TRANSPLANTED BUDDHISM IN AND FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA

P O L I G R A F I

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T R A N S P L A N T E D   B U D D H I S M   I N   A N D   F R O M   S O U T H E A S T   A S I A

REGULAR PAPERS / DRUGE RAZPRAVE

TRANSPLANTED BUDDHISM IN AND FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA

Southeast Asia had emerged as the preferred stopping point for Buddhists traveling between India and China via maritime routes as early as the 3rd century A.D. The Buddhist sculptures and texts unearthed so far help trace the existence of Mahayana Buddhism across this region back to the 7th century, and even earlier. In the modern era, Theravada monks from Thailand, Myanmar, and other Southeast Asian countries were dispatched to various non-Buddhist countries as "missionaries" to serve the religious needs of the immigrant communities from their respective home countries. In the 19th century, Mahayana monks from China started emigrating to Southeast Asia. Supported by the local Chinese communities, they built many temples in their host countries, where these communities have subsequently grown in size and influence to date.

Focusing on Southeast Asia, this special issue of Poligrafi documents and investigates these trans-regional Buddhist movements past and present. The original idea of this special issue was for the articles to cover a range of Buddhist traditions emigrating into, out of, and within Southeast Asia, and/or explore the original purpose of emigration, the established communities, the present vibrancy of the tradition, etc. When creating content sections, it became clear how diverse and important this topic is in the light of new epistemologies, academic questions and deconstructions, as well as in the search for new models for coexistence, from intergenerational to intercultural, and the ethical challenges associated with it.

Yaoping Liu and Anja Zalta

THE BUDDHIST CONCEPT OF *PAṬICCASAMUPPĀDA* BASED ON PĀLI MANUSCRIPTS: GENESIS, MEANINGS, ANNOTATED TRANSLATION, INTERPRETATION AND DOCTRINAL SIGNIFICANCE

Sanjoy Barua Chowdhury

Introduction

The doctrine of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is considered a "central principle"[1] of the Buddha's teachings[2]. The Buddha acknowledged that the doctrine of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* appeared to him as an astonishing and eye-opening discovery that brought him vision, knowledge, wisdom and a deep understanding on the occasion of his enlightenment.[3] In clarifying its doctrinal value along the path of awakening, the Buddha asserted that the realization of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is like the under-

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[1]   The phrase, "central principle" alludes to the depth of the doctrinal worth of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* based on Buddhist soteriology, i.e., *nibbāna*. The Buddha states that when one realizes the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, they can experience the bliss of *nibbāna*. For a detailed analysis, see M I 184.
[2]   Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Great Discourse of Causation: The Mahānidāna Sutta and its Commentaries* (Kandy: Buddhist Publications Society, 1995), 1.
[3]   See S II 104.

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standing of his "subtle and profound teachings",[4] i.e., the Dhamma.[5] Because of its doctrinal prominence, the discourse of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is frequently found in the mainstream Pāli manuscripts from *Tipiṭaka*.[6] On the basis of canonical scriptures, scholars and Buddhist monks described the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* in various ways for thousands of years. The paper aims to clarify the genesis [or origin] of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and its meaning, annotated translation, interpretation and doctrinal significance, based on the *Nikāya* manuscripts.[7] Prior to academics and practitioners, an in-depth study of this research reveals why and to what degree the Pāli tradition values the thought of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* as articulating its insight into how to attain the path of ultimate liberation from a Buddhist perspective.

The Genesis of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*

The Buddha stated that one of his quintessential teachings is the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*.[8] Hence, it was expressed in various ways through-

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[4]   In the Buddha's teaching, the "subtle and profound teachings" are designated as the *Dhamma* in accordance with the Pāli Tradition, which is equivalent to *Dharma* in Sanskrit. According to Nyanatiloka, the four noble truths synthesize the *Dhamma*, the liberating law that the Buddha discovered and proclaimed. See the Venerable Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1960), 97.
The four noble truths are expounded in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* from the *Digha Nikaya* as "subtle and profound teachings". The Buddha asserted that he experienced enormous sorrow for innumerable rebirths as long as he did not understand the essence of the four noble truths. For a detailed analysis, see D II 91.
[5]   M I 184: *yo paṭiccasamuppādaṃ passati. So dhammaṃ passati. Yo dhammaṃ passati. So paṭiccasamuppādaṃ passatī.*
[6]   *Tipiṭaka* is a Pāli or *Tripiṭaka* in Sanskrit, which means "Three Baskets". The collections of the scriptures from the *Suttas, Vinaya* and *Abhidhamma* - the three divisions that constitute the Buddhist Canon - were originally preserved in the "three baskets" on palm-leaf manuscripts. See Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History, and Practices* (New York: Cambridge Universiry Press, 2012), 459–462.
[7]   The *Nikāya* manuscripts allude to the subdivisions of the *Suttapiṭaka* (Basket of Discourses) in the Pāli canon. As shown by the Tipiṭaka, there are five *Nikāyas* (collections) of *suttā* (discourses), namely: *Dīgha Nikāya* (*The Long Discourses*); *Majjhima Nikāya* (*The Middle-length Discourses*); *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (*The Connected Discourses); Aṅguttara Nikāya* (*The Numerical Discourses*); and *Khuddaka Nikāya* (*The Minor Collection*). "Tipitaka: The Pali Canon". Available online: https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/ (accessed on July 11, 2022).
[8]   Bodhi, *The Great Discourse of Causation: The Mahānidāna Sutta and its Commentaries*, 1.

out the *Tipiṭaka*. Inquiring into the Pāli manuscripts, we learn that the thought of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* appeared as a remarkable, stunning, and eye-opening discovery during the Buddha's inward journey along the way of his journey to awakening. He further clarified that the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* articulated itself to him as vision, knowledge, insight, understanding and light.[9] According to the *Udāna*,[10] we come to know about the three watches of the night during the Buddha's journey into awakening. Each night, the concept of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* was applied to observe in one of three different ways: forwarding, reversing and both forwarding-reversing orders.[11] Due to their applicability to understanding the process of life from its origins to eradication-from existence in *saṃsāra*[12] to attainment in *nibbāna*,[13] – the three distinct formulas are recognized as the practical aspects of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*.[14]

Aside from its practical aspect, the abstract formula of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* was discovered during an insightful conversation that an *arahat*,[15] Assaji Thera,[16] had with Brahmin Upatissa, thereaf-

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[9] See S II 105.

[10] The *Udāna*, the third manuscript of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* (the Minor collection), contains a rich collection of concise discourses, each of which culminates with a short verse spoken by the Buddha. The *Udāna* consists of eighty *suttā* (discourses) arranged into eight *vaggas* (chapters).

[11] See Ud 1–3.

[12] The Pāli word, *saṃsāra*, is frequently translated as "the cycle of life". Nyanatiloka defines the term *saṃsāra* as "round of rebirth". See Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, 297–298.

[13] The Pāli term *nibbāna*, also known *nirvāṇa* in Sanskrit, translates as "blowing out" or "extinction". See Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, 201. The goal of the Buddhist path is *nibbāna*, which is seen as the ultimate release from suffering in this existence. See Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013), 589–590.
In a Buddhist context, *nibbāna* could be defined as going beyond the "cycle of life" of *saṃsāra*. According to the Ādittapariyāya *Sutta* of *Saṃyutta Nikāya,* the Buddha stated that the whole world is in flames and the extinction of greed, hatred and delusions are the state of *nibbāna*. For a detailed analysis, see S IV 19–20.

[14] Sanjoy Barua Chowdhury, "Unfolding Dependent Origination – A Psychological Analysis for Disclosing the Root of the Afflictive State of Mind", *Journal of International Buddhist Studies* 13, no. 1, 11 – 43, http://www.ojs.mcu.ac.th/index.php/JIBS/article/view/6913/4529.

[15] The Pāli phrase "arahat" designates people who have eradicated greed, hatred and delusion, and are free of all affiliations or cankers. See I. B. Horner, Early Buddhist Theory of Man Perfected: A Study of the Arahan (London: William and Norgate Ltd., 1936), 44.

[16] Assaji Thera was one of the first five *arahats* of the Buddha. See S III 66, S IV 420.

ter known as Sāriputta.[17] The Venerable Assiji responded when asked about the philosophy of his instructor that the Buddha defined both the origins of all things [of *dhammā*][18] and how to eradicate them.[19] The abstract formula of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* exposes cause and effect, also known as the law of conditionality (*idappaccayatā*[20]),[21] which was found in a dialogue between the Buddha and his attendant, Ānanada.[22] Since the teaching of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is positioned as a crucial discourse, it can be found in every *Nikāya* of Pāli manuscripts. Both the theoretical and practical aspects of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* are equally important prior to the methodology of Buddhist soteriology.

The Meanings of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*

The Pāli word *Paṭiccasamuppāda*[23] is derived from a combination of two words: *paṭicca* and *samuppāda*. The first term *paṭicca* means "because of" or "on account of", whereas the second word *samuppāda* refers to "arising on the ground of", or "happening by way of cause". Following the Pāli grammatical structure of *sandhi* (union), samuppāda can be

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[17] Sāriputta is one of the chief male disciples of the Buddha, together with Moggallāna. After hearing Assaji Thera's presentation of the Buddha's teaching, he proceeded to meet with the Blessed One and became his sincere student See Ñāṇapoṇika Thera and Hellmuth Hecter, *Great Disciples of the Buddha: Their Lives, Their Works and Their Legacy*, ed. Bhikkhu Bodhi (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003), 49–53.

[18] In this regard, *dhammā* is denoted as the phenomenal object of things. See D II 290.

[19] Vin I 40: *ye dharmā hetuprabhavā hetuṃ teṣāṃ tathāgato hyavadat, teṣāṃ ca yo nirodha evaṃvādī mahāśramaṇaḥ.*

[20] The Pāli term *idappaccayatā* is analyzed by Bhikkhu Bodhi as a specific conditionality of the doctrine of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*. He added that *idappaccayatā*, also referred to as the law of cause and effect, is the emergence of phenomena in dependence on specific conditions and circumstances. See Bodhi, *The Great Discourse of Causation: The Mahānidāna Sutta and its Commentaries*, 2.

[21] M III 63: *imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti, imassuppādā idaṃ uppajjati, imasmiṃ asati idaṃ ha hoti, imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati.*

[22] Ānanada served as the Buddha's primary attendant. According to the *Mahānidāna Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya*, we can find a conversation between the Buddha and Ānanda in which the Blessed One addressed how the doctrine of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is marvelous, astounding, eye-opening and deep to comprehend. In the same discourse, we further observe the Buddha's admonishment to Ānanada while he mentions that the teaching of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* was easy and clear to understand. For a detailed analysis, see D II 55.

[23] See Vin II 96; S III 16; A III 406.

subdivided into two words: *saŋ* or *saṃ* and *uppāda* [*saŋ* (with) + *uppāda* (arising)].[24] Both the words *samuppāda* and *uppāda* imply "origin", "arising", "genesis", "production" or "coming to be".[25] Buddhaghosa[26] defines the term *Paṭiccasamuppāda* in terms of three words: *Paṭicca*, *sammā*, and *uppāda* [*Paṭicca* (having dependent) + *sammā* (a right) + *uppāda* (arising)].[27] According to Buddhaghosa, the Pāli word *Paṭiccasamuppāda* can be rendered as either "having dependent, a right arising" or "dependent on causes rightly by".[28] Literally, the Pāli term *Paṭiccasamuppāda* can be translated into English as "Dependent Origination," or "Dependent Arising".[29] Peter Della Santina transliterated the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* as "Interdependent Origination" or "the chain of causation".[30]

Annotated Translation of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*

The discourse of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, in both theoretical and practical formats, is found in a number of places in the Pāli manuscripts. The theoretical formula of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, also known as the law of conditionality (*idappaccayatā*), is articulated through the exposition of causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*paccaya*). Referring to the "Bahudhātuka

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[24]   *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is rendered in Sanskrit as *Pratītyasamutpāda*, which is also derived from the combination of two words: *pratītya* and *utpāda* [*pratītya* (dependent) + *utpāda* (origination)]. This Sanskrit translation is similar to the Pāli phrase and follows the same grammatical structure. See Chowdhury, "Unfolding Dependent Origination," 6930.

[25]   Ibid.

[26]   Buddhaghosa was a commentator, translator and philosopher of Theravāda Buddhism. He is well known for his monumental book *Visuddhimagga (Path of Purification)*, which was compiled around the 5th century. The translator of the *Visuddhimagga (Path of Purification)*, Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, stated that the *Visuddhimagga* is recognized as a masterpiece of world literature that methodically organizes and interprets the teachings of the Buddha found in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka*. See Bhadantācariya Buddhaghossa, *Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification*, trans. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (Colombo: Samayawardana Printers, 2010), xxvii.

[27]   Vism 574: *Keci pana paṭicca sammā ca titthiyaparikappitapakatipurisādikāraṇanirapekkho uppādo paṭiccasamuppādoti evaṃ uppādamattaṃ paṭiccasamuppādoti vadanti.*

[28]   Buddhaghossa, *Visuddhimagga*, 533.

[29]   Bodhi, *The Great Discourse of Causation: The Mahānidāna Sutta and its Commentaries*, 1.

[30]   Peter Della Santina, *The Tree of enlightenment* (Taiwan: Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc., 1997), 119.

Sutta" of the *Majjhima Nikāya*,[31] a conversation between the Buddha and Ānanada can be found, where the Blessed One[32] introduces the law of causationality [or the theoretical formula of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*] as follows:

"When this exists, that comes to be; with this arising from this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases."[33]

On the other hand, the practical aspect of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* was presented through introducing twelvefold links within two sequences of forwarding (*anuloma*) and reversing (*paṭiloma*) orders.[34] The twelvefold linkage of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* are: (i) ignorance (*avijjā*), (ii) mental formations or fabrication (*saṅkhāra*), (iii) consciousness (*viññāṇa*), (iv) mentality and materiality (*nāmarūpa*), (v) sixfold sense bases (*saḷāyatana*), (vi) contact (*phassa*), (vii) feeling (*vedanā*), (viii) craving (*taṅhā*), (ix) clinging (*upādāna*), (x) becoming (*bhāva*), (xi) birth (*jāti*), and (xii) aging and death (*jarāmaraṅa*).[35] The discourse of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* in terms of practical aspects is translated into two sequences, with reference to the "Nidāna Vaggo" of *Saṁyutta Nikāya*,

1. Forwarding order (*anuloma*) of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*:
With the condition of ignorance, mental formations,[36] arise;
With the condition of mental formations, consciousness,[37] arises;

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[31]   See M III 63.
[32]   The Blessed One is referred to the Buddha. See Vism 210.
[33]   The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, trans. Ñaṇamoli Bhikkhu; ed. Bhikkhu Bodhi (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), 927.
[34]   Ud 1–3; S II 25–26.
[35]   Ibid.
[36]   Bhikkhu Bodhi translates the Pāli term *saṅkhārā* as "volitional formation". See Bodhi, *The Great Discourse of Causation: The Mahānidāna Sutta and its Commentaries*, 55.
A.P. Buddhadatta Mahāthera defines *saṅkhārā* as "mental coefficients". See A.P. Buddhadatta Mahāthera, *Concise Pali-English Dictionary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1994), 225.
I. B. Honor renders *saṅkhārā* as "habitual tendencies". See *Majjhima Nikāya: The Collection of the Middle Length Saying. Vol 1*. Trans. I. B. Horner (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1995), 360.
[37]   T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stade interpreted "mental quality" as "consciousness (*viññāṇa*)". See T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stade, *Pali-English Dictionary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 2007), 618–619.

With the condition of consciousness, mentality and materiality arises;

With the condition of mentality and materiality, sixfold sense bases arise;

With the condition of sixfold sense bases, contact arises;

With the condition of contact, feelings arise;

With the condition of feeling, craving arises;

With the condition of craving, clinging arises;

With the condition of clinging, becoming arises;

With the condition of becoming, birth arises;

With the condition of birth, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair [come into play]. This is the genesis of all of this suffering [stress and dissatisfaction].[38]

II. Reversing order (*paṭiloma*) of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*:

With the cessation of ignorance, mental formations cease;

With the cessation of mental formations, consciousness ceases;

With the cessation of consciousness, mentality and materiality cease;

With the cessation of mentality and materiality, sixfold sense bases cease;

With the cessation of the sixfold sense base, contact ceases;

With the cessation of contact, feeling ceases;

With the cessation of feeling, craving ceases;

With the cessation of craving, clinging ceases;

With the cessation of clinging, becoming ceases;

With the cessation of becoming, birth ceases;

In a study of Pāli literature, mental states [or consciousness] can be defined using four different terms, such as mentality (*nāma*), thought (*citta*), mind (*mano*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). See Sanjoy Barua Chowdhury, "The Process of Life in Dependent Origination: An Analysis Based on Buddhist Psychology", Ph.D. Dissertation (Ayutthaya: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2019), 51.

[38] S II 2: *Avijjāpaccayā bhikkhave, saṅkhārā. Saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ. Viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ. Nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanaṃ. Saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso. Phassapaccayā vedanā. Vedanāpaccayā taṇhā. Taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ. Upādānapaccayā bhavo. Bhavapaccayā jāti. Jāti-paccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ, sokaparidevadukkhadomanassūpāyāsā sambhavanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti.*
Translation by the author of the article.

With the cessation of birth, ageing, and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair cease. This is the cessation of all this suffering [stress & dissatisfaction].[39]

Interpretations of the Twelvefold Links of the Paṭiccasamuppāda

The Buddha's proposal of the twelvefold links and their active roles are delineated within the forward and reverse models of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*. In addition to the work of Buddhist scholars, Buddhist scriptures provide detailed information on these twelvefold formulas. Based on the *Nikāya* manuscripts and scholars' views, Buddhist interpretations of the twelvefold formulas are as follows:

1. The first constituent of the cycle of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is ignorance (*avijjā*), which refers to "lacking knowledge or information".[40] The Buddha defines ignorance as the lack of knowing the four noble truths (*cattāri ariya saccāni*),[41] namely suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the way to its cessation.[42] Gethin defines "ignorance" as a positive misconception and not the mere absence of knowledge.[43] Based on the wisdom of the Pāli manuscripts, ignorance is defined as the foundation of all evil actions and wrong views,[44] along with the taproot of suffering (*dhakka*);[45] therefore, it stands first in the formula of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*.

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[39]   S II 4: *Avijjāya tveva asesavirāganirodhā saṅkhāranirodho, saṅkhāranirodhā viññāṇanirodho, viññāṇanirodhā nāmarūpanirodho, nāmarūpanirodhā saḷāyatananirodho, saḷāyatananirodhā phassanirodho, phassanirodhā vedanānirodho, vedanānirodhā taṇhānirodho, taṇhānirodhā upādānanirodho, upādānanirodhā bhavanirodho, bhavanirodhā jātinirodho, jātinirodhā jarāmaraṇaṃ sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā nirujjhanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hotī"ti.*
Translation by the author of the article.
[40]   "Oxford learner's Dictionary," accessed July 13, 2022, https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/ignorance?q=ignorance+.
[41]   See D II 91.
[42]   See S II 4.
[43]   Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 150.
[44]   S V 1.
[45]   See S II 2; S XII 4; D II 91.

2. The second link in the cycle of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is mental formation (*saṅkhāra*). Bhikkhu Bodhi translates the Pāli term *saṅkhārā* as "volitional formation",[46] whereas A.P. Buddhadatta Mahathera defines it as "mental coefficients".[47] I. B. Honor renders *saṅkhārā* as "habitual tendencies".[48] The Buddha acknowledges three kinds of volitional formations: bodily volitional formation, verbal volitional formation, and mental volitional formation.[49] In brief, the mental formation can be expressed as habitual tendencies [whether positive or negative] that lead the mind to attach to the aforementioned three actions. Based on the Buddha's above exposition, Bhikkhu Bodhi asserts that the Buddhist concepts of *Kamma* (actions) and mental formation (*saṅkhāra*) are synonymous.[50]

3. The third is consciousness (*viññāṇa*), which defines the mental quality.[51] Inquiring in the *Nikāya* manuscripts, the words mentality (*nāma*), thought (*citta*), mind (*mano*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) are all used as synonyms for one another. According to Buddhist doctrine, the mind predominates over both wholesome and unwholesome actions.[52] In this sense, consciousness is crucial to understanding how the mind generates phenomenal and physical actions. The Buddha classified consciousness into sixfold categories: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness and mind-consciousness.[53] However, the Buddhist teaching of consciousness offers the basis for a comprehensive understanding of

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[46] Bodhi, *The Great Discourse of Causation: The Mahānidāna Sutta and its Commentaries*, 55.
[47] A.P. Buddhadatta Mahāthera, *Concise Pali-English Dictionary*, 225.
[48] *Majjhima Nikāya: The Collection of the Middle Length Saying. Vol 1.* Trans. I. B. Horner, 360.
[49] See S II 4.
[50] *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, Vols 2, trans. Bhikkhu Bodhi (Boston: WisdomPublications, 2000), 45–47.
[51] T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stade, *Pali-English Dictionary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 2007), 618–619.
[52] Dhp 1-2: *Manopubbaṅgamā dhammā manoseṭṭhā manomayā; Manasā ce paduṭṭhena bhāsati vā karoti vā.*
[53] See S II 4.

mental states, whether wholesome or unwholesome. Bhikkhu Bodhi signifies the appearance of consciousness as follows:

"Consciousness appears as an enduring subject due to a lack of attention. When it is mindfully examined, the appearance of lastingness is dissolved by the perception of its impermanence."[54]

Additionally, Buddhist scripture clarifies that consciousness and wisdom are inseparable and precisely states that wisdom cannot flourish alone without an awareness of consciousness.[55] The Buddhist interpretation of consciousness reveals a clear notion of the role of the mind and its various directions [or mental concomitants].

4. Mentality and materiality (*nāma-rūpa*) are listed as the fourth link together. According to Buddha, mentality (*nāma*) is precisely correlated to feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), volition (*cetanā*), contact (*phassa*) and attention (*manasikāro*), while form or materiality (*rūpa*) derives from the four great elements (*mahābhūtānaṃ upādāyarūpaṃ*).[56] The Venerable Buddhaghosa, in The Path of Purification (*Visuddhimagga*), affirms that when mentality and materiality (*nāma-rūpa*) are connected to the five aggregates (*pañcakhandha*), mentality (*nāma*) is correlated with the three aggregates of feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*) and mental formation (*saṅkhāra*), whereas materiality is signified with the aggregate of material form (*rūpa*).[57]

5. The fifth link in the cycle of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is the six sense bases (*saḷāyatana*), which define the six sense organs, including the eye base (*cakkhāyatana*), the ear base (*sotāyatana*), the nose base (*ghānāyatana*), the tongue base (*jivhātana*), the body base (*kāyāyatana*) and the mind base (*manāyatana*).[58] Inquiring into the *Nikāya* manuscripts, the six sense doors are operated by the

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54   Bodhi, *The Great Discourse of Causation: The Mahānidāna Sutta and its Commentaries*, 27.
55   J. Allam Hobson, "Normal and Abnormal States of Consciousness" in *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*, ed. Max Velmans and Susan Schneider (Oxford & MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2007), 101.
56   S II 3.
57   See "Paññā-bhūmi-niddesa", Vism Ch. XVII.
58   S II 3.

mind base.[59] In fact, the mind is the key term for noticing responses from the bodily organs.[60]

6. The sixth link of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is contact (*phassa*), as it results from the interaction between mentality (*nāma*) and materiality (*rūpa*).[61] Rhys Davids and William Stede define contact (*phassa*) as the fundamental fact in the sense of impression.[62] Inquiring into the *Nikāya* manuscripts, Mahākacchāna[63] expresses contact as follows:

"Dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact."[64]

The aforesaid statement clearly indicates the crucial significance of consciousness in the process of the mentality and materiality mechanism. The Buddha classified contact into six ways : eye-contact (*cakkhusampasso*), ear-contact (*sotasamphasso*), nose-contact (*ghāṇasamphasso*), tongue-contact (*jivhāsamphasso*), body-contact (*kāyasamphasso*) and mind-contact (*manosamphasso*).[65]

7. The seventh link is feeling (*vedanā*). Interpreting the cycle of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, feeling is distinguished into six aspects: feeling born of eye-contact (*cakkhusamphassajā*), feeling born of ear-contact (*sotasamphassajā*), feeling born of nose-contact (*ghāṇasamphassajā*), feeling born of tongue-contact (*jivhāsamphassajā*), feeling born of body-contact (*kāyasamphassajā*) and feeling born of mind-contact (*manosamphassajā*).[66]

8. The eighth formula is craving (*taṇhā*), which is also denoted as one of the chief roots of suffering.[67] Buddhist scripture makes

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[59] See Dhp 1–2.
[60] See M I 108.
[61] Sn 170: *Nāmañca rūpañca paṭicca phassā; icchānidānāni pariggahāni, icchāya'santyā- na mamattamatthi, rūpe vibhute na phusanti phassā.*
[62] T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stade, *Pali-English Dictionary*, 478.
[63] Mahākacchāna is recognized as one of the skilled and versatile teachers of eighty outstanding disciples of the Buddha in accordance with the *Nikāya* manuscripts. For a detailed investigation, See Thag 494–501.
[64] M I 111: *Cakkhuñcāvuso paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ. Tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso.*
[65] See S II 3.
[66] See S II 3; M I 396; S III 226.
[67] See Dhp 334-359.

it clear that craving rules the world.[68] In the discourse of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, the Buddha expounds upon six classes of craving: craving for forms (*rūpataṇhā*), craving for sounds (*saddataṇhā*), craving for smells (*gandhataṇhā*), craving for tastes (*rasataṇhā*), craving for tactile objects (*phoṭṭhabbataṇhā*) and craving for mental phenomena (*dhammataṇhā*).[69]

9. The ninth constituent, clinging (*upādāna*), is commonly referred to as grasping.[70] The Blessed One expounds on four kinds of clinging: clinging to sensual pleasures (*kāmūpadāna*), clinging to views (*diṭṭhūpādāna*), clinging to rules and vows (*sīlabbatūpādāna*), and clinging to a doctrine of self (*attavādūpādāna*).[71] In addition, the process of clinging has a strong bond with the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandho*). Therefore, on the basis of the aggregates, the Blessed One classified clinging-aggregates into five aspects: form as a clinging-aggregate (*rūpūpādākkhandho*), feeling as a clinging-aggregate (*vedanūpādākkhandho*), perception as a clinging-aggregate (*saññūpādākkhandho*), fabrication as a clinging-aggregate (*saṅkhārāūpādākkhandho*) and consciousness (*viññāṇūpādākkhandho*) as a clinging-aggregate.[72]

10. The tenth link of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is the existence or becoming (*bhāva*), which refers to the sensual characteristics of the body.[73] The Buddha describes its threefold existences: sense-sphere existence (*kāmabhavo*), form-sphere existence (*rūpabhavo*) and formless-sphere existence (*arūpabhavo*).[74]

11. The eleventh link is birth (*jāti*), which comprises the entire embryonic process beginning with conception and ending with parturition.[75] The Blessed One expounds upon birth as follows:

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[68]   M II 54: ūno lko atitto taṇhādāso.
[69]   See S II 3; A II 211; M I 256.
[70]   Nyanatiloka. *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, ed. Nyanaponika (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2004), 184.
[71]   See S II 3.
[72]   M III 15.
[73]   Nyanatiloka. *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, 31.
[74]   See S II 3.
[75]   Nyanatiloka. *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, 69.

"The birth of the various beings into various orders of beings, they are being born, descend into production, the manifestation of the aggregates, the obtaining of the sense bases."[76]

12. The twelfth constituent is ageing and death (*jarāmarana*). According to the discourse of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, the Blessed One explained that ageing (*jarā*) refers to a being's old age, brokenness, greyness, wrinkling, decline of vitality, and degeneration of the faculties, whereas death (*marana*) refers to a being's deceasing, passing away, breaking up, disappearance, mortality, death, completion of time, breaking up of the aggregates and casting off of the body.[77]

The Doctrinal Significance of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*

Despite the fact that the four noble truths (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*) are regarded as the Buddha's awakening discovery, the concept of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is the methodological approach to how to end suffering along the path to ultimate freedom. The four noble truths and the concept of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* are integral to each other because the principal object of both doctrines is to clarify the taproot and cessation of suffering, i.e., *dukkha*.[78] According to the Buddha's first discourse, "Setting the Well of Dhamma in Motion", the four noble truths[79] are expounded as follows:

1. The first noble truth is suffering, which includes birth, ageing, illness, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.
2. The second truth is the origin of suffering, which is defined as clinging that leads to further becoming within the cycle of saṃsāra.

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[76]   *Ibid.*
[77]   See S II 3.
[78]   Despite the Pāli term, *dukkha* is commonly translated as suffering or dissatisfaction, its intricate meaning makes it difficult to convey in English. According to the discourse of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda,* the Buddha mentioned eight types of suffering, including birth, aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. See S II 3–4.
[79]   See S V 420.

The discourse mentioned three kinds of craving: craving for sensual pleasure, craving for existence, and craving for non-becoming.⁸⁰

3. The third noble truth is the cessation of suffering that can be acquired by abandoning craving.⁸¹

4. The fourth noble truth is the path leading to the cessation of suffering. Here, the path refers to the noble eightfold path.⁸²

As per the above description, the four noble truths can be divided into two groups: (I) the first two are grouped together as suffering and its origin, and (II) the final two are placed in a separate category as the end of suffering and the path to ceasing the suffering. Both groups explicitly demonstrated the Buddhist soteriological approach, which is methodologically articulated in the two sequences of forwarding (*anuloma*) and reversing (*paṭiloma*) orders in the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*. Practical aspects of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* clarify its connection with the four noble truths as follows:

1. Forwarding (*anuloma*) of the twelvefold constituents of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*: Ignorance (*avijjā*) → Volitional formation (*saṅkhāra*) → Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) → Mentality and materiality (*nāma-rūpa*) → Six sense bases (*saḷāyatana*) → Contact (*phassa*) → Feeling (*vedanā*) → Craving (*taṇhā*) → Clinging (*upādāna*) → Becoming (*bhāva*) → Birth (*jāti*) → Aging and Death (*jarāmarana*) → … Sorrow (*soka*), lamentation (*parideva*), pain (*dukkha*), grief (*domanassa*) and despair (*upayasa*) = The origin of suffering (*dukkha samudaya*) = the first and second noble truths.

2. Reversing the order (*paṭiloma*) of the twelvefold constituents of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*: Ignorance (*avijjā*) ceases → Volitional formation (*saṅkhāra*) ceases → Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) ceases → Mentality and materiality (*nāma-rūpa*) ceases → Six sense bases (*saḷāyatana*) ceases → Contact (*phassa*) ceases → Feeling (*vedanā*) ceases → Craving (*taṇhā*) ceases → clinging (*upādāna*)

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⁸⁰ *Ibid.*
⁸¹ See A II 211; M I 256; S III 227; S v 420.
⁸² The noble eightfold path includes the right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. For a detailed investigation of the noble eightfold path, see A I 178; D II 72; M I 299; S II 104.

ceases → Becoming (*bhāva*) ceases → Birth (*jāti*) ceases → Aging and Death (*jarāmarana*) ceases → … Sorrow (*soka*), lamentation (*parideva*), pain (*dukkha*), grief (*domanassa*) and despair (*upayasa*) cease = The cessation of suffering (*dukkha nirodha*) = the third and fourth noble truths.

Based on the notes mentioned above, if the realization of the four noble truths is considered to be the ultimate goal for seekers and devotees, the doctrine of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is applied as the methodology of Buddhist soteriology, i.e., *nibbāna*.

Conclusion

The concept of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* describes the vision of life through demonstrating twelvefold links – from birth to death. Examining the depth of every link brings an explicit notion that everything is interconnected and inseparable, i.e., nothing exists independently of its cause and condition. The causal relationships of the law of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* assert that the process of life and its motion are a part of the chains of twelvefold links. The Buddha's teaching of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* clearly outlines the taproot of suffering and its path to cessation. The doctrinal and scriptural study of this paper clarifies the connection between the concept of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and the four noble truths. If realizing the four noble truths is considered to be the ultimate aim for seekers and followers, the understanding of the doctrine of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* – also known as the attainment of *nibbāna* – is applied as the Buddhist soteriological methodology.

We can conclude from the discussion in the scripturally based research paper that the doctrine of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is unquestionably the most profound, distinctive and dynamic yet subtle teaching in Buddhist doctrine. By providing a landscape of its historical genesis, explicit meaning, annotated tradition, interpretation and doctrinal significance, the discourse of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* can be considered the pivotal Buddhist teachings that succinctly articulate the path of ultimate liberation. The Buddha's objective was to present the teaching of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* to delineate clear steps and motions of life from womb to tomb, in addition to seeking out the taproot of suffering and

the method to vanquish it. The concept of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is valued for the teaching of the Buddhist method of eradicating *dukkha* as well as directions for an ethical life, which is how its doctrinal relevance and significance are expressed.

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Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

A	*Aṅguttara Nikāya*
D	*Dīgha Nikāya*
Dhp	*Dhammapada*
M	*Majjhima Nikāya*
S	*Saṁyutta Nikāya*
Thag	*Theragāthā*
Ud	*Udāna*
Vin	*Vinaya-piṭaka*
Vism	*Visuddhimagga*

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THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM: THE SRI LANKAN CONTRIBUTION TO ITS PROGRESS

Kapila Abhayawansa

Theravāda Buddhist scholars accept that the most authentic teachings of the Buddha were preserved in the Theravāda Buddhist School as it descended from the immediate disciples of the Buddha. Though some adherents of the tradition from time to time deviated from it for one reason or another, it managed to remain in India, securing its identity up to the time of the Third Buddhist Council and then, as a result of Asoka's missionary work, it became thoroughly rooted in Sri Lanka. Presently, it prevails mainly in countries like Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos, and has attained popularity in Singapore, Malaysia and some Western countries, including Australia and the United States of America.

According to the Theravāda commentarial tradition, the Buddha preached his teaching to the people during his lifetime in India through the medium of Māgadhī[1] (the language of Magadha), which was later popularly known as Pāḷi.[2] The teachings which were presented by the Buddha in the Pāḷi language were collected in the Tipiṭaka. The classification of the teachings of the Master into Dhamma and Vinaya, and the compilation respectively into Nikāya-s and Vibhaṅga-s (Bhikkhu-vibhaṅga and Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga), took place at the First Buddhist Council presided over by Venerable Mahā Kassapa and attended by five

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[1]   *Sā māgadhī mūlabhāsā – narāyāyādikappikā Brahmṇācassutālāpā – sambuddhācāpi bhāsare –* VinA. 1214.
[2]   The word Pāḷi as a name of language came into existence after the 13th century AD in Sri Lanka.

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hundred elders (Thera-s) who were the pioneers of the Theravāda teachings.[3] However, the commentarial tradition of Theravāda believes that the compilation of the teachings of the Buddha into the Tipiṭaka (three baskets) namely Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma had taken place at the First Council itself.[4] According to canonical tradition, the Second Buddhist Council, which was held one hundred years after the death of the Master, endorsed what had been rehearsed at the First Council.[5] According to the available Theravāda sources, with the addition of Kathāvatthu-pakaraṇa into the Abhidhamma-piṭaka, the compilation of the canon of the Theravādins into Tipiṭaka was finalized at the Third Buddhist Council, which took place at the time of Asoka about two hundred and thirty-five years after the Buddha's Parinibbāna.

It seems that the Theravāda enriched and secured its unique position not only from the canonical tradition but also from its exegetical tradition. It possesses commentaries as well as sub-commentaries and post-commentarial exegesis. The commentaries, which amount to 24 in number, have been made on nearly all the Canonical books, and they provide a vast exegetical literature alone. When we examine the wide range of Theravāda Buddhist literature, we can identify two layers of thought in respect of the doctrinal aspect of Theravāda, as Prof. Y. Karunadasa suggests in his monumental work on Theravāda Abhidhamma.[6] According to Prof. Karunadasa, "One is Early Buddhism, which is presented in the Sutta Piṭaka and to a lesser extent in the Vinaya Piṭaka. The other is distinctly Theravāda Buddhism which makes use of both the literary sources of Early Buddhism and the texts of the Pāḷi Abhidhamma to evolve a very comprehensive system of thought."[7] We can understand, therefore, that the Theravāda tradition is represented by the Sutta and Vinaya, Abhidhamma Piṭaka-s together with the Pāḷi commentarial sources.

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[3]   *Cullavaggapāli, Pañcsatikkhandhaka* (Vinaya Pitaka, vol. 11 (London: Pali Text Society, 1995), 286.
[4]   T. W. Rhys Davids, J. Estlin Carpenter, eds., *Sumaṅgala vilāsinī: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Dīghanikāya* (London: Pali Text Society 1886). pt. 1, 15.
[5]   *Cūḷavaggapāli–Sattasatikkhandhaka.*
[6]   Y. Karunadasa, *The Theravāda Abhidhamma: An Inquiry into the Nature of Conditioned Reality* (Hong Kong: The Centre of Buddhist Studies, The University of Hong Kong, 2010), 3
[7]   *Ibid.*

Although the Theravāda tradition emerged on Indian soil, we cannot find a long history of its existence there. Literary sources confirm that it originated with the First Buddhist Council and gradually declined after its culmination at the Third Buddhist Council. However, it should be mentioned here that the Third Buddhist Council played a crucial role in the propagation and establishment of Theravāda Buddhism both within and outside of India.

With the conclusion of the Third Council, Thera Moggaliputta Tissa, who was the president of the Council, took an extremely valuable step for the propagation of the message of the Buddha even outside its birthplace.[8] After having both purified the Saṅgha and established the pure teaching of the Buddha, Venerable Tissa thought of dispatching missionaries to establish Buddhism in different countries and selected capable monks for this purpose.[9] There is no doubt that Asoka gave his full support to elder Tissa in this respect. It is quite evident from the thirteen-rock edict of Asoka which shows that the King tried to spread the Dhamma not only in his own territories or among the people of the borderland but also in kingdoms far off.[10] However, according to Venerable Buddhaghosa, Venerable Tissa sent off missionaries to nine different countries.[11]

Each Thera was sent to the relevant country together with at least four other monks in order to establish Buddhism there. It is believed that Buddhism is rooted in a country where a higher ordination is offered to a person who is born in that country. In a place where there is a lack of monks, the higher ordination can be granted by an assembly of four monks.[12] That was the reason why at least four monks were sent along with each leading monk.

It is a historical fact that the arrival of Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka took place as the result of the missions undertaken fol-

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[8] J. Takakusu, M. Nagai, ed., *Samantapāsādikā: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Vinaya piṭka* (London: The Oxford University Press, Pali Text Society, 1924), Vol.1, 63.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Romila Thapar, *Aśoka and the Decline of The Mauryas* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 255–57.
[11] See. Appendix I.
[12] See *Cūḷavagga. Kammakkhandhaka* I.9

lowing the Third Buddhist Council patronized by Asoka. The term Tambapaṇṇi mentioned in the list of countries to where missionaries were dispatched refers to Sri Lanka. Mahāvaṃsa, one of the chronicles that recorded the arrival of missionaries in Sri Lanka, directly mentioned the name Laṅkādīpa, which denotes modern Sri Lanka instead of Tambapaṇṇi as follows: "Laṅkādīpe manuññamhi manuññaṁ Jinasāsanaṁ patiṭṭhāpetha tumhe, ti pañca There apesayi."[13] According to the Sri Lankan chronicles, the group of missionaries headed by Ven. Mahinda, who is said to be the son of Asoka, landed in Sri Lanka with the message of the Buddha. The year of the arrival of Ven. Mahinda is supposed to be 236 BCE. The King of Sri Lanka, who was known as Devānampiya Tissa, cordially welcomed Ven. Mahinda and his group, and provided all the facilities for them to establish and popularize Buddhism throughout the country. It is said that Ven. Mahinda took all necessary steps for the firm establishment of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, comprised of all the four assemblies, Bhikkhu, Bhikkhunī, Upāsaka, and Upāsikā, within a very short period.

Commentaries in the Sinhala Language (Sīhalaṭṭhakathā)

The centre of Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka was the Mahāvihāra monastery founded in Anurādhapura by the King Devānampiya Tissa under the instruction of Ven. Mahinda. It is clear that was the Sri Lankan monks who lived in the Mahāvihāra emphasized the Theravāda tradition through their literary activities. The development of Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka can mainly be attributed to the different literary activities and exegetical literature based on the Pāḷi canon which was brought to Sri Lanka by the missionary group headed by Ven. Mahinda.

When we examine the Sri Lankan contribution to Theravāda Buddhism, it is first necessary to pay attention to the exegetical literature, which was extensively developed by the Sri Lankan monks. Sri Lankan chronicles and Pāli commentaries suggest that both the Pāli canon and commentaries were brought to Sri Lanka by Ven. Mahinda when he

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[13]   W. Geiger, ed., *Mahāvaṃsa* (London: Pali Text Society 1958), X. 9.

came to Sri Lanka with other members of the group. Further, it is stated that the commentaries which aimed at the exposition of the meaning of the canonical teachings were composed at the First Council, and also rehearsed at the following two councils, and were brought to Sri Lanka by Ven. Mahinda who translated them into the Sinhala Language for the benefit of the local population.[14]

Analyzing Buddhaghosa's statement G. P. Malalasekera observes:

It must be borne in mind that these commentaries were not compiled in the modern sense of the word, nor did any commentaries, such as Buddhaghosa himself wrote later, exist in the Buddha's lifetime or immediately after his death. So that when, in the opening stanzas of the Sumaṅgalavilasinī, Buddhaghosa mentions that the commentary to the Digha-Nikāya was rehearsed at the first council by 500 holy Elders, we may assume that he means that at this meeting the meanings he attached to the various terms – particularly to those that appear to have been borrowed from Hindu philosophy – were discussed and properly defined. This removes the difficulty of conceiving the contemporaneous existence of the commentaries and the Piṭkas from the very earliest times. Such definitions and fixations of meaning formed the nucleus of the later commentaries. The Elders had discussed the important terms at the First Council, and had decided on the method of interpreting and teaching the more recondite doctrines.[15]

According to Ven. Buddhaghosa's statement mentioned above, the origin of the composition of the commentarial literature can be traced back to the First Buddhist Council. But the earliest reference to the First Council, the 11th chapter of Cullavagga Pāḷi, Pañcasatikkhandhaka, does not report that the monastics made such a composition of the commentaries. It is certain that the commentaries are very important for the understanding of canonical teachings. If the monastics composed such commentaries on the canon, it would be recorded in the Cullavagga report, because the composition of commentaries is a sepa-

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[14]   *Atthappakāsanatthaṁ, aṭṭhakathā ādito vasisatehi;*
Pañcahi yā saṅgītā, anusaṅgītā ca pacchāpi.
Sīhaḷadīpaṁ pana ābhatātha, vasinā mahāmahindena;
Ṭhapitā sīhaḷabhāsāya, dīpavāsīnamatthāya. - Rhys Davids, Estlin Carpenter, *Sumaṅgala vilāsinī: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Dīghanikāya,* I. 1.
[15]   G. P. Malalasekara, *The Pāli Literature of Ceylon* (Colombo: M. D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd. Reprinted 1958), 90.

rate project from the recognition of the canon at the Council. The Cullavagga also records some other activities that took place even after the Council. If there were commentaries composed at the Council, there is no reason for the Cullavagga to neglect to mention it. The records of the Second[16] and the Third[17] Councils also do not confirm the rehearsal of the commentaries at those councils. This suggests that the statement of Ven. Buddhaghosa about the origins of the Aṭṭhakathā cannot be affirmed with the evidence at hand. Further, there is no evidence to show that there was any commentary completed in India before the arrival of Ven. Mahinda in Sri Lanka. The Mahāvaṁsa, one of the Sri Lankan chronicles, states that in the fifth century when Ven. Buddhaghosa arrived in Sri Lanka, there were no commentaries available in India. The Mahāvaṁsa explaining the reason for Ven. Buddhaghosa coming to Sri Lanka says the following:

> Pāḷimattaṁ idhānītaṁ natthi Aṭṭhakathā idha –
> Tathācāriyavādañca bhinnarūpā na vijjare
> Sīhalaṭṭhakathā suddhā Mahindena matīmatā –
> Saṅgītattayam ārūḷhaṁ Sammāsambuddhadesitaṁ
> Sāriputtādigītañca kathāmaggaṁ samekkhiya –
> Kata Sīhalabhāsāya Sīhalesu pavattati.[18]

(The text alone has been handed down here [in Jambudīpa], there is no commentary here. Nor are the broken systems of the teachers found. The commentary in the Sinhala tongue is faultless. The wise Mahinda considered the tradition laid before the three Councils as it was taught by the Perfectly Enlightened One and as recited by Sāriputta and the others and wrote it in the Sinhala language and it is spread among the Sinhalese).[19]

There is no doubt that there was already a practice of providing explanatory details to the deep, profound, and sometimes ambiguous teachings of the Buddha during the time of the Buddha. They were done either by the Buddha himself or by some other lead-

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16 See. *Cūḷavagga,* 12th chapter.
17 Takakusu, Nagai, *Samantapāsādikā: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Vinaya piṭka* (introduction).
18 *Mahāvaṁsa.* xxxvi 227–29.
19 The translation has been quoted from Goonesekere L. R., *Buddhist Commentarial Literature,* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2008), 55–6.

ing disciples of the Buddha. The *Paṭiccasamuppādavibhaṅgasutta*[20], *Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhāyasutta*[21], *Sammādiṭṭhisutta*[22], and *Cullavedallasutta*[23] are some of the examples that show that there were some discourses which bear the commentarial characteristic within the canon itself. And further, we can find *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and the *Niddesa*-s, two different treatises included in the *Khuddakanikāya,* which were composed with the intention of providing commentaries respectively to the *Aṭṭhakavagga* and *Pārāyaṇavagga* of the *Suttanipāta.* In addition to that, the present Pāḷi commentaries themselves point to some factors which are instrumental in providing fully-fledged commentaries to separate books of the canon, such as *Ācariyavāda* (traditional teachings), *Porāṇakā* (those who knew the ancient legends), *Bhāṇakā* (reciters), *Aṭṭhakathā-naya* (commentarial method) and so on.

For the above-mentioned reasons, we may presuppose that although Ven. *Mahinda* did not have a readymade complete set of commentaries that covered the whole range of canonical literature when he arrived in Sri Lanka, he would have had all the necessary component factors beforehand for him to start a project of the composition of commentaries after his arrival in Sri Lanka.

According to the commentarial tradition, both the canon and the commentaries brought to Sri Lanka were in the Magadha language and Ven. *Mahinda* translated only the commentaries into the Sinhala language for the benefit of the Sri Lankan people.[24] This traditional view also seems to be rather unplausible because one may ask what the purpose of translating commentaries into Sinhala is when the canon is in the Magadha language. On the other hand, commentaries do not provide word-by-word explanations of the canonical teachings. Even without the slightest knowledge of the canonical teachings, it is not easy to properly, grasp what is explained in the commentaries.

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[20] S. iii. 2.
[21] M. i. 256.
[22] M. i. 46.
[23] M. i. 299.
[24] *Sīhaladīpaṁ pana ābhatāttha vasinā mahā mahindena*
ṭhapitā sīhalabhāsāya dīpavāsīnaṁ atthāya - Rhys Davids, Estlin Carpenter, *Sumaṅgala vilāsinī: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Dīghanikāya*, I, Introductory verses, 9.

There is no evidence to show that the Pāḷi commentaries said to be brought to Sri Lanka by Ven. Mahinda existed at least up to the time that the Pāḷi canon was written in the books at the time of the 1st century AD during the reign of King *Vaṭṭagāmaṇi.* If there were Pāḷi commentaries brought to Sri Lanka, why did they completely disappear within the three hundred years before the 1st century AD?

It is possible that the foregoing inquiry leads to the fact that Ven. Mahinda brought the Pāḷi canon and the necessary component factors together with the commentarial method (*Aṭṭhakathā-naya*) and handed them over to his disciples, who were the Sri Lankan monks, and they composed the commentaries in the Sinhala language, which then became known as the *Sīhalaṭṭhakathā* on the basis of the methods and other necessary factors provided by Ven. *Mahinda.*

In any case, it is accepted that the present Pāḷi commentaries were based on the *Sīhala aṭṭhakathā* (Sinhalese commentaries) that existed before the 5th century AD, after which Ven. *Buddhaghosa* and other commentators composed the present commentaries. The *Sīhalaṭṭhakathā,* which were the primary sources of the present Pāḷi commentaries, are believed to have been composed during the period starting from the 3rd century BC and ending in the 5th century AD.

Regarding the Sinhalese commentaries, Lakshmi R. Goonesekere is of the view:

Mahinda would have introduced the traditional commentaries, but during the centuries that followed his arrival other commentaries had developed, and at the time Buddhaghosa arrived on the island, i.e. in the early fifth century, there were commentaries belonging to different schools.[25]

We have no evidence to show that those original Sinhala commentaries existed for a very long time after the composition of the present Pāḷi commentaries. They were probably lost following the exit from Polonnaruwa in the 11th–12th centuries. However, we are fortunate enough to have collected some of the names of those commentaries as they were quoted in the present Pāḷi commentaries.[26]

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[25] *Ibid.* 17.
[26] See. Appendix II.

Most scholars who have researched the origin of Pāḷi Buddhist commentarial literature are of the view that the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* or *Mūla-aṭṭhakathā* can be the main commentary out of all the other commentaries which are reckoned to be Sinhalese commentaries.[27] It is quite evident that Ven. *Buddhaghosa* highly respected the *Mahā aṭṭhakathā* and he placed a great reliance on its accuracy. That is why he mentioned that he compiled the commentary to *Vinaya piṭaka* (*Samantapāsādikā*) taking the *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* as the basis of it.[28] Though the Theravāda tradition claims that Ven. *Mahinda* brought the commentaries to Sri Lanka and translated them into the Sinhala language, it does not mention the commentaries by their names. Even though we accept *Mahā-aṭṭhkathā* as the commentary brought to Sri Lanka, respecting the tradition, there is no doubt that some of the commentaries listed above are the works of Sri Lankan monks who were inspired by the commentarial method brought to Sri Lanka by Ven. *Mahinda*. The *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* is believed to be a commentary made for the entire canonical literature. The commentaries which are referred to as *Uttaravihāra-aṭṭhakathā*, *Mahā-paccariya-aṭṭhakathā*, and *Kurundī-aṭṭhakathā* can be regarded as separate and independent commentaries distinct from *Mahā Aṭṭhakathā*, for their names themselves clearly imply that they were composed by monks who lived outside of the *Mahāvihāra*. The *Uttara-vihāraṭṭhakathā* mentioned in the *Vaṁsatthappakāsanī*[29] is supposed to be a commentary made by the monks who resided at the *Uttara-vihāra* or *Abhayagiri-vihāra* which was established in the 1st century BC; the *Mahāpaccarī* is said to be a commentary composed on a raft by Sri Lankan monks; and the *Kurundi-aṭṭhakathā* received its name after the *Kurundavelu-vihāra,* the place in Sri Lanka where it was composed.

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[27]   Bimala Churn Law, *A History of Buddhist Literature* (New Delhi: Rekha Printers Pvt. Ltd. 2000), 379.

[28]   *Saṃvaṇṇanam tanca samārabhanto; Tassā mahāaṭṭhakatham sarīram; Katvā mahāpaccariyam tatheva; Kurundinamādisu vissutāsu.* Takakusu, Nagai, Samantapāsādikā: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Vinaya piṭka, (introduction).

[29]   G. P. Malalasekera, ed., *Mahāvaṃsa-ṭīkā: Vaṁsatthappakāsinī* (London: Pali Text Society, 1935), I. 25; 55.

It is believed that the *Andhakaṭṭhakathā* and *Saṅkhepaṭṭhakathā* were not the Sinhala commentaries, though they were consulted by the Pāli commentators. In this regard, L. R. Goonesekere is of the view:

The *Andhaka-aṭṭhakathā* was very likely written in the *Andhaka* (Andhra) language. It may have belonged to the *Andhaka* school of south India asven. *Buddhaghosa* more often than not rejects its views. The *Saṅkhepa-aṭṭhakathā* or 'Short Commentary' quoted in the *Samantapāsādikā,* if it is to be accepted as written in south India, was probably also the product of a south Indian school.[30]

It is not clearly known whether the commentaries coming under the *Sīhalaṭṭhakathā*, such as *Vinayaṭṭhakathā*, *Suttantaṭṭhakathā*, *Abhidhammaṭṭhakathā*, *Sīhalamātikaṭṭhakathā*, *Dīghaṭṭhakathā*, *Majjhimaṭṭhakathā*, *Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā*, *Aṅguttaraṭṭhakathā*, *Jātakaṭṭhakathā*, and *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇassa Sīhalaṭṭhakathā*, were the component parts of the *Mahā Aṭṭhakathā* or independent commentaries belonging to the sections of the canon that their names implied.

The names *Uttaravihāra-aṭṭhakathā*, *Mahā-paccarī-aṭṭhakathā*, and *Kurundī-aṭṭhakathā* clearly imply that they were composed by monks who lived outside of the *Mahāvihāra*.

There is no doubt that the various commentaries that were composed by the Sri Lankan monks during the time between the arrival of Ven. *Mahinda* and the composition of the present Pāḷi commentaries in the fifth century have made a great contribution to the development of Theravāda Buddhism.

The commentaries provide not only clarifications of the meanings of the terms that appeared in the canon but also plenty of expositions of the deep and profound doctrinal concepts included in the canon. It should be mentioned here that the commentarial expositions of the teachings of the Buddha were extremely constructive for the Theravādins to establish their identity among the other schools of Buddhism.

Ven. *Buddhaghosa* commenting on *Sīhala Aṭṭhakathā* acknowledges the contribution made by the monks who resided at the *Mahāvihāra* for the enhancement of the identity of Theravāda. According to him,

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[30]   Goonesekere, *Buddhist Commentarial Literature,*" 18.

the *Therā*-s of the *Mahāvihāra* had a system of explaining the Dhamma peculiar to them (*Therānaṁ samayaṁ*)[31] with the expert decisions (*sunipuṇavinicchayānaṁ*).[32] Ven. Buddhaghosa says that he tried to translate *Sīhalaṭṭhakathā* without distorting the commentarial tradition descending from the elders of the *Mahāvihāra*.[33]

Apart from the *Aṭṭhakathācariya*, who made the Sinhalese commentaries, another factor contributing to the progress of Theravāda Buddhism can be found among the Sri Lankan monks who were experts in the teachings of the Buddha, who were endowed with profound knowledge of certain sections of Buddhist teachings and capable enough to express their own decisions on some dubious matters of the Dhamma. Their opinions were accepted and included in some of the present Pāli commentaries by Ven. *Buddhaghosa.* According to Mrs L. R. Goonesekere, the views and opinions of the following were quoted in the Pāli commentaries: *Dīghabhāṇaka Tipiṭaka Mahāsiva*[34], *Tipiṭaka Cūḷābhaya*[35], *Tipiṭaka Cūḷanāga*[36], *Tipiṭaka Mahā Dhammarakkhita*[37], and Moravāpīvāsī Mahādatta.[38]

The First Writing Down of the Theravāda Canon

Another massive contribution made by the Sri Lankans to Theravāda Buddhism was the event of writing down the Theravāda canon in the 1st century BC in Sri Lanka for the first time in the history of Buddhism. From the origin of the Theravāda canon until the 1st century BC, it continued to be transmitted orally from generation to generation for nearly five hundred years among the Theravādins. It is said that a thousand monks who were Arahants and well-versed in the canon and com-

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[31] Rhys Davids, Estlin Carpenter, *Sumaṅgala vilāsinī: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Dīghanikāya,* I, Introductory verses, 9.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] *Samayaṁ avilomento, therānaṁ theravaṁsapadīpānaṁ; Sunipuṇavinicchayānaṁ, Mahāvihārādhivāsīnaṁ. – Ibid.*

[34] SA III 281.

[35] SA III 277, PugA 190.

[36] SA III 277; PugA 190.

[37] PugA 190; DhsA 267, 278, 286.

[38] DhsA 230, 267, 284, 286; Ps-a 405; VibhA 81.

mentaries gathered at the place called *Āloka Vihāra (Aluvihāra),* Mātale, Sri Lanka, and undertook the project of writing down not only the canon but also the commentaries during the reign of King *Vaṭṭagāmani* (29–17 BC).[39]

The event of writing down the Pāli canon marks a very important juncture in the history of Buddhism. It was a very praiseworthy and intelligent step taken by the Sri Lankan Theravāda monastic community for the purity and the protection of the words of the Buddha. Before its writing down, the canon was in the collective memory of the members of the monastic order who were entrusted to preserve it. It was orally transmitted from generation to generation. In such a situation there would have been the possibility of the distortion of the message of the Buddha. On the other hand, when the canon depends on the hand of a few people, there is no certainty of its survival for the benefit of the generations to come. When taken into a fixed form by means of writing down in books, those possibilities would not arise.

We are fortunate that the writing down of the Pāli canon in books in the first century secured its originality with regards to its contents, though there may be writing errors due to it being copied from generation to generation until was printed. If the Sri Lankan monks had not taken this step, there is no doubt that today we would not have the opportunity to talk about the original teachings of the Buddha (as the Theravādins believe) as recorded in the Pāli canon. It is an honour to the Sri Lankans that the Theravāda canon, which was protected by the Sri Lankans orally at first, was put into book form and has been recognized and accepted by all the Theravāda Buddhist countries existing today.

Pāli Commentaries

As we have already seen according to Sri Lankan sources, the original Theravāda commentaries that were brought to Sri Lanka by Ven. Mahinda were translated into the Sinhala language and some other new commentaries were composed in Sinhala by the Sri Lan-

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[39] Mhv. XXXIII, 100.

kan monks. As they were in the Sinhala language, only those who were well versed in the Sinhala language were able to benefit from them. This might be the reason why the *Mahāvihāra* fraternity, which was the guardian of Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka, permitted Ven. *Buddhaghosa* to translate the Sinhalese commentaries into Pāḷi which was recognized as the common religious language of Theravāda Buddhism, not only in Sri Lanka but also elsewhere. Also, when the canon was written in Pāḷi, the *Mahāvihāra* community of monks may have felt that it was not compatible to have the commentaries in the Sinhala language.

It is recorded that the Sinhalese commentaries, which were written down together with the Pāḷi canon in the 1st century, were translated into the Pāḷi language by Ven. *Buddhaghosa* and others starting in the fifth century in Sri Lanka.[40] When we examine the present Pāḷi commentaries, it is quite evident that they are not merely the direct translations of the corresponding earlier Sinhala commentaries. The system of the presentation of the contents of the present Pāḷi commentaries by the commentators itself provides us with quite enough evidence to show that the translations were made with revisions and other editorial changes. The great commentator Ven. *Buddhaghosa* himself records how he made the translation of *Dīghanikāyaṭṭhakathā* (*Sumaṅgalavilāsini*) as given below:

Hitvā punappunāgataṃ atthaṃ pakāsayissāmi
Sujanassaca tuṭṭhatthaṃ ciraṭṭhitatthañca dhamassa[41]

(Having removed the repetitive meaning (of the Sinhala commentaries), I will reveal the meaning for the happiness of the good people and for the long life of the dispensation).

This fact is further attested by expressions such as *Mahā-aṭṭhakathāyaṃ sāraṃ ādāya* (having taken the essence of the *Mahā aṭṭhakathā*), *Mūla-aṭṭhakathāyaṃ sāraṃ ādāya* (having taken the es-

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40 According to *Mahāvaṃsa*, the chronicle of Sri Lanka, the great commentator Ven. Buddhaghosa came to Sri Lanka during the reign of the King Mahānāma (406: 28 A.D). See *Mahāvaṃsa* ch. xxxvii.
41 Rhys Davids, Carpenter Estlin, *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Dīghanikāya, I. Introductory verses, 10.*

sence of *Mūlaṭṭhakathā*), and *Porāṇaṭṭhakathānaṁ sāraṁ ādāya* (having taken the essence of the *Porāṇaṭṭhakathā)* which appear in the present Pāḷi commentaries. These expressions clearly show that when they translated a Sinhala commentary, the Pāḷi commentators re-edited it without translating the entire text.

As the result of the translation project which took place during the 5th century AD in Sri Lanka, we now have commentaries in the Pāḷi language relating to nearly all the canonical texts. Those commentaries provide the necessary details supportive to understanding the contents of the canonical texts and also give explanatory notes on the meaning of the important words of the canon.[42]

Taken as a whole, these commentaries are a source of encyclopaedic knowledge that covers not only all the theoretical and practical aspects of Theravāda Buddhism but also the social, political, economic, religious, philosophical and historical aspects of India and Sri Lanka where Theravāda Buddhism came into existence and where it was firmly established. L. R. Goonesekere summarizing the contents of the Pāḷi commentaries observes:

Most commentaries have, in the course of their explanations, incorporated various episodes, narratives, fables, and legends, whereby the commentators have unknowingly given us much information on the social, philosophical, and religious history of ancient India and Ceylon. Much geographical data and glimpses of political history are also contained in them. While some commentaries such as the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, Jātakaṭṭhakathā, and Dhammapāla's Paramatthadīpanī* are rich in material on the social and economic history of Buddhist India, most of Buddhaghosa's commentaries and the later ones, while containing material relating to India, throw a flood of light on the religious and secular history of Ceylon for centuries after Buddhism was introduced into the island. The history of Buddhism in Ceylon, the development of the monastery, the growth of worship and ritual, and the history of the *Saṅgha* can all be traced from the information furnished in them.[43]

It is not an exaggeration to say that Theravāda establishes its identity distinct from other Buddhist sects mainly on the basis of the Pāḷi commentarial literature. Specifically, the Pāḷi *Abhidhamma* commentaries

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[42] See. Appendix III.
[43] Goonesekere, *Buddhist Commentarial Literature*, 43–44.

shed much light on this identity as they provide the necessary interpretations for the Dhamma theory of Theravāda which distinguishes it from other *Abhidharma* traditions.

Visuddhimagga

The *Visuddhimagga,* written by the great commentator Ven. *Buddhaghosa*, is a compendious work on Theravāda Buddhism which includes a wide range of theoretical and practical teachings. It pays much attention to presenting a detailed account of the Theravāda meditative system in order to explain the path of purification leading to *Nibbāna.*

Moreover, the most valuable contribution made by Ven. *Buddhaghosa* through the *Visuddhimagga* to the academic world can be recognized when we examine his exposition of the doctrine of *Paticcasamuppāda* in the chapter called *Paññābhūminiddesa.* Buddhaghosa was able to give a comprehensive exposition to the doctrine of *Paticcasamuppāda* for the first time in the history of Theravāda, with the attestation of the teachings of the Buddha. Although the Buddha presented the teaching of *Paticcasamuppāda* consisting of twelve factors in order to explain the emergence and cessation of suffering, there was no decision among Buddhist scholars before *Buddhaghosa* whether those 12 factors belong to one singular lifetime of a being, or to the whole of *saṁsāric* existence. Buddhaghosa was the first scholar of the scholastic period to point out that the 12 links are to be applied in the *saṁsāric* context and not just in the one singular life span.

Visuddhimagga is recognized by the Theravāda Buddhist world as a comprehensive manual of the Theravāda system of path of purification which represents the entire *Brahmacariya* life in a systematic way by collecting relevant materials from the discourses of the Buddha.

Ṭīkā-Sub-Commentaries

Another aspect of the exegetical literature of Theravāda tradition comes under the name of *Ṭīkā* (sub-commentaries), which are the commentaries on the commentaries (*Aṭṭhakathā*). Sub-commentaries were composed in Sri Lanka sometimes after the compilation of the

Pāli commentaries in order to clarify the ambiguities and any points that were vague in the commentaries. There is no doubt that the sub-commentaries shed much light on the commentaries and explain some matters that are not very clear. When the commentaries and the sub-commentaries are taken together, they provide all the necessary explanations for the Theravāda canonical teachings. It should be emphasized here that most of the sub-commentaries were composed by the Sri Lankan monks who were well versed in the *Mahāvihāra* tradition of interpretation.[44]

Manuals (*Saṅgaha*)[45]

When we consider the factors contributing to the enhancement of Theravāda Buddhism, we cannot ignore the service rendered not only by the Pāḷi commentarial literature but also by different types of manuals (*Saṅgaha*) provided by the Sri Lankan monks who were well versed in the particular subjects of Buddhism that they were dealing with. It seems that the aim of the manuals is to collect and present their subject matters in a concise form for educational purposes. Bimala Churn Law in his *A History of Pāli Literature* introducing manual literature in Pāḷi observes:

Although the subject matters of these manuals vary, one predominant feature of each of them is this that it presents its theme systematically in a somewhat terse and concise form, purporting to be used as a handbook of constant reference.[46]

Conclusion

The Pāḷi canon that was written down by the Sri Lankan monastics and the exegetical literature that includes commentaries, sub-commentaries, and manuals that were composed by the Sri Lankans were all

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[44]   See. Appendix IV
[45]   See. Appendix V.
[46]   Bimala Churn Law, *A History of Buddhist Literature* (New Delhi: Rekha Printers Pvt. Ltd. 2000), 585.

accepted by the other Theravāda Buddhist countries such as Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos as their sources of Theravāda Buddhism. It is evident that the Theravāda monks of the Mahāvihāra fraternity in Sri Lanka contributed immensely to the establishment and nourishment of Theravāda Buddhism, both at home and in other countries.

There is historical evidence to confirm that Myanmar is one of the countries where Buddhism was reformed several times with the assistance of the Sri Lankan Theravāda monks from a time as early as the 11th century. It is said that King Anawrahta (1044–1077) took steps to reform Buddhism in Myanmar with the assistance of the Sri Lankan Theravāda scholars. During the reigns of Narathu (1167–1171), Naratheinkha (1171–1174), and Narapatisithu (1174–1211) Shin Uttarajīva who received higher ordination from the Sri Lankan Mahāvihāra monks was able to establish an Order in Myanmar in the form of the Mahāvihāra school in Sri Lanka (Sinhala Saṅgha). King Dhammazedi (1471–1492) is reported to have sent thousands of Burmese monks to obtain higher ordination from Sri Lama with the training of the Mahāvihāra school.[47]

Not only Myanmar but other Theravāda Buddhist countries, namely, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, have also been immensely influenced by Sri Lankan Theravāda Buddhism. With the effort of Parākramabāhu the Great (1153–1186), Theravāda Buddhism was consolidated in Sri Lanka. It is reported that receiving information about this Theravāda reform taking place in Sri Lanka, many monks from Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos came to Sri Lanka and obtained the higher ordination from Sinhalese monks. Regarding Buddhism in Thailand, Karuna Kusalasaya records in his Buddhism in Thailand – Its Past and its Present:

Thailand also sent her Bhikkhus to Ceylon and thereby obtained the Upasampada vidhi (ordination rule) from Ceylon, which later became known in Thailand as Lankavaṁsa. This was about 1257 A.D. (B.E. 1800). Apparently, the early batches of bhikkhus who returned from Ceylon after studies, often accompanied by Ceylonese monks, established themselves first in Nakhon Sri Thammarat (south Thailand), for many of the Buddhist relics bear-

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ing definitely Ceylonese influence, such as Stupas and Buddha images, were found there. Some of these relics are still in existence today.[48]

We may conclude by saying in no uncertain terms that Sri Lanka has made an invaluable contribution to Theravāda Buddhism from its arrival to Sri Lanka up to the present for its establishment and flourishing, not only throughout the island but also outside of it, and to keep it as a distinct tradition of Buddhism in the history of Buddhist thought.

Abbreviations

DhsA	*Dhammasaṅi Aṭṭhakathā*
Mhv	*Mahāvaṁsa*
M	*Majjhima-nikāya*
PugA	*Puggala-paññatti Aṭṭhakathā*
S.	*Saṁyutta-nikāya*
SA	*Saṁyutta-nikāya Aṭṭhakathā*
VibhA	*Vibhaṅga Aṭṭhakathā*
VinA	*Vinaya Aṭṭhakathā*

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[48] Karuna Kusalasaya, *Buddhism in Thailand: Its Past and its Present* (Sri Lanka, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, Second Reprint 1983), 19.

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Appendix I

Names of the missionaries and the relevant countries.

Names of the Missionary	Country
Thera Majjhantika	*Kasmīra and Gandhāra*
Thera Mahādeva	*Mahisamaṇḍala*
Thera Rakkhita	*Vanavāsī*
Thera Yonaka Dhammarakkhita	*Aparantikā*
Thera Mahā Dhammarakkhita	*Mahāraṭṭha*
Thera Mahā Rakkhita	*Yonaloka*
Thera Majjhima	*Himavantadesa*
Thera Soṇa and *Thera Uttara*	*Suvaṇṇabhūmi*
Thera Mahinda together with the *Thera-s Iṭṭhiya, Uttiya, Sambala, and Bhaddasāla,* and the novice *Sumana and* upāsaka *Bhaṇḍuka*	*Tambapaṇṇi (Sri Lanka).*

Appendix II

The following names of *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* are found in the Pali commentaries:

1) *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā* or *Mūla-aṭṭhakathā*, also known as *Aṭṭhakathā*,

2) *Uttaravihāra-aṭṭhakathā*,

3) *Mahā-paccariya-aṭṭhakathā*,

4) *Kurundī aṭṭhakathā,*
5) *Andhakaṭṭhakathā,*
6) *Saṅkhepaṭṭhakathā,*
7) *Āgamaṭṭhakathā,*
8) *Porāṇaṭṭhakathā,*
9) *Pubbopadesaṭṭhakathā,* or *Pubbaṭṭhakathā,*
10) *Vinayaṭṭhakathā,*
11) *Suttantaṭṭhakathā,*
12) *Abhidhammaṭṭhakathā,*
13) *Sīhalamātikaṭṭhakathā,*
14) *Dīghaṭṭhakathā,*
15) *Majjhimaṭṭhakathā,*
16) *Saṁyuttaṭṭhakathā,*
17) *Aṅguttaraṭṭhakathā,*
18) *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* and
19) *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇassa Sīhalaṭṭhakathā.*

Appendix III

The following is the list of Pāḷi commentaries which include the names of the canonical texts, names of the Pāḷi commentaries, and the names of the commentators in the format: *Mūla*; commentary; commentator.

Vinayapiṭaka

Vinayapiṭaka (Pārājika, Pācittiya, Mahāvagga, Cullāvagga and Parivāra)	Samantapāsādikā	Buddhaghosa
Pātimokkha	Kaṅkhāvitaraṇi	Buddhaghosa

Suttapiṭaka

Dīghanikāya	Sumaṅgalavilāsini	Buddhaghosa
Majjhimanikāya	Papañcasūdani	Buddhaghosa
Saṃyuttanikāya	Sāratthappakāsini	Buddhaghosa
Aṅguttaranikāya	Manorathapūrani	Buddhaghosa

Khuddakanikāya

(i) Khuddakapāṭha	*Paramatthajotikā*	*Buddhaghosa*[49]
(ii) Dhammapada	*Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*	*Buddhaghosa**
(iii) Udāna	*Paramatthadīpanī*	*Dhammapāla*
(iv) Itivuttaka	*Paramatthadīpanī*	*Dhammapāla*
(v) Suttanipāta	*Paramatthajotikā*	*Buddhaghosa**
(vi) Vimānavatthu	*Paramatthadīpanī*	*Dhammapāla*
(vii) Petavatthu	*Paramatthadīpanī*	*Dhammapāla*
(viii) Theragāthā	*Paramatthadīpanī*	*Dhammapāla*
(ix) Therīgāthā	*Paramatthadīpanī*	*Dhammapāla*
(x) Jātaka	*Jātakaṭṭhakathā*	*Buddhaghosa**
(xi) Niddesa	*Saddhammapajjotikā*	*Upasena*
(xii) Paṭisambhidāmagga	*Saddhammapakāsinī*	*Mahānāma*
(xiii) Apadāna	*Visuddhajanavilāsinī*	*Unknown*
(ixv) Buddhavaṃsa	*Madhuratthavilāsinī*	*Buddhadatta*
(xv) Cariyāpiṭaka	*Paramatthadīpanī*	*Dhammapāla*

Abhidhammapiṭaka

Dhammasaṅganī	*Atthasālinī*	*Buddhaghosa*
Vibhaṅga	*Sammohavinodanī*	*Buddhaghosa*
The remaining five books: Dhātukathā, Puggalapaññatti, Kathāvatthu, Yamaka, and Paṭṭhāna	*Pañcappakaraṇaṭṭhakathā*	*Buddhaghosa*

Appendix IV

Among the sub-commentaries written in Sri Lanka, the following have been recognized as the most important.

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[49] The commentaries marked with an asterisk (*) are attributed to Ven. Buddhaghosa, but the attribution is contested.

Sub-commentaries on Vinaya commentaries (*Samantapāsādikā*)

Vajirabuddhiṭīkā	*Sāriputta* (12th century)
Sāratthadīpanī	*Sāriputta* (do)
Vimativinodani-ṭīkā	*Mahā Kassapa* (13th century)

Sub-commentaries on Sutta-piṭaka Commentaries

Dīghanikāyaṭṭhakathā-ṭīkā (sub-comm. on *Sumaṅgalavilasinī*)	*Dhammapāla*
Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā-ṭīkā, (sub-comm. on *Papañcasūdani*)	*Dhammapāla*
Saṁyuttanikāyaṭṭhakathā-ṭīkā, (sub-comm. on *Sāratthappakāsinī*)	*Dhammapāla*
Aṅguttaranikāyaṭṭhakathā-ṭīkā, Sāratthamañjusā, (sub-comm. on *Manorathapūranī*)	*Sāriputta*

The first three sub-commentaries were attributed to Ven. Dhammapāla (who is considered to be different from the commentator Dhammapāla) while the last is attributed to Ven. Sāriputta.

Sub-commentaries on the Abhidhamma commentaries

Atthasālinīmūlaṭīkā	*Ānanda*
Vibhaṅgamūlaṭīkā	*Ānanda*
Pancappakaraṇamūlaṭīkā	*Ānanda*

These three sub-commentaries are considered to be *Abhidhamma mūlaṭīk*. Sometimes, they are also known as *Mūlaṭūkā*. Authority of the *Mūlaṭīkā* is ascribed to a Sri Lankan monk called *Ānanda*.

Sub-commentary on *Visuddhimagga*

Paramatthamañjusā (*Visuddhimaggamahāṭīkā*)	*Dhammapala*

Appendix V

The manuals composed in Sri Lanka by the erudite monks can be listed as follows:

Manuals relating to the subject of *Vinaya*

Vinayavinicchaya	Buddhadatta
Uttaravinicchaya	Buddhadatta
Khuddakasikkhā	Dhammasiri
Mūlasikkhā	Mahā sāmi
Pāḷimuttakavinayavinicchayasaṅgaha	Sāriputta

Manuals relating to the subject of Abhidhamma

Abhidhammaṭṭha-saṅgaha,	Ācariya Anuruddha
Paramatthavinicchaya	Ācariya Anuruddha
Abhidhammāvatāra	Buddhadatta
Rūpārūpavibhāga	Buddhadatta
Saccasaṅkhepa	Ananda[50]
Mohavicchedanī	Kassapa
Khemappakaraṇa	Khema
Nāmarūpapariccheda	Ācariya Anuruddha

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[50]   Ven. *Ananda* who is considered to be the *teacher of* Ven. Dhammapāla

THAI RELIGION AND THE VIABILITY OF THE CONSTRUCT OF 'CULT'

Matthew A. Kosuta

Introduction

There is in anthropology and religious studies continuing debate on the viability and applicability of categories, concepts, and, more formally, constructs created by Western scholars and applied to non-Western cultures. In the field of religious studies, while the debate has settled down, there are still arguments against the use of the construct of 'religion'. As a social scientist I hold that objective definitions, categorization, concepts and constructs can be formed for descriptive and analytical purposes, including cross culturally. Thus, I support this debate over the construct of 'religion', especially given the multiplicity of definitions of religion that have been put forward, with the goal of establishing a scientifically valid and applicable construct of 'religion', as well with other descriptive and analytical concepts. With this in mind, I was intrigued by the Asian Research Institute at the National University of Singapore's workshop held in October 2021 on "Interrogating the Notion of 'Cult' as a Social Formation in Asian Religions". The organizers appear to have noticed an uptick in the usage of 'cult' in works on Asian religions. I was particularly interested because in the study of Thai religion, some scholars use the construct 'cult', while it is completely absent from other works; in my own work I use 'worship'. I had also finished extensive reading on ancient Roman and Greek religion, in a search for descriptions and models of polytheism, where the use of 'cult' as a descriptive and explanatory construct seemed standard. I

participated in this workshop and the original draft of this article was presented and critiqued in the workshop. This version of the article investigating the viability of the construct of 'cult' in Thai religion is the result of that workshop.

In the United States, the word cult is generally taken in a negative sense as a type of small sect or group with weird and even degenerate forms of religious practice. A cult in American culture is usually some offshoot of an established religion, most frequently from Christianity or Hinduism. When one thinks of a cult, groups and leaders such as the Peoples Temple (Jim Jones), Branch Davidians (David Koresh), Rajneeshpura (Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh), Heaven's Gate and even Scientology come to mind. Indeed, the Wikipedia entry on Jim Jones calls him "an American cult leader" among several other things. An internet search of 'cults' pulls a host of links to such groups as above with adjectives such as "most terrifying cults" and "weird and creepy cults" demonstrating that while a group may be relatively innocuous, applying the term 'cult' does carry connotations of strange or odd at best, and crazy and dangerous at worst.

Reviewing dictionary definitions of cult shows that cult has both this meaning of small groups with strange and even dangerous beliefs and practices, as well as the neutral definition of a system of worship or veneration of a deity or object. There is also what can be termed the academic definition that means religious worship more generally or worship of a particular deity or spirit.

But the above negative definition does appear in American academics when researching and discussing the groups noted above. Does this mean that using 'cult' for the worship of gods, goddesses, bodhisattvas and spirits is counterproductive because of the negative connotation, especially in the USA? This is compounded by the advent of Donald Trump into politics, where we now have American political reporting and social media using cult for the 'cult of personality" of Donald Trump and that the Republican Party is no longer a political party but rather it is a 'cult'.

I never seriously thought about using or not using cult in my own work, I just recognized it when used in academic writing. It wasn't until sometime in 2019, when I started formally working on conceptual-

izing Thai religion as polytheism, that the definition of cult and its use came to my full attention. For comprehensive studies on and models of polytheism I turned to studies on ancient Mediterranean religions, particularly Greek and Roman, but especially Roman religion. I was now in an academic world saturated with the use of 'cult'. Nevertheless, I did not consider using 'cult' and my article on the worship of the Thai King Naresuan and his elephant duel. I used worship of King Naresuan, not cult of King Naresuan, and I did not use cult the article. Not until reading the call for papers for the Asian Research Institute workshop on the "Notion of Cult" did the question of its viability appear front and centre in my mind.

The article presents an overview of the use of the construct of cult in academic works, first in studies of Greek and Roman religion, and then in a more in-depth look at the use and lack thereof of cult in research on Thai religion (worship of Buddha, deified monks, deified kings, revered monks, Rahu, local deities and spirits). This article provides both the concrete application of cult and a general sense of how the construct of cult is used. A discussion is held on whether cult is applicable to the Thai religious context and by extension other religions as well. More broadly, though not a specific topic of the article, the detailed discussion of the viability of 'cult' speaks to the viability of other analytical terms in the social scientific study of religion.

Methodology

The core methodology is phenomenology of religion and thus qualitative; the phenomenological research on religion is located within the sociology and anthropology of religion. One can also categorize the methodology more broadly as religious studies. Most of the publications examined for this study are from the disciples of history of religion, sociology and anthropology. In terms of phenomenology of religion, for this study the strict holding in mind of Thai concepts of religion and religious practice is necessary because to determine if 'cult' describes and explains Thai religion, then the Thai emic view must be maintained throughout. The second aspect of phenomenology of religion that was emphasized was the comparative method. A review was

carried out on a number of articles, book chapters, and books used in work on Thai religion which consisted of articles and books on Thai religion, Roman and Greek polytheism and several of the articles cited in the Asia Research Institute call for papers. The duration of the research portion was only about six weeks because the material had already been extensively researched.

Data Collection

Twenty-four articles, book chapters, and books covering topics on Thai religion were reviewed as well as thirteen articles and book chapters covering ancient Roman and Greek polytheism. Each of these had already been read for the research on Thai religion. Three articles listed in the Asia Research Institute workshop call for papers were read for the first time. Every use of the word 'cult', 'cults' and 'cultic' found in an article or book chapter was logged, but for several books only representative usages, and not every usage, were logged. I searched for definitions and, importantly, patterns of usage. Dictionary definitions of cult were sought out as seen above, as well as the identification of the constructs or terms used when cult is not used, paying special attention for the use of 'worship'.

Data Analysis

The definitions and usage patterns of cult from studies on Roman, Greek, and Thai religion were compared, first internally (cult in Roman and Greek studies compared separately from Thai studies) and then against each other to identify definitions and usage patterns. The findings were then compared to Thai religious expressions of *wai* (pay respect), *būchā* (sacrifice, worship) and *būang sūang* (worship, appease) to assess the applicability of the construct of 'cult' to Thai religion. Finally, a comparison between definitions and patterns of use of cult and worship was made.

Results

Definitions of Cult from Works Reviewed

The focus for the Asia Research Institute workshop was "cult as a social formation", but the call for paper did not define "social formation". In this instance, it is doubtful we are dealing with the full Marxist definition of social formation as the economic structure, forces and relations of production, and the relation to the superstructure, but we can see cult as a social formation where it "designates a social whole composed of distinct but interrelated instances."[1] Indeed the main definition for cult presented below is just that.

In the works reviewed, only five (see below) gave some definition of the word cult. The fullest treatment of the concept, term or category 'cult' is in Irene Polinskaya's detailed study of a specific instance of ancient Greek religion where she devotes approximately two pages to investigating and defining the academic term 'cult' and its applicability to the study of Greek religion.

Her definition is as follows:

Cult, as well as ritual, is often viewed in opposition to myth, as something that involves 'doing' as opposed to 'talking'. Hence a common use of the phrase 'cult practice'. Also, in common scholarly usage, 'cult' is what humans 'pay' to deities and what deities 'receive'. In my understanding, 'cult' is a form of interaction (cf. pay-receive) that encompasses all traditional means of communication with the divine: rituals, myths, prayers, dedication of votive offerings, ocular consultations, incubations for healing, and so on. […] As a stand-in for 'worship', the term 'cult' serves a useful purpose: it designates an entirety of all modes of worship directed by a distinct social group to a particular hypostasis of a deity at a particular location…[2]

In footnotes Polinskaya refers to Christensen noting that cult is the "regular worship of gods" and that "Greeks considered 'cult' and 're-

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[1] Richard Peet, "Materialism, Social Formation, and Socio-Spatial Relations: An Essay in Marxist Geography," *Cahiers de Géographie du Québec* 22, no.56 (1978): 150. https://doi.org/10.7202/021390ar.

[2] Irene Polinskaya, *A Local History of Greek Polytheism: Gods, People, and the Land of Aigina, 800-400 BCE* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 101.

ligion' as synonymous" (footnotes 4 & 5 respectively).[3] From Polinskaya's definition two usages for cult were identified, one equated with religion and worship encompassing an entire religious tradition and the other more specific in the worship of a single deity (the specific structure, materials, prayers, etc.); that is, (1) cult = religion/worship, and (2) cult = ritual. From all the works reviewed, this is a definition that all but a few of the scholars who use the term cult would agree with. Indeed, this definition was kept in mind as the works were reviewed and this dual definition fits for nearly all usages of cult.

Two of the articles cited in the Asia Research Institute workshop call for papers also define 'cult'. Jack Meng-Tat Chia in a footnote says "In this study, I adopt Paul R. Katz's definition of 'cult' which refers to 'a body of men and women who worship a deity and give of their time, energy, and wealth in order for the worship of this deity to continue and thrive.'"[4] And while not fully defining 'cult' Nguyen Gia Hung states, again in a footnote, "In this thesis, the word 'cult' is not used with negative connotations: it is used to refer to the worship of *thần*, deities in English in general, or of *thành hoàng làng*, village guardian deities in particular."[5] First, and importantly for my purposes, as with Polinskaya, cult is the "stand-in" for worship. These two definitions place the usage of cult more in the confines of the meaning to worship particular deities-spirits rather than the wider definition of cult as religion or as generalized worship. And as a necessary side note, it must be pointed out that in reference to Paul R. Katz, people do not worship a deity "in order for the worship of this deity to continue and thrive"; rather, people worship a deity in a patron-client manner based on, as Polinskaya says, a reciprocal pay-receive relationship (quoted above) with the intention and desire that a particular human or the human community continues and thrives.

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[3]   *Ibid.*
[4]   Jack Meng-Tat Chia, "A Recent Quest for Religious Roots: The Revival of the Guangze Zunwang Cult and Its Sino-Southeast Asian Networks, 1978-2009," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 41, no. 2 (2013): 91, https://doi.org/10.1179/0737769X13Z.0000000004.
[5]   Gia Hung Nguyen, "The Cult of the Guardian Deities in Contemporary Vietnam: the Re-invention of a Tradition" [Unpublished doctoral dissertation] (School of Humanities and Social Inquiry, University of Wollongong, 2016), 1, https://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/4762.

Although not part of the works reviewed, in order to set up the next two definitions it is necessary to refer to an older definition given by Max Weber: "The relationships of men to supernatural forces which take the forms of prayer, sacrifice and worship may be termed 'cult' and 'religion', as distinguished from 'sorcery' which is magical coercion."[6] We will skip over Weber's distinction between religion and "sorcery" and highlight that once again the equating of cult and religion, and also worship.

Jörg Rüpke, while not disputing the definition of cult per se, questions the use of individual deities.

If the renunciation of a chapter on the gods [in *A Companion to Roman Religion*] prompts an explanation, the lack of systematic treatment of 'cults' should prompt another. 'Cults' as applied to ancient religions is a very convenient term, as it takes ancient polytheism to pieces that are gratifyingly similar to the large religious traditions like Christianity: defined by one god, be it Venus or Mithras… […] Thus, part V deliberately illustrates the wide spectrum of religious groups or options and does not attempt to map ancient polytheisms as the sum of different "cults".[7]

For this, we think Rüpke holds that using cult creates a distortion and a separation between deities within the polytheistic system that is not there. Within polytheism there is no this god's cult or that goddess's cult in that sense that the deity can be or is worshipped exclusive of other deities. Rüpke seems to rule out using cult for application to the worship of single deities.

Finally, Peter A. Jackson, writing before the above scholars (except for Weber) and writing on Thai religion, expresses the more 'American' definition of cult:

Thai historian Nithi Aeusrivongse "uses the expression *latthi-phiti* ('doctrine-ritual'), which he glosses in English as 'cult', to describe these ritual-symbolic devotional movements. Nithi defines *latthi-phiti* as 'a ritually rich religious doctrine which is not a part of the "principles" (lak-kan) or orthodoxy of the dominant religion adhered to by the majority of people' (Nithi,

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[6]   Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 28.
[7]   Jörg Rüpke, ed., *A Companion to Roman Religion* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007), 7.

1993:11n). However, while the movements considered here may have begun as unorthodox minority phenomena, their rapid growth in the 1990s meant that their popularity and influence relocated them from marginal positions into the cultural and religious mainstream. I prefer to call these phenomena 'movements' or 'religions' rather than 'cults' to denote their significance at the height of the [economic] boom.[8]

While the definition contained in this statement is not necessary negative, it does align with the 'American' definition of cult as an "unorthodox minority phenomena". For Jackson, once the cult is large enough in terms of both adherents and popularity, it becomes orthodox and mainstream and shifts to a "movement" or a religion; and thus, cult is not synonymous with religion and this definition is an outlier in regards to the other definitions presented here.

Within these definitions Polinskaya presents the fullest definition and one that can act as the standard definition of cult and one that encompasses Chia and Nguyen. Rüpke poses a challenge to expanding the definition beyond its original broader definition of beliefs and practices of a pantheon, a community of gods and goddesses. While Jackson presents a more American definition that stands apart from Polinskaya.

The Patterns of Use of Cult in Works on Greek and Roman Religion

The focus is not on this body of works and thus only a general overview is provided. The reading of Greek and Roman religion was originally done to study conceptual models of polytheism and develop a conceptual model of Thai religion as polytheism. At that time, there was no concern with the concept 'cult'; however, it was noted that cult is used frequently and in nearly all the articles and book chapters read. Because the reading of the articles and chapters was done in the hope that they would provide information and even models of polytheism that would be useful in an application to Thai religion, reading on specific 'cults' of deities was not done. Indeed, perhaps because of

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[8]   Peter A. Jackson, "Royal Spirits, Chinese Gods, and Magic Monks: Thailand's boomtime religions of prosperity," *South East Asia Research* 7, no.3 (1999): 248, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23746841.

the extensive use Rüpke's edited *Companion* (2007) and his individual book on Roman religion *Pantheon* (2018) and because he specifically stated his reticence to apply cult to the individual worship of deities, no extensive use of cult applied to individual deities was found. In the *Companion,* while the use of cult is frequent, it is used primarily in the broader meaning "publicly financed cult", "places of cult", "municipal cults", "provincial cults", "the cult statue", "new cults", "mystery cults", etc. Cases of applying cult to a specific deity do occur "the cult of Dionysus", the cult of the Lares", "Imperial cult", "the cult of Mithrus", but these are outnumbered some five or six to one by the more general definition. In the other works on Greek and Roman religion reviewed the pattern is repeated.

The general impression is that cult is used systematically, and even when not defined, falls into the description and definition of Polinskaya, and while two meanings or usages for 'cult' were identified, in practice, even within a specific context, it is not always clear whether the meaning is religion/worship or ritual – it frequently can be both.

Despite saying that cult can designate "a particular hypostasis of a deity at a particular location", Polinskaya, in reviewing approximately 100 pages of her book, uses cult in the more general sense equated to religion or religious ritual, such as "in the sphere of cults", "local cultic calendars", "various cult sites", cult images", etc. The reason for this may well be because only the first six chapters of her book were read to build a conceptual model for polytheism and the first six chapters cover definitions, methodology, theory, and the like; deeper in the book when treating actual worship, she may use cult applied to a specific deity. However, she does use phrases such as, "figures of cults", objects of cults" and ancient Greek cults", the use of the plural "cults" indicating that there are indeed discrete cults for deities.

The Patterns of Use of Cult in Works on Thai Religion

In reviewing the material on Thai religion used in my research, specific attention was paid to the use of cult, it was found that several scholars do not use cult at all, several use it sparingly, and several scholars use cult frequently. Except for the distinction between cult and re-

ligion made by Jackson noted above, no scholar provided a definition of the term. During the review of these works a cognate for cult was looked for when cult was not used. That is if cult means or is a replacement for religion, or more specifically for worship, then when a scholar does not use cult, does the scholar use worship or some similar term instead? The review comprised twenty-four articles, book chapters and books on Thai religion. Of these, nine works did not use cult at all, and using subjective estimates, eight had low to moderate use (1–10 uses, subjective estimate because 9 uses in a short article could be considered high rather than moderate), and seven with high usage (10 or more uses). An overview follows.

We start with Peter A Jackson who was quoted above. Because he specifically said why he would not use cult, it should come as no surprise that in that long article[9] and one published a few months earlier,[10] he does not use cult. As he explains, he uses "prosperity religion(s)", "prosperity movements", "devotional movements" and then for specific deities or people he uses worship – "worship of King Chulalongkorn", "worship of Kuan Im", and "worship of monks". This usage helps demonstrate the dual definition of cult already expressed, 'religion' and 'movement' are more global general terms, while 'worship' is for application to deities as a whole or individually. And here we see the terms used when 'cult' is not used – worship is the go-to term, directly expressing Polinskaya's statement that cult is the stand in for worship. Writing much later in 2016 and 2020, Jackson has dropped his objection to using cult. In these more recent articles, he refers to the same phenomena above as "prosperity cults", "cult of King Chulalongkorn", "cult of Kuan Im", and to new phenomena called "spirit medium cults", "cult of amulets", and "cult of spirits". No explanation as to why he made this change has been provided.

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[9]   Jackson, "Royal Spirits, Chinese Gods, and Magic Monks," 245–320.
[10]   Peter A. Jackson, "The Enchanting Spirit of Thai Capitalism: The cult of Luang Phor Khoon and the post-modernization of Thai Buddhism," *South East Asia Research* 7, no. 1 (1999): 5–60, https://doi.org/10.1177/0967828X9900700102.

John Holt also uses 'cult' quite frequently in his book and book chapter on Lao religion.[11] (2009, 2019 respectively). The main use is in "spirit cults", and then "phi cults" "cultic behavior, "cultic life in Laos", and also applied to heroes of the communist revolutions in Vietnam and Laos: "Ho's [Ho Chi Minh] contemporary cult", "Ho's cultic veneration", "the public cult of Kaysone" [a leading figure in the Lao communist revolution], Kaysone cult". Holt's use of cult is in alignment with the usage of the works on Greek and Roman religion.

The most ubiquitous use of cult is by Pattana Kitiarsa in both his 2005 article and subsequent book on basically the same subject of describing Thai religion and his theory to conceptualize Thai religion as a hybrid (2012).[12] The usage is very much in line with the later writings of Jackson, we find "spirit-medium cults", "rural cults", "amulet cults", "Indian religious cults", "Guanyin cult", "spirit cults", "popular cults", "urban prosperity cults", "cult of Phumphuang, and my favourite "supernatural cults".

In a hint at a definition of cult, Irene Stengs asks in her book on King Chulalongkorn "But is the King Chulalongkorn cult merely a religious cult, in the sense of the word: King Chulalongkorn is a deity, endorsing a system of rites and beliefs […]. Or are we confronted with its more 'modern' and 'secular' equivalent, a 'personality cult?'"[13] So she presents both the neutral academic category and a negative, as well as modern and secular, definition of 'cult' and we are apparently supposed to juggle this throughout the book. Stengs does use cult defined as a system of rites and beliefs for deities – though she does not explicitly say so – such as, "the cult of Chao Mae Kaun Im (Kuan Yin)." This deity cult is certainly not a personality cult, as Kuan Im is a Thai deity (as well

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[11]   John Clifford Holt, *Spirits of the Place: Buddhism and Lao Religious Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009); John Clifford Holt, *Theravada Traditions: Buddhist Ritual Cultures in Contemporary Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019).

[12]   Pattana Kitiarsa, "Beyond Syncretism: Hybridization of Popular Religion in Contemporary Thailand," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no. 3 (2005): 461–487, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463405000251; Pattana Kitiarsa, *Mediums, Monks, & Amulets: Thai Popular Buddhism Today* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2012).

[13]   Irene Stengs, *Worshipping the Great Modernizer: King Chulalongkorn, Patron Saint of the Middle Class* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), 14.

as Chinese), but Stengs does not address this. And so, returning to King Chulalongkorn, he is now a deity for Thais and so Stengs' question about a personality cult is clearly answered: the King Chulalongkorn cult is religious worship, not a cult of personality.

We close with Justin T. McDaniel who is in opposition to the use of cult. He states in regard to attempts to understand Thai religion, "We retreat to a series of vague explanations and terms like 'magic', 'cult', 'Indianized', 'localization', and 'folk' when attempting to describe what seems like novel anomalies…"[14] There is no elaboration of the topic as to exactly why these terms are vague and so one can only speculate as to why he considers 'cult' to be so. Not surprisingly, he does not use cult in the book.

Discussion

Cult of Amulets and Spirit-medium Cults

We begin this section where we ended the last, with works on Thai religion. The use of cult by Pattana Kitiarsa is so pervasive that it raises questions as to the accuracy of its use, particularly "cult of amulets" or "amulet cults" and "spirit-medium cults". Stanley Tambiah, writing well before Kitiarsa, has a book title using the phrase "spirit cults" (*Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in North-east Thailand*)[15] and another using "the cult of amulets" (*The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets*, 1984).[16] Chapter 14 of the latter is titled "The cult of images and amulets"; in that chapter and chapters 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19[17] (1984, p. 195-289), however, 'cult' is used quite sparingly. Peter A. Jackson in his 2016 article[18] also uses both "cult of amulets" and

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[14] Justin Thomas McDaniel, *The Lovelorn Ghost and the Magic Monk: Practicing Buddhism in Modern Thailand* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 15.

[15] Stanley J. Tambiah, *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in North-east Thailand* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

[16] Stanley J. Tambiah, *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[17] Tambiah, *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the cult of Amulets*, 195–289.

[18] Peter A. Jackson, "The Supernaturalization of Thai Political Culture: Thailand's Magical Stamps of Approval at the Nexus of Media, Market and State," *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues*

"spirit medium cults". We question this use because both the amulets and the spirit mediums are instruments or material and human objects used in the cult/worship of a deity or spirit, rather than the cult being about the amulet or spirit medium. There is a deity, a revered monk, or a spirit that is worshipped first, and the amulets and the spirit mediums are components in that cult of the deity or spirit. We do not say, for example, that there is a cult of 'incense' (material component in the cult like amulets) or a cult of Catholic priests (primary human component in the cult like spirit mediums). So, in the cult of King Chulalongkorn there are amulets and spirit mediums, and the same for other deities, but there is no cult of the amulets or cult of the spirit mediums of King Chulalongkorn, although both amulets and spirit mediums may well be revered.

Kitiarsa unintentionally–given how he used the term cult–makes our point when he says concerning amulets, "*Luang Pu To* was reborn in heaven as a *thep* and that his spirit comes down to possess a body to help human beings. Remembered as a highly charismatic and intellectually renowned monk, he is also popular in amulet cults; his amulets are 'the most sacred of all auspicious materials and his magical spells (*katha*) are the most recited religious verses'."[19] Thus, there is a cult of Luang Pu To and amulets are made representing him. There is not a cult of amulets into which Luang Pu To is then chosen as a figure in the amulet cults. And further for spirit mediums, "Through the magical expertise of mediums, Phra In's power as it appears in Hindu cosmology is transformed into specific practices; in the cults, he is a deity who demands proper worship and offerings."[20] "In the cults" appears to mean the spirit medium cults, but this reverses the process. There is the deity Phra In first, and then spirit mediums channel or are possessed by his spirit; there is no cult of spirit mediums who create and conjure up deities. The spirit mediums coalesce around existing deities and spirits.

Cult Versus Worship: The Applicability of Cult to Thai Religion

Returning to Polinskaya's definition of cult, she says it is a stand-in for worship. This begs the question as to what the difference between 'cult' and 'worship' is that makes cult a better explanatory concept. Looking at definitions of worship, worship is more the general act or action, while cult is more comprehensive, encompassing all aspects of the phenomenon. Cult is self-contained, or closed–the cult of King Chulalongkorn, as opposed to the openness of worship–the worship of King Chulalongkorn.

Thus, reservations are raised about the applicability of cult to Thai religion. First is Rüpke's concern for the separation and/or differentia-tion, not of the deities, but of the worship of these deities that makes each a distinct cult, and even if there are distinctions, do they matter in any substantive way to the worshipper? The Thai vocabulary equating to worship has slight nuances between terms, but they generally express the same beliefs, sentiments, and ritual actions: *wai* (pay respect), *būchā* (sacrifice, worship), *būang sūang* (worship, appease), etc. These are frequently prefaced by *pitī* (ritual, ceremony), thus, *pitī būang sūang*. There is an informal standardized use for basic worship with materials consisting of garlands, incense and candles; this can be augmented with other items depending on the deity or spirit: drinks (sometimes liquor), meats, sweets, figurines of animals (typically roosters, zebras, water buf-falo and elephants) and figurines of women performing Thai classical dance. In Thai religion there is no formal membership in worship and ritual practice (at least none that we know of) and worship is fluid with individual Thais free to worship, or not worship, any deity and spirit they chose. Worship is a simple generalized pattern with minor varia-tions to suit particular deities, deified kings, spirits, etc. There are no separate priests for each deity; in fact, there are no established priests for worshipping deities in Thai religion. One can organize a special event or attend one where ritual specialists (*ajāns*), sometimes but not always called *phrām*, carry out the ritual, and in the worship of deities, Buddhist monks may also participate, but day-to-day worship is an individual or small group affair of family and/or friends.

While one can certainly say the "cult of King Naresuan", and the title of my article could be changed[21] to *Among the Pantheon: the Cult of King Nareusuan's Victory in Elephant Duel*, the fluidity of Thai religion, the polytheism that is Thai religion, strains the parameters of the notion of the 'cult' of an individual deity as a specific social formation in Thailand.

Finally, it is important to note that no one has applied the construct cult to the Buddha or Buddhism: there is no "cult of Buddha". To me this means that 'cult' in Thai studies is inconsistent, perhaps confused. This opens up one of our main criticisms of the use of cult. If cult is used for Thai, Chinese, Roman, or Greek deities, then it should be used for all religions and all deities, and thus we should find academic works on the cult of Buddha, the cult of God, the cult of Jesus (including Protestant Christianity), and the cult of Yahweh, and the cult of Allah. Cult is used in connection with Catholic saints, but this only reinforces my point. Not using cult with these deities also reinforces Rüpke's criticism of dividing up polytheism into parts denying its unity, but maintaining Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam as wholes. This non-use also appears to grant a superiority to Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam because they are not cults. Given this, how then is 'cult' a neutral, generalizable descriptive and analytical construct?

Conclusion

Given our support of creating academic concepts, categories, and constructs for social sciences and the quality of Polinskaya's definition and use of cult, it is understood why scholars use cult as a descriptive and explanatory term; yet, we are hesitant to incorporate it in our work. First is the simple matter of the predominance in American circles of the negative connotation of cult. Secondly, and I think more importantly, I am squarely in the camp of Rüpke. I am less concerned when

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[21]   Kosuta, Matthew, "Among the Thai Pantheon: Worshipping King Naresuan's Victory in Elephant Duel," *Humanities and Social Sciences Journal of Graduate School, Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University* 14, no. 2 (July–December 2020): 623–637.

cult is used in a general sense of religion or worship, but I find it distorting the phenomena to differentiate deities and spirits by 'cults'.

Finally, we must reinforce the idea that ended the Discussion section which speaks directly to the necessity of a construct being generalizable. In the context of Thai religion, a telling omission in the pattern of use of 'cult' is that not one scholar uses cult in relation to the Buddha – there is no "cult of the Buddha" or "Buddha cults". Why is this? And why is there no cult of Yahweh, cult of Jesus, and cult of Allah in other works of religious studies? It strikes me that the construct of cult has an inherent bias imbedded within it. If cult cannot describe the social formation around the Buddha, if cult cannot break into usage in the monotheistic religions, if it is not useful in describing and explaining them, and if 'cult' is not a good stand-in for the worship of these deities, then it is not in my view a construct adequate to apply to Thai deities and spirits. If cult is not generalizable, and thus not applicable to all deities and spirits inclusive of the central or only deity of a religion, then it is not applicable to any deity, or any spirit – in contrast, worship is.

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THE BURNING MONK: A REVIEW OF A BUDDHIST'S SELF-IMMOLATION DURING THE VIETNAM WAR

Luka Benedičič

Introduction

On June 11th, 1963, the Mahayana Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc publicly self-immolated in Saigon in response to the violent anti-Buddhist crackdown and the general suffering of the masses in Vietnam and died at the scene. The self-immolation was captured by the photographic lens of Malcolm W. Brown, who shortly afterwards won the Pulitzer Prize for his reporting in Vietnam. The photograph of the burning monk quickly circulated in the world media, triggering a flood of shocked reactions, interpretations and evaluations of the act. At the crossroads of the different perspectives is an overarching fascination with the role of the body in this event. The suffering and the simultaneous mastery over the body are highlighted, where the sacrifice of its qualities and the resulting death become a symbol of compassion and protest. However, monks close to the deceased pointed out that, according to their understanding of the Buddhist horizon, self-immolation was neither suicide (in the sense of the abolition of individual existence) nor protest, since to endure the pain of the fire is above all a demonstration of steadfast devotion and love for the people one wishes to protect, and since the enemy of the people is not any other human being or authority figure, but intolerance, hatred and discrimination.

Interventions of this kind are not mere word games. Simultaneously, the objection that all events are inherently ambiguous and subject to interpretation is superficial. The argument for addressing the problem of interpretation, gaze, perspective and worlds in this historical example is its liminality. Not only because it ends in death, but also because of the visual power of the scene, the range of attitudes (political, religious and scientific), and emotional responses to it (admiration, dismay, sadness, anger and sympathy), as well as the wide media coverage of the event. The self-immolation was captured by a single journalist's camera, and most media grabbed a single photograph, the same one every time, which was the basis for the world's coverage of the event.

Two Reports and the Historical Context

Flames were coming from a human being; his body was slowly withering and shrivelling up, his head blackening and charring. In the air was the smell of burning flesh; human beings burn surprisingly quickly. Behind me I could hear the sobbing of the Vietnamese who were now gathering. I was too shocked to cry, too confused to take notes or ask questions, too bewildered even to think.[1]

David Halberstam, then a reporter for The New York Times and a future Pulitzer Prize winner for his reporting in Vietnam, poignantly describes his experience of witnessing the self-immolation of the Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc in the Vietnamese capital Saigon. The act was a reaction against the regime led by Ngo Dinh Diem, which – alongside all the other tensions and repression in social life – openly favoured Christianity over Buddhism. Buddhists were not allowed to fly their flags to celebrate the Buddha's birthday. Before Duc's death, there were other demonstrations in the streets and the government army violently suppressed a gathering of Buddhists in Hue who were demanding the right to fly the Buddhist flag alongside the national flag. Nine Buddhists died in the conflict and the government has not claimed responsibility for their deaths. Thich Quang Duc, who was an

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[1]   David Halberstam, *The Making of a Quagmire: America and Vietnam During the Kennedy Era* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 128.

elder of the local Mahayana Buddhist community, took matters into his own hands.

The event was reported by another Pulitzer Prize winner from that year, Malcolm W. Browne, then a reporter for the Associated Press, whose recognised photograph Burning Monk was taken that day in Saigon. Browne was supposedly the only Western journalist carrying a camera at the time, so his black-and-white photographs, and one in particular, were distributed heavily throughout the world's media.[2] John F. Kennedy said that no photograph in the history of journalistic reporting had received such an emotional response worldwide as this one. It shows a Buddhist monk sitting on the ground in the middle of an otherwise busy street in the lotus position, his eyes closed, his hands folded, his arms around a large flame and with smoke billowing from it.

Browne describes the regime of Vietnamese leader Ngo Dinh Diem and his total control of the media. He says that the Buddhists were determined to override the censorship with which Diem silenced his opposition. They knew that Diem's censorship had the tacit support of the US, which backed him as a new political leader because of his anti-communist statements. The Buddhists, therefore, felt that they would have to fight the publicity battle alone. Despite their inability to fight tanks and the large secret police network, they had to do something to draw the world's attention to the suffering of Buddhists in Vietnam. Thich Quang Duc managed to do this, sitting down in the middle of a busy road in broad daylight, surrounded by 350 monks praying and waving protest signs. One of the monks poured petrol on him, Duc struck a match and was immediately surrounded by flames. The police were too shocked to react, even though they had somehow expected the event. In fact, Buddhist leaders had informed their correspondents around the city in advance that two monks had come forward and would publicly kill themselves if the state did not respond to their demands:[3]

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[2]   Malcolm W. Browne, "Viet Nam Reporting: Three Years of Crisis," *Columbia Journalism Review*, December 2, 2011, https://archives.cjr.org/fiftieth_anniversary/viet_nam_reporting_three_years.php.
[3]   *Ibid.*

The days dragged on, and there were many street demonstrations in which nothing significant happened. Press interest lagged. It happened that I was the only Western newsman present during the street procession in which Quang Duc died. (...) As a matter of duty, I photographed the whole horrible sequence of Quang Duc's suicide and relayed the pictures and story as fast as possible into The Associated Press network. It is difficult to conceive of any newsman acting otherwise (...). [H]ad a Western newsman with a camera not been present at Quang Duc's suicide, history might have taken a different turn.[4]

Brown would also probably not have been there if he had not received a phone call from another Buddhist monk informing him to come to the procession, because something important might happen there. Even the path to the publication of the photograph in the US was not a straightforward one: The Philadelphia Inquirer was the only newspaper that wanted to publish Brown's photograph of the burning monk, while other newspapers initially refused to publish it. The New York Times reportedly said the picture was unsuitable for breakfast.[5]

The reaction was swift and global. Buddhist leaders printed enlargements of the photograph, had them coloured, and took them to future demonstrations. People wept and bowed in prayer in front of the photograph. China, too, printed a large number of photographs and distributed them both at home and across its national borders – with the attribution that the self-immolation was the work of the US imperialists and their Diemist subjects. Many reports followed of suicides in a similar fashion to Duc's death. They came from Burma, India, Japan, France and elsewhere. In the US, a group of prominent clerics used a photo of the Burning Monk on the front page of The New York Times and The Washington Post with the caption: "We too protest".[6]

Duc's action made waves in Vietnam and beyond. The monk's self-immolation, which received the most publicity, was followed by the deaths of 36 monks and one young Buddhist woman, also by fire, dur-

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[4] *Ibid.*
[5] Michelle Murray Yang, "Still Burning: Self-Immolation as Photographic Protest," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 1 (2011): 7, https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2010.536565.
[6] Ibid.

ing the Vietnam War.[7] Protests followed in various parts of Asia, with protesters carrying a picture of Duc at the head of a procession, most often illuminated, depicting him as a saint. Many protesters followed him to death. Self-immolation – especially with a note of protest – is gaining momentum and is still going strong: more than a hundred Tibetans have died in this way in the last ten years.

The debate that Duc's self-immolation started is multifaceted: in his book on self-immolation in Tibet, Whalen-Bridge at one point problematizes the difference between the not-yet-Buddhas in Tibet who ran down the streets screaming, falling on the ground, getting up and collapsing again as they were consumed by flames – on the other hand, Thich Quang Duc was calm and cold-blooded. He also makes the interesting comment that in order to judge Duc's self-immolation in Buddhist terms, it may be necessary to know what Duc's inner state really was – if it was anger and despair, that might disqualify the sanctity of the act for some Buddhists. In short: it is not sufficient to conclude that he was a good meditator.[8] Dionisopoulos and Skow[9] note that, based on newspaper publications, Americans have made a wide variety of judgments about the photograph and Duc's action – that is, from political (including anti-communist), aesthetic, moral-ethical, religious and other perspectives. The act and the way in which it was carried out were judged. The death, eschatological themes, the suicide, and its visual staging, the public character of the act, the political atmosphere, and the role of the American media in Vietnam were problematised. The news sparked a strong anti-war campaign, which was joined by mass self-immolations by Americans protesting against the war in Vietnam. This shocked some people – including Thomas Merton, a Catholic monk who saw in suicide protest "the fetishism of immediate visible results" and, in protest, distanced himself from some anti-war Catholic

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[7]   Christopher Queen, "Dr. Ambedkar and the Hermeneutics of Buddhist Liberation," in *Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia*, ed. Christopher Queen and Sallie B. King (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 1.

[8]   John Whalen-Bridge, *Tibet on Fire: Buddhism, Protest, and the Rhetoric of Self-Immolation* (New York, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 119.

[9]   George N. Dionisopoulos and Lisa M. Skow, "A struggle to contextualize photographic images: American print media and the 'Burning Monk'," *Communication Quarterly* 45 (1997): 393–409, https://doi.org/10.1080/01463379709370073.

groups.[10] When asked whether suicide was a sin, a Buddhist psychiatrist explained to another researcher in conversation that in his view there were no sins in Buddhism, only transgressions.[11] So this too was the location of a possible schism – a difference between two ontological positions.

But there was universal amazement at Duc's mental and physical capacity to endure so much pain without succumbing to it in screams and spasms of the body. This is how the psychologist Manno described Duc's self-immolation in his article:

> Duc's act was the epitome of a profound behavior, able to be elicited with careful practice, volition, and experience. The state of mind cultivated allowing the self-immolation behavior is what draws onlookers to Duc. We respectfully wonder, we are held captive, and our memory is entranced by his image. How is it possible for Duc to willingly undergo such an act? Neuroscientists are beginning to understand it's the brain's structure and function altered due to numerous hours of meditation that enabled Duc to become the Monk on Fire.[12]

Buddhism and Social Activism

There is a strong connection between Buddhist practices of (self-) violence and times of tense social circumstances. Despite the doctrine of non-violence (ahimsa), violence – towards oneself and others – is often a matter of debate in Buddhism. Although Buddhism is instinctively associated with pacifism, there are several historical instances when a particular branch of Buddhism has been politically engaged, and sometimes militarised, in a particular setting. Sociologists of religion often link the rise of nationalisms to the religious atmosphere in a particular

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[10] Cheyney Ryan, "The One Who Burns Herself For Peace," *Hypatia* 9, no. 2 (1994): 21–39, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1994.tb00431.x.

[11] Marjorie Hope, "The Reluctant Way: Self-Immolation in Vietnam," *The Antioch Review* 27, no. 2 (1967): 161, https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.18.4.njnu779530x55082.

[12] Francis A. M. Manno, "Monk on Fire: The Meditative Mind of a Burning Monk," *Cogent Psychology* 6, no. 1 (2019): 14, https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2019.1678556.

setting; Buddhism is no exception, according to recent discussions on Theravada Buddhism in Thailand, Burma and Sri Lanka.[13]

In historical Buddhist texts, one finds discussions (albeit rare) that polemicise the prohibition of killing and encourage the participation of monks in violent events. One concept they use to advocate this is compassionate killing. Thus, monks should be allowed to use arms to defend their homes and their people. The author of one of the texts in which this idea appears – young monks in China are said to have looked for such texts and read them carefully when they were looking for reasons to militarise – argued that killing is not the opposite of not killing, but that it is necessary to consider first of all whether it can be carried out from a position of compassion and whether it can do good. Compassionate monks could kill out of an awareness that they were sacrificing their own karma – they would kill the enemy in order to save the enemy from killing someone and producing bad karma for them. Other authors have also invoked the doctrine of non-discrimination and non-duality when arguing that monks are allowed to kill.[14] Critics of these interpretations have argued that contemplating such ideas requires great spiritual maturity, not just the logical flip-flopping of concepts and doctrines.[15]

Not all socially activist Buddhism is militant. On the contrary: sometimes its practice is radical non-violence (ahimsa). Many anecdotes from the Vietnam War inform about soldiers storming into a temple and coming across meditating monks; they were instructed to kill them, but it sometimes happened that they laid down their arms for a while, joined them in meditation, then left without any harm done. The promoters of so-called Engaged Buddhism wanted to bring a similar impression to the streets and to political dialogue, hoping to show that coexistence is possible if we are conscious of the spiritual

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[13] See Tessa J. Bartholomeusz, *In Defense of Dharma: Just-war ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka* (London, New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002); Michael Jerryson, *If You Meet the Buddha on The Road: Buddhism, Politics, and Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Peter Lehr, *Militant Buddhism: The Rise of Religious Violence in Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).
[14] Xue Yu, *Buddhism, War, and Nationalism: Chinese Monks in the Struggle Against Japanese Aggressions, 1931–1945* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 50.
[15] *Ibid.*, 200.

side of our lives. The 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to peacefully resolve the conflict between Tibet and China. A similar advocate during the Vietnam War was Thich Nhat Hanh, who was banned from entering his homeland by the authorities until 2005.[16]

Engaged Buddhism is an example of a new 20th-century social movement. It is a contemporary form of Buddhism that actively and non-violently intervenes in the socio-economic, political and ecological problems of a society. The movement grew slowly in Buddhist Asia throughout the twentieth century, but towards the end of the century, it became particularly influential among Buddhists who travelled to the West.[17] Engaged Buddhism is not centralised and has no founders, only individual initiators. It draws heavily on Buddhism, but it is not an outgrowth of any one branch of Buddhism – Theravada, Mahayana and other Buddhists can all be initiators of the movement. It is defined by a desire to bring Buddhist knowledge into politics and public debate, in order to bear on peaceful and compassionate solutions to social problems. Engaged Buddhism has been shaped by different political manifestations across Asia, which means that the movement is not unified; it is defined primarily by a shared philosophy and a common aspiration. At the same time, it is a modern phenomenon, strongly influenced by the West and its social, economic and psychological circumstances – but also by its direct interventions in Asian societies, for example during the Second World War, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War. Buddhist Asia in the middle of the last century was also subjected to strong processes of modernisation, globalisation and westernisation. In addition, the genocide in Cambodia and Tibet, poverty in Sri Lanka, the repressive government in Burma, and deforestation in Thailand (etc.) have created local traumas – and desires for deep healing.[18]

Socially Engaged Buddhism has been criticised in Asia and in the West: conservative Buddhists in Asia have said that monks should live exemplary lives of purity in the temple, while the West has often argued

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[16] Sallie B. King, *Socially Engaged Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 4.
[17] *Ibid.*, 1.
[18] *Ibid.*, 2.

that the movement is merely a product of Westernisation, hence it is a Westernised and therefore inauthentic form of Buddhism. Nhat Hanh replies that Gautama did not become a Buddha when he attained enlightenment, but only after he decided to use this insight to become a teacher and help others. Ariyaratne points out, however, that Buddhism had always been socially engaged before colonial expansion, but with the advent of Western knowledge, medicine, etc., it lost its position as an authority to which people could turn for help.[19]

It is undoubtedly true that the West has had a strong influence on the movement. Many of the initiators, including Nhat Hanh, spent some years in the West and were educated there. Many Western concepts appear in their arguments, such as structural violence and human rights. The greatest spiritual influence came from non-Buddhists like Gandhi (he too was educated in the West) – the exception was Ambedkar, a close collaborator of Gandhi for some time. Christian charity and activism also took over from the West. Similarly, the insights of social science and economic and political theory. But this does not mean that Engaged Buddhism is a direct product of Western influence. In fact, the movement is always faithful to the Buddhist worldview and is based on ideas from Buddhist philosophy and spirituality. The movement accepted Western ideas that were useful to it but rejected many that it considered incompatible with the Buddhist tradition, such as the idea of political justice.[20]

Protest and Suicide

What most of the responses to Brown's photo have in common is that they describe Thich Quang Duc's self-immolation as a suicide protest. I want to problematise this claim. Firstly, it is worth pointing out that the monk's physical self-immolation using fire was not an improvisation. Not only was the self-immolation planned, but to a lesser extent, it is part of important monastic rituals. When taking vows, for example, monks are required to burn several small areas of their bodies

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[19]   *Ibid.*, 7–9.
[20]   *Ibid.*, 11.

with fire and endure the pain; that way, they confirm their commitment to a ritual or ceremony.

Thich Quang Duc's action involves the self-immolation of the whole body. In Buddhist literature, there exist enigmatic passages that seem to give instructions on how to perform self-immolation.[21] In Buddhism, the true way of life is linked to mental exercises such as meditation and study. Self-immolation – according to some interpreters – offers a physical path to enlightenment, which makes it attractive in a particular way. This is reflected in the increasing number of self-immolations in medieval Chinese Buddhism (from the fifth century onwards, to be precise), where it was seen as a legitimate way of attaining salvation.[22] Buddhism speaks of many types of "leaving the body" that are as extreme as self-immolation, such as cutting off one's fingers or hand, skinning oneself, feeding one's body to insects or wild animals, self-mummification, starving oneself, throwing oneself off a cliff, and so on. Benn points out that self-immolation should be understood as only one of these ways.[23]

There are also many ways of self-immolation. The most common is self-cremation – a form that originates and was popularised in China to the extent that it is depicted in many hagiographies.[24] Self-immolation can have different meanings. In eschatological terms, it may have been interpreted as an immediate attainment of enlightenment, at other times as a guarantee of rebirth in heaven. Historically, however, the practice of self-immolation has been more common in the midst of social conflict and in times of crisis – especially when Buddhism and Buddhists have been the specific target, notably of secular pressures and political discrimination.[25]

Scholars of Buddhism are very careful in talking about self-immolation. On the other hand, lay commentators have often labelled it as

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[21]   Paul F. Copp, *The Body incantatory: spells and the ritual imagination in medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2014), 147.

[22]   James A. Benn, *Burning for the Buddha: self-immolation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: Kuroda Institute, 2007), 8.

[23]   *Ibid.*, 9–10.

[24]   *Ibid.*, 11.

[25]   *Ibid.*, 200–201.

suicide (in the existential sense) – and from the perspective of social criticism, as protest. Browne, too, often speaks of Duc's self-immolation as suicide. Social science interpretations of Duc's self-immolation take a similar route, thematizing the body and its effects, as well as the historical context. Sindhi and Shah[26] attempt to understand self-immolations as protest using historical examples from Tibet. Andriolo[27] analyses the body as a site of performance and analyses the effects of self-immolation as a suicide protest. Dionisopoulos and Skow[28] write a reflection on the American media response to suicide by fire. Filippelli[29] thematises Duc's self-immolation as compassionate suicide, and Murray Yang[30] as photographic protest.

It can be said that self-immolation has become culturally marked as a political act and an act of protest. Recalling Jan Palach in 1968 in Czechoslovakia – who was offered a skin transplant by Jasa Zlobec, but Palach died too soon and the transplant was not possible. There exist similarities between cases of self-immolation in different historical contexts, where many of them had a publicly emphasised note of politics and protest. There is also the intuitive approach of social scientists to thematise the body – with or without fire – as a potential site and means of protest. The Falun Gong students in Tiananmen Square, 2009, and the recent reading of the Constitution in Ljubljana's Republic Square, 2020, are also examples of protesting with the body. Increasingly so, we live in an age of the performative. Performance itself often uses the body to convey a socially critical message – thinking of Marina Abramović's Rhythm 0 in Naples, 1974.

It is natural to assume that religious and other culturally marked events can also be seen as political protests. Despite the comfort of such a notion, the present essay problematises this intuition and proves it to be an inadequate analytical framework.

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[26] Swaleha A. Sindhi and Adfer Rashid Shah, "Life in Flames: Understanding Tibetan Self Immolations as Protest," *The Tibet Journal* 37, no. 4 (2012): 34–53.
[27] Karin Andriolo, "The Twice-Killed: Imagining Protest Suicide," *American Anthropologist* 108, no. 1 (2006): 100–113, https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2006.108.1.100.
[28] George N. Dionisopoulos and Lisa M. Skow, "A struggle."
[29] Sandra Filippeli, "An Inquiry into Self-Immolation as Social Protest," *Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal* 3, no. 1 (2018): 53–68, https://doi.org/10.18432/ari29258.
[30] Murray Yang, "Still Burning."

Letter to Martin Luther King: An Ontological Problem

Zen Buddhist monk and advocate of the Engaged Buddhism movement Thich Nhat Hanh was the most prominent promoter of peace in the West during the Vietnam War. Among other things, he travelled to the USA where he gave public speeches to provoke reflection and a change of heart among the people sending their men to Vietnam. He met Martin Luther King Jr. who later nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize. In his letter In Search of the Enemy of Man, addressed to King Jr. on June 1st 1965 (they first met a year later), Hanh comments on Thich Quang Duc's self-immolation and criticises the view that the self-immolation is an act of suicide and protest. Owing to the context of his letter, he directly addresses the "Western Christian" perspective, though his critique can also be applied to non-Western and non-Christian settings. Hanh was a close friend of Duc, so his understanding of the event is particularly informative. I offer an excerpt from this letter:

The self-burning of Vietnamese Buddhist monks in 1963 is somehow difficult for the Western Christian conscience to understand. The Press spoke then of suicide, but in the essence, it is not. It is not even a protest. What the monks said in the letters they left before burning themselves aimed only at alarming, at moving the hearts of the oppressors and at calling the attention of the world to the suffering endured then by the Vietnamese. To burn oneself by fire is to prove that what one is saying is of the utmost importance. There is nothing more painful than burning oneself. To say something while experiencing this kind of pain is to say it with the utmost courage, frankness, determination and sincerity.

The Vietnamese monk, by burning himself, says with all his strength and determination that he can endure the greatest of sufferings to protect his people. But why does he have to burn himself to death? The difference between burning oneself and burning oneself to death is only a difference in degree, not in nature. A man who burns himself too much must die. The importance is not to take one's life, but to burn. What he really aims at is the expression of his will and determination, not death. In the Buddhist belief, life is not confined to a period of 60 or 80 or 100 years: life is eternal. Life is not confined to this body: life is universal. To express will by burning oneself, therefore, is not to commit an act of destruction but to perform an act of construction, i.e., to suffer and to die for the sake of one's people. This is not suicide. Suicide is an act of self-destruction (...).

This self-destruction is considered by Buddhism as one of the most serious crimes. The monk who burns himself has lost neither courage nor hope; nor does he desire non-existence. On the contrary, he is very courageous and hopeful and aspires for something good in the future. He does not think that he is destroying himself; he believes in the good fruition of his act of self-sacrifice for the sake of others. Like the Buddha in one of his former lives – as told in a story of Jataka – who gave himself to a hungry lion which was about to devour her own cubs, the monk believes he is practicing the doctrine of highest compassion by sacrificing himself in order to call the attention of, and to seek help from, the people of the world.

I believe with all my heart that the monks who burned themselves did not aim at the death of the oppressors but only at a change in their policy. Their enemies are not man. They are intolerance, fanaticism, dictatorship, cupidity, hatred and discrimination which lie within the heart of man.[31]

Hanh's letter is an emotional but also an intellectual surprise. His argument for the universality of life invalidates the label that Duc's self-immolation was a suicide. He also rejects that it was a protest, but instead claims that it aims "at moving the hearts of the oppressors and at calling the attention of the world to the suffering endured at the time by the Vietnamese". If we transpose the current "Western" and "Christian" terminology into another, case-specific "Buddhist" ontology, then suicide becomes part of the ritual, and protest loses its destructive connotation – it is preserved as communication with the public. In despair, we find compassion; in violence, we find determination and commitment. Sin becomes excellence, and transgression is translated into mastery. Hanh conceptualises Duc's self-immolation as a compassionate transition – a ritual with a communicative function.

Without Hanh's letter, which provides the key to these semantic transformations, one might question whether such an attempt at translation is permissible and meaningful. Much has been said about the critique of translation between worlds by some whom I do not draw from in this essay[32], as well as by some to whom I will refer. Any advocate

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31   Thich Nhat Hanh, *Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 106–107.

32   See Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London: Cohen & West Publisher, 1966); Marilyn Strathern, *Partial Connection*. Updated edition (Wal-

of taking interlocutors seriously can be justifiably suspicious of any at-
tempt at such translation. Even if we accept our translation, we may be
tempted to wonder whether it is really reasonable to argue that some-
thing is not suicide just because the self-immolator believes that their
life will continue when their body turns to ashes. If not, shouldn't the
self-immolation of someone who was not a Buddhist also be considered
a suicide – or is it only the perspective of the one who kills himself
that is crucial? Similar questions can be asked about self-immolations
that were self-declared protests. However, such questioning can become
problematic, because it is problematic to frame this challenge as a mat-
ter of perspective.

This article is designed as an invitation to reflect on the frames
within which we ourselves interpret and judge social phenomena, with
particular reference to the invisible. We capture the aspect of the invis-
ible by including in our discussions of ethnographies in which people's
beliefs are not only subjected to serious analysis, but are taken seriously
enough in thinking about their world to allow not only for the exist-
ence and legitimacy of alternative explanatory models of the world (and
of events in it), but also to allow for the possibility that these explana-
tory models are at least equivalent to our own when discussing what is
real. We are asked to further loosen the idea that political, materialist
and economist language is the most appropriate and natural analytical
tool when considering the otherness of the other. Not only at the level
of admitting the existence of other and different worlds, but in seri-
ously allowing for them.

Mario Blaser[33] comes to a similar conclusion in his article "Is An-
other Cosmopolitics Possible?" The debate starts with the government
of Newfoundland and Labrador, which in January 2013, announced
a 5-year ban on hunting reindeer because their population in the area
had declined drastically in the last twenty years. The reasons are uncer-
tain, but it was clear that they had to stop the hunting, which was also
banned for the indigenous Innu and Inuit communities of the area. The

nut Creek, California: Altamira Press, 1988).

[33] Mario Blaser, "Is another cosmopolitics possible?," *Cultural Anthropology* 31, no. 4 (2016):
545–570, https://doi.org/10.14506/ca31.4.05.

Innu elders immediately announced that their community would not comply with the ban because they considered it a threat to their way of life. The elders insisted that ending hunting – including the bone-handling and meat-sharing practices that follow the harvest – would disrupt the Innu's relationship with Kanipinikassikueu, the spiritual lord of the atîku (as they refer to reindeer), who would then no longer be devoted to their animals and to general well-being.[34]

The disagreement over this political decision – also political because it is made from a position of power and its associated authority – appears at first glance to be a clash of two perspectives on the same reality, which is why Blaser turns to theorists of cosmopolitanism, but above all to its critics. Latour[35] says that people do not enter into conflicts with different perspectives on things, but with different things themselves: this would mean that reindeer and atîku are not the same thing spoken of from two perspectives, but are two different things. Such an approach has already sparked debates about the pluriverse[36] as the conceptual successor of the universe, which – as a pre-existing unified and shared cosmos – is presupposed by classical cosmopolitics.[37] Blaser mentions Isabelle Stengers,[38] who says that she turned to the notion of cosmopolitics out of a need to forge a new political ecology, after she felt that the category of politics and the political was rooted in a historical tradition in which modern science had more of a say in judging the ultimate political question: "Who can talk of what, be the spokesperson of what, represent what?"[39] For Stengers, "cosmos refers to the

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[34]   *Ibid.*, 545–546.
[35]   Bruno Latour, "Whose Cosmos, Which Cosmopolitics? Comments on the Peace Terms of Ulrich Beck," *Common Knowledge* 10, no. 3 (2004): 450–62, https://doi.org/10.1215/0961754X-10-3-450.
[36]   See Michael Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression, and Intersubjectivity* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2002); Arturo Escobar, *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2018).
[37]   Mario Blaser, "Is another cosmopolitics possible?," 546.
[38]   Isabelle Stengers, "The Cosmopolitical Proposal," in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, ed. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), 994–1003.
[39]   *Ibid.*, 995.

unknown constituted by these multiple, divergent worlds, and to the articulations of which they could eventually be capable".[40]

Blaser highlights some anthropological responses to the problem of cosmopolitanism, such as multispecies ethnography,[41] new materialism,[42] and the ontological turn.[43] He summarises that all approaches have their critics, who argue that they either take too much account of human informants and not enough of non-human informants (for example, the reindeer), or that they define non-human informants politically almost exclusively through the prism of scientific naturalism.[44] It turns out that the disagreement between authorities and indigenous communities is not only more profound than the difference between the two perspectives – it is totally different from the conflict that classical cosmopolitan theory seeks to resolve.

At one point in his paper, Blaser distances himself from the academic debate and starts to think about the current state of political dissonance between worlds. He defines this as the problem of reasonable politics, i.e., the never-explicit but ever-present assumption that the analyst – however they read their terrain; epistemologically, ontologically and (cosmo) politically – is ultimately right. This is most evident, Blaser argues, in situations where life and death are at stake: then counterfactual explanations of what is one and what is the other, and what modes of life and afterlife are possible, are quickly dismissed as too uncertain, exotic and metaphysical: "Conflicts surrounding entities that states and corporations treat as resources and that others take as nonhuman or suprahuman persons with whom they sustain

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[40] *Ibid.*
[41] See Stefan Helmreich and Eben Kirksey, "The Emergence of Multispecies Ethnography," *Cultural Anthropology* 25, no. 4 (2010): 545–76, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2010.01069.x.
[42] See Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010).
[43] See Martin Holbraad, Morten Axel Pedersen and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "The Politics of Ontology: Anthropological Positions," in *The Politics of Ontology, Theorizing the Contemporary series*, ed. Martin Holbraad and Morten Axel Pedersen (Cultural Anthropology website, January 13, 2014), https://culanth.org/fieldsights/series/the-politics-of-ontology; Eduardo Kohn, "Anthropology of Ontologies," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 44 (2015): 311–27, https://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-102214-014127.
[44] Mario Blaser, "Is another cosmopolitics possible?," 547.

various social relations – as is the case of the Innu with atîku and its spirit master – are thus exceedingly apt to make evident the problem of reasonable politics".[45]

Non-human persons – like other ontological relations and cosmic laws, we might add – are not culture, because it is not a matter of choosing between perspectives; where one sees this, the other sees that.[46] Wagner aptly described his discipline (anthropology) as "the study of man 'as if' there were culture".[47] He explains: "Since anthropology exists through the idea of culture, this has become its overall idiom, a way of talking about, understanding and dealing with things, and it is incidental to ask whether cultures exist. They exist through the fact of their being invented, and through the effectiveness of this invention".[48]

The monk's self-immolation is likewise a question of life and death. Except that the external disagreement in interpretation – which is already problematic as a concept – does not affect the course of the event, which is ongoing or has already passed. In this respect, the reality of the ontological conflict between the monk and the audience, which sees his act as a suicide protest, is more subtle. So subtle that the conflict, at first sight, only seems real to a social scientist. At the same time, the way Brown's photograph divides the audience is not based on a conflict between a political and an apolitical position – or between an objectivist and a non-objectivist view of things. Duc's self-immolation has sparked controversy on many levels: in politics, public morality, religious dogmatics, science and so on. "Photographs, which cannot themselves explain anything, are inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation, and fantasy."[49] Above all, these narratives are mixed. People critique each other's position using first one, then another explanatory model.

Blaser's research points to the inherent problem that the creation of a shared world interferes with and destroys other worlds. Concern for the reindeer can threaten the existence of atîku. In this respect, he sees a common-world-oriented cosmopolitics as akin to a (reworked) ra-

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[45] *Ibid.*, 549.
[46] *Ibid.*
[47] Roy Wagner, *The Invention of Culture* (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1981), 17.
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: RosettaBooks, 2005), 17.

tional politics.⁵⁰ He evokes Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and his take on "translation as a process of controlled equivocation": de Castro thinks of translation as a process that must search for and preserve differences rather than similarities.⁵¹ Without looking for a common denominator that links two related terms in a pre-existing world, Blaser is interested in how to link the two terms by homonymous acts that address different things at the same time, but in such a way that concern for one party (e.g. reindeer) increases concern for the other party (atîku).⁵²

Blaser's essay is a reflection on the invisible (more precisely, on other ontologies; the invisible is just a broader label for everything that might be, but does not appear to us through our own worldview and methodological apparatus) as well as on the effects of the invisible and how to deal with them when they take the form of conflict and become a "public thing." The difficulty of thinking about the invisible is the tendency to simplify; speaking of a "Buddhist ontology" is likewise misleading, since ontological uniformity cannot be expected across all Buddhist schools and the social milieus from which they emerged. Some Buddhists have expressed doubts about self-immolation not being a sin (since one chooses to die) and some claimed that the act has brought about more agitation and violence than compassionate attention and healing (problematising the many self-immolations that followed then and after, all over the world, among Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike in imitation of Thich Quang Duc).

Final Thoughts

This paper has offered a parallel reading of Blaser's study as a call to reflect on the ethnographic object in the analysis of religious social movements and their protest manifestations. This study has highlighted some of the complexities in the thinking of self-immolation in Buddhism and has problematised its ontological objectification and politi-

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⁵⁰   Mario Blaser, "Is another cosmopolitics possible?," 564.
⁵¹   Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "Perspectival Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Equivocation," *Tipití: Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America* 2, no. 1 (2004): 5, https://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/tipiti/vol2/iss1/1.
⁵²   Mario Blaser, "Is another cosmopolitics possible?," 565.

cisation. It hints at some of the philosophical and theological postulates of Engaged Buddhism, which are implicitly revealed by Thich Nhat Hanh in his letter explaining Duc's self-immolation. It also provides the grounds for an exploration of how the visual points to a (sometimes narrow) definition and interpretation of the invisible; it is not possible to draw more concrete conclusions, but it can be added that the strong media attention that Thich Quang Duc's case received has contributed to the representation of self-immolation as a protest and suicide. This was not only due to the political but also the cultural clash between the West and the East, which was accompanied by the emigration of many teachers of Asian philosophies to Europe and especially to the US, which lasted throughout the twentieth century. Engaged Buddhism took shape in response to a pre-existing interest in Buddhist spiritual teachings.

In addition to the Vietnam war that drew the increased attention of the West towards the East, Engaged Buddhism was a social movement that developed ways of communicating its message that were approachable and fascinating to the non-Buddhist mind. This was, in part, because its advocates knew that they wanted a large, global audience. In a way, Engaged Buddhism is a direct response to globalisation. As a result, Thich Quang Duc's self-immolation spread quickly and globally. The resonance of the Burning Monk as a photographic image and the strength of its message is confirmed by a study[53] that counted and examined all the references to "self-incineration" in The New York Times and The London Times between 1790 and 1972. They took specific note if it was a political protest. The study found that 71% of the reports of self-incineration occurred between 1963 and 1972. Almost all the incidents involving political protest occurred during this ten-year period. The graphic representation shows very clearly that 1963 (the year of Duc's self-immolation) was a watershed year for the reporting of such events as the frequency of reporting increased dramatically from then on – for the first time, historically.[54] While this analysis does not

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[53]   Kevin Crosby, Joong-Oh Rhee and Jimmie Holland, "Suicide By Fire: A Contemporary Method of Political Protest," *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 23, no. 1 (1977): 60–69, https://doi.org/10.1177/002076407702300111.
[54]   *Ibid.*, 67–68.

cover recent history, it clearly demonstrates the wide reception of Thich Quang Duc's self-burning in the West.

This paper argued that the connection between Engaged Buddhism and protest as an act within this movement is not unambiguous – to some extent, it suggests that the context of a social movement determines when and in what ways something is or is not to be considered a straightforward protest. A certain caution is therefore needed in a priori labelling and thinking about the political engagement of social movements as a protest. Quick conclusions can lead down the wrong path in understanding both the agents and their actions. Finally, despite my insinuation that a political reading of Thich Quang Duc's self-immolation can be seen as "Western-centric", I would like to stress that it is quite possible that the same argument also applies to some non-Western and non-Christian spaces and people that reacted to the self-immolation.

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FO GUANG SHAN'S EXPANSION IN THE RELIGIOUS MARKET OF THAILAND: A SWOT ANALYSIS

Guiyu Su, Yaoping Liu

Note of Romanization

Pinyin is used as the primary Romanization for Chinese characters throughout this paper; however, some names and organizations in the Wade-Giles system remain unchanged due to their continued use among Thais and various Westerners. For example, Hsing Yun.

Introduction

As the most prominent Buddhist country in continental Southeast Asia, Thailand is home to more than 300,000 monks.[1] A total of 93% of its population follows Theravada Buddhism.[2] In Thailand, there are 33,630 temples registered under four Buddhist schools–Maha Nikaya, Dhammayuttika Nikaya, Annam Nikaya, and Jin Nikaya, respectively.[3]

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[1]   Samantha Bresnahan, "Why Thailand is putting its monks on a diet?" *CNN Health*, October 18, 2019, https://edition.cnn.com/2019/10/18/health/thailand-monks-vital-signs-wellness/index.html.
[2]   Office of International Religious Freedom, "2020 Report on International Religious Freedom: Thailand," May 12, 2022, https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/thailand/.
[3]   Division of Buddhist Religious Sites, Office of Religious Treasures (abandoned temples), "Nationwide measurement data statistics," December 31, 2004, http://www.dhammathai.org/watthai/watstat.php.

Among them, the first two belong to the mainstream Theravada tradition, while the latter two are derived from the Mahayana tradition founded by Vietnamese and Chinese immigrant monks subsequently in the 19th century.[4]

With its large Buddhist population, Thailand also attracts a growing number of foreign Buddhist institutions for religious market expansion since the early 1990s.[5] The Taiwan-based FGS is one of these foreign Buddhist institutions to have started setting up its branch in downtown Bangkok. The present research specifically refers to Taihua si and the Buddha Light Cultural and Educational Center, the two branches of FGS in Bangkok.

A Brief History of FGS

Born in 1927 to a Li family in Jiangsu Province, eastern China, Hsing Yun became a monk in his early teens. Later, the young Hsing Yun entered the Jiao Shan Buddhist College in Zhejiang Province and was inspired by the founder of the college, Tai Xu (1890–1947), who introduced the concept of earthly Buddhism.[6] In 1967, Hsing Yun founded FGS in Ma Chu Yuan, Da Shu Township, Kaohsiung City, Taiwan, with Taixu as his spiritual teacher.[7] In 1972, Hsing Yun formulated the Constitution of the FGS Patriarchal Association, and since then, FGS has become a modernized, institutionalized, and well-organized religious group. FGS is guided by four primary purposes: to promote Buddhism through culture, cultivate talents through education, benefit society through charity, and purify people's hearts through communal practice. Over the decades, FGS has established a university,

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[4]   Yaoping Liu, "The History of Jin Nikāya in Thailand: A Preliminary Study from a Sociopolitical Perspective," *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies*, 33 (2020): 123–124.

[5]   Guo-zhong Xing, "Remark on paradigm of religion economic research," *Science and Atheism*, no. 6 (2008): 5–21.

[6]   Darui Long, "Humanistic Buddhism from Venerable Taixu to Great Master Hsing Yun," *Hsi Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism*, 1 (2000): 56, http://buddhism.lib.ntu.edu.tw/FULL-TEXT/JR-JHB/jhb94215.htm.

[7]   Dapeng Sang, "On Master Hsing Yun's Practical Philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism - A Treatise on the Personality Characteristics of Hsing Yun's Humanistic Buddhism," *Journal of Wuhan University: social sciences edition*, no. 4 (2015): 7–14.

a Buddhist college, a library, a publishing house, a translation center, a literature center, a teahouse, a nursery school, a home for the elderly, a senior high school, a newspaper, and a television station. The FGS Sangha has since become a significant promoter of humanistic Buddhism in Taiwan and overseas.[8]

For better development, religion often responds to catch up with the social, economic, and sometimes even political needs of its times. Taiwan's economy developed rapidly from the 1960s to the 1980s and became one of the "Four Little Dragons of Asia".[9] After economic growth, Taiwan gradually became internationalized, and many Taiwanese businesspeople started investing and doing business abroad, bringing Chinese culture to their hosting countries.[10] At the same time, the 1980s saw the influx of an increasing number of overseas Chinese immigrants, including Taiwanese immigrants, who were already deeply influenced by traditional Chinese culture. In addition, mainland China's admirable economic achievements since its opening in the late 1970s inspired the national pride and cultural confidence of overseas Chinese.[11] Given these premises, traditional Chinese culture has become popular overseas, especially among overseas Chinese communities worldwide. This is also essential for religious institutions such as FGS to attract a large following and grow tremendous influence overseas, especially the Chinese communities on foreign soil.[12]

On the other hand, overseas Chinese communities have contributed to the quick and vast expansion of Chinese religious institutions, such as FGS, abroad. To date, FGS has grown its enormous influence over Chinese communities worldwide, including Thailand, in the manifes-

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[8] Yu-Chieh Huang, "Flame-like Ritual Music and its Religious Connotations: The Case of the Buddhist Temple System in Taiwan," *Taiwan Music Studies* 4 (2007): 20–38.
[9] Hujiang Li, "The 'Blue Ocean Strategy' of Contemporary Buddhist Organizations: The Case of the Buddha Light Mountain Mission," *Journal of Southwest University for Nationalities (Humanities and Social Sciences),* no. 9 (2010): 109–113.
[10] Hujiang Li, "Three Features of the Blue Ocean Strategy of Contemporary Buddhist Organizations - A Comparative Analysis of the Dharma Body Monastic Order and the Fo Guang Shan Order," *Wutai Mountain Research,* no. 1 (2010): 13–17.
[11] Shi Cangjin and Li Qunfeng: "A Brief Analysis on Fo Guang Shan's Spreading and Influences Abroad," *Southeast Asian Studies* 1 (2013): 59–66.
[12] Zhou Ye, "Communication Strategies in Faith Consumption - An Experimental Analysis of Taiwan's Fo Guang Shan Cultural and Educational Group," *Business Manager,* no. 3(2011): 1–21.

tation of its large Chinese following and the growing number of local converts. However, there is a dearth of scholarship that has paid attention to its expansion from a marketing perspective.

FGS promotes exchanges and understanding among different denominations and sects. It actively plays the role of "ambassador of civil diplomacy," using religious beliefs as a link to strengthen understanding and trust between countries and to promote relations among them. The spread of FGS overseas also encourages the influence of the "Greater China" cultural soft power overseas.[13]

FGS's internationalization movement

In the late 1970s, FGS expanded out of Taiwan to foreign countries. In Asia, the Buddha's Light International Association has established associations in India, Ladakh, Sri Lanka, Sikkim, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Macau, Korea, Tokyo, Osaka, the Philippines, and other countries and regions.[14] There are dozens of FGS branches in Asia, located in Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Thailand, India, and many other countries. Most of these countries have a prevalent Buddhist faith or some social influence; in addition, many have huge Chinese populations, many of whom are devout Buddhists. In Southeast Asia, FGS first entered Malaysia, where a large Chinese population and Buddhism are generally popular in the Chinese community.[15]

In 1963, Hsing Yun visited Malaysia as a member of a delegation from Southeast Asian countries. Since the 1980s, Hsing Yun has visited Malaysia almost every year, and his itinerary mainly consisted of lectures, presiding over pujas, three conversions, five precepts pujas, etc. In 1987, at the "North-South Masters' Reunion" lecture organized

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[13]   Nan Gao, "The Social Functions of Humanistic Buddhism - An Example of the Buddha's Light Mountain Mission in Taiwan," *Humanity*, no. 26 (2016): 38–38.
[14]   Yang Liao, "The Philosophy and Practice of Humanistic Buddhism-A Sociological Analysis of Humanistic Buddhism in Fo Guang Shan," *Essays in the Sociology of Human Buddhism*, no. 1 (2018): 302–318
[15]   Yi Wang, *A Preliminary Study on the Religious Beliefs of the "Four-Faced Buddha" in Thailand and Taiwan*, Vol. 1(Beijing: Social Science Literature Publishing, 2015).

by the Malaysian Buddhist Youth Federation, Hsing Yun represented the Northern and Southern Buddhist Dharma Society to discuss the teachings together. In the same year, at the invitation of the President of the Malaysian Buddhist Association, Elder Kim Ming, and the Buddhist community of Singapore, Hsing Yun led a 20-member delegation to Malaysia and Singapore to teach the Dharma. In 1989, Hsing Yun presided over the groundbreaking ceremony of the South China Temple (now the Tung Chan Temple in Lamjung, Selangor), which was the first time in the 20 years since the establishment of the Malaysian Buddhist Association that a formal letter was sent to invite foreign masters to come and teach the Dharma. Since then, Malaysia has had a local Buddhist monastery.[16]

From the early 2000s, Hsing Yun turned his attention to Southeast Asia and his visits there became more frequent. In 2002, he went on a month-long charity tour to Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Thailand to promote Buddhism and further facilitate exchanges between Buddhism in the North and South. In 2004, Hsing Yun officiated at the opening ceremony of the 2004 Asia International Buddhist Association Fellowship in the Mouri Temple, Japan, and revealed the future development of the Buddhist cause. In 2006, Hsing Yun was invited to Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India, to officiate at the Three Jewels conversion ceremony for 200,000 people. In 2008, Hsing Yun went to Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia for a 12-day Dharma tour, officiating at the Three Conversions and Five Precepts, the Bodhisattva enlightenment ceremony, and the Singapore Buddha Mountain opening ceremony, as well as talking with the faithful. In 2009, he went to New Malaysia and Thailand. At the same time, he also went to Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand again for a 10-day Dharma tour, where he presided over the reading of "Ten Thousand Visions of Humanity," the "Three Conversions and Five Precepts Ceremony," and the "Fourth and Fifth Council Meetings of the World General Assembly of the Buddha's Light Association"; at the same time, he delivered a lecture on "How to Obtain the True Meaning of Buddhism in the World". The same year,

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[16]   Kun-hong Hou, "Buddhism and Politics in the 1930s: Venerable Tai Xu and Chiang Kai-shek," *Journal of Sichuan Normal University: Social Science Edition*, no. 33 (2006): 7–5.

he went to the Philippines for a five-day Dharma promotion tour and presided over the "Three Conversions and Five Precepts Puja."[17]

FGS and Hsing Yun also place great importance on exchanges with different denominations to promote understanding and trust within Buddhism and among different sects.[18] In February 1994, FGS signed a bilateral agreement with the Dharma Sangha in Bangkok, Thailand, which includes an exchange of publications, protection of human rights and religious freedom, preservation of Buddhist traditions, and promotion of cultural and educational collaborations between Buddhist groups. In 1998, Hsing Yun traveled to Malaysia and met with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, where they engaged in dialogue and exchange on Buddhism and Islam.[19]

In 2003, at the invitation of the Korean religious community, Hsing Yun visited Korea and met with representatives of Songgwang Temple, Haein Temple, Tongdu Temple, and the Choe Gye Sect, and held a "Cultural Exchange Alliance Ceremony" at Haein Temple. In 2004, Hsing Yun met with Elder Dharmadatta, head of the Southern Mission in Malaysia and Singapore, and Venerable Keung Thima, President of Shakyamuni Bhikkhu University. In 2005, Hsing Yun met with a delegation of the Board of Trustees of the Dongguk University of Buddhism in Korea.[20]

In response to the invitation of Global Vision Vietnam, Hsing Yun visited the thousand-year-old Zhen Guo Temple in Hanoi, Vietnam, in October 2011. He met Phu Huy, the third Dharma Master of the Buddhist Association of Vietnam, to exchange views on the current situation of Buddhism in Vietnam and the future development of Buddhism. In 2008, Hsing Yun met with Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi at the Malaysian Prime Minister's residence to discuss

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[17] Feng Han, "The Role of Buddhism in the Socio-Economic Development of Thailand," *Asia-Pacific Studies,* no. 1 (1994): 72–76.
[18] Leilei Zhang, "The Development of Monastic Economy and the Concept of Humanistic Buddhism - A Study of Buddha's Light Mountain as an Example," *Journal of Guangdong Technical Teachers College*, no. 6 (2014): 92–98.
[19] Qun Zheng, "Thailand:The Fusion of Modernity and Tradition," *Creation*, no. 2 (2004): 3–16.
[20] Weimin Liao, "Ci Xiang Xifang: An Exploration of Master Hsing Yun's Communication Style in the Perspective of Charity Culture," *Film Review*, no. 11 (2014): 4–25.

topics related to inter-ethnic harmony. In 2008, Hsing Yun met with Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi at the latter's office to discuss issues related to ethnic harmony and social development. On the ground, FGS has always attached importance to political connections and often built closer relationships with the different levels of government in its hosting countries.[21] For example, In Malaysia, the head of state visits Dongchen Temple on important Chinese holidays such as the Lunar New Year. On 28 December 2011, the Malaysian Ministry of National Social and Family Development invited FGS to Malaysia to discuss the content of youth education activities to reduce family and social problems caused by youth and to promote social harmony. Choo Seng, President of FGS Johor Bahru Branch, and representatives from the Board of Directors of the branch suggested to the government to practice the "three good things" (speak good words, do good deeds, and keep a good heart) and to advocate and jointly promote the "Seven Precepts of the Purification of the Human Heart Movement," which are to quit smoking and drugs, pornography, violence, theft, and gambling. It is hoped that the participants can purify their hearts and minds and rectify social morals through young leadership training camps, Buddhist youth camps, and the Seven Commandments Movement. Mr. Sulaini, the official representative of Malaysia, expressed his appreciation for the choice of Dongzen Temple as the main venue for the activities of FGS Malaysia, which promotes the participation of youth from different towns in various activities beneficial to the mind and body. In 2005, when a disastrous tsunami struck Southeast Asia, FGS cared for the children who lost their parents due to the disaster and launched a relief campaign with the participation of more than 5,000 monks and devotees. In 2008, when tropical cyclone Nal Gis hit Myanmar, Hsing Yun instructed the Bangkok Cultural and Educational Center in Thailand and the local Buddha's Light Association to mobilize their members for disaster relief work.[22]

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[21]   Jin-Cheng Shen, and Jin-Yan Xie, "A Study of the Relationship between Religious Tourism Attractiveness, Satisfaction, and Loyalty: A Case Study of Kaohsiung Fo Guang Shan," *Tourism Management Research*, no. 1 (2003): 79–95.
[22]   Duo Jue, "Report on the Study Tour of the Literary and Educational Business of Fo Guang Shan," *Buddhist Studies*, no. 1(2008): 366–373.

The Dharma-related and social activities of FGS, especially Hsing Yun, have received high recognition in Asia. In 1995, Hsing Yun was awarded the "Buddha Treasure Award" by the Indian Buddhist Congress. In 2000, Hsing Yun received the "Best Contribution to Buddhism Award" from the Thai government. In 2003, Hsing Yun received an honorary doctorate in "Educational Management" from the Mahabharat Chulalongkorn Buddhist University in Thailand. In 2004, Hsing Yun received an honorary doctorate in philosophy from Dongguk University in Korea and a doctorate in religion from Dhammapada Magud Buddhist University in Thailand. In the same year, representatives of the Dhammapada Sangha under the monk king of Thailand jointly cast 19 giant gold Buddhas, which were presented to 19 Buddhist countries and regions worldwide for worship. In 2006, at the age of 80, Hsing Yun received a birthday gift of "80,000 people copying the Heart Sutra" from the Malaysian Buddhist community. In August 2010, Hsing Yun was chosen by the Malaysian newspaper Sing Tao with the highest number of votes as the "2010 Most Popular Foreign Writer" and received an honorary doctorate in literature from Geumgang University in Korea.[23]

Research Problem

As an active advocate of humanistic Buddhism, Hsing Yun dedicatedly expands this new form of Buddhism out of Taiwan by setting up branches of FGS in different continents. For the Theravada Buddhist countries such as Thailand, he and his followers, both monastic and lay, promoted the inter-tradition harmony of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism (or Buddhism spread northward *en route* to central Asia and southward *en maritime route*).[24] To attract the following from the local Chinese immigrants, Hsing Yun and his dispatches to Thailand named their second Buddhist sanctuary Taihua si, literally the temple of Thai and Chinese, perhaps also for ethnical cohesion. Since the establishment of the Buddha Light Cultural and Educational Center in 1994,

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[23]   Jinqiang Su, "Master Hsing Yun's Human Buddhism," *Taiwan Voice*, no. 21 (2018): 1–11.
[24]   Gongren Zheng and Li Bin, "Ten Contributions of Master Hsing Yun to Buddhism*,*" *World Religious Culture*, no. 5 (2015): 11–16.

FGS has become one of the most influential foreign Buddhist institutions active in Thailand. Its following is growing, and its influence extends beyond the local Chinese community to reach Thais. According to inside information provided by an anonymous person, the number of FGS followers in Thailand now exceeds 250,000.[25] FGS's expansion in Thailand directly or indirectly poses challenges, especially to the local-grown Chinese Buddhist school, Jin Nikaya, given they both share the common religious market, Thai-Chinese communities.[26]

The scholarship on FGS's internationalization movement has as yet paid almost no attention to its expansion in Thailand.[27] Dr. Yaoping L.I.U., the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Professor in Buddhist Studies, who has been based in Thailand for many years, has observed the growing influence of FGS and other Taiwanese Buddhist institutions.[28] He has noted the competition between FGS and Jin Nikāya in the local religious market.[29] But neither he nor others have gone into any profound studies of how FGS had accessed the religious market in Thailand with such great success and in a such short period. None of the existing literature has addressed the strengths FGS bears for its past success in the local religious market and the weakness of its future existence in Thailand.

Research Objectives

To solve the problems motioned above, this paper constructs a SWOT matrix to mainly analyze the strengths and weaknesses FGS bears for its expansion in the religious market of Thailand. In addition, the paper also aims to explore the potential opportunities for FGS's further growth in Thailand and certain threats it might face in the near or long future.

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[25]   Hujiang Li, "The Way of Management of Contemporary Buddhist Organizations - An Example of the Buddha's Light Mountain Order and the Dharma Body Temple Order," *Journal of Qinghai University for Nationalities: social science*, no. 42 (2016): 9–32.
[26]   Liu, "The History of Jin Nikāya in Thailand," 123–124.
[27]   Tianhong Kuo and Jia Wang, "The Positive Role of Buddhism for Social Charity in Taiwan - Focusing on Fo Guang Shan and Tzu Chi," *Heilongjiang Ethnic Series*, no. 3 (2012): 187–192.
[28]   Liu, "The History of Jin Nikāya in Thailand," 123–124.
[29]   *Ibid.*

Research Scope

The present research is limited to the two Buddhist sanctuaries FGS built in Bangkok and the religious programs it carried out for the local religious market based on the two sanctuaries.

1. The Buddha's Light Mountain Cultural and Education Center in Bangkok.

To promote exchanges between China and Thailand, FGS established the Bangkok Cultural and Education Center in the commercial area of Thailand in 1994, with the capacity to host 800 people for religious gatherings. In 2020, Venerable Nyin Guan, the abbess of this center, led a record 600 people to take the three precepts. Furthermore, according to an anonymous monk, the Buddha's Light Society's vegetarian meditation, short-term retreats, Buddha City pilgrimage, as well as Chinese arts programs such as cooking classes, hand-copying of scriptures, Great Compassion Confessions Ritual, and so on, especially the lively teaching style of the Sutra Hall, are currently attracting many men and intellectuals and are a future force for the promotion of Buddhism in the world.[30]

2. Taihua si

Taihua si was built under the auspices of Hsing Yun, the founding master of FGS in Taiwan, and supervised by Hsing Yun, the former abbot of FGS in Taiwan. The overall shape of *Taihua si* is that of a Chinese Buddhist temple. Adhering to the philosophy of "Respect and Inclusion" and the spirit of "The Four Elements" of the Founding master of FGS, *Taihua si* is dedicated to promoting humanistic Buddhism in the region. Through the intermediary of the Vice Governor of Bangkok, the Tourism Authority of Thailand has listed *Taihua si* as a recommended tourist attraction in Bangkok.[31]

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[30]   Li , "The Way of Management of Contemporary Buddhist Organizations," 9.
[31]   Li, "The "Blue Ocean Strategy," 5.

Literature Review

Religious market in Thailand

Buddhism has been long and deeply integrated with Thai society and life. People cannot live, grow old, die, receive education and medical care, get married, put beams on their new houses, or travel to work without a temple and monks.[32] Besides the family, the temple is the most important basic unit in village life in Thailand. Every village or cottage has a temple.[33] The cultural and spiritual life of Thai people revolves around Buddhist temples. Monks play an essential role in the social reality of people's lives. Thais have a traditional "accumulation of merit" model of faith. They believe that special powers on the part of monks, through wealth donations or religious practices, are transferred to the lives of the faithful, ultimately transforming their suffering in the world.[34]

The basic presupposition of Stark and Fink's economics of religion or religious market theory is that, like the material economy, there is a similar exchange of supply and demand in faith that constitutes a religious economy or market. Definition: "the religious economy includes all religious activity in a society, including the 'market' of present and potential believers, one or more organizations that attempt to attract or maintain believers, and the religious culture offered by these organizations." Stark and Fink argue that religious demand in any society is fairly stable and that all religious economies include a relatively stable set of market demand niches that are potential market segments for believers with specific religious preferences (needs, interests, and expectations). Thus, Stark et al.'s theory is also known as the supply theory or supply-side explanation.[35]

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[32] Li-Liang Chen, "The History and Overview of Buddhism in Thailand," *Dharma Yin*, no. 12 (2018): 1–12.

[33] Yan Gao, "Experiencing Thai Buddhist Culture," *Qiaoyuan*, no. 9 (2017): 2–18.

[34] Li-Ping Fan, "Buddhism in Thailand and Thailand's Industrialization," *Journal of Guangxi Normal University: philosophical and social science*, no. 4(1995): 5–33.

[35] Rodney Stark and Ching-Jin Chang, "The Economics of Religion," *Journal of Shandong University of Finance and Economics*, no. 6 (2011): 20–31.

Because of the popular demand for faith, monks in Thailand have had to assume the values and ideal goals of the faithful. The monks' religious activities give believers a shared cultural experience and religious psychological satisfaction, giving them a sense of belonging and closeness to the sacred.[36]

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)

A SWOT analysis is a situation analysis based on the internal and external competitive environment and conditions, i.e., the main inner strengths, weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats closely related to the object of study are listed through investigation and arranged in the form of a matrix. Then a series of conclusions are drawn by matching various factors with each other using a system analysis, and the conclusions are usually decision-oriented.[37]

Strengths, which are internal factors of the organization, include a favorable competitive situation, adequate financial resources, good corporate image, technical strength, economies of scale, product quality, market share, cost advantages, advertising, and so on.

Disadvantages, which are also internal factors of the organization, include aging equipment, disorganized management, lack of critical technologies, backward R&D, shortage of funds, poor operation, product backlog, poor competitiveness, and so on.

Opportunities, which are also external factors of the organization, include new products, new markets, new demands, lifting of foreign market barriers, mistakes of competitors, and so on.

Threats external to the organization include new competitors, an increase in substitute products, market tightening, industry policy changes, economic recession, changes in customer preferences, unexpected events, and so on.

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[36]   Zhiyin Yang, "The Regularity Study of Religious Economy - A Systematic Construction of Religious Economics," *Studies in World Religions*, no. 5 (2012): 6–34.
[37]   Zhiping Fan and Yonghong Sun, "An Enterprise Knowledge Management Strategy Based on SWOT Analysis," *Nankai Management Review*, no. 5 (2002): 3–23.

Using this method, a comprehensive, systematic, and accurate study of the scenario in which the subject of the study is located can be conducted so that corresponding development strategies, plans, countermeasures, etc., can be formulated based on the results of the study.

How to apply the SWOT in the analysis of a religious institution

The positive orientation of religious culture can help promote society's good and orderly development and play a positive role for religious people and believers in promoting economic and social development.[38] The application of SWOT in religious institutions has a certain value and significance for current and future issues of common concern and discussion in academic and religious circles, such as how to modernize religion in response to the needs of the times and society, how to explore and expand the theoretical construction and practice of human religion, how to correctly deal with the relationship between initiation and exodus, transcendence and secularization, and how to grasp the future development of religion in the context of globalization–all have certain value and significance.[39] The questions of how to deal with the relationship between secularism and initiation, transcendence and secularization, and how to grasp the future development direction of religion in the context of globalization are of some value and significance.[40]

Research Method

This paper focuses on the literature research method, observation method and interview method, field as well as social media visits and informal interviews with the two branches of FGS.

Literature research method: Based on extensive references to academic works, papers, and temple memoirs in related fields, theoretical

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[38]   Li, "Three Features ," 13–17.
[39]   Gao, "The Social Functions," 38–38.
[40]   Tian-Hong Kuo and Jia Wang, "The Positive Role of Buddhism for Social Charity in Taiwan - Focusing on Fo Guang Shan and Tzu Chi," *Heilongjiang Ethnic Series*, no. 3 (2012): 187–192.

knowledge such as the sociology of religion are applied to analyze and study the marketing strategies of FGS.

Participant observation method: Mainly, we participated in the lives of the monks of FGS to understand their views on the church of FGS and the development of FGS culture in various places.

Informal interviews: Interviews were conducted with residential monks and laypeople, mainly to understand the impact of the various activities carried out on their ordinary lives and to analyze further where improvements are still needed for the smooth spread of the Buddhist movement in Thailand, represented by FGS.[41]

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis has the advantage of considering the problem comprehensively, thinking systematically, and being able to "diagnose" and "prescribe" the problem.

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[41] Xue-Cheng Yang and Xiao-Hang Zhang, "Application of social network analysis in marketing," *Contemporary Economic Management*, no. 31 (2009): 5–6.

Strengths	Weaknesses
1) Teachings (doctrinal theory-Humanistic Buddhism) are understandable and acceptable for Thai-Chinese, even Thais, given that it shares many commonalities with the dominant Theravada Buddhism in Thailand.	1) The Chinese immigrants in Thailand have long intermingled with Theravada teachings and practices; it will take more time for FGS's Humanistic Buddhism to gain wider recognition.
2) The FGS conducts various religious activities and operates sophisticated art programs, such as Meditation, the New Year Festival of Light and Peace, Buddha's Birthday Celebrations, International Book Fairs and the Vegetarian Expo, and so on.	2) The two branches lack monastic manpower, especially the Thai-speaking monastics, to organize significant religious and philosophical activities for the local Chinese communities who rarely speak Chinese Mandarin, even southern Chinese dialects. Local-born Chinese school.
3) The FGS is a well-known Buddhist brand within and outside Taiwan, with 3,500 temples built in 173 countries across different continents.	3) To build and maintain the munificent facilities in Thailand is costly and will consequently pressure FGS branches to attract donations and further escalate its competition with the local-born Chinese school.
4) The FGS has been good at fund-raising through its sophisticated religious and arts in Taiwan and the Chinese communities in its hosting countries.	

Opportunities	Threats
Though registered in Thailand as a civil foundation instead of a Buddhist temple, it has purposely built close relationships with the Thai Sangha, especially the powerful Buddhist leaders and the local political figures, for protection. This questionable status presses FGS and its representatives to generate more supportive networks for existing and then expanding.	The local-grown Jin Nikaya has been long questioning FGS's legitimacy to act as a Buddhist temple in Thailand. As one of the four legally-recognized traditions under the Thai Sangha, the former bears unparalleled influence within and outside of Thai-Chinese communities, especially among the local-born Chinese due to its long history and deep assimilation into Thai society. The disputes between these two institutions are not top secret despite manifesting in a silent manner at this point. We just hope these two Buddhist institutions will not resort to public fighting in the near future.
Since Thailand is the Southeast Asian country hosting the second largest Chinese population, only after India in this region, it is not difficult for FGS to gain a sizable share of the local religious market.	The main market target of FGS is Chinese immigrants with a certain emotional bond with Chinese culture and religions. However, the almost zero Chinese proficiency, especially of the local-born Chinese, prevents FGS from gaining wider market recognition in Thailand. The problem, as mentioned previously, is that FGS failed to mobilize more monastics who can speak Thai to entertain the participants in its activities. Relying on the local interpreter often ends up with some unexpected problems.

Conclusion

FGS's international expansion has been successful in the past decades, given the enormous number of its branches across different continents and its strong networks with Chinese Buddhists in different hosting countries. This is commonly agreed upon and even praised by scholars in multiple languages.

However, its expansion in Thailand, a country long dominated by Theravada Buddhism, leads to various challenges, even threats from its local competitors, according to the SWOT analysis above. Moreover, its weakness, such as the lack of Thai-speaking monastic manpower and the legitimacy of existing as a Buddhist temple, are exposed despite the various strengths it bears and opportunities it has created during its decades of struggling for wider market recognition.

The authors hope this paper can inspire new approaches to studying this prominent and influential Buddhist institution, which has been active on the world stage for a long time.

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A CASE STUDY ON THE CONSECRATION OF SPACE AT THE MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY SALAYA CAMPUS

Jane Dillon

Introduction

Mahidol University is an autonomous research institute in Thailand that implements modern philosophy in its academic pursuits is still religious with a sacred overtone in its cultural practice. Religion has become a part of public life at the university along with other religious rituals that were revived and performed all year round in the communal space. The revival of religion at the university is due, in part, to the spirit presence and the occurrence of tragic incidents that are perceived to be related. James Taylor, in his work Buddhism and Postmodern Imaginings in Thailand: The Religiosity in Urban Space, described contemporary Thai Buddhist society to be disenchanted due to the impact of modernity and secularization. Taylor suggests that the process of globalization produced a sense of insecurity and dislocation among the people. This insecurity was perpetuated by political and economic instability and the increasing fragmentation and polarization of the Thai metropolis. Taylor states that religious history and tradition have lost their significance in Thailand, and that Thai Buddhism is caught up in contradictions of history and traditions, with this national religion becoming more marginal to the lives of people, or assuming a more private form of practice.[1]

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[1]   James Taylor, *Buddhism and Postmodern Imaginings in Thailand*: *The Religiosity in Urban Space* (Surrey: Routledge, 2008), 1–2.

The revival of religious pracitice at Mahidol University Salaya campus refutes this claim: studies reveals that religion remains significant for the contemporary Buddhist community in the institution. The dichotomy between religion and modern academia is due to the fact that religion is particularly superstitious, which compromises the integrity of modern philosophy in its ethos. Modernity is intertwined with science and secularism which is in conflict with religion.[2] In A Secular Age, Charles Taylor dissects secularity into three different senses. The first sense is found in a situation in which the political organization and other public practices are 'emptied of God' or of any reference to ultimate reality. The second sense is in "falling off of religious belief and practice", in people turning from God, and the third sense focuses on the condition of belief that persists in a society where 'belief in God is understood to be one option among others'.[3] At Mahidol University secularism is applied in the first sense where secular academic practice is bracketed from the cosmos that is in communication with the spirit. In Max Weber's distinction of differentiation, it is believed that modernity will result in religious demarcation rather than religious disappearance, in which religion matters prominently in some affairs and not in others.[4] According to Weber, religion will continue to remain relevant in a specific place, time, and function in the modern context. Although religion is excluded from academic pursuits at Mahidol University Salaya campus, its presence is rested in the public life which presents an interesting case for the study of the sacred and the modern in Thailand.

Objectives

The significance of this study is to understand the religious space on the Mahidol University Salaya campus. The objectives of this study are

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[2] Scott E. Hendrix, "Superstition and modernity: The conflict thesis, secularization thesis, and anti-Catholicism," in *Religion in the Era of Postsecularism,* ed. Uchenna Okeja (London: Routledge, 2019), 103.

[3] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 2–3.

[4] Philip Gorski, David Kyuman Kim, John Torpey and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, *The Post-Secular in Question: Religion in Contemporary Society* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 339.

to: (1) examine the phenomenon of sacred landscape at Mahidol University Salaya campus; (2) identify the socio-religious foundation of the contemporary Thai Buddhist community at Mahidol University Salaya campus.

Sources and Methods

This study relies on primary and secondary sources to present the phenomenon of religious revival at Mahidol University Salaya campus. The primary source presents data on materialized artifacts in the public space of Mahidol University Salaya campus, the Golden Jubilee Medical Center, and Mahidol Wittayanusorn Demonstrative School. The data presents the number of religious artifacts disseminated in the communal space of the institution. The findings on artifacts were used to: (1) catalogue and classify into representations based on cultural authority; (2) analyze the data to identify the socio-religious foundation of the contemporary Thai Buddhist community at Mahidol University Salaya campus.

The secondary source presents the narrative literature on the hierophanies at Mahidol University Salaya campus. The study employs the published work of Dr. Phunphit who was the director of the Institute for Language and Culture Research for Rural Development at Mahidol University and Dr. Sugree Charoensook who is the founder of the College of Music at Mahidol University, as a secondary database on religious phenomena at Mahidol University Salaya campus. The narrative literature of the two professors was based on the phenomenology of personal encounters with spirits among students, professors, and university officers that reveals the axis-mundi on campus. The narrative literature on spirit encounters at the university campus provides an insight of the cosmology and the collective worldview of the contemporary Thai Buddhist community at Mahidol University Salaya campus.

Method

i) Collect material artifacts at Mahidol University Salaya campus, the Golden Jubilee Medical Center and Mahidol Wittayanusorn Demonstrative School.

ii) Catalogue the findings through classification of artifacts based on cultural representations.

iii) Analyze the result to identify the socio-religious foundation of the community at Mahidol University Salaya campus.

The revival of religion at Mahidol University Salaya Campus

Mahidol University Salaya campus is a contact zone between modern philosophy and sacred geography. Geographically, Mahidol University was established in Bangkok as a modern institution in 1943, while academically its education is grounded on positivistic epistemology with its core in medical science. In 1971, the university acquired a large property in the west of Bangkok in the province of Nakorn Prathom. The new campus was built in 1975, in a sub-district called Salaya. Mahidol University Salaya campus was officially opened on 23 July 1983. The new campus was constructed to accommodate the expansion of new faculties and the first-year medical students. Over the years, the Mahidol University Salaya campus had transformed into a religious space where religious rituals are performed all year round in the public space organized by the community on campus and religious artifacts have materialized onto the landscape of the university as sacred objects.[5]

The revival of religion at the Salaya campus was a result of spirit manifestations; according to both university personnel and students, there are spirits wandering on campus among those living within the university.[6] The removal of spirit shrines during the construction of the university became a controversy that many believed to be the source of the chaos on the Salaya campus. Prior to the establishment of the institution, spirit shrines were part of the religious artifact in village religious culture. It is believed that there is a sacred order to the cohabitation between the living and the spirits. There were many spirit shines that were consecrated on the property when the university inherited the

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[5] Apilluck Kasemphonkul, *Retelling the Legend of Salaya* (Nakhon Pathom: Liberal Arts, Mahidol University, 2009), 221–223.

[6] Sugree Charoensook and Phunphit Amtaykullah, ความเชื่อเรื่องเจ้าที่ในพื้นที่มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล ณ ศาลายา เจ้าขุนทุ่ง (Nakorn Prathom: College of Music, Mahidol University, 2009), 6–10.
Kasemphonkul, *Retelling the Legend of Salaya,* 215.

estate. During the construction of the university, all the shrines were removed, and the Mahidol University Salaya campus was established as a secular space from 1975 to 1988.

The first religious artifact to be installed on the property was a Buddha statue, which was presented to the university as a gift on 28 June 1988 from Mom Rachawong Songsri Kedsingh, a Mahidol professor at the Bangkok campus and a doctor at the Siriraj Hospital. The second Buddha statue was presented to the university by Princess Sirindhorn on 8 May 1992. The arrival of two Buddhist artifacts on the university campus were due to the myth of spirit manifestations on the Mahidol University Salaya campus that had travelled from Salaya to Bangkok by way of the university students. Dr. Auay Kedsingh and Princess Sirindorn were informed of the legend at the Salaya campus and presented the Buddha artifacts to the university.[7] The Buddha statues were placed at the Salaya campus as the religious centre of the community; however, the Buddhist community reinstated the spirit of the soil shrine as the sacred centre of the campus.

The consecration of the first spirit shrine on campus was organized by the university community in 1991. The shrine of the spirit of the soil is called a Jao Thi; the term Jao refers to lordship and Thi is the landscape. The spirit of the soil is believed to be the spirit chief of the living community. In the anthropological ethnographies of Thai culture, the cult of spirit, is largely centred on a concept of power that is regarded as intrinsic to a specific territory, usually the village. The village belongs to pre-modern geographical construct of muang or town. The spirit is the deity of the local community, and according to Mus the locality itself is perceived as a god. An impersonal god defined above all by a localization, the notion of power in this epistemology is found within a specific place that accounts for the dynamism of life associated with locality, its energy or its ethos depending on the social nature of its associated territoriality.[8] The Jao Thi shrine is worshipped by the community as a sacred object; its power is confined to a particular space

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[7]   Charoensook and Amtaykullah, ความเชื่อเรื่องเจ้าที่ในพื้นที่มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล ณ ศาลายา เจ้าขุนทุ่ง, 6.

[8]   John Clifford Holt, *Spirits of the Place, Buddhism and Lao Religious Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 24.

and its sphere of influence is localized. The power of the spirit of the soil does not extend beyond its geographical location. The spirit of the soil is associated with the village that operates autonomously outside of modern-day Theravada Buddhism.

The revival of spirit artifacts on campus was due to the ongoing tragedies that had occurred on the campus from the time of the construction of the university. Several accidents occurred on campus as well as murders at the Faculty of Environment and Resource Studies which were believed to be orchestrated by the spirits. In 1986, Dr. Phunphit Amataykullah shared his encounter with the spirits at the university with a monk (พระครูภาวนาจารณ์ วัดพระเชตุพน). The Buddhist monk affirm that the incidents on campus were manipulated by the Jao Thi and suggested that Dr. Phunpit consecrate a shrine for the spirit of the soil on campus. After the monk had passed away, Dr. Phunphit consulted with a lay female spirit medium (คนเข้าทรง) regarding the unexplained situation at the university and received the same instruction. In this way, the consecration of a shrine for the spirit of the soil at the campus was performed to restore the sacred order on the Salaya campus. The consecration of the shrine was performed through an animist and a Buddhist ritual. The animist ritual was performed by the lay spirit medium, and the Buddhist ritual was performed by ninety-nine monks.[9] The spirit shrine was consecrated behind the International College on the Salaya campus, and the location of the shrine was revealed by the spirit through its communication with the medium. The religious event was organized by Dr. Phunphit and attended by high-ranking university officials. The existence of the main spirit or Jao Thi can be understood as the village guard or the village chief that is treated as the intermediary between the divine and the human; it is also regarded as being endowed with the power of the "god of the soil", which is believed to be the ancestors of the village who also embody the power of the soil. The village chief stands in a relationship of "lineage" to the social past of the given place.[10] The revival of the sacred centre and the reinstatement of

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[9] Charoensook and Amtaykullah, ความเชื่อเรื่องเจ้าที่ในพื้นที่มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล ณ ศาลายา เจ้าขุน ทุ่ง, 11–12.
[10] Holt, *Spirits of the Place Buddhism and Lao Religious Culture*, 27.

the spirit shrines were a collective effort of the contemporary community on campus to restore the sacred centre within the university. The spirit of the soil was deified as the lord of the campus community, and he is referred to as Jao Khun Tung. Figure 1 shows a picture from the university website taken on 25 November 2019, of Professor Dr. Piyasakol Sakolsataydorn, the president of the University Council and the members of the council's official visitation of the Salaya campus sacred sites, which included the shrine of Prince Mahidol, the king's mother and Jao Khun Tung, and the Buddhist statues.

Figure 1: Professor Dr. Piyasakol Sakolsataydorn[11]

According to Figure 1, the community of Mahidol University officially recognizes Jao Khun Tung as a deity. It became a tradition for the community to pay tribute to the shrine through a rite of passage before

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[11]   https://mahidol.ac.th/th/2019/university-council-president/

an event or major constructions to take place at the university; however, a tribute was not performed to the shrine prior to the construction of the College of Music at the Mahidol University Salaya campus. The tragic incidents recurred during the construction of the college and Dr. Sugree, who was the director of the College of Music at Mahidol University, recieved a personal visit by the spirit of Jao Khun Tung on campus in 1999. The professor was warned by the spirit of his misconduct and demanded Dr. Sugree to honour the tradition or deaths would continue to recur during the construction of the College. Dr. Sugree organized a ritual and renovated the spirit shrine in 2001 to appease the spirit. The renovation was funded by the faculties within the Mahidol University Salaya campus. After the renovation, the spirit shrine of Jao Khun Tung became physically more prominent and visible in comparison to other sprit shrines on campus. The Buddhist community on campus makes offerings to the spirit in exchange for grades, promotion, and funding for the institution, and this behaviour can be described as an exchange between the living and the spirits.[12]

The sacred and the profane

In The Elementary Form of Religious Life, Durkheim defines the sacred and the profane as a common characteristic of religious beliefs that presuppose the classification of all the things, real and ideal, of which one thinks in two classes or opposed groups generally designate by two distinct terms. This divided the world into two domains one of which contains all that is sacred, the other all that is profane, is the distinctive trait of religious thought; the beliefs, myths, dogmas and legends that are either representations or systems of representation which express the nature of sacred things, the virtues and powers which are attributed to them, or their relations with each other and with the profane things.[13] The sacred according to William E. Paden is the supernatural and the transcendent reality, which manifests itself in various places, times and

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12   Kasemphonkul, *Retelling the Legend of Salaya*, 223.
13   Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Form of The Religious Life* (London: The Free Press, 1965), 52

objects;[14] the sacred order indicates mere orderly arrangements as opposed to messiness, randomness or chaos.[15] The distinction between the sacred and the profane in phenomenology is characterized between the physical and supernatural dimension within human affairs and the modes of thought of being in the world that are divided into two modalities of experience. The sacred is the opposite of the profane: in the sacred modality, it refers to an experience that is not physical but sacrament, that is, a communion with the sacred.[16] The sacred and the profane existential dimensions exist as a part of a single existence; it is when an absolute reality has been revealed where an absolute fixed point can be established.[17] The sacred manifests as a reality of a different order from the "natural" realities outside of a secular life or the profane. In the profane, space is homogeneous and neutral without a qualitative differentiation or orientation given by virtue of its inherent structure.[18] The manifestations on the university campus revealed a sacred order of the space to be intertwined with the supernatural in a single reality. The spirit shrine represents a fixed point of orientation in the homogeneity as the axis-mundi. The experience on the campus detached the territory of the university from its profane surrounding. The consecration of space in the university makes the campus open to another dimension in its communication, Eliade describes this as the paradoxical point of passage from one mode of being to another;[19] it is when the spirit becomes an integral part of our "profane" world in sacred geography. The shrine as a profane object became a sacred artifact through rituals performed by the agent. The process of consecration is a technique of orientation for the construction of sacred space that reinstate the sacred order on campus to end the chaos. It is the cosmicization of the unknown territories into an organized space that can become habitable for settlement. In traditional societies, a sacred place constitutes a break

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[14] William E. Paden, *New Patterns for Comparative Religion: Passage to an Evolutionary Perspective* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 45

[15] Paden, *New Patterns for Comparative Religion: Passage to an Evolutionary Perspective*, 48

[16] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion* (San Diego: A Harvest Book, Inc., 1959), 14.

[17] Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion*, 21–22.

[18] *Ibid.*, 22.

[19] *Ibid.*, 26.

in the homogeneity of space that symbolizes a passage from one cosmic region to another in communication with another dimension.[20]

Royal-Modern Institution

Historically, universities in Thailand were established and supported by the Chakri dynasty from the nineteenth-century in the period of modernization, with Chulalongkorn University being the first modern university in Thailand founded by his successor King Vajiravudh. Chulalongkorn University was the first modern university in Thailand to offer secular education with the aim to produce civil officials for the kingdom. Although the university practices secular education, the institution was established under the pre-modern political construct of absolutism under religious influence. Modern movements in Thailand were introduced through royal initiative in the reign of King Chulalongkorn (r.1856–1910). King Chulalongkorn was responsible for the modern movement and Thai modernity is understood through the notion of the king as the father of modernity in the framework of paternalism or the king as a father of the people. This concept of kingship was established in the late thirteenth century in the adaptation of Theravada Buddhism in the principle of paternalism with Buddhism.[21] In this epistemology, modern knowledge was not a result of a new understanding of the world. Literacy and education in Thailand were implemented through the traditional narrative that is connected with Buddhist kingship.

In the reign of King Chulalongkorn, Siriraj Hospital (1888) and the Royal Medical College (1983), known as Bhatayakorn School (โรงเรียน แพทยากร), were established. Modern hospitals and secular education were implemented by the traditional monarch. The glory of King Chulalongkorn is accredited through the Thai modern movement and phrases such as Ratchawong Chakri (Chakri dynasty) or Borommaha

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[20] *Ibid.*, 37.
[21] Siriporn Dabphet, "State and Religious Ideology in Nineteenth-Century Thailand," *Journal of the Siam Society* (1990): 53.

Chakri Wong (the Great Chakri dynasty) only came to be used in the reign of King Chulalongkorn.[22]

The shift towards modern politics under constitutional monarchy had only taken place in 1932. The country was under a new form of government after the revolution led by Field Marshal Plaek Phibun-songkhram that ended absolute monarchy. This government limited the role of the king and the place of royalism in the public; one of the extreme cases was the restriction on the young King Bhumibol Adulyadej (r. 1946–2016) from leaving the capital.[23] This resulted in the decline of the Thai royal institution and the role of the monarch was reduced during the anti-monarchist period. Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram's government attempted to de-emphasis the royal role in state institutions, and the Royal Medical College became the University of Medical Sciences in February 1943. The collapse of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhramin's government in 1950 resulted in a new political chapter in Thailand. General Sarit Thanarat revived the legacy of Thai royal institution and royalist nationalism in 1957. This government laid a religious foundation for the return of the god-king by combining the constitutional monarchy with pre-modern notions of kingship. King Bhumibol Adulyadej placed the royal institution at the centre of nationalist discourse in Thai identity with the process of rehabilitation of the Thai monarchy.[24] The notion of god-king was part of the traditional ideology of devaraja of the Hindu framework. This ideology emphasized the divine element of a monarch that was adopted into society in the fourteenth century. This includes court etiquette and Hindu-Brahman rituals to the divine element of a monarch.[25] In this political ideology the monarch is presented as the spiritual centre and the head of the modern Thai nation, and as the protector of Thai

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[22] Attachak Sattayanurak: "The Intellectual Aspects of Strong Kingship in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the Siam Society* (2000): 91.

[23] Matthew Kosuta, "King Naresun's Victory in Elephant Duel: A Tale of Two Monuments," *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 34, no.3 (2019): 584, https://doi.org/10.1355/sj34-3d.

[24] Peter A. Jackson: "Virtual Divinity: A 21st-Century Discourse of Thai Royal Influence," in *Saying the Unsayable: Monarchy and Democracy in Thailand*, ed. Soren Ivarsson and Lotte Soren (Singapore: NiAS Press, 2010), 30.

[25] Siriporn Dabphet, "State and Religious Ideology in Nineteenth-Century Thailand," *Journal of the Siam Society* (1990): 54.

democracy legitimized by the religious power of meritorious author-ity. The monarch is not presented as a secular man: he is the moral legislator, moral judge, and supreme protector of the religion. The Thai monarch is responsible for the success or failure of the political order, and, by implication, of the social order which became a symbol for the moral protector of good karma and the preventer of evil.[26] In the reign of King Bhumibol, there were statements such as "King and Nation are one and indivisible", "Army or the king", and "government headed by the king".[27] Moreover, the late King is often attributed with 'mystique' and his popularity is regarded as possessing almost supernatural powers. In his reign, there was increasingly use of the traditional royal language that highlighted the sacred status of the Thai monarch with magical overtones; according to a report in the Financial Times, King Bhumibol was described as 'a monarch styled as a demi-god'.[28] The legacy of Thai royalism was successfully restored through the rehabilitation that resulted in the rise of royalism in the twentieth century.

The implication of the rehabilitation of the Thai royal institution in the late 1950s created a sacred overtone on the identity of Mahidol University. The name Mahidol was granted to the university by the late King Bhumibol to honour his father Prince Mahidol of Songkhla who became the "Father of Modern Medical Science and Public Health of Thailand". The University of Medical Sciences officially took on a new identity as Mahidol University on 29 July 1969, with Prince Mahidol of Songkhla as the emblem of the institution. The royal symbol of Prince Mahidol was granted to the institution as the symbol of the university combined with the motto: Attānaṁ upamaṁ kare อตฺตานํ อุ ปมํ กเร, written in Pali, which translates as the Golden Rule in English: 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you'. The writing in Pali reflects the symbolic connection between the royal institution and Buddhism producing a sacred overtone in the identity of the institu-tion; the symbol of the institution reflects the narrative of religion and the king in Thai royal nationalism. The statue of Prince Mahidol of

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[26] Norman Jacobs, *Modernization Without Development: Thailand as an Asian Cases Study* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 32–33.
[27] Kosuta, *King Naresuan's Victory in Elephant Duel,* 578.
[28] Jackson, "Virtual Divinity: A 21st-Century Discourse of Thai Royal Influence," 30, 34.

Songkhla was deified and worshiped as a sacred artifact by the community at the Salaya campus on Mahidol Day.

Mahidol University Graduation

The overlap between the sacred and the profane at the institution is presented in the graduation ceremony. A graduation ceremony is the most important event at the university; it is when all faculties come together collectively as a unit to host a ceremony from both liberal arts and science disciplines, as well as to include all levels of academic achievements from undergraduate to postgraduate students. It is a celebration of the technical-legal fact of the successful completion of one's studies and it is one of the most important ceremonies for all students as it marks the end of an academic chapter. Mahidol University graduation is a public event that provides a clear indication of the sacred order at the university. The graduation is performed as a religious ritual with a line of Buddhist sangha monastics chanting on stage and the sworn statement of the graduates referencing the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, and other sacred things. The university diplomas are presented to the graduates by a member of the Thai royal family. The Thai royal institution is considered as Ramathibodi and a divine, signifying the ceremony's status as a sacred ritual. The graduates' families are not permitted to attend the ceremony as it is treated as a sacred event.

Graduation Declaration

"I, (each graduate declares his or her own first name and surname), do solemnly pledge before the *Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, and all things sacred*, in the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn who presides over this ceremony on behalf of His Majesty the King, with all those assembled here as witnesses, that I will pursue my profession using the knowledge, experience and skills instilled in me by Mahidol University, to the best of my ability, and hold steadfast in my loyalty to my *country, my religion and my Sovereign*. I will respect my teachers and use my knowledge and expertise only for the public good and will not associate myself with misconduct or evil. I will strive to extend the prestige of my community and

my profession, to foster harmony and to sacrifice personal gains for public benefit. This pledge I will uphold as being even more precious than my life".[29]

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Result

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Data on cultural artifacts

The list of religious artifacts at Mahidol University Salaya campus is presented in Table 1. The table is divided into three categories: (1) the Thai royal institution, (2) animism, and (3) Buddhism. A further breakdown on artifacts of the Thai royal institution is presented in Table 2. This is divided into six categories based on members of the Thai royal family: Prince Mahidol, Princess Srinagarindra, Princess Sirindorn, Princess Galayani Vadhana, King Maha Vajiralongkorn, and King Bhumibol Adulaydej.

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Table 1: The number of artifacts

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	Royal	Animist	Buddhist
Quantity	10 (48%)	9 (43%)	2 (9%)
Material symbol	statues and photo-graphs	shrines and statues	statues

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Table 2: The number of the royal artifacts

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	Prince Mahidol	Princess Srinagarin-dra	Princess Sirindorn	Princess Galayani Vadhana	King Maha Vajira-longkorn	King Bhumibol Adulyadej
Quantity	4 (40%)	2(20%)	1(10%)	1(10%)	1(10%)	1(10%)

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[29]   Mahidol University Graduation Ceremony, 2018.

The finding regarding the public dissemination of royal statues and photographs on campus is as follows:

1. Statues of Prince Mahidol are located at the office of the president, the Mahidol learning centre, the Faculty of Medical Technology, and at the Golden Jubilee Medical Center.
2. A statue of Princess Srinagarindra is located at the Faculty of Nursing and the Ramathibodi School of Nursing.
3. A bust of Princess Sirindhorn is located at the College of Music in front of the Young Artist Music Programme.
4. A statue of Princess Galayani Vadhana is located at Bhumibol Gankeet Building D of the College of Music.
5. A photograph of King Maha Vajiralongkorn is located on the ground floor of the Faculty of Liberal Arts.
6. A photograph of King Bhumibol Adulyadej is located at Prince Mahidol Hall.

The finding regarding the public dissemination of spirit shrines on campus is as follows:

1. There are three shrines located at Mahidol Wittayanusorn Demonstrative School: a Brahman shrine and two local ancestral shrines referred to as grandma and grandpa (ศาลตายาย).
2. There is one phra phum shrine at Ratchasuda College and the Thai House.
3. There are two busts of the donors for the funding and continuation of the College of Religious Studies located in the courtyard of the college.
4. A spirit shrine is located at the former building of the Faculty of Environment and Resource Studies.
5. A Kru Mee Khak statue located at the Musical Arboretum at the College of Music; this is a local character of Thai literature.
6. The main spirit shrine on the Salaya campus is the shrine of lord father Khun Thung (the name of the spirit), which is located behind the International College that was consecrated by the spirit medium initiated by Dr. Phunpit Amataykullah in 1991.

The finding of the public dissemination of Buddhist statues on campus is as follows:

1. One Buddha statue is in front of the Student Dormitory
2. One Buddha Statue is located at the Faculty of Environment and Resource Studies which was placed after the murder incident.

Discussion

The finding on artifacts at Mahidol University Salaya campus reveals the religious notion of kingship and the socio-religious space in the pre-modern cosmology. Thailand in the nineteenth century was a period of a new intellectual movement; modern knowledge was introduced into the country through the traditional monarch. The Thai political culture is never divorced from religion, nor Buddhist cosmology, religion is intertwined with Thai politics through the notion of Buddhist kingship. Buddhism became politicized in Thai modern period through the carefully crafted narrative of the civilized of Thai culture by the political elites; since culture is the common theme in virtually every definition of civilization,[30] religion became an effective means to categorize people based on their way of life. The Thai political elites used Buddhism to support the class structure and to promote cultural superiority of centre and periphery relations, by dividing the space into different degrees of sacred dimension. This was based on the premise that the city was the enlightened space that is the most developed. The epistemology of siwilai (civilized) in the modern period has placed the cosmos and space in a hierarchical structure in the "umbrella of merit" where the centre of merit is placed at the capital within the proximity of dharma and the cosmic power of kingship. The village is refered as the periphery located in the provincial areas that was considered a backward space; in the domain of simplicity, superstition, ignorance and the less civilized. In this ethos, Bangkok is the symbol of merit being the centre of Buddhist cosmology where the king is situated while the rural is the area

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[30] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster paperbacks, 2003), 42.

outside the sphere of merit.[31] The centre-periphery relation provides a foundation of the sacred space in the modern period, Mahidol University Salaya campus is located at the periphery in the "backward space", according to the Thai etymology of the civilized. The dissemination of artifacts on campus reveals the cosmology inside the campus to be in the the the sphere of village influence, and the artifact of the royal institution represents the centre of merit in the religious political sphere, with the two together belonging to the pre-modern ontological construct.

In the pre-modern period, Thai religious culture was purely animistic. Buddhism only became the centre of spiritual authority in the hierarchy of beliefs in the nineteenth century. This resulted in the superiority of religion in Thai religious culture that is demonstrated through state policy. Jonathan Fox describes Thai religious policy as multi-tiered preferences where one religion receives the most benefits. In Thailand, Buddhism receives the most support from the state as the first tier, followed by Islam and Christianity as the second tier.[32] At Mahidol University Salaya campus, Buddhism represents the sacred centre in "The memories of Mahidol University (2012)," Mahidol University exclusively records the Buddhist artifacts of Phra Phutmahidol พระพุทธมหิดลมงคลวรญาณ and Phra Mahalarb พระมหาลาภ as religious artifacts of the campus. The spirit shrine of Jao Khun Tung was completely dismissed in the official record which is conflicted with the practice of the community presented in Figure 1. The narrative of the Jao Khun Tung shrine is recorded in the published work of Mahidol University professors written by Dr. Phuphit Amataykullah and Dr. Sugree Charoensook (2009) at the library of Mahidol University Salaya campus, and in the publication by Pattana Kitiarsa (2012), Mediums, Monks, & Amulets, Thai Popular Buddhism Today.[33]

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[31] Thongchai Winichakul, "The Quest for 'Siwilai'; A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteeth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam," *Journal of Aisan Studies* 59, no. 3 (2000): 537, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911800014327.

[32] Jonathan Fox, *Political Secularism, Religion, and the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 44.

[33] Pattana Kitiarsa, *Mediums, Monks, & Amulets: Thai Popular Buddhism Today* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2012), 137–140.

The published work of Dr. Phuphit Amataykullah and Dr. Sugree Charoensook (2009) reveals the religious practice of the community at Mahidol University Salaya campus to be dictated by the animist sphere of influence. There are many religious rituals on campus that are organized with animist elements and some that are purely animist, e.g. the wai kru ceremony hosted by the Thai music department, the worship of the campus spiritual shrine of Khun Tung organized by the community of faculty members, the blessing of new construction projects, auspicious times to begin a project or Lek (ฤกษ์), ceremonial practice of grand openings, initiation rites for new students, etc. According to the religious behaviour of the community, it is salient that the subjective consciousness and the collective reality of the community is animistic, the deification of the local spirit inside the institution and the spread of spirit shrines on the property reinforces the authority of the religious culture of the village within the university. The shrine of the lord of the soil or Jao Thi on the campus represents the pre-modern socio-religious organization of the village community,[34] and the spirit shrines, such as grandma-grandpa shrines, are identified with the community at the village level. The cultural practice at the university reflects the socio-religious organization of the pre-modern construct where the peasants were ruled by local village headmen and the regional aristocracy were under the authority of the capital.[35]

The findings concerning the spiritual imprint at Mahidol University Salaya campus has shown the Thai royal family and the village spirit cult to be the dominant cultural imprint based on the data. The two represent a fully pre-modern worldview, that, taken together, are juxtaposed with the scientific academic mission that creates a dichotomy between sacred and secular. The spirit shrines represent the spirit cult of the pre-modern cosmology of muang in its metaphysical nature and ethics of power. The artifacts of the Thai royal family symbolize the religious role of Thai traditional kingship propagated by Sarit Thanarat's government that was brought back in the twentieth-century along with traditional

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[34] Holt, *Spirits of the Place Buddhism and Lao Religious Culture*, 18.
[35] Kenneth R. Hall, *A History of Early Southeast Asia: Maritime Trade and Sate Development, 100-1500* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC: 2011), 6.

rituals and language. The dissemination of the Thai royal family at Mahidol University Salaya campus reflects the institutional cultural value as part of the royalist nationalist historiography. The political ideology of the twentieth century reinstituted royalism, religiousism and nationalism where the Thai royal institution is connected with the divine and Thai religiosity. The study reveals the socio-religious foundation at Mahidol University Salaya campus to be conditioned by the religious politics that cleaves from the principle of the secular academic approach of modern philosophy.

Conclusion

The consecration and renovation of the Jao Khun Tung shrine marks the revival of sacred geography of village religious culture, while the spread of the spirit shrine at Mahidol University Salaya campus demonstrates the dominance of the village religious authority in the community within the university. Although Buddhism represents the religious identity of the Thais supported by the state, the religious practice surrounding the community has shown the contemporary Buddhist community to be in the sphere of animist influence. The representations of spirit shrines on campus illustrates the collective ontology of the community to be informed and conditioned by the pre-modern geographical construct of space. The royal institution and the village spirit cult represent a fully pre-modern worldview, which, taken together, support the foundation of the sacred in the public space at Mahidol University Salaya campus. The network of royal representations promotes the notion of traditional kingship and its link to the Brahmanical symbolism of royal absolutism via the pre-modern worldview under religious constructs where the King has acquired renewed potency alongside Buddhism as a basis of political legitimation in the twenty-first century.[36] The spirit shrines represent the cosmological structure of the metaphysics in pre-modern times and the implementation of royalist nationalism ideology that supports the rise of pre-modern cosmology to re-emerge in the Thai public sphere. The tra-

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[36] Jackson, "Virtual Divinity," 29.

ditional bond of the pre-modern past has resurfaced as a consequence of the religious character of Thai politics in the twentieth century. The religious phenomena at Mahidol University Salaya campus presents a paradox between religion and modernity in the Thai academic institution that is treated as sacred ground among staff and students alike.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

B i b l i o g r a p h y

Charoensook, Sugree, and Phonphit Amataykullah. ความเชื่อเรื่องเจ้าที่ในพื้นที่มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล ณ ศาลายา เจ้าขุนทุ่ง. Nakorn Prathom: College of Music, Mahidol University, 2009.

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BUDDHISM AND AN AGEING SOCIETY IN THAILAND AS A PART OF *SUVARNABHUMI* LAND

Somboon Watana

Introduction

In terms of history, since more than 2000 years ago, *Suvarnabhumi* land has referred to what is now Southeast Asia. Buddhism was first propagated in this region around the third Buddhist era, especially in some parts of Thailand and Myanmar, by the eighth line of Buddhist missionaries led by the Indian Buddhist monks named Sona and Uttara, which was supported by King Asoka, the Great. In terms of *Suvarnabhumi* land in part of Thailand, history talks of the acceptance of Buddhism since the early third Buddhist era. Nakhon Pathom City and Uthong City, Suphan Buri province, Thailand, were the evidence concerning Buddhism found by the scholars. From that era to the present day, when the city was stronger and stabilized, there have been many kingdoms, and the kings became leaders. From the Dvaravadee kingdom from the 1st to the 11th century, from the Srivijaya kingdom from the 6th to the 13th century, from the Lop Buri Kingdom from the 9th to the 13th century, from the Sukhothai Kingdom from the 13th to the 15th century, from the Lanna Kingdom from the 14th to the 17th century, from the Ayudhaya Kingdom in 1350–1767 C.E., from the Thonburi Kingdom in 1767–1782 C.E., and from the Ratanakosin Kingdom from 1782 C.E. to the present, Buddhism has been the main religion and has contributed to Thai society constantly. Here, the teaching of Buddhism has been propagated, interpreted and applied in

the religious, societal, economic, cultural and individual dimensions for the sake of the well-being of the people. Consequently, in the present century, one global issue is an ageing society. Thailand has already become an ageing society, and Buddhism has been interpreted and applied to solve this issue.

In the earlier 21st century, the ageing population has shown a continuing upward trend. According to a report by the United Nations Population Fund in 2012, 2 people are celebrating their 60th birthday every second, and in a year, there are about 58 million new elderly people around the world. Consequently, the one in nine people in the world aged 60 years or more is predicted to increase to one in five by 2050.[1] The global population aged 60 years or more was 962 million in 2017, which was more than twice as large as in 1980 when there were 382 million elderly people globally.[2] The ageing population globally is predicted to reach over 1.5 billion in 2050.[3]

Thailand defined the "elderly" (or senior citizens) in 2003 in the "Elderly Person Act 2003" as a person who is aged 60 years or over and has Thai nationality.[4] Thailand has been an ageing society since the year 2006 when the population aged 60+ years reached 10.4 %, and was about become an aged society in 2021 due to the number of the ageing population reaching 13 million or 20% of the country's population.[5] The impact of this change in the population structure, if it is not prepared for effectively, will lead to other consequences, such as affecting

[1]   United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), *Aging in the Twenty-First Century: A Celebration and A Challenge* (New York, and HelpAge International, London, 2012),12, https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Ageing%20report.pdf.

[2]   United Nations, *World Population Ageing 2017 Highlights* (New York: United Nations Publication, 2017),1, https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/WPA2017_Highlights.pdf.

[3]   United Nations, *World Population Ageing 2020 Highlights* (New York: United Nations Publication, 2020), 1, https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa_pd-2020_world_population_ageing_highlights.pdf.

[4]   Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University and Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute (TGRI), *Situation of the Thai Elderly 2017* (Bangkok: Deuan Tula Printing House,2019), 14, http://www.dop.go.th/download/knowledge/th1552463947-147_1.pdf.

[5]   Department of Elderly Affairs, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand, *Measures to Drive the National Agenda on Aging Society (Revised Version)* (Bangkok: Amarintara, 2019), 8.

society, the economy and the allocation of resources in the future. The number of people in the labour age groups will be reduced, which will affect the country's gross development production. Meanwhile, the allocation of resources for age-related caregiving in the country will increase and will affect the economic and social stability of the country in the long term. It will also significantly affect the country's budget burden as the state will have to allocate the tax money of working people to welfare for caregiving. The higher proportion of the ageing population will influence the government to use more of the budget for age-related caregiving. This situation may affect the long-term fiscal stability of the country.

Due to the complete transition into an ageing society, the Thai government has prepared to face this challenge in many areas such as the country's policy and the national government's responsible department, etc. The government has established policies and plans to support the ageing society in both the National Economic and Social Development Plans. These plans have a concrete and clear vision to develop the quality of life of the population in the ageing society so that every member of the Thai population is born into a quality environment that is developed at all ages, which can be a powerful driver for the growth of the country with stable security. Following this agenda, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security has established strategic issues to lead the practice.[6] In spite of the efforts of many such sectors, better quality age-related caregiving is needed. This does not only require physical factors such as budget, accommodation and government policy – no less important is a philosophy or concept of caregiving for ageing people, because this is an important factor that will lead to the real goal of quality caregiving for the ageing population. Thai society is a Buddhist society because about 93.5% of the population believes in Buddhism.[7] Elderly people would be familiar with a way of life that is

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[6]   Department of Elderly Affairs, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand, *The Strategic Plan of the Department of Elderly Affairs 20s, BE 2561-2580* (Bangkok: Samlada,2018).
[7]   National Statistical Office, *Social, Cultural and Mental Health Conditions 2018*, accessed November 3, 2022, http://www.nso.go.th/sites/2014/DocLib14/News/2561/09-61/N21-09-61-1.pdf.

close to Buddhism as their religious capital. Buddhism has been deeply rooted in Thai society for thousands of years since the age of Suvarnabhumi where Thailand is now located. It has made many contributions to Thai society in terms of teachings about living, education, arts, culture, traditions and beliefs, as well as the aspect of buildings such as temples, Buddha images, pagodas, etc. Hence, in this paper, the Buddha's teaching about age-related caregiving in the case of parents in the Pāli Canon and the research papers of Thai scholars, as well as the Buddhism project for ageing people, will be interpreted and applied to propose alternative age-related caregiving that is suitable for the well-being of the ageing Buddhist Thai society.

The concept of Ageing People in Buddhism

The Meaning of Ageing People in Buddhism

The term "ageing people" refers to the term "*Phusungaāyu*" in Thai, which was first enacted in Thailand in 1962 by Maj. Gen. Luang Attasitthi Sitthisunthorn.[8] The terms "*Phusungaāyu*" and "*Phusungwai*" in Thai indicate the number of people that are older counting the age from birth (Chronological age) and who are generally referred to as "*Konkae* or *Konjarā* (old person)." The Office of the Royal Society, BE 2554 (2011), gives the meaning of the word "*Kae* (old)" as having more age or being of old age, and gives the meaning of the word "*Jarā* (old)" as old with age and worn out.[9] In Buddhism, there is no word "*Phusungaāyu*" directly, but there is a word in Pāli, "*Jarā* (old)", which, in Thai, means, *Kae* (aged), *Koaw* (old) and *Kramkra* (mature). The dictionary of the Royal Institute, B.E. 2546 (2003 C.E.), used all these words to give the meaning of "*Phusungaāyu* (ageing person)." In Buddhism, the word "*Jarā*" appears in the scriptures as the Buddha said, "Oh! Monks, what is *Jarā* (old) … (it) is the condition of old teeth, falling grey hair, the age of decline, the old age of human be-

8   The Royal Institute, *Definition of Elderly*, *Dictionary of the Royal Institute 2003* (Bangkok: Nanmee Books Public Class, 2003), 347.
9   Puangthong Kraiphibul, "Older Person," accessed December 9, 2021, http://haamor.com/th.

ings and all other beings, this is called "*Jarā* (old age)."[10] The ageing of human beings and other sentient beings means the deterioration of the various components i.e., physicality and the potentiality related to that physicality, such as vision, listening, movement, etc., which has the meaning of "the old age of *Indriya* (the faculties)," with the word "*Indriya*" also meaning the ability of the body and behaviour related to the body and the mind. Indriya is great in their duties, such as the ears (*Sotindriya*) that are responsible for listening and the eyes that are responsible for seeing. Each part has a different duty or function in its way, so it is called "*Indriya*".[11] Therefore, the ageing person is old. An ageing person experiences their physical ability and behaviour related to the body diminishing compared to a younger age.[12] There are many definitions of an ageing person given by many organizations according to the language of their own countries. However, all the definitions mean a person who enters old age and maturity.

In terms of the importance of elderly people in Buddhism, stories talk of the importance of ageing people who have maintained Buddhism. In the Buddhist scriptures, there are many stories of elderly people who are important in preserving Buddhism in various fields, as in the following example:

An Anāthapindhika millionaire has been praised by the Buddha as being a great Buddhist disciple in giving alms. He has achieved *Dharma* and proclaimed himself as a worshiper. He donated a lot of property, built 54 temples in *Rajgirh* town to *Savatthī*, and regularly offered food to 2,000 monks per day. He also established the first monastery called *Chetavana* for the Buddha.

The Chivakakomarabhacca (medical doctor) was a physician of the Buddha and other monks as ordered by *Bimpisala*, the King of *Magada* state. In addition, king *Bimpisala* appointed Chivakakomarabhacca as

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[10] Mahamakutarajavidhyalaya Foundation in the Royal Patronage, *Tripiṭaka, and Commentary 91 Books the 200th Anniversary of the Chakri Dynasty Rattanakosin* (Bangkok: Mahamakutarajavidhyalaya Foundation in the Royal Patronage,2003), vol. 26, 92.

[11] *Ibid.*, vol. 17, 117.

[12] Somboon Watana, "Concept of Elderly Care in Theravada Buddhism," *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences Burapha University* 24, no. 44 (2016): 173–193, https://so06.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/husojournal/article/view/55972/46738.

a regular doctor. Chivakakomarabhacca gave special treatment to the Buddha 2 times. The first time, he prepared a special laxative to drain the accumulated things in the body of the Buddha, and the second time when Phradevadatta rolled a stone to kill the Lord Buddha, fragments of which struck his feet causing them to bleed, he made a healing medicine. Chivakakomorabhacca also provided treatment for monks who were ill with various diseases without charge.

In addition, there are many shreds of evidence indicating the beneficence of elderly people in the Buddha's time in the scriptures and that the Buddha has praised many people who have contributed to Buddhism, for example, Mrs. Khushchutara, Mrs. Samāvati, Mrs. Uttaranundā, Mrs. Supavasakoliyadhitā, Mrs. Supipiyā, and Mrs. Katiiyāni.[13] Ashoka, the Great King, maintained Buddhism and propagated Buddhism to various lands in India and other countries, helping it spread throughout the world today.

Examples of various people who uphold Buddhism show that those people in the Buddha's time and later, such as the kings and wealthy persons, young and old, inherited Buddhism till the end of their own lives. These cases were only partly presented in this work. Many other cases show the importance of elderly people who have contributed to the succession of Buddhism.

In the Buddha's time, there was no issue of an ageing society. However, in this paper, the author will take the case of the parents as described in the *Pāli* canon as ageing people, since parents imply ageing people because it can be assumed that generally all parents live to old age and all ageing people are parents till the end of their lives.

Apart from assigning importance to elderly people as mentioned above, Buddhism shows the importance of elderly people as the parents of sons and daughters. In Buddhism, ageing people as parents are important to their children and daughters because they give birth, and give favours to their children. Ageing people as parents have a love and compassion for their children, which is pure and a difficult thing to

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[13]   Mahamakutarajavidhyalaya Foundation in the Royal Patronage, *Tripiṭaka and Commentary 91 Books the 200th Anniversary of the Chakri Dynasty Rattanakosin* (Bangkok: Mahamakutarajavidhyalaya Foundation in the Royal Patronage,2003), vol. 33, 152.

have for as many people as possible. The Buddhist scriptures spoke of the importance of ageing people as the parents of sons and daughters in many places, which can be summarised in the following sections.

Importance of Ageing People in Buddhism

Buddhism mentions that the birth of sons and daughters in the present life must rely on three important factors, one of them being the relationship between the mother and father. As the Buddha said in *Mahātanhasaṅkhayasutta*, because of the meeting of the 3 factors, namely, 1) the mother and father live together 2) the mothers are of re-productive age, and 3) there is *Gandabbo* (Citta (mind) at the moment of birth in the human world) or the birth of the baby in this human world. After that, the mother keeps the baby for nine or ten months, then the mother gives birth to a burdensome baby with a lot of risks and fed the heavy burdens that were born with their blood and a risk to life itself.[14]

The Buddhist scriptures have shown the importance of the parents as high moral people who were well-regarded in the Buddha's time. The Buddha has praised parents as the *Bhraman*, the first angel, the first teacher, etc. of sons and daughters.[15] Based on the above evidence, it can be concluded that Buddhism gave honour praising parents as equivalent to the highest people because they have supported sons and daughters. Buddhism glorifies, praises and honours the parents of sons and daughters. If any son or daughter does not give importance to parents and are ungrateful, their hearts are rough and are unable to develop themselves to have good morals and ethics. Buddhism praises the grateful person as the symbol of a good person, as the Buddha said that a *Sattapurisa* (good person) would be grateful. They are grateful people and they all are praised by the *Sattapurisa* (good person). Gratefulness is a basic aspect of a good person ..."[16]

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[14]   *Ibid.*, vol. 19, 452.
[15]   *Ibid.*, vol. 45, 286.
[16]   *Ibid.*, vol. 33, 277.

An Interpretation and Application of Buddhism for the Well-Being
of Ageing People in the Ageing Society in Thailand as a Part of
Suvarnabhumi

According to the perspective of Buddhism, ageing people are not a
problem of society, they are long social contributors, long-life experts,
and a storehouse of knowledge. Therefore, the elderly should be taken
care of by the younger generation, and the younger generation should
give praise and learn long life experiences from them to develop our
society as well.

Obviously, in the Buddha's time, there was no issue with an ageing
society. This paper will take the case of parent caregiving by sons and
daughters as described in the *Pāli* canon concept. Here, parents' caregiv-
ing implies elderly caregiving because it can be assumed that generally
all parents live to old age and all ageing people are parents till the end of
their lives. Hence, the Buddhist concept of caregiving for parents or the
elderly will be pointed out here. According to the Buddhist philosophy,
through ontological analysis, man consists of mind and body (*Rupa*,
Kāya (corporeality) and *Nāma*, *Citta* (mentality), which are not duality
and not identity but are both in a state of becoming and cooperating
under the law of Buddhist causation (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*), as supported
by Chien-Te Lin (2013), who said that the Buddhist position could
perhaps be best described as a middle way approach of 'neither-duality-
nor-identity.' And what is called "man", according to Buddhism, can be
classified in more detail as *Pancakhandha* (Five Aggregates), namely, 1)
corporeality, 2) sensation, 3) recognition, 4) mental formation and 5)
consciousness. A person who consists of these five aggregates must be
developed and cared for according to these five aggregates (or in brief,
Rupa, and *Nāma*). For age-related caregiving, in Buddhism, corporeal
caregiving and mentality caregiving should be taken in balance.

According to Buddhism, human beings are components of the body
and mind, or *Rūpa* and *Nāma* in the Buddhist language, which are
composed of 5 aggregates, namely the *Rūpa* (the body and its properties
including various behaviours that are due to the body), *Vedanā* (feel-
ing), *Saññā* (memory, determination, knowing what it is), *Saṅkhārā*
(thoughtful preparation, conceptualization) and *Viññāṇa* (conscious-

ness). Accordingly, if a human is both body and mind, then a human should take care of himself both physically and mentally in parallel with the development of life. To Buddhism, elderly people are similar to general people in terms of the five aggregates (*Pañcakhanda*). Human life is in the state of *Paṭiccasamuṭapāda* (dependent origination). The human life development principle in Buddhism is *Trisikkha*, which consists of 1) *Silasikkhā*, 2) *Cittasikkhā*, and 3) *Paññāsikkhā*. *Silasikkhā* is the pattern for developing human life to have a good relationship with the environment. *Cittasikkhā* is the pattern for developing human life to have a meditated mind, to be aware of restraint, stability, steadfastness, healthy mental development, strength and happiness, which is conducive to intellectual use. *Paññāsikkhā* is a framework for life development to discriminate between what should be and should not be, what is useful and non-useful, what is right and what is wrong, and what is real, in order for the effective development of life until free from the suffering. Since ageing people are the parents of us or of others, they have made a high contribution to society, and all of us should find ways to take care of them as the best reward for them.

Therefore, according to Buddhism, the application of *Trisikkhā* to age-related caregiving should always consider that the *Trisikkhā* is like the principle or framework of development and development guidelines. There are many guidelines according to various doctrines, but here we will propose the development of the so-called *Bhāvanā* 4. The *Bhāvanā* 4 can be used for development in 4 areas. Both *Trisikkhā* and *Bhāvanā* 4 are the caregiving method that can develop the body, behaviour, environmental relations, mind and wisdom in balance. *Trisikkhā* is the development principle and the main part. The *Bhāvanā* 4 is the practice method to measure whether or not people have been developed by *Trisikkhā*.[17] Somdet Phra Buudhaghosacariya (P.A. Payutto), the well-known Thai scholar and Buddhist monk, said about the real meaning of the development of elderly people in terms of Buddhism: "what's important is that…old persons have grown to a matured stage, which means they have become fully endowed with

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[17]   Somdet Phra Buddhaghosacariya (P. A. Payutto), *Bhuddhadhamma (Original Edition)* (40th edition 2021), 301, https://www.watnyanaves.net/th/book_detail/302.

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mental and intellectual strength that can be the core and the leader of true development."[18]

Accordingly, Somdet Phra Buudhaghosacariya (P.A. Payutto), when he was given the name *Phradhammapiṭaka* (P.A. Payutto), stated concerning how to develop humans in terms of Buddhism that life should be developed in a balanced manner, including 4 aspects: physical development, to be known, to use the eyes and organs, the hands, feet, mouth, etc., and to have a relationship that is supportive of the physical environment. An orderly society contains relationships that are supportive of fellow human beings with a system of appropriate expression methods and discipline in development. Accordingly, the development of life with the *Bhāvanā* 4 is to develop people to understand and realize the truth of life. Firstly, human development in precepts should be taken. To be able to perform the precepts, they must be composed of the body and organized properly. When the body is complete, the precepts are born. When a person has the precepts, it will lay the foundation for the mind to be kind. And with wisdom, they will gain more knowledge and understanding of what should be done and should not be done.[19] For this reason, the application of Buddhism as the Buddha's teaching for the care of elderly people is to apply the principle of *Trisikkhā* and the teaching of the *Bhāvanā* 4 as the philosophy for caregiving for ageing people.[20] This philosophy, for all the stated reasons, is an appropriate way for age-related caregiving in a Buddhist society. The Doctrine of *Bhāvanā* 4 for the development of 4 aspects of humans has the following meanings:

1) *Kāyabhāvanā* (Physical Development) is physical training according to the five sensations to get in touch with all five things outside of the sense organs, treat those things in a way that is ben-

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[18] Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University and Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute (TGRI), *Situation of the Thai Elderly 2017* (Bangkok:Deuan Tula Printing House,2019), 2, http://www.dop.go.th/download/knowledge/th1552463947-147_1.pdf.

[19] Phra Phrom Kunaporn (P. A. Payutto), *Buddhist Holistic Wellbeing* (Nakhonpathon: Wat Yanavesakawan,2014),142–144.

[20] Uthaiwan Sukimanil, "Concepts of Health Care for The Elderly under Buddhist Methods and Laws," *Journal of MCU Peace Studies* 8 (Supplement Issue 2020): 395, https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/journal-peace/article/view/241410/164884.

eficial for our lives, promote moral improvement, and developing relationships with the physical environment.

2) *Silabhāvanā* (Moral Development) is discipline training, not encroaching or causing damage, remaining well with others, and supporting each other.

3) *Cittabhāvanā* (Emotional or Mind Development) is the mental training to be strong, stable and grow with all the virtues such as benevolence, diligence, patience, concentration and freshness.

4) *Paññābhāvanā* (Wisdom Development) is wisdom training, to know and understand the things that are true, knowing the world and life according to conditions, able to manage the mind free from suffering, and solving problems through intelligence.[21]

Applying the Buddha's teaching of *Bhāvanā* 4 to caregiving for ageing people can be interpreted as follows:

1) *Kāyabhāvanā* (Physical Development) is the physicality caregiving of elderly people, caring for the healthy bodily development and relationships with the physical environment, physical and behavioural caring for ageing people's bodies, such as encouraging them to exercise properly, supplying medicines, providing the right food for them, caring for and preventing various dangers that may occur to them. Accordingly, James Stuart has explained why elderly people should be taken care of, saying that in the Buddhist tradition, providing for ageing people's needs is the main way of showing respect. In many cases, parents live with their children and may help raise their grandchildren. Young people should also take care of their parents' financial and other personal needs.[22] In the year 2016, the author conducted research on "Caring for Elderly Parents According to the Buddhist Teachings of Thai Buddhists" by surveying a sample population in the Bangkok area of 632 people who take care of elderly parents on the issue of taking care of them by helping the elderly parents

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[21]   Phra Dhammapitaka (P. A. Payutto), *Dictionary of Buddhism* (Bangkok: Sahadhammik, 2002), 70.

[22]   James Stuart, "Buddhist Belief in Respect of the Elderly," accessed January 20, 2022, https://classroom.synonym.com/buddhist-belief-in-respect-of-the-elderly-12085136.html.

to exercise appropriately, to have a proper food supply, better hygiene, taking them to a doctor in time, helping pay for their medical expenses and providing money for them to spend in daily life. The result was that in the overall sample group, 95.4% had taken care of their elderly parents according to the guidelines of *Kāyabhāvanā*.[23]

2) *Silabhāvanā* (Moral Development). Moral development for ageing people is a kind of caregiving to take care of the ageing people in social relationships and the social environment so they can live well with others. Therefore, those who care for ageing people should consider helping the elderly to interact well with the people around them such as relatives, friends, sons, daughters, etc. In addition, caregivers should help ageing people take care of their health by themselves. Accordingly, the research entitled "Caring for Elderly Parents According to the Buddhist Teachings of Thai Buddhists" by surveying a sample population in the Bangkok area of 632 people who take care of elderly parents in terms of *Silabhāvanā*, inquired about taking their elderly parents to visit relatives, friends' houses, doing social activities, facilitating transportation in doing social work, taking them to travel for relaxation in a good environment, taking them to the temple to make merit, giving to the underprivileged, and creating benefits for society in various ways. It was found that in the sample group, 93% of the sample took care of their elderly parents according to the guidelines of *Silabhāvanā*.[24]

3) *Cittabhāvanā* (Emotional Development) is the care of the mind, feelings and emotions of ageing persons. The caregivers should take care of the elderly by helping them have a strong mind, happiness, joyfulness, stability, a lack of loneliness, and a lack of anxiety. Those who care for ageing persons should pay special attention to this aspect because the elderly often need the honour of caring from the caregiver. In addition, since the ageing

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[23] Somboon Watana, "Caregiving for Elder Parents in accordance with the Buddhist Doctrine in Thai Buddhist Families," *Journal of Community Development Research (Humanities and Social Sciences)* 10, no. 2 (2017): 74, https://www.journal.nu.ac.th/JCDR/article/view/1821/1103.
[24] *Ibid.*, 75.

persons are senior citizens. They have wisdom accumulated over a long lifetime; younger people can show respect by listening to the advice of their ageing persons. Buddhists also extend the idea of filial piety to all ageing persons as senior citizens.[25] Accordingly, in the year 2016, the author conducted research on "Caring for Elderly Parents According to the Buddhist Teachings of the Thai Buddhists" by surveying a sample population in the Bangkok area of 632 people who take care of elderly parents in terms of caring for *Cittabhāvanā* (Emotional Development) inquiring about supporting practice meditation, friendly talk, creating an atmosphere that is always happy and cheerful, always showing love and respect for the elderly, etc. The result revealed that in the overall sample, 97.3% took care of their elderly parents according to Cittabhāvanā guidelines.[26] Supporting ageing people through practicing *Cittabhāvanā* (Emotional Development) to be mindful can fulfil their spiritual well-being because religious aspects are often associated with spirituality.

4) *Paññābhāvanā* (Wisdom Development) is caring for the ageing persons in terms of intelligence. Caregivers should support the ageing persons to understand the nature of life and create opportunities for them to be close to the Dharma teachings in Buddhism. *Paññābhāvanā* is the practical way to obtain Buddhist spiritual well-being. In this stage, elderly people will be happy and have peaceful minds. The research entitled "The Effectiveness of Buddhist Doctrine Practice-Based Programs in Enhancing Spiritual Well-being, Coping and Sleep Quality of Thai Elders"[27] has presented the significance of *Paññābhāvanā* (Wisdom Development) promoting the spiritual well-being of the Thai ageing people as the result of the research revealed that ageing people who practiced *Vipassanā* meditation demonstrated significantly better

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25   Stuart, "Buddhist Belief."
26   Watana, "Caregiving," 76.
27   Rodchana Wiriyasombat et al., "Effectiveness of Buddhist Doctrine Practice-Based Programs in Enhancing Spiritual Well-being, Coping and Sleep Quality of Thai Elders," *Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research* 15, no. 3 (July–September 2011): 203, https://he02.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/PRIJNR/article/view/6512/0.

spiritual well-being at one, two and four months after completing their intervention. Those who practiced chanting showed a significant increase in spiritual well-being, only two months and four months after completing their intervention. The control group demonstrated no significant changes over the three measurements. Although all three groups revealed significant changes in coping, at various times during the three measurements, both the *Vipassanā* meditation group and the chanting group showed better coping than the control group. Regarding sleep quality, both the *Vipassanā* meditation and the chanting group, compared to the control group, demonstrated significant increases in sleep quality four months after completing their invention. Accordingly, in the year 2016, the author conducted research on "Caring for Ageing Parents According to the Buddhist teachings of Thai Buddhists" by surveying a sample population in the Bangkok area of 632 pele who take care of ageing parents in terms of caring for the intellectual development of ageing people, asking about issues of taking parents to make merit, to listen to sermons at the temple and to practice *Vipassanā* meditation, etc. The result revealed that in the overall sample, 91.1% took care of their ageing parents according to *Paññābhāvanā* guidelines.[28]

Buddhism Activities for Age-Related Caregiving in Thailand

Following the Buddha's teaching of the willingness for human well-being, to respond to the ageing society in Thailand, some activities for age-related caregiving in Thailand of the Thai Buddhist monks will be taken as examples as follows:

Wat Suan Kaew Ageing Care Home: The Wat Suan Kaew Ageing Care Home, located in the Nonthaburi province of Thailand, was established by well-known senior Thai Buddhist monk Luang Por Payom Kalyāno in 1992. The rationale of this project is that nowadays offspring are burdened with having to pursue a career and raise a family, leaving no time to take care of their parents and grandparents. At present,

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[28] Watana, "Caregiving," 77.

ageing people experience hostile loneliness, a disease that destroys the mind and body prematurely, a disease that can occur in ageing people of all levels. So, for ageing people who have been abandoned by their offspring, Luang Por Phayom Kalyāno also provides a comprehensive upbringing for them. Moreover, the ageing people who come to request aid have never been rejected. Accordingly, he provided medical care for those ageing people until the end of his life as a nursing home project. The project was established as an association, a club to exchange views, a collection of experiences of ageing people, and also the opportunity to help the activities of the temple, which is considered a charity that elderly people will receive for the last moment, a value to the heart.[29]

Wat Dhammaraksa Nivesana Ageing Care Home: This project, located in Lopburi Province, Thailand, was established by the well-known Thai Buddhist monk named Luang Por Alongkot Tikkhapanyo who is the abbot of the Wat Phra Bat Namphu temple, Lopburi Province, Thailand, where there is a rehabilitation facility for people with AIDS. This is a new extended project of this Thai Buddhist monk. The main mission aims to provide late-stage shelters for abandoned ageing people. The rationale of this project is based on the increase in abandoned ageing people. Consequently, Luang Por Alongkot Tikkhapanyo, with his compassion for ageing people, stated "if temples and monks do not reach out to help, then who will help them to have a proper place to eat and die?" Hence, the Wat Dhammaraksa Nivesana Ageing Care Home has been divided into an ageing care tower for elderly people who can still help themselves and also for those who are less able to help themselves. Additionally, ageing people who are less able to help themselves, such as those who are blind, have lost limbs, have Alzheimer's, or have excretory problems, are looked after by volunteers to provide caregiving for both physical and mental health. Furthermore, a health service system has been provided that is linked to the health insurance of the Nong Muang Hospital, a public hospital. And for ageing people who can help themselves, such as being able to walk and eat, the temple provides daily activities for them to do, such as waking up to collect mattresses, clean-

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[29] "Wat Suan Kaew Aging Care Home," Suan Kaew Foundation, accessed January 30, 2022, https://www.kanlayano.org/home/projects/projects_10.php.

ing the premises, watering the plants, planting trees, exercising, eating, listening dharma, listening to or playing music therapy, watching movies, listening to music, and participating in group conversations.[30]

These two examples of Buddhist activities for age-related caregiving in Thailand were established and managed by well-known Thai Buddhist monks, namely Luang Por Payom Kalyano of the Wat Suan Kaew temple and Luang Por Alongkot Tikkhapanyo of the Wat Phra Bat Namphu temple. These two monks are called in Thai "*Luang Por*" in the sense of ageing, beloved, respected monks of various Thai people because they have sacrificed their life for monkhood in Buddhism, then followed the Buddha's teaching for human well-being by doing work of social engagement for the long time of around 40-45 years. It is not too much to say that these two monks are leaders in social engagement work in Thai society and even on the issue of the ageing society in Thailand.

Conclusion and Discussion

Thailand is a part of *Suvarnabhumi* land where Buddhism originally arose around 2300 years ago. Buddhism, as it has been interpreted and applied, has created various contributions to the Thai people such as culture, society and the economy, as well as a moral way of life, etc. The ageing society is a new issue in the 21st century. It is the result of the development of science and technology in terms of medical sciences and economic growth in the past century. In the present year of 2022 C.E., Thailand is an ageing society. In the perspective of Buddhism, ageing people, or the parents referred to in the *Pāli Tripiṭaka*, are important. The ageing people or the parents have been praised by the Lord Buddha and are regarded as a noble equivalent to *Brahma*, the saint of the sons, etc. Hence, the age-related caregivers or the sons and daughters should take care of the ageing people or their ageing parents. Buddhism has praised caregiving for ageing people or ageing parents in terms of both the body and the mind for comfort.

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[30] "Open Thammaraksa Temple to help the elderly," *Thairath Online*, accessed January 25, 2022, https://www.thairath.co.th/content/140303.

Moreover, the Buddha suggests that age-related caregivers (such as sons or daughters) should take care of them, for the sake of the sustainability of caregiving. Ageing people or ageing parents should be taken care of by the Buddha's teaching of *Bhāvanā* 4. Buddhist age-related caregiving can be an innovation for age-related caregiving in the 21st century to promote spiritual well-being in the global world. Otherwise, the age-related caregiving trend will be strongly promoted in terms of physical and mental caregiving but will ignore spiritual caregiving, which is the most important dimension of the elderly in a Buddhist society like Thailand. Both practical and academic approaches regarding age-related caregiving are still needed to advance both the quantity and quality to promote the Buddha's teaching about age-related caregiving for better human life from generation to generation. Age-related caregiving in an ageing society is not the duty of any one person but is an important agenda for all in societies to respond to this duty together in the best and most suitable way for ageing people. Since ageing people are the model of the future generation, taking care of them appropriately would create an ethical norm of generosity for each other and would be a society that cultivates the virtues of gratitude that is the basis of the goodness of living together in society.

In addition, to support the agenda of age-related caregiving in an ageing society in Thailand, there are 4299[31] Buddhist temples that the Thai government and related sectors plan to use as the religious capital for age-related caregiving according to the Buddha's teaching for human well-being. How can this idea be realised? To answer this question, the above 2 example projects of Luang Por Payom Kalyano and Luang Por Alongkot Tikkhapanyo should be models for other Thai Buddhist temples. To support this idea, the research on the "Preparedness of Buddhist Temples for an Ageing Society" conducted by Pornsiripong, Sasiwongsaroj and Burasitdhi[32] should be taken as an example. The findings of the research were that almost all of the temples were moderately

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[31]　"Temple Registration System," National Office of Buddhism, accessed January 30, 2022, http://binfo.onab.go.th/Temple/Dashboard.aspx.

[32]　Saowapa Pornsiripong, Quanjit Sasiwongsaroj, and Yongyut Burasitdhi, "Preparedness of Buddhist temples for an aging society," *Journal of Language and Culture* 33, no. 1 (2014), 100, https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/JLC/article/view/21723/18736.

ready. They were highly prepared for social networking and social space and moderately prepared for life-long learning and health promotion. Factors affecting different degrees of preparedness included: the abbot's potential, the number of monks, the qualifications and knowledge of the resident monks, support from communities nearby, and experience in social networking. The means for developing the preparedness of the temples were: sharing knowledge on best practices, training programs for abbots on active administration, educating monks on aspects of ageing people, supporting temples in establishing networks, and creating an age-friendly environment." Accordingly, James Stuart[33] observed the modern practices of the Buddhists and found "prolonged lifespans have changed the way senior citizens live, and this has affected the way Buddhists practice respect for ageing people. Since many people are healthier for longer, they want to remain independent and work long into their old age. Some Buddhist temples have begun organizing clubs to bring senior citizens together with younger people, and many Buddhist organizations celebrate special days intended to focus attention on respect for the ageing people." These 2 examples of academic studies indicated the potentiality and possibility of utilizing the Buddhist religious capital for society, as well as for the well-being of the elderly in the ageing Thai society. Again, the author, as a lecturer on the course "An Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy" in the Bachelor of Arts Program in Religious Studies of the Mahidol University of Thailand, has designed the topic of Buddhist Philosophy and Age-Related Caregiving in this course and taught more than 100 students for 4 years from 2014 to the present to prepare them for challenging the ageing society in Thailand. All these attempts are a way to apply the Buddha's teachings to the challenge of the ageing society in the 21st century. All these attempts of Buddhism in Thailand to be concerned with the new challenge of the ageing society have a foundation in the religious capital of Buddhism continuing from the *Suvarnabhumi* age more than 2000 years ago. Lastly, it can be said that the interpretation and application of the Buddha's teachings originally rooted in the *Suvarnabhumi* age and continuing to the

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[33]   Stuart, "Buddhist Belief."

present in Thailand are the way Buddhism in Thailand promotes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN). The 2030 Agenda's transformational vision and the pledge of SDGs to "leave no one behind" means that development agendas must include all people of all ages. The implementation of SDGs must essentially rely on equality, social justice and human dignity and recognize that ageing people have an equal right to development.[34]

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[34]   Stakeholder Group on Ageing, "Ageing," United Nations, accessed October 26, 2022, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/ageing.

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"DUAL AWAKENING?" – MINDFUL SOCIAL ACTION IN THE LIGHT OF THE DE-CONTEXTUALIZATION OF SOCIALLY ENGAGED BUDDHISM

Anja Zalta

Defining the Problem

The central theme of the paper deals with the idea of "dual awakening", which is based on the Buddhist mindfulness appropriated by socially engaged Buddhism as a method to recognize and implement a "wholesome" paradigm on both the social and individual level. I will be interested to know what the concept of "dual awakening" means in the Southeast Asian context presented by socially engaged Buddhism, and how it is transferred into the Western modernist paradigm.[1] The premise of the research is to ascertain whether and how this transfer (to a large extent) ignored the "dual awakening", individual as well as collective, and whether the central emphasis is shifted from the social action to personal "attention", which means building and/or correcting one's own personality. The research question derives from the paradigm of new religious changes that characterized Western societies in the final decades of the 20th century[2], as well as from studies by Tullio

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[1] The terms West-East are used to indicate differences based on episteme and geopolitics.
[2] For more se: Paul Heelas, *The New Age Movement, The Celebration of the Self and the Sacralization of Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996).

Giraldi and Thomas Joiner.[3] The latter, in his book Mindlessness, The Corruption of Mindfulness in a Culture of Narcissism,[4] describes the methods and market niche of modern psychotherapeutic practices and meditation workshops, which confirm Giraldi's initial thesis that it is important to "clearly examine the phenomenon of mindfulness because of the enormous number of books, studies and articles published on the subject – not only in scientific journals, but also in non-specialist publications and media …".[5] According to his investigation, a search of the key word 'mindfulness' in the PubMed database of the US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health shows "there were almost no scientific journal articles on the subject before the year 2000." The number of articles dealing with the topic of "mindfulness" then began to rise rapidly: 100 in 2008, 500 in 2013 and 900 in 2017. In 2015 alone, however, the number of articles dealing with the concept of 'mindfulness' grew to 30,000 articles in the general press. The niche that opened up in the religious and health market brought in approximately 1.2 billion US dollars in 2016 alone.[6] We are aware that mindfulness is a difficult construct to define, yet it can be described as a form of participant-observation that is characterized by moment-to-moment awareness of perceptible mental states and processes that includes continuous, immediate awareness of physical sensations, perceptions, affective states, thoughts and imagery.[7] The problem of the practice of mindfulness, in which interest has increased considerably in recent decades and which has moved from a type of Buddhist meditation to completely new secular forms and applications, primarily as a psychotherapeutic method and a means of improving well-being, is

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[3] Tullio Giraldi, *Psychotherapy, Mindfulness and Buddhist Meditation* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) and Thomas Joiner, *Mindlessness, The Corruption of Mindfulness in a Culture of Narcissism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[4] Joiner, *Mindlessness.*

[5] Giraldi, *Psychotherapy, Mindfulness and Buddhist Meditation*, 3.

[6] *Ibid.*, 3–4.

[7] Mindfulness focuses on number of qualities that include (a) a deliberate intention to pay attention to momentary experience, (b) a marked distinction from normal, everyday modes of consciousness, (c) a clear focus on aspects of active investigation of moment-to-moment experience, (d) continuity of a precise, dispassionate, non-evaluative moment-to-moment awareness of immediate experience, and (e) an attitude to openness, acceptance, kindness, curiosity and patience.

already pointed out in the thematic issue of Poligrafi from 2015.[8] In the process of massive popularization and secularization, mindfulness has been decontextualized, re-contextualized, and often reinterpreted in radically new ways, which raises a series of questions, such as why this ancient Buddhist meditation is spreading so rapidly today, and how different conceptions and definitions affect its applications and goals, as well as the practice process itself and the scientific research related to it.

My brief analysis will follow the following scheme: first, I will introduce socially engaged Buddhism and highlight some of its central concepts, and later move the context of the Western New Age paradigm by reviewing selected research on meditation of/and mindfulness. I will then critically evaluate these findings and place them in the context of socially engaged Buddhism and the imperative of action combined with mindfulness.

An Introduction to Socially Engaged Buddhism

The term socially engaged Buddhism was coined by Thích Nhất Hạnh (1926–2022), a Buddhist monk from Vietnam, who was marked by Vietnamese resistance to the French as well as the Vietnam War, and who has become known for his pioneer work promoting engaged Buddhism and social action. In 1966, he founded the Tiep Hien order (The Order of Interbeing) with the aim to promote active engagement and application of Buddhism in modern life.[9] Thích Nhất Hạnh introduced certain ideas and principles of socially engaged Buddhism, among others a sense of oneness, non-dualism, interdependence, interconnectedness, the understanding of co-responsibility and empathy for all beings, but at the same time the imperative of action combined with mindfulness.

According to his activity and understanding, Buddhism is (and has always been) socially engaged, because it addresses and attempts to over-

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8   Anja Zalta and Tamara Ditrich, eds., "Čuječnost: tradicija in sodobni pristopi," *Poligrafi* 20, 77/78 (2015).
9   For details see: Patricia Hunt-Perry and LynFine, "All Buddhism is Engaged: Thich Nhat Hanh and the Order of Interbeing," in *Engaged Buddhism in the West,* ed. Cristopher S. Queen (Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2012), 35–66.

come human suffering. A counter-argument could be that Buddhism is about escaping samsara and not trying to fix it. Socially engaged Buddhists, however, emphasis that samsara should not be understood as a problem with the world as such, but with our individual engagement with it and co-creation of social reality based on our individual greed, delusion, hatred, mental habits, possession and attachments to identity.

Engaged Buddhism adopts the language of modern social and political theory: of human rights, egalitarianism, individual freedoms and democracy, as well as techniques of nonviolent resistance and peaceful protest rooted in the modern era[10]. There is also a global discourse about ecological issues, which adapts concepts of interdependence and compassion for all sentient beings. Whether these developments are simply hybridized forms of Buddhism that have elements of Western modernity could be a topic of a much longer discussion, yet we should not overlook the "mindful" nonviolent, ethical, social and political activism of these movements, which are oriented towards relieving suffering on a personal level as well as on a wide systematic scale. According to socially engaged Buddhists, in order to achieve this, "dual awakening", social and individual transformation is necessary. A number of socially engaged Buddhist groups (such as Fo Guang Shan and Soka Gakkai, and socially engaged Buddhists such as A.T. Ariyaratne in Sri Lanka, Sulak Sivaraksa in Thailand, and Western Buddhists, such as Robert Aitken, Ken Jones and Joanna Macy) support the view that social and individual transformation cannot be separate. This position is also the central thesis of our writing.

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[10]   For more see: Sallie B. King, "Socially Engaged Buddhism," in *Buddhism in the Modern World,* ed. David L. McMahan, (New York: Routledge, 2012); D. L. McMahan, *Buddhism in the Modern World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 172; Ken Jones, *The New Social Face of Buddhism* (Wisdom Publication, Boston, 2003); Christopher S. Queen, "Introduction: A New Buddhism," v *Engaged Buddhism in the West,* ed. Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King (Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2000); S. Christopher Queen, and Sallie B. King, ed., *Engaged Buddhism, Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996); see also Nandasena Ratnapala, *Buddhist Sociology* (Sri Lanka: Vishva Lekha Publ., 2005); Geoffrey Ostergaard and Melville Currell, *The Gentle Anarchists: A Study of the Leaders of the Sarvodaya Movement for Non-Violent Revolution in India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

Wholesome Self, Wholesome Society – The concept of "dual awakening"

To analyze the initial thesis, it is necessary to highlight some central Buddhist concepts.

One of the key Buddhist concepts is the doctrine of dependent co-arising (*paticcasamupada*), the understanding that everything is a part of a limitless web of interconnections and that everything undergoes a continual process of transformation and relatedness. Since the transformation has to start with the individual, the Buddhist approach first focuses on the intra-psychic change with several ethical virtues that can assist Buddhist transformation processes. They include *metta* (friendliness), *panna* (wisdom) and *upaya* (appropriate means). To these *sangaha vatthuni*, grounds of kindness, the social application of the Buddhist ethical ideals can be added, such as the four principles of group behaviour, which comprise generosity (*dana*), kindly speech (*peyyavajja*), useful work (*atthacariya*) and equality (*samanatta*).[11]

These concepts translated into practice were first presented to me by the socially engaged Buddhism movement Sarvodaya in 2011 in Sri Lanka. Sarvodaya offers new ethical models for peaceful coexistence and new economic and political paradigms for social well-being. It arose in Sri Lanka in 1958 as one the manifestations of Buddhist revival that began in the late 19th century and continued into the 20th century (in the post-colonial period). Sarvodaya had started as what its founder Ariyaratne called "an educational experiment": forty high-school students and twelve teachers from Nalanda College, a Buddhist secondary school in Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo, went to live and work for two weeks in Kanatoluwa, a low-caste village. The work camp that they formed was called a *shramadana* ("gift of labour"); while working in a low-caste village, students experienced a different aspect of their culture, and at the same time, barriers between the upper and lower

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[11]   For more see: Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism, Teachings, History and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); A. T. Ariyaratne, *Buddhist Economics in Practice* (UK: Sarvodaya Support Group UK, 1999); Detlef Katowsky, *Sarvodaya, The Other Development* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1980).

castes were broken down.[12] As signified by its name *Sarvodaya* or "the awakening of all" or "uplift of all" supports the idea of "dual awakening", an awakening of both the individual and society at the same time. These two forms of awakenings are integrally related as a dual process in which the liberation of the individual depends upon the liberation of society and vice versa. Ariyaratne presents the idea of implementing the Buddhist Four Noble Truths in a secular context.[13] While interpreting these ideas socially, concrete forms of suffering from daily experiences and directly from the environment become the focus of awakening. Let's look at an example:

The first truth, *dukkha*, suffering or unsatisfactoriness, is according to him translated as "there is a decadent village". Villagers are encouraged to detect problems in their environment, such as egoism, possession, competition, harsh speech, destructive activity and inequality.

The second truth, *samudaya*, the cause of suffering, signifies that decadent conditions in the village have one or more causes, such as poverty, destructive engagement, disease, oppression, disunity, stagnation or ignorance. The third truth, *nirodha*, cessation, indicates that suffering can cease with the use of pleasant speech, constructive engagement, equality egolessness sharing, co-operation, love, etc. The way out of suffering lies in the fourth truth, *marga*, which means solving the problem by means of educational, cultural, spiritual, health-oriented actions.[14]

In his Collected Works, Ariyaratne presents the whole concept behind Sarvodaya activities:

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[12]   After this first achievement, Sarvodaya started appealing people to give whatever they can, their labour, their lands, their skills, their wealth, etc. with the intention to alleviate the suffering of the poorest and the powerless people living in rural and urban communities (from constructing wells to provide drinking water to tanks and canals to provide water for the cultivation of lands for producing food, shelter for people who have no houses to live in, building roads, community centres, schools and such other community facilities in education and health care, even establishing their own banks, etc.).

[13]   A. T. Ariyaratne, *Collected Works*, vol. IV. (Sri Lanka: Vishva Lekha Publ., 1999); A. T., Ariyaratne, *Collected Works*, vol. VII., (Sri Lanka: Vishva Lekha Publ., 1999); A. T. Ariyaratne, *Collected Works*, vol. VIII. (Sri Lanka: Vishva Lekha Publ., 2007)

[14]   Ariyaratne, *Buddhist Economics*.

"When a human being participates in any Sarvodaya activities, his or her primary objective should be to practice the four principles of Personality Awakening, which the Buddha taught. The first principle is loving-kindness (Metta) towards all beings. In the Discourse on Loving Kindness (Karaniya Metta Sutra) the Buddha has taught the importance of respecting and preserving all sentient beings. From one-celled living beings to the most evolved of living beings such as the human's friendliness and respect must be extended. Therefore, anybody joining the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement should a person who accepts the principle not to destroy sentient beings, but to protect all life."[15]

According to Ariyaratne, loving-kindness or *metta* is translated into compassionate action *(karuna)* by undertaking physical or mental activities to alleviate the suffering of all sentient beings (whether by digging wells or building schools or helping the sick or educating the children or improving the economic life of all people or teaching the Dhamma to improve their spiritual life). All these actions are expressions of compassion. As mentioned previously, meritorious deeds form a special mental state of altruistic joy *(muditha)*, and over a period of time if/when human actions are guided by these three principles of *metta*, *karuna* and *muditha*, such a person can progressively develop a state of mind called equanimity *(upekkha)*.

The described Buddhist path constitutes the crucial link between the individual and society in Sarvodaya's whole scheme of awakening and development. Transforming the consciousness of individuals and communities toward compassion represents the starting point in Sarvodaya's plan to transform society and an essential step toward building a just and peaceful coexistence.[16] Social and environmental destruction demands new ethics and ethic consciousness, a new paradigm which deals with the new challenges of postcolonial and post capitalistic societies. Sarvodaya's approach to generate this critical mass of ethic consciousness has focused on the peace meditations (among other things), starting in 1983, when Sri Lanka's civil war erupted with a bomb blast

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[15]   Ariyaratne *Collected Works, Vol. VIII*, 190–206.
[16]   The two terms that Sarvodaya has employed in its plans are *gram swaraj* – the liberation of the village through the creation of economic and social programmes at the grassroots level; and *deshodaya* – the national and political outcome liberation process.

that targeted army personnel who were travelling in a truck.[17] In an interview conducted with Bandula Senadeera, Sarvodaya's international division, "this incident prompted Sinhalese people to destroy the property of Tamil people in the southern parts of the country. Violence occurred in every part of the country and the security forces were unable to contain the further spread. At this point, Sarvodaya intervened to change the minds of people who were engaging in violence, starting by organizing large-scale peace walks with the participation of people from different ethnic groups. The main peace walks originated from more vulnerable places in the country. While nationwide walks were taking place, there were also local level walks happening divisionally attended by eminent and ordinary people alike."[18]

According to him, apart from these peace walks, all members of Sarvodaya individually practice meditation and a number of national-level peace meditation programmes have been held. For example, in Anuradhapura in 2006, there were approximately one million people attending this meditation programme, while in Colombo 2008, there were about three hundred thousand participants. According to Bandula, all the political party leaders were on the meditation stage, including the ruling party presidents, the prime minister and opposition leaders.

Sarvodaya have district-wide meditation programmes covering every single district of the country. There are 24 districts and 24 meditation programmes spearheaded by the coordinators of the districts.

In all, nearly three million people have participated in these meditations. Why does meditation remain one of the key tools or methods of socially engaged Buddhists? A fundamental goal of meditative techniques is to train the mind to disengage from usual modes of thinking, attention and reaction to the object of consciousness. Research on meditation, mindfulness and *neuroplasticity*[19] (in the following we will

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[17]   This blast claimed the lives of nine army personnel.
[18]   The interview with Bandula Senadeera was held a Moratuwa, the Sarvodaya headquarters in Sri Lanka in August 2020 and updated online in October 2022.
[19]   *Neuroplasticity* is understood as the brain's capacity to change. Since the human brain is designed to be constantly scanning the environment and meaning is constructed on past experience, our response to our environment includes applying meaning well before experience reaches our consciousness. Once experience enter the consciousness, further response, interpretation and reaction occur. According to Kristeller, we have much of this

mention only a few) clearly shows that specific kind(s) of mental train-
ing can influence how our brains operate. As a consequence, our emo-
tional and mental well-being can indeed be cultivated through mental
discipline, which means through the development of awareness and the
evolution (cultivation?) of consciousness.

A Brief Evaluation of Selected Research on (Mindfulness) Meditation in the West

Since the 1960s hundreds of empirical studies have been carried out
on the range of effect of meditation. Buddhist meditative traditions em-
phasize that the extended goal of practice is development of empathy
and compassion. However, an investigation into the research clarified
for me that there has been surprisingly little systematic investigation of
the impact of meditation on the traditional goals of practice: cultiva-
tion of empathy or compassion. Only a very few studies have examined
the impact of meditative practice on these central components of (so-
cially engaged) Buddhism. Mediation in the West or in the so-called
global North is widely recognized as a tool to attain a variety of goals:
physical relaxation; reduction of stress and anxiety, against depression,
improvement in behavioural self-regulation, etc. One of the rare excep-
tions of the available research on the traditional effect of meditation
dates from 1970. Lesh explored the effect of four weeks of Zazen train-
ing on 16 master's-level student therapists. They were compared to a
waiting-list comparison group and a group of students who expressed

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"self"-centered and self-protective processes in common with lower organisms in order to
survive, but we also share with them empathy, affiliation and social processing, which may
be hardwired into virtually all mammals as a process necessary for caring for the young
(Jean L. Kristeller and Thomas Johnson, "Cultivating Loving-Kindness: A Two-Stage Model
for the Effects of Meditation on Compassion, Altruism and Spirituality," conference paper
at Works of Love: Scientific and Religious Perspectives on Altruism, Villanova, Villanova
University, June 3, 2003 http://www.metanexus.net/archive/conference2003/pdf/WOLPaper_
Kristeller_Jean.pdf). Also, according to Eric Thompson, with neuroplasticity we can influence
our brain function and development and go beyond our own neurophysiology, so the
awakened conscious intention can open up to a transformational process (Eric Thompson,
*The Neuroscience of Meditation: An Introduction to the Scientific Study of How Meditation
Impacts the Brain* (Awake Technologies, LLC, 2011), https://www.sergioangileri.it/PDFSA/
neuroscience_meditation.pdf).

no interest in meditation. Empathy was measured by the accuracy of responses to assessing emotions expressed by a videotape client. Only the Zazen group showed increases in empathy.[20] Within models of self-actualization, a shift from self-preoccupation to concern for others is considered a natural progression along stages of self-development. Yet questions still remain: how did this shift come about? How is it linked to the development of empathy?

In the following, we will look more closely at how the modern studies deal with the effects of meditation and what the central points and the consequences of meditation are.

A review of the literature on mediation and self-actualization in the 90s by Alexander identifies 46 studies that supported the value of meditative practice for development of self-actualization.[21] Without a doubt, this can be linked to the rise of new religious movements on the global scene, whose central goal is individual well-being and building one's own identity.[22]

So-called mindfulness psychotherapy has become one of the predominant representations of Buddhism in contemporary popular religious culture in the West, yet the particular understanding of mindfulness is based on the interests of stress reduction techniques of contemporary Western consumers, not as a technique to attain 'awakening'.

Mindfulness is being incorporated into a wide variety of therapies and interventions. Popular therapeutic approaches in the last two decades include mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT), and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT).

Some approaches use various forms of meditation as a method for cultivating mindfulness, while others, such as ACT and DBT, empha-

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[20]   Terry V. Lesh, "Zen Meditation and the Development of Empathy in Counselors," in *Meditations: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives,* ed. D. H. Shapiro & R. Walsh (Hawthorne, NY: Aldine Publishing, 1984).

[21]   Charles N. Alexander, Maxwell V. Rainforth, and Paul Gelderloos, "Transcendental Meditation, Self-Actualization, and Psychological Health: A Conceptual Overview and Statistical Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality* 6, no. 5 (1991): 189–247.

[22]   Wouter Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture; Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 42–61; Heelas, *The New Age Movement.*

size non-meditation experiential learning techniques. These interventions focus on therapeutic mindfulness or how mindfulness can be used as a key ingredient of therapeutic insight. Mindfulness-based therapy (MBT), such as mindfulness-based stress reduction (the most famous representative of which is undoubtedly Jon Kabat-Zinn from the University of Massachusetts Medical Faculty) and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy have become a very popular subject in contemporary psychotherapy. The review suggests that MBT is a beneficial intervention to reduce negative psychological states, such as stress, anxiety and depression. Hofmann reviewed 39 studies encompassing 1,140 participants receiving MBT for a range of conditions, including cancer, generalized anxiety disorder, depression and other psychiatric or medical conditions.[23] A study by Carson explored the effect of mindfulness meditation in combination with guided mediation on relationship enhancement in married couples. A total of 44 couples were randomly assigned to either a waiting-list control or to an intervention programme based on mindfulness meditation practice. The couples were in generally well adjusted relationships and had been married on average for 11 years. The programme consisted of eight two-hour sessions and one full day's retreat. The practice programme based on mindfulness meditation significantly improved the quality of connectedness, including relatedness to and acceptance of the partner.[24] However, questions about the criteria for the accreditation of using mindfulness in therapy remain for further discussion, with a particular emphasis on who is qualified to offer mindfulness therapy, since a major aim of mindfulness meditation, at least in the Buddhist context, is a phenomenological investigation and understanding of how the mind works. According to Buddhist philosophy, mindfulness is a precondition to attain wisdom (which is synonymous with the understanding of the impermanence, unsustainability and co-dependence of all conditioned phenomena). With attained

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[23]   Stefan G. Hofmann, Paul Grossman and Hinton D., "Loving-Kindness and Compassion Meditation: Potential for Psychological Interventions," *Clinical Psychology Review* 31, no. 7 (November 2011): 1126–1132, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2011.07.003.
[24]   James W. Carson et. al., "Mindfulness-Based Relationship Enhancement," *Behavior Therapy* 35, no. 3 (June 2004): 471–494, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7894(04)80028-5.

wisdom, empathy and compassion are the logical consequence. As already mentioned, the cultivation of empathy and compassion *(metta)* are fundamental aspects of Buddhism. The basic meditative practice for the cultivation of *metta* is so-called loving-kindness meditation. Loving-kindness meditation (LKM) in Buddhism starts with engaging compassion towards the self, then the focus is shifted to others (to a benefactor, a good friend, a neutral person, to someone with whom we experience interpersonal difficulties, even an enemy, and finally to all beings in the world).[25] LKM aims to develop an affective state of unconditional kindness to *all* beings, since it is closely linked to the Buddhist notion of *interconnectedness,* that all living beings are inextricably connected. Together with loving-kindness *(metta)* and compassion *(karuna)*, sympathetic joy *(mudita;* i.e. joy in others' joy) and equanimity *(uppeka)* constitute the four *brahma-viharas,* which are regarded as four noble states or qualities that can be cultivated. These four qualities form the foundation of the Buddhist ethical system and are necessary to achieve insights into the working of our own minds, as well as the world around us. Despite the existence of theoretical framework(s) regarding mindfulness as such, very little data exists on LKM as a clinical intervention method. Gilbert and Procter[26] developed a treatment method they called compassionate mind training. The treatment consists of a programme of 12 weekly two-hour individual sessions. The therapy targets self-criticism and shame to enhance self-compassion by encouraging clients to be self-soothing when they are feeling anxiety, anger and disgust. The treatment incorporates techniques of monitoring and cognitive behavioural ther-

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[25] Beginning with extending compassion toward the self is considered essential for two reasons; first, it engages a sense of inner awareness of those feelings or experiences most likely to block the expression of compassion, especially anger; secondly, it cultivates awareness of inner resources to deal with such feelings. The first is important because otherwise the self may spring back too quickly into a protective mode; the second is important because cultivating the experience of compassion toward the self provides a foundation for extending that sense of love out to others. For more, see also: Sharon Salzberg, *Lovingkindness, The Revolutionary Art of Happiness* (Boston & London: Shambala Classics, 2002).

[26] Paul Gilbert and Sue Procter, "Compassionate mind training for people with high shame and self-criticism: Overview and pilot study of a group therapy approach," *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy* 13, no. 6 (2006): 353–379, https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.507.

apy, dialectical behaviour therapy, and acceptance and commitment therapy. Participants reported a significant improvement on self-report measures of anxiety, depression and self-criticism[27]. The limited empirical evidence from the intervention literature suggests that elements of LKM can be trained within a relatively short time. The study by Hutcherson and colleagues suggests that even seven-minute training in LKM can produce small or moderately strong improvements in positive feelings toward strangers and the self. The LKM training period in the other studies with non-clinical populations consisted of six 60-minute weekly sessions. The LKM exercise itself was only 15–20 minutes in duration, although the effects were also modest. In clinical studies, the LKM training consisted of eight weekly one-hour sessions to reduce chronic low back pain. A slightly modified programme of 12 weekly two-hour sessions was employed for treating anxiety, anger, and mood problems. Therefore, LKM appears to have a positive effect on psychological functioning, even after a relatively short training time.[28]

Final remark

These research studies illustrate an association between mediation practice and attaining positive emotions and stress reductions on the one hand, and the cultivation of empathy, compassion and altruism on the other. However, the value placed on cultivating empathy and compassion was not made explicit as part of the goals of participation in the meditation process in the West, where it is mainly forgotten or (deliberately?) overlooked that these practices derive from the Buddhist tradition and that striving for personal well-being and/or wellness should not replace the ethical endeavour to (also) elevate compassion and empathy as a tool for mindful, ethical and compassionate social engagement.

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[27] *Ibid.*
[28] Cendri A, Hutcherson, Emma Seppala and James J. Gross, "Loving-kindness meditation increases social connectedness," *Emotion* 8, no. 5 (2008): 720–724, https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013237; see also Salzberg, *Lovingkindness.*

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RESEARCHING "ON AND IN" GLOBAL SOUTH COUNTRIES: SOUTHEAST ASIA

Mohammed Ilyas

Introduction

Over the last few decades, calls for epistemic decolonisation have rapidly increased among some global north countries (hereinafter, global north countries include global north settler states) and global south countries. Especially after the initial Black Lives Matter Movement (2103-) and the Rhodes Must Fall campaign protests at Cape Town University in South Africa in 2015. Since these protests, a lot of literature calling for the decolonisation of global north academia, in the form of decolonising the university, social theory, pedagogy, curricula, classroom, knowledge production, and methodology, has been published.[1] That said, this article focuses on decolonising methodologies, and specifically on how global north academics conduct research on or in global south countries because their attitudes and practices could sometimes inadvertently reinforce coloniality.[2] This situation, in

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[1] Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gabriel and Kerem Nisanciolu, *Introduction: Decolonising the university* (London: Pluto Press, 2018); Linda Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies* (London: Zed Books, 1999); Syed Farid Alatas, "Academic Dependency and the Global Division of Labour in the Social Sciences," *Current Sociology* 51, no 6. (November 2003): 599–613, https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392103051006003; Syed Farid Alatas and Sinha Vineeta, *Sociological Theory beyond the Canon* (London: Palgrave McMillan, 2017); Raewyn Connell, *Southern Theory: Social Science And The Global Dynamics Of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2007); Romon Grosfoguel, Roberto Hernandez and Ernesto Rosen Velasquez, *Decolonizing the Westernized University: Interventions in Philosophy of Education from Within and Without* (Washington D.C: Lexington Books, 2018).
[2] Hamid Dabashi, *Can non-Europeans think?* (London: Zed Books, 2015).

some ways, mimics how non-white students are perceived and treated in global north universities.[3] That said, I am fully aware that some global south academics may hold similar attitudes and engage in similar practices and, therefore, inadvertently reinforce coloniality. I will explore how global south academics inadvertently reinforce coloniality in future articles.

Therefore, this article offers some ways for global north academics doing research on or in global south countries to guard against reinforcing coloniality, based on the work of indigenous and decolonial academics like Lind Smith.[4] That said, it is also important to mention that I am aware that the term 'indigenous' may be considered problematic by some academics, given the diversity of communities that claim indigeneity based on language, culture or claims to other identity registers.[5] However, I am using the term specifically to refer to communities that were present before European colonisation in countries that are today called 'global north settler states'.[6]

Over the last decade, decolonising global north academia has gained considerable popularity among some global north academics and stu-

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[3]   Xianlin Song and Greg McCarthy, "Governing Asian international students: the policy and practice of essentialising 'critical thinking'," *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 16, no 3 (January 2018): 353–365, https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2017.1413978; Anne Shirley Tate and Paul Bagguley, "Building the anti-racist university: next steps," *Race Ethnicty and Education* 20, no 3. (December 2017): 289–299, https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2016.1260227; B. Kumaravadivelu, "The Decolonial Option in English Teaching: Can the Subaltern Act?," *Tesol Quarterly* 50, no 1. (October 2014): 66–85, https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.202.
[4]   Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies*; Levac et al, *Learning across Indigenous, Western Knowledge Approaches and Intersectionality: Reconciling Social Science Approaches* (Guelph: University of Guelph, 2018); Walter D. Mignolo, "Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom," *Theory, Culture & Society* 26, 7–8. (February 2010): 159–181; https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409349275.
[5]   Hamdeesa Tuso and Mureen P. Flaherty, *Creating the third force: indigenous processes of peacemaking* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2016); Jennifer Ball, *Women, development and peacebuilding in Africa: Stories from Uganda* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).
[6]   Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonisation Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonising, Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no 1. (September 2012): 1–40, https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630.

dents, especially epistemic decolonisation.[7] This popularity has led to many publications, conferences, seminars and workshops (online and offline) being organised by global north academics, students and research centres. For example, a quick search using the Web of Science portal for the term 'decolonising' reveals that publications on decolonisation have rapidly increased since 2000. Not only is most of the literature authored by academics based in global north countries, but the publishers are also primarily from the same countries. For example, academics at the University of London have published the most articles on decolonisation, suggesting that the UK is an important hub for decolonial knowledge production. This situation could be interpreted as centres of knowledge production in global north countries inadvertently reinforcing coloniality because they continue to dominate knowledge production, even on decolonisation.[8]

One of the most popular ways to engage in epistemic decolonisation is decolonising methodology. One reason for its popularity is that it makes academics and students aware of the 'dirty history' of research and research methods in global north countries and global south countries. It also provides ways to conduct research that could help guard against reinforcing coloniality. By research, I mean several things. Firstly, epistemological and methodological choices. Secondly, the recruitment of research participants, research assistants, advisors, funders and other stakeholders. Thirdly, fieldwork. Fourth, the dissemination of findings through articles, books, conference papers, specialist workshops and seminars. Finally, the advancement of the researched community through the research. There are several research methods under the banner of decolonial methodologies that have gained much popularity among global north and, in some cases, global south academics and students. These methods are popular and important because they have been developed by indigenous and decolonial academics and are deemed non-invasive, non-exploitative and non-predatory. These

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[7]   Kasturi Behari-Leak, "Decolonial turns, postcolonial shifts, and cultural connections: Are we there yet?," *English Academy Review* 36, no. 1 (May 2019): 58–68, https://doi.org/10.1080/10131752.2019.1579881.

[8]   Connell, *Sothern Theory*; Mohammed Ilyas, "Decolonising Terrorism Journals," *Societies* 11, no 6. (January 2021): 2–18, https://doi.org/10.3390/soc11010006.

methods are based on knowledge production and dissemination practices that have roots among indigenous communities and global south countries.[9] These methods include but are not restricted to critical and autoethnography, art-based methods, storytelling, sharing circles, yarning, *pagtatanong Tanong*, learning from wisdom keepers, participatory research and *halaqas*.[10] For example, the *halaqa* is a research method that comes from traditional Muslim teaching and knowledge exchange practices, which is still used among Islamic institutions such as universities, *madrasas*, mosques, Sufi circles and even in Muslim homes in the global north and global south countries.

Since Linda Smith's groundbreaking book entitled *Decolonising Methods*, which was published in 1999, decolonising methods have gained considerable popularity among global north academia. In her book, she discusses the colonial history of research and its legacy among indigenous communities in New Zealand, which is a global north settler state. Since then, many other academics have highlighted the racism of research during colonialism and its continued impact. As such, they have not only called for theoretical and methodological reflexivity but also raised important concerns about the dangers of decolonial research methods and epistemologies being assimilated or integrated into global north knowledge production paradigms.[11] For example, some

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9   Bagele Chilisa, *Indigenous Research Methodologies* (California. Sage Publications. 2011): 117–139; Norman Denzin, Yvonna Lincoln and Linda Smith, *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (California: Sage Publications, 2014); Raven Sinclair, "Indigenous research in social work: The challenge of operationalising worldview," *Native Social Work Journal,* no 5. (November 2003); Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Provisional Notes on Decolonising Research Methodology and Undoing Its Dirty History," *Journal of Developing Societies* 35, no 4 (November 2019): 481–492, https://doi.org/10.1177/0169796X19880417.
10   Tuck and Yang, "Decolonisation,"1–40; Levac et al, *Learning across Indigenous.*
11   Moyra Keane, Maren Seehawer and Constance Khupe, "Decolonising Methodology: Who Benefits From Indigenous Knowledge Research?," *Educational Research for Social Change* 6, no 1. (May 2017): 12–24; Lauren Landau, "Communities of knowledge or tyrannies of partnership: Reflections on North–South research networks and the dual imperative*," Journal of Refugee Studies* 25, no. 4 (December 2012): 555–570, https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fes005; Miguel Zavala, "What do we mean by decolonising research strategies? Lessons from decolonising, indigenous research projects in New Zealand and Latin America," *Decolonisation: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 2, no. 1 (2013): 55–71; Mirjam B. E. Held, "Decolonising Research Paradigms in the Context of Settler Colonialism: An Unsettling, Mutual, and Collaborative Effort," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 18 (January 2019):

indigenous academics[12] argue that appropriation and integration of indigenous epistemologies into global north epistemology could weaken the former, and assimilating indigenous knowledge into global north knowledge could mean denying the core differences between the two. Other indigenous[13] academics argue that appropriation and integration can lead to global north epistemology marginalising and delegitimising what it does not consider to be knowledge because of its global dominance. This situation could lead to indigenous and global south research paradigms, theories, concepts, methodologies and imaginaries being further marginalised or suffering epistemicide.[14]

For some global north academics and students, methodological decolonisation may seem a simple and easy task, and decolonial methodologies may appear attractive methodological alternatives to those born out of the global north episteme. However, in reality, methodological decolonisation and using decolonial methodologies is not an easy task and reinforcing coloniality is an ever-present risk, despite the good intentions of academics and students. The primary reason for this is not the research methods themselves but how global north academia conditions the minds of academics and students on how to think, know, feel, believe, be and do. Here, I am referring to the colonised mind of global north academics and students, which is the opposite of the colonised mind that academics like Alatas[15], Alatas[16] and Gu[17] have explained in

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1–16, https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918821574; Jason Chalmers, "The transformation of academic knowledges: Understanding the relationship between decolonising and indigenous research methodologies," *Socialist Studies/Études Socialistes* 12, no 1. (May 2017): 97–116, https://doi.org/10.18740/S4GH0C.

[12]   Levac et al, *Learning across Indigenous.*

[13]   Thimothey Reagan, *Non-western educational traditions: Local approaches to thought and practice 4th edition* (London: Routledge, 2017).

[14]   Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Chalmers, "The transformation of academic knowledges," 97–116; Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2011).

[15]   Syed Hussein Alatas, "Intellectual Imperialism: Definition, Traits, and Problems," *Southeast Journal of Social Science* 28, no. 1 (November 2000): 23–45, https://doi.org/10.1163/030382400X00154.

[16]   Alatas, "Academic Dependency".

[17]   Ming D. Gu, *Sinologism An alternative to Orientalism and postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 2011).

their work on global south academics. Admittedly, the global north colonised mind that I am referring to needs more explanation, which I hope to do in future articles. However, for this article, it is sufficient to mention that the global north colonised mind suffers from a 'superiority complex' based on cultural and intellectual superiority.[18]

This article is composed of four parts. In the first part, I detail my methodological approach, which includes my motivations for writing the article from the perspective of a British-BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) academic, who works for a global north university in a global south country. It also includes the framing and key terms that I use in the article. The second part of the article focuses on making global north academics researching on or in global south countries aware that using decolonial methodologies is not an easy task and inadvertently reinforcing coloniality is an ever-present risk. In fact, those wanting to use them will need to think carefully and, on the one hand, justify their research methodology and, on the other hand, show how their research findings will benefit the researched community in meaningful and substantial ways. Therefore, using decolonial methodologies entails more than having a 'diverse research team or inviting a global south academic to talk at a global north university'. In the third part of the article, I discuss what indigenous and decolonial academics call the dirty history of research and research methods. This history, in most cases, is not taught in undergraduate and postgraduate social science degree programmes or research method courses in the global north and, for this matter, in global south universities, which is why most academics and students are unaware of it. In the final part of the article, I suggest certain ways informed by decolonial methodologies for global north academics to consider using to guard against reinforcing coloniality whilst researching on or in global south countries.

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[18]   Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vinatge Books, 1979).

Methodological Approach

This article is methodologically informed by decoloniality. In other words, it is written from the borders of different identity registers.[19] This part of the article is broken down into a few sections. In the first section, I explain my motivations for writing this article by employing autoethnography as a decolonial methodology because it offers a unique way to discuss personal experiences of coloniality along several registers, including identity that connects global north and global south academia.[20] That said, I am aware that some academics may disapprove of using decolonial methods because they deem them unscientific or because of some other reasons.[21] However, such positions do not acknowledge that decolonial methods have become popular, on the one hand, from the critique of global north epistemology and methodology, and on the other hand, because there is limited awareness of decolonial methodologies emanating from indigenous and global south knowledge production traditions.[22] Furthermore, autoethnography offers me a way to discuss my positionality and situatedness in relation to the global north and global south actors I engage with as part of my research from the perspective of critical reflexivity and broader local, regional and global power structures and privileges, including those that privilege me.[23] As such, it adheres to key decolonial goals, like addressing social justice concerns.[24] Importantly, autoethnography also enables me to start a

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[19]   Walter Mignolo and Madina Tlostanova, "Theorising from the Borders: Shifting to Geo- and Body-Politics of Knowledge," *European Journal of Social Theory* 9, no. 2 (2006): 205–221; https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431006063333.
[20]   Levac et al., *Learning across Indigenous*; Jason Arday, "Dismantling power and privilege through reflexivity: negotiating normative Whiteness, the Eurocentric curriculum and racial microaggressions within the Academy," *Whiteness and Education* 3, no. 2 (January 2019): 141–161, https://doi.org/10.1080/23793406.2019.1574211.
[21]   Mohammed Ilyas, "Decolonialisation and the Terrorism Industry: Indonesia," *Social sciences* 10, no. 2 (February 2021): 417–440, https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10020053.
[22]   Held, "Decolonising Research Paradigms," 1–16.
[23]   Tony E. Adams, Stacy Holman Jones, and Carolyn Ellis, *Handbook of Autoethnography.* (London: Routledge, 2016); Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics*.
[24]   Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies*; Davydd Greenwood and Morten Levin, "Reform of the social sciences and of universities through action research," *Teaching and Learning* 1, no 1. (Spring 2008): 89–121.

process centred on reciprocity as a way to do 'decolonial work'. In the form of publishing with global south academics (Southeast Asian) on issues such as why and how some voices and perspectives are silenced and dismissed, and others are not and why inappropriate treatment of global south academics and researchers is overlooked or downplayed? In the second part, I explain coloniality and decoloniality for the benefit of those readers who may not be aware of these basic and fundamental decolonial concepts, as well as to theoretically and conceptually frame the article as decolonial in orientation. In the final part, I detail the key terms I use throughout the article, which have been developed by employing autoethnography as a decolonial method.

Motivations

I am motivated to write this article based on my personal experiences as a British-BAME academic working for a global north university in a global south country, whose research focuses on a range of sociological and criminological issues, such as race, religion, risk, and political violence. As an academic, I engage with a range of global north and global south actors. These include academics, religious and community leaders, embassies and NGOs (Non-governmental organisations) and CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) (hereinafter, I will use the terms global north and global south actors) and with the latter often funding research on political violence and community cohesion programmes. Although providing names of organisations, events and programmes is good practice, and it is better not to do so in some instances because it may lead to loss of funding and livelihood for those involved, as well as a range of risks that are not always appreciated by some global north academics.[25]

Through my interactions with global north and global south actors, I have realised that their motivations for researching and funding research on political violence, disseminating research, accepting one perspective on political violence over another, and organising community cohesion programmes differ on several registers. On the one hand, it

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[25]   Ilyas, "Decolonising the Terrorism Industry," 1–16.

seems that the theoretical and conceptual understandings employed by academics and funders are underpinned and organised around coloniality through a culturalist approach. Where Islam and Muslims are essentialised and deemed as the causes of extremism and political violence'. With little reflection on other possible causes, such as how local sociopolitical ecosystems are fostered by economic and political struggles that are a composite of the local, regional and global powerplay.[26] On the other hand, the methodological approaches adopted by some academics and funders have, in some instances, led to attitudes and research practices that appear predatory and exploitative. With little regard for the physical and mental well-being of the academics and researchers that they employ.[27] One good example of this is how some funders expect global south academics to be available 24hrs a day. As such, having little regard for the mental and physical well-being of the academic and researcher.[28]

Like the theoretical and conceptual understandings, the community cohesion programmes also appear to be inadvertently underpinned by coloniality and, in some instances, designed in a way that preserves the socio-political status quo. In other words, they preserve the privileges of the dominant community and connected elites from minority communities. For example, some community cohesion programmes tend to employ a state-orientated understanding of religious discourses that appears to be centred on the War on Terror logic, which imagines Islam and Muslims in essentialist ways and being the only cause of extremism and political violence. The funding for research on political violence and community cohesion programmes appears to be based not only on the same logic and imagination but also on ideological and political convictions that project the global south's future as congruent to that of the global north, despite the apparent historical and cultural differ-

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[26] Ilyas, "Decolonising Terrorism Journals," 2–18.
[27] Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies*; Ilyas, "Decolonising Terrorism Journals," 2–18.
[28] *Ibid.*

ences.[29] Therefore, Sardar's[30] point about the future of the global south being the global north seems to hold true.

Based on these engagements, I feel it is important for me to encourage all the global north and global south actors involved in funding, researching political violence and organising community cohesion programmes to carefully consider whether their understandings, motivations and goals could inadvertently be reinforcing coloniality. However, the suggested ways to guard against reinforcing coloniality are intended for global north academics researching on or in global south countries. However, I feel that they could also be helpful to global south academics, religious and community leaders, embassies and NGOs to consider. This is because political, religious, social and organisational status and identity registers do not preclude an organisation or individual from inadvertently reinforcing coloniality through attitudes, research and organisational practices. That said, the reason why I have chosen global north academics as the focus of my suggestions is because of the glaring power differentials that I have noticed, which are structured around race and connected privileges between the global north and global south actors involved in funding, researching, organising community cohesion programmes, and the researched communities. Not being aware of the power differentials can easily and quickly lead to unethical attitudes and research practices. In other words, predatory and exploitative motivations, goals and research practices that are reminiscent of colonial knowledge production relations.[31] That said, I know that the aforementioned type of power differentials also exist between global south actors, which I will explore in future articles.

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[29]   Guendalina Simoncini, "International PVE and Tunisia: A Local Critique of International Donors Discourse," in *Encountering Extremism: Theoretical Issues and Local Challenges,* ed. Alice Martini, Ford Kieren and Richard Jackson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 180–199.

[30]   Ziauddin Sardar, "Development and the Locations of Eurocentrism," in *Critical Development Theory Contributions to a New Paradigm,* ed. Denis O'Hearn and Ronaldo Munck (London: Zed Books, 1999), 44–63.

[31]   Ilyas, "Decolonising Terrorism Journals," 2–18.

Coloniality and Decoloniality

Coloniality and decoloniality are perhaps the two most important concepts in decolonial thinking. Maldonado-Torres[32] posits that coloniality is the process of racial domination and marginalisation that structured colonialism and has continued into the postcolonial era in various forms. We see coloniality working in global politics, economics and the global north and global south academia. Mignolo,[33] a leading decolonial theorist, argues that modernity and coloniality are two sides of the same coin. For him, coloniality signifies the underside or dark side of modernity, where exploitation, marginalisation, violence and epistemicide occur.

Decolonial theorists, such as Maldonado-Torres[34] and Ndlovu-Gatsheni,[35] argue that coloniality is composed of three main parts that condition all aspects of life in different ways, including the mind, identity registers and politics. These are the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being and non-being. The coloniality of power refers to how and why global politics and international organisations organise the world based on global north political and economic standards.[36] The coloniality of knowledge refers to how global north academia and attached epistemology and ways of sensing, thinking, imagining, feeling, believing, being and doing dominate how knowledge is produced globally. They dominate for three main reasons. Firstly, global north academia lays claim to universality, objectivity and neutrality. This marginalises other epistemologies and ways of sensing, thinking, imagining, feeling, believing, being and doing and, therefore, ways of producing knowledge. Secondly, dominant global north languages, such as English, French and German, are the main repositories of what is considered as

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[32]   Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being," *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2-3 (April 2007): 240–270, https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162548.
[33]   Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity.*
[34]   Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being," 240–270.
[35]   Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Provisional Notes on Decolonising," 481–492.
[36]   Romon Grosfoguel, "Decolonising Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political-Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality," *TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1, no. 1 (May 2011), https://doi.org/10.5070/T411000004.

knowledge by global north academia. Thirdly, these languages provide the lexicon through which knowledge is expressed and understood. In turn, they construct a mental architecture by imposing a knowledge system on indigenous communities and global south countries that is not their own.[37] As Taiwo[38] posits, the knowledge system had already been rigged before we were born (referring to himself as an African man and African people). The coloniality of knowledge has several negative ramifications for global south academia and academics. For example, global south academia and academics suffer from intellectual dependency, the captive and colonised mind and extroversion.[39] In other words, there is a tendency among global south academics to mimic or copy their global north counterparts in terms of university structure, curricula, theorisation, methodology and knowledge production. This is because global north academia determines how academia should be organised, including universities and 'what should be taught and how it should be taught' globally. The final type of coloniality is the coloniality of being and non-being, which structures how people are racialised and treated according to a predetermined set of racialised tropes.[40] For example, people occupying the zone of being are deemed more human than those occupying the zone of non-being. As such, the former are afforded human rights, material resources and social and political recognition, unlike the latter. One current and obvious example of how the zone of being and non-being operates is the differential treatment of refugees fleeing from the Ukraine and Russia war and those fleeing from conflicts in global south countries by global north countries.[41] For

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[37]   Ngugi Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind. Nairobi, Kenya* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1986); Kawasi Wiredu, "Conceptual decolonization as an imperative in contemporary African philosophy: some personal reflections," *Philosophies africaines: traversées des expériences,* no. 36 (2002): 53–4.

[38]   Qlufemi Taiwo, *Agnaist Decolonisation: Taking African Agency Seriously* (London: Hurst & Comapnt, 2022).

[39]   Alatas, "Intellectual Imperialism," 23–45; Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind*; Wiredu, "Conceptual decolonization," 53–64; Alatas, "Academic Dependency," 599–613; Paulin J. Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality, 2nd edition* (Bloomington, US: Indiana University Press, 1996); Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind*.

[40]   Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being," 240–270.

[41]   Philip S. S. Howard, Bryan Chan Yen Johnson and Kevin Ah-Shen, "Ukraine refugee crisis exposes racism and contradictions in the definition of human," *The Conversation,*

example, Ukrainian refugees are considered 'like us', meaning 'white and civilised' by media outlets from global north countries, unlike those fleeing Iraq and Syria.[42] These opinions suggest the prevalence of a hidden "pernicious racism".

Unlike coloniality, decoloniality is the theory and practice of 'how to undo coloniality'.[43] It is "ways of thinking, knowing, being and doing that began with, but also precedes the colonial enterprise and invasion. It implies the recognition and undoing of the hierarchical structures of race, gender, heteropatriarchy and class that continue to control life, knowledge, spirituality and thought, structures that are clearly inter-twined with and constitutive of global capitalism and Western mo-dernity". As such, decoloniality breaks the theory and practice binary, moves towards plurality and includes embodied experiences, such as emotions, feeling and ways of being. Therefore, moving towards pluriv-ersal imaginaries and future realities.[44] As such, readers need to be fa-miliar with both terms because understanding them will help them identify and guard against reinforcing coloniality while researching on and in global south countries.

Conceptual Framing

The first term I will define is *global north countries, global north set-tler states* and the *global south*. I use these terms to preface ontological, epistemological, axiological, academic, geographical, racial, political and economic differences between the global north and global south countries. However, I am aware that there are also differences between the countries within the global north and the global south.[45] In other

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February 27, 2022, https://theconversation.com/ukraine-refugee-crisis-exposes-racism-and-contradictions-in-the-definition-of-human-179150.

[42]   Danial Hannan, "Vladimir Putin's monstrous invasion is an attack on civilisation itself," *The Telegraph*, February 26, 2022, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/02/26/vladimir-putins-monstrous-invasion-attack-civilisation/.

[43]   Walter Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2018).

[44]   Grosfoguel, "Decolonising."

[45]   Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South, Justice against Epistemicide* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2014).

words, there are 'norths in the south and souths in the north', which makes the aforementioned differences challenging to describe accurately. As such, there is considerable debate among academics over the most accurate terms to explain the aforementioned differences.[46]

The second term that I will define here is what I call *critical decolonial reflexivity*, which I employ as a methodological approach to writing this article. Critical decolonial reflexivity entails turning the 'decolonial gaze' onto critical ways of seeing, thinking, feeling, believing, being and doing, including decolonial ways. As a methodological approach, on the one hand, it is based on border thinking, which is the space created 'outside of the inside by the inside' because of its exclusionary and marginalising practices based on race. On the other hand, it is based on 'double consciousness'. In other words, it provides a way of sensing, seeing, thinking, feeling, believing, imagining, being and doing that is based on the experiences of global south populations, indigenous communities and BAME communities from global north countries interacting with borders in multiple ways (often conflictual). The experience also includes being forced to be on the borders because of the exclusionary and marginalising practices, becoming aware of the colonial difference and constantly being a 'stranger in one's own home'. An estrangement that the BAME and indigenous individual and the dominant group in global north countries use to define the BAME and the indigenous 'I'.[47] Critical decolonial reflexivity also means acknowledging that the current ways of sensing, thinking, imagining, feeling, believing, being and doing are conditioned and continue to be conditioned by coloniality, irrespective of identity and political registers.[48]

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[46] Sinah Theres Klob, "The Global South as Subversive Practice: Challenges and Potentials of a Heuristic Concept," *The Global South* 11, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 1–17, https://doi.org/10.2979/globalsouth.11.2.01.

[47] Inash Islam, "Muslim American Double Consciousness," *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 12, no. 2 (November 2020): 1–20, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X20000235; Jose Itzigsohn and Karida Brown, "Sociology and the Theory of Double Consciousness. W. E. B. Du Bois's Phenomenology of Racialized Subjectivity," *Du Bois Review. Social Science Research on Race* 12, no 2. (Fall 2015): 231–248, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X15000107; Grosfoguel, "Decolonising"; Mignolo and Tlostanova, "Theorising from the Borders," 205–221.

[48] Mignolo, "Delinking. The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality and the Grammar of Decolonialit," *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2-3 (April 2007): 449–514, https://doi.

Critical Decolonial Reflexivity and Decolonisation

In this part of the article, I highlight how current decolonisation efforts in global north universities could inadvertently reinforce coloniality. My intention here is not to devalue the decolonising work of global north academics and students because I am aware that decolonising efforts face a lot of resistance from other academics, universities, the media, politicians and sections of the public. Instead, I simply want to show that decolonising is not a simple or easy task for global north academics and students (also applies to global south academics and students), who may wish to use decolonial methodologies because poorly thought out decolonial efforts could lead to 'moves to innocence'. This situation means that coloniality is inadvertently reinforced because the decolonising efforts end up being a 'tickbox' exercise and do little to address the deep-rooted coloniality.[49]

The first criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonising work is that some of them imagine attending events organised by their global south counterparts is not worthwhile because they will not benefit from them. This situation means that the work of global south academics is silenced through omission and knowledge production remains dominated by global north academics and academia.[50] The second criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonising work is that the events organised by global north academics, students and research centres based in global north universities tend to cater for academics and students from their region in two ways. By primarily inviting academics from global north countries and, secondly, by organising events at times that are suitable for global north academics and students – thus silencing global south academics and students through omission. This situation suggests that decolonising in the imagination of the organisers is something that

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org/10.1080/09502380601162647; Mignolo and Tlostanova, "Theorising from the Borders," 205–221.

[49]   Tuck and Yang, "Decolonisation," 1–40.

[50]   Syed Farid Alatas, "Silencing as Method: Leaving Malay Studies out," in *Fieldwork and the Self*, ed. Jammes, J., King, V.T., Asia in Transition, vol 12 (Singapore: Springer, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-2438-4_10.

only global north academics and students are interested in. The third criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonising work is that some of them imagine decolonisation as a new field of study. A field born out of global north intellectual and cultural tradition and isolated from other traditions and cultures. As such, they fail to acknowledge that decolonisation as a field of study and process has existed for many decades in global south countries.[51] The fourth criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonising work is that they tend to only call for what I have elsewhere referred to as 'soft decolonisation'.[52] Soft decolonisation tends to centre on diversifying the curricula or recruiting BAME academics to show how the university is taking anti-racism seriously. However, such work has been taking place under other banners for a few decades now, with little success. One reason for this could be that universities defer responsibility to fight racism to BAME academics because of white fragility, which reinforces whiteness and, more broadly, coloniality.[53] As such, the aforementioned decolonising efforts appear to be, on the one hand, a 'tick box and branding exercise' and, on the other hand, an exercise of ideological pacification, leading to 'moves to innocence' by universities.[54] This type of decolonising arguably does little to address the deep-rooted causes of coloniality in global north academia. The

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[51]   Behari-Leak, "Decolonial turns," 58–68; Maldonado-Torres, "Thinking through the Decolonial Turn: Post-continental Interventions in Theory, Philosophy, and Critique—An Introduction," *TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 1–15, https://doi.org/10.5070/T412011805; Walter Mignolo, "Geopolitics of Sensing and Knowing: On (De)coloniality, Border Thinking, and Epistemic Disobedience," *Postcolonial Studies* 14, no. 3 (October 2013): 273–283, https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2011.613105.

[52]   Mohammed Ilyas, "Decolonialisation and the Terrorism Industry," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 15, no. 2 (March 2022b): 417–440, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2022.2047440.

[53]   DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* (London: Penguin Books, 2018).

[54]   Tuck andYang, "Decolonisation," 1–40; Malose Makhubela, "Decolonise, Don't Diversify: Discounting Diversity in the South African Academe as a Tool for Ideological Pacification," *Education as Change* 22, no. 1 (2018): 1–21; Kalwant Bhopal and Clare Pitkin, "'Same Old Story, Just a Different Policy': Race and Policy Making in Higher Education in the UK," *Race Ethnicity and Education* 23, no. 4 (January 2020): 530–547, https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2020.1718082; Makhubela, "Decolonise," 1–21.

fifth criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonising work is that they tend to monopolise decolonisation. This has resulted in two things. Firstly, global north academics are centre-staged by other global north academics, students and research centres, which fosters the impression that they are leaders of decolonisation.[55] Secondly, it creates a global north 'decolonial bubble' dominated by and for global north academics and students. The sixth criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonising work may be upsetting for some, but it is important to mention because it is based on the lack of 'self-reflexivity' among some of them regarding decolonisation efforts and attached privileges.[56] By this, I mean that there is little introspection about their positionality and situatedness when it comes to decolonising work. The seventh criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonising work concerns the criticism of decolonisation. Here, I include myself because the criticism levelled at decolonisation is based on employing global north epistemology, and in doing so, global north epistemology is recentred through the backdoor.[57] The eighth criticism can be levelled at all those engaged in decolonising work, including me, for not adequately defining and explaining what decolonisation is and what it entails. For example, what does decolonisation mean and entail in the global north and global south countries?[58] This situation raises several questions. These include whether decolonisation only concerns the epistemic struggle against global north epistemic hegemony.[59] Is decolonisation

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[55]   Nirmal Puwar, "Puzzlement of a Déjà Vu: Illuminaries of the Global South," *The Sociological Review* 68, no. 3 (December 2020): 540–556, https://doi.org/10.1177/0038026119890254.
[56]   Heidi Mogstad and Tse Lee-Shan, "Decolonising Anthropology," *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* 36, no. 2 (September 2018): 53–72, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26946000; Leon Moosavi, "Turning the Decolonial Gaze towards Ourselves: Decolonising the Curriculum and 'Decolonial Reflexivity' in Sociology and Social Theory," *Sociology* (July 2022): 1–20.
[57]   Ilyas, "Decolonialisation," 417–440.
[58]   Morreira et al, "Confronting the complexities of decolonising curricula and pedagogy in higher education," *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal* 5, no. 1-2 (August 2020): 1–18, https://doi.org/10.1080/23802014.2020.1798278; Ilyas, "Decolonialisation," 417–440; Taiwo, "*Against Decolonisation.*"
[59]   Taiwo, "*Against Decolonisation.*"

something more than epistemic?[60] When will decolonisation (or de-colonisations) end? What are the post-decolonisation plans, or is it an endless process? The ninth criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonisation work is that they have a tendency to romanticise the past and trap global south countries as some kind of 'chattel property' of the global north countries, which entails some kind of 'mental servitude' and always needing to be saved by the global north.[61] The final criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonising work is related to the fifth one, which is that they tend to 'read, cite and invite academics that only publish in a select few global north journals' that are part of the decolonial bubble. This leads to several issues from a decolonial perspective. Firstly, it leads to the silencing through omission and dismissal of global south academics and, for that matter.[62] Secondly, it means that knowledge production on decoloniality is centred in global north countries. Thirdly, it creates the impression that only global north academics and universities are concerned about decolonisation. Finally, it reinforces a global north decolonial bubble that seems to be designed (accidentally or otherwise) by and for the global north, academia, academics and students.

Coloniality and Research Paradigms

In this part of the paper, I discuss what indigenous and decolonial academics call the dirty history of research and research methods. By this, they mean the predatory, exploitative, racist and inaccurate research during colonisation.[63]

Academics like Ndlovu-Gatsheni[64] argue that research conducted by academics from global north countries in the global north and global south countries during colonisation has a dirty history because it was predatory, exploitative and informed by racist tropes that involved bio-

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[60] Tuck and Yang, "Decolonisation," 1–40.
[61] Taiwo, *Against Decolonisation*; Chalmers, "The transformation of academic knowledges," 97–116; Ilyas, "Decolonialisation," 417–440.
[62] Alatas, "Silencing as Method."
[63] Sinclair, "Indigenous research," 117–139.
[64] Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Provisional Notes," 481–492.

colonialism and intellectual exploitation.[65] Similarly, Smith[66] argues that research during colonialism involved measuring and comparing the limbs and faculties of colonised people to determine their level of mental capacity, such as intelligence, based on global north standards. This situation, as Smith argues from her personal perspective, has left the Māori people traumatised and suspicious of academics.[67] Arvizu and Saravia-Shore[68] also argue that the exploitation and inaccurate representations of colonised people have meant that they do not trust academics. The trauma and lack of trust in global north academics is compounded by several other factors that reinforce coloniality, which I will briefly mention here. Firstly, some global north academics still think it is acceptable to make archaeological digs on land that, for example, is held sacred by indigenous people.[69] This situation not only suggests that the global north academics have little care for the rights of indigenous people but also think, feel and imagine the world in a way that is reminiscent of colonisation and therefore perpetuates colonial knowledge production relations. Secondly, governments of global north countries remain unapologetic about colonisation.[70] This situation is unfortunate and undermines the decades of anti-racist policies and education that these countries have rolled out. Thirdly, some museums in global north countries still possess the remains of colonised people and their cultural artefacts, which were brought back for either 'racialised research or as war trophies'.[71] This situation suggests that the grievances and the trauma of colonised people do not matter to the governments of global north countries. One reason for this could be that, for them, colonialism is something that happened in the past and,

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[65]   Laurelyn Whitt, *Science, Colonialism, and Indigenous Peoples: The Cultural Politics of Law and Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
[66]   Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies*.
[67]   Whitt, *Science*.
[68]   Stefen F. Arvizu and Marrieta Saravia Shore, *Cross-cultural Literacy: Ethnographies of Communication in Multiethnic Classrooms* (London: Routledge, 2017).
[69]   Whitt, *Science*.
[70]   Andrew Woolford and Jeff Benvenuto, "Canada and colonial genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* 17, no 4. (December 2105): 373–390, https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2015.1096580.
[71]   Kehinde Andrews, *The New Age of Empire How Racism and Colonialism Still Rule the World* (London: Penguin Books, 2021); Whitt, *Science*; Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies*.

therefore, is not relevant or important to their present or future.[72] That said, one would expect things to have changed since the end of colonialism, but this appears not to be the case. Instead, the opposite seems true because colonialism continues under the banner of coloniality and is, in some cases, justified by employing discourses on scientific and intellectual advancement.[73]

The Research Process and Guarding Against Coloniality

In this final part of the paper, I will suggest some ways that the global north academics can guard against reinforcing coloniality whilst researching on and in global south countries. The methods I suggest are informed by decolonial methodologies.[74] Admittedly, the methods I suggest for conducting research may be difficult for some global north academics to employ because of their research training, epistemological, methodological, ideological and political convictions, or economic interest or even due to pressure from their universities and funders.

The first way is for academics to examine what Tuck and Yang[75] call the academic-industrial complex. On the one hand, doing so will mean highlighting how coloniality operates at different levels of global north academia, such as at structural, cultural, academic and publishing levels. On the other hand, it implies that academics need to engage in deep self-introspection, which will help them identify and address how their attitudes and behaviour could lead to them reinforcing coloniality. However, this will not be an easy task, and global north academics who are serious about not reinforcing coloniality must understand that decolonising is a life choice and does not start and end at the university entrance. The second way is for academics to learn about

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[72]   Keme Nzerem, "Nigeria's battle to reclaim looted Benin Bronzes," *Channel 4 News*, September 10, 2021, https://www.channel4.com/news/nigerias-battle-to-reclaim-looted-benin-bronzes.

[73]   Karsten Noko, "Medical colonialism in Africa is not new," *Al-Jazeera*, April 8, 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/4/8/medical-colonialism-in-africa-is-not-new; Whitt, *Science*.

[74]   Held, "Decolonising," 1–6; Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies;* Chalmers, "The transformation of academic knowledges," 97–116.

[75]   Tuck and Yang, "Decolonisation," 1–40.

the researched community's religious and cultural beliefs, practices and politics and simultaneously critically reflect on how their own ways of knowing, thinking, feeling, believing, being and doing condition their positionality and situatedness.[76] This will help them identify possible methodological problems and plan how to address them before and during the research. The third way is for academics to become students of the researched community, which will help them learn and understand the ways of thinking, knowing, feeling, believing, being and doing of the researched community and therefore guard against attitudes and behaviour that may undermine the research.[77] The fourth way is for academics to critically reflect on their positionality and situatedness and attached privileges in relation to their research participants, the rearched community, research assistants, translators, local advisers and other stakeholders. Such reflection will help them become aware of the unequal power relations, which give them considerable power to characterise, define, describe and foster perceptions of the researched community among the public and policymakers. Therefore, making them more conscious of the need to accurately and carefully report their research findings because not doing so could lead to unintended consequences for the researched community, such as economic exploitation, political marginalisation and even violence, long after the research has been completed. The fifth way is for academics to critically reflect on the type of questions that they want to ask, why and how they want to ask them, the language they want to use to ask them, where (location) they will ask them and what type of answers they are expecting to receive. Critically thinking about such methodological concerns will encourage academics to reflect on their epistemology, methodology, research objectives and personal attitudes and behaviour. Not doing so could mean that the research findings are inaccurate, the research objectives may not benefit the researched community, and the attitude and behaviours of the academics may harm the researched community. The sixth way is for academics not to see the research participants and the researched community as repositories of information. Seeing them

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[76] Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies.*
[77] Levac et al., *Learning across Indigenous.*

in such ways could lead to predatory and exploitative research practices and unethical research findings.[78] The seventh way is for academics to ensure that the research participants and researched community are not seen or used as native informers or intellectual compradors. Seeing or using them in such ways entails holding attitudes and engaging in practices that are reminiscent of colonial knowledge production relations.[79] The eighth way is for academics to make the duty of care part of their research. Doing so will mean that the research participants and the researched community are not negatively impacted by the research but actually benefit from it.[80] The ninth way is for academics to ensure that the research process, from the initial conceptualisation to dissemination, does not inadvertently lead to the silencing of the research participants and the researched community through omission and dismissal.[81] The tenth and perhaps the most important way is for academics to make the concept of reciprocity a central component of the research process. Indigenous academics developed the concept to address the unequal power relations and prevent predatory and exploitative research objectives, attitudes and practices among academics.[82] Reciprocity can mean several things, such as research collaboration between the academics, research participants, the researched community or other stakeholders.[83] This means seeing and encouraging research participants, the research community and other stakeholders as knowledge producers and beneficiaries, rather than just repositories of information.[84] The final way is for academics not to organise and use events as a way to gather information from global south academics, CSOs and educational institutions

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[78]   Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies*; Levac et al., *Learning across Indigenous.*
[79]   Alatas, "Intellectual Imperialism," 23–45; Rohit Varman, Saha Biswatosh and P. Skalen, "Market subjectivity and neoliberal governmentality in higher education," *Journal of Marketing Management* 27, no. 11–12 (October 2011): 1163–1185, https://doi.org/10.10 80/0267257X.2011.609134; Ilyas, "Decolonising the Terrorism Industry," 1–16; Yimovie Sakue-Collins, "(Un)doing development: a postcolonial enquiry of the agenda and agency of NGOs in Africa," *Third World Quarterly* 42, no. 5 (August 2020): 976–995, https://doi.org/1 0.1080/01436597.2020.1791698.
[80]   Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies.*
[81]   Alatas, "Silencing as Method."
[82]   Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies.*
[83]   *Ibid.*
[84]   Greenwood and Levin, "Reform of the social sciences," 89–121.

for funding and publishing purposes. Doing so will mean that the academics are engaged in predatory and exploitative research practices that are reminiscent of colonial knowledge production relations.

The ways I have suggested here to guard against inadvertently reinforcing coloniality are by no means exhaustive, and I am sure other indigenous and decolonial academics can think of more ways. Nevertheless, I hope that the ways I have suggested will help global north academics to critically reflect on how they plan, conduct and disseminate their research and ensure that the research participants and researched communities benefit and are not silenced through omission and dismissal.

Conclusion

Decolonising academia is not a simple task because it is hard and traumatic work that impacts the mind, body and emotions of those who engage in it. Therefore, the thinking and feelings generated by decolonising cannot be turned on and off like a light switch. Like a trauma, the thoughts and feelings remain with the academic all the time. Perhaps the most difficult part of decolonising is that it demands that academics make sacrifices, which most academics are unlikely or unwilling to make for personal reasons or other convictions.[85]

With this in mind, I admit that changing the ways of doing research among global north academics is not an easy task because of epistemic coloniality and a range of other factors. For example, academics will need to reflect on whether their ideological and political convictions, economic interests and academic career goals align with the goals of decolonisation.

In this article, I have attempted to show that global north academics wanting to use decolonial methodologies to research on or in global south countries should not assume that it will be an easy task but a task that should be undertaken. Of all the ways I have suggested, I feel that four are the most important and should be incorporated as part of any research process. The first way is for academics not to absolve them-

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[85] Tuck and Yang, "Decolonisation."

selves of their duty of care to all those that participated in the research, including stakeholders. The second way is for academics not to see all those who participated in the research as repositories of information that they can economically and academically benefit them. Instead, academics should see and actively encourage their research participants and the researched community to become co-knowledge producers, owners and beneficiaries of the knowledge they produce about themselves. The third way is connected to the second. It entails academics not seeing or treating all those who participated in the research as native informers or intellectual compradors because this may lead them to be harmed long after the research has been completed and published. Finally, academics should not engage in predatory or exploitative research practices because they clearly demonstrate no regard for the research participants and the researched community and are akin to colonial knowledge production relations and therefore reinforce decoloniality.

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RADIKALNA TEOLOGIJA KOT HERMENEVTIKA NEMOGOČEGA: JOHN CAPUTO IN DOGODKOVNOST RESNICE

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Celotno miselno zgodovino[1] je mogoče brati kot igro premeščanj in nadomeščanj soodvisnih poimenovanj in pomenov, kot učinkovanje označevalne verige, njeno trganje in ponovno spajanje. Angleški marksistični teolog Terry Eagleton tako v odličnem delu *Culture and the Death of God* pravi, da je zgodovina ateizma le sosledje malikovalskih nadomestkov: »Zgodovina sodobne dobe je med drugim iskanje namestnika Boga. Razum, Narava, Duh, kultura, umetnost, sublimno, narod, država, znanost, človeštvo, Bit, Družba, Drugi, želja, življenjska sila in osebni odnosi: vse našteto je občasno služilo kot oblika izpodrinjenega božanstva.«[2] Seveda pa ni le Bog tisti, ki mu ves čas iščemo namestnike, vsaka nova koncepcija nekako izpodriva druge, praviloma pa med zamenjavami ni velikih razlik in ohranjajo bistvene elemente drugih členov v verigi.

John D. Caputo je eden najpomembnejših ameriških mislecev s področja religijske misli in filozofije. V trenutku, ko se zdi, da njegovo delo počasi prihaja h koncu, izšla je že tretja knjiga njegovih izbranih del, v zadnjih letih pa tudi redno izhajajo monografije in zborniki, ki proučujejo recepcijo njegovega dela v različnih kontekstih, bomo celoto njegovega delovanja predstavili z vidika nekaterih osrednjih konceptov,

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[2]   Terry Eagleton, *Culture and the Death of God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 44.

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ki so mu služili kot nazivi za obdobja v razgibani miselni poti, in s tem vsaj malo pojasnili razvoj njegove misli. Ti osrednji označevalci se prelivajo drug v drugega, zato jih ne bomo brali kronološko, ampak bomo poskušali ponazoriti, kako tvorijo navidezno sklenjenost nekega dela. Prek raznovrstnih tematskih etap in postankov na poti do *radikalne teologije* (kot je naslov njegovega zadnjega dela[3]) bomo pokazali unikatnost Caputove pisave in ji s tem odprli prihodnje interpretacije.

Dekonstrukcija teologije

Caputo je kariero začel v poznih šestdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja, ko se je ukvarjal predvsem z analizo krščanske srednjeveške mistične tradicije in sholastične filozofije ter njunih vplivov na novoveško filozofsko misel, nato pa se je natančneje posvetil delu Martina Heideggerja, ki mu je predstavljal pot do nadgradnje in prenove katoliške misli, ki je sovpadala s pokoncilskim duhom. Caputo je v odličnih komentarjih Heideggerja[4] proučeval zamolčane krščanske elemente v njegovi misli: med drugim je poudaril Lutrov koncept *Destruktion* kot kritično držo do metafizičnih nasedlin, ki onemogočajo pristen dostop do izročila, ter Eckhartovo držo *Gelassenheit* kot osrednji eksistencialni modus v Heideggerjevih povojnih spisih. V Heideggerju je prepoznaval tudi določene neprijetne elemente, ki vodijo v izjemen konservativizem in samomistifikacijo, v skladu s tem se je do tega vplivnega misleca začel opredeljevati vse bolj kritično.[5] To obdobje njegovega delovanja mu je sicer prineslo določen uspeh, še bolj pa se je to zgodilo, ko se je konec osemdesetih let oddaljil od Heideggerjeve misli in posvetil postmoderni filozofiji. Pravo razodetje je bila zanj filozofija Jacquesa Derridaja – epigraf k delu *O religiji* se tako glasi, »Jacquesu Derridaju, ki mi je razvezal jezik« –, še zlasti ko jo je dojel kot podobno Kierkegaardovi misli. Kierkegaard kot ena izmed osrednjih Caputovih filozofskih referenc, kot

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[3] John D. Caputo, *In search of Radical Theology: Expositions, Explorations, Exhortations* (New York: Fordham UP, 2020).
[4] John D. Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought* (Athens OH, Ohio University Press: 1978).
[5] John D. Caputo, *Demythologizing Heidegger* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

pravi Caputo sam, res še ni posedoval dekonstrukcijskega besednjaka, vseeno pa ga moramo v marsikaterem pogledu šteti za Derridajevega predhodnika. Caputo je bil na Derridaja kot slavnega filozofa, enega izmed najplodovitejših nadaljevalcev Heideggerjevega dela in inovativnega kritika metafizične tradicije, pozoren že pred tem obdobjem, toda njegova misel ga najprej ni popolnoma prepričala, v njej namreč še zdaleč ni videl potencialov za pristop k perečim problemom sodobnega časa.

Poudariti moramo, da je bil Derrida že pred Caputovimi prelomnimi interpretacijami ključna referenca za nekatere pristope v okviru tega, kar danes razumemo pod besedno zvezo radikalna teologija. Konec sedemdesetih let in v zgodnjih osemdesetih so nastala nekatera ključna dela o razmerju Derridaja do teološke misli, med njimi izstopa *Erring* Marka C. Taylorja, v katerem pa Derridajeva misel ne prinaša izrazitih potencialov za dialog z religijo. Taylor namreč nedvoumno postulira: »Dekonstrukcija je 'hermenevtika' smrti Boga.«[6] Caputu kot nekomu, ki je od vselej čutil afiniteto do krščanske miselne tradicije, tak Derrida ni bil privlačen. Da se je to spremenilo, se je morala vsaj malo spremeniti tudi Derridajeva misel. Konec osemdesetih let je dekonstrukcija doživela številne preobrate, zato nekateri to obdobje utemeljeno označujejo kot prelomno v Derridajevi misli. To obdobje na nek način predstavlja oddaljitev od zgodnjega gramatološkega obdobja, ko se je dekonstrukcija dojemalo kot golo tekstualno operacijo, ki nima nikakršnega »realnega« referenta, njen učinek se kaže predvsem kot deskripcija, s tem pa spada predvsem na področje estetike, v poznih osemdesetih pa naj bi Derridajevo delo pridobilo tudi preskriptivni značaj, to naj bi označevalo prehod k poznemu Derridaju, ki se v nasprotju z zgodnjim posveča etično-političnim temam. Za Caputa, ki se s to tezo o obratu v Derridajevi misli sicer ne strinja popolnoma, pa je bilo še najpomembneje, da se je v tem obdobju vse bolj začela kazati tudi njena kompatibilnost z nekaterimi vidiki bogate judovsko-krščanske tradicije.

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[6]   Mark C. Taylor, *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 6. Pozorni bodimo, da Taylor besedo hermenevtika zapiše v narekovajih. Za Caputa dekonstrukcija *je* hermenevtika (brez narekovajev), v tem se loči tudi od Derridaja. Ta sestavek premišljuje prav ta unikatni nastop, ki ga predstavlja Caputova (radikalna) hermenevtika.

Sled in resnica

Caputo torej po lastnem pričevanju po srečanju z Derridajevim delom dobi kontekst za razvitje svoje misli, ki brez dvoma ostaja vpeta v kontekst dekonstrukcije, sočasno pa se od nje tudi oddaljuje. Caputo je v primerjavi z Derridajem veliko dostopnejši mislec, ki kljub zavesti, da so klasifikacije vselej površne in obsojene na zanemarjanje izjem, brez pretenzije po jasnosti in izključni veljavnosti svojih stališč tvega določene nazorne shematizacije. V krajšem delu *Filozofija in teologija* tako shematsko oriše historiat razmerja med podobnima vedama, ki ju precej poenostavljeno včasih predstavljata razum in vera. Za Caputa med filozofijo in teologijo pravzaprav ni velikih nasprotij, tako kot jih ni med razumom in vero. Kadar govori o veri, v mislih nikakor nima »vere, ki je nasprotna razumu«, to je namreč zanj »preveč poenostavljena opozicija«, ki jo je v vsem svojem delu »poskušal oslabiti in zaplesti, ne da bi jo popolnoma diskreditiral«.[7]

Caputo zgodovino pojmovanja resnice razdeli v tri dobe – predmoderna resnica je enačena z Bogom, moderna resnica z razumom, postmoderna ali postmetafizična misel pa resnico dojema in situira kot dogodek. Danes nam je vse jasneje, da je resnica najbolj nedostopen in izmuzljiv pojem, kar je na primer razvidno tudi iz naslova Caputove knjige *Resnica (Truth)* iz leta 2013, ki bralcu pravzaprav ne pove ničesar, saj bi bil tak lahko naslov vsake knjige, vsaka govori (svojo) resnico, tudi popolnoma fiktivna dela, ki to storijo prek odvoda v izmišljijo. Navedena knjiga pa govori o resnici, natančneje o resnicah, skozi zgodovino, ne o tem, kar je veljalo za resnično, ampak o tem, kako, kako je nekaj lahko veljalo in danes lahko velja za resnično. Knjiga je torej o resnici, ni pa resnica, v nasprotju s številnimi neskromnimi preroškimi deli. Caputo svojo »resnico« konstituira kot nevednost,[8] kot »silo, ki drži prihodnost odprto ter je v tesni povezavi z vero in upanjem ob upoštevanju prihoda, ki ga ne moremo predvideti«.[9]

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[7]   John D. Caputo, *Philosophy and Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 68.
[8]   Zato svoje delo poimenuje »*docta ignorantia hermeneutica*«, glej: John D. Caputo, *Radikalnejša hermenevtika: o tem, da ne vemo, kdo smo* (Ljubljana: KUD Apokalipsa, 2007), 261.
[9]   John D. Caputo, *Truth: Philosophy in Transit* (London: Penguin, 2013), 241.

Caputove knjige ne spadajo izključno na področje religiološke misli, za vsa njegova dela pa lahko nedvomno rečemo, da če že niso o religiji in religijskih vidikih eksistence, jih lahko na to področje zlahka umestimo, saj zanj bistvena vprašanja filozofije večinoma sovpadajo z vprašanji teologije. Ta kompatibilnost je mogoča predvsem v postmetafizični dobi, dotlej namreč Zahodu vlada ekskluzivističen koncept resnice, ki je vzpostavljen z monoteistično teorijo resničnosti in se k njej vrača. Monoteizem po naravi zanika druge religije, samo lasten Bog je resnični Bog, vsi drugi so torej lažni.[10] Seveda se to spreminja s postmoderno dobo, ki se v krščanstvu začenja z drugim vatikanskim koncilom. Tudi drugim verstvom je priznana določena resničnost, določeno dostopanje do resnice, drugoverci tako niso več v laži, ampak v resnici na drugačen način. Religija s tem postane iskateljstvo, nenehno hrepenenje, ni več nekaj, čemur se pridružiš ter s čimer sprejmeš statut in s tem ekskluziven dostop do resnice, temveč skupno pripadanje resnici kot neidentiteti same s seboj, vzpostavljanje skupnosti rane, manka in odsotnosti.

To, da je resnica dogodek, ne pomeni, da je kdaj končana ali popolnoma določena. »Resnica ni nekaj, kar se zgodi, je nekaj, kar se dogaja v tem, kar se zgodi. Dojeti resnico kot 'dogodek' pomeni dojeti nekaj, kar se poskuša zgoditi v nečem. Resnica je proces *poskušanja postati res*.«[11] Dobra ponazoritev tega je Deleuzova ontologija nenehnega postajanja, ki v resničnosti prepoznava predvsem njen dinamični potencial, Caputo pa v tem kontekstu pogosto poudarja tudi krščanstvo Johannesa Climacusa (Kierkegaardov psevdonim) kot nikoli dovršeno stanje, torej kot cilj prizadevanj, in Derridajevo koncepcijo demokracije (in še nekaterih drugih osrednjih dekonstrukcijskih elementov) kot nečesa, kar ima še priti. Tem pristopom je skupno stališče, da se resnica lahko pripeti kjerkoli. V to sled prihajajočega stanja oz. prisotnosti se lahko umeščamo prek vere, versko dejanje je torej sledenje. »Kaj sploh lahko je vera, če ne vera v sled,« pravi Caputo.[12] Radikalna teologija je s tem *teologija sledi*, kot taka pa se umešča med vero in nevero, njeno učinkovanje je v nenehnem premeščanju obeh polov opozicije.

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[10]   *Ibid.*, 45.
[11]   *Ibid.*, 58–59.
[12]   Caputo, *In search of Radical Theology*, 81.

Iz tega lahko sklepamo, da dogodkov ne (z)moremo uresničiti, saj bi jim to odvzelo vso nepredvidljivost, prihodnostnost. Dogodek je vedno v prihodnosti, tako mora biti neuresničljiv, uresničljiv dogodek namreč ni dogodek. Dogodek mora še priti, vedno še. To pa po Caputu ne pomeni, da smo nemočni, resnice oz. dogodka res ne moremo uresničiti sami, lahko pa sebe uresničimo zanju. Resnica je vselej v prihodnosti, biti v resnici tako pomeni biti odprt za prihodnost, prepričuje Caputo: »Reči, da je nekaj res, pomeni, da ima prihodnost, da bi mi bili v resnici, moramo biti izpostavljeni tej prihodnosti.«[13] To je torej Caputova izpeljava Avguštinovega *facere veritatem*, pri katerem *facere* zavzame nekoliko manj aktivno vlogo dopuščanja, za Caputovo držo pravzaprav bolj ustreza izraz *permittere*. »V resnici se nahajamo toliko, kolikor smo izpostavljeni dogodku, v odprtosti tistemu, česar/čigar prihoda ne vidimo, sebe postavljamo pod vprašaj in se usposabljamo za nekaj, na kar ne moremo biti pripravljeni.«[14] To je torej filozofija: pripravljati se na tisto, »na kar ne moremo biti pripravljeni«. V tej definiciji odzvanja platonistično pripravljanje na smrt, le da v tem primeru ne gre samo za smrt.

Na tem mestu lahko morda na kratko obravnavamo očitke relativizma, ki letijo na Caputa in so pravzaprav podobni očitkom na račun Derridaja, pred njim Nietzscheja idr. Gre za preprost argument, ki pravi, da če resnica kot nekaj za vselej postavljenega, predmetu lastnega, ne obstaja, potem ni nobene razlike med dobrim in zlim, nacizmom in protinacizmom itd. Nietzsche nikoli ni trdil, da resnice ni, povedal pa je, da ta ni absolutna, da je pogojena z raznolikimi kontekstnimi danostmi. Dobro so znane njegove kritike nereflektirane metafizične resnice,[15] manj pa, da je sam nadvse cenil t. i. življenjsko resnico. Zanj je resničnost konkretna bivanjska stvarnost, pristno bivanje. Nietzsche torej pozna resnico. Ta je biti v skladu z življenjem, kot taka pa kritizira nihilistične težnje, ki vladajo zahodnjaški miselni zgodovini. Resničnost je obratna silam, ki zanikajo življenje. Resnica je torej težavna, naporna,

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13   Caputo, *Truth*, 77.
14   *Ibid.*, 93.
15   Friedrich Nietzsche, »O resnici in laži v zunajmoralnem smislu,« *Filozofija na maturi* 11, št. 1/2 (2004): 65–72. Originalni vir: Friedrich Nietzsche, »O resnici in laži v zunajmoralnem smislu«, prev. Aleš Košar, *Nova revija* 11, št. 121/122 (1992), 618–624.

je nekaj, kar bi v skladu z najnižjimi impulzi radi zatrli. Seveda pa je, kot opaža Caputo, Nietzschejeva afirmacija življenja »šokantno elitistična in aristokratska«.[16] Tudi od tega vidika se mora postmoderna filozofija religije oddaljiti, zato se sam bolj kot na ničejanske vidike postmoderne filozofije v svoji radikalni teologiji sklicuje na kierkegaardovsko misel. Gre za določeno Caputovo interpretativno oddaljevanje Derridaja od Nietzscheja, v ta namen postmodernizem razdeli v dve skupini. Na eni strani locira pogansko strast, srečen met kozmične kocke in neosebne sile, na drugi pa krščansko strast, božjo milost in osebno silo. »To nasprotje je ustvarilo dve liniji tega, kar danes imenujemo 'postmodernizem' – ena zelo v grobem vodi od Kierkegaarda do Levinasa in Derridaja, druga pa od Nietzscheja do Foucaulta in Deleuza.«[17] To dejanje vpisovanja dekonstrukcije v judovsko-krščanski kontekst lahko vzamemo za strnjen, paradigmatski opis celotnega Caputovega dela.

Radikalna hermenevtika

Caputo se umešča na področje, ki ga odpira subtilna razlika med fenomenologijo in dekonstrukcijo. Derrida kot začetnik dekonstrukcije nedvomno izvira iz fenomenološke šole, njegovi najzgodnejši sestavki so posvečeni Husserlovim filozofskim pristopom, hkrati pa se od fenomenologije tudi omejuje. Njegova zgodnja knjiga *Glas in fenomen* iz leta 1967 se konča z jasno označbo razlike med diskurzoma in na zadnji strani besedila zapiše: »V nasprotju s tem, o čemer nas je fenomenologija – ki je vselej fenomenologija percepcije – poskušala prepričati, v nasprotju s tem, v kar si naša želja ne more pomagati, da je ne bi mikalo verjeti, se stvar sama vselej izmika.«[18] Dekonstrukcija s klasično fenomenologijo ne deli utvare, da je mogoče dostopati do stvari same. To pa za Caputa ni edina distinkcija, zanj je precej pomembnejša razlika, da ima fenomenologija popolnoma deskriptivni status ter je tako apolitična in etično indiferentna, medtem ko dekonstrukcija interpretira in intervenira, s tem pa zavzema stališča in prevzema odgovornost.

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16   Caputo, *Truth*, 196.
17   John D. Caputo, *How to read Kierkegaard* (London: Granta Books, 2007), 88.
18   Jacques Derrida, *Glas in fenomen* (Ljubljana: Studia humanitatis, 1988), 111.

Dekonstrukcija, kot jo razume in v radikalno teologijo pretvarja Caputo, temelji na prepričanju, da stvar sama (*Ding an sich*) nikoli ne more biti popolnoma navzoča, nikoli je ne moremo posedovati, resnica je torej vselej posredovana in mora biti interpretirana. Caputo v svojem projektu *radikalne hermenevtike*, ki se sčasoma spremeni v *še radikalnejšo hermenevtiko*, neprestano poudarja, da je skrivnost v tem, da skrivnosti ni, to pa se zoperstavlja resnici, ki deluje kot narkotik.[19] Posedovanje resnice je v nasprotju s tem, kar nastopa kot postulat tradicionalne misli, za Caputa slaba novica. Nekaj, kar bi ustavilo igro, vsa človeška eksistenca se napaja iz odprtosti interpretacije, kar pomeni, da imajo koncepti, besede in bitja svojo prihodnost. Odprtost za kontaminacijo lahko seveda dojemamo kot nevarnost za življenje, toda to je le delna percepcija, saj je odprtost za kontaminacijo življenje samo. Nepopolne vednosti so za Caputa vse, kar lahko posedujemo: »Nihče od nas ne zaseda privilegiranega mesta uvida, nihče od nas nima dostopa do Boga (ali Boginje), ki bi nam predajal hermenevtične skrivnosti.«[20]

Ta točka, spoznanje, da »ne vemo, kdo smo«, je za Caputa hermenevtično izhodišče, ki podobno kot heideggerjevsko zasnutje hermenevtike fakticitete pravzaprav ni antropološko vprašanje, torej osrednjeno na človeka kot osrednji objekt proučevanja, temveč je ontološko, torej vprašanje o bivajočem, ki samemu sebi pomeni glavni interpretativni izziv in je vselej že interpretirano. Caputo pa seveda ne ostaja pri heideggerjevski in gadamerjanski hermenevtiki, ki zanj nekako še vedno poseduje nekoliko preveč (eksistencialnega) razumevanja in dostopa do bistva stvari. Razlika oz. zaostritev tega stališča je za Caputa jedro dekonstuktivne hermenevtike, to je afirmacija postmoderne resnice kot dejstva, da »ni ničesar brez konteksta in ničesar, kar bi bilo imuno na rekontekstualizacijo«.[21]

To pomeni, da zahtevi po hermenevtiki ne moremo ubežati. »Interpretacija je stvar vpogleda in rahločutnosti za singularnost situacije, s katero smo soočeni, ne pa presojanje te situacije z naborom neprožnih pravil, ki jih vnaprej postavi Metoda ali pa čista fikcija, imenovana či-

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[19] Npr. John D. Caputo, *Radical hermeneutics: repetition, deconstruction, and the hermeneutic project* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 189.
[20] *Ibid.*, 258.
[21] Caputo, *Truth*, 202.

sti Razum.«[22] Ni pravil, čeprav bi si jih zelo želeli in bi bila verjetno zelo koristna. To pa ne pomeni, da je to stališče nerazumno. Obratno, tovrstno razmišljanje je popolnoma protifundamentalistično, fundamentalizem namreč temelji na modernistični predpostavki resnice kot popolne umljivosti in obvladljivosti.

Vse interpretacije pa niso enake oz. enakovredne. Caputo vztraja, da so nekatere interpretacije boljše od drugih, tiste, ki so bolje informirane, so običajno plodovitejše, uspešnejše, bolj posrečene. Dejstva seveda so, hkrati pa so vedno znova podvržena interpretacijam. To je posledica tega, da so dejstva fikcija (angl. *facts* iz lat. *factum*, ki izvira iz *facere*, narediti), ustvarjenina. »Dejstva so učinkovanje referenčnega okvira, ki jih izbere, to pomeni, da ni neinterpretiranih dejstev.«[23]

Molitev in rana

Derrida v drugi polovici kariere izda avtobiografsko delo *Circumfession*,[24] svojevrstno postmoderno različico Avguštinovih *Izpovedi*. V tem besedilu želi presenetiti odličnega poznavalca dekonstrukcije Geoffreyja Benningtona, ki sočasno piše nekakšen program Derridajeve pisave (*Derridabase*). Derridaju preostajajo samo še najgloblja in najosebnejša dejstva, vse drugo Bennington že pozna ali je zmožen predvideti. V tem kontekstu Derrida razkrije, da ves čas joče, kliče in moli, ter da če bi razumeli h komu moli, bi o njem vedeli vse. Derrida s tem, da je človek molitve, ki moli že ves čas, prav mogoče preseneti bralce, morda tudi tako podučene, kot je Bennington, Caputu – ki že pred tem ob analizah mističnega izročila pride do stališča, da je molitev eden najsijajnejših radikalno teoloških nazivov za nemogoče, nemogoče je namreč tisto, kar molitev požene v gibanje – pa to Derridajevo razodetje pomeni potrditev predhodne slutnje. Odtlej se Caputo v maniri *postmodernega avguštinstva* vedno znova ukvarja z vprašanjem, kaj pomeni to, da Derrida moli. Pri analizi te dileme se zateče tudi k *ranjeni besedi* Jeana-Louisa Chrétiena, po katerem »molitev vznikne iz bede,

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[22]   *Ibid.*, 203.
[23]   *Ibid.*, 216.
[24]   Geoffrey Bennington in Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida* (Pariz: Éditions du Seuil, 1991).

razimenovanega subjekta, subjekta razlaščene avtoritete, ki potrebuje pomoč«.[25] V skladu s tezo, da je molitev ranjena beseda, si Caputo za marsikoga heretično drzne reči, da če dosledno sledimo Chrétienu, potem je Derridajeva molitev celo globlja od Avguštinove. Derrida namreč moli, da bi lahko molil, njegova molitev kroži okoli izkušnje nemogoče komunikacije, zato njegova beseda nastopa kot absolutna ranjenost, medtem pa Avguštinova beseda, če pogledamo malo podrobneje, niti ni tako ranjena. »Avguštin je namreč posedoval tolažbo univerzalnega (…), tradicije, liturgije«, Derrida pa je bil vselej primoran ostati odvisen samo od lastne molitve in izkušnje nemogočega.[26] »Ko Avguštin izpoveduje svojo ranjenost in grešno naravo, hkrati izpoveduje vero v sanacijo teh ran. Derrida pa izpoveduje skrivnost in ne vedenja, destabilizirano stanje izpovedi, izpoved brez izpovedne vezi.«[27]

Kot že rečeno, Caputova radikalna teologija je nasledek prve njegove velike inovacije, radikalne hermenevtike, ki v nasprotju s predhodnicami ne išče esenc, večnega pomena, ampak se zaveda, da so interpretacije vse, do česar lahko dospemo. Caputo naziv radikalne teologije kot ustreznega krovnega označevalca za svoje delo izbere tudi prek negacije, in sicer v debati z Martinom Hägglundom, ki v Derridajevi misli prepoznava radikalni ateizem (tak je tudi naslov Hägglundove odmevne knjige).[28] Caputov odgovor na Hägglundova redukcionistično ateistična branja Derridajeve filozofije je torej radikalna teologija – kar zanj osebno pomeni povratek h klasičnim teološkim temam, afirmacijo lastnih religijskih korenin in sočasno afirmacijo filozofskih diskurzov, ki so ga izoblikovali, čeprav so kritični, demistifikatorni in zanikovalni.

Rezultati tega Caputovega dela so večplastni, v vsakem primeru lahko rečemo, da so odlična nadgradnja Derridajevega dela, branje, ki ga je Derrida[29] večkrat potrdil kot skladnega z lastnimi intencami, v tradi-

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[25] John D. Caputo, »Shedding Tears Beyond Being,« v *Augustine and postmodernism: confessions and circumfession*, ur. John D. Caputo in Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 100.

[26] Caputo, *In Search of Radical Theology*, 89.

[27] Caputo, »Shedding Tears Beyond Being,« 103.

[28] Martin Hägglund, *Radical Atheism: Derrida and the Time of Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

[29] Glej npr. »The Becoming Possible of the Impossible: An Interview with Jacques Derrida,« v *A Passion for the Impossible: John D. Caputo in Focus*, ur. Mark Dooley (New York: SUNY Press,

cionalno religijsko misel pa vnaša določeno poživitev in inovacijo. Brez dvoma gre za razširitev pojma teološkega in razširitev teoloških pojmov, poglejmo si samo Caputovo retorično vprašanje: »Kaj če je ime Bog ime vsega, kar je *mogoče*, vse do nemogočega in vključno z njim?«[30] Caputo se torej v svoji radikalni teologiji bolj kot Bogu (to je domena običajne, konfesionalne teologije) posveča njegovemu imenu. »Gramatikalno gledano je Bog samostalnik«, zapiše, »toda gramatološko, torej v mojem besednjaku, niti nominativno niti substantivno ne označuje ničesar, ni niti substanca niti subjekt, ni niti njuna sinteza«.[31] Kadar Caputo govori o razliki med gramatikalnim, tj. slovničnim poimenovanjem, in gramatološkim poimenovanjem, se seveda sklicuje na zgodnje Derridajevo delo *O gramatologiji*,[32] ki je temeljno besedilo dekonstrukcije. Caputova preprosta teološka poanta, ki napaja vse različice njegovih izrazov, pa pravi, da Bog ne obstaja, ni nekaj navzočega. Zato mu včasih pripiše nevtralen status preganjanja (*Es spukt*). Bog torej ne obstaja, nekaj pa se godi v njegovem imenu. Morda bi zato bilo bolje, da namesto o Bogu govorimo o bogoučinku. Ti učinki so nešteti, vendar jih zaradi njihove spektralne narave pogosto spregledamo.

Radikalen značaj šibkosti

Caputova religijska misel je bila v neki fazi označevana predvsem kot *šibka teologija*, ki je vzor našla tudi v misli pomembnega postmodernega filozofa Giannija Vattima, ki pravi, da ima zgodovina biti redukcijski, nihilistični značaj, sodobni postmoderni postmetafizični dobi pa odgovarja »šibka misel« (it. *pensiero debole*), misel brez pretenzij po dostopu do absolutne resnice. Sodobna postmoderna misel si ne more več privoščiti silovitih tez in razlag, ki enkrat za vselej razrešujejo velika metafizična vprašanja, ampak mora zavzeti ponižnejša stališča, taka je tudi Caputova šibka teologija, ki ne meni le, da mora biti misel o božjem šibka, ampak tudi Boga dojema kot takega.

2003), 21–33.

[30]   John D. Caputo, *Hermeneutics: Facts and Interpretation in the Age of Information* (London: Pelican, 2018), 318.

[31]   Caputo, *In Search of Radical Theology*, 62.

[32]   Jacques Derrida, *O gramatologiji* (Ljubljana: Društvo za teoretsko psihoanalizo, 1998).

Caputova šibka teologija postulira šibkega Boga, neabsolutno bitje, ki mu ne ustreza nobeno izmed tradicionalnih (presežniških) imen. Caputo v velikem teološkem delu izvede podrobno hermenevtično branje svetopisemskih pripovedi o stvarjenju in sklene, da vidik suverenosti pri stvarjenjskem dejanju ni navzoč, pojmovanje stvarjenja kot izraza vsemoči, kar izraža izraz *ex nihilo*, je veliko poznejša sholastična projekcija, v svetih spisih pa ni mogoče najti nobene absolutne suverenosti, prepričuje Caputo. Če pa že morda je, to gotovo ni »suverenost moči, ampak suverenost lepote sveta in suverenost veselja do življenja, ki je brezpogojno potrjeno in brezpogojno obljubljeno v ritmih Elohimovega ‚dobro‘«, zapiše Caputo.[33]

Kadar govorimo o Caputovi radikalni teologiji, jo je očitno najprej treba jasno razmejiti od konfesionalne teologije. Zadnja nastopa kot varuh simbolov in izročila, s čimer opravlja dragoceno delo, prva pa v tradicijo vnaša dvom, ki ga ne napaja volja po zanikovanju, temveč strast do nemogočega (tj. posedovanja resnice kot vselej odložene). Tradicionalna, konfesionalna teologija je tako na strani razsvetljenske filozofske misli, saj meni, da lahko dostopa do večnih, nezgodovinskih in celo brezčasnih resnic. V radikalni teologiji pa v nasprotju z mislimi, ki so se izoblikovale v predhodnih obdobjih, osrednje mesto zavzame dogodek. Dogodek v nasprotju z resnico ali Bogom ne nosi esence, ampak nastopa kot nekaj, kar iz prihodnosti vnaša motnje v sedanjost. Dogodek namreč nikoli ne more biti popolnoma prisoten, uresničen in tako posedovan, saj je vselej v odlogu, »bistva so odkrita le na avtopsijah – posthumno«, zapiše Caputo.[34] Dogodek je v nasprotju s tradicionalnimi teološkimi učinki, ki so končni, vselej nezaključen, lahko se mu le približujemo, toda razmik, ki ga vzpostavlja, nikoli ne more biti zaprt. V svetopisemskem kontekstu to dejstvo izrazi Bog sam, ki pravi: »Mojega obličja ne moreš videti; kajti noben človek me ne more videti in ostati živ.«[35] Izničenje razlike (kot konstitutivnega elementa za sleherni obstoj) pomeni smrt. Dogodki se zgodijo v času in prostoru, kot taki pa so vselej že podvrženi prostorsko-časovnemu odlogu.

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[33] John D. Caputo, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 92–93.
[34] Caputo, *In Search of Radical Theology*, 10.
[35] *Druga Mojzesova knjiga* 33,20. Exodus 33:20 Ekumenska izdaja ali (exod. 33:20 (EKU)).

Radikalna teologija, kot jo piše Caputo, je postteistična oz. posta-
teistična, saj v dekonstrukcijski maniri presega binarne opozicije in
jih preči. Spomnimo, da Derrida v enem izmed redkih opisov dekon-
strukcije zapiše,[36] da je ta sestavljena iz dveh korakov, prvi je strateški
obrat binarnega razmerja, to pa ni končni učinek dekonstrukcijske in-
tervencije, ta je namreč v prečenju obeh polov opozicije. V konkretnem
radikalno teološkem kontekstu to pomeni, da je najprimernejši odziv
na teistično-ateistično paradigmo in na simplistično pojmovanje Boga,
kot to izrazi že Paul Tillich[37] (avtor, na katerega se Caputo v zadnjem
desetletju pogosto nanaša), ateizem, kar pomeni zanikanje obstoja ab-
solutnega Bitja. Ateizem pa za radikalno teologijo ni konec poti, temveč
njen začetek, pristna vera se namreč poraja iz ateizma. Tu Caputo misli
v »parateoloških kategorijah, v katerih neverovanje v Boga ne izključi
religije«,[38] tradicionalna imena za Boga zato v radikalni teologiji na-
domešča modus klica, »Bog ne obstaja, temveč vztraja«.[39] Nastopa kot
klic, apel, krhkost morebitnosti. Richard Kearney v knjigi, ki jo lahko
označimo za nekoliko milejšo različico radikalne teologije, zapiše, da
»Bog niti je niti ni, temveč more-biti«.[40] Z drugimi besedami Caputo
poudarja, da Bog ni esenca niti eksistenca, ampak insistenca. Gre za
klic, ki ga zaznamuje neosebnost, nedoločnost klicalca: »Nedoločenost
je razlog, zaradi katerega je vera vera in ne Védenje.«[41] Klic se zgodi kot
tišina, kliče pa nas k hermenevtiki, mesijanski drži urgentnosti. Tu je
poleg Derridaja kot ključnega misleca mesijanizma v 20. stoletju zelo
vpliven tudi Walter Benjamin, ki pravi, da nam je bila zaupana »šibka
mesijanska sila«. Obstaja namreč skrivni dogovor med preteklimi gene-
racijami in sedanjo, sedanji smo mesijanska generacija, tisti, ki smo bili
pričakovani, da prinesemo odrešenje. Vsak trenutek tako nosi mesijan-
ski potencial, po našem življenju so razpršeni »drobci mesijanskega«.[42]

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[36] Jacques Derrida, *La Dissemination* (Pariz: Éditions du Seuil, 1972), 12–13.
[37] Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 25.
[38] John. D. Caputo, »The Return of Anti-Religion: From Radical Atheism to Radical Theo-
logy,« *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 11, št. 2 (2011), 40.
[39] John D. Caputo, *The Insistence of God: A Theology of Perhaps* (Bloomington: Indiana Uni-
versity Press, 2013).
[40] Richard Kearney, *Morebitni Bog: hermenevtika religije* (Ljubljana: KUD Apokalipsa, 2021), 7.
[41] John D. Caputo, *O religiji* (Celje: Celjska Mohorjeva družba, 2013), 167.
[42] Walter Benjamin, *Izbrani spisi* (Ljubljana: Studia Humanitatis, 2013), 225.

Tradicija in dogodek

Radikalna teologija, kot jo uprizarja Caputo, nastopa v šestih korakih,[43] ki se jasno opredeljujejo do tradicije. Prvi je suspenz nadnaravnega označenca, velike razlage, pojasnjevalnega onkraj, ta drža dopušča dogodku, da se pripeti. Pri tem suspenzu nadnaravnega pa seveda ne zdrsne v naturalizem, grobo zamejitev vseh potencialnih modusov biti. Ta redukcija je teopoetska, šibitev logosa teologije se vrši brez zdrsa v iracionalno. Naslednja je redukcija verjetja. Derrida loči med *croyance* (verjetjem) in *foi* (vero), zato lahko zapiše, da mora pristno verovanje nujno prečkati puščavo ateizma: »Želja po Bogu, Bogu kot drugem imenu želje, v puščavi obravnava korenit ateizem.«[44] Bistvena razlika je torej v tem, da izpostavitev dvomu verjetje zanika in razkraja, medtem ko dvom vero oplaja. Suspenz verjetij odpre prostor za globoko vero v dogodek, v neverjetnost dogodka. Radikalna teologija je tudi redukcija religije – »religija danes sama bolj potrebuje rešitev, kot pa lahko rešuje druge«[45] –, nastopa kot suspenz ločnice med religijskim in nereligijskim, pod vprašaj postavlja institucionalni vidik religije, vse regulacije, kodifikacije. Radikalna teologija je v marsikaterem pogledu predhodna religijski ustalitvi, zato Caputo pravi, da je »protoreligija klica«.[46] V zvezi s tem radikalna teologija izvaja celo teistično redukcijo, ne zanima je ločnica med teizmom in ateizmom, ampak jo prečka. Binarna opozicija teizem/ateizem ni koristna, radikalna teologija se tako predvsem opredeljuje proti težnji, ki iz dogodka, ki ga nosi ime Bog, naredi vrhovno bitje, temeljni element v ontoteološki zasnovi zahodnjaške metafizike. Radikalna teologija ne želi dokazovati obstoja ali neobstoja Boga, temveč biti refleksija dogodka, ki ga nosi ime Bog. Prav tako pa je radikalna teologija tudi politična redukcija, ne želi namreč sodelovati v klasičnih apolitičnih teoloških težnjah, ki svoj emancipatorni potencial umeščajo

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[43] Caputo, *In Search of Radical Theology*, 15–20.
[44] Jacques Derrida, »Postscriptum,« prev. V. Snoj, v *Izbrani spisi o religiji* (Ljubljana: KUD Logos, 2003), 148. V tem prevodu uporabljen slovenski izraz (»korenit«) bi lahko morda uporabljali na vseh mestih, kjer uporabljamo »radikalno«, pravzaprav gre za isti pomen (lat. *radix* pomeni koren), vendar se zdi, da je na tem mestu dobro razumljiva tujka, ko že imamo tudi prevod Caputovega dela *Radikalnejša hermenevtika*, veliko ustreznejša.
[45] Caputo, *In Search of Radical Theology*, 24.
[46] *Ibid.*, 18.

v onostranskost, njen cilj je teopolitična praksa, delati Boga tu in zdaj, uresničevati Božje kraljestvo. »Mi moramo šibkost Boga narediti močnejšo od moči sveta.«[47]

Tradicija ima torej kompleksen odnos do dogodka, ki jo vzpostavlja in začenja. Po eni strani ga želi ohraniti, mu biti zvesta, živeti iz njega še naprej, po drugi pa je vselej podvržena zgodovinskim in drugim vplivom, ki ji to onemogočajo. Reformacijski odgovor na to dilemo (ki pozneje najde odmev pri številnih nostalgičnih novoveških filozofih) je *sola scriptura*: vsaka poznejša podogodkovna nasedlina je odvečna in zavajajoča. To fundamentalistično prepričanje o nezmotljivosti spisov zanemarja vse izsledke besedilnokritičnih pristopov. Vsi spisi seveda niso nastali naenkrat (tudi zato se ni mogoče vrniti k njim), prav tako niso delo samostojnih avtorjev, temveč produkti večstoletnih redakcijskih in drugih predrugačenj, ki se dogajajo še danes. Caputo o tem pravi: »Spisi niso temelj tradicije, ampak njen učinek.«[48] Tradicija je živa stvarnost, »je nenehen proces avtokorekcije«.[49] Spisi ne nasprotujejo tradiciji niti tekmujejo z njo za primat, saj ne gre za nikakršno nasprotje. Vsaka pristna skupnost mora biti vselej v procesu prerojevanja, reformacije, celo v stanju protesta proti tradiciji, do določenih interpretacij tradicije, ki se vselej vršijo na škodo drugih. Cerkev nima zgodovine, ampak je zgodovina, ves čas v nastajanju, prepisovanju in izbrisovanju starega.

Dekonstrukcija ni destrukcija, torej uničenje zgodovine, ampak odpiranje novih kontekstov za nove vpise, njeno prepričanje je, da izročilo najbolj spoštujemo in ga lahko ohranimo le tako, da mu damo prihodnost. Radikalno teološka razsežnost dekonstrukcije se pripravlja na vedno nove kontekste in rekontekstualizacije, s tem pa se seveda ves čas izpostavlja tveganju.

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[47]   John D. Caputo, *What would Jesus deconstruct?: The Good News of Postmodernism for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2007), 88.
[48]   Caputo, *In Search of Radical Theology*, 32.
[49]   *Ibid.*, 33.

Spektralno jubilejno leto

Jubilejno leto ne spada niti h kronološkemu času koledarjev niti k brezčasju večnosti, ampak k teopoetskemu času obljube, pripada drobnim koščkom vsakdana.[50] To leto se dogaja v navidezno nepomembnem, v tem, kar sveti Pavel v pismu Korintčanom poimenuje »*ta me onta*« (dobesedno tisto, kar ni). Ključno vprašanje, na katero v svojem delu odgovarja Caputo, je torej, kakšna bo pojavitev jubilejnega leta, kako bodo navzoče prihajajoče realnosti. Dogodek je za Caputa spektralna stvarnost, svoj pristop zato poimenuje *spektralna hermenevtika*,[51] ki temelji na zavesti, da so pojavi nekaj, kar se kaže kot strašljivost, kot preganjanje in, najpomembneje, kot nekaj, za kar ne moremo reči, da je prisotno niti da je odsotno. Jubilejno leto po sedemkrat sedmih letih še vedno ni prišlo, petdeseto leto se vselej izmuzne, toda čeprav je vedno preloženo, ga še vedno štejemo. Duhovi ne čakajo na naša dovoljenja, pridejo nepovabljeni – kar je po Derridaju pogoj za gostoljubje[52] (*visitation sans invitation*). Kako naj torej razglašamo jubilejno leto, ko pa se nikoli ne pripeti?

Dekonstrukcija po Caputu ni kritika, njen cilj nikakor ni sodba, ne prizadeva si za pojasnjevanje ali razjasnjevanje, dekonstrukcija namesto da bi mistifikacije (tj. prikazni) nadomeščala z realnostjo (tj. prisotnostjo), prisotnost nadomešča s prikaznimi. Dekonstrukcija ne odganja duhov, ampak jim ponuja gostoljubje.[53] Prikazni so seveda lahko zelo različnih vrst, vse od sledi, ki jih pokojniki puščajo v svetu, do pojmovnih prikazni, besedilnih učinkov in drsa pomena. Vsa Derridajeva pisava opozarja na ta spektralno-pošastni značaj naših dominantnih diskurzov, ki temeljijo na eksorcističnem zavračanju odsotnosti in fetišističnem privilegiranju navzočnosti. Caputo se torej vklaplja v dolgo tradicijo kritikov metafizike prisotnosti, še zlasti pa črpa pri Derridaju,

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[50]   *Ibid.*, 43.
[51]   John D. Caputo, »Spectral hermeneutics«, v John D. Caputo in Gianni Vattimo, *After the death of God* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 45–88.
[52]   Jacques Derrida, *De l'hospitalité: Anne Dufourmantelle invite Jacques Derrida à répondre* (Pariz: Calmann-Lévy, 1997), prim. Maja Bjelica, »Asylum as Hospitality: Relistening to Derrida,« *Poligrafi* 23, št. 91/92 (2018) in Lenart Škof, »Refugee Crisis, Vulnerability and Ethics of Cohabitation,« *Poligrafi* 23, št. 91/92 (2018), 97.
[53]   Caputo, *In Search of Radical Theology*, 47.

ki pravi, da pojme, kot sta bit in prisotnost, preganjajo rane preteklosti, prisotnost je destabilizirana in kot taka dekonstruktabilna, zato Derrida svoje slavno delo o Marxovih duhovih začne s hamletovsko diagnozo – »čas je iztirjen«.[54] Sedanjost kot čista prezentnost nam torej po dekonstrukciji ni dostopna, saj je vselej že v odlogu. Caputo pa to izkoristi, da poudari najizmuzljivejšega izmed vseh pojavov: Boga. Bog je zanj najbolj spektralen pojav, to pomeni, da je tudi najmanj predvidljiv in najstrašljivejši. S to tezo seveda nasprotuje sholastični misli, ki je Boga postulirala kot *ens realissimum*, kot tisto bivajoče, ki ne more biti resničnejše, popolnejše, bolj v polnosti prisotno, vseprisotno. Toda izkušnja nas uči, da kljub vsej tej polni prisotnosti Boga ni mogoče najti nikjer, in tu vstopi radikalna teologija, ki Boga ne dojema kot metafizičnega poroka, ampak kot spektralno šibko silo, ki lahko v najboljšem primeru kliče in prosi. Bog je vztrajna ponižnost, je želja onkraj želje, želja, ki se ne izčrpa ob nemogočem.

Caputo za tako religijo pravi, da je »religija *sous rature*«, kar pomeni pod izbrisom. Gre za še eno dekonstrukcijsko figuro, ki svoj izvir umešča v Heideggerjevo križno prečrtanje (*kreuzweise Durchstreichung*) besede biti, pri Derridaju je ta tipografska gesta posplošena, za dekonstrukcijo se vsaka beseda že ob pisanju samozabrisuje in je torej *sous rature* (dobesedno pod izbrisom). Religija torej s svojo latinsko in drugačno determiniranostjo ni najustreznejši izraz, hkrati pa boljšega ne premoremo, zato Caputo besedo religija prečrtuje in zabrisuje. Še pogosteje pa govori o *religiji brez religije*, tak je tudi podnaslov njegove najslavnejše knjige, ki nosi največje zasluge za poudarek teološkega potenciala v Derridajevi misli.[55] Religija brez religije je diskurz, ki nastopa kot »nedogmatični dvojček dogme«. Ta sintagma je navedek iz Derridajevega dela *Dar smrti*,[56] v katerem se Derrida posveča Kierkegaardovemu delu *Strah in trepet* ter še enkrat združi dekonstrukcijo in Kierkegaardovo

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[54] Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: l'état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle internationale* (Pariz: Éditions Galilée, 1993).

[55] John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida; Religion without religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

[56] Jacques Derrida, *Dar smrti* (Ljubljana: KUD Apokalipsa, 2004), 65.

eksistencialno komunikacijo – v skladu s tem se Caputo v neki točki opredeljuje za pripadnika »danske dekonstrukcije«.[57]

Prihod Boga je vedno v odlogu, dejstvo, da je v prihodu, pa ne označuje primanjkljaja, temveč strukturno danost. Gre za brezpogojnost in brezpogojnosti so, kot zapiše Derrida v uvodu k svojemu poznemu delu o politiki suverenosti,[58] vselej šibke sile. To, da je Bog v odlogu in da nastopa kot šibka sila, pa pomeni, da je velik del odgovornosti na naših ramenih. Kot je dejal že Mojster Eckhart, radikalni teolog *avant la lettre*, Bog nas potrebuje, da postane Bog, brez nas se ne more uresničiti. Dejstvo, da je Bog ime klica, implicira, da lahko nanj odgovorimo ali ne. V nasprotju s tradicionalnimi metafizičnimi pojmovanji, ki so za obstoj in neobstoj Boga oblikovale vrhunske logične dokaze in protidokaze, je v radikalni teologiji edini dokaz za obstoj ali neobstoj Boga naš odziv na klic, dejanje vere. »Religija, če kaj takega obstaja, je odziv na klic, ki ga nismo slišali,« zapiše o tem Caputo.[59] Ime Boga je tako ime dejanja, nikakor pa Bog ni »neskončna nematerialna rešitev za končna materialna vprašanja«.[60] Bog torej ne daje nikakršnih odgovorov, kvečjemu prinaša nove probleme, ki jih moramo reševati eksistencialno. To pa ni razlog za obžalovanje (»dekonstrukcija realnosti in prisotnosti, resnične prisotnosti, ni slaba novica, temveč delo ljubezni in žrtvovanja«),[61] saj pomeni življenje samo. Bog ne prinaša odgovorov, kljub temu pa nam prek novozaveznih besedil kaže svojo (ne)vidnost in (ne)obstoj. V zgodbah je poudarjena množica bitij v pomanjkanju, bolnih in revnih, potrebnih pomoči, tudi prek njih se uteleša klic, ki je osrednji element radikalne teologije.

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[57]   Caputo, *The weakness of God*, 28.
[58]   Jaques Derrida, *Voyous: Deux essais sur la raison* (Pariz: Éditions Galilée, 2003), 13.
[59]   Caputo, *In Search of Radical Theology*, 67.
[60]   *Ibid.*, 72.
[61]   John D. Caputo, »For Love of the Things Themselves: Derrida's Hyper-Realism,« *Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory* 1, št. 3 (2000), 37–61, https://jcrt.org/archives/01.3/caputo.shtml.

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TRADITIONS-DIRECTED APPROACH IN THE COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Javad Taheri

On the Nature of Comparison

When it comes to making comparisons in a philosophical setting, we should begin with a few basic remarks concerning the elements that comprise the structure of any comparison. Ralph Weber has developed a categorization based on an earlier proposal by Christian Wolff[1]. Weber argues that, for a comparison to be conducted within the context of comparative philosophy, five features must be present.[2] A philosophical comparison must include 1) the comparer, who is the person by whom comparison is performed, 2) the comparata that represents all sides of the comparison to be compared, 3) the pre-comparative tertium that indicates a point of resemblance that is affirmed in the process of selecting the comparata as the entity that will be subjected to the comparison, 4) the tertium comparationis, also known as an aspect that is maintained

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[1]   For more on Wolff's proposal see Ralph Weber, "Comparative Philosophy and the Tertium: Comparing What with What, and in What Respect?," *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 13, no. 2 (2014): 152, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11712-014-9368-z.

[2]   For a discussion on this see Jonathan O. Chimakonam and Amara E. Chimakonam, "Two Problems of Comparative Philosophy: Why Conversational Thinking Is a Veritable Methodological Option," in *Comparative Philosophy and Method: Contemporary Practices and Future Possibilities*, ed. Steven Burik, Robert Smid, and Ralph Weber, 1st ed. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 224, https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350155053; Ralph Weber, "'How to Compare?' - On the Methodological State of Comparative Philosophy," *Philosophy Compass* 8, no. 7 (2013): 593–603, https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12042.

by all comparata, and 5) the outcome of the comparison, which is the relation between comparata with respect to the tertium comparationis. Based on these five elements, says Weber, a basic analytical tool can be prepared to fulfil a philosophical comparative study.[3] The primary stage in the formation of a comparison begins when a comparer who has sufficient knowledge about comparata (concepts, practices, arguments, etc.) becomes cognizant of the pre-comparative tertium, which is, in Smith's words, a 'recollection of similarity.'[4] The comparison will achieve a fruitful outcome after the tertium comparationis–which is a well-developed version of the pre-comparative tertium–is studied and developed based on engagements generated between comparata by the comparer.

However, in order for a comparative endeavor to be characterized as philosophical, it has to have the character of reflection, which is the process by which particular issues or problems experienced by different traditions are addressed, based on widely acknowledged principles or patterns. This element–reflectiveness–makes the comparison an ongoing and ever-evolving piece of work. In spite of that, the application of a 'formalized analysis' required of the established field of philosophy gives it a fixed structure.[5] A cross-tradition interaction that takes place by comparing a set of things from one tradition with a set of things from one or more other traditions allows us to better comprehend or interpret all sets of things involved. Comparative philosophers place particular emphasis on the fact that the development of the very practice of philosophy is an essential component of this comparative action.[6] On this account, a comparison conducted inside a philosophical

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[3]   For more on this see Weber, "'How to Compare?'."

[4]   Jonathan Z. Smith, "Prologue: In Comparison a Magic Dwells Jonathan Z. Smith," in *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age*, ed. Kimberley C. Patton and Benjamin C. Ray, ACLS Humanities. (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2000), 26.

[5]   Paul Masson-Oursel and Harold E. McCarthy, "True Philosophy Is Comparative Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West* 1, no. 1 (1951), https://doi.org/10.2307/1396931: 7; Raimundo Panikkar, "What Is Comparative Philosophy Comparing?," in *Interpreting Across Boundaries: New Essays in Comparative Philosophy*, ed. Eliot Deutsch & Gerald James Larson, 116–136 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 122, 124.

[6]   Robert W. Smid, *Methodologies of Comparative Philosophy: The Pragmatist and Process Traditions*, SUNY Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 216; Stephen C. Angle, "The Minimal Definition and Methodology of

framework would result in the transformation of 'thinking,' 'reasoning,' and 'philosophy,' as well as of our understanding of the ways in which 'comparison' can be performed effectively.[7] This suggests that in order for us to reap the potential of comparison in intercultural philosophies, it is also necessary to undertake critical correlations between sets of things from all comparata. This would in fact contribute to the creation of enduring progress.

When seeking to develop methods for philosophical comparison, as argued by Brakel and Ma,[8] universalism and relativism in their most extreme forms must be avoided. One must stay well away from linguistic relativism, which holds that each philosophical tradition has a distinctive and enclosed discourse or language-game, an attitude that renders the relationship between philosophical traditions incommensurable and completely untranslatable. At the other extreme is a kind of linguistic universalism that assumes a full translatability, in which a single ideal language is thought to exist through which cross-cultural philosophy may be accomplished and its findings communicated most successfully. Such a position is problematic as well. Because of this, and taking Brakel and Ma's argument into consideration, I would argue that while engaging in comparative studies, it is essential to maintain a balanced approach. This is due, on the one hand, to the fact that in performing a comparative study we have already accepted that the

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Comparative Philosophy: A Report from a Conference," *Comparative Philosophy: An International Journal of Constructive Engagement of Distinct Approaches toward World Philosophy* 1, no. 1 (2010): 106, https://doi.org/10.31979/2151-6014(2010).010109.

[7]   Masson-Oursel and McCarthy, "True Philosophy Is Comparative Philosophy"; J. Fleming, "Comparative Philosophy: Its Aims and Methods," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 30, no. 2 (2003): 261.

[8]   For a detailed discussion on the inadequacies of the idea that either ultimate universalism or pure relativism are applicable to comparative philosophy's methodology see Brakel and Ma's following three works: Jaap van Brakel and Lin Ma, "Necessary Preconditions of the Practice of Comparative Philosophy," in *Comparative Philosophy and Method: Contemporary Practices and Future Possibilities*, ed. Steven Burik, Robert Smid, and Ralph Weber, 1st ed. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 38, https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350155053; Lin Ma and Jaap van Brakel, "On the Conditions of Possibility for Comparative and Intercultural Philosophy," *Dao : A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 12, no. 3 (2013): 297–312, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11712-013-9330-5; Lin Ma and Jaap van Brakel, *Fundamentals of Comparative and Intercultural Philosophy*, SUNY Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016).

comparata are distinct spheres that may inform one another on things that they can collectively possess but not universally share (inadequacy of universalism). On the other hand, one cannot accept absolute relativism, according to which every side of a comparison cannot share any understanding with other sides (i.e., they are incommensurable), hence negating the possibility of conducting comparative research between different spheres (inadequacy of relativism).

The most intriguing proposal–one with the fewest potential complications–could be the suggestion that 'the idea of an ideal language with fixed and exact meanings' be replaced by the notion of family-resemblance-concepts in which all the following assumptions are disregarded: '(1) the ideal language assumption, (2) the assumed necessity of a shared, or common, or in-between language, and (3) the assumption of a number of (linguistic, cognitive, cultural, philosophical) universals.'[9] In a comparative study of Christian and Muslim theologies, for instance, it must be acknowledged that Islamic theological claims cannot be entirely translatable into Christian terms and vice versa. The conceptual, cultural and historical gaps between the two faiths make this inevitable. Nevertheless, sufficient translatability exists to be able to provide a productive comparison study. On this account, a 'de-essentialized' approach, which adopts a Wittgensteinian family resemblance perspective to the issue of cross-cultural language, is the most appropriate strategy for fulfilling the requirements.[10] In other words, the capacity to conduct philosophical comparisons across traditions is conditional to mutual attunement based on family resemblance as opposed to a specific universal principle with a predetermined common core.[11]

One of the purposes of cross-cultural comparisons between different philosophies is the advancement of the field of philosophy today. The comparing process has the potential to transform philosophical practice

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[9]   Brakel and Ma, "Necessary Preconditions," 38.
[10]   For a thorough and useful examination of interreligious (in)commensurability and (un)translatability, see Gorazd Andrejč's book, particularly the chapter entitled 'Incommensurability and Interreligious Communication': Gorazd Andrejč, *Wittgenstein and Interreligious Disagreement: A Philosophical and Theological Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-49823-6.
[11]   Ma and Brakel, *Fundamentals of Comparative and Intercultural Philosophy*, 195; Ma and Brakel, "On the Conditions," 297–312.

globally. It is suggested that this transformative element is present not just in comparative philosophy, but also in comparative theology. Later in this paper, it will be shown how this advancement must be highlighted in the disciplines of comparative philosophy, comparative theology, and comparative philosophy of religion. The theology of religions was the starting point for Western Christianity's serious involvement with other religious traditions on a systematic and theological basis. Alan Race's 1983 book *Christians and Religious Pluralism* classified Christian encounters with other religions into three categories: exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. Since the publication of Race's work, scholars have maintained a variety of viewpoints on the typology suggested by Race, which contributed to further developments in the discipline of theology of religions. Although 1983 was the year that signified the commencement of the study of the theology of religions, these three positions, but especially the inclusivist and exclusivist views, can be seen throughout the history of Christian thought.

Christian exclusivism claims that non-Christians are deprived of Christian truth and salvation. More moderately, inclusivism holds that non-Christians have partial access to the truth and/or salvation. In his concept of 'anonymous Christianity,' which represents a form of inclusivism, Rahner contends that non-Christians may be rescued by their implicit faith.[12] While inclusivists disagree on certain issues among themselves–e.g., Hans Küng disputed Rahner's approach–the very idea of inclusivism, which is situated between externalism and pluralism, entails that Christian truth is superior to non-Christian truth. Trying to go beyond both exclusivism and inclusivism, pluralism claims that in order to be granted truth and salvation neither an explicit nor an implicit faith in Christ is necessary. According to John Hick, the pluralist approach is the only one that fully appreciates the 'universality of God' since salvation is available to everybody, whether they are Christian or not.[13] As a reaction to pluralism, which in the West has historically been rooted in liberal theology, a post-liberal perspec-

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[12]   Esra Akay Dag, *Christian and Islamic Theology of Religions: A Critical Appraisal*, Routledge Studies in Religion 56 (New York: Routledge, 2017), 14–15.
[13]   Akay Dag, " *Christian and Islamic Theology of Religions*," 22.

tive has been developed. Post-liberal theology appeared in 1984 with George Lindbeck's book *The Nature of Doctrine*. A 'Cultural-linguist' type of theology of religions was proposed by Lindbeck's post-liberal theology in which he argues that people's experiences are shaped by their language and prior experiences. By means of a problematic reading of Wittgenstein, Lindbeck's post-liberal theology contends that theological language is incommensurable and uncommunicable.[14] Several scholars have argued–persuasively–that Lindbeck's position is unwarranted and of limited value to comparative studies of religions.[15]

The advent of contemporary comparative theology in the 1990s occurred against the backdrop of Christian attitudes toward non-Christian faiths that predominated in Western theology of religions from the middle to the end of the 20th century. Contemporary comparative theology has a more ambitious objective than that of the theology of religions. From the outset, contemporary comparative theology was more receptive to different religious traditions, including seeking truth in other traditions. Scholars still debate the relationship between comparative theology and the theology of religions. Certain thinkers, especially Paul Hedges, see comparative theology as a subset of the theology of religions,[16] while some of the main scholars within comparative theology, such as Francis Clooney and James Fredericks, disagree. While theologians like Clooney think that comparative theology and the theology of religions are methodologically separate, they resist the idea of substituting one for the other and suggest that they can still complement one another in many ways.[17] Although comparative theology has

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[14]   See the Chapter on Lindbeck in in Andrejč, *Wittgenstein and Interreligious Disagreement*, 72–80. See also Moyaert's critique of Lindbeck: M. Moyaert, "Postliberalism, Religious Diversity, and Interreligious Dialogue: A Critical Analysis of George Lindbeck's Fi Duciary Interests," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 47, no. 1 (2012): 64–86.

[15]   For a detailed explanation of this topic, see Andrejč, *Wittgenstein and Interreligious Disagreement*, chap. 4.

[16]   For further on this see Paul Hedges, *Controversies in Interreligious Dialogue and the Theology of Religions*, Controversies in Contextual Theology Series (London: SCM Press, 2010), 152.

[17]   For a discussion of the contrasts between theology of religions and comparative theology, as well as their connections to one another, see Francis X. Clooney, "Catholic Roots for the Discipline," in *A Companion to Comparative Theology*, ed. Pim Valkenberg et al., vol. 2, Brill's Companions to Modern Theology, Volume 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 43–44; Akay Dag, *Christian and Islamic Theology of Religions*, 38–39.

been influenced by the theology of religions, it is often critical of it and goes beyond it. Comparative studies carried out by comparative theologians have shown a pattern of progression that has substantial parallels with the one that was outlined in relation to philosophy. By paying close attention to their similarities, differences, and even disagreements[18], practitioners of comparative theology are able to expand their understanding not just of other religious traditions but also of their own religious tradition.19

Comparative theologians have, as one of their primary aims, the goal of arriving at a more profound religious truth by acquiring a better understanding of the religious truths that are included within the *comparata*. This is said to be the case due to the fact that comparative theologians argue that our knowledge of the religious truth is accumulative in the sense that the more attentively we study a variety of religious traditions, the more access to the entire religious truth we will have.[20] By means of critical correlations between sets of things among *comparata* and a hermeneutical effort–that must include an hermeneutical openness of *comparata*–one would be able to arrive at such profound knowledge.[21] A 'diatopical hermeneutics,' as Panikkar terms it, is needed here to overcome 'the distance between two (or more) cultures which have independently developed in different spaces (*topoi*) their own methods

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[18]   For a discussion on religious disagreement see Andrejč, *Wittgenstein and Interreligious Disagreement*, 13.

[19]   For more on deep learning in comparative theology see Francis X. Clooney, "The Emerging Field of Comparative Theology: A Bibliographic Review," *Heological Studies* 56, no. 3 (September 1995): 521–50; Catherine Cornille, "The Problem of Choice in Comparative Theology," in *How to Do Comparative Theology*, ed. Francis X. Clooney and Klaus von Stosch (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018); James L. Fredericks, "Introduction," in *The New Comparative Theology: Interreligious Insights from the next Generation*, ed. Francis X. Clooney (London: T & T Clark, 2010), xvii; Akay Dag, *Christian and Islamic Theology of Religions*, 38.

[20]   Francis X. Clooney, *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning across Religious Borders* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), xiii, 16, 69,.

[21]   Fredericks, "Introduction," x; Klaus von Stosch, "Comparative Theology as Liberal and Confessional Theology," *Religions* 3, no. 4 (2012): 983–92, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel3040983; David Tracy, "Comparative Theology," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade and Charles Joseph Adams, vol. 14 (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1987), 447; Marianne Moyaert, "Recent Developments in the Theology of Interreligious Dialogue: From Soteriological Openness to Hermeneutical Openness," *Modern Theology* 28, no. 1 (2012): 44, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0025.2011.01724.x.

of philosophizing and ways of reaching intelligibility along with their proper categories.'[22]

New studies have a tendency to make a distinction between what are known as confessional comparative theologies and meta-confessional comparative theologies. A further step in comparative theology is an approach which goes beyond the confessional comparative theology. Catherine Cornille uses the term 'meta-confessional comparative theology' to refer to the potential for comparative theology to be fundamentally 'unconstrained by the doctrinal or ritual constraints of any particular tradition.'[23] Meta-confessional comparative theology (Catherine Cornille), interreligious theology (Perry Schmidt-Leukel), transreligious theology (J. R. Hustwit), and interstitial theology (Tinu Ruparell) are terms used to describe a type of theology that attempts to go beyond the constraints of any one religious tradition.[24] The word 'theology' in 'meta-confessional comparative theology' refers to the field's tradition-situatedness, while 'meta-confessional' suggests a specific emphasis on intellectual and intersubjective aspects which signify that the comparison stretches across or goes beyond diverse confessions. Since meta-confessional comparative theology makes an effort to be something distinct from comparative studies that are connected to one faith or confession, it is sometimes referred to as interreligious theology.[25] Comparative theology is often thought of as having a normative character, which suggests that it not only investigates the meaning of specific practices and beliefs but also seeks to establish their truth.[26] Once it is recognized as a means of acquiring a more universal understanding of the truth, it is referred to as 'meta-confessional.' Thus, it varies from 'confessional' comparative theology, which is seen as a means for gaining a deeper or more nuanced grasp of the truth as it is found within a certain religious tradition. Meta-confessional comparative theology is

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[22]   Panikkar, "What Is Comparative Philosophy Comparing?," 130.
[23]   Catherine Cornille, *Meaning and Method in Comparative Theology* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2020), 25.
[24]   *Ibid.*, 25.
[25]   For more on the concept of interreligious theology see Perry Schmidt-Leukel, *Religious Pluralism and Interreligious Theology: The Gifford Lectures--an Extended Edition*, 1 online resource vols., Gifford Lectures (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017),.
[26]   Cornille, "The Problem of Choice in Comparative Theology," 20–21.

not an apologetic practice, but an intellectual enquiry into the meaning and purpose of human life in religious traditions. Unclear phrases are refined and improved through comparison, resulting not only in the progress of the discussion but also in the transformation of the one doing the comparative study. A meta-confessional stance, however, is sometimes necessary, especially when one admits that once a comparison is done the comparer will eventually arrive at a certain level of understanding about the truth of the *comparata*. This is why it can be argued that meta-confessional comparative theology, comparative philosophy of religion, imparative theology (Raimund Panikkar), as well as what we have previously alluded to as interstitial theology (Ruparell) and interreligious theology (Schmidt-Leukel) and meta-confessional comparative theology can refer to the broad practice of Going beyond one's own religious tradition in order to learn from the religious other. It is a field in which hybrid perspectives or stances are formulated in order to promote a fruitful discourse between different religious traditions, which ultimately leads to the development of 'recombinant' religious traditions.[27]

Gaining a better knowledge through comparing philosophical and theological contexts inspired researchers to account for various forms of learning. For example, comparative theology identifies several modes of learning that are applicable to comparative philosophy as well. When one engages in a kind of learning that is known as 'intensification,' the meanings of ideas, concepts, practices, and texts become clearer. Moreover, the truth in any particular tradition can be bolstered and intensified based on the truth seen in other religious traditions. Once the concealed or neglected components of a religious tradition have been invigorated, a different method of learning known as 'recovery' or 'rediscovery' is at work, claims Cornille.[28] The process of 'reinterpretation,' in which sets of things in one religious tradition are reinterpreted in light of ideas from other tradition or traditions, adds another layer of depth and richness to newly uncovered pieces of information. A shift of this kind took place, for instance, during the historical reconstruction

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[27]   *Ibid.*, 21, 24.
[28]   *Ibid.*, 29.

of Christian theology on the basis of philosophical ideas acquired from Hellenistic philosophy. This faced Christianity not only with 'challenges and questions' but also 'new avenues of understanding and experience' which led to a broader Christian self-understanding of its principles and ideas.[29] On top of the learning process, 'appropriation' enables the comparer to create new ideas, experiences, and actions when interacting with other traditions. It can be viewed as the development of elements (teachings or practices) that have long been components of one's own tradition, or as the introduction of fresh experiences and newly discovered insights.[30] Traditional theologians who lack experience or expertise in comparative theology may struggle with or reject an understanding of appropriation in which aspects absent from the comparer's own religious tradition are to be included.

The Comparative Philosophy of Religion

In this study, the distinction between comparative philosophy of religion and meta-confessional comparative theology is not substantial, because it is presumed that they share incredibly profound traits that enable us to make interchangeable use of the two. Nevertheless, given that there are a few differences between them, it is sensible to keep them apart conceptually. This study highlights a *traditions*-oriented versus a *tradition*-oriented approach. This means that it favors the term 'comparative philosophy of religion', because for comparative theology of any kind *tradition*-situatedness ultimately still matters and any intersubjective and universal attempt must serve the latter. Consider, as an illustration of this point, a study comparing sets of things from a certain school of Islamic theology to sets of things of a specific theology in Christianity. The comparative philosophy of religion in this case compares not from an Islamic or Christian perspective, but from a much less theologically determined Abrahamic vantage point that is shared by both Islamic and Christian traditions. Notice that, to perform interreligious study, the comparative philosophy of religion approach

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[29]   *Ibid.*, 30.
[30]   *Ibid.*, 28–31.

adopted here employs neither a strictly neutral nor a *tradition*-oriented approach. It, rather, seeks to implement a *traditions*-oriented practice in which equal credit is given to all *comparata*. Two case studies will later illustrate how this strategy might be applied.

Philosophical Analysis

It is argued in this paper that philosophical analysis is the most significant element of the comparative philosophy of religion. The reason for this is that the philosophical analysis is aimed at helping us comprehend the most appropriate interpretation of theological assertions. The contexts in which words are used determine their appropriate meanings. Therefore, philosophical analysis aims to describe the depth-grammar– as distinguished from the surface-grammar–of theological claims. The concepts of 'surface-grammar' and 'depth-grammar' were developed by Wittgenstein to elucidate the manner in which one might grasp the most appropriate meanings of words and phrases. Gorazd Andrejč investigates, in light of his interpretation of Wittgenstein, how David Burrell differentiates between these two concepts and how he uses this difference to address the problem of God-talk in his philosophical theology. According to this account, as explained by Andrejč, in order to determine the most appropriate meanings of religious assertions about God (while using a logical and linguistic analysis), one must differentiate between the ordinary meanings of the religious language (surface-grammar) and their meanings as appeared in their theological context.[31] In order for philosophical analysis to be conducted as extensively as possible, different strategies are offered. Any list of elements on which philosophical analysis is founded is not conceptually exclusive and may be expanded. The most important elements of philosophical analysis that are applicable to comparative philosophy of religion are discussed below.

Comparative philosophy of religion, very much like comparative theology, has the potential to be seen as a 'visionary' work, which suggests that a philosopher of religion who is engaged in comparative study

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[31] See Andrejč, *Wittgenstein and Interreligious Disagreement*, chap. 6.

is urged to observe things attentively. Cornille elaborates on the significance of 'a visionary quality' in relation to the process of conducting a comparative study by stating that:

> The comparative theologian suddenly sees or understands something in and through the other religion that she deems important and enriching also for her own tradition, and that she cannot but attempt to integrate or reflect upon from within her own religious framework. This may not prove to be immediately relevant for other theologians within a particular tradition. But it may still come to leave its mark in time or among some fellow theologians and believers. Comparative theology, when conducted from within a particular religion, may thus avoid the sense of randomness by directly contributing to theological discussions occurring within their respective traditions, or by attempting to awaken other theologians to the relevance of their own visionary insight. It is this focus on a particular religious and theological community that saves comparative theology from the negative implications of randomness.[32]

On this account, the visionary feature makes it possible for a comparer to recognize not only the pre-comparative *tertium*, but also what *comparata* have in common or where they differ. An approach that is visionary lays the way for a good identification of issues and the efforts that are to be made to address them.

It is legitimate to expect that the comparative philosophy of religion will serve as a method for problem-solving. Taking a comparative approach to addressing issues and finding answers that cut across cultural boundaries is one way to accomplish this goal. Later on, I will show how the case studies included in this paper serve as examples of problem-solving approaches that are used to explore the traditionally delicate problem of religious language. In the role of a problem-solver, a comparer makes an effort to provide concrete explanations and solutions to the emergence of philosophical dilemmas within certain historical and cultural settings.

Moreover, for the development of a flourishing comparative philosophy of religion, its approach should also be explanatory. On this ground, a philosophical explanation–though not a scientific explana-

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[32]   Cornille, *Meaning and Method in Comparative Theology*.

tion inasmuch as it relates to the current study–of *comparata* is necessary. A scientific explanation is a kind of explanation that utilizes the empirical data and is intended to shed light on the link between empirical phenomena by formulating theories and putting them to the test. Philosophical explanation does not appeal to empirical data; rather, it is an investigation of concepts and the rational interrelationship between abstract ideas. The relevance of this is derived from the fact that comparison is an essential activity that requires a deep understanding of the features to be compared. Providing an explanation of a phenomenon is more complicated than just describing it by means of general descriptions, since explanation needs an in-depth and detailed grasp of the subject of study. More specifically, in a philosophical and theological setting, an explanatory approach goes beyond description to provide the reasons why a thing is as it is and not otherwise. In addition, having an explanatory viewpoint demands a dialogical engagement between various persons or cultures, which is different from simply making theories or thinking in solitude. This suggests that to be a successful comparer, one must not only be equipped with comparative thinking in which one compares methods of thinking, but also one has to know how to think comparatively, that is a thinking which is considered to be comparative in nature.[33] Thinking comparatively, to put it another way, is characterized by a nature that is self-critical, creative, and cross-cultural, due to which the outcomes/results of comparative studies are continually reevaluated. In light of this, an explanation of the comparative philosophy of religion cannot simply consist of thinking in isolation or developing a theoretical formulation; rather, it calls for the confrontation of many figures or traditions by a dialogical confrontation.[34]

Another essential aspect of the comparative philosophy of religion is its constructiveness, which is one of the reasons why it is regarded as a

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[33]   On the difference between comparative thinking and thinking comparatively see Chimakonam and Chimakonam, "Two Problems of Comparative Philosophy," 227.
[34]   David Cheetham, "Comparative Philosophy of Religion," in *Contemporary Practice and Method in the Philosophy of Religion: New Essays*, ed. David Cheetham and Rolfe King, Continuum Religious Studies (London: Continuum, 2008), 109–110.

productive process by nature.[35] The constructiveness of this discipline relies on the existence of an innovative system in which theological issues are addressed in stages and in which constant improvement is made to the best available options. It is suggested that a constructive comparative philosophy of religion must have been already supplied with hermeneutical creativeness. The importance of hermeneutical creativity for philosophical study of theologies has been emphasized by comparative theologians such as Burrell, Tracy, Stosch, and Moyaert, among others.

As we have seen, various elements of philosophical analysis have been explored so far; however, we have yet to examine the most crucial component of the field. I would suggest that an important part of philosophical analysis that needs to be incorporated into the methodological strategy is that of Wittgenstein. As we will see, adopting a Wittgensteinian method helps in gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the *comparata*. While there are several different ways of thinking about analysis in analytic philosophy– 'reductive and connective,' 'revisionary and descriptive,' 'linguistic and psychological,' and 'formal and empirical,' to name a few–the so-called method of the 'Grammar of Our Language' by Ludwig Wittgenstein[36] fits particularly well with the comparative philosophy of religion as it is understood here. The later Wittgenstein's grammaticalist conception of religion has been quite influential. According to this conception, language plays the most important role in establishing the meaning of religious statements.[37]

In the Wittgensteinian approach, philosophical analysis is a grammatical examination in which the prioritized thing to do is to clear away any misunderstandings that may have arisen from a particular philosophical issue. The misuse of words, which is mostly brought on 'by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different re-

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[35]   For more on constructive analysis see David B. Burrell, *Towards a Jewish-Christian-Muslim Theology*, Challenges in Contemporary Theology (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 46.

[36]   Michael Beaney, "Conceptions of Analysis in Analytic Philosophy," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, 2021, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/analysis/s6.html.

[37]   See Andrejč, *Wittgenstein and Interreligious Disagreement*; Gorazd Andrejč and Daniel H. Weiss, eds., *Interpreting Interreligious Relations with Wittgenstein: Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies*, Philosophy of Religion - World Religions Ser. (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

gions of language,' is the source of the most serious misunderstanding. This problem can be remedied by 'substituting one form of expression for another,' which, as Wittgenstein suggests, can be best described as philosophical analysis, since it is similar to process of 'taking a thing apart.'[38]

Case Studies

In this part, two case studies that were carried out very recently are examined in order to shed light on the understanding of the subject matter of the present paper. The first study is a book titled *The Other Prophet: Jesus in the Qur'an*, which employs comparative theology to study the notion of Jesus Christ as it appears in the Qur'an. The second case study analyses how an innovative approach to the methodology of comparative philosophy of religion, which is closely connected to the meta-confessional methodological framework, can be taken.

Case Study 1: The Other Prophet

The Other Prophet: Jesus in the Qur'an[39], published in 2019, is the outcome of a comparative theological research on the topic of Christology and Qur'anic prophetology co-authored by Muslim theologian Mouhanad Khorchide and Catholic theologian Klaus von Stosch. Rather than serving as an example of apologetics, this work is an original inquiry into the nature of Jesus Christ that takes into account historical and contextual knowledge about Jesus in an effort to answer modern questions about the Islamic and Christian understandings of Jesus. The methodological strategies employed in the book bear resemblance to those outlined in this paper, in a discussion on the nature of compari-

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[38]   Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, Repr. of English text with index (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), sec. 90, https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/4294631/mod_resource/content/0/Ludwig%20Wittgenstein%2C%20P.%20M.%20S.%20Hacker%2C%20Joachim%20Schulte.%20Philosophical%20Investigations.%20Wiley.pdf.
[39]   Mouhanad Khorchide and Klaus Von Stosch, *The Other Prophet: Jesus in the Qur'an*, trans. Simon Pare, 1 online resource vols., Interfaith Series (Chicago: The Gingko Library, 2019).

son. The first section of the book employs the 'intensification' method to revisit the background of the controversy over Jesus in the Qur'an in order to provide Christians with a novel understanding of Jesus. The objective of this research, which serves as a contemporary example of comparative theology, is not to establish who has the best picture of Jesus of Nazareth, but to develop and broaden our understanding 'by remaining faithful to the truths to which we are both committed.'[40] The reader is presented with a number of problematic conceptions about Jesus at different points in the text. The authors argue that certain Christians or Christologies, which are not indicative of Christianity as a whole, are the source of these problematic ideas of Christianity. This is the reason why they could suggest that Christians are enabled to correct problematic Christologies in light of insights provided by the Quran. This characteristic points out the self-correctiveness of comparative theology based on the critical correlations between religious traditions.

In a chapter titled 'New Developments in Modern Christology,' Klaus von Stosch, based on his analysis of modern Christologies, suggests a particular Christology that would be helpful for setting up a mutual understanding between the Christian and Qur'anic conceptions of Jesus. Stosch is determined in using the methodology of comparative theology which is not only inspired by transcendental philosophy and Wittgensteinian grammatical analysis, but also by philosophical perspectives offered by contemporary comparative theologians and theologians of religions. Stosch attempts to demonstrate that the most productive comparison must be made between the Quran, which is seen as divine revelation within the Islamic context, and Jesus Christ, who is regarded as divine revelation in Christianity. Such a comparison is far more beneficial than comparing the Prophet Muhammad to Jesus Christ.

A novel interpretation of the Quranic verses referring to Jesus Christ is proposed in another debate in the research, based on not only historical but also grammatical examinations. It is argued that the verses in question include denunciations that are directed at particular exaggerations that are common in certain Christologies. This work's meth-

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[40]   *Ibid.*, 5.

odological approach is bolstered by a critical investigation of those Christologies proposed by the Quran and other modern Christologies in which Jesus Christ is misrepresented. As this study testifies, the depth-grammar must be distinguished from the surface-grammar of theological representations, with the help of philosophical analysis. In a discussion on Jesus and Quranic prophetology, an attempt is made to conceive Jesus Christ through the lens of the Quranic understanding. To demonstrate how prophetology can contribute to Christology, the emphasis here is on Jesus as a prophet. According to this, Jesus is described using terms that are utilized by a well-established Islamic understanding in which Jesus is portrayed as a prophet who serves as the messenger of God. This depiction of Jesus is distinct from the image of Jesus in Christianity, in which he is depicted as the Son of God. This is an example of a method employed in comparative theology, in which an in-depth knowledge of a set of things from one tradition is provided through in-depth knowledge of a set of things from another tradition. This features a critical aspect of any critical comparative study (including comparative philosophy of religion), namely the evolutionary nature of comparison in general.

The significance of constructiveness, which, as we have seen, is regarded as one of the most important methodological approaches of a successful comparative study, is emphasized in the penultimate chapter of the book. The authors make an effort to demonstrate that the Quran supports the achievements and fundamental principles of Christology and Christian soteriology, but not always by the same terms as they are employed in Christian terminology. The Quran, according to this research, is the actual divine presence by which God 'allows His own being to become an event,' a presence that the authors believe to be the representation of divine salvation.[41] On this premise, God can be conceived of as a being with a free relationship to creation based on divine love and salvation. Efforts are made to develop this innovative understanding of the Quran's message in accordance with the creative, yet critical, approach of comparative theology. In this book, although each author is situated in his own religious tradition and aims to demonstrate

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[41]   *Ibid.*, 159.

how the comparative study in question is developing their understandings of their respective traditions, both of them at some points attempt to be *traditions*-oriented in order to make more universal claims that contribute to the improvement of the notion of Jesus across traditions involved. Such a *traditions*-orientedness is shown in statements such as this one: 'Our aim is not to compete to determine who has the better perspective on Jesus of Nazareth, but rather to advance our perspectives by remaining faithful to the truths to which we are both committed.'[42] According to the findings of this study, it is clear that the Christological and Quranic conceptions of Jesus Christ are closer to one another than was previously believed. That is to say, a more developed concept of God is born as a result of the critical correlation between Islamic and Christian theologies, in which the equally valued Christian and Muslim conceptions of Jesus Christ are compared, contrasted, and evaluated, and due to which a stronger partnership between Christianity and Islam is constructed.

Case Study 2: Towards A New Comparative Agenda in Philosophy of Religion

The second case study compares and contrasts the manner in which Muhammad Huseyn Tabatabai, a Shiite theologian, and David B. Burrell, a Catholic theologian, discuss the concept of God in their respective philosophical theologies.[43] The two main *comparata*, i.e., Tabatabai's and Burrell's approaches to the problem of God-talk, have roots in Aristotelian and Platonic philosophical traditions, which were subsequently reinterpreted by Avicenna and Aquinas, respectively. Tabatabai and Burrell have reworked Avicennan and Thomistic philosophical traditions based on their respective Abrahamic theistic heritage. This is the reason why we can talk of significant–although not complete–translatability between Tabatabai's and Burrell's philosophies of religion. The respective philosophical theologies of Tabatabai and Burrell can, arguably, be read as being at the boundary between confessional and me-

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[42]   *Ibid.*, 5.
[43]   This comparison is the subject of a forthcoming PhD thesis on the topic.

ta-confessional comparative theologies. Each of the two philosophies, through a critical reinterpretation of the theological traditions they inherited, has resulted in a greater understanding of the concept of God.

To be more specific, Burrell develops a type of philosophical theology[44] that, based on his grammaticalist reading primarily of Thomas Aquinas and occasionally of other philosophers as well as biblical material, seeks to provide an interpretation of religious language in which the transcendence and unknowability of God are compromised with the divine act of creation.[45] Accordingly, Burrell applies a Wittgensteinian/grammaticalist Thomistic approach to the problem of religious language. He conducts a comparative study between the Christian doctrine of 'Son of God' and the Quranic teaching 'God has no son', arguing that the apparent contradiction between the above two statements can be resolved if they are interpreted as grammatical assertions whose meanings are dependent upon their respective depth-grammars. The seeming incompatibility between the Islamic principle of '*tawhid*' and the Christian doctrine of 'Trinity,' says Burrell, can also be resolved in the same manner.

As with Burrell, Tabatabai also maintains that any progressive philosophy must actively seek to learn from a wide range of religions and cultures. To offer a new system better prepared to solve theological issues like the problem of religious language, he began to investigate and reinterpret the traditional philosophical theology in which he was situated. His critical approach to the philosophical theologies he inherited from Avicenna and Mulla Sadra, his reworking of old philosophical concepts and methods, and his development of new conceptual frame-

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[44]   According to Burrell, while it is possible to use the terms 'philosophy of religion' and 'philosophical theology' interchangeably, it is more reasonable to use the term 'philosophical theology' for any tradition-oriented investigation, including Burrell's own work, i.e., an investigation whose progress is impossible 'without attending to the religious traditions which animate its inquiry.' See David B. Burrell, *Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 1.

[45]   For more study see Burrell, *Towards a Jewish-Christian-Muslim Theology*; Burrell, *Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions*; David B. Burrell, "Analogy, Creation, and Theological Language," in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010); David B. Burrell, *Aquinas: God and Action* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979).

works (including the concept of *itibariyyat*) are proof of this. Tabatabai argues that fruitful comparative studies–such as comparative studies he, along with French philosopher Henry Corbin, has conducted of religious texts and mystic teachings of a few religious traditions (including the Gospel of John, the Upanishads, and the Tao Te Ching)[46]–must be done through a critical examination of teachings and beliefs found in *comparata*. Due to his engagements with a range of theological and philosophical interpretations, both inside and outside of Islamic tradition, he was able to develop a mystical-philosophical theology,[47] which strives to be less problematic and more constructive than the previous studies carried out by his predecessors in his tradition.

Despite the fact that the philosophical theologies of Tabatabai and Burrell have occasionally crossed certain confessional boundaries, in the end they are considered to fall within the confines of confessional and, at times, meta-confessional comparative theologies. Recently, however, an alternative idea has been argued for which presents Burrell not as a 'confessional' thinker or even a 'meta-confessional' thinker, but rather as something that goes beyond such categories. Farina and Valkenberg (2022), following in the footsteps of Cornille, claim that the reciprocal illumination that was intended in Burrell's comparative work can be considered as an interreligious comparative theology. If this proposal is accepted, then, arguably, Tabatabai's philosophical theology can also be viewed as an example of interreligious comparative theology. Note that, whichever label we use, the philosophical theologies of both thinkers should still be distinguished from the field of philosophy of religion because, in the end, they are nevertheless *tradition*-oriented endeavors.[48]

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[46]   Siyyid Huseyn Nasr, "Introduction," in *Muhammad Huseyn Tabatabai, Shiite Islam,* trans. Siyyid Huseyn Nasr (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), 24; Hamid Algar, "Allama Siyyid Muhammad Hussain Tabatabai: Philosopher, Exegete, and Gnostic," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 17, no. 3 (2006): 344; Muhammad Huseyn Tabatabai, *Shiih: Majmuih-Yi Muzakirat Ba Prufisur Hanri Kurban*, ed. Ali Ahmadi and Hadi Khusrowshahi (Qum: Risalat, 1978).

[47]   Muhammad Legenhausen, "ʿAllamah Tabatabaʾi and Contemporary Philosophical Theology," in *Contemporary Topics of Islamic Thought* (Tehran: Alhoda, 2000).

[48]   Pim Valkenberg et al., "Introduction," in *A Companion to Comparative Theology*, ed. Pim Valkenberg et al., vol. 2, Brill's Companions to Modern Theology, Volume 2 (Leiden; Brill, 2022), 12–13.

The approach I have been developing in the present study, however, while comparing the philosophical theologies of Tabatabai and Burrell, aims to be comparative philosophy of religion rather than comparative philosophical theology. It attempts to move beyond the theologies of the two thinkers while taking theoretical advantage of merging certain components of their approaches. The *traditions*-oriented nature of this study suggests that it does not seek to conduct comparative research from either a Shiite or a Thomistic viewpoint, but rather from a position in which both Shiite and Thomistic views are accorded equal value. In addition to its *traditions*-orientedness, it does not seek neutrality, since a neutral approach which adopts an agnostic view on religions would move beyond the *comparata* in a manner that would refuse to see them as legitimate ways of truth-seeking.

In this case, it is possible to highlight more than one *tertium comparationis* between the two *comparata* in order to clarify the implications of being *traditions*-oriented and avoiding neutrality. They include an adherence to an Abrahamic cosmology (ethical-monotheistic understanding of the cosmos, humanity, and reality, and their relationship to one another), the recourse to analogous interpretative and conceptual resources in western and Islamic traditions (e.g., their reworking of Aristotelian and Platonic categories), and the isomorphism between Burrell's 'way of analogy' and Tabatabai's principle of 'focal meaning.'

Concluding Remarks

In light of what has been explicated about the methodology of comparative philosophy of religion, which is illuminated and supported by insights learnt from the two case studies, a *traditions*-oriented–but not merely 'neutral'–approach to comparative philosophy of religion is proposed in this paper. According to key elements of this approach, the explanatory method incorporates a conceptual analysis with a formal-evaluative task, since the explanation of concepts assists the comparer to obtain a deeper and more adequate understanding of *comparata* in order for a successful comparison to be conducted. This is because a philosophical comparison necessitates an in-depth examination of all sides, which enables a deep knowledge of *comparata*. Identifying the

grammatical structures at work in religious language is a crucial strategy in gaining an appropriate understanding of *comparata*. The first step to performing this task effectively is to pay close attention to the linguistic appearances of words and expressions (surface-grammar). As required of any comparative study, and the comparative philosophy of religion is no exception, it is critical to identify similarities, which are resemblances between certain characteristics shared by all *comparata*. This paper's approach avoids affirming the presence of a common core across the *comparata*, rather it affirms the fruitful presence of quasi-universals, but not fully-fledged universals, in a genuinely comparative study. The family-resemblance principle underlies the kind of universality represented by quasi-universals. It is demonstrated that in a comparative study there are some quasi-universals (such as hybrid conceptions) that serve to illustrate the interconnectedness of the traditions involved in the comparison.[49] In addition to identifying affinities, the task of contrasting[50] not only differences but also disagreements between the *comparata* becomes a must.

It is argued that the philosophical approach of comparative philosophy of religion must be characterized by the importance it places on reflection in addressing the problem at hand. According to this account, to be reflective entails being flexible in one's approach to an issue by approaching it from a number of viewpoints and being willing to modify one's strategy at different times and in different settings. In addition to reflectiveness, it includes a formalized analysis, which imparts generalizability and universality to the process. In this respect, a formalized analysis varies from reflectiveness, which is a gradual process involving a self-correction mechanism. Nonetheless, the combination of these rather distinctive features suggests a 'de-essentialized' approach that overcomes the aforementioned forms of universalism and relativism that result in essentialism and incommensurability, respectively. Such a de-essentialized method enables a reciprocal attunement in

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[49]   On the universality of quasi-universals, see van Brakel and Ma, "Necessary Preconditions of the Practice of Comparative Philosophy."

[50]   For a discussion on the notion of contrast see Panikkar, "What Is Comparative Philosophy Comparing?"; Daya Krishna, "Comparative Philosophy: What It Is and What It Ought to Be," *Diogenes* 34, no. 136 (1986): 58, https://doi.org/10.1177/039219218603413604.

comparing *comparata* based on the concept of family resemblance. In order to achieve ideal attunement, critical correlations between various spheres must be of immense value. This allows the comparative philosophy of religion to operate as a problem-solver by using the comparative method, which not only examines problematic situations but also resolves them by undergoing necessary adjustments. In its culmination, the philosophical method applies grammatical analysis to determine the depth-grammar of different assertions. Understood in this way, the comparative philosophy of religion is an approach that strives for an illuminative and imaginative interpretation, enabling us to illustrate how comparison entails the development of our knowledge of the *tertium comparationis* at issue. Such an integrative approach transcends the mere juxtaposition of *comparata* with the aim of enhancing the comparative work as a whole. In conclusion, although a *traditions*-oriented method in comparative philosophy of religion strives to be meta-confessional on the one hand, it avoids approaching the *comparata* with a neutral–agnostic–attitude on the other. The outcome of the application of the methodology of such a comparative philosophy of religion in a Judeo-Christian-Islamic context is a particular mode of the Abrahamic philosophy of religion.

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ABSTRACTS

Sanjoy Barua Chowdhury
The Buddhist Concept of Paṭiccasamuppāda *Based on Pāli Manuscripts: Genesis, Meanings, Annotated Translation, Interpretation and Doctrinal Significance*

The concept of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is regarded as one of the most profound and subtle teachings imparted by the historical Buddha (563–483 BCE) since the inception of his teachings. In addition to its doctrinal record in the mainstream Buddhist languages of the Pāli and Sanskrit traditions, the Buddhist concept of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* has been developed by numerous scholars over 2600 years and has contributed to evolving doctrinal components in many dialects in South and Southeast Asia. Focusing on the Pāli tradition and *Nikāya* manuscripts, this paper aims to clarify the origins of *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, including its meaning, annotated translation, interpretation and doctrinal significance. Prior to both academics and practitioners, an in-depth study of this research reveals why and to what degree the Pāli tradition values the idea of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* as articulating its insight into how to attain the path of ultimate liberation from a Buddhist perspective.

Keywords: Buddha, Paṭiccasamuppāda, *Pāli Manuscripts,* Nikāya *Texts, Buddhism.*

Kapila Abhayawansa
Theravāda Buddhism: The Sri Lankan Contribution to its Progress

Sri Lanka is the only country that has seen Theravāda Buddhism established, preserved, and continue to exist up to the present since the missions to other countries from its birth in India. It is a historical fact that after the Third Buddhist Council, missionaries were dispatched to nine countries for the propagation of Theravāda Buddhism. There is no historical evidence to confirm that any of the nine countries except Sri Lanka was able to preserve Theravāda Buddhism and keep it in its original form throughout the course of time. On the other hand, Sri Lanka secures the honour and credit to have been the centre of Theravāda Buddhism for a considerable time.

The present paper deals with the way Sri Lanka contributed immensely to the establishment, protection, and flourishing of Theravāda Buddhism as a unique

tradition of Buddhist thought. In this respect, our attention is focused mainly on the exegetical literature of the Theravāda tradition which will shed much light on both the theoretical and practical aspects of the tradition. The Sri Lankan *Mahāvihāra* community of monks was responsible for providing a vast exegetical literature which consists of commentaries, sub-commentaries, sub-sub-commentaries, and the compendiums based on the Theravāda canon brought to Sri Lanka. The writing down of the Theravāda Pāḷi canon in Sri Lanka for the first time also marks a unique event in the history of Buddhism. The contribution made by Sri Lanka to preserve the Pāḷi canon by this means was highly instrumental in preserving it in its original form. Further, Sri Lanka was a source of inspiration to other Theravāda Buddhist countries to revitalize their Buddhism in accordance with the more orthodox form of Theravāda.

Key words: Theravāda Buddhism, Pāḷi Canon, Commentaries, Sub-commentaries, Manuals, Visuddhimagga.

Matthew A. Kosuta
Thai Religion and the Viability of the Construct of 'Cult'

This article takes the construct of 'cult' as used in academic work, defined in part as a 'social formation', and applies it to Thai religion in order to assess its viability as a descriptive and/or analytical category in the Thai religious context while highlighting elements of Thai religious belief and practice to identify possible cognate words to 'cult' in the Thai language (wai (pay respect), būchā (sacrifice, worship), būang sūang (worship, appease), etc.). The article presents an overview of the use of cult, or lack thereof, in current research on Thai religion (worship of Buddha, monks, kings – living and deceased, revered monks, Rahu, local deities and spirits). Reference will be made to the extensive use of 'cult' in studies of Greek and Roman religion. Outcomes show that in Thai religion there is rarely, if ever, formal membership in ritual practice and worship is fluid with individual Thais free to move between what can be termed 'cults' thus weakening the viability of the term. While one can certainly say the "cult of King Naresuan", the fluidity of Thai religions strains the parameters of the construct of 'cult' as a social formation in Thailand.

Key words: cult, religion, spirits, Thai, worship.

Luka Benedičič
The Burning Monk: A Review of a Buddhist's Self-Immolation during the Vietnam War

This paper is a study of the self-immolation of the Mahayana Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc in 1963, Saigon. It highlights some of the reactions to this event, as well as more recent academic analyses, and contrasts them with the letter of the monk Thich Nhat Hanh who disagreed that the self-immolation was a protest or suicide. This ontological discrepancy motivated new research approaches. In order to show it as studyable, the paper thematizes it by introducing the conceptual pair of visible-invisible. It presents a discussion by Mario Blaser that addresses the field of epistemology and ontology, also commenting on some fundamental theoretical approaches such as the ontological turn and cosmopolitics. The paper argues that the invisible – for example ontological – contents of the event have been overlooked in many analyses, or oversimplified by using an objectivist or political vocabulary.

Key words: Engaged Buddhism, Politics, Cosmopolitics, Ontological turn, Western-Centrism.

Guiyu Su, Yaoping Liu
Fo Guang Shan's Expansion in the Religious Market of Thailand: A SWOT Analysis

As one of the prominent Mahayana Buddhist institutions from Taiwan, Fo Guang Shan (FGS) entered the religious market of Thailand as early as the 1990s. Its influence has grown tremendously among the local Chinese communities and Thai society. Despite this, there is a dearth of scholarship dedicated to FGS's market expansion in Theravada-dominated Thailand. Through a SWOT analysis, this paper explores FGS's marketing strategy for the Thai religious market. The findings suggest that FGS bears certain strengths, such as its appealing humanistic Buddhist doctrine, gift-giving networking skills and its strong emotional bonds with the Chinese communities in Thailand. These strengths have brought and will continuously provide FGS with opportunities for further expansion. However, FGS's weakness is always there and obvious, given its foreign and non-mainstream nature and questionable legitimacy of existing as a Buddhist institution (or temple) in Thailand. All this has already caused threats to FGS's missionary clergies and

sanctuaries, mainly based in the Bangkok area, not to mention the growingly fierce competition from its Thai Theravada and local-born Mahayana counterparts.

Key words: Thailand, FGS, religious market, marketing strategy, SWOT analysis.

Jane Dillon
A Case Study on the Consecration of Space at the Mahidol University Salaya Campus

This article presents the phenomenon of religious revival in the twentieth century through a case study of phenomenology at Mahidol University Salaya campus, Thailand. The principal scope of this study is on the socio-religious construct of the contemporary Buddhist community at Mahidol University Salaya campus. The revival of religion at the university has transformed the campus into a religious space that juxtapositions its secular academic framework.

Key words: profane, religion, sacred, spirit, Thailand.

Somboon Watana
Buddhism and an Ageing Society in Thailand as a Part of Suvarnabhumi Land

Thailand is a country in Southeast Asia that was once Suvarnabhumi land with a long history of 2600 years in parallel with the history of Buddhism here. Buddhism, the major religion in Thailand, was originally propagated by two Indian Buddhist monks named Sona and Uttara. Consequently, Buddhism has contributed to the Thai people for a long time. Obviously, in the first quarter of the 21st century, the situation of the elderly population around the world has been monitored and planned. Thailand is a country in Southeast Asia that has had an Ageing Society for more than 10 years. About 93.5% of the Thai population believe in Buddhism. According to Buddhism, elderly people are valuable because of their experience and contribution, and Buddhism always teaches gratitude. Therefore, to meet the challenge of an ageing society, appropriate age-related caregiving must be subject to accountability. In the Pāli Canon of Buddhism, there are many stories and teachings about the role and significance of elderly people along with caregiving, such as parents' caregiving. The Buddha's teachings have aimed to help provide human beings with physical, moral, emotional and wisdom development for the sake of

their well-being. To follow the Buddha's compassion, Buddhism in Thailand has been interpreted and applied to the well-being of ageing people.

Key words: Buddhism, Suvarnabhumi, Thailand, Southeast Asia, Ageing Society, Ageing People.

Anja Zalta
"Dual awakening?" – Mindful Social Action in the Light of the De-contextualization of Socially Engaged Buddhism

The paper presents the concept of "dual awakening", which is based on the Buddhist mindfulness appropriated by socially engaged Buddhism as a method to recognize and implement a "wholesome" paradigm on both the social and individual level. In the first half of the paper, I analyze the idea of "dual awakening" in the Southeast Asian context, especially in the case of the Sarvodaya Sramadana movement in Sri Lanka, In the second part of the paper, I review some of the research on (mindfulness) meditation in the West to critically evaluate the de-contextualization of transferring Buddhist ideas and methods (such as cultivating empathy and compassion as a basis for social action) into the Western modernist paradigm.

Key words: socially engaged Buddhism, mindfulness, Sarvodaya, concept of "dual awakening, loving-kindness meditation, social action.

Mohammed Ilyas
Researching "On and In" Global South Countries: Southeast Asia

Over the last decade, there has been an increasing awareness that colonialism continues through various overlapping iterations of coloniality, such as politics, economics, security and academia. Academics from global north countries and global south countries have highlighted and called for the dismantling of coloniality in its various iterations. Perhaps the most vocal decolonising calls have come from global north academics wanting to decolonise global north academia in the form of epistemic decolonisation. As such, in this article, I call on global north academics researching 'on and in' global south countries to employ decolonial methodologies to avoid inadvertently reinforcing coloniality. By utilising autoethno-

graphy and critical decolonial reflexivity, I offer ways for global north academics researching on or in global south countries to guard against reinforcing coloniality during their research.

Key words: Decolonisation, Coloniality, Methodology, Research, Indigenous, Global North, Global South, Academia.

Luka Trebežnik
Radical Theology as Hermeneutics of the Impossible: John Caputo and the Eventuality of Truth

The article is dedicated to the contemporary thinker from the field of radical theology – John Caputo. By analysing the central concepts of his work, the continuity of his thought is shown and the innovation of his approaches in postmodern religious thought is highlighted. The article traces his career and reflects on some of the main stages of his writing, focusing in particular on his approach to various theories of hermeneutics and new conceptions of religion. It concludes by pointing to the possibility of future readings and new understandings of Caputo's work.

Key words: John D. Caputo, radical theology, hermeneutics, deconstruction, the impossible, postmodern religion.

Javad Taheri
Traditions-Directed Approach in the Comparative Philosophy of Religion

This paper aimed to present a novel approach to the comparative philosophy of religion which I call traditions-oriented. It is related to and yet distinct from both comparative philosophy and confessional (tradition-oriented) comparative theology. This paper begins with a reflection on the meaning and employment of 'comparison' in the context of philosophical analysis. What follows is an analysis of the nature of the comparative practice conducted under the umbrella concept of the comparative philosophy of religion. After sketching out the developmental trajectory of research through which a traditions-oriented, non-neutral, comparative philosophy of religion can emerge, the articulation and implementation of a global monotheistic philosophy of religion is suggested. Two case-studies from

the area of Muslim-Christian comparative reflection are used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the approach developed in this paper.

Keywords: traditions-oriented comparative study, comparative philosophy of religion, comparative philosophy, comparative theology.

P O V Z E T K I

Sanjoy Barua Chowdhury

Budistični koncept paṭiccasamuppāde *na podlagi pālijskih rokopisov: izvor, pomeni, komentirani prevod, interpretacija in doktrinarni pomen*

Koncept soodvisnega obstoja (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) velja za enega najglobljih in pronicljivih naukov, kar jih je zgodovinski Buda (563–483 pr. n. št.) posredoval od samega začetka svoje duhovne poti. Poleg doktrinarnih zapisov o tem budističnem konceptu v obeh osrednjih budističnih jezikih, paliju in sanskrtu, je doktrinarne elemente najti tudi v številnih narečjih južne in jugovzhodne Azije, saj so koncept *paṭiccasamuppāde* v več kot 2600 letih razvijali številni strokovnjaki in s pisanjem o njem prispevali k razvoju omenjenih prvin. Prispevek se osredotoča na palijsko izročilo in pripadajoče zbirke (*nikāye*) rokopisov, da bi pojasnil izvor nauka o soodvisnem obstoju, njegov pomen, komentirani prevod, razlago in doktrinarni pomen. Poglobljena študija o preučevanju teh tem pred akademskim in praktičnim raziskovanjem pojasni, zakaj in kako visoko palijska tradicija ceni idejo *paṭiccasamuppāde* kot ubeseditve uvida v pot, ki vodi do končne odrešitve z budistične perspektive.

Ključne besede: Buda, paṭiccasamuppāda*, palijski rokopisi, besedila iz nikāy, budizem.*

Kapila Abhayawansa

Teravadski budizem in šrilanški prispevek k njegovemu razvoju

Šrilanka je edina država, v kateri se je teravadski budizem, potem ko se je po začetku v Indiji začel z misijami širiti v tujino, uveljavil in ohranil do danes. Po Tretjem budističnem koncilu so bili misijonarji poslani v devet držav, kjer naj bi širili teravadski budizem, kar je zgodovinsko dejstvo. Zgodovinskih dokazov, ki bi potrjevali, da je ta veja budizma še kje drugje kot na Šrilanki preživela skozi stoletja in se ohranila v svoji izvirni obliki, pa ni. Šrilanka si lahko šteje v čast, obenem pa pripiše tudi vse zasluge, da je tako dolgo središče teravadskega budizma.

Pričujoči članek obravnava izjemni prispevek Šrilanke, da se je teravadski budizem kot edinstvena tradicija budistične filozofije uveljavil, ohranil in razcvetel. V tem pogledu je avtorjeva pozornost usmerjena predvsem na eksegetsko gradivo te-

ravadske tradicije, ki podrobneje osvetli tako njene teoretične kot praktične vidike. Šrilanška skupnost menihov vélikega budističnega samostana (*mahāvihāre*) je bila zadolžena za pripravo obsežne eksegetske literature, ki vključuje komentarje, komentarje komentarjev, komentarje komentarjev komentarjev in priročnike, temelječe na teravadskem kanonu, ki je bil prinesen na Šrilanko. Prvi zapis teravadskega paḷijskega kanona na Šrilanki je bil edinstven dogodek za zgodovino budizma, s katerim je Šrilanka ključno prispevala k ohranitvi kanona v izvirni obliki. Šrilanka je poleg tega navdihnila tudi druge dežele, v katerih je bil nekoč razširjen teravadski budizem, da so svojo obliko budizma poživile v duhu bolj tradicionalne teravade.

Ključne besede: teravadski budizem, paḷijski kanon, komentarji, komentarji komentarjev, priročniki, Visuddhimagga.

Matthew A. Kosuta
Tajska religija in ustreznost pojma kult

Avtor raziskuje pojem kulta v okviru tajske religije v pomenu, v katerem se uporablja v akademskih delih (kjer je delno opredeljen kot družbena tvorba), da bi ocenil ustreznost termina kot opisne in/ali analitične kategorije v tajskem verskem kontekstu. Pri tem izpostavi elemente tajskih verovanj in praks, da bi odkril morebitne kultu sorodne besede v tajščini (wai (izkazati spoštovanje), būchā (žrtev, čaščenje), būang sūang (častiti, pomiriti) itd.). V članku je podan pregled uporabe oziroma neuporabe omenjenega pojma v aktualnih raziskavah o tajskih religijah (o čaščenju Bude, menihov, kraljev − živih in preminulih, spoštovanih menihov, Rahuja, krajevnih božanstev in duhov), avtor pa predstavi tudi razširjeno rabo termina kult v raziskavah o grški in rimski religiji. Rezultati analize kažejo, da tajska religija skorajda ne pozna koncepta formalnega članstva pri ritualnih praksah, izbira oblike čaščenja pa je fluidna, saj posamezniki lahko svobodno prehajajo med skupnostmi, ki jih sicer označujemo za kulte, s čimer zmanjšujejo ustreznost samega izraza zanje. Čeprav je seveda mogoče govoriti o kultu kralja Naresuana, fluidnost tajskih religij močno razteguje parametre pojma kult kot družbene tvorbe na Tajskem.

Ključne besede: kult, religija, duhovi, Tajska, čaščenje.

Luka Benedičič
Goreči menih: preučitev primera budističnega samozažiga med vietnamsko vojno

Avtor v članku preučuje samozažig mahajanskega budističnega meniha Thicha Quanga Duca v Sajgonu leta 1963. Izpostavi nekaj odzivov na ta dogodek in novejše akademske analize ter jih kontrastira s pismom meniha Thicha Nhata Hanha, ki je nasprotoval interpretacijam, da je bil samozažig protest ali samomor. Ta ontološka diskrepanca je spodbudila nove raziskovalne pristope. Da bi diskrepanco prikazal kot preučljivo, jo avtor tematizira z vpeljevanjem pojmovnega para vidnega−nevidnega. Predstavi razpravo Maria Blaserja, ki obravnava področji epistemologije in ontologije ter komentira nekatere temeljne teoretske pristope, med njimi ontološki obrat in kozmopolitiko. Zagovarja tezo, da so bile nevidne − denimo ontološke − vsebine omenjenega dogodka v številnih analizah spregledane ali pa so bile zaradi uporabe objektivističnega ali političnega besednjaka predstavljene preveč poenostavljeno.

Ključne besede: angažirani budizem, politika, kozmopolitika, ontološki obrat, zahodnocentrizem.

Guiyu Su, Yaoping Liu
Širitev organizacije Fo Guang Shan na tajskem religijskem tržišču: SWOT analiza

Fo Guang Shan (FGS) je kot ena od vidnejših tajvanskih ustanov za mahajanski budizem vstopila na tajsko religijsko tržišče že v 90. letih prejšnjega stoletja. Njen vpliv med lokalnimi kitajskimi skupnostmi in v tajski družbi je odtlej strmo narasel, vendar je kljub temu še vedno zelo malo akademskih raziskav, ki bi se posvečale njeni širitvi na tajskem tržišču, na katerem prevladuje teravadski budizem. S SWOT analizo avtorja v prispevku preučujeta trženjsko strategijo, ki jo je organizacija FGS izdelala za tajsko religijsko tržišče. Ugotavljata, da ima FGS nekaj močnih točk − kot so privlačna humanistična budistična doktrina, uspešnost vzpostavljanja mrež obdarovanja ter trdne čustvene vezi s kitajskimi skupnostmi na Tajskem −, ki ustvarjajo priložnosti za nadaljnje širjenje te organizacije v državi. Vendar pa so hkrati vedno prisotne in očitne tudi šibke točke organizacije FGS, namreč njena tujost in njen 'nemainstremovski' značaj ter vprašljiva legitimnost njenega obstoja kot budistične inštitucije (ali templja) na Tajskem. Te so tudi že spodbudile grožnje misijonarjem in svetiščem organizacije Fo Guang Shan, ki se večinoma nahajajo na območju Bangkoka, občutiti pa je tudi vse močnejše rivalstvo s teravadskimi budističnimi ustanovami kot tudi z domačimi mahajanskimi budstičnimi organizacijami.

Ključne besede: Tajska, FGS, religijsko tržišče, trženjska strategija, SWOT analiza.

Jane Dillon
*Študija primera o posvetitvi prostora v univerzitetnem naselju Univerze princa
Mahidola v Salaji*

Prispevek predstavi pojav oživitve religije v 20. stoletju, in sicer skozi fenomenološko študijo primera univerzitetnega naselja Univerze princa Mahidola v Salaji, na Tajskem. Študija se osredinja na družbeno-religiozni model sodobne budistične skupnosti v omenjenem naselju. Z oživitvijo religije znotraj univerze se je univerzitetno naselje spremenilo v verski prostor, ki kontrastira posvetnemu akademskemu okviru univerze.

Ključne besede: posvetno, religija, sveto, duh, Tajska.

Somboon Watana
Budizem in starajoča se družba na Tajskem kot del »Zlate dežele«

Tajska je država v jugovzhodni Aziji, ki je bila nekoč del tako imenovane »Zlate dežele« (Suvarnabhumi), z 2600-letno zgodovino in enako dolgo zgodovino budizma na svojih tleh. Budizem, osrednja vera v državi (okoli 93,5 % prebivalstva je verujočih budistov), je torej že dolgo pomemben del življenja tajskega naroda. Vse od začetka 21. stoletja se položaj starejšega prebivalstva po svetu skrbno spremlja in načrtuje – Tajska že 10 let sodi med države s starajočo se družbo. Za uspešno spopadanje z izzivi tovrstne družbe je treba predvsem odgovorno poskrbeti za ustrezno oskrbo ostarelih. V budizmu so starejši ljudje cenjeni zaradi svojih izkušenj in preteklih prispevkov družbi, vera pa tudi uči hvaležnosti. Palijski kanon budizma vsebuje veliko zgodb in naukov tako o vlogi in pomembnosti starejših ljudi kot o starševski skrbi zanje. Namen Budovih naukov je v tem, da človeka spodbujajo k napredovanju v telesnem, moralnem, čustvenem in intelektualnem razvoju in s tem k skrbi za lastno in skupno dobrobit. Tajski budizem sledi idealu sočutja s prizadevanjem za dobrobit starejših.

Ključne besede: budizem, Suvarnabhumi, Tajska, jugovzhodna Azija, starajoča se družba, starajoče se prebivalstvo.

Anja Zalta
»Dvojno prebujenje?« − Čuječno družbeno delovanje v luči dekontekstualizacije družbeno angažiranega budizma

V prispevku je predstavljen koncept »dvojnega prebujenja«, utemeljenega v budistični čuječnosti, ki si jo je družbeno angažirani budizem prisvojil kot metodo za prepoznavanje in uresničevanje »zdrave« paradigme tako na ravni družbe kot posameznika. V prvem delu prispevka avtorica analizira idejo »dvojnega prebujenja« v kontekstu jugovzhodne Azije, predvsem v okviru gibanja Sarvodaya Shramadana na Šrilanki. V drugem delu preuči nekaj raziskav o (čuječnostni) meditaciji na Zahodu, da bi kritično ocenila dekontekstualizacijo prenosa budističnih idej in metod (npr. spodbujanje empatije in sočutja kot osnove za družbeno delovanje) v Zahodno modernistično paradigmo.

Ključne besede: družbeno angažirani budizem, čuječnost, Sarvodaya, koncept »dvojnega prebujenja«, meditacija ljubeče naklonjenosti, družbeno delovanje.

Mohammed Ilyas
Raziskave o državah globalnega juga, ki potekajo v njih samih: jugovzhodna Azija

V zadnjem desetletju se povečuje zavedanje, da se kolonializem nadaljuje v številnih delno sovpadajočih različicah, med drugim na področju politike, gospodarstva, varnosti in v akademski sferi. Mnogi akademiki iz držav globalnega severa in globalnega juga so osvetlili problem kolonialnosti in njegovih različnih ponovitev ter pozvali k njegovi odpravi. Verjetno naglasnejši pozivi k dekolonizaciji prihajajo iz vrst akademikov iz držav globalnega severa, ki želijo dekolonizirati lastno akademsko sfero z epistemsko dekolonizacijo. Kot eden izmed njih pozivam kolege, ki raziskujejo globalni jug ali izvajajo raziskave v državah, ki mu pripadajo, naj uporabljajo delokonialne metode, da bi se izognili nenamerni krepitvi kolonialnosti. Z uporabo avtoetnografije in kritične dekolonialne refleksije, ki jo predlagam v pričujočem prispevku, lahko akademiki iz držav globalnega severa, ki izvajajo raziskave o državah globalnega juga in v njih samih, preprečijo, da bi s svojim delom nehote krepili kolonialnost.

Ključne besede: dekolonizacija, kolonialnost, metodologija, raziskovanje, staroselski, globalni sever, globalni jug, akademska sfera.

Luka Trebežnik
Radikalna teologija kot hermenevtika nemogočega: John Caputo in dogodkovnost resnice

Članek se posveča delu Johna Caputa, sodobnega misleca s področja radikalne teologije. Z analizo osrednjih pojmov, ki jih je izbral za oznake svojih projektov, je proučena kontinuiteta njegove pisave in poudarjena inovativnost njegovih pristopov k postmoderni religijski misli. Prikazana je njegova miselna formacija in premišljene so nekatere izmed ključnih etap njegovega ustvarjanja, še zlasti njegovi pristopi k različnim teorijam hermenevtike in novi zasnovi pojma religije. V končni fazi je v članku poudarjena možnost prihodnjih branj in novih razumevanj Caputovega dela.

Ključne besede: John D. Caputo, radikalna teologija, hermenevtika, dekonstrukcija, nemogoče, postmoderna religija.

Javad Taheri
V tradicije usmerjen pristop v primerjalni filozofiji religije

Namen članka je predstaviti nov pristop k primerjalni filozofiji religije, ki ga avtor imenuje »usmerjen na tradicije«. Povezan je tako s primerjalno filozofijo kot s konfesionalno (v tradicijo usmerjeno) primerjalno teologijo, obenem pa se od njiju pomembno razlikuje. Avtor uvodoma poda razmislek o pomenu in rabi »primerjanja« oziroma »primerjav« v kontekstu filozofske analize. Sledi analiza primerjalne prakse, ki se izvaja znotraj krovnega koncepta primerjalne filozofije religije. Avtorjevemu orisu razvojne poti raziskave, skozi katero razkriva v tradicije usmerjeno, nenevtralno metodo primerjalne filozofije religije, sledijo predlogi za oblikovanje in udejanjenje globalne monoteistične filozofije religije. Za ponazoritev učinkovitosti pristopa, ki ga avtor razvija v tem prispevku, sta opisani dve študiji primerov s področja muslimansko-krščanske primerjalne refleksije.

Ključne besede: v tradicije usmerjena primerjalna študija, primerjalna filozofija religije, primerjalna filozofija, primerjalna teologija.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS / O AVTORICAH IN AVTORJIH

SANJOY BARUA CHOWDHURY

Sanjoy Barua Chowdhury is a Lecturer at the College of Religious Studies (CRS) of Mahidol University (MU), Thailand. He completed a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU) in Thailand. His research interests include South Asian Buddhist history and scriptures, religion-psychology, global mindful movements and a socio-cultural anthropological approach to religions. He has contributed several academic papers on Buddhist philosophy, psychology, sacred scriptures of South Asia, and contemporary religious studies to various research journals.

Dr. Sanjoy Barua Chowdhury predava na Fakulteti za religiologijo Univerze princa Mahidola na Tajskem. Doktoriral je iz budističnih študij na Univerzi Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya na Tajskem. Raziskovalno se ukvarja z zgodovino in svetimi spisi južnoazijskega budizma, psihologijo religije, globalnimi gibanji čuječnosti in sociokulturnim antropološkim pristopom k religijam. Njegovi strokovni članki, ki zajemajo področja budistične filozofije, psihologije, svetih spisov Južne Azije in sodobne religiologije, so bili objavljeni v različnih znanstvenih revijah.

KAPILA ABHAYAWANSA

Prof. Kapila Abhayawansa is a Buddhist scholar specializing in Pali, Sanskrit, Buddhist philosophy, and Western and Indian philosophies. A graduate of the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, he obtained a Master's degree in philosophy from Banaras Hindu University, India and earned the title Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. He served as head of the Department of Buddhist Culture of the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, and is currently a permanent professor holding the posts of the Dean of the Faculty of Religious Studies and Vice Rector for Academic Affairs at the International Buddhist College in Thailand. Recently, he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters (DLitt) by the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, in recognition of his contribution to the field of Buddhist studies.

Prof. Kapila Abhayawansa je strokovnjak za budizem, specializiran za pali, sanskrt, budistično filozofijo ter zahodno in indijsko filozofijo. Dodiplomski študij je zaključil na Univerzi v Peradeniji na Šrilanki, magistrski naziv iz filozofije je pridobil na Hinduistični univerzi v Varanasiju v Indiji, doktorat iz filozofije pa na Univerzi v Kelaniji na Šrilanki. Nekdaj predstojnik Oddelka za budistično kulturo na Podiplomskem inštitutu za palijske in budistične študije Univerze v Kelaniji je zdaj redni profesor ter dekan na Fakulteti za religijske študije in prorektor za študijske zadeve na Mednarodni budistični fakulteti na Tajskem. Nedavno mu je Podiplomski inštitut za palijske in budistične študije Univerze v Kelaniji (Tajska) podelil častni doktorat iz književnosti kot priznanje za prispevek k razvoju budističnih študij.

MATTHEW A. KOSUTA

Matthew A. Kosuta received his PhD in Sciences des religions from the Université du Québec à Montréal in 2003. He is a Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga. He specializes in Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia; Thai Religion; religion and war; and theory and method in religious studies. His broader areas interest are the history of Southeast Asia, Asian religions, and military history. Prior to joining UT Chattanooga, Matthew taught at the College of Religious Studies, Mahidol University for fifteen years from where he retired as an associate professor.

Matthew A. Kosuta je leta 2003 doktoriral iz religiologije na Quebeški univerzi v Montrealu in je predavatelj na Oddelku za filozofijo in religijo na Tennnesseejski univerzi v Chattanoogi. Specializiran je za področja teravadskega budizma v jugovzhodni Aziji, tajske religije, religije in vojne ter religioloških teorij in metod, njegov širši raziskovalni interes pa zajema zgodovino jugovzhodne Azije, azijske religije in vojaško zgodovino. Preden se je pridružil Tennnesseejski univerzi, je petnajst let poučeval na Fakulteti za religiologijo Univerze princa Mahidola na Tajskem, nazadnje kot izredni profesor.

LUKA BENEDIČIČ

Luka Benedičič (1998) is an undergraduate student of the sociology of culture at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. He is interested in interdisciplinary approaches to the study of cultural heritage, memory, religion, art and the body. In his bachelor's thesis, he discussed the processes of how something becomes a political issue – mainly from the perspective of the body, the visual, performance and pro-

test. In his free time, he writes and publishes poems, book reviews, field reports and essays on culture. Recently, he was featured in the Young Pen ("Mlado pero") column in the newspaper Delo.

Luka Benedičič (1998) je dodiplomski študent sociologije kulture na Filozofski fakulteti v Ljubljani. Njegovi raziskovalni interesi so interdisciplinarni pristopi k raziskovanju kulturne dediščine, spomina, religije, umetnosti in telesa. V svojem diplomskem delu obravnava procese, skozi katere nekaj postane politično vprašanje – predvsem z vidika telesa, vizualnega, performansa in protesta. V prostem času piše in objavlja poezijo, knjižne recenzije, reportaže in eseje o kulturi. Nedavno se je v časopisu Delo predstavil v rubriki Mlado pero.

GUIYU SU

Ms. Su is a research student from the Department of Management Science, Institute of Science Innovation and Culture, Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep. She holds a high interest in Buddhist arts and practices of different traditions. Academically, she often tries various approaches to studying Buddhist institutions active within and outside Thailand.

Guiyu Su je študentka raziskovalka na Oddelku za upravne vede na Inštitutu za znanstvene ino-vacije in kulturo na Kraljevi univerzi za tehnologijo v Bangkoku. Zelo jo zanimajo budistične umetnosti in prakse različnih tradicij. Na akademskem področju pogosto preizkuša različne pristo-pe k preučevanju budističnih inštitucij, ki delujejo na Tajskem in zunaj nje.

YAOPING LIU

Dr. Liu received his Ph.D. in religious studies from Mahidol University, where he served as a lecturer of Buddhist studies from 2017 to 2021. He is currently the Director of Institute of Science Innovation and Culture at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep. Dr. Liu has dedicated his scholarly attention to the Chinese Buddhist Communities in Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries. He was recently granted by the American Council of Learned Societies and Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation a new professorship in Buddhist Studies.

Dr. Yaoping Liu je doktoriral iz religiologije na Univerzi princa Mahidola, kjer je med letoma 2017 in 2021 tudi delal kot predavatelj, zdaj pa je direktor Inštituta za znanstvene inovacije in kulturo na Kraljevi univerzi za tehnologijo v Bangkoku.

Dr. Liu se raziskovalno posveča kitajskim budističnim skupnostim na Tajskem in v drugih državah jugovzhodne Azije. Nedavno sta mu ACLS (Ameriški svet znanstvenih združenj) in Fundacija družine Roberta H. N. Hoja podelila profesuro v budističnih študijah.

JANE DILLON

Jane Dillon is a PhD candidate in the Department of Religious Studies specializing in religious politics. She has completed her PhD dissertation on secularism and modernity. She has a BA in Southeast Asian Studies and an MA in International Relations. Her research field is religion and politics in Thailand.

Jane Dillon je doktorska kandidatka iz religiologije, specializirana za religijsko politiko. Tema njene doktorske disertacije je sekularizem in sodobnost. Dillon je diplomantka jugovzhodnoazijskih študij in magistrica mednarodnih odnosov. Njeno raziskovalno področje je religija in politika Tajske.

SOMBOON WATANA

Somboon Watana earned a Ph.D. degree in Philosophy from Panjab University, India, and is currently an Assistant Professor in Religious studies at Mahidol University, College of Religious Studies, Thailand. His areas of interest in research concerned Buddhism and *Suvarnabhumi*, Buddhism and ageing society, and Buddhism and meditation.

Somboon Watana je doktoriral iz filozofije na Univerzi v Pandžabu v Indiji in je trenutno docent za religiologijo na Fakulteti za religiologijo Univerze princa Mahidola na Tajskem. Njegova raziskovalna področja so budizem in *Suvarṇabhūmi*, budizem in starajoča se družba ter budizem in meditacija.

ANJA ZALTA

Dr. Anja Zalta studied sociology, ethnology and cultural anthropology. She is an Associate Professor for Sociology of Religion at the Sociology Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and author of numerous articles on religious traditions and identities, Islam in Slovenia and in the Balkans, inter--religious and inter-cultural dialogue, socially engaged Buddhism, Asian religious paradigms, and the role of religion(s) in European cultural and religious history. Between 2014 and 2015, she was a Visiting Researcher at the Nan Tien Institute

(Applied Buddhist Studies) in Wollongong. Her current research is focused on the question of (religious) minorities and human rights.

Dr. Anja Zalta je študirala sociologijo, etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo. Je izredna profesorica za sociologijo religije na Oddelku za sociologijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani in avtorica številnih člankov o religijskih tradicijah in identitetah, islamu v Sloveniji in na Balkanu, medreligijskem in medkulturnem dialogu, družbeno angažiranem budizmu, azijskih religijskih paradigmah ter vlogi religij(e) v evropski kulturni in verski zgodovini. Med letoma 2014 in 2015 je kot gostujoča raziskovalka delala na Inštitutu Nan Tien (za uporabne budistične študije) v Wollongongu v Avstraliji. Trenutno se raziskovalno posveča vprašanju (verskih) manjšin in človekovih pravic.

MOHAMMED ILYAS

Dr. Mohammed Ilyas is a lecturer in Criminology at the University of Derby. His research focuses on criminology, political violence (the global north and global south) and decoloniality. He is also interested in religion, race, hate crime, ethnicity and inequality. His current research focuses on coloniality in the terrorism industry.

Dr. Mohammed Ilyas predava kriminologijo na Univerzi v Derbyju v Veliki Britaniji. Raziskovalno se osredotoča na kriminologijo, politično nasilje (globalni sever in globalni jug) in dekolonialnost. Zanimajo ga tudi tematike religije, rase, kaznivih dejanj iz sovraštva, etnične pripadnosti in neenakosti. Njegove aktualne raziskave obravnavajo kolonialnost in industrijo terorizma.

LUKA TREBEŽNIK

Luka Trebežnik, PhD, is a post-doctoral researcher at the Science and Research Centre Koper. His research work covers the various fields of modern philosophy (especially post-war French thought, particularly deconstruction and phenomenology) and religious studies (the relationship between faith and reason, the status of truth in religious and philosophical discourses, mystical traditions, Jewish and Christian elements in modern thought).

Luka Trebežnik je doktor religiologije, zaposlen v Znanstveno-raziskovalnem središču Koper, kjer izvaja podoktorski projekt. Njegovo raziskovalno delo sega na področja sodobne filozofije (predvsem francoske povojne misli, še zlasti dekon-

strukcije in fenomenologije) in filozofije religije (proučevanje razmerja med vero in razumom, statusov resnice v religijskih in filozofskih diskurzivnih praksah, mističnih izročil, judovskih in krščanskih elementov v sodobni misli).

JAVAD TAHERI

Javad Taheri is now pursuing a double PhD research project at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. His research aims to provide a novel comparative perspective to the field of philosophy of religion. The process through which Christian and Muslim philosophical theologies interact is of general interest to him. In particular, he is interested in an approach that could be employed to establish a new concept of God that is shared by Christians and Muslims.

Javad Taheri opravlja dvojni doktorski raziskovalni projekt na Univerzi v Ljubljani in na Univerzi v Groningenu, na Nizozemskem. Cilj njegove raziskave je ponuditi novo primerjalno perspektivo za področje filozofije religije. Njegov širši raziskovalni interes je usmerjen v proces sodelovanja in medsebojnega vplivanja krščanske in muslimanske filozofske teologije, ožji pa v pristop, ki bi se lahko uporabil za uveljavitev novega koncepta Boga, ki bi bil skupen kristjanom in muslimanom.

TRANSPLANTED BUDDHISM IN AND FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA