Buddhism and the Dynamics of Transculturality

Religion and Society

Edited by
Gustavo Benavides, Frank J. Korom,
Karen Ruffle and Kocku von Stuckrad

Volume 64

Buddhism and the Dynamics of Transculturality

New Approaches

Edited by
Birgit Kellner

DE GRUYTER

ISBN 978-3-11-041153-9
e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-041308-3
e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-041314-4
ISSN 1437-5370

Library of Congress Control Number: 2019941312

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at http://dnb.dnb.de.

Typesetting: Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.
Printing and binding: CPI books GmbH, Leck

www.degruyter.com

Contents

Birgit Kellner

1 Introduction

This volume originated with the conference "Buddhism and the Dynamics of Transculturality," which was held June 11–13, 2012, at the University of Heidelberg, within the congenial atmosphere of the *International Academic Forum Heidelberg* (IWH).[1] Davide Torri contributed an additional essay based on new fieldwork conducted in Nepal, work that became even more relevant after the country was devastated by a series of earthquakes in April and May 2015.

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

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

- the spread of Buddhist doctrines, practices and institutions in terms of patterns of mobility, as well as in terms of the social networks that support or prevent the establishment of Buddhism in a particular region;
- the domestication of Buddhism in new cultural environments, and the various strategies and devices utilized towards this end;

1 Special thanks are due to Ina Buchholz and Kathrin Amend for the efficient and graceful organization and running of the conference, as well as to Markus Viehbeck, Alexander Häntzschel and Alexandra Heidle for lending various forms of support during the conference. I would also like to thank Liudmila Olalde Rico for editorial support in the final production stages of this volume, and Cynthia Peck-Kubaczek for improving the English of the introduction.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110413083-001

– the production of Buddhist histories that newly framed and freshly contextualized previous processes of cultural exchange, histories that were crucial to Buddhism's spread and domestication in the relevant regions.

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

In 1940, the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz propagated the term "transculturation" to "express the highly varied phenomena that have come about in Cuba as a result of the extremely complex transmutations of culture that have taken place there."[2] In his study of the impact of sugar and tobacco on Cuban society, Ortiz argued that the complex cultural changes on an island where new waves of migrants arrived so many times through its history could not be properly considered a form of acculturation, a "process of transition from one culture to another." With his elaboration of *transculturation*, Ortiz placed himself in opposition to conceptions that dominated US-American anthropology at the time. Both elements – a fascination with particularly dense forms of cultural mixture effected by migration, and discontent with prevailing theories that approach cultures as homogeneous and stable systems – also characterize the theorization of *transculturality* as it intensified over the course of the 1990s, this focused on contemporary conditions of globalization. As the

2 Quoted from Ortiz (1995, 98) (new edition of the first English translation from 1947; for the Spanish original see Ortiz [1940]).

German philosopher Wolfgang Welsch argued,[3] cultures "de facto no longer have the insinuated form of homogeneity and separateness. They have instead assumed a new form, which is to be called *transcultural* insofar that is *passes through* classical cultural boundaries."[4]

Welsch's concern with moving away from conceptualizing cultures as stable and closed systems is frequently echoed in the rich literature on transcultural dynamics that has emerged since then. Elements of Welsch's approach have, however, been called into question.[5] Most importantly in the present context, it cannot be assumed prima facie that the "new" form of cultures is a hallmark of the present. Processes of cultural contact and transformation can surely be studied in all epochs, well before the formation of global capital markets and the advent of the internet, and even well before the European maritime expansion in early modernity. Building a theory with universalizing aspirations on the premise that transculturality marks a new era in human history risks begging the question, since the construction and dissolution of cultural boundaries is in itself a historical process.[6]

In keeping with the critical spirit that has characterized the elaboration of the transcultural since Ortiz – distancing from entrenched modes of thinking – and through the increase in the number of studies that expand the temporal frame into a distant past and extend the geographical sphere beyond regions under direct influence of European powers, transculturality has shifted its status as a concept. Although the term is still occasionally used more narrowly to refer to particular features of situations of dense cultural mixture thought to be especially dynamic, the critical exploration of individual disciplinary histories as well as the expansion of the range of cultural phenomena under study have made it seem more productive to conceptualize transculturality as a heuristic tool, a perspective for interrogation, or an orienting concept (rather than an analytical notion).[7] The plurality of uses of the term that is now visible in a growing body of literature – a plurality that is to some degree also reflected in the papers in this volume – may seem disorienting. Yet, in an expansive research environment that

3 Welsch (1999) (without reference to Ortiz).

4 Welsch (1999, 197).

5 Cf. Benessaieh (2010) for an overview of relevant debates, including those on the notions of culture from which the respective positions draw.

6 For programmatic criticism of Welsch along these lines, see Juneja (2012, 2013), as well as, again, Benessaieh (2010).

7 Flüchter and Schöttli (2015) offer further a theoretical discussion that was informed by the research environment of Heidelberg research cluster, where the research for the contributions of Andreeva, Samuels, Torri and Viehbeck in the present volume was also conducted.

might be thought to effect a "transcultural turn,"[8] it seems futile and ultimately misguided to insist on a rigid, stipulative definition.[9]

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

8 Bond and Rapson (2014, 6–15).

9 For a more comprehensive discussion of transculturality vis-à-vis multiculturalism and interculturality, see Benessaieh (2010).

approaches and potentially unwarranted methodological premises, but also by historical "leftovers."[10]

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

In the Upper Indus Valley / Gandhāra, and more specifically in Swat (Uḍḍiyāna), Buddhist monastic presence left a rich archaeological record, including reliefs in Hellenistic style. Based on material provided by recent Italian excavations, Anna Filigenzi examines scenes depicting wine production and consumption, the latter in connection with more or less explicit erotic gestures. These have been read as a Greek cultural import and labelled "Dionsysiac scenes," but Filigenzi argues for a more complex interplay between the local and the foreign that amounts to a visual borrowing of foreign styles to express local cultural meaning. Combining archaeological evidence of wine consumption in the north-west of the Indian subcontinent with the textual record of early Buddhist literature, Filigenzi concludes that the consumption of wine in Swat was "a component of the normal ambit of economic and cultural life, a status quo for which the [Buddhist] monastic communities certainly

10 In a broader context, this principle often informs the articulation of more specific critiques based on the history of individual academic disciplines; see, e.g., Maran and Stockhammer (2012) for an exemplary critique of the paradigms of "diffusionism" and (German) "culture history" in archaeology, and Herren-Oesch and Ruesch (2012) for a critique of historical studies pursued in the framework of nation-states as units of investigation (in the context of a wider-ranging programmatic presentation of transcultural history).

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

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

Although transcribing Indian terms might have seemed to Chinese translators the simplest solution when literal translations could not be easily devised, it also meant that resulting terminology remained markedly foreign, and was, initially at least, unintelligible to target audiences in China. In translation studies, the method of such translations has been called "foreignizing," resulting in translations that bring the reader closer to the world of the author, rather than

vice versa.[11] By contrast, the strategy of "translation by matching cultural categories" (Japanese *bunka taiō gata yakugo*), as Funayama calls it, is more "domesticating" in that it brings the author's world – the world of Indian Buddhism – closer to the reader's, this consisting in "the translation of an Indic term based on a traditional Chinese concept that is similar to the original Indic term, yet not literally identical."[12] For instance, Chinese *dao*, "way," does not literally translate Sanskrit *bodhi*, "awakening," but one still finds *daoshu*, "way-tree," as a translation for Sanskrit *bodhivṛkṣa*, the tree under which Buddha Śākyamuni attained awakening. Such cultural translations[13] look for local concepts that in their function or connotation somehow match foreign notions, without any literal, word-to-word correspondence between source- and target-language. The fate of translations devised through this method was not uniform; some such terms like *wuwei* for *nirvāṇa* were eventually abolished, and translation by transcription was adopted instead. Other cases, such as *sheng* for Sanskrit *ārya*, open windows for studying intricate semantic shifts between Daoist, Confucian, Buddhist and Nestorian contexts, as well-worn terms take on new connotations, but can also be once again reduced to their pre-translation semantics. The semantic repertoire constitutes a relatively flexible cultural resource, opening a space for subsequent re-signification.

Still within a Chinese context, Lothar Ledderose presents and discusses the *Stone Hymn,* a monumental inscription at Mt. Tie on the northern outskirts of Zoucheng in Shandong Province. This inscription – 17 meters long and 14 meters tall – is one of numerous inscriptions studied in a long-term project on Buddhist stone inscriptions in Shandong province conducted by the Academy of Sciences in Heidelberg. The *Stone Hymn* is only one of three colophons to an even more monumental *sūtra* inscription. Through their size, their *sūtra* content, and their strategically chosen positioning on widely visible mountain rock surfaces, these inscriptions can generally be understood as attempts to emplace and stabilize the Buddha's word in localities where Buddhism was contested. As stated in the *Stone Hymn*, inscribed in 579 (Northern Zhou dynasty) shortly after a persecution of Buddhism in the Shandong region, even when the end of this eon draws near with scorching winds, the engraved *sūtra* will remain; it

11 For the contrast between "foreignizing" and "domesticating" translation strategies, cf. Pym (2014, 31) (drawing on Schleiermacher's distinction between *verfremdend* and *verdeutschend*).

12 Funayama, this volume, p. 89f. Funayama (n. 13) draws attention to the need for keeping this translation strategy separate from the technique of "matching concepts" (格義), a method for elucidating Chinese Buddhist texts using categories from Daoism or Confucianism that, moreover, was not characteristic for Chinese Buddhism, as is sometimes claimed.

13 See Burke (2007) for a more general account of "cultural translation."

will never decay. Their material stability notwithstanding, the inscriptions were subject to far-reaching processes of re-signification in the course of later history, and in this respect, Ledderose's study picks up where Funayama's ended. Since the eighteenth century, epigraphers have studied inscriptions such as the *Stone Hymn* with a documentary interest, unveiling aspects of calligraphy and the historical circumstances in which such inscriptions were produced. Yet in the case of the *Stone Hymn*, they have ignored its Buddhist content as well as the large adjacent *sūtra* to which it belongs, and have not pursued the question as to why this particular text was engraved in the spatial and social setting in question. It was the inscription's calligraphic mastery, of such great importance in Chinese culture, that caught their attention.

Anna Andreeva's essay continues the theme of "emplacing" Buddhism and addresses complex sacred topographies in medieval Japan, centering on Mt. Asama 朝熊山 in the eastern part of today's Mie prefecture, which lies in close proximity to the sacred Ise shrines that are of paramount importance to the articulation of Japanese cultural identity as well as for *kami* worship. As Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli have emphasized, medieval Japanese religion was characterized by a combinatory religious paradigm epitomized in the two notions of *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 ("foreign buddhas as original ground and local kami as their manifest trace") and *shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合 ("merging kami and buddhas").[14] Accordingly, in her exploration of Mt. Asama's history and its place in Japan's religious culture, Andreeva takes a long view in explaining the background for an event that took place 1750, when priests from the Ise shrines intervened in the performance of the established ritual Gumonjihō at Mt. Asama's Buddhist Kongoshōji temple. Andreeva points to networks of relationships between cultic sites in Japan, while simultaneously tracing the worship of Bodhisattva Kūzō (Sanskrit: Ākāśagarbha) and celestial bodies in rituals designed to bring about perfect memory through the transmission of Buddhism from India across Central Asia and China to Japan. Shrine-temple histories called *engi* (縁起) that hint at such connections can thus be seen as repeated attempts to inscribe cultic sites within larger frames of translocal and transcultural Buddhist memory, supporting the survival of religious sites in a competitive economy of the sacred. Andreeva's investigation into Mt. Asama illustrates how a full picture of a seemingly local historical event only emerges after tracing the various transcultural links that made it possible, with such a picture then serving to reconstruct its significance.

14 Teeuwen and Rambelli (2003).

In the Edo period (1600–1868), the myths and legends that connected Japan with the distant Indian lands, mediated through Buddhism and also perpetuated by *engi* histories such as those explored by Andreeva, were confronted by new information about the Indian subcontinent and the island of Lanka that was brought to Japan by Jesuits and the Dutch. Fabio Rambelli traces pathways of Japanese knowledge about India and Ceylon, centering on the site of Buddha Śākyamuni's life. Some in Edo Japan placed Śākyamuni on Lanka, while others thought he had lived in northern India (Māgadha) and in part believed that India was still a Buddhist country. Analyzing shifts in the Japanese imagination of the Indian lands as encounters between different sets of knowledge, Rambelli highlights how these encounters were premised on different authorities for certifying knowledge: from the historical, (Buddhist) text-based knowledge upon which Japanese conceptions of India were based, to the knowledge based on contemporary territorial access that European agents mediated to Japan.

Davide Torri takes a broader perspective of the role played by Buddhism in the production of ethnic identities among the Tibetanid communities of the Nepalese Upper Himalayas. He discusses both specific strategies of emplacement (or domestication) and the creation of shared Buddhist historical memory. With long-term historical connections to the Tibetan plateau, the remote mountain valleys in today's Nepal have often played a conspicuous role as "hidden lands" (Tibetan *sbas yul*), refuges for sheltering the Buddha-dharma in times of distress. They acquired this status through the agency of powerful Buddhist masters, most prominently Padmasambhava, who bound local divinities and spirits by oath to protect the Dharma. The "sequential subjugations" (Torri) effected by Padmasambhava, by the famous poet-mystic Mi la ras pa (ca. 1028–1111) and others are linked to conspicuous places and markings (footprints, carvings) that empower the landscape as a hidden land. Like pre- or non-Buddhist practices centering on the "gods of place" (*yul lha*), these Buddhist forms of emplacement support identities that are rooted in a locality. But in ways not unlike the Chinese stone inscriptions investigated by Ledderose and Mt. Asama as discussed by Andreeva, these sites inscribe the local in a larger, translocal (and transcultural) framework. In Helambu, the area where Torri has conducted his fieldwork and which is the focus of his essay, the travels of the Ngagchang Shakya Zangpo (Tib. *sngags 'chang shākya bzang po*; $15^{th}/16^{th}$ cent.), who opened this particular hidden land, link this remote area in the Upper Himalayas with the first Tibetan monastery of Bsam yas, as well as with the stupa of Bodhnath in Kathmandu. In these relationships, Helambu is situated at a "double periphery" (Torri) – and is where (Kathmandu) most Hyolmo live today. Issues of Buddhist "landscaping" and the role of Buddhism in supporting the fractioned identities of Tibetanid groups in the Upper Himalayas acquire heightened significance through the

recent transformation of Nepal from a Hindu monarchy into a republic supported by a conception of "ethnic federalism." The devastation of Helambu through the earthquake of April 2015, which has accelerated outward migration even further, severely impacted the social fabric of the already dispersed Hyolmo community. Under these circumstances, it remains to be seen how increased migration will affect the locality-based identities of the Hyolmo and other Upper Himalayan communities.

The two final papers in this volume, by Markus Viehbeck and Jonathan Samuels, highlight in different ways how positions and concepts from within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition that arguably reflect partisan ideologies have guided the academic study of Buddhism, positions and concepts that were taken over as orienting models with less critical reflection than (as we know now) was necessary. David L. Snellgrove most explicitly promoted the view that Tibetan Buddhism preserves authentic Indian Buddhism in an unadulterated form, epitomized in the notion of an "Indo-Tibetan Buddhism." Recent discussions problematize such claims to privileged access in a larger Buddhist context, but, as Viehbeck points out, there is historical precedent for this. The clearest attempt to approach the relationship between Buddhism in India and in Tibet in a more nuanced fashion, by David Seyffort Ruegg, has distinguished between historically Indian and typologically "Indic" elements in Tibetan intellectual culture. Viehbeck argues that this distinction must be supplemented further by empirical studies on how the acclaimed Indian origin of particular positions manifests within Tibetan discourse and practice. For his part, he offers an exemplary study drawing on late nineteenth-century Tibetan debates on the proper interpretation of an Indian Buddhist "classic," Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. These debates operated on the shared background of a strict binary logic that placed conformity to Indian tradition in opposition to aberration and deviation from it. Yet, the fierce controversies between 'Ju Mi pham and his sparring partners not only show that even in the nineteenth century, Tibetan authors were still attributing greater weight to Indian textual authorities (in Tibetan translation) than to their own interpretive tradition. They also allow one to recognize how allegiance to Indian authorities was tempered by the creative application of a hermeneutic toolbox within a larger "space of negotiation" (Viehbeck). Polemical discourse on Indian Buddhist classics both confirmed their authority *and* offered opportunities for asserting Tibetan intellectual ingenuity. It may seem commendable at first to abandon the label "Indo-Tibetan Buddhism," as it simply reproduces, in academic discourse, an ideological position from within Tibetan Buddhist historiography. But this should not distract from the importance that conformity with Indian tradition held in Tibetan discourse and practice as a standard and value – or, for that

matter, from the need to study the negotiation of conformity in a historically situated manner across different areas of cultural production.

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

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

organizing categories used within religious communities and conceptual schemes employed in the academic study of religion – is not enough to avoid the risk of scientism,[15] even though such investigations are necessary. Such investigations must be supplemented by close readings of these types of categories as they are used contextually, in view of historically situated rhetorical strategies and ideologies.

References

Benessaieh, Afif. 2010. "Multiculturalism, Interculturality, Transculturality." In *Transcultural Americas/Amériques Transculturelles*, edited by Afif Benessaieh, 11–38. Ottawa: Ottawa University Press.

Bond, Lucy, and Jessica Rapson, eds. 2014. *The Transcultural Turn: Interrogating Memory Between and Beyond Borders*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter.

Burke, Peter, ed. 2007. *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press.

Flüchter, Antje, and Jivanta Schöttli. 2015. *The Dynamics of Transculturality: Concepts and Institutions in Motion*. Cham, etc.: Springer.

Herren-Oesch, Madeleine, and Sibylle Ruesch. 2012. *Transcultural History. Theory, Methods, Sources*. Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer.

Juneja, Monica. 2012. "Kultur, Kulturtransfer und Grenzüberschreitungen. Joachim Eibach und Claudia Opitz im Gespräch mit Monica Juneja." *zeitenblicke* 11, Nr. 1 (07.11.2012). URL: http://www.zeitenblicke.de/2012/1/Interview/index_html, URN: urn: nbn:de:0009-9-34709.

Juneja, Monica. 2013. "Understanding transculturalisms." Monica Juneja and Christian Kravagna in conversation. In *Transcultural Modernisms*, edited by Fahim Amir, 22–23. New York: Sternberg Press.

Krech, Volkhard. 2012. "Dynamics in the History of Religions – Preliminary Considerations on Aspects of a Research Programme". In *Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe : Encounters, Notions, and Comparative Perspectives*, edited by Volkard Krech, Marion Steinicke, 15–70. Leiden, Boston: Brill.

Maran, Joseph, and Philipp W. Stockhammer, eds. 2012. *Materiality and Social Practice: Transformative Capacities of Intercultural Encounters*. Oxford/Oakville: Oxbow Books.

Neelis, Jason. 2011. *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange Within and Beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Ortiz, Fernando. 1940. *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*. La Habana: Jesús Montero Editor.

Ortiz, Fernando. 1947. *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, translated from the Spanish by Harriet Onís, with a foreword by Bronislaw Malinowsky. New York: Knopf. (Translation of Ortiz [1940].)

Ortiz, Fernando. 1995. *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. New edition of Ortiz (1947) with an introductory essay by Fernando Coronil. Durham: Duke University Press.

15 Cf. Krech (2012, 21).

Pym, Anthony. 2014. *Exploring Translation Theories*. 2nd ed. Oxon/New York: Routledge.
Seyffort Ruegg, David. 1995. "Some Reflections on the Place of Philosophy in the Study of Buddhism." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 18/2: 145–181.
Teeuwen, Mark, and Fabio Rambelli, eds. 2003. *Buddhas and kami in Japan: Honji suijaku as a combinatory paradigm*. London/New York: RoutledgeCurzon.
Welsch, Wolfgang. 1999. "Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today." In *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, edited by Mike Feathersone and Scott Lash, 194–213. London: Sage.

Ingo Strauch

2 Buddhism in the West? Buddhist Indian Sailors on Socotra (Yemen) and the Role of Trade Contacts in the Spread of Buddhism

2.1 Introduction

The spread of Buddhism is usually associated with two main factors: first, the patronage by political elites who fostered missionary activities within the Indian subcontinent and beyond; second, the economic support by merchants and traders, who since the days of the Buddha had formed one of the most influential social groups in the Buddhist lay community. The specific manifestation of these two factors is reflected by the different stages in the spread of Buddhism as an institutional religion. The Mauryan empire united for the first time in history large parts of the Indian subcontinent under a coherent political and administrative structure. In the case of Buddhism, this development was accompanied by a huge missionary endeavor, promoted by the ruling elite, that embraced almost all of the Indian subcontinent but hardly involved the mercantile groups nor touched territories outside India.[1]

A completely new quality was reached in the period, when the Indian subcontinent became part of larger political and economic units that embraced the regions further north and east of India. Under the rule of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty, the Indian north was part of a huge empire that united territories of Eastern Iran and North-West and North India and had important political and economic influence even in Central Asia (Xinjiang). The heart of India was dominated by two other mighty empires: the Western Kṣatrapas and the Sātavāhanas. These three Indian powers were "global players": via an extensive network of land and sea-routes they profited from the international trade activities along the so-called Silk Road. It is not surprising that this political and economic internationalization did also have its impact on the fate of Buddhism.

It is well-known that along the Silk Road, Buddhism spread eastwards. Buddhist merchants and pilgrims used the trade routes to propagate Buddhist ideas and to establish Buddhist institutions. Rulers along the "Silk Road"

1 For the limited success of Buddhist mission in the Hellenistic regions neighboring the Mauryan empire in the west, see Lamotte (1958, 338) and Seldeslachts (2007, 136–138).

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110413083-002

converted and promoted Buddhism in their territories. For the role of traders in this development, we draw on an extraordinarily rich source: the corpus of epigraphs and petroglyphs discovered in the Upper Indus Valley along the Karakorum Highway in Northern Pakistan. This material has been documented and studied in a project run by the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences. The epigraphical material from the Upper Indus Valley covers a period of nearly a millennium, beginning with the inscriptions written in Kharoṣṭhī, which can be dated to the first century BCE. The corpus comprises several thousand texts in different scripts and languages, including Indian, Sogdian, Chinese, and Tibetan material, and thus reflects the different lines of trade and commerce which met in this transitory space at the crossroads between India, Tibet, China, and Central Asia. Many of the texts and drawings along the Upper Indus Valley bear an explicit Buddhist character: drawings of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and *stūpa*s; and inscriptions by Buddhist pilgrims or lay people. The evidence of this huge corpus is now almost completely available in the excellent publications of the Heidelberg Academy project, "Rock Carvings and Inscriptions along the Karakorum Highway," that documented this material from the 1980-ies up to 2012.[2]

But the Silk Road connected India not only with the East – with Central Asia and China – but also with the West. Literary and archaeological data bear impressive witness to the western branch of these trade networks and to the intensive participation of Indians in these activities.[3] However, there is hardly any evidence for the specific Buddhist character of these traders. Concerning the role of trade contacts in his study about the western expansion of Buddhism during this period, Erik Seldeslachts concludes:

> There is also a lot of literary and epigraphical evidence for the presence of Indian traders and other visitors, even whole communities, in Armenia, the Northern Black Sea area, Socotra, Arabia, the Red Sea area, and across the Mediterranean (. . .). One, however, looks in vain for something specifically Buddhistic about these people, whereas it is often possible to clearly identify Hindu elements (. . .) On the whole, the available evidence of the popularity of Buddhism among "Western" business communities is thus meagre. (Seldeslachts 2007, 148–149)

This picture has now considerably changed. A few years ago, in 2000, Belgian speleologists discovered in one of the karst caves on the island of Socotra

2 Bemmann and König (1994); Fussman and König (1997); Bandini-König (1999); Bandini-König and von Hinüber (2001); Bandini-König (2003); Bandini-König (2005); Bandini-König (2007); Bandini-König (2009); Bandini-König (2011).

3 For a short survey about Indian traders along the western routes of the Indian Ocean sea trade and further references, see Strauch (2012, 367–377).

(Yemen) a considerable number of inscriptions and drawings, which date back to the second through the fourth or early fifth centuries CE – the heyday period of the Silk Road. A comprehensive, annotated catalogue of these inscriptions and drawings was published in 2012 (Strauch 2012, 25–218).[4] The majority of them can be attributed to Indian mariners, who visited Socotra on their way to South Arabia or the Red Sea. For the first time, this corpus thus provides the opportunity to have a closer look at the Indian participants of the Indian Ocean sea contacts between India and the West.

It is the aim of this paper to investigate the Buddhist material from Socotra. Based on the comparison of the Socotran evidence with the Upper Indus material, we will try to determine the specific conditions that accompanied the spread of Buddhist ideas and institutions along the western routes of the Silk Road. In the final part, the results of this comparison will be evaluated against the background of the broader discussion about the presence of Buddhists and Buddhist ideas in the Hellenistic and Roman western world.

It should be stressed right from the outset that as welcome and important as the data from Socotra are, they hardly allow a comprehensive view of the variety of aspects to be considered here. But they can certainly help to better understand some of the issues that have to be addressed in this context.

2.2 The corpus of Socotran inscriptions and drawings

While exploring a huge underground cave on the island Socotra, Belgian speleologists discovered a large number of graffiti and drawings inscribed on the walls, stalagmites, stalactites and floors of the cave. As subsequent research showed, the inscriptions were written in South-Arabian, Ethiopian, Greek, Palmyrene, Bactrian, and Indian scripts and languages and can be dated to the first half of the first millennium CE.[5]

It has been known for a long time that Socotra was part of the intercontinental Silk Road network from the Hellenistic period onwards. The anonymous

4 The references to inscriptions and drawings used here follow the system of this catalogue.

5 The preliminary results of this first exploration were communicated in Robin and Gorea (2002); Dridi (2002); Strauch and Bukharin (2004). Some years later – in December 2005 and January 2006 – I had the chance to visit the cave myself and to prepare a new documentation, which could provide much additional material and is the basis of the catalogue published in 2012.

Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, written in the middle of the first century CE, describes the island's population as a kind of multiethnic community consisting of Arabs, Indians, and Greeks who settled there for the purposes of commerce (PME 30 + 31, Casson 1989, 67–69). The island's main products listed by the *Periplus* are tortoise and dragon-blood. According to this text, Socotra was connected through two routes with the Indo-Roman world; to the west, trade was conducted via Muza, i.e. the South-Arabian harbor at the mouth of the Red Sea. The Indian subcontinent was accessed via the ports of Western India, namely Barygaza, the ancient Bharukaccha, and Limyrike, which can be identified with the Malabar coast of South India. Thus the island was a kind of crossroad or meeting point for trade routes from east and west.

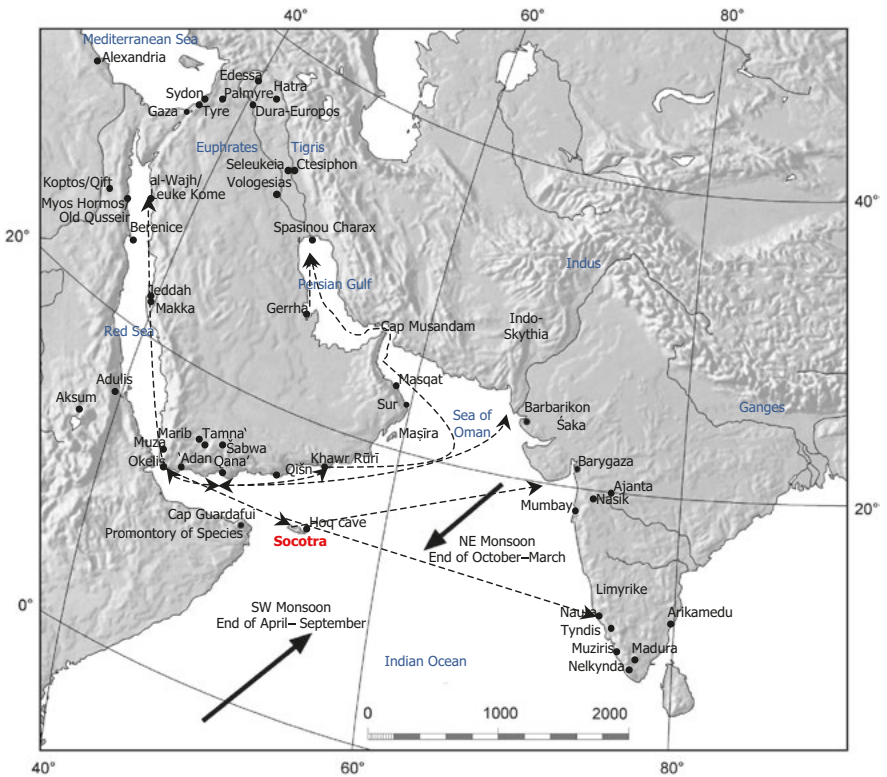


Figure 2.1: Map of the Western Indian Ocean, with the routes indicated by the *Periplus* [courtesy: Mikhail Bukharin].

The cave, Hoq, is situated at a height of about 350 m in the granite plateau on the northern shore of the island Socotra.

Figure 2.2: View of the cave's entrance from below [courtesy: Socotra Karst Project].

Its entrance faces the sea, and as remains of soot on the ceiling of the plateau in front of the cave show, fires were perhaps used for navigating bypassing ships. This function might be one of the reasons for the cave's attraction to visitors from foreign countries. However, soon after entering the huge portal, other reasons for attracting people's interest become obvious. Shaped as a long corridor – ca. 2 km long and up to 37 m high – the cave houses a large number of speleological formations – multifarious stalagmites and stalactites forming impressive structures of an extraordinary beauty.

The inscriptions and drawings are located in the back part of the cave, nearly one kilometer from the entrance. They were usually inscribed by visitors at places along the path using the material available on the spot, such as mud from the cave's floor, broken pieces of stalactites or stalagmites or even charcoal taken from the torches that were necessary to illuminate the way through the absolutely dark interior of the cave. Among the numerous traces of inscribed texts, I could identify 193 inscriptions from 117 Indian visitors. With the exception of a single Kharoṣṭhī graffito, all of them are written in a variety of Brāhmī. According to their paleographical features, the Brāhmī epigraphs can be dated to the second through the early fifth century CE. The paleography also helps to determine the geographical provenance of the visitors. The majority of them used a variety of Brāhmī that is typical for the Gujarat-Western Deccan

Figure 2.3: Inside the cave [courtesy: Dirk Vandorpe].

region during later Sātavāhana and Western Kṣatrapa rule. There is hardly any strong evidence for a participation of traders from the Indian South – a fact that might be surprising considering the strong presence of South Indian mariners in the few epigraphical materials from Red Sea ports. This western origin is corroborated by the occasional indication of provenances in the texts themselves. Five of the visitors call themselves *bhārukacchaka* "from Bharukaccha," thus clearly confirming the statement of the *Periplus* with regard to the significance of this important West Indian harbor. One of the Indian visitors identifies his hometown as Hastakavapra, another important West Indian port of this period. Some of the Indians also point to their professional status and add to their names the words *nāvika* or *niryāmaka*, both terms referring to maritime titles.

As mentioned above, in many places, the Indian inscriptions were accompanied by graffiti in South Arabian, Ethiopian, Palmyrene, Greek and Bactrian scripts and languages. This clearly underlines the character of Socotra as a meeting point of traders from different ends of the maritime Indian Ocean networks.

Due to their general character – being commemorative text left by travelers – it can be expected that the formal features of the inscriptions from Hoq correspond to those of the Upper Indus Valley. The formal characteristics of the Karakorum Brāhmī corpus were systematically described by Oskar von Hinüber (1989a). Von Hinüber distinguished three major types: Type 1, which "contains only names either in the nominative or endingless, or less often in the genitive case" (1989a, 43); Type 2, which combines the names "with verbs meaning 'has

come, has arrived'" (1989a, 44); and Type 3, where additional information is indicated, like "a) professions, b) castes and tribes, c) religious status, d) official titles" (1989a, 46). Applying von Hinüber's categorization to the specific evidence of the personal inscriptions of Hoq, it is possible to distinguish the following four groups:

1. The first group contains only the name of the visitor, e.g.

   pālaputro "Pālaputra." (10:8)

2. The second group adds the father's name, e.g.

   viṣṇubhaṭṭiputro skaṃdamitro "Skandamitra, son of Viṣṇubhaṭṭi." (10:7)

3. In the third group, the personal name, with or without the father's name, is supplemented by additional information concerning either the origin, profession, ethnic affiliation, or religious and official titles, e.g.

   bhārukacchaka niryyāmaka viṣṇudharo "The captain Viṣṇudhara from Bharukaccha." (11:12)

4. The last group is characterized by the use of verbal forms in the meaning of "has come, has arrived," thus forming complete sentences, e.g.

   śivaghoṣaputro rudranandi prāptaḥ "Rudranandi, son of Śivaghoṣa, arrived." (10:1)

The large group of personal inscriptions, which forms the overwhelming majority of texts at Hoq (89%), is supplemented by a small number of texts with different contents. They can be characterized as religious or devotional texts and are, of course, of special interest for the topic of this paper.

In some places, the inscriptions are accompanied by drawings. While most of them depict well-known and religiously unspecific auspicious symbols, such as the *pūrṇaghaṭa* or the *nandyāvarta*, others can be associated with a clearly identifiable religious background. Thus, it can be assumed that the *triśūla* drawings at different spots were left by Śaiva visitors, while drawings of *stūpa*s clearly point to the Buddhist character of these objects.

2.3 Buddhism among the Traders at Socotra

2.3.1 Buddhist Names

It is known that in many cases, Indian names refer to the religious and, to a certain degree, social status of a person. In Indian onomastics, Buddhist personal names are often formed by using the designation of one of the three jewels – Buddha, Dharma, Saṃgha. We find among the Hoq visitors only five persons with a name formed in this way:

Buddhanandin (= scribe 50, 9:8)
Saṃghadāsa (= scribe 19, 2:23), son of Jayasena, from Hastakavapra
Saṃghanandin (= scribe 96, 14:19)
*Buddhăsăkă[6] (= scribe 97, 14:20)
Dharma (scribe 33, 6:5 and 11:40)

Among the patronyms, three further Buddhist names are attested:

Buddhamitra, father of Bhaṭṭikumāra (scribe 54, 10:3 and 12:2)
Dharma, father of Halla (= scribe 34, 6:6)
Saṃgharaṅgin, father of Ajitivarman (= scribe 35, 6:7), a *śaka*

Thus, it is probable that at least eight persons among the visitors of Hoq were Buddhists or belonged to Buddhist families. It is possible, that the personal names Aśoka – attested twice, once as a visitor's name, once as a father's name – and Upāli also indicate a Buddhist background of the visitors. Due to the popularity the Mauryan king and the disciple enjoyed among Buddhists, both names were frequently chosen by followers of Buddhism (cf. Malasekara 1937–1938, s.vv.). However, Aśoka is also attested as a *brāhmaṇa's* name in Oshibat: *aśokaḥ brahmaṇa* (18:15, Bemmann and König 1994, 55) and Chilas, Camp Site: *aśokaḥ vipriḥ* (von Hinüber 1989a, 53, no. 46).[7] Consequently, with certain reservations, a Buddhist background might be attributed to a total of eleven persons.

The informative value of the names is, of course, rather limited. We have to take into account that a Buddhist does not necessarily have to bear an explicit Buddhist name. Thus, the visitor who probably completed the *stūpa* drawings at Hoq is called *iśaradasa* (Skt. Īśvaradāsa), bearing a name with a clear Śaiva affiliation.

These uncertainties left aside, it is possible to present at least an estimation of the percentage of Buddhists among the visitors of Hoq cave. Compared with the presence of other clearly identifiable religious communities – such as the Vaiṣṇavas (seven names) and the Śaivas (eight names) – the eleven (+ x) Buddhists formed a considerable – but not the major – proportion of the sailors who participated in the expeditions to Socotra.

6 Due to the unclear notation of vowel lengths the final element of this composite name cannot be determined. Cf. Strauch 2012: 185.

7 It is interesting to notice that the name Aśoka is perhaps also attested among the so-called Oxyrhynchos paypri from Egypt (P.Oxy 3868, ed. Sirivianou 1989, 150–153, cf. Seldeslachts 2007, 149). The papyri from Oxyrhynchos contain more important material which points to the presence of Indians in Egypt during the first centuries CE (cf. Strauch 2012, 371–372).

If we have a closer look at the family relations of these persons, we might get an idea about their social background. Saṃghadāsa's father is called Jayasena, a name that clearly points to a *kṣatriya* background of the family. The same is true for Ajitivarman, whose father was obviously a Buddhist named Saṃgharaṅgin. Moreover, the ethnonym *śaka* used by Ajitivarman indicates his Iranian background. The *śaka*s were very influential in Western India. Several of them are found among the donors for Buddhist monasteries in the Western Ghat cave inscriptions of the Sātavāhana and Western Kṣatrapa periods (cf. e.g. Lüders 1912, 209, Index s.v. *śaka*/*saka*).

More complicated is the case of Bhaṭṭikumāra, the son of (the Buddhist) Buddhamitra. Bhaṭṭikumāra visited the cave together with a man who calls himself Bhaṭṭiṣena, son of Śivamitra. The little group left two graffiti in the cave. Contrary to other visitors, they did not write their names separately, but only one of them incised both names connected by the conjunction *ca*.

Figure 2.4 : Inscription 12:2.

In one of their two graffiti (12:2) – incised on the top of a small stalagmite – Bhaṭṭiṣena is called *kṣatrapa*, thus pointing to his affiliation to the nobility of the Western Indian *kṣatrapas*:

> *śivamitraputro bhaṭṭiṣeno kṣatrapo buddhamitraputraś ca bhaṭṭiku[mā]ro*
> "The *kṣatrapa* Bhaṭṭiṣena, son of Śivamitra, and Bhaṭṭikumāra, son of Buddhamitra."

Figure 2.5: Inscription 12:2 with text indicated by hand-drawing.

The exact relation between the two men cannot be established on the basis of their two little texts. The fact that both visited the cave together and wrote their names within a single text, shows their rather close relationship. As their fathers' names indicate (Buddhamitra, Śivamitra), their core families seem to have belonged to different religious groups. But as in the case of Īśvaradāsa cited above, it is also possible that the father's "Śaiva" name does not indicate his religious attitude. The Śaiva name can also be explained by the *kṣatrapa* status of Bhaṭṭiṣena. As names of Western Kṣatrapa rulers (Rudradāman, Rudrasena) show, their demonstrated Śaiva identity was clearly one of their strategies of assimilation within the – originally remote – Indian context. Remarkably, the second *kṣatrapa* at Hoq cave also bears a Śaiva name (15:5).

On the other hand, the close association of Buddhist and Śaiva elements is also reflected in the onomastic material from the Upper Indus and the subcontinent. Beside typical Buddhist names, there are many persons whose names seem to indicate a different religious affinity. As Fussman pointed out, "(l)es noms śivaïtes sont maintenant bien attestés dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Inde et particulièrement en contexte bouddhique: de nombreuses dédicaces ont pour auteur un personnage dont le nom signifie 'esclave de Śiva' (*Śiva-dāsa*) ou 'protégé par Śiva' (*Śiva-rakṣita*)" (1989, 12). As in the case of the *stūpa* drawings from Hoq, a *stūpa* drawing at Chilas II was carried out by a person bearing a Śaiva name, Śivadasa (Skt. Śivadāsa) (Fussman 1989, 12, no. 4,1). Referring to other inscriptions from the Indian northwest and to the report by the Chinese

pilgrim Sun Yün (520 CE), Fussman concludes: "Il semble bien que dès cette époque, dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Inde, śivaïsme et bouddhisme aient fait bon ménage" (1989, 12). Based on the evidence from other inscriptional corpora, it is possible to extend the validity of Fussman's observation. Thus we find numerous persons with Śaiva names among the donors mentioned in the Western Ghat inscriptions.[8] As some of the inscriptions show, an explicit Śaiva name does not exclude a person's status as a Buddhist lay follower or even monk. Thus we find among the Western Ghat inscriptions a Sivabhuti (Śivabhūti), who is the son of the *upāsaka* Sāmaḍa (Śyāmala) (Junnar, Lüders 1912, 134, no. 1175). In Kuḍā, a *thera bhadanta* bears the name Sivadata (Śivadatta) (Lüders 1912, 109, no. 1040). It is therefore possible that also the Hoq visitor Bhaṭṭikumāra, son of Buddhamitra, and his companion Bhaṭṭiṣena, son of Śivamitra, belonged to such a milieu of a strong interaction between Buddhist and Śaiva communities.

It is tempting to suggest that names can also reflect a kind of multiple religious identity. Von Hinüber refers to Buddhist names like Dharmaviṣṇu and Dharmaśiva, attested in North-West and Central India (von Hinüber 1989a, 53). In the case of Dharmaviṣṇu from Shatial, his companion (father/brother?) Viṣṇubhadra bears a distinct Vaiṣṇava name (12:3–4, Fussman and König 1997, 132), while the peculiar combination Dharmaviṣṇu seems to preserve the family's Vaiṣṇava tradition on the one hand, and introduces the new Buddhist identity at the same time.

2.3.2 Buddhist Devotional Texts and Drawings

While the Buddhist names bear testimony only to a person's alleged religious identity as a matter of fact, the texts of the second group and the drawings can help to determine the character of this identity. Two of the Hoq graffiti are especially important here. They are left by a visitor, who calls himself Rahavasu, a name which lacks a definite etymology but seems to have no clearly discernible Buddhist background. His two short texts contain terms that clearly signify the historical Buddha Śākyamuni.

One of them (11:43) uses a well-known epithet and designates the Buddha as *mahāmuṇi* "Great Sage." It runs in Middle Indian phonology: *bhagavato mahamuṇi[sa]*, "For the Lord Great Sage." In Buddhist literature, the use of this

8 See for example in Junnar, the *gahapati* Sivadāsa (Lüders 1912, 133, no. 1170) and Sivabhuti (Śivabhūti), son of Sivasama (Śivaśarman) (Lüders 1912, 134, no. 1173). In Kuḍā, an entire Śaiva family donated a cave with stone carvings and pillars (Lüders 1912, 110, no. 1045).

epithet is not restricted to the historical Buddha. In the *Mahāvastu*, it is used as a generic attribute to qualify a Tathāgata: Śākyamuni (1.99, 1.78), Sarvadarśin (1.123), Cārunetra (1.123), Sahasranetra (1.167), etc. There is also a former Buddha bearing the name Mahāmuni.[9] It can therefore be assumed that the little text at Hoq cave has to be understood in a quite general sense "For the Lord Buddha." Due to the lack of references to any other Buddhas besides the historical one, this formula most probably refers to the Buddha Śākyamuni.

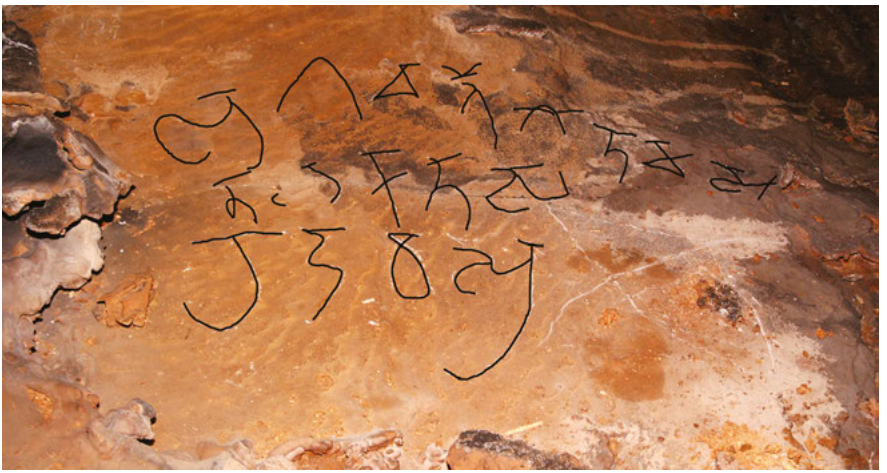


Figure 2.6: Inscription 14:28 indicated by hand drawing.

The second of Rahavasu's short texts (14:28) mentions the Buddha by his birth name – Gotama/Skt. Gautama: *bhagavato gotamasa*. Only in high resolution can a second line between this text and the visitors's name *rahavasu* be made out on the photograph. Although the letters are hard to distinguish, this line can be quite safely reconstructed as *na[bha]katasa*. Given the Middle Indic character of the inscription, this term can perhaps be associated with a Skt. lexeme *nabhaḥkrānta*, a term which later lexicographers explain as "lion." Although the earliest attestation of this meaning is rather late – it belongs to the 12th century lexicographer Hemacandra – it cannot be excluded that Hemacandra here relies on a much older usage. Moreover, Hemacandra lived in Gujarat: exactly the region from where the visitors of Socotra came. If this interpretation can be accepted, the word "lion" here refers to a popular epithet of the Buddha, who was

9 Mahāvastu 3.230: *nāgamunir ānaṃda tathāgato mahāmuniṃ tathāgataṃ vyākārṣīt*. "The Tathāgata Nāgamuni, Ānanda, predicted the Tathāgata Mahāmuni."

also known among his followers as *śākyasiṃha* "the lion of the Śākya family." Although this interpretation of *nabhakata* is not beyond doubt, it would at least not contradict the context of this small devotional text.[10]

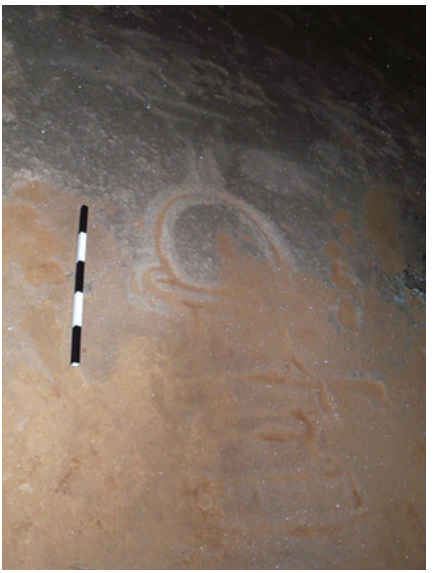


Figure 2.7: Drawing of a *stūpa* A at site 13.

The Buddhists among the Hoq visitors also left behind one of the most impressive remains: two drawings of *stūpa*s made in the sand of the cave's floor, several meters away from the main path and therefore completely unaffected by later visitors (13:5-A, 13:5-B).

The surface of the drawings has been mineralized as has the surface of the footprints, which are found beside the drawings and certainly belong to the person who made them. The first explorers discovered just beside the drawings and the footprints a name written in the sand (13:5C). In the preserved images of this writing, the name can be identified as that of Iśaradasa (Skt. Īśvaradāsa), who left his name at different spots inside the cave (11:6, 11:7, 11:39). It is remarkable,

10 The meaning of the small text *saṃgha[sya nama]* (16:20) is difficult to evaluate. Although the element *nama* recalls the frequently attested *namo* in other Indian epigraphs – among them numerous Upper Indus inscriptions – the word order as well as the genitive of *saṃghasya* leave serious doubts about interpreting it as *namo saṃghāya* "Veneration to the Order." It is also possible to regard *saṃghasya* as hypocoristic form of a name with *saṃgha* as an initial element, leaving *nama* unexplained or regarding it as a possible miswriting.

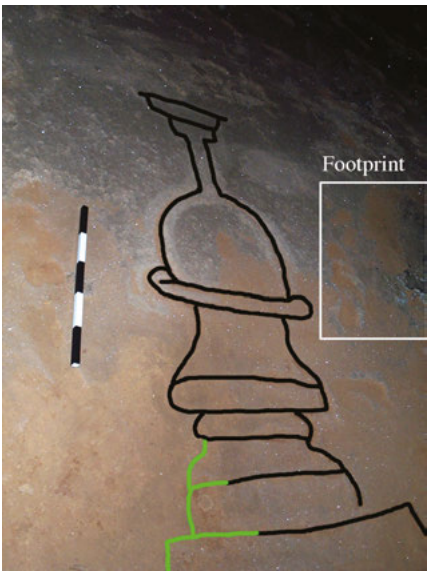


Figure 2.8: *Stūpa* drawing A indicated by hand drawing.

Figure 2.9: Drawing of a *stūpa* B at site 13.

that his name bears an explicit Śaiva character. This fact either proves the close connections between Buddhism and Śaivism pointed out by Fussman (see above) or it confirms our observation, that a personal name *can* indicate the religious affinity of a person, but it does not necessarily have to do so.

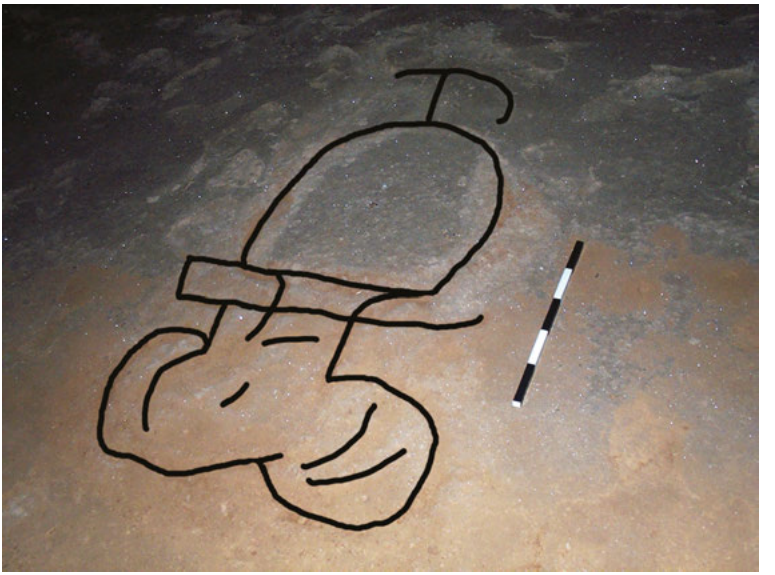


Figure 2.10: *Stūpa* drawing b indicated by hand drawing.

If we compare these drawings with the numerous depictions of *stūpa*s found along the Upper Indus Valley at the Karakorum Highway – and in particular in the area around Chilas – their parallelism is obvious.

It seems that the Hoq painters drew on a popular inventory of *stūpa* drawings which could be used for ritual purposes. In the case of the Karakorum petroglyphs, Volker Thewalt noticed:

> Many of these elaborate rock-carvings must be attributed to highly skilled craftsmen who received their artistic training in the great monasteries of Gandhāra, while others are crude imitations, executed by traveling laymen or the inhabitants of neighboring villages, wishing to gain some spiritual merit by reproducing these sacred monuments. (Thewalt 1985, 782)

According to the external circumstances and the poor quality of the drawings, the "artist" of the Hoq *stūpa* drawings – probably named Iśaradasa – certainly belonged to the second group referred to by Thewalt: "traveling laymen."

Thewalt indicates one major purpose of these *stūpa* drawings: the generation of merit. In the case of the Karakorum drawings, this purpose is repeatedly indicated by the accompanying inscriptions, where the drawing of the *stūpa* is designated as *deya-* or *devadharma* "religious donation."[11] See e.g.:

11 For the meaning of *deyadharma*, see Bhattacharya (1987).

Figure 2.11: *Stūpa* petroglyph 30:20 at Thalpan [Bandini-König 2003, Tafel 71].

Figure 2.12: *Stūpa* petroglyph 34:9 at Shing Nala [Bandini-König and von Hinüber 2001, Tafel 26].

devadharmo yam priyanandaputra dharmasihe
"This is the religious donation of Dharmasiṃha, son of Priyananda."
"Dies ist die religiöse Stiftung des Sohnes des Priyananda, Dharmasiṃha." (Ziyarat 89:2 + 100:8, Bandini-König 2011, 76 + 80)

In some cases, a special formula is added which refers to the generation of merit to be transferred to all sentient beings. Thus the donor Kuberavāhana wrote at Thalpan:

(devadha)[rmo yaṃ] kueravāhanasya yad atra bha<va>tu puṇyaṃ (ta)[t ////] (prāptāya) st[u]
"This is the religious donation of Kuberavāhana. What here is the merit, may that be (for the obtaining)..." (Thalpan 30:27, Bandini-König 2003, 128)

Von Hinüber (1989b, 78) interprets this text convincingly as a variant of the well-known formula *yad atra bhavatu puṇyaṃ tat sarvasattvānām anuttarajñānāvaptaye stu*. ("What here is the merit, may that be for the obtaining of supreme knowledge by all beings.")[12]

The complete formula is also preserved, as e.g. in

yad atra puṇyaṃ bhavatu sarvasatvānāṃ (a)nutarajñānāvāptaye stu-r-itī
"What here is the merit, may that be for the obtaining of supreme knowledge by all beings." (Hodar 4:1, Bandini-König 1999, 149)[13]

Beside this aspect of generating merit, another function of these *stūpa* drawings has been repeatedly stressed. As Oskar von Hinüber noted:

Bereits M.A. Stein hat jedoch vermutet, daß die Felszeichnungen von Stūpas als Ersatz für Votivstūpas gedeutet werden können (...). So scheint es denkbar, daß von Anfang an die Kultobjekte eben die Felsbilder waren, die nur hier Buddhas, Bodhisattvas und kunstvolle Stūpas in großer Zahl zeigen. (von Hinüber 1989b, 75)[14]

The same idea was expressed by Volker Thewalt:

So kann es keinen vernünftigen Zweifel geben, daß die *stūpa*-Zeichnungen sehr häufig als Ersatz für monumentale *stūpas* angefertigt worden sind, wenn die zeitlichen und finanziellen Ressourcen der Stifter begrenzt waren. (Thewalt 2008, 10)

12 Von Hinüber's reconstruction: *yad atra bhavatu puṇyaṃ tad anuttarajñānaprāptāya syāt*. It is, however, not evident for me why von Hinüber chose the less attested form *prāptāya* instead of the more common °*āvāptaye*. For the Mahāyāna character of this formula cf. Schopen (1979, 4–15 [= 2005, 227–239]). See also Ruegg (2004, 13–14 and n.17) and Ruegg (2005, 5–7).
13 Cf. also Shatial 140:23 (Fussman and König 1997, 293).
14 This aspect was also highlighted by Neelis, who remarked that these drawings certainly also "provided a focus for veneration" (Neelis 2010, 282, see also Neelis 2014).

Regarding the function of these drawings he adds:

> ... selbst einfachste Zeichnungen von *stūpa*s dienten den reisenden Gläubigen als Meditationsobjekte und machten so die Ausübung des Glaubens selbst an Orten möglich, an denen es anders keine Gelegenheit gab, den *stūpa* zu verehren. Dem gleichen Zweck dienten übrigens auch kleine transportable Votiv*stūpa*. (Thewalt 2008, 15)

Accordingly, it is possible to distinguish two main functions of the activity of drawing *stūpa*s on rock and other surfaces:

1. They mark a – probably – temporary place of Buddhist worship and thus create a sacred space.
2. They are assumed to generate merit for the artist, his relatives, his parents up to all sentient beings.[15]

It is possible that both these intentions also motivated the drawings at Hoq. Due to the absence of any other places of Buddhist worship on the island, it is quite natural to assume that the visitor created such a place by drawing these *stūpa*s as objects of veneration. By doing so, he also produced religious merit. However, both a qualifying label as *deyadharma* or a note regarding the expected merit are missing. Moreover, the drawings were executed in the soft sand of the cave's floor. Even the footprints of the artist are visible. If the *stūpa* drawings would have fulfilled any ritual function in a kind of *pradakṣiṇa* ritual, the traces of such a circumambulation would have been visible. But the surface of the sand surrounding the images is completely untouched. If the artist indeed intended to create a "temporary place of worship," this intention was never realized.

According to the data discussed so far, the Buddhists among the oversea traders from India practiced a rather simplistic form of Buddhism, that centered around the worship of the Buddha Śākyamuni and of the *stūpa*. There is not the slightest trace of any "advanced" form of Buddhism, which is generally related to Mahāyāna tendencies. There is no reference to Bodhisattvas – such as Maitreya, Mañjuśri or Avalokiteśvara – nor are any of the "new Buddhas" mentioned by name, ex. Amitābha or Akṣobhya. This evidence clearly distinguishes the Hoq corpus from the material from the Upper Indus, where these new Buddhist ideas are repeatedly addressed (cf. von Hinüber 1989b, 83–99). Thus we find among the inscriptions from Chilas-Thalpan references to Lokeśvara/Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, Amitābha and Akṣobhya. Beside these well-known and popular names, the inscriptions contain a number of Tathāgata names, which are much less attested and show frequently parallels to texts preserved among the Gilgit and Central Asian manuscripts.

15 For the concept of the "transference of merit" in Buddhist epigraphical records, cf. Schopen (1985).

Material of this kind is completely absent in the Hoq corpus. It is possible, that ideas such as those expressed in the Upper Indus material were not present among the Buddhists in Western India who would have followed a much more conservative approach in their religious belief and practice. It is equally possible to ascribe this fact to the social status of the sailors; this would put aside the hypothesis of a distinct lay element in the emergence and distribution of Mahāyāna ideas. The drawings of Bodhisattvas and Tathāgatas at the Upper Indus, which are usually labelled with inscriptions containing their names, are very artistic and can hardly be ascribed to traveling merchants. According to Thewalt's observations, they should be attributed to the "highly skilled craftsmen who received their artistic training in the great monasteries of Gandhāra" (Thewalt 1985, 782). In other words, they have certainly a monastic background and represent donations, commissioned either by locals or by traders on their way through this area. In some cases, many of the Bodhisattva and Tathāgata drawings can be ascribed to a single donor, as for example Siṃhoṭa who was, according to the name suffix *-oṭa*, certainly a local patron.[16]

2.3.3 Buddhist Monks at Socotra?

As argued above, the rather simplistic perception of Buddhism revealed by the short "devotional" texts and the *stūpa* drawings could hardly indicate the presence of monastics among the Hoq visitors. On the other hand, it is well known that the travelers along the trade routes to the north also comprised Buddhist monks accompanying the caravans. Many of the graffiti on those routes designate the scribes explicitly as Buddhist monastics using titles like *bhikṣu, ācārya* (von Hinüber 1989a, 50–51) or *śramaṇa* (Kharoṣṭhī, Fussman 1989, 27–28). References to the first two terms are completely missing in Hoq. Only the less distinct term *śramaṇa* is attested in two epigraphs from the cave. A clear interpretation of both texts is hindered by the fact that the term can also be used as a personal name, as Heinrich Lüders remarked with regard to personal names like Samaṇa, Samanā, Śramaṇaka and Śamanika in early Indian inscriptions (1940, 618). The name Śramaṇa occurs also as a monk's (*bhikṣusya*) name on an inscribed slab from Mathurā.[17] It is therefore possible to

16 For the local suffix *-oṭ(ṭ)a(ka)* see von Hinüber (1983, 273).

17 See Falk (2000, 32–34 [= Falk 2013, 312–314]), with further references for epigraphical and literary attestations of this name. It is possible that also the name of the Indian Zarmanokhēgas, who according to Strabo committed suicide in Athens in front of the Roman emperor Augustus (63–14 BCE), goes back to an Indian name containing the element *śramaṇa*. Interestingly, Zarmanokhēgas is reported to hail from Bargosa (Bharukaccha) (cf. Reed 2014,

interpret both occurrences of the term *śramaṇa* at Hoq along these lines without their indicating any presence of Buddhist monks on Socotra.

In the first case, the visitor Dhruva, whose texts are attested at five different spots inside the cave, extended his usual text (reconstructed here as Sanskrit) *dhruvaḥ prāptaḥ* "Dhruva arrived" by the wording *śrama[ṇa]sya ma* ? ? ? (11:32). Neither the function nor the meaning of this extension can be established. It is therefore not possible to draw any reliable information out of this evidence.

The reading of the second text containing the word *śramaṇa* is somewhat clearer, but its interpretation is equally difficult. It reads:

śakaśramaṇo āga[to] "The *śakaśramaṇa* has come." (14:16)

The interpretation of *śakaśramaṇa* is not beyond doubt. If we understand *śramaṇa* here as personal name, the text could easily be understood as "The Śaka (Scythian) Śramaṇa has come." The text would thus contain a valuable information about the ethnic background of this (probably) Buddhist visitor, but no indication about an assumed monastic background.

The second uncertainty in this compound concerns the initial segment. If *śaka* here instantiates the well-known ethnonym, the interpretation suggested above is surely the preferable one. But due to the rather corrupt character of the orthography and language used in the Hoq graffiti it cannot be ruled out, that *śaka* goes back to a Middle Indic influenced form of Skt. *śākya*. Based on this – hypothetical – reconstruction one might compare the wording *śakaśramaṇa* with the otherwise attested term *śākyaśramaṇa* "monk of the Śākya, Buddhist monk."

This term is used in several Avadāna works and in the astronomical text *Yavanajātaka*, written in the second to third centuries CE by Sphujiddhvaja. In both text groups, it designates a Buddhist monk. The *Mṛcchakaṭikā* uses the term in its Middle Indic spelling *śakkaśaṃaṇake*.[18] However, like in the first instance, this interpretation is rather speculative and should also not serve as indisputable evidence for the presence of Buddhist monks on Socotra.

2.4 Socotra and the Diffusion of Buddhism to the West

It is generally accepted that the expeditions of Buddhists in the scope of early Western Indian Ocean trade did not result in a durable success of this religion in

275–276). Seldeslachts, who refuses this explanation of the name, regards the identification of Zarmanokhēgas as Buddhist unconvincing (2007, 148).

18 For a more detailed discussion and references, see Strauch (2012, 182).

the West. This paper is not the place to comprehensively discuss the multiple reasons for this historical development. It is also not our aim to address here the numerous theories on the impact of Buddhist ideas on philosophical developments in the West. Although much of the material discussed in this context is difficult to evaluate and speculations often outnumber "hard" historical facts, there can be no doubt that the intense contacts between the Mediterranean and India in the centuries following Alexander the Great's campaign to the East left traces in the cultures of the involved parties.[19]

In the following discussion, I want to narrow the scope to the actual transmitters of these transcultural phenomena: Who were the people who actually conducted this exchange of Buddhist ideas and concepts? Are Buddhist traders the main agents, or communities of Buddhists settling abroad for trading purposes?

The significance of trade networks for the early spread of Buddhism towards China was recently studied by Jason Neelis in his remarkable monograph *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks. Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia* (2010). Investigating the historical contexts of the diffusion of Buddhism towards China, Neelis appeals to the dual model developed by Erik Zürcher. Zürcher juxtaposes the mode of "contact expansion" as a kind of "diffusion, in which wandering Buddhist ascetics established residential monasteries near agricultural and commercial centers along trade and travel routes" with a "long-distance transmission," where Buddhist ideas and doctrines were transmitted over various, inconsistent routes of communication (Neelis 2010, 5–6). Neelis says:

> During the early phases of Buddhism in China in the Later Han period, the first Iranian and western Central Asian foreign monks and translators were active in Loyang about a century before residential monasteries were established in the Tarim Basin. The paucity of archaeological evidence in the transit zone of Xinjiang does not corroborate a pattern of diffusion by contact expansion from monastery to monastery following major trade routes. Élite centers of Buddhist literary and artistic production only develop later when sufficient economic surpluses are available for making donations to support year-round monastic institutions. However, such a network of monasteries was not necessary for sub-élite agents of Buddhist transmission who crossed formidable boundaries in the mountainous northwestern frontiers of South Asia and the Takla Makan desert in eastern Central Asia, but who remain largely anonymous in literary traditions. (Neelis 2010, 308)

The Upper Indus routes formed an important part of this long-distance transmission of Buddhism to China. The inscriptions and drawings along these trade

19 The most recent and very detailed study on this subject is Seldeslachts (2007). Other relevant works are Bongard-Levin and Karpyuk (1982); Webb (1993); and Halkias (2014). Most of the earlier literature devoted to this subject is quoted in these studies.

routes represent these sub-élite agents that are mainly responsible for the diffusion of Buddhism in this initial phase. At the same time, the data from the Upper Indus show a beginning process of localization and assimilation of Buddhism in this region:

> ... socioeconomic conditions in the upper Indus apparently did not support a pattern of monastic settlement before a period of élite patronage by the Palola Ṣāhi dynasty of Gilgit from the 7th to early 8th century. The enigmatic absence of a Buddhist institutional presence before this period did not mean that Buddhists were missing from the transit zone of the upper Indus. Instead, this overview of Buddhist petroglyphs and inscriptions has demonstrated that traders, itinerant monks, and local patrons began to localize religious topologies and narratives long before élite patronage led to increased levels of Buddhist literary and artistic production in Gilgit. (Neelis 2010, 287)

Applying these two models of diffusion described for China and for the Upper Indus to the evidence from Hoq, it becomes obvious that neither of them corresponds to the conditions we observed with regard to the Hoq inscriptions. There is no indication of the existence of monastic institutions or of an involvement of élite or sub-élite agents that could be responsible for the distribution of Buddhism among the local population. A successful spread of Buddhism presupposes the presence of "professionals," i.e. monastics, who could adequately propagate their ideas among the local population and the socioeconomic élite and who could initiate the establishment of monastic institutions and networks to perpetuate a Buddhist presence in these regions. Trade and traders could act as initial and supportive factors in the spread of Buddhism, but they were hardly in the position to substantiate this religious impact.

Evaluating the specific situation of Socotra, another factor has to be taken into account. Sailors came here to undertake certain trading activities and used their stay on the island for a visit of the supposedly sacred and, of course, naturally beautiful cave. They had to wait for the next monsoon, which would allow them to continue their journey to India or to the Mediterranean.[20] It is hardly

20 The exact duration of their stay cannot be determined on the basis of the Hoq material. But the data of Gujarati inscriptions from a much later period (seventeenth to eighteenth century CE) that were discovered at Ras Howlef on the northern coast of Socotra, can perhaps be projected to the earlier period (Shelat 2012). These later inscriptions give information about the average duration of a voyage from Western India to Socotra (about 50 days) and the stay of the sailors on the island (4–5 months). According to these documents, the sailors had to leave Gujarat in the month Jyeṣṭha (May–June) and had to return from Socotra before the storms of the south-west monsoon (between June and August) began (Shelat 2012, 431). An alternative schedule that delays the departure from Socotra to September, i.e. after the south-west monsoon, is attested in Arab and English sources (Shelat 2012, 431). In any case, a longer stay on the island seems unavoidable.

imaginable that they felt the need to erect a monastery on the island. Such an institution would need much more constant support than temporary visits of bypassing Indian ships could supply. The *Periplus'* statement that Indians lived permanently on the island is certainly not to be taken as accurate.

With regard to the permanent settlements of Indians in other parts of the Western Indian Ocean network the situation is different. But unfortunately, our knowledge about them is much more limited. Although there are indications that Indian communities settled permanently or at least for a longer time in harbour sites like Myos Hormos and Berenike and along the South-Arabian coast,[21] there are no archaeological traces of any Buddhist institutions, be it a *stūpa*, a monastery or another cultic edifice or even object. None of the few Indian inscriptions discovered along the Red Sea coast refers to Buddhism.[22] It is possible that there were Buddhists among the Indian traders and settlers in the west, but how they were organized and how they practiced their religion in the foreign environment is completely unknown.

In general, much of the "evidence" for the presence of Buddhists and Buddhist ideas in the Hellenistic and Roman West is rather hypothetical or even speculative. In the following, I will evaluate only some of the most current and repeatedly quoted pieces of "evidence."

a) "Buddhist merchants in Alexandria" – Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40 CE–ca. 112 CE)

According to Webb, "a community of Indian Buddhist merchants (even bhikṣus) could establish itself in" Alexandria (1993, 64). In support of this statement, he refers to two passages in the work of the Greek orator Dio Chrysostom[23] and the interpretation given by Jean W. Sedlar in his monograph *India and the Greek World* (1980). Sedlar writes:

> . . . he mentions "a few Indians" among the men of many nationalities who listened to his speech. Dio's statement that the Indian merchants of Alexandreia belonged to a class

21 Regarding the Indian inhabitants of Berenike, Sidebotham remarks: "Indian sailors or merchants, and like their Sinhalese contemporaries, visited Berenike and either stayed for a few months, arriving in early summer and catching the monsoon back to India in August, or resided there on a more permanent basis" (2011, 69).

22 See Salomon (1991). For more – sometimes disputed – epigraphical evidence for the Indian presence in Egypt and East Africa, see Strauch (2012, 369–372).

23 Webb (1993, 64–65, n. 22). Cf. Halkias, who refers to "Chrysostomos' reference to a class of Indian merchants in Alexandria" (2014, 73, n. 22).

> held "in low repute" by the rest of their countrymen, who "say harsh things about them," may perhaps indicate that they were Buddhists or Jains – heretics from the orthodox Brahmin viewpoint. Tending to support this identification is the fact that in this period Brahmins were forbidden to cross the sea on pain of incurring ritual pollution and possible expulsion from caste membership. (Sedlar 1980, 81)

As we will see, both scholars here mingled up two different texts by Dio and created thus the existence of "Indian merchants of Alexandreia" with "a low repute" that is not based on any textual evidence.

In his *Oratio* 32 ("To the People of Alexandria"), Dio lists:

> not merely Greeks and Italians and people from neighbouring Syria, Libya, Cilicia, nor yet Ethiopians and Arabs from more distant regions, but even Bactrians and Scythians and Persians and a few Indians, and all these help to make up the audience in your theatre and sit beside you on each occasion. (Cohoon and Lamar Crosby [1940] 1961, 211)

Sedlar and Webb link this remark with Dio's *Oratio* 35 ("Delivered in Celaenae in Phrygia"). Here, Dio refers to India as the only place in the world which had more favorable conditions than those of Celaena:

> Accordingly I know of no city that is more favoured by fortune than Celaenae and no people that leads a better existence – save only the people of India. (Cohoon and Lamar Crosby [1940] 1961, 407)
>
> (. . .) though only a few do go there, in pursuit of trade, and they mingle only with the people of the coast. And that branch of the Indian race is in low repute, and all the others say harsh things of them. (Cohoon and Lamar Crosby [1940] 1961, 413)

There is no need to assume that the people at India's coast have anything to do with the Indians of Alexandria. That their low reputation would hint at their Buddhist (or Jain) identity is mere speculation. But even if we accepted this speculation, it cannot help to determine the character of the Alexandrian Indians. Whether they were Buddhists or not, merchants or monastics, we simply don't know. Thus any conclusion that Dio explicitly refers in his *Oratio* 32 to Buddhist merchants is completely unjustified.

b) The *therapeutai* of Alexandria: a Buddhist sect? – Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 BCE–50 CE)

While Dio's *Oratio* 32 gives an impressive account on the cosmopolitan character of first century Alexandria, the Jewish *Therapeutai* community of Alexandria, as described a century earlier by Philo of Alexandria in his *De Vita Contemplativa,*

can hardly contribute to our discussion. Although their ascetic character together with certain other features allow for a comparison with Buddhism, there is not the slightest evidence that this community had any direct relation with Buddhism or can be linked to Buddhist groups settling in Egypt.[24] Even if we were to assume an influence of Buddhist ideas and concepts on this Jewish sect, we have no clue to determine the source of this influence on the basis of Philo's account.

c) The gymnosophists of Ethiopia in the biography of Apollonius of Tyana: a formerly Buddhist community? – Philostratus (ca. 170–247 CE)

Philo's description of the *Therapeutai* has been compared with that of a group of "Naked Ones" in Ethiopia found in the fictional biography of Apollonius of Tyana (1st c. CE) written by the sophist Philostratus ca. 225–235 CE (Anderson 1986, 216–217, Sedlar 1980, 190–207). The character of Philostratus' work is highly complicated, intermingling information inherited from Megasthenes' *Indika* and other earlier accounts with more recent data whose source is mostly unclear (Karttunen 1997, 7–8). While his description of India contains much authentic information, the Ethiopian part of Philostratus' work abounds in inaccuracies and fantastic elements (Anderson 1986, 215–220). In his book on Ethiopia (Book VI), Philostratus describes a community of naked ascetics and reports about a discussion Apollonius had with Thespesion, the oldest of the sect's followers. Apollonius is praising his own philosophy, which he describes as "constituted in the way Pythagoras ordained, and (...) divinely inspired in the way the Indians ordained before Pythagoras" (6.11.12, tr. Jones 2005, 131). Further on, he blames the Ethiopian gymnosophists to deny their Indian origin:

24 Cf. the discussion of this theory by Seldeslachts (2007, 158–160), who calls "the comparison between the sect of the *Therapeutai*, and Buddhism most interesting" (2007, 158). His conclusions remain, however, rather vague. Halkias is completely misleading when he writes: "As recorded by Philo of Alexandria (...), the presence of early Buddhist settlements in the West could explain the unusual convictions of an active sect in Alexandria of Egypt, the Therapeutai ..." (2014, 73, n. 22). More reliable studies of this sect are now available with Taylor and Davies (1998), and Taylor (2003). Although Taylor admits certain parallels with Buddhism and a possible influence "of Buddhism and other Indian philosophies on the intellectual world of Alexandria" (2003, 64, n. 23), she says: "To what extent those who followed the contemplative life copied any forms or ideas from the norms of Eastern philosophy cannot be known" (2003, 74).

> You yourselves supported Pythagoras in this wisdom so long as you spoke well of the Indians, since you too were originally Indians. But when you were shamed by the report that the displeasure of the Earth caused you to come here, and you preferred to be anything rather than Ethiopians arrived from India, then all your actions were directed to that. You stripped yourselves of your original clothing, as if simultaneously casting off your Ethiopian identity, you determined to worship the gods in the Egyptian way rather than your own, and you began to tell unseemly stories about the Indians, as if you yourselves were not discredited by having come from discreditable people. (6.11.13, tr. Jones 2005, 131+133)

Two frequently used *topoi* characterize Apollonius' appeal. The first is the general admiration for Indian wisdom and Indian sages as holy men *par excellence* that began to dominate the western image of India in the Hellenistic period and reached its climax in the late-antique period (Parker 2008, 251–307, see also Karttunen 1997, 55–64).[25] The second *topos* concerns the equation of India and Ethiopia that is found in a number of classical sources and hardly reflects any historic authenticity (Parker 2008, 54; Schneider 2004).

The same two motifs can also be observed in a later passage of this account when Nilus, the youngest of the Ethiopian gymnosophists, approaches Apollonius and tells him about the reason why he decided to become a member of this group:

> My father once sailed to the Red Sea of his own free will, since he commanded the ship that the Egyptians send to the land of India. He conversed with the Indians of the shore, and brought back accounts of the wise men there similar to those that you recounted to us. I also heard from him some such story as this, that the Indians were the wisest people in the world, and that the Ethiopians were migrants from India who maintained their ancestral wisdom and respected their origins. So on entering manhood I gave my inheritance to anyone wanting it, and joined these Naked Ones as naked as they were, expecting to learn Indian wisdom or something close to it. (6.16.3, tr. Jones 2005, 149+151)

Nilus' report here simply reiterates the *topoi* previously introduced in Apollonius' speech. The reference to Egyptian merchants travelling to Indian coastal areas is possibly based on historical facts and confirms what we learned above from Dio Chrysostom. It is also possible that these merchants transmitted Indian ideas to the West. But the reference to the Indian origin of Ethiopians can hardly claim

25 Cf. especially Parker (2008, 303–304): "By the end of the late-antique period it had become impossible to think of Brahmans without the intervening lens of Christian asceticism (and indeed of its polytheist competitors) (...). To speak of the Brahmans and Gymnosophists as a Hellenistic fiction might seem unnecessarily skeptical (...). Yet on the other hand, we must be very aware of the ways in which these ascetics filled a need on the part of Greeks and Romans: the need for holy people, leading a gloriously independent existence within their own social worlds."

any historical value. Thus Philostratus' account can tell us nothing about the presence of Indians or even Buddhists in first century Ethiopia.[26]

d) Buddhist symbols on a gravestone from Dendera?

In the monograph on the 1898 excavations in ancient Dendera, F. Ll. Griffiths, while discussing the inscription on a Demotic gravestone, refers to the opinion of the Egyptologist Flinders Petrie who was "inclined to see in the crossed circle and object resembling a four pronged fork the Buddhist symbols of the wheel of life and the trisul" (Flinders Petrie 1900, 54). This interpretation had already been dismissed by Rapson, who was shown a copy of the symbols, and should not be taken seriously into account when discussing the evidence of a Buddhist presence in Ptolemaic Egypt.[27] According to a recent study by Jan Moje, both symbols are purely Egyptian. Moje interpreted the first sign ("the fork") as offering table with four breads, the second ("the wheel") could also represent a bread, although Moje here prefers another interpretation that links the shape

26 As an example for such an imaginative interpretation of Nilus' report, I quote G.R.S Mead (1901, 102–103, Chapter 10: "The Gymnosophists of Upper Egypt"): "If there be any truth in this story it follows that the founders of this way of life had been Indian ascetics, and if so they must have belonged to the only propagandising form of Indian religion, namely, the Buddhist. After the impulse had been given, the communities, which were presumably recruited from generations of Egyptians, Arabs, and Ethiopians, were probably left entirely to themselves, and so in course of time forgot their origin, and even perhaps their original rule. Such speculations are permissible, owing to the repeated assertion of the original connection between these Gymnosophists and India. The whole burden of the story is that they were Indians who had forgotten their origin and fallen away from the wisdom."

27 Cf. the short discussion of Salomon (1991, 736, n. 33). Flinders Petrie is also responsible for another piece of "evidence" for an Indian presence in Egypt. In 1908, he briefly introduced some "Indian" terracotta figurines from Memphis, which according to him "are the first remains of Indians known on the Mediterranean. Hitherto there have been no material evidences for that connection which is stated to have existed, both by embassies from Egypt and Syria to India, and by the great Buddhist mission sent by Asoka as far west as Greece and Cyrene. We seem now to have touched the Indian colony in Memphis, and we may hope for more light on that connection which seems to have been so momentous for Western thought" (1908, 129). Although some scholars of Indian Art are inclined to accept his interpretation of some of the Memphis terracotta figurines as Indian and even consider the possibility that they might be products of a local Indian community (especially Harle 1991, 1992), these figurines can at most indicate a certain Indian influence on the aesthetic concepts used by the local artists in Memphis. The channels of this influence remain obscure – whether it was local Indians or local Egyptian artists acquainted with Indian art through direct or indirect contact with Indian models. For our discussion about the presence of Buddhists in the West, these figurines are of no relevance.

of the symbol to that of the Demotic hieroglyph for "underworld." Hence he considers this symbol to be a cryptographic representation of Osiris, the god of the underworld (Moje 2008, 40–43).[28]

Based on this short review, Seldeslachts' statement about "patches of practicing Buddhists in Egypt and elsewhere ... left to themselves, except for the support of traders and converted locals" (2007, 161) must remain hypothetical until further confirming evidence can be procured.[29] There is no positive evidence for the existence of "practicing Buddhists" in the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean, not to speak of Buddhist monasteries.

If we look at the detectable impact Buddhism had on western conceptions, there is hardly anything that could prove a strong presence of Buddhist ideas in the intellectual circles of the West.[30] But the little evidence we have can perhaps help to better evaluate the assumed role of Indian traders in the process of the Buddhist-western encounter.

The first western author who explicitly mentioned Buddhism was the Christian, Clement of Alexandria, who lived in the late second or early third century CE (Seldeslachts 2007, 154–155, cf. also Parker 2008, 252).[31] Of course, given the possible presence of Indians – and Buddhists – in this part of the Roman Empire, it is tempting to assume a kind of first-hand information that Clement could have obtained from his Indian "neighbors." This was indeed recently suggested by Annika Yoshida Reed, who "wonder(s) whether Clement's own context in Roman Egypt, in the cosmopolitan city of Alexandria, may have afforded him opportunities to hear travelers' tales of the Indian subcontinent, or perhaps even to encounter South Asian traders of the sort attested by the epigraphical evidence adduced by Richard Salomon" (Reed 2014, 272).

But if one takes a closer look at the relevant statements found in his monumental work *Stromateis*, it becomes obvious that Clement uses all sort of sources, but none of them can be characterized as first-hand accounts and none of

28 The stele is listed as no. 20 in Moje's catalogue (2008, 33). A depiction can be found on Table 21. I have to thank Alexandra von Lieven for this reference.

29 This statement clearly contradicts the above cited passage, according to which one "looks in vain for something specifically Buddhistic about these people" (Seldeslachts 2007, 148).

30 Bongard-Levin and Karpyuk, who investigated the influence of Buddhism on Hellenistic and Roman literature, concluded: "As a whole, Buddhism did not execute any remarkable influence on the ancient world" (1982, 50, tr. I.S.). The same conclusion was drawn by other scholars, such as E. Lamotte and Loucette Boulnois (Webb 1993, 81–82).

31 According to Rawlinson, Clement is even "the first writer to shew any real knowledge of Eastern philosophy, in addition to the commonplaces repeated by successive writers since the time of Megasthenes" (1916, 174).

them can be traced back to the assumed presence of Indian Buddhists in the Alexandrian region.

Clement's first explicit Buddhist reference is embedded in a longer passage about Indian religions that is otherwise based on Megasthenes' *Indika*. In a single sentence Clement refers to the Buddha:

> Some, too, of the Indians obey the precepts of *Boutta* whom, on account of his extraordinary sanctity, they have raised to divine honors. (Clement, *Stromateis* 1.15.71, cited after Reed 2014, 273)

As a possible source for his information about Buddhism, Bongard-Levin and Karpyuk (1982, 47) referred to Clement's teacher, Pantaenus, who travelled at the end of the second century CE as a missionary to India (see also Reed 2014, 273). According to Seldeslachts (2007, 154), Clement's transcription of Buddha as *Bouttas* could also indicate that he did not get his information directly from Indians, but rather through Iranian intermediaries.[32] There is no evidence, at least, that Clement's reference goes back to Indians living in or near Alexandria.

The second, rather large and detailed description of the Buddhist religion in Clement's work was clearly borrowed from an earlier source. Clement himself refers to Alexander Polyhistor (first century BCE).[33]

> And those called holy men (*semnoi*) go naked throughout their entire life. They seek for the truth, and predict the future, and reverence a certain pyramid beneath which, they think, lie the bones of a certain god. Neither the gymnosophists nor the so-called holy men have wives. They think sexual relations are unnatural and contrary to law. For this cause, they keep themselves chaste. The holy men are also virgins. They observe, it seems, the heavenly bodies and from what they indicate foretell future events. (Clement, *Stromateis* 3.7.60, cited after Reed 2014, 273–274)

Although this passage might well refer to Indian (or Indo-Greek) Buddhists – but Jains or Ājīvikas are equally potential candidates – it hardly reveals any profound knowledge of this religion. Still less can it serve as proof for Clement's direct acquaintance with Buddhists or Buddhism.

---

32 Such a source was also suggested by Bongard-Levin and Karpyuk (1982, 47) for the initial part of Clement's description of Indian religions, where he refers to Bactrian *samanaioi (Samanaioi Bactrôn)*. For this term, Dihle had already suggested a Middle Persian intermediary form *ssamana*. For this passage, which some scholars also ascribed to Megasthenes, cf. Karttunen (1997, 63, n. 266).

33 See Karttunen (1997, 63) and Bongard-Levin and Karpyuk (1982, 48). Dihle even considers these passages as going back to Megasthenes (Karttunen 1997, 63, n. 265).

In fact, most of the early western sources referring to Buddhism are Christian texts. As Bongard-Levin and Karpyuk have stressed (1982, 50), this predilection can be understood as a kind of counter-reaction against the somewhat uncritical and idealistic way in which Brahmans were described in non-Christian texts. The assumed "monotheism" of Buddhism made this religion a natural partner in the struggle against the polytheistic cults of the Roman Empire.

Another important Christian author who wrote extensively about India was the Syrian Christian, Bardesanes (154–222 CE), a contemporary of Clement.[34] He is said to have written an entire book about India, which is unfortunately not preserved. Fragments of it, cited by later authors, show that Bardesanes indeed added much new information about India to the classical canon inherited by Megasthenes. According to Porphyry, who used much of Bardesanes' work, his information goes back to "one Sandanes, Sandalis, Dandamis or Damadamis, an Indian who came with an embassy to Syria to welcome the Emperor Elagabalus to the throne in 218 A.D." (Rawlinson 1916, 143, see also Bongard-Levin and Karpyuk 1982, 48). According to the passages preserved in Porphyry's work, Bardesanes described the mode of life of Brahmins and *samanaioi* (< *śramaṇa*). He wrote about the *samanaioi*:

> But the Samanaeans are elected, and consist of those who wish to possess divine knowledge (...) When, however, any one is desirous of being enrolled in their order, he proceeds to the rulers of the city; but abandons the city or village that he inhabited, and the wealth and all the other property that he possessed. Having likewise the superfluities of his body cut off, he receives a garment, and departs to the Samanaeans, but does not return either to his wife or children, if he happens to have any, nor does he pay any attention to them, or think that they at all pertain to him. And, with respect to his children indeed, the king provides what is necessary for them, and the relatives provide for the wife. And such is the life of the Samanaeans. But they live out of the city, and spend the whole day in conversation pertaining to divinity. They have also houses and temples, built by the king, in which they are stewards, who receive a certain emolument from the king, for the purpose of supplying those that dwell in them with nutriment. But their food consists of rice, bread, autumnal fruits, and pot-herbs. And when they enter into their house, the sound of a bell being the signal of their entrance, those that are not Samanaeans depart from it, and the Samanaeans begin immediately to pray. But having prayed, again, on the bell sounding as a signal, the servants give to each Samanaean a platter, (for two of them do not eat out of the same dish,) and feed them with rice. And to him who is in want of a variety of food, a pot-herb is added, or some autumnal fruit. But having eaten as much as is requisite, without any delay they proceed to their accustomed employments. All of them likewise are unmarried, and have no possessions: and so much are both these and the Bramins venerated by the other Indians, that the king also visits them, and requests them to pray to and supplicate the Gods, when any

34 For the life and work of Bardesanes, see Skjærvø (1988).

> calamity befalls the country, or to advise him how to act. (Porphyry, *De Abstinentia*, 4, tr. Taylor [1823] 1994)

The information Bardesanes got from the ambassadors shows a rather detailed knowledge of the monastic life-style and the social and economic conditions of monasticism and its relation to state institutions, but hardly any familiarity with Buddhist doctrines and rituals. As Deeg and Gardener (2009, 5–11) have shown, this description – and in particular the following references to the *samanaioi*'s ritual suicide – even better fit a Jain context. It is exactly the kind of rather generic information one would expect from a diplomat in royal service.[35] Again there is nothing to indicate a personal encounter between Bardesanes and Buddhist institutions or practitioners.

Information about Buddhism and Buddhist conceptions was at that time not only available from Buddhists themselves or from Indians who were acquainted with Buddhist culture and ideas. Several religious communities such as the Manichaeans from Iran were influenced by Buddhism and transmitted certain ideas to the West. The personal contacts of the religion's founder Mani (216–277 CE) with Buddhists, whom he met on his tour to India, and the influence of Buddhist conceptions on Manichaeism are well known.[36] More disputed is the Buddhist impact on the teachings of the early Christian Gnostic Basilides (ca. 85–ca. 145 CE), as argued by Kennedy (1902).[37] Unfortunately, we know next to nothing about Basilides' possible contacts with Buddhism.[38]

Through the close interaction between Manichaean, Gnostic, Jewish, and early Christian communities, Buddhist ideas and conceptions could enter the "Western world" in a modified form. In most cases, their Buddhist background

35 Reed's assumption that he got this information from an "Indian sage" (2014, 276) can hardly be substantiated on the basis of the available evidence.

36 For the Buddhist impact on early Manichaeism, see Sundermann (1997).

37 See Webb (1993, 75–76) and Seldeslachts (2007, 151–154). Richard Garbe (1914) even says: "Vollkommen vom Buddhismus durchtränkt ist das System des Basilides (aus der ersten Hälfte des zweiten Jahrhunderts), der das Leiden für den Grundzug alles Daseins erklärte, die Seelenwanderung mit dem Gesetz der Vergeltung annahm und die Persönlichkeit als einen Komplex aus fünf Bestandteilen auffaßte (entsprechend den fünf buddhistischen Khandas oder Daseinselementen) – um nur die hauptsächlichsten Entlehnungen aus dem Buddhismus zu erwähnen" (1914, 72). A comprehensive survey about Basilides' teachings and life in the context of Alexandrian Gnosticism and early Christianity is found in Pearson (2008), who does not even consider the possibility of a Buddhist influence.

38 Webb refers to "Indian merchants from the port of Barygaza in Gujarat and from Ceylon" as Basilides' source (1993, 75). This information is not based on any historical evidence. Webb here takes Kennedy's assumption that Basilides might have heard about Buddhism from Indian merchants in Alexandria as described by Dio Chrysostom (see above) as historical fact.

was not explicitly marked nor were these ideas directly linked with Buddhist practitioners. As Seldeslachts rightly remarks, "many such apparently Buddhist elements are found on the crossroads between Judaism, Gnosticism, Christianity, Neo-Platonism, and similar agents of the orientalisation of the West (2007, 150)."

According to this short overview, several sources of information about Buddhism can be identified in Hellenistic, Roman and early Christian literature. Based on rather generic ideas about Indian ascetics (*śramaṇa*) inherited from Alexandrian historians and the Seleucid ambassador Megasthenes, western conceptions about Buddhism were gradually augmented by specific information, mainly through the following three channels:

1. Indian diplomats traveling west.
2. Westerners traveling east.
3. Indirect information from religious communities that had contact with both spheres, such as Manichaeans, and Gnostic and early Christian groups.

There is no evidence that Indian Buddhists settling in the West or Indian Buddhist monks traveling west were ever referred to as a source of information about this religion. At the same time, none of the sources confirm the existence of Buddhist communities in the Mediterranean.[39]

2.5 Conclusion

If it is permissible to generalize the evidence of the Hoq corpus for India's oversea trade contacts with the West in the first centuries of our era, the following points can be highlighted:

1. A considerable portion of the merchants and sailors travelling west were Buddhists. Projecting the evidence from Hoq, their percentage might have reached nearly 30%.

39 See also the rather clear statement made by Russell Webb: "Summing up, a Buddhist community, recognizable as such, was never established in the Mediterranean area, or, indeed, anywhere in the West proper" (1993, 80). He continues, "(t)he only exception might be made in the case of the international emporium of Alexandria in Egypt, where individual Buddhist merchants from India could well have formed part of the transient population" (Webb 1993, 80–81). As we stated above, the probability of Buddhist merchants among the Indian trading communities along the Western Indian Ocean trade routes does not automatically imply the existence of Buddhist communities, which *per definitionem* must include monastics. Evidence for such monastic communities is completely absent.

2. According to the devotional texts and drawings left at Hoq, the Buddhist merchants practiced a rather simplistic form of Buddhism where the figure of the historical Buddha Gautama and the object of the *stūpa* represented the core of the religious and ritual activities. There is not a single text, which would refer to any kind of dogmatic issues. At the same time the corpus does not give any indication of Mahāyāna ideas.
3. There is no definitive evidence that could indicate the presence of Buddhist monastics among the participants of oversea trade with the west.
4. According to the evidence from Hoq, where texts of various sea-trading communities – including South-Arabians, Ethiopians and Greeks – are attested, neither the local population (including the local élites) nor any of the other attested ethnic groups were involved in any kind of Buddhist activities.

When compared to the literary, archaeological and epigraphical evidence, the information from Hoq fits well with the general picture. As the sources show, the participation of Buddhist sailors and merchants in the western Indian Ocean sea-trade was not accompanied by the establishment of Buddhist religious institutions. Only a process that involved the active engagement of religious professionals could have supplied the basis for the diffusion of Buddhism as an institutional religion. Temporary settlements of traders along the sea trade routes in South Arabia and the Red Sea coast were hardly able to provide the necessary economic support for permanent Buddhist institutions.

Although it is highly probable that there were Buddhists among the Indian traders and settlers, there is no evidence that Buddhism ever left the boundaries of these Indian communities or was accepted by the local population or the local economic or political élite. This missing "localization" is certainly also due to the apparent lack of Buddhist monastics among the Indian travelers. Consequently, the conditions along the western Indian Ocean trade routes were nearly diametrically opposite to the situation in the Indian northwest, where Buddhist monastics actively participated in the movements along the trade routes and where local patrons lively supported the Buddhist activities.

References

Anderson, Graham. 1986. *Philostratus. Biography and Belles Lettres in the Third Century A.D.* London, et al.: Croom Helm.

Bandini-König, Ditte. 1999. *Die Felsbildstation Hodar*. Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans 3. Mainz: von Zabern.

Bandini-König, Ditte. 2003. *Die Felsbildstation Thalpan. I Kataloge Chilas-Brücke und Thalpan (Steine 1–30)*. Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans 6. Mainz: von Zabern.

Bandini-König, Ditte. 2005. *Die Felsbildstation Thalpan. II Katalog Thalpan (Steine 31–195)*. Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans 7. Mainz: von Zabern.

Bandini-König, Ditte. 2007. *Die Felsbildstation Thalpan. III Katalog Thalpan (Steine 196–450)*. Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans 8. Mainz: von Zabern.

Bandini-König, Ditte. 2009. *Die Felsbildstation Thalpan. IV Katalog Thalpan (Steine 451–811)*. Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans 9. Mainz: von Zabern.

Bandini-König, Ditte. 2011. *Die Felsbildstation Thalpan. V Kataloge Ziyarat, Thakot, Khomar Das, Gichoi Das, Dardarbati Das*. Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans 10. Darmstadt: von Zabern.

Bandini-König, Ditte, and Oskar von Hinüber. 2001. *Die Felsbildstationen Shing Nala und Gichi Nala*. Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans 4. Mainz: von Zabern.

Bemmann, Martin, and Ditte König. 1994. *Die Felsbildstation Oshibat*. Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans 1. Mainz: von Zabern.

Bhattacharya, Gouriswar. 1987. "Dāna-Deyadharma: Donation in Early Buddhist Records (in Brāhmī)." In *Investigating Indian Art*, edited by Marianne Yaldiz and Wibke Lobo, 39–60. Berlin: Museum für Indische Kunst; Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

Bongard-Levin, G.M., and S.G. Karpyuk. 1982. "Svedeniya o buddizme v antichnoj i rannekhristianskoj literature." In *Drevnyaya Indiya. Istoriko-kul'turnye svyazi*. Moskva, 42–52. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Naüka.

Casson, Lionel. 1989. *The* Periplus Maris Erythraei. *Text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Cohoon, J.W., and H. Lamar Crosby. [1940] 1961. *Dio Chrysostom. With an English Translation. In Five Volumes*. Volume III. The Loeb Classical Library 339. London: William Heinemann Ltd., Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.

Deeg, Max, and Iain Gardner. 2009. "Indian Influence on Mani Reconsidered. The Case of Jainism." *International Journal of Jaina Studies (Online)* 5.2. Accessed April 25, 2016. http://www.soas.ac.uk/research/publications/journals/ijjs/file49418.pdf.

Dridi, Hédi. 2002. "Indiens et Proche-Orientaux dans une grotte de Suquṭrā (Yemen)." *Journal Asiatique* 290.2:565–610.

Falk, Harry. 2000 (repr. in Falk 2013, 309–315). "Two New Inscriptions from the Time of Huviṣka." *Berliner Indologische Studien* 13–14:29–35.

Falk, Harry. 2013. *Hariśyenalekhapañcāśikā. Fifty Selected Papers on Indian Epigraphy and Chronology*, edited by Britta Schneider and Ingo Strauch. Bremen: Dr. Ute Hempen Verlag.

Flinders Petrie, W.M. 1900. *Dendereh 1898*. Memoirs of the Egypt Exploration Fund 17. London: Offices of the Egypt Exploration Fund.

Flinders Petrie, W.M. 1908. "The peoples of the Persian Empire." *Man* 71:129–130.

Fussman, Gérard. 1989. "Les inscriptions Kharoṣṭhī de la plaine de Chilas." In Jettmar et al. 1989, 1–39.

Fussman, Gérard, and Ditte König. 1997. *Die Felsbildstation Shatial*. Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans 2. Mainz: von Zabern.

Garbe, Richard. 1914. *Indien und das Christentum: eine Untersuchung der religionsgeschichtlichen Zusammenhänge*. Tübingen: Mohr.

Halkias, Georgios T. 2014. "When the Greeks Converted the Buddha: Asymmetrical Transfers of Knowledge in Indo-Greek Cultures." In *Religions and Trade. Religious Formation, Transformation and Cross-Cultural Exchange between East and West*, edited by Peter Wick and Volker Rabens, 65–115. Dynamics in the History of Religions 5. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Harle, James. 1991. "The 'Indian' Terracottas from Ancient Memphis: Are They Really Indian?" In *Akṣayanīvī. Essays Presented to Dr. Debala Mitra in admiration of her scholarly contributions*, edited by Gouriswar Bhattacharya, 55–61. Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica Series 88. Delhi: Satguru Publ.

Harle, James. 1992. "The 'Indian' Terracottas from Ancient Memphis: A Hitherto Unknown Deity?" In *South Asian Archaeology 1989: Papers from the Tenth International Conference of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe: Musée National des Arts Asiatiques, Guimet, Paris, France*, edited by Cathérine Jarrige, 375–384. Madison: Prehistory Press.

von Hinüber, Oskar. 1983. "Zu einigen Felsinschriften in Brāhmī aus Nordpakistan." In *Ethnologie und Geschichte. Festschrift für Karl Jettmar*, edited by Peter Snoy, 272–279. Wiesbaden: Steiner.

von Hinüber, Oskar. 1989a. "Brāhmī Inscriptions on the History and Culture of the Upper Indus valley." In Jettmar et al. 1989, 41–71.

von Hinüber, Oskar. 1989b. "Buddhistische Inschriften aus dem Tal des Oberen Indus (Inschriften Nr. 68–109)." In Jettmar et al. 1989, 72–106.

Jettmar, Karl, Ditte König, and Volker Thewalt. 1989. *Rock Inscriptions in the Indus Valley*. Antiquities of Northern Pakistan. Reports and Studies 1. Mainz: von Zabern.

Jones, Christopher P. 2005. *Philostratus. The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. Books V–VIII. The Loeb Classical Library 17. Cambridge, Mass./London: Harvard University Press.

Karttunen, Klaus. 1997. *India and the Hellenistic World*. Studia Orientalia 83. Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society.

Kennedy, J. 1902. "Buddhist Gnosticism, the System of Basilides." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1902:377–415.

Lamotte, Etienne. 1958. *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien: des origines à l'ère Śaka*. Louvain-La-Neuve: Institut orientaliste de Louvain.

Lüders, Heinrich. 1912. *A List of Brahmi Inscriptions from the Earliest Time to about A.D. 400 with the Exception of those of Asoka*. Appendix to Epigraphia Indica, X (1909–10). Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing.

Lüders, Heinrich. 1940. *Philologica Indica: ausgewählte kleine Schriften: Festgabe zum siebzigsten Geburtstage am 25. Juni 1939 dargebracht von Kollegen, Freunden und Schülern*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht.

Malalasekara, G.P. 1937–1938. *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*. 2 volumes. London: Murray.

Mead, G.R.S. 1901. *Apollonius of Tyana. The Philosopher Explorer and Social Reformer of the the First Century AD*. Accessed April 24, 2016. http://gnosis.org/library/grs-mead/apollonius/apollonius_mead_0.htm.

Moje, Jan. 2008. *Demotische Epigraphik aus Dandara: Die demotischen Grabstelen*. Internet-Beiträge zur Ägyptologie und Sudanarchäologie 9. Berlin. Accessed April 24, 2016. http://www2.rz.hu-berlin.de/nilus/net-publications/ibaes9.

Neelis, Jason. 2010. *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks. Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia*. Dynamics in the History of Religion 2. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Neelis, Jason. 2014. "Localizing the Buddha's Presence at Wayside Shrines in Northern Pakistan." In *Religions and Trade. Religious Formation, Transformation and Cross-*

Cultural Exchange between East and West, edited by Peter Wick and Volker Rabens, 45–64. Dynamics in the History of Religions 5. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Parker, Grant. 2008. *The Making of Roman India* . Cambridgeet al.: Cambridge University Press.

Pearson, Birger A. 2008. "Basilides the Gnostic." In *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'*, edited by Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen, 1–31. Vigiliae Christianea Supplement Series 76. Leiden: Brill.

Rawlinson, H.G. 1916. *Intercourse Between India and the Western World*. Cambridge: University Press.

Reed, Annette Yoshiko. 2014. "Reimagining the East. Eurasian Trade, Asian Religions, and Christian Identities." In *Material Culture and Asian Religions: Text, Image, Object*, edited by Benjamin Fleming and Richard Mann, 265–283. Routledge Research in Religion, Media and Culture 4. New York: Routledge.

Robin, Christian, and Maria Gorea. 2002. "Les vestiges antiques de la grotte de Hoq (Suqutra, Yémen)." *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 2002:*409–445.

Ruegg, David Seyfort. 2004. "Aspects of the Study of the (Earlier) Indian Mahāyāna." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 27.1:3–61.

Ruegg, David Seyfort. 2005. "The Kalawān Copper-Plate Inscription: Early Evidence for Mahāyāna-Type Thinking?" *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28.1:3–9.

Salomon, Richard. 1991. "Epigraphic Remains of Indian Traders in Egypt." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111:731–736.

Schneider, Pierre. 2004. *L'Éthiopie et l'Inde: interférences et confusions aux extrémités du monde antique (VIIIe siècle avant J.-C. – VIe siècle après J.-C.)*. Collection de l'École française de Rome 335. Roma: École française de Rome.

Schopen, Gregory. 1979. "Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 21:1–19 (= Schopen 2005, 223–246).

Schopen, Gregory. 1985. "Two Problems in the History of Indian Buddhism. The Layman/Monk Disctinction and the Doctrines of the Transference of Merit." *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 10:9–47.

Schopen, Gregory. 2005. *Figments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism. More Collected Papers* Studies in the Buddhist Traditions. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Sedlar, Jean W. 1980. *India and the Greek World. A Study in the Transmission of Culture*. Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield.

Seldeslachts, Erik. 2007. "Greek, the Final Frontier? The Westward Spread of Buddhism." In *The Spread of Buddhism*, edited by Ann Heirman and Stephan Peter Bumbacher, 131–166. Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section Eight: Central Asia 16. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Shelat, Bharati. 2012. "The Gujarati stone inscriptions from Rās Ḥowlef (Socotra)." In: Strauch 2012, 407–432.

Sidebotham, S.E. 2011. *Berenike and the Ancient Maritime Spice Route*. The California World History Library. Berkeley et al.: University of California Press.

Sirivianou, Maria G. 1989. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri LVI*. Graeco-Roman Memoirs 76. London: Egypt Exploration Society.

Skjærvø, P.O. 1988. "Bardesanes." In *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Volume III, 780–785. Accessed April 25, 2016. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bardesanes-syr.

Strauch, Ingo, ed. 2012. *Foreign Sailors on Socotra. The inscriptions and drawings from the cave Hoq*. Vergleichende Studien zu Antike und Orient 3. Bremen: Dr. Ute Hempen Verlag.

Strauch, Ingo, and Mikhail Bukharin. 2004. "Indian Inscriptions from the Cave Ḥoq on Suquṭrā." *Annali dell' Istituto Universitario Orientale* 64:121–138.

Sundermann, Werner. 1997. "Manichaeism meets Buddhism. The Problem of Buddhist Influence on Manichaeism." In *Bauddhavidyāsudhākaraḥ. Studies in Honour of Heinz Bechert on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, edited by Petra Kieffer-Pülz and Jens-Uwe Hartmann, 647–656. Indica et Tibetica 30. Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica-et-Tibetica-Verlag.

Taylor, Joan E. [2003] 2009. *Jewish Women Philosophers of First-Century Alexandria. Philo's 'Therapeutae' Reconsidered*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Taylor, Joan E., and Philip R. Davies. 1998. "The So-Called Therapeutae of *De Vita Contemplativa*: Identity and Character." *Harvard Theological Review* 91.1:3–24.

Taylor, Thomas. [1823] 1994. *Select works of Porphyry: Containing his four books On abstinence from animal food; his treatise On the Homeric cave of the nymphs; and his Auxiliaries to the perception of intelligible natures*. (Repr. Prometheus Trust.) Accessed April 25, 2016. http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/porphyry_abstinence_00_eintro.htm.

Thewalt, Volker. 1985. "Rockcarvings and Inscriptions along the Indus." In *South Asian Archaeology 1983*, vol. 2, edited by Janine Schotmans and Maurizio Taddei, 779–800. Naples: Istituto universitario orientale.

Thewalt, Volker. 2008. *Stūpas und verwandte Bauwerke in Felsbildern der Stationen Chilās* I, *Chilās* II *und Oshibat am Indus (Nordpakistan)*. Teil 1: Text. Wiesenbach: Volker Thewalt Verlag. Accessed April 25, 2016. http://www.thewalt.de/stupa_080812.pdf.

Webb, Russell. 1993. "The Early Spread and Influence of Buddhism in Western Asia." *Buddhist Studies Review* 10.1:57–82.

Anna Filigenzi

3 Non-Buddhist Customs of Buddhist People: Visual and Archaeological Evidence from North-West Pakistan

In the rich repertoire of the Buddhist art of Gandhāra,[1] a special place is occupied by what we usually call "Dionysiac scenes," where different characters are portrayed in the act of drinking, dancing, performing more or less explicit erotic gestures that are a prelude to sexual intercourse, or engaged in social ceremonies of unknown nature.

When considered together and analysed more closely, these scenes reveal a typological variety that no doubt reflects different layers of meaning. Besides not fitting into any unitary picture, such themes cannot be easily reconciled with our idea of ancient Buddhism. Nevertheless, the association of Buddhist

1 The term "Gandharan art" is used here in its historicised meaning, which is purely conventional and traditionally accepted by scholars as the more adaptable to an artistic phenomenon that has been recognised, although with distinct regional characteristics, in wider territories than the Peshawar Valley. In this usage (which, I would like to clarify on behalf of non-specialists, was adopted with full consciousness and not without criticism) "Gandharan art" includes art from neighbouring regions such as Swat, Panjab and Eastern Afghanistan, and is roughly encompassed within the Kushan time frame (1st to 3rd century CE). I refer the reader to the brilliant synthesis in Zwalf (1996, 11–19).

Note: An abridged and slightly different version of this paper was published in French (Filigenzi 2016). The contents were first outlined in the framework of the workshop At the Foothills of the Hindukush: Art and Archaeology of the Swat Valley, Pakistan (Drexel University, Philadelphia, May 7, 2011), and further developed on the occasion of the International Symposium Buddhism and the Dynamics of Transculturality (Internationales Wissenschaftsforum Heidelberg, 11th–13th June 2012). I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the organisers of these events, Pia Brancaccio and Birgit Kellner respectively, for encouraging this line of research and providing the best opportunity to discuss it with colleagues from different disciplinary fields. My deepest gratitude also goes to Pierfrancesco Callieri and Luca Maria Olivieri for their scientific advice and suggestions, as precious as ever. I am also indebted to Lorenzo Costantini for helping me to address specific palaeo-bothanic issues, and to Laura Giuliano for her kind assistance at the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale "Giuseppe Tucci," Rome. Special thanks go to Max Klimburg, who generously gave me access to the pre-print version of his article (Klimburg 2014). His presentation at the conference Wine Culture in Iran and Neighbouring Countries (Institute of Iranian Studies, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, 16th–17th September 2010), on which that publication is based, was indeed revelatory of the connections between the iconographies discussed here and the Kafir folklore.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110413083-003

iconographies with imageries manifestly evocative of sensuousness and/or inebriation, so odd to our eyes, must have been significant to the society of the time, although it continues to elude satisfactory explanation. Basically, this is due to the fact that our knowledge of these ancient societies, being mostly dependent on occasional clustering of sources, is like separate mountain peaks that reach above the clouds while the unbroken complexity of the underlying landscape remains hidden from our sight.

An in-depth analysis and interpretation of all the relevant iconographic subjects are beyond the scope of the present article. Here, attention will be focused on some particular reliefs, whose contextual meaning and close connection with real life are more easily discernible, in the hope that this may somehow contribute to establishing the need for a general reassessment of the evidence. The aim of this paper, indeed, is not to solve such intricate problems but rather to tackle them, when possible, from an inner perspective, based on the theoretical assumption that any element which is included in a coherent code of communication has a contextual meaning, in spite of its possible foreign origin or dissonant appearance with relation to the whole.

In particular, the following sensitive issues will be addressed here:

1. Are wine consumption and related symbolism merely a Greek import to the north-west of the Indian subcontinent?
2. Do the "Dionysiac" themes in Gandharan art all have the same meaning?
3. Who are the people depicted in those scenes, and which religious/ideological universe do they represent?

This investigation will focus on modern-day Swat (now part of the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, formerly North-West Frontier Province [NWFP], North-West Pakistan), which archaeologists have long since identified as the ancient Uḍḍiyāna of the literary sources. Indeed, not only the rich archaeological landscape that has been revealed by more than fifty years of systematic research, but also the geographical and climatic features – and in several cases the modern toponymy as well – largely match the ancient topography of Uḍḍiyāna as it is described in Indian, Greek, Chinese, and Tibetan sources.[2]

2 Archaeological investigations have been carried out in Swat since 1956 by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan (IAMP) in close collaboration with the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of Pakistan. A constant and capillary activity of archaeological surveys and excavations is also being carried out by teams from the Department of Archaeology of Pakistan and the University of Peshawar. I refer to *Journal of Asian Civilizations* [Special Issue – *Italian Archaeology and Anthropology in Northern Pakistan*, ed. by Ghani-ur-Rahman and L.M. Olivieri], 34/1 (2011), and to *East and West* 2006 [Special issue – *Fiftieth anniversary of the Italian*

3.1 Buddhist and Non-Buddhist Cultures in Swat: the Archaeological Evidence

It is a fact that in Swat the most astonishing survival of the region's cultural past is represented by the tight network of Buddhist monuments which developed along the tributaries of the left bank of the Swat River since the time of Aśoka and reached its period of greatest splendour in the first centuries of the Common Era. However, while the predominance of Buddhism emerges quite monolithically from the macroscopic archaeological evidence, Buddhist doctrine and also its social interface must have been a more nuanced reality, significantly influenced by the interaction with diverse cultures and ways of life, and moreover, with folk religions. Here we are on difficult ground, the features of the latter being extremely elusive. However, a boost to tackle such a tricky subject is given by recent archaeological discoveries that we can finally connect to the Dardic cultural substratum, which in Swat was (and partly still is) the baffling co-protagonist of the great codified systems.

3.1.1 The Dards and the Cultural History of Swat

Different ancient sources vaguely place the Dards (the Dadikai of Herodotus; the Daradas of the Puranic lists; the Daedalae of Curtius Rufus; the Derbikes of Ctesia [?]; see Tucci [1977, 11–12]; Francfort [1985]) in the north of modern-day Pakistan. Today, the term Dardic survives in linguistic science as an extended geographic reference that embraces all the Indo-Arian languages spoken in this region (Koul 2008). However, the ancient land of the Dards has not yet acquired any defined historical, geographical, and cultural characterisation. We do not know whether the Dards had ever given birth to any unitary political entity or if they were rather organised in different principalities somehow connected with

Archaeological Mission in Pakistan, ed. by L.M. Olivieri] for a summary of the activities and related bibliography, to which at least Faccenna and Spagnesi (2014) and Olivieri (2014) are to be added. For a more inclusive bibliography, see http://www.oeaw.ac.at/uddiyana/. The IAMP was initially administrated by IsMEO (Italian Institute for Middle and Far East), then by IsIAO (Italian Institute for Africa and the Orient), as the result of the merging of IsMEO with the Italo-African Institute (IIA). At present, the IAMP is administrated by ISMEO (International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies). This new Association was founded in Rome in 2012, in order to take over the historical legacy of IsIAO, which was suppressed in November 2011 by legislative decree as part of a drastic spending review process.

each other. Nevertheless, a kind of "Darada system" seems to have existed until at least the fifth century CE (Tucci 1977; Jettmar 1977, 421).

Tracing back the Dardic world was an embedded target of the archaeological explorations in Swat since their very inception, despite the fact that field research began with two main and more pragmatic objectives: rediscovering its Hellenistic heritage and gaining insights into the history of Buddhism. These aims reflect the cultural orientations and needs of the period between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. At that time, the guidelines for field research were drawn from the available literary sources and also dictated by the political interests of the colonial powers in Asia. Not insignificant were also the anticipated results in terms of monumental discoveries, which were expected to stimulate the interest of the Western world and thus help fund raising activities.

Nevertheless, a holistic approach to cultural history was strongly advocated in the founding charter of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan, which since 1956 has carried on a true "territorial archaeology" in Swat. Some seminal studies in particular have laid the groundwork for a diversification of the research areas which marked a kind of modern devolution from the conventional standpoints. Among these, mention must be made of Giuseppe Tucci's work on cultural substrata, which goes far beyond the history of events and dates (Tucci 1963, 1977). It takes time, however, for archaeology to deploy sensitive investigation methods into the sub-layers of the macroscopic evidence. Only now, perhaps, can one say that an accumulation of relevant data allows research on cultural history to move ahead on firmer ground.

3.1.2 Evidence and Existence: Methodological Problems of Field Research

Our reconstruction of the past inevitably suffers from circumstantial disparities between different fields of investigation. This is especially true with regard to a large part of Asian territories, where historical events and cultural aspects often elude our analytical efforts or even escape our surveys because of the lack of detectable elements such as the existence of written documents, the support of strong dynastic propaganda, and the monumentality and durability of artefacts. Thus we might easily overemphasise the originality of phenomena that emerge more prominently in a void of material evidence and acquiesce in applying cultural etiquettes that have been created for better known, neighbouring contexts.

This is the case with wine consumption and its related rhetoric. The copious literary and visual evidence which attests to its existence in well-defined contexts such as the classical Western world or medieval Iran leads to these

better known areas being regarded as culture hearths on which similar patterns in less known contexts are hierarchically dependent. However, the history of wine production, consumption, and social/ritual use is certainly much more complex, as sporadic but significant evidence seems to prove. With regard to Swat, it may be useful to work backwards.

I would like to start with a luxury artefact of the Huṇa period, possibly a box lid in the shape of an irregular hexagon, with elongated longitudinal axis and opposite vertices with stepped profile (Qi Xiaoshan and Wang Bo 2008, 181; here, Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Box lid (?) with drinking scene. Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum. After Qi Xiaoshan and Wang Bo (2008, 181).

Rows of pearls between fillets divide the surface into a central rectangle, which bears two figured scenes, and two opposite triangles, which are fully occupied by vegetal motives. The main figured scene, on the upper register of the rectangular field, depicts a drinking scene with four male characters. The protagonist, characterised by short straight hair with slightly curly tips and pronounced facial features, is sitting in a relaxed posture on a big cushion and wears a densely pleated long sleeved tunic and trousers, large earrings and a short pearl necklace (or neckline?). He holds in his right hand a large lobed bowl, into which a servant, standing to the left, pours a liquid from a jug. To the right, another standing servant fans him with a fly whisk. The servants have short hair and wear button-like earrings, a necklace (or neckline?) and different clothes: the one to the left, only partially visible, wears the same pleated tunic as the master; as

for the other to the right, one cannot rule out a short *dhotī*, and a long necklace and bracelets, although the latter could be also interpreted as the edges of a plain tunic. A fourth character is represented in profile to the left, in the act of bowing down before the master. Apart from a waist there are no elements for the identification of his dress. Besides his posture, a further element of differentiation is represented by his hair, wavy and longer than that of the other characters.

One wonders whether such differences imply any ethno-cultural distinction between the master (and his personal attendants) and this obsequious character.[3] The prominence of the seated character is further enhanced by his slightly bigger proportions, and his overlapping – although only barely – the figures at his sides. The upper corners of the field are occupied by a vegetal element: a cluster of fruit or flowers between two leaves in profile. The same plant is depicted on the triangular fields as well, this time much bigger and with more details, although the schematic rendering makes uncertain the identification of the species. Whatever the specific botanical identification, this plant must have had a symbolic link with the scene. Several plants from Indian flora could match its shape – for instance the *kadamba* and the jackfruit, well known in traditional medicine for their detoxifying, analgesic and invigorating properties. Nevertheless, the three-lobed shape of the leaves points towards the vine or, as a second option, the hop (*Humulus lupulus*) – the latter listed by some authors among the specific plant species from which the *soma* might have been produced.[4] The remaining space below the main scene is further divided into two registers, the upper one composed by a row of three rectangles. The lateral rectangles are occupied by two identical quadrupeds (walking?) in profile to the right and characterised by elongated muzzles, small ears and a heavy body (wild boars? canids?). The central rectangle appears as a shallow empty cavity (to serve some purpose?), with a semi-circular projection that reaches the lower

3 The reference to ethnicity here is intended to be understood in very broad terms (see De La Vaissière [2003] for a reassessment of the question with specific relevance to this topic).

4 See Sharma, Seerwani, and Shastry (1972, 42); Padhy and Kumar Dash (2004, 19). Cf. Falk (1989) and Brancaccio (2010, 333), who maintain instead the identification of *soma* with Ephedra. See also Nyberg (1995) for a review of the different hypotheses with regard to the botanical equivalent of *soma*. However, the botanical identification has to be approached from two different viewpoints: the *soma*/*haoma* of the Avestic and Vedic literature, and the ritual use of "*soma*/*haoma*" derivatives (i.e. culturally recognised as "entheogenic") across time and space. One has to consider that the spread of *soma*/*haoma* rituals over regions characterised by highly diverse ecosystems might have induced local adaptations. It is very likely, indeed, that the preparation of *soma*/*haoma* in different geographical and historical contexts was more dependent on specific psycothropic properties and environmental requirements of the selected plant rather than on specific botanical species or varieties.

edge of the object and interrupts the lower register, the latter decorated by two superimposed motifs separated by a fillet: a rectilinear festoon (below) and a row of opposite triangles filled with parallel lines (above).

The value of this object, quite modest from a merely artistic point of view, lies rather in its significance in relation to the cultural and social history of a still little-known period that can generically be defined as Huṇa. This period is hinted at by the whole of iconographic, stylistic and technical elements. The strong and heavy facial features, the short hair, and the costumes by and large comply with models known from the Huṇa environment (Callieri 1997, 267; Grenet and Riboud 2003, 138; Filigenzi 2010, 169). The iconographic lexicon echoes Gandharan, Sasanian and Gupta traditions, while bearing at the same time a strong formal unity that seems to represent the secular counterpart of post-Gandharan works of religious nature known from the Pakistani-Kashmiri areas (Paul 1986, figs. 47–53, 58–59, 69, 71). More specifically, this object finds its closest comparisons with a small number of box lids, all of them from non-archaeological contexts but reportedly from Pakistan, and more precisely, in some cases, from Swat (Ghose 2003, with references). Besides sharing the same style, technique, and material, they display common iconographic themes, all referring to courtly life. The range of subjects, which include fantastic beings, animals in combat, human heroes killing a beast, royal hunting, and musical entertainment, conveys an image of refined luxury in an intimate atmosphere and captures the taste and habits of the upper classes in a specific time and environment. A further element of formal and conceptual unity is the decorative patterns in the form of schematic vine stocks that, notwithstanding marginal differences, recur quite similarly in some of these box lids (Ghose 2003, figs. 5, 7, 10, 13).

No doubt, these objects constitute a homogeneous group whose production can be safely attributed to a well-defined artistic milieu, if not to a single atelier, as already suggested in the case of some of them (Lerner and Kossak 1991, 92). In particular, the shape is most probably the same as a fragment of plaque preserving a stepped triangular vertex occupied by a hunting scene (Bopearachchi et al. 2003, 355, cat. no. 316), where the horseman wears a costume very similar to that of the main character of our piece, and closely recalls the conventional portrait of the Alkhan Huns as we know it from their coins.[5]

This image of a Huṇa aristocrat, who receives homage from a subordinate while drinking, features a social ritual of inclusion/exclusion based on wine

5 For a reassessment of the relevant evidence, see now Vondrovec (2008); Alram and Pfisterer (2010).

consumption and widely known in post-Sasanian Iran and Central Asia. At first sight, one would say that we are confronted here with themes of Iranian origin. More probably, we are simply observing old local traditions revived by a wave of Iranian culture.

3.1.3 Wine Production and Consumption in the North-West of the Indian Subcontinent: The Archaeological Evidence

The assemblages of the proto-historic graveyards of Swat (c. 1700–300 BCE) include a large number of the so called "brandy-bowls," i.e. drinking vessels characterised by hemispherical, globular or carinated bodies on a high foot. Although no traces of substances were detected, their connection to the ceremonial practice of libation is nonetheless manifest. Some sort of intoxicating liquid was indeed consumed in proto-historic Swat, probably beyond the funerary context as well.

The probability that wine was among the inebriating substances consumed by local people – either in convivial or ritual situations, by large or restricted groups – is quite high. The archaeological grains from the civil settlement of Aligrama and Loebanr 3 (18^{th}–4^{th} century BCE) also include grapevine (Callieri et al. 2006, paragraph 8). On the other hand, a large variety of wild grapevine is still characteristic of a vast area stretching from Anatolia to Pakistan (Olmo 1996). South-western Asia must have been involved quite early in the process of domestication of this plant, which started, according to archaeobotanists, in the Early Neolithic not too far away, in terms of phyto-geography, from modern-day Pakistan. The ample evidence of grape pips yielded by a number of Neolithic sites in Daghestan, Azerbaijan and Georgia (Costantini, Kvavadze, and Rusishvili 2005–2006, 64) adds credit to the hypothesis put forward by N.I. Vavilov that the homeland of wild and cultivated grapes was Transcaucasia, where a very large number of ecotypes of grapes were found (Vavilov 1960, 343). Besides, it is a fact that palaeo-botanical evidence of cultivated grapes is recorded in the Indian subcontinent from the third millennium BCE onwards (Falk 2009, 65).

The consumption of wine – or some other kind(s) of intoxicating drinks – in the Subcontinent is also confirmed by both Sanskrit and western literary sources of early historic times (Falk 2009, 65). Of particular interest with regard to the area of modern-day Pakistan is the story reported by Curtius Rufus about the inhabitants of Nysa (a town placed by both Morgenstierne and Tucci somewhere near the Tirič Mir, in modern-day Chitral) worshipping

Dionysus.[6] This statement is evidently based on the *interpretatio graeca* of the habit of drinking wine or a wine-like product,[7] but also – one may argue – of some sort of festivals or ritual celebrations associated with wine.

Moreover, material evidence of wine production is being copiously collected in Swat thanks to a careful survey of the highlands overlooking urban settlements of early historic periods. A number of stone tanks – both wine-presses and vats – carved out of the rock can be compared with similar devices still in use among the Kafirs of the Hindu Kush (Olivieri and Vidale 2006; Olivieri 2013, 190; cf. Edelberg 1965, fig. 3). Interestingly, these tanks are often located near rock shelters (possibly natural sanctuaries and/or hermitages of still unknown nature) and, in some cases, Buddhist settlements.[8] The rock shelters (spanning a vast chronological horizon from the Bronze Age to approximately the tenth to twelfth century CE) have been connected with communities of transhumant pastoralists that we may venture to call "Dardic."

The paintings and graffiti adorning many of the rock shelters refer to a still little-known ideological universe, which might be generically – and conventionally – termed animistic.[9] The coherent visual syntax of the pictograms attests to the cohesive force of non-literate traditions which for centuries existed vis-à-vis Buddhism. These communities, most likely also practising integrative forms of mountain economy (lumber, orchards, honey harvest, dairy products, leather industry, vineyards), seem to have formed a kind of tribal belt around the urban and monastic settlements of the valleys, with which they must have had constant economic and cultural interaction (Olivieri 2008, 2010, 2011, 2013; Olivieri and Vidale 2004, 2006; Falk 2009). Indeed, the presence of rock shelters, wine-making places and Buddhist monasteries at a short distance from each other is suggestive of an effective contiguity.

6 Morgenstierne (1931, 443); Tucci (1963, 157–158; 1977, 27). As for Curtius' *Historiae Alexandri Magni*, although its reliability has been often questioned, it was certainly based on primary sources, now lost.

7 According to Jettmar (1986, 64), among the Kafirs, wine replaced an earlier use of *soma* in cultic practices connected to Indra (see below). On this topic, see also Tucci (1977, 32–33); Brancaccio (2010, 334).

8 Consistent occurrences can be detected in the relevant topography: vats on their own (for fermentation?) are usually found next to the Buddhist settlements whilst wine-presses are located in the proximity of painted rock shelters. In one case (Gwarejo-patai, Kotah), a wine-press was found *inside* one of them (Olivieri 2013, 191).

9 The term "animism" has been widely criticised and revised by modern anthropology. It is retained here within the frame of such criticism, as indicative of a complex relationship with the environment. For a survey of the relevant debate, see Harvey (2005).

Although monks were not allowed to consume wine or other intoxicating beverages, occasional usage for medical purposes was certainly practised. However, whether and how the monastic communities indulged in the consumption of wine is not the question here. Rather, the question is whether the local people in Swat – the same people who surrounded and supported the monastic communities – were accustomed to wine production and consumption and how they socially patterned this particular habit. From this, a contingent question arises as to whether and how the monastic communities acknowledged it.[10]

The growth of the network of Buddhist and urban settlements during the early historical period was certainly supported by a well-organised and cross-functional economy, which must have entailed a better integration of mountain industries into the system. The wine produced in the wine-making places that have been found in the highlands is likely to have been destined for the urban settlements of the valleys, although archaeological evidence is still lacking about the process of fermentation/distillation and storage. What we know for sure is that wine was consumed (and seemingly distilled as well) in the towns, as attested by distilling vessels found at the archaeological site of Bīr-koṭ-ghwaṇḍai (Barikot, Swat) and dated to the first to third century CE, one of them bearing a Kushan *tamgha* (Callieri 1990, 686; Brancaccio and Xinru Liu 2009, 226).[11] The direct involvement of monastic communities in the economy of wine (production

10 As for the monastic discussions about wine consumption, a collection of relevant passages in the Pāli commentaries is provided by Kieffer-Pülz (2005). It is opportune to recall here that, according to the *Mulasarvāstivāda Vinaya*, the Buddha himself would have explained to his retinue of monks, who did not know the grapes, that these were fruits from the northern region, that they could be pressed to extract the juice, and that the juice should be heated in order to preserve it (Przyluski 1914, 506–507). See also Brancaccio and Xinru Liu (2009, 225–227), where this passage is analysed in the framework of wine distillation for preventing its degeneration, and historically contextualised according to the archaeological evidence from modern-day north-western Pakistan.

11 The record from Bīr-koṭ-ghwaṇḍai includes two complete distillers (BKG 1411 and BKG 1680); a fragment of a distiller (BKG 1399); a fragment of a receiver (BKG 1430, the one with the impressed *tamgha*); and a miniature distiller (BKG 2539). BKG 1411 and BKG 2539 are characterised by a thick, temperature-resistant base with parallel incisions. It might be useful to recall here that a number of such bases have been found at the Buddhist site of Amluk-dara. My thanks are due to Luca Maria Olivieri for providing me with the complete list of the finds from Bīr-koṭ-ghwaṇḍai, and for pointing out to me the relevant data from Amluk-dara, excavated and restored by the Italian Archaeological Mission, under his direction, in the years 2011–2012. The excavation was carried out in the framework of the *Archaeology Community Tourism* (ACT), a three-years project financed by the Italian Government through the Pakistani-Italian Dept Swap Agreement (PIDSA), and managed by the Economic Affairs Division, Government of Pakistan (Olivieri 2014).

and trading) also cannot be ruled out, especially in light of the physical proximity of wine-making places to Buddhist monasteries and, more generally, of the pivotal role that Buddhist monastic communities seem to have played in the management of crucial economic activities.[12]

Thus, if we look at the material evidence, we cannot but conclude that the consumption of wine in Swat was a component of the normal ambit of economic and cultural life, a *status quo* for which the monastic communities certainly had to make accommodations. A witness to this is the category of the so-called "Dionysiac" iconographies in Gandharan art, a cultural term that we should try to avoid in favour of a more neutral definition as "revelry scenes."

3.2 Revelry Scenes in Gandharan Art

As a matter of fact, the designation of Gandharan revelry scenes as "Dionysiac," which suggests a direct and exclusive connection with the Greek tradition of wine consumption and related symbolism, can be critically misleading. The Gandharan libation and erotic scenes, albeit formally derived from the Hellenistic symbolic repertoire, need to be looked at from the Buddhist viewpoint, i.e. from a contextual perspective, as would be normal in any art-historical analytical method. The case of erotic couples placed just above a Buddha image is particularly representative of the irreducibleness of such associative schemes to a mere question of exotic import (Figure 3.2).[13]

It is evident that interpretative efforts must take into account the intrinsic polysemy of these scenes and, moreover, the cultural landscape they were embedded in.

A significant area of concentration of iconographic themes connected with wine appears to be Swat, and particularly sites located in the Jambil valley, such as Panṛ I, Saidu Sharif I, and Butkara I, all excavated by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan under the direction of Domenico Faccenna. This homogeneous archaeological record, characterised by distinct technical, iconographic, and stylistic features, is supplemented by a number of pieces that, based on their close affinity with the former, can be attributed to the same

12 For interesting comments on the relationship between monastic communities and wine economy, see Falk (2009).

13 A rich selection of specimens can be found in Faccenna (1964, pls. DCXII–DCLI). See Carter (1968, 130) for an insightful examination of the Indian character of such themes, though disguised under Western iconographic models. For a tentative interpretation of the "erotic couples" I refer to Filigenzi forthcoming.

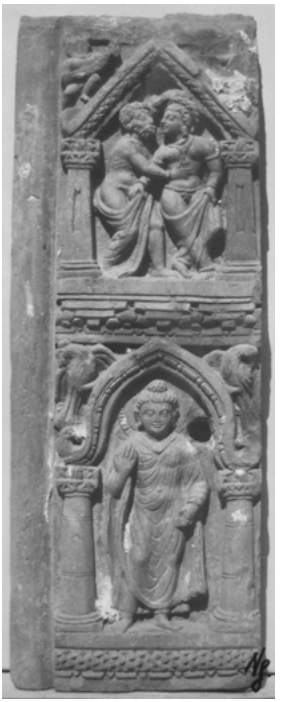


Figure 3.2: Door jamb with Buddha and erotic couple. From Butkara I (B 3215). After Faccenna (1964, pl. CCLXXXIX).

workshops.[14] The formal, physical, and geographic coherence of this corpus of sculptures allows us to reason in concrete terms about the meaning and cultural background of libation scenes in the Buddhist context in general and, in a more perceptual perspective, in the context of the specific cultural history of Swat.

A first distinction can be made between two types of depictions: symbolic allusions to states of mind induced by eroticism and/or intoxication, and revelry and/or ceremonial scenes containing unequivocal references to actual performances. In formal terms, the first group is clearly derivative of models of Hellenistic origin, although its contextual meaning is still a matter of debate. To this category we can ascribe themes such as drinking males (either *putti* or adults), sometimes shown recumbent or hanging limply as to suggest

14 In particular, the reliefs belonging to the collection of the former Wali of Swat (WS), which formed the first nucleus of the Saidu Sharif Museum, and others occasionally found in the area, inventoried as "Varia" (V). The materials from the sites excavated and surveyed by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan are kept in the Saidu Sharif Museum. A representative collection is also kept in the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale "Giuseppe Tucci," Rome, following an official agreement with the Government of Pakistan.

drunkenness; birds, lions, and boars drinking from craters and basins, either alone or in association with humans; banquets of wine with erotic connotations, and satyr-like characters drinking wine with women who are sometimes shown to be reluctant, thus probably depicting inducement of intoxication aimed at seduction (Figures 3.3–3.5).[15]

Figure 3.3: A segment of a cornice with drinking scenes (WS 10). After Faccenna (1964, pl. DCXVIIa).

Such scenes generally appear in peripheral position, on architectural frames of various types (cornices and *harmikā* slabs), among which special mention is deserved by two fragments from a false-niche, namely from the intradox of the projecting arch. They both display in one of the figured squares a young Faunus-like character, visibly drunken, holding a wine vessel (Figures 3.6–3.7).

The second group, instead, evokes real life and manifestly refers to an autochthonous system of social ritualism. This group includes actual wine-making operations or ceremonial scenes where wine plays a central role. The most explicit reference to wine-making is provided by a relief of unknown provenance, now kept in the Peshawar Museum, which portrays different moments of wine-making where male characters in Kushan dress are shown engaged in pressing, filtering and tasting wine.

The operations are presided over by a main character holding a spear, seated on a throne with canopy and flanked by standing attendants (Figure 3.8).[16] Being isolated, this relief cannot be contextualised in any semantic scheme.

---

15 A chronological benchmark is offered by relief S 1164, a segment of a frieze showing two male characters (seemingly drunken) seated at either side of a large vessel filled with fruits (grapes?) and found reused in the filling of *vihāra* no. 63. According to the stratigraphic sequence of the site, this monument belongs to the earlier phase (Phase a) of Period II, the latter spanning the end of the first century CE through the middle of the third century CE (Faccenna 1995, 138, 155, 369–374).

16 Not Kubera/Pāñcika (the chief of the *yakṣa*s) as suggested by Ingholt (1957, 104) and accepted by Carter (1968, 131), but rather a true "Kushan" chief. See below.

Figure 3.4: A segment of a *harmikā* slab with drinking scenes (WS 69). After Faccenna (1964, pl. DCXLI).

Figure 3.5: A segment of a cornice with a seduction scene. From Butkara I (B 3073). After Faccenna (1964, pl. DCXLVIII).

More informative in this respect is a series of reliefs from Swat where revelry scenes do not occupy decorative architectural elements, but are explicitly connected with the main decorative apparatus of the *stūpa*. They represent a separate part of the so called "narrative friezes," which depict scenes of the

Figures 3.6 and 3.7: Segments of an arch intradox with devotees, among which is a drunken Faunus. From Panṛ (P 817, P819). Copyright Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan.

Buddha's life. Friezes originally adorning small *stūpa*s provide ample evidence of the narrative being arranged in two superimposed registers. Sometimes the two registers are both devoted to Buddhist themes. In this case, one usually finds scenes from the Buddha's life in one of the registers and generic (?) scenes of adoration in the other. More often, the two registers are markedly distinguished from each other by apparently unconnected content, i.e. "biographic" scenes in the lower register and "lay" scenes in the upper register.

Among these, mention can be made of a relief showing in the upper register naked male characters depicted in the act of dancing around a large wine vessel to music performed by drummers (Figure 3.9).

The scene, though highly conventionalised, brings to mind a male festival centred on wine consumption and most probably connected to the wine-making season.[17] In the scene below, notwithstanding the pronounced abrasion of the relief, is still possible to recognise the episode of the Horoscope: the

17 Inv. n. V 590. Falk (2009, 67) interprets the scene as the opening of a storage bowl and the gestures of the male characters as an attempt to protect themselves from being harmed by the lid, which might be tossed up into the air by the pressure of the gas. This interpretation appears to be quite unlikely in light of recognisable iconographic conventions, such as the

Figure 3.8: A relief with wine-making scenes (After Ingholt 1957, 104, n. 175).

seated couple to the right, the standing female attendant in the middle, the seated old Brahman holding the child followed by a standing young *brahmacarin*, and the framed half-columns – which in Gandharan narrative friezes represent the conventional separation between the scenes of the Buddha's life – leave no doubt that the relief appertains to the Buddhist visual biography. The relationship between the two registers, if any, is not clear. It must be noticed, however, that the segmentation of the two superimposed scenes almost coincides, both in length and in the dividing architectural element, but they differ in scale (smaller in the upper register) and in the absence of the encasing frame in the half-columns of the upper register.

Even more thought-provoking are some curvilinear reliefs from Saidu Sharif I,[18] which in the upper register again depict characters in Kushan dress (all male, with the exception of the couple in the scene to right in relief S 570)

distinct posture of legs and arms of the dancing characters (cf. the "Phrygian" dancer in Goldmann [1978, fig. 5]; the two dancers depicted in a door jamb in Faccenna [1964, pl. CCCL], both from Butkara I) and the additional presence of drummers. Besides, the nudity of the male characters is more congruous with an uninhibited feast.

18 The Buddhist sacred area of Saidu Sharif I was excavated by the Italian Archaeological Mission in the years 1963–1982 with some periods of suspension in between, especially from 1968 to 1977. Notwithstanding extensive publication (excavation reports and exegesis), the paramount importance of this site for the studies on Gandharan art and architecture seems to have passed almost unnoticed. Not only the Main Stūpa of Saidu Sharif I can be safely dated (second quarter of the 1st century CE), but it also represents one of the earliest specimens (if not *the* earliest specimen) of the "*stūpa* with column," which translates in an architectural tridimensional form the concept of *maṇḍala*. Moreover, this *stūpa* was originally conceived for accommodating a continuous narrative frieze composed of sixty-five big panels and a relevant architectural frame (base, cornice and dividing panels). None of the components of the frieze

Figure 3.9: A relief with a "biographic scene" (below) and a wine festival (above) (V 950). Copyright Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan.

sitting on curule-type chairs while minor standing characters serve wine or carry a goat (S 418 and S 704) (Figures 3.10–3.14).

In comparison with the Buddhist narrative in the lower part of the reliefs, the "lay" scenes in the upper section are characterised by a different partition, consisting not of semi-columns but of vine bushes, which suggest an open-air setting and, additionally, a space outside the sacred Buddhist precincts. These reliefs show a distinct formal unity in their technical, stylistic and iconographic features, in the sameness of the architectural frame (plain base, straight festoon with overlapping lanceolate leaves facing left, moulded upper cornice with row of saw-teeth, identical dividing panel in the lower

was found *in situ*, but several fragments of it have been recognised by D. Faccenna thanks to a careful analysis based on technical, material, iconographic and stylistic features. Thus, this represents the *only* datable Gandharan narrative frieze, and probably one of the earliest. The stylistic features assign this frieze to a mature phase of the earliest stylistic group (the so-called "drawing style" first detected at Butkara I), by now at the threshold of the second group (the "naturalistic style," which represents the best known aspect of Gandharan art). These archaeological data provide rare, precious benchmarks for a relative chronology of the entire Gandharan production. See Faccenna (1995, 2001); Filigenzi (2006a, 2012).

Figure 3.10: A relief with "biographic scenes" (below) and ceremonial scenes (above). From Saidu Sharif I (S 418). After Faccenna (2001, pl. 125).

Figure 3.11: A relief with "biographic scenes" (below) and ceremonial scenes (above). From Saidu Sharif I (S 570+749). Copyright Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan.

Figure 3.12: A relief with "biographic scenes" (below) and a ceremonial scene (above). From Saidu Sharif I (S 704). After Faccenna (2001, pl. 127).

Figure 3.13: A relief with "biographic scenes" (below) and ceremonial scenes (above). From Saidu Sharif I (S 729). After Callieri and Filigenzi (2002, 146).

Figure 3.14: A relief with "biographic scenes" (below) and ceremonial scenes (above). From Saidu Sharif I (S 735). After Faccenna (2001, pl. 126a).

register and bushes in the upper register), size (c. 18 x 36/40 cm) and curvature, which make them compatible with the decoration of one and the same small *stūpa* (Faccenna 2001, 151).[19]

The Kushan dress of the characters depicted in all the scenes is a significant detail that deserves some reflection. Actually, what we conventionally call "Kushan" dress is not necessarily indicative of "Kushan people," with the exception perhaps of some specific attributes, such as particular ornaments and headgears that are indicative of royal rank. For the most part, we can assume that people dressed in this way just wear the contemporary costume (of earlier origin than the Kushan period, indeed), which in Gandharan art significantly contrasts with the "philological" use of the Indian dress in scenes related to the Buddha's biography. The same costume, apart from adaptations to the current fashion or to the need of showing a political affiliation to the ruling power, survived over centuries (as attested by the late-antique bronze sculpture of Gilgit and rock

19 They are: S 339; S418 (MNAOR 4107); S 436; S570 (MNAOR 4129); S 572 (MNAOR 4130); S 704 (MNAOR 4152); S729 (MNAOR 4160); S735 (MNAOR 4162). None of them (nor indeed were any of the sculptures from the site) was found *in situ*; nor it is possible – at least in the framework of the present work – to undertake any detailed analysis of their possible provenance based on archaeological data. The Inventory Book indicates the provenance of S 418 from the small *stūpa* 38. This attribution was based on the match of both find spot and size of the relief with the above-mentioned monument.

sculpture of Swat; Filigenzi 2006b, 197–198) and, as we can observe, is substantially the same as that still in use.

The affiliation of all the above-mentioned reliefs with the "naturalistic" group is nonetheless indicative of a mature phase of Gandharan art, which falls within the Kushan period.[20] While it is impossible to determine who exactly are the people represented in these reliefs, one still may assume that they were not axiomatically blood-related members of the Kushan élite. More likely, they were members of the local élite, although certainly affiliated with the Kushan power. If this is the case, one could not expect to distinguish, in the highly typified repertoire of Gandharan reliefs, the native "Dardic" aristocracy of Swat by virtue of any other appearance but the customary outfit of a large part of the Indo-Iranian world at that time.

Be that as it may, the question is what the iconographic schemes of the "drinking men" mean, especially in association with Buddhist narrative cycles. The iconographic details which the scenes have in common (the vine bush, the non-Indian costume of the protagonists, and the consumption of wine apparently restricted to the seated characters) are determinative of space, time, and condition: the event takes place in the open air, i.e. outside the structured and well recognisable Buddhist sacred areas, in the present and not *in illo tempore*, and is celebrated with a libation that demonstrates a significant difference of rank between drinkers and non-drinkers.[21] The ceremonial character of the scenes is

20 The chronological attribution of the reliefs is based not only on stylistic considerations, but also on archaeological data. All the monuments of the Stūpa Terrace have been carefully described by Faccenna and all assigned to a specific typology and building/chronological phase (Faccenna 1995, 179 ff.). According to the reconstructed sequence, *stūpa* 38 – to which the frieze has been assigned – belongs to the last phase (Phase c) of Period I (first century CE), even though in the paragraph devoted to *stūpa* 38 (Faccenna 1995, 280–282) no mention is made of related sculptural decoration. However, I take the occasion here to recall that Faccenna devoted his efforts to the detailed publication of the architectures, with a circumstantial examination of their components and typological variety, in order to create a safe and comprehensive archaeological reference frame for the study of the sculptural materials. In this respect, his publication of the frieze of the Main Stūpa of Saidu Sharif I (Faccenna 2001) can be considered a true masterpiece, and the first part of a work specifically dedicated to the sculptural materials from the main Buddhist sites of Swat and related workshops. Unfortunately, he left unfinished his volume on the sculptures from Butkara I. However, based on the original manuscripts and revision notes, and according to the wishes of Faccenna's family, an ISMEO team has undertaken to complete and publish this groundbreaking work.

21 The commanding role of the seated aristocrats in scenes of wine-making and libation ceremonies might be indicative of the existence of some sort of formalised control of the wine production. Very cautiously, I recall here the Kushan *tamgha* impressed on the above-mentioned

made even more explicit, in two instances, by the presence of the goat, which does not walk freely but is emphatically conducted by a man (a *victimarius*, we would say), in a way that probably suggests a bloody sacrifice without actually representing it.

Clearly, these scenes have no semantic links with the Buddhist sacred space, rituals, and precepts, but at the same time they do not manifest any conflicting interference with the latter. One wonders whether the local aristocrats – likely the donors of the small *stūpa*(s) to which the reliefs belong – made themselves recognisable to the eyes of their contemporaries by resorting to a well-identifiable notion of social identity. The association scheme, which combines in quite a diminished hierarchy Buddhist hagiographic tales and realistic lay narratives, proves that such behaviours were evidently deemed not only acceptable but socially relevant.

The presence of wine and goat sacrifice in these scenes, once again, may evoke "Dionysiac" scenarios. However, we should avoid reductionist interpretations, and try instead to read these visual accounts according to an "inner" perspective with the help of a feasible archaeological anthropology. As a matter of fact, the picture of an ancient social ritualism provided by the Swat reliefs shows surprisingly close affinities with customs still current among the Kafirs of Hindu Kush.

According to the documentation collected and analysed by L. Edelberg (1965), S. Jones (1966), Edelberg and Jones (1979), and more recently by M. Klimburg (1999, 2014), an important cult place in honour of Indr, also used for meetings of important men, was the *Indr-ta* in Wama, in Southern Nuristan. Indr is the Kafir version of the Vedic Indra. Like the latter, he is the ruler of the atmosphere and atmospheric phenomena, and as such is connected in Kafiristan with rainbows and earthquakes (Jettmar 1986, 64).[22] As originally connected to ritual consumption of *soma* (see n. 7), Indr is also the god of wine and owns vineyards (Jettmar 1986; Chandra 1998, 151). In particular, the Indrakun garden, an orchard located high above the Pech River, where fruit trees grow embraced by wild vines, traces its origin back to Indr, who,

distiller from Bīr-koṭ-ghwaṇḍai, and the analogous evidence collected by Allchin at Shaikhan Dheṛī (Allchin 1979).

22 The coupling between rainbows and earthquakes is most probably due to the association (rare, indeed) of seismic events with luminous aerial phenomena. Once dismissed as hallucinatory or superstitious, this occurrence is now proved by the unambiguous data provided by recording devices. For a recent review, see Thériault et al. (2014).

according to the local folklore, carved the vats into the boulders himself and visits the garden each summer (Klimburg 2014, 58).[23]

Edelberg (1965, 165) reports that, after the completion of the grape harvest, an important celebration in honour of Indr took place in the *Indr-ta*. On this occasion, a large cult image of Indr was taken from his temple (*Indr-ama*) out into the village and placed in the centre of the *Indr-ta*, on a boulder that served as a base, next to which was a sacred tree (already dead at the time of Edelberg's visit in 1948). Two long rows of stones were used as sitting places for high-ranking men who used to drink much wine stored in the *Indr-ama*. Between the rows of stones there was a flat dancing ground and, in the vicinity, four stone wine vats (*watkuna*). The effigy of Indr was honoured by pouring wine on it and by sacrificing to it several he-goats and one or two oxen, whose blood was thrown on the sacrificial fire while "priests" sung hymns (Edelberg 1965, 165; Klimburg 2014, 59).[24]

Wine, goat sacrifice, dance and songs are thus among modern Kafirs the characterising elements of a festival of great social relevance presided over by men of high rank, exactly in the same way as, nearly two millennia before, it occurred in ancient Uḍḍiyāna at ceremonies performed outside the Buddhist sacred precincts by the same aristocrats who supported the *saṃgha* and embellished the sacred areas.

The interplay and fluidity between the non-official religion of the layfolk and that of the formalised Buddhist system materialises in new archaeological discoveries. Until recently, we did not know the provenance of some peculiar images of "Gandharan" goddesses holding a beaker and the severed head of a goat (Taddei 1987). In one case, the strong connection between the *devī* and the goat is expressed by the theriomorphic aspect of the former, who has a goat head (Figure 3.15).

23 Apollonius of Tyana, who visited India in the first century CE, mentions a temple of Dionysus on the mountain of Nysa, which he describes as a cultic space in the open. His account is remarkably similar to the local tradition about the Indrakun. According to Apollonius, Dionysus founded it "in honour of himself," planting round it a circle of laurel trees and a border of ivy and vine which in time grew together and made themselves "into a kind of roof." Dionysus also set up inside the temple an image of himself "which resembled a youthful Indian, and was carved out of polished white stone" and "there were scythes and baskets and wine-presses." Moreover, "when Dionysus celebrates his orgies and shakes Nysa, the cities underneath the mountain hear the noise and exult in sympathy" (II, 8). Although the reliability of the "*Life of Apollonius of Tyana*" is questionable, the persistence and coherence of the accounts about local "gods of wine," regarded by the Greeks as Dionysus, are certainly meaningful.

24 On the high symbolic value of the goat/ibex in the mountainous regions of the Hindu Kush, see Tucci (1963); as for the connections of these animals with rituals involving intoxication, see Brancaccio (2010, 335).

Figure 3.15: A goat-headed goddess holding a beaker and the severed head of a goat. After Zwalf (1996, n. 105).

Figure 3.16: A god holding a goblet and the severed head of a goat. From Bīr-koṭ-ghwaṇḍai (BKG 2304). After Olivieri (2015, fig. 8).

However, the hypothesis that they could come from Swat sounds reasonable, given the connection with mountain culture they suggested. The stele representing a Durgā-like goddess killing a caprid instead of a buffalo (Tucci 1963; Filigenzi 2015, 141–143, 204, figs. 72a, b), despite a much later dating (7th–8th century CE), is certainly to be considered another offspring of the same process of acculturation of folk, pre-Buddhist hunter-deities accompanied by goats/ibexes (Tucci 1963) – or hypostasised as the latter – that seemingly appear already in Swat among protohistoric graffiti (Olivieri 1998, 69–70). The recent discovery of a small stele statue representing a male deity holding the same attributes in the urban site of Bīr-koṭ-ghwaṇḍai is now substantiating this hypothesis (Figure 3.16).

Moreover, the presence of this small icon in a domestic context, vis-à-vis both small Buddhist and non-Buddhist cultic spaces *intra muros*, is the best confirmation of a transversal religious culture, which is at the same time formally Buddhist and faithful to a folk religion. Both appear to have been not only intertwined in daily life, but also influenced by each other in their conceptual and visual forms.

3.3 The Powerful *Nāga*s

A further insight into "transversal" religious beliefs is provided by other, non-human participants to Gandharan revelry scenes such as the *nāga*s, i.e. non-human beings of ophidian nature presiding over the subterranean world, from where they regulate at their own whim the telluric forces, the circulation of waters, and the bestowing or denying of the subsoil wealth. Along with *yakṣa*s, *nāga*s must have represented an ineradicable presence in the religious Indic universe, to the extent that even a well-structured religious system such as Buddhism (as well as Hinduism) was compelled to somehow offer them recognition. As a matter of fact, the presence of such beings in ancient Buddhist visual art is not to be regarded as merely symbolic of an accomplished victory of Buddhism over an ancient and primitive folklore, but rather as a window into a different religious culture existing side by side with Buddhism, with its own deities, cultic places and rituals. Archaeology can hardly detect concrete evidence of this world, which probably found its primary expression in natural sanctuaries with no permanent buildings.

Like the *nāga*s, the *yakṣa*s are also associated with water – the latter especially intended as vital principle, seed (Carter 1968) – and with intoxicating liquors. With the exception of some prominent figures such as Kubera/Pāñcika and the *yakṣa* Vajrapāṇi, *yakṣa*s however are not easily distinguishable in the Gandharan iconographic repertoire, where they probably became assimilated

with Satyrs and Sileni (see n. 14). Nevertheless, the existence in Gandhāra of specific divine figures connected to wine (or other kinds of intoxicating drinks) prior to the Greek conquest is more than a likely hypothesis. Falk (2009, 65) recalled the Gandharan god Soroadeios (a high ranking *yakṣa*?) mentioned by Chares of Mitylene, a Greek historiographer who followed Alexander in his military expedition into Asia. Of Chares' *Stories about Alexander* (*Peri Alexandron historiai*), only a few fragments survive in citations and excerpts. From the relevant passage, quoted by Athenaios of Naukratis (*Deipnosophistai* 1.48.64), we know that Chares translated the name Soroadeios (i.e. the Greek phonetic version of an unknown Indian original) as *oinopoios*, "wine maker."[25]

Greater recognisability is instead reserved for *nāga*s, which seem to have held a particularly prominent position in Swat. Apart from the well-known stories of conversion, the world of the *nāga*s emerges vividly in scenes where they are represented drinking, dancing, playing music. Scenes of this kind, combined with other, more generic revelry scenes and with marine monsters, decorate, for instance, the stair risers from Jamalgaṛhī (Zwalf 1996, nos. 310, 330–331; 332–337; Behrendt 2007, fig. 11). But again, it is in Swat that we detect a closer proximity of the *nāga*s to the Buddha's world. At Kafirkoṭ drinking and dancing *nāga*s appeared on *stūpa* drum panels, which means not in a peripheral position, but on the main part of the *stūpa*'s decoration (Figure 3.17).[26]

Figure 3.17: A relief with a libation scene involving *nāga*s. After Zwalf (1996, n. 338).

The force of the *nāga*s and the prominent place they seem to occupy in Swat certainly derive from environmental circumstances. Northern Pakistan is a highly seismic zone, constantly at risk of devastating earthquakes and floods. The Buddha can subjugate and convert the *nāga*s, as the legends emphasise, but

25 For a quick overview of the hypotheses about possible equations to Indian names, I refer to Falk (2009).

26 For the reliefs, see Zwalf (1996, 250–251, nos. 338–339); as for their exact provenance, some doubts remain about the record in the Museum Register (Zwalf 1996, 27).

they are still there, still feared and venerated by the local population. An extremely interesting witness to the co-existence of Buddhism and some form of local cult of *nāga*s is provided by Songyun's account of a lake in Swat inhabited by a *nāga*:

> To the west of the river is a tank occupied by a nāga-rāja. By the side of the tank is a temple served by fifty priests and more. The Nāga-rāja ever and anon assumes supernatural appearances. The king propitiates him with gold and jewels and other precious offerings, which he casts into the middle of the tank; such of these as find their way out through a back exit, the priests are permitted to retain. Because the dragon thus provides for the necessary expenses of this temple (clothes and food), therefore men call it the Nāga-rāja temple… (Beal [1884] 1958, xcv–xcvi).

How important *nāga*s were in the physical and cultural landscape of Swat, and how necessary it was for Buddhism to come to some kind of compromise with them, is further confirmed by a local tradition reported by Xuanzang (Beal 1958, 132), according to which the royal lineage of Uḍḍiyāna actually originated from a mixture of the two elements. As a matter of fact, Uttarasena, the mythical king of Uḍḍiyāna coeval to the historical Buddha, was the son of a Śākya prince and the daughter of the *Nāga-rāja*. Therefore, it is not a surprise to find in Swat a series of Huṇa coins showing the bust of the king protected by a multi-headed snake (Pfisterer 2014, 47–58, 299–300). The precise meaning of this iconographic device is a matter of speculation, but in any case, either it alludes to the king's devotion to the *nāga*s or to a conscious will of connecting somehow the king to a local mythical lineage. Either way, the fact remains that the *nāga*s are still there, in the core of a venerated Buddhist land.

In conclusion, what we can argue from this scattered but consistent evidence is that the "Dionysiac" imagery in Gandharan art cannot be confined within a single category, given the large semantic field it covers. Within this field, Western iconographic models are best viewed not as imported notions but rather in terms of visual borrowing, which gives expression to concepts and behaviours embedded in local cultural realities. Moreover, from these apparently marginal and dissonant components of the Buddhist artistic language, we can catch a glimpse of the world outside the Buddhist sacred areas. They tell us that Buddhism was not ruling Uḍḍiyāna in splendid isolation. All around there were other religious customs, which, better than Buddhism – and since long before Buddhism – engendered the ritual celebration of major life-cycle events, helped people to handle daily-life or environmental problems, and were believed to ward off evil or be imminently conducive to welfare. No wonder, indeed, that even Buddhist people were involved in them. Also, through the witness of visual art we can concretely perceive that the osmosis between Buddhism and indigenous beliefs must have been fecund and constant, as

a part of that silent and intangible flow which eventually merged in the complex system of Vajrayāna and its multitude of gods and demons.

References

Allchin, Frank Raymond. 1979. "Evidence of Early Distillation at Shaikhan Dheri." In *South Asian Archaeology 1977*, edited by Maurizio Taddei, 755–797. Series Minor VI. Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, Seminario di Studi Asiatici.

Alram, Michael, and Matthias Pfisterer. 2010. "Alkhan and Hephthalite Coinage." In *Coins, Art and Chronology II. The First Millennium C.E. in the Indo-Iranian Borderlands*, edited by Michael Alram, Deborah Klimburg-Salter, Minoru Inaba, and Matthias Pfisterer, 13–38. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Beal, Samuel, trans. [1884] 1958. *Si-yu-ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World. Chinese Accounts of India Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang by*. . . 4 vols. Calcutta: Susil Gupta (first ed. London).

Behrendt, Kurt. 2007. *The Art of Gandhara in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New Haven (CT): Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Bopearachchi, Osmund, Christian Landes, and Christine Sachs, eds. 2003. *De l'Indus à l'*Oxus*: Archéologie de l'Asie Centrale*. Lattes: Association Imago-Musée de Lattes. Exhibition catalog.

Brancaccio, Pia. 2010. "The Pottery from Bajaur: A Window into the Late Gandharan Tradition." In *Coins, Art and Chronology II. The First Millennium C.E. in the Indo-Iranian Borderlands*, edited by Michael Alram, Deborah Klimburg-Salter, Minoru Inaba, and Matthias Pfisterer, 329–340. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Brancaccio, Pia, and Xinru Liu. 2009. "Dionysus and Drama in the Buddhist Art of Gandhara." *Journal of Global History* 4.2:219–244.

Callieri, Pierfrancesco. 1990. "Archaeological Activities at Bīr-koṭ-ghwaṇḍai, Swāt. A Contribution to the Study of the Pottery of Historic Age from N.W.F.P." In *South Asian Archaeology 1987*, edited by Maurizio Taddei and Pierfrancesco Callieri, 675–692. Serie Orientale Roma LXVI, 2. Naples: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente – Istituto Universitario Orientale, Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici.

Callieri, Pierfrancesco. 1997. *Seals and Sealings from the North-West of the Indian Subcontinent and Afghanistan (4th century BC – 11th century AD): Local, Indian, Sasanian, Graeco-Persian, Sogdian, Roman*. With contributions by Elizabeth Errington, Riccardo Garbini, Philippe Gignoux, Nicholas Sims-Williams, Wladimir Zwalf. Istituto Universitario Orientale, Dissertationes I. Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale-Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente.

Callieri, Pierfrancesco, and Anna Filigenzi, eds. 2002. *Il Maestro di Saidu Sharif. Alle origini dell'arte del Gandhara*. Roma: Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale – Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente. Exhibition catalog.

Callieri, Pierfrancesco, Luca Colliva, Marco Galli, Roberto Micheli, Emanuele Morigi, and Luca Maria Olivieri, eds. 2006. *Valleys of Memory. Ancient People, Sites and Images from Swat. 50 Years of the IsIAO Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan*. Rome: IsIAO.

Carter, Martha. 1968. "Dionysiac Aspects of Kushan Art." *Ars Orientalis* 7:121–146.
Chandra, Suresh. 1998. *Encyclopaedia of Hindu Gods and Goddesses*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons.
Costantini, Lorenzo, Eliso Kvavadze, and Nana Rusishvili. 2005–2006. "The Antiquity of Grapevine Cultivation in Georgia." *Vazi da ghvino* (*Vine and wine*) 1–2 /25–26:62–80.
De La Vaissière, Étienne. 2003. "Is there a 'Nationality of the Hephtalites'?" *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 17:119–132.
Edelberg, Lennart. 1965. "Nuristanske Sølvpokaler (with an English summary)." *Kuml, Yearbook for the Jutland Archaeological Society*: 153–201.
Edelberg, Lennart, and Schuyler Jones. 1979. *Nuristan*. Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt.
Faccenna, Domenico. 1964. *Sculptures from the Sacred Area of Butkara I (Swat, W. Pakistan)*. Descriptive catalogue by M. Taddei. IsMEO Reports and Memoirs II.2–3. Roma: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato – Libreria dello Stato.
Faccenna, Domenico. 1995. *Saidu Sharif I (Swat, Pakistan), 2. The Buddhist Sacred Area. The Stūpa Terrace*. IsMEO Reports and Memoirs XXIII.2. Rome: IsMEO.
Faccenna, Domenico. 2001. *Il fregio figurato dello Stūpa Principale nell'area sacra buddhista di Saidu Sharif I*. IsIAO Reports and Memoirs XXVIII. Rome: IsIAO.
Faccenna, Domenico, and Piero Cimbolli Spagnesi. 2014. *Buddhist Architecture in the Swat* Valley. *Stupas, Viharas, a Dwelling Unit*. With the collaboration of Luca Maria Olivieri. ACT-Field School Project Reports and Memoirs, Special Volume 1. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications.
Falk, Harry. 1989. "Soma I and Soma II." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 52.1:77–90.
Falk, Harry. 2009. "Making Wine in Gandhara under Buddhist Monastic Supervision." *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* (*Evo ṣuyadi: Essays in Honor of Richard Salomon's 65th Birthday)*, n.s., 23:65–78.
Filigenzi, Anna. 2006a. "From Mind to Eye: Two-Dimensional Illusions and Pictorial Suggestions at Saidu Sharif I." In *Architetti, capomastri, artigiani. L'organizzazione dei cantieri e della produzione artistica nell'Asia ellenistica. Studi offerti a Domenico Faccenna nel suo ottantesimo compleanno*, edited by Pierfrancesco Callieri, 17–40. Serie Orientale Roma C. Roma: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente.
Filigenzi, Anna. 2006b. "Sūrya, the Solar Kingship and the Turki Śāhis. New Acquisitions on the Cultural History of Swat." *East and West* 56.1–3 [Special issue – *Fiftieth anniversary of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan*, edited by Luca Maria Olivieri]:195–203.
Filigenzi, Anna. 2010. "Post-Gandharan non-Gandharan: An Archaeological Inquiry into a Still Nameless Period." In *Coins, Art and Chronology II. The First Millennium C.E. in the Indo-Iranian Borderlands*, edited by Michael Alram, Deborah Klimburg-Salter, Minoru Inaba, and Matthias Pfisterer, 389–406. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
Filigenzi, Anna. 2012. "Orientalised Hellenism versus Hellenised Orient: Reversing the Perspective on Gandharan Art." *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 18:111–141.
Filigenzi, Anna. 2015. *Art and Landscape. Buddhist Rock Sculptures of Late Antique Swat/ Uḍḍiyāna*. With contributions by L.M. Olivieri and P. Rockwell. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse Denkschriften 462. Band. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. http://hw.oeaw.ac.at/7241-3?frames=yes

Filigenzi, Anna. 2016. “Dionysos et son double dans l’art du Gandhāra : dieux méconnus d’Asie.” In *La Grèce dans les profondeurs de l’Asie. Actes du 26e Colloque de la Villa Kérylos à Beaulieu-sur-Mer les 9 et 10 octobre 2015*, edited by Jacques Jouanna, Véronique Schiltz, and Michel Zink, 289–304. Cahiers de la Villa “Kérylos”, n° 27. Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres – Diffusion de Boccard.

Filigenzi, Anna. Forthcoming. “Forms, models and concepts: regionalism and globalism in Gandharan visual culture.” In *Doris Meth Srinivasan Felicitation in Admiration of Her Scholarly Research*, edited by Gerd J. R. Mevissen, Arundhati Banerji, Vinay Kumar Gupta, and Corinna Wessels-Mevissen, 165–188 (provisional). New Delhi: Aryan Books International.

Francfort, Henri-Paul. 1985. “Notes sur la mort de Cyrus et les Dardes.” In *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci memoriae dicata*, edited by Gherardo Gnoli and Lionello Lanciotti, 395–400. Serie Orientale Roma LVI,1. Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

Ghose, Madhuvanti. 2003. “The Impact of the Hun Invasion: A Nomadic Interlude in Indian Art.” *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 17:145–158.

Goldmann, Bernard. 1978. “Parthians at Gandhāra.” *East and West* 28:189–202.

Grenet, Franz, and Pénélope Riboud. 2003. “A Reflection on the Hephtalite Empire: The Biographical Narrative in the Reliefs of the Tomb of the Sabao Wirkak (494–579).” *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 17:133–143.

Harvey, Graham. 2005. *Animism: Respecting the Living World*. London: C. Hurst & Co.; New York: Columbia University Press; Adelaide: Wakefield Press.

Ingholt, Harald. 1957. *Gandhāran Art in Pakistan*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Jettmar, Karl. 1977. “Bolor: A Contribution to the Political and Ethnic Geography of North Pakistan.” *Zentralasiatische Studien* 11:411–447.

Jettmar, Karl. 1986. “Cross Roads and Sanctuaries in Western Central Asia.” *International Association for the Study of the Cultures of Central Asia Information Bulletin* 9:47–58.

Jones, Schuyler. 1966. *An Annotated Bibliography of Nuristan (Kafiristan) and the Kalash Kafirs of Chitral*. Vol. I. København: Munksgaard.

Kieffer-Pülz, Petra. 2005. “Die Klassifizierung des Alkoholverbots in der buddhistischen Rechtsliteratur der Theravādin.” In *Im Dickicht der Gebote: Studien zur Dialektik von Norm und Praxis in der Buddhismusgeschichte Asiens*, edited by Peter Schalk, Max Deeg, Oliver Freiberger, Christoph Kleine, and Astrid van Nahl, 153–223. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Historia Religionum 26. Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet.

Klimburg, Max. 1999. *The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush: Art and Society of the Waigal and Ashkun Kafirs*. 2 vols. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Klimburg, Max. 2014. “Viticulture in Kafiristan.” In *Wine Culture in Iran and Neighboring Countries*, edited by Bert G. Fragner, Ralph Kauz, and Florian Schwarz, 53–70, 331–339. Sitzungsberichte der phil.-hist. Klasse. Veröffentlichungen zur Iranistik 75. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Koul, Omkar Nath. 2008. “Dardic Languages.” In *Encyclopaedia of the Linguistic Sciences: Issues and Theories*, edited by Vennelakanti Prakāśam, 142–147. New Delhi: Allied Publishers.

Lerner, Martin, and Steven M. Kossak. 1991. *The Lotus Transcendent: Indian and Southeast Asian Art from the Samuel Eilenberg Collection*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Morgenstierne, Georg. 1931. “The Name Munjān and Some Other Names of Places and Peoples in the Hindu Kush.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 6.2:439–444.

Nyberg, Henrik. 1995. "The Problem of the Aryans and the Soma: The Botanical Evidence." In *The Indo-Aryans of Ancient South Asia*, edited by George Erdosy, 382–406. Indian Philology and South Asian Studies 1. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Olivieri, Luca Maria. 1998. "The Rock-Carvings of Gogdara I (Swat): Documentation and Preliminary Analysis." *East and West* 48.1–2:57–91.

Olivieri, Luca Maria. 2008. "Hanging Rocks and 'Intoxicating Drinks': The Rock Art Sequence of the Swat Valley." *South Asian Studies* 24:15–26.

Olivieri, Luca Maria. 2010. "Painted Shelters from Swat (Pakistan) and Surrounding Areas: Recent Discovery in the Frame of the AMSV Project." In collaboration with Faiz-ur-Rahman. In *Picture in Transformation. Rock Art Research from Central Asia to the Subcontinent. Papers presented at the 19th EASAA Conference (Special Session and Thematic Symposia), Ravenna 2–6 July 2007*, edited by Luca Maria Olivieri, Laurianne Bruneau, and Marco Ferrandi, 13–26. BAR International Series S 2167. Oxford: Archaeopress.

Olivieri, Luca Maria. 2011. "Beyond the Buddhist Communities. Subalternity and Dominancy in Ancient Swat." *Journal of Asian Civilizations* 34.1 [Special Issue – *Italian Archaeology and Anthropology in Northern Pakistan*, edited by Ghani-ur-Rahman and Luca Maria Olivieri]: 127–156.

Olivieri, Luca Maria. 2013. *Painted Rock Shelters of the Swat-Malakand Area from Bronze Age to Buddhism: Materials for a Tentative Reconstruction of the Religious and Cultural Stratigraphy of Ancient Swat*. Berlin. http://www.diss.fu-berlin.de/diss/receive/FUDISS_thesis_000000040006.

Olivieri, Luca Maria. 2014. *The Last Phases of the Urban Site of Bir-kot-ghwandai (Barikot). The Buddhist Sites of Gumbat and Amluk-dara (Barikot)*. With the contributions of Amanullah Afridi, Michele Cupitò, Francesco Genchi, Francesco Martore, Syed M. Niaz Ali Shah, Massimo Vidale and Others. Excavation and Conservation Activities in Swat District (2011–2013), Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa – Pakistan 1. ACT-Field School Reports and Memoirs II. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications.

Olivieri, Luca Maria. 2015. "The Last Phases at Barikot: Urban Cults and Preliminary Chronology. 1. Data from the 2011–2012 Excavation Campaigns in Swat." *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology* 6:1–40.

Olivieri, Luca Maria, and Massimo Vidale. 2004. "Beyond Gogdara I. New Evidence of Rock Carvings and Rock Artefacts from the Kandak Valley and Adjacent Areas (Swat, Pakistan)." *East and West* 54.1–4:121–180.

Olivieri, Luca Maria, and Massimo Vidale. 2006. "Archaeology and Settlement History in a Test-Area of the Swat Valley. Preliminary Report on the AMSV Project (1st Phase)." With contributions by Abdul Nasir Khan, Tahir Saeed, Luca Colliva, Riccardo Garbini, Leonardo Langella, Roberto Micheli and Emanuele Morigi. *East and West* 56.1–3 [Special issue – *Fiftieth anniversary of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan*, edited by Luca Maria Olivieri]:73–150.

Olmo, Harold Paul. 1996. "The Origin and Domestication of the vinifera grape." In *The Origins and Ancient History of Wine*, edited by Patrick E. McGovern, Stuart James Fleming, Solomon H. Katz, 31–43. Philadelphia: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers.

Padhy, Sachidananda, and Santosh Kumar Dash. 2004. "The Soma Drinker of Ancient India: An Ethno-Botanical Retrospection." *Journal of Human Ecology* 15.1:19–26.

Paul, Pran Gopal. 1986. *Early Sculpture of Kashmir (Before the Middle of the 8th Century AD). An Approach to Art History and Epigraphy of the Jhelum Valley and Its Peripheral Regions*. Leiden: Sneldruk Enschede.

Pfisterer, Matthias. 2014. *Hunnen in Indien. Die Münzen der Kidariten und Alchan aus den Sammlungen des Bernischen Historischen Museums und Jean-Pierre Righetti*. Mit typologischen Zeichnungen von Theresia Eipeldauer. Denkschriften der philosophisch-historischen Klasse, 459. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Przyluski, Jean. 1914. "Le nord-ouest de l'Inde dans le Vinaya des Mūla-Sarvāstivādin et les textes apparentés." *Journal Asiatique* 11.4:493–568.

Qi Xiaoshan, and Wang Bo, eds. 2008. *Sichou zhi lu. Xinjiang gudai wenhua* [*The Ancient Culture in Xinjiang along the Silk Road*]. Urumqï: Xinjiang Renmin Chubanshe [Xinjiang People's Publishing House].

Sharma, A.L., A.B. Seerwani, and V.R. Shastry. 1972. "Botany in the Vedas (Part I)." *Indian Journal of History of Science* 7:38–43.

Taddei, Maurizio. 1987. "Non-Buddhist Deities in Gandharan Art: Some New Evidence." In *Investigating Indian Art: Proceedings of a Symposium on the Development of Early Buddhist and Hindu Iconography, held at the Museum of Indian Art Berlin in May 1986*, edited by Marianne Yaldiz and Wibke Lobo, 349–362. Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

Thériault, Robert, France St-Laurent, Friedemann T. Freund, and John S. Derr. 2014. "Prevalence of Earthquake Lights Associated with Rift Environments." *Seismological Research Letters* 851 (Jan.–Feb. issue):159–178.

Tucci, Giuseppe. 1963. "Oriental Notes, II: An Image of a Devi Discovered in Swat and Some Connected Problems." *East and West* 14.3–4:146–182 (repr. in Tucci 1997, 119–156).

Tucci, Giuseppe. 1977. "On Swāt. The Dards and Connected Problems." *East and West* 27. 1–4:9–85, 94–103 (repr. in Tucci 1997, 165–259).

Tucci, Giuseppe. 1997. *On Swāt. Historical and Archaeological Notes*, edited by Pierfrancesco Callieri and Anna Filigenzi. Rome: IsIAO.

Vavilov, Nikolai Ivanovich. 1960. "Dikie rodichi plodovich dereviev Aziatskoi chaste SSSR i Kavkaza i problema proishojdenia plodovichdere viev." *Akademik N.I. Vavilov izbrannie trudi*. Vol. 2, 343–361. Moscow/Leningrad: Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.

Vondrovec, Klaus. 2008. "Numismatic Evidence of the Alchon Huns Reconsidered." *Beiträge zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte Mitteleuropas* 50:25–56.

Zwalf, Wladimir. 1996. *A Catalogue of the Gandhāra Sculpture in the British Museum*. 2 vols. London: British Museum Press.

Toru Funayama

4 Translation, Transcription, and What Else? Some Basic Characteristics of Chinese Buddhist Translation as a Cultural Contact between India and China, with Special Reference to Sanskrit *ārya* and Chinese *sheng*

4.1 Introduction

Chinese Buddhist translations were made for over nine hundred years, from the Later Han to the Northern Song dynasties. Translation activity was interrupted in the Southern Song, resumed in the Yuan, and finally continued until the Qing dynasty, though the scale became considerably smaller.[1] In this article, I will attempt to explore some basic characteristics of Chinese Buddhist translation (hereafter abbreviated as CBT) from a macroscopic point of view. CBT was translation from an Indic language such as Sanskrit to classical Chinese, but it is too simplistic to assume that it was a smooth one-way transmission from India to China; a variety of cultural gaps between India and China should be taken into consideration to grasp the essential characteristics of CBT.

Buddhism had a serious impact on Chinese culture, contributing important new ideas such as the notion of *saṃsāra* (endless transmigrations and reincarnations). It also brought Indian material culture to China.[2] On the other hand, from a linguistic perspective, unlike other languages such as Tibetan, Chinese was not

1 Strictly speaking, the translation activity for those nine hundred years included the occasional hiatus. There were two remarkable hiatuses in particular: one began in the second half of the fifth century, lasting at least for some decades with a few minor exceptions; and the other for one hundred and sixty or seventy years after the Indian monk Prajñā's translation of the *Dasheng bensheng xindi guanjing* 大乘本生心地觀經 in 810–811. Funayama (2013, 36–38, 45–46, 244).
2 For a major study of this topic, see Kieschnick (2003).

Note: I want to thank Dr. Ryan Overbey for his kind help to refine my English. This paper is based on material already examined in Funayama (2013, in Japanese). I have added some significant new information about primary sources.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110413083-004

subject to any positive change when it adopted Buddhism. Linguistically, China remained China even after this massive import of Indian culture. Nevertheless, there are some non-negligible aspects of Indian Buddhist language that contributed – however partially – to some noteworthy changes in the Chinese language. Provisionally, I want to pay attention to the following four points:

The first is the creation of new Chinese characters for transcription.[3] A typical example of transcription is *anouduoluo sanmiao sanputi*阿耨多羅三藐三菩提 for Skt. *anuttarā samyak-sambodhi* ("the unsurpassed, correct and perfect awakening"). It is literally translated as *wushang zhengdengjue*無上正等覺. Incidentally, "translation" is sometimes called *yiyi* 義譯 ("the rendition by meaning") in traditional commentaries and compendia. In the process of Chinese Buddhist translations, Chinese characters such as *mo* 魔, *fan* 梵, *ta* 塔, *seng* 僧, *bo* 鉢, *sa* 薩, *qie* 伽, and *jiasha* 袈裟 were newly created for transcription; they had not existed before the Chinese adoption of Buddhism (Funayama 2013, 181–187).[4] On the other hand, some Chinese characters were used especially for transcription. Examples of such words are *fo* 佛, *tuo* 陀, *ni* 尼, *jia* 迦, *pi* 毘, *pu* 菩, *ji* 偈, *na* 那, and *luo* 羅. These had existed before the Chinese adoption of Buddhism and were not newly created characters, but they were used only for transcription with no meaning of their own (Funayama 2013, 187).

Second, CBT was by and large word-for-word translation, not sentence-for-sentence translation. However, CBT partially inspired some new usages of Chinese particles (*zhuzi* 助字). For example, the use of *gu* 故 ("because") put at the end of a sentence was not at all popular in the period prior to Buddhism, whereas it was frequently used in CBT. This is because a reason-phrase is put after the proposition in Sanskrit, as follows:

> A sound is impermanent, because of being a product.
> Skt. *anityaḥ śabdaḥ, kṛtakatvāt*.
> Ch. 聲是無常，所作性故.[5]

3 By "transcription," I mean what is traditionally called *yinyi* 音譯 (lit. "translation by phonemes"); other options for the same sense are "phonetic transcription" and "transliteration." In contrast to *yinyi*, normal translation is traditionally called *yiyi* 義譯 (lit. "translation by meanings").

4 Characters such as *cha* 刹 and *chan* 懺 and *bai* 唄 may also have been made for Chinese Buddhist translations as assumed by some previous studies, but verification will require further careful investigation, including specification of their earliest usages.

5 The Sanskrit and Chinese passages are quoted from the *Nyāyapraveśa* (Śaṅkarasvāmin) and its Chinese translation *Yinming ru zhengli lun* 因明入正理論 by Xuanzang (T32, 12a).

This type of *gu* also gave rise to further peculiar phrases such as *yi* . . . *gu* 以. . .故 and *wei* . . . *gu* 為. . .故 that are often used in CBT to express reason or purpose.[6]

Third, quite a few texts of CBT feature repetition of four-character phrasing, which did exist even before the advent of Buddhism. However, as Yoshikawa Kōjirō ([1958] 1968) observed, the rather tedious phrasing of four, four, four, four was not as popular in indigenous, non-Buddhist texts.

Yet another impact of Buddhist translation on Chinese language was the production of new words to express Buddhist technical terms such as *yuanqi* 緣起 (*pratītyasamutpāda*), *shijie* 世界 (*lokadhātu*), *fannao* 煩惱 (*kleśa*), and the above-mentioned *lunhui* 輪迴 (*saṃsāra*), just to mention a few.

It is not necessary to enumerate all the varieties of Buddhist influence on Chinese language.[7] Here I just want to indicate a fact: once the above-stated characteristic elements of CBT were acknowledged by Chinese monks and literati, some of them started to adopt this style in their own writings. Just to mention one, a mechanical repetition of four-character phrasing is discernible in numerous parts of Huisi's 慧思 (515–77) text entitled the *Gate of the Samādhi Wherein All Entities are Without Dispute* (*Zhu fa wuzheng sanmei famen*諸法無諍三昧法門 T no. 1923).[8]

Now, let's examine the significance of transcription and its relation to translation. This gets at the basic problem of identity and/or difference between the meaning of the original Indic term and the Chinese translation, especially when an Indic term does not have a precise Chinese equivalent bearing exactly the same meaning. In my view, this reveals one of essential characteristics of CBT.

I would like to highlight two contexts in which precise translation is remarkably difficult. The first is the case of highly developed technology such as the modern vocabulary of computers. In the case of modern Japanese, for instance, we use these words in the form of transcription in *katakana* and do not give any real Japanese translation of their meanings. In the case of CBT, this manifests as transcription using Chinese characters.

The other difficult case of untranslatability from one language to another is related to religious concepts. In this case too, one could use transcription if translation is not possible. But such transcription can be problematic if readers cannot understand the meaning behind the transcription. On the other hand, one could also render the original term using an indigenous term in the target

6 The phrase *yi* . . . *gu* 以. . .故 is used to show the reason with instrumental case or ablative case and *wei* . . . *gu* 為. . .故 is used as a translation of either "because of . . ." with ablative (occasionally instrumental) case or "for the purpose of . . ." with dative case.

7 For further points and examples, see Funayama (2013, 177–208).

8 E.g., a passage (T46, 633a) indicated in Funayama (2013, 198).

language. Almost all cultures have their own religions, and religious words are so fundamental and deeply bound up with culture that it is extremely difficult to precisely translate a foreign religious term to one's own language *without* using a term of one's own religion.[9] Quite a few terms of religion in a source language cannot be translated without using indigenous terms of religion in the target language. For example, it is widely known that Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) translated Deus as *tianzhu* 天主 ("Heavenly Lord") in Chinese, explaining it as *shangdi* 上帝 ("Supreme Monarch"). In this case those who read the explanation of Deus by "Supreme Monarch" would be inevitably led to an association of god with a nuance of secular sovereign.

4.2 On "Translation by Matching Cultural Categories"

In this way the activity of producing CBT was not only important for individual translations themselves, but also reveals how Buddhists struggled with the problem of untranslatability which underlay the gulf between Indian and Chinese cultures and languages. When an Indic term was difficult to translate literally, Chinese Buddhist translators had recourse to giving either a transcription of the Indic term or a kind of paraphrase by using a Confucian or Daoist term that, despite serious difference in the literal sense, could partially work in a similar context. If the translation fully matches the original meaning, no problem arises. However, if a translation has any deviation from the original meaning in Sanskrit or Pāli, it entails the possibility of misunderstanding; an inadequate translation could misrepresent or distort the original sense. A transcription, on the other hand, was potentially incomprehensible, because it can convey no meaning through the sequence of Chinese characters, and readers with no knowledge of the source language could not understand the original meaning.

For example, Skt. *nirvāṇa* (or Pāli *nibbāna*) was transcribed as *niepan* 涅槃. *Nihuan* 泥洹 and *niyue* 泥曰 were also used in earlier times. *Nihuan* is used as early as the later Han dynasty, as found in Lokakṣema's [Zhi Loujiachen支婁迦讖] translation *Daoxing bore jing* 道行般若經 (Karashima 2010, 336–337). In this case, the Chinese characters of the transcription convey no meaning. Hence if

9 As discussed in Funayama (2013, 209–210), Suzuki nicely describes a really intriguing account of serious problems Francisco Xavier (1506–1552) had in his propagation of belief in God in Japanese, especially his use of "*dainichi* 大日" (as a translation of God by matching cultural categories) and "*deusu*" (as a transcription of Deus).

a transcribed term such as *niepan* was totally new to Medieval Chinese readers, and had not yet passed into general usage, then readers simply could not understand the transcription. Understanding the meaning of *niepan* was possible only when readers knew Sanskrit or when they had become familiar with actual usages of *niepan* in Chinese.

Actually, this term was not always transcribed in the earliest stage of CBT. As is well known, the Daoist term *wuwei* 無為 ("non-action") was employed as a translation of *nirvāṇa* in the corpus of the earliest translator, An Shigao 安世高 in the Later Han. The *Da Anban shouyi jing* 大安般守意經 (Taisho no. 602) has an interesting passage which says:

> *An* is purity. *Ban* is clarity. *Shou* is nothing. *Yi* is called action. [Putting all together, *Anbanshouyi* means the condition of] pure and clean non-action. (安為清，般為淨，守為無，意名為，是清淨無為也. T15, 164a)

This appears in translation, but it cannot be a literal translation from an Indic language. It looks like an exegetical element interpolated in translation, though it is not at all clear whether this "interpolation" was made by An Shigao or someone else at a later period. Anyway this is an example of the use of a Daoist term *wuwei* in early CBT. It was only later that translations such as *miedu* 滅度 (lit. "passage into extinction") appeared in CBT.[10]

Furthermore, Stefano Zacchetti (2002, 87) successfully identified *wuwei* which is used in another An Shigao translation, entitled *Yin chi ru jing* 陰持入經 (Taisho no. 603), with *nibbāna* in the *Peṭakopadesa* in Pāli. However, *wuwei* as a translation of *nirvāṇa* did not last long because it was too Daoistic and misleading as a Buddhist translation. *Lokakṣema preferred the transcription *nihuan* in his translation of the *Perfect Wisdom Sutra* entitled the *Daoxing bore jing* 道行般若經 (Karashima 2010, 336).

It is also widely known that the *Daoxing bore jing* and some other earlier translations of the *Perfect Wisdom Sutra* have the translation *benwu* 本無 for *tathatā* ("suchness"; e.g., Karashima 2010, 28–31), a term which later translations would render with *zhenru* 真如.[11]

I would like to tentatively call this type "translation by matching cultural categories."[12] By this special term, I mean the translation of an Indic term based on

10 Xuanzang 玄奘, the most important translator, sometimes preferred *yuanji* 圓寂 ("complete tranquility") for *parinirvāṇa*.

11 For a study of *zhenru* as a translation, see Kaginushi (1968).

12 "Translation by matching cultural categories" is an English equivalent for what I tentatively call "*bunka taiō gata yakugo*" 文化対応型訳語 in Japanese. For this notion, see Funayama

a traditional Chinese concept that is similar to the original Indic term, yet not literally identical. It is not a literal translation of the original "meaning," but the indication of an equivalent concept that more or less works similarly in the Chinese cultural context. Thus *wuwei* is not a literal translation of *nirvāṇa*, but can convey the basic religious significance to some extent. Needless to say, such expedient translation may lead to serious misunderstanding of the term, especially for those who do not have any knowledge of the original Indic language.

In what follows, I will briefly introduce other five cases of "translation by matching cultural categories."

1. *Dao* 道 ("way") for Skt. *bodhi* ("awakening, enlightenment"). Expressions such as *daoshu* 道樹 for Skt. *bodhi-vṛkṣa* or *bodhi-druma* ("bodhi-tree") under which the Śākyamuni became enlightened and *chengdao* 成道 for Skt. *sambodhi*/*abhisambodhi* ("perfect/supreme awakening") are examples of "translation by matching categories" because "*dao*" evidently comes from the Daoist notion, and does not mean a "path" (e.g., Skt. *mārga*) in these cases.

(2013, 214–215) (I owe the English translation of this Japanese to Dr. Michael Radich who kindly thought about some optional expressions for this Japanese word; however any problems with this notion either in English or in Japanese are my own responsibility). This type of translation is in a sense similar to so-called *geyi* 格義 (matching concepts), but it should be distinguished from *geyi* in that *geyi* has no direct relation to the work of translation. According to Mair (2010), the original notion of *geyi* had nothing to do with the process of translation. *Geyi* was a technique to *interpret* Chinese Buddhist texts using non-Buddhist categories from Daoism or Confucianism. It is a method to elucidate a term, not a method of translation. Nor should it be used in the periodization of Chinese Buddhism; as Kobayashi (1997) and Mair indicate, the use of the term "kakugi bukkyō" 格義佛教 (Matching Concepts Buddhism) to signify a period of Chinese Buddhism was a modern Japanese creation, and such a period never existed in history. Rather, those who actually applied *geyi* for the interpretation of Buddhist texts were quite limited in number. In the *Biographies of Eminent Monks (Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳*)*, the actual description of *geyi* is found only in the biographies of Zhu Faya 竺法雅 (a contemporary of Dao'an 道安 [312–85]), Sengxian 僧先, and Huiyuan of Mt. Lu 廬山慧遠 (334–416). While we should not confuse the notion of *geyi* with the process of CBT, I still believe that we can pay special attention to this unique and heuristically convenient notion – which embodies one of essential characteristics of Chinese Buddhism – by intentionally extending the concept of *geyi* to a broader context. In this sense, I would like to propose the distinction between a real *geyi*-style of interpretation, which is the original sense of the term, and translation by matching cultural categories. In a sense we may be able to say that what I call "translation by matching cultural concepts" is a "*geyi*-like" (or "quasi-*geyi*") translation method, but not *geyi* itself in the strict sense. For example, *wuwei* as a translation of *nirvāṇa* is a translation by matching cultural categories, but it should be distinguished from a *geyi*-style of interpretation.

2. *Jing* 經 ("warp thread") for Skt. *sūtra* ("thread, yarn"). The original meanings of *jing* and *sūtra* are thus similar but not identical.[13] Especially in China, the word *jing* had a special meaning, hence the word *jingdian* 經典 to refer to Confucian classics. It is possible that Chinese Buddhist translators intentionally chose the word *jing* for *sūtra* in order authorize Buddha's words as comparable to the words of ancient sages in Confucianism. Incidentally, later scholar-monks such as Jingying Huiyuan 淨影慧遠 (523–92) and Zhiyi 智顗 (538–97) elucidate the meaning of *jing* by paraphrasing it into *chang* 常, implying that *sūtra* contains eternal truth.[14] This type of Chinese interpretation is divorced from the meaning of *sūtra* in Sanskrit.
3. *Long* 龍 ("Chinese dragon") for Skt. *nāga* ("a snake or a serpent-like demon").[15] Interestingly *nāga* is nearly always translated as *long*, though the Chinese dragon is obviously not entirely the same as the *nāga* in India.[16] To the best of my knowledge, no example of *she* 蛇 for *nāga* has been attested. Most probably this is because the mythical and overwhelming power of *nāga* can best be expressed by *long* in Chinese, whereas *she* cannot convey such a nuance.
4. *Ganlu* 甘露 ("sweet dew") for Skt. *amṛta* (lit. "non-death," "immortal"). One of the earliest examples is found in *Lokakṣema's translation *Daoxing bore jing* (Karashima 2010, 179). It was occasionally translated as *busi* 不死, but *ganlu* was much more popular throughout the history of CBT. Linguistically speaking, *ganlu* is not a translation of *amṛta,* but merely an equivalent concept found in Chinese culture.[17] As already indicated in dictionaries and other reference works, the word *ganlu* had been used in Chinese indigenous texts such as the *Laozi* Chapter 32, signifying sweet dews that pervade the realm as a result of the virtue of a benevolent king.[18] In the case of Tibetan, on the

13 For the etymology of Skt. *sūtra,* see Mayrhofer (1963, 492) and Mayeda (1964, 227–266).

14 Huiyuan's 慧遠 *Commetary on the Nirvāṇa-sūtra* (*Daban niepan jing yi ji* 大般涅槃經義記 T37, 614b). Zhiyi's智顗*Commentary on the Lotus Sutra* (*Miaofa Lianhua jing xuan ji* 妙法蓮華經玄記 T33, 753a).

15 For Skt. *nāga,* the word *xiang* 象 "elephant" is also occasionally used, because Skt. *nāga* implied the meaning of elephant.

16 A Chinese dragon has claws on four legs, can fly in the air, and is large enough for human or a transcendent to ride on it and fly, while a *nāga* does not have claws, does not fly, and is rather small in size.

17 According to Wogihara ([1979] 1986, 994b), one of the original Sanskrit words of *ganlu* can be *madhu-vindu* (lit. "sweet drop[s]"; *vindu* for *bindu*), found in the *Lalitavistara*. But in my view, this usage occurs only rarely.

18 *Laozi* Chapter 32: 道常無名。樸雖小，天下莫能臣也。侯王若能守之，萬物將自賓。天地相合，以降甘露，民莫之令而自均。"The Dao, considered as unchanging, has no name. Though

other hand, the standard translation is *bdud-rtsi* which literally means the "drink of gods"; generally speaking, the idea of "sweet" (Ch. *gan* 甘) is not found in Tibetan translation.

5. *Zhenren* 真人 ("a true person") for Skt. *arhat*. The standard transcription of *arhat* is *aluohan* 阿羅漢 or *luohan*. Although this transcription is used in the earliest period, earlier translators also made use of a translation *zhenren* for *arhat*. As a synonym of *xianren* 仙人 "transcendent" or "immortal," *zhenren* is a well-known term to signify an ideal practitioner. I will discuss the significance of the notion of *zhenren* again in the next section.

The above-stated examples reveal that "translation by matching cultural categories" deeply influenced CBT.[19] In other words, much of the basic vocabulary of Chinese Buddhism cannot be understood without attending closely to this type of translation. In these cases a term often takes on a doubled meaning, and accordingly a reader's understanding also swings between purely Indic and purely Chinese meanings. If a reader is familiar with the original Sanskrit word, he understands the Chinese translation such as *daoshu* merely as a translation of *bodhi*-tree, but if he has no knowledge of Sanskrit, he will understand the meaning more in the Daoist sense.

4.3 Skt. *ārya* and Ch. *sheng*

Next, I would like to consider yet another fundamental term of religion: the notion of saintliness. The terms I will take up now are Skt. *ārya*, Tib. *'phags pa*, and Ch. *sheng*. Let me start my observations from the original meaning of Ch. *sheng*.

---

in its primordial simplicity it may be small, the whole world dares not deal with (one embodying) it as a minister. If a feudal prince or the king could guard and hold it, all would spontaneously submit themselves to him. Heaven and Earth (under its guidance) unite together and send down the sweet dew, which, without the directions of men, reaches equally everywhere as of its own accord" (tr. by James Legge in Chinese Text Project; http://ctext.org/).

19 There are more examples of "translation by matching cultural categories"; e.g., Skt. *deva* "god, heaven" (often used in plural in Sanskrit) is usually translated by *tian* 天 "heaven" (usually used in singular in Chinese).

The original meaning of *sheng* was rather simple: a wise or intelligent person who could have some connection with Heaven.[20] It was not used to refer to a supreme person such as a "sage."[21]

However, the notion changed from around the middle of the fifth to the third centuries BCE, when Confucianism became predominant in Chinese thought. The word began to be used in a more limited way to signify a person who has perfectly embodied human morals, merits or virtues. Such an idea can be found in the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語), one of the most fundamental and influential scriptures of Confucianism.

Sage as the monarch of the world – Moreover in the same period, *sheng* was also applied to a perfect ruler or sovereign of the world who embodied the abovementioned human virtues. And this view led to the general image of the *shengren* 聖人 ("sage") in later times. Normally Confucian tradition admits only eight persons as sages through the age of Kongzi (active ca. 551–ca. 479 BCE): 1 Yao di 堯帝 – 2 Shun di 舜帝 – 3 Yu wang 禹王 – 4 Tang wang 湯王 – 5 Wen wang 文王 – 6 Wu wang 武王 – 7周公旦 Zhougong Dan (Duke Dan of Zhou) – 8 Confucius (Kongzi 孔子).

Building on this assumption, though not directly related to Confucianism, all emperors were also called *shengren* or *shengdi* 聖帝 ("sage-emperor") because they were monarchs of Chinese Empire. One of the earliest examples of such usage is found in the *Book of the Later Han* (*Hou hanshu* 後漢書), in particular in

20 More concretely, the meaning of *sheng* in an earlier period, if not the earliest, is found in the *Shuowen* 說文, a well-known etymological dictionary composed by Xushen 許慎 in 100 CE. It defines the word *sheng* as a synonym of *tong* 通 "to penetrate," "to pass through." And according to previous studies, especially an article by Rodney Taylor (1988, 219), the *Shuowen* suggests that *sheng* is a person who "give passage to" the ways of Heaven – that is, manifests the ways of Heaven through his own person for the benefit of man. Further, it is also noteworthy that the character is composed of the radical or signific *er* 耳 – the character for ear – and the phonetic *cheng* 呈 glossed by Karlgren as "to manifest" and by extension "to reveal" or "to disclose." With the role of the signific *er* – ear –, the character *sheng* has the sense of "one who hears." That is, the sage hears the ways of Heaven, suggesting his penetration and understanding. We also have to deal with the phonetic of the character *cheng*, which means to manifest. In this sense, a sage not only hears the ways of Heaven but manifests, reveals, or discloses them to man. Another similar etymology is also possible. According to *Jito* compiled by Shirakawa Shizuka (1994, 499), the word *sheng* is divided into three elements: *er* "ear," *cheng* "to manifest," and *kou* "mouth." Shirakawa criticizes the view of the *Shuowen* on the grounds of the phonetic dissimilarity between *cheng* and *sheng*. According to him, mouth used here symbolizes a vessel or place in which prayers to gods or Heaven are kept. In any case, these features of *sheng* reveal that a sage is a wise man who can have contact with Heaven.

21 A clear study of the history of the term *sheng* is given in Gu (1979, 80).

the royal order issued in 31 CE in which the Emperor Guangwu 光武 prohibited the minister's usage of *sheng* toward the emperor (Yoshikawa Tadao 1990).

Sage as the inventor of Chinese civilization – *Sheng* had yet another meaning in Confucian classics: it was used to signify one who establishes Chinese civilization – in other words, "the inventor of civilization." Such a usage is found in the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記), especially in its chapter "Record of Music" (*Yueji* 樂記). There is a famous passage which says "one who makes [civilization] is called *sheng* 'the sage,' and one who correctly expresses it is called *ming* 明 'the intelligent.'" Here, the expression "one who makes [civilization]" means sages of antiquity who established various social systems and their own culture and arts. In this way Confucians employed the special terms "the sage as the monarch of the world" and "the sage as the inventor of civilization."

On the other hand, in the *Laozi* 老子, one of the most fundamental books of the Daoist tradition, we can find two different meanings of *sheng*. One is the normal usage of *shengren* ("sage") in the good, positive sense just as used in Confucianism, signifying an ideal human being (Chapter 2). The other usage of *sheng* as "sainthood" or "intelligence" is unique to Daoism. Laozi rejects the notion of *sheng* in the sense of Confucian intelligence and says, "Give up sageness, renounce wisdom, and it will be a hundred times better for everyone" (Chapter 19). Here it is evident that the notion of *sheng* ("sage") is employed in a negative sense.

Next, in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, another fundamental text of Daoism, the key terms which signify an ideal being are *zhenren* 真人 ("a true person"), *shenren* 神人 ("a divine person"), and *xianren* 仙人 ("a transcendent" or "an immortal"). The word *zhenren* is unique. It is remarkable that the Chinese word *zhen* itself is never employed in Confucian classics, while it is used in the *Zhuangzi* many times.[22] This reveals that *zhenren* is a fundamentally Daoist notion which should be clearly distinguished from the Confucian sense of *sheng* ("sage").

On this line of development, an interesting expression was established later by Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343 or 284–363) of the Jin dynasty: *shengren* as the one who has attained the Way. Ge Hong was well-known as the author of the *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 ("*Biographies of Divine Transcendents*") and the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 ("the *Master Who Embraces Simplicity*"). In a section of the latter work, Ge Hong made a clear contrast between the "sage as the one who has attained

22 The significance of the fact that "*zhen*" is never used in Confucian classics was first noticed by the seventeenth-century Chinese scholar Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–1682) in his *Rizhi lu* 日知録 "Record of Daily Knowledge." See Yoshikawa Tadao (1990, 178).

the Way" and "the sage as the monarch." The latter is obviously a Confucian concept. He states as follows:

> Those who are called sages (*shengren*) by people in this world are the sages as monarchs (*zhishi zhi shengren*治世之聖人), and not the sages who have attained the Way (*dedao zhi shengren* 得道之聖人). The sages who attained the Way are represented by the Yellow Emperor and Laozi. The sages as monarchs, on the other hand, are represented by the Duke of Zhou and Confucius.

This view became the standard for the distinction between Confucian and Daoist ideas: Confucians honored those who established the past and the present societies along with the lineage of monarchs, whereas Daoists praised people who had realized truth and "attained the Way." Furthermore, as I explained above, Confucians enumerated only eight sages, which implies that after Confucius no sage had yet appeared again in the world, whereas Ge Hong in his *Biographies of Divine Transcendents* states as follows:

> In ancient times, there were a large number of those who became immortals, and one cannot exhaustively discuss them, but since the rise of the Han dynasty, the number of those who became immortal is forty-five, or, including me, (forty-)six.

Here we confirm that the numbers of "sages" and its Daoist equivalent "transcendents" are quite different. The Confucian tradition does not admit the simultaneous existence of two sages, but Daoists possibly do.

Now let's examine the meaning of *sheng* in Buddhism. When Buddhism came to China around the beginning of the first century or even earlier, CBT started to employ *sheng* as a translation of Skt. *ārya,* by extending the notion to a broader sense.[23] Skt. *ārya* is often translated as "noble one" in English.[24] We have to understand that Ch. *sheng* is not a literal translation of Skt. *ārya* "noble one"; the former is merely a Chinese equivalent of the latter in a new cultural context.

It is possible to translate *sheng* into English "sage" in the case of Buddhism, too. However, I don't think that the word "sage" is entirely sufficient as a translation of *sheng* in the Buddhist context. The English word "sage" means

23 It is not yet clear at this juncture, however, which translator first began to use *sheng* as a definitive translation of *ārya*. According to Enomoto (2009, 352), An Shigao's translation for *āryasatya* (which is normally translated as *shengdi* 聖諦 lit. "noble-truth") was *zhendi* 眞諦and *xianzhedi* 賢者諦 in his translation entitled *Sidi jing* 四諦經; and likewise according to Karashima (2010, 531), another Han translator Lokakṣema also uses *xianzhe* 賢者 for *ārya* and does not use sheng in his translation *Daoxing jing*.

24 For the notion of *ārya* as well as its English translation(s), see Harvey (2009). For the same notion and its Chinese and Tibetan translations, see Enomoto (2009).

a wise person, which goes perfectly well with the original meaning of *sheng* in Confucianism. However *sheng*/*ārya* in Buddhist texts means not only an intellectual person but also a person who has attained lofty states of mind such as enlightenment as a result of religious practice. This aspect of *sheng*/*ārya* in Buddhist texts can be best expressed by "holy one" or "a saint" in my view.

Buddhism generally assumes a distinction between Skt. *pṛthagjana* (or Ch. *fanfu* 凡夫 "the ordinary being") and *ārya* (or *sheng*). The latter, *ārya*, signifies a human or divine being who excels in virtue and religious experience. In the case of Śrāvaka Buddhism (Voice-hearers Buddhism, or "mainstream" Buddhism), *ārya*/*sheng* refers to a "stream-enterer," "once-returner," "non-returner" or "*arhat*." In Mahayana, *ārya*/*sheng* usually means a bodhisattva of the first stage (Skt. *prathamā bhūmiḥ,* Ch. *chudi* 初地) or higher.[25] When such theories of practice and religious attainments are taken into consideration, the English expression "noble one" does not perfectly match the Buddhist meaning. Rather, the religious sense of *ārya* in Buddhism is much closer to words such as "holy," "holy one" or "saint" in Western terminology. The use of "saint" in the Indian and Tibetan Buddhist contexts are found in studies such as Obermiller (1932, e.g., 130–1, 140–2) and Ray (1994).[26]

Another reason for my preference of "holy one/saint" for Ch. *sheng* is the Buddhist usage of the term and its relationship with later Christian usages in China. It goes without saying that *sheng* means "holy" or "sacred" in modern Chinese, especially in the case of Christian terms. When we trace it back to earlier period, we notice that Mattero Ricci uses *shengshen* 聖神 for saints such as Francis of Assisi in the *Tianzhu shiyi* 天主實義.[27] Further, when we shift our viewpoint back to Nestorian Christianity in the Tang dynasty, scholars have noticed the following two points: First, Nestorian texts contain many loan words from Chinese Buddhism such as *shizun* 世尊, *dashi* 大師, and *dasheng* 大聖. And second, modern scholars use the translations "saint" and "holy" for the Nestorian usage of *sheng*. For example, Tang (2009, 119) translates *zhisheng* 至聖 as "the Holiest." Moreover, noting that *qingjing* 清淨 and *sheng* are two terms to signify "holy" in Nestorian texts in the Tang dynasty, the same author (Tang 2009, 126) states as follows:

25 For the definition and the position of *ārya*/*sheng* in the system of Buddhist practice, see Funayama (2005, 377–9).

26 However, I don't agree with Ray's assumption that "saints" can be used for any bodhisattvas in Mahayana and for only "*arhat*" (and not for "stream-enterer," "once-returner," and "non-returner") in Śrāvaka Buddhism. See Funayama (2005, 406, n. 9).

27 For *shengshen*, see Shibata (2004, 227, n. 64); see also Shibata (2004, 306, n. 2) for another usage of *sheng* (*shengdian* 聖殿) in the *Tianzhushiyi*.

> The word "Holy" is translated as "Qing Jing" 清淨 in the Luoyang Inscription. It means "peaceful, still, quiet and undisturbed." We also find that in both the "Nestorian Inscription of Xi'anfu" and the Dunhuang manuscript "Zunjing," the word for the Holy Spirit is "Jing Feng 淨風," the pure wind. (. . .) The word "sheng 聖" is another option to render the word "holy." For instance, in the same *Zunjing* text, the Messiah is called "sheng zi 聖子" (Holy Son). "Sheng" is widely used in modern Chinese for "holy." [Note : omission (. . .) by FT.]

Moreover, in the case of one of the most important Nestorian texts, entitled *A Hymn of the Brilliant Teaching to the Three Majesties for Obtaining Salvation* (*Jingjiao sanwei mengdu zan* 景教三威蒙度讚), which is the Chinese version of the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* (Tang 2009, 126), the second and the third paragraphs run as follows (Lin 2003, 125 = Lin 2011, 226–227):

一切善衆至誠礼、一切慧性稱讚歌、一切含真盡歸仰、蒙聖慈光救離魔。
難尋無及正真常、慈父明子淨風王、於諸帝中為師帝、於諸世尊為法皇。

Here we notice the terms *sheng* 聖 in the second paragraph and *shizun* 世尊 and *fahuang* 法皇 in the third. A. C. Moule's English translation of these passages goes as follows:

> All the congregation of the good worship with complete sincerity;
> All enlightened natures praise and sing;
> All who have souls trust and look up to the utmost;
> Receiving *holy* merciful light to save from the devil.
> Hard to find, impossible to reach, upright, true, eternal,
> Merciful Father, shining Son, holy Spirit, King,
> Among all rulers you are Master Ruler,
> Among all the *world-honoured* you are spiritual *Monarch*.
>
> (Moule 1930, 53. Emphasis by FT)

Regarding the text in question, Chen (2006, 100; 2009, 203–4) points out that the above-stated usage of *sheng* is certainly based on Buddhist terminology. Further, Forte (1996, 386 and 388) also applies the word "saint" to *sheng* in both Nestorian and Buddhist texts in the Tang.

I think that the above-mentioned wordings in Nestorian texts and studies thereon undoubtedly reveal that the word *sheng* should be translated as "a saint" or "holy one" in the Nestorian context, and that such a usage of the word is based on contemporary Buddhist terminology in the Tang. Here I want to emphasize the fact that *sheng* does not mean "holy one" or "saint" in the Confucian context, but it does in the Nestorian and later Christian contexts. It is hard to explain the usage of *sheng* in Chinese Christianity directly from the orthodox Confucian idea of the term. It is the notion of *sheng* in Buddhism that fills in the gap between Confucianism and Christianity. In other words, Buddhist usage of *sheng*

has double aspects: *sheng* as sage (basic sense) and *sheng* as saint (new sense), and the latter aspect made it possible to use the term in the Christian context too.

4.4 Conclusions

In this paper, in order to understand some essential features of CBT, I explored the technique of "translation by matching cultural categories" as a special type of translation which is neither transcription nor translation (translation by meaning) in the strict sense, and I briefly examined some fundamental religious terms such as *wuwei–nirvāṇa, dao–bodhi, jing–sūtra, long–nāga,* and *ganlu–amṛta*. Finally, I examined in detail the notion of *sheng* as well as its Sanskrit counterpart *ārya*. This type of translation had two consequences: It made it possible for medieval Chinese people to more easily understand difficult notions of Indian Buddhism, but it also posed the danger of misunderstanding the original notion. I would like to claim that some, if not all, of the most fundamental ideas in the religion of the source language could only be translated by using equivalent expressions in the target language. Otherwise it remains untranslatable in the form of transcription. Some early translations, such as An Shigao's use of *wuwei* for *nirvāṇa*, were eventually abolished, and other translators started to use either transcriptions such as *niepan* or new translations such as *miedu*.

Finally, if we assume this kind of untranslatability without having recourse to "translation by matching cultural categories," we can take another step to show that the same phenomenon is true of modern translations. I mean that roughly the same paraphrasing process actually takes place in English translation. For example, we cannot translate a Buddhist text without using Christian or Greco-Roman words such as "scripture" for *sūtra/jing*, "temple" or "monastery" for *vihāra/si* 寺, "nectar" or "ambrosia" for *amṛta/ganlu*, "monk" for *bhikṣu/daoshi* 道士 or *seng* 僧, and so on. In this sense, what I call "translation by matching cultural categories" is alive and well today. To understand the history of Chinese Buddhist translations is indeed a task of historical research, but at the same time it provides us an excellent opportunity to reconsider what translation is from a fundamental perspective.

References

Chen, Huaiyu. 2006. "The Connection between *Jingjiao* and Buddhist Texts in Late Tang China." In *Jingjiao: The Church of the East in China and Central Asia*, edited by Roman Malek, 93–113. Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica.

Chen, Huaiyu. 2009. "The Encounter of Nestorian Christianity with Tantric Buddhism in Medieval China." In *Hidden Treasures and Intercultural Encounters: Studies on East Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia*, edited by Dietmar W. Winkler and Li Tang, 195–213. Wien: LIT Verlag.

Enomoto, Fumio 榎本文雄. 2009. "'Shishotai' no gen'i to Indo bukkyo ni okeru 'sei' 「四聖諦」の原意とインド仏教における「聖」." *Indo tetsugaku bukkyogaku* インド哲学仏教学 24:354–336.

Forte, Antonino. 1996. "On the So-called Abraham from Persia: A Case of Mistaken Identity." In Paul Pelliot, *L'inscription nestorienne de Si-ngan-fou*, edited with Supplements by Antonino Forte, 375–418. Kyoto: Scuola di Studi sull'Asia Orientale; Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises.

Funayama, Toru 船山徹. 2005. "Seija kan no ni keito: Rikucho Zui To bukkyoshi chokan no ichi shiron 聖者觀の二系統——六朝隋唐佛教史鳥瞰の一試論." In *Sankyo kosho ronso* 三教交涉論叢, edited by Mugitani Kunio 麥谷邦夫, 373–408. Kyoto: Kyoto daigaku, Jinbun kagaku kenkyūsho.

Funayama, Toru 船山徹. 2013. *Butten wa dou kan'yaku sareta no ka: Sūtora ga kyōten ni naru toki* 仏典はどう漢訳されたのか——スートラが経典になるとき. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.

Gu, Jiegang 顧頡剛. 1979. "'Sheng' 'Xian' guannian he ziyi de yanbian '聖' '賢' 觀念和字義的演變." In *Zhongguo zhexue, di yi ji* 中國哲學, 第一輯, 80–96. Beijing: Sanlian shudian.

Harvey, Peter. 2009. "The Four *Ariya-saccas* as 'True Realities for the Spiritually Ennobled' – the Painful, its Origin, its Cessation, and the Way Going to This – Rather than 'Noble Truths' Concerning These." *Buddhist Studies Review* 26.2:197–227.

Kaginushi, Ryōkei 鍵主良敬. 1968. "Honmu oyobi nyo, shinnyo no yakushutsu ni tsuite 本無および如　真如の訳出について." *Ōtani gakuhō* 大谷學報 47–4: 34–57.

Karashima, Seishi 辛嶋静志. 2010. *A glossary of Lokakṣema's translation of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā. Daoxing bore jing cidian/Dogyo hannya kyo shiten* 道行般若經詞典. Tokyo: International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University.

Kieschnick, John. 2003. *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kobayashi, Masayoshi 小林正美. 1997. "'Kakugi bukkyo' ko 「格義仏教」考." In *Shirīzu Higashi-Ajia bukkyo dai san kan, shin bukkyo no koryū* シリーズ　東アジア仏教第3巻 新仏教の興隆, edited by Takasaki Jikido and Kimura Kiyotaka, 293–303. Tokyo: Shunjūsha.

Lin, Wushu 林悟殊. 2003. *Tangdai jingjiao zai yanjiu* 唐代景教再研究. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe.

Lin, Wushu 林悟殊. 2011. *Lin Wushu Dunhuang wenshu yu yijiao yanjiu* 林悟殊敦煌文書與夷教研究. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe.

Mair, Victor H. 2010. "What is Geyi, After All?" In *Philosophy and Religion in Early Medieval China*, edited by Alan K. Chan and Yuet-Keung Lo, 227–264. Albany: SUNY Press.

Mayeda, Egaku 前田惠學. 1964. *Genshi bukkyo seiten no seiritsu shi teki kenkyū* 原始佛教聖典の成立史的研究. Tokyo: Sankibo busshorin.

Mayrhofer, Manfred. 1963. *Kurzgefaßtes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen. A Concise Etymological Sanskrit Dictionary. Band II: D–M*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, Universitätsverlag.

Moule, A. C. 1930. *Christians in China before the Year 1550*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Obermiller, E., tr. 1932. *History of Buddhism (Chos-ḥbyung) by Bu-ston. II. Part. The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet*. Heidelberg: Harrassowitz.

Ray, Reginald A. 1994. *Buddhist Saints in India: A Study in Buddhist Values & Orientations*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Saeki, P. Y. 1937. *The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China*. Tokyo: The Maruzen Company Ltd.

Shibata, Atsushi 柴田篤. 2004. *Tenshu jitsugi* 天主実義. Tokyo: Heibonsha.

Shirakawa, Shizuka 白川静. 1994. *Jito fukyūban* 字統 普及版. Tokyo: Heibonsha.

Tang, Li. 2009. "A Preliminary Study on the *Jingjiao* Inscription of Luoyang: Text Analysis, Commentary and English Translation." In *Hidden Treasures and Intercultural Encounters: Studies on East Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia*, edited by Dieter W. Winkler and Li Tang, 109–132. Wien: LIT Verlag.

Taylor, Rodney L. 1988. "The Sage as Saint: The Confucian Tradition." In *Sainthood: Its Manifestations in World Religions*, edited by Richard Kieckhefer and George D. Bond, 218–242. University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles and London.

Wogihara. [1979] 1986. *Kan'yaku taisho Bonwa daijiten, shinso ban* 漢訳対照梵和大辞典 新装版, edited by Suzuki gakujutsu zaidan 鈴木学術財団. Tokyo: Kodansha.

Yoshikawa, Kojiro 吉川幸次郎. [1958] 1968. "Bussetsu Muryojukyo no bunsho 仏説無量寿経の文章." In *Yoshikawa Kōjirō zenshū dai shichi kan* 吉川幸次郎全集第七巻, 510–517. Tokyo: Chikuma shobo.

Yoshikawa Tadao 吉川忠夫. 1990. "Shinjin to seijin 真人と聖人." In *Iwanami koza toyo shiso dai jūyon kan, Chūgoku shuūkyo shiso ni* 岩波講座　東洋思想第十四巻、中国宗教思想2, 178–187. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.

Zacchetti, Stefano. 2002. "An Early Chinese Translation Corresponding to Chapter 6 of the *Peṭakopadesa*. An Shigao's *Yinchi ru jing* T603 and Its Indian Original: A Preliminary Survey." *Bulletin of the School of African and Oriental Studies* 65,1: 74–98.

Lothar Ledderose

5 Stone Hymn – The Buddhist Colophon of 579 Engraved on Mount Tie, Shandong

Two characters, reading *Shisong* 石頌, *Stone Hymn*, are engraved on a rocky cliff at Mount Tie, in the northern outskirts of the city of Zoucheng 鄒城 in Shandong Province.[1] These two characters, written in a stately archaistic seal script, form the title above the text of the *Stone Hymn*. Its field of script on the slanting granite[2] surface under the open sky is 17 meters long and 4 meters wide (Figure 5.1). The characters are arranged in twelve columns with 52 characters each. There are, however, some exceptions in this grid: columns five and eight have 53, and column two has 54 characters, while column ten has only 43 characters, because the hymn proper begins with a new column.[3] As the rock has been exposed to the elements for more than fourteen hundred years, many characters are now effaced and hard to make out. Figures 5.2-3 show a rubbing taken in 2008.[4] It is so large, that it had to be hung beneath the ceiling, when it was exhibited in the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst in Cologne in 2009 (Figure 5.4). In spite of its enormous size, the text of the *Stone Hymn* is dwarfed by the sutra engraved to its right (east). This, a passage from the *Great Collection Sutra* (*Dajijing* 大集經), has an overall height of more than 51 meters. The *Stone Hymn* is one of its three colophons.

1 Measurements:*shi* 85 x 76 cm, *song* 72 x 77 cm.

2 I thank Rainer Altherr for the mineralogical identification which is "biotite-hornblende granodiorite."

3 Even today, the number of characters in the columns is in dispute. A list of each column – with the uncertainty: 52 or 53 for column 3 – gives Aikawa (2003, 150). See also Aikawa (2004). Wang Jun 王鈞 writes in Wang Jun and A Tao (1990, 2): largest column (11) 52 characters, shortest column (10) 43 characters. Lai Fei (2007, 112) writes: 43–52 characters per column, but counts 54 characters in column 2. Our own counting is evident from the line breaks in the transcription of the text below.

4 Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst Köln and Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften (2009, 63).

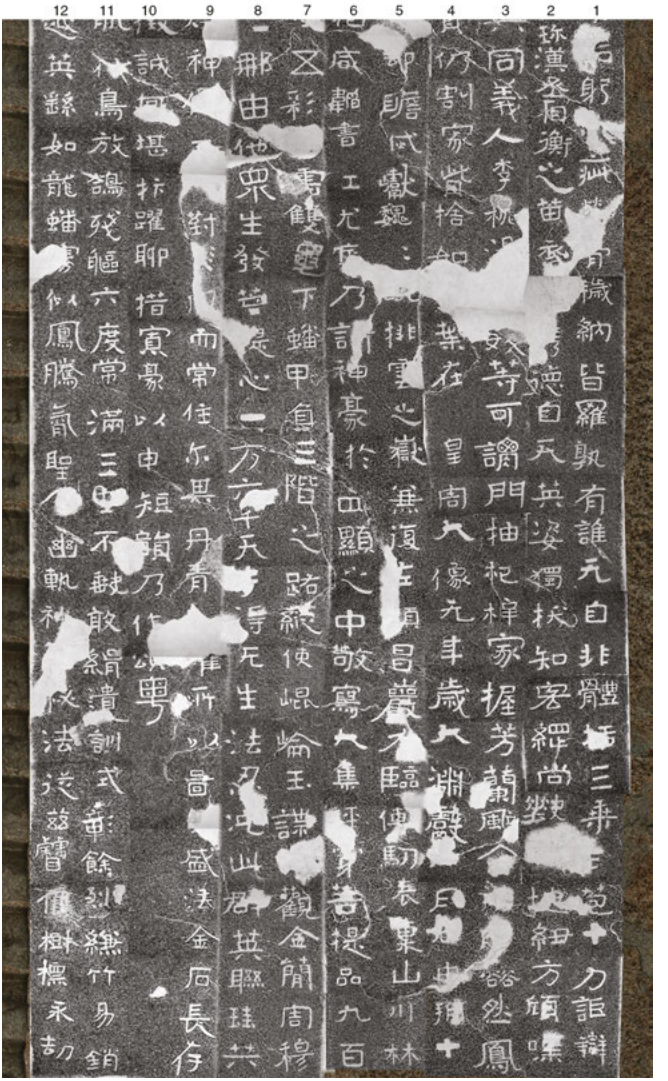
https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110413083-005

Figure 5.1: Aerial view of the engravings on Mount Tie. The *Great Collection Sutra* within the fenced field of script on the right, *Stone Hymn* on the left.

Mount Tie is among the thirty-one sites in Shandong where, during the Northern Qi (Bei Qi 北齊; 551–577), and Northern Zhou (Bei Zhou 北周; 557–581) dynasties Buddhists monks and devout lay persons engraved sutra texts on mountain cliffs, rocks and stelae. These engravings are the subject of

Figures 5.2–3: *Stone Hymn*. Upper part. Rubbing in four stripes of paper. Made in 2009 by the Shandong Stone Carving Art Museum in Jinan.

a research project that the Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften has been conducting in collaboration with the Shandong Stone Carving Art Museum in Jinan. The results are being published in five volumes in a multivolume series



Figures 5.2–3: Lower part (continued)

on Buddhist sutras engraved in stone in China.[5] The *Stone Hymn* is one of the many jewels in this material; so far it has gone almost unnoticed.[6]

5 Ledderose (2014 ff., *Shandong Province*, vols. 1, 2, and 3, and *Sichuan Province*, vols. 1, 2, 3 and 4, are in print). The *Stone Hymn* is presented in *Shandong Province*, vol. 2 (2015), 149–174.
6 For a brief assessment of its various aspects see Ledderose (2016).

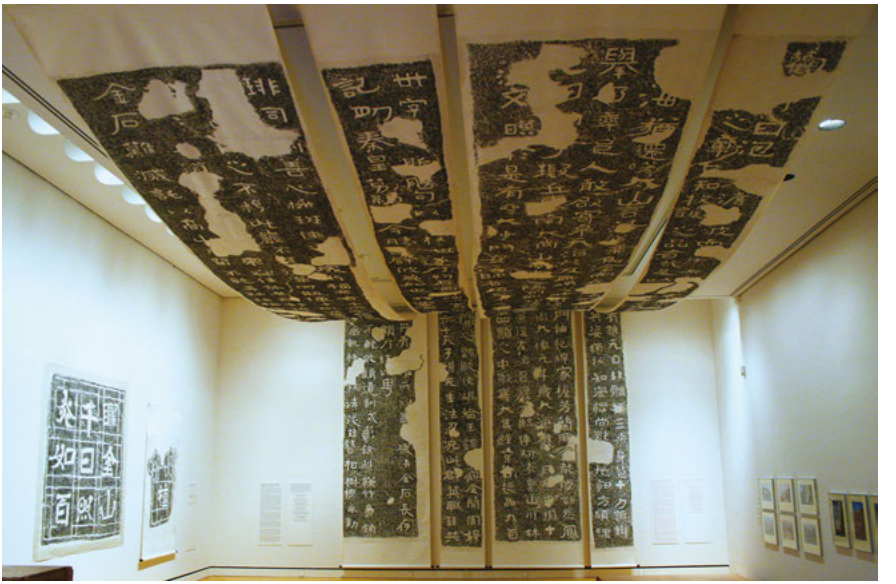


Figure 5.4: Rubbing of the *Stone Hymn* exhibited at the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne, 2009.

Epigraphers first recorded the *Stone Hymn* at the end of the 18th century. Huang Yi 黃易 (1744–1802), who has been called an early Chinese field archaeologist, went to Mount Tie and painted a sketch, which, in 1797, he included in an album with 24 small pictures entitled *Illustrations of my Visits to Stelae at the Foot of Mount Dai* (*Dailu fangbei tu* 岱麓訪碑圖).[7] In his rendering of Mount Tie, the engraved inscription is not visible, yet in the colophon to his painting Huang Yi writes that the cliff is steep and slippery and that it is difficult to make rubbings. Nevertheless, he obtained a complete set, and, as he proudly points out, after a thousand years he was the first to pay attention to this inscription. He quotes the information that a certain Kuang Zhe 匡喆, a descendant of the Chief Minister of the Han dynasty, Kuang Heng 匡衡 (fl. 48–32 BCE), had the sutra engraved in the "first year of the *daxiang* era of the August Zhou dynasty," which corresponds to 579.

In the summer of 1796, Huang Yi had already sent a set of rubbings to the eminent scholar, Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849). When Ruan Yuan served in Shandong as Director of Studies (*xuezheng* 學政) from 1793 to 1795, he convened, in his

7 In the National Palace Museum in Beijing. Illustrated in Gugong bowuyuan (2010, 185–193). The leaf with Mount Tie is on p. 190.

residence in Jinan 濟南, a research cluster of more than a hundred learned members, who studied ancient inscriptions engraved on stone and on bronze objects in the province. He published them in his comprehensive *Epigraphic Records of Shandong* (*Shanzuo jinshi zhi* 山左金石志), to which he wrote a preface in 1797.[8]

When compiling his entry on the *Stone Hymn* in this work, Ruan Yuan made use of the rubbings that he had received from Huang Yi. He bravely attempted a first transcription of the entire text and here showed himself to be highly methodical. He inserted blank squares, where characters had weathered on the rock and did not appear in his rubbings. If he could identify only parts of a character, he printed those parts, and if characters had been written in variant forms, he also printed those. This must have been quite an exacting task for the artisans who cut the wooden printing blocks for Ruan's book.

In his commentary, Ruan Yuan is more specific than Huang Yi, noting that the twelve columns of the text have 52 or 53 characters each, that the diameter of each character is seven inches, and that each of the two large title characters, *Stone* and *Hymn*, has a diameter of more than two feet. He further quotes evidence from a local gazetteer that the Kuang family had formerly moved to a village thirty (Chinese) miles north of Zou City, and he assumes that the family was still living there when they had the sutra carved.

Ruan Yuan's entry is typical of the sober, but selective interest of the early epigraphers. They always name place and date of an inscription and, as a rule, they give measurements, the number of columns and characters, and they also identify the calligraphic type of script (Huang Yi calls it symmetrical clerical script, *bafen* 八分, Ruan Yuan says standard script, *zhengshu* 正書). They pay much attention to the donors and makers of the inscriptions, their official positions and their family relationships. They are not, however, concerned with the content of the inscription and they show no interest at all in Buddhist issues.

In the following two centuries, more than a dozen epigraphers wrote about the *Stone Hymn*. By and large they follow Ruan Yuan's scheme, and the data they provide become ever more exact. In 1834, Dong Chun 董純 and Ma Xingyi 馬星翼 are the first to quote the precise date of the inscription, including the day.[9] In the autumn of 1839, Li Zuoxian 李佐賢 (1807–1876), a native of Shandong and Presented Scholar (*jinshi* 進士) of 1835, visited Mount Tie. Quoting the *Stone Hymn*, he identifies the calligrapher, who wrote the adjacent sutra as "the Great Renunciant (*śramaṇa*), Dharma Master Sengan 大沙門僧安法師."[10] In 1907,

8 Bi and Ruan (1977–2006, 14484b–14485b).

9 Dong and Ma (1995, 469).

10 Li and Chen (1911, 14195a). There is no character *seng* 僧 in the *Stone Hymn*, yet Dharma Master An is today generally identified as Seng'an Daoyi 僧安道一 (fl. 562–579).

Yang Shoujing 楊守敬 (1839–1915) reproduces the characters of the *Stone Hymn* with the traditional method of drawing the strokes in double outlines (*shuanggou* 雙鉤), and he gives a full transcription.[11] In 1911, the local official Sun Baotian 孫葆田 (1840–1911) attempts another transcription of the text and gives more numbers of characters and exact measurements.[12]

Again, it is astonishing, that the Buddhist nature of the text attracts hardly any attention from these later authors. Nor do they show interest for the large adjacent sutra. The *Stone Hymn* tells us that the sutra text is the "Piercing the *Bodhi* Chapter of the *Great Collection Sutra* 大集經穿菩提品," but in the 18th century nobody takes any notice. Li Zuoxian and his colleague, Wu Shifen 吳式芬 (1796–1856), who was, like Li, a native of Shandong and Presented Scholar of 1835, are the first to mention the three giant title characters, *Dajijing* 大集經 (*Great Collection Sutra*).[13] Beginning with Ruan Yuan, authors had quoted passages of a few characters, out of context, from the sutra, but they did not discuss its content, religious significance, authorship or date, and they never explored the reasons why the sutra was engraved at this particular place and time, or in these particular historic and social circumstances.

In the twentieth century, epigraphers continued for a while in the traditional mode. They mostly quoted earlier authors without making substantial additions. This only changed in the 1980s, when the Shandong Stone Carving Art Museum (Shandong shike yishu bowuguan 山東省石刻藝術博物館) in Jinan 濟南 began systematically to survey and document the Buddhist stone inscriptions in Shandong. Specialists from other institutions joined the efforts. More site investigations of the *Stone Hymn* were made, more characters were identified, more rubbings were taken, and scholars further improved on the reading of the text. About a dozen transcriptions were proposed in the last quarter century.[14]

Nevertheless, even contemporary Chinese scholars are still under the spell of the mighty epigraphic tradition that Ruan Yuan initiated: they concentrate on the physical features of the engraved characters; they decipher and measure them and describe their state of preservation; they analyze the calligraphy stylistically, compare it with other inscriptions in the province and try to assign it to a particular calligrapher; they list the names of donors and concentrate on

11 Xie Chengren (1988, vol. 10, transcription 419–419; double outlines 420–698).

12 Sun Baotian (1977–2006, 9253b–9254a).

13 Li and Chen (1911, 14195a), Wu Shifen (1937, vol. 28:21153a).

14 Listed in *Buddhist Stone Sutras in China, Shandong Province*, vol. 2 (see note 5 above), 172–174. The most thoroughly annotated transcription is Zhang Guangcun (2003). Partial transcription and English translation in Harrist (2008, translations: 166, 180; transcription: 294).

their titles and official positions. Here, Zhang Zong's 張總 research has brought clarification about the roles that different individuals played in the sutra carving project: the Kuang family were the fund raisers, local officials were the donors, and three individuals, who are named in other colophons, were the chief overseers of the project.[15] Suggestions have also been made as to who the anonymous author and the anonymous calligrapher of the *Stone Hymn* might have been, yet a convincing conclusion has not been reached.[16]

When our team established the reading of the *Stone Hymn* that is presented below, we built on the new findings and enriched them with our own investigations on the rock. These included taking photographs at night with strong slanting strobe lighting (Figure 5.5). We further amended worn and unreadable characters by making informed suggestions about the wording that the author would have chosen. Here, Professor Luo Zhao 羅炤, from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, contributed his knowledge of Buddhist texts. We also examined the *Stone Hymn* in its larger geographical, social and religious context and viewed its calligraphic style in a wider perspective.[17] These routes of analysis in our main publication are not repeated here, but the content and the structure of the text will be discussed in the following.[18]

The *Stone Hymn* is the most extraordinary of all colophons accompanying engraved Buddhist sutras and sutra passages in Shandong. It is a beautiful piece of writing, a superb example of the literature of the time. The anonymous author chose an elegant and rare vocabulary and arrests the reader with evocative imagery and vivid metaphors.

The *Stone Hymn* consists of a main text in verse, interspersed with prose, which in spite of its length epigraphers have called the Preface (*xu* 序). It has five parts in ten columns. The short hymn proper (*song* 頌) follows in two columns. The first part of the Preface sets the scene; it consists of verses of four, five, and six character lines. Indeed, almost the entire text is written in verse, with only few exceptions: the second part on the donors and the central third part on the dedication each begin with a few words in prose; another short prose section is

15 See Zhang Zong's discussion of Mount Tie in *Buddhist Stone Sutras in China, Shandong Province*, vol. 2 (note 5 above), 100–105.

16 Wang and Lai (1989, 42) suggest that the calligraphy was written by a disciple of An Daoyi, and so thinks Hu Xinli (1989, 45). Zhang Guangcun (2006, 227) argues that the donor Sun Qia 孫洽, who is named in another engraved colophon, wrote both, the text and the calligraphy.

17 See Ledderose (2013).

18 Modern authors have not yet analyzed the content of the *Stone Hymn*. In Wang and A (1990, 2) Wang Jun 王鈞 merely lists, but not in sequence, seven topics that he sees treated in this text.

Figure 5.5: Taking photographs of the engraved text at night.

found in the second part, two more in the third part, and one in the fourth part. Yet otherwise, the fourth part on the sutra engraving and the fifth part on the end of the eon are entirely written in verse, with lines of four or six characters. The hymn proper, after a short introduction, also consists of poetic language throughout: six stanzas with four verses each and a last stanza with two verses; each verse has four characters.

The first part, as is usual in votive texts, opens up a wide perspective on the Buddhist teaching and the value of sutras. It evokes the ephemeral nature of the world, including our fragile human existence. Rescue can only come through the knowledge of the correct texts that save and protect.

The second part introduces the donors of the sutra engraved next to the *Stone Hymn*, and to which the *Stone Hymn* is the colophon. Kuang Zhe and his four younger brothers are listed by name, and here the reader learns that they are descendants of the Han Chief Minister, Kuang Heng. These virtuous and insightful disciples of the Buddha are aware of the precarious state of the cosmos. They "know that the vast hawsers of heaven have long been deficient and discern that the earth's pivot is near collapse. They sigh that yet the great blue sea also changes and bemoan that even Mount Tai falls." A second group of donors are called the "willows and catalpas of their lineages, fragrant orchids of their

families." Finally, there is a Buddhist lay society; it may have contributed most of the funds.

The words of part three, the central part of the text, preserve the essence of the dedication ritual, which must have been performed when the engraving of the sutra was completed. First, the sutra is anchored in space and time. It was dedicated: "on the seventeenth day, a *bingzi* day, of the eighth month, which began on a *gengshen* day, Jupiter in Pisces, first year of the *daxiang* era of the August Zhou dynasty." This elaborate date corresponds to September 23rd, 579.

Then the sutra on Mount Tie – and, implicitly, the *Stone Hymn* – are placed in a cultural geography. The author begins by naming Xiaqiu 瑕丘 in the vicinity, which was the administrative center of Yanzhou 兗州 Prefecture. It is known that there were, at the time, an important monastery and a nunnery at Xiaqiu. The monks, who did the engraving, may have had connections with these institutions.

Like many writers of solemn texts, the present author, too, moors his subject at a node where two axes cross, a major north-south axis, and a secondary east-west axis. In this case, the secondary axis reaches, in the east, to Mount Jian 尖山 (here called Cliff of Zhang 昌巖) and, in the west, to the post road, while the main axis points to Mount Yi 嶧山 (here called Mount Zhu Yi 邾嶧) in the south, which rises "majestically... its peak reaching the Milky Way," and in the north to the "looming magnificence of Mount Tai 泰山, ... the sacred mountain parting the clouds."

The mountains in the south and east, and probably the post road stations in the west, could be seen by someone reading the sutra and the *Stone Hymn* while standing on Mount Tie's southern slope. Mount Tai in the north, however, is beyond sight. Only if the beholder climbs up to the 118 meter high ridge above the sutra and, even further, to the peak of Mount Gang behind it, at 235 meters, then no other range will obstruct his view toward Mount Tai. On an unusually clear day, he might be able to make out this most sacred of all holy mountains in China in the far distance, 94 kilometers away. At 1,545 meters, its peak is the highest elevation in Shandong.

The deeper reason, why the writer draws the reader's attention to the two mountains, Yi and Tai, is their prominence in political and cultural history. The First August Emperor of Qin (Qin Shi Huangdi 秦始皇帝; r. 221–210 BCE) had stelae erected here to commemorate and celebrate his unification of the realm. In the second half of the 6th century, Buddhists in northern China now rejoiced in celebrating a new unification of their land, this time under the Buddha. When the *Stone Hymn* was completed in 579, the short but atrocious Buddhist persecution, which had raged in Shandong in 577/578, had come to an end. In

earlier years, two sutra passages had already been placed on Mount Yi in 564 and in 570–572, as well as on Mount Jian in 575. Mount Ge 葛山, still further to the east, would be engraved in the following year, 580, and in these same years (the precise date has been lost) Mount Tai was honored with a spectacular inscription of the *Diamond Sutra* (*Jingangjing* 金剛經). Together, the inscriptions on these mountains transformed the region into a land of the Buddha. By invoking Mount Yi and Mount Tai, the author of the *Stone Hymn* affirms that these two venerable peaks – including their ancient imperial aura – had now been fully integrated into the Buddhist realm.

The officiant of the dedication ritual was the Great Renunciant, Dharma Master An, a monk of deepest insight and a calligrapher of the highest order. He wrote out the "Piercing the *Bodhi* Chapter" of the *Great Collection Sutra*. The last sentence in the dedication names the fundamental reason for the entire enterprise: "to leave behind these surpassing words in order [...] to rescue the world." Here the author of the *Stone Hymn* takes up the topic that he had already raised in the first and second parts, namely that the engraved chapters from the Buddhist scriptures will "save and protect" in a time, when the "earth's pivot is near collapse."

In his fourth part, the author narrates how the engraved sutra was produced. He describes the format, which had the shape of an overwhelming stele: "Six dragons encircle it above, their mouths glowing with five-colored [...] clouds; two tortoises crouch below, their shells supporting the path of three steps." Compared with these achievements, similar ancient, pre-Buddhist feats in China, appear trivial, and that even includes the occasion, when the Buddha himself delivered the sermon as "twelve *nayuta* of beings put forth the *bodhi* mind (i.e. set their minds on Unsurpassed Correct Perfect Enlightenment), and sixteen thousand gods attained the Acceptance that *dharmas* are Without Birth." The reason for this boastful claim is simple: the sutra preached by the Buddha was only heard once; engraved into the rock, however, it will last forever.

The fifth part consists of three and a half stanzas in which the author explains how the stone sutra will endure. Harking back to his first part, where he bemoaned the dire state of the world, he now directs the reader's view to the end of our eon. He refers to the anxieties of Buddhist believers of the period, who were fearfully expecting the end of the Dharma (*mofa* 末法). Yet, the author assures us, the sutra hewn into the solid rock will not be affected by the deluge and the scorching winds of the final inferno. In the next world age, it will still be available and make the teachings of the Buddha known again.

Finally, the hymn proper repeats in succinct, poetic language salient elements from the main text. The one major addition concerns the calligraphy,

Translation*

石頌 **Stone Hymn.**

I 引言：佛法	**I Introduction: The Buddhist Teaching**
/1/觀行曰	As the *Contemplation of Practice* says:
沧海永澹	The great blue sea rolls forever,
清波而難守	and the clear waves are hard to hold.
赤電興震	The red lightening rises and quakes,
朱光而易滅	and the vermillion radiance quickly perishes.
但以	And yet,
四毒纏躬	the Four Poisons entangle the body,
八疵縈骨	the Eight Faults wind around the bones.
穢納皆羅	The net of the defilements ensnares us all.
孰有誰无	Who is free of them, who is not?
自非	Those, whose
體括三乘	frame does not encompass the Three Vehicles
身苞十力	and whose body does not enclose the Ten Powers,
詎辯/2/口口之章	cannot understand the texts that [. . .] [. . .],
烏知救護之品者哉	and have no way to know the chapters that save and protect!
II 供養人	**II The Donors**
是叭有信佛弟子匡	Thus, there were the devout disciples of the Buddha, Kuang Zhe and his
喆及弟顯口祖珌漢	younger brothers, Xian, [. . .], Zu, and Zhen, descendants of the Han Chief
丞相衡之苗裔也	Minister [Kuang] Heng,
秀德自天	endowed with the excellent virtue bestowed by Heaven,
英姿獨拔	outstanding in their heroic bearing.
知宏綱尚缺	Knowing that the vast hawsers of heaven have long been deficient
察地紐方傾	and discerning that the earth's pivot is near collapse,
嘆/3/沧海猶遷	they sighed that yet the great blue sea also changes,
嗟太山言落	and bemoaned that even Mount Tai falls.
遂	Consequently,
棄烏塗而在懷	they have embraced within their hearts the renunciation of the bemired paths
收清骸而口府	and they have [. . .] within their bowels the acceptance of the pure body [of Buddhism].
扵是乃	Thereupon,
與同義人李桃湯口	along with the likeminded persons, Li Tao, Tang [. . .], [Tang] Tou, and
娥等	others
可謂–	–they can be called
門抽杞梓	willows and catalpas of their lineages,
家握芳蘭	fragrant orchids of their families –
颯尒龍騰	they, swift as dragons soaring,
豁然鳳/4/擧	sudden as phoenixes taking flight,
乃率邑人	led the people of this lay society,

敢欲	and humbly wished
寄泉天沼	to entrust their resources to the Heavenly Pond,
共汲無竭之津	so as to draw together from the Inexhaustible Reservoir,
歸財法肆	to dedicate their wealth to Dharma cloisters,
同取永用之寶	so as to jointly lay hold of a treasure of everlasting use.
仍割家貲	Accordingly, they have cut into their family resources,
捨如霜葉	casting them aside like froststricken leaves.
III 福業	**III The Meritorious Act**
在皇周大像元年歲	On the seventeenth day, a *bingzi* day, of the eighth month, which began
大淵獻八月庚申朔	on a *gengshen* day, Jupiter in Pisces, first year of the *daxiang* era of
十/5/七日丙子	the August Zhou dynasty.
瑕丘東南	[Here], to the southeast of Xiaqiu,
大崗山南崗之陽	on the southern slope of the Southern Gang of the Great Mount Gang.
前觀邾嶧峨峨	Ahead, one can see Mount Zhu Yi rising majestically,
覩拂漢之峯	and make out its peak reaching the Milky Way.
却瞻岱巘巍巍	Turning around, one can look into the distance at the looming magnificence of Mount Dai
眺排雲之嶽	and gaze toward that sacred mountain parting the clouds.
兼復	Furthermore,
左顧昌巖	to the left, the Chang Cliff comes into view,
右臨傳駟	and, to the right, one overlooks the post road.
表裏山川	Surrounded by mountains and streams,
林/6/口交暎	with groves and [. . .] resonating with each other.
於是有刍大沙門安法師者	And there was the Great Renunciant (*śramaṇa*), Dharma Master An of Qi,
道鑒不二	whose way has illuminated nonduality,
德悟一原	whose virtue has awakened to the One Origin.
匪直秘相咸韜	Not only does he grasp all the mysteries –
書工尤最	his calligraphic skill is of the very highest order.
乃	Therefore,
請神豪於	[the donors] have requested that this Divine Brush,
四顯之中	[here] amidst the Four Eminences,
敬寫大集經穿菩提	inscribe with veneration the 930 characters of the “Piercing the *Bodhi*
品九百/7/卅字	Chapter” of the Great Collection Sutra,
遺斯勝句	to leave behind these surpassing words
以口拔世	in order [. . .] to rescue the world.
IV 刻經	**IV The Sutra Engraving**
遂乃	Consequently, they then
約石畾碑	painted the rock, picturing a stele,
蔑炳常質	rendering incandescent its mundane material.
六龍上繞	Six dragons encircle it above,
口瑩五彩口雲	their mouths glowing with five-colored [. . .] clouds;

雙龜下蟠	two tortoises crouch below,
甲負三階之路	their shells supporting the path of three steps.
縱使	Even
崐崘玉諜	the jade plaques from Mount Kunlun,
東觀金蘭	the golden slips in the Eastern Pavilion [Library],
周穆/8/記功	the recorded merits of [King] Mu of Zhou,
秦皇勒績	and the inscribed achievements of the Emperor of Qin;
口今勝口	[. . .] the present surpassing [carving],
譬彼蔑如也	compared with it, they are trivial!
釋迦本演之世	During the age of the original preaching by Śākyamuni,
于時	at that time,
十二那由他衆生發菩提心	twelve *nayuta* of beings put forth the *bodhi* mind,
一万六千天子得无生法忍	and sixteen thousand gods attained the Acceptance that *dharmas* are Without Birth.
况此群英	Is this not comparable with this group of luminaries,
聯珪共/9/琲	who have collected jewels and gathered pearls,
同口善心	and who, being of the same [. . .] and of good minds,
採斑倕之巧	have chosen craftsmen as skilled as Ban and Chui
成斯福業者乎	to complete this meritorious act?

V 末法	**V End of the Eon**
従今鐫搆	From now on, when this engraved text
逢刼火而莫燒	encounters the inferno at the end of the eon, it will not be consumed.
神口口口	When its divine [. . .] [. . .] [. . .]
對炎風而常住	faces those scorching winds, it will forever abide.
尔其	And
丹青口口	these reds and greens [. . .] [. . .],
所以畧其盛法	this is why they illustrate the flourishing Dharma.
金石長存	Metal and stone long endure,
/10/所以彫之不朽	this is why engraving upon them never decays.
此巖不琢	Were this cliff not hewn,
後葉何觀	what would later ages see?
璋才同返	Jewel-stuff will all revert;
萯藻謝歸	duckweed will wither and return [to earth].
猶覽此徽	Yet, gazing upon these signs,
誠何堪抃躍	truly, how can you not clap your hands and leap [for joy]!
聊措寡豪	Reluctantly, I take up my scanthaired brush
以申短韻	and employ short rhymes,
乃作頌粤	to make a hymn, which says:

VI 頌	**VI Hymn**
/11/茫茫大道	Boundless is the Great Way,
非口口口	It is not [. . .] [. . .] [. . .];
空来寂住	It comes emptily and goes quietly,

能卷能舒	It can roll up and it can unfold.
想口口岸	Thinking [. . .] [. . .] the shore,
口離陷途	[. . .] he avoids falling into the [dark] paths;
稱肌代鳥	Weighing his flesh to replace the bird,
放鴿殘軀	He frees the pigeon by mutilating his body.
六度常滿	The Six Perfections are ever complete,
三空不缺	The Three Emptinesses are not lacking;
敢緝遺訓	They ventured to gather the instructions handed down
式彰餘烈	To glorify the achievements bequeathed.
縑竹易銷	Silk and bamboo are easily ruined,
/12/金石難滅	But metal and stone are hard to destroy;
託以高山	Entrusting [the texts] to a high mountain,
永留不絕	They will last forever without end.
尋師琁翰	Seeking the master's treasured brushwork,
區口口高	In all regions [. . .] [. . .] high;
精跨羲誕	Its refinement surpasses [Wang] Xi[zhi] and [Wei] Dan,
妙越英繇	Its marvels exceed [Zhang Bo]ying and [Zhong] You;
如龍蟠雾	As dragons coiling in the mist,
似鳳騰霄	Like phoenixes soaring in the sky.
聖人幽軌	The recondite tracks of the Sage,
神口秘法	And the secret practices of the Divine [. . .],
従茲贊相	With these magnificent marks,
樹標永刼	Their banner is raised for the endless eons.

* The translation was done by the research group of the Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, including Chen Liang 陳亮, Paul Copp 柏剛, Funayama Toru 船山徹, Eric Greene 葛利尹, Ho Wai Ming 何偉明, Lothar Ledderose 雷德侯, Luo Zhao 羅炤, Ryan Richard Overbey 歐銳恩, Jessica Rawson 羅森, Tsai Suey-Ling 蔡穗玲, Claudia Wenzel 溫狄婭. Footnotes, in which we explain the reasons for our reading of the characters will be found in *Buddhist Stone Sutras in China, Shandong Province* vol. 2 (note 5 above), 160–162.

whose excellence, the author assures us, surpasses even that of Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303–361). This is a bold claim, indeed, because Wang Xizhi was universally hailed as the greatest master of all ages.

As the reader looks back over the text, two topics stand out. The author emphasizes several times that engraving the sutra into the enduring rock will guarantee the survival of the Buddhist teaching into the next world age and so rescue mankind. The second topic, which comes up more than once, is the praise for the aesthetic value of Dharma Master An's calligraphy. The calligraphic tradition is at the core of Chinese culture, and its roots reach far back into a pre-Buddhist period. The fact that a Buddhist monk, and possibly one with a foreign background, was recognized for his supreme achievement in this quintessentially Chinese art, was incontrovertible proof that, by the end of the

sixth century, the foreign religion had fully taken root in its new homeland and had appropriated some of its central cultural values. It was a successful exercise in transculturality.

References

Aikawa Masayuki 相川政行. 2003. "Tieshan Daji jing he jingsong shufa yanjiu 鐵山大集經和經頌書法研究 [Research on the Calligraphy of the 'Great Collection Sutra' and the 'Sutra Hymn' of Mount Tie]." In *Beichao moya kejing yanjiu* (*xu*) 北朝摩崖刻經研究 (續) [Research on the Sutras Engraved on Polished Cliffs during the Northern Dynasties, vol. 2], edited by Shandong shike yishu bowuguan 山東石刻藝術博物館, 135–157. Hong Kong: Tianma tushu youxian gongsi 天馬圖書有限公司.

Aikawa Masayuki 相川政行. 2004. "Shujōshi Tetsusan「Daishūkyō」daikaku to 「Sekishō」no kenkyū 鄒城市鐵山「大集経」題刻と「石頌」の研究 [Research on the main engraving of the Great Collection Sutra and the Stone Hymn on Mount Tie at Zoucheng]." *Heisei 16 nen Risshō daigaku bungakubu kenkyū kiyō* 平成 16 年立正大学文学部研究紀要 (The Academic Journal of the Faculty of Letters, Rissho University) 20:1–17.

Bi Yuan 畢沅, and Ruan Yuan 阮元, eds. 1977–2006. *Shanzuo jinshi zhi* 山左金石志 [Epigraphic Records of Shandong]. In *Shike shiliao xinbian* 石刻史料新編, series 1, vol. 19:14325–14802.

Dong Chun 董純, and Ma Xingyi 馬星翼. 1995. "Zou Xian zhi gao 鄒縣志稿 [Draft of the Gazetteer of Zou County]" (preface 1834). In *Lidai Zou Xian zhi shizhong* 歷代鄒縣志十種 [Ten Historical Gazetteers of Zou County], edited by Liu Fengtong 劉鳳桐 and Zhang Xinmin 張信民, 403–510. Beijing: Zhongguo gongren chubanshe 中國工人出版社.

Gugong bowuyuan 故宮博物院, ed. 2010. *Penglai suyue: Gugong cang Huang Yi Han Wei beike teji* 蓬莱宿约: 故宮藏黄易漢魏碑刻特集 [Revisiting Penglai: Stelae Engravings from the Han and Wei Dynasties from Huang Yi's Special Collection Preserved at the Palace Museum]. Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe 紫禁城出版社.

Harrist, Robert E. 2008. *The Landscape of Words*: *Stone Inscriptions from Early and Medieval China*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Hu Xinli 胡新立. 1989. "Zou Xian Sishan Beichao moya kejing 鄒縣'四山'北朝摩崖刻經 [The Sutras Engraved during the Northern Dynasties on Polished Cliffs of the 'Four Mountains' in Zou County]." *Shufa* 書法 65, no. 2:44–47.

Lai Fei 賴非. 2007. *Shandong Beichao fojiao moya kejing diaocha yu yanjiu* 山東北朝佛教摩崖刻經調查與研究 [Field Work and Research on the Buddhist Sutras Engraved on Polished Cliffs in Shandong during the Northern Dynasties]. Beijing: Kexue chubanshe 科學出版社.

Ledderose, Lothar. 2013. "Scaling the Cliffs." *Orientations* 44, no. 1:51–58.

Ledderose, Lothar, series editor, 2014 ff. *Buddhist Stone Sutras in China, Zhongguo fojiao shijing* 中國佛教石經. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz; Hangzhou: China Academy of Art Press.

Ledderose, Lothar. 2016. "The Largest Colophon in China: The Stone Hymn 石颂 of 579 AD at Mount Tie 鐵山. Chūgoku saidai no okugaki. 579 nen ni Tetsuzan ni kizamareta Sekishō 中国最大の奥書. 579 年に鐵山に刻まれた《石颂》."In *Higashi Ajia ni okeru Sho no bigaku no dentō to henyō* 東アジアにおける《書の美学》の伝統と変容 [Tradition and Transformation in Aesthetics of East Asian Calligraphy], edited by Kambayashi

Tsunemichi 神林恒道, Kaya Noriko 萱のり子, Tsunoda Katsuhisa 角田勝久, 81–97. Tōkyō: Sangensha 三元社.

Li Zuoxian 李佐賢, and Chen Zhu 陳洙, postface 1911. *Shiquan shuwu jinshi tiba* 石泉書屋金石題跋 [Colophons to Epigraphica from the Stone Well Studio]. In *Shike shiliao xinbian*, series 2, vol. 19:14189–14196.

Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst Köln and Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, eds. 2009. *The Centenary of the Museum of East Asian Art Cologne. The Heart of Enlightenment: Buddhist Art in China 550–600*. Köln: Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst Köln.

Shike shiliao xinbian 石刻史料新編 [New Edition of Historical Materials Carved on Stone]. 1977–2006. Edited by Xinwenfeng chubangongsi bianjibu 新文豐出版公司編輯部, 4 series, 100 vols. Taibei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe 新文豐出版社.

Sun Baotian 孫葆田. 1977–2006. *Shandong jinshi zhi* 山東金石志 [Epigraphic Records of Shandong]. In *Shike shiliao xinbian*石刻史料新編, series 2, vol. 12:9147–9392.

Wang Jun 王鈞, and A Tao 阿濤, eds. 1990. *Sishan moya kejing* 四山摩崖刻經 [Sutras Engraved on Polished Cliffs of the Four Mountains]. Beijing: Zhishi chubanshe 知識出版社.

Wang Sili 王思禮, and Lai Fei 賴非. 1989. "Tieshan Shisong de chubu kaocha yu yanjiu 鐵山石頌的初步考察與研究 [A Preliminary Investigation and Research of the *Stone Hymn* on Mount Tie]." *Shufa* 書法 65, no. 2:41–43.

Wu Shifen 吳式芬. Undated; ed. 1937. *Jinshi huimu fenbian* 金石彙目分編 [Categorized Edition of an Assembled Catalog of Epigraphica]. In *Shike shiliao xinbian*, series 1, vol. 27–28: 20651–21591.

Xie Chengren 謝承仁, ed. 1988. *Yang Shoujing ji* 楊守敬集 [Collected Works of Yang Shoujing]. 10 vols. Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe 湖北人民出版社.

Zhang Guangcun 張廣存. 2003. "Tieshan ke *Jingsong* shidu bing jiaozhu 《鐵山刻經頌》識讀並校注 [Reading and Critical Annotation of the 'Hymn to the Sutra Engraved at Tieshan']." In *Beichao moya kejing yanjiu* (*xu*) 北朝摩崖刻經研究（續）[Research on the Sutras of the Northern Dynasties Engraved on Polished Cliffs, vol. 2], edited by Shandong shike yishu bowuguan 山東石刻藝術博物館, 215–235. Hong Kong: Tianma tushu youxian gongsi 天馬圖書有限公司.

Zhang Guangcun 張廣存. 2006. "Tieshan Beichao kejing xinkao si ti 鐵山北朝刻經新考四題 [Four Questions on the Latest Research on Sutras Engraved on Polished Cliffs at Mount Tie during the Northern Dynasties]." In *Beichao moya kejing yanjiu* (*san*) 北朝摩崖刻經研究 (三) [Research on the Sutras of the Northern Dynasties Engraved on Polished Cliffs, vol. 3], edited by Shandong shike yishu bowuguan 山東石刻藝術博物館 and Hebei Sheng Handan Shi wenwuju 河北省邯鄲市文物局, 221–231. Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe 內蒙古人民出版社.

Anna Andreeva

6 "To Overcome the Tyranny of Time": Stars, Buddhas, and the Arts of Perfect Memory at Mt. Asama

The transcultural and hybrid nature of religious practices in premodern Japan can be best understood in terms of historical relationships between cultic sites, local deities (*kami* 神), Buddhist divinities, and (sometimes) celestial bodies. In order to get a full picture of these relations, one should add to this mixture the diverse groups of religious practitioners who inhabit or visit these places for ritual purposes, to accumulate spiritual power, or for doctrinal or religious training.

Cultic sites, being a permanent feature of the geographical landscape, act as a nexus for the symbolic and ritual relationships between divinities and practitioners. Networks and relationships between cultic sites depend on their facilitators – that is, religious institutions and individual practitioners. Such networks are subject to change, being established for a certain period of time; they are also easily disrupted by social, economic, or political circumstances. The temporal points of the supposed or imagined origins of such networks and relationships – as well as their shifts, reconfigurations, or abrupt terminations – become encoded in cultic sites' religious identity and cultural memory, as expressed through texts, rituals, and images. Taken together, cultic sites act as nodes for certain kinds of religious practice; each site can be somewhat similar or related to the other sites nearby, but it can also be markedly different.

One prime but understudied example of such phenomena is Mt. Asama (朝熊山), a mountain rising 555 metres above the sea level, near the present-day town of Toba (鳥羽市) in the eastern part of Mie prefecture in Japan. Located a few kilometres to the northwest of the Ise shrines (Ise Jingū 伊勢神宮) – Japan's most important sacred complex, which enshrines the tutelary deities of the imperial house – Mt. Asama was for some time a centre of pilgrimage and ritual practice in its own right, attracting priests from nearby Shinto shrines, mountain ascetics, Buddhist monks, and itinerant holy men from remote provinces. Between the late twelfth and sixteenth centuries (and perhaps already much

Note: Research for this article was conducted within the subproject "Economies of the Sacred: Merging Esoteric Buddhism and Kami Cults in Pre-modern Japan" of the interdisciplinary research group "Negotiating Religion From a Transcultural Perspective" at the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context – The Dynamics of Transculturality," University of Heidelberg, 2013–2016.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110413083-006

earlier), this mountain was repeatedly conceptualised as a ritual and memorial site associated with the veneration of stars and the acquisition of perfect memory. Performed during the night among the mountain's forests and caverns, the ritual of *Gumonji-hō* (求聞持法, lit. "inquiring and retaining [in one's mind]") focused on contemplating the star Venus, worshipping the bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha (Kokūzō 虚空蔵), and reciting *dhāraṇī* – lines of Sanskrit syllables thought to be imbued with special potency – over an extended period of time. This practice, known to mountain ascetics in Japan since at least the eighth century, was said to endow those who performed it with the utmost lucidity of mind and sharpness of perception, to grant perfect memory, and also to increase merit, prosperity, and virtue.

Ritual texts from the Muromachi (室町, 1336–1573) and Edo (江戸, 1600–1868) periods describe the complex nature of worship at Mt. Asama and provide ample clues as to how and why this mountain became associated with ritual practices aimed at attaining perfect memory through worshipping stars, local deities, and Buddhist divinities. In large part, Mt. Asama's history was shaped by processes of recontextualising ritual, astrological, and astronomical knowledge that had originated in Central Asia, India, and China at different periods and arrived in Japan as part of the corpus of Buddhist teachings and practices, along with techniques of directional and calendric calculation and geomantic divination. In Japan, the understanding of Buddhist and other traditions, including astronomical knowledge, was reconfigured to suit particular needs, landscapes, and purposes and was merged with local traditions of *kami* worship. As a result of this long-term transcultural movement – combined with localisation – Buddhist deities, concepts, and images became central to religious discourses and practices at Mt. Asama and remained a crucial part of the site's cultural memory before and, to some degree, after the Meiji period (1868–1912).

6.1 Suppressing the "Wrong" Memories

During the third month of 1750 (Kan'en 寛延 3), the Buddhist temple located atop Mt. Asama in the Watarai (度会郡) district of Ise initiated a rare public display of its principal image (*honzon* 本尊) of bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha (Kokūzō). A number of sacred historical images or statues are usually preserved in temples as inaccessible, secret objects (*hibutsu* 秘仏); they are periodically put on display at events called *gokaichō* (御開帳, lit. "the august unveiling"). Such events are conducted to remind parishioners of the temple's core identity as

a religious institution and to collect funds from the attendant public for the upkeep of temple property (Fowler 1991–92; Rambelli 2002; Horton 2007).[1]

This particular event occurred a few months after the transfer of the two Ise shrines to a new site (*shikinen hengū* 式年遷宮) was completed in 1749 (Kan'en 寛延 2). The shrines' relocation was a major procedure in the religious, economic, and – to some extent – political life of Japan. It took place every twenty years, necessitated an extensive fundraising campaign, and required the attendance of the members of the imperial family (Teeuwen and Breen 2017). During the ceremonial opening of the *honzon* and subsequent festivities, the temple on top of Mt. Asama, called Kongōshōji (金剛証寺), also displayed a ritual banner bearing the following description of its other principal image[2]:

> 天照太神影向尊像雨宝童子
> *Tenshō daijin yōgō sonzō Uhō dōji*
> The deity Uhō Dōji, the provisional manifestation of Tenshō Daijin

With this banner, the divine ancestor of Japan's imperial house and the principal divinity of the Ise shrines, the solar deity Amaterasu (天照, or Tenshō Daijin, as it was known in Buddhist circles), was announced to worshippers within the precincts of a Buddhist temple as the hybrid Shinto-Buddhist divinity Uhō Dōji, the "Rain-Treasure Child."

Kongōshōji today preserves an Uhō Dōji statue dating from the Heian period (905–1185, possibly the latter half of the tenth to the twelfth centuries), which is likely to have been that very *honzon*. It is a wooden sculpture of an androgynous deity with fleshy cheeks and a benign, calm facial expression, carved from a single block of Japanese *hinoki* cypress. On top of the deity's head rests a four-layered treasure stupa (*hōtō* 宝塔), and the deity's long hair flows over both shoulders. The deity stands on a block of mountainous rock and is dressed in simple Tang-style, long-sleeved robes, resting its right hand on a one-pronged *vajra*-jewelled staff and holding a *cintāmaṇi* jewel in its left hand.[3] According to temple legend, the statue of this divinity, formally called Kongō Sekishō Zenshin

1 The functions of secret images are often more diverse. See the broader discussion from the viewpoint of semiotics in Rambelli and Reinders (2012, esp. ch. 4, "The Ways of Not Seeing," 134–70).

2 During the *gokaichō*, such banners usually stand in front of the temple gates and in an immediate vicinity of the hall where the image is installed. They may also be placed at the entry point to the mountain or in the vicinity of nearby villages, especially if many temple parishioners and patrons reside there.

3 For references and photographs of this statue, see Nara National Museum (2007, 164; for annotation in Japanese, see p. 303).

Uhō Dōji (金剛赤精善神雨宝童子, Protective Deity of the Adamantine Red Jewel, Rain-Treasure Child), was carved by the Buddhist monk Kūkai (空海, 774–835), the architect of Japan's esoteric Buddhist tradition of Shingon and also the alleged founder of Kongōshōji. Representing the appearance of Amaterasu as it descended from heaven to earth (according to the myth, in the province of Hyūga [日向] in Kyushu), Uhō Dōji was a medieval deity that was also revered as a manifestation of the central divinity of esoteric Buddhism, the cosmic Buddha Mahāvairocana (Dainichi 大日) (Faure 2016, 276–79).

To commemorate its own identity at the time of that event, the temple also issued its own foundation history, entitled *Ise Asama dake ryaku engi* (伊勢朝熊岳略縁起, *Abbreviated Karmic Origins of Mt. Asama at Ise*; hereafter, the *Ryaku engi*), as a woodblock-print pamphlet. Although oral transmissions regarding the origins of Kongōshōji had circulated widely among the mountain ascetics who came to Mt. Asama prior to the publication of this pamphlet in 1750, the temple history was properly recorded by a Kongōshōji abbot only in 1662 (Kanbun 寛文 2).[4] Since the pre-1662 versions of the *Ryaku engi* most likely existed in the form of handwritten books or scrolls, they would only have been available to select temple clergymen, and not to the wider public. Both the 1662 record and the subsequently published version referred to several poems attributed to the imperial deity Amaterasu, glorifying Mt. Asama as the imperial deity's dwelling place and explaining that

> Mt. Asama is a sacred peak where the sages of immortality dwell. On its southern foot, there is the shrine on the Isuzu River (五十鈴宮) [that is, the Inner Shrine of Ise, Naikū (伊勢内宮)]. In the southwest, there is the Uji shrine (宇治宮) [dedicated to the Divine Grandchild Ninigi, the ancestor of the imperial family]. In the west, there is the Toyouke shrine (豊受宮) [the Outer Shrine of Ise, Gekū (外宮)]. Because these three great deities eternally dance around this sacred mountain, the nearby Akeho pond (明星の池)[5] has been invoked in poetry as the "pond of stringed jewels of sun, moon, and stars."[6]

4 Kubota (1980, 143–58, esp. 150–51); Kodama (2000, 390–411). Other Kongōshōji documents, including the earlier text *Asamayama engi* (朝熊山縁起), recorded in 1511, are preserved as original manuscripts at Tōji Kanchiin, in Kyoto. This core text of the Asama tradition and other similar manuscripts preserved at the Jingū Bunko (神宮文庫) archive at Ise may have been the source for the aforementioned 1662 version of the *Ryaku engi* and will be discussed below. The significance of the Japanese term *engi* will be revisited later, in the section titled "Ākāśagarbha, Kūkai, and Amaterasu in the *Asamayama Engi*," Section 6.4, pp. 136–143 of the current chapter.

5 Literally, the "pond of the Bright Star" or the "pond of *myōjō*, the star Venus." The Japanese characters *akeho* (明星) can also be read as *akaboshi*, which is a homophone for the "red star" (赤星). The relationship between *myōjō* as the Bright Star, Venus, and the colour red will be clarified later in this chapter.

6 *Ise Asama dake ryaku engi* 伊勢朝熊岳略縁起, in Gorai (2000, 108–10).

Elsewhere, the Kongōshōji foundation histories also explained that Mt. Asama has been a place of the most devout Buddhist and mountain ascetic practice since its beginning. They described how the founder of the temple (for this, read Kūkai) prostrated himself on the ground and worshipped the Bright Star (*akaboshi* or *myōjō* 明星), that is Venus. In response, Japanese deities – including the aforementioned Uhō Dōji, the three avatars of Kumano (*Kumano sansho gongen* 熊野三所権現), and eight myriads of other *kami* – appeared before him and proclaimed that Mt. Asama was a sacred mountain around which the deities Tenshō Daijin (Amaterasu), Tenson Daijin (Divine Grandchild Ninigi), and Toyouke Daijin eternally oscillated (*yūgi shitamafu* 遊戯し給ふ). At that point, as a sign of divine approval (*shō* 証),[7] the aforementioned Uhō Dōji momentarily appeared to Kūkai in its form as the imperial deity Amaterasu and proclaimed an oracle:

> I will manifest myself in a sacred image that will protect many generations of the Divine Grandchild [Ninigi]'s descendants [i.e., Japanese emperors]. This image, full of virtues and solemnly decorated, will appear in bright luminescence from the cavern of the Bright-Star Water (*myōjō sui* or *akaboshi no mizu* 明星水).[8]

What has been narrated above appears as a plain, unobtrusive story, a local legend meant to encourage patrons' donations by revealing the mytho-historical premises of Kongōshōji's construction as well as the divine landscape of Mt. Asama and nearby sacred sites. This narrative invoked the divine ancestors of Japan's imperial house, enshrined at Ise, placing them within the history of the Buddhist and mountain ascetic practices at Mt. Asama. Moreover, it emphasised strong mythological connections between the imperial deity, the mountain, and Japan's influential Shingon tradition. A characteristic of this type of narrative was the alignment of the distant divinities of Buddhism with local deities (*kami*). In modern scholarship on Japanese premodern religiosity, this phenomenon is known as *honji suijaku* (本地垂迹), literally meaning "buddhas as original ground and local deities as manifest trace" – a notion that will be discussed further in the following sections (Teeuwen and Rambelli 2003, 1–54).

The aforementioned temple history printed by Kongōshōji in 1750 for distribution to the public was issued in the aftermath of a rare major event – the ritual transfer of the two Ise shrines, which took place once every twenty years and always attracted a surge of new pilgrims to the region (Teeuwen and Breen

7 Presumably, to commemorate this mythic event, the temple was given the name Kongōshōji (金剛証寺, Temple of Adamantine Proof).

8 *Ise Asamadake ryaku engi*, in Gorai (2000, 108–10); Kubota (1980, 150–52).

2017, 139–62). No doubt these prints could be acquired easily by pilgrims travelling *en masse* to Ise and paying homage to nearby Mt. Asama.

Yet Kongōshōji's activities had caused discontent and controversy at the Grand Ise shrines. A large complex consisting of two main and many subsidiary shrines, Ise was an ancient sacred site which had been dedicated to the imperial tutelary deity Amaterasu since at least the sixth century. In the *longue durée*, the shrines were exclusively reserved for ritual worship by members of imperial house. During the medieval period, the ritual transmissions of Japan's early mytho-histories regarding the Age of Gods (*kamiyo* 神代) had claimed that, akin to the Buddhist divinities of India, Amaterasu had made a vow to protect one hundred generations of Japanese kings.[9] This link between Amaterasu and Japanese *tennō* (天皇) rulers was the cornerstone of the shrines' identity and remained part and parcel of Ise's own historical ideology. This mattered greatly, especially in the aftermath of the medieval period, when the imperial house was split and impoverished and could no longer provide much subsistence or direct economic patronage to the Ise shrines.[10]

This caused a significant reorientation of the shrines' survival strategy, necessitating a shift in their relations with major donors even while they still maintained their historical links to the imperial house. By the year 1750, the Ise shrines were a centre of popular mass pilgrimage (*Ise mairi* 伊勢参り).[11] Although the Kongōshōji incident remains obscure in some respects, it is reasonable to suggest that the Ise priesthood objected to Kongōshōji's self-promoting activities at the time of a major ritual event in the shrine's calendar and also to the divergent portrayal of their official mythology by their Buddhist neighbours. In particular, the idea that the imperial cult could be appropriated by local temple clergy and travelling mountain ascetic groups in

9 This vow was, for example, referred to in one of the chapters of *Miwa daimyōjin engi* (*Karmic Origins of the Great Bright Miwa Deity*), recorded at the Ōmiwa shrine in Yamato around 1318. See Andreeva (2011, 289).

10 The institutional history of the Ise shrines has been discussed in detail in Teeuwen (1996), and more recently, in Teeuwen and Breen (2017).

11 In some years during the first half of the eighteenth century, the Ise shrines had attracted between two and three million pilgrims. On average, at least 400,000 visitors went to pay homage to the Ise shrines annually. It is notable that, while the shrine priests strove to maintain their formal links to the imperial house, for pilgrims coming to give thanks to the shrines, Amaterasu represented the deity primarily ensuring agricultural prosperity. See Breen and Teeuwen (2010, ch. 2, "Kami Shrines, Myths, and Rituals in Premodern Times"; on popular practices, see pp. 57–58); also Teeuwen and Breen (2017, ch. 7, "Pilgrims' Pleasures," 139–62).

order to appeal to a broad public and effectively divert economic resources may have been a major source of irritation.[12]

In a bid to suppress the contradictory sacred topography of the Ise and Asama deities presented by Kongōshōji, the Ise priests immediately issued a legal complaint, seeking to stop publication of the *Ise Asama dake ryaku engi*, citing similar, earlier transgressions as precedents. Such cases included a seventeenth-century campaign against Jōmyōji (常明寺), a subordinate of the Tōeizan (東叡山) temple complex in the Kantō region, which publicly sought to present itself as the structural Buddhist counterpart to the Ise shrines (*naiin* 内院) as well as other temples in Kyoto. In the fourth month of 1750, the court ruled that the case of the Ise shrines should be upheld. As a result of this ruling, Kongōshōji was forced to remove the "offensive" banner and stop publication of its history. Any further distribution of the woodblock prints of the *Ryaku engi* was prohibited. The same thing happened in 1846 (Kōka 弘化 3), when the temple attempted to republish its own history. At that time, to prevent future publications, the Ise shrines insisted that the printing woodblocks be burnt.[13]

In doing so, the Ise shrines sought to suppress the alternative memory of their own mythological history, as preserved by the Buddhist temple on Mt. Asama. This alternative history suggested that in the distant past, Mt. Asama had been a centre for an important Buddhist practice, which involved the combinatory, hybrid worship of multiple deities, such as Japanese *kami* (including the imperial ancestor Amaterasu), buddhas, stars, and celestial bodies. This practice was developed and transported further afield by the itinerant ascetics and non-elite practitioners of all stripes, some of whom dabbled in astrological and geomantic divination. Moreover, the role assigned to the imperial deity in this practice was subordinate to that of the Buddhist deities, different from those historically acceptable at Ise, and dependent on Kongōshōji's own constructions of space, time, and memory. Incidentally, the fact that Amaterasu had multiple Buddhist identities was not in itself in any way subversive. From the mid-eleventh century until the 1600s, Amaterasu was variously identified in Buddhist circles as a manifestation of the bodhisattva Kannon (観音, Sk. Avalokiteśvara, Ch. Guanyin) or the wisdom king Aizen Myōō (愛染明王, Sk. Rāgarāja) or, most

12 In fact, the Ise shrine clergy had objected to the inclusion of Mt. Asama in the *Ise mairi* since at least the beginning of the eighteenth century. In the *Ise sangū annaiki* (伊勢参宮案内記, *Guide to Ise Shrine Pilgrimage*) issued by the shrines in 1707, the popular practice of calling the pilgrimage to Ise *sangū* (三宮, "three shrines") was strongly rejected as "being extremely mistaken"; see Kubota (1980, 143); Knecht (2006, 246).

13 Kubota (1980, 151).

importantly, as a direct manifestation of the cosmic Buddha Dainichi (大日, Sk. Mahāvairocana), the omnipresent divinity of esoteric Buddhism.[14] However, since Kongōshōji was not formally connected to any imperial temples and had no direct links to the ruler's family, such appropriation of the divine ancestry and imperial agency must have been seen by the Ise clergy as widely off the mark. It contradicted the official mythology of both the Ise shrines and the imperial house and challenged Ise's claims to religious and institutional superiority.

6.2 Pre-existing Sacred Topographies

The Buddhist temple Kongōshōji did indeed have a different vision of Amaterasu's role in Mt. Asama's past. This was necessitated by the mountain's own cultic history and its position within a range of sacred landscapes and topographies that had emerged during premodern times. Initially a mountain with few – if any – particular religious affiliations, towards the late twelfth century, it became envisioned as one possible site for the descent of the future Buddha Maitreya (Miroku 弥勒) and an entry point into his Tōsotsu heaven, a paradisiac realm akin to Buddha Amida's (阿弥陀) Pure Land. During that time, mountain ascetics and religious practitioners, including the Ise priests, buried Buddhist sutras on Mt. Asama in the hope that they would survive during the age of degenerate dharma (Ch. *mofa* 末法, Jp. *mappō*) and ensure their rebirth in Maitreya's realm.[15] The bronze mirrors and copper or clay cylindrical sutra vessels, discovered on the mountain slopes in considerable numbers during the Edo period (1603–1868) and again by chance in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, contain inscriptions indicating that such burials had been practised since at least the mid-twelfth century.

For example, one such artefact contained thirteen handwritten scrolls of Buddhist sutras; the inscription on the copper cylinder states that it was buried by the Buddhist nun Shinmyō (比丘尼真妙) in 1159 (Heiji 平治 1.08.15) to pacify the spirit of a deceased Watarai (度会) priest and to ensure his safe passage into the Pure Land. The colophon to a copy of the *Lotus Sutra*[16] contains a number of

14 On medieval Buddhist theories regarding Amaterasu, see Itō (2011).

15 See, for example, a discussion of the sutra burials in Heian Japan in Moerman (2007, 245–74); on the role of Miroku and on the sutra burials by Fujiwara no Michinaga (藤原道長, 966–1027), see esp. 261–65. See also Ruppert (2009, 110), and more recently, the discussion of similar ritual internments at Mt. Kinpu in Blair (2015, 160–89).

16 Sk. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*, Ch. *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華経, Jp. *Myōhō rengekyō*. In Japan, it's also most widely known as the *Hokkekyō* (法華経).

personal names of the Watarai, the hereditary priestly lineage in charge of the Outer Shrine of Ise. Other objects interred in the cylinder included three mirrors decorated with images of the Amida triad. Taken together, these objects suggest that Shinmyō's 1159 ritual internment on Mt. Asama may have been intended, on the one hand, to preserve Buddhist scriptures and images so they would survive throughout the degenerate age of *mappō*, until the arrival of a future Buddha, and on the other hand, to ensure that the deceased Watarai priest could successfully attain rebirth in either Miroku's or Amida's Pure Land.[17]

During the latter half of the twelfth century, both hereditary Ise shrine lineages, the Watarai and the Arakida (荒木田, who were in charge of the Inner Shrine), as well as people associated with them, regarded Mt. Asama as a sacred mountain that would endure through the time of *mappō* and survive until the coming of the future Buddha.[18] Yet another object, a large clay sutra container excavated from the sutra burial sites on the mountain slopes, reveals that it was commissioned by the *gonnegi* (権禰宜) priest of the Inner Shrine, Arakida Tokimori, in 1173.[19]

Previous studies of Ise shrines and medieval kami worship have already noted that some of the Ise clergy retired to the nearby Buddhist temples upon completing their shrine duties. The hereditary lineages of Watarai, Arakida, and Ōnakatomi usually established their family temples (*ujidera* 氏寺) in areas not far from the Ise shrines.[20] Mt. Asama had a small auxiliary shrine, called Asamayama jinja (朝熊山神社) which enshrined the deity Amaterasu in the

17 See the photograph of this particular object in Tokyo National Museum (2009, 56, fig. 26; for the annotation in Japanese, see pp. 179–80).

18 Peter Knecht (2006, 240–41). On the basis of his analysis of the *Ise sankei mandala*, depicting Mt. Asama and Kongōshōji as a part of the Ise shrines landscape, Knecht argues that Mt. Asama may not have been fully perceived as a Pure Land at the time of the mandala's creation during the later Muromachi period (1336–1573), but that it may have been related to the cult of Mt. Fuji in eastern Japan instead. Mt. Fuji appears in the upper-left corner of *Ise sankei mandala*; the local custom has it that Mt. Fuji's white peak can be seen from the top of Mt. Asama on a clear day. I thank Professor Shirayama Yoshitarō of Kōgakkan University for arranging a trip to Mt. Asama in February 2004. During that trip, the weather was clear, and some vague shape could indeed be seen in the far distance.

19 Tokyo National Museum (2009, 55, fig. 27; for the annotation in Japanese, see p. 180).

20 Itō (2011, 194–95). Some of these temples, especially the Arakida and the Ōnakatomi temples, had images of Avalokiteśvara (Kannon), namely, the Eleven-Headed Kannon (Jūichimen Kannon 十一面観音), as their principal buddhas. Evidence in support of this is a record by the Buddhist monk Tsūkai, in *Tsūkai Daijingū sankeiki* 通海大神宮参詣記 (*Records of Pilgrimage to the Grand Ise Shrines*, late 13th century), in Hanawa (1932, 759–812, esp. p. 793). Tsūkai was a resident monk at the temple Rengeji (蓮花寺) and had links to the Sanbōin (三宝院), the sub-temple of the esoteric Buddhist temple complex Daigoji (醍醐寺), southwest of Kyoto.

form of a small sacred mirror.[21] Like many local shrines, it was overseen by clergy from the Ise shrines[22]; a small Buddhist temple or a votive chapel may have also been located in its vicinity. Even though the Ise shrines enforced a strict protocol prohibiting all things Buddhist within shrine precincts, evidently the Buddhist life of Ise deities and priests was not so restrained. As is clear from the evidence above, for priests of the Ise shrines, their personal Buddhist goals as well as the geography of their fulfilment included Mt. Asama as a site of potential connection to Buddhist lands and divine realms.

Throughout the medieval period, Mt. Asama, positioned as it was to the northeast of the Ise shrines,[23] attracted itinerant holy men, diviners, and mountain ascetics linked with other important Buddhist temples, mostly but not exclusively of esoteric Buddhist persuasion. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, the Buddhist monk Tsūkai (通海), a descendant of the Ōnakatomi lineage, stated in his collection *Daijingū sankeiki* (大神宮参詣記, *Records of Pilgrimage to the Grand Ise Shrines*) that Buddhist monks hailing from the metropolitan temples in Kyoto and Nara had been coming to visit the Ise shrines since at least the 1180s; it was customary for them to pay homage to Mt. Asama from a distance.[24]

Some monks may have gone all the way up to the mountain peaks. Among these was the leader of the Nara temple Saidaiji (西大寺), Eizon (叡尊, 1201–1290), who came to Ise at least three times during the 1270s and 1280s.[25] Buddhist monks who had links to Shugendō practice and were stationed more permanently at

---

He recorded his notes while residing at Ise around 1287. I have discussed this topic in Andreeva (2017, 175–90).

21 Hanawa (1932, 769). See, for example, a short text, entitled *Shō Asamayama sha jinkyō shō, satabumi* 小朝熊社神鏡沙汰文 (*About the Divine Mirror of the Small Asamayama Shrine near the Grand Shrines of Ise*), in Hanawa (1928, 356–85). For example, this text reports an incident in 1270 (Bun'ei 文永 6.11) in which the sacred mirror representing Amaterasu and enshrined on Mt. Asama was broken.

22 Hanawa (1928, 356–85).

23 Traditionally associated with the "demon's gate" (*kimon* 鬼門) in early Chinese geomantic divination and in Japanese Yin-Yang thought, northeast was a direction from which malevolent spirits could enter and threaten the important facilities. Mt. Asama, therefore, was envisioned as an outpost protecting the Ise shrines and as the seat of imperial deities from fairly early on. This geomantic notion may have even been considered in the foundation of the Ise shrines to the southwest of Mt. Asama in the sixth century. If so, this location would have been of a special significance to the practitioners involved in astral and geomantic divination.

24 Hanawa (1932, 794–99); Andreeva (2017, 175–90).

25 Nara kokuritsu bunkazai kenkyūjo (1997: 3–78). However, he does not mention his visit to Mt. Asama in 1273 specifically; see p. 38; see also Andreeva (2017, 175–79).

other small temples in Ise province may have followed his example.[26] For instance, Tsūkai reports that Eizon climbed Mt. Asama in 1273 (Bun'ei 文永 10.03), after his pilgrimage to the two Ise shrines. There, he paid his respects to the sacred mirror installed at the Asamayama shrine and observed the Buddhist image inscribed on it before proceeding to look at the cherry trees (*sakura*) on the mountain. Tsūkai, who lived at a temple near Mt. Asama and may have accompanied Eizon or other monks on such visits, described this image only as that of a Buddhist divinity wearing a crown.[27]

In 1392, Kongōshōji, the temple on Mt. Asama, was appropriated by clergy of the Rinzai Zen lineage, who were affiliated with the Gozan (Five Mountain) temples, supported by the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (足利義満, 1358–1408). Little is known about possible ritual connections with this stream of Buddhist practice, but the Rinzai Zen patronage and administration undoubtedly added another layer to the dynamics of pilgrimage, ritual system, and religious development on Mt. Asama, and possibly also to the Ise shrines and their surrounding Buddhist milieu. The Japanese scholar of medieval Shinto Kubota Osamu has noted that the first indications of such joint "three-shrine pilgrimage" (*sangū mairi* 三宮まいり), which included Mt. Asama and the two Ise shrines, were already emerging during the Muromachi period, around the year 1487.[28]

During the late medieval and early modern periods, although it burned at least once, the temple continued to attract mountain practitioners and eventually entered the institutionalised structure of Shugendō. Even though Kongōshōji's heritage reminds one of its rich past as an esoteric Buddhist mountain temple involved in the production of medieval Shinto practices, it remains formally affiliated with the Rinzai Zen sect to this day.

---

26 Both medieval historical sources and modern Japanese scholarship (Kubota 1980; Abe Yasurō 1985; Itō 2011) have pointed out that there was a considerable number of Buddhist temples in the vicinity of the Ise shrines and the broader Ise-Shima area. Among those were the Sengūin (仙宮院) in the Watarai district, a Shugendō temple linked to the Tendai temple complex of Miidera/Onjōji in Saga province, and Enmyōji (円明寺) in the Kusube district, linked to the Saidaiji Temple in Nara. There were also other temples specialising in Pure Land teachings and practice in the areas of Toba and Shima.

27 Hanawa (1932, 769–70); Andreeva (2017, 178–79). Tsūkai mentions other Buddhist monks from Daigoji who observed Sanskrit syllables (*shuji* 種子) on the shrine mirrors during the Kenkyū 建久 years (1190–99). His description could fit with the iconography of several deities: bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara (Kannon) and Ākāśagarbha (Kokūzō), or the cosmic Buddha Mahāvairocana (Dainichi).

28 Kubota (1980, 143–44). This date could coincide with the period when the famous *Ise sankei mandala*, which included Mt. Asama in its iconography of the Ise shrines, was created. See n. 18.

On the basis of the surviving material evidence, it becomes clear that Mt. Asama first emerged as a Buddhist memorial site by the mid-twelfth century; it was most likely configured in such a manner by the religious figures linked to the Ise shrine clergy. This attests to the fact that, historically, the priests at the Ise shrine were actively participating in the Buddhist life of nearby cultic sites. Since then, it has been appropriated by different religious groups with distinct ritual and practical agendas, a process which can be discerned through a variety of ritual texts associated with this mountain. As a result, by facilitating the religious and ritual practices of its diverse users – Shinto clergy, mountain ascetics, and Buddhist monks of various denominations – during the medieval period, Mt. Asama became a polyphonic, polysemic sacred site, which combined the worship of imperial *kami*, stars, and Buddhist divinities and welcomed practitioners of all stripes. But how was it possible for such complex sacred topographies to emerge? And what significance did the celestial bodies have for the religious landscape of Mt. Asama?

6.3 At the Crossroads of Buddhist Networks

Before we proceed to answer these questions and discuss the religious history of Mt. Asama, a few explanatory notes are required to highlight the complex processes of cultural translation, transculturation, and appropriation of Buddhist elements that took place at Mt. Asama prior to the medieval period, in the broadest possible sense. Take, for example, just two aspects: the temple's principal Buddhist deity and the major ritual in its Buddhist practice. Both had diverse historic itineraries prior to their implantation and adoption at Mt. Asama, where they became an inseparable part of its distinct Buddhist topoi.

First, let us turn to the deity. Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha, possibly with an Indic and Central Asian background, had been known in China since at least the early fifth century.[29] Following the arrival in China of several scholar-monks from Kashmir, Gandhāra, Sogdia, and other parts of India in the first half of the fifth century and later, several scriptures emerged – either translated from Sanskrit and other languages or compiled in China – describing in some detail the virtues of this deity and the contemplations in which it featured.

29 In her discussion of eidetic contemplations (Ch. *guan* 観, Jp. *kan*), Cynthea Bogel notes that the Buddhist sutras focusing on the contemplation of Ākāśagarbha were most likely composed in Central Asia and China during the late fourth to early fifth centuries; see Bogel (2009: 193).

For example, the Kashmiri monk Buddhayaśas (佛陀耶舍, active in China from 408 to 412) may have been among the first to introduce the texts featuring Ākāśagarbha; he is credited with an early translation of the *Ākāśagarbha sūtra* (Ch. *Xukongzhang pusa jing* 虛空藏菩薩経, Jp. *Kokūzō bosatsu kyō*, T. 405).[30] After his arrival in China in 424, the Kashmiri monk Dharmamitra (曇摩蜜多, 356–442), for his part, translated or compiled at least two more scriptures which contained instructions on contemplating Ākāśagarbha.[31] Later, eighth-century Indian and Central Asian scholar-translators working in China, such as Vajrabodhi (Ch. Jingang zhi 金剛智, Jp. Kongō chi, 671–741) and his prominent disciple, the Sogdian-Indian monk Amoghavajra (Ch. Bukong Jingang 不空金剛, Jp. Fukū Kongō, 705–774), also translated a number of scriptures featuring Ākāśagarbha. These subsequently acquired cachet in the esoteric Buddhist circles in Tang China. These scriptures, which emerged as a result of the appropriation of Buddhist teachings at the crossroads of Buddhist networks from Central Asia, India, and China, were transmitted as part of esoteric Buddhist tradition to ninth-century Japan by Kūkai, Saichō (最澄, 767–822), and others.[32]

In traditional Indian contexts, the deity's name, Ākāśagarbha, meant "Space Womb." Identified with dawn and celestial light, the deity was linked to the star Venus around the sixth century in China.[33] In East Asia, it was known under its Chinese name, Xukongzang pusa, which came to be transliterated in Korean as Heogongjang bosal and in Japanese as Kokūzō bosatsu; its perceptions and ritual functions remained subject to subtle modification and change, depending on sociocultural circumstances and geographical localities.[34] In seventh- and eighth-century China, it seems to have been favoured as a deity representing the sky

30 Mochizuki (1974–80, 2: 1138).

31 He translated the *Sutra of Divine Incantations of the Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha* (Ch. *Xugongzang pusa shenzhou jing* 虛空藏菩薩神咒経, Jp. *Kokūzō bosatsu jinju kyō*, T. 407) and the *Sutra of Contemplation on the Boddhisatva Ākāśagarbha* (Ch. *Guan Xukongzang pusa jing*, Jp. *Kan Kokūzō bosatsu kyō* 観虛空藏菩薩経, T. 409).

32 To get a better sense of the transcultural character of China's Buddhist translators and the significance of their works for the Japanese context, see Abe Ryūichi (1999, 116–18).

33 *Mikkyō daijiten* (2007, 569). See also the short introduction in Dolce (2006, 3–45, esp. 7–9). The association between Kokūzō and Venus appears already in Buddhayaśas' early fifth-century translation of the aforementioned *Ākāśagarbha sūtra* (Jp. *Kokūzō bosatsu kyō*, 虛空藏菩薩経, T. 405) and subsequent Chinese translations, which are mentioned below. This deity was also described in Zhiyi's (智顗, 538–597) treatise on meditation, "Stopping and Contemplating" (Ch. *Mohe zhiguan*摩訶止觀, Jp. *Maka shikan* T. 1911._46.56b29) and his *Commentary on the Lotus Sutra* (Ch. *Fahua wenju* 法華文句, T. 1718).

34 A more detailed discussion of the images identified as Kokūzō and found in India, China, Korea, and Japan can be found in Hillary Pedersen (2010, esp. ch. 1, pp. 17–71, and p. 31).

and figuring in the set of eight bodhisattvas. This set was described in the "Sutra on the Mandala of Eight Grand Bodhisattvas" (Ch. *Ba dapusa mantuluo jing* 八大菩薩曼荼羅経, Jp. *Hachi daibosatsu mandara kyō*, T. 1167, translated by Amoghavajra, or T. 1168, translated by Faxian 法賢). In early seventh-century China, it was also enshrined in stūpas, paired with bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha (Ch. Dizang 地蔵, Jp. Jizō), or invoked during confession and repentance rites.[35] In Japan, Kokūzō had certainly been known in the Nara temple milieu since at least the eighth century. It was installed as one of the attendant deities to the Great Vairocana statue at Tōdaiji. This deity was also evoked in the context of ritual practice by semi-lay priests (Jp. *ubasoku* 優婆塞, translating Sk. *upāsaka*), mountain ascetics, and esoteric Buddhists.[36] I will return to this point below.

Although Ākāśagarbha's early iconography proves to be highly diverse at times, in its more established form, this deity appeared wearing a crown of five gems representing five esoteric wisdoms (*gochi* 五智), holding a sword in its right hand and a lotus topped with a wish-fulfilling gem in its left hand. In this and other manifestations, it was perceived to be the guardian of a treasury of all-encompassing wisdom and achievement, with its powers pervading the five directions of space. In esoteric Buddhist iconography, as known in Japan, this deity – identified with dawn and celestial light – appeared as a central bodhisattva in the court of space (*Kokūzōin* 虚空蔵院) in the Womb-World Mandala (Sk. *Garbhadhātu*, Jp. *Taizōkai* 胎蔵界).

Second, let us turn to the primary Buddhist ritual practice associated with Mt. Asama. The Gumonji-hō ritual, in which Ākāśagarbha played a central role, was first fully described in a manual, translated in 716 by Śubhākarasiṃha (Ch. Shanwuwei 善無畏, Jp. Zenmui, 635–735), an Orissan monk from the Nālandā monastery, who arrived in China from India via Turfan.[37] Entitled

35 Zhiru Ng (2007, 52 and 161–62).

36 Bogel (2009, 25). She also notes that knowledge and technologies of the production of Buddhist statues, particularly the early esoteric varieties, may have been brought to Japan by artisans from Tang China who accompanied the famous Vinaya master Jianzhen (鑒真, Jp. Ganjin, 688–763) in the mid-eighth century, and images of esoteric deities were certainly witnessed by the Japanese Buddhist monks who travelled to China. Hillary Pedersen notes, however, that only a handful of images that can possibly be identified as Kokūzō survived from the eighth century in China; see Pedersen (2010, 27–28). As for the Japanese understandings of the term *ubasoku*, rather than referring to a ritual of bi-monthly confession described in the Vinaya, it was used to denote types of practitioners: namely, a novice, a layperson, and an ascetic; see Beghi (2011, 665, n. 2).

37 Śubhākarasiṃha was part of a group of Buddhist scholar-translators, based at Loyang in western Henan in central China, who worked on the translations of important Buddhist

"Method of the All-Winning Essence *Dhāraṇī* for Having Demands Heard and Upheld by the Space-Womb Bodhisattva Who Can Fulfil All Wishes,"[38] Śubhākarasiṃha's short manual presented a technique for summoning and contemplating the bodhisattva by making special hand gestures (*mudrā*) and reciting mantras an extensive number of times (*nenju* 念誦). As a result, the manual states, the deity would appear, gold in colour, wearing a crown with five buddhas on it, holding a white lotus in his left hand and a jewel in his right hand, and sitting on a lotus against a full moon disc in the middle of the night; promptly, "all sins and obstacles will be eliminated" (*issai zaishō shikkai shōmetsu* 一切罪障悉皆銷滅).[39] The aforementioned incantation came to be known as the Ākāśagarbha mantra.

Moreover, the Buddhist scriptures featuring this deity stated that those who engaged in ceaseless recitation of the Ākāśagarbha mantra would acquire the ability to remember and understand any Buddhist text without ever forgetting it. Elsewhere in Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures, as mentioned previously, Ākāśagarbha was associated with the Bright Star (*myōjō*, 明星), or Venus, perhaps, as a metaphor signifying an utter lucidity of mind and readiness for enlightenment. For example, these two conditions are described in Buddhayaśas' early fifth-century translation of the *Ākāśagarbha sūtra* in the following way:

> [On the association with Venus]
> 虚空藏菩薩摩訶薩。若不現身在其人前教發露者。是初發心菩薩。應於後夜合掌至心而向東方燒堅黑沈水及多伽羅香。請明星言。明星明星成大慈悲。汝今初出照閻浮提。大悲護我。可爲我白虚空藏菩薩摩訶薩。願於夢中示我方便。發露懺悔犯根本罪。令得大乘方便智眼。
>
> Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha (*Xukongzang pusa*) is a supreme enlightened being (Sk. *Mahāsattva*, Ch. *mohesa* 摩訶薩, Jp. *makasatsu*). If it does not manifest itself in bodily form,

scriptures from Sanskrit to Chinese, many of them esoteric. Śubhākarasiṃha was most famous for his translations of *Susiddhi* (Jp. *Soshitsuji kyō* 蘇悉地経, T. 894) and the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (Sk. *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi*, Ch. *Darijing* 大日経, Jp. *Dainichi kyō*, T. 848), on which he worked together with his student Yixing (一行, 684–727), a Zhenyan monk and an author of the *Commentary to the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (Ch. *Darijing shu* 大日経疏, Jp. *Dainichi kyō sho*, T. 1796). Yixing – who was skilled in mathematics, astrology, Daoism, and calendrical studies – studied with another Indian monk, the translator and esoteric ritual master Vajrabodhi, mentioned above. Vajrabodhi's most prominent disciple was the aforementioned Amoghavajra, who was born in Samarkand in Central Asia and arrived in China around 715, and later went on an extensive pilgrimage to collect Buddhist texts in Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, and India; see *Mikkyō daijiten* (2007, 70–71, and on Shanwuwei/Zenmui, 1366–67).

38 Jp. *Kokūzō bosatsu nōman shogan saishō shin darani gumonji hō* 虚空蔵菩薩能満諸願最勝心陀羅尼求聞持法, T. 1145_.20.601–603.

39 T. 1145_.20.0602a01–06 and T. 1145_.20.0601c21, respectively.

> it will reveal the teaching in front of that person. It is a bodhisattva of the initial determination [to seek enlightenment]. In response, late at night [at dawn], press your hands together and focus your mind, facing the east, and burn hard black [sandalwood], fragrant aloe, or the incense of the Tagara tree. Call on the Bright Star [Venus] and say: "Bright Star, Bright Star, grant the great compassion. You always appear first and illuminate the Jambudvīpa. Grant me great compassion and protection. Transform me into a white bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha, the supreme enlightened being. I beseech [you] to reveal the expedient means to me in a dream. I reveal and confess [my] transgressions and fundamental sins. Grant [me] the expedient means of the Great Vehicle and the wisdom-eye."[40]

> [On the association with perfect memory]
> 是虛空藏菩薩摩訶薩。即令彼人得於憶持不忘之力
> This Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha is a supreme enlightened being. Therefore, the people [who worship him] will be granted the power of keeping [their] memory and not forgetting.[41]

These conceptual linkages, documented by the early Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures arriving from the West, must have led to the association of Ākāśagarbha with Buddhist arts of memory. The foci of this early type of worship was the performance of penitential rites focusing on the star appellations and what subsequently became known as the Gumonji-hō after Śubhākarasiṃha's 716 Chinese translation. The Tang dynasty Buddhist catalogue of 730 included this and other scriptures and ritual manuals featuring Ākāśagarbha[42]; in the age of long-distance exchanges and the intensive formation of Buddhism as a transcultural force, these scriptures (although constantly modified as a result of translation efforts) travelled from Central Asia and Tang China further east, to Korea and Japan.

In Japan, the Gumonji-hō had been known and practised by both ordained monks and mountain ascetics, at least since the early eighth century.[43] Cynthea Bogel has noted that the memorisation of spells and scriptures was a prerequisite for entering the governmental programme of training for the priesthood[44]; thus, a ritual means for achieving perfect memory would have

40 T. 405_.13.0653a06–12.

41 T. 405_.13.0655a11–12.

42 Abe Ryūichi (1999, 116–17); Pedersen (2010, 23).

43 Notable monks from the Buddhist temples in Nara, including Dōji (道慈, d. 744), Gonsō (勤操, d. 827), and Zengi (善議, d. 812), have been known to practise the Gumonji-hō rite. Other sources suggest that the adepts of "natural wisdom" (*jinenchi* 自然智) and ascetics training in the mountains of Yoshino, Katsuragi, and Hakusan also practised it. Bogel also mentions a historical account from 732, which states that laypersons read and chanted sutras followed by incantations invoking Kokūzō, the Seven Buddhas Yakushi, and the Eleven-Headed Kannon; see Bogel (2009, 393, n. 83).

44 Bogel (2009, 161 and 393, n. 82).

been of vital importance for those seeking to become Buddhist monks and enter the ranks of the Buddhist clergy. Critically, it was this practice of Gumonji-hō and the realisation of its importance and efficacy that prompted young Kūkai to study Buddhism. In a semi-autobiographical account entitled *Demonstrating the Goals of the Three Teachings* (*Sangō shiiki* 三教指帰), which he initially wrote in 797 at the age of twenty-four, Kūkai described how he met a Buddhist priest who introduced him to the meditation of Ākāśagarbha, known as the Gumonji-hō, which promised perfect memory. Kūkai then went on to practise this meditation on the cliffs of Mt. Tairyū, in the province of Awa, and at Cape Muroto in Tosa (nowadays the prefectures of Tokushima and Kōchi in Shikoku).[45]

He subsequently travelled to China in 804, where he came into contact with Buddhist scholar-translators working in Sanskrit and Chinese. At the Qinglongsi (青竜寺) Temple, Kūkai studied under the esoteric master Huiguo (恵果, 746–805), who was himself a disciple of the much-mentioned Amoghavajra, a major figure in the propagation of esoteric Buddhist ritual at the Tang court. Upon Kūkai's return, the legacy of these masters – along with many more esoteric Buddhist teachings, ritual consecrations (Sk. *abhiṣeka*, Jp. *kanjō*, 灌頂), and icons – was transmitted to Japan, where they were further appropriated, reinterpreted, and recalibrated during the processes of establishing Buddhist traditions in Japan's local context.

Although known since the eighth century in the Buddhist temple milieu in Nara, the cult of Ākāśagarbha-Kokūzō played a major role in entrenching esoteric Buddhism (*mikkyō* 密教) as a temple tradition attractive to elite aristocratic families and the imperial house of Japan. For example, a set of five Ākāśagarbha statues, based on the description in the *Yugikyō* (瑜祇経),[46] was brought to Japan by Eun (恵運, 798–869) from Tang China in 847 and installed in the Kanchiin (観智院) Hall of the imperial temple, Tōji (東寺), the main Shingon *mikkyō* compound in Kyoto.[47] In time, the Gumonji-hō became an essential part of ritual learning at temples such as Kōyasan, Sanbōin at Daigoji, and other monastic complexes which combined the study and practice of esoteric Buddhism with training at remote mountain retreats and, at times, with mountain asceticism. Hand-painted images of Kokūzō bosatsu

45 See the English translation of this passage in Abe Ryūichi (1999, 74).

46 The full title of this influential esoteric scripture, presumably a Chinese translation by either Vajrabodhi or Amoghavajra, is the *Sutra of All the Yogas and Yogis of the Vajra Peak Pavillion* (Ch. *Jingangfeng luoge yuqie yujia yuqi jing*, 金剛峯楼閣一切瑜伽瑜祇経, Jp. *Kongōbu rōkaku issai yuga yugi kyō*, T. 867).

47 On the sets of five Kokūzō at Shingon temples and their patronage by the Fujiwara, see the detailed argument in Hillary Pedersen's 2010 PhD dissertation, from the viewpoint of art history.

emerging from a bright moon or a star disc floating atop a ragged mountain can be found nowadays in museum and temple collections.[48] It is not clear whether Kūkai ever travelled as far as Mt. Asama in Ise. However, according to local tradition, he was credited with the construction or even "revival" of the Buddhist temple Kongōshōji in 825, after he allegedly practised the Gumonji-hō ritual there by worshipping Venus on the mountaintop and receiving the "Divine Vajra-Sign" as proof of his imminent enlightenment. Subsequently, at Mt. Asama, the historic connections between the Shingon teachings and the performance of Gumonji-hō were institutionalised and memorialised through foundational narratives and ritual texts which invoked Kokūzō, Kūkai, and the divine ancestor of the imperial house, the deity Amaterasu.

6.4 Ākāśagarbha, Kūkai, and Amaterasu in the *Asamayama Engi*

Let us return to the questions posed earlier: How was it possible for these complex sacred topographies to emerge at Mt. Asama? And what significance did the celestial bodies have for the religious landscape and institutional history of this mountain? What enabled the site to become the focus of a vision of history that rivalled that of the Ise shrines? These questions were posed primarily in order to explain the mountain's place in Japan's religious culture prior to the eighteenth century, and in particular to provide a context for Kongōshōji's 1750 conflict with the Ise clergy.

In part, these questions can be answered through a close reading of late medieval ritual texts associated with Mt. Asama. One of them, entitled *Asamayama engi* (朝熊山縁起, *The Karmic Origins of Mt. Asama*), particularly stands out.[49] Copied by the high-ranking Buddhist prelate Shinkai (真海, active around 1466–1512) in the late Muromachi period around the year 1511, from a manuscript preserved at a temple in Mino province (in the southern part of modern Gifu prefecture), this text is representative of Japanese shrine-temple histories explaining their karmic origins. The term *engi* can be traced back to the doctrinal concept of "dependent origination" (Sk. *pratītyasamutpāda*).

Such texts were usually produced by temple and shrine clergy and used as ritual and legal documents in early and medieval Japan, often with the implicit

48 See, for instance, items A–10498 (Kamakura period) and A–989 (late Heian period, 12th century) in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum.

49 *Asamayama engi*, in Sakurai et al. (1975, 78–87). This is not to be confused with a later text, *Ise Asama dake ryaku engi*, shortly referred to as *Ryaku engi* before.

purpose of claiming ownership over property or land; resolving issues of income, taxation, and *corvée* labour; or procuring funds to build new facilities after the destruction of earlier ones in fires or armed conflicts (Frölich 2007). Most importantly, to assert the legitimacy of the religious identity and ritual practice of temples and shrines, *engi* texts constructed decidedly Buddhist histories of Japan's local cultic sites and elaborated links between their divinities and Buddhist cosmology, Buddhist topography of the world, and major Buddhist deities and figures (Grapard 1982, 1987, 1992, 1998; Blair and Kawasaki 2015). In short, tapping into the transcultural history and resources of Buddhism in order to enhance their own authority, Japanese *engi* assumed their status as a kind of symbolic and cultural capital, asserting the historicity and power of local divinities and places. By forging the mythological links between local deities and the distant divinities of Buddhism, Japan's imperial lineage, or other famous Buddhist figures, local cultic sites thus created new ways of embedding transculturally mediated deities – such as Ākāśagarhbha – into their own landscapes.

Asamayama engi was an early precursor of the eighteenth-century *Ise Asama dake ryaku engi* (referred to as *Ryaku engi* above) and other similar documents preserved by Kongōshōji during the Edo period. As already discussed, temple publications based on these latter documents triggered the infamous legal dispute with the Ise shrines in 1750. In contrast, one could say that *Asamayama engi* represents the religious identity and cultural memory of Mt. Asama, narrated in Buddhist terms by practitioners associated with the site during the medieval period. Although the *Asamayama engi* was composed in the early sixteenth century, the rituals, myths, and oral transmissions that served as the very *raison d'être* for its compilation date back much earlier – at the very least, to the second half of the fifteenth century, roughly when Mt. Asama was considered integral to the religious landscape of the Ise shrines.[50] During that period, Mt. Asama was a training site for travelling mountain ascetics, known as *yamabushi* (山伏) or *shugenja* (修験者), most likely connected to the Sanbōin (三宝院) of Daigoji (醍醐寺), a major esoteric Buddhist temple complex near the capital city of Kyoto.[51]

The majority of ritual texts belonging to the tradition of Mt. Asama, such as the aforementioned *Ryaku engi* (1662, republished in 1750) as well as the earlier

50 As specified earlier by Kubota (1980); see n. 28. The hand-painted image known as *Ise sankei mandala*, discussed in 2006 by Peter Knecht, also attests to the fact that during the late Muromachi period, Mt. Asama was inseparable from Ise iconography; see n. 18.

51 In his early assessment of this text, Kubota Osamu described *Asamayama engi* as an example of the medieval Ryōbu Shintō (両部神道) tradition that proliferated at Ise during the medieval period. He also linked the production of this text to the Sanbōin; see Kubota (1980, 147).

Asama dake giki (朝熊岳儀軌, *Ritual Procedures of Mt. Asama*, 1511)[52] and *Asamayama engi* (1511), refer to these religious figures who traditionally practised austerity on the mountain as ancient "sages of immortality" (*tokoyo no seisen* 常世之聖仙). Often encountered in early Japanese Buddhist literature, these sages were involved in mixed esoteric and Daoist-like practices of self-cultivation. Japanese Buddhist tales, such as *Nihon ryōiki* (日本霊異記, *The Records of Miracles from Japan*, 823) and *Konjaku monogatari shū* (今昔物語集, *Collection of Tales Past and Present*, early twelfth century) relate that their self-cultivation practices entailed surviving on a diet of pine needles, herbs, and morning dew, acquiring the skill of walking on air, and performing miracles. These ascetics and mountain practitioners, some of whom were also known as *shōnin* (聖人, lit. "holy men"), roamed around sacred sites and mountains, moving from one seasonal training or retreat to another. Many were skilled in the recitation of *dhāraṇī* spells, contemplation techniques, and apotropaic rituals of healing, rainmaking, and the pacification of malevolent spirits (Andreeva 2017, 78–82 and 105–25). The agency of such practitioners played a significant part in Mt. Asama's premodern history as well as in the production of *engi* texts associated with the site.

Taken as a whole, the *Asamayama engi* (hereafter, *Engi*) explains the origins of the Buddhist temple atop the mountain as well as how deities – including the divinity of Ise (Amaterasu) and the bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha (Kokūzō) – came to be attached with this sacred habitat. The text also seeks to clarify the religious identity of Mt. Asama and legitimacy of the aforementioned ritual for perfect memory, the Gumonji-hō, through the figure of Kūkai, Japan's "only legitimate" holder of esoteric knowledge and the alleged founder of Kongōshōji. The *Engi*'s implicit argument starts from the point at which Kūkai is invited to come to Mt. Asama by local deities, who wish to see him perform the appellations to Bodhisattva Kokūzō. Although the old temple, the Buddhist deities, and local divinities – including Amaterasu – are all present on the mountain, the ancient ascetics who used to be in charge of ritual practice have all but disappeared, and the rite of Gumonji-hō had been discontinued, leaving the symbolic order of the mountain in complete abandon and disarray.

As seen in the previous discussion of this ritual in Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures, its main purpose was to construct perfect memory through

52 *Asama dake giki*, in Nishikawa (1979, 30–52). Recorded in the same year, this text is far more extensive than the aforementioned *Asamayama engi* and includes its main motifs. From the contents, it is evident that through the figure of Kūkai, *Asama dake giki* claims Kongōshōji's direct link to the main imperial temple of the Shingon tradition, Tōji. This will be discussed below.

contemplation of divinities, endless repetition of mantras, and the acquisition of a lucid mind. However, in the *Asamayama engi*, the Gumonji-hō transmitted by Kūkai is presented as a "trademark" practice native to Mt. Asama, a rite that must be re-established in order to ensure the future proliferation of its performers, the ascetics, as well as the continuous well-being of Amaterasu, Japan's imperial lineage, and the state, all of which depend on the ritual pacification of Japan's realm.

Throughout this *Engi*, the imperial deity Amaterasu laments the tyranny of time. It talks to Kūkai endlessly about how to preserve the past of Mt. Asama and ensure its future, so that myriads of its "seed-children," resting unborn within the womb of this sacred mountain, can continue to emerge in the physical world to live as ascetics and Gumonji-hō practitioners and to protect the divine land of Japan by worshipping Venus and generating merit by performing the Gumonji-hō. Here is how the deity explains its view of Mt. Asama's history in a lengthy, opera-like speech to Kūkai:

> At that time the Bright Star (明星) [Venus] came out, its light rotating [like] the [Cakravartin King's] Wheel-Treasure (*rinpō* 輪宝). This Wheel-Treasure transformed into the buddha image (*buttai* 仏躰). It dwells now as this [bodhisattva] Kokūzō. [53]
>
> [In the beginning,] the [primordial] deity Omodaru[54] kicked off its shoes, they floated as if on milk. Our parents, Izanagi and Izanami, descended from heaven into these shoes, collected the dust and made a mountain. That was the province of Awaji. Having established this land, the two deities gave birth to the earth deities (*kunitsukami* 地神). The divine priest (*negi* 禰宜) Ōhirume no Mikoto (大日霊尊)[55] and other deities are 10,900,708,000 years old.
>
> The divine priest [Amaterasu], for the sake of all sentient beings, gave birth to the benevolent king [human emperor]. This was Jinmu (神武).[56] Since then, the descendants of Amaterasu stand high for fifty-two generations.[57] The Buddha protecting the future of its

53 Implied here is the principal temple image (*honzon*) of Kongōshōji, the statue of Kokūzō.

54 Omodaru is one of the divinities which constituted the "seven generations of heavenly deities" (*amatsu kami no nanayo*, or *tenshin shichidai* 天神七代) and included Izanagi and Izanami. Along with the "five generations of earthly deities" (*chijin godai* 地神五代), these cosmogonic deities were well known from Japan's earliest mytho-histories, as recorded in the *Nihon shoki* (日本書紀, *The Chronicles of Japan*, 712). Early cosmogonic myths were revitalised during the medieval period, under the influence of Ryōbu Shinto (両部神道), a combinatory worship of *kami* and esoteric buddhas, another by-product of esoteric Buddhist activities in Japan; see n. 51. For a detailed discussion and illustrations of these deities, see Andreeva (2017: 280–90).

55 This is an older appellation for Amaterasu, a name under which it often figures in the *Nihon shoki*.

56 That is, the first mythological ruler of Japan and alleged founder of Japan's royal lineage, *tennō* 天皇.

57 The modern translators (Sakurai et al. 1975, 79–80) note that this would imply Saga (嵯峨, 785–842) or Junna (淳和, 785–840), the early Heian-period rulers. Emperor Saga was a

> descendants resides in the Three-Vajra Cavern [on Mt. Asama]. Amaterasu, together with Amatsu Koyane no Mikoto,[58] manifests itself there daily without fail. The Buddhist temple had become dilapidated and is waiting for karmic bonds with the roots that lead to enlightenment. Now, Patriarch [Kūkai], take your chance.
>
> It is the place that spreads good fortune [. . .]. The manifestations of different *kami* and buddhas are attached to this mountain; they procure good fortune and wisdom and nourish the country. However, if the Buddhist Law ceased [here], it would be difficult to save [people] widely from confusion of the Latter Days of the Dharma. Patriarch, take this land, preach Shingon and continue the [generations of] Seed-Children who inherit this lineage into the infinite future (*mirai eiei ni oite uji wo tsugi, taneko wo tsuzuke* 未来永々において氏を継ぎ種子を続け). Make it a place [where] good fortune and prosperity are [forever] increasing.[59]

This passage shows how the Buddhist deity Ākāśagarbha was appropriated and used as a symbol of authority and legitimacy by the religious practitioners on Mt. Asama. Presented as a vehicle for and embodiment of an uninterrupted tradition, this deity is fused seamlessly with Japanese cosmogonic myths, local cultic practice, and the imperial ideology represented by Amaterasu. These medieval myths were part of the foundation of Mt. Asama's own religious identity in premodern times; their very purpose was to demonstrate a longstanding relationship with both the Ise shrines and esoteric lineages of Shingon, the major legacy of the ninth-century Buddhist patriarch Kūkai.

To manifest its significance in Japan's mythological past, Mt. Asama is presented in the *Engi* as a primordial mountain that houses Japan's most important divinity, Amaterasu, also known under her older name, Ōhirume no Muchi (大日靈貴), used in the *Nihon shoki* (日本書紀, *The Chronicles of Japan*, 712). Mt.Asama thus literally becomes a site of creation: if it is not quite *the* Mt. Sumeru of Indian Buddhist cosmology, then it is the "Cloud-Sea Peak" (*kumomi no mine* 雲海峰), intrinsically connected with the workings of Yin and Yang and Japan's earliest cosmogonies, and a primordial womb where the scores of future "seed-children" (*sue musubi taneko* 末むすび種子) are implanted.

The *Engi* uses these metaphors of procreation in order to induce a sense of urgency regarding the continuous, uninterrupted emergence of new generations of rightful Buddhist practitioners, *kami* priests, and mountain ascetics. The imperial deity Amaterasu repeatedly voices its concerns, trying to convince

---

contemporary of Kūkai, instrumental in facilitating the construction of Tōji, the first Shingon temple in the Heian capital, and supportive of Kūkai's advancement in the religious world.

58 The *kami* of Kasuga, a tutelary deity of the Fujiwara family of court regents.

59 The translation is abbreviated for convenience. Sakurai et al. (1975, 78–80). For the full text in Japanese, see *Asamayama engi* in Sakurai et al. (1975, 77–87).

Kūkai of the necessity of carrying on the Gumonji-hō practice for the sake of the future of Japan's imperial family, who are Amaterasu's descendants as well as those of its divine child, Ninigi. The deity invokes some impressive numerical calculations that roughly correspond to notions of Indic calendrical time, punctuated by the oscillations of stars and celestial bodies:

> At that time Daishi [Kūkai], as if his finger- and toe-nails were being pulled, began to perform incantations, raising his voice to the full and throwing his body[60] on the ground, fervently proclaiming his devotion to the deities. Amaterasu again pulled him over and said: "About this high peak... When the last one of the thousand latter buddhas appears in the world, this will be the time to preach the Dharma and bring benefit to the sentient beings [as the bodhisattvas do]."[61]

Having received Amaterasu's order, Daishi immediately built the *argha* well.[62]

> He performed rituals springing good fortune inside the Three-Vajra Cavern and praised the magnificent hall. He transferred the *honzon* deity [Kokūzō], and to dedicate the new image, he carved out a manifestation of Amaterasu,[63] sprinkled it with water from the amber tiles, and washed the head of this new Buddha. When he performed this *abhiṣeka* consecration (*kanjō* 灌頂の供養), the previous *honzon* [Kokūzō] transferred its light [to the new one] and returned to the Three-Vajra Cavern. The new *honzon* (*shinbutsu* 新仏) moved its head and uttered the *gāthā* verse:
>
> "A vast compassion emerges from the power of faith,
> It is inherent in the minds of sentient beings.
> Those who have the great power of divine cognition
> Will appear in true reality and deliver [sentient beings] from suffering."
>
> Suddenly, Tenshō Daijin [Amaterasu] tilted her golden honour-cap, rejoiced and paid homage to the supreme *honzon* of the "morning clan" (*chōke daiichi no gohonzon* 朝家第一の御本尊).[64] Then she proceeded to the palace of Bodhisattva Maitreya. Daishi moved to the main hall and performed the rite of Gumonji. At that time, the jewel [drops of] water trickled on the rock [and formed the Sanskrit] syllable *vāṃ*.[65] Daishi said: "Ah, how delightful. Now, in the middle of human existence, due to the power of Gumonji, I have

60 Literally "five limbs," Jp. *gotai* 五躰.
61 Sakurai et al. (1975, 81).
62 Jp. *akai* (閼伽井), a well from which to draw sacred water for the consecration of deities for newly constructed Buddhist temples. This is the scene of "reconstruction" in Kongōshōji.
63 Although the *Engi* passage does not specify, its next chapter explains the manifestation of Amaterasu as the deity Uhō Dōji. This arrangement will be discussed below.
64 The meaning of this sentence is obscure, but it could imply that Amaterasu pays homage either to the temple *honzon*, the image of Kokūzō, or, more likely, to the image of Uhō Dōji, newly consecrated by Kūkai. It further implies that this image is the one venerated by Japan's august "morning" lineage, that is, the imperial family.
65 The Sanskrit syllable representing wisdom and Buddha Dainichi of the Diamond Realm.

> personally met Daijin [Amaterasu] and was be able to see the Space-Womb [Kokūzō]." The tears of joy swelled [in his eyes] and dampened the sleeves of his robe. Daishi made a vow and said: "In the Latter Days of the Dharma, the Gumonji practitioners will trickle the water from this *argha* well in the shape of syllable *vāṃ*, and bathe in the Bright-Star [Venus] water. If they come to Mt. Asama, the 'Morning-Bear Peak,' and serve this august *honzon*, I will emerge from my nirvana cell (*waga nyūjō no muro wo dete* 我入定の室を出て)[66] and be inseparable [from them] like a shadow. The divine elixir of immortality and rituals of compassion [of Future Buddha Maitreya] will be revealed to them."[67]

For the duration of Amaterasu's emotive pleas to Kūkai, various divinities – such as local *kami* and the esoteric deities Kokūzō, Benzaiten (弁財天), Fudō (不動), and Future Buddha Maitreya (Miroku 弥勒) constantly appear in front of him, making appeals and pronouncing oracles. These deities are invoked as parts of a mandalic vision of Mt. Asama that represents it as a manifestation of Pure Land (Sk. *sukhāvatī*, Ch. *jingtu*, 浄土, Jp. *jōdo*). This abundance of voices, characters, and figures is what makes one think of the *Asamayama engi* as a "polyphonic" text in a Bakhtinian sense. The divine beasts, such as the Golden Bear (*kinshoku no kuma* 金色の熊),[68] the Buddhist wish-fulfilling gems (*nyoi hōju* 如意宝珠), the three imperial regalia (*sanshu jingi* 三種神器), flying relics, magic red jewels to ensure longevity, and substances described as "Bright-Star Water" (*myōjōsui* 明星水) and the elixir of immortality[69] also appear in the *Engi* and join in this divine, carnivalesque dance of solicitation around Kūkai. Given the time period and historical circumstances of this text's appearance, the mood of appeal and solicitation must have been broadly directed at powerful Shingon temple complexes, such as Sanbōin or Tōji, as well as both local and remote patrons – the primary economic and political powers in medieval Japan that need to be considered in this context.

Among the various agencies appealed to in this text, bodhisattva Kokūzō plays one of the major roles, because it is described by Amaterasu as a deity representing memory, history, and time, the divinity "protecting [Amaterasu's] future" (*waga sue mamori no hotoke* 吾が末守りの仏). Bodhisattva Kokūzō,

66 By the medieval period, Kūkai was an object of popular cults himself. It was believed that he entered nirvana in his cell on Mt. Kōya in Kii province. This passage of the *Asamayama engi* presents a vivid image of him, fervently performing incantations and crying; this image may in part have been inspired by the appearance and actions of mountain ascetics at Mt. Asama, rather than by the real, historical figure of Kūkai.

67 *Asamayama engi*, Sakurai et al. (1975, 81–82). The translation is abbreviated for convenience.

68 The golden bear, representing the sun rotating around the earth, appears to be a much older mythological figure, for which *Asamayama engi* provides no further explanation. Apart from scarce references to similar types of divinities appearing occasionally in the Tibetan, Ainu, and Tuvan local traditions, I have been unable to verify it further.

69 *Asama dake giki*, Nishikawa (1979, 35).

a representation of the star Venus, truly luminous and bright, epitomises the all-penetrating solar light and appears as a manifestation of the five wisdoms of esoteric Buddhism (*gochi* 五智), which is an implied reference to the supreme deity of esoteric Buddhism, the cosmic Buddha Mahāvairocana (Dainichi 大日). In Japan, the conceptual parallels between Dainichi, whose Japanese name literally means "Great Light," and the solar deity Amaterasu have been known in esoteric Buddhist circles at least since the eleventh century.[70] However, it is only at Mt. Asama that these multiple deities are all merged together in this particular combination, via the worship of celestial bodies and their respective conceptual make-up, based on allusions to light.

6.5 Mt. Asama as a Mandala

The second chapter of *Asamayama engi*, entitled "On the Protective Deities [of Mt. Asama]" (*Chinju no daiji* 鎮守の大事), builds upon the relationships discussed in the previous sequence, while also providing more details about the mandalic layout of Mt. Asama and describing the *honji suijaku* correlations between *kami* and the buddhas who inhabit this sacred mountain. It is the deity Amaterasu itself who explains these important settings:

> The Seven Divine Treasure spirits dwell here. First is Amaterasu's mother, Benzaiten 弁財天 (*honji* is Treasure-Hat Jizō 宝冠地蔵). The second is the rough deity, *kōjin* (荒神, that is Fudō 不動), it is the entrance (Dainichi 大日) to Prosperity (Monju 文殊). The third is Kasuga Daimyōjin (春日大明神, *honji* is Śākyamuni, to the right of the rough deity). The fourth is Miwa Myōjin (三輪明神, to the left of Benzaiten, *honji* – Shōten 聖天). The fifth is Niu Myōjin (丹生明神, Shō Kannon 聖観音, Kasuga is on the right). The sixth is Hakusan (白山, Eleven-Headed Kannon 十一面観音, Miwa is on the left). The seventh is Kiyotaki Gongen (清滝権現, Wish-Fulfilling Kannon 如意輪観音), the Three-Shrine garden is in the middle. The people who want to experience the true faith will come on pilgrimage and will be reborn after meeting Amaterasu and obtaining the Seven Treasures.[71]

As is often the case with texts closely connected to *shugen* traditions, Mt. Asama is described as a Lotus – a symbolic sacred site, the sacrality of which is validated by certain Buddhist deities and *kami*. At first glance, this particular collection of deities appears to be chaotic. But as in many other Japanese *engi* texts, these relationships might actually provide vital clues as to what kinds of places and cults the people who practised at Mt. Asama were interested in or felt an

70 Itō (2011, 27–90).

71 *Asamayama engi*, Sakurai et al. (1975, 83–84).

affinity with. The passage quoted above demonstrates that, for late fifteenth-century Asama ascetics, it was surely important to construct some sort of link to (and, possibly, actual networks with) other prominent sites of *kami* and Buddhist worship, such as Shinto shrines and large Buddhist complexes. In this case, the Kasuga Shrine near Kōfukuji Temple in Nara, Mt. Kōya in the northern part of Kii peninsula, Mt. Hakusan in the northern Hokuriku region, and Mt. Miwa and the Daigoji Temple in the vicinity of the metropolitan centres of Nara and Kyoto in central Japan would certainly have fit the bill. Other ritual texts from the Mt. Asama tradition partially support this view.[72]

But what was the reason for constructing this particular pattern? The above theory of the seven deities is mirrored in another, far more extensive text from the Mt. Asama tradition, written at the same time – *Asama dake giki* (1511). This text refers to the secret transmission of the seven shrines (*nanamiya* 七宮), which represent the seven secret fields of merit of the seven buddhas (*shichi-butsu himitsu shichi fukuden* 七仏秘密七福田), which are all somehow connected to the Hindu god Deva Mahākāla (摩訶迦羅).[73] Although the *Asama dake giki* does not explicitly refer to it, this construct implies a very direct allusion to a similar ritual system found at Mt. Hiei (比叡山), to the northeast of Kyoto (in modern Shiga prefecture).[74] In the early medieval period, the divinities of the seven Hie shrines, located at the foot of this mountain, were associated with the worship of the seven stars of Ursa Major, a notion that was well documented in medieval religious literature – for example, in the *Keiranshūyōshū* (渓嵐拾葉集), a fourteenth-century collection penned by the Tendai monk Kōshū (Grapard 1987 and 1998; Arichi 2006). Thus, the Asama *engi* texts reference both the worship of Ursa Major and their desire to mirror the powerful Buddhist complex of Mt. Hiei, the outpost of Tiantai (天台) and Japanese Tendai doctrine, in terms of religious efficacy.

As far as Buddhist transcultural connections are concerned, it is precisely this *Asama dake giki* that refers explicitly to the historical connections between Kongōshōji and the Shingon school – namely, the Tōji Temple – and firmly

72 For example, the aforementioned *Ise Asama dake ryaku engi* and the late medieval Asama texts hint at its connections with other important centres of mountain asceticism, such as Mt. Hiko in Kyushu, Mt. Sengen in Mino province (modern Gifu), and many others. The significance of shrines and temples mentioned in the main body of this text has already been well documented in contemporary Japanese and Western scholarship, so I shall omit the numerous references here.

73 *Asama dake giki*, Nishikawa (1979, 35 and 40).

74 Similarly to Mt. Asama's location with respect to the Ise shrines, according to the early notions of geomantic divination, Mt. Hiei and its Tendai Buddhist complex, Enryakuji (延暦寺), occupied the position to the northeast of the capital city of Heian, thus acting as a symbolic, ritual protector against malevolent spirits; see n. 23.

establishes the temple of Mt. Asama as the direct inheritor of the teachings of esoteric Buddhism, transmitted to Kūkai at different times and localities by Buddhist translators and scholars, such as Vajrabodhi, Śubhākarasiṃha, Amoghavajra, Yixing, and Huiguo.[75] One may question the extent to which medieval and early modern practitioners and residents at Mt. Asama's temple were aware of these transcultural connections (and one would be hard pressed to further analyse the postmodern dimensions of this term). The exact historical evidence for such awareness may indeed prove elusive. However, there is no question that within Japan's esoteric schools, there was a strong historic conviction that esoteric teachings had indeed arrived in Japan as a result of Buddhism's "transmission via the three countries" (*sangoku den* 三國傳) – that is, "from India and China to Japan" – and were therefore legitimate.[76] Although the *Asamayama engi* does not make any direct claims revealing such particular transcultural connections, its focus on the figure of Kūkai, the rite of Gumonjihō, and bodhisattva Kokūzō essentially underscores the same intention. Moreover, based on our earlier discussion of the transcultural histories and itineraries of these persons, rites, and deities, the reasons why Mt. Asama's ritual texts should seek legitimacy in broader Buddhist cultural memory are clear. This provides a powerful narrative into which Mt. Asama, with its scores of heterogeneous and itinerant ascetics, could easily fit. Moreover, such a narrative portrayed Mt. Asama in a new light and afforded it more significance within a much broader Buddhist world, spanning from India to Tang China, and Japan. As a result of these medieval constructions, it should not be at all surprising that the eighteenth-century Kongōshōji exercised the right to display its own historicity in whatever way its clergy deemed necessary.

The third and final chapter of the *Asamayama engi* is entitled "On the Red-Spirit Child" (*Shakushō dōji no koto* 赤精童子の事). In this chapter, we finally find an explanation for the provenance of the image that the eighteenth-century Ise shrine clergy felt compelled to act against. In this part of the *Engi*, Amaterasu manifests itself as a divine Rain-Treasure Child (Uhō Dōji 雨宝童子), holding a red jewel and making a vow to protect Mt. Asama.[77] In this more esoteric form, the imperial deity immediately reveals its connections to the elementary needs of premodern societies – such as procuring rain and ensuring a timely rotation of the sun, moon, and stars – and presents a solution to more complex religious issues: constructing memorial sites, worshipping transcultural esoteric

75 *Asama dake giki*, Nishikawa (1979, 45).

76 On *sangoku den*, see Toby (1994, 323–47 and 2001, 15–45); Blum (2001, 31–51).

77 For the premodern images of Uhō Dōji, see again Faure (2016, 276–79).

deities arriving from overseas, and finding new, effective techniques for Buddhist salvation in the critical conditions of degenerate dharma. The conceptual background of the Uhō Dōji remains unexplained, but the satellite text *Asama dake giki*, discussed above, connects the worship of this medieval figure to an allegedly similar arrangement on Mt. Tiantai (天台) in China, perhaps invoking Mt. Asama's own forgotten or underplayed connection to the aforementioned Japanese Tendai temple at Mt. Hiei. This narrative possibility is achieved via the figure of the tenth-century monk Ryōgen (良源, 912–985), known as Jikaku Daishi (慈覚大師) (Groner 2002). *Asama dake giki* also makes a case for the practice of the esoteric Fudō Myōō (不動明王) ritual as a means of protecting the Ise shrines from demons.[78]

In the light of the aforementioned statements – which particularly highlight the desire to build connections to important religious sites, both in central Japan and overseas – even a preliminary assessment of *Asamayama engi* suggests the possibility that Mt. Asama's status in the history and development of cultic movements in the Ise and Shima areas should not be underestimated. An investigation of other texts associated with Mt. Asama – such as the already mentioned *Asama dake giki* and *Shō Asamayama sha jinkyō satabumi* (小朝熊社神鏡沙汰文)[79] – and their cross-reading with comparable ritual texts from Ise, Miwa, Hakusan, and other traditions could help us map the precise span of its medieval networks and religious *imaginaire* even further.

The celestial associations continue to play a pivotal role. For example, a 1614 version of *Asama dake engi* draws explicit parallels with the previously existing star cults (referred to as the "twelve divine generals"), geomantic knowledge (the "twelve branches"), esoteric divinities, and local *kami*, including the imperial ancestor deities. This latter version equates Amaterasu's divine child, Ninigi (the ancestor of Japan's imperial lineage), with Jupiter or Venus, while the two main deities of Ise are, respectively, the sun and the moon. From these texts, it is clear that Mt. Asama's sacred topography was not perfectly unified but was nevertheless based on medieval interpretations of *kami* worship merging with the teachings of esoteric Buddhism, star cults, and Yin-Yang correlative thinking. These theories were employed and transported by local ascetics, some of whom evidently specialised in divination techniques and astral calculations. This kind of dense, symbolic association underpinned the production of a religious vision supported and developed by the diverse religious

78 *Asama dake giki*, Nishikawa (1979, 49); see also n. 23 and n. 74 above.
79 Hanawa (1928, 356–85).

practitioners at Mt. Asama, which caused much controversy and legal conflict with the Ise shrines centuries later.

6.6 Conclusion

There are multiple reasons why local cultic sites might adopt transcultural ideas, concepts, teachings, or deities. The case of Mt. Asama, one of many similar cases in Japan, amply demonstrates that such sites must construct and constantly augment and replenish their own mythology and assemblage of ritual practices. They must maintain links with influential institutions, groups of practitioners, and donors to ensure their continuous survival. In part, such motivations are fulfilled by constantly updated sacred topographies and ritual performances, which depend on their origins in the vast, transcultural Buddhist topoi. Such topographies – combining the worship of stars, imperial deities, and celestial buddhas with mountain austerities and ritual practices of Buddhist contemplation – came to be transmitted as a major part of the Kongōshōji religious economy by the early modern period. Noteworthy here is the foundational mythological narrative that portrayed Ise in a light that did not reflect the view of Amaterasu's history perpetuated at the imperial shrines. As a consequence, the Ise shrine priesthood actively sought to suppress this narrative in 1750. Through the medieval *engi* texts that documented its tradition, Mt. Asama emerged as a site where perfect memory was essentially within the grasp of a physical, bodily experience of a star-gazing practitioner, and where the construction of the future urgently depended on maintaining the transculturally mediated Buddhist practice of venerating celestial bodies.

Seen from this perspective, the traditions of medieval cultic worship inherited by Mt. Asama's Kongōshōji Temple before 1750 were already complex Buddhist productions resting in part on the confluences of the many strands of ritual and astronomic knowledge that were absorbed into Buddhist scholarship and practice in Central Asia, India, China, Korea, and Japan in different forms by the end of the first millennium. The notions of sacrality, as understood by the medieval "holders of memory" at Mt. Asama, arrived there via complex processes of transmission, exemplified by literal, material, visual, and cultural translation that belied long-distance and long-term exchanges in the premodern Buddhist world. In this regard, the cult of the deity Ākāśagarbha and the ritual of perfect memory (Gumonji-hō) – transmitted to Japan by, among others, Kūkai, the founder of Shingon – were adopted as defining features of the ascetic Buddhist practice of Ise at Mt. Asama and can be understood as a good example of such long-term exchange.

References

Abe Ryūichi. 1999. *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Abe Yasurō 阿部泰郎. 1985. "Shintō mandara no kōzō to shōchō sekai 神道曼荼羅の構造と象徴世界." In *Taikei: Bukkyō to nihonjin I* 大系：佛教と日本人 1, *Kami to hotoke*: *Bukkyō juyō to shinbutsu shūgō no sekai* と佛：佛教受容と神佛習合の世界, edited by Sakurai Yoshirō 桜井芳郎, 311–57. Tokyo: Shunjūsha.

Andreeva, Anna. 2011. "*The Karmic Origins of the Great Bright Miwa Deity*: A Transformation of a Sacred Mountain in Pre-modern Japan." *Monumenta Nipponica* 65/2:245–97.

Andreeva, Anna. 2017. *Assembling Shinto: Buddhist Approaches to Kami Worship in Medieval Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Asia Center.

Arichi, Meri. 2006. "Seven Stars of Heaven, Seven Shrines on Earth: The Big Dipper and the Hie Shrine in the Medieval Period." In "The Worship of Stars in Japanese Religious Practice," edited by Lucia Dolce, special double issue, *Culture and Cosmos. A Journal for the History of Astrology and Cultural Astronomy* 10/1–2: 195–216.

Beghi, Clemente. 2011. "The Dissemination of Esoteric Scriptures in Eighth-Century Japan." In *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, edited by Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne, 661–82. Handbook of Oriental Studies, section four: China, vol. 24. Leiden: Brill.

Blair, Heather Elizabeth. 2015. *Real and Imagined: The Peak of Gold in Heian Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center.

Blair, Heather, and Kawasaki Tsuyoshi, eds. 2015. "*Engi*: forging accounts of sacred origins." Special issue, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 42/1.

Blum, Mark. 2001. "The *Sangoku-Mappō* Construct: Buddhism, Nationalism, and History in Medieval Japan." In *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, edited by Richard K. Payne and Taigen Dan Leighton, 31–51. Abingdon: Routledge.

Bogel, Cynthea. 2009. *With a Single Glance: Buddhist Icon and Early Mikkyō Vision*. Seattle/London: University of Washington Press.

Breen, John, and Mark Teeuwen. 2010. *A New History of Shinto*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.

Dolce, Lucia. 2006. "Introduction. The Worship of Celestial Bodies in Japan: Politics, Rituals, and Icons." In "The Worship of Stars in Japanese Religious Practice," edited by Lucia Dolce, special double issue, *Culture and Cosmos. A Journal for the History of Astrology and Cultural Astronomy* 10/1–2: 3–45.

Faure, Bernard. 2016. *Gods of Medieval Japan*. Vol. 1, *The Fluid Pantheon*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Fowler, Sherry D. 1991–1992. "*Hibutsu*: Secret Buddhist Image of Japan." *Journal of Asian Culture* 15:138–59.

Frölich, Judith. 2007. *Rulers, Peasants, and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Japan: Ategawa no Shō, 1004–1304*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Gorai Shigeru五来茂, ed. 2000. *Ise Asama dake ryaku engi* 伊勢朝熊岳略縁起. In *Shugendō shiryōshū* 修験道史料集 2, Nishi Nihon hen 西日本編, edited by Gorai Shigeru五来茂, 108–10. Sangaku shūkyōshi kenkyū sōsho 山岳宗教史研究叢書 18. Tokyo: Meicho shuppan.

Grapard, Alan. 1982. "Flying Mountains and Walkers of Emptiness: Toward a Definition of Sacred Space in Japanese Religions." *History of Religions* 21/3:195–211.

Grapard, Alan. 1987. "Linguistic Cubism: A Singularity of Pluralism in the Sannō Cult." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 14/2–3:211–34.
Grapard, Alan. 1992. *The Protocol of the Gods: A Study of Kasuga Cult in Japanese History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Grapard, Alan. 1998. "*Keiranshūyōshū*: A Different Perspective on Mt. Hiei in the Medieval Period." In *Re-Visioning "Kamakura" Buddhism*, edited by Richard K. Payne, 55–69. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
Groner, Paul. 2002. *Ryōgen and Mt Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
Hanawa Hokinoichi 塙保己一, ed. 1928. *Shō Asamayama sha jinkyō shō, satabumi* 小朝熊社神鏡沙 汰文. *Gunsho ruijū* 群書類従, Jingi bu 神祇部, kan 12, 356–85. Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai.
Hanawa Hokinoichi 塙保己一, ed. 1932. *Tsūkai Daijingū sankeiki* 通海参詣記, by Tsūkai. *Zoku gunsho ruijū* 続群書類従, Jingi-bu 神祇部, kan 81, 759–812. Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai.
Horton, Sarah J. 2007. *Living Buddhist Statues in Early Medieval and Modern Japan*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Itō Satoshi 伊藤聡. 2011. *Chūsei tenshō daijin shinkō no kenkyū* 中世天照大神信仰の研究. Tokyo: Hōzōkan.
Knecht, Peter. 2006. "*Ise sankei mandala* and the image of the Pure Land." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 33/2:223–48.
Kodama Makoto 児玉允. 2000. "Asamayama shinkō to take mairi 朝熊山信仰とタケ参り." In *Kinki Reizan to Shugendō* 近畿霊山と修験道, Sangaku shūkyōshi kenkyū sōsho山岳宗教史研究叢書 11, edited by Gorai Shigeru 五来茂, 390–411. Tokyo: Meicho shuppan.
Kubota Osamu 久保田収. 1980. "Tenshō Daijin to Uhō Dōji: Asamayama shinkō wo chūshin to shite 天照大神と雨宝童子–朝熊山信仰を中心として." In *Ise Shinkō* 伊勢信仰 I, edited by Hagiwara Tatsuo 萩原龍夫, 143–58. Tokyo: Yūzankaku.
Mikkyō Daijiten 密教大辞典. 2007. 10th edition. Kyoto: Hōzōkan.
Mochizuki Shinkō 望月信仰. 1974–80. *Bukkyō daijiten* 仏教大辞典. Kyoto: Sekai seiten kankō kyōkai.
Moerman, Max D. 2007. "The Archaeology of Anxiety: An Underground History of Heian Religion." In *Heian Japan, Centers and Peripheries*, edited by Mikael Adolphson, Edward Kamens, and Stacie Matsumoto, 245–74. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
Nara kokuritsu bunkazai kenkyūjo 奈良国立文化財研究所. 1997. *Saidaiji Eison kongō busshi kanshin gakushōki* 西大寺叡尊金剛仏子感心学正記. In *Saidaiji Eison denki shūsei* 西大寺叡尊伝記集成, 3–78. Kyoto: Hōzōkan.
Nara National Museum. 2007. *Shinbutsu shūgō: Shinkō to mi* 神仏習合–信仰と美 (*Shinto Gods and Buddhist Deities: Syncretic Faith in Japanese Art*). Nara: Nara National Museum. Special exhibition catalogue.
Nishikawa Masatami 西川順土, ed. 1979. *Asama dake giki* 朝熊岳儀軌. *Shintō Taikei* 神道体系, Jinja hen 神社編 14, "Iga, Ise, Shima," 30–52. Tokyo: Shintō taikei hensankai.
Pedersen, Hillary. 2010. "The Five Great Space Repository Bodhisattvas: Lineage, Protection, and the Celestial Authority in Ninth-Century Japan." PhD dissertation, Kansas University.
Rambelli, Fabio. 2002. "Secret Buddhas: The Limits of Buddhist Representation." *Monumenta Nipponica* 57/3:271–307.
Rambelli, Fabio, and Eric Reinders. 2012. *Buddhism and Iconoclasm in East Asia: A History*. London/New York: Bloomsbury.

Ruppert, Brian O. 2009. "Beyond Death and Afterlife: Considering Relic Veneration in Medieval Japan." In *Death and Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism*, edited by Jacqueline I. Stone and Mariko Namba Walter, 102–36. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Sakurai Tokutarō 櫻井徳太郎 et al., eds. 1975. *Asamayama engi* 朝熊山縁起. *Nihon shisō taikei* 日本思想体系, vol. 20, Jisha engi 寺社縁起. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.

Teeuwen, Mark. 1996. *Watarai Shinto: An Intellectual History of the Outer Shrine*. Leiden: Research School CNWS.

Teeuwen, Mark, and Fabio Rambelli, eds. 2003. *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm*. London: Routledge.

Teeuwen, Mark, and John Breen. 2017. *A Social History of the Ise Shrines: Divine Capital*. London/New York: Bloomsbury.

Toby, Ronald. 1994. "The 'Indianness' of Iberia and Changing Japanese Iconographies of Other." In *Implicit Understanding: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, edited by Stuart B. Schwartz, 323–47. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Toby, Ronald. 2001. "Three Realms/Myriad Countries: An Ethnography and the Re-bounding of Japan, 1550–1570." In *Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia*, edited by Chow Kai-wing et al. 15–46 Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Tokyo National Museum. 2009. *Ise Jingū to kamigami no bijutsu* (伊勢神宮と神々の美術, *Ise Shrines and Treasures of Shinto*). Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum. Special exhibition catalogue.

Zhiru Ng. 2007. *The Making of a Saviour Bodhisattva: Dizang in Medieval China*. Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism 21. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Fabio Rambelli

7 In the Footprints of the Buddha: Ceylon and the Quest for the Origin of Buddhism in Early Modern Japan – A Minor Episode in the History of the Japanese Imagination of India

Throughout the premodern era, many Japanese created representations of India and of India's relations to Japan. References to India (often referred to with its Buddhist name, Tenjiku) can be found in a wide variety of texts, including origin narratives about deities, sacred places, professions and professional tools. A striking aspect of the Japanese imagination about India is that many sources claim that significant aspects of Japan and Japanese culture originated in India: mountains flying from India to Japan, Japanese kami being reincarnations of Indian people, professional tools coming in from India; even some samurai clans claimed that they were carrying out in Japan the struggle opposing the *deva*s to the *asura*s (of course, on the side of the former). It goes without saying that most of this was largely imaginary and owed very little to actual interactions. In fact, a very few people from India are known to have ever reached Japan, and we have no certain information about any Japanese ever reaching India until the sixteenth century. Thus, Japanese knowledge about India was essentially based on the Chinese Buddhist monk Xuanzang's (ca. 602–664) account of his travels there in the seventh century, and on additional information scattered in the Buddhist canon. Considering this lack of direct communication, the fascination of the Japanese for India is even more striking. I have elsewhere proposed the term "Indianization" to describe the impact of Indian culture to Japan – which goes beyond more or less imaginary origins. For instance, knowledge of Sanskrit was influential in the developing of the *kana* syllabaries in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; Indian narrative elements concurred in the development of classical and medieval Japanese literature; knowledge of political theories and of the caste system contributed to the organization of premodern Japanese society; and Indian ideas about the sacred, not limited to Buddhism, contributed to the development of Japanese religiosity.[1]

1 For an overview of some these aspects, see Rambelli (2014).

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110413083-007

In the Edo period (1600–1868), the Japanese imagination about India began to change. The development of alternative and competing representations of the world (Confucian and Sinocentric, European and Eurocentric, Nativist and Japanocentric), together with increasingly numerous and vocal anti-Buddhist discourses, concurred to relativizing India's role and prestige. This process was further compounded by the arrival of new information on India, mostly brought by Europeans (at first the Jesuits, and later, after the self-closure of Japan to foreigners in the early seventeenth century, by the Dutch). This new information forced the Japanese to revise their own knowledge about India which, as we have seen, was based on texts written many centuries before.

Western sources brought new information about places; about practices (kingship, caste system, etc.); and about the enormous wealth of India – little of which was mentioned in the Buddhist texts. The westerners also made it known to the Japanese that India was gradually falling under the control of western powers (Portugal, France, Holland, and later England). All of this contributed to the loss of prestige of Buddhist texts (as their information was not reliable) and ultimately of Buddhism itself (which many Japanese intellectuals saw as one of the causes of India's decline and colonization by barbarians).

A major discrepancy between western and Japanese knowledge of India concerned Buddhism. Initially, westerners treated Buddhism as one of many forms of world's paganism or heathenism. But when the Japanese (and others in Asia with whom the Europeans had contacts) kept insisting that Buddhism was a specific religion that originated in north India, westerners were puzzled. There was no cult of Buddha in India, and northern India in particular was largely Muslim. Westerners had no information about the sacred places of the Buddha – which, we should remember, were "rediscovered" in the second half of the nineteenth century by British, German, and Nepalese archeologists. Yet, the Europeans began to realize the similarities among various religious traditions in East Asia, Southeast Asia, Tibet, Mongolia, and Śrī Laṅkā; by the late seventeenth century, they knew that those countries shared the same religious framework, even though they didn't share a single sacred language and unified teachings, rituals, and representations. But the similarities were obvious enough.[2] Yet, the origins of this vast religious tradition were still unclear.

This chapter explores what happens when different sets of geographical and cultural knowledge meet by addressing the ensuing processes of interpretation, validation, and comparison with previous knowledge. The case in point

2 On the history of the western discovery of Buddhism, see de Lubac (1952), Droit (1997), App (2012), Allen (2002), Almond (1988).

is the role of Śrī Laṅkā (at the time known as Ceylon) in the formation of the western discourse about Buddhism – a discourse that had repercussions also as far as Japan.

7.1 Ceylon and the Origin of Buddhism

All local information from several regions in Asia pointed toward India as the original place of Buddhism, and Ceylon was the only place in the Indian subcontinent where Buddhism was actually practiced (as known by the Europeans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries); since westerners had colonized the island, western sources began to circulate in Japan indicating a strong connection between Ceylon and the Buddha.

A clear example is a text by the Japanese Confucian scholar and politician Arai Hakuseki (1657–1725), entitled *Sairan igen* and written in 1713, which contains descriptions of the world's countries drawn from a wide range of Chinese sources combined with more recent information from Europe. The latter was mostly acquired in conversations that Hakuseki had with the Italian Jesuit priest Giovanni Battista Sidotti (1668–1714), who entered Japan illegally in 1708 and was kept prisoner in Edo (present-day Tokyo) until his death. This text reports that in Ceylon there are footprints of the Buddha, and a temple enshrines a magnificent statue of a reclining Buddha together with a relic of a tooth of the Buddha.[3] This information appears to be based, at least in part, on an account given by the Chinese monk Faxian (337–ca. 422), who stayed in the island for two years around 412–414 in the last leg of his long voyage in India (399–414):

> When Buddha came to this country, wishing to transform the wicked nagas, by his supernatural power he planted one foot at the north of the royal city, and the other on top of a mountain, the two being fifteen yojanas apart. Over the footprint at the north of the city the king built a large tope, 400 cubits high, grandly adorned with gold and silver, and finished with a combination of all the precious substances. By the side of the tope he further built a monastery, called the Abhayagiri, where there are (now) five thousand monks. There is in it a hall of the Buddha, adorned with carved and inlaid work of gold and silver, and rich in the seven precious substances, in which there is an image (of Buddha) in green jade, more than twenty cubits in height, glittering all over with those substances, and having an appearance of solemn dignity which words cannot express.[4]

3 Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, *Sairan igen* 采覧異言.

4 Faxian, *Foguoji*, also known as *Kaoseng Faxian zhuan*, in T. vol. 51 no. 2085, pp. 857–866; English translation by James Legge ([1886] 1965, 102).

Note that Faxian does not mention a statue of Buddha's Parinibbana, which probably did not exist at the Abhayagiri monastic complex in Anuradhapura (the largest sculpture of Buddha's Parinibbana is located in the Gal temple in Polonnaruva); Hakuseki may have combined additional, more recent information to Faxian's classic description when he wrote about a reclining Buddha statue.[5]

After this passage, Hakuseki adds, "it is said that this [Ceylon] is the place of Buddha's *nirvana*."[6] Hakuseki included the same information in another text he wrote on international matters, *Seiyō kibun* (1715)[7]; there seems to have been a perception that Buddha left his footprint in the island at the moment of his *nirvana*. This might be due to an inference made by foreign travelers, who associated the footprint of the Buddha, and thus a visit of the Buddha to Ceylon, with the numerous representations of the Buddha's Parinibbana present in the country.

It is interesting to note here that Hakuseki and other early modern authors did not quote from the account of Śrī Laṅkā made by the Chinese monk Xuanzang (ca. 602–664) in his *Da Tang xiyu ji* (646)[8]; Xuanzang, however did not actually travel to the island, but limited himself to report stories and information he had acquired in India.

We may also note here in this connection that prior to Arai Hakuseki's works, Ceylon was mentioned at least three times in an important text by geographer Nishikawa Joken (1648–1724), the *Zōho Ka-i tsūshōkō* (1708): first as Keiran,[9] then as Sairon or Seira,[10] and finally as Seiron, where the author writes: "3,870 leagues by sea from Japan. It is an island; it has a ruler who performs punishments (*shioki suru*). It is a hot country, and its people look like the Siamese. It is a despicable (*iyashiki*) land. It is in the ocean of South India."[11] Interestingly, Nishikawa does not mention any connection between the island and the origin of Buddhism.

---

5 Faxian, however, did mention a relic of Buddha's tooth: Faxian, in Legge (1965, 104–106).

6 Arai Hakuseki, *Sairan igen*, p. 837a.

7 Arai Hakuseki, *Seiyō kibun* 西洋記聞, p. 44.

8 Xuanzang, *Da Tang xiyu ji*, in T vol. 51, n. 2087, pp. 932b–934c; see *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, translated by Li Rongxi (1996, 323–333). Xuanzang does not mention any statue of a reclining Buddha.

9 See http://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/i13/i13_00581/i13_00581_0004/i13_00581_0004_p0009.jpg, last accessed 30 January 2018.

10 See http://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/i13/i13_00581/i13_00581_0004/i13_00581_0004_p0011.jpg, last accessed 30 January 2018.

11 See http://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/i13/i13_00581/i13_00581_0004/i13_00581_0004_p0016.jpg, last accessed 30 January 2018. For a print edition of this text, see *Zōho Ka-i tsūshōkō* 増補華夷通商考 (Revised and Expanded Considerations on Trade with Civilized and Barbarian Peoples) by Nishikawa Joken 西川如見 ([1944] 1988).

The superposition of Buddhist sacred places onto Ceylon's geography contributed to the misunderstanding that the island was one of the original sacred places of Buddhism. Particularly important in this process is the identification of Adam's Peak with Mount Laṅkā (Jp. Ryōgasen), the place where the Buddha supposedly taught the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*. A map of India (Figure 7.1) included in Hirata Atsutane's *Indo zōshi* (Atsutane worked on this text for six years, from 1820 to 1826), shows Adam's Peak (Jp. Atamusuzan) in the southeastern part of Ceylon (Figure 7.2); a note in the map says: "Adam['s Peak] was called in the past Mount Laṅkā [Jp. Ryōgasen]; place in which Śākyamuni preached scriptures."

Hirata Atsutane apparently based his map on information received from Holland. Before him, the polymath and western studies scholar Shiba Kōkan (1747–1818) had painted Adam's Peak in 1808 (Figure 7.3), which he understood as being a different name for the Vulture Peak (Jp. Ryōjusen, Sk. Gṛdhrakūṭa), the sacred place of Buddhism where the Buddha is believed to have preached some of the most influential scriptures, including the *Lotus Sutra*.[12]

Shiba Kōkan's painting was, in turn, based on Dutch precedents, such as the painting presented in Figure 7.4.

This is an indication of the confusion generated by attempting to map western knowledge (which, in the case of Buddhism, was largely wrong) onto received Japanese knowledge.

The misperception of Śrī Laṅkā as being directly connected with the life of the Buddha continues in Japan well into the Meiji period (1868–1912), the time of the early phases of Japan's modernization. The well-known and influential supporter of modernization as westernization, Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901), published in 1869 a compendium of world geography, entitled *Sekai kunizukushi*. In it we read: "Next, at the southern tip of India Ulterior [Hindustan] there is the island of Ceylon. This is also a British possession, and has good harbors. This island is the birthplace of Śākyamuni."[13]

It is not clear where Fukuzawa acquired this information, but an obvious source (albeit, perhaps, an indirect one in the case of Fukuzawa) comes to mind: Marco Polo's *Travels* (Italian *Il milione*). The *Travels* is the first text to present to the west a fairly accurate account of the life of the Buddha Śākyamuni, whom Polo calls Sagamoni Borcan; this account was probably based on information he had gathered in Ceylon (which he calls Seilan).[14] Marco Polo describes the

12 On Shiba Kōkan, see Keene (1969).

13 Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉, *Sekai kunizukushi* 世界国尽 (Compendium of All Countries of the World), p. 596a.

14 Borcan is the Italianized form of the Mongolian *Burkhan*, "deity," used by the Mongolians to refer to the Buddha.

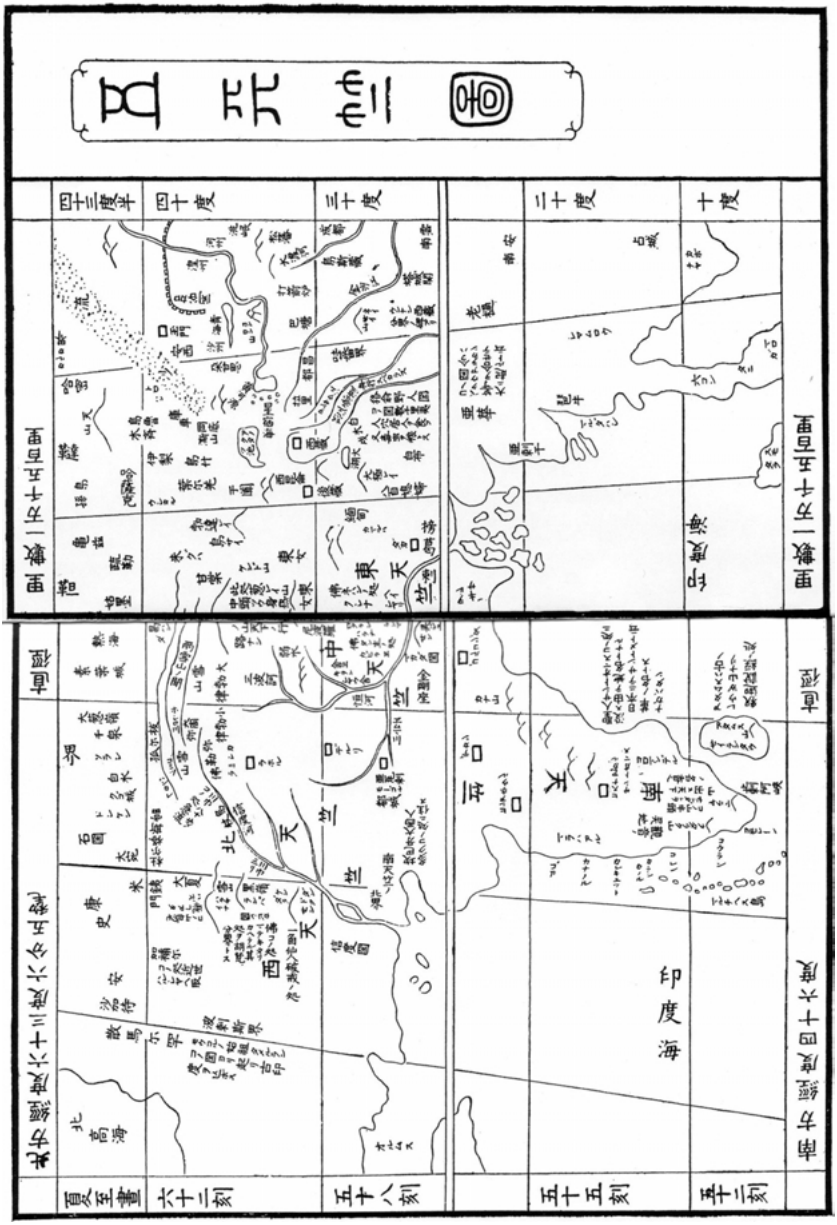


Figure 7.1: Map of India by Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤, from *Indo zōshi* 印度蔵志, in Hirata Atsutane (1977, vol. 11, 26–27).

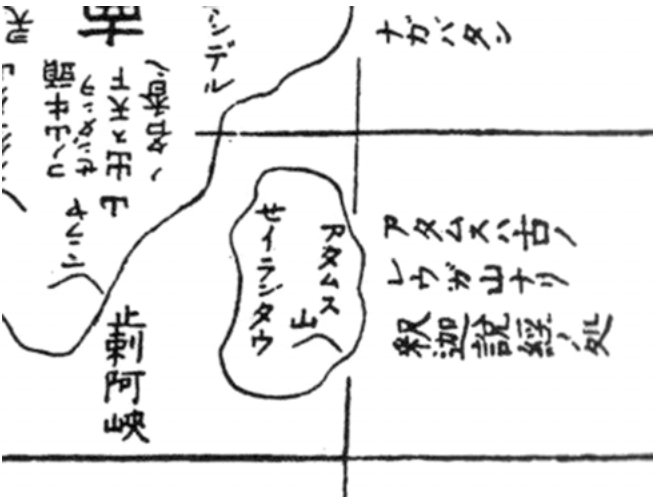


Figure 7.2: Ceylon in Hirata Atsutane's map of India (detail), from *Indo zōshi* 印度蔵志, in Hirata Atsutane (1977, vol. 11, 26–27).

miraculous birth of Sagamoni, his noble upbringing, and his ascetic life and final demise. At the end, Polo writes: "And this befel in the Island of Seilan in India."[15] The Venetian also mentions Adam's Peak; he writes that the Saracens consider it the burial place of Adam, the first man, but he also adds that "the idolaters" [i.e., the Buddhists] say it is Sagamoni Borcan's tomb.[16]

It is important to recall here that the sacredness of that mountain in Śrī Laṅkā is recognized by several religious traditions: in addition to the Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and Christian also have attributed to it a role in their own religious narratives. Adam's Peak is called the Mountain of Serendib by the Arabs; Hindu sources refer to it as Śrī Pāda and claim that the footprint is Siva's. The mountain, the footprint, and the devotional practices associated to it, involving Muslims and "idolaters" (both Buddhists and Shaivites), are described by Ibn Battuta in his travel records.[17]

In the 1600s the Portuguese arrived to Ceylon and added another layer to the religious palimpsest of the sacred mountain. A Portuguese traveler,

15 See Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, Book 3, Chapter 15.

16 See Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, Book 3, Chapter 15.

17 See Holt (2011, 116–117). See also Ibn Battuta's description of Śrī Pāḍa in *The Travels of Ibn Batuta*, translated by Rev. Samuel Lee (1829, 183–192).

Figure 7.3: Shiba Kōkan, Vulture Peak. From Kōbe Shiritsu Hakubutsukan (2001, 57).

Constantino de Sá de Miranda (active 1638–1644), wrote that the footprint was produced not by "Buddum as the Chingalas believe," but by Saint Thomas the Apostle.[18]

Before Constantino de Sá de Miranda, a Portuguese historian, Diogo do Couto (ca. 1542–1616), argued that what the Singhalese call Buddum was in fact Prince Josafat, one of the protagonists of the famed medieval tale of Barlaam

18 Quoted in Holt (2011, 172).

Figure 7.4: Adam's Peak by François Valentijn (Holland, 1666–1727), painted in 1724–1726. From Kōbe Shiritsu Hakubutsukan (2001, 57).

and Josafat. Apparently, Diogo do Couto had noticed the striking resemblance between Sagamoni's life as told by Marco Polo and the legend of Josafat.[19]

This understanding that Buddha was closely related to Ceylon became fairly common in Europe for a couple of centuries. In 1691 Simon de la Loubère, envoy of the king of France Louis XIV on the third French mission to Siam, reported that the religion of Siam had come from Ceylon, and that Sommona-Codom, that is, the Buddha Śākyamuni, "was the Son of a King of the Island of *Ceylon*."[20] The English sailor Robert Knox (1641–1720), in *An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon, in the East-Indies* of 1681, wrote: "The Mountain is at the South end of the Countrey, called Hammalella, but by Christian People, Adam's Peak, the highest in the whole Island; where, as has been said before, is the Print of the Buddou's foot, which he left on the top of that Mountain in a Rock, from whence he ascended to Heaven;" that the mark on Adam's Peak is the "foot-step of their great idol *Buddou*."[21] Later, Michel-Jean François Ozeray, the author of *Recherches sur Buddou or Bouddou, Instituteur religieux de l'Asie orientale* (1817), perhaps the first European book in which the Buddha was described as "a distinguished philosopher, a wise man born for the happiness of his fellow creatures and the good of humanity,"[22] wrote that Buddou was born in Ceylon "Son of a king (of Ceylon, according to Japanese tradition)."[23] It is worth recalling here that India came to be generally recognized in West as the place of origin of Buddha and Buddhism only by the late 1840s.[24] Thus, it is less surprising to read Ozeray writing about Ceylon as the birthplace of Buddha than to find his claim that this information is based on a "Japanese tradition." One cannot but wonder about the possibility that wrong information about Ceylon as the birthplace of Buddha, brought to Japan by the Europeans, had somehow made its way back to Europe and was being quoted by European authors as based on Japanese sources.

19 On the medieval Christian legend of Barlaam and Josaphat, which is a transformation of the standard, classical account of the life of the Buddha, after a long and complex cultural drift (Sanskrit to Persian to Armenian to Greek to Latin to the vulgar languages of medieval Europe), see Cesaretti and Ronchey (2012) and Lopez and McCracken (2014). On Diogo do Couto's interpretation, see da Lourinhã (1963).

20 In Simon de la Loubère, *Du Royaume de Siam*, p. 525.

21 Robert Knox, *An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon, in the East-Indies*, p. 81; see also pp. 3, 72.

22 Michel-Jean François Ozeray, *Recherches sur Buddou or Bouddou, Instituteur religieux de l'Asie orientale*, p. 40.

23 Michel-Jean François Ozeray, *Recherches sur Buddou or Bouddou, Instituteur religieux de l'Asie orientale*, p. 51.

24 See Almond (1988, 22).

In any case, early modern Europeans had only a vague and imprecise set of information about Buddha and his relations to Ceylon: some sources claimed that Buddha was born there, others that the island was his death place. These pieces of information made their way to Japan, where they influenced late premodern and early modern understanding of Buddhist history and geography.

7.2 A Geographical Short-Circuit

We have here a case of intellectual short-circuit, in which insufficient information (on Buddhism), combined with wrong or imprecise inferences (about Ceylon), but stated with strong conviction, generate misunderstandings. However, we should also note that this early-modern global discourse about Ceylon's role in the origin of Buddhism is not completely far-fetched. Buddhist chronicles of Śrī Laṅkā report that the Buddha visited the country three times: the third time, in particular, he visited Kelaniya (Sk. Kalyāṇī) upon invitation by the *nāga* king Maṇiakkhika; on that occasion, the Buddha went to Mt. Sumanakūṭa (Sin. Samanola) and left his footprint there.[25] As we have seen, the Chinese traveler Faxian (but not Xuanzang) also mentions a mountain in Ceylon where the Buddha left his footprint. After Faxian, other Buddhist sources in East Asia, in particular those associated with Tang period esoteric Buddhism, also refer to Śrī Laṅkā and its sacred mountain.[26]

We should also note that there is another close association between the Buddha and Śrī Laṅkā, namely, the "fact" that Buddha exposed the *Laṇkāvatārasūtra* on Mt. Laṅkā, the residence of the *rākṣasa* (demon) Rāvaṇa[27] – who, incidentally, happens to be the negative hero of the Indian epic tale *Rāmāyaṇa*. As we have seen, Mt. Laṅkā is, in fact, an old appellation of the mountain later called Adam's Peak and Śrī Pāda. This information is partly present in a stunning aerial map of India, in which the island of Śrī Laṅkā appears on the foreground (Figure 7.5).

In this large painting by Gountei (Utagawa) Sadahide (1807–1873), a painter of the Utagawa School specialized in western themes and bird-view images,

25 *Mahāvaṃsa* 1: 71–78. See Geiger (1912, 8). For a more detailed account also based on other local sources, see Wijayaratna (1987).

26 See Sundberg and Giebel (2011).

27 *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (Jp. *Ryōgakyō*) (translated by Bodhiruci in 513), in T vol. 14, no. 671. See Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (1932); see also http://lirs.ru/do/lanka_eng/lanka-nondiacritical.htm, last accessed 30 January 2018.

Figure 7.5: *Shakuson buppō mishugyō no gazu* (Painting of the [places where] Śākyamuni practiced Buddhism), 1860, by Gountei Sadahide. From Kōbe Shiritsu Hakubutsukan (2001, 58).

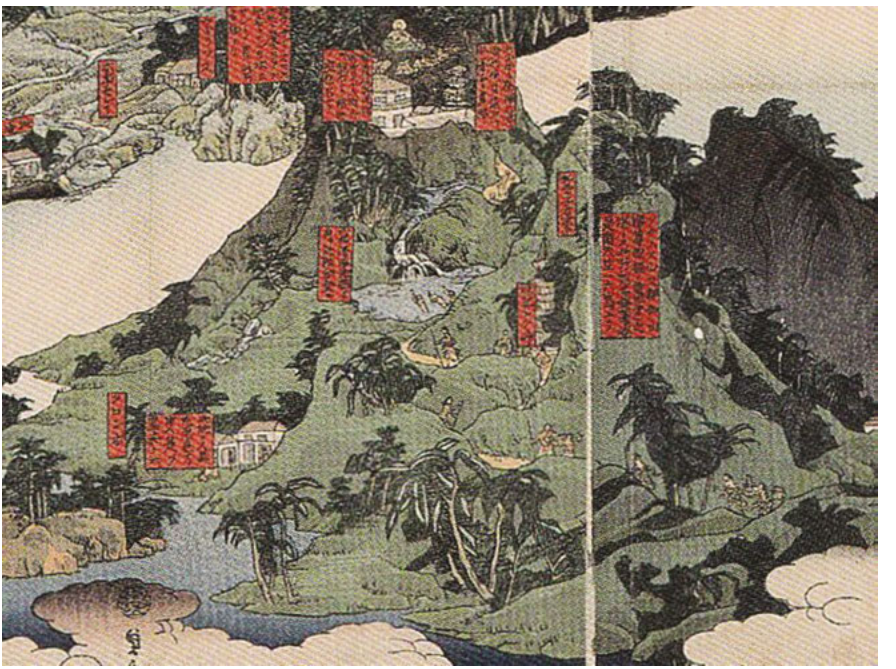


Figure 7.6: Ceylon in *Shakuson buppō mishugyō no gazu* (detail), by Gountei Sadahide. From Kōbe Shiritsu Hakubutsukan (2001, 58).

Adams Berg (Adam's Peak) is correctly equated with the Buddhist Ryōgasen (Mt. Laṅkā), where Buddha is said to have exposed the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*; it is glossed in the map as "The most important sacred place where Śākyamuni exposed his *sūtra*s" (*Shakuson sekkyō no reichi daiichi no ba*) (Figure 7.6).

We can glimpse from all this information the existence of a tradition associating the Buddha with Śrī Laṅkā, and of another tradition in which Śrī Laṅkā imagines itself as an ancient stalwart of Buddhism since the reign of Emperor Aśoka (third century BCE). It was not difficult, for uninformed western observers, to infer from all this that Ceylon was, if not the place of the birth and death of the Buddha, at least an important center for the propagation of Buddhism in Asia.

However, the Japanese never completely accepted Ceylon as the birthplace of Buddhism. They had a vast amount of sources clearly stating that Buddha was born and had died in the same area of north-eastern India bordering with the ancient kingdom of Magadha.

In the early nineteenth century, a Japanese geographer, Asahina Kōsei 朝夷厚生 (1748–1828), attempted to locate the sacred sites of Buddhism in

contemporary maps of India by relying on information drawn from the travel accounts by Faxian and Xuanzang, preceding by a few decades similar attempts by western archeologists. Asahina's efforts are displayed in a map of India included in his book on India (Figure 7.7, Figure 7.8).

Analogously, the previously mentioned map by Hirata Atsutane also includes Kapilavastu (Kapirae), "birthplace of the Buddha," and Kusinagara (Kushina), "place of Buddha's *nirvana*," in a relatively accurate position in north-eastern India (Figure 7.9).

Furthermore, Fukuzawa Yukichi also wrote in his previously mentioned *Sekai kunizukushi*: "Along this river [the Ganges] there is Allahabad, a sacred place of Śākyamuni Tathāgata. Even today, more than two hundred thousand pilgrims go there every year from all regions of India."[28] This is the same book in which Fukuzawa, as we have seen, had situated Śākyamuni's birthplace in Ceylon. It appears that, in the mind of eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries Japanese, the boundaries of India (or, at least, of Buddhist India) were not clearly established and encompassed Ceylon as well; in addition, the location of the sacred sites of Buddhism was not known and thus only vaguely represented in maps (and besides, Allahabad is *not* a Buddhist sacred site).

In this way, centuries-old knowledge about the location of the Buddhist sacred sites combined with a continuing Japanese misunderstanding according to which India was a Buddhist country. Indeed, premodern Japanese do not appear to have known that Buddhism had disappeared from India in the early thirteenth century. As late as at the beginning of the nineteenth century Jiun Sonja Onkō (1718–1804) was writing that he would like to visit the sacred places on the Buddha in India – something that would have been impossible anyway, because the location of those places was not known until Markham Kittoe and Alexander Cunnigham, separately, rediscovered them in the 1840s, followed later by Lawrence Austine Waddell and Alois Führer in 1896.[29]

7.3 Conclusion

The Japanese tended to trust the reliability of the geographical information provided by western sources as more detailed and up-to-date than their own, perhaps also because this new information was free of Buddhist apologetics; in general, the Japanese authors tried to map information from the west upon

28 Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Sekai kunizukushi*, p. 595a.

29 On the process of re-discovery of the sacred sites of Buddhism, see Allen (2002).

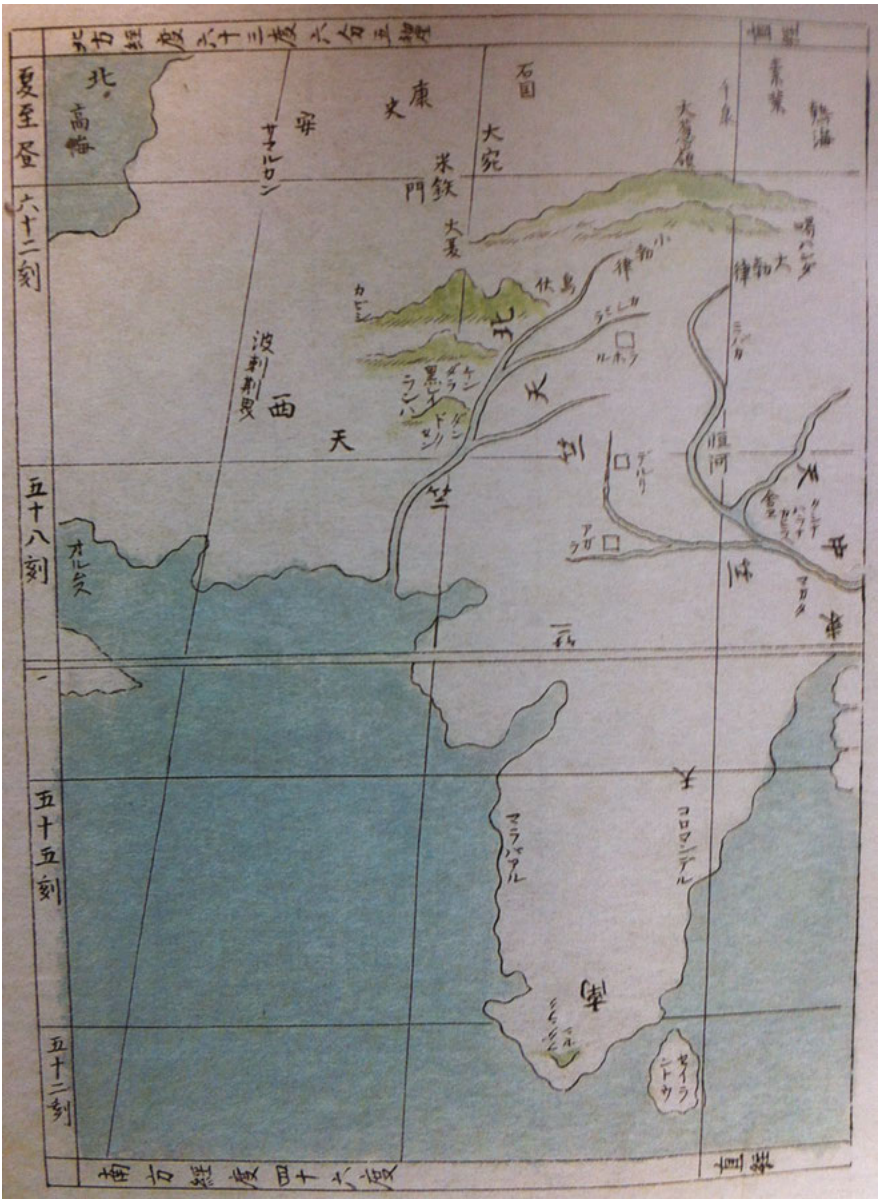


Figure 7.7: One of India's maps (Go-Tenjiku yonzu 五天竺四図) by Asahina Kōsei 朝夷厚生's *Bukkoku kōshō* 仏国考証, 1814. Courtesy Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library (Tōkyō Toritsu Chūō Toshokan 東京都立中央図書館). From Kondō Osamu 近藤治 (2006). Courtesy of Kyūko Shoin.

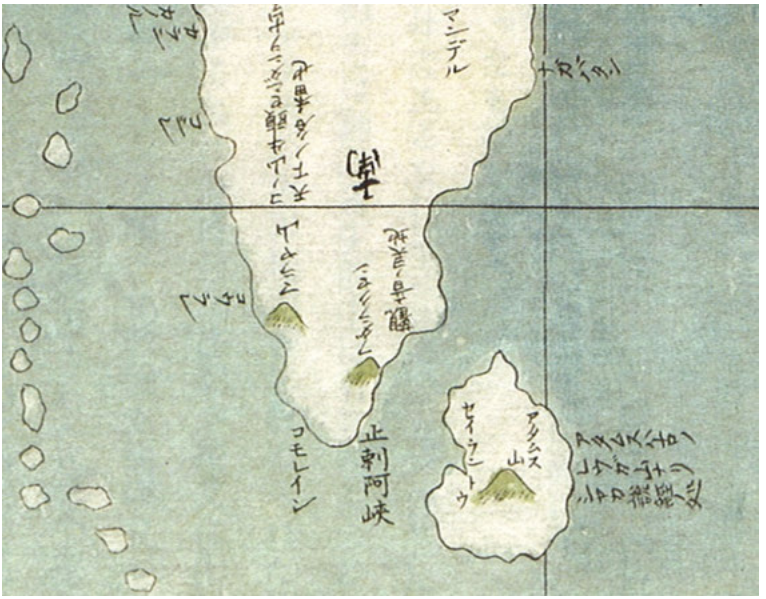


Figure 7.8: Detail from one of India's maps (Go-Tenjiku yonzu 五天竺四図) by Asahina Kōsei 朝夷厚生's *Bukkoku kōshō* 仏国考証, 1814. Courtesy Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library (Tōkyō Toritsu Chūō Toshokan 東京都立中央図書館). From Kondō Osamu 近藤治 (2006). Courtesy of Kyūko Shoin.

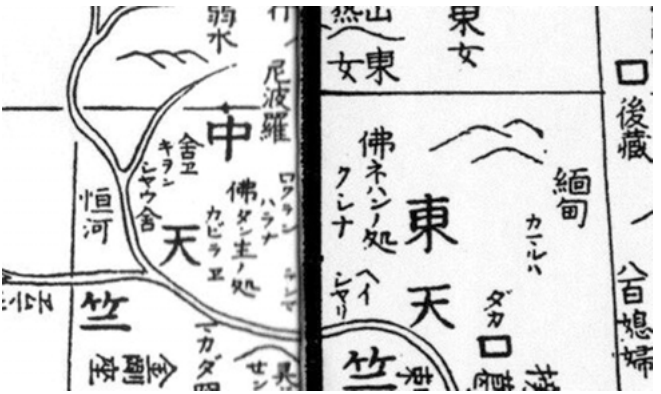


Figure 7.9: Detail of Hirata Atsutane's map of India with the sacred places of Buddhism. From Hirata Atsutane, *Indo zōshi* 印度蔵志, in Hirata Atsutane (1977, vol. 11, 26–27).

their previous knowledge. In the case of Buddhism, this didn't work out well. At first, the Europeans did not envision Buddhism as a separate religious tradition, but they merged it within their broader category of Paganism/Heathenism. Initially, this was acceptable to Japanese scholars of Dutch studies, most of whom were Confucians and therefore not interested in Buddhist apologetics and doctrines; the Japanese also believed that Buddhism was more or less diffused all over the world – an idea that somehow matched the westerners' notion of Paganism as one of the world religions. Later, toward the eighteenth century, when the Europeans began to identify Buddhism as a specific religion, they began to look for its place of origin and for information about its founder, but it took a long time for them to first acquire and then trust native knowledge. For example, the Europeans began to use the information derived from the Chinese travelers only after their texts had been translated into French – again, after they had been mediated by European academic discourses and institutions.

References

Allen, Charles. 2002. *The Buddha and the Sahibs: The Men Who Discovered India's Lost Religion*. London: John Murray Publishers.

Almond, Philip. 1988. *The British Discovery of Buddhism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

App, Urs. 2012. *The Cult of Emptiness*. Rorschach and Kyoto: UniversityMedia.

Arai Hakuseki 新井白石. (1906) 1977. *Sairan igen* 采覧異言 (Collected Views on Foreign Discourses). In *Arai Hakuseki zenshū* 新井白石全集 (Complete Works of Arai Hakuseki). Vol. 4. Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai 国書刊行会.

Arai Hakuseki. 1975. *Seiyō kibun* 西洋記聞 (Records of Matters Heard about the Western Countries). In *Nihon shisō taikei* 日本思想大系. Vol. 35. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten 岩波書店.

Cesaretti, Paolo, and Silvia Ronchey, eds. 2012. *Storia di Barlaam e Ioasaf: La vita bizantina del Buddha*. Turin: Einaudi.

Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, trans. 1932. *The Lankavatara Sutra: A Mahayana Text*. London: Routledge Kegan Paul.

da Lourinhã, Hilário. 1963. *Vida do honrado Infante Josaphate, filho del Rey Avenir, versão de frei Hilário da Lourinhã: e a identificação, por Diogo do Couto (1542–1616), de Josaphate com o Buda*. Introduction and notes by Margarida Corrêa de Lacerda. Lisboa: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar.

de la Loubère, Simon. 1691. *Du Royaume de Siam*. Paris: Chez la Veuve de Jean-Baptiste Coignard et Jean Baptiste Coignard.

de Lubac, Henri. 1952. *La rencontre du bouddhisme et de l'Occident*. Paris: Aubier.

Droit, Roger-Pol. 1997. *Le culte du néant: Les Philosophes et le Bouddha*. Paris: Seuil.

Faxian. *Foguoji*, also known as *Kaoseng Faxian zhuan*. In T. vol. 51 no. 2085, pp. 857–866.

Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉. 1959. *Sekai kunizukushi* 世界国尽 (Compendium of All Countries of the World). In *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshū* 福沢諭吉全集 (Complete Works of Fukuzawa Yukichi). Vol. 2. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten 岩波書店.

Geiger, Wilhelm, trans. 1912. *The Mahāvaṃsa or the Great Chronicle of Ceylon*. London: The Pali Text Society.

Hirata Atsutane. 1977. *Hirata Atsutane zenshū* 平田篤胤全集. Tokyo: Meicho shuppan 名著出版.

Holt, John Clifford. 2011. *The Sri Lanka Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Keene, Donald. 1969. *The Japanese Discovery of Europe, 1720–1830*. Revised edition. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Knox, Robert. 1681. *An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon, in the East-Indies*. London: Richard Chiswell.

Kōbe Shiritsu Hakubutsukan 神戸市立博物館, ed. 2001. *Ikokue no bōken: Kinsei Nihon bijutsu ni miru jōhō to gensō* 異国絵の冒険ー近世日本美術に見る情報と幻想. Kobe: Kōbe Shiritsu Hakubutsukan.

Kondō Osamu 近藤治, ed. 2006. *Tōyōjin no Indokan* 東洋人のインド観 (East Asian People's Images of India). Tokyo: Kyūko shoin 汲古書院.

Laṅkāvatārasūtra. In T vol. 14, no. 671.

Lee, Rev. Samuel, trans. 1829. *The Travels of Ibn Batuta*. Translated from the Abridged Arabic Manuscript Copies, preserved in the Public Library of Cambridge. London: Oriental Translation Committee.

Legge, James. (1886) 1965. *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*. New York: Dover Publications.

Li Rongxi, trans. 1996. *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*. BDK English Tripiṭaka 79. Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research.

Lopez, Donald S., Jr. and Peggy McCracken. (2014). *In Search of the Christian Buddha*. New York: Norton.

Nishikawa Joken 西川如見. (1944) 1988. *Zōho Ka-i tsūshōkō* 増補華夷通商考 (Revised and Expanded Considerations on Trade with Civilized and Barbarian Peoples). In *Nihon suidokō* 日本水土考 (Description of the Japanese Environment), *Suido kaiben* 水土解弁 (Consideration on the Natural Environment), *Ka-i tsūshōkō zōho* 華夷通商考増補 (Revised and Expanded Considerations on Trade with Civilized and Barbarian Peoples). Tokyo: Iwanami shoten 岩波書店.

Ozeray, Michel-Jean François. 1817. *Recherches sur Buddou or Bouddou, Instituteur religieux de l'Asie orientale*. Paris: Brunot-Labbé.

Polo Marco. 1920. *The Travels of Marco Polo*, translated by Henry Yule, edited and annotated by Henri Cordier. John Murray: London.

Rambelli, Fabio. 2014. "The Idea of India (Tenjiku) in Premodern Japan: Issues of Signification and Representation in the Buddhist Translation of Cultures." In *Buddhism Across Asia*. Vol. 1, edited by Tansen Sen, 259–290. Singapore: Institute of South East Asian Studies Publishing.

Sundberg, Jeffrey, and Rolf Giebel. 2011. "The Life of the Tang Court Monk Vajrabodhi as Chronicled by Lü Xiang (呂向): South Indian and Śrī Laṅkān Antecedents to the Arrival of the Buddhist Vajrayāna in Eighth-Century Java and China." *Pacific World*, Third Series, 13 (Fall): 129–222.

Wijayaratna, Môhan. 1987. *Le culte des dieux chez les bouddhistes singhalais. La religion populaire de Ceylan face au bouddhisme Theravāda*. Paris: Cerf.

Xuanzang. *Da Tang xiyu ji*. In T vol. 51, no. 2087, pp. 932b–934c.

Davide Torri

8 From Geographical Periphery to Conceptual Centre: The Travels of Ngagchang Shakya Zangpo and the Discovery of Hyolmo Identity

This chapter will explore and analyze dynamics of cultural production in a particular context, the Helambu valley (Nepal). The valley is home to the Hyolmo, a Nepalese minority of Tibetan origin, whose culture seems to have been shaped by the particular agency, within a sacred geography (Yolmo Gangra), of a specific class of cultural agents, namely the so-called reincarnated lamas and treasure discoverers. One of them, in particular, could be considered the cultural hero *par excellence* of the Hyolmo due to his role in establishing and maintaining long lasting relationships between distant power places, and to his spiritual charisma. His legacy still lives on among the people of Helambu, and his person is still revered as the great master who opened the outer, inner, and secret doors of the Yolmo Gangra. The role of treasure discoverers – or *tertön* (*gter ston*)[1] – in the spread of Buddhism across the Himalayas is related to particular conceptions regarding the landscape and especially to the key-theme of the "hidden lands" or *beyul* (*sbas yul*). But the bonds linking a community to its territory are not simply an historical by-product. As in the case of the Hyolmo, the relationship between people, landscape, and memory is one of the main features of the identity-construction processes that constitute one of the most relevant elements of contemporary Nepalese politics.

1 Tibetan names and expressions are given in phonetic transcription, with a transliteration according to the Wylie system added in brackets after their first occurrence (or after a slash when entirely inside brackets). Longer expressions or work titles are given only in Wylie transliteration.

Note: This paper is based on fieldwork in the Kathmandu Valley and Helambu villages (Sindhupalchok district) conducted yearly since 2006 and intensified especially between April 2013 and October 2015, within the framework of the subproject "Buddhism between South Asia and Tibet – Negotiating Religious Boundaries in Doctrine and Practice" of the interdisciplinary research group "Negotiating Religion From a Transcultural Perspective" at the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context," University of Heidelberg.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110413083-008

8.1 The Ethnic Revival of Nepal and the Quest for Hyolmo Identity

When asking "Who are the Hyolmo?" one is likely to receive quite a wide range of answers, replies and efforts at definition. Some among them are more refined than others; some are confusing or even unclear; but all of them have something in common: a stress on some key-concepts (or conceptual markers), pointing directly to a geographical or a cultural matrix, or more likely, to a combination of the two. As an example, some of the most common answers received during my fieldwork identified the Hyolmo as the people originally coming from Helambu valley (since now several of them are residing in Kathmandu valley) or, more accurately, the Buddhist people of the upper Helambu (since on the lower slopes there are also Hindu settlements). Even more specific were the answers linking the people with the place of *Yolmo gangra* (*yol mo gangs ra*) or with the descendants and the legacy, of Shakya Zangpo and other famous Buddhist masters of the past.

These and other similar answers reflect a certain degree of discussion, research, study, and self-reflection. They include personal perceptions and social constructions, leading to enunciations in which individual and collective efforts at definition merge into articulated statements about identity, culture, location, language, religion, and position. A whole constellation of very slippery terms seems to constitute what people say about themselves, about their "essential" social being, their innermost "identity." This process, affecting not only the Hyolmo, has been sparked by recent events that have been characterizing the contemporary political history of Nepal for at least two decades, sending shockwaves through the rich and variegated social landscape of the Himalayan state. The Hyolmo were and still are, like many other communities, groups, and cultures, compelled to a renewed and sustained effort to assert their identity and distinctiveness *vis-à-vis* the Nepali state and the other communities of the Nepalese civil society.

After two people's mass-movements (Nep. *jana āndolan*), a protracted Maoist insurgency, widespread political violence, repression, and the collapse of the Hindu monarchy, Nepal is now a republic, but still in a very uncertain, unpredictable, and unstable phase. The constitution-writing process, just completed and yet still far from its initial objectives, was hindered by power struggles between major and minor political actors and hotly debated issues which allow no easy solution to the current political stalemate. One of the most difficult issues to address is the one related to the transformation of Nepal into a federal state: a federalism that is intended to be shaped along ethnic (fault)

lines. In this peculiar situation, every community is asking for proper representation in the parliament and in the public life, asking for a fair share of political and social power, which has been retained by Hindu upper castes (N. Bahun, Thakuri and Chhetri) that for so long have been strategically allied to the central and centralizing powers of the monarchy. For the very same reason, the whole ethnic revival is serving more or less vested political interests, and new political elites are emerging.

The ethnic revival of the Nepalese minorities is continuously displayed all over the country in a colorful blossoming of local festivals, performances of "traditional" songs and dances, and a rich production of literature, news services, and new media broadcasting in vernacular languages. In many cases, religion is also at the forefront of this revival; the fall of the monarchy was, after all, the fall of Hinduism as a state-religion, and it was greeted by many as the end of the "forced" *sanskritization* (Srinivas 1952) process, which was seen as inherent and intrinsic to the royal court "civilizational" process. Steadily, the Nepalese Hindu monarchy was incorporating all the non-Hindu groups into a caste/group hierarchy, finally codified in the *Muluki Ain* of the 1854 (see Höfer 1979): a social taxonomy, obviously oriented along Hindu lines of social organization, which was intended to provide the authorities with an ideal model of societal organization and thus making social positions immediately readable through the creation of five main groups (Pradhan 2011, 104):

1. *tāgādhārī* (Wearers of the Holy Thread): upper high castes.
2. *namāsinyā matwāli* (Non-enslavable Alcohol Drinkers): "Gurkha" groups (Magar, Gurung, etc., the so-called "martial tribes").
3. *māsinyā matwāli* (Enslavable Alcohol Drinkers): Tamang, Chepang, Kumal, Sherpa, Thakali, Tharu, Gharti, etc.
4. *pāni nacalnyā choi chiṭo hālnu naparnyā* (Impure but touchable): lower occupational castes, Muslims, and Europeans.
5. *pāni nacalnyā choi chiṭo hālnu parnyā*: untouchables.

Most of the Buddhist groups inhabiting the High Himalayas were grouped into the category of *enslavable alcohol drinkers*, as the main criteria for the creation of the macro-groups were the Hindu notions of purity and pollution. A detailed analysis of this topic would surely lead us astray, and it is beyond the purposes and aims of this chapter. Nonetheless, it will be necessary to keep it in mind while addressing the more specific issue of the Hyolmo identity and the role Buddhism has in it. Dynamics affecting the Hyolmo community, in fact, are just a single part of a much more complex pattern affecting the Nepalese society as a whole. The issue of ethnic identity was already one of the key-points in Maoist discourses (Eck 2010, 45) too during the civil war. The Maoist leadership

used it widely, and quite successfully, to mobilize large sectors of the society against the state under its flags; "the right of self-determination" was to become the norm of the "New Nepal" under construction. Moreover, the regional fronts of the guerrilla warfare were also ethnically configured in at least certain cases, like the *Tharuwan Mukti Morcha*, the *Limbuwan Mukti Morcha*, and so on, not to mention the organic link between the insurgency and the Magar of the Rolpa and Rukum areas, where the armed struggle actually started.[2]

In some ways, a discourse about ethnicity also predated the actual start of the civil war; in the late Eighties, it was already one of the key-words of the first People's Movement which brought the *panchayat* system to an end in 1990.[3] The relevance of the ethnicity issue is hard to overestimate; the idea of a new, republican, secular, federal state where all the social groups of Nepal have equal access to resources seems to rest on the very idea of a multi-cultural state in which all the different cultures are equally valued and represented. Paradoxically, the very same issue of ethnicity is today also one of the most dangerous features of Nepalese politics; the whole issue of federalism may prove too difficult to handle, and centrifugal movements could tear the social fabric apart. The years immediately following the civil war were in fact characterized by a very volatile political landscape, and insurrectional factions calling for a *de facto* secession of the Tarai plains from the rest of the country posed a very serious threat to the peace process, causing at the same time episodes of gory communal violence. To enforce or to pursue a project of ethnic federalism could open the way to *balkanization* and a grim future of disturbing conflicts.[4]

The current trends of ethnic fragmentation of the social and geographical landscape of Nepal are mirroring the political project of de-sanskritization of the State; the new Nepal, according to the common perception, should become a place of diversity. It should display all of the diversity, and differences, that the Hindu Monarchy tried for so long to subsume into a national identity centered on the "divine right" to rule of the king. Dominance of the high Hindu castes is equally rejected, and ethnic revival emphasizes antagonistic relations in terms of religions, languages and customs.

Why, some scholars query, do the people inhabiting the upper fringe of Nepal not participate collectively in this process under a single denomination? Hindu people from the south, for example, have been able to overcome,

2 Hutt (2004); Lawoti and Pahari (2010); Lecomte-Tilouine (2013).

3 Raeper and Hoftun (1992).

4 For a general discussion on the ethnic revival and inherent risks of conflicts, see Gellner, Pfaff-Czarnecka, and Whelpton (2008); Lawoti and Hangen (2013); Gellner, Hausner and Letizia (2016).

to a certain extent, their differences and to project themselves in a very effective way in the political sphere under a single denomination (*madhesi*), and a unique party (*Madhesi Janadhikari Forum*). In terms of political activism, this seems more effective than extreme particularism, and in doing so, Madhesi have been able to successfully confront the hegemony of the high castes of the Hill region, although their approach was challenged, in the South, by Tharu and Dalit activism. In the upper part of Nepal, we also find several societies that share a common heritage: a historical link with the Tibetan plateau, spoken languages directly derived from Tibetan or even dialects of it, religious affiliation to Tibetan Buddhism, and so forth. These people from the mountains, who from an external viewpoint appear so clearly to share a common matrix, seem to fail to recognize it, pursuing specific identities by paying more attention to the differences between themselves than to their similarities. Variously defined by Tibetologists as "ethnic Tibetans," "Tibetanids," and the like, these groups seem to lack a common perception of their homogeneity. This homogeneity is reflected in the collective appellation, *Bhotiya* or *Bhotia*, given to them sometimes by other Nepalese citizens. However, even this external and collective appellation is problematic, its semantic boundaries being often blurred and vague, and the groups (e.g. Sherpa, Thakali, Tamang, Gurung, etc.) referred to by this term often do not feel represented by it.

Ramble tries to answer the question in these terms:

> It was suggested above that the single most important component of national identity in Tibet was, and still is, Buddhism, but that the unity provided by the sense of a common religion was opposed to close attachment to a limited territory that found expression in cults of local gods. I believe that it is in the terms of the cult of gods of place that the identity of Nepal's Tibetanid enclaves in modern times is best understood. The people of these regions are certainly Buddhist (or Bonpo) at least in name, but the influence of these religions has generally not been strong enough that it could shift people's primary allegiance away from an identity determined by locality to one based on more abstract religious ideals. (Ramble 1997, 398)

In the end, this point seems to be one of the most relevant in order to analyze the contextual, essentially local, nature of the several and diverse Buddhist cultures of the Himalaya. Buddhism and local cults were, in fact, constantly woven into each other; while the *dharma* adapted to local conditions, slowly encroaching upon the terrain and often following the individual efforts, travels, and experiences of specific masters, vernacular influences were also shaping in reverse the contextualization of Buddhist ideas. The result appears often as the product of such a tension. That seems to be true at least for the Hyolmo of Nepal, whose history could well serve the purpose to highlight patterns of

adaptation in a Himalayan valley. It is certainly true that *place* has a central role in identity-definition processes and the Hyolmo, as we will see, are not an exception to this. At the same time, this is true for every other group inhabiting in Nepal; identities are primarily local. In addition, to promote an idea of a greater identity, up to a real nationalism, you need a state, or at least the project of a state. In this sense, identity is not only a process, but also a project.

Shneiderman (2006), moreover, has poignantly remarked that Tibetologists have overlooked the whole concept of ethnicity, and this has led to simplistic assumptions about issues of identities of the many groups located on the southern fringes of the *Tibetosphere*:

> In the anthropology of Nepal, it is accepted without question that in most cases the primary marker of social difference is in fact ethnic identification. The terminological absence of "ethnicity" as a key-category of analysis in Tibetan Studies stand out by contrast. Although the terms "ethnic Tibetan," "ethnically Tibetan" and "Tibetan ethnicity" are used frequently in Tibetan Studies, there is very little discussion of what these terms actually signify, or of ethnicity as a relational system. Religious and regional differentiation is written about, but little attention is paid to the question of ethnic identity *within* the overarching category "Tibetan." (Shneiderman 2006, 12)

Nepalese ethnicities, whatever their origin, must be understood and explained mainly in the wider frame of the Nepalese society. Ethnic names, in fact, were and are to be understood as intrinsically relational "labels" to negotiate social position vis-à-vis the state and other groups, in a process which is at the same time vertical (i.e. ethnicities produced/recognized by the state) and horizontal (ethnicities produced/recognized by interaction between neighboring groups), and subject to change over time.[5] It is far more productive to try to see these groups as local societies defined by the continuous negotiation of spaces of economic, cultural, linguistic, and religious exchange with other local societies (de Sales 1991, 23). Historically, as it has been amply demonstrated (Levine 1987; de Sales 1993), identity is subject to changes and shifts resulting from adaptation to social conditions.[6]

Those who identify themselves today as Hyolmo constitute a sparse community of people linked to specific places of Nepalese geography, foremost among these, the Valley of Helambu/Hyolmo. Helambu valley lies North of Kathmandu Valley, below the Langtang Range, which separates it from the Kyirong area of Tibet (China). Their main religious affiliation is *Nyingmapa*

5 Lawoti and Hangen differentiate, in the Nepalese context, between "state-centric" and "people-centric" nationalism (2013, 7).

6 See, for example, Levine (1987); de Sales (1993).

(*rnying ma pa*) Buddhism. Among the Hyolmo, Buddhism was mainly a non-monastic tradition, based on village-temples and family lineages, in which the duties of the non-celibate householders and religious specialists (the lamas) were transmitted and inherited generation after generation from father to son. Hyolmo society appears to have been shaped by the diffusion of Buddhism in the region since ancient times, with the main settlements in the area apparently following the distribution and the progressive and expanding influence of the Lama families across the territory. Lama lineages, *lama riba* (*bla ma rigs pa*), were traditionally associated with *jangter* (*byang gter*) and *nyingthik* (*snying thig*) traditions, but nowadays members of the younger generations – often from non-lama lineages (Hyol. *mangba riba*) as well – seeking religious education also join the monastic orders of other schools.

In the social landscape of Nepal, *Hyolmo* as a distinct category seems to be a rather late addition; until the 1990s, in fact, they were known to outsiders as Helambu Sherpa, and they were using this ethnonym as part of their known given name.[7] The category of *Helambu Sherpa* too was not around for a very long time; its use can be dated back to the beginning of the 1960's, since previously they were simply known, at least in ethnographic literature, as Lama people of Helambu.[8] It seems that the adoption of the term "Helambu Sherpa" was a conscious effort at defining themselves as closely connected to the Solu-Khumbu Sherpa, well-known for their role in guiding trekkers to the Everest region. The previous designation, "Lama People," was also an act of defining themselves in contrast to other groups inhabiting the lower parts of Helambu. In both cases, the ethnonym was a status marker pointing directly to a web of social relations with other groups: an essentially relational definition to position themselves in the social fabric of Nepal, confirming once more, that identity too is a process – against all essentialist views – and a social construction, shaped by internal and external forces, as already mentioned before. Whatever their name in the past, people inhabiting the Helambu valley understand that their ancestors were somehow related to Buddhist priests migrating from Tibet via Kyirong (*skyid grong*) and establishing religious buildings on land granted by Newari and Gorkha kings (as attested by royal documents about the *guṭhī* land grants). These Buddhist temples and shrines became foci of social activities, and several of them became villages (Hyol. *ghyang*). The "colonization" of Helambu probably proceeded through diffusion of the descendants of the

7 In ethnographic literature, we find multiple names used for the Helambu people: Helambu Lamas, Helambu Sherpa, Yolmo Sherpa, and similar expressions. See, for example, Goldstein (1975); Bishop (1989, 1993).

8 See Clarke (1980c).

Lamas families. As Robert Desjarlais wrote, "much less certain is how many others also migrated from Kyirong regions and, relatedly, to what degree the relocated Lama families formed marriage alliances with families already living in the Yolmo region" (Desjarlais, 2003: 7). For the purpose of the present paper, we will deal with the Hyolmo as a distinct social group, with well-defined social boundaries, but we should never forget that identities may not have the same degree of coherence and homogeneity that we would like them to have, and boundaries may have been more blurred that we may think.

After the first people's movement, the *jana āndolan* of 1990, the civil war (1994–2006), and the second *jana āndolan* of 2006, Nepalese society as a whole has been exposed to multiple forces, and the result is a polyphony of voices (a cacophony, according to some) each one reclaiming space, power, legitimization; the collapse of the Hindu Kingdom has awakened religious and ethnic revivals, with the creation of political (or highly politicized) spaces for discussion, negotiation and conflicts. The kaleidoscopic effect is a Nepal that is multifaceted as never before. In this context, as I said, the Hyolmo currently engage with other people and communities, trying to find their place, to assert their specific identity, and to gain visibility in the wider context of Nepalese society; it is a process of constant negotiation, which entails a huge effort to define themselves in order to be recognized by other groups.

8.2 Of Travelling Masters and Other Wonders: From Padmasambhava and Milarepa in Hyolmo to Modern Settlements

This process of identification and self-definition entails the production of a "shared memory" of sorts. In this respect, the figure of the Buddhist master, Ngagchang Shakya Zangpo (*sngags 'chang shā kya bzang po*), acquires a role of the utmost importance. He is, in fact, tied to events of an ancient and glorious past, directly relating to the first dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet, as well as to later events that provide the background for the creation of a Buddhist community in the Helambu valley of Nepal. Helambu itself – or y*ol mo* as it is known in Tibetan sources – plays quite a central role too.

The early history of settlements in Helambu is shrouded in the mists of hagiographic stories and tales related to the spiritual adventures of Padmasambhava, who appears as the protagonist in many stories and whose presence and activities in the area are identified with a set of particular places. Geomorphic formations, which still testify to the villager, the wandering pilgrim, and the faithful devotee

the miraculous feats of the great tantric master, are abundantly represented here. Footprints, stone artefacts, carvings and outstanding rock formations form a web of power-places scattered all around the slopes and ridges, inscribing the saint activities related to the *praeparatio* of the land for the sheltering of the *dharma* in times of danger and distress. Specific caves and clearings are associated with his resting, fighting, and meditation places, often overlooking the valley with its gorges, enshrined by the high cliffs and ridges of a crown of rocky and snowy peaks. In certain villages, Padmasambhava has a place also in narratives that constitute an integral part of the local shamanic lore and that are employed during rituals, testifying to the enduring impact that his figure has had in shaping the spiritual landscape of the Hyolmo. In these narratives, the master is often referred to only elliptically in Hyolmo as *gyagar pandit* (Tib. *rgya gar gyi paṇḍi ta*), the Indian teacher, but also appears in many others tales as a local character, tied to the local shamans by a common, if fictive, kinship. Although there are no historical traces of the presence of Padmasambhava in the region apart from those attributed to him by folklore stories, if we accept that he was travelling to Samye (*Bsam yas*) through Kyirong, it is not impossible that he also sojourned in Helambu. The valley is, in fact, located just beside the main route linking Kathmandu valley to Tibet. Here, as in other places, narratives about Padmasambhava describe his activities as being concerned primarily with the domestication and taming of the landscape. The enigmatic Padmasambhava appears to be the exorcist and tamer *par excellence* in the pivotal events leading to the first dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet in the many narratives related to the taming of *lu* (*klu*) residing in lakes and controlling the waters (Dalton 2004), or in what is considered one of his most remarkable feats, the domestication of the riotous indigenous deities of Tibet hindering the construction of the first monastery at Samye (Dalton 2011, 66).

Another figure in the valley has a particular role in the religious history of the region and of Buddhism in particular; Milarepa seems to have been active in the area, according to some writings (especially in "the song of a yogi's joy") and oral lore.[9] His meditation cave, Tagphug Senge Dzong (*Stag phug seng ge rdzong*), the "tiger cave lion fortress," dominates a steep passage in a particularly narrow point of the valley where the slopes become more similar to a vertical jungle and end in a rocky gorge, whitened by the tumultuous waters of the Melemchi Khola. As Quintman poignantly remembers:

9 However, Quintman (2014) deconstructs these sources and points to Tsangnyön Heruka as an active and creative agent in the process of geographical identification of relevant places appearing in Milarepa's biographies. Milarepa's Yolmo could therefore be the result of literary conflation of disparate materials culminating in the creation of a new sacred place.

> Few Tibetan figures have left an impression on the Himalayan landscape, both literary and geographic, as indelibly as Mi la ras pa (ca. 1028–1111), whose career as meditator and poet was punctuated by travel among mountain retreats across the borderlands of southern Tibet. Stories of his converting disciples, taming wild places, and subjugating local spirits carved out a terrain fertile for the spread of dharma, thereby defining the contours of a Buddhist topography on both sides of the Himalayan range. (Quintman 2008, 363–364)

These activities equate to *landscaping*, the process of "production and formulation of sacred space through a variety of means" (Quintman 2008, 370); textual and narrative traditions, in these cases, became active forces and effective means in defining perceptions and beliefs related to the environment. Narratives also accumulate like sediments upon each other. Instructed by his teacher Marpa, Milarepa seems to be bound to retrace the footsteps of Padmasambhava:

> Likewise, for the local lord (*gnas bdag*) of Yol mo, the local protector (*gnas srung*) of Dpal 'bar, the *lha btsan* deities of Gangs Ti se, and so forth: the Mahācārya [Padmasambhava] bound them under oath. Then later on, they once again restored their oaths and vows of *bodhicitta* before Rje btsun [Mi la ras pa] himself, and having done so they were ordered to support the practice lineage. (Quintman 2008, 397)

These *sequential subjugations* seem to constitute a precondition of sorts for the creation of settlements at a later time (Childs 2012, 22), and became the ideal model for later rituals related to the land cleansing, blessing, and transformation (Schrempf 1994; Cantwell 2005; Gardner 2006). As a result, landscape is imbued with sacred meanings and values, recursively incorporated into textual sources, which are then inscribed or recognized in the physical geography through a system of symbolic signs that arose preternaturally. Many other caves and places in the valley are associated with other entities, like *ḍākinī* (Tib. *khandro ma / mkha' 'gro ma*), *nāga* (Tib. *lu / klu*) and even with King Gesar of Ling, a renowned epic hero in Tibetan literature.

When moving from religious narratives to other kind of sources, we find textual evidence produced by the state authorities of Kathmandu Valley referring to temples and villages of the Helambu valley. While this could be taken into account as a solid basis for a chronology, we must keep in mind that it could also demonstrate an *a posteriori* acknowledgement of the existence of settlements following the establishment of religious institutions. The real chronological data of at least some of these first settlements remains shrouded in a consistent haze of uncertainty and in the domain of oral local lore, where genealogical accuracy has been paired with an equally relevant genealogical creativity and selective amnesia. According to the pioneer studies of Clarke in the area, the oldest lama villages were founded by religious specialists and became religious foci, slowly emerging as village-temples belonging to this or that

lineage through intermarriage with people already settled in or around the area. Regarding these people, much less is known. Expansion of the lama lineages then proceeded in several ways, mainly through fission (of the two sons of lama X, one inherited the role of the father at village X, while the other moved to another location and started the construction of a new shrine there), and apparently moving from North to South, and then Eastwards (see Clarke 1980a). This pattern of diffusion seems to start from the early sixteenth century, but further studies will have to clarify the exact nature of the spread of settlements tied to Buddhist lineages and religious establishments and settlements already existing in the area.

Apart from the local geography with all its religious and sacred connotations, the organic link with Tibetan Buddhism, which connected the Hyolmo with a web of power places that were located well beyond the boundaries of Helambu valley, is partially understandable as a result of migration and settling: a migration and settling process that has not yet ended, protracted over different time phases and spreading towards different directions. In the most recent years, in fact, the community has been affected by a new migration trend leading many people to desert Helambu in order to resettle in the outskirts of the Kathmandu Valley and particularly in the suburbs surrounding the Bodhnath *stūpa* area, like Chabahil, Jorpati and Tinchuli.[10] At the same time, a consistent part of the Hyolmo youth is involved in an even larger diaspora towards Gulf Countries, South-East and East Asia, Europe, and North America, mainly for the purpose of seeking jobs. As noted by Childs:

> The punctuated equilibrium model of migration, characterized by long periods of stability interrupted by brief periods of mobility, glosses over a fundamental, well-documented feature of human movements: although migrations can start as singular events, they typically evolve into protracted processes. (Childs 2012, 11)

The story of Hyolmo movements in the distant past can be diachronically mapped, to some extent, according to their "traditional" narratives (especially to the one related to Shakya Zangpo) so as to include some Tibetan places (Samye, Kyirong) and Bodhnath (Kathmandu valley) into an ideal map which could provide us with relevant insights about their history and identity. The

10 The disaster which struck Nepal in April 2015 massively affected the Sindhupalchok district; at least half of the known casualties were from this area and the seismic events severely damaged all the existing infrastructures, including road system, schools, health-check posts and the like. In the following months, the migration towards Kathmandu valley greatly increased, leaving many areas almost depopulated.

relationship between the Hyolmo and the places they inhabit – the places they recognize as playing a role in their history – can certainly be defined as a "dynamic relationship"; it is, after all, a history made up of movements, both collective and individual, and self-reflecting activities on the role and importance of places in the past and for the future, through the present.

The story of the Hyolmo, as they formulate and understand it, is related to the travel of a renowned tantric master between two centers of power, Samye (Tibet) and the Kathmandu Valley, followed by a stop in a peripheral position (Helambu/Hyolmo). It is very interesting that, by being located in a middle position between two sacred centers, Helambu can be conceived of as a "double periphery"; the center of the ideal Hyolmo map is, in this case, peripheral to both the extremes. The definition of Helambu as a waystation on an ideal pilgrimage may appear paradoxical because it is exactly Helambu (or Hyolmo) with which most of the Hyolmo identify themselves, or which they identify as their ancestral and sacred land. This seeming-paradox can be explained by acknowledging that, despite being centered to that region, the Hyolmo narratives also express a continuous tension between the two poles – Samye as the origin place of their cultural hero, Ngagchang Shakya Zangpo, and Bodhnath, the place he was bound to renovate. Both places are firmly inscribed in the Buddhist sacred geography, and quite noteworthy is the fact that events related by the narrative framework we are taking into consideration are essentially tying Shakya Zangpo with powerful conceptual centers: the Tibetan kingdom of old, on the one hand, and one of the most important Buddhist holy places of modern and contemporary Nepal, on the other. As already noted by Clarke, the elaboration and the resulting fabric of Hyolmo social life is highly influenced by its location between Kathmandu and Tibet, by its geographical proximity to major trade and pilgrimage routes, and by its exposure to Buddhist literary tradition and to the power of the Nepalese state (Clarke 1980a, 320). To understand fully the ideas concerning Hyolmo culture and identity, one has to keep in mind these forces shaping it and making it unique. The relevance of the local dimension, so pivotal in the identity creation process, is determined by its external connections and shaped by them.

Shakya Zangpo was not the only one travelling in and out of the boundaries of Helambu; the land enclosure was blessed before, as we have seen, by Padmasambhava and Milarepa, as in a recursive process of confirmation and renovation of its "sacred" nature. And the process is not obviously limited to the remote past; the other lama lineages, too, have stories of travelling and of exceptional, wondrous, or miraculous circumstances, as we will see, for example, in the case of Lama Rigdzin Nyima Senge (*rig 'dzin nyi ma seng ge*) (1687–1738), of the Tennyi Lingpa (*bstan gnyis gling pa*) lineage.

The whole process has not ended; as the majority of the community shifted to the Kathmandu Valley, Helambu remained in the background and became firmly inscribed into their memories as a socio-religious focus, constantly referred to even in the urban environment. Its pilgrimage sites are nowadays advertised not only locally, but also tied to the general Buddhist revival attracting Nepalese and foreign visitors who travel along the ancient routes and sometimes even settle there.

This trend was partially brought to a grinding halt by the April 2015 earthquake, which severely affected the area. As in other parts of Sindhupalchok district, the Hyolmo villages were almost completely razed by the seismic events and the ensuing landslides; houses, shrines, roads, and schools were wiped away, together with the lives of many villagers. The reconstruction work proceeds at a very slow pace, and in the meantime, many settlements have witnessed a marked movement of villagers towards the Kathmandu Valley, which, despite also being affected by the earthquake and engulfed by refugees, still enables better access to services like schools and hospitals.

8.3 A Sacred and Secret Land

The notion of a sacred space of sorts, and the links between a community and the space they inhabit, has a pivotal role in many discourses about identity and ethnicity. In the case of the Hyolmo, the wondrous nature of Helambu Valley is related to the intrinsic powers inhabiting the landscape combined with its true essence according to the Buddhist worldview. The valley is in fact a *beyul,* one of the blessed "hidden lands," prepared as places of shelter and fortresses of the *dharma* in times of decadence, danger, and menace.[11] As pointed out by Aris, "the earthly paradises awaiting the faithful in these valleys are described in terms which sublimate the real Himalayan landscape. Their identification as 'hidden lands' was accepted just as much by the groups living in their close vicinity as by the Tibetans who were mainly responsible for developing their cult" (Aris 1990, 97). In this way, local perceptions, ideas, and beliefs about the landscape were blended into a larger framework that transcends local boundaries and dimensions.

The ideas related to a *beyul* could be generally referred to an attitude toward the environment which incorporates diverse influences:

11 On the "hidden lands," see Ehrhard (1994, 2013d); Diemberger (1997); Childs (1999).

> that environment incorporated both "pre-Buddhist" and "Buddhist" elements, There were mountains that were the homes of mountain gods, streams, and rivers where the *lu*-spirits dwelt, caves where holy lamas had meditated, marks that had been left in rocks by Guru Rimpoch'e or King Gesar, lakes whose patron spirits could aid lamas to divine karmic currents or *tendrel*, hidden valleys that had been opened by seers of the past as retreat-places for spiritual practice or escape from political turmoil. (Samuel 1993, 158)

It must be noted, at this point, that a general attitude toward landscape and environment as "animated" and inhabited by a host of non-human agents seems to be shared among several cultures of the Tibetan plateau and the Himalayan range (Torri 2015). The introduction of Buddhism does not heavily alter this conceptual framework, but rather it creates a new paradigm which incorporates, and hierarchically orders, all the various elements and entities according to an overarching Buddhist cosmological narrative. Mumford (1989) explains this process using the Bakthinian ideas of an essentially *dialogic framework*, in which different layers of meaning coexist simultaneously and interpenetrate, giving rise to a synthetic third one that encompasses both.

The resulting hierarchical order seems to derive, firstly, from a common religious capital rearranged according to a different economy of the sacred; local *numina* became part of the Buddhist conception of the *saṃsāra* and were thus subjected to conditioned processes. Secondly, this rearrangement was conceptually intended as a vertical opposition (Skt. *laukika*, "mundane," as obviously inferior to *lokottara* "supramundane") and a horizontal marginalization and subordination (from the center to the periphery according to an ideal *maṇḍala*) (Ruegg 2008).[12] This systematic hierarchization, which entails even an *englobement du contraire* (Dumont 1980: 239), appears to have been a very successful strategy for the incorporation and cooptation of diverse indigenous elements, providing a legitimate space for local numinous entities, from mountain gods to riverine spirits, ancestral deities, and the like (Dollfus 2003; Pommaret 2003; Steinmann 2003). In other words, it created a proper space for the negotiation of specific elements to be rearranged, reoriented, and assigned new values across trans-cultural and trans-religious boundaries.

It should be worth mentioning also that Buddhism, despite being the main feature of Hyolmo religious culture and, as such, also the cornerstone of their identity perception, is not the only significant feature. As in many other Himalayan societies, they have a *substratum* of a pre-Buddhist – or better, non-Buddhist – religiosity or spiritual practice. This earlier religiosity has several points of contact with local forms known elsewhere by different names, which can still conveniently

12 See also Samuels' contribution to this volume.

be defined as shamanism. The religious specialists of this older tradition are locally known as *pombo* or *bombo*, a term obviously related to the Tibetan *bon*.[13] The *bombo*'s main areas of activity are limited today to divination, fortune-telling, healing rituals, and seasonal offering to the clan-deities, but it cannot be excluded that, in the past, they were called to perform a wider number of rituals. A relevant part of the local folklore, in fact, is devoted to the stories of conflicts between *lama*s (often identified directly with Padmasambhava or Milarepa) and *bombos* who follow the old customs. Particular attention is given, in those stories, to the right to perform funeral rites, which, in one way or the other, the shaman is at some point always forced to relinquish. Even today, Hyolmo *bombo*, despite claiming formal adherence to Buddhism, still nurture an ambivalent and ambiguous stance towards it, keeping to their tradition, and transmitting their oral lore along continuing spiritual lineages. Mainly, they are to be found among the members of the *mangba riba*, the Hyolmo expression indicating non-lama families of Helambu. They retain also some special connections with specific power places, (e.g. the Gosainkund Lake) scattered across the valley and peaks of Helambu, and they have their own pilgrimage routes.

The Buddhist appropriation of the sacralized landscape – and not only in Helambu – seems to be encrypted in a series of narratives related to the "taming" of the land and its other-than-human agents (local deities and demons) or their vanquishing and defeat as performed by well-known characters such as Padmasambhava and Milarepa. In many cases, the diffusion of Buddhism as it appears in those narratives, is not the peaceful conversion of people upon hearing the Buddha's story, but the actual spiritual conquest of the physical terrain through exorcism and the taming and subduing of its other-than-human agents (see Huber 1999; Ramble 1999; Dalton 2004 and 2011). In the case of the *beyul*, then, once it has been properly prepared, the landscape becomes endowed with particular qualities:

> Foremost is the palpable and visible presence of the body or teachings of Padmasambhava, the landscape being impregnated with his body marks, and relics, representing the master being widely on display. After the signs are recognized or the holy objects installed by a person with the necessary traits the place comes to possess a new spiritual quality, often visualized as a maṇḍala with four entry points. The geographical dimensions of the place can vary to great extent, as already mentioned, and it can offer refuge to the followers of Padmasambhava in troublesome times. Having once been opened, it normally becomes the destination of pilgrims, who circumambulate either the place as a whole or the different objects in it, thereby coming into direct contact with the holy artifacts. (Ehrhard, 2013c, 224–225)

13 On the issue of Bön and shamanism see Bjerken (2004); Samuel (2013).

The Hyolmo, and especially the oldest lama lineages, consider themselves the keepers and custodians of the holy places variously known in prophetic texts, guide books (Tib. *lam yig*), or inventory texts as *Yolmo gangra* ("screened by snowy peaks") or *padma'i tshal* ("the lotus grove"). To them, this is a blessed land, "an idealized and spiritualized landscape – the sky is like a *bhavacakra* with eight spokes, the earth like an eight petalled lotus" (Ehrhard 2013b, 123).

A manuscript fragment collected by Clarke in Helambu recites as follows:

> I will tell you of the marks of distinction of the place we are living, Yolmo. Marpa, the disciple of Naropa of India, said to Mila Repa: "If you want to go to the land of Tibet, then you should go by the Nepal valley, and you must go to Grang-ra (t: gangs-ra) at Yolmo, and Ribo Pomba (t: ri-bo dpal-'bar) at Mangyul (Kyirong)." These two places were foretold in the Buddha's prophecies, and are two of the twenty-four holy places of the Tantras. They were foretold as Godavari (t: do-da'lba.ri) by the Pandit Gyandah Zu (t:nydza-ngha dza) as the most sacred of these twenty-four holy places. Padmasambhava of Udhiyana and Mila Repa, and Dorje Thudup's (t: mthu-stobs) master, rechung Dorje Dragpa (t: grat-pa) and the Tertön dangso (t: grang-so), they all walked around Helambu and blessed it. Because of that, this land is different. (Clarke 1980a:350)

Contents of these prophetic guide-texts to the hidden land (variously titled *yol mo gangs kyi ra ba'i lung byang snying gi, sbas pad ma tshal gyi lam yig, yol mo gangs kyi ra ba'i gnas yig*, etc.[14]) give some indications as to where to locate the hidden valley, containing descriptions of its geography and its precise location according to Buddhist topographical terms. It is said, for example, to be North of *Vajrāsana*, Northeast of Li (here intended as Kathmandu Valley), at the foot of Mangyul, at the throat of Buddha's devotee, at the western side of the mountain chief of the twelve territorial goddesses or two *yojana* to the east of Riwo Pelbar (*ri bo dpal'bar*) Mountain, South of the snow mountain resembling a victory banner, West of the *yaksi* snow queen, and so forth. They describe the valley as shaped like a lotus, eight-petaled, and rich in treasures and relics like a platter filled with jewels and precious stones, where the crops are rich and harvests abundant, where medicinal springs and streams flow incessantly. This is the land that was blessed and pacified by Padmasambhava for the sake of the *dharma*, disseminated with relics, guarded by vigilant spirits and deities, not to be defiled, contaminated or polluted. And it will be opened, it is said, at the right time by the right person (Dondrup 2010).

14 See *Collected Biographies and Prophecies of the Byang Gter Tradition: Reproduced from MS. From the Library of Bla-ma Sengge of Yol-mo*, edited by Sherab Gyaltsen and Lama Dawa (1983).

8.4 Shakya Zangpo, A Cultural Hero

Generally speaking, the *beyul* are intrinsically related to the activities of a particular group of religious masters, the so-called *tertön* or treasure-discoverers. The valley of Helambu is tied in particular to two of them. The first is Rigzin Gödem Ngödrup Gyaltsen (1337–1408) (*rig'dzin rgod ldem dngos grub rgyal mtshan*), revealer of the *jangter* (*byang gter*) tradition, in which many of the prophecies related to Yolmo are contained, though it seems he never visited the place himself. The second is Ngagchang Shakya Zangpo, a follower of the *jangter* tradition, the renovator of Bodhnath and the discoverer and opener of the *Yolmo gangra*.

Who is Shakya Zangpo? Also known as *Yolmowa tulku* (*yol mo ba sprul sku*), *tertön* Shakya Zangpo is probably the single most important historical figure for the establishment of a modern religious and social community in Helambu, having immense prestige and still being referred to in relation to the primary features of Hyolmo culture in the contemporary ethnic revival. Not only, according to hagiographic narrations, did he open the secret doors of Yolmo *beyul*, thus starting the creation of a Buddhist community in Helambu, but he also found the abandoned and forgotten great *stūpa* of Bodhnath and renovated it.[15] While Clarke, after examining genealogical lists initially proposed that Shakya Zangpo lived at the end of the 17th century (Clarke 1980b), Ehrhard, after a careful analysis of various sources, sets the time of the life of Shakya Zangpo between the second half of the 15th century and the first half of the 16th (Ehrhard 2013b).

A biography of him collected by Clarke in Helambu recites as follows:

> The father was a monkey and the mother was a demon. At that time the monkey stayed in one place, and the demon came, played and laughed with him, then they copulated and had many children. The eldest was called Na-chang Shakya Zangpo, the middle children were called Nagas, and the two youngest children were called Tangtsen (t: *drang-btsan*, "bear-harmful earth-spirit") and Shangtsen (t: zhang-btsan, "maternal uncle-harmful earth-spirit"). Na-chang Shakya Zangpo was born in Tibet, the snow land, where he stayed in Samye, and with a wife from Samye he moved to Palkun (t: dpal-kun), and from Palkun to Zongkar and from Zongkar to Zer-nang (t: dzar-nang), and then from Zer-nang to Yolmo Grangra, where he made a peaceful tour, converting the harmful spirits to protectors of religion. From the top of Yolmo he came down to Tsiri (t: tsis-ri, but Churi, brtsu-ri) and then became powerful. The population increased and he moved down to palchok, where he made a peaceful tour and converted the harmful spirits to protectors of religion. He taught Padmasambhava's religion, and then moved northwards to Nyagi. He made the area of Manikharka (a flat area immediately below Nyagi strewn with large rocks) peaceful, and converted harmful spirits to protectors of religion. (Clarke 1980a, 350)

15 On the *stūpa* of Bodhnath, see Ehrhard (1990).

The wondrous nature of Shakya Zangpo is deliberately inspired by that of his archetypal model, the great master Padmasambhava. Shakya Zangpo is accorded a miraculous birth, a supernatural family, and a series of mystical adventures in order to pacify, exorcize, tame, and convert indigenous non-human entities inhabiting the country in order to transform them into *dharmapāla* (Tib. *chökyong* / *chos skyong*), the protectors of the Buddhist religion, or to confirm them in such a role, since we must suppose that Padmasambhava and Milarepa had engaged in similar activities, whose effects left supernatural marks in the landscape of Helambu. It is a well-known fact, after all, that such mundane entities are characterized by a flickering nature, and sometimes they need to be reminded to stay committed.

Shakya Zangpo's opening of the "outer, inner and secret" doors of the *beyul*, taming the local spirits, and building the first temple of the area, despite being so important for Helambu, were just the last of his feats, as mentioned in other sources. For example, another concise text adds some details:

> The man's *rigs* (here "family lineage") is given as Shākya bzang-po, and his *rus* (here "caste") as *drang srong* (Skt. *Brahmin*),[16] he being an emanation of Chos-blon Padma Gung-btsan. He is told to build a gompa in a land where the sky looks like the "wheel of worldly existence" (*srid-pa'i 'khor-lo*), and the land like the eight-petalled lotus. After receiving this prophecy, he comes by way of Ribu Pomba (Kyirong) to Kathmandu, where he repairs two *stūpa*s, and then he opens the "outer, inner and secret" doors of Yolmo Gangra. (Ehrhard 2013b, 122)

The two *stūpa*s mentioned in the texts are two of the most impressive Buddhist monuments of the Kathmandu Valley: Bodhnath and Svayambhunath. The aforementioned prophecy containing the story of the great *stūpa* of Bodhnath (or *Jarung khashor* [*Bya rung kha shor*] as it is called in Tibetan), which explains the circumstances of its construction, decline, and renovation, is very relevant to highlight the role of Shakya Zangpo, and his importance for the *dharma* in general and for the Hyolmo community in particular.

The text[17] reporting the legend of the great *stūpa* starts with a religious assembly at Samye, the first monastery built in Tibet. At the gathering we find the three most important characters of those eventful times in which Buddhism gained a foothold in the country: the king Trisong Detsen (*Khri srong lde btsan*),

16 In this regard, it should be noted that according to recent studies the term drang srong could be, possibly, just a corruption of the toponym Drang-so, indicating thus not the "caste" but a geographical location, the place of birth of Shakya Zangpo. See Ehrhard (2013b).

17 This resume of the story of the great *stūpa* is based on the translation made by Dowman (1973).

the abbot Śāntarakṣita, and the tantric master Padmasambhava. Gathered together with them is the first nucleus of newly ordained monks and the supporters of the new religion. Giving a teaching to the assembly, Padmasambhava relates the story of the great *stūpa*, a story, astonishingly, which involves the very same people gathered there and listening.

Avalokiteśvara, committed to liberating from suffering all the sentient beings of the six realms, once wept two teardrops just from looking at the lower worlds. These two tears became the two daughters of the god Indra, the heavenly king, and were named Pūrṇa and Apūrṇa. Having stolen some flowers, Apūrṇa was reborn in the human world as a punishment, and more precisely, in the land of Nepal. She became known as Shamvara (Skt. *Saṃvarī*; Tib. *demchok*) or Yadzima, (Tib. *bya rdzi ma*) a poultry-woman, and she bore different sons from different low-caste men: a stable hand, a swineherd, a dog keeper, and a poultry-man. At some point in her life, she decided to use her savings to build a *stūpa*. Shamvara died during the fourth year of construction, but her sons kept working and completed if after three more years. When it was finished, each of the sons prayed and expressed his wish to be reborn in the land of snows and to help propagate the *dharma* there. One would be reincarnated as a king protector of religion; another as an abbot to organize the *saṅgha*, a third as a tantric *yogin* to protect the religion established by his two older brothers, and the fourth as a wise and religious minister in the very same court, in order to coordinate them. In the very same way, also the servant and even the animals at the construction site were able to obtain related rebirth. In this way, the servant of the four sons was reborn as Padma Gungtsen (*gung btsan*), another minister of King Trisong Detsen.

After this, Padmasambhava continues the explanation by stating all the benefits awaiting those who offer prayers at the great *stūpa*, and finally, he foretells a dark age of danger, when religious duties are forgotten, demons are enraged, and everything falls into ruins, including the *stūpa*. On hearing this, one of the disciples, Padma Gungtsen, abbot of Gos, asks: "O great Guru! Let me reborn to restore the great stupa when it is in ruin during the decadence and the corruption of that dark age." Willing to help him, the King Trisong Detsen asks Padmasambhava to be reborn as a servant of Padma Gungtsen's reincarnation: "but – he asks – how will I recognize him?" "He will be born in the year of the Hog in the highland of the province of Tsang to a family of Tāntrikas adept in the arts of magical transformation, and he will be called Pella Zangpo" was the answer. The *terma*, supposedly written down in the sacred script of the *ḍākinī* by Yeshe Tsogyal, was recovered by Ngagchang Shakya Zangpo, who recovered it from its place of concealment at the monastery of Samye after receiving proper revelations through dreams.

The identification of the *tertön*, Shakya Zangpo, with one of the first disciples of Padmasambhava, and previously, with one of the people engaged in the construction of the Bodhnath *stūpa*, grants him a special charisma and establishes, once and forever, a powerful link between the two external extremes of the Hyolmo religious landscape: the Samye monastery in Tibet at the time of the first dissemination of Buddhism, and Bodhnath in the Kathmandu Valley. Through his past life, he was a disciple of Padmasambhava at Samye and a minister of King Trisong Detsen, thus actively participating in the first dissemination of the *dharma* in Tibet. This placed him spatially and temporarily at the real center of Tibetan religious and political power (a duality expressed perhaps by his double role of disciple and minister). Meanwhile, in his present life, he is the pilgrim from Samye, on his way to restore the wonderful monument in the Kathmandu valley known in Tibet as *mchod rten chen po bya rung kha shor* (the great *stūpa jarung khashor*).

Because of the prophecy contained in the *terma*, he left Tibet and moved to the Kathmandu Valley (another center of political power) where he excavated the great *stūpa*, hidden – so the story goes – by the jungle and covered with earth. It is the very same *stūpa* that he helped to build in a previous life. After his intervention, the place regained its importance as a sacred space. Although it has obviously a longer history (built in the fifth or sixth century), it is with the rediscovery and the unearthing of the buried edifice that the *stūpa* acquires relevance in Tibetan sources, and it became linked with the most important legendary and historical personalities of early Tibetan Buddhism (see for example, Ehrhard 1990, 7).

Other oral sources report that, after the renovation, Shakya Zangpo moved to the other side of the valley and participated in the renovation of Swayambhunath *stūpa* together with Tsangnyön (*gtsang smyon*) Heruka. When they met, they engaged in a display of magical powers. Tsangnyön Heruka made the clouds assemble over the places, and ordered them to thunder and hail. Seeing this, Shakya Zangpo, with the power of his *mantra*s and *mudrā*s, made the surrounding hills bend down to pay homage to him[18]; and so, it is said, it can be seen even today.

On his way back, Ngagchang Shakya Zangpo stopped near Kyirong, where he performed a spiritual retreat. At the end of the retreat he practiced divination and received instructions regarding the opening of the "hidden

18 The story of these magical contests was told to me by some of my informants, in Kathmandu, during the spring of 2008. According to Ehrhard (1991), it is a spurious tradition and the Shakya Zangpo involved in the renovation of the Swayambunath *stūpa* is not the Yolmo Tulku.

land." According to popular stories collected in the region, from the top of Mount Ama Yangri, he threw an antelope horn (*churi*) in the air and followed it when it started to fly. He followed it into the hidden valley and stopped only when, upon touching the ground, the horn developed roots and became a juniper tree. On that site, he founded the Churi Ghyang (temple-village of the Antelope Horn). In front of the juniper, a small replica of the Bodhnath *stūpa* can be seen. According to many villagers, he was followed by twenty-one people (from the different clans) at this stage, and they founded the first seven villages in the area.

As reported by Ehrhard, while in Kyirong, Shakya Zangpo met with another famous *tertön*, Rigdzin Chogden Gonpo (*rig 'dzin mchog ldan mgon po*) of Lhodrak:

> That treasure discoverer, [who is] an incarnation, having given to this master (i.e. sNgags-chang Śākya Bzang-po) many "introduction lists" (*kha byang*) of commonly known valleys, and one valley in particular, spoke to him: "Since now you possess the prophecies for opening and maintaining the 'gates of the hidden lands,' do that by all possible means." Uttering prayers for proper guidance and "truth-speaking" prayers [sNgags-chang Śākya Bzang-po] came into the hidden land Padma'i-tshal or Yol-mo gangs-ra, and founded the monastery Tsu-ti. (Ehrhard 2013d, 265)

The location of the first monastery (15th century) is close to a meditation cave considered to be Shakya Zangpo's retreat place, and nearby it is still possible to see the juniper tree which supposedly blossomed from the antelope horn and a small *stūpa* which resembles a miniature version of the one at Bodhnath. Inside the monastery, a wooden *phur ba* made from the wood of the wondrous juniper is kept as a relic.

In a later document, we find the Nepalese royal confirmation of the land grant to the temple founded by Shakya Zangpo:

> To Tembā Ghyān Jain Lāmā, to son of Nāmgā Ghyān Jain Lāmā, the descendant of Nājyāng Syāgpa Sāngpo, concerning Curi ghyāng and Duphopāko ghyāng. (The king says) I have recertified (the land title) that was given in the past, and the activities of the ghyāng as before. Namely the teaching of disciples, the carrying on of the activities of the gumbā, customs and all, by the carrying out of the daily and seasonal worshipping of Gorakhnāth, with due respect (to the laws of the land). By performing your own personal rituals, the counting of mani beads and meditating, in recognition of our sovereignity (*sic*), as in your previous instruction, (you are) to be the lord of the land. If any difficulties, large or small, occur, consult with the amāli of Listi, and act in accordance with his advice. Asaur, 1866, B.S.,[19] 4th day, waning lunar fortnight, Sunday (Clarke 1980a, 45)

19 The date corresponds to September/October 1809.

Among the lama lineages, the one claiming to originate from Shakya Zangpo is reputed to be one of higher status. Other lama lineages are to be found in the area, and their descendants also trace them to lama ancestors with the same kind of wondrous adventures. As an example, I will briefly report the origin story of the Tennyi Lingpa (*bstan gnyis gling pa*) lineage, the main lama lineage of the village of Tarkheghyang. This village was founded by lama Nyima Senge, from Kyirong.

A folk version of the story relates how the lama was called to the Kathmandu valley by a Newari king in order to stop an epidemic that was ravaging his capital and killing a large number of the population. With his powers, Nyima Senge stopped the epidemic and brought it under control. As a reward, the king gave him one hundred horses. On his way back to Kyirong, in Tibet, he had to stop when the horses refused to climb up the steep slopes of the Himalayan hills. Unable to proceed further with his reward, Nyima Lama complained to the king, who commuted the horses with the plot of land where they initially stopped. On that place, he founded a temple and then a village.

According to Clarke (1980a, 53), the epidemic in question could be the one recorded by Freyre during the year 1716 and lasting for five months, killing at least 20000 people. The historicity of these events seems to be confirmed by two copper plates which report land-grants to the village temples of Tarkeghyang, one of which recites as follows:

> Sri Sri Jagajjaya Malla grants to Lama Nima Sring Ronge of Kero the land known as Tarkya, bounded to all four directions by land of the Royal House, totalling 66 *ropani* and in addition the 5 *ropani* of the dried out river bed. This is in return for the peace and prosperity returned consequent on the rituals performed by the Lama to ward off the epidemic in the Country. The land should be neither deserted nor mortgaged. As long as descendants or disciples of the Lama are living there, they should be available for any service to the king. 843 N.S. Chaitra, 1st day, waning lunar fortnight.[20] Witness Sri sri Rajendra Malla deva. (See Clarke 1980a, 52.)

What is interesting and very relevant in these documents is the link, which is made evident and unequivocally explicit, between local temples and the various governments of Nepal in the forms of land grants given by the Newari and Gorkha Kings, demonstrating the incorporation of these Buddhist enclaves into the religious framework of the Hindu Monarchy. Very relevant, in this regard, is the statement related to the "daily and seasonal worshipping of Gorakhnāth," protector god of the Shah royal house; the religious activities of the Buddhist temple of Churi Ghyang were intended to contribute to the field of ritual

20 The date corresponds to March/April 1723.

activities for the benefit of the monarchy. This is probably the key for the interpretation of Hyolmo culture as a specifically local culture, where the influences deriving from Tibet and Nepal interfaced and merged into something peculiar to this area.

8.5 Conclusions

The valley of Helambu became a holy place, its nature transformed into something exceptional by the fact of its being a *beyul*, a "hidden valley," a place of refuge for religion in times of danger. As such, it is filled with relics from ancient times: shrines, sacred peaks, and religious focal points which make it, simultaneously, blessed and extremely auspicious to inhabit or to visit. Moreover, it is from this very particular religious essence that its importance for the creation of a local identity stems. In the case of the Hyolmo, the link between the people and the landscape depends on a specific definition of the inhabited and uninhabited spaces; this definition is grounded in religious perception, ideas, and beliefs about the landscape, conveyed through an equally specific set of narratives about the feats, travels, and practices of Buddhist masters from the past. It is from those actions that the place was sanctified, thus effectively becoming a power-center in itself and a real cornerstone in the process of identity making.

As we have seen, it is from the establishment of a network of shrines and temples managed by non-celibate lamas that the original settlements originated. And it is from the recognition of these settled lamas by the Kathmandu authorities that these settlements become more permanent, being allocated to the lama families together with the resources (namely, a plot of land and tenants) which are necessary to their maintenance and even expansion. At some point, the wandering lamas from Kyirong, due to recognition of Nepalese authorities, became something similar to a kind of landed gentry, receiving land grants as a reward, or in exchange for the fulfillment of the religious needs of the people, and for the celebration of rituals for the Royal Houses of the Kathmandu Valley. That is to say, the source of the charisma of the Lama families derives from a double source of authority: a religious one, from Tibet; a socio-economic one, from the kings of Nepal. Regarding Shakya Zangpo, it should be also noted that, beyond the establishment of a local community, he was also the founder of a religious lineage (*Yolmo tulku / yol mo sprul sku*) that transcended the specificity of Helambu. Its current spiritual leader, the tenth Yolmowa Tulku, now resides in Sikkim, having his seat at the Gomjang monastery near the city of Gangtok, thus holding a relevant position inside the wider framework of Nyingma tradition.

The aforementioned narratives related to the sacred valley, which amply pervade the Hyolmo identity discourse, embed Shakya Zangpo in a dynamic geography and link him (and thus the Hyolmo) to crucial sites of Tibetan and Nepalese Buddhism. At the same time, Helambu Valley/Hyolmo became integrated into a wider system of transcultural (religious, political, economic) exchanges focusing on the spreading of Buddhism in the Himalayan region and the connection with "heroic" figures of the past such as those of Padmasambhava or Milarepa.

We can roughly identify two different groups of stories here: the first one is the *terma* (*gter ma*) literature, about the "hidden land" and also about Shakya Zangpo himself, like the *Legend of The Great Stūpa* which ends with the prophecy about Shakya Zangpo's re-discovery and renovation of the *stūpa* narrated by Padmasambhava to his disciples. A second group of narratives that focus on what happened after the renovation (i.e. Shakya Zangpo's travel back to Kiyrong and then back to Helambu): the histories related to the single lama lineages, the establishment of the first temples, and the foundation of villages, were mainly retold as part of the oral lore of the area, although they are sometimes supported by certain written documents. This part of the story is more local in its essence, providing Shakya Zangpo and other lamas with a retinue of followers (representing the Hyolmo clans) and pointing to the foundation of villages in Helambu. It contains also, as we have seen, narrations of magical events, and magical duels with other *lamas* or *yogins*.

A common pattern among several Himalayan communities engaged in the current process of ethnic revival seems to highlight at least some common areas which plays a pivotal role in the definition or assertion of a distinct identity: a strong bond with a geographical area identified and perceived as "ancestral," the specificity of cultural customs, a distinct language, and religion. The last census of Nepal (2011) offers a bewildering picture of the country's diversity with 126 caste/ethnic groups, 123 languages spoken as mother tongues and ten religions recognized by the state (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Kirat, Christianity, Prakriti, Bon, Jainism, Baha'i and Sikhism).[21]

Others have fruitfully explored the role of the "frontier" as a contact zone between cultural areas (for example, the elaboration of the notion of Willem van Schendel's *zomia* [2002]) and its application to a theory on "ethnogenesis" based on "state-evasion" processes, which the very idea of refuge, shelter, or hidden valley seems to suggest; for example, see James C. Scott (2009) and the comments upon it, such as *Journal of Global History* vol. 5.2 (2010). Of particular

21 Data retrieved on the Nepal government website (http://cbs.gov.np/nada/index.php/catalog/54) on October 23, 2017.

importance is also Shneiderman's contribution, pointing to a key factor: notions of identity that "are grounded in a transnational economy of belonging" (Shneiderman 2010, 306). The perceptions related to one's own identity are multifaceted and grounded in multiple locations; in the case of the Hyolmo, this sounds astonishingly true. Fleeing or simply travelling away from the Tibetan plateau, the Hyolmo identity discourses acknowledge the spiritual source of some of their lineages as being located in the areas of Samye and Kyirong. Despite linking their innermost identity to the valley of Helambu, they are well aware of the legacy of Tibetan Buddhism, which has become increasingly important in the recent elaborations of ideas and notions about "Hyolmo-ness." At the same time, the field in which this "Hyolmo-ness" is being displayed is the Nepalese society, and it is in relation to Nepal politics about identity that their cultural heritage (language, religion, customs) has been, and still is being, scrutinized, selected, improved, and performed.

The emergence of a distinct identity, a process which we could call *ethnogenesis*, is the result of multiple historical processes entailing fission, fragmentation, hybridization, merging and juxtaposition, to name only a few. Some of these processes are external and vertical (e.g. State apparatuses organizing a census to map social structures and classifying the population according to a fixed scheme imposed from above), while others are horizontal (e.g. group pressure from neighboring communities competing for resources and status). Still other identity processes are internal (e.g. hegemony of certain groups in the "selecting" process of what constitute the proper "tradition" of the group; reactions of subaltern components of the very same society, etc.). We are should evaluate and assess the aforementioned processes only in a retrospective way if, *conditio sine qua non*, they have led to the historical establishment of a group distinctiveness (Rodseth 2005, 88).

This distinctiveness, if properly analyzed and deconstructed, reveals itself for what it is: a reordering process allocating similarities and differences in order to coexist in a wider system of social relations. If we consider the whole process, which I will call from now on the "invention" of Hyolmo identity, we will see that it is grounded in three conceptions. A) "Invention," in the etymological sense of the word, comes from the Latin *invenio*, and means "to find," "to discover," or "to come upon." In this vein, a prolonged and sustained dialogue has been ongoing for several years now between several groups who recognize themselves as Hyolmo. Moreover, several people are engaged in studies regarding historical documents and oral traditions pertaining to lineages, villages, language, stories, and so on. Also, a repertoire of songs and dances has been more or less formalized and it is actually displayed on occasions of public gathering. B) Drawing on Anderson and his work on "*imagined communities*" (2016), we can

explore "invention" as "imagination." Among the Hyolmo, communities produce shared memories or histories as textual (narrative) models of/for themselves, envisaging a place and a context for that community in the socio-political framework of Nepalese society. C) Invention also entails an active "selection" process of what is distinct, what is similar, what is different, and so on between a postulated "us" and external "others."

As mentioned before, the whole process was set in motion by the political events and the "ethnic revival upsurge" of the 1990s and the following civil war. Moreover it was accelerated by the process of urbanization and migration from Helambu valley to Kathmandu, in the first place, and secondarily from Kathmandu to various destination abroad (e.g. India, Gulf Countries, Middle East Korea, Europe, North America). The process was and still is more or less consciously driven by urban, literate, Buddhist, relatively wealthy elites that, from the Kathmandu valley, engage in discussion with various members of the Hyolmo communities, with local and national politicians, and with social activists belonging to other groups. Among the most important interlocutors, we find the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), an umbrella organization grouping at least 56 different ethnic groups, with which the Hyolmo Society (Hyolmo Sangh) is affiliated. The NEFIN works as a very centralized network, able to mobilize a relevant part of the population in order to exert political pressure on the Government on certain issues related to inclusiveness, secularism, education, and other critical areas where minorities feel they were discriminated against in the past. The history of the Hyolmo Sangh and its wing organizations can be traced back to the early Nineties when a small group of Hyolmo settled in the Kathmandu valley and decided to start gathering regularly to keep alive the sense of a social group with a common origin in the new urban environment.

Before being political, the necessity was religious. In the city, the Hyolmo were detached from their main religious institution, the village-temple, and their lamas were confined to perform their rituals in their private houses. They did not feel at home when attending performances at other religious institutions of the Kathmandu valley, manned mainly by the diasporic Tibetan community, neither did they find a place to congregate and celebrate in the nearby Sherpa Gompa. It must be remembered that, in those years, the Hyolmo were more or less officially known as Helambu Sherpa, but the Sherpa Gompa functioned exclusively as the religious and social focus of the Solu Khumbu Sherpa. A first solution was found in the premises of the Chabahil *stūpa*, under the guidance of Palsang Lama Hyolmo. The small building attached to the *stūpa* was renamed Ngagchang Shakya Zangpo Gompa and became the first headquarters for the urbanized Hyolmo. In the political turmoil of the Nineties, several voices were raised about a multicultural, secular Nepal. The Hyolmo joined

in and started asserting themselves as a distinct *janajāti ādivāsī* group, mainly through the inspiration of Kancha Lama Hyolmo, a politician originally from the village of Sermathang.

After a few years, as the community living in the suburbs surrounding the Bodhnath *stūpa* in the Kathmandu valley increased in size, a new organization was founded, the Hyolmo Social Service Centre (Hyolmo Samaj Sewa Kendra), and a plot of land was acquired in the area of Tinchuli after a campaign of voluntary donations. On that plot of land, the Hyolmo Gompa was finally built, with the efforts, donations, and annual membership fees of many sponsors belonging to the community. The Hyolmo Gompa and its premises constitute the new focus of the diasporic community, in religious and social terms, and it is used for rituals and for lay gatherings as well. It also embodies an ideal new center from which to assert and display a Hyolmo identity. In this regard, the Gompa and its premises can be considered a *repositoire*, a laboratory, and a cornerstone for the definition of a shared heritage; it is a space for religious, social, and ideological production where Hyolmo culture is elaborated, codified, adapted, show-cased, and experienced.

The Hyolmo identity had to be rediscovered by its proponents; but to rediscover is also to re-member, bringing back together what was dis-membered (Bhabha 1994, 63), sparse, diffused. The whole process of abandoning the Helambu Valley, deserting ancestral villages and moving away from Hyolmo's distinct places paradoxically sparked a "revival" of "original" Hyolmo culture in the new web of social relations in the Kathmandu valley, mainly due to the political environment between the two people's movements, ultimately leading to the demise of the Hindu Monarchy. At the very same time, this whole process triggered a shift in the Hyolmo self-perception. In the past, identity, as testified by existing ethnographic literature about several Himalayan communities, was essentially centered on the local dimension, mainly because people were not often dislocated, and if dislocated, they were still socially and ritually attached to their ancestral places. Today, the Hyolmo look back at Helambu as the "original" place from where their culture originated and is deeply rooted; however, nowadays the community has been invested in a mass migration to the Kathmandu valley. It is true that a relevant part of the population still inhabits the ancestral villages, but one cannot avoid noticing the sheer number of locked houses and deserted temples, the abandoned fields and solitary paths, even more so after the devastating effects of the earthquake. Employment opportunities, education, and health facilities have drawn old and young people away from Helambu and into the new urban settings of an ever-growing Kathmandu. If anything, the community is not local anymore, and this is the reason why, recently, the Hyolmo Samaj Sewa Kendra added the word "Nepal"

to its official name. The transformation of the Helambu Sherpa – a local, imprecisely defined society – into the Nepalese Hyolmo – a national indigenous group (*janajāti ādivāsī*) officially recognized by state apparatuses – is complete. In this sense, the construction of the Hyolmo Gompa answered two different issues. First, it tangibly counteracted the social dispersion intrinsically tied to the relocation to an urban environment and the physical deprivation of a proper socialized space (i.e. the Helambu valley, the *beyul*, the villages and the communities, the temples) with its historical background and its religious value. Second, it recreated and refocused the community that moved to the Kathmandu Valley by repeating, or perhaps imitating, the actions of the first lama settlers of Helambu: the building of a temple.

The first place where the Hyolmo gathered in the premises of the Chabahil *stūpa* was renamed after the Hyolmo cultural hero and opener of the *beyul*, Shakya Zangpo. Ngagchang Shakya Zangpo stories constitute the center of a web of entangled narratives that revolve around a specific central place, the *beyul*, with deep ramifications into different directions and times, namely the connections with sacred *chronotopes* located elsewhere, like Samye and Bodhnath: The history of Helambu, both social and religious, cannot be disentangled from this powerful figure, connected to the remote past of myth, to events that happened in Tibet, to the establishment of a community in Nepal in historical times, up to the quest for a specific identity in present-day Nepal. These narratives provide the Hyolmo, as a group, with an ideal, well-defined and legitimate social place from where they can position themselves *vis-à-vis* the other Nepalese communities with which they share time and space, memory, and history.

References

Anderson, Benedict. 2016. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London/New York: Verso Books.

Aris, Michael. 1990. *Man and Nature in the Buddhist Himalayas. Himalayan Environment and Culture*. New Delhi: Indian Institute of Advanced Study.

Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Bishop, Naomi Hawes. 1989. "From Zomo to Yak: Change in a Sherpa village." *Human Ecology* 17.2:177–204.

Bishop, Naomi Hawes. 1993. "Circular Migration and Families: A Yolmo Sherpa Example." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 13.1–2:59–66.

Bjerken, Zeff. 2004. "Exorcising the Illusion of Bon 'Shamans': A Critical Genealogy of Shamanism in Tibetan Religions." *Revue d'études tibétaines* 6:4–59.

Cantwell, Cathy. 2005. "The Earth Ritual: Subjugation and Transformation of the Environment." *Revue d'études tibétaines* 7:4–21.

Childs, Geoff. 1999. "Refuge and Revitalization: Hidden Himalayan Sanctuaries (Sbas-yul) and the Preservation of Tibet's Imperial Lineage." *Acta Orientalia* 60:126–158.
Childs, Geoff. 2012. "Trans-Himalayan Migrations as Processes, Not Events: Towards as Theoretical Framework." In *Origins and Migrations in the Extended Eastern Himalayas*, edited by T. Huber and S. Blackburn,11–29. Leiden: Brill.
Clarke, Graham. E. 1980a. "The Temple and Kinship amongst a Buddhist People of the Himalaya." Ph.D. thesis, University of Oxford, Oxford.
Clarke, Graham. 1980b. "A Helambu History." *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* 4:1–38.
Clarke, Graham. 1980c. "Lama and Tamang in Yolmo." In *Tibetan Studies in honor of Hugh Richardson*, edited by Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi, 79–86. Warminster: Aris and Phillips.
Dalton, Jacob Paul. 2004. "The Early Development of the Padmasambhava Legend in Tibet: a Study of IOL Tib J 644 and Pelliot tibetain 307." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124.4:759–772.
Dalton, Jacob Paul. 2011. *The Taming of the Demons: Violence and Liberation in Tibetan Buddhism*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press.
de Sales, Anne. 1991. *Je suis né de vos jeux de tambours: la religion chamanique des Magar du nord*. Recherches sur la Haute Asie, 11. Nanterre: Société d'ethnologie.
de Sales, Anne. 1993. "When the Miners Came to Light: The Chantel of Dhaulagiri." In *Nepal Past and Present: Proceedings of the France-German Conference, Arc-et-Senans, June 1990*, edited by Gerard Toffin, 94–97. Paris: CNRS.
Desjarlais, Robert R. 2003. *Sensory Biographies: Lives and Deaths among Nepal's Yolmo Buddhists*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press.
Diemberger, Hildegard. 1997. "Beyul Khenbalung, the Hidden Valley of the Artemisia: On Himalayan Communities and their Sacred Landscape." In *Mandala and Landscape*, edited by Alexander W. MacDonald, 287–334. New Delhi: DK Printworld.
Dollfus, Pascale. 2003. "De quelques histoires de klu et de btsan." *Revue d'Études Tibétaines* 2:4–39.
Dondrup, Khenpo Nyima. 2010. *Guide to the Hidden Land of the Yolmo Snow Enclosure and its History*. Kathmandu: Vajra Publications.
Dowman, Keith. 1973. *The Legend of the Great Stupa*. Berkeley: Dharma.
Dumont, Louis. 1980. "Postface: Toward a theory of hierarchy." In *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications*, 239–46. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Eck, Kristine. 2010. "Recruiting Rebels: Indoctrination and Political Education in Nepal." In *The Maoist insurgency in Nepal: Revolution in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Mahendra Lawoti and Anup K. Pahari, 33–51. London/New York: Routledge.
Ehrhard, Franz-Karl. 1990. "The Stūpa of Bodhnāth: A Preliminary Analysis of the Written Sources." *Ancient Nepal. Journal of the Department of Archaeology* 120:1–9.
Ehrhard, Franz-Karl.1991. "Further Renovations of the Svayambhūnāth Stūpa (from the 13th to the 17th Centuries)." *Ancient Nepal. Journal of the Department of Archaeology* 123-125: 10-20.
Ehrhard, Franz-Karl. 1994. "The Role of 'Treasure Discoverers' and their Writings in the Search for Himalayan Sacred Lands." *The Tibet Journal* 19.3:2–20.
Ehrhard, Franz-Karl.2013a. *Buddhism in Tibet and the Himalayas. Texts and Traditions*. *Kathmandu*: Vajra Publications.

Ehrhard, Franz-Karl. 2013b. "A Forgotten Incarnation Lineage: the Yol-mo-ba sprul-skus (16th to 18th centuries)." In *Buddhism in Tibet and the Himalayas: Texts and Traditions*, edited by Franz-Karl Ehrhard, 121-150. Kathmandu: Vajra Publications.

Ehrhard, Franz-Karl. 2013c. "Concepts of Religious Space in Southern Mustang: the Foundation of the Monastery sKu-Tshab gter-lnga." In *Buddhism in Tibet and the Himalayas: Texts and Traditions*, edited by Franz-Karl Ehrhard, 218-228. Kathmandu: Vajra Publications.

Ehrhard, Franz-Karl. 2013d. "A 'Hidden Land' in the Tibetan-Nepalese Borderlands." In *Buddhism in Tibet and the Himalayas: Texts and Traditions*, edited by Franz-Karl Ehrhard, 259-282. Kathmandu: Vajra Publications.

Gardner, Alexander. 2006. "The Sa Chog. Violence and Veneration in a Tibetan Soil Ritual." *Études mongoles et sibériennes, centrasiatiques et tibétaines* 36–37:283–323.

Gellner, David N., Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka, and John Whelpton, eds. 2008. *Nationalism and Ethnicity in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Vajra Publications.

Gellner, David N., Sondra Hausner, and Chiara Letizia, eds. 2016. *Religion, Secularism and Ethnicity in Contemporary Nepal*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Goldstein, Melvyin C. 1975. "Preliminary Notes on Marriage and Kinship." *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* 2.1:57–69.

Gyaltsen, Sherab, and Lama Dawa, eds. 1983. *Collected Biographies and Prophecies of the Byang Gter Tradition: Reproduced from MS. From the Library of Bla-ma Sengge of Yol-mo*. Gangtok: Palace Monastery.

Höfer, Andras. 1979. *The Caste Hierarchy and the State in Nepal. A Study of the Muluki Ain of 1854*. Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner.

Huber, Toni, ed. 1999. *Sacred Spaces and Powerful Places in Tibetan culture: a collection of essays*. Dharamsala: LTWA.

Huber, Toni, and Stuart Blackburn. 2012. *Origins and Migrations in the Extended Eastern Himalayas*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Hutt, Michael, ed. 2004. *Himalayan People's War: Nepal's Maoist rebellion*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Lawoti, Mahendra, and Anup K. Pahari, eds. 2010. *The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Revolution in the Twenty-First Century*. Routledge Contemporary South Asia Series, 20. London: Routledge.

Lawoti, Mahendra, and Susan Hangen, eds. 2013. *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nepal: Identities and Mobilization after 1990*. Vol. 58. London/New York: Routledge.

Lecomte-Tilouine, Marie, ed. 2013. *Revolution in Nepal: An Anthropological and Historical Approach to the People's War*. New Delhi and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Levine, Nancy E. 1987. "Caste, State, and Ethnic Boundaries in Nepal." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46.1:71–88.

MacDonald Alexander W., ed. 1997. *Mandala and Landscape*. New Delhi: DK Printworld

Mumford, Stan Royal. 1989. *Himalayan Dialogue: Tibetan lamas and Gurung shamans in Nepal*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Pommaret-Imaeda, Francoise. 2003, "Êtres soumis, Êtres protecteurs: Padmasambhava et les Huit Catégories de Dieux et Démons au Bhouthan." *Revue d'Études Tibétaines* 2:40–66.

Pradhan, Rajendra. 2011. "Ethnicity, Caste and a Pluralist Society." In *Perspectives on Modern South Asia: A Reader in Culture, History, and Representation*, edited by Wiswesaran Kamala, 100–111. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.

Quintman, Andrew. 2008. "Toward a Geographic Biography: Milarepa's Life in the Tibetan Landscape." *Numen* 55.4: 363–410.

Quintman, Andrew. 2014. "Redacting Sacred Landscape in Nepal: The Vicissitudes of Yolmo's Tiger Cave Lion Fortress." In *Highland Passages: Himalayan Studies in Honor of Hubert Decleer*, edited by Benjamin Bogin and Andrew Quintman, 69–95. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

Raeper, William, and Martin Hoftun. 1992. *Spring Awakening: An Account of the 1990 Revolution in Nepal*. New Delhi: Viking.

Ramble, Charles. 1997. "Tibetan Pride of Place: or, why Nepal's Bhotiyas are not an Ethnic Group." In *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom*, edited by David N Gellner, Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka, and John Whelpton, 379–413. Studies in Anthropology and History, 20. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.

Ramble, Charles. 1999. "The politics of sacred space in Bon and Tibetan popular tradition." In *Sacred Spaces and Powerful Places in Tibetan Culture: a Collection of Essays*, edited by Toni Huber, 3–33. Dharamsala: LTWA.

Rodseth, Lars. 2005. "The Fragmentary Frontier: Expansion and Ethnogenesis in the Himalayas." In *Untaming the Frontier in Anthropology, Archaeology, and History*, edited by Bradley J. Parker and Lars Rodseth, 100–109. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Ruegg, David Seyfort. 2008. *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism in South Asia and of Buddhism with "Local Cults" in Tibet and the Himalayas*. Wien: Austrian Academy of Sciences.

Samuel, Geoffrey. 1993. *Civilized Shamans. Buddhism in Tibetan Societies*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Samuel, Geoffrey. 2013. "Revisiting the Problem of Bon Identity: Bon Priests and Ritual Practitioners in the Himalayas." *Journal of the International Association for Bon Research* 1, Inaugural Issue: 78–97.

Schrempf, Mona. 1994. "Tibetan Ritual Dances and the Transformation of Space." *The Tibet Journal* 19.2:95–120.

Scott, James C. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Shneiderman, Sara. 2006. "Barbarians at the Border and Civilising Projects: Analysing Ethnic and National Identities in the Tibetan Context." In *Tibetan Borderlands*, edited by P. Christiaan Klieger, 9–34. Leiden: Brill.

Shneiderman, Sara. 2010. "Are the Central Himalayas in Zomia? Some scholarly and political considerations across time and space." *Journal of Global History* 5.2 :289–312.

Srinivas, Mysore Narasimhachar. 1952. *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Steinmann, Brigitte. 2003. "Les Lha srin sde brgyad et le problème de leur catégorisation – Une interprétation." *Revue d'Études Tibétaines* 2:81–91.

Torri, Davide. 2015. "The Animated Landscape: Human and Non-Human Communities in the Buddhist Himalayas." In "Proceedings of the International Conference 'The human person and nature in classical and modern India'," edited by Raffaele Torella and Giorgio Milanetti, Supplement, *Rivista di Studi Orientali* 88.2: 251–268.

Van Schendel, William. 2002. "Geographies of knowing, geographies of ignorance: jumping scale in Southeast Asia." *Environment and Planning D* 20.6:647–668.

Markus Viehbeck

9 Indo-Tibetan Relations in Tibetan Polemical Discourse: Reconsidering Cultural Dynamics between Tradition and Innovation

> Here, I have nothing at all to say which would be new, different, and exceed the scriptures.
>
> Prajñākaramati, *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā*[1]

> Claiming everything old as the ways of the gods
> Seeing everything new as deceptions of demons [. . .]
> This is the system of Tibet, the land of the Dharma.
>
> Dge 'dun chos 'phel, *Rgyal khams bskor ba'i snang tshul*[2]

9.1 Prologue: Indo-Tibetan Relations in Tibetan and Buddhist Studies

In June 2011, only a few days before the XVI[th] Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies in Taiwan, an exchange on the email-discussion list "H-Buddhism" caused some excitement in the global Buddhist Studies community: scholars were discussing the usage and implications of the phrase

1 BCAP (Skt.) 7.12f. (commenting on BCA I.1d and 2a): *naiva kiṃcid apūrvam aparam āgamād atiriktam asmin vaktavyam asti mama |.*

2 Dge 'dun chos 'phel (2009, 507):
rnying pa thams cad lha yi srol du grags ||
gsar pa thams cad bdud kyi 'phrul du sems ||
ngo tshar phal cher than lhas nyid du bsgoms ||
chos kyi rgyal khams tri bho ṭa yis srol ||
For an alternative translation, see Lopez (2009, 101–102).

Note: Research for this article was conducted within the subproject "Buddhism between South Asia and Tibet – Negotiating Religious Boundaries in Doctrine and Practice" of the interdisciplinary research group "Negotiating Religion From a Transcultural Perspective" at the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context," University of Heidelberg. I would like to thank Birgit Kellner and Jonathan Samuels for their helpful comments on the penultimate version of this article, as well as Douglas Fear for his meticulous copy-editing.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110413083-009

"Indo-Tibetan" or "Indo-Tibetan Buddhism."[3] In this, they were addressing not merely a label, but a question of larger significance, namely how forms of Buddhism on the plateau and their historical precursors on the subcontinent are related. This issue, and the shifting positions towards it, have been driving forces in the emergence of Tibetan and Buddhist Studies as individual, though closely connected, fields of enquiry – if not as clearly demarcated disciplines.[4]

At the end of the nineteenth century it was not only possible, but common to speak of Tibetan Buddhism merely as a deviant form of authentic Indian Buddhism, called "Lamaism." Most prominently, this was argued in L.A. Waddell's influential monograph of the same title, which portrayed Tibetan Buddhism as "poly-demonist superstition," which "is only thinly and imperfectly varnished over with Buddhist symbolism."[5] Tibetan Studies as a whole was often perceived as a mere "Hilfswissenschaft," pursued to provide Indological and Buddhist Studies access to source material that was lost in Indian languages.[6] The latter view contributed to an image of Tibet as a repository for authentic Buddhist teachings, untouched by the turbulences of time. This notion was also effective in the subsequent phases of academic preoccupation with Tibet, which were shaped in a substantial way by a closer interaction between local and foreign scholars. Many of the more serious scholarly endeavours in the first half of the twentieth century made extensive use of the opportunities provided by the contact zone of the Eastern Himalayas, where they accessed Tibetans as subjects, as well as helpers, for their research. This close exchange continued in the second half of the century, when (some) Tibetan scholars were employed by Western universities or recreated their own scholastic institutions in (mostly Indian) exile, and thus provided a structured setting for academic co-operation. While Tibetan Studies developed into a field of interest in its own right, with a variety of specific methodological and disciplinary approaches (history, anthropology, art history, etc.), the study of Tibetan Buddhism, in particular, remained governed by the emphasis on

3 The respective messages were exchanged from June 11 to June 21, 2011, and can be accessed in the discussion logs of H-Buddhism: http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=lm&list=h-buddhism [accessed December 15, 2014].

4 As Cabezón (1995a), as well as Freiberger (2009) have noted, the former on the basis of investigating the methodological and institutional set-up of Buddhist Studies, the latter by focusing on the rhetorical construction of a discipline, Buddhist Studies is a particularly heterogeneous field consisting of a great variety of methodological approaches. The same is also true of Tibetan Studies.

5 Waddell (1895, XI).

6 A still very useful survey of the history of Buddhist Studies that includes studies in Tibetan Buddhism is provided in De Jong (1997).

a strong connection to the origin of the Buddhist religion in India. This was expressed succinctly in the title as well as the scope of David Snellgrove's influential survey-monograph on "Indo-Tibetan Buddhism" of 1987. As it is laid out in its preface, the study is based on specific conceptions of the relation between Indian and Tibetan Buddhism. Here, Tibetan Buddhism is described as being of "essentially Indian nature," as having "perpetuated forms of Indian Buddhism long since lost in the land where Buddhism originated." The idea of a privileged access to Indian Buddhism via Tibet is also expressed in a passage of his earlier writing (from 1957) that is repeated in the later monograph: "The source in India has long been dead, and only the Tibetans possess the living traditions which can enliven the ancient places."[7] While similar notions seem to have had an impact on many studies in doctrinal aspects of Tibetan Buddhism, it is also in this specific context that the relation between Indian and Tibetan Buddhism was problematised.[8] Critics such as C.W. Huntington suggested that the emphasis on a strong bond between Indian and Tibetan Buddhism was largely shaped by a Tibetan view of this relation. The influence of Tibetan historiography on research in Indian Buddhist doctrine, as Huntington warns, "[. . .] is both subtle and profound, and we need to pay much closer attention to the ways in which principles and presuppositions of a peculiarly Tibetan brand of Indology have infiltrated our work."[9] This thought is also expressed in later writings, where he questions the usage of the expression "Indo-Tibetan Buddhism," since it "derives its authority largely on the basis of a tacit assumption that Tibetan scholars stand in some sort of historically privileged position vis-à-vis the Indian sources."[10]

While the relation between Buddhism in Tibet and in India was and continues to be of great importance for core questions in academic research, there seems to be only limited effort in enhancing our understanding of this relation. David Seyfort Ruegg, in an important contribution to this matter, saw a major problem in conceptualizing this relation along "the familiar opposition of stagnant stasis *vs*. dynamic change, a somewhat superficial and jejune dichotomy which has so frequently, and unproductively, been invoked in considering such

7 Snellgrove (1987, XIX).

8 Cautions about the usage of the term "Indo-Tibetan" in early writing were raised by Huntington (1995) and, in the same volume, Tillemans (1995).

9 Huntington (1995, 695).

10 Huntington (2003, 84, n. 6); here, Huntington also refers to several other scholars such as Dreyfus, Tillemans, and Cabezón, who address the connection between Tibetan and Indian Buddhism critically.

matters."[11] He agrees that identifying continuities and discontinuities is crucial, but suggests that we understand this distinction in a more interlinked and dynamic fashion, as "homoeostasis (dynamic stability) and internal, systemic disequilibrium leading to restoration/renewal/innovation."[12] In this way, he develops a picture of Tibetan intellectual activity that is very closely connected to South Asia, but does also include the creativity and agency of thinkers on the plateau. Making a case for Tsong kha pa, a philosopher who was heavily criticised by contemporary intellectuals for being too innovative, he shows how individual elements of his thought can be aligned with Indian principles. In this way, his intellectual output, and, as Seyfort Ruegg seems to imply, that of any other Tibetan thinker for that matter, can be analyzed as a combination of two spheres: "the *Indian* – that is what is *historically* identifiable as having been taken over from Indian sources – and the *Indic* – that is, the meta-Indian that is typologically (if not historically) Indian," explained as a thinking "in line with Indian models and templates."[13]

In practice, however, it will be difficult to draw this distinction. Whether individual notions of Tibetan thinkers are taken over from Indian sources in a literal sense, only slightly, or significantly altered can be subject to much discussion. The full controversial potential of this question will become obvious when we take a look at how Tibetan scholars conceive of their relations to Indian Buddhism and make use of them in constructing and defending who they are and what they do. As José Cabezón has argued, scholastic identity is in particular determined by a sense of tradition and orthodoxy, and a quest to maintain these with the rational methods acquired in the intellectual training within this tradition.[14] It is therefore not surprising that tensions between tradition and innovation – the first understood as continuation and preservation of Buddhism from India, the second as any alteration to the former – became an important element in the way these identities are negotiated. In exploring these tensions, I will focus on examples from polemical literature,[15] produced by Tibetan scholastics of the late nineteenth century. Investigating these discourses will not only shed

11 Seyfort Ruegg (2004, 321).

12 Seyfort Ruegg (2004, 321).

13 Seyfort Ruegg (2004, 340).

14 Cabezón (1994, 11–26). Further, the application of the terms "tradition" and "scholasticism" in a Tibetan Buddhist context is discussed in Dreyfus (2003, 6–13). This also provides a detailed analysis of educational structure and practice in Tibetan monastic institutions.

15 For a brief description of the genre of "polemical literature," see Lopez (1996). Vital elements of this genre as well as its historical developments are outlined in Cabezón and Dargyay (2007, 2–33).

light on an emic view of the relation between Buddhism in India and in Tibet, and thereby help to sharpen our understanding of the divide or penetration between emic and etic perspectives, but also address productive mechanisms in the appropriation of Buddhism on the plateau.

9.2 Nineteenth Century Tibetan Debates on an Indian Buddhist Classic

When 'Ju Mi pham (1846–1912), a famous scholar of the Rnying ma school, completed his commentary on the ninth chapter of the *Bodhi(sattva) caryāvatāra* (BCA) on September 9th, 1878, he indicated in its title that this text should facilitate "an easy comprehension of the words and meaning" of this chapter.[16] What the title did not disclose is another, and, for the present investigation, more important function, namely that it should provide his school with more sharply defined philosophical contours. These could be drawn in stand-alone treatises too, but very often Tibetan scholars preferred commentary as a medium, thereby aligning their ideas with a key text they had inherited (mostly) from India.

Mi pham's chosen work is ascribed to the Indian master Śāntideva, who was active at the beginning of the eight century CE. It quickly gained importance, not only in South Asia, but also in other linguistic and cultural contexts. The BCA was rendered into Tibetan as early as the beginning of the ninth century, into Chinese in the late tenth century, and into Mongolian in the early fourteenth century. Among these different settings the text was particularly successful on the plateau. It was translated into Tibetan three times altogether, and Rngog Blo ldan shes rab (1059–1109),[17] a Bka' gdams pa scholar who participated in the final Tibetan translation, was also the first Tibetan scholar to write a commentary on the text. In the centuries to follow, the BCA received much attention and was read from a variety of perspectives: as an inspiring poem, a meditation manual, a liturgical text, or a philosophical treatise.[18] Seen

16 The full title of Mi pham's work is *Shes rab kyi le'u'i tshig don go sla bar rnam par bshad pa nor bu ke ta ka* (*Nor bu ke ta ka*).

17 In providing the life dates of Tibetan scholars, I make use of the database of the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC), if not stated otherwise; cf. http://www.tbrc.org/. Relevant data was accessed on February 27, 2014.

18 This variety is not only encountered in modern receptions of the text, as Luis Gómez explained (1999, 267), but is also established in the variety of Tibetan literature that developed in relation to the BCA.

as a standard text to explicate Madhyamaka philosophy, individual scholastic traditions of interpreting its content emerged.[19] The Rnying ma school, to which Mi pham belonged, is notably late in joining this development. Here, an increasing interest in the BCA surfaced only in the nineteenth century. While Mi pham's teacher Rdza Dpal sprul (1808–1887) contributed to making this text important among a varied audience,[20] it was left to his disciple Mi pham to give a specific interpretation of Madhyamaka thought on the basis of the BCA.

His commentary was often formulated in sharp contrast to, or even as a direct criticism of, other established readings, most importantly those from within the Dge lugs school. Unsurprisingly, members of this tradition where keen to defend their alignments with the BCA, and engaged in an extended series of debates, with polemical writings being exchanged over a period of almost thirty years. These controversies involved some of the most important scholastic centres of that time, with Brag dkar Sprul sku (1866–1928) and Dpa' ris Rab gsal (1840–1912), the two most prominent opponents of Mi pham, writing from the massive Dge lugs institutions of 'Bras spungs (Central Tibet) and Sku 'bum (A mdo), respectively, and Mi pham from different locations within the area of Sde dge, the cultural heart of Khams.[21]

The fact that Tibetan intellectuals engaged in such an extended debate over the interpretation of a single textual item of the Indian Buddhist tradition illustrates the general importance that knowledge from India acquired in a Tibetan context. Moreover, the polemical writings that were exchanged in this controversy provide us with a wealth of material to investigate how relations between Indian and Tibet were conceived of and used by Tibetan scholars. In these texts, such relations were addressed in two principally different, but interconnected aspects: as a certain historical narrative that provides a framework for Tibetan intellectual history as a whole, and in the form of concrete arguments that explicate how principles that are drawn from the general framework are enacted in scholastic practices. We will start with the former, which will first require a detour to historiographical sources.

19 Rdza Dpal sprul (1808–1887), a crucial initiator of interest in the BCA from members of the Rnying ma school, lists the following scholars as standard references for the respective scholastic traditions (see *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 805.1–3): Bsod nams rtse mo (1142–1182) for the Sa skya school; Tsong kha pa (1357–1419) and Dar ma rin chen (1364–1432) for the Dge lugs tradition; and Dpa' bo Gtsug lag phreng ba (1504–1564/66) for the Bka' brgyud.

20 For details on the role of Dpal sprul in spreading the BCA in this specific historical setting, see Viehbeck (2016).

21 Details of the historical development of the debates and an overview map of the geographic extension are provided in Viehbeck (2014, 29–38).

9.3 Purity and Impurity in the Transmission and Promulgation of Buddhism in Tibet

As has been pointed out several times,[22] Tibetan historiographical accounts and notions of Tibetan cultural identity that are both the product and the basis of such accounts are significantly shaped by a view of Tibetans as righteous continuators of Indian Buddhism. While earlier sources are much more diverse in their outlook, historiographical writing after the fourteenth century[23] increasingly consolidates a standard narrative of the past that has been repeated until the present day.[24] There, introduction of Buddhism in Tibet, conceived of as two waves of dissemination – the "Earlier Propagation of the Teaching of the Buddha" (*bstan pa'i snga dar*) from the seventh to the ninth centuries, and the "Later Propagation of the Teaching of the Buddha" (*bstan pa'i phyi dar*) from the late tenth century on onward – is depicted as a highly regulated endeavour, in which members of the social elite, Tibetan rulers and ministers, and Buddhist scholars and translators, ensured the proper transmission of Buddhist texts, doctrines, and practices.

This concern for a controlled and institutionalised setting for propounding Buddhism is also expressed in a number of authoritative treatises, such as the introductory part of the famous *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* (late eighth century), which sets out rules for textual translation and for handling tantric texts,[25] or the *Bka' shog* (ca. 986), an ordinance by the Western Tibetan king Ye shes 'od (late tenth–early eleventh century).[26] The latter not only warns against non-Buddhist teachings emerging from Bon or Indian *tīrthika*s, but also perverted forms of texts,

22 For a significant recent contribution in this regard, see Schwieger (2000).

23 Earlier sources include a diverse body of literature such as the *Royal Annals of Tibet, Old Tibetan Chronicle, Dba' bzhed*, or *Bka' chems ka khol ma*. Later accounts are often phrased within the principles of the *Chos 'byung* genre, such as the famous works of Bu ston (1290–1364), Dpa' bo Gtsug lag phreng ba (1504–1564/66), or Tāranātha (1575–1634). For an overview of Tibetan historiographical literature, see Van der Kuijp (1996).

24 Schwieger identifies two main reasons for this process of "canonization" (2000, 949–950): firstly disputes with traditions that were then excluded from the main stream, and, secondly, a lack of new input from Indian Buddhists as Buddhism, as a living tradition, was disappearing from the subcontinent.

25 A comprehensive study of the *Sgra sbyor* and its different versions, emphasizing its character as a royal decree, is given in Scherrer-Schaub (2002).

26 Samten Karmay provides a translation of the ordinance in an earlier article (1980), and also of fragments of the work that have come to light more recently (2015). I would like to thank Birgit Kellner for pointing out newly found historiographic material on Purang-Guge rule, described by Pa sangs dbang 'dus (2012).

practice, and doctrine within Buddhism. In particular, it mobilises against the practices of so-called "village tāntrikas," which are seen to be in conflict with the organised forms of Buddhist transmission within centralised institutions.

The issue of authentic transmission is also at the centre of the broader cultural orientation of Tibetans' religion. In the common remembrance of later Tibetan intellectuals the so-called "Debate of Samyé (*bsam yas*)" marks a clear turning point in the cultural stratification of the Buddhist tradition on the plateau. While the historical course of events is in various aspects unclear, Tibetans commonly depict this controversy as a formalised encounter between two individuals, conducted at Samyé, the very first monastic foundation in Tibet, and as such a place of considerable symbolic significance.[27] In this view, Kamalaśīla (ca. 740–795) stands in for the Indian Buddhist tradition and its specific doctrines, which put forth a gradual path to awakening, stressing analytical inquiry and moral discipline. His opponent Hwa shang[28] Mahāyāna represents the Chinese Ch'an tradition, propagating a quiescent approach according to which Buddhahood is attained suddenly and as an effect of the calming of all mental activities. Although the Chinese sources of this event paint a different picture, the Tibetan accounts inform us of the victory of the Indian side, as decided by the Tibetan ruler Khri srong lde btsan (742–800), who acted as a judge over the debate. As a consequence, the system of Indian Buddhism was introduced as the official religion of the Tibetan empire, and all adherents of Hwa shang were driven out of the country.

Historical developments were more complicated, and it is safe to assume that the cultural pluralism of the different forms of Buddhism Tibetans encountered at the fringes of their territory had effects on the way Buddhism was adopted on the plateau. Still, it is this historically and culturally simplified narrative that became effective in shaping the identities of many later Tibetan intellectuals, even down to the present day. The power of this narrative also informed scholastic discourses, in which the term "Hwa shang" was used to designate the archetype of an erring and defeated opponent. In this way, scholars commonly accused their opponents, despite the factual variety of views they professed, of adhering to a "Hwa shang view" (*hwa shang gi lta ba*), a view that was deemed to be nihilistic, as it would neglect the law of karmic

27 Bretfeld (2004) discusses the importance of this event as part of the "cultural memory" (in the sense of Jan Assmann) of later Tibetans. For a detailed discussion of the development, background, and content of this controversy from a historical perspective, see Seyfort Ruegg (1989).

28 This is also rendered into Tibetan as Ha shang or Hā shang.

retribution.[29] The idea of a possible threat through such a mistaken view is also reflected in the interpretation of the story of "Hwa shang's lost boot." It is said that the defeated Hwa shang left behind one shoe when he left the debate arena, which was seen as an omen that proponents of his view would still be present – left over – or come back to Tibet in later times.[30]

In its simplicity, this depiction of Tibetans' past seems to fulfil a clear function. It provides not only a positive model of identification, a strand of proper transmission and continuation of the Buddha's teaching from the origins in India to Tibet, but is also accompanied by, and demarcated against, a negative model, a corrupted lineage of transmission, associated with the figure of Hwa shang, "village tāntrikas," and other detractors.

Given the overarching importance of this narrative, it is not surprising that the opponents within the nineteenth century controversies about the correct interpretation of the BCA also made use of it. All of the scholars involved, in one way or another, appealed to the bifurcation of a proper and a corrupted transmission that this narrative entails. Attributions of this kind are commonly found in some elaboration in the introductory section of the individual works, so in a part of a text that, as a "paratextual threshold,"[31] stages and frames the content that follows afterwards. In so doing, these elements distribute roles to the philosophical sparring partners, even before the actual exchange of arguments can be witnessed and the readership can determine these roles for itself.

The most extensive narrative of this kind is found in a critique by Blo bzang chos dbyings (1890–1949),[32] the last among the Dge lugs scholars of Mi pham's time to raise objections against him. In the introduction to his critique *Brotherly Companion, a Drop of Camphor that Eliminates the Suffering of the Heart of a Person of Little Intelligence: An Answer to the Critical Letter of 'Ju Mi pham 'jam dbyangs rnam rgyal rgya mtsho*, Blo bzang chos dbyings sums up the development that led to the debates in the following way[33]:

---

29 As José Cabezón points out, an analogous development can be observed for his opponent Kamalaśīla (Cabezón and Dargyay 2007, 21): "[. . .] just as Hwa shang becomes the paradigmatic 'other,' Kamalaśila becomes in some ways the paradigmatic defender of the faith [. . .]."

30 The topic of the shoe suggests a connection to the legend of Bodhidharma. In later Tibetan interpretations, however, the shoe of Hwa shang is clearly connected to notions of pollution and corruption, which are absent from the Bodhidharma legend. On the symbolism connected to Hwa shang's shoe, see Lopez (1996, 223, n. 5).

31 Here, I am borrowing from Gérard Genette's classic *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997).

32 For his life dates, see Viehbeck (2014, 13).

33 The full title in Tibetan is *'Ju mi pham 'jam dbyangs rnam rgyal rgya mtsho'i rtsod yig gi lan blo dman snying gi gdung sel ga bur thig pa'i spun zla*. The following alternates between

> Initiated by Nāgārjuna, the second Buddha, the Madhyamaka tradition – the philosophical system that was accepted as entailing the highest point of view – was spread by masters of the Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika traditions and flourished in all parts of India. Then, gradually, it came to Tibet, where the "collections of the profound and vast Dharma [...] were translated well," due to the combined efforts of translators and rulers. Even though Buddhism was able to establish itself in the tradition of the Early Translation (*sngar 'gyur*), with an abundance of followers, "the strength of the interest of the disciples gradually diminished and hence the majority turned away from the correct path: some took their own view to be the highest, and pretended it was the sermon of the Buddha, others came into contact with wrong views such as [that of] Hā shang [...]. These people of wrong views and practices were refuted by Kamalaśīla." Further, Atiśa criticised those who took up the path of the Vajrayāna without basing themselves on the ordinary path of proper discipline, and he "adorned Tibet with the Bka' gdams teaching." Later, this was obstructed by "mistaken people from earlier times."[34] At that stage, it was time for Tsong kha pa (1357–1419), the founding father of the Dge lugs tradition, to point out the correct path once again. He and his followers succeeded, but soon afterwards, "the black banner of the proponents of wrong [positions] was woven by the three, Go, Shag, and Stag," i.e., the famous critics from the Sa skya school, Go rams pa (1429–1489), Śākya mchog ldan (1428–1507), and Stag tshang lo tsā ba (b. 1405). However, the followers of the Dge lugs tradition did not allow these wrong views to prevail. Rje btsun Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1469–1544/46), 'Jam dbyangs dga' ba'i blo gros (1429–1503), and Paṇ chen Chos rgyan (1570–1662) "cut [these wrong views] with the sharp knives of scripture and logic (*lung rigs*) and knocked them down." In the present days, there is again a detractor of Lord Tsong kha pa. This time, it is the "fearless" Mi pham, who composed "sarcastic refutations with regard to the positions (*thugs bzhed*) of Lord [Tsong kha pa's] own tradition" which clarify the original thought of Nāgārjuna. But also he is countered by Brag dkar Sprul sku, a Dge lugs scholar of Mi pham's time, who refutes him with "immaculate reasoning" (*rigs pa dri ma med pa*) and by quoting from the scriptures of Nāgārjuna's Indian successors, that is Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti. Mi pham, on the other hand, would "expound these scriptures in a wrong way, by [giving] crooked explanations."

As this excerpt clearly demonstrates, not only the concrete controversies in the nineteenth century, but also the entire development of Tibetan intellectual history prior to it, are seen along the lines of the master narrative of a proper and an improper transmission of Buddhism. Similar, though less extensive, accounts of this kind are also found in the writings of the other participants of the debate. Dpa' ris Rab gsal starts his first criticism by establishing Tsong kha pa together with his heirs, that is, the lineage of the Dge lugs school he founded,

---

close paraphrase and literal quotation of the respective passage (*Ga bur thig pa'i spun zla* 129.20–132.2). For a better historical placement of the individual figures, dates were added. The full Tibetan text is provided in Viehbeck (2014, 51–52).

34 Tib. *sngar gyi log rtog rnams*; it is rather unclear whether this phrase refers in a very general sense to a diverse body of Buddhists that are seen to form some kind of continuation from people criticised earlier by Kamalaśīla and Atiśa, or whether it points to very concrete targets of Tsong kha pa's attacks.

as an incontestable authority, predicted by "trustworthy scriptures and excellent beings."[35] This is contrasted with a line of detractors. Rab gsal as well mentions Stag tshang Shes rab rin chen, the famous first critic of Tsong kha pa, who "had a mind that is affected by the defect of Timira,"[36] a disease, where apparently existing, but actually non-existent hairs disturb one's vision – a typical example of someone whose perception is not to be trusted. Also Mi pham is seen to be criticising Tsong kha pa and his lineage unjustly. He is described as "short-tempered" (*blo sna thung*) and "having a partial view" (*phyogs re'i mig can*)[37]; he would "criticise any text of his own or another's [tradition] without consideration and, in particular, be clueless in regard to the path of reasoning [. . .]."[38] While Mi pham is more defensive in his replies, he still has to ensure a firm place in the proper transmission of Buddhism. He explains the disparity between him and the thought of Tsong kha pa to be only superficial and based on the affiliation with his own Rnying ma tradition[39]:

> As for myself, I was born in this life at the feet of the teaching of the Earlier Translation (*snga 'gyur pa*), and as I received the nectar [of the teaching] from the mouths of great holders of the teaching, devotion towards holding on to it increased. Therefore, I was simply not caught by the demon of terrible destruction, that means, an evil attitude of disparaging the profound long-standing tradition of the Highest (i.e. the Buddha), but, aiming at a pure [presentation of the Buddhist teaching], I gave some explanations of the scriptural tradition, following the earlier highest [masters].

Similar to the model established in historiographical sources, later Tibetan scholars place great importance on the connections to India, and depict these as a line of (ideally) pure transmission of the original message of the Indian masters and ultimately the Buddha. In this, each individual element in the transmission serves to ensure that the original message is protected, and is vested with authority as a proponent of this very message. At the same time,

35 *'Ju lan* 370.4: *yid ches pa'i lung dang skyes bu dam pa*. Rab gsal's account is also discussed in Viehbeck (2014, 50–51).

36 *'Ju lan* 370.6: *rab rib kyi skyon chags pa'i blo ldan.*

37 *'Ju lan* 371.1.

38 *'Ju lan* 371.1–2: *gya tshom du rang gzhan gyi gzhung gang la'ang skyon brjod cing| khyad par rigs pa'i lam la rgyus med pas* [. . .].

39 *Brgal lan nyin snang* 98.3–4: *bdag ni skye ba 'dir snga 'gyur pa'i bstan zhabs su skyes shing bstan 'dzin chen po rnams kyi zhal gyi bdud rtsi nod pa las snga 'gyur gyi bstan pa dang de 'dzin la gus pa yar 'phel du gyur pa las| dam pa'i ring lugs zab mo sun 'byin gyi blo ngan phung khrol ngan pa'i gdon gyis ma zin tsam gyi dwang ba gtso bor byas nas gzhung lugs kyi bshad pa cung zad re byas pa rnams sngon gyi dam pa dag gi rjes su brjod pa yin la|*. See also *Yang lan* 464.6f., where this issue is addressed. A more detailed treatment of Mi pham's placement in terms of an established tradition is given in Viehbeck (2014, 55–57).

any kind of change is seen as a deviation and a threat to the integrity of transmission. The distinction of preservers of the original teaching and deviators from it thus provides a positive mould for the identities of Tibetan scholars, but it could also be used to frame and exclude rivals. In this way, it becomes a regulating element, a tool for legitimation and for providing authority to individual proponents of Buddhism, which invokes closeness to the original message of Indian Buddhism as a principal authority.

Using this framework, individual scholars have to defend the legitimacy of their teachings by showing their conformity to the (Indian) original, and they can point out faults of opponents by proving that the teachings of the latter deviate from the original intent. This they can do by employing certain methods, foremost, by appealing to scriptural authority (*lung*) and logic or reasoning (*rigs pa*), as mentioned in the accounts discussed above.

While this gives us an idea of the general elements that are at work when Tibetan scholars legitimise what they are doing via a connection to Buddhist India, I will explore in the following how these elements are enacted in practices of argumentation. In doing so, I will draw widely from the material I have investigated more closely, that is, the texts that were exchanged between Mi pham and Dpa' ris Rab gsal.[40]

9.4 Framing and Claiming Authority in Practices of Argumentation

Differences in the interpretation of the BCA between Mi pham and Rab gsal pertain basically to four separate passages of the text. The contents discussed in relation to these are of a very variegated kind and range from rather insignificant issues, such as personal idiosyncrasies or even spelling mistakes, to fundamental differences in the scholastic formulations of Madhyamaka doctrine. For our current discussion, however, the contents are not very important, rather, we want to focus on how questions of tradition and innovation are treated within these.

In the various stages of the controversies and in respect to all issues discussed, both parties appeal to the idea of continuity or unity with the Indian tradition, and try to depict their opponent's statements as a deviation from the original message. Thus, a specific statement might be called a "private

40 Details of the available versions of these works by both authors, as well as their relations, are discussed in Viehbeck (2014: 83–97).

teaching,"[41] a "creation of one's own mind, an intellectual fabrication,"[42] a "new Tibetan tenet system" that is put forth "not in accordance with anybody"[43] rather than being a teaching that is in line with the established Indian tradition.[44] As such, it not only "goes astray from the authoritative path, which consists of the teachings of the Buddha and the commentaries on their intention,"[45] since it "merely pulls [the original teaching] in harmony with one's own assumptions."[46] In fact, it actually harms the true Buddhist teaching, as it "corrupts the meaning of the profound words of the Buddha"[47] and "defiles the beneficial scriptures of the ones from the Noble Land (i.e., Buddhist India) with the stains of one's own mind."[48] We also find this conservative attitude condensed into a question, like the following criticism[49]:

> How should one become someone who holds the lineage of the Victor,[50]
> If one refutes [a statement] although one knows that it is said by the Victor?

While these examples claim a deviation in terms of an unspecified, personal fault, the debates also make use of the image of Hwa shang to place the opponent in a line of corrupted transmission. Here, the teaching of Hwa shang is associated with "a nihilistic view, not the teaching of the Buddha, but the

41 *Ga bur chu rgyun* 446.3: *sger chos*.

42 *Rab lan* 323.3: *rang gi blo bzo rtog bzo*.

43 *'Ju lan* 409.4: *su dang mi bstun par bod kyi grub mtha' gsar pa*.

44 This issue is commonly summarised under the Tibetan term *rang bzo*, which Matthew Kapstein explains in the following way (2000, 205): "Thus *rang-bzo*, literally 'personal invention,' is almost always mentioned as a negative quality. A commentator assures his readers of the reliability and authority of his work by proclaiming it to be *rang-bzo-med-pa*, 'without personal invention.'" On this concept, see also Seyfort Ruegg (2004, 329–335). Note that the concept of *rang bzo*, while frequently mentioned (as something to be avoided) in Tibetan scholastic knowledge production, is also endorsed in the same sense by Indian commentators, as shown, for our present example, in Prajñākaramati's commentary of the BCA, which stresses avoiding *svāntrya* – the Sanskrit equivalent of *rang bzo* – when commenting on the first verse of the BCA; cf. BCAP (Tib.) 1050.17, 1051.3, 1055.4, and 1055.8. In Sanskrit, the first parallel seems to have been on the first folio missing in La Vallée Poussin's edition; the latter three are found in BCAP (Skt.) 2.2, 5.13, and 5.16, respectively.

45 *'Ju lan* 403.1f.*: gsung rab dgongs 'grel dang bcas pa'i gzhung lam las 'khyog pa*.

46 *Nor bu ke ta ka* 42.5: *rang gi zhe 'dod dang mthun par khrid pa tsam*.

47 *Rab lan* 400.6: *sangs rgyas kyi bka' zab mo'i don bslad pa*.

48 *Rab lan* 198.3: *rang blo'i dri ma 'phags yul ba'i gzhung bzang la bsgo ba*.

49 *Rab lan* 323.5: *rgyal bas gsungs par shes kyang sun 'byin na|| rgyal ba'i brgyud 'dzin du yang ji ltar 'gyur||*.

50 This is an epithet for the Buddha.

teaching of Māra (i.e., a demon),"[51] and a rival could be accused of having "written [his work] by gathering many scriptures [. . .] in order to accomplish the intention of Ha shang."[52] Naturally, both opponents avoid being associated with Hwa shang, while, at the same time, they try to establish such a connection for the other, as shown for example in the following criticism by Rab gsal[53]:

> Despite [your] great hypocrisy of pretending to belittle the Hwa shang view, [. . .] there is no doubt that you have arrived from China, in the guise of a monk of the present age.

We even find allusions to the narrative of Hwa shang's lost boot, as in the following passage, which also may serve as an example for the rich rhetoric of the discourses, known for their frequent use of irony[54]:

> There is no doubt that you follow Ha shang Mahāyāna, but as you attained [his] lost boot as your lot, you are not even to blame!

In all these examples, notions of continuity and deviation become important for regulating questions of legitimacy. Only he who can claim to be part of the pure transmission of the Buddhist teachings from India can furnish his own elaborations with the authority that comes along with this transmission. Any association with an established aberration then deprives a scholar of this authority, as, for example, the trope connected to Hwa shang, but also irregularities embedded in personal idiosyncrasies. To refute such an accusation and to prove continuity or unity with the original teaching, a scholar can invoke certain methods.

9.5 Scripture and Logic as a Means for Claiming Unity with the Indian Tradition

As mentioned previously, Tibetan scholars commonly refer to scripture (*lung/āgama*) and logic or reasoning (*rigs pa/yukti*) as means for attesting authority. As general methods, these were accepted in South Asia not only among

51 *Rab lan* 392.4: *chad lta dang| sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa min pa dang| bdud kyis bstan pa.*

52 *Ga bur chu rgyun* 431.3f.: *ha shang gi dgongs pa rdzogs phyir* [. . .] *lung gi tshogs mang du bris pa.*

53 *'Ju lan* 404.2f.: *hwa shang gi lta bar smad khul gyi zob che na yang|* [. . .] *khyed rgya nag nas da lta rab byung gi gzugs kyis byon pa gor ma chag go|.*

54 *'Ju lan* 398.1: *ha shang ma hā ya na'i rjes su song ba la the tshom med de| lham lus pa bgo skal du thob pa'i phyir le lan bda' ba'ang med do||.*

Buddhist, but also most non-Buddhist traditions. Their application and mutual relation, however, was subject to much discussion, especially in the Buddhist epistemological tradition.[55] Rather than going into any of these theoretical aspects, we will explore how Rab gsal and Mi pham made use of these principles in their practices of argumentation.

Most importantly, the question of whether a specific statement is in agreement with the authoritative tradition is settled by referring to scriptural proof (*lung/āgama*), which in the present case means basically any scripture of *Indian* origin. This point is indeed crucial. Many of the problems that are discussed in the debates must be seen in the light of over eight hundred years of philosophical and exegetical development in Tibet. However, the Tibetan scriptures that, sometimes, concisely discuss these issues, play only an extremely limited role as references for proving a position.[56] In the exchange between Mi pham and Rab gsal, there are several hundred references to Indian works used to prove their individual statements, while there are only a few instances where quotations from Tibetan texts are employed for the same purpose. When it comes to the discussion of whether Mi pham's view of emptiness is in agreement with scriptural authority, this asymmetry between Indian and Tibetan proof material is especially evident: to support his conception of emptiness, Mi pham quotes, for this single issue alone, over one hundred and sixty passages from various Indian scriptures (in their Tibetan translations).[57] Towards the end of this enormous list of scriptural proof, we find five quotes from a treatise of Atiśa, a major authority in the "Later Propagation" (*phyi dar*), who travelled and taught widely in Tibet, but who had nevertheless been born in India. Later in the text, there is a loose reference to two Tibetan scholars, but Mi pham does not provide a single quote from any Tibetan author to support him in this vital issue.

References to Indian scriptures appear indeed as the most powerful tool to establish a close relation between Indian and Tibetan thought, but there is also

55 For a general introduction and an overview of different stances within the *pramāṇa* school, see Hayes (1984). Richard Nance (2007) provides a more specialised discussion in the context of Buddhist scholasticism, focusing on the meaning of reasoning.

56 This may be different in cases of dispute between members of the same Tibetan Buddhist school, where indeed Tibetan sources are referred to. In our example, where Mi pham stands in for the Rnying ma school and Rab gsal for the Dge lugs tradition, Indian sources are invoked as outside and higher authority.

57 In Mi pham's *Rab lan*, this list occupies about thirty-five pages with references organised, roughly, in the following manner: *Prajñāpāramitā* literature (pp. 257–259), other *sūtra*s, mainly from the last cycle of teachings (pp. 259–280), *śāstra* literature in its historical order (pp. 280–287), *tantra*s (pp. 288–291), and tantric literature in the form of *dohā*s (pp. 291–292).

a second method to prove or undermine legitimacy in general, and that is logic or reasoning (*rigs pa/yukti*). Especially in the present "times of degeneration," as the following quote explicates, both principles are important to eliminate misunderstanding and false prophets[58]:

> In the darkness that is gathering in the time of the evil aeon
> Fear excels owing to deceivers who have no faith.
> [But] by the radiance of a million suns of scripture and logic
> [Their] confused words are shown as a heap of ashes.

While scriptural authority can be used to assess a concrete statement by comparing it with another (Indian) statement, the task of logic is to investigate the validity of a statement on its own grounds, and, especially, to point out possible contradictions and unwanted consequences that could be drawn from the statements of one's opponents. The principle of logic also comes into play in cases of an apparent contradiction between explanations of later Tibetan scholastics and the authoritative Indian scriptures they refer to.

Both adversaries claim their place in a line of pure transmission of Indian Buddhism and accept the general principle of unity with this tradition to fortify their positions. However, both of them, for various reasons, manoeuvred themselves into a situation where a particular statement of their interpretation of the BCA is in direct contradiction to the reading of Prajñākaramati, an eminent commentator of the eleventh century, whom both adversaries accept as the main Indian authority on the BCA.[59] Confronted with the criticism that the respective interpretations would not be in accordance with authoritative scripture, here embodied in Prajñākaramati's *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā*, both scholars resorted to the principle of logic or reasoning (*rigs pa/yukti*) to call for a more detailed investigation of the scripture and a differentiation of different levels of meaning. As expressed in the following defence by Mi pham, a common strategy would be to distinguish between literal phrasing (*sgra*) and

58 *'Ju lan* 383.1f.:
bskal ngan dus kyi mun nag rub pa'i nang||
yid ches bsal ba zob kyis 'jigs dam pa||
lung rigs nyi ma 'bum phrag 'od zer gyis||
ngag tshig 'chal ba thal ba'i phung por mtshon||

59 These cases are connected to the interpretation of BCA IX.46 (and the larger question of the understanding of emptiness by Arhats) and BCA IX.78. For a detailed analysis of the respective discussions, see Viehbeck (2014, 125–150, 109–125).

actual meaning (*don*)[60] and claim unity with the latter, while admitting a superficial deviation, as it is now explained, with regard to the former[61]:

> Individual texts put forth different ways of explanation, but why should one be tainted by a fault simply because one did not repeat solely the earlier [way of explanation] as long as there is no contradiction with regard to the meaning?

The same distinction is also drawn by Rab gsal, who further emphasises a relation of dependency between the two principles, in which the meaning of a specific statement needs to be established by reasoning[62]:

> Scriptures are the basis of investigating whether [their meaning] is literal or not, and [this] is determined by immaculate reasoning [. . .].

In this way, the authoritative power of scripture can be limited and made subordinate to reasoning[63]:

> Even to say that [something] was explained by many Indian scriptures is not substantial as a proof.

Also Mi pham, in his reply to the criticism by Rab gsal, agrees with the relation between scriptural authority and logic as he laid out[64]:

> It is explained that if one discovers the correct reasoning [of a text] by means of logic when one investigates the meaning of a text through logic, then one should give priority to logical reasoning. We, too, accept that and engage in investigation in such a way.

As indicated by Mi pham, this kind of argumentation is in line with theoretical discussions that commonly accept the supremacy of reasoning over scripture. Still, in practical terms, opponents are not likely to accept such attempts of theoretical balancing between the principles of scripture and reasoning readily.

---

60 This distinction is crucial in many other contexts that discuss Buddhist hermeneutics and plays a very important role, for example, in the setting forth of rules for translation from Indic languages to Tibetan, as expressed in the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*, referred to earlier.

61 *Rab lan* 198.3f.: *gzhung so sos 'chad tshul mi 'dra ba byas kyang don la 'gal ba med na snga ma kho na bskyar zlos ma byas pa tsam zhig gis skyon ci la 'go|.*

62 *'Ju lan* 389.3f.: *lung rnams ni sgra ji bzhin yin min dpyod pa'i gzhi yin zhing| dri ma med pa'i rigs pas gtan la 'beb pa* [. . .].

63 *'Ju lan* 389.5: *rgya gzhung mang pos bshad zer ba yang sgrub byed du mi che ste|.*

64 *Rab lan* 227.6: *lung don rigs pas dpyad nas rigs pas 'thad pa yang dag pa mthong na rigs pa dbang btsan dgos par bshad pa ltar bdag cag gis kyang de ltar 'dod nas dpyad pa la zhugs pa yin no|.*

With regard to the cases quoted, opponents considered their arguments successful as soon as a deviation, even if it was just one in literal phrasing, was admitted. Situations like those above, where Tibetan scholars admit an inconsistency, however superficial, between their own statements and the authoritative Indian scriptures are therefore rather rare. Nevertheless, these instances are important, as they illustrate central aspects of the nature and the development of Tibetan scholastic thought.

9.6 Innovation within Tradition?

First of all, there is the rather trivial, but not insignificant, observation that a Tibetan Buddhist scholar could decide to deviate from the Indian tradition, at least in its literal manifestations. While such a move entails very much the danger of being accused of deceit by a rival colleague, the scholar under attack could still appeal to the conceptual toolbox of Indian Buddhist hermeneutics to legitimise his viewpoint. There, support by scriptural authority and support by reasoning are given as two guiding principles. In practical terms, scriptural proof weighs very heavily, but reasoning can also be used to modify any specific statement. Reasoning thus employed can provide a loophole for Tibetan scholars, which allows them to engage more freely and creatively with the texts they inherited from their Indian predecessors. But the usage of reasoning to interpret these very texts and to determine their precise meaning can also be seen as a core element in their self-proclaimed duty to expound, transmit, and preserve the original message of Indian Buddhism with the tools they took over from this very tradition.

Understood in this sense, the agency and creativity of Tibetan scholars can very well be aligned with the standard narrative of Buddhist transmission, which develops a highly asymmetrical relationship between Buddhism in India and in Tibet. In this perspective, original, pure Buddhism emerges from India, and the Tibetans' role is limited to preserving this tradition and to defending it against any alteration. Therefore, conformity with the Indian tradition, proven through scriptural evidence, but also through logical proof, can be employed as a means to settle disputes among Tibetan philosophers who struggle for the supremacy of their individual traditions as true advocates of the original teaching. The mere fact that such differences developed, and the way Tibetan scholars react when confronted with the criticism of a possible deviation from the Indian tradition, however, reveals a creative aspect. Other than what the grand narrative suggests, enacting the principal authority of the Indian tradition is not merely a passive concession to the flow of

Buddhism from India to Tibet, but requires the active engagement of Tibetan scholars. In this endeavour, they connect to and select individual teachings, which they interpret in a specific sense – and they are prepared to argue for their individual readings by quoting other authoritative scriptures or resorting to logical reasoning. The application of the two principles of scriptural authority and logical proof thus provides a space of negotiation in which Tibetan scholars find their identity as heirs of the Buddha in a twofold, yet connected way: as passive preservers and, at the same time, active enunciators of the original teaching.

9.7 Conclusion: Emic and Etic Perspectives in Working with Polemical Literature

As has become clear by now, the discourse of our present investigation, but also the entire genre of polemical literature that it is part of, is not necessarily concerned with an impartial representation and discussion of the philosophical other. Rather, its literary production is to be framed within a strong agenda of delineating and defending individual scholastic traditions. The following warning by Dan Martin therefore appears apt[65]:

> When dealing with a polemic all the usual problematics of scholarly objectivity and impartiality rise to the surface. [. . .] We should hear and weigh the statements and arguments from all parties of course, while recognizing that polemic is extreme testimony often produced under a state of duress and usually put forward in order to induce a state of duress.

With their importance for the identity of Tibetan scholars, relations to India figure prominently in polemical discussion, and rival scholars will not miss an opportunity to scrutinise and question these relations. Even if their reasons for attacking in the first place are less than noble, they still might point us to interesting aspects in the philosophical system of an author, in particular to its more innovative features. They will not, however, spare us from the work of evaluating the argumentative validity of this system along with that of its

65 Martin (1997, 263). While I agree with Dan Martin's warning that personal agendas in writing polemical texts must be considered, it should also be noted that engagement in polemics as such, is, from a Tibetan scholastic point of view, not an extreme action, but rather standard knowledge production phrased along the idealised trio of exposition, disputation, and composition (*'chad rtsod rtsom gsum*).

criticism, if that is at all what we are interested in. If we are fortunate enough to be able to deal with a more extended debate, with arguments being exchanged back and forth over several steps, we can even observe how Tibetan scholastics themselves engage in such a kind of intellectual sparring. Analysing polemical literature therefore not only shows how legitimacy in terms of a close connection to Indian Buddhism can be questioned, but also exposes strategies that have been developed to cope with such an accusation.[66] Negotiations between the principles of scriptural authority and logical reasoning are a fundamental part of such processes and exhibit the productive power of these principles for the creation of Tibetan Buddhist thought, in allowing for a sliding along the (historically) Indian and (typologically) Indic scale, if we were to put it in Seyfort Ruegg's terms. While I also acknowledge this distinction as pointing to core forces in Tibetan Buddhist scholasticism, I hope I have been able to demonstrate how the tension that this distinction entails is eminent to emic discussions about the legitimacy of individual formulations of Tibetan Buddhist thought. This itself should not diminish the explanatory potential of this distinction when looking at Tibetan Buddhist writing from an outside perspective, but it should remind us to be careful in keeping these perspectives apart. And lastly, the stress laid on relations to India by Tibetan scholars themselves, but also the strong connections we observe from an outside perspective should not blind us to the possibility that some Tibetan scholars in some situations, against all odds, emancipated themselves from their Indian heritage and entertained thoughts that went not only beyond Indian sources, but also Indic models.

References

Sanskrit Sources

BCAP (Skt.) Louis de La Vallée Poussin, ed., Prajñākaramati's Commentary to the Bodhicaryāvatāra of Śāntideva. Calcutta, 1901–1914.

66 For a list of other, potentially interesting features that the investigation of polemical literature can address, see Cabezón (1995b, 647–648).

Tibetan Sources

BCAP (Tib.)	Shes rab 'byung gnas blo gros, *Byang chub kyi spyod pa la 'jug pa'i dka' 'grel*. In *Bstan 'gyur dpe bsdur ma*. Beijing: Khrung go'i bod rig pa'i dpe skrun khang, 1994–2008: vol. 61, pp. 1049–1685 (TBRC W1PD95844).
Brgal lan nyin snang	'Ju Mi pham rnam rgyal rgya mtsho, *Brgal lan nyin byed snang ba*. In MPSB: vol. 14 (*ca*), pp. 97–189.
Dge 'dun chos 'phel 2009	Dge 'dun chos 'phel, *Mkhas dbang dge 'dun chos 'phel gyi gsung 'bum*. Vol. 2 (*smad cha*). Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2009.
Dpal sprul bka' 'bum	Rdza Dpal sprul, *Dpal sprul bka' 'bum*. 5 vols. Chengdu: Southwest Minorities Institute, 1996? (TBRC W5832).
Dpal sprul rnam thar	Mkhan po Kun dpal, *O rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po'i rnam thar dad pa'i gsos sman bdud rtsi'i bum bcud*. In *Dpal sprul bka' 'bum*: vol. 5, pp. 775–853.
Ga bur chu rgyun	Dpa' ris Blo bzang rab gsal, *Shes ldan yid kyi gdung sel rigs lam ga bur chu rgyun*. In RSSB: 423–470.
Ga bur thig pa'i spun zla	Ldan ma Blo bzang chos dbyings, *'Ju mi pham 'jam dbyangs rnam rgyal rgya mtsho'i rtsod yig gi lan blo dman snying gi gdung sel ga bur thig pa'i spun zla*. In *Rtsod lan gyi rim phyogs gcig tu bsdebs pa thub bstan byi dor* (*Blo bzang dgongs rgyan mu tig phreng mdzes deb bco brgyad pa*). Mundgod: Drepung Loseling Educational Society, 1996: 128–223.
'Ju lan	Dpa' ris Blo bzang rab gsal, *'Jam dpal dbyangs kyi dgongs rgyan rigs pa'i gzi 'bar gdong lnga'i sgra dbyangs*. In RSSB: 367–421.
MPSB	'Ju Mi pham rnam rgyal rgya mtsho, *'Jam mgon mi pham rgya mtsho gi gsung 'bum*. 27 vols., edited by Lama Ngodrup & Sherab Drimey. Paro, 1984–1993 (TBRC W23468).
Nor bu ke ta ka	'Ju Mi pham rnam rgyal rgya mtsho, *Shes rab kyi le'u'i tshig don go sla bar rnam par bshad pa nor bu ke ta ka*. In MPSB: vol. 14 (*ca*), pp. 1–95.
Pa sangs dbang 'dus 2012	Pa tshab Pa sangs dbang 'dus, "Gsar du thon pa'i spu rgyal bod dang mnga' ris stod kyi rgyal rabs skor gyi rtsa che'i yig rnying ngo sprod." In Rdo sbis Tshe ring rdo rje, ed., *Deng rabs bod rig pa'i skor gyi dpyad rtsom gces btus: 'Tshol zhib dang mtha' dpyod*. Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2012: 601–632.

(continued)

Rab lan	'Ju Mi pham rnam rgyal rgya mtsho, *Gzhan gyis brtsad pa'i lan mdor bsdus pa rigs lam rab gsal de nyid snang byed*. In MPSB: vol. 14 (*ca*), pp. 191–464.
RSSB	Dpa' ris Blo bzang rab gsal, *Gsung 'bum, Blo bzang rab gsal*. Sku 'bum: Sku 'bum par khang, 199? (TBRC W00EGS1017359).
Yang lan	'Ju Mi pham rnam rgyal rgya mtsho, *Mkhas mchog blo bzang rab gsal mdun phul rgyu rjes ma*. In MPSB: vol. 14 (*ca*), pp. 464–473.

English & German Sources

Bretfeld, Sven. 2004. "The 'Great Debate' of bSam yas: Construction and Deconstruction of a Tibetan Buddhist Myth." *Asiatische Studien* 58.1:15–56.

Cabezón, José I. 1994. *Buddhism and Language: A Study of Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Cabezón, José I. 1995a. "Buddhist Studies as a discipline and the role of theory." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 18.2:231–268.

Cabezón, José I. 1995b. "On the *Sgra pa shes rab rin chen pa'i rtsod lan* of Paṇ chen Blo bzang chos rgyan." *Asiatische Studien* 49.4:643–69.

Cabezón, José I., and Geshe Lobsang Dargyay. 2007. *Freedom from Extremes: Gorampa's "Distinguishing the Views" and the Polemics of Emptiness*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

De Jong, Jan W. 1997. *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America*. Tokyo: Kosei Publ.

Dreyfus, Georges B.J. 2003. *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk*. Berkeley et al.: University of California Press.

Freiberger, Oliver. 2009 (2007). "The disciplines of Buddhist Studies – Notes on religious commitment as boundary marker." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 30.1–2:299–318.

Genette, Gérard. 1997. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gómez, Luis O. 1999. "The Way of the Translators: Three Recent Translations of Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*." *Buddhist Literature* 1:262–354.

Hayes, Richard P. 1984. "The Question of Doctrinalism in the Buddhist Epistemologists." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 52.4:645–670.

Huntington, C.W. 1995. "A lost text of early Indian Madhyamaka." *Asiatische Studien* 49: 693–767.

Huntington, C.W. 2003. "Was Candrakīrti a Prāsaṅgika?" In *The Svātantrika-Prāsaṅgika Distinction: What Difference Does a Difference Make?*, edited by Georges B.J. Dreyfus and Sara L. McClintock, 67–91. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

Kapstein, Matthew. 2000. *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation and Memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Karmay, Samten G. 1980. "The Ordinance of Lha Bla-ma Ye-shes-'od." In *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*, edited by Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi, 150–162. Warminster: Aris & Philips.

Karmay, Samten G. 2015. "A Decree of lHa Bla ma Ye shes 'od." In *Cultural Flows across the Western Himalaya*, edited by Patrick McAllister, Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, and Helmut Krasser, 477–485. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Lopez, Donald S., Jr. 1996. "Polemical Literature (*dGag lan*)." In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, edited by José I. Cabezón and Roger R. Jackson, 217–228. Ithaca/New York: Snow Lion Publications.

Lopez, Donald S., Jr. 2009. *In the Forest of Faded Wisdom: 104 Poems by Gendun Chopel*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Martin, Dan. 1997. "Beyond Acceptance and Rejection? The Anti-Bon Polemic Included in the Thirteenth-Century *Single Intention* (*Dgong-gcig Yig-cha*) and Its Background in Tibetan Religious History." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 25:263–305.

Nance, Richard. 2007. "On what do we rely when we rely on reasoning?" *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 35:149–167.

Scherrer-Schaub, Cristina. 2002. "Enacting Words: A Diplomatic Analysis of the Imperial Decrees (*bkas bcad*) and their Application in the *Sgra sbyor bam po gñis pa* Tradition." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 25.1–2:263–340.

Schwieger, Peter. 2000. "Geschichte als Mythos: zur Aneignung von Vergangenheit in der tibetischen Kultur: ein kulturwissenschaftlicher Essay." *Asiatische Studien* 54:945–973.

Seyfort Ruegg, David. 1989. *Buddha-nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective. On the Transmission and Reception of Buddhism in India and Tibet*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies.

Seyfort Ruegg, David. 2004. "The Indian and the Indic in Tibetan Cultural History, and Tsong kha pa's Achievement as a Scholar and Thinker: an Essay on the Concepts of Buddhism in Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32:321–343.

Snellgrove, David L. 1987. *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and their Tibetan Successors*. London: Serindia Publications.

Tillemans, Tom J.F. 1995. "Foreword." *Asiatische Studien* 49:641–642.

Van der Kuijp, Leonard W.J. 1996. "Tibetan Historiography." In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, edited by José I. Cabezon and Roger R. Jackson, 39–56. Ithaca/New York: Snow Lion Publications.

Viehbeck, Markus. 2014. *Polemics in Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism: A Late* 19th*-Century Debate between 'Ju Mi pham and Dpa' ris Rab gsal*. Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien Universität Wien.

Viehbeck, Markus. 2016. "An Indian Classic in 19th-Century Tibet and beyond: Rdza Dpal sprul and the Dissemination of the *Bodhi(sattva)caryāvatāra*." *Revue d'Études Tibétaines* 36: 5–44.

Waddell, L. Austine. 1895. *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism, with its Mystic Cults, Symbolism and Mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism*. London: W.H. Allen & Co.

Jonathan Samuels

10 Revisiting the Emic Perspective: Lessons to Be Learnt from the Worldly–Other-Worldly Distinction in Tibet and Beyond

10.1 Introduction

The "worldly–other-worldly" division (Sanskrit: *laukika–lokottara*) is usually presented as a contrastive opposition of Indic origin, frequent reference to which occurs in various Buddhist textual traditions. In general terms, this binary division seeks to delineate the other-worldly or transmundane – i.e. "something that is related to attaining liberation (*vimokṣa*) from *saṃsāra* or that leads to such liberation" (Buswell and Lopez 2014, 481) – seen to lie at the heart of the Buddhist doctrine, from areas that are judged as "mundane." Thus, according to traditional literature, the spiritual path of the true renunciate, along with the ideals and goals that inspire it, belong to an order that transcends the everyday affairs of human society. The scheme has attracted considerable academic attention, and has been dealt with at length by Seyfort Ruegg (2008) particularly in relation to India and Tibet.[1]

On at least three counts this division seems notable. Firstly, this is an emic distinction, thus whatever controversies there might be regarding the validity and applicability of various western theoretical and metatheoretical frameworks, it at least seems to be an account from *within the culture*. Secondly, as with numerous other translated terms and categories, this division is commonly referred to in Buddhist writings from a variety of territories and times. However, the significant doctrinal, historical, and social dimensions to this division elaborated on

1 I wish to thank Berthe Jansen, Markus Viehbeck, and Birgit Kellner for the comments and suggestions that they made regarding draft versions of this work. I am especially grateful to Birgit Kellner for her shrewd observations, from which this study has much benefitted.

Note: Research for this article was conducted within the subproject "Buddhism between South Asia and Tibet – Negotiating Religious Boundaries in Doctrine and Practice" of the interdisciplinary research group "Negotiating Religion From a Transcultural Perspective" at the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context – The Dynamics of Transculturality," University of Heidelberg.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110413083-010

below indicate that it has had far more currency than the majority of these shared items, the impact of which has largely been confined to the domains of literature and traditional scholarship. The worldly–other-worldly distinction is what might conventionally be described as "cross-cultural."[2] It might also, in the view of some, deserve to be regarded as a "transcultural phenomenon," especially if one understands transculturality as referring to something that *traverses* of linguistic, ethnic, and territorial boundaries, and can fruitfully be examined in terms of its border-crossing aspects. Lastly, although this scheme is one that has been promoted by religious thinkers and writers, its application has been diverse. The "worldly" side of the division evidently embraces many aspects of what would commonly be judged "secular." As such, the division seems to promise insights into how relations and boundaries between the religious and non-religious domains have been negotiated in different cultural contexts.

In traditional texts the worldly–other-worldly division is generally treated as self-evident, or explained in terms of a foundational myth. Many academics, on the other hand, feel compelled to lift this binary from its original cultural setting(s), and interpret it in terms of a "bigger" theoretical picture. Previous studies have often sought to frame discussion of the division within, or use it as a point of departure for, engagement with the broader themes of the religious–secular divide.

10.2 Studies of the Emic Division

The worldly–other-worldly division is relevant to larger debates about religion in pre-modern Asia. It has been argued, particularly in discussions informed by post-colonial theory (McCutcheon 1997, 1998), that the division between the religious and secular spheres is one that has been projected onto spatially and/or chronologically remote cultures.[3] More generally, it has also been asserted that "religion" is a non-native term, "created by scholars for their intellectual purposes" (Smith 1998, 281). However, Kleine has asserted, with respect to medieval Japan (2013, 2–8), that the worldly–other-worldly division represents persuasive evidence of a clear, self-conscious distinction between religious and

2 Terms for the worldly are Pāli: *lokiya*; Chinese: *shijian*; Japanese: *seken*; Korean: *segan*; Tibetan: *'jig rten*. Those for the other-worldly are Pāli: *lokuttara*; Chinese: *chushijian*; Japanese: *shusseken*; Korean: *ch'ulsegan*; Tibetan: *'jig rten las 'das pa* (Buswell and Lopez 2014, 467–468, 481).

3 For further discussion on this issue see Kleine (2013, 2–9).

secular spheres, at least when one is prepared to judge the terms or concepts involved as "functional equivalents" (2013, 7).

Some form of worldly–other-worldly distinction might be seen as integral to a Buddhist view of the universe, and a strong link exists between this distinction and the most fundamental binary division of *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra*: a division which "may in fact be described as the oldest emic secondary encoding by which the more general guiding distinction transcendent (*lokottara*)/immanent (*laukika*) is specified from a soteriological perspective" (Kleine 2013, 15).[4] As demonstrated in two of its most common applications – governance and inter-religious relationships (discussed below) – the worldly–other-worldly scheme seems regularly to have been employed in attempts to navigate relations between religious ideal and social reality. Where the designations *saṃsāra* and the *saṃsāric* have been used, the message is generally uncompromising: these are things to be shunned. In contrast, the term "worldly" has commonly seemed to recognise the provisional necessity (even for those seeking liberation) of various aspects of the mundane. Thus, the worldly–other-worldly division has often "served as an organizing principle for ordering a complex world of religious and cultural representations" (Seyfort Ruegg 2008, 40).

The Pāli (*lokiya–lokuttara*) and Sanskrit (*laukika–lokottara*) versions of the worldly–other-worldly division were obviously earlier formulations than those that eventually appeared in China, Japan, Tibet, and elsewhere. Questions remain about the origins and relation between these two.[5] However, it was obviously the prevalence of Theravāda or Mahāyāna Buddhism (with their respective canons and literatures) that determined which of the two was primarily referenced in any given geographical area or cultural setting. The Pāli language version (i.e. *lokiya–lokuttara*) has been discussed, among others, by Ames (1964), Southwold (1978; 1983), and Holt (1991, 19–26), especially in the Sinhalese context, whereas Tambiah has considered the division in the Thai setting (1970, 40; 1976, 9, 41–43). Most of these works adopt an anthropological approach and a synchronic perspective regarding the scheme. It is furthermore sometimes used in support of the distinction between a "great" and "little"

4 Aspects of this touch upon the systems theory promoted by Luhmann, which Kleine has connected with the worldly–other-worldly distinction (see below).

5 Gombrich seems to dismiss the idea that Pāli has some prior claim to these terms by asserting that they are "pure Sanskrit" (1971, 58). He also identifies this as a scholarly division (1971, 58). This statement may be as much about the community that has greatest use for the division as about its origin. But it should be noted that Southwold, who like Gombrich worked in Sri Lanka (although a different area), reports that the division enjoys widespread usage even on village level (1983, 77).

tradition – i.e. the division between monastic Buddhism and village Buddhism. Many in the social sciences treat the analytical framework of dualistic oppositions as an essential way to approach explorations of the ritual, social, and other domains. As explained below, discussions about the worldly–other-worldly regularly compare and dispute its relationship with western bipartite divisions.

Regarding the Sanskritic branch of the worldly–other-worldly division (and its various offshoots), apart from the other studies cited below, special mention should be made of Seyfort Ruegg's work on the topic. Based chiefly on Sanskritic sources, particularly in relation to the interface with Tibet, his interest in the division culminated in his detailed study of 2008, entitled, *The symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism in South Asia and of Buddhism with 'local cults' in Tibet and the Himalayan region*. Some of the themes Seyfort Ruegg deals with have some relevance to contemporary or recent practices, but in line with others who concentrate on the (Sanskritic) *laukika–lokottara*, he examines it mainly through the medium of historical religious literature. Some of the points he makes regarding Tibet are considered below.

10.3 A Cross-Cultural Division

Before examining some more specific points regarding the use of the worldly–other-worldly division in the Tibetan situation, it is worth discussing two areas in which the division has been most commonly cited. These are: 1. Governance, and 2. Interreligious relationships. As well as illustrating ways that the division has been used in different contexts, this discussion will highlight some of the correspondences that seem to support the idea that the division be viewed as a single, cross-cultural phenomenon.

10.3.1 Governance

A chief paradigm in Buddhist literature for developing some concept of a secular domain – in contrast with a spiritual one – is the description of duties of the *dharmarāja* ("righteous king"). The worldly–other-worldly distinction seems regularly to have been employed as a way of circumscribing dual domains, often characterised as "secular" and "religious." Tambiah deals at length with the latter divide, providing Pāli and Sanskrit literary sources, and explores the concept in the context of the Thai monarchy, an institution he proposes is to some extent based upon the worldly–other-worldly divide (Tambiah 1976, 9, 41). Vital to the

understanding of the dual domains is the presence of parallel jurisdictions and rules, or codes of law. Kleine suggests that certain areas of discourse in medieval Japan were organised around the binary code of the "ruler's law" (*ōbō*) and "Buddha's law" (*buppō*). He quotes the prominent figure Rennyo (1415–1499), the "second founder of Jōdo Shinshū," as one who links the two systems with the worldly (*seken*) and other-worldly division (*shusseken*) (2013, 23). Kleine talks of a "*ōbō*/*buppō* dichotomy," and shows how medieval writers developed the concept of an "interdependence of the ruler's law and the Buddha's law" (*ōbō buppō sōi*). He proposes that this interdependence represents more than mere co-operation between state and "church" institutions, and should be interpreted as a dichotomy that is a "culturally specific emic variation of the religious/secular distinction" (Kleine 2013, 23).

Even though aspects of the dichotomy may be specific to the Thai or Japanese situations, there are interesting parallels with Tibet. The notion of the division between spiritual (*chos*) and temporal (*srid*) orders, and particularly the "union" of these (*chos srid zung 'brel*) was put forward as the ideal system for governance by the Fifth Dalai Lama (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1617–1682) at the foundation of the dGa' ldan pho brang administration (Cüppers 2004, 8). Much earlier, there are specific references to the worldly–other-worldly division in relation to dual jurisdictions and codes of law. Very similar formulations to the Japanese ones appear: the "ruler's law" (*rgyal khrims*) and the "religious law" (*chos khrims*). It is again the worldly–other-worldly division that is cited in support of this distinction.[6]

More specifically, the worldly–other-worldly (Tibetan: *'jig rten–'jig rten las 'das pa*) has served as a key framework within a genre of literature which takes governance and statecraft as one of its principal themes. In Tibet, the genre is referred to as "treatises on worldly affairs" (*'jig rten lugs kyi bstan bcos* or simply *lugs kyi bstan bcos*), and is associated with the Sanskrit *Arthaśāstra* literature, and perhaps more especially, with the various *Nītiśāstra*.[7] Tibetan authors identify certain *Mahāyānasūtra*s as sources for these teachings, but are particularly keen to cite works attributed to Nāgārjuna, especially the *Nītiśāstraprajñādaṇḍa* (*Shes rab sdong bu*), *Nītiśāstrajantupoṣaṇabindu* (*sKye bo gso ba'i thigs pa*), the fourth chapter of *Ratnāvalī* (*Rin chen phreng ba*), and *Suhṛllekha* (*bShes pa'i spring yig*). The latter two works present themselves as advice on ethics and politics to a king and prince respectively. This format inspired Tibetan authors such

6 For discussion of the twin codes, especially in the Tibetan monastic context see Jansen (2014, 191–220).

7 Pathak examines a group of eight *Nīti* texts translated from Sanskrit and preserved in Tibetan (1974, 25–45).

as 'Ju mi pham rgya mtsho (1846–1912), who composed his own "Treatise on Kingship" (*rGyal po'i lugs kyi bstan bcos*).[8] The principal aim is to inform the ruler of religious responsibilities, but his estate is presented entirely in terms of the *worldly* domain (*'jig rten*): i.e. drawing from the worldly–other-worldly distinction.

The ruler in the case of 'Ju mi pham's work was Ngag dbang 'jam dpal rin chen, ruler of the territory of Derge (*sDe dge*) in Eastern Tibet. Apart from reference to this ruler in the short colophon,[9] information about the historical background is almost totally lacking. Quite apart from their desire to conform to literary norms, Buddhist writers such as 'Ju mi pham also wished to project the universal appeal and relevance of their message, something that was best achieved by lifting it out of a historically and geographically specific context. For the most part, such works refer to an idealised vision of society, based upon the four-fold Indian *varṇa*-system, and are often almost entirely devoid of explicit details regarding their actual setting.[10] These works are, however, clear about their sources. In the colophon, 'Ju mi pham cites a long list of texts, including, among others, the aforesaid works of Nāgārjuna, as well as the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra* (Sūtra of Golden Light). Thus, despite the tendency towards the universalistic portrayal, these authors present us with evidence that allows us to identify the fonts of their inspiration and plot historical routes of communication for schemes such as the worldly–other-worldly one.

10.3.2 Interreligious Relationships

Seyfort Ruegg's earlier remark regarding the way that the worldly–other-worldly opposition has "served as an organizing principle" alluded to its appearance at the interface between Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions. Kleine proposes that the scheme has, since ancient times, "served as an apologetic strategy by which Buddhists demonstrated their superiority over other cults while accepting religious plurality" (2013, 18). Evidence of this appears, for instance, in China, where the worldly–other-worldly distinction (*shijian–chushijian*) played a role in

8 For more discussion of this work see Hartley (1997). A translation, entitled "Mipam's Treatise on Royal Ethics," by José Cabezón, is also forthcoming (no publication details yet available).

9 See pp.197–200 of the Shes rig dpar khang edition.

10 This is not to dismiss the issue of classes and outcastes as irrelevant to the Tibetan situation. But we refer here to a literary reimagining of the culturally distant and socially distinct Indian system based on the *varṇa* model.

a re-characterisation of Buddhism's relations with other traditions. From the 5th century CE, in elite discourses, the doctrine of the Three Teachings (*san-jiao*) was promoted. This conceived of the religious landscape as a single conceptual unit, within which Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism were all necessary and harmonious components (Gentz 2013, 125). From the 6th century onwards, however, the growing self-awareness and self-assertiveness of Buddhism brought about what has commonly been interpreted as a "strong tendency towards Indianization" (Gentz 2013, 125). Rejection of the doctrine of the Three Teachings in some quarters expressed itself through increased reliance upon the language of the worldly–other-worldly distinction: Buddhism was other-worldly, whereas Daoism and Confucianism were branded "worldly." In Buddhist polemical literature, in response to Daoist criticisms of Buddhism, Daoism is accused of concerning itself *solely* with the "worldly" realm (Gentz 2013, 125).

As well as being used to characterise relations between differing religious traditions, the scheme has been deployed assiduously in the branding of specific classes of the unseen community. Buddhist literature served as a medium for the export of various specifically Indic gods and spirits classified as "worldly" (i.e. in doctrinal terms, understood as belonging to the *saṃsāric* rather than the *nirvāṇic* side of the binary). Although scholars occasionally attempted to place certain native deities among the ranks of the other-worldly, the more usual approach seems to have been to consign indigenous deities to the category of the worldly, as happened, for example, with the *kami* in medieval Japan (Kleine 2013, 18).[11]

The division between the worldly deities (*'jig rten gyi lha*) and other-worldly deities (*'jig rten las 'das pa'i lha*) is particularly well established in Tibet. According to the standard narrative, it was necessary, during the 8th century, for the Indian master Padmasambhava, to "tame" numerous worldly gods (i.e. indigenous deities), many of which were then forced to swear service as "protectors" (*srung ma* and *chos skyong*) of the Dharma.[12] The language of the division can be traced back to the imperial period (7th–9th centuries), as evidenced by

11 As exception to this, noted by Kleine, is that during the Japanese Heian period (794–1185) attempts were made to identify various *kami* with emanations of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas (2013, 18, n. 31).

12 For the first and still perhaps most detailed study of the protector deity phenomenon see René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz's 1956 work, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities*.

stele inscriptions from the era. The 'Phyong rgyas inscription (ca. 797),[13] which celebrates the reign of Khri srong lde btsan, refers to the Buddhist tradition he is credited with championing as "the Benign *Other-worldly* Dharma."[14] Clearly, this served to distinguish it from some "worldly" other(s). In a similarly early text,[15] celebrating the foundation of the *De ga g.yu tshal* monastery, there is reference to "all of the worldly gods and *nāga*s."[16]

Commonly speaking, in contrast to the other-worldly deities, the worldly gods are portrayed as "malicious, excitable, and easily offended" (Mengele 2010, 111). References to these gods and practices devoted to them have often appeared in writings on the precepts accompanying the taking of refuge in the Three Jewels. The standard advice, such as that offered by Grags pa bshad sgrub (1675–1748?), has been[17]: "One is not to take refuge in worldly gods in any long-term sense. However, this does not preclude reliance upon them for the sake of achieving a short-term improvement in one's condition(s), just as someone who is afflicted by illness will rely upon a physician."[18]

As in the case of the *varṇa*-based social model, Tibetan authors have generally inserted details from an Indian setting into these passages. Hence, most commonly in this context, the worldly gods cited are the likes of Brahma and Indra,[19] figures which might have had limited relevance to the Tibetan readership.[20] Occasionally, however, both Indic and indigenous deities are explicitly mentioned, such as by O rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po (rDza dpal sprul rin po che, 1808–1887) in his *Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*:

> Once one has gone for refuge in the Buddha, it is said that one should not prostrate oneself before gods who are still migrating through *saṃsāra*: gods of the non-Buddhist *tīrthika*s, such as Śiva and Viṣṇu, are not free from their own sufferings within *saṃsāra*. One should also not regard powerful worldly gods and spirits such as the "regional

13 This and the other imperial-era passages cited appear on the Old Tibetan Documents Online website (see bibliography).

14 *'jig rten las 'das pa'i chos bzang po* (line 29).

15 Text ITJ 0751.

16 *'jig rten gyI lha klu thams cad* (line 37).

17 In his work entitled: *Byang chub lam rim chen mo'i snying po bsdus pa rje'i dgongs gsal dgyes byed mchod sprin*.

18 *'jig rten pa'i lha la phugs kyi skyabs su bzung nas skyabs su mi 'gro ba yin gyi / 'phral gyi mthun rkyen sgrub pa'i ched du re bltos byed pa mi 'gal te / nad kyis btab pas sman pa la re brtos byed pa bzhin no* (Grags pa bshad sgrub 2009, 59).

19 For a discussion on viewing these as "pan-Indian" deities, shared by Buddhism and other religions see Seyfort Ruegg (2008, 19–29).

20 Deities bearing the same names do appear in Tibetan protector deity practices. However, in the context of taking refuge, the reference is to gods who belong to the foreign (i.e. Indian) setting.

> deities" (*yul lha*) and the "site-owners" (*gzhi bdag*) as sources of refuge beyond this life, then prostrate to them, making offerings and the like.[21]

Two groups of gods (i.e. foreign and indigenous) are acknowledged, but the message is that both occupy the same category, and that the worldly–other-worldly distinction is applicable, irrespective of cultural setting. Their subordinate status is reaffirmed, but no attempt is made to dissuade the propitiation of these worldly gods. Belief in the power and usefulness of these beings is encouraged, although strict boundaries are delineated: they cannot help in matters beyond the present life.

References to the worldly deities' efficacy go back to imperial times, as attested in the passage in the aforesaid De ga g.yu tshal text: "As this manifestation of the peace treaty's excellence is something known and verified by the Three Jewels and all the worldly gods and *nāga*s it is hoped that (the agreement and the political order) will steadily endure forever."[22] Here it is both the Three Jewels and the worldly deities that are solemnly invoked to bear witness and guarantee observance of a peace treaty, thereby securing political order.[23] The rest of the text seems to indicate that this evocation of the worldly beings is necessary due precisely to their jurisdiction over mundane matters.

In general terms, the view is that in contrast to the other-worldly deities, the worldly gods concern themselves with mundane affairs and function on a far more "human" level. Hence, they can be manipulated to serve ends which from the other-worldly perspective may be judged as of short-term value or even unworthy. This does not, however, mean that practices associated within the class marks any sort of divide in the Tibetan situation between "higher" monastic Buddhism and village Buddhism. Authors, even those from the most monastically-inclined Gelug (*dGe lugs*) school, have produced detailed works on the taxonomies and collected biographies of protector deities.[24] Similarly,

---

21 *sangs rgyas la skyabs su song nas 'khor bar 'khor ba'i lha la phyag mi btsal zhes bya ste / phyi rol mu stegs pa'i lha dbang phyug dang khyab 'jug la sogs rang nyid 'khor ba'i sdug bsngal las ma grol ba rnams dang / gzhan yang yul lha dang gzhi bdag la sogs pa 'jig rten gyi lha 'dre mthu bo che rnams la phyi ma'i skyabs gnas su bzung nas phyag dang mchod pa la sogs pa mi bya* (rDza dpal sprul rin po che 2003, 176).

22 *mjal dum gyI legs pa chen po mngon sum du mdzad (37r2) pa 'dI dkon mchog gsum dang / 'jig rten gyI lha klu thams cad kyis kyang mkhyend cIng gzigs pas na / nam du yang myI 'gyur zhing brtan bar smond to.*

23 The peace treaty in question appears to be the Sino-Tibetan one of 821–822.

24 Of the most celebrated we find *Dam can bstan srung gi rnam thar* by Sle lung bzhad pa'i rdo rje (1697–1740) and *bsTan srung dam can rgya mtsho'i mtshan tho* by Klong rdol ngag dbang blo bzang (1719–1794).

monastic authors through the centuries have helped create a whole tranche of ritual literature devoted to them. Generations of monastics have also actively participated in rituals dedicated to various worldly gods, including some that mirror the practices directed to the other-worldly beings, such as the consecration (Tibetan: *rab gnas*, Sanskrit: *pratiṣṭhā*) of images, representations, and cairns associated with those gods.[25]

Aspects of Southwold's description of practices in Sri Lanka (1978, 364–365) resonate with those of Tibet. As in Tibet, worldly gods may be presented as guardians of religion, invoked in overtly Buddhist practices, and their representations can be found close to Buddhist temples. Monastic communities indulge the practices. Southwold's informants explained that: "The gods have power only in worldly (*laukika*) matters, and one chooses to relate to them only for worldly ends" (1978, 365). It seems clear that the boundaries and hierarchy intrinsic to the worldly–other-worldly division have been internalised by members of village communities as much as monastic institutions. Propitiation of these gods is acceptable on the grounds that it does not challenge the Buddhist order and the superiority of the other-worldly values. The sense, for the general population, of the remoteness of the higher spiritual goals is used to justify engagement with these gods. This engagement may be spoken of in apologetic tones, and practices portrayed as a form of addiction. There are also parallels between characterisations of the Tibetan protectors and the Japanese kami. The belligerent nature, as well as the punishment of communities (through the visitation of natural disasters) and that of individuals (for religious infractions) which are noted for the kami (Teeuwen and Rambelli 2003, 11) resemble the character and behavioural traits commonly attributed to various Tibetan *srung ma*.

10.4 Caught in the Binary Thrall

As the worldly–other-worldly distinction has commonly been used to delineate two distinct domains (related to governance, law, and religion), some academics have drawn comparisons with various western binary frameworks. Before returning to more details of the worldly–other-worldly division, the way that these other binaries have been explained as both relevant to and perhaps helping to explain the existence of the emic distinction warrant consideration. The comparisons seem primarily to have been prompted because the worldly–other-worldly

25 For example, *'Jig rten pa'i lha rten sogs la rab gnas bya tshul* which appears in *rGyun mkho'i cho ga phyag len sna tshogs* by Nags gtsang byams pa ngag dbang (1998).

distinction has been used to demarcate a sphere of religion, particularly in contrast with some inferior "other" – commonly represented in academic literature as a secular, or non-religious domain. Hence, in the studies already cited, discussion about how the worldly–other-worldly distinction relates to Durkheim's division between the sacred and profane is frequent, and comparison with Luther's theory of the Two Kingdoms (*Zwei-Reiche-Lehre*) has also occasionally been made. Kleine suggests that another dichotomy, advanced by Luhmann is relevant. Luhmann conceives of various "function systems," each of which has its own specific *binary code* serving as its "main tool for internal integration and external demarcation" (Blühdorn 2000, 343), determining what is relevant to the communications that occur within the system. The specific binary code for religion, governing communication, is that of "transcendence" and "immanence."[26] Kleine proposes this can be linked to (and account for) the worldly–other worldly distinction and the aforesaid "*ōbō*/*buppō* dichotomy." He also contends that: "As contingency, indeterminacy and transcendence are fundamental problems for all human beings and all social systems, and because communication centering on the code of transcendence/immanence leads to the establishment of religion as a distinct social system, we may assume that dividing the world into a religious and a secular sphere is a potentially universal phenomenon" (2013, 12).

Another binary division, specifically relevant to Tibet, is the one set out by Samuel in *Civilized Shamans* (1993). Samuel distinguishes what he claims are two forms of Buddhism: the "shamanic" and the "clerical" varieties. Clearly influenced by the Padmasambhava subjugation narrative, Samuel believes that it is profitable to explore Tibetan religion by considering it in terms of the polarities "wild" and the "tame" (1993, 217–222).[27] Although Samuel makes no claim of a direct correspondence with the worldly–other-worldly distinction, the clerical–shamanic dichotomy (and the wild–tame polarities) serve as the framework within which the distinction is interpreted.[28]

There is no general agreement about which, if any, of these binaries are relevant to the worldly–other-worldly distinction, and there is not a little dispute surrounding the matter. Ames and Smith both assert the relevance of Durkheim's dichotomy. But Seyfort Ruegg (2008, 132) criticises Ames' attempts to equate the worldly–other-worldly distinction with Durkheim's division, stating that: "Indeed, it is anything but clear how the religious phenomena in

26 Kleine (2013, 15, n. 26) renders *Immanenz* and *Transzendenz* respectively as "transcendence" and "immanence."

27 This has been reprised more recently, as he relies upon the same framework to explain the Tibetan Bon religion (Samuel 2013).

28 See Samuel (1993, 163–165) for his distinction between worldly and other-worldly deities.

question in his article, and which are characteristic of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and elsewhere, can be made to fit the familiar, but rather over-tidy and rigid, dichotomy sacred: profane" (2008, 132).

Kleine (2013, 15, n. 26) also rejects the Durkheimian division here, accusing Smith (1968, 209) of confusing *lokottara* with "sacred" and *laukika* with "profane," and arguing instead that Luhmann's theories are more germane. Samuel's binary is also intended as a means of turning away from traditional categories, offering something with a "lesser weight of prior associations" (1993, 7).

These comparisons are not presented merely as interesting speculation, but with the distinct sense that at least one of these binary schemes can help explain the existence of the emic distinction. As the example of Kleine shows, refutation of one scheme does not indicate disenchantment with binary divisions in general, and there is no obvious questioning the limitations or validity of cross-cultural comparison of bipartite distinctions. Confidence in binary divisions and dichotomies, at least in terms of their analytical efficacy, is strong: signs, perhaps, of an implicit faith that it is through reference to bipartite structures and dichotomies that complexities can be resolved. Perhaps this is unsurprising, given the peculiar hold that the notion of binary distinctions exerts upon many an academic mind, and the almost hallowed status it appears to enjoy in some disciplines. Here, the concern may be more with comparison – the relevance and applicability of one scheme to another – than it is about the truth or falseness of the dichotomies involved, as might be the case when rhetoric itself is the subject of analysis (see Vickers 1990). However, as the process of assertion and refutation attached to the comparisons illustrates, clear attempts are made, by more than one writer, to champion a specific dichotomy, and in so doing, promote one position to the exclusion of alternatives (Vickers 1990, 149). We therefore witness what some might see as intrinsic to examination by means of dichotomous division, namely, the introduction of "privileged categories" (Vickers 1990, 148).

The promotion of a specific dichotomy, and more generally, an over-reliance upon the imposition of bipartite divisions as an analytical approach, obviously brings with it significant potential for over-simplification and distortion. Seyfort Ruegg's judgement that Durkheim's dichotomy is "over-tidy and rigid" (2008, 132) is acknowledgement that insistence that things adhere to a specific dichotomy may well result in implausibly clear distinctions, over-neat categorisations, and not infrequently, resolutions to complex situations that are so strikingly simple as to test the bounds of credibility. When dealing, as in the present case, with a matter as extensive as the demarcation of boundaries related to religion, the risks appears to be exacerbated. The temptation seems great for the dichotomies to expand, to the point where the parts within them are presented as jointly exhaustive, embracing almost every aspect of what

might be termed "tradition," all facets of which can perhaps be better understood if only things can be assigned to their "correct" categories and/or considered in terms of contrastive oppositions.

Thus, for instance, at various points, aspects of what Samuel describes as tantra, shamanism, Bon, and folk traditions all find themselves in the same category. It is the promise that fresh insights (or the revealing deeper truths) that is used to justify such categorisations.[29] The mere act of corralling different traditions together will often ascribe coherency and sense to the category they share: simply through association the items within the category may seem to be bound by some invisible glue of commensality. However, the fact that individual aspects (or traditions) find themselves in the same category may owe at least as much to the demands of a (pre-determined) bipartite system, with its limited options, as it does to careful examination of the data. The exercise of categorising traditions according to such dichotomous schemes also necessarily calls for a high degree of abstraction and generalisation: the selectivity of data felt to be relevant to the categorisation can encourage the "distillation" of specific traditions. In Samuel's bipartite scheme, for instance, the clerical and shamanic represent two distinct orientations, and this seems to warrant the reduction of all religious expression and activity to a set of fundamental psychological urges (the wild and the tamed). Following this, it becomes valid to characterise whole religious schools, such as the Gelug, as predominantly clerical, and others, such as the Nyingma (*rNying ma*), as predominantly shamanic (Samuel 1993, 10). An eagerness to project uniformity necessarily leads to some disregard for internal variation, and risks side-lining complicated individual stories. Furthermore, the reductive process that brings about these characterisations almost inevitably involves some separation of traditions and practices from their social-cultural and historical context to facilitate abstract appraisal. The general perils associated with this reductive approach are surely only heightened when attempts are made to identify cross-cultural correspondences so that one may engage in trite comparisons.

The various schemes mentioned in this section all ascribe deep roots for their binary divisions. Durkheim's dichotomy has regularly been referred to as a universal. Luhmann's division is usually described as an embedded code. Even Samuel, who refers at one point to his categories as "conceptual tools" (1993, 8), ultimately seems to traces them to deep-seated psychological proclivities. The

29 Samuel's scheme allows him, for example, to combine the seemingly elemental with the lofty, as he depicts the highest aim of Mahāyāna Buddhism, i.e. the achievement of full enlightenment, as a quest for "the ultimate shamanic power" (1993, 557).

idea that these binary divisions represent some form of underlying or natural order, only discernible (and verifiable) in its manifestations, recommends that investigation be confined to deciphering how systems and processes work within them. Questions about the roots of these non-emic binaries are deflected, perhaps increasing the chances of falling back, in an uncritical fashion, on the language of universality and natural order. Durkheim's division has been attacked for its Eurocentrism, and its lack of universality has been convincingly demonstrated in relation, among others, to traditional religions in Africa and Australia. Despite Kleine rejecting the equation of the worldly–other-worldly categories with those of Durkheim, he is still prepared to claim that the division of a religious and a secular sphere is a "potentially universal phenomenon" (Kleine 2013, 12). It is difficult to see how the notion of universality for a religious–secular divide is any more plausible than it is for a sacred–profane one. It might also be observed that the presumption that cross-cultural correspondences are ultimately attributable to universality, deeply embedded codes, or binary sets of psychological orientations does not act as the greatest incentive for investigating the routes of transmission or the role of human agency in the historical diffusion of binary schemes.[30]

10.4.1 Buddhist Binary Abstractionism

It could well be remarked that for those who are committed to binary comparisons, but have reservations about supposed correspondences between binary divisions from spatially and/or chronologically remote cultural settings, Buddhism has plenty of its own that would seem ideal for comparison. Binary schemes are integral features of Buddhist thought, as attested by, among others, the fundamental *saṃsāra–nirvāṇa* dichotomy. Traditional scholarship, especially within Mahāyāna schools, has long engaged in examining the relations between different Buddhist schemes – binary or otherwise. Tibetan religious thinkers, in their eagerness to present theirs as a system in which Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna were fully integrated, displayed great enthusiasm for identifying correspondences between different schemes and classifications. There is at least, therefore, a traditional precedent for considering how basic structural elements within Mahāyāna Buddhism are related, albeit with a far higher degree of circumscription involved than in contemporary academic activities in this area.

30 The lack of a role for human agency is a common criticism of Luhmann's theories.

In his study of the worldly–other-worldly division, Seyfort Ruegg remarks upon the discrepancies between etic and emic categorisations. He favours the idea of a common substratum for explaining various similarities between Hindu and Buddhist traditions, arguing that the substratum model is more useful than the borrowing paradigm. His study notably engages in much analysis of correspondences and links between different elements *within* Buddhism, and involves "looking for 'emic' categories rooted in the very dynamics of Buddhist thinking" (2008, 135). Deliberating about relations and interactions between schemes within the tradition – one that is presented as a bounded system – would strike many as an eminently more sensible approach than musing or disputing about vague cross-cultural correspondences. Seyfort Ruegg takes certain core concepts of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna, such as the emptiness, and applies them to the *laukika–lokottara* (worldly–other-worldly) distinction. In terms of the binary schemes, he also points to possible parallelisms between pairs including *lokottara–laukika, paramārtha–saṃvṛti* (levels of truth), and *jñāna–samaya* (forms of knowledge/wisdom) (2008, 151, 186), then reflects upon them and their implications. Seyfort Ruegg's sophisticated analysis does not confine itself to binary schemes, but still he manages to resist the type of erudite comparison proffered by Kleine, who distinguishes between what he says are two forms of transcendence that can be drawn from Luhmann system, and argues that these, together with Luhmann's notion of immanence, should be viewed as related to the theory of the three-fold body of Buddha (2013, 17).

Some might feel that a degree of theorising with respect to the worldly–other-worldly distinction, such as whether, for instance, it arises in some way from the dichotomy between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* might well be in order. There is, however, considerable risk of de-contextualisation in discussions of such abstract matters. When firmly rooted in textual traditions, and points of view attributable to specific scholars, however abstract and speculative the subject matter, investigation can obviously constitute an exploration of intellectual history. And although it may well be argued that it becomes necessary for knowledgeable academics to ponder the nature of certain structural relations because of traditional literature's failure to address them directly, perhaps more could be done to clarify, in these discussions, where the line rests between what traditional scholars have said, and what, in theory, they *might* have said: a point of demarcation that is often vague in musings of such a cerebral nature.

It will seem to many that the abundance of isomorphic schemes in Buddhism means that comparison between them verges on the irresistible, and that the structural elementariness of the binary division means that discussion is always likely to gravitate towards the theoretical. But it seems necessary to look beyond the binary resemblances of some schemes to recognise important variations. Those such

as the *paramārtha–saṃvṛti* and *jñāna–samaya* seem only rarely to have found any place outside the domain of elite discourse (and the meditations of limited numbers of practitioners). By contrast, the worldly–other worldly distinction, as has already been established, has had definite applications beyond these bounds. Examination of the topic may therefore seem to demand more historical and socio-cultural context and detail than has thus far been provided, especially when investigating the dimension of "local cults." In terms of contextualisation, more acknowledgement would seem to be required of boundaries and borders between elite culture and popular society.

10.4.2 Accounting for Cross-Cultural Appearance: In Summary

In the foregoing discussion, different perspectives on the worldly–other-worldly division have become apparent, particularly in relation to explaining its presence in different cultural settings. At least three ways of accounting for that presence can be identified. The divisions between them are articulated here in starker terms than in any of the works cited above. They also need not, in theory, be understood as positions that oppose each other in all respects. They can, however, be said to represent three tendencies to approach the question in different ways.

Firstly, in traditional thinking, as embodied in the Tibetan Buddhist literature, although the scheme is sometimes linked with what might be termed a concept of "Buddhist civilisation" – something that, in certain manifestations, such as in the sphere of governance, takes root in those places to which Buddhism has spread – more generally it is treated as one facet of a self-evident and self-explanatory order. Secondly, certain academics have accounted for the scheme's cross-cultural presence primarily in terms of universal or deep-rooted, underlying patterns, seemingly innate to humanity or human society. Academics who hold such positions are obviously more inclined to engage cross-cultural comparisons, stretching beyond the bounds of Buddhist cultural settings. Thirdly, there are those who, through structural analysis, have explained the scheme as being integral to Buddhist thought, and thus, by implication at least, have accounted for its presence in different cultural settings in such terms.

Certain shortcomings with the second approach have been identified, and while the third approach, intent upon understanding internal relations between core structural features, obviously goes some way to explaining the recurrence of certain binary divisions in different cultural spheres, the discussion almost necessarily veers towards the highly abstract. One thing that these positions

share is their tendency to speak of the worldly–other-worldly scheme itself in singular and generalised terms. Upon questioning, most would probably agree that this scheme's presumed uniformity amounts primarily to a group of common themes and strategies, which in their translation and employment in different settings may display considerable variation.

The remainder of this study will consider the worldly–other-worldly scheme embedded within the specific socio-cultural setting of Tibet. Although it admittedly deals with the topic in somewhat broad historical terms, it aims to move away from the generalised and abstract way that the scheme has often been regarded thus far. Previous studies have not sought to account for the scheme's cross-cultural appearance in terms of historical diffusion, and the processes through which ideas and schemes such as the present one have been propagated. There is, for example, no obvious scriptural blueprint or mandate for the implementing a religious-secular divide in statecraft. A corpus of Sanskrit-language commentarial works (identified above), commonly cited by Tibetans authors, have served as sources of inspiration, but creativity and adaptation have also played their parts. Translation, commentary, and personal relations between authors and rulers all signal various processes, historical communications (between individuals and literatures), networks of transmission, structures of authority, and a major role for human agency. Although none of these can be pursued in depth here, one of this study's contentions is that examining the scheme in terms of historical processes of diffusion can serve as a valuable alternative, and perhaps necessary counter, to the generalised and undifferentiated way that cross-cultural Buddhist traditions are often approached.

10.5 The Binary Distortion of Religious History

It may well be felt speculative cross-cultural comparisons premised upon the assumption that similar binary schemes manifest in different times and cultural settings is doomed to over-simplification and some degree of distortion. Focussing on emic schemes in individual settings may seem to bring with it some degree of reassurance. Indigenous expressions might naturally seem like more trustworthy guides to the religions, cultures, and societies in which they have featured. Before returning to the worldly–other-worldly distinction, it may be useful to reflect on the example of another Tibetan religious binary division, that of Bon and Buddhism.

The Bon–Buddhism division, while one of Tibetan origin, is also controversial. A major source of dispute has been the use of the term "shamanism" in relation to Bon. While a few continue to use the term in relation to the Bon

tradition, this is opposed by many others.[31] Bjerken, for instance, explores what he sees as the concept's dubious relationship with interpretations of Tibetan practices (2004, 8–30). He concludes that "shamanism" is viewed by many leading Tibetologists as "inappropriate [...] for describing any aspect of Tibetan religion" (2004, 6). Early studies of Tibetan religion by foreign travellers and savants popularised a stereotypical image of two competing religious traditions – Buddhism and "ancient" Bon. Bjerken argues that Bon's association with shamanism derives from the interpretations of "amateur Orientalists" (2004, 8), with their preconceptions regarding "primitive" religion. The image feeds the tendency to view the past in terms of other simple oppositions – the struggle between the ancient and new, the native and foreign, the shamanic and the monastic. Even those who might favour characterising the past in terms of such oppositions, and believing that they might hold *some* truth, would probably feel instinctively that things cannot have been so straightforward: and thus it proves with the Bon–Buddhism dichotomy. Any notion of Bon as a pre-Buddhist religion, locked in a binary opposition with Buddhism, is impossible to reconcile with the current understanding of historical processes. It is now known that the critical period for the formation of the Bon religion was the 10th and 11th centuries, with the intervention of historical figures, particularly Shenchen Luga (gShen chen klu dga') and his followers,[32] who seem to have been instrumental in transforming strands of pre-existing traditions into a monastic-based religion. Debates about whether prior to this, during the imperial period, there was a unified system known as *B/bon*, continue. However, any sense that the Bon of later centuries represents the survival of some pre-existing and more elementary expression of spirituality is gone.[33] To a large extent, Bon owes its origins to processes of interplay and exchange, and a monastic reinvention of the tradition instigated by identifiable human agents, very much in the image of its "opponent" (i.e. Buddhism).

The characterisation of Buddhism and Bon as two religious systems forming a simple binary opposition, as well as the association of Bon with shamanism and primitive religion might seem like prime examples of foreign conceptual imposition, initiated by the aforesaid "amateur Orientalists," and perpetuated in popular literature. But the picture is more complicated. Early foreign travellers and writers picked up on the propensity of both historical Buddhist authors and

31 See note 34.

32 This issue is explored by Martin (2001).

33 In acknowledgement of the transformation, some academics distinguish between *Bon*, the organised religion that arose in the 10th and 11th centuries, from *bon*, the tradition(s) that preceded this.

Tibetan popular narrative to reduce a complex picture to an elementary Bon–Buddhism opposition: the idea that Tibet's past could best be understood in terms of a tension between two competing spiritual traditions. Historically, while Buddhist authors have generally been keen to stress the divide, there has been considerable variation in attitudes to their supposed rival. Some have dealt with Bon in a more sympathetic fashion, whereas others have portrayed it as an "evil" religion. It is, however, uniformly represented as a single tradition. This image is eagerly accepted by adherents of Bon, who also promote the idea of that the Bon tradition constitutes an ancient continuity. Those adherents who are aware of the "primitive" connotations of terms such as shamanism, are equally keen as Bjerken to disassociate Bon from them. Accusations of primitiveness are stock features of historical anti-Bon polemic, dating from centuries before the entrance of terms like shamanism. Attempts to distance Bon from the primitive taint are also mixed with the desire of the monastic tradition to claim exclusive rights to the name of Bon. Furthermore, while there are more general problems with the concept of shamanism, the objections of some in Tibetan Studies to its usage seems to be based partly on the view that the perceived universality of the concept clashes with the image of uniqueness that they seek to maintain with respect to Tibetan religious traditions.

More recently, a subtler dimension to the evolution of the Bon tradition has arisen from analysis of imperial-era documents. It has been asserted that: "It is Buddhism, an imported metanarrative, that brings together this variety of Tibetan rituals and beliefs as an entity that can be identified, named and discussed" (van Schaik 2013, 254). That is, whatever the tradition(s) own adherents may have contributed, Buddhist thinkers and authors have been willing participants, or have perhaps even instigated the process, supplying what were probably a disparate set of practices with the coherency of a single tradition. In early polemical passages, Buddhist authors are seen to criticise, in specific terms, certain Tibetan practices, without attaching them to any named tradition.[34] Conversely, in post-imperial works, the same practices – most notably sacrifice – are attributed to Bon. In the early passages, there is emphasis upon Buddhism as the "benign Dharma of the gods" (*lha chos bzang po*), which is contrasted with the "cruel" nature of these practices. There is therefore a sense of Buddhist writers engaged in a process of self-definition which involves creating some religious "other." The role of the binary structure here, in contributing towards a coalescing of identities, organised around contrastive and often extremely stereotyped opposition, cannot be ignored.

34 For further discussion see van Schaik (2013).

This example serves as a reminder (if any were required) that contemporary academics, seeking cross-cultural correspondences are not the only ones who may be guilty of resorting to over-simplified binaries to explain or resolve complex situations. The creation of the Bon–Buddhism dichotomy is one in which both Tibetan tradition and foreign observers can be said to have colluded. The idea that this represents a dichotomous opposition, organised around polarities, is also not foreign to the indigenous setting. However, these polarities are of a crude, value-laden variety – "good–evil," "civilised–uncivilised," "compassionate–cruel" – rather than analytical. Their propagandistic quality reminds us of the type of popularist rhetoric that may emerge in any society. It is the partiality and unreliability of these divisions and categorisations that should be remembered as we return to consideration of the worldly–other-worldly distinction.

10.5.1 The Worldly and the Unwieldy

In traditional Tibetan literature, the coherence of the worldly and other-worldly categories is taken as given. Academic analyses of this *emic* division are also inclined to be somewhat trusting with respect to its logic and the integrity of its categories. In the case of the worldly category it may well be questioned whether this trust is well founded.

The terminology of the Tibetan "worldly–other-worldly" division hails from the early stage of translation, during the imperial era. The compound structure of "worldly" (*'jig rten*) – in contradistinction to which stands the "other-worldly" (*'jig rten las 'das pa* – literally: "passed beyond the world") – is a translation term, assembled from Tibetan components, which denote "locus" (*rten*) of "destruction" (*'jig pa*), and is based upon a Buddhist Sanskrit etymology, which refer to world's impermanent nature.[35]

35 The process of translating religious and technical vocabulary from Sanskrit to Tibetan purported to follow the Sanskritic *nirukta* ("etymologies") tradition. The Tibetan terms, while new, were therefore supposed to be rooted in august Sanskrit etymologies. But as Birgit Kellner points out (personal communication), the particular gloss given to the Tibetan rendering of "world" (*'jig rten*) is based on the idea that its Sanskrit equivalent *loka* is derived from *lujyate* "it is [bound to be] destroyed." But the Sanskrit root **luj* for this term appears to be fictitious, and in the view of Michael Hahn, the "destruction" reading was probably based on the idea that this fictional root was a variant of *ruj*, "to break." Hence, rather than simply describing *'jig rten* as a Tibetan term based on a Sanskrit etymology, Birgit Kellner prefers to characterise it, more precisely, as a "Buddhist hermeneutic etymology of the Sanskrit term *loka*." These points about Sanskrit "etymologies," also draw attention to another facet of the manufactured nature of the terminology and concepts relating to the worldly–other-worldly distinction.

Another native term, *srid pa*, which was also co-opted to serve as a translation term for *bhava* ("becoming") in the context of the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination (*Pratītyasamutpāda*), is also used, more generally, to signify "existence" and "world." *Srid pa* does not appear to have been a newly created term, but one chosen as the translation equivalent for *bhava* due to its prior denotation of birth and creation. Therefore, *'jig rten* gave a new Buddhist gloss to "world" that seems to have contrasted diametrically with the associations of its pre-existing indigenous counterpart. Furthermore, the creation, during the era of translation, of terminology to convey the notion of two separate (worldly and other-worldly) domains does not appear to have intended to displace any earlier vocabulary. Instead it seems to have been necessitated by the absence of any terminology and concepts distinguishing between two spheres (be they religious and secular, or transcendent and immanent).

Looking beyond the translators' imprints, scrutiny of the worldly category's contents may seem to erode the sense that it represents the unmediated expression of some "universal" binary, as well as revealing other shortcomings. On a cursory level, a parallel may be drawn between this worldly category and that of the animals, which Foucault, following Borges, cites as having supposedly appeared in a "certain Chinese encyclopaedia" (1970, xvi).[36] The latter is reported to have divided animals into:

> (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (1) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off "look like flies."

If one were to draw up a list of items that the "worldly" label is most commonly attached to in works by Tibetan Buddhist writers, it could include: (a) statecraft (b) folk-tales, (c) local deities, (d) certain forms of meditative concentration, (e) agricultural work, (f) non-Buddhist religions and systems (Hinduism, Confucianism, etc.) (g) the cosmos, (h) marriage, (i) arts and technologies, (j) physical geography, (k) sex, (l) disappointment at loss,[37] (m) celebrations and parties, (n) materialist philosophy.

36 As Foucault acknowledges, this list is pure literary invention.

37 That is, one of the so-called "eight worldly-concerns" (Tibetan: *'jig rten chos brgyad*: Sanskrit: *aṣṭau lokadharmāḥ*) personal concerns about gain, loss, status, disgrace, censure, praise, pleasure, and pain.

The basis of Borges' category must, in some sense, be distinguished from the category itself. Even a bizarre concept such as the "emperor's animals" can provide the "logic" necessary for the formation of a homogenous taxonomy. It would also be pointless to deny that the mere act of categorisation is invested with power. Even an apparently random group of items may, through common juxtaposition or association, eventually seem to "belong" together. As Foucault (1970, xvii) remarks: "We are all familiar with the disconcerting effect of the proximity of extremes, or, quite simply, with the sudden vicinity of things that have no relation to each other; the mere act of enumeration that heaps them all together has a power of enchantment all its own."

Similarly, the worldly category also has a basis and binding logic. From the soteriological viewpoint adopted by Buddhist thinkers and writers, the "worldly" forms a coherent and real category. From any other angle, this may simply strike us, as with Borges' list, as a curious way of looking at things and a set of bizarre juxtapositions.

Despite the blanket designation "worldly," the varied items in the category are associated with certain different perspectives. The category ranges from elements that religious authors would contend are: i) negative, and always to be shunned – such as the "eight worldly concerns"; ii) neutral, and permitted for particular individuals in certain situations – such as, agricultural work and marriage; and iii) positive or desirable for spiritual progress requirements – such as *samādhi* concentrations prior to reaching the *ārya* stage. In no text (to my knowledge) are these subdivisions explicitly spelt out, although anyone reasonably well versed in textual knowledge would readily confirm their existence. The general lack of interest in internal divisions perhaps highlights what might already seem obvious. Namely; the worldly category does not derive from some theory of resemblance, or a careful exercise in taxonomical arrangement. The category comprises an almost random collection of elements, thrown together solely because of the universal act of bifurcation, demanded by the binary scheme. The scheme itself is supremely disinterested in variation. It is also intended not so much as description as a judgement with respect to the world(ly). The scheme's only logic is to create a hierarchical division in which the worldly is projected as inferior to the other-worldly. In terms of managing relations with other practices and traditions, there would seem to have been a positive side to this. Through a combination of religious ideology, reference to Indic precedents, local reinterpretations, and pragmatic considerations, the scheme has contributed, in different settings, to relatively tolerant attitudes regarding the continued practice of various pre- or co-existing traditions. On the other side, however, the uncompromising soteriological logic of the scheme means that the terms for admission of the various "Buddhist," "non-Buddhist," or

non-religious, secular elements[38] receiving the "worldly" designation are their subordination.[39] In addition to the physical world, the term *'jig rten* encompasses the personal existence of an individual.[40] As the relevance of other traditions (especially Tibetan indigenous ones) is limited to "this life," the scheme can be seen to rationalise their devaluation, by denying the possibility that they have, in the terms of organised Buddhism, any truly religious dimension. As the next section explains, this is significant for one of the ways that the scheme has been employed.

10.5.2 Strategies of Subjugation: The Unnatural Order of Imposition

Leaving aside, for a moment, questions about the origins of the worldly–other-worldly scheme, and the integrity of its categories, we return to aspects of its application. The scheme warrants the description "cross-cultural" because it has featured prominently in a variety of cultural settings within Asia, in a common set of domains, such as governance and interreligious relations. Focussing upon the scheme's employment in these two domains is to align it closely with order and (at least in certain contexts) a degree of balance within society. Based upon this, the scheme would appear to be something that has not only been linked with visions of an ideal society, but has also played a practical role in societies' regulation. Viewed in these terms, the resemblances (vague or otherwise) between aspects of the worldly–other-worldly scheme and various ideas and models (such as the notion of a religious-secular divide) that are pertinent to the creation of the social contract and the establishment of a balance of power in social or state-settings further afield become more compelling, and the assertion of correspondences between them seems more justified. This perspective on the scheme is, however, too limited. Returning to the issue of the categorisation of deities brings to light a less than benevolent aspect of the scheme's employment.

As noted above, it has been customary for indigenous authors and academics alike to speak of the worldly–other-worldly distinction in a very generalised

38 Although there is insufficient space to pursue the matter here, I acknowledge some reservations about usage of the term "secular" in the present context.

39 The literary expression of this subordination is discussed by Seyfort Ruegg (2008, 45–56).

40 That is, "this world" (*'jig rten 'di*) denotes the present life, whereas the "earlier world" (*'jig rten snga ma*) and "future world" (*'jig rten phyi ma*) convey former and future lives, respectively.

fashion, giving the impression of a standardised Buddhist division, observed and applied in an almost uniform manner. The frequent references to Indic gods and spirit categories, such as *deva*s, *yakṣa*s, and so forth (Southwold 1978, 364; Kleine 2013, 18) add to this impression. In reality, of course, there have been variations in each cultural setting, especially with regard to deities. "Pan-Indian" gods (Seyfort Ruegg 2008, 19–29), such as Brahma and Indra, were to some extent imported into different settings as part of the Buddhist literary and iconographic traditions (particularly those associated with scripture). Hence it is not surprising that these Indic gods, or mentions of them, appear in an array of cultural settings, distinct from their original "homeland." Although this meant a new place for individual Indic gods on the walls of temple and the folios of texts, this was no guarantee that they were assimilated into popular narrative or practices. In Tibet, for instance, Brahma, or at least a god sharing his name (*Tshangs pa*), became the centre of a protector cult (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, 145–153), but this was not true for all such imported deities. In a taxonomical sense, however, these gods had an important function *collectively*. In Tibet and elsewhere they formed the basis of a ready-made category of supernatural inferiors. It was to this category, already populated by Indic gods, that indigenous deities, be they Japanese *kami* or Tibetan *srung ma* (depending on the setting) could be assigned. In Tibet, the account of Padmasambhava bringing indigenous deities to heel approaches something of a master-narrative for the local interpretation of the worldly–other-worldly distinction. The narrative set in imperial times, talks of native deities, uniformly transformed into worldly protectors of Buddhism. But there is little real homogeneity in this category. It encompasses an unholy mixture, ranging from deities with Indic origin, to gods associated with local Tibetan geographic features (mountains and lakes), pre-imperial or imperial-era kingship cults, powerful political figures, mythical martial leaders, tribal chieftains, and numerous others, many of which are not pre-Buddhist in any sense.[41]

Viewed simply in terms of the ways that deities are classified, the scheme seems innocuous, and any role it might have played in history, of little practical consequence. However, behind the deity-names would seem to have lain any number of cults, practices, and belief-systems, rooted in individual communities and environments. Rather than simply noting that local deities were placed in the inferior category, and considering the constructive aspects of a scheme which has allowed the assimilation of indigenous practices into a Buddhist

41 Traditional accounts of the various origins of some of the protectors are given in works such as the *Dam can bstan srung gi rnam thar*, mentioned above.

framework, it seems necessary to investigate the scheme's role in promoting a culture of subservience, and thereby helping to re-draw the religious landscape. Further exploration is required of the agents of this subordination, the background of the strategies that they employed, and the interests that this classification served, as well as who or what, beyond the deities, it was deemed necessary to subjugate. In the Tibetan case, the perhaps unusual extent of monastic involvement with the worldly elements itself must be seen in the context of this subordinating strategy. Documentation, classification, and the Buddhicisation of ritual were all ways in which a primarily monastic community could stamp its authority on popular practice: without discouraging it, the intention was to mould, channel, and regulate it. Thus, for example, the local community might be inclined to interpret epidemics, unexplained deaths, or natural disasters as signs of the displeasure of powerful mountain deities. The worldly–other-worldly division, supported by the production of narrative and ritual texts, allowed the Buddhist tradition to demonstrate its superiority in such cases. Ritual specialists might be called upon to deal with the recalcitrant deities. One such account appears in the early 15th century hagiography of Khyung po rnal 'byor (ca.1050–ca.1140), where the protagonist was called upon to deal with problematic deities, including the potent mountain spirit, *gNyan chen thang lha*.[42] Where spirits resisted, battle ensued, fought out partly through control of the elements. In one case, Khyung po rnal 'byor, manifesting as the fierce, horned Buddhist tantric deity *Yamāntaka*, finally brought the offender, *'Ba' ra nag po*, to his knees. Pleading for mercy, the latter said: "Great lama, I beg you to desist! My entire retinue have been killed by (your) lightning, and every one of my (religious) sites destroyed by (your) buffalo horns. And now I, coughing up blood, am on the point of death!"[43]

Such accounts did no harm to the personal reputations of their Buddhist central figures, but were obviously also intended to convey the power and superiority of the religion to which they belonged. The spirits are not depicted as rogue operators so much as rulers at the centre of parallel power structures, and there are frequent references to pacts between them and the local human population, who engage in sacrificial practices in their honour. However, in the ultimate expression of submission, spirits such as 'Ba' ra nag po were finally compelled to adopt the lay (*upāsaka*) Buddhist vows. This cannot be understood purely as

42 This account appears in *Khyung po rnal 'byor gyi rnam thar* (Nam mkha' bsam grub rgyal mtshan 1996, 52–54).

43 *bla ma chen po de ltar mi mdzad pa zhu / nga'i 'khor thams cad thog gis bsad / ma he'i rwas gnas thams cad bshig / da nga khrag skyugs nas 'chi bar yod* (Nam mkha' bsam grub rgyal mtshan 1996, 52–53).

metaphor, the announcement or reassertion of Buddhist hegemony involved the acceptance of Buddhist regulation of local ritual dominions, or their dismantlement.

Tibetan landscapes, both literal and literary, are strewn with such narratives. The negotiation between the organised Buddhist religion and more localised, unregulated ritual systems have either spawned or at least helped standardise various sets of symbols, vocabulary, and mediums, such as the binary distinction between "white" and "red" (*dkar mchod* and *dmar mchod*) offerings – respectively, dairy-based and slaughter-based. Each deity is said to prefer one or the other form of propitiation, and these are to some extent indicative of their supposed relations with organised Buddhism, which can range from an enthusiastic embrace to a begrudging acceptance of its principles and supremacy.

There would seem to be significant cross-cultural correspondences in the way that Indic deities have been retained and amalgamated with native deities to construct a single category of worldly gods. However, there would seem to be more to this than just creating the image of a homogenous, subordinate pantheon. In the way that the scheme has been applied, there is evidence of processes (and perhaps a common set of strategies) for managing and manipulating systems of practice related to indigenous deities. This puts a different complexion on binary divisions such as the worldly–other-worldly distinction. As already demonstrated in terms of the Bon–Buddhism division, what might superficially appear to be a straightforward and somewhat neutral distinction, that helps explain the religious or historical landscape, revealed itself instead to be one derived from complex processes, involving the encounter between organised religion and pre-existing or co-existing traditions. Somewhat contrasting with the notion of the worldly–other-worldly distinction as some "natural" articulation of religion, favourable to expressions of religious plurality, we see it as an extremely partisan, and in certain aspects highly contrived hierarchical division, employed in the projection of power. The concept of *privileged categories* might well be seen as an appropriate one here.

10.6 Influences of the Worldly–Other-Worldly Scheme in the Tibetan Social Realm

In recent decades, Tibetan Studies specialists have grown increasingly aware of the importance of local traditions, particularly mountain-deity cults. The local framework, while limited in its scope, does at least offer some alternative to the view that the Tibetan religious world must be described in terms of a

straightforward binary of monolithic traditions – namely, Buddhism and Bon. The major part, already outlined, that the Bon– Buddhism binary seems to have played in creating the religious "other" contrasts markedly with what we see in the worldly–other-worldly division. Apart from projecting the idea of Buddhism's supremacy, this scheme seems disinterested in depicting any single opposition, especially one which could be characterised as religious. The apparent randomness of the worldly category's contents in Tibet makes more sense when one begins to appreciate the extent to which it has been contrived by scholarly discourse, dominated by other-worldly value-judgements. Hence, one might wonder how much impact the division has had outside the scholarly domain. Seeking to clarify this offers an opportunity to demonstrate how the worldly–other-worldly distinction can be discussed without resorting to a blurring of boundaries or launching into a realm of abstraction.

Seyfort Ruegg depicts the worldly–other-worldly scheme as "dynamic" (2008, 83). Part of his grounds for this contention seems to be that the scheme allows worldly beings (gods, etc.) to progress to the other-worldly level. He may be right to posit "upward mobility" in terms of theory. But this has little relevance to the actual usage. Neither in the ritual world, scholarly discourse, nor popular belief can it be said that there is concern with charting the "spiritual development" of gods and spirits. Both they and the classes they belong to are invariably viewed in static terms. Hence, the scheme has primarily been used to foster the idea of a fixed order. The worldly gods, for instance, are locked into their subordinate position, and maintain a set of frozen relationships with both the other-worldly beings and their human clients. Hagiographical writings, as we have seen, often include accounts of historical figures subjugating individual gods. Ritual works are predicated on the veracity of these accounts. Both hagiography and ritual works feature prominently at the monastic-lay interface, and have served as channels through which the notion of a "worldly" order – specifically bearing the message that the worldly gods, while effective, are inferior – could enter popular consciousness from the literary domain.

A contemporary example of the use of the scheme, and the relation between the scholarly domain and popular understanding, comes in the form of one of the most contentious issues, especially among the Tibetan diaspora, in recent years. This relates to the protector deity Dorje Shugden (*rDo rje shugs ldan*) or Dolgyal (*Dol rgyal*). The issue of whether this is a worldly or other-worldly being divides opponents and supporters of practices associated with the cult. I do not pretend that the whole issue can be reduced to an argument about the worldly–other-worldly designation. However, the reliability and status of the deity are perceived as crucial issues, and arouse great passions. The

worldly–other-worldly debate serves as a framework for the debates.[44] The basis of the division is primarily a matter for scholarly discourse. Uneducated and doctrinally illiterate Tibetans, in my experience, usually admit that their understanding of this debate, and perhaps also the concept of the "other-worldly," is decidedly hazy. But they are still keenly aware that in the current context, the term "worldly god" (*'jig rten gyi lha*) refers to an inferior category, and can therefore be interpreted as a pejorative designation. That is: awareness of the subordinating function and disparaging usage of the scheme's terminology can be separated from contextual details, and communicated primarily through the *tone* of everyday exchanges.

While illustrating how the language of the scheme can be relevant to the world's "everyday affairs," the above example still belongs firmly to what might broadly be described as the province of religion. To better understand the degree of the scheme's influence in popular culture, however, we must look beyond domains that would usually be described as "religious" (either in the sense of organised religion or cultic practices). Perhaps unsurprisingly, in documents written for a monastic audience, the authors regularly seek to distinguish their community and activities from those of lay persons by applying the label "worldly" to the latter. Hence, the lay person is represented as the "worldly householder" (*'jig rten khyim pa*),[45] or even simply as the "worldly one" (*'jig rten pa*).[46] The same is true for common activities, often referred to as "farming and the like, the activities of worldly ones" (*so nam sogs 'jig rten pa'i bya ba*).[47] Similarly, in hagiography, an especially well-rehearsed scenario involves the protagonist departing home for a monastic existence. Ignoring the distressed cries of his parents, who plead with him (sometimes their sole heir) to stay and perform his reproductive duties, and thereby protect the family inheritance, he dismisses concern for all such things as "worldly."[48] Even in literature with broad popular appeal, religious characters such as Milarepa can be expected to make use of the worldly designation in their disavowal of the mundane, such as when he declares: "I do not want *worldly* sons."[49] The account of

44 For further details on the controversy see Dreyfus (1998).

45 From the Monastic Guidelines (*bca' yig*) of bKra shis lhun po monastery, cited in Jansen (2014, 133).

46 This appears in the Monastic Guidelines of rNam rgyal grwa tshang (Jansen 2014, 165).

47 From the Monastic Guidelines of sKu 'bum byams pa gling (Jansen 2014, 179).

48 See, for example, the biography of Khyung po rnal 'byor (Nam mkha' bsam grub rgyal mtshan 1996, 6–7).

49 *'jig rten gyi bu tsha nga mi 'dod*. This is cited in *Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung* (rDza dpal sprul rin po che 2003, 84).

forsaking the worldly, household life is immediately recognisable as one modelled upon the biography of the Buddha, and there are numerous examples in Tibet of monastic writers, or those wishing to project a monastic set of values, who have liberally employed the same, or a comparable set of "worldly" labels. As Buddhist authors outside Tibet have drawn from similar sources of inspiration, it is unsurprising to encounter similar passages in other literary traditions. But two important observations can be made about the Tibetan usage. The first is about how this labelling relates to "real life": however dismissive the language, the community and activities labelled as worldly are essential to the survival of the monastic life. Hence, if this message truly seeks to discourage engagement in reproduction and economically-motivated industry, the intended audience would seem only to be a portion of the population. Members of the other (lay) community, it might be presumed, would remain oblivious to the literature that employed this labelling, or if exposed to it, would recognise that the message was aimed at a monastic audience. That is, one could imagine that the language has had limited currency outside the domain of literary representation and religious narrative. I would argue, however, that quite to the contrary, this language has been embraced by the Tibetan lay world. More recently, occasional examples of this occur in ironic employment of the designation "worldly." Thus, a collection of a traditional form of song-jousting (*shags*), often performed during wedding ceremonies, was entitled "the Nectar-beer Songs Revelling in the Eight Worldly Concerns" (*'jig rten chos brgyad dga' ba'i bdud rtsi chang shags*). This blatant subversion of religious language, in which the eight mundane sources of concern, the wholly undesirable branch of the worldly family, are celebrated, must partly be seen as the product of the modern era, in which religious scepticism can be expressed openly. But in historical Tibetan literature, the practice of applying the label "worldly" to wedding-related activities is a long one. Rather than getting married, in hagiographical descriptions, religious figures, "take pleasure in accordance with worldly custom" (*'jig rten dang rjes su mthun par rol rtse mdzad*).[50] In fact, "that which is performed in accordance to worldly custom" (*'jig rten mthun 'jug*) becomes a byword for the wedding itself, and "the way of the world" (*'jig*

50 This term appears, for instance, in the biography of Chos rje nam mkha' rgyal mtshan in *Shangs pa bka' brgyud bla rabs kyi rnam thar* (Nam mkha' bsam grub rgyal mtshan 1996, 440). The terminology is intended to convey a sense of obligation. It also distances the protagonist from *true* engagement, implying that this may, after all, be part of a religious performance, setting the scene for the subsequent abandonment of the world. In the present case, the "pleasure" can be taken to allude both to the celebrations surrounding the wedding and the subsequent enjoyment of sex.

rten 'gro lugs) can be a designation for the exchange of prestations prior to the wedding. Even in writings that feature no lofty individuals or overtly religious content, such as the far more sympathetic works devoted solely to the description of wedding rituals, practices are still couched in these "worldly" terms. The label "worldly" has become so deeply embedded in the wedding vocabulary as to become almost inseparable from it, and in the minds of many, appears to define the Tibetan nuptial sphere.

Far from being confined to written literature, even illiterate lay persons can often be heard referring to matrimonial activities in this fashion. This is far more than the assimilation of vocabulary. Here monastic-inspired judgements have insinuated themselves into popular culture. This is demonstrated by the apologetic tone in which such "distasteful" matters as weddings particularly are spoken of during conversation with monks. Historically, institutional religion neither sanctioned nor officially recognised marriage in Tibet. The separation between the nuptial and monastic spheres was entire. Possible intersections, such as the presence of a monk at a wedding, have traditionally not been welcomed, and have been deemed inappropriate, both in monastic and lay terms.

The worldly–other-worldly division can hardly be viewed as solely responsible for what some might view as the discrimination against secular traditions. However, it could well be argued that the scheme has served as the primary vehicle for the imposition of a religious order, and that the designation "worldly" has, like no other, been absorbed into secular traditions and continues to be employed in a voluntary form of self-subordination. Even in the modern era, where descriptions of weddings and popular practices are plentiful, compilers and authors, still feel unconsciously compelled to attach to them the label, apparently in some deferential echo from the past.

More generally, perhaps the strongest evidence of both the hierarchical imposition and secular absorption of the attitudes that the worldly–other-worldly scheme has served as a vehicle for is the *absence* of relevant historical literature. Despite Tibet's boast of more than twelve centuries of literary activity and a huge literary corpus, the number of works dealing overtly with secular practices, such as weddings and various other rites of passage, is pitiful.[51] The primary blame for this dearth of literature surely rests with the disdainful attitudes towards them

51 Since the late 1970s in Tibet, concurrent with the rise of modern Tibetan literary movement, there has been a tremendous expansion of the range and diversity of Tibetan-language publications. There is now no shortage of texts describing traditional wedding rituals and recitations. But the exact provenance of the material they contain cannot be established. The handful of texts that can dated to earlier than the late 20th century belies the richness and ubiquity of ritual traditions that preceded.

emanating from a religious establishment. Monastic writers especially have judged them unworthy of recording and preserving, and as such have effectively confined centuries of practice almost entirely to the realm of oral literature and unrecorded history. While the emic credentials of the worldly–other-worldly distinction are indisputable, the role it has played in the literary and historical marginalisation of secular practices has been a significant one. It may have served the purposes of a religious (and chiefly monastic) community, but certainly should not be interpreted as an unbiased representation of Tibetan beliefs and practices. A crucial question arises from this. Namely, how much have these literary biases shaped our perceptions of Tibetan culture? To what extent does the picture of Tibetan cultural life as one dominated by the organised religions of Buddhism and Bon derive from our over-enthusiasm to accept the emic descriptions, as presented in a literature whose anti-secular prejudices are so blatant?

In addition to the role it has had in shaping Tibetan cultural perceptions, a second observation can be made regarding the Tibetan worldly–other-worldly division. In a religious culture inspired by the monastic ideal, and in which the tension between the householder and ascetic lifestyles would be viewed by many as intrinsic, marriage, reproduction, and concerns related to them are, predictably, regular targets of renounced invective. Here the label "worldly" acts as the most regularly employed cliché, both in Tibetan Buddhist literature and popular discourse, for those wishing to speak of marriage in dismissive terms. More generally, there are no collective terms for the life-cycle events and traditional practices that surround them, but labels such as "worldly customs" (*'jig rten pa'i lugs*) are commonly used to refer to them. The "worldly" categorisation and designations certainly affected the historical perception and reporting of life-cycle events, and the associated rituals in Tibet.[52] Their relation to organised religion, for instance, contrasts greatly with what is found in the Hindu traditions, where religion and the rites of passage (*saṃskāra*) are generally seen as part of a unified system.[53] But life-cycle rituals imply a system – a set of norms and values, centred particularly upon birth and marriage, and understandings of the individual as part of this reproductive system. It is perfectly understandable that a monastically-inspired religious culture would not wish to represent this alien system. I would contend, however, that the "worldly" characterisation, as the most common and unflattering cliché that has *allowed* those who are so minded (both in literary discourse and everyday

52 The exception here is the domain of death and funerary rituals, which organised religion has exercised a strong control over.

53 For discussion of the Hindu rites of passage see Michaels (2004, 71–99).

parlance, through to the present day) to consciously erode any notion that these customs and practices belong to anything that might constitute a coherent system, or components of a separate, parallel (and by implication, rival) order. The "worldly" designation supports the characterisation of them as a disparate and perhaps chaotic mix of practices, with a barely discernible logic and lacking that most essential of sources for organised Buddhism, *scriptural authority*.

The research of local traditions, such as mountain-deity cults, provides an important perspective on Tibetan religious practice. It reminds us of the existence of nexuses of ritual and belief other than those centred in the monastery, and of expressions of religion that may not accord exactly with the projections of organised Buddhism. But aside from the somewhat discredited notion that Bon constitutes an entirely different form of religious expression, there is no real sense of any substantial religious "other" in Tibet. The case for advocating the reproductive nexus as this "other," or even one of the others has yet to be made, but it is one that I would propose warrants consideration. Organised Buddhism in Tibet, with its monastic-inspired ideals, has generally sought to minimise the importance of descent, kinship relations, and life-cycle rituals, and dismiss the idea that they have any religious significance. However, as numerous anthropological studies would confirm, in other societies (particularly those where the influence of organised religion might be weaker) the very same elements are regularly interpreted as constituting integral elements or even the foundations of traditional religion. If we add to this the place of poorly understood aspects of Tibet's past, such as clan-based organisation and ancestor-related practices, there would seem to be very good reasons for exploring the aforesaid elements in terms of the reproductive nexus, in the devaluing of which the worldly–other-worldly distinction appears to be implicated.

10.7 Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, the worldly–other-worldly division's traversing of regional, ethnic, and linguistic boundaries warrants its consideration as a cross-cultural (or perhaps, in the view of some, a transcultural) phenomenon. Partly in attempts to account for this cross-cultural appearance, certain academics have chosen to push discussion into the realm of universals (or related concepts), seeking to associate the scheme with other binary divisions – religious–secular, spiritual–profane, transcendent–immanent. The suggestion has been that, either due to the structure of human society or the human mind, the reappearance of such a division is inevitable. A structural perspective, less

inclined towards such expansive and speculative generalisations, is taken by Seyfort Ruegg, who contemplates the way that the worldly–other-worldly division is related to other schemes *within* Buddhism. These studies also give the impression that the scheme has generally been employed in a relatively constructive fashion, by stressing how it has been used in the areas of governance, interreligious relations, and the integration of non-Buddhist traditions. Throughout, there is strong tendency to approach the scheme in a generalised fashion. Traditional sources, especially in their frequent reference to Indic elements (gods, spirits, and a *varṇa*-based social model), do nothing to deter the sense of this as a single scheme, that has manifested in a uniform manner. However, academic generalisation seems to be more attributable to the aforesaid desire to explain the scheme's appearance in different settings.

The universalistic path inexorably draws one away from the specifics, not least because it forces us to move outside the realm of traceable historical and textual pathways. Concerns about the "bigger picture" also seem, in the present case, to result in a neglect for the role of human agency. There has also been a curious lack of interest shown in historical diffusion and the processes related to it, investigation of which would seem to be integral to any interpretation of transculturality.

There is no shortage of historical and cultural detail pertinent to the worldly–other-worldly scheme that might be seen to challenge the neatness of binary generalisations, and it might readily be concluded that a fascination with structures and schemes, especially binary ones, can work to the detriment of understanding historical processes, if not almost necessarily resulting in generalisation and distortion. Far greater attention to these processes is called for in terms of the worldly–other-worldly scheme. This would lead to a better understanding of how it has traversed borders, rather than trying to account for its cross-cultural appearance in static terms. However, as topics of analysis, cross-cultural flows themselves, like schemes, may become subject to reification. On one level, it seems necessary to re-affirm the presence of borders, as abstracted from specific socio-cultural setting, the scheme cannot be understood in any meaningful sense.

A second conclusion relates to our understanding of the emic nature of the worldly–other-worldly division. Allied with their image of the division as a "natural expression" (of some universal or structural feature), previous studies have not questioned the reliability of the division. This study has demonstrated that emic schemes, perhaps especially binary ones, may be just as susceptible to charges of over-simplification, artificiality, and distortion as those which are imposed from outside. Most importantly, like their etic counterparts, they may also represent highly partial perspectives and be used for the projection of

imperious views. Thus, in case of the worldly–other-worldly division, it would seem to have been employed not merely to reaffirm the superiority of the soteriological ideals, but to subordinate non-Buddhist traditions. Specifically, it can be seen to have played a major part in an institutionalised devaluation of practices consigned to the "secular" domain. As such, the division's role in shaping both indigenous and foreign perceptions of Tibetan culture would appear to have been significant.

Finally, there is the question of why academic discussion about the worldly–other-worldly division has so veered towards the speculative and abstract. Neither the premises or the contents of the division appear to warrant this, and it seems difficult to believe that this direction would have been taken if the emic scheme involved were, for instance, a five or six-fold one. Here Blühdorn's remark about Luhmann's theories exerting "the magic of the Sirens" (2000, 339) seems apposite. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the alluring elementariness of the binary scheme has once more demonstrated its beguiling appeal.

References

Ames, Michael M. 1964. "Magical-animism and Buddhism: A Structural Analysis of Sinhalese Religious Systems." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 23:21–52.

Bjerken, Zeff. 2004. "Exorcising the Illusion of Bon 'Shamans': A Critical Genealogy of Shamanism in Tibetan Religions." *Revue d'Études Tibetaines* 6:4–59.

Blüdhorn, Ingolfur. 2000. "An Offer One Might Prefer to Refuse: The Systems Theoretical Legacy of Martin Luhmann." *European Journal of Social Theory* 3.3:339–354.

Buswell, Robert E., Jr., and Donald S. Lopez Jr. 2014. *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*. Princeton University Press, Princeton: New Jersey.

Cüppers, Christoph, ed. 2004. *The Relationship Between Religion and State (chos srid zung 'brel) in Traditional* Tibet. *Proceedings of a Seminar Held in Lumbini*, Nepal, *March 2000*. Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute.

Dreyfus, Georges. 1998. "The Shuk-Den Affair: Origins of a Controversy." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 21.2:227–270.

rDza dpal sprul rin po che. 2003. *rDzogs pa chen po klong chen snying tig gi sngon 'gro'i khrid yig kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*. Delhi: Songan rinpoche (tulku pema lodoe).

Foucault, Michel. 1970. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Pantheon.

Gentz, Joachim. 2013. "Religious Diversity in Three Teachings Discourses." In *Religious Diversity in Chinese Thought*, edited by Perry Schmidt-Leukel and Joachim Gentz, 123–140. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gombrich, Richard. 1971. *Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Grags pa bshad sgrub. 2009. *Byang chub lam rim chen mo'i snying po bsdus pa rje'i dgongs gsal dgyes byed mchod sprin*. In *Grags pa bshad sgrub kyi gsung 'bum*. dPal btsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang (anonymous editor) Vol. 17, 18–173. Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang.

Hartley, Lauran J. 1997. "A Socio-historical Study of the Kingdom of Sde-dge (Derge, Kham) in the Late Nineteen Century: Ris-med Views of Alliance and Authority." MA thesis, Indiana University.

Holt, Clifford J. 1991. *Buddha in the Crown: Avalokiteśvara in the Buddhist Traditions of Sri Lanka*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jansen, Berthe. 2014. "The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-Modern Tibet." PhD thesis, Leiden University.

'Ju mi pham rgya mtsho. 1996. *rGyal po'i lugs kyi bstan bcos sa gzhi skyong ba'i rgyan*. Dharmasala: Bod gzhung shes rig dpar khang.

Kleine, Christoph. 2013. "Religion and the Secular in Premodern Japan from the Viewpoint of Systems Theory." *Journal of Religion in Japan* 2:1–34.

Klong rdol bla ma ngag dbang blo bzang. 1991. *bsTan srung dam can rgya mtsho'i mtshan tho*. In *Klong rdol bla ma ngag dbang blo bzang gi gsung'bum*. Vol. 2, 461–493. Gangs can rig mdzod 21. Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrung khang.

Martin, Dan. 2001. *Unearthing Bon Treasures: Life and Contested Legacy of a Tibetan Scripture Revealer, with a General Bibliography of Bon*. Leiden: Brill.

McCutcheon, Russell T. 1997. *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia*. New York: Oxford University Press.

McCutcheon, Russell T. 1998. "Redescribing 'Religion' as Social Formation: Toward a Social Theory of Religion." In *What is Religion? Origins, Definitions, and Explanations*, edited by Thomas A. Idinopulos, 51–71. Leiden: Brill.

Mengele, Irmgard. 2010. "*Chilu* (*'Chi slu*) Rituals for 'Deceiving Death'." In *Tibetan Ritual*, edited by José Ignacio Cabezón, 103–129. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Michaels, Axel. 2004. *Hinduism: Past and Present*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Anonymous editor. 1998. *'Jig rten pa'i lha rten sogs la rab gnas bya tshul*. In *rGyun mkho'i cho ga phyag len sna tshogs*, 79–81. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe sprun khang.

Nam mkha' bsam grub rgyal mtshan. 1996. *mKhas grub khyung po rnal 'byor gyi rnam thar*. In *Shangs pa bka' brgyud bla rabs kyi rnam thar* by Nam-mkha' bsam-grub rgyal-mtshan, et al., 3–62 Gangs can rig mdzod 28. Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz, René de. 1956. *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities*. The Hague: Mouton & Co.

O rgyan tshe ring, and bKra shis don grub, comps. 1998. *'Jig rten chos brgyad dga' ba'i bdud rtsi chang shags*. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Old Tibetan Documents Online (OTDO). http://otdo.aa.tufs.ac.jp/ and http://otdo.aa-ken.jp/

Pathak, Suniti, K. 1974. *The Indian Nītiśāstras in Tibet*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Samuel, Geoffrey. 1993. *Civilized Shamans; Buddhism in Tibetan Societies*. Kantipath, Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point.

Samuel, Geoffrey. 2013. "Revisiting the Problem of Bon Identity: Bon Priests and Ritual Practitioners in the Himalayas." *Journal of the International Association for Bon Research* 1.1:77–97.

Seyfort Ruegg, David. 2008. *The symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism in South Asia and of Buddhism with 'local cults' in Tibet and the Himalayan region*. Wien: Österreichische Akadamie der Wissenschaften.

Sle lung bzhad pa'i rdo rje. 2003. *Dam can bstan srung gi rnam thar*. Beijing: Mirigs dpe skrunkhang.

Smith, Bardwell L. 1968. "Toward a Buddhist Anthropology: The Problem of the Secular." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 36.3:203–216.

Smith, Jonathan Z. 1998. "Religion, Religions, Religious." In *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, edited by Mark C. Taylor, 269–284. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press.

Southwold, Martin. 1978. "Buddhism and the Definition of Religion." *Man* 13.3:362–379.

Southwold, Martin. 1983. *Buddhism in Life: the anthropological study of religion and the Sinhalese practice of Buddhism*. Manchester: University Press.

Tambiah, Stanley. J. 1970. *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in North-East Thailand*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tambiah, Stanley. J. 1976. *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: a study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand Against a Historical Background*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Teeuwen, Mark, and Fabio Rambelli. 2003. "Introduction: combinatory religion and the honji suijaku paradigm in pre-modern Japan." In *Buddhas and kami in Japan: Honji suijaku as a combinatory paradigm*, edited by Teeuwen and Rambelli, 1–53. London/New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

van Schaik, Sam. 2013. "The Naming of Tibetan religion: Bon and Chos in the Tibetan imperial period." *Journal of the International Association for Bon Research* 1.1:227–257.

Vickers, Brian. 1990. "The Dangers of Dichotomy." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 51.1:148–159.

Index

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110413083-011