



University of *Ljubljana*
FACULTY OF ARTS

ASIAN STUDIES

**RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES IN ASIA:
CONTINUITY AND CHANGE**

Volume IV (XX), Issue 1
Ljubljana 2016

ASIAN STUDIES, Volume IV (XX), Issue 1, Ljubljana 2016

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All articles are double blind peer-reviewed.

The journal is accessible online in the Open Journal System data base: <http://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/as>.

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Published by: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani/Ljubljana University Press, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana

For: Oddelek za azijske študije/Department of Asian Studies

For the publisher: Branka Kalenič Ramšak, Dean of Faculty of Arts

Ljubljana, 2016, First edition

Number printed: Print on demand

Graphic Design: Janez Mlakar

Printed by: Birografika Bori, d. o. o.

Price: 10,00 EUR

ISSN 2232-5131

This publication is indexed in the Cobiss database. This journal is published two times per year.

Yearly subscription: 17 EUR

Address: Filozofska fakulteta, Oddelek za azijske študije, Aškerčeva 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija
tel.: +386 (0)1 24 11 450, +386 (0)24 11 444, faks: +386 (0)1 42 59 337

This journal is published with the support of the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS).



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CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana

2-584(5)(082)
130.3:2(5)(082)

RELIGIOUS and spiritual practices in Asia : continuity and change / [editor-in-charge Nataša Visočnik].
- 1st ed. - Ljubljana : Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete = University Press, Faculty of Arts, 2016. - (Asian studies, ISSN 2232-5131 ; vol. 4 (20), issue 1)

ISBN 978-961-237-812-7
1. Visočnik, Nataša
283847936

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Introduction

Jana S. ROŠKER*

Spirituality plays a significant role in shaping the cohesion of communities, their values, and their structures across the globe. Various religious practices and ideational systems are particularly complex in Asia. Home to some of the world major spiritual traditions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism, as well as to a relevant number of practicing Christians, Muslims, and self-identified atheists and agnostics, Asia provides us with an intense and extraordinarily rich tapestry of different religious and spiritual practices.

Because of their importance, these traditions and practices form the common thread behind the special theme of the present issue of the journal *Asian Studies*. The volume challenges the notion that Asian modernities are derivative imitations of the West. On the contrary, it argues that contemporary Asian societies have transformed their ancient traditions in unique ways, forming new distinctive and widespread spiritual and religious practices that are of utmost importance for the representation, preservation, and revival of traditions, as well as for forming the identity of modern peoples living in contemporary Asian societies.

The volume is structured into five sections, including articles on *The Concept of Time in Buddhism*, contributions devoted to the issues of *Mind and Body, Subject and Object* in Asian religions, debates on the *Some Characteristics of Japanese and Korean Buddhism*, introductions to *Contemporary Neo-Confucianism*, as well as discussions of *Narrations and Religious Histories*. In the first section, Bart Dessein and Jianyun Li explore some important connections between different Buddhist meditation techniques and the perception and sensation of time. To different degrees they all also touch on the problematic, but highly topical relation between the Buddhist and the cognitive studies. Bart Dessein, approaches the problems of time in Buddhism through a historical perspective. In his article “Progress and Free Will: On the Buddhist Concept of ‘Time’ and Its Possibilities for Modernity” he mainly explores the notion of time through the ideas of progress and free will, which are also important concepts included in Buddhism, especially in the Mahayana School. Jianyun Li’s contribution entitled “What is Time? Yogācāra-Buddhist Meditation

* Jana S. ROŠKER, Professor, Department of Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.
jana.rosker[at]ff.uni-lj.si



on the Problem of the External World in the *Cheng Weishi Lun*” is also mainly focused upon the Buddhist concept of time and its relation to human perception and cognition. Both contributions contained in the first section, inter alia, at least briefly deal with the relation between Buddhism and modern cognitive studies. This relation is also a central topic of the second section entitled *Body and Mind, Subject and Object*. This section opens with Sebastjan Vörös’s essay, which directly addresses this relation and points out some central questions related to the topic through the lens of the study of consciousness in cognitive neuroscience. Andrej Ule’s contribution develops some further approaches to these questions through the Buddhist insight into forms of consciousness, which enable humans to become aware of the elimination of all differences between the individual (personal) self and the universal Self, transcending even the very category of existence and not-existence. The author of the last article in this section is Hashi Hisaki. Her contribution deals with contemporary Zen Buddhism and focuses on some spiritual possibilities it offers to post-modern, alienated human beings. It describes the opportunities to seize and preserve in these digital era the original human consciousness with its creative thinking and acting, including its abilities to transmit one idea to another for reforming and developing something new.

Iva Lakić Parać and Beatrix Mecsi are the authors of the third section, which explores “Some Characteristics of Japanese and Korean Buddhism”. While Parać’s essay opens the question of whether and to what extent the popular image of Bodhisattva Jizō in Japan still contains certain elements of native or autochthonous Japanese religions, Mecsi’s article deals with different forms of the popularization of Bodhidharma in Korea and Japan respectively through the lens of intercultural comparisons.

The next section deals with the philosophical and spiritual stream of Contemporary or Modern (Neo)-Confucian thought. While Jana S. Rošker explores this stream through its relation to the concept of the so-called “Asian Values”, Haesung Lee introduces to the readers one of the most important Confucian discourses in the history of Korean philosophy, namely the Neo-Confucianism of the Joseon dynasty.

The last section of this special issue is of a more general nature. It includes three articles on various topics concerning religious histories and religious narrations. While Tamara Ditrich explores the history of the modern concept of mindfulness and its recent post-colonial roots, Tahereh Ahmadipour introduces us a new interpretation of certain spiritual dimensions that can be found in Vladimir Bartol’s novel *Alamut*. The special issue concludes with Nataša Visočnik’s essay on the spiritual life and the role of religion in the life of *Zainichi* Koreans in contemporary Japan.

Thus, as we could see above, the present volume contains an extraordinarily rich range of materials on a relatively wide variety of topics, linked to Asian spiritual and religious traditions and their role in modern times. All of them indicate the continuing vitality of these traditions. Because of the key role Asian spirituality plays in holding together communities, explaining ancient traditions, and celebrating nature and life, we hope that this issue will be of interest for many readers of our journal. We also hope it will represent a small, but significant step in the nowadays much-needed examination of the relation between the spiritual and the secular in Asian societies and that it will, in a broader and more general sense, raise a deeper awareness about the importance of comparative studies of religion and society.

Jana S. Rošker, Chief Editor

The Concept of Time in Buddhism

Progress and Free Will: On the Buddhist Concept of “Time” and Its Possibilities for Modernity

*Bart DESSEIN**

Abstract

An even only cursory glance at the way Buddhism is experienced, interpreted, and lived in the contemporary world—both Western and Oriental—reveals Buddhism’s multiple “modern faces”. This paper does not intend to describe all or even a selected group of these many faces, but attempts to contribute to our understanding of how peculiar developments within Buddhist philosophy have made it possible that such a variety of “Buddhist modernities” could develop. It is shown that it is the peculiar Buddhist interpretation of the concept of time that has provided the basis on which the various modern features of Buddhism could build, because the Buddhist interpretation of time contains an aspect of progress and free will. It is suggested that these two aspects increased the prominence given to the individual adept in the Mahāyāna. The article then claims that it precisely are the ideas of rationality, progress and individualism that are also characteristic for the modern world that contain the possibility for Buddhism to develop its multitude of modern faces.

Keywords: time, karmic retribution, knowledge, meditation, Buddhist modernity

Izvilleček

Že bežen pogled na to, kako ljudje v sodobnem svetu (tako na Zahodu kot na Vzhodu) doživljajo, interpretirajo in tolmačijo budizem, razkrije, da so zanj značilni številni »obrazi sodobnosti«. V članku ne bom popisoval vseh ali le izbranih vidikov teh različnih obrazov, temveč bom poskušal osvetliti, kako so specifične spremembe znotraj budistične filozofije omogočile, da je nastalo toliko različnih »budističnih sodobnosti«. Zagovarjal bom trditev, da je specifična budistična interpretacija časa postavila pomembne temelje za razvoj številnih značilnosti sodobnega budizma, saj vsebuje dimenziji napredka in svobodne volje, ki sta postali še posebej pomembni v budizmu *mahāyāna*. Dokazoval bom, da so za sodobni svet značilne prav ideje o racionalnosti, napredku in individualizmu, ki budizmu dopuščajo, da razvije množico sodobnih obrazov.

Ključne besede: čas, karmična retribucija, vednost, meditacija, budistična sodobnost

* Bart DESSEIN, Professor of Chinese Language and Culture, Ghent University, Belgium.
bart.dessein[at]UGent.be



Introduction

Undertaking an evaluation of Buddhism in contemporary societies is a complex matter, as it immediately raises a series of questions: Which particular society is to be the focus of investigation? Which aspect of contemporaneity is to be discussed? Modernity for a Buddhist lay follower, e.g., will be of a different quality than it is for a monk who lives in the confines of his monastery. These modernities will again have a different meaning than those embraced by, e.g., a female Buddhist devotee who is familiar with the “modern” concepts of gender equality. Given, further, that “(a) sense of time is fundamental to human thought to the extent that the past must be invoked in order to establish any present ideology, even one that involves a discounting of the past. All ideologies are fundamentally descriptions not of a present state, but of a past history” (Kemp 1992, 106) each of these Buddhist modernities will itself also be influenced by the particular history of Buddhism in the region under investigation, or by the mutual influence different social and political structures and Buddhism may have had on each other.

As modern life—the contemporary *condition humaine*—in India is different from modern life in China, or in Japan, and as also American modernity arguably differs from German modernity or from Slovenian modernity, discussing Buddhism as a bridge between Asia and Europe becomes an even more complex issue. Which Western Buddhism is compared with which Asian version? As Buddhism has also undergone major transformations in the various regions of Asia, and as the concept of “original Buddhism” is merely a 19th century European construct, created in a Protestant, Darwinian, and Romantic context (See Maes 2015, 11–36; Lopez 2008, 5–37, 154–91; McMahan 2008, 7–8).¹ defining “Western Buddhism” or “modern Buddhism” as against a presumably authentic Indian Buddhism is a futile undertaking. Not only is there no such thing as an “original” Buddhism with which its modern Western versions could be compared, neither is there an overall modern Asian prototypical Buddhism. Contemporaneity in Asia has, in the past two centuries, seen the influences of European colonization, which have changed the political structures that were associated with Buddhism; confrontation with Western religions and ideologies has stimulated Buddhist activism; it has, in some cases, made Buddhists participants in civil war, or has stifled any Buddhist activity; capitalism has changed traditional value-structures; and also such “modern” concepts as democracy, egalitarianism, and secularization have had a great impact on Buddhism. In the

1 This can also be inferred from, e.g., Sir Edwin Arnold’s 1879 *The Light of Asia*, a poem on the life of the Buddha that portrays the Buddha in a way that is akin to Jesus. See Harvey (2013, 420).

contemporary digital age, traditional Buddhist cultures have easily transgressed their regional confines, and a whole new “Buddhist world” has emerged.²

And yet, we can rightfully speak of “modern Buddhism”, “Western Buddhism”, “European Buddhism”, “American Buddhism”, etc. In the introduction to his work *Deutsche Buddhisten. Geschichte und Gemeinschaften*, Martin Baumann (1992, 15) correctly states that the Europeanization of Buddhism comprises the acceptance of Western cultural elements by Buddhist interpreters and monastic communities, and that despite the fact that this development has changed the face of Buddhism, elements we can easily define as “Buddhist” have been maintained. It is precisely because there is commonality of Buddhist concepts that the “other” can be qualified as “Western”, “European”, or “American”.

It is to one of these commonalities that the following pages are devoted: the concept time. It will be shown that the development in the interpretation of the Buddhist concept time has made it possible for the Buddhist doctrine to have become adaptable to a multitude of simultaneous modernities—be they Asian or European, be they of a moral, ethical, religious, social, or still other nature.

“*Sarvam asti*”: Everything Exists

Confronted with the vicissitudes of life, human beings have always and everywhere tried to understand their present condition and have tried to give their contemporary life sense and meaning. This intellectual process is intrinsically related to the way a human being perceives time. Time can be interpreted as either having a dependent or independent existence, and as being either finite or infinite. That is, human beings can see themselves as traversing through an either finite or infinite but independently existing time, or they can see time as inherent in themselves. The first position implies that time has an absolute quality, i.e., time does not exist relative to a human being. The disappearance of a human being, i.e. the disappearance of one’s personal allotment of time, has no impact on the absolute time that continues to either infinitely or finitely exist. Human beings cannot therefore have a lasting effect on time. The second position implies that time exists relatively to human beings. One’s personal allotment of time, that is, the relative time, disappears together with the passing away of a human being. As time exists within oneself, time is finite by definition.³

2 For a detailed analysis of all these phenomena: see Harvey (2013, 376–418).

3 In Western philosophy, the absolute concept of time was formulated by Isaac Newton in his *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, published in 1687, and the relative concept of time was formulated by Immanuel Kant in the part “Transcendental Aesthetic” of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, published in 1787. For some further theoretical reflections on the topic: see Li and Dessein (2015, 157–8, 172–3).

The Buddhist concept of *karman*, i.e., the concept that the present lifetime is the retribution (*vipāka*) of deeds in a former lifetime, is a particular interpretation of the relationship between discrete factors (*dharma*), including human beings, and time. While Buddhism inherited the concept of *karman* from the Indian tradition within which it developed, and while all Buddhists, from the outset, accepted that the dynamics of *karman* are responsible for their contemporary life and also determine future rebirth, it was especially the Sarvāstivādins, whose development as a distinct philosophical group has been suggested to date back to the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE⁴, who philosophically developed the relation between discrete factors and time, whence their name.⁵ The Sarvāstivādins' (main) claim (*vāda*) that everything (*sarva*) exists (*asti*) is, actually, a claim that the discrete factors exist in three distinct periods of time. This position is logically inferred from the dynamics of *karman* as expressed in the concept of "conditioned production" (*pratītyasamutpāda*), the workings of causality, whereby a present discrete factor is the result of former causes and is, in its turn, the cause of a future discrete factor. The **Samyuktābhidharmahṛdaya*, a work written in Gandhāra in the 4th century CE by the Sarvāstivādin Dharmatrāta and which is extant in a Chinese translation by Saṃghavarman of 434 CE, describes this process as follows:

If there were no past and future, then there would be no present period of time; if there were no present period of time, there would also be no conditioned factors (*saṃskṛta dharma*). That is why there are the three periods of time (*trikāla*). Do not state that this is wrong. When stating that what is remote is past and that what will exist is future and (that it therefore) does not exist, and that there is only the present, this is not correct. Why? Because there is retribution (*vipāka*) of action. The World-honored One said: "There is action and there is retribution". It is not the case that action and retribution are both present. When action is present, retribution should be known as future; when retribution is present, action should be known as already past. (T.28.1552, 963b5–12)

We can here recall that the **Samayabhedoparacanacakra*, a work attributed to a certain Vasumitra⁶ explains that the name "Hetuvādin" (causalists) is another name

4 Hirakawa (1974, 143) suggests the 2nd century BCE; Shizutani (1978, 48 ff.) suggests the 1st century BCE.

5 Bronkhorst (2011, 116–7) remarks that "Brahmanical religion allowed various sometimes mutually contradictory points of view with regard to one's future destiny to coexist, and some of the most conservative Brahmins, the Mīmāṃsakas, had no place for the theory of karma right up to the middle of the first millennium CE and beyond".

6 According to Bareau (1950, 70), this work was compiled between the 3rd and the 1st centuries BCE and the 1st century CE. Lamotte (1958, 301–2) dates Vasumitra 400 years after the Bud-

for the Sarvāstivādins (T.49.2033, 22c9–10.). Bhavya, a 6th century Mādhyamika (see Bareau 1954, 231–2), explains the causalist principle as follows: “What has been produced (*utpanna*), what is being produced (*utpadyamāna*), and what is to be produced (*utpattavya*) is all supplied with causes (*sahetuka*).”⁷

This basic description of the concept of dependent origination would, as mentioned above, be accepted by all Buddhist schools. It therefore is indeed likely that it was only later that peculiar philosophical explanations of how the concept of dependent origination technically relates to the concept of time were formulated, and that it especially was the Sarvāstivādins who were responsible for this development.

The above quotations show an intricate connection between the dynamic working of *karman* (through conditioned production (*pratītyasamutpāda*)) and the time concept (past, present, and future). A logical result of this connection has been that, for the Sarvāstivādins at least, time is none other than the activity of discrete factors. As stated by Kenneth K. Inada (1974, 173): “(E)xperiential events do not take place or flow in time. Rather, it would be more appropriate to say that events flow as time”. Time is inherent in the discrete factors that therefore must have a continuous essence (*dravya*), stretching from the past, over the present, to the future. In this sense, the “temporality” of discrete factors is superimposed on them by a subjective observer.⁸ (See Dhammajoti 2009, 117–8)

The importance of this philosophical development notwithstanding, the technical question of precisely how karmic activity and time are connected, i.e., the question *how* precisely time manifests itself in the discrete factors, became heavily debated between the Kāśmīri Vaibhāṣikas and the non-Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivāda sugroups of Bactria and Gandhāra. As just mentioned, the “temporality” of discrete factors is superimposed on the latter by a subjective observer. That is to say, an observer sees discrete factors that have a continuous essence coming into existence, after which their continuance in the present is observed, as well as their disappearance in time once their allotted period of time has passed. In Buddhist vocabulary,

dha’s *parinirvāṇa*. Masuda (1925, 8) situates Vasumitra in the 1st century CE. Cousins (1991, 28) proposes a 1st to 4th century CE date for Vasumitra. There are three Chinese versions of this text: *Yibuzong lun lun* (T.49.2031), *Shiba bu lun* (T.49.2032), and *Buzhiyi lun* (T.49.2033). On the dates of these three versions: see Masuda (1925, 5–6), Lamotte (1958, 302) and Wang (1994, 171, 175–6).

7 For Bhavya’s explanation: see Rockhill (1884, 182), Walleser (1927, 78–9), Bareau (1956, 168).

8 Dux (1989, 37) states that “When we say ‘now’, we do not only denote the actual moment of our own existence; ‘now’ is the expression of the situation of the universe in the logical second of its most advanced duration, the moment of its transition in the dynamic organization that encompasses everything and everyone that is simultaneous with ourselves”.

this is expressed in the concept of the “characteristic marks of the conditioned” (*samskṛta lakṣaṇa*): birth (*utpāda*), change in continuance (*sthityanyathātva*), and passing away (*vyaya*).⁹

Between the Vaibhāṣikas and the non-Vaibhāṣikas, discussion arose whether or not these “characteristic marks of the conditioned” exist as discrete factors themselves. This discussion had major ramifications for the way the functioning of time was perceived. From the [**Abhidharmamahā*] *vibhāṣā*[śāstra], the major work of the Kāśmīri Vaibhāṣikas (dated roughly somewhere around the end of the 1st to the end of the 2nd century CE)¹⁰ we know that the Vaibhāṣikas saw the characteristic marks as discrete factors in their own right.¹¹ If the characteristic marks exist as discrete factors in their own right, the question is then how they relate to the factor with respect to which they, as discrete factors, have a function, for such a relation must exist. If there were no relation between the characteristic marks and the specific discrete factors they characterize, all factors would arise or disappear simultaneously because the presence of the characteristic marks as discrete factors is true with respect to all possible discrete entities. If, however, the characteristic marks of the conditioned *do not* exist as discrete entities but equally exist with respect to a specific discrete factor, which is the position held by the non-Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivādins, the question then is why the characteristic marks birth, change in continuance, and passing away do not function simultaneously with respect to the discrete factor they characterize, that is, why does a discrete factor not disappear at the very moment it arises? The non-Vaibhāṣikas’ answer to the above question can be read in Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośa*:

9 Sinha (1983, 85) remarks that “It is not the reality of past, present, and future as three points of time that is posited by *Mahāvibhāṣā*; rather, it is the reality of things or *dharma*s as past, present, and future that is admitted here”. For a detailed study of this problem: see Dessein (2007) and Dessein (2011).

10 On the different traditions on the date of the compilation of this work: see Nakamura (1996, 107) and Willemen, Dessein and Cox (1998, 119, 231–2). The Chinese version of this work was done by Xuanzang between 656 and 659 CE. (See T.55.2154, 557a18–19 and 320c12–16)

11 This implies that these “primary” characteristic marks (*mūlalakṣaṇa*) must be, in turn, characterized by further characteristic marks, the so-called secondary marks (*anulakṣaṇa*). It is clear that this standpoint leads to an infinite regression, as these secondary marks should logically be discrete factors in their own right and have further characteristic marks as well. When their opponents pointed to this infinite regress, the Vaibhāṣikas answered that the primary birth gives rise to the actual factor, and further leads to continuance, change and passing away, and that it also induces birth of birth, continuance of continuance, change of change, and passing away of passing away. Birth of birth, they claimed, only gives rise to primary birth. The next question for the Vaibhāṣikas obviously then was to explain how the birth of birth can bring forth birth when it itself arises through birth. (See T.27.1545, 200c15–28)

The World-honored One (...) manifested that it is the essence of a stream of conditioned force that is (designated as) conditioned and as having the nature of having arisen through conditions. (...) He did not manifest that all three characteristic marks are present in one (separate) *kṣaṇa* (instant) of a conditioned force.¹² (T.29.1558, 27c2–4)

When the characteristic marks are absent in one separate instant, but are present in succession, it is logically “birth” that brings a discrete factor into existence. “Birth” is that instant in the subjectively perceived stream of successive moments in which a discrete factor acquires its essence (*dravya*). This acquisition of the essence is the result of conditioned arising, that is, of the combination of causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*pratyaya*) through former karmic activity. For the Vaibhāṣikas, this position is untenable because when a factor acquires its essence through “birth”, then a change in characteristic marks would imply a change in essence. A given discrete factor would become a different discrete factor along with the succession of the characteristic marks birth, continuance, change, and passing away. They therefore differentiated a latent “capability” (*sāmarthyā*) and an active state (*kāritra*) of the characteristic marks. This solution is related to their acknowledgement that characteristic marks are discrete factors themselves. Any single characteristic mark has the ability to change from a latent state to an active state while continuously existing as an independent discrete factor, simultaneously with the discrete factor on which they have an effect (See T.27:1545, 200a9–b5, 393a15–16). A logical result of this interpretation is that it is no longer the characteristic mark birth that brings a discrete factor into existence, but the “becoming active” of birth. A next question to be solved was the following: When the characteristic marks exist as discrete factors themselves, how then does birth become active with respect to a particular discrete factor, without thereby eliminating the relation between characteristic marks and the discrete factor on which they have an effect, i.e., avoiding the possibility that all discrete factors arise and disappear simultaneously? The Vaibhāṣikas found the solution to this problem in the concept of conditioned production: Birth needs a particular assemblage of causes and conditions to become active (See T.29:1562, 409a28–b1 and 409b11–13). These causes and conditions are a karmic continuation with respect to a particular discrete factor.

That karmic activity in the present lifetime will, through the principle of conditioned production, have its effect on a future life, brings us to the peculiar position that the Buddhist cycle of rebirth (*saṃsāra*)—a cyclic time concept—contains an aspect of progress: each beginning of a new cycle through karmic retribution is not a return

12 The lifetime of Vasubandhu remains on object of scholarly discussion, with arguments for either a 4th century or a 5th century lifetime.

to a “timeless origin”.¹³ Karmic “progress”, it should be noted, is also not determinist. For most Buddhist schools, the result of *karman* is morally indeterminate (*avyākṛta*), which means that karmic retribution does not determine fortune and misfortune: the Buddhist cycle of rebirth leaves space for free decision (See Halbfass 2000, 116–8; Bayer 2010, 50–51). Günter Dux (1989, 236) remarked that, as a rule, life is “loaded” and returns back to the origin. The origin, however, is twofold: the origin that is timeless and the origin that adjusts to becoming. As long as the soul is loaded, it cannot return to the timeless origin, but only to the origin of becoming. Only those who have attained wisdom that is free from any bond to the world can return to the timeless origin. In this process, one does not destroy time, but liberates oneself from time. Applying this to Buddhism, while the earlier, non-Vaibhāṣika position saw time as inherent in the discrete factors, which implies that time is relative and stops with the passing away of an individual human being, thus making a return to a “timeless origin” impossible, the Vaibhāṣikas’ distinction between a passive state and an active state of the characteristic marks created the following “eschatological” possibility: when a Buddhist adept, through pursuing the middle mode of progress (*madhyamā pratipad*), attains Nirvāṇa, their relative time may have stopped, but the absolute time will continue to latently exist. They therefore can return to the “timeless origin”. With this time perspective, Buddhism, one could claim, stands in between a strict cyclical concept of time and a linear one that was, for Europe, developed as a result of the Jewish-Christian eschatology, and was introduced by Augustine (354–430).¹⁴ I will return to this when discussing Buddhism in the contemporary European world.

The “Powers of Cognition” and the Idea of Individual Progress

Above, we have stated that the dynamics of dependent origination leave the place open for free will: whether or not a human being follows the Buddhist path of liberation that will, in the end, enable him to return to the “timeless origin”, is his free decision.¹⁵ It is, moreover, because the cyclic time concept of Buddhism contains an idea of progress that it is possible to gradually shake off all bonds to the world

13 This time concept differs from the traditional Chinese cyclic time concept that lacks this aspect of progress. See Bauer (2006, 37–8).

14 Taking the birth of Christ as the focal point of history, Augustine’s linear time model was divided into three time periods: the period from Adam to Moses, the period from Moses to the birth of Christ, and the period from Christ to the end of the world. The resurrection of Christ is the endpoint of this linear interpretation of time. For the development of the time concept in Europe see Dux (1989, 327–31).

15 Also in this respect, Buddhism differs from the Christian doctrine. For Christianity, the fact that all human beings are created by God, makes them part of a divine plan. See Göller and Mittag (2008, 28, 31), who characterize Augustine’s view of history as the transformation of the history of a clan, people, or tribe into the history of mankind.

and liberate oneself from time. The importance of these concepts is visible in the description of the Buddhist path to liberation as it is presented in the Sarvāstivāda philosophical works. While progressing on the path to liberation, the practitioner gains and practices different forms of knowledge and forms of meditative attainment. On the path to liberation, there thus is an interplay between knowledge and meditative attainment, i.e., between the cognitive and the meditative.¹⁶

The path to liberation consists of a “path of vision” (*darśanamārga*) and a “path of spiritual practice” (*bhāvanāmārga*). The distinction between these two kinds of path is based on the way passions (*anuśaya*) are annihilated, i.e., through vision and repeated spiritual practice, respectively. There is a basic set of ten passions that are simultaneously linked to the three Buddhist realms of existence (the sensual realm (*kāmadhātu*), the realm of form (*rūpadhātu*), and the realm of formlessness (*ārūpyadhātu*) and that are to be partly annihilated through vision (*darśanaprahātavya*) of the four noble truths and partly through repeated spiritual practice (*bhāvanāprahātavya*). This means that for the final destruction of all these passions, one has to apply vision and repeated spiritual practice of all four truths, and throughout the three realms of existence. As the *śrāvaka* progresses in this pursuit, he attains the ten kinds of knowledge as follows: When he initially enters the path to liberation, he first develops patience regarding the truth of suffering (*duḥkhasatya*) in relation to those passions that belong to the realm of sensual passion. This moment is called “patience regarding the truth with respect to suffering” (*duḥkhe dharmakṣānti*). In this moment, what is destroyed is that particular part of the ten passions that belongs to the realm of sensual passion and that is to be destroyed by vision of the truth of suffering. As the *śrāvaka*, in this moment, is not yet free from desire, he acquires conventional knowledge (*saṃvṛtijñāna*). This moment is followed by a second moment in which the same truth is fully understood. This moment is called “knowledge of the truth with respect to suffering” (*duḥkhe dharmajñāna*). In this moment, the *śrāvaka* makes sure that the part of the passions that was annihilated in the previous moment does not reoccur.

The *śrāvaka* now takes possession of two more types of knowledge: knowledge of the doctrine (*dharmajñāna*) and knowledge of suffering (*duḥkhajñāna*). This second moment is followed by a third moment, which is related to that part of the passions that is to be destroyed by vision of the truth of suffering and belongs to the higher two realms. This moment is called “subsequent patience regarding the truth with respect to suffering” (*duḥkhe ’nvayakṣānti*). The final destruction of this part of the passions, i.e., the certitude that also this part of the passions will not reoccur, is called “subsequent

16 For a discussion on the different theories that have been formulated concerning the relation between knowledge and meditative attainment see Cox (1992, 65–66 and 83–86).

knowledge regarding the truth with respect to suffering” (*duḥkhe ’nvayajñāna*). In this fourth moment, the *śrāvaka* also takes possession of subsequent knowledge (*anvaya-jñāna*). As there are four truths, there are sixteen moments in this “path of vision” (*darśanamārga*). In the sixth moment, knowledge of the origin (*samudayajñāna*) is further acquired; in the tenth moment, knowledge of cessation (*nirodhajñāna*); and in the fourteenth moment, knowledge of the path (*mārgajñāna*).

Having reached the sixteenth moment on the path of vision, the *śrāvaka* enters the stream towards liberation. He now has to subdue that part of the same passions that is to be annihilated through repeated spiritual practice. While doing so, he continues cultivating the seven kinds of knowledge he has already attained on the path of vision. Once the *śrāvaka* has attained the fruit of nonreturning (*anāgamyaphala*), i.e., the last of the noble fruits (*śrāmanyaphala*) before attaining *arhat*-ship, he obtains the knowledge of the thoughts of others (*paracittajñāna*), as he is now completely freed from the realm of sensual passion. When the *śrāvaka* has accomplished his task of completely destroying all passions, he obtains the last two kinds of knowledge: knowledge of destruction (*ksayajñāna*), i.e., knowing that all passions have been destroyed, and knowledge of nonorigination (*anutpādayajñāna*), i.e., knowing that one is no longer subject to rebirth.¹⁷ Because with the obtainment of the knowledge of destruction and of the knowledge of nonorigination the *śrāvaka* enters Nirvāṇa, he equals the Tathāgata. These two kinds of knowledge therefore pertain to the Tathāgata only (T.28.1550, 821b24–c2).

Table 1: *The obtainment of knowledge on the path to liberation*

path of vision (<i>darśanamārga</i>)	moment 1	conventional knowledge (<i>samvrtijñāna</i>)
	moment 2	knowledge of the doctrine (<i>dharmajñāna</i>) knowledge of suffering (<i>duḥkhajñāna</i>)
	moment 4	subsequent knowledge (<i>anvayajñāna</i>)
	moment 6	knowledge of the origin (<i>samudayajñāna</i>)
	moment 10	knowledge of cessation (<i>nirodhajñāna</i>)
	moment 14	knowledge of the path (<i>mārgajñāna</i>)
	path of spiritual practice (<i>bhāvanāmārga</i>)	

17 The earliest description of this path is found in Dharmasreṣṭhin’s **Abhidharmahydya*, a non-Vaiḥāṣika Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma text that has to be dated around the beginning of the Common Era. (See T.28.1550, 820b25–c18) Notice that it might be that a *śrāvaka*, actually, is already free from desire when entering the path of vision. In that case, he possesses the knowledge of the thoughts of others from the outset.

The idea of individual progress that is evident from the above is also visible in the related concept of the so-called “powers of cognition” (*jñānabala*). A list of ten powers of cognition already figured in the *Samyuktāgama* as a part of a discussion on the difference between the fully awakened (*samyaksambuddha*) Tathāgata and the *arhat* who is liberated through wisdom (*prajñāvimukta*). Of this series of ten powers of cognition, two are particularly important in light of the development of the interpretation of time provided in the previous section: the “power of the cognition of one’s former abodes or existences” (*pūrvanivāsajñānabala*), i.e., the Buddha’s power to know all his and all other beings’ previous existences; and the “power of the cognition of death and rebirth of sentient beings” (*cyutyupapāda-jñānabala*), i.e., the Buddha’s power to see with his divine eye (*divyacakṣus*) the place of death and rebirth of all beings. These two powers of cognition are developed in a trance state (*dhyāna*) and have a material form as cognitive object.¹⁸

While the possession of these powers of cognition is, according to the *Samyuktāgama*, (i.e., according to Śrāvakayāna Buddhism) (T.2.99, 186c17–187b5),¹⁹ only possible for the Tathāgata, with the development of the Mahāyāna, they were thought not to be unique for the historical Buddha, but also to be obtained by the Buddhist adept. This can be inferred from Dharmasreṣṭhin’s **Abhidharmabṛdaya* in which the powers of cognition are discussed with respect to their

18 The other eight are: the power of the cognition of the possible and impossible (*sthānāsthānajñānabala*), i.e., the Buddha’s power to know all factors, their causes and conditions (*hetupratyaya*), and the mechanism of their fruits of retribution (*vipākaphalāniyāma*); the power of the cognition of retribution of action (*karmavipākajñānabala*), i.e., the power to know the sphere of action (*karmasthāna*) of all kinds of actions of the past, present, and future; the power of the cognition of trances, liberations, meditative attainments and *samādhis* (*dhyānavimokṣasamādhisamāpattijñānabala*), i.e., the power to know all these auxiliary factors of the path to liberation; the power of the cognition of higher and lower faculties (*indriyaparāparajñānabala*), i.e., the power to know the moral faculties of all beings; the power of the cognition of resolve (*nānādhimuktijñānabala*), i.e., the power to know the purity (*prasāda*) and the inclinations (*ruci*) of all beings; the power of the cognition of dispositions (*nānādhātujñānabala*), i.e., the power to know acquired dispositions of all beings in all spheres of existence; the power of the cognition of the courses (*sarvatragāminipratipajñānabala*), i.e., the power to know which way leads to which destination; and the power of the cognition of the destruction of impure influence (*āsravakṣayajñānabala*), i.e., the power to know the destruction of impure influence, the nature of impure influence and the mindset of himself and of all beings.

19 An abridged version of the same is found in T.2.99, 189a7–13. For an extensive treatment of the ten powers of cognition: See Lamotte (1970, III: 1524–1563). Sanskrit versions of the *Daśabalasūtra* are quoted in the *Sphuṭārthābhīdharmaśāstrāvyākhyā*: Wogihara (1971, 614: 1.14–642, 1.26), attesting many variants. For fragments of manuscripts: see Lamotte (1970, III: 1506). For other variants: see Lamotte (1970, III: 1509–1510). These ten powers of cognition are also enumerated in the *Ekottarāgama* (T.2.125, 776b16–c20), which continues with listing four kinds of confidence (*vaiśāradya*), equally possessed by the Tathāgata (T.2.125, 776c20–777a5). These two series also figure in the “Greater Discourse on the Lion’s Roar” of the *Majjhimanikāya* (MN I: Trenckner (1988, 71), Horner (1954, 95–97).

mutual relation, and with respect to their relation with the ten kinds of knowledge (*jñāna*) a *śrāvaka* takes possession of when progressing on the path to liberation, a treatment that suggests that the *śrāvaka* also has part in them.²⁰ This also explains why the **Abhidharmamahādaya* and Dharmatrāta's **Samyuktābhidharmamahādaya* deal with this topic in the chapter "Knowledge".²¹ The order in which the ten powers of cognition are discussed in these works is also the order we find in the *Samyuktāgama*, and is the order as it became standardized in the Sarvāstivāda literature.²² According to the **Abhidharmamahādaya*, the first power of cognition comprises the ten forms of knowledge a *śrāvaka* develops (T.28.1550, 820b26–c18). For the other nine powers of cognition, Dharmasreṣṭhin only states that they are different from the first power of cognition as to the number of knowledges they comprise (T.28.1550, 822c29–823a14).²³ Dharmatrāta's **Samyuktābhidharmamahādaya*, a work that is heavily influenced by Vaibhāṣika viewpoints, further informs us that the power of cognition of the former abodes or existences comprises one knowledge: the knowledge of former existences, which is a type of conventional knowledge, and that the same is true for the power of cognition of birth and death (T.28.1552, 922a15–16 and 922b2–3 resp).²⁴ The possibility to know previous existences obviously relates to the progressive aspect we delineated above.

Dharmatrāta's **Samyuktābhidharmamahādaya* as well as the **Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra* further list the ten powers of cognition together with a corresponding series comprising four types of confidence (*vaiśāradya*), great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*), and three kinds of mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna*), thus forming a list of eighteen factors. This list is called the "eighteen unique factors (āveṇikadharmā) of a Buddha" (T.28.1552, 922c16–18; T.27.1545, 85a26–27, 156c16 ff., 624a14–15, 735c16–18). The Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma literature thus appears to have developed a series of "eighteen unique factors of a Buddha",

20 The Chinese version of this text was done by Saṃghadeva and Huiyuan in 391 CE. See T.28.1550, 809a5–7; T.50.2059, 357c23–361b13; T.55.2145, 72c29, 99c17–18. See also Willems (1975, xxxii, note # 40). For a detailed study of this concept: see Dessein (2010).

21 The **Abhidharmamahādaya* first discusses the elements of existence (*dharma*), the formations (*saṃskāra*) that are responsible for the process of causality, and the actual actions (*karman*) that beings commit. After this initial exposition, the author outlines the passions (*anusāya*) that are the fundamentals of the actions committed, and the phases of nobility (*ārya*) a *śrāvaka* goes through to eventually reach *arhat*-ship. These two chapters can be considered as the core chapters of the text as the passions are the fundamentals of rebirth, and the phases of nobility form the antipode to *saṃsāra*. In the chapters on knowledge (*jñāna*) and concentration (*samādhi*), the qualities attained while progressing on the path to liberation are addressed. Note that also the *sūtra* literature urged the *bhikkhus* to develop the powers of cognition. (See T.2.125, 777a12–13)

22 On the likely Sarvāstivāda affiliation of the *Samyuktāgama*: see Waldschmidt (1980, 136, 139, 148).

23 See also Willems (1975, 101–4), Armelin (1978, 152–3).

24 See also de La Vallée Poussin (1971, V: 71).

of which it is explicitly stated that they do not belong to the *śrāvaka* or to the *pratyekabuddha* (T.27.1545, 158a4–11).

Table 2: *The relation between the powers of cognition and the ten kinds of knowledge*

Power of cognition	Ten kinds of knowledge
power of the cognition of the possible and impossible (<i>sthānāsthānajñānabala</i>),	conventional knowledge (<i>saṃvṛtijñāna</i>) knowledge of the doctrine (<i>dharmajñāna</i>) knowledge of suffering (<i>duḥkhajñāna</i>) subsequent knowledge (<i>anvayajñāna</i>) knowledge of the origin (<i>samudayajñāna</i>) knowledge of cessation (<i>nirodhajñāna</i>) knowledge of the path (<i>mārgajñāna</i>) knowledge of the thoughts of others (<i>paracittajñāna</i>) knowledge of destruction (<i>kṣayajñāna</i>) knowledge of nonorigination (<i>anutpādayajñāna</i>)
power of the cognition of one's former abodes or existences (<i>pūrvanivāsajñānabala</i>)	conventional knowledge (<i>saṃvṛtijñāna</i>)
power of the cognition of death and rebirth of sentient beings (<i>cyutyupapādayajñānabala</i>)	conventional knowledge (<i>saṃvṛtijñāna</i>)

This explicit statement in the **Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāsāstra* notwithstanding, we have learnt from the above that when a *śrāvaka* progresses on the path to liberation, he takes possession of ten types of knowledge, the last two of which consists of his transformation from being a *śrāvaka* to being Buddha-like. Along with taking possession of these ten types of knowledge, the *śrāvaka* also develops powers of cognition, the last two of which are types of conventional knowledge that enable him to look back on previous existences. The fact that a *śrāvaka* becomes Buddha-like, and that he takes possession of powers of cognition which in Sūtra literature were stated to be unique for the Buddha, conflates at least some qualities of a *śrāvaka* and a Buddha.

In circumstances where, on the one hand, some characteristics were ascribed to the Buddha only, and, on the other hand, no difference seems to have been made between some qualities of the Buddha and of the liberated *śrāvaka*—both were called “*arhat*” (See Bareau 1957)²⁵—discussion arose as to what precisely the difference between an *arhat* and a *buddha* consisted of, and the infallibility

25 See also Jaini (1992) and Bronkhorst (2000, 127–8).

of an *arhat* became questioned. As a result, some Buddhists no longer regarded *arhat*-ship as the ultimate goal of religious praxis, but they chose to strive for *bodhisattva*-ship, thus aspiring to become a Buddha—or, at least, to possess the same qualities a Buddha has. The Mahāyāna acceptance of a simultaneous existence of multiple Buddhist universes, each with its own Buddha, naturally further enhanced this possibility.

The development of the concept of the *bodhisattvayāna* thus radically changed the path of cultivation. Nāgārjuna's *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*, a commentary on the **Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, an expanded version of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, gives us detailed information on this new path.²⁶ Addressing the issue of the powers of cognition, the text states: "(Moreover,) Śāriputra, the Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva who wants to understand the ten powers of cognition (*jñānabala*), (...), should develop *prajñāpāramitā* (T.25.1509, 235a28–b1)."²⁷

In the subsequent explanation, it is stated that the qualities just enumerated are peculiar for the Buddha, and that a *bodhisattva* should first exercise the qualities of a *śrāvaka* in order to convince the *śrāvakas* and the *pratyekabuddhas* to turn to the Mahāyāna (T.25.1509, 235b1–c3). This statement clearly depicts the *śrāvakayāna* as a preparatory vehicle for the *bodhisattvayāna*, as it is further stated that, having acquired the qualities of the *śrāvaka*, the *bodhisattva* is desirous of obtaining or desirous of knowing the qualities that particularly pertain to the Buddha. To attain this aim, he must cultivate *prajñāpāramitā* (T.25.1509, 235c3–21, 236b10–12, b21–22).

The **Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* also gives evidence that a *bodhisattva* must first develop the qualities of a *śrāvaka*. According to this work, a *bodhisattva* has twenty-one characteristic marks, seventeen of which he shares with a *śrāvaka* and four of which he shares with the Buddha (See Conze 1961, 203–12). That the *bodhisattva* possesses characteristics that partly belong to a *śrāvaka* and partly to the Buddha may be explained by the following: contrary to the Buddha, a *bodhisattva* delays his eventual entry into *nirvāṇa* and remains in *saṃsāra* with the purpose of consecrating himself for the well-being of worldlings (*prthagjana*) as long as possible. First practicing the *śrāvakayāna* may enable him to help the adherents of this vehicle shift to the Mahāyāna.

26 The 2nd century text was translated into Chinese as *Da zhidu lun* (T.25.1509) by Kumārajīva between 402–6. (See T.25.1509, 756c9–18; T.55.2145, 75b10–18) Kumārajīva translated the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* simultaneously. See also Lamotte (1970, III: v–vi, xlv–l). The short recension is the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. The long recensions are the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* and the *śatasāhasrikā*.

27 See also T.8.222, 149b8–9.

That the *bodhisattva* indeed can obtain the powers of cognition is affirmed in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra*, as follows:

The *bodhisattvas* have not yet obtained the ten powers of cognition, and the *śrāvaka* and the *pratyekabuddha* are unable to obtain them. So why are they mentioned now? Answer: Although a *śrāvaka* is unable to attain them, when he hears about the quality of these ten powers of cognition, he thinks: “The Buddha has such great qualities,” and he rejoices himself in saying: “We have obtained great gains and abundant good.” Thanks to the purity of their faith, they enter the path of destruction of suffering. When the *bodhisattvas* hear about [the ten powers of cognition], they diligently cultivate the path of the *bodhisattva*, and at will obtain such ten powers of cognition and other fruits of great quality (T.25.1509, 236a14–19).

and:

Because the Buddha has such qualities, therefore one should think about the Buddha. The Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva therefore wants to obtain the ten powers of cognition, the four types of confidence and the eighteen unique factors of the Buddha, and he thus should study *prajñāpāramitā* (T.25.1509, 236b9–12).

The difference between a *bodhisattva* and the Buddha is also visible in the following passage of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra*: When the question is raised why, with thirty-six attributes of the Buddha (ten powers of cognition, four types of confidence, three kinds of recollection, great compassion and eighteen unique factors), only eighteen are said to be unique (*āveṇika*), the answer given is that the *śrāvakas* and the *pratyekabuddhas* possess part of the first eighteen, but have no part in the second series of eighteen (T.25.1509, 247b19–22). This is also affirmed in the following:

The *arhat*, *pratyekabuddha* and *bodhisattva* (in some way take part in the ten powers of cognition that Kātyāyanīputra took for attribute unique for the Buddha): they too know the possible and impossible, have the power of cognition of retribution, have the (power of) cognition of *dhyāna* and *samāpatti* and so up to the (power of) cognition of the extinction of impure influence (T.25.1509, 255b25–c22).

As according to the Mahāyāna *arhat*-ship is no longer the ultimate goal of religious praxis, acquiring the qualities that before were ascribed to the fully enlightened *arhat*—among which are the ten powers of cognition—is not the end of the

religious path. Having attained this stage, the *bodhisattva* must still progress on to the further stages of the *bodhisattva* (*bodhisattvabhūmi*).

That a *bodhisattva* was not thought of as completely identical to the Buddha is evident from the fact that the Mahāyāna *sūtras* came to develop separate lists of characteristics for a *bodhisattva* and the Buddha. The newly developed list of factors that are unique for the Buddha is of a non-canonical origin, however, and is adopted in the Mahāyāna texts.

To sum up: while the *sūtra* literature differentiated ten powers of cognition as exclusive attributes of the Tathāgata, the **Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra* and the Sarvāstivāda texts that postdate this text add a series of other elements to these ten, and call them the “unique factors of the Buddha”. With the rise of the *bodhisattvayāna*, the religious career of the adept drastically changed. According to the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā* literature, the *bodhisattva* first had to develop the qualities that also a *śrāvaka* and a *pratyekabuddha* possess, and then has to, through exercising *prajñāpāramitā*, also develop the qualities of a Buddha. This explains why early lists of attributes of a *bodhisattva* contain some qualities that are peculiar for a *śrāvaka* and some that belong to the Tathāgata. Gradually, however, separate lists of unique factors of a *bodhisattva* and unique factors of the Buddha were developed. This led to a new, non-canonical, list of eighteen unique factors of the Buddha. The ten powers of cognition no longer figure in this new list, as they became interpreted as also belonging to *arhat*-ship.

Progress, Free Will, and Buddhist Modernity

It is clear from the above that the accentuation of an individual’s free will, the notion of progress, and the accentuation of both knowledge and meditative attainment in the Buddhist path to liberation are elements that have the potential to fuse with European concepts of “modernity”. Before this could actually happen, however, also the European interpretation of the concept time had to undergo fundamental developments. A first such major shift in the way time was perceived in Europe was brought about by the Christian scholastic thinking. After the establishment of history writing in ancient Greece in the 5th century BCE had deviated the attention from the realm of the sacred, the mythical and the mythological, and redirected it to the profane world (see Göllar and Mittag 2008, 17),²⁸ Augustinus (354–430) again rendered life on earth untrue

28 Eliade (1986, 97) remarks that archaic time concepts are characterized by an annihilation of concrete time, i.e., an anti-historical tendency, the refusal to preserve a memory of the past. This, so he claims, is a refusal of archaic man to perceive himself as a historical being.

and without value. According to the Christian doctrine, humans are alienated from themselves and will only return to themselves in the transcendent empire of God. Profane life is not meaningful *an sich*, but is only meaningful in its transcendental function. Another important aspect of the Christian faith is its universal claim: all human beings are created by God and therefore do not merely have the potential to turn to God, but are even summoned to take part in the divine plan to become part of the ecclesiastical community (See Göller and Mittag 2008, 25–31).

A second major shift was brought about starting from the middle of the 15th century, when the development of the physical sciences in the age of Humanism and Renaissance revealed that both time and space are endless. This not only challenged the Augustinian view, but also reinterpreted the role of human beings: they became individual actors in an endless time and space, and personal freedom was seen as a prerequisite for human beings to be able to act individually and creatively (See Casirer 1927, 46).

In the previous sections, we have outlined that, in Buddhism, the cyclic time concept entails an aspect of progress, and that, with the development of the Mahāyāna, human beings—*śrāvakas*—were thought to be able to partake in part of the qualities of the Buddha, in this encouraged by the simultaneous existence of multiple universes and Buddhas. Given, further, that the decision to pursue the path towards Buddha-hood is based on a human being's free will, it may therefore be no surprise that the 18th century Europe's appreciation of Buddhism is based on the Buddhist doctrine's rationality.²⁹ As Peter Harvey stated (2013, 419):

Like Christianity, Buddhism had a noble ethical system, but it appeared to be a religion of self-help, not dependent on God or priests. Like science, it seemed to be based on experience, saw the universe as ruled by law, and did not regard humans and animals as radically distinct.

Into the 1960s, Buddhism in Europe remained primarily focused on the rationality of the Buddhist doctrine, and its preoccupation with intellect and experience; cultic activities were often seen as a degeneration of the “original” Buddhism (Baumann 1992, 17).

²⁹ In the world of philosophy, Buddhism reached the West through such thinkers as Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) who, however, conflated concepts of Buddhism and Hinduism. In the field of literature, we can mention, e.g., Hermann Hesse's 1922 *Siddhartha* and the poems by Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder (see Tonkinson 1995), and in the field of psycho-analysis, Carl Jung is known to have been influenced by Buddhist practices. (See Harvey 2013, 419–20) For the latter: see Fromm, Suzuki, and De Mortino (1963).

As we have outlined above, the Buddhist path to liberation was from the outset characterized by an intricate interplay between knowledge and meditative attainment. That is, engaging in meditative practices does not necessarily infringe on modern man's claim to rationality—actually, the very reverse is true. This may be one element in explaining the popularity of a variety of forms of meditative practices in modern Europe that became prominent in the 1970s (Baumann 1992, 17). Peter Harvey continues his description of the appreciation of Buddhism in Europe as follows (2013, 419): “Yet for those with a taste for mysticism, such as those touched by the Romantic movement, it offered more than science.”

Since the 1970s, Buddhist modernity in Europe has also seen an increase in Buddhist groups, organizations, and temples that define themselves as Vajrayāna, with, judging from the internet World Buddhist Directory, 44.7% of the Buddhist groups, centers, monasteries/temples, and organizations in 2010 defining themselves as “Vajrayāna”, followed by those of “Mahāyāna” affiliation (36.2 %), “Theravāda” (11.7 %), and “Non-sectarian/Mixed” affiliation (7.2 %).³⁰

That Buddhism also serves an individual “modern” agenda may be evident from a glance at the table of contents of Damien Keown's *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics* (2000) where we find such topics listed as Buddhism and Ecology, Buddhism and Human Rights, Buddhism and Abortion, etc.

Also, in Asia, the coming in of the modern world has changed the face of Buddhism. Discussing Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere (1988, 126) suggested that what they call “Protestant Buddhism” both protested against European colonization and Christian missionization, a process in which emphasis is put on an individual's seeking for their ultimate goal without intermediaries. “Under the influence of Protestantism”, they claim, “Religion is privatized and internalized: the truly significant is not what takes place at a public celebration or in ritual, but what happens inside one's own mind or soul”.³¹ This development is indeed similar to the advent of Protestantism in Europe that, in its critique of Catholicism, advocated that trust in men could endanger the soul, and provided the individual with a direct access to God (Weber 1951, 241).

Discussing contemporary China, Goossaert and Palmer (2011, 304) claimed that:

At a basic level, then, the emergence of religious modernity can be said to be characterized by a shift in the relative importance of preexisting

30 For a detailed overview: see Harvey (2013, 451–6).

31 See also McMahan (2008, 7).

forms of Chinese religiosity, from the ascriptive communal cults employing religious specialists to voluntary, congregational, and body-cultivational styles.(...) Another point of continuity—which is also the defining “modern” characteristic of most of these movements—is their conscious identification with tradition, in relation to, though not necessarily in opposition to, a modern secularist culture in which religion is constantly obliged to justify itself, often resorting to modernist or scientific arguments. The traditions thus formulated can be considered “reinvented” in the sense that they create new compositions out of selected elements of tradition—elements often selected for their perceived compatibility with modern, secular values.

From the philosophical developments outlined above, it may be clear that such a “reinvention” of tradition permeates the whole Buddhist history.

Conclusion

Buddhist doctrine has, from the outset, seen an intricate connection between the dynamic process of *karman* that operates through conditioned production, and time. It was the Sarvāstivādins who tried to explain precisely how these are technically related. While the earlier non-Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivādins saw time as inherent in the discrete factors themselves, the Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivādins regarded discrete factors and time each to have an independent reality. They developed the concept of a relative time, i.e., time as it regards one particular discrete factor, and an absolute time that, once a human being has returned to a “timeless origin” preserves a latent existence. This strengthened a human being’s position as a creative actor with respect to their particular relative time. For the further development of Buddhism, the importance of this interpretation was that the notion of “individual progress” was strengthened, albeit within a fundamentally cyclic concept of time. The Buddhist time concept thus came to hold a position within a strict cyclic time concept and a strict linear concept. The philosophical value of this development was that Buddhism more clearly became neither fatalistic nor determinist—it became “modern”. The accentuation of an individual’s free will, the notion of progress, and the accentuation of both knowledge and meditative attainment in the Buddhist path to liberation are elements that could fuse with European concepts of “modernity” and may, therefore, be helpful in trying to explain the possibility of Buddhist modernity.

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What is Time?: Yogācāra-Buddhist Meditation on the Problem of the External World in the *Treatise on the Perfection of Consciousness-only* (*Cheng weishi lun*)

Jianjun LI*

Abstract

Because it asserts that there is consciousness-only (*vijñapti-mātratā*), the difficulty in philosophically approaching the Yogācāra-Buddhist text *Cheng weishi lun* centers on the problem of the external world. This paper is based on a review by Lambert Schmithausen that, specifically with regard to the problem of the external world, questions Dan Lusthaus's phenomenological investigation of the *CWSL*. In it I point out that the fundamental temporality of consciousness brought to light by the Yogacaric revelation of the incessant differentiation of consciousness (*vijñāna-pariṇāma*) calls into question every temporally conditioned, and hence appropriational, understanding of *vijñapti-mātratā*. Therefore, the problem of the external world cannot be approached without taking into account the temporality of consciousness, which, furthermore, compels us to face the riddle of time.

Keywords: time, *vijñapti-mātratā*, *Cheng weishi lun*, Dan Lusthaus, Lambert Schmithausen

Izveček

Budistično jogijsko besedilo *Cheng weishi lun* zagovarja trditev, da obstaja samo zavest (*vijñapti-mātratā*), zato se filozofski pristop tega besedila usmeri na problem zunanjega sveta. Ta članek temelji na recenziji Lamberta Schmithasena, ki se ob upoštevanju problema zunanjega sveta ukvarja s fenomenološkimi preiskavami *CWSL*-ja Dana Lusthaus. V njem sem poudaril, da je zaradi odvisnosti zavesti od časa, ki jo poudarja razodevanje nenehnega spreminjanja zavesti pri jogi (*vijñāna-pariṇāma*), vprašljivo vsako časovno pogojeno, in zato večkrat prisvojeno, razumevanje pojma *vijñapti-mātratā*. Tako k problemu zunanjega sveta ni mogoče pristopiti brez upoštevanja časovnosti zavesti, ki nas poleg tega sooča tudi z uganjo časa.

Ključne besede: čas, *vijñapti-mātratā*, *Cheng weishi lun*, Dan Lusthaus, Lambert Schmithausen

1 LI Jianjun 李建軍, Faculty of Philosophy, Philosophy of Science and the Study of Religion, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany. jianjun.lmu[at]gmail.com



Introduction

A main ground for scholars to talk about philosophical phenomenology developed by Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) and Buddhism together is that both of them have undertaken a very profound analysis of consciousness, which is characterized by its intentionality. In Buddhism, the concept that corresponds to intentionality is *karman* or *karma* (業 業). Inspired by the intentionality of *karman*, Dan Lusthaus has attempted a phenomenological investigation of (Yogācāra) Buddhism taking the *Treatise on The Perfection of Consciousness-only* (*Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論, *vijñapti-mātratā-siddhi*)¹ as an example (See Lusthaus 2002, especially 11–36; 168–94). In his critical response to Lusthaus’ research, Lambert Schmithausen also accepts the phenomenological rendering of *karman* as intentionality,² but he does not agree with Lusthaus on the problem of the external world as presented in the *CWSL*.³

Following the debate between Schmithausen and Lusthaus, I will try to demonstrate in this paper that the *temporality of consciousness*, which is brought to light by revelation of the incessant differentiation/evolution/alteration of consciousness (*vijñāna-pariṇāma*), not only helps deepen our comprehension of the concept of intentionality or *karman* but also compels us to further meditate on the problem of the external world. The problem of the external world looked at in light of the temporality of consciousness, which generally puts into doubt the experiences of time in everyday life, necessarily and radically highlights the riddle of time. It should be stressed that there would be no problem concerning the external world at all, if the recognition of the radical temporality of consciousness had not already compelled us to face the riddle of time.⁴

1 *Cheng weishi lun* or *Cheng wei-shih lun* is abbreviated as *CWSL* in the following discussion.

2 Regarding the intentionality of *karman*: “In Buddhism karmically productive action is defined as consisting in either intention (*cetanā*) itself or intentional (*cetayitvā*) acts, which means that in any case intention, hence a *mental* factor is decisive” (Schmithausen 2005, 50–51).

3 Dan Lusthaus’ *Buddhist Phenomenology. A Philosophical Investigation of Yogācāra Buddhism and the Cheng Wei-shih lun* has evoked much discussion. (See, for instance, Waldron 2003, Gray 2003, Muller 2004, Eckel 2004, Gradinarov 2005 and Lau 2007) In the following, however, I will focus on Lambert Schmithausen’s response to this book (Schmithausen 2005).

4 The question of time has threaded the phenomenological movement and become another meeting point in the phenomenological investigation of Buddhism. For example, Rolf Elberfeld, especially with reference to the Zen-Buddhist meditation on time by Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253), has made a contribution to the phenomenology of time in Buddhism (Elberfeld 2004). And partly in his newly finished dissertation Li Jianjun has, with regard to the responsive phenomenology of Bernhard Waldenfels, discussed the universal tension between existential temporality and spiritual freedom in religious discourse. Buddhism is also integrated into his analysis. In his opinion, a crucial difference of Mahayana-Buddhism (The Yogācāra in question in this paper is one of the two main streams of Mahayana-Buddhism, the other one is Madhyamika) from the early Buddhist schools is its cognition and implicit emphasis on the necessity of being-rooted in everyday life and the ac-

The Impossibility of Scientific Indifference with Regard to the Temporality of Consciousness

The *CWSL*, a key Yogācāra-Buddhist text compiled by Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664), has attracted much attention from scholars.⁵ Interest in this text has not been limited to philological and religious studies, but has, from the beginning, gone beyond the usual deciphering of words and pointed to the *CWSL*'s subtle and profound way of philosophizing.⁶ We can say that, in its religiously-flavored

tualization of spiritual freedom in everyday life in this world (Li 2015). The assertion sounds quite anti-conventional and needs to be explained. Although is not the actual task of this paper to verify this assertion, it is not irrelevant in the following analysis.

- 5 Since its earliest translation from Chinese into French by Louis de La Vallée Poussin (1928–1929), we have today at least two more complete English translations by Wei Tat 韋達 (1973) and Francis H. Cook (1999) respectively, as well as some fragmentary translations such as those by Wing-Tsit Chan 陳榮捷 (1963) and Derk Bodde (1937). With regard to the significance of this text Wei has said: “*Ch'eng Wei-shih lun* is a creative and elaborate exposition of the *Trimsika* and a synthesis of its ten commentaries. It received the most careful attention of Hsüan Tsang and his most eminent disciple K'uei Chi (窺基, 632–682). It represents the flower of their literary and spiritual genius. It was received with acclaim by later scholars who extolled it as a work of outstanding excellence and as the cornerstone of the doctrine of the Wei-shih of Yogacara School.” (Wei 1973, LIII)
- 6 Dan Lusthaus's debate with de La Vallée Poussin (Lusthaus 2002, 492–3) and Lambert Schmithausen's questioning of Lusthaus's philosophical investigation of the *CWSL* (Schmithausen 2005, 11) are two recent examples of an intrinsic tension in the reading of the text: on the one hand we have to literally decipher what the text talks about. On the other hand, by reading it in order to comprehend what *vijñapti-mātratā* means, we are forced to philosophize, that is, to be aware of the actual dilemma in approaching the idea of *vijñapti-mātratā*: we have to ask ourselves, for the sake of examination, if *vijñapti-mātratā* is reasonable or not, but by thinking we are already entangled in the decisive problem of attachment and appropriation, which one hopes to overcome, through the recognition of, or awakening to, *vijñapti-mātratā*. Thinking is based on mental attachment and appropriation. Apparently this intrinsic tension accompanied Lusthaus when he, through his philosophical reading of the *CWSL*, “challenged the traditional understanding, and especially its ontological aspect” (Schmithausen 2005, 10). Schmithausen says, “Yogācāra thought has traditionally been understood as advocating the epistemological position that mind, or consciousness, does not—at least not directly—perceive or cognize anything outside itself, but rather cognizes only its own image of an object, and as propounding the ontological position that there are no entities, especially no material entities, apart from consciousness, or, more precisely, apart from the various kinds of mind (*citta*) and mental factors or mind associates (*caitta*)” (Schmithausen 2005, 9). Actually, Lusthaus has to agree with him, although he finds the expression “ontological position” not very exact. As a matter of fact, we can feel Schmithausen's unavoidable intrinsic tension in approaching the idea of *vijñapti-mātratā*. According his statement, not being a philosopher, he does not discuss Lusthaus's philosophical interpretation of the *CWSL*, but rather re-examines the main passage on which Lusthaus grounds his thesis of the independent existence of matter from a philosophical point of view. At the same time, he concedes, “I agree with his (Lusthaus's) view that the teaching of *vijñapti-mātratā* is basically not a theoretical aim in itself but a ‘therapeutic device’, a soteric strategy, directed against attachment and appropriation” (Schmithausen 2005, 11). In any case, the *CWSL* is aware of this intrinsic tension in approaching *vijñapti-mātratā* and has therefore repeatedly pointed out that it is definitely improper to say that there is a teaching/theory/position called *vijñapti-mātratā*. By discussing this in light of the temporality of consciousness, I will reveal this tension further.

descriptions of the complicated evolution or alteration of consciousness and its possible transformation and purification in terms of Buddhism, in reality it has tried, analytically and critically, to touch the most fundamental and ultimate “thing” pertaining to life and the world.

Yogācāra-Buddhism is apparently a highly formalized theoretical system. Its elucidation of *viññapti-mātratā*, usually rendered as consciousness-only or mind-only, is also very scholastic and shows a strong connection with the Abhidharmic tradition. However, Yogacaric texts such as the *CWSL* cannot be read and analyzed without attention to their spiritual dimension.⁷ The text’s denial of the independent existence of the world outside consciousness sounds preposterous and radically challenges our everyday experiences. If we take the prejudicial view that this is nonsense, it will be very hard for us to follow the Yogacaric train of argumentation, and even with extraordinary scientific patience we will miss its main point. That means Yogācāra-Buddhism cannot be treated solely as an object of the philological and religious studies. It compels us to integrate the study of it into our own lives and thoroughly examine all our opinions and knowledge of life and the world as we interpret them. We have to seriously ask ourselves if Yogācāra-Buddhism is really talking about something true or not.⁸

7 Despite his criticism of Lusthaus’s ambiguous insistence on some kind of real existence of matter that is independent of mind, Schmithausen appreciates his consideration of Yogācāra’s spiritual aspect: “It is one of the merits of Lusthaus’s study that he indeed tries to take into account, in his interpretation of Yogācāra thought, central concerns of the *Buddhist* tradition, especially karma (...) and attachment (...)” (Schmithausen 2005, 49). And like Lusthaus, he gives much attention to “the spiritual context of *viññaptimātratā*”, pointing out that “Buddhism is concerned with *sentient* beings and their *intentions*, which result in either karmic effects or liberation. It is therefore *mental* factors that produce their world or their experience of the highest truth or true reality (*tathatā*). This strengthens the argument for mind-only (*viññaptimātratā*) understanding of the nature of the world. To regard it as independent of mind is, from this point of view, a misconception from which Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are free even when they enter the karmically produced worlds/minds (*vipākaviññānas*) of other beings to help them transform their impure worlds into pure ones and share with them their Buddha fields or the final freedom”. (Werner 2009, 268)

8 Even today the concept of idealism, often criticized as solipsism, is usually used to talk about Yogācāra-Buddhism (see e.g. Werner 2009, 268). Many discussions center on the question of whether Yogācāra-Buddhism is idealistic or not (see e.g. Lusthaus 2002, 492–3; 533–4). Concerning this disputation, Chan Wing-cheuk 陳榮灼 has given a brief summary of this dispute in his clarification of Ueda Yoshifumi 上田義文’s non-idealistic interpretation of Yogācāra-Buddhism in terms of a comparison with Sartre’s phenomenology (Chan 2005, 127–44; Ueda 1967). But the uncritical use of such a crucial concept in Western—especially German—philosophy has made the “matter itself” even more unclear. The difficulty in reading German philosophers like Kant and Hegel, who have comprehensively expounded the richness and subtlety of idealism—also susceptible to misunderstanding, unfortunately (see also footnote 10)—is the same as that in comprehending Yogācāra-Buddhism, which excludes some *view* that the reader can simply accept as a result of book learning. Therefore, the present paper emphasizes that our ordinary life must be taken into account if we do not want to naively play with words. Because of this, a kind of trivial study of

Nevertheless, according to the highest insight of Buddhism, spiritual attitudes and positions are beyond the intellectual distinction between true and false in the ordinary sense.⁹ But we must admit that actual everyday existence including scientific activities cannot be so. Though not arbitrarily, we always take various positions for the sake of everyday life and are therefore somehow prejudiced, consciously or unconsciously. Yogācāra-Buddhism systematically criticizes the function of human cognition and thoroughly examines the essence of consciousness with all its possible contents, showing them to be cognitive constructions or mental fictions (*parikalpita*). So it would be self-contradictory and unscientific to naively take Yogācāra-Buddhism as a neutral object of investigation, forgetting to put our own conditioned and always karmically functioning consciousness under scrutiny as well. Therefore a total *indifference* is not only impossible in principle, but, especially in dealing with the Yogacaric analysis of consciousness, seriously misleading and self-delusive.

This impossibility of indifference is rooted in the essential *temporality of consciousness*, which is to be understood in terms of the Yogacaric revelation of the incessant *viññāna-pariṇāma* (*shibian* 識變, the differentiation/evolution/alteration of consciousness). I will highlight this fact in my reading of the *CWLS*. The constantly ongoing intentional/karmic activities of consciousness imply its fundamental temporality, which in principle is tantamount to the existence of a sentient being. As I will point out, all forms of the human experience of time are based, according to the *CWLS*, on the fundamental temporality of consciousness. Because of it, we, as readers, researchers, scientists or thinkers, are at all times in a process of change

Yogācāra-Buddhism, which often misleads researchers to sink into speculation and wordplay, is criticized strongly by Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1885–1968) in his *Xin weishi lun* 新唯識論 (*A New Treatise on Consciousness-Only*); he also frequently emphasizes “the transformation of life and the realization of enlightenment” (my personal rendering of the concept *shizheng* 實證 by Xiong) as prerequisites to comprehension of the truth of *weishi* (*Consciousness-Only*). Of course, Xiong carries out an emendation of Yogācāra-Buddhism with recourse to the philosophy of the *Yijing* 易經 (*Book of Changes*), which I cannot recount here. For further details see Xiong 2001.

- 9 Here and also in footnote 8 above we see that the concept “true” as used in this paper is unavoidably, but also expediently and provisionally, ambiguous. Logical Positivism, for instance, adopts a “criterion of verification”. It says that “a sentence is factually significant to any given person if, and only if, ... he knows what observations would lead him, under certain conditions, to accept the proposition as being true, or reject it as being false” (Ayer 1952, 35). This “criterion of verification” is not significantly different from the ordinary attitude of people in everyday life. Whether an assertion or proposition is true in ordinary sense or in the sense of Logical Positivism as summarized by Alfred J. Ayer (1952) is actually not what Yogācāra-Buddhism challenges. By the radical revelation of the intentionality and temporality of consciousness, which differentiates and judges constantly, Yogācāra-Buddhism admonishes sentient beings to free their intentional and temporal consciousness from attachments to the true or the false. So the question at the end of the last paragraph, namely “is Yogācāra-Buddhism really talking about something true or not?”, actually means: “does the Yogacaric ‘beyond true and false’ correspond to the reality of an enlightened life?”

that is intentionally or karmically conditioned, even though we seem to continue to be the same and think we are. This brings to light the fact that we absolutely are not and cannot be indifferent in the study of Yogācāra-Buddhism. Accordingly, it is not consciousness in general, but rather the consciousness of an experiencing and thinking “I”, here and now, that is in question.

Consciousness-only and the Problem of the External World

In his investigation of the *CWSL*, Dan Lusthaus stresses that the denial of the independent existence of the world in general goes against its *externality*. That means that the ordinary objects around us in themselves cannot be denied.¹⁰ What Yogācārins challenge is their *externality* at all: nothing can appear anywhere other than in consciousness. Here it is important to note that in talking about Yogācāra-Buddhism many popular formulations such as “the *denial* of the independent existence of the world outside consciousness”, “*there are no* material entities apart from consciousness”, etc., are themselves not really definite. It is because of the temporality and intentionality of thinking by virtue of names and concepts that each appropriated understanding of *vijñapti-mātratā* is paradoxically caught up in a problem from which Yogācāra has just admonished us to refrain. So it must be clarified that in every mentally conducted *negation* of the existence of a thing, the existence of the thing has in fact been somehow already *assumed* and thus *affirmed* in advance.¹¹ It is the unconscious or unnoticed assumption itself

10 This reminds us of Kant, who carried out a thorough critique of pure reason in human beings. All that we can know—due to space and time as *a priori* forms of sensibility and due to certain categories (e.g. causality, substance etc.) as *a priori* forms of understanding—are things as they appear in the “phenomenal world”. The “noumenal world” of things-in-themselves is outside our experience and not available to us by pure reason. But Kant has, very interestingly and surprisingly, emphasized that it would be a total misunderstanding of his philosophy if people were to imagine metaphysically that behind the phenomenal world there still exists somewhere and somehow a noumenal one (see Kant 1998, A 255/B 311). The difficulty and challenge of Kant’s philosophy has induced many to philosophize or meditate further. In addition, the “phenomenological *epoché*” (suspension) or “bracketing” of Husserl could inspire us to deepen our research on Yogācāra-Buddhism. Husserl has also emphasized that the actual suspension of all judgments before philosophizing is not easily realized and that we should practice (Übung) trying to do so, and that the result of it could be “a thorough personal transformation” (“eine völlige personale Wandlung”) as in the case of “a religious reversal” (“eine religiöse Umkehrung”) (see Husserl 1956, 139–40). Naturally I do not want to hastily compare Yogācāra-Buddhism with Kant’s philosophy or Husserl’s phenomenology. What I mean here is only that it is very important for us to pay equal attention to the nuances in a subtle philosophy like Yogācāra.

11 That means temporally beforehand consciousness has appropriated and presupposed something in order to make a negation or affirmation. It needs time to construct something and to go on, and vice versa: it goes on and needs constructs so that it has the time-experiences. Here the innate or inborn temporality of consciousness is implied already.

that becomes exactly the problem that the *CWSL* tries to get rid of through its persistent emphasis on *viññapti-mātratā*. Such an assumption contributes to *attachment* (*grāhaka/upānāda*). Attachments are necessary conditions for thinking or experiencing in general but often become unconscious. The ceaseless evolution or alteration of consciousness is not only based on attachments, but constantly produces new attachments. In this sense the world experienced by every sentient being is a world of mental projections formed of words and concepts.

In addition, the Yogacaric statement about the non-existence of the external world is always connected to its emphasis on the existence of internal consciousness. This pivotal nuance is pointed out near the beginning of the *CWSL*:

What the ignorant imagine to be “real” *atman* and “real” *dharmas* are devoid of all objective existence. They are simply fictitious constructions based on erroneous opinions and conceptions. Hence we say that they are “fictitious constructions” ... Thus, the seeming *atman* and the seeming *dharmas* which evolve out of internal consciousness, although they exist as a product of various causes, are not really of the nature of a real *atman* and real *dharmas*, despite their semblance. This, then, is the reason for calling them “fictitious constructions”. ... What we take to be external objects are result of our erroneous opinions, and do not “exist” in the same way as consciousness does. ... Internal consciousness, born by reason of causes and conditions, ... is not ... non-existent in the same way as are external objects. ... Thus, we exclude the two (extreme) ... doctrines (which either affirm additional reality of objects or reduce everything to emptiness). ... External objects, since they are mere fictitious constructions arising from internal consciousness, exist purely from a worldly point of view. On the other hand, inasmuch as consciousness is the essential basis from which false appearances of an external world spring, it really exists.¹²

The highest insight into emptiness (*śūnyatā*), for which Madhyamika is famous, is not abolished by Yogācārins. But, “for Madhyamaka, emptiness is the ultimate analytic device; for Yogācāra, it is one of several corrective tools, one

12 愚夫所計實我實法都無所有，但隨妄情而施設故說之為假。內識所變似我似法，雖有而非實我法性。然似彼現故說為假。外境隨情而施設故非有如識。內識必依因緣生故非無如境。由此便遮增減二執。境依內識而假立故唯世俗有，識是假境所依事故亦勝義有 (Wei 1973, 12–13; *CWSL* 1b07–13). Wei’s explanatory addition due to Kuiji 窺基’s commentary is omitted and all Sanskrit words are put in lowercase letters and italics for the sake of conformity. The same is true of the following citations from Wei’s translation of the *CWSL*.

Concerning this point see also: “*Atmans* and *dharmas* are non-existent, *tathata* and consciousness are not in-existent. Therefore, beyond (the attachments to existence and non-existence), we are on the middle way.” 我法非有，空識非無。離有離無，故契中道 (*CWSL* 39b01–02).

which points to the conditionality (*paratantra*) out of which phenomenality (*saṃvṛti*, *viññapti*) is constructed” (Lusthaus 2002, 465). Lusthaus designates the existence of internal consciousness as the *facticity of phenomenality* (ibid., 463). Why is it so crucial to recognize that “empty consciousness is not non-existent” (*kongshi fei wu* 空識非無, *CWSL* 39b01–02)? Or why is consciousness phenomenally not empty? Consciousness and all of its activities and contents, which are the “conventional, enclosed experiential domain” and the ground for the appearing of a mundane world, can perhaps be emptied theoretically, but they are always emerging and stay always as lived problems for sentient beings. The karmically-conditioned constantly emerging stream of consciousness is the actual focus of Yogācāra. Lusthaus argues, “without some acceptance of the facticity (of phenomenality) which is never anything or anywhere other than consciousness, nothing whatsoever can be affirmed or denied, nothing can be known or understood (ibid.).”

Therefore,

for Yogācāra, existence and non-existence are not ontological assertions, but phenomenological descriptions. ... The claim that consciousness is the only existent is made for epistemological and therapeutic, not ontological reasons. (ibid., 465–6)

Furthermore, he stresses:

The claims made in the name of *viññapti-mātra* are only antidotes to a specific, deep-rooted, ubiquitous type of attachment, one that involves positing an external world ripe for appropriation. Emptiness is posited as an antidote to attachment; and *viññapti-mātra* is charged with the same task. ... Thus merely critiquing propositions, as Mādhyamika does, inevitably fails to reach the source of the problem that generates those propositions (*prapañca*). To do that, according the *Cheng wei-shih lun*, one must contemplate one’s own mind (*zi guanxin* 自觀心) (ibid., 466).

Viññapti-mātratā is a kind of soteriological warning of “cognitive narcissism” (ibid., 540) and Yogācāra-Buddhism consistently centers on the purification of consciousness and liberation from karmic conditioning; it does not talk about anything ontological at all. Accordingly, *mātra* does not mean

an approving affirmation of mind as the true reality. ... Consciousness (*viññāna*) is not the ultimate reality of solution, but rather the root problem. This problem emerges in ordinary mental operation, and it can only be solved by bringing those operations to an end. (ibid., 533)

Therefore, “to prove ‘only mind exists’ as a sort of doctrine or dogma, a position to take because it is the ‘correct’ position, is to thoroughly miss the Yogācārins’s point” (Lusthaus 2002, 488). However, the *CWSL* itself also implies that all possible understandings as outcomes of mental activities—and therefore as appropriations and attachments to the appropriated views—should be given up, as it clearly admonishes:

In order to refute the false belief that external to the mind (*citta*; *xin* 心) and its associates (*caitta*; *xinsuo* 心所) there exist real objects, it is said that there is nothing but Mere-Consciousness. But to believe in the genuine existence of Mere-Consciousness is like believing in that of external objects; it too is a kind of dharma-attachment (*dharmagraha*). (Wei 1973, 87)¹³

Ultimately, the emphasis on *viññapti-mātratā* in the *CWSL* is also typical Buddhist provisional expediency (*upāya*; *fāngbian* 方便). Therefore it is very important to see what Yogācāra says about consciousness-only as a device/means/antidote/corrective tool to attachments (Lusthaus 2002, 462–4).

Divergence between Lusthaus and Schmithausen Examined with Reference to the Temporality of Consciousness in Everyday Life

The divergence of views between Dan Lusthaus and Lambert Schmithausen regarding the problem of the external world in the *CWSL* helps to bring to light some dilemmas in our examination of the doctrine of *viññapti-mātratā* (See Lusthaus 2002 and Schmithausen 2005). We can say that Lusthaus has made a compromise in his interpretation of the *CWSL*, because what Schmithausen finds problematic by Lusthaus is persuasively supported through the texts to which he has referred. The *CWSL* definitely acknowledges that by *viññapti-mātratā* it does not mean that there is only *one* consciousness (cf. *CWSL* 39c9–20). On account of this, all criticisms of Yogācāra as solipsism are indefensible. This citation from the *CWSL* is decisive proof that Yogācāra is not solipsism and supports Lusthaus’ challenge of the traditional reading of the text, represented, for example, by de La Vallée Poussin (de La Vallée Poussin 1928–1929; Lusthaus 2002, 492–3). Accordingly, the minds of other sentient beings in themselves cannot be reduced to one’s own consciousness and the way one knows other minds is the same way that one knows all other things in the world.¹⁴ Therefore, neither the things in the

13 為遣妄執，心心所外，實有境故，說唯有識。若執唯識，真實有者，如執外境，亦是法執 (*CWSL* 6c24–26). I have slightly changed Wei’s translation.

14 “It seems as though one’s own mind perceives another person’s mind as an object, as it perceives material things, etc.” (如緣他心，色等亦爾。 *CWSL* 39c16)

world nor the minds of others can be the immediate and direct objects (*qinsuoyuan* 親所緣緣) of one's own consciousness. This leaves room for Lusthaus to deduce that it is equally assumable that, though nothing that we know can be apart from consciousness, it does not indicate whether there is something there in itself or whether it is independently outside consciousness. The point here is we cannot make any judgment about it. All that we know is the product of the karmic or intentional evolution of consciousness. In my opinion Lusthaus has tried to lessen the tension between the teaching of consciousness-only and *everyday life*, in which spiritual/religious practice is inescapably situated. On the one hand, in order to realize freedom in life it is undoubtedly significant and urgent for a human being to meditate on his factual *enslavement* by the intentional or karmic closure of consciousness in everyday life.¹⁵ On the other hand, radical-sounding talk about consciousness-only that fails to take everyday life into account will not be taken seriously by people not only in their ordinary discussions and communications but also even in the academic study of Buddhism.¹⁶ That is, however, not only a problem for Yogācāra. Generally, in all kinds of religious and metaphysical discourse, the assertions to be demonstrated are usually argued in such a radical-sounding way that it, without obvious sympathetic connection to the reality of everyday life, diverts attention from its earnestness and seriousness.

Although it is mixed with strict logical argumentation, the Yogacaric way of reasoning already contains some unquestioned assumptions such as: the cycle of repeated reincarnation/rebirth, the various forms of life (there are other sentient being besides human beings and animals), the doubtless truth of *nirvana*, and so forth, which are not self-evident to ordinary consciousness and presumably are not either to Schmithausen and Lusthaus. In addition, Yogacaric reasoning has recourse partly to authoritative Buddhist Sutras (*shengjiao* 聖教), and—most

15 The Buddhist concern for the spiritual aspect in contrast to philosophical phenomenology is generally noticed (see also footnote 7). Obviously different from the latter, the revelation of the intentionality and temporality of consciousness in (Yogācāra)-Buddhism urges liberation from general sufferings in everyday life of sentient beings, which are manifested concretely in different forms of *klesa* (pollution or contamination) of consciousness. Briefly, the consciousness, which functions intentionally and temporally, is enslaved in this sense. Li (2015) especially highlights this point in his analysis of consciousness in light of Waldenfels' responsive phenomenology and Buddhism.

16 David Hume (1711–1776) is a very good example of someone who recognizes the distance between theory and life. In his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, he argues that causality as one principle of the association of ideas is nothing more than habit or custom, and so does not necessarily have anything to do with the real world. "But (Hume) acknowledges that his own practice does not always reflect his philosophical position. (He) recognizes that despite his causal skepticism, it would not be wise to 'throw himself out at the window'. As he wrote early in this work, we must 'be modest in our pretensions; and even to discover the difficulty ourselves before it is objected to us. By this means, we may make a kind of merit of our very ignorance.'" (Kaufmann and Baird 1994, 682)

importantly—religious experiences such as *samadhi* and awakening, which have not yet been experienced by many people, play a conclusive role in Yogācāra. In a word, Yogācāra is not and cannot be persuasive purely logically. But this is not a shortcoming of Yogācāra. On the contrary, the fact that at decisive points it has little to do with reasoning dependent on temporal consciousness can inspire us to search more deeply.¹⁷ Briefly, the transformation of our life itself is presupposed in order to realize a possible comprehension of Yogacaric truth. Recognition of the fact that there are obstructions to approaching Yogacaric teaching in our present life should not become an excuse for us to speculate metaphysically, but should rather impel us to come back to our actual karmically/intentionally conditioned life. In ordinary daily life filled with conscious activity it is a vicious cycle to talk about whether a world outside one's consciousness exists or not, because the one who is questioning here and now is enclosed in his constantly differentiating consciousness and in reality has no safe standpoint to make a clear distinction between outside and inside.

Because of this intrinsic paradox, any extreme affirmation of *vijñapti-mātratā* is in fact a disturbance to the final awakening to it through the self-observation of consciousness (*zi guanxin* 自觀心).¹⁸ The ceaseless differentiation or objectification of

17 For example: in talking about the principle of interdependent origination it stresses, “the principle of interdependent origination as taught in Mahayana ... is profound and subtle, beyond description and explanation; such names as cause, effect/fruit and so on are only provisional designations” (大乘緣起正理 (...) 深妙離言, 因果等言皆假施設. *CWSL12c27–28*); and by verbalizing the original *nirvana* of all *dharmas* it also similarly emphasizes that “the *nirvana* that is pure in its essential nature is ... the *bhutatathata*, the ultimate principle or essential nature of all *dharmas*. Despite adventitious contaminations, it is: (a) pure in itself; (b) possessed of innumerable and measureless excellent qualities; (c) free from birth and destruction, being absolutely tranquil and placid, like space; (d) equal and common for all sentient beings; (e) neither identical with all *dharmas* nor different from them (for it is the *dharmata*); (f) free from all *nimittas* (because it is not apprehensible, the *grahyanimitta* is lacking in it); (g) free from all *vikalpa* (mental discrimination) (because it does not apprehend; the *grahakavikalpa* is lacking in it); (h) beyond the path of intellect (that is to say, it is ‘realized’ internally; it transcends ideation and ratiocination); (i) beyond the path of names and words; and (j) realized internally by *aryas* (saints and sages). This *tathata* ... being ‘essentially peaceful’, receives the name of *nirvana*” (Wei 1973, 759; 本來自性清淨涅槃, 謂一切法相真如理, 雖有客染而本性淨, 具無數量微妙功德, 無生無滅湛若虛空, 一切有情平等共有, 與一切法不一不異, 離一切相一切分別, 尋思路絕名言道斷, 唯真聖者自內所證, 其性本寂故名涅槃. *CWSL55b07–12*).

18 Cf. *CWSL* 59a10–14: 識唯內有, 境亦通外, 恐濫外故, 但言唯識. 或諸愚夫, 迷執於境, 起煩惱業, 生死沈淪, 不解觀心, 勤求出離, 哀愍彼故, 說唯識言, 令自觀心, 解脫生死, 非謂內境, 如外都無 (“Because consciousness is exclusively internal while objects are both internal and external. Fearing that sentient beings may admit the reality of external objects, the Buddha teaches *vijnaptimatratā*; because the ignorant misunderstand and cling to objects, produce *klesha* and *karman*, are sunk in *samsara*, and do not exert themselves to obtain deliverance by the contemplation of the Mind. The Buddha, out of compassion, teaches *vijnaptimatratā* to enable them to obtain deliverance from *samsara* by dedicating themselves to the contemplation of the Mind. But that is not to say that internal objects are absolutely non-existent in the same way as are external objects.” (Wei 1973, 807)

consciousness (*xianxing* 現行) is the everyday life of sentient beings. Any discussion of the Yogācāric view must take everyday life into consideration. No matter how it is explained, we, as embodied humans living a *lifetime* in “an adamant, unwieldy material world” (Schmithausen 2005, 56) have inexhaustible questions and doubts, which are principally rooted in the temporality of consciousness. The radical separation between theory and practice itself is a suffering that, ironically, is again caused by consciousness.

The Intrinsic Paradox in Approaching *vijñapti-mātratā* Intellectually

I have said that Lusthaus made a compromise in his reading of the *CWSL* because Schmithausen’s resolute excluding of the possibility of “an existence of matter that is independent of the cognizing mind” is more faithful to the text. But Lusthaus’s compromise divulges an intrinsic tension in a philosophical investigation of Yogācāra that takes its spiritual aspect into account, as mentioned above. It seems that for Schmithausen it is enough to be as faithful as possible to the text. But actually, even for him, this is not so easy, if all that one can say comes from nowhere else than from natural, everyday consciousness.

Firstly, Schmithausen’s refutation of Lusthaus is ultimately grounded in his reference to the eighth ālaya-vijñāna (storehouse consciousness). For Lusthaus, “Yogācāra does not posit any single overarching ‘mind’ or ‘consciousness’ as the source or solitary existent of or in the world. There is no ‘Cosmic ālaya-vijñāna’ of which we are all parts or manifestations” (Lusthaus 2002, 487). It is not necessary to agree with what Lusthaus says about the eighth consciousness in his philosophical investigation. In any case, he does not accept uncritically the description of ālaya-vijñāna in the *CWSL*, whereas Schmithausen takes it as his crucial argument in opposing Lusthaus’s deviation from the original text in the *CWSL*. Schmithausen, through his faithful reference to the *ālaya-vijñāna*, especially in regard to the seemingly ambiguous verbal distinction between “internal” (*nei* 内) and “external” (*wai* 外),¹⁹ puts an end to any “going too far” in talking about Yogācāra Buddhism. He does this through his clarification “in light of sufficiently explicit and unambiguous statements of the position of the *CWSL* in the *CWSL* itself” (Schmithausen 2005, 17). In the *CWSL* it says:

When *ālaya-vijñāna* itself arises due to its causes and conditions it develops internally into ... the body possessed of sense-faculties, and

19 Regarding Schmithausen’s detailed clarification of the distinction between “external *dharmas* 外法” and “internal *dharmas* 内法” and between “external *skandhas* 外蘊” and “internal *skandhas* 内蘊”. See Schmithausen 2005, 25–38.

externally into the surrounding (world) (*bhājana*), and it takes these very [images] into which it has developed as its object (*ālambana*) (Schmithausen 2005, 35–36).²⁰

Thus we can see that reference to the *ālaya-vijñāna* can actually stop all discussions, just as in philosophy inference to God can stop all argumentation. Theoretically all relevant problems of the external world can be resolved through reference to the *ālaya-vijñāna*, but such explanations may have little to do with our everyday life. The point here is not whether the statements regarding *ālaya-vijñāna* are right or wrong, but rather that such a discussion is out of the reach of the temporal consciousness of an ordinary human being. Or to put it in another way, if we say that everything evolves from *ālaya-vijñāna* and nothing can exist independently outside of consciousness, or, on the contrary, if we try to dispute that in spite of the argumentation of the *CWSL*, it is not unreasonable for sentient beings to still imagine something outside consciousness, we are, nevertheless, engaged in actual thinking and discussion, which is always limited to the sixth consciousness (*mano-vijñāna*; *yishi* 意识). Hence, in the *CWSL* the analysis of the experiential sixth consciousness constitutes the main part of the entire text. The sixth consciousness and its fifty-one associated activities (*caitta*) have very much to do with our everyday life and are the primary contents which every concrete spiritual practice must face.

Secondly, the consequence of the whole argument of the *CWSL*, with its ultimate reference to the *ālaya-vijñāna*, is to assert that the life of all sentient beings before true awakening is a dream or illusion. The dream metaphor is also used as the main argument in Vasubandhu's *Vimsatika* to prove *vijñapti-mātrata*.²¹ The *CWSL* asks now, since we definitely know when we have had a dream in sleep and we know that it was a dream, why can we not believe, even if we are awake and are conscious of a world around us, that everything is only consciousness, like in a dream? The *CWSL* argues that we are unable to know that

20 阿賴耶識，因緣力故，自體生時，內變 [...] 根身，外變為器。即以所變，為自所緣 (CWSL 10a17–19).

21 Cf. T vol. 31 no. 1590 《唯識二十論》 (Twenty-Stanza Treatise on the Consciousness-Only Doctrine) 74c3–4; 15–16: 若識無實境，即處時決定，相續不決定，作用不應成。處時定如夢，身不定如鬼，同見膿河等，如夢損有用 ((Objection): If there were only representations of consciousness and no (extra-mental) objects, then there would be no experience of (the same) determined space and time, nor would there be (ground for) the indeterminacy of consciousness-continuum (i.e. an individual), nor would there be determined effects of actions (by individuals). (Reply): The determination of space and time is experienced just as in a dream. And (the same world, in spite of) the indeterminacy of consciousness-continua embodied as individuals is experienced (by different individuals) just as in the case (of the experience) of ghosts (in hell): All of them seem to see the same river of pus, etc. And the determined effects of actions are like the experiences of a dreamer).

life is a dream because we have not yet reached true awakening or enlightenment; it is not only this entire life but also the ceaseless cycle of birth and death before awakening that is a long dream.²² In the end, Schmithausen's rectification of Lusthaus's interpretation of the *vijñapti-mātrata* comes back to the dream metaphor. Therefore, Buddhas, as the truly enlightened, he says, "for the sake of other sentient beings ... fall back into an experience of the emerging world of multiplicity" and experience it "as *illusory* or as nothing but mind (and mind-as-associates)" (Schmithausen 2005, 54–55). With regards to a certain surrounding world as the basis for spiritual practice, he continues, "it is precisely on account of its being an image (dream/illusion) in mind that its transformation from an impure world into a pure, sublime one through individual spiritual practice becomes plausible" (ibid., 56). But we have to ask, if ordinary consciousness contains nothing more than dreams and illusions, how is it possible for consciousness ultimately to be transformed? We can only conclude that illusion must be inseparable from truth. In any case, unless we are enlightened like Buddhas and have broken through our dream consciousness, all that we have said about the *vijñapti-mātrata* belongs to dream consciousness.

Thirdly, Schmithausen has not really overcome Lusthaus's challenge regarding *CWSL*'s acknowledgement of the existence of the minds of others (*taxin* 他心), although he has begun his response to the latter with a correction of Lusthaus's problematic translation of the text in question (ibid., 13–18). According to Yogācāric insight into the dream-like reality of the world, not only the minds of others that I know are images in my mind, but also my own mind is essentially illusory.

22 Cf. *CWSL* 39c03-09: 若覺時色皆如夢境不離識者，如從夢覺知彼唯心，何故覺時於自色境不知唯識？如夢未覺不能自知，要至覺時方能追覺。覺時境色應知亦爾。未真覺位不能自知，至真覺時亦能追覺。未得真覺恒處夢中，故佛說為生死長夜，由斯未了色境唯識 (“(Objection): You have said that the things seen during one's waking state are all like objects in a dream and are inseparable from consciousness. But, on awakening from a dream, we know that the dream is only in our mind. Why, then, is it that, when we are awake, we do not know that the sphere of objects perceived by us is Mere-Consciousness? (Reply): As long as we have not awakened from the dream, we are incapable of realizing that the objects of the dream are unreal. It is only after we have awakened that, in retrospect, we come to realize this. We should know that the same is true of our knowledge regarding the sphere of material objects in our waking life. Until we have truly awakened, we cannot ourselves know, but, when we reach the state of true Awakening (Enlightenment), we shall be able, in retrospect, to realize it. Before this genuine Awakening is achieved, we perpetually remain in a dream. This is why the Buddha spoke of the long night of transmigratory existence, characterized by ceaseless rounds of birth and death. He did so because of our failure to understand that the sphere of material objects is Mere-Consciousness.” (Wei 1973, 521)) Also, cf. T vol. 31 no. 1590 《唯識二十論》76c08: 未覺不能知，夢所見非有 (Before (a man) is awakened, (he cannot know that) everything experienced/seen is just like in a dream and not existent).

Vasubandhu mentions this point noticeably in the last verse of his *Vimsatika*.²³ It implies that we do not know that everything we know is in reality illusions and dreams, including all knowledge of ourselves. This being the case, what we have to cast doubt upon is not the external world, but ourselves, who think and speak about illusions. Consequently all debate around the problem of the external world is secondary and entangled already with intrinsic paradoxes.

Temporally Ongoing Differentiation of Consciousness and the Riddle of Time

As shown above, any interpretation of *vijñapti-mātratā* falls easily into a dilemma. The subtlety here lies in the momentarily occurring self-revocation in every appropriating understanding of *vijñapti-mātratā* due to the temporality of consciousness, as I already mentioned at the beginning of the treatise. *Vijñapti-mātratā* is not a static theory that we can appropriate as some fixed knowledge; this would inevitably result in more attachments in us. Living and knowing are a dynamic process of appropriation, which is the root concern of Yogācāra. This dimension of time implies that, for a sentient being, the fundamental attachment happens in every moment; otherwise it is impossible to live further and to know anything.

The whole complicated analysis of consciousness in the *CWSL* is described as *vijñāna-pariṇāma*, the differentiation/evolution/alteration of consciousness. The subtle differentiation of consciousness, in other words, the realization or actual emergence of every experience, is temporal. In this sense the *vijñāna-pariṇāma* points to a philosophy of time. This basic time-dimension penetrates all experiences of sentient beings in general and is different from and more essential than the ordinary time concept, which belongs for Yogācārins to the twenty-four *citta-viprayukta-samskāra-dharmas* (embodied-conditioning not directly perceived by *citta*; (Cf. Lusthaus 2002, 544)). Time as such in ordinary life is not directly perceived by mind, but indirectly experienced through the observation of the change or movement of some thing *out there*. Therefore, for such an experience of time there is no problem of an external world. Even to imagine the possibility of infinitely sectioning the consciousness-stream/continuum into infinitely short moments, called *kṣanas* (*chana* 刹那/*nian* 念) in Indian discourses on time,

23 Cf. T vol. 31 no. 1590 《唯識二十論》77a22–23: 他心智云何, 知境不如實? 如知自心智, 不知如佛境 ((Objection): If (we have) the knowledge of other minds, doesn't it mean that (we have) true knowledge of external objects? (Reply): (We as the Unenlightened) not only have no knowledge of other minds, but also no knowledge (of the true nature) of our own minds as known by the Enlightened).

is essentially not different from the ordinary concept of time in everyday life. Any view or imagination of time as some duration misses easily what the *viññāna-pariñāma*, concerning the essence of time, really implies: because of the radical temporality of consciousness we have in reality *no standpoint* to decide whether the experienced world outside there exists or not. We ourselves are constantly changing, but the ordinary experience of time already presupposes a stable “I” as observer. Without this lived presupposition/assumption there is no experience of world and time.

Moreover, the temporal evolution of consciousness cannot be ignored by a scholar of Yogācāra, especially when the striking description of the *ālaya-viññāna*, the ultimate source for the *viññāna-pariñāma*, is taken into account:

Is the *ālaya-viññāna* permanent or impermanent? It is neither permanent nor impermanent, for ... it is in perpetual evolution like a violent torrent. By “perpetual” it is meant that, since before the beginning of time, this consciousness has evolved into a homogeneous series without interruption, because it is the creative basis of the manifestations of the transmigratory course through the three realms of the existence (*dhatus*), the five directions of reincarnation (*gatis*), and the four forms of birth (*yonis*), and also because in its essential nature it is firm enough to hold *bijas* without allowing them to be lost. By “evolution” is meant that this consciousness, from before the beginning of time, is born and perishes from one moment to another, ever changing. As cause it perishes and as fruit it is then born. Thus, it never remains continuously a single entity. Through the evolution of the other consciousness (*pravṛtti-viññāna*), it is perfumed and thus forms seeds. ... The word “perpetual” rules out the notion of impermanence of discontinuity; the word “evolution” indicates that it is not permanent. ... “Like a violent torrent”: it is the nature of being (*dharmata*) of “causation” which is foreign to permanence and impermanence. In its sequence of cause and effect, it is like a violent torrent which is never impermanence yet never permanence, and which ever flows onward in a continuous series, carrying with it what sometimes floats and sometimes sinks. So too is this *ālaya-viññāna* which, from before the beginning of time, is born and perishes, forming a series that is neither permanent nor impermanent, carrying along sentient beings, sometimes floating, sometimes sinking, without allowing them to attain liberation from the circle of the mundane existence. Again it is like a violent torrent, though beaten by the wind into waves, flowing onward without interruption. So too is this *ālaya-viññāna*, which, though it encounters conditions producing the visual and other kinds of consciousness, perpetually maintains its onward

flow. Or yet again it is like a violent torrent, in whose waters fish are borne along below and leaves of grass above, pursuing its onward course without abandoning it. So too is this consciousness, which perpetually follows its onward evolution, carrying with it the perfumed internal *bijas* and the external *caittas* (*sparsa* etc.). These comparisons show that the *ālaya-vijñāna*, from before the beginning of time, has been both cause and effect, and so is neither permanent nor impermanent. They mean that since before the beginning of time this consciousness has been one in which from moment to moment effects are born and causes perish. Because these effects are born, it is not impermanent; because these causes perish, it is not permanent. To be neither impermanent nor permanent: this is the “principle of conditional causation or dependent origination” (*pratityasamutpada*). This is why it is said this consciousness is in perpetual evolution like a torrent. (Wei 1973, 170–3)²⁴

These happenings in *ālaya-vijñāna* cannot be directly recognized or experienced by natural everyday consciousness. Although we know theoretically that everything, the external world and the internal mind, is changing without pause, we live in a kind of continuity and stability. As a result, the life of sentient beings is in Buddhism usually described as a continuum (*samtāna*). But if principally we are not stable at all by ourselves even in the innermost stratum, how is it possible for us to experience that the world outside as well as our mind inside are temporally always in motion? Thus the temporality of consciousness or stream of consciousness (*vijñāna-samtāna*) is not the last secret, even though, through the emphasis on it, all physical temporal phenomena are already put in doubt.

We have to ask further, what is time in reality? If everything experienced and changes thereto are only images of mind, does it not mean that the time-experience is actually a delusion?²⁵ The ordinary understanding of time in all forms is fundamentally challenged. The riddle of time is intrinsically bound with the analysis of the essence of consciousness. An analysis of the radical concept of

24 阿賴耶識為斷為常?非斷非常以恒轉故.恒謂此識無始時來一類相續常無間斷,是界趣生施設本故,性堅持種令不失故;轉謂此識無始時來念念生滅前後變異,因滅果生非常一故,可為轉識熏成種故.恒言遮斷轉表非常,猶如瀑流因果法爾.如瀑流水非斷非常,相續長時有所漂溺,此識亦爾.從無始來生滅相續非常非斷,漂溺有情令不出離;又如瀑流雖風等擊起諸波浪而流不斷,此識亦爾.雖遇眾緣起眼識等而恒相續.又如瀑流,漂水下上魚草等物隨流不捨,此識亦爾.與內習氣外觸等法恒相隨轉.如是法喻,意顯此識無始因果非斷常義.謂此識性無始時來,剎那剎那果生因滅.果生故非斷,因滅故非常.非斷非常是緣起理.故說此識恒轉如流 (CWSL 12b28–c15).

25 Naturally for Yogācāra not only time, but also space, personal consciousness stream and causality are dream-like and illusory. See footnotes 21 and 22.

time implied in the *CWSL* has therefore been chosen as an approach to comprehending the main subject: *vijñapti-mātrata*. If *vijñapti-mātratā* proves to be truth, what does it mean to live a life that is principally characterized by its experience of time? Or to raise the question in another way, does the time exploration help us recognize or acknowledge the Yogacaric theme of “*vijñapti-mātratā*”?

Lusthaus and Schmithausen have both noticed the impressive time-dimension of Yogācāra. Yet they have not yet really touched the radicality of the Yogacaric philosophy of time. In a footnote Schmithausen explains *pariṇāma* (bian 變) as follows:

it is used as an action noun describing a process taking place in the continuum (*samtāna*, *samtati*) of a person or in the consciousness continuum or its latent stratum. It may also refer to the culmination of this process or to its result (the actual kinds of *vijñāna*). In the *CWSL*, however, it refers to a *detemporalized* “transformation” or “development” within a single moment of a *vijñāna* or mental factor, i.e. to the fact that each moment arises in such a way that it has “changed” or “developed”, from the outset, into an image of an object cognized (or into a duality of image 相 and vision 見). (Schmithausen 2005, 13)

It is very interesting that Schmithausen has highlighted the paradoxical “*detemporalized* ‘transformation’ or ‘development’ within a single moment” of the *vijñāna-pariṇāma*. His reading is very careful but he has not asked why such a *detemporalization* can happen paradoxically as a “transformation” or “development” that must be temporal? Lusthaus has also not really faced the subtlety of the Yogacaric *vijñāna-pariṇāma* and assumed in reality the ordinary understanding of time. Although he has repeatedly indicated the temporality of the evolution of consciousness in such formulations as “one can cling to ideas, but not a fleeting moment of consciousness” (Lusthaus 2002, 488), “consciousness operates at every moment” (ibid., 538), “sensations (...) arise moment by moment in a causal flux” (ibid., 540) etc., his understanding in these cases is, in principle, like that of Schmithausen, not different from the ordinary concept of time in everyday life, even though the ground of the experience of time is moved from external world into consciousness. Both Schmithausen and Lusthaus appreciate the spiritual dimension to which the whole of Yogācāra-Buddhism points. But this spiritual aspect is not far away from actual everyday life and ordinary reasoning. On the contrary, it is rooted in an ultimate doubt about human life and thinking in general. As I have stressed above, the paradox in our discussion of the problem of external world implied in Yogācāra-Buddhism must be traced back to the riddle of time, which touches directly human thinking and living in the moment. Otherwise, Yogācāra-Buddhism would only be teaching nonsense.

Yogacaric Accentuation of *pratyakṣa-pramāna* in Relation to the Riddle of Time

In their enquiry concerning the problem of external world both Schmithausen and Lusthaus have ignored the significance of the radical temporality of consciousness, which is also reflected in the fact that neither of them pays attention to the Yogacaric distinction between *pratyakṣa-pramāna* (immediate knowing, *xianliang* 現量) and *anumāna-pramāna* (inferential reasoning, *biliang* 比量) as two means of knowledge. Lusthaus's interpretation of *anumāna-pramāna* as “inferential reasoning” is no problem, but his understanding of *pratyakṣa-pramāna* as “perception” is careless and misses a special philosophy of time in Yogācāra (see Lusthaus 2002, 455–8). In general, our perception in everyday life is already an interpretation, conducted by consciousness, of immediate experience.

In order to clarify this point, we must ask further: what is *pratyakṣa-pramāna* actually? If not perception, is it sensation? Yogācāra-Buddhism definitely admits that at least the immediate sensations of the five sense-organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body) belong to the *pratyakṣa-pramāna*. Generally speaking, even though pure sensation itself is really immediate, we human beings, whose consciousness is intentional and temporal, usually miss it habitually. If we have known something, then this is already perception, the result of *digested* sensations, which are already influenced through and mixed with other functions of consciousness. To put it in another way, the actual activity of knowing, even if it is the present perception, is hardly possible to be direct and immediate, because the consciousness is almost always in unrest (temporality). In Vasubandhu's *Vimsatika* an objection is raised to the declaration of the doctrine of consciousness-only through an appeal to present perception, which is thought to be *pratyakṣa-pramāna* by an objector. Vasubandhu responds:

The present perception or awareness (of the external world) is just like in a dream, since when the perception (of the external world) originates, the perceiver and the perceived both have already gone away, how is it possible for you to say that [the present perception] is the *pratyakṣa-pramāna*?²⁶

According to Yogācāra-Buddhism, the *pratyakṣa-pramāna* is regarded as the best among various means of knowledge, because it is pure and free from temporal conditioning. But, given the subtle temporality entangled with perception and other functions of consciousness, the daily way of knowing has little chance to stay by *pratyakṣa-pramāna* or by pure sensation. Therefore, although *pratyakṣa-pramāna* is

26 現覺如夢等,已起現覺時,見及境已無,寧許有現量 (T vol. 31 no. 1590/76b15–25).

never at one moment separated from the knowing of consciousness, sensation is always somehow contaminated and the actual knowing activity of consciousness is by nature inferential (Cf. Liang 2009, 90).

The unusual implication of the Yogacaric emphasis on *pratyakṣa-pramāna* is lastly to be seen in its intrinsic connection with its solution to the problem of the external world and its insistence on consciousness-only. In the *CWSL* a question is asked:

The external spheres of matter, color, etc., are clearly and immediately apprehended and corroborated by the five consciousnesses. ... How can you deny the existence of that which is perceived through immediate apprehension (*pratyakṣa-pramāna*)?

The reply is as follows:

When the external spheres are apprehended through the *pratyakṣa-pramāna*, they are not regarded as external. It is only later that consciousness, through its discrimination, erroneously creates the notion of externality. Thus, the objective spheres immediately apprehended are the ‘perceived division’ of the consciousnesses themselves. Since they are manifestations of consciousness, we say they exist. But inasmuch as they are regarded by consciousness as constituting external and real matter, etc. and are thus erroneously imagined to be existent, we say they are non-existent.²⁷ (Wei 1973, 520; Wei’s translation is slightly changed)

Knowledge based on temporal consciousness is differentiating and is the source of the problem pertaining to the externality of the world. This implies that the Yogacaric distinction between *pratyakṣa-pramāna* (immediate knowing) and *anumāna-pramāna* (inferential reasoning) also points ultimately to the riddle of time or the radical temporality of consciousness. Here we see further the decisive importance of taking the question of time into account in our reading of Yogācāra-Buddhist texts like the *CWSL*.

The above analysis brings us to a surprising conclusion: *pratyakṣa-pramāna*, basically different from the reasoning of temporal consciousness, implies some kind of non-differentiating *timelessness*, which is principally symbiotic with the tranquilization/purification of mind/consciousness. So when Lusthaus says, “the appearance is always immediately present, here, now. The notion of an object extends through time, and (...) takes its significance from its temporal context” (Lusthaus

27 色等外境，分明現證，現量所得，寧撥為無？現量證時，不執為外，後意分別，妄生外想。故現量境，是自相分，識所變故，亦說為有。意識所執外實色等，妄計有故，說彼為無（*CWSL* 39b27-c01）。

2002, 14–15), he has shown the fundamental temporality (“temporal context”) in ordinary building up of knowledge, which is based on *anumāna-pramāna*. He also touches on the possibility of *pratyakṣa-pramāna* as knowing the appearance immediately here and now, but he has not yet seriously asked what *pratyakṣa-pramāna* actually is and why perception is different from temporal inferential reasoning, if he interprets *pratyakṣa-pramāna* as perception and perception itself is also temporal. What is more, it also becomes understandable why the paradoxical *detemporalization* described by Schmithausen, despite the ceaseless transformation or development of consciousness, is actually requisite for the *anumāna-pramāna*. *Detemporalization* presupposes the temporality of consciousness and together the two make every experience possible. Seeming *detemporalization* is necessary for something to *be there outside*, which paradoxically evolved out of consciousness and to which consciousness tends to attach.

Conclusion

Temporal consciousness must always presuppose something in order to go on thinking. That means even though Yogācārins and Buddhist scholars nowadays try to elucidate critically Yogācāric insight into *viññapti-mātratā*, there is always something uncritically assumed (the unavoidable attachment). This fact, namely, the time-dimension of thinking itself, here and now, proves consciousness-only. In this sense, for Yogācāra, spiritual breakthrough means a kind of *timely* enlightenment to the emptiness of a temporal consciousness which differentiates in itself ceaselessly and is thus phenomenally not empty. As implied in the *CWSL*, absolute temporality is in reality timelessness, which is destined to be obscure to ordinary consciousness in everyday life.²⁸

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²⁸ Therefore, according to the *CWSL* Lusthaus' idea (2002, 25) that the present moment alone is real is likewise problematic. In any case, the present moment is not the same as *pratyakṣa-pramāna*.

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Body and Mind, Subject and Object

Buddhism and Cognitive (Neuro)Science: An Uneasy Liaison?

Sebastjan VÖRÖS*

Abstract

The main aim of this article is to shed light on the intricate relationship between Buddhism and science by focusing on what is becoming an increasingly popular area of contact between the two domains, namely the study of consciousness in the field of cognitive (neuro)science. First, three fundamental ways of approaching the relationship between Buddhism and science are outlined: (a) rejection (Buddhism and science are not, and cannot be, compatible); (b) acceptance (Buddhism and science share important commonalities); (c) construction (Buddhism and science are compatible because they have been made compatible in the course of specific historical processes). It is claimed that which of the three stances one takes depends ultimately on how one construes the two parties involved and the nature of their (potential) interaction. To exemplify this, the scope of the discussion is narrowed to the domain of consciousness research and a general overview of some of the main arguments for and against the collaboration between Buddhism and cognitive (neuro)science (“Three Turnings of the Wheel of (Non)Interaction”) is provided. Finally, in light of the tentative results of our analysis, a short reflection of some of the most pertinent presuppositions and entailments of different stances towards Buddhism-science dialogue is laid out, with special emphasis on the distinction between construing Buddhism as “living” *versus* “dead” tradition.

Keywords: Buddhism, cross-cultural cognitive science, contemplative science, consciousness studies, religion-science debate, dialogue, integration, construction

Izveček

Glavni cilj članka je osvetliti zapleten odnos med budizmom in znanostjo. Problema se lotim tako, da se osredotočim na področje, kjer postaja preplet med omenjenima domena v zadnjem času vse bolj izraziti, se pravi na področje raziskovanja zavesti. V članku najprej očrtam tri splošne pristope k odnosu med budizmom in znanostjo: (a) ovržba (budizem in znanost nista in tudi ne moreta biti kompatibilna), (b) sprejemanje (budizem in znanost imata specifične skupne lastnosti) in (c) konstrukcija (budizem in znanost sta kompatibilna, saj sta se povezala v specifičnem historičnem kontekstu). V članku zagovarjam stališče, da je izbira med tremi držami v zadnji instanci odvisna od tega, kako

1 Sebastjan VÖRÖS, PhD, Faculty of Arts,
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.
sebastjan.voros[at]ff.uni-lj.si



pojmuje oba akterja in naravo njunega (potencialnega) medsebojnega odnosa. Da bi to lažje ponazoril, diskusijo zožim na polje raziskovanj zavesti in podam splošen pregled ključnih argumentov za sodelovanje med budizmom in kognitivno (nevro)znanostjo (»trije obrati kolesa (ne)sodelovanja«) in tudi proti njemu. Na koncu z upoštevanjem provizoričnih ugotovitev predhodne analize podam še kratko refleksijo o ključnih predpostavkah in posledicah, ki določajo različne drže do dialoga med budizmom in znanostjo, pri čemer poseben poudarek namenim razliki med tem, ali budizem razumemo kot »živo« ali »mrtvo« tradicijo.

Ključne besede: budizem, medkulturna kognitivna znanost, kontemplativna znanost, raziskovanje zavesti, razprave med religijo in znanostjo, dialog, integracija, konstrukcija

Buddhism and Science: Adversaries or Allies?

The idea of Buddhism as a potential interlocutor and/or ally of science has been around since at least the 19th century. Throughout this period, several points of convergence have been identified, discarded, and sometimes rediscovered (evolutionary theory, cosmology, quantum mechanics, neuroscience), but the main point has remained more or less unaltered: that Buddhism and science are somehow compatible and that by carefully studying their commonalities we might get a better grasp of certain realities they both pertain to. However, the topic in question is notorious for eliciting strong knee-jerk reactions, and is usually met with either ardent enthusiasm or cold disapproval. This is rather unfortunate as it veils the intricacies and complexities of the topic, and thwarts a much needed analysis of some of its most pertinent presuppositions and entailments.

To this end, I propose to get the discursive ball rolling with a famous quote from Albert Einstein:

The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion. It should transcend a personal God and avoid dogmas and theology. Covering both the natural and the spiritual, it should be based on a religious sense arising from the experience of all things, natural and spiritual as a meaningful unity. If there is any religion that would cope with modern scientific needs, it would be Buddhism. (A. Einstein)

There are many things that could be said about this quote, but probably the most important one is that it seems Einstein *never actually said it* (Lopez 2008, 1–2). This, however, is very *telling* in itself, and we will use the made-up quote to exemplify three predominant approaches to the Buddhism–Science debate.

The first approach suggests that the validity of the alleged compatibility between Buddhism and science is tantamount to the validity of the “quote” as a whole: just as Einstein never uttered those words, so too was there never any substantial congruence between Buddhism and science. A sham quote is just that—a *sham*. It is nothing but the last in a series of sleigh-of-hand attempts to marry two domains that are either incommensurable (“non-overlapping magisteria”; cf. Gould 1999) or epistemically asymmetrical, with one (Buddhism) bound to be reduced to, or explained away by, the other (science) (e.g. Wilson 1998).

The approach on the opposite side of the spectrum sides with the central message of the “quote”, maintaining that there is, in fact, a certain kind of “kinship”, or at least “compatibility”, between Buddhism and science. The precise nature and scope of this compatibility has been a matter of some debate, “with some suggesting that the essential teachings of Buddhism (variously identified) are in no way contradicted by the findings of science (variously enumerated), while others suggest that the Buddha anticipated many of the key discoveries of science” (Lopez 2008, 2), but the main contention is that, although perhaps false in attributing the message to the famous physicist, its central point is nevertheless true (Wallace 2002, 2003).

The third approach tries to steer a middle course between the two extremes, suggesting that, although it might be true that (*pace* first type) there is a certain (sense of) congruence between Buddhism and science, the latter (*pace* second type) does not necessarily reside “in the things themselves”, but is rather a net effect of the historical context in which the discourse of the Buddhism–science dialogue initially emerged. In other words, it is wrong to frame the debate in terms of drawing parallels between two discrete entities (“essences”) that may or may not share a certain set of common features; instead, both Buddhism and science must be conceived as (partial or full-blown) historical constructs that have undergone numerous changes governed by a set of specific cultural, social, ideological, etc. factors. According to this view, Buddhism and science *do* have points in common, because they were *made* to have certain points in common (Sharf 1995, 2000; Lopez 2008).

In short, there seem to be three basic ways of relating to the introductory make-believe quote and thus of interpreting the relationship between Buddhism and science: (a) *rejection*: the “quote” is made up and therefore false (i.e. Buddhism and science are not, and cannot be, compatible); (b) *acceptance*: although falsely attributed to Einstein, its main message holds true (i.e. Buddhism and science are compatible); (c) *construction*: the “quote” as a whole is neither true nor false, but a side product of a specific historical process (i.e. Buddhism and science are compatible because they have been made compatible).

The proponents of the idea that there exist relevant commonalities between Buddhism and science (category (b) above) are thus faced with two types of criticism: the first and more straightforward type (category (a) above) claims that all professed similarities are, in the last analysis, illusory: although it might *seem* that Buddhism and science are compatible, closer scrutiny reveals that this is actually *not the case*. The second and more subtle type (category (c) above), on the other hand, maintains that, even if professed similarities between Buddhism and science are real (and there are reasons for believing that they might be), upon closer inspection they prove to be very different from what proponents of (b) take them to be. This latter type of critique is especially pertinent because, unlike the blunt categorical dismissal of (a), it is willing to concede that there are (or might be) certain commonalities between Buddhism and science, but is also adamant that this does not necessarily mean that these commonalities tell us anything particularly revealing about the “nature” of Buddhism, science, or their interrelationship.

The main difference between (b) and (c), which both embrace claims of similarity, becomes clearer if we compare two recent books on the topic. Although carrying the same (main) title, the two books differ substantially in their general take on the Buddhism–science dialogue. In his introduction to *Buddhism and Science: Breaking the New Ground*, the editor Alan Wallace points out that the main presupposition of the book is that Buddhism and science “are commensurable and that the interface between Buddhist theories and practices and scientific theories and models of inquiry can somehow be fruitful” (Wallace 2003, 1). Wallace is convinced that, once we divorce ourselves from the predominant-*cum*-reactionary approaches in contemporary academia, which construe Buddhism primarily through the lens of its “textual *doctrines*”, and start paying attention to its “experiential *insights*”, i.e. once we start “entertaining the possibility of learning about the world *from* Buddhism, as opposed to studying this tradition as a means to learn *about* Buddhism” (ibid., 27), the way can be paved for “mutually respectful dialogue and collaboration” (ibid., 26). Buddhism, conceived primarily as a repository of various techniques “for the cultivation of contemplative insight”, might prove to be of great value to science in general and cognitive science in particular (ibid., 6).

Published just five years later, *Buddhism and Science: A Guide for the Perplexed* opens with a very different message. The main presupposition of the book is that “in order to understand the conjunction in terms of Buddhism and Science, it is necessary to understand something of the history of the conjunction” (Lopez 2008, xi). Lopez argues that the origins of this conjunction can be traced back to specific sociocultural circumstances of the (predominantly, but not exclusively) late 19th and early 20th century, and were strongly influenced by specific social,

political, etc. motives (warding off the onslaught of modernism, post-colonialist struggle for independence, etc.): “Asian Buddhists have argued for the compatibility in order to validate their Buddhism. European and American enthusiasts and devotees have argued for the compatibility to exoticize Science, to find it validated in the insights of an ancient Asian sage.” (Lopez 2008, 6) In other words, science vested Buddhism with “authority, validation, and truth” (ibid., 32), while Buddhism served as a surrogate and docile form of spirituality, as a “religion that is not a religion”, and an “ideal alternative to theism, dogma, and ritual” (ibid., 35). In the course of this complex historical process, both terms have undergone profound changes: Buddhism has come to designate “a single tradition, and within that tradition, an isolated set of elite doctrines and practices”, while science seems to have been reduced to little more than “a mantra, a potent sound with no semantic value” (ibid., 32).

The discrepancies between Wallace and Lopez can be readily (re)cast in terms of *change* vs. *construction*. While both authors are willing to concede that Buddhism construed as a (potential) partner of science is different from traditional forms of Buddhism that were originally developed in Asian sociocultural contexts, Wallace feels that this “new Buddhism” is basically “Buddhism *changed*”, i.e. that traditional Buddhism has *adapted* itself to the new environment of the 19th and 20th-century Western world, and Lopez maintains that it is ultimately “Buddhism *constructed*”, i.e. it is a *product* of complex sociocultural processes that were at work in the period of modernization and (post)colonialism. In short, the question may be posed as follows: is there some relatively stable and/or immutable “aspect” or “dimension” of Buddhism that can be legitimately claimed to be compatible with one or more aspects of science?

One can readily see why issues of this sort can be confusing. They are inseparably connected with the daunting question about the *precise nature* of Buddhism: Is Buddhism a religion, philosophy, or even science? All three positions have been vigorously defended and just as vigorously attacked. In discussions of this type, one is haunted by the image of (Western) academia perpetually chasing its own tail: one imposes, more or less forcibly, general and vague categories on a complex set of phenomena, and is then surprised when the end result proves to be overgeneralized and vague. Now, there is little doubt that using concepts and categories, such as “religion” and “science”, which are not only vague, but were also developed within a specific sociocultural setting with its unique discursive frameworks, to describe phenomena from a radically different sociocultural and discursive background can, and does, lead to confusion and bewilderment. But this can hardly be the *whole* story. Note that both Wallace and Lopez emphasize the importance of recognizing and tackling problems associated with the cultural specificity of these

terms, but, curiously enough, they end up with *diametrically opposed* conclusions. It would seem, then, that the question cannot be solved with the all too often rhetorically florid, but argumentatively vacuous, trope of intercultural incommensurability. Deeper issues might be at stake, and it is *this* that we would like to focus on in the rest of our paper.

But since all (theoretical) work and no (concrete) play makes Jack a dull boy, we propose to narrow and specify the topic of our discussion: instead of examining the question about the relationship between Buddhism and science *in abstracto*, we intend to focus on what currently seems to be its hotbed—*cognitive (neuro) science*. Every century seems to have its pet scientific revolution, and in the 21st century this role seems to have been taken by neuroscience, as amply illustrated by a host of evocative book titles (*Buddha's Brain*, *The Bodhisattva's Brain*, *Zen and the Brain*, etc.), catchy neologisms (NeuroBuddhism, Skeptical Buddhism, Contemplative Science, etc.), and vivid magazine pictures of robed monks with EEG wires attached to their scalps. In what follows, we will take a look at some of the main arguments for and against the collaboration between Buddhism and cognitive (neuro)science (“Three Turnings of the Wheel of (Non)Interaction”), followed by a short reflection of what the overall discussion has to say about some of the main issues we have brought in this section.

Cognitive (Neuro)Science: Between Brains and *Qualia*

Cognitive (neuro)science is an cross-disciplinary study of the mind and its processes, encompassing a wide range of scientific disciplines (philosophy, anthropology, linguistics, psychology, computer science, and neuroscience). Since its inception in the 1950s, it has undergone numerous changes, of which two are particularly relevant for the purposes of our study. The first change is the so-called *neuroscientific revolution* (Lynch 2009). With the emergence of functional imaging techniques in the 1990s it suddenly became possible to examine the neurobiological underpinnings of a vast array of mental processes, making phenomena that have been traditionally banned from natural sciences amenable to scientific inquiry. Neuroscientific studies have proven of great interest to different scientific disciplines and have produced numerous discoveries; however, it did not take long before first critics started voicing their concerns, arguing that *unveiling* neurobiological underpinnings of mental processes is not necessarily tantamount to *unravelling* their secrets. Specifically, issues were raised whether cognitive neuroscience is ever likely to close the notorious “explanatory gap” (Levine 2002), separating neural processes from conscious phenomena (cf.

Nagel 1974). For the most part, neuroscientific models tended to ignore this so-called “hard problem of consciousness”—the problem of explaining why is it that (neuro)cognitive processes are accompanied by subjective or phenomenal experiences (*qualia*) (Chalmers 1995)—and opted for the study of the underlying (unconscious) mechanisms.

This brings us to the second shift in cognitive (neuro)science, a shift perhaps not as striking as the first one, but of no less significance. Some philosophers and (neuro)scientists, deeply dissatisfied with predominantly reductionist and/or functionalist trends in contemporary “(neuro)sciences of the mind”, tried to approach the “hard problem” by rekindling the interest in first-person approaches to the study of consciousness. Instead of simply ignoring *qualia* or explaining them away, the proponents of so-called “experiential turn” in cognitive (neuro)science (Froese 2010; Varela et al. 1991) argue that we should (a) find and/or develop first-person methodologies for a disciplined study of conscious phenomena, and (b) integrate these methodologies into mainstream cognitive (neuro)science (e.g. Gallagher 2003; Varela 1996; Varela and Shear 1999). Searching for appropriate candidates, many authors have turned to phenomenological movement (Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty) and contemplative/meditative wisdom traditions, especially Buddhism (Varela et al. 1991; Vörös 2013, 2014; Thompson 2005).

But how exactly is Buddhism supposed to contribute to consciousness research? It has been suggested that the intricate system of Buddhist meditative practices (e.g., *śamatha*, *vipaśyanā*, *mettā*, etc.) and phenomenological accounts (as outlined in, e.g., *Abhidharma*) could help science develop invaluable practical know-how for the study of consciousness and thus shed light on some thorny issues in cognitive (neuro)science. The central idea is eloquently expressed by Thompson:

[C]ertain contemplative traditions—Buddhism most notably, but not exclusively—and certain approaches in cognitive science—the embodied approach and neurophenomenology—are not simply compatible, but mutually informative and enlightening. Through back-and-forth circulation, each approach can reshape the other, leading to new conceptual and practical understandings for both. (Thompson 2007, 232)

Put differently, instead of harboring an atmosphere of distrust, cognitive (neuro)science and Buddhism should engage in a reciprocal exchange of know-how and expertise, which might prove mutually illuminative, possibly leading to productive dialogue or even large-scale integration in the form of what has sometimes been called “cross-cultural cognitive science” (Davis and Thompson 2014).

First Turn of the Wheel: Collaboration

Before proceeding with some concrete suggestions on how to incorporate Buddhism into cognitive (neuro)science, two caveats are in order. First, in contemporary debates (at least) three points of contact between Buddhism and contemporary cognitive (neuro)science (construed in the broadest possible sense, also encompassing certain psychotherapeutic approaches) have been identified. The idea sketched above, i.e. Buddhism as a potential collaborator of science, is only one among them, the other two being Buddhism as an object of study (mostly related to neuroscientific studies of experienced Buddhist meditators), and Buddhism as a source of alternative/complementary therapeutic (mostly meditation-related) techniques. I have decided to omit these other aspects for two reasons: (i) unlike the first approach, they have both been studied extensively; this is not to say that all issues have been settled—*far* from it!—, but merely that they have been identified by mainstream scientific communities as topics worthy of study (which doesn't necessarily hold true for the first approach); (ii) they are generally less controversial in their claims; again, this is not to say that they are not controversial, but merely that their suggestions concerning the nature of scientific research are not as radical as those put forward by the first proposal. Secondly, to keep the paper within reasonable bounds, our sketch will be somewhat asymmetrical and will focus primarily on what Buddhism might offer cognitive (neuro)science, omitting most references to the opposite question, i.e. what cognitive (neuro)science might offer Buddhism.

Buddhism's contribution to cognitive (neuro)science will be studied under two headings: *methodological* (improvements of, and/or additions to, scientific know-how) and *thematic* (new perspectives on specific topics of inquiry). The two headings are closely related, so I suggest we look at each of them in turn.

Methodological Contributions: Attention Training

As pointed out above, it has been claimed that rigorous methods are needed for systematic exploration of lived experience. For example, Shear and Jevning speak of a “significant asymmetry” in current neuroscientific studies of consciousness:

For while their objective side employs sophisticated scientific methodologies, capable of isolating and evaluating variables completely outside the ken of ordinary sense perception, their subjective side typically uses mere everyday sorts of introspection, capable of isolating only ordinary internal phenomena such as sense perception, imagining and verbal thought (...)

The need for systematic first-person methodologies here is thus starkly apparent. (Shear and Jevning 1999, 109)

On a similar note, Francisco Varela, in his groundbreaking paper on neurophenomenology (1996), argues for the need to investigate “the concrete possibilities of a disciplined examination of experience” that would help us combine “cutting edge techniques and analyses from the (neuro)scientific side” with “very consistent development of phenomenological investigation” and thereby move “one step closer to bridging the biological mind-experiential gap” (Varela 1996, 335, 343).

Thus, it would seem that, in order to successfully overcome the explanatory gap and establish a “science of consciousness” *proper* (if there, indeed, be such a beast!), we must develop and “calibrate” an instrument that would enable us to examine states of consciousness with precision and exactness (Wallace 2003, 16). But what might this indispensable instrument of introspection be? Already a century ago, William James, in his classic *Principles of Psychology* (1890/1950), wrote that “the faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character and will”, and that to “improve this faculty would be the education *par excellence*”. However, drawing on findings from late 19th-century psychology, which had suggested that attention cannot be sustained for more than a few seconds at a time, he reached a rather grim conclusion that “(n)o one can possibly attend continuously to an object that does not change” (ibid., 424, 420). In other words, the ability to control attention seems to be the key to unlocking the secrets of the mind, but according to James, this key is fickle and imprecise, perhaps incorrigibly so.

Now, contemplative traditions would agree that it is indeed *hard* to exert control over one’s attention, but they are adamant that it is *not impossible*: attention *can* be cultivated and therefore improved (Wallace 1999, 180). Put differently, although people “vary in their abilities as observers and reporters of their own mental lives”, these abilities can be “enhanced through mental training of attention, emotion, and metacognition”, and contemplative/meditative practice is “a vehicle for precisely this sort of cognitive and emotional training” (Thompson 2007, 228):

[J]ust as unaided human vision was found to be an inadequate instrument for examining the moon, planets and stars, Buddhists regard the undisciplined mind as an unreliable instrument for examining mental objects, processes, and the nature of consciousness. Drawing from the experience of earlier Indian contemplatives, the Buddha refined techniques for stabilizing and refining the attention and used them in new ways, much as Galileo improved and utilized the telescope for observing the heavens. (Wallace 1999, 176)

For example, the Buddhist practice of *śamatha* (literally, *quiescence*) was designed to counter two major obstacles to attention, namely excitation and laxity, and to engender a serene mental state, characterized by attentional stability and vividness (Wallace 1999, 177). It therefore provides rigorous *pragmatic* means for the progressive development of sustained attention (e.g., “9 stages”, cf. *ibid.* 1999, 180–4), which is a *sine qua non* for any type of phenomenological investigation.

Thematic Contributions: Experiential Landscape and the (No-)Self

Although there are several research topics where Buddhism might contribute to scientific knowledge, we are going to briefly look at only two of them, namely the exploration of the experiential landscape and the study of the (no-)self. Starting with the first topic, we have seen that meditative practices help us cultivate “a capacity for sustained, attentive awareness of the moment-to-moment flux of experience”, and could thereby improve our “phenomenologies of subjective experience”, i.e. our overall understanding of the ordinary, day-to-day mental phenomena (Thompson 2007, 228–9). However, and even more intriguingly, Buddhist written and verbal accounts abound in descriptions of experiential phenomena that are rarely encountered in our everyday lives. For example, final stages of *śamatha* practice are said to be characterized by an “absence of appearances”, where only “sheer awareness, clarity, and joy of the mind” are present (Wallace 1999, 182). Such experiences are interesting not only because of their extraordinariness, but also because Buddhists seem to be univocal that they *underlie* our everyday (waking) consciousness. And just as biologists try to get a better understanding of a complex biological phenomenon (e.g. a living organism) by looking at its simplest form (e.g. *E. coli*), so cognitive scientists might learn a lot about consciousness by looking at its most rudimentary representatives (cf. Forman 2007).

Further, Lancaster argues that certain Buddhist texts and practices provide means of experientially accessing what is normally referred to as “preconscious” or “preattentive” cognitive processes: “Put simply, mystical practice seems to entail a shift in the “leading edge” of consciousness such that elements previously obscured (preconscious) enter the clarity of consciousness” (Lancaster 2005, 253). A similar line of thought is taken by Davis and Thompson, who have recently suggested that the Buddhist “five aggregates model (of the mind)” and “Theravāda mindfulness meditation” might shed light on some recent controversies in consciousness studies, particularly the relationship between phenomenal and access consciousness (cf. Block 2008). In short, *phenomenal consciousness* is the what-is-it-like character of experience, while *access consciousness* refers to the

content of an experience that is accessible in working memory, and can be acted on, verbalized, etc. Currently there is no consensus as to how these two categories are interrelated or even if they actually constitute different phenomena. The intricacies of the debate need not concern us here —what is crucial is that Davis and Thompson feel that the question might not be merely theoretical, but susceptible to empirical/experiential investigation. In their view, one of the major shortcomings in contemporary discussions on the topic is that they proceed without considering “the possibility that specific forms of mental training might be able to produce new data about attention and consciousness” (Davis and Thompson 2014, 591). In effect, they suggest that “Theravāda mindfulness meditation might serve as a useful tool for direct (phenomenological) investigation of certain basic levels of consciousness (a fact substantiated by recent studies of its effects on certain cognitive phenomena, cf. *ibid.* 2014, 593) and thus help address certain issues from a new (empirical) perspective.

The second domain in which cognitive (neuro)science and Buddhism might engage in a fruitful exchange is the problem of the self. It has long been recognized that the notion of a discrete, (semi-)autonomous entity called “the self” is problematic. For example, in an oft-quoted passage, Hume writes:

For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but a perception. (Hume 1739, book I, part IV, sect. VI)

The currently predominant view in cognitive science accords with this notion, maintaining that the elusive “ego”/“self” is nothing but a *beneficial illusion* with no independent existence of its own (e.g. Dennett 1991; Metzinger 2003). Mental life is said to consist of a flux of sub-personal mental processes, the sense of self being merely a useful superimposition on this array of unconscious events.

The main problem with this view, however, is that it seems to contradict our everyday experience: although there might be good *scientific* reasons for the claim that there are no egos/selves, there seem to be equally, if not even more persuasive *phenomenological* reasons that such entities do, in fact, exist. Buddhism concurs with scientific claims about the non-existence of unified selves, but on different (if complementary) grounds: it claims that it is not only possible to *think* the non-existence of the self, but to actually *enact* it, make it an integral part of one’s *lived* experience. The famous Buddhist doctrine of *anātman* or *no-self* is thus not put forward merely as a *theoretical* model, but as an *experiential* hypothesis, something

that can be instantiated if a certain set of procedures is followed. This, however, requires strenuous discipline, as “an untrained mind is inevitably deluded over the real nature of mind and consciousness” (Lancaster 2005, 249). It is for this reason that Varela et al. feel the question of the self to be “the meeting ground” of science, philosophy, and meditative/contemplative traditions: “[A]ll reflective traditions in human history (...) have challenged the naïve sense of the self” (Varela et al. 1991, 59). And it is the contention of the proponents of Buddhism-(neuro)science collaboration that these different bodies of knowledge might approach the problem from different, yet mutually enlightening perspectives.

Second Turning of the Wheel: Criticism

Recently the prospect of incorporating Buddhism into cognitive (neuro)science has been challenged on different grounds. First, it has been claimed the idea of a fruitful collaboration between Buddhism and cognitive (neuro)science has been around for approximately two decades, but so far it has failed to produce tangible empirical results (Garfield 2011; Federman 2011). Yet even if we accept that the reason for this is that the idea is recently new, it still remains dubious as to whether meditative practices might enrich our knowledge of consciousness *in principle*. Consider the so-called “hermeneutic fallacy”: “How do you know that by exploring experience with a method you are not, in fact, deforming or even creating what you experience”? (Varela and Shear 1999, 13) Given that “the mere act of attention to one’s experience transforms one’s experience” (Chalmers 1997, 44), it would seem that by *refining* attention, we are not, in effect, gaining a better insight into experience, but *redefining* its very nature and content.

Moreover, it has been emphasized that there is a tendency among advocates of the proposed fusion towards drawing hasty (over)generalizations. For example, even if, *prima facie*, there seem to be certain telling similarities between the “findings” of cognitive (neuro)science and Buddhism (e.g., about the nature of the self), these must be treated with caution, as it is possible that they are nothing but *remarkable coincidences*. Referring to Buddhism, Federman writes: “(This is) not to say that Buddhism and cognitive science are in complete disagreement, but that sweeping statements about similarities are misleading.” (Federman 2011, 44) What is more, even if it turns out that these similarities are not merely superficial analogies, one might wonder whether they can be put on equal footing: Are “facts” acquired by some form of Buddhist meditation really on a par with “facts” acquired by science? Federman is empathic on this point: “Buddhism can inspire, but the final word is that of science.” (ibid., 46) Garfield goes even further, claiming that the

only “facts” that Buddhism can offer cognitive (neuro)science are those related to “the particular regions of the brain involved in, or transformed, by meditation”, whereas its doctrine, meditative techniques, and phenomenology are of little or no use to contemporary science (Garfield 2011, 17). He goes on to argue that, in its 2500-year history, Buddhism has been unable to unearth some very basic cognitive phenomena, which throws a dubious shadow on its role as a potential collaborator of science:

We have no reason to believe that experienced meditators are immune to inattentional blindness, to the Loftus effect, or the monochromaticity of the peripheral vision (...) Moreover, none of these effects, each demonstrable in the undergraduate laboratory, are reported in thousands of years of meditative experience or could be deduced a priori from immediate data of experience. (ibid., 23–24)

From this, Garfield concludes not only that “it would be foolish for cognitive science to rely on Buddhist meditation as a source of evidence or rely on Buddhist theory as a substitute for well-confirmed or cognitive theory”, but also that “cognitive science may have more to contribute to Buddhism than the other way around”, and that Buddhist theorists of mind would do well “to attend to contemporary scientific results concerning the mind” (ibid., 24, 25).

According to Federman, the incongruence between contemplative and experimental “facts” is further exacerbated by a fundamental difference in the background motivation of Buddhism and cognitive (neuro)science. Whereas the prime motivation of the former is *ethical* and *soteriological*, the prime motivation of the latter is *descriptive* and *explanatory*. The normative stance of Buddhism, in which the ethical is closely intertwined with the factual, is characteristic of *pre-modern* systems, and is in direct contrast with the supposedly descriptive, value-free orientation of scientific inquiry (Federman 2011, 47, 52).

Sharf takes the critique one step further, claiming that the prospects of Buddhism-(neuro)science collaboration are flawed *in principle*. He argues that the emphasis on (meditative) experience, i.e. “the very notion that one can separate an unmediated experience from a culturally determined description of that experience”, is “a relatively late and distinctively Western invention” (Sharf 2000, 271). More precisely, the idea that Asian traditions, notably Buddhism, are predicated on religious experience and that meditation is a means to induce these experiences can be traced back to “a handful of twentieth century Asian religious leaders and apologists” (e.g. Radharkishnan for the Hindu, Carus and Suzuki for the Buddhist tradition), and was an integral part of an attempt to legitimize the validity

of their religious traditions and fend off modernist criticism (Sharf 2000, 271–2; 275). Phenomenological renditions of technical terms such as *samādhi* (trance), *vipāśyanā* (insight), etc., are therefore moot, as they project modern categories onto Buddhist notions and neglect the fact that, traditionally, the meaning of such terms was strongly related to “the polemic and ideological context in which Buddhist meditation (was) carried out” (Sharf 1995, 260): they were not so much descriptive as *prescriptive*, embedded into broader discursive, ideological, and political strategies of their respective traditions.

Third Wheel: Reclaiming the Ground

How serious are these challenges? Have they irrevocably done away with the prospect of integrating Buddhism into cognitive science? Not necessarily. In what follows, I will try to address these concerns, but in reverse order.

One of the indisputable contributions of historical/textual criticism à la Sharf to the debate on the role and nature of meditative experience and practice has been to (re)instigate the interest in cultural, historical, social, etc. frameworks, in which specific experiences and practices have emerged. All too often, researchers would downplay these factors, drawing hasty analogies and unwarranted conclusions. But it is one thing to emphasize the *importance* of specific (cultural, etc.) factors, and another to maintain that all other phenomena are either *reducible* or *subservient* to them. Thus, although Sharf has done an outstanding job in demonstrating the embeddedness of contemplative experiences in the broader context of “prior ideological commitments”, “socioeconomic background”, “political agenda”, “sectarian affiliation”, “education”, etc. (ibid., 265), to maintain that this is *all* there is to such experiences seems dubious and flies in the face of the available textual evidence. It is true that, in studying ancient meditative manuals, one must pay attention not only to their *content* (e.g. description of various experiential (?) stages on the contemplative path), but also to the *context* in which they were used (e.g. underlying ideological structures, specific ceremonial settings, etc.) (ibid., 244), but does this mean that we are entitled to completely *ignore* the former or *reduce* it to the latter?

Sharf seems to be aware of the implausibility of such a radical view, and allows for meditative experience to be possible *in principle* (ibid., 245–6; 259–60), yet hastens to add that, even if it were real, traditionally, it was “not considered the goal of the practice, was not deemed doctrinally authoritative, and did not serve as the reference points for (the practitioners’) understanding of the path”, because of its “ambiguous epistemological status and essentially indeterminate nature” (Sharf

2000, 272). But note that, at least for the purposes of the present article, it is not important *what role* certain practices/experiences played in a given historical context, but the fact that such practices/experiences *did* exist, or at least, that there are good reasons to assume they did. And since there are, indeed, no water-proof *a priori* objections to this view—since it *is* possible that they did, do and can take place—, it is a matter of empirical investigation to ascertain, whether and how these experiences could be studied and/or incorporated into the corpus of scientific inquiry.

Does this mean, however, that the role of Buddhism, especially if we take into account the deep intertwinement of fact and value that seems to be characteristic of it, must necessarily be restricted to that of providing science with data for further analysis, as suggested by Federman and Garfield? Again, not necessarily. First of all, just because descriptive and normative aspects are interlaced in Buddhism, it does not mean that, if subjected to a careful historical and textual analysis, they cannot be separated and studied individually (at least to a certain extent). But even more interestingly, active engagement with such questions projects back to, and sheds light on, the fundamental presuppositions underlying our own views of science. Put differently, it forces us to (re)consider the very idea of “scientific inquiry”, alongside with some of its central notions, such as “factuality”, “objectivity”, “subjectivity”, “neutrality”, etc. The term “science”, as Wallace never tires of emphasizing, is *not* as univocal as we generally assume, and contains elements that are not as “value-free” and “neutral” as we often take them to be. This (re)opens a host of interesting, and potentially productive questions, i.e. whether or not physicalism and reductionism are necessary ingredients of science, whether the construal of objectivism in the sense of gaining knowledge of an independently existing external reality is plausible, etc.

But the possibility of establishing a fruitful dialogue is, of course, not to suggest that meditative know-how and experience ought to be used as *substitutes* for time-tested scientific methods (empirical research, statistical analysis, etc.), as implied by Garfield. If anything, meditative practices can be seen as potentially useful *complements* to the currently prevailing research methodology—complements with their own limited scope and circumscribed domain of inquiry (e.g. phenomenological research). For this reason, it is simply wrong to assume that the “experienced meditators” should have detected the cognitive phenomena alluded to above, as there are good reasons to believe that at least *some* of these phenomena occur on a *pre-experiential*, *unconscious* level, and are therefore *not* susceptible to phenomenological analysis. Garfield, who lumps all these phenomena under the category of “deep phenomenology”, seems to be making a “category mistake” in conflating 1st-person with 3rd-person analysis. At this point in research, it is

simply too early to speculate about what contemplative training *cannot* do: a much more productive strategy would be to carefully consider which elements might be useful, and then try to systematically test them in a laboratory setting.

But what of the claim that by methodically analyzing experience we are, in fact, changing the experience itself? Here, I am inclined to side with Varela and Shear, who agree that this is “a significant problem” as “every examination is (already) an interpretation”, but then go on to add that this does not necessarily mean that a rigorous approach to experience creates nothing but artefacts. Exploration of experience, they claim, is on the same boat as all the other types of scientific investigation: it is bound to suffer from “cultural expectations and instrumental bias”, but, at the same time, “there is no evidence that the phenomenal data gathered are not equally constrained by the proper reality of consciousness contents”. And even though human experience is not a fixed domain, but is changeable and fluid, it can at least be maintained that contemplative practices enable us to explore and modify experience “in non-arbitrary ways” (Varela and Shear 1999, 13–14).

Fourth Turning—A Way Forward?

So, where does this leave us? From what has been said, there seem to be no *insurmountable* obstacles to the prospect of establishing cross-cultural cognitive (neuro)science. It is true that, presently, concrete results are scarce, but time and further research will tell, whether such collaboration is empirically fruitful, and therefore worth pursuing. In this respect, the in-principle, armchair objections must be regarded with suspicion, as they risk throwing out the baby with the bathwater: there is little doubt that the idea is beset by many (methodological, hermeneutical, etc.) problems, but this does not mean that its basic tenets are hopelessly flawed.

This brings us back to our initial discussion. It seems that the two lines of criticism that proponents of Buddhism-neuroscience collaboration must face, although very different on the surface, have one thing in common: they are both *prescriptively restrictive*, in that they are convinced of being able to authoritatively proclaim what Buddhism is (not), and what it is (not) capable of, *in spite* of any claims to the contrary from (at least some) Buddhist practitioners and/or sympathizers. “Rejectionists” posit rigid, impermeable classificatory categories (if A is a science, then A cannot be a religion, *and vice versa*), while “constructivists” deny the existence of any fixed categories, seeing the latter as nothing but temporary solidifications in the on-going flow of unbridled discursivity; but they both feel that theirs is the right, and only, way of conceiving Buddhism (even if, as in the second case, “conceiving” actually means “deconstructing”). Buddhism is either

a full-blooded religion (which is basically synonymous with backwardness, superstition, fire-and-brimstone theology, etc.) or a bricolage of specific discursive histories clumsily lumped under a common concept; it is either a static, *rigidly defined entity* or a dynamic, *kaleidoscopic non-entity*.

The question ultimately boils down to how we conceive not only Buddhism but *all* systems that claim to be seeking (ab)solutions on the *existential/experiential* level. According to Payne, for example, we can approach Buddhist traditions in two ways: as “living traditions” that “develop in relation to the changing world within which they exist”, or as “dead systems of religious doctrines” (Payne 2002, 2). Both lines of criticism, although approaching the matter from different angles, seem to subscribe to the second view, while the proponents of Buddhism-(neuro)science dialogue, for the most part, opt for the first view, insisting that Buddhism’s “theories and teachings must be brought into dialogue with contemporary thought” (ibid., 2). A “living tradition” in this sense would be a tradition that addresses certain *existential* needs in *structurally* similar ways, which means that it manifests itself *through* discursive frameworks (is there any other way?), but *cannot be fully reduced to them*. It is, in other words, *dynamic*, but *not a non-entity*. Lopez’ critical remarks on the blunders surrounding the talk of “the *abstract* entity ‘Buddhism’, moving from culture to culture around the world and absorbing all that it encounters into itself” (Lopez 2008, 34; my emphasis) is therefore correct, but *beside the point*. The main feature of a *living* tradition is precisely that it is *not* (merely) abstract, but relates (also, and predominantly) to *lived experience*: failing to find a common “theoretical core” therefore doesn’t necessarily mean that Buddhism is nothing over and above the sum of its background sociocultural conditions.

And as long as *any* elements of *this (existential/experiential) sort* can be identified in Buddhism, the prospects of establishing cross-cultural cognitive (neuro)science are, at least *prima facie*, feasible; thus, “whatever value (a cross-cultural) model (might have) lies not in any claim to historical authenticity but, rather, in its claim to being empirically accurate and productive of future research” (Davis and Thompson 2012, 585). In an excellent paper on scientific studies of meditation, for example, Lutz et al. (2007) argue that, despite numerous metaphysical and interpretative differences, traditional descriptions of meditative practices agree on some important *structural commonalities*: (i) it is believed that each such practice induces a predictable experiential state; (ii) this experiential state is claimed to have a predictable effect on both body and mind; (iii) meditative practices are claimed to be gradual in that the capability of inducing the intended state is believed to improve over time, resulting in the acquisition of certain traits and/or the occurrence of certain events (cognitive, emotional or physical). Barring research of this nature on the ground of its being purely fictional and not having anything

to do with Buddhism (*what* Buddhism, mind you?) seems patently absurd. The famous historian Daniel J. Boorstin once suggested that the major obstacle to discovery is not ignorance, but the “illusion of knowledge” (in Wallace 2003, 27)—an admonition some contemporary authors would do well to heed.

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The Concept of Self in Buddhism and Brahmanism: Some Remarks

*Andrej ULE**

Abstract

I contrast briefly the Buddhist concept of Self as a process and a conditional reality with the concept of the substantial metaphysical concept of Self in Brahmanism and Hinduism. I present the criticism of the Buddhist thinkers, such as Nāgārjuna, who criticize any idea of the metaphysical Self. They deny the idea of the Self as its own being or as a possessor of its mental acts. However, they do not reject all sense of Self; they allow a pure process of knowledge (first of all, Self-knowledge) without a fixed subject or “owner” of knowledge. This idea is in a deep accord with some Chan stories and paradoxes of the Self and knowledge.

Key words: Buddhism, Brahmanism, Self, Non-Self, Consciousness, Knowledge

Izvleček

Na kratko soočim budistični pojem sebstva kot procesa in pogojene realnosti s substancialno metafizičnim pojmom sebstva v brahmanizmu in hinduizmu. Predstavim kritiko tega pojma pri budističnih mislecih, kot je Nāgārjuna, ki kritizirajo vsako zamisel metafizičnega sebstva; zavračajo idejo sebstva kot samostojne bitnosti ali kot posestnika duševnih aktov. Vendar ti kritiki ne zavračajo vsakega pomena sebstva; dopuščajo čisti proces spoznanja (predvsem samospoznanja) brez fiksnega subjekta ali »imetnika« znanja. Ta ideja se močno sklada z nekaterimi zgodbami v Chanu o sebstvu in spoznanju.

Ključne besede: budizem, brahmanizem, sebstvo, nesebstvo, zavest, spoznanje

* Andrej ULE, Professor, Department of Philosophy,
Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.
andrej.ule[at]guest.arnes.si



The Fundamental Opposition Regarding the Self

It is a well-known fact of the history of religion and philosophy that Brahmanism and Buddhism sharply disagree about the existence and nature of the Self, both about the mundane ego-consciousness and the transcendental-transcendent Self (pure consciousness). For the authors of the *Upaniṣads*, there exists the eternal Self-*ātman*, which is the internal absolute in conscious beings and is identical with the essence of all being—*brahman*. The famous assertion *Tat tvam asi* (“Thou Art This”), declares this thought in a short formula. “Thou” refers to the *ātman* in us and “This” refers to the *brahman*. The sentence thus says, “*ātman* is *brahman*”. The later Vedantist thinkers, especially Śaṅkara, understood this thought as the identity of the individual consciousness in a man and the cosmic consciousness. This identity exists on the transcendental level but does not exist on the phenomenal (empirical) level. However, the empirical ego (*aḥam*) or the empirical soul (*jīva*) has its relative existence. *Aḥam* exists in the life of an individual person and dies with the death of that person. *Jīva* is somewhat more real than *aḥam* because it transmigrates through many lives. A person’s empirical I and Self-consciousness are like the “mental projections” of *ātman* into an individual being.

According to the *Upaniṣads*, *ātman* is an imperishable, eternal being. It lives in the heart of man and is the perceiver, conceiver, and knower. Some *Upaniṣads* are even more “realistic” in their description of *ātman*: it has a shape like a man: in normal times it dwells in the heart, but sometimes it goes out of the body (for example in sleep or trance). When it returns to the body then it appears. At death it escapes from the body and continues to carry on an everlasting life of its own. However, it returns to a new body if the deceased man did not know its real eternal nature that is its identity with *brahman*. If a human being transcends their inborn ignorance about their own Self, then his *ātman* “stays” in its very nature. It stays as a pure being (*sat*), consciousness (*cit*), and bliss (*ānanda*). However, in some *Upaniṣads* the transcendence of *ātman* is stated clearly. The famous statement of *Chandogya Upaniṣad*: *Neti-neti* (It is neither this nor that) indicates that the idea of *ātman* was not metaphysically naive. Many sentences are only metaphors for something which we cannot properly express (De Smet 1974).

For Buddhists, there is no *ātman*, no eternal Self, that could accompany or exist behind the rebirth process of an individual consciousness. They deny all kinds of eternal beings or non-beings. Thus, the impression of a sharp conflict emerges, between Brahmanism or Hinduism on the one hand and Buddhism on the other. It is clear that because of the immense complexity of the self-concept in Buddhism I’ll give here only a sketch of this topic. I would like to stress some lesser-known similarities between the Buddhist and the Brahmanistic/Hindu concept of the

Self. There are many philosophical schools in Buddhism and Brahmanism/Hinduism whose ideas on the Self differ greatly. In what follows, I will focus primarily on two prominent philosophical schools in Buddhism and Brahmanism: Nāgārjuna's *Mādhyamika* and Śāṅkara's *Advaita-Vedānta*.

Buddhist Criticism of the Metaphysical Self

For Buddhists only processes exist, or better, subsist. Everything is impermanent; it causes and/or experiences suffering, and possesses no Self. These are the three characteristics of existence. As a result of understanding these three characteristics, we learn to develop renunciation, or detachment. Once we understand that existence is universally characterized by impermanence, suffering, and Non-Self, we eliminate our attachment to existence. Once we eliminate our attachment to existence, we reach the threshold of *nirvāṇa*. The whole cosmos of beings consists of a series of causes and effects without a beginning. Each being is conceived of as a momentary “sum” of different causes, and thus everything has only a conditional and relative existence (*pratītyasamutpāda*). In the case of humans, the Buddha speaks of the cyclical links between *avidyā* (primordial ignorance), volition, perception, the appearance of names and forms, touch and sensation, desire and comprehension, becoming, birth, pains, old age, and death. No factor of human existence is everlasting; it has its beginning and end. They necessarily produce *samsāra*, the empirical world and different kinds of *dubkha* (suffering). The phenomenon of *dubkha* indicates the impermanence and selflessness of all planes of existence. It is the result of our fundamental ignorance. Only by eradicating ignorance through meditative practice and the supportive help of the eight-fold way is it possible to transcend the fundamental ignorance and seemingly infinite chains of causes and effects. Strictly speaking, *no-one* will be free, and *no-one* will enter *nirvāṇa* because there is no person or Self who is bound or will be free. This thought was well expressed in the *Vissudhi Magga* (Path of Perfection):

For there is suffering, but none who suffers;
 Doing exists although there is no doer;
 Extinction is but no extinguished person;
 Although there is a path, there is no goer.
 (Buddhagosa, *Vissudhimagga* XVI, 90)

Buddha propounded the thesis of Non-Self (ssk. *anātman*, pali *annatā*). According to this thesis, the Self is merely an empty notion because every living being is a changeable and transitory complex of components that do not possess any

substance (Harvey 1995). This idea has played a central role in Buddhism in general, although it has been interpreted and elucidated in very different ways by various Buddhist schools.

We must distinguish between the transmigration and rebirth. The term rebirth is a more general notion and includes transmigration too. Rebirth (reincarnation) means only the transition of mental events from one life into another, but it does not necessarily presuppose a stable spiritual substance that would make the rebirth, but if it does, it is referred to as transmigration. Buddhism knows rebirth without transmigration, but Brahmanism and Hinduism know transmigration. At least in its early period, Buddhism defended the idea of successive “lightings” and “extinctions” of contingent conscious moments enmeshed in a net of karmic causes and effects (ibid.). Buddhism does not deny the impression of the continuity of consciousness in our lives and the impression of a relative continuity of the stream of consciousness through many successive lives. In later Buddhism, for example in some schools of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, something like a *phenomenal continuum* of individual consciousness tying together successive rebirths was accepted but even this continuum was understood as an illusion which disappears at the very “moment” when an enlightened being “enters” into *nirvana* (Choi 20011). In spite of the nonsubstantiality of individual consciousness and the “illusory” nature of the individual self in Buddhism, the individual was not conceived simply as nothing but as a phenomenal being which can act in phenomenal world: she can meditate, free herself from her karmic conditions, and eventually become enlightened.

Is it possible to understand this position without positing a certain “something” that stays the same throughout the rebirth process, or at least throughout one’s lifespan? This and similar questions have been a major bone of contention for Buddhist thinkers and they were never adequately solved—perhaps because they cannot be “solved” by a theory, but a vivid, yet ineffable meditative insight.

The Buddhist notion of the stream of consciousness can be compared to Wittgenstein’s notion of the continuity of a given language game without having something in common in all cases of its use. Wittgenstein compares this continuity with a cord. The strength of a cord does not always depend on there being a single strand which runs from end to end, it sometimes depends on the interrelationship between overlapping and criss-crossing fibers, none of which runs the entire length of the cord (Wittgenstein 1968, par. 67). The early Buddhist doctrine of rebirth may be viewed like this: there is no permanent unchanging *ātman* linking up successive lives with its continuous psychic fiber, but there is, nevertheless, continuity that is assured by overlapping and criss-crossing fibers. Buddhists

sometimes use the metaphor of a flame in order to make this point, since the flame is ever changing yet continuous.

Early Buddhists used the concept of the stream of consciousness that has no cognitive subject. Consciousness (*viññāna*) is more-or-less passive, perishable, formless, momentary. It functions as a passive force of the life-continuum. It has no internal continuity, but the karmic impact causes the continuum of *viññāna*. It is interesting that in early Buddhism and in Zen too, there is little or no interest in rebirth. It is more important that there is the attachment to the existence that causes rebirth. The stream of consciousness is the same as the stream of becoming (*bhāvasota*). A similar question would be: “what contributes to the unity of consciousness of a given person?” Buddhists generally accept the idea of the five basic constituents of a person: form (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), idea and perception (*saññā*), formation (*samskāra*), and consciousness (*viññāna*). All these constituents are empty of their self-existence as they are made of constantly changing *dharmas* (phenomena). They are also completely interdependent. What binds them into an individual conscious being? Is it one of these factors or something outside them? Buddhists generally deny both possibilities whose unity consists only in the interconnections of its parts or “elements” (*skandhāḥ*). We have thus the common ideas of the unity of a being and of the process-continuity without a necessary binding element, force, condition, etc. At least the early Buddhist criticism of the idea of Self does not mean the denial this idea as such, but only the criticism of the metaphysical idea of the Self as some everlasting inner being in each conscious individual. They also deny the idea of the Self as a hidden or a private “owner” (cognizer, actor) of mental life and experience. However, they accept the idea of a person, or of an empirical mental being that temporarily and conditionally lives in a given form. Strictly speaking, only the term “person” unifies the complex of constituents of a human being into a unity.

Nāgārjuna, the famous founder of the dialectical *Mādhyamika* philosophy (the philosophy of the Middle way), was very radical in denying of the Self. His main work is the famous *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, *Stanzas on the Middle Way*.¹ Like the Buddha himself, he tried to show that the Self and the Non-Self are both void notions. We cannot say whether a Self exists or not. Nāgārjuna and his followers do not accept the Self as the “appropriation” of mental acts and as a pure being outside the person. However, they do not reject any sense of Self. They accept the pure process of knowledge (and Self-knowledge) without a fixed subject or “owner” of knowledge. The Self has to be different from the empirical factors of the person because these factors are his acts. The agent and its acts are necessarily different.

1 Abbreviated in “*Karika*”.

It is also impossible to distinguish the Self from the empirical constituents of the person (feeling, touch, perceiving, imagination, etc.) because in this case it would be without relation to anything other than itself. It follows that the Self cannot be “in” the factors of the personal existence, nor can these factors be “in” the Self. The factors cannot “possess” the Self nor can the Self possess the factors. The only rational idea of the Self then is the *reciprocally dependent existence* of the Self and the factors of personal existence, like agent and act: “Action depends upon the agent. The agent depends on action. One cannot see any way to establish them differently.” (Nāgārjuna 1995, VIII, 12)

This understanding may bring freedom from our “clinging” to phenomena, i.e. from *samsāra*. Nāgārjuna says this clearly at the end of the eight chapter of the *Karika*:

We must say that action depends upon the agent, and the agent depends upon the action. Agent and action cannot exist independently of each other.

From this negation of independently existing agents and actions, an understanding of clinging should arise. Through this analysis of action and agent all else should be comprehended. (ibid., VIII, 2, 3)

We cannot even say of an enlightened soul: “He is free of I-ing and mine-ing” because there is not any ‘he’ as an entity, substance, person, etc.” (ibid., XVIII, 2, 3).

Nāgārjuna concludes: “When views of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ are extinguished, whether with respect to the internal or external, the appropriator ceases. This having ceased, birth ceases.” (ibid., XVIII, 4)

This criticism denies personal mind, I, and Self as “appropriators” of their “own” mental or physical acts. From the fact that there are some mental acts, we conclude that there exists one whose they are. We cannot conclude more from that, namely, that there must be someone who exists prior to these mental acts, one who was the real appropriator of the mental acts. We cannot prove the existence of Self as a pure I that lies behind the empirical mental activity. Some European philosophers like Descartes later made this (false) move. Descartes believed the mental substance possesses all *cogitationes*. I thus believe the Buddhist criticism of Self to directly refute the very idea of the separate existence of persons, minds, or I’s, which are at a distance from their mental acts (i.e. perception) and acts, but it does not reject the indicative use of the words “self”, “I”, etc. when the individuals refer to themselves as actors, speakers, and “subjects” of psycho-physical states and processes.

Nāgārjuna's criticism of any substantial self does not mean that he negates any concept of the self, but that he leads us with his argumentation to the understanding of the voidness of self that is to the self which is inter-dependent regarding all phenomena's (*dharmas*).

Even if, according to Nāgārjuna, our freedom and acts are likewise “interdependent” (void) with other phenomena as our being, it is not only an illusion. Without freedom any hope for enlightenment would be only an illusion too. Nāgārjuna surely did not defend such a claim. It is perhaps wise to say so, as a Japanese Zen master answered to the question if Buddha is bound with his *karman*: Buddha is identical with his *karman* (or even better, he is not different to it) (Katz 1974, 26).

Buddha as a completely enlightened being does not have any *own karman* because he does not have any *own Self*: he can thus only be non-different to the total *karman* of all living beings. This view accords with the Mahayanistic view on bodhisattvas; they are living beings who do not want to “enter” into *nirvāṇa* without entering of other living beings into it. One can de-mythologize this view by understanding how insight into the non-substantiality of individual persons and their acts necessarily coincides with the expansion of the net of interdependencies between living beings which one takes responsibility for them.

Some Later Convergences

In spite of all the differences between Buddhism and Brahmanism-Hinduism and the Buddhist criticism of the idea of Self, later on Buddhism and Hinduism (especially after appearance of *Mahāyāna*) indicate some convergence. Some thinkers of *Advaita-Vedānta* and of *Mahāyāna Buddhism* came particularly close in regard to the concept of the Self. The *Mahāyāna* philosophers of the “Mind only” (or *Yogācāra*) philosophy developed the concept of a basic mind (consciousness) that coincides with reality. However, this coincidence stays negative. The basic mind and the essence of reality are without substantiality and Self. Both are two aspects of the voidness of everything (*śūnyatā*). They transcend both being and non-being. Similarly, for some Vedāntists, the Self is the spiritual consciousness that is essentially indescribable and inconceivable in human terms. The best “positive” description of it would be that it is the *sat-cit-ananda* (pure being-pure consciousness-pure bliss). This description is only metaphorical; it does not touch the very essence of *ātman*. Seen logically, it is a negative description: *sat* means rather *non-nothing* than being, *cit* means rather *not non-consciousness*, and *ānandā* means *not non-bliss*. We cannot say positively what constitutes the positive content of *ātman* and its identity with *brahman*. Similarly, we can say, the term “Self”

is a metaphorical term, and we must be careful not to confuse it with the concept of individual substance, soul, person, or even god.

Some *Māhāyāna* philosophers like Vasubandhu, the founder of the “Mind-only” philosophy, developed the concept of a pure consciousness (*vijñaptimātratā*) which is the very basis of all existence. Vasubandhu means that the pure consciousness cannot be grasped by the intellect because the intellect itself is non-existent. However, this statement does not mean that the pure consciousness is non-existent. Pure consciousness is undeniable because the very process of denial is based on the strength of a self-luminous and self-evident flow of consciousness. It is the only reality, and it can be directly realized by a spiritual experience which transcends the subject-object duality (Tripathi 1972, 333f). The non-discursive joint realization of the void nature of consciousness and of all kinds of objects of consciousness leads to *nirvāṇa*.

Vasubandhu denies the real existence of the world and defends its construction in the field of the basic stream of consciousness. A similar idea was given later by Śāṅkara, the leading philosopher of the non-dual *Vedānta*. Śāṅkara used a similar argument to “prove” the existence of the Self, which in some way also resembles the later argument of Descartes on *Cogito*:²

Just because it is the Self, it is not possible to doubt the Self. For one cannot establish the Self (by proof) in the case of anyone because in itself it is already known. The Self is not demonstrated by proof of itself. It brings into use all means of proof, such as perception and the like, in order to prove a thing that is not known. For the objects of the expression, like ether etc., need a proof because they are not assumed as known in and of themselves. The Self is the basis of the action of proving, and consequently it is evident before the action of proving. Since it is of this character, it is therefore impossible to deny it. For we can call into question something which comes to us (from outside), but not that which is our own being. (Deussen 1973, 127f)

It is obvious that there close parallels between Śāṅkara’s and Vasubandhu’s arguments. It might be claimed that, at least for these two thinkers, the difference between the Buddhist theory of consciousness and the Vedantist theory of the Self is not as great as it is commonly supposed in the polemics between the Buddhist

2 Arguments of Vasubandhu and Śāṅkara present two cases of transcendental arguments that try to show some necessary conditions for the possibility of the existence of conscious (mental) acts and conscious (mental) phenomena. I wrote more about the transcendental arguments in Indian and European philosophy in Ule 2008.

rejections of the Self and its affirmation by the orthodox Indian philosophers. The difference is rather one of emphasis. Buddhist thinkers of the Mind-Only (*Yogācāra*) school provide in-depth and subtle analyses of the Mind. They present the pseudo-creative potentiality of the Mind in the constructing of phenomena. However, they do not accept substantialism. They deny the eternal substantiality of the Self and the crude opposition of the Absolute and of *maya* (cosmic illusion). Some Vedantist philosophers (as well as some other orthodox philosophers) emphasize the substantiality of the Self (the thesis “*ātman is brahman*”) and gravitate towards some kind of dualism between the Absolute and the phenomenal world (*samsāra*).

Vasubandhu’s and the Śāṅkara’s arguments are similar to Descartes’s *Cogito* but ultimately transcend it. It seems that Descartes stops his *Cogito* in a self-evidential, but transitory thought “I think”. From that he draws the conclusion (in line with the assumption that no material substance is present in the time of doubt) that the thinking subject is a thinking substance that is qualitatively different from a material (spatially extended) substance. However, the existence of me as a thinking substance is given only momentarily. Descartes needs God as a third kind of substance not only to coordinate the thinking substance and the material substance in a human being but also to provide for the continuous duration of the thinking substance (Descartes 1979, 50).

The important difference in the conception of pure consciousness by most *Yogācāra* philosophers and the metaphysical Self by non-dual Vedāntists is that pure consciousness is conceived as a pure flow of consciousness, and the metaphysical Self as an eternally present and non-intentional self-awareness.

Buddhist thinkers of the *Yogācāra* philosophy have analyzed the Mind with great subtlety. They have presented the pseudo-creative potentiality of the Mind in the construction of phenomena. In general, *Māhāyāna* Buddhism did not accept substantialism of the Self and the identity of the individual consciousness with the absolute Self. However, there have been some exceptions to this rule. The group of later *Māhāyāna sūtras* called *Tathāgathagarba* (*The Womb of Buddha*) developed the concept of the universal Buddha nature that is said to “reside” in all living beings and is the potential of their enlightenment. This universal Buddha nature takes on the form of the absolute Self, which seems similar to the Vedantic concept of the Self (*ātman*). The central *sūtra* of this school, the *Māhāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (2nd–3rd century CE) contains many positive claims regarding the Self that are attributed to Buddha himself. For example:

Common mortals and the ignorant may measure the size of their own self and say, “It is like the size of a thumb, like a mustard seed, or like

the size of a mote.” When the Tathagata speaks of Self, in no case are things thus. That is why he says: “All things have no Self.” Even though he has said that all phenomena (*dhārmās*) are devoid of the Self, it is not that they are completely/truly devoid of the Self. What is this Self? Any phenomenon (*dhārma*) that is true (*satya*), real (*tattva*), eternal (*nitya*), sovereign/ autonomous/ self-governing (*aisvarya*), and whose ground/ foundation is unchanging (*asraya-aviparinama*), is termed “the Self” (*ātman*). ... For the sake of beings, he (Tathagata) says “there is the Self in all things.” O you the four classes! Learn *Dhārma* thus! (*The Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra* 1999, Ch. 3: 28)³

Buddha also gave advice to the monks (present at the time of his passing) that, in every situation, one must constantly meditate upon the idea (*samjñā*) of the Self which is said to be eternal, blissful, and pure. However it is questionable whether, in this particular *sūtra*, Buddha actually defends the idea of the Self as an independent reality. In the last chapter, Buddha provides a more precise characterization of the Self:

Nobly-born One, I have never taught that the six inner and outer *āyatana*s (sense-spheres) and the six consciousnesses’ are Eternal, Blissful, the Self, or Pure; but I do declare that the cessation of the six inner and outer *āyatana*s and the six consciousnesses arising from them is termed the Eternal. Because that is Eternal, it is the Self. Because there is Eternity and the Self, it is termed Blissful. Because it is Eternal, the Self and Blissful, it is termed Pure. (ibid., Ch. 43: 474)

The eternal Self is thus conceived as the “residual” term denoting the unspeakable Reality that “arises” when all *samsāric* components of our being “cease”, and not as the ideal or the absolute being given outside the phenomenal world. Here, the importance of Nāgārjuna’s criticism of the idea of independent Self is of special relevance. Nāgārjuna attacks the idea of the Self construed as a separate reality, as a separate entity occupying an autonomous ontological position in the structure of being. He criticized all concepts of an Absolute that would lay hidden behind the phenomenal world (*samsāra*). His criticism also hits implicitly the *Yogācāra* theory of the pure consciousness as the essence of reality and the idea of the

3 There exist many Chinese and Tibetan translations of this *sūtra* and only a part of its (possibly original) Sanskrit edition. They do not agree in all details but the quoted part is present in all variants of this *sūtra*. I quoted from the so-called “Northern” Chinese version of the *sūtra* made by the Indian monk Dharmakṣema around 421 CE and was translated in 1999 in English by the Japanese scholar Yamamoto.

world as an illusion in respect to the absolute identity. He presented a type of “non-standpoint” thinking which does not need some absolute besides the world, including *nirvāṇa*.⁴ For Nāgārjuna, the difference between the illusory world and emptiness or voidness is still a theoretical standpoint, and is a thesis that could be objected to. It thus still belongs to the realm of relative truths. It does not present the ineffable absolute truth that transcends all standpoints including a “thesis” of the illusory nature of the world and the “thesis” of the two truths itself. The ego-sense (the Self) does not exist as an independent reality, but is like a reflection of something else in the mirror of our mind. I believe it is the complex of the psychophysical constituents of a person that is reflected as the personal I in the person’s mind-stuff.

However, in spite of the Buddhist criticism of the metaphysical Self in Brahmanism at least Śaṅkara was quite cautious in regard to the idea of substantial Self and the idea of the Self as a “possessor” of its own mental acts. For Śaṅkara the Self is only the pure knower, or better, the witness of the mental activity, not the possessor of the mental activity. The Self is the necessary condition of possibility of all mental activity. The impression of appropriateness of mental activity to the mental subject belongs to the empirical I (*ahamkāra*) and to mental consciousness. The mental “ownership” of mental acts is illusory in respect to the Self. The Śaṅkara’s notion of ātman refers to the trans-personal truth of all persons, all mind(s).

Śaṅkara like some Buddhist philosophers accepts also the conditional difference between the lower (relative) and higher (absolute) truth (or between the lower and higher level of reality). This difference itself is a relative too, and can be transcended by the deepest mystical insight. In this insight the impression of the difference between the individual (personal) self and the Self vanishes. For most Buddhist philosophers the highest truth similarly transcends all differences between the Self and Non-Self, Being and Non-Being, Conditional and Unconditional. They do not tell what the absolute reality (*tathāgata*) is, thus they deny the idea of the absolute Self (or of any absolute being like *brahman*, God, Buddha, etc., too).

4 I will again pay attention to Wittgenstein, who developed a synthesis of the absolutism and its criticism which go beyond the limits of thought and language. The early Wittgenstein gave the first kind of this synthesis. The silence at the end of *Tractatus* expresses the limit of speaking and negates it. Wittgenstein has here still presupposed a common logical form of language and the world as a kind of absolute essence. The later Wittgenstein gave in his analysis of everyday language another term of this synthesis. He tried to develop the non-attachment to any fixed theoretical standpoint. He did not presuppose an essential correspondence of the language to the world. He was “not interested in constructing a building so much as in having a perspicuous view of the foundations of possible buildings” (Wittgenstein MS quoted in Hilmy 1987, 191). The unspeakable “correct view” at the end of *Tractatus* partly corresponds to the “perspicuous view” of our use of everyday language in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy.

For the higher, trans-conceptual level of the Vedāntist non-dualism the Self is not a separate, self-existent being next to or over the world because it transcends the very category of existence and not-existence. In this sense the usual concept of *māyā* in *Vedānta* is only a relative one. This is similarly to *Mādhyamika*. The Buddhist criticism of the Vedāntist concept of the Self and its transcendence regarding the world hit only the lower level of the Vedāntist knowledge. There is no dualism between the Self and the “illusionary” world. The seeming dualism between the transcendental Self and the phenomenal world must be transcended in a complete non-dualism of the spiritual reality that could not be expressed in words but in a mystical experience.

This does not hold true for all Vedantist thinkers. Śāṅkara, for instance, distinguishes between lower forms and higher forms of conceiving the *ātman* = *brahman* identity and its difference from *samsāra*. In the former case, the Self is presented as some kind of God or the absolute being that “magically” brings forth the phenomenal world. In the latter case, however, the highest conceptions of the Self (or *brahman*), e.g. “Being, Consciousness, and Bliss” (*sat-cit-ananda*), and the notion of the cosmic illusion (*māyā*) are only metaphorical in respect to the Truth.

It is worth to pointing out that both Śāṅkara and Nāgārjuna use the relationship of the face and its reflection in a mirror to show the illusory nature of the “I”. Nāgārjuna writes in *Ratnāvalī* (*Precious Garland*):

As the reflection of one’s own face is seen depending upon a mirror, but does not exist in its own right; so the “I” is experienced depending on the factors of personal image of one’s own face. As, in the absence of a mirror, one’s own face is not seen, so neither is the “I” in the absence of the factors of personal existence. From hearing this kind of statement the noble Ānanda attained the eye of truth and spoke continuously of it to the other monks. (Candrakīrti 1979, 168)

The idea of Self as a self-existent entity is thus (according to Nāgārjuna) the product of existential hypostazing of the perceived unity of a person, as a result of primal ignorance. Śāṅkara argues that the “I” is the appropriator of the mental functions, but the Self is the absolute Consciousness which reflects itself in the I:

The appropriator is the ego-sense which always stands in proximity to this (absolute Consciousness) and acquires a reflection of it... Only when there is a reflection (*ābhāsa*) of the inner Witness can words like “I”, “thou”, etc., by referring to the reflection, indirectly indicate the Witness. They cannot designate the latter directly in any way... Because the

ego-sense bears a reflection of the *ātman*, it is designated by words pertaining to the *Ātman*; just as words pertaining to fire are applied to torches and the like though only indirectly.

The reflection of a face is different from the face since it conforms to the mirror; and in turn the face is different from its reflection since it does not conform to the mirror. The reflection of the face while the *ātman* is comparable to the face and therefore different from its reflection. And yet ordinary knowledge fails to discriminate them. (*Upadeshasahasri* 18 by De Smet 1974, 70f).

Conclusion: Enlightenment without the Fixed Self or Non-Self

Buddhist and especially Nāgārjuna's criticism of the idea of self undermines any notion of the Self as a separate entity occupying an autonomous ontological position in the structure of being. This criticism is pertinent for some very important philosophical and religious ideas of the Self in Indian philosophy (for example, the *Sāṃkhya-Yoga* notion of the Self as *puruṣa*, or some theistic ideas of *ātman*), but not so much for the non-dualist Vedāntic notion of the Self like the Śāṅkara's notion. Śāṅkara's notion of the Self is not a personal self, it is the common transpersonal truth of all persons, all mind(s). It is also not a self-existent being (next to or above the world) because it transcends the very category of existence and not-existence. It is the Self and the Non-Self simultaneously but it is still something absolutely unconditioned. Nāgārjuna agrees that neither the existence nor the non-existence of the Self can be affirmed but he maintains that one should be free of I-ing and mine-ing (i.e. free from the possessive self) in order to free oneself from the cycle of personal rebirths. In his *Karika* he does not ascribe any fixed ontological status to either the Self or the Non-Self, and does not accept any unconditioned Absolute; for him, not even *nirvāṇa* is an Absolute over and above the cyclic existence (*samsāra*): "There is not the slightest difference between cyclic existence and *nirvāṇa*. There is not the slightest difference between *nirvāṇa* and cyclic existence." (Nāgārjuna 1995, XXV, 19)

The comparison with the use of the similar mirror-analogy by Nāgārjuna which was quoted before, shows that both thinkers compare a relative, conditioned "I" with the reflection of our face in the mirror. The ego-sense (or the Self by Nāgārjuna) does not exist; it is like a reflection of something else in the mirror of our mind. There is the true Self for Śāṅkara that resembles our face while for Nāgārjuna it is a bit unclear what would in this analogy resemble our face (in

the difference from the reflected “I”). I believe it is the complex of the psycho-physical constituents of a person that is reflected as the personal I in the mind-stuff of the person.

Nāgārjuna allows the pure process of knowledge (and self-knowledge) without a fixed subject or “owner” of knowledge that focuses itself on the interior “experience” of Emptiness and *nirvāṇa*. It seems paradoxical that there is knowledge without an act of knowledge and without subject. This idea is in a deep accord with some Chan stories and paradoxes on the Self and knowledge. Let me finish with a Zen stanza of Nansen:

Hearing, seeing, understanding, knowing—
Each of these is not separate.
For him, mountains and rivers
Do not appear in the mirror.
When the frosty heaven’s moon has set
And midnight nears
Whose shadow with mine
Will the clear pool reflect, cold? (Miura and Sasaki 1965, 59)

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The Significance of “*mu*shin”: The Essential Mind of Zen Buddhist Philosophy for Humans in a Contemporary World

Hisaki HASHI*

Abstract

In our time of an information highway, digital networks are linked around the clock. Among various data many people are unconsciously depending on IT and digital medias with their body—but without any mind. The human origin, its creative thinking and acting, transmitting one idea to another for reforming and developing something new has been quite forgotten. Against this omnipresent phenomenon the Zen Buddhist Philosophy of Mind shows a dynamic approach to re-create and re-construct a human life, accompanied by the unique concept of the absolute one, “*mu*” (無), *mu-shin* (無心), the mind of *mu* presents a dynamic unity in its flexible activity.

Keywords: philosophy of Zen Buddhism, the essential Mind in Zen, contribution for a contemporary world

Izveček

V današnjem času informacijske prepletenosti so digitalna omrežja povezana štiriindvajset ur na dan. Obdani z najrazličnejšimi podatki so ljudje od tehnologije in digitalnih medijev nezavedno odvisni, in sicer telesno – ne pa tudi umsko. Pozablja se osnovna dejavnost človeka, njegovo kreativno razmišljanje in delovanje, prenos idej s preoblikovanjem in razvijanjem novega. V nasprotju s to vsesplošno težavo pa zenovska budistična filozofija uma ponuja možnost dinamičnega pristopa k rekreiranju in rekonstrukciji človeška življenja skupaj z edinstvenim konceptom absolutnega »*mu*« (無), ali *mu-shin* (無心), kjer um *muja* predstavlja dinamično enost v vsej svoji prilagodljivosti.

Ključne besede: filozofija zen budizma, esencialni um v zenu, prispevek v sodobnem svetu

* Hisaki HASHI, Dr. phil., durch Habilitation authorized
Professor for full areas of philosophy at the Department of Philosophy,
University of Vienna, Austria.
hisaki.hashi[at]univie.ac.at



What is Our Self just in Our Time of Digital Information Highway?

In our time of digital networking, all regions of the world have been globalizing toward one direction, to get and send information as fast and as far as possible. Everything is judged as a packet of compact information, whereas the core of most of the things seems to appear just as a punctual station for sending and receiving a digital information.

These things are organized by our self, our bodily existence with consciousness. We, people of the 21st century, are accompanied by information based on cognitive scientific data, for example how our brain *sees* everything, how is the function of our brain activities is like, how far we can recognize our intellectual or psychic activities through a data-base, from computer tomography etc. There we are, as a system of complex functions of many sub-systems in our biological organism. We are accustomed to operate them just by natural science data base or by our objectivist thinking. We will understand everything in objectivizing digital data if we respect and value them as they become an unavoidable part of the present world.

On the other hand, the lacking part of this stream, a *reversed course* in thinking and acting, is less regarded: The “experiencing of everything in a full activity from the integrated oneness of body and consciousness”. I. e. a fulfilled self in one’s own life by every occasion, in every core of the things in the environment. The Buddhist Philosophy, especially Zen thinking is bound to this main aspect of “experiencing everything in a full activity of the integrated body and mind”.

Humans as a “Splitting Animal”

Villard van Oman Quine remarked: The thinking human, the rational thinking subject is a “split animal” in his “Kant lectures” (Quine 2003, 86–90). He shows that human beings value *protocol sentences* (which was presented originally by scientific positivists), for example, “Tom says: It is raining” in analytical thinking, cognitive- and natural sciences. The second half of the sentence shows an objective protocol of an occasion. The first half is bound to an empirical person within an empirical phenomenon of a circumstance, including also one’s own feeling, emotions and subjectivist behavior. Quine means: A protocol sentence is in purpose of presentation of an absolute objectivity whereas it comes from the pure “subjectivity” of a human being as an individual person. The pure subjectivity of a person and his objectivist protocol sentence are always connected in a human being’s personality. Even if the second half of the statement is an

objectivist protocol sentence, it is *unavoidably* bound to one's subjectivist personality: Quine judges this complexity in saying that we as human beings exist as a "*split animal*".

Splitting into the dualistic directions—a (person as a pure subject) and a (person striving for objectivist thinking): It is evident that analytical philosophers and cognitive scientists strive primarily for the perfection of the "second half" of truth presented in a "protocol sentence". In contrast to this approach, Buddhist philosophers are mostly interested in the first half of the sentence ("Tom says", "Anne says" etc.), meaning the "*pure subject*", who is oriented toward grasping what the person's self is. Reflections of Buddhist Philosophy go further, whereas our own subjectivism of any kind is viewed by our own selves self-critically and cautiously. Even if we judge, we think, and we act most objectively in the Cartesian sense of rationalism, we are bounding to this fatal dualism represented by Quine—the *splitting animal*—into the pure subjectivity of our bodily self *per se* and the objectivity of our cognition.

The Subject-object Dichotomy in Zen Buddhist Thinking

Let us view how the problem (of the "split animal") is treated by the Zen Buddhist philosophy of mind. Izutsu T. represented the position of our subject-object dichotomy through a graphic as seen below (Izutsu 1977; 1986, I.4.). Our consciousness has always the structure of three stations: viewing, thinking, and acting. 1) (I see), 2) (I see myself), 3) (I see objects of mine).

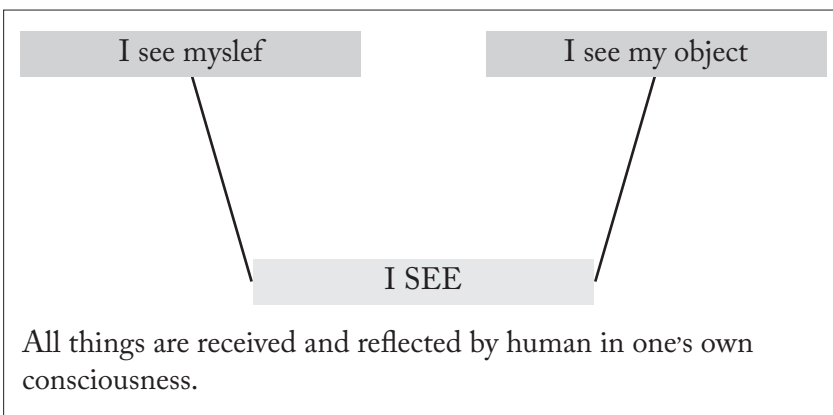


Illustration 1: *The splitting subject and object* (Izutsu 1986, Chap. 1.4)

As humans in the contemporary world, we mostly have intentions regarding on the last aspect: We see the objects of ours—in daily life and also in the context of contemporary scientific knowledge. On the other hand, the reflection of *one's own self*, which is shown by Izutsu *in the 2nd station*, is not reflected cautiously¹ (Heisenberg 1991, 16).

The objectivist thinking method in Natural Science and Technology is correct just in the construct of the systematic thinking discipline. But we have to remark that this thinking method cannot be valid as an all embracing discipline. Let us see the content of our self-consciousness. Informed by experts of brain physiology and cognitive science, we can observe the routes how an electron signal runs from one part to another part of the cortex and how intensive the exchange of energy between the observed parts is. For example, when a musical sound is received by a human organism supported by neuro transmitter, we can see the route of running electrons which transmit the information (Wróbel 2011, 16–17). We can observe and protocol the whole process of how digital information is collected. But, the collected data of neuro science are not same with the human experience of “hearing a sound of music”. The first one cannot replace the latter.

Recently it is often stated in neuro science that the brain function has been continuously clarified by various experiments, but that the verified and acknowledged parts are still limited and that the results of collected knowledge are depending on the following condition: “Only if the collected data has a conjunction to a ‘human experience’, which has been experienced in one’s own life, the brain recognizes the input data in connecting to one’s own experience in which a person gets one’s own knowledge.” For example, the present state of neuro- and cognitive science is not able to define *from where* and from which part of the brain’s “three dimensional space” knowledge emerges. Only if a human perceives a physical thing, its horizontal and vertical dimensions, and only if the human walks to recognize how long its length is, s/he recognizes firstly what a three-dimensional thing in reality is. Also, a most highly developed state of cognitive science is not able to clarify what “consciousness” is, from where it arises, from which function of the neuro transmitter it comes from, from which collaboration of crushing parts of vertical cells one’s own knowledge can be built up and so on. The data of neuroscience gets only its effective face if the human being “experiences” something and gets

1 Someone can say, that “modern physics since Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle also remarks the relationship of observing subject and observed object, so that the reflection of our observing self is not omitted by natural scientific thinking”. No. This is a very simplified modification, which is far from the origin of Heisenberg’s thought. We should not forget that the full content of the Uncertainty Principle is construed through the rigorous observation and execution of the pure physicist discipline (Heisenberg 1991, Chap. I).

“knowledge of something”, whereas the *neuro scientific data by itself* is not able to construct and replace the same “experience of human”.²

In the Buddhist knowledge, there is a term “*sangai yuishin*” 三界唯心, which shows a significant concept as follows: “In all areas of the three worlds (i.e. the world of greedy, the world of visible phenomena, and the world of Buddhist cognition *dharmā*) are construed exceptionally through our mind, the mind of humans. All things are received and reflected in our mind like a mirror. If our mind is coated by our subjectivism, things are received in a subjectivist way where knowledge and thought start from this state of a biased view by one’s own subjectivism³ (Hashi 2015b, 289; *The Teaching of Buddha* 2014, 51–60). Even if it is a highly skilled natural and cognitive scientist knowledge, viewed from the Buddhist Philosophy of *mind*, it is yet a special kind of “*subjectivism*”, whereas a scientist believes in the “absolute objectivity” of natural scientist knowledge and keeps it as an absolutely centralized one. Then, during this activity to believe and keep the “most objectivist knowledge”, the thinking human has executed one’s own *karma* (not as sin!) as a “whole reality of one’s thinking, acting and experiencing of life in a causal logical continuum”, in one’s own subjectivity, limiting the “absolute truth in an absolute objectivity”. If this person is based on one’s own scientific centralism, he/she reflects one’s own position *only affirmatively*, but without setting a critical view to one’s own standing point. The objective and analytic thinking person should reflect his own thinking position from a self-critical distance—as an observer to the thinking and acting unit of one’s own self. Heinz von Foerster, an Austrian physicist who emigrated to the USA, positioned that he as a developed physicist looks at his own physicist position from an intellectual distanced level, “the observer of the 2nd order” (Foerster 1985a; 1985b, 81; Cf. Maturana 1985, 301). With this

2 Even if an Artificial Intelligence is highly developed and it can overcome a human ability in all areas of life, it cannot “experience” occasions of any kind spontaneously at the human level of a complexity, because it is a construed program with certain functions. Even though it can collect several types of data for itself (for example in purpose of winning the game), a further function out of the input programs could not be activated. It “learns” something, but only within the input rules including some kind of variations: Cf. Fleissner 2011, 39–58.

3 H. Maturana means in his writing collaborated with F. Varela: Even if cognitive scientists work out their objectivist analytical theory, it is unavoidable to execute one’s own scientific methodology, which is limited by one’s own scientific thinking subject. An absolute objectivism of cognitive scientists is bound at the same time to the execution of one’s own scientific subjectivism. I, as the author of this article, will represent that the unique principle of Nishida, the so-called founder of the Kyoto School, the “absolute contradictory self-identity” (*zettai mujunteki jiko dōitsu* 絶対矛盾の自己同一) has here the validity to verify that an absolute objectivistic thinking of human reason is also accompanied by the pure subjectivity as limited knowledge of a human: Maturana 1982. Original positions of the problematic of “subjectivity and mind” of Buddhism are found in: Pāli Canon in Early Buddhism, in *Lankā vatarā sutra* (楞伽經), *Huayen Sutra* (華嚴經) in Mahayana Buddhism: see References, category Bukkyō dendō kyōkai 2014.

conception, Foerster got a unique position as a self-critical cognitive scientist, which was characterized in his own words as follows: “Vom Physiker zum Metaphysiker” (from the physicist to the metaphysician). Quite similar to Foerster, the Buddhist Philosophy of Mind phrases a critical and self-critical position, in which our “mind” works day by day by integrating body and consciousness, in acting and thinking accompanied by our cautious view. It is able to execute a self-corrections in relationship with the things and beings in its environment.

Excursus 1:

The characteristic of the self-positioning in this philosophy is, that the viewing and acting Self reflects and perspectives one’s own Self and in relationship to other Selves and Beings from the dimension of Experiencing in the middle of daily life. Thus, all reflections are executed from the dimension of acting self in a real time in a life world. It includes a rigorous self-critical view in self-analysis, but accompanied also by religious Compassion for suffering one: In this dimension, the Buddhist Philosophy has another starting point and another purpose, which is distinguished clearly from analytical philosophy. Problems treated in Buddhist Philosophy are overlapped sometimes with Phenomenology. But once again, it purposes the solving of suffer and self-healing in thinking and acting from the middle of the dimension of Experiencing Self (See Hashi 2015d).

Also, the calmness of Zen Practice is oriented to solve an ego-centralized mind of suffering self in a cautious insight, which clarifies the relationship of one’s Self to the other beings in the environment. It has a goal in Self-Healing in relationship from one’s self to another. In this position, the deep calmness of Zen Practice is *not* the same of Husserl’s *epoché*, which started from the orientation for examining and establishing the philosophy as a rigorous science.

The Conflict of Our Mind

The essential part of Zen Buddhist knowledge and cognition problematizes the “*mind*” of one’s own subject and its fixed connection to “one’s own subjectivity” per se. The self, bounding to its subjectivism in striving for an objective knowledge—by Quine the central problem of the “splitting animal”—is prepositioned in the Buddhist philosophy of mind in questioning how we can overcome this splitting and this self-contradiction through our thinking and acting in daily life (Hashi 2015b, Chap. 2.1.). Let us remember the diagram of Izutsu (Izutsu 1986, Chap. I.4). He states that our mind is construed by the integrated three principal

positions: 1. (I see), 2. (I see myself) (and my internal world), 3. (I see my object) (primarily outside of me, in an external world): The first one, (I see), is the most fundamental principle, which is arising in the middle of an experiencing self. In other words, it is the fundamental station which enables our viewing, thinking and acting *before* our analyzing and psychic viewing,—“I see my objects” and “I see myself”—are going on. Before the splitting into a dichotomy of the positions 2 (I see myself) and 3 (I see my object), the first position (I see) is input without reflection as a preposition in a non-verbal way in one’s own mind.

Excursus 2:

Nishida, the founder of the Philosophy of the Kyoto School in the 20th century, characterized that Eastern Philosophy has its main aspect in viewing and reflecting on things in experiences in the middle of the world phenomena, always accompanied by the acting and thinking subject, the mind of the self. We will focus on the latter, the viewing and thinking self, which is not a briefly empirical consciousness of “I see”. It is neither an Ego in the subjectivist way nor the objectivist rational thinking cogito after Descartes. The self by Nishida is, just in short, the true self in the subjectivist way that dominates and operates the others by one’s own subjectivism and must be reflected and *solved* cautiously. The acting and thinking self is present, but the orientation and content of one’s consciousness is not the same as the Cartesian “*ego cogito*”. The self by Nishida is part of the phenomena of the whole world and universe. It is part of the environment in which self-consciousness is oriented to experience and construct a meaningful world as an *egoless self* (solved from the subjectivist way of thinking) step by step in daily life: Nishida called it the Logics of the essential Mind (*shin no ronri* 心の論理) and remarked that this main stream is quite different from that of Occidental (Western) Philosophy (Nishida 1965/66). The latter has the characteristic of objectivizing and analyzing things mostly from an observing view, a method of observing and judging every aspect in a clear-cut dichotomy of “either A or non-A”. In the progressive civilization and technology of the 19th century the East Asian main stream of thinking, the subject of experiencing, viewing and knowing the self (I see) was sometimes neglected as a minority for the world’s progression caused by Natural Science and Technology, case by case. Nishida emphasized that a new philosophy is expected eagerly in the middle of the progress of civilization and technology in which the objectivizing and analyzing mentality of Occidental Sciences experienced its limit.

Another Way to Solve the Conflict—In Distinguishing from Cartesian Way of Cogito

It is obvious that the modern rational and natural scientific way of thinking has set these three stations with the highly concentrated 1st position as “*I think*” (*je pense, ego cogito*). In the rational scientific thinking of Descartes, which was shown clearly in the *Discourse de la Méthode*, chapter 5: It corresponds the 3rd position of the diagram of Izutsu (I see my object) which is highly closed up in the frame of “observing an object to find a certain rule of the nature of physiology and medicine” The essence of Descartes’ thinking was actually noticeable in the fourth chapter, in which almost all reflections for things which are “right, clearly logical, and sure” in every repetition of examinations when one’s own recognition for oneself goes on from “I think” and verifies it as a “concrete existence of rationality as a sub-system attached to the highest creator God” in an open mind (which sounds quite optimistic). (Descartes 2009, 71–77) Here we can see that the same construction for trusting human’s own rationality as the highest project attached to God can be hardly found by Buddhist Philosophy, since the latter has not set a highest creator in a personalized form. The characteristic of Buddhist *dharma* (the entity of orders, systems, and networks of truth of various kinds) is independent on *brahman* as a *principle* of moving and creating all things of the world like God does as a creator. A theistic character was solved in Early Buddhism by Buddha and in the *lanka vātara sūtra* in Mahayana Buddhism, the monotheist theory is definitively distinguished from Buddhist original positions (Nakamura 2003a). Especially in Zen Buddhism the creator of the world (God) was out of any questions. The most important thing to achieve is the discovering of a pure humanity in one’s own bodily existence, in Buddhist term “the Buddha Nature” (*bussbō* 仏性) (Nakamura 2003b; Hashi 2014a). A kind of credo in Zen Buddhist way of thinking is characterized by the integration of three principles:

- 1) Believe firmly the potential to state one’s own Buddha Nature in our bodily existence (大信根 *dai-shinkon*),
- 2) Keep a doubt for a limited ability of one’s acting and thinking to grasp and state one’s Buddha nature 大疑団 *dai-gidan*) and
- 3) Strive actively and affirmatively toward achieving the true Buddha Nature in ourselves (大奮志 *dai-funshi*) (Hashi 2014a, III, Chap. 3: 181–83)

From this view, the diagram of Izutsu shows a most interesting aspect. Regarding Buddhist philosophy, we see a famous aspect: Everything in the world is bound to the way of a subject’s mind: If the subjective mind tend to see and value everything in a negative way, the whole world in its environment metamorphoses in a negative and pessimistic way. If the mind has been changing itself, the world’s

environment arises into a positive and clear view. The world is always a limited world which remains in a frame of one's own self-consciousness and which is always changing in a network of relations between the environment and the human.

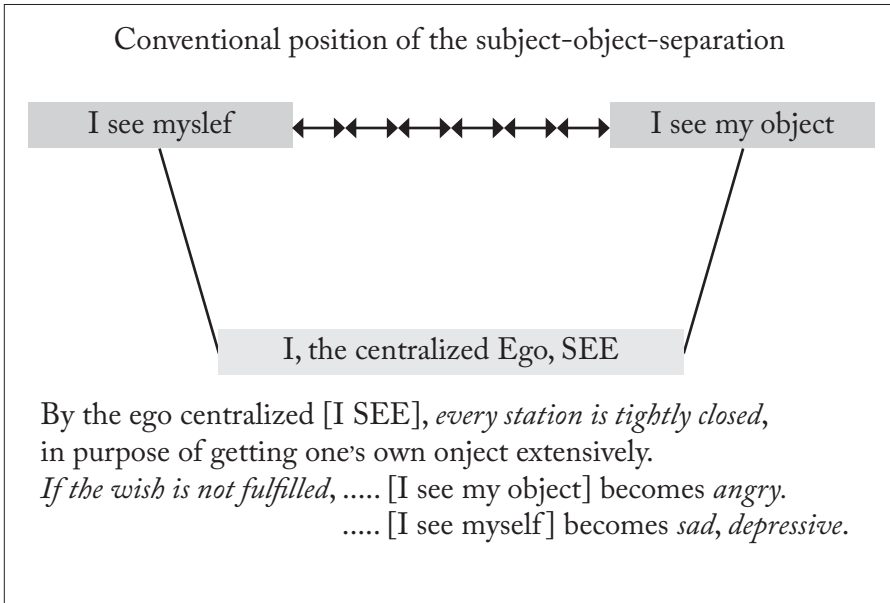


Illustration 2: *Closed dimension in one's own ego-centralized mind*

Separated from the Cartesian high level of rationalism, most humans exist without cautious reflection to this construction of dichotomy. We are bounding to this triadic which is often tight and firmly closed, whereby our Ego [I SEE] *unconsciously centralizes* and expands dominantly⁴ (Hashi 2014a, II, Chap. 7).

The Absolute Truth as an Unlimited Oneness—the “mu” in Zen Buddhist Thinking

The Absolute One in Zen Buddhist Thinking is, in brief, *neither “God” nor “Nothingness”* as framed in Occidental philosophy. It is an *unlimited oneness*, which is not identified with the one. Therefore in Zen thinking it is called “Oneness without One” (一無一) (Ueda 1986). The negated word, the first “one” and the last “one”, are just the same in the original Chinese script. But their meanings are different.

4 For the conception of the “Mind” and “Mindfulness” of Classic Zen literature see also Hashi 2014a, Appendix to Main Section II, “Bodhidharma: Über den Geist”.

The first “one” is the fundamental, absolute, all enveloping Oneness which is *not* a creator like God in Occidental religions. The last “one” is a unit or one in an empirical phenomenon in a life world.

Whereas Zen Buddhism has been developing from the beginning without bounding to an existence of God, the focus of Zen thought is concentrated to the living world, the self as *an integrative unity of body and mind*. The latter is a creative dimension of bodily existence and consciousness. It is not only a point of receiving, copying, and delivering various information. Furthermore, it is a creative dimension for actualizing truth. Terminologically I call it the “*corpus*” (Hashi 2014a, I), which did not receive the same meaning as in the French phenomenologists. One of the characteristics of my terminology is that this “*corpus*” works as an *awakening self* (Akizuki 1978) in striving for realizing an unlimited truth day by day in a co-existential network for one’s own self and the others. Its goal is quite idealistic to “realize and actualize an eternal good and truth” (like the *idea* of Plato). At the same time, it is different from the characteristic from Plato, which says that this goal should be realized in an empirical life world or in a middle of world immanence. The ideal must be actualized in reality. If not, it collapses into a “well drawn rice cake in a picture cannot satisfy a hungry person” (Dōgen 1980; 1993) (*gabyō fu-jūki* 画餅不充飢). The cautious mindfulness in Zen Buddhist thinking is always bound to the reality of a real world and real life. It does not contain a separation of the real experience in a living world from a *world of pure idea* in any kind. The mind (心) is, in another word, a highly integrated and self-critical unity which is able to integrate everything that is in a position of contradiction. It is an integrated unity of the both contradictory poles, for example the subjectivity and objectivity, the relation of one’s own self and another self, an emotionality and rationality etc. Let us remember the note number 6, the special term of Nishida (Kyoto School), the “absolute contradictory self-identity” (*zettai mujunteki jiko dōitsu* 絶対矛盾的自己同一).

In order to find out why our mind is able to integrate a contradiction, the Zen Buddhist philosophy does not ask for the existence of an absolute creator (God) in a personalized form. In Buddhist philosophy the world neither has a fix beginning nor ending. There is *no substance* in a thing which is able to *remain forever*. Things are in a dynamic change, accompanied by the time which is emerging, staying and vanishing in every moment. The causality of that why Buddhist Philosophy emphasizes terms in negative expressions, for example *an-ātman* (non-self, non-ego), *anitya* (non-stability, non-substantiality), etc., shown in this kind of realistic view. There is no being of an absolute God, no stability of things forever: the being one always accompanies its moment to fall into nothingness, since every moment is bound to a factum of that one moment in a time that emerges, stays shortly, and

vanishes, whereas another moment arises, stays shortly and also vanishes. Being in a space is bound to this rule of time (emerging-staying-vanishing), in which nothing remains forever in an absolutely identical condition (Nakamura 2003, vol. 5; Hashi 2014b; Hashi 2015a). As the world's phenomena are not bound to an absolute creator, the mindfulness in Zen Buddhist philosophy is getting to the centre of every problem in order to clarify and establish what we are, what our self is, and how to deal with every problem in daily life. A typical form of Zen Buddhist cognition is grasping that there is no fix substantiality of our self, which is found in various relations in networks between one's self and the other. Everything is in a dynamic change, whereas our self-consciousness tries to define and to represent what our self is able to do in its best way. But this self has a fundamental contradiction in it: i.e. in the 1st Station of (I see) it is a pure subject in breathing, thinking, viewing, and doing. On the other hand it tries to grasp itself as an objective mind, attempting to realize how we are positioning ourselves in an environment and in our relation between us and every circumstance. The Zen Philosophy tries to fill this gap, namely a pure subjectivity of our self and its intensive expect for objectivizing, with the fundamental method of “*mu*”, the method of an absolute negation to build up a fixed idea or dogmatic concept (I see), whereas we are a unity of self-contradiction that finds itself staying and vanishing in every relation in a real life. (I see myself) is also accompanied by this contradiction that we can objectify the things only in a frame of our born, inherent subjectivity. (I see the object) is also accompanied by a rigorous self-critical mind—that we will grasp objects mostly in a frame of our subjectivist self-centralized mentality and try to establish them in a scientist category of an “absolute objectivity” from a scientist position as a “upervisor” (Cf. Descartes 2009). Herein the Zen Buddhist philosophy, based on the principle of “*mu*” (literally translated as “nothingness”) has the goal for “negation and solution of a subjective mind in any kind” which results in an “open court of ourself in a cautious view of mindfulness” (See the next chapter to find out what this means in detail!).

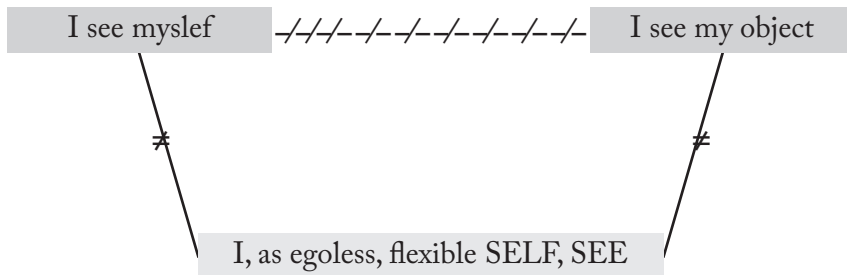
The Absolute Liberty in the Mindfulness of Zen Buddhist Philosophy

Let us view the diagram based on Izutsu, in which a self-rigorous criticism and negation is shown in a dynamic solution based on the graphic I have mentioned previously. I interpret this dimension of the three stations of Viewing, Thinking, and Acting of humans as a creative corpus for solving of every dogmatic fixation to a conventional thinking. The latter is, for example, how Dōgen, one of the leading thinkers and monks of Japanese Zen Buddhism, presented his position as follows: “Usually we say that ‘we see the mountain’ as our object. We, as a thinking subject

see the object, whereas the mountain cannot see us as an inorganic entity.” (Dōgen 2004, II; 1993) Dōgen said that it is a typical conventional way of thinking to centralize ourselves and pretend that all other things in our environment are only bound to our thinking ego, so that things among us could be/should be dominated and operated by the knowledge of human. Dōgen expresses the opposite position clearly: “NO” (Dōgen 2004, II; 1993). It is not just that we see the mountain and other things in environment as nothing more than objects which must be operated by human. Before we put our knowledge or our rationality into the scheme “we see the mountain”, the mountain shows us presently what it is as it is. Only if the mountain shows itself, we can view it clearly—“What It is—As It is”—without putting on our subjectivism of any kind. Herein, the mountain and we humans *co-exist* in an *intra-relation*. The mountain (the part of the whole nature) and we (the part of humankind) are in a relationship of *mutual transmission*. Herewith, the exchange of subject-object positioning is possible in Dōgen’s Zen Buddhist Philosophy: We can *also* say that “we see the mountain” and at the same time that:

The mountain sees us; The mountain goes with us;
The mountain flows with us in the eternal stream of time.
(Dōgen 2004, II; 1993)

Regarding the things from state of the *great emptiness*
(*sūnyatā*) of the *dharma* (universal truth ALL-In-ONE).....



The [mountain] is not the object of human ego.
It is a part of the phenomenon of the nature,
the part of the universal truth (*dharma*).
The fact [I (*as and egoless Self*) SEE] is also a part of them.

Illustration 3: *Liberation of one's own Ego-Centralism* (cf. Hashi 2009)

This kind of dynamic flexibility to solve our subjectivism and to remind the mutual transmission between human and nature results directly of what is known as the *mushin* (無心), the pure mind of mu as an open court for viewing, reflecting everything clearly without being bound to one's subjectivism, in acting and realizing a truth based on the *corpus*—one's bodily existence—to acting and expressing a part of an eternal truth in daily life. In other words, this corpus performs a full mindfulness in cautious view and the dynamic liberty. This perspective can be shown in the basic diagram of Izutsu, which I would modify as follows (Cf. Izutsu 1986, I: 4):⁵

Every station of self-consciousness reflects cautiously every route in the triad. It keeps itself as a human origin, but it negates tentatively every unnatural fixation like a dogma which tightens one's station to another, so that a closing dimension of a subjectivist ego-centralized self should be solved by achieving an original liberty of pure humanity: Buddha Nature. It is never the same with nihilism of any kind. The absolute negation of the fixated mind between us and things in the world brings us to an absolute liberty (freedom) of our breathing self as a bodily *corpus* that is open to every relation between our self and things in the environment, i.e. without any disturbance and that is also free for constructing a fresh, affirmative, and creative relation between one's bodily self and others.

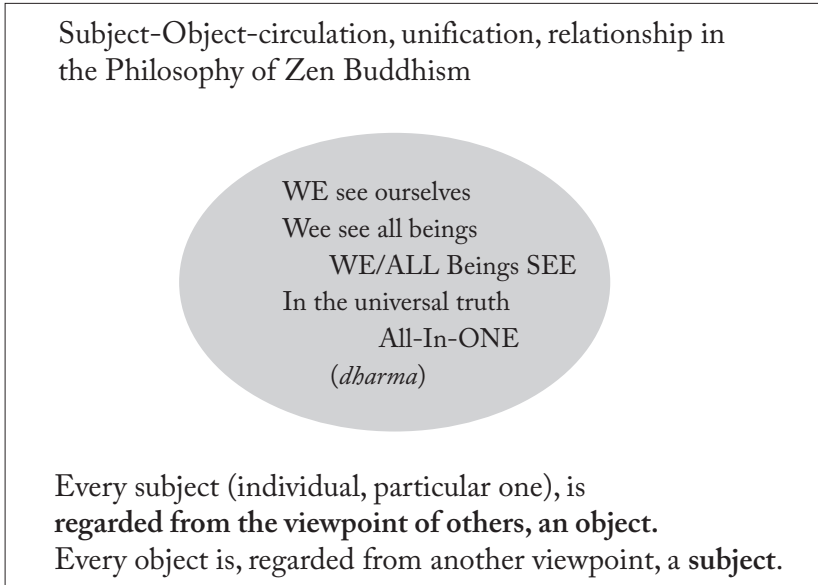


Illustration 4: *Subject-Object-Circulation, Unification and Relationship*

5 The basic structure of the diagram is based on Izutsu, is cleared up by Hashi to present exactly what is the self-liberation (*gedatsu* 解脱) and self-transcendence (in sense of Dōgen, *tōdatsu* 透脱) in Zen Buddhist Philosophy.

Our full body and mind are completely in the oneness dimension, fulfilled by positive energy, but without any fixation of egoism. This circumstance is called the “*mushin*” by Zen Buddhism, the mind which is never fixated to any subjectivist position. This point shows the “fulfilled mindfulness of *mu* as an unlimited dimension in striving for truth”. The Self bears this open mind is called the “*mu*-self”, *muga* (無我) in Zen Buddhism, which is often called as “non-self”. I will translate it in another way in view of semiotic relevance: an “unlimited self in an egoless open mind (in solving of any subjectivist limitation and ego-centralized view)” (Dōgen 2004, II; 1993; Cf. Hashi 2015c).⁶

Conclusion

It is necessary to summarize that the “*mushin*”, the unlimited self-consciousness in an egoless open mind, is based on a dynamic self-negation and self-reconstruction in our daily life, so that it is not a static situation without any motion (contrary to the “*apathie*” of stoa). It is a clear awareness of self-consciousness within the integration of body and mind, by which the thinking and acting self solves one’s own subjectivism carefully. The theoretical side of the “*mushin*” is explained in this article, but principally, it should be practiced in one’s own life and in one’s intellectual and empirical activities. Trial and error comes again and again. The act of solving one’s own subjectivism in getting a transparent insight into the environment in daily life can be performed continuously.

We, the humans in our century, are fully occupied with an array of information, with pressure to do everything immediately, with being bound to a deadline of several schedules. In my opinion this system brings humans gradually to a burn-out syndrome. The “freedom” of one’s self is *totally exchanged* randomly, for example with an uncontrolled arbitrariness of ego. The important aspect of the “mindfulness” of the *mu-shin* (無心) (Suzuki 1989, Chap. 4), the fulfilled mindfulness without bounding to egoism, is that our self is in an invisible network of relations between our self and other selves, things and beings in an environment. We are a part of this invisible network in which our self cannot be bound to any fixed

6 Hisamatsu, Shin’ichi (1889–1980), one of the leading philosophers of the Kyoto School, the expert of Zen Buddhist Philosophy, named it the “Formless Self” in the meaning of an egoless Self in an enormous flexibility to reconstruct one’s own self in relationship with other selves in their circumstance and environment. It is idealistic of the self, transcending in a clear awareness in a worldly immanence. Hisamatsu accented the “Ego transcending Self” (超個) in an idealist way. Akizuki Ryomin (1921–1997), a disciple of Zen thinker Suzuki Daisetz, accented the relationship of the “Idealist Self Transcending” and the “Empirical Self in a Life World” and calls it the “The empirical Self accompanied by Self Transcending” (超個の個) (Hashi in print).

ideology or fixated mind of any kind. *Absolvere*, the Latin verb for “solve” and solution, shows an open time-space in which every point of subjectivist fixation is solved perfectly. The self is positioned in a dynamic possibility in its autonomy. According to the things in environment our self can construe the best relation between our bodily existence, things and beings as co-existential partners. I think this “fulfilled open mindfulness” is able to contribute a relevant concept for the humans in our time as an integrative unity of body and mind, which is the best medicine for self-healing against a hectic inhuman survival game.

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*Some Characteristics of Japanese
and Korean Buddhism*

Bodhisattva Jizō and Folk Religious Influences: Elements of Folk Religion in Jizō's Understanding in Japan

Iva LAKIĆ PARAC^{*}

Abstract

In this paper I will focus on religious meanings that surround Bodhisattva *Jizō* and their connection with Japanese traditional folk religious beliefs and practices that have greatly influenced the present-day interpretation of the *Jizō* phenomena in Japan. *Jizō* is an ideal case for illustrating the functioning of religious currents in Japan and perfectly reveals how these currents were mutually complementary in the past and how they work today.

Keywords: Bodhisattva *Jizō*, *sae no kami*, *dōsojin*, *yama no kami*, Japanese folk beliefs

Izvlaček

V članku se osredotočam na religiozne pomene, ki spremljajo bodisatvo *Jizō*, in njihove povezave z japonskimi tradicionalnimi ljudskimi verovanji in praksami, ki so pomembno vplivali na sodobne interpretacije fenomena *Jizō* na Japonskem. *Jizō* je idealen za pozoritev delovanja religijskih tokov, saj odkriva, kako so se ti tokovi dopolnjevali v preteklosti in kako delujejo danes.

Ključne besede: bodisatva *Jizō*, *sae no kami*, *dōsojin*, *yama no kami*, ljudska verovanja na Japonskem

* Iva LAKIĆ PARAC, Department for Indology and Far East Studies,
Chair of Japanology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia.
iva_lakic[at]yahoo.it



Introduction

Jizō is ubiquitous in Japan. His statuettes follow you at every turn—while walking on forgotten village roads, entering homes and temples, touring cemeteries, and entering holy places such as mountains or volcanoes. In Buddhist iconography he is presented as a monk with chubby cheeks, while in the Japanese language there is a phrase *jizōgao* or “the face of *Jizō*”, which means a smiling face with round cheeks, indicating a satisfied person. Since ancient times *Jizō* was the deity to whom people used to direct the widest variety of prayers. One of the reasons that *Jizō* is experienced in this specific way in Japan is that, while common people usually perceive Buddhist concepts as somewhat complicate, complex and difficult to understand, the meanings surrounding *Jizō* are perceived in a simple way understandable to everybody.

Jizō's original name in Sanskrit is *Ksitigarbha*, consisting of the words *ksiti*, “earth”, and *garbha*, “uterus”. Many Japanese theorists associate *Jizō* with the Indian goddess of the earth, *Prthivi* (her name in Sanskrit means “earth” and she is the “Mother Earth”, often associated iconographically with the cow), although there are no historical links. He is one of the most beloved and revered Bodhisattvas in East Asian Mahayana Buddhism, in China known as Dizang, in Korea as Jijang Bosal, and in Japan as Jizō Bosatsu.

The religious meanings surrounding this Bodhisattva in Japan have been associated with the most powerful and meaningful items of human existence: procreation and protection of progeny. In this sense, it is interesting to follow the process of his amalgamation and how he grew in importance together with the change of Japanese peoples' understanding of issues concerning human procreation, especially in modern times.

Within the Buddhist pantheon he is one of the eight major *Bodhisattvas*¹, beings that are one step from nirvana but delay the final step because they made a vow to help all people in their efforts to get out of *samsara*². Although they can be

1 *Bosatsu* or *Bodhisattva* in early Buddhism, is Buddha in past lives before his enlightenment; in Mahayana Buddhism he is the spiritual ideal, a being on the road to enlightenment that had vowed to stop itself before nirvana out of compassion for other beings. He cherishes perfection, but postpones his full revival until all beings are saved. His main characteristic, together with wisdom, is compassion for beings in *samsara* (round of rebirth) and with his karmanic merits he can take upon their sufferings. The most famous *Bodhisattvas* are Avalokiteśvara (Jap. *Kannon*), Manjushri (Jap. *Monju*), Samantabhadra (Jap. *Fugen*), and Kṣitigarbha (Jap. *Jizō*) (Jauk-Pinhak 2001, 109).

2 According to Tibetan Buddhism, the circle of life is made of the middle, where the pig, snake, and rooster (or pigeon) run around, symbolizing folly, hatred, and greed—the passions that keep beings in *samsara*. Around them there are six worlds or kingdoms, which stand for the six types of existence. All the beings are categorized according to their merits: celestial beings dwell on the top, on their sides there are demons and people, above them there are animals and hungry ghosts, and at the bottom there are inhabitants of hell (Jauk-Pinhak 2001,107).

compared with the Christian saints, the difference is, *inter alia*, in the fact that the latter have already entered the stage of eternal bliss (Jauk-Pinhak 2001, 109).

Before coming to Japan, *Jizō* appeared in India, and naturally in China, presumably sometime in the 7th century. *Jizō* becomes more popular in China only in the 9th century while in Japan his cult will flourish in Kamakura period. Although there are similarities, there are also big differences in *Jizō*'s cult in China and Japan. The first and the main difference is in the attitude towards this deity among the people; the Japanese feel closeness and accessibility, while in China such a relationship towards the “lord of the underworld” does not exist (see De Visser 1912).

Why such an attitude of the Japanese towards *Jizō*? My assumption is that *Jizō*'s popularity and his overwhelming presence in Japan are due to the fact that his worship contains many elements of Japanese folk religious practices and beliefs.

This relationship was determined by his associations with the popular local folk deities, such as *dōsojina* and *sae no kami*, and *Jizō* is actually worshiped in the manner of ancient Japanese folk deities. In my opinion, the *Jizō* Bodhisattva amalgamation illustrates well how Buddhism adapted to the needs of Japanese people through history, but, even more importantly, it also shows the persistence of attitude that Japanese people have toward their popular traditional deities and beliefs.

People who studied *Jizō* cults in Japan know how vast and multiple this field actually is and explaining it all would be a rather difficult task for one article. Accordingly I decided not to touch on the present *Jizō* practices in depth. Instead, I will focus on what I was told by my Japanese sources during the Yamagata stay, more precisely, on their attitude toward this Bodhisattva. My attempt in this paper is to investigate the traditional historical and axiological background represented by the folk religious influences and to search for the reasons of that attitude inside the traditional non-Buddhist practices and beliefs.

Fieldwork Research in Yamagata Prefecture

During my ethnographic fieldwork research in Yamagata prefecture in 2006 I had an opportunity to grasp some of the Japanese religious practices *in situ*. The goal of my research was to find out what *Jizō matsuri* looked like in the past (see Lakić Parać 2013), but the collateral findings of the research included discerning the attitude ordinary people have toward *Jizō*. I was interviewing the village people about their opinion on this deity and found out that they have a rather close and warm relationship with him. They prayed to *Jizō* on a variety of occasions, and they all felt closeness to this *Bodhisattva*.

Summarizing my fieldwork research results, today, there are no official religious ceremonies dedicated to *Jizō* in the Yamagata villages I stayed in (Higashihorikoshi and Soegawa), and *omairi* (visiting the graves of the deceased) is held on every 24th day of the month, but not as a special festival. But in the past, according to my Japanese informers, the festival was held on April, August, and December 23rd. When I asked them why the 23rd day of the month, they did not know, but I found out later that the date was connected with the custom of visiting the graves of the deceased during the spring and autumn equinox (March 23rd and September 23rd). These rituals follow the lunar calendar, which is approximately one month ahead of the Western calendar (used in Japan since 1873).

The ritual that was held on April 23rd was called The Spring Festival and it was held in the afternoon, attended by about sixty-year old women and the local *miko*. The women prayed for their families, especially for their grandchildren to be born safe and grow up healthy. Sometimes the local *miko* predicted the future; she would tell if there was some misfortune people should be warned about. The ritual that was held on August 23rd was called The Autumn Festival, while the ritual held on December 23rd was called The *Jizō* Festival and was conducted strictly at night. I found out that the ritual held on December 24th was called *Jizō bon*, better known as *Urabon*, which represented the continuation of the great *Obon*.

All these festivals are associated with the custom of visiting the graves of the deceased and the belief in their spirits visiting us on the specific occasions. These practices are accompanied with folk religious beliefs (divination, exorcism, belief in evil spirits, spirit possession) that continue in Japanese society even today. The fieldwork research made me realize how strongly the elements of folk religion are present in *Jizō* worship. I believe the presence of these elements is one of the reasons for *Jizō*'s great popularity in Japan. In the following chapters I will try to put together some pieces of historical, theoretical, and axiological framework that might explain why such a specific attitude toward *Jizō* exists.

Jizō in Sutras and Legends

According to the written documents the name *Jizō* appears for the first time in the 8th century, while the first written sources and statues honoring him date from 9th century. Theorists do not agree about the timing of *Jizō*'s growth in popularity in Japan. Some claim that it happened at the end of the 9th century and in the 10th century, some place that time even earlier, and some say that *Jizō* was known in Heian period (he is mentioned in the women's diarist literature), but truly flourished only in the next, Kamakura period (1185–1333). Namely,

the popularization of *mappō* doctrine happens during this period and *Jizō*, as one of the popular Bodhisattva, finds himself in a worthy position.³ This period was marked by numerous wars, violence and general insecurity. At times like these people seek a way out of earthly trouble and the rise of the popularity of Buddhism is not a surprise.

From the 7th century and onwards Chinese Buddhist clergy was increasingly interested in the world of hell, its geography, the articulation of torture and “bureaucracy” on which all this imaginary rested. This is a crucial moment, says Glassman (2012), in the formation of the context that forever linked *Jizō* to the underworld and its dark forces, although his role as a guardian of the human soul (which is held in China) was reduced to that of guardian of children’s souls in Japan. His religious meanings in China will develop around the hell belief and the legend of the Buddha’s disciple Mulian (Jap. Mokuren; Skt. Maugalyāyana), who descends to the underworld to rescue his mother from her posthumous sufferings. The story of *Dizang* or the Bodhisattva *Jizō* develops within the framework of the similar context. In the *Dizang pusa benyuan jing* (Jap. *Jizō bosatsu hongankyō*, Eng. *Sutra of the Original Vow of Jizō Bodhisattva*) we read of two past lives of *Jizō*, in which he, incarnated as a girl, saved his mother (ibid., 15–16).

In the first story he is incarnated as the daughter of a Brahmin family who lives in a distant cosmological period (Jap. *zōhō*), at the time after Buddha’s death, when his light is attainable only through the holy books and presentations (pictures and statues) that embody him. The girl prays before the Buddha image and he responds to her with the promise that he will show her where her mother is and how to save her. However, the girl has to go home, sit down, and repeat his name three times. She does that, and her soul is transported into the Kingdom of Hell, where she meets a guardian who informs her that, thanks to her prayers and alms, her mother earned numerous merits, and is, therefore, moved from hell into heaven. But the sight of other souls in torment moves her so much that she decides to take a vow to do whatever it takes to save them and release them all from hell (Vettore 2010, 70).

In the second story *Jizō* also appears as Brahmin girl. The girl asks a clairvoyant monk to help her find her mother; he enters into a trance and discovers that she

3 Mappō is one of the Three Ages of Buddhism, significant to Mahayana adherents who believe that different Buddhist teachings are valid in each period due to the different capacity of the people to accept and understand these teachings. Mappō represents latter days of the law and the degeneration of the Dharma doctrine, in which people are incapable of following the Buddha teachings any more. They must wait for a new Buddha to be born (Jap. Maitreya, considered to be born millions of years in the future) to ensure the continuity of Buddhism. Until that time people should follow the teachings of different Bodhisattvas (“Buddha-to-be”) and rely on their help and mercy.

is suffering terribly. He asks the girl what her mother had done to be subjected to such a torture. She answers that she enjoyed too much food, especially fish and turtles, and thus had taken the lives of many living creatures. The monk instructs the girl to paint and carve numerous images of the Pure Lotus Eye Buddha and worship him by calling upon his name (Glassman 2012, 17).

This sutra probably originated in China, and therefore belongs to a group of so-called apocryphal texts, meaning that there is no clear evidence that the original Indian copy actually existed. Another text from the same group that played a big part in understanding of *Jizō* in Japan is *Shiwang jing* (Jap. *Jūōkyō*, Eng. *Sutra of the Ten Kings*). It tells the story of ten kings of hell and the path of the dead throughout their kingdoms. The most prominent is King Yama (Chin. Yanliwangwang or Yama, Jap. Enraō or Enmaō), the king that is met within the fifth week after the death (ibid., 18). In another (apocryphal) sutra named the *Jizō Jūō Kyō* or “The Sutra of *Jizō* and the Ten Kings” (composed in 13th century Japan) *Jizō* is equated with *Enma*, which can be understood as part of the doctrine *honji suijaku*⁴ that equates Buddhist deities with the local ones. This sutra is about two foreign deities, but the doctrine itself is not exclusive and rigid, and it allows different combinations and interpretations. Both manifestations are two aspects of the same reality, which in this case means that *Enma* and *Jizō* in essence represent the same thing, just in different ways. According to Glassman (2012, 18) *Jizō* owes his immense popularity in medieval and early modern Japan in large part to the belief that *Jizō* is the best mediator between the sinner and the King *Enma*, since he, with his merciful and benevolent nature, represents the alter ego of this frightening judge.

In the 13th century the cult starts to truly flourish, as evidenced by the numerous statues and *setsuwa* stories about *Jizō*. Some of them are preserved in the large collections of *setsuwa* like *Konjaku monogatarihū* or *Shasekishū*, but the most important collection of such legends is certainly *Jizō bosatsu reigenki* (“Miraculous stories of Bodhisattva *Jizō*”). Most of these stories are related to a certain statue and the miraculous events connected with it. It is important to have in mind that it was believed then, that merely listening to the medieval religious narration could bring about good merits and assurance of, for example, the fulfillment of a certain romantic wish or a safe childbirth (ibid. 2012, 172).

4 The term *honji suijaku* refers to the idea that the Buddhist deities provisionally appear as Shintō *kami* in order to spiritually save sentient beings in Japan. The *kami* are thus the manifestations (*suijaku*; literally “traces”; i.e. the form appearing in the world to save sentient beings) of the Buddhist deities, and the Buddhist deities are the *honji* (literally “original ground”) of the Shintō *kami* (namely, their true form and substance). Ultimately, the two entities are seen to form an indivisible relationship (Kawamura 2015).

Jizō and Sae No Kami

Somewhere around the same time appears one of the *Jizō*'s most representative iconographic form: *Rokudo Jizō* (six statues placed together in line, each for one level of human transition⁵). Many Japanese scholars argue that this is completely a Japanese product and that *Jizō* is found in this form only in Japan (Glassman 2012, 27). Some theorists claim that this specific presentation of *Jizō* is the result of the influence of Japanese folk beliefs, even more because the *sutras* dedicated to the worship of the Six *Jizō*s are Japanese apocryphal texts, originated in Japan towards the end of the 12th or the 13th century.

As statues are most often placed at large intersections, standing as the patrons of travelers (both in this and in the hereafter, through all six levels of human existence), the theorists connect them with *sae no kami* or *sai no kami*. “*Sae*” means “to block; to stop” and *sae no kami* are border deities. They are placed at the entrances to the villages because it is believed that they will protect them from evil spirits and negative forces. As we will see later in the text, they are mentioned in the *Kojiki*, where they stand at the borders of the world of the dead and the world of the living, but also between the sexes, and thus are associated with fertility and procreation. In addition to the patron deity of boundaries and fertility they are linked to the children (Bocking 1996, 146). Let us explain who these folk deities are and what their role is in the formation of *Jizō*'s religious meanings.

The *sae no kami*, Japanese gods of sexuality and fertility, were from the beginning often represented in a phallic form. Phallic stones began to appear in Japan by the early Jōmon period (about 10,000 BCE–300 BCE) and by the end of Jōmon were quite widespread. *Fudōki* (local histories) show that these stones were meant to ensure fertility and safe childbirth. Archeologists have found extensive evidence from a very early period that the practice of marking village boundaries by stone pillars was also meant to ward off evil influences from outside the village. As some Japanese scholars suggested, the explosion of *Jizō*'s popularity in the early medieval period must be understood in the context of village cults that venerated *sae no kami* or *dōsojin*; “road ancestor gods” (Glassman 2012, 161). The process by which stone images of *Jizō* came to replace border stones and fertility images in villages throughout Japan showed that *Jizō*'s popularity in the late medieval period and beyond was due primarily to assimilation with these ancient cults. It was his relationship with the gods of fertility that ultimately led to *Jizō*'s modern identity as the patron saint of born and unborn children. In other words, *ishigami* or stone gods represent a very ancient layer of Japanese folk beliefs that were assimilated

5 Generally, there are six realms of samsara. These include: Gods, Asuras, Hungry Ghosts, Hell Beings, Animals, and Humans.

with Buddhism during the medieval period through the figure of *Jizō*. It was through these stone images that people in Japan were able to incorporate foreign faiths and reconcile them with autochthonous practices (Glassman 2012, 162).

The cult of *dōsojin* or *sae kamie* reaches deep into the past, when the most famous Japanese myths were formed. According to the words of Kojima Yoshiyuki (cit. *ibid.*, 167):

Among all the cults (*shinkō*) of the Japanese people, the *dōsojin* are the most widespread and also the oldest. The character of the cult is various and complex, but its most basic aspects are that it seeks to ward off evil and that it bears similarities to the legend of Izanami and Izanagi. The identity of Izanami and Izanagi as the gods of union (*musubi no kami*) and the gods of couples (*fūfu no kami*) is closely related to this connection of the *dōsojin* to the story of Izanami and Izanagi. The role of the *dōsojin* as the gods of birth (*osan no kami*) and the gods of children (*kodomo no kami*) is no doubt a reflection of the narrative of the birthing of the land. Also, the fact that these gods are the first to demarcate the separation between the world of the living and the world of the dead reveals the close connection to the *dōsojin* of popular legend.

The earliest mention of the term *sae no kami* occurs in the *Kojiki*, in a scene where *Izanagi* descends into to the underworld of *Yomi* in pursuit of his wife after she died giving birth to their youngest child, the god of fire. By looking at her corpse, he breaks a taboo, doing what he has been explicitly warned against, and is chased from the land of the dead. After reaching safe grounds he drives a staff down into the ground, thus forming some kind of gate or barrier; this staff itself is called *funato no kami* and serves as a boundary marker between the land of the living and the land of the dead. The word *funato*, “the place at the fork in the road”, was a slang for the sexual organs from as early as the Nara period (Glassman 2012, 167–9). This association comes from the similarity between an intersection or two roads connected diagonally and the relationship between the human torso and legs (*ibid.*).

Some scholars argue that when people disposed of their dead on hillsides, they often placed stone gods at the base of these hills to mark the separation between the world of the living and the world of the dead. So, it can be said that *ishigami* presided over birth as well as over death. These two functions of *ishigami* may seem to be at odds with one another, or at least unrelated, but the earliest records of worship of these gods make clear that the display of sexuality or the exposing of sexual organs was seen as the best way to drive away dark or evil influences and invite good fortune and blessings.

As we have seen, *Jizō's* connection with death and the underworld is obvious from the very beginnings, but from where does his connection with sexuality and birth come? It seems that that change came about during the medieval period when *Jizō* started to be experienced as *ubugami* or the deity of birth (Glassman 2012, 167). A similar process of identification that occurred with *Jizō* and *sae no kami/dōsojin* had already occurred with the *yama no kami* and *ta no kami*.

Dōsojin and Yama No Kami

During the introduction of agricultural techniques in the last centuries BCE, the travelers who reached Japan from Korea and China brought together with their agricultural knowledge their beliefs and rites. Among the Japanese nomadic hunters of that time it was customary to venerate the mountain deity (*yama no kami*) whom they believed to reside in the woods, and to place offerings on trees, the resting place of the deity. It is supposed that at some point the mountain deity was identified with the earth-god of the newcomers who had the knowledge of agriculture. So the mountain deity became the protector of farmers and was portrayed mostly in the form of a stone placed on a special holy site. The connection between foreign rites and the Japanese cult of *yama no kami* was made easy by the fact that the agricultural deity of the south Chinese area was a phallic earth-god, honored and bestowed with gifts in places within the woods, and was marked with a stone. A similar act of identification may have led to a similar process in the case of *dōsojin*, since this deity was represented by a (phallic) stone from the very beginning (Naumann 1963, 349).

Let us examine more closely what kind of deity *yama no kami* was and what the possible associations with *Jizō* are. According to Bocking's "A Popular Dictionary of Shintō" (1996, 220), *yama no kami* is, as the very name suggests, a mountain god. He has two meanings: one pertains to the deity worshipped by those working in mountain areas (traditionally hunters, charcoal-burners, and woodcutters), and in this case identified with Ōyamatsumi or *Kono hana saku ya hime*. In its other meaning *yama no kami* denotes the deity of agriculture and growth, who descends from the mountain at a specific time and is worshipped as *ta no kami* or the god⁶ of the rice fields.

6 *Ta no kami*: "The kami of rice fields, i.e. *kami* of agriculture, known throughout Japan under various names; in Tōhokunōgami, in Nakano and Yamanashi *sakugami*, in the Kyōto-Ōsaka area *tsukuri-kami*, in the Inland Sea *jigami*, in Kyūshū *ushigami*. *Ta-no-kami* is generally thought to descend from heaven or the mountains in the spring and to return in the autumn, and is often identified with *yama no kami*. In Eastern Japan *ta no kami* may be identified with Ebisu, and in the west with Daikoku." (Bocking 1996, 199)

Yama no kami is a severe deity, who does not give in easily to the prayers of the hunters, or any others who dared to violate the unwritten laws of the woods, by punishing them and inflicting them with diseases and even death. In order to guarantee the deity's goodwill, the people must maintain the purity of the rituals and use the special language (the "mountain language") as soon as they enter the woods (Naumann 1963, 342–3).

There was the belief that the mountain deity dwelt or rested upon certain kinds of tree that were forbidden to be felled. Nearly everywhere in Japan it was believed that on a fixed date in autumn the mountain deity went through the woods to collect the seeds of the various trees. On a certain day in spring, he went to the woods again to sow those seeds and to protect the growth of the trees. It can be concluded that the mountain deity is also in some way the creator and the preserver of the woods (ibid., 343).

Independently of the trees of the mountain-deity, it was believed in the past that many trees possessed *tama*⁷ and were, therefore, worshiped as gods. The concept of "tree spirits" is very often connected with the belief that spirits of the dead dwell in the woods in the mountains or on nearby trees. People prayed to those trees for recovery from illness and for an easy delivery, for lucky marriage and for offspring. The same prayers were offered to the mountain deity. The conception of *yama no kami* as a helper in childbirth has its roots in the belief that he brings from the woods the soul of the child waiting to be born. This soul is nothing but the spirit of an ancestor who died years ago and was dwelling in the woods purifying itself and thus losing its former individuality (ibid., 343–4).

At the beginning of the New Year there it was customary to cut some small trees or branches and to bring them home, where they were used in many ways, mainly for praying for a good harvest. This custom of cutting down trees and branches on New Year's seems to be connected with the conception that *yama no kami* himself descends from the woods to live for half the year in the fields to become *ta no kami*, the field-deity⁸. Some scholars pointed out that this *ta no kami* is actually a deity of the same origin and characteristics as *yama no kami* (ibid., 344).

7 The most common meaning of *tama* in the Shintō context (also pronounced "rei") means soul or spirit. *Tama* is an entity that resides in something to which it gives life and vitality, whether this is human, animal, or a natural feature. Disembodied, the *tama* may be a *kami* or aspect of a *kami*, or a spirit of an ancestor or other dead person. (Bocking 1996, 197)

8 *Ta no kami* may also be equated with *Jigami*: Land kami. "A term used in Western Japan, similar to *jinushigami* or *tochigami*. It refers to the enshrined spirit of a village founder or one who first cultivates the land in a particular area. The shrine is usually located in a corner or on the border of a field. In some cases ancestors are thought to become *jigami*". (Bocking 1996, 69)

The alternating status of this deity had its roots in the belief in the so-called *marebito*, i.e. gods or ancestor-souls visiting the homes of the living on certain days (New Year's, Bon festival, or after the harvest). Actually, mountain-deity is nothing but the soul of an ancestor. This opinion became prevalent because the mountain deity was often identified with the year-god, who came down from the mountains on New Year's Day, bringing good luck and prosperity and declaring himself to be the soul of an ancestor (Naumann 1963, 345).

Marebito are defined as “supernatural guests”, usually the spirits of ancestors, who arrive from *tokoyo*,⁹ a miraculous land from across the sea, to enrich the land with new power for the new year.¹⁰ They are part of a “horizontal” cosmological structure in which *kami*, like ancestral spirits during *bon*, are believed to come from, or return to a faraway land or across the sea, rather than from another world above or below this one.¹¹ Boundary deities (*sae no kami* etc), as well as deities of good fortune as *Ebisu* and *Daikoku*, also belong in the general category of *marebito* as deities who come “from the outside” and are invoked for special purposes” (Bocking 1996, 115).

What we see is that the mountain deity has healing powers, helps in childbirth, brings prosperity, and operates as *marebito*, the spirit of an ancestor.

Naumann points out that there is a striking resemblance between the rituals (feasts) of the mountain deity and those of the gods of roads that could lead to the supposition of one identity of the two gods. In ancient times the mountain deity was the protector of mountain roads and passes, and the deity of roads was the protector against evil spirits lurking at the boundaries between the world of the living and the world of the dead, and was, therefore, posted at all spots that were haunted by such spirits, i.e. cross-roads, bridges, village boundaries, etc. (Naumann 1963, 346).

9 *Tokoyo*: “Eternal land, *tokoyo no kuni*. Another-world, either across the sea or a realm of its own beneath the water, equated with the dragon's palace, *ryūgū*, inhabited by beneficent and demanding spirits including spirits of the dead and particularly transforming snakes. Inland, *Tokoyo* came to be located in the mountains rather than the sea, forming the other-world of mountains which, combined with Buddhist cosmology, was the basis of mountain religion (*shugendo, yama no kami*).” (Bocking 1996, 205)

10 Remnants of belief in *marebito* survive in folk dances and mimes and they share some characteristics of the horned, straw-coated *namahage* of northern Japan and the *toshidon* of the south.

11 On the other side there is the concept of *Takamagahara*: “The Plain of High Heaven, the other world from which the heavenly *kami* descend. It is the upper realm in a “vertical” cosmology comprising high heaven, this human world and *yomi*, the lower realm of the dead. The notion widespread since Meiji era that emperor was descended from the *kami* of *takamagahara* derived from the rediscovered “classic” mythologies of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi* (*kokugaku, kokkashintō*), even though the traditional cosmology of shrine worship overwhelmingly refers to *kami* who live in this world or come from mountains (*yama no kami*), over the horizon or under the sea (*tokoyo, marebito, ryūgū*).” (Bocking 1996, 195)

The feast of the mountain deity was mainly celebrated within the first month of the year and especially around the 15th day or around the winter solstice (former month 11), and was often accompanied by certain features of feasts celebrated at about same time in honor of the *dōsojin*, the gods of roads. Those feasts were illuminated with bonfires and represented phallic vegetation rites, ritual laughing, rope-pulling and contests for divination of the crops. These features, though mostly connected with *yama no kami* and *dōsojin*, are also observed in Shinto shrines and some Buddhist temples, but it is evident that the connection with these deities is only a secondary one. (Naumann 1963, 346)

The Secondary Connections with *Yama No Kami* Cult

Naumann (1963, 348) notices a whole range of similar rituals in Japan, Korea, and South China at approximately the same time of the year, namely:

- Japan: The whole complex of customs and beliefs connected only secondary with *yama no kami* consisted of feasts celebrated chiefly around the 15th day of the first lunar month, which is the day of the full moon called the “Minor New year” (and maybe in former times marking the beginning of the year), and sometimes of a corresponding feast in autumn or winter (such as the Bon festival or a feast around the winter solstice). These feasts were defined by the belief in the spirits of the dead visiting the living, by rites of expelling evil (bonfires) and of invocation of fertility (phallic vegetation rites), by contests between local groups for divination of crops (rope-pulling, stone-fights), and by fetching and sending the gods to preside over agriculture (mainly *yama no kami*).
- Korea: There was a custom of burying the dead in the mountains, where it was believed the souls of the dead dwelt. We notice that there were feasts on January and July 15th, based on the belief of the spirits of the dead visiting the living, mountain climbing with torches, rites of expelling evil, contests between local groups (rope-pulling, stone-fights), and the descent of the mountain deity down into the village shrine on April 15th.
- South China: The same feasts held on January and July 15th (or during the days of equinoxes), were characterized by the visit of the spirits of the dead, by the rites of expelling evil (bonfires), by promoting fertility (phallic vegetation rites), by contests between local groups (rope-pulling, stone-fights), and by invoking the gods to send rain and, therefore, to provide fertility (dragon) (ibid., 348).

In my opinion, *Jizō matsuri*, whose traces I witnessed in Yamagata prefecture, cannot be anything but one of these secondary connections with previous popular traditions. It was held on April, August, and December 23rd, the date connected with the custom of visiting the graves of the deceased during the lunar spring and autumn equinox (March 23rd and September 23rd). It was also associated with the belief in dead ancestor's spirits visiting us on specific occasions. These rituals, as I mentioned, were accompanied by various folk religious practices and beliefs (participation of the local *miko*, divination, exorcism, spirit possession).

Conclusion

With the exception of the temples, *Jizō* is most commonly encountered at road crossings, village boundaries, and graveyard entrances, where he stands as a protector of travelers, both in this and in the “other world”. His liminal position in both a physical and metaphysical sense has been associated with the very ancient folk beliefs that are thought to have influenced the formation of *Jizō's* cosmogony and whose traces can still be seen all over Japan. These beliefs are linked to *sae no kami* and *dōsojin*, gods of boundaries and roads, to Japanese folk deities associated with fertility and sexuality that have evoked prosperity and wealth. From the ancient times they were placed at village and cemetery entrances and near crossroads, and it is considered that *Jizō* took over their ancient role.

The Japanese and other East Asian peoples buried their dead in the hills. They placed stone statues (*ishigami*) at their bases to mark the boundary between the world of the dead and the world of the living. In this way, *sae no kami* and *dōsojin* happened to rule not only in the realm of fertility and procreation, but also in the realm of death. At first glance these two functions may seem rather incompatible, but since ancient times the presentation of sexuality in some form was one of the ways of the struggle against evil and undesirable forces, as much as it was a way of evoking happiness and prosperity. In this way, *Jizō*, who was at first associated with death and the underworld, begins to replace the folk deities in the Middle Ages and the new change in meaning brings about the connection with reproduction and birth.

If we look much further back in time from the ages when the Japanese myths were formulated, we will encounter *yama no kami*, the Japanese god of mountains. This god was identified with the god of fertility of the newcomers after the introduction of agriculture technique in Japan. The Japanese guardian of the souls of the dead, who accompanied them back to the world of the living, was now turned into the god of fertility, food, and prosperity (*ta no kami*). In other

words, a similar process of assimilation that occurred with *Jizō* (foreign element) and *sae no kami/dōsojin* (domestic element) had already occurred with the *yama no kami* and *ta no kami*.

According to Bocking's *A Popular Dictionary of Shinto* (1996) *Yama no kami*, *Ta no kami*, *Sae no kami*, *Ebisu* and *Daikoku* belong to the category of *marebito* or the deities that come "from the outside" when the ground needs to be showered with the special gifts. In their essence they are nothing but ghosts of the ancestors coming from the country over the horizon¹² or above the sea at the particular time of the year. *Jizō* matsuri in Yamagata continued this tradition occurring during the spring and autumn equinox (March 23rd and September 23rd), today dates reserved for the visiting the graves of the deceased.

The process by which stone statues of *Jizō* replaced the stone statues of *sae no kami* and *dōsojina* illustrates well how Buddhism, as an imported religion, manipulated the existing customs and beliefs and used them to gain acceptance among ordinary people. His association with native gods of fertility and reproduction eventually brought him toward his modern identity as protector of the unborn or the children that died prematurely. But *Jizō* did not adopt this identity right after his arrival in Japan. This reversal occurred in the Middle Ages, sometime during Muromachi period (1338–1573). Until that time he was, just like in China, the god of the underworld and the protector of the spirits of the dead, especially the biggest sinners who ended up in hell. The historical and social circumstances that led to this reversal are in the process of investigation, but what we can say for sure is, that during the Muromachi and Edo periods there was an increased interest in the legends and the miraculous stories of *Jizō*. Also, during this period we see a formulation of the *Sai no kawara* concept or the place on the riverbank where the souls of the dead children reside. This process will ultimately result in the belief of *mizuko* (spirits of the dead children) as *goryō* or evil spirits, and also in the emergence of *Mizuko Jizō*, although we know that there is no trace of vengeful evil spirits in the original Buddhist texts nor can we find that Bodhisattva *Jizō* was dedicated exclusively to them. What we witness is another manipulation of meanings with the intent of promoting Buddhism and adapting it for the spiritual needs of women in modern times, and also for having a significant commercial impact.

The *Jizō* Bodhisattva amalgamation does a good job of illustrating how Buddhism adapted to the needs of Japanese people through history. But it also shows the

12 This horizontal view of human existence is an ancient Japanese view that does not recognize the "other world" above us (heaven) or beneath us (underworld), but sees it as part of our own world and not as something that can be separated from it.

persistence of attitude Japanese people have toward their popular folk deities and beliefs. The popularity of *Jizō* is closely connected with his associations to these deities. The attitude of the Japanese towards *Jizō*, the fact that they feel closeness and familiarity versus his figure, is determined by his conceptual interweaving with *dōsojina* and *sae no kami*. *Jizō* is actually worshiped in the manner of ancient Japanese folk deities, even though he is a Buddhist by tradition.

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Special Features of the Popularization of Bodhidharma in Korea and Japan

*Beatrix MECSI**

Abstract

According to tradition the founder of Chan or meditational Buddhism, Bodhidharma, originated from India, yet his legend and first representations are more typically associated with China and his legendary figure is frequently seen in the visual art and popular culture of the East Asian countries. In my paper I focus on the visual representations of Bodhidharma as they became popular in Korea and Japan, attempting to show the basic differences in the popularization of the visual images of Bodhidharma in these countries, focusing mainly on the visual appearance and iconography. The power of the image is seen in the commercialization of representations of Bodhidharma, particularly in Japan, where this practice occurred much earlier than in Korea and developed different traditions compared to those in China, where the legend came from.

Keywords: Bodhidharma, Korea, Japan, visual representation, popularization

Izveček

Po tradicionalnem verovanju ustanovitelj chana ali meditativnega budizma, Bodhidharma, izvira iz Indije. Vendar njegovo legendo in prve predstavitve vse bolj povezujejo s Kitajsko, kjer je njegovo karizmatično podobo pogosto opaziti v vizualni umetnosti in popularni kulturi vzhodnoazijskih držav. V članku raziskujem vizualne predstavitve Bodidharne, ko so postale popularne v Koreji in na Japonskem, s čimer poskušam prikazati glavne razlike v popularizaciji vizualnih podob Bodidharne v teh državah, pri tem pa se osredotočam predvsem na vizualne podobe in ikonografijo. Moč podobe je premišljena skozi komercializacijo upodobitev Bodidharne, predvsem na Japonskem, kjer se je komercialna uporaba pojavila veliko prej kot v Koreji in kjer so se razvile drugačne tradicije kot na Kitajskem, od koder legenda prihaja.

Ključne besede: Bodidharma, Koreja, Japonska, vizualne podobe, popularizacija

* Beatrix MECSI, Associate Professor, Institute of East Asian Studies
ELTE University Budapest, Hungary.
bmecsi[at]gmail.com



Introduction

According to tradition, the founder of meditational Buddhism, Bodhidharma originated from India, and nowadays this legendary figure is frequently seen in the visual art and popular culture of East Asian countries. Known as *Putidamo* 菩提达摩 or *Damo* in China, *Boridalma* 보리달마 or *Dalma* in Korea, and *Bodai Daruma* 菩提達磨, or *Daruma* in Japan, *Bo-dhi-dha-rmo-tta-ra* in Tibet, and he can also be found in Vietnam.

The aim of my research was to make a deeper investigation of Bodhidharma as his figure appears in visual arts.

Art and visual culture not only spread nationally, but also crossed borders, influencing the artistic and creative thoughts of other regions. It is particularly true of religion, where monks were the carriers of Buddhism from one country to another, and alongside their religious beliefs they transmitted the visual culture of other territories in the form of religious imagery.

In the representations of Bodhidharma, we can clearly contrast the style of *chinsō*-type colored paintings¹ used for rituals with the more spontaneous monochrome ink-paintings, and the other derivatives of the image, such as the doll-form, which was developed in Japan. Looking at both their function and production, it is evident that style had an importance in the use of these images.

Iconography of Bodhidharma

Even to those familiar with the images of East Asia, it is sometimes very difficult to name depicted figures because of the lack of inscriptions, especially in the late phases of the development of certain iconographies. This is due to the tendency of using pre-existing patterns and giving them new meaning, as was the case in the Western culture during the early Middle Ages when the pagan Apollo figure was used to represent Jesus Christ. Rather than inventing completely new imagery, combining existing intellectual and religious systems is an easier way to proceed. Therefore, we often find that artists were inspired by previous visual models rather than having drawn primarily from textual sources. In many cases, these textual sources themselves were also inspired by previous visual representations. As the meaning of the depicted figure changed in society and in the mind of the artist, inevitably certain forms merged and new pictorial representations were produced.

1 *Chinsō* (Ch. *Dingxiang* 頂相) Japanese pronunciation of the term for formal portraits of meditation masters, usually made in a meticulous style, using color, with great attention paid to the realistic depiction of the face. *Chinsō* served in the rituals of the transmission of Dharma and substituted for the master himself after his demise (Steiner 2013, 187).

The identification of the earliest images is very important, because they can give us vital clues to the history of certain iconographic types.

Bodhidharma is believed to have lived around the 5–6th centuries, but the earliest surviving images about him can be dated only to the 11–12th century (Mecsi 2014). There are two distinct iconographic types that appeared in China and later became entangled with each other. One is a beardless figure and the other, a more popular representation, shows Bodhidharma as a hairy, bearded man with a stocky build and exaggerated foreign features, often wearing a hood. The majority of the images of Bodhidharma are half-body or bust portrait. The remaining group includes full-body portraits, where we can differentiate between standing and sitting images. Among the standing images, we can find Bodhidharma crossing the Yangzi River on a reed, carrying one shoe or sandal, a combination of the two themes, or sometimes free of any such objects. Among the sitting images Bodhidharma can be found in a chair (especially in the earliest periods) or sitting in meditation, in a landscape, or entirely removed from time and space, with no background or sense of surroundings. The landscape setting varies. For instance, there is Bodhidharma in a cave (a more common version),² sitting under a tree³, or the combination of the two. According to the type of representation, we can differentiate between en-face, three-quarter profile, profile portraits, and representations showing Bodhidharma from the back. Within the simplified profile and back portraits set against a timeless and spaceless background, a specific iconographic type has developed: the “one-brushstroke Bodhidharma” which, together with the circle (Jap. *ensō*), had interesting religious-spiritual significance in *Chan* Buddhism. Depending on context, there are single Bodhidharma pictures, as well as pictures that form part of a group, and sometimes examples in which he is represented on the middle panel of a triptych. Among these, the oldest type is the group representation.

When Bodhidharma images arrived from China to Korea and Japan, they were used and popularized in different ways, despite the similar features in the images themselves. It was due to the given country’s socio-religious background, which I do not intend to discuss in detail in this article, but I would like to focus on the visual appearances of the Bodhidharma images in Korea and Japan, and point out the use of different models for popularization in these countries.

2 Apart from the fact that cave temples were common in India and China, their symbolism also plays a role in the interpretation of Bodhidharma imagery. See the explanation in the esoteric Sōtō Zen’s kirigami tradition as being a womb (Faure 1987).

3 Sitting under a tree is a reference to Shakyamuni Buddha’s enlightenment. But the activity is also associated with Buddha’s contemporary, Mahavira (599 BCE to 527 BCE), the founder of Jainism (Eliade 1997, 71).

Bodhidharma in Korea

Previous Studies on Korean Seon Painting

Compared to the published material and related pictorial art on the Chinese and the Japanese meditation schools, there are only a few sources available on *Seon*⁴, the Korean meditation school. This is partly because of the official ideology of the relatively recent Joseon dynasty (1392–1910) was based on Neo-Confucianism, with Buddhism experiencing a reduced presence.

There is little research on the artistic practice associated with Korean meditational Buddhism, which is more neglected than the religious doctrinal aspects of *Seon*. There is virtually no material on this topic in Western languages, and the few sources available in Korean (see e.g. Choi Suntaek and Kim Nami) are not always critical, but do make a great contribution to our knowledge and provide good reference materials.

Kim Myeongguk and the Problem of Bodhidharma as Huineng

The earliest surviving pictures of Bodhidharma made by Korean masters are from the 16th and the 17th centuries and have a strong connection with Japan. Among them, the most famous are Kim Myeongguk's (c. 1600–after 1662) Bodhidharma paintings, which long remained a model for later artists approaching this theme. Kim Myeongguk was a member of the Dohwaseo, Royal Painting Institute. His contemporaries described him as a carefree drunkard, a characterization that corresponds to the Chinese image of the eccentric artist.⁵



Figure 1: Kim Myeongguk (b. 1600–d. after 1662), *Triptych*, 17th century, (Ink on silk, hanging scroll, 96.6 x 38.8 cm each), Collection of Tokyo University of Arts (Choi 1998, pl. 21)

4 Seon: the Korean pronunciation of the Chinese word “Chan”.

5 We know several stories about him written by Nam Yuyong (1698–1773) in the collection called Noeyeon jip 雷淵集 (Noeyeon collection) (Nam Yuyong, Noeyeonjip, Jinhwisok ko 1783, 35–36)

In 1637 and 1643, Kim Myeongguk visited Japan as a member of an official delegation.⁶ It has been said that he was probably drawn to *Zen* Buddhist figure painting through commissions from Japanese patrons, who generally preferred Buddhist themes. Many of his paintings held in Japanese collections are of this genre, whereas contemporary painting in Korea was dominated by secular themes. The Seoul National Museum has the most impressive example of his most famous painting of Bodhidharma, where the patriarch was depicted with a few forceful, yet delicate, brushstrokes.



Figure 2: *Unknown painter, Huineng (from Sancaituhui), Ming period (1609) (print) (Wang and Wang 1988, 317)*

One of Kim Myeongguk's paintings is a triptych belonging to the Tokyo University of Fine Arts, whose central panel shows Bodhidharma crossing water on a reed (Fig. 1). His head is covered with a dark hood, which is most unusual in this kind of representation, yet we can find its source in the famous Ming Chinese printed book *Sancai tubui* 三才圖會 (Kor. *Samjaedohwi*) (Collected Illustrations of the Three Realms), an important resource for the artists, with illustrations of the famous Daoist and Buddhist masters on every page. In this book, the Sixth *Chan* patriarch Huineng 惠能 (638–713) is seen in a dark hood and has similar facial expressions,⁷ so we might suppose that Kim Myeongguk had used this pattern book, adding a

6 He stayed for ten months in 1637.

7 Huineng's dark hood existed as a visual formula from the 12th century, where we can see Huineng represented among the patriarchs wearing a separate hood, which was darkened in later copies.

little modification to suit his subject (Fig. 2). Using Huineng's iconography based on the *Sancai tubui* and followed by the *Xianfo qizong* 仙佛奇蹤 (Kor. *Hongssiseon-bulgijong*) (Marvelous Traces of Transcendents and Buddhas), printed in 1602, the hood is not darker than the robe itself, which we also find in other representations of Bodhidharma. The wall painting of the Geukrak Hall of Daewon temple in South Jeolla province shows Bodhidharma with the same features as the image of Huineng seen in both model books, but we can be sure about the identity of the figure in the wall painting, as it shows Huike 慧可 (487–593) presenting Bodhidharma his severed arm, as according to legend he cut off his own arm to draw the attention of Bodhidharma, who then became his master (Fig. 3).



Figure 3: *Unknown painter, Bodhidharma with Huike, Joseon period, (wall painting), Geukrak-jeon, Daewonsa, Boseong, South Jeolla Province, Republic of Korea*

Kim Hongdo and the Problems of Bodhidharma as an Immortal

In the oeuvre of another famous Korean artist, Kim Hongdo (1745–after 1814) who is considered one of the most outstanding artists of the Joseon period (1392–1910), we find several paintings showing figures standing or sitting on a reed⁸.

8 The reed as a motif appears in Buddhist texts when describing Bodhidharma as crossing the Yangzi river and only appeared in the 13th century. The earlier textual sources did not mention the reed as a tool for crossing. There is speculation that the appearance of the reed can be connected to a mistake during transcribing the Chinese characters in a text. However, it can be closer to the truth to suppose the influence of earlier pictorial representations of figures crossing water on various “vehicles”, including a reed among them, which might have an influence on the appearance of this motif in the 13th century (Mecsei 2008).

One of them bears an inscription “Picture of crossing the sea on a reed” (Fig. 4). Even though we know stories from Japan claiming that Bodhidharma actually crossed the sea and went to Japan, this tradition can be also traced back to the depiction of the Daoist immortals crossing the sea, and has a long history in iconography that predates Bodhidharma’s appearance. In the case of Kim Hongdo, we know that he painted Daoist themes, too. And if we look at the figure in his painting, we see his East Asian rather than Western features, and the fur around his waist also suggests immortal qualities (as a parallel see Shen Chou’s painting of an immortal from China in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Arts, Kansas City). Kim Hongdo’s other painting shows a young boy sitting and sleeping on a reed. This theme was also popular among artists in 18th-century Korea (see Sim Sa-jeong’s (1707–1769) painting of a similar theme), but even though there is still some confusion in identifying this crossing figure with Bodhidharma (Kim 2000, 90–91), it is probable that the young seated figure follows the iconography of an immortal (see other seated young immortal figures crossing the water, but without a reed). This is supported by the fact that Kim Hongdo painted very similar scenes of immortals crossing water, for instance one such immortal crossing on a shrimp.



Figure 4: Kim Hongdo (1745–1806), *Standing Figure on a Reed*, 19th century, inscription: “Crossing the sea on a reed”, Colors on paper. Gansong Art Gallery, Seoul (Choi 1998, pl. 40)

However, the strongly held view is that Kim Hongdo's crossing paintings depicting Bodhidharma resulted in later images using this iconography, either showing Bodhidharma as a young boy or showing Bodhidharma's crossing on a reed in a seated position.

We have seen from the above examples that the identification of a certain personality in visual arts is interlinked with a given society's beliefs, adding new qualities to an existing legend. The tradition of *arhat* paintings, paintings of patriarchs and paintings of Daoist immortals had a great contribution to the Korean Bodhidharma imagery and the existence of illustrative models and pattern books is evident, though their use was not always first-hand and there was a degree of freedom in their reconfiguration as seen in the use of Huineng's model for the image of Bodhidharma (Mecsei 2014).

This tendency can be observed during the later periods, too, and we can see the use of certain models for producing newer objects, but in a less varied manner.

Bodhidharma Images in Contemporary South Korea

Anyone who visits South Korea today soon encounters representations of Bodhidharma. His figure and legend are usually represented in Buddhist temples, but a recent phenomenon has taken his figure more and more into the secular and semi-secular context, such as souvenir shops not only in the vicinity of temples but in other tourist areas and frequently-visited places, like motorway service stations, or even tube stations and restaurants. Popular women's magazines and television channels often carry advertisements for Bodhidharma painters offering potential well-being.

The chosen sources for promoting this saintly figure are very different in Korea and in Japan, thus the manner in which Bodhidharma images enter the secular world differs considerably in these countries.

In Korea producing Bodhidharma images and objects has become a fashion in recent decades, and has increased considerably in the last couple of years. It started with the Seoul Olympics in 1988, when the so-called gold cards were launched on the market. These gold cards are small cards painted with real gold paint, showing representations of the twelve Oriental zodiac animals, Taoist talismans, and, for the Westerners, four-leaf clovers or images of Jesus Christ, but most of them contained the image of Bodhidharma.

Contemporary painters also turned towards the image of the saint, and we find not only monks, but some professional painters who started to revitalize his image. We

clearly see this not only in the art shops and exhibitions, but also in the publications of several books and albums devoted exclusively to Bodhidharma paintings.⁹

The structure of these books is the same: each painting (usually 100, or more often 108) is followed by a poem or an explanation related to Bodhidharma's legend or to some Buddhist teachings. These books often combine the pattern book format with a drawing manual and include tips on how to draw Bodhidharma. Korean painters of Bodhidharma generally use such pattern books together with other publications on Buddhist imagery, and in many cases it is obvious where they took their models from. However, at the same time, spontaneous ink paintings require some expression from the artist.

In the context of popularization, the importance of major public events must be mentioned, as well as how some artists have used these occasions to propagate the image of Bodhidharma.

In 2002 when Korea and Japan held the FIFA World Cup, the monk-painter Kim Dongseong (b. 1954) showed his new works in both countries representing Bodhidharma with a football, updating the figure in a manner appropriate for the event. However, he also included a philosophical explanation for his paintings, referring to the basic qualities and shared pronunciation for the word “ball” (Kor. *gong*) and emptiness (also *gong*), an important concept in Buddhism (Skt. *śūnyata*).

In 2005, during the International APEC (Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation) meeting in Busan, the monk Beomju (b. 1943) made a public performance by making a huge Bodhidharma painting. Painting large-scale Bodhidharma images for public events can be traced back to earlier traditions. It is recorded that the famous *Ukiyo-e* artist, Hokusai (1760–1849) also made a similarly giant image in 1804.¹⁰

Painting Bodhidharma as a performance is not so rare among Korean monk-artists, and Jung Gwang the “mad monk” (1934–2002), who gained international reputation with his daring Bodhidharma paintings and performances, even influenced contemporary expressionist art in the West.

In Korean visual arts and Buddhism there is a burgeoning trend in the production and distribution of images of the first Chan patriarch, which requires an attempt to understand it in the context of its inner developments and history, while placing it within the larger context of other Asian countries.

9 For example Hong and Yi Byoung-kyo 1993; Kim 1999; Kim 2000; *Beomju seunim Dalma seonmuk* 2001; Yu 2002.

10 Kōriki Enkōan, from *Hokusai taiga sokusho saizu* 北斎大画即書細図 (Drawing the Eyes on Hokusai's Big Picture), c. 1817, Nagoya City Museum

Popularization of Bodhidharma in Japan

To transform the image of a religious founder into a doll is an interesting phenomenon that appeared only in Japan (Fig. 5). It is evident that the customs around the cult of Bodhidharma in the form of a doll are closely related to religious practices of earlier times. We should look for the ties between popular customs, ancient aesthetics, and religious practices, for example, the opening of eyes ceremony and the symbolism in the usage of such dolls on 19th-century Japanese silk farms.



Figure 5: *Daruma dolls in Japan (Photograph taken by the author in 2007)*

An interesting aspect is the appearance of professional doll-makers and the so-called Daruma-markets, mostly in the Kantō region. It shows a connection with the post-war economic situation, and the fund-raising plans of the Buddhist temples, where establishing new cults with minimal effort could help in surviving hard times. There is also an international aspect to the distribution of such images, as it is interesting how a specifically Japanese toy could evolve into the national symbol of the Russians, the famous Matryoshka doll.

Although the story of Bodhidharma has its origins in China and spread to most East Asian countries, it is in Japan that he became the most popular and the most visible figure, seen not only in the temple compounds, but in everyday life, in the streets, in homes, offices, restaurants, public buildings, and many other places. His name in Japanese is Bodai Daruma, but he is known mostly as Daruma, sometimes with the honorific titles, as Daruma *daishi* (“great master Bodhidharma”), which refers to an exemplary founder of the Zen tradition, or simply Daruma *san* (“Mr. Bodhidharma”), a name which refers to his familiarity

with everyday life. Contrary to Korea, in Japan a special textual tradition connects Bodhidharma with Prince Shōtoku, thus making him a part of Japanese culture and linking him with a geographical location where Bodhidharma was never noted to appear in person.¹¹

Thus the legend of Bodhidharma became embedded in common knowledge and the image of Bodhidharma became identified with Japan, as if in becoming a figure of popular culture the Indian missionary stepped out of the walls of the monasteries and mingled into the life of everyday Japanese people. In a small temple at Ōji, in the Nara prefecture, a site is indicated as the burial place of Bodhidharma, and two large stones mark the supposed meeting place of Bodhidharma and the Prince. According to tradition, that temple was founded by Prince Shōtoku, who tried to commemorate the meeting by carving a Daruma image, which is currently enshrined at Empuku-ji 円福寺, a Zen temple near Kyōto. This statue is a piece of Important Cultural Property and is considered the oldest Daruma statue in Japan, but, in fact, it is not older than the 13th century (McFarland 1987, 18).

11 The 22nd volume of the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (*Chronicle of Japan*) has a story about Prince Shōtoku 聖徳太子 (572–622), the famous propagator of Buddhism, as he met a hungry wanderer at the crossroads of Kataoka. The Prince gave him food and his mantle and wrote a poem about him. The other day he sent an envoy to have a look at the poor wanderer, but he was told that the man he met on the road had already died. Shōtoku Taishi became very sad and ordered the body to be buried in the place where they had met. Some days later he told one of his attendants that the man he met on the Kataoka crossroads was not an ordinary man, but a saint. And he sent a servant again to the tomb to observe it, but the servant reported to the Prince that the body was missing; only the cloth which the Prince had given to him lay on the coffin, neatly folded up. Shōtoku Taishi then sent the servant back for the cloth, and he continued wearing it as before. People kept saying that “only a saint recognizes a saint,” and started to respect their Prince more than before (*Nihon shoki* 1987, 98–99).

The association of Bodhidharma with the hungry wanderer appeared in a biography of Shōtoku Taishi, *Ihon Jōgū Taishiden* いほんじょうぐう太子伝, written by Keimei in 771. This text ends with a question: “Could that starving man have been Bodhidharma?” (See Kuranaka 1996, 23). The tentative speculation in this text became an actual fact in *Denjutsu Isshin Kaimon* 伝述一心戒文 (*The Record of the Precepts in a Mind*), composed by Kōjō in 834, which says that “the starving man was, after all, Bodhidharma.” (See Kōjō 1964, 653) The explanation for this was the story according to which Shōtoku Taishi (574–622) was the avatar of the famous Tendai Master Nanyue Huisi 慧思 (517–577) and a legend says that Nanyue had once been Bodhidharma’s disciple. (For more on this, see Faure 1986, 187–98) When they met for the first time on Mt. Tiantai 天台山, Bodhidharma predicted that they would both meet again in the next life in Japan. This statement is followed by the story about the Prince and the beggar, where the Prince recognized his master in the poor man. (See Kōjō 1964, 74.2379, 653b)

In the *Genkō Era Biographies of Eminent Priests* (*Genkō Shakusbo* 元亨釈書, 1322), written by Kōkan Shiren 虎関師鍊 (1278–1347), we also find the same story, identifying the hungry wanderer with Bodhidharma. (See Kōkan vol. 62: 66–230) Bodhidharma was also presented in other Tendai writings as well. In Kōshū’s *Keiran Shūyōshū* 溪嵐拾葉集, (compiled between 1311 and 1348), his teachings were contrasted with those of the Tendai school founder, Zhiyi 智顛 (538–97). See Kōshū T.76.2410, 532b.

The appearance of Bodhidharma in many forms and roles is remarkable in Japan. It not only exists in paintings, but it is also sculpted in different media, formed from clay or papier-mâché, or produced in plastic. Its role ranges from the venerable icon to a piece of art, a decoration, a talisman or a toy, or the combination of these. Bodhidharma plays several roles in Japan: he is a symbol of Zen practice and experience, a paradigm of perseverance, a popular god of luck, a patron saint of the martial arts, and an object and inspiration for satire and humor.¹²

Though Buddhism was introduced to Japan around the 6th century via Korea, and Chan Buddhism flourished from the 9th century onwards in China, it happened only in the Kamakura period (1185–1333) that Zen, as a distinct school, emerged in Japan. The monks who transmitted the Zen teachings studied in China at various schools: Eisai 栄西 (1141–1215) introduced Rinzai Zen in 1191 and Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253) brought Sōtō Zen to Japan. It is usually considered that it was due to its simplicity that Zen attracted the samurai elite, who ruled much of the country at that period, thus, with their patronage Zen gained power and endurance. One of the earliest Zen schools was named after Bodhidharma: *Daruma-shū* (Daruma-school) and thus Daruma became a nickname for Zen (Faure 1987, 25–55). In the late Kamakura period, Zen Buddhism gained still more influence among the military rulers, who became practitioners of Zen arts and painted Daruma-portraits, and the Zen monks served as their “spiritual guides and cultural mentors” (McFarland 1987, 35). In the following Muromachi period (1336–1568), Zen Buddhism also enjoyed a great patronage from the ruling elite and produced its most elevated masterpieces in ink paintings. The fourth Ashikaga shōgun, Ashikaga Yoshimochi 足利義持 (r. 1392–1422), was a great devotee of Zen Buddhism and his Bodhidharma painting is a famous example.¹³ The emperor also painted Bodhidharma-portraits, as the extant example of the Emperor

12 Humor has a very important role in Chan Buddhism. Laughing is something that cannot be planned, a result of an unusual revelation, a realm outside utilitarian and logical perceptions. Showing Chan personalities laughing (like Hanshan 寒山 and Shide 拾得, Jp. Kansan and Jittoku) is a familiar scene in Chan art. Though Bodhidharma is not laughing, his morose figure makes the viewers laugh. The satirical expressions and the humorous elements in representing Bodhidharma were always present and gained more and more space, especially in popular imagination and related art (Hyers 1973). In accordance with the perception of daring to make fun of those usually venerated objects and personalities, in Chan Buddhism even the religious founder can be open to such treatment. The comic expression of Bodhidharma comes from the depiction of the foreign-looking arhats whose efforts were regarded by the Mahāyānists as a kind of futile achievement compared to the deeds of the wonderfully depicted Bodhisattvas who are saving the humankind. Though these arhats were not taken away, but given their role as protectors of the Buddhist law. The description of arhats can be connected with the Daoist immortals, who were usually out of the commonplace and quite unusual in their appearance as well as in behaviour. Chan Buddhism was very much influenced by the Daoist ideas, and the Chinese spirit of humor.

13 Now in the collection of the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Köln

Go-Yōzei 後陽成天皇 (r. 1586–1611), which survives at the Jishō-in 慈照院 of Shōkoku Temple 相国寺 in Kyōto.¹⁴

In popular imagination, the continuous sitting posture of Bodhidharma resulted in the loss of his legs and his arms through atrophy, as they withered and fell off. Sōtō Zen emphasizes the sitting practice (*zazen* 坐禪). The center of power and energy of the human body is believed to be located below the navel, thus the legless and armless Bodhidharma figure is explained as a kind of illustration of the concentrated meditation practice (McFarland 1987, 16). Tōrei Enji 東嶺圓慈 (1721–1792), a famous disciple of Hakuin, referring to the *Damoduolo chanjing* 達摩多羅禪經 (“Bodhidharma Zen Sūtra”),¹⁵ painted Bodhidharma in 1781 showing him with the indication of the eighth, seventh, and sixth levels of consciousness on his body, as well as the field under the navel, marked with dark red, whereas the painting’s inscription “indicated that it is the crucial point where vital energy is gathered”.¹⁶ Thus the roly-poly Daruma dolls symbolizes Bodhidharma’s balance and concentration, which enable him to get upright even though the doll is about to fall down or has fallen over. The roly-poly Daruma dolls are known as *okiagari* 起き上がり, i.e. “eight-rising”, on account of the proverb: “seven times falls, eight times rises” (*nana korobi, ya oki* 七転び八起き), thus the Daruma doll is a symbol of perseverance and resilience. The roly-poly Daruma doll is not only a toy for children, but a talisman for adults and is believed to possess real power against plagues and illnesses. In earliest times Daruma dolls were used to protect children from illness, especially from smallpox, so Bodhidharma was regarded as the god of smallpox.¹⁷ This was partly because of the dolls’ red color, which has magical connotations and which was associated with magical and healing powers enabling it to absorb the smallpox.

A well-known custom is that when one receives a doll such as this, which usually has blank eyes, one should paint one of the eyes of the doll while making a wish;

14 The 177th Emperor of Japan, Go-Yōzei, who lived in a very critical period when Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–98) and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616) attempted to gain power, devoted his time to arts and lived as a scholar, rather than a politician. See McFarland 1987, 22 and 36. Also see *Daruma ten*.

15 A work by Fo-jih and Tōrei Enji *Damoduolo chanjing* 達摩多羅禪經 (*Bodhidharma Zen Sūtra*) (T.15. No.618). A translation attributed to Buddhahadra (359–429), completed around 413. The title of the original text was, apparently, Yogacharabhumi, one of many treatises sharing the same title. The original Indian text is lost, but is attested in the preface by Huiyuan (334–416). See Michel Mohr’s handout of his lecture held 16 January 2003 at SOAS, Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions.

16 With the courtesy of Prof. Michel Mohr, through conversation with him in 2003

17 Bernard Faure, the preliminary French version of the article “The Double Life of the Patriarch” kindly provided to me by the author in 2003.

the other eye can be drawn only when this wish has come true.¹⁸ The dotting of the eyes is an interesting counterpart of the traditional Buddhist ritual called *kaigen kuyō* 開眼供養, “opening the eyes ceremony”, in which a new Buddhist image cannot be regarded as sacred until its eyes are ritually indicated. This custom has its roots in the ancient Chinese tradition and aesthetics. According to an old Chinese chronicle, a painter called Lie Yi (around the second century BCE) always left out the pupils of the dragons and phoenixes he painted, because if he had completed them, they could have come to life and flown away (Miklós 1973, 9). Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之 (ca 344–ca 407) is also said to have placed particular emphasis upon “dotting the eyes”, sometimes refraining from dotting the pupils for several years (Chen Shih-hsiang 1985, 14). On silk farms in 19th-century Japan, the Daruma images were regarded as luck-bringers maybe because the shape of the cocoons are like *okiagari* Daruma dolls. In some cases the cocoons themselves were used for making Daruma dolls (Jap. *mayu Daruma*), and sometimes a small weight was also put inside them to work like a normal *okiagari* doll (McFarland 1987, 65). The rite of filling the eyes was done the following way: in spring, when the first silkworms hatched, they drew their first eye and when the second generation hatched in autumn they drew the other one. The set of five miniature Daruma dolls painted in different colors is also associated with silk production. The set of five colors invokes many associations, as the number five has a great importance in ancient East Asian culture. McFarland explains it with the five-colored streamers in Shintō shrine displays, and its possible connections with the *gohei*, a vertical wand to which folded paper is attached. He suggests the supposition that “*gohei* is a relic of time when pieces of cloth were presented in this fashion and *gohei* and the streamers had a similar origin in the ancient Shintō cults” (ibid., 66). He also thinks that it probably can be connected with the Shintō prayer (*norito*), which refers to offerings to the *kami* of five types, or—as the language makes it possible—five colored types of things (*itsu-iro no mono* 五色のもの), which are traditionally interpreted as thin coarse silk strips of five colors (ibid., 66). Japan, similarly to Korea, adopted the Chinese cosmological system with its sophisticated equivalences and connections between time, directions, qualities, and senses. Bodhidharma was also fitted into these correlations with his unique and caricature-like personage. As he is represented in a red robe, and red is connected with the element of Fire, Bodhidharma became associated with fire and consequently with the other qualities and directions given in the table of equivalences according to the Chinese belief-system (Yoshino 1995, 114). Bodhidharma was also used in *ukiyo-e* parodies, where “Daruma has been not only removed from the temple, but recast as a figure in the Edo period demi-monde” (McFarland 1987, 82). In this role Bodhidharma is paired with a courtesan, with whom he had exchanged

18 This custom probably appeared in the Edo period.

clothes, and finally his figure is feminized, and he became a woman (McFarland 1986, 168). The term “*daruma*” in the late Edo period was slang for prostitute. Daruma with a courtesan can appear in two ways, either directly, together with the courtesan as a second principal figure when they exchange clothes,¹⁹ and indirectly as a picture on a wall, a decoration on a garment, or as a roly-poly doll placed somewhere in a room. For the question as to how Bodhidharma became a woman, Kidō Chūtārō suggests that the model was a celebrated beauty of the Edo period, called Han Tayū (Kidō 1978, 355–8). She was the highest-ranked courtesan in the Yoshiwara pleasure district at the end of the 17th century. Later on she was redeemed by a wealthy merchant and became a Buddhist nun. While she was a courtesan, she heard the story of Bodhidharma sitting for nine years facing the wall. She laughed at it and said: “That is not such a big deal. Prostitutes have to spend every day and every night sitting and looking for customers—not facing a wall, but facing the street through the windows. After ten years in this world of misery, I have already exceeded Daruma by one year.” And according to the lore, when the painter Hanabusa Itchō (1652–1724) heard this anecdote, he conceived the idea of merging Daruma and the prostitute into a single figure (McFarland 1986, 82). Probably this was the first “*onna Daruma*” or “woman Daruma”, which then became a popular figure among the floating world-artists and throughout Japan.

The appearance of the *okiagari onna* Daruma dolls is also an interesting phenomenon. Their connection with the famous Russian Matryoshka dolls is already a proven fact.²⁰ Daruma is a stimulus to childish fantasies and is included imaginatively in children’s play. Apart from games played by children there are different kinds of wooden Daruma toys, such as puzzles and the popular dropping Daruma (Daruma *otoshi* だるま落とし), which consists of variously colored wooden rings, with a Daruma image on top. The player should knock each ring under the column, while the column remains upright. In Japan a snowman is called “snow Daruma 雪ダルマ” and its representation often appears in ink-paintings. Around New Year, Daruma-markets are held in several places, extensively in the Kantō area. They are scheduled one after the other in order to permit vendors to move

19 The same type of parody can be found in regard of Budai 布袋 (in Japanese Hotei), when he is shown in woman’s dress while a woman is represented with the big sack: the attribute of Budai. See the painting by Furuyama Moromasa (fl. ca. 1704–1748), reproduced in *Christies New York*, 27. 10. 1998, 48–49, lot. 21.

20 From the historical perspective, the dolls arrived in Russia from Japan relatively recently, in the 1890s. It is said that somebody brought a wooden carving of a Buddhist saint as a surprise to the Mamontovs, a family of Russian industrialists and patrons of arts. The doll that came from the island of Honshu would break into two halves revealing a smaller one with the same trick, there were five. Ten years after Matryoshka had made its appearance in Russia, it was awarded a gold medal as a typically Russian toy at the World Fair in Paris in 1900. (Katkova 2004)

from one place to another from early January till early March. Many temples in Japan are called Daruma temples. Some of them have a long history of taking part in the popular Daruma cults. Others started to make such associations after the Second World War to cope with their severe financial situation, and thought that with the visibility and the trading of Daruma dolls they would increase their income and popularity. Before the war, parishioners usually gathered at the temple with their own hand-made Daruma-images to pray for protection and prosperity, and, after the war, these events were formalized to become an official festival and the home-made images became substituted with professionally crafted figures sold by the temple (McFarland 1987, 99–100).

In conclusion, Daruma in the form of a doll was said to be a symbol of Japanese identity. In none of the East Asian countries where his figure appeared did he become a part of people's everyday life to such a degree as in Japan. It corresponds to several associations and values: venerating the Indian source and the Chinese development of Buddhism, the adaptation and Japanization of Chinese cultural elements, and Japan's own definition of the uniqueness of its ethos (ibid., 100). As McFarland summarized it aptly: "A great number of Japanese have been associated with Daruma. They have honored and emulated him. They have deified and worshipped him. They have humanized and played with him. They have trivialized and made sport of him." (ibid., 54) Bodhidharma in the form of a doll is much more regarded as a symbol of Japaneseness, and therefore Japanese people popularized this figure at such a grand scale that the city of Takasaki has even chosen the Daruma doll as its symbol, where not only the temple—named after Daruma, of course—is full of Daruma dolls, but the whole city is decorated with Daruma-designs and the shops sell a diverse array of goods all related to Daruma. There is even an association of Daruma temples, and a German medical doctor and collector, Gabriele Greve, who has launched a website for studying Daruma, also established a small museum in the mountains of Okayama prefecture.²¹

Conclusion

According to tradition, the founder of meditational Buddhism is the Indian-born Bodhidharma, whose legendary figure can often be seen in the visual art and popular culture of East Asian countries. The iconography of Bodhidharma shows strong relationships with the representations of Daoist immortals and Buddhist arhats and patriarchs, which can be seen clearly in the developments

21 See her blog. Gabriele Greve, *Daruma San in Japan, Japanese Art and Culture* (posted on 25. 12. 2007).

and misinterpretations of several images of such genres resulting into new iconographies.

Starting from similar sources, but using different models for the representation and popularization of Bodhidharma, Korea and Japan differ from each other. Socio-historical reasons also play a great role in the difference of models and forms of how Bodhidharma appears in these two countries: in Japan Zen enjoyed a continuous support from the 13th century onwards, and, especially in the Edo period, popular religions and imagination formed and secularized the image of Bodhidharma further. While in Korea, from the 15th century onwards, Buddhism suffered and was marginalized in favor of the dominant Neo-Confucianist ideology, and Buddhist imagery was therefore not as abundant as in Japan, and the Buddhist iconographical themes were blurred and misinterpreted further in this milieu. However, with the revitalization of Buddhism, mostly in the 20th century, the production of Bodhidharma imagery got a new impetus, and they were produced in great quantities by monks and artists alike, often with magical and luck-bringing intentions. The models were mostly taken from earlier Bodhidharma paintings painted by Korean artists, such as the famous Bodhidharma-bust by Kim Myeongguk.

In Japan, however, mostly the popularized and secularized Daruma dolls are used, and they are often brought back to religious contexts (e.g. Daruma dolls appear in Buddhist altars). It can thus be said that in Japan the secularized image became sacralized again; while in Korea, the popularization of Bodhidharma in the form of reinterpreting famous Korean paintings has just started to appear in recent centuries, and has not gone to such extreme forms as it did in Japan, with the versatile forms of the popular Daruma dolls.

When we look at the ways Bodhidharma images are popularized in modern and contemporary East Asia, we find some basic differences between China, Korea, and Japan.

Among these countries, Japan was the first one to popularize Bodhidharma on a large scale, not only in the simplified ink paintings usually crafted by the monk painters and in their popular color prints, but also in the form of a roly-poly doll called *Daruma*.

The transformation of a religious founder's image into a doll is an interesting phenomenon, which only appeared in Japan, and this form of representation entered Korea as a symbol of Japaneseness rather than a representation of Bodhidharma himself (for example, as a sign in Japanese restaurants, like the waving cat).

In China the popularization of Bodhidharma only happened recently, but here the visual appearance does not play such an important role as it does in Japan

or Korea. Here, the cult flourishes especially around the Shaolin monastery and mainly among martial arts practitioners, to whom Bodhidharma is venerated as the founder of Shaolin kung fu.

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Contemporary Neo-Confucianism

Modern Confucianism and the Concept of “Asian Values”

*Jana S. ROŠKER** *

Abstract

Through contrastive analysis, the present paper aims to introduce the connections between the now fashionable notion of Asian values and the Modern Confucian discourses. Even though this has often been closely identified with Confucian axiology, this article shows how and why this notion has almost nothing to do with the contemporary stream of the so-called Modern Confucians or their philosophy. However, precisely because of this false identification, and in order to clarify any misunderstandings as to the supposed Confucian roots of this idea, it must be examined in greater detail, and placed in its historical, ideological, and sociological context. Hence, the present paper aims to introduce the difference between Modern Confucian philosophy and the discourse on Asian values, which is often mistakenly comprehended as forming part of Modern Confucianism. Given the prevalence of this confusion, it is important to explain why and in what ways Modern Confucians are, instead, generally critical of the concept of “Asian values”.

Keywords: Modern Confucianism, ideology, Asian values

Izvleček

Ta prispevek predstavlja odnos med trenutno zelo modnim pojmom azijskih vrednot na eni in filozofsko strujo modernega konfucijanstva na drugi strani. Četudi se azijske vrednote pogosto enačijo s konfucijansko aksiologijo, članek nazorno utemelji, da ta pojem nima tako rekoč nobene zveze s sodobno strujo modernega konfucijanstva, niti s filozofijo njenih predstavnikov. Vendar je treba prav zaradi napačnega enačenja razjasniti nespo-razume glede domnevnih konfucijanskih korenin te ideje. V ta namen moramo koncept azijskih vrednot podrobno raziskati tudi znotraj njegovih zgodovinskih, ideoloških in socioloških kontekstov. Zato je glavni cilj tega prispevka predstavitev oziroma ponazoritev razlik med filozofijo modernega konfucijanstva in diskurzi azijskih vrednot, ki se pogosto napačno predstavljajo kot konstitutivni del modernega konfucijanstva. Glede na razsežnost problema je pomembno poudariti, da se moderni konfucijanci s to idejo nikakor ne identificirajo, temveč so, prav nasprotno, do nje zelo kritični.

Ključne besede: moderno konfucijanstvo, ideologija, azijske vrednote

* Jana S. ROŠKER, Professor, Department of Asian Studies,
Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.
jana.rosker[at]ff.uni-lj.si

Modern Confucianism and Its Values

The revitalization of the complex traditions of Chinese philosophical thought during the 20th century has assumed increasing relevance and significance in recent decades. In the first half of the 20th century, this tendency could be observed in the works of many of the leading modern Chinese philosophers who were searching for ways to renew the methodological and theoretical aspects of the Chinese tradition, and especially of the pre-modern philosophy that followed the Neo-Confucian revival.

Modern Confucianism as an important philosophical discourse in contemporary China did not emerge only due to the desire for a modern synthesis of the Confucian and Euro-American traditions, but also as a consequence of an axiological crisis in both traditions. The crisis of Confucianism as a leading state doctrine of pre-modern China was part of the much more general crisis of the Chinese state on the threshold of modernity, a crisis due to Chinese technological backwardness, widespread poverty, and the failure of the political system to adapt to the actual conditions of society. The specific circumstances of the 19th and 20th centuries demonstrated that Confucianism, which had functioned as the central state doctrine and ideological basis of traditional Chinese society for two millennia, could no longer serve as an ideational basis for a modern society.

Some of the most prominent Chinese philosophers of the 20th century developed Modern Confucianism, as the discourse, which most clearly expressed the rehabilitation of traditionalism. In addition to the acknowledged precursors of this current, Feng Youlan and Xiong Shili, we should mention in this context Liang Shuming, Zhang Junmai and He Lin. These thinkers belong to the so-called first generation of this stream of thought.¹ The present article focuses upon the work of the 2nd generation, which includes Mou Zongsan, Tang Junyi, Fang Dongmei and Xu Fuguan, and especially upon the ideas of some of the most well-known contemporary proponents of the 3rd and the 4th generations, such as Yu Yingshi and Lee Ming-huei.

We should also bear in mind that the term Confucianism (*ru xue* 儒學) often denotes early Chinese thought in general.² It certainly holds true that the Neo-Con-

1 The categorization into "generations" follows a long tradition in Confucian scholarship, which is ultimately rooted in classical Confucianism.

2 Tu Weiming, a prominent member of the 3rd generation of Modern Confucianism, has described this in the following way: "The scholarly tradition envisioned by Confucius can be traced to the sage-kings of antiquity. Although the earliest dynasty confirmed by archaeology is the Shang dynasty (18th–12th century BCE), the historical period that Confucius claimed as relevant was much earlier. Confucius may have initiated a cultural process known in the West as Confucianism, but he

fucians of the Song and Ming Dynasties, who created the theoretical framework that underpins Modern Confucianism, formally distanced themselves from Daoism, Buddhism, and similar, more mystical and less rational traditions, even going so far as to view the proponents of these systems as their philosophical “enemies”. At the same time, however, one of the greatest theoretical shifts in Neo-Confucian philosophy was due precisely to the integration of many important Daoist and Buddhist concepts and methods into the framework of classical Confucianism. It was the assimilation of those very ideas that orthodox classical Confucian doctrine deemed dangerous, improper, and even “heretical”, which to a great extent defined the reform of classical Confucian thought, which, already at that time, had ossified and become far too formalized. These Buddhist and Daoist impulses saved Confucianism from collapse in the period from the 10th to the 14th centuries and succeeded in transforming the classical state-building doctrine into a system of thought that deserved once again to be called “philosophy”.³ In their attempts to synthesize Euro-American and Chinese philosophies and modernize the Chinese philosophical tradition, many other Modern Confucian thinkers also focused on various traditional discourses which do not belong to the framework

and those who followed him considered themselves part of a tradition, later identified by Chinese historians as the *rujia*, ‘scholarly tradition’, that had its origins two millennia previously, when the legendary sages Yao and Shun created a civilized world through moral persuasion” (Tu 2014, 1). In addition to Tu, many other scholars have noted the broader connotations of the term *ru*. Roger Ames, for example, has shown how this notion refers to a general classical “scholarly tradition” (see Ames 2014, 5). This, of course, does not mean that Daoist and Buddhist texts were included in the Confucian canon, but only confirms how inextricably intertwined these three major idea systems were. In most forms of Confucian state orthodoxy, e.g. the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, the term *Ru* basically signifies an expert in the Five Classics. In her book on Confucianism and women, Li-Hsiang Lisa Rosenlee also writes: “The concept of *Ru* 儒... denotes the inexact Chinese counterpart of the term Confucianism used by Jesuits in the 18th century... The ambiguity of its semantic origins in ancient, pre-Confucian times obscures the connection between *Ru* as an intellectual discipline and Confucius, as its most prominent spokesperson. Unlike the term Confucianism—its secularized and simplified representation in the West—the complex term *Ru* can only be approximated as the teaching of the sages and the worthies wherein the ethical teaching of Confucius—the Supreme sage and the First teacher—forms a part, but an important part nevertheless.” (Rosenlee 2006, 4)

- 3 It is difficult to say to what extent this process was a conscious one, but the contemporaneous integration and “discharging” of Buddhist and Daoist philosophy certainly constituted a challenge for Neo-Confucian philosophers. By the 10th century, the formalized classical Confucian doctrine was an empty husk, and was studied and mastered only in order to pass the official state examinations, which for the successful candidates (and their clans) opened up access to political power. But because this doctrine was incapable of satisfying the intellectual needs of the educated classes, these classes turned to the study of Daoist and Buddhist philosophies, a tendency which threatened both Confucianism as such, and the entire ideological system on which the traditional state institutions were based. In this sense, the Neo-Confucian reform was absolutely necessary for the preservation of Confucianism, in terms of its function as the main social, ethical and philosophical system of thought in China.

of Confucianism in a narrow sense.⁴ As a final point, we must also take into account the differences between the original Chinese notions and their semantic connotations that originate in the translations of these notions into Indo-European languages. The expression "*ru xue*" is translated as "Confucianism" (also in the term "Modern Confucianism"), and thus automatically connotes Confucius (Kong Fuzi 孔夫子) and the various historical phases of Confucian teachings. But "*ru xue*" actually signifies "the teachings of the scholars", which means that this expression does not a priori exclude any of the major influences on the history of Chinese thought. In fact, what Confucian and Daoist philosophy, as well as sinicized Buddhism all share is this idea of traditional Chinese philosophy as the "teachings of the scholars".

Here, we must stress the fact that Confucian values are multilateral and multifaceted. Although official publications in contemporary China dedicated to promoting new values that define their idea of a modern, harmonious society often indicate Confucius and Confucianism as the source of this concept and the underlying values, a more detailed analysis can quickly show that the modern idea of Asian values has little to do with original Confucianism.

The Political and Ideological Background of "Asian values"

In dealing with Asian modernization, we have often encountered the fashionable catch-phrase of so-called "Asian values". Even though it has often been closely identified with the Confucian tradition (see for example, Fetzer and Soper 2007; Yu 2000; de Bary 1998; Lee Hung-jung 2003), this expression, as we shall show below, has almost nothing to do with the Modern Confucians or their philosophy.

In recent years, the term "Asian values" has represented the key concept of an authoritarian ideology that, in order to contain the presumed threat and risks of "Western" individualism within in their own societies, promoted the "virtues" of Asian communitarianism and rigorous government.

"Asian values" as a doctrine of developmentalism can be understood as the claim that, until prosperity is achieved, democracy remains an "unaffordable luxury". This "Protestant ethic" form of "Asian values" attributes high growth rates to

4 Modern Confucians rarely relied on Daoism, and understandably so, for this current emerged not only in order to preserve cultural identity, but also with the goal of modernizing and "saving" the institutional framework of Chinese society. The anarchic classics of Daoism are eminently unsuited for such goals. That said, several Modern Confucian philosophers have devoted considerable effort to the study and integration of Buddhist thought into their own theories (e.g. Xiong Shili, Liang Shuming and Mou Zongsan).

certain cultural traits. These characteristics include hard work, frugality, discipline, and teamwork. Western democracy hinders rapid development, claim authoritarian rulers in the East Asia and thus must be delayed until substantial development has been achieved (Thompson 2001, 155–6).

It is hardly a coincidence that the concept of Asian values emerged amidst the panorama of new Asian ideologies (especially in Singapore and Malaysia) in the early 1980s, precisely in the period when the (semi-westernized) governments of both countries were confronted for the first time with the phenomena of widespread democratic movements and growing individualism among their citizens. This ideology warns against heedlessly embracing “Western” democracy and a free press, watching foreign TV programs and listening to pop music, in short, all those elements that could lead their countries down the slippery slope of degeneration. In this way, Asian values became the polar opposites to everything that was wrong with the West.

Rising crime and divorce rates—as well as new tastes in music, television, and film—were linked to an electoral swing away from the ruling People’s Action Party (whose vote share fell nearly 20 percent between 1980 and 1991). The importance of maintaining “Asian values” could thus justify both draconian laws regarding personal behavior and the crackdown on political opposition in 1987. In short, the Singaporean state had created an ideology to combat democratic tendencies and individualism despite the country’s advanced stage of economic development (*ibid.*, 157).

After the successful elimination of political opposition by the Malaysian government in the 1980s, Asian values gained importance in that country as well. The then Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamed argued that these values provided the best foundation for official rule, and criticized Western countries for trying to impose an arbitrary version of “democracy” on that country⁵. He also attacked the West for its growing decadence and used that argument in order to promote Asian values as the best alternative to the risks of “Westernization”.

A similar view was taken by government of the P.R. of China. In 1995, Jiang Zemin declared at the United Nations general assembly:

The sacred nature of state sovereignty is inviolable. No state has the right to interfere in the internal affairs of another or force its own will on others. Some large countries frequently use the pretext of “freedom”, “democracy” or “human rights” to encroach upon the sovereignty of other states,

5 Although wide swaths of Malaysian population are Islamic, the concept of Asian values is compatible with this religion, as it mainly refers to principles of behavioral ethics and political ideals.

interfering in their internal affairs, damaging the unity of other countries or the solidarity of their nationalities. This is a major factor behind the lack of peace in the world today. (Jiang Zemin in Moody 1996, 166)

While he did not explicitly refer to the concept of Asian values in this address, his views were supported by the majority of Asian countries and the connection between such highly problematic approaches as "cultural relativism" and Asian cultures as a conceptual unity acquired some institutional corroboration. In fact, even before Jiang's speech, in 1993 a meeting of Asian countries in Bangkok had issued a joint declaration stating that human rights were contingent upon the real culture, history, level of economic development and other similar factors (Moody 1996, 166). Western countries, therefore, had no right to impose their views and consider their own concepts and opinions superior to those of other cultures. This view was expressed most vehemently by the P.R. of China and was accepted by the majority of Asian countries, with the exception of Japan and the Philippines.

In order to better understand the historical and social functions of Asian values, Mark R. Thompson (2001, 158) drew a series of historical comparisons between modern Singapore and Malaysia, and imperial Germany of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He observed many historical parallels and claimed that these similarities were not accidental, for imperial Germany had had a considerable impact on Japanese ideologies in the Meiji era and, through Japan, upon other countries of East and Southeast Asia. Like imperial Germany, Singapore and to a lesser extent Malaysia were also equipped with strong bureaucratic apparatuses that regulated industrial development. But while imperial Germany had had a parliament, parliamentary institutions were purely formal in Singapore and Malaysia and had no significant role in government decision-making.

Modern Confucian Reactions and Some Axiological Clarifications

The concept of Asian Values appeared in the forefront of a broader international exchange thanks to the Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, who was reproached by Lee Ming-huei for behaving like "the press secretary for Confucian culture" (2001, 85). This is quite problematic, of course, and hardly favorable for achieving a broader understanding of the Confucian tradition, given that the concept of Asian values is to a great extent rooted in the ideas of the despotic (i.e. legalist) line of Confucianism.

This line is grounded in the interpretations of Xunzi, the ancient philosopher who represented a sort of bridge between Confucianism and Legalism. His philosophy

served the ideologists of the Han Dynasty as a solid basis for the consolidation of a Confucian ideology that was suited to the needs of the new Han Empire, which had succeeded the huge centralized Qin Empire and needed an ideology that would justify and support a centralized control over the entire state. This ideology therefore comprised numerous despotic elements (e.g., the principle of collective responsibility or the principle of denunciation). This line of Confucianism has also been advocated by the majority of the new Confucian ideologues in the P.R. China. Not surprisingly, Lee Kuan Yew's idea of "Asian values" was very warmly received in mainland China and, in 1994, he was appointed honorary president of the International Confucian Association, in Peking.

We can doubtlessly agree with Lee Ming-huei (2001, 85), who claimed that Confucian culture as understood by Lee Kuan Yew is an anti-liberal, despotic culture in which the community is much more important than the individual. In his opinion, while Lee Kuan Yew's critique of Western societies is reasonable, his image of Confucian society is still too one-sided, even if it is not completely in contradiction with the historical facts. The fact that the Confucian cultural tradition has, over the course of Chinese history, often been linked to monarchic despotism, in no way means that despotism was a Confucian ideal.⁶ When reading the ancient Confucian classics by Lunyu, Mencius or Xunzi, it becomes very clear that original Confucianism implied a tendency to consider the will of the people. This tendency, of course, is not comparable to democracy in the modern sense, but it nevertheless contains ideal foundations that are suitable for the establishment of a democratic order:

Not surprisingly, most Modern Confucians advocate the idea and values of democracy, and Lee Kuan Yew's views on the Confucian tradition did not find all Asian leaders in agreement. For example, the South Korean president Kim Dae Jung and the former president of the Republic of China (Taiwan) both confirmed the connection between the Confucian tradition and democracy. (ibid., 85)

Lee Ming-huei has also criticized the thesis of "Asian values", calling its content "unclear" (ibid., 85). In his view, the evaluation of Confucianism must consider

⁶ The despotic line in Confucianism was established during the Han Dynasty, which had inherited the enormous, centralized, legalist, and despotic Qin state. Because ruling such a state required a centralized doctrine, and because the new rulers could not simply appropriate Legalism, which had represented the central ideology of the defeated Qin empire, the new state doctrine was based upon Dong Zhongshu's reinterpretation of the original Confucian teachings. This reinterpretation was rooted primarily in Xunzi's elaboration of original Confucianism, such that Xunzi appears as the bridge between Confucian and Legalist teachings.

its democratic tendencies, as this is the only way its intellectual heritage, which has preserved its vital force to the present day, can also maintain its significance in future.

The general orientation of the concept of Asian values has also been criticized by Yu Ying-shih in his *Confucianism and China's Encounter with the West in Historical Perspective* (2005). In this essay, he tries to differentiate between the values proposed by advocates of Asian values and those advanced by the Modern Confucians, concluding that the authors of the Declaration advocated an interpretation of the Chinese cultural heritage that implied certain modern Western values, such as science and democracy (Yu 2005, 214). In this context, he also criticizes Huntington's thesis on the "clash of civilizations"⁷:

It is rather unfortunate that Huntington speculates a great deal about the prospect of a clash between Chinese and Western civilizations without a basic historical grasp of the developments of Confucianism in modern and contemporary China. He seems to rely heavily on Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, as the sole authoritative interpreter of Confucianism who, as Havel says, takes great interest in the Confucian tradition only to use it to condemn Western democracy. I do not deny that a deep-seated antagonism does seem to exist between the regime in Peking and the West. However, the source of this antagonism clearly lies elsewhere. It is only fair that Confucian culture be absolved of all blame. (ibid., 215)

Political Confucianism and the Problem of Hierarchy

In their empirical study on the influence of Confucian values on the views of Taiwanese citizens, S. Fetzer and Christopher J. Soper (2007, 153) found that Confucian values—which they consider to be the core of Asian values—were not in substantial contradiction with the principles of liberal democracy, and that none of its three central values (i.e. loyalty or filial piety, social hierarchy and the idea of social harmony) could be regarded as reducing the support for democracy. They also concluded that many Confucian values could reduce certain "phenomena" associated with Western style democracy and its glorification of individualism. In

7 Here, we should mention two additional aspects of Huntington's theory: "...That the civilizations he referred to, while they represented long-standing cultural traditions, were not relics of the past but were products of modernity that were empowered by their claims on modernity. Second, that to impose the values of the modern West on these societies would not only not work, but also represented a kind of imperialism." (Dirlik 2001, 22)

particular, the Confucian communitarian ethics, which are defined by principles of mediation and the concept of the extended family, could offer new ways of joining people in communities, while the principle of social harmony, which repudiates the one-dimensional glorification of individual rights regardless of their social and cultural context, also appears as a positive factor for coexistence. In this framework, they even found certain positive aspects in the ethic of filial piety, as a way for individuals to transcend their narrow egoistical interests and recognize their responsibilities towards previous generations (Fetzer and Soper 2007, 154). In their view, democracy is by no means incompatible with Confucian values, such that linking or creating a synthesis of the two discourses is unnecessary. They concluded their study with the declared hope that a growing percentage within the overall Asian population would become the driving force in reviving those traditional elements which are favorable to democratic development and social progress.

However, in his critique of deBary's book, *Asian Values and Human Rights: A Confucian Communitarian Perspective*, Anthony C. Yu offers a decisive rebuttal of such views:

Against this line of argument, the following points may be made: First, among contemporary sinologists outside China, Confucian revivalists such as Wang Gungwu, Tu Wei-ming, Julia Ching, Irene Bloom, and de Bary himself, have repeatedly emphasized the reciprocity of obligations expected of differentiated human relations (renlun) as a less stridently individualistic and more desirable (because more communitarian) precursor of the notion of rights. What they consistently fail to acknowledge is the asymmetry of these “principles of relations (lunli, the literal Chinese translation of ‘ethics’)” and the resulting inequality of obligations presumed in the hierarchical conception of relations and obligations. (ibid., 300)

Here, we must point out that hierarchy, which is doubtless paramount in the Confucian concept of social structure, is clearly based on inequality. However, parliamentary democracy is also based upon a hierarchical decision-making process and system, while the basic premise of the Confucian model of hierarchy can instead be identified in the principle of a representation that is reciprocal, correlative, and complementary. There is thus mutual conditioning and co-dependence of both levels within the hierarchic structure, which requires that the superior entity always recognize its responsibility to represent the interests of its subordinates, i.e. of the hierarchically inferior entity. This responsibility towards subordinates is clearly manifested in the canonical Confucian virtue of justice (*yi*), which constitutes the elementary principle of governance in original Confucianism:

長幼之節，不可廢也；君臣之義，如之何其廢之？欲潔其身，而亂大倫。君子之仕也，行其義也。人倫明於上，小民親於下。

If the relations between old and young may not be neglected, why should the duties that should be observed between sovereign and minister be neglected? If one wishes to maintain personal purity, how can he permit human relations to come to confusion? A nobleman takes office, and performs the righteous duties belonging to that office. (Confucius 2012a, Wei zi 7)

Of the classical Confucians, Mencius was the one who always stressed the responsibility of the rulers towards their people:

人倫明於上，小民親於下。...父子有親，君臣有義，夫婦有別，長幼有序，朋友有信... 勞之來之，匡之直之，輔之翼之，使自得之，又從而振德之。

When the importance of human relations is clear to superiors, kindly feelings will prevail among the people below (Mencius 2012, *Teng Wen gong* I/3) ... There should be closeness and affection between father and son, justice and righteousness between sovereign and minister, separate functions between husband and wife, proper order between old and young and sincere fidelity between friends... People should be encouraged and led; they should be rectified and made straight; they should be guided, so they can grow wings and become possessors of themselves. On such a basis they can become virtuous. (ibid., I/4)

In traditional Confucianism, the concept of the "Heavenly Mandate" (*tian ming* 天命) represents the highest criteria for the measurement or evaluation of a ruler's suitability⁸:

君子有三畏：畏天命，畏大人，畏聖人之言。

A nobleman is in awe of three phenomena. These are the Heavenly Mandate, great personalities, and the teachings of the sages. (Confucius 2012a, *Ji shi* 8)

Even Xunzi, whose works provided the basis for a new Confucian state doctrine that implied despotic-legalist elements during the Han Dynasty, stressed that a good government should always consider the needs and interests of the people. If

8 A suitable ruler will consider the decrees of the Heavenly Mandate and obey the Mandate; a ruler who ignores it is unsuitable for his position

a ruler did not show proper responsibility towards his subjects, they had a legitimate right to take his power from him.

君者、舟也，庶人者、水也；水則載舟，水則覆舟。此之謂也。故君人者，欲安、則莫若平政愛民矣。

A ruler is like a boat and common people are like water. The boat can be carried by the water, but water can also overturn it. If a ruler wants to rule in peace, the best thing he can do is love his people. (Xunzi 2011, *Wang zhi* 5)

Conclusion: Asian Values as a New Form of “Reversed Orientalism”?

Claiming Confucian roots for the concept of Asian values, as its proponents continue to do, thus appears as both groundless and one dimensional. Indeed, the very foundation of this concept is problematic, for even in the context of its allegedly indigenous culture it appears as a completely artificial construct. As Peter R. Moody Jr. (1996, 166) pointed out, the term Asia denotes a superficial and insufficiently defined geographic notion, given that in the pan-Asian area there exist many different cultures with prevailing values that differ from one another in the same way that specific prevailing values differ within Western axiological systems.

“Traditional” values, which purportedly prevailed before the invasion of Western culture, function as the single point of reference meant to link these values to one another. Of course, this does not reduce the generalization on which this apparently post-colonial ideal construct rests, for the “Confucian tradition”, which is meant to symbolically connect all these different values, is likewise an artificial construct (Hill 2000, 177). It is, in fact, a hybrid model of a “homogeneous” Confucianism that in reality does not exist. Thus, one of the basic characteristics of the concept of Asian values is this function of reproducing the methods of so-called “reversed Orientalism”.

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9 We should also recall that the Confucian tradition—in various forms—only had an influence on the East Asian countries. For example, in India and other South Asian countries it had no influence at all, even before colonialization. It would therefore be more correct to speak of “East Asian values”.

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The Neo-Confucianism of the Joseon Dynasty: Its Theoretical Foundation and Main Issues

HaeSung LEE*

Abstract

The theoretical foundation of Joseon Neo-Confucianism, which started with the theory of the Principle and Material Force (*Seongriseol*), seeks for the fundamental values of all things in the universe by means of the theories of Cosmology (*Ujuron*) and Mind and Nature (*Simseongron*). The theory of Self-Cultivation (*Suyangron*) pursues ideal character training to reach the ultimate Noble Gentleman's (*Gunja*) status; then established the theory of Fidelity (*Yiriron*), which stresses moral practice against injustice. These theories functioned organically with the theory of Ritual Formalities (*Yeseol*) and the theory of Statecraft Ideas (*Gyeongseron*), deeply rooted in Democentrism (*Minbonjuyi*), in order to realize Confucian ideas as methodological indicators. The theory of Four Beginnings and Seven Emotions (*Sadanchiljeongron*) extended to be the theories of the Principle's Dominance (*Juriron*) and Material Force's Dominance (*Jugiron*). Likewise, the theory of Sameness-Difference of Human Nature and Material Nature (*Inmulseong Dongiron*) became the Horak debates, which formed the Neo-Confucian academic genealogies of the Joseon dynasty.

Keywords: Neo-Confucianism, Joseon dynasty, Korean philosophy, theory of Principle and Material Force

Izveček

Teoretske osnove novokonfucijanstva korejske dinastije Joseon, ki so zakoreninjene v teoretskem modelu načela in materialne sile (*Seongriseol*), vidijo osnovne vrednote vsega bivajočega v teorijah (*Ujuron*) ter srčni zavesti in naravi (*Simseongron*). Teorija samo-kultivacije (*Suyangron*) opisuje kultivacijo posameznika, katerega značaj naj bi v tem postopku sčasoma dosegel stopnjo plemenitnika (*Gunja*). Utemeljena je tudi na teoriji zvestobe oziroma lojalnosti (*Yiriron*), ki poudarja moralno prakso in si prek nje prizadeva odpraviti nepravilnost. Te teorije so delovale skladno s teorijo obrednih formalnosti (*Yeseol*) in teorijo državnosti (*Gyeongseron*) in so temeljile na ideji democentrizma (*Minbonjuyi*) ter si prizadevale za uresničevanje konfucijanskih idej v smislu metodoloških premis. Teorija štirih kalčkov in sedmih občutij (*Sadanchiljeongron*) se je razširila in vključila tudi teorijo

* HaeSung LEE, Professor, Chief of Korean studies, Institute of Classical, Mediterranean and Oriental Studies, University of Wrocław, Poland. hslees[at]yahoo.co.kr



prevlade materialne sile (*Juriron*). Na podoben način je v razprave prišla še teorija človeške in materialne narave (*Inmulseong Dongiron*) in oblikovala se je genealogija dinastije Joseon.

Ključne besede: neo-konfucijanstvo, dinastija Joseon, korejska filozofija, teorija načela in materialne sile

Introduction: Joseon—the Ideal State of Confucian Ideology

Founded in Confucian ideals, the Joseon dynasty (朝鮮 1392–1910) was a completely differentiated state, in which all the social norms were integrated with the ruling ideology—difficult to find such a case in other civilizations around the world. All Five Confucian Constant Virtues (*Osang* 五常, Chin. *Wuchang*)¹ were included in the names of key buildings to reflect the idea in all directions of Seoul, the capital city.

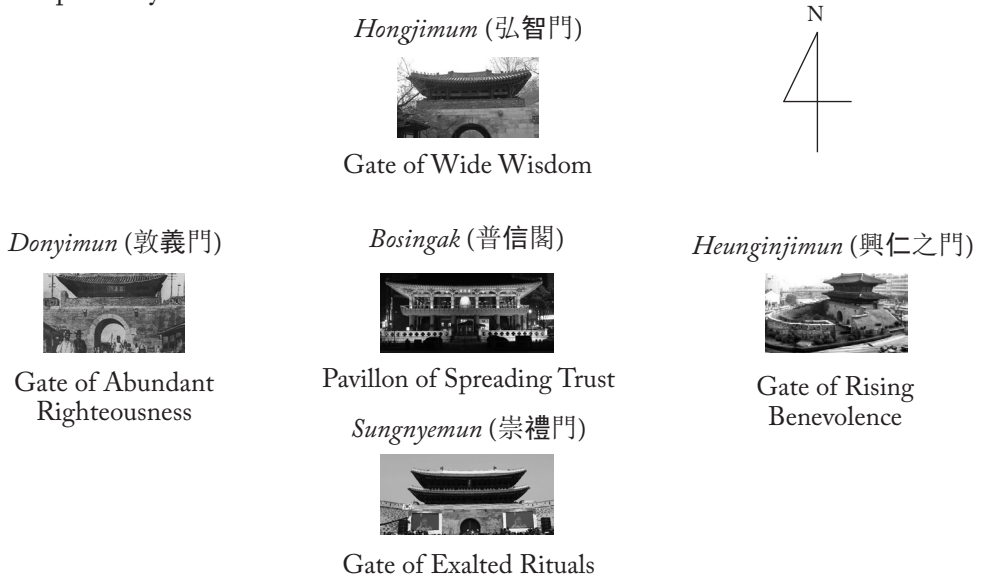


Figure 1: Buildings symbolized the Confucian core values in Seoul (Source: author's own work)

Moreover, the main royal buildings were also named by Jeong Dojeon (鄭道傳, 1342–1398)², who was the founding contributor of the dynasty: *Gyeongbok Gung* (景福宮)—the Main Palace of the dynasty; *Kwanghwa Mun* (光化門)—the Main Gate

- 1 They are: Benevolence (*In* 仁, Chin. *Ren*), Righteousness (*Yi* 義, Chin. *Yi*), Propriety/Rituals (禮 *Ye/Rye*, Chin. *Li*), Wisdom (*Ji* 智, Chin. *Zhi*), and Trustworthiness (*Sin* 信, Chin. *Xin*).
- 2 He was the principal architect of the Joseon regime—laying down its ideological, institutional, and legal framework, which would govern it for five centuries (Lee 2014).

of the palace; and *Keunjeong Jeon* (勤政殿)—the Throne Hall for court audiences and foreign envoys. “Gyeongbok” means “to pray for the great fortune of peaceful reign for the kings, royal family and the people”.³ “Kwanghwa” means “the kings’ great virtue illuminates the whole country”. It is the abbreviation of “Kwangcheon Hwail” (光天化日), which means “the world of bright prospect” and “peaceful period”. Apart from that, “Keunjeong” means “to rule with sincerity and diligence” which was quoted by Jeong Dojeon in the *Book of Documents* (*Seogyeong* 書經, Chin. *Shujing*).

Likewise, The Neo-Confucianism of the Joseon dynasty, which set up the state framework and led social order as its absolute value system, which thrived as a central ideology through the rise and fall of the country for more than five hundred years.

The Theoretical Foundation of Neo-Confucianism

Joseon Neo-Confucianism was based on the philosophy of metaphysical, nominal, and practical speculation. The theoretical foundation of Joseon Neo-Confucianism, which started with the “theory of Principle and Material Force” (*Seongriseol* 性理說, Chin. *Xinglishuo*), seeks for the fundamental values of all things in the universe by means of the theories of Cosmology (*Ujuron* 宇宙論, Chin. *Yuzhou-lun*) and Mind and Nature (*Simseongron* 心性論, Chin. *Xinxinglun*).

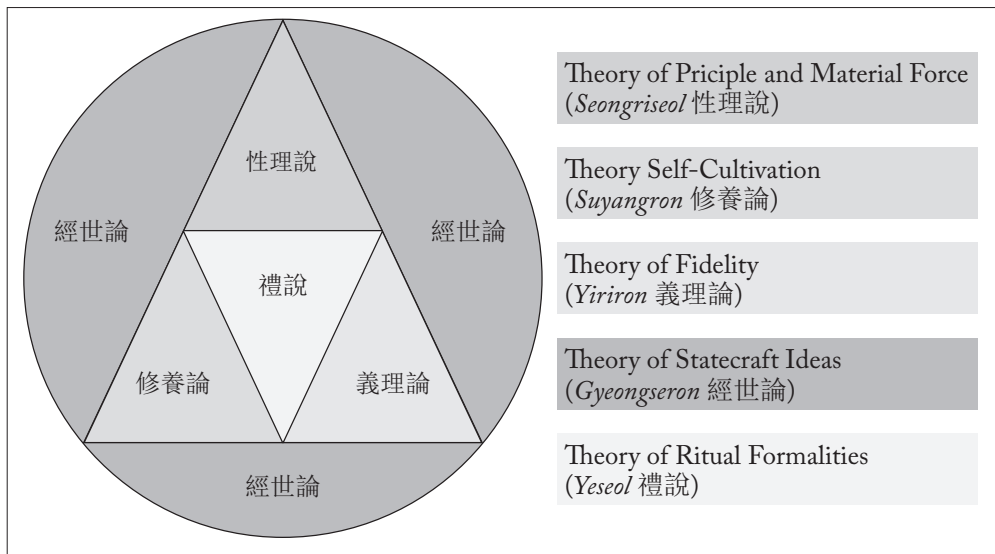


Figure 2: Theoretical foundation of Joseon Neo-Confucianism (Source: author’s own work.)

3 *Classic of Poetry* (*Sigyeong* 詩經, Chin. *Shijing*), Part *Daya* (大雅). “既醉以酒 既飽以德 君子萬年 介爾景福”.

Subsequently, it gave birth to the theory of Self-Cultivation (*Suyangron* 修養論, Chin. *Xiuyanglun*), which pursues ideal character training to reach the ultimate Noble Gentleman's status; then established the theory of Fidelity (*Yiriron* 義理論, Chin. *Yililun*), which emphasizes moral practice against injustice. Moreover, these theories functioned organically with the theory of Ritual Formalities (*Yeseol* 禮說, Chin. *Lishuo*), which constructs proper human relationships and social orders, and the theory of Statecraft Ideas (*Gyeongseron* 經世論, Chin. *Jingshilun*), deeply rooted in Demo-Centrism (*Minbonjuyi* 民本主義, Chin. *Minbenzhuyi*) in order to realize Confucian ideas as methodological indicators.

Theory of Principle and Material Force

“Neo-Confucianism” is a general term commonly applied to the revival of the various strands of Confucian philosophy during the Chinese Song dynasty (宋 960–1280 CE). Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200 CE) was by far the most well-known scholar, and is pretty representative of “mainstream” Neo-Confucian thought—the “theory of Principle and Material Force” (*Seongriseol* 性理說). There are two main theoretical foundations in the theory. The first one is “Cosmology”. It came from speculations on questions like: “What is the universe made of?”, namely, “What is the universe composed of?”, or “What are the most fundamental particles of the Universe?” Zhu Xi explained that the unique source of the whole universe is called the “Supreme Ultimate” (太極 *Taiji*). (See Fung 1976) “Cosmology” was based on the theory that the Principle (*Ri* 理, Chin. *Li*) and the Material Force (*Gi* 氣, Chin. *Qi*) were combined to drive creation and evolution of the universe. The Principle is a formless, motionless metaphysical aspect which refers to value while the Matter (Material Force) is visible and movable which homologizes the conditions in phenomena (physical aspect; fact). (Huang 1999, 131–4) Thus, from the “Cosmology” the Theory of Principle and Material Force constitutes the doctrinal foundation of Neo-Confucianism that sought to explain nature, society, and human beings.

The next foundation is the Theory of Mind and Nature (*Simseongron* 心性論, Chin. *Xinxinglun*). It is the application of *Ri* (理) and *Gi* (氣) to Human Mind. Because Heaven endows the whole universe and every part of it with its own nature, there can be harmony in the world, but only if each part acts according to its original nature. Namely, the heart of man is therefore equal to the universal order; it is a reflection of the natural patterns. Accordingly, the Human Mind (*Sim* 心, Chin. *Xin*) is consisted of the two following aspects: Nature (*Seong* 性, Chin. *Xin*) and Emotions (*Jeong* 情, Chin. *Qing*). Here, Nature (*Seong*) is to *Ri* what Emotions (*Jeong*) are to *Gi* and both of them syncretize in Human Mind.

There are two types of Nature, namely: Original/Fundamental/Metaphysical Nature (*Bonyeonjiseong* 本然之性, Chin. *Benranzhixing*) by Heaven from the beginning of the Universe, and Material/Psychophysical Nature (*Gijiljiseong* 氣質之性, Chin. *Qizhibixing*) (Huang 1999)—it already manifested, expressed, and released one. The former is regarded as perfectly good, while the latter as having had the potential of not being good. (ibid., 131–4) Here, the word Material/Psychophysical temperament (*Gijil* 氣質, Chin. *Qizi*) is the condition/bowl/container in which Nature (*Seong*) is placed. In accordance with the quality of Material Nature, the status of all things or all creation is to be decided. When the Nature is fully-perfect, it becomes to be a human being. If the Nature is leaning or imperfect, it is to be plants, animals, or inanimate things. The variations in physical endowments are due to factors beyond human control.

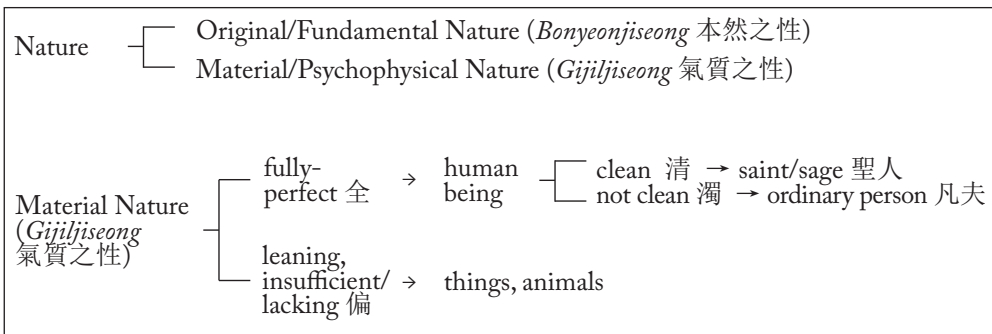


Illustration 1: Nature (性 *Seong*) (Source: author's own work)

There are two types of Nature. They are: Four Beginnings/Buddings/Germs (*Sadan* 四端, Chin. *Siduan*) and Seven Emotions/Feelings (*Chiljeong* 七情, Chin. *Qiqing*). It was Mencius who proposed the Four and the Seven, when he argued that human nature is inherently good. He saw that commiseration, shame, modesty, and moral discernment of the human mind and heart are the beginnings of the Four Virtues: Benevolence/Humanity (*In* 仁, Chin. *Ren*), Righteousness (*Yi* 義, Chin. *Yi*), Propriety/Rituals (*Ye* 禮, Chin. *Li*), and Wisdom (*Ji* 智, Chin. *Zhi*). The Seven Emotions include Joy (*Hui* 喜, Chin. *Xi*), Anger (*No* 怒, Chin. *Nu*), Sadness (*Ae* 哀, Chin. *Ai*), Fear (*Gu* 懼, Chin. *Ju*), Love (*Ae* 愛, Chin. *Ai*), Hate/Repulsion (*O* 惡, Chin. *Wu*), and Desire (*Yok* 欲, Chin. *Yu*). Yet, Mencius also considered the Four Beginnings of moral feelings to cause goodness in human nature, (Ching 1985, 304–5) but he did not clearly distinguish such moral feelings in the Four Beginnings from the general feelings in Seven Emotions.

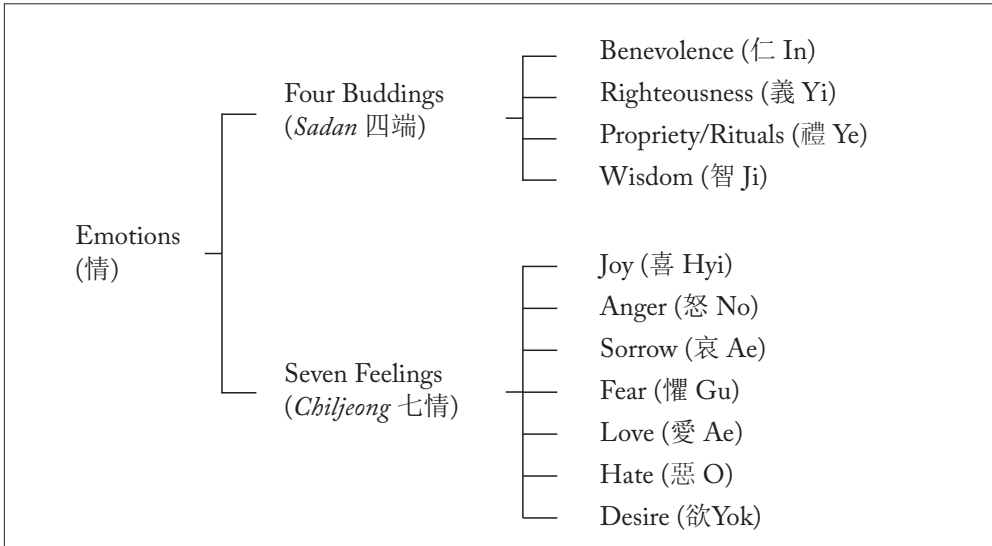


Illustration 2: *Emotions* (情 Jeong) (Source: author's own work)

It is Zhu Xi who actually tried to make a distinction between the Four and the Seven, based on his philosophy of *Ri* and *Gi*. According to him, the distinction between the Four and the Seven is clear because the Four Beginnings manifest *Ri*, while the Seven Emotions manifest *Gi*. However, he also perceives an unclear link between the Four and the Seven, as he acknowledges that the Four beginnings also belong to the realm of emotions or feelings. It was the Joseon literati themselves who elaborated and updated the Chinese version much more. The *Ri-Gi* relations, which were processed in 16th century Joseon Korea, are important theoretical grounds by which the Four-Seven debates unfolded, the outcomes of which will be discussed further.

Theory of Self-Cultivation

The theory of self-cultivation is a holistic concept that includes all kinds of human efforts to change themselves into a fulfilled being overcoming their current existential incompleteness. The ultimate object of self-cultivation in Neo-Confucianism (Zhu Xi's version) is to become a sage by training so as to reach the status of Noble Gentleman status. Zhu Xi believes morality exists a priori in the human heart. His view is closely connected to his cosmological views.

There are four ways to practise the theory. The first one is "Staying in quiet reverence (*Gyeong* 敬) to fathom the heavenly Principle"—居敬窮理 (*Geogyong*

Gungri, Chin. *Jujing Qiongi*)⁴. Self-cultivation was able to “exhaust” the naturally integrated universal order (*Gungri* 窮理, Chin. *Qiongi*), which mostly happened in the form of studying the ancient writings (e.g. Classics). *Gyeong* is the main principle of self-cultivation. It could be defined as “uniformity”, which means the substance in itself. So, “Staying in quiet Reverence” is a method of the *inner* cultivation of the mind to cultivate one’s personality. However, it contains solemn attitude which is expressed outwardly. “Fathoming heavenly Principle” is the method of *outer* self-cultivation of mind to extend knowledge by studying reasons of all things.

Second, Zhu Xi’s fundamental idea of Nature stresses the doctrine of “investigating things and perfecting knowledge (*Gyeokmul Chiji* 格物致知, Chin. *Gewu Zhizhi*)” in which he relates *Ri* to ethics through self-cultivation. *Gyeokmul* (格物) means studying deep into the root of matter, while *Chiji* (致知) is to dig into the heart of a fact to find the correct answer and knowledge. In other words, the way of “investigating things” (*Gyeokmul*) must be an introspection building on what is already “known” of the Principle (*Ri*) which leads outward to extend one’s knowledge (*Chiji*). (Gardner 2007, 8) In Zhu Xi’s view, because moral authority is inherent both in the human mind and in all other things, it is possible to investigate the Principle (*Ri*) not only in the human mind but also in the relation between the self and things.

The third is “moral cultivation and self-reflection (*Jonyang Seongchal* 存養省察 *Cunyang Shengcha*)”. *Jonyang* is preserving *one’s self*, in other words, cherishing the nourishment of mind; thus it is the previous state originating from inner mind to preserve and grow the original and natural mind given to men. *Seongchal* is examining *oneself*; these are the ways to see and correct the mind. The combination of *Jonyang* and *Seongchal* as a moral discipline requires a nourishment and cultivation of the original moral mind when the Principle is hidden and resting, before it becomes manifest and critical of the self when the Principle is moving, having gained Material Force. (Yuksel 2013, 179)

The final methodological approaches of how an ordinary person may become a saint/sage is through “cherishing the heavenly Principle (*Ri*) and denying Human Desires” (*Joncheonri Geoinyok* 存天理 去人欲, Chin. *Cuntianli Qurenju*). The nature of the heavenly Principle and the essential nature of matter can never be separated, but the former must continuously conquer the latter. Abnormal or excessive life desires are in opposition to the principles of Heaven. This is the Neo-Confucian notion of controlling human desires by the Principles of

4 Or, it is translated as “dwelling in *Gyeong*” exhausting *Ri*. Zhu, Xi. 朱子 *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (*Topically Arranged Conversation of Master Zhu*), 1986, 403–4.

Heaven, as well as preserving the principles of Heaven and removing human desires. (Yu 1992, 308–12)

Theory of Fidelity

In the book Confucius named “Spring and Autumn (*Chunchu* 春秋 Chin. *Chunqiu*)—the history of ancient Lu state” (魯 1048–256 BCE), he instituted the new sacrament of the contract of allegiance called the “Code of Honor” (*Daeyimyeongbun* 大義名分, Chin. *Dayimingfen*). This sacrament is therefore often and generally spoken of as the “Great Principle or Code of the Spring and Autumn Annals (*Chunchudaeyi* 春秋大義, Chin. *Chunqiudayi*)” and was perceived as the principle of royalty even when the state was collapsing in relation to its historical background.

Neo-Confucianism undertook a hermeneutic shift from the exegesis and annotation of textual particulars to the elucidation of a text’s “great significance” (*Daeyi* 大義, Chin. *Dayi*) or “moral principles” (*Yiri* 義理, Chin. *Yiyi*). This term has been used as the embodiment of righteousness and rational principles. The principles encompasses: 1) The theory of Rectification of Names (*Jeongmyeongron* 正名論, Chin. *Zhengminlun*)⁵—against to injustice and unrighteousness; 2) The Discourse on Revering the King (*Jonwangron* 尊王論, Chin. *Zunwanglun*) the kindhearted government (*Injeong* 仁政) and rule by virtue (*Deokchi* 德治); 3) A Sinocentric view of civilization and barbarism (*Hwairon* 華夷論 Chin. *Huáyílun*) revering Hàn China and expelling the Barbarians; and 4) The idea of Great Unification of the Nations (*Daeiltong* 大一統思想, Chin. *Dayitongsixiang*), which calls for the unification of the nations in peaceful coexistence.

Confucian Ritual Formalities

The Confucian term 禮 (*Ye*, Chin. *Li*) is described as all traditional forms that provided a standard of proper conduct. Literally, it means “rites” but it can also be used to refer to “ceremony” or “rules of conduct”. Even more, the term has come to generally be associated with “good manner” or the “upright way”.

The traditional Confucian understandings of propriety and behavior had been guided by the *Three Rites* (“Rites of Zhou” (*Jurye* 周禮, Chin. *Zhouli*), the *Book of Rites* (*Yegi* 禮記, Chin. *Liji*), and the *Book of Etiquette and Ceremony* (*Yirye*

5 He defined “Let the ruler be a ruler, the minister be a minister, the father be a father and the son be a son”. *Analects* 12: 11.

儀禮, Chin. *Yili*). However, while the first one concerns the bureaucracy and organizational theory rather than “ritual” as commonly understood, the second and the third treat all the criteria of social behaviors and ceremonial rituals. The *Book of Rites* and *the Book of Etiquette and Ceremony* are much more concrete and exhibit an effort to control people’s external behavior. In *Book of Rites*, Confucian ceremonial rituals include series of important rites such as the family rites of capping, wedding, burying, mourning, and sacrificing, the village rites of drinking, banqueting and archery, and the state rites of interchanging missions, visiting the emperor, and offering sacrifices to Heaven. Additionally, the *Book of Etiquette and Ceremony* provides the detailed descriptions of these ceremonial rites. (Fan 2012, 143)

The family rituals developed a lot during the Neo-Confucian revival. The *Family Rituals of Master Zhu* (*Jujagarye* 朱子家禮, Chin. *Zhuzijiali*) was important part of Zhu Xi’s effort to strengthen the moral fiber of Chinese society by standardizing major social rites of passage according to his reconstruction of the orthodox Confucian forms and principles. This book is a manual with running commentary of four rituals: capping and pinning (initiation), wedding, funeral, and rituals to ancestral spirits. As its ceremonial ideal, Zhu Xi’s Family Rituals presents the “foundation of decorum and eclecticism of scholarship and experience” that were presented as state principles of ancient rituals, and gives top priority to establishing a household shrine system, where ancestral tablets were enshrined and all ceremonial acts were performed. This book had been influential for a long time not only in China, but also in other countries of Confucian civilization—Japan, Korea, and Vietnam.

Theory of Statecraft Idea

Statecraft Idea (*Gyeongseron* 經世論, Chin. *Jingshilun*) is one of four main spheres of Neo-Confucianism.⁶ It includes all the political ways to solve problems in social realities and covers all the theories of management systems for the Neo-Confucian Ideal State. However, the idea was perceived as the ultimate goal from the ancient Confucian thoughts.

The classical principles of the statecraft idea were treated with serious significance. In the *Book of Documents* (*Seogyeong* 書經, Chin. *Shujing*)—one of the Five

6 They are: 1) Theory of Principle and Material Force (*Rigiron* 理氣論, Chin. *Liqilun*); 2) Theory of Mind and Nature (*Simseongron* 心性論, Chin. *Xinxinglun*); 3) Theory of Self-Cultivation (*Suyangron* 修養論, Chin. *Xiuyanglun*); and 4) Theory of Statecraft Idea (*Gyeongseron* 經世論, Chin. *Jingshilun*).

Classics of ancient Chinese literature—the sage ruler’s governing principles and models are suggested, and especially, systemized in practical assignments of nine categories in the chapter of the *Great Plan* (*Hongbeom* 洪範, Chin. *Hongfan*). Namely, being founded on the Mandate of Heaven (*Cheoxnmyeong* 天命, Chin. *Tianming*) and the Governing by virtue (*Deokchi* 德治, Chin. *Dezhi*), the book proclaims the Confucian ideal of the type and origin of statecraft presenting political assignments such as the institutions, the law, production, material goods, rituals, and astronomy in a concrete form.

Confucius also showed his willingness to establish political order in place of the chaos at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period and set up the political ideology of the Governing by virtue and the Governing by propriety (*Yechi* 禮治, Chin. *Lizhi*). In the same context, Mencius developed statecraft idea in his Righteous Kingly Way Politics (*Wangdo Jeongchi* 王道政治, Chin. *Wangdao Zhengzhi*) pursuing the realization of his political idea on the basis of public welfare and stability in economic spheres such as tax reform and the land reform.

Zhu Xi also laid stress on land reform and developed Mencius’ idea that the Well-Field System (*Jeongjeonje* 井田制, Chin. *Jingtianzhi*) was to be the foundation of benevolent governance. His ideal was the realization of a society under benevolent leadership, through which all people live comfortably with “constant minds” (恒心, Chin. *Hengxin*) by “constant production” (恒產, Chin. *Hengchan*). That was why the Great Learning (*Daehak* 大學, Chin. *Daxue*) became a classic in the statecraft learning of the Chinese emperor when Zhu Xi first presented it to the throne in the Southern Song court.

Main Issues of Joseon Neo-Confucianism

The NeoConfucian vision of the world as a moral whole, in which the scholar had the most privileged position by access to the Confucian classics, became the basis for literally all formal state systems. Moreover, Zhu Xi’s thought was the basis for Korean scientific discourse and this system of knowledge was more advanced in many fields than its rivals in the West until the 17th century. However, it is true that majority of the scholars—lost in the abstractions of too “fuzzy” discourses on “virtue” and “filial piety”—used NeoConfucian learning as a dogmatic ideology to justify their rule and to reject the modernization of the country. Furthermore, differences in the factional disputes over propriety reflected conflicting views of medieval Korea’s social systems and were to be undertaken as part of an inevitable process amid changing social systems in the late Joseon period.

Debates on “Four–Seven”

Joseon Neo-Confucianism is an upgraded version of the Chinese original. It contains much more elaborated consideration on human emotions. Neo-Confucianism, which is mainly based on the Principle and the Material Force, has difficulty maintaining the balance between *Ri* and *Gi*, for it is usually inclined toward either *Ri* or *Gi* domination. The debates are the very matter of moral judgment and ethical behavior for the Joseon Neo-Confucian scholars’ philosophical subject and was vigorously proceeded for a long time.

The theoretical instrument of the analysis was the Four Beginnings (*Sadan* 四端, Chin. *Siduān*) and the Seven Emotions (*Chiljeong* 七情, Chin. *Qiqing*). Thus, the Four–Seven Debate (*Sadan–Chiljeong*) dealing with human moral emotion as a philosophical subject includes the matter of human nature, mind, and emotion. Among the debates, the most famous ones were between Yi Hwang (李滉 1551–1570) and Ki Daeseung (奇大升 1527–1672) in 1559–1566 and between their disciples—Seong Hon (成渾 1535–1598) and Yi Yi (李珥 1537–1584) in 1872–1578.

Yi Hwang and Seong Hon are the representative scholars of the theory of the Principle’s (*Ri*) dominance (*Juriron* 主理論, Chin. *Zhulilun*). On the theory of the Principle and the Material Force (*Rigiron* 理氣論, Chin. *Ligilun*), Yi Hwang’s first thesis was the one of “Mutual Issuance of Principle and Material Force” (理氣互發 *Rigibobal*). According to him, “*Ri* is noble; *Gi* is mean” (*Rigui Gicheon* 理貴氣賤). *Ri* stands for pure virtue, because it is absolutely good virtue from the Heaven. On the other hand, *Gi* varies. It may be good or bad because of its human aspects. (Yi 1985, 416) Here, he applied his opinion on *Ri* and *Gi* to the “Theory of Mind and Nature” (*Simseongron* 心性論). Thus, the Principle is Nature, while Matter is Emotions. This scheme shows his core conception on Four Buddings and Seven Emotions.

Furthermore, Yi Hwang elaborated his conception on the Four Beginnings and Seven Emotions following four theses: (Yi 1985, 402–4)

- 1) “Four Buddings are manifested from *Ri*, therefore, purely good” (四端之發純善故無不善);
- 2) “Seven Emotions are manifested from *Gi* and, accordingly, can be either good or evil” (七情之發兼氣故有善惡);
- 3) “Four Buddings are manifested from *Ri* and *Gi*, thus passively follow it”; (四端理發而氣隨之);
- 4) “Seven Emotions are manifested from *Gi* and *Ri*, therefore, passively rides on (accompanies) it”. (七情氣發而理乘之)”.

Yi Hwang regarded both the Four Beginnings and Seven Emotions as the same “emotions”, but distinguished one from another considering their origins and functions. The scheme 3 shows his core concept on “Four–Seven” based on *Ri*’s domination (*Juriron* 主理論, Chin. *Zhulilun*).

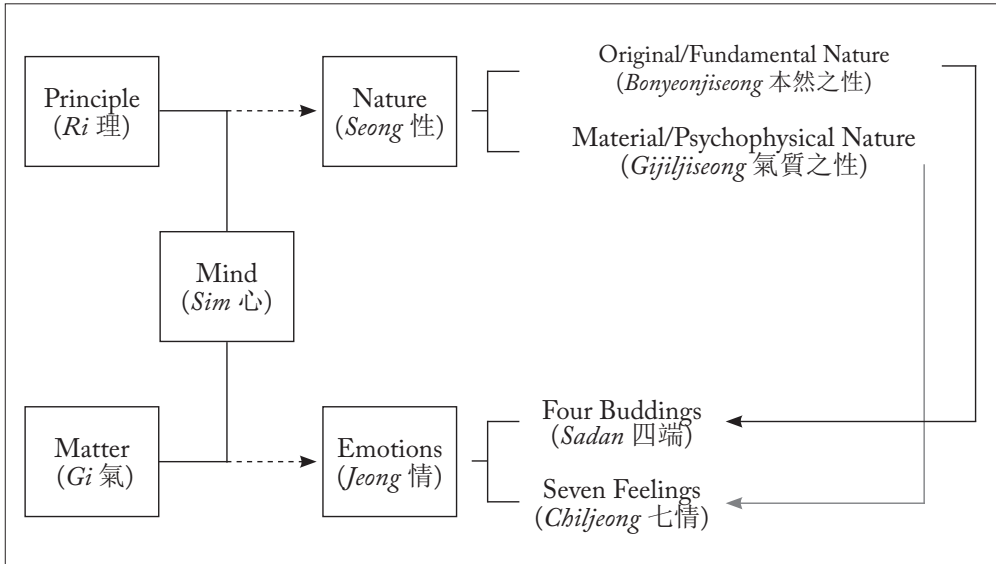


Illustration 3: Yi Hwang’s conception on *Ri*’s dominance and “Four–Seven”. (Source: author’s own work)

Whereas Yi Hwang considered the Principle to be much more important than Matter, Yi Yi stressed that both *Ri* and *Gi* are significant. He could not accept Yi Hwang’s view of the dominance of *Ri*, therefore he denied it. Yi Yi thought it meaningless to define some kind of superiority between them.

For Yi Yi, the notion that everything is dependent was considered a given fact. Yi Yi constructed the theme of “*Ri* openly penetrating in all aspects, and *Gi* being confined in space and time (*Ritongiguk* 理通氣局)”. (Yi 1988, 44: 210d–211a) In accordance with this point, his interpretation is that “when there’s one *Ri*, there’s also one *Gi*. Likewise, when *Ri* becomes divided into ten thousand parts, there are tens of thousands of *Gi*.” Because there is “Indescribably wonderful relation between and *Gi* (*Rigijimyo* 理氣之妙)” which makes them mixed in Harmony. (ibid., 10: 201–3)

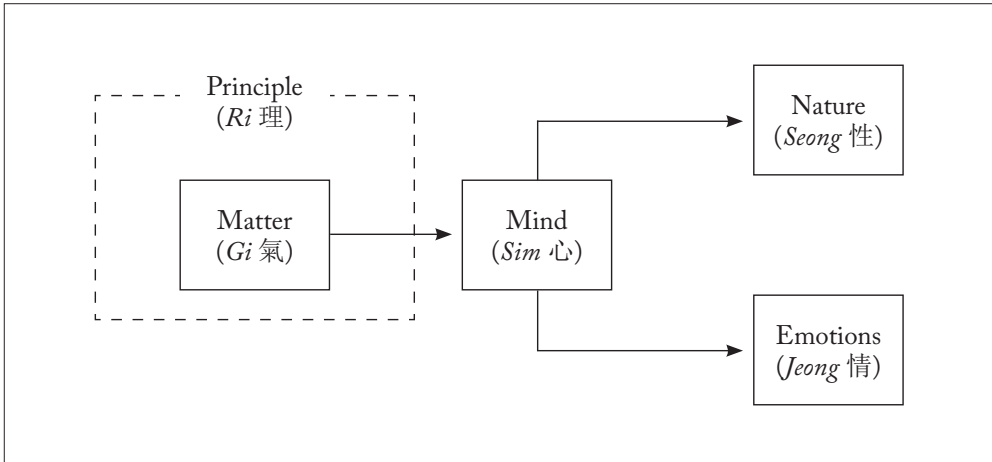


Illustration 4: Yi Yi's conception on *Gi*'s dominance. (Source: author's own work)

The Four Beginnings are all human feelings. In his view, *Ri* is just a principle. What exists in reality is *Gi*. Human nature or emotions, all of them come from *Gi*; *Ri* is the Principle which drives *Gi*. Likewise, Yi Yi transformed dualistic theory of human nature (*Ri* and *Gi*) into the monistic theory. In other words, he understood human nature as holistic and balanced ways. In that context, he elaborated on his version of “Theory of *Gi*'s Dominance (*Jugiron* 主氣論, Chin. *Zhuqilun*)”.

Yi Yi thought much of the unity that *Ri* and *Gi* are not separable. He claims that “*Ri* is non-active, and *Gi* is active; *Gi* issues and *Ri* mounts it as one does a horse (*Gibalriseung* 氣發理乘)”. (Yi 1988, 10: 26a) In other words, *Ri* as the Principle, riding on manifested *Gi*, *Ri* drives/controls it. For him, the Four Beginnings are selected good parts of the Seven Emotions and they are connoted in the Seven Emotions. Thus, Yi Yi's view on “Four–Seven” of “*Gi*'s dominance (*Jugiron*)” can be summarized as “the Four Beginnings are purely good in *Gi*; the Seven Emotions also are in *Gi* which could be either good or evil. That is why the Four Beginnings are a purely good part of Seven Emotions in *Gi*”.

7 For more details, see Han1996, 111–4.

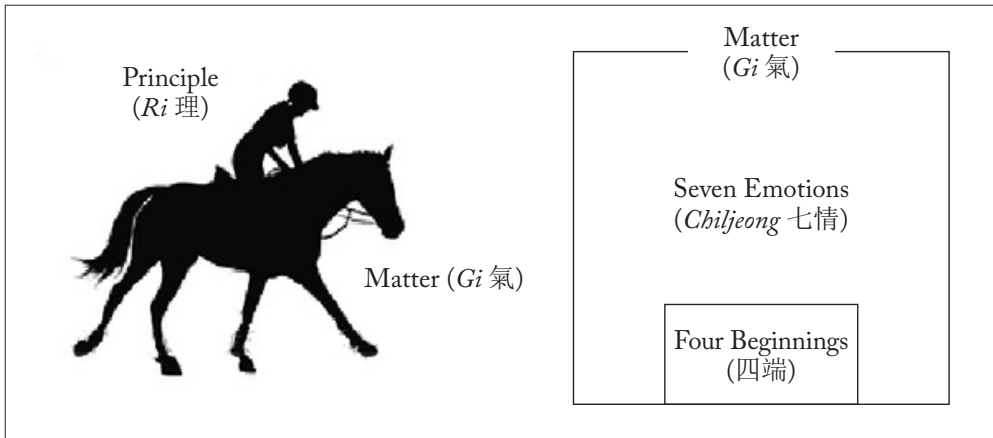


Figure 3: Yi Yi's *Gibalriseung* and *Four Beginnings*' place. (Source: author's own work)

According to Jeong Yakyong, different points of view between Yi Hwang and Yi Yi were caused by the divergence of methodological approach to the conceptualization of *Ri* and *Gi*. Yi Whang built up these concepts from the nature of human being *Inductive* while Yi Yi created them from summarization of all the creations in the world *Deductive*.⁸

The Historic Processes of Fidelity

The spirit of the Righteousness (*Yiri* 義理, Chin. *Yili*), which highly respects the Moral Code (*Gangsang* 綱常, Chin. *Gangchang*) and Fidelity (*Jeolyi* 節義, Chin. *Jieyi*), to classical Confucian principles was the core standard in the Joseon dynasty's understanding of Neo-Confucianism.

Sarim (士林) literally means "forest of scholars" or the "scholars in the rural district", namely the term implies the "literati out of state office". Such a group of Neo-Confucian scholars emerged with the establishment of the Joseon dynasty. Though a majority of the scholars had very negative attitudes toward the society of Goryeo—the former dynasty (918–1392), *Sarimpa* was fraction that rejected to serve the new dynasty and criticized the immorality of the ruling party called *Hungupa*. (勳舊派)—the Meritorious Power group—in the new dynasty.

Though they were opposite to the new Joseon dynasty, ironically Neo-Confucian state ideology highly acknowledged their loyalty to Goryeo because of their

8 For more details, see Lee 1987, 381–4.

Confucian teaching that “A loyal subject never serves two kings (忠臣不事二主)”. That was *Sarim*’s spirit of the Righteousness.

Later, such a strong belief of Righteousness was revealed again during the King Sejo’s reign (1455–1468). Apart from the major groups of *Sarim* and *Hungu* Factions, there were also some minor groups in the early Joseon dynasty. They were *Jeolyi* Faction (*Jeolyipa* 節義派). The *Sarimpa* regarded that King Sejo, who was tainted by the usurpation of his nephew’s throne, impaired the Neo-Confucian morality and righteousness and denied to serve King Sejo against the injustice of breaking legitimacy. The *Jeolyi* Faction was the group of people who committed to fidelity against King Sejo’s “unfair accession” to the throne, such as the “Six martyred ministers” (*Sayuksin* 死六臣), who had been killed by the new power group. Afterwards, the historical reputation had strongly leaned to the side of the resisters for their spirit of Fidelity. The pair of *Yi* (Righteousness 義) and *Li* (Principle 理) was a central proposition for the Korean Neo-Confucian scholars. They often clashed with the interests of the privileged strata and eventually suffered a series of literati purges (*Sabwa* 士禍).⁹

Next to the fidelity of the scholars toward the “legitimate” throne, the “Righteous Army” (*Yibyeong* 義兵), which means volunteer corps, their regard for the righteous spirit is worth mentioning. The emergence of the “Righteous Army”, led mainly by Neo-Confucian scholars, occurred over three phases in the Joseon dynasty. The first one rose up during the Japanese invasions of Korea (1592–1598). The volunteer corps were organized in the cause of justice to resist Japanese invaders and to keep Joseon dynasty with loyalty and righteousness. These volunteer corps were also organized during the long period of Japanese invasion and occupation from 1890 to 1945.¹⁰ These movements were initiated by the Neo-Confucian scholars under the slogan of “Defending Orthodoxy and Resisting Heterodoxy” (*Wijeong Cheoksa* 衛正斥邪),¹¹ but later comprised the disbanded Korean imperial guard as well as farmers forming over 60 successive righteous armies to fight for Korean self-reliance and independence.¹² It became the whole nation’s resistance against

9 There were four literati purges during the Joseon dynasty. They are: the First Literati Purge (*Muosabwa* 戊午士禍) in 1498; Second Literati Purge (*Gapjasabwa* 甲子士禍) in 1504; Third Literati Purge (*Gimyosabwa* 己卯士禍) in 1519; and Fourth Literati Purge (*Eulsasabwa* 乙巳士禍) in 1545.

10 Some Korean historians define the period in 1895–1910 as the “War of Righteous Armies Period (義兵戰爭期)”.

11 However, this theory implied the Sino-centric ideology and applied it to the social situation. In other words, this kind of view in the second half of 19th century Joseon dynasty devoted all its energies to build up *Yiriron* into social ideology. Such as it was, it was quite exclusive and easily fell into conservative closed-mindedness.

12 The most famous uprisings were: the Righteous army of *Eulmi* (*Eulmi Yibyeong* 乙未義兵) in 1895, Righteous army of *Eulsa* (*Eulsa Yibyeong* 乙巳義兵) in 1905, Righteous army of *Jeongmi* (*Jeongmi Yibyeong* 丁未義兵) in 1907 and Thirteen Province Alliance Righteous Army (*Sibsmado Changyigun* 十三道倡義軍) in 1908.

Japanese unrighteousness. Such a tradition of righteous spirit was continued in the form of a national armed struggle against Japanese imperialism during the occupation period (1910–1945).

The spirit of the Righteousness (*Yiri*) implies a somewhat different view in the frame of traditional East Asian political order. China was the center of “All Under Heaven” as a territory and capital region ruled directly by the Son of Heaven (*Cheonja* 天子, Chin. *Tianzi*; the Emperor), however this concept referred only to Han (漢 Chin. *Han*) Chinese dynasties. Neither Khitan Liao (遼; 916–1125), nor Mongolian Yuan (元 *Yuan*; 1260–1368), nor Manchurian Qing (清 *Qing*; 1636–1912) were considered as the “real” Chinese—thus Confucian—dynasties. Accordingly, during the Joseon dynasty, the Sino-centric vision of the world (*Hwairon* 華夷論) was deeply rooted among the neo-Confucian scholars.¹³ Moreover, such point of view was widely spread among Joseon scholars after the Second Manchurian (*Qing* dynasty) invasion (*Byeongjaboran* 丙子胡亂 1636–1637) in the 17th and 18th century, even though the Han Chinese Ming (明) already collapsed in 1644. They strove to sustain the identity of Joseon as the protector of genuine Confucian culture and tradition, and felt confident that Joseon was the very state that succeeded Sino-centrism: Joseon as a smaller, but the only post-Sino-centric state (*Sojunghwa* 小中華).

At the end of the Manchurian invasion, King Injo (1623–1649) was humiliated to bend his knee before Hong Taiji—the emperor of the Manchurian Qing dynasty—had to become his vassal. Before the capitulation, there were two groups of Korean officials in opposition view to each other: *Juwaharon* (pro-reconciliation 主和論) vs *Jujeonron* (anti-reconciliation 主戰論 or *Cheokwharon* 斥和論). *Juwaharon* was the utilitarian view of capitulation to reconcile for the safeguard of the nation and the people sitting down quietly after humiliation, whereas *Jujeonron* was intransigent in persistence and the king and all the officials had to fight to death. King Injo rather supported anti-reconciliation group presenting strong attitude to fight,¹⁴ but he changed his mind at the last moment because of the absolute inferiority of his military power.

13 Among modern Korean historians, the Sino-centric vision of the world often was criticized as a blind view following just the Han Chinese tradition (*Mowhasasang* 慕華思想) or submission to the stronger (*Sadaejuyi* 事大主義). However, it was the most important norm of the principle of Confucian righteousness (*Yiriron*) in traditional society, led by the Sino-centrism as well as Neo-Confucian ideology in Joseon.

14 “What I really want to keep is Great Righteousness. No matter the consequence of it—whether to succeed, to continue to exist, or to be ruined. If all of vassals and ordinary people, one and all, agree with me, there are only a few days left for you to see your country’s collapse.” (*Songjadaejeon* vol. 213, Chapter of Three anti-reconciliation gentlemen)

Kim Sangheon, one of the “three anti-reconciliation gentlemen” (*Cheokwha Sambaksa* 斥和三學士), also composed a poem in prison in Shěnyán to express his firm belief that “the matter of success or failure depends on the will of Heaven. However, I abide the issue following the Righteousness.” (Keum 2002, 137) That was the real faith of *Yirion*, whose attitude is determined by the Righteousness, regardless of any kind of success, failure, profit, or loss.

After the war, the Joseon Neo-Confucian scholars had absolutely espoused the “righteous doctrine” of “Enhancing Ming and Rejecting Qing” (*Sungmyeong Baechyeong* 崇明排清), which excludes the Qing dynasty as the “Manchurian barbarians” and respected the already ruined Ming dynasty as the only Chinese orthodoxy. Namely, the slogan of “revering China and expelling the barbarians” (*Jonjunghwa Yangijeok* 尊中華攘夷狄) was regarded as the great truth of *Yirion* in those times. Such an attitude of Confucius’s critical spirit of Great Righteousness (*Chunchuyiri* 春秋義理) was deeply recognized among the Korean Neo-Confucianists.

In that context, the Qing imperial calendar was not adopted in Joseon, though the dynasty dominated mainland China. Instead the “Sungjeong” (崇禎, Chin. *Chóngzhēn*)—that of final emperor *Yizong*’s of Ming dynasty (1368–1644)—was widely used in everyday life in all records. The reasons for the collapsed Ming dynasty being revered were: 1) that Ming was the very orthodox dynasty of Han China and to repay a debt of gratitude to Ming’s emperor Shenzong, who helped Joseon “escape a peripheral country from the crisis” (*Jaejobeonbang*, Chin. 再造藩邦) during the Japanese invasions; and—getting below the surface—2) to accentuate the faith that Joseon did not want to serve Qing, which dominated the mainland of China at that time because of the barbaric Manchurian culture. (ibid., 138)

Moreover, showing his faith on Great Righteousness, the next King Hyojong (1649–1659) was persistent with his goal of a “Northern Expedition” (*Bukbeolron* 北伐論)—the plan of Military Expedition to Qing dynasty—all the time during his reign to overcome humiliation from the Second Manchurian invasion in 1637.

The Horak Debates on Nature

Since the early 18th century, the “Horak debate (*Horaknonjaeng* 湖洛論爭)” arose in the early decades of the eighteenth century and facilitated the comprehensive understanding of Neo-Confucianism and reflected social and political situations. A *Horak* debate is a philosophical discussion transformed Chinese Neo-Confucianism into the peculiar aspect of Joseon’s Neo-Confucianism and developed it further. In the word “Horak”, “Ho” means Hoseo, which is a region below Seoul,

and “Rak” which is Seoul and its vicinity. So these are the debates between the scholars based in those two regions.

The root of the *Horak* debates can be traced back to Yi Yi. He disagreed with Yi Hwang’s “unorthodox” conferral of an independent dynamism to a pattern and developed Zhu Xi’s interdependent substance-function construction of the pattern—the psycho-physical relation of energy to the pinnacle of logical and systematic coherence. (Lee 2014, 142–3) Korean philosophers sought to be liberated from the quintessential search for tangible desires that are the inevitable plague of humankind, in achieving morality that overlaps the bounds of human nature. Yi Yi referred to the natural state of human desire as *Gi*, or *Gijil* (氣質 psychophysical conditioning) as essential energy and argued that humans are, from the outset, imbued with a morally pure essential energy.¹⁵ However, he acknowledges the reality that humans do not solely possess pure essential energy. Subsequently, he emphasized the need to constantly strive for the transformation of other various kinds of essential energy in order to restore one’s original, pure heart.

The main issue of the *Horak* debates is “Sameness-Difference of Human Nature and Material Nature (*Inmulseong Dongiron* 人物性同異論)”. Here, the material nature means everything of a non-human nature including animals. It was the matter of Nature to examine the substance of Mind (*Sim* 心). Hence, those debates were provided to define the precise concept of Nature, as well as the prerequisite for understanding the Emotions’ phenomena. However, the debates also have additional sub-issues such as the “un-awakened mind itself” (*Mibalsimche* 未發心體), which means the essential substance, and “the differences of mind between the sage and ordinary people” (*Seongbeomsim* 聖凡心).

There is a stand-point that defines debates as universal, not particular ones in Korean Neo-Confucianism. On the other hand, there is a methodological contrast. I would like to briefly present two mutually opposite views of the *Horak* debate representatives: Li Gan (1677–1727) and Han Wonjin (1682–1751).

Li Gan insisted that though the “Nature” (*Seong*) of “Supreme Ultimate” (*Taegeuk* 太極), “Mandate of Heaven” (*Cheonmyoung* 天命) and virtues may be situated at the different places, they are in accordance with each other in essence (substance). For him, the “substance of Mind before its emanation is originally good (*Simche*

15 Yi Yi’s thinking was focused on the theory of self-cultivation in Confucianism, which has the purpose of perfecting humans to a higher state. Therefore, he was less interested in whether the nature of men and animals were the same. Rather, he focused on pointing out the basic goodness of all humans through the theory of “*Ri*-through and *Gi*-within” or “Pattern pervades, psychophysical energy delimits” (Yi 1988, 3: 10.25a, 32)

Bonseonron 心體本善論)¹⁶ Thus, he stands for the position that “Nature is *Ri*” (*Seongjeukri* 性卽理). *Rakron* is to *Ri*’s dominance and deduction what *Horon* is to *Gi*’s dominance and induction. The followers of *Rakron* criticize that *Horon* falls too much into analysis and loses its consistency. As a result, *Rakron* often misses the relation between the substance and phenomenon.

“Sameness-Difference of Human nature and Material Nature”
(*Inmulseong Dongiron* 人物性同異論)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rakron</i>: Sameness • Li Gan (1677-1727) • »<i>Seong</i> (Nature) is <i>Ri</i> (Principle)« (性卽理) • → Theory of “Profitable Usage and Benefiting the People” • (<i>Yongbusaengron</i> 利用厚生論) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Horon</i>: Differences • Han Wonjin (1682-1751) • »<i>Seong</i> (Nature) is <i>Gi</i> (Matter)« (性卽氣) • → Theory of “Defending Orthodoxy and Resisting Heterodoxy” • (<i>Wijeongcheoksaron</i> 衛正斥邪論) |
|---|---|

Illustration 4: Two opposed views on the “Sameness-Difference of Human Nature and Material Nature” (Source: author’s own work)

On the contrary, Han Wonjin was on the “Difference of Human Nature and Material Nature” (*Inmulseong Sangiron* 人物性相異論) and the “substance of Mind before its emanation contains both good and evil (*Simche Yuseonakron* 心體有善惡論)”. (Kim 2009) However, he doubted “when it comes to *Ri* (Principle) how the other things could be obtained perfectly in every virtue like a human being?” That is to say, he affirmed that other things were born with partly limited *Gi*, while the human being has them perfectly in the nature of temperaments (qualified *Gi*). Thus, he stands for the position that “Nature is *Gi*” (*Seongjeulgi* 性卽氣). *Horon* saw that *Rakron* put the first consideration too much in abstraction as to be caught in an empty theory. Besides, the point of *Horon* on the issue shows affirmative view in the condition of concrete scholars and empiric objects.

Although the *Horak* discourse was the subject of debate that, at times, rendered its expression in extreme terms, the discourse does not, to a large extent, diverge from Yi Yi’s conception. This may be attributed to the broad spectrum of essential energy encompassed by Yi Yi’s proposal that various kinds of natural tendencies should be transformed so as to achieve the practice of pure morality. However, the *Horak* theory may be distinguished from Yi Yi’s in terms of the rationale it

16 For further information see Kim 2009, 151–83.

proposes for the inability to narrow the breadth of this essential energy.

In fact, these debates are historically based on the East Asian international order of those times: the collapse of the Sino-centric Ming dynasty and the reinforcement of the Manchurian Qing dynasty (which the Korean Neo-Confucianists did not want to accept, considering their view of the Qing dynasty as barbarians). Simultaneously, it is the intensification of the Mind and Nature theory (*Simseongron* 心性論) as well. Later, *Horon* became basis of the conservative exclusionist power theory “defending orthodoxy and resisting heterodoxy” (*Wijeongcheoksaron* 衛正斥邪論); and *Rakron* became the theory “north learning” which stresses “profitable usage” (*Riyong* 利用) and “benefiting the people” (*Husaeng* 厚生). The idea preceded the morality of proper virtue.

Fiery Debates and Conflicts over Ceremonial Protocol Issues

After the Japanese invasions of Korea (1592–1598) the reinforcement of Confucian ideology was introduced as one of the methods of overcoming the post bellum effects and stabilizing society. The rituals provided a social system people could relate to, and further was a cultural form that justified the discrimination of status, and was a method of education that realized social ideas. The studies on the “Confucian Rituals (*Yebak* 禮學)” began flourishing fully, so as to form “the Faction of Confucian Ritual Formalities” (*Yebakpa* 禮學派). Bibliographical study of the ritual formalities (*Yegyyeong* 禮敬) and management of the society accordingly with the norm system by its ritual practice of the Confucian ruling class and official dynasty regulations of state rituals became the most important object of *Yebak*. Accordingly, from the 17th century, various writings on systematization of “Family Rituals” (*Garye* 家禮)¹⁷ emerged. Their studies focused mainly on collecting and investigation of the ritual commentaries to find a concrete system and procedure in accordance with the “Family Rituals of Master Zhu” (*Jujagarye* 朱子家禮, Chin. *Zhuzijiali*), which were comprised of the “Four Rituals”—the Celebration of One’s Coming-of-Age; Marriage Ceremony; Funeral Rites; and Sacrificial Rituals. Under the circumstance, the “controversy of fiery debates and conflicts over ceremonial protocol issues” (*Yesong* 禮訟) were broken up for few times, which was connected with the Faction’s interests.

17 For example there were published: “Guide to Family Rituals (*Garyejipram* 家禮輯覽)”, “Preparing Funeral Rituals (*Sangryebiyo* 喪禮備要)”, “Explanation to doubtful points on Formalities (*Yiryemunhae* 疑禮問解)”, “Questions and Answers to State Rituals (*Jeonryemundab* 典禮問答)”, “Differences and Similarities in Funeral Rites of the Past and Present (*Gogeum Sangrye Idongyi* 古今喪禮異同議)”, and “Sequel to the Explanation to doubtful points on Formalities (*Yiryemunhaesok* chin. 疑禮問解續)”.

Yesong was the most significant issue in politics (under the name of Confucian order) in Joseon Korea. The most heated debate among the *Yebak* scholars was between Youngnam and Giho Schools on the issue of how the dowager Queen Jo—the former King Injo’s second wife—had to wear funeral garment according to the Confucian form of funeral when King Hyojong (1649–1659) died in 1659. This debate originated from the difference of opinion of King Hyojong’s status as the former king’s son.¹⁸

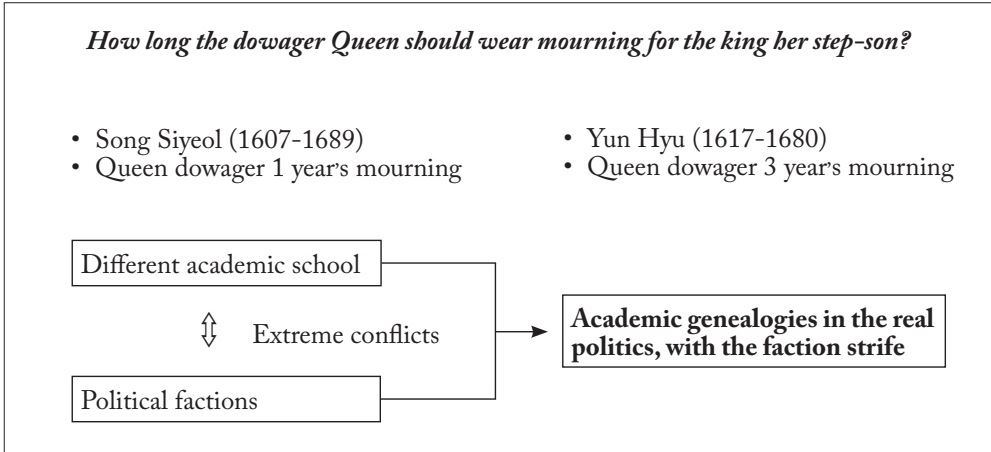


Illustration 5: *Gihae Yesong* in 1659 (Source: author’s own work)

Song Siyeol and Song Jungil of Giho School insisted that the Queen dowager should go into mourning for 1 year, while Yun Hyu and Heo Mok of Youngnam School insisted on mourning for 3 years. In consequence, the final decision was up to the style of dress during a one year period of mourning. However, this fiery debate and conflict over the ceremonial protocol was repeated as political confrontations and continued to be the struggle for political hegemony for 35 years. Though Hyojong was the second son, he ascended to the throne because of the Crown Prince Sohyeon’s death. When it comes to the succession to the throne, it

18 King Injo (1623–1649) had two sons—the princess Sohyeon and Bongrim. Their mother died in 1636 and king Injo married again in 1638. His second wife, later known as Queen Changneol, was a teenage member of the Jo family. She bore no sons. In 1645 Sohyeon, the Crown Prince, died. When King Injo died in 1649, his younger son, Prince Bongrim, later known as King Hyojong, came to the throne. His step-mother, Queen Changneol, was then 25 years old and became dowager Queen Jo (*Jodaebi*). Ten years later, when King Hyojong died, there was a question as to how long the dowager Queen should wear mourning for King Hyojong, her stepson. This conflict arose because there was no previous record about Confucian funeral requirements when somebody’s second stepson who actually succeeded the family line dies.

was always regarded that the eldest prince should be the “Proper Line of Descent” (*Jeoktong* 嫡統) in the Joseon dynasty. In other words, not every prince by blood has equal qualifications for succession. On the other hand, however, the one who already succeeded to the throne—though he was not the eldest prince—had the “Legitimate Line of Descent” (*Daetong* 大統), which was relevant to *Jeoktong*. The criterion—which of them had to adapt: whether *Daetong* comprises *Jeoktong*, or *Jeoktong* as the foundation of *Daetong*—is very significant to understand the royal authority. It is also important to define social order of the dynasty. The mission of *Yesong* in the second half of 17th century was to explain the theoretic system of *Yebak* logically as well as to raise *Yiriron* in the *Yebak* style. It is true that *Yesong* functioned as the main factor of extreme conflict and schism in real politics with the factional strife. However, *Yebak* was continuously developed, even after the *Yesong* debates in Neo-Confucian Joseon.

Statecraft Ideas

There were a lot of Statecraft (*Gyeongseron* 經世論) theorists in Joseon. Almost every Neo-Confucian scholar presented his own version of the theory. In this article, the most prominent scholars’ ideas will be announced.

Jeong Dojeon (1342–1398), who played a leading role in founding the Joseon dynasty and mapping out its ruling institutions, authored “On Mind, Material Force, and Principle” (*Simgiiripyeon* 心氣理篇) and “An Array of Critiques against Buddhism” (*Bulssi japbyeon* 佛氏雜變) to refute Buddhism and Taoism.¹⁹ In these books, he expounded Neo-Confucian theories, ranging from the cosmos to the governance of human beings and the state. He defined the most important goal of statecraft; that is Humane Governance (*Injeong* 仁政) based on Demo-centric idea (*Minbon* 民本) and Ruling by Virtue (*Deokchi* 德治). His statecraft idea was systemized into “Administrative Code of Joseon (*Joseon Gyeongukjeon* 朝鮮經國典)” and “Mirror of Governance (*Gyeongjemungam*, Chin. 經濟文鑑)”.

In the Joseon *Gyeongukjeon* (朝鮮經國典), the duties of each organ were defined in the Six Codes of Law.²⁰ He evidently clarified the Demo-centrism as

19 Jeong strongly addressed his points as follow: 1) the Buddhist ideas of samsara and karma are wrong and immoral; 2) the Buddhist theory of knowledge neglects objective principles of the phenomenal world as only an “illusion”; and 3) the Buddhist method of self-cultivation is focused too much on the “emptiness” of the mind, ignoring the family and society. See Keum 2007, 98–136.

20 They are: “Governance” (*Chijeon* 治典), “Taxation” (*Bujeon* 賦典), “Rite” (*Yejeon* 禮典), “Administration” (*Jeongjeon* 政典), “Law” (*Heonjeon* 憲典), and “Manufacturing” (*Gongjeon* 工典).

the core idea of the governing Joseon dynasty saying “... On the whole, the ruler relies on the nation, and the nation on its people. The people are the foundation of the nation, of Heaven and of the ruler...”. Furthermore, the next thesis, that “...The people are weak but cannot be threatened with might, and they are foolish but cannot be fooled by cleverness...”, represents the idea that political power over people must be under restriction. Likewise, he firmly settled the Democentric and Virtue-Governance ideas to be an essential ruling ideology saying “a ruler’s position must be maintained through Virtue, so as to gain the people’s heart”.

While the “Administrative Code of Joseon” is mainly about the governing systems with its “Governing a Nation and Relieving the Subjects” (*Gyeongse Jemin* 經世濟民), “Mirror of Governance” emphasizes the honorable attitudes and responsibilities of government officials. This writing explains the history of the premier system, the duties of the premiers, the attitude towards resigning or remaining in the function of premier, the duties of remonstrators, guard officers, provincial governors, and county chiefs in due order.

Jo Gwangjo (1482–1520) was the first scholar who returned to political reality from the *Sarim* Faction. He mentioned the king’s basic duties during the royal lectures: 1) respect the real (orthodox) Confucian studies (*Sungjeonghak* 崇正學); 2) straighten people’s minds (*Jeonginsim* 正人心); 3) pattern oneself after former wise and holy men (*Beobseonghyeon* 法聖賢); and 4) set up ideal politics (*Heungjichi* 興至治).²¹ He was of the opinion that a ruler’s mind must be under the control of scholars who are acquainted with the Neo-Confucian ideal. Thus, the Confucian gentlemen as well as the men of virtue (*Daein* 大人, Chin. *Dàrén*) are to support a ruler and a ruler must trust them to distinguish proper personnel from inferior ones to create ideal politics in which the state remains at peace with people under protection. By Jo’s own account, the realization of the ideal politics (*Jichi* 至治, Chin. *Zhizhi*) must be accomplished by gentlemen who are Confucian scholars. (Jo 1988, 22: 145–50)

Li Eonjeok’s (1491–1553) commentary on the “Nine Classic Epigrams of Doctrine of the Mean” (*Jungyong Gugyeong Yeonyi* 中庸九經衍儀) is his unfinished work of unique and extensive research on the “Doctrine of the Mean” (*Jungyong* 中庸, Chin. *Zhongyong*). Li systemized ruling principles and methods adapting the nine epigrams in chapter 20 of the “Great Learning” (*Daehak* 大學, *Daxue*)—which are the basic subjects of governing a country—into the structure of

21 Yi Yi, “道峰書院記 (The Records of Dobong Confucian Academy)” and “經筵日記 (Diary of the Royal Lectures).” In *Yulgokjeonseo: Complete Book of Yulgok’s Works*. Vol. 13, 28. 1988.

the book.²² This book has great meaning of profound study on the classical texts of Confucianism as well as the statecraft ideas of Neo-Confucianism.

Further, the “One Principle of Ten Provisions” (*Ilgang Sibmokso* 一綱十目疏) and “Eight Regulations for Advance and Cultivation” (*Jinsupalgyu* 進修八規)—memorials to the Throne—are the other writings which well show Li Eonjeok’s philosophy of statecraft. Here, the “One Principle” means a ruler’s mind—the foundation from which politics comes—and the “Ten Provisions” are concrete methods for governing a state like “strictly managing a family” (the first provision). In the second memorial, he stressed the principles of real kingcraft and these are the basic conditions for being obedient to the Heavenly Way, to make people’s mind in peace, and to cultivate the nation’s foundation.

Yi Hwang’s Statecraft ideas are expressed clearly and concisely in the “Six-Article Memorial” (*Mujinyukjoso* 戊辰六條疏), (Lee 1974, 9–39) which he addressed to the newly enthroned young King Seonjo (1567–1608). The first article says that “succession to the throne by adoption must be treated as very valuable. In this case, Humanity and Filial Duty (*Hyo* 孝, Chin. *Xiao*) must be in deep consideration.” The second, “slandering family must be forbidden and both parents by blood as well as adoptive should be respected.” Thus, the first and second article request not only that the king keep the royal family well cared for, but also that he place leadership by public conscience ahead of private interests, the balance and the unity of people and setting an example to others as the preceding condition in the rule of right. The third article says that “the learning of the monarch must be promoted to further develop the foundation of politics.” In this article, we can find the leadership of the governor’s thoughts on justice, on setting the sense of value to suit the time and history, and on cultivating emotional intelligence through governor’s internal and moral training. Further, the fourth article says that “a ruler has to be well aware of the method how to realize the moral Way (*Do* 道, Chin. *Dao*) to get to people’s minds.” In other words, perceived truth before institutional reformation and drove away heretical views confusing people’s mind, and the politics for people integration by establishing rightly people’s mind. The fifth says “to entrust state administration to ministers and to keep good communication with them”, which shows that a ruler must trust his officials and not decide arbitrarily.

22 They are: 1) self-cultivation (*Susin* 修身, Chin. *xiushen*); 2) respecting the sages (*Jonsin* 尊賢, Chin. *Zunshen*); 3) loving kinfolk (*Chinchin* 親親, Chin. *Qinqin*); 4) revering the ministers of state (*Gyeongdaesin* 敬大臣, Chin. *Jingdachen*); 5) acquiring the officials’ mind (*Chegunsin* 體群臣, Chin. *Tiqunchen*); 6) loving the people (*Jaseomin* 子庶民, Chin. *Zishumin*); 7) dealing well the craftsmen (*Raebaekgong* 來百工, Chin. *Laibaigong*); 8) winning over the hearts of men living far countryside (*Yurwonin* 柔遠人, Chin. *Rouyuanren*); and 9) stabilizing the local feudal lords (*Hoejebu* 懷諸侯, Chin. *Huaizhubou*).

This article deals with the capacity for the governor's tolerance through an open dialogue and the importance of selecting the fittest people for public duty. Finally, he pointed out that "a ruler must practice moral cultivation with sincerity and examine himself to follow Heavenly charity (*Cheonae* 天愛, Chin. *Tianai*)." In the sixth article, there was the realization of mind-loving people, keeping an eye on the abuse and corruption of governor's power, and assuming responsibility for people by the name of the authority of Heaven's decree with the harmony of the governor's power and the people's power.

Yi Hwang's political idea is to make the king as a sage. Because he believes that the innate nature of human beings is good, he stresses the cultivation of mind and morally honorable action more than external control and surveillance. It is said that Yi Whang's "Six-Article Memorial" was the condensed output of statecraft based on the "Great Learning" (*Daehak* 大學, Chin. *Daxue*) and the "Doctrine of the Mean" (*Jungyong* 中庸, Chin. *Zhongyong*). (Keum 2002, 103–4)

The late 16th century was the period when social contradictions were accumulated to claim the demand of its reform. Yi Yi stated squarely that the society had a lot of contradictions and clearly presented his idea of the "Political Reformation Project" (*Gyeongjangron* 更張論). Especially, in his memorial to King Seonjo in 1573, he insisted on reforming degenerated politics for the people's stabilization of livelihood. Accordingly, two goals of the Project were: 1) improvement of the moral fiber of government officials and 2) betterment of the people's standard of living. To realize the goals, Yi Yi paid sincere attention to two methods—both subjective and objective. (ibid. 1997, 109–10) The subjective one is the steadfast aim of completing the project and the objective is the reformation of evil practices. That means the two structures of individual self-cultivation—steadfast aim and reflection to improve temperament—and state reformation of evil practices are coincident with each other. Namely, both Individual Cultivation (*Suyangron*) and Statecraft ideas (*Gyeongseron*) seemed to be in consistency in the substance of "Nature and Principle". So, he systemized the way of correcting unrighteous ideas in the basis of his theory of *Ri* and *Gi*.

Yi Yi emphasized *Ri* as a universal standard. He said that "Nothing is more important for a ruler to enlighten *Ri* in an emergency." This standard of *Ri* in a state reality is the very official discipline which is, at the same time, the thread of life as well as the state's vital energy. Thus, everything must remain in good order in the case of tight discipline, whilst all the laws and systems become abolished in vice versa. In this context, the legislation of the discipline must be supported by the consensus of public opinion (*Gongron* 公論) and the fixed line of national policy (*Guksi* 國是). *Gongron* must have the agreement of all people so as to

not be determined by individual desire or perception. (Yi 2002, 361–72) Also, *Guksi* should be all the people's assertion, unspoken affirmation. For Yi Yi, these *Gongron* and *Guksi* should be decided not by those in power but by the people who are in charge of Neo-Confucian ideology.

Based on the “Science of Changes” (*Yeokhak* 易學, Chin. *Yixue*), Yi Yi presented the term of “timely suitability” (*Siyi* 時宜), which is the justice principle in the reality of time. He defined the *Siyi* as the “timely versatility to relieve the people with proper laws.” (Yunyeon 1995, 193–5) In other words, it does not mean that the transcendental and unchangeable principle exists, but it is more possible to relieve people in a changing reality. That is the very unity in which *Ri* and *Gi* are inseparable, and is also the principle of Statecraft (*Gyeongseron*) in which only *Gi* (not *Ri*) is emanated. Moreover, his statecraft pursuing the unity of the principle and reality leads to the ideal Individual Cultivation (*Suyangron*) of Sincerity (*Seong* 誠, Chin. *Cheng*).

Jeong Yakyong (1762–1836) was the greatest scholar in the late Joseon dynasty. Taking the representative position in *Practical Learning* (*Silbak* 實學), he was distinguished in so many fields of study, since he wrote more than 500 books and a lot of memorials to the throne. It is generally agreed that he based his statecraft studies on classical studies such as the *Four Books*²³ and *Five Classics*²⁴ (*Saseo Ogyeong* 四書五經, Chin. *Sisbu Wujing*). (see Keum 2001) Besides, it may be said that Jeong presented an original philosophy of his own by critically incorporating, synthesizing, and creatively restructuring the diverse ideological currents of the time, which included Neo-Confucianism of “Zhuzi’s Science” (*Jujabak* 朱子學), “Wáng Yángmíng’s Science” (*Yangmyeonghak* 陽明學), “North Learning” (*Bukhak* 北學), and “Evidential Research” (*Gojeunghak* 考證學). Jeong Yakyong’s theory of statecraft and his reform ideas were well compiled in his trilogy of works—the *Design for Good Government* (*Gyeongseyuppyo* 經世遺表), *Admonitions on Governing the People* (*Mokminsimseo* 牧民心書), and *Toward a New Jurisprudence* (*Heumheumsinseo* 欽欽新書) dealing with governing people.

Jeong thought that the government organization, political system, and social institutions of the Joseon dynasty in the early 19th century should be reformed at the base. In the “Design for Good Government”, which is the most representative writing of his view on *Gyeongron*, he designed the new bureaucracy organization,

23 They are: *Great Learning* (*Daebak* 大學, Chin. *Daxue*); *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Jungyong* 中庸, Chin. *Zhongyong*), *Analects* (*Noneo* 論語, Chin. *Lunyu*) and *Mencius* (*Maengja* 孟子, Chin. *Mengzi*).

24 They are: *Classic of Poetry* (*Sigyeong* 詩經, Chin. *Shijing*), *Book of Documents* (*Seogyong* 書經, Chin. *Shujing*), *Book of Rites* (*Yegyeong* 禮經, Chin. *Lijing*), *Book of Changes* (*Yeokgyeong* 易經, Chin. *Yijing*) and *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunchu* 春秋, Chin. *Chunqiu*).

which emphasized the kingly government (*Wangjeongron* 王政論) that he pursued and the approach to seek a way of managing the public authority and politics transparently. He showed two tasks in this book: (see Keum 2001, 129: 61–136) 1) the comprehensive reformation of the national system according to a new standard and 2) the utmost possible uplift of productivity in all parts of industries. The former was to get rid of long-established conventions and irrationalities. The latter was to overcome the stagnation by the ruling class' exploitations.

The core concept for realizing his statecraft ideas was presented in his *Admonitions on Governing the People* in which Jeong proposed “Six Statues of Governance” (*Yukjeon* 六典) (see Song 2009, 24: 57–81) in detail, showing his functional intent for the state's practical operation. This book is a meticulous manual for district magistrates on how to better govern people by using your heart. The first “Statute on Personnel (*Ijeon* 吏典)” refers to the appointment of upright officials, those who are out of powerful families' influence. In the second “Statute on Taxation (*Hojeon* 戶典)”, he suggested the “Communal Farming Land System (*Yeojeonje* 閭田制)” as a reformative land policy. According to the system, only those who actually cultivate the land—actually engaged in agriculture—may possess the land. This system represents his idea of the real farmers' (who are actually engaged in agriculture) exclusive ownership of farmland. In other words, he aims to abolish landowners' excessive ownership. The system is to be operated by this principle: *distribution by the amount and contribution of labor*. It may be seen something similar to the socialist ideal, but as a matter of fact, the system has more to do with Kibbutz in Israel (the combination of Zionism and socialism); thus, it might be said that it is some kind of combination of Confucianism and socialism. The third “Statute on Rites (*Yejeon* 禮典)” refers to the Rituals written for the purpose of people's edification and refining the custom. The fourth “Statue on War (*Byeongjeon* 兵典)” aims at the well-fortified Defense System and the fifth “Statue on Punishment (*Hyeongjeon* 刑典)” pursues social justice thorough strict and fair law enforcement. The last “Statue on Manufacturing (*Gongjeon* 工典)” aspires towards innovation and a popularization of technology. It is the highest possible increase in productivity of all parts of industries so as to overcome the stagnation by the ruling class' exploitations.

“Admonitions on Governing the People” emphasizes integrity (*Cheongryeom* 清廉), frugality (*Jeolyong* 節用), and love of the people (*Aemin* 愛民) as the cardinal virtues of civil servants. The virtues are meaningful and universal even to modern society.²⁵ Although this book is based on the social and political scene of the nine-

25 It is well-known that this *Admonitions on Governing the People* was late Ho Chi Minh's favorite book as to keep at hand, even in his final days.

teenth century of Joseon dynasty, the many cases of irregularity and inefficiency among local governments described by Jeong are perennial, as is the quest of a civilized state toward achieving a government that might effectively manage such aberrations. (Choi 2010)

Concluding Remarks

The Neo-Confucian spirit was the most deeply soaked, the most broadly spread among Koreans, and it provided them with ideology, norms, and a lifestyle that was most strongly functional. Meanwhile, there lie piles of extensive historical records resources, intense academic achievements, and marvelous artistic works. However, since a thought is always activated and functions through history, it is worthwhile to examine the process of how Korean Neo-Confucianism combined with historic and social conditions and, as a result, what kind of properties were formed.

There are some specific characteristics of the tradition of Joseon (Neo)-Confucian thought, compared to that of China. The Korean spiritual climate, social conditions, and the developmental aspects of national history were accordingly quite different in Korea than in China.

Firstly, whereas the Chinese Confucian thought developed toward the more cosmological, centrifugal, and outward, the Korean one was condensed rather into an anthropological, centripetal, and inward way such as the “Four-Seven” theory and Human Nature in the *Horak* debates. Such a philosophy of anthropological tradition, connected with sanctity of human life, exerted a strong influence on Korean people’s moral value, consciousness, and its practice.

Secondly, while Chinese Confucian thought had a more reasonable and practical tendency, Koreans pursued to seek religious and ethical legitimacy under the name of Confucian teaching. The inherent and endogenous elements in Koreans’ mentality made it possible to internalize (Neo-)Confucianism to the synthetic and inspiratory level of mysteriousness, beyond logical rationality.

Moreover, Chinese Confucian thought rather stressed the importance of Humanity—the Confucian gentleman’s status. On the other hand, Joseon Neo-Confucian literati put much more emphasis on Righteousness and Fidelity in a macroscale. Making dynamic links with the Neo-Confucian Joseon literati’s spirit which denies coercive power and respects right way of Confucian order, it became historically the pivotal ideology of the society.

Last but not least, the spirit of the Joseon literati’s Righteousness made the theoretic speculation on moral propriety clear, completely different from the Japanese

one, which just admires warriors' braveness for victory. It was the very spirit that faced up and struggled to resist foreign invasions. Moreover, the Neo-Confucian ethical intellectualism, rampant in Joseon society, made it possible to encourage this spirit for over five hundred years.

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Narrations and Religious Histories

Buddhism between Asia and Europe: The Concept of Mindfulness through a Historical Lens

*Tamara DITRICH**

Abstract

Since the beginning of the twentieth century mindfulness has been positioned at the core of modern Buddhism and viewed by many modern interpreters as an essential component of Buddhist doctrine and practices. More recently, the practice of mindfulness has become rapidly popularised, radically secularised and removed from its Buddhist context, employed mainly as a therapeutic tool or applied for the enhancement of well-being. This paper examines the concept of mindfulness using an historical lens, aiming to identify some of the main parameters and consequent implications involved in the changes and developments of this Buddhist contemplative method—from its early beginnings over 2,500 years ago to the present day. Special attention is given to the historical developments in the colonial period, when various Buddhist traditions encountered the main European discourses of the time, resulting in the birth of modern Buddhism. In this period, particularly in Burma, meditation was positioned at the centre of Buddhist teachings and thus provided the grounds and conditions for the subsequent popularisation and secularisation of mindfulness in the late twentieth century. Through an examination of the concept of mindfulness through history, the paper explores whether a critical awareness of historical facts provides a better understanding of the current ubiquity of mindfulness practices worldwide. In addition, mindfulness has recently become an object of scientific research and, hence, it is important to investigate it in different contexts and discourses throughout history, and understand the implications of various definitions, interpretations and applications of mindfulness for the development of modern research approaches and methodologies.

Keywords: Buddhist meditation, mindfulness, Buddhist history, modern Buddhism

Izveček

Od začetka 20. stoletja je bila čuječnost postavljena v sam center modernega budizma in je pogosto predstavljena kot bistvo budistične doktrine in prakse. V zadnjih desetletjih se čuječnost izjemno hitro širi po vsem svetu, vendar predvsem kot sekularna metoda, popolnoma izvzeta iz svojega izvirnega budističnega konteksta, ter ima terapevtsko vlogo ali pa je sredstvo za izboljšanje počutja. Prispevek raziskuje koncept čuječnosti skozi zgodovino

* Tamara, DITRICH, Research Fellow, University of Ljubljana, Nan Tien Institute and University of Sydney. t.ditrich[at]gmail.com



in poskuša identificirati glavne parametre, ki so pogojevali spremembe v konceptualizaciji in aplikacijah te starodavne budistične kontemplacijske metode – od njenih začetkov pred več kot 2500 leti pa do danes. Posebna pozornost je namenjena zgodovinskemu obdobju kolonizacije, ko so se budistične tradicije soočile s takratnimi evropskimi diskurzi, in kako je to srečanje porodilo moderni budizem. V kolonialnem obdobju, predvsem v Burmi, so se na kolonizacijo odzvali s konstruktom modernega budizma, ki je meditacijo postavil v središče budizma in tako ustvaril pogoje za njeno popularizacijo in kasnejšo sekularizacijo, ki smo ji priča od zadnje polovice 20. stoletja. Prek predstavitve zgodovinskega razvoja čuječnosti prispevek raziskuje, kako lahko kritično zavedanje zgodovinskih pogojev in okoliščin doprinese k boljšemu razumevanju dandanašnje izjemne širitve aplikacij čuječnosti po svetu. V 21. stoletju je čuječnost postala tudi predmet znanstvenih raziskav, pri čemer so se odprla številna vprašanja v zvezi z njeno konceptualizacijo, interpretacijo in aplikacijo. Prispevek ugotavlja, da lahko poznavanje konceptualizacije in vloge čuječnosti v različnih zgodovinskih kontekstih in diskurzih doprinese k razvoju pristopov in metod pri znanstvenih raziskavah.

Ključne besede: budistična meditacija, čuječnost, budistična zgodovina, moderni budizem

Introduction

The Buddhist concept of mindfulness has a long history of over 2,500 years. The earliest textual records come from ancient Indian Buddhism, where it is situated as one of the central components of Buddhist praxis, aiming at spiritual liberation. With the spread of Buddhism across the Indian subcontinent and later on in most parts of Asia, the concept and practice of mindfulness remained, though sometimes positioned at the background, integrated within the doctrinal discourses and praxes of all major Buddhist traditions. New developments in the colonial period in Asia (approximately in the period from the 1870s to the 1950s) underpinned the emergence of new foci in Buddhism, including positioning mindfulness at the forefront of the Buddhist praxis. This emphasis on mindfulness and its popularisation in the colonial period provided grounds for the consequent spread of mindfulness practice across the world, and its eventual secularisation. In contemporary secular contexts it is primarily viewed as a psycho-therapeutic method or one among the tools for promoting enhanced wellbeing, increased contentment, productivity, and enjoyment of life. In conjunction with the recent new applications of mindfulness, new interpretations have developed that view its roles and functions in radically new ways, unprecedented in the history of Buddhism. Since the late 1980s, and particularly in the last decade, research on mindfulness has been growing rapidly, as evidenced by the exponential growth of research publications (AMRA 2015).

The increasing ubiquity of mindfulness applications worldwide raises many questions, such as: what social, cultural and historical conditions and circumstances have been involved to allow and provide for this ancient Indian method of contemplation, which was presumably practised only by (relatively few) recluses, ascetics and monastics of ancient India, to become a global phenomenon, applied today in a wide spectrum of social contexts such as psychotherapy, schools, prisons, corporations, wellness industries, and even military institutions? How is mindfulness understood and interpreted in modern secular environments in comparison to its traditional positioning within the Buddhist discourse? Are there substantial differences in the conceptualisation and methods of mindfulness between the two discourses and, if so, how did they evolve? What conditions contributed to the modifications in the presentations of mindfulness to allow it to become a marketable commodity in today's global markets? Which specific cultural, historical, and social parameters have been involved in the reinterpretations of mindfulness through its history, from the ascetic practices of ancient India to its applications in the modern world?

This article discusses how an investigation of the history of mindfulness within various historical contexts may proffer some directions and insights in addressing the above questions. With this aim, the main historical periods that conditioned major shifts in understanding of mindfulness are investigated. Firstly, the paper discusses the origins of mindfulness in the context of ancient Indian history, drawing from the textual sources of the Theravāda Buddhist Canon, traditionally positioned as containing material from the fifth century BCE onwards. Secondly, the paper explores the colonial period, when the first attempts were made at building bridges between Europe and Asia; it focuses especially on the events in Burma, leading to the emergence of modern Buddhism, which established meditation, and mindfulness in particular, at its very centre, viewing it as an essential component of Buddhist doctrines and practices. Thirdly, the article discusses the postcolonial period in which modern Buddhism has become a global religion, resulting in the popularisation and later on secularisation of mindfulness. Some of the main issues involved in the process of the transplantation of a single concept such as mindfulness from ancient Indian discourses into modern European ones are identified.

Early Beginnings in Ancient India

As evidenced by textual sources, the roots of mindfulness reach far back into ancient India, in the middle of the first millennium BCE, when major Indian philosophical and religious traditions seem to have emerged. This was the so-called Axial Age, a period of cultural transformation of several ancient civilisations where diverse and

innovative religious movements occurred, sharing many commonalities among them such as the ideas of transcendence, relativity of social realities, and attempts at universalization of ethics (Bellah and Joas 2012). In that period in India, a spectrum of new ideas, religious movements, sciences and philosophies were systematically presented although most of them seem to have been, at least to some extent, a continuation, a new articulation or modification of the pre-existing religious movements.

Textual sources inform that the religious map of pre-Buddhist India included a rich spectrum of religious movements, which may be represented by two main traditions, i.e., the dominant Vedic and non-orthodox ascetic movements, with more or less continuous tension between the two, but also an encounter from which creative responses, new ideas, and movements surfaced in different historical periods (an example *par excellence* of such an integration is arguably the most popular Hindu text, the *Bhagavadgītā*). The Vedic tradition, the religion of the dominant élites, had its beginnings probably in the middle of the second millennium BCE (Witzel 1997, 263). As evidenced by textual sources, this tradition had been developing a large body of texts, commentaries, and complex practices for about thousand years before Buddhism emerged. Vedic religion was mythical and ritualistic, initially centred around sacrificial rituals and magic practices; however, it also gradually assimilated, reinterpreted and integrated many ascetic ideas and movements (Harvey 2013, 8–14). Historical information about the pre-Buddhist, non-orthodox movement (Sanskrit *śramaṇa*, Pāli *samaṇa*) is scarce; it can be inferred from Brahmanical sources but the main information is drawn from early Buddhist texts (Bronkhorst 2000, 78–127; Jaini 2001, 47–96).

Buddhism seems to have emerged together with other contemporary ascetic movements such as Jainism around the fifth century BCE. It shares major foci with other ascetic traditions, centring on the ideas of karma, rebirth, transcendence (of the human world and the entire cosmos), ascetic practices, including mental training, and the development of philosophical ideas and theoretical representations to justify particular ascetic movements (Gethin 1998, 10–11). The ascetic traditions view rebirth as undesirable, as suffering, and thus essentially question the order of the world itself: the highest goal is no longer to flourish in human life, as the Vedic tradition would aim for, but to transcend it (Taylor 2012, 335). Hence, the aim of Buddhism is transcendence, awakening (*bodhi*), a profound transformation of human consciousness, reached through ethical and meditative training, and, for the monastics, renunciation of worldly life, which means disconnecting an individual from the existing social structure.

The historical background of the beginnings of Buddhism is succinctly summarised by Obeyesekere (2012, 139): it was the time of social and economic changes in India

with the increasing expansion and power of major kingdoms such as Kosala and Magadha; the emergence of new cities; development of trade and expansion of trading routes; modifications of the social structure with the emergence of a new class of traders acting as patrons of new religious movements. All these changes would bring about disruptions and dislocations of traditional life, and at the same time allow broader communication and exchange of ideas. In this context, the pre-existing values may have been questioned and new solutions to the problems of existence proposed. Political and economic expansion would be reflected in the expansion and universalisation of concepts and ideas as exemplified by the Buddhist proposition of transcendence or the universality of *dharma* or ethics (Obeyesekere 2012, 140). Although it seems plausible that the socio-economic changes of the time allowed for more rapid expansion of new ideas and religious practices, it would be more difficult to directly link the new socio-political situation to the premises of the Buddhist discourse itself. The foundations or at least major components of the Buddhist doctrine may be identified in the pre-existing religious ideas and movements of India; for example, the universalizing of transcendence or ethics is evidenced already in the later Vedic tradition, and meditation practices are recorded in the pre-Buddhist *Upaniṣads*. Furthermore, as argued by Bronkhorst (2000), a large segment of meditation practices in Buddhism may originate from other pre-existing ascetic traditions of India. However, the particular historical circumstances in the middle of the first millennium BCE brought about the conditions for the articulation and great expansion of Buddhist ideas and practices, and formation of a systematic theoretical formulation of the early Buddhist discourse in the *Abhidhamma* literature, which is one of the important foundations for later philosophical developments. It has to be noted that Buddhist philosophical ideas and meditative praxes emerged mainly from the individuals or monastic communities that were initially situated outside the political centres, engaging only with a minority of the population.

Along with the shared context of the ascetic discourses of the time, Buddhism also provides its own, specific approaches, practices, and theoretical representations; among these, mindfulness (Pāli *sati*, Sanskrit *smṛti*) has a prominent position, having been for the first time presented, explained, and closely integrated into the entire Buddhist exegetical project. *Sati* is situated in the fundamental structure of the four truths, outlined already in the Buddha's first sermon, the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta* (Bodhi 2000, 1843–1847).¹ This *sutta* sums up the early Buddhist doctrine about suffering and liberation from it, by incorporating ethical,

1 Interpretations of mindfulness that have evolved in modern Buddhism very frequently refer back to Theravāda sources, hence this overview of the roots of mindfulness draws from the Theravāda Buddhist canon and consequently, the technical terms for mindfulness and the related concepts are given (in brackets) in Pāli.

soteriological and pragmatic aspects of the teachings (Sumedho 2003). The four truths comprise: (1) the diagnosis of the disease: the conditioned interrelated phenomena that constitute life are unsatisfactory, subject to suffering (*dukkha*); (2) the origin of the disease: suffering (*dukkha*) is caused by craving (*tanhā*) which is linked to ignorance (*avijjā*); (3) the cure: complete extinction (*nibbāna*) of craving, ignorance, and aversion; (4) the medicine as the way to perfect health: the eightfold path, comprising ethical training, meditation, and wisdom. Mindfulness is an integral part of the eightfold path, intrinsically linked to all the other components: as right mindfulness (*sammā sati*) it is central in cultivation of wholesome mental states (*kusalā dhammā*) and the arising of wisdom (*paññā*), which is presented as an understanding of the nature of all physical and mental processes and phenomena (i.e. impermanence, non-satisfactoriness, and non-self) and thus a pivotal condition for liberation from ignorance, for realisation of *nibbāna*. According to the *Abhidhamma*, mindfulness and wisdom are wholesome mental components (*kusalā dhammā*), occurring only in ethical mental states, which are presented as those free from greed, aversion, and delusion (Bodhi 1993, 85–90). To summarise, mindfulness is seen to protect the mind from reacting with desire and aversion; to condition development of an understanding as to whether mental states are wholesome or not; and, together with clear comprehension, to establish the grounds for wisdom to evolve, which, in turn, is an indispensable condition for spiritual liberation (Ditrich 2015, 3).

There are several different concepts in Pāli related to mindfulness that are often lost in linguistic and cultural translation, due to the lack of equivalent concepts and appropriate terminology in modern European languages and discourses (Gethin 2013). Mindfulness is often understood as a synonym for attention (or awareness) although the Buddhist sources clearly distinguish these two terms. The Pāli term *manasikāra*, which is usually rendered into English as “attention” or “awareness”, is described in the Buddhist sources as a mental factor (*cetasika*) that functions as the bare cognition of an object before it is recognized, identified, and conceptualized (Bodhi 1993, 81), and can be associated with ethical or non-ethical mental states. On the other hand, mindfulness (*sati*) is a mental factor, described in the *Abhidhamma* to be able to occur only with “wholesome” (*kusala*) mental states; it is often linked with wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*), i.e., attention arising together with understanding of what is wholesome and what not, and which facilitates the development of wisdom (Anālayo 2006, 58). Mindfulness as a constituent of the eightfold path, leading to liberation from suffering, is called “right mindfulness” (*sammā sati*); it is comprised of mindfulness (*sati*), freedom from desire and aversion (*vinneya abhijjhādomanassa*), clear comprehension (*sampajāna*) and diligence (*ātāpā*) (Anālayo 2006, 49).

To summarise: within the broader framework of ancient Indian religious and philosophical discourses, Buddhism seeks transcendence, achieved through the eight-fold path, encompassing marked pragmatic and ethical components. The goal of meditation practice, which includes mindfulness, is liberation from suffering, in Pāli terminology *bodhi*, frequently translated into English as “enlightenment”; however, a more appropriate translation would be “awakening”—awakening from (the nightmares of) delusions, cravings, and aversions. Mindfulness is thus a component of a larger soteriological framework of early Buddhism that emerged within ancient Indian religious discourses of the time and is implicitly related to them. As outlined above, this broader framework defines what mindfulness is and what its aims at; how it functions in the broader context of Buddhist discourse within the specific historical, social and cultural circumstances of the time; it informs how mindfulness is conceptualised and describes or prescribes the methods of practice, the processes involved, and the expected outcomes; it also provides extensive “cognitive maps”, especially in the *Abhidhamma* teachings, which are always presented through an ethical lens, and universalizes the structure of human consciousness through an analysis of its constituents and the processes involved. It has to be reiterated that mindfulness is always one component within the overall ethical and soteriological framework of Buddhist discourse, and cannot be singled out as a meditation method, leading on its own to liberation from suffering.

Colonial Period: the Birth of Modern Buddhism

The term “modern Buddhism”, coined by Lopez (2002, ix–xlili), is used as an umbrella term for a wide spectrum of doctrines, philosophies, rituals, and practices that have emerged over the last 150 years. Its beginnings are situated in the late nineteenth century, the time of new developments in Buddhism that occurred as a response to the colonisation of Asia and the consequent encounters between Buddhist traditions and European discourses of the time. Modern Buddhism was reinvented by both Westerners and Asian Buddhists, aiming to represent Buddhism as a world religion equal to Christianity, as well as a philosophical system compatible with European ideas of science and rationalism (Lopez 2002, xiii). As outlined well by McMahan (2008, 67–73), in the encounter with Christianity, particularly Protestantism in colonised Ceylon and Burma, Buddhism responded by: diminishing the traditionally central role of the Saṅgha and the increased involvement of and leadership from the laity, thus reflecting the anti-clericalism of Protestantism; positioning the early Canonical texts as the source of “true” or “original” Buddhism, while largely disregarding the living Buddhist traditions of the time; situating meditation at the very centre of Buddhism, perceiving it to be

a private, subjective, individualised practise and experience, reflecting a Protestant aim for an individual to relate directly to and experience God without priestly intermediaries.

Another significant parameter in the evolvment of modern Buddhism was the meeting of Buddhist societies with European science and rationalism, which in turn had stemmed from the ideas of the European Enlightenment, with a strong emphasis on empiricism, reason, science, individualism, universalism, freedom, rejection of religious orthodoxy—to name a few (Lopez 2002, xi–xii; Scharf 1995, 252). Consequently, modern Buddhism would reject those facets considered incompatible with science and the non-rational, such as image worship, rituals, and magical practices witnessed in the colonial period, and would instead seek to return Buddhism to its original texts, representing them as a complete philosophical and psychological system based on reason (McMahan 2008, 65–67). The representation of Buddhism as a “scientific” religion laid the ground for the interpretation of meditation as a rational enquiry and thus set the scene for scientific research of meditation, mindfulness in particular, in the past few decades, viewing it as an object of science as well as science in itself (e.g., Wallace 2007).

The colonial period was also the time of European Romanticism, which evolved as a critique of rationalisation, secularisation, and materialism, and projected spirituality and mysticism onto the East, pursuing the sacred through spiritual experiences as a form of self-expression and personal fulfilment. These facets of Romanticism played a major role in positioning meditative experience at the forefront in modern Buddhism, frequently viewing it at the very core of Buddhism (Scharf 1995). An example of Romanticism, in confluence with rationality, is the Theosophical Society, established in 1875 in New York, which was instrumental in the development of modern Buddhism: it created one of the earliest bridges between European and Buddhist religious discourses by merging an eclectic Western esotericism and mysticism with Hindu and Buddhist doctrines (Lopez 2002, xiv–xvi; Harvey 2013, 420–1). Aiming to highlight the essence of all religions and to construct a scientific universal religion, it was instrumental in what Theosophists believed to be the restoration of “original” Buddhism, an “essential core”, largely drawn from the earliest textual records in Pāli, grounded in the four truths, the doctrine of non-self, dependent origination, and a strong emphasis on meditation as the essence of Buddhist praxis. These aims are represented especially by Colonel Olcott, one of the founders of the society, in his *Buddhist Catechism* (1881), where he outlines the “essential” doctrine of Buddhism, which he proposes to be “universal” for all Buddhist traditions, largely based the Theravāda tradition of Ceylon, believed to be the most authentic version of Buddhism (McMahan 2008, 97–101; Lopez 2002, xviii).

Among the European discourses emerging during the colonial period, psychology has had one of the most significant long-term impacts on the interpretation of Buddhism and particularly meditation, by attributing new meanings to Buddhism through a psychological lens: cosmology has become psychology, gods are facets of the human mind, cosmological realms are mental states, and later on, in the postcolonial period, Zen is presented as a form of psychoanalysis (McMahan 2008, 48). Meditation, formerly a part of the complex Buddhist path, is now represented as a private psychological experience or mental event (Scharf 1995, 68). These developments have facilitated a new understanding of the aim of meditation: the traditional pursuit of freedom from rebirth in various undesirable realms and the ultimate liberation from rebirth is replaced by the aim of liberating an individual from negative, conflicting mental states (McMahan 2008, 52–57). This shift was a precondition for the emergence, in the last few decades, of clinical applications of mindfulness as a therapeutic tool, viewing it entirely in psychological terms.

Apart from the main parameters involved in the evolution of modern Buddhism outlined above, particular developments in Burma during the colonial period greatly contributed to the central positioning of meditation and its rapid expansion on a mass scale, unprecedented in the history of Buddhism. Burma was gradually colonised in the nineteenth century, over three Anglo-Burmese wars (between 1824 and 1885), with the final annexation of the entire country to the British Empire in 1885. Before annexation, the last king Mindon of upper Burma and his court responded to the colonial threat and political instability by trying to strengthen their kingdom through increased support of Buddhism with what was considered then meritorious actions such as the strong support of monasteries, protection of the Saṅgha, organisation and running of the Fifth Buddhist council in 1871, and the inscribing of the entire Pāli Canon on 729 large marble slabs in Mandalay, each shrined in a pagoda (Ahmar 1994; Bolée 1968). In this period, the Burmese educated elite around the court also encountered European modernity, and showed great interest particularly in science and technology and consequently, started to introduce innovations such as the introduction of printing press. Western science was viewed by them as complementary to Buddhism, and they endeavoured to interpret it to be compatible with Buddhism, providing additional understanding of Buddhism; they situated science within the Buddhist framework and its aims (Braun 2013, 19–28).

Following annexation into the British Empire, the Saṅgha, no longer under the patronage of the kings, turned to the lay population for support in an attempt to protect Buddhism in Burma. In this process Buddhism was reformulated, reconstituted and re-evaluated by positioning at its forefront two domains, traditionally

assigned to the monastics, i.e., the study of the textual tradition, particularly the *Abhidhamma*, and meditation, as the way of practicing Buddhism for the lay population (Braun 2013, 150–5). Although in the pre-colonial period individual monks would practise meditation, the lay population did not do so, and awakening was perceived by both monastics and the laity as a very remote possibility in distant future lives. The foci of Buddhist practice for the laity throughout Buddhist history seem to have been predominantly devotion, development of generosity and virtue and the generation of merit. In the colonial period a major shift occurred: meditation began to be practised by lay people on a massive scale in everyday life, and awakening presented an actual possibility to be attained “in this very life”, as frequently stated by Ledi Sayadaw (1999, 160; 194), one of the most influential figures in the development of modern Buddhism in Burma.

Ledi Sayadaw (1846–1923) was a very significant Buddhist scholar, a prolific writer, a charismatic speaker, and meditation master, who was instrumental in the secularisation, popularisation and expansion of meditation and mindfulness, both for the Saṅgha and the laity. He popularized the study of Buddhism, especially the *Abhidhamma*, viewing these texts as the essential foundation for meditation practice, particularly insight meditation (*vipassanā*). One of Ledi’s teachers from the pre-colonial period was U Hpo Hlaing (1830–1883), King Mindon’s minister, who was interested in European science and aimed to link it with the *Abhidhamma*. Following his teacher, Ledi Sayadaw considered science to be in agreement with Buddhism, whereas European scholars of the time viewed this relationship the other way around (Braun 2013, 32). In his endeavour to protect Buddhism, and in creative response to colonialism by drawing from and newly representing their own Buddhist heritage, Ledi and his followers turned to the lay population for the continuation of Buddhist teachings through a new emphasis on meditation which was to be informed by and embedded in the knowledge of Buddhist teachings, particularly the *Abhidhamma*. Mindfulness was newly presented by Ledi and his followers as the most appropriate method of meditation for the lay population, to be practised outside the monastic environment; he stated that a lay person who meditated could be called a monk (ibid., 122). He wrote numerous works on Buddhism in Burmese, in a language and style accessible for lay people, which became, through the use of print, extremely popular (ibid., 131).

Insight meditation (*vipassanā*) which is largely founded on the practise of mindfulness thus became in Burma, and later on in other Theravāda Buddhist countries, a primary practise of modern Buddhism. Traditionally, meditation comprises two interlinked practices, i.e. *samatha* (a practice emphasizing the development of concentration but including also mindfulness and other factors), which is usually practised first, followed by *vipassanā* (based on the development of mindfulness

and cultivation of other mental components) (Sujato 2005). The two methods are presented in early Buddhism as constituents of a larger soteriological structure, involving a variety of meditative methods, which would presumably require extensive practise. The Pāli texts also provide detailed analyses of the “types” of consciousness in conjunction with its mental factors and processes involved in the development of concentration, mindfulness, and wisdom. Modern Buddhism, with Ledi and his followers, gave pre-eminence to *vipassanā*, since the practice of *samatha* was considered too demanding for lay people, requiring lengthy practise, preferably in solitude. Mindfulness was recommended to be practiced in everyday activities, in the mundane domain (Ledi 1999, 28), while still embedded in and informed by the Buddhist teachings. Inevitably, this shift resulted in simplification of the method itself and impacted on the process of meditation itself, its outcomes, and its interpretations. The time dedicated to formal meditation was significantly shortened, and the expectations of quick results notably heightened: the possibility of awakening “in this very life”, reiterated by Ledi Sayadaw, was a few decades later translated by another influential teacher, Mahasi Sayadaw, into the possibility of experiencing the first stage of awakening (*sotāpatti*) even in a few weeks (Scharf 1995, 256).

Mindfulness is not seen by Ledi as the sole component on the Buddhist path but rather as one component though a very important one. Ledi perceived meditation as an individual pursuit; it was only his disciples who later on established meditation centres and thus, for the first time, created domains for collective lay practice (Braun 2013, 144) with far reaching impact within Burma and in the contemporary world. Ledi Sayadaw’s lineage of influential disciples included Saya Thetgyi (1893–1945), one of the first lay teachers of meditation, and his disciple U Ba Khin (1899–1971) who modified and simplified meditation methods for lay people. Further down this particular lineage was Goenka (1924–2015), who was instrumental in popularising *vipassanā* worldwide in the format of a ten-day course. Another famous teacher of the colonial period was Mahasi Sayadaw (1904–1982), who became the most popular teacher in Burma (Scharf 1995, 255); his method of mindfulness practice spread worldwide and constitutes a large component of today’s contemporary mindfulness applications in secular contexts around the globe.

Modern Buddhism in Burma adjusted, simplified and reinvented mindfulness along with popularising meditation amongst the Burmese laity; yet, it still retained its position within Buddhist discourse. However, the new foci, and especially mass meditation practice amongst the laity and the consequent simplification of the methods with the assurance of quick results prepared the grounds for further popularisation, firstly from Buddhist monastics to Buddhist lay practitioners, and

then to the new stage—i.e. the modern secular interpretations and applications of mindfulness.

Postcolonial Period: Popularisation and Secularisation of Mindfulness

In the postcolonial period, the two prominent lineages of *vipassanā* meditation from Burma, propagated by Mahasi Sayadaw and U Ba Khin respectively, gradually spread across other Theravāda Buddhist countries and, from the 1970s onward, worldwide. Meditation courses taught in the US and Europe were initially based on the Burmese methods of mindfulness practice, however, already at early stages they started to draw from and integrate other Buddhist traditions as well as non-Buddhist spiritual practices (Braun 2013, 162–4). Importantly, new interpretations of mindfulness developed that perceived it mainly as a form of awareness training, with the benefits of enhanced psychological wellbeing. The focus on liberation in this life, already articulated in colonial Burma, was taken further: it conditioned the new perception of mindfulness as a tool for self-improvement in therapeutic contexts. Consequently, suffering, which is viewed in traditional Buddhism as an intrinsic feature of birth, ageing, sickness, and death, is viewed in modern Buddhism as caused either by poverty and social injustice as interpreted in engaged Buddhism (King 2000) or, more frequently in therapeutic approaches, by personal circumstances and events in an individual's life; hence, meditation aims to improve societal life as well as personal life.

Since the 1980s, mindfulness has been increasingly applied in various forms of psychotherapy such as therapy for anxiety disorders, depression, pain management, relationship counselling, etc. Kabat-Zinn has been particularly instrumental in proliferating mindfulness in therapies with his initial program “Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction” (MBSR) in the 1970s; since then this programme and many others have been developed and expanded worldwide. The proliferation of mindfulness has been followed by rapidly growing research, indicating the benefits of mindfulness-based therapies (e.g. Eifert and Forsyth 2005) and their positive effects on the brain (Fox et al. 2014). In these new domains mindfulness is often presented as bare awareness of or attention to the present moment, without interference, in a non-judging way (Kabat-Zinn 2003, 145).² Ñāṇaponika's book *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* (1962) largely contributed to the rendition of the term mindfulness as “bare attention”, which in turn strongly influenced the consequent definitions of mindfulness, as pointed out by Gethin (2011, 267).

2 The attribute “non-judging” does not stem from Buddhist traditions; it was coined, as far as I am aware, by Kornfield (2012, 2).

Mindfulness is perceived to be a therapeutic tool for a wide spectrum of problems and disorders as well as for achieving an enhanced ability to enjoy pleasures of life (Baer 2006, 10). These presentations are significantly different from the Buddhist aim of mindfulness, which seeks freedom from desire or attachment to pleasure.

In the last two decades, the conceptualisation and application of mindfulness have been responding in new ways to new circumstances—such as global capitalist markets, consumerism, new modes of communication through the expansion of media and virtual networks—by transforming mindfulness into a marketable commodity. Secularised mindfulness applications seem to be currently developing into two different, yet closely related directions. On the one hand, it is further applied in an expanding spectrum of therapeutic contexts, specifically in various types of psychotherapy, in which it has retained one of the Buddhist aims of meditation—release from suffering. On the other hand, mindfulness is also increasingly applied in order to enhance well-being in various work environments, such as corporations or even the military, aiming to increase productivity, adaptability, and success rates, and improve work performance, leadership, and decision making—to name a few. Here mindfulness has received radically new meanings, often devoid of ethical considerations as exemplified in the military context or in the corporate world, where it can be potentially misappropriated as a means for maintaining the status quo in unacceptable work environments, aiming to maintain power and increase profits (Purser and Millilo 2015). The new aims of secularised mindfulness reflect consumerist social values such as the pursuit of increased enjoyment, self-satisfaction, self-maintenance, or personal fulfilment, in stark contrast to the understanding of mindfulness in the Buddhist paradigm, both in ancient India and in the more recent colonial period, where the pursuit of happiness and increased enjoyment are not the core aims, though they may be side effects of meditation practice. The goals of Buddhist meditation are clearly situated in ethical and soteriological domains (Ditrich 2013).

Increased applications of mindfulness have triggered, especially in the last decade, rapidly growing research, focusing mainly on the effects of its applications. Mindfulness has been researched mainly through the methodological tools of social and medical sciences, particularly psychology, applying quantitative and, less frequently, qualitative methods. A recent meta-analysis of the research of mindfulness, based on 595 scholarly studies³ (Sedlmeier et al. 2012), concludes that most studies of mindfulness have serious methodological problems because they were conducted without sufficient theoretical background in a largely atheoretical

3 Initially 595 scholarly studies were identified, but almost 75% were excluded from the overview due to methodological problems.

manner. This analysis suggests that the focus of research should be on how and why meditation works rather than on the current main preoccupation with the question of whether it works. The study recommends the development of more precise theories and measurement devices for future research, which should aim to identify the components of meditation practice from which predictions could be drawn about its effects. With this aim in mind, it may be proposed here that a systematic investigation of the extent to which current theoretical models could be informed by the Buddhist contemplative traditions from which mindfulness stems in the first place would contribute to the scientific research of mindfulness. Such an investigation may also represent an attempt to construct a bridge between the ancient Buddhist and modern scientific discourses, without appropriating either.

Conclusion

Although meditation methods have been very adaptable throughout Buddhist history, the recent extraction of mindfulness from its Buddhist roots have resulted in its unprecedented ubiquity, being increasingly perceived and used as one of the innumerable new commodities in the global spiritual and wellness markets. This paper has discussed how these radical shifts in understanding mindfulness were historically conditioned, especially through the events involved in the evolution of modern Buddhism as response to colonialism and the encounter with European modernism. As far as mindfulness is concerned, the historical changes in colonial Burma may be singled out as highly significant, particularly the new positioning of two important components of Buddhist discourse: firstly, situating meditation, and especially mindfulness, at the forefront of Buddhism; secondly and more importantly, positioning the practise of mindfulness into a secular domain through its popularisation amongst the laity on a mass scale. Thus, for the first time in Buddhist history, the majority of practitioners of mindfulness meditation were lay people, practising mindfulness in everyday worldly life; however, the practice remained strictly within traditional Buddhist discourse, to be practised in conjunction with the cultivation of virtue, generosity and the generation of merit, all building towards a transcendental aim. The shifts in colonial Burma prepared the grounds for the eventual popularisation of mindfulness worldwide in the post-colonial period, and its eventual secularisation within new discourses and domains of practice.

The new constructs of mindfulness raise dilemmas and require closer examination. As pointed out by Gethin (2011, 268–9), the removal of mindfulness from

its Buddhist context may be seen as a misrepresentation of traditional Buddhist meditation; or alternatively as the extrication of essential components of mindfulness while shedding an unnecessary traditional context; or as a modern integration of essential and useful components of Buddhist meditation with modern science. Furthermore, it may be noted that the various conceptualisations of mindfulness, the methods of its practice, and the processes involved may have immediate implications for research approaches and outcomes. Since mindfulness has become an object of scientific research, it is even more important to understand mindfulness in different historical contexts and paradigms that have implications for its definitions, methods of practice, as well as the experiences and expected outcomes from the practice itself, and, consequently, all have an impact on research methods and results. The decontextualized modern construct of mindfulness, used primarily as a tool for achieving improved well-being may limit its potential, as indicated in the Buddhist discourse, for deeper investigation of human consciousness and ethics which today's world needs to address and explore. With this in mind, examination of the evolution of the concept of mindfulness through a critical awareness of historical facts involved in its conceptualisation and praxis in different contexts may serve as a corrective to the modern, prevalently ahistorical, constructs of mindfulness.

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On the Simplest Reading of Bartol's *Alamut*

Tahereh AHMADIPOUR*

Abstract

Bartol's *Alamut* as a valuable Slovenian literary work has been exposed to several interpretations for more than 70 years. The simplest or maybe the most credulous reading of this book is the one that considers it as a history book. This reading deems that the novel literally narrates the political and social events of Iran in the 11th century, the time that the Ismailis with Hasan Sabbah as the leader ruled over Alamut Castle. In this article the novel's most important interpretations have been provided by discussing the deliberate critical essays through content analysis and historical criticism of the happenings. Then by using some important historical documents and relevant evidence, some events and persons of that time have been detected. The main aim of the article is to show that while Bartol incorporated a vast knowledge of the history of the Middle East as the core part of his novel, he also regarded his own nation and the miserable events of his own country. As a matter of fact he sent a harsh message through creating his own Hasan Sabbah, without any concern for the history.

Keywords: Bartol's *Alamut*, Hasan Sabbah, historical Criticism, Slovene literature

Izveček

Bartolov *Alamut* je pomembno slovensko delo, ki je že skoraj 70 let tema številnih interpretacij. Najpreprosteje, celo lahkoverno je to delo brati kot zgodovinsko knjigo. Takšno branje predpostavlja, da roman v resnici pripoveduje o političnih in družbenih dogodkih v Iranu 11. stoletja, v času, ko sta Esmail in Hasan Sabah vladala Alamutovemu gradu. V tem članku so poudarjene najpomembnejše interpretacije romana z diskusijo dveh premišljenih kritičnih esejev skozi analizo vsebine in zgodovinsko kritiko dogajanja. Z uporabo nekaterih pomembnih zgodovinskih dokumentov in z relevantnimi dokazi so bili odkriti nekateri dogodki in osebe tistega časa. Glavni cilj članka je pokazati, da je Bartol dobro poznal zgodovino Bližnjega vzhoda, kar je bila osnova za osrednji del tega romana, prav tako pa je upošteval svoj narod in nesrečne dogodke v lastni državi. Pravzaprav je prek svojega Hasana Sabaha podal kruto sporočilo, ne ozirajoč se na zgodovino.

Ključne besede: Bartolov *Alamut*, Hasan Sabah, zgodovinska kritika, slovenska literatura

* Tahereh AHMADIPOUR, Associate professor in sociolinguistics.
Department of Linguistics and Translation Studies,
Vali-E-Asr University, Rafsanjan, Iran.
Tahereh.ahmadipour12[at]gmail.com
ahmadipour[at]vru.ac.ir



Introduction

When I started reading *Alamut*, I did not imagine how fascinating and impressive this literary masterpiece could be. As a person from the Middle East I felt really at home with the setting, so familiar to me, so timeless, so appealing and easy to follow that it could draw me up to the end. The reader can be certain that the author has lived at least for some time in that colorful setting. The novel shares a wealth of knowledge about the Middle East from various points of view including culture, history, human psychology, religion, politics, and philosophy. This novel encouraged me to start reading and researching about some real facts about Alamut Castle and Hasan Sabbah, as well as some commentaries on the novel. Among the many materials written on Bartol's *Alamut* over the years, two reviews touched me the most. One was by Michael Biggins (2005), the other is a review essay written on Biggins' mentioned article by Miran Hladnik (2005). Both of the essays are still fresh with some sound and deliberated ideas, capable of being discussed and used to present my own comments. The two reviewers provided and argued the different interpretations of Bartol's novel. I am going to talk over the simplest interpretations of the novel referred by Biggins, namely the possibility of the relationship between the novel and history. I try to provide some answers for the following questions: How much is the novel, *Alamut*, a reflection of some historical happenings? To what extent is the main character of the novel, Hasan Sabbah, similar to the Hasan Sabbah in real world in 11th century in Alamut Castle? How Bartole used history at the service of his own purpose?

A Review on the Two Related Essays

Biggins examines the social and political situation of Slovenia in and around the time Bartol's writing *Alamut* in 1938. He mentions that when Bartol was writing the novel, to the west, "Italy's fascists regularly hounded the large ethnic Slovenian minority of the Adriatic seacoast town of Trieste" (Biggins 2005, 428), i.e. Bartol's home town. They decided to extend their territory into Slovenia and other countries. At the same time, as he worked on an early draft, barely thirty miles to the north Austeria was forcibly annexed to Nazi Germany. A little bit farther to the east in the Soviet Union, with Stalin as its leader, quite a lot of people were murdered. By depicting the picture of such circumstances, Biggins tends to prove that Bartol's writing of *Alamut* was "an escape from the mass political movements, charismatic leaders, and manipulative ideologies" (ibid., 428–31). On the other hand Hladnik cannot tolerate this comment and doesn't believe in the notion that writing *Alamut* in such a situation can be regarded as "a profound meditation",

on the disastrous happenings of the time. Hladnik gives a harsh critical attitude towards considering Bartol as a “cosmopolitan” writer and not a “nationalistic” one. He cannot accept Bartol is being characterized as “a mistake in the Slovenian genetic code”, and *Alamut* as an adventurous novel or even a mere literary masterpiece.

Biggins classified different approaches to interpret the *Alamut*. The first is regarding it “as a broadly historical if highly fictionalized account of eleventh century Iran under Seljuk rule” (Biggins 2005, 430). He deems the novel deserves to be appreciated because of “scrupulously researched historical background” and also the “general absence of historical anachronisms”. He enumerates many of the novel’s features that show Bartol to have been quite knowledgeable about the people, time, place, and all the happenings of that settings “for over a millennium”. The second interpretation of the novel in Biggins’ classifications is to view it as an allegory of totalitarian regimes between the two world wars in early twentieth century in Europe. Bartol depicts Hasan Sabbah, a dictator leader as a personality so similar to Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin. Biggins thinks that there are similarities between the happenings, personalities, and hierarchical organizations of the Ismailis that Bartol used in the novel and the ones in real life at Bartol’s time. Hladnik also finds this possible for such “allusions to Nazi political figures and events of that time”. The third interpretation that Biggins denies to accept, but which Hladnik embraces is the notion of viewing Bartol as a “nationalistic” writer. Based on this reading, *Alamut* is “a roman-e-clef”, meaning a novel with a key, about a real life, which shows a good response to totalitarianism. It seems that he dreams asking “Why not have a leader such as Hasan in all the disasters that came to the Slovenian nation from the foreign dictators of the era”. If so, what does Hasan mean for Bartol’s community, a savior of the nation or a dictator? Then both Biggins and Hladnik touch on the real-life of Bartol’s best friend Zorko, the head of a Slovenian terrorist group who was captured and accused by Italians in 1930 showing Bartol’s note in his diary: “Zorko, I will avenge you”. Hladnik disputes Biggins, deciding rather in favor of this interpretation. Hladnik claims that his interpretation is based on some other subtle commentaries such as Lino Legiša’s, who are completely familiar with Bartol’s circumstances while creating the novel. Then he discusses different readings put forward by Biggins. He analyses that if there is a lot devotion in the novel to “Hasan’s demonic rationalism and nihilism”, the “theme of evil” has always been more interesting than anything else even in “positive moralistic teaching”. He uses the lines of Bartol’s thought through his attitudes in *Al Araf*, Bartol’s other book written before *Alamut*, when he says, “he who wants to become master of his own fate should follow the dogs”. Hladnik aims to say that this is Bartol’s message to the Slovenian people begun in

Al Araf and completed in *Alamut*. The fourth interpretation proposed by Biggins, which he thinks be new, says that *Alamut* can reflect the conflict between America (which behaves cruelly) and the Islamic world, and then America receives terroristic actions as revenge. This kind of struggle between “a massive, lumbering empire” and “a small group of close woven network of self-sacrificing agents” remind us that this is a fundamental conflict that originated more than one thousand years ago. Biggins defends the position of the small group by criticizing the other side as an “arrogant, self-satisfied occupying power whose chief goal is finding ways of extracting new profits from its possessions”. Biggins still does not think that this interpretation can be so perceptive however one may find some similarity between Bartol’s 11th century and the recent political events around the world.

Obviously Biggins does not consider any of the interpretations as a favorite, because he believes each has been folded with ideologies. He turns to the view that *Alamut*, as a work of literature with the specific task, does not “conveying facts in a linear way”. On the other hand Hladnik deems literature as “a laboratory” for testing the solution of social problems in a fictional way. He tries to send the message that *Alamut* instructs solutions for an endangered community, but of course a very dangerous solution that at this time Hladnik does not recommend it as the best to remove the human beings’ dilemma.

Purpose for the Historical Approach

My contribution to these reviews is of another sort, a sort of explanation about some real persons and happenings in Alamut castle in Iran in the 11th century especially on the main character Hasan Sabbah. As Hladnik argued that “for a long time already the artistic fame of the novel *Alamut* has not depended on the novel itself, but on numerous critical, essayistic, and literary historical explanations”, then my view of the novel may possibly play a small role in discoveries of Bartol’s thoughts as reflected in the novel. Actually Biggins and Hladnik have rejected the historical interpretation to be the best reading of the novel and I am not in favor of it as well. I intend to add some information for *Alamut’s* readers to let them know how Bartol imaginatively and skillfully blends fiction and reality for his own intention.

Some time before I came across an interview with the producer the Assassin’s Creed Games, developed by Ubisoft Montreal, which has won a number of awards. She asserted that the series took inspiration from the novel *Alamut* by Bartol. She has said, “It is not just a game, but a crusade to revolutionize a genre” (CVG UK 2006). In some of the nontechnical, jotted-down reviews of *Alamut*, the novel itself has been regarded as a history book showing Islam, Iran, and

Iranian culture. Ordinary readers of *Alamut* also mostly put their attitudes “on its simplest interpretation”. Some writers also succeeded in making Hasan Sabah and his followers and their beliefs perhaps the symbol of Iran and Iranian and Islam. All these form some cliché or stereotypes about a nation and as we know Bartol through his works we can be certain that Bartol did not mean it. Bartol is an artist who does not want his “beloved” book to become the inspiration for some attitudes other than his. Here he is similar to Moulana Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī, when in the first poem of Mathnavi he says (Whinfield 1898):

Each interprets my notes in harmony with his own feelings,
But not one fathoms the secrets of my heart

A Review on Some of the Real Documents from the Real Alamut in Iran

As a matter of, fact the story of Hasan Sabbah and the Alamut Castle narrated by Bartol is such a charming one that the reader is tempted to learn how much of the story was *real historically*. It is so difficult to pull out the facts from all the fallacies during a turbulent period, but based on the different documents the Ismailis were surrounded by a powerful empire against them with some counter-ideologies even for years after their collapse. I do not have any purpose to defend or reject Hasan’s personality, ideologies and policies in that period of time because this is not my concern here. As I said I am presenting some of the documentary facts about history to the readers of *Alamut* who are eager to know in order to differentiate between the people and happenings in the novel and those in reality. One can be sure that Bartol has not created such a masterpiece to be used for purposes other than his. We know that Bartol painted with vast knowledge of the Middle East, despite being from Slovenia. And we know that he was impressed by Marco Polo’s travel book, a chapter of which narrates a story about Alamut and its events at Hasan’s time. Bartol showed that he could painted an eastern tale rooted in real life, though Biggins expected it to be a masterpiece in European literature and not a mere thesis product and as Hladnik regarded it as a highly nationalistic literary work. I want to say that the portrait of Hasan Sabbah drawn by Bartol is different from the one in 11th century Iran. Bartol deliberately created another Hasan, a gripping personality of his own because of his own goal.

Marco Polo (15 September 1254–8–9 January 1324) was an Italian merchant traveler whose travels are recorded in *Livres des merveilles du monde* (*Book of the Marvels of the World*, also known as *The Travels of Marco Polo*, c. 1300), a book that

did much to introduce Europeans to Central Asia and China. He narrates the story of Hasan Sabbah based on what he heard from natives of that region. He begins with the other name “The Old Man”, which was called in their language “Aloadin”. He narrates the story of Hashashin, Da’ian, Fedaiyan, and the artificial paradises and the rest. He narrates that “having first made them drink a certain potion which cast them into a deep sleep, and then causing them to be lifted and carried in. So when they awoke, they found themselves in the Garden (...).” (Polo 1920) Bartol was smart enough to use the story as an attractive part of his own novel, but that was not everything he needed. In the novel there is quite a lot of precise information about the real persons, places and exact times, showing that Bartol had visited reliable historical documents. But the fact is that he was not concerned of all the history because he was not a historian, he applied Marco Polo’s story, real history, his own imagination and his noble knowledge of philosophy and personalism along with literature, to make a splendid but fearful creature called Hasan Sabbah. The “laboratory of literature”, in Hladnik’s words, is the only place such an eminent god-like being could emerge.

There are several different documents and history books about Alamut and Hasan Sabbah in the 11th century because the tradition of historiography in Alamut’s time also was prevalent and kings and rulers encouraged these affairs in their courts at least for their own sake. This historiographical tradition commenced with the Sargodhast-e Sayyedna, a work describing the life and the events of the reign of Hasan Sabbah (d. 518 AH/1124 CE) as the first lord of Alamut. The castle was a mountain fortress located in the South Caspian province of Daylam near the Rudbar region in Iran, approximately 100 km (60 mi) from present-day Tehran, the capital of Iran. The name “Alamut” means “Eagle’s Nest”. The first part of Sargodhast-e Sayyedna seems to have been autobiographical. After the collapse of Alamut the book has been used by three main historiographers in Ilkhanate (1256–1353) era: This branch of the Mongol dynasty welcomed these three distinguished historians. It is important to know that all these chronicles held at the libraries of Alamut and other Nizari castles in Daylaman and Quhistan are believed to have perished in the Mongol invasions or soon afterwards, during the period of Ilkhanate ruled over Persia. However, these chronicles as well as other Nizari writings and documents were seen before destroying and were used extensively by the three Persian historians of the Ilkhanate period, namely, Juwayni (d. 681 AH/1283 CE) with his main book entitled *Ta’ rikh-i jahān-gushā*, Rashid-al-Din Fazl-Allah (d. 718 AH/1318 CE) with his history book *Jami al-Tarwarikh*, and Abul-Qasim Kashani (d. ca. 736 AH/1335 CE) with his book *Zobdat al-Tarwarikh*. Indeed, these history books remained the most important primary sources on the Nizari Ismaili state in Persia, and they provided the main sources of reference for later Persian historians,

like Hamd-Allah Mustawfi (d. after 740 AH/1339 CE) and Hafizi Abru (d. 833 AH/ 1430 CE), writing on the subject (Daftary 2007, 176–8).

As the readers of *Alamut* know, Hasan Sabbah is the most important character of the novel, related to all the other characters and happenings who assigns everything in the plot, his spirit and his thoughts have been deliberately spread all over the novel. That is why I endeavored to put forward some hints of the personality and the doctrine of two Hasans, the head of Alamut Castel and Bartol's main character. I would not like to compare these two because I wonder if they are comparable and whether they belong to the same categories or not. Therefore I simply aim to bring about some existing real documents about Hasan Sabbah, the head of Alamut in 11th century so that and intellectual reader can analyze the relationship between these two Alamuts and two Hasans.

Bartol's Hasan Sabbah

For Bartol, Hasan Sabbah is a leader with intolerable disgusting dispositions, sometimes immoral and dissolute, a big liar with different faces, a dishonest person with some false instruments such as drugs for deceiving and making a fool of his followers to improve his unique plan. Bartol draws this picture of him: To women he is unfaithful and regards them as mean creatures and exploits them (Miriam, Apama, the garden girls and his daughters). Not so strict about Islamic guidelines and regulations, he easily changes them in different situations such as drinking wine that sometimes can be permitted. To his family he is indifferent, unfeeling and more than this, cruel. He sends his daughters to work, and the way they talked about their father's feeling towards them is alarming, and also sentenced his son to death. To his friend he is jealous and also hard-hearted: we see the way he behaved to Khaje Nezam in the story as a positive character and a friend who had done everything good for Hasan but was killed by him nonetheless. To people he is oppressive; he sends the best and bravest men towards death mercilessly. To himself also he is cruel, so that at the end he is alone, a madman, just thinking about his evil plan against humanity. As far as God goes, Hasan sees himself as the center of the universe and everything is in his hand if he wants. He considers himself to be God by himself; once he said I am the savior of human beings, and once he said I want to get into God's position. One can imagine that Bartol meant to make this character incomparable even with Satan.

When Bartol's Hasan talks about his beliefs he reminds Miriam about a secret he's been carrying around for twenty years: "a long-ranged plan that I've transformed from fantasy into reality", and also

(...) Of all the warriors for the Muslim faith, *Ali* (first Imam of Shiite) was closest to my heart. Everything about him and his descendants was full of *mystery*. But the thing I found most moving was the promise that Allah would send someone from his (Ali's) line into the world as the *Mahdi*, to be the last and greatest of the prophets. (Biggins 2005, 142)

Then he says, "(...) on lonely nights I would even wonder if I weren't the awaited savior myself" (ibid.). We can see even his belief as a Shiite is from a strange sort and not the same as a real believer. It seems that Bartol intends to show that he was an adventurous character that was interested in Shiism because he thinks that it is "mysterious". And at last Bartol's Hasan sees himself to be *Mahdi*, the Savior. He from his childhood (12 years old) heard about various sects from his teacher Amireh Zarab, including the Ismaili sect and also about disputes between different sects. He says, "I decided that from then on I wouldn't worry about doctrinal disputes but (...) attainable things..." (ibid.)

Bartol's Hasan talking over his doctrine thinks that

but somewhere at the bottom of my heart I still missed those fairy tales from my earliest youth. My tenacious faith in the coming of Mahdi and the great mysterious of the prophet's succession. (...) the evidence was mounting in support of the thesis that nothing is true. (ibid.)

Then he disputes about the followers of different beliefs and religions that all of them claims that they are right and others are wrong. Then he says more and more he began to see the supreme wisdom of the Ismaili dais: "truth is unattainable to us, it doesn't exist for us. If you don't believe in anything, then everything is permitted, then follow your passion". To get these ideas he was impressed profoundly by the doctrines heard from Abu Nedjam Saradj who said the "doctrine of Ali and Mahdi is just bait for the masses of believers... and a fairy tale. Because the truth is unknowable, therefore we believe in nothing and have no limits on what we can do..." (ibid., 143). When Hasan asks about the point of deceiving people, Saradj answered "Don't you see we have become slaves of the Turks?" (ibid.) and then confessed that he uses the name Ali as a sacred name to unite the masses against the rulers. Bartol's Hasan confesses to Miriam that after getting these insights from Abu Seradj, "It was an entirely new person reawakening to life".

In creating Hasan's *plan*, as the most important plotline, Bartol puts a discussion between Omar Khayyam and Hasan when "at the moment a powerful and immutable plan was born in me" describing it as "the likes of which the world had

never seen”. The plan was “to test human blindness to its utmost limits. To use it to attain absolute power and independence from the whole world.” He thinks that now he can embody the fairy tale and turn it into such a reality that “our remotest descendants would talk about it”. He talks like a god “to conduct a great experiment on man” (Biggins 2005, 148). Yes, this is what Bartol made elegantly.

Hasan Sabbah, the Ruler of Alamut in the 11th Century

Now we turn to Hasan Sabbah, the leader of the Ismaili sect in the 11th century. He seems to be not much the same as Bartol’s version, in personality and thinking. What made Hasan Sabbah such a unique personality with a weird way of competing against his enemies? Daftary, who is an expert in Ismaili history and studies, describes the reasons of Hasan’s hostility with the Seljuks, He thinks that Hasan Sabbah seems to have had a complex set of religio-political motives for his revolt against the Seljuks. As Shii Ismaili, he could not have tolerated the ardently Sunni Seljuk Turks’ hostility towards Shi’ism and their aim to uproot the Fatimid caliphate (Daftary 1996, 34–37). He also puts forward Hasan’s nationalistic mentality as one of the possible reason for his revolt showing “the Persians’ resentment over the alien rule of the Seljuk Turks”. Hasan’s ethnic identity has given as another reason for his hostility towards Turks and Daftary thinks that Hasan took the unprecedented step of replacing Arabic with Persian as the religious language of the Ismailis of Persia (ibid., 34–37). Regarding the words and concepts of *assassins*, *hashashin* and *hashish*, Daftary (2007, 19–24) discusses in details and calls administrating hashish to the *fedayeen* (his followers), a fictional tale that “neither the Ismaili texts nor any serious contemporary Muslim sources in general attest to the actual use of hashish, with or without gardens of paradise, by the Nizaris...”. (ibid., 24)

Hasan’s doctrines have been presented in his treatise entitled *Chahar Fasl*, meaning *Four Chapters* (Shahrastani 1968 II, 195–98). In this book he presents a new teaching or preaching (*al-da’wa al-jadida*), which Daftary believes is a “reformulation of the established Shii doctrine of *ta’lim* (authoritative instruction)”. He views that the way Hasan restates the doctrine is more vigorous. In his treatise, in the first chapter, Hasan argued for the inadequacy of human reason and wisdom in knowing God and in the second chapter he describes the necessity of an authoritative teacher (*mu’allim-i sadiq*) as the spiritual guide of men, in the third and fourth chapters the idea of the necessity of having a constant and identified teacher for human beings has been provided and at last he concludes about the people who are different from each other on the notion of the necessity of having a guide

(Daftary 1990, 340–4, Shahrastani 1968, II: 195–8; Juwayni 1992, 48–52; Rashid al-Din 1959, 149–53, 105–7; Kashani 1987, 133–72, 186–90, 142–43). His doctrine of *a'lim*, emphasizing the autonomous teaching authority of each imam in his own time, became the central doctrine of the Nezaris based on Hasan's ideas (Daftary 1990, 340–4; 361–5). Shahrastani, who is Hasan Sabbah's contemporary and is completely familiar with the Ismaili sect's doctrine, described some of the beliefs of Hasan Sabbah written in *Chahar Fasl*. He says Hasan Sabbah believed that being rational or wise is not enough to understand the truth, as a result to identify and perceive God (Hagh). If people were left alone in such a situation, they go astray. Then Hasan comes to this conclusion that people need to have a teacher, *mu'allim-i sadiq* (honest teacher), who is *Imam-e- ma'soom* (innocent religious leader) from a holy origin and selected by God (Shahrastani 1968, 195–8).

About Hasan's Personality, based on the documents, mainly in the books written by three main mentioned historians in the Ilkhanate courts, Hasan Sabbah's had mystic and simple way of life and his sound behaviors were sample for his followers. It was said that he very strictly followed the Islamic regulations and guidelines and did justice to all people the same. For example he considered drinking wine a great sin, and he could not tolerate this even for his own son. He also believed in earning life through physical working, because of that most of *fedayeen* (his followers) were farmers. Also after each victory Hasan never condemned nor avenged the defeated people. Daftary writes that based on the mentioned documents, Hasan sent his wife and daughters away permanently to Girdkuh to be safe from the war, and he asked them to earn their living by spinning (1996, 34–37). Ibn-e-Athir (1885, 625), Juwayni (1992, 215), Rashid al-Din Fazlollah (1959, 133) and Kashani (1997, 168) all described Hasan's unique personality as a philosopher, astrologist, and lecturer who had the strong power of leadership and management in politics and in war affairs as well.

To be more familiar with Hasan Sabbah's personality and beliefs we take a look at some other historical documents. It makes us more aware of the political situation of that period, as we know he ruled over his own realm in the middle of a country as well as preached a doctrine different from the central kingdom called the Seljuks. There are two valid letters remained from Malekshah, the king and Hasan, the ruler of Alamut Castle, corresponded with each other in 484 HJ. Malekshah sent the letter to Hasan by Ziaadin Khaghan, his prime Vazir (minister), to threaten Hasan for having this "new nation and religion" and mentioned that "you sent some stupid persons to hit people with a knife" and then warns him if he does not put aside this misleading behavior, he will send his men to destroy *Alamut* (manuscript 2012). The way Hasan answered Malekshah is gentle and exactly different from the rough and rude voice of Malekshah but vigorous. First he

says that he welcomed the message and the messenger. He reasoned that he has not brought a new religion but it is what the Prophet Mohammad said. Then he tries to describe his situation and Khaje Nezam's hostility, "I do not have any affection for this world and its affairs", but "just I think that Prophet Mohammad's offspring have the right to be his successors as Muslim Khalife (leader and ruler)" and then he wished that the king could identify the truth and God helps them find it. In some part of the letter Hasan says that if the king does not accept his words honestly, he will be forced to do something against the king (Ravandi 1997, 196). These letters may unravel the struggle between Hasan and Malekshah and the way they regard each other and also the real attitude between Hasan and Khaje Nezam towards each other. Rashid al-Din wrote that he mostly spent his life teaching his doctrine, searching and writing books as well as handling the affairs of his realm and it has been said that he came out of his personal chamber just few times during more than his thirty years as the ruler of Alamut (1959, 133–4). About his *fedaiyeen*, Ibn-e-Athir (1885, 66) narrated in detail some real stories about brave fighting from some of them. On the other hand some of the historians, such as Juwayni (1992, 72), report that if Hasan couldn't capture a place through peace and by invitation, he tried to get it by any means such as murdering, and if the place was suitable to build a castle on it, he surely did it.

Discussion and Conclusion

We return back to the questions put forward at the beginning of the article. Hasan Sabbah (1050–1124), was a real person, a powerful religious and political leader ruled over a mountain fortress called Alamut Castle in the north part of Iran and he was against the dominant Seljuk Turks. He founded a group of *fedaiyeen* as his members. There are quite a lot historically valid documents about all the happenings of his period. But we know that Bartol's *Alamut* as a literary work drew its inspiration firstly from history, based on Polo's story about *Alamut* narrated from the local Iranian people. But this is not the only thing he borrowed from history; he also used some deliberate religious insights, beliefs, and knowledge about characters. He modified them as he intended carefully. As a matter of fact he could make different knowledge including history, philosophy, imagination, and literature to be at his own service for conveying his own nationalistic message to his people. Biggins wrote that Bartol incorporated many of his own qualities and personal interests into portraits of Hasan and the novel's other characters. Also he says he was an "avid student" of philosophy, history, mathematics, and the natural sciences (Biggins 2004, 436).

To mark the occasion of a 1957 edition of *Alamut*, Bartol talks to the book's readers in a solicitous tone. He condemns the "terrible, inhuman, despicable methods"

used by Hasan, and about the “solidarity” and “friendship” among the *fedaiyeen* and girls that “never die” (Biggins 2004, 436). He talks about Ibn-e-Taher, who at last searches for “truth”. As we get from history, Ibn-e-Tahir was murdered immediately after killing Khaje Nezam, but in the novel, for Bartol, he remains alive as a symbol of the young people of his country. And more important than all, he reveals Bartol’s aim and his feeling of writing *Alamut*. He says: “Friend! Brother! Let me ask you; is there anything that makes a person braver than friendship? Is there anything more touching than love? And is there anything more exalted than the truth?” We can see that this is Bartol’s message years after *Alamut*’s publication. His message now is different from the one in the novel. He says that he wrote the novel for “friendship”, for “love”, and for “truth”. He as an older Bartol does not like to encourage the people to behave like Hasan or *fedaiyeen* because the situation has changed now.

As Biggins considers the *Alamut* of Bartol as a work of literature with a specific task, not “conveying facts in a linear way”, I think also it is not. Biggins expects a literary work can explore universal truths about human life and he thinks that Bartol has done this so carefully that our conception through some “subtle clues” has been led to distinguish between truth and delusion. And Bartol knew this well as a literary artist too. Through such a high caliber work of art he could send his message to his nation: this kind of Hasan Sabbah, as a leader, will be lonely and unhappy at last. But Ibn-e-Tahir perhaps his symbol for the young people in his nation should seek truth and hate deception. He does not admire Hasan Sabbah in his commentary and asks the people, if they are subjected to his inhumane methods, “never to lose their most noble values”. Then at last Bartol demolished his splendid idol deliberately.

Now my last word is that Bartol did not have any concern about anywhere except for his own country and his own nation. He employs some real facts to merge them with his own favorite intentions and desires with an incredible taste of imagination to create the wonderful *Alamut*. Bartol’s novel, in Biggin’s words, is a sublime “work of literature”, but what made it sublime? Surely the deep wound and profound sorrow for his nation and his home land (from which the older Bartol in 1957 had to some extent recovered) helped this literary work to become sublime, which Hladnik’s interpreted as nationalistic feelings.

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The Role of Religion in the Life of *Zainichi* Koreans in Japan

Nataša VISOČNIK*

Abstract

Among the many elements that define people's identity is ethnicity, which refers mainly to a person's or a group's sociocultural heritage, based on characteristics such as common or shared national origin, language, religion, dietary preferences, dress and manners, and other traits that denote a common ancestry. Religious identity, especially if shared, can influence one's socioeconomic adjustment within an ethnic boundary that promotes ethnic identity, and religious faith can be a source of ethnic and even inter-ethnic solidarity. Korean immigrants in Japan established numerous mutual aid organizations, religious institutions, and self-governing bodies that aimed to promote the welfare of Korean communities, and thus work to establish the Korean identity in Japan. The religious practice of Japan's Korean minority represents Confucianism, Christianity, shamanism, and Buddhism, or even a combination of two or more of them. This paper asks whether religion worked as a strong homogenising and distinguishing factor in the case of Korean minority and how did this role change through the generations of Koreans in Japan?

Keywords: *Zainichi* Koreans, religions, folk religion, identity, representations

Izvilleček

Med elementi, ki definirajo človekovo identiteto, je tudi etničnost. Ta se nanaša na osebno ali skupinsko kulturno dediščino, ki temelji na značilnostih, kot so skupen izvor, jezik, religija, prehrana, oblačila, navade ter drugi elementi, izhajajoči iz skupnih prednikov. Religiozna identiteta, predvsem skupinska, lahko vpliva na družbenoekonomsko prilagajanje posameznika znotraj etničnih meja, ki vplivajo na etnično identiteto. Religiozno verovanje je lahko tudi vir etnične ter medetnične solidarnosti. Korejski migranti na Japonskem so ustanovili številne organizacije medsebojne pomoči, religijske institucije in samoupravne organe. Njihov cilj je doseči blaginjo korejske skupnosti, zaradi česar se trudijo na Japonskem vzpostaviti korejsko identiteto. Religijsko udejstvovanje korejske manjšine predstavljajo različna verovanja, kot so konfucianizem, krščanstvo, šamanizem, budizem, ali pa kombinacija več verovanj, npr. šamanizma in budizma. Glavno vprašanje predstavitve je, ali je religija za Korejce res faktor poenotenja in razločevanja od drugih in kako se ta vloga spreminja skozi generacije Korejcev na Japonskem.

Ključne besede: Korejci *Zainichi*, religije, ljudske religije, identiteta, predstavitve

* Nataša VISOČNIK, Assistant Professor at Department of Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. [natasa.visocnik\[at\]guest.arnes.si](mailto:natasa.visocnik[at]guest.arnes.si)



Outline

As many other minority groups living in a diaspora, the Korean minority in Japan challenges the assumption that the national state is “homogeneous”, a notion that has prevailed in Japan for many years. The case of Koreans in Japan is, however, a very complicated one and is thus a topic that many studies have been investigating from various points of view. Chapman (2006, 90) emphasizes that, since Japan has lived under an ideology of homogenised national identity, the existence of resident Koreans has been seen as a “problem” in Japanese society from most of the post-war period. The diaspora has historically struggled against legislative and social exclusion and attempts at assimilation. But these struggles have caused social change, and recognition of an ethnically diverse population, such as in recent years the notion of a “multicultural Japan”, has been gaining in recognition.

This recent research¹ has focused on the study of diversity, mutual representations, and the expression of identity of Korean minority group in Japan, which advances through the assertion of their existence and value in a foreign country, through the analysis of the problems of their non-acknowledgment, and through giving them a voice. The question of identity in general and national and ethnic identity in particular requires not just a subject’s identification with a specific space as home, but also the examination of the process of production and reproduction of such an identity. The paper focuses on the problems that the minority group of resident Koreans have with understanding, expressing, and representing their identities, while rising questions as to what it means to be “Korean” in Japan.

As the processes of identity formation always occur inside socio-political and cultural contexts, the members of minority communities are often confronted with a multitude of “others”, towards whom quite different designs of identity may be presented. Among the many elements that define people’s identity is ethnicity, which refers mainly to a person’s or a group’s sociocultural heritage, based on such characteristics as common or shared national origin, language, religion, dietary preferences, dress and manners, as well as other traits that denote a common ancestry (Kokot et al. 2004, 7). Regarding the religious faith Oleg Pakhomov (2011, 5) points out that it can even be a source of ethnic and even inter-ethnic solidarity. Religious identities, especially if shared, can influence socioeconomic adjustment within an ethnic boundary that “promotes ethnic identity and endogamy” (ibid.). Religious motivation can reproduce ethnic differences in different ways or reduce

1 The research is based on the fieldwork conducted mostly in Kyoto, but some interviews were also done in Ōsaka in 2012 and 2014. The fieldwork in 2012 was financially supported by Japan Foundation and supervised by Professor Ogura Kizo from Kyoto University.

individual anxiety and disappointments from contingent cultural or intergenerational differences.

This paper, however, deals with the role of religion in the process by which the *Zainichi* Koreans in Japan formed their identity. Korean immigrants in Japan established numerous mutual aid organizations, religious institutions, and self-governing bodies that aimed to promote the welfare of Korean communities, and thus work to establish the Korean identity in Japan (Hardacre 1986, 31). The minority has developed unique practices in Japan, but the questions this paper poses include whether this religion worked as a strong homogenising factor among *Zainichi* Koreans and a factor that distinguished them from the Japanese, like it may have worked for some other ethnic group around the world, and how this role is changing through the generations of Koreans in Japan.

Koreans in Japan

Koreans constitute the largest “foreign”² community permanently residing in Japan. Slightly more than 40 percent of all registered foreigners in Japan are Koreans. This number includes both *Zainichi* Koreans and recent newcomers from South Korea. Despite their similarities in physical appearance and considerable acculturation to mainstream Japanese society, Koreans in Japan have been discriminated against by both the Japanese state and Japanese society. *Zainichi* Koreans, those who came to Japan during Japan’s occupational period over Korea and their descendants, are classified into two groups: North Koreans and South Koreans. *Zainichi* Koreans are also customarily distinguished from newcomers by either Japanese society or the Japanese state (Kokot et al. 2004, 7; see also Chapman 2006; Ryang 2005).

They mostly carry Korean citizenship, as Japan is a *jus sanguinis* (law of the blood) rather than a *jus soli* (law of the sun) state, which means one must have at least one parent of Japanese nationality to claim citizenship. It is possible to naturalize, but although naturalization requirements are eased for *Zainichi* Koreans, it can still be a complex, bureaucratic process, in which one must usually change Korean names into Japanese ones. In addition, because Japan does not recognize dual citizenship, a prospective naturalized citizen must also renounce their Korean citizenship (see

2 According to statistics from the Ministry of Justice, there were 497,707 Koreans in Japan in 2015. This figure does not include those who have adopted Japanese citizenship, which might be around 268,399 according to the figures from 2005. Added to this number should also be long-term visitors (66,291), and Korean students in Japan (15,718) who make up 848,115 in total (Ministry of Justice 2015).

Brown 2015). In Japan, Zainichi Koreans have a “Special Permanent Resident” status under which they enjoy access to the Japanese social welfare, pension, and health insurance systems. However, they do not have the right to vote, and there are some pension and social welfare clauses which do not apply to them.

The literal meaning of Zainichi is “staying in Japan temporarily”³. Although they have been living in Japan since the Japanese Occupation of Korea in 1910 or later, they are still called “temporary” residents. This term reflects the desire of many Koreans to someday return to their mother country—especially after World War II, when the Allied Powers defeated Japan, liberated Koreans in Japan had a strong desire to go back to Korea. However, those ambitions faded over time. Zainichi Koreans, now in their fourth generation, are permanent residents of Japan, and many of them no longer have a desire to go back. Despite this, the term has survived, reflecting the reality of institutional discrimination by the Japanese state and Japanese society (Kokot et al. 2004, 7; see more in Višočník 2003).

As mentioned, there are two main political separations, regarding their affiliation with either South or North Korea, and thus two⁴ political advocacy organizations with which Zainichi Koreans become involved: Mindan⁵ and Chongryon⁶. Mindan, established in 1946, is generally considered to be pro-South Korea, while Chongryon, established in 1955, maintains ties to North Korea (Ryang 2005) and claims to follow the North Korean *juče* ideology⁷. About 65 percent of Zainichi

3 The term *Zainichi* (在日) emphasizes place of residence rather than bloodline. Since the late 1970s, the younger generation has used the term to emphasize their different approach to living in Japan to that of the first generation Zainichi. This term also avoids the inclusion of nationality as a defining element in identifying this community (Chapman 2008, 4–5; Inadsugi 2002, 559–62).

4 There is also a third group that is more oriented towards the practical needs of the community called *Mintören* (民闘連), which is not divided between the two Koreas. It is not a formalized organization but holds annual conferences and mobilizes support and contributions wherever and whenever issues present themselves (Hicks 1998, 22).

5 An abbreviation of the Japanese name *Zai-Nippon Daikan Minkoku Kyoryūmindan* (在日本大韓民国居留民団).

6 In Japanese it is called *Soren* (総聯), an abbreviation of *Zai-Nippon Chosenjin Sorengokai* (在日本朝鮮人総聯合会) (Hicks 1998, 22), which translates as General Association of Korean Residents in Japan.

7 The political philosophy known as *juče* became the official autarkic state ideology of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) in 1972. Although foreign scholars often describe *juče* as “self-reliance”, the true meaning of the term is much more nuanced. Kim Il Sung explained that it means to be the “master of revolution and reconstruction in one’s own country. This means holding fast to an independent position, rejecting dependence on others, using one’s own brains, believing in one’s own strength, displaying the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance, and thus solving one’s own problems for oneself on one’s own responsibility under all circumstances” (Lee 2003). The idea of *Juche*, also known “Kimilsungism” after Kim Il-sung, is the religious, political, social and economic ideology of North Korea (North Korean Christianity; see also Clark 2000, 56–9).

Koreans are affiliated with Mindan, while 25 percent are associated with Chongryon. In general, Chongryon has been the more pointedly nationalistic of the two organizations, encouraging Zainichi Koreans to maintain their Korean identities and eschew assimilation into Japanese society. Mindan, on the other hand, has been quite active in the movement supporting suffrage for Zainichi Koreans, but both organizations promote Korean culture and advocate for economic opportunities for Zainichi Koreans (Brown 2015, 256).

Beside the conflicting allegiance to the two Koreas, for most Zainichi their sense of self is characterized by numerous conflicting and contesting notions of identity. These are chiefly discussed in diametrical opposing opinions (Chapman 2008, 5); the different sense of one's place and time in Japan (temporary versus permanent), intergenerational tensions and discrimination by Japanese state-controlled institutions that have spanned decades. These all indicate the great complexity of life for many of the Zainichi population living in Japan.

The younger generations do not necessarily feel that the Korean peninsula is their homeland any longer; that their permanent residence in Japan has become an undeniable fact. Since the early 1980s they have displayed more affirmative views of their own hybridity, and a search for a third way "looking neither toward naturalization, which would require them to abandon their ethnicity, nor toward returning to a divided or even unified homeland" (Iwabuchi 2005, 68).

Here we will discuss the religious affiliation of the group that is pro-South Korea, although a certain number of pro-North Korean people practice one or a combination of religions.

The Role of the Religion in Identity Formation of Minority Groups

Any research into identity and diaspora must therefore take into account a great variety and heterogeneity of identities at any given point in time, among which "diaspora⁸ identity"⁹ is only one, although a formative, part. Kokot et al. (2004, 6–7) continue that, in the context of diaspora, religion has always remained central to paradigmatic definitions. A focus on both sides of diasporic practice is bringing the meaning of religion to the fore, discussing the meaning of religion

8 In past decades, the meaning of the term "diaspora" has been extended from long-established diasporas like the Jewish, Armenian, or Greek experience, towards a host of new and more contested areas of reference.

9 The "essences" of identity are seen by many anthropologists merely as the content of an ongoing process of boundary construction, being constantly re-invented and shifted according to the requirements of the situation (Kokot et al. 2004, 4).

both as a factor in forming diasporic social organization, as well as in shaping and maintaining diasporic identities. As these studies point out, an interest in religious identification and practice can be observed in various social and cultural contexts, challenging the emphasis on the vanishing of religion in modernists' discourses.

Dru C. Gladney (2008, 8) argues out that "religion may define majorityness as often as other naturalized categories such as culture, race, ethnicity, locality, and language". He points out that, according to Keyes, Kendall, and Hardacre religion, such as state Shintoism in Japan and Islam in Southeast Asia, plays an important role in defining who is included in or excluded from certain configurations of power and authority. Religion may be the main factor determining one's political or national affiliation (Hindu/Muslim in India, Protestant/Catholic in Ireland, and Malay Muslim/Chinese in Malaysia, respectively) (*ibid.*).

With a provisional definition of religion it can be said that "it is a system of belief capable of organizing the life-words of entire social groups" (Pace 2005, 133), which also means that it gives meaning to social and individual action with adhering to norms, it can also create places where social ties, networks and representation are facilitated, and it can establish a principle of authority and power. When a religion can function as a belief system, it may become a medium of communication (*ibid.*) and also a source of ethnic and even inter-ethnic solidarity (Kokot et al. 2004, 7). This means that it is capable of reducing the complexity of the social environment and thus creates religious identity, and, especially if shared, can influence one's socioeconomic adjustment within an ethnic boundary that "promotes ethnic identity and endogamy" (Pakhomov 2011, 5). In the process of social de-contextualization, which means that the new environment is much more complex and differentiated than the previous one (Pace 2005, 114), religious motivation can besides creating ethnic differences, reduce individual anxiety and disappointments from contingent cultural or intergenerational differences (Kokot et al. 2004, 7).

Being in a diaspora environment can cause a tension between an original religious belief that immigrants bring with them and the new social environment. These tensions can be solved in different ways as Enzo Pace shows: the diaspora model (maintain group's own specificity), politicization of belief (re-create the community lifestyle and transform the group cohesion), compromise model (yield some influence from the hosting society), and individualization of belief (process of secularization, individual choice) (Pace 2005, 115). These factors depend on the crossing of adhesion to the principle of authority on which a religious system is based and the amount of freedom of religious expression in a new country on one hand, and the adaptation process to the new social environment on the other.

While these processes can be easily detected if the migrant group has a single religious belief, in the case of Zainichi Koreans we can find not just one, but at least two of them, as will be shown later.

The Religions of *Zainichi* Koreans in Japan

There are many world religions and native beliefs in Korea, but there is no severe conflict among them.¹⁰ Some of them are established religions such as Buddhism (25%), Confucianism (2%), and Christianity (25%); newly rising religions include the Unification Church and several other denominations that have derived from Christianity, varieties of Buddhism, and the Korean Religion of the Heavenly Way (Ch'ondokyo), and there are also popular religions like shamanism. The same can be said for the religious activity of the Korean residents of Japan, who combine several revivals of traditional beliefs (with some unique changes) and an assimilation of Japanese religions. In Zainichi Korean society we can find Shamanism, Confucianism, Korean Buddhism, Zainichi Christian Church Associations, and also various Japanese religions including folk religion, Buddhism, Shintoism, and new religions (Iida 2002, 35).

Iida Takafumi (2002, 58) continues that the religion in Japan-resident Korean society is a complex fusion of interrelated facets. Furthermore, among the Japan-resident Koreans there is a considerable difference between the religious faith and practice of the “oldcomers” (the Koreans who came to Japan before World War II and their succeeding generations) and that of the “newcomers” (those who came to Japan from the 1970s and after). If we categorize these groupings into ethnic-culturally oriented (that is, “assimilation” oriented, Zainichi oriented, homeland oriented) and organizational/network (voluntary networking, formal organization network) types, we may lay out the various categories (ibid., 58).

These networks are very important for Korean people because as they provide connections with their origins, their homeland, other Korean people living in Japan or elsewhere, with the neighbourhood and local Zainichi Korean and

10 However, while many Koreans feel compelled to pick one or another label when they are surveyed, in fact many do not belong to any single tradition but think of themselves as belonging to several at once, being comfortable with a mix of symbols and rituals (Clark 2000, 29, 30).

In North Korea today, as mentioned, the state officially discourages the practice of religion, regarding it unscientific, superstitious, and a vestige of the feudal past. A certain number of people continue to practice Buddhism, Protestant and Catholic Christianity, and Ch'ondokyo, but they have to belong to state-sponsored religious organizations that are closely monitored by the government (ibid., 29).

Japanese communities, all contributing toward broadening the circle of one's friends. These communities give them a goal and orientation in everyday life by offering them several activities, economic mobility, organized festivals, Korean centers, help with legal, economic, and political matters, and so on. Regarding the religion these networks include shamanistic and Confucianistic rituals, rituals of folk religion, Buddhism, death memorial services, and so on, for example: Ikoma Mountain Hozanji temple Organization (生駒宝山寺講), Zainichi Kwang San Kim Shi Shinzokukai (在日光山金氏親族会¹¹), Shinnyo-en (真如苑, *Borderless Garden of Truth*)¹², Kakyō Fudoshōekai (華僑 普度勝会¹³) (Iida 2002, 33–4).

Christianity

Christianity has a very turbulent history in Korea too, going from the suffering and sacrifice of Korean Christians, to being widespread in the period of modern Korea, which made Christianity a refuge and force for reform (Clark 2000, 52). In Japan however, there is no widespread growth like that on the Korean mainland. The main Protestant organization is the Zainichi Daikan Kirisuto Kyokai Sokai 在日大韓基督教会總會 (Korean Christian Church in Japan) with 58 churches, claiming 4,803 members throughout Japan. Eleven of these churches, with 1,460 members, are located in Ōsaka (Iida 1988, 158) and a few can also be found in Kyōto.

The total number of Christians among Korean residents comes to less than 1%, even when taking into consideration the members of Catholic and other Protestant churches. This percentage is about the same as for Christians in Japan as a whole. On the other hand, the Korean Christian churches are actively involved in solving the topics of discrimination and human rights among Korean residents in Japan, and have an important impact on Korean residents and Japanese society (ibid., 159).

11 According to Ogawa and Teraoka (1993) in their article the networks, whose basis are the sameness of kinship, shared attachment to hometowns and nearby residents. One such network is the Korean Kinship Organization in Japan.

12 In Kyōto there are two temples: Shinnyoen Kyōto Temple and Kyōto Training Center. Shinnyo-en temples and centers are sacred space created to support practitioners' training. One way to look at a Buddhist temple, and Buddhism itself, is as a refuge where a practitioner can recharge their spiritual batteries. The temple and all that transpires there allows practitioners to reconnect with the expansive goodness of their Buddha nature. As such, the temple is considered a "sacred" space.

13 This is an organization for overseas Chinese, which offers the service to other minorities as well. The Chinese are the second-largest minority group in Japan.

Within The Korean Christian Church in Japan there are two distinct groups, each with their own leanings. One is a group that gives specific weight to taking on the aforementioned social issues, which we might call the “Society-Oriented Group”, and the other group, which we might call the “Gospel-Oriented Group”, puts emphasis on salvation from within (Iida 2002, 297). Perhaps some several thousand Japan-resident Korean Christians belong to the Catholic Church, but the actual figure is unclear. Ethnic aspects of this community are not particularly emphasized, and most members use Japanese names (*tsūmei* 通名) (Iida 2013, 128).

Buddhism

Since its arrival in Korea (BCE 372) Buddhism has flourished and has had great influence on Korean culture. During its existence in Korea it has also absorbed and adjusted to other religions or civil thought, such as Confucian social norms (Clark 2000, 40). When Japanese culture began to influence Korea, Korean Buddhism split into the Choge order, which remained celibate, and the Taego order, which allowed monks to marry. Later this dispute was settled, both sects now allow monks to marry, but some differences and the division remained (ibid., 42–3).

As for Buddhism, there are seven temples in Japan (two in Ōsaka, four in Tōkyō, one in Kyōto) with 7,950 members (4,300 in Ōsaka, 2,150 in Tōkyō, and 1,500 in Kyōto) belonging to the Choge sect, the main Buddhist organization in Korea. Their headquarters are located at Fugen-ji 普賢寺 in the Ikuno district of Ōsaka. This temple was built in 1968. However, it appears that the establishment of orthodox Buddhism lags behind the spontaneous acceptance of shamanistic beliefs or the proclamation of Christianity among resident Koreans. Temples of the Choge sect are in urban areas and rather inconspicuous, with the exception of the one in Kyōto, which is built in Korean style, deep in the mountains, and has begun to manage a large cemetery. Other Korean sects include the Taego sect, which has a number of temples. The headquarters in Seoul does not recognize them as branch temples; they could rather be considered as particular examples of syncretistic folk religions (Iida 1988, 159).

Confucianism

Confucianism still provides the fundamental moral structure for the daily life of resident Koreans, it is a value system that seeks to bring harmony to the lives of

people in communities—the family, the village, and the state. It plays an important role in providing ceremonies for funeral and ancestor rites, such as *chesa*¹⁴ (Clark 2000, 31–33). Respect for elders, the dominance of the male over female, ancestor worship, and kinship consciousness are all stronger among Korean residents than among the Japanese. Funeral rites in particular are still maintained in the traditional Confucian way, and serve as a reminder of their ethnic identity to younger Koreans, who are more conscious of being “Japanized”. However, Confucianism as a religion neither has an organized institution nor an educational system, and it appears that its moral influence is waning among the increasing number of Japan-born Korean residents (Iida 1988, 158).

Shamanism

At the dawn of the modern age in Korea, shamanism accounted for the whole rich tradition of Korean spiritual belief. Though the rich variety of folk deities still is part of Korean conversation and consciousness, “shamanism” as such has come to mean something more limited: the practice, invariably by female shamans called *mudang* or *manshin*, of spirit propitiation on behalf of people who hire them to perform ceremonies called *kuts* (Clark 2000, 45).

As Iida (2013, 140) may understand shamanism as not so much a religious tradition peculiar to a particular region, but rather as one of the universal religious phenomena that may occur throughout mankind in its entirety, Clark (2000, 45) points out that Korean shamanism was recognised in the 1980s and 1990s, during a time when young Koreans did new searching for their own “authentic” national identity, as emblems of true “Koreanness”. In the diaspora, especially in Ikuno, a area in Ōsaka with a particularly dense Korean population, coming from Cheju-do island (South Korea), a performing of traditional rituals of Korean Shamanism served to build a network among them before the war (Iida 2013, 124).

After the war, however, such activities took the form of the *chōsen-dera* 朝鮮寺 (Japan-resident Korean temples) established in the Ikoma 生駒 mountain range (see Iida 1988). These number around 60 institutions, and while to the

14 *Chesa* is the key element of family life; it is the Confucian ancestral ritual, family ceremony that remembers one or two, or sometimes three, generations of ancestors in the father’s lineage. Families honor their ancestor in *chesa* ceremonies on Lunar New Year’s Day and on Chu’sok, the Harvest Festival. They also honor specific ancestors on the anniversary of their deaths, and the rest of the *chesa* ceremony is to remind everyone of the continuity of the family and of the debt that is still owed by younger generations to those who came before (Clark 2000, 33, 98).

outside world they appear to be nothing other than Buddhist temples, they have functioned as places for the rituals of Korean shamanism. In these rituals, for the purposes of propitiatory memorial services for the spirits of the dead (*shisharei* 死者霊), divine spirits (*kamigami* 神々) are summoned by a specialist shamanistic medium with spiritual abilities, and the spirits of the dead speak through the medium (*kuchiyose* 口寄せ). Korean shamanistic rituals, which take place over two or three days to a week, and sometimes up to ten days, are carried out in the temples of Mt. Ikoma. Korean shamanistic rituals of shorter duration were also carried out widely in a number of temples in Ōsaka City's Iku-no Ward, with its high concentration of Japan-resident Koreans, and the areas around it (Iida 2013, 125).

A basis in Korean traditional shamanism has been indicated as a reason for the development and spread of Korean Christianity, particularly the Full Gospel Church, in the later part of the twentieth century. Even in the case of the Full Gospel Church in Japan, most believers are “newcomer” females, and thus one would not move toward a flat denial of the theory of connections between aspects of these two religions (Christianity and Korean shamanism) relating to their basis in modern Korean society (*ibid.*, 139).

Folk Religion

One of the important religious places of Koreans in Japan is Ikoma Mountain, which range straddles the border of the Kyōto, Ōsaka, and Nara districts. There are innumerable shrines and temples, churches connected with ascetic sects or the new religions, and other small shrines and sacred places which serve as foci to varieties of nature worship and animistic faiths. Almost all the various forms of Japanese folk religion are represented here. Many religious figures such as Shinto priests, Buddhist monks, ascetics, faith healers, diviners, mediums, peddlers of wonder drugs, and so forth gather in this area to serve the almost ten million people. Among these religious organizations connected to Ikoma is a unique group commonly known as the “Korean temples” (*chōsen-dera* 朝鮮寺, such as Ishikirijinja 石切ネ申社, Hozan-ji 宝山寺, Chogo Sonshi-ji 朝護孫子寺), supported by Korean residents of Japan, mostly from the Ōsaka area.

Hardacre's fieldwork-based study examined characteristics of Zainichi Korean temples in the Ikoma Mountain Range near Ōsaka and the function of the *bosaru*, female shamans, in the *Zainichi* Korean community. Hardacre showed that unlike their counterparts in Korea, many Japan-based *bosaru* established affiliations with

Japanese Buddhist schools and played an important role in the identity formation of *Zainichi* Korean women.¹⁵

Assimilation

Assimilation into or of various Japanese religious traditions is another phenomenon. It may be that since there are common basic elements between Korean and Japanese religion, such as the merging of animism and Shamanism and a this-worldly orientation, it is easy for this religious assimilation to occur. Some Korean residents go to Japanese Buddhist temples to request funerals or memorial services, and it is not unusual for them to visit famous Japanese temples and shrines to pray for worldly benefits such as prosperity in business or relief from disease. There are also some who are involved in Shugendo organizations and actively participate in ascetic practices in the mountains or under waterfalls (Iida 1988, 158–60). In this case we can say that the role of religion within the migration process can be traced from the migratory act to changes in religious practice after migration to religion as an integrative force within the receiving society.

Conclusions

In making sense of a racial, ethnic, or national group—categories of modern peoplehood—one usually looks to language, religion, or custom and culture, but the identities are fluid and multifaceted; they can be at both the personal and group level and we negotiate them all the time. In the process of identity formation the Korean people in Japan face a variety of conflicts in the secular and religious world. Koreans in Japan are divided by politics, gender, class, occupation, education, age, and status. However young people have become interested in identity politics, not from the perspective of the north-south binary opposition, but with an eye to questioning their future in Japan. Many now actively debate ethnic identity, diaspora politics, and integration in or autonomy from Japanese society.

Because of the complex situation of Korean minority in Japan, the feeling of conflicts might also appear also in the realm of religious expression. For those who practice religion, their mutual identity as Koreans is reinforced and preserved through

15 The unique role of the *bosaru* has been pointed out. In Korea, for the most part men conduct Confucian-type ancestral rituals and women are associated with Buddhist or shamanistic practices. Women who were lay believers in their home country became religious practitioners through their experiences after coming to Japan (Hardacre in Akaïke 2015).

participation in ritual space, for example in the Christian Church or at Korean temples. Especially if we look at the group of “Korean temples” in the suburbs of Ōsaka, where the largest number of Koreans in Japan reside, we can say that it is a religious phenomenon consisting of a syncretism of Korean Shamanism, Korean Buddhism, and Japanese mountain religion (Iida 1988, 155). This shows us that the rituals performed by these believers clearly have undergone a transformation that is typically formed by the fact that it happened in Japan. The result is therefore different from what it would be in Korea. On the other hand one can view the place and role of the Korean temples from a different perspective, as part of the milieu of Ikoma as a living museum of folk religion. For example, Ikoma is a place of heightened religious awareness, where people transcend the boundaries of nationality.

Thus today’s everyday life of Zainichi Koreans does not differ a lot from the Japanese; their culture is becoming more and more Japanese, as they wear same clothes, eat the same food, live in similar houses, and thus become more and more indifferent to the notion of Korean identity. However the most distinct element is the Confucian memorial ceremony *chesa*, ancestor worship, when the family gather to perform a ritual. This shows the great influence of Confucianism in their lives—reverence for ancestors, respect for elders, and a consciousness of the mutual duties and obligations to relatives. Others may also feel deep affinity for the beauty and serenity of Buddhist temples and worship and may even visit Buddhist temples to pray. Korean Christians, having joined a religious tradition that is less tolerant of other faiths, might avoid Buddhism but they are much less likely even to be aware that they are guided throughout their lives by Confucian rules and understandings. But there are also Christians who have thought a lot about the mixture of Western religion and their own identity and conclude that their beliefs contain elements of shamanism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity all at the same time. Although Shinto adherents were unlikely to be Zainichi, the major world religions, ranging from Buddhism to Christianity, had faithfuls among both ethnic Korean and ethnic Japanese populations. Lie simplified this by saying (2008, 130) that first-generation Koreans engaged in ethnically distinct Buddhist temples and other ritual practices, but they were clearly on the wane by the 1980s. Prewar ethnic Koreans tended to practice strictly rituals of ancestor worship (*chesa*). Although almost universally practiced by the first generation, the Confucian ritual became vitiated and transformed under successive generations. Younger Zainichi either simplified or abandoned *chesa* and look up to their Japanese peers.

We can conclude that religious faith can work as a source of ethnic and even inter-ethnic solidarity among the Koreans in Japan in some cases (where not politically divided), but in some cases it cannot be a distinguishing factor from the ethnic Japan, as it leads to assimilation.

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Asian Studies in Slovenia

Ponovno ovrednotenje Webra na Japonskem in nekatera izhodišča za obravnavo religije v povezavi s potrošništvom

*Tinka DELAKORDA KAWASHIMA**

Izveček

V zahodnih študijah religije se v zadnjem času religijo razumeva kot spreminjajoče se prakse ljudi, in ne kot skupek prepričanj in doktrino, ki jim verniki sledijo. To še posebej drži za japonsko religijsko konstelacijo, kjer je bogato prakticiranje različnih religij vselej prednjačilo pred pripadnostjo dogmam in verskim institucijam. Raziskovalci so v taki religioznosti opazili spodbudne elemente za razvoj moderne kapitalistične družbe. Članek podrobno prikaže, kako so Webrove teze o vplivu religije na razvoj moderne družbe sprejemali na Japonskem in na osnovi razširitve njegovih tez predstavi nekatera mogoča izhodišča za obravnavo religije v povezavi z razvojem modernega potrošništva na Japonskem.

Ključne besede: religija, modernizacija, etika, Weber, Japonska, potrošništvo, magija, simboli, rituali, »religiozni vsakdan«

Abstract

In recent times, religion has been viewed as a changing set of practices or actions that people take rather than a set of beliefs or a doctrine that people follow. This is especially true for the religious setting in Japan, where the practice of religion has been favored over relatively "static" faith and devotion to dogmas and religious institutions. Researchers have noticed encouraging elements within characteristics of such religion in Japan for the development of a modern capitalist society. The following paper attempts to show the possible foundations for examining the role of religion within the context of consumption during the modernization process using an extension of Weber's theories within the Japanese context.

Keywords: modernization, consumption, religion and magic, Protestant ethic, capitalism, Weber, Japan.

* Tinka DELAKORDA KAWASHIMA, PhD, Department of Intercultural Studies, Yamaguchi Prefectural University, Japan. tinkanet[at]gmail.com



Uvod

Webrova *Protestantska etika in duh kapitalizma* ostaja pomembno izhodišče, ko razmišljamo o povezavi med modernizacijo in religijo v katerikoli družbi, vsaj v tezi, da samo z ekonomskimi dejavniki ni mogoče razložiti nastanka kapitalizma in moderne družbe; za razumevanje razvoja sodobne družbe se je nujno poglobiti v njene specifične nazore in vrednote.¹ Po Webru je modernizacijo »zahoda« podprl tok ljudske etične reforme, ki so jo usmerjali »zahodna« religiozna tradicija in modernistična religiozna gibanja znotraj nje. Gre za protestantsko etiko, povezano s kalvinistično idejo o predestinaciji, ki naj bi z religioznimi spodbudami za posvetno dejavnost, z »odčaranjem sveta«,² z individualizmom in z delovno etiko predstavljala nujne predpogoje za razvoj v moderno kapitalistično družbo na »zahodu«. Danes govorimo o različnih tipih modernosti in različnih poteh do njih. Japonska družba se je hitro modernizirala in je od druge polovice 20. stoletja po uveljavljenih kriterijih moderna.

Modernost, kot se jo razume na Japonskem, je tesno povezana z njenim stikom z »zahodom«.³ Vendar je glede na to, da je bila Japonska zaprta za zunanji svet kar 250 let, od 17. stoletja naprej, razlog za ta uspeh vprašljivo iskati izključno v kontaktu z »zahodom«. Za uspeh in hitro spremembo so verjetneje zaslužne nekatere institucije, ki so v tradicionalni japonski družbi obstajale že prej, in ljudje,

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- 1 »Modernizacija pomeni tehnološke racionalizacijske zagone in spremembo dela in organizacije, obsega pa še veliko več: spremembo družbenega značaja in normalnih biografij, življenjskih slogov in ljubezenskih form, struktur vpliva in moči, form političnega zatiranja in udeležbe, dojemanja dejanskosti in spoznavnih norm. Plug, parna lokomotiva in mikročip so v družbeno znanstvenem razumevanju modernizacije vidni indikatorji za mnogo globlji proces, ki zajema in spreminja celotne družbene sestave in v katerem se nazadnje spremenijo *viri gotovosti*, iz katerih se napaja življenje« (Beck 1986, 23; Eisenstadt 1973).
 - 2 Webrova skovanka »odčaranje sveta« označuje razkroj tradicionalnih predstav o svetu, proces opuščanja religioznih, mitično-magijskih, organsko celostnih in kvalitativnih pogledov na svet in na človeka ter zamenjavo z znanstvenimi, posvetnimi in instrumentalno-izračunljivimi pogledi. Razvoj tovrstnega racionalno metodičnega načina življenja je postavljen v zvezo z asketsko protestantsko etiko, katere temeljna značilnost je asketsko samoobvladovanje (Weber 1992). Z magijo se razume »prizadevanje, da se z magično religijskimi sredstvi zagotovi ugoden potek totranskih, življenjskih zadev, od plodnosti do zdravja, od ljubezni do vojaških uspehov neke družbene skupnosti, države, rodu oz. posameznikov kot pripadnikov teh skupnosti v tem življenju« (Kerševan 1989, 19).
 - 3 Obdobje pred tem se imenuje zgodnje-moderno in se je začelo po prihodu Portugalcev in Špancev v 16. stoletju ter ga zaznamuje omejitev stikov z zunanjim svetom v dobrih 250 letih obdobja Tokugawa (1600–1868). Moderno obdobje se je začelo s propadom tega režima in z odprtjem dežele pod pritiski Amerike in drugih zahodnih sil. Sledilo je hitenje Japonske, da bi se tehnološko, ekonomsko in vojaško modernizirala ter dohitela zahod. Japonsko modernizacijo tako pogosto označujejo kot srečevanje z »zahodno civilizacijo« (po Sugiyama 1994; Millikan in Blackmer 1961, 11–12).

sposobni spremembe (Bellah 1957; Millikan in Blackmer 1961, 11–12).⁴ Japonska je bila prva ne-zahodna družba, ki je industrializacijo dosegla po drugačni poti od »zahodne« in v 70. letih postala drugo največje gospodarstvo na svetu, kar je pri raziskovalcih modernizacijskih procesov in teorije moderne družbe spodbudilo zanimanje za japonsko družbo in kulturo. Pri tem je še posebej zanimivo to, da se je Japonska modernizirala brez pomoči krščanstva kot dominantne religije, še več, nobena religija ni imela monopola, kot ga poznamo v »zahodni« družbi in kakršen je pogojeval sekularizacijo na »zahodni način«. Zastavi se torej vprašanje, katere značilnosti religijskega sveta in njegovega razvoja bi lahko vplivale na proces oblikovanja modernosti na Japonskem?

Danes se veliko Japoncev šteje za sekularne ali nezainteresirane za religijo. V nedavnih študijah se je na primer samo 26 odstotkov respondentov izreklo za religiozne. Samo 30 odstotkov ljudi se ima za pripadnike določeni religiji, čeprav predstavniki religij trdijo, da imajo toliko pripadnikov, da njihovo skupno število dvakrat presega skupno število prebivalcev Japonske. Po drugi strani pa skoraj 90 odstotkov Japoncev redno obiskuje grobove prednikov, 75 odstotkov družin ima doma budistični in/ali šintoistični oltar, večina staršev vodi svoje otroke k obredom odraščanja *shichigosan* (七五三) v lokalno svetišče, templji in svetišča opažajo množičen obisk ob novem letu *hatsumōde* (初詣で) (Meiji jingu v Tokiu obiščejo milijoni ljudi) in romanja v številne svete kraje so vse bolj priljubljena, kar potrjuje tudi oddaja »Nippon junrei« (日本巡礼) (Romanje na Japonskem) na nacionalni televiziji. Vse to kaže na visoko udeležbo Japoncev v religioznih praksah, pa tudi na eklektično naravo japonske religioznosti.⁵

4 Zahodni industrializem se je razvijal počasi skozi stoletja akumuliranja kapitala in tehnik, medtem ko so se ne-zahodne države srečale z modernizacijo kot s »fait accompli« (z dovršenim delom). Kapital, nujen za industrializacijo v ne-zahodnih državah, je bil preobsežen, da bi ga mogel zagotoviti obstoječi ekonomski mehanizem v teh družbah. Industrializacijo je podprla in financirala vlada (Bellah 1957, 192–3). Drugače od zahodnega pogleda na »vtikanje« političnih oblasti v ekonomijo kot škodljivega, je za države, ki so se razvile in industrializirale brez tuje finančne pomoči (Japonska, Rusija, LR Kitajska), značilna večja politična superiornost kot na zahodu, dominantnost političnih vrednot je nad ekonomskimi. Na Japonskem je religija odigrala pomembno vlogo v procesu politične in ekonomske predanosti osrednjim vrednotam, ki so legitimirale potrebne politične inovacije in okrepile etiko notranjega asketizma. Družina in država, sorodstvene vezi in politika niso bile zgolj sekularne kolektivnosti, ampak tudi religiozne entitete. Izpolnjevanje dolžnosti do teh entitet je imelo ultimativni pomen, ker je posamezniku zagotavljalo varnost pred nevarnostmi prehodnega sveta (ibid., 194).

Pri Bellahu in Fuseju prevlada argument, da so za družbenoekonomski razvoj potrebni določeni predpogoji, ki so globoko vpeti v družbenih kulturnih strukturah in sistemih vrednot. Preveriti pa je treba, ali ni sistem vrednot, o katerem govori Bellah, omejen na majhen del prebivalstva in zaobjema le del tradicije, ki jo je vlada Meiji »izumila« za svoj nacionalistično-modernistični proces.

5 Na Japonskem soobstaja mnogo različnih religioznih tradicij. Med najpomembnejšimi so šintoizem, budizem mahayana, konfucianizem (predvsem konfucianska etika), krščanstvo, nove religije

Ali bi živahne religiozne prakse v moderni družbi na Japonskem med drugim lahko pripisali pozitivnemu vplivu potrošniške kulture na moderno religioznost? Tudi raziskovalci v modernih zahodnih okoljih ugotavljajo, da so zaradi procesov sekularizacije in globalizacije, ki so odpravili religijske monopole, ter zaradi vplivov potrošniške kulture značilni »svobodnejše« izbiranje religij, »revitalizacija religije« oz. t. i. desekularizacija. Že tradicionalna ljudska religioznost na krščanskem zahodu je nastajala kot ljudska izbira, selekcija, interpretacija in kombinacija zahtev/ponudb specializiranih ustanov različnih starih ljudskih religij in krščanstva ter njihovih nosilcev (Kerševan 1989). Kaj nam to pove o medsebojnem vplivu med potrošništvom in ljudsko religioznostjo?

Naša naloga je ugotoviti, kakšne religiozne prakse in vrednote so obstajale na širši ravni, ravni ljudstva. Novejše študije predmoderne japonske družbe kažejo, da je npr. sistem vladnega nadzora *bakufu tōsei* (幕府統制) v obdobju Tokugawa zaobjel le del religioznega udejstvovanja, ob njem pa so delovale druge številne religiozne prakse, v nekakšni pol-legalni sferi (Williams 2006). Tukaj je zajeta ljudska religioznost, ki je lahko v veliki meri vplivala na razvoj drugih družbenoekonomskih vidikov modernizacije.

Poleg tega ni zadosti predpostavljati, da so za hiter ekonomski razvoj japonske družbe zaslužni zgolj pogosto izpostavljeni faktorji, kot je prisotnost delovne etike v ideologijah japonskih religij (Fuse 1970) in sistem vrednot v obdobju Tokugawa (Bellah 1957). Ti pogledi zanemarjajo pomen t. i. »živete religije« v zgodnje-modernem obdobju. Williams (2006, 185) piše, da Bellahova knjiga odseva idejo, da ima vzpon Japonske kot moderne politične in ekonomske nacije korenine v neo-konfucianski ideologiji, v elitnem sloju, kot tudi med trgovci in drugimi. Na te Bellahove ugotovitve so prav gotovo vplivale okoliščine, da so do 70. letih 20.

in ljudske religije. Krščanstvo je bilo Japonski predstavljeno v 16. in ponovno v 19. stoletju. Nove religije so se pojavile in zacvetele v prehodu v obdobje Meiji v 19. stoletju ter po drugi svetovni vojni. Ljudske religije so bile skozi sinkretična religiozna verovanja in prakse dolgo časa del dediščine preprostega ljudstva. Vse te tradicije so ves čas vplivale druga na drugo in sooblikovale religijo japonske družbe. Takšna kompleksna situacija ustvarja vtis, da le malo sodobnih Japoncev pripada neki določeni religiji. Zato rečemo, da je za Japonce značilna religioznost brez pripadanja ali »neafiliacijska religioznost«. Tipični ustaljeni vzorec, ki mu sledi japonska družina v svojem religioznem prakticanju, je, da za novo leto obiše šintoistično svetišče, pogreb in komemoracije prepusti budističnemu obredju, poroke krščanski cerkvi ali šintoističnem svetišču. Letni prazniki se prav tako praznujejo po ustaljenih pravilih eklekticizma: *bon* in enakonočje (ekvinokcij) sta budistična, novo leto in praznovanja *matsuri* so šintoistični. Nove religije, kot je Tenrikyō, pa krpajo luknje, ki so jih pustile glavne religije, in sicer tako, da ponujajo obredje in molitve za bolne. Kadar Japonce pesti bolezen, se mnogi obrnejo k novim religioznim skupinam ali k vedeževalcem in verskim zdravilcem. Nakamaki pravi, da je takšen pluralizem oz. način povezovanja z bogovi izraz japonskega koncepta TPO (ang. time, place & occasion), kar pomeni, da obstajata primeren čas in kraj za vsako priložnost (2003, 13).

stoletja področje preučevanja zgodnje-moderne religije obvladovali intelektualni zgodovinarji neo-konfucialnizma in nativistične reakcije na kitajske učenosti – nacionalne učenosti *kokugaku* (国学) (Williams 2006, 186). Šele v poznih 80. letih so se pojavile študije zgodnje-moderne religije kot »živete religije« (ang. *lived religion*) (ibid., 187). Prav tak svež pogled na razvoj japonske moderne družbe ponudi Francks v svoji »alternativni ekonomski zgodovini moderne Japonske« (2009). V knjigi navede številna zgodovinska dejstva iz vsakdanjega življenja Japoncev in argumentira, da nam o ekonomski zgodovini in vzponu več kot produkcija (industrijska in religiozna) pove zgodovina potrošnje oz. tisti, ki so na strani povpraševanja. Z vpogledom v zgodovino japonskih potrošnikov nam tudi postane jasno, da modernizacija Japonske ni bila nekaj, kar se je zgodilo nenadno ob srečanju z modernim zahodom, ampak je bil to proces, ki se je, vsaj v velikih japonskih mestih, začel že v 18. stoletju.

Preden se osredotočimo na razmerje med ljudsko religioznostjo in potrošništvom, si pogledjmo, katere značilnosti religijskega sveta naj bi po Weberu vplivale na proces oblikovanja modernosti.

Webrova teorija

Weber je predvideval, da sta bila puritanska »odprava magije« in »notranja izolacija posameznika« (ki stoji sam pred Bogom) glavna faktorja ljudske etične reforme ali t. i. »človeških temeljev modernizacije«. Takšen odnos med religijo in etiko je eden od vzorcev reform v ljudski etiki, ki je spodbudila modernizacijo. Za Webra pa je bila temeljnega pomena še napetost (in njena odprava) med svetovnim nazorom religije in znotrajsvetnimi sferami človekovega delovanja (Kerševan 1990). Webrova shema za klasifikacijo in analizo svetovnih religij je temeljila na obsežni raziskavi krščanstva, antičnega judaizma, hinduizma, budizma in kitajske religije (deloma tudi islama in zgodnjega ter srednjeveškega krščanstva). Predvideval je, da obstaja neka notranja logika v svetovnih nazorih teh religij ter da to logiko poganja napetost med svetovnim nazorom samim in realnostjo (Campbell 2006, 19).

Primitivna religija naj bi bila po njegovih predvidevanjih po značaju magična in animistična, ko pa se družba razvije do točke, da ima dovolj sredstev za podporo duhovništva, postanejo verovanja organizirana in koncepcije božanstva sistematizirana znotraj dveh glavnih usmeritev. Prva predpostavlja imanentni princip božanstva, to je nekaj, kar je del sveta od vekomaj in k čemur se človeštvo lahko »adoptira« (brahmansko-atmanski princip v indijski religiozni filozofiji); druga pa predpostavlja koncepcijo božanstva kot transcendentalnega, v bistvu ločenega od sveta, katerega nadzira od zgoraj in ga je ustvaril iz nič (semitski bog stvarnik)

(Turner 1981, 12). Glede na ti dve usmeritvi Weber razlikuje med »vzhodnimi« in »zahodnimi« religijami. Po Weberu bi naj v primerjavi z »zahodom« drugim kulturam manjkala

sposobnost in discipliniranost ljudi za racionalen način življenja nasploh. Med najpomembnejše elemente oblikovanja načina življenja v preteklosti pa naj bi sodile magične in religiozne sile ter na veri temelječe etične predstave o dolžnosti. (...) Tam, kjer so obstajale zavore duhovne narave, je razvoj racionalnega življenja trčil ob resne ovire. (Kerševan 1990, 9)

Pot v racionalizacijo je bila po Weberu mogoča, če so bile take ovire odpravljene. To je mogoče le, če so dejavnosti znotraj neke racionalizirane sfere hkrati racionalne tudi z ozirom na religiozne cilje oz. vrednote (ibid., 11–12).

Po Weberu naraščajoča racionalizacija znotrajsvetnih sfer človekovega delovanja (ekonomsko, politično, umetniško, spolno itd.) na eni strani in racionalizacija religijskega delovanja na drugi strani vodita do napetosti med religijo in takimi posameznimi sferami. To pa toliko bolj, kolikor bolj jasno je cilj/vrednota religije zunajsvetna. Prav to pa je značilnost t. i. odrešilnih religij, ki odrešujejo od sveta in implicirajo neke vrste odklanjanje od njega (ibid., 11). Religijsko racionaliziranje ravnanja (Weber) lahko onemogoči doseženo stopnjo racionalnosti v drugih, znotrajsvetnih sferah. Primer za to je religiozno racionalno delovanje v smislu pridobivanja milosti z zakramenti in posebnimi dobrimi deli, ki odvrta ljudi od zavestnega angažiranja na drugih področjih, ali pa religiozno racionalno ravnanje v duhu medsebojne bratske ljubezni do bližnjega, ki se bije z logiko ekonomske in politične racionalnosti, ki za svoje cilje – dobiček in moč – uporablja druge predpostavke (ibid.).

Po Weberu je protestantizem, s kalvinistično idejo o predestinaciji, odpravil taka nasprotja in utrl pot nadaljnji racionalizaciji (ibid., 12). »Kako je lahko spodbujala 'znotrajsvetno' delovno usmerjenost prav religiozna misel, ki je – v nasprotju s tradicionalno katoliško – zavračala kakršenkoli vpliv človeških del na človekovo opravičenje in odrešenje?« Takšna teologija povzroča visoko napetost znotraj posameznika, kar rešuje z nenehno dejavnostjo ekonomskega značaja. Vsaka dejavnost naj bo dejavnost v slavo božjo. Delo je smiselno kot izražanje božje slave. To je prispevalo k oblikovanju kapitalizma z individualizmom in s pojmovanjem stvarnosti, ki ga Weber imenuje »odčaranje sveta«, kjer na svet ne delujemo več z magičnimi sredstvi, niti ne samo z njimi. Weber je predvideval, da ko se kapitalizem enkrat oblikuje, ta njegova psihološka izhodišča izgubijo pomen. »Duh zapusti železno armaturo«, moderno družbo (produkcijo), ki jo je sam soustvaril in v kateri je doslej prebival (Weber 1988). Duhovno izpraznjeno mesto, ki ga je

z odčaranjem sveta zapustila religija, pa naj bi zasedla potrošnja (Vidmar 2004, 61; po Williams 1991, 203). Hedonistična kultura množične potrošnje naj bi izpodkopala tradicionalne buržoazne vrednote in puritansko etiko ter povzročila zaton religije (Bell 1976). Takšni in podobni argumenti kažejo na evolucionistično razumevanje procesa od kapitalizma do potrošništva, ki na svojih plečih žrtvuje religijo. Če pa prevzamemo Campbellovo dopolnitev Webrove teze, da so za nadaljnji razvoj kapitalizma, poleg puritanske delovne etike, bili enako pomembni tudi hedonistični potrošniški motivacijski temelji (Campbell 1987), lahko začnemo razmišljati, kateri elementi v religijskem svetu, ki se ugodno navezujejo na potrošništvo, so lahko prispevali k razvoju moderne družbe.

Dopolnitev Webrove teorije: vzajemni spodbujevalni odnos med proizvodnjo in potrošništvom

Za preživetje moderne kapitalistične družbe je, kot je predvidel že Marx (1857), (ekonomsko) potrošništvo ključnega pomena. Danes vsakdanje življenje in samouresničevanje ljudi poteka skozi potrošništvo, ki ga nekateri imenujejo celo »nova religija« oz. nadomestilo zanjo.

Po Webru je bila protestantska etika tista, ki je dala zagon procesoma racionalizacije in modernizacije v zahodnih družbah (Weber 1988). Puritancem je z versko gorečnostjo uspelo sočasno spodbuditi proizvodnjo in zamejiti potrošnjo, Weber pa ne odgovori na vprašanje, na kakšnih duhovnih osnovah se je z določenim »faznim zamikom« začelo razraščati »nekoristno« užitekarsko zapravljanje. Z drugimi besedami, v Webrovi protestantski etiki ne najdemo odgovora na vzajemni spodbujevalni odnos med proizvodnjo in potrošnjo. Campbell v odgovor na produktivistično pristranskost sodobnih interpretacij narave modernih družb napiše knjigo *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Consumerism*, v kateri se usmeri v spregledane okoliščine, ki so spodbujale razvoj potrošništva. Skozi razvoj protestantizma v Angliji 17. in 18. stoletja prikaže, da sta druga ob drugi obstajali dve nasprotujoči, vendar komplementarni družbeni etiki, kot dve plati religijskega gibanja. Prva, delovna etika, je legitimizirala proizvodnjo, druga, »romantična hedonistična« etika (posebna buržoazna potrošniška etika), pa potrošnjo (Campbell 1987, 8 in 35).

Potrošništvo naj bi se začelo v srednjem sloju družbe z njegovimi zahtevami po luksuznih dobrinah, to je v sloju, ki je bil nosilec asketske in puritanske protestantske etike. Pri iskanju povezave med protestantizmom in užitkom je Campbell odkril, da je skrb za estetiko – nov sestavni del, uvožen od plemstva, pripeljal do radikalnih sprememb v predhodno moralno in spiritualno etiko srednjega sloja (ibid., 203).

Campbell je razširil Webrova spoznanja o povezavi med protestantizmom in kapitalizmom, tako da sta obe plati – racionalni asketizem in sentimentalni pietizem, obravnavani kot prispevka k razvoju moderne ekonomije (Campbell 1987, 11). Tako naj bi reformacija k razvoju kapitalizma prispevala dva elementa. Asketska etika je spodbudila produkcijsko plat, osamosvojitve iz togih okvirov religije pa je omogočila dinamičen razvoj povpraševanja po blagu. Obe – proizvodnja in potrošnja – sta imeli močno idejno (religiozno) podlago in le tako se je lahko začel njun vzajemni razvoj (Kos 1998, 269).

Campbellove teze so kot Webrove omejene na krščansko izkušnjo, a služijo kot izhodišče za problematiziranje razmerja med religijami in potrošništvom nasploh. Upoštevanje predpostavk o obstoju religioznih elementov, ki spodbujajo potrošniško plat razvoja moderne družbe, nas od vprašanja, »ali je potrošnja zasedla izpraznjeno mesto, ki ga je zapustila religija«, popelje k vprašanju, kateri elementi religije, ki se ugodno navezujejo na potrošnjo, so prispevali k razvoju moderne japonske družbe in se ohranili v njej?

Poglejmo si, kako je bila vloga religije v modernizacijskih procesih obravnavana na Japonskem.

Prilagajanje Webrove teorije skozi vrednotenje japonske preteklosti

Kmalu po drugi svetovni vojni je zgodovinskim študijam na Japonskem (delno kot reakcija in kot kritika na medvojno »cesarsko-nacionalno podobo«) vladala družbenoekonomska interpretacija s pretežno ideološkim pogledom. V takšnem ozračju so bile tradicionalne ideje in navade, vključno z religijo, večinoma označene kot »pred-moderne« in kot »preživetke fevdalizma«. Kakor koli že, teorija o modernizaciji, ki je prišla v ospredje v poznih 50. letih, bi skoraj spremenila pogled na japonsko zgodovino. Delo *Tokugawa religion* (1957), čeprav tujega avtorja Američana Roberta N. Bellaha, je naznanilo novo smernico reevaluacije preteklosti, še posebej zgodnje-moderne preteklosti japonske zgodovine.⁶ V tem kontekstu je bila tema modernizacije tesno povezana s problemom racionalizacije v zgodovini, pojav, ki ga je Max Weber vpeljal kot ključ za primerjalno analizo svetovnih religij. V tem času je tudi sprejetje in reevaluacija Webrovih idej napredovala med japonskimi intelektualci, celo še pred t. i. »Webrovo renesanso« v njegovi domovini.

6 V študiju Vzhodne Azije se s terminom »zgodnje-moderno« pojmujejo kitajske dinastije Song, Ming in Qing, v primeru Japonske pa s terminom »zgodnje-moderno« obdobje mislimo obdobje Tokugawa (več o tem Hayashi 1998, 18–20).

Njegove teorije so imele močan vpliv ne le na področju sociologije religije, ampak nasploh v družboslovnih znanostih. Takšno sprejetje Webra je izhajalo iz japonskega prepričanja o zaostalosti Japonske po izgubi v drugi svetovni vojni in gorečega zgledovanja po »zahodu« in teorijah »zahodnih« mislecev, kot sta Max Weber in Karl Marx v preučevanju zgodovinskega razvoja japonskega kapitalizma. Različne smernice v japonski sociologiji religije odražajo spreminjajoča se stališča do Webra. Webrove teorije so bile po vojni tako vplivne, da se pristopi japonskih sociologov in religiologov do religije razlikujejo glede na njihovo stališče do Webra. Tako v grobem razlikujemo med tremi obdobji: 1. obdobje pred drugo svetovno vojno, 2. obdobje takoj po vojni in skozi 60. leta in 3. obdobje od 70. let do danes (Kageyama 1976, 139–60).

Prve študije Webra so se nanašale predvsem na njegovo delo na področju ekonomske in komercialne zgodovine. Sociologi so o njegovih idejah začeli razpravljati ob koncu 20. let v povezavi s sociološko metodologijo in s koncepti, kot so »idealni tipi« in »svoboda vrednot«. Te študije so postopoma formirale osrednji tok Webrovih študij na Japonskem. Poleg raziskav Webrove ekonomske teorije in sociološke metodologije so se pojavile študije, ki so se ukvarjale z njegovimi primerjalnimi obravnavami vzhoda in zahoda ter z njegovo analizo odnosa med etiko in ekonomskimi procesi (Maruyama 1965 in Uchida 1990).

Obdobje po drugi svetovni vojni velja za »zlato dobo Webrovega vpliva na Japonskem« (Uchida 1990, 119–202). Takrat so temeljito raziskovali Webrove teorije etike in etosa s poudarkom na njegovi knjigi *Protestantska etika in duh kapitalizma*. Ōtsuka Hisao, profesor moderne evropske ekonomske zgodovine, v knjigi *Kindaiteki ningen ruikei no sōshutsu (Kreacija modernih človeških tipov, 1946)* razpravlja o tem, kako bi Webrovo teorijo etosa povezali s teorijo človeških tipov/vrst, ki bi podprli japonsko modernizacijo. Za rekonstrukcijo japonske demokracije, piše Ōtsuka, je treba ustvariti »modernej, demokratični tip človeka« po zgledu Webrovega »modernega zahodnega etosa« (Ōtsuka 1969, 175). Njegove razprave so na razvoj študija religije na Japonskem vplivale z idejo, da je neka specifična religija (protestantizem) privedla do oblikovanja moderne družbe in da vse druge religije zavirajo to formacijo. Na Japonskem pa je prevladalo idealiziranje protestantizma kot vira modernizacije zaradi njegove zmage nad »magijo«. Posledično so japonske religije doživljale kritike, da so prepojene z magijo in ovirajo modernizacijo. Magija je po Ōtsuki integralni del tradicionalnega etosa, nasprotja moderne človeškega tipa. V *Majutsu kara no kaihō* (1969, 235) zapiše, da je »osvoboditev od magije ... neobhodna v uresničitvi procesa rekonstrukcije demokracije v današnji Japonski«. Zanj je odstranitev magije iz japonske religije nujen korak v realizaciji japonske modernizacije, s katero pa mora Japonska pohiteti, da dohiti »zahod« (Hayashi in Yamanaka 1993, 213).

V 70. letih je v dojemanju Webrove teorije nastal velik preobrat. Prvič, ker je po osrednjem mestu, ki ga je imela v povojni sociologiji religije, pričela upadati njena praktična uporabnost, s tem pa se je zmanjšal vpliv tudi vebrovskih kritikov modernizacije na Japonskem, v glavnem pa zaradi dveh dejavnikov v ozadju tega preobrata: nove smernice v intelektualnih razpravah na globalnem prizorišču in posebni družbeni pogoji na Japonskem. V akademskih krogih se je iz kritike evolucijskega pogleda na zgodovino s centrom v Zahodni Evropi razvil anti-modernizem. Na Japonskem se je začel širiti močan vpliv avtorjev, kot so Jung, Levi-Strauss in Eliade. »Zahodnjaki« so se že v prvi polovici 20. stoletja začeli zavedati slabosti in nevarnosti moderne družbe, medtem ko se je tako razmišljanje na Japonskem in v drugih ne-zahodnih družbah razširilo šele v drugi polovici istega stoletja. Takšno ozračje v intelektualnih krogih je spodbudilo pomembnost antropologije, mitologije, religijskih študij, globinske psihologije, simbolizma in strukturalizma, to pa je pomenilo odmik od prvotno dominantnega racionalizma in modernizma. S tem so tudi Webrove teorije, ki govorijo o odpravi magije skozi racionalizacijo, postale zastarele. Prevladalo je spoznanje, da so miti, simboli, rituali in svetovni nazori bistvenega pomena v življenju ljudi (Hayashi in Yamanaka 1993, 216).

Drugi dejavnik, ki je vplival na preobrat v odnosu do Webrove teorije, je bil hiter ekonomski razvoj, ko so se Japonci začeli zavedati izboljšanja življenjskega standarda in začeli na politično ekonomsko situacijo gledati v pozitivnejši luči. Zgodnejše diskusije o modernizaciji so vedno označile Japonsko kot zaostalo za zahodom in nerazvito družbo, vendar sta ta pogled izpodrinili uspešna industrializacija dežele in ekonomska blaginja. V akademskem svetu se je pojavila zavest o obstoju več modelov modernizacije (ne tipa »za« ali »pred« ampak različnih tipov). Japonska je, zavedajoč se svoje prisotnosti med drugimi naprednimi industrijskimi družbami, začela ponovno ceniti zanemarjene vrednote iz fevdalne preteklosti, kot sta tradicionalna razširjena družina *ie* (家) in dinamika skupinske orientiranosti družbe (Aoki 1990). Te spremembe v intelektualnih krogih so vplivale na spremembe v študiju religije. Privedle so do uporabe novih metodologij in analitičnih orodij za odkrivanje pomena mitov, simbolov in ritualov. Zacvetele so študije religije in antropologija s poudarkom na pomenu simbolov. Racionalizacija Webrove sociologije je postala predmet kritike. Japonsko ljudsko religijo, ki je bila označena za »nepravo religijo« in »magijo«, so številni raziskovalci ponovno ovrednotili.

Oblikovala sta se dva pristopa do Webrove teorije: prvi je izločil Webrovo teorijo kot nerelevantno za Japonsko in poskušal postaviti študij religije na temeljih študija simbolov in ritualov.⁷ Drugi pogled je bil kritičen, vendar si je prizadeval adaptirati Webrovo teorijo.

7 O teh študijah več v delih Yanagawa Keiichi (1968 in 1975).

Vpliv magično-religioznih elementov na etične reforme

Avtorji kritično-adaptabilnega pristopa do Webrovih tez zavračajo negativni pogled na japonsko ljudsko religijo, a upoštevajo pomen etosa. Tako poskušajo preveriti prakso in zgodovinski razvoj etičnih idej Japoncev in pojasniti odnos med japonskim modelom modernizacije in religioznim etosom, ki jo je podprl in ohranil.

Vidni predstavniki kritično-adaptabilnega dostopa so Robert Bellah (1957), Yasumaru Yoshio (1974), Yamamoto Shichihei (1979) in Shimazono Susumu (1981). Ti so prevzeli pogled, da Japonska ne zaostaja za zahodom, temveč je šla zgolj po drugačni poti do modernizacije kot zahod. Vsi med njimi so v svojih študijah argumentirali, da je japonska ljudska religija uspešno zagotovila etiko in etos, ki podpira modernizacijo (Hayashi in Yamanaka 1993, 217). Pokazali so še, da se je magija, ki naj bi v evropsko-severnoameriškem svetu v procesu modernizacije izginila, na Japonskem ohranila ali celo okrepila (Shimazono 1992 in Numajiri 1996, 109–24). Shimazono ponovno pretehta pomen magičnih elementov v religiji in družbi na Japonskem. Razišče, kako so magično religiozni elementi oz. »magični faktor« neločljivo povezani z elementi, ki so privedli do ljudske etične reforme, vendar se pri tem osredotoča na nove religije. Magija oz. magični faktor je zanj nekaj, kar lahko podpira moderno in postmoderno družbo znotraj vitalističnega koncepta, ki obdaja magično religioznost predvsem novih religij. V vitalistični religiozni miselnosti se bude, *kamije* (神) in druge religiozne objekte čaščenja dojema kot vir življenja. Vsa živa bitja naj bi bila rojena iz tega vira, od koder izvira harmonija med človekom, naravo in božanstvi. Tako je vera v bude in *kamije* hkrati vera v medsebojno povezanost človeških bitij in v skupno življenje ljudi in božanstev. Po Shimazonu naj bi ta odigrala vlogo vodiča ljudske etične reforme 19. in 20. stoletja (1981). Ne glede na »predmodernost« vitalistične miselnosti, ki se ni ukvarjala s holističnimi in racionalističnimi interpretacijami sveta ali družbenega reda in iskanjem načinov za vzpostavitev družbene pravičnosti, naj bi ta odgovorila na pomembna vprašanja ljudi, ki so se soočali z modernizacijo, saj se je osredotočila na najosnovnejše težave vsakdanjega življenja, kot je iskanje vezi v novih družbenih odnosih po razkroju vezi tradicionalne skupnosti. Kot tak miselni sistem, pravi Shimazono, je vitalistična miselnost gotovo odigrala pozitivno vlogo pri prilagajanju ljudi na moderne družbene odnose in zatorej morebiti vsebuje elemente, ki so podprli moderno in postmoderno družbeno miselnost (1981, 221). Yasumaru pa deloma zanika zgornje argumente Shimazona, saj dvomi, da bi bilo navadno ljudstvo zmožno samodiscipline in individualnosti, ki jo zahteva vitalistična miselnost (Yasumaru 2007, 348). Po mnenju Yasumaruja je »pravilno« etično naravnost priskrbelo ljudska moralna miselnost, čeprav se ta in religiozni miselni sistem, temelječ na vitalizmu, celo izključujeta. Yasumaru

iz »teorije o asketizmu« Webra in Ōtsuke razvije »teorijo ljudske (moralne) miselnosti«, ki naj bi nastala v specifičnem procesu japonske modernizacije. Pri tem kritizira Maruyama in Ōtsuko, ker sta ljudsko miselnost označila za »iracionalno, nazadnjaško in fevdalno« (Yasumaru 1974, 40). Ljudska moralna miselnost naj bi temeljila na krepostih, kot so marljivost, varčnost, ponižnost, sinovsko spoštovanje in harmonija. Yasumaru, opirajoč se na zgodovinsko gradivo, argumentira, da so te kreposti oblikovale notranjo religiozno etiko preprostih ljudi ter da je ta dajala podporo modernizaciji na Japonskem (Yasumaru 1981). Njegovi pomisleki o vlogi vitalistične odreditve na »ugodno« etiko ljudstva v procesih modernizacije verjetno temeljijo na usmerjenosti vitalistične odreditve v ta svet in k praktičnim koristim. Težnje, ki jih prepoznamo v magiji, pa so navidezno v nasprotju z etičnimi vrednotami, potrebnimi za modernizacijo po Webrovi tezi. Pri Yasumaruju si magični elementi (vitalizma) in ljudska etična reforma stojijo nasproti. Z negativno kritiko magije se tako Yasumaru ne uspe distancirati od »modernistov«. Ti niso prepoznali ljudske etične reforme, ki je imela pomembno vlogo pri oblikovanju etike moderne Japonske, saj so verjeli, da večina Japoncev blodi v »začaranem vrtu« (Shimazono 1992, 141).

Spre gledana vloga magije, simbolov in ritualov v razvoju potrošniške plati modernizacije

Večinoma so avtorji torej preverjali povezanost magičnih elementov v religiji z etiko. Taki pristopi so sloneli na razumevanju religije po Webrovem zgledu. Weber je predvideval, da je za zagon racionalizacije potrebna pravilna etična naravnost, ki izhaja iz integrativnega miselnega sistema, utemeljenega na religioznih idealih. Tak poudarek miselnega sistema pa zanemarja druge pomembne plati religije, kot so simboli in rituali. Videti je, da na argumente različnih avtorjev vplivata dva različna pristopa do religije, ki delujeta v ozadju njihovih razmišljanj. Prvi pristop poudarja miselni sistem religije in prezira pomembnost simbolov in ritualov. Drugi pristop upošteva simbole in rituale kot bistvene strukturne elemente religioznega pojava. Japonski avtorji so v novejših študijah s pozitivnimi pristopi do magično-religioznih elementov pripeljali do zanimivih ugotovitev, da se je magija, v nasprotju z evropsko-severnoameriškim svetom, kjer naj bi njena korenita odprava pogojevala ekonomski razvoj, v procesu modernizacije na Japonskem ohranila ali celo okrepila (Shimazono 1992; Numajiri 1996, 109–24).

Prav ugotovitve o ohranitvi in okrepitvi magično-religioznih elementov v modernizaciji na Japonskem pa kažejo na vzajemno povezanost z rastočim potrošništvom in potrošniško kulturo. Vendar se avtorji niso posvetili nadaljnjemu

pomenu magično-religioznih elementov v razvoju potrošniške plati modernizacijskih procesov. Dodatna pobuda za tovrstne raziskave so rezultati novejših raziskav religije v sodobni potrošniški družbi, ki kažejo na procese sakralizacije zaradi infuzije simbolov in komercializacije ritualov. Namesto »odčaranja sveta« nastaja t. i. »začaranje vsakdanjega življenja« (Firat in Venkatesh 1995). O tem pričajo raziskave religioznih dogodkov, praznikov, ritualov in simbolov, ki stimulirajo (ekonomsko) potrošnjo (in obratno) ter razcveti romanja s pomočjo potrošniškega trga v sodobni Japonski (Reader 2013; Delakorda Kawashima 2015). Gleda na omenjene ugotovitve o vzajemnih spodbudah med magičnimi praksami, simboli in rituali ter potrošniško prakso v sodobni družbi je treba vlogo magično-religioznih elementov ponovno preveriti, ne zgolj v njihovem pomenu za razvoj ugodne »delovne« etike, ampak tudi v njihovi nezamerljivi funkciji v potrošniški plati razvoja moderne kapitalistične družbe.

Nekatera izhodišča za obravnavo religije v povezavi s potrošništvom

Potrošništvo v sodobni Japonski vključuje veliko lastnosti, ki sicer določajo zahodno potrošništvo (od prednosti, ki jo imata moda in oglaševanje na potrošnikovo izbiro dobrin, do uporabe dobrin za določanje statusa in individualnosti). Vendar to ne pomeni, da je to rezultat zgolj zahodnega vpliva in da so družbene posledice potrošništva take kot pri zahodnih potrošnikih (Francks 2009, 5).

Vsaka posamezna zgodovina (in družbeno-kulturne okoliščine itd.) vsekakor pogojuje vzorce rasti potrošništva in pojav potrošnika kot vidika/znaka modernosti. Eden od načinov za boljše razumevanje rasti potrošništva v japonskem kontekstu je preučitev vsakdana preprostih ljudi, ki so izkusili pred-industrijsko rast. Tega ni mogoče razumeti zgolj skozi konvencionalna razmišljanja zgodovinarjev, ampak skozi poznavanje načinov, kako in zakaj so ljudje uporabljali dobrine. Tega, kar so ljudje kupovali in uporabljali, ni določal le njihov dohodek, ampak tudi spreminjajoča se infrastruktura, znotraj katere so živeli, delali in kupovali, družinski vzorci in spolne vloge, ki so strukturirale njihov vsakdan, popularna kultura, njihovo oglaševalsko in medijsko okolje in prevladujoče misli ter ideje, ki so zanje pogojevale pomene materialnih dobrin. Kot nedeljivi del tega vsakdana je treba posebej preučiti izjemen razmah religioznih praks v tem obdobju.

Vzajemen odnos med religijo in potrošništvom je v načinih, kako ljudje prakticirajo religijo ter kako se posamezne religiozne prakse in rituali v realnosti prepletajo z ekonomskim potrošništvom. Nekateri konkretni primeri so individualni nakup amuletov (in drugih religioznih in ne-religioznih predmetov) za tuzemske praktične koristi, kot so sreča, varnost v prometu, uspeh v šoli ipd.; nadalje romanje

za neposrednejši stik z božanstvom in pridobitev milosti; darovanje nagrad (ali denarja) v zameno za religiozne usluge oz. milosti.

Zaključek

V evropsko-severnoameriški literaturi so vse prakse in občutja, ki zadevajo magične, materialne, tuzemsko usmerjene »ljudske« religiozne vidike religije, poimeno-vane s pojmom ljudska religioznost. Z raziskavo pojavov ljudske religioznosti, ki ji je bilo v japonski religiozni zgodovini morebiti bolj prizaneseno kot na zahodu, je mogoče preveriti povezanost med materialnim svetom ljudske religioznosti in posvečeno duhovnostjo organizirane religije. V nasprotju z Webrovo tezo o »odčaranju sveta« je treba obravnavati materialno-magični svet, ne le kot pomemben del religije, ampak tudi z upoštevanjem njegove spodbujevalne vloge na razvoj potrošniške usmerjenosti.

Določene lastnosti religije (politeizem, religija kot kulturni resurs, pluralizem, neafiliacijska religioznost, eklekticizem, popularna božanstva *hayarigami* (流行神), povezovanje religijske niše z marketinško), ki jih najdemo v japonski družbi že v zgodnje-modernem obdobju (gl. Delakorda Kawashima 2015), postajajo v evropskih deželah vidnejše šele po t. i. vplivih sekularizacije (deinstitucionalizacija religije). Predpostavljam, da so to univerzalne religiozne prakse in težnje, ki jih najdemo zunaj institucionalizirane religije (v področju ljudske religioznosti). Moja glavna teza je, da z zatonom religijskih monopolov in z rastočo potrošniško kulturo in etiko pride do prekrivanja in součinkovanja take ljudske religioznosti s potrošniško usmerjenostjo. Raziskovanje japonske tradicionalne religioznosti v sodobni japonski družbi lahko osvetli medsebojno povezanost in soodvisnost ljudske religioznosti (kot kontinuitete med tradicijo in sodobnostjo) in potrošništva (kot osrednje lastnosti vsakdanjega življenja sodobne družbe). Prav potrošniški vsakdan v (post)moderini družbi je morda gonilo »religioznega vsakdana«, ki ga je napovedal že Weber:

Veličastni racionalizem etično-metodičnega vodenja življenja (ki izvira iz vsake profetske religioznosti) je vrgel s prestola to mnogoboštvo v prid le enega, ki je »potrebno« – in potem moral privoliti v kompromise in relativiziranja, ki jih poznamo iz zgodovine krščanstva zaradi realitet notranjega in zunanjega življenja. Danes pa je religiozni »vsakdan«. Stari bogovi, odčarani in od tod v podobi neosebni sil, vstajajo iz grobov, stremijo po oblasti nad našim življenjem in začenjajo zopet med seboj svoj večni boj (...). (SWP 1964, 330)

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Summary

Various sociologists and scholars of religion, using Weber's theories as a basis, examined the internal connection between religious ideology and the growth of modern industrialist capitalism in Japan. In the religious studies of postwar Japan, Weber's work *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* becomes a paradigm, while Protestantism is renowned as the only true religion that is, with its ethics, capable of shaping a modern society. Within Japanese literature of this period, one can find written that for the modernization of Japan it was, following the western model, necessary to become liberated from magic "*majutsu kara no kaihō*" (魔術からの開放), which is an integral part of Japanese traditional popular religion. Later, towards the end of the 1960s, when Japan reaches a successful level of industrialization and economic growth, the use of Weber's theories for criticizing Japan as "behind" in its modernization loses its credibility and the awareness that there exist different models of modernization begins to appear. Some academics dismiss them as irrelevant for Japan, while others, assuming the existence of a Japanese model of modernization along with supporting Japanese religious ethics, attempt to adapt his theories.

Written works appear stating that the establishment of a new moral codex (favorable for the development of capitalism) during the popular ethical reforms in the 19th century was influenced by factors such as traditional value system and government, popular moral thought and magical/religious dimensions of vitalistic mindset of new religions. This paper, drawing on the assumption that considers the meaning of religious elements for the development of the consumer aspect of the development of a capitalist society, suggests a detailed study of magical or religious elements, not only taking into account the development of favorable popular ethics for promoting production but also their role in the development of consumption as a necessary factor in capitalist societies.

