

Spotlight

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November 2017

Intercultural Religions

Chinese and Buddhist Philosophy in early Twentieth-Century German Thought by Eric S. Nelson [Bloomsbury Academic, 9781350002555]

Presenting a comprehensive portrayal of the reading of Chinese and Buddhist philosophy in early twentieth-century German thought, [Chinese and Buddhist Philosophy in early Twentieth-Century German Thought](#) examines the implications of these readings for contemporary issues in comparative and intercultural philosophy.

Through a series of case studies from the late 19th-century and early 20th-century, Eric Nelson focuses on the reception and uses of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism in German philosophy, covering figures as diverse as Buber, Heidegger, and Misch. He argues that the growing intertextuality between traditions cannot be appropriately interpreted through notions of exclusive identities, closed horizons, or unitary traditions. Providing an account of the context, motivations, and hermeneutical strategies of early twentieth-century European thinkers' interpretation of Asian philosophy, Nelson also throws new light on the question of the relation between Heidegger and Asian philosophy. Reflecting the growing interest in the possibility of intercultural and global philosophy, [Chinese and Buddhist Philosophy in early Twentieth-Century German Thought](#) opens the possibility of a more inclusive intercultural conception of philosophy. [Continue](#)

The Suttanipata: An Ancient Collection of the Buddha's Discourses Together with Its Commentaries edited and translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi [The Teachings of the Buddha, Wisdom Publications, 9781614294290]

This landmark volume in the *Teachings of the Buddha* series translates the *Suttanipata*, a text that matches the *Dhammapada* in its concise power and its centrality to the Buddhist tradition. Celebrated translator Bhikkhu Bodhi illuminates this text and its classical commentaries with elegant renderings and authoritative annotations.

The [Suttanipata](#), or "Group of Discourses" is a collection of discourses ascribed to the Buddha that includes some of the most popular suttas of the Pali Canon, among

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them the *Discourse on Loving-Kindness Sutta*. The suttas are primarily in verse, though several are in mixed prose and verse. The [Suttanipata](#) contains discourses that extol the figure of the *muni*, the illumined sage, who wanders homeless completely detached from the world. Other suttas, such as the *Discourse on Downfall* and the *Discourse on Blessings*, establish the foundations of Buddhist lay ethics. The last two chapters—the Atthakavagga (Chapter of Octads) and the Parayanavagga (The Way to the Beyond)—are among the most ancient parts of the Pali Canon. The Atthakavagga advocates a critical attitude toward views and doctrines. The Parayanavagga is a beautiful poem in which sixteen spiritual seekers travel across India to meet the Buddha and ask him profound questions pertaining to the highest goal.

The commentary, the *Paramatthajotika*, relates the background story to each sutta and explains each verse in detail. The volume includes numerous excerpts from the *Niddesa*, an ancient commentary already included in the Pali Canon, which offers detailed expositions of each verse in the Atthakavagga, the Parayanavagga, and the *Rhinoceros Horn Sutta*.

Translator Bhikkhu Bodhi provides an insightful, in-depth introduction, a guide to the individual suttas, extensive notes, a list of parallels to the discourses of the *Suttanipata*, and a list of the numerical sets mentioned in the commentaries. [continued](#)

[Unforgetting Chaitanya: Vaishnavism and Cultures of Devotion in Colonial Bengal by Varuni Bhatia \[Oxford University Press, 9780190686246\]](#)

What role do pre-modern religious traditions play in the formation of modern secular identities? In [Unforgetting Chaitanya](#), Varuni Bhatia examines late-nineteenth-century transformations of Bengali Vaishnavism—a vibrant and multifaceted religious tradition that traces its origins to the fifteenth century Krishna devotee Chaitanya (1486-1533). Drawing on an extensive body of hitherto unexamined archival material, Bhatia finds that both religious modernizers and secular voices among the Bengali middle-class invoked Chaitanya, portraying him simultaneously as a local hero, a Hindu reformer, and as God almighty. She argues that these claims should be understood in relation to the recovery of a "pure" Bengali culture and history in a period of nascent, but rising, anti-colonialism in the region.

Who is a true Vaishnava? In the late nineteenth century, this question assumed urgency as debates around questions of authenticity appeared prominently in the Bengali public sphere. These debates went on for years, even decades, causing unbridgeable rifts in personal friendships and tarnishing reputations of established scholars. Underlying these debates was the question of authoritative Bengali Vaishnavism and its role in the long-term constitution of Bengali culture and society. At stake, argues Bhatia, was the very nature and composition of an indigenously-derived modernity

inscribed through the politics of authenticity, which allowed an influential section of Hindu, upper-caste Bengalis to excavate their own explicitly Hindu pasts to find a people's history, a religious reformer, a casteless Hindu sect, the richest examples of Bengali literature, and a sophisticated expression of monotheistic religion. [continue](#)

[An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hindu Theology by Swami Paramatattvadas \[Cambridge University Press, 978-1107158672\] paperback](#)

[An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hindu Theology](#) provides a comprehensive doctrinal account of the Swaminarayan tradition's belief system, drawing on its rich corpus of theological literature, including the teachings of Swaminarayan himself and classical commentaries on canonical Vedāntic texts, emphasizing the dynamic Vaishnave bhakti form that allows for its distinctive place among contemporary Hindu sects and the south Asian diaspora. This book offers a comprehensive study of a modern form of Hindu theology that is growing in the place of its birth in the Indian state of Gujarat and among Indian immigrants in East Africa, Great Britain, and the United States. It is the most prominent form of transnational Hinduism because it creates networks that define and preserve ethnic and religious identity in the modern context of rapid mobility and communication. Founded by Swaminarayan (1781-1830), a religious reformer in a time of great social and political change in Gujarat, Swaminarayan Hinduism expounds a path of devotion to Swaminarayan as the final, perfect manifestation of God.

Since its inception over two hundred years ago, Swaminarayan Hinduism has flourished into a transnational movement described as one of the fastest growing Hindu groups in the world. Despite being one of the largest and most visible Hindu traditions both in India and the West, surprisingly little is known about what the Swaminarayan fellowship believes. [An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hindu Theology](#) provides a comprehensive doctrinal account of the Swaminarayan tradition's belief system, drawing on its rich corpus of theological literature, including the teachings of Swaminarayan himself and classical commentaries on canonical Vedāntic texts. Part I delineates the sources and tools of Swaminarayan Hindu theology, while Part II systematically expounds upon its distinctive five eternal entities - Parabrahman, Akṣarabrahman, māyā, īśvara and jīva - and mukti (spiritual liberation). In presenting these key themes theologically and lucidly, Swami Paramatattvadas makes the Swaminarayan Hindu belief system intelligible to scholars, students and serious readers. [continue](#)

[Monastic Wanderers: Nāth Yogīs Ascetics in Modern South Asia by Veronique Bouillier \[Routledge, 9781138095397\]](#)

How have the premodern Shaiva ascetic sect of the Nāth Yogīs (known also as the Yogīs with splitted ears) succeeded in maintaining its presence and importance until today? This book intends to give a general survey

of this sampradāya which is said to have been founded by the Siddha Gorakhnāth, known for his strong link to Haṭha Yoga. However, rather than to Yoga, the history and expansion of the Nāth sect are linked to its rich legendary corpus. Dealing first with the marks of belonging (such as the huge earrings worn by the fully initiated Yogīs) which give the sect its unity, the book then focuses on its organization and explores the dialectics between the wandering Yogīs and the monastic settlements.

The Nāth monasteries belong to two categories: the pañcāyati maṭhs, collectively owned and managed by the sectarian authorities, which ensure the permanency of the sect, and the nījī maṭhs, owned on a personal basis and transmitted from guru to disciple, which permits innovative initiatives

The book gives a detailed account of two pañcāyati monasteries, the Kadri Maṭh of Mangalore where its head's enthronement is spectacularly performed every twelve years, and the Caughera Maṭh of Dang Valley in Nepal, the royal foundation of which gives a glimpse of the complex relationships that can exist between monasteries and kingdoms. It then focuses on three nījī maṭhs: Amritashram in Fatehpur (Rajasthan), Ashtal Bohar in Rohtak (Haryana) and the Gorakhpur mandir (UP). Each of them shows a different mode of adaptation to a modern context and attests of the present importance and continuity of this pluri-secular tradition of asceticism.

Véronique Bouillier is a social anthropologist at the CNRS (Paris). Looking first at the social organization and history of Shaivite ascetic castes in Nepal, she turned to the study of monastic structures, as implemented by the Nāth Yogī sect in Nepal and in India, and devoted two books as well as several articles both in French and English to the interface between asceticism and society. [continue](#)

Consciousness in Jung and Patañjali by Leanne Whitney [Research in Analytical Psychology and Jungian Studies, Routledge, 9781138213524]

The East-West dialogue increasingly seeks to compare and clarify contrasting views on the nature of consciousness. For the Eastern liberatory models, where a nondual view of consciousness is primary, the challenge lies in articulating how consciousness and the manifold contents of consciousness are singular. Western empirical science, on the other hand, must provide a convincing account of how consciousness arises from matter. By placing the theories of Jung and Patañjali in dialogue with one another, *Consciousness in Jung and Patañjali* illuminates significant differences between dual and nondual psychological theory and teases apart the essential discernments that theoreticians must make between epistemic states and ontic beliefs.

Patañjali's Classical Yoga, one of the six orthodox Hindu philosophies, is a classic of Eastern and world thought. Patañjali teaches that notions of a separate egoic "I" are

little more than forms of mistaken identity that we experience in our attempts to take ownership of consciousness. Carl Jung's depth psychology, which remains deeply influential to psychologists, religious scholars, and artists alike, argues that ego-consciousness developed out of the unconscious over the course of evolution. By exploring the work of key theoreticians from both schools of thought, particularly those whose ideas are derived from an integration of theory and practice, Whitney explores the extent to which the seemingly irremediable split between Jung and Patañjali's ontological beliefs can in fact be reconciled.

This thorough and insightful work will be essential reading for academics, theoreticians, and postgraduate students in the fields of psychology, philosophy of science, and consciousness studies. It will also appeal to those interested in the East–West psychological and philosophical dialogue. [continued](#)

Greek Buddha: Pyrrho's Encounter with Early Buddhism in Central Asia by Christopher I. Beckwith [Princeton University Press, 9780691166445] paperback

Pyrrho of Elis went with Alexander the Great to Central Asia and India during the Greek invasion and conquest of the Persian Empire in 334–324 BC. There he met with early Buddhist masters. *Greek Buddha* shows how their Early Buddhism shaped the philosophy of Pyrrho, the famous founder of Pyrrhonian skepticism in ancient Greece.

Christopher I. Beckwith traces the origins of a major tradition in Western philosophy to Gandhara, a country in Central Asia and northwestern India. He systematically examines the teachings and practices of Pyrrho and of Early Buddhism, including those preserved in testimonies by and about Pyrrho, in the report on Indian philosophy two decades later by the Seleucid ambassador Megasthenes, in the first-person edicts by the Indian king Devanampriya Priyadarsi referring to a popular variety of the Dharma in the early third century BC, and in Taoist echoes of Gautama's Dharma in Warring States China. Beckwith demonstrates how the teachings of Pyrrho agree closely with those of the Buddha Sakyamuni, "the Scythian Sage." In the process, he identifies eight distinct philosophical schools in ancient northwestern India and Central Asia, including Early Zoroastrianism, Early Brahmanism, and several forms of Early Buddhism. He then shows the influence that Pyrrho's brand of scepticism had on the evolution of Western thought, first in Antiquity, and later, during the Enlightenment, on the great philosopher and self-proclaimed Pyrrhonian, David Hume.

Greek Buddha demonstrates that through Pyrrho, Early Buddhist thought had a major impact on Western philosophy.

It is hard to imagine anyone other than Beckwith being able to carry off such a tour de force -- he is an expert in the murky world of Central Asia during the ancient (and

medieval) world, which requires a mastery of multiple languages, the archeology of the Silk Road, the historiography of the Medes, Persians, Alexander the Great, and the Indian northwest generally. Essentially, he puts flesh on the very, very old (and sometimes wacky) hypotheses concerning the cross-fertilization of the Greek and Buddhist worlds in the 6-3rd centuries B.C.E. Related work has been carried out over the years by various reputable scholars (e.g. Walter Burkert on the Near Eastern influences on the Greeks comes to mind; and Kuzminski's recent book on Pyrrhonism covers some of the same ground **see below**). The central hypothesis here, which was sketched out a long time ago by Jaspers in *The Axial Age*, but now tightened, is that all roads lead out from the earliest Buddhism to, gulp, Pyrrhonian scepticism, the early Brahmanic teachings, Jainism, early Taoism, and later, normative Buddhism. Beckwith depends for all this on a mix of archeological findings in recent years, and his reading of the garbled surviving texts concerning the meeting of Megasthenes and Pyrrho during and a little after Alexander's foray into northwest India. It will be interesting to see how the scholarly community reacts to this very strongly argued version of the story -- this is the first time that I have seen reference to the Buddha being a Scythian! I should say that this book is in some ways easy to read, but it is structured very oddly, and is very, very repetitive, as the author incrementally repeats his claims several times, and the same evidence is gone through multiple times in different contexts.

Four centuries lie between the time the Buddha lived and the time the earliest known Gandhari and Pali Buddhist texts were committed to writing. Since religions are never static affairs, these texts undoubtedly diverged to some extent from the Buddha's original teachings, but exactly how far and in which ways is uncertain; our knowledge of the gap between the earliest Buddhist teachings and early canonical Buddhism is basically a vast, empty chasm. Unfortunately for us, the Buddha's Indian contemporaries lacked both a written language and an understanding of how history differs from mythology and hagiography.

Indulge me in a thought experiment: Imagine that you and I live in a preliterate society. Imagine that nothing Abraham Lincoln ever said or did was written down, either at the time or subsequently. Imagine that there are no photographs or drawings of him. Imagine that there were no documents pertaining to the Civil War -- no quartermasters' inventories, no Mathew Brady photographs, no slave diaries, no rosters of those who served, no records of Lincoln's speeches. Imagine too that there is no written record of the presidents who served before or after Lincoln. All that exists is our memory of what our parents and teachers told us face to face, based on their memory of what their parents and teachers told them.

If this was so, how accurate would our knowledge of Lincoln be today? How much of what he said would be accurately remembered and generally agreed upon?

Think of all the apocryphal Lincoln "quotes" that currently float through the Internet in all their glorious inaccuracy.

Now imagine that another three hundred years passes before the orally transmitted "knowledge" of Lincoln is finally set down on paper. How much more inaccurate would those ideas about Lincoln be?

Christopher Beckwith's new book, [Greek Buddha: Pyrrho's Encounter with Early Buddhism in Central Asia](#) is a fascinating attempt to fill this historical void with educated speculation. Beckwith urges us to make his own mental experiment. He suggests that we bracket off almost everything we think we "know" about early Buddhism from canonical sources, and instead invites us to follow him as he attempts to reconstruct early Buddhism from sources closer in time to when the Buddha actually lived, namely the stone edicts and pillars of the Mauryan kings, the records of ancient Greek travelers, recent archeological findings, and the earliest Chinese Taoist texts.

Beckwith pays special attention to one such Greek traveler: Pyrrho of Elis, a young artist who travelled with Alexander the Great to Gandhara in the years 327-325 B.C. where Pyrrho met with and was influenced by a group of early Buddhist practitioners. Pyrrho returned to Greece espousing a radical new philosophy—"Pyrrhonism"—which bore more than a surface resemblance to the Buddhism he encountered in Gandhara (as has been noted previously by scholars like Georgios Halkias). For example, Pyrrho cultivated *apatheia* (passionlessness) in order to develop *ataraxia* (inner calm). He made explicit use of the fourfold negation of the tetralemma [five centuries before Nagarjuna!]. He was celibate, lived in simplicity, engaged in meditation, and was regarded by his neighbors as a holy man. He recommended an attitude of "not-knowing" in regard to *pragmata*, or "disputed ethical questions." Pyrrho viewed *pragmata* as having three primary characteristics: they were inherently *adiaphora* (undifferentiated by logical differentia—possibly a parallel to the Buddha's "anatta"), *astathmeta* (unbalanced—possibly a parallel to the Buddha's "dukkha") and *anepikrita* (indeterminate — possibly a parallel to the Buddha's "annica"). The degree to which Pyrrho's three qualities of *pragmata* map one-to-one onto the Buddha's three marks of existence is a question I'll leave to better philologists and philosophers than myself, but I found Beckwith's argument intriguing.

Beckwith then takes his argument a step further. He notes that concepts like "karma" and "rebirth" are mentioned by neither Pyrrho nor Megasthenes (another traveling Greek who served as Seleucus Nicator's ambassador to Chandragupta from 302 to 298 B.C.). Based on this, Beckwith asserts that these ideas weren't a part of early Buddhism. This seems like an awfully big assumption to make, especially since Pyrrho himself wrote nothing—we only know of his thoughts through the

writings of his contemporaries and students. In addition, while Pyrrho's philosophy may have been based on Buddhism, he may not have adopted all of Buddhism's tenets; he may have picked and chosen those ideas that were most consonant with his Hellenic background. While Beckwith is correct that we've no hard evidence that karma and rebirth were Buddhist beliefs prior to 100 B.C., absence of evidence is not the same thing as evidence of absence. The most we can say is that he may be right.

Beckwith also speculates on the Buddha's ethnicity. He argues against the canonical assertion that the Buddha was a native Magadhan born in Lumbini, and argues instead that the name "kyamuni" ("Sage of the kyas") suggests that the Buddha was a "kya, i.e., an ethnic Scythian (a Central Asian people who dominated the steppes). Of course, the epithet "kyamuni" doesn't necessarily imply that the Buddha himself was actually "foreign-born." Alternatively, the Buddha could have been descended from Scythians who migrated to Magadha somewhat earlier, perhaps as early as 850 BC as Jayarava Attwood has speculated. One interesting implication of the Buddha's possibly Scythian origin is that he may have developed the Dharma, at least in part, in response to Zoroastrianism, the religion of Darius's Achaemenid Empire which stretched from the Balkans to the Indus Valley. If so, Buddhism can be understood, in part, as a rejection of Zoroastrian monotheism and cosmic dualism.

Beckwith suggests, following the controversial chronology suggested by Johannes Bronkhorst, that early Buddhism preceded the Upanishads and, then goes off on his own to suggest that it also preceded Jainism. He believes that these allegedly later religious traditions adopted aspects of Buddhist teachings and then projected their own origin stories into an imaginary pre-Buddhist past to lend them greater authenticity, in much the same way that the Mahayana would later claim greater antiquity for its own sutras. Beckwith can find no support for the early existence of Jainism in the kinds of data he deems acceptable. The Greek travelers, for example, fail to mention it. The earliest datable references to Jainism are found in the post-100 B.C. Pali literature. Beckwith believes that those Pali Suttas that treat the Buddha and Mahavira as contemporaries are useful fictions designed to address Buddhist-Jain disputes that were current during the era in which they were composed.

Even more fascinating is Beckwith's speculation that Laotzu and the Buddha were one and the same person, and that Taoism grew out of very early Chinese contact with Buddhism. Beckwith does a linguistic analysis of Laotzu's "actual" name ("Lao Tan") as recorded around 300 B.C. in Chuangtzu. He argues that "Lao" is the same as "K'ao," and that K'ao-Tan could plausibly have been pronounced "Gaw-tam" in certain old Chinese dialects, making it intriguingly close to "Gautama," with the final /a/ being dropped due to canonical monosyllabicization.

This is a linguistic argument far beyond my powers to evaluate. If true, it makes for a wonderful story of how Buddhism first influenced the formation of Taoism, and then several hundred years later, Taoism returned the favor in coloring how the Chinese translated and understood the Mahayana Sutras. What goes around comes around. In any case, Beckwith believes it to be no accident that similar theories arose nearly simultaneously in Greece, India, and China during the Axial Age, and that there was a greater degree of intercourse between these cultures than has previously been thought.

There is much more to Beckwith's book, including discussions of Pyrrho's influence on David Hume, the provenance of the Mauryan stone edicts and pillars, the linguistic facility of Alexander's entourage, and Pyrrho's place in the stream of Greek philosophy. Beckwith's discussion of the connection between Pyrrho's quasi-Buddhist philosophy and David Hume's examination of the problem of logical induction serendipitously coincides with Alison Gopnick's recent speculation about how Hume may have become familiarized with Buddhist thought during his stay at the Royal College of La Flèche. Like the parallel emergence of novel philosophies during the Axial Age, the parallels between Hume's philosophy and Buddhist insights may be due to more than mere coincidence.

There are problems with the Beckwith's book, to be sure. As mentioned above, it's impossible for a non-scholar like myself to evaluate Beckwith's claims. While some seem plausible, others seem more of a stretch. I suspect it's better to think of them as hypotheses which can spur future research than to think of them as strongly supported facts. I should also note that Beckwith could have benefited from a better editor to help him eliminate some of his repetitiveness—he can, at times, worry a point beyond all endurance.

Some readers might be tempted to dismiss Beckwith's theses as being largely irrelevant to Buddhist practice. They might think, "What does it matter, in the end, whether the Buddha was really a Scythian or one-and-the-same person as Laotzu? What matters is how one is coming along in one's practice and realization." While I'm sympathetic to that point of view, I think it's a mistake. Our hypotheses about who the Buddha was and what the Buddhist project is ultimately about deeply inform our approach to practice. Consider, as one example, Stephen Batchelor's recent historical reimagining of early Buddhism and his proposal that doctrines of karma and rebirth were not nearly as central to it as some contend. Beckwith's arguments buttress Batchelor's, and together their ideas have the potential to significantly inform the future dominant direction of Western Buddhist practice.

Even if Beckwith's arguments turn out to be deficient in many of their particulars, Beckwith successfully points to the limitations of taking the Pali Canon's account of

Buddhist history at face value. Buddhist texts need to be read with a certain degree of suspicion. They need to be read alongside contemporaneous Greek and Chinese sources, checked against emerging archeological findings, and understood within the context of our growing understanding of Central and Southern Asian history. I'm incapable of doing this myself and I have no way of judging the ultimate worth of Beckwith's arguments. On the other hand, I look forward with interest to whatever lively discussion ensues. By [Seth Zuihō Segall continue](#)

[Pyrrhonism: How the Ancient Greeks Reinvented Buddhism by Adrian Kuzminski \[Studies in Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Lexington Books, 9780739125069\] paperback](#)

Pyrrhonism is commonly confused with scepticism in Western philosophy. Unlike sceptics, who believe there are no true beliefs, Pyrrhonists suspend judgment about all beliefs, including the belief that there are no true beliefs. Pyrrhonism was developed by a line of ancient Greek philosophers, from its founder Pyrrho of Elis in the fourth century BCE through Sextus Empiricus in the second century CE. Pyrrhonists offer no view, theory, or knowledge about the world, but recommend instead a practice, a distinct way of life, designed to suspend beliefs and ease suffering. Adrian Kuzminski examines Pyrrhonism in terms of its striking similarity to some Eastern non-dogmatic soteriological traditions—particularly Madhyamaka Buddhism. He argues that its origin can plausibly be traced to the contacts between Pyrrho and the sages he encountered in India, where he traveled with Alexander the Great. Although Pyrrhonism has not been practiced in the West since ancient times, its insights have occasionally been independently recovered, most recently in the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. Kuzminski shows that Pyrrhonism remains relevant perhaps more than ever as an antidote to today's cultures of belief.

Kuzminski begins this brief but radical reappraisal of Pyrrhonism by showing that it differs sharply from ancient Dogmatic Skepticism, although the two are often mistakenly conflated. Dogmatic Skepticism is the doctrine that knowledge is impossible; Pyrrhonism is not a theory or doctrine at all, but rather a practice of careful suspension of belief in the non-evident. Pyrrho of Elis, the founder of this school, accompanied Alexander the Great to India, and ancient sources claim that his philosophy was inspired by encounters with "gymnosophists" there. Kuzminski explores the remarkable parallels between the Pyrrhonist tradition and Madhyamaka Buddhism in particular: the critique of appearance/reality dualism; the affinity between suspension of belief and the acceptance of appearances at face value; the rejection of dogmatic belief as a form of clinging with pathological effects; and how practice-based ways of life which eschew metaphysics can serve as an antidote to "cultures of belief". The book ends with a suggestive discussion of how the insights of Pyrrhonism have been independently recovered in the West, most recently by Ludwig Wittgenstein. [continued](#)

[Selected Writings of M.M. Gopinath Kaviraj by Gopinath Kaviraj \[Indica Books, 9788186569603\]](#)

Includes 11 articles in English by the renowned pandit, each one throws a flood of light on topics in varied interest. Some articles which have not so far been published in any of the previous compilations published from time to time by different organizations.

Gopinath Kaviraj (1887-1976) does not need presentation in the world of modern Indian philosophy and thought. [continued](#)

[The Origin and Goal of History by Karl Jaspers \[Routledge, 9780415578806\] \(German edition, 1949\)](#)

First published in English in 1953, this important book from eminent philosopher Karl Jaspers deals with the philosophy of the history of mankind. More specifically, its avowed aim is to assist in heightening our awareness of the present by placing it within the framework of the long obscurity of prehistory and the boundless realm of possibilities which lie within the undecided future.

Karl Jaspers, writing in post WWII expectation of reconstruction of German intellectual life had hopes for the future that hardly address the shambolic psychopathology of a world ruled by the land of Nimrod.

When mankind started to consider itself civilized, there were many empires competing for control of the world, and the Roman empire provided enough Christianity to give Jaspers hope the West would not sink back into the fatalism of Asia. "Whatever fashions itself out of Asia and must sink back into Asia is transitory." Jaspers championed a civil society that could eschew the brutal forces that desire to dominate – through an anger driven delight in violence, in cruelty – that could avoid the empty will toward prestige -- the desire for wealth and pleasure – blind to ascetic moral temper, instead to be driven by erotic passions, which by force assume ultimate ends.

Jaspers structured his work quite explicitly as a humanist doctrine. From this time on, moreover, he attached greater importance to the social and collective conditions of human integrity and he tended to tone down his earlier construction of interiority as the place of human freedom. In fact, even the term Existenz became increasingly scarce in his post-1945 publications, and it was replaced, to a large extent, by ideas of shared humanity, founded, not in the decisive experiences of inner transformation, but in the resources of culture, tradition and ethically modulated political life. Central to these later works, consequently, was not only a turn towards humanistic reflection, but also an inquiry into the politics of humanism and the distinctively human preconditions of political existence.

Broadly reconstructed, in his later political work he argued that the emergence of European totalitarianism—exemplified by both National Socialism and Communism—was the result of a decline in political humanity and of an increasing primacy of modes of technical or instrumental rationality, which erode the

authentic resources of human life. He therefore sought to offer an account of a human polity, able to provide an enduring bastion against totalitarian inhumanity

First, he argued, the human polity must be sustained by an integral cultural tradition, so that human beings can interpret the ciphers of their integrity in the ethical contents of a national culture. The political betrayal of humanity, he suggested, is usually flanked by, and in fact presupposes, a cultural betrayal of humanity, and totalitarian governance normally arises from the erosion or instrumental subjection of culture. In the nineteenth century Marx had argued that the reactionary malaise of German politics was caused by the fact that German society habitually allowed culture to stand in for politics and defined the relatively de-politicized educated bourgeois elite [*Bildungsbürgertum*] as the pillar of social order and the arbiter of progress. Jaspers responded to this characterization of Germany by claiming that societies which undermine the cultural role of the bourgeois elite are inherently unstable, and that the educated bourgeoisie has a primary role to play in upholding the preconditions of democratic culture. Second, he argued that the human polity must be based in free communication between citizens: communicative freedom is a prerequisite of public virtue. The human polity, he thus implied, is likely to be democracy, based in some degree of publicly formed consensus. Like Arendt, in fact, he concluded that social atomization creates cultures in which totalitarianism is likely to flourish, and that only unregulated debate in the public sphere can offset this latent pathology of mass society. Third, he argued that the resources of technological, scientific and economic planning employed by the political system should be kept at a minimum, and that the existence of an unplanned sphere of human interaction is necessary for the maintenance of a human political order. In this respect, he fervently opposed all tendencies towards technocratic governance, which he identified both in the Communist bloc in Eastern Europe, and in the rapidly expanding welfare state of the Federal Republic under Adenauer. Technocracy, he asserted, is the objective form of the instrumental tendencies in human reason, and if it is not counterbalanced by the integrally human resources of cultural or rational communication it is likely to result in oppressive government. In this respect, he moved close to quite standard variants on political liberalism, and he endorsed limited government, relative cultural and economic freedom, and protection for society from unaccountable political direction. Fourth, he also argued that a human polity requires a constitutional apparatus, enshrining basic rights, imposing moral-legal order on the operations of the state, and restricting the prerogative powers of the political apparatus. Like Kant, therefore, he advocated the institution of an international federation of states, with shared constitutions, laws and international courts. Fifth, however, he also retained aspects of the elite-democratic outlook which he had first inherited from Weber, and he continued to argue that the human polity must be supported and guided by reasonable persons or responsible elites.

Intercultural Religions

Chinese and Buddhist Philosophy in early Twentieth-Century German Thought by Eric S. Nelson [Bloomsbury Academic, 9781350002555]

Continued: This book is a revelation, tracing how ideas have traveled more than we have generally recognized. The dialogues between east and west have often been interpreted primarily as a one-way exchange about how the East has learned from the West. It is time to appreciate the ways in which multiple journeys have occurred and how Eastern thought has, as a matter of fact, informed and been taken up in Western thought, particularly in German philosophy as illustrated in this work. This book is one of a kind and exemplifies all that we need to engage, to learn, and to become philosophers in the twenty-first century. Robin R Wang, 2016-17 Berggruen Fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Science, Stanford University, USA and author of *Yinyang The Way of Heaven and Earth in Chinese Thought and Culture*

In this groundbreaking study, Eric S. Nelson examines the impact of Chinese and Buddhist Philosophy on 20th Century German Thought. Through illuminating chapters on Buber, Heidegger, Misch, and others, Nelson sheds a unique light on the development of German Philosophy in the 20th Century, as well as on contemporary Comparative philosophy. This is an original and important work which reveals the influence of Asian Philosophy on Contemporary Continental thought, and which opens new perspectives for intercultural and comparative philosophy. Francois Raffoul, Professor of Philosophy and French Studies, Louisiana State University, USA

This is a landmark study in comparative thought. By tracing Chinese and Japanese influences on modern German philosophy, Eric S. Nelson examines a pressing question of our troubled times: is there a common ground for universal wisdom? Is there a path forward? Perhaps the most satisfying outcome of this book is that the careful consideration of Asian sources sheds light on the ideas in Heidegger's later work. By explaining how these influences clarify key contentions in German philosophy, Nelson breaks new ground. Martin Schonfeld, Editor, *Journal of Global Ethics* and Professor of Philosophy, University of South Florida, USA

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The work before you is an interpretive journey through the historical reception of Chinese and Buddhist philosophy in modern German thought, focusing in particular--albeit not exclusively--on the early twentieth century. Its intent is to describe and analyze the intertextual nexus of intersecting sources for the sake of elucidating implications and critical models for intercultural hermeneutics and intercultural philosophy. The possibility of such a philosophy is confronted by the persistent myth and prejudice that philosophy is and can only be a unique and exclusive Western spiritual achievement.

The chapters of this book consist of a series of philosophically oriented historical case studies, focusing primarily on the intersection between Chinese and German philosophy. They explore instances of the encounter, dialogue, and exchange—and lack and failure thereof—between "Eastern" Chinese and "Western" German thinkers and discourses. "Eastern" and "Western," as Gihwa noted, are only relative situational concepts. The history of this already existing and ongoing communicative interaction and cultural exchange compels us to consider, more seriously than hitherto, whether a more nuanced and historically appropriate conception of philosophy can emerge through critically engaging and reflecting on the modern encounter between Western and non-Western philosophy, and articulating its intercultural and intertextual dynamics; if it proves impossible to transgress these borders, the old reductive myths of the exclusivity, exceptionality, and isolation of Western philosophy and civilization will continue to hold sway.

The question of who can philosophize, and who counts as a philosopher, is a quintessential philosophical question. It was posed by Socrates himself in the formulation of the idea of philosophy: the philosopher is the one who loves (philo) wisdom (sophia). This question has been repeatedly reposed throughout the history of philosophy. This work is an endeavor to repose it once again anew, arguing—in response to the modern Western idea of philosophy—for a more encompassing and historically adequate conception of philosophy than provincializing identifications of philosophy with the history of Western metaphysics or modern Western rationality. Such limiting ethnocentric identifications, and

the ideological spell of a continuous Western identity from the Greeks to the moderns, undermine the ostensive infinity and universality—to adopt the language of Hegel and Husserl that continues to be deployed today—of its aspirations.

The question of what does and does not count as philosophy is itself more than a purely philosophical question. Philosophy has long been identified with the idea and potential of humanity itself, in classical Greek, Roman, and Renaissance traditions, and with conceptual, critical, reflective thinking in Western modernity. There is a close affiliation between the Western denial of non-Western thinking and the perception of non-Western peoples as mere strategic objects of "just" wars and drone strikes, of pragmatic use, neglect, and termination. The denial of the humanity and destruction of the other are constitutively part of the ideological claim that the West is the sole universal, infinite, and cosmopolitan civilization. The denial of the possibility of philosophy to non-Western others is interconnected with the renunciation of their humanity and rationality, as human beings are reduced to mere objects of technical and strategic manipulation by denying them recognition as independent persons who are capable and worthy of genuine encounter and dialogical interaction.

The much-needed emancipation of philosophy from ethnocentrism, often cloaked in the language of a false universality, requires what could be called "a critique of European reason," or a deconstruction of the Eurocentric conception of rationality, which is simultaneously an internal immanent critique of the dialectic of Western philosophy and an exposure to the exteriority of its—in this case East Asian—others.

The history of Western philosophy is historically already intercultural and intertextually bound up with non-Western philosophy. The word "intercultural" in this context should be distinguished from "multicultural" and "comparative." It is not a juxtaposition of differences or a search for an underlying identity. Intercultural signifies the multidimensional space of encounter between philosophies of different social-historical provenience, each of which is a complex dynamic formation that cannot be fixated and reduced to the identity of a cultural or linguistic essence, or racial type, underlying a supposedly unitary community or tradition. "Intertextual" is a concept developed by Julia Kristeva in her essay, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel" (1966). It refers to how texts consist of allusions, citations, reappropriations, rifts on, and misinterpretations of other texts. As Kristeva clarifies, it signifies that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another." Intertextuality also refers, as it does in this work, to the intersection of argumentative and interpretative strategies, images, metaphors, and ideas occurring between different discourses. Illustrations of the intercultural and intertextual character of philosophy include: the traces of the materialist argumentation of Ibn Rushd (Latinized as Averroes) in medieval and modern Western philosophy; Heidegger's

discussions of emptiness and the empty vessel and Buber's descriptions of encounters with living organisms that refer to Daoist ideas and images; or, negatively, the deployment of the idea of "Oriental despotism" from Montesquieu to Hegel to articulate "Occidental freedom"; or the apparently trivial use of the word "mandarins" in the writings of Simone de Beauvoir or Jürgen Habermas, a use that presupposes a previous exposure to and reception of Chinese social-political culture.

Intercultural, in contrast to a merely comparative, philosophy is (1) already a historical reality, albeit underappreciated and underdeveloped, and (2) remains a necessary task for contemporary philosophizing. This task is typically interpreted as broadening and opening the discourses of philosophy in ways that continue to presuppose the primacy of Western philosophy that sets the standard and measure of what should and should not count as philosophy. It is the primary normative paradigm to which other philosophies are assessed and must conform to be included and taken seriously in the discipline. There is to this extent Islamic, Indian, or Chinese philosophy insofar as they fit into this predetermined framework, without any thought or inquiry into whether the opposite could be the case. One significant task of intercultural philosophy is to reveal the multi-perspectivity and multi-directionality of thinking, a prospect that may well be more appropriately disclosed in the works identified with Nāgārjuna and Zhuangzi than in the reduction of the complex textures of these discourses to Western philosophical categories.

The word and concept "philosophy" has a Greek origin and a "Western"—and often underemphasized Middle Eastern—history. "Philosophy" was introduced to Japan and subsequently East Asia through the modern encounter with Western learning, which the Japanese initially called "Dutch learning" (Japanese: rangaku). The Japanese scholar Nishi Amane (1829-1897) is credited with coining the expression (Japanese: tetsugaku; Chinese: zhexue) that combines the kanji characters for "wisdom" and "learning." Modern philosophy, since the modern construction of the idea of the West, has depicted philosophy as a unique history from the ancient Greeks to modern Europeans. This, however, is not the Greek or the premodern understanding of philosophy, which intercultural philosophy must renew to resist its modern limited conception and for it to be—in fact what it claims to be in theory—an unhindered love and pursuit of wisdom even if, as al-Kindi contended, it originates in ancient and foreign lands. It is not accidental that Merleau-Ponty's anti-ethnocentric declaration that philosophy's "center is everywhere and its circumference nowhere," which occurs in a still all too Hegelian framework, renews an insight from medieval philosophy.'

Philosophy is not merely a cultural or political program; it is thinking about the matter to be thought. The matter to be encountered and thought that philosophy would name is broader in scope than Western intellectual history or the history of Western metaphysics and ontotheology from ancient Greece to modernity. Philosophy was recognized as a human possibility that occurred across

nations and beyond them in the cosmopolitan ideal of the Greek and Roman Cynics and Stoics. Classical Greek and Roman philosophy, in which philosophy is self-inquiry about how to live and achieve the true and the good, is in many ways closer to classical Arabic, Indian, and Chinese practices of philosophizing than to its modern reified Western conception as theory without life and analytic technique without wisdom. The histories of Buddhist, Confucian, and Daoist thinking in East Asia, for instance, indicate multiple examples of self-inquiry, reflection, and criticism. These complex discourses encompass philosophical argumentation, conceptualization, and interpretation within and across cultural, regional, and historical differences in ways that are not merely customary, finite, local, and particular. They too suggest the prospects and risks of intercultural philosophy in, for example, the long series of arguments, criticism, and counter-criticism occurring between East Asian Buddhisms and Neo-Confucianisms.

A tenacious prejudice of modern Western philosophy that echoes in its contemporary incarnations is the preconception that argumentation and conceptualization do not occur in non-Western intellectual traditions. Asian philosophies have been classified as folk, intuitive, mythical, mystical, and poetic wisdom traditions lacking argument, self-reflection, and universal concepts. Hegel described a defining characteristic of Western thinking as the "labor of the concept" ("Arbeit des Begriffes") and "labor of the negative"; as a labor that progressively breaks with the previous particular in achieving a new universal.' Hegel, particularly in his posthumously published lecture-courses on history, philosophy, and religion, and the subsequent tradition employed the distinction between nonconceptual and conceptual cognition to demarcate Western and non-Western thinking.

The tribalist prejudices of modern Western philosophy appear to function as a deeply embedded and seemingly unquestionable 'ethnocentric a priori' in Western philosophical discourses, operating against the existing intercultural intertextuality of philosophy. These prejudices can begin to be confronted when sources beyond the confines of Western discourses are encountered and counter-examples from a multiplicity of discourses engaged. Actual sources—which encompass, to name only a few, al-Kindi and Ibn Rushd, Nāgārjuna and Sankara, Mengzi and Zhuangzi, Gihwa and Dōgen—allow a response to the question: "Who is the Plato of the Pacific? The Kant of Africa?" to paraphrase Saul Bellow's polemical question: "Who is the Tolstoy of the Zulus? The Proust of the Papuans? I'd be glad to read him." Pointing to non-Western philosophical sources can, of course, only be the beginning of a response to the Eurocentric interpreter who would still need reading, engaging, and comprehending what has already been predetermined in their mind as unworthy of consideration and the labor of conceptualization and interpretation.

The possibility of a more genuine encounter and dialogue is constrained and undermined by the colonial

and racial history of modern Western philosophy that still shapes its institutions and practices. The asymmetrical relationships between Europe and Asia are recurrently interpreted—even among those critics of colonialism who construe non-Western discourses as Western constructs—as consisting of a one-way colonial relation transferring and imposing Occidental paradigms onto the "Orient." Contrary to the narrative of the Western invention of the "East," and Eastern philosophies, contemporary scholarship is increasingly revealing how Asian writers and philosophers have engaged in the formation of their own discourses and creatively redeployed European sources in relation to their own questions and contexts in their confrontation and interpretation of the multiplicity of Western, Eastern, and hybrid intercultural and intertextual modernities. Concurrently, and often this thesis is met with skepticism by those who interpret the history of Western philosophy as a self-contained internal development of the history of ontology, reason, or spirit. Asian and other non-Western argumentative strategies, metaphors, and conceptions have had a long-term influence on modern Western philosophical and intellectual discourses that are already to an underappreciated extent intercultural and intertextual.

In the following chapters, select case studies in the interaction of European and East Asian thought from the late nineteenth-century through the mid-twentieth-century in a range of philosophers will be reconsidered. By investigating the reception and uses of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism in twentieth-century German philosophy, this work tracks the growing intertextual mediations between discursive traditions, which cannot be appropriately interpreted through monocultural hermeneutical strategies that presuppose exclusive identities, closed horizons, or unitary traditions. The intercultural context and historical realities of philosophy is not a contemporary invention of political correctness; it belongs to the very historical movement of reflective and conceptual thinking and philosophy since the origins of philosophy itself in Greece, India, and China, to name a few. Throughout this work, East Asian sources and discourses will be returned to historically contextualize and critically assess the interpretive strategies employed by the European philosophers under discussion.

Providing an account of the context, motivations, and hermeneutical strategies of early twentieth-century German interpretations of China and Chinese philosophy in its initial chapters, this work offers a more contextual approach to the question of the relation between Heidegger and Asian philosophy in its later chapters. Reflecting the growing interest in the possibility of intercultural and global philosophy, Chinese and Buddhist Philosophy in Early Twentieth-Century German Thought articulates prospects for a more comprehensive and inclusive intercultural conception of philosophy that is unafraid of its own amalgamation.

Description of the chapters:

Chapter 1, *A Peculiar Journey: Confucian Philosophy in German Thought*, offers an elucidation of the reception of Confucius (Kongzi) and Confucianism in modern German philosophy. Earlier German thinkers such as Leibniz argued that Confucian thought indicated a suggestive model for Western ethical-political reflection and the reform of Western practices and institutions. This chapter examines the role and interpretation of Confucianism in early twentieth-century German philosophy, in the broader historical context of this reception, describing how diverse thinkers (such as Buber, Misch, Plessner, Popper-Lynkeus, Rosenzweig, and—later—Jaspers) engaged Chinese culture and thought and debated the merits of Confucianism in a modern European situation. Rosenzweig declared Confucius a boring and mediocre exemplar and representation of the ethical, lacking religious sublimity and height. Misch interpreted Confucius as initiating a Socratic style ethically oriented revolution that, through its incorporation of the interpretive engagement with and reflection on historical life, provided a significant model for a contemporary age dominated by the urge to form a new philosophy of life (*Lebensphilosophie*). Buber emphasized the ethical and spiritual core of Confucian philosophy, concluding in the context of the last years of the Weimar Republic that it was ethically too noble and demanding, as well as culturally inappropriate, for a Europe dominated by the will to power and struggle for existence.

In Chapter 2, *The Problem of Life in China and Europe: Zhang Jun mai, Eucken, and Driesch*, the interaction between Zhang Junmai (Carsun Chang) and the life-philosophers Rudolf Eucken and Hans Driesch is examined. Zhang studied classical Chinese, politics and law, and subsequently modern Western philosophy in China, Japan, and Germany. This chapter elucidates the work he co-wrote in German *The Problem of Life in China and Europe* (*Das Lebensproblem in China und Europa*, 1922) with the vitalistic life-philosopher Eucken during his stay in Germany. It will trace Zhang's philosophical exchanges with Eucken and the neo-vitalist philosopher Driesch as well as the interest of Eucken and Driesch in Chinese philosophy that both interpreted as a potential source for renewing a Western form of life deeply in crisis. After Zhang's return to China, he became an advocate in the 1920s of German Idealism (particularly Kant and Hegel), the neo-vitalism of Eucken, Driesch, and Bergson, constitutionalist and German social-democratic ideas, and a renewed egalitarian vision of Neo-Confucianism inspired by Wang Yangming. Adopting Confucian and life-philosophical arguments, Zhang debated the merits of Chinese and Western ways of thinking and living with Chinese advocates of "wholesale" or "complete" Westernization (*quanpan xihua*). At issue in these debates were the nature and scope of logical and scientific method and a free intuitive form of life and, by implication, complete Westernization or Chinese renewal and the appropriate adaptation of science, technology, and modernity within a broader vision of aesthetic-ethical life. Zhang's philosophical writings fused Neo-Confucianism and

German idealism in ways that powerfully shaped Chinese philosophy in the twentieth-century and which informed his active social and political engagement.

Chapter 3, *Resentment and Ressentiment: Nietzsche, Scheler, and Confucian Ethics*, examines the issue of "resentment," its function in the Western interpretation of China, and its roles in moral life in early Confucian philosophy and in Nietzsche and Scheler. In contrast to modern European discourses of recognition and resentment discussed in the initial sections of this chapter, undoing resentment in oneself and in others is a primary element of becoming an ethically exemplary person in early Confucian ethics. Contemporary Western ethical theory routinely relies on the assumption that symmetry and equality are the principal means of undoing the psychological and social fixation involved in resentment; yet the asymmetrical recognition of the priority of the other person is necessary for undoing and letting go of resentment in early Confucian ethics. This analysis leads us back to the *Analects* (Lunyu), a text that calls for the recognition of both the pervasiveness of resentment under certain social conditions and the ethical demand to counter it both within oneself and in relation to others through self-cultivation and other-oriented ritual propriety. Confucian ethics consequently encompasses a nuanced and realistic moral psychology of resentment and the ethical self-cultivation necessary for dismantling it in promoting a condition of humane benevolence (*ren*). Benevolence is oriented toward others even as it is achieved in the care of the self and self-cultivation.

In Chapter 4, *Technology and the Way: Daoism in Buber and Heidegger*, switching the focus from Confucianism to Daoism, we further explore the intertextuality between Chinese and Western thought by exploring how images, metaphors, and ideas from the texts associated with Zhuangzi and Laozi were appropriated in early twentieth-century German philosophy. This German interest in "Lao-Zhuang Daoism" encompasses a diverse range of thinkers, including Buber and Heidegger, in light of which will be considered: (1) how the problematizing of utility, usefulness, and "purposiveness" in Zhuangzi and Laozi becomes a key point for their German philosophical reception; (2) how it is the poetic character of the Zhuangzi that hints at an appropriate response to the crisis and loss of meaning that characterizes technological modernity and its instrumental technological rationality; that is, how the "poetic" and "spiritual" world perceived in Lao-Zhuang thought became part of Buber's and Heidegger's critical encounter and confrontation with technological modernity; and (3) how their concern with Zhuangzi cannot mean a return to a dogmatic religiosity or otherworldly mysticism; it anticipates a this-worldly spiritual (Buber) or poetic (Heidegger) way of dwelling immanently within the world. The Zhuangzi reveals a dialogical and communicatively mediated spirituality distinguishable from the monistic, elemental, and anti-linguistic incarnation of the teaching. Zhuangzi brings the "teaching of the dao" back to ordinary life by

philosophizing through words, similes, and parables in a way that parallels Hasidic storytellers. The poetic affective word has priority over the cognitive proposition in Daoist and Hasidic teachings. Heidegger's vision of Daoism, informed in part by Buber's interpretation, turned toward a poetic dwelling that cannot be reduced to instrumental calculative thinking in order to respond to what is needful in human existence. Buber and Heidegger's contrasting interpretations indicate two overlapping yet divergent possibilities for addressing Daoist "poetic thinking" in response to technological modernity.

Chapter 5, *Heidegger, Misch, and the "Origins" of Philosophy*, addresses the divergent approaches of Heidegger and Misch concerning the question of the origins of philosophy. It explores, on the one hand, how Heidegger and his successors interpret philosophy as an Occidental enterprise based on a understanding of its history as the history of the metaphysical and ontotheological concealment and unconcealment of being. In contrast to the prevailing monistic paradigm in Western hermeneutics and philosophy, on the other hand, Dilthey and Misch recognized the plural character of philosophy, unfolded a pluralistic understanding of historical life, and their pluralistic hermeneutics offers elements for more adequate intercultural hermeneutics. Misch developed Dilthey's hermeneutics further by demonstrating the multiple origins of philosophy, as critical life-reflection, in the historical matrices of ancient Chinese, Greek, and Indian civilizations. Misch's approach to Chinese philosophers such as Confucius and Zhuangzi reveals, despite its flaws, a historically informed, interculturally sensitive, and critically oriented life-philosophical hermeneutics that remains suggestive for contemporary intercultural philosophy and interpretation.

The twentieth-century philosophical reception of and dialogue with Buddhism is the primary concern of the final three chapters. Several recent works have argued for the relevance of classical phenomenology for interpreting Asian philosophies such as Buddhism and Daoism and articulating a broader more intercultural conception of philosophy.

In Chapter 6, *Phenomenology, Eurocentrism, and Asia: Husserl and Heidegger*, the reflections of Husserl and Heidegger on the European-Western character of philosophy, their idea of the unique exclusive spiritual identity of Europe, and how these claims shape their interpretations of Asia and Asian thought are examined. Husserl discussed Buddhism in a sympathetic manner in two small texts from the mid-1920s, discovering in them a source of ethical and cultural renewal and a teaching akin to transcendental philosophy. Heidegger explicitly engaged with Daoist and Japanese themes in postwar writings. Even as Husserl and Heidegger had moments of engagement with and openness toward Asian thought that reveal possibilities for furthering the project of a "hybrid" intercultural and comparative philosophizing today, both thinkers problematically limited the scope of philosophical reflection and dialogue through the

identity-thinking that characterized their understanding of the ideas of Asia, Europe, and philosophy itself.

Chapter 7, *Encounter, Dialogue, and Learning: Martin Buber and Zen Buddhism*, examines Buber's statement that the West needs learning from the East and his interpretation of East Asian Chan/Zen Buddhism in the context of the exclusion and marginalization of Zen Buddhism in twentieth-century Western philosophy. What kind of learning is called for in Buber's claim that the West should learn from the East? Does it mean that one must adopt a Zen, Daoist, or other Eastern philosophy? Can the sensibility revealed in Zen Buddhist sources help answer the problem of technological modernity posed by Buber and Heidegger? Such questions find further clarification in the references to Zen Buddhism that Buber and Heidegger made in the 1950s and 1960s. Buber called for a dialogue with and learning from Zen Buddhism in the postwar years, which he elucidated in the context of Hasidic Judaism and Daoism.¹³ In addition to identifying a specific kind of anti-conceptual dialectic at play in both Daoism and Zen, Buber clarified the skeptical understanding of reality as dream in Zen through Zhuangzi's dream of the butterfly. Daoism and Zen are not substantially differentiated in Buber and Heidegger's remarks. While Heidegger focused on experiences of the way, emptiness, the gathering of heaven and earth, and responsive letting be, Buber emphasized the paradox, the image, and the teaching in narrative language as well as in the dialogical encounter and learning between "I" and "Thou" in Daoist and East Asian Zen Buddhist sources.

In Chapter 8, *Nothingness, Language, Emptiness: Heidegger and Chan Buddhism*, Chinese Chan Buddhist indications and practices of emptiness (kong) are contrasted with Heidegger's formal indication of the nothing (Nichts). Issues of whether paradoxical concepts can be meaningful are addressed by articulating their performative manner (how) as well as their philosophical content (what) without appealing to problematic notions of pure intuition or mystical experience of an absolute beyond the event and enactment of communication. Buddhist emptiness is not an obscure absolute entity. It is not a thing in any sense but is the practice of emptying; Heidegger's nothing is the terror and disclosure of openness. Both involve clearing and enacting a way by wayfaring. The discourses of Heidegger and some forms of Chan Buddhism indicate strategies of self-transformation within the worldly immanence of everyday life through employing the perplexing and transformative language of emptiness and nothingness in (1) aporia, paradox, reversal, shock, and questionability; (2) living words and gestures that dereify habitual and conventional structures and practices to enact emptying itself and open responsiveness to things.

Finally, in conclusion, the implications of these case studies for an intercultural discourse of philosophical modernity, a critique of the Eurocentric conception of rationality, and the possibility of a conceptually adequate and interculturally appropriate hermeneutics and

philosophizing that call for a critical and diagnostic reflective practice are briefly articulated in outline. <>

Essay: Toward an Intercultural Philosophy: Concerning a critical intercultural hermeneutics

The phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty posed the question in "Everywhere and Nowhere" ("Partout et nulle part," 1956), an essay written as an introduction to a collection of texts from "world philosophers," of how philosophy can be in a position to evaluate what can and cannot be included in the category of philosophy: how can one gain a vantage point to say definitively what is and what is not philosophy? He comments: "... since we lack the comprehensive witness who would reduce them to a common denominator, how could we possibly see one single philosophy developing through different philosophers?" Merleau-Ponty skeptically engages the Hegelian problem of whether the philosopher can access one perspective or system that could incorporate, preserve, and integrate (deploying Hegel's notion of *Aufhebung*), all other moments of thought through the labor of determinate negation, immanent critique, and dialectical synthesis.

Merleau-Ponty contends that when we endeavor to "go beyond" a philosophy "from within" in immanent dialectical critique, we cut its heart out by doing so. We contemporary philosophers insult the other philosophy by "retaining" it through subordination in a reduced purified form without what we have deemed in "understanding better" its failures and limitations, that is, without its own words and concepts that made it what it was for those who thought and understand it. To expand and revise Merleau-Ponty's argument, we speak as if the insights of Heraclitus and Laozi, the flow of Descartes's *Meditations* and the humor of the Zhuangzi, could be reduced without loss to the contemporary understanding of the system (to use Hegel's language) or the most fashionable analytic theory or continental event of truth.

Merleau-Ponty's rejoinder attempts to open Western philosophy to its non-Western others while retaining a Hegelian framework through his conception of an indirect unity of world philosophies: "Each time we shall have to learn anew to bridge the gap between ourselves and the past, between ourselves and the Orient, and between philosophy and religion; and to find an indirect unity." His elucidation of an indirect unity, with a recognition of the ambiguity of the relation between a philosophy and its other and philosophy's troubled place toward—without itself adopting—an adequate intercultural critical model and practice of philosophy and interpretation.

Wilhelm Dilthey's philosophy of worldviews (*Philosophie der Weltanschauungen*) might offer another point of departure for intercultural philosophy. Dilthey pluralistically argued that there are multiple perspectives and worldviews at work in each form of historical life, a revised version of this argument was examined in the

Gingo biloba

Dieses Baums Blatt,
der von Osten
Meinem Garten
anvertraut,
Giebt geheimen Sinn
zu kosten,
Wie's den Wissenden
erbaut,
Ist es Ein lebendig
Wesen,
Das sich in sich
selbst getrennt?
Sind es zwei, die sich
erlesen,
Daß man sie als
Eines kennt?
Solche Frage zu
erwidern,
Fand ich wohl den
rechten Sinn,
Fühlst du nicht an
meinen Liedern,
Daß ich Eins und
doppelt bin?

This leaf from a tree
in the East,
Has been entrusted
to my garden.
It reveals a secret
sense,
Which pleases
thoughtful people.
Is it one living being,
Which has divided
itself?
Or are these two, who
chose
To be known as one?
Answering this sort of
question,
Haven't I found the
proper sense,
Don't you feel in my
songs,
That I'm one and
double?

comparative work of Georg Misch in Chapters 1 and 5. There is no world without world-formation and cultivation as well as interpretive confrontation and conflict.' World-picturing enacts and expresses an understanding and "feeling of life" (Lebensgefühl). Due to the plurality of social-historically formed individual perspectives, Dilthey concluded that: "an objective, determinate, integral system of reality that excludes other possible ones is not demonstrable."

There is accordingly in Dilthey's account no preestablished determinate universal system of judgment or horizon of truth that can be followed and applied to all individuals, societies, states of affairs, and situations. But, as Dilthey argued in his critique of the historical school, historicism and relativism (the embrace of the local and particular without the recognition of the common, general, and universal) would leave interpreters unable to judge, evaluate, diagnose, and criticize. The apparent impasse between totalizing universalism and narrow particularism is resolved by risking communicatively encountering and engaging others by interpreting their expressions as well as practicing a form of self-reflectiveness that, echoing Kant's portrayal of reflective judgment in the Critique of Judgment, Dilthey and Misch called Selbstbesinnung. Rather

than automatically subordinating the particular to the ostensive universal, and the nonidentical to the identical, or remaining unreflectively absorbed in particularity, reflection can proceed from the particular—and the rich textures of its situation—toward the universal in order to formulate new more appropriate interpretations and concepts adequate to the phenomena.

Local experiences, self-understandings, and traditions are conditions of and media for communication, yet they have already been reshaped countless times through historical encounters and communications with other perspectives, forms of life, and traditions. No contemporary form of social-historical life has a closed horizon of interpretation, or is without its own multi- and intercultural history of material and communicative reproduction and interaction. Communities are already interculturally formed. They have been and continue to be expanded and revised through the very practices of communication and coming to mutual understanding that constitute communities. Whether there can be an appropriate sense of intercultural community, and an intercultural *sensus communis*, which avoids the extremes and pitfalls of universalism and particularism, globalization and nationalism, is at this point an unresolved question.

The contemporary hermeneutical philosopher Rudolf A. Makkreel has maintained in his recent work committed to a multicultural reinterpretation of hermeneutics, *Orientation and Judgment in Hermeneutics*, for the necessity of hermeneutics to embrace a multicultural stance given our current multicultural interpretive situation. Makkreel's interpretation moves beyond the parameters of Dilthey's philosophy of the multiplicity of worldviews to articulate the multicultural character of each form of historical life, which was considered through the concept of the lifeworld in the present work.

Makkreel's multicultural interpretive strategy offers an alternative to conceptions of reconciliation conceived of as a dialectical synthesis (Hegel), a dialogical fusion of horizons (Gadamer), or a new consensus (Habermas). Instead of employing idealized monistic models of dialogue, community, and tradition, which Makkreel argues shapes the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Habermas, interpreters can adopt a different hermeneutical point of departure that allows for and opens up encountering others; that is to say, the recognition and negotiation of the intersections of multiple spheres of life as well as the tensions of divergent and conflicting claims, interests, and traditions that constitute a historical form of life or lifeworld.

Makkreel's work does not explicitly address non-Western philosophical texts and intercultural interpretations of hermeneutics. These sources can broaden and enlarge but also significantly reorient Western hermeneutics as argued in the present work. His analysis of modern Western hermeneutics from Kant and Schleiermacher through Dilthey to Gadamer and Habermas indicates why such an intercultural engagement across boundaries and a critical-reflective orientation—which resists being fixated to one uniform space, unifying

topology, or topos—across multiple shifting contexts of meaning and topos is necessary.

The articulation of multicultural hermeneutics in *Orientation and Judgment in Hermeneutics* reveals ways of reconsidering hermeneutics by extending it beyond the scope of a decision between universal norms or a tradition, formal cognitive validity or the ontological disclosure and horizontal-intersubjective achievement of truth in a horizon or tradition. The chapters of this book, read alongside contributions to hermeneutics such as Makkreel's, point toward possibilities for a more adequate intercultural hermeneutical practice.

To make a further distinction, contemporary hermeneutics needs to be appropriate to the myriad differences of existence (i.e., multicultural) and adequate for the communication and interpretation across differences (i.e., intercultural). Hermeneutics ought to take into consideration the already existing intertextuality of modern Western discourses instead of ahistorically isolating and privileging them. A culturally appropriate and philosophically adequate hermeneutics would begin and continue communicative processes of encountering, engaging, and entering into dialogue with other positions, perspectives, and ways of thinking and living without assuming their intrinsic inferiority (as much of modern Western philosophy and negative Orientalism have done) or a superiority that reifies other discourses by placing them beyond the inter-human realm of communication and critical interpretation (as in affirmative appropriative faddish exoticism and Orientalism).

Intercultural communication and thinking cannot be left to an anticipated future that does not recognize that it has already been long underway and in which the other, as anticipated, can never begin to be encountered. Heidegger's "From a Dialogue on Language" with a Japanese interlocutor appropriately warns against the risks of premature assumptions of understanding others and the premature synthesis of Eastern and Western philosophies and cultures that would flatten their differences into a common uniform identity. Such a univocal globalized culture would entail the impossibility of the intercultural. But Heidegger's understandable caution and hesitation takes a step too far, becoming an opposition between the Occident and the Orient and hindering possibilities of intercultural encounter and communication from the opposite direction. The setting of this limitation to communication comes at the heavy cost of projecting encounter and dialogue, which Heidegger is in fact already engaged in with his Japanese and other East Asian visitors, into a distant future that can never arrive. The intercultural is only futural and to come for Heidegger, when in fact it has already occurred through the history of Western philosophy and its interaction with non-Western lifeworlds. Heidegger posits a current limit to intercultural dialogue and the intertextuality of philosophical traditions, and he already exceeds the very limit he wishes to posit in doing so.

On the way to a critique of Eurocentric reason

As this book has endeavored to illustrate, non-Western discourses do have a sense of the universal and the infinite that Husserl and other Western philosophers have claimed is a unique European inheritance." To mention a counterexample once again, Zhao Dongming has shown, in a different context, how the Neo-Confucian philosophy of mind can well be interpreted as a discourse of the infinite.

Due to reasons such as this that have been investigated in the previous chapters, the univocal and monolithic conception of Western reason, and the associated privileging of European ethical life (Hegel's *Sittlichkeit*) or the modern Western lifeworld (*Lebenswelt* in Husserl and Habermas) as the sole culture of reason and the universal, is deeply questionable. This work has accordingly pursued the strategy of provincializing the Eurocentric tendencies of Western philosophy—through a philosophical investigation of examples from the social-historical milieu of the twentieth-century—with the intention of critically emancipating philosophy and reason along with their universal aspirations.

Thinking, reflecting, and reasoning occur in myriad ways in multiple cultural and historical contexts, as Chapters 1 and 5 showed through a reconsideration of Misch's work on intercultural philosophy. Philosophizing with the matter to be thought itself breaks through overly narrow conceptions of philosophy. Philosophy itself resists being restricted and isolated to the history of Western metaphysics, the history of being, or overly narrow modern conceptions of rationality and logic that make them purely technical theoretical affairs. The idea of one privileged modern Western life-nexus (*Lebenszusammenhang*) or lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*), grounding and grounded in science and technology, has proven itself to be an illusion.

The notion of the lifeworld can be decolonized by recognizing the provinciality and non-universality of the Western lifeworld as one singular formation among multiple others. As the European philosophers Husserl and Habermas themselves admitted, there are myriad forms of life and multiple lifeworlds. What was harder for them to recognize, given a philosophy of history that hierarchically ranked societies from the "primitive" to Western modernity, was the rationality and potential for reflection inherent in the communication and reproduction of each form of practical life.

Each lifeworld has its own (1) processes of material and communicative reproduction; (2) possibilities for argumentation, conceptualization, communication, debate, interpretation, and reflection; (3) pathologies, dysfunctions, imbalances of power, and destructive tendencies. There are furthermore (4) the boundaries of individual and collective understanding, and the limits of discourse and language explored through questions of nothingness and emptiness in Chapter 8, as disclosed in limit-situations of crisis, decentering, and—in Misch's language—"breakthrough" (*Durchbruch*).

A satisfactory conception of intercultural hermeneutics must be more than relativistic and multicultural in (1) exercising a non-identitarian sympathy and a non-reductive charity in understanding and interpretation to discover the internal rationality in other ways of thinking and living; (2) taking into consideration the complex and plural fabric of divergent and conflicting claims, perspectives, and tendencies at work in each lifeworld; and (3) engaging in, and not abandoning, the critical and diagnostic aspects of philosophy in appropriately exercising a hermeneutics of suspicion and materially oriented ideology critique against the structurally reproduced pathologies, injustices, and distortions within a lifeworld. These elements entail rejecting the overly narrow conception of the lifeworld articulated in Husserl and Habermas insofar as the modern Western lifeworld cannot be taken as the definitive model of each lifeworld, or form of historical life, and the distinction between systems and lifeworld is itself questionable by bifurcating the two and preventing the recognition of how the lifeworld itself reproduces both communication and domination.

As argued before, to reintroduce an informative example, Zhang Junmai's reconstruction of a progressive New Confucianism is a significant example of and model for critical and diagnostic intercultural interpretation. Based on the humanistic tendencies of Confucian philosophy, interpreted in relation to contemporary Western thought, Zhang confronted its ethical failures, the complexity of its present conditions, and its critical and Enlightening potential for the future. Zhang's modern Confucian discourse indicates ways of reinterpreting the problematic of rationalization, modernity, and the lifeworld in a less Eurocentric manner.

This historical-philosophical study has been written in the endeavor to offer readers (1) a clear and concise account of the context, motivations, and hermeneutical strategies of early twentieth-century European thinkers' interpretation of Chinese and Buddhist philosophy; (2) a historical and contextual approach to the understanding of philosophy as Western and the possibility of a more encompassing intercultural conception of philosophy; and (3) an examination of issues and problems of intercultural communication and understanding through concrete intertextual case studies.

We have traced in this work the early-twentieth-century German philosophical reception, as well as the larger context of relevant ideas and figures in Germany and China, of Chinese and Buddhist thought. This project was pursued through an "internal" immanent critique and an "external" exposure to alterity and exteriority, as a moment toward an intercultural understanding, to problematize prevalent modern Western discourses of philosophy and hermeneutics. A critique of the Eurocentric idea of reason is one step in articulating alternative—more interculturally sensitive and appropriate—conceptions of rationality, philosophy, and hermeneutics. The intercultural turn is not a rejection of

the pursuit of reason or truth, it is a call for them to be truer to their own vocation and potential.

The intercultural turn is more needful in a time facing the revival and institutionalization of racist and nationalist ideologies. It is, moreover, needful within the Western academic discipline of philosophy that is complicit with racism and nationalism insofar as it excludes, ignores, and trivializes the philosophizing and reasoning occurring—in the past and the present—across the globe in places such as Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, as well as East Asia.

A Ginkgo leaf: An image between one and two

Generations of peoples across East and West have already encountered and engaged with one another to one extent or another in ordinary everyday discourse and practice. As Driesch noted within the limitations of his own vocabulary, intercultural communication, hybridity, and interaction have shaped the past and present in which we live and think to such a profound extent that projects of ethnocentric purity are conceptually incoherent and practically impossible. Yet, as critics of modernity and globalization have shown, ideas and practices of identity, oneness, and totality without difference and remainder are themselves highly questionable. The ideal of the whole then needs to be one that encourages concurrently maximizing unity and diversity, complementarity and difference, such that each can be itself without being leveled in synthesis.

In conclusion, in response to the overly Hegelian notion of unity as synthesis operational in Merleau-Ponty's essay discussed above, we might ponder a poem about a leaf written for Marianne von Willemer in 1815 by the German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Goethe composed the poem "Gingo [ginkgo] biloba" published in *West-östlicher Diwan* (West-Eastern Divan) that expresses an idealized image of the unity of difference in love as well as the potentially complementary relationship between East and West as concurrently one and two. <>

Greek Buddha: Pyrrho's Encounter with Early Buddhism in Central Asia by Christopher I. Beckwith [Princeton University Press, 9780691166445] paperback

Excerpt: In the past few decades a quiet revolution has been under way in the study of the earliest Buddhism. Its beginnings lay in the discoveries of John Marshall, the archaeologist who excavated the great ancient city of eastern Gandhāra, Taxila (near what is now Rawalpindi), and published his results in 1951. The evidence was incontrovertible: the Buddhist monastery, the vihāra, with its highly distinctive architectural plan, appeared there fully formed in the first century AD, and had been preceded by the ārama, a crude temporary shelter that was also found there.' Marshall openly stated that organized Buddhist monasticism accompanied the appearance of monasteries then—in the Saka-Kushan period—and had not existed before that time. This partly corresponded to the traditional trajectory of the development of Buddhism, but in delaying the

appearance of monasticism for an entire half millennium after the Buddha, it challenged practically everything else in the traditional account of Early Buddhism. Most scholars paid no attention whatsoever to this. However, eventually others noticed additional problems, particularly contradictions in the canonical texts themselves that challenged many fundamental beliefs about the early development of the religion. André Bareau, Johannes Bronkhorst, Luis Gómez, Gregory Schopen, and others challenged many of these traditional beliefs in studies of the canonical texts viewed in the context of other material—archaeological excavations (of which there were and are precious few), material in non-Buddhist texts, and so forth. Their discoveries have overthrown so many of the traditional ideas that, as so often in scholarship, those who follow the traditional view have felt compelled to fight back. But the new views on Buddhism are themselves not free of traditional notions, and these have prevented a comprehensive, principled account of Early Buddhism from developing.

The most important single error made by almost everyone in Buddhist studies is methodological and theoretical in nature. In all scholarly fields, it is absolutely imperative that theories be based on the data, but in Buddhist studies, as in other fields like it, even dated, "provenanced" archaeological and historical source material that controverts the traditional view of Early Buddhism has been rejected because it does not agree with that traditional view, and even worse, because it does not agree with the traditional view of the entire world of early India, including beliefs about Brahmanism and other sects that are thought to have existed at that time, again based not on hard data but on the same late traditional accounts. Some of these beliefs remain largely or completely unchallenged, notably:

the belief that Sramanas existed before the Buddha, so he became a Sramana like many other Sramanas the belief that there were Sramanas besides Early Buddhists, including Jains and Ājīvikas, whose sects were as old or older than Buddhism, and the Buddha even knew some of their founders personally that, despite the name Sramana, and despite the work of Marshall, Bareau, and Schopen, the Early Buddhists were "monks" and lived in "monasteries" with a monastic rule, the Vinaya that, despite the scholarship of Bronkhorst, the Upanishads and other Brahmanist texts are very ancient, so old that they precede Buddhism, so the Buddha was influenced by their ideas that the dated Greek eyewitness reports on religious-philosophical practitioners in late fourth century BC India do not tally with the traditional Indian accounts written a half millennium or more later, so the Greek reports must be wrong and must be ignored perhaps most grievously, the belief that all stone inscriptions in the early Brahmi script of the Mauryan period were erected by "Aśoka", the traditional grandson of the Mauryan Dynasty's historical founder, Candragupta, and whatever any of those inscriptions say is therefore evidence about what went on during (or before) the time he is thought to have lived

we "know" what problematic terms (such as Sanskrit *duhkha* — Pali *dukkha*) mean, despite the fact that their meaning is actually contested by scholars, the modern and traditional dictionaries do not agree on their etymologies or what they "really" mean, and the texts do not agree either.

These and other stubborn unexamined beliefs have adversely affected the work of even the most insightful scholars of Buddhism. Yet no contemporaneous or near-contemporaneous hard evidence of any kind affirms such beliefs. Moreover, it is bad enough that such ideas have caused so much damage for so long within Indology, but the resulting misinformation has inflicted damage in other fields as well, including ancient Greek and Chinese philosophy, where the traditional construct has been used as the basis, once again, for rejecting the hard data, forcing scholars in those fields to attempt to explain away what seems to be obvious Indian Buddhist influence. This then helps maintain the traditional fiction of three totally unrelated peoples and traditions as "cultural islands" that had absolutely no contact of any kind with each other until much later times, as used to be unquestioned belief as recently as Karl Jaspers's famous book on the Axial Age, and continues, by and large, among those who follow in his footsteps. [Karl Jaspers, [The Origin and Goal of History](#) [Routledge, 9780415578806] (German edition, 1949; English translation 1953). [see](#) I should stress, however, that Jaspers's book is nevertheless very insightful and is still worth reading today.]

Setting aside the traditional beliefs mentioned above, and much other folklore, what hard data might be found on the topic at hand? What sort of picture can we construct based primarily on the hard data rather than on the traditional views? In the present book I present a scientific approach, to the extent that I have been able to do so and have not been misled by my own unrecognized "views". It is important to note that this book is not a comparison of anything. It is also most definitely not a critique or biobibliographic survey of earlier research. Such a study would be great to have (and in fact, an excellent bibliography on Pyrrhonism was published by Richard Bett in 2010), but I have cited only what I thought necessary to cite or what I was able to find myself, with a strong preference for primary sources. I have also paid some attention to recent traditional interpretations of "Early" Buddhism, and have in several instances cited them for Normative Buddhist reflections of actual Early Buddhist thought.

I have attempted to solve several major problems in the history of thought. The most important of these problems involves the source of Pyrrho's teachings. I would like to call it philosophy, and I have sinned—sometimes willfully—by doing so when I talk about Early Pyrrhonism's more "philosophical" aspects, but in general to call it philosophy in a modern language is to seriously mislabel it. The same would be true if I called it religion. It was to some extent both, and to some extent neither, and it was science, too.

I first spent a great deal of time reexamining and rethinking the Greek testimonies of Pyrrho's thought, and in 2011 finally published a long article on the topic in *Elenchos* (reprinted with minor revisions in Appendix A). I then considered the studies which claim—in accord with statements of ancient authors—that Pyrrho acquired his unusual way of thought in India. I also read studies that claimed the exact opposite—that he did not learn anything at all of major importance for his thought there—and other arguments which essentially claim that Indian philosophy is basically Greek in origin. That forced me to investigate Early Buddhism in depth, with the result that I discovered the above problems, among others, and my study became much longer and more involved than I had expected.

My research set out to determine whether Indian thought—particularly Buddhism—had influenced Pyrrho's thought. It ended up delving very deeply into the problem of identifying genuine Early Buddhism: the teachings and practices of the Buddha himself, and of his followers for the first century or two after his death. As mentioned above, in my view all scholarship, regardless of its subject matter, should follow the dictum "theories must accord with the data", with the corollary that the earliest hard data must always be ranked higher in value than other data. In addition, theories and scholarly arguments must be based on rational, logical thought. These are among the core principles of scientific work in general, and I have done my best to follow them.

One of the anonymous reviewers of the manuscript of this book has different ideas about how I should have proceeded. He says, "A strong case could be made that even relatively specific features of the history of philosophy such as the Problem of the Criterion (relative, that is, to the general phenomenon of skepticism) could be explained as a generic motif rather than, so to speak, as a patented idea". He contends that "two figures saying similar, or even identical, things in different parts of the world is never enough to establish direct influence."

This is a problematic claim with respect to philosophy and religious studies. The field of biblical studies is founded on the ability and necessity to do text criticism. It is purely because textual near identity is recognizable that textual scholars can identify interpolations, university teachers can recognize plagiarization—even cross-linguistic plagiarization—and so on. Is it conceivable that, for example, the famous statement of Protagoras, "Man is the measure of all things", is unrelated to the Greek original, or is not recognizable? The ancient Greek words has the same meaning as the modern Chinese translation or the modern Russian translation, and so on. Assuming it is correctly translated, the quotation is famous, easily recognizable, and not liable to be confused with any other, whatever the language, despite its brevity. But why? It is the highly distinctive content of the text that makes it easily identifiable. Translation converts the meaning expressed from one language to another. It does not do it perfectly

because with perfect identity no translation occurs—the texts are identical. The reviewer's assertion denies the possibility of communication by language even in the same language (not to speak of the possibility of understanding, say, a German translation of an English textbook, or vice versa, as students manage to do every day), and the necessity of intelligibility assumed by the very existence of the field of linguistic typology.

Aristotle talks about exactly this topic in his *Metaphysics*. For example, no doubt many ancient Greeks, Indians, and Chinese said, "It's a nice day today," and proceeded to take a walk somewhere to enjoy the fine weather. Many people everywhere do that, and my wife is liable to say the same thing to me when it is warm and sunny. So, it is easy for us to imagine that countless Greeks, Indians, and Chinese have said the same thing. But to paraphrase Aristotle again, we can hardly imagine that anyone in ancient India or China could then have said, "Let's walk to the Odeon in Athens!"

The reviewer instead compares the historical appearance of Pyrrhonism to that of "the widespread phenomenon of world-denying mendicants or for that matter cultural motifs of lycanthropy, unicorns, or night-walking." He proposes that "pan-Eurasian social dynamics could be enough to explain the independent appearance of philosophical theories that deny the attainability of certain knowledge and that reject all positive doctrine." Yet Pyrrho's declaration in the Aristocles passage has challenged not only the manuscript reviewer but a century of scholars, who have not been able to explain it no matter what approach they have adopted, thus demonstrating both how unique it is and how difficult it has been for anyone to deal with it. This is only one part of the actual, complex problem that needs to be discussed and explained.

Another of the reviewers of the manuscript of this book suggests that I should discuss the controversial issue of the date of the foundation of Jainism, its relationship to Buddhism, and so on, in greater detail. I strongly agree that it would be great to have a careful, historically sound study of this topic, and I have long encouraged other scholars to undertake one. So far, however, Indologists, including Buddhologists, have not examined the Jain dating issue carefully and thoroughly from a historical point of view, and no such comprehensive study yet exists, though the issue is mentioned by a number of scholars, including Mette (1995), who though evidently pro-Jain concludes that Buddhism seems to be in all respects earlier than Jainism. The earliest incontestable hard evidence for the existence of Jainism is not earlier than the Saka-Kushan period (first century BC to third century AD), about a half millennium after the Buddha, as shown by the fact that none of the explicitly identified and datable Jain material listed in Ghosh's authoritative register of Indian archaeological sites is earlier than the Saka-Kushan period, the earliest being caves dated (generously) to ca. 100 BC to AD 200. My approach in the book is to base all of my main arguments on hard data—inscriptions, datable manuscripts, other dated texts, and archaeological reports. I do not allow

traditional belief to determine anything in the book, so I have necessarily left the topic out, other than to mention it briefly in a few places, with relevant citations. Here I quote a century-old summary that remains the received view:

Jainism bears a striking resemblance to Buddhism in its monastic system, its ethical teachings, its sacred texts, and in the story of its founder. This closeness of resemblance has led not a few scholars—such as Lassen, Weber, Wilson, Tiele, Barth—to look upon Jainism as an offshoot of Buddhism and to place its origin some centuries later than the time of Buddha. But the prevailing view today—that of Bühler, Jacobi, Hopkins, and others—is that Jainism in its origin is independent of Buddhism and, perhaps, is the more ancient of the two. The many points of similarity between the two sects are explained by the indebtedness of both to a common source, namely the teachings and practices of ascetic, monastic Brahminism.

However, he then comments, "The canon of the White-robed Sect consists of forty-five Agamas, or sacred texts, in the Prakrit tongue. Jacobi, who has translated some of these texts in the 'Sacred Books of the East', believes they cannot be older than 300 B.C. According to Jainist tradition, they were preceded by an ancient canon of fourteen so-called Purvas, which have totally disappeared ..." Regarding the idea that any kind of monasticism, least of all Brahmanist asceticism, could be the "common source", it may be noted that monasteries per se in India cannot be dated earlier than the first century AD, when they first appear in Taxila; they were introduced from Central Asia, where Jainism was and is unknown. Finally, my discussion here, and throughout this book, is concerned only with issues of historical accuracy. In my opinion, all great religions have much that is admirable in them, however old or new they may be.

I would like to emphasize that this book does not belong to any existing view, school, or field, as far as I am aware, so that it does not subscribe to any tradition walled off from the rest of intellectual life.

It therefore has no gatekeepers, clad in the traditional metaphorical chain-mail armor and bearing the traditional metaphorical halberd, proclaiming threats to their perceived enemies in archaic languages, dedicated to keeping new knowledge out and stamping out all possible threats to those inside its walls so that the residents can safely continue their traditional beliefs without the necessity of thinking about them. The book is also inevitably imperfect, though I have tried to make it as correct as I could, despite the limitations of my own imperfections. So I hope it is not the "last word" on the many topics it covers, but only the "first word". My goal throughout has been exclusively to examine the evidence as carefully and precisely as possible, and to draw reasonable conclusions based on it—while of course considering other studies that shed light on the problems or in some cases argue for a different interpretation. This sounds like a rather un-Pyrrhonian

enterprise, but ultimately, and somewhat unexpectedly, it is what Pyrrhonism is all about.

Pyrrhonism: How the Ancient Greeks Reinvented Buddhism by Adrian Kuzminski [Studies in Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Lexington Books, 978-0739125069] paperback

I find this book to be intriguing for a couple of reasons. First, Professor Kuzminski lays out a very convincing argument that the ancient Greek philosopher Pyrrho of Elis (380 - 270 BCE), drew a good deal of inspiration from Indian Buddhists who are in the Madhyamaka tradition of the Mahayana ('Greater Vehicle') school. To be able to do this properly, he first explains what Pyrrhonism is and what it is not. Most historians of philosophy lump Pyrrho in with his older contemporary Democritus and with the post-Aristotelean Academics - those who came after Aristotle in the Academy at Athens. There is a serious flaw in the standard view, which may be simply defined: Pyrrho and all subsequent Pyrrhonists were not dogmatic about anything, anything. Instead they exercised a mental process which through practice led them to a state of tranquility which Pyrrho named ataraxia - roughly, 'freedom from passions.' Is something true? It can be shown to be untrue through dialectic reasoning. But he goes further: it is neither true nor untrue, nor is it not true and not not untrue. Since a definitive statement cannot be made about things, the wise man - the Pyrrhonist - will suspend judgment. Done according to this practice, one's causes for upset, sorrow and worry fall away. Now, if you're a Buddhist, you'll right away notice that this is very similar to the concept of emptiness - sunyata - which goes back to the Tathagata himself. Pyrrho actually went to India with Alexander the Great and according to two other ancient writers, Democritus and Diogenes Laertius, spent time with the Indian sages who he met there. Ergo, it appears that he brought back some form of Buddhist practice.

The second reason that I find this book to be exciting is because about two months ago I'd had a conversation with a Zen practitioner and we kicked around the idea that Buddhism might have been in the great cities and cultures of the Mediterranean. I knew that Clement of Alexandria (150 - 215 CE) was supposed to be the first Greek writer on antiquity to specifically mention the Buddha - as bo Boutta - in his Hypotyposes. I also knew that India and Greece long had a thriving international trade going on by land and by sea. There was nothing to stop Buddhists from coming to places like Alexandria, Athens, Damascus, Ephesus and Rome; and aside from Alexander's incursions into the empires east of the Levant (current Palestine), Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Persians and Babylonians (among others) made their way to India as well. Many were merchants, some were military people, some were scholars.

Before I found this book my chief candidate for "Greek philosopher who brought Buddhism from India" was / is Pythagoras (570 - 496 BCE). Even his name Pythagoras may be an Hellenized form of Pitta guru, which title is very Indian indeed. But as I looked over what actually

survives of Pythagoras' original teachings (and not so much) I was struck that some of his thinking and his way of life reflects an earlier Indian philosophy - Jainism, which was the creation of an Indian philosopher, Mahavira (599 - 527 BCE). Jains will not eat meat because to take the life of anything is an horrendous sin; so it is that the Jains compromise by being vegetarians. Just like Pythagoras.

For anyone seeking direct ties between Buddhism or Jain and the West, there simply is no 'smoking gun,' no text in either Greek or Indian literature which specifically states that Indian sage X spoke with Greek inquirer Y or vice versa. Therefore, such a hunt must rely upon secondary and tertiary sources of information in both traditions. There are a number of sources, some of them quite old but quite reliable. I am thinking of W. W. Tarn's *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (1950) which fleshes out much of the post-Alexandrian empires for which primary texts are scant. Tarn's great contribution was to construct plausible outlines of these empires by a constant referral to the numismatics - the study of the coins recovered in archaeological digs throughout the entire region. What emerges is a picture of a very lively exchange of goods and ideas in both directions.

What Professor Kuzminski has done is to very much put a backbone into the speculations about Greek - Indian philosophic exchange; from here the idea has gone from "it's possible" to "it's very likely" and especially so with Pyrrho of Elis. Kudos to the good professor for giving us this work! <>

The Suttanipata: An Ancient Collection of the Buddha's Discourses Together with Its Commentaries edited and translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi [The Teachings of the Buddha, Wisdom Publications, 9781614294290]

Excerpt: The Suttanipāta is an anthology of Buddhist discourses belonging to the Khuddaka Nikāya, the fifth collection in the Sutta Pitaka of the Pāli Canon. The title of the work means a compilation (nipāta) of discourses (sutta). Several of these discourses occur elsewhere in the Sutta Pitaka, but most are unique to this collection. The commentary to the work, Paramatthajotikā II, already recognizes its composite nature when, in its introductory verses, it says that "it is so designated [Suttanipāta] because it was recited by compiling suitable suttas from here and there." It is sometimes claimed that the Suttanipāta is one of the most ancient Buddhist texts. This may be true of some of its contents, but it is not true of the collection. As an anthology that emerged from the oral tradition, the Suttanipāta is a multitextured, multilayered work that spans several phases of Buddhist literary activity. It includes material that belongs to the most ancient stratum, but it also contains other material which, while still representative of Early Buddhism, should be assigned to a later period. Exactly when the anthology came into existence is not known, but since, as a collection, it has no parallel in the

texts surviving from other Early Buddhist schools, it is likely to be unique to the Pāli school now known as the Theravāda.

The stratification of material in the Suttanipāta shows that as a collection it underwent a process of gradual growth and evolution as newer material was added to a more primitive core and the contents were rearranged until it arrived at its present shape. The growth of the Suttanipāta by the addition of new material does not necessarily mean that all the suttas inserted into the anthology at a later time were composed subsequent to the Questions of Punnaka

On each occasion, rather than introducing the verse at the beginning of a discourse, he cites the verse at the end, preceded by the phrase "And it was with reference to this, bhikkhus, that it was stated by me in the Pārāyana.

At AN 3:61 (III 399) a group of elders are sitting together after their meal when one of them says: "This was said, friends, by the Blessed One in the Pārāyana, in the Questions of Metteyya." He then cites 1042 (with a slightly different reading of the first line) and asks his fellow monks how they understand it. Each offers his own interpretation, after which they go to the Buddha for clarification. The Buddha then repeats the verse and explains his intention. Finally, it is said that early one morning the female lay disciple Nandamātā recited the Pārāyana in a voice so pleasing that the divine king Vessavana, passing nearby, stopped in his flight and congratulated her for her recitation.

It may be significant that these passages refer to the work as Pārāyana rather than as Pārāyanavagga. The suffix —vagga, "chapter," may have been added only after the Pārāyana became a chapter in the Suttanipāta. In the case of the Atthaka-vagga, however, the suffix seems always to have been part of the title, perhaps implying that the group of suttas formed a set, not necessarily a chapter in a larger work.

The antiquity of these two chapters—the Atthakavagga and the Pārāyana—as well as their importance for the Buddhist community, can be understood from the fact that each was made the subject of an ancient commentary, the Niddesa, which was incorporated into the Sutta Pitaka. The larger section, the Mahāniddesa, comments on the Atthakavagga; the shorter section, the Cūlaniddesa, comments on the Pārāyanavagga and the Khaggavisāna Sutta.

Circumstantial evidence for the early existence of several other texts presently included in the Suttanipāta is provided by the Bhabra Inscription of King Asoka, where he cites seven discourses on the Dhamma that he desires "many monks and nuns should hear frequently and meditate upon, and likewise laymen and laywomen." Three can be reasonably identified with texts now existing in Sn. The Munigāthā are almost certainly the verses of the Muni Sutta. The Moneyya Sutta is probably the Nālaka Sutta, excluding the introductory verses. And since Upatissa was the personal name of Sāriputta, the Upatissapasina—Upatissa's Questions—is probably the

Sāriputta Sutta, where Sāriputta asks questions of the Buddha.

In commenting on its respective source texts, the Niddesa often buttresses its points by quoting from other texts (not the Atthakavagga or Pārāyanavagga), usually prefaced with the remark: "For this has been said by the Blessed One" (vuttam h'etam Bhagavatā) or "Hence the Blessed One said" (ten'āha Bhagavā). Several of these texts are now included in Sn. The ones most often referred to are the Sabhiya Sutta and the Padhāna Sutta. Verse 271 from the Sūciloma Sutta is cited several times, as well as from the Salla Sutta; individual verses from other texts are also cited. The Niddesa does not refer to these works by their titles, though in its citations from the Sabhiya Sutta it includes the line where the Buddha addresses Sabhiya by name. These quotations testify to the existence of those discourses at the time the Niddesa was composed, though from this it cannot be determined whether they had yet been incorporated into the anthology now called the Suttanipāta. The earliest known references to the Suttanipāta are in the Milindapailha, but these are all in a section of that work recognized as relatively late.

The formation of the Suttanipāta can only be reconstructed through critical analysis of its texts with reference to their language, doctrinal content, and the social conditions they reflect. The most thorough attempt at such a reconstruction was made by N. A. Jayawickrama in his "Critical Analysis of the Suttanipāta." Jayawickrama suggests that the suttas of the Atthakavagga, the pucchās of the Pārāyana, and the poems extolling the muni ideal are likely to be the oldest parts of Sn. At a subsequent phase, he conjectures, the work was enlarged by including other material. In this phase he puts the didactic poems of the first three vaggas, the two biographical discourses (the Pabbajjā and Padhāna Suttas), the older dialogues of the Mahāvagga, the dialogue poems of the Urugavagga, and the yakkha poems. He considers four of the popular discourses—the Mangala, Metta, Parābhava, and Vasala Suttas—along with the Cunda and Kokālika Suttas to be a little younger but still pre-Asokan. The youngest suttas he takes to be the Ratana, the Vijaya, and the Dvayatānupassanā, and the latest compositions to be the vatthugāthā, the introductory verses, which were added at a relatively later time to the Nālaka Sutta and the Pārāyana. I would qualify this, however, with the observation that while the Dvayatānupassanā itself might be relatively young, its verses likely stem from an older period and may have been brought into the sutta to give them a framework. Several of these verses are found elsewhere in the Anguttara, Samyutta, and Itivuttaka. Verse 728 is identical with of the Pārāyana, from which it was evidently taken.

Jayawickrama ascribes the composition of the bulk of the poems roughly to the period 400-300 B.C.E. He delineates five stages in the evolution of the anthology.

- (1) First, there was "an early nucleus of more or less floating material" available for the creation of an anthology.

- (2) Next came an attempt at a collection by bringing together the Atthakavagga, the Pārāyana pucchās, the Khaggavisāna Sutta, and a few other suttas on the ascetic ideal. These became the foundation of the work.
- (3) This was followed by a transitional stage in which more suttas considered representative of the Buddha's teachings were selected and bundled along with the foundational texts.
- (4) As more material was amassed, the Culavagga and Mahāvagga were separated off, thus yielding the five chapters we have now.
- (5) The final phase, he suggests, "was marked by the prefixing of the Uruga, Ratana, and Pabbajjā (and Padhāna) Suttas to the three respective vaggas under the editorial hand of monastic redactors for propagating the Dhamma."

The Suttanipāta depicts the Buddha teaching and conversing with people from different walks of life in the Indian society of his time: a herdsman, a farmer, brahmins, monks, wandering ascetics, and lay disciples. His ministry in the texts extends even beyond the human sphere to devas and yakkhas. In this respect the anthology resembles the Sagāthāvaggasamyutta, with which it shares several suttas. The Sagāthāvagga is classified according to the types of people and beings with whom the Buddha speaks. Though the inquirers and auditors in Sn are far less numerous, they fit into most of these categories.

The following list shows the types of interlocutors in Suttanipāta who meet the Buddha and the other auditors whom he addresses, along with the numbers of the discourses in which they appear. The list is based solely on information provided by the text of Sn itself or by reasonable inference from the text. It does not consider the background information related by the commentary, whose attributions may stem from a later narrative tradition: Ascetic inquirer, unnamed Bhikkhus, a specified Bhikkhu, Brahmins, Brahmanic students, Deities, King, specified Layperson, Māra, Yakkhas, Unspecified inquirer, and no inquirer.

In this scheme I distinguish suttas that make no mention of an interlocutor or auditor from those in which the interlocutor or auditor is left unspecified. Those that make no mention of an auditor also do not specify a speaker; the implication is that the speaker is the Buddha himself. The Uruga Sutta and the Metta Sutta are examples of discourses that fall into this category; taken on their own, without reference to the commentary, they appear to be straightforward didactic poems bereft of any dialogical or expository format. The Khaggavisāna Sutta can also be cited as an example of this type, though the commentary explains each verse as the utterance of a paccekabuddha.

Suttas with an unspecified interlocutor feature another voice that poses questions, which the Buddha answers. The other speaker either asks questions at the beginning of the sutta, which the Buddha responds to without

interruption in the body of the sutta, or the other speaker and the Buddha engage in an alternating question-and-response exchange. The *Sammāpabbājanīya Sutta* is an example of the former type; the *Kalahavivāda* and the two *Viyūha Suttas* follow the question-and-response format. The commentary explains that the inquirer in all six suttas without a specified interlocutor was a duplicate Buddha that the Blessed One had mentally created for asking these questions, which no one else was capable of posing in just the way the Buddha wanted. While this explanation might seem to exceed the bounds of credibility, the background narrative to several sūtras in the Chinese (**Arthapada*), a parallel to the *Atthakavagga*, provides a similar explanation. This suggests that the two spring from a common narrative tradition, one that goes back to a very early period.

Among the categories of interlocutors and auditors who are identified, it might seem that "brahmin students" (*mānava*) constitutes the largest group. However, the number in this category is inflated by counting separately the sixteen students of the brahmin *Bāvāri*, who visit the Buddha as a group and ask him the sixteen sets of questions that make up the body of the *Pārāyanavagga*. If we collapse these into one, the distribution per category would more faithfully reflect the actual number of separate interlocutors. Further, since these sixteen students seem to have adopted the lifestyle of celibate ascetics, they could also be reassigned to the category of "ascetic inquirer," which would then expand to eighteen.

The categories of interlocutors and auditors in the *Suttanipāta* roughly correspond to those of the *Sagāthāvagga*, though proportions and details vary. Two discourses are spoken to deities in response to questions, and a third can be added if we include the *Ratana Sutta*, apparently addressed to earth and sky deities. Three suttas involve *yakkhas*, including two parallels to suttas from the *Sagāthāvagga*. Only one discourse reports a conversation with a king, the *Pabbajjā Sutta*, where King *Bimbisāra* visits the future Buddha outside the city of *Rājagaha*. This contrasts with the *Sagāthāvagga*, where an entire chapter of twenty-five suttas is devoted to the Buddha's conversations with King *Pasenadi*. *Māra*, too, appears here only once, in the *Pabbajjā Sutta*, also assigned to the period prior to the enlightenment. In the *Sagāthāvagga* *Māra*, too, gets an entire chapter of twenty-five suttas. There are no discourses involving *bhikkhunīs*, though according to the commentary the *Vijaya Sutta*, on the repulsive nature of the body, was taught to two *bhikkhunīs* for removing their attachment to their beauty. Among the distinct categories, brahmins claim a disproportionately large number. This may be indicative of the friction that existed between Buddhism and Brahmanism. It is telling that in five of these discourses the Buddha challenges tenets and practices of the brahmins prevalent during this period. When we take an overview of the Buddha's interactions with inquirers from the different groups, one consistent feature that stands out is his success in winning them over to his teaching. Among householders,

Dhaniya and *Māgandiya*, who both start off scornful of the Buddha, end up going for refuge and entering monastic life along with their wives, after which they attain arahantship.⁸ The two ascetic inquirers, *Sabhiya* and *Nālaka*, leave behind their old loyalties and go forth under the Buddha. The three *yakkhas* not only take refuge but extol the Buddha with exuberant words of praise. With the brahmins, perhaps the most difficult challenge and potentially the biggest win, the Buddha always ends victorious. Three of the brahmins—*Kasibhāradvāja*, *Sundarikabhāradvāja*, and *Sela*—not only take refuge but enter the homeless life, while the others become lay disciples. The brahmin student *Māgha* becomes a lay follower, and the sixteen brahmin inquirers of the *Pārāyana* become monastic disciples. In the *Vāsettha Sutta*, *Vāsettha* and *Bhāradvāja* become lay disciples, but at the beginning of the *Aggailna Sutta* it is reported that they were living among the *bhikkhus* seeking to become *bhikkhus* themselves. They did so even in the face of sharp condemnation by their fellow brahmins.

These cases of conversion point to what might have been a purpose behind the compilation of the *Suttanipāta*—perhaps not the sole or primary purpose but a major one: to show the Buddha in his role as the incomparable teacher of devas and human beings. Even when faced with fierce resistance, he prevails. Even when confronted by hostile antagonists, he wins them over. His adversaries, despite their prestige and rhetorical skills, are no match for the Buddha. With his wisdom, patience, wit, and skillful means, he turns his opponents into ardent disciples some of whom even attain the final goal of the holy life.

The discourses of the *Suttanipāta* span a wide range of topics in Early Buddhism. These include personal and social ethics, devotional praise of the Triple Gem, reflections on death and loss, the path of monastic training, discussions with brahmins about class status, and the nature of the spiritual ideal. The Thematic Guide offers a broad overview of the topics dealt with in the work.

It is worth noting at the outset that the *Suttanipāta* does not contain systematic discussions of Buddhist doctrine in the analytical style that prevails in the prose *Nikāyas*. Such topics as the four noble truths, the eightfold path, the three marks of existence, the five aggregates, and other doctrinal topics are seldom mentioned or totally passed over. The word *anicca*, for instance, does not occur at all in any of the poems, and there is only one mention of *anattā*. From such observations, some scholars have suggested that the unstructured teachings we find in *Sn* and kindred works represent the authentic and original teachings of the Buddha and that the doctrinal expositions of the prose *Nikāyas* are late developments, perhaps the product of monastic editors.

Such a suggestion, however, would have bizarre consequences. It would in effect reduce the Dhamma to a collection of poems and aphorisms with only the barest unifying structure. The plain fact is that the discourses of *Sn* have a different purpose than to provide a

comprehensive overview of the Dhamma. As works mostly in verse, their primary purpose is to inspire, edify, and instruct rather than to provide systematic doctrinal exposition. While the exact diction and format of the prose suttas might have taken shape at the hands of monastic editors, without the light shed by these suttas it is virtually impossible to determine the purport of the verse collections and the vision that unifies them. <>

Unforgetting Chaitanya: Vaishnavism and Cultures of Devotion in Colonial Bengal by Varuni Bhatia [Oxford University Press, 9780190686246]

Excerpt: [Unforgetting Chaitanya](#) charts a regional story from Bengal. It is a story from Magura and Ula, the villages that two important protagonists of the book hail from. It is a story from colonial towns, such as Comilla, Murshidabad, Ranaghat, Dinajpur, Krishnanagar, Jessore, Cuttack, and Patna. It is also a story from key Vaishnava sacred sites in Bengal—Nabadwip, Bishnupur, Shantipur, Shrikhanda, Sylhet, and Katwa. These are provincial Bengali towns claiming a rich legacy of Chaitanya. Some of them, such as Shantipur and Katwa, boast of a "seat" belonging to Chaitanya's primary Bengali disciples who generate their own gosvami lineages. Many of these seats, or shripats, are living sites of Chaitanya worship and devotion in Bengal. Others, such as Bishnupur, emerge as key centers of Vaishnava patronage and temple-building activity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. And these spaces are populated not only by gosvamis, but also by mahants (temple priests) and grihasthas (householder Vaishnavas), and the "mendicants"—the babajis and baishnabis, and other practitioners of sahajiya devotion. The histories of these seats, temples, and their devotional cultures have been relegated to the sidelines in inscribing the broader growth and development of a globally oriented Gaudiya Vaishnavism. The elision of the region of Bengal and its social, cultural, and historical peculiarities in studies of Gaudiya Vaishnavism has been both curious and detrimental to the overall understanding of modern transformations of this rich, vibrant, and myriad devotional tradition and cultural phenomenon.

Allow me, in this context, to state upfront a key productive tension that operates in this book as a heuristic device. This is the tension between Bengali Vaishnavism and Gaudiya Vaishnavism. By Gaudiya Vaishnavism, I mean the institutionally sanctioned form of Vaishnavism that grounds itself in the teachings of Chaitanya, especially as they are commented upon and disseminated through the writings of the six gosvamis of Vrindavan. This tradition, which produced a vast corpus of theological treatises and ritual manuals explicating Chaitanyite devotion to future generations, is orthodox in its social and ritual practices. During the period covered in this book, Gaudiya Vaishnavism receives a solid foundation as reformed religion in institutional networks of the Gaudiya Math and Mission under the aegis of the father-son duo, Bhaktivinoda Thakur and Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati. While this book remains

acutely aware of the transformations within Gaudiya Vaishnavism in the colonial period, it is not my intention here to chart these out.

Rather, my focus in this book is what I specifically characterize as Bengali Vaishnavism, by which I mean the multiplicity of devotional life-worlds associated with the figure of Chaitanya, as well as with the complex of Radha-Krishna worship in the Bengali-speaking region of the subcontinent. These worlds include not only the sacred biographies written in Bengali, or temples built in a uniquely local style under the patronage of local rulers; they also include a wide range of the so-called obscure religious cults who take Chaitanya to be their spiritual progenitor as well as a mystical ideal. In other words, the book is a study of an immanent religious field marked by its (commitment to) "locality"—of subjects and agents, of everyday life and institutional spaces, of ritual practices and devotional literature. This field is not, and cannot be, contained within the ambit of institutional Gaudiya Vaishnavism for reasons that have to do with its inherent multiplicity and "untidiness." Nonetheless, as this book shows, some aspects do, at various times, become accepted as components of a quintessentially Bengali linguistic, regional, and cultural identity.

In some cases, Chaitanya-centric Vaishnavism pushes the cultural boundaries of the region of Bengal beyond its linguistic or territorial perimeters. When it does so, it contributes to the idea of a Greater Bengal, or *brihat banga*, to use the words of literary historian and antiquarian Dinesh Chandra Sen. This Greater Bengal contained territorial margins of the Bengali-speaking region—such as Orissa, Manipur, Tripura, and Assam. And it did so, the argument goes, because of Chaitanya's influence on the local devotional cultures. According to Dinesh Chandra Sen, "From Orissa to Manipur through a large tract of country covering an area of about 224750 sq. miles Chaitanya was now worshipped in temples, while the streets of cities and village-paths resounded with his praises in popular songs." Bipin Chandra Pal writes of the presence of Manipuri Vaishnavas in the social world of his childhood in Sylhet. And Kedarnath Datta Bhaktivinoda is able to call upon the ruling family of Tripura to support his cause of Mayapur.

A key recent study by Indrani Chatterjee brings together religious actors and agents—monks and nuns of the Vaishnava, Shaivite, Sufi, and Buddhist orders—to write a connected history of northeastern India by focusing on male and female monasticism. Her study, while drawing attention to the importance of monastic regional connections in the eastern part of India, alerts us that the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century visions of Bengali "greatness" and grandeur, such as those expressed by Dinesh Chandra Sen or suggested by Bipin Chandra Pal, were located within a cultural imperialist imagination of the *bhadralok*. For the *bhadralok*, these peripheries were also sites of untamed Vaishnavism of the kind that Kedarnath Datta encountered as a colonial bureaucrat in 1871 among the *atibadis* of Orissa (a Vaishnava sect indigenous to this

region), who had accepted a charismatic Bhuiyan-Paik leader, Biskishen, as an avatara of Chaitanya and "Mahavishnu." Datta played a crucial role in imprisoning this millenarian, anticolonial rebel. Curiously, Datta's rationale for the stern disciplinary action taken against this rebel—of which he forms an integral component—derived from the necessity of putting down false prophets whose spurious teachings had compromised the true religion taught by Chaitanya. It is no surprise, then, that the tussle over modern identities in these eastern regions has had to firmly, even violently, resist the domination of Bengal, often articulated in the cultural mapping of Bengali Vaishnavism, and expressed (most importantly) through the spread of Bengali language.

Hence, an important intervention that this book extends is to relocate Chaitanya and the Vaishnavism that draws from his devotional legacies back into Bengal. Such a move helps to clarify two key moments from the mid-twentieth century that are central to contemporary popular understandings of Bengali Vaishnavism and the figure of Chaitanya in India. The first of these is the moment when Chaitanya was specifically presented as a Bengali representative in the discourse on the Bhakti Movement. The second is the moment of the emergence of "cultural communism" in Bengal when performances, such as kirtan, and performers associated with Bengali Vaishnavism were seamlessly integrated into the cultural apparatus deployed by the Communists in Bengal. As both of these moments alert us, secular appropriations of religious figures from the past are integrally the stuff of nationalist imaginations as well as revolutionary movements. This book seeks to map the genealogy of such secular and culturalist dimensions of Bengali Vaishnava traditions.

Charting Loss and Recovery in Bengali Vaishnavism

What is being unforgotten here? It is certainly Chaitanya; however, it is not merely Chaitanya the sannyasi, but Nimai the precocious Bengali lad; Gauranga, the fair-bodied Bengali avatara of Radha-Krishna; and Mahaprabhu, the Great Bengali Master. And, through him, what is also being unforgotten is an iconized and idealized image of an authentic Bengaliness, both in the past as well as in the present.

The first chapter of the book critically examines the well-entrenched discourse of Vaishnava decline in Christian missionary, colonial administrative, and Hindu reformist circles in nineteenth-century Bengal. These writings, I argue, form the discursive context of Vaishnava revival and recovery in the late nineteenth century. Chapter 2 explores the varied worlds of Vaishnava traditions in precolonial and early colonial Bengal—worlds from where bhadrakalok Vaishnavas had emerged and which they proceeded to discipline in light of the critiques and dismissals of Vaishnavism that they had themselves been influenced by. Chapters 3 and 4 examine specific types of Vaishnava recovery attempted in humanist and cultural nationalist contexts, respectively. In chapter 3, I analyze the role of literary histories of Bengali language, especially the role of individual Bengali archivists, collectors of manuscripts, and authors of these histories

in presenting a secular-humanist face of Chaitanya as a religious reformer.

Chapter 4 evaluates the role of a Vaishnava journal with a large subscription base in the provincial towns of the Bengal Presidency in repurposing Chaitanya as an icon of indigenous identity and belonging to the land and its people. These chapters demonstrate that the soteriological category of Vaishnava loss can make itself available to secular interpretations, thereby allowing the writing of humanist histories of social transformations, literary greatness, and religious reform. Chapter 4 also shows that the language of Vaishnava loss is reprocessed to articulate bhadrakalok anxieties around deracination as a result of the colonial encounter. Loss thus stokes a romantic imagination in our period, thereby invoking nostalgia and a yearning for an almost-forgotten past. In Chapter 5, I critically examine the life and contribution of a remarkable Gaudiya Vaishnava theologian—Kedarnath Dutta Bhaktivinoda and his controversial discovery and determination of Chaitanya's birthplace in Mayapur in the late nineteenth century. Recovery, as it works in chapter 5, is simultaneously able to harness poetic and aesthetic dimensions, alongside secular humanist ones, thereby challenging the composition of secular histories and emphasizing mythic and experiential elements.

In the forthcoming chapters, then, I explore late nineteenth-century bhadrakalok reimaginings of Bengali Vaishnavism and of Chaitanya in order to argue that they have left a deep impact on questions of self and subjectivity, religion and culture, and language and regional identity in colonial and postcolonial Bengal. The Bengali self that is being analyzed in these pages is thoroughly Hindu. It wishes to be that way, firmly jettisoning anything that compromises its peculiarly regional version of Hinduism. It is a confidently bhadrakalok Vaishnavism. In this book, the recovery of an authentic self—parallels the recovery of forgotten homes, drowned birthplaces, and lost songs, each one indelibly indexed to the great Master, Chaitanya, who at one point was none other than the local lad "Nimai of Nadia."

Neo-Vaishnavism, Krishna and Chaitanya in Bengal

The first Bengali kirtan I heard in my life, rather belatedly I should add, was "Bharati Gourango loiya jai," sung by Amar Pal. This song speaks of Vishvambhar's renunciation and is addressed to his mother, Shachi, to arise, awake, and stop her son from leaving. Hearers of the song already know that this was not to be. Gauranga would leave, take vows of monasticism, and become Krishna Chaitanya. I heard this song in a compilation of Bengali folksongs or lokgiti. I was struck by the pathos the song was able to elicit in me. More than that, I wondered about this specific expression of viraha—the loss of a beloved son to sannyasa. I pondered over terms like "Gauranga" (and with it, "Nimai"), their relative absence in written sources, and their wide prevalence in oral ones. I had already been visiting archives, reading journals and periodicals, and collecting material to write about Vaishnavism in Bengal in the colonial period when

I first heard this kirtan. And, suddenly, things fell into place like they had never before.

In Bengal, the realization hit home—there was no Vaishnavism without kirtan; there was no Vaishnavism without viraha, the pain of loss; and there was also no Vaishnavism, from the perspective of the twentieth century, without a range of contemporary terms, from *lokgiti* to religious reform, to define it. In writing this book, the primary challenge for me has been to weave together this insight into a narrative that is able to demonstrate the close intertwining between religious and cultural patterns in understanding the significance assumed by Chaitanya and Bengali Vaishnava traditions for a modern Bengali identity and subjectivity. Another challenge the neo-Krishna movement is about twenty years old. Before 1800 Vaishnavism does not seem to have been in great favor with the higher castes of Bengal. Traditionally they were Saivas or Sāktas rather than Vaishnavas; and English education seems to have told with peculiar severity on Krishnaism. But shortly after 1880 a great change becomes visible: Krishna begins to be praised on every hand, and ancient Vaishnava books are read and studied with avidity.

Like many others of his ilk, Farquhar's reading of the "newness" of Vaishnavism in Bengal is both informative, as well as misleading. For instance, Vaishnavism was hardly a dying creed in Bengal. Numerous prominent families of high caste, that is, of Brahmin, Baidya, and Kayastha backgrounds, were followers of Vaishnavism, not to speak of the wide prevalence of Vaishnavism amongst the region's middle to lower castes. We also know that the spread of English education did, indeed, have a particularly detrimental effect on middleclass and educated Bengalis' engagement with Vaishnavism. These young *bhadralok* began to gradually drift away from the faith of their elders.

The list of names of such "drifters" can read like the who's who of mid- to late nineteenth century Bengali intelligentsia: the Brahma leader Keshub Chandra Sen's father, Ram Kamal Sen, was a prominent and well-known Vaishnava, and a contemporary of Ram Mohan Roy; prominent nationalist Bipin Chandra Pal described his father's extremely orthodox Vaishnava ethics and praxis in his memoirs; Bengal's key publisher and a doyen of orthodox Hindu opinion, Sishir Kumar Ghosh, often mentioned the Vaishnavism of his older brothers; important members of the Tagore family were practicing Vaishnavas; even the ur-Brahmo, Ram Mohan Roy, hailed from a Vaishnava family. And yet, despite this list of Bengali notables—all upper caste—hailing from Vaishnava backgrounds, there was some truth to the claim that *smarta* Brahmins of Bengal tended to steer clear of Vaishnavism, as corroborated by the that I faced in writing this book was to walk the thin line that neither disregarded the importance of institutional Gaudiya Vaishnavism in its modern form nor overlooked the incredible plurality of lived Vaishnavisms in Bengal, today as well as in the past. I hope I have been able to do justice on both accounts in the preceding pages.

In his 1903 book *Gita and Gospel*, the Scottish missionary, Orientalist, and keen observer of Hinduism J. N. Farquhar (1861-1929) observed, testimony of Haraprasad Shastri. For ritually orthodox Brahmins of the *smarta* kind, Vaishnavism was too messy, too ready to accept the superiority of a *chandala* over a Brahmin in matters of devotion, too open to women, and too eager to mix with Muslims of the right dispensation.

Farquhar makes two more observations that are similarly prescient and misleading in his appendix to *Gita and Gospel*. These have to do with the historical context that he draws upon as being formative to the rise of what he calls the neo-Krishna movement in Bengal: one, the anticolonial nationalist movement and two, Christianity. Hence, according to Farquhar, this revival of interest in Krishna among the literate public in Bengal was a direct consequence of the "neo-Hindu movement with its literature, lectures, societies, and missionary propaganda, the rise of the Indian National Congress and of the social reform movement, the advance of native journalism, and the establishment of the native, unaided colleges." Neo-Krishnaism, he goes on to say, "is one result of the operation of that potent spirit whereby India has become conscious of her unity, and her sons have been roused to a vigorous defense of all that they have inherited from the past." Christianity is the key, however, for Farquhar because Christianity provides neo-Krishnaism with its comparative framework. "A distinct taste for such books as the Gospels has sprung up; and men have come to feel the need of a perfect character, such as Christ's is, for daily contemplation and imitation. The neo-Krishna movement endeavors to supply these needs from within Hinduism, offering the *Gītā* instead of the Gospels, and Krishna instead of Christ."

Farquhar's conclusions remind us of the overarching framework of Hinduism that has been so determinative of how we, as scholars, have approached the subject. For him, as for latter-day scholars, "neo-Hindu" and "neo-Krishnaism" go hand in hand with the rise of anticolonial nationalism in the subcontinent. The story from Bengal, however, is the story of Chaitanya; and Bengali Vaishnavism is inextricably tied to the image of its beloved deity—who is simultaneously its primary devotee-figure—Chaitanya. Despite a strong measure of titles dealing with Chaitanya in Farquhar's literature survey of books published in Bengal on the subject of "neo-Krishnaism," especially those authored by one of this study's protagonists from chapter 4, Sishir Kumar Ghosh, Farquhar is unable to see the local particularities of Bengali Vaishnavism and hence unable to evaluate it as anything beyond a pan-Indian phenomenon of Vaishnava resurgence.

Of course, Krishna (and Radha) can never be too far away from anywhere that Chaitanya is present. He is, after all, a joint manifestation of the two in Gaudiya Vaishnava doctrine and theology. And yet, in the writings that we have been examining in this book, Chaitanya plays a very distinct role of provincializing Vaishnavism as well as Hinduism, and locating them firmly in Bengal.

If, as Farquhar observes, neo-Vaishnavism allows for a "vigorous defense" of all that has been "inherited from the past," it is a specifically Bengali past, located in the Bengali town of Nabadwip, at a key historical juncture of Muslim political ascendancy in the region. If this "new" devotional religion offers a divinity "for daily contemplation and imitation," it does so in the figure of a local-lad turned deity and in the language spoken by the genteel classes of the region. And if this bhakti tradition operates as the "potent spirit" of the region, it is a spirit that sings in Bengali and is able to encapsulate the plural worlds of devotional praxis that exist in this region. "Neo-Krishnaism," or simply neo-Vaishnavism, in Bengal is as much about Chaitanya as it is about Krishna. It is, moreover, as much about devotional practices as it is about devotional publics where the latter variously represent an anticolonial collective, the authentic Bengali Volk, and a grand vision of an emerging notion of Greater Bengal.

The figure of Chaitanya firmly reminds us that this resurgent Bengal is not India, although at times it operates as a metonym for India and as a shorthand for Hindu. This is especially true when the "vernacular mind" located in the folds of collective forgetting is sought to be hitched to the image of a medieval saint and his devotional legacies. The coming together of the idea of the Bhakti Movement in the twentieth century reminds us that modern India's popular religious history can be read through the (sacred) biographies of many such saints and the languages of their poetry. In this regard, India is a "desh of deshis," a nation constituted by its many vernaculars, where the histories of these vernaculars lies strongly entwined with the literatures associated with the aforementioned Bhakti Movement. The term "neo-Vaishnavism," however, also reminds us of other kinds of territorialities and other kinds of mappings of grandeur that cannot be ignored.

Chief among these is the role that bhadrakal Bengal seeks to play as the dominant, representative voice vis-à-vis its own margins, its subaltern castes and classes: the women—the genteel bhadrakal as well as the "immoral" baishnabi, the unruly bairagi, or the all-too-mixed darbesh. And then there are the margins that are sought to be incorporated into what Dinesh Chandra Sen grandly proclaimed to be *brihat Banga*—a Greater Bengal that stands at the helm of the cultural and linguistic worlds historically adjoining the region of Bengal. It is significant that in the period of high nationalism when the idea of India had gained currency, Dinesh Chandra Sen was seen to be "an intellectual dinosaur" projecting a "national Bengali identity" at the cost of a pan-Indian identity. For, as his staunch critic, the linguist Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay, said, "We cannot afford to forget that the land of Bengal is a part of India; that Bengalis are part of a cluster of Indian nationalities and have no other identities separate from India."

The prefix "neo"—whether appearing before Vedanta, or Hindu(ism), or Vaishnavism/ Krishnaism—is certain to raise questions in certain quarters, especially after Paul

Hacker's usage, where it operates to delegitimize modern interpreters and their interpretations of key Hindu texts and concepts. Despite its discursive moorings in purist understanding of tradition as something that is static and unchanging, thereby rendering modern hermeneutic gestures—especially those that draw upon an eclecticism of religious concepts and ideas—fundamentally illegitimate, it is important to note its significance in allowing us to see what is innovative about such interpretations. This book is concerned with the impact of modern ideas and concepts—ideas drawn in equal measure from a liberal paradigm as from a Christian one—in locating the impetus behind recovering, re-evaluating, and renewing the importance of Chaitanya and Bengali Vaishnavism for the literate, educated, and upper-caste Hindus of Bengal.

A goldsmith, methinks, has come into the flower garden.
He would appraise the lotus, forsooth,
By rubbing it on his touchstone!
—A Baul to a Vaishnava

Kshitimohan Sen quotes the above lines in his c. 1930s essay "Bauls and Their Cult of Man." Sen narrates a story where a Baul and a Vaishnava enter into a dialogue with each other. Since love, or prem, ties both of them, the Vaishnava asks the Baul if he is aware of "the different kinds of love as classified in the Vaishnava scriptures." Upon learning that the Baul is not aware of these scriptural sophistications, the Vaishnava proceeds to educate him. At the end of the lecture, the Baul's response consists of the above words. The struggle between scripture and practice, religion and mysticism, regulated ritual and experience, is not a new one. We hear of it from a wide range of quarters across world religious traditions.

The Bauls, under the leadership of Lalon Shah (1774-1890; also known as Lalon Fakir), were a powerful presence in the Bengali countryside in the early decades that we discussed in this book. And yet, they are visible only by their absence in the writings of bhadrakal Vaishnavas of this period, even as their contribution to folk music and popular religion are being memorialized, some would say appropriated, by the likes of Rabindranath Tagore and Kshitimohan Sen of the Shantiniketan group.

It is in this spirit, then, that we must revisit some of the claims made about the significance of Chaitanya and Bengali Vaishnavism by Nrisingha Prasad Bhaduri in the article that appeared in the Ananda Bazar Patrika with which I began this book. Bhaduri's call to engage with the history of Vaishnavism in Bengal and with Chaitanya to ameliorate the collective amnesia about Bengali selfhood and identity crucially depends upon an acceptance of a secular-humanist and religious-reformist framework of understanding Chaitanya. This Chaitanya is a reformist saint who charts a new "middle" path between the Sanskrit cosmopolitan and the vernacular provincialism of Bengali religious worlds. While Bhaduri's approach allows space for a Baul singer singing about Chaitanya, it cannot, within its own historicist limitations,

understand Chaitanya as a mystical ideal enshrined in this well-known (albeit anonymous) baul song, for instance:

Tin pagoler hoilo mela Nade eshe
Tora keu jash ni o pagoler kache

Those three madmen come together in Nadia
Don't you wander close to those mad ones!

The song speaks of the three madmen and their coming together in the land of Nadia. Nadia here an allegory for a sacred utopia, a nowhere land where our three madmen spend their time eternally defying all human laws. These madmen are no mere mortals. They are mystics, their madness an indication of nothing less than their all-knowing state of consciousness. The song invites us, coaxes us, while warning us at the same time

to walk with these madmen, become mad ourselves, because only then, the song tells us, "you will know" (pagoler shonge jabi, pagol hobi, bujhbi sheshe). And who are these three madmen that the song warns us against, and yet urges us to walk with?

Chaite-Nite-Advai pagol nani dhoreche
Tora keu jash ni o pagoler kache

They have taken the names Chaitanya-Nityananda-Advaita

Don't you wander close to those mad ones!

An examination of the call for unforgetting Chaitanya, then, must end with the question: which Chaitanya should we unforget? The six-armed Chaitanya made popular in Kalighat paintings of the late nineteenth century? The atibadi incarnation of Chaitanya as Mahavishnu? The preacher who came, like Jesus Christ, to "fulfill the old law"? Or the dhuti-clad, mocha-relishing, Bengali-speaking local lad? Late nineteenth-century Bengali bhadrakalok—this book shows—were not bothered by the internal inconsistencies of such particulars. Their Chaitanya swung between the poles of a Christ-like deity, a Luther-like reformer, an indigenous Great Man, and an avatara. These frameworks hovered even where there were explicit calls to locate Chaitanya firmly in the land and the history of Bengal, and even where devotion to Chaitanya was seen as a key measure of an authentic Bengali identity. And their understanding of Bengali Vaishnavism, similarly, swung between the poles of a social and religious reform movement, a people's history of Bengal, and a repository of literary artifacts from premodern Bengali language. It attempted to provide a cultural unity to what would be a half-hearted and ultimately doomed concept of a "nation" of Bengal, territorialized in the idea of a Greater Bengal. It is, then, not surprising that this Chaitanya was eventually integrated into the discourse of the Bhakti Movement specifically as a representative of Bengal, and not as a saint with pan-Indian ramifications. <>

[An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hindu Theology by Swami Paramattvadas \[Cambridge University Press, 978-1107158672\] paperback](#)

About the Author

Swami Paramattvadas was ordained as a Hindu monk in 1992 by His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj. After studying in India for fourteen years, including for a Master's in Sanskrit, Paramattvadas returned to England in 2006 to read for a Master's in Religion at the University of Oxford. After a further year of pre-doctoral studies focussing on Christianity, he completed his Ph.D. in Hindu theology under Gavin Flood at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies and the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India. Swami Paramattvadas has written and spoken extensively on Swaminarayan history, doctrine and teachings around the world, and is currently a scholar at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies.

['An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hindu Theology](#) is a ground-breaking book that will be widely appreciated by scholars and believers in India and the West. It is a welcome addition to the growing field of Swaminarayan studies, distinguished by its clear focus on the teachings of the tradition, with close attention to philosophical and theological foundations. Written by an erudite insider and practitioner, it is an excellent example of Hindu theology, as Swami Paramattvadas speaks with the authority of his experience, practice, and with the benefit of many years of traditional learning. The book exemplifies constructive religious thinking, as he points to areas where new thinking is required, to understand ever more deeply the mysteries of God and scripture, the human and the world, as the tradition grows globally. This work will be prized by members of the Swaminarayan community, by scholars interested in contemporary Hinduism and in the self-representation of faith traditions with an increasing global presence, and by theologians of all faiths committed to the global interreligious conversation.' Francis X. Clooney, Director, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University

'Swaminarayan Hinduism is rapidly becoming the most prominent form of Hinduism in many countries. This constructive presentation of Swaminarayan theology is an essential text for Swaminarayan and Hindu studies and a valuable resource for comparative theology and interreligious dialogue. Swaminarayan developed a theology, an ethical discipline and a reform movement in a time of rapid social and political change in the early nineteenth century that continues to inspire and guide Hindu followers in the twenty-first century. Contemporary migration movements expand his influence across strong transnational networks and through social media in cyberspace, making this book even more relevant in helping us understand what this dynamic global community believes. Swami Paramattvadas' Western education at Oxford and classical Hindu studies in India enable him to present this important Hindu theology with academic rigor, depth and clarity. His introduction is an accessible and major contribution to the study of modern

Hinduism.' Raymond Brady Williams, Wabash College, Indiana, author of *An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hinduism*. <>

Monastic Wanderers: Nāth Yogīs Ascetics in Modern South Asia by Veronique Bouillier [Routledge, 9781138095397]

Excerpt: At the end of this journey into the world of the Nāth Yogis, we have followed different paths, encountered many different situations, discovered various ways of being a yogi. However, we also discovered, beyond this diversity, common features and connections which tell of a shared belonging.

I have shown the importance of the monastic organization, a fact which is, in my view, a principal component of Indian sectarian asceticism. Monastic structures give institutional continuity and preserve sectarian movements from splits. Among the Nāth Yogis, we have seen monasteries functioning at two levels:

Collective monasteries are, in a way, the memory of the institution and the place where all Yogis can find their roots; these monasteries belong to everyone and everyone may have his place there. The rotation of offices prevents personal appropriation and exclusiveness; the collective monasteries are rooted in the foundational myths of the sect, follow the examples proposed by the great Siddhas with their behaviour inspired by yogic Tantrism, and perform esoteric rituals reserved for initiates.

This continuity appears in the succession of events leading to the enthronement of the head of Kadri monastery. It starts with the assembly of the Yogis of the twelve panths and the election of the one who bears the special title of rājā during the Nasik Kumbh Meld, thus once every twelve years; it is followed by the long procession which, over six months, leads southward ascetics and sect leaders carrying ceremoniously the pātradevatā, a divinized symbol of their condition as Gorakhnāth's disciples; finally the ceremonial installation of the raja is performed, combining vedic rites of royal consecration and sectarian investiture. These rituals maintain the permanency and the cohesiveness of the sect around values and symbols in which the sect itself is represented.

The monastery of Caughera has its roots in the legendary world of the Siddha Ratannāth, whose enigmatic figure gives us a glimpse of the special relationships the Nāths had with Islam. Caughera is also representative of the system of close association and mutual legitimation occurring between Nāth monasteries and royal powers; interplay between spiritual and worldly benefices found expression in the traditional tenurial system exemplified in Caughera legal documents.

Kadri, Caughera, and Pushkar are among the few monasteries which belong to the Nāth sampradāya as a global and pan-Indian institution. Their heads are elected among the community for a limited period, they have no local roots, they serve the institution and have no right to leave the district of the math during their mandate.

The personal or private monasteries function on a different basis. They are open to innovation and transformative change, but their stability depends on uncertain factors such as the charisma of the founder and his successors, the patronage of fortunate well-wishers, and the inclusion in local networks. Thus, these monasteries are most often rooted in a specific territory from which their mahants come and where they travel regularly. In such a context, to build up sacrality thanks to the founder's hagiography is most essential: the narrative of his exceptional life helps to gather a community around his worship and to legitimize the related institution. Such a monastery has to be constantly maintained, being both fragile because of its dependency on an external support, and adaptable to a changing context because of its institutional autonomy. It can then free itself from tradition, introduce some new practices and reject others, and adapt itself to transformation of socio-political conditions or to a change of patronage.

I do not believe the monasteries are the outcome of a long process of 'taming the ascetics', as Carrithers defines it, followed by Van der Veer (1987: 683) who describes: 'a long process of sedentarisation [which] has resulted in the taming of the wild, free-moving ascetic'. In my view, in the Nāth sect, as in many other sects, monastic structures are intrinsic to the nature and even to the emergence of the sect, and many epigraphic testimonies prove their antiquity. Wandering and the monastic life are in a relation of complementarity and between these two modes of Nāth behaviour there is no clearcut or permanent barrier: ascetics easily change their way of life and do not remain permanently sedentary. What is involved is rather a different relation to space, a shift between mobility and steadiness. The constant moving of the jamāt's itinerant ascetics contrasts with the sedentarity of the monasteries and moreover with the prohibition for certain mahants of pañcāyati maths against leaving their seats. Wandering is not devoid of rules, the journey may obey institutional logic (for example, the calendar of monastic festivals). The two worlds are not opposed; we have seen that the mobile group of ascetics can constitute an 'itinerant monastery', with its portable altar and hierarchical structure, and that traditionally this itinerant monastery has authority over the centres it visits. The settled institutions, the pañcāyati maths, are thus subjected to the control of the roaming renouncers. And it was necessary for the Caughera pīr and the Kadri raja prior to their enthronement, to adopt the way of life of the itinerant tapasvī ascetics, with the self-control and the endurance of physical pain that it supposes. Monasteries, in my view, do not represent sedentarization but come within different possibilities which remain always open and whose values are hierarchized, the jamāt adding monastic stability to prestige of itinerant movement.

One finds much evidence of the fragility of monasteries and of the decrease in importance of the Nāth Yogis. One can look, for instance, at the former domain of Ayas

Dev Nāth, the exceptional guru of the jodhpur Maharaja Man Singh; his monastery, the Mahāmandir, has now been transformed into a school and the affluent and powerful Nāth community of the early nineteenth century has lost all importance. It is also possible to visit the monastery linked to the temple of the goddess Annapūrna ('fertile', 'full of grain') near Jaipur, whose mahant was the guru of the Maharaja; the rot cooked in the math for Sivarātri and kept in the palace kitchen used to bring Annapūrna's blessing and abundance to the palace and the king. A succession conflict, the Maharaja's lack of interest, land reform, have left the present mahant lonely and impoverished: and as a final misfortune and reversal in the order of things, 'now Annapūrna is hungry'.

Decrease in princely patronage and land reforms had a negative economic impact on the Nāth monasteries. Many of them, often sufficiently large to accommodate big gatherings of ascetics and devotees during festivals but otherwise rather deserted, did not survive the decrease in resources nor the loss of their ceremonial functions for royal courts.

Elsewhere the patronage of merchants replaced that of kings. Evidently businessmen, like princes, wish success in their enterprises and for that they look to the special powers of wonder working ascetics. But their activities, less violent - apparently - require more peaceful religious forms: merchant communities more often adopt Jainism or devotional Vishnuism than Tantric Shaivism. However, even some of these merchant groups, in Shekhavati and elsewhere in India, have chosen Nāth gurus, who have been able to come up to their expectations, both in suggesting a personal discipline inspired by Nāth principles and in proposing a collective devotional atmosphere, allowing lay devotees to share in a common, territorially grounded memory.

Monasteries in this context appear less sectarian, they open their doors to everyone and give their devotees the opportunity to combine the modernist trend with a personal spiritual quest and self-affirmation, which characterizes many of the new urban

middle class, while resorting to the familial inherited tradition of a well-established sect. Fatehpur Ashram is symptomatic of this new openness, which embraces 'vedism' such as has been reinvented in these fashionable broadcast celebrations, as well as emotional bhakti, the strict bodily discipline of Hatha Yoga, and most importantly, the personal relationship with a guru.

Lay disciples responded eagerly to this opening in their direction. Nāth monasteries, which had a limited audience when they were frequented only by ascetics, became places of assembly. Mukundgarh in Shekhavati is a good example of this change from ascetic math to public temple: the Yogi Chetnāth has supervised the construction of a huge new temple to Siva, his own future monastery being just a little square room nearby.

Together with the opening to lay devotees comes media coverage: all the media were present for Fatehpur Mahotsav and Kadri rājābhisek: the jhundī's arrival took

place in front of the television cameras and daily Press reported the succession of ritual events. At a deeper level, the new standards of modernity can be seen in the development, which is new for the Nāths, of welfare activities. This is the case in Gorakhpur and Asthal Bohar, where the many educational and health institutions make the Nāths participant in the socio-political game. This involvement in the public space inevitably leads the Nāth leaders to enter the political arena, out of concern for efficiency or because of their leading position: being by tradition the counsellors of princes, they now aspire after ministership or elected positions. The monastery of Gorakhpur was the first to take this path, followed by Asthal Bohar. Until now the Hindutva extremist position of Gorakhpur mahants has remained limited, perhaps under the influence of a clientele of devotees who prefer successful business to communalist violence.

However, the adaptation to modern religiosity, to a kind of sweet devotion which appears for instance in the long sessions of devotional singing, practiced everywhere even by the itinerant ascetics of the jamāt, goes together with a certain denial of Tantric and unorthodox ritual forms (such as sankhadhāl and cannabis smoking). This belongs of course to the general trend in India towards puritanism, only more so for the sects which have a well-known Tantric reputation and want to acquire an image of respectability. Will the Tantric side become the exclusive privilege of the Grihastha Yogīs, among whom certain communities have kept to specific secret practices?

The position of the Mahāsabhā is quite interesting, as the association has to play two contradictory roles: to promote the Nāth Yogi sect and also to discipline it. It tries to take control of the existing institutions and to include them in a bureaucratic organizational structure, according to the rules of functioning of modern institutions (with assemblies, committees, elections, presidents and vice-presidents, and statutes). The Mahāsabhā wants to know the identities of all the ascetics, to list them, to register them and to be able to check on their behaviour and expel them if necessary. It also wants to publicize the philosophy, history and particularity of the Nāth tradition, and it sponsors the publication of books, which incidentally reveal practices elsewhere disapproved of. The Mahāsabhā has both to testify to the originality of the Nāth contribution to Hindu tradition and to ensure its conformity with the prevailing ideology; a symbol of this attitude appears in the rules of the Mahāsabhā which forbid the smoking of cannabis and encourage the practice of Hatha Yoga.

The Nāth Yogis' sampradāya remains important in the Indian religious landscape; it is even experiencing new development and prosperity, thanks to the innovative capacities of its monasteries, especially the nijī maths, but it runs the risk of having its specificity diluted with a vague religiosity, a 'neo-guruism' obeying diverse influences. There the collective monasteries play their part as guardians of tradition. The difference is striking between the jhundī mahant refusing any single change

in the performance of the Kadri rājā's consecration and the Asthal Bohar mahant displacing and modifying age-old sanctuaries in order to give them a magnificent appearance and promote the monastery: on one side, there is fidelity to details transmitted in the sect's tradition and identical repetition of memorial marks, on the other transformation dictated by changing circumstances.

Considering the importance taken by the Mahāsabhā in recent years, its influence will determine the future evolution of the Nāth sect. Will the Mahāsabhā be able to preserve the sect's identity, to accompany its development while protecting what makes it what it is? <>

Selected Writings of M.M. Gopinath Kaviraj by Gopinath Kaviraj [Indica Books, 9788186569603]

After brilliant studies, Kaviraj was for many years librarian in the Sanskrit College, Varanasi, and took advantage of this opportunity to read and research on every topic of Indian and contemporary thought, as well as editing and publishing some seventy-two books in the field of Indology. He later became Principal of the Sanskrit College until 1937, when he voluntarily retired to devote himself to research and sadhana. He was conferred the titles of Mahamahopadhyaya in 1934 and of Padmavibhusana in 1964.

Kaviraj possessed a vast and profound erudition, and the depth of his thought was remarkable. He studied every branch of Indian thought, though he came to be known mainly as an expositor of yoga and tantra. He wrote articles on a wide range of subjects in English, Hindi, Bengali and Sanskrit. But, besides being an epoch-marking scholar, he was also a man of noble personality and a true sadhaka. He was disciple of the renowned yogi Swami Vishuddhananda Paramahansa (14 March 1853 – 14 July 1937) popularly known as Gandha Baba (The perfume saint) was an Indian yogi of West Bengal, India, and became later a bhakta of Sri Anandamayi Ma (30 April 1896 – 27 August 1982), on whose ashram at Varanasi he spent the last days of his life.

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ESSAY: PHILOSOPHY OF THE NĀTHAS

The supreme ideal of Yoga sādhanā as conceived in the Nātha School seems to differ from the conceptions of Patañjali, of the earlier and some later Buddhistic systems and even of Sañkara's Vedānta. Nevertheless, we must observe that the Naha ideal is analogous to what we find in the Āgamic system of non-dualistic thought in ancient and medieval India.

This ideal is described in one word as sāmārya, which implies obliteration of traces of all kinds of existing differences, not by a process of transcendence as in Sāmkhya, or of sublation as in Vedantic Māyāvāda, but by a positive process of what may be described as mutual interpenetration. This ideal underlies the principle of unification between Purusa and Prakṛti, or between Siva and Sakti. The attainment of this deal is the Supreme Unity of Parama Siva, where Siva and Sakti are one undivided and indivisible whole. It is called Mahāsakti in the language of the Sāktas and represents the Absolute of the Sākta Āgamas. It stands for the samatā of the Avadhūta yogins, which is really a unification from the logical point of view of tattva and tattvātita, i.e. the one and the Beyond.

A cursory glance at the ancient spiritual literature of India would reveal the fact that in almost all the systems associated with Agamic culture we find a strong insistence on the ideal of sāmārya in some form or other. By way of illustration I may refer to the Tantric Buddhism of the Kālacakra school, in which the union of pajnā and upāya, technically known as vajrayoga, is strongly emphasised. Thus the Hevajra Tantra says:

samara tulyam ityuktam syāt tasya cakre rasah smrtah samarasam tvekabhavam eternātmani bhanyate

The vajrayoga, which is the ideal of Kālacakra Buddhism, represents in fact the state of Supreme Oneness.

The Vira Saivas of the Jangam School also recognise this ideal in their own way. A brilliant exposition in the form of sāmārya bhakti representing the self-luminous unity of Delight realised after a course of continued sādhanā is to be found in Mayideva's Anubhava Sutra and in Prabhudeva's works.

The Svachchanda-Tantra which is one of the earliest Āgamas available to us furnishes a detailed account of the several stages in the process of the unification which ends in Supreme Sāmārya. In this process seven grades are mentioned and described.

Svatantrānandanātha, the author of Mātrkā Cakraviveka, was a brilliant exponent of the Siddha school. He explains this doctrine in his own inimitable manner. He says:

māyāvalāt prathamabhāsi jadasvabhāvam vidyodayāt vikasvara cinmayatvam suptyāhvayam kimapi visramanam vibhāti citrakramam cidacideka rasasvabhāvam

Here in this context the sāmārya referred to is between cit and acit, i.e. between Consciousness and Unconsciousness, which neutralise each other and

appear as one. He illustrates this with an interesting example of a pictorial representation, which in reality is one, but which appears to one onlooker as representing an elephant and to another as representing a bull according to the view-point taken.

In the yogic sādhanā of certain Tantric schools, especially those affiliated to the Ardhakālī line, we are told that the twelve-syllabled mantras constituting the complete pādukā-mantra of Sri Gurudeva represent respectively the unman! and samani aspects of the Absolute. The former suggests the upward motion in the direction of the Supreme Purusa (ha) with the Supreme Prakṛti (sa). The latter suggests that the Supreme Prakṛti (sa) which descends from the glance (īksana) of Para-Brahman or Unman! Siva floods with Delight the Supreme Purusa (ha) during its descent. These symbolize in the undivided Absolute Consciousness (cit) both the upward and downward movements of the Divine. Behind Unmanā and Samanā there is only one single Essence, for Purusa and Prakṛti are ultimately one and the same Brahman, one symbolised by the triangle with its vertex upwards and the other by the triangle with its vertex downwards. The familiar diagram of satkōna as an interlaced figure signifies this union which is represented (they say) by the twelve-petalled lotus above the pericarp of the sahasradala lotus. In fact, the conception of Guru Pādukā in its highest expression is the conception of sāmārasya par excellence.

It is said:

svaprakāsa sivamurti rekikā
tad vimarsa-tanu-rekikā, tayoh ~
sāmārasya vapurisyate parā
pādukā parasivātmano guroh

This indicates that the Divine Guru or Para Siva has three pādukās, two being lower and one higher. The two lower pādukās symbolize the self-luminous Siva on one hand and his self-reflecting Sakti on the other. The higher pādukās is the integration in the form of sāmārasya of the two in the Supreme Unity.

It may be noted in passing that even the realisation of the Christian Trinity is only a partial manifestation of the truth of sāmārasya. The great Spanish saint Teresa of Avila once realised this through Divine Grace and tried to express it in her own language, in course of which she said that at first an illumination shining like a dazzling cloud of Light appeared before her followed by the emergence of the three persons of the Trinity. She felt that the three Persons were all of one Substance, Power and Knowledge and were one God. The vision was not the result of the function of the bodily eye nor even of the eye of the soul. It was an intellectual vision of an intimate kind. Henry Suso, the disciple of the great German mystic Meister Eckhart, referred to the union of the soul and God. He spoke of God as saying: "I will kiss them (the suffering saints) affectionately and embrace them so lovingly that I shall be they and they shall be I and the two shall be united in one forever." Elsewhere it is said: "The essence of the soul if united with the essence of the Nothing and the powers of the One with the activities

of the Nothing" (The Little Book of the Truth, edited by J.M. Clark, page 196). This is exactly like the union (samyoga) of Liinga or Paramātmā with Ātmā of the Vira Saiva School.

From what has been said above it is abundantly clear that, in some form or the other, sāmārasya is the ideal, not only of the Agamic culture, but also of many other spiritual sādhanās.

It now remains to be seen how the Nātha yogins received this highest consummation of Oneness. It is said that the true process of sāmārasya begins only when the Sadguru's grace has succeeded in effecting Mental Quiet (citta-visrānti). The real sādhanā cannot commence until the mind is rendered quiet and free from disturbances incident on a sense of identity with the body. The mind being at rest, the Divine Bliss and an experience of Pure Infinite Glory dawn on the soul which is awakened from its age-long slumber. The sense of duality disappears in the serene light of undifferentiated Unity. This light, unbounded and one, brings out the powers of consciousness. The Universal Consciousness, being once awakened, produces in the yogin a perfect knowledge of his own Body, which results in the illumination and stabilization of the Body concerned (deha-siddhi).

In other words, this Body becomes immortal and immune from the ravaging effects of Time. The yogi is now an adept (siddha). This luminous Form which is the essence of caitanya has to be made, as a further step, one with the Universal Uncreated Light of paramapada already revealed. This is done through a continuous process of investigation into the real nature of Ātmā. It is to be remembered that sāmārasya should not be a momentary attainment, but a permanent possession, in the sense that no reversal (vyutthāna) may ever occur. Before this state (nirutthāna) is made permanent after sāmārasya is once attained, some successive moments in the supreme experience are noted:

- (i) The Transcendental Reality is revealed as the universe. In other words, the difference between what is Formless and what has Form disappears for ever and it is co-eternal with the vision of the universe in Ātmā.
- (ii) In the transitional stage there is a tendency in the Powers to move out. This has to be restrained and the Powers kept as contained within the Ātmā.
- (iii) The Ātmā is realised as a continuum of unbroken prakāsa with the Supreme Dynamism.
- (iv) As a result of all this there is a unique vision of Being which is unborn. This is the Supreme Integral vision which marks

the stage of nirutthāna. It is a vision of Eternity when infinite varieties are an expression of the One and when the One reveals Itself in every point of the Infinite.

It seems true that the Nātha yogin's view of pinda siddhi and Patanjali's idea of kāyasampat are not the same, though it is true that in each the control of the elements is the result. The ideal of vajradehā was behind both and dominated the Tantric Buddhist also. In 'Nāthism', the

fact that pinda siddhi results from a vision of Paramapada and is an antecedent of the two indicates that, though Patañjali's kāyasampat aims at physical purification to its utmost extent, it can never be equated to the natural purity of Purusa and continues to remain an inalienable property of Prakṛti.

In this light it may be presumed that the criticism of Gorakṣa Nātha's ideal of pinda siddhi by Prabhudeva, as found in legends current in South Indian Saiva schools, has to be explained as the outcome of sheer sectarianism.

The Nātha ideal is first to realise jīvanmukti through pinda siddhi, which secures an Immaculate Body of Light free from the influence of Time, i.e. a deathless undecaying spiritual Body of Light, and then to realise Parāmukti or the highest perfection through the process of mutual integration, samarasīkarana. The Bengali Nātha work entitled Hadamālā, a comparatively late work of the Nātha school of Bengal and published by Prafulla Chandra Chakravarty in his book on 'Nātha dharma O Sāhitya', also points out that the complete course of Nātha spiritual culture did not end with the attainment of siddha deha through drinking of nectar after the completion of the process technically known as transcendence of the Moon; it was a state of jīvanmukti as free from death. It is only a prelude to the realization of the highest ideal of perfection through the culture of Omkara. <>

Consciousness in Jung and Patañjali by Leanne Whitney [Research in Analytical Psychology and Jungian Studies, Routledge, 9781138213524]

Excerpt: Depth psychology developed in the early part of the twentieth century as an empirical science of the unconscious. Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), most widely known today as the father of analytical psychology, and Austrian neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), are two of the founding fathers of the field. Focusing on what the conscious personality is not aware of, depth psychology is a psychology of the hidden, the secret, and the repressed. The developers of the discipline thought the science of the unconscious to be utterly revolutionary in its approach to understanding the human psyche. While the focus in contemporary depth psychology remains on unconscious contents and processes, the discipline since its inception has also been equally concerned with consciousness.

Through studying the nature of the psyche and the conscious—unconscious dynamic, Jung's depth psychology aimed, in part, at reconciling science and religious experience. In Jung's view, religious structures and traditions have been failing us, giving rise to scientific materialism and religious fundamentalism. Through postulating instinctual forms of mental functioning, Jung relocated religious experience into everyday life. In turn, by following certain methods in an approach to the numinous, he observed the healing of mild mental disturbances, such as anxiety, stress and

obsessive-compulsive behavior, in his patients. Although his scientific body of work remained incomplete upon his death, one of the most prominent aspects of his legacy is his belief in the religious function of the psyche.

While working to find empirical evidence of the psyche's religious function, Jung studied a variety of subjects, including Western philosophy, quantum physics, and mystical teachings. In Eastern liberatory traditions, in particular orthodox and nonorthodox Hindu philosophy, he found parallel evidence to what he termed individuation, the central process of human development and the spiritual development of the personality. Consequently, he found Eastern philosophy and psychology, including Patañjali's Classical Yoga, to be of tremendous value to his psychological research.

Composed around the second to fifth century of the current era, Patañjali's Yoga Sūtra is both a classic of Eastern and world thought, formulating one of six orthodox Hindu philosophies situated within the Upanisadic and Brahmanic tradition. Brahmanism adheres to the metaphysical concept of brahman, the Hindu term for God or the Absolute. Although often rendered as Self, brahman eludes a simple English translation and is also variously described as ultimate reality, pure consciousness, and being-consciousness-bliss. As a discriminatory science of knowledge, Patañjali's Yoga guides practitioners to direct experience of purusa, the localized expression of pure consciousness. Patañjali's methodology, through the recollection of all projections and the total involution of thought forms, mobilizes a radically empirical scientific methodology, which — it could be said — succeeds in reconciling science and religious experience.

In the domains of psychology and philosophy, comparing the work of Jung and Patanjali in particular and Eastern and Western ideas in general offers a rich source of deep discussion in relation to the nature of consciousness, the reality of thought, dualistic and nondualistic worldviews, and religious experience. For many Eastern liberatory models, including Patañjali's, reality is not always the way it appears. Furthermore, in many of these Eastern liberatory models, dualism and materialistic monism are falsifiable. Notably, although the present study uses an East—West comparison — in the end, there really is no divide. Like the equator, East—West is merely a descriptive tool.

As one of the first to emphasize the importance of bridging East and West, Jung went to great lengths to research the East and understand it. He carried around The Tibetan Book of the Dead, gave lectures on Kundalini Yoga, and studied the Tao Te Ching. Jung (1929/1983) acknowledged, "The European invasion of the East was an act of violence on a grand scale, and it has left us with the duty — noblesse oblige — of understanding the mind of the East" (para. 84). Jung believed that a fruitful relationship between Western and Eastern concepts of mind could be realized. However, because of cultural differences, there were significant challenges in this dialogical endeavor for Jung, and those challenges by and large remain today. A portion of

the challenge lies in the approach to the numinous. For instance, whereas God is directly accessible according to orthodox Hindu philosophy, for the Abrahamic religions and a multitude of Western philosophers, God is ontically inaccessible. Putting the work of Jung and Patañjali into dialogue challenges the religious fundamentalism as well as the orthodox scientific view of the West.

In the West, science and religion, each in its own way, set out to describe reality. Science does so through observing the behavior of the physical world and studying the underpinning mathematical theories, while religious descriptions most often result through revelation or the reliance upon doctrine. While any connection between science and religion may initially seem cursory at best or antagonistic at worst, today their relationship is becoming far more nuanced on account of the field of consciousness studies. The field, while fostering the ongoing dialogue between science and religion, interestingly, also addresses many of the unsolved problems in science.

Science still knows very little about how thought is produced, correlated with our neuronal hardware, or related to reality. Being highly interdisciplinary, the field of consciousness studies approaches these problems from multiple angles and points of view. Within the field, researchers from psychology, anthropology, biology, and neurology all argue for their respective views on the nature of consciousness in particular and the nature of reality in general. The crux of the consciousness debate seems to center around the arguments that present consciousness as an abiding principle of awareness underlying all transitory mental states versus the arguments for consciousness as mental activity. As of yet there is no consensus, and the discussion is sometimes heated. Furthermore, the definition of consciousness seems to be elusive, with scholars in various fields defining it differently.

Conducting research that will allow for a contemporary science of consciousness within the Western tradition has proved challenging because the subjective and qualitative nature of conscious experience resists the objectivity of orthodox scientific inquiry. Orthodox science holds tight to the primacy of physical matter, the paradigm of mind—matter dualism, and knowledge as objective and scientific — even though discoveries in quantum physics have challenged the orthodox view by revealing energy as the primary building block of the universe and the interconnected relationship between the observer and the observed.

Even though subjectivity poses a pivotal challenge to the orthodox experimental frame, several fields, including cognitive psychology and neurology, are flourishing as they unravel physical and biological mechanisms that correlate to conscious experience. Neurology undeniably provides us with information of clear value within a domain. Be that as it may, even if we find the neural mechanisms for perception, the neurobiological process of love, for instance, will never substitute for the direct experience of love.

Given the enormous prevalence of science and religion and their influence in contemporary society, it is obvious that as a species, we clearly seek to understand and make sense of our world. But if we truly want to understand consciousness in general and numinous experience, then we must be vigilant about being aware in every moment of what we are doing and how we are drawing conclusions. Taking an in-depth look at the foundation of the beliefs and the processes of our empirical endeavors is vitally important. For instance, while neurology provides us with useful information, it should never be assumed that the neural pulse is the sole carrier of information. The spikeless neurons and gap junctions are providing us with equally valuable directives. With too heavy a focus on the obviously visible, the subtle and invisible become neglected.

By presupposing an objective and subjective realm, empirical scientists base their research on reductionistic principles with the belief that "I" as a subject can "objectively" investigate independent objects. Interestingly, materialist science does not see the subject—object distinction as an assumption but rather wholeheartedly believes the distinction to be real. As a result, the general public more often than not assumes the subject—object distinction without question. There is an awesome power to this official narrative because it continues to self-reinforce and construct the lens through which many, if not most, Westerners view the world.

Our worldview determines what tests we want to invest in, how we construct them, what results we look for, and how we interpret the data. For instance, orthodox science views numinous experience as a function (or dysfunction) of brain process, while the world's great religious traditions tend to regard numinous experience either as a manifestation of the deities and prophets of their tradition or as Reality itself. Therefore, if orthodox science deems itself capable of regarding (or disregarding) religious experience as "simply" a brain process, then questioning the reliability of the scientific worldview is mandatory. Furthermore, there is such an abundance of research going on within different fields that often scientists from one field do not know what is happening outside the domain of their expertise. Merging disciplines, as neuropsychology and interpersonal neurobiology have done, may help to foster a much-needed vigilance.

For those working within the bounds of the empirical platform, dualistic scientific methodology is oftentimes seen not only as an adequate means of investigation but also as the only one. This belief constitutes a major block for further dialogue and development across disciplines in the area of consciousness studies. It is a massive assumption that the subject—object relation is capable of accounting for life or of understanding it. For instance, when the orthodox empirical platform is challenged by nondualists, those who do not perceive the world through a subject—object dichotomy, the disputes are most often met with scorn by the players holding the positions of power within the academic institutions. An alternative view of the world appears

extremely threatening to scientific orthodoxy. Yet an understanding of science is dependent upon knowing how the mind works. If the aim is to understand, then disregarding descriptions of the world simply because they are challenging to conventional science is illogical and irrational, or in other words, contradictory to the tenets of science itself.

Neither science nor religion is an isolated system. They exist within a much greater whole. Knowledge constructed through religious or scientific systems offers a part of knowledge, not the whole of it. They are constructed languages, constrained like any other, that attempt to form relationships. Relationships formed this way are bound by the very human thought processes that isolate and choose which parts to relate. As important as these relationships may be within a specific framework, they are context dependent.

How does one describe the infinite, unlimited, and immeasurable using language that is finite, limited, and measured? The overall integrity of life is compromised when we are only focused on its parts. Yet if the subset is in alignment with the set or if the measurable is in harmony with the immeasurable, language can offer us different ways to consider the undivided whole and, perhaps, help us realize deeper insight.

Researching Jungian and Patañjalian thought calls attention to the fact that, in the endeavor of consciousness research, it may be time for science that is solely based in conventional modes of thought to proceed with cautious reservation. When it comes to the human psyche, we must acknowledge that progress can occur outside the scientific domain. The human psyche is a naturally occurring phenomenon in life. Science, on the other hand, is some lens humans have constructed to take a look into, and back at, life. Therefore, in the case of conventional science, if it is built on the foundation of falsifiability, then its very foundation should also be falsifiable.

My own reservations about the ways in which we habitually perceive through cultural construction prompted this study: reservations drawn from my life experience in general but from one all-encompassing moment. At age 33, I had what is referred to in the religious studies literature as a pure consciousness event. This unplanned incident instantaneously catapulted "me," a woman born, cultivated, and conditioned in a Western framework of duality, or subject—object consciousness, into nonduality, whereupon the distinction between subject and object — indeed all distinctions — broke down. Prior to this event, I had no knowledge of the essence of the teachings in any liberatory psychologies or nondual philosophies, although I was in a yoga asana room at the time of the event. Indeed, I had no knowledge that pure consciousness events even existed. Yet in that fraction of a moment, an immediate incontrovertible knowledge arose, that in addition to what appears on the surface of reality, beyond what we can perceive with our five physical senses, everything is interconnected and interdependent, with an essence that seems to be an all-

knowing luminosity. In other words, what I suddenly understood at the deepest level of my being, and without any prior knowledge, seeking, or research, was that the subject—object split is merely an appearance.

The pure consciousness event and enormous perceptual shift did not simultaneously eradicate the deeper patterns of my dualistic conditioning. It did, however, infuse me with the determination to do so. Knowing without a doubt that all is one and self-luminous, I wanted to understand how this could be so, given all the suffering and strife that appears and is experienced in the consensus reality we call life. I understood that the false beliefs under which "I" was conditioned would need to be extinguished.

The way we perceive everyday reality through our five physical senses leads many of us to conclude that the world is a multiplicity. Separation, independence, and plurality are powerful and ingrained ways of perceiving the world in Western culture. The pure consciousness event I experienced gave me a radically different understanding of our visible world. But it also produced deeply philosophical questions. How could the world be both a unity and a multiplicity? I have made an unceasing exploration of the world in front of our eyes, and behind it, to viscerally experience how a dualistic and nondualistic worldview could be united. I have had to learn through experience, much of it trial and error, how to bridge these two worlds.

As I began exploring, one of the first texts I was intuitively guided to read was Padmasambhava's *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. His lucid description of Clear Light was extremely comforting. The text was evidence that the reality of radiance I had awakened into was known and documented. Not long after reading this classic text of Tibetan Buddhism, I discovered the writings of Jung and Patañjali. Patañjali's *Classical Yoga* and Jung's depth psychology have provided fruitful perspectives, tools, and approaches during my explorations of the world in front of, and behind, our eyes — and consequently, I have remained drawn to these two highly influential authors and their related schools of thought for over fifteen years. There are intriguing places where their works intersect, despite cultural and epochal variation, and decisive areas of divergence.

One aspect of the debate between East and West is located around the nature of the egoic "I." Freud emphasized the ego in his structural and topographical models of the psyche and at the same time emphatically stated that it is not master of the house. In his model, the conscious and unconscious became a duality split by an ego. Throughout his career, Freud constructed and deconstructed, postulating theories of the self. As an atheist, Freud disagreed with religious practice, but he studied it. His psychology aimed to return us to ourselves, to assist us in overcoming states of alienation. Yet at the same time, he also imprinted, through psychoanalytical language and terminology, a dualistic model by treating the ego as real. Although the spiritually oriented Jung spotted what he believed to be some flaws in Freud's thinking, he never did away with

Freud's model entirely. He merely modified it. The models Freud and Jung adhered to, may have been bound, or codetermined, by deeming depth psychology an empirical science. Hence, depth psychology, while considering itself an empirical science, benefits by turning its lens back on itself and finding viable ways of comparing its reductions and subject—object splits with views that are foundationally holistic. Views that see wholeness as the real, the given, and our fragmentary thought as a symptom or illusory perception.

Yoga psychology and philosophy teach us that viewing our world through our conditioned mind, which consists of fragmentary thought and illusory perception, brings about a misunderstanding of our true nature — and the obscuration of pure consciousness. In distinction to Western psychology, all Eastern liberatory psychologies maintain that our egoic consciousness has no foundation in reality: that our ideas on a separate subject, a duality between ego and world, are based in limited thinking. In Yoga, the isolated mind and egoic "I" are concepts that can be completely deconstructed. To state this slightly differently, while the West cannot yet explain the origin of thought, in Western psychology it is believed that the ego, or a personal independent subjectivity, is a determinant of consciousness. In sharp contrast, in the Yoga tradition, when we differentiate pure consciousness from thought, we are led to the realization that only consciousness truly exists.

Investigations of consciousness lead us deep into the heart of the mystery of life. Therefore, what seems vitally important for research on consciousness is an open perspective. As Jung himself admitted, psychological theories "are the very devil. It is true that we need certain points of view for orienting and heuristic value; but they should always be regarded as mere auxiliary concepts that can be laid aside at any time." Studying consciousness psychologically means studying all the phenomena that are available to human perception, even if these phenomena are not available to all humans at once. For instance, psychic phenomena, such as remote viewing and precognition, offer us valuable insights into the nature of consciousness and indeed the nature of reality. Fundamentalist science tends to want to silence these phenomena, but at what expense? If the rigidity of the statistically empirical scientific model is hindering us from discovery, then the true scientific endeavor has been lost. If the subject—object distinction does not exist at the deeper levels of reality but is merely an appearance on the surface, dualistic models misrepresent the true nature of our being.

Are we meant to discover reality through test results or through the process of our own trial and error? If theorists and educators rely on test results that have already been shown to sometimes be less reliable than once thought, what kind of foundation are we creating? If our orthodox scientific methods are such that we can set up tests and quite literally create an outcome rather than observing one, science becomes a tool to obfuscate rather than understand. In other words, perhaps a radical empiricism, based on our direct experience of the

world, is the foremost science needed when it comes to a science of consciousness and the reality of being. Along these lines, researching Jung and Patañjali brings the imperative necessity of discerning between the ontic and epistemic into sharp focus.

Seeking to replicate scientific results, we can approach the methodology and design of an initial experiment as closely as possible, but repeat studies will never be the same. That idea is true for our life in general when we see and experience "life" as a verb, even though the word literally is a noun. We can attempt to re-produce how life functions through scientific means, but the original creativity of life in its wholeness cannot be, and will never be, re-produced. It is one constant flow of activity that does not stand still

so that one species can make a static model of it. It is a huge assumption that we can pull apart life and find biological, psychological, neurological, quantum, and other correlates and then put it back together to formulate the whole. We may be able to find the skeleton, the musculature, the neurons, for instance, or we may be able to understand cycles of change and the system(s) of life, but the cycles, the system, and the parts can ever be separated from the awareness in which they arise. It is incorrect to assume that life can be conceptualized in a manner that gives us answers to the nature of consciousness and to our experience of being.

Over the past several decades, many scholars have researched Jung's dialogue with Eastern thought. Much of the research has uncovered the challenges in the discourse. My aim in this study, in part, is to unearth more distinctly where Jung met his limits in relation to yogic thought. The dualistic Judeo-Christian and Cartesian confines that boxed Jung in are still prevalent in much of our thinking today. Likewise, from a depth psychological view, it is important to explore any limitations that may exist within the work of Patañjali, with Classical Yoga's description of the physical world. The other more implicit aim of the present research is to question the notion of duality in its entirety: to question a basic duality in nature — or the subject—object split — and to question the idea that reality is not empty-of-other.

Consciousness in Jung and Patanjali is broken down into seven chapters. Chapter Patañjali is an overview of Patañjali in which the background of his thought is explored. The relationships of Classical Yoga to Upaniadic, Buddhist, Sāmkhya, and Advaitic ideas are examined. Although Patañjali's sūtras are often read as a companion text to Sāmkhya, due in large measure to shared terminology and the use of a dualistic metaphysics, Yoga's intersection with the nondual tradition of Advaita Vedānta is discussed. In contradistinction to certain prominent Advaita teachings, which view the world as illusory, emphasis is placed on Patañjali's confirmation of the reality of the world. For Patañjali, matter is real; it is the materialistic outlook that is flawed. Sanskrit terms relevant to Patañjali's text are also defined and interpreted. Further explorations in this chapter include Patañjali's approach to consciousness,

mind—psyche, ego—Self, and the transformation of human consciousness.

Chapter Jung is an overview of Jung in which the background of his thought is explored. How and when depth psychology arose in the Western hemisphere are considered, as is the relationship of Jung's thought to that of the Freudian, scientific, and religious ideas of his day. In particular, the divergence between Freud's and Jung's thoughts on the nature of the unconscious is studied, and Jung's confrontations with the unconscious are explored. Jung's early experiences through dreams are considered as well as his conviction that religious belief should be backed up by direct experience. Further explorations in this chapter include Jung's approach to consciousness, mind—psyche, ego—Self, and the transformation of human consciousness.

While Chapters on Jung and Patañjali can stand alone as individual studies, Chapter Jung and Patañjali back to back puts Jung's and Patañjali's thought directly into dialogue. Jung's and Patañjali's approaches to consciousness, mind—psyche, ego—Self, and the transformation of human consciousness are considered back-to-back. Their areas of similarity and difference are introduced and examined.

Jung on yoga inquiries into Jung's analysis and understanding of yogic texts and liberatory thought with an emphasis on uncovering where Jung met his limits in relation to nondual ideas. The teleological directedness of the psyche is explored as are the potential problems depth psychology faces because of Jung's assertion that the ego and the unconscious are ontically real.

A synthesis of Jung and Patañjali continues the dialogue between Jung and Patañjali and — while factoring in their decisive areas of divergence — explores a potential synthesis of their ideas. The efficacy of the unconscious is looked at closely. Depth psychological and yogic ideas on the mind—body unity are explored. Affect as an empirical means of entering the psyche and Jung's synchronicity hypothesis are examined as possible means of forging a bridge between depth psychology and Classical Yoga. A holograph heuristic device is mobilized to explore how pure consciousness can be Reality and yet not realized as such, at the level of human awareness. The conclusion completes the research by summing up the results and by returning to the conundrum orthodox scientists face as they work toward a science of consciousness.

Consciousness in Jung and Patanjali explores how consciousness is accounted for in the work of Jung and Patañjali, with an aim towards finding a common psychological language, or synthesis, between depth psychology and Classical Yoga. Through a synthesis of the work of Jung and Patañjali can a more comprehensive view of consciousness and its relationship to matter be discovered? If so, from that union, can deeper insights around human experience be gleaned? In an age of ongoing oppressive power structures, the threat of nuclear holocaust, environmental stressors, and increasing anxiety, it

seems imperative that we persevere in finding means of addressing the amelioration of human suffering and unveiling visions that offer the deeper sense of our shared humanity. I believe that our explorations in the field of consciousness studies can assist us in accomplishing this task. As we move rapidly into a global society, as we continue to unearth national and cultural limitations, and as science and religion continue to collide, exploring a synthesis of Eastern and Western psychology offers an opportunity to forge the foundation of a new, perhaps global, psychology. <>

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