recited and taught to succeeding generations, and to the extent that rites such as the *pṛṣṭhya ṣaḍaha* (and others) continued to be performed according to sanctioned patterns, it would seem that notions of tripartite protection, threefold shelter, triple refuge – all the connotations of *tridhātu śaraṇaṃ trivarūtham* – lived on in the minds of at least some Brahmins. And possibly in the minds of others in ancient India.[45] Weiler has claimed that the "triple averment," or verbally going for refuge to Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha, is "strongly reminiscent of Indra's triple refuge."[46] But there are other intriguing motifs of refuge and triple-refuge in vedic texts, and it might be that over time the older vedic ideas of refuge and triple refuge influenced or took on new forms, forms that might help us better understand evolving ideas of refuge in ancient India.[47] These may have emerged in what Michael Witzel calls the "Late Vedic" period, when the great early *Upaniṣad*s and other texts were created by composers who – it is widely acknowledged – drew with considerable expertise on earlier vedic

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[45] It is certain that some vedic motifs found their way into non-vedic texts. But exactly how and why did this happen? More to the point, were vedic references to "refuge" known, at least to some degree, by non-priests? By bards or patrons? By cultured despisers? By those who purveyed or sought remedies in spells or mantras? Weiler suggests that because the formula "O Indra, threefold refuge . . . " is the *pragātha* of the *sāman* in AB 5.1.21, it "operates as a kind of spell" (1962, 241 n. 20) – but he does not elaborate on the use of such mantric "spells" in any significant way. For a discussion of the use of Ṛgvedic mantras in different contexts see Patton (2005).

[46] Weiler (1962, 242), referring to RV 6.46.9. Monier Monier-Williams thought that the Buddhist "three-refuge formula" was noteworthy for another reason: "Very remarkably, this, the only prayer of true Buddhism, resembled the Gāyatrī or sacred prayer of the Veda . . . in consisting of three times eight syllables" (1889, 78). Monier-Williams also noted how the "prayer-formula of the Jains" differs from the "three-refuge" formula of the Buddhists (536) – one difference being that the former does not refer to refuge.

[47] "The act of taking refuge, in traditional Indian culture, was a formal act of allegiance, submitting to the preeminence and claiming the protection of a powerful patron, whether human or divine. The formula of taking refuge was uttered three times to make it a solemn and formal commitment" (Robinson and Johnson 1997, 43). Unfortunately, Robinson and Johnson do not cite any texts for this explanation, nor do they explain what is meant by "traditional Indian culture." Weiler's comment on the matter is even less anchored to any particular time or place: "The transition from the literal shelter of a home to a greater and truer shelter or protection of a god or gods is natural and easy for the religiously orientated mind" (1962, 241 n. 20).

material.[48] Such composers would have realized that they could draw on a selection of usages to express ideas of refuge and triple refuge, including the word *śaraṇa*.[49] Or take the verb *pra√pad*, forms of which were used in some vedic texts in the sense of "resort to" or "take refuge in."[50] In the great *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* forms of *pra√pad* are used in this sense to articulate a complex set of refuges: turning to *bhūr* for protection means turning to the earth for protection, to the intermediate region for protection, and to the sky for protection; turning to *bhuvas* for protection means turning to the fire for protection, to the wind for protection, and to the sun for protection; turning to *svar* for protection means turning to the *Ṛgveda* for protection, to the *Yajurveda* for protection, and to the *Sāmaveda* for protection.[51] This being so, *bhūr*, *bhuvas*, and *svar* each can be thought of as a kind of triple refuge.[52]

We have already seen, above, a form of *pra√pad* used in connection with the word *śaraṇa* in the *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra*, another late vedic text.[53] In *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 2.22.3-4 a form of *pra√pad* is collocated with the word *śaraṇa* in a construction having the following pattern: x *śaraṇaṃ prapanno*. With x in the accusative this formula basically means: "I have gone forward to x as a refuge," or "I have resorted to x as a refuge," or as some translators render it, "I have taken refuge in x." What is more, the construction is used to speak explicitly of going to three refuges:

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[48] Witzel posits that the early *Upaniṣad*s, including the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, date to before c. 400 BCE (see now Witzel 2009, 287, 290, 292, 308).

[49] Another available term, as we have seen above, was *śarman*. Some examples of *śarman* that is triple or threefold (*tridhātu*) include RV 1.34.6; 8.40.12; some examples of *śarman* that provides triple or threefold defense (*trivarūtha*) include RV 8.42.2; 9.97.47; 10.66.5; 10.66.7; 10.142.1; *Atharvaveda Saṃhitā* (Śaunaka) 9.2.16 (Roth and Whitney 1855, 197); *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 4.3.12.1 (Weber 1871, 361). It is difficult to estimate the extent to which such ideas of *śarman* might have influenced ideas of triple or threefold *śaraṇa* or *saraṇa*.

[50] Or a similar expression. See *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 6.5.6.3 (Weber 1872, 216; tr. Keith 1914, vol. 2, 542); *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* 4.42 (text and tr. Gonda 1989, 41).

[51] CU 3.15.5-7 (text and tr. Olivelle 1998, 210-211). I have greatly condensed Olivelle's translation.

[52] The terms recall vedic cosmology as explained in relation to another ritual context: "If we turn now to the tri-partition [of the universe] . . . earth, atmosphere and heaven are called *bhūr*, *bhuvaḥ* and *svar* respectively . . . . These three words, in the nominative as just cited, are from very early times known as the three *vyāhṛti*, the three utterances . . . . In this [ritual context under discussion] the meaning of the syllables has long been disregarded; but *bhū* and *svar* are good classical Sanskrit words for earth and sky, and the middle term, *bhuvaḥ*, is but the plural of *bhū*. This curious detail may suffice to show that it is the basic tri-partition which really pervades Indian cosmology" (Gombrich 1975, 113).

[53] On such late vedic texts see Witzel (1995, 2-3); Witzel (2005, 77, 86-87).

All the vowels are corporeal forms (*ātman*) of Indra. All the spirants are corporeal forms of Prajāpati. And all the stops are corporeal forms of Death. So, if someone criticizes him for the way he pronounces his vowels, he should tell that man: "I have taken refuge in Indra, and he will rebut you." And if someone criticizes him for the way he pronounces his spirants, he should tell that man: "I have taken refuge in Prajāpati, and he will crush you." And if someone criticizes him for the way he pronounces his stops, he should tell that man: "I have taken refuge in Death, and he will burn you up."[54]

One feels sure that the trinity in this passage is triune – if I may put it in such a way – because there are only three topics that the Sāmavedic composer wishes to address in the passage: the correct pronunciation of vowels, the correct pronunciation of spirants, and the correct pronunciation of stops. But it may well be that what makes this passage interesting for composer and audience alike, so I would like to suggest, is the application of the old *śaraṇa* and triple *śaraṇa* motifs – reinforced with a recognized sense of *pra√pad* – to a new situation. For here another kind of triple refuge has been established by going to Indra, Prajāpati, and Death. These entities are willing to act now, apparently, as protectors of the particular ways of pronunciation favored by the composer of the text.[55] In a note such as this one we cannot pursue the question of what was at stake for the composer of the above passage, and direct influence from an earlier triple *śaraṇa* motif must remain conjectural. Here I will simply reiterate that composers of *Upaniṣad*s and other vedic and post-vedic texts were masters at recycling earlier vedic terms and motifs, this being one way that new ideas could be advanced in a milieu that prized tradition.[56] And as scholars including K. R. Norman and Richard Gombrich have shown in a variety of publications, it was a game that Buddhists too could play rather well.[57]

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[54] Olivelle (1998, 197). For the Sanskrit text see ibid., 196.

[55] On which pronunciation see CU 2.22.5; also Olivelle (1998, 540 n. 22.5). Weiler, seemingly writing in terms of the particular and the general, asserted that CU 2.22.3-5 "illustrated" the "thin line between the persuasion of religion and the coercion of magic, with regard to the search for a true refuge" (1962, 241 n. 20).

[56] As the recent dissertation of Finnian McKean Moore Gerety (2015) reminds us with striking force.

[57] However, *śaraṇa / saraṇa* is not among the "Brahmanical Terms in a Buddhist Guise" discussed by Norman (2012).

V. Nyanaponika's musings on refuge appear to have been motivated, at least in part, by a desire to prevent "the process of taking refuge from degenerating into a routine habit."[58] The great Thera, so it seems, wished to forestall the "degradation" of going for refuge "by way of thoughtless recital of the formula."[59] Ironically, Nyanaponika's remarks serve to underscore just how routine and formulaic the accounts of going for refuge actually are in a great many Pāli texts. Indeed, in many cases such accounts seem nothing more than an acceptable way to conclude an edifying story. But there are exceptions, and some of these – even if they too are stylized – are what we find interesting and worthy of further consideration in what follows. As for what we find in vedic texts, one is tempted to suppose that for practitioners of vedic religion the meaning of *śaraṇa* was largely a matter of what Nyanaponika would have called the "habitual rites of traditional piety." This is because, looking from a certain angle, one is struck by what one does not see in the vedic texts discussed above. What one does not see in them – unlike in certain Pāli texts – is any suggestion that *śaraṇa* is something to which one goes in connection with a change of heart.[60] For the vedic thinkers represented in this note, talk of *śaraṇa* comes not with talk of contrition or conversion or the like, nor with any talk of the transformative healing of a broken heart such as we find in the words attributed to Ubbirī in these verses of the *Therīgāthā*:

> He pulled out the arrow . . .
> that was stuck in my heart,
> he expelled the grief for a daughter,
> the grief that had overwhelmed me.
>
> Today the arrow is pulled out,
> I am . . . completely free.
> I go to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha for refuge,
> I go to the Sage for refuge.[61]

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[58] Nyanaponika Thera (2008, 11).

[59] Ibid., 10.

[60] I do not mean to suggest that practitioners of vedic religion were insincere or could not feel religious emotion (on which latter possibility see Solomon 1970). And I recognize that passages such as RV 8.18.12 raise interesting questions. For if *enas* means "sin" and *śarman* means "shelter," then in this text we have something that superficially – save for the gods – is almost Augustinian: "O Ādityas, extend to us the shelter that will free even the sinful from his sin . . . ." (tr. Jamison and Brereton 2014, vol. 2, 1062). But in this note I am more concerned with *śaraṇa* and specifically the use of the triple *śaraṇa / saraṇa* motif.

[61] *Therīgāthā* verses 52-53. Translation based on Hallisey (2015, 39), with modifications. For

There was no Augustine who could write a *Confessions* among the early Buddhists, but here and there in their surviving compositions we do get something like a brief glimpse into the inner life of a Buddhist convert, intimations of what it means subjectively for an individual to go for refuge in the Buddhist fashion. Whether such accounts are true, merely pseudonymous, or entirely fictional is beside the point,[62] and the standard against which we should judge them is not Augustine but the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, not Rousseau but the *Ṛgveda Saṃhitā*. Scholars of late have poured buckets of cold water on the idea of religious experience,[63] but it is doubtful that very many people know or care about the reservations of the learned in these matters. I take it as given that many people hunger for a special kind of personal experience, call it a religious experience, the peace that passes understanding,[64] *nibbāna*, or what you will.[65] Supposing this was also true or became true at some point in ancient India,[66] the points

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Pāli text see ibid., 38; cf. Norman (1995, 8); cf. *Therīgāthā* verses 131-132.

[62] Similarly Kumkum Roy on *Therīgāthā* stories: "The question of the literal truth or accuracy of such stories is obviously not the point. What is clear is that, whether narrated in prose or verse (or both), they had the basic elements of a good narrative. They achieved and maintained the delicate balance between the plausible and the unusual, and would have attracted audiences" (1998, 21).

[63] See, for example, David Kyle Johnson, *Why Religious Experience Can't Justify Religious Belief* (forthcoming), and Nick Zangwill, *The Myth of Religious Experience* (2004). See also the preface and some essays in Martin and McCutcheon (2012); see also Fitzgerald (2009), Sharf (1995), and Sharf (1998). The latter is reprinted with an introduction in Martin and McCutcheon (2012, 131-150), and as "The Rhetoric of Experience and the Study of Religion" in the *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 7, no. 11-12 (2000): 267-287.

[64] See Philippians 4:7.

[65] Whether such expressions refer to the same thing, to different things, or to nothing at all makes no difference to my point, which is simply that many people want what they think such expressions represent. The desire for such states or experiences is a prominent theme in much of the recent literature on "spirituality" and the like. See, for example, Biersdorf (1975), Fuller (2001), Thomas (2006), Sheldrake (2012), and Huss (2014), among other studies.

[66] This is not the place to delve into a chronology of ancient Indian texts, but it is worth noting that in the *Bhagavad Gītā* Arjuna desires to see Kṛṣṇa in a new way (11.3-4); the experience produces in Arjuna a new *mata* or "conviction" (11.18); thus fortified and after being told to "go for refuge" (*śaraṇaṃ gaccha*) to the Lord alone (18.61-62; cf. 18.66), Arjuna will soon begin killing his kinsmen (text and tr. Feuerstein 2011, 220-221, 224-225, 316-317, 318). Also worth noting are the final six stanzas of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, in which the poet speaks of the "deepest love for God" (*deve parā bhaktir*) and in which the poet can declare: "in that God do I . . . seek refuge" (*taṃ ha devam . . . śaraṇam ahaṃ prapadye*) – the text suggests that Śvetāśvatara was able to proclaim his message ultimately because of "the power of his austerities and by the grace of God" (text and tr. Olivelle 1998, 432-433). In these probably post-Buddha texts we may have evidence of a desire, on the part of some,

raised in this note might help us better understand just what the message of the early Buddhists was.

By way of further illustration, let us take as a final case the conversion of the murderous brigand Aṅgulimāla as reflected in his own words according to the text of the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*.[67] The composer of the text has the reformed Aṅgulimāla, whose *nom de guerre* meant "Finger-garland" after the gruesome trophies he had collected, reflect on his new life and identity with verses including the following:

> "Harmless" is the name I bear,
> Though I was dangerous in the past.
> The name I bear today is true:
> I hurt no living being at all.
>
> And though I once lived as a bandit
> Known to all as "Finger-garland,"
> One whom the great flood swept along,
> I went for refuge to the Buddha.[68]

The conversion of sinful Aṅgulimāla was brought about by a miracle performed by the Buddha. To register the impact of what Aṅgulimāla experienced, the text tells of how the latter threw down his weapons and worshipped the Blessed One's feet, and of how Aṅgulimāla uttered the following curious verse:

> *cirassaṃ vata me mahito mahesi*
> *mahāvanaṃ samaṇo 'yaṃ paccavādi*
> *so 'haṃ cirassā pahāssaṃ pāpaṃ*
> *sutvāna gāthaṃ tava dhammayuttaṃ* [69]

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for a transformative personal experience. I cite these examples in particular because they also involve the idea of *śaraṇa*. A fuller treatment of the topic would ask and try to answer the following question (patterned on a question about the syllable *OM* posed by Moore Gerety 2015, 427): *What happens to the idea of śaraṇa when the sacrificial paradigm gives way to, or comes into contact with, new paradigms based on salvific knowledge, contemplation, renunciation, or theistic devotion?* One thing that happens, I would like to suggest, can be seen in Pāli texts.

[67] Chalmers (1898, 97-105) = MN ii 97-105.

[68] Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi (2005, 716). See Chalmers (1898, 105) = MN ii 105.

[69] See Chalmers (1898, 100) = MN ii 100. On why the verse is curious, and indeed problematic, see Gombrich (2007, 144-154).

Oh, at long last this recluse, a venerated sage,
Has come to this great forest for my sake.
Having heard your stanza teaching me the Dhamma,
I will indeed renounce evil forever.[70]

This emotive translation, furnished as it is with suggestions of longing, repentance, and almost Christian redemption, might be deeply satisfying to some readers. But there are alternative approaches to interpreting and translating the verse based on different readings of the relevant Pāli texts. One of these approaches has been put forward by Richard Gombrich, to whom we are indebted for bringing the story of Aṅgulimāla to a new level of interest and plausibility.[71] Professor Gombrich proposes certain emendations to the text and this translation of the same verse:

ciraṃ vatā me mahito maheso
mahāvanaṃ pāpuṇi saccavādī
so 'haṃ cajissāmi sahassapāpaṃ
sutvāna gāthaṃ tava dhammayuttaṃ

For a long time to fulfil a vow I have been honouring Śiva. You have arrived in the forest, speaking truth. So I shall give up my thousand crimes, for I have heard your verse, which teaches what is right.[72]

In this translation the emotional temperature has been turned down several degrees, though, for scholars, the possibility that a character in an early Buddhist text was based on a worshipper of Śiva holds exciting potentialities.[73] But be that as it may, what is important in the story for our purposes is the fantastic discontinuity in Aṅgulimāla's life. It resembles discontinuities highlighted elsewhere in this note, in the life of Ubbirī the grieving mother, and in the life of Sumanā, giver of "treasure in carpets and shawls." I submit that echoes of all these stories can be heard in the ideas

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[70] Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi (2005, 711).

[71] See Gombrich (2007, 135-164).

[72] Text and tr. ibid., 154.

[73] Anālayo (2011, 493-494 n. 258) notes that Gombrich was not the first to suggest a connection between the character Aṅgulimāla and the worship of Śiva. Based on his study of Chinese parallels, Anālayo concludes: "Thus, none of the Chinese versions supports the assumption that Aṅgulimāla's stanza could have referred to Śiva."

of Nyanaponika with which our inquiries began. And the deeper note in the message of these stories, I would like to suggest, is just this: the possibility of experiencing something genuinely amazing. I am thus prepared to look upon Nyanaponika and Dhammapāla, at least provisionally, as more recent spokesmen for a view of refuge that emerged in antiquity, possibly among Buddhists: a view that sees refuge in connection with a personal transformation of surpassing significance. Could the ancient promoters of vedic texts and sacrificial religion offer the same possibility? The fact is: composers of vedic texts seem to have used the motifs of refuge and triple refuge before the Buddhists. The question is: what did Buddhists achieve by using versions of the same motifs? The answer is to be found, perhaps, in the contemplation and transposition of these words from a magisterial historian of Late Antiquity:

> Dramatic changes in health, dramatic changes in the weather, dramatic shifts in the locus of wealth – as gold, precious objects, robes, land, even small children passed from the "world" to the monastic establishments associated with holy persons – all these highly visible changes were held to have registered the most amazing of all discontinuities: the stirring to contrition of the sinful human heart.[74]

Abbreviations

AB	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
DN	Dīgha Nikāya
CU	Chāndogya Upaniṣad
JB	Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
MN	Majjhima Nikāya
RV	Ṛgveda Saṃhitā
SN	Saṃyutta Nikāya

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[74] Peter Brown, *Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (1993, 186).

Acknowledgments

In quotations from Sanskrit and Pāli texts in this note I have converted some of the orthographic usages found in the editions cited to usages that are more standard in our day. I have also resolved sandhi or added spaces in some of the Sanskrit and Pāli texts cited above.

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Ethnic Buddhist Temples and the Korean Diaspora in Japan

Tadaatsu Tajima

Abstract

This article reviews the ancestral rituals of the Zainichi, as the Koreans in Japan are known in Japanese. The Zainichi tried to establish their own identity in Japan through their mortuary rituals, and thus to reorganize the Korean diaspora in Japan. Their ancestral rituals have been changed from a Confucian style to a Buddhist style.

Part One: Introduction

Immigrants, in general, whether they migrate willingly or unwillingly to a new country, are obliged to adapt themselves to its culture, language, rules of social etiquette, food, housing style, dress, etc. Despite their efforts at enculturation and adaptation, frequently even the second and third generations of immigrants have found themselves victims of prejudice and discrimination by the host country citizenry even after legally obtaining a nationality which guarantees their rights. Whilst these external factors rooted in the racial, political and cultural issues of the immigrants are a serious problem and handicap, on a deeper level too identity problems exist beyond the first generation of immigrants, so that they question themselves concerning who and what they are vis-à-vis their new home country. Because of these external and internal conflicts, the immigrants do not feel safe and secure, and these stresses can lead to crime and mental illness.

My research has discovered that many immigrants have a difficult time caring for their well-being. One elderly *zainichi*[1] expressed her lot in life to me in the following words: "There is no place for us *zainichi,* neither in this world nor in the next; there is just no place to feel at home." These heavy words were uttered by a beautiful old *zainichi* woman as she prayed in front of an unlabelled ceramic pot of bone and ash on a shelf reserved or allotted for *zainichi* in a Buddhist temple.

The term "diaspora" is now in vogue in the field of research concerning immigration.[2] Even in countries with no connection to the Judaeo-Christian world,[3] "diaspora" is a term used for refugees and those who have found themselves in exile from their native homes for various reasons. The term likens these people to the famous dispersion of the Jews from the Promised Land of Israel thousands of years ago. The concept of "diaspora" is useful to analyse the establishment and changes in the immigrants' community and the evolution of their identity from the different angles of the stereotypical "majority versus minority" relationship in their new country. Not only in these aspects of immigration, but also in the relationship between their original home and their new home far away, we can observe changes. Therefore it is possible to observe and study the lives of immigrants as they deal with religious and cultural challenges. So I will next explain the historical background of the *zainichi*.

Part Two *Zainichi* : Historical Background

70 years have passed since the end of the Second World War, which eventually finished with the defeat of the Empire of Japan in 1945 by the allied military forces. At the same time colonisation of the neighbouring countries of Korea, China and Taiwan by the Empire of Japan ceased. At that time approximately two million Koreans, willingly or unwillingly, had already migrated to Japan, alone or with family. During colonisation by the Empire of Japan, the Korean people were forced to accept Japanese nationality. Soon after the war ended, most of the people from Korea returned to Korea, but some opted to stay in Japan. They preserved their Japanese nationality until 1947, when the 'Alien Registration Act' was enacted. By it, Koreans were henceforth officially regarded not as

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[1] *Zainichi* literally means "being in Japan" away from home. More specifically, they are former colonial immigrants and their descendants.

[2] Esman, 2009, pp.13-21.

[3] On the Korean diaspora, see Matsuda & Chon ed., 2013; Ryang & Lie ed., 2009; and Ryang, 2008.

Japanese but as foreigners, *gaijin* in Japanese. *Chousen* was the title used to identify Koreans living in Japan; it was tantamount to a sentence of no identity, because of the political instability on the Korean Peninsula after the end of the Second World War.

By the end of the 1940s, politics had split the Korean Peninsula into two new countries. In the north, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, customarily referred to as "North Korea", was established with support from the People's Republic of China and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In the south, in 1948, the Republic of Korea, customarily referred to as "South Korea", was established with support from the United States of America. Soon after that announcement, on Cheju Island, a small, mostly recreational island paradise off the southwest coast of South Korea, many citizens revolted at the news of the division of their country. In retaliation for the uprising, one third of the islanders were slaughtered by the South Korean Army[4]. Ultimately these political differences on the peninsula contributed to and caused the Korean Civil War from 1950 to 1953. For survival and safety, some Koreans for the first time, and others who had formerly resided in Japan, decided to seek asylum in Japan, either legally or illegally (through smuggling). Some people were suspicious of these smugglers from the Korean peninsula and Cheju Island, known as *zainichi* who had supported the South Korean government could submit a form entitled 'Korean Residents Union in Japan' (*Mindan* in Japanese)[5] and could thus easily obtain South Korean nationality. However, members of the 'General Association of Korean Residents in Japan' (*Soren*[6] in Japanese) could not obtain it because this organisation had supported the North Korean Government.

From 1948, the South Korean government requested the Japanese government to grant South Korean citizenship to all the *zainichi*. There was only one way to receive this new identity. If Koreans in Japan submitted a form entitled *Mindan,*[7] *they could easily obtain South Korean nationality. However, Soren*[8] *members of zainichi* could not obtain it in due course.

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[4] Saishu-to 4·3 Jiken 40 Shunen Tuitou Kinenn Ko-enshu henshu-iinkai ed., 1998 and Nomura, 1997, pp.213-40.

[5] Formally called 'Zai-Nippon Daikan-minkoku-mindan'.

[6] Formally called 'Zai-Nippon Chousen-jin Sorengo-kai'.

[7] Formally, it was called "Zai-Nipponn Daikan-minkoku-mindan" or, in English, "Korean Residents' Union in Japan".

[8] Formally, it was called "Zai-Nippon Chosen-jin Sorengo-kai", or in English, "General Association of Korean Residents in Japan".

After the Second World War Japan was occupied by America and partially ruled by American military leaders; their *GHQ* (General Headquarters) aimed to revive the country under a new Constitution.

Aiming to preserve their Korean culture and language, the *zainichi* established ethnic schools around Japan through voluntary mutual aid associations. These ethnic Korean *zainichi* schools were known as *Chousen Gakkou* in Japanese and *Uri Hakkyo* in Korean.[9] Gradually these local voluntary associations united into one association.

The *GHQ* (General Headquarters) was comprised of American military leaders who for a while invaded Japan after the Second World War in order to revive the country under a new Constitution. It was very anti-socialist and anti-communist in its ideology. For this reason it worried about these locally established new private schools and pressured the fledgling Japanese government to close them. However, some *zainichi* protested against the closings. In retaliation, North Korea supported these schools with money and supplies, enabling them to continue without Japanese governmental support. From that time on the *Uri Hakkyo* system was recognised by the Japanese as a North Korean institution. Accordingly, *zainichi* society in Japan imitated the national split back home on the Korean Peninsula in its separation of local ethnic schools between supporters of the North and of the South.

Most scholars agree that Japanese and *zainichi* in ethnicity belong to the same race of people. They are hardly distinguishable in appearance of skin tone, hair colour or eye colour. Nonetheless the *zainichi h*ave been discriminated against in various ways; for example, they have been the target of hate speech.[10] This discrimination was partly caused by the cultural difference between Koreans and Japanese, but its roots are mainly linked to the colonization of Korea by Imperial Japan from 1910 to 1945. People of the Korean Peninsula at that time were forced to assimilate to be Imperial Japanese citizens. The Koreans temporarily lost their language, names, clothing, etc.; in essence the whole Korean culture was taken away from them and they were subservient to the colonizing Japanese. During the colonization period, the Koreans could not even move freely around their own country. Thus the *zainichi* were born as colonised people who had formerly been discriminated against by the suzerain Japanese colonists.

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[9] Song, 2012 and Pak, 2012.
[10] Morooka, 2013 and Mindan Chuou Honbu ed., 2013.

The historical background of discrimination, inequality and prejudice during the Japanese colonisation period and the split of the *zainichis'* home country following the Korean War have negatively affected and moulded the personality of the *zainichi* down through the generations until the present day.

Part Three: Zainichi of the third and fourth generation

By and large, there is little difference of attitude between the first and the second generation *zainichi* immigrants, because they all grew up observing the struggles of the previous generation in their new home in Japan. Some of them dreamed of returning to Korea. Despite their struggles, the first and second generation *zainichi* managed to establish a life for themselves in Japan.[11] It seems that the third and following generations of *zainichi* no longer even consider returning to the mother country of Korea. These newer generations are quite self-reliant and self-confident and they are succeeding in their life in Japan. Most of them do have South Korean citizenship now, and can freely travel back and forth between the two countries. However, there is now a new kind of discrimination among *zainichi* against long-term residents in Japan:. they are referred to as *pan-choppari* or "half Japanese", a pejorative term. Some of them try to go back to South Korea to live but many find that adapting to Korean ways is too difficult.

One of the professional *zainichi* soccer players in Japan had this experience. Lee Chu-son was born in Tokyo in 1985 as a third generation *zainichi* with South Korean nationality. After graduating from a Japanese High School, he became a professional soccer player in the Japanese National Professional Soccer League. Through his great ability and popularity he was eventually recruited by his native Korea to become a member of its national soccer team. However, Lee Chu-son discovered that he was treated as a "half-Japanese" person even in his native Korea, so he resigned from the team and returned to play in Japan. Finally, he changed his nationality to Japanese. Lee Chu-son was selected to join the Japanese national team for the Asian Cup in 2008 and contributed his talents to winning the Cup for Japan that year. He is quite unique because even though Lee Chu-son changed his nationality to Japanese, he kept his Korean name and even consistently used the original foreign Chinese characters. Most other famous *zainichi* sports stars and movie stars have hidden their ethnic name and preferred to adopt a Japanese style name instead.

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[11] Kim pointed this out for both the first and the second generation of *Zainichi*, Chosen ethnicity is crucial to their identity though there is a slight difference between these two generations. See Kim, 1999, pp.63-136.

Another good example of a third generation *zainichi* is another professional soccer player named Chon Tese. He was born in 1984 in Nagoya. But his case is much more complicated. His father held South Korean nationality but his mother held North Korean nationality. She was a teacher at the Korean ethnic school in Japan for North Korean students. Chon Tese had South Korean nationality, but having been educated in the Korean ethnic school for North Korean students he wanted to play professional soccer in North Korea and play for that country in the World Cup in South Africa. Afterwards he played professional soccer in Germany; and at present he plays for one of the South Korean professional soccer teams.

These two examples show that the categories of *zainichi* cannot necessarily be applied to the third and fourth generations.

Zainichi **Nationality, Affiliation and Style of Name**

Historically, for *zainichi,* there were only three ways to live long term in Japan. Those who obtained *Chousen* nationality, recognised as North Korean, belong to *Soren* and use Korean style names; those who took South Korean nationality belong to *Mindan* and use both Korean and Japanese names; those who naturalised as Japanese leave the *zainichi* diaspora and use a Japanese name only. Nationality, affiliation of diaspora and style of name are combined together to form *zainichi* identity. The way the third and fourth generation *zainichi* form an identity living in Japan differs from the first and the second generation migrants.

Recently the relationship between Japan and the two Koreas is not good. But in the world of secular entertainment relations between Japan and South Korea seem quite cosy. Korean movie stars and pop-star singers frequently appear on Japanese TV programs. Many middle-aged women love Korean TV male stars, and young Japanese girls also have idols among the Korean Pop Song Stars. *Kimchi* and Korean food are also very popular with the Japanese people. *Kimchi* is available even at most convenience stores as a staple food item.

Across the ocean, in Korea, the situation is similar: there is interest in Japan and its cultural assets. For instance, Korean nationals seem to really enjoy Japanese food and there are many Japanese restaurants in Korea these days. Karaoke also is a huge export item from Japan with a Karaoke shop on practically every corner in Korea. *Manga* comics originated in Japan but are now very popular in Korea too. The young people are using the Manga genre as a means to study Japanese culture and language. Such sharing of cultural assets seems to be creating a kind of borderless society between Korea and Japan.

Whilst the *zainichi* seemed to have lost their identity by living in Japan, there is hope for a brighter future nowadays, due to interest in one another's culture.

There are still some real obstacles to overcome for *zainichi* in order to feel fully accepted in both cultures. Recently a third generation *zainichi* wrote a book about her experience and compared obtaining her Korean nationality to obtaining a driver's license but never using it to actually drive.[12] She is saying that it takes some personal effort and action on her part to learn more about being Korean. One *zainichi* actually wrote a book about the *End of Zainichi*.[13] Unfortunately those *zainichi* who have been lucky enough to obtain North Korean nationality are not allowed to visit South Korea.

Part Four: Buddhism and Ancestral Rituals in Japan: from "Funeral Buddhism" to "Disappearing Buddhist Temples"

I have described how and why *zainichi* identity has been moulded and modified by historical events since 1910, when Imperial Japan colonized the Korean Peninsula. Let me now explain how and why the ancestral rituals have influenced successive generations of *zainichi*. Let me begin by explaining ancestral rituals in Japanese Buddhism.

(1) Relationship with Shintoism

One of the chief features of Japanese Buddhism is called "Funeral Buddhism". For Japanese, it is most common to request that funerals, burials, and annual ancestral prayer services, whether in the home or at local temples be conducted by the local Mahayana Buddhist priests. Concerning the rites of passage for common Japanese, Buddhism has dominated the nether world namely issues associated with death, eternal destiny and associated ancestral rituals. On the contrary, Shintoism rules events in this world and all associated rites of passage associated with it, such as the rite of passage for new-born babies, children's third-fifth-seventh birthday blessings, marriage ceremonies, and festivals associated with a fruitful harvest. Thus Shinto shrines are intimately involved with life issues, whilst Buddhist temples, assist believers with issues surrounding death. Somehow in Japanese lives within both this world and the nether world, there is compartmentalization between Buddhism and Shintoism, because the latter dislikes "impurity" (*kegare* in Japanese).

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[12] Lee, 1997.
[13] Chung, 2001.

This compartmentalization of Japanese religion seems to be prominent among Japanese since the Meiji Restoration; it has promoted modernization, as well as the Westernization of Japanese society. The Japanese government tried to separate Shintoism to legitimate the Japanese Empire as set apart from the rest of the religious world in Japan. Before the Meiji era there had been an amalgamation between Buddhism and Shintoism and other folk beliefs. A good example of this can be experienced at the shrines and temples of Nikko (Nikko Tosho-gu in common Japanese), which were registered in 1999 as a World Heritage Site. Actually this sacred area consists of two main shrines and one temple, but most Japanese regard it as just one religious site, not two distinct ones. Besides this example, most Japanese in their private homes maintain both a small Shinto shrine and a Buddhist altar at which the family gathers in the morning and in the evening to pray for all living and deceased family members. Also in daily life we utter "There are no gods or Buddha in this world" when we face miserable hardships such as great natural disasters.

In academic society, we refer to this relationship between Buddhism and Shintoism as "syncretism", or more specifically, as a "manifestation theory" in that the Shinto gods are actually manifestations of the Buddha, or even sometimes vice versa. Historically speaking, Buddhism was imported into indigenous Shintoism around the 7th century from China via the Korean peninsula. Ikegami, a sociologist of religion in Japan, has pointed out that it is quite unique in the world that indigenous Shintoism has survived after Buddhism spread as the "Great Religion" among the Japanese.[14] Ikegami also mentions the relationship between Buddhism and Shintoism in relation to ancestral rituals. For Japanese, he says, it is very important for the surviving relatives to change the dead "stormy spirit" (*araburu-mitama*) to the "peaceful spirit" surviving through various ancestral rituals. Shinto priests use the "ritual of purification" (*harai*) for the relatively weaker deceased "stormy spirit", which is submissive to human power. On the other hand, a Buddhist ritual related to "ancestral memorial services" (*ekou*) and "anathematization of the stormy spirit" (*chobuku*) is held by Buddhist priests when it manifests itself as stronger than human power. Thus Ikegami argues that there is a sense of collaboration between Buddhism and Shintoism regarding ancestral rituals.

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[14] Ikegami, 2003, pp.7-121.

(2) Marriage and Meat-eating by Buddhist priests and *danka seido / terauke seido*

Buddhist sects unique to Japan evolved during the Kamakura era (1192-1333), when Japanese society was changing from a hedonistic aristocratic society to a militaristic Samurai society. One of those sects, named "Pure Land and True Doctrine" (Jodo- shin-shu) was founded by Shinran (1178-1263). He, following the Pure Land (Jodo) sect established by Honen (1133-1212), pronounced that only Amida Buddha in the "latter day of the Law" could save people if they sincerely chanted a prayer to him. Shinran furthermore encouraged others by living the lifestyle of a layman, eating meat and marrying, even though these were prohibited for Buddhist clergy. Thus Buddhist monks' ability to marry and eat meat is Shinran's interpretation of Honen's belief in Amida Buddha and "latter day" eschatology. The Meiji government eventually promoted the way of life proposed by the Jodo-shin-shu Buddhist sect for other sects too, so that they might become more secularized, like Shintoism. As a result most Japanese Buddhist sects now permit marriage, eating of meat and consumption of alcohol by their clergy, like lay Buddhists.

There also exists in Japanese Buddhism a unique organizational structure called *danka-seido*. It was first established under the name of *terauke-seido* ("temple guarantee system") in the middle of the 17th century. The Edo Shogunate forced common people to register at their local Buddhist temple, in order to confirm their allegiance to the Buddhist faith. This provided a guarantee that those registered were neither Christians nor members of an anti-Tokugawa Buddhist sect. In return, the local temple promised to care for members' funerals and family tombs, and assist with annual memorial prayer services and other ancestral rituals. Thus common people were coerced nominally to become Buddhists without a true conversion experience or any initiation; they were merely Buddhist by registration. As a result, "Funeral Buddhism" has been accepted into local village community life by familial adherence to Buddhist style death rituals for generation after generation. In this manner, Mahayana Buddhism in Japan has not only survived but thrived out of obedience to local customs.

(3) Buddhism before and after the Rapid Economic Growth from 1955 to 1973.

In the Meiji era, Buddhism lost power in Japanese society because of a policy called *haibutu-kishaku*, which set out to abolish Buddhism in order to strengthen the power of state Shintoism. On the other hand, the civil law of the Meiji government promoted the patriarchal family system of the Samurai

(the ruling class), which dictated that only the eldest son could succeed to the family inheritance. Hence, the first son had to take care of his patrilineal ancestors by diligent and thoughtful reverence to the ancestor tablets and his family's tombs. Local Buddhist temples could survive by maintaining their parishioners' family tombs to pay respect to the patrilineal ancestors.[15]

However, later on the Buddhist temples in Japan found it hard to survive under the modernisation and industrialisation of a westernised society. This phenomenon became quite obvious after the end of the Second World War, when Japanese society had to face rapid economic growth (1955-73) and rural to urban migration upset the traditional family system. In 1940, before the Second World War, 44.6% of the Japanese population worked in primary industries such as agriculture and fishing, 26.2% in the secondary industries such as heavy industry and chemical industries, and 29.2% in service industries such as business, banking and information technology. In 1960, 5 years after rapid economic growth had started in Japan, the number in primary industries had fallen to 32.7%. In contrast to this reduction, those in secondary industries increased to 29.1% and those in service industries increased to 38.2%. This tendency continued to escalate until in 1980, 7 years after the end of rapid economic growth, those in primary industry had decreased to 10.9%, those in secondary industry sector had increased to 33.6%, and those in service industries to 55.4%. In short, most of the people in Japan have moved from the local village community, where the primary industries are located, to the cities, where the secondary and third sector industries are situated. Urbanization thus spread throughout the Japanese islands.

Unfortunately this rural-to-urban migration has destroyed not only the village communities around Japan, but also the patriarchal family system, because many young people opted to leave their home villages to seek work and higher education in the cities. Consequently, after moving to the cities, the migrants tended to find partners to begin their own nuclear families there. The parents of these nuclear families could still maintain a relationship with their home villages and support their *danka-dera* (family temple) through ancestral rituals for their deceased grandparents and parents.[16]

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[15] Inoue, 1990, pp.98-101.

[16] Ukai, 2015. In contrast to the journalistic book mentioned above, sociologists of religion have demonstrated how Buddhist temples can reorganise the community in a depopulating society. Also see Sakurai & Kawamata, 2016.

However, the children of migrants eventually maintain very little relationship with their parents' home village, which it is troublesome to visit. Gradually, those left in the home village age, and other relatives die, or migrate to other places. Some have tried to move their family tomb to a closer cemetery, or have made up their minds to close the family tomb (*haka-jimai*)[17] by reburying their ancestors' bones (*kai-sou*) in large public graves (*gassou* /*shugo-baka* or *goudo-baka*) to ensure that their ancestors will be prayed over in their absence by others visiting the public grave. Japanese opt to be buried in these public graves either because they are single or because they themselves are childless. They are afraid of being buried in the tomb of someone who has no relatives to mourn their death (*muen-baka*).

It also happens that white collar workers are transferred for work and live outside their home village in towns or cities far away, sometimes without the possibility of returning. These internal migrants similarly easily lose their relationship to their family temple. Familiarity with the problem of modern migration itself provides insight into the decline of the family temple system in Japanese society, not only in rural but also in urban areas. The destruction of the family temple system and consequential breakdown of the patriarchal family system have created new funeral and burial styles. In a traditional Japanese community, not only relatives of the dead family member, but also neighbours and members of the company selflessly work together to assist with the funeral rituals.

Nowadays, funerals attended by family members only (*kazoku-so*) and cremations without a funeral (*choku-so*) are becoming popular options among Japanese. As for the burial, not only are *goudo-baka* (collective public grave), *shugo-baka* (columbarium niche), and *sankotu* (scattering ashes at sea or over the countryside) attractive new options for urban migrants faced with uncertainty about their graves. Some Japanese have totally rejected religion and opt to perform the rites of the funeral themselves as friends of the deceased (*yujin-so*)[18], and some decide on interment in non-religious gravesites; these too are now becoming popular.

Thus desire for freedom from the family temple system has generated various new styles for funerals and burial; individuals can choose their own style of funeral and burial.

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[17] Kikkawa, 2015.
[18] Toyotetsugaku-kenkyu-jo, 2006.

In the next Parts I shall discuss the ancestral ritual of *zainichi* in origin and in Japan, then how this change of ancestral rituals in Japan has created a new pattern of ancestral rituals among *zainichi*.

Part Five: Ancestral Rituals in origin and among the first and second generation of Zainichi.

Before Imperial Japan colonised Korea in 1910, Confucianism had already spread among Koreans ever since the Choson Dynasty (1392-1910) chose it as the national religion in the late fourteenth century. Patrilineal kinship groups in clan and village communities were organised in relation to Chu Hsi Ierei's (朱熹) Confucian domestic rules. Buddhism and other folk beliefs sometimes led to syncretism. Shamanism had been suppressed by the government because it was regarded as superstition by Confucian scholars. Yet among Korean ordinary people, these folk Buddhist monks, Posaru, Shamans, Mudans and Shinban, play a very important role in ancestral rituals and in fishery and agricultural annual festivals for the prosperity of clans and peace for the dead who will care for their living descendants.

According to Chu Hsi Ierei, the chief of the clan, namely the first son of the head family, should enshrine the fifth generation of the head of the family on the anniversary of each ancestor's memorial day as well as during the New Year Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival of the lunar calendar. Every ritual for the ancestors was conducted by the first son of the family at his house with all the clan members. Each time, the offerings for the ancestor were prepared by the women of the family, but they could not attend the formal ceremonies.[19]

The cost and time involved in preparing for these ancestral rituals caused great hardship for the whole family. And from a gender point of view, women sometimes condemned these Korean traditional rituals and their customs. At the present day, partly because of the spread of Christianity, these ceremonies have been modified and both genders now partake in the ancestor worship ceremonies; it is more like a time of prayer and conversation with the deceased loved ones.

Obviously, among the first and the second generations of Korean immigrants to Japan, the new style of ancestral ritual has been occurring since the late 1980s, when the *zainichi* were obliged to settle down in Japan. They established their

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[19] Kim, 2008.

own tombs and tried to re-organize their patrilineal family clans, who share the same tomb. For instance, the Kam-sum Kim clan established a Japanese branch of the worldwide clan by creating their own tombs in Japan and announcing that the dead father was the first ancestor of the branch of the paternal line family tree in Japan.[20] In order to register this new faction of the Kam-sum Kim clan, the successor of the dead father tried to contact the original clan in South Korea. Thus Japanese members of the branch visit and celebrate the clan at the original site in South Korea. Of course, only *zainichi* who had obtained South Korean nationality could do such ancestral activities after the Basic Treaty between Japan and South Korea was concluded in 1965.

The first generation of *zainichi* preferred to bury their bodies back in Korea when they died in Japan. So some *zainichi* tried to send the bodies to the home village or town to be buried; the family and kin group did not want to let the dead body be burnt to ashes, because cremation was not the Korean custom[21]. At that time, it took more than one month to send a corpse back to South Korea and without embalming the remains decomposed rapidly.

Around 1990 Cheju City created a graveyard for *zainichi* to bury deceased family members. Even though some *zainichi* can travel back and forth between South Korea and Japan, it is inconvenient, and most prefer to carry out these responsibilities as close to Japan as possible. So many *zainichi* are inclined to establish graves close by and to preserve their own unique Korean ancestral rituals as exactly as possible. The ancestral rituals maintain their own culture and serve to reunite the clan, even when it is located in Japan.[22]

The Korean tradition of ancestral rituals is very important for *zainichi* to preserve their Koreanness both within the family and at the kinship level; it also serves to help individual identity. However, among the first and the second generation a change can be observed. The chief difference between the Korean manner of ancestral worship and the Japanese is that Korean rituals are performed in accordance with Confucian ideas but the Japanese ones in accordance with Buddhist ideas. Also, approximately 1% of Japanese are Christian, and while there is some syncretism with the local religions regarding the timing of the rites of death, the basic ideas regarding eschatology are quite different.

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[20] Lee,1992 and Ogawa & Teraoka,1993.

[21] Yan, 2004 and Kim, 1985.

[22] Lee and Ogawa & Teraoka above mentioned.

In Japan, most of the Korean style ancestral ceremonies used be performed by the first son of the successor of the family or the kin group at his house, and started from midnight. Each ritual for an ancestor in the past five generations should be performed on the exact anniversary of their death. All the offerings for the ancestor and the celebration party afterwards for the family and kinship members are prepared by women. Criticism of Korean ancestor worship includes the cost and the diminished role of women in the family *zainichi*.[23]

First and second generation immigrants in general try hard to preserve their original culture. This also applies to Korean immigrants in Japan. Especially, immigrants from the Cheju Island in Korea have shown loyalty to the traditional way of performing the ancestral rites. Focusing on the ancestral rituals, Shamans (called Shinban and Posaru in Korea) had been treated indifferently by the ruling classes in the Chousen Dynasty period, but they contributed to the ancestral rituals by being mediums to the dead ancestors' spirits. When descendants wanted to celebrate their ancestors, they asked shamans to perform special rites named *Kku*. The *Kku* rituals are held in small temples and shrines on Ikoma Mountain in Nara prefecture, which is home to many Japanese folk beliefs related to both shamans and mountain-dwelling ascetics.

Koreans as well as Japanese believe that prosperity and adversity, happiness and unhappiness, health and illness in this world may be related to the efforts they devote to performing ancestor worship. Sometimes Buddhism and shamanism become syncretised in their beliefs and rites, as mentioned above.

Iida, a sociologist of religion at Otani University in Kyoto, has since the 1980s studied the religious practices of *zainichi*. He with other scholars conducted research on Korean Buddhist temples (*chosen-dera*) in the Ikoma Mountains from 1983 to 1984, and discovered that the *zainichi* were using syncretic rituals and rites of Buddhism and shamanism within their ancestral rituals.[24] Most of the *zainichi* came from Cheju Island off the coast of South Korea and settled outside Osaka City, in the vicinity of Mount Ikoma.

Iida also surveyed the religious facilities of Koreans in the Ikuno area of Osaka city from 1988 to 1989. In order to analyse these Korean Buddhist temples, he categorised them by the location and affiliation of the Korean residential association of the temple: "temple of Mountain and temple of City", as well as *Mindan-kei* (South Korean) and *Soren-kei* (North Korean). Also he pointed out

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[23] Lee, 2007.
[24] Iida, 2002, p. 64.

that there existed Branch Buddhist temples from South Korea. He then found out that on Ikoma Mountain there were *chosen-dera* which performed Buddhist and shamanic syncretic rituals for the dead ancestors of *zainichi* from Cheju Island.[25] In contrast to the Mountain type, he found that there were some branch temples of one of the biggest factions of the South Korean Buddhist sect called Jogyejong. He found red Suwasuchika (meaning Posaru – Buddhist shaman), small advertisement boards, on ordinary residences. He reported that there were no Buddhist shamanic syncretic rituals in *chosen-dera* of the City type because of the loud sound of drums and cymbals used during the ceremony.

The actual ancestral rituals of *zainichi* have been studied by Yan, another sociologist of religion.[26] He observed second generation *zainichi* and interviewed them with a questionnaire in the Osaka area from 1996 to 99. He noticed different attitudes among the *zainichi* towards the local culture. Yan discovered a stronger identification to the homeland than to the migrated new country in the first and second generations compared to the third, fourth and fifth generation migrants. The former generations continued to perform the ancestral rituals exactly as they had at home, while the later generations paid little attention to details. After the 1980s a drastic change occurred in *zainichi* ancestral practices because of aging in the membership and the loss of the first generation.

Some new types of ancestral rituals can be observed only among *zainichi*. These are a mixture of Buddhist style ancestral rituals which are simplified and scaled down from ancestral rituals held at Korean Buddhist temples in Japan. In Korea,there are very few reports of ancestral ritual held at Buddhist temples. Only those who have no son perform ancestral worship at Buddhist temples.[27] When ancestral worship does happen at Buddhist temples, prayers may be chanted in Korean. This type of ceremony was observed in my fieldwork experience in both the Tokyo and the Osaka areas where *zainichi* live.

Part six. Present situation of Ancestral Ritual: data from fieldwork and surveys

My previous research study of ancestral rituals among ethnic school teachers' families found that 18 out of 22 interviewed ethnic school teachers, aged from the 20s to the 60s, did their *chesa* (ancestral worship ceremony in Korean) at

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[25] Ibid, pp.61-180.

[26] Yan, 2004.

[27] Kim, 2008, p.77

home.[28] Only one said that he had not attended it because the first son of his grandfather was living in the Korean peninsula. None of them belonged to the first generation of immigrants from the Korean Peninsula; they were the second and third generations. Also we found that it was extremely difficult for them to prepare it properly, because they had less experience of attending the *chesa* in Korea. They had to prepare for the *chesa* when their parents passed away. At that moment, they watched the promotional video about the *chesa* provided by Soren in the area. These *zainichi* were strict about wanting to prepare and perform the *chesa* correctly in the Korean manner to reflect their own Korean identity.

During fieldwork in 2009 my colleagues and I visited two *zainichi* Buddhist temples in the cities of Osaka and Tokyo to interview the chief priests of the temples about ancestral rituals of the *zainichi*. Again in 2011 we did a follow-up site visit to the same temples because they seemed to be very popular for performing ancestral rituals by the *zainichi* teaching at the *Uri-hakkyo*, ethnic schools. All teachers still preserved their nationality and had been educated from kindergarten level to university supported by Soren who supports North Korea. Most members performed the ancestral rituals at home and they enshrined their parents' and relatives' remains in these temples.

These *zainichi* admitted that they used to follow funeral rites and rituals in Japanese Buddhist fashion Now however they try to preserve their Korean cultural heritage concerning rites for the dead, for instance, by wearing traditional mourning clothing made out of rough white and yellow hemp. Also if possible they request sutras to be chanted in Korean.

90% of the first generation of *zainichi* came from South Korea before the Second World War. However, *zainichi* related to Soren and/or to their ethnic school *Uri-hakkyo* cannot return to their home town or village because they possess a North Korean passport. Although *zainichi* with North Korean nationality holders belong to the same patrilineal kinship group or clan, it is hard for them to travel back into South Korea where they might be regarded as North Korean spies. As the teachers of *Uri-hakkyo* should act as role models for the *zainichi,* those who remember the colonisation of their home country by Imperial Japan use their original ethnic names with pride, as Chousen nationality embodies the history of their exile.

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[28] This research study was planned by the author, and carried out with co-researchers Yuri Inose, associate professor, Ryukoku University, and Lee Hyoungyon, lecturer, Tokai University. For details see Inose,2011 and Tajima, Inose & Lee, 2010.

This group of *zainichi* who possess North Korean passports really do exemplify the truest notion of diaspora in the original Jewish meaning because they were forced to leave their homeland and live in a foreign country. Because these teachers seemed ideal for our fieldwork we interviewed them most thoroughly. Still the *zainichi* from North Korea can neither visit South Korea nor freely travel to North Korea. In this difficult situation the North Korean *zainichi* strive hard to preserve their own identity through ancestral rituals for the dead, much as the Jews in the diaspora tried to preserve their own religious life through the observance of traditional rites of passage and celebrations.

One of the highlights of our research findings was discovering that there are two relatively new ethnic Buddhist temples just for *zainichi* with North Korean nationality. The chief Buddhist priest of these two temples graduated from the highest level of *Uri-hakkyo*, equivalent to a university degree. Besides being a priest of the Tokyo temple he also worked for this Chousen University as professor of natural sciences. The chief priest of the new temple in Osaka also taught at an *Uri-hakkyo* soon after graduating from that university.

There are similarities between these two temples. Both temples are located in big cities and described as "City Type *Zainichi* Korean Temples." They do not operate any services related to shamanism but do accept performing the *"chesa"*. The latter is traditionally performed at home but for those who have family and resources performing them at the temple is a practical alternative.

The names of these temples evoke in the *zainichi* good memories of their home in Korea, including the value of unity and peace. Toukoku in Osaka means "Unification of the Country", and Kokuhei means "Peace in the Country". Inside the Tokoku-ji in Osaka, part of the Berlin wall is exhibited. Each name embodies the hope and ideal for the home country. At the same time, in Buddhist practice, both temples put stress on lectures in Korean on Korean culture. At both temples they chant the Buddhist sutras in Korean and use "Buddhist mortuary tablets" with the name of the dead written in Korean, instead of the Buddhist name used in Japanese style funerals.

As for the facilities, both temples have a large ossuary which can house the remains of more than 1000 people. Remains of the dead are put into ceramic containers and carefully wrapped in white cotton. Some remains have the traditional Buddhist mortuary tablet inscribed with the name of the deceased along with a photo. Prayers are also offered for the unknown dead who have no one to pray for them. Both priests said that these are unknown dead Koreans who were taken away from their homes during the colonisation of the Korean peninsula by Imperial Japan.

The first generation of *zainichi* remained faithful to their cultural origin in the Korean peninsula such as Cheju Island, where syncretic religious practices involving both shamanism and Buddhism were dominant. Therefore the mountain type of *zainichi* Korean temples on Ikoma mountain were popular among Koreans, especially those who came from Cheju Island and had lived together in the Osaka area. However, for the third and the fourth generations of *zainichi,* because of their marriage with Japanese or *zainichi* outside Cheju Island, it is difficult to preserve this local belief in later generations. *Zainichi* prefer to choose more standardised Korean practices like the *chesa* or keep as close as possible to the image in their memory of how it was performed before their diaspora experience.

Both *zainichi* temples, Toukoku-ji[29] in Osaka and Kokuhei-ji[30] in Tokyo, belong to Zai-nippon Chousen Bukkyou-to kyoukai (in English by author's translation: Korean Buddhist Association in Japan), established in 1955 soon after the Soren organised. This was at first organised by a Korean Buddhist named Ryu, who came from Korea in 1937 after practising at the Kaiin Temple in South Korea. He then studied to graduate from one of the Buddhist universities located in Kyoto. He stayed at the Japanese Buddhist temple named Manjyu-ji in Kyoto. Practising Buddhism at the temple, he invited Buddhists from the Korean peninsula and let them stay at the temple while studying Buddhism in Japan. Using his private network of Korean Buddhists, he with thirty-three other priests joined the Korean Buddhist Society under the umbrella of Soren.[31]

Later, this Korean Buddhist society was split when one of the Korean Buddhists who worked at the South Korean consulate in Kobe city found that its activities had been inclined to be political. With some other members, he left this Buddhist society, and established the South Korean Buddhist society in 1963. However, this society disappeared, and then another was established. 1n 1991, it was renewed under the name of the Korean Buddhist Community.[32] Thus the Korean Buddhist society is also split in accordance with the split of the Korean peninsula and their resident societies.

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[29] http://toukokuji.com/

[30] http://www.kokuheiji.jp/

[31] Miyashita, 2012 and Iida, Takafumi; Tani, Tomio; Ashida, Toshirou; and Akiba, Hiroshi, 1985.

[32] Formal name in Japanese is "Zai-nippon kan-bukkyou-to sorenngou-kai".

Not only for *zainichi w*ith North Korean nationality or with South Korean one, ancestral rituals constitute the chief value in Confucianism. To preserve this value is very important for *zainichi* people, not only for the family or the clan but also for the individual, to help integrate family and kinship structure and stabilize their identity. *Zainichi* who hold South Korean nationality have access to Korean temples where South Korean monks serve. Also they can attend the ancestral rituals of their clans held in their home towns or villages in their home country, South Korea. However, for the *zainichi* with Chousen nationality, it is rather difficult to make contact with South Korean monks or to attend the rituals held in South Korea, because of political differences. Therefore, the Buddhist temple for the North Korean *zainichi* has been vitally needed for the *zainichi* with Chousen nationality. Monks of both temples answered our questions concerning the nationality of the members, and most of them seem to belong to North Korea. But they do not care whether people have South Korean nationality or Japanese nationality, or are newcomers or of long standing; they say that all belong to the same Oriental or Asian ethnicity.

Zainichi in Japan should adopt their ancestral rituals in accordance with their socio-cultural milieu. In Japan, rituals and thoughts related to death always have been moulded and operated by Buddhism and Buddhist temples. Funerals are held in the Buddhist way, chanting in front of the body before it is put in the coffin. Buddhist Otsuya (wake for the dead) and the following funeral service and cremation service are traditional among Japanese. It was common long ago to bury ashes in the graveyards located at Buddhist temples, because even after these death rituals are complete, on the anniversary of the death Buddhist monks would pray for them. *Zainichi* also have attended these ceremonies in Japan. It is quite natural that the second, third and fourth generation of *zainichi* follow these customs.

Zainichi have become accustomed to Japanese culture. However, they would still like to preserve their own Korean culture in order to connect to their roots on the Korean peninsula. In this situation, *Zainichi* have tried to demonstrate Korean style in ceremonies as against Japanese style. In this sense, Korean Buddhist temples are essential for *zainichi* to settle into the diaspora situation, especially for those who hold Chousen nationality, because they cannot return to their ancestors' home country.

Part seven . Concluding Thoughts

I began by outlining the historical background of *zainichi.* Their diaspora was born from the Imperial Japanese colonisation of the Korean Peninsula, and this Korean diaspora in Japan was later divided into two in accordance with the political split

into North and South Korea since the Truce Agreement at the end of the Korean Civil War (1950-1953). Then I introduced a new type of *zainichi* in Japan have been obliged to adapt their ancestral. To understand it more thoroughly I quoted comments from two professional soccer players who have chosen to settle down in Japan. Then I mentioned the ancestral rituals of *zainichi,* based originally on the Confucian style of the Korean Peninsula. When the first generation of *zainichi* left Korea they tried to preserve the Confucian style of ancestral worship. However, while living in Japan the *zainichi* found that in order to adapt and continue their practices they had to rely upon the local Buddhist temples and so create a new style. This new style is necessary because particularly the *zainichi* who possess Chousen nationality cannot return to South Korea and travel to North Korea is difficult at times. Thus the Buddhist temples have become more and more important sites for continuing their worship of their ancestors.

Finally, I would like to mention the relationship between *zainichi* identity and the Korean diaspora experience. In Part Three, I mentioned that a new type of identity can be observed among the third generation, using the example of the *zainichi* professional soccer players. Also, I have mentioned that there are new types of Buddhist temples welcoming ancestral rituals by *zainichi* in accordance with their time-cherished traditions but in a new hybrid form. In this sense, a new type of identity is needed to identify a new type of diaspora. *Zainichi* Korean temples must be the anchor point for the new identity of the third, fourth, and future generations. This phenomenon is perhaps best expressed by the Biblical maxim that new wine needs new wineskins.

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The Emperor's New Clothes:
The Buddhist Military Chaplaincy in Imperial Japan and Contemporary America

Brian Victoria

All men tremble at punishment, all men fear death. Likening others to oneself, one should neither slay nor cause to slay.

Dhammapada, v. 129

Abstract

In twentieth century Japan, Buddhist military chaplains were present on the battlefield from as early as the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 and lasting up through the end of World War II. The focus of this article is less on the history of these chaplains than the manner in which they interpreted the Buddha Dharma so as to allow them and their sectarian sponsors to play this role. This is followed by a more detailed examination of the recent emergence of a Buddhist chaplaincy within the U.S. military, asking whether there are any similarities, especially doctrinally, between the military chaplaincy in the two nations.

The purpose of this examination is to identify issues related to those elements of Buddhist doctrine and practice that make the existence of a Buddhist chaplaincy both possible and, at the same time, problematic. Equally important, it reveals one facet or dimension of the manner in which institutional Buddhism has served the political and military interests of those countries in which it is present, and still does so.

Introduction

At first glance Buddhism would seem poorly equipped for providing chaplains to the members of the military of any country. For starters, the first precept that Buddhists of all schools and sects, both lay and cleric, pledge to abide by is to abstain from taking life. As Bhikkhu Bodhi, an American Theravāda monk and translator of the Pāli Nikāyas, notes: "The *suttas* [Skt. *sūtra*], it must be clearly stated, do not admit any moral justification for war. . . . One short *sutta* even declares categorically that a warrior who dies in battle will be reborn in hell, which implies that participation in war is essentially immoral."[1]

Further, Buddhist apologists like Zen scholar D. T. Suzuki have portrayed Buddhism as a strictly if not uniquely peaceful religion. Suzuki wrote: "Whatever form Buddhism takes in different countries where it flourishes, it is a religion of compassion, and in its varied history it has never been found engaged in warlike activities."[2] Thus, inasmuch as soldiers are required to kill or incapacitate all those whom the government of their country designates as its enemies, the existence of a 'Buddhist soldier' would appear to be an oxymoron. Or in simpler words, "What's a nice, peaceful religion like Buddhism doing in a place like the military?"

Apart from Buddhism, there are related questions that need to be addressed, beginning with why a predominantly Christian nation like the U.S. would welcome non-Christian military chaplains, or at least chaplains outside the Judeo-Christian tradition, into the ranks of its chaplaincy corps. Is this relatively recent development a sign of the acceptance of an authentic religious pluralism on the part of the U.S. military, if not the American government? If so, should this development be welcomed, especially by adherents of a heretofore non-recognized faith, and/or a faith primarily adhered to by an ethnic minority in the U.S.?

Although space limitations do not allow for an in-depth exploration of these questions, at least an introduction can be presented with the hope that future scholars will follow with more detailed studies and alternative approaches. Meanwhile this article does not attempt to resolve the broader, and thornier, issue of the appropriateness of a Buddhist, or any other, chaplaincy in the U.S. military. Rather, the focus is on the historical development of and justification for a Buddhist chaplaincy and its attendant, chiefly ethical, problems.

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[1] "War and Peace: A Buddhist Perspective," *Inquiring Mind,* p. 5. The *sutta* referred to in this quotation is the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 42:3. CE

[2] Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism and its Influence on Japanese Culture,* p. 34.

In light of the U.S. military's expectation that a chaplain, as a uniformed military officer, actively contribute to fulfilling the military's mission of conquering the enemy, the argument can be made that, by definition, Buddhist chaplains, like the chaplains of all faiths, cannot remain true to the peaceful tenets of their faith. Further, given that if they step too far out of line chaplains can be forced to resign their commissions or, at the very least, fail to be promoted, the argument can be made that there is an inherent conflict between their duty as a uniformed officer and their spiritual calling. Important though these questions are, they fall beyond the scope of this article.

Thus, while no normative position regarding the appropriateness of a Buddhist chaplaincy will be attempted, the paper's conclusion will nevertheless identify areas deserving further consideration as the number of Buddhist chaplains within the U.S. military continues to grow. Bearing this in mind, let us begin our study with a very brief examination of Buddhism's historical connection to violence and warfare.

Buddhist "Holy Wars"

Demonstrating the falsity of the assertions quoted above that Buddhism is, in practice, a religion of peace, another Theravāda monk, S. Dhammika, notes: "Even a cursory acquaintance with Asian history will show that this claim is baseless." According to Dhammika, two examples in Buddhist history clearly show an early connection between Buddhism and warfare. The first example involved King Anawrahta (1044-77), the monarch who made the Theravāda school of Buddhism the state religion of Burma. Dhammika describes how the king, following his conversion, acquired his first set of Pali-inscribed Buddhist scriptures:

> The nearest copy was in the neighboring kingdom of Thaton that was invaded, its capital sacked and the scriptures triumphantly brought to Pagan on the backs of a train of elephants. The king of Thaton and his family lived out their remaining days as slaves in a monastery. To get relics to enshrine in the numerous *stupas* he was building Anawrahta then invaded Prome, stripped its temples of their gold, broke open its *stupas* and carted everything off to Pagan again. The next victim was Arakhan that possessed the revered Mahamuni image that the king was determined to get to glorify his capital. This time the battles were inconclusive, and the king had to be content with some less sacred images and relics.

After this, Anawrahta turned his pious and belligerent eyes to Nanchao where the Tooth Relic was enshrined. The king of Nanchao managed to avert disaster with an unexpectedly impressive show of arms and by buying off Anawrahta with a jade Buddha image that had come into contact with the Relic. All of Anawrahta's campaigns were opposed militarily and must have resulted in a great deal of bloodshed although no figures are given in the ancient records. The clerics who recorded these events were only interested in the number of monks Anawrahta fed and the number of monasteries he built, not in how many people he slaughtered. However, what is clear is that these wars qualify to be called religious wars.[3]

The second example Dhammika cited is far better known. It concerns the story of Prince Duṭṭhagāmaṇi as recounted in the *Mahāvamsa*, an early, non-canonical history of Theravada Buddhism in Sri Lanka. In the second century BCE, a line of non-Buddhist Tamils had ruled Sri Lanka for some seventy-six years. However, in 101 BCE Prince Duṭṭhagāmaṇi started a campaign to overthrow them and make himself king. From the very beginning Duṭṭhagāmaṇi and his supporters saw their struggle as a crusade designed to "bring glory to the religion". Monks accompanied the troops into battle because "the sight of the monks is both a blessing and a protection for us." Monks were also encouraged to disrobe and join the fighting, and thousands are recorded as having done so. To ensure victory, Duṭṭhagāmaṇi attached a relic of the Buddha to his spear. He claimed that this meant that he was not fighting for his own advantage but for the promotion of Buddhism. In effect, Duṭṭhagāmaṇi used Buddhism to enhance the morale, or fighting will, of his soldiers.

Following his victory, however, it is said that Duṭṭhagāmaṇi regretted the large number of enemy he had killed. Although probably an exaggeration, the *Mahāvamsa* claims that as many as one million Tamils were slaughtered. Deeply disturbed, Duṭṭhagāmaṇi was relieved when, as the following passage details, eight senior priests assured him that he had made very little bad *kamma* (Skt., *karma*) since nearly all his victims were non-Buddhists and, as such, were no more than animals.

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[3] S. Dhammika, *The Broken Buddha: Critical Reflections on Theravāda and a Plea for a New Buddhism*. Available on the Web at: http://www.buddhistische-gesellschaft-berlin.de/downloads/brokenbuddhanew.pdf (accessed October 3, 2013).

> Only one and a half human beings have been slain here by thee, O lord of men. The one had come unto the (three) refuges; the other had taken unto himself the five precepts. Unbelievers and men of evil life were the rest, not more to be esteemed than beasts. But as for thee, thou wilt bring glory to the doctrine of the Buddha in manifold ways; therefore cast away care from the heart, O ruler of men.[4]

Historical examples like these have led Oxford University's Alan Strathern to conclude:

> However any religion starts out, sooner or later it enters into a Faustian pact with state power. Buddhist monks looked to kings, the ultimate wielders of violence, for the support, patronage and order that only they could provide. Kings looked to monks to provide the popular legitimacy that only such a high moral vision can confer.

> The result can seem ironic. If you have a strong sense of the overriding moral superiority of your worldview, then the need to protect and advance it can seem the most important duty of all. Christian crusaders, Islamist militants, and the leaders of "freedom-loving nations" have all justified what they see as necessary violence in the name of a higher good. Buddhist rulers and monks are no exception.[5]

Buddhist scholar Stephan Batchelor reinforced Strathern's viewpoint when he provided the following explanation in his book, *Buddhism without Beliefs:* "The power of organized religion [is] to provide sovereign states with a bulwark of moral legitimacy."[6] Applied to Buddhism, this means that killing by the state is moral so long as Buddhist clerical leaders approve of it on the basis of the interpretations presented above as well as others.

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[4] XXV, pp. 108-112. All related quoted material contained in Bartholomeusz, *In Defense of Dharma,* p. 56.

[5] Strathern, "Why are Buddhist monks attacking Muslims?" BBC, 1 May 2013. Available on the Web at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-22356306 (accessed on 11 August 2013).

[6] Batchelor, *Buddhism without Beliefs,* p. 16.

The common theme in all of the preceding examples is that it is not Buddhist teachings *per se* that have been responsible for Buddhism's endorsement of violence. Rather, institutional Buddhist leaders have, with but few exceptions, responded positively to the needs, or demands, of the rulers of their respective states, whether they be kings, feudal lords, generals, prime ministers, or, as in the case of the US, a civilian president who also serves as the military's "commander-in-chief". In other words, Buddhism, like all of the world's major faiths, has typically played an important supportive role in violence initiated by the rulers of those countries to which it has spread.

The Buddhist Chaplaincy in Japan

Origins

As for actual Buddhist chaplains, one of the earliest progenitors of such figures is to be found in Japan. Japan is of particular significance because, as this article reveals, it was the Buddhist faith of Japanese-Americans that was primarily responsible for the creation of a Buddhist chaplaincy in the US military.

Japan's Buddhist chaplains can be traced back to at least the fourteenth century. It was in 1333 that warriors loyal to Emperor Go-Daigo (1288–1339), whose political power had been usurped, revolted against the warrior-led government holding sway in Kamakura. As a result, itinerant Buddhist chaplains belonging to the Pure Land sect (J. Jōdo-shū) were assigned to warriors in the field in order to ensure that their patrons recited the name of Amida Buddha at least ten times at the time of death. In so doing, it was believed, the warrior's rebirth in the Pure Land was assured.

As historian Sybil Thornton notes, the activities of these chaplains quickly expanded beyond a purely religious function, and they ended up burning, burying and praying for the dead, as well as caring for the sick and wounded. When their warrior patrons were not engaged in battle, the chaplains amused them with poetry and assumed a role close to that of a personal servant. Given that these chaplains appear to have been beholden to their patrons for food, clothing, and shelter, this latter role is hardly surprising.[7]

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[7] Thornton, "Buddhist Chaplains in the Field of Battle" in Lopez (ed.), *Buddhism in Practice,* pp. 586-7.

Over time, these chaplains came to play what might best be described as a paramilitary role, actively aiding and protecting their warrior patrons when needed. This, however, provoked a reaction from the chaplains' ecclesiastical superiors: in a letter written in 1399, they admonished their subordinates to "never touch things like bows and arrows and weapons . . . because they are used to kill." On the other hand, chaplains were allowed to hold their master's body armor and helmet "because they are things that protect the body."[8] Should the chaplains violate these prohibitions, or their warrior patrons force them to, the ecclesiastical authorities threatened to cancel the rebirth of the offending party in the Pure Land.

Whatever one may think of these Pure Land chaplains, at least minimal standards of conduct existed for all parties. By the sixteenth century, however, things had changed. On the one hand, the battlefield neutrality of priests affiliated with the earlier itinerant branch (J., Yugyō-ha) of Pure Land Buddhism continued to be recognized by the authorities. On the other hand, Sybil Thorton notes that priests in other sects were forced to provide warlords with "camp-priests who acted as couriers, bodyguards, and body servants to warriors in the field."[9]

While other sects of Japanese Buddhism may not have provided chaplain-like figures that ministered directly to warriors on the battlefield, the Zen sect nevertheless enjoyed a particularly close relationship with medieval warriors from the thirteenth century onwards, a relationship consisting of a meditative training regimen to overcome the fear of death, integrated with a metaphysical basis for its acceptance on the battlefield. As D.T. Suzuki (1870-1966) notes:

> In Japan warriors have, for the most part, practiced Zen. Especially from the Kamakura period [1185-1333] through the Ashikaga [1337-1573] and Warring States period [1467-1567], it is correct to say that all of them practiced Zen. This is clear when one looks at such famous examples as [warlords] Uesugi Kenshin, Takeda Shingen, and others. . . . I believe one should pay special attention to the fact that Zen became united with the sword.[10]

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[8] Quoted in ibid., p. 590.

[9] Ibid., p. 589.

[10] Quoted in Victoria (5 August 2013), "Zen as a Cult of Death in the Wartime Writings of D.T. Suzuki," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 11, Issue 30, No. 5. Available on the Web at: http://japanfocus.org/-Brian-Victoria/3973#sthash.poJWptcx.dpuf.

Modern Era

Given this historical background, it is not surprising that, in the modern era, Buddhist chaplains accompanied troops to the battlefield as early as the first Sino-Japanese war of 1894-5. Their job was not only to give 'morale-building' talks to the soldiers, but also to conduct funerals for those who fell in battle, as well as notify the relatives of the deceased in Japan itself. Even in times of peace the need for chaplains was recognized, with the Nishi (West) Honganji branch of the True Pure Land sect (Jōdo-Shinshū), for example, dispatching forty-six priests to more than forty military bases throughout Japan as early as 1902.

In the same year Nishi Honganji produced a booklet entitled *Bushidō* as part of a series called "Lectures on Spirit" (*Seishin Kōwa*). The connection between the two events is clear in that it was Ōtani Kōen (1850-1903), an aristocrat and the branch's administrative head, who both dispatched the military chaplains and contributed a foreword to the booklet. Kōen explained that the booklet's purpose was "to clarify the spirit of military evangelization."[11]

As its title suggests, Nishi Honganji intended this booklet to provide the doctrinal basis for its outreach to the military. That this outreach had a broader focus than the soldiers themselves can be seen from the inclusion of a final chapter entitled "To the Parents and Family of Military Men". Although in 1902 Japan was at peace, there was an increasing awareness of the possibility of war with Imperial Russia. Thus sectarian leaders like Kōen realized that soldiers' parents and family members would be concerned that their loved ones might die in battle.

The booklet's author, Satō Gan'ei (1847-1905), was a military chaplain as well as clerical head of a Nishi Honganji-affiliated laymen's association known as the *Yuima-kai* (Skt. Vimalakīrti).[12] The military character of this association is clear in that three high-ranking Imperial Army officers were members, each contributing a calligraphic endorsement to the booklet. One of the three, Lt. General Ōshima Ken'ichi (1858-1947), later served as Minister of War in two cabinets and Privy Counsellor during the Asia-Pacific War of 1937-45 (aka WW II).

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[11] Satō, *Bushidō,* p. xxii.

[12] Vimalakīrti is the central figure in the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra*. The text presents him as the ideal Mahayanist lay practitioner and a contemporary of Buddha Shakyamuni. However, there is no mention of him in Buddhist texts until after Nāgārjuna (2nd century CE?) popularised Mahāyāna teachings in India.

In his introduction, Gan'ei explained that the purpose of religion in Japan was "to be an instrument of the state and an instrument of the Imperial Household." More specifically, the government had granted Buddhism permission to propagate itself in order "to ensure that citizens fulfill their duties [to the state] while at the same time preserving social order and stability." Gan'ei claimed religionists like him had been charged with making sure this important task was accomplished.[13]

In a section entitled "The Way of the Martial Arts and the Way of the Buddha", Gan'ei explained what this had to do with the military:

> The *bodhisattva* of the Way of the Buddha is the warrior of the Way of the martial arts; the warrior of the Way of the martial arts is the *bodhisattva* of the Way of the Buddha. This is due to a mysterious convergence between *bodhisattva* and warrior. That is to say, the warrior in the Way of the martial arts is made knowledgeable of life and death through duty and loyalty, while the *bodhisattva* in the Way of the Buddha is able to destroy evil, know the future, and exist freely within the realm of life and death. Therefore, if a warrior believes in the Way of the Buddha, he will be doubly advantaged, with the courage derived from his sense of loyalty and duty further strengthened even as he loses his fear of death.[14]

In Japan's first major war with a European power, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, Zen priests like Shaku Sōen, abbot of Engakuji in Kamakura, also volunteered to go to the battlefield. Shaku described his motivation as follows:

> I wished to have my faith tested by going through the greatest horrors of life, but I also wished to inspire, if I could, our valiant soldiers with the ennobling thoughts of the Buddha, so as to enable them to die on the battlefield with the confidence that the task in which they are engaged is great and noble. I wished to convince them of the truths that this war is not a mere slaughter of their fellow-beings, but that they are combating an evil, and that, at the same time, corporeal annihilation really means a rebirth of [the] soul, not in heaven, indeed, but here among ourselves. I did my best to impress these ideas upon the soldiers' hearts.[15]

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[13] Ibid., p. 2.
[14] Ibid., p. 31.
[15] Quoted in Victoria, *Zen at War,* p. 26.

Brief though they are, Sōen's words are pregnant with meaning. First, his words reveal one of the roles, or even the main role of chaplains in all militaries, i.e., the promotion of the "morale" (aka "fighting spirit") of the soldiers on the battlefield. This is accomplished by convincing the soldiers that they are engaged in a morally just struggle, in Sōen's words, "to enable them to die on the battlefield with the confidence that the task in which they are engaged is great and noble." Built into this understanding is that the enemy's actions must necessarily embody the opposite, i.e., "they are combating an evil."

It is noteworthy how closely these words resonate with countless Christian military chaplains who have similarly sought to inspire their soldiers with "the ennobling thoughts of [God/Christ]." Christian chaplains also promote the belief that "the task in which they [Christian soldiers] are engaged is great and noble" and are therefore "combating an evil." In Sōen's case, the "Buddhist difference" is that for Buddhist soldiers "corporeal annihilation really means a rebirth of [the] soul, not in heaven, indeed, but here among ourselves." At least according to D.T. Suzuki's translation of his master's words, as quoted above, Sōen granted Japanese soldiers who perished during the Russo-Japanese War both a "soul" and the opportunity to be reborn "among ourselves."

To be sure, Sōen recognized that there was an inherent conflict between a Buddhist soldier's duty to kill his nation's enemies and the Buddhist precept, valid for lay and cleric alike, "not to kill". Sōen resolved this conflict in a short essay entitled "The Buddhist View of War". First published in 1906, the essay read in part:

> Whatever calling he may have chosen in this life, let him [the citizen of a nation] be freed from egocentric thoughts and feelings. Even when going to war for his country's sake, let him not bear any hatred towards his enemies. In all his dealings with them let him practice the truth of non-*atman*. He may have to deprive his antagonist of corporeal presence, but let him not think there are *atmans*, conquering each other. From a Buddhist point of view, the significance of life is not limited to the present incarnation. We must not exaggerate the significance of individuals, for they are not independent and unconditional existences. They acquire their importance and a paramount meaning, moral and religious, as soon as their fate becomes connected with the all-pervading love of the Buddha, because then they are no more particular

individuals filled with egotistic thoughts and impulses, but have become love incarnate. They are so many representative types of one universal self-freed love. If they ever have to combat one another for the sake of their home and country — which under some circumstances may become unavoidable in this world of particularity — let them forget their egotistic passions, which are the product of the *atman* conception — of selfishness. Let them, on the contrary, be filled with the loving-kindness of the Buddha; let them elevate themselves above the horizon of the mine and thine. The hand that is raised to strike and the eye that is fixed to take aim do not belong to the individual, but are the instruments utilized by a principle higher than transient existence. Therefore, when fighting, fight with might and main, fight with your whole heart, forget your own self in the fight, and be free from all *atman* thought.[16] [See Appendix I for complete text.]

Further, in light of the fact that D.T. Suzuki was Sōen's lay disciple, it should come as no surprise to learn that Suzuki adopted a similar position to that of his master, i.e., killing was acceptable in Buddhism so long as it was done without "hatred towards his enemies". To the extent that Suzuki's invocation of his Buddhist faith in support of war comes as a surprise, if not shock, to his many admirers in the West only reveals how poorly Suzuki is understood even today. In a 1904 English language essay entitled "A Buddhist View of War" Suzuki wrote:

War is abominable, and there is no denying it. But it is only a phase of the universal struggle that is going on and will go on, as long as one breath of vitality is left to an animate being. It is absurdity itself to have perpetual peace and at the same time to be enjoying the full vigor of life. We do not mean to be cruel, neither do we wish to be self-destructive. When our ideals clash, let there be no flinching, no backsliding, no undecidedness, but for ever and ever pressing onwards. In this kind of war there is nothing personal, egotistic, or individual. *It is the holiest spiritual war.*

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[16] Shaku Sōen, *Zen for Americans,* pp. 193-97. See "Appendix I" for the complete text. Also available on the Web at: http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/CriticalZen/Buddhist-View-of-War_Soen.html (accessed May 5, 2016).

One thing most detestable and un-Buddhistic in war is its personal element. Egotistic hatred for an enemy is what makes a war most deplorable. But every pious Buddhist knows that there is no such irreducible a thing as ego. Therefore, as he steadily moves onward and clears every obstacle in the way, he is doing what has been ordained by a power higher that himself; he is merely instrumental. In him there is no hatred, no anger, no ignorance, no prejudice. He has lost himself in fighting. . . . Let us then shuffle off the mortal coil whenever it becomes necessary, and not raise a grunting voice against the fates. From our mutilated, mangled, inert corpse will there be the glorious ascension of something immaterial which leads forever progressing humanity to its final goal. Resting in this conviction, Buddhists carry the banner of Dharma over the dead and dying until they gain final victory.[17] (Emphasis mine) [See Appendix II for the entire essay.]

In reflecting on this essay, the first thing to note is that it was not written in a political vacuum, but in the midst of a war that Suzuki enthusiastically supported. For example, when Japan first attacked Russian naval forces stationed in China on February 10, 1904, Suzuki, then resident in the U.S., commented in a letter to a friend: "The Chicago papers this morning published two naval battles fought at Port Arthur and Chemulpo, in both of which the Japanese seem to have won a complete victory. This is a brilliant start & [*sic*] I hope that they would keep on this campaign in a similar manner till the end."[18]

Secondly, perhaps influenced by his support of the war, Suzuki clearly advocated what he called "the holiest spiritual war" as an integral part of Buddhism. He was equally convinced that it is "absurdity itself to have perpetual peace and at the same time to be enjoying the full vigor of life." Thus, the killing of one's fellow human beings is only to be expected inasmuch as it has been "ordained by a power higher than himself." Given this, the question becomes: what use are the efforts of mere mortals, Buddhist or otherwise, to oppose war or work for peace?

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[17] D. T. Suzuki; *The Light of Dharma*, July, 1904, Vol. 4. No. 2, pp. 179-182. Available on the Web at: http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/CriticalZen/A-Buddhist-View-of-War.html (accessed May 5, 2016).

[18] Quoted in Victoria, "The 'Negative Side' of D. T. Suzuki's Relationship to War," p. 104. Available on the web at: http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/CriticalZen/DTSuzukiandWar.pdf (accessed June 20, 2016).

Although Suzuki did not clearly identify what this God-like "power higher than himself" is, he appears to suggest that it is the *Dharmakāya,* i.e., the absolute basis of reality, that ordains war and killing. Is this the teaching of the Buddha Dharma?

Damien Keown, a scholar of Buddhist ethics, is also puzzled by Suzuki's reference to a power higher than himself. Keown writes:

> I'm not sure what the 'higher power' he [Suzuki] refers to is, that sounds odd in a Buddhist context, and saying that the warrior is 'merely instrumental' makes it sound like his actions are predetermined and so he has no moral responsibility for what he does. In brief, it's the usual Zen attempt to deny moral values by creating a smokescreen of metaphysical mumbo-jumbo.[19]

Unlike his master, Shaku Sōen, Suzuki never became a Buddhist military chaplain. Given his lay status, this is hardly surprising. Yet, it is clear that doctrinally speaking the two men shared a strongly war-affirming stance based on their Buddhist faith. In this, of course, neither man was unique, for, as detailed in my book *Zen at War,* this was the near universal stance adopted by both Buddhist scholars and clerics associated with Japan's traditional Buddhist sects in the 20th century, at least up until Japan's defeat in 1945.

Organized Resistance

It should be noted, however, that there were flickers of resistance to the incorporation of Buddhism into the modern Japanese military. For example, the "Youth League for Revitalizing Buddhism" (*Shinkō Bukkyō Seinen Dōmei*), founded on April 5, 1931, was a notable exception to institutional Buddhism's ready subservience to the state. Between 1931 and 1934 the League published a total of six pamphlets detailing its critical stance on various issues.

The League's second pamphlet, published in 1933, was entitled: "On the Road to Social Reform and the Revitalization of Buddhism" (*Shakai Henkaku Tojō no Shinkō Bukkyō*). As the title implies, the focus was on the need for social reform based on a Buddhist understanding. For example, it put forth the proposition that international cooperation, rather than narrow nationalism, was the Buddhist approach to world peace. It claimed that when nations seek solely to promote themselves, they inevitably

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[19] Damien Keown shared these comments with the author in an e-mail dated November 21, 2015.

resort, sooner or later, to military force to achieve their self-centered goals. The League claimed this was clearly at odds with the Buddhist doctrine of "selflessness" (*muga*).

As early as May 1933, at the third national conference of the All Japan Federation of Buddhist Youth Organizations (*Zen Nippon Bukkyō Seinen-kai Renmei*), League representatives recognized the dangers stemming from the rise of totalitarianism not only in Japan but in Germany as well. Thus they put forward a motion condemning Hitler and the Nazi Party for their "all-out violent oppression of the Jewish people", their "burning of cultural properties". their "repression of liberals and peace activists", etc. These violent acts were identified as both "inhumane" and "anti-Buddhist".[20] Their motion, however, was rejected and only resulted in increasing degrees of suppression by both institutional Buddhism and the police. With the arrest of some two hundred members in October 1937, the League came to an end and with it any organized Buddhist resistance to Japan's ever growing repression of political dissent at home and military aggression abroad.

Individual Resistance

Despite the absence of organized resistance there were still individuals who resisted the war effort based on their Buddhist faith. For example, Rinzai Zen Master Nakajima Genjō (1915-2000) described his wartime service in the Imperial Japanese Navy as follows:

> In 1937 my ship was made part of the Third Fleet and headed for Shanghai in order to participate in military operations on the Yangtze River. We eventually reached the city of Chenchiang where the temple of Chinshan-ssu is located. It was a very famous temple, and I encountered something there that took me by complete surprise. On entering the temple grounds I came across some five hundred novice monks practicing meditation in the meditation hall. I blurted out to the abbot, "What do you think you're doing! In Japan everyone is consumed by the war with China, and this is all you can do?" The abbot replied, "And just who are you to talk! I hear that you are a priest. War is for soldiers. A priest's work is to read the sutras and meditate!" I felt as if I had been hit on the head with a sledgehammer, and as a result I immediately became a pacifist.[21]

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[20] Quoted in Victoria, *Zen at War*, p. 71.

[21] Quoted in Victoria, *Zen War Stories,* p. 7.

Nakajima Genjō in the Imperial Navy

Nakajima Genjō as a Zen Priest

Needless to say, "realizations" like those of Nakajima and other individual wartime Buddhists had no appreciable effect on Japan's war effort. In fact, as far as Nakajima is concerned, in January 2000 this author personally asked him if he had attempted to distance himself from Japan's war effort following his change of heart. His reply was short and to the point: "I would have been court-martialled and shot had I done so."[22]

Nevertheless, the historical record reveals that there were a number of individual Buddhists, both lay and cleric, who opposed Japan's war effort based on the tenets of their Buddhist faith, especially the vow they had taken to abstain from taking life. This suggests that Buddhism, like other world religions, can become the catalyst or basis for war resistance. However, at least in the Japanese case, the record also reveals that Buddhism's connection to such war resistance was, in terms of absolute numbers, let alone efficacy, very weak.[23]

On the contrary, it can be said that Buddhism and Buddhist chaplains in wartime Japan provided all of the ingredients, from doctrinal interpretations to battlefield religious practice, necessary for the spiritual support of Japan's military aggression. Not only that, in the postwar period, Japanese-influenced Buddhist military chaplains would resurface in an unlikely venue, i.e., in Japan's wartime enemy – the United States of America.

The Creation of a Buddhism Chaplaincy in the U.S. Military Background

In examining the process leading to the acceptance of Buddhist chaplains, the first point to be made is that religions like Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam have long been suspect in the U.S. military due to their non-Western origins, i.e., as alien to America's WASP-dominated, Judeo-Christian heritage. Even Roman Catholic military chaplains were rejected until the American Civil War.

Consequently, Japanese-Americans were rebuffed when they requested the establishment of a Buddhist military chaplaincy during the war. They were rebuffed when, following forcible placement in "relocation camps" immediately after Pearl Harbor, their young men were finally allowed to enlist in the Army beginning in 1943, on condition they would fight in Europe. According to Greg Robinson, then Assistant Secretary of Defense John J. McCloy feared that negative American perceptions of Buddhists would compromise the reputation of their units.[24]

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[22] Ibid., p. 14.

[23] For additional examples of individual Buddhist resistance to Japan's wartime aggression, see Victoria, *Zen at War,* pp. 73-78.

[24] Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America.* p. 271.

Changing Attitudes

It was the undoubted bravery of Japanese-American soldiers demonstrated in W.W. II that slowly began to change the minds of U.S. military, political leaders and the American public. For example, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team was composed completely of Japanese-Americans who served in the European theater. The 442nd arrived in Europe after the 100th Infantry battalion, another Japanese-American unit, had already established its reputation for bravery on the battlefield. In time, the 442nd became, for its size and length of service, the most decorated unit in U.S. military history.

Needless to say, many if not the majority of these Japanese-American soldiers were Buddhists, primarily associated with the Jōdo Shin (True Pure Land) sect of Buddhism. There is one indication that one or more Japanese-American Jōdo Shin priests disguised themselves as Christian military chaplains and accompanied the 442nd into battle.[25]

A plaque commemorating the wartime deaths of members of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team

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[25] This indication is contained in the 2006 docudrama, *Only the Brave,* directed by Lane Nishikawa. Nishikawa went to great lengths to portray the unit's wartime exploits as accurately as possible. One scene in the film depicts Japanese American soldiers being comforted by a Christian chaplain. However, the language exchanged between the two sides makes it clear that the Christian chaplain is actually a Shin Buddhist priest. The author, however, has been unable to establish the historical authenticity of such a person or persons.

The Grave Marker, with Dharma Wheel, for Astronaut Ellison Onizuka

The unquestioned bravery of the Japanese-American soldiers led the Secretary of the Army to approve the placement of a Buddhist symbol, i.e. a "Dharma Wheel", on relevant soldiers' graves in February 1951. At the same time, the Dharma Wheel was allowed in chapels in national military cemeteries. However, together with the Star of David, this Buddhist symbol was given a position secondary to the Christian Cross.

Chapel at the Punchbowl in Honolulu, Hawaii

Finally in 1990 the American military resolved to make plans for inclusion of Buddhists chaplains in the armed forces. In August of that year the Institute of Heraldry produced rank insignia, once again taking the Dharma Wheel or *dharmachakra* as its emblem.

First Buddhist Chaplains in the U.S. Military

Although Buddhist chaplains were initially rejected by the US military, today the "Buddhist Churches of America", affiliated with the Nishi Hongwanji branch of the Jōdo Shin sect in Japan, remains the sole organization allowed to officially endorse Buddhist chaplains. Thus it is not surprising that the first formally recognized U.S. Buddhist chaplain was an ordained priest in that sect, Lieutenant Junior Grade Jeanette Gracie Shin. The Navy commissioned Lt. Shin, whose Buddhist name is Yuinen, in 2004. Among other assignments, Lt. Shin has served as a United States Navy Chaplain stationed at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in California. Although there are now additional Buddhist chaplains, all of them, with the exception of Lt. Shin, serve in the U.S. Army.

Shin was raised a Buddhist and describes herself as having been a "military brat". Instead of going into the Air Force like her father, she enlisted in the Marine Corps and became a communications operator because she wanted to do something different. After leaving the Marine Corps, Shin went to school at George Mason University in Virginia, earning her bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Religious Studies. After college, Shin attended the Buddhist Seminary in California, where she received a master's degree. Shin intended to become a Buddhist minister, but changed her mind when America went to war in Iraq:

> I've been a chaplain since 2004. Since we're at war, I thought I should go back to the military. With my background and knowledge, I thought I should become a chaplain. That way I can help our service members *prepare for the war*, not just physically, but spiritually.[26] (Emphasis mine)

In working with service members, Shin states she helps them to relax and meditate, and she educates them about the history of Buddhism.

In an October 4, 2012 interview posted on the website of the Buddhist magazine, *Tricycle,* Lt. Shin was asked about her work as a military chaplain, including the question of how she responds to those Buddhists who criticize her with regard to Right Livelihood and keeping the first precept, i.e., to refrain from taking life. In response, Shin replied:

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[26] Quoted in "Navy's only Buddhist Chaplain with 1st Marine Logistics Group." Available on the Web at: http://www.dvidshub.net/news/printable/40052 (accessed 15 December 2013).

> I have encountered some Buddhists who object to the practice of military chaplaincy due to the First Precept and Right Livelihood; however, my response is that Buddhists do exist in the military; they are citizens of this nation, so therefore they should have a chaplain of their faith background available. Also, America is not the only country to have Buddhist military chaplains—they are also present in the armed forces of nations with predominantly Buddhist populations like South Korea and Thailand. Buddhists, like other people, make individual choices about their practice of Dharma; it is not for me to judge how they interpret doctrine—my only concern is that they are able to practice without discrimination.[27]

Given the past history of religious discrimination Japanese-American Buddhist soldiers experienced, Shin's concern that today's Buddhist soldiers be able "to practice without discrimination" is understandable, even praiseworthy. Yet, while Shin claims that it is not up to her "to judge how they interpret doctrine," she finds no difficulty in interpreting Buddhist doctrine so as to affirm military service. Thus, at the time of the 2010 Vesak observance Shin issued the following proclamation:

> This year's Vesak observance, the remembrance of Lord Buddha's Birth, Enlightenment, and Parinirvana, occurs closely to our Memorial Day observance. On both occasions, this is a time for the remembrance of deeds that provided for our Emancipation from suffering: the Buddha's final victory over Mara, and our military veterans who gave the "last full measure" so that we may have freedom today [*sic*].

> The Buddha showed us the Way to liberation, that liberation from suffering was in fact possible, and available regardless of our karmic circumstances or our social caste; our veterans have sacrificed so that we also are liberated from slavery and oppressive government. We continue to honor and remember the Buddha for His Great Compassion for us. We must not only remember what he accomplished, but work to pass on his teachings.

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[27] **"**Q & A with Lt. Jeanette Shin, U.S. Military's First Buddhist Chaplain." Available on the Web at: http://www.tricycle.com/blog/q-lt-jeanette-shin-us-militarys-first-buddhist-chaplain (accessed on 11 September 2012).

> American Buddhists have fought in the wars of this nation, and Buddhist families have lost sons and daughters in our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have also given the "last full measure", no different from any other citizen of this Nation. Do not forget those who have given so much for us. Take time during your Memorial Day vacation, or during your memorial services this Sunday, to remember those who have served. *Namo Amida Butsu*

Lt. Shin further stated that she wished to clear up a misconception about the nature of a military chaplain's work: "I think one misconception is that military chaplains function as missionaries or that they preach killing. However, most chaplains really are concerned with ensuring that individuals, whether in the military or hospital or prisons, have access to services and sacraments of their respective faith."[28]

Lt. Shin maintains a website entitled "Buddhist Military Sangha."[29] Its mission statement reads as follows:

- Provide a welcoming and positive forum for Buddhists currently serving or who have served in the military to communicate with and support one another.

- Recognize and promote honorable military service as in accord with the Eightfold Path's Right Livelihood.

- Correct misconceptions about Buddhists serving in the military.

- Help Buddhists unfamiliar with the military understand the jobs of their relatives and friends who are serving or who have served, and who love and respect the military profession.

- Help Buddhist Sanghas learn how to support and understand Buddhist military members, veterans, and their families.

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[28] **"Q & A with Lt. Jeanette Shin, U.S. Military's First Buddhist Chaplain."** Available on the Web at: http://www.tricycle.com/blog/q-lt-jeanette-shin-us-militarys-first-buddhist-chaplain (accessed on 11 September 2012).

[29] The "Buddhist Military Sangha" website can be accessed at: http://buddhistmilitarysangha.blogspot.jp (accessed on 15 December 2013).

- Represent the importance of religious pluralism and diversity in today's military population, and by extension in American society.

- Provide information about Buddhist Military Chaplaincy in US Armed Forces.

On this website Shin quotes numerous personages, including the Dalai Lama, as well as Buddhist teachings to justify Buddhism's support for warfare as well as the existence of a Buddhist military chaplaincy. She quotes the Dalai Lama addressing soldiers as follows:

I have always admired those who are prepared to act in the defense of others for their courage and determination. In fact, it may surprise you to know that I think that monks and soldiers, sailors and airmen have more in common than at first meets the eye. Strict discipline is important to us all, we all wear a uniform and we rely on the companionship and support of our comrades.

Although the public may think that physical strength is what is most important, I believe that what makes a good soldier, sailor or airman, just as what makes a good monk, is inner strength. And inner strength depends on having a firm positive motivation. The difference lies in whether ultimately you want to ensure others' well being or whether you want only wish to do them harm.

Naturally, there are some times when we need to take what on the surface appears to be harsh or tough action, but if our motivation is good our action is actually non-violent in nature. On the other hand if we use sweet words and gestures to deceive, exploit and take advantage of others, our conduct may appear agreeable, while we are actually engaged in quite unacceptable violence.

The ultimate purpose of Buddhism is to serve and benefit humanity; therefore I believe that what is important for Buddhists is the contribution we can make to human society according to our own ideas and values. The key to overcoming suffering and ensuring happiness is inner peace. If we have that, we can face difficulties with calmness and reason, while our inner happiness remains undisturbed.

The teachings of love, kindness and tolerance, the conduct of non-violence as I have explained above, and especially the Buddhist theory that all things are relative, are a source of that inner peace.

It is my prayer that all of you may be able to do your duty and fulfill your mission, and in due course when that is done to return to your homes and families. [Signed] Dalai Lama[30]

Echoing these words are those of Capt. Somya Malasri, a former Thai monk who is currently one of only two active duty U.S. Army chaplains. Malasri explains the Buddhist rationale for warfare as follows:

A lot of people ask if a Buddhist can be a soldier because the first precept is no killing. The answer is yes. You can protect yourself or sacrifice yourself to do the righteous thing. You can sacrifice yourself to protect your country because if there's no country, there's no freedom and you cannot practice your religion. In Buddhism, if you go to war and kill others, it's your duty, not your intention to kill other people. If a person dies of your intention, and you have anger, that is wrong in Buddhism. *When soldiers go to war, they don't have any intention to kill others and they don't have hatred in their minds.*[31] (Emphasis mine)

In the first instance, it is interesting to compare Malasri's understanding of the relationship of Buddhism to war and the state (represented by the emperor in this instance) with that of Japanese scholar-priest Inoue Enryō, who wrote in 1904:

Buddhism is a teaching of compassion, a teaching for living human beings. Therefore, fighting on behalf of living beings is in accord with the spirit of compassion. . . . Buddhism would not exist [in Japan] without the devotion of the Imperial family. When looked at from this viewpoint, it is only natural for Buddhists to fight to the death in order to repay the debt of gratitude they owe to the Buddha and the emperor.[32]

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[30] Ibid., posted on Monday, 21 June 2010 (accessed on 11 December 2013).
[31] Ibid., posted on Friday, 17 August 2007 (accessed on 11 December 2013).
[32] Quoted in Victoria, *Zen at War,* pp. 29-30.

Lt. Shin just after she has sworn allegiance to the USA on induction as a military officer

In both instances we see that "freedom of religion" (i.e., to practice Buddhism) is not an inherent human right but rather something in the nature of a 'gift' bestowed on its citizens by the state. Needless to say, the idea of the king (i.e., state) as both benefactor and protector of Buddhism has long been deeply embedded in Thai Buddhism as it has been in institutional Buddhism throughout Asia. Hence, Buddhist soldiers are expected to offer up their lives as an expression of gratitude or repayment for the state's beneficence.

Implicit in this relationship is the unconditional subservience of the Buddhist *sangha* (community) to the state. In the country of Malasri's birth, i.e., Thailand, this subservience can be seen in the fact that it is one of only two Asian countries that have a formal Buddhist military chaplaincy, the other being South Korea. Like all Thai Buddhist military chaplains in the Theravada school of Buddhism, Malasri first had to formally disrobe before he could become a military chaplain. In South Korea, on the other hand, Buddhist military chaplains wear officers' uniforms but, as adherents of the Mahāyāna school, retain their clerical status.

In addition, Malasri's statement that in going to war soldiers must have no intention of harming others or harboring ill-will toward them mirrors the sentiments of both Shaku Sōen and D.T. Suzuki previously introduced, i.e., that the Buddhist soldier may kill so long as he harbors "no hatred, no anger, no ignorance, no prejudice" toward his enemy. And although phrased in a somewhat more convoluted manner, this is a position Suzuki maintained even in the postwar period. In 1959, Suzuki wrote:

> The art of swordsmanship distinguishes between the sword that kills and the sword that gives life. The one that is used by a technician cannot go any further than killing, for he never appeals to the sword unless he intends to kill. The case is entirely different for the one who is compelled to lift the sword. For it is really not he but the sword itself that does the killing. *He has no desire to do harm to anybody,* but the enemy appears and makes himself the victim.[33] (Emphasis mine)

It can, of course, be rightly argued that intentionality is a critical component of Buddhist ethics. The reason for this, of course, is the central role of *karma* in Buddhist doctrine. Thus, each intentional thought, word and deed has a corresponding effect, negative intentional acts having a negative effect and positive acts a positive one. As Shakyamuni Buddha is recorded as having said: "I say that intention is *kamma* (Skt. *karma*), for having intended one thinks, speaks or acts."[34]

One of the best-known Mahāyāna explications of intentionality related to killing is contained in the *Upāyakauśalya* (Skill in Means) *Sūtra.* This sutra tells the story of a ship's captain, named Great Compassion, whose boat was carrying

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[33] Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture,* p. 145.

[34] *Anguttara Nikaya* III, 415.

500 merchants. Like the captain, all of the merchants were *Bodhisattvas,* except one, a robber who planned to kill everyone on board in order to steal the ship's cargo. Thanks to a dream, the captain became aware of the robber's murderous intent and agonized over what to do. If he told the merchants about the robber they would no doubt kill the robber but then would have to suffer the karmic results of their deeds for aeons. At the same time, the captain realized that if he did nothing the merchants would die. Finally, out of compassion *for the robber*, the captain determined to personally accept the hellish karmic retribution himself, killing the robber so as to prevent the latter from having to suffer the results of his evil deeds. However, the sutra states that due to the captain's great compassion and utterly selfless motivation he was ultimately spared from rebirth in hell.

As the translator of this sutra, Mark Tatz, notes, this sutra is likely to have been composed in the first century B.C.E.[35] If Tatz is correct, this sutra is highly unlikely to represent the original teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha concerning the use of violence. In fact, Damien Keown, a scholar of Buddhist ethics, has gone so far as to label this sutra the place "where it all started to go horribly wrong for the Mahāyāna."[36] Nevertheless, this sutra deserves close scrutiny given the role it has played in endorsing the use of "compassionate violence" in the Mahāyāna school.

On the surface this sutra appears to support the claims of Sōen, Suzuki, Malasri and others that Buddhists may kill so long they do so without hatred or animosity toward the enemy. On closer examination, however, it can be readily recognized that even if it accurately reflected Shakyamuni Buddha's views, the application of this sutra to modern warfare would be highly problematic. First, unlike the bodhisattva ship's captain, modern soldiers are anything but free to decide whom they will kill, with or without a dream. On the contrary, they are effectively automata, killing anyone their superiors order them to kill with little or no means of determining the guilt or innocence of their victims.

Second, their adversaries on the battlefield, who carry the designation "enemy", are typically no different from them. They are likely in the prime of life and, more often than not, fighting as a result of having been conscripted into their country's military, i.e., forced under threat of imprisonment, or even death, to kill the designated "enemy", whom they have never met and know little about

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[35] Tatz, trans. *The Skill in Means (Upāyakauśalya) Sutra*, p. 1.

[36] Quoted in an e-mail to the author on July 27, 2016.

other than the fact that their military superiors have inevitably identified their adversary as "evil". Further, running deep in the consciences of soldiers on both sides is their fervent desire to return home safely to loved ones. They are made to believe that the only way this can occur is if they kill whomever they are ordered to kill. Unlike the ship's captain, they have no choice.

Third, in modern warfare it is nearly axiomatic to recognize that nations engage in war to promote their "national interests". This understanding of the causes of war has been recognized in the West since the time of Machiavelli (1469-1527). National interests are nothing if not the *collective self-interest*, aka *selfishness,* of the citizens of a nation, especially the self-interest of the rich and powerful in that nation. Nevertheless, seldom if ever do the rich and powerful themselves do the actual fighting, though they reap the financial rewards that come with making the weaponry, acquiring the natural resources, etc. connected with a successful war. Nor must it be forgotten that it is typically the nation's poorest and least educated citizens upon whom falls the task of actually fighting *and dying* on the battlefield.

From a Buddhist perspective, national self-interest is simply an alternative name for collective ego, an expression of attachment to such things as land, natural resources, cheap labor, military power, etc. As such, the furtherance of national self-interest, i.e., collective *selfishness,* could never be a goal in accord with the Buddha Dharma, inasmuch as the latter is devoted to release from all forms of attachment.

At this juncture the question is typically raised as to what a Buddhist should do in the face of a truly dangerous if not demented figure like Adolf Hitler. Shouldn't a Buddhist soldier, if he or she has the chance, kill someone like Hitler, a figure far, far, worst than a robber, in order to save the lives of innumerable innocent victims?

Once again, it would certainly appear necessary to do so. Yet, demented though Hitler may have been, he could not have killed many without the support of large numbers of German citizens. The historical reality is that the German people only followed a psychopath like Hitler out of the great financial and societal insecurity facing them in the aftermath of WW I and the Great Depression. This insecurity, in turn, was in large part a direct result of the massive war reparations imposed by the victors on the defeated German nation in the Treaty of Versailles at the end of WW I. When a people are driven to desperation they react desperately. Thus, the solution to future Hitlers is not ever more weaponry such as atomic or hydrogen bombs but, instead, ensuring that no people are driven to take desperate measures due to impoverishment or oppression.

Finally, there is one aspect related to the story of a bodhisattva ship's captain

that is of critical importance: the lack of any suggestion that the ship's captain, thanks to his dream, had to first make sure that the man he intended to kill, however reluctantly, really was a robber, and as a corollary, the need for the soldier to exercise his own independent judgment as to who is, or is not, his enemy. Shakyamuni Buddha famously said, "Those who without themselves ascertaining the state of affairs follow the rumours of others are utterly irresponsible; they are exploitable by others."[37]

In fact, this exactly fits the circumstances of the American invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003. Weapon inspectors said at the time that there was no compelling evidence Saddam Hussein possessed "weapons of mass destruction", nor was there convincing evidence that Iraq was a state sponsor of terrorism. Nevertheless, the US ordered its soldiers to invade Iraq. In such a case, is it sufficient for American Buddhist soldiers taking the lives of countless Iraqis to claim that they were merely "following orders" or that they killed "without hatred" or killed "compassionately"?

In the story of the bodhisattva ship's captain there is nothing that addresses the need for Buddhist soldiers to ensure, at the very least, that they are killing the "bad guys". In a different context, Shakyamuni Buddha addressed this issue when he stated:

> Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumor; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, "The monk is our teacher." When you yourselves know: "These things are good; these things are not blamable; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness," enter on and abide in them.[38]

Based on the list above, it is reasonable to assume that Shakyamuni Buddha would also have included in his admonition "not to go (kill in this instance) upon

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[37] Pali text: *Appatvā padaviññāṇaṃ paraghosānusārino pamādaparamā bālā, te honti parapattiyā*. *Jātaka* 322, *Daddabha Jātaka*. Translation provided by Richard Gombrich.

[38] Quoted in the *Kālāma Sutta* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. Translated by Soma Thera, Kandy, Buddhist Publication Society. Available on the Web at: http://www.bps.lk/olib/wh/wh008.pdf (accessed 25 October 2016).

the orders of military superiors unless you yourself know that your opponent is truly your "enemy".

In light of the above it can be said that even if the *Upāyakauśalya* (Skill in Means) *Sūtra* could be shown to accurately depict the words of Shakyamuni Buddha, it offers no more than a point of departure for a serious discussion of the Buddhist position on modern warfare. At the same time it must be admitted that there may be a canonical reference suggesting Shakyamuni Buddha approved the use of armed force in defense of a nation, just as there are other canonical references in which he asserted that soldiers would go to hell for their deeds.[39]

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[39] One example of Shakyamuni Buddha's seeming approval of maintaining and using a military force may be found in a conversation between a general named Simha, aka Sīha in the Pali original, and Shakyamuni Buddha:

Simha said: "I am a soldier, O Blessed One, and am appointed by the king to enforce his laws and to wage his wars. Does the Tathagata who teaches kindness without end and compassion with all sufferers, permit the punishment of the criminal? and further, does the Tathagata declare that it is wrong to go to war for the protection of our homes, our wives, our children, and our property? Does the Tathagata teach the doctrine of a complete self-surrender, so that I should suffer the evil-doer to do what he pleases and yield submissively to him who threatens to take by violence what is my own? Does the Tathagata maintain that all strife, including such warfare as is waged for a righteous cause should be forbidden?"

The Buddha replied: "He who deserves punishment must be punished, and he who is worthy of favor must be favored. Yet at the same time he teaches to do no injury to any living being but to be full of love and kindness. These injunctions are not contradictory, for whosoever must be punished for the crimes which he has committed, suffers his injury not through the ill-will of the judge but on account of his evildoing. His own acts have brought upon him the injury that the executer of the law inflicts. When a magistrate punishes, let him not harbor hatred in his breast, yet a murderer, when put to death, should consider that this is the fruit of his own act. As soon as he will understand that the punishment will purify his soul, he will no longer lament his fate but rejoice at it."

The Blessed One continued: "The Tathagata teaches that all warfare in which man tries to slay his brother is lamentable, but he does not teach that those who go to war in a righteous cause after having exhausted all means to preserve the peace are blameworthy. He must be blamed who is the cause of war. The Tathagata teaches a complete surrender of self, but he does not teach a surrender of anything to those powers that are evil, be they men or gods or the elements of nature. Struggle must be, for all life is a struggle of some kind. But he that struggles should look to it lest he struggle in the interest of self against truth and righteousness.

"He who struggles in the interest of self, so that he himself may be great or powerful or rich or famous, will have no reward, but he who struggles for righteousness and truth, will have great reward, for even his defeat will be a victory. Self is not a fit vessel to receive

U.S. Air Force

While the U.S. Air Force currently has no Buddhist chaplains, October 2007 saw the dedication of the "Vast Refuge Dharma Hall Chapel" at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO. This chapel came about as a result of a request made in 2004 by a graduate of the Academy's first Class of 1959, Wiley Burch. Burch, now a Buddhist priest affiliated with the Hollow Bones Rinzai Zen sect, requested that a multipurpose room in the lower level of the Cadet Chapel be transformed into a Buddhist chapel. At the Chapel's dedication, Burch said:

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any great success; self is small and brittle and its contents will soon be spilt for the benefit, and perhaps also for the curse, of others. Truth, however, is large enough to receive the yearnings and aspirations of all selves and when the selves break like soap-bubbles, their contents will be preserved and in the truth they will lead a life everlasting.

"He who goeth to battle, O Simha, even though it be in a righteous cause, must be prepared to be slain by his enemies, for that is the destiny of warriors; and should his fate overtake him he has no reason for complaint. But he who is victorious should remember the instability of earthly things. His success may be great, but be it ever so great the wheel of fortune may turn again and bring him down into the dust. However, if he moderates himself and, extinguishing all hatred in his heart lifts his down-trodden adversary up and says to him, Come now and make peace and let us be brothers, he will gain a victory that is not a transient success, for its fruits will remain forever. Great is a successful general, O Simha, but he who has conquered self is the greater victor."

Note that in an e-mail to the author, Richard Gombrich has described this sutra as "a blatant forgery" while Peter Harvey has also raised serious doubts about the accuracy of the war- endorsing sections of this quotation, which first appears in the above form in the 1894 compilation of Buddhist teachings contained in Paul Carus' book, *The Gospel of Buddha,* available on the Web at: http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/btg/. For an overview of this debate see: http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-buddhism&month=0801&week=e&msg=vm8OZXGZj%2BWm%2BjeEf8EKOg&user=&pw=

At the opposite end of the spectrum, Shakyamuni Buddha's opposition to war is contained in the *Samyutta Nikaya* (The Connected Discourse of the Buddha) 42.3, entitled *Yodhajiva Sutta* "The Warrior":

When a warrior strives and exerts himself in battle, his mind is already seized, debased, & misdirected by the thought: "May these beings be struck down or slaughtered or annihilated or destroyed. May they not exist." If others then strike him down and slay him while he is thus striving and exerting himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the hell called the realm of those slain in battle. But if he holds such a view as this: "When a warrior strives and exerts himself in battle, if others then strike him down and slay him while he is striving and exerting himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of devas slain in battle," that is his wrong view. Now, there are two destinations for a person with wrong view, I tell you: either hell or the animal womb.

Thus, according to this *sutta/sūtra* a warrior (or soldier) inevitably goes to hell – or is reborn as an animal of some kind – as his karmic punishment for having killed. How many Buddhist chaplains would dare discuss this with Buddhist soldiers?

I understood there was a possibility or a place for Buddhism in the military. I understand the culture very well, and I understand the diversity of it. From that place, rather than being hard and coming in against, I came in willing to accept all. That's a Buddhist teaching, not to set yourself up against things so much as to just be, we say, like clouds and like water, just flow. . . . Without compassion, war is nothing but criminal activity. It is necessary sometimes to take life, but we never take it for granted.[40]

The Academy's Buddhist program leader, Sarah Bender Sensei of the Springs Mountain Sangha, asked herself how Zen Buddhism fits with the military path:

People in the military come up — for real— against questions that most of us just consider abstractly. The questions of Buddhism are the questions of life and death. So where else would you want Buddhism than right there where those questions are most vivid?[41]

If the Air Force Academy is somewhat removed from a place where the questions of life and death are at their "most vivid" the same cannot be said for then Lt. (now Captain) Thomas Dyer, the first Buddhist chaplain in the U.S. Army. Serving with the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Lt. Dyer provided meditation instruction to soldiers actually located on the battlefield, i.e., to soldiers stationed at Camp Taji in Iraq.[42]

Dyer subsequently explained the relationship of Zen to Buddhism as follows:

Primarily Buddhism is a methodology of transforming the mind. The mind has flux in it or movement, past and future fantasy, which causes us not to interact deeply with life. So Buddhism has a methodology, a teaching and a practice of meditation to help one concentrate in the present moment to experience reality as it is. . . . Zen practice is to be awake in the present moment both in sitting and then walking throughout the day. So the idea

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[40] Ibid., posted on Thursday, 1 November 2007 (accessed on 11 December 2013).

[41] Ibid., posted on Tuesday, 13 October 2009 (accessed on 11 December 2013).

[42] A 2010 YouTube video of Lt. Thomas Dyer providing meditation instruction to US soldiers stationed at Camp Taji, Iraq is available here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GbFGBDFiNo.

is that enlightenment will come from just being purely aware of
the present moment in the present moment.[43]

Significantly, in Dyer's case the basic Buddhist precept to abstain from killing is conspicuously absent. On the other hand, being "purely aware of the present moment" is a very desirable state of mind on the battlefield, especially when freed from questions of individual moral choice or responsibility.

The "Spiritual Cost" to Buddhism

With some 5,287 Buddhists serving in the US military as of June 2009, few observers would argue against the need to address the spiritual needs of Buddhist soldiers.[44] It can also be said that the emergence of Buddhist chaplains in an increasingly multiracial, multicultural U.S. military was an entirely "natural", even "inevitable", process. Further, in light of institutional Buddhism's millennia-long history of involvement in, if not support for, organized warfare in those Asian countries where it flourished, why should the U.S. be any different?

As noted above, it is certainly possible to see the acceptance of Buddhist and other chaplains of non-Judeo-Christian religions as a part of the move toward genuine religious tolerance and pluralism within the U.S. military. In the case of Buddhism, military authorities, as we have seen, initially rejected Buddhist chaplains. Yet the exemplary bravery of Japanese-American (and Buddhist) soldiers in W.W. II brought eventual acceptance. This explains why the Japanese Jōdo Shin sect-affiliated 'Buddhist Churches of America' was the first, and still remains the only, officially recognized, endorsing agency for Buddhist chaplains, regardless of their personal sectarian affiliation.

Nevertheless, the question must be asked, even if it cannot be answered here: what has been the "spiritual cost" to Buddhism, especially its ethical teachings, for its long and ongoing history of subservience to the state, most especially state-initiated warfare? What happens to the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha when the chaplains ministering to Buddhist soldiers are themselves wearing a military uniform and being paid by the military, thereby contributing to a prioritization of their own nation and its national interests?

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[43] (Now Capt.) Thomas Dyer's explanation of Zen and Buddhism is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jc-UAumSVL8.

[44] Jeff Brady. "Military Buddhist Chapel Represents Tolerance," National Public Radio, 13 October 2009.

In the case of the Buddhist military chaplaincy in the U.S., it can be argued that the price of Buddhism's acceptance has been the same as for all other faith traditions, i.e., its incorporation into the military's overriding and enduring mission – to destroy all human beings, domestic and foreign, whom U.S. political leaders determine to be the enemy of the state. As a Buddhist chaplain, Lt. Shin, explained above, she sought to "help our service members prepare for the war, not just physically, but spiritually."

In this connection it should be noted that Buddhist military chaplains, as officers, swear the same oath of allegiance to the state (i.e., its political leaders) as do combat officers:

> I, [name], do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. [So help me God]

Note: The phrase in brackets need not be said if the speaker has a personal or moral objection.

Swearing in Ceremony for an Asian Buddhist U.S. Army Chaplain

One of the great ironies in the case of Japanese American Buddhists is that Lt. Shin, the first American Buddhist chaplain, employed either identical or very similar rationales to endorse American military actions as her Japanese predecessors did to endorse Japanese military aggression during WW II.

According to Shin, Shakyamuni Buddha is the prototypical "first warrior" because of his birth in the *kshatriya* caste. In a January 2008 Dharma talk entitled: "Shakyamuni – The First Warrior," Shin noted:

> Siddhartha Gautama (his birth name) was born into the *kshatriya varna,* or caste, of ancient India/Nepal. This was the caste of the warriors, the rulers and aristocrats of ancient India. . . .The Buddha's Enlightenment was described as a 'battle' between himself and Mara, the embodiment of death and evil. . . .[The Buddha said:] 'Mara, riding atop a huge elephant, you came leading a whole army. Come, do battle! I shall emerge victorious. You will not throw me into disorder. Although the human and celestial worlds were both unable to destroy your army, I shall defeat your army as a rock destroys tree leaves.'

> The ancient texts emphasize the need for determination, sacrifice, and courage for Buddhists to follow the path of Buddha-dharma, to bear up under hardships in order to achieve the highest goal a human being can attain: to conquer death, fear, ignorance, evil, and thereby attain liberation. *The qualities of a good warrior are exactly the qualities needed for a serious Buddhist practitioner.*[45] (Emphasis mine)

Shin's comments are similar to those of Rinzai Zen Master Shaku Sōen who, it will be recalled, served as a battlefield chaplain at the time of the Russo-Japanese War. In September 1905 Shaku published his *Diary of Subjugating Demons* (J. *Gōma Nisshi*), providing a personal account of his service with the Japanese First Army Division in Manchuria. Micah Auerback describes the contents of Shaku's diary as follows: "In our world, Sōen dilated, the demon king Mara is personified by none other than Imperial Russia, seeking to swallow

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[45] The entire article, "Shakyamuni – The First Warrior," is posted on the Website of the "Buddhist Military Sangha" available here: http://buddhistmilitarysangha.blogspot.jp/search?q=Mara (accessed 24 November 2014).

up the entire globe and to plunge it into darkness. Thus, he contended, 'we must call [this conflict, that is, the Russo-Japanese War] not just a great just war in this world but rather a full-fledged great battle to subjugate demons throughout the [entire] cosmos.'"[46]

It would only be a few months after its victory in this "great just war" that Japan took the first steps in the colonization of Korea.

A further irony is that Shakyamuni Buddha was depicted in a similar manner in the Nazi SS. With Hitler's permission, Heinrich Himmler modeled the SS on the Japanese samurai class from November 1935 onwards.[47] Within the SS, Walther Wüst, an Indologist at Munich University and a high-ranking SS officer, portrayed Hitler as the Buddha of the present age because both the Buddha and Hitler were "warriors" who had first conquered evil (Mara in the Buddha's case) and then totally and selflessly dedicated themselves to their "Volk". Additionally, both men were "Aryans". This latter point was important for the Nazis because, as Horst Junginger notes: "Since Buddha and Adolf Hitler belonged to the same hereditary community, they reacted the same way to the problems of their time. Moreover, their common genetic constitution endowed them with the capacity to guide their people from subjugation to freedom."[48]

The final irony is one that appears to have escaped the notice of the Shin-affiliated Buddhist Churches of America. In the aftermath of W.W. II, a number of Japanese institutional Buddhist leaders, including those of the two main branches of the Jōdo Shin sect, publicly repented their unconditional support of Japanese aggression as well as the manner in which they had twisted Buddhist doctrines in the process. On April 2, 1987, for example, Higashi Honganji issued the following statement:

> As we recall the war years, it was our sect that called the war a "sacred war". It was we who said "the heroic spirits [of the war dead] who have been enshrined in [Shinto's] Yasukuni Shrine have served in the great undertaking of guarding and maintaining the prosperity of the imperial throne. They should therefore be revered for having done the great work of a bodhisattva." This was an expression of deep shamelessness and ignorance on our part. When recalling this now, we are attacked by a sense of shame from which there is no escape. . . .

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[46] Quoted in Auerback, "A Closer Look at Zen at War," p. 158.

[47] Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler: A Life,* p. 281.

[48] Junginger, "From Buddha to Adolf Hitler: Walther Wüst and the Aryan Tradition," p. 125.

> Calling that war a sacred war was a double lie. Those who participate in war are both victims and victimizers. In light of the great sin we have committed, we must not pass it by as being nothing more than a mistake. The sect declared that we should revere things that were never taught by the Saint [Shinran]. When we who are priests think about this sin, we can only hang our heads in silence before all who are gathered here.[49]

The second main branch of this sect, i.e., Nishi Honganji, issued the following statement on February 27, 1991:

> Although there was pressure exerted on us by the military-controlled state, we must be deeply penitent before the Buddhas and patriarchs, for we ended up cooperating with the war and losing sight of the true nature of this sect. This can also be seen in the doctrinal sphere, where the [sect's] teaching of the existence of relative truth and absolute truth was put to cunning use.[50]

Conclusion

In light of the above, it is clear that the problematic aspects of a Buddhist military chaplaincy extend far beyond such individuals as Lt. Shin and the other Buddhist chaplains introduced in this article. A good argument can be made that the core of the problem lies in the military chaplaincy system itself, whether in wartime Japan or today's United States. As previously noted, all chaplains, regardless of faith, are required to unconditionally support the "mission" of their respective country's military, i.e., to defeat all enemies, domestic and foreign.

In the case of the US, one need only imagine what would happen to Lt. Shin, or any other Buddhist chaplain, who dared in a "Dharma talk" directed at soldiers to openly question, let alone criticize, the invasion of Iraq, a country that possessed neither "weapons of mass destruction" nor sponsored terrorism. Had she or any other chaplain even raised this issue, how long would military

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[49] Quoted in Victoria, *Zen at War,* pp. 152-153.

[50] Ibid., p. 153.

authorities have allowed them to minister to the "spiritual needs" of the troops under their care? Needless to say, this question can, and should, be asked of military chaplains of all faiths.

Thus, the question must be raised, even though we cannot address it here: is the current generation of American Buddhist chaplains, through their service to the state and its military, making the same errors as their Japanese and other Asian predecessors? Are the "emperor's new clothes" alluded to in the title of this article really no more than the "secondhand" garments of their Japanese (and other Asian) Buddhist predecessors?

Or can the argument be made that, unlike Japan's wartime aggression, the US fights only "just" or "defensive" wars on a worldwide scale, so that it is perfectly acceptable for American Buddhist chaplains to use the same interpretations of Buddhism as their now repentant Japanese predecessors. Further, need we ask what American Buddhist chaplains should have done if they came to the conviction that the second US invasion of Iraq in 2003 was based on falsehoods (as it was). Should they have shared their suspicions or convictions with the soldiers who looked to them for moral guidance? If morally challenged, should they have resigned their commissions or simply accepted the old dictum "my country right or wrong", thereby ignoring the commitment of their faith to truthfulness.

Further, lurking in the background, is the question many soldiers and non-soldiers alike have asked themselves: What would the founder of my faith, Shakyamuni Buddha in this case, have done or at least expect me to do? This is a particularly vexing question for Buddhists, since Shakyamuni Buddha is recorded as having personally gone to the battlefield to prevent war on at least one occasion. In this instance he is said to have successfully reasoned with the belligerents on both sides over the division of river water in a time of drought, thereby preventing a war between them.

Of course, no one can be certain that this story concerning Shakyamuni's personal intervention on the battlefield is historically accurate. Nevertheless, its inclusion in the Buddhist corpus indicates, at the very least, the existence of longstanding Buddhist antipathy to warfare, apparently beginning with its founder. On the other hand, as we have seen, down through the centuries Buddhists have a long record of collaborating with wars initiated by the political leaders of their day. Thus, as with many other faiths, it can be argued that Buddhism is no exception to the clash between "theory" (or doctrine) and historical "practice," at least on the part of later Buddhists.

The almost unchallenged presence of Buddhist chaplains in the U.S. military suggests that this clash is far from being resolved. For those who believe that Buddhist soldiers, like others, deserve access to the teachings and nurture of the Buddha Dharma, one possible solution would be to continue to have Buddhist military chaplains, but chaplains who are not part of the military and subject to its chain of command and dictates. Such chaplains would then be truly independent and free to teach the Dharma according to their understanding. This would, however, require other Buddhist groups to pay for their expenses.

As for the larger question of Buddhism's relationship to war and violence, this is ultimately something each and every Buddhist must decide for her- or himself. In particular, this article raises the question of the importance of "intentionality" in Buddhism. Specifically, does the lack of "intent" to kill the enemy, coupled with a lack of hatred, supersede or render mute the first precept every Buddhist, lay and cleric alike, pledges to observe, i.e., not to kill? I leave this question for the reader to ponder.

Appendix I: "Buddhist View of War" by Shaku Sōen

This triple world* is my own possession. All the things therein are my own children. Sentient or non-sentient, animate or inanimate, organic or inorganic, the ten thousand things in this world are no more than the reflections of my own self. They come from the one source. They partake of the one body. Therefore I cannot rest quiet, until every being, even the smallest possible fragment of existence, is settled down in its proper appointment. I do not mind what long eons it will take to finish this gigantic work of salvation. I work at the end of eternity when all beings are peacefully and happily nestled in an infinite loving heart.

This is the position taken by the Buddha, and we, his humble followers, are but to walk in his wake.

Why, then, do we fight at all?

Because we do not find this world as it ought to be. Because there are here so many perverted creatures, so many wayward thoughts, so many ill-directed hearts, due to ignorant subjectivity. For this reason Buddhists are never tired of

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*The "triple world" (*triloka*) is a common Buddhist term for "the universe." The three worlds are "the world of desire"— (*kāmaloka*), "the world of bodily form" (*rūpaloka*), and "the immaterial world" (*arūpaloka*).

combating all productions of ignorance, and their fight must be to the bitter end. They will show no quarter. They will mercilessly destroy the very root from which arises the misery of this life. To accomplish this end, they will never be afraid of sacrificing their lives, nor will they tremble before an eternal cycle of transmigration. Corporeal existences come and go, material appearances wear out and are renewed. Again and again they take up the battle at the point where it was left off.

But all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas never show any ill-will or hatred toward enemies. Enemies – the enemies of all that is good – are indeed wicked, avaricious, shameless, hell-born, and, above all, ignorant. But are they not, too, my own children for all their sins? They are to be pitied and enlightened, not persecuted. Therefore, what is shed by Buddhists is not blood – which, unfortunately, has stained so many pages in the history of religion – but tears issuing directly from the fountain-head of loving kindness.

The most powerful weapon ever used by Buddha in the subjugation of his wayward children is the practice of non-*atman* (non-egotism). He wielded it more effectively than any deadly, life-destroying weapons. When he was under the Bodhi-tree absorbed in meditation on the non-*atman*ness of things, fiends numbering thousands tried in every way to shake him from his transcendental serenity; but all to no purpose. On the contrary, the arrows turned to heavenly flowers, the roaring clamor to a paradisiacal music, and even the army of demons to a host of celestials. And do you wonder at it? Not at all! For what on earth can withstand an absolutely self-freed heart overflowing with loving kindness and infinite bliss?

And this example should be made the ideal of every faithful Buddhist. Whatever calling he may have chosen in this life, let him be freed from egocentric thoughts and feelings. Even when going to war for his country's sake, let him not bear any hatred towards his enemies. In all his dealings with them let him practise the truth of non-*atman*. He may have to deprive his antagonist of the corporeal presence, but let him not think there are *atmans*, conquering each other. From a Buddhist point of view, the significance of life is not limited to the present incarnation. We must not exaggerate the significance of individuals, for they are not independent and unconditional existences. They acquire their importance and a paramount meaning, moral and religious, as soon as their fate becomes connected with the all-pervading love of the Buddha, because then they are no more particular individuals filled with egotistic thoughts and impulses, but have become love incarnate. They

are so many representative types of one universal self-freed love. If they ever have to combat one another for the sake of their home and country – which under circumstances may become unavoidable in this world of particularity – let them forget their egotistic passions, which are the product of the atman conception of selfishness. Let them, on the contrary, be filled with the loving kindness of the Buddha; let them elevate themselves above the horizon of the mine and thine. The hand that is raised to strike and the eye that is fixed to take aim, do not belong to the individual, but are the instruments utilized by a principle higher than transient existence. Therefore, when fighting, fight with might and main, fight with your whole heart, forget your own self in the fight, and be free from all *atman* thought.

It is most characteristic of our religion, as we understand it, that while Buddha emphasized the paramount significance of synthetic love, he never lost sight of the indispensableness of analytical intellect. He extended his sympathy to all creatures as his own children and made no discrimination in his boundless compassion. But at the same time he was not ignorant of the fact that there were good as well as bad people, that there were innocent hearts as well as guilty ones. Not that some were more favored by the Buddha than others, but they were enabled to acquire more of the love of the Buddha. One rain falls on all kinds of plants; but they do not assimilate the water in the same fashion. Buddha's love is universal, but our hearts, being fashioned of divergent karmas, receive it in different ways. He knows where they are finally led to, for his love is un-intermittently working out their salvation, though they themselves be utterly unconscious of it.

Above all things, there is the truth, and there are many roads leading to it. It may seem at times that they collide and oppose one another. But let us rest confident that finally every ill will come to some good.

Appendix II (Complete Text): "A Buddhist View of War" by D.T. Suzuki

Every religion strives to bring about universal peace on earth; every prophet points out a way to paradise; every philosopher promises us the attainment of eternal happiness; every wise man tells us how to enjoy the bliss of life; and finally, every one of us wishes and endeavors to be delivered from all anxiety, worry, fear, grief, despair, etc. And in spite of all this, our world, our life is anything but peaceful, blessed and happy. How do we account for the paradox?

Is our idea of peace chimerical? Are we building an air-castle to bring it about? Is our civilization founded on the sand? Are all the noble aspirations of our ancestors and our enthusiasm to follow in their wake like running after a mirage in a desert? Is our very existence an empty dream which is charming only as long as it lasts? Or perhaps are some mischievous spirits hovering over our heads and luring us to a land of eternal contradiction?

Whatever our objective experiences are, the final verdict comes from within, not from without.

It is after all our will to believe our subjectivism, (sic) that decides our destiny on earth and in heaven. In spite of its contradictions, its apparent disappointments, and its visionary promises, religious faith is our final bulwark which is invincible even unto death. We know not the reason why; nay, it is idle to court the question. It is enough that it is so. Infinite happy is he, indeed, who takes refuge in this sanctum of faith.

What then is the faith entertained by a Buddhist in the midst of this constant warfare between individuals, between classes, between nations, and between all things?

To express most outspokenly, Buddhist faith is essentially optimistic.

Whatever apparent and temporary evils, they are destined in their very constitution to come to a happy terminus. The cosmological development of *Dharmakaya* [lit., Truth body] is so vast and comprehensive that all things are, at least temporarily, possible here, — even such as appear irrational, inharmonious, or immoral in their partial realization. What we poor mortals experience here is only an infinitesimal portion of the grand scheme of *Dharmakaya*.

There was once an idiot who observed the heavens through a hollow tube of reed. He sincerely believed what he discovered with his instrument, for hence his heavens could not be made vaster than the diameter of the tube. Perhaps we shall repeat this folly if we attempt to scale the infinitude of the *Dharmakaya* with our limited intellect.

Such is the fundamental faith of Buddhism. And the faith is attainable only by pureness and simpleness of heart. The superficial, dissecting, murderous intellect is forever barred out in the holy realm.

How vague, how hazy, how mystical! But this vague mysticism is the very source from which religion drinks to her heart's content. It is the most wonderful fact in this world of prosaicism that every soul is capable of experiencing it sooner or later.

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Enlightened Buddhists, however, do not hide themselves forever in the shrine of eternal subjectivism, as far as their every-day dealings are concerned. They have no spite for the realm of relativity, because their temporal existence is possible only under this condition, and also because there is nothing dual in life which is the highest synthesis of all contradictions. They eat, they drink, they propagate, they collide, they struggle, they strike, and they succumb.

War is abominable, and there is no denying it. But it is only a phase of the universal struggle that is going on and will go on, as long as one breath of vitality is left to an animate being. It is absurdity itself to have perpetual peace and at the same time to be enjoying the full vigor of life. We do not mean to be cruel, neither do we wish to be self-destructive. When our ideals clash, let there be no flinching, no backsliding, no undecidedness, but for ever and ever pressing onwards. In this kind of war there is nothing personal, egotistic, or individual. It is the holiest spiritual war.

One thing most detestable and un-Buddhistic in war is its personal element. Egotistic hatred for an enemy is what makes a war most deplorable. But every pious Buddhist knows that there is no such irreducible a thing as ego. Therefore, as he steadily moves onward and clears every obstacle in the way, he is doing what has been ordained by a power higher that himself; he is merely instrumental. In him there is no hatred, no anger, no ignorance, no prejudice. He has lost himself in fighting.

Another thing that makes good Buddhists shrink, though not irrecoverably, is the physical side of war. Brutality has never appealed to Buddhism. It is barbarism pure and simple. As a matter of fact, we cannot escape our material existence, but it is our solemn duty to make its significance as spiritual as possible, for herein lies divinity of our being. At the present stage of civilization in which we are living, great masses of people are still desperately groaning under the yoke of crass materialism and war is still liable to rage in its most diabolical form. This is an evil Buddhists cannot take for a part of the grand scheme of Dharmakaya, comprehensive as it is. It must be crushed down at any cost with all the strenuosity Buddhists may possess.

As a physical being we are nothing. Even the strongest man cannot stand the explosion of a compound of nitroglycerin an innocent-looking chemical in itself. Strange, indeed, that such a spiritual essence as ourselves (sic) should be encased in such a fragile vessel as flesh. Stranger still that this spiritual essence very frequently yield (sic) itself to the clamouring demands of the flesh. But in spite of the incongruity, the significance of our existence asserts itself in a most

unmistakable way and sometimes quite unexpectedly. History bears witness to all this. Let us then shuffle off the mortal coil whenever it becomes necessary, and not raise a grunting voice against the fates. From our mutilated, mangled, inert corpse will there be the glorious ascension of something immaterial which leads forever progressing humanity to its final goal.

Resting in this conviction, Buddhists carry the banner of Dharma over the dead and dying until they gain final victory.

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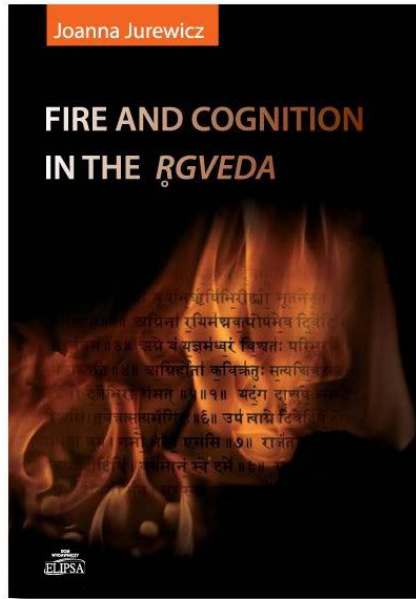_____ *Zen at War,* 2nd ed. Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

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Book Reviews

Joanna Jurewicz. *Fire and Cognition in the Ṛgveda.*[1] **Warszawa: Dom Wydawniczy ELIPSA, 2010. (485 pages, ISBN 978-83-7151-893-5)**

Reviewed by László Fórizs

"There is, monks, an unborn, unbecome, uncreated, unconditioned."[2]

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[2] *atthi bhikkhave ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhataṃ,* Ud. 8.3.

In the following paragraphs I will review a very interesting but highly technical book by a Polish scholar, Professor Joanna Jurewicz from the University of Warsaw. This monograph is a result of many years of research and can be considered as an enlargement of her habilitation work.[3]

Putting Professor Jurewicz's work in context

Professor Jurewicz is an indologist, a distinguished Vedic scholar, but she has also made important discoveries in the field of Buddhology.

One of her first discoveries was published in the *The Journal of the Pāli Text Society*: "Playing with Fire: the *pratītyasamutpāda* from the Perspective of Vedic thought."[4] In this article Professor Jurewicz related the terms and concepts of the famous *Nāsadīya-sūkta* to the chains (*nidāna*) of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*), and by the help of this connection she could "decipher the original meaning of the chain".[5]

In her own words:

"The character of the similarities between the Vedic creation and the *pratītyasamutpāda* enables us to propose a tentative reconstruction of the line of the Buddha's argument, which consisted in the redefinition of Brāhmaṇic notions and ideas."[6]

"It seems that the Buddha chose those cosmogonic descriptions which met two conditions: first, they explicitly express the cosmogony as transformations of the *ātman*; second, they preserve their cognitive meaning, even if they are taken out of the Vedic context."[7]

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[3] Jurewicz 2001.

[4] Jurewicz 2000.

[5] Gombrich 2009: IX.

[6] Jurewicz 2000: 79.

[7] Ibid.: 80. She summarizes the different roles of the *ātman* in Vedic cosmogony (viewed as a cognitive process) and the Buddha's reaction in this way: "In Vedic cosmogony, the cognitive process is undertaken by the self-cognizing Absolute. The reflexive character of this process is expressed by the word *ātman*, which denotes both the Absolute itself, the conveyor of the cosmogonic process, and the forms assumed by the Absolute in this process: the world, the human being, the inner Self, and finally the fire altar, which expresses those manifestations on the ritual level. The negation of the *ātman*'s existence postulated in the Buddha's doctrine of *anattā* leads to the conclusion that the whole Vedic cosmogony is based on a false assumption and its acceptance inevitably leads only to suffering." (Ibid.: 78.)

"At the same time, it seems that the Buddha (perhaps for polemical purposes) aimed greatly to simplify the Vedic ideas; the most important result of this is that he let go the cyclical character of the process: the *pratītyasamutpāda* is a simple, linear process."[8]

This "simple, linearized" approach is a bit misleading, but it helped to realize the deep connections between Vedic and Buddhist thought.

The importance of dependent origination in all of the Buddhist traditions can not be overestimated:[9]

"The essential aim of Dependent Origination is to illustrate the origin and cessation of suffering (*dukkha*)."[10] "The teaching of Dependent Origination reveals [the] three characteristics[11] and describes the interrelated sequence of phenomena." "All natural processes, including the dynamics of *kamma*, are possible because things are impermanent and insubstantial."[12]

It is worth noting that any really non-substantialist account of the process should be, in a sense, circular (or at least cyclical). So it is not surprising that dependent arising has already been interpreted not only linearly, but also cyclically or even circularly from very early times.[13]

Professor Jurewicz's note is quite relevant here:

"I would also like to stress that I am aware that the interpretation of the *pratītyasamutpāda* as a polemic against the Vedic cosmogony tackles only one aspect of this huge problem; as the Buddha said to Ānanda: 'This conditioned origination is profound and it appears profound'."[14]

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[8] Jurewicz 2000, 81.

[9] A clear and beautiful exposition of the traditional interpretation of dependent origination can be found in Payutto 2011: 3–17.

[10] Ibid.: 15.

[11] (i) Impermanence and instability (*aniccatā*), (ii) inherent stress, conflict and imperfection (*dukkhatā*) and (iii) essential 'selflessness' or insubstantiality (*anattatā*). (Ibid.: 17.)

[12] Ibid.: 18.

[13] The analysis of the difference between circular and cyclical interpretations exceeds the limitations of this review and will be discussed in a different paper. For an account of the different interpretations of *pratītyasamutpāda* see Payutto 2011.

[14] *gambhīro cāyam ānanda paṭiccasamuppādo gambhīrāvabhāso ca*, D II 55, Gombrich's translation. Quoted by Jurewicz 2000: 77–78.

Professor Gombrich's assessment

Professor Gombrich assessed the worth of her research with the following enthusiastic words:

> "Given the centrality to Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination, I think this [discovery of Professor Jurewicz] may rank as one of the most important discoveries ever made in Buddhology'."[15]

About the reviewer

I have also been interested in the *Nāsadīya* since I first met it at the Benedictine Monastery of Pannonhalma in 1976. I wrote a poetic commentary to the hymn in 1989 which was published as the last chapter of my book on the cosmogonic hymns of the Ṛgveda.[16] It consists of fourteen poems using each half stanza (*pāda*) of the *triṣṭubh* verse as guidance. My commentary is a non-linear and non-substantialist interpretation of the *Nāsadīya* according to which creation is a participatory process.[17]

Research methodology used in her scientific articles and in the book

In her research Professor Jurewicz not only uses extensively the available concepts and methods of cognitive linguistics, but also introduces new ones whenever it becomes necessary. For a proper understanding of her thoughts one has to be familiar with the conceptual apparatus of cognitive linguistics and the way she uses it. For this purpose reading and analysing her book, then meditating upon its content is the best choice.

Meaning in cognitive linguistics

In cognitive linguistics meanings are seen as emerging dynamically in discourse and social interaction:

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[15] Gombrich 2005: 154.

[16] Fórizs 1995.

[17] Ibid.: 74–97 & 153–170. See also Fórizs 2002: 113 (endnote iii); 2005; 2013c; 2016a: 117–119, especially notes 3–6 to the translation and interpretation of the *Gāyatrī-mantra* (RV 3.62.10) in BU 6.3.7 and [2003/]2016b.

"Rather than being fixed and predetermined, they are actively negotiated by interlocutors on the basis of the physical, linguistic, social, and cultural context. Meaning is not localized but distributed, aspects of it inhering in the speech community, in the pragmatic circumstances of the speech event, and in the surrounding world. In particular, it is not inside a single speaker's head. The static, insular view ascribed to cognitive semantics is deemed incapable of handling the dynamic, intersubjective, context-dependent nature of meaning construction in actual discourse."[18]

In looking for meaning in the Ṛgveda Professor Jurewicz follows this guidance throughout her book.

Content of the book

The book consists of a long and important Introduction, three Parts and five Appendices.

In the first chapter of the Introduction the author outlines the basic concepts and assumptions of cognitive linguistics and explains how to use them in the analysis of the Ṛgveda.[19]

The second chapter gives a new and insightful interpretation of the famous *Nāsadīyasūkta* by applying the methods of cognitive linguistics.[20]

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[18] Langacker 2008: 28.

[19] Her main focus remains on Ṛgvedic metaphysics throughout the book: "In my investigation of the RV I will apply the main concepts of cognitive linguistics and analyze the text according to the assumptions of this discipline. ...However, I should mention that conceptual metonymies, metaphors and blends are discussed in this book only to the extent necessary for the reconstruction of metaphysical assumptions; their full reconstruction still awaits a detailed exploration. I am mostly interested in how general and abstract thought emerges from its experiential ground and how we can reconstruct the fiery core of Ṛgvedic metaphysics." (Jurewicz 2010: 43.)

[20] To see the relevance of Jurewicz's research on the *Nāsadīya* to our understanding of early Buddhist thought it is enough to quote Gombrich: "In arriving at my own ideas, I owe enormous intellectual debts, above all to Joanna Jurewicz and to Sue Hamilton. ...Her demonstration that the Buddha is always talking about experience chimes beautifully with Joanna Jurewicz's early work on the Ṛg Vedic 'Hymn of Creation', in which she shows how from the recorded beginnings of Indian thought, existence and consciousness are intertwined. Though the Buddha disentangled them, this philosophy of experience, as one might call it, influenced him profoundly. Joanna Jurewicz's other discoveries are no less momentous. Not only has she deciphered the original

The remaining chapters of the book are divided into three parts: Part I. The defining events. Part II. Philosophical models. Part III. Gods' activities and metaphysics. Professor Jurewicz gives the following summary of these parts:

> "In the first part, I discuss the defining events and I demonstrate how the unified concepts of fundamental processes are created and how they can be evoked in the description of the *Nāsadīya*. I also present the basic assumptions of the Ṛgvedic cosmology according to which the processes of the world are seen as transformations of Agni.
>
> The second part of my book is devoted to the analysis of the philosophical models: I examine their conceptual structure and links with the *Nāsadīya*. I also reconstruct Ṛgvedic metaphysics and anthropology, which were organised around the concept of Agni.
>
> In the third and final part I focus on the concepts of four Ṛgvedic gods (Indra, Bṛhaspati, Viṣṇu and Varuṇa). I discuss their relationships with the defining events on the one hand and with the *Nāsadīya* on the other, how activities of the gods are elaborated within the frames of philosophical models and the tendency of the poets to identify these gods with Agni."[21]

The last chapter of the book summarizes the main results concerning the Ṛgvedic gods, Agni and the *Nāsadīya:*

> "The only Ṛgvedic concept of a god which became metaphysically productive was the concept of Agni conceived as internally contradictory reality."[22]

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meaning of the chain of dependent origination. Her discovery of belief in rebirth in the Ṛg Veda also makes the entire early history of Indian religion far more plausible and coherent. I wonder whether any other single scholar in the last hundred years has made so important a contribution to the field." (Gombrich 2009: IX–X.; see also Jurewicz 2000.)

[21] Jurewicz 2010: 25.

[22] Ibid: 438.

"Seen in this way the cosmogony of the *Nāsadīya* is a story about the liberation of the Absolute and of human beings which is gained in cognition. This is the kernel of the RV put in general terms. However, it is enough to replace the concept of the Absolute with that of Agni to unfold the way to the metaphysics of fire."[23]

At the end of the book there are four very useful appendices for the interested reader to pursue:

I. Main conceptual metaphors in the RV analysed in the book[24]

II. Main conceptual metonymies in the RV analysed in the book

III. The Ṛgvedic general domains and the general model of reality transformation

IV. Diagrams of (eight) philosophical models[25]

The conceptual apparatus introduced by Professor Jurewicz

According to cognitive linguistics the main mental operations are *metonymy* and *metaphor*. They are based on the projection of one conceptual entity onto another conceptual entity (mapping).

"As a cognitive phenomenon, the word meaning is motivated by mental operations such as metonymy and metaphor. *Metonymy* is a mental strategy, which gives access to a whole conceptual domain via its salient point (e.g. "head" is a salient point of "person"). *Metaphor* is a mental strategy which allows humans to think about a conceptual domain in terms of another domain (e.g. we conceive time in terms of money). Whenever I use the words 'metonymy' and 'metaphor', I understand them like this."[26]

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[23] Cf. ibid: 440.

[24] The main metaphors concerning the Absolute analysed by Jurewicz: The Absolute Is A Human Being, The Absolute Is The Other, The Absolute Is A Warrior, The World Is A Living Being, A Group Of Living Beings Is An Organism.

[25] There is also a fifth appendix: Stanzas discussed in the book.

[26] Jurewicz 2012: 3.

In her reconstruction Professor Jurewicz not only makes extensive use of the available conceptual apparatus of cognitive linguistics,[27] but she also introduces new concepts and models suitable for her investigation:

Defining events

"In their hymns, the Ṛgvedic poets referred to some basic cosmic and ritual processes in such a way that they focussed more on their similar features than on differences between them. Thanks to that they could ...create a conceptual apparatus in terms of which they could express philosophical content. I call these basic cosmic and ritual processes *the defining events*." [28]

The defining events are divided into three groups by Professor Jurewicz:

(i) the expansion

(ii) the appearance of the morning light

(iii) the pressing of Soma.

General domains

"The Ṛgvedic poets organised their thought with more general concepts which I will call '*the general domains*' and which betray a tendency to abstract concrete experience in order to express various phenomena and processes."[29]

The general domains can refer to

(i) natural phenomena (Water and A Rocky Hill),

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[27] "In reconstructing the meaning of the Ṛgvedic words I accept the principles of cognitive linguistics, according to which language is grounded in human cognition and words reflect what people think about entities, relations or states named by them." Jurewicz 2012: 2.

[28] Jurewicz 2010, 24. In other words: "Defining events are the domains which refer to the most important experiences of the Ṛgvedic poets and which most strongly influenced their thinking. ... I call them defining events because of their formative influence on Ṛgvedic thinking and because they play the role of basic axioms or definitions within their conceptual system." (Ibid.: 36.)

[29] Ibid.: 24.

(ii) objects (A Vessel Filled with Liquid)

(iii) activities (Procreation, Creation of Space, Finding the Hidden, Freeing Cows and Cleansing by Heat).

Philosophical models and the general model of reality transformation

We can speak about such general models of reality within which the poets of the Ṛgveda arranged their philosophical ideas. Professor Jurewicz distinguishes two types of them:

> "The first kind are models which encompass as wide a range of processes as possible; such models highlight the links between them but the recipient is expected to imagine the processes in concrete detail. These models are called *'philosophical models*'. The second kind of model is the '*general model of reality transformation'* which reduces all processes into one simple schema of transformations of opposing aspects of Agni."[30]

The *philosophical model* is nothing else than a complex conceptual integration (*blend*[31]). It is a model of reality which integrates "its various processes and phenomena so that the recipient can see correspondences between them."[32]

> "The Ṛgvedic blends prompt their recipient to create complex, holistic notions of various aspects of reality or of reality as a whole. Some input spaces are abstract and general, others are closely connected with concrete phenomena and processes. Thanks to

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[30] Ibid: 24.

[31] Blending or conceptual integration is a kind of generalization of metaphors introduced by Fauconnier and Turner some twenty years ago. Jurewicz gives the following brief account of their concepts in the Introduction: "They constructed a basic theoretical model consisting of four conceptual wholes called 'mental spaces' which are integrated during cognitive processing. Two of these spaces are called input spaces. They partially map their content onto a third space, called emergent space. The fourth space is generic space. ...Conceptual integration involves compression of vital conceptual relations which are neurobiologically rooted, such as Cause-Effect, Analogy/ Disanalogy, Time, Space, Change, Identity, Part-Whole and Representation. (Jurewicz 2010: 30, see also Fauconnier – Turner 2002.)

[32] The main aim of a philosophical model is "to express the cosmogony and functioning of the world and of human beings". (Jurewicz 2010: 40.)

this it becomes possible to create emergent spaces which unfold an overall and, at the same time, a very detailed vision of all reality. The Ṛgvedic conceptual blends attest to the ability to unite abstract and general thinking with rich imagery, deeply grounded in experience. The poets skilfully balanced these two ways of thinking and invited their recipients to do the same."[33]

The following philosophical models are discussed by Professor Jurewicz:

(i) the model of Child of the Waters

(ii) the model of the Boiled in the Raw

(iii) the model of the Wave of Honey

(iv) the model of Streams of Clarified Butter

(v) the model of the Aṅgirases Freeing Cows

(vi) the model of Indra's Fight with Vṛtra

(vii) the model of Footprints of Viṣṇu

(viii) the model of the Copper Pillar.

The general model of reality transformation is the most abstract and general category which can be reconstructed on the basis of the Ṛgvedic text.

"It shows how reality is created and how the function of the world and human beings can be transformed into a simple schema of alternate transformations of Agni and Soma. In this model, the concepts of Agni and Soma are almost devoid of their concrete semantic layers of fire and plant/juice and of their godhead and rather refer to the opposing aspects of internally contradictory reality. This manifests itself in creation, in processes of the world (sunrise and raining) and in the activity of human beings (ritual and cognition)."[34]

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[33] "The model operates only conceptually and is never expressed in words explicitly but is implied by the way various processes and phenomena are presented in the RV, both by the defining events and philosophical models." (Ibid.: 40.)

[34] Ibid.: 39.

The aim of the book

What Professor Jurewicz strives to demonstrate in her book is that "the successive stages of creation are expressed in the *Nāsadīya* in such a way that they evoke concepts which not only facilitate understanding of the creative process but evoke earlier thinking about creation."[35]

> "It will be shown that the scenario of the creative process expressed by the *Nāsadīya* agrees with the scenario of the defining events and of cosmogony described in the philosophical models. In my opinion this basic similarity shows that thinking about cosmogony was motivated by thinking about the defining events and – generally – by this earlier thought. The analysis presented in the next chapters will also reveal those semantic layers of the *Nāsadīya* that are impossible to discover without knowledge of its Ṛgvedic background. I will also show that the myths describing activity of various gods describe processes the scenario of which agrees with the scenario of creation presented at the *Nāsadīya* — at least in its basic outline."[36]

Appreciation of Professor Jurewicz's work

It is an impossible task to do justice in just a few pages to such a momentous enterprise as Professor Jurewicz's book. It is full of brave and original thoughts revealed by the help of the conceptual apparatus and extended methods of cognitive linguistics. This monograph opens up new perspectives in the study of the Ṛgveda and is in a sense complementary to the historical reconstruction of Michael Witzel.[37]

In the following paragraphs I will restrict myself to a few critical remarks which are primarily related to the *Nāsadīya*.

Translation of the *Nāsadīya*[38]

Because of its importance I will quote the complete hymn in the translation of Professor Jurewicz together with her summary of her interpretation.

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[35] Ibid.: 59. In her opinion this was an intentional act of the composer of the hymn.

[36] Ibid.: 59.

[37] Witzel 1995abc.

[38] For the text, see Appendix.

"1. There was neither being/truth nor non-being/untruth then. There was neither space nor the heaven which is above. What was concealing/What was moving? Where? In whose protection? Was there the water unfathomable, deep?

2. There was neither death nor immortality there. There was no sign of day and of night. That One was breathing breathlessly with its own will. There was nothing else beyond it.

3. Darkness was hidden by darkness in the beginning. Everything was flood without any sign. What was about to be/what was empty was surrounded by the void. That was born thanks to the power of heat — One.

4. Desire firstly came upon that which was the first semen of thought/mind. The poets, having searched in the heart with reflection, found the kinship of being/truth in non-being/untruth.

5. Their ray/reins streamed sideways. Was there anything below? Was there anything above? There were givers of semen, there were powers — will below, endeavour above.

6–7. Who truly knows? Who could proclaim here whence it is born? Whence is this creation? The gods later, with the creation of this. So who knows whence this has come into being? Whence has this creation come to being? It has either placed itself or it has not. Who its eye-witness in the highest heaven, he either knows or does not know."[39]

Interpretation of the *Nāsadīya*

According to Professor Jurewicz the process of creation presented in the *Nāsadīya* can be divided into the following stages (with the corresponding formulaic expressions in brackets):

"0. The precreative inexpressible state ('There was neither being/truth nor non-being/untruth then')

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[39] Jurewicz 2010: 48–55.

1. The first act is the passage from the precreative inexpressible state to the state which can be expressed ('That One was breathing breathlessly with its own will')

2. The Absolute's inchoate division into aspects unmanifested and manifested ('darkness was hidden by darkness in the beginning')

3. The appearance of the first expressible form of the manifested aspect ('everything was flood without any sign')

4. The final constitution of the manifested aspect ('That which was about to be/that which was empty was surrounded by the void. That was born thanks to the power of heat —One.')[40]

5. The appearance of desire for the manifested aspect ('desire firstly came upon that which was the first semen of thought/mind')

6. The creative activity of the poets ('The poets, having searched in the heart with their thinking, found the kinship of being/truth in non-being/untruth. Their ray/reins streamed sideways')

7. Realisation of the creative activity by concrete human beings (stanzas 6–7)."[41]

Comment on the *Nāsadīya*

First of all I agree with almost all of the translation. The proper understanding of its formulaic language is indeed one of the keys to the hymn.

My comment is on stanza 5a, *tiraścī́no vítato raśmír eṣām adháḥ svid āsī́3d upári svid āsī̄3t*. In her translation:

"Their ray/reins streamed sideways.
Was there anything below? Was there anything above?"[42]

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[40] "Thus That One finally organises and determines itself. The opposition of both spheres, the hiding and the hidden one, becomes unequivocal. The dark void – That One which is not to be – is called non-being/untruth (*ásat*). The heated object of cognition – That One which has come to being – is called being/truth (*sát*)." (Ibid.: 52.)

[41] Ibid.: 58.

[42] Ibid.: 53.

"raśmí is usually interpreted as 'cord'; some scholars identify it with *bándhu* from the previous stanza. *raśmí*, however, means first of all 'the ray of the sun' and 'reins' of a chariot'. Both meanings evoke the concept of the sun: in the case of 'ray' the metonymy Ray for the Sun (Part for Whole) operates, in case of 'reins' the metaphoric mappings the Sun is a Horse, the Sun is a Chariot can be activated."[43]

I am not convinced that 'cord' is not an acceptable meaning for *raśmí* here.

Geldner translates 'measuring cord' (Richtschnur):[44]

> "Quer hindurch ward ihre Richtschnur gespannt,
> Gab es denn ein Unten, gab es denn ein Oben?";[45]

Elizarenkova also gives 'cord' (*shnur*) for *raśmí*.[46]
Joel Brereton renders the lines as:

> "Their cord was stretched across:
> Did something exist below it? Did something exist above?"[47]

Michael Witzel also uses the same word in his translation:

> "'Obliquely stretched out was their cord.
> Was there really 'below'? Was there really 'above'?"[48]

Macdonell hesitated about the meaning of *raśmí*. In his Vedic reader he translated:

> "Their cord was extended across: was there below or was there above?"[49]

For *raśmí* he wrote the following:

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[43] Ibid.: 53.

[44] Grassmann 1873 allows 'allegorically' (bildlich) 'reins' (Zügel) here, but he gives 'measuring cord' (Messschnur) in RV 8.25.18. See also Mayrhofer 1996 (*EWA*): *raśanā́*-, f. Strick, Seil, Halfter (RV+) ...Von *raśmí*- (~*raśmán*-) nicht zu trennen. *raśmí*-, m. Zügel, Zugseil, Leitsel (RV+ [meist im Plur.; übertragen auch 'Strahl', s. Renou, EVP 3 (1957) 52]).

[45] Geldner 1951, Volume 35: 360.

[46] Elizarenkova 1999: 286.

[47] Brereton 1999: 256.

[48] Professor Witzel's translation is excellent; however, I do not understand why he uses the adjective 'salty' in verse 3b: "A featureless salty ocean was all this (universe)." (Witzel 2012: 107) It is an unnecessary etymologization which disrupts the imagery of the hymn.

[49] Macdonell 1917: 210.

"the meaning of this word here is uncertain, but it may be an explanation of *bándhu* in 4 c: the cord with which the sage (referred to by *eṣām*) in thought measured out the distance between the existent and non-existent, or between what was above and below."[50]

On the other hand, in his metric translation he interprets *raśmí* as ray:

"Their ray extended light across the darkness:
But was the One above or was it under?"[51]

Professor Jurewicz excludes the meaning 'cord' for *raśmi* in the Ṛgveda. For her *raśmi* means only 'ray' or 'reins'.[52] But I cannot see convincing reasons that lead to such a clear isolation of the meaning of *raśmi*. It could clearly have this connotation in the case of reins.

Professor Jurewicz could have accepted this meaning too. She pointed out in the *Introduction* that the associations of the recipients of the hymns could encompass a very wide semantic range, and she also tried to preserve the ambiguity of the original.[53] In three important cases she rightly allowed both alternatives. See, for example, her comments on stanza 1 of the *Nāsadīya*:

The form *ā́varīvar* is usually interpreted as derived from *ā́* √*vṛt* ('What was moving?'). Macdonell however proposes to derive it from *ā* √*vṛ* ('What was concealing?'). Both interpretations can be justified on the basis of later stanzas of the *Nāsadīya*. The answer to the question about movement can be found in the second stanza, which describes That One as breathing — so moving in some way. The answer to the question about concealment can be found in the third stanza presenting the state of darkness hiding the darkness."[54]

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[50] Ibid.: 210.

[51] Macdonell 1922: 19.

[52] Personal communication.

[53] "In my attempts to understand the RV I have assumed that the recipient of this text was immersed in his contemporary culture and well versed in the RV itself. Its memorisation, which would have been usual in an oral and story telling culture meant that the recipient's associations could encompass a very wide semantic range. In my English translation of the stanzas I have tried to preserve the ambiguity of the original because it is an important way by which the poets prompt a recipient to open his mind to various associations." (Jurewicz 2010: 25.)

[54] Ibid.: 46.

And stanza 3:

> "It is not accidental that the second part of the phrase *tuchyénābhv*
> can be understood both as *ābhū́* – 'that which is about to be' and as
> *ābhú* – 'that which is not, that is empty, void'. This expresses the
> idea that inside the void there is a part of reality which is about to
> be but which does not exist yet at this creative stage."[55]

As well as stanza 4:

> "The first hemistich of the stanza is usually translated differently:
> it is assumed after Macdonell 1917 that *yád* refers to *kā́ma* and
> *mánaso rétas* qualifies the desire and not *ābhú/ābhū*. ...However,
> we can also interpret *yád* as referring to *tád* from verse *a* which
> in turn anaphorically refers to That One which was born through
> the power of heat, i.e. to *ābhú/ābhū́*. I think that the intention of
> the poet was to prompt the recipient to activate both senses of
> the hemistich and because of this its syntactic structure can be
> equivocally interpreted."[56]

I am not asking why Professor Jurewicz did not translate *raśmí* as cord, but
why she did not allow that meaning at least as an option.

This interpretation has also profound consequences. It can evoke (geometric)
construction/measurement.[57]

Comment on the book

The book includes the translations of only four complete hymns: ṚV V. 63, VI.
9, X. 124 and X. 129. In addition, it quotes extensively from three hymns: ṚV
IV. 1 (stanzas 10–18), IV. 58 (stanzas 1–9 and 11) as well as from VI. 1 (stanzas
1–4). This is not necessarily a problem, in fact a lot of hymns are compilations,
however providing the complete text can be helpful in many cases.

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[55] Ibid.: 49.

[56] Ibid.: 51.

[57] In fact, *raśmí* can evoke measurement even with the meaning 'ray' as can be seen from the
following stanza: *pári yó raśmínā divó 'ntān mamé pṛthivyā́ḥ* (RV 8.25.18.) [He] who measured
($\sqrt{m\bar{a}}$) with his ray (*raśmi*) the ends of heaven and of earth on every side. Cf. Brereton – Jamison
2014: 1082. See also Fórizs 1989, 1995, 2005.

And the last question

Our interpretations are in fact close to each other:

"*Neither the non-existent nor the existent existed then.*
Neither the midspace nor the heaven beyond existed."[58]

There are still no building blocks,
The joints of existence and non-existence
have not congealed yet;
There is no time, no space, no matter;
There is neither existence nor non-existence,
There is nothing.

But this nothing is more than existence
More than non-existence.
Everything is still possible,
No fate has been determined yet:
This nothing is free.
That One has not secernated yet.[59]

The only difference in our understanding is [her assumption of] the [perfect] completeness/fullness of the starting point, and the perspective concomitant to it:[60]

"... [I]n the precreative state, reality does not cognise because it does not want to cognise and not because it cannot do so due to any inner or outer limit. That would mean that the precreative state is understood as the state of the Absolute in the same way it is defined in European metaphysics: as perfect fullness without any lack which could justify future creation... The Absolute does

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[58] Cf. "The non-existent did not exist, nor did the existent exist at that time. / There existed neither the midspace nor the heaven beyond. // What stirred? From where and in whose protection? / Did water exist, a deep depth?" (Brereton 1999: 250.) The Hungarian translation of the *Nāsadīya* was made by me in 1976 in Pannonhalma, and I used this rendering in my poetic re-creation (Fórizs 1989, 1995).

[59] Fórizs 1995: 157. In pp. 153–170 I consider the *Nāsadīya* as a series of enigmatic formulas (*brahman*); and I weave the new (contemporary) cloth (texture) of the hymn of creation by drawing the woof of my own words through the warps of these *brahmans*.

[60] But in this case it is almost everything.

not need the world and is not forced to create it. But it can — if it wills that."[61]

First of all, it seems problematic to assert anything about the precreative state. So it is at least very misleading to talk about it as "the state of the Absolute".[62]

The adjective perfect and full also appears in the following passage though it is not quite clear what 'the perfect and full Absolute' refers to:

"It also seems probable that the idea of being a not-cognizing *ātman* may constitute one of the meanings of *avidyā*, which is the source of all the successive events inevitably leading to entanglement in the empiric world. This inevitability is also present in the Vedic cosmogony: once *ātman* manifested his inability to cognize, the rest of the creative process became a constant attempt to fill the epistemic and ontological gap which appeared in the perfect and full Absolute."[63]

In other places Professor Jurewicz identifies the Absolute (or the creative power of the Absolute) with *tád ékam*.[64]

So she starts with the Absolute (*tád ékam*) and the perfectness and fullness of it is assumed. This might be a legitimate assumption, but I do not share it with her.

For me the poet of the *Nāsadīya* and some of the greatest seers of the Ṛgveda are distinguished from the thinkers of later times by the unique perspective they made it possible to achieve: their starting-point is, in a sense, the incomplete.

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[61] Jurewicz 2010: 47.

[62] A similar expression ('pre-creative state of reality') was also used in her analysis of the Vedic correspondent of the first *nidāna*: "The actual term *avidyā* does not appear in Vedic cosmogony. But the ability to cognize appears in it. Firstly, the pre-creative state of reality is identified with the state of being unknowable." (Jurewicz 2000: 81.)

[63] Ibid.: 81.

[64] *tád ékam* is also referred to as the Creator (ibid.: 94), and the equivalence of the Creator and *ātman* also appears on the bases of BU 1.4 (ibid: 82). Elsewhere she talks about 'the final formation of the Creator's *ātman*' (Ibid.: 89.), which expression is very interesting, and needs further scrutiny.

Completeness and wholeness is not the beginning but the end.[65] Instead of undergoing the transformations of an already existent *ātman*, we are taking part in the [re]creation of it:

> "From the dark I go into the multicolored, and from the multicolored into the dark. Shaking off evil, like a horse its hair, and freeing myself, like the moon from Rahu's jaws, having [re]created the *ātman*[66], cast off the body, I attain the uncreated world of *brahman*, I attain [the uncreated world of *brahman*]."[67]

This perspective makes an appearance even in some [early] parts of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad:*[68]

> *bráhma vắ idám ágra āsīd ékam evá | tád ékaṃ sán ná vyàbhavat.*

> ""In the beginning this world was only *bráhman*, only one. Because it was only one, *bráhman* had not fully developed." (BU 1.4.11.)[69]

> *sá eṣá ihá práviṣṭa ắ nakhāgrébhyo yáthā kṣuráḥ kṣuradhāné 'vahitaḥ syắd viśvambharó vā viśvambharakulāyé | tám ná páśyanty ákṛtsno hí sáḥ prāṇánn evá prāṇó nắma bhávati vádan vắk páśyaṃś cákṣuḥ śṛṇváñ chrótraṃ manvānó mánas | tắny asyaitắni karmanāmắny evá | sá yó 'ta ékaikam upắste ná sá vedắkṛtsno hy èṣó 'ta ékaikena bhávati | ātméty evópāsītắtra hy èté sárva ékaṃ bhávanti.*

> "Penetrating this body up to the very nailtips, he remains there like a razor within a case or a termite within a termite-hill. People do not see him, for he is incomplete as he comes to be called breath

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[65] This is the mystery of "re-creation" (a constructive, self-transcending act of the participant). See Fórizs 1995, 2005, 2013c and [2003/]2016b.

[66] *kṛtātman,* '[someone] with [re]created-*ātman'* (*bahuvrīhi* compound). The [re-]created *ātman* is not the beginning, but the end: the completion of the process; and the completeness is achieved [by my deeds] in the world. From the One through the Many to the Whole.

[67] *aśva iva romāṇi vidhūya pāpaṃ candra iva rāhor mukhāt pramucya dhūtvā śarīram akṛtaṃ kṛtātmā brahmalokam abhisaṃbhavāmīty abhisaṃbhavāmi*, ChU 8.13. Cf. Olivelle 1998, 287. He translates "I, the perfected self (*ātman*), cast off the body, the imperfect, and attain...".

[68] I give the text in Patrick Olivelle's translation.

[69] Olivelle 1998: 49.

when he is breathing, speech when he is speaking, sight when he is seeing, hearing when he is hearing, and mind when he is thinking. These are only the names of his various activities. A man who considers him to be any one of these does not understand him, for he is incomplete within any one of these. One should consider them as simply his self (*ātmán*), for in it all these become one." (BU 1.4.7.)[70]

saìṣā́ bráhmaṇó 'tisṛṣṭir | yác chréyaso devā́n ásṛjatā́tha yán mártyaḥ sánn amṛ́tān asṛjata, tásmād átisṛṣṭir|átisṛṣṭyāṃ hāsyaitásyāṃ bhavati yá eváṃ véda

"This is *bráhman*'s supercreation. It is a supercreation because he created the gods, who are superior to him, and, being a mortal himself, he created the immortals. Anyone who knows this stands within this supercreation of his." (BU 1.4.6.)[71]

sá naivá vyàbhavat|tác chréyo rūpám átyasṛjata dhármaṃ|tád etát kṣatrásya kṣatráṃ yád dhármas|tásmād dhármāt páraṃ nàsti

"It still did not become fully developed. So it created the Law (*dharma*), a form superior to and surpassing itself. And the Law is here the ruling power standing above the ruling power. Hence there is nothing higher than the Law." (BU 1.4.14.)[72]

This perspective has been changed irrevocably in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* with Uddālaka Āruṇi:

sad eva somyedam agra āsīd ekam evādvitīyam|tad dhaika āhur asad evedam agra āsīd ekam evādvitīyam|tasmād asataḥ saj jāyata

kutas tu khalu somyaivaṃ syād iti hovāca|katham asataḥ saj jāyeta|sat tv eva somyedam agra āsīd ekam evādvitīyam

"In the beginning, son, this [world] was simply what is existent (*sat*) — one only, without a second (*ekam evādvitīyam*). Now, on

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[70] Ibid.: 47.
[71] Ibid.: 47.
[72] Ibid.: 49.

this point some do say: 'In the beginning this [world] was simply what is nonexistent (*asat*) — one only, without a second. And from what is nonexistent was born what is existent.'"

"But, son, how can that possibly be?" he continued. "How can what is existent be born from what is nonexistent? On the contrary, son, in the beginning this [world] was simply what is existent (*sat*) — one only, without a second. (ChU 6.2.1–2.)[73]

Professor Jurewicz is also aware of the fact that "this Upaniṣadic concept of reality simplifies the ideas of the *Nāsadīya*:

"The hymn presents a vision of creation in which precreative reality is neither being/truth (*sát*) nor non-being/untruth (*ásat*). ...In later thought the word *sát* generally refers to the unmanifested aspect, *ásat* to the manifested."[74]

This reversal can be seen in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.3.28 where:

"*sát* denotes what is unmanifested, immortal and full of light, while *ásat* denotes the dark, mortal manifested world. It is also attested by *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1–2 which negates the possibility of origination of the world out of non-being/untruth (*ásat*) and considers being-truth (*sát*) as the source of creation."[75]

However, what has been changed is not only the denotation of *sát* and *ásat,* but also the very perspective.[76] A perspective from which it can be clearly seen that no independent substance is possible here: neither an independent existent (*sát*) nor an independent non-existent (*ásat*).[77] Later on this perspective was lost, and no one else than the Buddha found it.

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[73] Ibid.: 247.

[74] Jurewicz 2010: 52.

[75] Ibid.: 52.

[76] Cf. Fórizs 1989, 1995; see also Fórizs 2002: 112.

[77] Uddālaka Āruṇi assumes nothing else than this independence, when he replaces the independent – one without a second – non-existent (*asad ... ekam evādvitīyam*) with the independent – one without a second – existent (*sad ... ekam evādvitīyam*).

Appendix

nāsȧd āsī̠n no sad ā̇sīt ta̠dānī̠ṁ nāsī̠d rajo̠ no vyȯmā pa̠ro yat |
kim āvȧrīva̠ḥ kuha̠ kasya̠ śarma̠nn ambha̠ḥ kim ā̇sīd gahȧnaṁ
gabhī̠ram ||1.

na mṛ̠tyur ā̇sīd a̠mṛta̠ṁ na tarhi̠ na rātrya̠ ahnȧ āsīt prake̠taḥ |
ānī̇d ava̠ta̠ṁ sva̠dhayā̠ tad eka̠ṁ tasmȧd dhā̠nyan na pa̠raḥ kiṁ
ca̠nāsȧ ||2.

tamȧ āsī̠t tamȧsā gū̠ḻham agrė 'prake̠taṁ sȧli̠laṁ sarvȧm ā i̠dam |
tu̠cchyenā̠bhv apihitaṁ yad āsīt tapȧsa̠s tan mȧhi̠nājȧ̠ya̠taikȧm ||3.

kāma̠s tad agre̠ sam ȧvarta̠tādhi̠ manȧso̠ retȧḥ prathama̠ṁ yad āsī̇t |
sa̠to bandhu̠m asȧti̠ nir ȧvindan hṛdi pra̠tīṣyȧ̠ ka̠vayȯ manī̠ṣā ||4.

ti̠ra̠ścīno̠ vitȧto ra̠śmir ės̱ām a̠dhaḥ svid ā̠sī3d u̠pari svid āsī3t |
re̠to̠dhā ā̇san mahi̠mānȧ āsan sva̠dhā a̠vastā̠t prayȧtiḥ pa̠rastȧt ||5.

ko a̠ddhā vėda̠ ka i̠ha pra vȯca̠t kuta̠ ājȧ̠tā kutȧ i̠yaṁ visṛ̠ṣṭiḥ |
a̠rvāg de̠vā a̠sya vi̠sarjȧne̠nāthā̠ ko vėda̠ yatȧ āba̠bhūvȧ ||6.

i̠yaṁ visṛ̇ṣṭi̠r yatȧ āba̠bhūva̠ yadi vā da̠dhe yadi vā̠ na |
yo a̠syādhyȧkṣaḥ parame̠ vyȯma̠n so a̠ṅga vėda̠ yadi vā̠ na vedȧ ||7.

(RV 10.129, input by Holland and Van Nooten 1994, version by Eichler.)

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Early Buddhist and Vedic Thought I:

Joanna Jurewicz: *The interpretation of the Nāsadīyasūkta (RV 10.129)* (23 July 2012).

Joanna Jurewicz: *Playing with fire – The pratītyasamutpāda from the perspective of Vedic thought* (24 July 2012).

Joanna Jurewicz: *The Ṛgveda: 'small scale' societies and rebirth eschatology* (25 July 2012).

Early Buddhist and Vedic Thought II:

Joanna Jurewicz: *Vedic roots of Buddhist similes* (15 July 2013).

Joanna Jurewicz – László Fórizs: *Internal contradictions in the Vedic and Buddhist thought* (16 July 2013).

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Yuke Sirimane. *Entering the Stream to Enlightenment: Experiences of the Stages of the Buddhist Path in Contemporary Sri Lanka.* **Sheffield: Equinox, 2016. (366pp)**

Reviewed by Mark Leonard

In this book Sirimane compares the experience of accomplished Buddhist practitioners in Sri Lanka with ancient Buddhist texts. Her field research produces fascinating material which provides new understanding of the Buddhist Path and which, she finds, provides evidence for its authenticity. However, her work is built on assumptions that need to be examined with a critical eye.

Yesterday I gave a lift to a couple from deep in the Blackdown Hills on the Dorset-Somerset border to Birmingham. It was a ragtaggle gathering of three hundred or so assorted Buddhists, environmental activists, and mudlarks living in social bubbles experimenting with zero carbon footprint living.

Buddhafield Green Earth Awakening was blessed by the spirits of the four directions. The Dhamma burned through the morning mist of an Indian summer and shining under a hunters' moon at night, two and a half thousand years on, shaping new ways of applying its principles to the challenges of our times. A palpable sense of renewal was in the air.

It was a tribal gathering. There were workshops, discussions, pujas, neo-pagan ceremonies in the open air and under canvas stretched over geodesic domes. There were encounters around the fire accompanied by the songs of reborn hippy troubadours late into the night.

My companions on the journey to Birmingham embody the equanimity produced by Goenka style Vipassana practice. This system was designed to address the needs of another social context in another continent in another time. First to give new life to the Dhamma in colonial Burma when institutions of Sangha and State were crumbling under British rule, and then on to India in

a form accessible to modern educated Brahminical society. From India, the Dharma travelled on a new "silk road", carried by hippies from East to West, the basket of the Dhamma shape-shifting at each turn to address the needs of the times.

Now, with the confluence of different tributaries rising in the lofty peaks of Asian Buddhist meditation styles, mindfulness meditation has become, among other things, the new caffeine of Silicon Valley, . There is increasing interest in what is actually going on when we pay attention to sensations of breathing, and increasing interest in what the Buddha actually thought and taught.

Meanwhile in Sri Lanka Yuke Sirimane has been exploring a fascinating question. She has gathered first hand accounts from persons, both monks and lay-practitioners, who are reputed to be Noble Persons. She has recorded their experiences, recounted to her in interviews, and looks for themes that seem to confirm their attaining stages of realisation on The Path.

As is proper, Sirimane must first define her terms: Noble Persons and Supramundane Fruits of the Path. There are eight categories of persons: Stream Enterers, Once-returners, Non-returners, Arahants, and those on the way to becoming Noble persons of each description. Most the field research examines the experiences of "Stream Enterers". There is one interview with an individual who may be an "Arahant".

Now I am writing in a seminar room in the Knowledge Hub of the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital, between mindfulness classes for NHS staff. This week's class focuses on how posture affects the way we see ourselves in a social context and how this seems to be reflected in hormones and mood. A submissive posture seems to produce increased levels of stress hormones. A confident posture seems to produce increased levels of testosterone.

As social beings, a sense of threat is often related to the way we feel that people in positions of authority may be evaluating our performance. One example of how this can have a negative impact on the work we do is "sunk-cost bias". We dedicate resources to a project and feel more and more committed to making it work. Costly projects may run over budget and fail to meet deadlines. The more we invest in a project the less willing we are to scrap it even if the cost-benefits move deeper and deeper into negative returns. Mindfulness has been found to make people better able to drop projects like these. With mindfulness, people are more prepared to appraise current conditions and make judgments based on what is actually happening rather than basing their judgments on an unrealistic hope and a prayer.

In a medical environment, this is particularly important in diagnosing a patient's condition. A practitioner comes to a diagnosis on the basis of their expertise. We invest in our judgments and subconsciously give less import to information that conflicts with our notions of what is going on. Our perception is selective and the more our sense of things is threatened, the less we notice. We resist change. It's only natural for a practitioner to register symptoms that confirm their diagnosis and pay less attention to indications that confound their expectations. Their reputation is built on their knowhow and a misdiagnosis becomes a threat to their sense of self. This sense of threat further impairs their ability to notice what is actually going on and compounds the tendency to fall prey to what is termed "confirmation bias".

It therefore makes sense to work with posture. In many meditation styles, it is thought to be important to sit in an upright posture. This upright posture then will have an effect on hormones. A posture that produces a sense of confidence will not only reduce the activity of the mind and produce a calming effect in meditation, it will reduced the sense of the risks of getting things wrong. This helps people to be more aware of what is actually going on and helps people to adapt to changing conditions more responsibly and so reduce the effects of cognitive bias.

The practice of developing mindfulness clearly has benefits in terms of more skilful action in society, but where might this practice lead? Perhaps understanding more about the origins of this practice in a Buddhist context will help us to answer this question.

Sirimane derives her definitions from the *Visuddhimagga*, which was compiled in Sri Lanka by a fifth century monk, Buddhaghosa, to elucidate a systematic "Path of Purification", and from source material from the Pali Canon. Buddhaghosa's work aimed to summarise the Tripitaka almost 900 years after the Buddha's living teachings were delivered to the inhabitants of Northern India. His work is described as "the hub of a complete and coherent method of exegesis of the Tipitaka, using the 'Abhidhamma method' as it is called. And it sets out detailed practical instructions for developing purification of mind." (Bhikkhu Nyanamoli 2011 p. xxvii.)

Sirimane's work, comparing descriptions of development in ancient texts with living experience, is significant not least because of the challenges of doing such research. In a Buddhist context, many are reluctant to relate personal experiences, as this can be seen as self-promotion; besides, the accounts may even become objects of attachment to themselves or to others seeking similar

attainments. (Thus the suspected Arahant talks to Sirimane only because his teacher asks him to do so.) Sirimane recognises this and other potential difficulties in her field research, many of which must be comparable to any qualitative study of this kind. However, she may be unaware of what may be the greatest potential bias that the whole project is subject to. She is Sri Lankan and a member of the Samatha Trust. Her sense of identity, personal, spiritual and national, is wrapped up in this study.

Notwithstanding this potential for bias, Sirimane comes to what I believe is a very significant conclusion. Her interviewees all describe specific "fetter-breaking" peak experiences that act as milestones on the way to becoming Noble Persons and subsequent attainment of Supramundane Fruits of the Path. She identifies a further requirement of soteriological development: that the peak experience be later conceptually framed in terms that comply with that stage of progression along the path as identified in source texts. The peak experience then is passed, but its after effect and its conceptual framing then produce the stage of attainment. The memory of the peak experience in the context of its conceptual framing then becomes firmly fixed in the mind of the Noble Person and so penetrates every aspect of their being.

Could it be that all that we are seeing in this study is a set of experiences predicted by the model of development as it is understood and practised? Are the very experiences described and recorded just the product of the construction of the path as it is taught in a particular social context? Perhaps we should not be so concerned about this as an object of academic curiosity or even from a personal perspective as a Buddhist. What is of much greater social signficance is how this framing of the Dhamma is dependent on its re-reading at different times and in different social contexts.

I have always been quite suspicious of what seems to me to be a nihilistic interpretation of the Dhamma: that the intention of practice is to stem the operation of higher functions of the human mind by habituating the nervous system to deconstructing experience down to elements of sensory input. On this interpretation, ability to do this in all circumstances seems to be exactly what defines an Arahant.

On my journey with my companions from the Blackdown Hills to Birmingham, I pressed them to describe what they learned on their Vipassana courses. I said I had heard the story of the dependent origination of experience many times before. What was it that was really going on for them? What is "ultimately real", my new friend said, was the process involved and the sensory experience.

My friend could not tell me why reducing experience to perception of sensory input was different from the experience of an animal. They had posited a reality in the process of deconstruction of their personality reducing self to sensory experience in order to escape from existential pain. This, I believe, is the danger of trying to understand the Dhamma from a modernist perspective, and it goes back at least as far as the origins of the practices as they are taught today in Sri Lanka.

This process is often described by an analogy: "There is no wood, there are only trees." This analogy is said to help practitioners to understand that deconstructing self enables them to be free of the existential suffering that arises from a constructed sense of self. However, I believe this view is only, at best, half the story and that it fails *to see the wood for the trees*.

What is left, after the experiential sense of self that we cling to has been completely lost? It is not until the final section in the penultimate chapter of Sirimane's book, which concerns her sole interview with a suspected Arahant, that the subject of compassion is mentioned. But where does this compassion actually arise from if the sense of self is gone? Of course, this is not the first time this question has been asked!

The standard explanation goes something along the following lines: Once a person thoroughly deconstructs the process of creating the self, they are free from the suffering created by it. Then they are grateful to the Buddha for the Dhamma that has liberated them from suffering and grateful to the Sangha for support along the way, for which some vestigial remnant of self is required. Then, seeing the suffering of other beings, they wish to teach the Dhamma to alleviate their suffering also: the vestigial remnant of self is generating empathy for the illusion of a self.

If we are Buddhists, we may believe this theory. If we are academics, we may find it an interesting subject for research. However, with the growing iterest in mindfulness in contemporary society, there is a far more significant issue at stake. Can a critical understanding of Buddhist practice help us to find ways of changing society to shape a world in which the threat to survival of future generations is reduced. If we don't find new ways of living together and of relating to the natural resources that sustain life on this planet, our collective extinction is a real possibility.

We have evolved as social apes whose survival is dependent on our ability to cooperate. Our individual survival is dependent on our ability to build mutually supportive relationships with others in a group, but our success comes from

our ability for abstract thought and language. With this ability we create new technology, stories of who we are and how we relate to each other within a group. As a group we create a culture in which we enact our lives and shape the world around us.

Whatever we see, we seek to comprehend from the perspectives that have shaped us. Because of our power to make the abstract real, disentangling the real and meaningful from the imaginary and fantastic becomes profoundly significant, not least in the way we recreate the Dhamma in different places and different times. It is this overview that Sirimane and many others, at least since colonial times and quite probably as early as Buddhaghosa, have failed to recognise in their attempt, each in their time, to understand, apply and preserve the Dhamma.

So what is the relevance of Sirimane's findings today? We appear to be witnessing early stirrings of a social revolution that has been precipitated by the Dhamma's most up-to-date tool-kit, which has emerged to meet the needs of society today – *mindfulness*. Sirimane describes "fetter-breaking" peak experiences that, with reflection, lead to progress along the path. This observation seems to make a great deal of sense, but how are we to understand this in a contemporary context?

This is an important question, not only due to the increasing number of people engaging in the practice but also because we need better to understand its potential implications for society. There are two questions here: What is going on in the individual, and how then does this interact with social change?

On an individual level, contemporary understanding of the mechanisms of mindfulness have been shaped by cognitive therapy. Redirecting attention to sensory experience has a number of therapeutic benefits that seem to fit quite well with a modern Buddhist understanding of Insight Meditation. This enables a person to disengage from unhelpful or unrealistic ideas and thinking; it opens the gate to experientially based insight into the way thoughts and emotions shape our lives. This gives us a degree of autonomy to choose not to cultivate unhelpful or unrealistic beliefs and the moods they precipitate. Even engaging in short mindfulness meditation practices can produce profound changes; but there are also reports of damaging effects of more intense regimes like the Goenka version of Vipassana retreats.

What is lacking is an understanding of how the simple practice of paying attention to sensory experience has these results and what, if any, is the function of the Brahma Viharas? A psychological understanding may well be

part of the story, but what is going on in the body when beliefs change as a result of direct experience? How do these changes then precipitate "fetter-breaking" experiences? Sirimane explains the importance of a conceptual framing of the experience as a defining characteristic of the Noble Person but hardly mentions compassion!

Perhaps we can better understand this process by recognising that the self-construct becomes imprinted on physiology as a result of a complex series of processes. Hormonal states produced by prevailing moods and emotional reactivity result in epigenetic change at a cellular level. Neuroplastic change in the brain takes place as a result of patterns of thinking and behaviour. Activity and diet have an effect. And all of these processes are shaped by how we see ourselves – the self-construct – in relation to others.

When the self-construct is deconstructed in Insight Meditation, the force that shapes the embodied imprint is released and physiological homeostatic processes of the "organism" return to normal function. The physiological regeneration and neuroplastic change that takes place as a result of this process produces changing body states and changes in perception and cognition that are experienced subjectively. These changes then may precipitate peak experiences, that Surimane identifies as "fetter breaking experiences", and long-term shifts in cognition and perception which follow: Supramundane Fruits of the Path.

Of key significance here is sensitivity to internal body states that reflect a more equamimous mind state with low mental activity. Sensitivity to this "base state" takes place via afferent function of the ancient and primitive portion of the vagus nerve, which informs the central nervous system of changes in visceral function that take place as a result of changing states of arousal. When we settle into a relaxed state a number of things take place; digestive organs function; biochemical processing in the liver takes place, removing toxins etc; breathing settles into a rhythm and Heart Rate Variability becomes optimal.

Recent research has begun to understand the function of thin films of connective tissue, the fascia, which hold all of the soft tissue of the body in place. As well as literally "holding us together" the fascia also act as a simple vascular system that enables lymph to remove waste products from bundles of muscle fibres, which they hold together. Stiffness in the body is associated with reduced elasticity and malformation of fascia which impairs their vascular function and can cause pain.

These translucent layers of connective tissue also act as a sense organ. There are as many nerve endings in the fascia as there are in the eyes. The fascia are our "internal eyes". They tell us where the hand is when we scratch an itch in the dark. They tell us about our posture, and this informs the central nervous system of our social status, and then the central nervous system instructs the endocrine system to regulate hormone levels to reflect our social status and so our self-image. Developing interoception (awareness of internal body states - a "sense-base" not identified by the Buddha but potentially described as Mindfulness of Body) and increased sensitivity to body-based experience that take place as a result of Insight Meditation (also known as mindfulness) may play a significant role in how the practitioner is affected..

How do the Brahma Viharas fit in? From a psychological perspective, developing a sense of ease is only possible when a person feels safe. In the Tradition, this sense of safety is afforded by the support of the community of Monks and Nuns. Here, the role of the Sangha is only made possible by almsgiving by the lay community, and the practitioner co-opts prosocial mind-states – kindness, compassion and empathetic joy – as the means to establish equanimity in the service of the ultimate goal of Nibbana.

In our evolution we have gained this sense of safety in a social group that ensures our individual survival. We have developed an advanced capacity for abstract thought shaped by language. We have developed a sense of self that relates to others, the social group and our environment, and this imaginary world has become the window of our experience. We have survived individually and collectively by developing complex relationships with our companions that enable us to co-operate and share resources according to daily need.

As society has evolved we have needed to create increasingly well-defined symbolic references of self and how these relate to others within increasingly complex social structures. It was when agrarian technology provided a food surplus, so that society and language developed in Northern India, that the Buddha taught there. We could say that the whole of the path he taught was to counteract the trend towards the construction of a new sense of self that arose out of these conditions. If so, how do we understand the world-view that informs Suriminane's study and its implications in contemporary society?

I suggest the answer to this question lies in understanding self as socially constructed. From this perspective it then becomes possible to evaluate the framework of commonly held assumptions about the Buddha's teachings, which shape Sirimane's perspectives, her methodology and her findings in a way that is relevant to contemporary society.

The self-construct acts in various ways to acquire the resources needed to ensure the organism's survival. However, satisfying this need is entirely dependent on a person's ability to be valued by others in the community. As population density has grown, the social self has had to become increasingly well defined and with this process it has sought to project its need for safety by establishing its position in an increasingly stratified social structure.

Where resources are distributed unequally and privilege accompanies high social status, the weak are disadvantaged and the strong have to protect their gains. Social inequity drives competitive self-interest and individualism. Stress produced under these social conditions creates increasing levels of self-definition, individualistic motivation and strategic manoeuvring to acquire status, which devalue cooperative and pro-social behaviour and select for sociopathic traits.

Deconstructing the self with mindfulness then can be used to diffuse the existential suffering that is produced, but this technique can also be used as a means to diffuse the distress caused by perceiving the suffering of others. Then mindfulness becomes a means of maintaining the status quo, and one could then argue that the stress on the ideal of the Arahant, who has taken The Path to its logical end, becomes the keystone of a patriarchal State Buddhism. Surimane's study is not the first time that there has been an attempt to understand Buddhist practice from a rationalistic perspective which, intentionally or otherwise, may act in the service of these ends.

This trend towards seeking scientific validation for Buddhist thinking and practice has shaped the Tradition at least since colonial times. Sirimane's study appears to follow this trajectory in the service of contemporary Theravada Buddhist identity. However, this does not mean that we should not employ empirical methodologies to study the tradition: we just need to do it better.

The problem arises when we see the self as an internal subjective process. The development of the modern sense of self has come from an idea that subjective experience is an individual process. This is closely linked to the notion that natural selection operates at an individual level and all complex phenomena can be understood by defining the parts which function together. This way of thinking has shaped the idea of the nation state and defined the way Buddhism has been understood, becoming a state religion in Buddhist countries.

This modernistic perspective, which may well go back to Buddhaghosa's time, creates the idea of a separate spiritual realm of experience and downplays the importance of social engagement. Was this really the Buddha's intention? If mindfulness in today's society is not just going to be a tool that supports the status quo by enabling people to cope with the stress of modern life and which

is creating dangerously unstable levels of social inequity and destroying the planet's life support systems, we need to find a way of finding a social antidote to the social forces that are creating the problems humanity faces today. Here the need is not to escape rebirth by snuffing out the burning fire of self-construction, it is to evolve a self-construct that can engage in skilful action to make a better world with others.

Can mindfulness in contemporary society become the bridge between deconstructing the causes of a sick psychology and constructing a foundation for secular ethics based on a greater awareness of our socially embodied experience? If so, the practice of mindfulness in contemporary society will need to be re-evaluated in social terms. This will involve extracting it from its use as a value free intervention that acts to correct stress related psychopathology expressed on an individual by individual basis. From a Buddhist perspective, this will also require reviewing the prominent rationale for its practice as an individual soteriological endeavour. The Brahma Viharas need to be understood as a driving force to construct a pro-social self framed within an understanding of how we construct self socially and how this self changes in different social contexts to make Buddhism relevant in a modern world. Buddhists then need to find a way of explaining how equanimity arises out of a sense of embodied meaning and purpose in society, not as a means of escaping it.

Lin, Chen-kuo and Radich, Michael (eds.) (2014). *A Distant Mirror: Articulating Indic Ideas in Sixth and Seventh Century Chinese Buddhism*. **Hamburg: Hamburg University Press. (565pp)[1]**

Reviewed by Rafal Stepien

A Distant Mirror is the third volume in the Hamburg Buddhist Studies series brought out by the Numata Center for Buddhist Studies at the University of Hamburg. The book as a whole, as well as each chapter individually, is freely available for digital download as PDF from the Hamburg University Press website (http://blogs.sub.uni-hamburg.de/hup/products-page/publikationen/125/). As the 'Acknowledgements' make clear (13), it is the result of the "Indian Buddhist Thought in 6th-7th Century China" project sponsored by the National Science Council of Taiwan, and held at National Chengchi University between 2009 and 2013. This project held numerous lectures and workshops under the three designated fields of: 1) Yogācāra Buddhism in China and Korea, 2) Buddhist logic and epistemology in China, and 3) the Indian elements in Chinese forms of Buddhist system (cf. 21). Detailed summaries (in Chinese) of the project as a whole and of all the individual contributions made by both well-established and emergent experts in these three fields may be consulted at http://nccuir.lib.nccu.edu.tw/bitstream/140.119/51954/1/98-2410-H-004-182-MY3.pdf.

The project of which *A Distant Mirror* constitutes the published fruit was explicitly designed "to explore boundaries between South Asian and East Asian Buddhist philosophy" (13). This orientation merits emphasizing, for there can be no doubt that the academic study of Buddhist philosophy in Western languages and universities has been inordinately dominated hitherto by what are conventionally referred to as its 'Indo-Tibetan' strands. Before delving into the

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[1] Following the lead of many of the contributors, I have benefitted from and am grateful for comments made by Dan Lusthaus on a draft version of this paper.

contents of the book itself, it will thus be well to substantiate the book's claim to be treating "virgin territory" (13) by "bring[ing] Indian Buddhist philosophy, especially epistemology and logic, into dialogue with the Chinese mind" (13). If nothing else, this will serve to underline the welcome originality of *A Distant Mirror*. Indeed, in what follows I have gone to some length in locating and explaining what I see to be the methodological as well as the philosophical value of this book precisely because I believe it begins filling a deep and under-appreciated lacuna in the field of Buddhist studies.[2]

To my knowledge, four English-language books have been published in recent years purporting to treat 'Buddhist Philosophy' as a whole. In chronological order, these are: 1) *Buddhism as Philosophy: An Introduction* by Mark Siderits; 2) *An Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy* by Stephen J. Laumakis; 3) *Buddhist Philosophy: Essential Readings* edited by William Edelglass and Jay L. Garfield; and 4) *A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy* edited by Steven M. Emmanuel. Unfortunately, and despite the implicit universality of their titular claims, all four sideline, if not altogether ignore, Chinese, and more broadly East Asian, Buddhist philosophy. Siderits' monograph is the clearest example of this tendency as, despite its claim "to introduce Buddhist thought,"[3] it is in fact limited to Buddhist philosophy only from the Buddha to Dignāga, to the complete exclusion of any non-Indian strands of Buddhist thought.[4] Of the 263 pages of text in Laumakis' work, meanwhile, the first 174 treat Indian Buddhist philosophy, and of the four remaining chapters, not one exclusively deals with Chinese varieties of Buddhist thought.[5] Turning to the two edited collections, Emmanuel's section

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[2] I say 'begins' for the abundance of primary source material means that the volume's several chapters, limited in scope and length, necessarily leave vast swathes of territory unexplored.

[3] Siderits 2007 i (blurb).

[4] The only mention of non-Indian Buddhist thought, occurring in the final paragraph of text, is breathtaking in its degree of understatement: "And there are also interesting developments when Buddhist philosophy gets taken up in Tibet and in East Asia" (Siderits 2007 229).

[5] For the record, the four chapters are §9 'Bodhidharma's and Huineng's Buddhisms', §10 'Pure Land Buddhism', §11 'Tibetan Buddhism', and §12 'Two forms of contemporary Buddhism'. §11 is unproblematically situated within Indo-Tibetan studies, and §12 treats the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh. As for §9 and §10, even these chapters, which one might expect to be devoted to Chinese/East Asian Buddhist thought, turn out on close inspection to be only peripherally so. Although §9 is avowedly "concerned with the history and development of the Chinese appropriation of Buddhism" (175), even here the bulk of the text does not treat Chinese Buddhist philosophy directly, but rather traces the history of Buddhism's transmission

on 'Major Schools of Buddhist Thought' has one chapter each on 'Theravāda', 'Indian Mahāyāna', 'Tibetan Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna', and 'East Asian Buddhism'. Not only does this grant three quarters of the relevant discussion to the Indo-Tibetan traditions, but it also effectively lumps all the East Asian schools of thought of China, Japan, and Korea under one head.[6] Finally, of the thirty-eight *Essential Readings* included in Edelglass and Garfield's anthology, a full twenty-three introduce and translate Indo-Tibetan Buddhist texts. Indeed, the number of texts originating from India alone (nineteen) is equal to the number of texts from all other Buddhist traditions, with only four readings reserved for Chinese texts.

While it is of course natural that individual scholars should concentrate on their respective fields of specialization, it is regrettable that monographs and edited collections such as these, ostensibly introductions to Buddhist philosophy *tout court*, should effectively turn out to be quite limited in their purview. I have surveyed these introductory texts, as opposed to the slew of more specialized works, precisely so as to highlight the prevalence (largely unacknowledged let alone questioned) of Indian and Indo-Tibetan philosophy over Chinese and (to use the analogously problematic but nevertheless widely current moniker) Sino-Japanese Buddhist varieties. Although every one of the afore-cited books is excellent on its own terms, surely East Asian Buddhist philosophy merits more than a passing mention in works designed to introduce *Buddhist Philosophy*. Of course, book titles are often less the result of authorial or editorial choice as of publisher imposition and, given that a broader title may well attract a wider readership and hence lead to greater sales, the choice of titles I have cited may well be due more to market forces than any unquantifiable intellectual ideals. This does not affect the substantive content, however, which, as demonstrated, is decidedly skewed in all four cases.

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from India to China, introduces Confucianism and Daoism, outlines the teachings of Bodhidharma (an Indian), and sketches the reception of the *Lotus Sutra* (an Indian text), with only pp197-203 explicitly concerned with Chinese Buddhist philosophy *per se*. Lastly, the discussion of Pure Land Buddhism in §10 is in fact mainly taken up with Indian Buddhist forerunners of East Asian forms, with only pp221-227 explicitly devoted to Chinese and Japanese Pure Land. All told, then, we are left with some dozen pages in total directly addressing East Asian Buddhist philosophy.

[6] For the record, these only account for 4 of the 44 chapters in the entire volume. In total, however, a full 30 (i.e. over two-thirds) of these deal wholly or mainly with Indo-Tibetan sources. Given that 8 (§§34, 35, 39-44) are heterogeneous in their sources and thus elude easy geographical classification, this leaves only 6 chapters (§§7, 11, 12, 16, 22, 33, i.e. less than one-seventh) wholly or mainly on East Asian Buddhist philosophy.

Allow me to emphasize that none of these preceding comments should be taken as criticism of the study of Indian or Indo-Tibetan Buddhist philosophy. There can be no doubt as to the tremendous philosophical import of the various thought traditions subsumed under these over-arching rubrics, and their study is therefore rightly central to the academic field. However, there can likewise be no question that Chinese Buddhism (not to mention the extant or extinct Buddhisms of what are now Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Mongolia…) make and/or made great contributions to Buddhist philosophy and intellectual culture more generally. As such, it is unfortunate that this and these forms should continue to be peripheral to the academic study of Buddhist philosophy. After all, that the study of Buddhist thought in the West arose historically in the 19th century as a derivative from the philological study of Indo-European languages and texts is a fact, but that this circumstance should continue to define the contours of Buddhist philosophical studies in the 21st century is indefensible.

My critique is in like manner directed toward statements to the effect that the study of Buddhist philosophy in the West has been dominated by Indo-Tibetan objects "because South Asian and Tibetan Buddhist thinkers have tended to ask questions and pursue philosophical investigations in a manner much more akin to that of Western philosophers than that of many Chinese and East Asian thinkers before the modern era."[7] Not only is this position highly questionable, but if used as a methodological justification rather than as a historical statement of fact, then it would entail that we should refrain from studying philosophies framed divergently from our own – hardly a stance likely to engender much learning.[8] As for the common claims that Tibetan materials preserve more 'accurate' and/or 'sophisticated' versions of Indian Buddhist texts and ideas, the former position is rendered highly problematic simply by the fact that Tibetan translations of and commentaries to originally Indian works almost invariably post-date their Chinese counterparts (where both exist), and this often by several centuries. Finally, the refinement and complexity (not to mention sheer quantity) of Chinese Buddhist philosophical texts, as articulated in response to their Indian antecedents, should become amply apparent upon reading *A Distant Mirror* – and *a fortiori*, of course, upon reading the original texts themselves.

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[7] Edelglass 2013 485-486.

[8] I should add that Edelglass is, on my reading at least, *not* using this position as a methodological justification, but rather as a historical statement of fact; one, moreover, that he then adduces as evidence for the fact that "Buddhist traditions are vast and diverse" (486).

All of this should go some way toward highlighting the importance of *A Distant Mirror* as a corrective to (rarely admitted but nonetheless) persistent academic assumptions according to which Chinese Buddhism is a syncretic deviation from some "pure or unadulterated"[9] Indian ur-form of Buddhism. It would be well in this context to quote its editors' formulation of their choice of title,[10] as this eloquently echoes, and thereby hopefully justifies, my foregoing harangue. Lin and Radich write (15-16):

> We intend our title to encapsulate a methodological intuition, which we believe runs as a common thread through almost all of the studies collected here – that scholars should seriously consider the possibility that a wider set of features of the Chinese tradition, treated carefully, might serve us as a 'distant mirror' accurately displaying features common to Buddhism and elsewhere outside China.

> In other words, the studies in this volume typically set out to explore, in some detailed case, the possibility that even where Chinese Buddhism appears in some respect or degree to depart from what we know of its Indian counterparts, Chinese developments might still in some ways inform us about 'genuine' Buddhism (to use a dangerous turn of phrase), rather than representing mere distortions of, or departures from, an Indian gold standard.

As such, this edited collection is not first and foremost a philosophical study of various features of Chinese Buddhist logic and epistemology;[11] nor is

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[9] Sharf 2002 16. Sharf goes on to criticize what he calls the "ubiquitous" rubric of syncretism in the study of Chinese religion (17); see especially pp17-21.

[10] This is taken from the title of Barbara Tuchman's book on the history of fourteenth-century Europe, itself already co-opted by Jan Nattier in a section on 'A Distant Mirror: Studying Indian Buddhism through Chinese and Tibetan Texts' in Nattier 2003 (cf. 15).

[11] Representative works in this field include (in English) Kurtz 2011 and the special issue of the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* edited by Zhihua Yao (2010a), as well as (in Chinese) Fang 2002 and Yu 2009. Mention must also be made of the pioneering work of Giuseppe Tucci in this field (see e.g. Tucci 1929). It should be noted, however, that the majority of Chinese-language works on Buddhist logic and epistemology, like their European-language counterparts, treat of Indian, as opposed to Chinese, Buddhist logic and epistemology; see e.g. Shen 2007, Lin 2006, and the various important works of Weihong Zheng cited by Zamorski in his contribution to the volume (cf. 181-182). All these works include extensive bibliographies; here and in the following note I intend only to invoke some of the major contributions, but I am all too aware of the inadequacy of my lists.

it a historical study of the transmission and evolution of Indian philosophical ideas into China.[12] Rather, although contributing to both these fields, *A Distant Mirror* seeks to investigate Chinese contributions to philosophical debates (also) occupying Indian Buddhist minds. In so doing, the book tries to strike a balance between what the editors refer to as two methodological errors: that of incautiously taking Chinese characterizations of Indian Buddhist philosophical issues at face value without adequately considering the originality of Chinese contributions; and that of more or less dismissing Chinese inputs as uniquely, parochially, Chinese and hence of little use in reconstructing Indian Buddhist philosophical arguments (cf. 17). Instead, by "considering the ideas of Chinese authors and thinkers as independent or alternative developments, equally valid, of ideas and systems also known in India" (17-18), the contributions to *A Distant Mirror* effectively rehabilitate Chinese contributions to Buddhist philosophy as themselves independently worthy of reflection, and simultaneously demonstrate various ways in which such Chinese contributions may profitably illuminate their Indian Buddhist counterparts.

It is well worth noting that this two-fold approach mirrors (!) some of the most sophisticated work currently being produced in the Western academic study of Buddhist philosophy. Thus, it is common practice for Buddhist scholars to draw upon the Western philosophical canon in an effort to both demonstrate the inherent intellectual value of Buddhist philosophical ideas, and elucidate the means by which these may prove valuable to philosophical debates current in the Western context. Such aims have been forcefully expressed by Jay Garfield in several of his own and his co-edited volumes.[13] In his treatment of *The Problem of Intentionality in Classical Buddhist and Cognitive-Scientific Philosophy of Mind*,[14] meanwhile, Dan Arnold weaves together "philosophical ideas and arguments drawn from an exceptionally long list of heavy hitters in modern and contemporary (Western) philosophy (Kant, Sellars, Dennett, McDowell, Locke, Hume, Wittgenstein, Fodor… just to name a few)."[15] Analogous comments

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[12] Representative works in this field include (in English) Shinohara and Schopen 1991 and McRae and Nattier 2012, as well as (in Chinese) Ran 1995 and Huang 2008. Mention must also be made of the pioneering work of Kenneth Ch'en (see e.g. Ch'en 1964) and Erik Zürcher (see e.g. Zürcher 1972) in this field.

[13] See e.g. D'Amato et al. 2009, Cowherds 2011 & 2016, Garfield 2015, Tanaka et al. 2015.

[14] Arnold 2012.

[15] Holder 2015.

could be made regarding Dan Lusthaus' treatment of *Buddhist Phenomenology*,[16] which draws extensively from 20th century Continental thinkers such as Deleuze, Derrida, Husserl, Levinas, Lyotard, Merleau-Ponty, and Ricoeur as well as canonical mainstays such as Berkeley, Nietzsche, and Spinoza; or (to give one final example) Brook Ziporyn's *Philosophical Experiments with Tiantai Buddhism*,[17] which not only adds extended discussions of Bataille, Davidson, Frege, Freud, Hegel, Lacan, Sartre, Schopenhauer, and Whitehead to the list (not mention somewhat, ahem, peripheral figures to the Western philosophical canon such as Woody Allen, Bugs Bunny, and Groucho Marx), but could well be read *in toto* as a deliberate (and highly original) attempt to graft Chinese Buddhist ideas onto Western philosophical questions.

All of this is proffered as evidence of the prevalence, and more importantly utility, of inter-weaving Buddhist and non-Buddhist philosophy in relevant contemporary scholarly literature. Such an approach has led, and continues to lead, to some of the most philosophically interesting discussions and applications of Buddhist philosophy published in recent decades. Where *A Distant Mirror* differs from these approaches, of course, is in drawing not on sources vastly removed temporally, spatially, and culturally from Buddhist contexts, but from the direct Chinese heirs to Indian Buddhist philosophical thought. If any doubts remain as to the validity of using Chinese Buddhist sources to illuminate Indian Buddhist philosophical arguments, then surely such doubts should invalidate all the more the common (and, again, philosophically highly fruitful) practice of using non-Buddhist sources from the Christianate Western philosophical traditions to illuminate Buddhist philosophy, whether its geographical provenance is South- or East-Asian. Conversely, if it is fine to read Dharmakīrti via Berkeley or Zhiyi via Derrida, then surely it is at least as fine to read Dignāga via Huiyuan or Vasubandhu via Xuanzang.

Turning now to a more direct review of the volume's contents, the editors provide a useful one-paragraph summary of each contribution in their 'Introduction' (22-31). In doing so, they divide the book into three major sections: 1) 'Logic and epistemology' comprising the chapters by Funayama Toru (船山徹), Chen-kuo Lin (林鎮國), Shoryu Katsura (桂紹隆), Shinya Moriyama (護山真也), and Jakub Zamorski; 2) '*Yogācāra* ideas and authors', comprising the chapters by Ching Keng (耿晴), A. Charles Muller, Junjie

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[16] Lusthaus 2002.
[17] Ziporyn 2004.

Chu (褚俊傑), and Zhihua Yao (姚治華); and 3) 'Other Indian ideas', comprising the chapters by Hans-Rudolf Kantor, Chien-hsing Ho (何建興), Yoke Meei Choong (宗玉嬡), Michael Radich, and Michael Zimmermann. In terms of structure, use of the book would have been facilitated by formally repartitioning it according to this or some such schema in the 'Contents', particularly as the book's chapters follow the order of sections adumbrated in the 'Introduction'. As it stands, the 'Contents' simply lists the chapters serially, without any section-headings or even numbering – a minor but unfortunate omission.

The main body of *A Distant Mirror* begins with the chapter by Funayama Toru entitled 'Chinese Translations of *Pratyakṣa*' (33-61). Funayama's piece is centrally concerned with Chinese translations and interpretations of the Sanskrit term *pratyakṣa* (direct perception) as *xianliang* (現量). The first half of the chapter traces translations of *pratyakṣa* pre-dating Xuanzang (玄奘, 600/602-664), whose translations from Dignāga (陳那, ca. 480-540) initiated the systematic study of *pramāṇa* theory (因明, means of valid cognition) in China. Thus, Funayama initially demonstrates that Xuanzang himself did not employ *xianliang* consistently throughout his opus, sometimes using *xian* (現) alone, *xianjian* (現見), or *xianzheng lian* (現證量) in its stead. Funayama then works through earlier uses of *xianliang* by translators such as Pimuzhixian (毘目智仙 *Vimokṣaprajñā-ṛṣi, 6th c.) and Qutan Liuzhi (瞿曇流吉 i.e. Prajñāruci 般若流吉, also known as Gautama Prajñāruci 瞿曇般若流吉, fl. 538-543), Jingying Huiyuan (淨影慧遠, 523-592),[18] and Prabhākaramitra (波羅頗蜜多羅 /波羅頗迦羅蜜多羅, 565-633), as well as alternative translations of *pratyakṣa* by Kumārajīva (鳩摩羅什, ca. 350-409), Tanwuchen (曇無讖, 385-433), Guṇabhadra (求那跋陀羅, 394-468), Jijiaye (吉迦夜, fl. ca. 472), Bodhiruci (菩提流[/留]支, d. 527), and Paramārtha (真諦, 499-569). These sources lead Funayama to conclude "that *xianliang* had already been used before Xuanzang… and that as a translation, *xianliang* corresponds to *pratyakṣaṃ pramāṇam*, and not to *pratyakṣa* in the strict sense" (46). In the second section of his piece, Funayama moves temporally on from Xuanzang to determine how the term *pratyakṣa* was understood, and 'sinified', by later Chinese scholar-monks. Funayama argues that what he takes to be the artificial and ambiguous nature of the term *xianliang* "guided later scholars in the direction of philosophical developments different from those seen in Indian

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[18] Funayama mistakenly has 淨影寺慧遠.

Buddhism." (50) Funayama thus traces original Chinese understandings of the term in the work of Xuanzang's direct disciple Kuiji (窺基, 632-682), Jingyan (淨眼, d.u.), Tankuang (曇曠, 8ᵗʰ c.), and Zhixu (智旭, 1599-1655); understandings which make "sense only in the Chinese language, and not in Sanskrit" (53). On this basis, Funayama concludes by stating that "It is almost meaningless to say, on the basis of Indic language, that the Chinese way of understanding *xianliang* was a mistake, Rather, it can be evaluated as a new type of development. In this sense, it is an interesting example of what is called the 'Sinification of Buddhist Concepts'" (58).

The chapter by Chen-kuo Lin, entitled 'Epistemology and Cultivation in Jingying Huiyuan's *Essay on the Three Means of Valid Cognition*' (63-99), focuses on Huiyuan's *San liang zhi yi* (三量智義: *Essay*). Lin's stated aim is "to show that the Chinese reception of Indian Buddhist epistemology before the era of Xuanzang was far more significant than has been previously assumed" (63-64). His chapter can helpfully be divided into three major sections. In the first (63-69), Lin provides "a brief historical picture of the way that Buddhist epistemology was introduced from India to China during the fifth and sixth centuries" (64). Following a chronological sketch to this effect, Lin focuses on a topical reconstruction dealing with "first, theological issues, such as arguments for the existence of a soul (*ātman*, *puruṣa*) and cosmic creators (Īśvara, Viṣṇu); second, the metaphysical problem of the existence of the external world; and third, the relationship between epistemology and meditation" (65). In the second major section (69-84), Lin embarks on the doctrinal study of Huiyuan's *Essay*, which itself is a chapter from Huiyuan's major work, *A Compendium of the Great Vehicle* (大乘義章). Lin's analysis is structured in terms of Huiyuan's own threefold understanding of *pramāṇa*s (量)[19] as *pratyakṣa*,[20] *anumāna*,[21] and *āptāgama*.[22]

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[19] Lin translates 量 on its own consistently as 'means of valid cognition', but he leaves it unmarked when translating Huiyuan's text. Thus, for example, *xianliang* (現量) is consistently translated as 'perception' rather than, say, 'perception as a means of valid cognition' – effectively the Chinese equivalent of Sanskrit *pratyakṣa* rather than *pratyakṣaṃ pramāṇam*. Lin's rendering is thus freer than that necessitated by the finely-grained analysis of these and related terms' translation histories as detailed in the previous chapter by Funayama.

[20] Lin states that this "is rendered in Chinese by *xian* (現)" (72), but it appears consistently as *xianliang* (現量) in Huiyuan's text, the which compound term Lin translates consistently as 'perception'.

[21] Chinese *biliang* (比量), which Lin translates consistently as 'inference'.

[22] Chinese *jiaoliang* (教量), which Lin translates variously as 'authoritative teaching', 'authority', 'teaching', or 'scripture'.

> Throughout, Lin's focus [is] on Huiyuan's epistemology as it relates to ontology and meditation. For Huiyuan, epistemology and ontology will make no sense if they are not placed within the context of meditation. Hence, it is the main aim of this paper to demonstrate that only when the context of epistemology and meditation has been properly exposed are we able to fully understand the soteriological project in the early stage of Chinese Buddhist logico-epistemology (71).

Finally, the last section of Lin's chapter (85-97) is an appendix comprising a complete English translation of Huiyuan's *Essay*.[23] The slight inconsistencies in Lin's translation choices I have noted (which lead the translation to be a little free at times but at no point incorrect) do not overly detract from what is otherwise a fine rendering of a text Lin correctly identifies as "a gem among early Chinese Buddhist epistemological treatises" (63).

Shoryu Katsura's chapter, entitled 'The Theory of *Apoha* in Kuiji's *Cheng weishi lun Shuji*' (101-120), is the first of two dealing principally with Kuiji. In this chapter, Katsura's stated goal is "to show the traces of the transmission of Dignāga's theory of *apoha* in Kuiji's work, which will indicate that Xuanzang, though he did not translate [Dignāga's main work, the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, 集量論] & [Dignāga's auto-commentary or *Svavṛtti*] into Chinese, must have discussed [it]" (105). Katsura thus demonstrates that Kuiji refers to and indeed develops on Dignāga's theory of *apoha*[24] in his *Cheng weishi lun Shuji* (成唯識論述記),[25] a commentary to Xuanzang's *Cheng weishi lun* (成唯識論). The importance of Katsura's contribution lies in the fact that, since "Yijing's (義淨, 635-713) translation of Dignāga's masterwork… did not survive, it has been easy for modern scholars to assume that classical Chinese Buddhist scholars did not know *apoha* theory" (23) – an assumption Katsura's chapter seeks to undermine. This he works toward initially through a survey of Dignāga's own theory of *apoha* in its epistemological and, more briefly, semantic aspects. He then outlines Kuiji's own relevant positions with ample and extended citations from his primary text to argue for five conclusions.

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[23] The Chinese source text is given as T44:1851.670c-672a.

[24] Katsura defines this in Dignāgan terms as "exclusion/negation, or more precisely, 'exclusion/negation of others' (*anyāpoha/anyavyāṛtti*)" (104).

[25] Kuiji's commentary is also well known in Chinese as 成唯識論疏, 唯識論述記, and 唯識述記.

One, as per Dignāga, Kuiji posits perception (*pratyakṣa*, 現量) and inference (*anumāna*, 比量) as the only two means of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*, 量), which respectively cognize the particular characteristic (*svalakṣaṇa*, 自相) and general characteristic (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, 共相) of an object. Two, Kuiji "defines the general characteristic as 'exclusion of others' (*zheyu* 遮餘)" to conclude that "the exclusion of others is the general nature and function of conceptual cognition" (118). Three, and still following Dignāga, Kuiji argues that the particular characteristic "is beyond the reach of conceptual cognition. Thus, it cannot be expressed by any verbal designation (yanshuo 言説)" (118). Departing from Dignāga, however, Kuiji then goes on to argue along Mahāyāna lines that, four, "ultimately speaking, even the general characteristic cannot be expressed by any verbal designation" (118).[26] Finally, Kuiji proposes a hierarchy between both particular and general characteristics, whereas Dignāga had viewed only that latter as hierarchically related.

The chapter by Shinya Moriyama, entitled 'A Comparison between the Indian and Chinese Interpretations of the Antinomic Reason (*Viruddhāvyabhicārin*)' (121-150), is principally concerned with Kuiji's *Yinming ru zhengli lun shu* (因明入正理論疏), his great commentary to the *Nyāyapraveśa*[*ka*] (因明入正理論) or *Introduction to Logic* generally ascribed to Śaṅkarasvāmin (商羯羅主，6th c.).[27] Specifically, Moriyama is concerned "to demonstrate the originality of Kuiji's interpretation [of antinomic reason] when compared with various interpretations by Indian commentators on the [*Nyāyapraveśa*]" (122). Moriyama thus devotes some time to detailing the Indian Buddhist understandings of antinomic reason espoused by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti (法称, 6/7th c.), as well as the Jain interpretations of Haribhadrasūri (8th c.) and Pārśvadevagaṇi (13th c.). In general, *viruddhāvyabhicārin* is unique among what Dignāga calls the set of inconclusive reasons (*anaikāntika*) among fallacious reasons (*hetvābhāsa*) in that, "whereas the inconclusive nature of the others is based on their not fulfilling the three characteristics of a valid logical reason (*trairūpya* 因三相), the antinomic reason does fulfill the three

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[26] Kuiji's position is spelled out at T1830:43.288b15-21, which is cited and translated by Katsura on 113.

[27] Moriyama uses *Nyāyapraveśaka* as the title throughout instead of the more usual *Nyāyapraveśa*, even though he admits that this is in accordance with Jain practice as opposed to "the Tibetan and Chinese traditions" (n2, 121). I have preferred to side with the standard rendering. Note also that Moriyama makes subsidiary use of Kuiji's *Dacheng fayuan yi lin zhang* (大乘法苑義林章).

characteristics" (122) but contradicts other propositions of its proponent and thereby drives her/his "position into self-contradiction" (139).[28] Moriyama presents Kuiji's understanding of antinomic reason as "a complex mix of insight, original thought, and misunderstanding of Indian ideas" (25). Thus, as an example of the latter, Kuiji interprets the term *viruddhāvyabhicārin* (相違決定) as legitimately either a genitive *tatpuruṣa* compound (i.e. to mean 相違之決定), which is indeed grammatically permissible in Sanskrit, or as an instrumental *tatpuruṣa* compound (i.e. to mean 決定令相違), which as Moriyama points out is grammatically impermissible. Insightfully, however, Kuiji introduces three novel ways to classify the fallacy of antinomic reason: 1) as based on the parameters of the particular debate in which it is being used (cf. 139-143); 2) as a subset of "the fallacious thesis called 'thesis contradicted by another inference' (*anumānaviruddha*)" (140); and 3) as itself typologically categorizable according to the four types of 'contradictory reason' (*viruddha*) proposed by Dignāga (cf. 140). In all, Moriyama's chapter succeeds in showing "that the dynamics at work in the production of distinctive East Asian interpretations of Buddhist ideas can be complex, and irreducible to simplistic models" (25).

The final chapter in the section on 'Logic and epistemology' is that by Jakub Zamorski entitled 'The Problem of Self-Refuting Statements in Chinese Buddhist Logic' (151-182). This segues neatly from Moriyama's contribution in that it begins with and will go on to treat in detail an issue raised by Xuanzang's translation of Śaṅkarasvāmin's *Nyāyapraveśa*, as well as of Dignāga's *Nyāyamukha*. Within these treatises, Zamorski singles out two examples of 'pseudo-theses' (*pakṣābhāsa* 似宗): 1) "My mother is that barren woman" (我母是其石女), and 2) "All statements are false" (一切言皆是妄) (both 152). These statements, Zamorski proposes, "all Chinese (and in fact all East Asian) commentators of Indian treatises on Buddhist logic regarded… as two samples of one and the same fallacy, labeled according to the text of the *Introduction to Logic* [i.e. *Nyāyapraveśa*] as 'inconsistency with one's own words' (*zi yu xiangwei* 自語相違, after Sanskrit *svavacanaviruddha*)" (153). Although both of the cited examples are "untenable on logical grounds

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[28] Katsura has already spelled out the repartitioning of fallacious reasons in Dignāga's *Nyāyamukha* (因明正理門論) or *Gate of Logic* as threefold: "the pseudo-thesis (*pakṣābhāsa*, *sizong* 似宗), the pseudo-reason (*hetvābhāsa*, *siyin* 似因) and the pseudo-example (*dṛṣṭāntābhāsa*, *siyu* 似喻)" (103).

alone" (154), traditional Western logic would consider them as distinct; the first being "classified as *contradictio in terminis* or *contradictio in adiecto*, a statement whose predicate is in conflict with its subject" (154), and the second being "a canonical example of a statement that is both self-referential and self-refuting" (154) – a variation on the well-known Liar's Paradox. With all this in mind, the stated aim of Zamorski's paper is to analyze the interpretations of these sentences by "Chinese commentators to see how they approached the logical problems involved" (155). Specifically, Zamorski focuses on the commentaries by Wengui (文軌, d.u.) in his *Yinming ru zhengli lun shu* (因明入正理論疏), Shentai (神泰, d. u.) in his *Li men lun shuji* (理門論述記), and Kuiji (窺基, 632-682) in his own *Yinming ru zhengli lun shu* (因明入正理論疏 or, as it became known, *Da shu* 大疏). Zamorski then goes on to briefly survey later interpretations by the Hossō-school Japanese monk Zenju (善珠, 723-797) in his *Inmyō ron sho myōtō shō* (因明論疏明燈抄) and the Ming-dynasty Chinese monk Zhenjie (真界, d.u.) in his *Yinming ru zhengli lun jie* (因明入正理論解), as well as the use of 'inconsistency with one's own words' as a rhetorical tool by the Silla-era Korean monk Wŏnhyo (元曉, 617-686) in his *P'an piryang non* (判比量論). This material allows Zamorski to tentatively conclude:

> The comparison between Chinese approaches to the fallacy of 'inconsistency with one's own words' and their possible models extracted from Indian works extant in the Chinese Buddhist canon[29] suggests that the interpretations of Chinese monks are not only original, but also in many ways superior to their antecedents in Indian literature (176).

Ching Keng begins the series of chapters nominally concerned with 'Yogācāra ideas and authors' with his paper entitled 'A Re-examination of the Relationship between the *Awakening of Faith* and Dilun School Thought, Focusing on the works of Huiyuan' (183-215). Keng focuses on what he characterizes as "the most distinctive doctrinal feature" (213) of the *Awakening of Faith* (*Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論), viz. that "defiled phenomena are modes of the Truth or Thusness (*tathatā*)" (183) or, to put it in other words, that there is no distinction to be made "between unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*) and

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[29] Such as for example the *Tarka-śāstra* (*Rushi lun* 如實論) attributed to Vasubandhu (世親, 4-5th c.).

conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) *dharma*s" (183). Supporters of the Chinese provenance of the *Awakening of Faith* have typically traced it back to the Dilun (i.e Daśabhūmikā) School (地論宗) of which Huiyuan was the foremost master. But Keng's paper argues that "Huiyuan has a very different understanding of the origin of defiled phenomena from that described in the *Awakening of Faith*" (185) – a doctrinal difference which "entitles us to conclude that the *Awakening of Faith* is not a direct outgrowth of Dilun School thought" (186). Keng's innovative method is to "avoid citing any passages from works by Huiyuan in which the influence of the *Awakening of Faith* is most obvious" (189). As such, Keng's approach runs counter to the prevalent use in relevant scholarship of Huiyuan's *On the Meaning of the Eight Consciousnesses* (*Bashi yi* 八識義), an admittedly *Awakening of Faith*-influenced chapter within Huiyuan's doxographical *Compendium of the Great Vehicle* (*Dasheng yi zhang* 大乘義章). Instead, Keng bases his argument primarily on alternative sections of the *Compendium of the Great Vehicle* (though he also utilizes several other of Huiyuan's works). Having argued at length for his aforestated conclusion, Keng proposes two further ramifications of his findings. Firstly, it emerges that Huiyuan's opus should be divided into those works "evincing little or no influence from the *Awakening of Faith*, and those showing its strong influence" (212), with the former being characteristic of Dilun School thought while the latter are not. Secondly, Keng cautions us against "misinterpret[ing] Dilun School works by viewing them through the lens of the *Awakening of Faith*" (213). The importance of this point is such that I can do no better than quote the editors' summary of it in full:

> An important broader implication of Keng's argument Huiyuan's thought, Dilun thought, and even the thought of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* [*Lengqie jing* 楞伽經] has been anachronistically misinterpreted through the later, typically Chinese lens of the *Awakening of Faith*. This suggests the sobering possibility that typically 'sinitic' (or even 'sinified') developments became so pervasive in the later East Asian tradition that their stamp may still lie heavy upon parts of modern Buddhology itself, and that we might therefore overlook both evidence and products of 'sinifying' processes, and even the actual features of Indian materials (26).

The chapter by A. Charles Muller, entitled 'A Pivotal Text for the Definition of the Two Hindrances in East Asia: Huiyuan's "Erzhang yi" Chapter' (217-270) focuses on Huiyuan's *The Two Hindrances* (二障義). Indeed, the bulk of Muller's contribution comprises a full and well annotated translation of this text (236-267), which constitutes another chapter from Huiyuan's *Compendium of the Great Vehicle* (大乘義章). Muller translates the version of the text copied into the commentary to the *Awakening of Faith* known as the *Dasheng qixin lun yishu* (大乘起信論義疏) ascribed to Huiyuan or, if not the master himself, one of his close disciples.[30] Muller's accompanying notes are copious, ranging from editorial amendments of scribal errors, through citations of passages referred to by Huiyuan and Muller's own references to other relevant passages in the Buddhist canon on the topic at hand, to historically attuned explanatory glosses. Apart from this translation, Muller's contribution largely consists in introducing the work, and particularly in discussing its treatment of the "afflictive and cognitive obstacles to liberation [which] are formally organized under the rubrics of the 'two hindrances' – the afflictive hindrances (*kleśa-āvaraṇa*, *fannaozhang* 煩惱障) and the cognitive hindrances (*jñeya-āvaraṇa*; *zhizhang* 智障, *suozhizhang* 所知障)" (217-218). Muller argues counter to the prevailing view, according to which the two hindrances are "hallmark concepts of the Yogâcāra school" (218), to demonstrate that they are in fact broadly Mahāyāna categories given most extensive expression in the Tathāgatagarbha tradition which developed in East Asia out of the Dilun school. Muller draws on an impressive array of primary sources, including most notably the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra* (解深密經), *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (瑜伽師地論), *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (攝大乘論), *Fodi jing lun* (佛地經論 **Buddhabhūmi-sūtra-śāstra*), and *Cheng weishi lun* (成唯識論) for the Weishi-Yogācāra school; and the *Śrīmāladevī-[siṃhanāda-]sūtra* (勝鬘師子吼一乘大方便方廣經), *Ratnagotravibhāga* (究竟一乘寶性論), *Benye jing* (本業經), and *Dasheng qixin lun* (大乘起信論) for the Tathāgatagarbha tradition. Following two short sections outlining the 'Parameters for the two hindrances' (218-222) as understood through Wŏnhyo's comprehensive treatise on the topic (entitled 二障義 just like Huiyuan's work but translated differently by Muller as *System of the Two Hindrances*),[31] and briefly stating some of the 'Discrepancies' (222-223)

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[30] For the issue of authorship, see Muller's note 7 (222).

[31] As he mentions, Muller has translated Wŏnhyo's treatise in Muller & Nguyen 2012.

between Yogācāra and Tathāgatagarbha understandings, Muller surveys 'The *Tathāgatagarbha* system of the hindrances as explained by Huiyuan' (224-229) as well as 'The completed Yogâcāra system of the hindrances' (229-235).[32] Although Muller admits that, "[i]n a general sense, the systems of the two hindrances are quite similar in their structure and function in Yogâcāra and Tathāgatagarbha" (222), his analysis proposes the historical thesis that Huiyuan's work (Tathāgatagarbhic in orientation, and significantly pre-dating the systematic articulations of the Yogācārins) may in fact have "spurred some Yogâcāra scholars into action in this matter" (228).

The chapter by Junjie Chu, entitled 'On the Notion of *Kaidaoyi* (*Avakāśadānāśraya*) as Discussed in Xuanzang's *Cheng weishi lun*' (271-311), details Xuanzang's understanding of *kaidaoyi* (開導依), "literally, 'open-leading basis', or 'basis in terms of opening the way for the subsequent awareness and leading it to arise'", the third of "the three bases of thought and thought concomitants (*cittacaitta*)" of "the seventh awareness, i.e. the defiled mind" (all 271). As Chu states, "[t]he main purpose of this paper is to examine the meaning of the two elements of the term *kaidaoyi*, namely *kaidao* and *yi*, analyzing their possible origin in the Indian sources of both the Abhidharma and the Yogācāra, and to propose a reconstruction of their original Sanskrit forms" (272). Chu initially argues that the first element in the term, *kaidao*, "must be a translation of the Sanskrit word *avakāśadāna*" (305) on the basis of a critical survey of the term's uses and glosses in Kuiji's commentary to Xuanzang's text (i.e. the *Cheng weishi lun shuji* 成唯識論述記), Abhidharma treatises such as the *Wushi piposhalun*[33] (五事毘婆沙論 *Pañcavastukavibhāṣā-śāstra*) and *Apidamo dapiposha lun* (阿毘達摩大毘婆沙論 *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā*), Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*[*bhāṣya*] (*Apidamo jushe lun* 阿毘達摩俱舍論), and the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (*Yuqieshi lun* 瑜伽師地論). On this basis, Chu then argues that the complete term, *kaidaoyi*, "reflects a different version of *samanantarapratyaya*, referring to the awareness that has passed away in the immediately antecedent moment, called 'mind', which has the function of giving way in order for the subsequent awareness to arise" (305). As such, Chu concludes that the term "is not a translation of the Sanskrit word *krāntāśraya*, as Kuiji's phonetic transcription *jielanduo* [羯爛多] suggests,

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[32] As he mentions, this last section but briefly summarizes Muller's own more expansive treatments in Muller & Nguyen 2012 and Muller 2013.

[33] Chu mistakenly transliterates the title as *Wushi biposhalun*.

but rather, of *avakāśadānāśraya, 'basis that gives way'" (306). In the final section of his chapter, Chu outlines the three different interpretations of the function and nature of the term *avakāśadānāśraya discussed in Xuanzang's base text and attributed by Kuiji to commentarial traditions founded by Nanda (難陀 d.u.), Sthiramati (安惠/安慧 c. 475-555), and Dharmapāla (護法 530-561) respectively. In all, Chu's paper constitutes a clear example of how Chinese sources can function to not only reconstruct Sanskritic terms and illuminate Indic ideas, but also themselves meaningfully contribute to Buddhist epistemological thought.

The chapter by Zhihua Yao, entitled 'Yogācāra Critiques of the Two Truths' (313-335), uses "some scattered sources from Maitreyanātha [慈氏/弥勒, c. 270-350], Asaṅga [無著, 4-5th c.], and Vasubandhu [世親, 4-5th c.]… [to demonstrate] that they criticized the Madhyamaka version of the two truths doctrine on the basis of the Yogācāra theory of the three natures" (333). Yao's chapter begins with his own reductionist critique of the Madhyamaka theory of two truths, and the author's own affinity for the Yogācāra side of the debate is made clear at several subsequent points in the chapter. Thus, for example, Yao echoes his earlier characterization[34] of the Mādhyamikas' view of emptiness as one that leads to a "nihilist end" equivalent to claiming (in the words of the Yogācāra critique of Maitreyanātha) that "nothing exists" (一切皆無) – even though he admits that "[t]hose who are sympathetic to the Madhyamaka position may find this characterization inaccurate" (all 319). In any case, the main thrust of Yao's contribution is not so much philosophical as historical: He is concerned to demonstrate that the aforementioned Yogācārin authors did in fact attack Madhyamaka tenets such as the two truths and emptiness prior to Bhāviveka's (清辯/清辨, c. 500-578) well-known attack on the Yogācāra theory of the three natures in his Madhyamakahṛdaya-kārikā (中觀心論), its auto-commentary the Tarkajvāla (中觀心論諸思擇焰), and the Prajñāpradīpa (般若燈論) in the 6th century. Thus, Yao initially surveys the critiques of the "nihilist (nāstika)" (316) Madhyamaka position presented in the Yogācārabhūmi (瑜伽師地論) (which he, following the predominant Chinese tradition, ascribes to Maitreyanātha rather than Asaṅga), with subsidiary reference to its commentary, the Yugaron gi (Yuqielun ji 瑜伽論記), by the Korean scholar-monk Dunnyun/Dunlun (遁倫, also known as Doryun/Daolun 道倫, c. 650-730). Yao then charts the criticisms of the two

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[34] Cf. Yao 2010b, 84-85.

truths as found in the *Foxing lun* (佛性論 *Buddhadhātu-śāstra*) ascribed to Vasubandhu and translated into Chinese by Paramārtha (真諦, 499-569), and the *Shun zhong lun* (順中論 *Madhyamakānusāra*) ascribed to Asaṅga and translated into Chinese by Gautama Prajñāruci (瞿曇般若流支, fl. 538-543).[35] On Yao's reading, these Yogācārin authors were concerned "to resist a dualistic tendency towards positing existence versus nonexistence, and to maintain a holistic worldview by going beyond this dualistic tendency" (333) purportedly characteristic of their Mādhyamika opponents. As a whole, Yao's study rehearses and reinforces the well-established doxographical opposition between the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra schools in that it seeks, in the words of the editors, "to correct misconceptions concerning the Buddhist approach to reality among contemporary scholars, who he regards have fallen under the influence of Madhyamaka; and to champion a Yogācāra perspective that he regards as more plausible and fruitful" (28). Given this aim, it is unfortunate that Yao was unable to take the more nuanced understandings of the two schools' relationships, as detailed by the various contributors to Garfield and Westerhoff's subsequently published volume (2015), into account.

The final section of the book, on 'Other Indian ideas', begins with a chapter by Hans-Rudolf Kantor entitled 'Philosophical Aspects of Sixth-Century Chinese Buddhist Debates on "Mind and Consciousness"' (337-395). Kantor frames his study of 'mind and consciousness' (心識) in terms of the inseparability or 'conjunction of truth and falsehood' (真妄和合 – Huiyuan's formulation), a notion the ubiquity of which in the Madhyamaka/Sanlun (三論), Tathāgatagarbha, Yogācāra, Dilun, and Tiantai (天臺) sources Kantor adduces shows, he claims, "that it may point in the direction of an essential and general feature of Chinese Mahāyāna thought" (337-338). As such, Kantor states his aim as "to discuss, analyze, compare, and identify, from a philosophical point of view, similarities and differences between the various views of the relationship between truth and falsehood prevalent in Mahāyāna Chinese Buddhist debates on 'mind and consciousness' in the sixth century" (340-341). To this end, Kantor devotes one section each to Madhyamaka , Tathāgatagarbha, and Yogācāra sources, followed by one section on the Dilun and Tiantai positions as exemplified in the writings of Huiyuan and Zhiyi (智顗, 538-597) respectively. The Madhyamaka view is presented primarily

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[35] Yao mistakenly transliterates the Chinese name 'Jutan Boreliuzhi'; it should be 'Qutan Boreliuzhi' – who is also known as Qutan Liuzhi (瞿曇流吉).

via the *Zhong lun* (中論) – the Chinese translation of Nāgārjuna's (龍樹, c. 150-250) *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* inclusive of the commentary attributed to *Piṅgala (Qingmu 青目, 3ʳᵈ c.) – as well as the *Da zhi du lun* (大智度論 *Mahaprajñāpāramitopadeśa*) attributed to Nāgārjuna and Nāgārjuna's *Vigrahavyāvartanī* (迴諍論). According to Kantor's reading of these texts, dynamically differentiating truth and falsehood as correlatively dependent "in fact *realizes* inseparability, whereas separating, or seeing truth and falsehood as independent or mutually excluding realms, entails reifications *confusing* the two" (348 emphases original). Kantor's survey of Tathāgatagarbha sources relies primarily on the *Śrīmāladevī-sūtra*, though in the course of his exposition Kantor also draws on sources as disparate as the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (大般涅槃經) and relevant commentaries and treatises by Huiyuan, Zhiyi, Jizang (吉藏, 549-623), Kuiji, Fazang (法藏, 643-712), Zhanran (湛然, 711-782), and Chengguan (澄觀, 738-839). The following section "discusses truth and falsehood as they are viewed according to the Yogācāra concept of Mind in Asaṅga's *Compendium of the Great Vehicle* (*Mahāyānasaṃgraha-śāstra*, *She dasheng lun* 攝大乘論) which centers on the doctrine of *ālaya*-consciousness" (364). Kantor states that "[c]ompared to that of Madhyamaka and Tathāgatagarbha, the Yogācāra interpretation of the relationship between truth and falsehood seems to resort to a more dualistic explanatory pattern" (372), though he adds that the teaching of the 'three natures' (*trisvabhāva* 三性) entails that even here truth and falsehood are "not completely separated from each other" (372). Finally, Kantor turns to indigenously Chinese debates on mind and consciousness, with specific focus on Huiyuan's *Treatise on the Meaning of the Great Vehicle* (*Dasheng yi zhang* 大乘義章) and the Tiantai viewpoint espoused in Zhiyi's *Great Calming and Contemplation* (*Mohe zhi guan* 摩訶止觀). Although Kantor describes significant differences in the ways his various sources understand mind and consciousness, he concludes that "the common basis of all the models discussed… is the constructivist approach to the sense of reality, which specifically examines the inseparability of truth and falsehood in both our understanding and the way we exist in the world" (394).

The chapter by Chien-hsing Ho, entitled 'The Way of Nonacquisition: Jizang's Philosophy of Ontic Indeterminacy' (397-418), "examine[s] Jizang's key writings in an attempt to clarify his ontological position" (398). In order to do so, Ho first provides a brief and uncontroversial reading of Nāgārjuna's doctrine of emptiness, on the understanding that this constituted the philosophical

groundwork for Jizang's thought, as indeed for Sanlun thought more generally. He then takes Kumārajīva's occasional translation of *svabhāva* as 'determinate nature' (定性) (in addition to its more established translation as 'self-nature' 自性) in his rendering of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* (中論) as a springboard to discussion of ontological in/determinacy in Jizang's forebear Sengzhao (僧肇, c. 374-414). On Ho's reading of Sengzhao, "[t]he way the myriad things ordinarily appear to us is already saturated with concepts, which yet cannot accurately represent the way things really are" (401); that is, as ultimately "neither existent nor nonexistent" (403). According to Ho, Jizang takes Sengzhao's account of the conventionally true perspectivally determined "notional codependence" (401) of things, and conversely their supremely true "indeterminable state of quiescence" (405), as the direct basis for his own understanding of ontic indeterminacy. For Jizang, "the myriad things are codependent, indeterminate, and interrelated" (409), and true understanding of them is attained through what he refers to interchangeably as 'nonacquisition' (無得), 'nonabindingness' (無住), 'nonattachment' (無執), or 'nondependence' (無依) (cf. 398). Ho devotes the final section of his paper to an investigation of Jizang's conception of the 'Way' (道), although his argument often uses alternative terms such as 'principle' (理 e.g. 398) or 'the Real' (實相 e.g. 412-413) in its stead. Ho argues that Jizang's 'Way' is variously understood as equivalent to nonacquisition (cf. 410), as "an ineffable nondual quiescence wherein both oneself and things are equal and conceptually undifferentiated" (412), as "virtually the same as the myriad things" (413), and as "the preeminent source of soteriological value" (416) depending on the particular perspective or level of truth Jizang is addressing at a given moment – all of which, Ho admits, "makes it difficult to ascertain his genuine stance" (414). As Ho himself acknowledges, whereas the works of Nāgārjuna (and of other Indian Mādhyamikas) "have been studied intensively by modern scholars" (398), the tentative nature of his own conclusions bespeaks the need for much further research in the philosophical yield of Jizang and his fellow Chinese heirs to Indian Madhyamaka.

The chapter by Yoke Meei Choong, entitled 'Divided Opinion among Chinese Commentators on Indian Interpretations of the Parable of the Raft in the *Vajracchedikā*' 419-469), is based on the Buddha's espoused abandonment, at the climax of the parable of the raft found in both the *Majjhima-nikāya* (*Middle Length Discourses* 中阿含經) and the *Vajracchedikā* (*Diamond-sūtra* 金剛般若波羅密經), of both *dharma* (法) and *adharma* (非法). More particularly, Choong is concerned "to unravel the interrelationship of the Indian

and Chinese interpretations of *dharma* and *adharma* in the parable of the raft in the *Vajracchedikā*, and thereby to reveal the attitudes and behavior of the Chinese commentators toward Indian *sūtra*s and commentaries" (420). To this end, Choong charts how the ambiguity of the two crucial terms led to differing interpretations among Indian commentaries to the *Vajracchedikā* mainly extant in Chinese (such as those by Vasubandhu and Asaṅga) and among indigeneous Chinese commentaries by Zhiyi, Jizang, and Kuiji. Indeed, Choong carefully analyzes select passages to demonstrate that such commentarial differences among Chinese exegetes, and their Indian predecessors, followed "two distinct directions, that is, Madhyamaka and Yogācāra" (421). Following a survey of relevant variant readings in the six Chinese translations of the *Vajracchedikā* and a demonstration of the sectarian nature of these variants themselves, Choong goes on to treat at some length the Chinese Madhyamaka and Yogācāra interpretations, taking Zhiyi and Jizang to be affiliated with the former and Kuiji with the latter tradition (cf. 432). In so doing, Choong shows how the various and sectarianly colored commentarial interpretations were themselves based on the selective and strategic use of variant readings. Indeed, she goes on to argue that this hermeneutical division into Madhyamaka and Yogācāra trends was "already discernible in the Chinese translations of the *Vajracchedikā* itself" (450), such that the translations by Kumārajīva and Xuanzang are "compatible with the Madhyamaka" interpretation, whereas that by Paramārtha "propound[s] Yogācāra interpretations of the text" (453), and those by Bodhiruci, Yijing, and Gupta (笈多, also known as Dharmagupta 達摩笈多, d. 619) remain ambivalent due to either the absence of clear textual bias (Gupta), the presence of "mutually inconsistent" (452) translations (Yijing), or the co-presence of dual biases in differing textual versions (Bodhiruci). All this, coupled with her analysis of Indian interpretations of *dharma* and *adharma*, allows Choong to proffer some general conclusions as to "the most plausible interpretation of the parable of the raft in the *Vajracchedikā*" (458). Given the remit of the volume as a whole, however, it is perhaps even more worthwhile citing the assessment of Choong's contribution on the part of the editors, who state forcefully that she

> shows that Chinese scholiast monks were quite capable of picking and choosing among the sources available to them with acute critical acumen, and artfully spinning those sources in the service of their own doctrinal agendas… A picture emerges of Chinese authors not as dupes to Chinese cultural presuppositions,

misunderstanding Indic sources, but rather, as equal and sophisticated contributors to an ongoing, pan-Buddhist discussion about the most consequential questions in large doctrinal systems, engaging with debates that were already conducted in similar terms… in India" (19).

To this I would only add that, though she does not address them directly within the confines of her paper, Choong effectively contributes to much wider debates in literary and translation studies as to the doctrinally subjective nature of purportedly neutral exercises in textual translation and hermeneutics.

The following chapter, by Michael Radich, is entitled 'Ideas about "Consciousness" in Fifth and Sixth Century Chinese Buddhist Debates on the Survival of Death by the Spirit, and the Chinese Background to *Amalavijñāna'* (471-512). In it, Radich focuses

> on tracing the place of concepts of consciousness in the debates… ["about whether or not some part of the sentient being does or does not survive death, to transmigrate and reap *karmic* rewards" (471, emphasis original)], from the early fifth to the early sixth centuries; and, particularly, on presenting a new interpretation of Liang Wudi's (梁武帝, r. 502-549) *Shenming cheng fo yi* (神明成佛義, 'On the Attainment of Buddhahood by the *Shenming*') and its relation to its scriptural sources and intellectual-historical context (472).

Following brief surveys of the Buddhist positions of Lushan Huiyuan (盧山慧遠, 334-416), Zheng Daozi (鄭道子, d.u.), Zong Bing (宗炳, 375-443), and an anonymous Liu Song text perhaps by Huiguan (惠觀, d. c. 443-447), Radich turns to a more extended treatment of the treatise composed by Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty and accompanied by "learned interlinear notes" (483) by Shen Ji (沈績, d.u.). Like its predecessors, this text is concerned to argue for the "survival of death" (473) of some component of the human being – a component typically conceived in terms of 'consciousness' (識), 'spirit' (神), 'mind' (心), or in any case "the mental component in the human being" (473)[36] – on pain of

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[36] Following the lead set by Itō Takatoshi, Radich also mentions the use of compound terms such as 'mind-consciousness' (心識) by Sengrou (僧柔, 431-494) and Zhizang (智藏, 458-522), and 'true spirit' (真神) by Baoliang (寶亮, 444-509) (cf. 495).

rendering the foundational Buddhist teaching of *karma* incoherent. Wudi's term for this entity, "the single, fundamental ground of all the mind's various 'functions' (*yong* 用)" (483) is *shenming* (神明), which Radich renders as "spirit-cum-awareness/illumination" (cf. 483).[37] Through detailed analysis of the intellectual history of this and related notions in texts such as the *Śrīmāladevīsiṃhanāda-sūtra* (勝鬘師子吼一乘大方便方廣經), *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* (大般涅槃經), and *Cheng shi lun* (成實論 **Tattvasiddhi-śāstra* or **Satyasiddhi-śāstra*), as well as of the textual history of the term *shenming* in various Buddhist authors precedent to and, more abundantly, contemporary with Wudi, Radich shows that "Wudi's essay is merely the tip of an iceberg of ideas current in his time, and quite representative of contemporary developments" (502). This leads Radich to more general historical and methodological conclusions. Perhaps most important among the former is Radich's claim that the ideas he traces in this paper "could be regarded as forerunners to, and possible influences upon, the eventual formation of **amalavijñāna* doctrine" (506). Methodologically, Radich's chapter (like many of the other contributions to the volume) effectively demonstrates that certain widely current scholarly conceptions as to the 'sinification' of Buddhist concepts – by which is often meant the supposed "Chinese failure to understand basic Buddhism" (473) – are in fact "excessively simplistic" (504).

Finally, the stated aim of the chapter by Michael Zimmermann, entitled 'The process of Awakening in Early Texts on Buddha-Nature in India' (513-528), is

> to throw some light on the question of how the authors of early texts on buddha-nature (*tathāgatagarbha*, *buddhadhātu* etc.) in India, in the first centuries of the Common Era, perceived the process of awakening, i.e. how they imagined the actual realization of this buddha-nature, and how they described this process in terms of their own underlying vision (513).

Zimmermann's contribution is thus based predominantly on Indian sources, especially the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* (如來藏經) but also the *Ratnagotravibhāga-vyākhyā* (究竟一乘寶性論), with subsidiary reference to the **Tathāgatotpattisaṃbhava-nirdeśa* first translated into Chinese as *Fo shuo*

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[37] Radich also cites uses of other terms such as 'consciousness' (識), 'mind' (心), 'fundamental consciousness' (本識), 'spirit-cum-consciousness' (神識), and 'consciousness-cum-spirit' (識神) by Wudi and Shen Ji (N.B.: Radich transliterates but does not translate the latter two terms; their English renderings are mine).

rulai xingxian jing (佛說如來興顯經) by Dharmarakṣa (竺法護, c. 239-316) and no longer extant in the Sanskrit original. Zimmermann argues that, in these early texts, "two basic concepts of how buddha-nature should be imagined come to light" (514); concepts which he goes on to explain in terms of 'disclosure' and 'development'. According to the theory of disclosure, "living beings already carry perfect buddhahood within themselves… this core [, which] is unknown to the living beings themselves… [and] which all sentient beings have carried within themselves since beginningless time, is already perfect. In itself, it needs no transformation, no refinement, no change at all" (515). By contrast, according to the theory of development, "buddha-nature is an element… not yet fully developed… a germ or an embryo which still needs further ripening and appropriate nurturing in circumstances which would allow this element to come to full perfection" (516). On the basis of this two-fold conception of Buddha-nature in the earliest Indian texts on the topic, Zimmermann goes on to argue briefly for a series of related points; namely that "the early beginnings of buddha-nature thought in India were based on a view which focused on the individual as the major anchoring point and described the issue of awakening from this perspective" (519); that "the exact role of the Buddha on the path to realization is not completely clear" (519) at this stage; and that "the main point seems merely to be to promulgate the new idea that all sentient beings have buddha-nature" (520). This last point leads Zimmermann to "conceive of the oldest layer of buddha-nature texts as belonging to a branch of Mahāyāna Buddhism which is more oriented towards factors of religious emotionality [particularly in terms of *śraddha* – "religious confidence and motivation" (522)] as crucial in the process of attaining liberation" (523). Zimmermann's article then closes with a brief discussion of the 'efficacy of buddhahood', understood in terms of the characteristics automatically manifested by an individual who has attained the realization of Buddha-nature.

The end matter of book includes biographical introductions to the authors, and a detailed index. This last is particularly comprehensive as it includes alphabetical entries to concepts in both Sanskrit and Chinese (transliterated in pinyin) as well as their English translations, and proper names of individuals, schools, and works. Certain entries are marked in bold, but the method by which these emphasized passages have been selected is not stated; nor are the passages in bold *prima facie* the ones that treat the given entry in necessarily the most sustained manner. No consolidated bibliography is provided, though each chapter ends with its own bibliographical matter.

Overall, then, *A Distant Mirror* is a meticulously researched contribution to the study of sixth and seventh century Chinese Buddhist philosophy, particularly as it relates to its Indic antecedents. The book consistently includes the classical Chinese and Sanskrit terms and passages it discusses, and employs an impressive range of primary and secondary sources in these and other languages (primarily Japanese and English, occasionally Tibetan). The several chapters make important contributions to their respective topics, though (in case my detailed review of the several chapters did not make this clear enough) it should be stated that these contributions are typically highly specific. Indeed, the specialized nature of the several chapters' treatment of their highly varied subject matters, coupled with their invariably fine-grained approach to the texts under analysis, means that this volume is certainly *not* intended for the general reader. The individual chapters could well have appeared in any number of the specialist journals mentioned in their bibliographies, such that it will doubtless be the rare reader indeed who works through this hefty volume from cover to cover. What rescues the book as a whole from being merely a heterogeneous collection of articles is its editorial focus on specific sets of issues as elaborated by Chinese Buddhist thinkers on the basis of Indian Buddhist forebears within a specific time frame. Within these parameters, *A Distant Mirror* succeeds in what Zimmermann refers to in his 'Foreword' as the collective aims of the authors

> to push back against a certain parochializing tendency to relegate the study of Chinese materials to the study of questions pertaining to China alone… to problematize a prevalent notion of 'sinification', which has led scholars to consider the relation of Indic to Chinese materials predominantly in terms of the ways Indic ideas and practices were transformed into something ostensibly distinctive to China… [and] to go beyond another paradigm, that of seeing the sixth and seventh centuries in China primarily as the age of the formation and establishment of the so-called 'sects' or 'schools' of 'Chinese' Buddhism… Instead, by bracketing out possibly essentializing notions of 'India' and 'China', these studies attempt to view the ideas they study on their own terms – as valid Buddhist ideas, finding their existence in a rich, 'liminal' space of interchange between two large traditions (10-11).

As such, perhaps the most lasting contribution of *A Distant Mirror* to Buddhist studies resides less in the detailed additions to specialist learning made by its individual chapters than in book's entire methodology. As a pre-eminent embodiment of methodologically sophisticated scholarship in Chinese Buddhist philosophy that consciously transcends outdated and untenable assumptions as to the primal authenticity and supreme distinction of Indian Buddhist thought, *A Distant Mirror* should be required reading for any specialist of Buddhist philosophy in any of its myriad manifestations.

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