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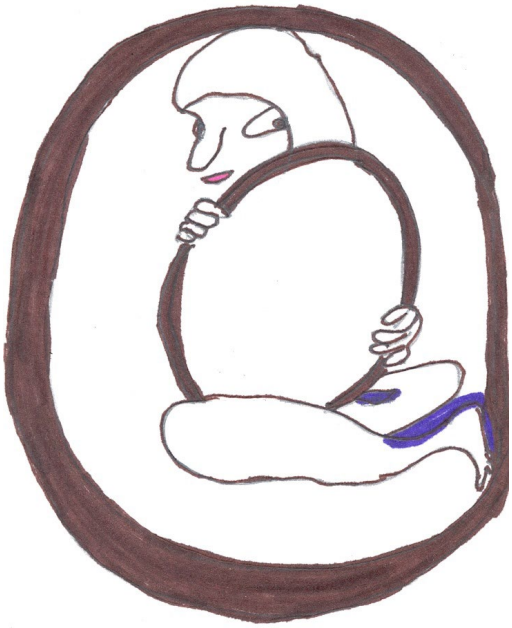
SCRIPTABLE

A Bispectral Review of Recent Books



Robert Tenor, editor
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EDITORIAL

Scriptable is an irregular review of what was once called the belles-lettres, where we essay upon a wide assortment of current books and articles with an eye open for "the beautiful jumble of discordant congruencies" derived from the authors and titles under discussion. We cast a wide academic net through the social sciences and humanities, with a strong orientation toward current events, social theory, religious and cultural studies.

With this number we move away from simple reportage of current scholarship to something more ambitious. The body of each issue includes editorial essays examining themes inspired by the works under consideration. The sum of our reviews are carefully pruned excerpts from the books themselves so as to preview the style and technicality of the text itself.
Our purpose is to inform and entertain. Through the review essays we hope to visit new and timeworn places through unsettled ideas in currency newly minted. Perhaps to see the outlandish as intimate and to show up the familiar as stranger than before thought.
Each issue should surprise.

Contents Close Reading Memoriam

CLOSE READING: KUNSTHISTORISCHE INTERPRETATIONEN VOM MITTELALTER BIS IN DIE MODERNE, FESTSCHRIFT FÜR SEBASTIAN SCHÜTZE

edited by Stefan Albl, Berthold Hub and Anna Frasca-Rath [De Gruyter, 9783110710939]

CLOSE READING puts the artwork in the center of concentrated art-historical interpretations programmatically. Seventy-two international authors each analyze one work of architecture, sculpture, painting, drawing, or graphic work, from Albrecht Dürer and Matthias Grünewald, to Titian, Artemisia Gentileschi, Michelangelo, and Nicolas Poussin, Francesco Borromini, and Fischer von Erlach, to Oskar Kokoschka and Shirin Neshat. They pursue various methodological approaches, address the creation context or questions regarding dating and attribution, the history of a collection, provenance, and restoration, or dedicate themselves to relationships between picture and text as well as to iconographic, iconological, and image-theory aspects.

Sebastian Schütze for whom this volume is his Festschrift, studied art history, classical archaeology and ancient history in Berlin, Bonn, Cologne and Rome. After completing his doctorate at the Free University of Berlin in 1989 (studies on Massimo Stanzione's painting with a critical catalogue of his works), he was a research assistant at the Bibliotheca Hertziana (Max Planck Institute for Art History) in Rome from 1992 to 1997. In 1997 he habilitated at the FU Berlin (Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, later Pope Urban VIII, as a client and patron. Beiträge zu einer Archäologie des rdmischen Hochbarock). After serving as professors at the Universities of Leipzig, Munster and Dresden, he was Professor of Modern Art History at Queen's University in Kingston Canada from 2003 to 2009. Since 2009, Sebastian Schütze has been University Professor of Modern Art History at the University of Vienna, where he has also served as Dean of the Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies since 2018. In 2013 he was elected as a corresponding member in Germany and in 2016 as a real member of the philosophical-historical class of the ÕSterische Akademie der Wissenschaften. His research focuses primarily on Italian art of the early modern period and its European appeal.

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This commemorative publication on the occasion of Sebastian Schütze's 60th birthday is part of the long and beautiful tradition of honouring scientists on the occasion of their milestone birthday. Nevertheless, this time is far too early to pay tribute to the life's work of the jubilee or even to draw a conclusion. With this publication, the multifaceted nature of his scientific achievements is shown in the mirror of the studies of friendly colleagues, employees and former doctoral students. Like a kind of photo mosaic, an idea of the diverse areas of interest and the topics of Sebastian Schütze's lively and always open scientific dialogue with his environment appears from the entirety of the contributions and contributors.

Requiring authors to closely read an object of their choice, the commemorative publication focuses on a central method of Sebastian Schütze's studies. This methodical approach is ultimately also to be understood as a commitment to an art history that, despite all the thematic and theoretical expansion of the subject, repeatedly focuses on the work of art. Each contribution presented here is based on a work or a small group of works and is dedicated to their interpretation and interpretation. Which methodological approach the contributors also choose depends on the subject matter and the research questions and can range from dating, attribution or restoration results to questions of iconography, image and text relations and analyses of the context of origin. The chronological framework spans from the Middle Ages to the modern age.

The 72 contributions to this commemorative publication are to be seen as a sign of the authors' friendship and solidarity with Sebastian Schütze. His biographical stations are inscribed in this international and interdisciplinary network of colleagues at universities, research institutions and museums. After studying in Berlin, Rome, Cologne and Bonn, he received a doctoral scholarship at the Bibliotheca Hertziana in Rome for his studies on the Neapolitan painter Massimo Stanzione and spent numerous research stays in Naples. Already in these early years he laid the foundation for his deep and long-standing connection with Italy, his colleagues on site and Italian art and culture. After his habilitation on the art patronage of Maffeo Barberini, later Pope Urban VIII, at freie Universität Berlin, he was appointed interim professorship in Leipzig, Dresden, and Munster, and a research professorship at the Bibliotheca Hertziana.In2003, Sebastian Schütze was appointed to the Bader Chair for Southern Baroque Art in Kingston, Canada, and finally to the Chair of Modern Art History at the University of Vienna in 2009. Here he was head of the Institute of Art History and head of the doctoral program, since 2018 he has served as Dean of the Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies. In 2016, the Austrian Academy of Sciences appointed him a w. member of the philosophical-historical class.

The importance that Sebastian Schütze attaches to exchange and dialogue can also be seen in his diverse scientific achievements, which can only be touched upon the conception of conferences, the publication of series and the implementation of study courses and exhibition projects. To name just a few examples: the conference series Dialogues - Reflections - Transformations initiated with

Antonietta Terzoli, which has been held regularly in Vienna and Basel since 2014 and examines the interactions between art and literature; the series Perspektivenwechsel, which has been published since 2020. Collectors, collections and collection cultures in Vienna and Central Europe, which publishes the research results of the Vienna Center for the History of Collecting, which he founded, as well as the series Hermathena, in which the editors and the editor of thiscommemorative publication published their dissertations or habilitations; the study courses on hand drawing, which are published in cooperation with the Albertina, or those he regularly holds at the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici in Naples, with whose founder Gerardo Marotta he had a deep friendship; and last but not least the numerous and extensive exhibitions, by Bernini Scultore e la nascita del barocco in Casa Borghese (Galleria Borghese 1998, with Anna Coliva) to Der Gõttliche: Hommage an Michelangelo (Bundeskunsthalle Bonn 2015, with Georg Satzinger) or Friedrich Nietzsche and the Artists of the New Weimar (Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada 2019).

Among the contributors to this publication are several (former) doctoral students and staff. Sebastian Schütze shared and discussed his ideas and broad knowledge with them in the lecture hall and on excursions in front of the original. This long-lasting connection is not only based on many findings in terms of content, but also on shared memories. For example, with the same passion and with the same precision in content as in front of the objects, important everyday topics such as the quality of the "pyre" were debated in Viennese coffee houses. His research also reflects his enthusiasm for new and different topics - such as Stefan George or William Blake. However, the center of Sebastian Schütze's research is Italy and the art of the early modern period - from Michelangelo, Caravaggio, and Bernini to Baroque painting in Naples.

This commemorative publication conveys a central idea of the ongoing exchange between the contributors and Sebastian Schütze. In terms of content and chronological breadth, it presents many new research results. In the layout of the individual contributions, quite a few authors were inspired by a new reading of Sebastian Schütze's fundamental writings… <>

Essay: Marc Mayer: Resilient Obscurity

One sunny afternoon, when I was about nine years old, I got myself wrapped-up in a play on television. I could not figure out what was going on, but it fascinated me. Three characters, two women and a man, were conversing in barely comprehensible sentences; I struggled to understand what the motivations for the words might be, and who these three people were to each other. They did not correspond to my experience of how adults interact.

Twenty minutes into it, my father entered the room and broke my concentration by asking, with exasperation: "Why are you watching that crap? You should be out playing!".

"I like it," was my meek response. He left the room shaking his head. I felt guilty and confused by the reprimand, but defiant. Why shouldn't I like it? I really did find it interesting, probably because it was barely comprehensible.

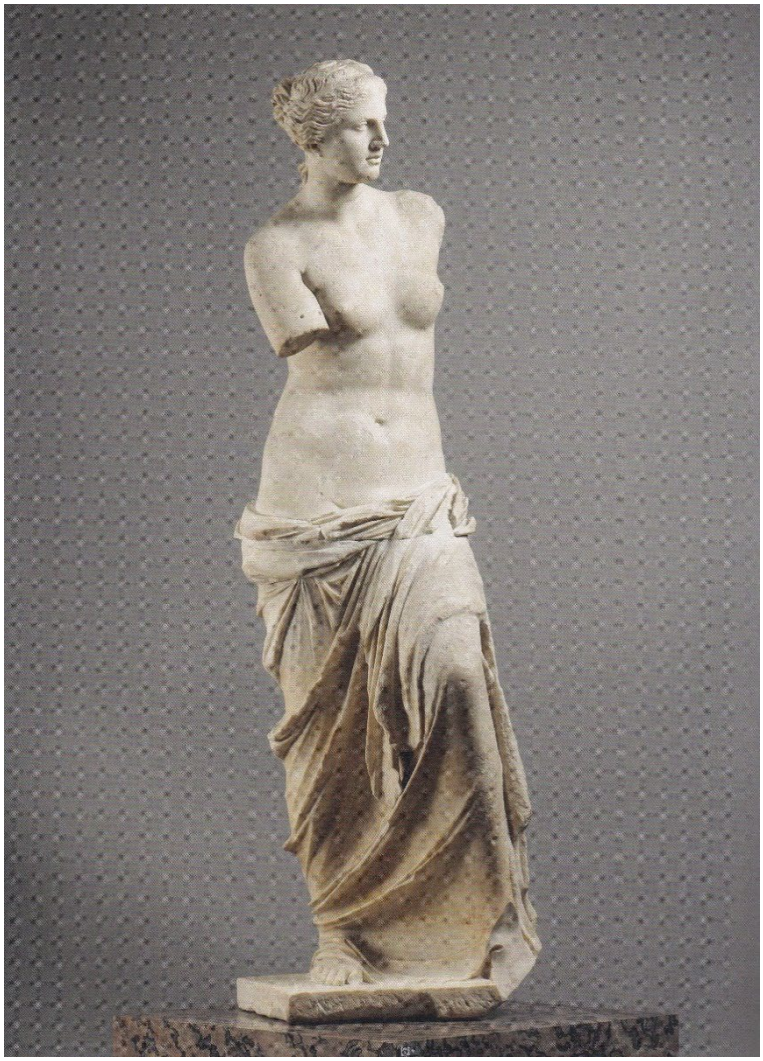
Recently, as I considered the cultural underpinnings of modernist art for a forthcoming lecture, this half-century old interaction came to mind. An odd memory to have harboured for so long, it seemed somehow connected to my observation that a familiar characteristic of modernist culture, a defining one of sorts, and of which that play was an example, is its difficulty.

Modern art, and its continuation under the euphemistic synonym "contemporary art," often relies on obscurity as a deliberate effect. Abstraction is the most notorious example, but Dadaism, Futurism, Surrealism, Reductivism, Conceptualism, and so much else - well into our own moment - are

evidence enough that obscurity is a modernist convention in visual art. The same applies to modernist literature, theatre, dance, etc. Why?

After thinking about the various ways in which art can be obscure, and finding many, I concluded that we moderns must be addicted to obfuscation for its own sake. Searching further, it became increasingly clear to me that this reliance on obscurity is, in fact, more than a mere convention, but rather a richly developed and central feature of modernist culture. There must be a reason.

A set of plausible reasons eventually came to me, but my childhood fascination with that vanguard play showed me the most obvious one, and I believe the most important: pleasure. Many of us enjoy the mental effort required to understand the world, we love the strain of devising our own explanations for things as a form of psychic calisthenics. We are stimulated by interpretive resistance, which may be why the arts happily provide so much of it.



VENUS DE MILO, CA. 130 BC. MARBLE, 203 CM. PARIS, MUSEE DU LOUVRE, INV. N 527

Art is a safe place to be unknowing. Unlike the larger world, where not understanding can be dangerous, even fatal, culture lets us enjoy our ignorance without harm, by being the place where we can go to exercise our capacity to overcome it. In fact, art is so benign that, should we not succeed in understanding a given work, the only consequence we would suffer is the distraction of its other pleasures.

New art attracts sensualists who want to escape a world of exhausted clichés, of pat sense and predictable sequences, an audience happy to put in the mental work this kind of escape requires. The tenor of much art criticism illustrates this mentality well with overly familiar put-downs such as "derivative "one-liner," "obvious," "facile "deja-vu," etc. Now that skill has become a secondary concern, the main complaints are either about a lack of originality or a lack of obscurity.

In an attempt to explain the phenomenon, let me borrow a term from computer science. "Cognitive friction" is to be avoided in user interface design. But it is experienced as pleasure by the intellectually —or at least the aesthetically — ambitious who are avid to explore the inscrutable. Resistance to rapid assimilation will be known to scientists as inevitable because inherent to their subject: inscrutable nature. Such resistance may also explain science's appeal, aside from its principal goal of advancing knowledge. Labour-savers, we design the world and organise our lives to avoid cognitive friction. Should one regret the loss, science and art are there to restore it.

Many of us enjoy strenuous thinking as much as we might enjoy physical exertion; in both cases, the reward is elation. Problem solving, theory building, the fashioning of speculative constructs are great ways to spend a day. For scientists, obscurity is reality, but artists invent their own because cognitive friction is the point. When things are too familiar and predictable, for example rote aesthetic transactions or formulaic entertainments, aesthetes are quickly bored. They look for things that resist rapid assimilation because they experience boredom as a form of pain. They also know that, given an open mind and a taste for new sensations, such pain can be avoided through art's constantly evolving enterprise of beauty.

Before returning to the justifications for obscurity as a cultural value, let's sample the evidence that its modernist typology provides. I have identified the following five types, though sustained consideration may uncover more. Esoteric obscurity is an especially common and longstanding feature of art. For example, Bosch and Breughel both painted riddles for the literate. Having always played a pedagogical role — both as a teaching aid and to enjoy one's education — art enlists esoteric obscurity most successfully when it appeals to those trained in art history and theory, its guaranteed audience. The success of Canadian artist Jeff Wall has been based to a large extent on his occult references to art historical precedents in genre painting, history painting, still life, and other canonical forms of the Western tradition. His large backlit photographs nod to the cultures of film, theatre, literature and photography, making his work especially rich for a broadly sophisticated audience who will also enjoy his flirting with subjects as diverse as psychoanalysis, racism, capitalism, urbanism, the gender agon, eros, politics, history, and so on. Like many artists today, Wall relies on a broadly literate audience that is simulated by iconographic puzzles.

Similarly, the ongoing development of abstraction has a strong appeal to those familiar with the idiom and its history. Monochrome painting, a particularly well-tilled soil in the field of abstraction, is notoriously esoteric and typically attracts mockery from the uninitiated, who will invoke Hans Christian Andersen's naked emperor. But for the happy few whose education and experience permit them to enjoy its wit, ironies, politics, spirituality and, especially, its pure retinal pleasure, monochrome painting is one of art history's glories. But it remains obscure, even for its lovers, who must acquaint themselves with the artist's specific intentions, as these are surprisingly varied.

That we have successfully developed an artistic means to communicate emotionally between strangers, outside of time, and without resorting to symbols or even surface detail, is a cognitive achievement that leaps over languages and customs to ennoble the whole enterprise of abstraction. Separating the picture from the image, so to speak, is on par with splitting the atom as a feat of ratiocination, though it is not discussed in such terms. Those who find abstract painting exciting are, famously, in a small minority, which may be another of its charms.

In our modern art world where the evacuation of all forms of orthodoxy is a multi-generational project, any subject will do, and the more esoteric the better. Today, art can be about anything or nothing at all and take any form, or none. But the imperative to "make it strange as an artist once admitted to me, is a unifying principle.

Absurdity has been a familiar form of obscurity since the early 20th century. Dadaism, its initiator, seems quaint by comparison to art's subsequent absurdities. This forthrightly risible form of obscurity became standardised and strategic, not to mention increasingly humourless under Andre Breton's theory-laden Surrealism. Once spent, Surrealism dissolved into a tributary of mainstream abstraction, buoyed along by its Freudian undercurrent.

After a second World War that ended in a nuclear holocaust, artists looked back at their Dadaist forebears' reaction to their own cataclysm, and the absurd was ripe for revival. A first glimpse of it came through the apocalyptic, "all over" sensibility of Abstract Expressionism, the outright obliteration of the image (Pollock) or its uninhibited violation (de Kooning). It then reemerged more explicitly through the post-abstract Neo-Dadaism of Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. Pop art, which is fundamentally absurd, soon followed, along with Pop's more Dionysian manifestations in Europe. Performance art, a conservative idiom on the whole, ever faithful to its Dadaist roots, continues to lean heavily on the absurd to create interest. As the world becomes once again preposterous and unfortunate, artificial absurdity continues to appear virtuous and sane.

A taxidermy goat wearing a tire like a darkly ridiculous yoke, and covered in paint drips longer than its hair, has a pathos that struggles for our attention because it is undermined by its absurdity. In this famous work by Robert Rauschenberg, originality and aesthetic intelligence take up as much psychic space as pathos and stupidity for the perceiver who can enjoy it as a hybrid emotion locked in the amber of art. This is unlikely to be the case, however, for the general population of artistic outsiders who only have the work's pathos and stupidity available to them. Why would one buy such a thing, you might ask? Because it is so meaningfully ridiculous, the aficionado of the absurd might answer, being careful to avoid specifics.

Dadaism is conventionally framed today as an admirable form of dissent against the calamitous militarism that lead to the killing fields of World War I. For its mid-century manifestation, the target was the frenzied consumerism that followed World War II. Absurdist obscurity bookends the first half of the 20th century. In the initial instance, we might think of it as artists on strike, protesting the more authentic insanity of mass death by refusing to make sense. The strategy was employed the second time to feign the suicide of high art, annihilated by its assimilation to hegemonic consumer culture. That, to me, is what Andy Warhol's Brillo box means, if it means anything at all.

Using symbols and figures to achieve meaninglessness is quite hard to do. As we navigate our surroundings, our minds are always searching for recognizable patterns and familiar icons that correspond to our experience. Consciously or not, the mind keeps trying to decipher what it finds before it until sense, or a functional equivalent, is either revealed or constructed. Creating a work of art with recognizable symbols and figures that share no coherence and refuse to form a cogent narrative goes against our nature and our "will to signification," if you will permit me. As a referential equivalent to non-referential abstraction, figurative absurdity results from deliberate striving, rather than chance, though chance is a useful tool.

Absurdity may no longer define an artistic movement today, a time beyond movements, but its tropes, postures and dissimulated gravity still pop up in art like baffling mushrooms. The fragmentary approach is an effective and convenient means for producing obscurity and is, therefore, widespread. Withholding key information from the viewer incites conjecture that prolongs the cognitive process, with all that entails for the work's "use value" as pleasure. This approach was surely inspired by

inadvertent precedents, such as the Venus de Milo and other sublime fragments, or relics of the non finito, which gain emotional power by being automatically intriguing: the mind wants a whole, so it imagines one. Programmatic fragmentation may originate with Caravaggio's elimination, or severe reduction, of the background in his paintings. Obscurity in baroque painting usually refers to the darkness of the scene, but we witness the migration toward its more recent second sense of "difficult to understand," as the trope of the blank background migrates through Caravaggio, David, Goya, Manet, Picasso, Mondrian, the "figure/ground" and "push/pull" problems of postwar abstraction and, ultimately, toward monochrome painting, where obscurity itself becomes the main event, however bright the colour.

When an object presented in the context of art withholds important details of its subject matter, obscurity will necessarily result. For the Caravaggisti, eliminating the background is withholding information to benefit the visibility of the foreground figures. They are, so to speak, "imposed" upon the viewer through a dramatic decontextualization. Can we think of monochrome painting as the revenge of the background? Why not? Such a question reveals the interpretive play that mystifying fragments enable.

Perhaps the best known artist working in the fragmentary mode today is Gerhard Richter, with his highly influential "blur" procedure. By scraping or smearing the painted surface of otherwise conventional renderings, Richter compels the viewer to fill in the missing information in the mind, and engage with the object through its violation. Although Richter has blurred far more abstract paintings than figurative ones, the fact that he has practiced the same procedure on both can justify our suspicion about the authenticity of his abstractions. Both types of his aesthetically damaged pictures can only be reconstituted the same way, suggesting that they can be similarly "read," making them equivalent on a technicality. Are Richter's works in the idiom an embodiment of its spirit, or rather an illustration of abstraction as a subject? The notion, then, that Richter's work might be an earnest example of non-objectivity is hard to swallow. His recent blurred paintings, based on four photographs taken by an inmate of the death camp at Birkenau, give yet more substance to this suspicion. Stricto sensu, these pictures are abstract because of the way they are fragmented, but the whole project of abstraction has been steering us away from seeking occult images, as this restores representation. Richter's abstractions are unorthodox in this tradition, a form of archaism. Be that as it may, by taking the path of fragmentation he fascinates us uncomfortably with the novel retinal effects of his auto-vandalism to achieve a high classicism of modernist obscurity.

A sound work by Ceal Floyer removes all the lyrics sung by Elvis Presley in Love Me Tender, except for the words "me" and "you," which occur where they do in the original recording, leaving silence where they do not. After much effort, we might eventually recognize the voice and then the song, though now we know that the word "me" occurs far more frequently than the word "you," with the negative implications that has for the sincerity of Presley's love song. South African artist Candice Breitz similarly explores fragments of film history towards an analogous feminist critique.

Another example comes from French artist Renaud Bézy, in a video where he has removed the _characters and the dialogue of Disney animations. Only the cartoon backgrounds and the background music are left, creating a hybrid desolation of uncanny familiarity. Yet another approach comes from Cree painter Brenda Draney, who simply leaves her subject unpainted, giving us only the context to look at, in compositions made lopsided by missing information. But this approach to fragmentary obscurity more properly belongs to the next type.

Private obscurity withholds information about the subject in works that are also personal talismans for the artist. Although such works are technically sentimental, their inscrutability saves the artist from accusations of sentimentality, a cardinal sin in an orthodox modernism that sees itself in opposition to the kitsch of those cultural industries that exploit empathy.

Private obscurity is the more porous type, as it might incorporate the esoteric, the fragmentary, or the absurd. Draney, for example, withholds aspects of her pictures through fragmentation to underscore the personal nature of her subject, usually a private anecdote. It reminds me of redaction, perhaps of a human resources report where the principals and respondents are unnamed in compliance with privacy laws. Draney leaves a blank field, or raw canvas, where there should have been an identifiable figure or a significant object. As a result, the artist and the viewer become estranged.

A more extreme approach to private obscurity, similarly, resulting in estrangement, was taken by the late American painter Thomas Nozkowski. Although his works look for all the world like the sincerest of abstractions, they are perfectly legible to the artist as schematic mementos of an experience, of an anecdote, or of a fleeting emotion that he wished to preserve. For the viewer, these are scrupulously non-representational pictures, but for the artist they are the opposite. Nozkowski orchestrates incompatible perspectives between artist and viewer. As they both face his painting, the difference between them is categorical because they are not seeing the same thing. He was careful throughout his career to avoid revealing his paintings' subjects, so this alienation was deliberate. In my mind, Nozkowski invented a moot instance of irresolvable opposition as an analogy of democracy, about which he was passionate. The beautiful paintings that result from instrumentalizing privacy in this way form a compelling, if abstract argument for democratic conciliation.

If we consider the reliance on personal history of the artists Joseph Beuys and Louise Bourgeois, we might find their work private and esoteric in equal measure. If you know the story that Beuys told of his wartime adventures, regardless of its veracity, you will understand why there is so much fat and felt in his work. What remains, however, is the job of justifying it for yourself as art. If you know about Louise Bourgeois' childhood, you will understand the large spiders and the great lengths of thread in her corpus. As Bourgeois was more conventionally skilled than Beuys, her artistry is also more evident.

Unlike with Nozkowski, where there are no insiders but himself, privacy is enlisted as a form of seduction for both Bourgeois and Beuys. Their knowing viewer — and it's easy to become one — is like an intimate acquainted with private anecdotes that illuminate murky iconographies. If you do not know the stories that these artists told about themselves, if you are not an intimate, you are left to squint at their work's opacity. Meanwhile, initiates marvel at genius overcoming trauma. Which brings me to the final type of obscurity on my list.

Cultural obscurity results when the references in a work belong to a non-mainstream, or non-Western culture unfamiliar to the viewer. In this case, the insider/outsider distinctions are just as stark as in the other forms of obscurity, but they tend more toward the inadvertent, where they are not compounded by contemporary art tropes. For example, an Anishnaabe artist does not necessarily intend to be obscure by referring to her people's creation myth, but that will be the result for those who are not familiar with it.

The growing prevalence of cultural obscurity in art, no doubt the result of identarian aesthetics, also reveals the new, non-dogmatic, non-prescriptive, post-colonial, ecumenical and inclusive spirit of the contemporary art world. Chronologically speaking, this form of obscurity is both the most recent and the most ancient, because cultural misunderstanding has always troubled humanity. As to which we should credit for this very positive development, the new inclusivity of the art world or a taste for cognitive friction that constantly needs replenishing, is an open question.

Feminist art, Queer art, Indigenous contemporary art (the qualification is crucial), art by African Americans and other diasporic practices, new art from various global cultures participating in the

great mosaic of the art world, often make references that will not be readily available to a Western audience. If the viewer learns about such cultures - which brings its own pleasures - obscurity can become exclusivity, just as it does in the esoteric, absurdist, fragmentary and private modes.

With the advent of modernism, Westerners put aside the ethnic peculiarities of Europe, not to accommodate foreign sensibilities, but as cultural hygiene to salve Western disenchantment with its own heritage. Whether through philosophy or science, those who had lost faith in their inherited myths and traditions wanted to open the windows and let in fresh air. What would high culture look like if it bore no resemblance to what had come before? What if the very premise and purpose of art were replaced, improved, elevated? Modernists had intended to build a world governed by reason and evidence, but that world has yet to be achieved, because modernists had more than reason and evidence in their baggage. Unfortunately, the obscurity that qualifies so much modernist art has hindered artists from participating effectively in the all-important bourgeois dialectic that determines the quality of life in liberal democracies and their client economies. Obscurity has a downside.

Emancipated by modernism, artists emphasized the new over the established, and made originality their goal. Having overpowered orthodoxy as a value, the imperative of originality created the ideal conditions for art to accommodate a rich diversity of practices. Clearly defined ideologies are hard to come by in artistic culture today, where ambiguity, ambivalence and especially obscurity join intellectual and aesthetic freedom as core values. Intentionally or not, modern art, and the reverence for originality that it shares with science, set up the conditions by which contemporary art was able to become an inclusive culture on a planetary scale. Both the intelligentsia and the market are now in sync in their enthusiasm for a global art world. And because such a world is also necessarily transcultural, we are now experiencing a great nourishing tide of obscurity.

Nevertheless, although an artist may be from China, Egypt, or Ghana, contemporary art lovers will be familiar with the tropes, tactics, conventions and trends learned in today's art schools, experienced in art museums and illustrated in art magazines, for the time being still predominantly in the West. Though the details of specific cultural references may elude the bulk of the audience, the form and intentions are familiar. Such details can be learned, perhaps by reading an insightful exhibition catalogue or an explanatory wall label, after a sufficient amount of time is spent in pleasant obliviousness.

For those of us familiar with modernist art and its contemporary extensions, a cross-cultural language can be intuited. But modernist aversion to artistic prescription has discouraged the development of a standardized grammar that can be learned outside of experience. Experience, then, is still the great determiner of who gets to be an artistic insider. Consequently, it also supports economic class distinction, as experience is expensive to obtain in art, unlike music or literature. If you do not live in a major art centre; or if you do not have the time and resources required to travel and build a repertoire of direct experience large enough to produce such intuition; or, more typically, if you come from a background where such experience and intuition is deemed irrelevant, modern art will be opaque to you and may feel symptomatic of the class struggle.

Which brings us back to the reasons for obscurity's ascendancy, beyond mere pleasure. If the ever-expanding education industry has shied away from establishing a standard aesthetic grammar for modern art, my guess is that the anti-academicism of its modernist foundations remains sturdy and determining. A violent reaction against the constraints of the aristocratic regime, bourgeois modernism produced a field that still wants neither compass nor map. Human nature being what it is, the insider/outsider dichotomy, a result of modernism's fundamental agonism, is well served by a field that loves obscurity for its own sake, and that uses it as both sword and shield. Perversely, the dichotomy is also very appealing if you oppose the ideal of liberal democracy's illusory classless

society. A snob is happy to belong to an exclusive minority, alone in its understanding that much of modern art is not meant to be understood.

But let's try out a more practical and less politically tendentious perspective. To maintain its ancient noble status, art has had to distinguish itself within the modern world's visual field, comprised mostly of superficial decoration, advertising, signage, pictographic instructions, pornography, all meant to be assimilated immediately. Obscurity slows assimilation. Slowing down the viewer by troubling the synaptic network between eye and mind has been a fruitful strategy for art, a guarantee of its distinction and a good path to its continued elevation. Conveniently, it undergirds a market that rewards novelty, scarcity and the extended "use value" of the inscrutable object. A work that holds its mystery stands a better chance of holding its value. In a consumer economy, the rare and increasingly valuable thing is the attractive product that resists definitive consumption.

There is yet another reason why obscurity has had such appeal, one that may give it renewed vigour as a new wave of insurgent calls for social justice faces an energized populism, causing upheaval within liberal democracies. An important new battleground for the left is on questions of decorum, taste and etiquette where modernist art has a solid history of antagonism. Freedom of expression, sacrosanct to liberal democrats, seems as illusive as ever in a time when a wrong word, a stupid joke or "unwanted attention" can instantly transform a hero into a pariah. Just as taboo subject matter was encrypted in modernist literature — think of Proust, Faulkner, Joyce, Eliot, and Woolf — obscurity provides its own encryption and its own quiet resistance. If art is a safe place to be unknowing, obscurity makes it also a safe place for candour.

If the left has made a provisional truce with a vanguard culture that still wants to "épater le bourgeois," modernist art continues to resist invitations to be socially instrumental. Its association with "bourgeois decadence," from the point of view of the traditional left, may seem old hat for the moment, given what we know of art's dialectical agonism within bourgeois society. But it is not a stable peace, as the left regroups for a different kind of revolution, one that implicates' art museums for the first time in decades. Although he abandoned abstraction in favour of a socially engaged return to iconography, it is precisely Philip Guston's fidelity to modernist obscurity, the ambiguity of his message to all but his knowing audience, that has recently frightened art museum directors into postponing his retrospective.

The fate of modernist obscurity, like the fate of modernism itself, is anyone's guess. From my perspective, it still has psychology, precedence and its own relatively robust economy going for it. The day that artists find a way to make compelling and relevant works of art that do not rely on the methods of obscurity, they will have finally become postmodernists. <>

Breathing: An Inspired History by Edgar Williams [Reaktion Books, 9781789143621

Our knowledge of breathing has shaped our social history and philosophical beliefs since prehistory. Breathing occupied a spiritual status for the ancients, while today it is central to the practice of many forms of meditation, like Yoga. Over time physicians, scientists, and engineers have pieced together the intricate biological mechanisms of breathing to devise ever more sophisticated devices to support and maintain breathing indefinitely, from iron lungs to the modern ventilator. Breathing supplementary oxygen has allowed us to conquer Everest, travel to the Moon, and dive to ever greater ocean depths. We all expect to breathe fresh and clean air, but with an increase in air pollution that expectation is no longer being met. Today, respiratory viruses like COVID-19 are causing disasters both human and economical on a global scale. This is the story of breathing—a tale relevant to everyone.

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The biology of breathing has been a lifelong fascination of mine. It is a phenomenon I have spent my career studying in creatures of all sizes, from small aquatic crustaceans to fish and humans. Along the way I have read widely on the subject, its history and its background, not only to inform my own research but that of students to whom I have had the great pleasure of teaching respiratory physiology for many years. As a respiratory physiologist investigating the mechanisms of breathing, I have travelled the world working in the very laboratories where many of the great discoveries in the science and history of breathing were made. In any series of lectures on the physiology and pathology of breathing, the names of the scientists and physicians who first made these discoveries arise, since they often named the mechanisms they had discovered after themselves: hence we have the Bohr effect, Cheyne-Stokes breathing and Guillain-Barre Syndrome, to name but a few. Research into the cause and management of respiratory illness is important, as it remains one of the greatest causes of global morbidity and mortality, affecting young and old alike.

The history of how we gained our present understanding of breathing is both long and fascinating. It spans many centuries, progressing in fits and starts as major discoveries suddenly revealed new insights into the mechanisms of breathing, such as the first microscopic examination of the lungs by the anatomist Marcello Malpighi (1628-1694), the discovery of oxygen in the eighteenth century, and the identification of the tuberculosis bacterium by Robert Koch in 1882. Historical epidemics of polio, tuberculosis and influenza have shown us how important breathing is to our health. The twentieth century brought huge increases in chronic incurable respiratory conditions such as asthma and smoking-induced chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). In the twenty-first century, methods of improving health and wellness, such as yoga and meditation, have been popularized. Central to their practice is the self-control of breathing, which helps to manage stress and ease the pressures experienced in everyday life.

Recently air pollution has focused the health-conscious public and governments of the world on the long-term impact of our health. Researchers have realized that ultra-small carbon particles from vehicle exhausts can enter the blood via the lungs and lodge in tissues within the brain and heart. Breathing has gained new cultural relevance with the emergence of the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. The unknown virus, which originated in China and is new to the human species, spread rapidly around the world, infecting and killing millions of people. This coronavirus enters bodies through the delicate respiratory membranes in the lungs. On its arrival, suddenly breathing other people's breath became potentially dangerous to life, as nobody had any immunity to the virus (officially named SARS-COV-2). Quarantine, isolation and physical distancing became global

watchwords as every country's economy shut down in an attempt to keep everyone safe. We all had to breathe within our own individual space, as did our nearest and dearest.

In most cases of Covid-19, the disease caused by the virus, the viral infection causes mild symptoms such as persistent coughing, a raised body temperature and aching limbs. Most people who catch the virus experience these mild symptoms, which pass quickly, but in a few cases, particularly vulnerable members of the public such as the elderly and those with heart disease, virus-induced pneumonia develops, making breathing difficult. Indeed, staying alive depends on breathing supplying the body with enough oxygen. Many of those who recover in full have commented on their struggle to breathe and how frightening this sensation can be. For the unfortunate few whose bodies overreact to the infection, in whom a `cytokine storm' develops into pneumonia, the only solution is mechanical ventilation and sedation until the storm is over. This book describes how, through the development of our understanding of breathing, we conceived the technology to support breathing, whether it be partially via a mask or fully by ventilator. It tells the story of how physicians and scientists sought to eliminate respiratory illness, and how they not only discovered the secrets of breathing but developed machines to support it. The innovations have helped to prolong life, and aid breathing on mountain tops or when diving beneath the sea.

Throughout, I have sought to answer a single question: why do we breathe the way we do? This book sets out the evidence.

Inspired Breathing

Breathing is such an ethereal and everyday occurrence that it is rarely the subject of poems, works of art, books or cultural phenomena. It does, however, feature in many English phrases and idioms. Before our modern understanding of breathing, early writers saw breathing in the context of pneuma, as a spiritual phenomenon. In fiction it was considered as a gentle breeze or as a spirit providing a vital life force. As we reach modern times, breathing becomes more visceral. Most modern works of fiction are permeated with a plethora of references to breathing, where it is used to signify heightened emotional states. Films with a breathing theme do exist and feature stories about extreme environments or the consequences of chronic respiratory disease.

There many phrases and idioms in the English language associated with breathing, be they physical, psychological or comical. One can talk 'under one's breath'. Less complimentary is the expression, 'I wouldn't breathe the same air' or the sarcastic retort 'pardon me for breathing; which can be followed with 'what a waste of breath' (which is related to the more archaic saying about 'saving one's breath to cool one's porridge'). To have someone 'breathing down your neck' is not a pleasant experience, giving the sense of being overly pressurized by someone or something.

On a more positive note there are phrases such as 'like a breath of fresh air' or to 'take someone's breath away,' usually referring to an inspiring or cheerful event. 'Catching one's breath' can signify the straightforward act of resting to overcome a temporary bout of breathlessness or can be uttered in order to initiate a brief pause to collect one's thoughts or plan ahead for what to do next. The phrases `to breathe a sigh of relief', 'breathing room' and 'breathing space' all speak for themselves, as does 'take a breather'.

A common phrase is 'with bated breath', or sometimes the malapropism 'with baited breath', the title of a Warhammer novel by George Mann. This phrase is frequently used but has obscure origins. At first it may seem to imply that the subject has halitosis, but this is not the case. It was first used by Shakespeare in the comedy The Merchant of Venice, by the character Shylock:

> SHYLOCK: Shall I bend low, and in a servant's whine, with bated breath and whispering humbleness say, 'Sir you spit on me on Wednesday last.

'Bated' is a short form of the word 'abated: The phrase 'bated breath' was popular in Victorian times, especially in the numerous melodramatic novels popular at the time. Good illustrative examples can be found in the novels of Georg Ebers, the German Egyptologist who discovered the medical papyri that bear his name. Ebers tried to popularize his discoveries through writing historical romances. In his novel A Thorny Path from1892, his characters 'listened with outstretched necks and bated breath', 'stood at the window with bated breath' and 'listened with bated breath'.

'Don't breathe a word' is a usually issued as a warning, asking someone to keep a secret. The opposite is found in ‘long-winded’ when a person speaks for an unnecessarily long time. Even inanimate items can breathe, such as wine, and in times gone by the medical practice of breathing a vein was considered good medicine and used to treat many a condition or illness.

The ancient Greeks, without our modern view of breathing, saw only pneuma and aether. Homer made effective use of these phenomena in his epic poems The Odyssey and The Iliad. In the first, The Odyssey, Homer equates peace and tranquillity with breathing, often referring to the gentle breath of the wind and evoking a quiet and peaceful climate: 'the gods becalmed me twenty days without so much as a breath of fair wind to help me forward', or 'Minerva took the form of the famous sea captain Dymas's daughter . . . then, coming up to the girl's bedside like a breath of wind, she hovered over her head'.

In stark contrast, in the more bloodthirsty Iliad, which includes the siege of Troy, where the Greeks battled the Trojans, the loss of breath or pneuma signifies the loss of life. Many warriors die in this epic, such as Achilles: 'Long as Achilles breathes this vital air' and 'The corpse now breathless on the bloody plain: Furthermore, breathing is commonly attached to an emotion or behaviour: 'Breathing revenge, in arms they take their way' and 'Thus they, breathing united force with fixed thought, Moved on in silence:

The fiction of Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400) includes the notion of pneuma, and its function as a vital life force and as a mechanism to cool the body, with the lungs considered the engine of the body.' In the Canterbury Tales the first tale, The Knights Tale (1386-8), explores the effects of love on two cousins, Palamon and Arcite, and ends with Arcite dying after being thrown from his horse. Here Chaucer describes the death in detail: after the heart stops beating, the 'pipes of his longes' 'shent with venym and corrupcioun', In other words, the circulation of the blood ceases, and the lungs cannot cool the body anymore. The final demise happens thus: `Dusked his eyen two and failled breeth' with the loss of breathing marking the point of death. This passage provides a good view of medical knowledge at the time, reflecting the view that breath was a vital life force.

Shakespeare's works contain many references to breathing, both dramatic and functional, such as in the following exchange from Romeo and Juliet:

> NURSE: Jesu, what haste! Can you not stay awhile? Do you not see that I am out of breath?
> JULIET: How art thou out of breath when thou hast breath to say to me that thou art out of breath? The excuse that thou dost make in this delay is longer than the tale thou dost excuse: (II.5)

Shakespeare even offers a new technical term to describe breathing: 'suspiration:','Nor windy suspiration of forced breath, No, nor the fruitful river of the eye' (Hamlet, 1.2). This refers to a long deep sigh, the windy and forced component implying that the sigh is falsely generated.' It is a useful word, but one rarely used in modern language or at all in medicine. An example is given by T. S. Eliot, who after surviving bombing in the London Blitz in his poem 'Little Gidding' (1942) muses on being destroyed by the fires of war or the fire of the Holy Spirit. The fourth stanza of the poem begins: 'The dove descending breaks the air' and ends:

> The intolerable shirt of flame.

Which Human power cannot remove.
We only live, only suspire
Consumed by either fire or fire.

Some people argue that Shakespeare wrote his lines in such a way that they were best delivered with a pause after each line and a breath taken before the next line. Today this is known as Hall's pause. This idea is controversial, as this might suit the actor in delivering their lines to a rhythm, but most audiences find it a distraction.

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) reflects the mechanistic view of breathing coming to the fore in his novel The Fair Maid of Perth: "Then I am so accustomed to the use of arms, and so well breathed, that few men can match me" said the little man, expanding his breast . . . "here is room for all the wind machinery":

The English poet and playwright John Dryden (1631-1700) used breathing to dramatize death: 'In vain: if sword and poison be denied me, I'll hold my breath and die' and 'The youth though in haste, / And breathing his last, / In pity died slowly, while she died more fast'. In the next verse a nymph persuades a young shepherd to revive himself so that she can die slowly and he more quickly, a noble act.

A book which covers many of the early twentieth-century issues concerning the discovery of industrial lung disease and thought by some to have influenced the Welsh Labour Party politician Aneurin Bevan (1897-1960) in his views on the structure of the National Health Service in the UK was The Citadel, published in 1937 by A. J. Cronin, a Scottish-born doctor-turned-novelist. It was an instant best-seller and in 1938 was made into the MGM film Citadel, starring Robert Donat and Rosalind Russell. The book follows the career of a newly qualified doctor, Andrew Manson, starting with his first job serving the coal-mining communities of the South Wales valleys as an inexperienced young doctor and ending with treating only wealthy private patients from his own practice in Central London. Apart from providing a commentary on medicine during the pre-Nils period, the book is notable because Manson is interested in pulmonary medicine. In the Welsh valleys he comes across miners with pneumoconiosis and tuberculosis. At the time coal dust was considered inert. Conducting research on the miners and later guinea pigs, he discovers the cause of the miners' lung disease, postulating that exposure to silica leads to tuberculosis. This is of course wrong: the author, Cronin, was unaware of pneumoconiosis. In the book Manson is expelled from his post in the Welsh valleys after his unlawful vivisection is discovered. In London he falls for the luxuries afforded by treating wealthy clients. He practises in the leading London Chest hospital but soon realizes that London is too foggy and polluted for TB patients. He advocates the ideas of the sanatorium in the cleaner airs of the home counties. The book closes with Dr Manson facing the General Medical Council for trying to cure TB by assisting in the deliberate creation of pneumothorax. The idea behind the treatment being that the collapsed lung would recuperate while resting and unventilated. This was a fashionable but illegal idea at the time and was later proved not to work. The doctor is cleared in the end. Cronin went on to create the 196os television series Dr Finlay's Casebook.

Modern fiction writers show a good knowledge of the mechanism of breathing and its relationship to emotion and behaviour. An example can be found in the first chapter of Broken Ground, published by Val McDermid in 2018. It opens in 1944 in Wester Ross, Scotland, where two men are digging pits. `The slaps of spades in dense peat was an unmistakable sound. They slipped in and out of rhythm; overlapping, separating, cascading, then coming together again, much like the men's heavy breathing: Later, one rests with his `breath tight in his chest: After a night of hard toil, their task is complete, and the chapter ends with the line: `Even as he spoke, the Mycobacterium tuberculosis organisms were creeping through his lungs, destroying tissues, carving out holes, blocking airways'. The character dies of TB, setting the scene for the story firmly set in the twenty-first century.

In Jo Nesbo's detective novel Knife (2019), the leading character, Harry Hole, is about to hear from the police unwelcome news about his partner Rakel: `Harry held his breath. He had read that it was possible to hold your breath for so long that you died. And that you don't die from too little oxygen, but from too much carbon dioxide'. When told that they have found her, he wanted to ask why and thought to himself `But to do that [I] would have to breathe: He breathed. And that means "what?", he asked. "She's dead, Harry"

Perfume: The Story of a Murderer (1985) is a tour de force of the olfactory sense, breathing and the craft of perfumery, written by the German author Patrick Süskind. The main character is Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, born in 1738, abandoned by his mother at birth, brought up by the Church and fostered by wet-nurses and childminders. Born without an odour, he soon realizes in his childhood that he has a superhuman sense of smell and can identify not only very subtle smells but the components of the odour. The book begins in Paris, a crowded and very smelly city. He starts life working for a tanner, a very smelly occupation. He secures an apprenticeship with an aged perfumer who has fallen on hard times, lacking a new perfume with which to entice his rich clients. With some scepticism from his employer, Grenouille is given access to the perfumer's collection of chemicals and scents and in a few days produces dozens of new perfumes which are so popular that they are soon produced on an industrial scale and sold all over Europe, making the perfumer a wealthy man.

The book illustrates how we take our sense of smell for granted and how we are surrounded by many familiar smells. Breathing and olfaction sets our emotions and behaviours: the invigorating smell of freshly brewed coffee in the morning, the smell of freshly baked bread stimulating hunger. Breathing the fragrance of fresh mown grass brings back memories of a summer long past. We recognize the scent of our loved ones, of babies and pets. These scents are all different, but we learn to enjoy or detest them.

After leaving Paris, Grenouille gains his credentials as a perfumer and sets off to Grasse in southern France to learn more about creating scents from flowers and plants. On his journey he invents a series of personal perfumes, which he cynically uses to influences people's opinion of him. One allows him to be the centre of attention, with everyone treating him like a celebrity; another keeps everyone away. They are scents that alter people's behaviour without the beholder noticing; something all modern scent manufacturers wish to do nowadays. Many of today's perfume- or fragrance-makers employ adverts to indicate that your attractiveness will be increased if you wear their fragrance.

On his journey south, at Montpellier, Grenouille meets the Marquis de la Taillade-Espinasse, a man influenced by the Enlightenment who has developed the idea that the earth generates a toxic gas which he calls Fluidium letale Taillade. Grenouille, who is looking rough after living in a cave for seven years, provides the marquis with a perfect example of the ill-effects of this terrestrial gas. His reasoning is that all living things move upwards away from the ground to avoid this gas. To test this theory, the marquis has invented a vital ventilation machine in his cellar, inside which Grenouille is sealed. The breathing machine is constantly ventilated with air drawn from a flue extended out of the house roof. Through an air-lock he is fed food from 'earth-removed' regions such as dove bouillon, lark pie and fruit picked from trees. The total recovery of Grenouille following this treatment proves to the marquis that his theory was correct. With this in mind the marquis departs on an expedition to the Pic du Canigou, in the French Pyrenees, which can be snow-capped for most of the year. The Marquis believes that living at altitude will make him superhuman by being free from the evil Fludium latale, the cause of all illness. The marquis is last seen ascending the mountain. Pic du Canigou was also visited by Sir Humphry Davy in January 1814, who was so impressed by its natural form and light that it inspired him to sketch the mountain and write a poem, 'The Canigou', which alludes to the geological forces of nature.

The portrayal of breathing is significant in some films. One of the most famous film characters known for their breathing is Darth Vader from the Star Wars films. In his youth, in his former life as Anakin Skywalker, Vader is severely burned, after which he can only breath through a full-face mask (rather like a motorcycle helmet). The mask gives his slow, steady breathing a very distinctive mechanical and sinister sound. Mask breathing also features in the psychological thriller Blue Velvet (1986). Here the character Frank Booth, played by Dennis Hopper, carries two cylinders of gas, which he breathes through a mask. These allow him to change his personality, swapping between 'Daddy' and 'Baby: The original idea was that the gas was helium, and when breathed it would raise the adult voice so that the character would sound like a child. In the end the gas is more 'pharmacological' than this and may act more like amyl nitrite.

Breathing is a common motif in films, not overtly, but in a subtle way, and is common in certain genres such as horror, melodrama and pornography. Here screaming, panting and hyperventilation are used to impart mood and promote the impact of the drama. Studies have shown that in general the emphasis of breathing on-screen is off-putting for the audience and is best left under the radar of perception and cognition. Thus the sound of breathing or lack of it is a conscious omission from many films and TV programmes. As one researcher states, `no one is ever just breathing:

While smoking is often depicted in films, there are few feature films that focus on respiratory disease. A recent example is the film Breathe (2017), a biographical drama about Robin Cavendish, who while living in Kenya in 1958 caught polio at the age of 28, having just married. He became paralysed from the neck down and could only breathe with a bedside respirator. After returning to the UK he was bedridden and given only a few months to live. After the birth of his son raised his spirits, he set about improving his quality of life by improving his bedside ventilator. The film illustrates his long struggle to convince his doctors and the medical profession that his improved ventilator, when incorporated into a wheelchair, is a great advance over the iron lung then used by many doctors to keep paralysed polio patients alive. His ventilator was so mobile that it allowed him to travel abroad and live a fuller life. It is an inspiring story with a tragic ending, as eventually the many years of mechanical ventilation fatally destroyed his lungs. He died at the age of 64, one of the longest surviving responauts, as they are called.

The film Apollo 13 (1995) tells the true story of the survival of the astronauts of the NASA mission in 1970. Tragedy struck two days in as an oxygen tank exploded in the service module. Fortunately, this was not the only supply of oxygen, but the mission had to be abandoned and the astronauts returned to Earth by using a slingshot circumnavigation of the moon to propel the crew back to Earth just before their oxygen ran out and the carbon dioxide levels in the cabin became toxic. The astronauts all returned safely to breathe another day. Last Breath (2019), a remarkable film in documentary style, details the true story of a deep-sea diver who while repairing an oil installation on the bottom of the North Sea is suddenly left without an oxygen supply. On the surface the support ship loses its position over the divers owing to a stormy sea, and the umbilical cord connected to the diver via a diving bell lowered from the ship and providing him with heat, air and power becomes tangled around an underwater installation and snaps. The diver is left with a small rescue tank carried for such emergencies that only contains 5 minutes of air. With the ship moving, the refuge of the diving bell also moves away, leaving the diver alone on the bottom of the North Sea. The sea is so rough that the crew struggle to return the ship to its original position, eventually taking around 3o minutes. When the ship's main cameras refocus on the diver, he is lying motionless on top of the structure. His diving buddy, who had made it safely back to the diving bell before the ship had lost position, was tasked with recovering the body and bringing it back to the diving bell. Once inside the diving bell, the recovered diver is given mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, and to everyone's surprise he instantly comes back to life. After a few months, the diver recovered

completely. It is thought that he survived so long without oxygen as his body was cooled and supersaturated with oxygen: he had spent a long time in a hyperbaric chamber before the dive.

The film The Aeronauts (2019) is a biographical adventure film about two balloonists, a scientist and a professional balloonist (based on Sophie Blanchard, the wife of the balloonist Jean-Pierre Blanchard) in the 1800s who attempt to explore the upper atmosphere, with disastrous consequences.

The English Language is rich with phrases involving the act of breathing, both mechanically and sensually. Literature has used this rich source to express and emphasize the drama and pathos of many works, from ancient times, through Shakespeare, to modern times. It is through the depiction of disaster, disease and adversity that we are told the consequences of not being able to breathe. In literature the boundary between life and death is often signified by the presence or absence of breathing and it is in the final chapter that we explore how we make one final great gesture before we pass away: our last breath. <>

Arcana X: Musicians on Music, Preface by John Zorn. [Hips Road/Tzadik, 9780978833718]

The final installment of John Zorn's major series of new music theory, with Oren Ambarchi, Peter Blegvad, Annea Lockwood, Henry Threadgill and many more Initiated in 1997 and now in its tenth and final installment, John Zorn's acclaimed *Arcana* series is a major source of new music theory and practice in the 21st century. Illuminating directly via the personal vision and experience of the practitioners themselves, who experience music not from a cool, safe distance, but from the white-hot center of the creative crucible itself, *Arcana* elucidates through essays, manifestos, scores, interviews, notebooks and critical papers.

Over 25 years the ten volumes of *Arcana* have presented the writings of over 300 of the most extraordinary musical thinkers of our time, who address composing, performing, improvising, touring, collaborating, living and thinking about music from diverse, refreshing and often surprising perspectives. Technical, philosophical, political, artistic and mystical in nature, these writings provide direct connections to the creative processes and hidden stratagems of musicians from the worlds of classical, rock, jazz, film soundtrack, improvised music and more.

Contributors include: Susan Alcorn, Oren Ambarchi, Ran Blake, Peter Blegvad, Tyondai Braxton, Patricia Brennan, John Butcher, Ben Coniguliaro, Amir Elsaffar, Kenny Grohowski, Tom Guralnick, Mark Helias, David Hertzberg, Stefan Jackiw, Dan Kaufman, Derek Keller, Richard Kessler, Pauline Kim, Ulrich Krieger, Hannah Lash, Dan Lippel, Annea Lockwood, Dave Lombardo, Charlie Looker, Thomas Morgan, Stephen O'Malley, Laura Ortman, Alex Paxton, Alexandria Smith, Conrad Tao, Pat Thomas, Henry Threadgill, Anna Webber, Fay Victor, Christian Wolff and Miguel Zenon.

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Excerpt:

The Arcana Series: Principio et Finem Similia

The idea of publishing an anthology of writings by musicians about music came to me around 1991. My original intention, set forth manifesto-style in the prefaces to the first several volumes of Arcana, was to correct what seemed a bitter injustice — an unfortunate lack of intelligent and insightful writing about a community of musicians that, for well over a decade, had been forging a music that was imaginative, well-crafted, honest, cathartic, and, in many ways, important. It was a mission that was taken on very much out of necessity — the music had been misunderstood, misrepresented, misjudged and marginalized for years. Few could have predicted that the project would continue for the next twenty-five years, broaden to address a vast assortment of musical styles and scenes, and expand to ten volumes filled with over 320 essays by an assembly of musical minds spanning three generations.

Organizing the first volume of Arcana was a Herculean effort — it took six years to collate, edit, design and publish the thing. The obstacles involved ranged from the musicians' initial suspicion, cynicism, procrastination, bitterness and insecurity to issues with editing, design, printing and distribution. Back then, connecting with people was not quite as easy as it is today, but while logistical problems certainly played a large role in the unusually long production time, the most formidable obstacle was the musician's inherent reticence in committing their thoughts to paper. A musician's major mode of expression is, after all, essentially non-verbal. When discussing music, words often fail us, and so it was exceedingly difficult to get the prospective contributors to respond, no less to complete and deliver their essays.

As the importance and reputation of the project solidified, however, publishing each successive volume became appreciably easier. Six years shrank to three, to two, and finally to less than a year — a remarkably brief period for a project of such scope. The writings in this final installment of Arcana were commissioned in the throes of the pandemic lockdown, and so afforded the authors an unexpected abundance of free time with which to complete their entry. The articles were submitted in record time, and results are, not surprisingly, outstanding. Arcana X is a spectacular apotheosis to the series, and boasts the most diverse group of musicians out of all the ten volumes.

My initial inspiration for Arcana was a book I bought in 1968 at the legendary music store Patelson's, which was located on 56th Street near 7th Avenue, just behind Carnegie Hall. Edited by Elliott Schwartz and Barney Childs, Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music was a stimulating compilation of penetrating and passionate writings by musicians ranging from Busoni, Ives, and Stravinsky to Cage, Carter, and Partch. There was much to learn from this collection, but even to the eyes of a young aspiring composer (I was 15 at the time) it was immediately apparent that many major figures were conspicuously absent!

Any project of this type will inevitably suffer from glaring omissions, and Arcana (despite its voluminous ten volumes and 300+ contributors) is no exception. Some musicians were asked multiple times but, for a variety of reasons, were never able to deliver; many simply declined; several never responded at all; then there were those who were regrettably overlooked. But much has changed in the past thirty years and thanks to the large coterie of musicians who have dedicated so much of their precious time in educating the younger generations in the history, practice and critical theory of the Downtown scene (George Lewis, Fred Frith, Mark Dresser, Nicole Mitchell, Anthony Coleman, Tyshawn Sorey, Alvin Curran, Kris Davis, Myra Melford, Anthony Braxton, Eyvind Kang, Wadada Leo Smith, and Marty Ehrlich are just a few who come to mind) interesting and insightful writing on new and creative music has flourished, with much of it easily accessible online.

It is now abundantly clear that a vibrant new music exists that transcends traditional boundaries and formal definitions (jazz, rock, classical, film soundtrack, folk, bluegrass) while simultaneously drawing upon them to varying degrees with imagination, respect, and integrity. Such music defies reductionist commodification, sets its own standards, and demands to be judged on its own terms. It's unreliable to discuss new music using old tools. If forced, you may succeed in fitting an oddly shaped peg into a square hole, but it is ultimately counterproductive, misleading, destructive, and can lead to disastrous confusions and misunderstandings. Although difficult and time consuming, it is infinitely more effective to cut a new hole to accommodate the exact shape of each uniquely individual peg. One can only hope that this will become the standard approach to music analysis and criticism in the new millennium.

By definition the critical establishment will always lag behind the creator — academics teach music history while musicians are out there making it — and even now, after many decades of musical exploration and creativity, incomprehension and misinterpretations abound. But despite lazy assumptions, antiquated rationale, and outdated theories, on the whole today's analytic landscape is

more open and diverse, more adventurous and inclusive than ever before. Tradition is not a dead past — it is a living, breathing entity existing very much in the present. Neither doctrine nor dogma, tradition is perhaps best described as a community of spirits. Let us look positively and enthusiastically towards a world where difficult and challenging music that "falls between the gaps" can be heard with a clear perspective, an informed ear, and an open mind — a world where such music can be accepted and respected for being what it is, rather than derided and denigrated for what it is not. In short, where new musical directions are found to be stimulating, and viewed with excitement, rather than threatening, and treated with a mixture of suspicion, disdain and contempt.

With the meeting of Jupiter and Saturn in December 2020 we find ourselves confronted with a Great Conjunction and the birth of a new astrological epoch. We leave behind an Earth Wave, a tumultuous era defined largely by materialism, greed, Empire-building, and a capitalist sense of ownership —and enter an Air Wave, heralding a Global Renaissance, one that bodes well for the avant garde, for spirituality, philosophy, culture, technological advancement, the concept of community, and vast mobility. What we need is a total reset: a veritable redistribution of power itself. 2021 is a new beginning. Hopefully this coming era will help guide us towards a more sustainable world of greater peace, economic fairness, climate awareness and increasing equality, cooperation, openness and gratitude — a transition from hierarchical, vertically-based power structures to more horizontally oriented, flat organizations demanding greater responsibility and accountability for all involved. —John Zorn, NYC January 2, 2021 <>

RENÉ SCHOEMAKERS: WELT-GEIST/WORLD SPIRIT

edited by Christian Waldo, Jens Stöcker [Museum Für Kunst Und Kulturgeschichte, Kerber; Bilingual Edition, 9783735606815]

This book gathers works by German painter René Schoemakers (born 1972), whose figurative works have lately examined the extremisms of today, including treatments of attempted murders by the Nationalist Socialist Underground. Schoemakers dares to take on existential questions with art-historical references, mocking humour and individual mythologies. Schoemakers‘ multi-layered paintings combine varying levels of representation using a naturalistic technique reminiscent of the Old Masters . Arranged in series and supplemented by wall drawings, text and symbols, the result is a complex general context.

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Bilder Aus Der Frühzeit Der Alien Zeitgenossenschaft /
Pictures From the Early Days of The Old Contemporaneity
By Arne Rautenberg

CV /
CV

With René Schoemakerrs, the "World Spirit" is moving into the Museum of Art and Cultural History. We are once again offering a critical and playful view of cultural history and the people of its time. The exhibition is an education in seeing, shaking up some of our certainties. Nothing is as it seems at first glance.

In hie work, René Shoemakers confronts us with quotations and symbols He draws on art history, Christian iconography, literature, and philosophy, and he does not shy away from symbols and signs that have been appropriated by radical ideologies. At the same time, he overwhelms with his hyperrealistic painting style that veers between documentary and narrative. His paintings can be read like experimental arrangements - attempts to understand the world. The "world spirit" got its name more than two hundred years ago from one of the most influential works of We stem philosophy, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Fledges The Phenomenology of Spirit. With the exhibition World Spirit, the artist and the museum have undertaken nothing less than engaging with different concepts of reality. Both do this with an attitude of playful subversion. In doing so here—al with all attempts—there is also the possibility of failure. But it is precisely this possibility that leads to insight and a new reality. To put it very simply; Rages central idea is one of the wishes for our exhibition. Seen in this light, one could also view this exhibition as a further step toward the world spirit finding itself via dialectical detours.

Schoemakers' works are full of his love of detad and clear form. At the same time, his paintings and drawings oar a clear-cut-outline and distinctly thematize what is not captured. In this way, the viewers sense how deficient their own vision is. The sheer inconceivability of Schoemakers' realistic painting style and the incomprehensibility inherent in his depictions become an education in seeing, leading us to the limit. The works challenge us to sharpen our gaze and look close. The truth behind what we see can be quite different from what we first thought.

So the right-wing extremist, inhuman, murdering NSU makes use of the Pink Panther, and the mass murder Anders Breivik dresses himself in bizarre fantasy uniforms Indeed, other protagonists assume their roles in the exhibition.

These breaks and reflections fascinate us because of their in-comprehensible reality, their apparent playful lightness, and their inherent chasms. At the end of the day, these are first and foremost magnificent works of art, which, as if by chance, show us the nonsense of radicalism detached from the world. The spirit flashes again and again, the (world-destroying) ghost of National Socialism, racism, right-wing extremism.

And suddenly, the moment in time when the exhibition and the catalogue come into existence has been certainty Doubters of a functioning, living democracy use this make themselves heard. Conspiracy theorists demonstrate downtown, skeptics of society's diversity and vitality present their radical simplifications. endure nor deal Dortmund and our museum stand for cosmopolitanism an embracing of the world, for open discourse and content-based debate This is why Rene Schoemakers and his "World Spirit" an so at home within our walls.

The fact that here, at the Museum of Art and Cultural History, ideas can also turn into an exhibition and consequently become reality is thanks to a wonderful museum team. I would therefore like to thank my colleagues at the Museum of Art and Cultural History for constantly urging us to pant amid all the obligatory tasks in our day-to-day routine, to turn to the important areas of our museum work and thus to social issues. For in our classic duties of collecting, preserving, researching, and communicating, there is also the obligation to take a critical and profound view of art and cultural history we all, I would like to express my special thanks to Rene Schoemakers and his willingness to engage with the and Dortmund. He tailor-made the catalogue and exhibition for us. My thanks equally go to Christian Waldo, who, as curator of the exhibition, discovered the artist for our museum and developed the exhibition and catalogue together with him.

Christian Walda: World Fear: Rene Schoemakers' Anti-Idealist Aesthetics

This essay is only an indirect introduction to Rene Schoemakers' art. I would already be very pleased ifit succeeds in creating a suitable intellectual framework that can convey the context of and essential motivation behind this art. With the self-chosen exhibition title WELTGEIST (World Spirit), the philosophically oriented and deeply reflective visual artist provides a roadmap for philosophical classification. We connect this term with a concept by the idealistic philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel from the nineteenth century. In the following essay, I would like to focus on an anthropological aspect from this, and relate it to Schoemakers' art. This is namely the human side that enables us to both achieve cultural accomplishments as well as commit crime: the human capacity to emancipate ourselves from reality and to create virtual counter-worlds and substitute worlds. When I call this ability idealism, it's not usually meant to refer to utopia, where idealism functions as ethics or a guide to action (that is to say, not the question of what the world we are working towards should look like), but rather idealism in epistemological terms (as a question of what the world should look like).

THE HUMAN CAPACITY TO IDEALIZE THE WORLD

Creating new, virtual worlds is part of human nature and has been the driving force behind our cultural creation since our very beginnings. This tendency is not negative per se—quite the contrary. The German-American philosopher Hans Jonas defines the difference between man and other animals directly in terms of their ability to create images. He sees man as a "symbolical being." (Jonas 1962, 202) Humans are capable of creating images that are of no direct use, thus appropriating the world in a "nonpractical" way. (Jonas 1962,203) Jonas describes the capacity for abstraction inherent in image-making as "idealization." (Jonas 1962, 205) He distinguishes among three things associated with abstraction: the object that finds its way into the depiction (say, an apple), the depiction (for example, oil on canvas in a still life), and lastly imagination in the human mind. An imagined image in the viewer's brain differs from representation in art, and both in turn differ from the depicted object itself. Jonas speaks of a "double distinction." (Jonas 1962, 209) It is a matter of representation, which may be understood anthropologically: "The principle here involved on the part of the subject is the mental separation of form from matter. It is this that makes possible the vicarious presence of the physically absent at once with the self-effacement of the physically present." (Jonas 1962, 212) With other animals, only the present reality counts, but for us humans, what is made up counts at least as much. Jonas speaks of the human capacity for "separating eidos from concrete reality, or form from matter." (Ibid.)

Reality and the human perception of reality (i.e. its representation in the human brain) are not the same thing. Banal as this statement maybe, it is necessary to emphasize this difference. This insight is perhaps the greatest legacy of Immanuel Kant, who succeeded in bringing together Western intellectual history's two great schools of thought—rationalism and empiricism. He carries this out

as a dual critique of both doctrines, postulating that without empiricism reason receives no data, and without rationality the senses alone are insufficient for knowledge: "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. It is thus just as necessary to make the mind's concepts sensible (i.e., to add an object to them in intuition) as it is to make its intuitions understandable (i.e., to bring them under concepts)." (Kant CPR, A 52) The central thesis of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason belongs to this combination of apparently incompatible epistemological views—the divergence between the thing in itself and the thing as recognized by the human senses and represented in the mind. In his more succinct and understandable Prolegomena, he says: "Accordingly, I by all means avow that there are bodies outside us, i.e., things which, though completely unknown to us as to what they may be in themselves, we know through the representations which their influence on our sensibility provides for us, and to which we give the name of a body — which word therefore merely signifies the appearance of this object that is unknown to us but is nonetheless real. Can this be called idealism? It is the very opposite of it." (Kant Prol, 4: 289; A 63/64) Kant does not claim that reality exists only through the intellectual (ideas); rather, he relates the ideal sphere only to the forms of human perception. Thus, in contrast to the philosophers of German Idealism who followed him, Kant possesses a completely different view of reality in terms of time and also ostensibly in terms of content. Kant is no Idealist.

Homo sapiens' ability to see things as true that do not exist is the foundation of civilization, urbanity, art, and culture. We humans invest considerable cost, time, and labor in producing imaginary worlds. Literature, theater, fine arts, films, computer games, and much more enable us to transcend our everyday lives, to regard things from a distant perspective, to anticipate better conditions and thus strive for them in the first place. Looking from the point of view of evolutionary history, this separation of real and virtual worlds and their obvious dependence on each other is the most likely reason that humans have made the greatest biological progress compared to all other animals. It hinges on our capacity for abstraction, our ability to both look back and anticipate, to plan and develop scenarios. The development of writing in and of itself is perhaps the most important system of abstraction, which nevertheless reflects its relationship to reality, ranging in activities from descriptions of goods in trade to romantic poems.

The German scholar Karl Eibl, who reasons through an evolutionary-biological lens, describes the human product of virtualization, which is relevant to our context, as an "inbetween world." (Eibl 2013, 134) Along with visualizing facts that do not currently exist, it could allow people to accumulate a huge reservoir of collective memories. This "in-between world" has an enormous influence on our ideas about the future, because prudent and provident Homo sapiens thinks first and foremost of danger. The accumulated dangers in his own and the collective past could take on gigantic proportions in the human imagination. The existing fear of concrete dangers becomes a permanent fear of the diffuse. Humankind has now developed several strategies (Eibl 2013, 136-138)

to dial fear back to anxiety, such as by personalizing dangers (for example, through gods) or simulating dangerous situations (for example, through art). Religion, Eibl says, is a reduction of fear of the unknown to fear of the known; works of art show us forms in which we virtually play through threatening situations. Eibl's epistemological concept of the in-between world corresponds nearly exactly to Jonas' aesthetic concept "Differentia." The crucial reference that I would like to borrow from Eibl's biological perspective is that of play. This is perhaps most evident in art.

Artistic products are graphic, depicted, written, or similar forms through which we are able to playfully reflect reality. Friedrich Schiller (for example, Schiller 1845) addressed nothing else. Art enables us to distance ourselves from the necessities of living. Hans-Georg Gadamer says that playing is even "the mode of being of the work of art itself" (Gadamer 1989, 102) The lack of an immediate need for art can create a space of freedom that few human products can provide. Experiencing art is not only enjoyment, but through engaging with it like a human counterpart with its (dialogic) unpredictability, it also becomes life experience and worldview. This works through the freedom inherent in art, which represents an "offered view" for Max Imdahl (Imdahl 1994, 318): "The image is a visual model invented from the ground up in order to experience an insurmountable powerlessness of disposal." (Ibid.) The essentially distanced approach to art is the prototype for respectful interaction with other people, but less dangerous. Art is the playful response to every form of fear of the world. However, whether this strategy of mitigation down to aesthetic anxiety succeeds depends above all on whether the virtual world created to mitigate fear is permanently recognized as a form of play.

IDEALISM AS DISPARAGEMENT OF REALITY

Placing actuality in opposition to virtual worlds is therefore a deeply human need and an important way of creating distance from reality In contrast, there is an unhealthy and dangerous way of dealing with these in-between worlds, specifically when they do not function as playful relief for the psyche but are themselves seen as reality (and thus completely lose their playful character). Ideal worlds that are permanently perceived as reality may be called ideologies, I think.

In 1945, George Orwell published his treatise Notes on Nationalism, in which he dealt with the events ofwar and genocide occurring at the time. As part of the definition of "nationalism," Orwell includes all closed systems such as National Socialism, political Catholicism, and Communism, i.e., ideologies that are all-encompassing in their self-understanding, lay claim to every aspect of every person's life, and, if possible, use a single source to explain all phenomena. Orwell recognizes three commonalities among the specific differences, one of which is particularly important for our context. Aside from the obsession and instability inherent in the construction of such a closed worldview, the author emphasizes an "indifference to reality" (Orwell 1945, 20) as a nationalist's fundamental psychological characteristic: "All nationalists have the power of not seeing resemblances between

similar sets of facts." (Ibid.) Whereas the nationalist may condemn crimes committed in another country, for example, he may still view them as necessary in his own country. The nationalist (popularly: ideological) view of a crime is not about its objective evaluation, but rather always about who is responsible. In such worldviews, morality depends on one's own affiliation. If we read Orwell correctly, it means that first comes the examination of belonging, from which morality is derived, on which in turn knowledge depends. If morality and reality were not to match up, any reasonable and open-minded person would question morality and, in case of doubt, adjust it. In Orwell's view, however, the nationalist prefers to change or reinterpret reality immediately—the present as well as the past. (Ibid.) This isolation from the direct evidential power of the empirical world is an important prerequisite for nationalism to function. (Ibid.) It is easy to cast doubt among those who wish to doubt that nothing can ever be proven: "Since nothing is ever quite proved or disproved, the most unmistakable fact can be impudently denied." (Ibid.) Orwell recognizes a pathological trait in this kind of world perception:

"Some nationalists are not far from schizophrenia, living quite happily amid dreams of power and conquest which have no connexion with the physical world." (Ibid.)

For the philosopher Hannah Arendt, people's emotional and rational relationship to reality is the point of reference for how social life is shaped. In her view, the foundation for politically motivated crimes lies in people's ability to believe an idea more than the reality around them. To the topic of "ideological argumentation, always a type of logical deduction," Arendt speaks ofits "emancipation from reality and experience." (Arendt 1951, 471) Some people tend toward a higher degree of abstraction than others in their perception of the world; for them, ideals are more important than reality. Arendt sees the basis for the totalitarianism of our world in this human trait, namely not using reality as a measure of knowledge and justice, but rather debasing it relative to ideas.

As already mentioned, essential anthropological equipment makes up the basic prerequisite for forming virtual realities. The fact, however, that people become permanently blind to empirical reality is certainly based on a centuries-old tradition. The first thinker to systematically work out this shifted relationship to actuality to the detriment of reality, and to place the idea of reality above reality as such, is Plato, who in doing so demonstrated the greatest influence on an idealistic world relationship. Plato grows up an aristocrat in a world of civil war, losing status with each social upheaval; during his own lifetime, Attic democracy rises in influence. His recipe against these changes is "the arrested state" (Popper 1994, 20) of a hermetic caste system, as Karl Popper underlines, who interprets Plato's experience of fear as the reason behind his search for a closed and unchanging world.

Plato perfectly masters the transformation of world fear into art—in his case, literature. For him, any kind of change is decay, which also makes him an ancestor of the saying "everything used to be better before," which can be heard from many of those who lose through social change. In a patriarchal culture, the losers are above all men, older people, and established people (mixable in any combination) who are challenged by the new. Out of the need to keep change at bay, Plato develops a theory of why the world is immovable in its true sense, namely his theory of forms. The idea of the forms is then in turn the model for the State. As communities—the younger they are, the greater the effect—move away from the imagined archetype of the State, they automatically descend from good government to tyranny. (Plato Republic, 544-69) In Plato's hierarchy, democracy takes third place out of four, undercut only by tyranny. This is the State, "...full of freedom and frankness—there a man may do as he likes." (Plato Republic, 557) That tyranny emerges from democracy as the worst form of government seems clear in these circumstances: "Then tyranny naturally arises out of democracy, and the most aggravated form of tyranny and slavery out of the most extreme form of liberty." (Plato Republic, 564)

Plato is probably the most influential thinker to preach a reactionary worldview as a strategy to reduce uncertainty, that is to say, engaging in a virtual reduction of overwhelming diversity. It is about escaping the world, about turning away from reality (which everyone can grasp with their hands) in favor of an afterlife (which nobody knows and, in a practical sense, no one can verify). Plato's ideas are said to have such a great influence, especially in Europe, thanks to Paul, the founder of Christianity, who was molded by Hellenic thought. Several centuries after Plato, Paul took up this theory of forms and developed it into a doctrine of salvation that separates the human body and the soul. Without Platonism, Christianity would likely have developed completely differently, and without Platonic Christianity, continental Europeans would probably never have become so idealistic.

Since then, Idealism has been an important strand of European thinking alongside realistic schools of thought. There have been remarkable high points. Idealism's second exuberant epoch begins around 1800 with German Idealism and culminates in the figure of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who coined the title of our exhibition. For Hegel, the "world spirit" is reason that has formed throughout history. However, much we associate the term with Hegel, though, it appears only thirty-seven times in his complete works of twenty volumes. Moreover, Hegel stole the idea practically verbatim from his Idealistic colleague Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, who in 1798 wrote an entire treatise

entitled Von der Weltseele (From the World Soul). (Schelling 1798) Schelling explains the organization of nature, both living and inorganic, in his thoroughly dualistic methodological approach, returning to an ancient philosophy of nature through the interaction of two opposing forces: first the force that expands, and then a second force that contracts. Schelling imagines an overall system of movement, an alternating principle, a force of nature. The world soul is the concept behind these processes: "These two conflicting forces, represented simultaneously in unity and in conflict, lead to the idea of an organizing principle that shapes the world into a system. It is such a principle, perhaps, that the ancients adumbrated in their notion of the world soul." (Schelling 1798) "System" is the key word here; the German Idealists interpret the world as a closed and regular whole. In his knowledge of nature in a time of emerging natural science, Schelling resorts to pure speculation. This form of argumentation may have been groundbreaking in antiquity, given the state of knowledge of the natural world then, but in Schelling's time it is nothing more than sheer fantasy and completely anachronistic, more in keeping with a longing for times past.

Schelling thus tells us nothing new. This main idea of the philosophy of Idealism—a systematic connection between everything—is more than two thousand years old. In what is probably Plato's most authoritative writing of all, the late dialogue Timaeus, he sketches a harmonious cosmological worldview. The mutable (necessary) world, which we can perceive with our senses, is merely the image of the unchanging and eternally existing (rational) being. But the world is an image of the forms, and the connection between the ideal and the real is the world soul. The macrocosm is analogous to the microcosm of humanity, which also possesses a soul and is guided by it. The universe is "a living creature truly endowed with soul and intelligence by the providence of God." (Plato Timaeus, 30) In his late dialogue Laws, Plato describes the soul as motion that moves itself. (Plato Laws, 895-96) (World-) soul is the driving engine of the world and its connection to the higher plane, the form. In this view, which contradicts every empirical observation and which therefore nobody can prove — let alone refute —there are two aspects that are supposed to be of decisive importance for Christianity's intellectual history and formation over centuries. First is the view that the movements of the objective world (history, nature, thoughts) are subject to a recognizable natural law, so that these movements even become predictable. This is accompanied by the almost self-evident vilification of the objective world, of this world in favor of an ideal beyond. The Platonic dialogues are highlights of literature, fantastic—but pure fiction. It does this literature an injustice to follow the author's suggestion that they are really about reality, about a view of nature.

What is the difference between virtual worlds (art and culture) and dangerous Idealism? Idealizations, as already explained, are anthropologically anchored. They are a fact and therefore neither good nor bad. They can become dangerous when the benchmark is lost; some people do not take what is imagined, invented, and fantasized as such, but rather as reality. The decisive difference seems to me to be attitude. Some people have a rather playful relationship to things, others a deadly serious one. The gradual differences naturally produce a spectrum. Just as fundamentalist Christians sometimes take the Bible literally and can't recognize any summarization, art, or exaggeration in Scripture, nationalists, fascists, and terrorists have no distance whatsoever from the object of their identity. Lack of humor is perhaps the most unmistakable sign that we are dealing with radicals. To this day, this is the most reliable litmus test for me. An ideological world relationship is a radical lack of distance in recognition and a pattern of overaggressive action. If the term didn't sound so euphemistic, since it has an extremely positive connotation in Germany, then I would like to call the radicals "Romantics." That is taking the world as an art world, because it provides the explanation for a made-world, not a random one. This is a deeply romantic tradition.

There are innumerable examples of what is merely invented, which can nonetheless become more important to people than life itself, and I will pick out just one. What should one think of a man who

hears voices ordering him to kill his son? With all due justification, this father would be sent to a psychiatric hospital as a schizophrenic threat. In this story (Bereschit/Genesis 22, 1-19; Surah 37, 99-113), the son merely figures as currency for another human being's loyalty to God (that is to say, to an idea). This story is not told as the aberrance of a schizoid man, whose imagined ideals are more important than an extremely close and beloved human life. Instead, it serves to demonstrate depth of faith. The narrative is a successful artistic summarization of the world's humane idealization, viewed without values. The story is not odd in that it reflects an archetypal reality; what is odd is when a Jew, a Christian, or a Muslim still sees a good demonstration of faithfulness in it. Reality is not taken seriously, but a fantasized "truth"—highly subjective, justifying everything, and not verifiable by anyone.

IDEOLOGY AND RENÉ SCHOEMAKERS

It is precisely in this sensitive area of human weakness that Rene Schoemakers applies his art. In my opinion, the leitmotif of his oeuvre is the human idealism described above, i.e., humankind's constant search for more than something as banal as reality. Human restlessness and the accompanying primacy of the ideal over the material, of the imagined over the real world, of the "higher" over the human needs shared by all can sometimes result in fatal consequences for us as people. Schoemakers humorously contrasts all the pathetic ideas from many centuries of body-hostile tradition and every form of detachment from the world with the simplest force: that of our world as we all know it, in its confusing, diverse, and chaotic character, and from which we —when its complexity exceeds our comprehension, and its demands overwhelm our strength—escape into plain ideas. This aesthetic approach, the subject of the following text, has two sides or is the combination of two different worlds. One side is the graphic means, the other is Schoemakers' central method.

Schoemakers' graphic means is the form of representation and its subject matter, subject matter being always what you see, what is represented. Schoemakers paints so clearly that most people assume his paintings are large photographs. This superficial naturalism is so exact that the things and people portrayed seem familiar and their depiction seems completely real; the works are precisely painted arrangements. Schoemakers creates the greatest possible visibility at this level. His most important component is the figure, that is, the human body abstracted into art—that's as close as we can get.

The central method is the production of context and its contents; unlike the subject matter, content comprises everything that is known and connoted, associated and described, implied and indicated. It is then represented together with everything that invisibly belongs to it. The jumble of levels of meaning in Schoemakers' work appears chaotic, barely defined, diffuse, multi-layered, and enigmatic, in stark contrast to the subjects' representation. Everywhere you look there are clues to meaning like pitfalls, the manifold hooks and eyes of art historical tradition, graphic anchors of collective images. Schoemakers' most important component is irony—that's as distanced as we can get.

This is, in other words, a close link between proximity and distance. Schoemakers plays a game with us, usually one of confusion as he generously scatters hints in his works. Irony, of course, carries this confusion conceptually within itself . The artist's goals are distortion and ambiguity, indeed the playful reflection of the world's chaotic diversity. In other words, it is the opposite of simplifying difficult reality into an ideal formed from a single mold. Schoemakers' works grandiosely shatter the ridiculous attempts to construct our inescapable reality as flimsy ideas, that is, to escape the world. Here are a few examples:

The human desire to see meaning behind everything, the omnipresent inability to see the world as just existing and not as meaningful, and thus the valorization of mere existence by a higher origin (which must be better than the perceived miserable reality), are the themes of CARNE LEVALE (BUTTERBERG) from 2012 (p. 8). What does the artist mean by all his artificially assembled scenes? What does the artist want to tell us? The four panels have the plotted addition: "Do you want the total metaphor?" Most people, if they were honest, would have to answer this tricky Goebbels-like question with a resounding yes. Schoemakers is playing on our need to interpret.

Particularly in works from recent years, the impulse to caricature the human search for the ideal has become ever greater. In THE UNENCUMBERED SELF (DIE TAT-HANDLUNG) from 2018 (p. 28) the artist quotes a passage translated into English from a tract known as "The Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism." This is a double-sided handwritten text, certainly written by Hegel, possibly together with Schelling and Friedrich Holderlin, probably in Tubingen in 1797. The essay outlines the transition from Kant's Critiques to a system that encompasses the whole world, reading: "The first idea is naturally the conception of myself as an absolutely free being. Along with the free, self-conscious being an entire world emerges simultaneously—out of nothingness—the only true and conceivable creation out of nothingness." (Systematic Program 1797, 5) In this document, the young idealists assume the existence of a self-conscious being before all things, actively creating. Freedom is the most important motif of German Idealism. In the end, however, what is meant is not political freedom through revolution, but freedom (of the idea) from all things of the reality surrounding us, an emancipation from reality in favor of the absolute sphere of freedom in the virtual world. As the title of a series, "Unencumbered" perhaps also refers to being unburdened by reality. Constructed as a triptych, the middle section shows a scene in which a girl holds a red thread leading to spindles lined up like batteries in a white (!) vest, worn by a cardboard silhouette—an act of terror that is not depicted, but nevertheless hinted at by the images that prevail within us. Terror is the violent attempt to intimidate the civilian population for the purpose of destabilizing societies. The people (those who are threatened and those who must carry out acts

of terror) play no part whatsoever in ideologies that call for these crimes for a higher purpose. It is simply a matter of implementing a figment. Or one could also say a ghost or spirit—the spirit as the non-world.

The reality to which Schoemakers refers is one entity; there are no good or bad examples for art. When he encounters something meaningful, he weaves it into his art. His TROTZIKOTZI from 2019 (p.16) shows a meme deployed —not just, but also—by the right wing: a puking emoji, the so-called "face vomiting." The artist found the sentence be- low it in a bathroom and transferred it here. The phrase "Poor Germany" written in Fraktur takes up the decay of our country as claimed by right-wing radicals.

One could label it irony a la Thomas Mann, along with his ambiguity and dismantling of greatness. Radicals' nationalistic pride usually bears the pathos of the strong eagle before it. Next to the lion, the eagle, meant to express strength and superiority, is the second most common heraldic animal, thanks to Charlemagne's introduction of it. The Federal Republic of Germany and the city of Dortmund also use the eagle as an emblem. The eagle on the German Empire's flag is a popular, often-used reference among right-wing radicals. Schoemakers satirizes the infantile demonstration of strength, and one rightly wonders why states do not choose peaceful animals as symbols. In his works PROMETHEUS STRIKES BACK I and II from 2014 (p. 25), he shows two puny birds. They are run-down, Disney-like creatures that no one would take seriously, plastic yet gold-plated. Through the signal word "Prometheus," the titles immediately produce a chain of associations in culturally inclined viewers, because Prometheus — literally the "foresighted" one — brought fire (culture) to mankind. Zeus severely punished him for this, tying him up and letting an eagle eat his regenerating liver. According to the legend, the hero Heracles delivers Prometheus from his torture. The rest is interpretation. But maybe we should look at another bird in LET THE POWER FALL II from 2019 (p. 17). In front of an Iron Cross — the pride of right-wing nationalists as much as the imperial eagle — on a heraldic shield, we see a headless, smashed sparrow. The heroic eagle becomes a squashed dickey bird. From "power-full," which one might easily hear from the title, the opposite quickly becomes the case. The symbol, valorized in a strongly elevated ideal, crashes down hard on the ground of reality.

Finally, we should turn our attention to the pair of paintings ANDERS (MUMMENSCHANZ) and KARL-HEINZ (MUMMENSCHANZ), both from 2019 (pp. 68/69). In both, uniforms (the "masquerades" called out in the titles) play the leading role as an expression of ideological worldview. The first painting deals with the Norwegian far-right terrorist Anders Breivik, who, motivated by racism, murdered seventy-seven people in Oslo and on Utøya in 2011. Breivik's abnormal psychiatric state was already evident in childhood, and he later became active in Islamophobic organizations. In the painting, a girl is wearing Breivik's fantasy uniform, decorated with various orders of chivalry. "Karl-Heinz" in the second painting refers to Karl-Heinz Hoffmann, the Bavarian right-wing radical who founded the "military-sportsgroup" named after him (banned in 1980), and whose role model, according to his own statement, is Adolf Hitler—a fellow misunderstood artist. From the ranks of the Hoffmann Wehrsportgruppe, a Jewish couple was murdered in Erlangen and the Oktoberfest bombing in Munich was carried out. Hoffmann made public appearances in Wehrmacht uniforms at an early age. In this pair of paintings, too, the figure is nothing but alienation; it is about the uniform and the worldview arising from childish fantasies of omnipotence. The figures symbolize the degradation of real life in yet another way. One holds a brush in her right hand, the other a fake mustache and a toy machine gun. For Breivik as for Hoffmann, other people's lives are no more material than a game one can end at any time.

CONCLUSION

In his art, Schoemakers takes aim at the soft underbelly of the human psyche, especially at cases of world fear. World fear is nothing other than the inability to endure contradictions (and so an intolerance of ambiguity), from which sometimes radical simplification strategies result in both recognition as well as action. Not all of us can take a joke and not all of us can tolerate equivocality when it comes to the big picture, when a crisis occurs and we cannot distance ourselves from the world because of a dramatic situation. The difference between hysterics and world conspiracy mystics and more balanced natures is not this somatic disposition, but how they each interpret the world's processes. Radical ideologues constantly claim that everything is at stake, that we are always at war, that everything depends on right now. It is for this reason that they offer unambiguity. One is only capable of humor if one can endure a certain degree of contradictions and ambiguities. Fear, however, is the total presence of anxiety. Whoever fears diversity fears the world, because the world can only be simplified or arranged to one's liking to a very limited extent.

Schoemakers' artistic strategy is his worldliness, his attitude humanism. His art centers the human body and its needs as a benchmark for knowledge and morality within his painted and drawn dismantling of ideals. <>

APOCALYPSE AND GOLDEN AGE: THE END OF THE WORLD IN GREEK AND ROMAN THOUGHT by Christopher Star [Johns Hopkins University Press, 9781421441634]

How did the ancient Greeks and Romans envision the end of the world?

What is the long-term future of the human race? Will the world always remain as it is or will it undergo a catastrophic change? What role do the gods, human morality, and the forces of nature play in bringing about the end of the world? In **APOCALYPSE AND GOLDEN AGE,** Christopher Star reveals the answers that Greek and Roman authors gave to these questions.

The first large-scale investigation of the various scenarios for the end of the world in classical texts, this book demonstrates that key thinkers often viewed their world as shaped by catastrophe. Star focuses on how this theme was explored over the centuries in the works of poets, such as Hesiod, Vergil, Ovid, and Lucan, and by philosophers, including the Presocratics, Plato, Epicurus, Lucretius, Cicero, and Seneca. With possibilities ranging from periodic terrestrial catastrophes to the total dissolution of the world, these scenarios address the ultimate limits that define human life and institutions, and place humanity in the long perspective of cosmic and natural history. These texts also explore various options for the rebirth of society after world catastrophe, such as a return of the Golden Age or the redevelopment of culture and political institutions.

Greek and Roman visions of the end, Star argues, are not calls to renounce this world and prepare for a future kingdom. Rather, they are set within larger investigations that examine and seek to improve personal and political life in the present. Contextualizing classical thought about the apocalypse with biblical studies, Star shows that the seeds of our contemporary anxieties about globalization, politics, and technology were sown during the Roman period. Even the prevalent link between an earthly leader and the beginning of the end times can be traced back to Greek and Roman rulers, the emperor Nero in particular. **APOCALYPSE AND GOLDEN AGE** enriches our understanding of apocalyptic thought.

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Near the midpoint of his Meditations, the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius wrote the following vision of the future: "Very soon, everything in existence will be changed; and it will either be vaporized, if the nature of the universe is one, or it will be scattered" (6.4). For centuries, the reign of Marcus Aurelius has been seen as one of the major turning points in world history. Edward Gibbon famously declared that his principate fell within "the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous." Significantly, the death of Marcus and the accession of his son, Commodus, in 180 CE signaled for Gibbon the end of this golden age and the start of the subject of his monumental tome The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. More recently, the movie Gladiator (2000) cast Marcus Aurelius as the last legitimate Roman emperor and the man who gave Rome back its true self by ensuring that his son did not rule and that power was returned to the senators. In reality, Marcus Aurelius had planned for several years that his son Commodus would be the next emperor. Commodus had the rare experience among the Roman emperors of knowing that he would eventually succeed his father. In this way, Marcus Aurelius ended the tradition of adoptive emperors that had been in place for nearly a century (98-180 CE), the period that Edward Gibbon saw as the height of human prosperity and felicity. Today, two massive monuments remain in Rome as testament to Marcus Aurelius's achievements as emperor: a column, now in the Piazza Colonna, which depicts events during his wars against the tribes on Rome's northeastern frontier, and an equestrian statue, now on the Capitoline Hill.

With this historical context and modern reception history in mind, the mini-apocalypse, set within the private world of the emperor, becomes all the more surprising and significant. When the emperor looks to the future he does not see a golden age continued by his son or, as the film would have it, by a restoration of the republic. Nor does he envision future generations admiring his monuments. Rather, Marcus envisions two different scenarios for the end of the world; both of which, he declares, will come quickly. To modern readers familiar with elaborate visions of world destruction both contemporary (films and novels) and ancient (the Bible), Marcus's one-sentence account is atypical. He does not refer to the burning or scattering of everything in existence as the end of the world. Rather, he considers both events from a strictly physical perspective. As such, each event is properly referred to as a "change" that transforms our epiphenomenal world back into the primal building blocks of the universe. Marcus does not see either scenario as arising from the actions of humanity. In fact, the death and suffering of humanity is of no concern for him. Rather, for Marcus, both possibilities are built into the nature of the universe. The end of the world is an unavoidable eventuality that is not contingent on human vice and virtue. Aside from this declaration about the rapidity with which the end will come, Marcus's mini-eschatology shares little with the

roughly contemporary Jewish and Christian apocalypses to survive from the ancient world. To take only the canonical texts, Daniel, likely formalized in the mid-160s BCE, concludes by stating that the end will come in three and a half years (Dan. 12:5-13).6 Revelation, likely composed in the 90s CE, states in the first sentence that this apocalypse was given to John so that God may reveal "to his slaves what must happen quickly" (Rev. 1:1). Perhaps suggesting the speed with which the change will come, Marcus's vision of the end is remarkably brief. It is a single sentence, and not an entire book, like Daniel and Revelation.

Marcus's eschatology is part of a larger text. The Meditations is not solely devoted to describing the end of the world. Marcus's vision of the end of the world, subsumed as it is within a larger, non-apocalyptic text, is typical of Greek and Roman authors. There is not a single extant text by a pagan Greek or Roman writer that is entirely devoted to describing the end of the world.' All of the accounts treated in this book are set within a larger narrative context. Like Marcus, Greek and Roman authors typically do not place accounts of the end at the end of their texts, in the way in which Revelation is the final book of the Christian Bible. Marcus's account of how the world may end comes in the middle of his text. It is part of his larger book of exhortations to himself, what Pierre Hadot has called "spiritual exercises" to help the emperor live his philosophy each day. As spiritual exercises, these writings were likely only intended for Marcus himself. Thus, his prediction about the end of the world may be unique among ancient eschatology in that the emperor did not write it for the enlightenment of anyone else. The visions of the end that Marcus gives are not unprecedented, however. They would have been familiar and understandable to anyone who had studied ancient philosophy.

Marcus's two possibilities for the coming change reflect the theories of the Stoics and Epicureans, respectively. The Stoics argued that the universe was made up of one primal universal building block, divine fire. It periodically returns to this element and the world is "vaporized" in the fiery ekpyrosis. Orthodox Stoic theory also stated that the world is then reborn and unfolds in exactly the same way. Marcus curiously leaves out this aspect here, but elsewhere he writes about the world's eternal cycles and the continuity of past and future. The second scenario, that the world will be scattered, is encapsulated by one verb in the original Greek text. This option succinctly puts forth the rival Epicurean view that the universe consists of atoms and void and eventually our world will return to its constituent building blocks. Thus, Marcus's prediction is part of a larger philosophical debate and tradition, rather than a religious text. While the Stoics did believe that the fire that made up the universe was identical with divine providence and could also be called Zeus or Jupiter, the periodic return to fire was typically seen as a natural part of the universe's functioning. The ekpyrosis did not occur as part of God's judgment of a sinful humanity. And if there is a theological element lying behind the Stoic theory, by contrast the gods are entirely absent from the Epicurean vision of the birth, growth, and dissolution of the world. Although Marcus is typically seen as a Stoic philosopher, when it comes to contemplating the end, he is not dogmatic. He is willing to accept the possible validity of two rival theories.

Typically, the Jewish and Christian apocalypses to survive from the ancient world are believed to have been written by anonymous, or pseudonymous, outsiders. They are attributed to long-dead fictional figures like Daniel, or ancient characters from the Bible like Enoch or Baruch. Revelation in as outlier in that the author reveals his actual name and history, although for centuries the author was conflated with John the Evangelist. These texts often vividly depict the downfall of earthly empires and anticipate the arrival of God's eternal kingdom. As scholars have long noted, the ancient apocalypses often set themselves against the empires of Greece and Rome and protest that the wrong king is on the throne. The leaders of these empires are typically the villains of these narratives. Daniel casts the Seleucid ruler, Antiochus IV, as a blaspheming beast. Nero is given a similar role in Revelation. Marcus Aurelius's Meditations turns this trope on its head. Here we see

the emperor himself imagining the destruction to come. Instead of separating himself from this destruction as a member of God's elect, Marcus imagines himself as a small part of the catastrophe, which is not part of God's judgment of humanity but part of the "changes" that take place within nature. Like Marcus Aurelius, the majority of the Greek and Roman authors investigated in this book were far from anonymous outsiders. They were members of the elite who likely had little desire to see a sudden, radical change to the status quo. Nevertheless, their social status did not prevent them from developing different end-of-the-world scenarios. Writing about the end of the world is not simply the invention of oppressed outsiders. Nor did the nameless imperial subjects who wrote the ancient apocalypses have the monopoly on this mode of thought. Marcus Aurelius demonstrates that even one at the top of the imperial hierarchy could engage with it. Rather than focusing on the end of Rome, however, Marcus's brief eschatology is part of a larger philosophical project to help him become a better emperor and human being.

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The passage from Marcus Aurelius represents what may be one of the last visions of the end of the world written by a pagan from the classical period of Rome. As Marcus Aurelius's reign represents the end of what Edward Gibbon once saw as the golden age of the empire and the "happiest period in human history," so his Meditations also represents the limits of Greek and Roman eschatology. With a gesture to cosmic cycles and return, this book will venture back in time to Hesiod and the origins of Greek and Roman thought about the golden race, the repeated destructions experienced by humans, and predictions about the future. Chapter 1 investigates the wide range of Greek thought on the history and future of humanity. Our specific focus is on accounts of destruction. We travel from Hesiod's myth of the metallic races to the long history of philosophical thought on the relationship between humanity and world catastrophe. Only brief testimonia and a few enigmatic fragments preserve the first Greek philosophers' thoughts on this topic. From what we can tell of the opinions of Anaximander, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Democritus, each offered vastly different theories. Only with Plato, in four of his dialogues, do we find detailed accounts of the periodic terrestrial catastrophes that have ravaged the human race in the past and can be expected to do so in the future. Plato's student Aristotle may have subscribed to this theory as well, but the accounts of world catastrophes attributed to him only survive in fragmentary works. After Aristotle, the two main schools of thought to develop during the Hellenistic period, Epicureanism and Stoicism, each posited the world's total destruction. As we have already seen with our investigation of the passage from Marcus Aurelius, each school envisioned different methods of destruction and different aftermaths. Unfortunately, the writings of Epicurus and the early Stoics about the end of the world are not very elaborate or detailed.

Perhaps surprisingly, aside from Hesiod and Plato, Roman authors have passed down to us the most detailed accounts of the end of the world to survive from classical antiquity. These authors build on ideas from their Greek predecessors but develop them with unprecedented detail, immediacy, and connection to contemporary politics. Thus, in chapter 2 we consider the multiple accounts of the end of the world in Lucretius's Epicurean poem De rerum natura (c. 55 BCE). Then the analysis moves to Cicero's development of Plato's theory of periodic world catastrophes in the final book of his De re publica, likely published a few years after Lucretius (c. 51 BCE).

Chapter 3 considers the interplay between the golden age and the end of the world in writers from the Augustan period. Until recently, this period itself was often designated the golden age of Rome. Along with the hope for peace that came with Augustus's consolidation of power and the acknowledgement that a new era had begun, we can also see a fascination with the end of the world. Vergil hints at this possibility already in Eclogue 4, a poem that is more famous for the declaring that the golden age as returned. As we have already seen, Horace writes of the end of the world as an

exercise in courage and a celebration of Augustus's future apotheosis. Yet a much earlier poem, Epode 16, provides an account of Rome's future destruction and is seen by some as a pessimistic response to Vergil's eclogue. Ovid's Metamorphoses provides detailed accounts of the primal destructions of humanity, by flood and fire. Yet he repeatedly connects these events from the origin of the world to his times. In addition, Jupiter remembers a prophecy that may promise the eventual destruction of the world.

The final chapters treat the most prolific eschatologists from the Greek and Roman world, Seneca the Younger and his nephew Lucan. Chapter 4 considers Seneca's account of the flood-to-come that closes the third book of his Natural Questions. Chapter 5 investigates poetic accounts of the end of the world, first in Seneca's drama Thyestes and then in Lucan's epic the Civil War on the conflict between Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great that ended the republic in the early 40s CE.

Chapter 6 considers the last detailed accounts of the end of the world in classical literature. Octavio and Hercules Oetaeus, two anonymous plays inspired by and once attributed to Seneca, provide very different accounts of how the world might end. Octavio makes manifest the relationship between Nero and the end of the world, a relationship that is only hinted at or obliquely referenced in the works of his two victims, Seneca and Lucan. Octavio and Hercules Oetaeus consider the end of the world from opposing angles. Octavia takes place in the world of recent Roman history and portrays the tyrant Nero at the height of his power. Hercules Oetaeus is set in a world pacified by a mythological hero. In addition, these plays, along with Seneca's Thyestes bring together the dual notion of catastrophe. They envision, in unique ways, the final catastrophe that will engulf the world. All three plays give their accounts of the end of the world at a moment of heightened tension and emotion. Thus, in the original poetological sense of the word, these plays' visions of the final world catastrophe are also sensational coups de theátre. Indeed, they are unique in classical literature 42 No other surviving play from antiquity offers such detailed accounts of the end of the world. These plays demonstrate not only the popularity of Seneca in the years following his death by suicide under Nero's orders but also how eschatology was seen as a key facet of his thought. Indeed, another text attributed to Seneca, a collection of epigrams, opens with an account of the end of the world. In this final stage, eschatology in Latin literature looks back to the lost world of the Julio-Claudians, and of Seneca and Nero.

Aside from the pseudo-Senecan authors, visions of the end of the world largely disappear and can only be found in short passages such as we have already seen in Marcus Aurelius. Romans would still repeatedly declare the return of the golden age and the eternity of their empire, but they would not consider the possibility of the end. The willingness to engage with the various scenarios of future destruction appears to have been largely confined to a few authors during the end of the republic and during the era of the first emperors. This fact suggests a close association between political instability and change and interest in eschatology. This impression could in part be accidental due to the texts that have survived. Passages in Seneca and Epictetus, as well as the passage from Marcus Aurelius (6.4), suggest that different visions of the end of the world were well known and debated among the learned elite for centuries. The unique detail and intensity we see in Latin authors from the late republic and early empire may offer us a rare instance where Latin writers are more `original" than their Greek predecessors. As far as we can tell, for example, Lucretius did not base his detailed accounts of the end of the world on anything he found in the writings of Epicurus. Similarly, the majority of Seneca's varied accounts of the end are not simple illustrations of the Stoic ekpyrosis.

Pagan Roman interest in the end may illustrate on a larger scale the psychology of apocalypse that Adela Collins identifies with the Christian apocalypse of John. According to Collins, apocalyptic writings spring in part from cognitive dissonance, when reality does not line up with expectations.

This may seem like an overly broad and generalizing principle, but the simple fact that reality and expectations very rarely line up may account for the longevity of narratives about the end of the world. The disjunction between the real and the ideal, theory and practice, was likely particularly acute for many elite Romans during the final years of the republic and the first decades of the principate.

Like many of us today, Romans like Lucretius, Vergil, Seneca, and others may have felt that their world had reached its breaking point and that they were living in the final age. The purpose of this book, then, is to investigate the varied ways in which Greek and Roman authors conceived of the collapse of the world and its aftermath. In scripting these scenarios, these writers were not simply pessimists in love with writing about mass destruction. Rather, by writing about the end of the world, or the breakdown and renewal of human society, these authors sought to define their places within the grand scheme of world history as well as demonstrate the interaction between the forces of nature and their own social, cultural, and political institutions.

As we saw with Marcus Aurelius, writing about the end of the world could be deeply connected to the larger practice of philosophy. It combines ethics with physics. In other words, knowing about the nature of the universe and the dramatic "changes" that are built into it can help us to live in the present and be unafraid of the future. The philosophical payoff is not simply to know that world catastrophe could come quickly and so we must "seize the day." Rather, regardless of whether one posits the end of the world in the distant or near future, envisioning and writing about it demarcates the ultimate conditions and the limits to fame, power, and progress that the gods or the nature of the universe have set for us. Marcus's pithy sentence is not representative of many of the accounts of the end, both past and future, that we will treat in this book, however. More typically, writing about the end of the world is a source of literary and narrative creativity and originality. After all, Plato's story of Atlantis, still immensely popular today among adults and children for envisioning lost worlds, grew out of his larger philosophical theories of periodic terrestrial catastrophes. This combination of philosophical and narrative creativity demonstrates the deep importance that many ancient Greek and Roman authors placed in understanding the role that catastrophes play in shaping the human and the ecological world, both past and future. This is a lesson with which the modern world is just beginning to come to grips.

Before moving on to our analysis of Greek and Roman visions, scenarios, and thought experiments about world catastrophes, a brief word about the present one. I write these lines in the relative safety and comfort of Vermont while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to claim lives throughout the world. If these ancient visions teach us anything, it is the value of this sort of thought experiment and the importance of envisioning multiple scenarios for the future. The best the ancients could do was to admit the inevitability of the end of the world as we know it and to encourage us to accept this fact with mental fortitude. Living in a time that has largely moved beyond prophecy, visions, poetry, and philosophy about the future and has replaced them with forecasts, scenarios, and risk management, we should understand not only the importance of thinking through the potential scenarios for catastrophe but also the need to develop robust plans to prevent and mitigate the next ones that we will inevitably face. <>

Love and Sex in the Time of Plague: A Decameron Renaissance by Guido Ruggiero [I Tatti Studies in Italian Renaissance History, Harvard University Press, 9780674257825]

As a pandemic swept across fourteenth-century Europe, the *Decameron* offered the ill and grieving a symphony of life and love.

For Florentines, the world seemed to be coming to an end. In 1348 the first wave of the Black Death swept across the Italian city, reducing its population from more than 100,000 to less than 40,000. The disease would eventually kill at least half of the population of Europe. Amid the devastation, Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* was born. One of the masterpieces of world literature, the *Decameron* has captivated centuries of readers with its vivid tales of love, loyalty, betrayal, and sex. Despite the death that overwhelmed Florence, Boccaccio's collection of *novelle* was, in Guido Ruggiero's words, a "symphony of life."

Love and Sex in the Time of Plague guides twenty-first-century readers back to Boccaccio's world to recapture how his work sounded to fourteenth-century ears. Through insightful discussions of the *Decameron*'s cherished stories and deep portraits of Florentine culture, Ruggiero explores love and sexual relations in a society undergoing convulsive change. In the century before the plague arrived, Florence had become one of the richest and most powerful cities in Europe. With the medieval nobility in decline, a new polity was emerging, driven by *Il Popolo*—the people, fractious and enterprising. Boccaccio's stories had a special resonance in this age of upheaval, as Florentines sought new notions of truth and virtue to meet both the despair and the possibility of the moment.

Review

"Paints a sweeping portrait of Florentine cultural life during the origins of the Renaissance…Shows how *The Decameron* illuminates the key social development through which Boccaccio (1313–1375) lived…Ruggiero expertly elaborates the theme of *virtù* in *The Decameron*, with results that are insightful and engaging."**—Andrew Stark, *Wall Street Journal***

"Ruggiero's invitation, evident on every page of his well-researched volume, is to fully appreciate the historical and theological context that shaped these stories, and in turn how they prompted new ways of imagining the world."**—Dan Turello, *Los Angeles Review of Books***

"An insightful and provocative analysis of how love and sex were actually 'lived' in the Rinascimento. Ruggiero is not only a leading historian, but also a literary critic at the top of his game. His book is well-timed, eerily current in fact. Almost seven centuries after Boccaccio wrote of the horrors a pandemic inflicted on Florence, individual responses remain, in fact, fairly identical: fear of the neighbor, anxiety about the future, escape to the countryside, dread from physical touch, and searches for pleasant, escapist ways to fill the day."**—Valeria Finucci, author of *The Prince's Body: Vincenzo Gonzaga and Renaissance Medicine***

"A dazzling new contribution to the history of emotions. Desire, passion, love, sex and all their perils come to life in Ruggiero's analysis of Boccaccio's celebrated *Decameron*, giving us an imaginative reconstruction of the complex cultural world of courtship, honor, and marriage in fourteenth-century Tuscany."**—Joanne M. Ferraro, author of *Venice: History of the Floating City***

"Guido Ruggiero, leading cultural historian of the Italian 'Rinascimento' and pioneer in the study of sexuality in the early modern period, now offers us an extraordinarily valuable reading of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. From his rich and innovative perspective, the 'hundred novelle' unfold in the shadow of the devastating Black Plague of 1348 and in a longer-term transition in Florence from medieval feudalism to economically-driven republicanism. Students and scholars of Boccaccio's masterwork may or may not finally agree with all of Ruggiero's bold conclusions, but anyone who comes to grips with them will be the wiser for it."**—Albert Russell Ascoli, author of *A Local Habitation and a Name: Imagining Histories in the Italian Renaissance***

"Quite fascinating for its reading of the *Decameron*, but beyond that also offers considerable insight into the place and times—and tells a good story of both the beginnings of the Renaissance and attitudes towards love and sex. An enjoyable and interesting read."***—Complete Review***

"Ruggiero, in this exemplar of *microstoria*, demonstrates the prominent place in the history of modern notions of love, sex, marriage, and power of the Italian Renaissance."**—Dean T. Ferguson, *International Social Science Review***

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Listening to the Decameron: An Introduction

The year 1348 shocked the world, or at least the world as viewed from the West; for it was the year that an apparently new plague that would become known as the Black Death struck Europe, carrying off from one-half to two-thirds of its population. Indeed, it is still remembered today as one of the greatest disasters of history. But, at the time, it seemed to confirm widely shared apocalyptic visions that the end of time was nigh. And with good reason, for the tremendous dying off had left the survivors wandering in the suddenly empty streets of once thriving towns and in the countryside contemplating abandoned fields and villages with fear about what further calamities an angry and punishing God had in store for a sinning humanity.

Giovanni Boccaccio claimed that in response to that deeply disturbing disaster he wrote the Decameron, one of the greatest and best-known works of Western literature. Although he had begun collecting and rewriting the one hundred tales that make up the heart of his masterpiece before the plague struck and continued revising them afterward, he maintained that he had decided

to write it in order to help his fellow Florentines weather the emotional stress of the staggering loss and devastation of the Black Death. His tales, he promised, would provide a pleasant diversion from the cruel reality of those empty streets and vacant palaces that literally haunted their once flourishing city and his imagination.

Significantly, one of the themes of those stories that he asserted would be most useful in doing so was love: a crucial emotion, key to recovering normal family life and community after that destruction. But he promised that love could offer something more valuable yet—for it was an emotion that he noted was especially important for uplifting the spirit of the women who had suffered so much, both from the plague and from the unhappy arranged and loveless marriages and unjustly restricted life they led. In sum, Boccaccio declared that the healing power of love in the time of the plague was his motive for retelling the tales of the Decameron and an ideal antidote for the material and emotional disaster that had struck his world.

Yet where Boccaccio saw love, he also saw sex. For the two were deeply intertwined in the culture and life of the day for him and his compatriots. And love both ideally and regularly led to shared sexual pleasures, at least in the tales of the Decameron. The reverse, unsurprisingly, was not always the case. Sex did not necessary lead to or even involve love, and therein lay a series of problems moral, practical, and emotional. Problems that at first might seem to have been quite similar to problems faced today, but Boccaccio's second half of the fourteenth century was not the modern world, and the way those problems were lived and felt at the time opens up revealing vistas on a complex of values and emotions that were often decidedly different. And this was the case even if they were in many ways foundational for our own values and emotions.

To return to a metaphor that I have used before, that world of love and sex at the time of the plague in Italy was rather like the world that Alice encountered when she went through the looking glass in Alice in Wonderland. People, things, and practices seemed familiar, but, tellingly, nothing worked there in quite the same way as it did before she entered her disorienting wonderland. Our own wonderland of Boccaccio's Decameron reads in much the same way, for at the same time that it often seems not quite right and disorienting, as we explore it in this book, its historical settings and textures offer fascinating comments and critiques both positive and negative on sex and love in the time of the plague and perhaps today as well as we respond to the dislocations and traumas of a modern pandemic.

In Florence in Boccaccio's day, for example, it was recognized and feared that the passions and practices associated with love and courting slid all too easily into the pleasures and myriad dangers of sexual intercourse, formally labeled illicit. Adultery and youthful premarital sex, in fact, were the assumed ideal locus of love, at least in the literary traditions of courtly love, the dolce stil nuovo, and the poetry of noted and much-imitated writers like Dante and Petrarch. In contrast, love in marriage, both in literature and practice, was a relatively unlikely proposition. For, while courting provided an important measure of status and setting for social interaction, the emotional love that was seen as developing in that context was viewed as too driven by youthful passions and too quickly passing to be used as the base for the carefully planned family alliances that were held to be at the heart of successful marriages—marriages that served greater family goals and provided the stable disciplinary base for an ordered society, socially and sexually.

Love was simply too quick, too fleeting, and too irrational an emotion to forge a long-term relationship like marriage. And, in turn, marriage, as a binding relationship entailing a series of obligations, was literally too constraining and unfree to allow one to follow one's desires and freely choose a lover, while true love was nothing if not free. In many ways, it was that freedom to love that made it an emotion both attractive and dangerous—deeply dangerous and often far distant from the modern world of Valentine cards or saccharine love stories. Yet, as we shall see, Boccaccio's

tales suggestively break free from this vision of the correct order of things. And anticipating that thesis of this book, they broke free to attempt to "civilize" the emotions associated with love and sex, to make them less dangerous for the newly reordered urban civil society that was to be rebuilt following the devastation of the plague.

Having said that, however, this is not really a book about Boccaccio or why he wrote the Decameron. For, well beyond considering Boccaccio's intent in writing it and his vision of love and sex, it is a reading of that fascinating and still evocative work, attempting to imagine how that masterpiece was heard in its day and how it might be heard anew today from a historical perspective. Much like a great symphony—a human symphony of the first Rinascimento—the Decameron is even more telling for me, this study, and Boccaccio's contemporaries, because it offers a rich entry into how they heard its many riffs on love: now laughing, now tragic; sometimes humble, often aristocratic; frequently realistic, and from time to time playfully whimsical. As a result, my goal in retelling these tales in their historical setting marries the interests of the literary critic in reopening (and ideally reevoking) the excitement of great tales and of the historian in rediscovering the historical texture of suggestive texts to offer hopefully new insights and textual pleasures.

For the Decameron, with its one hundred tales told over ten days by Boccaccio's fictional group of young aristocrats, sang of the life of a city, Florence, that was rapidly developing into one of the most important and richest economically and culturally in what would become Europe. And thus it was encountered there and elsewhere in the urban world of northern Italy, I would suggest, with a shock of recognition that the life of which it sang had not only changed profoundly but was continuing to change rapidly in the wake of the plague. Merchants, bankers, lawyers, secular scholars, and the humbler artisans of their world had come to matter—the popolo (literally the people) as they styled themselves. In turn, the old, landed nobility and their ways no longer were the stuff of the tales that mattered there, except perhaps as lessons on an outdated past—lessons to which the Decameron regularly returned.

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Nonetheless, the Decameron presents the case for true love and its accompanying sexual pleasures as the base for successful marriages, returning repeatedly to the unhappy and dangerous outcomes of traditional arranged marriages often involving unloving, unhappy couples of widely different ages and desires. And, over and over again, these negative examples of loveless and pleasureless marriages and the negative emotional life they offered are contrasted with the happy ending of true love in well-founded marriages where loving couples, having decided to marry, live happily ever after. Although it might be pointed out with a certain irony that few tales continue to describe the life of those married lovers living happily ever after, suggesting perhaps that that improbable conclusion for the Rinascimento was hard to demonstrate even in the happiest of the Decameron's tales.

That said, however, we do have significant archival evidence that the radical ideal of marriage for love and sexual pleasure was actually followed by some at the time in Florence and in the other cities of northern Italy and that it often entailed violence, both in terms of violent resistance by families interested in maintaining more traditional familial goals for marriage and violence by the lovers themselves or their supporters attempting to overcome those traditional goals to marry instead for love. Thus, returning to the tales of the Decameron, despite their emphasis on the ideal of peaceful and civilized marriages based on love, they also at times portray contemporary forms of violence associated with love, especially what was deemed true love, to win marriage. Moreover, this violence was usually presented positively, suggestively, in contexts much like those found in contemporary judicial documents. In fact, Boccaccio-author periodically describes in detail such love-driven violence with Dantean relish (often troubling to modern readers) and as virtually a heroic requirement proving true love, thus leaving us with a civilizing and peaceful institution frequently

founded on violence and the disruption of the social order that it was supposed to support and civilize.

If this all seems complicated and even at times contradictory, that is, of course, because it was. The many transitions that the cities of northern Italy were undergoing economically, socially, and culturally were nothing if not complicated, and the responses were seldom as neatly symmetrical and logical as social theorists, critics, or historians might desire or like to imagine. Rather, they were complex and rich with contradictions, much like the tales of the Decameron, and perhaps, we might point out, like the normal disorder and messiness of everyday life and contradictory values found in most societies. In those contradictions we can see the complexity and force of love and sexual desire and the feelings associated with both in the Rinascimento that at times still seem familiar today but often range far afield and involve much stronger and more dangerous feelings and emotions. For I would suggest that an often-overlooked aspect of the way the modern world has developed is the way love, desire, and feelings in general have been pared down and controlled internally and externally to lose much of their power, force, and at times dangerous potential for violence.

In this I am not claiming a linear process of the civilization of manners but rather an ongoing complex process of adapting emotions to different societies and cultures and their shifting relationships with die expression of feelings and passions—a history just beginning to be explored. And from time to time today in our supposedly more civilized and controlled society, when those feelings break through our carefully honed filters of self-control and culture, we are astounded and deeply troubled by the things that love and desire and the emotions associated with them can play a role in triggering. In the Decameron, we jump to a. different world and culture, where different controls are being put in place, driven by decidedly different social and cultural forces. A world and a culture where love, sexual desire, and their associated feelings were imagined in ways often strange to the modern eye and seen at the time as involving dangerous clusters of passions far distant from the modern.

This book, then, aims to reopen the Decameron and its symphony of life, a symphony of Rinascimento love and sexual desire and their associated feelings and passions, in sum, love and sex—when they were imagined as congeries of emotions dangerous, dark, seductive, and yet crucially alive with the melodies of life itself in the time of the plague. <>

The Prague Circle: Franz Kafka, Egon Erwin Kisch, Max Brod, Franz Werfel and Paul Kornfeld and their Legacies by Stephen James Shearier [Academica Press, 9781680537765]

A group of mostly Jewish German-speaking writers, the Prague Circle included some of the most significant figures in modern Western literature. Its core members, Franz Kafka, Max Brod, Franz Werfel, Paul Kornfeld, and Egon Erwin Kisch, are renowned for their seminal dramas, lyric poetry, novels, short stories, and essays on aesthetics. The writers of the Prague Circle were bound together not by a common perspective or a particular ideology, but by shared experiences and interests. From their vantage point in the Bohemian capital during the early decades of the twentieth century, they witnessed first-hand the collapse of the familiar and predictable, if not entirely comfortable, monarchical old order and the ascent of an anxious and uncertain modern era that led inexorably to fascism, militarization, and war. In order to deal with their new challenges, they considered strategies as diverse and oppositional as the members of the Prague Circle themselves.

Their responses were shaped to various degrees by Catholicism, Zionism, expressionism, activism, anti-activism, international solidarity with the working class, and transcendence. Stephen Shearier explores how these authors aligned themselves on the spectrum of the Activism Debate, which preceded the much studied Expressionist Debate by a generation. This study examines the critical reception of these influential literary figures to determine how their legacies have been shaped.

While the works of Franz Kafka and Franz Werfel have for generations been literary treasures for audiences throughout the world, these writers have been considered by most readers as having stood outside and independent of their time. Traditionally they have been treated by literary critics sui generis, that is, as autonomous, i.e. isolated from any context. It has not been taken into account, for example, that Kafka and Werfel along with their fellow Prague writers Egon Erwin Kisch, Paul Kornfeld, and Max Brod were for a number of years in close personal and professional contact with one another, that their cross-germinating works were a collective response to a specific historically-determined, troubled milieu and that they were members of a large seminal group of writers known as the Prague Circle.

While for decades works by members of the Prague Circle have enjoyed wide success, their popularity has been by no means constant. Paul Kornfeld, for example, was acclaimed by his contemporary critics and general audiences alike as the best dramatist of his generation, only subsequently to fall into nearly total obscurity. In the 1940s and 1950s Franz Werfel achieved extraordinary success in the U.S. but is virtually forgotten today both here and in German-speaking countries. While for nearly a century Kafka has been recognized in the West for his subtle and genial exposure of the ubiquitous oppressive social apparatus, he was considered anathema in the East.

Is this phenomenon of waxing and waning popularity simply the result of mutable literary tastes or does it perhaps have something to do with the serendipitous circumstances of professional and popular reception? The argument posited here is that artistic value is by no means

intrinsic but rather the cumulative time-dependent result of unpredictable forces. Grounded on the premises that 1) the writers of the Prague Circle were indelibly influenced by the particular set of sociological, political and cultural conditions extant in the milieu located chronologically and aesthetically between Impressionism and Expressionism and that 2) the "meaning" of art is created in

large part through its reception, which in turn is the product of particular historical contexts and the concomitant matrices of their respective variables, this examination attempts to demonstrate how our understanding of the works by the Prague Circle has been mediated by their historical reception.

Since it is assumed along with Deleuze and Guattari that the relationship between a work and its interpretation is not necessarily informed by the relationship between signifier and signified, but is rather an infinite series of ruptures, of "deterritorializations,"1 the objective of this investigation is to determine the ways in which changing perspectives in the reception of the Prague Circle over time and across national boundaries reflect the relativity of literary aesthetic value judgments. It is not my desire to weigh in on the debate around aesthetic merit, i.e. as to whether said merit is intrinsic or determined by variables such as market value, or specific time and place, etc. It will become obvious, however, that the reception of works by the writers of the Prague Circle over the course of the last 100 years has had a substantial, undeniable influence on the viability of these writers for both scholarly and lay audiences in the 21st century.

While the intention of this study is to be demonstrative, illustrative, the attempt has been made to ascertain the sociological and political effects on the critical and popular reception of the works by the Prague Circle in German- and English-speaking countries from the time of their publication through the first decades of the 21th century. To be clear: due to the inexorably growing and ever-changing academic landscape, this study could never aspire to be comprehensive and exhaustive.

Opposed to psychological interpretations dominant in Germany and France,2 and to the 'text immanent' approach employed by the New Critics prevalent in the U.S. since the 1950s,3 this study is conceived as a reading of readings. Based on Jauss' notion of 'Rezeptionsästhetik,'4 it proceeds to establish a 'history of reception.' Structurally it is designed to determine the various ways in which the members of the Prague Circle responded to extant conditions during the production of their works and to evaluate the extent to which our understanding of these works has been mediated by their reception over time.

In order to demonstrate how meaning is not merely a function of a literary work's representation of the "real world" in a literary work, but is created moreover by readers (general audience and professional critics alike) in their respective historical and cultural contexts, reception will be traced through various epochs in both the German-speaking world and in the USA. The production of meaning will be considered furthermore in the context of what I refer to as the Activism Debate.

While observing similarities as well as differences with respect, e.g., to their epistemological method, their ontology, their teleology/ theology, and their positions regarding the polemics of activism, this study concludes that the writers of the Prague Circle, who were zealously engaged in both the theoretical treatment and practice of perception, were strongly influenced by the then-current philosophical method of phenomenology, cultivated in particular at the Charles University in Prague.

Quintessentially Expressionist, that is, characteristic of the artistic movement engendered by phenomenology, many of the works created by the Prague Circle were deliberately opened to infinite possibilities for interpretation. As such they require ever contemporary, that is, constantly updated interpretation as well as the utmost rigor in historical exegesis for their valorization.

It will be shown that through the multiplicity of possible meanings they have offered in their works the writers of the Prague Circle not only present an iconoclastic alternative to hegemonic methods of interpretation, but in their act of aesthetic liberation offer an irrefutable gesture of generosity.

The collective efforts by the Prague Circle manifest a distinctive tension brought on by the decline of Impressionism and the rise of Expressionism. The coincidence of the moribund Habsburg Empire

and Berlin's emerging vitality was reflected by sometimes stark contradictions within the work of the Prague Circle, which on the one hand attempts desperately to salvage the old regime and on the other hand pushes ineluctably towards aesthetic pluralism and modernity. This modernist aspect of the Prague Circle (and the polyvalence of meaning it presents) lends itself readily to the dynamic made possible by reception theory. <>

Dice and Gods on the Silk Road: Chinese Buddhist Dice Divination in Transcultural Context By Brandon Dotson, Constance A. Cook, and Zhao Lu Series: Prognostication in History, Brill, 9789004461208]

What do dice and gods have in common? What is the relationship between dice divination and dice gambling? This interdisciplinary collaboration situates the tenth-century Chinese Buddhist "Divination of Maheśvara" within a deep Chinese backstory of divination with dice and numbers going back to at least the 4th century BCE. Simultaneously, the authors track this specific method of dice divination across the Silk Road and into ancient India through a detailed study of the material culture, poetics, and ritual processes of dice divination in Chinese, Tibetan, and Indian contexts. The result is an extended meditation on the unpredictable movements of gods, dice, divination books, and divination users across the various languages, cultures, and religions of the Silk Road.

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This book is about movement: the random movement of dice as they fall through the air and then settle on the ground in a particular configuration; the ontological and positional movements of gods and diviners through a ritual that brings about their intersection; and the physical movement of dice, books, and ritual techniques across India, Central Eurasia, and China. The event at the heart of these various movements is a ritual in which humans attempt to impose order, intention, and control over dice divination and over the gods, but where both dice and gods are united as unwieldy forces that largely evade these efforts.

This book is also about books, and about one book in particular. At its heart is a slim tenth-century codex from Dunhuang containing four medical texts and four divination texts, one of which is called the *Divination of Maheśvara* (*Moxishouluo bu* 摩醯首羅卜). The latter is a dice divination text whose method is unlike that in any other extant Chinese divination text, but which can be found in Turkish, Tibetan, Sanskrit, and Sogdian divination texts from the sixth through tenth centuries. The text was used to interpret the results of dice throws in concert with a local, perhaps Dunhuang-specific pantheon of Indian and Chinese gods and spirits led by the Indian god Śiva in his esoteric Buddhist guise as Maheśvara. There is one deity assigned to each of the *Divination of Maheśvara*'s sixty-four written oracular responses, each of which is further keyed to one of sixty-four different numerical trigrams, or combinations of three numbers. Such methods place the text in a long tradition of Chinese numerical trigram divination on the one hand, and within Indian dice divination traditions on the other. The *Divination of Maheśvara* is also a product of its specific time and place in Dunhuang, a center of Buddhist iconographic and textual production and a multi-ethnic enclave of Chinese, Tibetans, Khotanese, Sogdians, and Uighurs. As such, the *Divination of Maheśvara* can be approached from many angles as relevant to, variously, the Buddhicization of Chinese divination techniques; the Chinese assimilation or appropriation of transregional divination traditions; innovations based on long-standing Chinese divinatory traditions; the local reception and adaptation of Indic Buddhist pantheons; and the local articulation of divinatory relationships with the gods.

This book is sympathetic to its subject matter in the sense that it is structured somewhat like a consultation of the *Divination of Maheśvara*. Just as the latter allows one to divine up to three times about a given matter, this book has three main chapters, each of which, like an oracular response, has a similar structure but differing contents. The first chapter is a detailed study of the *Divination of Maheśvara*, the second surveys numerical trigram divination in China, and the third surveys dice divination on the Silk Roads.[1] Each chapter attends to the materiality of divination, and also interrogates divination users' ideas about the power of dice and of other objects used to construct mantic figures. Each chapter also investigates the mantic figures themselves, and how these perform an interpersonal communication between gods and humans. Besides such issues of materiality, ritual process, and divinatory aesthetics, each chapter also considers the gods and spirits that make up the divinatory pantheons of various Indian, Tibetan, and Chinese divination systems, and how these align with and diverge from the contents of the texts. These three chapters and their contents were not arrived at through a randomized throw of the dice, but the book nevertheless hopes to reward other ways of navigating its pages than proceeding from front to back.

Meta-Divination

It will be helpful to begin by introducing how one consults the *Divination of Maheśvara* and also to offer a glimpse of the text through a short "meta-divination." Suppose you live in Dunhuang in the

tenth century, and you have an important issue about which you need some advice, or perhaps an outsider's perspective. You visit a diviner and agree to his fee. He tells you to sit down and face west. The diviner then invokes the gods Śakra, Brahmā, and the four heavenly kings, as well as a host of other spirits as witnesses. He tells you to state your name, to focus your mind, and to profess a vow. Then he tells you to announce the issue that brought you here, and gives you an odd, rectangular die. Its four sides each have concentric circles as pips: one on one side, two on the next, three on the next, and then four circles side by side (see figs. 6a and 6b). The diviner tells you to throw the die three times. Your first roll is a four, your second is a two, and your third roll is a one. The diviner looks through the pages of his book, stops, and reads out loud,

> 4-2-1 This is called the King of the Wind Spirits set. You are constantly unhappy. Even if this is the case now, you'll later have happy celebrations. Don't worry or be fearful, as before long things will go your way. Initially inauspicious, but later auspicious.

The diviner tells you that this is a good result. You are not sure of this, and ask if you can roll the dice again. The diviner nods and tells you to once again announce the issue you are divining about while you throw the dice. This time you roll a one, then a two, and then a two again. Once more the diviner turns the pages of the book. He pauses, then intones:

> 1-2-2 This is named the Supervisor of Life Allotments Demon set. If you completed this set, no evil will reach you, but nothing you seek will come about and none of the goods you want will follow. You must be calm and tranquil, and contemplate goodness. This mantic figure is therefore neutral.

You consider this silently, thinking that this seems better than the first one, even if it is supposed to be "neutral" whereas the first response was "auspicious." After a long silence, you ask the diviner if you can throw the dice again for a third response. The diviner tells you that it is permitted to divine three times, but not more. You think this over, and consider the danger of ending up with a bad response.

"How many responses are there in the book?" you ask.

"Sixty-four," replies the diviner.

You decide to try one last time. Holding the die and running your thumb over the circular pips on each of its four sides, you announce your issue again and throw it three times. Two, two, and two. Once more the diviner turns the pages of the book, and stops near the front. He recites:

> 2-2-2 This is named the God Vināyaka set. If a person has issues to resolve, the god will protect him/ her. Whatever s/he needs will soon be obtained; clothing and food will come of their own accord and whatever s/he seeks will be fulfilled. Subsequently, camels, horses, and various domestic animals will not die or be injured. Greatly auspicious.

You feel a great sense of relief. The diviner looks pleased. You try to reflect solemnly on each of the three responses, but it is this last one that repeats in your head, blotting out the uncertainty of the first two. You feel a sense of lightness.

This "meta-divination" offers a sense of the divination ritual's sensibilities and of the *Divination of Maheśvara*'s contents. Its basic method also reveals what it is and what it is not. One creates a numerical trigram by throwing the die three times. The numbers or values from the die—one, two, three, or four—can occupy three slots, such that their ordering matters. There are as a consequence sixty-four possible combinations of numbers, that is, sixty-four numerical trigrams. Mathematically, one can represent this simply as $4^3 = 64$. As a point of reference, this is precisely analogous to how the four nucleotides in DNA and in mRNA, adenine (A), uracil (U), guanine (G), and cytosine (C), combine in groups of three (e.g., ACU, GAC) to form sixty-four possible codons. It should also be noted by way of comparison that although the method used by the *Book of*

Changes (*Yijing*) also results in sixty-four possible combinations and sixty-four corresponding entries in the text, this is arrived at in an entirely different way that demonstrates the dissimilarity of the two traditions. In the *Changes*, one sorts stalks to create a set of three unbroken (Yang) or broken (Yin) lines, thereby producing one of the Eight Trigrams, or *bagua* 八卦. Mathematically, the possible outcomes are thus $2^3 = 8$. Repeating the process, one creates a second trigram and then combines these two trigrams to make a hexagram, e.g. $8^2 = 64$. It is in short an utterly distinct method of combining signs that happens to also produce sixty-four possible combinations.

Even if it is practically and numerically a bounded system, the sixty-four possible outcomes in the *Divination of Maheśvara* might have been conceived of in their totality or in their potentiality as symbolizing the entire field of possibilities. Casting the dice and creating a numerical trigram, however, decisively narrows the field to one named god or spirit who either protects or is a source of harm. In the above meta-divination, we encountered the King of the Wind Spirits (*Fengshen Wang* 風神王), the Supervisor of Life Allotments Demon (*Siming Gui* 司命鬼), and the god Vināyaka (Dasheng Tian 大聖天). The first is to be linked with the Indic god Vāyu, but also evokes Feng Bo 風伯, the Chinese wind spirit associated with birds, mountains, and the Winnowing Basket astral lodge. The second god, the Supervisor of Life Allotments, is a famous ancient Chinese god associated with fate and with the underworld. The third, Vināyaka, is a Buddhist guise of the elephant-headed Indian god Gaṇeśa. This is a fairly representative sample of the Indic, Buddhist, Chinese hybrid pantheon of the text, which speaks to its divinatory sensibilities and to its social and religious context in tenth-century Dunhuang. The three gods and the three responses also mirror the three main chapters of this book, with their respective emphases on the *Divination of Maheśvara*, the long history of numerical trigram divination in China, and the transmission of dice divination out of India and across the Silk Roads.

Gambling with the Gods

The meta-divination additionally demonstrates the dynamics of play and of risk that inform dice divination. The die is a playful object, both in the sense that it is used in games and also in its being fundamentally equivocal. A die's multiple faces encode randomization and chance more completely and more succinctly than any other object used in divination. Dice divination is rooted in dice games, and in particular in the tradition of dicing or gaming with the gods. Tales of gambling with supernatural partners come to us from both China and India. In China dicing with the gods is often associated with the game of *liubo* 六博, in which opponents advance twelve pieces—six for each player—on a board by casting rods or dice.[2] While the image of immortals playing *liubo* became a popular motif during the Han, the game was also associated with lowlife gamblers and violent youths.[3] Mark Edward Lewis recounts a story from the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 (*Intrigues of the Warring States*), compiled between 23 BCE and 8 BCE:

> [A] "bold youth" (*han shao nian* 悍少年) … challenged the deity of a shrine to the god of the earth to a game of *bo*. The stakes stipulated that if the youth won he would borrow the god's power for three days, while if he lost the god could make him suffer. He made throws for the god with his left hand, throws for himself with his right, and won the match. He accordingly borrowed the god's power but then did not return it. After three days the god went to seek him, and as a consequence the grove around the shrine withered and died.

Surveying this and other episodes of gambling with the gods, Lewis observes that those who play *liubo* with the gods or spirits "are portrayed as figures bordering on the criminal who challenge the conventional order." This may be largely due to the association of the game with drinking and gambling. Additionally, it must be acknowledged that to challenge the gods is fundamentally a transgressive act. This is signaled by the stakes and by the mode of interaction, which Lewis even likens to combat: the game will establish a winner and a loser, and by winning humans seek to

effectively become god-like, that is "to expand their own powers, alter their fate, and manipulate their world."

The instances of gambling with the gods in China come largely from literary sources where they feature in anecdotes and cautionary tales. Gambling with the gods enjoys a more prominent place in Indian mythology and narrative. As in China, in India there are myths about the gods playing dice with each other and those in which the gods dice with mortals. In one example of the former type of myth, from the *Kedārakhaṇḍa*, it is the game of dice that precipitates the fragmentation of the unified, androgynous godhead into its male and female constituents, Śiva and his wife Pārvatī, when it/they are invited to play. In the course of a few rounds both the god and the goddess resort to cheating (*chalena*). Pārvatī wins from Śiva his crescent moon, his necklace, and his earrings, and then finally takes even his loincloth. In anger, Śiva stalks off to the wilderness to practice austerities in solitude. The story is full of humor and irony, but at its heart is the theme of oneness and separateness, and the remainder of the story is about the loss of wholeness that both Śiva and Pārvatī feel, and their attempts to regain it.[7] A passage just after Śiva's departure depicts Pārvatī's ambivalent love for and frustration with her sore-loser husband:

> She was tormented by this separation and found no joy anywhere. She thought only about Śiva. Her attendant Vijayā said to her, "You won Śiva by self-mortification; it was wrong to play dice with him. Haven't you heard that dicing is full of flaws? You should forgive him. Go quickly, before he is too far away, and appease him. If you don't, you will be sorry later."

Pārvatī replied, entirely truthfully: "I won against that shameless man; and I chose him, before, for my lover. Now there is nothing I must do. Without me, he is formless [or ugly—*virūpa*]; for him, there can be no separation from, or conjunction with, me. I have made him formed or formless, as the case may be, just as I have created this entire universe with all its gods. I just wanted to play with him, for fun, for the sake of the game, in order to play with the causes of his emerging into activity [*udbhava-vṛtti-hetubhiḥ*]."

This exceedingly rich passage sets up a contrast between the usual way of winning a god's favor, such as through self-mortification, and playing a game of dice.[9] The game of dice is "full of flaws," possibly because of the cheating that accompanies it, possibly because the undeserving can win by chance, or possibly for both reasons.

It is curious that Pārvatī's reply is marked as having been given "entirely truthfully." The meaning here is surely not ironic, since she is in fact revealing the core of the myth and the heart of the game: it is about fragmenting the androgynous, holistic godhead, "a state of infinite density and interconnectedness, in which no discontinuities exist" into discrete, gendered entities, and doing so for play (*līlā*), for fun, and "for the sake of the game." As we will see, this playful fragmentation of holism has a powerful analogy in dice divination.

One other point that this myth conveys is also found in many other Indian myths about dice games, namely, that dice games disrupt the social and cosmic order. The game achieves this by almost invariably dealing a loss to the ontologically or positionally superior party. This dynamic is present in the shearing off of aspects of Śiva, represented by his jewelry and garments, which then accrue to the winner, Pārvatī. The topsy-turvy sensibility of the dice game is even more apparent when human gamblers challenge gods. In one myth of this type from South India, a human gambler named "Unfettered" (Niraṅkuśa) is reminiscent of the transgressive "bold youth" from the *Zhanguo ce*. He prefers erotic treatises to the *Vedas*, and instead of staying with his wife he whiles away his time playing dice with courtesans until he loses all of his wealth and is thrown out of his house. Destitute, he enters a ruined Śiva temple, insults the god, and challenges him to a game of dice. Like the Chinese youth's game of *liubo*, "Unfettered" plays both sides, casting the dice for himself and for the

god, who remains silent, represented by a stone *liṅga*. "Unfettered" eventually wins and demands his prize: Rambhā, the courtesan of the gods. Loudly demanding payment, "Unfettered" ties a red cloth around the "neck" of the stone *liṅga*.

He pulled the edges of the cloth even more tightly together, strangling the god. Śiva appeared before him—perhaps because he accepted his defeat at the hands of someone who spoke the truth; or because he respected his aggressive devotion, a reflection of the fact that Unfettered was more of a god than he was; or possibly because Unfettered was really an idiot, and this brought out the god's compassion.

The passage underlines the ambivalent status of the gambler: he is possibly an idiot, but he is also "more of a god" than Śiva. As for the meaning of this latter gnomic statement, Handelman and Shulman answer this by describing the characteristics of gamblers like Unfettered:

> They are impudent, supremely confident, unstable, unpredictable …; above all they are perfectly at home in the shifting and fluid world of the game—indeed they are in a sense analogues of the game itself, or human embodiments of its inherent trickiness and flux. Emerging from below—unlike the god, who enters the mode of play from his higher order level of wholeness—they act as solvents on any form of solid or static being, including the rules of the game they play.

Unfettered is more god than Śiva because in being drawn into the game of dice Śiva is drawn out of his own supreme confidence, instability, and unpredictability and is crystallized into one particular form, just as in his game with Pārvatī he was sheared off from a state of unbounded wholeness to become a wandering, bereft, gendered god. The game is tricky in part because it can invert the usual dynamics of human-divine relations, reducing or canalizing the fractal nature and ontological multiplicity of the god—its "trickiness"—while enabling and facilitating something very like this for the human gambler, who is transformed by virtue of his winning from the god some of these very powers.

There are several analogies to be made here between dice and the gods. As we have emphasized, they are both multi-faceted. This is obvious in that a die is defined largely by its number of faces, and it is also obvious in the case of a god with more than one head or face. But a die's simultaneously representing a potential range of possibilities and its decisively settling on one of these in a given moment also points to the tendency of gods and spirits to similarly shift through a variety of forms, modes, and affective states according to time, place, and ritual setting. Bernard Faure, drawing on the work of John Law, describes the dynamic and shifty nature of the gods as follows:

> a god is a 'fractional object'—that is, an object that is 'more than one and less than many.' Gods are also plural because they owe their being to a network of relations. There may not be two Nyoirin Kannon, Aizen Myoo, or Benzaiten exactly alike: sometimes an individual name designates a combination of several deities, at other times a specific aspect of a multifaceted deity. Their fractal nature also reflects an essential, ontological multiplicity that cannot and should not be reduced to historical accidents.

The difference between the die as it falls through the air and the die that has settled on the ground is very like the difference between the unified godhead and its constellation as, say, Śiva. More obviously, both dice and gods have the power to determine a winner and loser, to benefit or to harm, or to grant a boon or deal a loss. Dice do this unpredictably, at random, and their own transition from unrolled potential to one particular outcome both models and precipitates the god's movement from infinite density and holism to a fragmented specific entity. These movements transpire in the game itself, which invites reversals in which human gamblers can become tricky and unwieldy and gods can become static.

Not all dice games are fair, and cheating is often an expected part of the proceedings. But trickiness on the part of the players can also succeed too well, to the point of rigging the game. This is in fact precisely the point of the dice game that forms a part of the Vedic horse sacrifice, or *aśvamedha*. In part of this ritual the king plays a dice game in which the danger of his opponent's potential winning throw, a four, is ritually neutralized and further exorcised by the sacrifice of a "four-eyed dog," which represents and incarnates the winning throw. The danger thus averted, the ritual will succeed predictably as planned. Commenting on this and on another similarly staged and similarly predetermined game of dice in another Vedic royal consecration ritual, the *rājasūya*, Handelman and Shulman write that "[t]he Rājasūya and the Aśvamedha games preview hypothetical futures that will be brought into being, and provide procedures that will actualize these acts of cultural imagination … Put otherwise, the Rājasūya and Aśvamedha dice games contain their futures within themselves, and control processes of causality that actualize these futures." Placed in dialogue with Śiva's game of dice with Pārvatī and his game with the human gambler "Unfettered," we might also simply say that in the cases of the Rājasūya and the Aśvamedha kings and priests have rigged the game, emptying it of all its "trickiness." These are very different sorts of players than Unfettered: where his brash confidence came from his unstable, unpredictable, and shifty nature, and established him as an agent of disorder, those who rig these royal dice games represent the forces of order.

This dynamic of exerting control over the game, and eliminating its instability and unpredictability, is perfectly clear in a ritual dice game that has formed a part of the Tibetan New Year's festivities since at least the 17th century. Here a representative of the Dalai Lama plays a game of dice with a figure who is essentially a scapegoat king, or a monstrous royal double of the Dalai Lama, called the *lugong gyelpo* (Tib. *glud 'gong rgyal po*). But this unfortunate's black dice are customarily marked with all ones, and the Dalai Lama's white dice have all sixes. After his inevitable loss at the dice game, the *lugong gyelpo* is expelled from the city of Lhasa. Such manipulation of the die itself is a literal destruction of its multifaceted nature and a reduction to stasis and certitude.

The dice game is an arena for communication between humans and gods, where forces of instability and unpredictability pull against those of order and coercion. In the parlance of games and gaming, a dice game is ludic in the sense that it is governed by a clear set of rules, where there are winning rolls and losing rolls. *Alea* is the pure chance or unpredictability of rolling the dice to see who wins and who loses. *Agôn* is *alea's* opposite, the operative dynamic in a contest of pure skill. Roger Caillois describes *alea* in terms that lay bare its challenge to social and cosmic order:

> In contrast to *agôn*, *alea* negates work, patience, experience, and qualifications. Professionalization, application, and training are eliminated. In one instant, winnings may be wiped out. *Alea* is total disgrace or absolute favor. It grants the lucky player infinitely more than he could procure by a lifetime of labor, discipline, and fatigue. It seems an insolent and sovereign insult to merit.

Alea's "insolent and sovereign insult to merit" is very likely one of the "flaws" that Pārvatī's attendant Vijayā saw in the dice game. The ritual attempts to erase *alea* and to avert risk can also be seen as a response to the "trickiness" of the dice game. As the myths we've just introduced show, dice and the dice game are not impartial. Their disruption of the cosmic order is also a disruption of the status quo. They correct in favor of balance, which is itself an assertion of a different sort of cosmic order. Even in a "fair" game of dice, such as that between Śiva and Pārvatī, the ontologically weaker party usually wins. This is even more apparent in the game between a human gambler and the great god. A god-like figure such as a king or a Dalai Lama would therefore theoretically face great danger when dicing against a lowly figure like the *lugong gyelpo*.

Dice Gaming and Dice Divination

The die carries many of the sensibilities of gaming with the gods into the practice of dice divination. In some forms of Tibetan dice divination, as described in chapter three, the ritual approximates a dice game with a divine opponent, such that we refer to this type of dice divination as "oracular gambling" and to the diviner as an "oracular gambler." Dice divination's entanglement with dice games helpfully corrects the common misapprehension that divination is only about accessing hidden knowledge or seeing the future. While divination can be concerned with prognostication, this is not all that it does, and it is not simply a matter of revelation. Like the game, which creates a winner and a loser, divination is also creative, bringing into existence a new situation with respect to the actors involved. As Filip de Boeck and René Devisch put it in their study of Ndembu basket divination, "divination does not so much offer a mimetic model of a social context, but rather *makes* a world … [It] constitutes a space in which cognitive structures are transformed and new *relations* are generated in and between the fields of the human body (senses, emotions), the social body and the cosmos." It is this creative, world-making element of dice divination that its relation to the dice game spotlights. This is not to the exclusion, however, of divination's uses of models and microcosms as a part of its creative processes.

Dice divination differs from dicing with the gods in two important ways. Firstly, its communication with the gods is radically aleatory in a way that the dice game is not; secondly, it introduces the intermediary of the mantic figure or numerical trigram. Divining, the dice will bring one into contact with a god or spirit, but which god or spirit that will be remains unknown until the dice have fallen through the air and settled on the ground. Divining with the *Divination of Maheśvara* is not a targeted communication like a prayer or sacrifice that is offered to a specific god or spirit. The gods and spirits of the divination text are on shuffle, "up in the air" like the dice themselves until a given roll summons forth one of their number. Until their number is called, these gods and spirits remain a pantheon in potential, unknown as a whole to any but perhaps the diviner or a habitual user of divination.

One cannot choose the god or spirit the dice invoke any more than one can choose whether this contact results in benefit or in harm. Moreover, because some combinations are almost inevitably missing in the dice divination book, sometimes there will be no response at all. This ability of a divination system to refuse to respond and to remain silent is known as "resistance," and it is an important indicator not only of perceived "objectivity," but also of the vitality of a given system. Also, whereas dicing with the gods instrumentalizes the game's ability to invert order and bring down the god as it raises up the human gambler, dice divination performs an interpersonal relationship with the gods that is less determined, less coercive, and less transactional in nature.

The second main difference between dicing with the gods and dice divination concerns their respective media. The bold youth's game of *liubo* with the soil god and Unfettered's dice game with Śiva were both more or less direct, even if the gods' rolls were done by proxy with the gamblers' "other" hands. There was a god, a human gambler, and dice. In dice divination, by contrast, there is an intervening medium, which is the mantic figure (Chinese *gua* 卦). As for the form and content of the mantic figure, the gods and spirits of the divinatory pantheon are invoked in the first instance not with words, but rather with one of sixty-four figures, or "numerical trigrams" randomly generated by the dice. This mode of communication between human and divine simultaneously insists on difference by avoiding the medium of human language, but also on some degree of commensurability by appealing to the language of numbers or of visual representations of numbered groups of dice pips, counting rods, or stalks.

The intermediary role of the dice-generated mantic figure, which in dice divination stands between the human divination user and the invoked god or spirit, further complicates the more direct

communication found in the dice game. In the latter, there is a clear homology between the dice game and the cosmogonic process. This trades on the Vedic principle of homologies, or *bandhu* connections: "[t]he dice game, and the dice embedded within the game, are constituted through homologies. Since the dice model the cosmic process, their action effects the dice game. And since the dice game models the cosmic process, its action effects the cosmos." It is precisely these *bandhu* connections that priests exploited when rigging the royal dice game during the horse sacrifice, thereby controlling the processes of causality. With the introduction of the intermediary mantic figure generated by the dice, the *bandhu* connections seem to be randomized and potentially more difficult to manipulate: there appears to be no homology, for example, between a dice roll of three twos and the god Vināyaka. Even if the relationship between a given god or spirit and a given mantic figure can be said to be "arbitrary"—as loaded a term as one finds in divination—this does not negate the more consequential homology that remains: the shiftiness of the dice is captured or crystallized in the mantic figure just as the god or spirit is drawn out of the "pantheon in potential" and into invoked presence. It is the mantic figure, interposed between the dice and the god, that attracts them both in the manner of a magnetic opposite. Where gods and dice are shifty and equivocal, the mantic figure is solid and certain.

The intermediary role of the mantic figure in relation to gods and spirits and with respect to the material culture of divination has also been theorized in a Chinese context. Here, rather than the microcosmic-macrocosmic homologies of *bandhu* connections, one tends to speak of correlative cosmology, the workings of *qi*, and the principle of creating a stimulus (*gan* 感) to elicit a response (*ying* 應) from the gods. A particularly utilitarian view both of the mantic figure and of the material culture of divination is offered by Yu Chan (287–340) in his treatise on milfoil and turtle divination.

After material things [e.g., stalks, turtles] are brought forth, there are images (or symbols [*xiang* 像]). After there are images, there are numerical appetencies (*shu* [數 decoding of the symbols/ mantic figures]). After there are numerical appetencies, benign and malign tendencies abide in them. The milfoil plant is the chief item for looking into numerical appetencies, but is not something that is made real by the divine spirits. The turtle is the basic substance for disclosing ominous signs, but it is not something that is brought into being by unearthly presences … It is the same as with the fish-trap which, although it captures the fish, is not the fish; or the rabbit-snare which, although it captures the rabbit, is not the rabbit. In this way one uses the image to search out the subtle message, and when the message is found, then the image may be forgotten. So, the milfoil is used to search out the spirit, and when the spirit is thoroughly understood, then the milfoil may be dispensed with.

Put simply, divination is here seen as a means to an end of communicating with gods or spirits. The mantic figure is there to be decoded, and rather than being fetishized it should be discarded once its purpose has been served.

Against this utilitarian approach to mantic figures as signs to be read, understood, and then discarded, there is the opposite extreme that treats the mantic figures as gods themselves. The Eight Trigrams that form the basis of the *Changes*' sixty-four hexagrams, and which are also arrayed in a variety of mantic figures, for example, are deified as the Eight Spirits (*bashen* 八神) or the Eight Archivists. This is comparable to the deification of other cosmological, calendrical, and astrological forces such as the Stems and Branches, the planets, and the Astral Lodges (*xiu* 宿).

The form of the mantic figure may be pertinent to whether it is understood as a sign to be decoded, an invocation to the gods, or a god itself. In the *Divination of Maheśvara* the mantic figures that stand at the beginning of each oracular response are simply numbers, as they are in the Sanskrit dice divination texts in the sixth-century *Bower Manuscript*. As such they are signs with phonetic values. In

Tibetan and Turkish dice divination texts, however, the mantic figures are pictorial representations of dice pips. That is, the pips of the dice are not "translated" into numbers on the page. There are similar pictorial sensibilities in Chinese numerical trigram texts in which the array of stalks or counting rods that constitutes the mantic figure is similarly transferred rather than translated on the page. This choice of representation relates to the issue of "legibility," and to what Yu Chan assumes about reading or decoding the "numerical appetencies" of the mantic figure. As we will see throughout the book, the *Divination of Maheśvara* and many other Chinese numerical trigram texts implicitly reject the premise that their constituent parts—the three individual numbers or symbols making up the trigram or mantic figure—are to be "read" and interpreted. This is the case even when these texts use some of the vocabularies of correlative cosmology that might connect them to Yin and Yang and other standard interpretive strategies for reading and decoding mantic figures.

To complicate the status of the numerical trigram and its location between sign and symbol, the numerical trigrams of the *Divination of Maheśvara* are named after gods and spirits, and other Chinese numerical trigram traditions that use pictorial representations—as well as the hexagrams of the *Book of Changes*—are also given names. The precise relationship between the mantic figure and its name or the god or spirit associated with it is usually left undefined, to be teased out by the semantics of the oracular responses and by other hints in the text. But some gods appear more than once, and some are linked to one mantic figure in one text but to a different mantic figure in another text. The link between a mantic figure and a given god or spirit is, if not random, characterized by flux and by a sense of play.

A Relational Network of Gods, Dice, Books, Divination Users, and Mantic Figures

This trickiness—of the mantic figure, of the dice, of gods, and of the game, has seeped into the fibers of this divination tradition, infusing it with a sense of movement that extends also to divination books. These books are found on their own in paper and birchbark scrolls and codices, but they are also often found as parts of compilations that variously include astrological texts, medical texts, ritual texts, and legal texts. This demonstrates that divination is one ritual mode among many, and that it usually falls short of offering a comprehensive program of diagnosis, prognosis, healing, and exorcism, to say nothing of cosmology and soteriology. But besides showing divination to be deficient as a panacea, or not fully self-sufficient, these partnerships or collocations of ritual modes and practices testify to divination's adaptability and malleability.

Divination has a tendency to work in tandem with other modes of ritual action. An oracular response in a divination text might, for example, prescribe that one perform a specific ritual in order to ensure good fortune or avert bad fortune. Similarly, divination might reveal the source of a malady as a preliminary to exorcism or to other more elaborate and well-established ritual prescriptions. And it might be employed at the end, to confirm that a ritual worked. Divination's use for diagnosis and prognosis also makes it a natural partner for medicine.

In addition to their tendency to join other texts within compilations or sometimes stand on their own, divination texts are also infused with movement themselves. A dice divination book should have sixty-four oracular responses, and as we will see, there are various strategies for how to array these responses (e.g., descending order) in a book so that there will be no repeated or omitted combinations. Nevertheless, every Sanskrit, Tibetan, Turkish, and Chinese dice divination text that we've studied features repetitions and/or omissions. As a result, very few dice divination books feature the prescribed sixty-four responses. In fact, the only dice divination books that include sixty-four responses without omission or repetition are those that have been "canonized"—the Sanskrit *Pāśakakevalī* and the Tibetan "Divination Calculation" (Tib. *Mo rtsis*)—later developments that we do not cover here. Faced with these and similar textual peccadillos in isolation, the textual

scholar's tendency is to assume sloppy scribes and lazy editors, or to take these as indications of a text's popular or vernacular milieu. But given how widespread this phenomenon is across divination texts, and given also the dynamic instability of all of dice divination's other elements—dice, gods, mantic figures, and oracular gamblers—we additionally perceive here a tendency of the texts to shift, seemingly at random, under the hands of their users, scribes, and editors.

This textual shiftiness represents an extreme version of what Paul Zumthor, in a medieval European context, refers to as "mouvance." This is the process by which anonymous or semi-anonymous texts, as opposed to those with attributed authors, are prone to high degrees of variation on both structural and syntactic levels as a result of traditional modes of composition across the oral and literary divide. As a consequence, a given text is "materialized in an unstable way from manuscript to manuscript, from performance to performance." The aleatory mode of dice divination only compounds this instability, producing a more virulent strain which we call "divinatory mouvance." Like the genius of the dice game and its tendency to invert social and cosmic orders, divinatory mouvance similarly informs dice divination and frustrates human attempts to wield and control. Divinatory mouvance is infused with *alea*, the lifeblood of dice divination. The missing and repeated responses, unstable orthographies, and other traces of divinatory mouvance are the vital signs of a divination system that is alive, coursing with creative tension against human efforts to wield it. Where *alea* is exorcised, by contrast, and humans fully subdue a divination system by emptying it of risk through "house rules," ritual adroitness, and other forms of "cheating," they only succeed in proffering a system that is inert and lifeless. It is no coincidence that only the "canonized" dice divination texts, which also suffer from creeping morality and soteriology, as well as impoverished oracular poetics, are perfectly ordered, with sixty-four responses.

There is a variety of ways in which one might approach this state of flux involving tricky and elusive dice, gods, mantic figures, divination users, and divination books. One might emphasize the mantic figure and its relationship to the concepts of sign and symbol. One might attend to the identities and biographies of the gods and spirits of divination on the one hand or to the determinative or interpretive agency of human diviners and clients on the other. Or one might make a fetish of the material culture of divination, so as to attribute autonomy and power to inanimate objects like dice and books. A safeguard against this latter approach, and against permitting any one of dice divination's moving parts—dice, gods, mantic figures, books, or divination users—to dominate or overbalance the others, is Michael Taussig's observation that "apparently self-bounded and potent 'things' are but the embodiments and concretizations of relationships which bind them to a larger whole." Taussig continues,

> Their identity, existence, and natural properties spring from their *position* in an all-encompassing organic *pattern* of organization in which things are understood as but partial expressions of a self-organizing totality … If attention focuses on a single thing, as it must at some point in any analysis, then the thing is to be seen as containing its relational network and surrounding context within itself; the "thing" is a system of relationships.

Attending to the gods, dice, books, divination users, and mantic figures as a "relational network" in this manner is further supported by actor-network theory as developed by Bruno Latour. This recommends itself for its emphasis on movement, and also for addressing itself to the situational and contingent dynamics that define dice divination. "A network is not a thing but the recorded movement of a thing. The questions AT [actor-network theory] addresses have now changed. It is no longer whether a net is a representation or a thing, a part of society or a part of discourse or a part of nature, but what moves and how this movement is recorded." The actor, or "actant" need not be human, and it is also characterized by movement: "actors are not conceived as fixed entities but as flows, as circulating objects, undergoing trials, and their stability, continuity, isotopy has to be obtained by other actions and other trials." In dice divination, the moving pieces—the dice, the

mantic figures, the books, the gods, and the human divination users—act upon each other through movements. The dice fall through the air, the mantic figure is formed, the pages of the divination book are turned, a god is drawn out from the pantheon and invoked into presence, and the relations of divination users to their worlds are altered. The actor-network of dice divination might be visualized as a web of axons and neurons, with a given roll of the dice setting in motion one action and not another. But unlike the neuroscientific simile, the movements are multidirectional.

In applying actor-network theory to dice divination we are also inspired by how Bernard Faure makes use of Latour's concept of the actant in his study of Japanese gods.

By viewing the Japanese gods as actors in this sense, and by remembering that they are ever-changing nodes within a network constantly in flux, we can more accurately perceive the Japanese gods as the unstable aggregates that they are rather than as static projections of human minds, society, culture, or what have you. Furthermore, actor-network theory allows us to see that the relationship between gods and humans was bidirectional: gods were not only a product, but in taking on a life of their own, they too became active, productive elements within a larger network.

Dice divination makes a larger network than this bidirectional relationship by its injection of similarly "unstable aggregates"—dice, mantic figures, and divination books—and by the infusion of this network with *alea*. Once again, if dice divination has something to offer actor-network theory it is its injection of randomization.

Besides Zumthor's concept of mouvance, Taussig's view of "things" as standing in for relational networks, and Latour's actor-network theory, we are also indebted to the gods of divination and to the oracular responses of divination texts themselves for suggesting to us a further interpretive framework. Although a dice divination book's sense of instability, born of the push and pull of order and disorder, might make it an attractive and sympathetic harbor for the gods, the gods of divination often convey something different from the oracular responses to which they are attached. In the *Divination of Maheśvara*, for example, there is a preponderance of gods associated with death and misfortune, and there are also a number of gods associated with the wind and with celestial phenomena, or who transit the liminal space between heaven and earth. Gods of the wind and sky also occupy central positions in Sanskrit and Tibetan dice divination texts. Similarly, poetic images of wind and clouds are a hallmark of Chinese oracular poetry. Coming up against these wind gods and images of wind and sky again and again, it dawned on us that the wind is the central element in dice divination in much the same way that fire is the central element in the *homa*/ *goma* ritual. Amidst the shifting gods, dice, books, and mantic figures, as well as the uncertain concerns facing the human divination users, the sense of being "in the wind" offers the perfect leitmotif for dice divination and its various movements.

Wind whips and batters or it gently cools; it bears along tidings of good or ill; it blows against the traveler or it fills one's sails. These are all relevant to divination, as is the fact that the wind is helpfully plural in the sense that there are many different kinds of winds, some of them named, and there are also various diverse, culturally specific ways of thinking about the wind. Wind blows across the dice as they fall through the air, and it blows through the pantheon of dice divination texts. The wind also whips through the pages of divination books, aligning it with mouvance and the tendency of the books' textual contents to twist or tatter, and also to move alongside medical, astrological, and other ritual texts. Like metaphor, which both "is" and "is not" simultaneously, wind conveys order and disorder. It might be disruptive, in the way that divinatory mouvance is disruptive and chaotic when restoring balance and *alea* in the face of manipulative diviners and clients. But winds can also be calming forces, and in an excavated Sanskrit dice divination text from Kucha it is the Maruts—wind gods associated with storms and battles—who ensure the truth of the divination process.

The wind is similarly ambivalent in various Chinese traditions. In the *Divination of Maheśvara* wind appears in oracular response [51]:

> 3-1-1 This is named the King of the Mountain Spirits set. Body and mind are like the wind neither stopping nor going. Nothing you want will be accomplished. Your thoughts are so unfixed that they cannot settle on their own. This matter will not be achieved. Inauspicious.

Here wind symbolizes prevarication, or pointless activity or thought that results in nothing.

In earlier Chinese numerical trigram divination texts, as we will see in chapter two, wind can be the source of a curse. This does not mean, however, that wind is inherently bad or destructive: it is the type of wind that matters, and one's relationship to that wind. The expression "Eight Winds" (*ba feng* 八風), for example, refers to the movement of the four seasons. Sages who live in harmony with the Eight Winds enjoy long life; those who go against the wind, or who are struck by wind from the wrong direction, suffer harm.

As a leitmotif for dice divination, and as the governing element of its relational network, wind points to divination's "shiftiness," and its restlessness to blow across the Silk Roads and embrace a variety of users who speak different languages and profess different beliefs. Wind also cannot be pinned down or bottled, and our own attempts here to make sense of dice divination are offered with this in mind, and with a recognition of the limits of our powers to fully capture or comprehend a tradition that has not been practiced for hundreds of years.

Outline of the Work

These theoretical reflections could certainly be pressed further to include an even greater emphasis on the analogy between dice divination and the dice game as bounded models that act upon an unbounded world, as a map of an actor-network, and as a venue for constituting gods and humans interpersonally through an aleatory mode of communication. There are also further points on embodiment, gender, ontology, positionality, contingency, and eventuality that follow from our approach to divination. But this is not that kind of book. Its chapters are not theory driven but are shaped rather more like case studies out of which we draw observations about the dynamic exchanges between divination users, gods, mantic figures, and the material culture of divination books and the objects of divination.

Chapter one attends to the Dunhuang codex in which the *Divination of Maheśvara* is contained, and then offers a close analysis of the text's instructions, its semantic fields, and its treatment of affective states. The semantic analysis of the *Divination of Maheśvara*'s oracular responses lays bare the divination process that it imagines. Namely, the client's intentions interact with the dice, which then form a mantic figure. Through the act of naming the mantic figure after a specific god or spirit, that god or spirit is invoked and activated as an agent of either protection or harm. Chapter one also explores the *Divination of Maheśvara*'s pantheon of gods and spirits in some detail, attending to their fluid classifications, their various identities, and the question of their relationship with the mantic figures and the oracular responses. The chapter closes with a full translation and transcription of the *Divination of Maheśvara*.

Chapter two contextualizes the *Divination of Maheśvara* within a long history of divination with numbers and numerical trigrams in China, from the fourth-century-BCE excavated bamboo manuscript of the *Stalk Divination* to medieval divination codices from Dunhuang like the *Duke of Zhou Divination Method* (*Zhou Gong bufa* 周公卜法), and the *Guan Gongming Divination Method* (*Guan Gongming bufa* 管公明卜法) that are contemporary with the *Divination of Maheśvara*. It attends to the ritual process and material culture of divination with stalks, counting rods, coins, draughtsmen, and dice-like teetotums. It also focuses on the format of some of these books, particularly divination codices from Dunhuang. Additionally, chapter two emphasizes the role of divination in identifying the

sources of curses to be exorcised, and it contrasts divination with the production of talismans and their differing modes of interaction with gods and spirits. Chapter two also attends to oracular poetry and the recurring images in divination texts, as well as to different forms of the mantic figure. Throughout, the chapter wrestles with questions about correlative cosmology and its (in)applicability to many forms of numerical trigram divination, and also considers the ways in which cosmological representations are used to variously lend further efficacy to divination and/or to attempt to fit it within Daoist, Buddhist, or other cosmologies and soteriologies. It finds divinatory mouvance at work in some Chinese numerical trigram texts, and identifies materials and methods that come close to those of the *Divination of Maheśvara*.

Chapter three surveys Turkish, Tibetan, and Sanskrit dice divination texts that share the *Divination of Maheśvara*'s method, and traces this tradition to India. It begins by introducing Old Turkish and Old Tibetan dice divination codices from Dunhuang that are contemporary with the *Divination of Maheśvara* and which use the same method of dice divination. It then examines a larger body of ninth-century Old Tibetan dice divination texts from Dunhuang and Turfan, and explores the "trickiness" of Tibetan diviners who interact with the patron goddesses of divination as their opponents and their partners in a contest whose ludic dynamics justify its being called "oracular gambling." Chapter three also examines the two dice divination texts in the sixth-century birchbark *Bower Manuscript* from Kucha, which are the earliest extant dice divination texts of this tradition. Attending both to divination books and to the archeological record of the four-sided dice used in this form of divination, known in Sanskrit as *pāśaka*-s, the chapter demonstrates that the *Divination of Maheśvara* ultimately derives from a tradition of dice divination and of dicing with a deep prehistory in India. Across these texts, there are some striking continuities, but the most persistent constant is their "shiftiness,"—a simultaneous willingness to be adopted and adapted while at the same time resisting the full imposition of order.

The short concluding chapter considers the pantheons, poetics, and sensibilities of these various texts and finds them to be united by images and creatures of the wind and the sky. It reflects on the paradoxes of a divination system whose hallmark in its transmission across the Silk Roads has been its variability and adaptability. The appendix offers full translations and transcriptions of the *Tricks of Jing* (*Jingjue* 荊訣), the *Duke of Zhou Divination Method*, and the *Guan Gongming Divination Method*, which are introduced and analyzed in some detail in chapter two.

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At once comparative and rooted in close philological study, especially of the Chinese and Tibetan texts, this book owes a great debt to path-breaking research in both dice divination and Chinese numerical trigram divination. We are particularly indebted to the incisive works of Marc Kalinowski on the latter, as is apparent throughout the book and in chapter two especially. We have also taken obvious inspiration from Michel Strickmann's preliminary comparative treatment of dice divination in the context of his larger, wide-ranging study of the transcultural transmission of lot divination (*chouqian* 抽籤).

A divination book in the abstract might represent unbounded possibilities and omniscience, but in practice it consists of (more or less) sixty-four responses. Our book is similarly bounded, and there are some topics that it does not treat. It does not attempt a definitive global history of the tradition of divining with four-sided *pāśaka* dice. Such a history would have to go into more archeological and material cultural detail than what we provide in chapter three. It would also have to address the transmission of this form of dice divination to the Islamic world, and the many related dice divination texts found in Persian, Arabic, and Turkish dating from at least the late-14th century onward. We all but ignore these texts here, as well as the archeological finds of *pāśaka* dice as far west as Egypt.

Because our inquiry begins in Dunhuang, with a tenth-century manuscript, we have emphasized excavated texts and vernacular texts. We do not examine the later (post-13th-century) Tibetan Buddhist tradition, nor the similarly "canonical" Sanskrit *Pāśakakevalī*.

Also, while we illuminate the *Divination of Maheśvara* by comparison with related dice divination texts and similar numerical trigram traditions, that is where the comparison ends. Since this is not a global history of *pāśaka* dice divination, we do not put it on the "transcultural divination map" by comparing dice divination at length with the *Book of Changes*, with Greco-Roman *sortes* traditions, or with Islamic *al-Raml* divination and its variants such as Ifa and Yifa. We hope that our case study and our reflections on the many movements of dice, mantic figures, gods, books, and divination users will have something to contribute, however, to such a project. <>

THE RĀMĀYAṆA OF VĀLMĪKI: THE COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION translated by Robert P. Goldman, Sally J. Sutherland Goldman, Rosalind Lefeber, Sheldon I. Pollock, and Barend A. van Nooten; Revised and Edited by Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman [Princeton Library of Asian Translations, Princeton University Press, 9780691206868]

The definitive English translation of the classic Sanskrit epic poem—now available in a one-volume paperback A reader and student friendly edition in one hefty 960 page volume.

The **RĀMĀYAṆA OF VĀLMĪKI,** the monumental Sanskrit epic of the life of Rama, ideal man and incarnation of the great god Visnu, has profoundly affected the literature, art, religions, and cultures of South and Southeast Asia from antiquity to the present. Filled with thrilling battles, flying monkeys, and ten-headed demons, the work, composed almost 3,000 years ago, recounts Prince Rama's exile and his odyssey to recover his abducted wife, Sita, and establish a utopian kingdom. Now, the definitive English translation of the critical edition of this classic is available in a single volume.

Based on the authoritative seven-volume translation edited by Robert Goldman and Sally Sutherland Goldman, this volume presents the unabridged translated text in contemporary English, revised and reformatted into paragraph form. The book includes a new introduction providing important historical and literary contexts, as well as a glossary, pronunciation guide, and index. Ideal for students and general readers, this edition of the **RĀMĀYAṆA OF VĀLMĪKI** introduces an extraordinary work of world literature to a new generation of readers. Based on the The Princeron Válmiki Rámáyana: Critical Edition, 1960-1975.

Review

"Truly epic and millennial in scale. The translation and expertise that have gone into this are not likely to be surpassed."**—Frederick M. Smith, *Religious Studies Review***

"The translation admirably succeeds in pursuing its 'twin goals of accuracy and readability.' . . . The closest thing [readers] could get to what the original taste and texture of the text must have been. . . . This is a remarkable achievement."**—Yigal Bronner, *European Legacy***

"Goldman has chosen a translation style that is simple, direct, and very close to the text, without being prosaic. He has avoided the twin pitfalls of preciousness and pedantry. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, as he reminds us, is a poem in a sense we have almost lost touch with: intended to be heard, easily understood, chanted in a loose and repetitive meter that permits the lapidary phrase."**—Edwin Gerow, *Journal of Asian Studies***

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The current volume, edited and revised by the general and associate editors of the original translation project, represents the complete text of the original Princeton University Press seven-volume translation of the Oriental Institute of Baroda critical edition of the Rámáyana of Válmiki. That translation, accompanied by extensive introductions and a dense scholarly annotation, was published serially as the flagship work in the Princeton Library of Asian Translations from 1984 to 2017.

The present volume, which includes a new general introduction and eliminates the original's extensive annotation, is intended for two audiences: the general reading public, who may be interested in gaining access to a little-known masterpiece of Asian literature, and high school and collegiate students and faculty. As discussed in detail in the introduction, the original translation, directed more toward an audience of academic specialists, has been considerably revised by Professors Goldman and Sutherland Goldman with a view toward making it more accessible to these two audiences.

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What Is the Válmiki Rámáyana?

When contemplating a reading of the Válmiki Rámayana, it might well occur to a reader unfamiliar with the work to ask, "What is a Rámáyana, and who or what is Válmiki?" If one were to be told that Rámáyana is the title of a famous and influential Sanskrit epic poem of ancient India, that Válmiki is the name of its author, and that the work is in many ways similar to epic poems like the Iliad, the Odyssey, and the Aeneid, one might then ask, "Why don't we refer to these latter works as `The Homer Iliad,' `The Homer Odyssey,' and 'The Virgil Aeneid'?" And thereby hangs a tale—or rather, many, many versions of the same tale.

The name Rámáyana, "Ráma's Journey," is actually a generic term that, over the last two and a half millennia, came to be applied, either specifically or generically, to the innumerable versions of the epic's central story that proliferated across the vast geographical, linguistic, cultural, and religious range of southern Asia from antiquity to the present day. The collectivity of these versions in poetry, prose, song, drama, cinema, and the visual arts is sometimes referred to as the Rámakathá, "The Tale of Ráma." Thus, although specific versions of the tale, such as those found in Sanskrit and many other languages, may use the term Rámáyana in their titles, many others do not. Indeed, the massive diffusion of texts, art, and performance based on the Ráma story found throughout the nations of southern Asia makes the Rámáyana, writ large, arguably one of the world's most popular, influential, and widely circulated tales ever told. In this it can only be compared with two works that have been equally pervasive and influential, but far less variable and religiously adaptable—the Bible and the Qur'an.

The oldest surviving version of the great tale of Ráma, and the one that is doubtless the direct or indirect source of all of the hundreds and perhaps thousands of other versions of the story, is the monumental, mid-first millennium BCE epic poem in some twenty-five thousand Sanskrit couplets attributed to Válmiki. In several respects this poem is also, as we shall see, unique among all versions of the tale.

In its own preface the text calls itself by three titles: Rama's Journey (rámáyanam), The Great Tale of Sitá (sitáyás caritam mahat), and The Slaying of Paulastya (i.e., Rávana) (paulastya^^dhah). The first title reflects the salience in the story of its hero, while the second features its heroine and the third its villain. In modernity, in order to distinguish this work from its legion of later versions, many of which are called simply Rámáy^ ^^, scholars and others tend to name it for its author. Thus, in keeping with Sanskrit's predilection for nominal compounds, the poem is often referred to in that language as the Váb^ikir^m^ya^a, "Válmiki's R^máyana." In English we tend to separate the two parts of the compound: the name of the author and the name of his work.

Like other Rám^yanas, Válmiki's work purports to be a poetic history of events that took place on the Indian subcontinent and on the adjacent island of La^^ká (popularly believed to be the modern nation of Sri Lanka). Indeed, along with its reputation as a great literary composition, and like its sister epic, the ^^hábhárata, it is regarded by numerous Indian commentators, as well as by the Indian literary critical tradition and many pious Hindus today, as belonging to the genre of itihása, "historical narrative." Also like the Mahábhárata, but unlike most other versions of the Rama story, Valmiki's epic is believed to be the work of a divinely gifted rs^, "seer," who was endowed with an infallible and omniscient vision enabling him to witness directly all the events recounted in his poem. Thus, his version of the tale is widely regarded as the first and most authentic and unfalsifiabie historical account of the life of its hero, Ráma, and all the other characters—human, simian, avian, divine, and demonic—with whom his career intersects.

A unique characteristic of Valmiki's Rámáyana is that it is almost universally revered in the Indian literary tradition as the veritable funs et origo of the entire genre of kávya, "poetry," or what we would call belles lettres: texts whose purpose, among others, is to stimulate our aesthetic sensibilities. Thus, the work is widely revered as the Adikdvya, "The First Poem," from which all later poetry derives, while its author is venerated as the Adikavi, "The First Poet." Indeed, the poem's tale of the life of its hero, Ráma, has come down to us with a prologue in the form of a meta-narrative about exactly how Valmiki came to learn the story of Rama and how he was inspired to craft it into a massive musical and poetic history. In that prologue, we read that Lord Brahma, the creator divinity himself, inspired the sage to compose the tale of Rama in metrical verse, "to delight the heart." In other words, in addition to its other merits, Valmiki's magnum opus is a grand entertainment filled with emotional scenes, romantic idylls, heroic warriors, beautiful princesses,

monstrous villains, comical monkeys, and cataclysmic battles. And so, along with the innumerable subsequent retellings it has inspired throughout the countries and cultures of southern Asia, the work has both delighted and edified its audiences for millennia.

But the work is not merely a literary account of a legendary hero's life and struggles. It also functions on two other critical levels, the devotional and the ethical. We learn at the very outset of the poem that, despite appearances, its protagonist is no ordinary human. Together with his three brothers, Bharata, Laksmana, and Satrughna, he is, in fact, an incarnation of one of the supreme divinities of Hinduism, Lord Visnu, who takes on various earthly forms over the long, recurring cycles of cosmic time when the righteous and righteousness (dharma) itself are imperiled at the hands of some mighty, demonic being or beings who are too powerful for even the lesser gods to resist. Thus, the warrior prince and righteous monarch Rama is regarded as one of the principal ^^atáras, "incarnations," of the Supreme Being and therefore an object of veneration, worship, and devotion for hundreds of millions of Hindus worldwide from deep antiquity to the present day. In this way. Válmiki's epic poem is one of the earliest sacred texts of the Vaisnava tradition of Hinduism and stands at the head of all the many Hindu versions of the R^m^yana.1 Although it has sometimes been superseded in the affection of many of Ráma's bhaktas, "devotees," by later, regional versions of the epic, Válmiki's Rám^yana remains a central scripture for some schools of Vaisnavism to this day, and most Hindus revere both the poem and the poet. Indeed, the day traditionally regarded as Válmiki's birthday is a "restricted," or optional, holiday on the Hindu calendar.

The epic narrative is constructed as a kind of morality play, an illustrative guide to righteous behavior, in the face of the most dire challenges and ethical dilemmas. At the same time, it is a grand cautionary tale of the downfall of the unrighteous, no matter how mighty they may be. Thus, the work, along with its role as a historical and literary text, functions as both a guide to moral and religious conduct (dharm^^^stra) and a political treatise on the proper exercise of kingship and governance (nitisástra). It fulfills these roles through the creation of (in some cases literally) towering figures whose characters and actions represent positive and negative exemplars for its audiences to emulate or to shun. In this way, the epic hero Ráma serves as the model for the ideal son, the ideal husband, the ideal warrior, and the ideal king. Thus, not only is he a god come to earth, but he is the ideal man. Other central figures serve similarly in their specific roles. The heroine, Sit, is the ideal wife, a ^^ti^rat^, a woman perfectly devoted to her husband for better or for worse. Laksmana is the ideal younger brother, utterly faithful to his elder, Ráma. The monkey-hero Hanumán emerges as the very paragon of selfless devotion to one's lord. Then there is the anomalous figure of Vibhisana, the virtuous ráks^sa brother of the epic's villain, who abandons his family and his people to take refuge and ally himself with Ráma.

On the "dark side," as it were, there is the monstrous, ten-headed ráksasa king, Rávana, a ruthless conquistador who terrorizes all creatures, even the gods themselves. Rávana is a defiler of all sacred rites and a prolific sexual predator who rapes and abducts women throughout the three worlds until he meets his downfall at Ráma's hands. There is also Rávana's sinister and terrifying son, the sorcererwarrior Ravani Indrajit, who, through his powers of illusion and magical rites, can make himself both invisible and invincible. Rávana's colossal younger brother is the horrifying, if almost comically grotesque, Kumbhakarna, who must be aroused from his perpetual sleep to wreak havoc on Ráma's army of semidivine monkeys (vánaras).

In opposing these sets of figures, the righteous and the unrighteous, the epic narrative establishes itself as a major episode in the grand and never-ending struggle between the forces of dharma, "good or righteousness," and the forces of adharma, "evil or unrighteousness," for control of the universe—a struggle that, as noted earlier, occasionally necessitates the divine intervention of the Supreme Being to resolve it in favor of dharma. In the end, once Ráma has been victorious in his

battle with Rávana and his evil minions, recovered his abducted wife, and established himself on his ancestral throne, he inaugurates a millennia-long utopian kingdom, the so-called Ramamdjya, Kingingdom of Ráma," which lives on in the political imagination of India to this day. This morality play, reenacted annually across much of India in the Ramlila, "The Play of Rama," a rather more cheerful popular celebration than the European Passion Play it parallels, continues to entertain and edify hundreds of millions who worship Ráma and Sitá (Sitaram). At the drama's conclusion, vast crowds of devotees and onlookers celebrate as a giant effigy of the demonic Rávana, packed with fireworks, is set ablaze for a glorious celebration of the triumph of good over evil. <>

BUDDHISM AS PHILOSOPHY by Mark Siderits [Hackett Publishing Company, 9781624669828]

In **BUDDHISM AS PHILOSOPHY,** Mark Siderits makes the Buddhist philosophical tradition accessible to a Western audience. Offering generous selections from the canonical Buddhist texts and providing an engaging, analytical introduction to the fundamental tenets of Buddhist thought, this revised, expanded, and updated edition builds on the success of the first edition in clarifying the basic concepts and arguments of the Buddhist philosophers.

Review

"Since the publication of the first edition of **BUDDHISM AS PHILOSOPHY**, the need for such a book has only grown as even more undergraduate programs are teaching Buddhist philosophy and looking for accessible materials that still do justice to the tradition's intellectual complexity. This updated version retains the first version's successful balancing act between fidelity to primary source material and application to general philosophical problems. The book teaches students how to do philosophy at the same time as it teaches them the particularities of Buddhist philosophy. Siderits moves fluidly from translations of primary texts to their explication and evaluation, both modeling expert philosophical methodology and pausing to explain to students how philosophical argumentation works." —Malcom Keating, Yale-NUS College

"I use **BUDDHISM AS PHILOSOPHY** as the core text of my 'Non-Western Philosophy' topics course; I'm a huge fan. Siderits's exposition provides a deeply illuminating, historically and philosophically informed walk through the underlying motivations for and diverse Indian Buddhist approaches to the doctrines of 'no-self' and 'emptiness.' This new edition improves on the previous with a new organizational structure, and clarified and expanded argumentation and discussion. Highly recommended for anyone interested in the metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical underpinnings and consequences of Buddhism." —Jessica Wilson, University of Toronto

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Excerpt: It must be emphasized that this is not done in order to show that Buddhist thought is "real philosophy." We think it will be evident to anyone who examines the Buddhist corpus that its authors are engaged in philosophical inquiry; special pleading is not necessary. This book was written to be suitable for use in undergraduate offerings in a philosophy department, and comparisons with similar or related concepts and theories in the Western tradition should make sense in that context, for two reasons. First, some students in such courses will already be familiar with parts of the Western tradition, and making connections with things one has already learned is a useful teaching strategy. Second, in the case of students not already familiar with the Western side of the comparison, philosophy instructors may want to encourage their students to engage in further exploration beyond the course content. But in any event, the instructor need not feel compelled to explain the Western side of a comparison to those students for whom this is the first and perhaps the last philosophy course. Something can be gained from getting the comparisons, but little is lost for those who don't.

Some of the material in this book will be challenging for some students, especially those with no prior exposure to philosophy. Some individual chapters (such as Chapters 5 and 7) are fairly lengthy and cover a great deal of ground. It may be best to have reading assignments consist of one or a few sections of a chapter, and not assign a whole chapter at a time. And while the material in the book can probably be responsibly covered in an advanced undergraduate philosophy course, it may not be possible to cover the entirety in other sorts of settings. The ninth chapter, for instance, might be a chapter too far in some cases. Here are some other parts of the book that the instructor who feels pressed for time might consider skipping over:

> Sections 4.4 and 9.6, both of which take up the issue of whether it is possible to talk meaningfully of the utterly non-existent.
> Section 5.9, which explores an argument for representationalism; since a different argument was presented in the immediately preceding section, and this argument is less clearly developed by its propounder, its discussion could be omitted without jeopardizing later uses of the representationalist thesis.
> Section 7.7, which discusses an argument for the Yogācāra thesis that the natures of the ultimate reals are inexpressible.

Buddhism As Philosophy was written to fill a particular pedagogical niche: to serve as a textbook that could be used in undergraduate philosophy courses focusing, in whole or in part, on the Buddhist philosophical tradition. We certainly hope that it will also be of some interest to readers other than the students in such courses and their instructors. But a few words may be in order at the outset about how it might best be used in the classroom by indicating what it does and does not try to do.

The first point that should be made clear is the scope of the book. The Buddhist philosophical tradition began with the Buddha, developed in South Asia for another one and a half millennia, but also spread to Southeast Asia, Tibet, and East Asia, and continues to develop today. This book treats only the South Asian part of the tradition. It does provide the background necessary for investigating those other parts, all of which developed in response to the Indian tradition. But the book is already more than long enough. Doing justice to the other components of the tradition would require something far, far longer.

Recent years have seen a substantial increase in scholarship focused on Indian Buddhist philosophy. Not surprisingly, this has meant the emergence of scholarly disagreements concerning the best interpretation of this or that Buddhist philosophical text, theory, or doctrine. There have been disagreements over such matters as whether the Yogácára school of Maháyána Buddhism is a form of external-world antirealism, and whether any Buddhist philosophers hold that a contradictory statement can be true. Those disagreements will not be discussed here. The interpretations presented here are all, we think, defensible. But it was judged that their defense is probably best left to the pages of the relevant scholarly journals. Students might be interested to learn that there are other ways to read parts of the tradition than the ones presented here. Some of the Further Reading lists at chapter ends point them in useful directions. We felt, though, that substantive discussion of the interpretive disagreements among scholars might prove distracting at this comparatively early stage in student explorations.

At certain points in the book, there are comparisons of a Buddhist concept, theory, or argument with some related item found in the Western tradition.

For instructors wishing to strictly adhere to the historical record, sections 3.4, 3.5, and 5.2 might seem problematic.

Section 3.4 discusses an argument developed by the eighth-century Mádhyamika philosopher Santideva. Since the chapter as a whole seeks to explicate an approach to ethics that is already in place in early Abhidharma, this argument may strike some as out of place.

Section 3.5 discusses a problem that was not discussed by Indian Buddhist philosophers, the so-called free will problem. Students do frequently raise questions about this issue, and scholars have proposed several answers a Buddhist might give. But the solution described here is not found in the historical record.

Section 5.2 discusses an approach to establishing non-self that is never fully developed in the Indian Buddhist tradition. Moreover, the discussion is triggered by an episode found in a Maháyána text, the Maha Prajnaparamita Shastra, and so might be considered not to belong in a chapter on Abhidharma theory.

Yogācāra is treated in Chapter 7 and Madhyamaka in Chapter 8, reversing the historical order of initial development of these schools. The rationale is that students who have been exposed to Madhyamaka dialectic are sometimes reluctant to return to the sort of metaphysical theorizing found in Yogácára. Still, the instructor committed to adhering to the historical record might prefer to discuss these chapters in reverse order.

Instructors sometimes want to bring parts of the Buddhist philosophical tradition into a course that is otherwise devoted to the Western tradition. One way this book might be used to that end would be to begin with the material presenting the Buddha's basic teachings and a common core of philosophical elaborations (Chapters 1-3, possibly omitting 3.5), and then use parts of some of the remaining chapters to discuss different ways in which that common core was developed. From Chapter 5 (on Abhidharma), for instance, one might confine one's attention to sections 1, 3, 4, and 5. A discussion of Yogácára might be restricted to the material presented in sections 1-4 and section 6 of Chapter 7. A brief exploration of Madhyamaka might focus on sections 1-4 and section 7 of Chapter 8. And no doubt there are many other configurations of the material presented here that would be suitable for different classroom contingencies.

Buddhism As Philosophy?

The purpose of this book is, as the title suggests, to examine Buddhism as philosophy. Before we actually start doing that though, it might be good to first get a bit clearer about what each of these

two things—Buddhism and philosophy—is. That will help us see what might be distinctive about studying Buddhism as a form of philosophy. And it is important to be clear about this, since there are some preconceptions about these matters that might get in the way of fully grasping how the philosophical study of Buddhism works.

What Is Philosophy?

When people first encounter philosophy, they want to know what it is about. Other disciplines have their own subject matter: biology is the study of life processes, sociology is the study of human societies, astronomy looks at planets and stars, and so on. So what is philosophy about? If you are not new to the study of philosophy, you know that what makes philosophy a separate discipline is not necessarily its special subject matter. True, there are questions that we naturally think of as "philosophical" in some sense. Questions such as, "How should I live my life?" and "How do we know anything?" and "How did all this come to be?" But the first question is also addressed by literature, the second by cognitive science, and the third by astrophysics. What distinguishes philosophy from other disciplines?

Someone who has already studied philosophy will also know that the answer has more to do with method than with content. What sets philosophy apart as a discipline is more its concern with how to answer questions than with the answers themselves. To study philosophy is to learn to think carefully and critically about complex issues. It is not necessarily to learn "the answers" that the discipline has arrived at. This can make the study of philosophy frustrating for some. When we first study a subject, we expect to learn the body of knowledge that has been developed by that discipline. When we study chemistry we learn the atomic weights of the elements, when we study history we learn the causes of the First World War, and so on. Only later, if at all, does one start looking into the methods the discipline uses within its field of knowledge. The study of philosophy is not like that. True, one might find out in an introductory philosophy course that Plato thought the soul must be immortal, or that Descartes held the one thing that can't be doubted is that the "I" exists. But one also learns that not all philosophers agree with Plato or Descartes on these claims. Some students find this immensely frustrating. Where, they want to know, are the facts that philosophy has established? In all the centuries that philosophy has existed, has it made any progress, come up with any answers?

One response to this question is that indeed philosophy has established something quite significant—that the truth turns out to be very complicated. None of the simple answers to the questions that philosophy looks at is correct. This is an important (and unsettling) result. The questions that philosophers ask often seem like they should have simple and straightforward answers. Take, for instance, the question of how the mind and the body interact. The state of my stomach causes me to think about what there is to eat, and then the resulting state of my mind brings about bodily motion in the direction of the refrigerator. How do these things happen? One thing that philosophical investigation of this question has shown is that we still don't know the answer. Even more detailed scientific study of the brain won't succeed (at least by itself) in explaining how this works. Yet we rely on the mind and the body working together in everything we do. So perhaps philosophy has established something after all—that under the surface of seemingly mundane matters lurks surprising complexity. Getting to the bottom of things turns out to be really hard work.

But there is another way to answer the complaint that philosophy hasn't established any facts. Someone who says this might be wondering what the point of studying philosophy is. And the way the challenge is posed suggests that they think the point of studying some subject is to acquire a body of knowledge to add new facts to the facts they already know. So one response

to the challenge might be to question this assumption. Perhaps the point (or at least a point) of studying philosophy is to acquire a set of skills. Specifically, the study of philosophy might turn out to

be one of the best ways to learn some critical argumentation skills: defining one's terms carefully, constructing good arguments in support of one's views, critically evaluating arguments (one's own and others'), responding to objections, and the like.' And these skills turn out to play a crucial role in many different areas of life. They are, for instance, extremely important to the practice of law. This would explain why the study of philosophy is recognized as one of the best ways to prepare for legal practice (something that was known in ancient Greece and in medieval India). Of course, the issues that philosophers grapple with can be intrinsically interesting to anyone who is at all thoughtful and reflective. But on this way of thinking about philosophy, the benefit of grappling with them is not so much that one gets the "right" answer, as that one learns to think more carefully and critically about complex matters in general.

To say this is not to say that the questions that philosophers ask are unimportant. It's because people find these to be pressing questions that they pursue the difficult task of trying to answer them—and thereby develop their logical and analytical skills. So something more should be said at this point about what sorts of questions these are. Philosophical inquiry can be sorted into several broad areas. One such domain is ethics. This has to do with the general question of how we should live our lives. So it includes not just questions about the nature of morality (which is concerned with what constitutes right and wrong in the treatment of others). It also deals with questions about what sort of life might be the best life for persons. Now it is sometimes thought that questions of ethics and morality are questions for religion. And it is true that most religions have a great deal to say on these matters. But when people think of questions of right and wrong, good and bad, as matters for religion, they often have in mind the idea that a religion simply tells us how we ought to behave. So they are thinking of ethics and morality as a set of rules or commandments. This is not what philosophers mean by ethics, though. As they use the term, ethics involves critical examination of competing views about how we ought to conduct ourselves. And this is something that one can do regardless of what (if any) religious beliefs someone has. The medieval Christian thinker Thomas Aquinas was doing ethics in this sense when he tried to determine what conclusions we can draw about being virtuous from a certain view of human nature. But so was the nineteenth-century German atheist Friedrich Nietzsche when he asked how we should live our lives given that God is dead. What makes both their discussions of ethical matters philosophical is that both involve the critical examination of arguments.

Metaphysics is another major area of philosophy. The word "metaphysics" gets used in several different ways. For instance, in bookstores the "metaphysics" section often has books on astrology and the occult. But as it is used in philosophy, it simply refers to the disciplined investigation of the most basic features of reality. Where ethics concerns the question of how things ought to be, metaphysics concerns the question of how things fundamentally are, or what reality is basically like. Now we might think that questions about how things are, or what reality is like, should be left to the sciences. And it is true that if, for instance, we wanted to know what a certain chemical compound is like we should turn to chemistry. But metaphysical questions are much more basic or fundamental than those that science can answer. Chemistry can tell us what effects might be caused by mixing two chemicals. But it is a metaphysical question what the general nature of the relation between cause and effect is. Likewise the sciences tell us a great deal about the nature of the physical world. But it is a metaphysical question whether everything that exists is physical; this is not a question that scientists can or should try to answer using the methods of science. Some other examples of metaphysical questions include: What is the nature of time? Are there, in addition to particulars such as individual cows, universals such as a single cowness that exists in all of them simultaneously? Does there exist an all-perfect, eternal creator of the universe? Is there a self, and if so what might it be like? The pursuit of metaphysical questions like these has often led philosophers to related but separate questions in the philosophy of language, such as how it is that words and sentences have meaning, and what it means for a statement to be true.

Another important area of philosophy is epistemology, or the theory of knowledge. Here the basic question is how we can come to know what things are like and what should be done. Inquiry in epistemology has often taken the form of asking just what it means to say that someone knows something or other. For instance, can someone be said to know something if they haven't ruled out all the ways in which they could be mistaken (even when they're not mistaken)? But epistemological inquiry may also take the form of asking what the means or methods of knowledge are. Sense-perception and inference (or reasoning) are popular candidates for reliable ways to acquire knowledge, but what about authority (taking the word of some trustworthy person), or reasoning by analogy? And if there are different means of knowledge, how are they related to one another? Does each have its own distinctive sphere, or do they all serve equally well to give us knowledge about the same objects? Does anyone means of knowledge have precedence over others?

As you might have guessed given what was said earlier about the nature of philosophy, philosophers have developed a number of different theories in each of its different branches. And there is no general consensus as to which theories in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics are correct. There is general agreement that the simplest answers are wrong. Take, for instance, the ethical theory of subject-based ethical relativism. This is the view that whether an action is morally wrong for someone to do depends on whether or not they sincerely believe that doing it is wrong. All philosophers today would agree that this theory is false. But when it comes to more sophisticated theories in these areas, agreement breaks down. For every theory that has been proposed in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics, there are serious criticisms that have been developed by philosophers. Much of the practice of philosophy involves looking at these objections to a given view and seeing if it's possible to answer them. (It is through this process that philosophical theories have grown so sophisticated.) But in doing so one frequently discovers that there are important connections between the view one holds in one area of philosophy and the positions one takes in other areas. A particular theory in ethics might for instance turn out to be unworkable unless one holds a certain position on some metaphysical issue. Learning to see these sorts of connections is another important benefit of studying philosophy.

When we understand philosophy this way, we can say that not every culture developed its own philosophical tradition. But ancient Greece did—this is where modern Western philosophy began. And so did classical India. In each case the original impetus seems to have come from a concern to answer ethical questions. Out of dissatisfaction with the received view of how people should live their lives, there arose efforts at thinking systematically about these matters. But in both cases these inquiries soon led to major developments in metaphysics and epistemology. For philosophers became aware that if we are to make progress toward determining how we ought to live, we need to be clearer about the nature of the world and our place in it. And this in turn requires greater clarity about what constitutes knowledge and what processes lead to it. People sometimes wonder if it could be just a coincidence that philosophy arose in two such different cultures at roughly the same time. Now we know that there were trade contacts between classical India and the Hellenic world. So it is at least conceivable that some ancient Greek philosophers and some classical Indian philosophers knew something of one another's work. But the two philosophical traditions appear to be genuinely distinct. They tackle the same basic questions in ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology. And they employ the same basic techniques of analysis and argumentation. Sometimes individual philosophers in the two traditions even reach strikingly similar conclusions. But this should not lead us to suppose that there was significant borrowing between one tradition and the other. We know, after all, that the same invention can occur independently in two distinct cultures. In mathematics, for instance, the zero was invented separately, in ancient India, and also by the Mayans of precontact Mesoamerica.

What Is Buddhism?

Philosophy, then, is the systematic investigation of questions in ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology (as well as several related fields). It involves using analysis and argumentation in systematic and reflective ways. This will do, at least for now, as an account of what we will mean by philosophy. What about the other term in our title, Buddhism? We might seem to be on safer ground here. While many people might lack detailed knowledge about what it is that Buddhists believe and what Buddhist practice involves, surely everyone knows that Buddhism is the religion that was founded in ancient India by the Buddha, subsequently spread throughout Asia, and is now attracting adherents in the West? Well, yes, but there's a load of mischief lurking in that word "religion." There is one sense in which Buddhism can matter will prove just as crucial to our undertaking as will being clear about what philosophy is.

We often base our understanding of a word on familiar examples. In the case of "religion," the familiar examples for most people in the West are Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. These are all monotheistic religions: they each involve belief in a single personal being who is eternal, is creator of the universe, and has all perfections. Not all religions share this sort of belief: Hinduism and Shinto are both forms of polytheism. It doesn't seem to be stretching things too much to group all the theisms together under one label, though. But particularly if the religion one is most familiar with is Christianity, one might also think of a religion as a "faith." To think of religion this way is to see it as a set of beliefs that one accepts out of a conviction that is not based on rational argument. Religion is then seen as falling on the "heart" side of the head/heart, or reason/faith, divide.

In modern Western culture there is a tendency to suppose that certain questions are to be settled through the use of reason, while others can only be addressed through faith and feeling. This is the dichotomy between reason and faith, with reason seen as a matter of the head and faith a matter of the heart. Along with this dichotomy there is a related one between facts, seen as the sort of thing that the sciences discover, and values, seen as private, subjective commitments that are not open to rational investigation and scrutiny. Suppose we agree that using our reason involves thinking about things in a cool, careful, detached, and deliberate way. Now it is probably true that some matters should not be decided entirely on the basis of calm, cool consideration of reasons. One's choice of life-partner, for instance, should probably involve considerable input from the "heart" side. But it is not at all clear that "head" and "heart" constitute a strict dichotomy. And in any event, it is not obvious that the matters we consider religious (or "spiritual") necessarily belong on the "faith" side of any such divide.

One thing that all the theisms (monotheisms and polytheisms) have in common is that they each try to articulate some vision of the ideal state for humans. This ideal state is usually depicted as being quite different from the way that people would live their lives if left to their own devices. The latter "mundane" (or "worldly") state is depicted as inherently unsatisfactory, as fallen away from how we ought to be. And the ideal state is represented as accurately be called a religion, but there is another sense in which it would be a mistake. And clarity about this sort of salvation from this fallen state. When we think of a religion as dealing with "spiritual" matters, it is this concern with attaining salvation, of escaping from an unsatisfactory way of being, that we have in mind. The concerns of religion are, in a word, soteriological. (A soteriology is a doctrine of salvation.) Now to think of religion as a faith is to suppose that soteriological concerns can only be addressed through a form of emotional commitment. It is to hold that the use of reason or logical investigation is of little or no use in seeking salvation. Many people in our culture believe this. But this was not the view of classical Indian culture. (Nor does it seem to have been held by the ancient Greeks, or by the philosophers of medieval Islam.) To many people in ancient India, including the Buddha, it made perfectly good sense to use our rational faculties in the pursuit of salvation. Of course this was not the only path that Indians recognized. Which path one should follow depends, according to the Bhagavad Gita, on

one's talents and predilections. But all four paths described in the Gita culminate in salvation, for they all instill knowledge of our true identity. Indian Buddhism generally teaches that there is just one path to liberation, not four. But that path consists in the combined practice of philosophical reasoning and meditation. Indian Buddhists, like others in ancient India, thought that salvation from our unsatisfactory state was to be had through coming to know the truth about who we are and where we fit in the universe. And they thought that attaining such insights requires the use of philosophical rationality.

Buddhism is, then, a religion, if by this we mean a set of teachings that address soteriological concerns. But if we think of religion as a kind of faith, a commitment for which no reasons can be given, then Buddhism would not count. To become a Buddhist is not to accept a bundle of doctrines solely on the basis of faith. And salvation is not to be had just by devout belief in the Buddha's teachings. (Indeed the Buddhists we will study would be likely to see belief of this sort as an obstacle to final liberation.) Rather, liberation, or nirvana (to use the Buddhist term), is to be attained through rational investigation of the nature of the world. As we might expect with any religion, Buddhist teachings include some claims that run deeply counter to common sense. But Buddhists are not expected to accept these claims just because the Buddha taught them. Instead they are expected to examine the arguments that are given in support of these claims, and determine for themselves if the arguments really make it likely that these claims are true. Buddhists revere the Buddha as the founder of their tradition. But that attitude is meant to be the same as what is accorded a teacher who has discovered important truths through their own intellectual power. Indeed the person whom we call the Buddha, Gautama, is said to have been just the latest in a long series of buddhas, each of whom independently discovered the same basic truths that show the way to nirvana. This may or may not reflect historical fact. But the spirit behind this claim is worth remarking on. What it seems to suggest is that the teachings of Buddhism are based on objective facts about the nature of reality and our place in it. And these facts are apparently thought of as things that human reason can apprehend without reliance on superhuman revelation.

If we expect all religions to be theistic, then Buddhism might once again not qualify as a religion. The Buddha is not the equivalent of the God of Western monotheism. Nor is the Buddha considered a prophet, someone whose authority on spiritual matters derives from privileged access to God. Gautama is seen as just an extremely intelligent and altruistic human being. Indeed Buddhism explicitly denies that there is such a thing as the God recognized by Western monotheism—an eternal, all-powerful, and all-perfect creator. To most people this denial is tantamount to atheism. So if we are to count Buddhism as a religion, it will have to make sense to say there can be atheistic religions.

Of course the Buddha acknowledged the existence of a multiplicity of gods. Should we then think of Buddhism as polytheistic, in the same sense in which some forms of Hinduism are ^^lytheistic? Perhaps we might if we wanted Buddhism to fit under a nice tidy definition of "religion" that required some form of theism. But this would be somewhat beside the point as far as Buddhism is concerned. The gods that ancient Indian Buddhists believed in were (like the gods of ancient Greece and all the rest of pre-Christian Europe) finite beings, rather like human beings only longer-lived and more powerful. More importantly; they play no role whatsoever in the quest for nirvana. Perhaps worship and sacrifice to the right gods might win one various mundane benefits, such as timely rainfall to make the crops grow, or the health of one's loved ones. But the gods cannot bestow nirvana on us. Indeed the fact that they are also mortal (they may live for unimaginably long periods, but they are still impermanent like everything else) is taken to show that they are no more enlightened than we humans are. For that matter, even an enlightened human being like a buddha or an arhat (someone who has attained nirvana by following the teachings of the Buddha) cannot bestow nirvana on others. That is something that one can only attain for oneself; enlightened beings can only help others by

giving them pointers along the way. And the point, for Buddhism, is to attain nirvana, to bring suffering to an end. So for this spiritual tradition, the question whether there are any gods turns out to be largely irrelevant.

The doctrine of karma and rebirth is another matter. As you may well already know, classical Indian Buddhism accepted this doctrine. These Buddhists believed that death is ordinarily not the end of our existence, that after we die we are reborn, either as humans or as some other form of sentient being (including non-human animals, gods, and the inhabitants of various hells). Which sort of rebirth one attains depends on your karma, which has to do with the moral quality of the actions you engaged in. If one's acts were primarily morally good, one may be reborn as a human in fortunate life circumstances, or even as a god. If one's life was full of acts done out of evil intentions, however, one might end up as a preta or so-called hungry ghost (so called because everything they can eat tastes like feces). Now to many ears this will sound like just the sort of thing that other more familiar religions offer: a promise of life after death, and a doctrine of retribution for one's sins. So is Buddhism really all that different from those other spiritual traditions? Is it really the case that it only expects us to believe those things for which there is objective evidence?

This is a good question. It may turn out that not everything Buddhists have traditionally believed can be rationally supported. This outcome is one of the possibilities that opens up when we examine Buddhism as philosophy. But before saying any more about that, we should clear up some possible confusions about the doctrine of karma and rebirth. The first point to make is that as Buddhists understand it, karma is not divine retribution for one's sins. You may have noticed that the laws of karma basically have to do with receiving pleasant results for acting out of morally good motives, and receiving painful results for acting with evil intentions. This prompts some to ask who determines what is good and what is evil. For Buddhists the answer is that no one does. Karma is not a set of rules that are decreed by a cosmic ruler and enforced by the cosmic moral police. Karma is understood instead as a set of impersonal causal laws that simply describe how the world happens to work. In this respect the karmic laws are just like the so-called natural laws that science investigates. It is a causal law that when I let go of a rock while standing on a bridge, it will fall toward the water below with a certain acceleration. No one passed this law, and no one enforces it. The laws of physics are not like the laws passed by legislative bodies. There are no gravity police. And if something were to behave contrary to what we take to be the law of gravity, that would be evidence that we were wrong to think it was a law. A true causal law has no exceptions. Likewise, the laws of karma are understood not as rules that can be either obeyed or broken, but as exceptionless generalizations about what always follows what. If we could keep track of enough persons over enough successive lives, we could find out what the laws of karma are in the same way that science discovers what the laws of nature are: our observations would disclose the patterns of regular succession that show causation at work.

A second point to make about the Buddhist attitude toward karma and rebirth is that belief in rebirth does not serve the same function that belief in an afterlife serves in many other religious traditions. The fact that after I die I will be reborn is not taken to be a source of relief or consolation. And the point of Buddhist practice is not to do those things that will help ensure a pleasant next life and prevent a painful one. The truth is just the opposite. As we will see in more detail in the next chapter, the Buddha claims that continued rebirth is just what we need liberation from. (The reason, briefly, is that rebirth entails redeath.) One could set about trying to use knowledge of karmic causal laws to try to guarantee that one continues to exist in relatively comfortable circumstances. But on the Buddhist analysis that would just reveal one's ignorance about how things really are. And because such behavior was based on ignorance, it would inevitably lead to more of the suffering that Buddhism is meant to cure. The doctrine of karma and rebirth is

not meant to make us feel better about the fact that we will die. For those Buddhists who accept it, it is part of the problem, not part of the solution.

A third point about the doctrine of karma and rebirth is that this was not a view that was peculiar to Buddhism. Instead it seems to have been commonly accepted by spiritual teachers from before the time of the Buddha, and to have been part of the common-sense conception of the world for most Indians for most of the time that Buddhism existed in India. So when Indian Buddhists claimed that we undergo rebirth in accordance with karma, they were not making claims that would have struck their audience as novel or strange. Now when we think of a religion as something that makes claims that must be taken on faith, we have in mind claims that are not already part of common sense. So the fact that Buddhists accepted the doctrine of karma and rebirth does not show that Buddhism is a religion in the sense of a creed, a set of doctrines for which there is no evidence and that are to be accepted on faith. Perhaps Indians accepted this doctrine without good evidence. But if so, it was not because they were required to as practicing Buddhists.

The doctrine of karma and rebirth is not a part of our common-sense worldview. So it would be reasonable for us to ask what evidence there is that this doctrine is true. It would be reasonable, that is, if we are investigating Buddhism as philosophy. For in studying philosophy we are interested in finding out what the truth is. (We may not always find it, but that's what we aim for.) Things might be different if we were studying Buddhism as an historical artifact, as part of the study of the history of religions. Perhaps then we would simply note that Indian Buddhists believed in karma and rebirth, and set aside the question whether they were justified in their belief. Instead we might simply explore how this belief affected other aspects of Buddhism: their ethical teachings, for instance, or the content of their artistic representations. There is a great deal we can learn by studying Buddhism and other religions in this way. By simply setting aside the question whether the teachings are true or false, and focusing on how different elements of the tradition might be related to one another, we can learn to see Buddhism's inner logic, how it hangs together as a system. This can help us see things we might otherwise miss. But it cannot tell us whether its teachings are reasonable. And this is something we might want to know when we study a religion like Buddhism. Buddhists claim that those of their teachings that run counter to common sense can be supported by rational arguments. Are they right about this? And if it turns out that some claim of theirs that strikes us as strange cannot be given rational support, how much damage does that do to the overall system? These are the sorts of questions that philosophical examination involves.

And this is how we will proceed with the doctrine of karma and rebirth (and with some other equally controversial views). We will ask (among other things) if there are good reasons to believe it. If there are not, we will go on to see whether other important teachings of Buddhism would also have to go if this doctrine were thrown overboard. This might come as a shock, particularly if you think of a person's religion as something sacrosanct that others shouldn't question. How can we criticize beliefs that might turn out to be central to another person's whole way of life? But someone who asks this is forgetting something: Buddhist philosophers thought that their most important claims should be subjected to rational investigation. This is what made them philosophers. They certainly criticized the views of other Buddhist philosophers. And there was a great deal of rational criticism exchanged between the Buddhists and other Indian philosophers. So perhaps it would actually be dishonoring Buddhism not to subject its doctrines to rational scrutiny. To study it as no more than an item of historical interest, and not ask how much truth there is in its core teachings, might mean failing to take it seriously as an important human creation.

Examining Buddhism As Philosophy

We have said enough for now about what philosophy is and what Buddhism is. And we have already begun to discuss what it might mean to study Buddhism as philosophy. There are a number of other

things that need to be said on that score. One is that this study will be selective. Like any other religious tradition, Buddhism is an immensely complicated phenomenon. To study Buddhism as philosophy means primarily studying texts. Specifically, it means studying those Buddhist texts that present philosophical theories and arguments. But this means leaving out of consideration many other sorts of Buddhist writings, such as those that specify the rules that monks and nuns must follow when they enter the Buddhist monastic order (the samgha), and those more popular writings designed to present simple moral teachings to an audience of lay followers. Moreover, there is much more to Buddhism than its literature (huge though that literature is). And our focus on texts means these other areas will go largely untouched. We will not be examining the many different kinds of Buddhist artistic expression to be found in such fields as sculpture, architecture, painting, devotional poetry, and drama. We will have very little to say about Buddhist institutions, their organization and history. We will say very little about the Buddhist practice of meditation, and nothing at all about such lay-Buddhist devotional practices as stupa worship. All of these aspects of Buddhism have been dealt with elsewhere, and there is no need to duplicate that scholarship here.

There are, though, other studies of Buddhism that focus on many of the same topics that we will be examining. These are works that try to introduce Buddhism through a survey of its chief schools and their principal doctrines. Since such studies are usually organized historically, they might be called doctrinal histories of Buddhism. Now this work will try to trace a historical progression as well. But there will be less concern here than in the typical doctrinal history to say who influenced whom, what influenced what, in the development of key Buddhist teachings. Indeed at times we will take things out of their historical order. This will happen where understanding conceptual connections takes precedence over working out the historical order in which ideas developed. But the most important difference between this work and doctrinal histories of Buddhism is that the latter are more likely to present just the conclusions of the Buddhist philosophers. Our job will be to look not only at their conclusions, but also at the arguments they gave in support of their conclusions. We will look at the objections that other Indian philosophers raised against the Buddhist views we examine, and we will consider the responses that Buddhists gave. We will try to come up with our own objections, and then try to figure out what (if anything) we think Buddhist philosophers could say to answer them. We will try, in short, to see how well Buddhist doctrines stand up to the test of rational scrutiny. Because we are examining Buddhism philosophically, we want to know what (if anything) in Buddhist teachings is true.

Now some of those teachings we can quite easily say are false. This is because some of the claims of Buddhist philosophers are based on views of the natural world very different from what our own sciences tell us about nature. For instance, some Buddhist philosophers hold that ordinary physical objects such as rocks and tables are made up of very large numbers of atoms of four different types: earth, air, water, and fire. (Similar views are found in ancient Greek philosophy.) Now this idea that material things are made up of four different elements or kinds of stuff is one we know today is false. When ancient philosophers called water an element, they had in mind that there was just one fundamental kind of stuff present in every liquid. So the difference between ^20 and ethyl alcohol might just be a matter of how much fire element was present in addition to the water element. We now know that there are far more than four naturally occurring elements, and two liquids might be made up of completely different elements. Moreover, we know that each of these elements is in turn made up of more fundamental particles, until we reach what may be the most basic of these, the six kinds of quarks. So when Buddhist philosophers argue about a question like whether color is present in each of the four elements, we can say that the very question is misguided—no answer is likely to be true.

Does this mean that Buddhist philosophy can be dismissed as an outdated, prescientific view of the world? No. The situation here is like what we find when we study ancient Greek philosophy. The

Greek philosopher Aristotle believed that the earth is the center of the universe. We know that this is false, and yet Aristotle is still considered an important philosopher. What we have learned to do in studying ancient philosophy is simply set aside those parts that conflict with our modern scientific knowledge, and focus on what remains. This is a legitimate approach. When philosophy began, both in ancient Greece and in ancient India, it was felt that philosophers ought to develop a truly comprehensive worldview. For the same methods of rational analysis and argumentation that philosophers were developing in order to answer questions in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics, seemed to likewise be suitable for studying the natural world. So for instance Aristotle wrote treatises on biology and meteorology, and the Sámkhya school of Indian philosophy developed a theory of chemistry. Indeed most of our present natural sciences have their origins in philosophy. But they have since developed their own distinctive methods and have become independent disciplines. Philosophy now focuses principally on issues in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. (This can lead to philosophical investigation of the natural sciences themselves; but studying the sciences philosophically is different from doing science.) This is why, when we today look at ancient philosophers, we tend to set to one side the details of their views about how the natural world works. For it usually turns out that even when these details are simply wrong, this has little or no effect on their views in the core philosophical areas of metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. This is how we will treat the Buddhist philosophers as well.

There is another element in the texts we will study that we shall also want to set to one side. What we will be examining are texts in which Buddhists give arguments for, and consider objections to, their key claims in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. But in some cases, the reason given to support a claim involves an appeal to the authority of the Buddha. This sort of thing happens when there is a dispute between two different schools of Buddhist philosophy over some doctrine. One school may then point to some passage in the sutras (the discourses of Gautama and his chief disciples) as grounds for accepting their position. Now this might count as a good reason to accept the view in question if you already thought that the Buddha's teachings were authoritative. But for those of us who do not, a dispute that is conducted in this way can only concern how to interpret the discourses of the Buddha. The question for us is not whether a certain doctrine is consistent with what the Buddha himself said. The question we want to answer is whether there's reason to think the doctrine is true. Sometimes the texts we will be looking at try to answer both questions. When this happens, we will focus on just their attempts to answer the second.

Most chapters in this book contain extracts, sometimes quite long ones, from primary sources in Buddhist philosophy, as well as extensive discussion. This means we will be reading passages from a variety of different Buddhist philosophical texts, beginning with the sutras, and ending with texts written some 1,500 years later. Reading and understanding these texts will pose some real challenges. Because these were mostly written for other classical Indian philosophers, it is not always easy to see what the argument is, and how the author responds to objections. But we will start slowly, and you will have plenty of help on this. The point here is for you to learn to read and understand these texts on your own. That way, if you want to look more deeply into some topic in Buddhist philosophy, you will be able to do so without having to rely on anyone else's interpretation. Then you'll be better equipped to try to find out what the truth is for yourself.

One final point before we begin our study of Buddhism as philosophy. Some people might take the title of this book to mean that it will tell them what the Buddhist philosophy is. But as you may have guessed by now, there is no such thing as the Buddhist philosophy. At least not in the sense in which we are using "philosophy" here. Given what the discipline of philosophy is, it should not be surprising that Buddhist philosophers disagree among themselves. By the same token, there is no such thing as the Christian philosophy, or the Jewish philosophy. There are philosophers who use the tools of philosophy to try to articulate what they take to be the basic truths of Christianity and of Judaism.

But Aquinas and Kierkegaard disagree profoundly in their understandings of Christian teachings, and Maimonides and Spinoza likewise differ in how they approach the philosophical expression of Judaism. Things are no different when we come to Buddhism. While there are certain fundamentals on which all Buddhist philosophers agree, there are important issues over which they disagree. Sometimes these differences can make things quite complicated. So to help us keep track of things, it would be useful to have a taxonomy or classification of Buddhist philosophical systems. We can start with this basic division into three distinct phases in the development of Buddhist philosophy:

1. Early Buddhism: the teachings of the Buddha and his immediate disciples;
2. Abhidharma: the development of rigorous metaphysical and epistemological theories growing out of the attempt to give consistent, systematic interpretations of the teachings of Early Buddhism;
3. Mahayána: philosophical criticism of aspects of Abhidharma doctrines, together with an alternative account of what Buddhist metaphysics and epistemology should look like.

Both the second and the third phase saw the development of a number of different schools, reflecting different approaches to the philosophical challenges being confronted. For our purposes the important schools will be:

2a. Vaibhásika (Sarvástivida)
2b. Sautrántika
2c. Theraváda (the form of Buddhism presently practiced in much of Southeast Asia)
3a. Madhyamaka (the philosophical basis of much of Tibetan Buddhism)
3b. Yogācāra (Buddhist idealism)
3c. Yogácára-Sautrantika (Buddhist epistemology, the school of Dignága).

We will look at each of these schools in turn, seeing how their views developed out of the work of earlier philosophers, and trying to understand and assess the merits of their arguments. But we will start, in the next three chapters, with the fundamentals that all Buddhist philosophical schools agree on, the basic teachings of Early Buddhism. <>

BUDDHISM AND THE DYNAMICS OF TRANSCULTURALITY: NEW APPROACHES edited by Birgit Kellner [Series: Religion and Society, De Gruyter, 9783110411539] Open Access

For over 2500 years, Buddhism was implicated in processes of cultural interaction that in turn shaped Buddhist doctrines, practices and institutions. While the cultural plurality of Buddhism has often been remarked upon, the transcultural processes that constitute this plurality, and their long-term effects, have scarcely been studied as a topic in their own right. The contributions to this volume present detailed case studies ranging across different time periods, regions and disciplines, and they address methodological challenges as well as theoretical problems. In addition to casting a spotlight on topics as diverse as the role of trade contacts in the early spread of Buddhism, the hybrid nature of religious practices in Japan or Indo-Tibetan relations in Tibetan polemical literature, the individual papers jointly raise the question as to whether there might be something distinct about how Buddhism steers and influences forms of cultural exchange, and is in turn shaped by modalities of cultural interaction throughout Asian, as well as global, history. The volume is intended to demonstrate the need for investigating transcultural dynamics more closely in the study of Buddhism, and to suggest new avenues for Buddhist Studies.

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This volume originated with the conference "Buddhism and the Dynamics of Transculturality," which was held June 11-13, 2012, at the University of Heidelberg, within the congenial atmosphere of the International Academic Forum Heidelberg (IWH). Davide Torni contributed an additional essay based on new fieldwork conducted in Nepal, work that became even more relevant after the country was devastated by a series of earthquakes in April and May 2015.

During the long and complex history of Buddhism, extending back in time for more than 2500 years, doctrines, practices and institutions repeatedly crossed cultural boundaries, undergoing considerable change for that very reason. The involvement of Buddhism in processes of cultural exchange and transfer has been remarked upon frequently. However, perhaps owing to the nature of the subject, which is both pervasive and seemingly subject to endless variation, scholars have tended to treat cultural exchange and its short- to long-term aftereffects descriptively, demonstrating that transcultural processes played a role in the history of Buddhism. But they have not necessarily probed very deeply into the how. A new attempt at approaching the subject seemed timely, especially considering that the more recent growth of interest in aspects of transculturality across a variety of pertinent disciplines, including art history and archaeology, history as well as anthropology, had also begun to make itself felt here and there in the field of Buddhist Studies.

The Heidelberg conference, organized within the framework of the interdisciplinary research cluster "Asia and Europe in a Global Context: The Dynamics of Transculturality," was convened to bring together scholars of Buddhism across disciplinary boundaries for joint reflection on various topics that have emerged in connection with three critical aspects of Buddhism's global history:

— the spread of Buddhist doctrines, practices and institutions in terms of patterns of mobility, as well as in terms of the social networks that support or prevent the establishment of Buddhism in a particular region;
— the domestication of Buddhism in new cultural environments, and the various strategies and devices utilized towards this end;
— the production of Buddhist histories that newly framed and freshly contextualized previous processes of cultural exchange, histories that were crucial to Buddhism's spread and domestication in the relevant regions.

The papers now assembled in this volume loosely follow a long trajectory: from ancient Gandhára across medieval China and Japan, to nineteenth-century Tibet and contemporary Nepal. They are, however, not arranged in a strict chronological order of the historical periods they concern. The topics discussed under the umbrella of these three large thematic areas are as diverse as revelry scenes in Gandharan art, Buddhist stone inscriptions in Shandong, star worship and the arts of perfect memory in medieval Japan, and conformity with Indian tradition as a standard in Tibetan Buddhist polemical literature. The essays address religious practice and discourse, visual and material culture, as well as sociopolitical issues ranging from political legitimation to the formation of ethnic identities. Most of the papers are concerned with pre-modern Asian societies and cultures, but some explore how religious and cultural knowledge produced in the past was rediscovered and re-contextualized in early modernity, this connected to processes that still reach into the present. Each essay is intended as an original contribution in its own field and disciplinary context, presenting hitherto unstudied materials and sources, while simultaneously striving to participate in a larger common conversation under the aegis of the somewhat elusive concept of transculturality.

In 1940, the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz propagated the term "transculturation" to "express the highly varied phenomena that have come about in Cuba as a result of the extremely complex transmutations of culture that have taken place there." In his study of the impact of sugar and tobacco on Cuban society, Ortiz argued that the complex cultural changes on an island where new waves of migrants arrived so many times through its history could not be properly considered a form of acculturation, a "process of transition from one culture to another." With his elaboration of transculturation, Ortiz placed himself in opposition to conceptions that dominated US-American anthropology at the time. Both elements - a fascination with particularly dense forms of cultural mixture effected by migration, and discontent with prevailing theories that approach cultures as homogeneous and stable systems - also characterize the theorization of transculturality as it intensified over the course of the 1990s, this focused on contemporary conditions of globalization. As the German philosopher Wolfgang Welsch argued, cultures "de facto no longer have the insinuated form of homogeneity and separateness. They have instead assumed a new form, which is to be called transcultural insofar that is passes through classical cultural boundaries."

Welsch's concern with moving away from conceptualizing cultures as stable and closed systems is frequently echoed in the rich literature on transcultural dynamics that has emerged since then. Elements of Welsch's approach have, however, been called into question. Most importantly in the present context, it cannot be assumed prima facie that the "new" form of cultures is a hallmark of the present. Processes of cultural contact and transformation can surely be studied in all epochs, well before the formation of global capital markets and the advent of the Internet, and even well before the European maritime expansion in early modernity. Building a theory with universalizing aspirations on the premise that transculturality marks a new era in human history risks begging the question, since the construction and dissolution of cultural boundaries is in itself a historical process.

In keeping with the critical spirit that has characterized the elaboration of the transcultural since Ortiz — distancing from entrenched modes of thinking — and through the increase in the number of studies that expand the temporal frame into a distant past and extend the geographical sphere beyond regions under direct influence of European powers, transculturality has shifted its status as a concept. Although the term is still occasionally used more narrowly to refer to particular features of situations of dense cultural mixture thought to be especially dynamic, the critical exploration of individual disciplinary histories as well as the expansion of the range of cultural phenomena under study have made it seem more productive to conceptualize transculturality as a heuristic tool, a perspective for interrogation, or an orienting concept (rather than an analytical notion).' The plurality of uses of the term that is now visible in a growing body of literature — a plurality that is to some degree also reflected in the papers in this volume — may seem disorienting. Yet, in an

expansive research environment that might be thought to effect a "transcultural turn," it seems futile and ultimately misguided to insist on a rigid, stipulative definition.

Throughout the essays on Buddhism assembled in this volume, one can detect a shared set of methodological and conceptual premises that arguably mark a programmatic difference of transcultural from "cross-cultural" or "inter-cultural" studies. On the most basic level, cultures are not seen as stable, closed and self-reproducing systems, but they are rather conceived in relational, processual, and dynamic terms. Second, the generative power of culture is placed in focus, leading to explorations of cultural elements — artifacts, practices, ideas — in terms of their meaning in a given setting, usually a particular locality during a more or less precisely circumscribed period of history. Third, such historically and geographically situated meaning is generally regarded as produced by a variety of actors that employ specific strategies, of which the papers illustrate a rich variety. The reconstruction of agency thus plays a particularly important role and guides many of the research efforts represented in this volume. Fourth, when studies with such a focus embark on tracing cultural elements further back in time and into other cultural contexts, this is undertaken with the larger goal of producing insights into the strategies found in the current situation. The enquiry is not guided by the question "where did X originate?" And the studies do not end with having identified such points of origin (that in the end invariably remain arbitrary). Rather, the question being asked is "what significance did local actors attribute to X, and how can insights into a transcultural history of X illuminate local strategies and meanings?" Fifth, close attention is paid to problems of labeling — especially those involved with cultural or religious belonging, and with social status — and to terms and concepts that are used to refer to religion(s) and cultural formations. In the past, concepts signaling a certain reflexivity on the part of historical Buddhist actors have occasionally been made the basis for general theories about Buddhism as a religious system as well as its approach to other religions. In particular, the final paper in this volume by Jonathan Samuels deserves to be highlighted for cautioning against such taxonomical abstraction (cf. below). Last, but not least, the critical spirit that informs transcultural studies supports self-reflective scholarly practice, self-reflection that results in a keen awareness of how prevalent modes of examining a subject might be marred not only by entrenched approaches and potentially unwarranted methodological premises, but also by historical "leftovers."

Turning to the individual papers, the first, by Ingo Strauch, addresses a period in the early spread of Buddhism from the Indian subcontinent. Following in the footsteps of Jason Neelis' recent exploration of networks in the Upper Indus Valley (Neelis 2011), Strauch reassesses evidence for Buddhist presence along the trade routes that connected the western parts of the Indian subcontinent with South Arabia, the Red Sea coast and regions further to the west. His focus is on a recently discovered corpus of inscriptions and drawings in the Hoq cave on the island of Socotra (Yemen) dating to the second to fourth or early fifth centuries CE. These inscriptions, individual names, dedications, and drawings of stupas pose vexing problems for determining the religious affiliation and social status of those who left them on the cave's walls. Traders and other "sub-elite" agents may have contributed a larger share to producing local forms of Buddhism than was hitherto presumed. Buddhism might indeed have been present among the Indian communities of traders that temporarily settled in these western regions, but it appears never to have left the boundaries of these communities. This would have been a prerequisite for patronage of the foreign religion by local elites and for monastic institutions to have been established, as would have been needed for a lasting Buddhist presence.

In the Upper Indus Valley/Gandhára, and more specifically in Swat (Udcliyana), Buddhist monastic presence left a rich archaeological record, including reliefs in Hellenistic style. Based on material provided by recent Italian excavations, Anna Filigenzi examines scenes depicting wine production and consumption, the latter in connection with more or less explicit erotic gestures. These have been

read as a Greek cultural import and labelled "Dionsysiac scenes," but Filigenzi argues for a more complex interplay between the local and the foreign that amounts to a visual borrowing of foreign styles to express local cultural meaning. Combining archaeological evidence of wine consumption in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent with the textual record of early Buddhist literature, Filigenzi concludes that the consumption of wine in Swat was "a component of the normal ambit of economic and cultural life, a status quo for which the [Buddhist] monastic communities certainly had to make accommodations." Accordingly, she argues for a reading of such "revelry scenes" as referring to forms of local social ritualism that can be connected with customs that are still current among the Kafirs of Hindu Kush. Juxtaposed with scenes from the Buddha's life in adjacent frames, revelry scenes and related icons then indicate a "transversal religious culture, which is at the same time formally Buddhist and faithful to a folk religion," intertwined not only in daily life, but also in conceptual and visual forms. Following Filigenzi's reconstruction of a fragmentary archaeological record, one may suspect that local elites patronizing Buddhism placed their own established customs within close range of the Buddha and his Dharma, in this case making use of a foreign visual repertoire. The difficulties of providing even a seemingly innocuous description of the situation that produced the revelry scenes demonstrate the methodological challenges involved in reconstructing local agencies without introducing overly hasty assumptions grounded in what the end are purely normative conceptions. Considering the problematic nature of wine consumption in Buddhist prescriptions of lay and monastic life, one may at first feel tempted to interpret revelry scenes as concessions made by a Buddhist authority to local customs that were important to their donors. Although this is one possibility, it suggests a social division between Buddhist monastics and their lay patrons that might in the end not reflect local realities at all, since these two groups cannot generally be presumed to have been neatly divided in terms of a local and foreign cultural background, respectively. The relationship between religious norm and social realities thus becomes a crucial issue in studying transcultural settings.

Toru Funayama expands the discussion from the epigraphic and archaeological record to the realm of language and addresses the cultural strategies adopted in the translation of Buddhist texts and terms from Indian languages during various stages of the domestication of Buddhism in China. The large-scale translation of Buddhist (and other) literature impacted language and linguistic practice on various levels. As for Chinese, new characters were created, new ways of using particles were devised, and a new phraseology emerged. The resultant innovations were by no means limited to translation, but also made their way into independent compositions by Chinese authors. Here, the area of greatest concern appears to have been terminology — how to cope with novel and foreign concepts while making use of already established literary idioms.

Although transcribing Indian terms might have seemed to Chinese translators the simplest solution when literal translations could not be easily devised, it also meant that resulting terminology remained markedly foreign, and was, initially at least, unintelligible to target audiences in China. In translation studies, the method of such translations has been called "foreignizing," resulting in translations that bring the reader closer to the world of the author, rather than vice versa. By contrast, the strategy of "translation by matching cultural categories" (Japanese bunko taio gata yakugo), as Funayama calls it, is more "domesticating" in that it brings the author's world — the world of Indian Buddhism — closer to the reader's, this consisting in "the translation of an Indic term based on a traditional Chinese concept that is similar to the original Indic term, yet not literally identical." For instance, Chinese dao, "way," does not literally translate Sanskrit bodhi, "awakening," but one still finds daoshu, "waytree," as a translation for Sanskrit b^dhivrksa, the tree under which Buddha Sákyamuni attained awakening. Such cultural translations look for local concepts that in their function or connotation somehow match foreign notions, without any literal, word-to-word correspondence between source- and targetlanguage. The fate of translations devised through this method was not uniform; some such terms like wuwei for nirvana were eventually abolished, and

translation by transcription was adopted instead. Other cases, such as sheng for Sanskrit árya, open windows for studying intricate semantic shifts between Daoist, Confucian, Buddhist and Nestorian contexts, as well-worn terms take on new connotations, but can also be once again reduced to their pre-translation semantics. The semantic repertoire constitutes a relatively flexible cultural resource, opening a space for subsequent re-signification.

Still within a Chinese context, Lothar Ledderose presents and discusses the Stone Hymn, a monumental inscription at Mt. Tie on the northern outskirts of Zoucheng in Shandong Province. This inscription — 17 meters long and 14 meters tall — is one of numerous inscriptions studied in a long-term project on Buddhist stone inscriptions in Shandong province conducted by the Academy of Sciences in Heidelberg. The Stone Hymn is only one of three colophons to an even more monumental sutra inscription. Through their size, their sutra content, and their strategically chosen positioning on widely visible mountain rock surfaces, these inscriptions can generally be understood as attempts to emplace and stabilize the Buddha's word in localities where Buddhism was contested. As stated in the Stone Hymn, inscribed in 579 (Northern Zhou dynasty) shortly after a persecution of Buddhism in the Shandong region, even when the end of this eon draws near with scorching winds, the engraved sutra will remain; it will never decay. Their material stability notwithstanding, the inscriptions were subject to far-reaching processes of re-signification in the course of later history, and in this respect, Ledderose's study picks up where Funayama's ended. Since the eighteenth century, epigraphers have studied inscriptions such as the Stone Hymn with a documentary interest, unveiling aspects of calligraphy and the historical circumstances in which such inscriptions were produced. Yet in the case of the Stone Hymn, they have ignored its Buddhist content as well as the large adjacent sutra to which it belongs and have not pursued the question as to why this particular text was engraved in the spatial and social setting in question. It was the inscription's calligraphic mastery, of such great importance in Chinese culture, that caught their attention.

Anna Andreeva's essay continues the theme of "emplacing" Buddhism and addresses complex sacred topographies in medieval Japan, centering on Mt. Asama in the eastern part of today's Mie prefecture, which lies in close proximity to the sacred Ise shrines that are of paramount importance to the articulation of Japanese cultural identity as well as for kami worship. As Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli have emphasized, medieval Japanese religion was characterized by a combinatory religious paradigm epitomized in the two notions of honji suijaku ("foreign buddhas as original ground and local kami as their manifest trace") and shinbutsu shug^ ("merging kami and buddhas"). Accordingly, in her exploration of Mt. Asama's history and its place in Japan's religious culture, Andreeva takes a long view in explaining the background for an event that took place 1750, when priests from the Ise shrines intervened in the performance of the established ritual Gumonjihó at Mt. Asama's Buddhist K^ngoshóji temple. Andreeva points to networks of relationships between cultic sites in Japan, while simultaneously tracing the worship of Bodhisattva ^^z^ (Sanskrit: ^kásagarbha) and celestial bodies in rituals designed to bring about perfect memory through the transmission of Buddhism from India across Central Asia and China to Japan. Shrine-temple histories called engi that hint at such connections can thus be seen as repeated attempts to inscribe cultic sites within larger frames of translocal and transcultural Buddhist memory, supporting the survival of religious sites in a competitive economy of the sacred. Andreeva's investigation into Mt. Asama illustrates how a full picture of a seemingly local historical event only emerges after tracing the various transcultural links that made it possible, with such a picture then serving to reconstruct its significance.

In the Edo period (1600-1868), the myths and legends that connected Japan with the distant Indian lands, mediated through Buddhism and also perpetuated by engi histories such as those explored by Andreeva, were confronted by new information about the Indian subcontinent and the island of Lanka that was brought to Japan by Jesuits and the Dutch. Fabio Rambelli traces pathways of

Japanese knowledge about India and Ceylon, centering on the site of Buddha Sákyamuni's life. Some in Edo Japan placed Sakyamuni on Lanka, while others thought he had lived in northern India (Mágadha) and in part believed that India was still a Buddhist country. Analyzing shifts in the Japanese imagination of the Indian lands as encounters between different sets of knowledge, Rambelli highlights how these encounters were premised on different authorities for certifying knowledge: from the historical, (Buddhist) text-based knowledge upon which Japanese conceptions of India were based, to the knowledge based on contemporary territorial access that European agents mediated to Japan.

Davide Torn takes a broader perspective of the role played by Buddhism in the production of ethnic identities among the Tibetanid communities of the Nepalese Upper Himalayas. He discusses both specific strategies of emplacement (or domestication) and the creation of shared Buddhist historical memory. With long-term historical connections to the Tibetan plateau, the remote mountain valleys in today's Nepal have often played a conspicuous role as "hidden lands" (Tibetan sbas yul), refuges for sheltering the Buddha-dharma in times of distress. They acquired this status through the agency of powerful Buddhist masters, most prominently Padmasambhava, who bound local divinities and spirits by oath to protect the Dharma. The "sequential subjugations" (Toni) effected by Padmasambhava, by the famous poet-mystic Milaraspa (ca. 1028-1111) and others are linked to conspicuous places and markings (footprints, carvings) that empower the landscape as a hidden land. Like pre- or non-Buddhist practices centering on the "gods of place" (yul lha), these Buddhist forms of emplacement support identities that are rooted in a locality. But in ways not unlike the Chinese stone inscriptions investigated by Ledderose and Mt. Asama as discussed by Andreeva, these sites inscribe the local in a larger, translocal (and transcultural) framework. In Helambu, the area where Torn i has conducted his fieldwork and which is the focus of his essay, the travels of the Ngagchang Shakya Zangpo (Tib. sngags 'chang shákya bzang po; 15th/16th cent.), who opened this particular hidden land, link this remote area in the Upper Himalayas with the first Tibetan monastery of Bsam yas, as well as with the stupa of Bodhnath in Kathmandu. In these relationships, Helambu is situated at a "double periphery" (Torri) - and is where (Kathmandu) most Hyolmo live today. Issues of Buddhist "landscaping" and the role of Buddhism in supporting the fractioned identities of Tibetanid groups in the Upper Himalayas acquire heightened significance through the recent transformation of Nepal from a Hindu monarchy into a republic supported by a conception of "ethnic federalism." The devastation of Helambu through the earthquake of April 2015, which has accelerated outward migradon even further, severely impacted the social fabric of the already dispersed Hyolmo community. Under these circumstances, it remains to be seen how increased migration will affect the locality-based identities of the Hyolmo and other Upper Himalayan communities.

The two final papers in this volume, by Markus Viehbeck and Jonathan Samuels, highlight in different ways how positions and concepts from within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition that arguably reflect partisan ideologies have guided the academic study of Buddhism, positions and concepts that were taken over as orienting models with less critical reflection than (as we know now) was necessary. David L. Snellgrove most explicitly promoted the view that Tibetan Buddhism preserves authentic Indian Buddhism in an unadulterated form, epitomized in the notion of an "Ind^-Tibetan Buddhism." Recent discussions problematize such claims to privileged access in a larger Buddhist context, but, as Viehbeck points out, there is historical precedent for this. The clearest attempt to approach the relationship between Buddhism in India and in Tibet in a more nuanced fashion, by David Seyffort Ruegg, has distinguished between historically Indian and typologically "Indic" elements in Tibetan intellectual culture. Viehbeck argues that this distinction must be supplemented further by empirical studies on how the acclaimed Indian origin of particular positions manifests within Tibetan discourse and practice. For his part, he offers an exemplary study drawing on late nineteenth-century Tibetan debates on the proper interpretation of an Indian Buddhist "classic," Sántideva's ^^dhicarya^atára. These debates operated on the shared background of a strict binary logic that placed conformity to

Indian tradition in opposition to aberration and deviation from it. Yet, the fierce controversies between 'Ju Mipham and his sparring partners not only show that even in the nineteenth century, Tibetan authors were still attributing greater weight to Indian textual authorities (in Tibetan translation) than to their own interpretive tradition. They also allow one to recognize how allegiance to Indian authorities was tempered by the creative application of a hermeneutic toolbox within a larger "space of negotiation" (Viehbeck). Polemical discourse on Indian Buddhist classics both confirmed their authority and offered opportunities for asserting Tibetan intellectual ingenuity. It may seem commendable at first to abandon the label "Indo-Tibetan Buddhism," as it simply reproduces, in academic discourse, an ideological position from within Tibetan Buddhist historiography. But this should not distract from the importance that conformity with Indian tradition held in Tibetan discourse and practice as a standard and value - or, for that matter, from the need to study the negotiation of conformity in a historically situated manner across different areas of cultural production.

Finally, Jonathan Samuels turns to conceptual schemes used within Buddhist traditions to locally articulate and organize relations to other religions, as well as to mark religion as a separate sphere from other social fields. The Japanese notions of honji suijaku and shinbutsu shug^, brought into play in Andreeva's paper (cf. above), operate as such schemes. They also respond to the perceived foreignness of Buddhism and serve as tools for bringing awareness of its translocal and transcultural character into focus. Samuels discusses the contrastive opposition between the "worldly" and the "other-worldly" — in Sanskrit: laukika and lokottara — which has served a similar purpose. It is conception that is found throughout Buddhist Asia, from ancient India across Tibet all the way to medieval Japan. Since this conceptual pair was widely employed across the boundaries of vastly different societies, it seems tempting at first to treat it as part of a universal order that transcends cultural boundaries. Indeed, it does have a striking similarity to meta-linguistic categories such as the sacred and the profane, or the religious and the secular. Samuels, however, argues forcefully against approaching the worldly/other-worldly binary as a taxonomy in the first place, which would be a prerequisite for mapping it onto metalinguistic categories, and articulates a fresh perspective for contextualizing it specifically in Tibet.

The worldly/other-worldly binary has been widely used, in Tibet and elsewhere, to arrange Buddhas, bodhisattvas and various divinities, as well as the practices devoted to them, in a hierarchical manner. While Buddhas and bodhisattvas are placed in the "other-worldly" category, local gods and spirits, as well as gods adapted from an ancient Indian religious matrix such as Indra or Brahma, are regarded as worldly. In the Tibetan context, Samuels argues, this binary has permitted the Buddhist monastic authority to assert itself in a complex religious environment: while veneration of worldly deities is not prohibited, it is relegated to a subordinate level that, precisely because of its subordination, is always in a position of potentially being placed under more explicit Buddhist control. The perhaps unusually high involvement of Buddhist monastics in "worldly" elements can thus be seen as an assertion of authority. The frequent reference to the "subjugation" of local deities by Padmasambhava and other masters, as also discussed in Torri's essay in this volume, is a case in point. In reflecting on the relationship between the "emic and the academic," Samuels can be taken as forcefully underscoring a more general point, one that also emerges from Viehbeck's paper. When examining Buddhist attitudes towards other religious practices and its intersecting relationship to other cultures, an investigation of object-linguistic and meta-linguistic categories — of organizing categories used within religious communities and conceptual schemes employed in the academic study of religion — is not enough to avoid the risk of scientism, even though such investigations are necessary. Such investigations must be supplemented by close readings of these types of categories as they are used contextually, in view of historically situated rhetorical strategies and ideologies. <>

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Our world today requires us to accept the oneness of humanity. In the past, isolated communities could afford to think of one another as fundamentally separate. Some could even exist in total isolation. But nowadays, what happens in one part of the world rapidly affects people in many other places too. Within the context of our new interdependence, self-interest clearly lies in considering the interest of others.

Many of the world's problems and conflicts arise because we have lost sight of the basic humanity that binds us all together as a human family. We tend to forget that despite the diversity of race, religion, ideology and so forth, people are equal in their basic wish for peace and happiness. However, this will not be achieved by merely talking or thinking about it, nor by waiting for someone else to do something about it. We each have to take responsibility as best we can within our own sphere of activity. As free human beings we can use our unique intelligence to try to understand our world and ourselves. But if we are prevented from using our creative potential, we are deprived of one of the basic characteristics of a human being.

Human beings naturally possess diverse temperaments and interests. Therefore, it is inevitable that different religious traditions emphasize different philosophies and modes of practice. Since the essence of our diverse religious traditions is to achieve our individual and collective benefit, it is crucial that we are active in maintaining harmony and mutual respect between them. Concerted efforts to this end will benefit not only the followers of our own faith, but will create an atmosphere of peace in society as a whole. Cultivating harmony, respect, and tolerance is something that we can each start doing in our own lives and in our own actions.

India is perhaps the one country whose civilization and culture have survived intact from their first beginnings. It is a civilization that has given rise to a long series of great teachers endowed with both human intelligence and a sense of responsibility towards the community. As a consequence, different

schools of thought and practice have evolved, some born here and others arriving from abroad. Because India and her people have, from ancient times, cherished a rich and sophisticated philosophy of non-violence at the core of their hearts, tolerance and pluralism have also flourished.

Today, India is self-sufficient, economically vibrant, and the world's largest democratic country. It is a force to be reckoned with not only in Asia, but also in the world. It is a country in which we can see *bahudhā*, which my friend and the author of this book Balmiki Prasad Singh has defined as something close to pluralism, as a living reality. Therefore, India has a very important role to play. It can be a model for other nations and peoples who are still striving to build civil societies, to institutionalize democratic values of free expression and religion, and seeking to find strength in diversity. India can also take the lead amongst other nations by formulating principled, courageous, and imaginative policies on regional and international issues.

The tragic events of 11 September 2001 and subsequently, have provided us with a very good opportunity. There is a worldwide will to oppose terrorism. We can use this consensus to implement long-term preventative measures. This will ultimately be much more effective than taking dramatic and violent steps based on anger and other destructive emotions. The temptation to respond with violence is understandable, but a more cautious approach will be more fruitful.

In today's reality the only way of resolving differences is through dialogue and compromise, through human understanding and humility. We need to appreciate that genuine peace comes about through mutual understanding, respect and trust. Problems within human society should be solved in a humanitarian way, for which non-violence provides the proper approach.

26 May 2007

HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

It was during my tenure as Executive Director, World Bank, at Washington DC, that the catastrophe of 9/11 took place. In the aftermath of the tragedy, it became fashionable for every thinktank to discuss two questions: 'What went wrong?' and 'Why people hate us [Americans]'? I happened to attend one such meeting barely ten days after the catastrophe. The gathering was impressive, I was seated almost opposite the Chairperson. The guest speaker had concluded on the sombre note of the need for building a coalition of nations against terrorism. He also spoke of the radicalization of Islam, values of religious pluralism, and the need for tolerance. The presentation over, the Chairperson asked for comments and looked at me. She said that India may have the answer in view of its heritage of pluralism and originality of mind, and gave me the floor. I was not prepared. I recall having said then that 'while India may have the answer, I do not' and went on to narrate my experiences in handling terrorism in India.

I have been contemplating this theme since then with a view to exploring an enduring framework for a global public policy—a policy for harmony among different people and societies in the post 9/11 world as seen through the lens of the Indian experience.

It is said that when the student is ready the teacher will appear. I was drawn to an attitude that has greatly contributed to the enrichment of Indian life: 'respect for another person's view of truth with hope and belief that he or she may be right'.[1]This is best expressed in the Rigvedic hymn that enjoins

> *Ekam Sad Vipra Bahudhā Vadanti*[2]
> The Real is one, the learned speak of it variously

Etymologically speaking, the word *Bahudhā* is derived from the word *bahu*, and *dhā* is suffixed to it to make it an adverb. 'Bahu' denotes many ways or parts or forms or directions. It is used to express **(p.xii)** manifoldness, much, and repeatedly. When the word is used with the root *kri*, it

means to make manifold or multiply. Bahudhā is also used as an expression of intermittent continuity in various time frames. It is used to express frequency, as in 'time and again'. In the present work, the word Bahudhā has been used to suggest an eternal reality or continuum, a dialogue of harmony, and peaceful living in society.

Pluralism could be the closest equivalent to Bahudhā in the English language. Pluralism has been described in various ways in history, sociology, and politics—cultural pluralism, political pluralism, and pluralistic societies. Pluralism has also been seen in the context of the coexistence of nation-state and ethnicity, equality, and identity issues.

The Bahudhā approach recognizes that there is a distinction between plural societies and pluralism. Pluralism is an inevitable ingredient of democratic societies. The role of religion, language, and ethnicity is very significant in plural societies. Pluralism in this context is an imperative for both developed and developing societies.

Pluralist societies are necessarily multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multilingual societies. In such societies, there are various boundaries: racial, linguistic, religious, and at times even ideological. The Bahudhā approach does not believe in annexation of boundaries or assimilation of identities and propagation of a simplistic world view. It merely facilitates dialogue and thereby promotes understanding of the collective good. The realization of one's own identity may sustain boundaries and yet, at the same time, understanding of other identities may help formulate a public policy of harmony. The Bahudhā approach is conscious of the fact that societies without boundaries are not possible.

The great struggles of the twentieth century were against colonialism, fascism, and communism. The twenty-first century has a different conflict—a conflict between forces of fundamentalism and those of tolerance and peace.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, there was a feeling of euphoria that peace had descended upon the world; that the time had come for diversion of funds from military budgets to developmental purposes. It also appeared that the forces of globalization and the liberalization of the market economy would secure the removal of poverty. But suddenly the importance of military conflict as a factor in our lives re-emerged, with the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1991.

In today's world, the power of the militarily weak to create unrest and destruction has emerged as a global phenomenon. Economic power and the use of military force have proved inadequate agents for the preservation of peace. The moot question is how to cope with an enemy that is physically weak, but endowed with a 'do or die' mentality.

Today, we face not only the problems of terrorism and suicide squads but also of poverty, disease, illiteracy, and environmental degradation. Of the six billion people that inhabit the earth, five billion are in the developing countries. Near a billion people struggle to survive on less than a dollar a day. More than a 100 million children are illiterate. Almost three million people die annually from HIV/AIDS, with over two million of those deaths occurring in sub-Saharan Africa. Today, half of the world's population is under the age of twenty-five years. Many are unemployed. Millions are disillusioned by what they see as an inequitable global system. Clearly, the need for change is paramount.

We are witnessing phenomenal changes in global politics— unprecedented demands are being made upon traditional diplomacy and democratic approaches rooted in electoral politics. In fact, the instruments of traditional diplomacy are unable to cope with many of the fast emerging challenges. Democratic political processes are also under stress. All this calls for new, bold, and imaginative statecraft from world leaders. Notwithstanding unresolved territorial disputes and autonomy issues

in different parts of the world, major nation-states are forging new partnerships and increasingly competing in trade. Regional alliances are also emerging. In these times of unprecedented change, we need to transcend old doctrines, and our language of dialogue too has to be reconstructed.

With the demise of colonialism and the collapse of the Soviet Union, democratic governance has emerged as the most important form of social and political ordering in the world. A major objective of democracy in a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society is to ensure that different faiths and cultures co-exist and flourish. Good governance in a democracy does not do away with alternative and opposing visions but deals with them in a manner that prevents physical conflict and violence. Argument and dialogue are important components of such a manner.

Today, in the age of terrorism and an unsafe world, there is a fresh need to understand the core meaning of our religions, to reshape our educational system, and to strengthen the United Nations (UN) in a manner that can help us to build a better future.

The re-emergence of religion as a vital force in the twenty-first century, both at the individual and community levels, needs to be taken into account in the formulation of a public policy of harmony. Blinkered visions about religion in general or about a particular religion is likely to create disaffection in society and make difficult the task of building a harmonious world order. Religion is a potent force. As an agent for the generation of peace and happiness, it generates goodwill among people, and helps them to lead a life of spirituality and fulfilment. In recent years, we have seen how people like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King have used it for achieving justice and freedom. Swami Vivekananda and Mother Teresa have been inspired by their religious faiths to serve the poor, the derelict, and the discarded. It is religious faith which has driven the Dalai Lama to propagate the message of love and peace not only among his Tibetan people (including those living in exile in India) but also in distant lands.

As an agent of destruction, religion is being used by radical leaders to spread hatred and inflict violence. Primarily, all faiths have emerged or been created to underpin a moral universe in which love, compassion, peace, and caring guide human conduct. Religion is to be an ennobling influence that leads men, women, and children to have respect for human beings, animals, and natural objects. In this background the recent phenomenon of suicide killings has indeed become a matter of concern. It is difficult to imagine that the young *jihadis* are totally impelled by a yearning for paradise. In reality, they are mostly misguided by political aspirations.

In this context, scholars have rightly seen links between fundamentalist movements and social conflict. For example, the eminent religious scholar Karen Armstrong[3] views the fundamentalism of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as a reaction against scientific and secular culture. Modernization and rapid economic changes have been painful processes for several individuals and societies who have long been marginalized due to centuries of imperialist exploitative mechanisms. Fundamentalists openly proclaim that they are battling against forces that threaten their sacred values.

All major religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—have fundamentalist elements, but it is militant Islam that is currently drawing maximum attention. Those who see links **(p.xv)** between terrorism and Islam need to take note of the fact that the Quran considers the killing of an innocent person a crime against humanity; it preaches tolerance and respect for all faiths. Far from promoting a clash of civilizations, the Quran celebrates social and cultural diversity. Jews, Christians, and Muslims lived peacefully for several centuries under Islamic rule in Spain. Similarly, Hindus and Muslims lived harmoniously under the rule of the Mughal Emperor Akbar and others in India.

While fundamentalist religious forces are likely to continue to dominate political discourse for some time to come, it is not likely to be a permanent feature of the world social and political order. As fundamentalism cannot satisfy growing human aspirations or meet the challenges of modernization, the present hold of extremist organizations over its followers in the Islamic world would gradually loosen and eventually recede substantially. We have strong mystical traditions in Islam that have found eloquent expressions in Sufi ideas and religious disciplines (to which Wahhabis and other fundamentalist groups are strongly opposed) that could be supported. The alienation of Muslims living in Europe and USA needs special attention as they feel alienated from their traditions. The problem gets accentuated as they are not fully accepted in the society where they live. In the prevailing situation both the civil society and the government needs to be sensitive. Intellectuals, women, and youth must be encouraged to play a greater role in the social and political affairs of their land. The more democratic the world becomes, the less would be the threat of terrorism and suicide killings.

Mahatma Gandhi, more than any other public figure in contemporary history, supported an attitude towards religion that goes beyond toleration. He did this in several ways by encouraging greater knowledge and deeper commitment about one's own faith and traditions and also that of others. He wanted believers to realize that loyalty towards one's own religion did not justify it being superior than other religions. He stated that every religion is imperfect but a beautiful expression of human aspirations of love rather than hatred. Mahatma Gandhi believed that a religiously plural society contains enormous resources as long as religion is not regarded as the primary maker of identity. His technique of non-violent conflict resolution— *satyagraha*—was a dialogic process, inviting negotiation and compromise.

More than two millennia before Mahatma Gandhi, Gautama Buddha wanted a rational approach to conflict resolution. In matters of religion, he advocated the Bahudhā approach of dialogue and understanding. To quote:

if others speak against me, or against my religion, or against the order, there is no reason why you should be angry, discontented or displeased with them. If you are so, you will not only be using yourselves into danger of spiritual loss, but you will not be able to judge whether what they see is correct or not correct!

Education has a central role to play in building a harmonious society. Education must begin at home as it is here that intolerance towards other faiths has its origins. We know that it is not only love and compassion but also hatred and intolerance that are widespread. Just as people can be taught to hate, they can also learn to treat others with love, dignity, and respect. In fact, the issue of a public policy of harmony is critically linked with education. There is an urgent need to focus on the educational curriculum in order to purge it of content that spreads hatred and/or distorts history. Effective education also demands the development of a creative mind and scientific temper.

Resolving conflict, however, goes much beyond education. Towards this end, the UN has to be strengthened in terms of its Charter so that it becomes an effective conflict resolution organization. The global political order must reflect the best interests, rules, and practices that states hold in common.

The UN is the best forum for generation of understanding among nation-states in the realm of politics and economy. It can also be a forum where dialogue among nations can be initiated and sustained. Such dialogues can support efforts towards peace and attempts to resolve conflicts between groups and nations.

As we look towards the future, it appears that the prevailing state system would continue to be a primary body. An international order based on the rule of law and consent of nation-states can alone be an effective conflict resolution mechanism.

* * *

During my research on manifestations of the Bahudhā philosophy in the works of Rabindranath Tagore, I found a powerful observation in the 'Introduction' to *Gitanjali* by W. B. Yeats. He writes:

> We write long books where no page perhaps has any quality to make writing a pleasure, being confident in some general design while Mr. Tagore, like the Indian civilisation itself, has been content to discover the soul and surrender himself to its spontaneity.

This made me wonder whether to pursue writing this book. Was I judicious in accepting the challenge of trying to seek the soul of civilizational harmony? I knew then and I am conscious now that the Bahudhā approach is not a discovery but at best a reassertion of an old truth about the pluralist approach in society, religion, and politics. In writing this book, I realize that I have not been able to raise myself to that sublime level where one has 'discovered the soul' or has 'surrendered oneself to [the] spontaneity' of civilizational harmony. Those are the tasks of the great universal philosophies. Mine is just an individual's effort to seek a way of reconciling the disturbing disorder of our times. This work is not a technical study of either history or philosophy. My effort is to record what I have found relevant in the Indian and world experiences that could provide ways and means for the formulation of public policies that could bring more harmony into societies. Nevertheless, I have been selective in choosing events and personalities and I am conscious of the fact that one's own cultural baggage affects one's outlook. My aim was not to glorify either the past or an individual but only to draw lessons from their successes and failures. William Faulkner does not exaggerate when he says: 'The past is never dead; it is not even past'.

India has been living through this pluralistic challenge longer than several other nations. In terms of faith, well before the advent of Christianity and Islam, India was a significant playing field of civilizational encounters between Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Both Judaism and Christianity came to India in the first century AD. Islam commenced its entry through the coastal towns of peninsular India from the eighth century onwards. In the ninth century, when the Zoroastrians of Persia felt that their religion was being threatened by the invading Muslims, they moved to the north-west coast of India. Their descendants, known as Parsis, still live there. The birth of Sikhism in fifteenth century India had the avowed objective of bringing peace to conflicting encounters between Hinduism and Islam. In the last century, when the Tibetans felt a threat to their religion and culture, they chose India to be their new home. Multiculturalism, then, is a basic feature of India's civilizational experience.

The Indian civilizational experience in respect of pluralism or multiculturalism does not advocate a melting pot approach that facilitates domination of values and norms of the numerically strong and assertive community over others. The most important feature of pluralism is that people believe in their multiple identities. India's strength has always been to absorb external influences. It is not surprising, therefore, to see Indians speaking of Shakespeare and Tulsidas in the same vein, and without any strain, in seminar rooms as well as private homes.

Multiculturalism as practised in India is not atheistic in character but is a blending of religions. Mahatma Gandhi, a devout Hindu, highlighted this aspect of communitarian life in India when he had passages read from the holy books of all the major religions at his prayer meetings. Secularism in India establishes that the state shall be neutral in matters of religion. But multiculturalism goes beyond that—it demands the flowering of different faiths and belief patterns. Secularism and multiculturalism are not in conflict. It is this openness of the Indian experience that provides the basis for constructing a public policy of harmony. It establishes that disputes shall be settled through

dialogue and there shall be a free flow of ideas and thought processes from different parts of the world.

One of the lessons of 9/11 is that we are living in an interdependent world. The futility of promoting violence and conflict in the name of religion is obvious to all except a few. It is here that public opinion needs to be groomed. We have to recognize that many factors drive public opinion, including education and media, and that a global view is required. There is a need for dialogue among the people of the world. Dialogue may or may not lead to consensus but it certainly creates understanding and relationships among people. The answer to terrorism lies not in repression, which only generates hatred and causes hindrances in the path of dialogue and peaceful change. Respect for the rights, beliefs, and cultures of all human beings can go a long way in facilitating and enhancing processes of negotiation and eventually in securing peace and harmony.

It is difficult to visualize a world where there will be no use of force. But, surely, military force should be only a last resort when all other methods to resolve conflict have been exhausted. While terrorism may gradually recede, the long-term threats to world peace are from poverty, inequality, environmental degradation (including global warming), disease, and illiteracy.

The message of this book relates to dialogue and compassion more than the mechanics of politics, statecraft, and diplomacy. And yet I am aware that without the rule of law, understanding and love cannot permeate social life. The process of dialogue would either be closed or cease to be a creative process and its value as a conflict resolution mechanism would get severely restricted. A progressive and peaceful world can only be one where both small and big nations receive a place under the sun and achieve a sense of recognition and worth.

Each book has its own destiny. I cannot predict the impact it will create or the attention it will receive. But my deep conviction of the relevance of the Bahudhā approach makes me hope that it will make some contribution to human affairs. In many ways, the writing of this book has been a *swantah sukhai* (pursuit of self-happiness). My thoughts and words have opened new doors of exploration for me. I hope it leads others to new possibilities too! In that spirit, I offer it to my readers. <>

Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy of Mind and Nature by Douglas S. Duckworth [Oxford University Press, 9780197616598]

Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy of Mind and Nature offers an engaging philosophical overview of Tibetan Buddhist thought. Integrating competing and complementary perspectives on the nature of mind and reality, Douglas Duckworth reveals the way that Buddhist theory informs Buddhist practice in
various Tibetan traditions. Duckworth draws upon a contrast between phenomenology and ontology to highlight distinct starting points of inquiries into mind and nature in Buddhism, and to illuminate central issues confronted in Tibetan Buddhist philosophy.

This thematic study engages some of the most difficult and critical topics in Buddhist thought, such as the nature of mind and the meaning of emptiness, across a wide range of philosophical traditions, including the "Middle Way" of Madhyamaka, Yogacara (also known as "Mind-Only"), and tantra. Duckworth provides a richly textured overview that explores the intersecting nature of mind, language, and world depicted in Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Further, this book puts Tibetan

philosophy into conversation with texts and traditions from India, Europe, and America, exemplifying the
possibility and potential for a transformative conversation in global philosophy.

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This book Is a thematic survey of Tibetan Buddhist thought. It provides a theoretic framework to introduce a wide range of intersecting ideas. With many informed studies and translations of Tibetan traditions now available in English, I feel that the time is right to survey the intellectual terrain of

Tibetan Buddhist thought with a wide-angle lens. What follows is my attempt to provide this lens and to map the terrain both descriptively and creatively. I do not base my framework around particular schools or sectarian traditions, but attempt to focus on issues and themes that structure the philosophical conversations within and among the schools. While doing so, I draw freely from European and American philosophical traditions to engage with and elaborate upon Buddhist thought and practice in Tibet. A central theme of Tibetan philosophy I draw out is the intertwining of mind, language, and world.

Understanding Buddhism in India is fundamental to understanding Buddhism in Tibet. Tibetan Buddhists played an essential role in preserving Indian Buddhist culture, not only by carrying on the traditions of study and practice from India into the present, long after their demise in India, but also by preserving Indian Buddhist texts in translation. Most Buddhist texts of the mature era of Indian Buddhist literature (fifth to eleventh centuries) are no longer extant in any language other than in Tibetan translation. Buddhist texts and traditions entered the Tibetan plateau from India from the eighth to eleventh centuries, just before living Buddhist traditions died out on the Indian subcontinent under the weight of Muslim incursions. After the eleventh century, Buddhist monastic institutions in India were left in rubbles, and Buddhist popular traditions came to be assimilated into Hindu traditions.

Given the importance of the Indian subcontinent for Tibetan Buddhism, I begin with a fair amount of discussion of Indian sources. The first chapter begins by looking to Nagarjuna, an influential second-century Indian Buddhist thinker, and his articulation of emptiness and interrelation. Emptiness is the ultimate truth in Mahayana Buddhism: the truth which, when known, sets you free. I highlight how the ultimate truth in Mahayana Buddhism comes to be interpreted along two main lines: as indicative of an inconceivable reality or as an absence of intrinsic nature. The former interpretation characterizes what comes to be known as "Mind-Only" in Tibet (or Yogacara), while the latter characterizes Madhyamaka, "the Middle Way." These two traditions represent competing interpretations of the ultimate truth and the Perfection of Wisdom (prajnaparamita) Sutras. Further, Tibetans hold Mind-Only and Madhyamaka to represent two main schools of interpretation elucidated within the two "great chariot traditions" (shing rta then po) of Mahayana Buddhism. While Tibetans use these terms to characterize distinct strands of interpretation of the meaning of the Buddha's message, we should keep in mind that these terms do not refer to individual schools or bounded canons of texts.

Also, what Tibetans refer to by the terms "Middle Way" and "Mind-Only" can be quite different, with usages that are highly charged within specific contexts of sectarian traditions and preferred interpretations of one's own school. In order to dislodge these terms from a single tradition's interpretive claims, for the purposes of this book I will use them differently. In my usage, "Mind-Only" highlights a particular phenomenological style of interpretation and orientation to contemplative practice. I use Madhyamaka, "the Middle Way," to highlight a critical orientation and deconstructive ontology. These terms, and the. "schools" associated with them, are highly contested and polysemic, yet I appropriate them as a heuristic and to convey an intimate relationship between two intertwined trajectories of interpretation. I feel that the problems I create by continuing to use these terms, with the distinctive meanings I have assigned them, are less severe than the problems of avoiding them altogether or narrowly constraining them to definitions tied into a single sectarian tradition's interpretation.

With the interplay of these two trajectories I attempt to sustain a tension between two contrasting readings of Buddhist thought, as both are viable and widely attested interpretations of Mahayana Buddhist literature and practice. One reading is commonly found in the works of academic philosophers attuned to ontological analyses and the Madhyamaka tradition of the Geluk (dge lugs)

school of Tibetan Buddhism. Another interpretation that I keep in play is a phenomenological reading that appeals to the irreducibility and inexpressibility of the lived world as experienced. I use "phenomenology" to represent this latter trajectory of interpretation, and while it may not be a perfect fit, the style of doing philosophy in phenomenological traditions clearly resonates here, and certainly shares a family resemblance with an important dimension of Mind-Only, which I shall highlight in chapter 1.

The relationship between these two orientations, of Madhyamaka and Mind-Only, or ontology and phenomenology, reiterates some of the problems and popular associations of a contrast between stereotypical "analytic" and "continental" ways of doing philosophy. That is, these two modalities are imperfect and simplistic caricatures of a complex and internally diverse relation of ideas. I take them to be co-constituted, like the first- and third-person perspectives on the world and the methodologies that grow out of these ways of reflection. In other words, what I characterize as ontological and phenomenological orientations are two dimensions of how a single individual relates to what is meaningful and true.

In chapter 2 I consider the ways that Madhyamaka and Mind-Only can be seen to offer distinct depictions of the world, framed in terms of a relationship between ontology and phenomenology. I suggest that the perspectives offered by ontology and phenomenology can be understood as taking their starting points in object-oriented and subject-oriented modes of inquiry, respectively. Mind-Only highlights the subjective orientations to a world; Madhyamaka undermines the finality of any objective world picture by highlighting the contingency of all objectifying constructions. I show how these perspectives are mutually entailed, and thus can be seen to share a common ground.

I have struggled with how to convey these two orientations, for "Madhyamaka" and "Mind-Only," along with its closely allied "Yogacara," are problematic and polysemic terms. Another alternative I considered was to represent the two orientations I aim to convey exclusively with the terms "ontology" and "phenomenology." Yet since this book is primarily rooted in Buddhist thought, rather than discuss Buddhist ideas solely in foreign terms imported from another culture, I opted to keep Buddhist terminology. Also, "phenomenology" is just as polysemic as Yogacara, so it does not solve the dilemma in the end. I have also thought about this issue with another pair of terms, "constructivism" and "realism." While these terms are relevant to this topic, they both fall into ontological orientations, and both trajectories of thought I am concerned with participate in each side of a constructivist-realist dichotomy; they are not actually distinct, but intertwined. For these reasons, rather than introduce a neologism, I continue to use "Madhyamaka" and "Mind-Only," following the Tibetans, to flag two orientations of interpretation that are entangled in such a way that each one supplements the other.

After aligning the axis of this book around these two orientations, in the next three chapters, I touch on mind, language, and world as a loose thematic framework. I begin with a theory of mind and a closely paired notion—self-awareness (svasamvedana)—in chapter 3. I show that the status of self-awareness is a wedge issue between the descriptive ontology of Madhyamaka and the phenomenological orientation of Mind-Only. Awareness can be understood as Janus-faced; it does "double-duty" as subject and object, as internal and external. This hybrid structure sets the stage for what I call objective idealism—a world in which perceiver and perceived take place in an internal relation. With the term "objective idealism" I aim to represent how subject and object are simply polarities within a higher structure that transcends (and includes) this duality. While the language of substance and idealism is anathema to Madhyamaka, the interrelation of perceiver and perceived I wish to convey is not an ordinary subjective idealism; here there is no internal subject reigning over objects, the relata are not separate and relation itself is internal and not a real (external) relation. Thus, without an external world, there can be no internal world either (nor a world in between).

The nonduality I seek to convey is not only the stuff of metaphysics, but also exemplifies the creative interplay of inner and outer worlds.

Chapter 4 turns to language. I show how many philosophical disputes revolve around linguistic disputes, prompted by competing conceptions of language. I also discuss the relation between concepts and percepts. Here again we can see the collapse of yet another dichotomy—like the one between ontology and phenomenology, subject and object—as percepts and concepts are interdependent. While a dichotomy of percepts and concepts is central to the epistemological edifice of proponents of Yogacara such as the seventh-century Indian, Dharmakirti, I show how this dichotomy falls apart in two main ways: conception collapses into perception (with nondual self-awareness in Mind-Only) and perception collapses into conception (with the thoroughgoing conceptuality of radical contingency and universal mediation emphasized in Madhyamaka). In both cases, we see the collapse of a percept-concept dichotomy, and language plays an important role in shaping both sides of this apparent divide.

In chapter 5 I consider the contemplative traditions of tantra. While mind (gnosis) and speech (mantra) are undoubtedly important in this context, too, here we also turn to the body (deity). The body, like speech and mind, exemplifies another intertwining, as it too is both perceiver and perceived. The body is the organ of the universe, the flesh of the world, and the dynamic substance of objective idealism. The objective idealism I have in mind here is not a simplistic notion of subjective idealism,' but the irreducibility of the relationally constituted whole. This nonduality is a dynamic unity that comprises everything—the universe (one and many). It is not a static, metaphysical absolutism, but one that is participatory; it is enacted in the contemplative practices of tantra, as well as Mahamudra and the Great Perfection (rdzogs then), the culmination and transcendence of Tibetan tantric traditions. These traditions can be seen as performances of this nonduality, fostering freedom through re-cognition and creative enaction, while undermining sedimentary, reified conceptions of mind and nature (that delimit and/or superimpose the way the world is and must be).

In four appendices I include translated excerpts from Tibetan texts that illustrate and expand upon some of the issues I raise in the chapters of this book. Each translation represents a distinctive tradition and genre of philosophical writing, and demonstrates to some extent the diversity and complexity of Buddhist philosophical literature. It is also noteworthy that all four of these texts represent a part of a living Buddhist culture; each of these texts can be found among texts currently studied and practiced in different Tibetan Buddhist communities across Asia today. This goes to show that the Tibetan Buddhist philosophy represented here is not only a vibrant and diverse tradition, but a living one, too.

In what follows, I take a broad view of what I see to be some of the most important philosophical issues at stake across Tibetan traditions, and try to avoid getting too bogged down within an exegesis on any particular tradition. This approach is admittedly ambitious and invites real dangers of overgeneralization (when fine-grained particularities are ignored) and superimposition (when personal preference overshadows an impartial description). Yet a thematic overview like this also can enable some insights into Tibetan forms of Buddhism that may not be visible when any single tradition is considered in isolation.

It is needless to mention that my interpretation of Buddhism is inflected by the European and American traditions I have inherited, but I should also acknowledge that the interpretation I offer here is influenced by the legacy of a nineteenth-century tradition stemming from eastern Tibet that has been called the "Gemang (dge mang) movement," named after the place where it flourished.' In contrast to an allegedly "non-sectarian movement" (ris med) that is antagonistic toward the Geluk tradition or incompatible with it, the Gemang movement is marked by an integration of Geluk and

Nyingma (rnying ma) traditions of scholarship and practice in a way that they are configured to be mutually illuminating. That is to say, this Gemang tradition is neither tied to Geluk sectarianism nor to a sectarian identity built upon what is incompatible with the Geluk school. Rather, it is characterized by hybridity and integration, with an eye on practice.

While I try to steer away from adopting a single sectarian voice on Buddhist thought in this book, to a certain extent the "Gemang movement," like my academic training, has shaped the way I represent this subject matter. I acknowledge that the kind of hybrid tradition that informs my interpretation and methodology may be no more objective or valuefree than any other; nevertheless, I believe (with Gadamer) that the influence of some tradition is necessary when any standpoint is taken on a subject matter. That said, contortions, distortions, and creations inevitably take place when a methodological lens is used to convey a domain of knowledge. It is my hope that what is enabled by my approach outweighs the problems that this methodology introduces.

In this book I aim to communicate important facets of Tibetan tradition neither by parroting it nor by standing over it with domineering academic hubris. Rather, my agenda is to convey a way to think about (and with) Tibetan Buddhist philosophy of mind and nature. In outlining these aspects of Buddhist thought, I do not censure my own perspectives on the material and also draw freely from a range of Indian, European, and American philosophical traditions to explain and elaborate key issues in Buddhist Tibet. To date there is no such overview of Tibetan philosophical culture, as most scholarly texts and translations of Tibetan thought are embedded within the structure of a particular sectarian tradition. I aim to provide an alternative way to access the subject matter so scholars and interested nonspecialists can relate to Tibetan thought outside the confines of a single sectarian voice or a one-dimensional philosophical stance. This book is intended as a bridge, both for Buddhists who seek to enrich their knowledge in conversation with Northwestern European and American philosophical traditions, and for those more familiar with these philosophical traditions to engage with Tibetan Buddhist thought.

Nonspecialists can use this book to gain a perspective on Tibetan philosophy, a place from which to find points of departure and threads of conversation from the intellectual worlds they inhabit. Specialists, on the other hand, can use this book to contextualize their particular areas of expertise. They may also feel compelled to highlight places that fall out of this frame, fill it out, or provide alternative frameworks to challenge or supplement the one I offer here. This book is a first step, not the last, to framing Tibetan Buddhism philosophically, and I hope readers will dig further into studies on topics that I outline here in broad strokes. <>

Garland of Visions: Color, Tantra, and a Material History of Indian Painting by Jinah Kim [University of California Press, 9780520343214]

Garland of Visions explores the generative relationships between artistic intelligence and tantric vision practices in the construction and circulation of visual knowledge in medieval South Asia. Shifting away from the traditional connoisseur approach, Jinah Kim instead focuses on the materiality of painting: its mediums, its visions, and especially its colors. She argues that the adoption of a special type of manuscript called pothi enabled the material translation of a private and internal experience of "seeing" into a portable device. These mobile and intimate objects then became important conveyors of many forms of knowledge—ritual, artistic, social, scientific, and religious—and spurred the spread of visual knowledge of Indic Buddhism to distant lands. By taking color as the material link between a vision and its artistic output, Garland of Visions presents a fresh approach to the history of Indian painting.

About the Author:

Jinah Kim is George P. Bickford Professor of Indian and South Asian Art at Harvard University. She is the author of Receptacle of the Sacred: Illustrated Manuscripts and the Buddhist Book Cult in South Asia.

Reviews

"I am in awe of this book. Jinah Kim controls a stunning range of information, both verbal and visual, that she uses as the basis for her brilliant insights. Elegantly written, entirely pioneering, and fully persuasive, this is a book of enormous importance."—Frederick M. Asher, Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota

"This is a paradigm-changing work. By linking together a dizzying array of concerns in this exploration of visionary practice and color, Jinah Kim complicates long-held assumptions about religious imagery in India and produces remarkable insights. The book is sure to create new paths of scholarly inquiry in a wide range of fields."—Janice Leoshko, Associate Professor, University of Texas at Austin

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In the twelfth regnal year of Gopala (IV)—a Pãla king who ruled parts of India in what is now Bihar and West Bengal during the first half of the twelfth century—a lay woman named An.aghãkã commissioned a sumptuously painted palm-leaf manuscript of an important Mahãyãna scripture, the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses (Astasãhasrikã Prajñãpãramitã, henceforth Perfection of Wisdom). The commission was intended to benefit her "priest, teacher, parents, and all sentient beings in attaining supreme knowledge." Only six out of the 206 folios of the manuscript were subject to painting. In these six folios, the unnamed miniaturist executed every given space with dexterity and finesse. On each folio, surrounding the two pre-bored holes for binding, were placed decorative bands filled with swirling vegetal patterns emerging from a monster's mouth: the dark green tendrils are accentuated with light yellow highlighting and shaded with deep blue against a vibrant red backdrop with yellow borders (figure 0.1). Each band measures about 2 cm in width, and it would have required a brush that was about 2/100 mm in diameter to execute the fine lines.

FIGURE 1 DECORATIVE PATTERN ON THE BAND AROUND THE STRING HOLE. DETAIL OF FIGURE 2.

The vibrancy of color is absolutely stunning nearly nine hundred years after its production. On the last folio of the manuscript, three painted panels contain a red goddess flanked by blue and yellow bodhisattvas (figure 2). Kurukullã, the red goddess in the center panel, is adorned with intricate jewelry and an ornate crown. She is seated within a golden yellow shrine-like frame decorated with a swirly motif and a hamsa (swan) on either end, supported by two vyãlas (mythical lions). The large cushion behind her displays an intricate textile pattern in organic blue and red (most likely indigo and lac)—the same colors that would have dyed contemporary textiles. The lotus seat where she sits cross-legged, drawing a flower bow, is rendered with blue, red, and green petals with yellow outlines. This acme of color pops even more brilliantly against the light brown palm leaf whose veins and suppleness still retain their organic character. The Sanskrit text in black ink is written in an ornamental kutila (hooked) script, a calligraphic variety of the cosmopolitan siddhamatrka script. Its flamboyance supports the brilliance of the painting.

FIGURE 2 FOLIO 206R, PERFECTION OF WISDOM MANUSCRIPT, DATE: CA. 1143 CE (TWELFTH REGNAL YEAR OF GOPÃLA [IV]), PATRON: LAYWOMAN ANAGHÃKÃ, WEST BENGAL. ORGANIC AND MINERAL PIGMENTS AND SOOT INK ON PALM LEAF, SIZE: 6.7 × 48.6 CM. PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART, 1987-52-14. PHOTO COURTESY OF PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART.

Although this folio (along with a fragment of folio 101) was separated from the original manuscript, and now resides in a museum, it is worth remembering that it once belonged to location—from a store room to a pedestal, for instance—and at times change hands, sometimes over great distances. The geographic area explored in this study is extensive, connecting Silk Road sites like Khotan and Dunhuang with centers of manuscript production in the South Asian subcontinent. A southern limit to its scope is provided by the Narmada River, since most of the manuscripts I discuss hail from regions north of the traditional boundary between north and south India.4 Its temporal field is the period between 1000 and 1500 CE—within a "medieval" time frame in global reckoning. A final caveat: although this study proposes alternative ways to approach the history of Indian painting, it is not an exhaustive survey of medieval Indian manuscript painting. Instead, it focuses on the many guises that pothi-format manuscripts assumed while functioning as archives, envoys, teachers, and translators of various forms of knowledge across time and space.

To answer the question of why primary colors dominated the palette of Indian miniature painting, we must turn to what Ananda K. Coomaraswamy—the first curator of Indian art in North America and its preeminent savant—called the "blank" period, a time in India when there was "no one great religious inspiration." In the early decades of the twentieth century, when Coomaraswamy was active, the prevailing assessment of Indian tantric traditions was that they were degenerate and corrupt forms of religion; hence, the view that the religious landscape of medieval South Asia provided no great inspiration for artistic activity. As we will see, however, tantric communities made substantial contributions to the art of painting in at least two areas: color theory and material culture. By devising procedures for seeing transcendent objects in a specific set of colors, tantric visionary practice provided a color scheme, based on primary colors, that could be harnessed for artistic purposes, namely, the translation of visionary experience into paintings that would circulate beyond the immediate locus of their productions. In certain tantric communities, there also were seekers (siddhas) pursuing transmutation through alchemical tantras who experimented with the ritual use of cinnabar (mercuric sulfide), the mineral source of vermilion. Since the main ores for mineral cinnabar were outside the South Asian subcontinent, vermilion was an exceedingly precious commodity when it was introduced to artisanal practice in medieval South Asia.

The skills required to produce a miniature were intimately tied to the art of the book. Manuscripts in South Asia were traditionally prepared with birch bark and palm leaves cut to uniform size and strung together through one or two prebored holes. Wooden book covers were provided to protect the folios. A pothi-format manuscript was normally oblong, a shape determined by the source material, usually palm leaves measuring 5–6 cm in width (in the case of the so-called talipot palm, Corypha umbraculifera, the most common type of palm used in the material examined for this study). With this material, the maximum available space on a given page does not exceed 6 × 55 cm. Given the limited space available to painters, each painted panel on a folio typically measured around 5 × 5.5 cm.

A miniature painting on a page in a Buddhist manuscript, such as the goddess Kurukullã in figure 0.2, rarely finds mention in most narratives of the history of Indian painting, especially after the arrival of the Mughals. The nominally Buddhist subject matter might prompt us to look for more ready comparisons in Buddhist communities nearby. In fact, most early examples of manuscript painting from South Asia come from Buddhist circles, with some exceptional examples hailing from Nepal. We remember that Anaghãkã's manuscript was taken to Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu valley, where it remained in ritual use, and the iconography of a four-armed red goddess holding a red lotus and drawing a flower bow finds a close parallel in a painting in another manuscript prepared in Nepal (dated 1071), now in the Asiatic Society, Kolkata (A15, folio 152v). The goddess Kurukullã also appears in a number of later Tibetan thangkas, suggesting that a Himalayan connection in the development of manuscript painting in South Asia might reward exploration. A sectarian

transregional model, however, provides little room to consider the legacy and the contributions of Buddhist manuscript painters in the later history of Indian painting. Here, let us consider an alternative transregional model.

Transregional and Transtemporal Connections

As portable objects traveling across different regions, South Asian manuscripts have survived many centuries of use, opening windows to distant connections across time and space. The painting in figure 0.3 was prepared on a vertically oriented sheet of paper. The top register occupying about one-eighth of the page contains a vernacular text (most likely a form of Braj) written in black ink. In comparison to the Sanskrit script in figure 0.2, the scribing seems less controlled, even casual, coinciding with the conversational tone of the text. The text is a cajoling message from Krsna that the sakhi (the go-between and confidante) delivers to Rãdhã, telling her how Krsna is love stricken and longing to see her and urging her "come, go and meet Krsna struck by Kãma's arrow!" Below this text the scene unfolds in three compartments: the top section shows Rãdhã in her apartment being swarmed by bees and addressed by the sakhi, whose standing position and lowered left hand connect Rãdhã's space to the dense forest where Krsna dejectedly longs for his lover; opposite Krsna's forest is an inverted U-shaped bower, in which a female figure seated on a fully opened lotus draws a flower bow with a lotus stem as an arrow. This figure is commonly taken to be Kãma, or his female consort, Ratï. The accompanying text tells us that Krsna is struck by Kãma's arrow. The comparison to Kurukullã's bow and arrow is inevitable.

As the goddess of desire, Kurukullã was regarded in tantric Buddhist communities as a personal deity of some importance.9 It is unlikely that Krsna's painter, identified as Sãhib Dïn (Sahib al-Din), a Muslim painter who served the Hindu Mewar court in seventeenthcentury Rajasthan, would have been aware of any recondite Buddhist iconography. Yet images of Kurukullã continued to be made in central Tibet and remained popular from the sixteenth century on. Indrani Chatterjee suggests that through "monastic geographicity" the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan regions remained connected to the rest of the South Asian subcontinent from the thirteenth through nineteenth centuries. Tibetan tantric and Mahãyãna Buddhist lineages "occupied the same terrain" as "the Sufi, Vaishnava, and Šaiva lineages of the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries," yet are forgotten in colonial and postcolonial scholarship.11 The earliest surviving miniature painting of Kurukullã places her on the Kurukullã peak in present-day Gujarat, and the iconography of the goddess may in fact have had a non-Buddhist origin. A potential connection between this small detail in a seventeenth-century Rajput painting and earlier Buddhist exemplars may seem inconsequential, but it is worth keeping in mind when we consider the genesis of the Indic manuscript-painting tradition.

The vertical format of the painting is unlike the horizontal pothi-format of the manuscript, but the choice of yellow as a backdrop for the band of text at the top of the page invites us to remember the color of a seasoned palm-leaf folio, poeticized as golden. The yellow backdrop is commonly seen in other Rajput court paintings with accompanying texts, and it is close to the color of contemporary Nepalese paper manuscripts. As seen in figure 0.4, the yellow paper folios with text written in black ink in a vernacular, informal hand of a painted manuscript of the Karandavyuha, dated 1631, resemble the text band in Sahib Din's painting. The materials are different: the Nepalese paper was probably prepared with pulp from the bark of certain bushes or shrubs (for example, Daphne papyracea),' and its color was produced by an application of arsenic (orpiment) to the surface of the page in the final stage of preparation before scribing. In the Rajput folios, in contrast, the color is the result of a pigment called Indian yellow, said to have been produced from the urine of cows that were only fed mango leaves The Indian yellow pigment does not seem to have insect repelling properties, unlike the orpiment used on the Nepalese paper. In any case, formal affinities such as carefully produced color and the proportions of text pages do not necessitate direct contact between artistic traditions, and more historical research is needed before a hypothetical interaction

between the seventeenth-century courts of the Rajput rulers and the Malla rulers of the Kathmandu valley can be confirmed.

Recent studies of transregional movements agree that the colonial-era model of Himalayan insularity, which held that Nepal and other kingdoms across the Himalayan foothills were sealed off from the rest of the world, has long been overdue for serious revision. Transregional connections between the Indian plain and a number of Himalayan sites, together with those across the Himalayas, are presently being reconstrued in various fields, including architecture. As mobile objects, manuscripts may sometimes constitute the only traces of long-ago travels across a network of connectivity now lost to us. Can they be fruitfully engaged to expand our understanding of the premodern era? In one instance, we can see that a sixteenth-century Bengali scribe was employed, in the area of present-day Delhi, in writing out a fully illustrated paper manuscript of the Aranyaka Parvan. According to the colophon on folio 362r, the scribe (kaydstha) named Bhavanidasa, son of Lakhanasi of the Ganda lineage, wrote the manuscript in 1516 (samvat 1573) in Yoginipura (today's Delhi) during the reign of the Sultan Sikandar. Where in Gauda his family may have hailed from is difficult to ascertain, but the manuscript bears witness to a scribal family's migration from eastern India to Delhi in the fifteenth century.

Overview of the Chapters

In three parts, this book is concerned with the manuscript as an artistic medium, vision, and color. Part 1 examines the development of the pothi-format manuscript as a painterly medium that uniquely encompasses textuality, visuality, and materiality. Chapter 1 challenges the common scholarly assumption that treats paintings in all mediums as if they belonged to a single artistic tradition—even despite evidence to the contrary. The adoption of the manuscript as a medium for painting is a relatively late phenomenon; and this chapter ex plains the circumstances that may have inspired such a move and discusses the subsequent impact of this development. It also highlights the importance of a trans-Himalayan manuscript culture where the practice of making painted manuscripts flourished.

Chapter 2 proposes that religious architecture was an inspiration and a potential model for the development of the art of the book. The regulated placement of painted panels containing images of deities within the three-dimensional space of a manuscript turned them into miniature temples that were not only portable but also potent cultic objects. The chapter concludes with a transsectarian comparison of images and textual sources documenting how the pothi-format manuscript became a fitting vehicle for the transmission of knowledge and authority in medieval South Asia.

Part 2 delves into the world of tantric vision, its associated practices, and the role of painted manuscripts in the dissemination of esoteric visual knowledge. Chapter 3 examines the process by which painted palm-leaf manuscripts became vessels for circulating images of visionary practice. Painted manuscripts, in particular, were embraced as an important medium for the transmission of esoteric visual knowledge. Passages relating to the art of the book in the Vajravali (lit. "garland of vajras") by Abhayakaragupta conclude the chapter by situating painted manuscripts within the world of Esoteric Buddhist rituals.

Chapter 4 identifies the ma/a, or garland, as a distinctly Indic model for the design of painted manuscripts. As a case study, it focuses on a late twelfth-century manuscript of the Perfection of Wisdom, now in the Varendra Research Museum (VRM), Rajshahi, Bangladesh, which demonstrates how the inherent seriality and spatial ordering of images accommodated by the pothi format can help record, compile, and circulate tantric visual knowledge tied to initiation linages. It explores the iconographic structure of the VRM manuscript and explains in detail some of the unusual Esoteric Buddhist iconography in it.

Part 3 turns to one of the central questions of the study and explores why primary colors dominate the palette of Indian painting by examining how primary colors became prominent features of the art of painting in India during the second millennium. I seek answers to this question in patterns of historical change: the adoption of color as an encoding tool for systematization of esoteric visual knowledge by medieval tantric groups, especially in Buddhist circles, and increased interest in the potency of certain materials generated by tantric practitioners. This is especially evident among those seeking transmutations of matter, such as siddhas seeking mercury, which is deeply tied to vermilion, the pigment responsible for the brightest, most powerful color in many paintings. Chapter 5 examines the history of the five-color system developed in Indian Esoteric Buddhism as a tool for encoding visual knowledge. This investigation uncovers changing attitudes toward color and provides clues to why primary colors in high opacity became important in painting in medieval South Asia, a development that presaged the spread of painted manuscripts. This chapter also discusses color theory as articulated in medieval Indic religious traditions to explore the symbolic meaning and function of color in medieval South Asia.

Chapter 6 discusses the material evidence of color use in manuscript painting in addition to close readings of texts, including artistic treatises and ritual manuals like the Natyasastra, the Citrasütra, and the Vajravalti that can help explain the Indic theory of color. Through laboratory research conducted in Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts, we have new information on the material composition of pigments used in Indic manuscript paintings, especially in the period before 1500. Identifying these pigments in conjunction with a close study of contemporary treatises explaining Indic theories of color affords us a glimpse into the artists' intimate, embodied knowledge of each color's material properties.

The book ends with an epilogue that discusses the methodological and historiographic implication of the book's analytical focus on color. The question of why primary colors dominate Indian miniature painting is thus addressed by examining the centrality of color in tantric visionary practice that was intimately tied to the development of the art of manuscript painting in India. Through an art-historical reading of material analysis of colorants, we get a glimpse of the artistic intelligence that shaped the color experience in painting. <>

OTHER LIVES: MIND AND WORLD IN INDIAN BUDDHISM by Sonam Kachru [Columbia University Press, 9780231200004]

Human experience is not confined to waking life. Do experiences in dreams matter? Humans are not the only living beings who have experiences. Does nonhuman experience matter? The Buddhist philosopher Vasubandhu, writing during the late fourth and early fifth centuries C.E., argues in his work *The Twenty Verses* that these alternative contexts ought to inform our understanding of mind and world. Vasubandhu invites readers to explore experiences in dreams and to inhabit the experiences of nonhuman beings—animals, hungry ghosts, and beings in hell.

OTHER LIVES offers a deep engagement with Vasubandhu's account of mind in a global philosophical perspective. Sonam Kachru takes up Vasubandhu's challenge to think with perspective-diversifying contexts, showing how his novel theory draws together action and perception, minds and worlds. Kachru pieces together the conceptual system in which Vasubandhu thought to show the deep originality of the argument. He reconstructs Vasubandhu's ecological concept of mind, in which mindedness is meaningful only in a nexus with life and world, to explore its ongoing philosophical significance. Engaging with a vast range of classical, modern, and contemporary Asian and Western thought, *Other Lives* is both a groundbreaking work in Buddhist studies and a model of

truly global philosophy. The book also includes an accessible new translation of *The Twenty Verses*, providing a fresh introduction to one of the most influential works of Buddhist thought.

Reviews

Sonam Kachru has the uncanny ability to translate some of the deepest and thorniest questions in Indian philosophy—about consciousness, transmigration, dreams (questions whose scholarly labyrinths he brilliantly navigates and sequesters in the extensive notes)—into prose so lucid and inspired that one can read it like a Robert Frost poem or a folktale. He breaks into the mind of one philosopher, Vasubandhu, to open up a wide world of mind-boggling imagination that is at the same time very close to the bone of our deepest shared human concerns about reality and death. **Wendy Doniger, author of *The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth***

Other Lives is both erudite and graceful. Sonam Kachru provides a compelling reading of *Twenty Verses*, a persuasive account of Vasubandhu's understanding of experience, and a profound analysis of what it is to inhabit a world. If you care about Buddhist philosophy or consciousness, this beautiful book is mandatory reading. **Jay L. Garfield, Doris Silbert Professor in the Humanities and Professor of Philosophy and Buddhist Studies, Smith College and the Harvard Divinity School**

With exceptional imagination and boldness, this book steps inside the logic of one of the leading philosophers in Buddhist history. Sonam Kachru offers us a stunningly novel account of Vasubandhu's thought and his appreciation of the fundamental entanglement of mind, world, and embodied experience. This is one of the very few works in modern Buddhist Studies that is simultaneously utterly fluent in the relevant philology, cosmology and history of ideas, and yet able to *think with* its object of study in ways that speak to pressing philosophical challenges today. Not the least of the latter would be the very possibility of experiencing the world from perspectives other than what we consider to be 'our own.' **Janet Gyatso, author of *Being Human in a Buddhist World: An Intellectual History of Medicine in Early Modern Tibet***

Attending to dreams on one side and non-human lives on the other, Kachru elegantly illuminates Vasubandhu's astonishing vision of the unfathomable, inextricable intertwining of minds and worlds. A marvelous book. **Evan Thompson, author of *Waking, Dreaming, Being: Self and Consciousness in Neuroscience, Meditation, and Philosophy***

Sonam Kachru's volume provides a philosophically profound and philologically rigorous analysis of Vasubandhu's concept of mind as inextricably tangled with the concept of world and other forms of life. The outcome is intellectually stunning. Kachru's account of Vasubandhu's notion of intentionality is revisionary, and his reconstruction of the deep context of his thought—showing Buddhist cosmology to be both philosophically valuable and necessary—will change the way we approach these materials in the future. **Roy Tzohar, author of *A Yogācāra Buddhist Theory of Metaphor***

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Excerpt: Human experience is not confined to waking life. Do experiences in dreams matter? Many maintain that humans are not the only living beings who have experiences. Does nonhuman experience matter? The Buddhist philosopher Vasubandhu of Peshawar, who flourished in the late fourth and early fifth centuries of the Common Era, appears to have thought so. In a work called The Twenty Verses, the only unimaginative thing about which is its name, he effectively argued that we cannot understand the relationship of mind and world without taking into account contexts of experience that go beyond those that many philosophers, working at different times and in different traditions, have deemed normative: the waking experience of human individuals.

Buddhist philosophy can suggest a way to connect the fact that we enjoy experiences when dreaming and the experiences of other life-forms. For they each, Buddhists supposed, provide us with contexts of possible experience to which we are connected. We dream and wake, and then fall asleep and dream again. Buddhist philosophy, furthermore, teaches that we live now as one life-form, then another: most of us shall experience another way of being minded, and we have all experienced other ways of being minded in the past.

By "ways of being minded" mean to gesture at ways in which creatures can be oriented at the world in thought, given different ways of thinking, perceiving, feeling, attending, and so on. In the next chapter I will entitle myself to this way of talking with the help of Buddhist vocabularies of frames of mind. But we may use the phrase informally for now to say this: Buddhist accounts are committed to the thought that we do not live our entire life waking, nor are human beings unique for being minded. We exemplify a distinct way of being minded in dreams, and other lives exemplify other minds, to use this latter phrase in Peter Godfrey-Smith's sense of creatures who, even though only distantly connected to us, nevertheless exhibit forms of mindedness comparable to and yet unlike our own.

Here's why this matters. By beginning his work with an appeal to other human contexts of experience (like dreaming) and other life-forms and their environments important to Buddhist cosmology (such as the lives of hungry ghosts and beings in hell, more about which below), Vasubandhu effectively reminds his interlocutors that Buddhists must believe that other lives and other minds ought to influence the way we describe what being minded involves. He also takes it that doing so has consequences. Thinking with such alternating contexts of possible experience, to put it impressionistically for now, has the consequence that the concepts of "mind" and "world" can be shown to be peculiarly entangled.

The view in rough outline goes as follows. Some of Vasubandhu's interlocutors believed that perception is paradigmatic of what it means to be minded; and perception, they appear to suggest, is a context in which mind and world, two separable things, come into some variety of relation. From the vantage point Vasubandhu would have us occupy in The Twenty Verses, however, this is to start the story too late. Perception, he will attempt to show his interlocutors, is the culmination of a story which involves the twinning of beings and their environments. To exhibit mindedness just is to be the kind of being that it befits one's history of action to be; and this, it turns out, comes down to saying that to exhibit mindedness is to be the kind of being that is fitted to the environment one's actions have contributed to making. We don't always see it, but in perception we are being put in touch with history, the history of what we have made of the world and what we have made of ourselves. Or, that's what Vasubandhu would have his interlocutors acknowledge as the central thrust of their own tradition.

As it turns out, it is a revisionary view, and, as such, challenging.' So too is Vasubandhu's way of encouraging us to make the necessary revisions. Just how challenging will become clearer in this introduction as well as throughout this book, but it can be somewhat comforting to know that the difficulty is not our own.

This book takes up Vasubandhu's challenge to think with perspective-diversifying contexts for two reasons. I wish, firstly, to recover Vasubandhu's account of mindedness; not to defend it, mind you—merely to understand it. Secondly, and relatedly, I wish to recover Vasubandhu's conceptual toolkit. I want to know not only what he thought, but also how. That means, at the very least, that I wish to understand his vocabulary and his concerns better.

Unfortunately, this results in a bit of a tension: while seeking to contribute to a history of philosophy, because of its interest in concepts and norms governing explanation and description, this book tilts rather far toward an interest in the abstract. The paragraphs have the distressing feel of tedium in places, which is a shame because, to speak more grandly, and more tendentiously, I wish to evoke what it was like to think with his conceptual tools about the world to which he took himself to be responsible in thought.

Speaking of Vasubandhu's contemporary, Buddhaghosa, Maria Heim says that "he approaches scripture with a literary, even poetic, sensibility, alert to the special qualities of the Buddha's speech whereby it conveys something infinite within its limited forms."' I have come to believe that there is an aesthetic component to the norms governing successful description and analysis in Vasubandhu's work as well, one that may be made precise with the help of a vocabulary that straddles the norms of reasoning in scholastic Buddhism and the norms governing aesthetic appreciation in Sanskrit literary culture. Though I won't really address this issue explicitly till the conclusion of the book, I provide clues to that end in the conclusions to chapters 5, 6, and 7, resting on evocation for the most part until the very end. But there is an experiential texture to thinking in another time and place and while environed in a particular scriptural tradition, and I have tried to evoke a taste of Vasubandhu's intellectual world even in the driest of paragraphs.

Here, in this introduction, I will explain what I am explicitly after in this book and how to use it. I'll begin by showing my reader around The Twenty Verses, after which I'll introduce the perspective-defying examples and what I call Vasubandhu's "interesting thesis" about mindedness.

The Twenty Verses

This book does not offer an introduction to Vasubandhu. Nor does it seek to offer a high-relief picture of what we know of his life or oeuvre; it will not quarry for sources for his views. Instead, I will focus on one work in particular, the so-called Twenty Verses, by which title I shall here mean the twenty-two (or, as is more likely, the twenty-one) verses as well as the prose commentary in which the verses are embedded. In fact, for the most part I'll be focusing on only parts of it: the part from the beginning that takes up dreams and the experiences of nonhuman life-forms in other worlds; and the part at the end where Vasubandhu appeals to dreaming once again, this time as a metaphor and model for what understanding consists in. Relatedly, I should caution the reader that my unmarked use of "Buddhism" and "Buddhist" does not aim at generality; I seek, instead, to center myself within the intellectual world of Buddhist thought as presented in The Twenty Verses and related works (more about which below), expressing also thereby the sometimes contested perspectives that Vasubandhu and his interlocutors bring to bear on that world.

^ have included a translation of this short but endlessly engaging work in the appendix. Even as this book is not written as a commentary to the entirety of The Twenty Verses, the translation is not intended as a crib to the original. Keeping in mind the availability of many translations of this work aimed at specialists, as well as philologically and philosophically rich commentaries, I have offered my

own (hopefully) user-friendly translation as an aid for readers unfamiliar with Indian Buddhist philosophy who wish to contextualize the use I have made of The Twenty Verses in this book. As my citations to The Twenty Verses refer to my own translation, readers are advised to consult the appendix for a brief statement of the principles that have guided the translation and its presentation.

Here's an overview of Vasubandhu's Twenty Verses. Beginning with a rather humdrum example of error in the prose introduction, it quickly goes on in verses 3 and 4 to invite us to think through the case of experience in virtual environments, in dreams, and in the hellish environments of life-forms quite distinct from our own. At the other end of the work, in verses 19 and 20, Vasubandhu introduces the topic of dying and madness, inviting us to think through what it means to be alive by appealing to narratives of possession and mental power.

It is helpful to think of the text as being framed by consideration of possibilities enshrined in Buddhist cosmology and narrative that may require revision of some part of the common-sense commitments of Vasubandhu's interlocutors and those of his readers, then and now. Inverse 21 Vasubandhu claims that we do not so much as know our own minds, an argument that brings this extraordinary work to a close.

In the intervening verses, Vasubandhu's work involves us in a consideration of phenomena at two extremities of scale. He considers the constitution of living environments and the beings who populate them in verses 4 through 7; and in verses 11 through 15 he considers the internal structure of matter, focusing on the very idea of indivisible atoms and the constitution of the familiarly scaled objects we take ourselves to perceive.

What is Vasubandhu after? In The Twenty Verses, Vasubandhu commits himself to defending a particular view as the Buddha's own. The view he ascribes to the Buddha is one that would have the Buddha council a restriction. When describing factors related to the full range of possible states sentient beings may enjoy, Vasubandhu understands the Buddha to recommend that we drop talk of the objects the experiences appear to be about, and which some believe serve as causes for these experiences.

I will offer a more precise characterization of this in chapter 1 when I discuss some features of Vasubandhu's technical vocabulary in more detail. For now, we may put things in the following way: Vasubandhu believes the Buddha's considered view to have been that we ought to speak of the full range of ways of being minded—all possible ways of being directed at the world in experience—without invoking objects as causes of content, without referring to anything, in fact, that goes beyond experience. <>

Women in Buddhist Traditions by Karma Lekshe Tsomo [Women in Religions, New York University Press, 9781479803415]

A new history of Buddhism that highlights the insights and experiences of women from diverse communities and traditions around the world

Buddhist traditions have developed over a period of twenty-five centuries in Asia, and recent decades have seen an unprecedented spread of Buddhism globally. From India to Japan, Sri Lanka to Russia, Buddhist traditions around the world have their own rich and diverse histories, cultures, religious lives, and roles for women.

Wherever Buddhism has taken root, it has interacted with indigenous cultures and existing religious

traditions. These traditions have inevitably influenced the ways in which Buddhist ideas and practices have been understood and adapted. Tracing the branches and fruits of these culturally specific transmissions and adaptations is as challenging as it is fascinating.

WOMEN IN BUDDHIST TRADITIONS chronicles pivotal moments in the story of Buddhist women, from the beginning of Buddhist history until today. The book highlights the unique contributions of Buddhist women from a variety of backgrounds and the strategies they have developed to challenge patriarchy in the process of creating an enlightened society.

WOMEN IN BUDDHIST TRADITIONS offers a groundbreaking and insightful introduction to the lives of Buddhist women worldwide.

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Why Study Women in the Buddhist Traditions?

The story of women in Buddhism is complex, because the world's Buddhist traditions and the roles of women within them are richly diverse. From India to Japan, Sri Lanka to Russia, each tradition has its unique history, culture, religious life, and cultural mores for women. Moreover, new refractions of each Asian Buddhist tradition are now developing in countries outside of Asia. It may be tempting to slip into simplistic stereotypes about Asian and non- Asian Buddhist women, but Buddhist societies span a multitude of different cultural heritages, geographical settings, and social strata, making it impossible to accurately characterize Buddhist women as a whole. In studying women in Buddhist traditions, therefore, we encounter a major challenge. Is it possible to identify patterns of Buddhist thought and behavior that influence gender roles or reinforce existing patterns of thought and behavior in such a wide spectrum of cultures and societies?

The Buddhist traditions extend over a period of twenty- five centuries, with roots in ancient Indian culture and branches extending to almost every corner of the globe. Not only did Buddhism put down roots over an extensive geographical area, but also these traditions have continued to evolve over a very long period of time, a process that is clearly in evidence throughout the world today. To complicate matters, wherever Buddhist teachings put down roots, they found themselves on soil that was already home to a multitude of indigenous cultures with their own religious traditions. These traditions inevitably influenced, and continue to influence, the ways in which Buddhist ideas and practices are understood and adapted. Tracing the branches and fruits of these culturally specific transmissions and adaptations is as fascinating as it is challenging.

With few early historical materials to work with and countless cultural variations and interpretations, getting a clear picture of women's roles in the Buddhist traditions is not an easy task. Moreover, as in other religious traditions, women have often been neglected or erased in existing accounts. Nevertheless, after nearly three decades of research on Buddhist women by dedicated scholars in many disciplines, there is more information available today than ever before. In 1987 when, almost by accident, I began doing ethnographic research on Buddhist women, I discovered that very little had been written on the topic. The major study available was I. B. Horner, Women under Primitive Buddhism, published in 1930.

Horner's work was remarkable for its time and is influential even today, but it surprised me that Buddhist women's history and ideas had subsequently received so little attention. In many contemporary surveys of Buddhism, the topic of women appears to be simply an add- on. Fortunately, many new books, book chapters, and articles have appeared in the last few decades. Although certain areas of study, such as Buddhist feminist hermeneutics, have barely begun, we have far more information on women in Buddhism available today than ever before.

What can we learn from a study about women in Buddhist traditions? The task here is to provide a broad overview of women in Buddhist societies, taking examples from diverse cultures and communities, to learn what women value in the Buddhist teachings and what obstacles they face in putting those teachings into practice. Our focus will be not on specific social customs but on gaining a broad understanding of the status and self-understanding of women in societies that identify as Buddhist. The objective is not to frame a definitive picture, an impossible task, but to pique readers' interest in Buddhist women and raise questions for further reading and research. The study of women in Buddhist cultures provides not only a window on the religious lives of women but also a vantage point from which to learn more about Buddhist philosophy, psychology, culture, and society. Despite the variety and complexity of the Buddhist traditions, we can learn a great deal about them through the lives of women.

History in the Mirror

We can begin with the hypothesis that the teachings of the Buddha ("the awakened one"; ca. 563–483 BCE) offered women a new outlook on life and greater independence in charting the course of their lives. The brãhmana social class in India was the most prestigious of the four primary social classes of that time. Although brãhmanas1 were not necessarily priests, many brãhmana men were priests, and they were the scholars and teachers of the Vedic scriptures composed in Sanskrit and conveyed orally for thousands of years. The worldview conveyed by the brãhmanas that was prevalent alongside Buddhism during the first millennium of its development on the Indian subcontinent included the ãšramas, the four stages of an ideal life for a male (student, householder, retiree, and renunciant, that is, one who renounces household life to pursue the spiritual path). The brãhmana worldview included four aims of life (purusãrthas) for a male belonging to the first three varnas, or social classes: sensual pleasure in marriage, prosperity, moral values, and liberation.

The Buddhist traditions trace their roots to Buddha 8ãkyamuni, who was born Siddhãrtha Gautama sometime during the fifth or sixth century BCE in a park known as Lumbini, just north of what is today the border between Nepal and India. According to the traditional narrative, when he was just seven days old, his mother Mahãmãyã passed away and he was nursed and nurtured by her sister, Mahãprajãpatï, who proved to be an extremely kind foster mother. As a scion of the 8ãkya clan and the designated heir of his father's principality, Siddhãrtha grew up in relative luxury, enjoying all the pleasures of palace life, including innumerable courtesans. When he was sixteen years old, he married a beautiful cousin named Yašodharã, who was also sixteen. After many years, she gave birth to a son, Rãhula.

Around that time, Siddhãrtha's prodigious curiosity led him to venture beyond the palace walls, where he discovered sickness, old age, death, and a calm, introspective renunciant. Because of his sheltered upbringing, he had not been exposed to the ancient Indian tradition of šrãmanas, seekers who renounce householder life in order to engage in contemplative practices and pursue spiritual goals. After the shock of encountering suffering for the first time, he was deeply impressed by the serene countenance of this homeless wanderer. These experiences led the young prince to abandon his luxurious life, his wife, and his newborn son Rãhula in favor of the spiritual path. He spent six years learning different philosophical perspectives and engaging in strenuous religious practices, including extreme fasting and other arduous feats, but he remained unconvinced and unfulfilled, so he sat down to meditate under a tree and resolved not to arise until he had discovered the true meaning of life. After six days of intensive meditation, he awakened to the true nature of things "as they are": the problematic nature of human existence, the root causes of suffering, the possibility of ending suffering, and the way to achieve that goal. Gods, humans, and the earth itself acknowledged his discoveries. The Buddha (the Awakened One) spent the remaining forty- five years of his life sharing these discoveries with audiences all over northern India. It is believed by Buddhists that Buddha 8ãkyamuni, who lived during the present historical era, was not the only person to become awakened; there have been countless buddhas in previous eras, and there are many yet to come.

Buddha Sãkyamuni ("sage of the Sãkya clan") taught a path to liberation from suffering and dissatisfaction that was open to all who wished to purify the defilements of their minds. His followers included women and men of all ages, social classes, and backgrounds. Although the Buddha probably did not intend to be a social activist, the path of wisdom and compassion that he taught was quite revolutionary at the time. In place of the worship of gods and performance of rituals, which were restricted to male religious specialists of the brãhmana class, he taught an ethical interpretation of the law of cause and effect and an empirical method of self- discovery that could be practiced by everyone. The Buddha verified the prevailing belief in rebirth and the causal connection between actions and their consequences during meditation under the bodhi tree just prior to his awakening. He began to share his insights on the urging of divine beings and spent forty-five years teaching throughout northern India. He taught that mental defilements such as desire, hatred, ignorance, pride, and jealousy are the causes of repeated rebirth within the cycle of existence (samsãra). Rebirth inevitably entails suffering and dissatisfaction, and the only way to become free of suffering is to achieve freedom from rebirth. After gaining insight into these teachings and the contemplative practices that facilitate understanding, his disciples were sent out far and wide "in the four directions" to spread his teachings, and thousands of men and women achieved the state of freedom from suffering and dissatisfaction. They became known as arhats, beings who are free from mental defilements and hence liberated from suffering and the bondage of rebirth in the wheel of birth and death.

Based on the insights he gained during meditation, the Buddha explained that sentient beings take different forms in samsãra, the wheel of repeated becoming, and there is nothing indelible, intrinsic, or enduring about these identities. Accordingly, a person may be born in a different body— male or female— in different circumstances from lifetime to lifetime. The circumstances of being reborn in a female body were thought to be more difficult and so a male rebirth was thought to be preferable. Female bodies were considered more difficult because, for example, women experience the sufferings of menstruation, childbirth, and menopause. Women are vulnerable to sexual harassment and rape and, at the time of the Buddha, were thought to require protection. At marriage, a woman had to leave her natal home and go to live with her husband's family, so daughters were often considered a liability— another mouth to feed until their marriage, which often required a large dowry.

In the patriarchal social milieu that prevailed in northern India at that time, women faced many limitations and difficulties. Aristocratic women such as the Buddha's stepmother Mahãprajãpatï and wife Yašodharã were subject to many restrictions, as were women of other social classes. In this context, the Buddha's declaration that women and men alike were capable of liberating themselves from suffering and from the cycle of rebirth was revolutionary. On a practical level, his decision to allow women to enter the monastic community (Pãli: sa^gha; Sanskrit: sa^gha) offered women an alternative to domestic life and the socially prescribed roles of wife and mother. The verses of some of the earliest Buddhist nuns, recorded in the Therïgãthã, are testimony to the spiritual achievements and freedom these awakened women experienced.

From India, the teachings of the Buddha spread in many directions and, at various points in history, became the dominant worldview in many parts of Asia. The main branches of Buddhism that developed were Theravãda and Mahãyãna. The Theravãda branch prevailed primarily in South and Southeast Asia, while the Mahãyãna became dominant in North and East Asia. Social customs and family practices vary widely in Buddhist societies, influenced by earlier cultures. Tracing the links and divergences among Buddhist beliefs, social practices, and religious institutions will be key to our understanding of attitudes toward women.

Buddhist Principles, Social Practices

In the social views disseminated by the brãhmanas, a woman was expected to marry and follow the dictates of her husband— indeed, she was taught to view her husband as god (pati means "god" and also "husband") and be totally devoted to him. By contrast, a Buddhist woman could decide, if she wished, to leave the household life and become a nun. If women from Buddhist families preferred to marry, they generally had more freedom than most to select their own partners. The Buddha gave advice about how to live a happy married life, but there are no religious laws that pertain to marriage in Buddhism. Marriage is a civil contract, in which religion plays little role. Monks or nuns may be invited to recite prayers or impart blessings, but marriage alliances are not sacred or sanctified by any higher power. There are no religious strictures against premarital sex or widow remarriage. Buddhists are encouraged to live by five lay precepts, which include abstaining from sexual misconduct, but these are personal choices, not divinely sanctioned obligations. The closest thing to a Buddhist legal code is the vinaya, a collection of texts that explain the precepts for monastics.

Customs regarding marriage, divorce, and property rights are culture specific. In Buddhist cultures, religious authorities generally prefer to leave family matters to the discretion of those concerned, giving counsel according to the Buddha's teachings when it is sought, and avoiding what are deemed "affairs of this world." In most Buddhist societies, clerics are celibate monks and nuns. Although they may have been previously married (like Buddha Šãkyamuni himself), celibate monastics are not expected or encouraged to take part in worldly matters. They are to abide by Buddhist values including generosity, ethical conduct, patience, mindfulness, wisdom, and loving- kindness. Religious values and the exemplary conduct of well- restrained monks and nuns undoubtedly influence Buddhist decision- making and interpersonal relationships, but monastic institutions have no jurisdiction over the lives of laypeople and no influence or particular interest in marriage practices, except to impart blessings and wish everyone peace and happiness.

In the Buddhist view, violence against any sentient being, including animals, is never religiously sanctioned. Although some Buddhists may condone violence in a life- or- death situation, the first precept is to abstain from taking life and is widely interpreted to mean refraining from harming any sentient being. In the family, especially, because it is the environment for the nurturing of children, violence in any form is discouraged. Instead, the Buddha taught his followers to live with loving-kindness and compassion for all in thought, word, and deed. Meditations on loving-kindness focus

especially on loved ones and then extend to all living beings. Although teaching nonharm as a moral principle does not ensure that all Buddhist families are havens of domestic peace and harmony, Buddhists value nonviolence and generally try their best to live up to this ideal.

Buddhist thought and social custom are often interwoven and influenced by beliefs and practices that predate the introduction of Buddhism. Gender hierarchies that privilege men over women, especially in politics and religion, are evident in all Buddhist societies. Although according to the Buddhist understanding of karma, the natural law of cause and effect, social and economic inequalities may be the result of a person's actions in the past, injustices cannot be justified by Buddhist teachings. The Buddha admitted seekers from all social and economic backgrounds into his community; in fact, the original Buddhist monastic community may be the earliest documented example of democratic governance. Still, socially embedded customs tend to give priority to males. These customs may reflect local practices or early Indian values, but the privileged place of males in Buddhist families, organizations, and societies may also be influenced by the privileged place of monks in Buddhist monastic institutions. In Buddhist societies even today, boys are more likely to get their parents' blessing and encouragement to enter a monastery. Boys are encouraged to become monks, in part to create merit (good karma) for their parents, but it is rare for girls to receive similar encouragement to become nuns. Until recently at least, the higher status of monks over nuns has contributed to a general preference for boys over girls. As a result, monks have traditionally far outnumbered nuns in Buddhist societies.

Relationships between monks and nuns are prescribed in the monastic codes, influenced especially by the "eight weighty rules" (Pãli: garudhamma; Sanskrit: gurudharma) in the vinaya that assign monks a superior status in the monastic ordering. Although the rules for monastics do not apply to laypeople, this gender differential in the monastic community seems to have been influenced by gendered social norms and to have perpetuated certain gender-specific social practices, preconceptions, and expectations that give priority to men over women.

For example, at the time of the Buddha, monks outnumbered nuns, so the teachings that have been preserved are often directed to monks. As a first step in overcoming self- grasping, the Buddha advised his followers to visit graveyards and cremation grounds and to meditate on the nature of the human body. Through meditation, he taught, one can see things "as they are" and thus cut through ignorance and delusion. By understanding that all human beings are equally subject to death and decay, one can see through the illusion of a separate, independently existent self. By understanding the true impermanent nature of things, one can see that although human bodies may appear attractive on the outside, inside they are full of many disgusting substances. Insight into the true nature of the body thus helps to free one from sensual attachment and the disappointments that arise from that attachment. Because the Buddha was addressing an audience of celibate monks, he used the unpleasant qualities of the female body as an example. The Buddha presumably used the "foul" nature of the female body as an example to help his audience of celibate monks cut through desire and maintain their commitment to renunciation, but the teaching may have perpetuated preconceptions about the impurity of women in patriarchal culture. If the Buddha had been addressing an audience of celibate nuns, he would presumably have used the unpleasant qualities of the male body as an example. Unfortunately, out of context, the references to the disgusting nature of the female body have been interpreted to imply that the male body is somehow superior to the female body.

Such scriptural passages contributed to the impression that a male rebirth is preferable to a female rebirth. In Buddhist societies, one frequently hears that "being born as a woman is the result of bad karma," even though there is no evidence that the Buddha said such a thing. How do these teachings

on the impure nature of the human body affect women, who are frequently associated with the body due to their unique reproductive capability?

The Buddhist scriptures include many positive representations of women, for example, extolling the love of mothers for their children, but the texts are inconsistent. One narrative describes the Buddha as being reluctant to admit women to his new mendicant community and portrays him as admitting Mahãprajãpatï only after she agrees to accept the eight weighty rules that subordinate nuns to monks. In this narrative, the Buddha is shown as predicting the decline and disintegration of his teachings, the Dharma, within five hundred years as a result of admitting women to the sangha, the monastic order. These narratives reflect the patriarchal gender relationships and expectations that existed in Indian society at the time. Despite the liberating nature of the Buddha's teachings and the practical alternative of monastic life for women, these stories have helped to reinforce patriarchal norms in Buddhist societies. Gradually, literary references to nuns' active, public participation in Buddhist activities became less frequent; the contributions of monks became the central focus, and often women are absent from Buddhist narratives altogether. This declining visibility of women in the scriptures seems to be linked with the socially and scripturally sanctioned subordination of women. Reinforced by unequal educational opportunities, gender inequalities in the sangha seem to mirror ambivalent attitudes toward women in society in general. As a consequence, in the Buddhist texts there are both powerful images of highly realized women and also passages that tend to diminish and disparage them.

The story of women in Buddhist traditions is multifaceted, varying over many centuries and a huge geographical expanse. The interrelationships among the Buddhist traditions are also complex and fluid, transfigured with the spread of Buddhism to other Asian countries and now all over the world. In these pages, we will identify commonalities in the experiences of Buddhist women, keeping in mind that the histories and cultural developments of the Buddhist traditions make each one unique. In the coming years, as scholars uncover more materials about these traditions and women's roles within them, we will certainly need to revise our thinking beyond this introductory survey. For now, we will trace Buddhist women's history in its early stages in India, and then expand to later periods of historical development in selected Asian and non- Asian contexts. This history will include stories of Buddhist women who live celibate lives as nuns, women who live family lives as wives and mothers, and women practitioners who do not fit neatly into either of these categories. The stories of Buddhist renunciant women will include those who observe the more than three hundred precepts of a fully ordained nun (Sanskrit: bhikhunï; Pãli: bhikkhunï), as well as nuns who observe various enumerations of five, eight, nine, or ten Buddhist precepts. We will discuss whether and how these distinctions affect women's spiritual practice, education, social acceptance, and the economic support they receive from the lay community. We will mark the significant characters and turning points in Buddhist women's history, including recent developments that parallel the globalization of Buddhism.

The Buddha taught a path to the goal of awakening, attained by abandoning all mental defilements or destructive emotions. Awakening is therefore a quality of consciousness or awareness, and consciousness has no sexual markers or gender. In the course of re- becoming, over many lifetimes, sentient beings take different forms and different sexes. Lacking any intrinsic essence, beings also lack any intrinsic gender. The celibate ideal, which is perceived to be the ideal lifestyle for abandoning desire, is also ultimately devoid of any intrinsic gender identity. The celibate, renunciant state as well as the liberated state can therefore be conceived as beyond gender distinctions. Yet gender distinctions remain on the conventional level, retained in rituals, personal perceptions, everyday interactions, and practical matters in daily life. In Buddhist monasteries, monks and nuns are typically segregated. Celibate monastics are not free from gender identities or from gender discrimination.

It is common to hear apologists say that there is no gender discrimination in Buddhism and that awakening is beyond the distinctions of male and female. Claims of gender equality are contradicted, however, by numerous examples of inequality in the perceptions and treatment of women. Pollution taboos that prohibit women from entering religious sites while menstruating are still found in some Buddhist societies even today, for example, in Bhutan, Burma, Ladakh, and Thailand.

Gender distinctions may also be conceived in a positive light. For example, today the choice to identify with a specific gender or elsewhere on the gender spectrum—non-binary, non-gender conforming, or no gender at all—is considered by many to be a human right. Although the notion of erasing or going beyond gender identity may be held forth as a means of eliminating gender discrimination, erasing gender distinctions altogether is a contested ideal, especially for those who have struggled with gender identity and finally embraced a preferred gender.

In the modern era, with greater sexual freedom, some also challenge the traditional assumption that celibacy (brahmacarya, "the pure life") is the ideal lifestyle for achieving liberation.

When Buddha Šãkyamuni presented his teachings on liberation from suffering, he taught a path of mental purification and transformation of consciousness that was equally accessible to women and men, both lay and monastics. Yet throughout much of Buddhist history, the experiences of women have most often been confined to prescribed familial and monastic institutions, and women's own ideas, preferences, and contributions have often been dismissed, repressed, or overlooked. Today, many Buddhist scholars are drawing attention to the scriptures and legends that helped to shape attitudes toward women and are rethinking the complex interactions of religion, culture, and society that affect Buddhist women's lives and choices. Especially in recent decades, with a growth of interest in Buddhist and feminist ideas internationally, new questions are being raised about the status of women in Buddhist societies and also about the assumptions that underlie contemporary narratives about them. These studies illuminate the diverse spiritual paths that women have taken in this major wisdom tradition.

The Buddha taught that all beings have the potential to purify their minds and become free from mental defilements, suffering, and rebirth. As the various Buddhist traditions developed, a woman could aspire to the highest goal envisioned by her tradition, whether to become an arhat (a liberated being), a bodhisattva (a being on the path to perfect awakening), or even a fully awakened Buddha. Even if the path was described as arduous, especially in a female body, a woman could achieve the highest goal her tradition had to offer, in theory at least. In the tradition known today as Theravãda ("path of the elders"), prevalent in South and Southeast Asia, the goal is to become an arhat, one who is liberated from cyclic existence. In the tradition known as Mahãyãna ("great vehicle"), prevalent in North and East Asia, the goal is to advance on the bodhisattva path to become a fully awakened buddha. Many statements denying that a woman can become a buddha appear in both Theravãda and Mahãyãna texts, but the existence of numerous female arhats during the time of the Buddha is ample evidence that women were able to achieve that specific goal. In the Mahãyãna tradition, it is believed that all sentient beings not only are capable of becoming buddhas but also will eventually become buddhas. It follows that women have the potential to become fully awakened buddhas. However, according to the Sütrayãna branch of the Mahãyãna tradition, although it is possible for a woman to practice on the bodhisattva path and stages in a female body and eventually become a buddha, in her final lifetime she must appear in a male body, like Buddha Šãkyamuni. In the Vajrayãna branch of the Mahãyãna tradition, which teaches practices of visualizing oneself in the form of a fully awakened being, it is said that a woman can become a buddha in female form. The classic example is Tãrã, an exceptional woman who generated a strong determination to achieve full awakening in female form for the benefit of sentient beings, and successfully did so.

Only the Mahïšãsaka, an early Buddhist school of thought, in which phenomena are regarded as existing only in the present moment, taught that a woman cannot become a fully awakened buddha, but this school died out in India long ago.

In actuality, many women in Buddhist cultures do not aspire for these lofty attainments. Instead, they tend to pursue devotional practices quietly and to support the spiritual endeavors of men, who dominate the social and religious hierarchies. Nevertheless, throughout history there have been extraordinary women practitioners who challenged social norms and emerged from the silence, giving testimony to their courage and exemplifying Buddhism's liberative promise. Through the power of these stories, beginning with accounts of the first female arhats in ancient India, Buddhist women have glimpsed their own potential and gained inspiration to persevere on the path to awakening. In contemporary Buddhist feminist circles, these accounts, both in history and legend, are being highlighted as models for women's realization (direct insight into the Buddha's teachings) and spiritual liberation.

Buddhist texts and communities convey divergent representations of women. The presentation of women as the seducers and corrupters of men is epitomized in the story of the Buddha's temptation by the voluptuous "daughters of Mãra" the night before his enlightenment.

Some of the less favorable portrayals and attitudes toward women may be traced to the pervasive patriarchal bias that characterized ancient Indian society during the early centuries of Buddhism's development, but these attitudes may also be traced to the Buddha's alleged reluctance to admit women to the sangha, the eight weighty rules that he reportedly imposed upon Mahãprajãpatï, and predictions of resultant decline. The eight rules, which legislate monks' authority over nuns, may have contributed to persistent gender bias in Buddhist religious structures that have given priority to monks and ensured the continuity of the bhikkhu sangha (community of monks) but not the bhikkhunï sangha (community of nuns) in Theravãda Buddhism. Even if women in Buddhist societies are aware that female arhats existed in Buddhist history, they may easily become discouraged by the meager support contemporary nuns receive toward their requisites: meals, robes, medicines, and dwellings. They may also become discouraged by the lack of validation and encouragement for women, especially those who opt out of the culturally preferred roles for women as wives and mothers.

Gender discrimination in Buddhism is not a phenomenon that applies only to some bygone era. Even today, Buddhist women in many countries, including Western countries, may encounter ingrained prejudices and assumptions about women's nature and capabilities, perpetuated by women and men alike. These prejudices and assumptions become clear if, for example, a woman decides to remain single, to not give birth to children, or to become a nun. Learning more about the variety of roles women have played in Buddhist traditions illuminates the ways in which women in diverse cultures have navigated the expectations of society, by either accepting, ignoring, or transforming them.

Revolutionizing the Future

In a global community that is strongly influenced by democratic ideals of justice and equality, gender discrimination is generally no longer seen as justifiable and is associated with many social problems, including domestic violence, sex trafficking, and the neglect of girls' health and education. In the eyes of much of the world, archaic religious structures that put women at a disadvantage— materially, psychology, socially, and spiritually— run counter to a new global ethic of gender equity and seem sadly out of step with the times. Assumptions about women's supposed karmic inferiority and the reality of their often invisible roles in Buddhist institutions— patterns that have been taken for granted for centuries— are now coming under scrutiny both in Buddhist societies and internationally. Discriminatory attitudes and patriarchal structures not only appear contradictory to

the liberating teachings of the Buddha but also may cause people to question the value of pursuing Buddhist practice in today's world, especially beyond Asia.

A dramatic increase in interest in the topic of women in Buddhism has generated a wave of new scholarship. Some studies focus on women in specific cultures or at different stages in Buddhist historical development, while others are literary analyses of the conflicting portrayals of women, as a category, that are found in Buddhist texts. As yet, however, there has been no updated introduction to women in Buddhism that offers an adequate treatment of the topic overall.

Tracing the path of Buddhism's historical and cultural development, this book begins with a discussion of Buddhist women in the early Indian context— the Buddha's mother, stepmother, wife, and earliest female disciples. It then moves to the lives, challenges, and achievements of women in other cultural contexts and periods of Buddhist history, up to the present day. In recounting the struggles and attainments of a range of realized and ordinary women, we will explore several salient themes, including the ways in which Buddhist teachings have been spiritually liberating for women, and also the ways in which certain teachings have been used to reinforce women's subordination within patriarchal social structures and Buddhist institutions. Using selected examples from a variety of Buddhist cultures, we will investigate women's unique roles within specific Buddhist societies and trace common threads among them. A transformation of Buddhist attitudes is currently taking place to envisage what social, religious, psychological, and ideological changes are needed to revolutionize Buddhist societies and institutions create a truly egalitarian society.

Buddhist teachings and traditions are increasingly transnational, and many antiquated attitudes are up for review. One major issue is the seeming contradiction between the internally egalitarian organizational structures modeled by the early bhikkhu and bhikkhunï sanghas and the hierarchical structures of many Buddhist institutions today. Buddhist texts and teachings provide solutions to many forms of suffering, but they do not explicitly address the structural inequalities that underlie many forms of suffering and injustice. The ultimate goal of Buddhist practice— the achievement of liberation— is said to be beyond gender, but on a practical level gender matters very much. Without conducive circumstances for Buddhist learning and practice, the goal of liberation is merely a dream for many women. Liberation as a theoretical ideal needs to be aligned with conditions on the ground. In reality, women disproportionately experience the misfortunes of everyday life. Poor, illiterate, uneducated, and overworked, millions of women find little leisure time for Buddhist practice.

It is heartening that a revolutionary new vision of Buddhism includes a sincere concern for women and the benefits that awakened women can offer society. This new vision has spurred a vibrant transnational movement to work for Buddhist women, to allow access to all kinds of education and all levels of monastic ordination. Buddhist scholars, practitioners, and scholar/practitioners are engaged in efforts to understand the roots of gender inequities and to analyze critically the texts and unexamined assumptions that have perpetuated myths of women's inferiority. With new research methodologies and a broader knowledge base, scholars aspire to apply these tools to a thorough reinterpretation of texts and traditions, and to uncover more information about the contributions that women have made to Buddhist thought and practice. Transcending cultural differences, new modes of communication facilitate creative and mutually beneficial international exchanges. A Buddhist feminist movement that began in the 1980s stretches across cultural boundaries to investigate the gender- specific presuppositions and limitations that not only persist in Buddhist cultures but also confine many human minds. The Buddhist feminist imagination is both a natural historical development, spurred by the global women's movement, and an intensely personal journey for many Buddhist women, nurturing self-awareness and establishing solidarity with other women and male allies. Awakening, both as an attainment beyond gender, available to all, and as an

awareness born of women's experience, holds the promise of liberating and revolutionizing humanity. <>

TALES OF A MAD YOGI: THE LIFE AND WILD WISDOM OF DRUKPA KUNLEY by Elizabeth Monson [Snow Lion, 9781611807059]

A fascinating biography of Drukpa Kunley, a Tibetan Buddhist master and crazy yogi.

The fifteenth-century Himalayan saint Drukpa Kunley is a beloved figure throughout Tibet, Bhutan, and Nepal, known both for his profound mastery of Buddhist practice as well as his highly unconventional and often humorous behavior. Ever the proverbial trickster and "crazy wisdom" yogi, his outward appearance and conduct of carousing, philandering, and breaking social norms is understood to be a means to rouse ordinary people out of habitual ways of thinking and lead them toward spiritual awakening.

Elizabeth L. Monson has spent decades traveling throughout the Himalayas, retracing Drukpa Kunley's steps and translating his works. In this creative telling, direct translations of his teachings are woven into a life story based on historical accounts, autobiographical sketches, folktales, and first-hand ethnographic research. The result, with flourishes of magical encounters and references to his superhuman capacities, is a poignant narrative of Kunley's life, revealing to the reader the quintessential example of the capacity of Buddhism to skillfully bring people to liberation.

Review

"Truly enthralling."—*Publishers Weekly*

"**TALES OF A MAD YOGI** is a wonderfully successful experiment in nonfiction narrative. Rooted in translation, field research, and oral history, yet expressed through immersive storytelling and prose-poetry, the book does what few works of scholarship can achieve: transport the reader to vast places and intimate spaces where the magic of Drukpa Kunley becomes real. With art, craft, and devotion, Elizabeth Monson brings the tales and teachings of Bhutan's great Buddhist saint to life."—Kurtis Schaeffer, professor of Tibetan and Buddhist Studies at the University of Virginia

"Elizabeth Monson gives a most compelling narrative of the Tibetan 'mad yogi,' Drukpa Kunley, revered in Bhutan for piercing through the hypocrisy of society to bring out the essence of the Dharma. The author, herself an academic and Buddhist practitioner, weaves together elegant prose, spiritual insights, folktales, and biographical elements of one of the most fascinating yet elusive religious figure of Tibetan Buddhism."—Françoise Pommaret, senior researcher, CNRS France, and associate professor, CLCS, Royal University of Bhutan

"There are few Buddhist saints as lively and humorous as Drukpa Kunley. Drawing on early autobiographical sources as well as the oral tradition, Elizabeth Monson's stunning creative biography captures the irreverent and joyful spirit of Drukpa Kunley's own voice. Written by the West's foremost scholar on Drukpa Kunley, this book is destined to become a classic. Liz Monson's creative rendering of Drukpa Kunley's life borrows on a classic of autobiographical literature that is absolutely unique. Shrugging off the trappings of convention, Drukpa Kunley reminds us that the essence of the dharma is a life authentically lived."—Willa Blythe Baker, founder and spiritual

codirector of Natural Dharma Fellowship

"A literary gem—reimagining the elusive Drukpa Kunley, based on exacting research and blended with lucid translations. Elizabeth Monson gives narrative flesh to the bare biographical bones found in his collected writings. The 'mad saint' comes to life, ever the social critic but more human and profound than in the folktales previously available in English."—Holly Gayley, associate professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder

"Drukpa Kunley's outrageous deeds show us how the ways to teach the Dharma are beyond any conventional limitations. Many of his teachings are given in the form of songs where this great master humorously uncovers layers of subtle hypocrisy that may stain our practice. It is refreshing to have this new telling of his life story, based on his autobiography and folk accounts recorded by the author in Bhutan."—Gerardo Abboud, author of *The Royal Seal of Mahamudra: A Guidebook for the Realization of Coemergence*

CONTENTS

An account of the periods of my life story that is factual and correct—from my birth to my present activities, up to the feasts offered at my death in the future—would be an insignificant piece of writing indeed! Except for the dried-up words with which I exhort my disciples toward the Dharma whenever they question me and with which I communicate the main points for performing spiritual practice these days, there is little need to write about

> the absurdities of my life, the food I ate in the morning, and where I shit it out in the evening.

Who was the Dharma Lord, Drukpa Kunley? He's been called many things: madman, crazy wisdom master, yogi, erudite scholar, wandering mendicant, scathing social and religious critic, lonely child, enlightened master, drunkard, adulterer, reincarnation of Saraha, great mahasiddha, and the list goes on. With so many manifestations, the question arises: Was Drukpa Kunley a real human being, with real challenges and sufferings, joys and achievements? Or is this legendary figure more mythic than human, more imaginary than historical, his name a label for a particular way of being in the world?

Drukpa Kunley's legacy has profoundly influenced ideas about how true realization can manifest in a religious world where selfishness, materialism, and hypocrisy often undermine the genuine transmission and practice of the Dharma. What does this manifestation of true realization look like? When we examine the speech and actions of Drukpa Kunley, we discover a complex nexus of interpenetrating and sometimes contradictory, but always fascinating, ideas of what realization might look like.

In Bhutan, where Drukpa Kunley's legacy flourishes, modern folk tales depict a bawdy, promiscuous, irreverent jokester—a philandering yogic madman who used any and all opportunities to engage in lewd or lascivious actions to shock ordinary people out of their habitual ways of viewing reality. This Drukpa Kunley had no qualms about breaking social mores or challenging the ethical and moral values by which people orient themselves both individually and collectively. He delighted in teaching average folks, while poking fun at those who call themselves Dharma practitioners. He elicits laughter and enjoyment as vociferously now as he did six centuries ago. He was the crazed yogic madman who slept with his own mother, separated women from their husbands, and drank himself unconscious, but who is also revered as a second Guru Rinpoche, pacifying and taming the wild demonic spirits that haunt the Himalayan mountain jungles of Bhutan. That he accomplished this primarily with his throbbing "thunderbolt of wisdom" continues to charm and amuse whoever hears of his exploits.

Today, in Bhutan, visitors can purchase replicas of his thunderbolt of wisdom from local gift shops, and many flock to Drukpa Kunley's temple, the Chime Lhakhang in the central valley of Punakha, to be blessed by the huge phallus said to have been carved by the saint, as well as by a replica of the bow and arrows he used for hunting. To this day, women who are unable to conceive travel from around the globe to this same temple to supplicate for the lama's blessing and to sleep on the ground in the hopes that their prayers for conception will be answered. And they are. Over and over again, reports of the efficacy of Drukpa Kunley's blessings emerge that enhance his reputation.

Lest we become too comfortable with this view of a dancing, drunken madman, Drukpa Kunley's own writings from the fifteenth century pull the rug out from underneath us. In the only known collection of his written works referred to above, the four-volume mix of both biographical and autobiographical writings, we encounter a different kind of madman. One whose weapons of pacification and education include his sharp tongue, his keen wit, and his penetrating critiques of religious hypocrisy. If this manifestation of Drukpa Kunley is considered crazy, it is due to his unrelenting drive to unveil the insidious deceptions that those who claim to model a religious life use to fool both themselves and others. He is crazy, too, in turning this keen gaze onto himself, exposing his own faults, tricks, and surreptitious efforts to broadcast a particular image of himself—a madness of humility and truth-telling.

To try to nail down all the characteristics of the yogi depicted in these volumes, the yogi who dances nimbly through a field of literary genres, is as difficult as Drukpa Kunley himself states in the passage

that opens the preface to this book. The Liberation Tales confronts the reader with a bewildering array of disparate compositions—from spontaneous songs of realization to stories, didactic tirades, mocking imitations, parodies, dream narratives, visions, and powerfully emotional responses to the impermanence and suffering experienced by all beings across time and space. While it is impossible to determine a single rationale for these writings, uncovering what it means to be a genuine human being traveling the path of the Dharma—both externally in terms of engagement in the mundane world and internally in terms of personal growth and realization—is a central theme. The madman who emerges from these pages is by turns compassionate, honest to a painful degree, spontaneous, fun-loving, sorrowful, romantic, practical, and mystical.

The Phenomenon of the Yogic Madman

To understand how and why Drukpa Kunley lived as he did, we can consider the emergence of a development in the fifteenth century coined by E. Gene Smith as the "nyonpa phenomenon."' While the tradition of saintly madmen is quite old in Tibet, Smith explores it as an emerging phenomenon in an age of impassioned doctrinal and religious reform.' The term nyonpa translates as "mad," "crazy," or "insane." Three main representatives of the nyonpa tradition in Tibet lived during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: Tsang Nyon Heruka (1455-1529); Drukpa Kunley (1455-1529); and U Nyon (1458-1532). These three lived and traveled in roughly the same places in south-central Tibet in the same time period. Mad yogis are found in many Tibetan Buddhist traditions but most are associated with traditions focused on meditation rather than on scholastic studies. The famous mad yogis mentioned above belonged to or had affiliations with the Nyingma and Kagyu schools and with the Drukpa Kagyu lineage in particular.

Tibetan Buddhism understands different forms of "madness," and the one most relevant to Drukpa Kunley's story presumes a religious model that assigns saintliness to reversing normative or prescriptive behavior as a way to exhibit spiritual powers and the attainment of liberation. In this form of liberated madness, what appears to be mad is in fact the "highest state of spiritual achievement." The present Dalai Lama describes this madness as follows: "When a person gains experience of emptiness, the ultimate mode of existence of all phenomena, his perception is as different from that of ordinary people as a madman's...." Such a "practitioner completely transcends the conventional way of viewing the world."' If we apply this definition, the term nyonpa refers to individuals whose spiritual and contemplative power is visibly transcendent and whose goals are pure, with the result that they are considered beyond dualistic notions of good and bad, permitted and prohibited. Such individuals are often (but not always) solitary yogis who follow a peripatetic lifestyle rather than living as ordained monastics, although they might have been such at one time in their earlier careers.

Yogic madmen and madwomen set themselves apart from other practitioners in the realm of behavior. Through their ongoing violation of commonsense rules and ethical and societal norms, wandering crazy yogis might dress oddly, decline to live in any sort of fixed dwelling, assert their ability to perform "miracles" and cure illnesses, and engage in eccentric and even antinomian behavior. As a result, these crazy yogis were highly visible from among the varieties of religious practitioners who populated the Tibetan landscape.

An important practice for mad yogis was that of "reversal."' In this practice, the yogi takes up various antinomian meditative techniques designed to bring about an experience of the reversal of the processes of birth, death, and becoming that arise due to ignorance of our true nature. Such practices gradually release the practitioner from the cycle of samsara. Through practicing reversal, practitioners recognize their original, unborn nature and learn how to stabilize that realization.' Additionally, a mad yogi might behave in impure or otherwise ritually proscribed ways. By acting

contrary to social norms, they transcend conceptual distinctions such as good and bad, right and wrong, in order to experience everything as "one taste.'

In The Liberation Tales, Drukpa Kunley is represented as being aware of these practices and their pitfalls. He comments on these, criticizing those who, without having realized their ultimate nature, engage in such practices to show off yogic powers and impress people:

If they do not join all activities with the four times for practice, who are those who call themselves crazy madmen? If even those who have mastered one-pointed concentration do not know that the true view is beyond imputation, what use can this be?

> Hence, rather than depicting a Drukpa Kunley who engages directly in such practices, these writings instead reflect a keen observer, who positions himself a step removed—an observer who can ascertain the difference between those who display genuine "crazy wisdom" and those who only pretend, hoping to fool the world around them.

Another possible reason for the birth of the mad yogi phenomenon explored by Smith was that it arose as a protest against the increasing systematization and emphasis on scholasticism of Tibetan Buddhist schools in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as quintessentially modeled by the Gelukpa tradition that was quickly gaining influence. From this perspective, crazy yogis represented the opposite of scholastic monks. They were a voice for reform—an attempt to return the Kagyu and Nyingma traditions to original tantric practices and views that were vanishing as powerful monastic institutions were established. These vanishing practices included oral transmission, individual solitary contemplation, and the deep spiritual bond formed between guru and disciple. In this view, the crazy yogi movement functioned as a means by which to reinvest the Kagyu tradition with some of its former religious fervor, to "rekindle the incandescent spirituality of the early yogis.' The chief symbolic figure for this movement was the great yogi, Milarepa (ca. 1052.—ca.1135).

Some characteristics of mad yogis include creating an outrageous public image as a front or disguise in order to act outside of commonly accepted moral boundaries. Some of these actions include stripping naked, drunken babbling, imbibing copious amounts of alcohol, and displaying outrageous and socially challenging behaviors, such as smearing oneself with feces or openly communicating with supernatural beings!' While Drukpa Kunley is indelibly associated with this image of the antinomian yogic madman in oral tales, in his own writings there is less evidence that he acted in these ways. However, both the outrageous figure of Drukpa Kunley so popular in contemporary Bhutan and the less overtly flamboyant figure to be found in The Liberation Tales embrace the idea that the realization of truth does not occur from scholastic study, moral rules, or even from a personal teacher, but that it arises from a direct experience of phenomena, particularly the natural world, just as they are.

The characterization of Drukpa Kunley as someone who experiences the entire world as his guru can be seen in the following quote from his autobiography: "Who or whatever appears becomes my fundamental guru."

Once one recognizes the nature of all phenomena, including the self, as empty luminosity?' everything that appears reminds the practitioner of that realization. The attainment of this view may result in taking up the activities of a mad yogi, whether such activities manifest overtly—as in wandering around naked or shouting obscenities—or less obviously—as in the willingness to expose the truth of one's own and others' hypocrisies—as we see in Drukpa Kunley's writings.

It is possible there existed a trope of yogic madness that Drukpa Kunley is represented as having a particular relationship with. From the point of view of his own self-identification in his writings as a nyonpa to the attribution of this label to him by his disciples and descendants over time and space,

the fact that this relationship is complicated cannot be denied. While certain aspects of his character appear to be nominally in line with some of the qualities associated with crazy yogis, in other significant ways Drukpa Kunley's self-representations in his writings either do not line up with or reconfigure them. Given the plethora of critical comments regarding unexamined "crazy" yogic behavior in his writings, there is no clear answer to this question. Perhaps the narrator effectively creates a new norm, an anti-norm, but at a higher level of abstraction, which dismisses all representations of the religious person as deluded except for those persons who have willingly exposed the truth of their own hypocrisies.

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Narrative Strategies and an Ethic of Joy

Finally, a discussion of the narrative strategies used in The Liberation Tales can shed some further light on Drukpa Kunley himself. Although, for the purposes of sharing the life story of this saint, this current book does create a cohesive narrative arc to Drukpa Kunley's life story, if we look closely at his rationale in The Liberation Tales for writing an autobiography or a biography, we see that for the narrator, the illusion of a cohesive self, created through narrative, is a subtle form of self-deception. This is because a cohesive narrative precludes the possibility of including aspects of a person's experience that may contradict or change the master narrative. Cohesive narratives allow for the illusion that real continuity exists between one moment of experience and another, directly contradicting laws of impermanence. Becoming attached to our ideas about ourselves and to a sense of a permanent "me" extended over time, human beings expend tremendous energy in sustaining such fictions. Attachment to our endless, deceptive story lines leads to further and further levels of misapprehension, suffering, and hypocrisy.

This issue has been explored in the academic field of literary studies. Whereas it was once taken for granted and expected in studies of autobiography that such texts were nonfiction literature in which real historical persons accurately and honestly represented the events, experiences, and vicissitudes of their lives, today it is more common to hear scholars discuss what happens when the unspoken "contract" for truth between autobiographers and readers is ruptured. In other words, what happens when authors of autobiographies purposefully thwart readers' expectations that they will relate the facts of their lives exactly as they took place as a way to show that factual representation is ultimately impossible? Does embellishing the details or reordering the events of a life to streamline them into a cohesive narrative violate the reader's expectation that presenting a factual account of a person's life is possible? And beyond this, might not the fictionalization of "real life" through embellishment, reorganization, and imagination also undermine how we understand the ethics of what it means to live an honest life, to be a good person? While these are questions that contemporary scholars of autobiography continue to grapple with, they are just as pertinent to the project of creating a cohesive narrative from the hints found in The Liberation Tales. We might say that The Liberation Tales implicitly anticipated these issues long before there was any idea of "modern" or "postmodern" literary criticism.

However, in spite of the possible fictions involved in creating a cohesive narrative, The Liberation Tales does value the use of a narrative arc as long as it functions to disrupt the mind's patterns of creating and then attempting to reify an ideal vision of oneself by instead revealing the truth of who we really are. In The Liberation Tales, instead of a cohesive narrative arc, the reader is confronted with a cacophony of diverse literary forms and tropes. Through this seemingly haphazard format, rather than reifying a solid sense of self, The Liberation Tales unravels and undermines the mind's subtle but powerful methods of self-construction and deception. This is in an attempt to liberate the reader into a more spontaneous, open, and joyful understanding of life.

The Liberation Tales illustrates this liberative process through narrative strategies that mimic the moment-to-moment nature of experience. The content of each composition in the autobiography reveals how every moment of experience presents the possibility of acting, responding, or being in harmony with a situation as it arises—the autobiography demonstrates the context-specific momentariness of experience. This is evident in the way many of the individual compositions in the autobiography are introduced by someone asking a specific question to the narrator. From one composition to the next, the content often shifts radically, demanding that Drukpa Kunley adjust his answers to respond appropriately to each new situation that presents itself. Not only the content of the individual compositions, but also the autobiography as a whole, embodies this expression of context-specific truth through its mixture of a variety of literary styles and subjects—through what I call its textual cacophony.

Generally, due to the persistent human habit of creating the story of "me"—a "me" we presume will be the exception to the constant change and dissolution that lies at the root of every experience—we are unable to relax into the momentariness of our experience. In light of this, Drukpa Kunley's literary goals seem to consist in instructing and retraining our minds to recognize how the habit of self-narration is no more than a conceptual overlay onto raw experience. He achieves this result linguistically, by using words, language, rhetorical devices, styles, moods, and genres. By allowing each individual bead of experience to remain distinct and by demonstrating this via different literary forms, he reveals how we fail to see these moments of impermanent experience for what they are when we force them to be part of a master narrative. By resisting the impulse to continue to create cohesive narratives, we can relax, as Drukpa Kunley does, into the richness and fullness of our experience. We begin to see how, in the act of normalizing, labeling, and forcing our experiences into conceptual frameworks, we lose the wonder, the delight, and the joy of things as they are.

This experience of wonder, this joy, this delight in things as they are is one of the main themes that accompanies most of Drukpa Kunley's literary expressions. This theme of joy is also evident in the oral stories of Drukpa Kunley and in their tellings. The attempt to represent experience directly, as it is, is shown to be inseparable from delight. As he attends to the momentariness of his experience, Drukpa Kunley delights in showing how we can avoid the trap of self-deception and represent ourselves honestly. Trusting in the "truth" of the immediate moment, he also trusts himself to represent that truth—the truth that who we are cannot be unified, cannot be reduced to a single identity, but is continuously reforged in every moment, every context, every situation, and every composition.

The Liberation Tales' use of multiple genres, including the mixing of genres within genres, such as didactic prose sections that contain spontaneous songs, lists of colloquial or popular sayings, stories, or commentaries in quotations from teachers or sutras, is psychologically astute in that it to keep the reader off balance. It makes fun of the human tendency to constantly seek out reliable reference points. As soon as one refer-point is established in the autobiography, it is withdrawn and another its place. Bombarded by one literary mode after another, the reader has no opportunity to become complacent or distracted. This cacophony of textual mediums in The Liberation Tales demands the reader's ongoing attention and response. It "challenges the reader to alternative forms of existence," suggesting novel alternatives to habitual thoughts and actions. Like the Buddha, Drukpa Kunley recognizes that people hear only what they have the capacity to hear: "Whether my example is harmful or not is determined primarily by the different types of human intelligence." Thus the same themes, the same messages, communicated through multiple ways, will inevitably permeate into the minds of the recipients, just as the 84,000 teachings of the Buddha were always intended to do.

Ultimately, it is not possible to find one, definitive ethical message communicated through Drukpa Kunley's life. Instead, we find a plethora of tellings, constructions, and refigurings that shift our

experience of the way things are. The truths displayed by Drukpa Kunley are always conditional, always relational, always reawoken into the present moment by the situations in which and to which the saint is summoned. Although in what follows, the reader will encounter a cohesive narrative arc (how else to tell a story?), it is worth bearing in mind that The Liberation Tales was not originally written in this way and to pay attention to the various mediums through which our protagonist expresses his teachings, thoughts, and feelings. <>

VAJRAYOGINÏ: HER VISUALIZATIONS, RITUALS, & FORMS: A STUDY OF THE CULT OF VAJRAYOGINÏ IN INDIA by Elizabeth English [Studies in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, Wisdom Publications, 9780861713295]

Vajrayogini is a tantric goddess from the highest class of Buddhist tantras who manifests the ultimate development of wisdom and compassion. Her practice is prevalent today among practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism. This ground-breaking book delves into the origins of Vajrayogini, charting her evolution in India and examining her roots in the Cakrasamvara tantra and in Indian tradition relating to siva.

The focus of this work is the *Guhyasamayasadhanamala*, a collection of forty-six *sadhanas*, or practice texts. Written on palm leaves in Sanskrit and preserved since the twelfth century, this diverse collection, composed by various authors, reveals a multitude of forms of the goddess, each of which is described and illustrated here. One of the sadhanas, the *Vajravarahi Sadhana* by Umapatideva, depicts Vajrayogini at the center of a mandala of thirty-seven different goddesses, and is here presented in full translation alongside a Sanskrit edition. Elizabeth English provides extensive explanation and annotation of this representative text. Sixteen pages of stunning color plates not only enhance the study but bring the goddess to life.

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My interest in the Buddhist tantras—and in sādhana meditation in particular—really began while I was in Oxford studying under Professor Alexis Sanderson. It was the inspiration of his research, as well as his personal encouragement, that led me one day to a Sanskrit manuscript in the Bodleian Library dating from the twelfth or thirteenth century, and preserved on palm leaves in a lovely, rounded ku^ila script. The text comprised a collection of some fifty sādhanas—meditation and ritual works—all of which were concerned with the practice of Vajrayoginī, a deity of the highest tantras. With Professor Sanderson's help, and the untiring support of Dr. Harunaga Isaacson, I set about the tasks of editing the texts and attempting to understand their contents. Without the knowledge of these two outstanding scholars, I could hardly have begun to fathom the complexity of the Buddhist tantric traditions, let alone begin my doctoral thesis. The thesis was completed in 1999 and was entitled Vajrayoginī: Her Visualisation, Rituals and Forms. This book is an adaptation of that thesis.

Taken as a whole, the texts in the manuscript form a so-called garland of sādhanas (sādhanamālā), which in this case includes praise verses and commentarial passages alongside the ritual and meditation manuals of the sādhanas themselves. This book focuses upon one Sanskrit sādhana from this unique collection, the Vajravārāhī Sādhana by Umāpatideva. At the same time, I hope to give a flavor of the breadth and richness of the other works in the Guhyasamayasādhanamālā. For while they all center upon Vajrayoginī as the generic deity, they describe many manifestations. Indeed, the collection contains over fifty iconographical descriptions, within which we can discern about twenty distinct forms of Vajrayoginī, some of whom —such as Vajravārāhī—are significant tantric deities in their own right. In fact, although the collection receives the late title Guhyasamayasādhanamālā (GSS), the Secret Pledge Sādhana Collection, a more suitable title might have been the *Vajrayoginīsādhanamālā, the Vajrayoginī Sādhana Collection. I have therefore attempted to draw from all its major works in the course of this study and, in the opening chapters, I survey the diverse forms and practices of Vajrayoginī in India, according to this collection. In this way, I hope the book will serve a double purpose: examining, from our textual evidence, the cult of Vajrayoginī in India prior to 1200 C.E., and shedding light on tantric sādhana meditation.

The decision to base the study upon a single sādhana from the Guhyasamayasādhanamālā was made for several reasons. While scholarly interest in the Indian Buddhist tantras has increased in recent

years, our knowledge of their vast array of texts remains in its infancy and will only improve as scholars produce critical editions of surviving texts along with informed study based upon them. The difficulty of drawing accurate conclusions from the texts currently available is due to the fact that the umbrella term "Buddhist tantra" actually covers a bewildering variety of methods, practices, and systems. These competed in India within a highly fertile and inventive environment over several centuries. Even contemporary accounts in the eleventh to twelfth centuries that describe a range of different systems, such as Abhayãkaragupta's encyclopedic Vajrãvalï or Jagaddarpa^a's derivative Kriyãsamuccaya, cannot be taken as conclusive evidence for practice on the ground, as those authors themselves struggled with the various currents of opinion without necessarily reaching their own conclusions. In addition, the meanings of many terms remain obscure and will only come to light when a far broader field of reference is available.

Given this complexity, and the need to clarify so many aspects of tantric practice, I chose to focus my study upon a single feature of the whole. Key pieces of the overall picture are therefore missing. I give only the briefest sketch of the initiations that were the necessary preliminary to sãdhana practice, and only a hazy description of the place of sãdhana in the tãntrika's overall scheme of spiritual practice. And there are many points where my conclusions are at best provisional. Within these limitations, I have attempted to highlight those practices that characterize the Indian traditions of Vajrayoginï. In so doing, I hope to reveal how our particular author adapted earlier sources and responded to his own scriptural heritage, absorbing new trends and reflecting different developments within the highest Buddhist tantras.

The sãdhana that I have edited, translated, and studied here is the Vajravãrãhï Sãdhana (GSS11) by Umãpatideva, an early-twelfth-century author from northeastern India. This work is a fruitful subject because of the length, clarity, and excellence of its composition. It was also desirable to choose a work from the Guhyasamayasãdhanamãlã collection that was as yet unpublished, because some primary sources dealing with Vajrayoginï and Vajravãrãhï are already available in recent editions, including some studies in European languages. For a long while, the main academic accounts of Vajravãrãhï and Vajrayoginï were the iconographical descriptions given by Benoytosh Bhattacharyya in The Indian Buddhist Iconography (1924) and by Marie Thérèse de Mallmann's Introduction à l'Iconographie du Tântrisme Bouddhique (1975), both of which contain some errors (e.g., n. 228). These works draw heavily on Bhattacharyya's edition of the Sãdhanamãlã (1925 and 1928), which contains fewer than a dozen complete Vajrayoginï/Vajravãrãhï sãdhanas, all of which also appear in the Guhyasamayasãdhanamãlã.1 More recent studies also focus on selections from the Sãdhanamãlã sãdhanas, such as the short study of Vajravãrãhï by Mallar Mitra (1999: 102–29), which is too brief to be fully comprehensive. A beautiful collection of sculptures of the deity from different phases of Tibetan art have been published by von Schroeder (1981, 2001); however some of his iconographical comments are also erroneous (e.g., n. 83). A few other Sanskrit editions of Vajrayoginï sãdhanas have been published, such as the short Vajravãrãhïsãdhana by Advayavajra (=GSS3) by both Louis Finot (1934) and Richard O. Meisezahl (1967), a Trikãyavajrayoginïsãdhana (^GSS25) by Max Nihom (1992), and a handful of sãdhanas from the Guhyasamayasãdhanamãlã in Dhï^ (namely, GSS5, GSS10, GSS26, GSS42, and GSS43), as shown in the appendix. Published editions of highest tantric texts also provide an important resource for a study of Vajrayoginï/Vajravãrãhï, especially those from the Cakrasa^vara tradition, such as the Yoginïsa^cãratantra with both its available Sankrit commentaries, edited by J. S. Pandey (1998), and some chapters of the Sa^varodayatantra (possibly a later Nepalese composition)2 edited and translated by Shin'ichi Tsuda (1974).

The paucity of publications for the Indic Vajrayoginï tradition is in stark contrast to the number of Sanskrit manuscripts that must once have existed. Bongo Butten no Kenkyü (BBK) catalogs just over a dozen Vajrayoginï texts not found in the Guhyasamayasãdhanamãlã, appearing within works such as the Yab skor (BBK: 261) and Yum skor (BBK: 273–77), commentaries on the Tattvajñãnasa^siddhi

(BBK: 279–80), the Jvālāvalīvajramālātantra (BBK: 493–94), as well as the later Nepalese Vajravārāhīkalpa in thirty-eight chapters (BBK: 261)—although many sādhana materials listed here are also found in our collection (details in the appendix). We can deduce the existence of yet more Indian Vajrayoginī sādhanas from the number of translations in the Tibetan canon that have no extant Sanskrit original. In an index to the Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur published in 1980, there are about forty-five sādhanas with Vajrayoginī or Vajravārāhī in the title, very few of which have (as yet) been correlated with a Sanskrit original by the compilers of the index. The popularity of the Vajrayoginī transmissions in Tibet is remarked upon in the Blue Annals (Roerich 1949–53: 390), which states, "The majority of tantric yogis in this Land of Snows were especially initiated and followed the exposition and meditative practice of the system known as [the Six Texts of Vajravārāhī] Phag-mo gZhung-drug" (p. 390). What is now known of her practice derives mainly from Tibetan Buddhism, in which Vajrayoginī (Rdo rje rnal 'byor ma) and Vajravārāhī (Rdo rje phag mo) are important deities.

Perhaps the main emphasis on forms of Vajrayoginī/Vajravārāhī (the names often seem to be used interchangeably) is found in the bKa' brgyud schools. This lineage is traced back to the siddha Tilopa (c. 928–1009), who had many visions of the deity, and who passed on oral transmissions to his pupil, Nāropa (c. 956–1040). Nāropa also had many visions of ^ākinī forms, the most famous of which is recounted in his life story, dated to the fifteenth and sixteenth century, in which Vajrayoginī appears to him as an ugly old hag who startles him into abandoning monastic scholasticism in favor of solitary tantric practice. However, this account does not appear in the earliest biographies (Peter Alan Roberts, personal communication: 2002).

The form of Vajrayoginī especially associated with Nāropa in Tibet is Nā ro mkha' spyod; "Nā ro [pa]'s tradition of the ^ākinī" or "Nāro's khecarī" (lit., "sky-goer"). This form is discussed below, as it is closest to that of Vajravārāhī described in the Indian sādhana translated here by Umāpatideva.

Several different practices of Vajravārāhī/Vajrayoginī were transmitted in the numerous traditions of the Tibetan bKa' brgyud school, through various teachers; for example, through the translator, Mar pa (Mar pa Chos kyi blo gros, 1012–97) into the Mar pa bKa' brgyud, and through Ras chung pa (Ras chung rDo rje grags pa, 1084–1161) into the several branches of the Ras chung sNyan rgyud, and yet another through Khyung po rnal 'byor, founder of the Shangs pa bKa' brgyud (eleventh–twelfth centuries) apparently from Niguma (sometimes said to be Nāropa's sister). This complex matrix of lineages continued in Tibet within the various bKa' brgyud traditions. In the Karma bKa' brgyud, the oral transmission was written down in the form of a sādhana by the third Karma pa, Rang byung rdo rje (b. 1284) (Trungpa 1982: 150). However, it is a sādhana by the sixth Karma pa (mThong ba don ldan, 1416–53) that serves as the basis for the main textual source in this school. This is the instruction text composed in the sixteenth century by dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba (1504–66).7 Vajravārāhī also appears in bKa' brgyud versions of the guruyoga, in which the devotee worships his guru (in one popular system, Mi la ras pa) while identifying himself as Vajravārāhī. Examples include the famous "four sessions" guruyoga (Thun bzhi'i bla ma'i rnal 'byor) of Mi skyod rdo rje, the eighth Karma pa (1507–54), and the Nges don sgron me, a meditation manual by the nineteenth-century teacher Jam mgon Kong sprul (1977: 119ff.), itself based on a sixteenth-century root text, the Lhan cig skyes sbyor khrid by the ninth Karma pa (dBang phyug rdo rje, 1556–1603). While Karma bKa' brgyud lamas around the world today frequently give the initiation of Vajravārāhī, they observe a strict code of secrecy in imparting the instructions for her actual practice; however, published accounts of some practices within some bKa' brgyud schools are now available.

Vajrayoginī is also an important deity within the Sa skya school. According to Lama Jampa Thaye (personal communication: 2002), her practices were received into the Sa skya tradition in the early twelfth century, during the lifetime of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158), first of the "five

venerable masters" of the Sa skya. Sa chen received from his teachers the initiations, textual transmissions, and instructions for three forms of Vajrayoginï. The first is a form derived also from Nãropa, and again called Nã ro mkha' spyod or "Nãro's khecarï" (although it is entirely different from the Tilopa-Nãropa-Mar pa transmission of Vajravãrãhï in the bKa' brgyud in that the deity has a different iconographical form with a distinct set of associated practices). The second is a form derived from the siddha Maitrïpa, known therefore as Maitrï Khecarï (Metri mkha' spyod ma). The third is derived from the siddha Indrabhüti, known therefore as Indra Khecarï (Indra mkha' sypod ma). This form is sometimes also known as Indra Vajravãrãhï, although as a deity in her own right, Vajravãrãhï has received much less attention among Sa skya pas than the Khecarï lineages.

These three forms are traditionally considered the highest practices within a collection of esoteric deity practices known as The Thirteen Golden Dharmas of Sa skya (Sa skya'i gser chos bcu gsum), as they are said to lead directly to transcendental attainment.12 However, it was Nãro Khecarï who became the focus of most devotion in the Sa skya tradition, and the practice instructions associated with her sãdhana were transmitted in the form of eleven yogas drawn from the siddha Nãropa's own encounter with Vajrayoginï. The most influential exposition of this system of eleven yogas emerged in the sixteenth century; known as The Ultimate Secret Yoga, it is a composition by 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang phyug (1524–68) on the basis of oral instructions received from his master, Tsar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho (1494–1560). Since that time, the eleven yogas "have retained great importance in the Sa skya spiritual curriculum" (ibid.). The practices have retained their esoteric status for Sa skya pas, and are "secret" in as much as one may not study or practice them without the requisite initiations and transmissions.

In the eighteenth century, it appears that the Sa skya transmission of Nãro Khecarï and the eleven yogas entered the dGe lugs tradition. This seems to have occurred in the lifetime of the Sa skya master, Ngag dbang kun dga' legs pa'i 'byung gnas. His exact dates are unclear, but the next Sa skya lineage holder is his pupil, Kun dga' blo gros (1729–83). Ngag dbang kun dga' legs pa'i 'byung gnas is in fact the last of the Sa skya lineage holders given in dGe lugs sources (he appears as "Näsarpa" in the list given by K. Gyatso 1999: 343–46), and from this point, the dGe lugs lineage prayers reveal their own distinct sequence of transmissions (ibid.). The dGe lugs pa had originally focused upon Vajrayoginï/Vajravãrãhï in her role as consort to their main deity, Cakrasa^vara, following the teaching of Tsong kha pa (1357–1419). Cakrasa^vara was one of the three meditational deities, along with Yamãntaka and Guhyasamãja, whose systems Tsong kha pa drew together as the foundational practices of the dGe lugs school. In this context, Tsong kha pa's explanatory text, Illuminating All Hidden Meanings (sBas don kun gsal) is apparently the main source on Vajrayoginï (K. Gyatso 1999: xii); and she has actually been described as Tsong kha pa's "innermost yidam, kept very secretly in his heart" (Ngawang Dhargyey 1992: 9). This claim, however, was probably intended to bolster Vajrayoginï's relatively recent presence in the dGe lugs pantheon, as the Sa skya tradition of eleven yogas was only popularized in the dGe lugs in the twentieth cenutury, by Pha bong kha (1878–1941). According to Dreyfus (1998: 246), "Pa-bong-ka differed in recommending Vajrayoginï as the central meditational deity of the Ge-luk tradition. This emphasis is remarkable given the fact that the practice of this deity came originally [i.e., as late as the eighteenth century] from the Sa-gya tradition and is not included in Dzong-kha-ba's original synthesis." The Vajrayoginï practice passed on by Pha bong kha and his pupil, Kyabje Trijang, focuses on the set of eleven yogas; and despite their esoteric, and therefore highly secret, nature—and the absolute prerequisite of receiving correct empowerments— explanations of these practices have been published and are widely available in English: by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso (1991/99), Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey (1992), and Khensur Rinpoche Lobsang Tharchin (1997).

The rNying ma has also drawn the practices of Vajrayoginï/Vajravãrãhï into its schools. Her presence is read back into the life of Padmasambhava, the eighth-century founder of the rNying ma, who is

said to have received initiation from Vajravãrãhï herself following his expulsion from the court of King Indrabhüti (Dudjom 1991: 469). Other important rNying ma lineage holders are also traditionally associated with the deity. For example, in the life story of Klong chen Rab 'byams pa (1308–63), as given by Dudjom Rinpoche (1991), he is said to have received visions of both a white Vãrãhï and a blue Vajravãrãhï, who foretell Klong chen pa's own meeting with Padmasambhava (ibid.: 577, 581). It is also Vajravãrãhï who leads him to the discovery of the treasure text (gter ma), Innermost Spirituality of the ^ãki^ï ((Man ngag) mkha' 'gro snying tig), the meaning of which is explained to him by Yeshe Tsogyel (Ye shes mtsho rgyal) (ibid.: 586). This identification between Vajrayoginï/Vajravãrãhï and Yeshe Tsogyel is significant—although Yeshe Tsogyel tends to be identified at different times with most of the major female deities of the tradition, such as Samantabhadrï and Tãrã (Dowman 1984: 12; Klein 1995: 17). In the account of Yeshe Tsogyel's life, a gter ma discovered in the eighteenth century (and now translated no fewer than three times into English), she is at times clearly identified with Vajrayoginï/Vajravãrãhï (e.g., Dowman 1984: 38, 85, 178); indeed, her sa^bhogakãya is said to be that of the deity (e.g., Gyelwa Jangchub in Dowman 1984: 4–5, 224; Klein 1995i: 147; J. Gyatso 1998: 247). The identification of Yeshe Tsogyel with Vajrayoginï/Vajravãrãhï is also suggested by Rig 'dzin 'Jigs med gling pa (1730–98), whose ^ãkki's Grand Secret Talk is revealed to him by a "paradigmatic" ^ãkinï, whom J. Gyatso (1998: 247) concludes is Yeshe Tsogyel herself.15 Various guruyoga practices within the rNying ma also formalize the connection between Yeshe Tsogyel and the deity. For example, in 'Jigs med gling pa's mind treasure, the Klong chen snying thig, the devotee longs for union with his guru as Padmasambhava, while identifying himself (and his state of yearning) with Yeshe Tsogyal in the form of Vajrayoginï/Vajravãrãhï. In other guruyoga practices, such as The Bliss Path of Liberation (Thar pa'i bde lam), the practitioner identifies directly with Vajrayoginï, who becomes "the perfect exemplar of such devotion" (Rigdzin Shikpo 2002: personal communication).

Over and above the deity's ubiquitous involvement in guruyoga meditations (a feature, as we have seen, of many Tibetan traditions), her popularity as a main deity in her own right is revealed by the growing number of liturgies devoted to her practice in the later rNying ma traditions. Robert Mayer (personal communication: 2002) mentions entire ritual cycles devoted to Vajravãrãhï, such as a volume entitled, Union of All Secret ^ãkinïs (mKha' 'gro gsang ba kun 'dus kyi chos skor). This was composed by the eminent nineteenth-century figure, 'Jams dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po, who believed it to be the "further revelation" (yang gter) of a gter ma dating back to the thirteenth century. The original gter ma revelation was by the famous female rNying ma gter ston Jo mo sman mo, herself deeply connected with Vajravarahi (ibid.; Allione 1984: 209–11). This volume is entirely dedicated to an important form of Vajravãrãhï in rNying ma practice, which is related to the gCod tradition, from Ma gcig lab sgron ma (1031–1129) (Allione ibid.: 142–204). Here, the deity takes the wrathful black form of (ma cig) Khros/Khro ma nag mo or Krodhakãlï, also sometimes identified as Rudrã^i/ï (Mayer op. cit.). Patrul Rinpoche (1994: 297–98) describes an iconographical form that, apart from its color, is much the same as that of Indra^ãkinï (for a full tangka of Krodhakãlï with retinue, see Himalayan Art, no. 491). In full, however, this is an extremely esoteric practice and, in the case of the principal bDud 'joms gter ma cycles at least, is regarded as "so secret and powerful that practitioners are often advised to either take it as their sole practice, or not seek the initiation at all" (Mayer op. cit.).

Tibetans also recognize a living reincarnation trulku (sprul sku) of Vajravãrãhï (rDo rje phag mo). The first trulku was a pupil of Phyogs las rnam rgyal (also known as 'Jigs med grags pa and as Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1376–1452), the learned Bo dong Pad chen of the monastery Bo dong E (probably a bKa' gdams pa foundation in 1049). A Bo dong pa Monastery was subsequently founded at bSam sdings by the side of Yar 'brog mtsho (Yamdrog Lake), referred to as Yar 'brog bSam sdings dgon pa, and it was here that the trulku of rDo rje phag mo became established (Rigdzin Shikpo 2002: personal communication). The first abbess is one of the most famous incarnations, memorable for

escaping from an invasion in 1717/19 of the Dzungar Tartars by apparently causing everyone in the monastery to appear as a herd of grazing pigs. But later incarnations have also been revered, and famed for their connection with Vajravārāhī, until the present trulku (b. 1937/38) who became an eminent official in the Chinese administration (Simmer-Brown 2001: 185–86; cf. Taring 1970: 167; Willis 1989: 104).

The pervasiveness of Vajrayoginī/Vajravarahi in Tibet is attested by her appearance also within the Tibetan Bön tradition. Peter Alan Roberts (personal communication: 2002) has translated a meditation text by Shar rdza bKra shis rgyal mtshan (1859–1934) that focuses on the development of the experience of "the wisdom of bliss and emptiness" (bde stong ye shes), with "heat" (gtum mo/ca^^ālī) as a sign of accomplishment. The work is entitled The Inferno of Wisdom (Ye shes me dpung)17 and draws on Bön compositions going back to the eleventh or twelfth century gter ma texts. It describes a wrathful, cremation-ground ^ākinī named Thugs rjes Kun grol ma ("She Who Liberates All through Compassion") who is clearly a form of Vajravārāhī. She is ruby-red in color, adorned with skulls, and stands on one leg in the dancing posture; a black sow's head protrudes from her crown, and she brandishes a chopper aloft, holds a skull bowl of fresh blood to her heart, and clasps a skull staff in the crook of her left shoulder. The symbolism governing her attributes, as well as the metaphysical context of emptiness, all appear in typical Vajravārāhī sādhanas in the Buddhist tantric traditions.

The practice of Vajrayoginī/Vajravārāhī is not exclusive to Tibet, however. In Nepal, Vajrayoginī is popularly worshiped as one of a set of four vārāhīs or yoginīs: Guhyešvarī (also worshiped as Prajñāpāramitā, Nairātmyā, and Agniyoginī), Vidyešvarī of Kathmandu, Vajrayoginī of Sankhu, and Vajrayoginī of Pharping (Slusser 1982: 256, 327). There are several temples of Vajravārāhī and Vajrayoginī in the Kathmandu Valley, for example, at Chapagaon Grove (ibid.: 325–26, 341), and at the hilltop temple of Pharping (ibid.: 331). In Sankhu, Vajrayoginī is the tutelary deity of the town, and her temple is dedicated to the fierce cremation ground goddess "Ugratārā Vajrayoginī" (Slusser 1982: 72 with n. 141). Here, Vajrayoginī is also identified with Prajñāpāramitā, "mother of all tathāgatas," and is considered the spouse of Svayambhū or Ādibuddha, who is housed in a smaller shrine on the same site, while in the Hindu version of the local myth, she is identified with Śiva's consort, Durgā (Zanen 1986: 131). Gellner (1992: 256) comments that in Nepal, "Vajrayoginī seems...to play a role in uniting exoteric deities, such as Tārā or Kumārī and the Eight Mothers, with the consorts of the secret tantric deities, viz. Vajravārāhī... Jñānadākinī... and Nairātmyā." Gellner goes on to describe tantric rites of initiation in current Newar practice that are taken mainly by Vajrācārya and Śākya males (ibid.: 169–270). Here, "Tantric initiation (dīk^ā) means primarily the initiation of Cakrasamvara and his consort Vajravārāhī" (ibid.: 268). The rites of initiation themselves are considered highly esoteric and are guarded with secrecy (ibid.: 273–80). Gellner's description—gleaned with difficulty from a learned informant—provides a rare insight into the modern-day practices. The first part of the initiation focuses upon Cakrasamvara, and is based on handbooks that follow the twelfth-century exegetical work, the Kriyāsamuccaya. The second part of the rite focuses on the consort Vajravārāhī (or "Vajradevī") and is based upon material taken from the Samvarodayatantra, but also upon as yet unidentified sources (ibid.: 272). Despite drawing from early tantric sources, the rites currently in use in Nepal have been substantially altered in the process of taming and adapting them to suit tantric initiates who are householders (ibid.: 300ff.). Nevertheless, the preeminence of Vajravārāhī in the tantric pantheon is retained in the modern Newar system. The series of rites that comprise the tantric initiation culminates with initiation into the practice of Vajravārāhī, thus indicating her supreme position within the hierarchy of Newar religious practice (ibid.: 280; cf. ibid.: 261–62).

From this brief overview of the practices of Vajrayoginī and Vajravārāhī outside India, it should be evident that we are dealing with a deity of major significance within tantric Buddhism. It is therefore

unsurprising to find, within the burgeoning of modern publications on the highest tantras, a number of works that also relate to the subject. Some impressive studies on the ^ãkinï have appeared, such as the detailed monograph by Adelheid Herrmann-Pfandt (1992) and valuable explorations by Janet Gyatso (1998) and Judith Simmer-Brown (2001). Such studies tend to range also across other academic disciplines; notably, the image of the yoginï or dãkinï has inspired a large body of crosscultural and feminist theological discourse.

My own approach is predominantly textual: I have explored the contents of a major Sanskrit source that sheds light on the Indian origins of Vajrayoginï practice and underpins later traditions. The importance of the Guhyasamayasãdhanamãlã to the study of Vajrayoginï/Vajravãrãhï can hardly be overstated. Within this, I have restricted the scope of my work to Sanskrit sources (and as I do not know Tibetan, I am greatly indebted to others in the few instances where I cite Tibetan texts). My aim has been, simply, to represent my sources as faithfully as possible, either by translating or summarizing their contents. Although this type of undertaking may itself be prone to, perhaps even determined by, all kinds of subjective and cultural interpretation and selectivity by its author, I have tried to present the material in a manner that is more descriptive than interpretive. For example, my use of the masculine pronoun throughout reflects the usage in my source material; this, despite the fact that the practice of Vajrayoginï/Vajravãrãhï was—and certainly is—undertaken by women as well as men. What I hope emerges here is as accurate a record as I am able to give of the early origins of the cult from the textual evidence that remains to us.

I have begun in chapter 1 by locating Vajrayoginï within the complex traditions of the Buddhist tantras. I then turn to the Guhyasamayasãdhanamãlã itself and explore what is known of its provenance, both of its authors and of the tantric sãdhana that makes up the bulk of its contents. Chapter 2 forms a survey of all the different forms of Vajrayoginï within the Guhyasamayasãdhanamãlã, and also of the various ritual contexts in which these forms are evoked. It therefore gives an overview of the cult in India as it emerges from these texts. Chapter 3 is a study of one particular sãdhana from the collection, the Vajravãrãhï Sãdhana by Umãpatideva, which is divided into its own distinctive meditation stages and final ritual portion. The Sanskrit edition (with notes) and the translation to the sãdhana follow chapter 3. The appendix gives a list of all sãdhanas in the Guhyasamayasãdhanamãlã (with witnesses where I have found them) and a summary of their contents. <>

The Profound Reality of Interdependence: An Overview of the Wisdom Chapter of the Way of the Bodhisattva edited and translated by Douglas S. Duckworth and Künzang Sönam [Oxford University Press, 9780190911911]

- The first English translation of Künzang Sönam's commentary on the Wisdom Chapter of the Way of the Bodhisattva
- Brings the Way of the Bodhisattva into conversation with a vast Buddhist literature from India and Tibet
- Makes an important source frequently referenced in the Dalai Lama's lectures available in English for first time

The Way of the Bodhisattva, composed by the monk and scholar Śāntideva in eighth-century India, is a Buddhist treatise in verse that beautifully and succinctly lays out the theory and practice of the

Mahayana path of a bodhisattva. Over one thousand years after Śāntideva's composition, Künzang Sönam (1823-1905) produced the most extensive commentary on the Way of the Bodhisattva ever written. This book is the first English translation of Künzang Sönam's overview of Śāntideva's notoriously difficult ninth chapter on wisdom.

The ninth chapter of the Way of the Bodhisattva is philosophically very rich but forbiddingly technical, and can only be read well with a good commentary. Künzang Sönam's commentary offers a unique and complete introduction to the view of Prāsangika-Madhyamaka, the summit of Buddhist philosophy in

Tibet, as articulated by Tsongkhapa. It brings Śāntideva's text, and Tsongkhapa's interpretation of Prāsangika-Madhyamaka, into conversation with a vast Buddhist literature from India and Tibet. By articulating the integral relationship between emptiness and interdependence, this text formulates a

sustained and powerful argument for emptiness as a metaphysical basis of bodhisattva ethics. This volume makes the ninth chapter accessible to English-speaking teachers and students of the Way of the Bodhisattva.

Review

"A wonderfully clear and readable translation of one of the most important commentaries on the ninth ("Wisdom") chapter of Shantideva's Way of the Bodhisattva. Essential reading for anyone interested in how Shantideva's theory of emptiness was interpreted in Tibet."--José Ignacio Cabezón, Dalai Lama Professor of Tibetan Buddhism and Cultural Studies, UC Santa Barbara

"Kunzang Sonam's commentary on Śāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra is a tour de force, and one of the masterpieces of 19th-century Tibetan philosophical thought. Despite its status in the Tibetan philosophical canon, however, it has not been translated into English and is little known in the West. Douglas Duckworth brings us a superb translation of the commentary on the difficult wisdom chapter, a commentary that illuminates Śāntideva's discussion with great erudition. The philosophical insight shines brilliantly in Duckworth's precise, but highly readable English. Anyone interested in Śāntideva's thought should read this text."--Jay L Garfield, Smith College and the Harvard Divinity School

"An extraordinary, commanding presentation and translation of a most important text that penetratingly and thoroughly explains the full depth and reach of the Geluk perspective on Śāntideva's Wisdom Chapter by a truly eclectic Tibetan author, Künzang Sönam. Douglas Duckworth has done the superlative!"--Paul Jeffrey Hopkins, Emeritus Professor of Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, University of Virginia

"All in all, this is an excellent piece of scholarship which significantly contributes to our understanding of Prasangika-Madhyamaka." -- Karl-Stéphan Bouthillette, Ghent University, Religion

CONTENTS

Excerpt: The Way of the Bodhisattva

The Way of the Bodhisattva (Bodhicaryivatira), composed by Šãntideva in eighth- century India, is a Buddhist treatise in verse that beautifully and succinctly lays out the theory and practice of the Mahãyãna path of a bodhisattva. Over one thousand years after Šãntidevás composition, Künzang Sönam (1823–1905), a student of the famed Paltrül Rinpoché (1808– 887), in eastern Tibet, composed the most extensive commentary on the Way of the Bodhisattva ever written. Paltrül Rinpoché is said to have requested him to write a commentary on the Way of the Bodhisattva in accordance with the interpretation of the "new schools" (gsar phyogs). He did so in nearly one thousand pages.

There are several commentaries on the Way of the Bodhisattva from India, but only one has survived in Sanskrit, a lucid commentary from the eleventh century by Prajñãkaramati. There are many Tibetan commentaries on the Way of the Bodhisattva as well, including important commentaries composed between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries by Sönam Tsemo (1142–1182), Gyelsé Tokmé (1295– 1369), Sazang Mati Panchen (1294–1376), Butön Rinchendrup (1290–1364), Tsongkhapa (1357– 1419), Gyeltsapjé (1364–1432), and Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa (1504–1566).

The nineteenth century witnessed a revival of the study and practice of the Way of the Bodhisattva, spearheaded by Paltrül Rinpoché.2 Paltrül Rinpoché is said to have explained the Way of the Bodhisattva in accordance with the distinctive traditions of commentary in Tibet: the Sakya (sa skya) tradition in accord with Sönam Tsemo's commentary, the Kagyü (bka' brgyud) tradition in accord with Pawo Tsuklak Trengwás commentary, the Geluk (dge lugs) in accord with Gyeltsapjé's commentary, and the Nyingma (rnying ma) in accord with Prajñãkaramati's and Gyelsé Tokmé's commentaries. In this way, he fostered a teaching style that discouraged sectarian disputes and harmonized Buddhist traditions without compromising their distinctive interpretative styles of commentary.

Paltrül Rinpoché was part of what the late Gene Smith called "the Gemang (dge mang) movement," which was characterized by a rise in Nyingma monastic scholarship fused with an ethos of the Great Perfection (rdzogs chen). Evidence for this movement can be seen to stem from the activity of Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé (1800–1855?), who established the first Nyingma monastic college of Šrï Si^ha at Dzokchen monastery. Paltrül Rinpoché and his disciples took up this vision for Buddhist scholarship and practice at the Gemang retreat affiliated with Dzokchen monastery in Dzachuka (rdza chu kha), near the source of the Mekong River.

Paltrül Rinpoché embodies this spirit of fusion of study and practice, as seen in his life and works. In particular, we see this exemplified in a popular text he composed on the stages of the path as a preliminary to the Great Perfection, which has been rendered in English as the Words of My Perfect Teacher. Shabkar Tsokdruk Rang dröl (1781–1851), a kindred spirit with Paltrül Rinpoché, also flourished in this region of eastern Tibet, and his works similarly combined mind- training (blo sbyong) and the stages of the path (lam rim) with the Great Perfection in an ecumenical way. In contrast to a divisive approach that is sometimes found to fly under the banner of a "nonsectarian movement" (ris med)— where "nonsectarian" excludes the Geluk tradition— "the Gemang movement" brings together the best aspects of both the Nyingma and Geluk traditions, which harkens back to Gampopás twelfth- century synthesis of the lineages of Mahãmudrã and Kadampa.

Paltrül Rinpoché taught the Way of the Bodhisattva in Sakya, Geluk, Nyingma, and Kagyü monasteries. The tradition of its annual teaching that he instituted has continued at many monasteries in Dzachuka, such as Gegong (dge gong) and Sershül (ser shul). His commentarial style was tied to a practical orientation, and he outlined the ten chapters of the text into four sections around a prayer for the cultivation of bodhicitta, "the spirit of awakening":

> May the precious spirit of awakening
> Arise where it has not arisen,
> Where it has arisen, may it not dissipate,
> But further and further increase.

The first three chapters are explained to bring about the spirit of awakening where it has not arisen; the second set of three chapters make it not dissipate where it has arisen; and the next three chapters bring it to further and further increase. The culmination of the ultimate spirit of awakening, the purview of wisdom (shes rab), is the ninth chapter, after which the text closes with a dedication for others in the tenth and final chapter.

Künzang Sönam composed two works on the famous ninth chapter of the text, one that consists of a commentary on the verses of the text and an "overview" (spyi don), which is translated in this volume. At the end of his text, he mentions a tradition that says some excellent things come from the Way of the Bodhisattva when it is understood in accord with the way it is explained in Gyeltsapjé's commentary, which he emulates in his own commentary. Other commentaries composed by Paltrül Rinpoché's students include an influential one by Khenpo Künpel (1870/ 2–1943), which has been translated into English as The Nectar of Manjushri's Speech. Khenpo Künpel was also a student of Mipam Rinpoché (1846–1912), who was himself a student of Paltrül Rinpoché and received teachings from him on the Way of the Bodhisattva as well. In contrast to Künzang Sönam's commentary, which relies on Gyelstapjé, Khenpo Künpel's commentary on the ninth chapter closely follows Mipam's commentary on that chapter, the Ketaka Jewel. Mipam's text famously sparked controversy and conversation from within Geluk scholarly circles. Mipam's commentary on this chapter, along with one of the criticisms it invoked and his response to that critic, have recently been translated into English in The Wisdom Chapter.

Khenpo Künpel was reported to teach the Way of the Bodhisattva to Khunu Lama (1895–1977), who taught it to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama has said, "If I have any understanding of compassion and the bodhisattva path, it is entirely on the basis of this text that I possess it." The Dalai Lama often teaches this text, and in 1993, he presented an oral commentary on it in France that was published in a volume entitled Practicing Wisdom. In it, the Dalai Lama draws primarily from the commentaries of Khenpo Künpel and Künzang Sönam, and he points out areas of compatibility and contrast between them. When the Dalai Lama taught the first eight chapters and tenth chapter of the Way of the Bodhisattva in France in 1991, he requested that the two commentaries on the ninth chapter be translated into English before he completed the teaching on this chapter two years later; this sparked a volume of these two translations in Wisdom: Two Buddhist Commentaries. Therein, we find Künzang Sönam's "word- commentary" (gzhung 'grel) on the stanzas of the ninth chapter, and here in this volume a translation of his other commentary on the ninth chapter in the form of an "overview" (spyi don).

As mentioned, Künzang Sönam's word- commentary on the Way of the Bodhisattva closely follows the commentary by Tsongkhapás student Gyeltsapjé. Künzang Sönam's overview of the chapter is also framed by Tsongkhapás interpretation of Madhyamaka, and it, too, integrates many passages from Šāntidevás other extant text, the Anthology of Training (Šik^'isamuccaya), in addition to citing passages from over one hundred different sütras and treatises. Künzang Sönam's overview, in particular, integrates Candrakïrti with Šāntideva as representing a single voice of Prãsañgika-Madhyamaka, framed in terms of the unique features of Tsongkhapás Prãsa^gika view.

Tsongkhapás unique presentation of Prãsañgika comes up across Künzang Sönam's overview, and stems from Tsongkhapás influential commentary on Candrakïrti's Introduction to the Middle Way (Madhyamak'ivat'ira), in which he identifies eight unique features of Prãsa^gika: the unique ways of (1) denying the reality of a basic consciousness (kun gzhi rnam shes) that is distinct from the six sensory consciousnesses and (2) denying self-awareness; (3) not asserting that autonomous arguments (rang rgyud kyi sbyor ba, svatantraprayoga) generate the view of reality in the continuum of an opponent, (4) the necessity of maintaining the reality of external objects in the same sense that the one maintains the reality of cognitions, (5) asserting that both Disciples (nyan thos) and Self-Realized Ones realize the selflessness of phenomena, (6) asserting that apprehending the self of phenomena is an afflictive obscuration, (7) asserting that disintegration is an entity, and (8) the consequent unique presentation of the three times. These features are all woven into Künzang Sönam's interpretation of the ninth chapter of Šãntidevás Way of the Bodhisattva. They are undergirded by his claim that nothing exists on its own, even conventionally, which is used to support the Madhyamaka view of the unity of the two truths of appearance and emptiness. Before we further explore the contents of his text, I will first introduce the author.

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Wisdom: The Ninth Chapter

The ninth chapter of the Way of the Bodhisattva, the Wisdom Chapter, is notoriously difficult, given that it is often cryptic and truncated, and it presumes knowledge of many Buddhist and non-Buddhist systems. It also propounds the view of emptiness and describes emptiness and interdependence as the metaphysical basis of ethics. The ninth chapter is also where we see pronounced differences in the interpretation of the text, as different commentaries on the other chapters for the most part accord with one another. Künzang Sönam's interpretation of the ninth chapter bears the mark of Tsongkhapás Prasangika- Madhyamaka, and he consistently emphasizes the unity of emptiness and interdependence, and the integration of an understanding of emptiness and ethics.

For the most part, Künzang Sönam's overview follows the order of the verses in the chapter, but he highlights particular verses, and skips others, as he puts the chapter into his own structure. The beauty of an "overview" (spyi don) style of commentary is that the author is not bound to follow a text word for word, but can elucidate the text's meaning more freely, in a way that is most appropriate to convey a clear message.

The first verse of chapter nine begins, "All these aspects were taught by the Sage for the purpose of wisdom." Künzang Sönam shows that all the aspects of method taught in the previous eight chapters, which bring happiness, are taught for the purpose of wisdom, which brings liberation. The second stanza goes straight into the two truths, where Šãntideva states that the conventional is within the domain of mind and that the ultimate is beyond that domain. On this topic Künzang Sönam gives an extensive, nine- part discussion of the two truths. Therein, he states that the basis of division of the two truths is objects of knowledge (shes bya), after showing that the two truths are defined in various ways by different Buddhist philosophical systems. He says that what distinguishes Buddhist philosophy is that it is "free from extremes" and that, though many different philosophies claim to be free from extremes, only the Prãsañgika-Madhyamaka lives up to that claim.

In his presentation of Madhyamaka, Künzang Sönam says that the relationship between the two truths is such that they are "essentially the same yet conceptually distinct" (ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad). In other words, the conventional and ultimate truths are essentially the same, for one cannot exist without the other, yet they are distinct from the standpoint of their conceived aspects. While "conventional truth" has several meanings, he says that in the context of the Way of the Bodhisattva the "conventional" means what is obscuring or concealing, and he describes it as "everything that is

understood to be truly existent by a conventional mind, like pots and so forth." Notably, he says that a conventional truth, in contrast to what is merely conventional, is necessarily realized after the ultimate truth. This is because to understand anything to be merely conventional, and hence to understand it as it truly is, one must first understand that it is unreal, lacking true existence.

Following the tradition of Tsongkhapa, he highlights an important distinction between conventional truth and conventional existence, showing that everything that exists (including emptiness) does so only conventionally, whereas a truth that is conventional is just one of two truths (the other being the ultimate truth of emptiness). Likewise, there is a distinction to be made between that which is the ultimate truth, which is the lack of true existence, and that which is ultimately existent, which is a false conception that does not exist at all.

While making these distinctions, he points to another central topic in Tsongkhapás presentation of Madhyamaka: identifying the object of negation. In doing so, he draws another important distinction between misconceptions (e.g., apprehending a truly existent self) and the objects of those misconceptions (e.g., a truly existent self). Similar to the distinction between (an existent) "belief in God" and a (nonexistent) "God," the latter (e.g., truly existent self) does not exist, whereas only the former (e.g., apprehension of a truly existent self) does.

The third stanza of the ninth chapter continues by outlining the world in terms of the perspectives of ordinary beings on the one hand, and of yogis on the other. Künzang Sönam here describes the primary meaning of "ordinary beings" as those who have not been influenced by philosophical systems, in contrast to yogis, who have either directly realized emptiness or who understand it through study and contemplation. He explains that there are ascending levels of yogis, culminating with Prãsañgika-Mãdhyamikas, those who are free from the two extremes of existence and nonexistence.

Künzang Sönam's overview does a lot to clarify the distinction between Svãtantrika and Prãsañgika, the two interpretations of Madhyamaka first distinguished as distinct schools in Tibet. He says that Svãtantrikas maintain a basis of conventional truth that can be found upon analysis, whereas Prãsa^gikas deny this and also deny that anything exists on its own (rang mtshan gyis grub pa), even conventionally. In describing a Svãtantrika, "a proponent of autonomous probative arguments," he states that "autonomous" (rang rgyud), "independent" (rang dbang), and "objective" (rang ngos nas grub pa) have the same meaning. In contrast, he characterizes a Prãsañgika as a Mãdhyamika who does not accept that anything exists on its own, even conventionally, and as "one who accepts that the inferential understanding to be established in the continuum of an opponent arises only by means of a reductio."

A central element in this interpretation is the denial, even conventionally, of anything that exists on its own, a technical phrase that some translators have rendered as "established in virtue of its own characteristics," but I have translated here as "exists on its own" for clarity. One should keep in mind that the key term in this technical phrase, svalakhala (rang mtshan), takes on different shades of meaning in different contexts of Buddhist philosophy: in Abhidharma, it refers to a thing's specific characteristic in contrast to its shared properties; in the epistemological tradition of Dharmakïrti, it refers to an ineffable and efficacious particular in contrast to a concept or universal; and in the context of this interpretation of Madhyamaka, it demarcates the subtle object of negation that is only realized in Prãsañgika. It is the meaning in this last context that is important for understanding Künzang Sönam's reading of Šãntidevás text as Prãsañgika-Madhyamaka.

In contrast to Prãsañgika-Madhyamaka, Künzang Sönam says that the system of Svãtantrika-Madhyamaka maintains a distinction between correct and incorrect conventional truths. Prãsañgikas, however, do not accept this division because in this system, "Whatever is conventional necessarily

does not exist the way it appears." The reason Svātantrikas assert a distinction between correct and incorrect conventional truths, he says, is because they accept conventional truth to exist on its own; Prāsaṅgikas do not accept this, and so they need not make a distinction between correct or incorrect conventional truths. In this context, he adds that "correct" (yang dag pa) effectively means "on its own" (rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa).

Künzang Sönam claims that accepting the difference between the respective existence and nonexistence of a real body and an illusory one does not conflict with Prāsaṅgikas not accepting correct or incorrect conventional truths. For a Prāsaṅgika, the difference between a conventional illusion (e.g., a ropesnake) and a conventional reality (e.g., a rope) can be and is drawn, but it is not a difference that is drawn objectively (yul de'i rang ngos nas). The essential point of the Prāsaṅgika view is that distinctions within the conventional— between truth and falsity, existence and nonexistence, real and unreal— are not objective; that is, they are not determined from the objects themselves.

Conventional distinctions between what is real and unreal are for Prāsaṅgikas made in terms of mundane conventions. These distinctions are not made based on any real differences in objects themselves; rather, what constitutes what is real and unreal is determined intersubjectively. Significantly, what is intersubjective necessarily incorporates a subjective dimension.

One might think that if a Prāsaṅgika does not accept objective distinctions, then this position would not be different from the subjective idealism of the Mind- Only school. Rather than claim that the mind is independently real in contrast to unreal external objects, as a subjective idealist does, Śāntideva explicitly affirms the interdependency of minds and objects. Following this, Künzang Sönam describes how minds and external objects are equally existent in mundane convention (and in Abhidharma) and equally nonexistent when their nature is sought in analysis (and in a sublime being's meditative equipoise). He argues that Prāsaṅgikas accept external objects conventionally because the coextensive presence or absence of objects and cognitions undermines the claim that even conventionally, there are no external objects. He reiterates this point by saying that not only does no conventional analysis negate external objects, but that conventional analysis undermines the absence of externality.

Elaborating on the difference between Madhyamaka and Mind-Only, Künzang Sönam says that "the distinction of whether or not external objects are accepted conventionally also comes down to whether or not one accepts something to exist on its own (rang mtshan gyis grub pa)." Once again, this is the main issue for his Prāsaṅgika interpretation. He argues that proponents of Mind- Only are not satisfied with assenting to the reality of the external world as it is accepted by ordinary people; they think that if there were external objects, they would have to be the types of things that would be findable upon analysis and that would exist separately from cognition. Yet since there are no such things, they deny them. Prāsaṅgikas, in contrast, assert the existence of external objects without appealing to these criteria, that is, without requiring any objective basis of designation for these claims. Thus, Prāsaṅgikas simply assent to external objects in accord with the ways of the world, and this is, once again, because of the fact that nothing is accepted to exist on its own, neither an external nor an internal world, even conventionally.

Künzang Sönam clarifies the Prāsaṅgikás acceptance of the empirical reality of external objects by arguing that it is not at all like the claims of those who posit the reality of external objects based on analysis, such as the Vaibhāsikas and the Sautrāntikas. This is because Prāsaṅgikas reject the kind of realism that is implicated in accepting an analytically determined external world. Rather, Prāsaṅgikas simply accept external objects (conventionally) in accord with the ways of the world, without (ontological) analysis. There is a subtle distinction to be made here that can easily be overlooked. That is, Prāsaṅgikas are not external realists, despite claiming the reality of an external world,

because they acknowledge that the external world does not stand on its own, even conventionally; like minds and objects, an external world rises and falls together with an internal world.

As Šãntideva states in chapter five of the Way of the Bodhisattva, the instruments of torture in hell and hell itself are products of an evil mind. Thus, neither hell realms nor human worlds are external, but that does not necessarily mean that they are "all in your head," either. It is important to see that a Prãsañgikás affirmation of an external world is not an assertion from her own perspective that there is an external world in reality; it is only an assent to intersubjective agreement determined by mundane convention. Ultimately, there is no external world (or an internal world) for Prãsañgikas, so though Prãsañgikas may not be idealists, they are certainly not external realists either. In any case, the reason Künzang Sönam understands Šãntidevás Prãsañgika to deny objective foundations such as self- awareness (rang rig), the dependent nature (gzhan dbang), and the basic consciousness (kun gzhi) comes down again to the same issue: there is nothing that exists on its own even conventionally.

Tibetan interpreters of Šãntideva like Künzang Sönam clearly see the Way of the Bodhisattva as a Prãsañgika text. The key to the placement in this category is that, for Künzang Sönam, Šãntideva supports the idea that nothing exists on its own even conventionally. Šãntideva therefore has no need to ground conventions in any deeper foundation. Without the need for conventional foundations, such as a dependent nature or a basic consciousness, he needs no ultimate foundations either, as if a real ultimate were needed to ground unreal conventions. As Šãntideva says, an illusory buddha works just as well as a truly existent one.60 When there are nothing but groundless conventions— all the way up and all the way down— the ultimate and the conventional are no longer separate; the two truths are none other than two aspects of the same thing. For this reason, the two truths are not only noncontradictory; they are mutually entailing. This is a key to Künzang Sönam's interpretation of Šãntidevás Way of the Bodhisattva as representing Prãsañgika-Madhyamaka.

After presenting a section in which he outlines the position of the proponents of Mind- Only, their critique, and a response to this critique, Künzang Sönam then expands on self- awareness and its refutation. Here he elaborates further distinctions of a Prãsangika-Madhyamaka interpretation of Šãntideva's text. He argues that self- awareness is a reification and that it does not provide an adequate account of knowledge or memory. Following Šãntideva's verses in the Way of the Bodhisattva, he also says that it is a contradiction for the mind to act on itself; as a knife cannot cut itself, a mind cannot know itself, either. He says that self- awareness is simply a subjective representation of mind that proponents of Mind-Only want to maintain as something that acts as both a subject and a nondual awareness, which is a contradiction. Further, he says that there is no source of knowledge (tshad ma, pramãla) that can lay claim to a nondual mind, such as a pure dependent nature or self- awareness, so it is nothing but a theoretical posit, and one that should be relinquished, even conventionally, because if something like it were to exist, it would exist on its own, and Prãsañgika concede nothing to exist this way, even conventionally.

Künzang Sönam does not only say that theoretical accounts of self-awareness are misconceived; he also argues against an alternative account of awareness, other object-awareness (gzhan rig). He says that a model of knowledge that takes the mind to stand apart from, yet know, what is other is also not a coherent account of the process of knowledge; nor is it a model that adequately accounts for the relationship between mind and world. In fact, he argues that all analytically determined accounts of knowledge, including self- awareness and other object- awareness, are misconceived. This is because any time a rich analysis of the conventional world is engaged, one is necessarily committed to the ultimate status of what is found. Moreover, it is because anything that is found in its basis of

designation, even in the case of a conventional analysis, is by implication an ultimate entity, which Prãsañgika unequivocally deny.

In his depiction of Prãsañgika, there is no way to find any basis of designation, behind or beyond designation, other than emptiness. So what we are left with to account for the conventional world is simply the consensus of mundane conventions— "I see blue," "I remember her," etc.— period. Other than mundane convention, there is no deeper structure or rich account that gets us any closer to the way things are; and furthermore, when we seek anything more than this and find something other than emptiness, we are deceived.

Despite being established by consensus, the world as it is understood by ordinary beings is always wrong in a fundamental way, as Šãntideva says:

> Even the objects of perception, such as visible forms,
> Are established by consensus, not by sources of knowledge.
> That consensus is wrong,
> Like the popular view that impure things are pure.

Following Tsongkhapa, Künzang Sönam explicitly says that for Prãsañgika, being a distorted cognition ('khrul shes) does not contradict being a source of knowledge (tshad ma).63 In this way, sources of knowledge for conventional truths can be held to be right or wrong pragmatically (or intersubjectively) and at the same time be mistaken in terms of the ontological status of these truths when they appear as if they are truly existent. For this reason, an ordinary being's understanding of the conventional world is superseded by a perspective of higher knowledge, for which the way things appear does not conflict with the way things are— namely, when things are seen as illusion- like and empty of true existence. Künzang Sönam's description of epistemology (tshad ma) in his overview closely follows that laid out by Tsongkhapás student, Khedrupjé (1385– 1438), in his Great Exposition, which has been translated into English by José Cabezón in A Dose of Emptiness.

That conventional truth is intersubjective, that it "accords with the world," should not be confused with a view of relativism: the fact that things are empty and that the process of causality (karma) is incontrovertible are nonnegotiable in this interpretation of Prãsa^gika. Indeed, Künzang Sönam argues that causality proceeds while things are merely nominally existent or while they are empty. Yet in his interpretation of Prãsa^gika, a tension remains between what is represented as a correct truth for the world, as an intersubjective truth, and what is held to be the correct truth for anyone, as an objective truth— namely, emptiness (as a nonnegotiable ultimate truth) and the undeviating causal process (as a nonnegotiable conventional truth). For the Geluk tradition in general, epistemic warrants come into play to keep the radical dialectic of Prãsañgika within the boundaries of Buddhist doctrine and in service of defending Buddhist claims of emptiness and the causal process.

Despite an ordinary being's conventional sources of knowledge always being wrong about the way things are, they are seen to deliver objects that to some degree correspond to objects in the world; thus, they are necessary, at least as long as the conditions for their existence (i.e., ignorance) are present. In other words, partially warranted and partially distorted conventional sources of knowledge continue to function until the ultimate is realized, just as an illusion continues as long as the conditions for its appearance remain, as Šãntideva said:

> For as long as the conditions are assembled,
> For that long illusions, too, will persist.

Thus, as long as the conventions of the world continue to function and are not undermined by another conventional source of knowledge, they work (for the time being).

Künzang Sönam further defends an interpretation of the Way of the Bodhisattva that is in tune with Tsongkhapás interpretation of PrãsañgikaMadhyamaka when he argues that everyone, including

Disciples and Self-Realized Ones, must completely realize emptiness in order to achieve nirvana. He argues that there is really only one kind of emptiness, the lack of any findable reality, which has many different substrates, such as persons or phenomena. His interpretation of Prãsañgika thus claims that to apprehend true existence is an afflictive obscuration, not a cognitive obscuration, because there is no hard distinction between the self of persons and phenomena (other than simply being a different substrate). Therefore, he says that it is necessary to realize emptiness fully, the lack of intrinsic existence in phenomena, in order to achieve just liberation. In doing so, the way he distinguishes between Buddhist vehicles (i.e., Disciple, Self- Realized Ones, Bodhisattva) is explicitly based on a distinction with regard to method, not a distinction in terms of view,68 because he holds that all Buddhist paths to liberation necessarily entail the realization of emptiness as it is expressed in Prãsañgika-Madhyamaka.

After an extended discussion in which he establishes the validity of the Mahãyãna against dissenters and outlines the meaning of obscurations and the stages upon which they are eliminated, Künzang Sönam continues with a presentation and refutation of non- Buddhist positions that Šāntideva addresses in his text. He first treats the Sãmkhya and then the Nyãya-Vaišesika, before returning to a further defense of the unique features of Prãsañgika-Madhyamaka. As he mentions in the context of his presentation of the philosophical system of Mind- Only, it is important to identify a position in order to understand how and why it is refuted. Without understanding the position of another, one will not understand one's own system, nor will one understand the Way of the Bodhisattva when it references those views.

Later in his overview he comes back to refute the theistic views of those who claim a singular, permanent, and independent creator God, like Išvara. He also critiques the position of the Jains (a.k.a. Nigranthas) in the context of refuting a view of causality that accepts arising from both self and other. Künzang Sönam's explanation of non- Buddhist philosophical systems relies closely on Jamyang Shepás Great Exposition of Philosophical Systems, which has been translated into English by Jeffrey Hopkins in Maps of the Profound.

In between Künzang Sönam's refutations of different non- Buddhist views, he returns to a defense of Tsongkhapás unique features of Prãsañgika. In presenting a Prãsañgika account of causality without substances, he describes the "entity of disintegration" (zhig pa'i dngos po) and the unique presentation of the three times that follows from this distinctive interpretation of causality.

After defending these last two features that Tsongkhapa had claimed were distinctive to Prãsañgika-Madhyamaka, Künzang Sönam recapitulates the arguments against a self-framed in terms of a relationship between the self and the aggregates. He elaborates first on a fivefold reasoning from Nãgãrjunás Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way (Mülamadhyamakakãrikã) and then on a sevenfold reasoning from Candrakïrti's Introduction to the Middle Way to show that a self is unfindable upon analysis when sought for as either identical with or different from the aggregates. He argues that the self is simply a nominal convention, designated in dependence upon the aggregates, just as a chariot is designated in dependence upon its parts. Any other self or chariot beyond mere designation cannot be found, nor is anything found in its basis of designation in Prãsañgika-Madhyamaka, even conventionally.

The fact that nothing is found in its basis of designation, even conventionally, is an important feature of Künzang Sönam's nominalist interpretation of Prãsañgika- Madhyamaka and a reason he does not accept any rich theory of causality— because such theories imply realism. That is, rich accounts of causality are those that are sought out in terms of a relationship between discrete things that are found upon analysis (e.g., to be the same or different); therefore, they are based on realist presumptions (e.g., identity and difference). In contrast, Künzang Sönam shows the way that causality

can function while being merely asserted conventionally, based on named regularities in the world rather than based in any substructure or rich theoretical story beyond conventional designation.

Despite his claims, and his valiant effort to present a nominalist theory of causality, Künzang Sönam may be guilty of going against his own nominalist strand of Prãsañgika in his defense of the "entity of disintegration." The impetus for the theory of the entity of disintegration, or so it seems, is to provide an account of causality in the absence of foundations. That is, disintegration is said to function as other entities do in the absence of real entities. With no real entities, an entity's disintegration— which is typically held within Buddhist philosophical systems to be a non- entity— is thus attributed with the same status as an efficacious entity (nominal). That is, both an entity and its disintegration are nothing more than nominal designations. Although attributing causal power to disintegration is an attempt to preserve a nominalist theory of causality, this theory invites other problems such as the reification of absence (i.e., treating emptiness as a "thing"), which has been a frequent target for critics of the Geluk tradition. Others have argued that the notion of an entity of disintegration goes against the Prasangika commitment to accord with mundane convention renowned in the world. In any case, I leave the relative merits and demerits of this system of Prãsa^gika for readers to evaluate for themselves, and I will continue to outline this interpretation to set the stage for the translation of his overview of the Wisdom Chapter below.

In the next section, Künzang Sönam presents the fourfold "application of mindfulness"— of body, feeling, mind, and phenomena— before turning to the practices of calm abiding (zhi gnas) and special insight (lhag mthong). For calm abiding, he reiterates the nine stages of mental abiding that lead to a genuine calm abiding, drawing from the Stages of Meditation (Bh'ivan'ikrama), Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes (Madhy'intavibh'iga), and the Ornament of the Mah'iy'ina Sütras (Mah'iy'inasütr'ila^k'ira). He then describes two kinds of special insight: mundane and transcendent. Only the latter special insight into selflessness leads to liberation. He again mentions that it is necessary to realize selflessness completely for liberation, and that this is to understand that nothing exists on its own, even conventionally. For him, this is the province of Prasangika- Madhyamaka and the root of all its distinctions from realist views.

Künzang Sönam next connects Šãntidevás verses to a presentation of three arguments that establish the selflessness of phenomena. Drawing heavily from Candrakïrti's Introduction to the Middle Way, he first lays out "the argument of the diamond shards," which is a refutation of four positions that, respectively, assert that causality is a process of arising from self, other, both, or without cause. He pins the position of causeless arising on the materialist Cãrvãka school, and the position that there is self- arising on the Sãnkhyas. The claim to arising from both self and other he attributes to the Jains and says that arising from other is a position found in realist Buddhist schools, from the Svãtantrika on down.

In his presentation of a second argument for selflessness, that of interdependence, Künzang Sönam explains three meanings of dependent arising as "meeting" (phrad) "relying" (ltos), and "depending" (brten). The first, "meeting," connotes the dependent arising that is part of the general grammar of Buddhism. Dependent arising here is a feature of causal processes, the way there are regularities without substances: "When this is present, that arises; when this ceases, that ceases." Indeed, Šãntideva consistently links his Way of the Bodhisattva with this central feature of Buddhist doctrine.

The notion of dependent arising also extends from causal processes, or chains of events, to spatial relationships as well. This is where we find a second meaning of dependent arising, "relying," that Künzang Sönam mentions. Here, dependent arising is interpreted to connote the interdependent relationship between parts and wholes. The meaning of dependent arising here also has a major role to play in Buddhist thought in general, where singular persons or selves, like chariots, are critiqued as lacking singular, autonomous existence. "Teeth, hair, and nails, are not the self . . . " Šãntideva

takes up this kind of analysis in the eighth and ninth chapters, when he deconstructs the notion of self and phenomena with analyses of the body, feelings, mind, and phenomena.

The last and subtlest view of dependent arising is found in the third of the three connotations of dependent arising, "depend." That all things exist in dependence upon linguistic and conceptual designation is a feature of a Madhyamaka view. Yet the fact that things do not exist otherwise, even conventionally, is a unique feature of Prasangika- Madhyamaka for Künzang Sönam— where all things without exception are conceptually or linguistically designated.

He calls the argument of interdependence "the king of reasoning" because it is the one through which the extreme of existence can be overcome through appearance (merely conventionally existing) and the extreme of nonexistence can be overcome through emptiness (merely the lack of intrinsic existence of appearances). This is a special argument, he says, because "there are no other arguments that formulate evidence from the side of emptiness that can simultaneously elicit certainty in both appearance and emptiness." The last of the three arguments he presents to establish selflessness is the argument that negates the production of an existent or nonexistent thing.

After presenting these three arguments, Künzang Sönam concludes his overview where Šãntideva concludes his chapter, with the benefits of realizing emptiness. He says that the function of realizing emptiness, the accumulation of gnosis, is the accumulation of merit, which manifests through an enacted understanding of the causal process. Thus, he links the logic of the end of the chapter with the logic with which it began, where "All these aspects are taught by the Sage for the purpose of wisdom." That is, he shows how the two accumulations of merit and gnosis comprise the six transcendent perfections, and how emptiness is integrated with compassion. He thus shows how emptiness serves as both the culmination and the basis for ethics in Mahãyãna Buddhism. What is distinctive about this interpretation, and Madhyamaka, is that it seamlessly integrates the Buddhist view (interdependence/ emptiness) with Buddhist conduct (nonviolence and altruism), without promoting one at the expense of the other (either by making ethics merely instrumental to realizing the view of emptiness or by claiming that ethical conduct is a natural or magical product of realizing a view of emptiness that is disconnected from ethics). <>

Middle Beyond Extremes: Maitreya's Madhyãntavibhãga with Commentaries by Khenpo Shenga and Ju Mipham

by Arya Maitreya, Jamgon Mipham, translated by The Dharmachakra Translation Committee [Snow Lion, 9781559395014]

Middle Beyond Extremes contains a translation of the Buddhist masterpiece *Distinguishing the Middle from Extremes*. This famed text, often referred to by its Sanskrit title, *Madhyāntavibhāga*, is part of a collection known as the *Five Maitreya Teachings*. Maitreya is held to have entrusted these profound and vast instructions to the master Asaṅga in the heavenly realm of Tuṣita.

Distinguishing the Middle from Extremes employs the principle of the three natures to explain the way things seem to be as well as the way they actually are. It is presented in **Middle Beyond Extremes** alongside commentaries by two outstanding masters of Tibet's nonsectarian Rimé movement, Khenpo Shenga and Ju Mipham.

Trulshik Rinpoche in his foreword says that the Regent Maitreyanatha, lord of the ten grounds, granted five treatises to the master Asanga in the divine realm of Tuṣita, two of which are concerned with 'distinguishing.' **MIDDLE BEYOND EXTREMES** contains an English translation of one of these two treatises, namely *Distinguishing the Middle from Extremes.*

Accompanying Maitreya's teaching are two commentaries: The first, composed by Khenchen Shenga, was created by means of a classic Indian source. The book also contains the explanations by Mipham Nampar Gyalwa, the loving protector and king of Dharma. In this way, it contains, as it were, both Indian and Tibetan commentaries.

MIDDLE BEYOND EXTREMES contains one among the protector Maitreya's five treatises, *Distinguishing the Middle from Extremes*. It is accompanied by two commentaries: Khenchen Shenga's elucidations, which are all drawn from a classical Indian source, and the explanations of the supreme scholar, Mipham Chokley Nampar Gyalwa. These English translations were prepared under the auspices of the Dharmachakra Translation Committee. The translators are headed by his student, Thomas Doctor, who is devoted, committed, and knowledgeable. The translators followed a series of lectures on the texts, and they have worked hard to clarify their understanding with the help of several scholars. The Dharmachakra Translation Committee draws its inspiration from the vision, commitment, and magnificent achievements of past Buddhist translators. Directed by Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche, the Committee is dedicated to making Buddhist classics available to modern readers in their native languages.

To those who read **MIDDLE BEYOND EXTREMES** Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche recommends following a program of lectures, since this is the best way to meet these texts. In any case, it is important that one actively seek to gain a clear understanding of these teachings. Whoever practices them will before long accomplish the stage of great enlightenment and, by relying on factors such as the six transcendences, arise as a great captain to guide all wandering beings.

In his Five Teachings *the protector Maitreya, the Regent who has mastered the ten grounds, reveals fully and flawlessly the view, meditation, conduct, and fruition that are accomplished through the Great Vehicle. With utmost profundity his teachings reach far and wide; they are a treasury of scripture, reasoning, and oral instruction.* – Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche

Unraveling the subtle processes that condition people's thinking and experience, Maitreya's teaching in **MIDDLE BEYOND EXTREMES** reveals a powerful path of compassionate vision and spiritual transformation. <>

THE PRINCE AND THE SUFI: THE JUDEO-PERSIAN RENDITION OF THE BUDDHA BIOGRAPHIES by Dalia Yasharpour [Brill Reference Library of Judaism, BRILL 9789004442740]

THE PRINCE AND THE SUFI is the literary composition of the seventeenth-century Judeo-Persian poet Elisha ben Shmūel. In **THE PRINCE AND THE SUFI: THE JUDEO-PERSIAN RENDITION OF THE BUDDHA BIOGRAPHIES,** Dalia Yasharpour provides a thorough analysis of this popular work to show how the Buddha's life story has undergone substantial transformation with the use of Jewish, Judeo-Persian and Persian-Islamic sources. The annotated edition of the text and the corresponding English translation are meticulous and insightful. This scholarly study makes available to readers an important branch in the genealogical tree of the Buddha Biographies.

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The Judeo-Persian Poet in the Context of History

The present study is a critical analysis, edition and annotated translation of Shahzãdeh lia Sufi "The Prince and The Sufi," the late seventeenth century literary Judeo-Persian composition by the poet Elïsha' ben Shmüel, pen named, Rãgheb, "the desirous one." The latter is a term with Sufi connotation, denoting one who desires proximity to God. Judeo-Persian, the Jewish language used until the first decades of the twentieth century, is largely Persian written with Hebrew script. As with other major Judeo-Persian compositions, Shahzãdeh lia Sufi is distinct in its linguistic, literary expression reflecting the convergence of Judaism with Iran, Islam and Persia over the space of centuries.

The Jews of Iran are among the most ancient of Jewish diaspora communities. Their settlement in the region adjacent to Iran most likely first took place when the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel and exiled its people, circa 722 BCE. It is plausible to speak of a continuous Jewish presence in the region from the Babylonian conquest of Judea, circa 586 BCE. Despite their religious minority status, a millennia long presence inextricable linked them to the land and its culture. To this day, the Jews of Iran revere Persian poetry recounting Iran's ancient glory, name their children after ancient Iranian kings and celebrate Nawruz. Narratives from the Tanakh, including the Book of Daniel, Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah depict Jews in Iran's royal court interacting with kings who allowed subjects to practice their religion and customs. Historical accuracy notwithstanding, these accounts left an enduring mark on their collective consciousness. In his versified epic the JUDEO-PERSIAN poet, Shãhïn (thirteenth -fourteenth century CE), reveled in describing Queen Esther's amorous relations with her Iranian king and named Cyrus as the product of their loving union. Daniel, Esther and Mordekay's tombs are said to be located in modern day Susa and Hamadan. Viewed as tangible connections to the prophets and the Holy Land and not merely relics of a bygone past, Jews made pilgrimage there to seek physical or spiritual refuge, pray and celebrate Jewish holidays. Extant JUDEO-PERSIAN chronicles of religious persecution in the seventeenth and eighteenth century suggest that Persian Jewry perceived itself to be reliving Esther and Mordekay's plight.

The Babylonian centers of Jewish learning, Sürã and Pumbedita, were established at the end of the third century CE and functioned until the eleventh century. The Jews of Iran contributed to producing the Babylonian Talmud (completed circa 499 CE), one of the most important sources of rabbinic Jewish law and teaching. Accounts in the Babylonian Talmud indicate that at times respectful, friendly interaction existed between some members of the Sasanian monarchy and the rabbis. Moreover, the Sasanian ruler, Yazdegerd I (399– 420 CE), is represented in the Babylonian Talmud as an ally of the Jews and Iranian sources say he married the daughter of a Jewish exilarch. She is said to have established Jewish settlements in Iran and given birth to Bahrãm Gür, a continuation of a tradition of depicting Iranian kings being born of Jewish mothers.

In 642 CE, the Arabs conquered what had once appeared to be an all-powerful Iranian dynasty. Unlike the people of other conquered lands, the Iranian population refused to give up its language for Arabic. As a result, it maintained significant aspects of its national and cultural identity. Likewise, the acculturated Jewish population continued speaking a variety of Iranian dialects.

Islam saw itself as superseding Judaism and Christianity and therefore, from its inception, adopted a policy of inherent discrimination. Designated legal status as ahl al-dhimmah, "People of the Pact," they were permitted to continue practicing their religion and live according to their own customs. In return for physical protection and protection of their property, Jews were obligated to pay jizyah, "annual poll tax." In addition to serving an economic function, the tax affirmed the subordinate status of religious minorities. Treatment of Jews varied with time and region and depended largely on whether the state was politically and economically strong and stable. Lack of stability resulted in increased religious observance and enforcement of the superior-inferior relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. At such times, opportunities for minorities to acquire a measure of wealth or social mobility were minimized. In addition to the poll tax, other shurüi, "conditions," designed to demonstrate the supremacy of Islam were observed in variant degrees.

New social, economic restrictions were imposed with the institutionalization of the Shi^ah (Per. Shïyeh) sect of Islam by the Safavid Dynasty (1501– 1736 CE). It viewed Jews as a source of najesãt, "ritual impurity;" therefore, a broad set of restrictive conditions were enforced in every facet of daily life. Given the socio-economic restrictions imposed on them, Jews were predominantly employed as artisans, craftsmen, and peddlers. Others pursued occupations deemed ritually unclean or morally reprehensible; they were tanners, producers and distributors of wine, entertainers to the Persian courts or cleaners of cesspools, drying the contents for fuel. A relatively small number were engaged in professions that allowed them to cross the social and economic divide, including trade, medicine, and sorcery.

The reign of Shãh 'Abbãs I (1587–1629) saw Esfahan, long home to a community of Jews, replace Qazvin as the capital. The King and subsequent Safavid rulers contributed to the city's development and splendor. On the whole, military action and internal restructuring implemented by Shãh 'Abbãs brought political stability and economic prosperity to Persia. He accomplished the latter in part by fostering diplomatic and trade relations with European countries. Toward the latter half of Shãh 'Abbãs' reign, however, religious minorities faced hostility and oppression from Shï'ï clerics and the State's policy of religious uniformity. In the case of the Jews, religious persecution manifested itself in forced conversions, killings, and the destruction of their writings. The situation calmed during Shãh ^afi's rule (1629–1642) and Jews were granted permission to revert back to their faith after approximately seven years; however, the policy of forced conversion would resurface.

Shãh 'Abbãs II (1642–1666) has been compared to his great grandfather and namesake for his ability to rule effectively to the benefit of the majority. His twenty-four year reign was largely characterized by peace and prosperity. The Shãh was known for taking an active role in various aspects of administration; in matters related to the Jews, however, he apparently deferred to a few fanatical Shi'i clerics and those in governmental posts who shared their views. Consequently, the measure introduced under Shãh 'Abbãs I, granting apostates possession of all their Jewish relatives' wealth upon their death, was re-instituted. The Grand Vizier, Mohammad Beg, was allowed to do as he wished with respect to religious minorities. Jews throughout Persia were forcefully converted to Islam. Ketãb-e Ãnüsï, "The Book of Forced Conversion" by Bãbã'ï ben Loif, is a Judeo-Persian versified account of events that occurred between the reigns of Shãh 'Abbãs I, Shãh ^afi and Shãh 'Abbãs II. Its description of forced converts secretly practicing Judaism while outwardly professing Islam is one of several details corroborated by other sources.

Persecution continued during the reign of Shãh Solaymãn (1666–1694) and Shãh Sol^ãn Hosayn (1694–1722), both of whom lacked strength of character and the ability to rule effectively. The power and influence of the Shi'i clerics increased during this period; both rulers expanded the heavy-handed policies of their predecessors with respect to the Jews, including forced conversion and heavy taxation.

The uncorroborated date of 1669 as the time Ben Shmüel lived and 1684, the date of composition for Shahzãdeh va Sufi, place the poet in this time period. Assuming that he was twenty-five years old in 1669 and forty years old when he composed the work, his dates would be roughly 1644–1704. He rarely provided biographical information in the body of his compositions and the MSS I have consulted yield few facts.

In his non-critical edition of Shahzãdeh va Sufi, Shim^on ^Arkham pointed to a manuscript, dated 1669, connecting the poet with the city of Samarqand.

> And I, Shim'on ^Arkham saw in the book, The Explanation of Isaac, in the commentary on The Binding of Isaac and the midrash of As An Apple Tree Among The Trees of the Forest and the study of Moses' Ascension on High, in a section at the beginning of the book was written, and I quote, "From me, Elisha' ben ha-Rav R. Shmüel, in the city of Samarqand in the year 1669." And, without a doubt, he is the author of this very book.

No one has been able to locate this manuscript since or to find another that corroborates Afkham's finding. For decades, some scholars repeated this assertion that the poet was from Central Asia. Vocabulary specific to this region can be found in the Judeo-Persian composition but the linguistic evidence is not enough to substantiate the claim; rather, due to the nature of MSS copies produced throughout Persia including Central Asia, one could argue either in support of the latter theory or against it.

More importantly, MSS suggest that he was the son of Shmüel Ben Pïr Ahmad, a poet of liturgical hymns who hailed from Kashan. The latter composed a versified Judeo-Persian commentary to Azharot "Warnings" on the positive ^^^^ ^^^ and negative commandments. In MS HU 8* 4374 the last couplet of an extant prologue to the work authored by Ben Shmüel titled, ^^^^^^^^^^ "Introduction to 'Warnings' of Rabi El'azar ben Bakuda," is written:

> Elïsha', the humble, arranged this rhymed prose
> By command of his father.

The passage is immediately followed by "The Book of Warnings" from the wisdom of Shmüel ben Mollã Pïr Ahmad.

The two employ similar language and style in their Hebrew liturgical hymns and Judeo-Persian translations/ commentaries.

The date in extant MSS for Elïsha' ben Shmüel is one of composition, found in the text at the conclusion of Shahzãdeh va Sufi—Hebrew date 5444, corresponding to 1684 CE. The date 1681 at the conclusion of Shmüel ben Pïr Ahmad's versified commentary enumerating the negative commandments places them in the same time period. Other than the possible familial connection to Ben Pïr Ahmad, I found one reference to Ben Shmüel's wife. In the preface to the Hebrew poem titled Elef Alfin, "One Thousand Alefs," the poet says that he composed it following her death. In the latter and another poem immediately following, he gives expression to his grief at her loss.

Ben Shmüel makes no mention of any political development in his compositions but Judeo-Persian authors and poets generally refrain from providing this kind of information. If he did, in fact, hail from Kashan but at some point left to settle in Samarqand, his move may have been motivated by a desire to flee unrest since Bãbã'ï ben Loif says as much in his chronicle of persecution.36 Ben Shmüel and

other Judeo-Persian poets' compositions demonstrate that despite the political and social difficulties facing religious minorities living in Persia from the Safavid period, Jews were not completely isolated. Rather, they continued to identify with Persian-Islamic culture and incorporated it into their literary, intellectual expression.

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Major Themes and Motifs

God as the source of all wisdom is a central theme that underpins almost all other themes in Shahzãdeh va Sufi. According to the text, the beginning of man's wisdom is recognition of God's existence. Two approaches to God are presented. The traditional views God as transcendent and omniscient; to act wisely, man must acknowledge God's existence, fear Him and embrace religious observance. The second and widely expounded approach allows for the individual to cultivate a personal relationship with God, primarily by means of love and devotion. The latter, in line with Jewish and Islamic mysticism, begins with the cultivation of one's intellectual and spiritual capacity to attain proximity to the divine. In the introductory section in praise of God the poet-narrator, Rãgheb, addresses the divine directly, saying, "you know my heart." He goes on to employ rhetorical devices that underscore an intimate relationship between the Creator and his creation including the metaphor of the lover and beloved; hyperbole and fanciful causes for natural phenomena. Similarly, Rãgheb's lit erary account of his spiritual awakening in the introductory section explaining his reasons for composing the work incorporates Sufi and lyric imagery and terminology as found in classical Persian poetry. A voice from heaven encourages him to develop his individual, spiritual consciousness by way of poetic expression.

Moses is the prophet who brings God's wisdom as manifested in the Torah to Israel. He exemplifies the best of human virtues. Moreover, he is designated as superior to all other prophets due to his intimate relationship with God. It is his knowledge of God that endows him with wisdom,148 described in the Judeo-Persian composition with references to Jewish and Islamic sources, as well as Sufism:

> Like the world illuminating sun, he took the path
> Of the light of wisdom, knowledge and truth,
> His lips, the treasury of attestations of faith,
> His heart, full of illumination from the candle of felicity.

The light imagery likening Moses' wisdom and intelligence to the illumination of the sun and the light of a candle is familiar to both traditions. As seen in the work of his predecessors, the latter description is combined with the depiction of Moses observing the three interdependent aspects of Sufi doctrine and practice—shahãdat "God-given law," ^arïqat "the Path to God" and ^Aqqad "the Truth." Likewise, the term 'elm, denoting "knowledge," "wisdom," and "understanding" is here, and in the body of the composition 5: 9–17, depicted as harmonious with the wisdom of the Torah.

The minister-turned-ascetic recounts his conversion to asceticism upon perceiving the world in its true guise. Likewise, in witnessing its harsh realities and the ravages that face man over time, not least disease and death, the prince intuits the importance of pursuing knowledge, "For, one may die quite easily having acquired knowledge." The Sufi instructs him on other attainments worth pursuing, which like wisdom, are of lasting value. The parable of the man who is summoned to repay a debt to the King exemplifies Ben Shmüel's approach to this theme:

> The one benefit of that gold and silver
> Is that he will depart from the world wearing a shroud.
> Kinsmen who were his companions,
> Will deliver him to the grave and turn away.

But kindness, good deeds and the knowledge of the Torah
Will accompany him all the way to God.

The converse of wisdom is nãdãnï or jail lit. "lack of knowledge" "ignorance" also denoting hasty, mindless action. Chapter Seventeen, titled "Haste in Any Task Results in Penitence and Affliction" is illustrated by the anecdote of the dog whose haste and avarice result in grievous bodily harm. Chapter Twenty Four pairs emãqat "foolishness" with this sort of ignorance and reiterates that it leads to misery. The main object of Chapter Thirty One is to illustrate the importance of devoting oneself to the vocation he has mastered; it is important to note that the poor weaver's impulsive behavior is what leads to his demise.

Another prominent theme pervading the Judeo-Persian is the power of eloquent, timely speech. The instruction found in the layers of narrative is conveyed almost exclusively through speech. The prince, endowed with an extraordinary degree of wisdom and spirituality from childhood, intuits the necessity for a wise man to assist him in his intellectual and spiritual development. The Sufi, described as "an eloquent and wise sage," undertakes the dangerous task of educating the pagan king's son. Upon meeting the Sufi, the two immediately assume the role of spiritual guide and student; the prince asks questions and the Sufi responds. The prince, and by extension the readership, is urged to keep company with the wise so as to benefit from their wisdom. Proverbs, anecdotes and parables related by the Sufi are often introduced with "wise men have said," "I heard,"156 or some variation thereof.

There is danger in giving advice when none is solicited. In order for wisdom to be effectively conveyed one's audience must, like the prince, be receptive to acquiring it. The wise are cautious and patient, waiting for just the right opportunity to instruct. In the anecdote of Chapter Sixteen, the minister and the pagan king enjoy a close relationship. The minister, however, silently grieves over the king's lack of worship and agonizes over whether to broach the subject with him. The minister's friends reinforce his fear of the king's wrath and warn him not to advise regarding the matter. He speaks out only after the king has a disturbing dream and is instructed by having witnessed the loving interaction between a destitute couple:

He said to himself, 'Now is the time
To speak with the king
And offer him advice regarding this idol worship,
Sometimes gently and other times firmly.'

Had the minister spoken too soon, his friends' generalizations regarding the intolerance of rulers for advice and their tendency to mete out swift punishment when displeased, could have applied to him.

Throughout the work, the eloquence and argumentative force of an individual's speech determines whether he successfully advances his interests. Sometimes, as in the anecdote of the bird and the gardener, success makes the difference between life and death. When captured by the gardener, the bird manages to evade death by tricking him with promises and alluring speech:

When the bird realized that he intended to kill him,
He spoke in order to trick him;
He said, "If you would only listen to me,
You would receive many outpourings of grace."

As illustrated in this example, eloquent speech is not always employed altruistically but also, if necessary, to manipulate and deceive. Nonetheless, once the cunning bird successfully eludes his killer, he tauntingly relates three legitimate maxims concerning what transpired between them. The Sufi warns the prince about people who trick with their words but he himself engages in a battle of words earlier in the plot and later uses eloquent speech to diplomatically maneuver around the prince's desire to abandon his royal station. Life is often unpredictable and treacherous and one

must know how to be cunning and manipulate others in order to survive. Those who can effectively employ eloquent speech to this end are most likely to successfully navigate through perilous circumstances.

While deception with speech is acceptable even advisable when advocating for oneself, disloyalty is considered a vice. The two friends in Chapter Twenty Seven who plot to trick a wealthy merchant out of his fortune only to scheme against one another both meet their death. A lack of fidelity motivated by greed is the opposite of the all-important moral virtue referred to as morovvat, "gallantry" in the sense of being brave, having good manners and being morally upright.

The transitory nature of this world and everything connected to it is a philosophical concept widely accepted throughout the Near East that complements pious tenets and practices and is another major theme of the composition. To warn man that what he perceives to be reality in this life is not enduring and therefore not real, the world is described in paradoxical terms. The more attached man is to this world, the more he is bound to be disappointed in the face of his mortality. In this vein the world is often associated with terms denoting time and fate, all of which are negatively depicted as inconstant and transitory. The world, time and fate are anthropomorphized and attributed with moral vices such as deceit and fickleness. The individual who recognizes that wisdom originates from God and observes moral and ethical tenets and practices is less likely to be lead astray by the world and its useless desires. In order to effectively convey a negative world view, the JUDEO-PERSIAN poet compared and contrasted it to its antithesis, the world to come. Similarly, the body is contrasted to the soul, outward form to spiritual meaning, as well as the preoccupation with worldly desires to the meditation on and preparation for judgment day.162 Chapter Eight's parable of the chests eloquently conveys the motif of outward appearance or form juxtaposed against inner meaning. It illustrates the importance of not judging people by their outward appearance and instead looking for spiritual substance. Similarly the husk and shell metaphor is used to convey these themes and motifs. Shahzãdeh va Sufi is pragmatic in its didacticism advocating a moderate form of piety, while its pervading world view is consistently and thoroughly negative.

A Hindu Critique of Buddhist Epistemology: Kumarila on Perception: The "Determination of Perception" Chapter of Kumarila Bhatta`s Stokavarttika: Translation and Commentary by John Taber [Routledge (Manohar), 9781138744233]

This is a translation of the chapter on perception (Pratyaksapariccheda) from Kumãnrila Bhatta's magnum opus, the Slokavarttika, which is one of the central texts of the Hindu response to the logico-epistemological school of Buddhist thought. It is crucial for understanding the debates between Hindus and Buddhists about metaphysical, epistemological, and linguistic questions during the classical period.

In an extensive commentary, the author explicates the argument of the Pratyaksapariccheda verse by verse while also showing how it relates to ideas and theories of other Indian philosophers and schools. Notes to the translation and commentary go further into the historical and philosophical background of Kumãnrila's ideas.

The book includes an introduction containing a summary of the history of Indian epistemology, an overview of Kumãnrila's philosophy, and a separate synopsis and analysis of Kumãnrila's text. It is a valuable contribution to the field of Indian philosophical studies.

John Taber is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of New Mexico, where he teaches courses in Asian thought and continental philosophy. His research has focused on the history of Indian philosophy, especially logic, epistemology, and metaphysics during the classical period, 500-1200 CE. He is also the author of Transformative Philosophy: A Study of Sankara, Fichte, and Heidegger.

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A Hindu Critique of Buddhist Epistemology

The Routledge Curzon Hindu Studies Series, published in collaboration with the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, intends primarily the publication of constructive Hindu theological, philosophical, and ethical projects. The focus is on issues and concerns of relevance to readers interested in Hindu traditions and a wider range of related religious concerns that matter in today's world. The Series seeks to promote excellent scholarship and, in relation to it, an open and critical conversation among scholars and the wider audience of interested readers. Though contemporary in its purpose, the Series also recognizes the importance of a contemporary retrieval of the classic texts and ideas, beliefs and practices, of Hindu traditions. One of its goals then is the promotion of fresh conversations about what has mattered traditionally.

It is therefore most fitting that John Taber's A Hindu Critique of Buddhist Epistemology: Kumãrila on Perception should be one of the first volumes in the Series. Mimamsa ritual thinking and exegesis, traditionally listed as one of the six major systems of Hindu theology and philosophy (darsana), is a superlative and uniquely Indian mode of thought. As Taber explains in his own Preface and his Introduction, Kumãnrila Bhatta is not only a leading Mimãmsã thinker, but also one of the leading intellectuals of the Indian tradition, a formidable exemplar of the intellectual rigor, analysis, and argumentation for which India is rightly famous. Although Kumãnrila's Slokavarttika — of which a major chapter is translated and interpreted here — has been available in English for nearly a century, so great a classic deserves the benefit of multiple renderings in English, and indeed has long been in need of a thoroughly accurate translation and elaboration. Taber's painstaking yet lucid translation, accompanied by valuable notes, brings Kurnãnrila's arguments to life, in a way that is accessible even for someone who is not a master of Sanskrit, while still satisfying trained Sanskritists.

As readers unfamiliar with Kumãnrila Bhatta gradually find their way into this demanding but richly rewarding treatise on perception, they may at first wonder whether and how this technical argumentation enhances our knowledge of Hindu religious traditions, even the ritual traditions connected with Mimãmsa. Yet A Hindu Critique of Buddhist Epistemology clearly illumines an important dimension of the Hindu traditions — in part simply by showing us a leading Brahmanical thinker at work, exemplifying how he thought through and deciphered the meantime of reality and our ways of knowing it, and how very elegant Indian religious thinking can be.

A Hindu Critique of Buddhist Epistemology also shows Kumãnrila in determined disputation with Buddhist opponents, arguing the fine points of epistemology; clearly, he is determined to concede nothing to his intellectual adversaries. As Taber points out — and highlights by the book's title — Kumãnrila's critique of Buddhist epistemology is a single extended argument (a treatise in itself, though actually only a part of the full argument that is the Slokavarttika), a stellar example of how a committed intellectual makes his case, stands by his insights and proposals, and probes his adversaries' positions for what can be learned from them and what in his view is mistaken or needs to be corrected. Modern concerns and values have largely moderated our modes of interreligious conversation today, and few of us are likely to proceed so unrelentingly and fiercely as did Kumãnrila. Nevertheless, his intellectual rigor and uncompromising commitment to clear understanding are values A Hindu Critique of Buddhist Epistemology fittingly highlights early on in this Series. Even in a crosscultural and interreligious environment, we need to remember how to argue well with one another.

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For a period of over eight-hundred years, from approximately the fifth century, the time of the composition of the oldest preserved commentaries on the Nyayasutra and Mimamsasutra, to the

thirteenth century, the final demise of Buddhism in India, Indian philosophy experienced its Golden Age. What can be seen as a single, vigorous, and more or less continuous debate took place among the various schools of the three great religious—philosophical traditions, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, concerning the nature of reality and the means of salvation. Many of the problems of metaphysics, epistemology, logic, and philosophy of language with which we are familiar in Western philosophy were discussed at length, with great acumen and insight, by Indian thinkers during this period. Unique solutions to some of these problems, determined by the peculiarities of the historical development of the Indian debate and its broader cultural context, were achieved. Philosophers whose names are still mostly unknown to us in Europe and America — Vatsyayana, Vasubandhu, Bhartrhari, Mallavadin, Dinnaga, Bhavaviveka, Dharmakirti, Kumãrila, Akalanka, Mandanamika, Sankara, Santaraksita, Vacaspatimisra, Udayana, Sri Harsa, Ramanuja, and Abhinavagupta — composed works worthy of being compared with the greatest masterpieces of Western philosophy.

Although our knowledge of this splendid period in the history of human thought has advanced much in the past fifty years, thanks primarily to the pioneering historical and philological work of Erich Frauwallner and his students, and to the interpretive work and philosophical explorations of B. K. Matilal, access to original sources has remained limited. The task of translating the texts of this era has just begun. We do not, for example, have full translations of either Dinnaga's magnum opus, the Pramanasamuccaya, nor of Dharmakirti's, the Pramanavarttika (into a modern European language, that is; both were translated into Tibetan in medieval times), which marked important advances in logic and epistemology and which were the focus of many of the controversies of the classical period. The same goes for the major works of Mallavadin, Bhavaviveka, Akalanka, Mandanamisra, Vacaspatimisra, Abhinavagupta, and Udayana. In fact, critical editions of many of these texts, which should ideally serve as the basis of translations, are not even available. Moreover, those translations that we do have are in many instances rough first attempts. The few high-quality, accurate translations that exist, on the other hand, have in most instances been produced by Indologists for other Indologists and are not easily used by the nonspecialist philosopher, let alone the general reader. (At the same time it must be acknowledged that it has been primarily through the production of philologically rigorous, annotated translations that our knowledge of classical Indian philosophy has advanced.) It would not be an exaggeration to say that our present state of knowledge of classical Indian philosophy is comparable to that of ancient Greek philosophy at the beginning of the Renaissance, when the first Latin translations of Plato's writings were starting to appear.

The present work is an attempt to provide a translation of a central chapter of one of the most influential systems of the classical period that both meets the criteria of an accurate, philologically correct translation and makes the text accessible to the nonspecialist. The text in question is the Pratyaksapariccheda or "Determination of Perception," the fourth chapter of Kumãrila Bhatta's magnum opus, the Slokavarttika, perhaps the greatest attack launched by a Brahmanical thinker against the metaphysical and epistemological theories of the Buddhists. One might doubt whether both of these purposes can be achieved in a single translation; indeed the translator acknowledges a certain hubris in his undertaking. I am well aware that it is an experiment that could easily fail. Nevertheless, I believe that one must make the attempt. Otherwise, if one does not try to make the text accessible outside a small circle of highly trained Indologists, modern philosophers will forever be denied firsthand appreciation of the rich reflection on issues of enduring philosophical interest that it contains. If one, alternatively, does not attempt a rigorously faithful translation, the reader will have been given access to ideas and theories that are not really Kumarila's but only the translator's, and therefore undoubtedly of an inferior sort.

The problem of achieving these two purposes in a single translation has, it is hoped, been solved by assigning them to distinct parts of the work. The Pratyaksapariccheda consists of 254 verses, called

slokas. I have translated the verses more or less literally, based on a semiticritical edition of my own. That is to say, I have produced a new, emended edition based on five existing printed editions and the variants they cite; however, I have not made use of any manuscripts. This version of the Sanskrit text is presented in an Appendix. I have tried to keep the English wording of the verses as close to the original Sanskrit as possible —without, however, using square brackets to set off words and phrases I have had to add myself to complete the syntax or clarify the references of pronouns. I have only in a few cases used square brackets to introduce explanatory phrases that I believe are necessary to make sense of the verses. Then, in a commentary of my own, I have expounded the meaning of the text verse by verse, focusing on the philosophical argument it develops; it is by this means that I have tried to make the text as comprehensible as possible for the more general reader. With the benefit of the commentary the reader should be able to decipher the verses, which by themselves, without the commentary, will be obscure. In the end it is hoped that the reader, combining translated text and commentary, will be able to see clearly the meaning of the text in the verses, while also coming to appreciate to some extent the remarkable precision and terseness of the language in which they are composed.

When learning a Sanskrit philosophical text it is customary in India, even today, not just to pick it up and read it but to study it with a teacher who will provide an oral commentary. In fact, most Indian philosophical texts are too difficult to comprehend without some kind of assistance. The wording of the texts is often elliptical, the arguments subtle, and a great deal of background knowledge — of the meanings of specific technical terms, of the theories of the other schools being attacked, etc. — is assumed. Perhaps the greatest obstacle to Westerners gaining a picture of what Indian philosophy is about is that it is presupposed that its texts will be studied in this way. It is, in any case, surely too much to expect a Western philosopher approaching this literature for the first time to be able to understand it without any of the advantages that Indian students have traditionally had. Therefore, the provision of a commentary along with the translation of an Indian philosophical text seems essential. However, it would defeat the purpose of a commentary if one were simply to translate along with the primary text one of the classical commentaries that has been handed down. That would just multiply the amount of (awkwardly) translated Sanskrit one must slog through. (For an accurate translation of philosophical Sanskrit is, I believe, almost of necessity somewhat awkward — though I am forced to acknowledge certain exceptions to this rule.) It seems better, rather, for the translator to provide his or her own commentary, after thoroughly studying and digesting the available classical ones, and attempt really to translate the traditional understanding of the text into a modern idiom.

Among modern translators of Indian philosophical texts, it was Erich Frauwallner who pioneered this approach, by prefacing his superbly accurate and readable translations with summaries of the main argument of the text. (See especially his Die Philosophic des Buddhismus [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958] and Philosophische Texte des Hinduismus, Nachgelassene Werke II, ed. Gerhard Oberhammer and Chlodwig H. Werba [Vienna: Verlag der Osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992].) Nevertheless, that great scholar chose not to try to explain every unfamiliar concept and theory mentioned or alluded to — no doubt, so as not to place too many demands on the reader, in the hope of making the text accessible to as wide an audience as possible. As a result, however, he invariably, and intentionally, left certain aspects of the arguments of the texts he translated unexplained. Since, for the philosopher, who is above all interested in the validity of the theories she studies, the details of the text, especially the subtler twists and turns of its argument, are crucial, I have, in attempting to make the text at hand accessible to philosophers — for, after all, it is a philosophical text — gone a step farther than Frauwallner and attempted to provide a commentary that leaves very few, if any, stones unturned. That is to say, I have followed out its argument in every detail, ignoring no feature that could affect its cogency or soundness, and

explaining to the best of my ability every concept and theory mentioned or alluded to that is relevant to understanding the context and import of the argument.

In this endeavor I have been fortunate to have had access to two other invaluable sources of information besides the classical commentaries, namely, two scholars with whom I read and discussed the Pratyaksapariccheda in Chennai (Madras) in the summer of 1997: Prof. J. Venkatarãma Sãstri of Madras Sanskrit College and Prof. K. Srinivasan of Vivekananda College. The former, a noted Mimãrpsaka (specialist in Kumãrila's school, the Purva Mimamsa), gave a superbly lucid, rigorous oral commentary on verses 52-86 and 111-185 of the text, in sessions attended by both Dr Srinivasan and me. Afterwards, in separate sessions, Dr Srinivasan and I reviewed the verses covered by Professor Venkatarãma Sãstri and discussed further verses. (The young Japanese scholar Kei Kataoka was also present at some of these sessions and made helpful suggestions.) However, with only a few exceptions, I have not attempted in my commentary to distinguish the contributions of Professors Venkatarama Sãstri and Srinivasan from those of the classical commentaries of Umbeka, Pãrthasãrathimira, and Sucaritamisra, which I have also studied in detail; nor, for that matter, have I gone into the, for the most part, subtle differences between the classical commentaries. Rather, I have tried to synthesize all that I have read and heard into one smooth-flowing discourse. Nevertheless, certainly much of whatever understanding I have achieved of the Pratyaksapariccheda is due to the help of these two superb scholars.

In addition to a commentary on the translated verses I have provided some notes in which I attempt to illuminate the historical and philosophical background of the text. I have tried to keep these to a minimum, mentioning what I feel to be only the most essential points and avoiding digressions into disputed questions, so as not to encumber the work with too much scholarly apparatus. Nevertheless, even as they are, I fear that philosophers will find them too detailed and Indianists will find them incomplete. The latter may be particularly disappointed that I have not included detailed justifications of my choices of variant readings and translations of difficult terms and phrases, but I believe that, for the most part, my readings and translations will be justified implicitly by whatever sense I have been able to make of the text in my commentary.

I have also, in the introduction to the translation, attempted to give an overview of the philosophical and historical background of some of the issues discussed in the Pratyaksapariccheda, in particular, the problem of whether perception can be "conceptualized." Essentially, this is the problem of whether perceptual judgements, in which we identify objects as belonging to certain types or as possessed of certain properties — for example, "That is a cow," "The cat is on the mat," "The book is red" — are truly perceptual in nature, or whether only the bare, non-conceptualized given is the proper object of perception, perceptual judgements involving a rather substantial contribution by the mind (as opposed to just the senses). I also draw what I take to be some rather obvious connections to developments in contemporary Anglo-American philosophy pertaining to this issue. Here, again, Indologists might be inclined to feel that I have been too ambitious in trying to synthesize developments in Indian thought that extend over centuries, and in offering summary interpretations of theories that, in their details and evolution, are not completely understood — primarily because most of the texts in which such theories are expounded still await proper editing, analysis, and translation. Here, however, I must say that, having perused the extant secondary literature on the problem of conceptualized versus nonconceptualized perception in Indian philosophy — what there is of it — I have found that much of it seems lost in the details; except for the work of Matilal, it generally conveys little sense of what the debate is really about. Surely we should not have to wait until every Indian epistemological text has been philologically processed before we are permitted to make generalizations about Indian epistemology. I see nothing wrong in working from the top down as we work from the bottom up, that is to say, trying to sketch maps of extended areas of Indian philosophical thought as we continue to explore the terrain. Certainly, the maps — our broader

interpretations and theories — will have to be revised continually as we proceed, but that is the nature of any scientific enterprise.

The Slokavarttika, including the Pratyaksapariccheda chapter, was first translated nearly a hundred years ago by the great polymath Ganganatha Jha (Calcutta: Biblioteca Indica, 1900-1909; rpt. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1983). That translation represents an important scholarly achievement in that it is a complete translation of the Slokavarttika and thus attempts to give the modern reader a glimpse of Kumãrila's entire system. Although it contains, verse by verse, numerous mistakes, it also construes, sometimes quite felicitously, many difficult passages; overall it reflects a vast knowledge of Mimamsa philosophy. Its main defect, however, is that, supplied with only occasional footnotes based on the classical commentaries, not a sustained commentary of its own, it does not convey a coherent sense of Kumãrila's argument by itself. One must, in fact, read it together with the original Sanskrit text in order to benefit from it. (Alas, this can be said of most of the philologically correct translations of Indian philosophical texts we have today!) Thus, although Jha's translation serves as an invaluable aid for Indologists (and has indeed served as such for this translator), a new translation, if only of a fraction of the material Jha ambitiously took on, is clearly in order.

In the end, of course, a translation, or at least one that is more or less faithful to the original, cannot presume to remove every vestige of foreignness from a text. Nor, perhaps, should it. It would, in the first place, be highly misleading to give the impression that Indian philosophical theories can be completely separated from the forms of expression in which they are couched. A text in verse, at least, even if composed in a simple sing-song meter like the anustubh (the meter of the sloka), and even if it presents arguments like any proper philosophical text, will still amount to a quite different kind of discourse from a Western treatise in prose. In particular, it will have more the air of an authoritative "saying"; the author may rely as much on the art and power of his language to impress and persuade as on the force of his argument. (Surely what is stated so elegantly must be true!) More importantly, although many Indian concepts may be translated directly into Western ones, many others need to be explained in terms of indigenous concepts, which are in turn to be explained by other indigenous concepts, and so on. The scholar who studies a foreign philosophical text like the Slokavarttika will in the end find herself, of necessity, learning to navigate in new waters. Enlightened by what she sees there, she returns home, somehow changed, somehow looking upon old things in a new way; however, she cannot bring what she has seen back with her. A successful translation of a text like the Slokavarttika is perhaps one that will just assist the reader in feeling more comfortable in foreign surroundings.

The subtitle of this work alludes to the seminal study of the first chapter of Dinnaga's Pramanasamuccaya by Masaaki Hattori, published in the Harvard Oriental Series in 1965: Dignaga, On Perception. By making such an allusion I do not pretend that the present work is comparable in scholarship to Hattori's. In fact, I am greatly indebted to Professor Hattori for much of my knowledge of the logico-epistemological school of Buddhist philosophy; without knowledge of Tibetan myself, I have obviously relied heavily on his translation of the Pramanasamuccaya from the Tibetan translations in which it has been preserved. Nor, obviously, have I used Hattori's work as a model. The arrangement of that study, with its deeply learned, but rather dense historical and philological notes in the back (comprising twice as many pages as the translation and chock full of Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese), and without a commentary that continuously traces the thread of the argument, makes it difficult for the nonspecialist to use. The significance of the allusion, rather; is as if to say: having allowed Dinnaga to present the Buddhist point of view on various epistemological and metaphysical issues, as well as trenchant criticisms of Brahmanical — that is, essentially, Hindu —theories of perception, it is now Kumãrila's turn to respond on behalf of his and the other Brahmanical schools. After more than thirty-five years of silence, it is now time for an orthodox thinker to be heard speaking in defense of his tradition. Then we shall see, as I believe — and it is

hoped that the reader will excuse this hint of partisanship on my part — that the Buddhist arguments are not nearly as clever as they first appear!

A translation of a text on epistemology might seem an odd choice for a series dedicated to fostering cross-cultural conversation between India and the West. Yet the study of problems of knowledge, in both India and the West, has always been related to deeper issues. In European philosophy, the investigation of the faculties of human knowledge and their limits, which began with the British Empiricists and culminated with Kant, ultimately had to do with the critical evaluation of "the pretense of reason," that is, the claim that the human mind can reach beyond experience and ascertain such things as the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the freedom of the will. So in Indian philosophy, questions about "the means of knowledge" (pramanas), even about so specific a faculty as perception, were to a great extent concerned with whether it is possible for humans to know, independently of scripture, the means of achieving happiness in this life and salvation in the next, that is, Dharma or righteousness — a matter which, Indians believe, also lies beyond the experience of ordinary humans. We shall see that this was the explicit context for Kumãrila's inquiry into the nature of perception. In India, more particularly, epistemology was the field upon which the debate over the authority of scripture was played out. The Brahmanical schools used epistemological arguments to defend the Veda, believed by them to be either an eternal, authorless document or the teachings of God, and challenged the scriptures of the heterodox traditions of Buddhism and Jainism, which were delivered by human teachers; the Jainas and Buddhists did the opposite. We also find epistemological questions — for example, the question concerning the relative strength ofperception and scripture—at the heart of controversies between the different Vedãnta traditions, Advaita, Dvaita, and Visista Advaita.

The study of Indian epistemology, then, in the final analysis is the study of traditions in conflict over fundamental presuppositions. It is a study in cross-traditional, if not cross-cultural, debate. A debate, of course, is not the same thing as a conversation. A conversation might be considered a friendly give-andtitake guided by an interest in achieving truth or understanding, or both. A debate may not be friendly at all, and may not be motivated by a concern to arrive at mutual recognition of the truth or understanding. Rather, it is a way of grappling with the Other in a contest governed by clearly defined rules, that is, a way of coming to terms with the Other in an arena where power is controlled and mediated in specific ways. The mediation of power in the arena of debate is through reason, and it is the visibility of reason as arbiter that distinguishes debate from all other forms of conflict. As a contest that is mediated by reason and presents evidence and logic as the criteria for victory or defeat, debate encourages and supports the growth of rational inquiry and reflection. Although Indian philosophical debates sometimes degenerated into polemics, for the most part they were conducted on a very high level. Participants were stimulated to achieve new insights and more compelling statements of their views. The greatest discoveries of Indian philosophy were achieved in the context of heated, highly charged debate. Debate may never reach resolution. In medieval India debates between the Buddhists and the Brahmins were publicly staged, as a form of entertainment. The losers were compelled to renounce their religion — which after all had been proven false — and convert to the other side. Nevertheless, short of such drastic consequences, debate is often an effective means for opposing camps to engage each other, resist and challenge each other, without coercion or domination. Although understanding, once again, is never guaranteed — however, it can also never be ruled out — mutual destruction is at least usually avoided. And yet, a kind of understanding — at the very least, mutual respect — also often emerges when two parties, offering clear reasons for their views, remain true to their convictions. Understanding between humans should not be thought of just as the convergence of beliefs. In any case, sometimes it is unrealistic to think that we can arrive at understanding in the sense of a perfect seeing eye-to-eye and dispelling of conflict. Yet debate always remains a viable form of dialogue, a sphere in which opposing parties must still listen and respond to each other, and be held accountable for their views. Debate is a way

for adversaries to live together in creative tension. Perhaps it is not the best way, but it is one that humans have employed for centuries. Unfortunately, it is a method we seem to have forgotten how to practice today. <>

KNOWING ILLUSION: BRINGING A TIBETAN DEBATE INTO CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSE: VOLUME I: A PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORY OF THE DEBATE by The Yakherds [Oxford University Press, 9780197603628

KNOWING ILLUSION: BRINGING A TIBETAN DEBATE INTO CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSE: VOLUME II: TRANSLATIONS by The Yakherds [Oxford University Press, 9780197603673]

- The first in-depth study of this essential debate
- Draws explicit connections to contemporary epistemology
- Assembles the joint work of a diverse team of scholars

Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) is by any measure the single most influential philosopher in Tibetan history. His articulation of Prasangika Madhyamaka, and his interpretation of the 7th Century Indian philosopher Candrakirti's interpretation of Madhyamaka is the foundation for the understanding of that philosophical system in the Geluk school in Tibet. Tsongkhapa argues that Candrakirti shows that we can integrate the Madhyamaka doctrine of the two truths, and of the ultimate emptiness of all phenomena with a robust epistemology that explains how we can know both conventional and ultimate truth and distinguish truth from falsity within the conventional world.

The Sakya scholar Taktsang Lotsawa (born 1405) published the first systematic critique of Tsongkhapa's system. In the fifth chapter of his Freedom from Extremes Accomplished through Comprehensive Knowledge of Philosophy, Taktsang attacks Tsongkhapa's understanding of Candrakirti and the cogency of integrating Prasangika Madhyamaka with any epistemology. This attack launches a debate between Geluk scholars on the one hand and Sakya and Kagyu scholars on the other regarding the proper understanding of this philosophical school and the place of epistemology in the Madhyamaka program. This debate raged with great ferocity from the 15th through the 18th centuries, and continues still today.

The two volumes of Knowing Illusion study that debate and present translations of the most important texts produced in that context. Volume I: A Philosophical History of the Debate provides historical and philosophical background for this dispute and elucidates the philosophical issues at stake in the debate, exploring the principal arguments advanced by the principals on both sides, and setting them in historical context. This volume examines the ways in which the debate raises issues that are relevant to contemporary debates in epistemology, and concludes with two contributions by contemporary Tibetan scholars, one on each side of the debate.

Authors: THE YAKHERDS

The Yakherds is a collective of scholars in Philosophy and Buddhist Studies based in the USA, India, Australia, Nepal, and Germany, and comprises both Western and Tibetan scholars. Between

them, they have translated, edited, and written over 70 books and several hundred articles and reviews, including numerous important translations of Tibetan philosophical texts and books on Buddhist philosophy.

Contributors:

José Ignacio Cabezón, Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies and Dalai Lama Professor of Tibetan Buddhism and Cultural Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

Ryan Conlon, doctoral student in Classical Indology at the University of Hamburg

Thomas Doctor, Associate Professor, Rangjung Yeshe Institute

Douglas Duckworth, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Religion, Temple University

Jed Forman, doctoral candidate in Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

Jay L. Garfield, Doris Silbert Professor in the Humanities, Professor of Philosophy, Logic and Buddhist Studies and Director of the Buddhist Studies and Logic programs, Smith College.

John Powers, Professor in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Deakin University

Sonam Thakchöe, Senior Philosophy Lecturer, University of Tasmania

Tashi Tsering, Professor and Dean of Sakya Studies, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies

Yeshes Thabkhas, Professor Emeritus of Indian Buddhist Philosophy, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies

CONTENTS VOLUME ONE

CONTENTS VOLUME TWO

This volume is a polygraph (as opposed to a monograph), a collaboration to which each member contributed. These contributions were then augmented, revised, and integrated with the work of the others. The first ten chapters represent the collective effort of the entire group. The consistency in style, voice, and translation, and the continuity of the argument, produced by a team of diverse scholars, yields a text that we believe is far better than anything that any one of us— or even any subset of our collective— could have produced. The final two chapters are a bit different. They are contributions by two traditionally educated monastic scholars in our collective to the debate we address. While the group has edited these essays and ensured consistency of style and translation choices with the remainder of the book, these two final sections represent the views of these scholars themselves and the living traditions they represent. For this reason, their names appear on those chapters.

As these essays indicate, the debates and texts we consider in this volume and in the volume of translations that accompanies it continue to inspire dispute and exegesis, and will continue to do so in the future. These disputes raise issues that go to the very heart of Buddhist thought and practice— emerging over the course of millennia in India and Tibet, they have engaged some of the best minds of South Asian Buddhism. They are also, as the reader will see, directly relevant to contemporary debates in epistemology.

The international group that produced this book— José Cabezón, Ryan Conlon, Thomas Doctor, Douglas Duckworth, Jed Forman, Jay Garfield, John Powers, Sonam Thakchöe, Tashi Tsering, and Geshé Yeshes Thabkhas— has adopted the collective name "Yakherds," an allusion to the Cowherds, who produced a groundbreaking collaborative study of the two truths, Moonshadows: Conventional Truth in Buddhist Philosophy (Cowherds 2011) and of Buddhist ethics, Moonpaths: Ethics and Emptiness (Cowherds 2015). The Cowherds' work demonstrates the usefulness of this methodology in Buddhist Studies and cross- cultural philosophy. Two Cowherds— Sonam Thakchöe and Jay Garfield— are also members of our present collective. In consideration of the fact that this

book examines Tibetan debates regarding the two truths that have their origins in India, "Yakherds" (gyag rdzi) suggested itself as a Tibetan equivalent of the Indic "Cowherds" (gopāla).

The name "Cowherds" is an allusion to a famous passage in Candrakïrti's Autocommentary on Introduction to the Middle Way in which he denounces the confused thinking of philosophers who engage in niggling disputes regarding grammar, epistemology, and ontology. He contrasts this philosophical thinking with the pragmatic, evidence- based perspectives of ordinary, uneducated people. He claims that his approach to philosophy accords with the understanding of the latter group, but that philosophers— with their convoluted and internally inconsistent systems and hair-splitting dialectics— are unable to grasp this. He declares that his perspective is concordant with "what even people like cowherds and women recognize."

Despite the sexism encoded in Candrakïrti's phrase, it highlights the differences between how the world appears to philosophers versus how it is perceived by ordinary people unconcerned with academic philosophical debates and theses. In ancient India, women were seldom educated, and cowherds were the equivalent of today's "man in the street" (or in the pasture), whose knowledge of the world is derived from empirical observation and recognition of patterns and regularities. These are used to make pragmatic decisions (such as when to move cows into the fields, and when to bring them home) that are uninflected by the sorts of abstractions that engage philosophers when they are pursuing their craft. Candrakïrti, as we will see, claims to accept all of the epistemic instruments used by ordinary people (including perception, inference, testimony, and analogy), and to do so in a manner that is consistent with mundane epistemological practices. But this apparently down- to- earth approach to epistemic warrant— to understanding what justifies assertions— sparked heated debates in India, which continued and were expanded in Tibet. Some of the most philosophically compelling of these debates constitute the subject matter of the present volume.

This volume is accompanied by a separate volume of translations of the texts central to this debate. Those translations were produced by individual Yakherds, but each was read, edited, and approved by the entire collective. We urge the reader to consult that volume, as the texts themselves are classics of world philosophy, and the account we offer here will come to life when one reads these foundational treatises.

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Philosophy advances through debate. The frisson of critique, revision, defense, and counterargument generates the sparks of insight that illuminate the nature of knowledge, of reality, and of life. Buddhist philosophy is no exception to this rule, and the Buddhist tradition has always provided the context for lively debate, both between Buddhists and their non-Buddhist interlocutors, and— often with greater ferocity— among Buddhists themselves.

Despite the differences among the world's great philosophical traditions, we often find that debates in one tradition are relevant to questions asked in another. This is hardly surprising. After all, when reflective individuals ask about the fundamental nature of reality, about how knowledge is possible, and about how to lead a good life, we expect convergence— if not necessarily regarding the answers to these questions— at least regarding the questions themselves, and about the range of answers that one might offer to them. And we can often achieve deeper insight into philosophical traditions and disputes by juxtaposing relevantly similar debates from different traditions, allowing each to see what it might have missed, or how its insights are expressed elsewhere.

It is in this spirit of dialogue for mutual benefit that we present a debate concerning epistemology and its relation to metaphysics. A great deal of philosophical energy was devoted to this debate in Tibet from the mid- fifteenth century through the eighteenth century, and it remains active today. As we examine this controversy, we see philosophical progress evinced in the development and the

sharpening of insights in committed philosophical contest. We also see questions raised regarding the relationship between knowledge and error and the status of fictional reality. The arguments we study in this book also address important questions concerning whether justification is even possible in the context of human fallibility and in the absence of any foundations of being or of knowledge.

These questions are relevant to the history of epistemology in the European tradition as well, and to contemporary epistemology. We hope that those who work in this tradition will find the ways that Tibetan scholars prosecuted these issues to be valuable. They are close enough to home to be relevant, and distant enough to provide useful perspective. We also hope that colleagues in Buddhist Studies will benefit from a philosophical analysis of this interchange that sheds light on what otherwise might seem like mere doctrinal disagreements.

The debate in question arises from a section in the work of the fifteenth-century Tibetan Sakya (Sa skya) scholar Taktsang Lotsawa Sherap Rinchen (sTag tshang Lo tsã ba Shes rab rin chen, 1405–1477): his doxographical treatise, Freedom from Extremes Accomplished through Comprehensive Knowledge of Philosophy. A key section, entitled Eighteen Great Contradictions, launches a sustained attack on the interpretation of Madhyamaka by one of the most influential philosophers in the Tibetan tradition, and forefather of the Geluk (dGe lugs) order.

As the reader will see, Taktsang charges Tsongkhapa (Tsong kha pa bLo bzang grags pa, 1357– 1419) with creating an incoherent mélange of antifoundationalist Prãsa^gika Madhyamaka ontology mixed with an epistemology derived in part from the work of Dharmakïrti (c. seventh century). Taktsang also charges Tsongkhapa with inconsistently accepting both that the world we inhabit is thoroughly deceptive— appearing in a way that does not reflect its actual status— and that the same world is something about which we can have unerring knowledge. Since to be nonerring is to be nondeceptive (mi bslu ba), Taktsang charges that this commitment is in tension with the claim that the world itself is deceptive (bslu ba). These issues, he points out, are relevant not only to ordinary epistemological investigation but also to the nature of buddhahood and the path to it, as well as to understanding normativity itself.

These charges ignited a sustained debate that occupied some of the greatest philosophical minds of Tibet. Tsongkhapa's Geluk followers defended his position. Scholars such as the first Panchen Lama, Losang Chökyi Gyaltsen (Pa^ chen bLo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1567– 1662), Jamyang Shepa ('Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje Ngag dbang brtson 'grus, 1648– 1721/ 2), and Purchok (Phur bu lcog Ngag dbang byams pa, 1682– 1762)— drawing on both Tsongkhapa's own work and that of his disciple Khedrupjé (mKhas grub rje dGe legs dpal bzang, 1385– 1438)— argue with great precision that nonfoundationalist epistemic warrants and genuine knowledge of deceptive appearances are possible in a Prãsa^gika Madhyamaka framework.

Taktsang's banner was taken up in the Kagyü (bKa' brgyud) tradition by scholars such as the eighth and ninth Karmapas, Mikyö Dorjé (Mi bskyod rdo rje, 1507– 1554) and Wangchuk Dorjé (dBang phyug rdo rje, 1556– 1603), who contend that Prãsa^gika Madhyamaka entails a thoroughgoing skepticism. For this reason, they argue that it cannot be represented as a philosophical system at all, since a Prãsa^gika cannot claim to know anything. At issue, we will see, is whether a normative account of epistemological practice is even coherent given the fallibility of human perceptions and cognitions and the impossibility of providing foundations for knowledge.

This debate, like most great philosophical disputes, has a backstory, and like most controversies in scholastic traditions such as those of Western and Tibetan philosophy, that backstory includes disagreements regarding interpretation and commentarial practice. In this case, the story begins with classical Indian discussions regarding how to interpret Nãgãrjuna (c. second century) and ramifies into Tibetan disputes regarding how to interpret those interpretations.

Nãgãrjuna's Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way (Mülamadhyamakakãrikã) is the foundational text of the Madhyamaka school. It was subject to divergent interpretations, which came to be systematized by Tibetan doxographers using the terms Svãtantrika and Prãsaagika— those who assert their own propositions through probative arguments and those who only use reductio arguments to refute their opponents, respectively.

This distinction in rhetorical and hermeneutical strategy is understood by some Tibetan commentators to reflect a deeper set of ontological and epistemological commitments. In particular, many Tibetans argue that Svãtantrikas are committed to the idea that— at least conventionally, although not ultimately— entities have distinguishing characteristics, or essences. Prãsa^gikas, by contrast, deny that talking about the fundamental nature of anything makes sense even conventionally. Some argue that while Svãtantrikas are willing to make claims about the nature of reality, and are willing to justify those claims, Prãsa^gikas recuse themselves from making any such claims and from justifying any assertions.

While Tibetan exegetes generally agree that the Prãsa^gika reading associated with Nãgãrjuna's commentators Buddhapãlita (c. 470– 550) and Candrakïrti (c. 600– 650)3 is superior to the Svãtantrika interpretation articulated by his other major commentator, Bhãviveka (c. 500– 560), Tibetan philosophers disagree among themselves regarding how to interpret Candrakïrti's reading and who follows him most faithfully. This is in part because of a tension in Candrakïrti's own position. On the one hand, he emphasizes the illusory nature of the conventional world and the inexpressibility of ultimate truth— thus suggesting a kind of quietism about both domains of truth. On the other hand, he insists on the appropriateness of conventional epistemic practices to life in the conventional world, suggesting the possibility of a positive epistemology.4 Different Tibetan exegetes emphasized each side of this position, and all of them attempt to reconcile these commitments. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, scholars such as Patsap Nyima Drakpa (Pa tshab Nyi ma grags pa, b. 1055), Chapa Chökyi Sengé (Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge, 1109– 1169), and Mabja Jangchup Tsöndrü (rMa bya Byang chub brtson 'grus, d. 1185) debated the interpretation of Candrakïrti, and we will see that those analyses constitute an important context for the controversy that Taktstang instigates in his critique of Tsongkhapa.

Just as this fifteenth- to eighteenth- century debate has antecedents in classical India and in eleventh- to twelfth- century Tibet, it continues today. Contemporary Sakya and Kagyü scholars press lines of attack consistent with those of Taktsang against Tsongkhapa's epistemological and ontological framework, and Geluk scholars continue to defend it. We will see two late moments in that debate in the concluding chapters of this volume. We also suspect that as Western philosophers read this literature, this dispute will have echoes in contemporary Anglophone philosophy.

This book is part of a two- volume set. The second volume contains new translations of several of the principal texts from the Tibetan debate itself, and we urge readers interested in this material to read those treatises. This volume is our own study of the philosophical controversies initiated by Taktsang, their antecedents, and how they played out in Tibetan intellectual circles. We begin with a broad survey of the debate itself, its context, and its Tibetan history. We then turn to an examination of Candrakïrti's interpretation of Madhyamaka and its reception in Tibet, preparatory to a characterization of the philosophical issues at stake in these discussions.

Having laid the groundwork, we turn to the controversy itself, first articulating the views of Tsongkhapa's disciple Khedrupjé on the compatibility of Madhyamaka and epistemology, and then to Taktsang's critique. This leads in turn to a consideration of the earliest Geluk responses to Taktsang, followed by the Kagyü reply to Geluk understandings. We conclude our account of the historical debate with Purchok's defense of Tsongkhapa, the last of the principal texts in this premodern literature. The volume ends with one contemporary Geluk and one contemporary Sakya essay on

these issues. These analyses do not study the history of this debate, but rather continue it in a contemporary Tibetan voice, demonstrating the fact that the Tibetan philosophical tradition is very much alive and that this debate continues to excite interest among Tibetan scholars.

We invite readers to this philosophical feast, comprising both a set of texts hitherto unavailable in any Western language and a study intended to bring them into conversation with the contemporary philosophical world. <>

Questioning The Buddha: A Selection of Twenty-Five Sutras by Peter Skilling, Foreword by Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse [Wisdom Publications, 9781614293934]

In the forty-five years the Buddha spent traversing northern India, he shared his wisdom with everyone from beggar women to kings. Hundreds of his discourses, or sutras, were preserved by his followers, first orally and later in written form. Around thirteen hundred years after the Buddha's enlightenment, the sutras were translated into the Tibetan language, where they have been preserved ever since. To date, only a fraction of these have been made available in English. **Questioning the Buddha** brings the reader directly into the literary treasure of the Tibetan canon with thoroughly annotated translations of twenty-five different sutras. Often these texts, many translated here in full for the first time, begin with an encounter in which someone poses a question to the Buddha.

Peter Skilling, an authority on early Buddhist epigraphy, archaeology, and textual traditions, has been immersed in the Buddhist scriptures of diverse traditions for nearly half a century. In this volume, he draws on his deep and extensive research to render these ancient teachings in a fresh and precise language. His introduction is a fascinating history of the Buddhist sutras, including the transition from oral to written form, the rise of Mahayana literature, the transmission to Tibet, the development of canons, and a look at some of the pioneers of sutra study in the West.

Reviews

"In this volume, prose and verse join beautifully to celebrate the Dharma. The selections show how rich, how diverse, and how wonderful the Kangyur is—and how little we know about it." **—from the foreword by Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse**

"A stimulating and delightfully readable book . . . Peter Skilling is probably the most versatile scholar of Buddhology today, equally conversant with philosophy, history, ritual, doctrine, art, and iconography. He has selected from the Tibetan twenty-five sutras that were lost in India long ago, which he has translated into elegant English. His introduction and first two appendixes together form a most lucid and up-to-date discussion of Buddhist thought that should be compulsory reading in any field of Buddhology." **—Pratapaditya Pal**, author of *Quest for Coomaraswamy: A Life in the Arts*

"Peter Skilling's selection of Buddhist sutras comes with an informative introduction, a meticulous exploration of sources, and an attractive and reliable rendering in English. Textual discoveries and expositions of this quality are a substantial contribution to Buddhist studies." **—Romila Thapar**, professor emerita of history, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

"A magnificent scholar and a magnificent human being, Peter Skilling has always been an example for us all, for his unbounded erudition combined with an unflinching modesty. This precious volume will

serve as a reference and an inspiration to present and future generations." **—Matthieu Ricard**, Shechen Monastery, Nepal

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About the Author

This book is a collection, an anthology, of twenty-five sutras translated from the Tibetan Kanjur. The Kanjur is one of the world's three great collections of Buddhist scripture: the Tibetan, the Chinese, and the Pali canons. The collected teachings of the Buddha translated into Tibetan, the Kanjur is made up of Indian texts translated by teams of learned Indian and Tibetan scholars over a period from about twelve to nineteen centuries after the Buddha's nirvana (between the eighth and about the fourteenth centuries CE). Many of these texts are lost in the original Indic languages and were not translated into Chinese or any other language. That is, they are preserved only in Tibetan. Even when a particular text does exist in Sanskrit or in Chinese translation, the Tibetan translation represents a particular moment in the life of the text. Even when the Tibetan, Sanskrit, and Chinese are close, they are not, and cannot be, identical. They are different recensions, different iterations, of what is ideally the same text.

Let us reflect on this: The Tibetan Kanjur preserves accurate translations of approximately 270 Buddhist sutra texts, some of them extremely long, the collaborative work of Indian and Tibetan scholars. This major and important collection of Indian texts has been preserved in Tibetan but has scarcely been translated into English or other modern languages. This lack of translation leaves a large lacuna in the materials available for the global study of Buddhist history, literature, philology, and philosophy. This raises the question: Can we appreciate or evaluate Indian Buddhist literature without taking account of the Tibetan corpus? Can we write satisfactory histories of Indian Buddhist literature without knowing more about the Tibetan collections?

We human beings are fond of certainties and conclusions. Nearly all the details of the history of Buddhist literature are, however, uncertain—date, authorship, provenance, production, circulation, reception—all of them. From the beginning, shortly after the Master's great decease, his followers redacted his teachings orally and organized them orally, through memorization and recitation. The oral canon developed for three or four hundred years before it began to be written down. I suspect that the process of writing started out with individual texts or groups of texts, rather than with single projects to transfer a complete Tripitaka from oral to written medium in a single go, despite the fact that some of the chronicles and their modern interpreters might suggest so.

Buddhist history begins with narratives of orality, and these narratives challenge, or even render invalid, the received notions of "prehistory" and "history." Prehistory is defined as the period before the development of writing systems and written records. This definition is inadequate insofar as it assumes that the only reliable history is written history, and it ignores or devalues other technologies of history, such as oral records or the study of the material record. Many societies have rich oral histories, and well into the twentieth century, indigenous communities from Borneo to Baffin Island preserved oral records that not only related a community's longue durée but also mapped their territories or known worlds in oral geographies of bodies of water, plains, mountains, and sacred sites—myths, stories, and songs that celebrate the features and life of the land. Today we look at these vanishing or vanished oralities as great and nearly impossible feats of memory, but is this not because our own memories, our own mental capacities and abilities, have changed? They have shrunk, they have withered, and we begin, or are already well on the way to, complacently outsourcing the work of memory to commercial conglomerates. These oralities were a vital part of the identity and the soul of the people. It may seem ironic, but it is good fortune that these records from the dawn of humankind's literary accomplishments were eventually recorded in writing, before the practices of orality died out or were altered by the encounter with modernity. The stories were not simply written down: they were crafted and refashioned into the written media of sagas and epics. Writing inevitably transforms.

Early Buddhist texts share in the poetry of prehistory. The Italian word for history is storia, and the French and English words for history also mean "story": when all is said, history is but a story, a tale told by the ignorant, full of sound and fury, signifying less than we fondly imagine. This story starts from an unknowable beginning (in Sanskrit, anavaragra), and its pre- orproto-phases are scarcely retrievable. No specimens of everyday writing—notes, drafts, letters, diaries—survive from the earliest periods of written culture in South Asia, but as decades and centuries passed, burgeoning corpora of inscriptions, poems, dramas, and religious texts were produced. No early Indian books survive in India itself; it is an anomaly that the earliest Indian manuscripts come from outside of India proper, from Gandhãra, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. This is not a result of social convulsions—although these have certainly taken their toll—but of the relentless erosion of time. Whenever dynastic or economic centers declined, relocated, or disappeared, so also cities, markets, trade routes, and religious centers declined, relocated, or disappeared, and this happened not just once or twice but periodically and repeatedly. Libraries and library cultures need steady support systems; they need long-term patronage and constant maintenance. What happened to the books and manuscripts when monasteries or cultural centers were abandoned? We do not know.

This story has been told before, and many times. In the discussion of Buddhist history that follows, I prefer to let the old warhorses rest in their stables and avoid the familiar dichotomies of "Hinayãna/Sravakayãna/ early Buddhism" versus "later Buddhism/Mahãyãna: not to speak of the threefold division of "Srãvakayãna/Mahãyãna/Vajrayãna." I do not see much point in repeating the familiar narratives, the "well-worn plots and set-piece battles" of the orthodox accounts. Buddhism wears robes of many colors, and it loses a lot when painted in dull monochromes or when forced into stark dualities or tripartite periodizations. I may use an unfamiliar terminology, coupling, for example, Vaitulya with Mahãyãna, or describing texts as dharmaparyãya rather than sutra.' There are reasons for these choices, which I mention further on. Generally speaking, I hope to open new ways of investigating early Buddhist history by bringing attention to ancient but lesser-used categories than those that have been adopted in modern Buddhist studies. I aim for a holistic account that focuses on the shared core rather than easy segmentations into discrete "sects" or broad periodizations into Hinayãna, Mahãyãna, and Vajrayãna. Buddhist schools of thought developed not in isolation but in conversation and competition.

Later in this introduction, I consider how Buddhist texts were transmitted, how they progressed from the spoken to the written word, from Indian language "originals" to Tibetan translations, how a body of Buddhist texts migrated across the Himalayas and settled down in a very different language family.' This is an enormously complicated story. Originating in deep orality, it is a tale without a text, a historical drama without a script, and this is not the place to tell the long and fascinating storia, even if I knew how. I hope to provide an up-to-date background for readers, and to this end I try to give a no-frills account taking into consideration the recent manuscript discoveries that have made a big change in how we look at Buddhist history

A study like this ought to pay homage to the trope of incomplete knowledge and point out that the field and the interpretations of the field are in a state of perpetual flux, and as a result, "our knowledge is incomplete." This trope is accurate enough, because knowledge can never be complete. Knowledge always strives for perfection. Here I am writing about the Kanjur, about the translation of twenty-five out of a total of about 270 sutras, a handful of leaves in the great and ancient forest of the Buddha's teachings. My knowledge, my perspective, cannot be complete, and I am not inclined to pretend to an omniscient command of the field. The ancients expressed the fullness, the gestalt of the teachings of the Buddha, as "84,000 units of teaching." But, as the Fortunate One points out to Sãgara, the lord of the nãgas, in translation 120 four summaries of the Dharma encompass all of the 84,00o units of teaching:

All compounded dharmas are impermanent.
All impure dharmas bring suffering.
All dharmas are without self.
Nirvãna is peaceful.

With these four summaries there arises insight into the inexhaustible teachings of the bodhisatvas, great beings.

This is more manageable. The teachings of the Buddhas are vast and incommensurable, and the scope of the buddhas is beyond our scope. We need to focus on core teachings, summaries, and outlines to bring our ideas and practice into focus.

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This book belongs to a series called Classics of Indian Buddhism. How is it possible to call these Tibetan texts "Indian classics"? Certain Mahãyana sutras are undisputed classics of Indian Buddhist literature and indeed of world literature. Idealistic epiphanies presented through innovative metaphysical dialogues and narratives, they are imperishable classics of the human spirit.' There are no universal criteria for defining classic or for settling a list of classics. Like "canon," "classic" is a subjective category, context bound, autonomous, and indeterminate. "Classics" are texts (or artifacts or practices) that individuals or communities privilege according their own criteria (taste, proclivities, needs).

The reader will soon see that I read the Tibetan texts as classical texts of Indian Buddhism, as Indian compositions, and I believe that the Tibetan scholars looked at them in a similar way. In the Kanjur (as well as the Tanjur), each translation is introduced, set apart, by the opening phrase, "in the language of India," which is followed by the Indian (usually Sanskrit) title written in Tibetan letters. The translation work was an intellectual collaboration between accomplished masters from India and learned Tibetans. At the same time, in terms of resources, patronage, and production, the Kanjur was a Tibetan effort. The Dharma kings, the nobles, and the Tibetan intelligentsia invited

Sakyamuni Buddha to cross the mighty mountains and settle down in the Land of Snows in the shape of his Dharma body—of his bka, his authoritative words. They then proceeded to conscientiously and methodically translate these words into the language of Tibet so that the sage of the Sakyas could settle down and feel at home. The opening formula "in the language of India" with its Sanskrit title is followed by "in the language of Bod (Tibet)" and the translated Tibetan title. In this way, the Kanjur has a double identity. We may call it Indo-Tibetan and celebrate its hybridity.

Translation must have begun in India during the Buddha's lifetime: the earliest translations would have been oral renderings within the Middle Indic family, from Prakrit to Prakrit.5 In a Vinaya passage about which much has been written, two brahmans ask the Fortunate One whether they may render the Dharma into Vedic chandas; the Buddha turns down the proposal and authorizes his followers to transmit his teachings in their own dialects.' Texts started out in unprocessed, living Prakrits; as they circulated they underwent progressive processing—conversion and translation—into other Prakrits, including Pali and the canonical language of the Sammitiya school. Some of them were eventually recast in hybrid or in standard Sanskrit. It is the nature of things (dharmatã) that texts did not and do not stand still; they need to be regularly updated. This fulfills both the religious urge to participate in the creation of a perfect text and the social urge to edit or revise texts to ensure that they are comprehensible. The translation of Indian Buddhist texts was a grand and polyglot enterprise, and over the centuries a single text may well have progressed through several dialects or languages. The power of the Buddha's teachings and the fame of his words (kalyano kittisaddo) were remarkable, and they drew wider and wider circles of attention. Texts traveled across borders, and by the

second century CE at the latest they began to be translated into Chinese, with the result that the earliest extant transcultural translations are those preserved in Chinese. Chinese Buddhists developed a culture of compiling catalogues of translations that give an idea of what was translated, when, where, and by whom. In Central Asia, the Dharma was translated into languages like Khotanese, Uighur, Tocharian, Tangut, and a range of others including Mongolian. Central Asian Buddhism was a multifaceted and dynamic force for over a millennium.

The Kanjur may be a cultural fusion, composite and heterogeneous, but honoring these texts as Indian classics does not in any way diminish the Kanjur's status as a treasure of Tibetan culture. It goes without saying that all cultures are composite and heterogeneous. The Kanjur stands in its own right as an extraordinary accomplishment of Tibetan Buddhists created over several hundreds of years and written, carved, wrapped, stored, and revered with care through the centuries till today. A vast body of knowledge was transferred from India to the Land of Snows. The process began by the seventh century CE, if not earlier, and continued, with periods of disruption, up to the thirteenth century and beyond. The result was the two collections called the Kanjur and Tanjur, the "collected translations of the Buddha's words" and the "collected of commentaries and treatises by later scholars." The Kanjur alone takes up over a hundred traditional volumes (pothi), amounting to an estimated 70,000 pages. The Tanjur takes up 224 volumes. In short, the production of the Kanjur and Tanjur was a stupendous human accomplishment. The translation project sponsored by the Dharma kings was certainly one of the greatest planned and sustained cultural exchanges in early world history.

This exchange, this transfer and transmission, was both cultural and spiritual. The Buddhist texts were carried to Tibet not only in letter but also in spirit, to constitute an enduring monument of culture in all its meanings. Buddhist thought, Buddhist philosophy, and Buddhist ethical and meditation practices were all part of the package. Renowned Indian masters like Sãntaraksita and his pupil Kamalasila crossed the Himalayas to help establish Buddhism in Tibet, to be followed by a regular stream of scholars in the centuries to follow. Tibetans in quest of manuscripts and teachings crisscrossed the ranges from Kashmir to Bengal, and Indians traveled to the high Tibetan plateau. The formidable snow mountains both separated and joined the two regions.

The Kanjur and Tanjur are not just collections of texts. They are important records of human and cultural history—a shared heritage of India, the Himalayan regions (including the Kathmandu Valley), and the Tibetan plateau. The prestige of the Kanjur and Tanjur was such that they were translated into Mongolian, and such that in China opulent imperial editions were produced in Beijing by visionary rulers like the Yunglo, Wanli, Kanzi, and Qianlong emperors. By the nineteenth century after the Buddha (the fourteenth century CE), if not earlier, the Kanjur and Tanjur were recognized across Central and East Asia as primary resources for the study of the Buddhadharma.

By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries CE, at the western end of the Eurasian continent, the frontiers of knowledge were expanding to inspire new intellectual concerns and interests, and the encounter with the cultures and religions in the east was very much part of this. One of the new fields of interest was the scriptures and literature of non-uropean religions, including those of India and Tibet. The grand pioneers of European Kanjur-Tanjur studies were the Hungarian scholar Alexander Csoma de Koros and the Frenchman Leon Feer—those were the days when giants strode the Earth. Feer wrote of the former that "by making known the vast sacred literature of Tibet, Csoma cast light on a part of the history of the human spirit that up to then was unknown."' In the modern period, in the twentieth century, the Kanjur and the Tanjur crossed the great oceans to spread around the world, and the Tibetan scriptures are now a world resource. <>

A Critique of Western Buddhism: Ruins of the Buddhist Real by Glenn Wallis [Bloomsbury Academic, 9781474283557]

What are we to make of Western Buddhism? Glenn Wallis argues that in aligning their tradition with the contemporary wellness industry, Western Buddhists evade the consequences of Buddhist thought. This book shows that with concepts such as vanishing, nihility, extinction, contingency, and no-self, Buddhism, like all potent systems of thought, articulates a notion of the "real." Raw, unflinching acceptance of this real is held by Buddhism to be at the very core of human "awakening." Yet these preeminent human truths are universally shored up against in contemporary Buddhist practice, contravening the very heart of Buddhism.

The author's critique of Western Buddhism is threefold. It is immanent, in emerging out of Buddhist thought but taking it beyond what it itself publicly concedes; negative, in employing the "democratizing" deconstructive methods of François Laruelle's non-philosophy; and re-descriptive, in applying Laruelle's concept of philofiction. Through applying resources of Continental philosophy to Western Buddhism, *A Critique of Western Buddhism* suggests a possible practice for our time, an "anthropotechnic", or religion transposed from its seductive, but misguiding, idealist haven.

Review

"Having read through the book a second time I can say without hesitation that *A Critique of Western Buddhism* is one of the most important books ever written on the subject of Buddhism—certainly the most important in the decades since Buddhism has established itself as an ideological resident here in the West." - *The Failed Buddhist*

"The single most important book of contemporary Buddhist philosophic reflection. Wallis' critique masterfully addresses the twinned questions central to contemporary Buddhism: 'What use is being made of Buddhism today?' and 'What use is Buddhism today?'" —*Richard K. Payne, Yehan Numata Professor of Japanese Buddhist Studies, Institute of Buddhist Studies, USA*

"It is a very rare and precious thing to find a book such as this, which engages as deeply with religious materials as it does with the philosophical. Glenn Wallis brings together resources from Continental philosophy, namely François Laruelle's non-philosophy, and concepts and ideas from Buddhism to carry out a fecund project that grows in the ruins of our philosophical and religious pretensions and arrogance."" —*Anthony Paul Smith, Associate Professor of Philosophical Theology, La Salle University, USA*

"Glenn Wallis' Critique of Western Budism is one of the rare examples of non-philosophy applied on a specific subject area, next to Anthony Paul Smith's non-philosophical environmental studies, John O'Maoilearca's animal studies as well non-Marxism. It proves that non-philosophy is praxis grounded rather than being self-sufficient system of philosophical diagnostics. Wallis' brilliant analysis demonstrates that radicalized Buddhism establishes a perfect homology with non-philosophy, both in form and in substance." —*Katerina Kolozova, Professor of Philosophy and Gender Studies, University American College, Macedonia*

"Wallis' Critique is a bold commentary and analysis of Western Buddhism that runs against the mainstream. His central arguments are convincing and should certainly enter into discussions of "mindfulness" practices and adaptions of Buddhism in Western societies. This book will challenge the

thinking and practice of many readers, make some uncomfortable, but will be a life preserver for others." —*Stuart W Smithers, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Puget Sound, USA*

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A ruin is a curious thing. Imagine the Acropolis or Borobudur, Ephesus or the Great Wall of China. Magnificent structures erected on the foundation of a society's most advanced technologies and its most sophisticated sciences. Constructed from raw materials— wood, metals, stone, lime mortar, marble, glass, turf, and soil— quarried, excavated, transported, and formed by the labor— the debilitating, depleting sweat and toil— of flesh and blood men, women, and children. But a ruin is more than the material out of which it is fashioned. It in infused with the longing of a people; longing for meaning and order; longing for fellowship and community; longing for the reign of beauty on earth. More than mere material, a ruin is saturated with culture. It is a culture's loftiest aesthetic imagination manifest in the light of day in all of its sensuousness. But a ruin is more than the designs and desires of a people. A ruin is nature. Its very matter is fired in the furnace of the elements. And once in place, the edifice is eternally embraced by earth, fire, wind, and water. As Georg Simmel wrote in 1907, "a ruin is fused into the surrounding landscape and, like tree and stone, grows into and is integrated in that landscape." As much as it tries, a thriving cathedral or a bustling office building cannot achieve this integration: its relationship to its natural surroundings is one of artificiality at best, domination at worst. Its atmosphere is charged by an ordering of its own making. By contrast, "an atmosphere of peace emanates from the ruin; for, in the ruin the contrary aspirations of both world potencies [the energies of nature and the conceptions of society] appears as a calm image of purely natural being." What has wrought this change in the charge of the structure's atmosphere is time. A ruin, finally, is time. It is transhistorical time, "ruin time," the steady chroniclers of past glory and decay, present cause and effect, and future promise and peril. "Ruin time unites," says Florence Hetzler. It suffuses the "biological time of birds and moss" with the immemorial "synergy" of all of living beings— human, animal, bacterial, microbial— whose bodies have touched, however fleetingly, however gently, the ruin.

Western Buddhism is not a ruin. It is a sprawling estate, operating daily at peak capacity. Western Buddhism is a prodigious ancillary of an ancient edifice that, as Simmel says of palaces, villas, and farmhouses, "even where it would be best to fuse with the atmosphere of its surroundings, always originates another order of things, and unites with the order of nature only in retrospect." Why should it "be best" to do so? Western Buddhism itself provides the answer: because there is no real division between culture, society, person, and "nature." The Buddha has taught us that it is nature all the way through. He also taught us that the very nature of nature inexorably impels our— the

world's— very ruination. Ruin is ruin because our desires and actions, however exalted, cannot withstand the nonnegotiable consequences of impermanence, dissolution, and emptiness. And yet, somehow, the edifice that is Western Buddhism does not merely remain in place: it stands fortified against the consequences of its own self- acknowledged insights into our "natural" condition. In doing so, it originates an order, both for itself and for its practitioner, that is at odds with these very insights. For, "to fuse with the order of nature only in retrospect" is to create the illusion that it does not fuse with nature at all. It creates the illusion that the object of Western Buddhism's fusion— the object of its most abiding desire— is of an altogether different order from nature's ruin. It is, rather, of a higher order that somehow enables escape from the raw contingencies of nature— the very ones that Buddhism itself articulates— leaving the subject ultimately unscathed.

The term for "nature" that I use in the subtitle and throughout the book is "the Real." Like Western Buddhism's "emptiness" or "no- self," in the history of Western thought, "the Real" names some profoundly productive a priori, awareness of which is a sine qua non of human awakening and of the liberation that such awakening is said to entail (however variously those consequences might be understood). Paradoxically, the Real is as evasive as it is productive, eluding capture by our strategies of linguistic and symbolic communication. Of course, it is we creaturely humans who enable this evasion by constructing obfuscating, at best, symbolization around the nonetheless fecund Real. In his twentieth- century masterpiece of literary criticism, The Origin of the German Tragic Drama, Walter Benjamin wrote that "in the ruins of great buildings the idea of the plan speaks more impressively than in lesser buildings, no matter how well preserved they are." For Benjamin, it is precisely the ruin's proximity to "creaturely nature" that infuses it with its "uncontrollable productivity." Of what, then, does the well- preserved building speak? Of what is it productive if not of the very idea that saw it rise from the dust in the first place? In proximity to what would this construction be, if not to the passion and pain coursing through the veins of earthly creatures? Such questions merely postpone my conclusion: Western Buddhism must be ruined.

This, at least, is the belief animating this book. I have come to this belief after forty- some years of actively surveying the Western Buddhist landscape. At turns figuratively and literally, my exploration has taken me from the tropical forests of the achans to the austere rusticality of the roshis to the stark mountainous terrain of the rinpoches. It has taken me from the temple to the practice center to the university classroom. It has enveloped me in the exertion of several practices, each of which is deeply contemplative in the degree of steady concentration involved: still, silent meditation; laborious reading of Pali, Sanskrit, and Tibetan texts; and the most difficult of all, sustained and unflinching critical thinking. Why is critique so difficult? Well, it is not only philosophers who fall in love with their subject. That love will ensure that the critique that follows does not obliterate, does not grind back to dust, the finely wrought edifice of Western Buddhism. And if I do succeed in my plan, it is only to view the ensuing ruin in the glow of a stranger, more creaturely, light.

I have learned a lot about ruin from the people I mentioned earlier. Another teacher not mentioned is the Persian Muslim poet Jalāl ad-Din Muhammad Rümi (1207– 1273). Rümi employed the conceit of ruin as an image of the catalyzing loss required to come in possession of our most potent human quality: love. He doesn't mean love as a commonplace affection. He means love as a ferocious force of ruination: "What care I though ruin be wrought?/ Under the ruin there is royal treasure." One collection of his poetry is titled The Ruins of the Heart. I have also learned a great deal about ruin from Canadian poet, novelist, and singer- songwriter Leonard Cohen (1934– 2016). A line from his 1992 song "Anthem" has become a kind of cultural cliché, like the Vincent van Gogh painting Starry Night that can be had on a teeshirt or coffee mug, but it nonetheless captures his notion of ruin: "There is a crack in everything/ that's how the light gets in." For Cohen as for Rumi, ruin is a question of igniting the "furnace of the spirit," whose ardent issue, always, is love.

I first heard Leonard Cohen in 1975 while in the room of my friend, Thomas Adams, who had then borrowed the album Songs of Love and Hate from a local library. At that point in our lives, Thomas and I were drinking from the trough of Alice Cooper, the New York Dolls, and Black Sabbath. Yet, we sat in rapt silence as the black vinyl turned, slowly secreting the passionate, melancholy ambience that is Leonard Cohen— his voice, his guitar, his verse. One of those verses, from the first song on the record, "Avalanche," could be the Universal Beloved inciting Rümi to ecstatic embrace. Or is it Shams, the mysterious dervish perpetually wandering in search of a beloved friend, someone with whom he could speak of secret things? It's impossible to say. Both masters wield double entendre as a weapon of ruination. After admonishing his wavering lover not to feign such passion in the face of doubt, the singer intones (or cautions?): "It is your turn, beloved/ It is your flesh that I wear." It is a disturbing, almost ghastly, line. But can you conceive of a more direct and unadorned image of union born of annihilation? Imagining that ruined building once again, I picture it obliterated as an edifice for narrow worldly concerns (commerce, service, bureaucracy) because it has become clothed in the flesh of nature.

Thomas and I intravenously ingested Leonard Cohen's intoxicant. At the same time, together with my brother Damon, we began imbibing the violent metallic hootch of the Stooges' Vietnam War–contaminated Raw Power: "I am the world's forgotten boy/ The one who searches and destroys."8 The three of us began imperceptibly to mix the dark elixir of Leonard Cohen and the volatile firewater of the Stooges with a form of music that would come to define our lives: punk rock. Like so many young people in search of an expression for their still nascent superpowers, we formed a band. Joined by like- minded insurgents of the moribund American middle class, we unleashed our Dionysian energy, power, passion, and heat on the Philadelphia (and beyond) underground from 1981 to 1987. The name of our band is Ruin. (Present tense: like an alcoholic, you are never cured of your band.)

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Introduction: Raise the Curtain on the Theater of Western Buddhism!

What are we to make of Western Buddhism? It presents itself as the treasure house of ideas and practices that were formulated by an enlightened teacher who lived in India 2,500 years ago. Followers of Western Buddhism tell us that this man's teachings accurately identify the real conditions of human existence. If true, that is quite a remarkable achievement. It would mean that an ancient diagnosis of human experience still pertains in our hyper- accelerated, ultra- technological modern society. Is such a correspondence possible? Western Buddhism might, conversely, be made out to be less of an unchanging universal account of human reality and more of a contemporary ideology. In its basic sense, an ideology is a strategy that "represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence." To recognize Western Buddhism as an ideology is not to view it as an instance of false consciousness or nefarious deception. It is rather to acknowledge it as being uniquely productive of a quite particular subject, one that imagines his or her relation to the world in quite particular ways. If we view Western Buddhism as an ideology, as, that is, a form of life, an apparently natural way of being within any given social formation, we could certainly better explain the incredible diversity among its forms throughout time and place. For, unlike an idealist timeless teaching, "ideology has a material existence." Its dictates are always enacted within the presently existing social arena and realized as a practice by real people therein. Invoking the prospect of an imaginary relation to one's world suggests a third, altogether different, possibility. Western Buddhism might be understood as a strategy for engaging with the dominant ideology of a society. In this case, it would be a practice of critiquing and possibly even improving the social formation in which its practitioners find themselves currently embedded.

My observation of Western Buddhism leads me to the conclusion that it itself is unsure which of these three characterizations best describes it. By "it," I mean, of course, the combined effect of the people— the formulators, teachers, and practitioners— who act in the name of "Western Buddhism," or really of "Buddhism" in the West today. Their accumulated record is an expression of adamant faith in the universal veracity of their teachings. Somewhat paradoxically, they are equally willing to perform operations on those same teachings, to adjust and alter them, in ways that suggest that they are aware of the time- and place-dependent ideological nature of the teachings. More puzzling, these same people regularly invoke concepts that caution, watch your head! radical critique of self and society underway!

One contention driving this book is that Western Buddhism functions in all three of these modes, but to varying degrees of explicitness. I see Western Buddhism as a critique subsumed within an ideology subsumed within a faith. I am almost tempted to apply to Western Buddhism, along with a grain of salt, Freud's famous topography. Faith is Western Buddhism's superego. It internalizes and echoes back society's sense of morality, righteousness, and goodness. It aims to produce the ideal subject, one who spontaneously conforms to the social law. The superego- faith of this subject compels him or her to eschew expression of aggressions that are forbidden by decorum. The faithful Western Buddhist subject is thus adept at channeling aggression into affirmation. Critique is Western Buddhism's id. The critical drive bound up in certain Western Buddhist postulates (e.g., emptiness, no- self, impermanence) are primitive and instinctual. This drive impels the subject's visceral desire to be unbeholden to subjugating norms, to be free of society's (and of faith's) self-serving moralistic constraints. It thus tends to produce a subject who takes up conceptual arms against the deceptively polite policing of those norms and thrusts them into a controverting chaos. The critical Western Buddhist subject is adept at flushing out repressive sleeper cells within the doctrinal and communal compound. Ideology is Western Buddhism's ego. It is the "I" of the subject, the "we" of the community. It is motivated by the demands of society (and of faith) and is thus acutely sensitive and responsive to "reality," to, that is to say, society's status quo. The ideological Western Buddhist subject seeks, above all, some form of wellbeing. Happiness would be optimal; but, short of that eternally elusive goal, certainly the reduction of stress and tension isn't too much to ask for. After all, Western Buddhist ideology, as Freud says of the ego, "serves three severe masters and does what it can to bring their claims and demands into harmony with one another." Ideology- ego's "tyrannical masters" are, of course, reality, faith, and critique. Western Buddhist ideology thus paradoxically produces an anxious Western Buddhist subject, one who is able to minimize conflicts with the pious demands of faith only by repressing and shoring up against the primal aggressive force circulating within the concepts of that very faith.

As the title suggests, one aim of this book is to give voice to the critical unconscious, to stay with our psychoanalytic metaphor, of Western Buddhist discourse. I will give the details of my approach later. Here, just a brief word about the general purpose of critique. Marjorie Gracieuse sums up this purpose when she speaks of "wresting vital potentialities of humans from the artificial forms and static norms that subjugate them." That is a generous definition of the task. It allows at the outset that the object of critique has something of value to offer us. At the same time it suspects that this value comes embedded in a system of thought and practice that has superfluous, and problematic, elements. These elements constitute a symbolic surplus value that functions to capture the desire of the practitioner. It is reasonable to think that it is in this surplus that we discover features that limit and coerce the subject's agency. Advertising gives us the most obvious examples of the value/surplus differential. It pitches item after item that relates to the fulfilment of some basic human need— food, clothing, hygiene, mating, transportation, security, relaxation, and so on. Yet it should not be difficult to discern how an ad for, say, a Prius SUV or a pair of Aéropostale ripped skinny jeans elicits desires that far exceed fulfillment of basic transportation and clothing needs. In addition, advertisement is produced by, and further reproduces, quite particular social relations (economic,

gender, racial, political). Symbolic surplus value is easily discernible when it comes to such goods as a pair of pants that, beyond the basic need of covering the flesh in cold weather, inscribe their young female wearer into "consumer society's colonization of youth and sexuality through [selling her] 'freedom' . . . to do whatever she wants with her body." It becomes more difficult to discern in the cases of the "vital potentialities" that Gracieuse alludes to. At what point, for example, does education cross over from being the practice of developing the human potential for thinking and knowing into a means of social inculcation? Paulo Freire, for instance, holds that all people possess the potential to become aware of the forces (social, political, cultural, linguistic, psychological, etc.) that constitute "the logic of the present."6 An educational program can facilitate that end, he says, by training students in "the practice of freedom," whereby they learn to discern the operations of these forces on their own sense of identity, as well as on the ways in which these forces serve to replicate and perpetuate "the logic of the present." An educational program can just as likely be put in the service of a political agenda that precisely wants to hinder such awareness of that logic. To do so, it does not deny "the vital potentiality of the human" that is the capacity for creative critical inquiry. Rather, it perversely directs this potential into a stultifying framework (forms and norms) of preordained outcomes. Another example, one familiar to readers of the present book, is meditation. Let's assume for a moment that sitting still, silently, and attentively serves, like education, the vital potentiality of the human for a certain type of creative critical self-inquiry. At what point does this ostensibly neutral, natural inquiry become a node in an ideological system? Is it not curious that meditators virtually always happen to discover in their meditation the very claims of their community's doctrine? What does such "validation" tell us about the relationship between the vital human potential affixed (possibly) to silent sitting and the apparently overdetermining forms and norms that frame such a practice?

I leave those questions hanging for now. The point here is that critique is a practice that attempts to "wrest" vital value from subjugating surplus. It is a practice that allows us to make explicit the operations of a system of thought and practice that the system itself, in order to remain whole, keeps implicit— its unstated assumptions; its unspoken values; its relationship to existing social, economic, and political formations; and, perhaps most importantly, its tacit formation of individual actors in the world. Without a practice of critique, we cannot distinguish a catalyst for a vital human potentiality from a self- serving prescription of a covertly ideological program, however well-meaning that program may be. The wager of this book is that, in distinguishing between the two types of practice, we are dealing with a difference that makes a world of difference. But what might that difference be? I will deal with this question in depth later. For now, just to give the reader some initial orientation, we can consider the purpose of the "wresting" that Gracieuse recommends. In brief, it has to do with something that will sound familiar to readers of Buddhism, namely, a certain unbinding from violence, delusion, and fugitive desire. We might call this unbinding freedom, liberation, or even nirvana. If these terms sound grandiose in the present context, they may nonetheless name a genuine vital potentiality of human beings. If so, this unbinding will require, like the Buddha besieged beneath the bodhi tree, a ferocious struggle against "the world under the sway of death." For, in naming coercive structures, in speaking of subjugation, stasis, and dissemblance, Gracieuse is giving voice to nothing if not the necessity of a kind of human insurrection against the existing world. I believe that Western Buddhism understands this struggle. The crucial question is whether it provides arms in solidarity with the struggling human or whether it performs a kind of spiritualized Dolchstoß in the very heat of battle. Or perhaps we will discover another potent image to characterize Western Buddhism in our time. First, however, we must explore many criticisms and refutations and propose many new ideas, concepts, and claims.

Why Western Buddhism?

Why Western Buddhism? The title of this book surely suggests that I am treating a quite specific variety of Buddhism: that which exists in the West. It would follow that this western variety has something— texts, doctrines, teachers, practices, beliefs, communities— that differs significantly from its eastern relatives. Otherwise, why would it be necessary to add the modifier? At the same time, though, the reader will notice that I often use "Buddhism" interchangeably with the modified form "Western Buddhism" and, indeed, rarely differentiate between the two usages. I will have more to say about this matter later. Here, I would like to highlight what I mean by the term "Western Buddhism."

Western Buddhism originated in the East, in Asia. I am not referring to the obvious fact that Asia, specifically India, is the wellspring of all subsequent international forms of Buddhism. Rather, from its core values to its high aspirations, Western Buddhism is the result of an articulation and self-understanding that initially took shape in Asia. According to the German Indologist Heinz Bechert, the lineaments of what we now think of as Western Buddhism were first drawn in Sri Lanka. This origin should not be surprising. As Bechert points out, since 1517 the coastal areas of the island had been occupied by, first Portuguese, then Dutch, and finally British, forces of merchants, militaries, and missionaries. At that time, too, the Buddhist Kingdom of Kandy (1521–1818) was rising in the land's interior, preserving the ancient domination of Buddhism in daily affairs. This hotbed of East–West proximity led to encounters such as the spirited public debates between Buddhist monks and Christian missionaries, where opposing worldviews could be aired, evaluated, critiqued, and defended. It is thus also not surprising that Asian Buddhists were subjected to a long and ultimately far- reaching exposure to "European ways of thinking."8 The movement of the arrow, though, was turning in the other direction as well: the colonizing Westerners were showing a sustained interest in Buddhism. However scheming and skeptical this newfound interest may have been on the side of the colonizers, it created, in turn, an equally new self- consciousness among Buddhists concerning their own tradition. "Thus," writes Bechert, "an essential presupposition for the development" of what would become Western Buddhism was this "intensive encounter between western and Buddhist thinking."

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Theaters comforting, theaters cruel

With that description in mind, it will be useful to revisit the question: what are we to make of Western Buddhism? Is it the serious form of thought and practice that its adherents would have us believe? It certainly speaks in the idiom of seriousness. Buddhist teachings invite us to entertain possibilities that should make even the most impulsive of the proverbial rushing fools balk: emptiness, selflessness, freedom, rebirth, the multiverse, enlightenment, abiding happiness. Topics like these, of course, have occupied some of the brightest minds that humanity has produced since the dawn of recorded human thought, thinkers from Parmenides and Plato to David Hume, Hannah Arendt, and Stephen Hawking, to just barely get the list going. Now, we're hearing about Buddhism's ability to address the most vexing issues confronting the twenty- first century, issues such as the domination of technology, environmental degradation, the intricacies of trauma and addiction, and the mysteries of the human brain. Western Buddhist teachers suffer no loss for words when it comes to any of these topics. Academics, too— principally in Buddhist studies, but also in fields like neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy— laud Buddhism's contributions to interminable debates on epistemology, ontology, logic, language, perception, and consciousness. The accumulated result is that Buddhism enjoys a blue- ribbon reputation in the West as a profound all- encompassing system of thought, or at least, to those less inclined toward intractable conundrums, as a self- help remedy par excellence.

Is this reputation deserved? Perhaps the most obvious approach to investigating the viability of Buddhists' claims for their ostensibly pansophic teaching would be to systematically present and analyze these teachings. Such an approach, however, would be tedious beyond belief and ultimately unproductive. Why do I say this? It would be tedious because "Buddhism" is the name of a two- and-a- half millennia amassing of ideas, beliefs, rituals, worldviews, texts, theories, art, architecture, music, fashion, practices, universities, monasteries, lay communities, virtually ad infinitum. And all of this in the cauldron of cultures spanning Beijing and Boston. Although this baroque assortment bears the shared name of "Buddhism," the commonalities across time and space are mostly of the family resemblance variety, wherein the self-identity of each lies in its difference from the others. Like the proud factions of a venerable and extremely large clan, Buddhists seem to be particularly sensitive to this matter of difference. This sensitivity, furthermore, informs the reason that a doctrinal analysis of Buddhism would be as unproductive as it would be tedious. Contemporary Western Buddhists commonly respond to criticism with an appeal to exception. This tendency parallels what I call a detail fetish among Western Buddhists, a kind of exemplification reflex. Providing a particular example in order to make a finely calibrated point is, indeed, not unusual in complex systems of thought. Heidegger has his hammer; Wittgenstein, his slabs. Spinoza has his hatchet, and Descartes, his wax. If you have ever read even the first page of a book on classical Buddhist philosophy, you will almost certainly have come across "the pot." Buddhists, in the written word and in dialogue, have always been quick at the draw with their own mechanism of ideological damage control: the hyper-specific doctrinal detail. Apparently, there is no criticism of a given Buddhist concept that cannot be decisively dismissed with an added detail, an overlooked facet, an ever- so- slight shifting of the dharmic goalpost. The detail is taken from this teacher's meticulous interpretation, from that pinpointed textual passage; or, failing its intended effect, from the hidden sphere of wisdom known as personal experience. The detail corrects, alters, refines, and reshapes. And along the way, it inevitably derails any criticism, rendering it irrelevant.

If Buddhism is in equal measure elusive and unassailable, how is an evaluation of it possible? If the term "Buddhism," or for that matter "Western Buddhism," is a catchall for such a wide diversity of phenomena, what is it exactly that is being critiqued? And even if we can say, if every particular instance that is offered up for critical analysis is countered by a supposedly more salient yet resistant instance, on what foundation can a critique be raised? To indicate more about my approach to these matters in A Critique of Western Buddhism, and to convey a sense of the book's spirit, I would like momentarily to band together the Buddha and the bearer of such ad rem wisdom as "Where there is a stink of shit/ there is a smell of being."

The Buddha did not write books, but if he had, I can imagine him thinking, along with his scatological comrade, Antonin Artaud: "I would like to write a Book that would drive people mad, that would be like an open door leading them where they would never have consented to go; in short, a door that opens to reality."34 In the terms that I introduce in Chapter 2, what Artaud calls "reality" is better understood as "the Real." In one of its uses, the concept of the Real gives us a way to talk about disavowed features of reality that threaten to sunder our constructions of order, sense, and meaning. In another usage, the Real names a facet of existence presupposed, yet unaffected, by human symbolic systems, such as language and ideology. So, I will accordingly adjust Artaud's terminology here. The Real, in Artaud's charged and idiosyncratic idiom, is marked by "cruelty." It is, in fact, the definitive cruelty. The very purpose of theater, Artaud believed, is to refract this cruelty: theater should be coextensive with the Real. It should ensue from the Real, thus operate alongside it. And yet the theater of his day aspired to be little more than a melodramatic retreat from the threats of modern life. It sought to protect its audience from the cruel. Artaud had a different vision. He saw in theater a practice that "inspires us with the fiery magnetism of its images and acts upon us like a spiritual therapeutics whose touch can never be forgotten." With this aspiration, he was up against no less than a popular institution that served, like the church and the police, the creation of a

public submissive to an oppressive status quo. Artaud thus made it his mission to transmute this theater of complacency into an "immediate and violent" maelstrom, one that exposed its viewers to the primal truths of their lives. Only a theater that wakes up its audience's "nerves and heart," he believed, is worthy of the name. Such a theater must be built on the cruelty that is the Real, on those eschewed features of reality that, to evoke Artaud's wise words from above, stink. Such a theater must not shrink from the possibility that "extreme action, pushed beyond all limits" must ensue from its feral process. For, if not pushed with such intentional zeal, the machinations of delusion and self- satisfaction will overwhelm the vitality that is catalyzed by the lucid acknowledgment of the cruel Real.

What do the fiery dreams of a bona fide madman like Artaud have to do with the cool and eminently sane Buddha? To suggest a parallel, let's turn to the primal scene of their respective spheres of action. We see demented revels of the Dionysian maenad dancing and drinking themselves into orgiastic frenzy, shredding, with their phallic thyrsoi, then ecstatically devouring, the raw flesh of the sacrificial beast. Out of this appetite, the theater is born. Buddhism's myth of origin is hardly less dramatic. Revisiting the locus of its founding scene, the seat of the Buddha's awakening, we are in the presence of overwhelming elemental power: trees, water, sky, fire, earth, bodies beautiful and decaying, lust, passion, storms, death, swirling cosmos, occult powers, animals, sprites, spirits, gods. Sitting against the trunk of a massive ficus, the Buddha, as Gilles Deleuze says of writers, uses all the resources of his athleticism to "dip into a chaos, into a movement that goes to the infinite." By engaging in extreme contemplative experimentation, the Buddha enters into a "Dionysian space of undoing" within which he enacts "not a system of demonstration, but an ordeal in which the mind is given new eyes."

Each of these spheres represents a literal theater, a theatron, a space of violent, if perhaps cathartic, seeing. And yet from a catalyst for the crushing ordeal of human awakening, the Theater of Buddhism, like that of Artaud's France, lapses into a refuge of comfort, into an institution of sleepy, complacent social conformity, into thought so sluggish as to mope its way into the desert of the Western New Age. That, at least, is one of two major premises of this book. What creates this breach is that the progenitors of Buddhism and of the Theater of Cruelty presuppose a "Real" of which their particular forms are crucial recoveries. This fact, the positing of a relationship to the Real— indeed, the very evocation of the notion— permits a corollary to the premise. In the case of Buddhism, this corollary is that its conceptual materials may, despite its lapses, offer valuable resources for radical reformations of thought and practice and of self and society in the contemporary West. But now a shadow of this first premise appears; namely, the noun "Buddhism" indexes an historical failure to unleash the force of its very own thought. "Buddhism," that is, names an obstinate containment of potentially vital human goods. The end result is that Buddhism everywhere functions as a conservative protector of the social status quo, however toxic, and as an ideological fortress spawning subjects whose treasured goal certainly appears to be to remain unscathed— in some sense or another— by life's vicissitudes. Paradoxically, therefore, we cannot look to Buddhism— to its teachers and defenders, to its commentaries and explications, to its communities and organizations— to assist us in removing its auto- erected bulwark of resistance.

The second major premise of this book derives from this paradox. It holds that certain critical procedures must be performed on and with the Buddhist material if Buddhism is to avoid complete absorption into the Western self-help industry. The question twice posed in this introduction— What are we to make of Buddhism?— is thus intended in the most literal of senses. What, if anything, might we do with Buddhism, with Buddhist materials, in our present circumstances? Committed Western Buddhists will be perplexed by the very question. It entails an assumption that, I doubt, would ever occur to them, much less be acceptable. For, to its adherents, Buddhism is nothing if not an exemplary inventory of what we should do in our present circumstances. This

inventory is, furthermore, nothing if not wholly sufficient. It encompasses the entire cosmos, in fact, including, for instance, what we should do with our minds, our bodies, our speech, and in comportment to others and to the environment. It makes pronouncements on the workings of causality, past, present, and future. It holds the codes to the cosmic vault of meaning and value. So, first, perhaps, among a host of other difficulties that I discuss in this book is that a critique will have to avoid the snares of the principle of sufficient Buddhism. Echoing Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason (all things, according to reason, have a reason) as well as François Laruelle's critical principle of sufficient philosophy (all things, according to philosophy, are philosophizable), this principle holds that Buddhism can be universally applied to its object. Given that Buddhism's overt object is reality, or indeed, the Real, Buddhism's sufficiency knows virtually no bounds. That being the case, any critique of Buddhism that uses Buddhist materials is setting itself up to be absorbed back into the fold as yet one more iteration of Buddhism. A critique will thus have to be nimble and will have to hit hard.

Here, I would like to mention four basic features informing my critique. The details will be found in the chapters that follow. First, I am borrowing elements from the prodigious theoretical apparatus of the contemporary French thinker François Laruelle. The most succinct definition of the aim of Laruelle's critique is that it is "the simplification of transcendence." Laruelle holds that philosophy—the topic of his own critique, which he terms "non-philosophy" or "non-standard philosophy"—suffers a condition whereby it is "intended by necessity to remain empty but which necessarily evades this void with objects and foreign goals provided by experience, culture, history, language, etc." Philosophy must remain empty because of its "intention" of filling the role of an explicator of immanent reality or indeed of a kind of science of the Real. That means that philosophy identifies itself as an organon, as an unmediated instrument of knowledge, rather than as co-author of the reality it explicates. Instead, what we find is that philosophy habitually affixes its own postulates concerning reality and the Real onto the very instrument of its ostensible science, thereby inevitably mixing these with the object to be known. Through this mixture, philosophy "evades" the immanent Real that it endeavors to think and know, and instead erects a transcendental mirror reflecting philosophy's mixture back onto the world, and into the Real. This circularity entails the failure of philosophy to function as the rigorous organon it so aspires to be. It thus becomes instead a "rumor . . . which is transmitted by hearsay, imitation, specularity, and repetition." As I will show, Laruelle's recognition of philosophy's identity transfers uncannily well to that of Buddhism. In part, this shows the protean nature of his theory. Indeed, he holds that " 'nonphilosophy' is the generic term for the enterprise which takes on other names locally according to the materials to which it relates." It is a theory that is simultaneously a practice, whereby the practitioner uses it to do something with the local material. I will say more about this facet in Part 3. In any case, I know of no theory more capable of resisting the reappropriating sufficiency that marks totalizing systems such as Buddhism than Laruelle's non-philosophy.

Second, it should be clear by now that a conviction running throughout my critique will be that an orientation toward immanence is a vital human value. I would hope to convince my readers that thinkers of immanence— whether in the sciences, medicine, economics, psychology, philosophy, even the arts— offer the most promising models for social and personal clarification and, where desired, transformation. This is because, like Heidegger's "hardness of fate" premise, their promise is rooted precisely in a transcendentally minimized assessment of human experience, one that moreover opens up the possibility for "authentic action" in our world. This conviction has a corollary: systems of transcendence, namely, those that posit autonomous yet immanently absent orders of truth and reality, must be forcefully countered. If for no other reason, they must be countered because they are alienating to human beings. Buddhism is a fascinating and rare instance of a system of thought that adamantly posits a version of radical, non- alienating immanence yet aggressively staves off the consequences of its own productive insights via transcendental mixtures of

its own making. My critique thus takes seriously those insights of Buddhism (e.g., subjective destitution, phenomenal dissolution, contingency, nihility, etc.) concerning reality in relation to the Real. My hypothesis is that Buddhist materials might contribute to serious, immanental models of human transformation, but only in ways that would be unrecognizable to Buddhists. Put in apt if somewhat dramatic terms: we might, after all is said and done, discern the afterglow of liberating human thought in the ruins of "Buddhism's" destruction.

Third, this critique serves as both a theory and a performance. I don't mean only that a text like this one is "performative," that it does, or at least aims to effect, something. I am more interested in the performance associated with the reading of the text. I hope to stimulate a reading, thinking, living subject, one who regards the Buddhist conceptual material alongside of, hence profoundly affected by, what Laruelle calls "radical immanence." Theory-practice therefore seems like a fitting term here. Theory, like its etymological relative, theater, positions us to gaze on the spectacle of Western Buddhism. As Sruti Bala writes, the two closely related terms "deal with orders of perception and meaning-making of reality." Performance, however, in contrast to theory, "foregrounds action as opposed to perception." It is thus "connected to the legal act of executing a will or promise, as opposed to the emphasis in the terms 'theater' and 'theory,' on considering and speculating." So, one implicit claim made for A Critique of Western Buddhism is that it at least endeavors to execute the promise of Buddhist emancipatory materials within some register of thought and action. "Placed together," to paraphrase Bala, theory and performance "span a range of investments, from aesthetic and formal to the political and social."

Finally, I want to reiterate that I am not critiquing Western Buddhism as a flawed deviation from a pure "original" Buddhism or as a corruption of traditional eastern forms of Buddhism. Neither am I putting Buddhism on trial and conducting an inquest into the truthfulness of its claims. The fact is that it is impossible to evaluate "Buddhism's claims" because, as I have already mentioned, "Buddhism" is too slippery a term. Its very fluidity, however, is a richly instructive fact, one that provides a clue to its identity and thus to how to construct a consequential critique. In brief, I am employing a method that bears no resemblance to approaches such as the history of ideas, the philosophy of religion, or doxography. While readers might excuse me from following either of the first two methods, I can imagine they will be disappointed if I don't base my critique on the evaluation of actual doctrines. I am following Laruelle here. He writes, "There is a frivolity of doxography from which 'the history of philosophy' does not always escape. It is not a matter here of objects, authors, themes, positions or texts; it is solely the matter of a problematic and of the reconstruction of this problematic." I will work out later what I think this problematic is for Western Buddhism. The point that I wish to make here— and it is a crucial point overall— is that whatever Western Buddhist "objects, authors, themes, positions or texts" I could name would amount to little more than indices. That is, names of specific texts, doctrines, teachers, etc., are but "indications of problems that we are striving to demonstrate and analyze in their coherence and functioning; guiding threads for penetrating into a [buddhistic] environment that exceeds them, but the extent, the possibilities and also the limitations of which they have made perceptible." I am interested in the "environment" that both exceeds and precedes any Buddhist text, figure, and so on, that we might name. This environment constitutes the problematic because it, and not specific doctrinal details, is the incubator of the countless phenomena that comprise "Western Buddhism." The general, Laruellen, term for this problematic is "decision." Very briefly, decision involves cutting knowledge off from its immanent- material-empirical given in order to ground that knowledge in a transcendent- ideal-hallucinated supplement. Such a move is, of course, not a problem for avowedly transcendental forms of thought, such as theistic religion. Decision is, however, a problem for self-declared phenomenologically verifiable systems like biology and Buddhism. I argue that, given its specific practice of decision, Western Buddhism exposes itself as a visionary form of knowledge. In any case, this is not to say that you will not encounter named examples in this critique. Rather, it

means that these instances will only be viewed— to use a famous Buddhist trope— as fingers pointing to the moon of buddhistic decision. The purpose of this approach, indeed of this entire critique, is, once again, not to annihilate the finely wrought edifice of Western Buddhism, but to view that edifice in the glow of a stranger, more creaturely, light. <>

THE RĀMĀYAṆA OF VĀLMĪKI: THE COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION translated by Robert P. Goldman, Sally J. Sutherland Goldman, Rosalind Lefeber, Sheldon I. Pollock, and Barend A. van Nooten; Revised and Edited by Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman [Princeton Library of Asian Translations, Princeton University Press, 9780691206868]

The definitive English translation of the classic Sanskrit epic poem—now available in a one-volume paperback A reader and student friendly edition in one hefty 960 page volume.

The **RĀMĀYAṆA OF VĀLMĪKI,** the monumental Sanskrit epic of the life of Rama, ideal man and incarnation of the great god Visnu, has profoundly affected the literature, art, religions, and cultures of South and Southeast Asia from antiquity to the present. Filled with thrilling battles, flying monkeys, and ten-headed demons, the work, composed almost 3,000 years ago, recounts Prince Rama's exile and his odyssey to recover his abducted wife, Sita, and establish a utopian kingdom. Now, the definitive English translation of the critical edition of this classic is available in a single volume.

Based on the authoritative seven-volume translation edited by Robert Goldman and Sally Sutherland Goldman, this volume presents the unabridged translated text in contemporary English, revised and reformatted into paragraph form. The book includes a new introduction providing important historical and literary contexts, as well as a glossary, pronunciation guide, and index. Ideal for students and general readers, this edition of the **RĀMĀYAṆA OF VĀLMĪKI** introduces an extraordinary work of world literature to a new generation of readers. Based on the The Princeron Válmiki Rámáyana: Critical Edition, 1960-1975.

Review

"Truly epic and millennial in scale. The translation and expertise that have gone into this are not likely to be surpassed."**—Frederick M. Smith, *Religious Studies Review***

"The translation admirably succeeds in pursuing its 'twin goals of accuracy and readability.' . . . The closest thing [readers] could get to what the original taste and texture of the text must have been. . . . This is a remarkable achievement."**—Yigal Bronner, *European Legacy***

"Goldman has chosen a translation style that is simple, direct, and very close to the text, without being prosaic. He has avoided the twin pitfalls of preciousness and pedantry. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, as he reminds us, is a poem in a sense we have almost lost touch with: intended to be heard, easily

understood, chanted in a loose and repetitive meter that permits the lapidary phrase."**—Edwin Gerow, *Journal of Asian Studies***

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The current volume, edited and revised by the general and associate editors of the original translation project, represents the complete text of the original Princeton University Press seven-volume translation of the Oriental Institute of Baroda critical edition of the Rámáyana of Válmiki. That translation, accompanied by extensive introductions and a dense scholarly annotation, was published serially as the flagship work in the Princeton Library of Asian Translations from 1984 to 2017.

The present volume, which includes a new general introduction and eliminates the original's extensive annotation, is intended for two audiences: the general reading public, who may be interested in gaining access to a little-known masterpiece of Asian literature, and high school and collegiate students and faculty. As discussed in detail in the introduction, the original translation, directed more toward an audience of academic specialists, has been considerably revised by Professors Goldman and Sutherland Goldman with a view toward making it more accessible to these two audiences.

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What Is the Válmiki Rámáyana?

When contemplating a reading of the Válmiki Rámayana, it might well occur to a reader unfamiliar with the work to ask, "What is a Rámáyana, and who or what is Válmiki?" If one were to be told that Rámáyana is the title of a famous and influential Sanskrit epic poem of ancient India, that Válmiki is the name of its author, and that the work is in many ways similar to epic poems like the Iliad, the Odyssey, and the Aeneid, one might then ask, "Why don't we refer to these latter works as `The Homer Iliad,' `The Homer Odyssey,' and 'The Virgil Aeneid'?" And thereby hangs a tale—or rather, many, many versions of the same tale.

The name Rámáyana, "Ráma's Journey," is actually a generic term that, over the last two and a half millennia, came to be applied, either specifically or generically, to the innumerable versions of the epic's central story that proliferated across the vast geographical, linguistic, cultural, and religious range of southern Asia from antiquity to the present day. The collectivity of these versions in poetry,

prose, song, drama, cinema, and the visual arts is sometimes referred to as the Rámakathá, "The Tale of Ráma." Thus, although specific versions of the tale, such as those found in Sanskrit and many other languages, may use the term Rámáyana in their titles, many others do not. Indeed, the massive diffusion of texts, art, and performance based on the Ráma story found throughout the nations of southern Asia makes the Rámáyana, writ large, arguably one of the world's most popular, influential, and widely circulated tales ever told. In this it can only be compared with two works that have been equally pervasive and influential, but far less variable and religiously adaptable—the Bible and the Qur'an.

The oldest surviving version of the great tale of Ráma, and the one that is doubtless the direct or indirect source of all of the hundreds and perhaps thousands of other versions of the story, is the monumental, mid-first millennium BCE epic poem in some twenty-five thousand Sanskrit couplets attributed to Válmiki. In several respects this poem is also, as we shall see, unique among all versions of the tale.

In its own preface the text calls itself by three titles: Rama's Journey (rámáyanam), The Great Tale of Sitá (sitáyás caritam mahat), and The Slaying of Paulastya (i.e., Rávana) (paulastya^^dhah). The first title reflects the salience in the story of its hero, while the second features its heroine and the third its villain. In modernity, in order to distinguish this work from its legion of later versions, many of which are called simply Rámáy^ ^^, scholars and others tend to name it for its author. Thus, in keeping with Sanskrit's predilection for nominal compounds, the poem is often referred to in that language as the Váb^ikir^m^ya^a, "Válmiki's R^máyana." In English we tend to separate the two parts of the compound: the name of the author and the name of his work.

Like other Rám^yanas, Válmiki's work purports to be a poetic history of events that took place on the Indian subcontinent and on the adjacent island of La^^ká (popularly believed to be the modern nation of Sri Lanka). Indeed, along with its reputation as a great literary composition, and like its sister epic, the ^^hábhárata, it is regarded by numerous Indian commentators, as well as by the Indian literary critical tradition and many pious Hindus today, as belonging to the genre of itihása, "historical narrative." Also like the Mahábhárata, but unlike most other versions of the Rama story, Valmiki's epic is believed to be the work of a divinely gifted rs^, "seer," who was endowed with an infallible and omniscient vision enabling him to witness directly all the events recounted in his poem. Thus, his version of the tale is widely regarded as the first and most authentic and unfalsifiabie historical account of the life of its hero, Ráma, and all the other characters—human, simian, avian, divine, and demonic—with whom his career intersects.

A unique characteristic of Valmiki's Rámáyana is that it is almost universally revered in the Indian literary tradition as the veritable funs et origo of the entire genre of kávya, "poetry," or what we would call belles lettres: texts whose purpose, among others, is to stimulate our aesthetic sensibilities. Thus, the work is widely revered as the Adikdvya, "The First Poem," from which all later poetry derives, while its author is venerated as the Adikavi, "The First Poet." Indeed, the poem's tale of the life of its hero, Ráma, has come down to us with a prologue in the form of a meta-narrative about exactly how Valmiki came to learn the story of Rama and how he was inspired to craft it into a massive musical and poetic history. In that prologue, we read that Lord Brahma, the creator divinity himself, inspired the sage to compose the tale of Rama in metrical verse, "to delight the heart." In other words, in addition to its other merits, Valmiki's magnum opus is a grand entertainment filled with emotional scenes, romantic idylls, heroic warriors, beautiful princesses, monstrous villains, comical monkeys, and cataclysmic battles. And so, along with the innumerable subsequent retellings it has inspired throughout the countries and cultures of southern Asia, the work has both delighted and edified its audiences for millennia.

But the work is not merely a literary account of a legendary hero's life and struggles. It also functions on two other critical levels, the devotional and the ethical. We learn at the very outset of the poem that, despite appearances, its protagonist is no ordinary human. Together with his three brothers, Bharata, Laksmana, and Satrughna, he is, in fact, an incarnation of one of the supreme divinities of Hinduism, Lord Visnu, who takes on various earthly forms over the long, recurring cycles of cosmic time when the righteous and righteousness (dharma) itself are imperiled at the hands of some mighty, demonic being or beings who are too powerful for even the lesser gods to resist. Thus, the warrior prince and righteous monarch Rama is regarded as one of the principal ^^atáras, "incarnations," of the Supreme Being and therefore an object of veneration, worship, and devotion for hundreds of millions of Hindus worldwide from deep antiquity to the present day. In this way. Válmiki's epic poem is one of the earliest sacred texts of the Vaisnava tradition of Hinduism and stands at the head of all the many Hindu versions of the R^m^yana.1 Although it has sometimes been superseded in the affection of many of Ráma's bhaktas, "devotees," by later, regional versions of the epic, Válmiki's Rám^yana remains a central scripture for some schools of Vaisnavism to this day, and most Hindus revere both the poem and the poet. Indeed, the day traditionally regarded as Válmiki's birthday is a "restricted," or optional, holiday on the Hindu calendar.

The epic narrative is constructed as a kind of morality play, an illustrative guide to righteous behavior, in the face of the most dire challenges and ethical dilemmas. At the same time, it is a grand cautionary tale of the downfall of the unrighteous, no matter how mighty they may be. Thus, the work, along with its role as a historical and literary text, functions as both a guide to moral and religious conduct (dharm^^^stra) and a political treatise on the proper exercise of kingship and governance (nitisástra). It fulfills these roles through the creation of (in some cases literally) towering figures whose characters and actions represent positive and negative exemplars for its audiences to emulate or to shun. In this way, the epic hero Ráma serves as the model for the ideal son, the ideal husband, the ideal warrior, and the ideal king. Thus, not only is he a god come to earth, but he is the ideal man. Other central figures serve similarly in their specific roles. The heroine, Sit, is the ideal wife, a ^^ti^rat^, a woman perfectly devoted to her husband for better or for worse. Laksmana is the ideal younger brother, utterly faithful to his elder, Ráma. The monkey-hero Hanumán emerges as the very paragon of selfless devotion to one's lord. Then there is the anomalous figure of Vibhisana, the virtuous ráks^sa brother of the epic's villain, who abandons his family and his people to take refuge and ally himself with Ráma.

On the "dark side," as it were, there is the monstrous, ten-headed ráksasa king, Rávana, a ruthless conquistador who terrorizes all creatures, even the gods themselves. Rávana is a defiler of all sacred rites and a prolific sexual predator who rapes and abducts women throughout the three worlds until he meets his downfall at Ráma's hands. There is also Rávana's sinister and terrifying son, the sorcererwarrior Ravani Indrajit, who, through his powers of illusion and magical rites, can make himself both invisible and invincible. Rávana's colossal younger brother is the horrifying, if almost comically grotesque, Kumbhakarna, who must be aroused from his perpetual sleep to wreak havoc on Ráma's army of semidivine monkeys (vánaras).

In opposing these sets of figures, the righteous and the unrighteous, the epic narrative establishes itself as a major episode in the grand and never-ending struggle between the forces of dharma, "good or righteousness," and the forces of adharma, "evil or unrighteousness," for control of the universe—a struggle that, as noted earlier, occasionally necessitates the divine intervention of the Supreme Being to resolve it in favor of dharma. In the end, once Ráma has been victorious in his battle with Rávana and his evil minions, recovered his abducted wife, and established himself on his ancestral throne, he inaugurates a millennia-long utopian kingdom, the so-called Ramamdjya, Kingingdom of Ráma," which lives on in the political imagination of India to this day. This morality play, reenacted annually across much of India in the Ramlila, "The Play of Rama," a rather more

cheerful popular celebration than the European Passion Play it parallels, continues to entertain and edify hundreds of millions who worship Ráma and Sitá (Sitaram). At the drama's conclusion, vast crowds of devotees and onlookers celebrate as a giant effigy of the demonic Rávana, packed with fireworks, is set ablaze for a glorious celebration of the triumph of good over evil. <>

Utpaladeva on the Power of Action: A First Edition, Annotated Translation, and Study of Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛti, Chapter 2.1 by Utpaladeva by edited and commentary by Isabelle Ratié [Harvard Oriental Series, Harvard University Department of South Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 9780674270817]

The Recognition of the Lord (Īśvarapratyabhijñā) by the Kashmirian Utpaladeva (c. 925–975) is a landmark in the history of nondual Śaivism, and one of the masterpieces of Indian philosophy. The detailed commentary (*Vivṛti*) on it by the author himself was so far considered almost entirely lost, but three chapters of this major work were recently recovered from marginal annotations in manuscripts of other commentaries on Utpaladeva's treatise.

The book provides the first critical edition, annotated translation, and study of one of these chapters, which endeavors to justify a fundamental paradox of the system—namely, the idea that Śiva (understood as an infinite, omniscient, and omnipotent consciousness) has a dynamic essence since the core of consciousness is a subtle form of action, and yet is by no means limited by the temporal and spatial sequence that affects all ordinary acts and agents.

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Excerpt: The importance of the fragments for the assessment of Utpaladeva's and Abhinavagupta's philosophical contributions

Several factors might be invoked to explain this temptation, perceptible in the alterations undergone by these IPVV marginal quotations, to let Utpaladeva's most important work sink into oblivion. As pointed out by K.C. Pandey, Abhinavagupta's detailed, elegant and synthetic ^PV might have been deemed clearer than Utpaladeva's highly inventive but elliptical work—in Terentianus' famous words, *pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli*. [The pamphlet has its own fate.] Besides, with the exception of Utpaladeva's devotional hymns, the latter's works are confined to the genre of philosophical treatises and commentaries, whereas Abhinavagupta has authored important works on various topics (the aesthetics of theatre, the aesthetics of poetry, the interpretation of Saiva scriptures, the practice and

meaning of Saiva rituals...), so that his fame may have surpassed Utpaladeva's early on—and this may have greatly influenced the choices that were made as to which works should be copied preferably to others within the Pratyabhijna corpus.

Whatever the reasons for these choices may have been, however, such decisions have profoundly affected our perception of the roles respectively played by Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta in building the Pratyabhijna system. Thus as pointed out above, before the publication of Raffaele Torella's pioneering studies on Utpaladeva's Vivrti, historians of Indian philosophy had simply assumed that Abhinavagupta's commentaries were the most innovative works in this tradition, and they tended to ascribe to Abhinavagupta some ideas that they could find in the latter's works, but not in Utpaladeva's stanzas or Vrtti. In his first article devoted to the Vi^rti, Raffaele Torella already questioned as follows Pandey's statement to the effect that the Pratyabhijna system "owes" its "importance" to Abhinavagupta's commentaries:

> A close examination of the IPVV is already sufficient in itself to limit the validity of this statement. Despite the inevitable difficulty in reading a text like the IPVV, which is an extensive and diffuse commentary on a work that has not come down to us, it seems clear that the majority of the themes and subjects that Abhinavagupta touches on find their direct correspondence—or at least their starting point—in Utpaladeva's tika. In fact the IPV itself, which according to Abhinavagupta is intended to be a commentary on what the kariktas are in themselves, accomplishes its task through a carefully gauged and considered systematization of a rich speculative material whose early origin is to be glimpsed in the tika. Only a direct reading of the tika would allow one to define the central role that Utpaladeva undoubtedly played in the elaboration of Pratyabhijna philosophy.

As more and more Vivrti fragments are coming to light, we are now able to compare all the texts belonging to the Pratyabhijna corpus; and is it is becoming ever more obvious that indeed, Abhinavagupta was a brilliant commentator, but also a very faithful one, and that Utpaladeva's Vivrti was the truly innovative work.

An interesting example of such a distortion in our vision of the history of the Pratyabhijna system is the issue of the famous "doctrine of reflections" (pratibimba^ada): in many of his works, Abhinavagupta claims that the phenomena constituting the universe as we perceive it are similar to reflections in a mirror, because the variegated reflections that we may see in a mirror are perfectly real inasmuch as they really occur on the surface of the mirror, yet they are nothing over and above the surface of the mirror that makes them manifest by assuming their forms. In the same way, argues Abhinavagupta, all phenomena, which are perfectly real, are not to be discarded as mere illusions (contrary to what the representatives of Advaitavedanta contend), yet they are nothing over and above the unique, all-encompassing and all-powerful universal consciousness that makes them manifest by assuming their forms. So far this analogy was ascribed to Abhinavagupta, or at least most scholars credited him with being the first to make a full metaphysical use of it. Utpaladeva himself; however, mentions in his commentary on another Saiva work (Somananda's Sivadrsti) that he has explained at length in his detailed commentary. <>

Defending God in Sixteenth-Century India: The Šaiva Oeuvre of Appaya Dïksita by Jonathan Duquette [Oxford Oriental Monographs, Oxford University Press, 9780198870616]

This book is the first in-depth study of the Śaiva oeuvre of the celebrated polymath Appaya Dīkṣita (1520-1593). Jonathan Duquette documents the rise to prominence and scholarly reception of

Śivādvaita Vedānta, a Sanskrit-language school of philosophical theology which Appaya single-handedly
established, thus securing his reputation as a legendary advocate of Śaiva religion in early modern India. Based to a large extent on hitherto unstudied primary sources in Sanskrit, Duquette offers new insights on Appaya's early polemical works and main source of Śivādvaita exegesis, Śrīkaṇṭha's Brahmamīmāmsābhāṣya; identifies Appaya's key intellectual influences and opponents in his reconstruction of Śrīkaṇṭha's theology; and highlights some of the key arguments and strategies he used to make his ambitious project a success. Centred on his magnum opus of Śivādvaita Vedānta, the
Śivārkamanidīpikā, this book demonstrates that Appaya's Śaiva oeuvre was mainly directed against Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, the dominant Vaiṣṇava school of philosophical theology in his time and place. A far-reaching study of the challenges of Indian theism, this book opens up new possibilities for our understanding of religious debates and polemics in early modern India as seen through the lenses of one of its most important intellectuals.

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The Rise of Śivādvaita Vedānta

> Once upon a time...
> The illustrious Ra:ngarājamakhin had a famous son, Appaya Dïksita,
> devoted to the moon-crested [Śiva].
> Thanks to him, the fame of the illustrious king Cinnabomma,
> breaker of armies, was unobstructed.
> He raised up the commentary of Śrïka:n:tha to support
> the doctrine of the supreme Śiva.

These words were inscribed in 1582 on the Kālaka:n:thešvara temple situated in A:daiyapālam, a small village in the Tamil region and the birthplace of the celebrated scholar at the centre of this book—Appaya Dïksita (c.1520–1593). Appaya was undoubtedly one of India's most influential Sanskrit intellectuals in the sixteenth century. A scholar of polymathic erudition, he wrote profusely in a range of Sanskrit disciplines prominent in his day—especially poetic theory (ala:mkārašāstra), scriptural hermeneutics (mïmā :msā), and theology (vedānta)— and with an idiosyncratic boldness that generated both praise and blame in the centuries to follow. While he is mostly remembered in India today for his writings on the non-dualist school of Advaita Vedānta—most notably for his subcommentary on Šankara's famous Brahmasütrabhāsya, the Parimala, which continues to be part of the curriculum in some institutions of learning in India—Appaya also devoted a large share of his long and prolific career to writing about Šaivism, a major religious tradition centred on the god Śiva and to which Appaya belonged by birth and remained devoted throughout his entire life. It is this key dimension of Appaya's career and scholarly persona, highlighted in the Kālaka:n:thešvara inscription, that forms the central scope of this book.

Appaya wrote all his Šaiva works over the course of three decades (1549–1578), while serving at the court of Cinnabomma—the 'breaker of armies' hailed in the inscription and whose fame Appaya contributed to spreading. Cinnabomma was an independent Šaiva ruler based in Vellore, a town in the Tamil country, located a few hundred kilometres from Vijayanagara, the capital of the empire of the same name. Vijayanagara was a powerful polity in South India founded in the fourteenth century and arguably one of the greatest empires in the history of South Asia.4 Appaya's Šaiva works include a number of hymns in praise of Śiva (often with a self-authored commentary), a ritual manual on the daily worship of Śiva and a series of polemical treatises and works of Šaiva Vedānta theology which, as this book will show, impacted on the intellectual and religious landscape of early modern India in significant ways. Aside from highlighting Appaya's association with Cinnabomma and his construction of the temple in A:daiyapālam, the Kālaka:n:thešvara inscription also hails Appaya as the author of the Śivārkama:nidïpikā, a monumental sub-commentary on the Brahmamïmā :msābhāsya, a Šaiva commentary on the Brahmasütras (a foundational text of the Vedānta tradition) composed by

Šrïka:n:tha Šivãcãrya around the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries. We are told that Appaya wrote this work thanks to the generous support of his Šaiva patron. He himself says at the beginning of the Šivãrkama:nidïpikã that he was commanded to write this work twice: in a dream by Šiva in His androgynous form as Ardhanãrïšvara and, in waking life, in the form of Cinnabomma, whom Appaya here implicitly identifies with Šiva. Upon completion of the Šivãrkama:nidïpikã, continues the inscription, Appaya was literally covered with gold by his patron and an endowment was established for 500 scholars to study Appaya's magnum opus both in A:daiyapãlam and Vellore.

The composition of the Šivãrkama:nidïpikã marked a new beginning in Appaya's Šaiva career. Prior to this work, Appaya had only written polemical works claiming Šiva's supremacy over Vis:nu-Nãrãya:na based on a creative exegesis of passages taken from sm:rti literature and Upanisads. With the Šivãrkama:nidïpikã, Appaya begins a new, more extensive exegetical project in which he articulates the view that the canonical Brahmasütras centre on Šiva as the conceptual and semantic equivalent of Brahman, the absolute reality eulogized in the Upanisads. From here on, Appaya shifts his focus from plain polemics to establishing a new theological position (siddhãnta) combining Šaiva doctrine with the orthodox theology of non-dual Vedãnta—a position he refers to as Šivãdvaita Vedãnta. Although he relies on Šrïka:n:tha's commentary as his main textual source in this endeavour, Appaya approaches the latter with an unusual degree of freedom, substantially reinterpreting its core teachings along the lines of Advaita Vedãnta, the school of Vedãnta he cherishes the most. In this sense, Appaya truly positions himself as the founder of a new school. Before him, virtually no scholar had paid attention to Šrïka:n:tha and his Šaiva commentary; with Appaya's commentarial work, the figure of Šrïka:n:tha achieved wider recognition among early modern scholars of Vedãnta. Appaya was not only the first scholar to present Šrïka:n:tha's Vedãnta as a legitimate participant in intra-Vedãnta debates of his time, but also the first to actively promote and defend the positions of Šrïka:n:tha vis-à-vis other Vedãnta schools, notably Višis:tãdvaita Vedãnta, as I shall demonstrate in this book.

His work on Šivãdvaita Vedãnta not only earned Appaya a formidable reputation as a scholar, but also established him as a legendary advocate of Šaiva religion in South India. Already during his lifetime, he was held as the representative of this school par excellence: a Sanskrit copper-plate inscription, dated to 1580 and ascribed to Sevappa Nãyaka of Tañjãvür, praises him as the 'sole emperor of Šaiva Advaita' (šaivãdvaitaikasãmrãjya). For his pioneering work on Šrïka:n:tha's commentary, Appaya continued to be praised as an emblematic figure of Šaiva religion in later hagiographies, and even as Šiva incarnate: his grand-nephew Nïlaka:n:tha Dïksita (seventeenth century), a great scholar in his own right, says in the opening of his Nïlaka:n:thavijayacampü that Šiva (šrïka:n:tha) took on the body of Appaya, the teacher of Šrïka:n:tha's doctrine (šrïka:n:thavidyãguru), in this Dark Age, just as Vis:nu will one day appear as Kalkin, His last incarnation (avatãra). But Appaya's Šivãdvaita work did not attract only praise. Right from its inception, it was met with fierce criticism from several quarters, including from Šaiva scholars who did not agree with the non-realist implications of this new form of Šaiva non-dualism. This criticism continued throughout the early modern period and to some extent into the modern period.

Appaya was not the first Šaiva scholar to undertake a major exegetical project backed by a Šaiva ruler. Two centuries earlier and in the same imperial setting— the Vijayanagara empire—Sãya:na had authored no fewer than eighteen commentaries on different Vedic texts under the patronage of the early Vijayanagara ruler Bukka I (1356–1377) and his successor Harihara II (Galewicz 2009: 34), both from the Sangama dynasty. It has been shown that Sãya:na's commentarial work was unprecedented in scope and that the 'image of grandeur' attached to his exegetical project was closely tied to the dynastical ambitions of the first Vijayanagara rulers (ibid.: 22). There are significant parallels between Appaya's and Sãya:na's grand projects. Aside from the fact that they both authored multiple works that were commissioned, and possibly encouraged, by a Šaiva ruler, both wrote commentaries that

could be characterized as both canonical and scholarly. As Galewicz explains, Sãya:na wrote commentaries on canonical Vedic texts with the clear intention that his own commentaries themselves be considered 'canonical' or authoritative. Furthermore, Sãya:na did so in ways that reached beyond the 'traditional idea of exegesis', making skilful use of poetic literary devices and manipulating the discourse of philosophical polemics with an imagined opponent to convey his own personal views (ibid.: 20–1). Likewise, Appaya's Šivãrkama:nidïpikã styles itself the first sub-commentary written from a Šaiva perspective on a canonical text of the Vedãnta tradition, the Brahmasütras. As we shall see, Appaya too made use of various literary devices and textual strategies to reinterpret Šrïka:n:tha's commentary in a way to convey his own idiosyncratic views on hermeneutics, grammar, and theology, and make his own sub-commentary— and, by extension, the school he sought to firmly establish—authoritative.

Like Sãya:na, Appaya also sought to make an impact on his immediate social milieu with his commentarial project. The last decades of the Vijayanagara empire witnessed dramatic changes in its social, political, and religious life. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the Araviï:dus, the last dynasty of the empire (which came to an end in 1565), abandoned the diverse patronage of Šaiva, Vais:nava, Jaina, and Muslim institutions that had been practised earlier, and started to aggressively commission Vais:nava scholars and institutions. By the time of Cinnabomma's death in 1578, the Araviï:du rulers had effectively taken control of the capital, and replaced Virüpãksa (a local form of Šiva that had been the ensign of the first Vijayanagara rulers) with Vi:t:thala (a form of Vis:nu) as the empire's tutelary deity (Rao 2016: 45). This shift in state policy in an empire that used to be predominantly Šaiva arguably changed how Šaiva and Vais:nava scholars interacted with one another. Not only did it dramatically enhance competition for royal patronage, influence, and prestige, but it also led to increasing polemicism and intellectual rivalry, particularly among theologians espousing different interpretations of Vedãnta. At the time when Appaya started his career under Cinnabomma, theologians of Vedãnta included primarily: smãrta brahmins, typically adherents of pure non-dualism (Advaita Vedãnta) who had managed the court temple of Virüpãksa since the empire's founding in the fourteenth century; Šrïvais:nava theologians, who advocated a non-dualism of the qualified (Višis:tãdvaita Vedãnta) and whose influence on Vijayanagara royal agents had been on the rise since the end of the Sangama dynasty in the late fifteenth century (Rao 2011: 30); and Mãdhva theologians, also of Vais:nava affiliation, who defended a realist and dualist view of reality (Dvaita Vedãnta), and who achieved wider prominence at the beginning of the sixteenth century under the leadership of the scholar and religious leader Vyãsatïrtha. It is in this context of increasing sectarian tensions between Šaivas and Vais:navas and of polemical debates between Vedãnta theologians that Appaya composed his Šaiva oeuvre. One key difference between Appaya and Sãya:na, however, is that the former's intellectual production was not so much a 'project of empire' as a project on the verge of it. Patronized by a self-declared Šaiva ruler rather than by a patron of imperial calibre, Appaya did not get involved with the Vijayanagara court. Nonetheless, it is likely that his militant defence of Šaiva religion was tied to the rise of Vais:nava religion in the imperial capital.

Likewise, Appaya was not the first Šaiva scholar to try and reconcile Šaiva doctrine with Vedãntic ideas. Before Šrïka:n:tha, both Bha:t:ta Bhãskarãcãrya (second half of the tenth century?) and Haradatta Šivãcãrya (twelfth to thirteenth centuries) had argued for the identity between Šiva and Brahman. These two Šaiva scholars most probably inspired Šrïka:n:tha's own views. Appaya himself draws attention to affinities between Šrïka:n:tha's and Bha:t:ta's Šaiva theologies in the Šivãrkama:nidïpikã, and several textual and conceptual parallels have been noted between Šrïka:n:tha's theology and Haradatta's understanding of the relation between Šiva/Brahman and the world (Sastri 1930). A number of premodern Virašaiva works written in Sanskrit also show a clear imprint of Vedãnta terminology and ideas, and share the same intention of establishing Šiva as the nondual Brahman of the Vedãntic tradition. What sets Appaya apart from these scholars, however, is

that he is the first Šaiva scholar to develop a fully fledged Šaiva Vedãnta position (siddhãnta) and elevate it to the status of a school (mata) on a firm footing with the other prominent Vedãnta schools of his time. The boldness and ingenuity with which he accomplished this scholarly feat as well as the scope of his commentarial project are unprecedented in the history of Šaivism in South India, and therefore fully deserve our attention. What drove the talented Appaya to 'support the doctrine of the supreme Šiva'? What were his message and rationale? How was his Šivãdvaita work received among Sanskrit intellectuals in early modern India? What does this tell us about Appaya as a scholar and social agent, and the complex world in which he lived and wrote?

This study puts the Šaiva oeuvre of Appaya and its reception in early modern India into context for the first time. In Chapter 1, I offer new insights on Appaya's main source of exegesis, Šrïka:n:tha's Brahmamïmã :msãbhãsya, and reassess the current evidence about Šrïka:n:tha's lineage, influences, and date of activity. Attention has recently been paid to the relationship between his Šaiva Vedãnta theology and the theology deployed in the work of Vïrašaiva scholars writing in Sanskrit. Although there are significant linkages between these Šaiva scholars, the extent to which they influenced each other's theologies is not yet fully understood. Among other things, my analysis will complicate the relationship between Šrïka:n:tha and Nïlaka:n:tha, a figure central to the Vïrašaiva Vedãnta tradition. In Chapter 2, I focus on Appaya's 'early' Šaiva works. In these polemical works, which I surmise to have been composed before the Šivãrkama:nidïpikã, Appaya emphasizes the greatness of Šiva and His superiority over Vis:nuNãrãya:na, based principally on the exegesis of passages taken from the Purã:nas, Upanisads and epics. An overall understanding of Appaya's early Šaiva works is key to understanding his Šivãdvaita Vedãnta oeuvre. Aside from the fact that they feature core theological concepts that prefigure the fully fledged theology of Šivãdvaita Vedãnta, they also reveal that Appaya was engaged with Vais:nava opponents early on. In these works, we begin to see Appaya's aversion for those 'heretics' and 'evil-minded' scholars who denigrate Šiva's worship. I will argue that these scholars were principally Šrïvais:nava adherents of Višis:tãdvaita Vedãnta, the dominant Vais:nava school of Vedãnta theology in Appaya's time and place.

One of the core arguments developed in this book is that Appaya's Šivãdvaita project pursued the same ambition of defending Šaivism as in the early polemical works, yet in a more systematic manner, that is, by shifting the debate to the interpretation of the canonical Brahmasütras. Prior to the sixteenth century, Vedãnta theology had essentially been the bastion of Vais:nava scholars. In the aftermath of Šankara's Brahmasütrabhãsya, four major Vais:nava-leaning commentaries on the Brahmasütras were written, namely by Rãmãnuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, and Vallabhãcãrya, the first two of which led to the formation of long-standing and systematic schools of thought—namely Višis:tãdvaita Vedãnta and Dvaita Vedãnta—and generated an important amount of commentarial literature. In comparison, the production of Vedãnta material by the other prominent religious group in medieval India, the Šaivas, had been rather limited. In Appaya's time, the Višis:tãdvaita Vedãnta school dominated the theological landscape in South India. Scholars still read and commented on the works of Rãmãnuja, Sudaršanasüri, and Venka:tanãtha while continuing to actively write new independent works in this tradition. The flowering of Šrïvais:nava scholarship on Vedãnta in this period was increasingly stimulated as Šrïvais:nava scholars were gaining the support of Vijayanagara rulers. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, several preceptors and advisors to the king belonged to the prestigious Šrïvais:nava Tãtãcãrya family. In Appaya's time, both K:rs:nadevarãya (ruled c.1509–30) and Rãmarãya (c.1542–1565) were advised by Tãtãcãrya preceptors (rãjaguru): the first by Venka:ta Tãtãcãrya, and the second by Pañcamatabhañjana Tãtãcãrya, a scholar whom later hagiographical sources describe as an important rival of Appaya. It is my view that Višis:tãdvaita Vedãnta had gained enough significance by Appaya's time to inspire, for the first time, a parallel Šaiva attempt—Šivãdvaita Vedãnta.

In Chapter 3, I turn to Appaya's Śivādvaita Vedānta works per se. While these works, composed later in Appaya's Śaiva career, are also polemical to some degree, they differ from the earlier Śaiva works in that their central concern is now the correct interpretation of the Brahmasūtras in light of Śrīka:n:tha's commentary. It is in these works that Appaya develops and promotes a fully consistent Śaiva Vedānta position (siddhānta) in opposition to Viśis:tādvaita Vedānta. For this purpose, he relies on various textual and hermeneutical strategies, ranging from including Śrīka:n:tha's position alongside other schools of Vedānta in an unprecedented doxography of Vedānta schools, to reinterpreting some of Śrīka:n:tha's key doctrines in line with the doctrine of pure non-dualism advocated in the Advaita Vedānta tradition, a position that Śrīka:n:tha did not himself fully acknowledge. Appaya's lifelong endorsement of Advaita Vedānta is well known. Not only did he write substantial works in this tradition, but he also remained a great admirer of Śankara (the bhagavatpāda, as he often refers to him) and of his Brahmasūtrabhāsya throughout his entire career. We shall see that this commitment not only influenced his reading of Śrīka:n:tha's commentary, but also—in stark contrast with his Śaiva co-religionists in South India—how he interpreted Śaiva scriptures and their validity vis-à-vis the Vedas.

In Chapter 4, I pursue my analysis of Appaya's Śivādvaita works with a special focus on the modalities of his engagement with the Śrīvais:nava tradition of Vedānta. I examine a number of arguments Appaya employs to criticize Rāmānuja's theology and his reading of the Brahmasūtras, and thereby establish Śrīka:n:tha's theology as the superior system. One of the core doctrines against which Appaya argues—developed to a large extent by Sudaršanasūri, a late-tirteenth-century scholar who may well have been Appaya's nemesis—is that the two Mīmā :msās, namely Pūrvamīmā :msā and Vedānta, form a single unified corpus. I also pay attention in this chapter to a little-studied work of Śivādvaita Vedānta, the Ratnatrayapar īksā, a short devotional hymn with self-authored commentary in which Appaya encapsulates his original vision of Śrīka:n:tha's 'esoteric' theology. I conclude this chapter with an examination of Appaya's critical take on Pāñcarātra, a key source of Śrīvais:nava theology.

The book concludes (Chapter 5) with an analysis of the reception of Appaya's Śaiva work in early modern India. Vais:nava theologians of Vedānta from various schools were quick to respond to Appaya's bold theses; we will pay attention to critical responses by Vijayīndra (Dvaita Vedānta), Purusottama (Śuddhādvaita Vedānta) and Śrīvais:nava theologians such as Mahācārya, Rangarāmānuja and Varadācārya. If the Śaiva response was generally more favourable, some Śaiva scholars also took a critical stance on Appaya's work and developed their own position on Vedānta. This is most notably the case of Vīrašaiva scholars of Vedānta, who promulgated their own distinctive position on Vedānta in the wake of Appaya—Śaktiviśis:tādvaita Vedānta.

By uncovering this intellectual history, I wish to demonstrate that Appaya Dīksita played a key role in the history of Śaivism in South India in being the first Śaiva scholar to ever take up the challenge posed by Śrīvais:nava theologians of Vedānta in the medieval period. His comprehensive work based on Śrīka:n:tha's commentary was not meant as a mere contribution to Vedānta scholarship; it was a grand exegetical project designed to respond in particular to the Śrīvais:navas' interpretation of Vedānta material. Thus this study aims to provide a more nuanced portrait of Appaya Dīksita, the scholar and the religious figure. It will present him not only as the prolific and bold intellectual we already know him to be, but also as a social agent sensitive to the polemical conflicts that set Śaivas and Vais:navas apart in his time and place. In doing so, I hope that this book will open up new possibilities for our understanding of the challenges of Indian theism, and also shed light on the religious landscape of early modern India as seen through the lenses of the most important scholar of the sixteenth century. <>

THE VEDA IN KASHMIR, VOLUMES I AND II: HISTORY AND PRESENT STATE OF VEDIC TRADITION IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYAS by Michael Witzel, [The Department Of South Asian Studies Harvard University, Harvard University Press, Harvard Oriental Series; v. 94, 95, This two-volume work includes a DVD that contains additional texts, rituals, sound recordings, and films taken in 1973 and 1979, Harvard University Press, 9780674258273; Volume 1: Harvard Oriental Series; v. 94, Harvard University Press, 9780674984370 I; Volume II: Harvard Oriental Series; v. 95, Harvard University Press, 9780674257771]

The Veda in Kashmir presents a detailed history and the current state of Veda tradition in Kashmir. It traces the vicissitudes of Vedic texts and rituals and their survival during some 400 years of Muslim rule. The peculiarities of the Śākalya Ṛgveda, Kaṭha Yajurveda, and Paippalāda Atharvaveda texts are discussed in great detail. The rituals from birth to death of the Pandits, the Kashmiri Brahmins, are depicted and explained, including current interpretation.

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Habent sua fata libelli. Though no longer a *libellum*, this book has existed for a long time, to quote Kalhana, like the Šãhi kingdom, only in name.

When, after a short visit to Kashmir in August 1973, I started to write down my observations on the present state of Veda tradition in the Valley, they soon turned out into a longer article (which, at one time, we wanted to publish in the Himalayan journal Kailash). Then, the original typed manuscript of this article was stolen from my car, along with a small bag of other Vedic materials, at Kathmandu.

In my last years in Nepal (1975-1977) I became very occupied with administration and other projects (such as filming the coronation of the late King Birendra and other Vedic rituals, notably the curious Tantric Agnihotra of Patan). That required me to put the work aside, except for collecting the materials for Ch. 4 during a bad bout of influenza. After having moved to Leiden in 1978, I made a new start, visited the Valley again for a month, in the summer of 1979 and subsequently went through my materials. But again, other work took precedence, notably the Paippalãda Samhitã, for which D. Bhattacharya came to Leiden in 1981-1982. After 1983 persistent work in Holland was made impossible due to the 'reforms' (read: budget cuts) of the then Education minister Deetman and the machinations and intrigues that this provoked. Disgusted, I left for Harvard in 1986. During a year of Sabbatical leave in 1989-1990, and due to the generous support of the Institute for research in Humanities Studies of Kyoto University and the Japanese Ministry for Education I found time to pursue this project again. I organized substantial materials from my field notes and from further reading, and tried to bring it to a conclusion. However, again this was not to be. The book has been in my drawer since 1990.

As some colleagues have asked (or teased) me about it, I now endeavor to present it in whatever incomplete and imperfect form I can achieve at this time. Necessarily, some questions have remained open and in some cases only initial data could be presented, with suggestions of how to proceed in the future.

For example, this book would have been delayed even further by: detailed philological study of the remaining doubtful variants in the Kashmir Rgveda ms., or the study of all accented passages in the Kashmiri PS, not to speak of a detailed investigation of all available ritual handbooks (cakas) in public or private possessio Habent sua fata libelli. Though no longer a libellum, this book has existed for a long time, to quote Kalhapa, like the Šãhi kingdom, only in name.

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Thus, although the book has been advertised in Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik in 1975, nothing much could be done after 1976, when I collected the Nyãyamañjarï quotations, and after adding my field research notes of 1979. Even until now, I still did not find time enough to go through much of the voluminous medieval literature of Kashmir, — though not a prerequisite, at least a desirable requirement for writing a better history of the Kashmiri Veda tradition and its schools. That remains a desideratum, though not too many data can be expected in the increasingly Shaiva-oriented texts of the late 1st and early 2nd millennia.

Nevertheless, it is hoped that even the present long, but still fragmentary account will provide an idea of Veda tradition in the Valley. This account is especially important because copper plate inscriptions that provide such a large body of evidence in other parts of the subcontinent largely fail us regarding Kashmir.

It is with all these imperfections and reservations that I finally present this book for scrutiny to my friends, colleagues and the interested public. As the medieval Japanese monk Kenkõ said in his Tsurezuregusa:

"It is typical of the unintelligent man to insist assembling complete sets of everything. Imperfect sets are better. ... Leaving something incomplete makes it interesting and gives the feeling that there is room for growth."

In this spirit, there is much room for the work of current and future generations...

About this book: a map for reading

The first two chapters set the stage with a brief description of Kashmir and its history (Ch. I), while Chapter II provides a more specific history of the Kashmiri Pandits a people and of their typical religious rituals. (Some of them, the Samskãras from birth to death, are treated in more detail, according to current interpretation, in Appendix II).

Chapter III includes a detailed investigation of the four Vedas and their attestation during all of Kashmir history. Special attention is paid to the oral transmission and the increasing disappearance of Vedic texts. Then, the four Vedas are discussed individually, listing and analyzing the texts belonging to the prominent recensions (šãkhãs) of Kashmir. Chapter IV provides additional, detailed evidence from a late 9th century source for Kashmiri Vedic tradition at that time (Jayanta Bhatta's Nyãyamañjarï).

The next few chapters (IV sqq.) deal with the main Vedic tradition of Kashmir, the Ka^ha school of the Black Yajurveda that is prominent in all rituals of Kashmir.

Chapter V presents an analysis of the Vedavratas, that is the observances a young student has to undergo when beginning and continuing to study the Veda, while including all its successive portions and text layers. It provides a good idea of what was supposed to be the normative curriculum during the many years of learning the Veda by heart. This evidence is reinforced by Chapter VI that is tied to the Vedavratas as it deals with specific rules for studying (dangerous) portions of the school curriculum, covered by the Vedic doksa and avãntaraḋïktã. As additional information, in Chapter VII the two late Vedic indexes of Mantras of the Katha Samhitã are edited and dealt with; and as an appendix parts of the little known Tarpamakãnta are extracted and discussed as it contains the names of prominent teachers and texts.

Chapter VIII sums up and enlarges on this information about the Katha school: it presents a very detailed account of all known texts of this long-isolated and now heavily endangered šãkhã, its available commentaries and ancillary texts. Chapter IX is the first attempt at drawing up a detailed history of this recension of the Black Yajurveda. As an excursus, the brief Chapter X deals with the explanation of the name, Katha, of this šãkhã and its supposed promulgator, the Rsi Katha.

Chapters XI-XIII deal with the other, formerly prominent šãkhã of Kashmir, the Paippalãda Atharvaveda. It had survived only in Kashmir and Orissa, where it still is found, precariously. To evaluate the garbled text of the only Kashmir manuscript of this school, written in 1419 CE under the famous Sultan Zayn ul Abidin (Zain al-'Ãbiḋïn), some preliminary studies are necessary. First one must investigate modern and medieval Kashmiri pronunciation, notably that of Vedic texts (Ch. XI) that has generally been neglected by scholars. Secondly, a study is necessary of the Šãradã script and the typical copying mistakes in Kashmir manuscripts (Ch. XII).

This prepares the ground for an evaluation of the history of text transmission of this rare Veda and its Paippalãda Šãkhã. The history and reconstruction of the original Paippalãda text is given in Ch. XIII, based on my earlier papers of the Seventies and Eighties. Added now is an evaluation of D. Bhattacharya's edition of PS as it still lacks in philological rigor and execution. These sections will help in the ongoing effort, by several scholars, of editing this important text in a more scholarly manner than heretofore. This effort is important as PS contains so much new information, including on everyday life some 3000 years ago.

The final chapter (XIV) is an epilogue on the past and present situation, and about the persistence of the Veda in Kashmir. It includes an evaluation of the reimport of Vedic tradition under Zain al-'Ãbiḋïn (1418/20-1470 CE) and it ends with a plea to preserve what can still be salvaged, both in written form as well as in ritual practice.

The Appendixes provide more detailed information on some topics that were not included in Ch.s I-XIV as they would have bloated certain chapters too much.

Appendix I presents the mss. of Kashmiri Samskãra rituals that have to undertaken from birth to death – and beyond.

Appendix II presents the current (traditional) interpretation of the Samskãra rites. Both Sütra theory and actual practice (of 1979) are described. More data are added about the religious life in the Kashmir Valley: it is a list of festivals, similar though often less extensive, to that given in the Nïlamata(-Purãna) more than a thousand years ago.

Appendix III discusses Kashmiri manuscripts and Šãradã script the knowledge of which is necessary for any study of Kashmir texts. It includes a list of past and (now regrettably lost) libraries of Pandits at Srinagar between 1875 and 1990, before their unfortunate exodus from the Valley. The question remains how much of them have been preserved, for which a detailed survey needs to be undertaken at Srinagar.

Appendixes IV and V build on this bibliographic material with a provisional list of typical Kashmir names and typical colophons used at the end of the Pandits' manuscripts. They may be useful for a desirable, future prosopography of authors and texts.

Appendix VI contains a detailed list of the Pandits' ritual handbooks, the Rcakas, as far as they are known now, both in manuscript as well as in printed form, and of their varied contents. Appendix VII is the unfinished Habilitationsschrift (D.Litt.) of the late Hertha Krick (1979). It sheds considerable light on the Vedic and medieval bimonthly Pãkayajña rituals. <>

Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia by Jason Neelis [Dynamics in the History of Religion, Brill, 9789004181595]

This exploration of early paths for Buddhist transmission within and beyond South Asia retraces the footsteps of monks, merchants, and other agents of cross-cultural exchange. A reassessment of literary, epigraphic, and archaeological sources reveals hisorical contexts for the growth of the Buddhist saṅgha from approximately the 5th century BCE to the end of the first millennium CE. Patterns of dynamic Buddhist mobility were closely linked to transregional trade networks extending to the northwestern borderlands and joined to Central Asian silk routes by capillary routes through transit zones in the upper Indus and Tarim Basin. By examining material conditions for Buddhist establishments at nodes along these routes, this book challenges models of gradual diffusion and develops alternative explanations for successful Buddhist movement.

CONTENTS

The concepts for this book emerged from field research in northern Pakistan leading to a Ph.D. dissertation.1 As a graduate student focusing on the study of graffiti written on rocks by ancient visitors to Hunza-Haldeikish, I was interested in what these inscriptions could reveal about the history of Buddhism in this local setting and regional environment. In the dissertation, I aimed to place the data from Buddhist inscriptions and petroglyphs at other sites in northern Pakistan within economic and historical contexts of Buddhist transmission. This book is centrally concerned with these broader contexts for the transregional establishment and expansion of Buddhist institutions throughout and beyond South Asia.

While the geographical focus on the region of the Northern Areas of Pakistan is restricted to a single chapter (Chapter 5: Capillary Routes of the Upper Indus), I have expanded the treatment of other networks for early Buddhist mobility between South Asia and Central Asia. Inevitably, it has not been possible to cover all aspects of this rich topic, but significant attention is given to formative phases and routes for Buddhist expansion in the Indian subcontinent in the earlier chapters (especially 2–3), and the later chapters (4–6) emphasize the northwestern borderlands as contact zones for Buddhist transmission between South Asia and Central Asia.

As discussed in greater depth in the first chapter, I have utilized a variety of relevant sources for this synthesis, but my methodological preference for material sources (such as inscriptions, manuscripts and archaeological remains) does not mean that literary sources have been neglected. A comprehensive survey of doctrinal developments is not attempted, nor has it been possible to retrace complex lines of textual transmission. I have extrapolated from available sources to connect patterns of early Buddhist transmission with trade networks and other economic, social and political catalysts, but limitations of these sources often constrain against reconstructing links with intellectual and philosophical movements. However, I hope that this work will provide useful background for braver and better equipped scholars to more adequately contextualize Buddhist ideological developments as well as art and imagery associated with particular ordination lineages, scholastic traditions, and the Mahãyãna and Vajrayãna in specific chronological and regional frameworks. ***

Road Map for Travelers

This exploration follows in the footsteps of travelers who left traces of their journeys in a wide range of literary and epigraphic records, devotional images, and archaeological artifacts with the goal of understanding how and why various Buddhist traditions flourished outside of the original homeland of the historical Buddha in ancient India. Interpretation of these sources helps to discern internal and external factors, along with historical contexts and socio-economic catalysts, which set this religion in motion throughout and beyond South Asia. The injunction purportedly spoken by the Buddha (and preserved in monastic codes, or vinayas) to "wander the path for the benefit and satisfaction of many people and out of compassion for the world" in order to "teach the dharma" gave canonical warrant for Buddhist mobility, although his instruction that "two must not go by a single (way)" was not strictly followed.1 Investigation of the religious agendas and practical details of their journeys helps to develop a fuller picture of the monks and nuns and other travelers who set out across the world's highest mountain ranges, deep river valleys, and formidable deserts.

Rather than restricting themselves to a single Buddhist superhighway, Buddhist missionaries followed various itineraries, including major arteries, minor capillary routes, and "middle paths" to travel back and forth between destinations. Their roads frequently overlapped and intertwined with those of merchants and traders in pursuit of both religious and economic goals. Since both itinerant monks and cenobitic communities inhabiting residential monasteries depended upon donations for material support, the dynamic growth of Buddhist institutions was directly linked with the generation of surplus resources. Thus, Buddhist transmission, which necessarily involved the transformation of basic ideas and common practices through interactions with local host cultures and other religious traditions, was symbiotically related to parallel processes of commercial and cultural exchanges. This book demarcates networks for the transmission of Buddhism and cross-cultural exchanges with the goal of explaining the ultimate success of the multidirectional movement of this panAsian religious tradition.

This introductory chapter provides a "road map" to theoretical models of religious mobility, critical issues in the study of religion and economics, and methodologies for analyzing primary sources. In the first section (Models for the Movement of Buddhism), a brief treatment of different metaphors and paradigms for understanding patterns of Buddhist movement widens the range of perspectives

by exploring possible alternatives to the typical view of the spread of Buddhism by gradual diffusion. The following section (Merit, Merchants, and the Buddhist San^gha) highlights linkages between Buddhist networks and trade exchanges after engaging with debates over relationships between economics and religions. The third section (Sources and Methods for the Study of Buddhist Transmission) is an overview of relevant literary, epigraphic and archaeological sources and a guide to methods of interpretation, which is intended to familiarize readers with recent discoveries of manuscripts, inscriptions, and other materials. A synopsis of the other chapters (Outline of Destinations) at the end of this chapter is the starting point for an investigation of historical and economic contexts for networks of Buddhist transmission, commercial exchanges, and cross-cultural contact between South Asia and Central Asia.

Models for the Movement of Buddhism

Themes of mobility pervade Buddhist imagery, beginning with the religious biography of 8ākyamuni Buddha, who relinquished his destiny of becoming a "wheel-turning" ruler (cakravartin) when he "set out" (Sanskrit: pravrajita) as a renouncer rather than fulfilling his duties as a settled householder in Kapilavastu. After a period of ascetic wandering and his subsequent awakening at Bodh Gaya, 8ākyamuni set the "wheel of dharma" (dharmacakra) in motion with his first teaching at Sarnath. The wheel symbolizes this hagiographic event, which is also recalled by the Buddha's gesture of "turning the wheel of dharma" in recurring iconographic patterns. Dynamic turning of a wheel has polyvalent meanings in Buddhist art and literature, including the widespread metaphor of the "wheel of becoming" (bhavacakra) to depict the cycle of rebirth in medieval Buddhist art from India, Central Asia, China, and Tibet. In addition to the wheel, motifs of roads, ways, and paths are employed as analogies for the teachings of the Buddha, who is characterized as the re-discoverer of an ancient road. A basic feature of Buddhist rhetoric is the "Middle Way" between extreme practices of ascetic self-mortification and luxurious self-indulgence and between philosophical extremes of nihilism and eternalism. Another prominent example is the "Noble Eightfold Path" elaborated by the Buddha during his first teaching at Sarnath, which is glossed as the "Way leading to the end of suffering" (dukhanirodhagāmanï pratipad) in commentaries. Buddhist texts with titles such as the Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga), and the Lamp for the Path to Awakening (Bodhipathapradïpa) demonstrate that Buddhaghosa, Atïša, and other Buddhist scholars from very different traditions framed methods of reaching religious goals in terms of "paths" (mārga). Many of these Buddhist texts schematically 'map' doctrinal complexities and meditation techniques for reaching Nirvān^a, fulfilling Bodhisattva vows, and realizing Buddhahood. On the basis of the variety of "mārga schemes" for reaching Buddhist goals, Robert Buswell and Robert Gimello argue that "the concept of 'path' has been given an explication more sustained, comprehensive, critical, and sophisticated than that provided by any other single religious tradition". The project of finding pathways of practice and thought to escape from suffering is not exclusively Buddhist, but the repeated emphasis and continuous elaboration of mārga-type imagery shows that metaphors and motifs related to journeying are particularly apt. Epithets of the Buddha as a "caravan leader" (sārthavāha) and narratives of Bodhisattva merchants discussed later in this chapter suggest that literary and visual allusions to wheels, pathways, and vehicles to express abstract goals of release may have had considerable basis in the experiences of everyday Buddhist monks and merchants who traveled on ordinary roads to reach conventional destinations. ***

Sources and Methods for the study of Buddhist Transmission

A synthesis of texts, inscriptions, and archaeological materials reveals patterns of Buddhist transmission which stand out in sharper relief when multiple sources are utilized for interpretation. Such an approach requires consideration of fundamental questions about how the primary sources related to the social and economic history of Buddhism:

1) What is the basis for situating these sources in chronological and geographical contexts? Addressing issues of time and place is necessary to discern the viewpoints of authors and producers of textual and material artifacts, as well as their audiences.
2) How does source analysis shed light on issues of institutional expansion, trade networks, and mobility? Is it possible to use evidence from religious sources to address questions about cultural, social, and economic contexts without reductionist oversimiplification?
3) How can internal Buddhist discourses illuminate historical processes of cross-cultural exchange, inter- and intra-religious dialogues, and shifting practices? While scholarly skepticism requires further questioning of emic claims of conversion narratives, for example, examination of underlying motives and assumptions can help to understand the practical and ideological concerns of Buddhist communities.
4) Can external sources be correlated with Buddhist sources to provide more comprehensive viewpoints on religious, historical, and economic contexts? 'Outside' sources include travel itineraries, coins and seals, and other written and visual materials that are not directly connected with monastic production.
5) Which etic perspectives in the academic study of Buddhism help to clarify relationships between sources, and which scholarly biases have clouded their interpretation? While the field of Buddhist Studies has inherited a tendency to privilege literary texts from the so-called Oriental Renaissance in the nineteenth century when scholars such as Eugène Burnouf initially identified common features in accounts of the Buddha's life, teachings, and community in Sanskrit, Pãli, and Tibetan texts, many recent scholars have challenged uncritical acceptance of this basic bias (which is certainly not unique to the study of Buddhism). Gregory Schopen characterizes this longstanding bias as a "Protestant Presupposition" in that Protestant reformers located religion in scripture rather than 'vulgar' external works and elevated doctrinal ideas over manifestations of devotion. Such methodological critiques are not intended to dismiss the importance of textual sources for illuminating key doctrines, but to seek answers to questions about material culture, religious practices, and socio-economic concerns by broadening inquiries to include a wider variety of literary discourses, epigraphic sources, and archaeological remains. While striving to avoid "the bugaboo of binary oppositions" between literary and material sources, élite scholasticism and popular practice, and the abstract thought and concrete practices, the goal here is to synthesize different genres of textual sources, epigraphic evidence, and archaeological materials, while acknowledging limits to their interpretation. The following outline of sources aims to introduce methodologies for approaching these valuable sources.
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Outline of Destinations

Having outlined some of the sources, methods, and theories at the outset of the journey, where do paths of Buddhist transmission lead? Before embarking, it is necessary to identify a starting point and destinations, both in terms of chronological time and geographical space.

Chapter 2: Historical Contexts for the Emergence and Transmission of Buddhism within South Asia

The second chapter establishes a diachronic foundation for the study of trade and transmission beginning with the emergence of Buddhism in northern India during the time of the historical Buddha around the fifth century BCE and continuing through the first millennium CE. Issues related to the emergence and growth of renouncer movements in very competitive social, economic, and religious environments are addressed in this re-examination of the initial phases of Buddhist formation in northeastern India from approximately the fifth century BCE to the Mauryan period. The focus of the historical overview shifts to contacts between India, Iran, and Central Asia in the early centuries

CE, since various groups migrated to South Asia along routes that were also used in the transmission of Buddhism in the opposite direction to their former homelands. Although it will not be possible to completely fill every gap in the history of Indian and Central Asian Buddhism, historical contexts for the patronage of Buddhist monastic institutions in later periods during the first millennium CE receive particular emphasis.

Chapter 3: Trade Networks in Ancient South Asia

Roads for the expansion of Buddhist communities throughout ancient India known as the 'Northern Route' (uttarãpatha) and 'Southern Route' (daks^in^ãpatha) are explored in the third chapter. These terms generally designate geographical / cultural regions of northern and southern India, often in relation to the location of the author of a text, the original homelands of travelers, or the domain of rulers whose exploits are eulogized in inscriptions. These arteries of commercial and cultural exchange, which were linked to much larger overland and maritime networks, served as paths of Buddhist transmission. Literary references as well as epigraphic and archeological evidence associated with particular nodes demarcate paths and patterns for the transmission of Buddhism in the Indian subcontinent.

Chapter 4: Old Roads in the Northwestern Borderlands

An extension of the Northern Route beyond the northwestern frontier of South Asia is a particularly significant part of the itinerary and is detailed in the fourth chapter. This chapter focuses on the domestication of Buddhist narratives, art and architecture, literary culture, and monastic institutions in ancient Gandhara, a pivotal border region for cross-cultural contact between Indian, Iranian, Hellenistic, and Central Asian spheres located in northwestern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan. Archaeological remains of stüpas and monasteries, distinctive artistic traditions which had a wide impact beyond South Asia as well as donative inscriptions and several collections of early Buddhist manuscripts written in the Gãndhãrï regional language amply demonstrate that Buddhist institutions flourished in many impressive centers of cultural production in the Gandhãran region. Buddhist cultures in the Swat valley (ancient Updpiyãna) and Bajaur in northwestern Pakistan and in Kashmir were closely linked with Gandhãra, but developed their own artistic and literary traditions and localized shrines and narratives, as attested in the accounts of Chinese pilgrims.

Chapter 5: Capillary Routes and Buddhist Manifestations in the Upper Indus

Inscriptions and rock drawings in the Upper Indus, Gilgit, and Hunza valleys of northern Pakistan demarcate a network of capillary routes and long-distance trade routes across topographical, linguistic, and cultural boundaries enabled Buddhist missionaries to "spread the dharma" at élite and sub-élite levels. Manifestations of the presence of the Buddha in the form of reliquary stüpas, inscriptions, and images show that the process of transmission involved more than adoption of philosophical ideas and religious ideals. As flexible religious systems rather than monolithic unchanging entities with fixed doctrines and rigid orthodox rules, Buddhist traditions were able to adapt to different environments. The ability to change with shifting conditions of economic support and to appeal to a wide audience of potential patrons differentiates the lasting success of Buddhist missions outside of the Indian subcontinent from other religions originating in South Asia. This reassessment of sources, methods, and models illuminates paths and processes of Buddhist transmission across Asia in order to answer longstanding questions about why the sangha was able to successfully transmit the dharma in its various manifestations beyond the homeland of Šãkyamuni Buddha. <>

BRINGING BUDDHISM TO TIBET: HISTORY AND NARRATIVE IN THE DBA' BZHED MANUSCRIPT edited by Lewis Doney [Series: Beyond Boundaries, Co-published with the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland with support from the European Research Council, De Gruyter, 9783110715224] Open Source

- Full text of the Dba'bzhed, a key work for the early history of Buddhism in Tibet
- Tibetan text and English translation in facing layout for the first time
- Expert analysis and contextualization of the Dba'bzhed

BRINGING BUDDHISM TO TIBET is a landmark study of the *Dba' bzhed*, a text recounting the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet. The narrative of Buddhism's arrival in Tibet is known from a number of versions, but the *Dba' bzhed* preserved in a single manuscript'is the oldest complete copy. Although the *Dba' bzhed* stands at the head of a long tradition of history writing in the Tibetan language, and has been known for more than two decades, this book provides a full transcription of the Tibetan for the first time, together with a new translation.

The book also introduces Tibetan history and the *Dba' bzhed* with several introductory chapters on various aspects of the text by experienced scholars in the field of Tibetan philology. These detailed studies provide analysis of the text's narrative context, its position within traditional and current historiography, and the organisation and structure of the text itself and its antecedents.

BRINGING BUDDHISM TO TIBET is essential reading for anyone interested in Tibetan history and kingship, the nature of Tibetan historical narrative or the traditions of text transmission and codicology. The book will also be of general interest to students of Buddhism and the spread of Buddhism across Asia.

CONTENTS

Tibet has never been as closed off to the rest of the world as it exists in some westerners' imaginations. During the seventh century, Chinese ambassadors passed through a Central Tibet ruled by the Tibetan empire. In the eighth century, artisans from Nepal and China were present at court and helped establish Tibetan Buddhist material culture. In the south, the trade routes across the Himalayas continued to provide access to the Indian subcontinent after the fall of the empire and, in the western Himalayas, the Mnga' ris Kingdom traced its heritage back to central Tibet but also maintained strong ties to South Asia. With the second dissemination of Buddhism, more Tibetans travelled to Kashmir, Nepal, Bengal and the Gangetic Plain in search of Buddhist teachings and texts, writing of their peregrinations and advising future travelers of the dangers that they would face. The journeys of Indic masters to Tibet are also recorded, though more usually in the third person.

Yet, the question still remains, what is Tibet? The geographical extent of what constituted 'Tibet' (Bod/Bautai/ Baitai/Tubbat/Fa/Tufan) during the imperial period (c. 600–850 CE) varied considerably as the Tibetan empire expanded and contracted at its various borders over time. Yet, through the prism of especially Buddhist historiography, a 'Tibet' emerged that was increasingly identified with the values of Indic Buddhism rather than military expansion. Works of historiography reflecting the influence of Buddhist literature and the cultural memory of the post-imperial Tibetans transformed the cosmopolitan Tibetan imperial world into a wild borderland contrasted with the Buddhist Indian subcontinent of the first millennium, through the biographies of its emperors who brought queens and religious masters to court from throughout their realms and beyond and thereby civilized the "land of snows." When the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) ruled over Tibet, the latter then gradually took on a new role as guru to the region's new imperial power. This rise in the status of Tibet on the world stage influenced even later accounts. For example, the lists of countries whose Buddhist masters played roles in converting imperial Tibet became longer, reflecting an expansion in certain Tibetans' geographical awareness in the interim. These histories raise certain questions: To what extent did such accounts draw on first-hand experiences of the places described, either as people saw them at the time of these works' compilation and/or during the imperial period itself? Is there anything in the depiction of the flow of people between South Asia and Tibet that links the self-representation of the emperors to the later 'national' self-image of the Tibetans?

As Buddhism spread through Asia during the first millennium, its encounter with the lands and societies it entered was represented in a variety of unique ways. Narrations of "the coming of the dharma" (chos 'byung) had profound effects on each country's literature and, together with the influx of foreign narratives about South Asia itself into these countries, formed an integral part of their assimilation of Buddhism. The myths surrounding the Tibetan empire and its place in the spread of Buddhism in Asia steadily grew in length, variety, and influence from the post-imperial "time of fragments" (sil bu'i dus) through the politically charged fourteenth century to the more philologically critical milieu of the fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682). However, Buddhist historians during this entire period rarely made explicit statements about their work. They seldom provided criteria defining different genres of historical text or any of the rules governing their choice of sources. It is therefore of central importance to analyse the adaptation and redaction of their narratives, if we ever hope to reveal Buddhist approaches to historiography in practice. This will also help us answer wider cultural questions of attributed authorship, literary genres, and the creation of traditionally authoritative Buddhist historical narratives. This book intends to do just this, and so contribute to ongoing debates about the religio-politically motivated reconstruction of history and narrative in Buddhist Asia, and its lasting effects on the national identities of those countries.

This edited volume brings together six scholars of Tibetan studies to examine one such history, the Dba' bzhed.1 The principal narrative of the Dba' bzhed reflects an eleventh or twelfth-century view of the Tibetan imperial period and especially the acts on behalf of Buddhism that the eighth-century

emperor (btsan po) Khri Srong lde btsan (as his name is spelled there), his subjects and invited religious masters performed in Tibet, China and India. The Dba' bzhed's full title is: "Dba' bzhed, the royal narrative (bka' mchid) concerning how the Buddha's dharma arose in Tibet." This description encapsulates the main account given in the text, and perhaps indicates the antiquity of its core depiction of this period. The Dba' bzhed first surveys the reigns of four major Tibetan Buddhist emperors: the prehistoric Lha tho do re snyan btsan, during whose reign Buddhism is said to have appeared in Tibet; Srong btsan sgam po (d. 649), during whose reign the practice of the doctrine was introduced; Khri Srong lde btsan (742–c. 800), during whose reign the doctrine spread and prospered; and Khri Gtsug lde btsan (Ral pa can; d. 841), during whose reign the doctrine was thoroughly systematised. The biographies of these emperors divide the narrative into four parts, with Khri Srong lde btsan taking the lion's share.

When the thirteen-year-old Khri Srong lde btsan takes over the governance of the empire (on folio 4r:6), the narrative shifts from the emperor to a small group of Tibetan ministers and their conspiracies against the dharma. The Dba' bzhed's principal protagonist is the Buddhist minister Dba' Gsas snang (known to later tradition as Gsal snang), with a lesser but still important role played by Dba'/'Ba' Sang shi. Despite the rival ministers' destruction of all that previous Buddhist kings had achieved and their interdiction against its future practice, Dba' Gsas snang goes in search of the dharma to India and Nepal where he worships at Buddhist pilgrimage and monastic sites (5v:1–2).

Dba' Gsas gnang convinces the emperor to invite the Indian abbot Šãntarak^ita to Tibet. Šãntarak^ita in turn recommends the tantric master Padmasambhava to tame the land in order to build Bsam yas Monastery (gtsug lag khang). However, Khri Srong lde btsan grows suspicious of the siddha's power and asks Padmasambhava to leave Tibet half-way through the narrative. The emperor instead appoints Dba' Gsas snang to "the highest religious authority (chos kyi bla) as head [at his] right side (sa g.yas kyi tshugs dpon)." For a while thereafter, though, Šãntarak^ita continues to play a more prominent role than Dba' Gsas snang, for instance in debate with the followers of the indigenous Bon religion of Tibet or digging out the site of Bsam yas with Khri Srong lde btsan (14v:1–15v:3).

When the abbot dies, Dba' Gsas snang is ordained as Ye shes dbang po and becomes the main moral goad of Khri Srong lde btsan. Ye shes dbang po recommends inviting the disciple of the now deceased Šãntarak^ita,

Kamalašïla, to take the gradualist side in the famous Bsam yas Debate against proponents of the instantaneous path to enlightenment (19v:3). Khri Srong lde btsan finally chooses the gradual approach as the victor and spreads it throughout Tibet (24v:2–3). Towards the end of the Dba' bzhed, it states that his reign marked a high-point in the rise of Buddhism in Tibet:

> Where the dharma did not get established during the reign of the five previous kings, Lha sras Khri Srong lde btsan, Ãcãrya Bodhisatva, Dba' Ye shes dbang po and 'Ba' Sang shi, these four, established the shrines of the triple gem.

These protagonists are actively responsible for bringing Buddhism to Tibet, despite the manuscript's title and opening lines framing the narrative as an arising of the dharma in a way that de-emphasises (human) agency. This should alert us to the multiple depictions existing with the same text. Providing the core narrative of this text in precis here gives the misleading impression that it is perhaps the homogenous work of a single author. However, the Dba' bzhed represents a collage of narratives that probably took on its recognisable shape around the eleventh century. Some Tibetans over the centuries may have read this text as a single work (just as it is translated as a single piece into English), but it was surely created through a process of compilation and annotation over a number of centuries. The text therefore contains numerous strata of narrative, which give differing impressions of the central protagonists of the narrative, the organisation of the court and religion's role in Tibet (both Buddhist and non-Buddhist). In this way, the Dba' bzhed offers us a number of different

snapshots of a vital evolving corpus of texts and quotations within Tibetan historiography focused on the eighth century, that shall be referred to in this volume as the Testimony of Ba tradition.

Contributors to this book describe the earliest sources preceding the Dba' bzhed history and the process of recension that created it and then altered it down the centuries. This process gave birth to the Testimony of Ba tradition on Khri Srong lde btsan and the spread of Buddhism in Tibet during his reign, the Testimony of Ba. The Dba' bzhed is the oldest available full version of the tradition, and its core narrative probably dates to the eleventh or twelfth century. Yet, it contains earlier narratives perhaps dating back to the ninth century, as well as later additional elements and interlinear notes. A longer, redacted version of the same narrative first published in 1980 most likely dates to the twelfth century, but a condensed version of the same narrative published in 1961 represents a thirteenth or fourteenth-century redaction.

In Chapter 1, I describe how the modern study of the Testimony of Ba began in 1961 when a late version of the narrative was published by Rolf A. Stein (1911–1999). As more exemplars appeared, they influenced scholarly debates (in Tibetan and other languages) over Tibetan history and historiography, its language, society and religion. Chapter 1 then sketches out the relation between a few of the key witnesses to the Testimony of Ba tradition. This investigation helps to show the high place that the text holds in the Tibetan historical tradition, as well as some of the ways in which the narrative was perceived and used over time.

In Chapter 2, Michael Willis and the late Tsering Gonkatsang examine the codicology, palaeography and internal history of the Dba' bzhed manuscript. Close study of the organisational structure and scribal peculiarities of the manuscript bring us closer to establishing the date of its compilation and the earliest history of the narrative. This is followed by copious notes on philologically intriguing aspects of the manuscript, its main text and annotations.

In Chapter 3, Sam van Schaik investigates the first evidence of the narrative, which comes from a fragment found in one of the Mogao caves near Dunhuang, Northwest China.7 This fragment dates between c. 800 to 900 CE, during or shortly after the time when the Tibetan empire controlled this area. The fragment may represent the narrative in its formative state and a close examination of its palaeography, codicology and content deepens our understanding of how the Testimony of Ba evolved between the ninth and eleventh century.

In Chapter 4, Brandon Dotson engages in a close reading of lexical details within the Testimony of Ba. He shows the relationship between the title and the Dba's clan's relation with the Tibetan emperor. Chapter 4 also discusses deliberately archaic phrases and terminology from the dynastic period, contained in the Dba' bzhed. The identification of these archaisms reveals much about the sources of the narrative and the cultural context of those who compiled and edited it over the centuries.

In Chapter 5, Serena Biondo focuses in on the Bsam yas Debate between followers of the gradualist and instantaneous paths to enlightenment. The historical veracity of the account, its sources and influence on later religious and philosophical debates in Tibet has long been a topic of intense interest among scholars of Buddhist Studies. Chapter 5 uncovers some important quotations of other Buddhist works within the Dba' bzhed, reinterprets its ending and reconsiders the identity of some of the major protagonists of the Bsam yas Debate.

In Chapter 6, I conclude Part One with a look at the depiction of Khri Srong lde btsan as a Buddhist king in the Dba' bzhed. Earlier narratives present a glorified, divine image of this emperor and describe his reign as a 'golden age' of Buddhist practice, from which Tibetan ritual has since declined. In contrast, the Dba' bzhed places the period of decline in the eighth century. Tantric masters such as Padmasambhava attempt to prevent its destruction. The emperor then hastens its demise by

banishing Padmasambhava and causing a division in the Buddhist community. This depiction causes tensions in the portrayal of Buddhist kingship that later editors of the Testimony of Ba had to deal with if they wanted to keep representing the imperial period as a 'golden age.'

Finally, the book provides a facing-page transcription and translation of the Dba' bzhed undertaken by Tsering Gonkatsang and Michael Willis and a very useful index to the text compiled by Serena Biondo. The manuscript presented here has 31 folios. The translated text runs to 16,670 words. Gonkatsang and Willis' transcription improves on a number of recent attempts in the sophistication of its philology and the clarity of the type-setting. Their translation also builds on that of Pasang Wangdu and Hildegard Diemberger in 2000, more thoroughly emphasising the main text and adding depth to the meaning based on our two scholars' long experience in Tibetology and Indology respectively. Having recourse to Pasang Wangdu and Diemberger's facsimile of the text and copious notes is still advised. I hope that this volume will prove of use to students and scholars of Tibetan Studies, and also those in the wider academic world interested in the redaction of historiography and the place of literature in the Buddhicisation of empire.

As readers make their way through this book, it will become clear that, at points, its contributors present different translations or interpretations of Dba' bzhed narratives. I have neither sought to reduce these tensions, nor 'solve' these contradictions, since one of the main aims of this volume is to problematise the monolithic presentation of the Dba' bzhed as a single work of some genius author that can be mined for their 'intent' in writing it at a single moment in history. Instead, these different readings show the Dba' bzhed to be a rich and complex source of the wider Testimony of Ba tradition. The strata within both should be distinguished, as in an archaeological dig, to highlight the different layers of historiography, identity politics and religious perspective deposited by the various redactors over time. In the future, I hope that this will lead

to a relative chronology of the narratives surrounding the Dba' bzhed history of the coming of the dharma or bringing of Buddhism to Tibet, and shed light on the changing cultural dynamics of the early second millennium that fed the soil of our extant exemplars of the Testimony of Ba and sowed the seed of its enduring popularity. In closing, I would like to heartily thank the contributors for their hard work, patience and many forms of help over the years beyond writing their individual contributions, and to Aaron Sanborn-Overby and Sabina Dabrowski at De Gruyter for seeing the book through the press. Most of the writing, editing and publication of this book was generously funded by the European Research Council and the Royal Asiatic Society as part of the project "Beyond Boundaries: Religion, Region, Language and the State" (ERC Synergy Project 609823 ASIA). Finally, this volume is dedicated to the memory of Tsering Dhundup Gonkatsang, who patiently guided the work at every step and gave keen attention to transcription and translation of the text, and whom we shall all miss.

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In Memoriam: Tsering Dhundup Gonkatsang (1951–2018) by John Bray

In the course of his life Tsering Dhundup Gonkatsang played many roles, but he found his vocation—above all else—as a teacher and a translator. Confident in his own skills, he never sought any particular academic prestige. Rather he found fulfillment in using his expertise to help others. This involved him in a wide variety of tasks, from deciphering complex historical texts to organising community events, making films, and translating human rights documents into Tibetan. His formal career culminated in his appointment as the first Instructor in Tibetan at the University of Oxford. Beyond his family, his greatest delight was in the success of his students.

Tsering was born in Da nga, Sharkhog, eastern Tibet in 1951, shortly after the Chinese Communist takeover of the region. His family were relatively prosperous, the kind of people who might be

classified as class enemies. In the mid-1950s, fearing that their son might be at risk, his parents took him on what became an extended journey first to Ngawa, then to Dartsedo (Kanding), and eventually to Lhasa. At that point, his father got into trouble with the Chinese authorities, and was imprisoned. Together with his mother, uncle and aunt, Tsering travelled on to Kalimpong in north-east India where he went to his first school. They did not see or hear from his father for more than 20 years.

In India, Tsering and his relatives at first lived precariously, and in that respect their fortunes mirror those of many others in the Tibetan refugee community. From Kalimpong they moved to Simla. During the colder winter months, the adults earnt a supplementary income selling sweaters in Calcutta (now Kolkata), and Tsering helped out during the school holidays. Later, his uncle and aunt were allocated a small plot of land in Bylakuppe, a Tibetan settlement in southern India, where they lived from the sale of maize and other crops, as well as wood gathered from the nearby forest.

Despite these hardships, Tsering was fortunate in being able to gain a good education as a boarder at the Central School for Tibetans at Happy Valley in Mussoorie, where he excelled both academically and at sport. Everything that he achieved subsequently was grounded on this early training.

Tsering went on from Mussoorie to study English at Chandigarh University. After graduation, he was recruited into the Special Frontier Force, a Tibetan military unit within the Indian Army, based in Chakrata (now part of Uttarakhand). He completed his training, but there was a delay in the confirmation of his appointment as an officer following an Indian government policy review after the 1977 national elections. Rather than hang around waiting, Tsering decided to change course and become a teacher. He therefore studied for a B.Ed degree at the Central Institute of Education in Delhi. In 1979, he joined the SOS Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) school in Dharamsala, the north Indian town that serves as the headquarters of the Tibetan government-in-exile, and in due course rose to become headmaster.

Early in the 1980s, during the period when there was a brief hope of political liberalization in Tibet, Tsering's father was able to travel via Nepal to India. Despite not knowing either Hindi or English, he found his way to Calcutta and, having met a Tibetan monk at Howrah station, contacted the Tibetan community in search of his family. Tsering once told a moving story of how his father was reunited with his aunt. Thinking that a sudden unannounced meeting might be too much of a shock, his father waited outside her home while her relatives prepared her with a gradual build-up of hope and expectation. Their conversation started with the thought that it would be good to hear from Tsering's father after so many years. Then they discussed how wonderful it would be if he could come to India. And it would be even better if he could come to see her. The climax came when they announced that he was waiting just outside.

Tsering's father had hoped that his family might accompany him back to Tibet. His uncle went so far as to obtain the necessary identity papers from the Chinese embassy in Delhi, but they ultimately decided that they would return only when the Dalai Lama himself was able to do so. Meanwhile, Tsering continued his teaching career in Dharamsala.

It was in Dharamsala that Tsering first became interested in the challenges of translation. The immediate spur was a guidance document issued in Tibetan by Samdhong Rinpoche, who was then at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Varanasi. Until then, exile Tibetan schools had focused on the teaching of English as a core survival skill, often at the expense of the mother tongue. Samdhong Rinpoche now called on them to redress the balance in favour of Tibetan. Evidently, his concerns were justified because Tsering had to translate this guidance for his Tibetan colleagues who were, themselves, products of an English-language education. He sent his translation to Samdhong

Rinpoche, whose warm endorsement encouraged him to take his own Tibetan language skills a step further.

In 1987 Tsering moved to the University of Glasgow in Scotland to study for a postgraduate degree in education, with a particular focus on mother-tongue teaching. He then moved to north London and set up a home there with his wife Dolker and their three children, Lhayum, Choeyang, and Tashi, who all joined him from Dharamsala. Dolker's constant support and their happy family life served as the foundation for everything else that Tsering did. He was immensely proud of his children, their partners, and two grandchildren, all of whom survive him.

From 1991 until 2001, Tsering worked at the International Community School in London, eventually becoming Head Teacher. Meanwhile, he was involved in a wide range of other activities. Already an accomplished teacher of English to non-native speakers, he now began to apply the same skills to the teaching of his own language. I was myself among a select group of friends who regularly visited his house in north London for private lessons. He also served as the General Secretary of the Tibetan Community in Britain (TCB) from 1994 to 1996, and for many years taught Tibetan to the TCB children. At the same time, he provided translation to and from Tibetan for a number of organisations, including Amnesty International, the Tibet Information Network (TIN), and the Trace Foundation in New York.

Once he had settled in London, Tsering was able to revisit Tibet. In 1997, he travelled to his home in Amdo, together with Dolker and Choeyang. In 2004, he and Dolker visited her home in Tinkye, southern Tibet. Finally, he was again able visit Amdo in 2007, a year before his father passed away.

In 2001, Tsering took up a position as Instructor in Tibetan at the University of Oxford; this was a new post, created in memory of the Tibetan scholar Michael Aris (1946–1999). Tsering's now well-honed talents as a teacher and a linguist meant that he was the perfect candidate. During his years in Oxford he was able to put all his varied skills and experience to the best possible use.

Tsering taught beginner and intermediate Tibetan, as well as working intensively with advanced students on the reading of specific texts. He typically spent two days a week in Oxford. Driving up from his home in London, he would start early in the morning and stay late, surviving on orange juice when there was no time for meals. For his teaching materials Tsering drew on an eclectic range of sources including the adventures of Tintin, his own translation of the Twelve Days of Christmas (an English carol), as well as Tibetan-language Internet blogs and historical texts. He presented papers on Tibetan teaching materials at successive triennial conferences of the International Association for Tibetan Studies (IATS). The panel that he planned on this topic at the 15th IATS conference in Paris in 2019 will be dedicated to his memory.

Tsering's students remember him for his warmth, encouragement and sense of humour, often telling jokes that set the class into fits of laughter. At the same time, they marvelled at his linguistic versatility, whether they needed help with dharma texts, poetry, folk tales or historical records. Always unassuming, he was at the heart of the Oxford Tibetan studies community.

Tsering was equally generous in his collaboration with researchers beyond Oxford, and I was myself a beneficiary. Together we wrote three historical papers on Ladakh, and a fourth was in preparation at the time of his death. Other close colleagues included Michael Willis of the British Museum with whom he wrote three joint essays; they were working on a project on the advent of Buddhism into Tibet according to the Chronicles of Dba' at the time of his death. It is a great pleasure to see this book finished and in the hands of readers.

Tsering's other personal projects included the translation of an illustrated biography of the 14th Dalai Lama on behalf of the Domey (Amdo) Association in Dharamsala, and a book on the protector

deity of Kirti monastery (in Ngawa, Eastern Tibet). At the same time, he was still fully involved in Tibetan community activities, serving as a trustee of the Tibet Foundation from 2009 to 2017, as well as Tibet Watch, a UK-based NGO monitoring Tibetan affairs, from 2008 to 2016. He provided translations for, among others, the US-based Radio Free Asia, and collaborated on the production of films and documentaries related to Tibet. In all of these activities, he rarely showed signs of fatigue. Tsering's daughter Choeyang shares part of the secret. For her father, there was no boundary between his formal work and the wide range of Tibet-related activities that brought him satisfaction and joy.

In April of this year I met Tsering at the British Library in London, and we chatted for two hours in the canteen. This would in any case have been a memorable occasion, since I now live in Singapore and we rarely had an opportunity to meet in person. Now the meeting has taken on an extra significance. Our conversation turned to his birthplace in eastern Tibet. Tsering then ran through the key events of his life, retelling old stories, and sharing new ones, including some of the anecdotes related here. He had one more year to go before retirement from Oxford, and then he would have had plenty of other projects. The overwhelming impression was a sense of fulfilment and contentment.

Less than three weeks later, Tsering died after a car crash on his way to Oxford, having started early on a Friday morning to offer extra help to students before the start of his formal lessons. It was and remains hard to take in this news. He still had so much to contribute and—on a personal note—there was still so much that I and others had wanted to ask him.

Tsering's legacy includes a range of articles and translations in print and scattered across the Internet. More than that, he will remain a continuing presence in the lives of the many people who knew him as a friend, colleague, and mentor. Between us, we will build on what we learnt from him, take it a step further, and share it with others. There can be no better way of honouring the best of friends and the most beloved of teachers. <>

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