Aims and Scope:

The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Universities is an academic journal published twice a year (1st issue January-June, 2nd issue July-December). It aims to promote research and disseminate academic and research articles for researchers, academicians, lecturers and graduate students. The Journal focuses on Buddhism, Sociology, Liberal Arts and Multidisciplinary of Humanities and Social Sciences. All the articles published are peer-reviewed by at least two experts.

The articles, submitted for The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Universities, should not be previously published or under consideration of any other journals. The author should carefully follow the submission instructions of The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Universities including the reference style and format.

Views and opinions expressed in the articles published by The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Universities, are of responsibility by such authors but not the editors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editors.

Advisors

The Most Venerable Prof. Dr. Phra Brahmapundit
   Rector, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand
The Most Venerable Xue Chen
   Vice President, Buddhist Association of China & Buddhist Academy of China
The Most Venerable Dr. Ashin Nyanissara
   Chancellor, Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, Myanmar

Executive Editor

Ven. Prof. Dr. Phra Sigambhirayarn
   Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand
Chief Editor
Dr. Dion Peoples
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand

Editorial Team
Ven. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phramaha Hansa Dhammahaso
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand
Prof. Dr. D. Philips Stanley
Naropa University, USA
Prof. Ven. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami
University of Oxford, UK
Prof. Dr. Tamas Agocs
Dharma Gate Buddhist College, Hungary
The Most Venerable Dr. Ching Hsing
Ching Cheuh Buddhist Sangha University, Chinese-Taipei
Ven. Prof. Chisho Namai
Koyasan University, Japan
Ven. Prof. Jinwol Lee
Dongguk University, Korea
Ven. Prof. Dr. Yuanci
Buddhist Academy of China, China
Prof. Dr. Takahide Takahashi
Rissho University, Japan
Prof. Dr. Le Mahn That
Vietnam Buddhist University, Vietnam
Senior Prof. Sumanapala Galmangoda
University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
Ven. Dr. Phramaha Somboon Vutthikaro
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand
Dr. Rabindra Panth
Nalanda Deemed University (Nalanda Mahavihar), India

Assistant Editors
Ven. Dr. Phrapalad Somchai Payogo
Buddhapanyasridvaravadi Buddhist College,
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand
Ven. Dr. Phramaha Sompong Unyo
International Buddhist Studies College (IBSC),
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
Ven. Dr. Phramaha Nantakorn Piyabhan
International Buddhist Studies College (IBSC),
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
H.E. Janos Jelen
Dharma Gate Buddhist College, Hungary
Dr. Sanu Mahatthanadull
International Buddhist Studies College (IBSC),
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
Dr. Soontaraporn Techapalokul  
International Buddhist Studies College (IBSC),  
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Staff

Phramaha Nopparat Abhijavo  
Phramaha Manothai Nepakkhavedhi  
Ms. Mukrawe Chimphana

Owner

International Association of Buddhist Universities

Office

International Buddhist Studies College (IBSC)  
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University  
Room A400 Zone A, 4th Floor, Classroom Building, MCU,  
79 Moo1, Lamsai, Wang-noi, Phra Nakorn Si Ayutthaya 13170, Thailand  
Tel: (6635)248-000 ext.8501, 8505  
Email: journaliabu@gmail.com
Editorial Message:

At the International Association of Buddhist Universities, we have several principles that we take as our guidelines in moving forward in our engagements. Here is a reminder of how we progress:

IABU Vision:
- Motivate future generations to gain and apply profound understanding of the Buddhadhamma in every aspect of life
- Raise the quality of scholarly work within Buddhist Studies and across other academic endeavors
- Contribute to meeting the challenges that face human society worldwide

IABU Mission:
- Support and collaborate with members to ensure humanity can benefit from the richness and variety of the multi-dimensional Buddhist traditions
- Provide a framework towards better understanding diverse policies and activities
- Collaborate in administration, teaching, research and outreach
- Recognize each other’s qualifications

IABU Goals:
- Propagate the Buddhadhamma through collaborative academic channels
- Eliminate Buddhist sectarian, national, and institutional barriers
- Raise the academic standards throughout the Buddhist world
- Maximize academic potentials and abilities

This is the sixth edition of the Journal of the IABU, and we hope that you gain some insights from these contributions to Buddhist Studies. In a few brief words, here is an introduction to this new volume. Prof. Shaw offers an obituary for the beloved Lance Cousins, a friend to the IABU. Dr. Dion Peoples offers a review and discussion on the new and insightful book by David McCarthy: Civil Endowment – The Transformation of Economic Power. Seth Abhijato, an American Theravada Buddhist monk studying at MCU, offers to clarify misconceptions over points on Epicurean philosophy. People often think it is too similar to Buddhism. Micka Moto-Sanchez discusses aspects of rituals between two different religious traditions. Prof. Peter Daniels discusses the importance of the ecology around the Mekong River and the people living near and along the river. Dr. Helen Rosen discusses how Buddhist principles can better solve issues in psychotherapeutic situations. Dr. Arvind Singh offers a problematic paper that doesn’t clearly comprehend stem-cells - consider how stem-cells have the potential to create new cells, and thus there is no conception of taking life, so it seems hypocritical that the presentation dictates how Buddhism would reject scientific innovation. The Anand-Behura paper is a standard presentation on abortion in Korean society. Dr. Neekee Chaturvedi writes on the exploitation of lower-castes in Buddhist India, as presented in the Jatakas. Dr. Dion Peoples takes from the writings of Karl Marx’s volumes of Capital and the Buddhist Jatakas, related to a way forward for economics as the ASEAN Economic Community emerges into existence. Ricardo Sasaki comments on a popular text. Please enjoy this version of the volume, previously released with 1517 online –views.

Editorial Team
Table of Contents:

**Obituary: L.S. Cousins, 1942–2015**  
Prof. Sarah Shaw  
6

**The Buddha’s Temperance: A Comparison of Epicureanism and the Dhamma**  
Phra Seth Abhijato  
9

**The Eucharist and Fusatsu: A Comparative Study of Ritual and Application of Divine Reflexivity Theory**  
Micka Moto-Sanchez  
18

**The Sustainable Management of the Mekong River Basin: Insights from Buddhism**  
Dr. Peter Daniels  
38

**From Innovative to Conventional: Transformations of Practice in Psychology and Meditation**  
Dr. Helen Rosen  
55

**Stem Cell Research and Bioethical Issues: A Buddhist Perception**  
Dr. Arvind Kumar Singh  
64

**Right to Life of an Unborn: Practice of Abortion in South Korea from a Buddhist Standpoint**  
Abhinav Anand & Ajit Kumar Behura  
73

**Subordination, Repression and Coping Strategies in the Jātaka Tales**  
Dr Neekee Chaturvedi  
81

**The Buddha’s Jatakas and Karl Marx’s Volumes on Capital – Towards an authentic perspective of Buddhist Economics for ASEAN**  
Dr. Dion Peoples  
92

**Motorcycle and the Art of Zen**  
Ricardo Sasaki  
115
Obituary: L.S. Cousins, 1942–2015

Prof. Sarah Shaw
London, England

With the death of Lance Cousins we have lost a man whose life was devoted to both the study and the practice of Buddhist meditation and theory. He will be deeply missed, and the effects of his life’s work are long-lasting.

Lance Selwyn Cousins was born in 1942 in Hitchin, Hertfordshire, a place for which he always retained an affection, and where his family had been printers for several generations. He attended Letchworth Grammar and Hales Grammar. In 1961 he won a scholarship to read History at St John’s College, Cambridge. He changed to Oriental Studies, though a historical perspective never left his academic work. He studied with Professor Sir Harold Bailey and Professor K.R. Norman, both of whom left a mark on his scholarly methods and understanding. When he graduated he worked in computers, and then conducted research in Denmark. By this time he was married, and he and his wife Barbara had two children, Randal and Halla. In 1970 he obtained a job at the University of Manchester, in the Department of Comparative Religion, where he subsequently became Senior Lecturer.

Whilst at Cambridge, he had met the man whom he regarded as his lifelong teacher. Boonman Poonyathiro (1932–) had become a monk at an early age and trained at Wat Pailom in various forms of samatha practice at that time popular throughout Thailand. In 1963, now a layman, Boonman met Lance, who immediately decided to set up classes for him in London and then Cambridge. In Britain Boonman taught a variation on a traditional Thai practice based on samatha breathing mindfulness, the meditation said by the commentaries to have been undertaken by the Buddha on the night of the awakening. Lance instinctively felt that he had found a practice true to the Buddha’s original teachings on meditation, a conviction deepened by a lifetime’s practice and academic research. During this time Lance was involved with setting up the Samatha Trust and became its founding chairman (1973–1999). He worked on organization and class teaching, but his success perhaps lay most in the one-to-one discussion that lies at the heart of the way this form of meditation is taught. He remained a trustee all his life and regularly attended courses taken by Boonman.

In Manchester in the early seventies Lance enjoyed working with Professor John Hinnells, in a lively academic environment. As the only full-time member of staff teaching in the area of Indian religions he had a busy workload. He was also asked by one of his students to start a meditation class, which he did in 1971, with great success. So from this time, teaching commitments were paramount, with those in academia and those with meditators working in tandem.

In 1977 Lance established a center for Samatha practice in Manchester, on High Lane, Chorlton, and organized often extended-visits for monks, nuns and lay teachers. The range of these demonstrated the interest he felt in the living Buddhist tradition: they included Ven. Anandamaitreya, Ven Piyadassa (Sri Lanka), Ajahn Chah and Ajahn Mahamanop (Thailand), and various other monks and nuns in the forest monastery tradition of the British Sangha Trust, including Ajahn Sumedho and Ajahn Viradhamma. The Burmese monks Ven U Titthila and Ven U Ṽāṇika were invited: Ven U Ṽāṇika’s teaching on the Yamaka over an extended period brought Lance in the presence of what he felt was a living Burmese tradition of Abhidhamma teaching. Guests from Cambodia were Ven Dhammavara and Ven Candavanṇa, a greatly esteemed student at Manchester
University, who helped Lance in his early Abhidhamma and Sutta classes, linked to meditation. Ven Candavaṇṇa trained a few members of the group in the disciplines of Cambodian chanting, in which he was expert. Ananda Bodhi visited, as did Ato Rinpoche, and a Bhaiṣajyaguru initiation was held at the center by the fourteenth Karmapa in 1978. Lance fostered links with the oldest Buddhist group in Britain outside London, the Manchester Buddhist Society, Sale, and with Saros, a philosophical group established by W.G. Davies. In 1986 a national Samatha Centre was founded in Greenstreete, Llangynllo, Powys; Lance frequently took courses and held meditation weeks there.

Receiving an Honorary Doctorate from Mahamakut Buddhist University, Thailand, in 2013.

Whilst often busy with academic and personal teaching, Lance wrote some seminal articles, on oral literature, meditation and jhāna, during this time. He always felt, however, that he would like to pursue more academic research. The early nineties were a very difficult time for him, but after this period he did indeed do this. The circumstances were unhappy: his marriage broke up and the university became victim to radical changes. Lance took early retirement and in 2000 he moved to Oxford. He became a member of common room (2001–2007, 2009–2015) and a supernumerary fellow (2007–2009) at Wolfson College. He was made a member of the Faculty of Theology at Oxford University, where he taught and lectured on Pāli and Buddhist Studies. Lance thoroughly enjoyed academic life in Oxford, and his college. His given names were oddly apt: certainly on the outside a ‘Lance’, he was, on the inside, a ‘Selwyn’, ‘a friend in the house’ – or in college, organization, and family home. He was a regular attender at Wolfson, and Sanskritists’ lunch. He was a staunch supporter of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies, set up by Professor Richard Gombrich, and became an honorary fellow. He was also delighted when Venerable Dr. Ajahn Khammai Dhammasāmi established the Oxford Buddha Vihāra. Some chanting was performed for him there on his 70th birthday.

At Oxford he undertook a considerable amount of academic work, though continued to teach and hold courses in samatha meditation, both for those in Wales and, in ventures he greatly enjoyed, for newly founded groups in Northern Ireland and America.
He wrote extensively on *Abhidhamma*, Buddhist meditation, Pāli, Middle Indian and Buddhist Sanskrit textual studies, and the history of early Buddhist schools, particularly in the Southern Buddhist Tradition. Always primarily interested in the common sources of the modern meditative traditions, he had a special interest in Sanskrit Buddhist sources. He was working on a number of projects at the time of his death, a situation he patently enjoyed. He did not complete his translation of the *Abhidhammathāvatāra*. A long-term planner, however, he left complete drafts of two books: a translation of the *Yamaka* and its commentary with Charles Shaw, and a history of aspects of Buddhist meditation. He knew that after two major heart attacks he might not see these published. After his move he sustained his strong connections with the living traditions in South and Southeast Asia. He spent periods of practice, teaching and research in Sri Lanka and Thailand and encouraged the Samatha group learning chanting with Ajahn Maha Laow to make tours in Thailand. In all, his death, the day after completing teaching of a five-term Pāli course, finally studying the commentary of *Jarasutta* (the ‘Discourse on Old Age’), came at a time of contented study, discussion and teaching.

His body remained at the Oxford Buddha Vihāra before his funeral, where full funerary *Abhidhamma* chanting was performed. Ajahn Dhammasami presided over his funeral, which included chanting, recital of the *Mettā Sutta* in English, and recollections from his daughter. At the reception at Wolfson afterwards, Professor Richard Gombrich discussed his career as an academic, Dr Paul Dennison discussed his association with the Samatha Trust, Professor Rupert Gethin discussed his role as a teacher, and Dr Rajith Dissanayake discussed his strong Sri Lankan connections. The family recounted memories from childhood.

It is an odd thing when someone that you have known for a long time dies, as if only at death you see that person’s life as a whole, as you only see the full boat as it leaves the port. A funeral is a time when this becomes strangely possible, as one sees so many parts in a person’s life coming together. At Lance’s funeral many strands interacted, and all just looked very happy to have had a chance to know him. A theme that recurred was Lance’s careful distinction between academic work and private practice. This seems odd, but it was out of respect for both. The analogy that comes to mind is of the historian of an early musical instrument and the player. The historian wants to find out the detail of early materials that make up the composition of the instrument, the circumstances in which it was played, how and why the instrument developed, and notation for its music. The player just wants to play it better. For Lance, the instrument was the human mind and body. He helped people who wanted to find out about how the instrument was understood by early Buddhists, and the detail of its music. But he also helped people who wanted to find the right notes to play now. At his funeral, hosted by his children, all these parts came together so we could feel a harmonious whole; his life events, happy and sad, were recollected in an atmosphere of deep attentiveness. Barbara, his brother and sister, his extended family and all his seven grandchildren, of whom he was very proud, attended.

He died on March 14th, 2015. The hospital lost all records of him for a while afterwards and the family did not find out about his peaceful death, from his third heart attack, until five days later. As Dr. Paul Dennison noted at his funeral, this was rather typical of Lance - for all his unbounded enthusiasm, quizzical wit, love of debate and conviviality, he could also be quietly traceless. After death his face apparently had that slight amused smile he sometimes had when some knotty puzzle was starting to become clear.

For his published work, see [http://oxford.academia.edu/LSCousins](http://oxford.academia.edu/LSCousins)
Introduction:
This present article argues against three comparisons of Epicurean thought and Buddhism: that Epicurean Atomism and the Buddha’s teachings of physical reality are similar, that Epicurus’ insistence that one should not fear consequence after death and the absence of god in the Buddha’s teachings are similar, and that Epicurean minimalism and the minimalism taught by the Buddha are similar.

Epicurean Thought and the Dhamma
Epicurus was a Greek philosopher born around 340 BCE, which is approximately 40 years after Aristotle was born. The scope of influence Epicurus has had on history, and today’s modern world, cannot be overstated. While Epicurus did not say gods don’t exist, he did tell his students not to be afraid, and to live life to its fullest without worry of the divine, for, after death there will be no punishment. Keeping this in mind, Epicurus was one of the first hedonistic philosophers declaring that one should enjoy the pleasures of life while they can. However, simply saying that he advocated the fulfillment of pleasure in the present moment does not adequately convey his teachings; he was actually a strong proponent of a simple life and attaining pleasure through an uncomplicated lifestyle while minimizing pain, causing many people to refer to him as an ascetic.

Epicurus also developed an elaborate physical theory based on the atomist philosophy of Democritus, where the physical world is made up of small pieces of matter that cannot be broken down any further known as “atoms”. This physical theory is remarkably ahead of its time, accounting for such natural phenomena as gravity and the notion that something cannot be created from nothing. Another interesting aspect of his philosophy is his “films” explanation of perception. He suggested that our perception of the outside world is due to thin “films” of the objects coming “into” our senses. He then concluded that this is how we get thoughts and ideas - a concept would be a thin “film” of an object entering our mind. He also constructed the first social theory argument, as far as I know, wherein a society was formed through an agreement to neither harm nor be harmed.

Epicurean theory, though it talks of simplistic living and simple atoms, is not a simple philosophy; the physical aspects along with his description of the empirical senses alone is quite sophisticated, and would require a person to devote one’s life to it in order to master. That being said, I have some issues with a tendency amongst some modern Buddhists that compares Epicurean thought to Buddhism.

The three main arguments I will address that support a similarity between Epicurean thought and Buddhism are these: first, that the materialistic perception of

---

2 The author is currently studying for his Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies, at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.
4 Epicurus, Letter to Menoeceus, contained in Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers, Book X.
Epicurus and his insistence that something cannot come from nothing is related to the physical world as taught by the Buddha. Second, that his suggestion to not fear the gods or punishment after death is similar to the Buddhist idea of a reality existing without a creator god, and third, that the minimalist teachings of Epicurus are comparable to those of the Buddha. I will address these three points and give explanations as to why I think the comparisons are hasty, at best.

**Atomism**

First, the extraordinarily elaborate physical theory of Epicurus being similar to the Buddha’s teaching of the Dhamma in regards to physical reality may be misguided. John C. Plott and James Michael Dolin explain in “Global History of Philosophy” why they think Epicurean Atomism has similar qualities with Buddhism:

Early Buddhism should, therefore, be regarded not as a system of metaphysics but as a verifiable hypotheses discovered by the Buddha in the course of his ‘trial and error’ experimentation with different ways of life. We agree therefore with Dr. Warder when he says that ‘the Buddha legend synthesizes the quest for truth on scientific principles regardless of past traditions: observation of life, experiments in asceticism (under various teachers and independently), final deduction of a way to end suffering’. We also agree with him when comparing Buddhist with Epicureanism, he says ‘both attacked old superstitions and sought knowledge of nature, knowledge which we may characterize as scientific on account of its bases of perception.⁹

The point Epicurus was making is that the world is conditioned by material “atoms,” and while he believed that the physical world was not completely determined - owing to the fact that atoms can “swerve” from a determined course¹⁰ - the whole of physical reality can be understood by these physical conditions. Physical conditions which are empirically observable and completely in the realm of the material world.

The Buddha’s explanation of conditions within physical reality, particularly Dependent Origination, really has very little to do with the Epicurean explanation - the two main firing points within the round of conditions of the Dependent Origination are ignorance and desire. Bhikkhu Bodhi explains these two firing points, the two roots of continuation being ignorance and desire (craving), of Dependent Origination in “A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma”:

Ignorance and craving should be understood as the two roots. Ignorance (avijjå) is called “the root (mûla) from the past extending into the present,” which reaches its culmination in feeling (vedanå). Craving (tañhå) is called “the root from the present extending into the future,” which reaches its culmination in decay-and-death (jarāmaraṇa).¹¹ Neither of these are empirically apparent in the material world.

Buddhism, though it has a surprising amount of emphasis on empiricism and reason for a religion, is structured around a framework of absolute truth that any believer must hold in order for many teachings to make sense. For brevity, I will use only one example of these absolute truths: rebirth, to explain my position.

---

If one does not hold that reincarnation is true, then the teachings of *kamma* and rebirth don’t make sense and are at best a myth; however, the teachings are very clear that this relation of conditions between action and rebirth is not only essential to the understanding of existence, but an actuality. If one does not hold that reincarnation is true, then the idea of *Nibbana* is nonsense. There can be no state of non-rebirth if there is no state of rebirth. If one does not hold that rebirth is true then the idea of past lives is ridiculous. The results of *kamma* from past lives being experienced in this present life are dependent upon there being past lives. There are many more examples of these absolute truths the Buddha builds upon in his teachings, but I will leave those for future discussion.

This is where people may say that rebirth can be tested by science, if not now, then in the future, therein allowing reincarnation to be empirically evident, as evidence: “which we may characterize as scientific.” My response to this possible misinterpretation follows.

Modern science is a field of study that uses hypothesis and testing, a study that leads to a belief in how the world functions and exists based on induction. One critical element of science is that it must always assume that it may be wrong, no matter how insignificant the chances are; science must be prepared to be proven false. That means two things: what is tested by science must be falsifiable and the result of the test must never be absolute.12

Karl Popper in “Conjecture and Refutations” discusses why modern science must deal with theories that are falsifiable:

The refutability or falsifiability of a theoretical system should be taken as the criterion of its demarcation. According to this view, which I still uphold, a system is to be considered as scientific only if it makes assertions which may clash with observations; and a system is, in fact, tested by attempts to produce such clashes, that is to say by attempts to refute it, Thus testability is the same as refutability, and can therefore likewise be taken as a criterion of demarcation.13

Continuing with reincarnation as the example: rebirth is not presented as a phenomenon that is falsifiable in the teachings of the Buddha. In the *Payasi Sutta*, Prince Payasi tries to prove the existence of rebirth through hypothesis and testing:

‘Reverend Kassapa, I have friends, colleagues and blood-relations who take life, take what is not given, commit sexual offences, tell lies, use abusive, harsh and frivolous speech, who are greedy, full of hatred and hold wrong views. Eventually they become ill, suffering, and diseased. And when I am sure they will not recover, I go to them and say: “There are certain ascetics and Brahmins who declare and believe that those who take life, ...hold wrong views will, after death at the breakingup of the body, be born in a state of woe, an evil place, a place of punishment, in hell. Now you have done these things, and if what these ascetics and Brahmins say is true, that is where you will go. Now if, after death, you go to a state of woe, ... come to me and declare that there is another world, there are spontaneously born beings, there is fruit and result of good and evil deeds. You, gentlemen, are trustworthy and dependable, and what you have seen shall be as if I had seen it myself, so it will be.” But although they agreed, they neither came to tell me, nor did they send a messenger. That, Reverend Kassapa, is my reason for maintaining: “There is no other world, there are no spontaneously born beings, there is no fruit or result of good or evil deeds.”’14

---

Kassapa’s answer:

As to that, Prince, I will question you about it, and you shall reply as you think fit. What do you think, Prince? Suppose they were to bring a thief before you caught in the act, and say: “This man, Lord, is a thief caught in the act. Sentence him to any punishment you wish.” And you might say: “Bind this man’s arms tightly behind him with a strong rope, shave his head closely, and lead him to the rough sound of a drum through the streets and squares and out through the southern gate, and there cut off his head.” And they, saying: “Very good” in assent, might ... lead him out through the southern gate, and there cut off his head.” Now if that thief were to say to the executioners: “Good executioners, in this town or village I have friends, colleagues and blood-relations, please wait till I have visited them”, would he get his wish? Or would they just cut off that talkative thief’s head? ‘He would not get his wish, Reverend Kassapa. They would just cut off his head. So, Prince, this thief could not get even his human executioners to wait while he visited his friends and relations. So how can your friends, colleagues and blood-relations who have committed all these misdeeds, having died and gone to a place of woe, prevail upon the warders of hell, saying: “Good warders of hell, please wait while we report to Prince Payasi that there is another world, there are spontaneously born beings, and there is fruit and result of good and evil deeds”? Therefore, Prince, admit that there is another world.”

Kassapa explains that the belief in another world, and rebirth itself, is unfalsifiable, that there exists another world whether or not you test it. These worlds are, in fact, absolute, considering that even if a test disagrees with the actuality of another world, this has no bearing on whether the other world exists or not. This belief is unfalsifiable, and therefore, not a theory that can be tested by science, it does not meet Popper’s criteria to be considered scientific.

If science were to somehow test rebirth in the future, from a Buddhist perspective, then the premise of the test would be something that exists absolutely and could not be falsified. Another important point is that things that may or may not be tested by science in the future cannot be used in an argument as if those things are scientific.

Secondly, let’s say reincarnation happened to be tested by unbiased scientists and the results were favorable that rebirth is an actuality of existence. These findings would be unusable by Buddhists for proof of their faith in rebirth as that faith would treat these findings as absolute truth. Remember, any findings made by science must allow for the chance to be disproven. Another correlation some see is that the atomism that constructs the matrix of the physical world contains no transcendental force in neither the Epicurean system nor that of the Buddha’s. Paul Muljadi suggests a similarity with Buddhism and Epicureanism in that there is no divine intervention in “Epicureanism: The Complete Guide”:

Parallels may be drawn to Buddhism [with Epicureanism], which similarly emphasizes a lack of divine interference as aspects of its atomism.

The Buddha explained that the cycle of experience continues to exist through kammatic formations from one life to the next. Our experience of the physical world is

thus dependent on the past \textit{kamma} we have acquired, this past \textit{kamma} being a force that is not of the material world. Bhikkhu Bodhi explains this process in his translation of the \textit{Ahidhammattha Sangaha}:

- Ignorance (avijjā), craving (taṇhā), and clinging (upādāna) belong to the round of defilements (kilesa);
- One part of existence (bhava) known as “karmic existence” and “karmic formations” (sāṁkhāra) belong to the round of \textit{kamma};
- One part of existence known as “rebirth existence” (upapattibhava) and the rest belong to the round of results (vipāka).

The three rounds exhibit the cyclic pattern of existence in \textit{sāṁsāra}. The most fundamental round is the round of defilements. Blinded by ignorance and driven by craving, a person engages in various unwholesome and mundane wholesome activities. Thus, the round of defilements gives rise to the round of \textit{kamma}. When this \textit{kamma} matures, it ripens in the resultants, and, thus, the round of \textit{kamma} gives rise to the round of resultants. In response to these resultants — the pleasant and painful fruits (phala) of his own actions... the person still immersed in ignorance is overcome by craving to enjoy more pleasant experiences, clings to those he already has, and tries to avoid the painful ones. Thus, the round of resultants generates another round of defilements. In this way, the threefold round turns incessantly until the ignorance at its base is removed by the wisdom of insight (vipassanā) and the supramundane paths.\footnote{Bhikkhu Bodhi, \textit{A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma}, (Buddhist Publication Society, 2012), p. 262.} These kammatic functions are certainly transcendental, if not divine, and add a force of nature that conditions physical reality that is neither apparent nor included in the material world.

\textbf{Fear}

There is some belief that Epicurus’ insistence to not fear the gods nor worry about punishment after death\footnote{Epicurus, \textit{Letter to Menoeceus}, contained in Diogenes Laertius, \textit{Lives of Eminent Philosophers}, Book X.} is similar to the notion that there is no creator god within the belief structure of Buddhism. Ann Heirman and Stephan Peter Bumbacher, in “The Spread of Buddhism”:\footnote{Ann Heirman, Stephan Peter Bumbacher, \textit{The Spread of Buddhism}, (Brill, 2007), p. 160.}

\begin{quote}
With Epicureanism, for example, Buddhism has in common its stress on spreading to all mankind a salutary message based on rational insight, which must lead to “absence of fear”, in particular of the supernatural.
\end{quote}

\textit{Ottapa}, Pāli for fear, is a fundamental quality in the teachings of the Buddha. It is, in actuality, a wholesome factor in one’s own decision making to fear the results of one’s actions. \textit{Ottapa} is the fear of being unwholesome and it stems from a fear of doing wrong in the present moment because of the results one would face from one’s own \textit{kamma} in this life and, to be sure, the next life, after death. The Buddha explains fear in the \textit{MahaAssapura Sutta}:

\begin{quote}
And what, bhikkhus, are the things that make one a recluse, that make one a brahmin? Bhikkhus, you should train thus: We will be possessed of shame and fear of wrongdoing. Now, bhikkhus, you may think thus: We are possessed of shame and fear of wrongdoing. That much is enough, that much has been done, the goal
of recluseship has been reached, there is nothing more for us to do; and you may rest content with that much. Bhikkhus, I inform you, I declare to you: You who seek the recluses status, do not fall short of the goal of recluseship while there is more to be done.\textsuperscript{19}

While Buddhism does not have a creator god, this does not imply that it is similar with Epicurus’ belief that one should not fear consequence of the supernatural or that there is no punishment after death. From the \textit{Saleyyaka Sutta}:

Householders, it is by reason of conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, by reason of unrighteous conduct that some beings here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell. It is by reason of conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, by reason of righteous conduct that some beings here, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.\textsuperscript{20}

The teachings of the Buddha are hinged on repercussions of past actions after death; I don’t see how this comparison is valid.

\textbf{Minimalism}

The idea that Epicurean minimalism is similar to the minimalism taught by the Buddha is explained by Jean-Pierre Changeux and Paul Ricoeur in “What Makes Us Think?: A Neuroscientist and a Philosopher Argue about Ethics”:

Epicurus establishes a hierarchy of desires: desires that are natural and necessary - the drink that quenches thirst, the feeling of pain and so on: and desires that are neither natural nor necessary - honors, glory, riches, women (or men), which must be eliminated. Pleasure is characterized by the absence of bodily suffering and troubles of the soul. To the extent that survival has been assured, the individual will tend to lessen his pain and suffering. Here one meets the four noble truths of Buddha’s teachings, which amount to an authentic physiology concerning the universality of pain, its origin, its suppression, and the eightfold path that leads to this suppression.\textsuperscript{21}

While these two teachings look similar on the surface, they are quite different from the perception of intention (a quality the Buddha held as foundational). Epicurus was interested in the comfort of the senses. He did not advocate indulgence because that would eventually lead to discomfort. Epicurus thought of desire in three ways: natural and necessary, natural and unnecessary, and empty. It was through minimizing the unnecessary and completely eradicating the empty that one found comfort in the senses. This is important as he wanted a life of pleasure via the senses, one of joy and ease.\textsuperscript{22} This is a drastic difference from the asceticism taught in the \textit{Nikāyas}. The minimalist path proclaimed by the Buddha was a means to detach oneself from the senses, not to find a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (tr.), \textit{The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya}, (Wisdom Publications, 1995), p. 280.
\end{itemize}
comfortable state within them. In “A Comparative History of World Philosophy: From the Upanishads to Kant”, Ben-Ami Scharfstein explains another position that sees similarities with the minimalism of Epicurus and that of the Buddha:

Although Buddhism theoretically rejects pleasure and Epicureanism seeks it, both define the desired state as one of calm, safety, and absence of pain.23

This comparison of a desired state that both Buddhism and Epicureanism teach may be another misinterpretation. The Buddha did not seem to advocate the desire, or craving, of a calm, safe and pain-free state in this existence, as Epicurus did. Instead, the Buddha advocated a want to be released from a state of rebirth and what we would call life, while Epicurus wanted comfort within that life. The Buddha explains that suffering comes from desire (craving) in the Majjhima Nikāya:

And what, monks, is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering? It is that craving which gives rise to rebirth, bound up with pleasure and lust, finding fresh delight now here, now there: that is to say sensual craving, craving for existence, and craving for non-existence. And where does this craving arise and establish itself? Wherever in the world there is anything agreeable and pleasurable, there this craving arises and establishes itself.24

The Buddha goes on to say that the extinction of suffering comes with the extinction of desire (craving):

And what, monks, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering? It is the complete fading-away and extinction of this craving, its forsaking and abandonment, liberation from it, detachment from it. And how does this craving come to be abandoned, how does its cessation come about? Wherever in the world there is anything agreeable and pleasurable, there its cessation comes about.25

According to the Buddha, desire itself leads to suffering. One’s desire to find this state of comfort that Epicurus advocated would only lead to the continuation of suffering in the eyes of the Buddha. While both lived, and taught a minimalist life, the intention behind this life was much different. The Buddha explains to Upali the difference between an act with intention and one without:

What do you think, householder? Here some Nigantha might be restrained with four checks - curbed by all curbs, clamped by all curbs, cleansed by all curbs, and claimed by all curbs - and yet when going forward and returning he brings about the destruction of many small living beings. What result does the Nigantha Nataputta describe for him?26

Consider when one is walking with the intention to cross a path and steps on a beetle unaware, compared to when one steps on a beetle with the intention to step on that beetle. While both acts seem similar, they are quite different according to the Buddha. This

---

was one quality of action and livelihood the Buddha was very clear about: intention. So, while Epicurus leads a minimalist life with the intention to attain a state of comfort *within* the senses, the Buddha leads a minimalist life with the intention to detach himself *from* the senses. While on the surface these two may seem to share certain qualities, the teachings are rather far apart, and these similarities may not be so similar after all.

**Conclusion**

I have argued that some aspects of Epicurean thought are not compatible with the Buddha’s teachings and have presented comparisons that I disagree with, namely: that Epicurean Atomism is similar to the Buddha’s explanations of physical reality, that Epicurus’ position to not fear consequence after death is in agreement with the Buddha’s teachings, and finally, that Epicurean minimalism is related to that of the Buddha’s.

These arguments being: Epicurean Atomism is founded upon no transcendental forces, while the physical reality of the Buddha is founded upon forces that transcend material reality. Epicurean thought posits the absence of punishment after death and that fear of such punishment is not necessary, while the Buddha’s teachings hinge on the consequence of action and rebirth, and that the fear of such consequence, *ottopa*, is a wholesome and necessary state. Epicurean minimalism is founded upon the search for the most comfort in life, having a simple lifestyle is how one experiences the most overall pleasure, while the minimalism that the Buddha taught is founded upon the extinction of desire and the extinction of one’s dependency on pleasure and comfort.

This paper does not argue that comparisons may not be drawn from Epicureanism and the teachings of the Buddha, however, such comparisons should be done with care and respect for the traditions of the teachings; respect for not only the teachings of the Buddha, but also those of Epicurus. Possible misinterpretations that may lead to faulty comparison hurt not only the tradition of Buddhism, but also Epicureanism.
References


Ritual has been an integral part of human life since antiquity, and its significance and influence on humanity cannot be overstated. While religious ritual was often dismissed by modern scholarship as a mere social phenomenon with no inherent power in itself, in postmodernity, it appears that the benefits of ritual performance has been rediscovered anew. A relative increase in the number of chaplain referrals for ritual related services in recent years, for example, may be one of various reactions to this rediscovery of the power of ritual in healthcare.26 Why can ritual be so empowering? How do its participants perceive the specific mechanics of ritual as efficacious and thus become influenced by it?

To address such questions, there have also been numerous theories formulated by prominent scholars of multiple disciplines, attempting to explain “ritual” in its own right and in relation to the practitioners and their objects of worship. While Western scholarship in general has traditionally tended to adopt the etic intelligibility in their investigatory work concerning ritual and other anthropological studies, the postmodern approaches to the study of ritual appear to be increasingly interdisciplinary and sympathetic to the emic perspectives, treating respective religious beliefs as valid theories rather than mere superstitious speculations. One theorist who exemplifies this postmodern sensibility and intelligibility is the recipient of the 2010 American Academy of Religion Book Award, Kimberly C. Patton.27

In this paper, I will employ Patton’s descriptive comparative approach and her innovative theoretical framework of “divine reflexivity” to elucidate certain aspects of ritual, particularly in relation to empowerment. By “empowerment” and “healing” in this paper, I refer to the quality of experience induced by the ritual performance that is conducive to restoring the sense of wellbeing and wholeness. With this meaning in mind, I will investigate the ritual practices endemic to two seemingly unrelated belief systems that have been historically categorized as the mainstream and influential Western and East Asian religions. Specifically, I will focus on the Eucharist of Catholicism as an example of a cardinal sacramental ritual that belongs to the religion of the West, and the Fusatsu 布薩 (or atonement) of Japanese Zen Buddhism as that of the East. In addition to the inquiry stated earlier concerning the empowering qualities of ritual, my aim is to answer another question: How does Patton’s theoretical framework help explain the experiences of the divine and its empowerment by the practitioners?

My answer and central claim, then, is this: the Eucharist and the Fusatsu are “empowering” because they are performed to affect not only the practitioners but also the “originators” (i.e., deities) of these rituals, so that the deities are also participating in the acts, making the sacrificial offerings, and receiving the benefits. In other words,

within the enactment of the specifically prescribed actions in ritual, the empowerment is generated and gained by both the practitioners and their deities, and the transformative power is shared mutually.

To support this view, I primarily focus on the comparative study of the emic perspectives of the ritual practices, emulating Patton’s methodology. However, some etic understanding of the psychological effects of ritual is not precluded from the study, as I observe the human penchant for deification of legends and the power of “belief” in the perception of efficacy. To explain, I will first provide a brief general overview of Patton’s theory and approach, along with two other eminent theories I will employ in this paper.

The overview will be followed by a discussion of the Catholic ritual of the Eucharist as a form of atonement, offering a brief historical review and analysis of the related sacred text vis-à-vis some Catholic commentary on the ritual. The next discussion will treat Sōtō Zen Buddhist’s ritual of atonement called Fusatsu with a brief textual examination of the Sūtra of Brahma’s Net and also the vows as the integral part of the ritual. The purpose of the textual presentation is to show that the autosacrificial aspect of the present form of Fusatsu originated with the bodhisattvas and perpetuated by their aspirants as they seek to unite with the deities. I will then conclude by summarizing how the self-referential deities originate, participate, receive, and activate empowerment through the enactment of ritual in the two very different faith traditions.

Theoretical Framework - Performance Theory:

As noted earlier, there have been various theories concerning religion and ritual in Western scholarship. One of the most distinguished twentieth-century anthropologists who specialized in the studies of ritual is Roy Rappaport. He is frequently cited in countless works by notable postmodern scholars. According to Rappaport’s “performative” theory, the performers of ritual - such as Catholic and Buddhist priests - are not only serving as the conduits of the trans-historical traditions and the communicators of the authority and power for their practitioners but also as their own transformative agents.28 Rappaport asserts: “At the heart of ritual… is the relationship of performers to their own performances of invariant sequences of acts and utterances which they did not encode.”29 The soteriological schemata, then, are intricately tied to the priests’ ritual performance, effectuating the transformative power for both the worshippers and the priests themselves. I thus refer to Rappaport’s theory in several places of this paper, as I underscore the significance of the “performance” itself in ritual in the perceived efficacy.

This crucial role of performance in ritual is also underscored by another distinguished contemporary scholar, Jonathan Z. Smith. Smith posits that it is essentially the “activity” of ritual that generates the “sacredness” of place.30 In addition to the importance of activity, however, Smith gives primacy to the significance of “place” in understanding ritual. He explains that ritual is a “controlled

---

30 Smith, To Take Place, as summarized in my review of the book, submitted to Professor Joshua Capitanio, University of the West, February 2014.
environment” into which meaning and efficacy are imbued by human agents. While there is no meaning inherently in any specific place to be sacred, in the hierarchical structure and temporal realities created through ritual, the sacred space is generated or replicated, and the perception of efficacy, meaning and order, and empowerment are gained.

**Theoretical Framework - Divine Reflexivity:**

While the influences of such scholars as Rappaport and Smith are undeniable, their theories seem to present some proclivity for etic perspectives to maintain objectivity. Postmodern scholarship, however, seems to show another trajectory in research methods. As a paragon of postmodern scholarship, for example, Kimberly Patton utilizes her knowledge of the vast range of theories by eminent scholars who preceded her, including Rappaport, Smith, as well as Durkheim, Eliade, Feuerbach, and many other giants in the history of religious studies. While sensibly challenging some of the traditional approaches and theories, she successfully adopts an interdisciplinary approach to advance her own “divine reflexivity” framework and its paradoxical depictions both uniquely and ubiquitously present in the structures of world religion.

According to Patton’s theoretical schemata, the concepts or images of gods are not merely some projections of human desires and fears that are simply expressed in sacrificial and other cultic rituals. She thus rejects the projectionist theories of religion which posit that gods are modeled after their humans, and the humans assume the lower positions than their gods to whom they offer prayers and sacrifices. Adopting and further building on the “theomorphic” theory of Mircea Eliade, she then develops her argument that gods are at once the originators, participants, and recipients of the religious worship and rituals celebrated by their human practitioners. She concludes the section of the book where she propounds her theory as follows:

The gods do not merely receive veneration or sacrifice; they perform ritual and thus ratify it, conferring upon it ultimacy… The ritual, whether in the form of pious observance or sacrificial gift, is returned to the gods who began the process and from whom religion is born. Religion is thus best understood as purely reflexive; it is created and self-referentially enacted by the divine for its own sake.

Ritual, then, can be viewed as a process and a function of religion, all of which the deity itself has originated and substantiated for its own sake. Furthermore, she asserts that this image of reflexive and self-referential deity is both culturally particular and phenomenologically universal, and thus applicable to various rituals of other religious traditions.

In support of this main thesis, Patton describes the manifestation, functionality, and understanding of the phenomenon of the self-referential deity from the perspective of the “insiders” of the religion. By employing a descriptive comparative approach, she attempts to illumine the subtle theological and reflexive implications of the religious rituals and practices depicted. She thus develops a new phenomenological

---

31 Smith, *To Take Place*, 2.
category, which she terms the “divine reflexivity,” defining the term as “the ritual performance by a deity of an action known as belonging to the sphere of that deity’s human cultic worship.” 35 While developing this theory, she also bridges the fields of theology, phenomenology, iconology, and religious history whose boundaries are often demarcated in hope for some objectivity.

In this ambitious endeavor, Patton grounds her arguments with in-depth analyses of primary and secondary sources, in the manner that is highly technical but clear and cogent. In my admiration of her scholarship, I will attempt to emulate her approach in my much shorter analysis of Catholic and Japanese Buddhist rituals below, in the hope that it may serve as a corollary to a much larger project in the future. I will also refer to Rappaport and Smith as well, as their theories may further illumine the analysis of these rituals as liturgical activity in the place made sacred by remembrance.

**Eucharist as the Catholic Ritual of “Atonement”**

In her analysis of Judeo-Christian portrayal of “God” as a father sacrificing his own son, Patton skillfully applies her “divine reflexivity” framework to examine the phenomenon of “autosacrifice” of God which God performs for the sole purpose of atoning for the sin of God’s own creation.36 Using the “divine reflexivity” apparatus, she compares the story of the crucifixion with the *aqedah* narrative in which Abraham willingly offers his son, Isaac, for sacrifice, while treating them as metaphoric equals.37 She then observes how this self-referential God is simultaneously depicted as the “judge, executioner, and chief mourner” of the cosmic drama.13 I would also add to her observation that Jesus as the “Son” and the second person of the Godhead was also a willing “autosacrifice” that the “Father” and the first person of the Godhead provided as a sacrificial lamb to atone for the sin of humanity. The self-reflexive God, then, is not only the “judge, executioner, and chief mourner” but also a willing self-sacrifice, ready to pour out God’s own “libation” of holy blood to sanctify humanity in order to reestablish human connection with God-self.

This ultimate atoning act of a self-reflexive deity was, at least in the mind of Christians, unequivocally demonstrated in the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, who was later called the Christ (or Messiah), exactly according to prophecy. Christians also believe that Jesus knew precisely what kind of death he was about to experience and hence, the night before the crucifixion, instituted the sacramental ritual of the Eucharist and commanded his disciples to remember, imitate, and repeat.38 The account of this event is believed to have been recorded in the New Testament, which is the primary holy text for Christians.

37 Patton, *Religion of the Gods*, 244-47. The *aqedah* narrative appears in the Book of Genesis 22: 2-14 in the Tanakh (i.e., the Hebrew Bible), where Abraham demonstrates his absolute trust and obedience in God, believing that even if he kills his son, God will be able to bring the son back to life. Before Abraham can complete his willful act of obedience, however, God intervenes and provides a lamb for Abraham to sacrifice in lieu of Isaac. Hence, Abraham names the place, “The LORD will provide” (יהוּדָּה יְהוָה בַּדַּד יִרְאֶה YHWH yire) (Gen. 22: 8, 14). With the premise that the obedience of Abraham and Isaac and the provision of the lamb together constitute a type of Christ foreshadowed in the Hebrew scripture, Christians believe that Jesus the God-Man became that willing “autosacrifice.” 13 Patton, *Religion of the Gods*, 247.
38 The term *Eucharist* comes from the Greek word εὐχαρίστεια (eucharistía) to render, “to give thanks.” The term has been mostly adopted and used by Catholics, as Protestants normally refer to the ritual as “the Lord’s Supper,” while calling the actual Passover supper that Jesus partook as “the Last Supper.”
Autosacrifice and Deification of Christ:

There are only minor textual variations between the synoptic gospels for this account of the Last Supper (i.e., the Eucharist) and a significant difference in the fourth gospel (i.e., that of John). The message that the narratives seek to convey, however, appears to be consistent in that Jesus takes common elements of human consumption and transforms them into a powerful symbol of his sacrificial and atoning death to which he willingly offers himself.39 Below is an account recorded in Matthew, the first gospel of the New Testament:

26 Ἐσθιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν λαβὼν ὃ Ἰησοῦς ἄρτον καὶ εὐλογήσας ἐκλασεν καὶ δῶς τοῖς μαθηταῖς εἶπεν· Λάβετε φάγετε, τούτο ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου.
27 καὶ λαβὼν ποτήριον καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· Πίετε ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες,
28 τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυνόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.40

26 And while they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had blessed [God for it], he broke it into pieces, and giving them to his disciples he said:
“Take, eat; this is my body.”
27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying: 28 “All of you drink of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for all for the forgiveness of sins.”41

In this passage, Jesus does not allude to his deity by making himself equal to God; rather, he gives thanks to God for food in verse 26 εὐλογήσας (eülogeísas – “having blessed”) and drink in verse 27 εὐχαριστήσας (eükaristeísas – “having given thanks”) as customary for the Jews at Passover. However, the point that is underscored is that he himself chooses to break up the bread (signifying his body) “into pieces” and pour out the wine (signifying his blood) “for all for forgiveness of sins” περὶ πολλῶν... ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν (peri pollôn... haphesin hamartiôn) in verse 28. While all three synoptic gospels follow this format, only the non-synoptic gospel of John written at a much later date departs from it and focuses instead on the deity of Christ and his role as the sacrificial Lamb.42 Thus deification of Christ, which gives the perceived transformative power to the elements, appears to have occurred much after Jesus was crucified.

42 For the purpose of the current inquiry, the examination of the gospel of John would be out of the scope of the paper. However, it seemed appropriate to point out that the deity of Christ was not emphasized until much later when churches were well established. Incidentally, the gospel of John was written last (sometime around 70 to 90 C.E.), several decades after the crucifixion of Christ took place. The textual structure and rendering from the synoptic gospels were also adopted later by the Apostle Paul who wrote letters to the churches, sometime between 50 to 65 C.E., which comprise nearly half of the New Testament. For the dating of the gospels and Paul’s letters to the Corinthians, I have referenced Raymond Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, by (New York : Doubleday, 1997), 127, 172, 334, and 512.
Remembrance and the Sacred “Place” of the Lord’s Table:

There is another element in the Eucharist “ritual” formula familiar to Christians of both Catholic and Protestant traditions but is missing from the accounts in the first two gospels. The missing element is the verse where Jesus commands his disciples to “do this in remembrance of me” (τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν (toute poieiste tein emein anamnesin) which appears in the first letter to the Corinthians, written by the Apostle Paul:

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread;
24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”
25 In the same way [he took] the cup also after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink [it], in remembrance of Me.”
26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

The command, “Do this remembrance of me,” also appears once after the breaking of bread in the gospel of Luke, who was reputedly a Greek physician converted by the Apostle Paul, neither of whom knew Jesus in person when he was alive.

Despite the fact that Paul was a later convert who did not attend the supper, the above passage in Paul’s letter, instead of what appears in the gospels, has been adopted verbatim by the Catholic and the mainline Protestant churches as the formulaic “words of institution” in liturgy. The reason for the churches to choose this passage over the ones in the gospel may be partly due to the word choices that seemed more conducive to liturgy. It may be, however, more to do with the theological influence that Paul had on church doctrine and code of conduct. Whatever the reason may be, the fact is that the command to “do this in remembrance” included in the words of institution does not appear in the gospels written earlier by the disciples who purportedly were present at the time.

By adopting Paul’s epistle version, however, the church members have been able to not only memorialize but also immortalize the presence of their beloved teacher-savior while also obeying his command to perpetuate his act of sacrifice “until He comes” in the eschaton. The “last supper” of Jesus, then, has become the “the Lord’s Supper” wherein Jesus’ action is emulated and mediated by clergy performing the ritual. The very act of obedience of the church in turn empowers the deified Christ who asked his disciples to “do this in remembrance” of him, as well as the clergy performing the ritual and the church members observing and receiving the elements supposedly infused with Christ’s power. Thus, in the act of “remembrance” and “memorialization,” the ritual is imbued with efficacy, and the ritual place in the form

---

44 I Cor. 11: 23-26, New American Standard Bible (NASB). The words in brackets [ ] were added by the translators of NASB.
45 Hagner, Matthew, 771.
46 While Paul was a later convert who never directly spent time with Jesus, his theology which was promulgated through his prolific writing of letters to the churches comprised almost half of the New Testament and has remained influential since the beginning of church history.
of “the Lord’s Supper” (i.e., Eucharist) is made sacrosanct, allowing a subtle interplay of divine reflexivity and human reciprocity to emerge.

This significance of “remembrance” of the practitioners in generation of a sacred space is also discussed eruditely by Jonathan Z. Smith in *To Take Place*. In treating the sacred text of the Tjilpa tradition of Northern Australian aborigines, Smith contends with Eliade’s interpretation that emphasizes “the myth behind the ritual” theory and the “sacred axis” of ancestral worship as the center of the community. He offers instead an alternative understanding that the point of connection between the ancestors and the worshipers is a “place” which is only sanctified and effectuated primarily by the “recollection” of the worshippers. He thus asserts that the specificity and the sacredness of the “place” of worship is defined and realized by the enactment of “remembrance” in ritual. Moreover, he maintains that ritual is not a response to or an expression of the “Sacred” but a mechanism by which “the ordinary is made sacred.”

**Transubstantiation:**

In the ritual of the Eucharist, however, at least according to the emic perspectives of the Catholic tradition, it is very much a response to the Sacred (i.e., deity) as well as an expression of the Sacred, who is believed to have not only originated it but continues to participate in and receive the offerings in the repeated reenactment of the “last supper.” The ordinary gathering of people around the “table” of the Lord (i.e., the “place” of Eucharist) is made sacrosanct by the prayers of the officiate and the participants, which are considered to be the words of “thanksgiving” because of the “remembrance” of the believers of the words of Jesus giving thanks in addition to giving thanks for his salvific sacrifice. In the trans-temporal and metaphysical ritual of the Eucharist, then, the deified Christ is believed to be truly present in the common elements sanctified by the prayers of the officiate. This mystical transformation of the substance is called “transubstantiation.” Thus, the divine reflexivity may be evident in this emic perspective, that the deity who originated the ritual is both invoked and consumed by the participants according to the very words of the deity, who in turn empowers and is perpetuated by the participants through the acts of obedience in their perceived transformed reality.

A Catholic scholar, Joseph Martos, explains that within the emic perspectives is the key to understand how the Eucharist or any sacramental ritual in any religion works. In other words, concurring with Eliade, he posits that it is in the descriptions of the lived experience of the practitioners that give legitimacy and “life” to the myth.
that gives birth to ritual, which in turn serves as “the door to the Sacred.”

Ritual, then, is the threshold that leads to the transcendent, and the Eucharist is the door and the invitation to transformation and new “human reality” in light of what the deity has done and is doing.

Like Eliade, Martos asserts that this feature of ritual as “the door” is common to all religions, and each religious meaning is uniquely found in the personal encounter with the Sacred. In particular to the Catholics, however, the transformative and empowering quality of the experience of the Eucharist is enhanced by the sense of “actuality” of the sacredness.

This notion of “actuality” is where the major difference lies between the Catholics and the Protestants in their views of Eucharist. That is, the former holds firmly to the belief of the “actual” substantive change of elements (i.e., the bread and the wine) to the body and the blood of Christ, referred to as the “transubstantiation,” while the latter does not.

Hence, for the Catholics, the Eucharist ritual invokes not only the presence of Jesus Christ but also his sacrifice. In other words, every time a Catholic priest enacts the “Last Supper” and utters the “words of institution” (i.e., liturgy), the Spirit of Christ actually shows up and overpowers the priest who then becomes the medium by which the common elements are transubstantiated into the actual body and blood of Christ.

Looking through the Theoretical Lens:

The efficacy of ritual, then, is very much dependent on the actions and beliefs of the ordained and qualified priest. Rappaport emphasizes: “The notion of efficacy of divine beings...might well be founded upon the performativeness and meta-performativeness of language as expressed in ritual.”

Elaborating on Rappaport’s point, Sharf observes: “Indeed, ritual authority and efficacy are tied to the priest’s skill in effacing his own agency so that he can serve as a conduit for the hoary tradition that speaks through him.”

Thus, Rappaport’s performative theory is applicable here, in that the sacred meaning and efficacy are not only communicated to the participants through the performance of the priest but also to the performing priests themselves by the Sacred (i.e., the deified Christ) through the very actions of the atoning ritual.

In addition to Rappaport’s theory, the transubstantiation tenet can also be explained by Patton’s divine reflexivity framework. As stated earlier, in the Catholic Eucharist, Christ is invoked so that the elements can actually become his body and blood to be consumed by his followers. This essentially means that his sacrifice is actualized every time the Eucharist is celebrated, wherein the worshippers give thanks to their deity for being their sacrifice again and again. Thus in Catholic mass, Christ is not only the object of worship but also an active central participant in the ritual of the Eucharist as the atoning sacrifice whose body is literally broken and blood shed for all “for the forgiveness of sins.” Hence, the Christian deity is at once the originator, participant, and recipient of the ritual offering, wherein his believers are empowered and transformed by his sacrifice, which in turn empowers the deity through the transformed lives of his followers.

53 Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, 16.
54 Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, 148-150.
55 Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, 20.
The notion that ritual is first and foremost “activity” that is communicated both to the performers and the observers can easily be witnessed in the Eucharist. So can Smith’s assertion that the spatial and temporal “place” of the Eucharist is made sacred by the act of remembrance by the practitioners. I have shown above, however, that the relatively new theory of “divine reflexivity” can most adeptly elucidate the emic perspectives of the sacrosanct ritual. What then about rituals belonging to other entirely different belief systems such as Buddhism? Can the divine reflexivity also help explain the perceived efficacy and the mechanism of empowerment and healing in a Buddhist ritual, and if so how? To this question, I turn in the following section.

Some readers may reasonably object the use of “divine reflexivity” by contending that Buddhists do not “worship” God or gods in the sense that “the Peoples of the Book” do.59 However, the role that the transcendent figures play in Buddhist ritual seems surprisingly analogous to that which is seen in the Eucharist. I thus propose that the divine reflexivity framework is readily viable in one Japanese Buddhist tradition due to, at least in part, a general human penchant for deification of great teachers and legends.

Sōtō Zen Buddhist Rituals of “Atonement” – 布薩 Fusatsu (Uposadha)

While there is a vast array of traditions within East Asian Buddhism, I will focus on the Sōtō tradition of Japanese Zen Buddhism as one of the most popular and influential sects in Japan. In Sōtō Zen, there is obviously no precise equivalent of the Catholic concept of the Eucharist in the sense of expiation of the inherent and committed “sins” through the mediation of deity. There is, however, a bimonthly ritual that provides a sacred space (or 畑 sīmā, “a specified boundary”) in which the sangha seeks to purify itself by confessing its past misdeeds and renewing the vows.60 It is called 布薩 Fusatsu in Japanese whose Chinese characters (漢字 kanji) represent a transliteration of a Sanskrit term uposadha.61

Significance of the Bodhisattvas:

As the characters are transliteration, there is no intrinsic meaning in the term. However, the choice of the characters can be interpreted as significant in light of Dōgen’s later teaching. That is, the character for 福 (布) signifies “spreading,” and the one for 瘗 (葛) points to the bodhisattvas, rendering the meaning of “spreading the bodhisattva vows and merits.” 62 This imagery of “spreading the cloth” is meaningful in both Jukai (ordination) and Fusatsu (in which the Jukai vows are renewed), as it also appears in the Kāśāya-gāthā (or 拼殺舎偈 takkesa ge) quoted by Dōgen and repeated by his followers in Sōtō Zen ritual after every esezen (meditation):

59 Patton, Religion of the Gods, 239–47. The quotation is from the title of Part II of Patton’s book, describing the religious followers of the “monotheistic” religions of the Middle East, such as the Jews, Christians, and Islam, whose faith and cardinal doctrines are predicated on their respective revelatory texts.


62 In Japanese, the word 布 also means “cloth.” In the compound with 葛, then, it can portray the image of “spreading the cloth [of] the bodhisattva.” The “pseudo-etymology” of the term 布薩 noted here, however, is not an accurate description of what the term actually means in a historical sense. It should be viewed only as a commentarial interpretation of the term based on my personal knowledge of Chinese/Japanese writing, which is supported by the definitions provided by MDBG Chinese-English Dictionary online: http://www.mdbg.net/chindict/chindict.php?page=worddict&kwrdst=1&kwdbq=%E5%B8%83%E8%96%A9 (accessed March 16, 2014).
How wonderful this deliverance robe! Like a formless field of merits It expounds the Tathāgāta’s teaching, and saves all sentient beings.63 大哉解脫服，無相福田衣。 (daisai getappuku, musō fukudene) 被奉如來敕。廣度諸衆生。42 (hibu nyōraikyō, kōdo shoshujyō)64

Hence in Fusatsu, the participants are taking on the role of the bodhisattva in “spreading the robe of liberation” and renewing the vows to save, and hence atone for, all sentient beings. Taizan Maezumi Roshi, who established the Los Angeles Zen Center in 1967, also explained that Fusatsu is a kind of “face-to-face atonement,” wherein reciting all the names of the Buddhas, the participants seek to “be one” with the Buddhas and the bodhisattvas.65 Thus in Sōtō Zen, the practitioners gather at new and full moon days to repent of all past evil actions and recite the vows, or 戒本 kaihon, while seeking to emulate and be in union with the bodhisattvas by invoking them along with the Buddhas (i.e., the seven Buddhas).45

These transcendent figures are not “worshipped” in the same sense of the word as in the Judeo-Christian or Islamic tradition; however, they are invoked, thereby brought to the present space and time to unite with the practitioners through the performance of the liturgical order. Here, I underscore the unification of the practitioners with the deified or transcendent beings and the community through the atoning ritual, which I find analogous to the way the Catholic priest and Christian believers are united with Christ in the Eucharist. Before I go on to drawing comparisons and applying theories to elucidate the practice of Fusatsu, however, a brief historical survey may be helpful.

Historical overview:

This practice of repentance and purification was endorsed and promulgated by Dōgen who popularized Sōtō Zen teachings in Japan in the early thirteenth century, although he does not specifically refer to the bimonthly ritual named Fusatsu in his extant writings.66 Its provenance, however, may be traced many centuries prior to the arrival of Buddhism in Japan. It is generally accepted by scholars that a similar or a primordial form of the ritual originated in the Vedic period, when the term upoṣadha referred to “a state of fasting or abstinence… prior to a soma sacrifice,” and the practice


64 Translation by SeesaaWiki Tsuru tsuru higurashi wiki (Sōtō shū kan ren yōgo shū) つるつる日の暮らし wiki (重要宗関用語集) http://seesawiki.jp/w/turatura/d/%e5%e8%b7%db%e3%8d%95 (accessed March 22, 2014).


was eventually adopted by other religious practitioners in India, including the followers of the Buddha. 67

According to the Indian Vinaya, then, the sangha gathered bimonthly to recite the prātimokṣa (戒本 kaihon), a list of precepts received by the individual monastics at the time of ordination. 68 When the ritual was adopted by Ch’an Buddhism in China, where Dōgen trained, it came to be associated with the Four Part Vinaya which contained 250 monastic precepts.69 By the time it was transmitted to China, the ritual had evolved to incorporate the bodhisattva precepts (菩薩戒 bosatsu kai) taken from the Sūtra of Brahma’s Net, which Dōgen knew very well from his earlier training in China and advocated “for the purpose of making repentances” prior to ordination and during Fusatsu.70 Thus, the ritual content significantly originated in China, along with the Sūtra of Brahma’s Net and the Sōtō Zen tradition that Dōgen propagated in Japan.

Autosacrifice of the Bodhisattvas:

The Sūtra of Brahma’s Net is an English rendering of the title of an influential text 梵網縵 (J. Bonmōkyō, c. Fànwǎng jīng). It is an indigenous work that appeared in China sometime between 440 and 480 C.E. and became the primary text used in China and subsequently one of the most influential texts in Japan for ordination to the bodhisattva precepts.71 Its primary purpose seems to have been not only to justify self-immolation practices but also to require them in demonstration of one’s dedication to the Buddhas and identification with the bodhisattvas, as the following passage from the text indicates:

If one does not set fire to the body, the arm or the finger as an offering to the Buddhas, one is not renunciant bodhisattva. Moreover, one should sacrifice the feet, hands and flesh of the body as offerings to hungry tigers, wolves, and lions and to all hungry ghosts.72

Thus, to be ordained into the bodhisattva precepts as an aspiring “renunciant bodhisattva” or “monastic bodhisattva” (出家菩薩 J. shukke bosatsu, c. chūjiā púsà), a novice was required to self-immolate, usually burning and leaving marks on one’s head or arms by means of “moxibustion” or the practice of burning moxa, as an offering (供養 J. kuyō, c. gōng yāng) to the Buddhas. The text here may indicate the divinely

---

67 Buswell, The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism, 944–45. The term upoṣadha is referred to as Fusatsu in Japanese Zen. Also, as oōjīa soma in Greek means “body,” a “soma sacrifice” probably refers to a sacrifice of a body or parts of a body.

68 Foulk, “Just Sitting?” in Dōgen, 83. The ritual to receive the ten precepts is called Jukai in Japanese, which appears in a section of the Rules of Purity for Chan Monasteries which Dōgen quotes in his writing (Bendōwa). In Sōtō Zen today, the ritual is also performed for lay individuals joining the sangha as Buddhists.

69 Foulk, “Just Sitting?” in Dōgen, 83.

70 Foulk, “Just Sitting?” in Dōgen, 83-84.


ordained prototype in the sense that the practice of self-sacrificial acts originated with the bodhisattvas.

Moxibustion and other various forms of self-mortification were an important part of ritual practices for monks in Edo Japan. Some of the extreme practices included burning off a finger as an offering to the Buddha and copying sūtras by cutting and using one’s own blood, all of which was not only to emulate the self-sacrificing bodhisattvas but also to “form karmic bonds between eminent monks and their followers.” The monks were thus seeking to “connect” with the spirits of their patriarchs in the lineage as well as to the bodhisattvas and the Buddhas who hear the invocations, participate in ritual, receive offerings, and offer back merits and empower the practitioners.

While such extreme forms of self-immolation have been long abandoned since the Meiji period in Japan, the spirit of dedication and sacrifice continues to live on in Jukai (ordination), Fusatsu (bimonthly confession and purification), and other monthly observances at Zen monasteries in Japan, including feeding the hungry ghosts and offering for spirits for dedication of merits. These monthly services, as well as funeral and memorial services for lay parishioners (懲業 danka), involve the same or similar activities of confession, repentance, and rededication to the bodhisattva precepts. The interconnectedness with the spirit world (神 kami), the patriarchs, the Buddhas and the bodhisattvas is thus maintained.

The reason I highlight the interconnectedness of the deities and the autosacrificial aspects of the bodhisattva ideal, precepts, and practice here is to underscore the selfreferential nature of their vows whose primary purpose is to eradicate the evil karmas of their aspirants and save them. The Buddhas and bodhisattvas are thus deified supernormal beings who can transcend time and space to unite with the practitioners who follow the precepts through ritual act. The union not only benefits the practitioners for its salvific value but also the bodhisattvas who have vowed to save them. The bodhisattvas, therefore, gladly unite with the aspirants to autosacrifice in each occasion of the ritual for the benefit of all. The self-reflexive dimension of Buddhist transcendent figures resembles the selfsacrificing Christ who has been deified and invoked at the Eucharist. The major difference is that Christ claims to be the co-creator deity of the entire universe who alone holds the key to salvation, whereas none of the bodhisattvas makes such audacious claims. Despite this and other differences in the soteriological schemes, however, the self-reflexive nature of the bodhisattva vows and ritual performance of these beings united with the practitioners, like Christ in the Eucharist, demonstrate the divine reflexivity at work.

Textual Reference:

The association, and hence the significance, of the bodhisattvas with their selfsacrificing activities comes from the Jataka tale and various Mahāyāna literature, including the Diamond Sūtra, the Lotus Sūtra, The Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 Lines (Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtra), as well as the Sūtra of Brahma’s Net. These texts contain the essential elements of the bodhisattva path, portraying the bodhisattvas that the East Asian Buddhist monks have come to not only aspire to and emulate but to invoke for their power. The portrayal of “the cosmic self-offering of Bhaiṣajyarāja” in the Lotus Sūtra, for example, is believed to have inspired the Zen cremation ritual which
appropriated the phrase “fiery self-immolation” from the text. The cremation ritual eventually incorporated mummification of the eminent monks to be preserved as šarīra (relics), which was venerated and ascribed power. Hence, as with the Tjilpa tradition (Smith) and with the Eucharist, in Zen, too, the sacral reality was generated or replicated in the controlled environment by means of the relics, and the interconnections with the patriarchs and the bodhisattvas were invoked and reactivated through ritual activity.

Furthermore, referencing these influential Mahāyāna texts, the Korean and Japanese Zen practitioners eventually came to identify the bodhisattvas as the ideal embodiment of compassion to which anyone can aspire, to awaken for the benefit of all sentient beings. For this reason, in almost every ceremony, including Fusatsu, the Four Vows 四弘誓願文 (shigu seigan mon) of the bodhisattvas are recited:

Sentient beings are numberless, I vow to save them all, 
Defilements are inexhaustible, I vow to cut them off, 
Dharma gates are limitless, I vow to learn them all, 
The Buddha’s way is unsurpassable, I vow to accomplish it.

衆生無辺誓願度。(Shujō muhen sei gan do)  
煩悩無尽誓願。(bon-nō mujin sei gan dan)  
法門無量誓願学。(hō mon muryō sei gan gaku)  
仏道無上誓願成。(butsu dō mujō sei gan jō)

The self-giving and self-reflexive element of the bodhisattva ideal is thus underscored in Fusatsu as with other ceremonies involving purificatory precepts and vows.

In addition to the “earthly bodhisattvas” to whom anyone can aspire, the concept of “transcendent bodhisattvas” has been developed to distinguish the ones that have realized Buddhahood but continue to be reborn because of the vows they have made to save all sentient beings. The Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (観音 kannon) is one such “transcendent” bodhisattva who is most frequently invoked in various ways in Zen. For example, in most of the ceremonies conducted in Zen, including Fusatsu, either the Heart Sūtra in which Avalokiteśvara is mentioned is recited, or his name is invoked (as one of the seven Buddhas), or both.

The reason I discuss Avalokiteśvara here is to highlight the self-reflexive aspect of this being. Like Christ, he is believed to be compassion personified and deified, having the ability to be omnipresent and omniscient with a thousand eyes and hands to see the suffering, hear the cry, and respond to all who call compassionately.

75 Adamek, “Imagining the Portrait of a Chan Master,” Chan Buddhism, 55.
76 Batchelor, The path of compassion, 5.
77 Jukai Seminar Workbook, printed by Hazy Moon Zen Center, (Los Angeles, California, Summer 2008): 30. 80 Batchelor, The path of compassion, 5. Quoted by Batchelor but the translation is not referenced.
78 Shōrin Temple 多林寺 (Okayama Prefecture, Japan) website, under 仏教の言 and 四弘誓願文：http://www.shorinzenji.com/%E4%BD%8F%E8%81%B7%E3%81%A1%E3%81%B5%E5%9B%9B%E5%BC%80%8E8%AA%93%E9%A1%98%E6%96%87/ (accessed March 18, 2014).
79 Batchelor, The path of compassion, 5.
Each time he is invoked in Fusatsu and other Zen ceremonies, like Christ, he comes to take on the suffering of the practitioners praying to him and seeking to unite with him. He can then fulfill his vows to save them. Thus, this is another instance where the self-reflexive transcendent being and the practitioners mutually benefit from the ritual performance.

Union with the Deities:

Hence, the invocation of and interaction with the bodhisattvas, the Buddhas, and the patriarchs through ritual is an integral part of Japanese Buddhism, including the Sōtō Zen tradition. Additionally, as one of the important elements of mainline Chinese Buddhist monasticism that were adopted in Japan, local deities play a crucial role in the concept and activity of ritual.\textsuperscript{81} Since the Heian period, Shinto gods (厳菊 suijaku) have been considered the “manifestations of the absolute and eternal Buddha” (本地 honji) and are invoked along with the bodhisattvas and the Buddhas as the “protectors.”\textsuperscript{82} Along with Fusatsu, then, several rituals involving local deities are conducted on a bimonthly basis throughout Zen temples in Japan to provide the sacred space and time for the union and empowerment.\textsuperscript{83} The Buddhas and bodhisattvas are, therefore, on the equal ground with the local deities, and together they are ascribed veneration and power to empower, protect, and transform the ritual participants.

Thus, Fusatsu provides a sacred space and a temporal reality where the relationship of interconnectedness, reflexivity, and reciprocity with the Buddhas, the bodhisattvas, the patriarchs, and the local deities is celebrated and maintained. The interconnectedness with and the reflexivity of the divine may be possible in Fusatsu, as the intention of the participants is to “become one” with the Buddhas and the deities invoked through the recitation of their names and the sūtras.\textsuperscript{84} Being one, then, the participants are the Buddhas, the bodhisattvas, and the gods offering their vows and making atonement. Thus, in the act of bowing which constitutes the major part of the ritual, for example, they are bowing to the seven Buddhas and bodhisattvas, to the gods, to each other, and also to themselves as the enacting bodhisattvas.

Furthermore, Taigen Dan Leighton observes that the Zen tradition considers “that the heart of spiritual activity and praxis is the enactment of buddha awareness and physical presence,” as “Buddhahood is a physical transformation as much as a mental transcendence.”\textsuperscript{85} In other words, through the specific invocations, recitations, and actions prescribed in the ritual, the monastics share the sacred reality and transmit transformative power not only to the participants in the ritual but also to themselves, as well as to the Buddhas, the bodhisattvas, and the local gods (厳菊 suijaku) who are invoked. Additionally, as Paula K. R. Arai asserts in her essay regarding women in Zen ritual, by engaging in the specified motions with their bodies, the participants


\textsuperscript{83} Welter, “Buddhist Rituals for Protecting the Country in Medieval Japan,” 124.

\textsuperscript{84} Maezumi Roshi, “Atonement,” in Jukai Seminar Workbook: 31. Maezumi Roshi’s former students at Hazy Moon Zen Center, one of whom is William Nyogen Yeo Roshi, attested to this “intention” toward the union by referring to the Fusatsu ceremony as “at-one-ment” during the interview before the ceremony on February 13, 2014, as well as during the dharma talk on February 15, 2014.

“activate the empowering and healing awareness of interrelatedness.” 86 Thus here, too, Patton’s divine reflexivity and Rappaport’s performative theories together seem helpful in explaining the emic perspective of empowerment capitulated and activated through the specific prescribed action and space in Zen rituals.87

Summary of Analysis and Conclusion

I began this paper with an observation of potency about the ritual in effecting empowerment and healing in the minds of the participants. The general recognition of the power of religious ritual is especially evident in the healthcare setting with a recent increase in chaplain referrals and requests for ritual performance, as a statistical report indicates.88 In this paper, I have endeavored to answer the question of such ritual power and efficacy from emic perspectives. In doing so, I have posited that the relatively new theory of “divine reflexivity,” as a postmodern theory par excellence, is most helpful, along with other projectionist theories, in unpacking the issue of ritual empowerment. With the appropriation of the divine reflexivity framework, then, I have asserted as my central thesis that the secret of power behind ritual lies, at least in part, in the emic sensibility and intelligibility that the ritual itself has been originated and effected by the deities themselves, who actively participate, receive, and offer benefits in the space and time specified as sacred through ritual. In brief, the objects of worship and the worshippers are both benefactors of ritual albeit in varied ways.

Thus, the deities are not mere “projections” of human needs or images, and neither is ritual simply a function of social mores or hierarchical structure. However, due to an inherent human proclivity to deify the objects of veneration, some elements of projections are inevitable in the dimensions of ritual. Yet, the very intention and act of deification may in fact empower the “living” objects of worship so as to increase their potency in return. Hence, the psychological hermeneutics can still work well within the divine reflexivity framework, and the emic intelligibility is as viable a theory as the etic one, and they can complement one another.

In asserting the above, my intention is not to generalize or claim a universal theory that encompasses all religious rituals. Rather, by pointing out the ubiquity of certain phenomena or dimensions in ritual, I attempt to highlight the potency in the particularity of rituals in different traditions. In other words, the specificity of ritual endemic to a particular tradition does not negate the ubiquity of the observed phenomena in ritual but rather complements it. Emulating Patton’s descriptive-comparative approach that she utilized in theorizing the self-referential deity has allowed me to achieve this seemingly paradoxical aim.

As the subjects of the descriptive comparison, I have chosen the rituals that are believed to offer “atonement” in two entirely different traditions that belong to different cultures. Specifically, I have examined the Eucharist in Catholicism and the Fusatsu in Sōtō Zen Buddhism to see how the chosen theories may help uncover some of the mysteries of empowerment in these particular rituals from the practitioners’ point of view.

After reviewing the general content of the theories very briefly, I have attempted to apply them first in my investigation of the Eucharist as celebrated in the

Catholic mass. Here, I have utilized the observation that Patton has already made in her book concerning the “autosacrifice” of a self-referential God, who is invoked, celebrated, sacrificed, and embodied through the enactment of a priest. In other words, the deity (i.e., Jesus who is deified and referred to as the Christ or the Savior) is sacrificed each time the Eucharist is celebrated with his body broken and his blood shed for the “forgiveness of sins” of all the participants present – including the priest.

The temporal and spatial reality of sacredness is thus demarcated and activated by the priest’s performance communicating the efficacy to all including himself and the deity (according to the theories of J.Z. Smith and Rappaport). The sacramental demarcation and activation occur first through the actions and utterances that signify “remembrance” within the hierarchical structure already set up by virtue of the ritual “place” and liturgical settings (Smith). Then through the performance of the priest and the observance—or faith—of the practitioners, the deity is invoked, its transformative power is infused, and all parties involved are empowered (Rappaport).

The “parties” benefited include the self-reflexive deity – that is, the deified Christ in this case as he is believed to be “alive” after his resurrection and is invoked (Patton). Being invoked, he is believed to “overcome” the priest and the elements on the altar of the Eucharist, re-sacrificed at the altar, and then consumed by the priest and the participants. By consuming the “transubstantiated” elements, then, the priest and the recipients are united with Christ, essentially becoming his hands and feet to not only heal and transform themselves but also extend forgiveness and healing to others.

Next, I addressed the ceremony of *Fusatsu* as particularly celebrated by the Sōtō Zen Buddhists in Japan. I first noted that it is not a precise equivalent of the Eucharist but presents a similar dimension of “atonement” in terms of purification through renewing and fulfilling vows. The renewals and fulfillment of the vows are effected through the actions and utterances that enable the union of the priests and the participants with the Buddhas, the bodhisattvas, and the local gods (*kami*) in the calendrical liturgy and demarcation of the sacred space (Rappaport and Smith). The Buddhas and the bodhisattvas invoked are deified through ritual, able to unite with the practitioners in spirit, while the local deities are also considered the “eternal Buddhas” in the heavenly realms that participate in the ritual.

In considering the role of the deified Buddhas and bodhisattvas as they are invoked, I also underscored the significance of their interconnectedness with the practitioners along with that of the patriarchs in Sōtō Zen. The relics of the mummified eminent monks, for example, are revered as potent entities that help generate or enhance the sacredness of the “place,” that is, the specified environment for ritual (Smith). These eminent monks are considered not only as the great teachers of the past but also as the bodhisattvas of the present, who can still inspire and impart power to the participants to atone for their past misdeeds and thus fulfill the vows.

Concerning the vows of the bodhisattvas, I examined some texts to highlight the self-referential and reciprocal relationships observable in *Fusatsu* (Patton). The practice of autosacrifice also originated with the bodhisattvas. For example, the bodhisattva vows to save all sentient beings are renewed and reactivated every time the bodhisattvas are invoked and their vows recited. The soteriological schemata expressed in the vows extend not only to the living participants in the ritual but also to the bodhisattvas who are believed to have sacrificed themselves as offerings and have vowed to help all beings before attaining Buddhahood. By becoming “one” with them,
then, the participants are essentially becoming the bodhisattvas renewing the vows and benefiting from their purification. The self-referential deity is thus portrayed here.

The analysis presented in this paper is only in the nascent form and thus incomplete. The relatively new theory of divine reflexivity posited by Patton appears to be a helpful, hermeneutical tool for an understanding of the empowering aspects of ritual in not only the ceremonies in the religions she has observed but also in East Asian Buddhism. There are rituals in other traditions that remain uninvestigated and are inviting my curiosity. Through such investigations, I hope to understand the empowering features of ritual in the belief systems to which many people subscribe, so as to perhaps inform chaplains how to better assist their constituents in healing and renewal.
Bibliography

Secondary Sources:


Primary Sources:


http://www.shorinzenji.com/%E4%BD%8F%E8%81%B7%E3%81%AE%E8%A9%B1/%E5%9B%9B%E5%BC%98%E8%AA%93%E9%A1%98%E6%96%87/ (accessed March 18, 2014).

http://seesawiki.jp/w/turatura/d/%c5%eb%b7%b6%ba%c0%d0%f5 (accessed March 22, 2014).
**Online Dictionary:**

MDBG Chinese-English Dictionary online.
http://www.mdbg.net/chindict/chindict.php?page=worddict&wdrst=1&wdqb=%E5%B8%83%E8%96%A9 (accessed March 16 and 18, 2014).

**Other Online Sources:**


SeesaaWiki Tsurara higurashi wiki (Sōtō shū kan ren yōgo shū) つらつら日暮らし wiki (室洞宗関連用語集).
http://seesaawiki.jp/w/turatura/d/%c5%eb%b7%b6%ba%e0%d0%f5 (accessed March 22, 2014).


The Sustainable Management of the Mekong River Basin: Insights from Buddhism

Dr. Peter Daniels
Environmental Futures Centre
Griffith School of Environment, Griffith University,

Introduction

Winding 4,900 kilometers across and between six nations, the Mekong River provides the essential resource for life for over 65 million people embedded within a remarkably rich and diverse ecosystem (Great Rivers Partnership 2015). It is the “circulatory system” for this economically dynamic and increasingly influential part of the world and represents a powerful metaphor of the profound interdependence of life. The significance of the Mekong for the livelihood of so many people, and its potent function as an interconnecting framework, elevate it as a prime concern for sustained and positive development in the region.

At national levels, the significance and interconnectedness associated with the Mekong River does vary considerably: from Cambodia and Laos, with 90% and 87% (respectively) of their population in the basin, to Vietnam (27%) and Thailand (33%), to Myanmar (1%) and China (25% of the Yunnan provincial people but just 0.7% of the total national population)(Kuenzer et al 2012; WWF Global 2015)(see Figure 1). The national contributions to total Mekong flow volumes also vary substantially from around 35% (Laos), to 10-20% for China, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam, to only 2% for Myanmar (Mekong River Commission 2005). Hence, there are also considerable differences in the direct interdependence felt via the Mekong’s existence and in the extent of immediate incentives to cooperate for beneficial outcomes.

Trans-boundary waterways are often a major source of conflict. However, if the idea of strong interconnectedness is extended beyond the upstream (cause) to downstream (impact) flow of a major river such as the Mekong, then there is good case for significant potential gains from cooperation. Indeed, profound ecological interdependence at local to global scales is increasingly accepted. In addition to this general paradigmatic shift in scientific and economic perspectives, the Buddhist world view reinforces a need to think in this way, that is, to be aware and take into account the cogency of universal interconnectedness and the close links between thought, intent, action and consequences. For the Mekong Region, this is both highly apposite and opportune given the strong influence of Buddhism across the suite of Mekong countries (see Figure 2).

There has been growing recognition and efforts to enhance cooperation and general economic returns under secular initiatives. From early moves for integrated approaches since 1957 (at least amongst four of the Mekong nations), at least the foundations of international cooperation and a “trans-regional” approach to manage demands upon the Mekong River, is now well established – notably under the auspices of the Mekong River Commission since 1995 (Le-Huu et al. 2003). The generalized view adopted is one of “integrated water resources management” (IWRM) that embeds human water use needs within catchment and fresh water cycles and as an intrinsic part of the ecosystem across the entire relevant spatial and temporal domain. Arguably,
many of the “sustainability thinking” dimensions (and more implicitly, many key Buddhist notions) are already taking hold. International cooperation has been facilitated by peace and growing economic relations over the past two decades.

Nonetheless, some are less sanguine about the extent, institutional capability and effectiveness, and extant positive outcomes from cooperation (for an example of more critical views, see Pech and Sunada 2008). There are certainly a number of major potential, and likely, infrastructure developments that pose as a potential source of dispute (notably the numerous hydropower dams planned for the Mekong tributaries and main-stem). Hence, there would appear to be a need to deepen the international cooperation process to ensure the sustainable management of human use of the Mekong River.

This paper addresses this perceived need and explores how the Buddhist world view can provide a suitable logic and platform to help guide and encourage trans-boundary cooperative strategies and actions for the sustainable management of the Mekong Region, by the suite of Buddhist nations sharing the Mekong River Basin. We examine supporting views inherent within Buddhism. Of particular note and interest here is the notion of dependent origination and the profound appreciation and understanding of the “scientific” nature of ecological and social interdependence. However, we also consider relevant implications of the Four Noble Truths, and the means proffered in the Eightfold Path as well as consistent knowledge and experience available from 21st century environmental science, economics and technology fields.

Of course, there are many other natural resource issues in the Mekong Basin, not just water and the river itself. However, many are related and the paper focus is upon water and the Mekong River for parsimony. The same logic and arguments, drawing upon Buddhist insights, would apply across most resource management issues.

Figure 1 - National population in the Mekong Basin (mills and % total, 2010) and % contribution to Mekong flow (2005)

Source: Kuenzer et al. (2013); Mekong River Commission (2005)
Environmental Pressures in the Mekong Region:

As noted, the Mekong River system is a vital resource nourishing an immense and highly biodiverse ecosystem and over 55 million people who depend upon rural, natural resource-based economic activities for their livelihood within the Lower Mekong Basin (IUCN, 2011). For the remaining regional population whose livelihoods do not depending directly on the ecosystem services of the Mekong system, the supply of water for domestic and other uses, and general ecosystem services would be likely to be vital for their daily life. Furthermore, the Mekong provides a wide range of economic functions and services to those outside the region – including the provision of hydropower to many nations across the region, the supply of food, forest and other agricultural output, and global ecosystem services such as nutrient cycling and soil formation, rain creation, climate regulation, and air quality improvement, carbon sequestration, existence value, and pharmaceutical and other option values.

The viability of these services to humans is already under pressure from many sources. Continued growth in the Mekong Basin’s population and reasonable levels of per capita economic growth, combined with a relatively stable economic structure, will assure the growth in demand for food, water, agricultural production for export (especially rice), and some industrial output, and will see a concomitant increase in demand for fresh water from the Mekong and its hydrological system. Population in the region is expected to grow by at least 60% by 2050 – largely due to increases in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam (Peach and Sunada 2008). Hence, the vital services and other benefits provided by the Mekong Basin are under threat.

---

89 Thailand has experienced significant structural change away from agricultural production but this is focused in the larger urban areas outside the Mekong and the north-east is still experiencing high growth in demand for agricultural water (LeHuu et al. 2003).
In order to compile and highlight some of primary socioeconomic drivers, environmental pressures and socioeconomic impacts related to the Mekong River Basin, the popular DPSIR environmental problem analysis framework has been employed. The DPSIR framework, developed by the European Environmental Agency, takes an interdisciplinary and systems analysis view. Environmental issue themes are typically analyzed as a series of separate steps (D-P-S-I-R) (Kristensen 2004). For example, climate change may be analyzed as beginning with economic activities (and underlying social factors) forming the driving forces (D) that exert material and energy flows (greenhouse gas emissions) and other pressures on the environment (P).

In turn, these generate changes in the state of the environment (S)(e.g. agricultural area available; fish stocks) that lead to impacts upon society as both economic and social costs or benefits (e.g. loss of agricultural output; flooding impacts). These unintended impacts (often called “externalities”), may elicit societal responses (R) via policy and other action to modify the initiating driving forces or, more superficially, to redress pressure and state condition changes. The DPSIR model has been adopted by the majority of the European Community nations as the best way to structure environmental information concerning specific environmental problems so as to reveal existing causes, consequences, effective responses and trends and the dynamic relationships between these components.

A preliminary analysis of the driving forces, pressures and state changes, and societal impacts pertaining to the Mekong Basin are provided in Table 1. It is important to note that, under the DPSIR view, “impacts” (that is, I) refer to economic and social impacts such as fisheries productivity change and not environmental flow or state changes such as nutrient and environmental flow changes (these are covered in P and S). Also, driving forces be both the source of environmental pressure on the Mekong Basin system, but they can also be, in turn, affected by the changes in environmental states. These effects can be positive or negative. For example, while tourism may have some adverse impacts on the provision of Mekong Basin services, it is likely to be positively affected by better water quality and other environmental amenity improvements, and also by some developments, such as dam-building, that can also have a suite of negative impacts on the underlying driving forces (e.g. fishery and agricultural productivity).

In addition to underlying growth in population, and associated food and water needs for direct consumption and export, the WWF (2015) list the four major threats (driving forces) in the Greater Mekong Sub-region as:

- hydropower
- climate change
- habitat loss (from multiple sources)
- illegal wildlife trade

However, perhaps the most definitive aspect of environmental problems, especially broad trans-boundary issues, is the complexity and interdependence between and within driving forces, environmental changes and impacts on society (Thiele 2011). They represent the classic case of “never being able to do just one

---

90 The DPSIR acronym refers to a “causal” flow from Driving forces, to Pressure, to State, to Impact, to Response. The loop is also closed by intentional actions (response) addressing the underlying driving forces or ameliorating pressure or state effects. Environmental state changes from the anthropogenic drivers may also directly impact those driving forces (e.g. their productivity) via altering the natural resource condition basis of those activities.
thing”. The flow-on effects of human actions in communities that are deeply embedded in a highly interconnected web of life in the Mekong ecosystem, are extensive and profound and will reverberate around almost every part of the greater basin system and outside into global ecosystems (and their human economy components).

Hence, the driving forces shown in Table 1 are inter-related as are the pressures and state changes they generate and the impacts back on humans. The “causal” paths between the elements of the table are not exclusive and can only be depicted as a matter of relative magnitude. The pervasive interdependence that must be recognized for achieving sustainability is intrinsic to biogeogenic or natural systems and anthropogenic action and effects are simply and extension of this. For example, Cambodia’s great Tonle Sap lake naturally buffers water flow by storing some of the peak flows from July to September and releasing supplies in low-flow season from October to April (Le-Huu et al. 2003). Indeed, the nature of extensive interconnections in the Mekong region has engendered a dynamic equilibrium between ecological, hydrological, landscape and climate conditions in the region. Human intervention in this equilibrium has been accommodated within these processes until recent decades but the perturbations are now substantial and increasingly significant.

Many of the adverse general social and economic impacts (I) of human intervention in the Mekong Basin tend to result from either (a) consequent reduced supply or depletion of water resources (often within seasonal cycles) or (b) from activities that degrade the resource by changing its quality in terms of nutrient levels and disease facilitation potential. However, there are many other less direct impact sources from humans.
Table 1 An Indicative DPSIR Analysis of the Mekong River Basin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRIVING FORCES</th>
<th>PRESSURES (P) / STATE CHANGES (S)</th>
<th>(SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC) IMPACTS (I)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Water Resource Related</td>
<td>Pressure and State Changes Combined</td>
<td>Economic and social costs and benefit changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. IRRIGATION - local and export, Other agricultural commodities</td>
<td>Loss of agricultural land supply – from flooding</td>
<td>Food and other non-fishery agricultural productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. HYDROPOWER – electricity generation (primarily for national and export markets)</td>
<td>Loss of agricultural land supply – from inundation</td>
<td>Fisheries productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. NAVIGATION / TRANSPORT - for trade, tourism, community interactions; including blasting to improve navigation through shallow and rapids</td>
<td>Loss of biodiversity rich land – from flooding</td>
<td>Tourism revenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. FISHERIES and AQUACULTURE - food source, export; Mekong basin as the world’s largest fresh water fishery</td>
<td>Loss of biodiversity rich land – from inundation</td>
<td>Disease health – water vector-borne disease incidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. URBAN WATER SUPPLY – for industry as well as urban populations</td>
<td>Deforestation (a major issue for the Upper Mekong Basin) (The Mekong Region is considered a biodiversity hotspot area)</td>
<td>Disease incidence – water quality based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. RURAL WATER SUPPLY and sanitation improvements - for non-irrigation local water supply</td>
<td>Environmental flow changes – volume, timing and by quality – from dam, land cover change, and climate change related precipitation change</td>
<td>Community displacement / social dislocation – from dam inundation, flow change and sea level rise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. DRAINAGE, SOLID WASTE, AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL - principally in urban areas; industry and development.</td>
<td>Water quality – nutrient level change</td>
<td>Social and economic losses from flooding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. TOURISM</td>
<td>Flooding</td>
<td>Energy demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Driving Forces</td>
<td>Saltwater intrusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. FOREST PRODUCTS</td>
<td>Drought</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLEARING</td>
<td>Coastal ecosystem loss – from flow changes and aquaculture and rice cultivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE</td>
<td>Groundwater supply loss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. CLIMATE CHANGE DRIVING FORCES</td>
<td>Sea level rise, precipitation pattern and temperature changes, coastal ecosystem loss, other potential climate change impacts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Compiled from Peach and Sunada (2008); WWF (2015)
Perhaps the most dramatic existing and future potential source of perturbation shaking the web of interdependence in the region comes from the construction of hydropower dams on the Mekong’s tributaries. In the Lower Mekong Basin, there were 25 operational hydropower dams in (2011), 99-133 tributary (and some mainstem) projects planned or being explored (2011, 2013), and seven dams completed or near-completion on the mainstem of the Mekong in China (2013) (Kondolf et al. 2014; Pearse-Smith 2012). As Pearse-Smith (2012, p75-76) notes:

Over the past fifteen years, however, hydropower development has begun to alter the hydrology of the basin (UNEP, 2006; ICEM, 2010). The cumulative effects of hydropower dam construction on the mainstream and its tributaries are transforming the fundamental characteristics of the river regime with pervasive repercussions not only for natural systems, but also social systems and economies (ICEM, 2010). The construction of four mainstream dams in the Upper Mekong has already affected the timing and scale of the Mekong’s natural pulse, as well as the many other natural features of the system that are tuned to it. Proposed future mainstream hydropower projects, including the remainder of the Yunnan Cascade and the Lower Basin mainstream hydropower projects, are all expected to further disrupt the Mekong’s flow regime.

Hydropower dams have an extensive range of environmental and associated social and economic impacts, both positive and negative. A brief list includes:

- tourism and recreational opportunities
- water availability and quality for downstream irrigation and other uses including irrigation and agricultural productivity (food security)
- fisheries productivity (food security)
- flood control
- saltwater intrusion
- agricultural and biodiversity land (inundation)
- nutrient and sediment changes
- social dislocation (inundation and infrastructure)
- loss of agricultural land (infrastructure)
- lower carbon emissions renewable energy supplies
- external economies from infrastructure (Keskinen 2012 and others)

Many of these impacts are related to the effect of dams in altering the Mekong’s environmental flows. The concept of “environmental flows” refers to “the quantity, timing, duration, frequency and quality of water flows required to sustain freshwater, estuarine and near-shore ecosystems and the human livelihoods and well-being that depend on them” (Acreman and Ferguson 2010, p.32). Changes in environmental flows will be important influences upon downstream water availability for a wide range of uses, nutrient levels and other quality conditions, fisheries productivity, saltwater intrusion, flood control and many other services provided by the Mekong.
While it is not appropriate to explore the complex and elaborate positive and negative impacts of dams in any detail here, they clearly demonstrate the profound nature of interdependence in ecological systems – especially those founded on life-vital water cycle and attendant systems.

**Relevant Buddhist Wisdom for Sustainable Management of Human Use of the Mekong**

As shown in Figure 2, all six nations in the Mekong Basin have very significant Buddhist influence in their sociocultural and political nature, with possible exception of Vietnam and China (at least according to the population percentages regarding Buddhist affiliation). However, it can be argued that both Vietnam and China are likely to have a stronger inculcation of Buddhist-related perspectives than the official statistics reveal when the discouragement of religious activity during their recent histories of austere communism are taken into account. Both nations also have substantial “folk” religion components that may well denote syncretic Buddhist beliefs. Furthermore, there is evidence of a resurgence in Chinese Buddhism since the reforms of the 1970s (Laliberte 2011).91

This paper continues with its analysis of how Buddhist concepts and world views can help facilitate more intensive and effective ongoing international cooperation in the sustainable management of human intervention in the Mekong River Basin. It is proposed that there is a great deal of potential for utilizing this shared view given the strength of the Buddhist influence across the region.

The dominant strands of Buddhism do vary across the Mekong countries – with the Mahayana branches prevailing in Vietnam and China, and Theravada Buddhism in the other nations. However, the strands share the essential teachings that form the basis for the potential contribution of Buddhism to more effective cooperation and planning. Three critical fundamentals include the notion of dependent origination (in its various forms and extensions), the Four Noble Truths, and the Eightfold Path. While it is possible to interpret Mahayana’s greater concern for facilitating the enlightenment path for all sentient beings as part of self-enlightenment, as a more pronounced recognition of universal interconnectedness, the latter notion remains as a cornerstone of the Theravada tradition (for example, see http://www.theravada.org.za/environment.asp).

While many of the underlying views and derivative actions and behaviors of Buddhism can be seen as consistent with those required for the prudent and sustained management of the precious services provided by the Mekong Basin, we focus upon the primary foundations associated with the notion of interconnectedness and dependent origination. There are alternative aspects and interpretations of this quintessential view across the various strands of Buddhism. They include the notions of *paticcasamuppada* or *pañicca-samuppàda* (equivalent to dependent origination) or *engi* (“arising in relation”) as underlying the doctrine or law or karma or *kamma-vipaka*.

The Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Path and other aspects of Buddhism supporting sustainability in the Mekong have some unique contributions but they all tend to rest upon the essential Buddhist cosmology of the fundamentally interconnected nature of the three spheres of human existence:

---

91 In 2007, 33% of 4,500 people surveyed across 31 provinces claimed to “believe in Buddhism”. The survey was undertaken by the Research Centre for Religious Culture at East China Normal University (Moxley 2010).
(1) the individual realm (covering existence, thought and action);
(2) the collective interrelations or institutions that form society; and
(3) the rest of the natural world (Yamamoto 2003).

Feldman (1998, p.1) describes how *paticcasamuppada* “is a vision of life or an understanding in which we see the way everything is interconnected - that there is nothing separate, nothing standing alone. Everything effects everything else. We are part of this system. We are part of this process of dependent origination.” Similarly, Wagner (2007 p.333) notes that the “Buddhist approach is based on a concept of universal interconnectedness, mutual conditioning and a radical interdependence of all phenomena, and in this respect quite close to modern system theory. In the classical scriptures, reality is compared to a sacred net of many mutually interwoven strings at countless levels.”

In this universal ecology, the “ripples” from events or state changes in one realm directly spill over into the others - spatially, temporally and transcendentally - and bounce back upon the originator’s own welfare. In accordance with the a growing overall societal trend towards holism, this basic perceptual framework is highly compatible with the important new wave of environment sciences (for example, ecological economics, ecology, contemporary social ecology and natural health with their paradigmatic shift towards the primacy of nature and the “embedding” of humans, and their artefacts and built environment, within the rest of the natural world. It also aligns with the causal reciprocation views that now prevail in post-structuralist social science.

Despite the “other-worldly” fatalism sometimes ascribed to Buddhism, it can also be interpreted as providing a strong case for active and effectual pro-environmental initiatives. This is undeniably associated with both the importance attributed to the external world as the relevant context for spiritual progress and with Buddhism’s profound belief in the interconnectedness that permeates the universe. In Buddhism, all things, including plants, humans and other animals, and inanimate objects, are joined as part of the field of Buddha existence (or “Buddha-nature” in Mahayana) (Payutto, 1994; Inoue, 1997).

Environmental care is also intimately tied to a maxim of abstinence from injury to life and a boundless loving-kindness to all beings (*ahisma* and *metta*). As discussed earlier, the interconnectedness between the three spheres of human existence (individual, society and nature) also underlies the natural order and karmic causality principles that explain the centrality of compassion in the Buddhist world view and highlight the importance of careful reflection upon the full, long-term consequences and intent of production, consumption and other human actions. As every action affects the whole universe and the self only exists in relation to others, actions that exploit the social or material world are self-injuring. The unified and interconnected nature of the universe suggests that “violent” action or intervention that consumes and damages the natural-material world, will have adverse repercussions in direct proportion to the extent of intervention.

In Buddhism, the law of dependent origination explains how all outcomes, results or effects (*vipaka*) of speech, action or body arise from a multiple causes or actions with intent (*kamma*). In turn, these causes arise from other *vipaka* and phenomena cease when the pre-conditions change. This is basis of the law of *kamma-vipaka* which adds the qualitative aspects by identifying how ignorant action with
“unskilful” or bad intent will lead to adverse results across the three realms (society, nature and back on self). “Skilfulness” is gauged by the extent to which craving, greed, delusions or aversion are embodied in the underlying motive and intent of the original action (Attwood 2003).

The mental component is critical here – deliberate, willful action is the source of (un)skilfulness. In Buddhism, the significance of consequent cause-effect chains, with ramifications far beyond the primary target of the originator’s action (and usually back upon the initial agent), is closely aligned with the central notions of “spillover effects” or “externalities” in contemporary economic–environmental thought (Daniels 2003).

However, there is also a strong argument that modern interpretations of Buddhism cannot simply rely upon skillful intent as the basis for “good” decisions and action. We are now aware, and have the capacity to gauge, many of the extended spillover or flow-on effects of our choices. In a complex, highly interdependent world, overcoming ignorance to fully explore and investigate the consequences of projects and other actions would be a vital aspect of effective Buddhist-inspired strategies for cooperation for the sustainability of the Mekong region.

Recognition of the Four Noble Truths would also play some role in helping cooperative action for the sustainability of the region. A detailed review of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path is not provided here on the assumption that the audience is familiar with these essential Buddhist precepts.92 In short, the Four Noble Truths warns of the futility of relentless expansion of consumption, and attendant production and demands upon environmental resources and labor and other social conditions as a means of providing true increases in well-being beyond the securing of essential physiological needs.

This wisdom is not of the same relevance in the Mekong region as in high income consumer market economies, given a need for substantial growth in material standards of living to provide for basic food, health and shelter needs and security. Nonetheless, it would help in the deferral of short-term economic gain motives in favor of actions promoting inter-connected well-being.

The prevalence of dukkha or pervasive dissatisfaction has profound economic consequences because it is associated with the existence of an eternal gap between what people want, and the satisfaction they receive, from biophysical reality. There are minimum needs that must be met to avert physiological deprivation, but in consumerist economies, the desire to satisfy systemic, constantly regenerated wants is a major motive of our lives, thoughts and actions, and permeates almost every aspect of society. Arguably, we really seek sustained satisfaction (and not the creation of new desires) but, instead, are attracted to and become “addicted” to an irrational process of short-term satisfaction of dynamic and endless wants.

A substantial part of the global market economy is predicated upon, and reproduced by, stimulating desire and maintaining the want-satisfaction gap – closure of this hiatus would certainly call for a major transformation in the nature and distributional outcomes of the economy as it now stands. The environmental harm and disturbance of the want–satisfaction roundabout and associated treadmill of production results from extensive biophysical intervention in the ecosphere in search of materials, water and energy for the extraction, manufacture, transport and services that expand economic activity and feed the relentless drive for new want satisfaction.

92 A description of the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path can be found in numerous sources on-line and in print. For an overview in relation to sustainability issues, see Daniels (2005).
The Eightfold Path details the multifaceted nature of changes in understanding, mental processes, patterns and thoughts, and actions and behavior that are required for progress towards reducing suffering (Sangharakshita 2007). The eight aspects have a natural flow from wisdom (right understanding and right aspiration) to moral commitment (right speech, action and livelihood) to mental regulation (right effort, mindfulness, and concentration) but they are presented as mutually reinforcing goals rather than a necessary linear sequence.

A central theme throughout the Eightfold Path is the principle of moderation or “the Middle Way”. As learned from the Buddha’s direct experiences in seeking the appropriate mental and behavioral modus operandi towards Nirvana, the effective path lies between the extremes of hedonistic self-indulgence and sensual pleasure, and excessive self-mortification or asceticism (Gunasekara 1982). Accordingly, the Eightfold Path contains a host of guidelines that directly shape the motives and nature of the human interface with the external world, and has great relevance for the sustainable economic activity and management.

Again, the principal features of the Eightfold Path lead to the need for thought and behavior that is carefully cognizant of their effect on others (and all facets of the “three realms”) and hence, back upon the welfare of the initiator.

Given profound interconnectedness and related concepts of interdependent wellbeing, a guiding maxim for human effort and action is to minimize harm or “violence” to one’s external environment. In the modern context, this does not necessarily mean inaction or no intervention, but Buddhist-inspired world views would advocate limiting intervention until the full social, economic, environmental and moral consequences of those actions are likely to be. This is not selfless altruism but a case of “intelligent self-interest” (XIV Bstan’dzin-rgya, 1999) where loving kindness and compassion regarding our effects upon others is recognized as a key aspect of increased happiness for oneself.

**Buddhist Inspired Strategies and Responses**

In this section, we examine some of general influences that Buddhism may have in helping to garner interconnectedness-based international cooperation for sustainability in the Mekong region. It does not directly-focus upon specific economic development policies in the region (which is well-documented elsewhere) or the analysis of the Basin Development Plan (BDP) (1995) and legal and institutional frameworks though these developments are vital to the success of cooperative strategies and Buddhism-aligned perspectives would be likely to support such moves.

As noted, sustainability concepts and a concerted coordination process is already underway in the Mekong region. This is clearly evident in the establishment of the Greater Mekong Subregion and Mekong River Commission intergovernmental body with the Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin and the BDP in 1995 (Le-Huu et al. 2003). However, there are still perceived to be major existing and new threats to sustainability in the region and the need for effectual cooperation will increase significantly in the near future (see Pech and Sunada 2008 and WWF 2015).

In practice, building on shared world view of Buddhism towards this end can happen in terms of (1) practical scientific assessment (identifying and quantifying the full range of social, economic and environmental costs, benefits and risks) and (2) political action in terms of consensus building, decision-making and resource support for greater cooperation and scientific assessment.
The range of areas for areas for cooperative benefit are extensive - agriculture, forestry and fisheries, transport, energy development, tourism, community development, flood control, drought alleviation and the mitigation of climate change impacts.

Perhaps the single most important potential contribution of Buddhism would be the thorough acceptance and adoption of the deeply inter-connected nature of nature and the associated interdependence approach required for achieving sustained and real increases in well-being. The key outcome from this view would be the minimization of harm or disruption to the ecosystem (including humans as a part thereof) whilst providing material needs and ensuring community capital. The only way to achieve this is via increased knowledge of impacts of development and programs (and component projects) for sustainability assessment and the application of Buddhist-inspired practical wisdom based on non-harm and related criteria.

Profound interconnectedness is so clearly manifest in the case of the complex, large and rich natural systems of the Mekong. While assessing the full range and extent of the consequences of any actions is an extremely difficult task, a Buddhist world view would see that the path to interdependent well-being is vitally dependent upon making intensive efforts to understand and assess the nature of cause-effect relations and interdependencies within this system so that interventions could be assessed in terms of, at the least, the crude magnitude of the perturbation or “net harm” cast upon the system (and back on humans). There are a host of existing and developing scientific methodologies for such “sustainability analysis” - ranging from Strategic Environmental Assessment (already used for the mainstream dams on Mekong (see ICEM 2010)), ecological analyses, “physical economy” techniques that measure the material and energy flows, and social and community impacts assessments. The shared aim is the minimization of society’s biophysical throughput or metabolism and other negative externality effects that flow on in cause-effect chains across space and time.

There has been a strong growth in organic, holistic views of the human-nature relation and the need to “ecologize” economic systems. One of the most recent and comprehensive incarnations of this integrated, synthetic framework is the theoretical, empirical and policy utility attached to the depiction of the operation of the society and its economy in terms of a “metabolism”. The socioeconomic metabolism consists of a network or “circulation” of physical flows of materials and energy (inputs and waste output) between nature and the economy, and the transformations and accumulations of these flows for human production and consumption within the economy.

These techniques include the related tools such as life cycle assessment, material and energy flow analysis, ecological footprints and environmental input-output tables (see Daniels and Moore (2001), Daniels (2002) and Wiedman et al., (2011)). These tools are growing rapidly in terms of application, sophistication, global and impact coverage, and methodological integration. Essentially, the "socioeconomic metabolism mapping" or SEMM methods share a goal of measuring and “mapping” the resource and other biophysical flows, and often social impact effects, of consumption and production. The economy is a complex and highly inter-related entity and specific goods, services, sectors and other economic activity cannot be considered in isolation. A basic premise is that every action leads to a complex set of “ripples” through the (increasingly global) economy leading to impacts well beyond its original limited spatial and temporal domain. The parallels between the measurement of externality impacts, and knowledge and care for the law of kamma-vipaka, are obvious and clear.
Buddhist-inspired economies and the suite of sustainability tools aimed at analyzing and reducing society’s metabolism share similar bases in terms of their perception of the relationship between humans, society and nature/the universe. A central theme is interconnectedness and the concomitant role of external effects beyond the initiating or transacting parties. It substantiates the need for economic actors to “internalize” their actions so that their market and non-market behavior and choices take into full account the extended influence of their intent and actions on the three interwoven spheres of human existence (their individual selves, the community and the natural world).

Typically, many of the SEMM sustainability analysis tools focus upon externalities linked to biophysical economy flow measurement across:

a) all stages of the energy life cycle of projects in a region - exploration, production and harvesting, preparation, transport and storage, further processing, purification; utilization; recovery, waste and decontamination and by-product storage, as well as

b) full supply chain social, economic and environmental externality impacts (positive and negative) of material and energy flows, land use change, and environmental state changes associated with each life cycle stage.

Ecological data and greater knowledge and understanding of basin dynamics and management are also critical and community-level research can effectively contribute to the knowledge and data that informs decision making in the Mekong setting and in helping to ensure that the needs and priorities of local people are taken into account.

A pivotal aspect consistent with the Four Noble Truths is also the recognition that non-consumptive activities can increase wellbeing and that action guided by endless craving and selfish material attachment will lead to further suffering rather than happiness. In specific regard to the natural environment, this change in belief, attitude and motive should have a beneficial impact by minimizing, or at least moderating and managing production activities (and consumption) so that material and energy throughput (and hence, environmental exploitation) and environmental state changes are mitigated.

In summary, such techniques provide a very useful knowledge base – a context-specific episteme – about the likely nature and magnitude of action-effect and flow-on effects through the economy, society and nature (paralleled in the generalized view of Buddhism and kamma-vipaka flows through self, society and the universe). Better interconnectedness and “karmic spillover” knowledge can help operationalize the practical wisdom that Buddhism offers for effective sustainable energy analysis. With this knowledge, a general guide to decision-making might be that “less disturbance is better”. Precautionary approaches involving less violent options and low levels of entropy conversion and intervention in natural cycles would tend to be strongly favored in management cooperation based on basic Buddhist insights. This would help make decisions with full regard to interconnectedness and minimum harm given resource demands required to generate real and sustained growth in well-being for the region (and beyond). In addition, a key goal to help minimize impacts would focus upon the development of technology for water and other resource-efficiency gains at appropriate scales of efficiency.

A kamma-vipaka approach to sustainability would emphasize and encourage research and development for cooperative international planning, assessment and strategic policy regarding water and other key environmental resources in the Mekong
basin and would provide useful insights, in combination with related sustainability analysis techniques, to create effective and productive but less harmful, more gentle, economic development.
REFERENCES


vulnerability of water resources to environmental change in Africa using river basin
approach. UNEP Headquarters, Nairobi, Kenya.

Kuenzer, C., Campbell, I, Roch, M. et al. (2013) “Understanding the impact of
hydropower developments in the context of upstream–downstream relations in the

Chinese Affairs, 40(2): 107-134

Division of Environment and Sustainable Development, UN-ESCAP. UNESCO.

(PDF). MRC, Vientiane, Laos.


(translated by Dhammavijaya and Bruce Evans).

development on local livelihoods.” Consilience: The Journal of Sustainable
Development 7(1): 73-86.

the Mekong River Basin.” AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment 37(3): 219-
224.

http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/table-religious-composition-by-country-

Sangharakshita (2007) The Buddha’s Noble Eightfold Path (Buddhist Wisdom for
Today). Windhorse Publications, Birmingham, UK.

Thiele, L. P. (2011) Indra’s net and the Midas touch living sustainably in a connected

Teng. “Mekong River, GIWA Regional Assessment.” Kalmar, Sweden: University of
Kalmar.


cycle approaches to emerging energy technologies: the case of wind power in the UK.
Environ Sci Technol. 45(13):5900-7


Basin.”


Recently, I mentioned to a friend (and experienced meditator) my experience at the conference I had gone to in San Francisco and how the “scientific” exploration of “mindfulness” as a technique had apparently taken over the country. Like so many others, I was complaining that, of course, it isn’t “really” mindfulness meditation because it takes place outside of any theoretical or religious context. My friend’s response was, “But it works…it helps people”. That set me back. And of course he’s right, at least as far as we can tell at the moment. Whether or not “secular mindfulness” will turn out to be an enduring treatment for burn-out, over-eating, stress, chronic pain and the rest, remains to be seen. Time will tell that story. But for now, the research evidence appears to support the notion that the “technique” of so-called mindfulness has positive effects when taught to individuals who are suffering in their environment.93

The conference was entitled “Mindfulness and Compassion: The Art and Science of Contemplative Practice” and was held at San Francisco State University on June 3 – 7, 2015. Astounding to me was that, leaving aside for a moment the main speakers at the conference, of the 44 concurrent paper presentations, most of the presentations were reporting results from research studies that evaluated the role of “mindfulness” in treating a variety of (usually) work-related stresses. For example, “Mindfulness-Based Eating Awareness Training (MB-EAT): An Overview of Theory, Practice and Research Evidence”, presented by Jean Kristeller of Indiana State University; “Recovery From Work: A Comparison of the Effects of Meditation Retreat Programs and Leisure Holiday Vacations in Working European and American Adults”, presented by Adrienne Chang from Miami University and Otto Pichlhofer, Medical University of Vienna; “Caring for the Caregivers Inside: A Pilot Mindfulness Training for Juvenile Justice Officers” presented by Eve Ekman from the University of San Francisco, San Francisco. Available at the conference as well was an issue of Mindfulness, Vol. 6, no. 2, (April, 2015) published by Springer publishing company, which again flooded the reader with articles presenting the efficacy of “mindfulness” in the treatment of a wide variety of disorders and problems, including stress, depression, anxiety, dependency, Type 2 Diabetes, addiction and others. As a backstory to the conference were the grumblings of some of us, complaining that folks weren’t really talking about mindfulness at all, that REAL mindfulness takes place within an ethical and philosophical/religious context, and that you can’t teach mindfulness as a “technique”. Some of the main speakers, including Robert Thurman, Matthieu Ricard, Ajahn Amaro and others, appeared to be voicing the same point of view; but my friend’s comments keep ringing in my ears: “…but, it works.”

93 The recent issue of Mindfulness (Vol. 6, no. 2, Apr. 2005) has numerous papers reporting on the most current findings for mindfulness-based interventions.
There is now an accumulated catalogue of criticisms leveled against the secular mindfulness movement, a movement some have even gotten to calling McMindfulness. Monastics, as well as other Buddhist scholars, have written about their objections to embracing secular mindfulness as a cure for our ills. At the same time, the secular mindfulness movement has been widely accepted in the popular culture and may be here to stay for a while. So what to do? Is there a potential resolution to this problem? Are some of us clinging to perception in such a way that we are simply resisting an appropriate application of an ancient technique to modern life?

What is Mindfulness?

Joseph Goldstein begins Chapter 1 of his book, *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Awakening*, by writing: “Following the declaration that the four ways of establishing mindfulness are the direct path to liberation, the Satipatthana Sutta continues with a concise definition of the path, highlighting its essential characteristics.” (2013: 3)

Within the same general timespan, Germer et al (2005), in their book *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy* define mindfulness as “(1) awareness, (2) of present experience, (3) with acceptance (the idea of “liberation” is nowhere to be found in their use of the word). In the eyes of these authors, there is the healing potential for mindfulness (in the context of psychotherapy) in that it “lessens the sting of life’s difficulties” (2005: 3) and therefore reduces emotional suffering and unhappiness. The two goals – of liberation and of reducing emotional suffering – are clearly quite different. One conceivably may view them on a continuum – reducing suffering as an early goal, which eventually will lead to personal liberation – or they may be viewed as highly different but desirable endpoints. In my experience, introduction to “mindfulness” through a program such as MBSR does occasionally lead a practitioner to want to learn more about Buddhist meditation, however that does not seem to be the usual case. More often, participants appear satisfied with the introduction to mindfulness that they receive without the conceptual background that forms its roots.

The idea of “liberation” has never been a particularly American goal. Living as we do in a rich, highly consumer-oriented society, we view success as incorporating the elements of making money, owning many, many things, and enjoying primarily material comfort. Most individuals in our society do not even operationalize their own, personal religious beliefs. For example, ordinary citizens might agree that one should “turn the other cheek” when they are spoken to or treated rudely, however in terms of how they live their lives, most people do not operationalize that idea. We much prefer to punish or seek revenge against someone who has injured us in some way. There tends to be a split between what one believes and how one behaves in our society. Religious ideals are noteworthy and admirable, but often viewed as highly impractical in the current climate of our lives. Thus, the common experience of going to church on Sunday, and living out the week without a second thought to the religious implications of one’s actions in life. If we do appear to take our religion seriously, we typically are viewed as religious extremists (which may or may not be true). The notion that happiness comes from within does not hold a great deal of credibility to the average American.

---

94 For example, see Purser, R. and Loy, D. Beyond Mindfulness, online at Huff Post – Religion, July 1, 2013.
95 See, for example, Reflections, Ajahn Sucitto (blog), Monday, July 1, 2013.
96 As evidence of this phenomenon, the Pew Research Center reports a decline since 2007 of self-proclaimed Christians, while at the same time reporting a rise in individuals who assert that they have no religious affiliation.
Mindfulness or Mindful Attention

Mindfulness is “the core practice of Buddhist psychology” (Germer, 2003: 13). Mindfulness refers to a kind of mind training that demands the practitioner stay in the moment and allow feelings and thoughts to arise without judgment. The practice of mindfulness meditation within the Buddhist tradition involves being present with not only what is comfortable, but with whatever one may feel that is uncomfortable as well. It is part of a philosophical/psychological structure that encourages impartiality towards all things and acceptance of the way things are (equanimity). One practices mindfulness both on and off the cushion, meaning both formally in sitting practice and informally throughout one’s daily life. It also entails belief in an ethical system that expresses the relationship between ethics and happiness. In Buddhist theory, when one behaves unethically, it is the person him or herself who is engendering the action that suffers the most. I want to behave well because I understand that I will be happier when I do so.

Mindfulness, in this conceptualization, focuses on process rather than content. When you are meditating, you are not concerned with “what” you are thinking, but rather pay attention to the fact that you are thinking. This aspect of meditation has also drawn criticism, albeit not as vocal as some of the other criticisms, that mindfulness in any of its manifestations, does not address meaning. For some, such as psychotherapist Jeffrey Rubin (2015) the lack of attention to the meaning of thoughts is a serious flaw in mindfulness practice.97

In fact, Buddhism is a broad structure for understanding the nature of being alive that differs in some ways from our usual notions of how to understand life and how to live. In the Buddhist tradition, one does not try and change the world to make it more to our liking but rather we understand that there will always be aspects of the world that we don’t like, that it is for us to accept and bear. Pain and suffering are considered inevitable, not aspects of life to be changed or eradicated. Both gain and loss are normal and to be experienced by us all. Death is not necessarily a tragedy, but rather the inescapable result of being born. Life is impermanent for everyone. Our most potent skill for dealing with life is developing the ability to be with whatever arises. As my own teacher often remarked, we suffer the most when we quarrel with life.

Unfortunately, some of these views at least are greatly at odds with American society. We are a society that privileges finding ways of changing what we don’t like. We tend to look towards external comforts like a big house, an expensive car and plenty of cash to bring us happiness. For many, death is wrong and shouldn’t happen. It is almost always tragic when someone dies. In practicing mindfulness within the Buddhist tradition, the emphasis is on finding a new way of being, not on striving to reach a goal. It is about awareness rather than action. In American society, it is all about getting somewhere.

With continued mindfulness meditation in conjunction with study of the suttas, Buddhist mindfulness practice results in certain insights or understandings about how we see the world. We attain a full realization of impermanence. We understand that we are all in the same boat, having the same fears, loves and suffering – thus we develop compassion for all beings. With continued practice a transformation takes place and we become more loving, more tolerant and more compromising beings. We become better citizens as well, and we are happier in our lives.

“Mindfulness” as it is being taught as a secular training imparts some of the skills inherent in Buddhist mindfulness but it is divorced from the larger ethical-philosophical religious context that accompanied its original formulation. One practices being in the present, paying attention and trying not to judge. By learning not to “fight” against pain, for example, one becomes more accepting of pain and therefore doesn’t increase its effect. The individual practicing secular mindfulness is learning how to guide and sculpt his or her attentiveness. In the West, the mindfulness movement has flowed very easily into the field of cognitive behavioral therapy, as it promotes learning to work with and manage thoughts rather than allowing them to direct behavior unwittingly.98 We “wake up” to our own tendency to drift through life rather than be present with it all. We may be able to achieve the ability to re-direct thoughts and feelings so that anxious thoughts, for example, do not predominate. These are helpful skills in navigating our lives, skills that are not taught in our system of education and skills that may be more helpful than memorizing times tables for getting through life.

Mindfulness in the Buddhist tradition, however, goes even further. Ayya Khema also points out how meditation helps us develop skills for living. She says, “It is a common conception that because we’re alive we know how to live. This is one of our human absurdities. Living life is a skill, and most people take a headlong fall at least once or twice in their lives.” (Khema, 1987: 12). She takes the point further, however, in suggesting that the real skills we need may be different from what we think we need, i.e. recognizing impermanence and not reacting to feeling. These are insights into the way it is and these insights provide us with the tools to negotiate our lives more accurately.

The difficulty, as I see it, is that we are calling two different enterprises by the same name. What we are teaching in 6 or 8 week sessions in hospitals, prisons, schools, and other settings is what I would call “mindful attention”. We are teaching people how to work with their minds rather than be directed by their minds. We are teaching individuals the difference between being present and being lost in thought. And perhaps most importantly, we are teaching people how to watch and see what their minds are doing.99

These are important skills and it is no wonder that they help people (as my friend noted to me); but are they the same as mindfulness in the Buddhist tradition? Is anything gained by merging the two activities under one rubric? Conversely, is anything lost by acknowledging them as different, though closely related activities?

The Example of Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy

Changes in theory, from the theoretically “pure” to a mixture that is more palatable to society in general, have happened before in our history. When psychoanalysis was first developed by Sigmund Freud as a way of understanding the mind, his ideas were anathema to many people for a variety of reasons.100 His idea that children were not “innocent”, but rather deeply immersed in erotic desire, was not an idea that society was prepared to accept. The practice of psychoanalysis itself was time-consuming and expensive, and over time, the theory was seen as highly speculative.

98 An example of this application is Z. Segal et al, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression.
99 In psychoanalysis, this is a skill called the “observing ego” and is often considered a pre-requisite for psychoanalytic treatment. However, in secular mindfulness, we are actually teaching individuals how to develop this skill, sometimes for the first time.
100 Slipp. S. The Freudian Mystique looks at this topic, among others.
and unavailable for the investigative sciences to support or disprove. When Freud first began to practice psychoanalysis, he saw patients six days a week, and even then complained about the “Monday crust”.

The procedure of psychoanalytic treatment has as its goal the deep restructuring of the neurotic’s personality. Freud believed that one should gradually move through the upper layers of the mind (the conscious and pre-conscious) in order to uncover the unconscious layers of the mind and bring them to consciousness. The goal was the eradication of neurosis through bringing to light the unconscious conflicts that had necessitated repression in the first place. For this process to succeed, the patient has to have frequent contact with the analyst as well as observing rigorously guarded rules of analytic interaction. It involves a major commitment of time and money, as well as psychic effort, on the part of the patient. Changes in life such as marriage and moving are often advisedly postponed in order for the psychoanalysis to proceed without disturbance.

An additional difficulty of the psychoanalytic method is necessitated by its physical arrangement – the person being analyzed lies on a couch out of eyeshot of the analyst. He or she cannot see the analyst nor any reactions that the analyst might be having to what the patient is saying. In addition, the verbal exchange that takes place is not like ordinary communication, in that the analyst might listen for long periods of time without commenting at all (a friend of mine in analytic training swears that his analyst didn’t say one word to him for two years!). Questions posed to the analyst usually are deflected back to the patient being analyzed.

All of these conditions presuppose an ability in the patient to withstand a high degree of deprivation, a deprivation that is usually not experienced in ordinary social interaction. While there are strong theoretical reasons for the rules of analytic treatment, many, many individuals, over time, found the rules of analysis too difficult or without merit. Thus, for example, in psychotherapy, the patient sits up facing the analyst and the interaction proceeds much more like an ordinary social exchange.

There are similarities in the histories of psychoanalysis and mindfulness, perhaps most obviously in the criticisms that are currently being waged against secular mindfulness proponents and those that even Freud himself directed at psychotherapy. While psychotherapy did not originate with Freud’s psychoanalysis (Cautin, 2011), psychoanalysis operated as a major unifying influence on the acceptance and utilization of psychotherapy in the U.S. Freud introduced psychoanalysis to the United States in 1909 when he gave his well-known lectures at Clark University (1995, Hale: 5) and was generally pleased by the positive welcome psychoanalysis had received in the U.S. However, he was also wary. Freud noticed that “American open-mindedness had led to the watering-down of psychoanalysis, which Freud believed, lost sight of essentials and lacked scientific rigor…” (IBID: 7).

The American medical establishment was practical if nothing else, and at the time was concerned about establishing scientific authority and respect for the burgeoning profession of psychiatry. Psychoanalysis, among other things, seemed to offer the possibility of that respect in a profession that was still in its formative years.

As with mindfulness meditation, psychoanalysis underwent a metamorphosis – in this case from an intensely rigorous investigation of the mind into psychotherapy, a less frequent method that had more circumscribed goals. Freud himself referred to the “pure gold” of psychoanalysis in contrast to the “copper” of psychotherapy, which included any methods that used suggestion and/or support to achieve the therapeutic goal. It was his belief that this dilution of the psychoanalytic method would, in fact,
be necessary in order to eventually create a “psychotherapy for the people” (2012, Gaztambide: 141). Mindfulness has also undergone a metamorphosis as a result of the popularization of some of its benefits for individuals who are not necessarily interested in intense, timeconsuming practice. Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction, for example, only requires a commitment of eight weeks of classes and approximately one hour a day committed to mindfulness practice. Some of the research protocols presented at the Mindfulness and Compassion conference involved perhaps six or eight weeks of training, using a pre-and post-test format to determine the effects of the intervention (“mindfulness” training). “Mindfulness”, in a scaled-down, limited-edition way, is becoming a popular antidote to living in our world. Psychotherapy, also, has become for many individuals a way of dealing with the stress of the environment, rather than embracing its original goal of learning about oneself. Similarly, many are finding that the rigors of Buddhist mindfulness, including practicing with the ten precepts that govern ethical behavior, and the practice of compassion, are more constricting then they wish to adhere to. A recent article in The New Yorker about one of the latest meditation gurus Andy Puddicombe, describes some of the ways he has made Buddhist ideas more palatable for everyday people. For example, he describes changing the names of the Four Ordinary Foundations of Tibetan Buddhism because, “The final one sounds bleak when you do the Tibetan translation...” (2015, The New Yorker: 47). Elsewhere in the article, Mamoom Hamid, at Social Capital, is reported as saying, “…at the end of the day, we want to create the biggest company around this concept without being shackled by your Buddhist-monk tendencies.” (IBID).

However, most recently, as we have seen neuroscience embrace and examine the brain as it changes during mindfulness meditation, so too is neuroscience being used to examine brain changes that occur as a result of psychoanalysis (NYTimes, 6/28/15: 38 – 73.) It remains to be seen as further evidence is accumulated whether or not evidence from brain studies will influence the direction of either meditation or psychoanalysis.

A Peaceful Co-existence

Given that Americans spent roughly 2.6 billion dollars on gym memberships and, combined with fitness classes, DVD’s, fitness apparel and personal trainers close to 45.2 billion dollars on physical fitness in 2011 (www.coolefitness.com), it is perhaps not surprising that we are finally embracing the idea that our minds might need some training also. Learning to focus, pay attention, notice our judgments, be present, are all aspects of being alive that improve our welfare and sense of happiness. We have generally behaved as though these skills come naturally to us all, but as mindfulness training is showing us, that is not the case and we can all benefit from learning how to do it better. On the other hand, developing mindfulness as an avenue to liberation, to a deeper wisdom that introduces us to a different way of viewing life, is an activity many people do not embrace, though there have always been some who do. Monks, nuns, and other members of religious orders such as priests and rabbis are individuals who devote their life to “being in the world but not of it” and there has probably always been a small minority of lay individuals who also seek a path of higher spirituality but who do not enter the monastic world formally. It is my contention that a little bit of “mindfulness” is good and, for some of us, a lot of “mindfulness” is better. But a lot

101 We cannot know for sure how many of these individuals there are, but they are certainly present in all religious groups.
of mindfulness is not better for everyone, as we know. So, to differentiate one from the
other, I propose that a little bit of “mindfulness” be called “mindful attention”, while
the term “mindfulness” be reserved for those who practice mindfulness within the
Buddhist tradition of ethics, wisdom and compassion. Mindful attention, it seems to
me, captures the quality of awareness that accurately represents those who are
practicing mindfulness for stress-reduction, weight loss, anger management, and other
worldly dilemmas that individuals face. Mindfulness, on the other hand, would then
only refer to those who practice the method within a serious meditation practice,
integrated with study of the suttas, allegiance to ethical stipulations, and a transformed
perspective of the self. It would indicate practitioners of the Buddhist path.

Conclusion
The concept of mindfulness has been embraced widely through the U.S. A
recent article by David Hockman in the New York Times (2013) was entitled
“Mindfulness: Getting Its Share of Attention”. It is showing up in corporate centers, in
educational institutions, as a cure for stress and insomnia, as a weight loss remedy and
for scores of other problems that folks encounter and struggle with in their daily lives.
Along with the practice of yoga, “mindfulness” has become a mainstream endeavor for
Americans who are having difficulty enjoying their lives. The scientific community
has embraced mindfulness as well, addressing its examination to how the brain changes
as a result of mindfulness and finding evidence that the practice of mindfulness
provides benefits visible through fMRI’s and other scientific measurements.
It is not surprising, however, that the rise of secular mindfulness has also created
controversy. For the small percentage of practitioners who also consider themselves
Buddhist, secular mindfulness and its acceptance by the scientific community as well
as the popular culture has caused some consternation. The mindfulness that is being
embraced as a remedy for the ills of life is not generally understood to be the
mindfulness that was promoted and taught by the Buddha, as described in either the
Satipatthana or the Anapanasati Sutta of the Pali canon. As a result, a tension has
developed between the more traditional Buddhist practitioners and the modern
scientists and practitioners of a kind of mindfulness that is divorced from its history.
At a conference like the one I attended recently in San Francisco, on Mindfulness and
Compassion, the two approaches to mindfulness were presented without a clear
differentiation. Often, the listener couldn’t be sure whether the mindfulness being
discussed was inclusive of Buddhist doctrine or not. For this reason, I am proposing
that the two different kinds of mindfulness be differentiated from each other by a
change in terminology. In the field of psychology, there is a clear distinction made
between psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. While there are “purists” who believe that
psychotherapy is a watered-down version of psychoanalysis (“rearranging the deck
dechairs on the Titanic”, so to speak), other believe that the exalted goal of
psychoanalysis, i.e. a re-structuring of the personality, is unnecessary and probably not
possible to attain most of the time. The work of psychotherapy, they might say, meets
individus where they are and helps them to accomplish their goals, which we might
categorize as making a better adjustment to society.
Mindfulness suffers from the same struggle in defining itself. Most
practitioners of mindfulness are not interested in liberation, but rather would just like
to feel better in their day-to-day lives. The goal of liberation, as proposed by the
Buddha, is not seen as either practical or necessarily desirable in our present day
culture.
I propose, therefore, that we make a distinction similar to the one that has come to characterize psychology, in which traditional Buddhist mindfulness continue to be called “mindfulness”, while the newer adaptations of mindfulness that are oriented more towards technique than towards wisdom or insight be called “mindful attention”. This distinction would clarify that while the two forms of mindfulness are related, they are not the same. One could then intelligently approach either of the practices understanding the goals in mind and with a more accurate expectation of what might reasonably be the end result. This end result might be the next step in the wholesome and positive development of our minds.
References


Introduction

As Buddhism continues to spread in the West, its views on contemporary issues are increasingly being sought. Both its own followers and outsiders are curious about how this ancient Asian tradition will respond to the moral dilemmas confronting the modern world. Buddhist bio-ethics as a field of academic study in the West is not new, but in recent years has experienced a considerable expansion in Asian countries as well. The schools of Buddhism have rich traditions of thought on bio-ethics. Researcher of Buddhist ethics face today is to generate a response to this new problem that is consistent with the spirit of Buddhist values and in harmony with its extensive scriptural tradition. This is no easy task since there are very few signposts or landmarks in this new terrain. After all, the earliest Buddhist canonical literature is well over two thousand years old, and many of the problems we face today are the result of modern social, economic and technological developments which could scarcely have been imagined during ancient times. In building a bridge from the old to the new, there are many possible pitfalls and dangers, and it is far too early to speak of definitive solutions. At the same time, it becomes pertinent to investigate how things work out in practice among Buddhists, who naturally operate in a world in which their religion is one of the factors that affect their behavior.

Debates over stem cell research are commonly framed as being between science and religion. The stem cell research is comparatively a new discipline applicable to scientific experiments concerning primarily with medical treatment which is progressing at a fast pace in modern era. Though initially, it was aimed at reconstructing the vital body organs, but now it is inclined towards cloning the human. There is a rapid and astonishing progress in the field of cloning since the making of “Dolly” – the first cloned sheep, a few two decades ago. So, now we need to assess the situation and decide whether we should go ahead with cloning a whole human being or not. Stem cell research and cloning should be viewed with the focus in mind that it causes injury towards animal and plant species during experimental studies in laboratories. The ethical issues and religious perspectives need to be judged to take a final decision by the scientific forum. Though Judaism and Islam are vocal in their support of cloning research, but Christianity has blanket prohibition. Judging the intensity of human ambitions and the fact that there exists no strict judicious control over stem cell research at present, cloning technology is also not encouraged according to the Buddhist Bioethics. Stem cell research and cloning should be viewed with the focus in mind that it causes injury towards animal and plant species during experimental studies in laboratories. Scientists see great potential for the use of human stem cells in the treatment of many medical conditions, including Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s diseases, diabetes, spinal cord injuries and degenerative heart conditions. Given the emphasis that Buddhism places on the central virtues of knowledge (prajña), compassion (karuna) and its long tradition of practicing medicine in the monasteries, the prospect of developing cures and treatments that alleviate human suffering should be welcomed. Buddhism, however, also places great importance on the principle of
ahimsa, or non-harming, and therefore has grave reservations about any scientific procedure that destroys life - whether human or animal. While Buddhism has no central authority competent to pronounce on ethical dilemmas, like other religions, it would appear that there is no ethical problem in principle with the therapeutic use of adult stem cells; but research involving the intentional destruction of human life, such as harvesting embryonic stem cells, is morally impermissible. The proposed paper will deal with the benefits of stem cell research, Buddhist concept of life, Buddhist bioethics with regard to cloning and other related issues of stem cell research from Buddhist bioethical point of view.

Bioethics:

Bioethics is a recent contemporary phenomenon as a field of study traceable to several causes and the most important cause is the issues that have captured the contemporary mind because they represent major conflicts in the area of technology and basic human values, those dealing with life, death, and health. Although many bioethical issues have been discussed since ancient times, the introduction of modern biomedical technologies, especially since the 1950s, has intensified some age-old questions and has given rise to perplexing new problems, mainly the prolongation of life, euthanasia, prenatal diagnosis and abortion, human experimentation, genetic interventions and reproductive technologies, behavior control and psychosurgery, the definition of death, animal rights, allocation of scarce health resources, and dilemmas in the maintenance of environmental health. Secondly, there is an intense and widespread interest in bioethics because it offers a stimulating intellectual and moral challenge. The third is, the rapid growth of the field of bioethics has been facilitated by the openness to multidisciplinary work that characterizes many scholars and academic institutions today, especially in matters dealing with personal and social aspects of human behavior.

Bioethics is a composite term derived from the Greek words bios (life) and ethike (ethics). It can be defined as the systematic study of human conduct in the area of the life sciences and health care, insofar as this conduct is examined in the light of moral values and principles. Bioethics extends to the value-related problems, biomedical and behavioral research, social issues and it also extends beyond human life and health to embrace issues involving animal and plant life. The development of bioethics within it provides the ethical and philosophical foundations for the concept of peaceful and harmonious co-evaluation of humanity and bio-environment. It can be considered both a conceptual science with philosophical dimension and, at the same time, a direction of practical activities. From a philosophical perspective, bioethics closely related to principle of reverence for life. Of paramount importance for bioethics is the philosophical idea that any individual, any form of bios is of unique, absolute value. The underlying philosophical idea of intrinsic unity of human and non-human life entails the responsibility of humans for all bios. The development of bioethics calls for overcoming these attitudes as considering the living things only useful tools and reductional attitudes towards life denying the principal difference between living beings and non-living matter.

What is good, what is bad? What is right, what wrong? What ought I to do or not to do? What, when I have done it, will be for a long time for my sorrow ... or my happiness? (Lakkhana Sutta D. III.157)
Bioethical Issues:

Bioethics has become a truly international phenomenon. Bioethics is grounded in and has implications for the religious, political, and legal elements of cultures. As a field of inquiry, bioethics has coveted an international political forum. Secular Western bioethics in particular lays claim to a universal account of proper and moral deportment, including the foundations of law and public policy, as well as the moral authority for national and international institutions to guarantee uniformity of practice, secure basic human rights, and promote social justice. Bioethical expertise is widely sought in the framing of public and institution policy. Religious and cultural moral diversity runs deep; it strides the divisions that separate regional, religious, and cultural biomedical and moral perspectives. This study would provide a view of the state of bioethical reflection across the world at the threshold of the 21st century. On the one hand, they amply demonstrate that interest in bioethics spans the globe. It is also helpful to consider a number of axes along which moral difference in bioethics can be displayed. We have attempted to discuss the problems of stem cell research in Bioethics. Our intention has been to raise all the issues which are related to Bio-ethical problems faced by the world which have resulted due to the new technology, different world views and transportation of Buddhism to different societies. As the twenty-first century ills the horizon, one of the greatest challenges facing Buddhism, in this modern world, is to evolve a perspective on bio-ethical issues which is both comprehensive and systematic. Though, it is beyond the scope of any single study to achieve both of these goals.

Recent decades have witnessed an explosion of interest in all aspects of Buddhist Studies while this fundamental dimension of the Buddhist ethos, which is relevance across the boundaries of sect and school, has become an academic backwater. Only recently have the signs appeared that this neglected is to be remedied and the initiative has come not from the Buddhist Studies but from within the ‘emerging and yet ill-defined area of the comparative study of religious ethics’ (Little, D. and Twiss: 1978). This discipline has stimulated some useful periodical literature dealing inter alia with the ethics of Buddhism (Reynolds, 1979). Much of the work on Buddhism, however, is in the form of tentative forays into the field and there has as yet been no systematic study which provides a characterization of the formal structure of the Buddhist ethical system using the typology of philosophical ethics.

Bio-Ethics and Buddhism:

If Buddhism does not rise to the challenge of modern world it will atrophy and die. Buddhism has reached productively to its encounter with new culture and there is every reason for optimism for its engagements with bioethical problems. As the momentum of modernization gather pace, it would be difficult to maintain an ostrich like attitude and hope that problems of modernity will simply go away. Global developments in science and medical technology have meant that the modern world intrudes whatever we like it or not. Buddha had taught the existence of an eternal moral law (dhamma sanātano) and believed that through reason, analysis, reflection and meditation one could come to know the requirements of this law in any given set of circumstances.

Bioethics is quite a relevant aspect in Buddhism and has been extensively used in various Buddhist scriptures. Buddha’s teaching of non-violence and non-aggression exhibits the sublime truths of bioethics. The concept of brahmavihāras or “four sublime moods” consisting of love (maitrī), compassion (karuṇā), sympathetic joy
(muditā) and equanimity (upekkhā) and the six paramitas of giving (dāna), morality (sīla), patience (ksanti), vigour (vīra) meditation (samādhi) and wisdom (paññā) might be interpreted to reconfigure Buddhist ethics for modern world. Further describing sīla, the first one which comes into Buddhist literature is non-killing of living being (panatipāta vermāni). In the Samaññaphala Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya there are references about five kinds of seeds which take birth such as mūlabījām, khandhavījām, phalubījām, aggavījām and vijavījām and there is clear instructions about doing no harm to them. In the Mettā Sutta of Suttanipāta, it has been said that the creatures which have not even taken their forms, they must be debarred from killing (bhūta vā sambhevesia vā sabbe sattā bhavantu sukkhi tatta). In the Buddhavagga of Dhammapada, it has been remarked that to take birth as human beings is very difficult and at the same time to remain alive is also very difficult. Any type of killing would be akusala kamma, thus resultant would be akusala. In this way cycle of birth and death will be continued. In the Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya, there is a description of jāti or birth. Here, jāti is called birth or conception because sense organs are not complete. Birth is also called sanjāti where sense of organs are complete or okkanti (decent) which means birth from womb or egg or abhinībbati (coming forth) meaning spontaneous generation a birth from moisture. The appearance of groups (khandhānam patabhāvo) or acquiring of sense-bases (āyatan patilābho) is also called birth. Here in the same sutta we find descriptions about the death. Death has been defined as “cutti cavantā bhedo antardhanan maccu marnaṃ kālaṇdiriyā khandhānaṃ bheda kalavarassanākkhepo jīvindriyassupacchado (the separation, difference, extinction, death, end due to time factor, extinction of constituent elements of beings, decline of body etc. is called death)”.

Buddhist interpretation of Stem Cell Research

Buddhism is a response to what is fundamentally an ethical problem, the perennial problem of the best kind of life for man to lead. The invitation extended to his followers was to participate in the highest and best form of human life, to live a ‘noble’ life. This form of life embraces both seeing the world in the way the Buddha came to see it, and acting in it in the way he acted. The goal, then, is not simply the attainment of an intellectual vision of reality or the mastery of doctrine (although it includes these things) but primarily the living of a full and rounded human life. No set of ethical teachings, however extensive, can define in advance all the circumstances in which ethical problems can arise. Every age faces new problems, and there is little specific guidance in Buddhist canonical sources, for instance, on the ethical dilemmas we face today as a result of the scientific and technological advances in the 20th century. No doubt responses to these issues could be deduced from the ancient teachings, but it must be said that the Buddhist tradition throughout its long history has shown little initiative in developing and refining the tools of ethical analysis which might assist us in formulating such responses. In comparison with the Semitic religions, for instance, Buddhism has hardly made a start.

Stem cells are blank cells that have the potential to develop into any type of cell in the body: nerve cells or kidney cells. Scientists are trying to harvest the cells before they have been differentiated, then coax them into becoming certain types. From this point of view it appears that Buddhist bioethics would definitely support the good harvests from stem cell research for primordial prevention and treating chronic and debilitating morbid conditions like diabetes, coronary heart disease, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, stroke, cancer etc. Here it is imperative to mention here that the stem cell
research is comparatively a new discipline applicable to scientific experiments concerning primarily with medical treatment (Barua: 2005). According to Buddhism, organ or tissue donation is a commendable act of compassion; but it is a matter of individual conscience. Therefore, according to Buddhism, organ tissue donation, which is a commendable act of compassion, is an act supported through Buddhist Ethics. Buddhist ethics would definitely bag the good harvests because of stem cell research for treating different types of diseases as mentioned above.

There are however, some risks in stem cell research, which Buddhist would never afford, for the following reasons. Buddhist Ethics epitomized in a single term sīla or morality would represent, apart from its religious significance, some old values reintroduced and reinforced during the 6th century BCE by the Buddha for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many. Dr. Ian Wilmut, who created Dolly the Sheep in 1997, is also opposed the idea of cloning human beings through stem cell research because in this process some of the cloned animals like mice and goats died. A similar outcome may also be expected in case of human cloning. There is apprehension if not properly utilized, cloned human organs would be destroyed, ultimately causing injury to living beings (Barua: 2005). Hence such a futile attempt at human cloning would be quite opposite to the statement regarding the non-injury to life as mentioned in the Brahmajāla Sutta and the Sāmaññaphala Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya records: pāṇātipātaṁ pahāya pāṇātipāta paṭīvīrato samano gotamo niḥita daṇḍonihita sattho lajji dayāpanno sabbapāṇabhūta hitānukam piviharati. (Dīgha Nikāya: 1890-1911). These Suttas also note: bijagāmo bhūtaṇāma samāram bhapaṭivirato samano gotamo (Dīgha Nikāya: 1890-1911).

Buddhist teachings which have been codified with the far reaching implications in a simple word sīla which constitutes the very foundation with its two reinforced pillars of mettā (Skt. maitrī), ‘loving kindness” (Ratnakula: 1999) as also karuṇā, (compassion), of the grand edifice of Buddhism and represents, of properly examined, not an orthodox legacy of Buddha’s ethical teachings, but a set of universal moral codes covering the humanity at large. The Buddha’s profound appreciation for the universal existence of suffering evoked a great compassionate response (karuṇā) and loving kindness (mettā) for all living beings. The very first percept among the Five Precepts (pañcasīla), which form the minimum code of ethics for all the followers of Buddhism, involves abstention from injury to life. Hence, such a futile attempt at human cloning would be quite opposite to the concept of non-injury to life as mentioned in the Dīgha Nikāya of Pāli literature (Dīgha Nikāya. 1890-1911). It is explained as casting aside of all forms of weapons and being conscientious about depriving a living being of life and promotes the cultivation of compassion and sympathy for all living beings. Buddhism also tirelessly advocates the virtues of non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion in all human pursuits.

The Pātimokkha Pāli (Vinaya Piṭaka: 1956) of the Vinaya categorizes the transgression of this rule as a Pācittiya offence. Here, I would like to draw the attention of scholars towards a particular term in Buddhism namely bīja which means seed, germ, semen, spawn which is very frequently used in the figurative sense. (Gupta, S: 2001) According to the Aṭṭhāsalini, another word is bīja-gāma which signifies seed-groups, seed-kingdom, seed-creation. There are five kinds of seeds usually enumerated in Buddhist Literature as mūla, khandha, phala, agga, bīja or plants propagated by roots, cuttings, joints, buddings, shoots, seeds (Hienberg: 2001). The above-mentioned Pāli Suttas strictly enjoin abstinence from destroying not only human lives, but also trees and plants or in other words all living beings (Davis: 1906-07).
From the Buddhist ethical point of view, non-injury (ahimśā) to all types of life is commendable. The Karmiyamettā enjoins the practice of mettā towards all living creatures, timid and bold, short and long, small and big, minute and great, invisible and visible, near and far, waiting birth and born (Anguttara Nikāya: 1885-1900). The Mettā Sutta, the blueprint of loving kindness, tells us how this boundless compassion should be cultivated towards all living beings without any distinction whatsoever (Sutta Nīpāta: 1884-1898). In the Saddharmapundarika Sūtra, is like dhamma-rain which makes everyone happy, taking them towards Nibbāna as well (Soothill, W. E.: 1956). In fact the Mahāmaṅgala Sutta (Dharmarakshita: 1977) of the Sutta Nīpāta lays down living in a congenial surrounding (paṭirūpasavāsa) as a blessing or good fortune (māngala).

In this perspective, stem cell research should not be encouraged under any circumstance (Damien, K: 1995). From Buddhist point of view karuṇā means compassion which is the sublime emotion that impels one to help another in distress (Samyutta Nikāya: 1884-1898). In the Vajracheddikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra the Buddha says, ‘The great friendliness marked by providing what is beneficial; the great compassion by protection’. He also taught His disciples to have ‘compassion on all creatures’ (Samyutta Nikāya: 1884-1898) and ‘never to destroy the life of any living creature, however tiny it may be’ (Sarao: 2010). The Buddha strongly upheld the purity of heart filled with loving-kindness marked with the principle of ‘live and let live’ to promote tolerance, compassion and love for all living beings/creatures. If we practice the Buddha’s teachings and truly follow the principle of love and compassion towards all living beings including forests and their inhabitants, that would create a balanced and happy environment which means each of us must make a sincere effort to take seriously our responsibility for each other and for the natural environment (Batchelor, S., & Brown, K.: 1994).

Buddha’s view on issues of Stem Cell Research as depicted in Pāli Literature

All of intentional killings (vadhacetāna) according to Buddhist ethics are regarded as immoral acts. Even though killing is done with the object of putting an end to suffering cannot be accepted as morally justifiable, for it is a transgression of the first precept or pāṇātipāta. With regard to the first precept one should neither injure, nor cause injury to living beings, from a tiny insect up to man. The Buddhist attitude to non-violence is well illustrated in the following lines:

All living beings tremble at punishment, all living beings fear death; comparing others with oneself, one should neither kill, nor cause to kill. All living beings tremble at punishment. Life is dear to all; comparing others with oneself, one should neither kill, nor cause to kill (Dhp. 129-130.). Let him not destroy, or cause to be destroyed, any life at all, or sanction the acts of those who do so. Let him refrain even from hurting any creature, both those that [are] strong and those that tremble in the world (Sn. 393.).

The Buddha laid down the rule that a monk, who intentionally deprives a human being of life, commits defeat (pārājika), and he is not in communion. According to Buddhist ethics, man was not created by God as the conservative held, but created by his own kamma or action. It disagrees with suicide and all types of killings or harming living beings or beings that are about to take birth not because they are against the will of
God, but because they are against the natural formation of life according to the following five factors:

1) Utuniyāma: The physical inorganic law, such as the four elements (dhātu), namely, earth (pathavī), water (āpo), fire (tejo), and wind (vāyo), etc., which constitute human body.

2) Bījaniyāma: The physical organic law or the order of germs and seeds, as in the statement: “As the seed, so the fruit”. The scientific theory of cells and genes belong to this law.

3) Cittaniyāma: The psychic law or the order of working of mind, such as the functions of consciousness in the process of sensation (vedanā) and cognition (saññā).

4) Kammaniyāma: The kammic law which relating to moral causation or the order of action and its effect.

5) Dhammaniyāma: The law of the norm governing the relationship and interdependence of all things, that is the way all things arise, exist and then cease, such as all beings experience birth (jāti), aging (jarā), sickness (bayaññā), and death (marana) as a normal conditions. Simply speaking, it is the law of Dependent Origination (pañiccasamuppāda). It is the most universal law that contains the first four niyāmas.

Taking life and using any means are regarded as against these natural laws. Buddhism believes that as long as a man is breathing and in procession of his consciousness (citta) he may obtain some spiritual achievement. According to Buddhist ethics, mercy killing of poor animals also is not morally justified. It is considered as a transgression of the first precept or pānātipāta. However, killing out of necessity and without any anger or hatred towards animals, lessens the intensity of bad results than killing through anger or hatred. The event of a series of animal killings in Western countries due to foot-and-mouth disease, in early 2001, could be seen as a ‘necessary evil’.

Conclusion:

Buddhism is widely respected for its benevolent and humane moral values. What is lacking in the primary and commentarial sources, however, is a systematic exposition of the theoretical framework in terms of which Buddhist ethics is to be understood. This means that we are at something of a loss when we seek solutions to new problems for which there is no scriptural paradigm, or when two or more values seem to be in conflict. This problem will come increasingly to the fore as the encounter between Buddhism and the modern West gathers pace. Buddhism responds to the moral dilemmas confronting the modern world. Bioethics is scantily mentioned in ancient sources and have received little attention down the centuries within the tradition itself. The challenge would be to generate a response to new problems that is consistent with spirit of Buddhist values and in harmony with its extensive scriptural tradition. It will be a great challenges since Buddhist literature are 2000 years old and many of these bioethical problems are result of modern social, economic and technological developments.

102 This needed a reference, which the author neglected to provide, but the editor sought its existence and found it in P.A. Payutto’s Dictionary of Buddhism (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidalaya University Press, 2000), p. 194, entry # 214, niyama.
Since Buddhism is considered to be a ‘way of good life’ or a ‘perfect life’, stem cell research for any purpose, whatever may be its need and urgency, cannot be encouraged. Buddhism strictly instructs abstinence from destroying not only human lives but also all living beings and the understanding of death is perceived as a process and is not an event, it supports the total brain death approach and prohibits the premature removal of organs for transplantation. Though selective stem cell research could be considered, but there is no limit to human ambitions. So, there is a high possibility that this stem cell research and cloning technology could be misused in future to pose a threat to the society. Hence, stem cell research and cloning technology for any purpose, whatever might be its need and urgency, is never encouraged by any Buddhist at all. An attempt has been made to conceptualize the modern concept of stem cell research with reference to one Buddhist point of view.
References:


Bhikkṣu Dhammarakkṣits, Mahāmaṅgala Sutta, Sutta Nipāta (Cullavagga). Sutta No. 4, Delhi, 1977.


Right to Life of an Unborn: 
Practice of Abortion in South Korea from a Buddhist Standpoint

Abhinav Anand & Assoc. Prof. Ajit Kumar Behura  
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad, India

Introduction

Intentionally ending the life or development of a foetus is called abortion. Spontaneous abortion and induced abortion are two types, where spontaneous refers to a miscarriage, and induced abortion is a procedure performed by a licensed physician when there is a possibility of danger to the life of the mother. Buddhist tradition rejects the practice of abortion; it believes abortion is the deliberate destruction of an innocent human life.

Buddhism was introduced in Korea from China in the late 4th century AD when monk Sundoku arrived under the order of the former King of Chin of China (Tedesco 1999, 124). Buddhism combined with the indigenous Shamanism before emerging on a larger platform. In late 14th century Confucianism replaced this tradition. Presently, Buddhism in Korea is the second largest religion after Christianity. In the year of 2010 religious statistics estimates that 22.9% of the population are Buddhist, 29.4% are Christians; both Catholics and Protestants, and 46.4% population of South Korea did not claim any religion.

An estimate shows about three hundred forty thousand (340,000) abortions are being done each year, although one parliamentarian suggested that there may be as many as 1.5 million abortions performed each year in South Korea. Abortion in South Korea is technically illegal, except under a certain circumstances: to save the life of the mother, in an instance of rape or incest, foetal impairment, or other socio-economic reasons. It has been shown that “Korea’s birth rate is the second lowest in the world: 1.19 births per woman and some Korean researcher’s fear that their very survival as a nation is in doubt, because of the ongoing unethical practices of abortion. The practice of abortion has been studied only for family planning policy and population control, is not sufficient.

Buddhist tradition does not have any central authority to provide guidelines to solve problems in moral dilemmas of abortion. No international organizations or colleges for medical practitioners, serve to formulate policies for healthcare professionals. However, in Buddhism there are certain basic moral values that are virtually accepted by all schools and sects. One may engage here to justify practices of ‘abortion’ or ‘no-abortion’; but the debate on abortion from the perspective of Buddhism would remain incomplete if we do not highlight its relevance to contemporary Korean society - therefore, the need exists to reinterpret central moral values to deal with new bioethical challenges.

103 At that time the Korea was divided into three kingdoms: Koguryo, Paekje and Shilla.
105 Shamanism is the ancient religion of animism and nature-spirit worship. It is based on the belief that human beings as well as natural forces and inanimate objects all possess spirits.
106 Online Source, Cited 17 June 2015 Available from:  
http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/explorer/custom%?subtopic=15&countries=South%20Korea&chartType=bar&data_type=number&year=2018&religious_affiliation=all&age group=all&pdfMode=false
http://www.mercatornet.com/articles/view/terminating_koreas_abortion_culture#sthash.8SL3ict0.dpuf
108 Ibid
There are textual evidences on the availability of this practice which highlights need to bridge the gap between the moral virtues of Buddhist traditions and contemporary bioethical problems. Buddhism considers abortion as an intentional killing, its practice is prohibited and a highly punishable offence. Practice of this directly goes against the paramount virtue ‘ahimsa’. Despite all these religious impositions, the practice of abortion is highly prevalent in South Korea possibly due to transformations of old mind-set towards a progressive secularism.

Abortion and Buddhist Texts

_Gabbhapatana_ (gabbha means womb and patana means bringing to fall) is denoted for abortion in Pali language. In the Buddhist literatures, abortion understood as an intentional killing of an embryo or fetus. It rejects the practice of abortion because it believes that abortion is a deliberate destruction of life and practice of this directly goes against the Buddhist principle _ahimsa_.  

_Ahimsa_ does not approve killing. It avoids killing of a living being. One should not kill a living being, nor cause it to be killed, nor should he incite another to kill. Do not injure any being, either strong or weak (_Suttanipata_, II: 14; cited in Sebastian 2005, 228).  

In _Mahakhandhaka_ of the _Mahavagga_, instructions are given for monks and nuns “An ordained monk should not intentionally deprive a living thing of life, even if it is only an ant. A monk who deliberately deprives a human being of life, even to the extent of causing an abortion, he becomes no longer a follower of the Buddha. As a flat stone, broken apart is something which cannot be put back together again, so a monk who has deliberately deprived a human being of life is no longer a follower of the Buddha. This is something not to be done by you as long as life lasts…” (_VinayaPitaka_ I: 97; cited in Keown 1995, 93).  

The elimination from the Sangha was cited a punishment for the monks and the nuns for advocating abortion. The _Petavatthu_ says “… my husband was angry and married another wife, and when she became with child, I medicated evil against her. …I, with mind corrupted, caused the fall of her unborn child. This fell in the third month, foul and bloody.” (_Petavatthu_, 1.7; cited in McDermott 1999, 160).  

Rivals between co-wives were primarily cause to have abortion during the time of Buddha. Few stories are cited in _Jatakas_, which says “the queen of king Bimbisara, resorted to having her womb massaged and heated by steam in order to cause the death of the unborn child.” This shows the prevalent method for abortion practices. From the above cited references one may articulate that abortion in the canonical texts mentioned as a karmic retributions. 

_Samkicca Jataka_ says that, those who oppress the weak and those who are guilty of abortion are reborn in the great Buddhist hell; _Mahaniraya_ there flows a great caustic river known as Vetarani and one cannot escape from its cutting water.  

This _Jataka_ refers to the karmic punishment of abortion and the seriousness of act as an offense. Apart from this it says that the early Buddhism shows the reason for seeking  

---

108 The word _Ahimsa_ comes from the desiderative form of the Sanskrit verb root ‘han’ with the negative prefix ‘a’ and its means non-killing. Though it sounds negative, _Ahimsa_ has a positive meaning. It means positive love in the form of Karuna and maitri towards all being (See footnote of Sebastian 2005, 228).


113 Vetarani river waters are bitter and sharp as razors. It is also mention that those who enter it are slashed up by sword and similar sharp weapons standing hidden along the river bank (_Sutta Nipata Commentary_, ii, 482, cited in McDermott 1990, 157).

abortion was extrametrical affairs, preventing inheritances and domestic rivalry between co-wives etc. 115 However in the contemporary Korean society, practice of abortion is increasing by the willingness of the doer and the seeker.

When Does Life Begin?

For the last few decades, ‘the question when does an individual life begin?’ has been the central issues of abortion debate. It is questionable to decide the point from where a thing is called a person and from where it is not a person. Different traditions and present scientific research describe it in their own way. The Buddhist tradition says human life begins when the fertilized egg is conceived in the mother’s womb, i.e., human life starts at conception.116 “Monks, it is at the conjunction of three things that there occurs the descent of an intermediate-being into the womb. If the parents come together in union, but it is not the mother’s proper season, and the intermediate being is not present, then there will be no conception. If the parents come together in union and it is the mother’s proper season, but the intermediate being is not present there will be no conception. But when the parents come together in unison, it is the mother’s proper season and the intermediate being is present, then on the conjunction of these three things the descent of an intermediate being will take place. Then monks, the mother for nine or ten months carry the fetus in her womb with great concern for her heavy burden.” 117 The *Mahatthanhasankhaya-sutta* says the process of fetal development and the cause and conditions are (i) intercourse must take place (union of sperm and egg) (ii) the mother’s fertile period and (iii) arrival of consciousness (*gandhabba*). “Human being means: from the mind’s first arising, from the time of consciousness becoming first manifest in a mother’s womb until the time of death, here meanwhile he/she is called a human being.” (Vinaya Pitaka, III, 73; cited in Damian 2010, 131).118 Hence Buddhism regards embryo as a human person from the very moment of conception, therefore abortion is considered as the termination of innocent human life.

Buddhism advocates a pro-life position on abortion. It argues that practice of abortion cannot be morally justified, because: it is a wrong deed. Life starts at the moment of conception and therefore destroying an early life is equal to destroying the life of a mature individual being. Pro-life acknowledges that, destroying an early human life is morally wrong. Buddhism opposes the practice of abortion on the basis of moral conduct ‘*ahimsa*’. The word *ahimsa* means non-killing or not-destroying life. Mahatma Gandhi, an exponent of ahimsa, was in love and compassion for all.119 Despite the principle of ‘*ahimsa*’, the teaching of *Karma* also makes abortion equally unacceptable. *Karma*, the action; is concerned with ethical implications of Buddha’s teachings and denotes the consequences of moral behavior.120 Buddhism have the five precepts (*pancasila*), the eight precepts (*astangasila*), the ten precepts (*dasasila*), the ten good paths of action (*dasakusalakarmapatha*) and the monastic code (*pratimoksa*) as main sets of precepts.121 Breaking these precepts may cause an unfavorable rebirth. Buddhist tradition argues that

---

117 Majjhima Nikaya, l. 256
121 Ibid
human fetus is an innocent and therefore it is wrong to kill a fetus. It is the central argument of pro-life position of abortion. Therefore, practice of abortion is an intolerable act.

**Practice of Abortion in South Korea**

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived from his life. Both the declarations show that, the right to life is inherent in a person. To save the life of a woman, to preserve a woman’s health both physical and mental, in case of rape or incest, case of fetal impairment, for economic and social reasons, and on - these seven grounds on which abortion is distinguished are permitted in the United Nations declaration, particularly in the world abortion policy 2013. In the declaration of Geneva 1948, which was adopted by the world medical association, states that ‘I will maintain the utmost respect for human life, from the time of conception’. In the light of this description we can make an attempt to understand abortion as a method to preserve life rather than a method to destroy life.

Korea was the third country after Pakistan (1953) and India (1958) to adopt an explicit population control policy in 1961. The government was convinced that without a proper population control policy it would be impossible to achieve economic development within a short period of time. In fact, from the early 1960s to the late 1990s, the Korean government encouraged women to get abortions to prevent overpopulation; however, at present the authority no longer encourages abortions nor enforces the abortion laws. A program was adopted by South Korea in 1961 to reduce the average number of child births per family and now it observes that the present birthrate in South Korea is the second lowest in the world (1.19 births per woman). Abortion is illegal under Korean criminal code 1953, except in certain compassionate circumstances. The Maternal and Child Health Law passed in 1973, set out conditions in which abortion could be performed, within 28 weeks of pregnancy ‘to save the life of mother’, ‘to preserve both physical and mental health’, ‘in case of rape or incest’, ‘in the case of fetal impairment’, etc. There are certain punishments for illegal abortions in Korea. If a woman did not qualify for one of the listed conditions, the punishment for undergoing an abortion is up to a year in prison and two million Won fines. A doctor who performed an abortion in the absence of the above conditions could be punished up to two years in prison, if there was no injury to the woman operated on. If the woman gets injured during abortion, the doctor may get imprisoned for three years. If the woman dies the doctor could be jailed up to five years. Furthermore, the doctor can lose his or her medical license

123 Ibid
128 Ibid
131 Kang, Jane. [Online October 14, 2013], (Cited, 21 July 2014 “To Abort or Not to Abort: That is the question in South Korea,” Voice in Bioethics Leave a comment, Available from: [http://voicesinbioethics.org/2013/10/14/](http://voicesinbioethics.org/2013/10/14/)
for up to seven years for performing an abortion\textsuperscript{131}; however, abortion is easily accessible in South Korea despite the legal prohibition, because a large number of physicians are willing to perform and officially reluctant to enforce the law.\textsuperscript{132} Korea has been called an ‘abortion paradise’ by some social activists and researchers and rampant abortion seems to have become a part of the accepted cultural pattern of Korea.\textsuperscript{133} In 2009, the abortion law was revised and the deadline for a legal abortion is changed from 28 weeks to 24 weeks\textsuperscript{134}, and abortion is prohibited under all circumstances after 24 weeks. Despite all these facts practice of abortion is very prevalent in South Korea. The reasons for the practices of abortion in Korea are many and complex. Lack of societal acceptance of effective contraception; Korean women use the coitus interruptus or the rhythm methods for birth control, which are generally less effective than condoms or hormonal treatment. Birth control pills have not yet achieve significant market exposure and are highly mistrusted by Koreans.  

The Koran Institute of Criminology conducted a survey in 1990 and acknowledged that ‘abortion rates among Buddhists are as high as the rest of the population of South Korea.\textsuperscript{135} Again, abortion is tantamount to killing which is against the teaching of Buddha in the very first precept.

**Buddhist understanding of Abortion**

Buddhism has pro-life position on abortion. Despite this, today we have a prochoice position due to lack of knowledge. This position mainly flourished in the western countries and from the last four decades pro-choice position becomes very popular with the rise of feminist movements by Judith Jarvis Thomson, who claims that the fetus is an innocent human being and a woman has a right to choose what happens to her body.\textsuperscript{136} Supporters of pro-choice activists believe that, women should have the right to choose whether to carry a baby or not, includes the right to end an unwanted pregnancy.\textsuperscript{137} They advocate that an unborn human being has a right to life, but this right does not entail that the child in the uterus is morally entitled to the use of the mother’s body.\textsuperscript{138} In Buddhist canonical works it is cited that an individual life starts at the very first moment of conception, where human body gradually develops along with consciousness; therefore, one is not entitled to take unborn human life.

The practice of abortion is dominant among the Buddhists and prevalent in the entire Korean society in general; for example, the Mizuko Kiyo or fetus memorial service for both spontaneous and induced abortion is widespread in Japan. Similar practice, yingling gongyang is found in contemporary Taiwan and China. In South Korea practices, sex-selective abortion is very common. Practicing abortion is illegal in Korea, China, and Taiwan, except in Japan. To deal with such moral dilemmas of pro-life and pro-choice, one may interpret the *Kalamasutta* or *Kesamuttisutta* or *Kesaputtiyasutta* to describe nature of moral actions. The Kalamas were confused as to which doctrine to accept and

\begin{itemize}
  \item Kang, Jane. [Online October 14, 2013], (Cited, 21 July 2014 “To Abort or Not to Abort: That is the question in South Korea,” Voice in Bioethics Leave a comment, Available from: \url{http://voicesinbioethics.org/2013/10/14/}.
  \item Tedesco Frank, “Abortion in Korea.” Buddhism and Abortion, ed. Keown, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 121-156.
  \item Kang, Jane. [Online October 14, 2013], (Cited, 21 July 2014 “To Abort or Not to Abort: That is the question in South Korea,” Voice in Bioethics Leave a comment, Available from: \url{http://voicesinbioethics.org/2013/10/14/}.
  \item Tedesco Frank, “Abortion in Korea.” Buddhism and Abortion, ed. Keown, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 121-156.
\end{itemize}
Buddha says, “O Kalamas, do not accept anything on mere hearsay (anussava). Do not accept anything by mere tradition (parampara). Do not accept anything on account of rumours (itikira). Do not accept anything just because it accords with your scriptures (pitaka-sampadana). Do not accept anything by mere supposition (nayahetu). Do not accept anything by mere inference (takkahetu). Do not accept anything by merely considering the appearances (akaraparivitakka). Do not accept anything merely because it agrees with your preconceived notions (ditthinijjhanakkhanti). Do not accept anything merely because it seems acceptable (bhabba-rupa). Do not accept anything thinking that the ascetic is respected by us (samaṇo me guru). But when you know for yourselves these things are immoral (akusala), these things are blameworthy (savajja), these things are censured by the wise (vinnu-garahita), these things when performed (samatta) and undertaken (samadinna), conduce to ruin (ahita) and sorrow (dukkha) then indeed you reject them. When you know for yourselves these things are moral (kusala), these things are blameless (anavajja), these things are praised by the wise (vinnuppasattha), these things when performed and undertaken, conduce to well-being (hita) and happiness (sukha) then do you live and act accordingly.”

It is not clear though, how can one know if something is moral or immoral? Buddha says, when in a moral dilemma, we should decide by ourselves. Everyone has got a basic moral intuition or the capacity to know what is good and what is bad. More clearly what is conducive to ruin (ahita) and sorrow (dukkha) is bad and what is conducive to well-being (hita) and happiness (sukha) is good. While following the basis precepts of moral conduct, one may indulge in the practice of abortion where there is an intention to achieve the best outcome, when in cases of: ‘to save the mother life’, ‘rape and incest’, ‘fetal impairment’, etc., as previously mentioned. In the case of rape, there is high possibility of pregnancy without her will and this will be the catalyst for the cause of physical/mental sufferings. To remove the mental and physical trauma one can induce an abortion. If the mother’s life is in danger by the pregnancy, one should prescribe abortion. Hence, in moral dilemmas, pertaining to abortion practices, one should follow [rationally, reflecting back upon the Kalama Sutta] the Buddhist middle-way to justify it.

**Conclusion**

Abortion is permitted in South Korea, during the seven instances mentioned above, as ethically and socially acceptable; but the prevalent practice of abortion is illegal if it is done for personal gain. ‘With abortion, you are aborting the future’, is sensible as the present abortion practice slogan, in South Korea. In central Buddhist philosophy, the practice of abortion is wrong; but, abortion may be justified on the basis of compassion when there is the motivation to save the mother’s life. Government and non-governmental anti-abortion organizations are formed on the objective to end all abortions, except for those that are needed to save the mother’s life. Abortion may be allowed where the intention is compassionate and the act achieves the best outcome for all concerned. Keown, Harvey and the Dalai Lama advocate that abortion is prohibited in the classical textual view, but should be allowed by modern-law, on the ground of compassion.

---


References:

Websites:
Online Source, [Cited 17 June 2015]. Available from:


Subordination, Repression and Coping Strategies in the Jātaka Tales

Assist. Prof. Dr Neekee Chaturvedi
Department of History and Indian Culture
University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, India

The Jātakas are a valuable resource for reconstructing social history. Even though the stories are largely intended to be moral parables, they are replete with historical details. With a broadly Buddhist orientation, they draw freely from the existing folklore. The many tales incidentally reveal various aspects of everyday lives of ordinary people. They also touch upon aspects of their relations with the elite, the repression that they had to suffer and the strategies they devised to cope with a society marked by deep differences based on caste, class and gender. These forms of repression manifested themselves through the social hierarchy of caste, the class differences between masters and slaves, and the patriarchal overtone in gender roles. The various forms of subordination, aggravated by oppressive factors of political power, patriarchal mindset and vulnerability of groups like the aged, form the focus of this study.

The Buddhist Jātakas are basically stories depicting the various previous lives of the Buddha and thus presenting a conceptual framework for the historical continuity of Buddhism. They do not discuss Buddhist philosophy in a direct manner but the lessons sought from the tales have a direct root in Buddhist ethics. To this we may safely add that the political critiquing or description of oppression, repression, resistance and conflict, which the paper seeks to discuss, are lacking a clear-cut exposition. They are rather embedded unintentionally within the main narratives that are bereft of a political context. Therefore, the effort to unravel the various forms of repression and resistance in the Jātaka tales is more an exercise in reading between the lines than arriving at a straightforward deduction. Despite the difficulties in methodology and wide possibilities of dissent, debate and argument, it is a significant area from the point of view of social history.

Although, it is extremely difficult to situate Jātakas within a limited chronological period as their composition and compilation spreads across a vast temporal expanse, yet, their influence goes far and wide. “The whole collection forms the most reliable, the most complete, and the most ancient collection of folklore, now extant in any literature in the world.”141 The Jātakas are one of the fifteen books of the Khuddaka Nikāya of the Sutta Piṭaka, and their composition can be placed between the 3rd century BCE and the 2nd century CE. The Jātaka legends occur in various forms at various places. They find frequent mention in the canonical Piṭakas.142 Jātaka scenes and even their titles are found engraved in the carvings of the Buddhist railings.143 Thus, the Jātaka legends must have always been recognized in the Buddhist literature and the bas-reliefs prove that the birth legends were widely known in the third century BCE and were then considered as part of the sacred history of the religion. On one hand, this indicates that they definitely had a considerable impact on society while on the other hand they can also be said to contain meaningful reflections on contemporary society.

141 Rhys Davids, T. W. Buddhist India, Varanasi, 1970
142 For example the Sukhavivara Jātaka and the Tittira Jātaka, (Vol. I, No. 10 and 37), are found in the Cullavagga, vii.1 and vi.6; and Khandavatta- Jātaka, Vol. II in Cullavagga, v.6; one of the minor books of the Sutta Piṭaka, the Cariya Piṭaka, consists of thirty-five Jātakas told in verse form
143 For example on the railings around the shrines of Sanchi and Amaravati and especially those of Barhut
The Pali work, entitled ‘the Jātaka’, contains 547 Jātakas or birth-stories, which are arranged in 22 Nippātas or books according to the number of verses in each story. The first one hundred and fifty stories contain only one gāthā or verse and are arranged in the first book called Ekaknipāto. The next hundred stories contain two gāthās comprise Dukanipāto and so the order continues. Each story opens with a preface called the Vidānakathā followed by the paccupannavatthu or ‘story of the present’, which relates particular circumstances in the Buddha’s life which led him to tell the birth-story and thus reveal some event in the long series of his previous existence as a bodhisatta or a being destined to attain Buddha state in atīvatthu. The kernel of the primitive tale is interpreted in the section called atthavatā. At the end, there is always given a short summary, samodhāna, where the Buddha identifies the different actors in the story in their present births at the time of his discourse. “The Jātakas themselves are of course interesting specimens of Buddhist literature; but their foremost interest to us consists in their relation to the folklore and the light which they often throw on these popular stories which illustrate so vividly the ideas and superstition of the early times of civilization…They are also full of interest as giving a vivid picture of the social life and customs of ancient India.”

The particular aspect of social history that this paper shall deal with is the various forms of repression and resistance. It is an important area to be focused upon as “…most subordinate classes throughout most of history have rarely been afforded the luxury of open, organized political activity.” The Jātaka tales have descriptions of everyday lives from different angles and they non-deliberately bring out various forms of repression that plagued the Indian society. As is the case with other folktales, the Jātakas deal with real concerns and issues of human society, even when the central characters are animals. Animals of these stories, like humans, live in an unequal world, face exploitation and manifest social struggles. The coping strategies of the weaker sections are very minutely drawn out from these stories. Very rarely do we see the marginalized groups breaking out into an open, unified, organized struggle. Their efforts do not reflect class consciousness nor are they aimed at subverting the mechanism of exploitation. They have modest intentions of what Hobbsbawm called “working the system… to their minimum disadvantage”, by employing what James C. Scott terms “weapons of the weak.” To draw out a record of such inconspicuous exploitation and subtle efforts to push set boundaries, the Jātaka tales prove to be an invaluable resource.

Scholars like Richard Fick, T. W. Rhys Davids, A. N. Bose and R. N. Mehta, in their study of the social history of the Buddha’s time, have relied heavily upon the Jātakas, B. G. Tamaskar configured geographical data from them while B. D. Chattopadhyaya drew out a list of various occupations from them. There have also been efforts to examine the relationship between the Buddhist art and the Jātakas. The studies exploring unequal relationships through the Jātakas have largely focused on slavery or the

---

150 A Social History of Early India, Pearson Longman, Delhi, 2009
royal elites.\textsuperscript{152} There have been only a few specific studies, relying solely on the \textit{Jātakas}, which deal directly with issues of subordination, exploitation, and resistance.\textsuperscript{153} Through a comprehensive literary study of the \textit{Jātakas}, the paper sets out to survey the various forms of oppression faced by the disadvantaged sections of the society. It seeks to configure factors of caste, class, gender, physical vulnerability in the various modes of repression and digs deeper to unmask the possibilities of resistance.

**Repression by Social Position: Caste and Outcaste**

The superior social position that was accrued to certain sections on the basis of caste and class spelled subordination for other sections. This may result in deliberate suppression by those in advantageous position. Repression might also evolve as a consequent reflex of the prevalent social customs. The \textit{Jātakas} afford many such examples where Brahmanas, considered a superior caste, and the Kings, attaining superior caste and class status, were accepted to exercise certain privileges over others. There are many examples of \textit{candālas}, who were at the lowest rung of the caste hierarchy, being treated unfairly. Though there are some instances where the \textit{candālas} exposed the injustice of the treatment meted out to them but these meager efforts offer little solace. The community has variously been regarded as a non-aryan tribal group or a mixed caste by the scholars.\textsuperscript{154} In the contemporary social milieu, they faced extreme abhorrence under the pretext of ritual purity.

In the \textit{Setaketu-Jātaka}\textsuperscript{155}, a \textit{candāla} is shown subverting the Brahmanical notion of pollution. A well-known teacher had a Brahmana student who thought a great deal of his high caste. One day, the student happened to come near a \textit{candāla}. The Brahmana was horrified at the thought of the wind touching \textit{candāla}’s body and then strike him, thereby polluting him. He therefore, ordered the \textit{candāla} to move to the leeward side of the road so that he did not stand in the wind’s path. He himself moved to the windward side. However, the \textit{candāla} did not oblige. He stood his ground on the windward side of the Brahmana and said that he would obey the Brahmana only if the latter could answer his questions, which the Brahmana was unable to do. As a result, he had to put up with public humiliation at the hands of the \textit{candāla}.

In the \textit{Citta-Sambuddha Jātaka}, two \textit{candāla} friends feel ashamed when two girls wash their eyes with perfumed water after seeing them. Their humiliation is worsened by a public beating for coming in the sight of the maidens. They disguise themselves as Brahmanas and go to a university for education but get ultimately exposed and are greatly humiliated.\textsuperscript{16} Their caste is revealed through the words that they blurt out when they gobble a mouthful of hot food. It is indicated at many places that this section had its own dialect.


\textsuperscript{155} \textit{Jātaka}, Vol. III, No. 377

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., Vol. IV, No. 498
The language and customs were derided upon and derogatory connotations were attached to terms like duṭṭhacandāla or mahācandāla. The social exclusion of the candālas was made even more severe by spatial and physical restrictions. It appears that they lived in the outskirts of the cities called bahinagare or candālagāme. Their appearance was such that they stood apart. There was an injunction for them to be easily recognizable when they entered the city. Needless to add such practices were followed to facilitate easy avoidance of any kind of mingling or contact. It comes as a mild surprise that they were not completely banished from the society but perhaps their association with certain professions ensured them some sort of societal contact. They were assigned the ‘impure’ task of removing and burying dead bodies. They also mingled with the animals and developed unconventional skills. At one place, they are called konda damak, trainer of mongoose and in another part of the text, the term candālavamsadhopana refers to their acrobatic dexterity. They also cleaned the streets. Their status seemed elevated when they participate in tasks like collecting and removing wilted flowers from the palaces and temples. The rise on the social ladder reached a high pinnacle when they were portrayed as spiritual leaders to be respected when they entered sanyāsa. The Buddhist texts attempted to defy the monopoly of knowledge by placing it in the hands of the marginalized. A Brahmin had to lose all the tantric powers as he did not acknowledge his candāla teacher to evade disrepute. Dismissing them as exceptions rather than the norm, R. S. Sharma states, “Only occasionally the Buddhist texts show some lurking sympathy for the lower order.”

The Buddha himself is born as a candāla in the Satadhamma Jātaka. He was travelling with a Brahmana who was not carrying food. As a bodhisatta the Buddha does not offer him food due to caste restrictions. The Brahmana youth, in the grip of hunger pangs, satiates himself with the leavings of the co-traveler. Tormented by a guilt-ridden conscience of trespassing food restrictions, he commits suicide. Food was considered inedible if a candāla so much as sighted it, and if such food is consumed even unknowingly, it resulted in social ex-communication. Such a fate befell sixteen hundred Brahmanas who tasted the water used for cooking rice by a candāla. The Brahmanas were to immediately lose their caste in such instance. The candālas resorted to gain knowledge to gain respect but did not have such outlets. Thus, they faced social repression through neglect, arduous, unpleasant task, disrespect and exclusion. Calling someone akin to candālas, candālasadisso, was an expression of ultimate rejection. Though a bodhisatta could take birth as a candāla, he earned praise for adhering to caste rules by taking care not to ‘defile’ a Brahman by offering him food.

156 Jātaka, Vol. IV, No. 392, 397; Anguttara Nikāya, I. 107, 162, II.85, Vinaya, IV. 6, Majjhima Nikāya, II.152; Samyutta Nikāya, V.168
157 Jātaka, Vol. IV, No. 202
158 Ibid., Vol. IV, No. 376
159 Ibid., Vol. IV, No. 379
160 Ibid., Vol. III. 410
161 Ibid., Vol. IV, No. 389
162 Ibid., Vol. IV, No. 390
163 Ibid., Vol. IV, No. 390
164 Ibid., Vol.III. No. 195
165 Ibid., Vol. IV, No. 390, 401
166 Ibid., Vol. IV. No. 200
167 Jātaka, Vol. II, No. 179
168 Ibid., Vol. IV. No. 390
169 Ibid., Vol. IV, No. 388
170 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 152


Ibid., Vol. II, No. 179
Social and Economic Inequality: Masters and Slaves

Slaves were not entitled to any rights according to the Jātakas. In fact, that they can be discarded at will is used as a simile in Kimchhinda Jātaka, while describing a hapless situation of destitution, “As...they throw the outworn slave away.” The slaves were devoid of economic power and social status. They were completely dependent on their masters. Their circumstances led not only to economic exploitation but their class position also pushed them to the lowest rung of social prestige. The Pali term for slaves, dāsa, is used as an insult at many places. The Nanda Jātaka identified the cause of harsh speech of a servant to be standing in a place where Nanda had buried the treasure, as he was a lowborn slave. As the slaves were shouldering the burdens of housekeeping, their close proximity to the household was ensured. Not only were they able to ward off social banishment, the general tenor suggests a humane treatment towards them.

Although it was enjoined upon the masters to mete out good treatment to the slaves and servants and harshness was not approved of, sometimes the masters beat up the servants. The Vessantara Jātaka gives a heart-wrenching account of a Brahmana’s cruelty towards his male and female slaves. Although, some scholars say that even though cruel masters existed, they were an exception and not the norm. In this light, such descriptions must be considered exaggerated. The slaves could also be freed by payment of a penalty. A Brahmana gahapati freed all his slaves when he was ordained into the Buddhist order. There are also examples in the Katāhaka Jātaka and the Kalanduka Jātaka, when the slaves had acquired some education and have risen above their station. Their arrogance was not to be tolerated. Either they remained in disguise but were shown their place or were recaptured. Sometimes the masters beat up the servants but not always did they meekly accept such ill-treatment. Finding a discreet opportunity in the Takkha Jātaka, a cruel daughter in a household, who used to revile and beat servants, was thrown into the river by them. Although the slave girls or the dāsis shared the misfortune of slave-hood, there seem to be even more restrictions on them on account of their gender. A large chunk of the burden of household chores falls on their shoulders. Sometimes they are assigned the pleasant tasks of taking care of the jewellery, but arduous tasks like pounding the rice comprise a more regular fare. In the Silavimāṃsā Jātaka, a slave girl Pingala could get some sleep only after she had bathed the feet of her master and his family, and when they had lain down to rest. There are many conspicuous omissions like slave girls do not attain a higher station on the basis of their own capability. The only available path of freedom lay in marrying into a higher class. In the Durjana Jātaka, a person’s meekness was described with a slave girl as a prevalent simile, “On days when she did wrong, she was as meek as a slave girl bought for hundred pieces…”

171 Ibid., Vol. III, No. 409, p. 234
172 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 200, 223; Vol. III, No. 343, 47
173 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 39
174 Singh, Madan Mohan, Buddhakalin Samaj aur Dharma, Bihar Hindi Granth Akademi, Patna, 2002, p.34
175 Jātaka Vol. VI, No. 547
176 Ibid., Vol. V, No. 532
177 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 125 & 127
178 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 125
179 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 127
180 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 156
181 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 92
182 Ibid., Vol. III, o. 330
183 Ibid., Vol. I, No. 64, p. 158
Political Power: State, Kings and Officials

Buddhism as a religion did not approve of politics as a noble profession but like all religions it betrayed a political dimension. In fact, “…little attention has been paid to this crucial aspect of Buddhism… It has also played a substantial role in the formation of specific states as well as in less formal ways of interpreting and informing social and political processes.” Instead of attempting a critique of Buddhist political ethics, Jātakas are helpful in understanding the political environment. The political structure was in the formative state. “Until shortly before the Common Era, the very last one percent of human history, the social landscape consisted of elementary, self-governing, kinship units that might occasionally, co-operate in hunting, skirmishing, trading etc. It did not contain anything one might call a state.” Therefore, the imposition of state authority could anyway lead to a semblance of oppression to a populace accustomed to living without state strictures.

The political climate depicted in these tales shows a dominant monarchical bias. The kings and their officials wielded a lot of power that emanated from political authority. Though the rulers were frequently admonished for sloth and mis-governance, there were many instances of their atrocities over their subjects. The whims of the rulers were not much of an exception and caused a lot of misery to the subjects. The Mahāpingala Jātaka enumerated the various modes of tortures wielded by a king. The common people were “crushed like sugarcane in the mill” by heavy taxation, fines, many mutilations and robberies. Lack of compassion in the ruler was identified as the chief cause of state-based oppression. Such rulers were cruel even in the personal realm causing misery to wives, sons and daughters. He was unkind to the courtiers and even the ascetics could not escape his misplaced wrath. The story concludes: “… a wicked king can be a nuisance, like a speck of dust in the eye or a thorn in the heel.”

It was well within the powers of the rulers to cast uninvited, undeserving misery upon his subjects. A king, in pursuance of a goat thief, burnt homes seven times in an entire village in which the thief was in hiding, causing great hardship to other innocent villagers. In another tale, the king’s ingratitude is brought out. On a visit by a person who had done him a great favor in an hour of need, the king recoiled at the thought of repaying him or other people knowing about it. He ordered him to be flogged on every street and to be ultimately executed. Such a king was disrespected and in this particular case was not only overthrown but was even slain by the ignignant nobles, brahmanas and people of all classes. Sometimes the subjects rejoiced when an oppressive king died. In an instance, people were astonished to see a porter mourn the death of his tyrannical master. He recounted the daily ignominy he faced when the king struck hard, hammer-like blows on his head whenever he passed. He was lamenting the fact that such an evil king might come back to the earth in another birth.

The cruelest example is mentioned in the Dhonasākha- Jātaka. In its introduction a description of the violent tyranny of a prince has been given. The prince summoned a very skillful artisan, and got him to build him a palace unsurpassed in magnificence and splendor. To avoid the replication of his master piece, he got the eyes of

---

183 Harris, Ian (ed.), *Buddhism, Power and Political Order*, Introduction, Routledge, New York, p. 18
185 Jātaka Vol. III, No. 313
186 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 240
188 Jātaka Vol. I, No. 73
189 Ibid., Vol. II, No. 240
190 Ibid., Vol. III, No. 353
191 Culladhammapāla Jātaka, Vol. III, No. 358
the artisan plucked out. Another king became jealous of his queen’s affection towards the child.\textsuperscript{54} He ordered the child to be mutilated and killed. In spite of the queen pleading to spare the child, the king ordered the infants body to be swirled on the point of the dagger.

Sometimes there were other non-whimsical, material temptations that led those in power to go astray. The officials embezzled in public money very often. The \textit{Kharassara Jātaka} recounts the misdeeds of a village headman, who incited robbers to carry off the taxes collected for the king on the condition that they give him half the loot. “He gave the robbers time to drive and slay the cattle and burn the houses.”\textsuperscript{192} Another judiciary official was greatly resented for giving false judgments after taking bribes.\textsuperscript{193} In any case, the ordinary people did not seem to be in a position to pose a threat to the state or garner effective opposition, thus, rendering the state machinery an effective apparatus for repression.

**The Vulnerable Sections: The Aged and the Animals**

The physical challenge and limitations emerge with advancing age and are directly proportionate to vulnerability in the society. With physical limitations, economic role and power of the aged also diminishes. Abuse has a significant effect on the physical and mental well-being of any individual but older adults are more prone to it due to the lack of physical strength vis-a-vis their younger counterparts. \textit{Jarā} or old age is identified as a state of being elderly (\textit{vuddha}), worn out (\textit{mahallaka}), far gone in years (\textit{addhagata}), approaching the end (\textit{vayo anuppatta})\textsuperscript{58} and the \textit{Tipiṭaka} describe it as characterized by ‘brokenness of teeth, greyness of hair, wrinkling of skin, decline of vigor and failing of the faculties.’\textsuperscript{195} The Buddha taught the Dhamma for the overcoming of misery (\textit{dukkha}) and because old age is one of the manifestations of suffering, he had much to say on this subject.\textsuperscript{195} Although the general tenor of the \textit{Jātakas} shows respect for the elderly yet specific episodes show they could be ill-treated. Vulnerability gets magnified by the dependent status and lesser visibility of the old. There are numerous \textit{Jātaka} stories of kings deciding to renounce the world at the appearance of the first grey hair.\textsuperscript{196} The pretext is usually of spiritual exertion resulting into retiring from mainstream worldly activities with the societal expectation to fade into oblivion.

Most of these episodes occur in a domestic context but at times seem to have been fuelled by ambition. The \textit{Somamanda Jātaka}\textsuperscript{197} mentions two brothers who took care of their aged parents. The younger brother deviously supplied them with unripe fruits. This greatly angered the elder brother when he discovered the wrongdoing. He rebuked him and later the younger brother took good care of the parents. The relationship between a daughter-in-law and mother-in-law involved more nuances than this story.\textsuperscript{198} The aged mother-in-law was served with food that was either too hot or too cold and similar was the state of her bath water. To add insult to injury, the old lady was accused of needless complaining. Her bed was deliberately infested with fleas and false allegations on her in front of her son were some of the tactics used to denigrate the old woman. At one point, the son had even turned out the old mother but later took her back and tended to her. In a similar incident of the young finding it cumbersome to attend to the elderly, a son plans to

\textsuperscript{192} \textit{Jātaka}, Vol. I, No. 79
\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Kimchanda Jātaka}, Vol. V, No. 511
\textsuperscript{194} \textit{Anguttara Nikāya}, I. 68
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Samyutta Nikāya}, II.2
\textsuperscript{195} \textit{Guide to Buddhism A-Z}, \url{http://buddhisma2z.com/content.php?id=291} last accessed on 25-13-2015
\textsuperscript{197} Vol. V, No. 532
\textsuperscript{198} \textit{Kaccani Jātaka}, Vol. III, No. 417
murder his own father.\textsuperscript{199} He is overheard by his child, who asks him if he should make a similar plan about his father. This produces remorse in the heart of the plotting son. He takes his father back and resolves to take care of him. Political ambition has been a goading factor for many treacherous acts. A prince, who was eager to succeed to the throne, proposes to murder his father.\textsuperscript{200}

The vulnerability owing to age was particularly manifest in weaker sections as mentioned earlier in the case of slaves. Sometimes cruel treatment was meted out to the animals too. The \textit{Dubbalkathā Jātaka} describes the constant dread that accompanied an elephant who had escaped from his trainer’s goad.\textsuperscript{65} The \textit{Dummedha Jātaka} unravels the evil designs of a conspiring king jealous of his elephant. He sought to make it fall in a precipice.\textsuperscript{201} Although numerous \textit{Jātas}\textsuperscript{202} show a great amount of love for the animals yet old age brought difficulties for them as well. The animals were also likely to be discarded and left without support, once they were past their prime and could no longer be of the same utility. An elephant laments ruefully being cast away by the king due to advancing age.\textsuperscript{203} Although the stories deal with animals, they can also be expressions of human concerns.

**Prejudices against Women**

The \textit{Jātaka} tales are replete with examples to illustrate the women as innately adulterous.\textsuperscript{204} Their partners, the men, without whose participation, it is difficult to commit adultery, are more often than not absolved completely of any guilt by according the status of a temptress to the woman. In the \textit{Bandhanmokkha Jātaka}\textsuperscript{205}, the queen extracted a promise of fidelity from the king by “unceasing importunity”. When the king is away at the battle, she committed debauchery with each messenger that the king sends her except the last one. When the king comes to know about her dalliances, he is refrained from punishing her or any of the messengers with the words, “…the men are not to blame; for they were constrained by the queen… and as far as the queen is concerned, she is not to blame, for the passions of women are insatiate, and she does not but act according to her inborn nature.” These ideas are reflective of the general idea about the essential nature of women in the Pali canonical literature and are also explicitly described in the \textit{Mahābhārata}. The \textit{Anuśāsana Parva} lucidly elaborates the general traits of women. “Women are the source of all evils. They are fickle-minded and selfish. They are opportunists; they try to avail every chance for fulfillment of their own desire. They can forsake all things for gratifications of their evil wishes.”\textsuperscript{206} The religious significance of the \textit{Jātakas} also needs to be factored in for understanding their wider impact on the position of women in the society. “The general subordination of women assumed particularly severe form in India through powerful instrument of religious traditions which have shaped social practices.”\textsuperscript{207}

Women were often shown to resort to trickery and successfully, deceitfully manipulating the men who loved them. A fair wife deviously managed to not only escape

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{199} \textit{Takkala Jātaka}, Vol. IV, No. 446
  \item \textsuperscript{200} \textit{Samkicca-Jātaka}, Vol. V, No. 530
  \item \textsuperscript{65} \textit{Jātaka}, Vol. I, No. 105
  \item \textsuperscript{201} \textit{Ibid.}, Vol. I, No. 22
  \item \textsuperscript{202} e.g. No. 356, 388, 410 etc
  \item \textsuperscript{203} \textit{Dalhadhamma Jātaka}, Vol. III. No. 409
  \item \textsuperscript{204} \textit{Gahapati Jātaka}, Vol. II. , No. 199; \textit{Sattabhastā Jātaka}, Vol. IV, No. 402
  \item \textsuperscript{205} \textit{Bandhanmokkha Jātaka}, Vol. I. No. 120
  \item \textsuperscript{206} \textit{Mahābhārata}, IX.75-79
  \item \textsuperscript{207} Chakravarti, Uma, “Conceptualising Brahminical Patriarchy in Early India: Gender, Caste, Class and State”, \textit{Economic and Political Weekly}, Vol. 28, No. 4, April, 1993, pp. 579-585
\end{itemize}
the fire ordeal but also connived to be with her lover while another resorted to
intoxicating her lover to have her way. It was stated in one of the stories that: “no woman
is ever faithful to one man alone. What crime will they not commit; and then, to deceive
their husbands, what paths they will not take. They are utterly false-hearted.”

Though women were generally assumed to be devious, some Jātakas sympathize
with wronged women too. There was once a queen taken privately by a king. She was
asked not to contact him if she bears a daughter and gave her a royal signet to be spent on
her upbringing. The strong bias for male progeny is more than obvious. In case, she bore
a female child, the responsibility of rearing the child would have been solely hers. Anyway,
she begot a son but when she came to his palace, the king denied her paternity claims to
avoid public shame. The matter was resolved much later by the efforts of the young son.
Childlessness was a stigma and married women not bearing children were sometimes not
shown proper respect. The life of widows also appears to be wrought with difficulties.
She faced economic hardships, toiled about miserably. Even her children suffered from
unfair treatment. She had to brave unkind words even if she lived in a prosperous
household.

Yet, when most of the stories were exhorting men to keep women at bay in order
to escape their evil snares, there is one heartwarming episode that rebukes the ungrateful
husband in no uncertain terms and in one case even exhorted the wife to leave a
thankless husband. In the Godha Jātaka, the queen revealed the utter selfishness of the
king to which the Bodhisatta said, “Lady, ever since the time when your husband ceased
to love you, why do you go on living her, making unpleasantness for both?”, and he
repeated two stanzas:

To one that honors thee, due honor show With
full requital of good service done:
No kindness on illiberal folk bestow,
Nor those affect that would thy presence shun.
Forsake the wretch who has forsaken thee,
And love not one who has for thee no love,
E’en as a bird forsakes a barren tree,
And seeks a home in some far distant grove…

This was quite a revolutionary counsel to “chaje chajantam vanatham na kavirā,
apetacittena na sambhajeyya” and needs to be taken note of. Although, the queen did not
have to resort to such drastic measures and was taken back by the king after realizing his
folly.

I.B. Horner feels that Pali literature misrepresents an egalitarian attitude of the
Buddhist times because of misogynistic editors. Many scholars like Nancy S. Barnes and Rita Gross agree with her but the bias may not be Buddhist but of the society at large.

It is pertinent to note that “the bodhisatta in his many previous reincarnations never

208 Andabhūta Jātaka, Vol. I, No. 62
209 Takka Jātaka, Vol. I, No. 63
210 Kattabari Jātaka, Vol. I, No. 7
212 Vessantara Jātaka, Vol. VI, No. 547
213 Puta-Bhatta Jātaka, Vol. II, No. 223
79 Jātaka, Vol. III, No. 333
214 Women under Primitive Buddhism: Laywomen and almswomen, Motilal Banarassidas, Delhi, 1975, p. 193
appeared as a female, be it human or animal."216 Even as a tree spirit or a celestial being, the form is invariably masculine. Jones writes that this is no accident becomes clear on a closer scrutiny of animal births.217 “Animals held to be especially sacred in the Hindu literature, like the elephant and the monkey, are well represented... The most sacred animal of all, however, is conspicuous by its absence.” The non-appearance of the bodhisatta as a cow even once is quite possibly owing to a lack of gender sensitivity. The Culla-Palobhana Jātaka regales in the fact that the bodhisatta was repulsed by women even as an infant.85

**Protest, Resistance and Coping Strategies**

Legal redressal was not always an option to combat the drudgery of the quotidian. It could only be resorted to under extraordinary circumstances, only when the state machinery was not averse to the complaint or more importantly, not a deliberate participant in the infliction. Robbery was very common. Highways were known to be insecure and the caravans of the merchants were highly prone to be stolen. These cases of robbery took place in forests, providing amenable hide-outs from the state machinery. The other issue that was not likely to garner sympathy from the king was taxation. The unique strategy that the villagers employed was to abandon the villages completely in a very short span of time and flee to the frontiers where tax collection was not easy.218 These were relatively powerless people who made geographical maneuvers escape state-centric conditions. Small, moated and walled centers together with their tributary villages wielded a hierarchy and control and the peripheral frontiers provided a subtle mode of challenging it. Animals like humans are described devising coping strategies unique to the weak. To get the better of their superiors they sometimes resort to flattery219, as a crow is able to manipulate a pigeon into facilitating access to assorted culinary samples through hyperbolic praise. Feigning illness and resorting to other pretenses to avoid work was also very common.88 At other times they get the better of the stronger by devices of the cunning. A boar was once challenged by a lion for a physical contest. Realizing himself to be at a disadvantage, he was frantically searching for a way out. His friends advised him to smear himself with dung. When the lion found him in such a foul state, he refused to take on a fight with him.

It is important to seek the forms of resistance reflected in the Jātakas. All historical societies had a persistence of exploitative relationships. Efforts to resist them, or counter them reflect a unique construction of social consciousness with different levels of awareness, solidarity and at many places also lack of either. It is a useful exercise to unravel the inroads commoners made into the seemingly straightforward social facts through subtle resistance that ranged from threat of migration, diffidence, disobedience, stubbornness, studied carelessness, or spreading a bad word to malign reputation. Many tales enjoin upon the king to be benevolent and generous towards his subjects lest the forces of cosmos shall turn against him and he shall lose his kingdom. There is also the tool of religious sanction to invoke a benevolent attitude of the powerful class, which is very interesting because, it is the same tool which was used to perpetuate the subordination of the marginalized, specifically through caste system.

---

216 Rudolf, Helga, *op. cit.*, p. 193
218 “gāmathāne gāmanāma nahuṃ” in Godha Jātaka
219 Kapota-Jātaka, Vol. I, No. 42
There were not many options with the weaker social classes. Sometimes they took complaints to the king\textsuperscript{220} but mostly they seem to have resorted to unique and innovative ways of redressal on a case by case basis. The fall of the reputation of the king, malicious gossips about the powerful, resorting to concealing lower status, garnering public support, fleeing the villages to evade payment of exorbitant taxes are some of the strategies that seem to have emerged to cope with the repression by the powerful. “…the binary division between resistance and non-resistance is an unusual one. The existence of those who seem not to rebel is a warren of minute, individual autonomous tactics and strategies which counter and inflict the visible facts of overall domination and whose purposes and calculations and desires and chaos resist any simple division into the political and the apolitical.”\textsuperscript{221} There seems to be no class consciousness but a fair idea of what is just and unjust even though the contemporary political climate may not seem to be conducive to these ideas. Hence, there were novel ways of subtlety, almost entirely avoiding open, revolutionary opposition and yet successful in making dents in the unjust system and making life less miserable. “The stubborn, persistent and irreducible forms of resistance… represent the truly durable weapons.”\textsuperscript{91} The Jātaka tales also reflect the cracks in the social norms through the various forms of resistance employed by the weak. The patient, silent struggles assiduously carried out by these seemingly passive agents provided the necessary breathing spaces within the oppressive structures of social, political and economic inequalities.

\textbf{Note:} All the references to the Jātaka stories are from the six volumes of translation, edited by E. B. Cowell, \textit{The Jātakas}, Motilal Banarssidas, Delhi, 1990
The Buddha’s Jatakas and Karl Marx’s Volumes on Capital – Towards an authentic perspective of Buddhist Economics for ASEAN.

Dr. Dion Peoples
Manager, International Association of Buddhist Universities
Bangkok, Thailand

Introduction:
In December of 2015, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) came into existence as an official running entity which will run the economics of the various nations in Southeast Asia. Many of the countries in the region are, to various extents, nations that subscribe to Buddhism as the religious ideology of the nation. Many Buddhists may have questions about how Buddhism responds to ASEAN or the AEC; therefore, this article responds to the AEC and the fundamentals of ASEAN, through looking at the old-world stories of the Buddha and the words of Karl Marx, because many of the nations, again, are Buddhist and have a background in Marxism or socialism. I am fully aware of Buddhism and Marxism, as created, has nothing to do with ASEAN, but there are hundreds or thousands of people with influence, who adhere to and propagate the ideology – so

---

220 No. 12, 220 etc. (Nigrodhamiga Jātaka; Dhammadhaja Jātaka)
221 Colin Gordon(ed.) in Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge, Pantheon Books, New York, 1980, Afterword
91 Scott, James C., op. cit., 1985, p. 30
therefore the link is relevant still, in this era of new ideas. The slogan exists: stand on the shoulders of the giants – therefore, all six volumes of the Jataka stories, all three volumes of Karl Marx’s Capital, and the website for ASEAN were examined for the research material for this article. Selections for discussion are based on Jatakas that may have some aspect of economics discussed within it, and then some corresponding criteria from Capital is used to discuss the issue, then a level of independent analysis is given, and finally a reassessment was done after examining the website of ASEAN (and its various internal webpages).

The Jatakas, Capital, and Elaborations:

Even though the world has largely moved away from Marxian economic principles, the various interpretations of the influence of communism/socialism are still present and respected for the ethical principles that are paramount in the operating principles of ideology that runs counter to the existing capitalist doctrine that is exploiting and devastating the planet. Marxism, in some ideological shade, does have similarities with Buddhism, or Buddhist principles. A look is taken from Karl Marx’s extensive, voluminous-work, Capital, with my interjections in brackets:

“Capitalist production collects the population together in great centers [such as Bangkok, through this centralization process, and the concentration of bureaucratic power] and causes the urban population to achieve an ever-growing preponderance. [More and more people move into the urban-center for the benefits that this collection of enterprises can bring to a capital-city.] This has two results. On the one hand it concentrates the historical motive of power of society [in the case of Bangkok, Siam/Thailand was founded on the basis of being an absolute-monarchy and later evolved into a constitutional-monarchy]; on the other hand it disturbs the metabolic interaction between man and the earth [people are no longer farmers or no longer operate and dwell in some self-sufficient manner: no longer grow their own food or no longer grow what is needed to sustain an independent life/lifestyle, instead the person is drawn into a scenario where alliances are needed to get aspects of what is needed to life and proceed in a decent way for one’s quality of life], i.e. it prevents the return to the soil [people lose their indigenous ways of life and the former connection one had with the earth, as agriculturalists] of its constituent elements consumed by man in the form of food and clothing; hence it hinders the operation of the eternal natural condition for the lasting fertility of the soil. Thus it destroys at the same time the physical health of the urban worker and the intellectual life of the rural worker. But by destroying the circumstances surrounding that metabolism, which originated in a merely natural and spontaneous fashion, it compels its systematic restoration as a regulative law of social production and in a form adequate to the full development of the human race. …Capitalist production therefore, only develops the techniques and the degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth – the soil and the worker.” (CVI, pp. 637-638)

Capitalism has deeply infected the lives of nearlyeveryone across the globe, including Buddhists. Buddhism, as a relic or preserver of traditional ways, has old-world stories to assist in our comprehension of capital.

The Appaṇṇaka-Jātaka recognizes that merchants traveled widely, to the East and West, in large caravans, often featuring around 500 carts, driven by oxen:

222 https://c2.staticflickr.com/8/7599/17027861102_7ebe53baa9.jpg - this photo is of a caravan from Cambodia, but it is likely to have resembled the circumstances in ancient-India.
Caravans could not be too large, because it would be difficult to find fuel (wood for fires), water, food, etc., along the way to their destination – for the men and grasses for the animals.²²³ The Appaṇṇaka-Jātaka suggests that merchants would debate over which crew would depart first, and the determination was made that a wise merchant would wait six weeks after the foolish merchant departed.

Someone might think that the first to depart could be the first to engage into the exchange of goods into a new marketplace, but the Buddha knew, as we see in these stories, that there is more to consider. He mentioned that a wiser merchant could go to his distant destination and barter the stock for anything needed at twice or three times the value, and come back to his own city without losing a single man out of all his company.²²⁴ How is this possible? How could the merchant who departed later gain advantages?

The Appaṇṇaka-Jātaka presents a scenario where the merchant seeking a new market exploits the mistake of his predecessor, in some opportunist-fashion. The merchant who travels first makes many mistakes along the way when forging ahead into new territories. The merchant moving along first must make new roads into the new area, and along the way the ox (load-carrying animals) eat up any of the grasses, old and new, that grow along the route, and the personnel will have their choices of any herbs that can go into their curries. Any water that can be consumed for quenching thirst is undisturbed. The merchant can fix the price of his stock as he chooses when bartering.²²⁵ This sounds good. He is a trailblazer, bringing new ideas into new locations and taking advantage of the new situation that is presenting itself. Workers do have aspirations and rights, and Marx spoke about this, propagating: “During part of the day the vital force must rest, sleep; during another part the man has to satisfy other physical needs, to feed, wash, and clothe himself. Besides these purely physical limitations, the extension of the working day encounters moral obstacles. The worker needs time in which to satisfy his intellectual and social requirements, and the extent and the number of these requirements is conditioned by the general level of civilization. The length of the working day therefore fluctuates within boundaries both physical and social. But these limiting conditions are of a very elastic nature, and allow a tremendous amount of latitude. …The capitalist has bought the labor power at its daily value. The use-value of the labor power belongs to him throughout one working day. He has thus acquired the right to make the worker work for him during one day.” (CVI, pp. 341-342) “The use of my daily labor power therefore belongs to you. But by means of the price you pay for it every day, I must be able to reproduce it every day, thus allowing myself to sell it again. Apart from natural

²²³ Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), p. 4
²²⁴ Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), p. 8
²²⁵ Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), p. 4
deterioration through age, etc., I must be able to work tomorrow with the same normal amount of strength, health and freshness as today. You are constantly preaching to me the gospel of saving and abstinence. Very well! Like a sensible, thrifty owner of property I will husband my sole-wealth, my labor power, and abstain from wasting it foolishly. Every day I will spend, set in motion, transfer into labor, only as much of it as is compatible with its normal duration and healthy development. …like every other seller, I demand the value of my commodity.” (CVI, p. 343)

How, now, are workers valued? The Buddha has an alternative perspective: this merchant is considered by the Buddha to be foolish; but how so? The wise merchant waits for the other merchant to go first, because his large caravan can travel more easily over the now-leveled rough spots along the route forged by the first merchant – making his way easier. His load-carrying animals will eat grasses that have regrown and are fresher, and his animals and personnel can drink from the wells that have been dug out in places where there is no water, taking advantage of the labor and any ingenuity from the first merchant. Again, he would have good fresh herbs for their curries, and could actually barter over the already fixed price – in order to get advantages over the previous venture.

It was from advantages like this, found in the Appāṇṇaka-Jātaka which suggests that Anathapindika (the famous merchant-capitalist, or treasurer) was able to acquire material wealth [possessing a store of flower-garlands, perfumes and unguents, oil, honey, molasses, cloths and cloaks], and could offer such gifts to the Buddhist Sangha.226 Here we have a presentation of giving, giving from a person who had gained so much through his enterprises that he could actually give from his store, to gain merit through offerings to the Sangha.

Karl Marx suggests: “All directly social or communal labor on a large scale [we are considering that an ox-caravan of 500 is a large-scale merchant/trade operation] requires, to a greater or lesser degree, a directing authority [either the King directing Anathapindika, or Anathapindika acting independently according to his intellect], in order to secure the harmonious co-operation of the activities of individuals [his staff and animals traveling or the market-capitalist that is also engaging into trade with Anathapindika], and to perform the general functions that have their origin in the motion of the total productive organism [market-trade], as distinguished from the motion of its separate organs [transportation of material-goods via ox-carts]. A single viola player is his own conductor [Anathapindika is his own merchant-business owner/capitalist]; an orchestra requires a separate one. The work of [Anathapindika would include] directing, superintending and adjusting [so that his work-guidance] becomes one of the function of capital [guiding his capital-goods], from the moment that labor under capital’s control [his ox-carts] becomes cooperative [Anathapindika must work with the drivers of the ox-carts to ensure that their needs are met or cared for, while traveling along towards their route and in their return visit. Their itinerary must be accounted for to ensure that their subsistence is met while traveling under the banner of the capitalist]. As a specific function of capital, the directing function [Anathapindika’s guidance] acquires its own special characteristics.” (CVI, p. 449) “Simple cooperation has always been and continues to be the predominant form of those branches of production in which capital operates on a large scale but the division of labor and machinery play only an insignificant part. Cooperation remains the fundamental form of the capitalist mode of production, although in its simple shape it continues to appear as one particular form alongside the more developed ones.” (CVI, p. 454) Anathapindika, as the merchant-capitalist, needed farmers to provide the agricultural-

226 Society, 2004), p. 1
goods, as sellers of their product to the merchant, who would then trade these goods with a distant-partner in mercantilism.

The economic activity in the Akatannu-Jataka suggests that there was a rival merchant in the border-region who was on friendly terms with Anathapindika [this friend was the operative-partner in mercantilism]. He, likewise, loaded 500 carts with local produce and with orders to travel to Anathapindika, would barter for goods for their value, and bring back the received goods in exchange. Similarly, Anathapindika did the same, except that these merchants were disrespected, somewhere along trade-route. The alleged friendly merchant sent another caravan, but this caravan was robbed by Anathapindika’s men, as revenge for the previous disrespect, leaving them shirtless and with no wheels and no oxen on their carts. They had to drag their platforms back to the village of origin in disgrace for violating principles of mercantilism. The jataka suggests that the friendly yet disrespectful/ungrateful merchant was to blame for the original disrespect, and not by Anathapindika’s men.227

To this point, Karl Marx suggests: “As far as the many variations in the exploitation of labor [farmers are probably not paid until the ox-drivers return from their distant engagement, and Anathapindika is not repaid either until the caravan returns and he withdraws his profits before paying or reimbursing the ex-drivers and farmers] between different spheres of production [the mercantilism of Anathapindika and the produce-selling farmers] are concerned, Adam Smith has already shown fully enough how they cancel one another out through all kinds of compensations, either real or accepted by prejudice, and how therefore they need not be taken into account in investigating the general conditions, as they are only apparent and evanescent.” (CVIII, p. 241) This is clear, in the simple level or economic-engagements. Marx continues to emphasize: “The capitalist mode of appropriation [acquiring the produce], which springs from the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property [the produce, when leaving the possessing of the farmer, then becomes the property of Anathapindika]. This is the first negation of individual private property [the farmer parting ways with the fruits of his labor], as founded on the labor of its proprietor [Anathapindika]. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a natural process, its own negation. This is the negation of the negation. It does not re-establish private property, but it does indeed establish individual property on the basis of the achievement of the capitalist era: namely co-operation and the possession in common of the land and the means of production produced by the labor itself.”(CVI, p. 929) One aspect that needs to be illuminated towards moving forward is what becomes of the produce that is acquired before it is being produced (manufactured) into a needed product? There is little discussion in the Jatakas pertaining to the production-processes, such as the actual weaving processes of any acquired cotton into linen, or the production and storage of fruit into juices, and any preservation of meats for future consumption when times dictate scarcity. Marx is also demonstrating that the capitalist is taking interest in the farmer’s ability to produce the crop, since the production process cannot re-create the crop (the duty of the farmer) – so the capitalist/merchant, interested in the best product, also decides to cooperate with the farmer – and a new relationship is created and shareholders eventually emerge.

Additionally, the Khandiraṅgāra-Jātaka discusses how the rich treasurer Anathapindika often gave gifts to the Sangha, but was warned by a spirit that said he is becoming heedless of his own future, and how drawing upon [the wealth of] his [stored]

resources only enriches the Buddha [and the Sangha, by extension] – since he is no longer engaging in traffic and business. Anathapindika eventually gave all that he formally possessed to this now wealthy-Sangha, including the last of his sour rice-husk porridge, left over from the day before, leaving Anathapindika impoverished, but never lost any faith and participation in Buddhism. Karl Marx discusses this storing of wealth: “In the meantime it is stored up, and exists only in the form of a hoard in the process of formation and growth. This the accumulation of money [it is uncertain if Anathapindika was paid in gold or in the fair-exchange of material goods, but here are other jatakas that pronounce that payments were made and in some cases there was exchanging of gold, so the presumption exists that there was accumulation of primitive forms of money], the formation of a hoard [large storage of determined-wealth], appears here as a process that temporarily accompanies an extension of the scale on which industrial capital operates. [In the case of Buddhism, an advanced industrial society didn’t exist in India at the time, but there could have been villages that specialized in some basic modes or means of production, such as the processing of cotton into linen, that would then be bought by the mercantile-capitalist.] Temporarily, because as long as the hoard persists in its state as a hoard, it does not function as capital [because, as a stagnant-entity, it is not being used in any productive manner or endeavor], does not participate in the valorization [pronouncement of value] process, but remains a sum of money that grows only because money available to it without any effort on its part is cast into the same coffer.” (CVII, p. 163) “For the capitalist who has others to work for him [Anathapindika’s ox-drivers and the associated farmers selling their produce to the merchant-capitalist], buying and selling is a major function. Since he appropriates the product of many people, on a larger social scale, so he has also to sell on such a scale, and later to transform money back again into elements of production. [Farmers need their reimbursement to invest into the next seasons’ agricultural product, and the merchantcapitalist has an interest in receiving a better crop that can be acquired and sold at higher prices, to not only regain the salaries of the merchants, but to also gain a profit from the venture into the various territories.]” Now as before, the time taken up with buying and selling creates no value. An illusion is introduced here by the function of merchant’s capital. But without going into further detail, this much is clear from the start: if we have a function with, although in and for itself unproductive, is nevertheless a necessary moment of reproduction, then when this is transformed, through the division of labor, from the secondary activity of many into the exclusive activity of a few, into their special business, this does not change the character of the function itself.” (CVII, p. 209) From one producer, from the transporter, from the trader, towards the producer or consumer, more people are involved who also seek subsistence and the means or desire for future survival, and all seek to gain from being involves in these business transactions.

Take now for instance, the economic activity found in the Serivâṇija-Jâtaka involving a dealer in pots and pans. He had a collection of cooking-wares, one of which was a grimy-old pot which was gold, but tarnished or hidden beneath the grime. The owner of the pot was unaware of his own possession, and was cheated from it by a keen junkcollector. There are people who are waiting to exploit others, there are people who endeavor to take advantage of whatever situation that they can, in order to prosper at the expense of others. Marx explains: “…how to make white black and black white, and better than the Eleatics, how to demonstrate before your very eyes that everything real is merely apparent.” – and the footnote reads: “The Eleatics were Greek philosophers of the sixth and fifth centuries BC, who held that Being alone was true, and that everything

228 Society, 2004), pp. 100-105
outside the one fixed Being was merely apparent.” (CVI, p. 358). There are people who manipulate the truth into being something false, and who later benefit from this deception.

Some people are deceptive, but this is for the basic level of necessary survival – a story of such deception is found in the economic activity derived from the Cullaka-SettihiJataka involving a rich-merchant family’s daughter that had sex with a slave. The slave and the daughter, together, both decided to run-away and live as a couple. The Jataka suggests that the wise boy of the treasurer found a dead mouse on the road and sold it to someone with a cat for a small piece of money. He had to hustle or intelligently-deceive to survive. With that money, he bought some molasses and mixed it with drinking-water. He would exchange this energy-drink to the tired flower-gatherers who would in exchange give him a handful of flowers as compensation for the beverage. Later, he was able to sell the flowers for eight-pennies, obviously increasing his initial investment from the found dead rodent. Later a disaster hit the king’s palace and the opportunistic-boy removed the fallen branches and leaves, and thus worked for a to-be-later-paid favor. The little-boy was able to work for owed-favors and odd-items which he could later sell. Eventually from his meager investment and cunning-intelligence: he built up a network of favors amongst strategic partners: such as horse-dealers, land-traders and sea-traders. From the credit owed to him, he was able to gain the usage of a ship capable of sailing the oceans, and hundreds of people would the pay him thousands for a share of using the ship. The young-man, the runaway-slave, was able to gain sizeable wealth from what originally started out by selling a dead-rodent to a cat-owner. He, this cunning and opportunistic capitalist, later becomes the town’s chief treasurer.229 Marx explains this illusion: “…on the other hand we have swindling and general promotion of swindling, through desperate attempts in the way of new methods of production, new capital investments and new adventures, to secure some kind of extra profit which will be independent of the general average and superior to it.” (CVIII, p. 367) A boy from nothing, started from nothing and climbed to the chief position and served as an example for future hustlers. Marx discusses this process of turning nothing into something, but in economic terms: “By turning his money into commodities which serve as the building material for a new product, and as factors in the labor process by incorporating living labor into their lifeless objectivity, the capitalist simultaneously transforms value, i.e. past labor in its objectified and lifeless form, into capital, value which can perform its own valorization process, an animated monster which begins to work as if its body were by love possessed. If we now compare the process of creating value with the process of valorization, we see that the latter is nothing but the continuation of the former beyond a definite point. If the process is not carried beyond the point where the value paid by the capitalist for the labor power is replaced by an exact equivalent, it is simply a process of creating value; but if it is continued beyond that point, it becomes a process of valorization.” (CVI, p. 302) The boy probably discusses how the dead mouse would be valuable for the cat, and how the sugar-water would benefit the tired workers, and how his labor in exchange for a future favor would be beneficial, and from this exercise in valor, he was able to turn an aspiration into validation, through his valorization (enhancements).

There are alternative forms of hustling which have different results: the economic activity in the Tandulanali-Jataka involves a rice-inspector who checks rice for its quality and then issues rice from the store-room by a ticket-system which enables senior people to acquire better rice and lesser-quality to junior people - when the system got messed up, seniors felt that they were robbed of their profit or just-due. The Jataka progresses to speak

of someone who values [inspects and assesses] horses, elephants, jewels, gold, and so on – he would pay a fixed and proper price to the owners of the goods. The king felt that he was being exploited and sought another inspector-valuver, who made certain irrational claims. The jataka continues, and this statement is made: “We used to think that the earth and the realm were beyond price; but now we learn that the Kingdom of Benares together with its king is worth a single measure of rice…” – and with that, the original valuer was able to retain his job over the one brought in. 230 People who make proper assessments through their inspections are valued, perhaps after a second-opinion or after an invalid experiment.

From trials and errors, we can also learn from Marx: “…other developments take place on an ever-increasing scale, such as the growth of the co-operative form of the labor process [everyone needs assistance in these socio-economic interactions], the conscious technical application of science, the planned exploitation of the soil, the transformation of the means of labor into forms in which they can only be used in common, the economizing of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialized labor, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and, with this, the growth of the international character of the capitalist regime. [We have already seen this through the engagements of Anathapindika’s mercantilism.] Along with the constant decrease in the number of capitalist magnates [because, as the simile suggests: big fish eat smaller fish], who usurp and monopolize all the advantages of this process of transformation, the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, and exploitation grows; but with this there also grows the revolt of the working class, a class constantly increasing in numbers, and trained, united and organized by the very mechanism of the capitalist process of production.” (CVI, p. 929) Marx continues: “At a certain stage of development, it brings into the world the material means of its own destruction. [One day these practices of exploitation will terminate from its own pressure and mistakes.] From that moment, new forces and new passions spring up in the bosom of society, forces and passions which feel themselves to be fettered by that society. It has to be annihilated; it is annihilated. [Here is why:] Its annihilation, the transformation of the individualized and scattered means of production into socially concentrated means of production, the transformation, therefore, of the dwarflike property of the many into the giant property of the few [monopolization], and the expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil [urbanization and centralization], from the means of subsistence and from the instruments of labor, this terrible and arduously accomplished expropriation of the mass of the people forms the pre-history of capital. It compromises a whole series of forcible methods…” (CVI, p. 928)

The economic activity in the Nigrodhamiga-Jataka suggests: “Friend, the deer are being destroyed in great numbers [over-exploitation of resources, senseless and careless slaughter of animals]; and, though they cannot escape [any natural] death, at least let them not be needlessly wounded. Let them go to the blocks [face death, hunted] by turns [strategically, systematically], one day one from [one] herd, and next day one from [the other herd]…” 231 Overhunting and negligence in managing wildlife is detrimental to any species. Humans can do better to manage species under their control, protection or observation. Humans shouldn’t have any species going extinct when properly managing nature-reserves and wildlife. Likewise, the economic activity in the Āyācitabhatta-Jataka suggests that killing animals for a sacrifice, when doing so would bring profit to the

230 Society, 2004), pp. 21-23
231 Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), pp. 36-42
business - believing in that is a foolish endeavor. We can establish: killing for profit and mismanagement of resources is essentially problematic, and has enduring consequences and devastating effects upon the ecology.

The economic activity in the Kāṇha-Jātaka suggests: a young merchant hired 500 ox-carts for 1000-coins [again, here is the evidence of the usage of money for payments or reimbursements] to travel some distance across a river, but when the fee of only 500 was paid: “…this fellow is not paying me according to the contract! I will not let him move on!” – so the chief-ox stood across the path and blocked the way; but when he was paid in full he strenuously-endeavored to successfully pull the carts across the river. This is evidence of a worker’s strike, when the employer is not fulfilling its part of the employment contract, but when properly paid, the worker will endeavor for the employee. Marx suggests: “Since the worker spends the greater part of his life in the production process [ox spend their day in the fields eating/resting, or pulling cargo for humans – the connectedhumans to this process are engaged in animal-husbandry or the associated trade-activities], the conditions of this production process are to a great extent, conditions of his active life process itself, and economy in these conditions of life is a method of increasing the profit rate. [The ox need fed, and the drivers need compensation for their labor and time, engaged into the trading for or on behalf of the capitalist.] In just the same way, we previously saw how overwork [or underpayment], the transformation of the worker into a beast of burden [in this case, an actual beast-of-burden, or the human involved in this engagement], is a method of accelerating the self-valorization [increase in the value, due to some labor – thus someone can gain some benefit/profit – and in this sense it is an arbitrary increase, which has nothing to do with the actual merchandise being traded – but may be some compensation for the transportation of the goods and something extra so that the trader gains or exploits the consumer… -it somehow validates itself] of capital, the production of surplus-value.” (CVIII, pp. 179-180) Marx, then offers this suggestion, for additional consideration: “…there is more to this than the alienation and indifference that the worker, as the bearer of living labor, has towards the economical, i.e. rational and frugal use of his conditions of labor. The contradictory and antithetical character of the capitalist mode of production leads it to count the squandering of the life and health of the worker, and the depression of his conditions of existence, as itself an economy in the use of constant capital, and hence a means for the raising the rate of profit.”(CVIII, p. 179) Charges are added to compensate for the burdens incurred during the engagement to being the product to the consumer. Everyone seek a gain, to sustain or increase their ability to have a livelihood.

The Buddha, himself, knew of these economic activities, from first-hand insight: the economic activity in the Kuhaka-Jataka suggests that the Bodhisatta often went to the border-districts for the sake of trading, in a previous existence or manifestation of his lifeforce.

According to the Nāmasiddhi-Jataka, even slaves earned pay. However, from Marx, we see: “Capital therefore takes no account of the health and the length of life of the worker [and it shouldn’t as something non-human], unless society forces it to do so. Its answer to the outcry about the physical and mental degradation, the premature death,
torture of over-work, is this: Should that pain trouble us, since it increases our pleasure (profit)? But looking at these things as a whole, it is evident that this does not depend on the will, either good or bad, of the individual capitalist. Under free competition, the immanent laws of capitalist production confront the individual capitalist as a coercive force external to him.” (CVI, p. 381) Demands, and sometimes irrational demands, are placed upon the consumer.

Marx echoes the Buddha, through these words: “If we confine our attention to some determinate quality of raw material [the capital that will be transformed through the production process], to a heap of rags, for instance...we perceive that it passes successively through a series of stages in the hands of the various specialized workers, until it takes its final shape.” (CVI, p. 464) [The individual owner of the robes, the Buddhist monk, can transform the linen himself, into the various forms that he needs the linen for or to serve that intended purpose, as something multifunctional.] According to the Guna-Jataka, the economic activity here features a gift of robes that will be worn, but the old robes will be: made into a cloak, old cloaks made into shirts, old shirts into a coverlet, old coverlets into a mat, an old mat into a towel, an old towel will be chopped up and mixed with clay to be made into mortar for building houses. No gift will be destroyed, the materials are all recycled.236 It would be apparent that Buddhism would support recycling-centers, and the reusing of manufactured-goods, into something useful on a later occasion. There are not too many instances from the Buddha where he discusses any kind of production-process; so, this is the closest we come to the reutilization of some product or possession that is reimplemented into an additional process, a transformation, for the sake of another product.

We cannot forget though, what we are discussing; Marx begins by defining what a commodity is: “an external object, a thing which through its qualities satisfies human needs of whatever kind. The nature of these need, whether they arise, for example, from the stomach, or the imagination, makes no difference.” (CVI, p. 125) Humans trade commodities in other locations to satisfy a scarcity, deficiency or unavailability in the current or another location. These commodities are partitioned in: “socially recognized standards of measurement for the quantities of these useful objects.” (CVI, p. 125) The usefulness of the commodity is determined to be the use-value, and constitutes the material form of wealth and exchange-value. (CVI, p. 126). There is some abstract quantitative relationship for the exchange of commodities. The need or desire to acquire this commodity exists, and the means are taken to acquire this product for local consumption or an alternate variable. The processing of commodities can be done by intensive or lazy labor and this gives some value to the product. (CVI, p. 130) “A commodity’s simple form of value is contained in its value-relation with another commodity of a different kind.” (CVI, p. 152) The product of labor is an object of utility in all states of society. (CVI, p. 153) “Man changes the forms of the materials of nature in such a way as to make them useful to him.” (CVI, p. 163) “As soon as men start to work for each other in any way, their labor also assumes a social form.” (CVI, p. 164) “The labor of the private individual manifests itself as an element of the total labor of society only though the relations which the act of exchange establishes between the products, and through their mediation, between the producers.” (CVI, p. 165) The worker demands compensation for his effort and for the time he expends in the work or the transformation process of the commodity into a useful product that has in it, an amount of value added, to be paid by the consumer.

236 Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume II (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), pp. 17-21
Marx continues to express: “Value, therefore, does not have its description branded on its forehead; it rather transforms every product of labor into a social hieroglyphic. [This arbitrary concept can be confusing and different for anyone.] Later on, men try to decipher the hieroglyphic, to get behind the secret of their own social product [the need arises to comprehend one’s own creation – self assessment]: for the characteristic which objects of utility have of being values is as much as men’s social project as is their language. The belated scientific discovery that the products of labor, in so far as they are values, are merely the material expressions of the human labor expended to produce them, marks an epoch in the history of mankind’s development, but by no means banishes the semblance of objectivity possessed by the social characteristics of labor. Something which is only valid for this particular form of production, the production of commodities, namely the fact that the specific social character of private labors carried on independently of each other consists in their equality as human labor, and, in the product, assumes the form of the existence of value, appears to those caught up in the relations of commodity production (and this is true both before and after the above mentioned scientific discovery) to be just as ultimately valid as the fact that the scientific dissection of the air into its component parts left the atmosphere itself unaltered in its physical configuration.” (CVI, p. 167) One’s own delusions are impermanent.

The economic activity in the Sihacamma-Jataka, pertains to the merchant selling his goods in various places, and he used a donkey to carry the items for him. When he went into the city to sell his things, he would put his donkey in a field before entering the city, and cover the donkey with a lion-skin so people would not steal his donkey, and thinking it was a lion - people would leave the lion alone. [Aesop also has a story of a donkey wearing a lion’s skin, but we would think that villagers would care less about a donkey than the prize of killing a lion, so the person covered his donkey with the wrong type of covering, sure to draw a crowd.] Yet villagers, despite hearing the hee-haws from the donkey, still beat the animal to its death, and stole the lion-skin. Delusion and deception doesn’t get past every person, nor should it be conceived to be an effective method for engaging into some economic activity. Marx states: “Small scale land ownership [although this may pertain to the farmer’s field where the merchant put his donkey, we continue] presupposes that the overwhelming majority of the population is agricultural [indeed, it was in ancient-India, and in most rural places where Buddhism is still effective] and that isolated labor predominates over social [people work/produce/manufacture for self – for one’s family; much like this independent merchant and his donkey]; wealth and the development of reproduction [the engagement of the merchant into this market-place], therefore, both in its material and its intellectual aspects, is ruled out under these circumstances, and with this also is the conditions for a rational agriculture. [The actual field where the donkey is resting is not under discussion, although it is the scene of the animal’s slaughter.] On the other hand, large landed property reduces the agricultural population to an ever decreasing minimum and confronts it with an ever growing industrial population crammed together in large towns [obviously the drain of agriculturalists seeking new urban livelihoods leave few behind who can work with the land, and then work with any land that has not been taken up and zoned for some industrial purpose]; in this way it produces conditions that provoke an irreparable rift in the interdependent process of social metabolism, a metabolism prescribed by the natural laws of life itself. The result of this is a squandering of the vitality of the soil, which is carried by trade far beyond the bound of a single country.” (CVIII, p. 949) It would appear that since the village was close

237 Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume II (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), pp. 76-77
to the city, the people would be educated enough to comprehend that a donkey is not a lion, even with the skin draped over the donkey. It would look odd dressed inappropriately. With a rural area drained of population, and likely it is the more educated who venture into the cities to find better work, the uneducated were left behind to act in an uncivilized way towards the donkey. These is a metabolism that is keen on devouring any animal or killing any animal that may be a threat to either the crops in the field or any residence near this field. Of course we can react to the death of our donkey in a variety of ways: true, perhaps, the bewildered farmers felt threatened (absurdly) by a fake-lion or were devious enough to rob the merchant of his vehicle; and now the merchant is without his vehicle and is owed compensation for what was taken from him. Here, in this jataka, we can see beginnings of the rift or divide between the urban and rural centers.

The economic activity in the Kurudhama-Jataka involves: the maintaining of righteousness. A rich man went to his rice-field and knew of its productivity, but had yet to give a portion of it to the King (tax), so before eating any of it, he felt some guilt, suggesting that he could never take from another man, and summoned the King’s master of the granaries to take out, by measurements, the portion that should belong to the king. The state owns a portion of what is produced; if the state does not acquire through taxation, the state will acquire through acquisition of produce. In this sense, the economic-activity in the Maccauddana-Jataka also becomes important to discuss: “...There is no prosperity for the cheat.” And then in some verses: “There’s no good fortune for the wicked heart, and in the sprites respect he has no part; who cheats his brothers of paternal wealth and works out evil deeds by craft and stealth.” Those who cheat the system will be punished. Marx may consider: “Things are in themselves external to man, and therefore alienable [many government policies may be alienable, yet people strive onward with their lives]. In order that this alienation may be reciprocal, it is only necessary for men to agree tacitly to treat each other as private owners of those alienable things, and, precisely for that reason, as persons who are independent of each other.” But this relationship of reciprocal isolation and foreignness does not exist for the members of a primitive community of natural origin. Men have often made man himself into the primitive material of money, in the shape of the slave but they have never done this with the land and soil. Such an idea could only arise in a bourgeois society, and one which was already well developed. “Today the product satisfies a social need. Tomorrow it may perhaps be expelled partly or completely from its place by a similar product.” The seller sells an existing commodity, the buyer buys as the mere representation of money, or rather as the representative of future money. The seller becomes a creditor, the buyer becomes a debtor. Some the metamorphosis of commodities, or the development of their form of value, has undergone a change here, money receives a new function as well. It becomes the means of payment.”

238 Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume II (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), pp. 251-260
to avoid renouncing his rights of ownership over it.” (CVI, p. 271) “Nature does not produce on the one hand owners of money or commodities, and on the other hand men possessing nothing but their own labor power. (CVI, p. 273) Taxation in some sense implies that the farmer is temporarily under servitude, a system imposed upon and external to himself, but is made to endure and actually feel some sense of belonging or patriotism in doing so, until that time comes when differences have been determined. Even if the taxation is for a social purpose, it may be squandered by leadership through displays of excess – and the common people are left to wonder why their fruits-of-their-labor have been heedlessly lost, perhaps through some lavish ceremony or sacrifice. Yet, when the taxation or produce has been turned over, it is no longer a possession of the farmer, and he needs to not be concerned about it, and must emotionally disconnect from his fruits. It was only his effort and an effort that he will have to reenact and perform again for the next appropriate season. Even if his next season of crops fail, he must still pay some form of tax or face criminal charges.

From facing charges because of one circumstance, other people face charges of differing circumstances - the economic activity in the Kulavaka-Jataka states: “…the village headman thought to himself: when these men used to get drunk and commit murders and so forth, I used to make a lot of money out of them not only on the price of their drinks but also by the fines and dues they paid.”240 This suggests that crime, or the subliminal promotion of vice, is part of the operation of the criminal justice-system. “The overseer’s book of penalties replaces the slave-driver’s lash. All punishments naturally resolve themselves into fines and deductions from wages, and the law-giving talent of the factory… arranges matters that a violation of his laws is, if possible, more profitable to him than the keeping of them.” (CVI, p. 550) “…killing [not] murder... if done for the sake of profit…” – but the reader is directed towards a footnote which references “appropriate moral and religious justification for the assassination…” (CVIII, p. 183) Crimes are actually part of the legal system and violations are expected. In a perverted sense, crimes are encouraged.

A portion of the Bhûridatta-Jâtaka contains a part of a dialogue that states: “a poor Brahmin in Benares had got deeply in debt, and being pressed by his creditors, said to himself, ‘Why should I go on living here?’241, and decided to move away into the forest to die, but then would later go on to lead some other adventures, and gain some livelihood. Later in the same old-world story, but in another part, it is stated that an ascetic asked for a large sum of money to be placed out due to a bet, but the king inquired: ‘Is it some debt your father left or is it all your own? That you should come and ask from me such an unheard-of loan.”242 The king tries to slander that ascetic: “I am a man well-backed with means, and you are a bankrupt clown. Who will stand surety on your side, and where is the money down?”243 The debtor wanted to flee or escape his economic responsibility – default on his loans or ignore the repayment of what he borrowed – impoverished, he has nothing to show for himself.

On more institutionalized crime - the economic discussion in the Nimi-Jataka suggests: “Describing how sin ripens and bears fruit: These men are they who in the marketplace, haggling and cheapening from their greed and gain, have practiced knavery

240 Robert Chalmers [translator], The Jataka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2004), pp. 76-83
and thought it hidden like one that hooks a fish, but for the knave. There is no safety, dogged by all his deeds these cruel creatures begat sin, and they are lying yonder swallowing the hook.”

Somehow, the thought extends to represent that this could be talking about interest and the collection of interest – and the evil that is derived from exploiting customers.

An aspect of the Mahājanaka-Jātaka that deals with economics, states: “We who have nothing of our own may live without a care or sigh, the kingdom may lie desolate, but naught of mine is harmed thereby. We who have nothing or our own may live without a care or sigh, feasting on joy in perfect bliss like [a radiant deity].”

Some people are happier without material possessions and this demonstrates that materialism does not equate to happiness. There are measurements now that consider a nation’s gross-national happiness, taking in factors such as available social-services, education, relative price of consumer goods, access to clean water, and other variables that comprise the data formulating that statistic. Thailand today, operates or rather propagates the principles of sufficiency-economics, where people engage into everything with moderation, reasonableness, and have resiliency – or risk management; knowledge and virtues derived from Buddhism are also important factors. How else can people live with nothing and be happy unless they train themselves to be content and derive happiness from being in such an unfortunate predicament.

More people live with nothing but have done something about it – the economic activity in the Samudda-Vāṇija-Jātaka pronounces: travel to a foreign place, and find some place there to dwell in, a forest, cut down some trees to build a mighty ship, and launch it from a river, and go away from the town, and go back and get family members, then proceed to the ocean. They sail where the wind takes them, until reaching an island in the middle of the ocean. The island had all of the great wild-plants and fruits, rice, sugar-cane, banana, mango, rose-apple, jack, cocoanut, etc. When they had to relieve themselves, they dug holes in the sand and hid it there, to prevent this only danger – and had to be very careful with this point. Then after the homes were established and they started to dwell – there was only two master craftsmen. When they decided to make some fermented drinks (alcohol), the deities were angered and suggested that they dwell there no longer that half a month, or the sea would destroy them, and they should flee the place. Later, the entire company packs into the ship, and waited for the waves to bring them back out into the ocean. The suggestion here is when traveling or immigrating into a new area – and note that they were encouraged to travel abroad (no need for passports and visas or complicated administrative procedures, as if individuals are property to be transferred like cattle or slaves) - ensure that the proper facilities are established, live within the means of the circumstance, or the entire endeavor will lead to the destruction of the colony. Be prepared and plan for your endeavors, and have mindfulness while performing your endeavors – and know that the possibility exists to begin a new life and live again in a new location.

The economic activity of the Losaka-Jataka discusses that a ship was being put out to the sea and a person hired himself out for service to the boat. Marx offers: “…as we

---

244 E.B. Cowell & W.H.D. Rouse [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume VI (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2005), p. 60
246 See: http://www.chaipat.or.th/chaipat_english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4103&Itemid=293 also, see: https://www.academia.edu/1165803/Buddhist-Marxist_Perspective_of_Thai_Sufficiency_Economics - by Dr. Dion Peoples – both pages accessed on 25 August 2015
have already seen, the worker actually treats the social character of his work, its combination with the work of others for a common goal, as a power that is alien to him; the conditions in which this combination is realized are for him the property of another, and he would be completely indifferent to the wastage of this property if he were not himself constrained to economize it.”(CVIII, p. 179) It’s difficult, at first, for the human to work together with others, it takes a higher mind to comprehend the value in this – and since the human knows that the property is not one’s own, then wasting the scraps is of little consequence to the heedless worker. The worker hiring himself out to the ship-owner knows the boat is not his, but must be more mindful of his endeavors since his life is at stake on the rough seas – carelessness cannot be tolerated.

The worker sees his place within the scheme of things, and comprehends his period of employment, perhaps under a suitable contract discussed between them. A large boat needs many personnel to operate or perform several key-functions, for the sake of everyone on the boat. Space is limited on boats, so there can be nothing wasted, everyone must have a function. The needs of the boat are greater than the need of the individual worker and the processes are beyond his minor function. When he places himself into servitude, he agrees to perform things he may not normally do, if operating as a free-individual.

An economic activity from the Mahabodhi-Jataka stated: “From former action still both bliss and woe begin; this monkey pays his debt, to wit, his former sin: each act’s a debt discharged. Where then does guilt come in? If such the creed thou holdst and this be doctrine true, then was my action right when I that monkey slew. Couldst thou but only see how sinful is they creed, though wouldst no longer then with reason blame my deed.”249 The content dealing with economics is the idea of debt: owing someone for what was previously borrowed or taken, or gratitude for a favor. Guilt is the feeling derived from compromising your own ethical-principles and the insight that the violation incurs a form of punishment for that violation. The ethical-violations of the capitalists must be met with some form of punishment. Guilt is a condition of negativity, of a mind with unwholesome characteristics, one bound for a hell or animal realm.

The Sudhābhōjana-Jātaka, as long as it is, features a small portion that discusses some economic activity, involving a monk with a history of charity, in verse-form, as follows250:

> Merchants through hope seek treasure far and wide And taking shop on ocean’s billows ride: There sometimes do they sink to rise no more, Or else escaping their lost wealth deplore

> In hope their fields the farmers plough and till Sow seeds and labor with their utmost skill But should some plague or drought afflict the soil No harvest will they reap for all their toil

> Ease-loving men, led on by hope take heart And for their lord’s sake play a manly part Oppressed by foes on every side they fall And fighting for their lord lose life and all

---


Grain stores and wealth renouncing for their kin
Through hope aspiring heavenly bliss to win
Long time harsh penances they undergo
And by bad ways attain to state of woe

Deceiver of mankind thy suit is vain
Thy idle craving for this boon restrain
No claim hast thou to seat or water pot
Much less to heavenly food.
Begone I like thee not.

The Sudhābhōjana-Jātaka is teaching us here that risk-taking or going out into the unknown opens us into a fate that is uncontrollable. Some fate is left to the forces of nature, and there is no real precaution that humans can take to protect endeavors from these forces – so again, this is known to also be risk-taking. Humans are easily swayed by their passions, and are always up against antagonists. The capitalist hoarders, seeking to protect themselves, actually, cheat society and from their own low-mind-states, are subjected to fines and other forms of sanctioned social punishment. All of these miscreants, must know that their livelihoods hurt and hinder humanity – the risk-taking and the exploitation don’t benefit anyone. Today, we would be wise to bolster oneself or become resilient in the face of strive – operating in economically-sufficient ways and means. It would be wise to protect and prevent oneself against a possible horrible fate, and this can be done without being greedy.

Some people think that the acquiring of money is the solution for their dilemmas. Marx continues this discussion: “As paper, the monetary existence of commodities has a purely social existence. It is faith that brings salvation. Faith in money value as immanent spirit of commodities, faith in the mode of production and its predestined disposition, faith in the individual agents of production as mere personifications of self-valorizing capital.” (CVIII, p. 727) “…the vulgar economist does nothing more than translate the peculiar notions of the competition-enslaved capitalist into an ostensibly more theoretical and generalized language, and attempt to demonstrate the validity of these notions.” (CVIII, p. 338) Our foundations for whatever we desire in economic-terms is nothing more than arbitrary-concepts from our imaginations. We are not valuing things that are necessary for our lives, but we have come to be indoctrinated to accept as a reality things that are imposed upon us externally. It’s meaningless and only matters because we make it matter – materializing an idea into matter.

The Śāma-Jātaka presents some words that pertain to economics, but due to the length of the citation, just a summary will be presented, here: a young man become a monk for the sake of gaining alms-food to support his parents who were living in poverty, by giving them his food-ticket. After twelve years of forest-isolation he finally visited his impoverished relatives, and began to pass his alms-food to them; however he was criticized for supporting his family. He supported his family, even to the detriment of his own health. He was brought before the Buddha, and the Enlightened One suggested: “…Well done, you are in a path which I have traversed before you: I in old time, while going [on almsround] supported my parents.”251

Buddhism places a great social emphasis upon

taking care of one’s parents. Although in some places Marx advocates for the abolishment of the family structure, here he instructs: “Parents must not possess the absolute power of making their children mere machines to earn so much weekly wage… The children and young persons therefore in all such cases may justifiably claim from the legislature, as a natural right, that an exemption should be secured to them, from what destroys prematurely their physical strength, and lowers them in scale of intellectual and moral beings. [Take notice that Marx is advocating for the individual human-rights of children.] It was not however the misuse of parental power that created the direct or indirect exploitation of immature labor powers by capital, but rather the opposite, i.e. the capitalist mode of exploitation, by sweeping away the economic foundation which corresponded to parental power [The high prices of consumer-goods, food, hours of work, low salaries, residential or industrial zoning laws, and other factors mandated that the family structure erode into a situation where both parents must work in order to provide for their families, or by necessary extension, then a child must work.], made the use of parental power into its misuse. However terrible and disgusting the dissolution of the old family ties within the capitalist system may appear, large scale industry, by assigning an important part in socially organized processes of production, outside the sphere of domestic economy, to women, young persons and children of both sexes, does nevertheless create a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. …It is also obvious that the fact that the collective working group is composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages must under the appropriate conditions turn into a source of humane development, although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalist form, the system works in the opposite direction, and becomes pestiferous source of corruption and slavery, since here the worker exists for the process of production and not the process of production for the worker.” (CVI, pp. 620-621) Civil society is taking away the “rights” of parents, whatever these rights are – and these parents are under constant surveillance. School teachers look for marks of abuse on children and report beatings from parents to the police. Civil society has ventured along to the point where parents are no longer allowed to discipline children, and children can be taken away by the state, to be institutionalized and raised by taxpayers. The time may come when parents, and then only a select few, will just be breeding-machines. The capitalist society believes that humans breed for the sake of the jobs that they are creating for their own profits; and not for the sake of families living life, and living a liberated life away from the forces of a globalized society – or their version of a civilization. Here we can mandate that the terms: civil, civilization, and civilize – all be defined and studied for what they are and what they do – and what is done under the rubric of these constructions, that have created social disharmony; forced adaptations:

- A definition of civil implies to be courteous and polite.
- A definition of civilize implies bringing social, cultural or moral development to other societies, and expecting them to be polite and well-mannered towards this change.
- A definition of civilization implies the exorcism of defiance in a culture towards the refinements and developments that occur through the adaptation or civilizing processes, so that this society can appreciate what has become of themselves operating in these new circumstances.

Children have rights, and sometimes parentage gets in the way of the rights of the individual, and the individual’s right to achieve betterment even though it may go against the emotional ties and judgment of the parent. Not every parent can correctly provide for
a child, and in many cases the state or society can better provide for the children. Many children today have grown up in child-care centers and have developed well and have become productive members of society.

There is another episode in the Nimi-Jataka, where a king tells a deity: “As when a chariot or when goods are given on demand, so is it to enjoy a bliss given by another’s hand. I care not blessings to receive given by another’s hand, my goods are mine and mine alone when on my deeds I stand. I’ll go and do much good to men, give alms throughout the land, will follow virtue exercise control and self-command: he that so acts is happy, and fears no remorse at hand.” This implies that economic endeavors should be fair and that there should be no exploitation of another person – fair trades or a fair price for every commodity or product. There should be markets where goods are available as people require or desire certain items. The merchant owns his products and they are his to exchange. A good merchant (capitalist) should take care of his men (employees), give back to the community and follow a code of morality that is virtuous. “The private property of the worker in his means of production is the foundation of small-scale industry, and small-scale industry is a necessary condition for the development of social production and of free individuality of the worker himself. Of course, this mode of production also exists in slavery, servitude, and other situations of dependence. But it flourishes, unleashes the whole of its energy, attains its adequate classical form, only where the worker is the free proprietor of the conditions of his labor, and sets them in motion himself: where the peasant owns the land he cultivates, or the artisan owns the tool with which he is an accomplished performer.” (CVI, p. 927) Doing much good for the benefit of others might entail the acquisition of the means of production to improve the product or the manufacturing process for the product wanting to be consumed or purchased by the consumer. An aspect of the bliss may be in the manner that someone implemented unique innovations to the product, but the bliss may not be so much in the innovations but just in the acquisition of the material, likewise, in becoming one who hoards or stores items. Impositions upon manufacturers employ workers into conditions of servitude where workers must subsume themselves under the condition of the capitalists paying for what is being produced or manufactured under the conditions that have been issued. However, in the liberated state, the owner of the means of production can create and innovate as necessary, under no pressure or need to compromise any principle for the sake of some invisible-hand mandating a certain level of performance and output. Again, creators or base-level manufacturers (small-scale industry) do take pride from their skillful-work, when producing something for a consumer, and perhaps returning dignity to the working-population is the bliss that social society is yearning for and wanting to attain.

A portion of the Bhūridatta-Jātaka states, that one person recited a Veda wrongly, so the correction should be said in some demonstrated proper manner – but here, just the portion dealing with an economic process is mentioned: “…though all earth’s trees in one vast heap [clear-cutting of the forest – senseless waste of resources] were piled [hoarding of resources] to satisfy the fire’s insatiate child [greedily], still would it crave for more insatiate still… milk ever changes – thus where milk has been butter and curds… when cooks light fires or blacksmiths at their trade or those that burn the corpses of the dead… these brahmans all a livelihood require, and so they tell us Brahma worships fire… Brahmans he is made for study, for command he made the Khattiyas, Vessas to plough the land, Saddhas he servants made to obey the rest… these greedy liars propagate deceit and

---
fools believe the fictions they repeat… why are his creatures all condemned to pain? Why
does he not to all give happiness? Why do fraud, lies, and ignorance prevail? Why
triumphs falsehood – truth and justice fail? …as full of silver, gold and gems for us, with
heavens unknown delights as overplus [surplus], they would have offered for themselves
alone, and kept the rich reversion as their own. These cruel cheats, as ignorant as vile,
weave their long frauds the simple to beguile… A clever low-caste lad would use his wit
and read the hymns nor find his headpiece split; the brahmins made the Vedas to their cost
when others gained the knowledge which they lost. Thus sentences are made and learned
by rote, in metric form not easily forgot… The Brahmin’s Veda, Khattiya’s policy, both
arbitrary and delusive be… The forest was cleared, all of the trees were piled up – in
previous jatakas a discussion illustrates the setting of backfires, but here… fire is used as
an illustration for greed, and no identity for the wood, being a valuable economic resource,
although it demonstrates that keeping a fire is necessary for various economic endeavors.
The sutta illustrates the caste system, a way of fraudulently and economically segregating
people by occupational-classes. The story says within itself that the policies of the
Brahmas and the ruling Khattiyas are oppressive. Marx examines the issue: “If small-scale
landownership creates a class of barbarians standing half outside society, combining all of
the crudity of primitive social forms with all the torments and misery of civilized countries,
large landed property undermines labor power in the final sphere to which its indigenous
energy flees, and where it is stored up as a reserve fund for renewing the vital power of the
nation, on the land itself. [It was previously accounted for in the jataka, above.] Large-
scale industry and industrially pursued large-scale agriculture have the same effect. If they
are originally distinguished by the fact that the former lays waste and ruins labor power
and thus the natural power of man, whereas the latter does the same to the natural power
of the soil, they link up in the later course of development, since the industrial system
applied to agriculture also enervates the workers there, while industry and trade for their
part provides agriculture with the means of exhausting the soil.”(CVIII, pp. 949-950) The
sutta propagates how Brahma ushers in collective-suffering and how the caste-system,
itself, propagates social exploitation and oppression, and denying certain groups of basic
human-rights, in particular the right to an education. Not only do they control education,
the upper castes control what is disseminated for others to learn.

Here we are reminded by what the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan
propagated, and of which, resonate deeply: "When they kill us, are you all going to be
peaceful? Well, should we be? That’s a question, we got to keep asking ourselves."255 A
bit later in the interview, the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan said, that it is social-
engineering that leads to the conditions that create the circumstance for people to fail in
the society; the society is not doing enough for itself to educate the young generation to be
successful, it has alternative aims. He said it is a nation that has been put into this miserable
condition by criminals engineering criminals. If someone commits a crime against the
society, there should be a form of punishment [as to the level, I won’t discuss].

There needs to be something ‘socially’ in place – laws, to prevent social/culture
deviance. There should be pre-emptive measures in place to ensure everyone has a valid
and welcomed position in the society where they can be productive members,
constructively contributing to the welfare of the community and state. However due to the
concept of freedom or liberation, over time: adaptations or alternative forms of expressions

253 I can recollect a statement by a popular radio-DJ on 105.1 The Breakfast Club, Charlemagne Tha God, who often
states: “No one will believe the truth if the lie is more entertaining.”
254 E.B. Cowell & W.H.D. Rouse [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume VI
June 2015
may emerge – and these may deserve some scrutiny or face consideration, which could prevent the collapse of the social structure – and some people ring out for justice, and demand justice. Like a tree: once the establishment of the necessary culture grows ‘roots’ and matures, fruits are produced and emerge as beneficial for society. Obviously, some people are raw, ripe, spoiled or have completely fallen off. Justice, is a weighty issue to manage, and is not the theme of this paper, but it cannot be ignored, so only this small paragraph serves as the statement that there is vigilance within this writing. Most people would seem to implement the fairest decisions possible.

Marx also wants justice, and wants to discuss progress: “Modern industry never views or treats the existing form of a production process as the definitive one. Its technical basis is therefore revolutionary, whereas all earlier modes of production were essentially conservative. By means of machinery, chemical processes and other methods, it is continually transforming not only the technical basis of production but also the functions of the worker and the social combinations of the labor process. At the same time, it thereby also revolutionizes the division of labor within society, and incessantly throws masses of capital and of workers from one branch of production to another. (CVI, p. 617) We have policies that create exploitation and the means of production, our own human processes create and induce levels of suffering upon the working-classes. Workers are made to accept and believe these deceptive and dangerous ideas and constructions.

The Vidhurapandita-Jataka discusses some aspect of economics: “When he is asked to carry out some business, like a well-fixed balance, with a level beam, and evenly poised, he must not hesitate; if like the balance, he is ready to undertake every burden, he may dwell in a king’s court. Whether by day or by night, the wiser man should not hesitate when set upon the king’s business; such [a person] may dwell in a king’s court. The wise man who when set upon the king’s business, whether by day or by night undertakes every commission – he is the one who may dwell in a king’s court.\(^{256}\) Managing the household of the king is a great responsibility, and it takes ingenuity for every process to function effectively. If the king aims for gains, the economist must manage the household-affairs of the royal-family effectively, for the benefit of the Royalty. We could be reminded of this statement: “Capitalism needs non-capitalist social-organizations as the setting for its development, but it proceeds by assimilating the very conditions which alone can ensure its existence.”\(^{257}\) The economist may not necessarily be the capitalist, but just manages the affairs of the leadership in the ways or under the ideology expressed by leadership in order to maintain the employed position. The economist is driven to manipulate every transaction for the benefit of leadership, at the expense of the people.

Another aspect of economic-theory from the Vidhurapandita-Jataka includes: “Trained, educated, self-controlled, experienced in business, temperate, gentle, careful, pure, skillful – such [a person] may dwell in a king’s court. Humble in behavior towards the old, ready to obey, and full of respect, compassionate, and pleasant to live with – such [a person] may dwell in a king’s court. Let him draw near and devotedly attend on virtuous and learned monks and Brahmans – desiring thereby his own real good. Let him not seek to deprive monk or Brahmans of any gift previously bestowed on them, and let him in no way hinder mendicants at a time of distributing alms. One who is righteous, endowed with wisdom, and skilled in all business arrangements, and well-versed in times and seasons – such [a person] may dwell in a king’s court. One who is energetic in business, careful and skillful, and able to conduct his affairs successfully – such [a person] may dwell in a king’s

---

\(^{256}\) E.B. Cowell & W.H.D. Rouse [translator], The Jātaka or the Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Volume VI (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2005), p. 142

court.” 258 Skillful and educated economists are needed inside of the King’s court, someone who actually is a benefit to the kingdom and not someone who is a drain on the system, but one that ensures economic prosperity for the empire.

Another statement from the Vidhurapandita-Jataka states: “Let him employ in offices of authority servants and agents who are established in virtue and are skillful in business and can rise to an emergency.” 259 When there is a crisis-situation, the skillful economist must turn around the negative fate of the kingdom and again restore prosperity to the kingdom.

**Conclusion for the Demands of ASEAN260:**

Buddhist nations (Buddhism is an aspect of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community) must adapt to the impending ASEAN Economic Community – where the collection of Southeast Asian nations will unify towards common aims. Economically, this features the free-flow of: goods, services, investment, capital and skilled labor. Each nation will have to take their own measures to foster coherency amongst its population, for adapting to this new AEC program. In the case of Thailand, a Buddhist nation, much of this fostering is being raised by the Prime Minister, General Prayuth Chan-Ocha. In the specific case of Thailand, the nation has four principles to uphold: the Nation, Monarchy, Religions, and the People. Any policy for adapting to the demands of ASEAN must conform or link towards supporting these treasured institutions. Thailand and many other ASEAN nations are Buddhist, the 2nd largest religion in the region (because Indonesia is vastly populated by Muslims – otherwise Buddhism would dominate the public discourse). Because these numerous nations are so diverse, there is a lot of talk on harmony, and acceptance of diversity, and other traits in the printed and propagated media towards unifying people of diverse backgrounds. All trade barriers and various discriminatory procedures are to be removed. The various doctrinal-ideas of capitalism are entrenched and protected in the documentation of ASEAN’s Economic Community, which involved a lot of regulatory procedures. Although Capitalism is the dominant form of government-economics, and perhaps to some extent the ideology of people who have the means to exploit others, another large-segment of society prefers to engage into transactions or engagements in a more socialized manner. No measurements of this assessment have been made here, but the point is that there are competing ideologies for the way in which we go about managing our domestic-affairs (economically), and in ways we manage our office or businesses (in relation to the workers, rather than the relationship with the customer or consumer) – so there are different dynamics that should be considered. We have to comprehend that leadership demands their potion in order to function and serve, but this demand and functionality, according to ethics, should never be a burden upon the very population that serves this protector. People still need their organic relationship to the planet – and this aspiration seems distant in modern-societies where we have synthetic and harmful relationships. There is a shift in the ecological metabolism, one that finds greed and delusion as the elements fueling our development, which may alienate our true aspirations for a proper and nutritious development. We grow along with distortions in our once-socialized pathways for our civilization, and have become like drug-addicts to the junk that fuels individualism and exploitation that

---

260 All material pertaining to ASEAN is taken or derived from their website, and the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint: [http://www.asean.org/archive/5187-10.pdf](http://www.asean.org/archive/5187-10.pdf)
capitalism demands – and our expressions as a species have become detrimental towards
our own neighbors. We’ve lost what it once meant to be human and have turned into an
alien-construction penned by a delusional-thinker who never held your concerns.

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community aspires to achieve enduring solidarity
and unity amongst the various people, while forging ahead with a common-identity in a
more caring and sharing society. This society will be greatly enhanced for the people’s
welfare, concerned with: human development, social welfare and protection, social
justice and rights, ensuring environmental sustainability, building the ASEAN identity,
and narrowing developmental gaps. The advice above from the Buddha and Marx is more
and more relevant, when it seems – as reality dictates – that the capitalists have other
aims. ASEAN needs to be balanced, and the people left unexploited.

Humans have traveled wide-enough on this land to see how other nations endure
and survive; humans have traveled wide-enough on this land to see how other nations
educate and propagate ideologies for the national ideology or other perspectives idealized
as our basic human rights. Why then are these values manipulated by employers and why
do employees compromise – and our families begin to fail? Mistakes are made and these
errors have consequences, but ultimately who is paying the larger price in the grand-
scheme of things? The capitalist demands the labor-time of the worker and the
development of the product valued enough to sell to demanding consumers; the worker
demands a salary and recreation time with the family – but knows that labor is the trade-
off to achieve this desire – since the detachment from a relationship with the Earth, as an
agriculturalist, has been transformed in the industrialized and technologically-advanced
civilizations. The Buddha has suggested that we observe workers who have previously
ventured out, and we make adjustments in our progress to ensure those same mistakes will
never be replicated. We progress with more knowledge and wisdom. If we do progress
with more knowledge and wisdom, and we are still making the same mistakes as those
who previously encountered those problems, then we have not gotten very far as an
intelligent-species.

Some members of our species are keen enough to think about how advancements
can be made in our condition, and for some people, this is a respectable perception when
this is done with intelligence and performance of those endeavors would never lead to the
detriment of anyone involved with those processes, regardless of the amount of faith one
had with a selected economic-system.

The individualism of our capitalist demands compromises by our landless workers,
exploited for the sake of the company’s profit – profits that are, in actuality, the withheld
wages of those being employed to produce and put value into the product. By its very
construction, the capitalist system of exploitation cannot survive, because to exploit a
resource means, ultimately, the destruction of the source of the material being taken – and
it can never be wholesomely replaced, leading to a dearth and void, and the collapse of the
enterprise. It can take but it needs to give-back so that there is more available for future
acquisitions. It needs to foster development and encourage development, and actively
participate in development. Capitalism, to be successful must induce a transformation
amongst the collective-consciousness of the labor-class to cooperate in the process of
production, which may take into consideration the private activities or recreational
activities of those employed – so that there is a mutual benefit for everyone’s survival.

Buddhism doesn’t care too much about the production process, but it does care
about the management of the affairs of the relationships between workers and the boss,
and between those in the household, and even between teachers and students. Buddhism
cares about society, but in economics, it is the process of various levels of exploitation that
have become central to the system regulating the acquisition of wealth – important for those in the highest positions in leadership.

We are also seeing, in the Buddhist texts, a development in the psychology of the merchant-class and those that became attached to the court-duties for managing the kingdom’s economics. These economists, or court-treasurers, were relied upon to enrich the pockets of the kingdom. Enrichment doesn’t come about through exploitation, as the discourse alludes to in the jataka about killing off the deer-herd suggests. Buddhism advocates then for management of the ecology – otherwise species-extinction results, obviously. Treasurers and economists have devised marvelous-schemes for the acquisition of wealth for leadership, in order to please them and maintain a position of employment. Leaders sponsor and endorse the legislation devised to exploit or plunder resources from nature and taxes from citizens, for the benefit of the nation and often enough for personal amusement of leadership, as suggested in the jataka that addresses sacrifices. Leaders also endorse that there are levels of deceit constructed into the system that regulates the affairs of the nation – deviations from social-norms are expected, and no system is expected to operate smoothly without violation, that is why there are punishments or penalties devised for any deviant/criminal activity. Liberation is also expressed, fleeing crimes and the beginning of a new life without the negative social-history can occur; liberation expressed additionally as the development and establishment of new places to live in lands previously uninhabited – there are many choices for achieving socio-economic security and well-being, and endurance for the species.

Someone may ask: Is the Buddha a socialist or a capitalist? From the assessment of the criteria above, a determination can be made that he promotes capitalistic values, but mandates that these capitalist-values for the development of the business should never bring about the decline of the ecology and economic-livelihoods of those employed or engaged into the system – it would have to be a socialized-capitalism that the Buddha would ultimately or collectively express – as formulated from the examination of the jatakas collection. The Buddha is not short of his criticism towards the vulgar or unscrupulous capitalist; however, where can we go from here, in absolute honesty – when ideology is on hold? This acclaimed Buddhist-Socialist must come to grips with the reality that the Buddha advocated for a responsible capitalism – the promoted gains, gained wholesomely.

We must adapt to improve ourselves and society.

A higher form of human development is also expressed, one which determines a new role for children who oversee and protect the parents from falling into states of woe, and where children and workers ensure that parents are taken care of as much as a worker would support the processes for the production of goods inside of the factory. Traditional family values are reassessed for the greater benefit of everyone collectively. The study, here, also addresses class-distinctions and how these constructions are arbitrary and divisive and should be dismantled. Therefore, advice that terminates the discussion, suggests that only those established in virtue and in skillful means should be employed in these important managerial positions for the development and prosperity of places where economics is important. We have to never forget that economics truly means the sciences behind how we manage our domestic affairs – and for the confused, this means how we manage our house and family, how we manage our careers and employees, and how we manage our communities and customers, and how we manage our state and lives of the citizens that demand protection under the state, acting as a parent of the home. This interconnectedness demands a disciplined social-responsibility. The advice from Buddhism and Marx will need to be taken more seriously.
Motorcycle and the Art of Zen

Ricardo Sasaki
Founder/Director: Nalanda Center for Buddhist Studies
Belo Horizonte, MG, Brazil

"...The Dharma is devoid of words or appearances, but it is not separate from words and appearances. If you abandon words you are subject to distorted views and defilements; if you grasp at words, you are deluded as to the truth. Students of the scriptures often abandon the inner work and pursue externals; Zen adepts prefer to ignore worldly activity and simply look inward. Both positions are biases which are bound at two extremes. They are like fighting over whether a rabbit’s horns are long or short, or arguing whether flowers in the sky are profuse or scarce." Uichon (1055-1101), great Zen Korean master (cited in Sunim, Kusan. The Way of Korean Zen. New York and Tokyo: John Weatherhill, 1987)

Zen philosophy is one of the most ancient philosophies in the world and has been a major dominating influence in the arts and sciences of Eastern thought and culture. Could we however determine if it is still relevant in the modern world? How can our Western society take advantage of such culture? For the past hundred years much has been done by Europeans, Americans as well Asians to translate Eastern ideas to the Western public. The book Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by Robert M. Pirsig is another example, now in the field of literature, which attempts to approximate those two concepts, an ancient Eastern and a modern American, in a rather fascinating way as he advances in his knowledge about motorcycle maintenance and the observations he draws from it which ranges from landscape scenes to motorcycle structure through the alleys of the Western philosophical history.

Published in 1974, the book by Pirsig had an enormous success in his trying to recapture an old way of life through the metaphor of the traveling of father and son through America and the motorcycle maintenance, which in itself is a major symbol for American culture and its way of life. What was a symbol of rationalistic and materialistic society, Pirsig transforms it into an instrument of explaining the workings of the mind revealing an art well known in the East, that is, to take examples gathered from nature or external environment and extract lessons relevant to the inner man. He says right on the front-page:

*The study of the art of motorcycle maintenance is really a miniature study of the art of rationality itself. Working on a motorcycle, working well, caring, is to become part of a process, to achieve an inner peace of mind. The motorcycle is primarily a mental phenomenon.*

In this way Pirsig tries to give a psychological and philosophical description of the process of rationality undergone by the Western thinking since the Greek times through the metaphor of motorcycle. Rationality is in itself a shaping force in Western society since Greek times, and motorcycle, at least apparently, is a product
of it. Nonetheless Pirsig challenges this assumption. In analyzing how near Pirsig goes in such comparison it is necessary however to give together with it an account of what Zen is in its main characteristics as, though he explains that his book:

*Should in no way be associated with that great body of factual information relating to orthodox Zen Buddhist practice.*

(Author’s note)

…the reader is made aware very clearly of the Eastern presence in the narrator’s life as well in Phaedrus’, a character often mentioned by the narrator along the book.

Within the vast Buddhist tradition born in the sixth century B.C. in India, there is an enormous variety of styles and forms, both in practical and theoretical aspects, in how to present the fundamental teachings of the Buddha. It is said that around the sixth century A.D., more than thousand years after Buddhism springtime, an Indian monk called Bodhidharma had traveled to China where he found a deplorable situation concerning Buddhist transmission. The Dharma, as the Buddha’s teaching is generally known, at that time was used only for theoretical debates. The Chinese saw Buddhism only as a foreign teaching and the noble Confucionists made use of it in order to debate points of the Confucian doctrine.

When around the first century A.D. Buddhism started to penetrate in Chinese land it was mainly because of its theoretical potential. Facing such situation Bodhidharma started to transmit the Dharma as it was taught in India since the times of the first teachers, emphasizing not only the theoretical elements but meditation too. As Chinese theoreticians were already too versatile in intellectual discussions Bodhidharma thought that if he would teach Buddhist theory he would probably end up teaching in an university or in the debate circles instead of transmitting the heart of the teaching. Bodhidharma was not a tie-and-suit man, but a master. His function was then to emphasize the practical elements of the teaching. Such characteristic was well taken by Pirsig for his metaphor, as we would not find a more “practical” symbol in American culture than a motorcycle. The narrator travels with his son Chris through the beautiful landscape of the American prairies and the starting point for his philosophical inquiries was the fact the couple of friends that were his companions in those trips did not take any interest in knowing how a motorcycle work. While they were trying to run away from a technological structure, the narrator finds that this same modern structure or “system” had a lesson to teach, revealing the way rational mind from Renaissance times created more trouble than answers due to a flaw built-in within it.

The solution for Bodhidharma was to make an adaptation of the Dharma in Chinese soil giving greater importance to meditative practice. Later on his way of teaching went to be known as Ch’an or, in its Japanese form, Zen. Bodhidharma taught that Buddhism was not a thing only to be taught or heard, but mainly something to be practiced. The narrator in page 4 says:

*You see things vacationing on a motorcycle in a way that is completely different from any other. In a car you’re always in a compartment, and because you’re used to it you don’t realize that through that car window everything you see is just more TV. You’re a passive observer and it is all moving by you boringly in a frame.*
In a way that is what Bodhidharma was also saying. Life is not something to be passive about but a practical thing to be acted upon. Phaedrus get crazily suffocated because he could not see a way out of the mental trap rational mind created, and in a way he could just watch passively life going by. Bodhidharma instead urged the Chinese to go out of their discussion room and face the teaching in its essence.

On a cycle the frame is gone. You’re completely in contact with it all. You’re in the scene, not just watching it anymore, and the sense of presence is overwhelming. (page 4)

As time goes by, the narrator is getting even nearer to the Buddhist teaching of presence and communion as can be seen in this phrase of Master Taizan Maezumi Roshi, a leading Zen teacher in USA:

What the Buddha had experienced was... the direct and conscious realization of the oneness of the whole universe and of his own unity with all things... To have this very realization is in itself to be the Buddha.

To be present, in the scene, as Pirsig says, is essential to Eastern teaching of a way of life, something the Transcendentalist poets also drawn from.

Only that day dawns to which we are awake (Henry David Thoreau)

For Bodhidharma, Buddhism was not a mass of dogmas to be accepted unconditionally, but rather something extremely practical and experiential. Meditation was the main and first way of integrating the teaching. Within those conditions Bodhidharma found out a radical solution, to sit and meditate only, trying to show the importance of practice. Pirsig did not arrive to such radical solutions, obviously because the main historical set was different, but the reader is made to travel through the whole process of rational philosophical thinking through the medium of Phaedrus, a ghost-like creature that appears from page 33 and is the real motivating force of the story.

It is Phaedrus that will lead us to tracks and roads of the mind less traveled but are nonetheless fascinating. Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Lao-tzu, up to Poincaré, Kant and Hegel are sought out by Phaedrus traveling through these mental roads of thought. It is already foreseen when the narrator says about roads off the main highway.

These roads are truly different from the main ones. The whole pace of life and personality of the people who live along them are different. They’re not going anywhere. They’re not too busy to be courteous. The hereness and nowness of things is something they know all about (page 5)

This hereness and nowness is the essence of Zen teaching that Pirsig transports to motorcycle traveling, a “presence practice,” exercised by the technique of sitting meditation. After some time the fame of that Indian monk spread out attracting those that were searching for the essence of Buddhism. They would come to him, they would sit and meditate. Those outside the practicing circle would say that Bodhidharma taught
only one thing: meditation. From that came the name by which his teaching came to be known: *Ch’an* or *Zen* (in Japanese), which, coming from the Sanskrit word *dhyāna*, means only “meditation”.

*Zen* means only meditation, but with the time it came to be known as a specific form of teaching and practicing. After Bodhidharma this particular form of transmission, still in its origins was passed on through many generations till around the eighth century when Hui-neng, the sixth patriarch since Bodhidharma, gave its final form. In a sense, it is Hui-neng the real founder or organizer of Zen school. The Chinese *Ch’an* develops and grows reaching regions outside Chinese borders. It reached Korea where it is known as *Song*, Vietnam as *Thien* and Japan, whose form came to be better known in the West, the famous *Zen*. But all these words are only transliterations of the Sanskrit one, *Dhyāna*.

The narrator is clearly aware of this kind of transmission of teaching as he makes use of a Native American Indian word, *Chautauqua*, to name what he would like to do. He defines *Chautauqua* as

> An old-time series of popular talks intended to edify and entertain, improve the mind and bring culture and enlightenment to the ears and thoughts of the hearer (page 7)

The book, he says, is meant to be a *Chautauqua* centering in a fundamental question of humanity: “What is best?” He says that:

> “What is new?” is an interesting and broadening eternal question, but one which, if pursued exclusively, results only in an endless parade of trivia and fashion, the silt of tomorrow (page 7)

...a comment very akin to Zen thinking that would see novelty as just a way to divert the mind from what really matters. It is not also foreign to Western ancient thinking which reverberates in Biblical saying:

> What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun (*Ecclesiastes* 1:9)

The *Chautauqua* starts taking as its starting point the realization of the narrator that his friends had a scary and irritating way of relating to technology.

> To get away from technology out into the country in the fresh air and sunshine is why they are on the motorcycle in the first place (page 14)

Though it could be taught that withdrawing to nature would be more akin to Eastern thinking, and then his friends would be more Eastern-like than the narrator, the plot is much more intelligent than that. If we take nature in opposition to technology we are splitting our mind in a division that has been dominating Western minds. Zen and Taoist teachings take the opposite direction, trying to make man realize the unity behind diversity as is so curiously demonstrated in the translation done by Phaedrus of the *Tao Te Ching* at page 227. For John and Sylvia the world is something split,
multiparted, and the trouble and the feeling of inadequacy they have along the story are characteristic of such frame of mind.

*I just think that their flight from and hatred of technology is self-defeating. The Buddha, the Godhead, resides quite as comfortably in the circuits of a digital computer or the gears of a cycle transmission as he does at the top of a mountain or in the petals of a flower. To think otherwise is to demean the Buddha - which is to demean oneself. This is what I want to talk in this Chautauqua* (page 16)

The narrator in this way refuses to split between nature and man’s production again and we need just to compare it to a sentence of another leading Zen master of this century:

*When we have our body and mind in order, everything else will exist in the right place, in the right way* (Shunryu Suzuki Roshi)

To get body and mind in order is, as I see, an underlined motive during the story. The balancing of the mind is practiced through the medium of Phaedrus, in his pursuit of truth, goodness, and equilibrium. He undergoes in this search for moments of disturbance and conflict as is expected in a healing process. And the balancing of the body can be seen in the metaphor itself. What would be more appropriated to symbolize it than the riding on a motorcycle? The equilibrium needed to stay in a two-wheel machine, the disturbances caused by the wind and the road, the unexpectedness coming from the next curve, the need to be aware and equanimous regarding the weather, the beauty and the adversities along the road, all factors met by the characters of the story.

*There is no one place or sharp line where the Central Plains end and the Great Plains begin. It’s a gradual change like this that catches you unaware, as if you were sailing out from a choppy coastal harbor, noticed that the waves had taken on a deep swell, and turned back to see that you were out of sight of land* (page 17)

Zen is a teaching aimed to achieve balance but it also is, apparently (but only apparently) a teaching that opposes to erudition and theoretical study. It is one of the errors some Westerners incur avoiding the study basing themselves in a phase took out of its original context which says:

*A special transmission outside the scriptures, no development on words and letters. Seeing directly into the mind of man, realizing true nature, becoming Buddha.* (Bodhidharma)

So some beginners think that Zen would be a spiritual path where books, study and all intellectual comprehension would be thrown away. It would only remain a “Zen” taken as a magical word, possessed of virtues and powers by itself. The true and only Zen however takes this sentence as meaning that after you have studied and gotten a deep investigation of the doctrine, then, you should throw away your books and stay with experience. To say it is “outside de the scriptures” is to say that first you go through
all the texts and only then you outgrow them. It is a point far away from saying it disdains all erudition and theoretical knowledge. Phaedrus also goes deeply into the philosophical problems realizing the dead-end of rationality by the end. Phaedrus appears in a conversation after a storm and during a talk about ghosts. It is said he was a man:

who spent all his whole life doing nothing but hunting for a ghost, and it was just a waste of time (page 32).

This ghost is seen later to be rationality as the West takes it. And Phaedrus is the Western philosophical mind trapped in the snare of rationality. It is by the end of the first part of the book that Phaedrus is revealed as being the narrator himself, his old self almost forgotten but still alive in a ghostly form. The story from now on becomes a dialogue of two selves in a same person, an inner dialogue in search of truth.

We have seen that some have taken Zen as something destituted of rationality, emphasizing instead intuition. But those instead of seeing the truth beyond the scriptures see it beneath the scriptures. Beyond and beneath is the difference between the true Zen practitioners and their fake counterparts. For Zen all intellectual study is a stair which one has to climb and up there to throw the stair away. But the false Zen believes one could throw the stair before climbing it. Such mistake could be due to the conception that intellectual comprehension is something opposed to spirituality, but it is interesting to see that Pirsig does not buy it, as to say. Though rationality is seen as a ghost, product of what the narrator calls “classical understanding,” its opposite is the “romantic understanding,” and not spirituality. The narrator does not attribute “romantic understanding” to a “spiritual” teaching, rather he sees spiritual understanding as something beyond and at the same time unifying them both. The split between spirituality and intellectual comprehension, something unimaginable in the East, permeates the Western thinking, even the religious one, culminating not in “religion” but in “religious sentimentality”, the blind faith and the valorization of emotionalism and sentimentality as the only means for spirituality.

Pirsig is aware that such split is one of the flaws in Western thought that undermines many of the problems in modernity. He summarizes an Eastern way of looking in page 70:

There is a perennial classical question that asks which part of the motorcycle, which grain of sand in which pile, is the Buddha. Obviously to ask that question is to look in the wrong direction, for the Buddha is everywhere... About the Buddha that exists independently of any analytic thought much has been said - some would say too much, and would question any attempt to add to it. But about the Buddha that exists within analytic thought, and gives the analytic thought its direction, virtually nothing has been said. (page 70)

I think that the merit of Pirsig here is to call for an awareness to the Western public regarding a theme so rare to be seen. Pirsig does not write for a specialized Zen public, but addresses to a fundamental question that is the basis of Western thinking itself. Phaedrus is a tormented man in search for himself, and this disturbance comes from the philosophy he himself adopts. Pirsig shows this fundamental conflict using the Eastern way of looking applied to motorcycle maintenance that is taken not as
pieces of metal combined in different shapes, as he puts it, but as series of concepts and ideas, revealers of patterns of thought:

That’s all the motorcycle is, a system of concepts worked out in steel. There’s no part in it, no shape in it, that is not out of someone’s mind.... I’ve noticed that people who have never worked with steel have trouble seeing this - that the motorcycle is primarily a mental phenomenon (page 88)

Pirsig makes use of this well-known object of American society as a metaphor of Western mind, calling the attention to the conflict, but also addressing our awareness on a false spirituality that wishes to remain outside the realm of rationality, much like John and Sylvia wished to go outside the technology and paradoxically traveling on a motorcycle! Some of us would wish to embark in a journey of self-knowledge going away of rationality, but curiously taking all bias of Western thought with us. Others would wish to stay within the realm of rational thought, but it would amount to a split of the man in multifaceted parts. This is a conflict of contemporary man, a conflict that is revealed in scientific thinking and in day to day common living as is well represented in the Western literature and that Pirsig tries to reveal.


**Bibliography:**


Book Review:


Dr. Dion Peoples
Manager, International Association of Buddhist Universities

David McCarthy’s book, Civil Endowment: the Transformation of Economic Power, suggests, by the title alone, that transformations are needed in the power dynamics pertaining to the management of the processes controlling business-level and national level economics. The level of economic power referred to in this text refers to those who actually have power over the economic processes in the nation, and how this power that they possess can be transformed to benefit everyone in society, but not at the micro-scale (an individual house). Before reading the text suitable for economics students and students within Buddhist Studies wanting to branch out into other academic genres, it should be stated that this book promotes the remanaging of profits or capital from economically-endowed (rich) people or corporations and giving back to society what was taken from civil-society. Certainly, Buddhists would determine this to be a form of generosity or giving – and such activity is considered to be meritorious.

McCarthy, then discusses three main principles in his text: capital, civil endowment, and compassion (sometimes discussed as generosity). I’ll discuss the text through these three terms by taking words from McCarthy to discuss important points from the book. In the process of constructing this review, nearly twelve pages of citations from the text were annotated, but rather than confuse readers with a lot of footnotes and page numbers, this review will just be a discussion of these three main points, thematically arranged. Again, these three highlighted main terms are: the remanagement of capital, creating civil endowments and the generation of systemic compassion, ideas that McCarthy uses throughout his text. The review is working within the language of McCarthy; and again these principles of capital, civil endowment and compassion - as mentioned towards transforming economic power, are the points for an interesting discussion.

Capital:

All of our economics-textbooks define capital. It is the primary tool that we use to progress in our lives, as we develop from children, into householders in our adult-lives. McCarthy begins by discussing the desire for structural innovations or transformations rather than tearing down the existing capitalist economic structure. The way we have lived our lives can change. We don’t have to be selfish individualists, but we can be more compassionate and generous towards others around us, in the society that we share. There is too much opposition to this idea amongst the people in power, who are only wanting and crating for themselves. Although he mentions that only a small amount of people (here, interpreted as meaning those who are well-off financially) would be willing to return to our low-tech agrarian ways (translation: a condition of poverty) or return as hunter-gatherers, the fact that the poorest people are becoming poorer: people in society need to take on this conceptual possibility as a conceivable reality, to prepare for the day when there is nothing left for the bottom-rungs of the social-ladder. The people in power are not willing to let their money go, are not willing to help those who cannot take care of
themselves – they are unable to return to a lesser-degree of materialism. The time will emerge when the capacity for being a materialist will be reduced, so rather than opposing the principle, humanity should work with this impending and obvious condition as the social-reality, as a species of animal populating the planet with other species.

Capital comprises the assets that people own, resources that can be exploited, and even the funds available in financial-accounts. When this capital is not being used, it could be transformed or transmitted towards people who can use it. It can be endowed or blessed for others to use productively. McCarthy then states that since capital is a mind-made creation, it shouldn’t be too hard to change our paradigms, transform our relationship towards our constructions or contrived/conditioned-ideas in new ways – anything can be revised. Capital, or more specifically, money sitting in the bank, could be used alternatively: creating capital flows into some civil endowment that has been agreed upon by the sector/specific location needing the financial assistance. McCarthy suggests, that through forms of tax-exemption schemes or as a replacement for tax, as a motivating incentive to give to any endowment: a civil endowment would be a worthy object for generating merit, through the generosity of potential donors.

Again, to reemphasize, McCarthy asserts: capital is a creation of the human mind and therefore, the idea of what capital is, can be changed. McCarthy states: if the human mind, working both socially and individually, creates capital, we can restructure or reform capital in the direction of the common good; not just capital, but also money is discussed – since it is a human-invention. As a social technology, says McCarthy, it is only instrumental in the economic process.

Economists, the people who tell us how we should be using our money, believe that economics is a rational science, but they never account or advocate for variations in the way humans react to circumstantial situations. Economics is the management of our household affairs, but it also extends to local government, corporations and national governments. Governments and corporations, and our places of employment, are trying to influence society through the special interests of the stakeholders and shareholders – the people with the money to influence decision-making processes. He writes on the existing theory of capital, contemplates on a pragmatic level as to what is needed and what is possible, and brings in Karl Marx, who viewed capital as arising from surplus value that is stolen from the workers. Capital arises from retained earnings (withheld wages from workers = company profits), being stolen. Generosity, though, can create civil capital – the psychological act of endowing it to the universal beneficiary – people benefiting or suffering from our past and present actions and anything residual from our policies affecting the future in which the beneficiary is living in as his/her current or present reality.

McCarthy uses the slogan: “Capitalism can’t be reformed, but capital can.” He mentions it’s easier to believe that the modern economy is an unmitigated disaster – but again, he wants to maintain the capitalist system despite the disasters it creates; but as we know this implies the world has been, in fact, meticulously planned – and there are plannedeconomies in the world that are operating sufficiently. Many nations have five-year-plans – Thailand is one of these nations operating through the structure put up by its National Economic and Social Development Board. The government is set up to ideally operate along ethical means, but sometimes officials become corrupt and are removed from office. Planned governments can be productive, as the recent example of Thailand is demonstrating.

Capital though, like a government or a policy, can be critically examined and as McCarthy states, it has three qualities: essence, nature, and manifestation. McCarthy here, actually utilizes some critical-thinking skills that can be emulated by our students:
take a term to analyze and scrutinize its essence, nature and manifestation. McCarthy states that capital is a creation of the human mind. Creating capital flows into some civil endowments, it could be that this may also be a form of tax-exemption or could replace tax, as an incentive to give to an endowment. Civil endowments are supposed to be worthy objects for the generosity of potential donors - and again McCarthy reminds us that capital is a creation of the human mind, so, any idea (capital) that we have created would be subjected to impermanence, or change. McCarthy states: if the human mind, working both socially and individually, creates capital, we can restructure or reform capital in the direction of the common good, rather than for selfish reasons. He reemphasizes that money itself is instrumental in the economic process as a representation for wealth used in trade or various other transactions, and it certainly is a human invention, as a social technology.

McCarthy asks us to consider what justice might look like when the concept or human right – according to some societies - is considered from the point of view of the manifestation, nature and essence of capital. In Theravada Buddhism, teachers express to students, as tools of critical thinking: scrutinize the characteristics, function, manifestation and proximate cause of a condition or object that is up for review. In terms of manifestation, McCarthy asserts that it is power: power is not just the ability to obtain wealth and productivity, but also to determine the very nature and course of investment – but it is only fair that everyone can get some of this power. Everyone should be factored into the structure and operation of the economy. In terms of the nature of the social construction of capital, it’s obvious that mandating the implementation of fairness and justice as social-policy would mean that everyone should have universal access to the benefits of capital. McCarthy continues to assert: economic institutions need to be structured to embody the goals of universal sufficiency and opportunity – examples can be taken from the royal-projects of Thailand’s King Bhumipol Adulyadej – and then channel profits or funds for investment towards the common good – the needs of society, perhaps using some of King Bhumipol’s ideas/inventions for the wellbeing of the people and future generations benefiting from these social-improvement endeavors.

According to McCarthy, economic conventions and structure of capital itself, are created by human decisions and actions, and reinforce that we can structure them in just ways. The essence then of capital is its spirit, and at the deepest level; the spirit of civil capital should be the compassionate, unbiased aspiration for the wellbeing of all humanity – the seeds for enacting justice reside here, and radiates its tangible nature in socially created forms, and its manifestations in beneficial power. McCarthy again redefines capital: qualitative features of capital are its casual features. Capital is causality – McCarthy here is utilizing a major Buddhist principle - because capital, in its outer manifestation is power, another socially constructed condition that enables productivity. Finally in essence, capital is the application of the human mind to the challenge of earning a livelihood – we bring this into the workplace. The civil capital idea is in a very real way an optimization of these general features of capital. Global capitalism as currently practiced, with its amoral quests for profits, but this is never a force for an open society.

McCarthy responds that the spirit of civil capital is likened towards capital that should be directed towards the common good, since in its very conception, civil capital is logical and intuitive in nature, and must possess unbiased compassion as the foundation of this spirit. We can see that the essence of capital is psychological, and the nature of its construction is social – it’s great that McCarthy reminds us of this fact. Capital, according to McCarthy, is oriented toward the present and future – although it has its controversial historical roots – which is generally the acquisition of profits from exploiting workers (withheld wages) or from exploiting the environment.
When we keep in mind the fact that capital also includes the historical legacy of shared intellectual and cultural knowledge that has been passed down to us from previous generations, we can then summarize types of psychological content that relates to capital in terms of four aspects: embedded knowledge, pervasive intention, operating plan, and foundational spirit. McCarthy states that the fact that capital arises from a confluence of political power, property relations, social conventions, customs, institutions, knowledge, and creative initiative – all of which develop over time in a given society – makes it somewhat hard to see that each and every one of these social facts has been created and instituted by the human mind. Ideas that are born from the mind can be redesigned and perfected. The whole notion that capital could be perfected – that capital could work in a fully compassionate way for the common good – is wonderful, but according to McCarthy, it is utterly impractical if there is no way for such capital to come into existence. Capital then, must be reformed or transformed.

McCarthy wants the foundational spirit of civil capital to equally address every human being as well as the society, at all times, towards the real implementation of justice and at the same time be a genuine demonstration of compassion. The argument from causality (relationship with Buddhist terminology) with regard to civil capital comes down to the point that it is designed in accordance with the very essence of the nature of human causality (do not neglect the Buddhist terminology). There could be capital for the common good and the indefinite future, possessing an ethical orientation: capital cannot be exploitative, extractive, or externalizing - these characteristics need to be minimized, according to McCarthy.

He, therefore asks: what sort of innovations would make a difference in our world? McCarthy promotes the idea of a civil endowment system, where portioned-amounts of capital are invested and used to benefit humanity, as the civil beneficiary. The civil beneficiary protocol promotes long-term environmental and social-wellbeing, as well as universal opportunity and economic justice. This civil capital, according to McCarthy, is not our social/human capital but the unification of public/private capital. How this civil capital is used, needs reconsidering, as power-relationships are reconsidered. This civil capital should enable, maintain and structure productivity. As we can ascertain, McCarthy wants to transform capital to be something used meritoriously.

Civil Endowment:

This is the main concept of McCarthy’s book, the section that has transformative capabilities for how we should progress next, in our lives and messages. He discusses civil endowments, as a form of generosity, which should be given by benefactors or an organization (corporation) with the obvious intention to give back to society, and states that such gifts inspire the collective to utilize endowments in meaningful (unselfish) ways. He discusses the collection of small fees (by an agency responsible for doing it), also is a form of generosity (our release of a portion of our salary towards the fees dictated by the agency to disseminate in some productive way) – by extension is generosity: paying tax is generosity; but the fees would be collected from sympathetic donors. We have to change our paradigms to see these processes as beneficial. Creating a civil endowment is a gesture of generosity, but McCarthy wants civil endowments to be governed by social organizations, not a government agency or some business. As for the administration of the endowment, there are three categories that are discussed, more specifically by McCarthy:

• The platonic form of administration: McCarthy suggests that pension plans or wealth management practices are examples of this.
• The democratic form of administration: McCarthy suggests this may not be an ideal form because there may be too much tension over majority/minority issues/opinions. A sizeable minority of the people could lose and this can be unfair to that half with different ideas.

• The commons-style of governance: McCarthy suggests this form has been marginalized by capitalists so that they can create their own idealized or imagined civil-societies, and we know of the disasters that our current society faces, so the commons-style is a solution for moving forward in unity.

McCarthy reminds us that there are conscious social agreements and rules. Cultural pressure moves towards environmental sustainability and greater economic justice – even if the forces of reaction against these ideals are powerful. McCarthy asserts placing human and environmental values first will never become the dominant viewpoint; therefore, as a result of this bitter aspect of reality: there should be new economic systems to implement, and possibly a system that is inspired or guided by Buddhism - although it shouldn’t be called Buddhist Economics – so that sensitive people adhering to alternative socio-political guidance systems will be freed from complaints.

According to McCarthy, civil endowment theory does not depend on eliminating or changing the basic nature of individual self-interest, private property, the business firm, or the political process – again, he is supportive of the capitalist-society, instead he offers: civil endowment theory concerns itself with civil society-guidance and leadership and, most significantly, with civil society’s economic power. McCarthy tries to summarize the concern over the issue by asserting, what we have is: what it does versus what it can do. We need to think about what endowments can do for civil-society.

Civil endowments should be considered from the bottom up – from the lowest part of society or the base-issue towards whatever other levels for the middle-class. Every bit of wealth given into the civil endowment system is a de facto adjustment of wealth inequality, ideally - since it is endowed equally to all – but the burden is placed differently upon different classes of wealth. If this were simply static-wealth, the effect would not be impressive, and certainly not implemented in a timely manner – but the capital-input, the charge and change that the wealth can being – this capital is not static, and effects can be rendered quickly. By creating something that groups of people can use productively, civil capital – this begins a process or serves as a catalyst for an economic process which is designed to build wealth in a more egalitarian way – and be more effective towards those needed upliftment in the lower-classes of wealth misdistribution. Indeed, this is a useful attempt to adjust wealth inequality, it could only be done by taking (redefining this to be useful contributions towards endowments) wealth from the rich towards being used in a way that is considered to be more socially effective, without being a political power center – where people would owe an allegiance towards the one who assisted in their productive development. Civil endowments would then be seen as something that brings about universal economic justice: equality and fairness are in its very structure and intent.

McCarthy explains how systems would need to be set up so that common people become educated in the principles of a healthy economy in general and more specifically in civil investment – so that these educated people become active participants in the democratic process over economic-issues facing the community. McCarthy then moves forward to explain how to generate interest in the movement towards creating and implementing civil-endowments as a social norm. McCarthy envisions three major phases namely: the symbolic, catalytic, and structural phases, which describe the potential process of development and transformation of the system.
• In the symbolic phase, the main benefit is in the communication of the very possibility of civil endowment, and in the establishment of the necessary institutions for its operation.

• In the next catalytic phase, civil endowment gains very real economic power, and is able to leverage various tipping points and gain substantial support.

• Finally, in the structural phase, it takes its place in a large scale way as a foundation of a healthy world economy. The symbolic phase starts from zero, in the first act of giving to an endowment.

**Generosity & Compassion:**

McCarthy goes easy on the Buddhist terminology. This text is not a book written for Buddhist scholars, it is obviously a text on economics – the management of the affairs of our houses, neighborhoods, counties/districts, states, nation or region. The text is about how to manage a large amount of funds that have been injected into the community for use within the community, to develop the community in a better way. From the generous act of the donor, we can see how we establish the principle of interdependence – an important Buddhist teaching, applicable anywhere, in any society. The principle of compassion abounds and underlies this capital-management system. McCarthy states that compassion is the background or root to operational attitudes and motivations. There should be socially responsible investing. McCarthy then moves onward to discuss six important virtues: generosity, ethics, non-aggression, diligence, focus, and wisdom – these constitute a general economics of compassion, through being fully stabilized in our hearts and minds towards the generation of true-wisdom.

Wisdom is compassion, states McCarthy. Compassion should be the guiding principle in economics. Wisdom is inseparable from compassion. McCarthy goes on to state: compassion means wishing that other people will not have suffering; so our wisdom must discern what is true and right, so that our insight liberates people from induced pain. Thailand’s Buddhadasa Bhikkhu had written extensively on the idea of Dhammic Socialism, containing the principle that the dictator is rather benevolent and acts on the interests of the people and presses ahead with the initiatives that are best (determined through public discourse, not at the whim of the leader) for the nation’s development, according to the various treaties and other alliances that the nation has made. A current example of a benevolent leader is the current Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, General Prayuth Chan-Ocha. The nation was nearing a violent civil war and politics were wreaking havoc – civil activities were stalled, the corrupt ruling regime was ineffective. The General, supported by the armed-forces, stepped in to preserve the dignity of the nation, and to press ahead, to guide the nation from out of the quagmire and strife. Thailand has reached high levels of national happiness under the leadership of General Prayuth Chan-Ocha. This is all mentioned not as participation within a cult of personality, but rather all of the evidence is in: all of his speeches are on Youtube¹, and when these are examined – no one can miss the way he lays out the direction of the government and is keen to also demonstrate the results of the suggestions. Feedback from the people, the citizens, is often encouraged. The people who complain the most towards the system are those that are not participating, and they feel left out and complain, senselessly. It’s easy to submit the suggestions though the official channels set up by the government. The great thing about having General Prayuth in power is that he is not from some political party, and he has no self-interest in politics, but is working in accordance to national principles – to serve the Nation, Monarchy, Religions and People of the nation. Benevolent rulers

¹ https://www.youtube.com/user/THNewswire/videos - the weekly speeches have English-language subtitles.
can exist, and can rule by dhammic-principles, effectively. McCarthy though remains adamant: Socialist appropriation, as the evidence of history shows, demonstrates how economic administration based on centralized governmental authority is fundamentally flawed. The fact that such ownership is morally tainted. This is an opinion based on old paradigms. A social-system can be in operation, that is not governed by elected political parties, so a Western-style democracy should again, not be idealized. Paradigms, again, need revisited and reconsidered for alternative and more productive endeavors that benefit society. McCarthy emphasizes four immeasurable principles that everyone must remember:

- All beings have happiness – we should cognize this as well as the causes of happiness
- All beings cognize the desire for their freedom from suffering and causes of suffering
- All beings cognize variations of higher forms of joy associated with the spiritual path.
- All beings cognize profound (thus: compassionate) equanimity associated with wisdom

**In Conclusion:**

How are we using our money? How are we using our capital? Are we developing our resources productively? Are we creating new resources? Are we taking care of future generations or are we just taking care of ourselves? We can ask a myriad of questions, and present numerous scenarios. For our international students of Buddhist Studies, this book would figure well into our economics curriculum. If there is a professor stuck in the capitalist mindset, or if there is a professor utilizing the higher principles of socialism – regardless of the ideological-mindset of the biased economics-conditioning, this book speaks towards these camps. McCarthy has numerous other ideas in his text that deserve our dear attention, but this review is long enough.

The three main principles that are ascertained from this economics-text pertain towards reinterpreting capital, creating civil-endowments, and generating and operating with more compassion – for the benefit of all or at the very least, the many. In Buddhist studies, we are interested in solving our encounters acutely (critically), to determine the real nature of the phenomena that we are examining, towards that aim, a chart was devised by the reviewer to assist students who wish to consider the matter more deeply – and therefore, towards furthering those aims:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Using Buddhist Critical Thinking Skills to Solve McCarthy’s Civil Endowment Possibilities:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRITERIA:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Endowment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generosity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To explain the chart, which would be filled out at length, by a researching student:

- What is the characteristic, function, manifestation, proximate cause – of capital?
- What is the characteristic, function, manifestation, proximate cause – of civil endowments?
- What is the characteristic, function, manifestation, proximate cause – of generosity?

Students would need to take up this research, and extend what McCarthy is propagating and offering humanity. In a large sense, a civil-endowment is the same as a corporate responsibility demonstrated through generosity – or in Buddhist terms, the giving of dana,
which is an act of merit. The gift, the civil-endowment can remedy the unmindful intentions (poor tactics?) of corporations that endeavor to strip the world of its resources, or to remedy the exploitation of the work of others. Capitalists are considered to be criminal masterminds possessing tremendous skill, plan meticulously, and have great personal discipline – but none of this is the required diligence towards building a better society and leaving behind a better society. Civil-endowments may be seen as a form of large-scale public apology, but are not meant to be seen as something pathetic – so some measure of anonymously given allotment (the endowment) is given compassionately. Demonstrations of compassion is wisdom.

Wisdom at the basic level is inherent in the basic awareness that we all possess, and bringing seeds of wisdom to maturity is necessary for clearing away our confusion and cultivating our awareness of how things really are. Civil-endowments are not something to satiate our losses nor do they serve to remedy the torment created by irresponsible corporate practices – but people do need better conditions for managing their affairs more effectively, and through practicing: generosity, ethics, non-aggression, diligence, and focusing – greater social balance can be attained.

McCarthy emphasizes that this text is about the progression of post-materialism, and the idea of co-centricity, that he discusses at some length, in the text. He wants the sharing of mutual economic-centers – people and corporations – socialism for capitalists? McCarthy states that the sharing of economic-centers, or co-centricity, is a concept that points towards a whole array of meanings. To closely define the term, he suggests cocentric economics is the term that best describes his body of work, which stresses economic justice, sufficiency and opportunity for everyone. Co-centric wisdom is to think in terms of whole systems.

McCarthy admonishes us to remember that we should not be retaining and operating in the primitive conventional economics and neoclassical economics from the 18th-19th century sciences. McCarthy professes: the intellectual roots of economics in 18th century scientific thinking was a way of thinking that led to the reduction of the function of an economy to the mechanistic operation of a set of quasi-independent entities with very simplified motivations. Therefore, McCarthy opines: we have to make progressions in how we manage capital, through the creation and operating generous civil-endowments. McCarthy teaches and reminds us that we all must learn to work not for his or her self, family or nation, but for the benefit of all of humanity - universal responsibility is key to our survival as a species, and serves as the best foundation for world peace. He uses the example taken from anyone familiar with agriculture: in the germination and growth of a plant, we can point to the seed as a primary cause, but the germination process will not take place without the enabling conditions of soil, water, and sunlight that serve as catalyst for growth. In an era when our governments and corporations are not doing enough for society, civil-endowments are a viable solution that we can endorse in our university-courses on economics for our students in Buddhist studies, who will eventually leave the campus, taking their knowledge out into the society where they later develop into wise leaders.