



**NZASR
AABS
CONFERENCE
2011**

Queenstown, New Zealand, 7–9 December 2011

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Keynotes

Religion as the Transmission of Authoritative Traditions: That without which Religion Is Not Religion

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Following Danièle Hervieu-Léger's definition of religion as a chain of memory, by which she means that authoritative traditions transmitted from generation to generation constitute the essential characteristic of religion, contrasting pictures emerge between religious practices in Indigenous societies, which are kinship based and focused on ancestors, and the individualistic, 'pick and choose' character of contemporary Western expressions of spirituality. This paper compares two cases: a rain ritual in which a medium becomes possessed by the chief's ancestor spirit amongst the Shona of Zimbabwe and a trance dance performed as part of the programme of a 'new-age' spiritual centre in Connecticut, USA. In both cases, despite different social and historical contexts, appeals are made to an authoritative tradition to legitimise the rituals performed. This suggests that, despite the individualistic nature of 'spirituality' in the contemporary West, the transmission of authoritative traditions, even if such traditions are merely postulated, remain the necessary component, the *sine qua non*, for any activity to be labelled 'religious'.

The Buddha's Middle Way: In Defense of Nice Clothes, Good Food, and Beautiful Monasteries

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The Buddha advocated a middle path between the extremes of luxurious living and harsh asceticism. But critics of his disciples' lifestyle accuse them of living too well: clothing themselves in fine robes, enjoying the pleasures of beautiful monasteries, and relishing the taste of meat. In this paper I will examine certain narratives from Buddhist and Jain texts that compare the comfort of Buddhist monks with the austerity practiced by Jains and other ascetic groups. I will conclude by raising some questions about the Buddhist defense of moderation and the institutional power politics that might have shaped the debate.

Buddhism in Western Practice I

LSD DHARMA: Psychedelics and Buddhism in America

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In recent decades some attention has been given to the possible connection between the contemporary practice of Buddhism and the use of psychedelic drugs. Among the various publications on the topic are the 1996 issue of the popular Buddhist magazine Tricycle devoted to Buddhism and psychedelics, and a book titled *Zig Zag Zen: Buddhism and Psychedelics*. Noteworthy in *Zig Zag Zen*, are contributions from prominent American Buddhists such as Stephen Batchelor, Jack Kornfield, Lama Surya Das, Richard Baker Roshi and Joan Halifax Roshi, who admit having ingested psychoactive chemicals in the 1960s, and who also recognise to various degrees an influence of these substances on their spiritual development. According to essayist Erik Davis in his contribution to *Zig Zag Zen*, there is a current American Buddhist subculture, which continues to use psychedelics as part of their religious practice. By employing recent data acquired through an online survey, and extensive interviews conducted in person throughout the United States and via Skype video calling, this paper explores aspects of an American psychedelic Buddhist subculture and argues that it could be productively viewed as a type of 'home-grown' American Buddhist neo-tantra.

Heart-of-the-Heart: Efficacy in Buddhist Meditation

Edward Fitzpatrick Crangle, University of Sydney

My recent published work on the dynamics of healing in Buddhist meditation specifically addressed Pāli *samatha* (Sanskrit: *śamatha*, ‘calm abiding, quietude’) practices, insofar as they realise their potential to facilitate the opportunity for insight and to increase the likelihood of spiritual healing. This earlier paper attempted to articulate, in part, a brief theoretical account of the dynamics of the meditative method in the context of Buddhist soteriology and altruism, as well as suggest a profound connection with the extraordinary ‘energy’ encountered in Buddhist contemplative praxis.

Within the context of Buddhist contemplative praxis, and in light of the above, the present paper continues tentatively to identify and briefly discuss the meditative ‘gateway’ to this extraordinary ‘energy,’ or transcendent wisdom at the centre of one’s being, identified here as an emanation of the *Dharmakāya* Body of Truth. That is, the ‘gateway’ will be appreciated as the contemplative ‘heart-of-the-heart,’ or as the ‘centre-of-the-centre.’

Thus, the work hopes in some way to extend our appreciation of the efficacy of Buddhist meditation in its soteriological and altruistic concerns. As we proceed, I will make use of the notions and contemplative practices of various schools of Esoteric Buddhism, with specific attention given to meditative practices associated with the *Heart Sūtra*.

Where does Buddhism exist? Establishing the ‘mind of the practitioner’ as the continuity for reception

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Drawn from my PhD thesis, this paper considers the question of reception from the perspective of Buddhism as a ‘living tradition’. This perspective proceeds from appreciating the Buddha as a human being, in which his teachings can be understood as treatises on human experience, encompassing experience in both its ordinary and enlightened expressions. Subsequently, where can we say Buddhism ‘exists’ if it is primarily of human experience in this way? As a consequence, if Buddhism is understood to be ‘sourced’ in human experience, then it can be argued that it would necessarily reflect human subjectivity in time and place. In fact, it could not be ‘Buddhism’ otherwise; this establishes the ‘living’ aspect evidenced by example in the myriad forms of Western engagement with Buddhism in the contemporary context. Further, within this, it can be said that the ‘mind of the practitioner’ serves as the continuity for the tradition of ‘Buddhism’. To establish this in support of the living tradition perspective, the notion of ‘tradition’ from a Tibetan Buddhist view will be considered and by example, how the ‘mind of the practitioner’ serves to connect developments in Tibetan Buddhism in relation to stages of practitioner focus.

Orientalism

Beyond Zen: Eastern Buddhism at the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893

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No-one questions the importance of the Japanese delegation to the World's Parliament of Religions (Chicago 1893) in the history of modern global Buddhism. The familiar narrative is, however, of the introduction of Zen to the West. This paper revisits the event to consider the presentation of the delegation more broadly, showing that much more was offered. It was not Zen that they planned to introduce, but the more encompassing 'Eastern Buddhism', the thoroughly modern Mahāyāna Buddhism of Meiji reform strategically repackaged for the occasion. Although unnoticed at the time, Eastern Buddhism offered much that resonates with key features of global Buddhism as we now know it, including an explicit formulation of social engagement. We know, however, that the connection is far from direct, and such ideas only circulated much later. The paper celebrates the perspicacity of the Japanese delegates in accurately predicting what would, in time, become features of a modern global religion. It also raises questions about the processes of formation of knowledge and the transmission of religion.

The Image of the Devadasi in Colonial India

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Descriptions of women dedicated to the service of the gods in Hindu temples are to be found in the works of almost every European traveller to India from Marco Polo onward. The combination of the ritual and sexual roles of these women is enough to explain the early European fascination with them, but reports of them have also to be understood within the context of the wider representation of Hinduism. Colonial ideology and Christian theology converged in representing Hinduism as effeminate, and therefore as degenerate, sensual, and subjugated. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Hindu women were at the centre of debates over the legitimacy of colonial rule and its supposed “civilizing mission.” Other aspects of these debates over women—in relation to *sati*, the age of consent and widow remarriage—have been discussed but the place of representations of temple women in them has not yet been examined, despite the prominence of these women in debates among missionaries, Hindu reformers and nationalists. This paper will examine the image of the *devadāsi* in the dual context of the representation of Hinduism and the debates over Hindu women from the early modern period to 1947.

The paper will be read by Nicole Aaron.

Reconsidering the Birth of Orientalism

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Not the least of the limitations of Edward Said's account of *Orientalism* was his almost exclusive focus on the nineteenth century. Urs App's *The Birth of Orientalism* (2010) revitalizes an older tradition of writing on Orientalism perhaps best represented by Raymond Schwab's *La renaissance orientale* (1950) and in doing so illuminates aspects of the European reception of Asian religions which have been obscured by the relentless emphasis on the later impact of colonialism. This paper takes up App's central thesis that the role of colonialism in the birth of Orientalism "dwindles to insignificance compared to the role of religion" by re-examining a number of the works singled out by App, and other recent works on Orientalism including Suzanne Marchand's *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire* (2009).

Ritual, art and archaeology

Gandhāran Reliquary Inscriptions

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The formulaic nature of Gandharan reliquary inscriptions has provided a foundation for the design of a comprehensive metadata model and enabled the implementation of an applied philological methodology for the analysis of the patterns observed. Preliminary analysis has proven productive. In particular, modelling the themes of ‘ritual practice’ and ‘identification and instantiation’ has exposed a ritual strategy which shifts from relic provenance to relic transformation; from identification of the relics with the historical body of the Buddha to identification with the attributes and qualities of the Dharma body of the Buddha. This transformation, effected by liturgy, imbues the relics with the attainments and qualities of the Buddha, and seems to indicate their ritual and functional equivalence to the Buddha.

'The world's biggest artwork is rolled down a mountainside.'

Edie Young, National Gallery of Australia

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During field work in Dharamsala and Kathmandu in 2009, researching the traditional Tibetan Buddhist art of appliquéd and embroidered hanging scrolls (*thangka*), I discovered that this little known art is, in fact, enjoying a strong revival, and shows evidence of a high level of technical skill, aesthetic vision and creativity. Information was gathered from observations of workshops and interviews with Tibetan master appliqué artists and senior monks.

Using the giant silk appliqué *thangka* as an example, I will illustrate how the social and ritual purpose for Tibetan silk appliqué art, and the continued demand for this art, has supported this revival. This revival now has an international aspect beyond the borders of the Tibetan cultural region, related to the spread of Tibetan Buddhism and the continuity of Vajrayana ritual practices.

Wilderness Isolation, Mahayana Buddhism and the Reoccupation of Abandoned Monastic Sites in the Deccan

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Though the Vakataka-era excavations at Buddhist monastic complexes such as Ajanta, Aurangabad, Bagh, Banoti and Ghatotkacha were certainly the most ambitious undertakings in the Deccan during the late fifth century, they were not, it appears, the only Buddhist sites in the region to be impacted by this resurgent, though meteoric, period of patronage. During the late Vakataka period, many of the long dormant rock-cut monasteries located throughout the Deccan plateau appear to have experienced a brief period of reinvigoration. In almost all instances the only visible evidence of the reoccupation of these monasteries is the presence of numerous haphazardly placed painted and sculpted ‘votive’ images, often confined primarily to a single area of the site. Though it has swallowed in both obscurity and, unfortunately, an alarmingly poor state of preservation, this paper will seek to examine select examples of this extant body of imagery in order to affirm its not insignificant historical value. Particularly, it would appear, for the potential evidence it might provide about Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism during the fifth century of the Common Era, a period which is increasingly becoming recognized as a crucial moment in the history of that movement.

Role Reversals in Buddhist Rituals

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The process whereby Buddhism assimilated the Hindu gods and goddesses has been well documented. It was, however, not merely one of absorbing these deities into the Buddhist pantheon to act as guardians of the Dharma. There are other, less familiar, layers of assimilation. In Buddhist rituals involving Hindu divinities there is a recurrent theme of the reversal of the roles played by benign and malignant beings in the Hindu epics. In Buddhist rituals of subjugation evil demons are invoked to subjugate the very same gods and goddesses who the epics record as having conquered them. The theme is developed by reference to the Sanskrit mantras used in rituals of subjugation practised in the Shingon School of Japanese Buddhism.

Minorities

Minority and Migration: Space, Place and Muslim Women's Faith

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The dynamics of personalized faith in the lives of minority and migrant women is relatively under-researched. This paper will focus on the ethnographic narratives of some Muslim women in New Zealand to explore how faith is articulated in local contexts of minority and migration. The women's narratives illustrate the significance of Islam in their lives, and the ways that religious understandings are transmitted across geographical, and social, spaces. They also demonstrate the significance of place and space in terms of the ways that women's faithful understandings and practices create various localized interpretive possibilities, as well as providing emotional support in contexts of minority, immigration and resettlement.

Intersections of Christian Mission and Archeology: The Emergence of The Chaldean and Assyrian Minorities

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My paper examines the modern articulations of Chaldean and Assyrian identities in the western diaspora, which often associate the monumentality of history and the progress of modernity with these two appellations. Customarily, the modern Chaldeans and Assyrians are defined, by themselves and by others, as an Aramaic-speaking Catholic (Chaldean) and Eastern Christian (Assyrian) minorities from the ancient land of Mesopotamia. Among the political agendas of such articulations is setting the Chaldeans and Assyrians (and Chaldo-Assyrians/Assyro-Chaldeans) apart from the Islamic and Arab discourses associated with the contemporary Iraqi ethno-religious majorities (Sunni and Shiite Arabs and Kurds) and bringing these Mesopotamian ethno-religious minorities closer to the Christian West.

I argue that the transformations in collective Eastern Christian identities are to a large extent retraceable to two critical contacts with the west that took place in the mid-nineteenth century. Two sets of synergistic cultural transformations worked implicitly as civilizing missions that brought Chaldeans and Assyrians to occupy a hybrid cultural status (Eastern like the Muslim majority, but Christian like the west) at home and abroad. One transformation is marked by the arrival or reinforcement of western Christian Missions in Mesopotamia. The second transformation is marked by the establishment of French and British excavation posts in the same region.

The Devil Made Me Say It: Religion, Gender and Basque Language Change

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This paper draws on archival materials (biblical texts and legends) to show how religious conflict in the Basque Country of Spain and France effected key changes in the Basque language (“Euskera”). That is, while most Basques have been (at least nominally) Catholic since their conversion to Christianity in the 10th century, evidence suggests their indigenous religion was matriarchal, centering on the goddess “Mari.” I will show that the triumph of Catholicism over competing belief systems contributed to crucial changes in the social meanings ascribed the first-person informal singular pronoun, “*hika*,” which led to its disuse over time. More specifically, *hika* is used in Catholic texts primarily for negatively charged interactional purposes: when Christ casts out demons, or when the crowd mocks Christ on the cross. In contrast, Basque legends use *hika* forms as a matter of course between its primarily female mythological and human characters: the goddess Mari as well as witches and fairy-like creatures called “*laminak*.” When Catholicism became the primary religion among Basques, so did the social meanings its texts inscribed on these pronominal forms become hegemonic.

Buddhism in Western Practice II

Local and international themes in New Zealand Buddhism

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Buddhism is a minority religion in New Zealand. The 2006 Census found that the majority of people who professed Buddhism were born in Asia. The country is host to a wide range of Buddhist organisations and groups, from temples that help specific immigrant communities to maintain cultural, linguistic and religious practices in a new land, to centres where people with no prior background in Buddhism gather to meditate. This paper, as part of the groundwork for a larger study on Antipodean Buddhism, surveys the range of Buddhist groups in New Zealand, with a focus on interaction between some of these diverse communities, the issues they face, and the imprint they are making on the landscape.

Robina Courtin: an Unconventional Buddhist?

Anna Halafoff, Monash University

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Venerable Robina Courtin is one of Australia's most prominent Buddhist teachers. Born in Melbourne in 1944, Courtin has been a Buddhist nun in the Tibetan tradition for over 30 years and the founder and director of the Liberation Prison Project. The wisdom, directness, and humor of her teachings have served as inspirations to Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. Arguably, it is her particularly Australian down-to-earth style that has enabled her to deliver Buddhism in a practical and accessible way to Westerners both in and beyond Australia. This paper draws on Australian media sources, including transcripts of documentaries, radio interviews, and newspaper articles, to provide an account of Courtin's life story and her insights on practicing and teaching Buddhism, particularly in the Australian context. In so doing, I examine her supposedly unconventional approach to Buddhism, arguing that Courtin may in fact be more traditional than the media have led readers to believe. Scholars have noted that Australians, and the media, have a very limited understanding of Buddhism in Australia. This paper begins to address this omission, and calls for further sociological inquiry focused on the experiences of Courtin's students and, more generally, on Buddhist women in Australia.

‘Extra-ordinary Teachers’: The Teacher-Student relationship in Australian Tibetan Buddhism

Ruth Fitzpatrick, University of Western Sydney
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Academic literature on Western Buddhism frequently describes Western Buddhism as egalitarian and democratic. My research, involving 35 in-depth interviews with Australian Tibetan Buddhist practitioners, challenges this depiction. When carrying out research on Tibetan Buddhism in Australia I encountered the enormous significance of the teacher for Western practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism. In their approach to the teacher, participants frequently adopt the metaphysical hierarchical paradigms of Tibetan Buddhism and the devotion that such paradigms entail.

Contemporary literature on Western Buddhism suggests the main role of the teacher is as a meditation instructor. However, my research reveals that the teacher’s influence stretches well beyond the meditation cushion. Teachers frequently have an impact upon the life direction, subjectivities and daily activities of their students.

The nature of the relationship between students and their teachers appears to conflict with many contemporary cultural and social trends. It runs counter to the observed trends in many spiritual and (late)-modern cultures of locating authority within the individual. It also appears to conflict with one of the most central values of the European Enlightenment, the aspiration toward personal autonomy and the assumed relationship between autonomy, critical reason and freedom. In this paper I explore the rationalities that practitioners give for their commitment to the teacher and examine some of the cultural and social factors that lead to their trust and devotion.

Japanese Religions and Media

“Oh you handsome devil! Romanticizing Catholicism and Diabolism in Japanese girls’ comics”

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The romanticization of foreign, particularly European, culture has been a staple of *shōjo* manga, Japanese girl comics, since their inception. Their representation of the West bears striking similarities to the dynamics of classic Orientalism as described by Edward Said. The comics portrayed the European Other as aestheticized, feminized, and sexualized in the same way as European scholars, travellers, and novelists had represented the “Orient” for centuries.

A thought-provoking aspect of girl comics’ “Occidentalism” is their representation of the Christian religion. The comics were often set in religious schools, and priests, churches, angels, crucifixes, Bibles, crosses, and rosaries, as well as diabolism and black magic, were constantly showcased. Just like Orientalist texts portrayed Asia as both spiritual and superstitious, the European religion in Japanese girls’ comics is the object of simultaneous fascination and horror, fear and desire.

In my paper, I investigate the use of Christian imagery in the sub-genre of so-called Boys’ Love, stories that focus on homosexual romance between beautiful young men. I concentrate on two classics of the genre, Takemiya Keiko’s *A Song of Wind and Trees* (1976–84) and Hagio Moto’s *Thoma’s Heart* (1976), and one more recent series, Toba Shōko’s *Dance With The Devil* (1993–6).

Religious anime? Discussing anime and Japanese New Religions

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Despite the popularity of *anime* (animation movies) noticeably few academic studies have been done on religion and *anime*. Several studies, however, have discussed the central role of media in influencing the ways in which religious thought and practices are understood and “consumed” in modern Japanese society. *Anime*, in particular, have been used by some religious groups and examples of religious topics portrayed in animation movies are countless, including, for example, the immensely popular Miyazaki Hayao’s works and the very recent released of the anime version of Tezuka Osamu’s *Buddha*. Indeed, the ubiquity of anime (and manga, which are often connect to animated movies) in Japanese culture demonstrates its significant potential to shape how religion is perceived and defined.

This paper will focus on anime produced by so-called Japanese New Religions. In particular, it will analyze the anime produced by the group Kōfuku no Kagaku (Happy Science) and their relationship with changes in the group’s image construction after 1995.

From Mixi to Facebook via Twitter: an overview of Japanese “New Religions” presence on the “Social Space”

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This paper explores the presence of Japanese “New Religions” (JNRs) on the Social Network(ing) Sites (SNS) and examines its reasons and the scopes, while taking into account the intertwined nature of the Internet with the so-called “offline reality”.

This paper introduces the “Japanese Internet” and the specificities of the SNS, providing the theoretical bases to understand the context of the online religious discourse. Subsequently, the paper provides examples of how JNRs are spreading on the Internet, assuming new forms and making use of new channels, while maintaining a certain degree of consistency and trying to avoid the new potentially participatory environment corrupting religious authority and deforming doctrine.

Despite the potentialities of the SNS to work as public places where religion is re-discussed and re-shaped by users, at this stage JNRs use the Internet cautiously, limiting users’ participation and playing with platforms privacy regulations. What will be in the near future, however, could be slightly different, because of the so-called “transient nature” of this medium, the incredibly fast change of global society after the advent of the Internet and the need for JNRs to find a greater audience.

Mahāyāna scholarship

Dharmadhātu in the *Avataṃsakasūtra*

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The *dharma**dhātu* theory ('the element of the elements theory' or 'the element of existence theory') states that all beings create themselves and even the universe is self-created. In the *Avataṃsakasūtra*, the *dharma**dhātu* is synonymous with the Matrix of the Thus-come (*Tathāgatagarbha*) and also with the universe or the actual world, i.e., the realm of all elements. There is another term, *pratītyasamutpāda* ('dependent arising' or 'dependent origination'), which is one of the terms that indicate the Buddha's teaching on the process of birth and death, occurs in the canons of all the schools of Buddhism. *Dharma**dhātu* and *pratītyasamutpāda* have come to represent the universe as universally co-relative, generally interdependent and mutually originating, and state that there is no single being that exists independently.

The aim of this paper is to find out how the terms *dharma**dhātu* and *pratītyasamutpāda* developed and changed over time and united into one truth. First, I will consider *pratītyasamutpāda* in the sixth *bhūmi* of *Daśabhūmiśvāro nāma Mahāyānasūtram* in the *Avataṃsakasūtra* in order to understand the connection between *dharma**dhātu* and *pratītyasamutpāda*. Next, I will consider the development from *dharma**dhātu* to *pratītyasamutpāda* in the *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 2 *Āvaraṇa pariccheda*, *Daśaśubhādyāvaraṇam* of *Yogacāra*. Finally I will consider the relationship between *pratītyasamutpāda* and *dharma**dhātu* in the *Mādhyāntavibhāga* Chapter 1 *Abhūta-parikalpa* Stanza 1 in the *Ṣaḍ-asal-lakṣaṇa*.

The Case for Self-Interest on the Buddhist Path

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This paper explores why early Mādhyamikas insist upon belief in a ‘self’ (*ātma*) as a necessary *a priori* assumption for beginners setting out on the Buddha’s path—so necessary, indeed, that for those who do not already hold any conception of the self at all, it is better to posit an existent self, even one ‘the size of Mount Meru’. The need to ensure a continuity between the doer of actions and the experiencer of results provides the background for this approach; positing a self enables, in the most immediate sense, a ‘bare minimum’ moral outlook based on self-interest. However, I suggest that to see this strategy as merely a means of pointing out a theoretical karmic relation between causes and effects is to lose sight of its greater import. I argue instead that framing the relation between actions and results in terms of the immediacy of first-person being situates the person as a moral agent within a narrative orientated toward certain ends – a moral agent who may be ‘self-interested’ but who at least knows what it means to be interested. Reconsidered in this light, this strategy, I suggest, holds implications relevant at more advanced stages along the Path.

On the Plurality of Vinaya Traditions in the Mūlasarvāstivāda and the Inconsistencies between the Tibetan *Bhikṣuṇī Prātimokṣa* and its Purported Canonical Commentary

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The rules-of-training for Tibetan Buddhist nuns have come down to us in two distinct forms: as a separate text designed for liturgical recitation (the *Bhikṣuṇī Prātimokṣa*), and embedded in what should be the *Prātimokṣa*'s canonical commentary, the *Bhikṣuṇī Vibhaṅga*. As first noticed by Bu sTon rin chen grub (1290–1364) in the fourteenth century, there is a major discrepancy between the number and order of rules in the *Bhikṣuṇī Prātimokṣa* and the *Bhikṣuṇī Vibhaṅga* preserved in Tibetan. Since the two texts do not match, Bu sTon concluded that the *Vibhaṅga* was not Mūlasarvāstivādin, that it belonged to some other school. If upholding the Vinaya is the cornerstone of monastic practice, then acknowledging the incompleteness or corruption of the Tibetan Bhikṣuṇī Vinaya tradition will have drastic consequences for contemporary movements seeking to introduce female ordination in Tibetan Buddhism.

In this paper, on the basis of evidence unavailable to Bu sTon, I will suggest that both the *Bhikṣuṇī Prātimokṣa* and the *Bhikṣuṇī Vibhaṅga* preserved in Tibetan belong to *a*—not *the*—Mūlasarvāstivādin tradition and that we must now consider the possibility that there were multiple Mūlasarvāstivādin traditions in India with at least two distinct sets of rules for nuns.

Don't Like What You Hear? Then Go to Hell! Fearmongering, Seduction and the 'Cult of the Book' in the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra*

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Since Schopen's seminal article of 1975, scholars of Buddhism have increasingly come to accept that the 'cult of the book' formed an important part of the nascent movement eventually known as 'Mahāyāna'. The precise nature of this cult of the book, however, remains a controversial and understudied matter. In his classic article, Schopen paints a picture of real-world groups congregating around sites where texts are preached or enshrined, and engaging in actual cultic activites that constitute the core of their group identity. I will argue that at least in the massively influential *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra*, the cult of the book can be better understood as a elaborate, multi-part rhetorical mechanism designed in significant part to ensure the preservation and transmission of new texts containing deliberately shocking, contrarian doctrines, where that transmission is to occur, in significant part, in the new medium of writing. The text organises cosmological and soteriological threats and blandishments around this central imperative of textual maintenance and reproduction, moreover, and this pattern suggests that the cult of the book, so defined, may even have played a backstage role in the production of some historically significant 'high' Mahāyāna doctrines. This may have interesting implications for the relationship between medium and message in the history of religious ideas.

Reception

Here Lies the Truth? Canonicity and Reception Mutations of the Fictional Jesus from Renan to Pullman

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This paper is a part of a wider project to chart the more standout depictions of Jesus in both film and literature from Renan's groundbreaking *Vie de Jésus* in 1863 through to Philip Pullman's *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ* in 2010. I will approach this survey with an eye to patterns of understanding the variances between the sacrality and humanity of Jesus, particularly in the recreations of the Messiah by Moorecock, Kazantzakis, Rice, and Pullman with references to cinematic manifestations from Pasolini, Jones, Ashby, Arcand, Scorsese, and Gibson. In the end I consider if writing about Jesus and depicting his life on film has become a game of playing with what remains of the Western canon than a real attempt to address one of the most powerful symbols of the sacred in the West.

Why God Doesn't Matter: The strange case of singer-songwriter David Eugene Edwards and his reception

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The American singer/songwriter David Eugene Edwards, the voice of Sixteen Horsepower and Wovenhand, is a devout Christian, and he makes no bones about his orthodox, uncompromising Reform theology in his songs, which, for almost two decades, have been almost entirely about God. However, Edwards' audience is largely non-Christian and he has largely been ignored by the mainstream of Contemporary Christian Music. Perhaps even more strangely, he has found an enthusiastic audience among fans of 'black metal', a subgenre of heavy metal music that is often openly (and occasionally violently) anti-Christian. This paper explores the central disconnection between Edwards, for whom God is only thing that really matters, and his fans, for whom God matters little, if at all, and suggests some possible explanations for the peculiar matter of Edwards and his reception.

Cliffs as Crosses: The Problematic Symbols of Colin McCahon's 'Necessary Protection'

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This paper examines the schism between intended message and actual reception in the artworks of Colin McCahon (1919–1987). McCahon was heavily influenced by Christianity, which he saw as inextricably linked to a message of ecological conservation. He also considered painting to be a prophetic task, and, as such, hoped to cause spiritual and behavioural transformation within his audience. McCahon's 'Necessary Protection' artworks use the beach environment and Christian symbols as a means of communicating his fear of environmental degradation, the importance of faith, and the necessity of loving one's homeland. Unfortunately, McCahon's symbolic lexicon has proven too esoteric to be comprehensively understood or embraced by his intended audience. In this presentation, I will explain the specific spiritual aims of the 'Necessary Protection' artworks and demonstrate the reasons why McCahon's intended communication has been thwarted by the obscurity of his imagery. To do so, I will use the critical framework of Erwin Panofsky, which reveals the importance of a viewer's cultural background in their engagement with an artwork. In doing so, I will illuminate the gulf between prophetic religious text and audience comprehension.

‘You Are From Your Father, the Devil’: Anti-Semitism and the Reception History of John 8

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The Gospel of John, where the term *Ioudaios* (“Jew” or “Judean”) appears approximately seventy times, has received much attention from scholars concerned about the anti-Jewish potential of the New Testament texts. The *locus classicus* of this problem is John 8:31-59, where, at the climax of the conflict, the Johannine Jesus brings against the Jews the sinister charge, “You are from your father, the devil, and you choose to do your father’s desires” (v. 44). Here is the origin of the view, popular throughout the Middle Ages and still found even among some well-meaning people today, that Jews are, quite literally, “children of the devil.” In the first part of this paper, I trace this tradition across Western Christendom, back from John Chrysostom and the early Church Fathers to Martin Luther and the medieval tradition, and finally up to the anti-Jewish rhetoric of Nazi Germany and modern Neo-Nazi groups. These examples will be contrasted with “new readings” of John 8:31-59 in modern scholarship which attempt to free the Gospel of John of the charge of anti-Semitism.

Buddhism in China

Lay ritual at Baoguo Monastery: Constant Walking Meditation

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Baoguo Si 报国寺 is a Buddhist monastery located at the foot of Emei Shan, an ancient sacred mountain and UNESCO World Heritage Site in Sichuan PRC. In addition to receiving thousands of tourists every day, Baoguo has an active local Buddhist lay congregation. Baoguo Si, like most religious sites in China today, is a place where the lay community can perform a wide variety of ritual, such as lighting incense and candles, donating money or food, bowing to sacred objects and images, and offering paper money to ancestors. The majority of Chinese tourists and pilgrims conduct these rituals while visiting the site. This paper examines a lay ritual practiced at Baoguo Si, the Constant Walking Meditation 常行念佛, which is conducted by practitioners who have taken refuge. The ritual takes place in the Samantabhadra Temple, which operates as a public ritual space or *nianfo tang*, 念佛堂 (lit.: recitation hall). This study is based on research conducted at Baoguo between July and September 2011 and analyses the history and performance of this ritual by mostly elderly female participants, who do the ritual on a regular basis. I argue that the ritual, which can be considered a reinvention of an ancient Buddhist practice, enables the monastery to remain an religious site despite being the centre of a booming tourist industry.

An Shigao and Early Chinese Buddhist Meditation

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Traditional sources state that An Shigao (?–168 CE) was born as a prince of Parthia, and travelled to Luoyang the capital city of Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220 CE) during 148 CE. He lived in China for many years, preaching, teaching and translating Buddhist texts dealing with meditation, abhidharma and basic Buddhist doctrine into Chinese. An Shigao played an important role in the early transmission of Buddhism into China, and there have been many investigations of his life and translations. Most of these investigations have focused on his biography, translation style, and the authenticity of the texts attributed to him. The close reading of his biography shows that during the time he was active in China, An Shigao was well-respected as a meditation master. However, little is known about the form of meditation that he taught and practiced.

According to Williams and Dumoulin, there was an upsurge in interest in the practice of various kinds of meditation among Chinese elites during the 2nd century CE. One reason for the successful spread of Buddhism during the Eastern Han was due to the influx of newly translated information about Buddhist meditation. A significant number of An Shigao's translations, such as the *Anban shouyi jing* 大安般守意經 “The Great Ānāpānasmṛti Sūtra”, *Yin chi ru jing* 陰持入經, *Chanxing faxiang jing* 禪行法想經 are concerned with meditation techniques. In this paper I will survey An Shigao's translation corpus, and identify information about the meditation techniques contained in his translations. Based on these texts, I will argue that it is likely that An Shigao practiced and taught a form of mindfulness of breathing meditation.

Tibetan Buddhism and Han Chinese: hybrid religious and cultural identity in contemporary China

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This paper will argue that Chinese practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism, while keeping Tibetan Buddhism as the core of their new religious identity, ‘hybridise’ elements of their ‘old’ worldview with elements of the new Tibetan Buddhist framework, which accommodates this hybridisation. This framework, it will be argued, is the Buddhist model of samsaric existence, which consists of the six levels of gods, demi-gods, human beings, animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings. Outside of these six levels are those liberated from rebirth through enlightenment. Within this framework of cyclic existence and liberated ‘being’, practitioners and lamas ‘find’ a place for all elements of the ‘old’ Chinese worldview, both religious and non-religious. In addition, many conflate Chinese and Tibetan deities within the framework, as well as interpreting elements of the framework within the discourse of Marxist and other rationalist ideologies. However, this placement, conflation and interpretation of different elements within this framework is not uncontested, either amongst practitioners or between practitioners and lamas, with many having different opinions about where these elements should fit, if at all, within the framework.

Themes to be briefly discussed in the paper in relation to the above will include Guan Gong/Gesar, Buddhist/Environmental protectors, Daoist Ghosts/Hungry Ghosts and Neo-Confucianism/Transcendental practice.

Origins

Why Christians Should Be Creationists

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Christian opponents of young-earth creationism often assert that there is no incompatibility between Christian faith and an acceptance of the theory of evolution by natural selection. There is, perhaps, no incompatibility, in the strict sense of this term: it is possible that both may be true. But if Darwin's theory is true, then it (a) undercuts a popular argument for the existence of God, (b) constitutes further evidence of the non-existence of God, and (c) demands that Christians abandon a traditional and theologically well-grounded view of biblical authority. While in no way defending the creationist position, this paper argues that if you are a Christian, you ought also to be a creationist.

Quantifying Cultural Transmission

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Quantitative methodologies for investigating textual and linguistic change afford unprecedented power for settling longstanding debates about the sources, variation, and functions of religiosity. But such methods also have their limitations. This (non-technical) talk describes two recent methodological innovations: (1) quantitative textual coding, and (2) comparative cultural phylogenetics. I discuss the virtues and limitations of these methods by working through one case study for each.

The greater *jihād*: from unsound *hadīth* to apologetic trope

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Traditional Muslim writers classified different kinds of *jihād*, applying the term to a variety of activities whose only shared feature was that they required sustained effort in the cause of Islam. In classical jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and other genres, the word was used primarily to mean war against unbelievers. Sūfī writers sometimes described the struggle against the self (*jihād al-nafs*) as the greater *jihād* (*jihād al-akbar*), but, far from repudiating the notion of military *jihād*, they themselves frequently participated in it. Indeed, the complementarity of the greater and lesser jihāds was reflected in an alleged saying (*hadīth*) of the Prophet Muhammad in which he returned from a military campaign and announced the resumption of the greater *jihād*.

With good reason, classical scholars doubted the authenticity of this greater *jihād* saying, and it is overwhelmingly rejected by militant Islamists today. Modern apologists, by contrast, have made it a centrepiece of their argument about the peaceful character of Islam. It is now used to support claims that Islam rejects aggressive warfare, permitting only defence, and that the primary meaning of *jihād* is the struggle to be a good Muslim and to reform society.

Therāvāda in Practice

Buddhism in the time of war: four ballads from the Khmer Republic

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Between 1970–1975, Cambodia was engulfed in a bloody Civil War. Artists on both sides of the conflict composed martial songs and patriotic anthems to support their soldiers and expound their political ideologies. There is a substantial body of research on the songs of the Khmer Rouge, the communist regime that overthrew the Khmer Republic in 1975 (Chandler 1994, Marston 1997; 2002). However there has been little work on the songs of the Khmer Republic, 1970–1975. This paper will consider 4 popular songs written and performed during this period that depict Cambodia's Civil War as a *cambang sasana*, a Buddhist holy war waged against communism. The motifs and metaphors of these war songs shed some light on the complicated history of this period.

The first two songs, recall Cambodia's former greatness during the Angkorian empire, criticise the pro-communist path taken by Sihanouk during the 1960s, and exhort the Khmer people to "wake up" and return to the correct, Buddhist path. They reflect the influence of the Khmer Krom nationalist Son Ngoc Thanh on the Khmer Republic during this period. The next two songs are darker, and reflect the despair Cambodian people felt as their country was destroyed by bombs and increasing numbers of Khmer men were killed in battle. Again they refer to Buddhism but this is an occult, esoteric Buddhism ruled by kru (Buddhist ascetics) Buddhist amulets and yantras.

Ehi Passiko: Monastic Code and the Role of Monarchy in Theravada Buddhism

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This paper is an invitation to ‘come and see’ (*ehi passiko*) the historical development of Buddhist monastic codes in Sri Lanka and Thailand and their modern day implications. It explores the rules for monastic life (Vinaya) laid down by the Buddha, the interpretation of these rules by the first Buddhist Council of Elders (Theravada) in 6 BCE and their later adaptation by the Buddhist monarchs of Sri Lanka and Thailand. The nature and impact of these adaptations is reviewed, since they have heavily influenced Theravada Buddhist culture. It is argued that the modification of these rules by the Theravada and then by religious monarchs has led to practices that are not always consistent with Buddha’s thinking.

For example, during the 12th Century in Sri Lanka, King Parākkramabāhu I set up a single controlling structure for the Sangha, including a Katikāvata (royal edict) regarding monastic discipline. In Thailand King Rām Kamheang (1238 CE) appointed the supreme patriarch of the Sangha to promote Buddhism. This action led to the establishment of an administrative hierarchy for the monastic community. However, a number of controversial issues have arisen since the monarchy became involved with the Sangha in this way. These issues can be readily addressed if the Dhamma and Vinaya are taken as the foundation stone not only for Theravada monasticism, but also for the wider dissemination of Buddhism and the ‘enlightened common sense’ that can benefit us all.

Vegetarianism and *Buddhapūja* in Urban Sri Lanka

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It is occasionally claimed that Sinhalese Buddhists are, on the whole, in favour of the practice of vegetarianism (Sin. *nirmāngsha*) (Gombrich, 1991; Harvey, 2000). This paper aims to further support this claim. During a field study conducted in 2010–2011 in Colombo and Kegalle District we interviewed thirteen families (nineteen individuals) on the topic of vegetarianism and other related activities. We found that most people were supportive of the practice and regarded it as a pious Buddhist activity. Meat eating was generally viewed with some disapproval even by people who themselves ate meat. This support was also indirectly revealed as a consequence of the way families carried out their *buddhapūja* rituals. Almost all the families insisted that the Buddha should receive only vegetarian food. This view is consistent with practices at important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in particular the Sri Daladā Māligāwa (The Temple of the Sacred Tooth). I will argue that this reflects a generally favourable attitude Sinhalese Buddhists have towards vegetarianism.

Teaching religions in multi-cultural settings

An Appraisal of Catholic Social Teaching on Ethnicity: The Nigerian Experience of Teaching and Practice of Religions

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The paper tries to discuss the recurrent issues on ethnocentric attitudes that have afflicted Nigerians and their subsequent implication on the teaching and practice of Religions in Nigeria. It further argues that this situation is as a result of age-long foundation and the elitists usage of religion to promote political privileges of the in-group and primordial interest. The paper further asserts that, in the light of the social teachings of Catholicism, the Nigerian leaders could build a virile united nation. The paper concludes that even distribution of development, ethnic equality, and fairness would invariably reduce destructive ethnocentric attitude in Nigeria and enhance the practiced of religions in the country in particular and Africa at large. The paper applied historical and analytical methods in appraising its data.

The paper will be read by John Lawani.

Secular—but multi-religious: Discursive possibilities for religious education in New Zealand's primary schools

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The Education Act of 1964 affirmed the secular nature of primary school education in New Zealand, and legalised the 'Nelson System' of voluntary Religious Instruction in schools. In consequence, religious education has evolved as a subject beyond the scope of the mainstream primary school curriculum. In a time when religion is regularly in world news, and when our school population is becoming increasingly diverse, the word 'religion' does not feature in 'New Zealand Curriculum 2007.'

This paper addresses the anomalous position of religious education in the secular, multi-religious primary school through a methodology of discourse analysis. A selection of key discourses will be outlined, within which historic and contemporary debates about religious education appear to have been framed. Interview data from a pilot study exploring the attitudes of a group of parents and educators in Dunedin, towards teaching about Christianity and the world religions in schools, will be analysed and discourses identified.

A critique of prevailing discourses and the interests that they privilege within both the education system and wider society will follow, with consideration of implications and possibilities for primary school education in New Zealand.

Method in the study of Buddhism

Translating the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*

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Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* is one of the most translated Buddhist texts. Modern translations have been published since 1892, from Sanskrit and Tibetan, into a wide range of European and other languages. In recent decades the field of translation studies has emerged and a number of theoretical approaches to translation proposed. Translators of literary texts can sometimes be hostile to translation theory. Does the field of translation studies have anything to offer translators of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit? What aspects of translation theory are applicable to translation of Buddhist texts and can translators learn anything from translation theory? This paper reviews approaches taken by translators of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* by examining what translators say about their aims in translating the work and the unspoken assumptions behind their choice of translation strategy. It shows that translation theory provides tools to assess translations and to place them in their social context.

Editing practices used to prepare the ‘European editions’ of Pāli texts

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Pāli texts have been published in Europe since the mid-nineteenth century, primarily by the Pali Text Society. Scholars of Theravāda Buddhism have relied upon these publications more heavily than the many series of Pāli texts published in South and Southeast Asia. A number of recent articles have assessed a small selection of these ‘European editions’. These studies suggest that European editions are based upon an alarmingly small number of witnesses and that important textual traditions within Theravāda Buddhism have been poorly represented or, in some cases, entirely ignored.

To date, a broad quantitative study on the editing practices used to prepare the European editions has not been undertaken. This paper seeks to partially fill this gap by analysing all Pali Text Society publications of canonical works and their commentaries (*atthakathās*). Of particular interest is the type, number and place of origin of witnesses; the methodology employed to select readings; whether or not emendations of the text were made by the editor; and whether or not witnesses have been critically compared. Comparisons will be made with publications of Pāli texts in Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand.

Current trends in cataloging, photographing, editing, and studying Pali manuscripts

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Large collections of Pali manuscripts are found in monastery libraries throughout Theravāda lands, in public libraries in Asia and in the West, and in private collections. Many of these manuscript collections are not easily accessed, particularly those in monastery libraries and in some Asian public libraries. Only a fraction of this vast archive of texts has been edited and published, the most notable among them being canonical texts and their commentaries; a significant proportion have yet to be identified and studied. This paper will outline the value of Pali manuscripts and discuss current trends in cataloging, photographing, editing, and studying them.