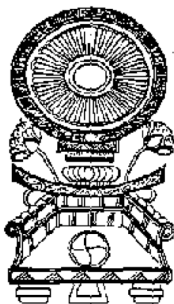


BUDDHIST STUDIES REVIEW

VOLUME 22 • PART 1 • 2005



THE JOURNAL OF THE
UK ASSOCIATION FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

BUDDHIST STUDIES REVIEW

Buddhist Studies Review is the semi-annual journal of the UK Association for Buddhist Studies. We welcome contributions to this journal in any aspect of the field of Buddhist studies. All mss should be sent to the Editor, from 2006, volume 23.1:

Professor Peter Harvey, School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
University of Sunderland, Priestman Building, Green Terrace, Sun-
derland SR1 3PZ, UK (email: peter.harvey@sunderland.ac.uk).

Copyright will automatically be vested in this journal unless a contribu-
tor stipulates otherwise.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Rupert Gethin (*Editor 2005*)

Mahinda Deegalle (*Book Reviews Editor*)

T. H. Barrett

Cathy Cantwell

Elizabeth Harris

Peter Harvey

Ulrich Pagel

Charles S. Prebish

Andrew Skilton

From 2006 *Buddhist Studies Review* will be published by Equinox Pub-
lishing Ltd.

For subscription details, please see inside the back cover.

BUDDHIST STUDIES REVIEW

VOLUME 22 • PART 1 • 2005

CONTENTS

Editor's Note	ii
Some Pali Discourses in the Light of Their Chinese Parallels <i>by Anālayo</i>	i
The Weary Buddha or Why the Buddha Nearly Couldn't be Both- ered <i>by David Webster</i>	15
The Buddha's Attitude to Social Concerns <i>by Mudagamuwe Maithrimurthi</i>	27
The Religious Meaning of Buddhist Sculpture in its Cultural Set- ting: The Buddha Images of Qingzhou in the Light of Recent Scholarship <i>by T. H. Barrett</i>	45
Book Reviews	71
Obituary: Thích Huyền-Vi (Le-Van-Huyên)	85
Call for papers: UKABS Special Conference	91

ISSN 0265-2897

© 2005 BUDDHIST STUDIES REVIEW

EDITOR'S NOTE

This is the first issue of *Buddhist Studies Review* to be published since the retirement of Russell Webb as editor. On behalf of the UK Association for Buddhist Studies I should like to thank both Russell Webb and also Sara Boin-Webb for all the hard work they put into *Buddhist Studies Review* over so many years. The two issues of volume 22 (2005) of the Journal will be edited by me and published directly by UKABS. From 2006, beginning with volume 23.1, Professor Peter Harvey will take on the role of Editor and *Buddhist Studies Review* will be published by Equinox Publishing Ltd. For the new subscription rates please see inside the back cover.

RUPERT GETHIN
Editor for volume 22 (2005)

SOME PALI DISCOURSES IN THE LIGHT OF THEIR CHINESE PARALLELS

ANĀLAYO

Most of the discourses found in the four Pali Nikāyas have one or more parallels in the Chinese Āgamas. These Chinese parallels tend to be often quite close to the Pali discourse, thereby reconfirming the overall picture of early Buddhism gained through familiarity with the Pali Nikāyas. In some instances, the Chinese parallels are moreover able to clarify or provide additional information in relation to a passage found in the Pali text. It is this potential of the Chinese Āgamas as a supplement to the Pali discourses to which I would like to draw attention with the present article, taking up a few examples from the *Mūlapaṇṇāsa*, the first group of fifty discourses in the Majjhima Nikāya.

One example for this potential of the Āgamas can be found in relation to a passage in the *Sabbāsava Sutta*, concerned with proper use of the requisites of a monk or a nun. The Pali version of this discourse instructs that alms food should not be used for, among other things, ‘ornament’ and ‘adornment’.¹ On considering this stipulation, one might wonder how food could be misused for ornament and adornment. The *Visuddhimagga* explains these two expressions as referring to not taking food in order to become plump or to have a clear skin, as harem women or actors might do.²

Yet in other Pali passages the words ‘ornament’ and ‘adornment’ refer to external embellishment, such as wearing garlands, bracelets, decorated sandals, jewellery and long-fringed clothes, etc.³ The same

¹ M 2 at M 1 10,9: *na maṇḍanāya na vibhūsanāya*.

² *Vism* 32,1.

³ D 1 at D 1 7,20 lists among others *mālā*, *hatthabandha*, *citruṇpāhana*, *maṇi*, and *vattha dīghadasa* as instances of *maṇḍana-vibhūsanatthānuyoga*.

meaning also underlies the injunction to refrain from adornment as part of the eight precepts undertaken on full moon days by Buddhist lay followers, an occasion where one is to abstain from wearing such external forms of beautification.⁴

In view of this it would be more natural for the problem of ‘ornament’ or ‘adornment’ to arise in relation to robes rather than food. An example of such misuse of robes can be found in a discourse in the Saṃyutta Nikāya and in its parallel in the Saṃyukta Āgama, which describe how the monk Nanda incurred the Buddha’s reproach for wearing ironed robes.⁵ Thus it comes as a confirmation of the information provided by other Pali passages when one finds that the Madhyama Āgama parallel to the *Sabbāsava Sutta* does not mention ‘ornament’ and ‘adornment’ in relation to food, but instead speaks of the need to avoid adornment in relation to robes.⁶

Another example for an alternative perspective offered by a Chinese parallel can be found in the case of the *Bhayaberava Sutta*, a discourse depicting the Buddha in conversation with the brahmin Jāṇussoṇī on the difficulties of living in seclusion. The Pali version reports the Buddha referring to some recluses and brahmins who mistake day for night, or night for day.⁷ In contrast to these, the Buddha knows day for being day and night for being night, for which he rightly deserves praise as a being free from delusion, arisen for the benefit and welfare of gods and men.

On considering this statement, it seems difficult to imagine someone mistaking day for night or night for day, and it seems even more peculiar to propose that someone able to recognize day for being day should for this reason be considered as a being free from delusion, arisen for the benefit of gods and men.

The Pali commentary explains this statement by describing how someone who has attained *jhāna* with a white *kaṣiṇa* object emerges unexpectedly from this *jhāna* during the night and, due to the after effect

⁴ Corresponding to the eighth of the ten precepts of a novice, Khp 1: *mālā-gandha-vilepāna-dhāraṇa-maṇḍana-vibhūsanatthānā veramaṇī*.

⁵ S 21:8 at S II 281,3 and SĀ 1067 at T II 277a12.

⁶ MĀ 10 at T I 432b23.

⁷ M 4 at M I 21,20.

of the *kaṣiṇa*, mistakes night for being day time. Or else some birds usually active only during the day may chirp at night and cause someone who hears them from inside a dwelling to mistake night for day.⁸

These explanations appear somewhat contrived and do not fit this passage from the *Bhayaberava Sutta* very well, since the Buddha's statement does not seem to be concerned with only a momentary mistaking of day for night or night for day.

The Ekottara Āgama parallel to the *Bhayaberava Sutta* presents the Buddha's statement differently. It reports the Buddha instead explaining that some recluses and brahmins, whether it be day or night, do not understand the path of the *Dhamma*. In contrast to these the Buddha, whether day or night, does understand the path of the *Dhamma*.⁹ This way of presenting the Buddha's statement seems more straightforward than its Pali counterpart.

Though the Ekottara Āgama presentation reads more straightforward, this may not necessarily imply that it represents the more original version, since a Sanskrit fragment supports the Pali reading.¹⁰ Hence this could be an instance where the Chinese translators rendered a knotty passage in such a way as to make it comprehensible to their readers. If the Buddha's statement should originally indeed have been that he recognised day for day and night for night, this could refer to other recluses and brahmins mistaking what is impermanent, unsatisfactory and not self for being the opposite, a misunderstanding similar to mistaking day for night or night for day.

An alternative perspective on a particular passage can also be found in the Chinese parallel to the *Vatthūpama Sutta*. The Pali version enumerates a set of mental imperfections and then turns to perfect confidence in the three jewels. Before taking up the development of the di-

⁸ Ps I 121. The commentary works out both examples in the opposite way as well, with someone attaining *jhāna* with a dark *kaṣiṇa* and emerging at day time, and someone hearing a night bird during day time.

⁹ EĀ 31.1 at T II 666b1: 日夜之中解於道法。

¹⁰ Cat. no. 32 fragm. 37 v2 in E. Waldschmidt, (ed.), *Sanskrihandchriften aus den Turfanfunden*, Teil IV (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1980), p. 131 reads (saṃ)jñ[o] divaṃse ca [d](i)vasa [sa], which would seem to be similar in meaning to M 4 at M I 21,24: *divā yeva samānaṃ divā ti sañjānāmi*.

vine abodes (*brahmavihāra*) and the achievement of liberation, the *Vatthūpama Sutta* has a passage about taking delicious food. According to this passage, for a monk of ‘such virtue’ even taking delicious food will not become an obstruction. This passage comes as a bit of a surprise at this point, in between perfect confidence in the three jewels and the development of the divine abodes, and its implications remain obscure.

The Pali commentary explains this statement as representing the achievement of non-return, since taking delicious food will not obstruct a non-returner from progress to full awakening.¹¹ Though delicious food will indeed not affect a non-returner or an arahant, it does not follow that to be beyond the attraction of delicious food necessarily means that one is at least a non-returner, as it is possible to remain unaffected by delicious food even if one has not yet gained such a lofty level of realization.

The *Vatthūpama Sutta* at this point speaks of aloofness from the attraction of food for one who is of ‘such virtue, such nature and such wisdom’.¹² Since the preceding passage spoke about perfect confidence in the three jewels, representative of stream-entry, the introductory reference to ‘such virtue, such nature and such wisdom’ can only refer to the same level of awakening. Hence the formulation in the *Vatthūpama Sutta* does not lend support to the commentarial explanation.

A similar passage occurs also in the Ekottara Āgama parallel to the *Vatthūpama Sutta*, where it comes after the achievement of liberation, at the end of an otherwise quite similar exposition.¹³ Unlike the *Vatthūpama Sutta*, the Ekottara Āgama discourse provides some background to the setting of the discourse, reporting that the arrival of the brahmin Sundarika Bhāradvāja formed the occasion for the Buddha to deliver this discourse. The same brahmin appears in the final part of the Pali and the Chinese versions, questioning the Buddha about purification through bathing in sacred rivers.

According to the Ekottara Āgama account, this brahmin felt quite confident of his own spiritual purity compared to the Buddha, as he

¹¹ Ps I 174.

¹² M 7 at M I 38,10: *evaṃ sīlo evaṃ dhammo evaṃ paṇṇo*.

¹³ EĀ 13,5 at T II 574c5.

only took simple food, while the Buddha sometimes partook of succulent and rich food.¹⁴ The Buddha had become aware of this thought of the brahmin and thereupon delivered the *Vatthūpama Sutta*. With this background information in mind, the passage on taking delicious food, found in both versions, becomes more easily understandable, as it was just such taking of delicious food by the Buddha that had caused the brahmin to underestimate the degree of purification the Buddha had reached. By pointing out that eating delectable food does not constitute an obstruction, the Buddha apparently replied to the misconception of the brahmin, a misconception that according to the Chinese version had motivated the Buddha to deliver the entire discourse.

At times the absence of a particular statement or passage in the Chinese version helps to highlight that its occurrence in the Pali version does not fit the context very well. Such a case occurs in the *Sammādit̥ṭhi Sutta*, a discourse expounding various ways of having right view. This discourse has parallels in the Madhyama Āgama, the Saṃyukta Āgama and in a Sanskrit fragment.¹⁵

The Pali version of this discourse concludes each exposition of how to have right view by bringing up the abandoning of the underlying tendencies to lust, irritation, and the conceited view ‘I am’, together with overcoming ignorance and making an end of *dukkha*.¹⁶ This passage does not occur at all in the Chinese and Sanskrit versions.

A closer consideration shows this statement to be out of context, since to overcome ignorance and to make an end of *dukkha* represent full awakening, whereas the topic of having right view is concerned with stream-entry.¹⁷ The Pali discourse follows each reference to overcoming ignorance and making an end of *dukkha* by declaring that ‘to that extent’ (*ettāvata*) a noble disciple is endowed with right view and has

¹⁴ EĀ 13.5 at T II 573c6.

¹⁵ MĀ 29 at T I 461b–464b; SĀ 344 at T II 94b–95c; and the Sanskrit fragments in C. Tripāṭhī, *Fünfundzwanzig Sūtras des Nidānasaṃyukta*, Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1962), pp. 187–197.

¹⁶ M 9 at M I 47.22, 48.14, 49.10,34; 50.14,29, 51.8,23, 52.3,21, 53.2,21, 54.1,16,33, 55.18.

¹⁷ M 9 at M I 46.22 speaks of being ‘endowed with perfect confidence in the *Dhamma*’ (*dhamme aveccappasādena samannāgato*) and of having ‘arrived at the true *Dhamma*’ (*āgato imaṃ saddhammaṃ*), expressions indicating that the reference is to stream-entry.

gained perfect confidence in the teaching.¹⁸ Yet such right view and perfect confidence are already gained with stream-entry, at which stage the underlying tendencies are far from being abandoned, ignorance has not yet been fully overcome and the making an end of *dukkha* is still to be accomplished. Hence the expression ‘to that extent’ does not tally with the content of the passage to which it refers. This suggests that the Chinese and Sanskrit versions of this discourse, which do not have this passage at all, present a more convincing reading in this instance.

Once in a while a Chinese parallel may differ only slightly, yet even such small variations can set a different tone to a particular statement. Such a case occurs in relation to the *Cūḷasihanāda Sutta*, a discourse which begins with the Buddha encouraging his monks to roar the lion’s roar that the four grades of (true) recluses can be found only in his dispensation, other teachings being devoid of (true) recluses.¹⁹ A parallel to this discourse, found in the Ekottara Āgama, has this statement in a slightly different manner.

While in the Pali version the lion’s roar occurs right at the beginning of the discourse, its rationale being an imaginary meeting with outside wanderers, the Ekottara Āgama discourse reports an actual encounter and challenge by other wanderers and comes to the lion’s roar only at the end of its exposition. According to the Ekottara Āgama version of this lion’s roar, the Buddha simply pointed out that the four grades of (true) recluses found among the monks cannot be surpassed by anyone else, without however proclaiming that the teachings of others are devoid of (true) recluses.²⁰

Compared to the Pali presentation, the Ekottara Āgama version of the lion’s roar comes as a natural climax at the end of its exposition and moreover does not make a disparaging statement about other teachings, circumstances which make its version of the lion’s roar breathe a less competitive spirit. Such would be more in harmony with the attitude recommended in the Pali and Chinese versions of the *Araṇavibhaṅga*

¹⁸ Adopting the translation for the occurrence of *ettāvatā* in the present passage given in CPD, s.v. *ettāvatā*, II, p. 657.

¹⁹ M 11 at M I 63,28.

²⁰ EĀ 27.2 at T II 644b15. Another parallel, MĀ 103 at T I 590b7, corresponds more closely to the Pali version.

Sutta, according to which the Buddha advised his monks to teach the *Dhamma* without disparaging others. In both versions he explained that to disparage others instead of teaching the *Dhamma* occurs when a statement is made in such a way as to belittle others.²¹ Taking a lead from the two versions of the *Araṇavibhaṅga Sutta*, to proclaim the superiority of the four types of true recluse found among the Buddhist monks would fall under ‘teaching the *Dhamma*’, but to then declare that all other teachings are devoid of (true) recluses might seem to be moving to some extent in the direction of what the *Araṇavibhaṅga Sutta* considers as ‘disparagement’.

Though the Buddha could at times be quite outspoken, his general attitude towards other contemporary teachers was never competitive. This non-contentious attitude can be seen in the Pali and Chinese versions of the *Upāli Sutta*, when a well-known and influential supporter of the Jains became a follower of the Buddha. Upāli expressed his pleasant surprise when the Buddha, instead of using Upāli’s conversion for propaganda purposes, advised him to carefully consider what he was about to do, even asking him to continue supporting the Jaina monks with alms, as he had done earlier.²² Such a magnanimous attitude in regard to other recluses and wanderers would fit the Buddha better than the competitive tone of the lion’s roar attributed to him in the Pali version of the *Cūḷasihanāda Sutta*.

Taking into account the Chinese discourses may sometimes help to enhance the force of a simile. Such a case occurs in relation to the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*, a penetrative analysis of the perceptual process by Mahākaccāna. The Pali version of this discourse concludes with Ānanda delivering the simile of the honey ball after which the discourse takes its name, comparing the delight to be gained on examining this instruc-

²¹ M 139 at M III 231,27 and its parallel MĀ 169 at T I 701c17.

²² M 56 at M I 379,3–16. The Chinese parallel to the *Upāli Sutta*, MĀ 133 at T I 630a25, even reports the Buddha advising Upāli not to proclaim his conversion at all, in addition to recommending him to continue supporting the *Jaina* monks. A similar instance of the Buddha’s non-contentious attitude can be found in the *Sīha Sutta*, A 8:12 at A IV 185,9 (= Vin I 236,14). In the case of A 8:12, however, the Chinese parallel MĀ 18 at T I 442b14 does not report the Buddha’s magnanimous attitude.

tion to a man who, exhausted by hunger, comes upon a ball of honey.²³ According to the Madhyama Āgama version of this discourse, however, the Buddha himself came out with this simile, indicating that just as from any morsel of a ball of honey one will get a sweet taste, so too one can get the taste of this instruction by contemplating any of the six sense doors, be it the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, or the mind door.²⁴

Compared to the Madhyama Āgama presentation of this simile, the Pali version's image of a man exhausted by hunger seems less persuasive, since someone exhausted by hunger would probably prefer substantial food to something sweet. The Madhyama Āgama version brings out the simile of the honey ball with increased clarity, indicating that the penetrative analysis of the perceptual process offered in this discourse can lead to realization when applied to any sense-door, just as a honey ball is sweet wherever one may bite it.

At times, the Pali and Chinese versions of a discourse may proceed quite similarly but then differ in their respective concluding sections. This happens in the case of the *Vitakkasaṅṭhāna Sutta*, a discourse describing five methods for overcoming unwholesome thoughts. The Pali and Chinese versions of this discourse conclude by indicating that practice of these five methods will lead to mastery over one's thoughts. The Pali version continues by proclaiming that in this way an end of *dukkha* has been made and craving has been eradicated, a proclamation not found in its Chinese counterpart. On reading this statement in the Pali version, one might wonder if mere control of thoughts has on its own already led to full awakening.

A closer inspection of this Pali passage reveals that the overcoming of craving and the making an end of *dukkha* are formulated in the past tense, whereas the previously mentioned mastery over one's thoughts stands in the future tense.²⁵ For freedom from *dukkha* and craving to

²³ M 18 at M I 114.9.

²⁴ MĀ 115 at T I 604c22. Another parallel, EĀ 40.10 at T II 743c23, agrees however with the Pali version on attributing the simile to Ānanda.

²⁵ M 20 at M I 122.2 reads *yaṃ vitakkaṃ ākaṅkhiṣṣati, taṃ vitakkaṃ vitakkessati*, but then continues with *acchechi taṅhaṃ, vāvattayi saṃyojanaṃ, sammā mānābhisamayā antamaṅkāsi dukkhassa*. The relevant Chinese passage is in MĀ 101 at T I 589a6.

stand in a meaningful relationship to mastery of thoughts, the usage of the tenses should be the opposite way. This suggests the reference to full awakening to be out of place in the Pali version, as indicated by its absence from the parallel Chinese version.

Sometimes the Chinese and the Pali versions disagree about the identity of the speaker of a particular statement. Such a disagreement occurs in relation to the *Mahāgosiṅga Sutta*, a discourse in which the great disciples extol their personal qualities in a poetic contest on a moonlit night. The Pali version of the *Mahāgosiṅga Sutta* reports Mahāmoggallāna as speaking in praise of the ability to reply to questions on the *Abhidhamma* without faltering.²⁶ Judging from what can be known about Mahāmoggallāna from other discourses, this kind of ability does not appear to be a typical trait of this particular great disciple. According to the list of eminent disciples found in the Aṅguttara Nikāya and in its parallel in the Ekottara Āgama, a typical trait of Mahāmoggallāna would rather be the exercise of supernormal powers.²⁷ Hence it comes as no surprise that the three Chinese versions of the *Mahāgosiṅga Sutta* and a Sanskrit fragment all report him speaking in praise of supernormal powers instead.²⁸

Regarding the statement extolling the ability to answer questions on deeper aspects of the Dhamma, according to the Madhyama Āgama parallel to the *Mahāgosiṅga Sutta* its authorship should be attributed to Mahākaccāna instead.²⁹ The Pali version of the *Mahāgosiṅga Sutta*, however, does not report his presence at this meeting of great disciples at all.

At times the Pali and Chinese versions do not differ on the identity of the speaker, but on the context within which a particular statement was

²⁶ M 32 at M I 214,24: *dve bhikkhū abhidhammakathaṃ kathenti ... aññamaññassa pañhaṃ puṭṭhā vissajjenti no ca saṃsādentī.*

²⁷ A 1:14 at A I 23,17 and EĀ 4.2 at T II 557b6.

²⁸ MĀ 184 at T I 727c16; EĀ 37.3 at T II 711a18; T 154 at T III 81b29; and the Sanskrit fragment cat. no. 1346 v3–6 in E. Waldschmidt (ed.), *Sanskriithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden*, Teil v (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1985), p. 233.

²⁹ MĀ 184 at T I 727b23. On this passage in MĀ 184 cf. also M. Anesaki, 'The Four Buddhist Āgamas in Chinese', *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 35 (1908), pp. 1–149 (57), and T. Minh Chau, *The Chinese Madhyama Āgama and the Pali Majjhima Nikāya* (Delhi: Motilal, 1991), p. 76.

made. Such a disagreement occurs between the *Cūlasaccaka Sutta* and its parallel in the Saṃyukta Āgama. The topic of these two discourses is an encounter between the Buddha and the debater Saccaka. Before meeting the Buddha, Saccaka had publicly boasted that he was going to floor the Buddha with his debating skills, a boast which turned into utter defeat during their actual meeting. Once defeated, Saccaka publicly admitted the foolishness of his attempt to challenge the Buddha. Saccaka then invited the Buddha and the monks for a meal, requesting the Licchavi householders to help out by providing the food required for this meal.

According to the Pali account, when the meal was over Saccaka wanted to dedicate the merit of the food offering to the Licchavi householders.³⁰ The Buddha thereupon told him that the Licchavi householders will only receive the merit to be gained by giving to Saccaka, who was not free from lust, hate and delusion, while Saccaka himself will receive the merit to be gained by giving to the Buddha, who was free from lust, hate and delusion. Since according to the same Pali discourse Saccaka was considered a saint by his contemporaries, the Buddha's public declaration must have appeared to Saccaka as insulting and offensive. One would not expect the Buddha to make such a statement when Saccaka had publicly admitted the foolishness of his earlier attempt to challenge the Buddha, had just provided him with a meal and was formulating an aspiration to share the merit acquired by this food offering.

The Saṃyukta Āgama discourse reports the Buddha making a similar statement, but in a different context.³¹ According to its account, once the meal was over and the monks were on their way back to the monastery, a discussion arose among them about the merit gained by Saccaka and the Licchavis respectively. Back at the monastery, the monks posed this question to the Buddha, who then gave the same explanation as in the Pali version. With the Buddha making this statement to the monks in private and not publicly to Saccaka, the Chinese version avoids pre-

³⁰ M 35 at M I 236,34.

³¹ SĀ 110 at T II 37b22.

sending the Buddha in the almost resentful attitude attributed to him by the Pali version.

Often enough the differences between the Pali and the Chinese version of a particular discourse are of relatively little consequence for our understanding of the essentials of the early Buddhist teachings. Nevertheless, such differences can help to clarify the details of a particular setting. Such a case occurs in relation to a visit paid by Mahāmoggallāna to Sakka, the king of the gods. According to the account of this visit found in the *Cūlatan̄hāsaṅkhaya Sutta*, at the moment of Mahāmoggallāna's arrival Sakka was endowed with 'five hundred (types of) heavenly music'.³² When Sakka took Mahāmoggallāna to see his palace, the celestial maidens inhabiting this palace felt embarrassed on seeing Mahāmoggallāna approach and retired into their rooms, comparable to the embarrassment experienced by a married woman on seeing her father-in-law.

A few aspects of this description are not entirely clear in the Pali account, such as what the nature of these five hundred types of music might be and why the celestial maidens in Sakka's palace should feel ashamed comparable to a married woman when seeing her father-in-law. Since according to Indian custom a woman had to go to live with her husband's family, one may wonder why she should feel ashamed whenever she meets her father-in-law. In view of the sometimes rather crowded housing conditions in India this would put her into a state of continuous embarrassment.

According to a Chinese parallel of the *Cūlatan̄hāsaṅkhaya Sutta*, found in the Saṃyukta Āgama, at the time of Mahāmoggallāna's arrival Sakka was in the company of five hundred celestial maidens, who were singing.³³ This helps to clarify the nature of the 'five hundred types of music'. The same Chinese version narrates that when seeing Sakka approach the palace from afar, the celestial maidens inhabiting the palace came forward dancing and singing.³⁴ On coming closer they realized that he was in the company of a monk, which caused them to

³² M 37 at M I 252,18: *dibbehi pañcahi turīyasatehi samappito*.

³³ SĀ 505 at T II 133C2+4.

³⁴ SĀ 505 at T II 133C16.

withdraw in embarrassment. That is, they were embarrassed because they had acted in the presence of a monk in a way they felt to be improper.

The simile illustrating their embarrassment recurs in another Chinese discourse, which specifies that the woman embarrassed on meeting her father-in-law had recently married.³⁵ This additional qualification helps to bring out the simile more clearly, since according to a discourse found in the Aṅguttara Nikāya a newly married woman will at first be abashed and ashamed in the presence of her in-laws, but as time goes on she acquires more self-confidence until finally she may even order them around.³⁶ These few additional details round off the description of Mahāmoggallāna's visit to the king of the gods.

As a last example I would like to take up the final two discourses of the *Mūlapaññāsa*, both of which have Māra as one of their protagonists. The first of these two discourses is the *Brahmanimantanika Sutta*, a discourse narrating that Māra had 'taken possession' of a member of Brahmā's assembly, causing this member of the Brahmā world to reprimand the Buddha.³⁷ According to the same discourse, on this occasion Māra had been able to extend his control even over Brahmā himself.³⁸ This is remarkable, since according to other discourses the *jhānas* and therewith the corresponding realms of the Brahmā world are clearly outside Māra's range of control.³⁹ Hence one would not expect Māra to be able to exercise control over the Brahmā world, or be able to take possession of one of its members.

The second of these two discourses is the *Māratajjanīya Sutta*, which reports a previous Māra harassing the monk disciples of Buddha Kaku-sandha. The Pali version of the *Māratajjanīya Sutta* describes how, because of being 'possessed' by Māra, a group of householders reviled and abused monks. A boy, similarly 'possessed' by Māra, even struck an *arahant* monk on the head, shedding his blood.

³⁵ MĀ 30 at T I 465a18: 初迎新婦.

³⁶ A 4:74 at A II 78,20.

³⁷ M 49 at M I 326,34: *Māro ... aññataroṃ Brahmaṇṇaṃ anāvaṇṇitvā.*

³⁸ M 49 at M I 327,30: *yo e' eva pāpima Brahmā yā ca Brahmaṇṇaṃ ... sabbe va tava vasagatā.*

³⁹ Cf. e.g. M 25 at M I 159,10 and its Chinese parallel MĀ 178 at T I 720a9; or A 9:39 at A IV 434,1.

The Pali discourse reports that, because of abusing the monks the householders were reborn in hell, while the boy's harming of the *arahant* monk caused Māra to be reborn in hell. This is puzzling, since Māra had 'possessed' both the householders and the boy,⁴⁰ yet in the first case the householders had to undergo the karmic retribution themselves, while in the second case Māra reaped the karmic fruits.

The Chinese versions of these two discourses present the situation differently. According to them, in none of these cases did Māra actually 'take possession' of someone. In relation to the *Brahmanimantanika Sutta*, according to the Chinese parallel Māra himself reprimanded the Buddha, pretending to be one of the members of Brahmā's assembly.⁴¹ Regarding the events in the *Māratajjanīya Sutta*, altogether three Chinese parallels agree that Māra only instigated the householders to pour abuse on the monks,⁴² whereas Māra himself was responsible for physically harming the *arahant* disciple, an act he undertook by manifesting himself in a human form.⁴³ The Chinese versions agree with the *Māratajjanīya Sutta* on the householders' having to suffer the retribution for the abuse and on Māra himself being reborn in hell, undergoing the dire fruits of harming an *arahant*. In this way the Chinese presentation of the role Māra plays in the *Brahmanimantanika Sutta* and in the *Māratajjanīya Sutta* seems to better accord with the range of his power and with the principle of karma and its fruit.

With these few selected examples I hope to have been able to show how the Chinese Āgamas can enhance our understanding of a particular Pali discourse. Since the purpose of the present article is to highlight the potential of the Chinese Āgamas as a complement to the Pali Nikāyas, I have concentrated on cases where the Chinese discourses help to clarify the Pali versions. The same applies certainly also the other way round, in fact many a passage in the Chinese Āgamas remains obscure until one turns to its Pali parallel for help and clarification.

⁴⁰ M 50 at M I 334₁₁: *Māro brāhmaṇagahapatike anvāvisi*, and at M I 336₃₃: *Māro aññatarāṃ kumāraṃ anvāvisitvā*.

⁴¹ MĀ 78 at T I 547b₂₄.

⁴² MĀ 131 at T I 621a₂₁; T 66 at T I 865a₁₉; and T 67 at T I 867b₁₄.

⁴³ MĀ 131 at T I 622a₇; T 66 at T I 866a₈; and T 67 at T I 868a₁₁.

In the end, the discourses found in the Pali Nikāyas and in the Chinese Āgamas are both but products of an oral tradition. Due to the inevitable variations resulting from oral transmission, these two collections are probably best made use of in conjunction in order to fully explore the legacy of early Buddhism.

ANĀLAYO
Bodhi Monastery

Abbreviations

A *Aṅguttara Nikāya*

CPD V. Trenckner, et al., *A Critical Pali Dictionary* (Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy, 1924–)

EĀ *Ekottara Āgama*

Khṗ *Khuddakapāṭha*

M *Majjhima Nikāya*

MĀ *Madhyama Āgama*

Ps *Papañcasūdanī*

S *Samyutta Nikāya*

SĀ *Samyukta Āgama*

T *Taishō*

Vism *Visuddhimagga*

I am indebted to Bhikkhu Pāsādika, Bhikkhu Bodhi, Bhikkhu Ānanda-joti, Professor Enomoto and Dr Gethin for criticism of earlier drafts of this article.

THE WEARY BUDDHA
OR WHY THE BUDDHA NEARLY
COULDN'T BE BOTHERED

DAVID WEBSTER

I want to focus in this article on a tiny fraction of the Pali canon of Theravāda Buddhism. It is not an obscure section, and is found on numerous occasions.¹ Indeed, we even find the same incident applied to more than one individual, but I will return to that later.

The version of this incident that I am going to use is found in the *Ariyapariyesanā Sutta* in the Majjhima Nikāya. The incident itself forms part of the most well known narrative of all Buddhist literature—the life of the historical Buddha. The most commonly recounted aspects of this story are those leading to the enlightenment—to the man Gotama becoming a Buddha. What interests me here, though, is what occurs in the gap between Gotama becoming a Buddha, and the Buddha becoming a teacher.

We should not underestimate the significance of the Buddha's entry into teaching. He had been a loner for much of the time² and the formation of the Saṅgha is a big step. The Buddha becomes much more involved with interacting with people again, more so than at any time since his renunciation. These interactions now involve lay people as well as ascetics. His role changes from that of a *samaṇa* to that of something akin to a *guru*.³ One might even go as far as to say that he has to re-

¹ In addition to M 1 168, we also find it at S vi 1, Vin 1 4 and D 11 36.

² He did spend the extended period, around 6 years with the five ascetics, but this group, especially considering the kind of activity they were engaged in, hardly constitutes a community. Furthermore, the Buddha and the others appear to not have had any clearly defined roles within this group—it was certainly a way of living far removed from the Saṅgha that was to come.

³ Although this word is not applied to the Buddha in the early Pali texts, it does describe rather aptly the kind of role he, albeit in some respects rather reluctantly, takes on.

establish a sense of himself as part of a community, albeit ultimately as the leader of that community. This change is one that is perhaps not always recognised by either scholars or Buddhist practitioners for the significant change in the Buddha's interpersonal status that it surely is.

However, during the aforementioned period the Buddha is *not* a teacher. Here is one who has attained the goal, won the prize, and having focused all on so doing, might now be seen as in something of a teleological vacuum—there is no obvious purpose to his existence. (Of course, at one level there is no *point* to anyone's existence, but most of us have goals—things we would like to achieve, even if it is all ultimately futile.)

We might assume that the Buddha is here without desire. At least he is without *taṇhā*, and while he later clearly does possess some of the positive forms of *chanda* (if we translate this term as 'a desire to do' or as a 'desire for')⁴ it may not even be clear if he 'wants' anything at this stage.

As yet this might not sound like a particularly exciting part of the Buddha's life. Why should we pay attention to it? The reason is that the Buddha wobbles: he seems to be disinclined towards teaching that which he has discovered. What could it be that might turn Gotama into a Pacceka Buddha?⁵ What leads him to the statement *my mind inclined to inaction rather than to teaching the Dhamma?*⁶

The obstacle—that which he saw as inclining him away from the declaration of Dhamma—was the realization of just how far most people are from the goal. After revelling in his attainment, we find, prior to the statement I have just quoted, him spelling this out:

I considered: 'This Dhamma that I have attained is profound, hard to see and hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise. But this generation delights in adhesion, takes delight in adhesion, rejoices in adhesion.'⁷

⁴ See PED, p. 274, for a discussion of the varieties of *chanda*.

⁵ A Buddha who discovers the path, but does not go on to teach.

⁶ M 1 168; I. B. Horner (trans.), *Middle Length Sayings*, 3 vols (London: Pali Text Society, 1954–1959), *Middle Length Discourses*, 1 260.

⁷ *Ibid.*

The term that Bodhi and Ñāṇamoli here render as ‘adhesion’ (*ālaya*) others have given as ‘sense-pleasures’, but it also includes the craving after such pleasures. Also, note that even in the Buddha’s day we find people bemoaning the youth of the day! The Buddha continues in this vein, emphasising the difficulty of his attainment, ending with the statement:

If I were to teach the Dhamma, others would not understand me, and that would be wearying and troublesome for me.⁸

This is where it gets interesting. Now, this may not seem to be a particularly fruitful area for investigation, being just a demonstration of how difficult to understand the Buddha’s newly won-prize and the Path to it are. However, if we look at this passage and its implications more closely we can see that it does a number of things.

We can see this section and the following one—where the *deva* Brahmā Sahampati persuades the Buddha to teach, and which runs up to the actual start of the first sermon—as a rhetorical device for establishing certain specific aspects of the Buddhist position. For example, the discussion with Brahmā Sahampati places the Buddha above the gods, but not in conflict with them. The whole piece can be viewed as an arena for the Buddha to clarify his status. The position presented acknowledges Brahmanical cosmology, but expands upon it and alters the significance and status of those who inhabit it. While this may be a particularly appropriate location to establish these notions, as a framework for what follows, it is not the only place in the Canon that does this, and it is not all that is significant in this passage.

What is most startling here is the admission that a ‘thus-gone’ might suffer—the Buddha’s seeing himself as capable of undergoing ‘weariness’ (*kilamatha*) and what some translate as ‘vexation’ (*vihesā*)—and, almost as importantly, not seeming to want to—having a desire to avoid them.

What is going on? Can the Buddha be feeling these things? We may think that he would just be physically tired, but the context seems to imply that he would be frustrated by such a fruitless task. Before I com-

⁸ Ibid.

ment on this, the status of the Buddha as a *tathāgata*—one who has gone beyond, a ‘thus-gone’ one—needs clarifying.

The state of the *tathāgata* might be compared to that of the *yogin* who has gone-beyond (for example at *Bhagavadgītā* 5.20). The outer person may be shaken but within he is steady, calm and unshakeable. This is also expressed in the *Milindapañha*, often seen as a standard presentation of Theravāda orthodoxy:

The King said: ‘He who will not be reborn, Nāgasena, does he still feel any painful sensation?’

The Elder replied: ‘Some he feels and some not.’

‘Which are they?’

‘He may feel bodily pain, O King; but mental pain he would not.’

‘How would that be so?’

‘Because the causes, proximate or remote, of bodily pain still continue, he would be liable to it. But the causes, proximate or remote, of mental agony having ceased, he could not feel it. For it has been said by the Blessed One: “One kind of pain he suffers, bodily pain: but not mental.”⁹

This seems fairly clear, and is reinforced in Book IV, 6, 41.¹⁰ Furthermore the *Milindapañha* contains a great many such discussions on the status of the Buddha in particular and ‘thus-gone’ ones in general. For example, in Book IV, the twenty-second and thirtieth dilemmas concern whether or not the Buddha felt anger (he did not, we are told), and for a passage that drives home the message that a ‘thus-gone’ cannot be mentally disturbed we can look to the thirty-ninth dilemma (in Book IV still). This begins with the familiar premise, presented here by the ever-questioning (but to my mind rather easily impressed), King Milinda:

‘Venerable Nāgasena, it was said by the Blessed One: “The Arahats have laid aside all fear and trembling.” But on the other hand ...’¹¹

The problem arises when King Milinda considers the occasion when the Buddha and five hundred Arahats encounter a ‘man-slaying’ elephant.¹²

⁹ Mil 44. T. W. Rhys Davids (trans.), *The Questions of King Milinda*, 2 vols, The Sacred Books of the East; vols 35–36 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1890/94), I 69.

¹⁰ Mil 253; dilemma 57.

¹¹ Mil 207–9; Rhys Davids, *Questions of King Milinda* I 297–300.

The problem occurs because the elephant charges and as it is bearing down upon the Blessed One, all the five hundred Arahats forsook the Conqueror and fled, one only excepted, Ānanda the Elder, the one monk who is not yet an Arahāt.

The dilemma then is clear, why do the Arahats flee? Are they scared, or do they just wish to get a good view for when the Buddha deals with this threat? To cut to the chase, Nāgasena solves the dilemma by claiming that the Arahats withdrew (a polite word for fled?) so that the goodness of Ānanda could be made clear to the people of the city (Rājagaha), and then this would contribute to the result whereby 'great masses of the people attain to emancipation from the bonds of evil'.¹³ So, the Arahats withdrew not from fear, but 'for the advantages they foresaw'¹⁴ in so doing.

Perhaps more directly relevant here are not the reasons Nāgasena gives for the Arahats withdrawing, but the reasons he gives explaining why they *cannot* be scared. It is not that they are just not scared on this occasion, rather their fear is seen as an impossibility. The unequivocal nature of this assertion is such that it is worth looking at how Nāgasena presents it to the king:

'Is the broad earth, O King, afraid at people digging into it, or breaking it up, or at having to bear the weight of the mighty oceans and the peaked mountain ranges?'

'Certainly not, Sir.'

'But why not?'

'Because there is no cause in the broad earth which could produce fear or trembling.'

'Just so, O King. And neither is there any such cause in Arahats. And would a mountain peak be afraid of being split up, or broken down, or made to fall, or burnt with fire?'

'Certainly not, Sir.'

¹² The story is also related, albeit with some minor and some major variations from the version which Mil gives, in the Vinaya Piṭaka, *Cullavagga* VII 3, 11–12 (Vin II 194–5). One of the main differences, a vital one in this context, is that in the Vinaya account the Arahats do not flee as they do here, and Ānanda does not remain behind. In Mil the elephant is known as Dhanapālaka, but in the Vinaya as Nālāgiri.

¹³ Mil 209.

¹⁴ Mil 209.

‘But why not?’

‘The cause of fear or trembling does not exist within it.’

‘And just so, O King, with Arahats. If all the creatures of various outward form in the whole universe were, together, to attack one Arahata in order to put him to fear, yet they would bring about no variation in his heart. And why? Because there is neither condition nor cause for fear (in him, whence fear could arise).’¹⁵

So, Arahats are not scared of anyone or anything—that is clear. A line I find striking here is that the attack of the final paragraph would lead to: *no variation in his heart*.¹⁶ This image conveys exactly the kind of view of both Arahats and the Buddha we find throughout canonical and non-canonical Theravāda texts. They are unshakeable within, not contingently, but necessarily: it is their nature to be so.

This, however, only deepens our problem. How, after all this, can we understand the idea that the Buddha may feel mental suffering, *nāma dukkha*? Perhaps we should return to the quotation itself. If we take the words *so mam’ assa kilamatho, sā mam’ assa vihesā* (‘that would be wearying to me, that would be troublesome for me’), can we find any assistance?

Perhaps they are just words for physical tiredness? Maybe this is a pseudo-problem that I have here conjured. The first term, *kilamatha*, is defined in the PTS’s Pali-English Dictionary (p. 216) as ‘tiredness, fatigue, exhaustion’, so this may add to the suspicion that I am just looking for trouble here, but what of *vihesā*?

PED (p. 643) gives this as ‘vexation, annoyance, injury, worry.’ This is more troubling and does seem to support the idea of some kind of mental disturbance. Elsewhere it is translated as ‘vexation’—indeed in the *Saṅgīti Sutta*¹⁷ it is used to partly describe the things an enlightened one is free from—the ‘vexations and fevers that arise from sense-desire’.¹⁸ Here it clearly does seem to be a form of mental distress.

¹⁵ Mil 208–09; Rhys Davids, *Questions of King Milinda* 1 299–300.

¹⁶ Mil 209: *na bhaveyya arahato cittassa kiñci aññathattam*. I. B. Horner *Milinda’s Questions* 2 vols (London: Luzac, 1963–64), 1 303) translates ‘there would yet be no faltering whatever in his mind’.

¹⁷ D III 240 ff.

¹⁸ M. Walshe (trans.), *The Long Discourses of the Buddha* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), p. 497.

We do find the term applied to himself by the Buddha at another point. In the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* we find the Buddha seeming to get a little bored of people asking him what has become of various individuals after death. He says to his companion Ānanda ‘that you should come to Tathāgata to ask the fate of each of those who have died, that is a weariness to him’.¹⁹ Here the term *vihesā* is used. And the implication of this paradox is so strong that the commentary points out that a Buddha can feel only physical weariness.²⁰ That such a comment is needed demonstrates, I feel, that the original context and expression implies that this is not the case. So we do seem to have a puzzle here.

Now, although it might be fun to pretend otherwise, I am not the first to notice something going on in this passage. The Pali commentary to the *Ariyapariyesanā Sutta* passage picks up the baton a little,²¹ but only with respect to why he might be in doubt, having desired for so many previous lives to become a fully enlightened (and teaching) Buddha.

The commentarial solution is to suggest that the Buddha could only see the full extent of people’s ignorance and attachment once he himself was fully free of such things, and furthermore that he wished Brahmā to play his role such that people would value his message—the gods holding it in such high esteem.

All very interesting, no doubt, but it does not get at the heart of what I am looking at here. What is noteworthy though, is that this incident is not seen as either an accident or as unique. In the account of the enlightenment of a previous Buddha, in the *Mahāpadāna Sutta*, we find the same words in the mouth of the long-past fully enlightened Buddha Vi-passī.²² Indeed, when the *Milindapañha* discusses this issue of the Buddha’s disinclination to teach, Nāgasena explains this event is one which happens to all Buddhas in all ages:

And this, too, is an inherent necessity in all Tathāgatas that it should be on the request of Brahma that they should proclaim the Dhamma.²³

¹⁹ D II 93; Walshe, *Long Discourses of the Buddha*, p. 241.

²⁰ Sv II 543, as Walshe notes (*Long Discourses of the Buddha*, p. 568, n. 375).

²¹ Ps III 74.

²² D II 36.

²³ Mil 41 (IV,5:37).

Here we seem in danger of being caught up in concerns with the problems of free-will and pre-destination. What I feel is more useful is to concentrate on the nature of the Buddha's concern—that he may have a frustrated desire.²⁴

So, we have come this far but I see no real solution at hand. It may just be that I am being pedantic here, but pedantry is—as surely the Abhidhamma shows—a badge of honour in the study of Buddhism. Those that have examined this area seem preoccupied with the *fact* of the hesitation, rather than the precise nature of it. Damien Keown quotes an unpublished paper by M. Wiltshire claiming that:

If he had taught automatically and without hesitation as the natural consequence of his enlightenment, then the act of teaching would not have been seen as a distinct achievement.²⁵

Here the choice is vital—the carrying out of an act of compassion for this world of misery-drenched beings. Keown himself describes the incident in even more significant terms:

²⁴ The topic is discussed in the fiftieth dilemma of Book iv of the *Milindapañha* (Mil 232–34). The discussion begins with Milinda contrasting the Buddha's slow, directed development 'through millions of years, through aeon after aeon,' with the hesitance to teach that we have been reflecting upon. As Milinda puts it: 'But on the other hand (they say): "Just after he had attained to omniscience his heart inclined, not to the proclamation of the Truth, but to rest in peace."' Milinda sees, at least to some extent, the problem that lies here: out of what does this hesitancy arise?

'Now was it from fear, Nāgasena, that the *tathāgata* drew back, or was it from inability to preach, or was it from weakness, or was it because he had not, after all, attained to omniscience? ... This too is a double-edged problem, now put to you,—a problem profound, a knot hard to unravel,—which you have to solve.' (Rhys Davids, *Questions of King Milinda* II 39–40)

So, our problem is now Nāgasena's problem. His response is in accordance with the canonical accounts I have referred to, but does not add as much to these accounts as one might hope. Nonetheless, it is an attempt to solve this problem, and as such may provide us with some basis for a fresh insight into this riddle. Nāgasena's account, that the *tathāgata*'s heart inclined to inaction rather than teaching is a function of two specific conditions. Firstly, the complexity of the teachings, and secondly the ignorant/craving nature of beings—this adds nothing new to the commentarial account.

²⁵ D. Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 42.

This initial hesitation and subsequent decision by the founder of the tradition to teach can be seen as emblematic of the new scale of values introduced by Buddhism into the contemporary religious scene.²⁶

All very well, but this still fails to address the given *reason* for the hesitation. Indeed some seem to describe the passage and pass right over this problem, as Carol Anderson seems to when she writes:

Thinking of how difficult it would be to teach this, and how frustrating it would be for people not to understand, the *sutta* says that the Buddha was not particularly inclined to teach *dhamma*.²⁷

The hesitation has—through all that I have discussed so far—be seen as a device: be it cosmological, rhetorical and moral, but still we seen no attention paid to this notion of the possibility of a weary Buddha.

Are we to see it as a canonical slip-up? Or an incident so enmeshed into a narrative that bickering over doctrinal niceties is inappropriate given the context? Were Buddhist texts usually less coherent (by whatever means applied by their redactors), it might be easy to brush this off. However, I think this is not only an entertaining little incident to look at, but one which seems to reveal a very human side of the accounts of the Buddha found in the Pali canon. There are only so many of these incidents (such as in the *Poṭṭhapāda-Sutta* where the Buddha sets out to a village for alms, before realising—presumably once already en route—that it is too early in the day),²⁸ but they add a charm to the texts, a sense of a person which many later texts seem somewhat devoid of.

Another area that this topic might act as a starting point for is an inquiry into the nature of the mind-body relationship in Buddhist thought. There does seem room for some discomfort here. On the one hand, Buddhist thought seems to deny any strict Cartesian split between mind and body. However, the split between the mental and non-mental

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ C. Anderson, *Pain and its Ending: the Four Noble Truths in the Theravāda Buddhist canon* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1999), p. 60. While reading this without the *sutta* we might think that the frustration would be felt by the hapless learner; the *suttas* clearly attribute the potential vexation to the Buddha.

²⁸ D I 178.

we have seen with regard to the potential for suffering looks as though it makes quite a strict distinction between the two.

There is certainly a close interaction between mind and body, which differs from Cartesian Substance Dualism. A further difference is that we can have a much more significant analysis of ‘mind’ in Buddhism than in a Cartesian approach.²⁹ However, just because the interaction is more explicit and multi-level, does this mean that we cannot disentangle the two? Peter Harvey suggests that, rather than Substance Dualism, Pali Buddhist texts, especially earlier ones, propose a model which he terms ‘twin-category process pluralism’.³⁰

While this is not the place to follow further Buddhist understandings of mind-body relationships too far, what is of interest here is the view that while *nāma* and *rūpa* are mutually conditioning and interact, they are still separate things.³¹ As Harvey writes: ‘There is a clear differentiation between *dhammas* which are intentional (part of *nāma*) and those which pertain to material form (*rūpa*).’³² So, if we accept Harvey’s view, the *nāma-rūpa* distinction is sufficiently secure for us to be able to rule out the possibility of *nāma dukkha* in a being who can experience *rūpa dukkha*.

In coming to a conclusion here, one approach is to suggest that this incident represents a relatively ‘human’ portrayal of the Buddha, which later traditions were unable to reconcile with prevailing doctrinal orthodoxies. However, this can only remain as a tentative suggestion, and as a partial answer.

So, sadly, I offer no conclusive answer to this puzzle. Why does a text so central to the key Buddhist narrative seem to indicate something in contradiction to the great mass of teaching on the nature of a Buddha?

²⁹ Buddhism seems removed by the ability to examine mental phenomena from that Cartesian view where ‘mind’ is more mysterious and elusive—what has been called ‘the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine’ (G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 17).

³⁰ P. Harvey, ‘The Mind-Body Relationship in Pali Buddhism: A Philosophical Investigation’, *Asian Philosophy* 3 (1993), pp. 29–41 (29).

³¹ They are not, then, a single organism by necessity. In normal circumstances, neither *nāma* nor *rūpa* are independent, but what has happened in an Arahāt is that the nature of *nāma* has been radically altered.

³² Harvey, ‘The Mind-Body Relationship in Pali Buddhism’, p. 39.

In a way, the answer is of course, that it just does. Perhaps I should take it easy here, and abandon the attempt to make it all fit coherently together. Maybe such a seeming contradiction cannot be solved when holding on to wanting to solve it. Like a Zen Koan it may only open before me when I let go of it. But if only an enlightened being can explain the type of frustration envisioned by the Buddha here, I may have to wait an exceedingly long time for an answer.

DAVID WEBSTER
University of Gloucestershire

Abbreviations

A *Anguttara Nikāya*

D *Dīgha Nikāya*

M *Majjhima Nikāya*

Mil *Milindapañha*

PED T. W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary* (London: Pali Text Society, 1921–25).

Ps *Papañcasūdanī*

S *Saṃyutta Nikāya*

Sv *Sumaṅgalvilāsini*

THE BUDDHA'S ATTITUDE TO SOCIAL CONCERNS AS DEPICTED IN THE PALI CANON

MUDAGAMUWE MAITHRIMURTHI

Much has been written on the subject of Buddhist attitudes towards social issues and concerns in general and towards conflict situations like war in particular.¹ The first comprehensive and fundamental study on war and Buddhism was published by Paul Demiéville, originally in 1957.² Since then scholars have shown a keen interest in this topic, for various reasons and motivations. There are, for instance, some recent illuminating analyses by Lambert Schmithausen,³ Steven Collins⁴ and Peter Harvey,⁵ to name just a few. There are also quite a number of books, essays and articles that have been published (or presented at dif-

¹ A shorter version of this paper was presented at the International Conference on Buddhism and Conflict in Sri Lanka in Bath, UK (June 2002). A Sinhalese translation (by Prof. Ratna Wijetunga) of the first unrevised version of this paper was unfortunately published by Ven. Dr Deegalle Mahinda (ed.) in *Budusamaya saha Śrī Lankavē Janavārgika Ghaṭṭanaya* (Colombo, 2003), pp. 249–260. This is the revised and unabridged version of the original paper. I would like to express my thanks to Mr Russell Webb and especially to Prof. Dr Lambert Schmithausen and Dr Rupert Gethin who kindly took the trouble to read through the original manuscript and make valuable comments.

² 'Le bouddhisme et la guerre: post-scriptum à l' "Histoire des moines guerriers du Japon" de G. Renondeau' reprinted in Paul Demiéville, *Choix d'études bouddhiques* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), pp. 261–299.

³ Lambert Schmithausen, 'Buddhismus und Glaubenskriege' in *Glaubenskriege in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* edited by P. Herrmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), pp. 63–92; 'Aspects of the Buddhist Attitude to War' in *Violence Denied: Violence, Non-Violence and the Rationalization of Violence in South Asian Cultural History* edited by J. E. M. Houben and K. R. van Kooij (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 45–67; 'Buddhismus und Gewalt' (Vortrag im Rahmen der Vortragsreihe: *Buddhismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart* - Weiterbildendes Studium Universität Hamburg, Vol. 11, 1998, pp. 8–21).

⁴ Steven Collins, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali Imaginaire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); see chapter six, pp. 414–496.

⁵ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 239–285.

ferent conferences and symposia) over the past decades,⁶ on the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

I myself have chosen to approach the topic of war and pacifism by dealing with the Buddha's attitude towards social concerns in a more general vein. War, of course, is a particular social concern. In most cases it is inflicted on society by rulers or persons with ambition for power, for territorial and other material gains. Wars are unfortunately also waged on the grounds of religion, or of national and political ideologies. Wars have been commonplace throughout the history of mankind. They have always been both offensive and defensive in nature. Wars generally involve killings—sometimes in the form of massacres—and the plunder, looting and destruction of property. Often they also involve rape and abduction of women. Thus a Buddhist engaging in warfare runs the danger of breaking (of course not in every case and always!) at least the first three precepts which he is supposed to observe as strictly as possible, namely not to kill, not to steal and, in case of a monk, not to be sexually active, or, in case of a layman, to be only active within the bonds of wedlock. Therefore one would expect the Buddha to object vehemently to any participation in warfare.

But when perusing the canonical texts one will inevitably notice how rare statements to this effect are. Almost invariably the Buddha appears hesitant and reserved when asked to comment on events like war and other social concerns. In the rare cases where he deals with such issues, he is concerned with the psychological, moral and salvific/soteriological side implications for the individuals involved, and does not address these issues as general problems that concern society as a whole and in this sense as having a political dimension.

I am not very much interested in exploring how pacifist Buddhist thought was and how much influence it exercised in many parts of Asia

⁶ Just to mention two articles which were presented recently: Tessa Bartholomeusz, 'In Defense of Dharma: Just-War Ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka', *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 6 (1999), pp. 1–11 and Elizabeth J. Harris, 'Buddhism in War: a study of cause and effect from Sri Lanka' (a paper presented at the XIIth conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, Lausanne, August 1999). A collection of interesting essays on this issue is contained in *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Sri Lanka*, edited by Bardwell L. Smith (Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books, 1978).

during its expansion as a universal religion and after that period. That is why I confine myself only to the attitude of the Buddha towards the social concern as documented in the Pāli canon.

Scholars hold differing opinions about the nature of the Buddha's function as a religious leader. Richard Gombrich comments, 'I do not think the Buddha took a serious interest in politics or intended his teaching to have political consequences', while Trevor Ling, in contrast, emphasizes, 'He may justly be described as a social and political theorist'.⁷ Collins (p. 418) rejects both these views of the quest of Buddha's involvement in politics saying:

This is a quest I have explicitly disavowed. From the perspective of this book, in which the Pali imaginaire constitutes an aspect of Buddhist ideology in the civilizational history of Southern Asia, the articulation of order to be found in Pāli texts is necessarily both cosmological/soteriological and social.

He asserts his opinion also elsewhere in his book (pp. 56 f.):

I do not mean to argue that the Buddha was not a celibate ascetic who taught his monastic followers a way to final salvation, seen as a definitive and complete release from rebirth. But there is no need to assume that when he taught non-celibate householders, as the texts say, the way to heaven (and other things), he was doing something extraneous to his real message. We cannot know how far the individual whom we know as Gautama Buddha did or did not set out to create the World Religion which we know as Buddhism, nor how much of what it became he would have accepted or rejected ... Speculative reconstruction of early Buddhism from textual evidence is, I believe, in the long run inevitably compromised by the fact that the texts as we have them were intended, in the traditional period, to construct an ideal in the past which could be set against a present reality, which was a priori different and defective.

I do not agree.⁸ I think our endeavour to find a development of certain ideas and practices is not so hopeless as Collins would like to make us

⁷ Richard Gombrich, *Theravāda Buddhism: A Social History from Benares to Colombo* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 81; Trevor Ling, *The Buddha: Buddhist Civilization in India and Ceylon* (New York: Penguin, 1973), p. 173; as cited by Collins, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities*, p. 418.

⁸ Collins's argument (*Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities*, p. 57) runs as follows: 'There are certainly historiographical methods for extracting documentary-style data from

believe. It is evident that Buddhism in its earliest phase was essentially an ascetic movement. I tend to follow Gombrich's assessment that the Buddha was not concerned with politics. I am not sure, however, whether it was only the lack of interest in political affairs which motivated the Buddha not to get involved. Rather, the Buddha's approach follows from his concentration on the problem of suffering at an individual level. His concern was neither political nor social, but purely salvific. I shall come back to this point later in my paper.

To be sure, I do not hold that the Buddha never addressed social issues. By contrast, there are, for instance, a few passages in the canon where he is reported to have analyzed poverty as a root of crime⁹ and as a cause for the decline of moral behaviour in society. Furthermore, the canon records many occasions on which the Buddha attacked the claim

such texts, whose worklike aspect was very far from empirical history of the modern sort. But any endeavour to narrate an event-history based on early Pali texts must reproduce the long-discredited positivist approach to myth: remove the supernatural, or otherwise unbelievable, and a "kernel" of empirical history remains. For example, if the Buddha is represented as conversing with one or more gods, this approach holds that the meeting with gods did not happen—since we know they don't exist—but what he is represented as saying, nonetheless, reliably documents his real, historical teaching.' Collins goes on to declare: 'This book [*Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities*] aims not to think in terms of the historical Buddha, what he intended, and what happened to his original message.' It is not very surprising that many mythological elements creep into hagiographies and other religious documentations. I myself have seen this happening even today. One can even observe how different fantastical descriptions of the Buddha's life and his activities are formed step by step, elevating him gradually from a normal human being to an omnipotent supernatural god-like personality. Even those parts of the Pali canon that portray him realistically have a lot of frame anecdotes in which some of his statements and teachings are embedded. I consider this a very natural process. Even today in many orthodox Buddhist countries there are people who take these stories for granted, and perhaps even more who try to grasp the essence and message of his teaching. They do not know that this is regarded as an 'outdated positivist' approach by present day scholars and even less do they care about that. I wonder if a devotee today in Sri Lanka (or in any other Buddhist country) would give much thought to whether queen Mahāmāyā conceived on an *uposatha*-day, pure and without any sexual contact, or whether she gave birth to Gotama from her right side as some Mahāyāna texts mention, or whether it was the real god Brahmā who persuaded the Buddha to teach. According to the Pāli canon the Buddha himself used this kind of approach to verify statements of other contemporary religious teachers; cf. D I 239 (*Tevijja Sutta*), M II 169 (*Caṅkī Sutta*).

⁹ D I 65 (*Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta*), D I 135 (*Kūṭadanta Sutta*).

of brahmins to be the highest class (*vaṇṇa*) merely by virtue of birth.¹⁰ He thereby undermined the brahmins' claim to superiority over the other classes, though without criticizing the class system itself as a social reality. Accordingly, he never demanded the abolition of the class system as such, though he did not accept the validity of its hierarchical ranking when he built his own religious community.¹¹

Juxtaposed to the paucity of canonical passages with social implications, there is the vast bulk of the canon which concentrates on soteriology, the prime concern of the mendicants, i.e. the path to get rid of the vicious cycle of suffering and rebirth, and to attain the supreme happiness of *nirvāṇa*, a path which presupposes that the practitioner leaves society in order to purify himself of all the negative aspects of existence. And, to my mind, it is from this angle, i.e. from the angle of soteriological relevance, that the Buddha Gautama approached all issues of his time. Everything that he preached and taught was set in this soteriological framework.¹² While from this perspective the Buddha's doctrine might be viewed as solipsistic in a way characteristic for 'private ethics', it is nevertheless clear that it still has social implications. Thus

¹⁰ M II 84; II 153 and D III 81.

¹¹ M II 89: *pubbe khattiyo ti samaññā sā 'ssa antarahitā, samaṇo t' eva saṅkhaṃ gacchati.*

¹² See for instance S I 116: *atha kho bhagavato yahogatassa paṭisallinassa evaṃ cetaso parivattakko udapādi: 'sakko nu kho rajjaṃ kāretuṃ ahaṇaṃ aghātayaṃ ajinaṃ ajāpayaṃ asocaṃ asocāpayaṃ dhammenā ti?'* (Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*, 2 vols (Boston: Wisdom, 2000), I 209: 'Then, when the Blessed One was alone in seclusion, a reflection arose in his mind thus: Is it possible to exercise rulership righteously: without killing and without instigating others to kill, without confiscating and without instigating others to confiscate, without sorrowing and without causing sorrow?') Bhikkhu Bodhi comments on this passage (p. 418, n. 299): 'It is interesting that the sutta does not offer an answer to the question whether righteous governance is possible, and this ambiguity pervades the Pāli Canon as a whole. While some texts admit that righteous rulers do arise (the 'wheel-turning-monarchs'), the general consensus is that the exercise of rulership usually involves the use of violence and thus is hard to reconcile with perfect observance of the precepts.' The only exception I have found is A IV 90 where the Buddha is represented as having declared *cakkavattī ahuṃ rājā ... adaṇḍena asatthena vijeyya paṭhavimā imaṃ asāhasena dhammena samena-m-anusāsīya dhammena rajjaṃ kāretvā asmim paṭhavimāṇdale*. But, when one examines the context more closely one necessarily finds out that the Buddha governs the earth righteously after having conquered it without inflicting violence as the result of cultivating the mind of benevolence for seven full years (*mettacittaṃ vibhāvetvā sattavassāni*).

the Buddha traced the roots of social evils to negative states of mind of individuals.

Let me illustrate this important point with two examples. To start with, by cultivating meditation of the four so-called 'unlimited' (*ap-pamaññā*) or 'sublime states [of mind]', i.e. the *brahmavihāras*, the meditator basically tries to purify his mind from ill-will and cruelty by permeating the whole world with boundless benevolence and compassion. He does so with the ambition of eventually attaining final liberation. When the canonical suttas (such as A IV 150 or V 342) discuss the advantages of practising these mental attitudes they exclusively mention those benefits which accrue to the practitioners. It is perhaps considered self-evident that the habitual practice of this meditation manifests in the daily activities of the meditator. His actions become gradually more altruistic, and this is definitely for the benefit and the welfare of others.

A second example of the social dimension of spiritual practices in Buddhism: the Buddha directed laymen and laywomen to observe the five rules of training (moral precepts) as an integral part of their everyday life. Though the observance of these precepts is to lay the basis for future spiritual development, it is not only a salvific device, but also ensures that men and women may live peacefully in harmony, without harming the interest of others, while at the same time securing their own safety and welfare. This is particularly so, because the moral precepts are not only a codex of negative ethics but also entail the cultivation of the corresponding positive qualities. Thus non-violence goes along with benevolence, friendliness, laying aside weapons, having respect for the life of every living being, and sympathy and kindness towards them, which includes a general concern for their welfare. Similarly, the rule not to take what has not been given is extended to include the benevolent spending of money for the poor and needy. Likewise, the avoidance of sexual misconduct entails that partners base their relationship on mutual trust and respect, and do not undermine existing social ties and patterns. The Buddha expected the laity to perform their duties as parents and children, husband and wife, relatives and friends, employers and employees and also to fulfil mutual obligations among monks and householders. It can thus be observed how keeping the

moral precepts, even though soteriologically motivated as laying the basis for spiritual advancement, has also clear social implications.

Before I proceed further, a few remarks on the nature of Buddhist ethics and the psychology behind it are in place. The main criterion in Buddhism for judging whether actions are morally good/pure or bad/impure is whether the action in question is harmful for oneself or for others or for both. Buddhism urges the practitioner to consider this before committing actions, be they through body, speech or mind (M I 415 f.).

Crimes result in negative consequences already in this very life in the form of revenge or lawful punishments meted out by the state, or in the form of one's own bad consciousness, which is operative especially at the moment of death. In Buddhism the results of morally bad or good actions do not depend upon a personal God punishing and rewarding. By contrast, they find their retribution as a matter of course in accordance with the law of karma. A person acting in a morally positive way is rewarded automatically by the mechanism of karma granting him/her a desirable rebirth, whereas the one who commits bad acts runs into an unpleasant state.

Consideration for others is motivated by the application of the 'Golden Rule', i.e. the realization that just as one dislikes being treated badly oneself, so do other living beings.¹³ Therefore one has to treat others as one wishes to be treated by them. A related idea which is already found in the canon, though not used to motivate one to be benevolent and affectionate towards others rather than harming them, is the concept that in the course of beginningless saṃsāra every sentient being has already been one's father or mother or another close relative.¹⁴ It follows from this consideration that from a Buddhist perspective war is necessarily an evil, since the actions involved in war are harmful for all the participants. It goes without saying that not only the victims suffer in war but also the aggressors. Besides the danger of being

¹³ Sn 705: *yathā ahaṃ tathā ete, yathā ete tathā ahaṃ/ attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā na haneyya na ghātaye//.*

¹⁴ *Sāvakaḥūmi of Ācārya Asaṅga* (ed. by K. Shukla, Patna, 1973), p. 379,8 ff.; cf. S II 189 f.

wounded or even killed in war, the aggressors accumulate bad karma by inflicting suffering upon others.

In ancient India war was the duty of a special social class, the *ṣātriya*s, which normally included the kings who are often represented as waging wars and actively participating in them. The Buddha seemed to have carefully avoided criticizing or making comments on the affairs of kings. Rather, perhaps also with the intention not to endanger the existence of his own religious Order, he enjoined his disciples to comply with the kings' rule: *anujānāmi bhikkhave rājānaṃ anuvattitum* (Vin I 138: 'I ask you, o monks, to act according to [the law and order of] kings'). Fittingly, the Buddha told the monks not to ordain deserters from the army (Vin I 73).

Once a warrior has joined the Order of the monks he becomes obliged to observe very strictly the precept of not killing. Therefore it is self-evident that he may not take any life, not even in self-defence or to protect a friend. He also may not encourage somebody to kill others or kill himself. Hence, a warrior turned-monk can obviously no longer participate in wars. Moreover, monks should not watch military parades or manoeuvres; nor should they stay in the company of soldiers longer than absolutely necessary. Besides being inappropriate for a monk, such behaviour could lead to the suspicion of espionage (Vin IV 104 ff.).

The only war a monk was allowed to take part in was that against his 'unwholesome states of mind'. Similarly it is taught in different *Arthaśāstra* texts that men, and particularly *ṣātriya*s and kings, ought to conquer their senses (*indriyajaya*) and wage war against the 'six enemies', namely, *kāma*, *krodha*, *māna*, *dambha*, *mada* and *harṣa* (*Kauṭilya-Arthaśāstra* 1.6.1). Being of *ṣātriya* descent himself, the Buddha often applied the war metaphor in his teachings, presenting the religious life as a battle against negative states of mind which impede final liberation. As the *Dhammapada* emphasizes:

'One may conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, yet he is the best of conquerors who conquers himself.'¹⁵

¹⁵ DhP 103: *yo sahaṣṣaṃ sahaṣṣena saṅgāme mānuse jine / ekaṃ ca jeyya-m-attānaṃ sa ve saṅgāmajuttamo //*

It is only in this metaphorical sense that the Buddha addresses war. Therefore I think that Schmithausen ('Buddhist Attitude to War', p. 48) is not off the mark when he remarks:

One might thus be tempted to consider the possibility that the Buddha (or early Buddhism) somehow took for granted the unrelated co-existence of private non-injury and warfare as the duty of kings and warriors.

As I remarked above, I too think that the Buddha was more concerned about the individuals who were seeking their salvation as private persons. It was to them that the Buddha directed his message without being much concerned about society as a whole.

In a concrete spiritual framework such as the above-mentioned *brahmavihāra* meditation, the Buddha ventured to reform or transform specific individuals, an endeavour which, as I pointed out above, also yielded good results for society as a whole.¹⁶ This spiritual perfection of individuals was the single aim of the Buddha to which he dedicated his whole life and energy. Even though the Buddha had close contacts with some of the kings of his time, like Pasenadī Kosala or Seniya Bimbisāra,¹⁷ he restricted his instructions to matters of general ethics and soteriology, and avoided being drawn into political affairs. It was up to the individual, according to the Buddha, to see how the soteriological principles taught and enunciated by him were implemented in everyday life and applied to specific situations such as war.

Let me illustrate this point by giving some examples. In the Saṃyutta Nikāya, when the Buddha was informed by monks about the war between Ajātasattu and Pasenadī Kosala, and the siege of King Pasenadī by Ajātasattu, the Buddha commented on the ill-will and suffering which was caused by defeat and then went on to teach that only those spiritually advanced persons who have given up both victory and defeat could

¹⁶ But for a rather singular statement in the Pali canon where 'own benefit' is criticized, see A IV 116: *yvāyaṃ puggalo attahitāya paṭipanno, no parahitāya, evaṃ so ten' aṅgena gārayho; yvāyaṃ puggalo attahitāya ca paṭipanno parahitāya ca, evaṃ so ten' aṅgena pāsaṃso*. Schmithausen nevertheless points out that in all three Chinese versions of this sutta the statement *evaṃ so ten' aṅgena gārayho* is missing; see L. Schmithausen, 'Benefitting Oneself and Benefitting Others: A Note on AN 7.64' in *Gedenkschrift J. W. de Jong* edited by H. W. Bodewitz and Minoru Hara (Tokyo: ICABS, 2004), pp. 149–160.

¹⁷ M II 166.

be really happy.¹⁸ When later Ajātasattu was defeated by king Pasenadi the Buddha is again seen commenting on the viciousness of the cycle of violence.

The slayer becomes in turn victim of another slayer and the evildoer in turn is maltreated by another evildoer. Instead of commenting on the evils of war and waging war, the Buddha in this way sets forth the law of retribution in a general way. He thereby leaves it to the individuals addressed to draw the correct conclusion, and only implicitly criticizes the conduct of the two kings.

An example with the same bearing is the following episode recorded in the canon (*Yodhājīva Sutta* at S iv 308 f.). A soldier approaches the Buddha with the question whether a warrior who dies in the battle goes to heaven or not, as he has been taught by his teachers. The Buddha twice refuses to give an answer. Again being pressed for an answer, he finally replies that on the contrary the apparent war-hero would definitely go to hell. For this he gives two reasons. Firstly, at the moment of death the warrior has an evil state of mind because he wishes the destruction of his enemies. Secondly, he cherishes the wrong view that by being killed in battle he would go to heaven. Interestingly, in the course of this discussion with the Buddha the soldier appears to be more worried about being misled by his teachers and teachers' teachers in this way, than by being killed in battle and consequently going to hell.¹⁹ This episode is of particular relevance in the present times in which religious groups and political organisations treat the martyr's death as an entrance ticket to paradise. Such brainwashing has become a 'burning' issue after the recent incidents in the USA and elsewhere. This canon-

¹⁸ Cf. *Manusmṛiti* 7. 198–200: *sāmnā dānena bhedena samastair atha vā pṛthak/ vijetum prayatetārīm na yuddhena kadācana// nityo vijayo yasmād dṛśyate yudhyamānayoḥ/ parājayas ca saṅgrāme tasmād yuddham vivarjayet// trayāṅgām apy upāyānām pūrvoktānam asambhave/ tathā yuddhyeta saṃpanno vijayeta rīpūn yathā//* Especially v. 199 reflects an attitude to war similar to the Buddha's: one should avoid war because both victory and defeat in war are necessarily transient.

¹⁹ Not only killing living beings is condemned in the earliest suttas in the Pali canon but also causing killing, approving of others' killing (S v 354; Sn 394) and praising the killing of others. (A II 253, A v 305: *attanā ca paṇātipātī hoti, paraṇ ca paṇātipāte samādapeti, paṇātipāte ca samanūñño hoti, paṇātipātassa ca vaṇṇaṃ bhāsati*). It is explicitly stated that those who commit these offence go to hell (A II 254).

cal passage tells us unmistakably that not only killing in war, but the mere intention to do so produces bad karma, and thus should be avoided. This holds good for any war, including defensive ones. There is no canonical passage which contradicts this opinion. As far as I can see, this is the unequivocal stance of early Buddhist thought on war.

However, one might suggest that the later Theravāda tradition has not always judged wars so negatively, especially when their perpetrators have subsequently become devout kings like the emperor Aśoka of India and King Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya in Sri Lanka. As suggested by the *Yodhājīva Sutta* just mentioned, and as well as many other canonical passages, the thoughts at the moment of death may play a decisive role in determining the nature of the next rebirth. Interestingly enough, this very concept is later used to explain how two great Buddhist kings, Aśoka and Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya were reborn in heaven in spite of having waged brutal wars before becoming devoted Buddhists.

The *Visuddhimagga* (VIII 14) mentions that Aśoka was grieved at the time of his last breath:²⁰

He donated happily a hundred millions after conquering the whole earth till in the end his wealth deteriorated to less than half an *āmataka* fruit (*myrobalana emblica*). Yet when his merit was used up, breathing his last breath, even Asoka the Unpitiful became pitiful²¹ face to face with death.

A modern commentary on the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* called *Paramatthadīpanī-anudīpanī*,²² written at the beginning of twentieth century in

²⁰ *sakalaṃ mediniṃ bhutvā datvā koṭṭisaṃ sukhī adḍhāmalakamattassa ante issarataṃ gato / teneva dehabandhena puññamhi khayam āgate maraṇābhimukho so pi Asoko sokam āgato //*

²¹ The terms 'the Unpitiful' (*asoko*) and 'pitiful' (*sokam*) were chosen to reproduce the word play intended in the original text. The king became pitiful (*sokam āgato*) in the sense that 'he fell into a pitiful condition'. Many other Pali words similarly combine two aspects; *bhaya*, for instance, stands for fear as well as for danger. Cf. Sinhalese *dukaḷa pat venavā*, 'to become sorrowful/unhappy' or 'to fall into a wretched/miserable situation'. Cf. Dh 219: *soṭṭhim āgataṃ*; Sn 272.

²² According to the *nigamana-gāthā* this auto-sub-sub-commentary (*anudīpanī*) to the *Paramatthadīpanī* was written by a Burmese monk, born in the town of Dīparaṅga in Burma (Mramma-desa) in the year Kali or Sāka 1208 (+ 638 = 1846 CE). I owe this information on reckoning Burmese eras to Ms Friedgard Lottermoser. In addition to this she informed me that the author is Ven. Nāṇadhaja who became later famous for his erudition under the name Leḍī Sayāḍo. In the Buddhist world he is well-known as a meditation master who had a great influence in popularizing the *vipassanā* method of

Burma by Ven. Leḍī Sayāḍo (Ñāṇadhaja), mentions very briefly that the Sinhalese texts (he does not specify which) depict King Aśoka as having had bad mental factors at the time of his death.²³ The same text also states elsewhere that King Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya too had visions of hells and other negative forms of existence (*duggati*) as his death approached, but succeeded in being born in heaven by remembering a meritorious deed which he had accomplished in the past.²⁴

In the cases of King Duṭṭhagāmaṇī and the father of the Elder Soṇa, the signs of evil existence first appear at the time of death. Later, those signs of evil existence disappear, as the king recollects one of his good deeds previously done, and as the father of the elder performs a good deed at that

meditation. This learned monk seems to have been instructed to write a new commentary to the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgha* as he was not satisfied with the old commentary, the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī*, which was known and respected in Burma as the 'Sinhalese commentary'. The materials that were collected by Ven. Ñāṇadhaja for this purpose from his teacher and from other old sources were destroyed by fire. So he gave up the idea of writing the commentary and retreated to a forest monastery, also mentioned in the *nigamana-kathā*. According to this he was living in the residence called Iaṅgha in the village of Muṃvragāma of the city Dīparaṅga. Invited by those interested he composed his sub-commentary based on the material which he could still remember. According to Ms Lottermoser there was an uproar among some of the monks who considered it unthinkable to challenge the authority of the 'Sinhalese commentary' and revise certain opinions on doctrinal matters. The *Anudīpanī* mentions the finishing date of the composition as 1278 (1916 CE). The *Paramatthadīpanī* itself was finished in 1897 CE.

²³ *Paramatthadīpanī-anudīpanī* (Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyana CD-ROM Version 3), p. 181: *Dhammāso-karaṇṇo maraṇakāle pāpapakkiyānaṃ upaṭṭhānaṃ katthaci sihaḷaganthe vuttaṃ.*

²⁴ Mp II 214: *aparabhāge raṇṇo Tathāgatassa sarīradhātūnaṃ aṭṭhamabhāgaṃ paṭiṭṭhāpetvā vīsaratanasatikaṃ mahācetiyaṃ kārentassa aparimīṭhile yeva cetiye kālakiriyāsamayo anuṃ-patto. athassa Mahācetiyaṃ dakkhiṇapasse nīpannassa pañcanikāyavasena bhikkhusaṅghe sajjhāyaṃ karonte chahi devalokehi cha rathā āgantvā purato ākase aṭṭhaṃsu. rājā 'puṇṇapothakaṃ āharathā' ti ādīto paṭṭhāya puṇṇapothakaṃ vācāpesi. atha naṃ kiñci kammaṃ na paritosesi. so 'parato vācethā' ti āha. potthakavācako 'Cūḷaṅgaṇiyayuddhe parāvījena te deva aḷaviṃ paravisitvā nisinnena ekaṃ sarakabhattaṃ cattāro koṭṭhāse kāretvā Bodhimātumahāṭṭissatthessa bhikkhā dinnā' ti āha. rājā 'ṭhapethi' ti vatvā bhikkhusaṅghaṃ pucchi, 'bhante, kataro devaloko ramaṇiyo' ti? sabbabodhisattānaṃ vasanaṭṭhānaṃ Tusitabhavanaṃ mahārājāti. rājā kālaṃ katvā Tusitabhavanato āgataratheva paṭiṭṭhāya Tusitabhavanaṃ agamāsi. Idam balavakamassa vipākāṇe vatthu. (This is also mentioned by Collins, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities*, p. 355.)*

very moment. Just after that the signs of good existence appear; both of them are born in heaven when they die.]²⁵

In both cases the texts are not explicit about why the two kings were unhappy²⁶ at the time of their death, but it is not difficult to guess the reason. After all, both of them killed thousands in battle²⁷ and later regretted this deeply.²⁸ I concede that the text by the Ven. Leḍḍi Sayāḍo

²⁵ Paramatthadīpanī-anudīpanī (Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyana CD-ROM Version 3), p. 153: *Duṭṭhagāmaṇi-rañño vatthumhi ca Soṇatthera-pituno vatthumhi ca tesam maraṇāsannakāle paṭhamam duggatinimittāni upaṭṭhahanti. paccā rañño ekaṃ pubbakataṃ kalyāṇakammaṃ anussarantassa therapitu ca taṅkhaṇe eva ekaṃ kalyāṇakammaṃ karontassa tāni duggati nimittāni antaradhāyanti. sagganimittāni pātubhavanti. ubho pi cavitvā sagge nibbantāni ti.*

²⁶ Paramatthadīpanī (Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyana CD-ROM Version 3), p. 257: *tato hi kesañci paṭhamam kammabalena vā kāraṇantarena vā pāpapakkhīyesu upaṭṭhahantesu puna Duṭṭhagāmaṇi-rañño viya pubbakataṃ balavantaṃ puññaṃ anussarantānaṃ vā Soṇattherapitu viya taṅkhaṇe vā pasādājanakaṃ puññaṃ karontānaṃ vā pacchā kalyāṇapakkhīyāni upaṭṭhahanti. tathā kesañci paṭhamam kalyāṇapakkhīyesu upaṭṭhahantesu Dhammāsoka-rañño viya pacchā kenaci kāraṇena domanassaṃ uppādetvā pāpakamma okāsaṃ karontānaṃ pāpapakkhīyāni upaṭṭhahanti ti.*

²⁷ Cf. *Mahābhārata* 12. 98. 4–5. It seems this kind of strategy was often used by the kings of ancient India and legitimated through the concept of *rājadharmā*.

²⁸ Mhv xxv 103–104, 109–110: *sayīto sīrisampattiṃ mahatiṃ api pekkhīya/ kataṃ akkhihiṅghatāṃ saranto na sukhaṃ labhi// Piyaṅgudīpe arahanto nātva taṃ tassa takkitaṃ/ pāhesuṃ aṭṭha arahante taṃ assāsetum issaraṃ// ... saggamagantarāyo ca natthi te tena kammunā, diyaḍḍhamanujā vettha ghātītā manujādhipa// saraṇesu thito eko, pañcasīle pi cāpāro, micchādīṭṭhi ca dussilā sesā pasusamā matā//. Sv II 640 gives a contradictory account of this event: *ayaṃ panattho Duṭṭhagāmaṇiabhaya vatthunā dīpetabbo: so kira dvatīṃsa dāmiḷarājāno vijitvā Anurādhapure pattābhiseko tuṭṭhasomanassaena māsaṃ niddaṃ na labhi, tato: 'niddaṃ na labhāmi, bhante' ti bhikkhusaṅghassa ācikkhi. tena hi, mahārāja, ajja uposathaṃ adhiṭṭhāhīti. so ca uposathaṃ adhiṭṭhāsi. saṅgho gantvā: 'cittayamakaṃ sajjhāyathā' ti aṭṭha ābhiddhammikabhikkhū pesesi. te gantvā: 'nīpajja tvaṃ, mahārāja,' ti vatvā sajjhāyaṃ ārabhiṃsu. rājā sajjhāyaṃ suṇanto va niddaṃ okkama. therā: 'rājānaṃ mā pabodhayiṭṭhā' ti pakkamīṃsu. rājā dutiyadivase suriyuggamane pabujjhitvā there aṇṇanto: 'kuḷhiṃ ayyā' ti pucchī. tumhākaṃ niddokkamanabhāvaṃ nātva gatāti. natthi, bho, mayhaṃ ayyakassa dāraḷānaṃ ajānanakabhesajjaṃ nāma, yāva niddābhesajjampi jānanti yevāti āha. When Mhv xxv 110 comments *micchādīṭṭhi ca dussilā sesā pasusamā matā* it perhaps alludes to the Sv I 69–70 (= Ps I 198 = Spk II 144 = Nidd-a 115 = As 97): 'In the case of living beings without [moral] values, such as animals, [the act of killing] is less blameworthy when the being has a small body, and more blameworthy when the being has a large body ... In the case of living beings that possess [moral] values, such as human beings, [the act of killing] is less blameworthy when the being of little virtue and more blameworthy when the being is of great virtue.' (so *guṇavirahītesu tiracchānagatādisu pānesu khuddake pāṇe appasāvajjo, mahāsāre mahāsāvajjo ... guṇavantesu manussādisu appaguṇe pāṇe appasāvajjo, mahāguṇe pāṇemahāsāvajjo*.)**

(Ñāṇadhaja) has been composed recently and not in Sri Lanka but in Burma, but it belongs to the same tradition of Theravāda and is based on traditional interpretations which are to be taken seriously. In the case of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya it represents a slightly modified version from the Mahāvamsa and some *atthakathās* where King Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya is only portrayed as seeing auspicious signs in the sky when he was lying on his death bed.²⁹

I take this as a good example for seeking the solution to a problem without violating the original norm of early Buddhism. To my mind the Buddha preached a doctrine of liberation. The world of saṃsāra is impermanent, unsatisfactory and full of suffering, and it is therefore imperative to leave it behind. The aim of the Buddha is not to improve the world or society by introducing new ideas, norms or structures. Rather, he teaches how to behave as long as one lives, so that one may avoid conflicts and cultivate wholesome states of mind. Improvement of the general situation of society can take place only through the moral and spiritual improvement of each individual. After changing oneself in a positive way the individual can contribute to society by being a good example for others and by admonishing them to follow his own example. Extremely critical conflict situations are generally problems of 'common worldly persons'. When the Buddha exhorts the path of liberation he cannot be expected to be involved in such problems. He only proclaims fundamental ethical norms. It is up to every individual to decide how he is going to solve a particular conflict in certain circumstances. War is like many other calamities, quite common and inevitable, and in this is similar to natural disasters.

Suttas, such as the *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta*, which are adduced by modern interpreters, with or without nationalist sentiments, so as to legitimize war neither explicitly nor implicitly encourage war in any way. Rather, they depict ideal societies, either in the past or in the future, where kings rule on earth without violence. Surely the *cakravartin* achieves this ideal state of affairs by force, using his army to conquer the

²⁹ See for instance Mhv xxxii 63 ff.; Mp ii 214. *Anudīpanī* p. 262 also gives a similar account: *tathā pi cha deva lokato attano santikaṃ āgate dibbaratheyeva gatinimittaṃ katvā cavanānaṃ dhammika-upāsaka Duṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhayarājādamaṃ vasesa taṃ pi kammanimittaṃ viya.*

earth. He does so, however, *without killing* because the potential opponents submit without resisting. Therefore, these suttas do not in the least attest to a Buddhist legitimization of war.

I am not sure how far we can detect in the Pali canon the 'two modes of *dhamma*' which are to be recognized according to the attitude taken towards violence, as suggested by Steven Collins in *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities*. According to Collins, in the first mode *dhamma* is an ethic of reciprocity, in which the assessment of violence is context-dependent and negotiable. In the second *dhamma* is an ethic of absolute values, in which the assessment is context-independent and non-negotiable. I admit this division is illuminating and helpful in interpreting relatively late canonical passages like those of Jātaka prose and post-canonical Pāli texts such as the *Mahāvamsa*. But I hold that the Buddha's attitude to the war was absolute, context-independent and non-negotiable. The Buddha kept silent on the issue of 'just-wars' because it was not up to him, but to the kings to deal with the possible conflicts between their duty as rulers and the ethical norms enunciated by the Buddha.

Schmithausen ('Buddhist Attitude to War', p. 52) observes: 'Norms are not necessarily invalidated by the fact that they are occasionally violated by certain individuals or groups.' And these persons seek for legitimization or compensation by 'making merit'. To my mind the later compensation for earlier crimes by making merit, as attested for South and Southeast Asia³⁰ has a further aspect. As the above two passages from the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Paramatthadīpanī-anudīpanī* bear out, the mind at the moment of death (*cuticitta*, *cetanā*, *pañidhi*, *saikhāra*) plays in the form of a strong intention, resolution or impulse a great role in determining the nature of the next rebirth.³¹ This fact is com-

³⁰ See for instance B. J. Terwiel, *Monks and Magic: An Analysis of Religious Ceremonies in Central Thailand*, 3rd revised edition (Bangkok, 1997), pp. 170 f.

³¹ A I 8-9: *idāhaṃ bhikkhave ekaccaṃ puṅgalaṃ paduṭṭhacittaṃ/pasannacittaṃ evaṃ cetasā ceto paricca paḍānāmi. imamhi ce ayaṃ samaye puṅgalo kālaṃ kareyya, yathābhaṭaṃ nikkhīto evaṃ niraye/sagge. taṃ kissa hetu? cittaṃ hi 'ssa bhikkhave paduṭṭhaṃ/pasannaṃ* (cf. also A I 32); S IV 302 (Cittagahapati); D II 169 (*Mahāsudassana Sutta*); M III 213 (*Mahākamma-vibhaṅga Sutta*); M III 99 (*Saikhāriṇīpapatti Sutta*); A III 380 (*so tamhi samaye labhati tathāgataṃ dassanāya*); S V 70 and S V 380 (Saraṇānisakya). See also W. Rahula, *History of*

patible with the Buddha's teaching and is well-documented in the canonical suttas. But in no way has this been taught in order to allow for bad actions and the avoidance of their negative consequences. Instead it was taught by the Buddha only to explain that there is another element alongside karma that determines in which form one is reborn. As far as I can judge, this idea was exploited to allow for a method of compensation for evil deeds without thereby contradicting the law of karmic retribution.

Let me say some words in conclusion. The Buddha was remarkably silent in commenting on wars and on the killing that inevitably goes along with them. But at least on one occasion he says that one who dies a hero's death goes to hell because of the evil state of his mind and his wrong view that the warrior who falls in battle goes to heaven. This stance is not challenged by any other sutta passages in the Nikāyas. A few suttas which seem to tolerate a non-violent kind of onslaught on the earth or justifiable punishments of criminals are portrayals of utopian or ideal societies and are to be recognized as such. And even in the suttas like *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta*,³² the 'Wheel-turning King' who conquers the foreign kingdoms and countries does so without utilizing any weapons and without any killings.³³ Even though applicable on a

Buddhism in Ceylon (Colombo: M. D. Gunasena, 1956), p. 254 and Collins, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities*, pp. 304, 355.

³² Collins, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities* (p. 66) raises the problem of the antiquity of the concept of the *cakkavatti/cakravartin* by asking 'should we infer that texts which speak of such a thing (= large scale political formation) are later than Aśoka?' without answering the question directly, even though he suggests 'we may conclude with him [= Gombrich, *Theravāda Buddhism*, p. 82] that "it was an institutionalized fantasy"', Collins prefers to take this sutta as a parable rather than a myth (pp. 480–1). For more information about his views see pp. 214, 356, 470 ff., 480 ff.) A. L. Basham (*The Wonder that was India* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1967), p. 84, fn.) considers the *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta* proposes 'probably the oldest occurrence of the Cakravartin concept' and suggests it 'either inspired Aśoka or was inspired by him, and the very late character of the Sutta rather suggests the latter'.

³³ D III 59: *so imaṃ paṭhaviṃ sāgarapariyantaṃ adaṇḍenāsatthena dhammena abhivijjya ajjhāvasi*; Sn 1002: *sace agāraṃ ajjhāvasati vijjeya paṭhaviṃ imaṃ, adaṇḍena asatthena dhammena- m-anusāsati//*. These textual passages indicate that the wheel-turning kings rule over their kingdoms righteously without using the force of weapons after conquering them whereas A IV 90 says even the act of conquering itself is also without any kill-

broader level, ethical instructions in early Buddhism are essentially individual and soteriologically relevant. It is only in later texts that war was introduced to be the subject of moral reasoning on a much larger scale and, as it were, was legitimized by speaking of two kinds of wars.

MUDUGAMUWE MAITHRIMURTHI
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Abbreviations

A	<i>Āṅguttara Nikāya</i>
As	<i>Atthasālinī</i>
D	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i>
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>
M	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i>
Mhv	<i>Mahāvamsa</i>
Mp	<i>Manorathpūraṇī</i>
Nidd-a	<i>Niddesa-aṭṭhakathā</i>
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i>
S	<i>Samyutta Nikāya</i>
Sn	<i>Suttanipāta</i>
Spk	<i>Sāvatthappakāsinī</i>
Sv	<i>Sumaṅgalavilāsinī</i>

ing or force of weapons (*adaṇḍena asatthena vijeyya paṭhavimā imam asāhasena dhammena samena-m-anusāsīya, dhammena rajjam kāretvā asmim paṭhavimaṇḍale ...*).

THE RELIGIOUS MEANING OF BUDDHIST SCULPTURE
IN ITS CULTURAL SETTING:
THE BUDDHA IMAGES OF QINGZHOU
IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT SCHOLARSHIP

T. H. BARRETT

Images of the Buddha and of related figures have been known in Western countries for some time, so that anyone interested in Buddhist art can easily learn the technical terminology of mudras and so forth necessary in order to discuss them in artistic terms. It is curious, therefore, that in circles interested in Buddhism very little discussion has been devoted until comparatively recently to the meaning assigned to images in general within the religion. The use of images has after all been controversial in both Western and Eastern Christianity, while Islam—as we hardly need reminding—has always been suspicious or even hostile towards them. It may be that this protracted reticence has been no more than a reflection of the various strands of Buddhism that have successively been imported from Asia. The canonical literature of Theravāda Buddhism, after all, has been familiar in English for over a century, but does not concern itself with images; likewise the literature of Zen, a form of Buddhism already known in the West for over seventy years. Perhaps only the late twentieth century progress of Tibetan Buddhism outside its homeland has at length created a greater awareness of the role of the Buddha image, and the revival of debates—debates that certainly will not detain us here—originally associated with the French scholarship of A. Foucher (1864–1952).

In revising what was originally an informal and quite general public talk for publication, I have been greatly assisted in being able to draw on the expertise of my colleague Kate Crosby, who has recently been working on devotional aspects of the Theravada tradition—though I am sure she would not wish to be seen as having given an unre-served endorsement to what follows.

The following remarks are more limited, and concentrate mainly on China, deriving for the most part from observations on the exhibition of Buddhist sculpture from Qingzhou that was organized at the Royal Academy in the early summer of 2002. My own interest in the Buddha image, however, was not prompted by the exhibition itself, but by an interest in the history of printing, one of China's most famous inventions. For there is clearly a strong connection between Buddhist texts and early printing, and I have come to see this as prompted by a desire to create sacred objects as much as by a quest for the greater availability of reading matter. Since these remarks were first drafted the focus on Buddhism and material culture in general in China has become much more pronounced, with a particular interest emerging in such tangible manifestations of the Buddha as Buddha relics.¹ Against such a background texts may be seen as but one form of sacred object within Buddhism, and in order to understand more broadly the potential sanctity of material, manufactured things as it emerges within the tradition—and especially as it emerges within the tradition in its Chinese form—recent discussion of the Buddha image in academic writing has provided me with what appear to be some very useful hints. These hints I am very happy to pass on, conscious as I am that my own starting point in the history of technology may perhaps provide an unusual perspective on current concerns—even though I am equally conscious that they are far from being definitive, or even systematic.

For a short discussion of any aspect of Buddhist belief is always something of a contradiction in terms. Even the most basic introduction to Buddhism produced in earlier times in East Asia begins with the stark

¹ For a stimulating recent summary of most recent scholarship in this area, see the first chapter of John Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 24–82, and see p. 73 in particular for a footnote on the renewed controversies just alluded to. A number of important studies evidently appeared too late to be mentioned in this survey, notably recent work by Chen Jinhua on the political function of relics, and also Hsueh-man Shen, 'Pictorial representations of the Buddha's nirvāṇa in Chinese relic deposits', *East Asian Art: Studies in Material Culture* 1.1 (2003), pp. 25–48—this article is one of the few recent contributions not to be used in John S. Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), which otherwise now generally gives the fullest and most up to date summary of the relevant scholarship.

warning that the Buddha preached eighty-four thousand distinct doctrines, for the very good reason that we are beset by eighty-four thousand different kinds of affliction, and the Buddha was concerned that we should have available to us the teaching specific to our own particular situation.² It is for this reason, therefore, that despite the best efforts of the Buddha to encapsulate his teachings in succinct statements such as the Four Noble Truths, nothing in Buddhism ever boils down to irreducible, unambiguous dogmas. The most compendious description of the meaning of Chinese Buddhist art that I know lists six different religious functions for it—such as the didactic, or the talismanic—before adding other important non-religious ones, such as the economic and the social (to say nothing of the political), even after granting that its ‘main’ religious significance, on which alone my remarks will concentrate, is quite another matter. The author also insists, incidentally, that seeing Buddhist art outside its religious context in Buddhist life, as we are obliged to do, deprives us of vital clues as to how quite similar artefacts could be simultaneously assigned very different functions.³ We will therefore from the start be skirting around no end of complex issues, not least of which will be the relationship between the religious imperative behind works of art and their aesthetic component, a topic that has been and still is vigorously debated for the South Asian cultural environment of the Buddhist world, just as much as it is amongst scholars of Buddhism alone.⁴ The Buddhist tradition, springing as it does from that cultural region, is so rich and Buddhist scriptural writing so vast that for every apparently simple principle there is another qualifying it, and probably appearing to contradict it. So rather than begin with some

² I refer to the text with which my own education started, namely the *Hasshū Kōyō* of the thirteenth century Japanese monk Gyōnen

³ See the excellent essay by Griffith Foulk, ‘Religious Functions of Buddhist Art in China’, in Marsha Weidner, ed., *Cultural Intersections In Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), pp. 13–29, and note also in the same volume the discussion on pp. 55 (and n. 105, p. 69) and 58–60 of Daniel B. Stevenson, ‘Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*, the Buddhist Rite for Deliverance of Creatures of Water and Land’, pp. 30–70.

⁴ Note most recently V. K. Chari, ‘Representations in India’s sacred images: objective vs. metaphysical reference’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 65.1 (2002), pp. 52–73.

simple key to the religious meaning of Buddhist sculpture, let us start with our own situation, as outsiders to any Buddhist cultural area, and see what first impressions specifically Chinese images have made on foreigners over the centuries.

Of course, foreigners in our part of the world have long been vaguely aware of the existence of a great civilization at the other end of the Eurasian landmass. The Romans, for example, knew that the silk that they prized so much came from that place. But the earliest report of China giving any precise details of Chinese life comes from about the time that many of the statues of Qingzhou were at the height of their glory; that is, round about the year 600. It was then that nomad leaders coming to the court of the emperor in Byzantium related tales of a land far away, which they began with the news that its ruler was called the Son of Heaven. 'Statues are the cult of this nation', this account continues.⁵ And it is no wonder that Buddhist sculpture should have been the first thing to impress nomads entering China, for while it is true that the colossal images that still survive carved out of the mountains of North China were not necessarily built for display (many of them in those days would actually have been obscured by wooden temple structures built around the front of them), still representations of the Buddha would have been very hard for the visitor to avoid.⁶ Indeed, it has been pointed out that Buddhism in Asia was unusual as a religion in creating whole landscapes of imagery, on a scale rarely matched by religion in Europe, whether pagan or Christian.⁷ We have, however, to wait a good thousand years for the first British comment on Chinese religious sculpture, in the form of the jottings of Peter Mundy, a Cornish adventurer who was on board the first English ship to arrive in Canton in 1637. Here, in a section titled 'Religion little respected: some have None att all', he

⁵ Michael and Mary Whitby *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 191–2; 'Son of Heaven' is actually 'Son of God' in the Greek, but the reference is nevertheless clear.

⁶ For the original situation of the great Buddhas of Yungang, see e.g. Craig Clunas, *Art in China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 93–4.

⁷ Gina L. Barnes, 'Buddhist Landscapes of East Asia', in Wendy Ashmore and A. Bernard Knapp, eds., *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 101–123.

observes ‘... very curious in adorning their pagodas, wherein are the Images off those they accompte For saintes, although they shew No great respect to the place Nor them, For they will talke, eatt, Drincke, walcke and play in their pagodas and before their altars as in a common house’.⁸

Mundy was only on a brief visit, of course, but already he had been preceded by a generation by Catholic missionaries, who had stayed to learn the language, and their remarks are not dissimilar in suggesting that, to judge by appearances at least, by this much later time familiarity had perhaps bred contempt. The greatest of their number, Matteo Ricci, writes:

What is difficult to believe is the multitude of idols that are in this kingdom, not only in the temples, which are full of them, sometimes to the number of several thousand, but also in private homes, where there are great numbers kept in a specifically dedicated place; in the plazas, in streets, on mountains, on ships and in public buildings, one sees nothing but these abominations.

But at the same time he also reports that the head of a monastery that he visited nears Canton told him ‘that idols were not worthy of worship, but [that] our masters, seeing that the people of the south were rather barbaric and incapable of sustaining religious belief in the absence of outward images, created idols for them’.⁹ In a sense this is a sound enough account of one aspect of Buddhist doctrine, though modern research has certainly confirmed Ricci’s account of the vast amount of money spent at that time on religious foundations and other acts of pious patronage.¹⁰

In yet more modern times a greater Western familiarity with China has produced amongst the British even greater puzzlement, as in the

⁸ Lt. Col. Sir Richard Carnac Temple, ed., *The Travels of Peter Mundy, 1608–1667*, Vol. III, pt. I (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1919), pp. 301–2.

⁹ These quotations are drawn from a longer account of Ricci and idolatry in David Porter, *Ideographia: The Chinese Cipher in Early Modern Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 106–7.

¹⁰ This is well documented in Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in late-Ming China* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1993).

following extract from Lady Mary O'Malley, who in the mid-twentieth century wrote novels under the name Ann Bridge:

They must *have* feelings of religious reverence, I suppose, but they are so different to European ones that they are quite unrecognisable by us. They treat their own sacred objects with extraordinary casualness. It's quite common in country temples to find maize and millet stored in the main shrine, and strings of onions hung around images to dry.¹¹

But a few years later, in Yunnan at the other end of China, one of the first anthropologists to live in a Chinese village recorded that though there was little formal religious education where he stayed, 'if a child played with a figure of Buddha or a religious picture, its mother would tell it to stop, perhaps making some comments to indicate the respect due sacred objects'.¹² And the paradoxes continue to this day: a German colleague has told me that he has seen offerings made even in the empty sockets left where Buddhist images were torn down during the Cultural Revolution—yet Keith Stevens, the leading collector of Chinese religious images in this country, has managed to acquire a large number of divine images discarded as useless by their one time believers.¹³

Now it cannot be denied that attitudes towards the separation of sacred and secular in China do not necessarily coincide with those of Europe, and never have, since at least the time of Confucius.¹⁴ Many Chinese Buddhists developed a strong sense of the pervasive presence of Buddhahood in all things, animate and inanimate, perhaps because of influences from their Chinese religious environment.¹⁵ There are in any case perfectly understandable Buddhist precedents for the down-playing of the miraculous in favour of the sacredness of everyday life

¹¹ Ann Bridge, *Picnic in Peking* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1941, originally 1932), p. 115.

¹² Cornelius Osgood, *Village Life in Old China: A Community Study of Kao Yao Yünnan* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1963), p. 323.

¹³ The results of his labours may be found in Keith G. Stevens, *Chinese Gods: The Unseen World of Spirits and Demons*, London; Collins and Brown, 1997.

¹⁴ This is the argument of Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as the Sacred* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972).

¹⁵ T. H. Barrett, 'Devil's Valley to Omega Point: Reflections on the emergence of a theme from the No', in T. Skorupski, ed., *The Buddhist Forum*, 11 (London: SOAS, 1991), pp. 1–12.

that later shows itself as one of the main rhetorical flourishes of the Zen school.¹⁶ The reader may recall that it was a Zen master who is said to have burned a Buddha image to keep warm—when Buddhahood inheres in every object, why make distinctions between secular and sacred at all?¹⁷ Even before the rise of the Zen school, we find the concept of sacred space labouring under similar difficulties—one guide to a sacred mountain, for example, is obliged to address the question: if the Buddha is everywhere, why should one place be holier than another?¹⁸ A possible type of answer to all such questions, of course, may lead back to my opening remarks about specific medicines for specific ills—it is our preconceptions about the holy, our own situation, that requires responses on a less than cosmic scale that address our specific levels of understanding. It is after all not just the image of the Buddha but also the very notion of the Buddha that is empty, devoid of meaning in any absolute sense, though obviously we may need to start from such terms to lead us on to a higher wisdom.¹⁹ That, no doubt, is why we find a cer-

¹⁶ A detailed account of these may be found in A. J. Price, 'Everyday Miracles', in Benjamin Penny, ed., *Religion and Biography in China and Tibet* (Richmond: Curzon, 2002), pp. 49–73.

¹⁷ This incident involving Danxia (739–814) is duly noted on p. 214 of the entry on Buddha images in the great Franco-Japanese Encyclopedia of Buddhism, first edited by P. Demiéville, *Hōbōgirin*, Fascicle III (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1937), pp. 210–15. It must be pointed out, however, that within this school the presence of enlightened masters, who were ritually treated as Buddhas, meant in a sense that Zen did possess images, but they were living images, or at least relics of once living masters. For a famous example of this paradoxical outcome, see the recent doctoral thesis on CD by Kees Kuiken, *The Other Neng*, Haren: Chinterpret c.s., 2002.

¹⁸ Huixiang, *Gu Qingliang zhuan*, 1, p. 1093b7–8, in edition of Taishō Canon, no. 2098 in Volume LI. Note, however, that pilgrimage to this holy site was later treated by Zen masters in a highly ambiguous fashion well short of outright condemnation: see Steven Heine, 'Visions, Divisions, Revisions: The Encounter Between Iconoclasm and Supernaturalism in Kōan Cases about Mount Wu-t'ai', in Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright, eds., *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 137–167.

¹⁹ This is the type of argument culled from the literature of Zen with which Demiéville concludes the passage on iconoclasm cited already in n. 17.

tain genre of Buddhist sutra explicitly denying that an image of the Buddha contains anything of the Buddha's spirit.²⁰

That, too, may be what Ricci's informant was trying to convey, but it is a type of explanation that does not seem to hold good for the actual practice of Buddhism, even of Zen Buddhism in later times, to say nothing of the environment that produced the Qingzhou sculptures.²¹ The most recent research rejects explicitly any straightforward accounting of Buddhist images either as sops to the credulousness of the masses or as mere symbols directing us towards higher truths.²² There is no denying, as will become clear, that different Chinese approached religion with different outlooks, so that it has been observed for example that visiting a pilgrimage site might be a very different experience focusing on different features for different people; it is just separating those believers into two simple groups—the sheep and the goats, as it were—turns out to be too crude an analysis.²³ Rather, different viewpoints seem to converge and diverge simultaneously—or, to change the metaphor, different notes seem to reverberate together—to form patterns that are never entirely distinct. In any case, even if we go back as early as we can in our knowledge of Buddhist sculpture, what evidence we have for the introduction of images in Indian Buddhism suggests that rather than resulting from the pandering of the educated to the ignorant idol-worship of the common herd, the earliest images were an innovation deliberately

²⁰ See p. 21 of Helmut Brinker, 'Early Buddhist Art in China', in *The Royal Academy of Arts, Return of the Buddha; The Qingzhou Discoveries* (London: The Royal Academy of Arts, 2002), pp. 20–33.

²¹ The actual practice of Zen, which differs from its rhetoric and conforms essentially to the patterns outlined in what follows, is explained in Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), Chapters Seven and Eight, and also *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), Chapters Ten and Eleven.

²² Robert Sharf, on p. 8 of his Introduction to Robert H. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf, eds., *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), pp. 1–18.

²³ See Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü, eds., *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 22–25.

spread about by learned monks and nuns themselves.²⁴ True, that is not to deny that there are countries today still more Buddhist than China where anthropologists assure us that some devotees explain images as doing no more than serving as a 'reminder' of the Buddha's life, but even their behaviour does tend on closer inspection to suggest that images mean more than that.²⁵

Nor is that to deny that Buddhists were perfectly capable of making the types of distinctions that, say, contemporary Byzantines would have made between a manufactured image and its original. In the story of the life of the great Indian ruler Aśoka, which was very well known in East Asia, when a Buddhist saint is tricked into bowing down to what he takes to be the Buddha though it is actually an evil being who has impersonated the Buddha, he excuses himself by saying: 'Just as men bow down to clay images of the gods, knowing that what they worship is the god and not the clay, so I, seeing you here, wearing the form of the Lord of the World, bowed down to you.'²⁶ This is close enough to the principle first enunciated by the Emperor Julian and taken into Byzantine Christianity a little later:

We do not say that the statues of the emperors are mere wood and stone and bronze, nor that they are the emperors themselves, but that they are images of the emperors. He therefore who loves the Emperor delights to see the emperor's statue.²⁷

But Christianity and Buddhism take somewhat different views of the business of salvation within history, and this affects—despite points of similarity—their entire modes of looking back upon their own traditions.

²⁴ See Gregory Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monk: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), pp. 238–257.

²⁵ See p. 275 of Juliane Schober, 'In the Presence of the Buddha: Ritual Veneration of the Burmese Mahāmuni Image', in Juliane Schober, ed., *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), pp. 259–288.

²⁶ John S. Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 195–6; cf. 107–8.

²⁷ Gervase Mathew, *Byzantine Aesthetics* (New York: Icon Editions, Harper and Row, 1971; first published 1964), p. 97; cf. p. 50.

Commemoration is certainly at the heart of Christianity, in the Eucharist, but it is a commemoration of a work completed, and that by South Asian standards completed remarkably quickly. By the standards of immeasurable cycles of time absorbed from South Asian culture into Buddhism and thence exported to East Asia (where cycles were by no means short in any case) the story of the Fall and of the countable generations from Adam to Abraham and onwards to the advent of Jesus seems to take place in the twinkling of an eye. By contrast the journey to enlightenment of the Buddha himself takes place over countless incarnations, and we must deem ourselves extremely fortunate to be alive even in broadly speaking the same stretch of history as such an enlightened being. In both traditions the message is that now it is high time to awake, but in the case of Christianity it is the brevity of human history that impels us to action; in Buddhism it is the very vastness of space and time that constitute the threat. For despite the timelessness of the Buddhist message at one level, at the level of our own existence the message that 'all things must pass' is not a comforting one. Our opportunities for hearing the Buddhist message in this world will pass, too, in due course, as age succeeds age in which the beneficent influence of the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha, who appeared in ancient India, have faded to nothing, and yet no other enlightened being is destined to appear for thousands upon thousands of years. In both traditions a certain anxiety becomes inevitable, but in the Buddhist case that anxiety is ameliorated by one reassuring factor, namely that the efficacy of the Buddha's teachings cannot disappear until he too has disappeared.

For he is with us yet, in a material form in this material world, though not as he once was. All accounts agreed that he died long ago in India, and was cremated, but his relics were recovered, and distributed across the land. As an enlightened being, moreover, the residues of cremation in his case had unusual properties, such as jewel-like hardness, and the ability to multiply in number *ad infinitum*. One day these relics will disappear from our world, but while they are still to be found spiritual effort will never be unavailing.²⁸ No wonder then that the earliest Chris-

²⁸ The value of relics to our understanding of Buddhism has only recently begun to attract substantial scholarly attention: for a good account of relics in relation to history,

tian account of Buddhism, included in his writings by Clement of Alexandria in about AD 200, runs 'Indians who follow the precept of Boutta, venerate him as a god, and worship a kind of pyramid beneath which they imagine that the bones of a divinity of some kind lie buried'.²⁹ Evidence from inscriptions in India suggests that this sort of commemoration of the continued presence of the Buddha (usually by means of what was termed a *stūpa*, to give the Buddhist word for Clement's 'kind of pyramid') must date back to over three centuries earlier than his day.³⁰

But not everyone saw this as the key to the persistence of the Buddha's presence amongst us. He himself, it seems, had directed his followers' attention to his teachings as the continued embodiment of what was important about him.³¹ This may perhaps have seemed a little abstract at first, when Buddhism was clearly transmitted through oral texts alone.³² Yet with the advent of Buddhist texts in writing the notion that the tangible presence of Buddhist texts would persist until the time came for the final waning of Buddhism as a spiritual force, and the corollary that the multiplication of Buddhist texts, in itself a meritorious act, would stave off decline, became closely associated with the cult of relics. For texts were now relics, in a sense—something of immense importance to the history of printing.³³ The importance of either relics or scriptures to the history of Chinese sculpture might, on the other hand, seem decidedly more remote, though it is quite clear that the Chinese

see Steven Collins, *Nirvana and other Buddhist felicities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 247–8.

²⁹ Rick Fields, *How the Swans came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America* (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1992, third edition), p. 17, citing H. G. Rawlinson, *Intercourse Between India and the Western World* (New York: Octagon Books, 1971, reprint of 1916), p. 29, drawing on Clement's *Stromata*, 305.

³⁰ See Gregory Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks*, p. 126, and also his essay, 'Relic', in Mark C. Taylor, ed., *Critical Terms in Religious Studies*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press.), pp. 256–268.

³¹ Note, amongst many possible references, the summary by Collins, *Nirvana and other Buddhist felicities*, pp. 245–6.

³² K. R. Norman, *A Philological Approach to Buddhism* (London: SOAS, 1997), Chapter Five.

³³ I have attempted to explain this in a number of publications, primarily in 'Stūpa, Sūtra, and Śāriira in China, c. 656–706 CE', *Buddhist Studies Review* 18.1 (2001), pp. 1–64, and *The Rise and Spread of Printing: A New Account of Religious Factors* (London: SOAS, 2001).

believed that the final fading of all traces of the Buddha's influence from this world would be marked by the disappearance into the ground both of his teachings in written form and of his corporeal relics.³⁴

A final glance, moreover, at the Byzantine contemporaries of the sculptors of Qingzhou may serve to suggest that all these interrelationships are worth considering carefully. In the Christian world of the Eastern Mediterranean text and image are mainly linked at the metaphorical level. According to Leontias of Neapolis, who died in the middle of the seventh century, icons are 'opened books to remind us of God'.³⁵ John of Damascus (675–749) also sees an image as the book of the illiterate—an idea with roots earlier than Byzantine Christianity.³⁶ But image and relic are accorded an equal functional role, both in the eyes of John, and in those of modern historians trying to reconstruct the spirit of the age.³⁷ All seem agreed that both were alike in that they brought mankind into closer contact with the holy. How, then did the contemporary doctors of the Chinese Buddhist tradition assess the meaning of the Buddha's image? Do we find a similar connection between sculpture and relics, or writing? A clue is already afforded by Su Bai's account of how the main emperor of the Northern Qi, under whose regime the sculptures of Qingzhou assumed a far more Indian style than had lately been the case, simultaneously 'worshipped the original Sanskrit texts', apparently as the veritable words left as relics by the Buddha himself, similarly going right against the tendency in China to approach Buddhism only through translated scriptures.³⁸

Now in connecting feelings of veneration for images and relics in whatever form to insecurities amongst Buddhist believers about the passing of history I am certainly offering an overall interpretation of

³⁴ On this very important belief, see Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 300, n. 5.

³⁵ Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 40.

³⁶ Mathew, *Byzantine Aesthetics*, p. 104, and cf, p. 97.

³⁷ Mathew, *Byzantine Aesthetics*, pp. 104, 105; cf. Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), p. 182.

³⁸ Su Bai, on p. 58 of his 'Sculpture of the Northern Qi and its Stylistic Models', in *Return of the Buddha: The Qingzhou Discoveries*, pp. 54–59. The significance of this statement has already been explored by Satō Shingaku, 'Hoku Sei Bukkyōkai ni okeru Bongo Butten no jūshi', *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 12.1 (1964), pp. 198–201.

their religious significance that is not necessarily shared by other scholars. The importance of relics in Buddhism is something that has only been generally recognised fairly recently in the West, since earlier scholars tended to adopt a post-Reformation view of them as epiphenomenal, superstitious accretions to a supposedly purer original Buddhism. It must be said that even amongst those who now wish to give them their due importance, some at least approach the question of their meaning from a philosophical, or even a psychological viewpoint, and these approaches do indeed have much to commend themselves.³⁹ But we have also discovered that a sense of history often meant more to Buddhists than was earlier supposed, even outside China, where there were very strong cultural pressures to take a view of Buddhism that conformed to China's distinctive and subtle ideas about the value of the past.⁴⁰ At any rate, if we look at the inscriptions carved into Buddhist images (inscriptions on reliquaries are less easy to locate) in North China in the sixth century, the rough time and place of the Qingzhou finds, we discover that as often as not they make some reference either to the past death of the Buddha, between the 'twin trees', or to the future coming of his successor, Maitreya.⁴¹ Though these references may be as perfunctory as those to the Cross, in Christianity, they still fix Buddhism just as much within the historical frame of experience, as does one of the most influential pieces of Buddhist epigraphy of the sixth century, even though this work, composed in the South, may not have been known in the North until somewhat later.⁴²

³⁹ See notably Robert Sharf, 'On the Allure of Buddhist Relics', *Representations* 66 (Spring, 1999), pp. 75–99.

⁴⁰ For a recent example of the study of Buddhist ideas of history formed outside China, see Jan Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991); I have tried to express some ideas about Chinese Buddhists and their notions of history in an essay entitled 'Exploratory Observations on Some Weeping Pilgrims', in T. Skorupski, ed., *The Buddhist Forum* 1 (London; SOAS, 1990), pp. 99–110.

⁴¹ This emerges from a reading of a standard epigraphic collection, Wang Chang, *Jinshi cuibian* (Beijing: Zhonghua shudian, 1985, reprint of Saoye shanfang, 1921, edition): see e.g. pp. 30.4a, 31.5b, 32.4a, 33.6b, 34.1a,b, 3a, 35.3b, and 36.1a.

⁴² See, for this influential piece, A. Forte, 'A Literary Model for Adam', in his edition of Paul Pelliot, *L'Inscription Nestorienne de Si-ngan-fou* (Kyoto: ISEAS, 1996), pp. 473–481, especially pp. 479–80.

And relic and image were most certainly connected, to judge from the encyclopaedias of Buddhism that began to be composed from the sixth century onwards. In the earliest of these, a compilation of scriptural extracts completed in 516, the section on Buddhist images is appended to a much longer list of excerpts concerning relics.⁴³ Exactly the same pattern is observable in at least one subsequent encyclopaedia put together between 945 and 954, in which the section on the Buddha ends naturally enough with a subsection on his Nirvana and the persistence of his relics, but this is followed by a final subsection on miracles associated with his image, not only in India but in China too.⁴⁴ True, this pattern is not reproduced in the largest and best known of such works, which dates to 668.⁴⁵ Here, however, the section on relics includes a subsection devoted solely to the story of a particularly famous relic of a type that illustrates much better than any doctrinal treatise ever could the way in which the conception of relic and image could overlap.⁴⁶

The story is set in the lifetime of Shakyamuni Buddha, in the north-west of India, present day Afghanistan—an area which after its conversion to Buddhism was as keen as anywhere to assert that the Buddha's feet in ancient times had walked also on its bare mountains, though there is no reason to suppose that it formed part of the sphere of action of the historical Shakyamuni. In these mountains there dwelled a ferocious dragon—to use the Chinese term, or rather its English translation—which, accompanied by five she-demons, was in the habit of laying waste to the surrounding countryside with hailstorms. The king of the area, in desperation, calls on the Buddha, who arrives with his own supernatural assistants, bearing fiery cudgels with which they attack the dragon. The monster takes refuge in the coolness of the Buddha's

⁴³ Baochang, ed., *Jinglü yixiang* 6, pp. 29c–30b, in the edition of the Taishō Canon, Volume 53.

⁴⁴ Yichu, ed., *Yichu liutie*, 1, pp. 14a–27b, in the 1669 edition published in photographic reproduction by Makita Tairyō, Kyoto: Hōyū shoten, 1979.

⁴⁵ On this work by Daoshi, see S. F. Teiser, 'T'ang Buddhist encyclopedias: an introduction to *Fa-yüan chu-lin* and *Chu-ching yao-chi*', in *T'ang Studies* 3 (1985), pp. 109–128.

⁴⁶ Daoshi, ed., *Fayuan zhulin* 40, pp. 599a–b, in the edition of the Taishō Canon, Volume 53.

shadow, submitting to his authority. He is then ordered to create a special grotto from the former cave home of the she-demons, wherein the Buddha enters. But on learning that the Buddha intends to return thence to his own country, the dragon is distraught: 'Why are you leaving me? If I cannot see the Buddha I will do evil things and suffer an evil reincarnation.' The Buddha, all compassion, promises to re-enter the cave and to dwell there for fifteen hundred years, shining from within the rock so that his form may be discerned from afar, though not from close up. This 'shadow' of the Buddha, as it is termed, then continued to preach, even while the original Shakyamuni returned home.

The tale would seem to relate to some natural underground phenomenon, like the Witch of Wookey Hole in Somerset but more impressive, that acted as a pilgrimage attraction conveniently placed near a major trade route, so that its fame spread throughout the Buddhist world.⁴⁷ As a result Chinese travellers from quite an early date were well aware of it, and through their accounts as well as translated texts such as that just summarized from the encyclopaedia, its fame spread in China too.⁴⁸ By the fifth century reproductions of it had even been provided there for those who had no opportunity to take the long journey across Asia to see it.⁴⁹ But if we ask whether it was a relic or an image of the Buddha, then quite clearly it was both. As a 'double' of the Buddha it was a part of him that substituted for the whole, and yet outlived him—very much in the way that the earliest images of himself that he created out of compassion for his adherents during unavoidable absences are said to have functioned.⁵⁰ No wonder we find the terminology of relic

⁴⁷ Much the fullest recent account of this phenomenon and the associated legend may be found in John S. Strong, *The Legend of Upagupta: Sanskrit Buddhism in North India and Southeast Asia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 28–32; note on p. 31 Strong's belief that this cult brings us to a point between aniconic and iconic representation of the Buddha.

⁴⁸ For some further comments on sources from the Chinese point of view, stressing as here the importance of Chinese notions of history, see pp. 106–7 of T. H. Barrett, 'Exploratory Observations on Some Weeping Pilgrims'.

⁴⁹ Strong, *Legend of Upagupta*, pp. 31–32.

⁵⁰ The legendary origins of the Buddha image as a double created by the Buddha for a king to serve during his temporary absence in heaven, where he was preaching to his mother, is detailed in a number of studies, including notably Martha C. Carter, *The*

and shadow overlapping eventually in China, in circumstances where a manufactured substitute relic was called for.⁵¹ Another phenomenon very similar to the Buddha's shadow in its blurring of the categories of image and relic would be the cult of the Buddha's footprint, supposed examples of which might be found in many places, including East Asia—where of course the Buddha's feet were held to have trod as well, albeit during those ancient times for which all records had been burned by the First Emperor of China.⁵²

In view of the circulation throughout Asia of tales based on such marvellous phenomena, it is no wonder that by the fifth century Buddhist commentators in Sri Lanka (a part of the Buddhist world that was also visited by Chinese pilgrims) had come up with an explicit analysis of relics into three types. These were corporeal relics, which we have already encountered; relics of use, in other words things associated with the former presence of the Buddha such as the tree under which he gained enlightenment; and commemorative relics, such as images.⁵³ The last-named, however, did not include just any old likeness of the Buddha, but images that ideally contained within them some fragment of a corporeal relic and that had been consecrated in ceremonies involving the reading of scriptures, culminating in the final addition of verisimilitude through the painting in of the eyes.⁵⁴ Records of such

Mystery of the Udayana Buddha (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1990). For a translated source, see the study by Robert Sharf, cited below, n. 62.

⁵¹ Cf. Shen, 'Pictorial representations', p. 33.

⁵² For these cults, see Barrett, 'Weeping Pilgrims', p. 102, and the article 'Bussokuseki' in Demiéville, *Hôbôgirin*, II (Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1930) –III, pp. 187–190. They even make a brief appearance in European literature: see Elias Canetti, *Auto da Fé* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), p. 141. For an excellent monograph on an early European encounter with one of these cults in Thailand, see Remco Raben and Dhivaratna Pombejra, eds., *In the King's Trail: An 18th century Dutch Journey to the Buddha's Footprint* (Bangkok: the Royal Netherlands Embassy, 1997), especially pp. 81–91.

⁵³ Kevin Trainor, *Relics, ritual, and representation in Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 89, nn. 82, 98.

⁵⁴ For the importance of text in such consecrations, see Juliane Schober, on pp. 275–6 of her 'In the Presence of the Buddha', in Juliane Schober, ed., *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast*. Contrast consecration in popular religion through the immuring of a live creature (usually an insect), as mentioned by Stevens, *Chinese Gods*, p. 26.

consecrations of images incorporating relics go back again to the fifth century in Sri Lanka.⁵⁵

They are also well attested in East Asia, where the most famous was probably the consecration of the great Buddha image at Nara in Japan in 752, an enterprise that to judge from the surviving records probably took more out of the economy of the fledgling Japanese state than a major programme of manned exploration of the moon would do today.⁵⁶ To the rulers of Japan in those days, however, so distant from the Buddha's enlightenment in both time and space, the provision for their subjects of such a tangible embodiment of the Buddha's presence in their own land would have constituted an immediately practical benefit far outweighing any cost. It is in Japan, too, that we can find the most striking example of the use not simply of relics but of text adapted to serve as a form of relic in order to impart power to a Buddha image.⁵⁷ For a recent publication has shown how one medieval image there has a Buddhist text held in place behind its eyes with a spring, just like a battery in an electric appliance today, to provide the power needed to animate the sacredness of the statue as a whole.⁵⁸ Even today in Thailand and elsewhere it is the recitation of texts—those alternative, verbal relics of the Buddha—that consecrate an image.⁵⁹ This contrasts strongly with the consecration of images in the popular religion of China, where the

⁵⁵ See pp. 24–5 of Richard Gombrich, 'The Consecration of a Buddha Image', *Journal of Asian Studies* 27.1 (1966), pp. 23–36.

⁵⁶ See the information collected in Joan R. Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 259–271.

⁵⁷ Youngsuk Pak and Roderick Whitfield, *Handbook of Korean Art: Buddhist Sculpture* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2002), p. 24, in explaining the image-text relationship within Korean art, adduce a particularly spectacular illustration of the contents of a thirteenth century Japanese Buddha figure.

⁵⁸ See the illustration on p. 149 of Paul Groner, 'Icons and Relics in Eison's Religious Activities', in Sharf, *Living Images*, pp. 114–150.

⁵⁹ See Donald L. Swearer, 'Consecrating the Buddha', in Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Buddhism in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 50–58. Kate Crosby points out to me that his related study, 'Hypostatizing the Buddha: Buddha Image Consecration in Northern Thailand', *History of Religions* 34 (1995), pp. 271–79, clarifies this further, speaking of 'coding' (p. 276) the Buddha image with his life story and his doctrines. Both the translation and the article, moreover, make it clear that the function of this coding with the 84,000 teachings is to help ensure their survival.

ritual of eye opening has been taken over, but depends on sacrificial blood, something taboo to Buddhists.⁶⁰

It was then as real fragments of the Buddha's presence in the bleak days of the sixth and early seventh century, as China was rocked by massive civil wars ushering in a new era of stability and reunification, that the sculptures of Qingzhou provided solace to their original worshippers. But clearly this had not always been so: the first Buddha images to appear in Chinese art, it has been argued, do not even represent the Buddha as we would understand him, but a Chinese Lord of the Dead for whom no conventional representation existed. In other words, the Buddha image was at first not understood in its own right but pressed into service to meet specifically Chinese needs.⁶¹ True, a text explaining the karmic benefits of making Buddha statues was translated quite early on in the history of Chinese Buddhism, and we must presume that Buddhist missionary teachers from South and Central Asia duly instructed Chinese monks (when they were eventually ordained) in a correct understanding of the status of these objects.⁶² But when did the generality of Chinese believers learn what a statue of the Buddha or one of his associates might mean?

There are some indications that this process of broader religious education got under way somewhat later, towards the fifth century, when the presence of Buddhism in China had become so firmly established as to become, despite many persecutions, irreversible. We find from even the mid-fourth century collections of tales of the miraculous or uncanny which, whatever their original function, are soon adapted to their own

⁶⁰ See Stevens, *Chinese Gods*, p. 27. On blood sacrifice, see Terry Kleeman, 'Licentious Cults and Bloody Victuals: Sacrifice, Reciprocity, and Violence in Traditional China', *Asia Major*, Third Series, 7.1 (1994), pp. 185–211.

⁶¹ This has been well argued by Wu Hung, most recently in 'Mapping Early Taoist Art: The Visual Culture of the Wudoumi Dao', in Stephen Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: the Art Institute of Chicago, with University of California Press, 2000), pp. 77–93. There is, however, a somewhat different interpretation of this evidence by Stanley Abe that he outlines in his *Ordinary Images* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 48–50.

⁶² For the scripture in question, see the translation by Robert Sharf, 'The Scripture on the Production of Buddha Images', in D. Lopez, ed., *Religions of China in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 261–7.

purposes by apologists for Buddhism keen to stress the power inherent in their religion. An examination of Buddhist themes to be found in such sources shows that statues played a major part in the consciousness of the authors, who are usually not monks but laymen, keen to relay the Buddhist message, as they understood it, to their peers. Here we find vivid illustrations of the karmic benefits—often available in the here and now rather than a future life—of creating Buddhist images or texts; here, too, we find the terrible and usually equally immediate karmic penalties of desecrating them, together with their miraculous powers of survival in the face of fire or other disasters. Statues shed blood when injured, or become immovable or mobile of their own accord.⁶³ These stories about images became part of the stock in trade of a certain type of East Asian literature with obvious pious analogies in Europe as well as other Buddhist parts of the Asian continent.⁶⁴ But even when transmitted in China by librarians working on vast imperially sponsored collections, the main sources upon which they relied for the preservation of the tales were often those compiled by members of the Buddhist clergy.⁶⁵

One prime source of this type is actually the encyclopaedia of 668 already mentioned for the story of the Buddha's shadow. Its compiler was indeed not alone amongst his contemporary fellow-monks in collecting tales of miracles that had taken place in China, for though the empire was by this point reunified, the mood of pessimism persisted, and some evidently saw it as their duty to stress the continued availability of the Buddha's saving power in China through the reiteration of telling ex-

⁶³ Robert Ford Campany, *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Medieval China* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), pp. 325, 327; cf. examples on pp. 332–4. Kate Crosby points out to me that the idea of an image having its own karma, resulting perhaps in injury, can be found also in South East Asia: see Schober, 'In the Presence of the Buddha', p. 268.

⁶⁴ For a couple of Chinese examples in translation, with a good study of a typical source, see Donald E. Gjertson, *Miraculous Retribution: A Study and Translation of T'ang Lin's Ming-pao chi* (Berkeley: Center for South and Southeast Asia Studies, 1989), tales 17 and 22; for some Japanese examples, see Kyoko Motomochi Nakamura, *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), Translation, Volume One, tales 17, 33 35; Volume Two, tales 13, 14, 17, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 34, 36, 37, 39, 42; Volume Three, tales 3, 7, 11, 17, 28, 29, 30.

⁶⁵ Thus Gjertson, *Miraculous Retribution*, p. 36.

amples that demonstrated his continuing presence, not least through his image. A fellow monk in 664 put together a collection of miracle tales including in its middle section a sequence of no less than fifty accounts of marvels associated with Buddhist images in China, if one counts in this number three cases associated with footprints of the Buddha which, as we have already suggested, fit naturally into this category in any case. An analysis of this source shows an initial preoccupation with the appearance of images floating in from the sea, suggesting a self-propelling desire on the part of these forms of the Buddha presence to find a home in China, giving way to other themes, such as the establishment of images of the Buddha as royal palladia, or predictors of good or bad fortune.⁶⁶ These, too, seem perhaps to have faded in their turn, though the royal house of the period to my eye appears just as concerned with images of the Buddha as ever.⁶⁷ Some recent translations from this collection give an excellent idea of how Buddhist images were regarded at this time—or at least how learned members of the clergy thought that they should be regarded.⁶⁸ Here, however, a single synopsis will have to serve to give a flavour of this literature, though the story in question is undoubtedly one of the most famous of its type, since it eventually came to be represented in paintings as well as transmitted through a number of different texts.⁶⁹

In 313, as the story goes, a fisherman found two stone images floating into a river estuary from the South China Sea. A female medium was sent out to welcome this auspicious sign, but the wind stirred up the waves, and the woman retreated. Someone suggested that the images

⁶⁶ This analysis, together with an appendix giving a good number of synopses of the stories, may be found in Koichi Shinohara, 'Changing Roles for Miraculous Images in Medieval Chinese Buddhism: A Study of the Miracle Image Section in Daoxuan's 'Collected Records', in Richard H. Davis, ed., *Images, Miracles, and Authority in Asian Religious Traditions* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), pp. 141–188.

⁶⁷ Some evidence for this view may be found in my study, already mentioned above, on 'Stūpa, Sūtra, and Śarīra', and in the writings of Antonino Forte on Buddhism in seventh and early eighth century China.

⁶⁸ Tiziana Lippiello, *Auspicious Omens and Miracles in Ancient China: Han, Three Kingdoms, and Six Dynasties* (Nettetal: Steyler, for Monumenta Serica Institute, Sankt Augustin, 2001), pp. 186–194. Lippiello's work puts these stories in a more general context of tales of wonder than does Shinohara's more closely argued study.

⁶⁹ Lippiello, *Auspicious Omens*, pp. 190–91.

might be Taoist, and since he was an adherent of that religion went to welcome them, but with the same result. Finally the images were recognised as Buddhist, and given appropriate Buddhist greetings the images drifted smoothly in to the shore, where it was found that they had inscriptions on them indicating that they were statues of Buddhas of past ages made by the Indian ruler Aśoka. The appearance of these stone travellers from India with their clear religious preferences caused many conversions to Buddhism in the area, or so we are asked to believe.

For though, as I have pointed out, some of these tales were originally collected by pious laypersons, we should not assume that they are going to give us an understanding of how the ordinary believer approached Buddhist images, since at the very least a story such as this one passed, as I have already made clear, through the hands of monks. But this is not a problem specific to Buddhist worship alone: in general, historical sources from China, as from most parts of the world, adopt the perspective of the powerful within society, and it is always difficult to find out the opinions of the powerless. All too often compendia of alleged 'folk tales' turn out in times past to have been put together by far from unsophisticated persons who usually had, moreover, something to prove. But there is one such compilation from the late eighth century that on reconstitution from its surviving fragments does turn out to reflect nothing more than an interest in the uncanny, and close reading has confirmed that it is in fact an unusually rewarding source of information on relatively everyday outlooks and attitudes.⁷⁰ The scholar responsible for this work of retrieval, Professor Glen Dudbridge, has drawn particular attention to the understanding of images in this source. For here there is a much more down to earth understanding of the role of Buddhist icons. To those rich enough to sponsor them, they will repay that sponsorship by intervening in the unseen world on their behalf—the popular religious principle of 'do ut des', that is, 'I give in expectation of your giving in reciprocity'.⁷¹ Typically such Buddha figures intervene in order to get their sponsors off some kind of punishment in the afterlife

⁷⁰ G. Dudbridge, *Religious experience and lay society in T'ang China: A reading of Tai Fu's Kuang-i chi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁷¹ Note in particular the summary on p. 388 of Glen Dudbridge, 'Buddhist images in action: Five stories from the Tang', in *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 10 (1998), pp. 377–391.

for misdeeds committed in this world. It is this, the perceived religious efficacy of images in response to the favours bestowed on them that explains why in popular religion images may be discarded if they do not appear to be living up to their obligations.

But no such attitudes could have developed in regard to specifically Buddhist images unless ordinary believers had accepted the orthodox Buddhist belief that representations of the Buddha are more than mere symbols or indications standing for other things. Both Buddhist monks and less doctrinally aware believers were alike in seeing them as independent agents—in the former case, as we have stressed, as ‘doubles’ that can be imbued with some of the power of the Buddha’s presence. So is the ordinary believers’ attitude a corruption of orthodox belief? If so, then it is a form of corruption present not only in China but elsewhere in the Buddhist world, where popular belief imbues famous statues of the Buddha with specific idiosyncratic personalities, displayed for example in their preferred choice of offerings. In these cases, it has been suggested, the power seen as inherent in these Buddha images derives not from Buddhist doctrine but from non-Buddhist beliefs.⁷² A full account of pre-Buddhist Chinese statuary and attitudes towards it would take us very far from the sculptures under discussion, and would also inevitably be somewhat speculative, in that only in Buddhist materials do we get an open discussion of the meaning of images. Even so, it is perhaps worth pointing out that the famous terracotta army of the First Emperor of China has been seen as providing a few clues as to the beliefs that caused its burial. In much earlier times, after all, it had been the practice to slaughter real retainers of servants, and in fact a number of human victims (evidently of persons whom the authorities wished to dispose of, though why is unclear) have been found in the First Emperor’s tomb.⁷³ But human victims decay: by contrast, one of the great advantages of the sculptures was that they retained the key quality of ‘reality’ which was, it is argued, what gave them magical efficacy.⁷⁴

⁷² See Robert L. Brown, ‘The Miraculous Buddha Image: Portrait, God, or Object?’, in Davis, *Images, Miracles, and Authority*, pp. 37–54, and note especially his conclusions.

⁷³ See Lothar Ledderhose, *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 57; cf. p. 67.

⁷⁴ Ledderhose, *Ten Thousand Things*, p. 68.

Might not, then, the image's capacity to endure, to preserve its verisimilitude longer than any of us can, be the key to its power in the eyes of ordinary Chinese, not as a corruption of Buddhist belief but as something more ancient and perhaps more instinctive? This would be very difficult to prove from the written record, but it might explain how the notion of enduring Buddha presence so important to Buddhist monks found a ready acceptance in the eyes of the broader mass of Chinese believers. One corollary would be, however, that an image that had lost its verisimilitude through accidental or deliberate damage would lose its efficacy. Is that what happened to the Buddhist sculptures of Qingzhou? Whatever the learned monks may have believed about them, perhaps ordinary people would have hesitated to repose any confidence in an image that looked like an injured Buddha.⁷⁵ The research on religious sculpture burials by Zhang Zong now published in English makes it clear that hoards such as that found in Qingzhou were collected together and interred as an act of piety, but this may indeed reflect no more than economic development that made replacement easier, rather than a response to literal iconoclastic persecution.⁷⁶ It is worth observing, however, that as in the beginning, so at the end the ignorant masses may not have been the ones that dictated this process, since the burial of Buddha images that had evidently come to the end of their working lives is also abundantly attested for ancient India.⁷⁷ Thus the likelihood is that the Chinese clergy were simply following practices of their religion handed down from their foreign forebears.

We can be sure, at any rate, that no diminution of the concept of the Buddha's presence in his likeness had set in by the twelfth century, since in fact the reverse seems to have been true, in that the idea was so well accepted that it becomes acknowledged even outside strictly Buddhist circles. In the century after the Qingzhou sculptures were buried we find that popular priests refer to the spirit-possession of a child medium with exactly the same term as that used for 'opening the eye' of a

⁷⁵ Note, however, the link between injury and bad karma uncovered by Schober in South East Asia, as already pointed out in n. 63 above.

⁷⁶ Zhang Zong, 'The Qingzhou Region: a Centre of Buddhist Art in the Sixth Century', in *Return of the Buddha*, pp. 44–53.

⁷⁷ Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks*, pp. 276–7.

statue and endowing it with Buddha-presence, even if in this case it is a living person who becomes possessed by a lesser god.⁷⁸ Even stern Confucians, who had for centuries denied that an ancestral spirit could literally descend into the ‘Personator’, the relative assigned to play the part of an ancestor in a funerary ritual, changed their tune at about this time too, and affirmed that a ‘real presence’ from the past could descend into a living descendant.⁷⁹ It is perhaps the presence of such ideas in Chinese culture that made it possible from very early in the Buddhist period from the idea of ‘eye-opening’ as somehow vivifying an image to pass from its religious context into its use by ostensibly purely secular painters.⁸⁰ For that matter a closer look suggests that a spectrum of continuity between the empowerment of images and spirit possession has been put forward by a number of scholars working on Buddhist materials.⁸¹

It may seem strange to insist in this way on a China where the educated, even when they declared solemnly that they did not to believe in magic, all the same did not believe in the absence of those whom we would count as truly absent. Yet a problematic sense of the presence of the absent is something that has no doubt become all too dulled by modern media like the telephone, wireless, film and television, which make a literal awareness of absent persons an everyday event. In a land without these distractions, such as China then was, it is possible to discern that even dreams of persons of long ago might have had a much greater impact than we would expect today—we know that, at any rate, such dreams made a deep impression on Confucius, and he was worried when they did not occur.⁸² I hope, too, that my earlier reference to the Eucharist will have reminded the reader that in religious circles in the West as well opposing conceptions of real presence have not been con-

⁷⁸ Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), p. 139.

⁷⁹ Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*, pp. 186–190.

⁸⁰ Sharf, “On the Allure of Buddhist Relics”, p. 83.

⁸¹ See Bernard Faure’s note, n. 35 on p. 327, in Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*.

⁸² *Analects* 7.5. Note the discussion of the existing literature on dreams in Faure, *Rhetoric of Immediacy*, Chapter Ten, and *Visions of Power*, Chapter Five.

sidered a simple matter but rather have given rise to vigorous controversy. I am conscious myself of having indeed gone out of my way to avoid simplifying things, to the point perhaps of irresponsibility. All I can say is that the academic research into the Buddha image that I have tried to introduce in the foregoing remarks has certainly helped me to realise that the printed word emerged from a world very different from that which it eventually created. If, as someone attempting to carry out historical research, I have to think my way back from the present into that very different world, then the images of the Buddha such as those found at Qingzhou provide some of the best means to do so. Here, it seems, the Buddha extends a helping hand to the historian, and I for one am most grateful for that.

T. H. BARRETT

School of Oriental and African Studies

BOOK REVIEWS

Daughters of Emptiness, Poems of Chinese Buddhist Nuns. Beata Grant. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003. x, 192 pp. ISBN 0861713621

As Beata Grant points out (p. ix), Buddhist poetry, and especially poetry written by women is an often undervalued section of the Chinese literary tradition. With her *Daughters of Emptiness*, this certainly changes. The book offers a selection of poems from the fifth to the early twentieth centuries, with an informative introduction and brief biographies on every nun-poet. Beata Grant confronts the reader with an exciting overview of the fate and the talent of Chinese Buddhist nuns. Although the poems can only represent a fraction of what has ever been written by nun-poets, and although these nuns can only represent a small percentage of all women, most of them illiterate, who entered the religious life, *Daughters of Emptiness* certainly offers a view of the diversity and the richness of these women's lives, as hoped for by Beata Grant on p. 19.

As indicated by the author-translator (pp. 4–5), the nun's order is clearly burdened by the so-called 'eight special rules', which ensure the subordination of nuns to monks, and which certainly might have reinforced the Confucian emphasis on the social submission of women to men. On the other hand, it should also be noted that in many Greater Vehicle texts, Indian as well as Chinese, the situation of women seriously deteriorated. This seems to be the result of two tendencies, namely the stronger emphasis on asceticism, and the aspiration for Buddhahood. Promoters of a stronger ascetic life in the monasteries, often considered women to be the daughters of evil, who distract men from the right path. In China, the accusations of laxity (see p. 6) further stimulated the call for ascetic rules. The aspiration for Buddhahood strongly degraded the status of *arhat*-ship. While in the first centuries of Buddhism, women and men could strive for the same goal and become *arhats*, women were now denied access to Buddhahood, unless they were first

reborn as a man. Still, given the fact that this idea is in full opposition to the concept of emptiness, it frequently came under attack. As explained on the pp. 16–18, emptiness transcends gender distinctions, making them irrelevant. The title of the present book, *Daughters of Emptiness*, therefore beautifully renders the essence of the religious way of the nun-poets.

The selection of poems is the result of an intensive search through anthologies, as well as through biographical, anecdotal and historical accounts from the fifth to the early twentieth centuries. Since many poems of the early period are no longer extant, the selection offers a significantly higher amount of poems from the Ming dynasty onward. The poems are elegantly and meticulously translated, and placed in their own cultural background. Interestingly, the Chinese poem is printed next to the translation thus offering the reader with Chinese language skills a rewarding contact with the original sounds and phrasing. References and allusions to the cultural tradition, which testify to the high level of literacy of the women writers, are explained in endnotes. On some occasions, it seems to me that some more details on these allusions might have been interesting for the reader. The correct grasping of the concepts of ‘without a self’ (p. 27), of *samādhi* (pp. 58, 80, 98), of ‘suchness’ (p. 67), or of *Tathāgatagarbha* (p. 151), and the understanding of the images of a dragon (pp. 96, 114), of a black cane (p. 96), of a fish-drum (p. 122), of a jewelled sword (p. 141), or of ‘the five sacred Buddhist mountains’ (p. 178; on p. 113 referred to as the four sacred mountains), might have benefited from an explanatory endnote. Although some more explanation might thus have been useful for the reader, on the whole the brief biographies together with the endnotes largely clarify the context in which the poems were written. Without sacrificing readability, Beata Grant offers the reader an inspiring translation of the literary talents of the nun-poets and of their religious understanding.

ANN HEIRMAN
University of Ghent

Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism. John R. McRae. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. xx, 204 pp. US\$19.95. ISBN 0520237986.

This is an unprecedented masterpiece of Chan scholarship. It is not a do-it-yourself manual for Zen practice, nor does it aim to be included in the list of 'Zen of anything' and 'Zen and whatever' books (pp. 101–103). This is a thought-provoking volume of Chan (Zen) studies: a collection of observations and remarks made by the author at this pivotal moment in his career.

To begin this review, authorship, readership and the structure of the volume deserve to be considered.

Being both an 'insider' and an 'outsider' of the field that he is dealing with, McRae succeeds as an author who embodies and expresses the perfect combination of scholar and practitioner of Zen. In addition, this book is the product of the constructive and fruitful dialogue between McRae and a large audience, including academics, students and monastics.

Seeing through Zen is meant to attract various categories of readers. The twofold identity of insider and outsider allows McRae to address practitioners as well as academics. The practitioners are invited to re-think their tradition in a critical 'outsider' way, while the academics are called to widen their perspectives. As a result, both are provided with a more comprehensive understanding of approaching Zen studies.

McRae aims to explain Chan through the analysis of the political and social history of China, as well as to provide further insights into the history of China from the Chan (or maybe simply Chinese Buddhist) perspective. Through this analysis students of East Asian Buddhism, Chinese religions, and also the new generation of Sinologists are sure to benefit from reading this volume.

Seeing through Zen may also be a manual of theory and method for Zen studies. McRae provides new methods, as only a scholar with an in-depth knowledge of the tradition and a complete and punctual awareness of the previous scholarship on the theme is able to do. McRae does not limit himself to proposing a study, but investigates research methods and related implementation. McRae intends 'to analyze Chan, not

merely recapitulate its innovative style' (p. 79), to adopt '[a] multiplicity of perspectives and a certain fluidity of analytical typologies' (p. 2), to 'avoid reducing the subject matter to simplistically encyclopedic parallels' (p. 121), and 'to catalyze different ways of thinking about Chinese Chan Buddhism' (p. 150).

Splendidly rich in content, and solidly argumentative, this volume starts with the list of the 'McRae's Rules of Zen Studies' (pp. xix-xx), an extremely interesting and unconventional section which I consider representative of the book, and a prized contribution of McRae to scholarship. The four 'commandments' that McRae suggests following when engaging in research on Zen are: (1) 'It's not true, and therefore it's more important'; (2) 'Lineage assertions are as wrong as they are strong'; (3) 'Precision implies inaccuracy'; (4) 'Romanticism breeds cynicism'.

McRae articulates his discourse in six chapters.

Chapter One, 'Looking at Lineage: A Fresh Perspective on Chan Buddhism', is based on two figures: the lineage diagram of Chinese Chan (p. 3) and the chart of the phases of Chinese Chan (p. 14). The diagram accentuates the aspect of continuity throughout the history of Chinese Chan, and emphasises a static image of the tradition. In contrast, the chart demonstrates the distinctions in the various phases, and thus highlights a dynamic aspect of Chan. On the one hand, the consideration of the only lineage diagram results in homologising Chan Buddhism. On the other hand, the chart implies the risk for any historian of recreating the history as effect of the reconstruction of a historical development. McRae argues for the necessity of approaching Chan from different angles in order to avoid relying on either the diagram or the chart system, and suggests the combination of both diagram and chart in order to integrate the static and dynamic aspects of Chinese Chan. Finally, this chapter is comprehensive of all the issues listed in the subtitle of the book. The diagram represents the genealogical self-definition of Chan ('[g]enealogy' in the title), while the chart underlines the '[t]ransformation' in Chan. The discourse on genealogy involves the issue of the relationship between master and disciple. Found here is the introduction of the theme 'encounter dialogue' (the 'encounter' in the title of the book), which is amply developed in the following chapters.

The brief but detailed explanation of Proto-Chan (dated c. 500–600), Early Chan (c. 600–900), Middle Chan (c. 750–1000) and Song-dynasty Chan (c. 950–1300) introduces themes that the author develops in the following chapters.

Chapter Two, 'Beginnings: Differentiating/Connecting Bodhidharma and the East Mountain Teaching', starts with the hagiography of Bodhidharma, that McRae chooses as representative of 'the fluidity of legendary Chan imagery' (p. 25). The parallel between the hagiographical Bodhidharma and the historical Bodhidharma shows McRae's critical approach to this figure and to the previous studies on the topic. This chapter outlines the main traits, significance and implications of figures and scriptures of the first two periods listed in the chart of Chan history. The Proto-Chan is studied through the figure of Bodhidharma and the extensive critical analysis of the *Treatise on the Two Entrances and Four Practices*. The East Mountain Teaching, and so the roles played by Hongren and Daoxin, and the *Treatise on the Essentials of Cultivating the Mind* are considered within the definition of Early Chan. Finally, McRae introduces the discussion on the polarities in Indian Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism and Chinese Chan, a theme that is returned to in the conclusion.

In Chapter Three, 'Metropolitan Chan: Imperial Patronage and the Chan Style', McRae provides a brief but detailed portrait of the historical, sociological and cultural reality of Chang'an and Luoyang as in the first half of the 8th century. Going through the history of Chan Buddhism, McRae analyses key figures such as Shenxiu, Shenhui, the Ox-head school and Huineng. He aims to contextualise these Buddhist Chan elements as agents of the evolution (and '[t]ransformation') of Chan, but also attempts to highlight the role that several non-religious historical, political and sociological figures and events played in the formation of the post-Tang Chan. With regard to the contributions of the *Platform Sūtra* to early Chinese Chan Buddhism, McRae advances thought-provoking ideas. McRae states that this scripture created a new understanding of the past, and proposed a new style of Chan practice. McRae's remarks on the significance and implications of the importance attributed to the Sixth Patriarch Huineng, the 'illiterate sage', provide new insights on the topic (pp. 68–69).

‘Classical Chan’ and ‘encounter dialogue’, their definitions and interconnections, are the overall theme of Chapter Four, ‘The Riddle of Encounter Dialogue: Who, What, When, and Where?’ McRae claims to be the first to have formulated the expression ‘encounter dialogue’ as an English equivalent to the Japanese *kien mondō* (Ch: *jiyuan wenda*) in his own translation of Yanagida Seizan’s ‘Zenshū goroku no keisei’.¹ In addition, McRae provides the three main features of ‘encounter dialogue’ (pp. 77–80), lists ‘The Eightfold Path to the Emergence of Transcribed Encounter Dialogue’ (pp. 83–98), and proposes the story of Mazu Daoyi’s Enlightenment (*Transmission of the Lamp*) as a case study of encounter dialogue. The chapter ends declaring the necessity of relating Chinese Chan (and Chinese Buddhism as well) to factors such as the reality of the monastic institution, the structure of the traditional oral and new genre of written Chan, in order to gain a better understanding of the ‘encounter dialogue’ itself.

Chapter Five, ‘Zen and the Art of Fund-Raising: Religious Vitality and Institutional Dominance in the Song Dynasty’, aims to provide the relationship between post-Tang Chan and the institution of the monastery. McRae distinguishes himself from the previous scholarship on Chinese Chan here as well. First of all, he refuses to see the Chan fund-raising as a sign of the degeneration of Chinese Chan (and Chinese Buddhism in general). In contrast, he advances the opposed theory of the act and technique of fund-raising as a distinctive mark of Chan discipline and success (p. 103). The fivefold critique that McRae advances of Dumoulin’s and Hu Shi’s analysis of the Chan fund-raising follows these arguments. Finally, McRae advances three phenomena that the previous scholarship neglected and future Zen Studies should focus on. First, he observes that a lot has been accomplished on the *sinicization* of Chinese Buddhism, but there is a need for researching the role that Chinese Buddhism played in the process of *sinification* (a theme developed further in p. 170, n. 15). Then, McRae invites the reader to reconsider the effect that the late-Tang catastrophes (such as the Huichang persecu-

¹ ‘The Development of the “Recorded Sayings” Texts of the Chinese Ch’an School’ in Lewis Lancaster and Whalen Lai, eds., *Early Ch’an in China and Tibet*, trans. John R. McRae. Berkeley Buddhist Studies, no. 5. Berkeley, CA: Lancaster-Miller Press, 1983, pp. 185–205.

tion and Huang Chao rebellion) exerted on Chan. Finally, in contrast to the homologising effect of the lineage system, McRae suggests elaborating further on the distinctions between the Song and 20th century Chan instead of highlighting (creating?) links between the two realities.

Chapter Six, 'Climax Paradigm: Cultural Polarities and Patterns of Self-Cultivation in Song-Dynasty Chan', argues for the validity (and the limits) of conceiving the Song-dynasty Chan as 'climax paradigm' of Chan Buddhism. According to McRae, there has never been one Chan school as a separate institution in the history of Buddhism in China, but we should use the Song-dynasty Chan as the 'climax paradigm' of the whole tradition. McRae identifies 'viewing the phrase' of Linji (Rinzai) Chan (Dahui Zonggao, 11th–12th century) and 'silent illumination' of Caodong (Sōto) Chan (Zhenxie Qingliao and Hongzhi Zhengjue, 12th century) as the patterns that depict the 'climax paradigm' (pp. 123–138). McRae joins the recent scholarship on Chan and Chinese Buddhism and argues that, in contrast to previous and academic views (Heinrich Dumoulin, Arthur F. Wright, Kenneth K.S. Ch'en, Jacques Gernet, Wm. Theodore de Bary and Hu Shi are on McRae's list), the golden age for Chan took place during the Song rather than during the Tang. The chapter ends with a final table with the fourfold periodisation of Chan (from Proto-Chan to Song-dynasty Chan), and the relative duels presented in the previous chapters (pp. 138–145). In order to better contextualise and analyse the 'climax paradigm' of Chan in the time and place of its historical development-evolution, McRae goes beyond the usual parallel of Indian Buddhism vs. Chinese Buddhism, and relates the oppositions characteristic of Song-dynasty Chan with reference to the patterns of polarity of Neo-Confucianism, and the intersubjectivity in Tiantai practice. In sum, McRae advances a threefold discourse: (1) Song Chan vs. Song Neo-Confucianism, (2) Song Chan vs. Song Tiantai, (3) Song Chan vs. the social order of China during the Song dynasty.

McRae concludes the chapter (and the book) with a final comment on the meaning of the title *Seeing through Zen*. According to the arguments that McRae presents in the book, I dare to advance 'Seeing through Song-Dynasty Chan' as an alternative title for this work, because of the challenging and intriguing invitation to read the development of

Chan in Asia as well as in non-Asian areas through the lens of the 'climax paradigm' Song-dynasty Chan. Nevertheless, 'Seeing through Zen' implies a wider range of ways to approach Zen Studies, which is the main concern that McRae never fails to point out.

The endnotes provide valuable bibliographical data, and precious and punctual details that continue and enrich the discussion developed in the corpus of the book. McRae raises a number of issues for future investigation. Among them, the analysis of the Zen 'enlightenment experience' in the context of the recent studies of the category of experience (p. 155, n. 7), the comparison between medieval and modern idealisations of Chan and Zen Masters (p. 157, n. 22), the anthropological analogy between medieval Chan and contemporary Chinese religions (p. 173, n. 21) deserve to be mentioned.

Besides the list of the primary sources (Buddhist canonical and related scriptures), the bibliography includes the best selection from the Western, Chinese and Japanese scholarship on the theme. The absence of Taiwanese scholarship (by the lay scholar Yang Huinan and the monks Yinshun and Shengyan for instance) is the only missing section.

In conclusion, I highly recommend this book to students and scholars, academics and practitioners, buddhologists and sinologists, scholars of religious and humanistic studies. Moreover, I support McRae's invitation 'to change how we all think about the subject', and 'to engage actively in the critical imagination of medieval Chinese Chan, or Zen, Buddhism' (p. xi). These are the main aims of the book, and these are the patterns that Zen Studies should follow.

STEFANIA TRAVAGNIN

School of Oriental and African Studies

Zen and the Modern World: a Third Sequel to Zen and Western Thought. Masao Abe and Steven Heine. xvi, 169 pp. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, Press 2003. £23.50. ISBN 0824826655

This third sequel to Abe's highly acclaimed *Zen and Western Thought* (1985) is comprised of a collection of essays and speeches penned over

the last thirty or so years. Many of the themes dealt with in the book are a recycling of Abe's signature motifs: namely, the implications for Western thought of recognizing emptiness and *śūnyatā* as the non-substantial ground of all conditioned arising. In this volume, however, Abe directs much of his attention to the question of Buddhism's significance for interreligious dialogue, and in particular its potential for effecting ethical and social transformation. Undoubtedly a major factor in determining the content of this volume has been the accusation that Abe's earlier presentations of Buddhism reveal the lack of an ethical foundation at the heart of Buddhist ontology.²

The book is divided into three sections. The first section begins with a chapter that tentatively proposes a dialogical blueprint for the ways in which the mutual transformation of monotheistic and Buddhist religions might take place. As one locus of dialogue Abe declares that, 'Buddhism often falls into indifference to social ethics and Buddhists must learn from monotheistic religions.' However, at the same time he argues for the ontological superiority of nothingness over monotheistic notions of God. Moving from this he claims that only a non-dualistic unity—and for Abe therefore a non-monotheistic relation to the absolute—can form the basis for a unity of the world religions that exhibit tolerance and attain peaceful co-existence. In the succeeding three chapters Abe articulates, *inter alia*, how the experience and activity of nothingness represents a challenge to the primacy of faith, personalistic salvation and certain determinations of transcendence. Additionally, the third chapter argues that compassion is inseparably related to enlightenment and considers the implications of this for social activity. Chapter Five continues the theme of religion in society in arguing for the complementary natures of Buddhism and science. While Abe's arguments in this section are thought provoking, the reader may feel that the concrete dynamics of how one religious sphere could learn from an ontologically less profound one are left undeveloped.

² See for example K. Bockja, 'Ontology without Axiology? A Review of Masao Abe's Account of the Problem of Good and Evil from a Western Philosophical Perspective', *The Eastern Buddhist* 31.1 (1998), 85–108.

The essays contained in the second section of this book focus upon the writings of Nishida, the founder of Japan's Kyoto School of which Abe has been the principal representative in the West for at least the last thirty years. In connection with the 'social' turn of this volume noted above, it should be noted that the recent revival of interest in Nishida's so-called Zen philosophy has been accompanied by a renewed interest in the question of the Kyoto School's ideological complicity in the imperialistic ambitions of pre-1945 Japan. Abe's essays in this volume do not directly address this issue but I shall return to it below.

Chapter Six deals with how judgements that are productive of conceptual knowledge reveal the individual phenomenon in its integrity *qua* a relation to the universal. In contrast to such knowledge, termed 'conceptual universals', Nishida attempts to articulate a notion of 'concrete universal' which allows any individual phenomenon, which are anyway always transcendent to conceptual knowledge, to be made 'rationally understandable'. Chapter Seven addresses how the realization of absolute nothingness is related to art, morality, and philosophy. For Nishida it is the religious dimension which goes beyond the aesthetic, philosophical and moral realms in demanding a giving up of the self. The need for such redemption is revealed in an authentic encounter with the absolute contradiction of human existence, that is to say humans as both formed and forming, both immanent and transcendent. The third chapter in this section develops an analysis of the religious dimension through an analysis of the certain critical points in the disagreements between Nishida and his former student Hajime Tanabe. The locus of the discussion is the notion of inverse correspondence, a term that characterizes the unity and difference that is the relationship between God and humans. Abe's argument here is not easily compressed but for our purposes here it should be noted that one of Abe's most striking claims is that in Nishida's consideration of the religious, he fails to enter fully into the place beyond the identity and difference of God and human subjectivity. As a consequence of this, Abe suggests that Nishida failed to 'grasp religion' beyond the differences separating religions.

The third section in the book complements the previous two in considering the significance of Buddhist awakening for the postmodern

world. In chapter nine Abe claims that at the limit of the awareness of one's sinful nature there is a movement into nothingness and a correlative formation of a personal relationship with God. Yet beyond this, claims Abe, through a realization of the fact that faith fails to transcend the hidden ego the human subject can penetrate through to absolute reality. The final essay in this book continues the critique of Western metaphysical categories wherein Abe argues that the end of the ancient medieval and modern periods of history signal the need to vanquish the standpoint of the modern ego. The postmodern era 'should be an era of self-awakened cosmology that takes as its basis an intuition prior to reflection.' This intuition, Abe contends, is fundamentally an Eastern and a Buddhist experience rather than a Christian one.

In reviewing and contextualizing this book, with its hierarchical designations of 'East' and 'West', 'Buddhism' and 'Christianity', combined with the fact that Abe's philosophy is essentially a development of the philosophy of Nishida, I feel it necessary to at least draw attention to some of the ideological issues at stake in the debate surrounding Nishida and the Kyoto School philosophies. Readers should be aware that the relationship of the Kyoto School to Japan's imperial ventures is arguably the most contested and divisive issue among those working in the area of modern Japanese intellectual history. And while this issue is far too complex to do justice to in a review of this length, I wish to comment briefly on the way in which Abe is placed in relation to this debate in the editor's introduction to this third sequel.

In his introduction (p. xv) Heine states:

Abe's work has been produced in a more recent era (over the last thirty years) and may best be viewed as independent from the debate. Unlike others who have not been forthcoming with an apology, Abe's work was not part of the pre-war period. Clearly his writings are not nationalistic or imperialistic. In fact quite the opposite approach can be seen through the current collection of essays that emphasize genuine intra- and interfaith dialogue to pursue the underlying unity of religious and cultural perspectives.

In framing my response to Heine, I should perhaps state that I consider many of the ideas and approaches taken in Nishida's work, as well as those contained in the volume under consideration here to be both stimulating and worthy of serious consideration. More widely, as a criti-

cal phenomenology of what might with a large number of caveats be termed 'religious' experience, the Kyoto School thinkers provide an engagement with European thought which many have found insightful.³ However, I would suggest that Heine's claim that Abe's writings are both independent from the debate as well as clearly being 'not nationalistic or imperialistic' necessitates some measure of qualification.

From the content outline given above I think it is clear that Abe's use of the term Buddhism is both a decontextualized and a demythologized one. Moreover, 'Buddhism' as it appears in the texts is almost always shorthand for a certain reading of Japanese Zen combined at times with aspects of (a similarly demythologized) Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. Furthermore, the need for this 'Buddhism' to supercede the fundamentally Western 'Modern World' indicated in the book's title is quite explicit. Consequently, whatever one may think of the insights contained in of Abe's work in its analysis of individual and collective religious consciousnesses, and whatever position one takes on the Nishida and the war issue, it is perhaps somewhat naïve to state there is *nothing* nationalistic or imperialistic about Abe's work. Indeed, on the opposite side of the debate to Heine, Bernard Faure contends that not only is the Kyoto School's idea of a superiority of the East a reverse Orientalism (with all associated imperialistic tropes) but draws attention to the potential ideological effects of such a discourse on for example contemporary nationalistic intellectual movements in Japan.⁴ In terms of methodological frames within the academic study of religion, in the same article Faure explicitly criticizes Abe's hermeneutical stance for 'enforcing the idea of something called Zen to be manipulated in comparative studies.' Interestingly, Faure then goes on to refer to Heisig's suggestion of seeing the work of the Kyoto School as a creative production not simply reducible to traditional Buddhist doctrine, but he then chooses not to develop this point.⁵

³ See for example M. C. Taylor, *About Religion: Economies of Faith in Virtual Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.)

⁴ See B. Faure, 'The Kyoto School and Reverse Orientalism' in Charles Wei-Hsun Fu and Steven Heine, ed, *Japan in Traditional and Modern Perspectives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

⁵ Faure is referring to J. Heisig, 1990.

In conclusion, with this volume as with others in the series, we are left with the difficult task of attempting (or indeed refusing) to reconcile a religious philosophy which may be evaluated on its own merits with an ideological content and its correlative effects. I offer no solution to this most difficult of problems but wonder if one possible way to move on from this polarizing debate might be to ask if the desubstantializing motifs in Abe's interpretation of Buddhism can be developed and utilized in such a way as to be made to turn upon their ideological progenitors and their modern day descendants.

CHRISTOPHER H. JONES

University of Tokyo

OBITUARY

THÍCH HUYÊN-VI (LE-VAN-HUYÊN)

8 April 1926 – 15 February 2005

In spring 2000 Ven. Dr Thích Huyền-Vi, spiritual advisor and sponsor of *Buddhist Studies Review* from 1984 – 2004, suffered a stroke that left him almost completely paralysed for nearly five years in spite of tremendous rehabilitation efforts. This year in January he was hospitalised again because of serious kidney problems, and shortly after having been taken back to his monastery he passed away in the midst of his numerous disciples.

With his death the World Buddhist Sangha Council in general and the Vietnamese Buddhist order of monks and nuns in particular as well as disciples and lay followers in many parts of the world have lost one of the Buddhist leaders of eminence, who was a great scholar, orator, organiser and, above all, a compassionate and magnanimous master.

Thích Huyền-Vi was born at Ninh-Thuân, a site of historical importance in the southern part of Central Vietnam. At a tender age he already showed a strong inclination for temple life so that, apart from secular modern education, he began to study classical Chinese under his stern and yet kind-hearted master when he was twelve. Thus, at the local temple, he had the unique chance to obtain a good grounding in the Sino-Vietnamese education of men of letters, involving intensive studies of both the Confucian classics and the Chinese Tripiṭaka.

In 1940 Thích Huyền-Vi was ordained a novice and six years later received the higher *bhikkṣu* ordination. At the age of eighteen he already taught at a Buddhist primary school. Soon after the higher ordination he left his native province in order to enrol on higher Buddhist studies at An-Quang Buddhist Institute in Saigon. Simultaneously he again acted as teacher at a secondary school run by the Sangha. Apart from his academic pursuits and teaching activities now, as later on, he was

untiringly engaged in charitable works to help alleviate the sufferings of the people who had become victims of the war. In spite of his young age he distinguished himself as a brilliant scholar of Buddhist Chinese (he specialised in particular in the Chinese versions of the *Abhidharma-kośabhāṣya* and in Yogācāra literature) and Vietnamese literature. On account of his remarkable academic success, in the 50s he first became a lecturer at An-Quang Buddhist Institute for monks and at Tù-Nghiêm Buddhist Institute for nuns as well as speaker of the Vietnamese Sangha Congregation; thereafter he was elected Vice-President of the General Commission for the Propagation of the Dharma in South and Central Vietnam and finally was made Director of An-Quang Buddhist Institute.

Decisive for Ven. Huyên-Vi's later activities at an international level was his resolution to leave for India in order to acquaint himself with both traditional Indian and Western methods of scientific work. He enrolled at Nālandā Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Pali and Buddhist Learning and began his studies during the summer term in 1961. Thanks to his extraordinary knowledge of Buddhist doctrine as preserved in the Chinese Tripiṭaka, he was able to acquire proficiency in Pali in a relatively short time; already in 1963 he passed the Pali-ācariya examination, and in 1965 he obtained his BA in English (especially for the benefit of foreign students the Nālandā Pāli Institute offered BA courses in that language). In 1967 he did his MA in Pali which he received from Magadh University at Bodh Gaya. His MA thesis is entitled *The Four Abhidhammic Reals*. Thereafter he began to prepare his PhD dissertation, being *A Critical Study of the Life and Works of Sāriputta Thera*. In May 1971 he successfully defended his dissertation. His thesis supervisor and research guide for both his M.A. thesis and doctoral dissertation was Professor U. Dhammaratana of Sri Lanka whom he held in great esteem.

Sāriputta, one of the chief disciples of the Buddha and noted for his wisdom whom tradition considers the originator of the Abhidhamma philosophy, was born at Nālandā. This very fact and his own special liking for Abhidhamma literature already developed in Vietnam seems to have inspired Ven. Huyên-Vi to embark upon *A Critical Study of the Life and Works of Sāriputta Thera*. About fifteen years earlier the well-known scholar André Migot had already published his 'Un grand disciple du

Buddha: Śāriputra – son rôle dans l'histoire du bouddhisme et dans le développement de l'Abhidharma' (Paris: BÉFEO, 1954). Migot's study certainly is a fine scholarly work. However, Thích Huyên-Vi's dissertation has by no means proved redundant; whilst the former study appeared as a long article, the latter is a full-scale study in which all relevant source materials culled from the Pali, Sanskrit and Chinese canonical and commentarial literature are evaluated. The outcome of Ven. Huyên-Vi's study is not the picture of the stereotype of an ideal ascetic as a 'product of the tropical climate of Ancient India', but that of a great sage and saint, of a charming and touching personality. As for the critical evaluation of the source materials our author seems to have reached conclusions similar to those of Migot.

In his youth Thích Huyên-Vi had already displayed extraordinary pedagogic skills. Simultaneously, when writing his dissertation at Nālandā, he taught modern Chinese for three years at the institute, holding the post of a lecturer. With remarkable success he inspired many students to follow the institute's Chinese diploma courses while he himself began to study classical Tibetan under the guidance of the renowned scholar Rigzin Lhundup. After more than a ten years' stay in India he returned to Vietnam. In 1973 he was appointed professor at Van-Hanh Buddhist University in Saigon where he lectured on Ch'an Buddhism according to Chinese sources. In addition, one year later he was appointed professor at Saigon State University to teach Buddhism and ancient Vietnamese literature. Due to the well-known political developments in that part of the world in 1975 his academic teaching career came to an abrupt end.

In spite of Ven. Huyên-Vi's prolonged stay in India and the tremendous difficulties in Vietnam caused by the political situation and the war, he had never been out of touch with his mother country. Even before his studies in India he had already become one of the Buddhist leaders of South Vietnam. In 1964 he was elected President of the Overseas Vietnamese Buddhist Association, and in 1969 he became Hon. President of the same organisation, having its headquarters in France. Subsequently in 1972, he was elected General Commissioner of the united Buddhist Congregation in Saigon, and in 1975 he was invited to Paris by the Linh-Son Buddhist Association to act first as its adviser and

later on as its president as well as abbot of the newly founded Monastère bouddhique Linh-Son (Vulture Peak Monastery), set up at Joinville-le-Pont on the outskirts of Paris. With great effort and assisted by just a few monks and nuns at that time and thanks to the enthusiastic support of his numerous lay followers he established what later on was to become the Linh-Son Headquarters of all the Linh-Son branches that in subsequent years were founded under his inspiration and guidance on all continents, including Africa. In 1977 the World Fellowship of Buddhists chose Linh-Son to be its WFB Regional Centre in France. Later on Ven. Huyên-Vi was elected one of the World Fellowship of Buddhists' Vice-Presidents, and in 1979 he became a life member of the World Buddhist Sangha Council, having its headquarters in Taipei, and ever since he had been supporting that organisation.

As indicated above, one of Thích Huyên-Vi's chief objectives had always been to further the cause of Buddhist education. Thus within a relatively short time he managed to convert the Linh-Son Vihāra into an ordination and training centre for monks and nuns. Since the number of Linh-Son branches all over the world kept growing, there had always been a great demand of well-trained, competent persons capable of taking charge of all those branch institutions. As, before long, Linh-Son Headquarters became too small for all the multifarious activities within its premises, Ven. Huyên-Vi found ways and means to acquire land and deserted buildings in the countryside to the north of Limoges, which both Sangha members and keen lay followers – under the guidance of their master – converted into what came to be known as Linh-Son Tung Lâm, freely rendered as Linh-Son Mahāvihāra or 'Dharmaville'. Ever since its inauguration in 1987 this retreat centre has become the venue for intensive monastic training especially during the annual summer retreats.

Long before the foundation of Dharmaville, Ven. Huyên-Vi felt the urgent need to raise the standards of training monks and nuns. With this aim in mind, in 1979 he had already initiated what was called 'Institut de recherche bouddhique Linh-Son' at the Joinville-le-Pont headquarters. To start with, in that year he and other graduate Sangha members began to teach meditation, Buddhist doctrine in Vietnamese and French, Chinese and Pali (grammar, Suttas and Abhidhamma). To

support educational activities, in the early 80s printing facilities were installed at the headquarters, and as a result numerous brochures, booklets and voluminous books – some also in English and French – have so far seen the light of day. Right from the beginning of his stay at Joinville-le-Pont, Ven. Huyền-Vi had realised the vital importance of anastatic reprints of rare Buddhist books in Vietnamese, particularly of Vietnamese translations from the Chinese Tripiṭaka; through his initiative it had become one of the main objectives of the ‘Institut de recherche bouddhique Linh-Son’ to reprint and distribute Buddhist literature in Vietnamese. To be sure, the major part of the literary output of Linh-Son Headquarters is of a homiletic nature, but some Buddhology-orientated works are not wanting. It was Thích Huyền-Vi who inspired the creation of a quarterly aiming at contributing to Buddhological research, viz. *Linh-Son – publication d’ études bouddhologiques* of which twenty numbers appeared between 1977 and 1982. Then, in the following year the ‘Institut de recherche bouddhique Linh-Son’ joined forces with the ‘Pali Buddhist Union’ in London which resulted in the joint bi-annual journal called *Buddhist Studies Review* edited by Russell Webb for the last twenty years. Ven. Huyền-Vi’s contributions to the latter journal were his pieces of Sino-Vietnamese calligraphy and it was also he who started translating in instalments parts of the Chinese version of the *Ekottarāgama*. Unfortunately his major contributions to Buddhist studies remain inaccessible to all those who do not read Vietnamese, viz. comprehensive commentaries *inter alia* on the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, on *Prajñāpāramitā* texts or contributions to the history of the Ch’an school which is also deeply rooted in Vietnam. He had been contributing articles on Buddhist and Buddhological subjects in numerous Vietnamese journals. In 1975 he already founded the quarterly *Hoàng Pháp (Dharmadūta)* which still appears and of which he was the editor-in-chief.

In view of Thích Huyền-Vi’s indefatigable Dharmadūta activities a felicitation ceremony was organised in his honour jointly with a belated celebration of his 70th birthday anniversary in 1997 in Paris. On this occasion also a felicitaton volume in his honour was released, entitled *Dharmadūta: Mélanges offerts au Vénérable Thích Huyền-Vi*, being a collection of articles of Buddhological concern by scholars from all over the world.

Finally, by the end of the last century Thích Huyền-Vi had acquired a piece of ground with buildings of a former commercial enterprise at Vitry in suburban Paris. It was his vision to set up there a Linh-Son Academy for both Asians and Westerners to pursue higher Buddhist studies and research, and it was just before his death that the World Buddhist University in Bangkok has confirmed to recognise the would-be Linh-Son Academy at Vitry as one of its affiliated WBU institutes. It is a pity that he was not to witness in March this year the laying of the foundation-stone ceremony for the construction of the future academy's main building. It is only to be hoped that in due course of time his dream will come true: a new seat of higher Buddhist studies and of other suitable disciplines in which both traditional and modern learning will be cultivated and in which meditative practice too should play an important role so as to avoid one-sided approaches. Even though "Linh-Son" is a somewhat common name of temples in Vietnam, Linh-Son Headquarters and its many worldwide branches are a token of Ven. Huyền-Vi's ever strong commitment to the ideal of *bodhisattvacaryā* and altruism.

BHIKKHU PĀSĀDIKA

CALL FOR PAPERS

UKABS SPECIAL CONFERENCE

Lancaster University
14–16 July 2006

Buddhism & Popular Culture

Association members are invited to submit proposals for papers on the above theme, which can be taken in its broadest possible context. These might focus on some of the following: the uses of Buddhist texts in popular ritual and other contexts; Buddhist pilgrimage centres and practices; amulets, prayers and devotionism; the cult of Buddhist saints; healing practices; prophecy; icons and iconography. We encourage proposals relating to all eras and geographical regions, and especially encourage submissions from postgraduates as well as from more established scholars.

Please send proposals *by 1 December 2005 in the form of a short outline of no more than 400 words* to both of the organisers as follows:

Ian Harris: i.harris@ucsm.ac.uk

Ian Reader: i.reader@lancaster.ac.uk

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

1. UKABS individual membership (**including subscription to BSR**): £15 (unwaged £10) by cheque made payable to 'UK Association for Buddhist Studies' to be sent to Dr Elizabeth Harris, UKABS Treasurer, 33 Buck Lane, London NW9 0AP, UK (email: ejharris@gn.apc.org). Members are requested to send with their cheque the form available at: <http://www.sunderland.ac.uk/~os0dwe/bs5.html>

2. Subscriptions to BSR (**journal only**) from volume 23.1, 2006:
- Institutional price: £40/\$75 (USD)
 - Developing-world institutional price: £19.50/\$37.50 (USD)
 - Individual price: £19.50/\$37.50 (USD)/€33
 - Student price: £15.60/\$30 (USD)/€26.50

Send all orders, sample-copy requests, claims and queries to:

Journals Department
Subscription Customer Services Manager
Turpin Distribution Services
Stratton Business Park
Biggleswade
Bedfordshire SG18 8QB
United Kingdom

Email: subscriptions@turpin-distribution.com

Tel: +44 (0)1767 604 951

Fax: +44 (0)1767 601 640

www.turpin-distribution.com

