SECTION IV

MODERNITY AND MODERNITIES

The question of rhetorical or categorical boundaries was addressed in section 1, with authors both questioning received categories and proposing new theoretical models. In this section, we return to such questions by highlighting a particular conceptual framework used to study Buddhism in the United States and worldwide: modernity. Most often juxtaposed with "tradition," modernity has come to dominate the field and promises new avenues for continued research.

In his contribution, Erik Braun focuses on what may be considered a "traditional" practice and its associated cosmological underpinnings: *jhna* meditation. By detailing the rise in popularity of jhnic practices and their associated blissful mental states, even and especially by prominent "modernist" teachers, Braun draws our attention to the complexity of this dichotomy, all too easily taken for granted.

David McMahan, whose larger work on Buddhist modernism has been widely applied in the field, calls into question the very category of "modernity" itself and reminds us to be attentive to the specific ways in which modernity is deployed. Whereas earlier generations of scholars presumed modernity to entail progressive cultural and economic development—with modernity seen as essentially synonymous with Westernization—McMahan explores how modernity in China challenges these assumptions by suffusing it with Confucian values as much as Western economic ones. Buddhist modernism, in this case, is properly understood as Chinese Buddhist modernity.

Mitchell and Quli query the utility of the category of "modernism," noting that a religious group labeled "traditional" in one context may be seen as "modernist" in another, as is the case with some Buddhist traditions that are cast as modern in Japan but traditional in the United States. Arguing that what scholars call "modernity" is actually a set of narratives, the authors suggest that Buddhists can choose to appropriate some elements but not others, and these elements are then integrated into existing cultural matrices; this produces multiple Buddhist modernities that blend both "modern" and "traditional" elements. Comparing two contemporary Buddhist groups in the United States leads the authors to question the utility of the label "modernist" itself, which may be seen as part of a larger academic paradigm rooted in ideas of rupture and loss.

TEN

THE UNITED STATES OF *JHNA*

Varieties of Modern Buddhism in America

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Since the turn of the millennium, *jhna* meditation, the cultivation of mental states of deep calm (*samatha*) and concentration (*samdhi*), has surged in popularity in America, both in print and in practice. This is a novel situation. Although the *jhnas* are understood to be profoundly pleasurable—as the monk Ajaan Brahm put it, "better than sex" (Brahm 2006, 1; cf. Spiro 1982, 55)—most meditation teachers in America and in Asia ignored them until recently. This was because they considered such states of rarified consciousness to be inappropriate for regular people. At best, the *jhnas* merely prepared one for the real work of liberation through the separate practice of insight meditation (*vipassan*); at worst, they created a "*samdhi* junkie" addicted to delusional bliss (Brasington 2007, 6). In the words of a well-known meditation teacher, *jhna* meditation was viewed as "a kind of meditators' Olympics, a pursuit suited only to extraordinary beings who lived in caves or monasteries, far beyond the ken of 'normal people'" (Gunaratana 2009a, vii).

But this negative attitude notwithstanding, in recent years many books and websites teaching the *jhnas* have appeared, numerous conferences and retreats dedicated to concentration practices have taken place, and popular Buddhist magazines have published articles extolling the *jhnas'* rightful place in Buddhist meditation.[1] A shift has taken place, it seems, toward a sensibility that values the *jhnas*. The teachers Tina Rasmussen and Stephen Snyder liken their cultivation to "Jedi warrior mind training"—a description that suggests the power of the *jhnas* as a force for good.[2] Some teachers even seek to turn the situation on its head, putting these states of mind at the heart of Buddhist meditation. To quote Ajaan Brahm again: "Put bluntly, if it isn't *jhna* then it isn't true Buddhist meditation!" (Brahm 2006, 127).

This chapter considers what features in American culture and Buddhist teachings have caused the *jhnas* to become popular in recent times. Identifying these features promises to give us a more accurate assessment of the shape and direction of modern Theravada Buddhism.[3] To do this, I quote a variety of voices prominent in the American Theravada Buddhist scene. These sources do not speak as one, but their agreement on key points gives a composite picture of the appeal of the *jhnas*. The picture that develops shows that the growing popularity of jhnic practices dissolves any stable, progressive relationship between forms of Buddhism considered traditional and those seen as modern.

In his examination of the development of Western Buddhism, Martin Baumann has identified a split between modernist forms that stress Buddhism as a rational and scientific system, based in scripture, and traditionalist forms that focus on ritual and devotional acts of merit-making and "hold specific cosmological worldviews" (Baumann 2001, 25). This analytical distinction—similar to those of other scholars examining Asian cultures (cf. Bechert 1994, 257–258; Lopez 2002b, ix)—certainly captures a broad but real difference at present between two Buddhist groups in America, a difference that usually maps onto the "convert" (modernist) versus "immigrant" (traditionalist) divide. But the *jhnas* crosscut these categories. Interest in the *jhnas* has burgeoned among the convert group, those Buddhists or Buddhist sympathizers who are, generally, white and in the middle or upper classes.[4] Such people are often highly secular—reluctant at times even to call themselves Buddhist—and concerned with meditation divorced from ritual practices or belief in rebirth (Fronsdal 1998, 164). In other words, they are exemplars of Buddhist modernism. But, as we shall see later, teachers of the *jhnas* have often included within their presentations of calm and concentration meditation cosmological worldviews that include rebirth and other

apparently "traditional" beliefs. Thus, examination of the growing popularity of these practices allow us to reconsider at the end of this chapter what a modern (or even postmodern) American Buddhist can be.

THE *JHNAS* IN MEDITATION PRACTICE

Orthodox Theravada Buddhism organizes meditation into two categories of practice, calm meditation (*samathabhvan*), which has as a central goal the achievement of states of deep concentration (*samdhi*), and insight meditation (*vipassanbhvan*), which aims at a liberative understanding of reality. The relationship between these two practices received perhaps its most authoritative articulation for Theravada Buddhism in the fifth-century compendium on meditation, *Path of Purification* (*Visuddhimagga*). Although the text allows for the possibility of divergences in how a meditator pursues the path to liberation, it assumes as normative the cultivation of morality, then concentration, and then insight.[5] Practices for cultivating concentration are part of *samatha* (calm) meditation, because calm and concentration are understood to be intrinsically connected. This stage of the practice, before one seeks insight, is where the meditator cultivates the *jhnas.*

The *jhnas* arise by focusing the mind on a selected object of meditation. Whether it be the breath (*npna*), a feeling of lovingkindness (*mett*), a circle of colored earth (*kasia*), or something else suitable to one's temperament, with effort one becomes immovably fixed on one's object and thus concentrated. A jhnic state comes about through a focus on the meditation object that suppresses the five "hindrances" (*nvaraa*) of sensual desire (*kmacchanda*), aversion (*bypda*), sloth and torpor (*thna-middha*), restlessness and anxiety *(uddhaccakukkucca),* and doubt (*vicikicch*) and promotes the corresponding growth of the five "limbs" of *jhna*: an initial grasping of an object of attention by the mind (*vitakka*), a sustained hold on that object by the mind (*vicra*), joy (*pti*), happiness (*sukha*), and one-pointedness of mind (*ekagatt*). The suppression of the five hindrances and the full flowering of the five limbs puts one in the first *jhna*, which is the first of eight possible jhnic states.[6] The next three states of *jhna* are simplifications of the first *jhna*: the second *jhna* drops initial grasping and sustained hold, the third drops joy, and the fourth is left with one-pointedness. After these four states, one can travel into four higher realms, called the "formless *jhnas*" (*arpajhnas*), which are characterized not by a *jhna* limb (one keeps the one-pointedness of the fourth *jhna*) but by an object of awareness (Gunaratana 2009a, 107). The meditator drops his or her original object of focus and takes up the particular object of a formless realm, each more subtle than the last. These are infinite space (*ksnañcyatana*), infinite consciousness (*viññnañcyatana*), nothingness (*kiñcaññyatana*), and neither-perception-nor-nonperception (*nevasaññsaññyatana*).

As rarified as these states are, they are still only a means to an end, not the end itself. The orthodox view understands that the practice of the *jhnas* comes before insight meditation because it stabilizes the mind and gives it a penetrating focus, but the meditator must then apply that focus in subsequent insight practice. In contrast to calm meditation, insight practice is a close observation of reality, empowered by calm and concentration (and so more than mere "looking" or intellectual reasoning), that confirms, permanently, the Buddhist lessons of no-self (*anatta*), suffering (*dukkha*), and impermanence (*anicca*) (Cousins 1973, 123).

The most commonly taught Theravada-derived method of meditation in America comes from the Burmese monk called the Mahasi Sayadaw (1904–1982). Certainly, there have been a number of other insight meditation techniques that have made an impact in the United States, for instance those of S. N. Goenka, Ruth Denison, and Henepola Gunaratana. But the Mahasi technique still serves as the charter method for insight meditation in America. Other methods are important to consider for this chapter only insofar as they materially change the dominant emphasis—expressed quintessentially through the Mahasi method—on insight practice without prior cultivation of the *jhnas.*[7]

In the system of "first concentration, then insight" outlined here, teachers indebted to Mahasi have put the focus almost entirely on doing *vipassan* from the get-go.[8] The Mahasi method teaches one to label all sense data as they come in through the six sense-doors of sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, and mind. Eventually, this cataloging of experiences deepens one's moment-by-moment concentration (which is not the same as absorption in the *jhnas*) and allows one to progress through the levels of realization leading to

insight. This is called the "pure insight" (*suddhavipassan*) or the "dry" (*sukkha*) method because it requires no special concentration.[9] From the viewpoint of this practice tradition, one that represents the mainstream in America, cultivating the *jhnas* simply delays the critical insight process.[10]

WHY THE POPULARITY OF THE *JHNAS* NOW?

So why have the *jhnas* become so popular in recent times if they have typically been discounted? I suggest a combination of factors—the changing influence of lineages of teaching, the experiences of individual practitioners, a rereading of Theravada Buddhist texts, and cultural context—to explain the growth in interest in the *jhnas.*

While the Mahasi technique is widespread, there is a lineage of teaching *jhna* meditation within the Thai forest tradition that has started to exert an influence. A number of Thai forest monasteries have been founded since the 1990s in the United States, and various teachers, both Thai- and Western-born and both male and female, have gained prominence. Many are connected to the teacher Ajaan Chah (1918–1992), including Ajaan Brahm, who is perhaps the strongest lobbyist for the *jhnas.* Although he heads a monastery and meditation center in Australia, he has made an impact in America through his book *Mindfulness, Bliss, and Beyond,* as well as his Dhamma talks available through his website (and other sites). Thanissaro Bhikkhu is another influential source for Thai Forest teachings in America. Thanissaro learned *jhna* meditation as part of his training in Thailand under Ajaan Fuang (1915–1986), and he has stressed the value of the *jhnas* since returning to the United States and becoming abbot of Wat Mettavanaram in southern California in 1993.

Besides teachers who work within a tradition of *jhna* practice, the exploration of Buddhist texts has led some teachers to promote the *jhnas*. These teachers, in essence, have begun their own lineages of practice. For instance, in her autobiography Ayya Khema describes how she first attained the formless *jhnas* (the *arpajhnas*) on the basis of her reading:

> It was a full-moon evening and we were getting ready as usual to meditate through the night. As I sat in the meditation hall, I was getting more and more tired and more and more bored. We had already sat there for four hours, had chanted, had heard a talk from Phra Khantipalo, and now it was midnight. *Then I recalled what I had read about meditative absorptions in the Buddha's discourses.*… Then it occurred to me that I should just once try to realize infinite space, infinite consciousness, the realm of nothingness, and neither perception nor non-perception. And lo and behold, the level of concentration I already had at my disposal was sufficient to allow me to experience these levels of consciousness. (Khema 1997b, 160, italics mine)

Gunaratana, too, states that he learned meditation, including the *jhnas,* not from any teacher but from reading books.[11] Khema and Gunaratana thus used texts not only to confirm prior experience but to produce it, and this has authorized calm and concentration practice.[12] Snyder and Rasmussen also demonstrate the importance of texts. While they did not formulate their method themselves, they follow a highly textualized (and extremely complex) system by the Burmese monk called the Pa-Auk Sayadaw based on the *Visuddhimagga.* It is a typical modernist move to return to originary texts to justify innovative practices. Yet these teachers do not go back just to the original canon. In using commentarial literature as well, they suggest that forms of modern Buddhism can draw on a wider range of sources for inspiration and evolution.

Additionally, even prior to the influence of text or teacher, some sorts of profound yet unexplained experiences of practitioners may have led them to the jhnic inventory of states of concentration. The teacher Leigh Brasington, who studied under Ayya Khema, has argued, for instance, that people can "stumble" into rudimentary *jhnas.*[13] Whatever the actual nature of these states, such experiences can lead practitioners to teachers and texts that espouse the *jhnas*.

Besides acting as charters for experience, texts are also used as authoritative sources to make a case for calm and concentration practice against the view of it as hazardous or unnecessary. Many *jhna* teachers

argue, in fact, that *jhna* practices are not only presented as acceptable within the Buddhist texts but actually as preferable if not outright required. To make this point, a number of teachers quote the Buddha from verse 327 of the *Dhammapada:*

> There's no *jhna* for one with no insight,
> no insight for one with no *jhna*.
> As for him with both *jhna* and insight,
> he is near enlightenment.[14]

Thanissaro Bhikkhu makes this clear in his own words as well: "When they depict the Buddha telling his disciples to go meditate, they never quote him as saying 'go do vipassana,' but always 'go do jhana.'"[15] Other teachers make much the same point: Snyder and Rasmussen, responding to the question of whether it is necessary to cultivate the *jhnas,* say, "For us, the answer lies in the practice of the Buddha himself. If he is our role model, should we not follow the path that he not only taught but personally practiced throughout his life, even at the moment of death?" (Snyder and Rasmussen 2009, 129). Ayya Khema says, writing around 1996, "In Asia too, as well as in the United States and in Australia, only my students and two other teachers even speak of the absorptions at all. But these absorptions are the real meditation" (Khema 1997b, 199). And this chapter began with Ajaan Brahm's statement that *jhna* is what Buddhist meditation is all about.

It could seem that such arguments for *jhna* cultivation push enlightenment farther away, since one must now strive for rarified and difficult-to-achieve states of consciousness, instead of simply turning to insight practice using regular consciousness as the starting point. But these teachers argue that, in fact, cultivating the *jhnas* may be the missing component that would allow for speedier enlightenment. Gunaratana and Brahm, for instance, both mention the fact that at the end of the *Satipahna Sutta* (MN 10; also see DN 22), the Buddha mentions that a person who follows properly the four foundations of mindfulness (body, feelings, mind, and mental contents) will attain enlightenment in as little as seven days. In recognition of the fact that this is not a schedule to which many successfully adhere, Brahm says, "Many Buddhists, monastic and lay, have completed many meditation retreats lasting longer than seven days and remain unenlightened. Please do not blame the Buddha!" (Brahm 2006, 104). He explains that what has been missing from a proper observance of the foundations of mindfulness is the purified and focused mind that emerges from *jhna* practice. This argument elevates the status of the *jhnas* by presenting them as vital to reach enlightenment (cf. Catherine 2008, xii; Gunaratana 2009b, 65).

To recapitulate the reasons for the appeal of the *jhnas* so far, we can see that personal experience can drive interest, the influence of authoritative lineages and teachers, and a desire to adhere more closely to what is perceived as the much more pronounced valuation of the *jhnas* in the canonical texts than previously acknowledged. And we have, too, a sense that the *jhnas* are practically useful in order to "turbo-charge"—to use Brasington's expression (Brasington 2007, 6)—progress toward enlightenment, even in as little as seven days. And, if difficult, this adds a sense of status. These are all, I think, important reasons for the rise in the prominence of the *jhnas,* but would they be enough to fuel a sustained interest? To convince publishers to release so many books, to fill *jhna* retreats? As important as they are, I think we also need to look beyond these reasons, which emerge largely from the top-down vantage point of individual teachers and practitioners embedded within the Theravada tradition, to what makes these arguments for the *jhnas* resonate within the American cultural context.

Recall that Ayya Khema said part of her motivation for seeking the formless absorptions was, quite simply, boredom. This touches upon another, and I think key, reason for the growing popularity of the *jhnas:* the more overt pursuit of this-worldly happiness. Of course, dry insight meditation offers happiness as its ultimate goal as well, but the direct cultivation of states of bliss are not part of the process. Indeed, to "bliss out" is something of a pejorative in *vipassan* circles, implying that one is wallowing self-indulgently in ephemeral states rather than focusing on the goal of self-knowledge. Nyanaponika, who in his influential *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* advocates the Mahasi method, says, "In taking up this practice, one should not expect 'mystical experiences' or cheap emotional satisfaction" (Nyanaponika 1996, 88).

But with the emphasis on the *jhnas* comes an emphasis on feeling good. Given the previous passages, it is perhaps no surprise that the most blatant proponent of the inherent good in the bliss of the *jhnas* is Ajaan

Brahm: “Do not fear delight in meditation. Happiness in meditation is important! Moreover, you deserve to bliss out. Blissing out on the breath is an essential part of the path” (Brahm 2006, 132). This is an argument that one pursues bliss for its own sake. After all, the Buddha is said to have sanctioned their enjoyment, and the teachers do stress the immediate benefits of such pleasures. Brahm quotes the Buddha thinking, “Why am I afraid of the pleasure which has nothing to do with the five senses nor with unwholesome things? I will not be afraid of that pleasure [of jhna]!” (Brahm 2006, 130).[16] Ayya Khema even hazarded the guess in a public talk that the reason so many Western monastics eventually disrobe is that they do not have the pleasure of the *jhnas* to offset the rigors of renunciation. Gunaratana notes the incredible joy and peace in daily life (Gunaratana 2009a, 19); the lay teacher Christina Feldman says the *jhnas* are good in and of themselves (Feldman 2004, 73); and Shaila Catherine states that “jhanas are states of deep rest, healing rejuvenation, and profound comfort” (Catherine 2008, xii). In the many comments made about the wholesomeness of the *jhnas*, what comes to the fore is an emphasis on a positive and healthful *experience*. This is how Snyder and Rasmussen describe the effect of the *jhnas*: “After *jhna* has ended, there remains a deeply felt peace. In our experience, the purified personal sense of consciousness merges into unobstructed, impersonal, universal consciousness” (Snyder and Rasmussen 2009, 72). Snyder and Rasmussen do not suggest that this is the end goal of Buddhist practice, but their book ends with such states. The overall “sell” of the *jhnas* by all these teachers is such that, at the very least, the impetus to practice is not predicated only on something past the jhnic experience. While it may be true the *jhnas* hasten enlightenment as the Buddha promised, the *jhnas* are presented as complete in themselves and very powerful.

This appeal to transcendent states is a powerful draw, because it taps into an emphasis on religion as, fundamentally, about an individual’s affective experience.[17] Influenced by Friedrich Schleiermacher, William James, Rudolph Otto, and others, Westerners frequently assume a personal, powerful experience of some sort as the heart and soul of religion. Thanks to the influence of Romanticism, many believe such an experience culminates in feelings of unity and interconnection beyond the individual ego in something like the “universal consciousness” mentioned by Snyder and Rasmussen.[18]

Thanissaro Bhikkhu, although an advocate for *jhna* practice, resists an assumption that meditation, whether dry insight or *jhna*, is intrinsically defined by a sense of universal oneness. In his article “The Roots of Buddhist Romanticism,” he argues that the discipline of psychology has helped to carry into Buddhism currents of Romanticism that present personal integration within an interconnected flux of reality as the overall objective of self-cultivation. Meditation in such a view becomes a therapeutic process, a matter of healthy self-adjustment through a sense of oneness amid daily life rather than the pursuit of world transcendence.[19] Thanissaro points out how much this assumption diverges from the stated goals of the Buddhist texts, and his trenchant critique calls our attention to cultural factors in America that create an elective affinity with the *jhnas*, even as they reorient their overall purpose. But, while accepting the importance of the Romantic strain in American Buddhism, such an affinity suggests that we can understand the appeal of the *jhnas* more fully if we look beyond the influence of Romanticism to the nature of the American religious sensibility.

Catherine Albanese has identified three strands in American religious life: the evangelical, the communal, and the metaphysical. The metaphysical strand of religious life is relevant here, for it is the American form of religiosity that emphasizes the mind and a belief in the mind’s “magical” ability to affect the material world (Albanese 2007, 6–7). This strand has four qualities: a preoccupation with the mind and its powers, a predisposition toward microcosmic-macrocosmic correspondences, thinking in terms of movement and energy, and—to quote Albanese—a “yearning for salvation understood as solace, comfort, therapy, and healing” (Albanese 2007, 15). These qualities resonate with the ways in which the *jhnas* are presented. Jhnic meditation obviously concerns the mind, yet it also trades upon a correspondence between mental and cosmological states (think of the immaterial sphere of infinite consciousness), states that have literal correspondences to realms of being in traditional Theravada cosmology. Such realms are seen as in flux, too, driven on by karmic energy. And as we have noted, many teachers stress the *jhnas* as a powerful means to well-being.

One aspect of the cultivation of the *jhnas* that is relatively neglected in Western discussions of the practice is morality (*sla*). Its fairly cursory treatment throws into sharper relief the emphasis on experience, pleasure, and healing. For instance, morality usually receives only brief treatment at the start of books on

the *jhnas*, and the authors present it as a preliminary requirement rather than an end goal. Yet for most Theravada Buddhists in the world, moral practice—whether donating to monks and nuns, building religious edifices, following the precepts, or visiting sacred sites—is the cornerstone of the religious life. Carrithers reported, for instance, that even Sri Lankan forest monks famous for their meditative prowess absolutely rejected his suggestion that meditation was more important than practices of morality (Carrithers 1983, 20). The authors and teachers I have mentioned certainly do not reject moral practices. In fact, they all teach that proper concentration emerges only out of a moral life. Still, their principle ways of teaching the *jhnas*—through books and articles focused almost exclusively on technique and through retreats outside of the traditional moral milieu of the monastery—means that moral practices receive relatively little attention.

The fairly loose connection between practice and a moral system also feeds into the appeal of the *jhnas* as religious experiences that cross sectarian lines. An open-ended, even diffuse approach to morality attracts practitioners who identify with another religious tradition, have an aversion to any teaching of exclusivity, or who view Buddhism as a pragmatic, therapeutic tool of mind that can be freed of any cultural baggage. And teachers of the *jhnas* find support for the argument that the *jhnas* are not exclusively Buddhist in the Buddhist texts themselves. Many note that the Buddha learned concentrative techniques from two teachers (ra Klma and Uddaka Rmaputta) prior to his enlightenment. Furthermore, they point out that the Buddha-to-be spontaneously fell into the first *jhna* as a child (mentioned by the Buddha in MN 36). From this they extrapolate to the idea that the *jhnas* are non-Buddhist, universal experiences. Snyder and Rasmussen say, "The story of the *jhnas* is a long one, so ancient that it predates written history and even Buddhism itself " (Snyder and Rasmussen 2009, 2). The report on the 2001 conference on the *jhnas*, organized by Leigh Brasington, noted that a retreat center manager observed that the *jhnas* were "familiar territory" to many religious practitioners.[20] In her autobiography, Ayya Khema relates the *jhnas* specifically to the Christian tradition: "Especially Teresa [of Ávila]'s instructions to her nuns in her book *The Interior Castle* made a particular impression on me, for there she describes the meditative absorptions that I teach also—only in her own personal way and connected with visions shaped by Christianity" (Khema 1997b, 193).

A sense of the *jhnas* as an objective experience outside of a particular belief system may account for the interest in relating these states to research on the mind, too. Brasington, for instance, mentions in an interview that research suggests (and he has participated in this research, even meditating inside an fMRI machine) that each jhnic state can be clearly differentiated on brain scans.[21] Brahm, too, mentions scientific studies of the brain at a number of points in his book. References to such research frames meditative experiences as objective events that lie outside any particular religious system.[22]

For insight-focused teachers, the fact that the *jhnas* are not intrinsically Buddhist is a reason to relegate them to minimal preparatory exercises or not to teach them at all. The opposite is true for *jhna* advocates. Both groups agree broadly on the *jhnas'* relationship to insight practices, yet they value the cultivation of these two aspects of meditation differently.[23] Ajaan Brahm diverges from my other sources—and so far as I know from most meditation teachers in Theravada traditions—in arguing that the *jhnas* are, in fact, a specific discovery of the Buddha and not part of a general mystical heritage (Brahm 2006, 127–130). Interestingly, Brahm's view is in accord with some recent scholarship in Buddhist studies, which has argued that the *jhnas* are the original core of Buddhist meditation (cf. Bronkhorst 1986; Vetter 1988). But whatever the original status of the *jhnas*, works that have contributed to the recent positive attention paid to these concentrative states tend to stress their objective accessibility. This aspect of their presentation underscores their fit within American culture's stress on individual experience and the healing powers of the mind.

By connecting the *jhnas* to currents in American religiosity, I do not mean to suggest that the *jhnas* are only popular here in the United States, for they are present in Asia and elsewhere. And we have seen that teachers can find ample textual legitimation in the canonical and paracanonical sources for their celebration of the *jhnas* as acceptable pleasures. But the fit between jhnic states and a strong strand in American religious history toward personal experience that "means healing and therapy" and an ecumenical outlook can help to explain their appeal here (Albanese 2007, 15). This is particularly true for

so-called convert Buddhists or sympathizers, who are likely to be indebted to the metaphysical strain of the American religious sensibility to a much greater degree than those with stronger roots in longstanding Asian forms of Theravada Buddhism.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RISE OF *JHNA* PRACTICE FOR MODERN BUDDHISM

The reasons for the popularity of the *jhnas*—personal experience, lineages of practice, teacher charisma, textual demands, and American cultural influence—complicate our understanding of the trajectories of Buddhism's development in a globalizing age, for their rise calls our attention to how a form of Buddhism can change in ways that make it appear to go back as much as forward in terms of processes of modernization. The possibility of such seemingly retrograde, nonlinear movement undercuts the assumption of any enduring pattern of development among Buddhist groups.

Typically modernist features (particularly a focus on individual experience, a lack of ritual or elaborate moral injunctions, and a sense of ecumenical connections across religions) drive much of the appeal of concentrative practices. Yet the presentations of the *jhnas* by modern teachers often contain many apparently traditional elements. For instance, many of the teachers of *jhnas* advocate a literal understanding of karma and cosmology. Ajaan Brahm in his book discusses his own and his students' recollections of past lives gained through *jhna* meditation. Snyder and Rasmussen have also recounted in interviews how turning to insight after the *jhnas* can enable a meditator to see his or her future lives leading up to enlightenment.[24] Gunaratana discusses how jhnic accomplishment leads to an awareness of rebirth.[25] And Ayya Khema mentions how she invites celestial beings to meditate and that "some of them are happy and willing to listen to the Dhamma and meditate with us."[26] To be sure, some teachers, such as Catherine and Brasington, present the *jhnas* with very little reference to karma, rebirth, or other realms of existence. Nevertheless, and accepting that a part of the *jhnas'* appeal is their purported accessibility across religious boundaries, their practice has demanded more fealty, not less, to Buddhist sources. This fealty brings in train, implicitly if not explicitly, intricate correspondences to cosmological realms and teachings of rebirth that are not easily extricable from the logic of jhnic cultivation.

Such developments among white "convert" Buddhists and sympathizers remind us that forms of Buddhism do not follow a single or simple process of modernization or rationalization but are, in fact, distinctive cultural formulations that can become—at least from the perspective we have now—*more* traditional in certain ways. This is not to say that *jhna* practitioners in America are actually becoming more traditional. It is important to remember that the label "traditional" is not a neutral term but a way to separate beliefs or practices seen as somehow poised for the future (and so "modern") from those judged to be aligned with (and ultimately consigned to) the past. Thus, it is only from a perspective that has set the parameters for modern Buddhism in a certain way that the *jhnas* appear traditional. In fact, as the reasons we have explored for the *jhnas*' popularity show, the cosmological elements that frequently crop up in discussions of them do not signal a retreat from modernity but the development of a new variety of modern Buddhism.

The *jhnas*' rise in America points to the fact that changes in forms of Buddhism will depend in part on the specific contexts in which they are engaged. So, in a sense this is an argument for a particular Buddhism within the borders of America. Certainly, some of the reasons for the success of the *jhnas*, especially their "metaphysical" features, are rooted in American culture. But, at the same time, we should remember that as much as the demands of contemporary culture drive religious change, such demands only make sense and are articulated in particular ways that depend on continuities of belief and practice across borders in a globalized context. This complex situation points to the power of a past shaped both by sources within and sources beyond the borders of American culture. This is not a conception of the past as some static tradition but rather, to use an economic term, as a "path dependency," the culmination of prior choices and emphases that determines a range of potential innovations (Kaviraj 2005, 516).

It is in light of this situation that we can return to the issue mentioned at the start of this chapter about what counts as modern Buddhism in America. The practice of the *jhnas* among modernist Buddhists destabilizes a clear trajectory for Buddhist development. Martin Baumann has argued that a new period of Buddhist history is emerging from modernist Buddhism, one that is postmodern or "global." A defining characteristic of this period is the fact that many Western practitioners are secularizing and psychologizing

Buddhist teachings to such an extent that they may jettison Buddhism altogether (Baumann 2001, 32). In doing so, these folks would be the vanguard of a movement of post-Buddhist practitioners. Baumann's description of this trend strikes me as accurate. But the whole story of Buddhism's development, even among modernist "convert" meditators, is unlikely to follow such a linear periodization (if it ever has). The growing popularity of *jhna* meditation suggests that radical secularization is only one of a number of possibilities, for the *jhnas* tend to promote a vision of practice that actually demands a greater commitment to Buddhist teachings and modes of practice.[27] As I have noted, calm and concentration meditation calls up Buddhist cosmologies, and teachers often frame such meditation in karmic terms rooted in a deep engagement with Buddhist texts of all sorts. These facts suggest that the growth of the *jhnas*, while clearly a modern development, might inspire a sort of return to tradition, too.

NOTES

1. In 2001, Leigh Brasington organized the first conference in America specifically on the *jhnas. Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* had a special section on the *jhnas* in its Winter 2004 issue, and *Buddhadharma: The Practitioner's Quarterly* had an article on the *jhnas* in its Winter 2009 issue. Thanissaro Bhikkhu has published a number of works—both on the Internet and in print—that include the teaching of the *jhnas.* Finally, a number of books have been published that deal specifically with cultivating the *jhnas*, such as Ayya Khema's *When the Iron Eagle Flies* (1991), Ajaan Brahm's *Mindfulness, Bliss, and Beyond* (2006), Shaila Catherine's *Focused and Fearless* (2008), Richard Shankman's *The Experience of Samadhi* (2008), Gunaratana's *Beyond Mindfulness in Plain English* (2009a), and Stephen Snyder and Tina Rasmussen's *Practicing the Jhnas* (2009).
2. Snyder and Rasmussen got this term from a participant in a *jhna* retreat. This interview is available at "The Jedi Mind Training of Concentration," http://www.buddhistgeeks.com/2010/02/bg-160-the-jedi-mind-training-of-concentration (retrieved February 27, 2010).
3. I follow here Wendy Cadge's definition of Theravada Buddhism: "Rather than viewing Theravada Buddhism as a coherent system, I imagine it and all religions as collections of teachings, institutions, people, and practices that are gathered in various combinations by people who want to understand or practice the tradition" (Cadge 2005, 11). For the history of the use of the term "Theravada," which has a relatively recent provenance, see Skilling (2009).
4. They are often called "convert" Buddhists, since they typically come to Buddhism by choice in adulthood, as opposed to "immigrant" or "cradle" Buddhists born to Buddhism. This is not to say that all convert Buddhists are white or well off, or that cradle Buddhists are not interested in meditation. The use of these categories here serves the heuristic purpose of describing a broad demographic distinction at present, but these terms have received much critical reflection and critique as enduring divisions (see Fronsdal 1998, 178; Numrich 2003; Seager 2002, 116ff.; and Tweed 2002, 22).
5. Buddhaghosa contrasts the procedures in regard to doing both practices or only insight in the chapter on the purification of view (*dihivisuddhiniddesa*) (see Ñamoli 1999, 605–616).
6. Division into eight is standard, though canonical and postcanonical sources have fourfold, fivefold, and ninefold classification schemes as well (Griffiths 1981, 620n3).
7. Jack Kornfield, Joseph Goldstein, and Sharon Salzberg were among the first American "reverse messengers" (to use Wendy Cadge's expression) who brought Theravada meditation to America in the 1970s. Together they founded the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts, which has served as the home base and training center for many subsequent teachers of meditation (Fronsdal 1998, 165–166).
8. There is, however, an awareness of the *jhnas* among Mahasi-style teachers. In fact, they understand that a certain form of jhnic awareness will arise from their method. But this sort of *jhna*, termed *vipassan jhna,* comes after progress in insight and does not have the absorptive qualities of initial *jhna* practice (see Pandita 1993).
9. For the justification of the Mahasi method based merely on "momentary concentration" (*kha ikasamdhi*), see Cousins (1996).
10. As many of the revivalists of *jhna* I will discuss in a moment point out, the canonical texts often stress the importance of the *jhnas.* It is too technical an issue to explore here exactly how Mahasi teachers

justify skipping the *jhnas*—in fact, most American teachers seem unaware of any need for justification or do not care—but the Mahasi Sayadaw and his Burmese disciples have provided a sophisticated argument, rooted in textual analysis, for doing so (see Cousins 1996).

11. "Bhante Gunaratana (16) How he learned meditation," http://www.veoh.com/watch/v744926AtNTcz8f.
12. For a discussion of this phenomenon of reading descriptions of experience where perhaps there was only scholastic analysis, see Sharf (1995a and 1998). For a qualification of Sharf 's view that Buddhism had no category of experience before influence from the West, see Gyatso (1999).
13. http://www.youtube.com/stephnashmeditation0#p/c/8D7C8C5B06209E4B (retrieved February 26, 2010). See also Brasington (2007, 4).
14. Natthi jhna apaññassa, paññ natthi ajhyato; Yamhi jhnañca paññ ca, sa ve nibbnasantike (http://www.tipitaka.org/romn, retrieved February 22, 2010). For quotes of these verses, see, for example, Brahm (2006, 172) and Gunaratana (2009a, 14).
15. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "One Tool among Many: The Place of Vipassana in Buddhist Practice," http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/onetool.html (retrieved February 26, 2010).
16. Brahm (2006, 130). The bracketed words are in the original. The Buddha also talks about the good of indulging in the pleasure of *jhnas* in DN 29, the *Psdika Sutta.*
17. Robert Sharf has pointed out the centrality of the category of experience, both for academics and believers: "Many lay adherents feel that the only *authentic* form of worship or scriptural study is one that leads to a personal experience of its 'inner truth'" (Sharf 1998, 94).
18. Sharf (1995a). See Carrithers (1983, 26–46) for an analysis of the strong influence of German Romanticism on the German-born monk Nyanatiloka.
19. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "The Roots of Buddhist Romanticism," http://www.purifymind.com/BuddhistRomanticism.htm (retrieved February 27, 2010).
20. Lloyd Burton, "Gathering Fruit and Planting Seeds: The First Western Conference on Jhana Practice in Theravada Buddhism," http://www.leighb.com/jhnarptleb.htm (retrieved February 28, 2010).
21. "Brain Study on Jhanas—Leigh Brasington with Stephanie Nash," http://www.youtube.com/stephnashmeditation0#p/c/8D7C8C5B06209E4B/4/5rMj4_CrFpU (retrieved February 28, 2010).
22. There are many sources on this topic. See Lopez (2008).
23. *Jhna*-friendly teachers have tended toward an argument that the *jhnas* and insight practices form one singular path. See, for instance, Gunaratana (2009a, vii). See also Richard Shankman's interview with Jack Kornfield (Shankman 2008, 107–116). This brings up the apparent longstanding tension in Theravada Buddhism between ascetic and absorptive means of liberation versus those that are more cognitive. Griffiths (1981) articulates this tension clearly.
24. "The Jedi Mind Training of Concentration," http://www.buddhistgeeks.com/2010/02/bg-160-the-jedi-mind-training-of-concentration (retrieved February 27, 2010).
25. For example, describing stream-entry, he says, "Knowing that there is birth before and after death, fear arises" (Gunaratana 2009a, 185).
26. Brahm (2006, 185–188); the interview in which Snyder and Rasmussen discuss seeing future lives is available at http://personallifemedia.com/podcasts/236-buddhist-geeks/episodes/81591-jedimind-training (retrieved February 27, 2010); Ayya Khema (1997a, 9).
27. Brasington, for instance, requires students who come to his *jhna* retreats to have completed at least two seven-day retreats. And his *jhna* retreats last two weeks to a month.

ELEVEN

Buddhism and Multiple Modernities

DAVID L. MCMAHAN

Scholars in recent decades have paid increasing attention to the ways in which Buddhist individuals, groups, and institutions have responded to, adapted to, and engaged with modernity. Most of these studies, including my own, have relied on largely Western conceptions and manifestations of modernity. Such studies have yielded and elaborated the concepts of Protestant Buddhism, modern Buddhism, and Buddhist modernism to refer to Buddhisms that have been significantly shaped by their engagement with the discourses, institutions, and practices of Western modernity. Studies of the early development of this phenomenon have shown how deeply Buddhists, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, adopted the discourses of Western modernity and translated the Dharma into modernist vocabularies effectively creating a new genre of Buddhist literature, new idioms of Buddhist practice, and new kinds of Buddhist institutions. I suggest that, especially when addressing contemporary forms of Buddhism and their engagement with modernity, there is increasingly a need to expand our conceptions of modernity itself, and that the recent paradigm of multiple modernities put forth by Shmuel Eisenstadt, Charles Taylor, and others is promising in this regard (see Eisenstadt 2002; Gaonkar 2001; Taylor 2001).

The "classical" sociological theories of modernity offered by Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and their successors all saw modernity as entailing progressive economic growth, industrialization, rationalization, urbanization, standardization, structural differentiation, and secularization. According to these theorists, modernity inevitably fosters a naturalistic outlook and tends to erode religious life, metaphysical thinking, and supernaturalism. In Weber's famous formulation, it contributes to secularization and disenchantment of the world, replacing a world alive with magic and spiritual meaning with a mechanized worldview, its natural rhythms replaced by the routines of factories and capitalist bureaucracies. At the same time, it erodes social and family structure, fragmenting local communities with the demands of mobility. Social theorists of the twentieth century assumed that modernity characterized by these features would inevitably spread from its origins in Europe throughout the world in a uniform and predictable manner, inexorably replacing local cultures with homogeneous modern systems of social organization and economies and with a rationalized, disenchanted, secularized worldview.

Empirical research and theoretical developments in recent decades cast doubt on this picture of a singular, uniform modernity. Many studies suggest that as the forces of Western modernity infuse themselves into a wide variety of cultural contexts, they are not simply passively adopted, nor are aspects of culture affected by Western modernity merely displaced by it. Rather, different communities, nations, and religious groups selectively adopt and adapt elements of Western modernity, combining them in unique ways with local concepts and practices. True, many indigenous cultures face threats to their very existence from the seemingly inexorable forces of now globalizing modernity. However, many very modern and modernizing societies do not, in fact, resemble Western Europe or the United States in morals, media, government, and attitudes toward science; rather, they have taken up these features of modernity in unique ways determined by their own preexisting social formations. And in contrast to the predictions of the decline of religion, many societies are experiencing religious revivals and attempting to engage religion directly with modernist ideas and practices or using religion to resist elements of Western modernity.

There are, in effect, multiple modernities: ways of being modern that creatively blend elements of indigenous cultures with the globalizing forces of modernity. European and American versions of modernity, though they enjoy historical precedence, turn out to be just that: particular versions among others. Various Asian cultures today employ indigenous cultural resources as tools for asserting their own

unique forms of modernity; thus, some sociologists today resort to terms like “Asian modernity” or “Chinese modernity.” They have analyzed, for example, how Confucian values are implicit in East Asian practices of capitalism or how Southeast Asian countries have become economically modernized without widespread secularization taking place as it has in Western Europe. Examples of unique configurations of phenomena commonly associated with the “modern” proliferate, as well, in the Islamic world and the global South. Modernity and Westernization, in short, are not identical.

This thesis seems clearly relevant to Buddhist studies and the issue of Buddhist modernism. I would suggest that, while in the early phases of the Buddhist engagement with modernity—the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—reformist Buddhists vigorously attempted to translate Buddhism into the discourses of Western modernity and were willing to jettison large swaths of Buddhist thought, practice, and culture in order to modernize in Western terms, more recently there are more complex intertwinings of Buddhism and modernity that require a more pluralistic conception of modernity.

The early phases of Buddhist modernism relied heavily on conformity to Western modernity. Early modernists liberally translated Buddhist thought into the languages of scientific rationalism, Romanticism, transcendentalism, Protestant Christianity, and (a bit later) Western psychology. These discourses set the terms by which Buddhism would become a serious option for Westerners, as well as for many Asians educated in European systems. Even when Buddhists resisted Western colonialism and political and ideological hegemony, they often did so by adopting many of the West’s categories and concepts, using them to express—and thereby transform—aspects of Buddhism. Advocates emphasized Buddhism’s rationality and compatibility with science, often in contrast to Christianity. And yet they also offered critiques of narrow scientism by means of vocabulary borrowed from Romanticism and transcendentalism, with their critiques of mechanistic views of the cosmos, their celebration of nature, their organismic cosmology, and their insistence on the importance of interior exploration of the depths of the psyche.[1]

In this way, Buddhist modernism took up what might be considered the fundamental dynamic tension in the West between the rationalist and Romantic, infusing itself into this tension and attempting to resolve it, carrying forward the rational, scientific enterprise while at the same time tempering it with interior exploration and an emphasis on creativity. Thus one might conclude that it was unfolding according to a Weberian logic with a twist, fostering the rational while offering new ways toward the reenchantment of the world. Since it took up this tension between two Western discourses, defined itself by them, Buddhist modernism might well have been interpreted in this early phase as confirming monocultural theories of modernity that predicted the large-scale transformation of societies on the model of modern European culture.

If we look at Buddhism across the globe today, however, such theories seem problematic. There are, in fact, elements of Western modernity that have embedded themselves firmly in at least the Buddhism of the elites around the world, but even these elements lend themselves to a wide variety of inflections based on combinations of social, cultural, and political factors unique to different communities. In recent decades the transformation of various Buddhisms has accelerated, as formerly isolated forms have gone global, while global influences flow into virtually every local Buddhist culture, creating unique creoles and hybrids. This interfusion proceeds at an ever more rapid pace occasioned by migration, media, state influences, and political contingencies. With this increasing hybridity comes more diversity, more creative blendings of Asian and Western, and, though Western elements remain, there is less of a feeling of obligation to articulate Buddhism wholly on the West’s terms and capitulate to all of the axioms of Western modernity.

The modernizing of Buddhism has not produced the uniformity that early modernizers might have imagined. When we think of contemporary iterations of Buddhist modernism, we tend to think of direct descendants of these early modernist reform movements, that is, a network of transnational, trans-sectarian, cosmopolitan Buddhisms that are global, deterritorialized, largely demythologized, articulated in the vocabularies of modernity, often meditation centered, and catering mostly to the educated middle class around the world. Consider, however, the existence of counter-cosmopolitan movements, such as the rather ethnocentric nationalist versions of Buddhism in Sri Lanka based on (re)creating a Sinhala Buddhist nation. This Buddhism fiercely criticizes globalization and international influence as corrupting, emphasizes “tradition” (which, of course, is a modern reinvention of tradition constructed as an antithesis to these forces), and, although it rhetorically resists globalization and international influences, it

depends on them, especially on its technology: messages are distributed through television and the Internet. It also relies heavily on modernist interpretations of Buddhism as scientific and eschews "superstition" and many popular practices. The threat of colonialism in this movement has been replaced by the perceived threat of various "others": NGOs, human rights organizations, greedy businessmen, Christian missionaries, among others (Berkwitz 2008).

Moreover, not all intertwinings of modernity and Buddhism involve the negation of classical cosmology, "superstition," and the "supernatural," as was predicted by the classical equation of modernization with secularization. Consider, for example, the lucrative religious talisman trade in Thailand, in which various sacred objects thought to confer protection—amulets, buddha images, votive tablets—are blessed by monks and sold to the faithful. Although the practice of icon reverence is an ancient one in most Buddhist cultures, this particular form in Thailand is inseparable from the modern commercial forces of globalized capitalism. The trade in sacred material objects has immense commercial significance, according to some reports generating commerce comparable to that of real estate (Swearer 2003, 16). Stanley Tambiah (1987) argues that the flourishing (though not the origin) of this cult of amulets is a response to the rapid destabilization of Thai society by modern economic and political forces, which have produced great uncertainty in many lives and fostered an *increased* tendency to rely on the supernatural. The popularity of amulets, therefore, represents a kind of return to not-so-modern practice fueled by some of the distinctive forces of modernity.

Even contemporary articulations of Buddhism that rely on the staples of Buddhist modernism take on divergent significance in different cultures. I would like to offer a more elaborated example of how one of these staples is articulated and deployed differently in different communities in ways that suggest distinctive modernities. The theme is the compatibility of Buddhism and science. I don't intend to evaluate this claim[2] but, rather, to examine briefly how three different intersecting communities understand and employ it in different ways, thus illustrating how a single modernist theme can be refracted in varying hues in different cultural and political contexts. These different contexts are: first, the American and European educated class; second, the Tibetan community in exile; and third, the People's Republic of China.

The attempt to establish a correlation between Buddhism and science began in the nineteenth century. Early translators of Pali texts, notably Eugène Burnouf and Thomas and Caroline Rhys Davids, saw the "core" of Buddhism as a rational, psychological, and ethical philosophy, with the more "religious" elements being secondary cultural accretions (Burnouf 2010; T. Rhys Davids 1882; C. Rhys Davids 1912). Buddhist leaders and reformers in Asia appropriated this interpretation as well, both in attempts to revitalize Buddhism in their own countries and to represent it to the West. Buddhist representatives to the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893, for example, presented a Buddhism shorn of ritual, mythical cosmology, and supernatural agents. Both Anagrika Dharmapla, of Ceylon, and Sen Shaku, of Japan, highlighted and reinterpreted Buddhist doctrines of karma and the arising of things through causes and conditions in ways that appeared to render them compatible with modern evolutionary theory, scientific causality, and Western conceptions of natural law (Dharmapla 1965; Sen 1993). The perception of Buddhism as a religion that might circumvent the problems that Christianity faced in the age of Darwin, positivism, and widespread questioning of faith was compelling to many liberal North Americans and Europeans. Indeed German American author and publisher Paul Carus was so enthused by the idea of the compatibility of Buddhism and science that he published a number of books insisting on Buddhism as the quintessential exemplar of the "Religion of Science" that would grow and flourish in the new era. Buddhism, he claimed, "is a religion which knows of no supernatural revelation, and proclaims doctrines that require no other argument than the 'come and see.'" It is, he insisted, "a religion which recognizes no other revelation except the truth that can be proved by science" (1897, 114). The early Buddhist sympathizer C. T. Strauss likewise claimed that "genuine Buddhism is the reverse of mystical, rejects miracles, is founded on reality, and refuses to speculate about the absolute and other so-called first causes" (1922, 105). Moreover, he said, it deems prayers, rituals, and ceremonies as "not only useless but a hindrance to spiritual advancement" (53–54). On this interpretation, the Dharma of the Buddha was utterly distinct from the rituals, celebrations, image veneration, and attempts to control spirits common in the popular Buddhism that Westerners often found in lands they colonized.[3]

By the mid-twentieth century, the rhetorical alliance of science and Buddhism had shifted somewhat from the notion of Buddhism as broadly compatible with modern science to the idea that it was itself a

kind of science. The German-born Theravada monk Nyanaponika Thera (born Siegmund Feniger, 1901–1994), in 1954, wrote of Buddhist meditation as a "science of mind" and presented the method of "bare attention" as essentially the same as that of the scientist: "unprejudiced receptivity" to things, reduction of the subjective element in judgment, and "deferring judgment until a careful examination of the facts has been made." This, he claimed, is the "genuine spirit of the research worker" (Nyanaponika 1996, 42). Henceforth, the characterization of Buddhist meditation as an "internal science" has become quite common among Buddhists in both Asia and the West. B. Alan Wallace, for example, insists that Buddhism offers methods for discerning empirical truths about the mind and the world and that these discoveries are subject to a kind of "peer review" among expert meditators (Wallace 2003).

The attempt to ally Buddhism and science is more vigorous and sophisticated now than ever and is currently the province of neuroscientists in some of the most prestigious universities in the United States. These researchers have been employing the most advanced brain-imaging technology and using as their subjects experienced meditators, some of whom have spent years perfecting their vocation. The subjects are hooked up to hundreds of electrodes or placed into functional magnetic resonance imagery (fMRI) machines so that scientists can attempt to observe what their brains are doing in various kinds of meditation. This research has yielded results suggesting various cognitive and health benefits of meditation and thus has garnered tremendous media coverage. It has increased the visibility and cultural cachet of Tibetan Buddhism, the members of which, in part due to the Dalai Lama's interest in the science of meditation, tend to be the most frequent collaborators.[4]

This kind of research occupies a particular place in the cultural milieu of the United States and the "West" more generally. It implicitly offers a secularized, deinstitutionalized view of meditation as something available to anyone, Buddhist and non-Buddhist—a kind of spiritual technology that can work independently of any institutional, dogmatic, authoritative, or religious affiliation. This is quite different from how meditation has usually been understood in Asian Buddhism, where, until the rise of twentieth-century lay-meditation movements, it has largely been the province of specialist monastics. In the new reenvisioning of meditation, this ostensibly central feature of Buddhism is seen as the most detachable from the institutional, cosmological, doctrinal features, not to mention those "superstitious" practices that most scientific researchers and consumers of such research see as having nothing to do with science (or, for that matter, Buddhism itself).

In the United States, the way such a polarity between "scientific" meditation and "superstitious" religious practice plays out is to make available Buddhist techniques to an educated and often relatively secularized segment of the public interested in health, self-cultivation, psychological therapy, and "spirituality" but usually decidedly uninterested in doing merit-making rituals, praying to deities, prostrating before images, and participating in the institutional dimensions of Buddhism. It also embodies a Protestant suspicion of clergy, authority, and religious institutions and sees meditation techniques as means to foster happiness, health, and creativity without the dogmas, rituals, and other "trappings" of religion. There are institutional implications to this characterization as well. Meditation must be presented as a secular therapy that can be studied and employed according to rigorous scientific protocol in order to receive funding, especially government funding, in public universities. The Buddhism that emerges in this context is modern in distinctively Western ways that treat science as the dominant discourse and yet offer Buddhism as a more humane "internal science."

The desire for such a science is deeply rooted in the Western discourses of modernity. The tension between Enlightenment conceptions of the world as a giant mechanism and the idealist and Romantic visions of the world as a spirit-infused organism have shaped an enduring ambivalence in the West about science. During the rise of Buddhist modernism in the Victorian age, the emergence of positivism and a general enthusiasm about empirical science and its potential to improve the lot of humankind was countered by the emergence of "occult science," Theosophy, and other spiritualist movements. These groups rebelled against the mechanistic and disenchanting tendencies of positivism while still attempting to embody a more expansive scientific approach that allowed for spirits and other planes of existence. Not coincidentally, these groups were pivotal in introducing Buddhism to the West. The unfolding of the twentieth century provided ample reasons for disillusionment with modern science, as the technologies of warfare and environmental destruction showed that scientific advancement, while undoubtedly improving humankind's lot in many ways, could also spell its demise. Countless machines have eased human

burdens, but others have enabled destruction on an unprecedented scale. Biological research has led to vaccines that have saved millions of lives but also portends frightening changes in the very structure of biological life itself, including human life. Thus the desire for an alternative science, free of nihilism, hubris, and destructive potential, is deeply embedded in the modern West, as is the dream of ancient wisdom from afar coming to rescue the West from its modern anomie, disenchantment, and self-destructiveness.

This secularization of meditation has also had significant effects not just on Buddhism but on various aspects of Western culture. It has become disembedded from the Buddhist tradition and rearticulated as a technique of self-investigation, awareness, personal satisfaction, and ethical reflection, taking on a life of its own in some cases altogether outside of Buddhist communities. Having attained the aura of a scientific—or at least scientifically testable—technique, psychologists and medical professionals have converted meditation into a therapeutic tool for addressing a wide variety of problems. It is now used for stress reduction, pain management, lowering blood pressure, and increasing focus among Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike, including people who don't even know they are doing something derived from Buddhism. Meditation and mindfulness are often presented as a "spiritual" rather than religious technique; something one can do as a Buddhist but also as a Christian, Jew, or agnostic. Moreover, this is not just a matter of Westerners appropriating a slice of Buddhism to their own ends. Many Asian Buddhists present meditation as separable from "Buddhism as a religion" and extol its scientifically proven benefits to both Buddhists and non-Buddhists.[5]

Let us now look at the stakes of such scientific experimentation and the publicity it garners from the perspective of the Tibetan diaspora community. Among Tibetans interested in studying meditation and Buddhism in scientific terms, there is surely a combination of motives. I take it as a given that scientific curiosity for its own sake and the genuine desire to share practices believed to be conducive to human flourishing and well-being, and perhaps investigating ways of refining these techniques, are factors in the enthusiasm the Dalai Lama and others have for these studies. No doubt Donald Lopez (2008) is correct in asserting that the Tibetan community also has a nationalistic stake here, as did Buddhists in colonized Ceylon over a century ago. Tibet as a nation within China is essentially helpless in securing its own autonomy. By promoting Buddhism as something akin to a benign, humanistic, and scientific enterprise, Tibetan Buddhism gains recognition and prestige among elites in countries that could bring pressure to bear on China to grant greater autonomy to Tibet. The deemphasizing of the nonscientific elements of Tibetan Buddhism and its reconstruction as a kind of scientific religion help this effort in that they tap into both the prestige of and the ambivalence toward science in Western culture, offering the hope that there can be a more humane science that produces enlightened beings rather than just increased technology, bombs, and environmental destruction.

Beyond this, the engagement of Tibetan Buddhists with scientific discourse is also one part of how Tibetans in exile refashion their tradition in the midst of their unique and rather abrupt confrontation with the divergent forces of modernity. Tibetan Buddhism did not follow the longer path of engagement with modernity begun in the nineteenth century in, for example, Ceylon and Japan but was thrust into the modern world through its colonization by China and the subsequent exile of hundreds of thousands of Tibetans. Thus, Tibetan Buddhist modernism indeed looks different than some of the rather radically demythologized versions inaugurated in the Victorian era. Tibetans are essentially negotiating new ways of being Buddhist and modern and blending the two in ways sometimes different from their Buddhist predecessors in other countries. Among some of the Tibetan diaspora in the West, such blendings take on a particular shape that tends to avoid presenting Tibetan Buddhism as a rich, polytheistic tradition full of rituals to honor and appease unseen beings, which much of the tradition on the ground, in fact, is. Rather, it tends to be presented as a "science of mind" or a spiritual technology. Deities are interpreted symbolically and translated into psychological archetypes or abstract "energies" that adepts can manipulate through advanced techniques of meditation, visualization, and concentration. Thus, Tibetans come to be seen in the West as, in Robert Thurman's words, "the quintessential scientists of nonmaterialist civilization" (1994, 110) who possess "sophisticated methods of software analysis and modification [that] can help with the individual's inner reprogramming" (1991, 64).

Thus, the bifurcation of the "rational" and "scientific" from what many in the West would consider "superstitious" serves a particular purpose here, too, one that overlaps with, but is not identical to, that of

Westerners interested in distinguishing the "spiritual" and "scientific" from the "religious" and "superstitious." For many Tibetans themselves, however, the engagement of Buddhism with science has in no way led them to embrace a secularized version of Buddhism like that often embraced by Western sympathizers. Most monasteries still follow the traditional curriculum developed over many centuries, perform rituals to honor and appease deities, and perform divinations to help determine the course of future plans. The discourse of Buddhism and science is in many respects peripheral to the lives of most Tibetan Buddhists, though it has potential to make greater and greater inroads as it continues to gain recognition and shape what people in the West understand by—and expect from—Buddhism.

Meanwhile, in the People's Republic of China (PRC), the modernist, scientific, secularized representation of Buddhism is deployed in yet another way, one that explicitly attempts to foil the interests of Tibetan independence while attempting to control the current revival of Buddhism in China. Let me illustrate this by way of an article from the government-controlled Xinhua News Agency, published March 30, 2009,[6] that reports on a conference in the Eastern Chinese city of Wuxi called the Second World Buddhist Forum that, according to the article, brought together over 1,700 Buddhist monks with scientists and business leaders. The main thrust of the article is not the talks given at the conference but rather a characterization of Buddhism that insists on its harmony with science and technology and its discouraging of "superstition." It says:

> It is acknowledged by both Buddhists and experts of social sciences that Buddha is a human being, but not a god, and everybody's destiny is in his own hand [sic], not in Buddha's.
>
> It is also a consensus that Buddhism does not worship superstition, or the enemy of science. On the contrary, it opposes superstition and stresses "cause and effect." In addition, Buddhism … supported science and technological development all along.
>
> "In my view, Buddhism is a religion of atheism and it is very rational," says a professor from the Institute for Science, Technology and Society at Tsinghua University.

The article also emphasizes that "Buddhism has never fought against science in [its] history" and notes that a number of Chinese monks themselves have been astronomers, mathematicians, and mechanical engineers. Modern monks, it also asserts, "enjoy the conveniences brought by science and technology—communicating [with] 'this world' via cell phones and promoting their doctrines via computers and [the] Internet." Buddhism is a form of knowledge, not a religion, insists a former president of the University of Science and Technology of China, and those who see Buddhism as "burning incense and praying" are straying from "its real spirit." This rational, scientific Buddhism is then explicitly connected with the nation. In building its "harmonious society," says the author of the article, China has been "rallying all positive forces" and "seeking wisdom and inspiration from its profound traditional culture."

Insofar as this is an article from a government-run news agency, we can assume that this is a kind of prescriptive map indicating the ways in which the current revival of Buddhism in China will be permitted to proceed. Tibetan Buddhism is explicitly absent in this description of rational, scientific Buddhism as part of "traditional Chinese culture" and "nation." In contrast to the representation of implicitly "Chinese" Buddhism as rational and scientific, representations in the news agency's paper, Internet site, and television channels portray Tibetans and other ethnic minorities in a very different light. The PRC is currently carrying out development projects in rural areas at a frenetic pace. The government hopes that tourism dollars will be one of the main sources of revenue for bringing roads, sanitation, natural gas, clean water, and television to these areas. Part of the campaign to lure tourists involves reversing the fear and suspicion of the dominant culture toward minorities, transforming it into the lure of the mysterious, sensual, and exotic charm of the primitive. It is a move that borrows liberally from Western orientalism, through which European representations exoticized "the East," depicting it as the irrational, primitive, feminine, sensual, mysterious Other to Western modernity, with its rationalism, masculinity, technology, and progress. This East/West picture from the nineteenth century has now been transposed onto Han and minority cultures in China, including that of Tibet. Billboards across rural freeways, pamphlets at tourist sites, and hotel magazines featuring local color all display attractive minority (nearly always) women dressed in their beautiful and ornate ceremonial garb, wild with colorful embroidery, silver ornaments, and

headdresses. A hotel magazine describes various minority cultures as “mysterious” and “exotic.” This packaging of ethnic minority culture is pervasive in southwestern and Tibetan areas.

And in contrast to the countless articles in the American press on Tibetan Buddhists as scientific explorers in fMRI machines, articles and documentaries on Tibet from Xinhua exclude Tibetan Buddhists from the rational and national Buddhism of the Han Chinese. Articles and news shows tend to focus on traditional Tibetan crafts, “folk art,” restored monasteries that have been transformed into museums, and the alleged Tibetan enthusiasm for the new technologies and higher standard of living. A special on China Central TV 9, the Englishlanguage channel, captures it well. It features an array of “traditional Tibetan folk music,” one act of which presents a group of singers in embellished versions of traditional Tibetan costumes. On the giant stage are huge pillars that seem to fuse Roman columns with Tibetan prayer wheels. Behind is an immense screen with a slow-moving succession of photos emblematic of Tibet—snow-peaked mountains, a yak in an open field, a sunbaked smiling farmer, and the Potala Palace (now safely transmuted from home of a god-king to tourist attraction). The singers intone Tibetan melodies to the lavish accompaniment of Western orchestral music. It resembles American musical theater with a Tibet theme. In between acts, the attractive young hostess of the show introduces the next example of “traditional Tibetan folk music,” a Tibetan pop group called Snow Lotus, with lithe young women in skimpy, midriff-baring versions of Tibetan dress, singing and shaking their hips to the chords of synthesizers and electronic drums. Lyrics, which flow in translation across the bottom of the screen, are uniformly banal: we are a simple, happy, strong people; the snowy mountains are all around; the beautiful flowers bloom; the sheep and yaks are in the pasture.

Clearly a picture of primitive tradition versus rationalistic modernity is being constructed here in relation to specific state interests. Chinese Buddhism, part of the great intellectual and scientific heritage of China, is the rational cultural resource in harmony with technology, development, atheism, and communism. Tibetan Buddhism and other minority religions are the exotic others within—the mysterious East within the East—displayed as cultural entertainment in order to promote development by, first, demonstrating the need to bring progress to backward peoples, and second, to bring the tourist dollars that are required for this development to the area. Their folkways, religions, and “superstitions” are translated from backward, threatening practices into charming bits of packaged exotica, not to mention erotica—the feminized, primitive other in opposition to the masculine rationality of the official self.

My point here is not to criticize the PRC government (though it richly deserves critique on this point) but to show how this rhetorical polarity of modern, rational, and scientific versus primitive, superstitious, and traditional fundamental to Buddhist modernism (indeed to modernity in general) has been deployed differently in different cultural and nationalistic contexts, suggesting the existence of different configurations of the modern within different communities. In the Chinese case, there is a single, overarching, and official modernity, and to the extent that Buddhism contributes and conforms to this configuration, it is welcome to help constitute it. Likewise scientists studying Buddhist meditators in university laboratories help constitute different understandings of Buddhist modernity, as well as what is essential and peripheral in Buddhism. And among the Tibetan diaspora struggling to gain global support for autonomy, the vision of scientific Buddhism presents a particular face to Western supporters and is also a point of negotiation within Tibetan Buddhism itself as it works out its own ways of combining modernity with received practice and belief. These three examples show the way a single theme perhaps central to the very concept of modernity is deployed in different configurations in order to help constitute different senses of what the modern is and how it relates to state, society, and individual. In this sense, they suggest not just differing interests but actually different versions of Buddhist modernity.

NOTES

1. For a more thoroughgoing analysis of the history of these developments, especially in the West, see McMahan (2008).
2. For diametrically opposed evaluations of this discourse, see Lopez (2008) and Wallace (2007).
3. For extended discussions of the development of this early Buddhist modernism, see Almond (1988), Lopez (2008), McMahan (2004, 2008), and Tweed (1992).
4. For an overview of this research see Lutz, Dunne, and Davidson (2007).

5. This should in no way be taken to imply that this secularized approach to Buddhist meditation exhausts the ways that it is understood and practiced in the United States. Even among distinctively modernist forms of Buddhism, there are in fact a number of different ways in which meditation is rhetorically and experimentally linked to science. The aforementioned should be understood as one general tendency.
6. See http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/30/content_11096669.htm.

TWELVE

Buddhist Modernism as Narrative

A Comparative Study of Jodo Shinshu and Zen

NATALIE E. F. QULI AND SCOTT A. MITCHELL

In this chapter, we argue that use of the category "Buddhist modernism" obscures the diversity of Buddhist traditions, which appropriate various modernist narratives selectively and produce significantly different modernities. To highlight the plurality of Buddhist modernities, we favor Taylor's cultural model—rather than the more Weberian acultural model—of modernity. By comparing American convert Zen to the Buddhist Churches of America (usually characterized as "modernist" and "traditional," respectively, in the literature), we demonstrate that both groups display characteristics associated with "modernism" and "tradition," though in different ways. We note that "Buddhist modernism" is a shorthand term for a rather substantial set of narratives (on science, democracy, nature, etc.) rather than an objective, easily delineated category; the term lacks a concise definition (Obadia 2006; see also Blackburn 2010, 212) and has come to include so many hallmarks that virtually no contemporary group can escape being labeled as such. Furthermore, that the same group in two different cultural contexts (for example, Japan and the United States) can be described as modernist in one setting but traditional in another reveals the non-objective nature of the term "Buddhist modernism" and suggests its usage is closely associated with judgments of authenticity and questions of pollution. That American convert Zen groups, which in many ways strictly adhere to perceived Japanese traditions, are frequently labeled "modernist" in the literature suggests that the term is being used inappropriately to mean simply "non-Asian," revealing the Western/Asian bifurcation often underlying the modernist/traditional dichotomy. We suggest redefining "modernism" as *a set of narratives*, which, when selectively appropriated and embedded in a larger set of narratives, produces a variety of configurations of "modern" and traditional," yielding multiple Buddhist modernities.

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT USAGE

One of the dominant theoretical paradigms used to analyze contemporary manifestations of Buddhism has been "Buddhist modernism." This term has come to stand in for a rather lengthy list of qualities (described in more detail later) that are said to differentiate "modern" Buddhisms from "traditional" forms. "Buddhist modernism," coined by Bechert in his multivolume work *Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft in den Ländern des Theravada-Buddhismus* (1966–1973), is used by him and others to describe changes in Buddhism resulting from the Asian Buddhist encounter with modernity and Westernization. He argues that

> Buddhist modernism is characterized by the emphasis laid on rationalist elements in Buddhist teachings, by the belief that the teachings of Buddhism and those of modern science are not only in conformity but identical, by the tacit elimination of the traditional cosmology, and by a reinterpretation of the objective of the Buddhist religion in terms of social reform and the building of a better world. (Bechert 1973, 91)

He further argues that the "resurgence" of Buddhism in terms of reformism in Asia occurred in tandem with the early spread of Buddhism in the West (Bechert 1984, 275), making Buddhist modernism a global

phenomenon. Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988) argue for a similar set of changes in Buddhism in Sri Lanka, which they prefer to call "Protestant Buddhism."[1]

Lopez expands his analysis beyond South and Southeast Asia to include Buddhist groups throughout the world, particularly in the West, beyond the nineteenth century. Arguing that Buddhist modernism now enjoys widespread acceptance throughout Asia and the West (Lopez 2002a, ix–x), Lopez suggests it is an autonomous "sect" or "school" of Buddhism with its own lineage, scriptures, and saints (Lopez 2002a; Lopez 2006, 249n3; see also Huber 2008, 420; McMahan 2008, 8).

While Lopez (2002a) provides a sampling of Asian and Western Buddhist (or perhaps "Buddhish") authors as representative of the "canon" of this new "sect," McMahan (2008) concentrates more carefully on Western manifestations, explaining that because it represents a response to modernity, Buddhist modernism inevitably reacts to issues of "individualism, egalitarianism, liberalism, democratic ideals, and the impulse to social reform" (McMahan 2008, 13). However, McMahan stresses that neither modernity nor Buddhist modernity are homogeneous; there are a variety of responses representing a multiplicity of adaptations (McMahan 2008, 14; see also chap. 11 in this volume).

The characteristics said to represent Buddhist modernism in the burgeoning literature on the topic comprise a lengthy laundry list of items, all of which derive from the basic issue of modernity and its attendant rationalization and democratization of religion. The list of qualities describing Buddhist modernism—all variations on basic themes of rationalism, textualism, experience, and democracy—includes an emphasis on reason and rationality, with the corollary that Buddhism is a philosophy and not a religion; the rejection of ritual; the symbolic reinterpretation of cosmology; psychologization of the teachings; articulations of the compatibility of science and Buddhism; a refocusing on doctrine and text over "superstitious" practices such as relic veneration or Buddha-name recitation; laicization and democratization; a focus on meditation with an optimistic view of nirvana, especially as manifesting in the historically unprecedented practice of meditation among the laity; an ecumenical attitude toward other Buddhist sects and a universalization of Buddhism; increased status of women; social engagement and a "this-worldly" emphasis; a return to the "original" teachings of the Buddha (especially as reconstructed through texts, in particular the Pali canon); and the rejection of the cultural accretions that have appended over the centuries (Baumann 2000; Bechert 1984; Levine and Gellner 2005, 11; Lopez 2002a; McMahan 2008; Quli 2008, 2009).

CULTURAL AND ACULTURAL MODELS OF MODERNITY

Charles Taylor (2001) has described two models of modernity employed by social scientists—that is, two ways of understanding narratives regarding the perceived differences between contemporary and past societies: cultural and acultural models, the former incorporating newer ideas regarding multiple modernities popular in anthropology, and the latter largely represented by secularization theory as articulated in classical sociology.[2] Taylor identifies the acultural model as the dominant theory of modernity in use over the last two centuries or so (Taylor 2001, 174). This model, often narrated with a tone of nostalgia (see Taylor 2001, 175; cf. Rosaldo 1989, esp. chap. 3), frames modernity as a kind of universal development in which traditional (i.e., nonrational) societies are gradually replaced by modern ones, thus stressing rupture and the loss of tradition (Obadia 2006; see also Payne, the afterword in this volume). When viewed either as an intellectual development (the replacement of superstition with rationality and science) or a social development (institutionalization and the construction of Weberian rationalized bureaucracies), traditional beliefs and old ways of understanding are seen as being lost (or perhaps conquered) through the implementation of (a universal) "reason" or science (Taylor 2001, 191), which gives rise to more efficient institutions and the disenchantment of the world.[3]

Because the acultural theory posits that "modernity" is a universal and value-neutral (or culture-free) process, all societies will eventually modernize and thereby become the same (Taylor 2001, 181). It is the process of "coming to see" the Truth, that is, a scientific, "rational," Enlightenment version of reality (Taylor 2001). As a "culture-neutral operation," one can insert any society for the variable on the left side of the equation, and, after applying the force of modernity, one will end up with the same answer on the right side of the equation: a society of individuals free of superstition who base their decisions on instrumental rationality (Taylor 2001).

The cultural model of modernity rejects the idea of modernity as a value-neutral operation. It takes seriously the diversity of cultures both past and present, "each of which has a language and a set of practices that define specific understandings of personhood, social relations, states of mind/soul, goods and bads, virtues and vices, and the like" (Taylor 2001, 172). Any beliefs we might have—"rational" or otherwise—are held within and related to a larger set of cultural models about how the world works, the nature of human relationships, and so on. This cultural matrix Taylor identifies as being in some sense unformulable and prereflexive (Taylor 2001, 186). Those tropes that scholars identify as reflective of "modernity" (science, ideas about the individual, bureaucracies, etc.) are always contextualized within existing cultural patterns.

Hefner argues that "secularization theory has oversimplified modernity and its nonmodern 'other.' Rather than recognizing that modernity might be multiple, [secularization theory] offered an idealized model of the West as the prototype for modernization in all societies" (Hefner 1998, 86). But there is no one version of modernity; narratives are always contextualized in larger worldviews. Rather than recognize this messy plurality, acultural models, like those that have for some time dominated Buddhist studies, are forced to use "modernity" with increasing vagueness to account for all the diversity we see when there should be none, resulting in the long list of attributes now used to describe Buddhist modernism. As Obadia notes (2006), part of the ability of the term "modernity" to describe societies is its ambiguous, plastic nature. This masks the truth that modernity is neither a singular, fixed operation, nor is it a singular, fixed narrative.

The claim to a universal modernity is undercut by the heterogeneity underlying it (T. Mitchell 2000b, viii). There are too many articulations of the modern, too many various origins of the modernity narrative to support a single, identifiable definition of the term "modernity" or the condition of the "modern." Even if we meticulously detail the "modern" elements originating in "the Protestant Reformation, the scientific revolution, the European Enlightenment, Romanticism, and their successors" (McMahan 2008, 9), each of these strands are peopled by individuals with multiple understandings of reason, freedom, and so on, producing contested discourses. Perhaps more importantly, these strands of European Enlightenment, Romanticism, and so on, have their own sources from the past. "Each new parent can reveal another parent, another logic. The identity claimed by the modern is contaminated. It issues from too many sources and depends upon, even as it refuses to recognize, forebears and forces that escape its control" (T. Mitchell 2000c, 13). What we have are multiple tropes on science, instrumental reason, freedom, individualism, rationality, and so on, representing "multiple and competing narratives" of Buddhist modernism (McMahan 2008, 9).

Seen in this way, "Buddhist modernism" is a *set* of similar narratives rather than a singular one. These narratives or ways of understanding can be, like other kinds of culture, transmitted across cultures. This transmission may be a forced one, as in the implementation of British notions of the separation of church and state in Sri Lanka (disestablishment). Or the narratives may be appropriated willingly, for example in King Mongkut's reforms in Thailand. But because ideas of the modern are brought into conversation with underlying (and often invisible) cultural assumptions about the nature of human action, morality, community, and so on, modernities differ from one another.

Theories of multiple modernities (e.g., Eisenstadt et al. 2002; Gaonkar et al. 2001), when they allow for a cultural rather than an acultural definition of modernity, are better situated to account for the diversities we see in the contemporary world. In particular, they problematize the notion that non-Western countries modernize by becoming more Western. Only *some* modernist narratives are selectively appropriated (Eisenstadt 2002, 14), and these narratives are situated in relation to existing cultural norms. This results in the creation of new forms that, while perhaps resembling Western modernities in some ways, are distinctly their own. As Inda and Rosaldo (2008, 28) remark on this process of globalizing cultural forms, "The peoples of the periphery do not simply or necessarily absorb the ideologies, values, and life-style positions putatively embedded in the cultural goods they consume. More often than not they actually customize these imported forms, interpreting them according to local conditions of reception." Specific actors may make use of modernist narratives in different ways as they pursue diverse visions of what makes a society "modern" (Eisenstadt 2002, 2), creating not just a single nationally or culturally bounded version of modernity but diverse versions within nations or cultures. As Hefner reminds us (1998, 87), even in the "West," modernity is envisioned dissimilarly by different religious traditions.

The idea of multiple modernities also helps to account for the fact that "modern" religious traditions are not only dissimilar from other modern traditions but exhibit "traditional" characteristics as well. Timothy Mitchell notes:

> How does one make sense of these "non-modern" elements coexisting and reconfirmed in the face of capitalist modernity? A conventional account … would treat the non-modern as no more than residuals, fragments of a past that cannot be relinquished only because [the] transition to modernity is incomplete, or has happened so rapidly that different phases have been telescoped together and therefore overlap rather than succeed one another. This is the inevitable analysis of modernizing approaches, which must gather all the different histories of colonialism into a singular narrative of the coming of modernity. They can deal with the non-modern only as the absence of modernity, only as forms that lack the discipline, rationality, and abstraction of the modern order of things—and therefore, since they are defined by what they are not, as essentially similar to non-modern forms everywhere else. It is not sufficient … to explain these forms as "the invention of tradition" or through the idea of the "modernity of tradition." These invocations of the restored, contrived, or resistant powers of a tradition accept the notion that there is a universal narrative of modernity, against which local variations can be measured. The alternative would be to acknowledge that modernity "is constituted by tensions that relate to each other asymptomatically," so that there cannot be "any one unitary history of its becoming." (2000a, xvi; quoting Chakrabarty 1994, 81)

By recognizing that articulations of "Buddhist modernism" are voiced within traditions[4] with historical continuity, the rupture narrative is replaced by one that is able to account for the continuity and resilience of traditions as well as their creativity. Such traditions—such as the Buddhism of, for example, Anagrika Dharmapala and his followers—show considerable connection to the past (e.g., veneration of relics) even while expressing more modernist ideas (the compatibility of science and Buddhism). Individual Buddhist temples may be seen to hold both "modernist" and "traditional" positions in the services they offer (for example, traditional merit-making alongside lay meditation; see McLellan 2008), and individuals at a temple may likewise hold a variety of modernist and traditional positions, for example, in the way that they interpret Buddhist cosmology (Cadge 2005, 90). Narratives of modernity have been appropriated by individuals, groups, and institutions in a variety of creative ways and integrated into the alreadyexisting cultures underlying them, producing unique forms with their own logics and histories.

The ability of religious traditions to integrate new cultural forms (such as those identified with "modernity") points toward an understanding of religions not as fixed or static, having an ageless core of beliefs, practices, and so forth, but as inherently hybrid or syncretic (Queen 1999, xviii; Stewart and Shaw 1994, 5; Tweed 2002, 18). Such a perspective on religious change enables us to address both continuity and discontinuity without becoming embroiled in issues of authenticity, which haunt the writings of many authors with their thick tone of nostalgia and loss (see Quli 2009).

Beyer, for example, sees religious traditions as discourses, suggesting that while contemporary religions may incorporate new elements, this does not make them purely "invented traditions" (cf. Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Rather, we are witnessing the "partial dissolution of received patterns of communication and their recombination with new elements to create a new form that bears strong resemblance to old ones.… [Because] all communication exhibits this combination of old and new [it] thereby obviates the question of which is more 'authentic'" (Beyer 2006, 11). Tweed, too, has been helpful in visualizing the mutability of tradition by articulating water metaphors to describe its essencelessness. Basing his model on Buddhist notions of non-self (*anatta*) and impermanence (*anicca*) (Tweed 2006, 55; see also chap. 1 in this volume), he imagines a religious tradition as a river, the content of which is always in movement. A deluge may flood the banks, creating offshoots that join nearby streams. A stream may dry up, or it may be fed by multiple sources. Looking at religious traditions with this lens, the question of whether someone like Dharmapla is a "real" Buddhist is less about orthodoxy as determined by a set of doctrinal assumptions or "traditional" practices and more about placing him within one of the many streams that have flowed out of that big Buddhist river; in the case of Buddhist modernities, these are streams that are also fed by Western Romanticism and other traditions. This perspective also curtails the trend toward the deconstruction of

traditions, epitomized by the view that all contemporary traditions are merely "invented" (an extension of the rupture paradigm),[5] which Stewart and Shaw contend has "invented another kind of intellectual imperialism" via anthropological hegemony (1994, 23).

TRADITIONAL AND MODERNIST TRAITS IN CONVERT ZEN AND THE BUDDHIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA

The limitations of the modernist/traditionalist dichotomy are made evident in a closer examination of specific American Buddhist communities. For the sake of brevity, in what follows we examine two aspects of this dichotomy within two specific American Buddhist traditions: American Shin Buddhism in its largest incarnation of the Buddhist Churches of America in comparison with the more nebulous manifestations of "convert" Zen founded by mid-twentieth-century Japanese missionaries such as Taizan Mazumi and Shunryu Suzuki, among others. Specifically, we explore the issues of (a) laicization or the displacement of traditional hierarchical authority structures with typically Western democratic or egalitarian forms and (b) the rejection of superstition and traditional Buddhist cosmology, which often carries with it an explicit rejection of ritual. What makes the American Shin and convert Zen cases particularly pertinent here is that these communities have been largely and uncritically assigned to the traditionalist and modernist categories, respectively. Baumann (2001) frames the traditionalist and modernist forms of global Buddhism as "Weberian ideal types" and claims that traditional forms of Buddhism are alive and well within "ethnic" (i.e., Asian immigrant and Asian American) communities. These communities' predilection for rituals and gaining merit and a preoccupation with Buddhism's rich cosmology are in sharp contrast to the meditation-centric and textually grounded character of "convert" modernist Buddhists. Thus, by merely replacing "ethnic" and "convert" with "traditional" and "modern," Baumann replicates the racialized features of the "two Buddhisms" debate well critiqued by Hickey in chap. 3 in this volume, revealing in the process his identification of modernity with the West and tradition with Asia. Moreover, as is shown later, this divide makes less and less sense in the face of ethnographic fieldwork within these communities.[6]

Laicization, Democratization

Articulated in a variety of ways, the rejection of monastic hierarchies and an embrace of more democratic institutional structures coupled with lay-centric practice is one of the hallmarks of what has been called modern Buddhism. The case of the Jodo Shinshu sect of Japanese Pure Land thus presents us with our first major stumbling block. In the early thirteenth century, former Tendai monk Shinran Shnin left the monastic establishment and became a disciple of Hnen, a Pure Land teacher who had been proselytizing to the laity in Kyoto. Quickly running afoul of the local authorities, both Hnen and Shinran were stripped of their monastic rankings and exiled from the capital. Shinran embraced this turn of events, referring to himself as "neither monk nor lay" for the remainder of his career while spreading Pure Land teachings among the laity in the Kanto region. The community that grew up around his teachings was from its very inception "lay centric," rejecting a celibate monastic clergy (Dobbins 1989). As one would expect, over the centuries a priestly class has developed; however, we must be attentive to the fact that this priestly class has never been a celibate monastic one as we would expect to find in other forms of "traditional" Buddhism. Moreover, during the Meiji reforms of the late nineteenth century, this model of "neither monk nor lay" was grafted onto virtually all forms of Japanese Buddhism as part of the government's forced modernization of Japanese cultural institutions that effectively laicized Buddhism across the country. Thus, if we take laicization to be a hallmark of the modern, how do we account for a Buddhist tradition that has been laicized for more than seven hundred years?[7]

Because we are here concerned with more contemporary matters, let us for the moment not dwell on the long and complex history surrounding the modernization of Japanese Buddhism and instead turn to the American case. Shin Buddhism in the United States is dominated by the Buddhist Churches of America, which was established in the late nineteenth century, thus representing the oldest Buddhist institution in the

United States. In many ways, the community is very much a "traditional" form of Japanese Buddhism. And despite Shinran's thirteenth-century laicization, there remains a rigid hierarchy in place that seems to defy democratization. Each of the BCA's sixty-one temples and churches are assigned a minister by the bishop (*sch*). Each minister is qualified to be a minister only insofar as he or (less likely) she has undergone a codified training and ordination procedure that includes several years of study and culminates in a complex and centuries-old ritual held at the denomination's head temple, the Honganji, located in Kyoto. This hierarchy and connection to Japan seem to fall in line with a traditional model of Japanese Buddhism that is at odds with the more egalitarian spirit of "convert" Buddhist groups in the United States.

Nevertheless, while there is a deep connection between the Buddhist Churches of America and the Honganji establishment, it would be naive to assume that the BCA is nothing more than a transplanted Japanese form of Buddhism in a new locale beholden to a rigid Japanese hierarchy. Rather, the BCA negotiates its place within American culture in multiple ways, and upon closer inspection both the connection to Japan and hierarchical structure are easily circumscribed in a typically modern American and democratic fashion. To begin, at the local level, each BCA-affiliate church is administered by a board of directors as one would expect to find in any American religious organization.[8] While each church has a minister, the minister is understood to be an employee of the church, hired by the board. This is in sharp contrast to the Japanese system, which has long had a patrilineal system of leadership wherein temples are run by ministers who pass them on to their eldest sons. The American employer-employee relationship between the board and the minister is perhaps in starkest relief when a Japanese minister comes to the United States with the expectation that he will have sole authority over his new assignment only to discover that his authority is at the pleasure of the board. Furthermore, whereas American ministers are, on paper, "assigned" to their churches by the bishop, this is not really the case. Decisions regarding ministerial assignments are often made "behind the scenes" in conversation with multiple parties and lay leaders and groups. Finally, on a day-to-day basis, whereas any given minister is the de facto spiritual head of the community, it is the lay leadership who takes the lead in running the church, from setting the ritual and liturgical calendar to running the Dharma schools that educate young Buddhists. American Shin Buddhist ministers rarely take the lead in Dharma school education, a task that most often falls to laywomen in the community. Thus, while there is a connection to Japan and a type of hierarchy in place within American Shin Buddhism suggesting a type of traditionalism, the community embraces lay-centric and democratic organizational structures that are a hallmark of modernist narratives.

When compared with the case of American convert Zen, something of the opposite seems to be true. The various "Zen centers" that have proliferated across the United States since the late 1960s and 1970s are assumed to be as modernist as the BCA is traditionalist. This typecasting is rather straightforward to the extent that American Zen practice is focused almost exclusively on seated meditation, a form of practice heretofore restricted not just to monastics but to specific classes of monastics. Thus, without even examining American Zen's social engagement, the role of Zen women, or any other markers of so-called "modernity," the fact that within the Zen center laypeople act like monks is enough to convince most that the community is thoroughly modern. Moreover, one of the successes of the Zen center model may be its rejection of centralized institutional power structures. That is, once a student has received Dharma transmission (i.e., been "certified" in some sense by his or her teacher or *rshi*), the student will feel empowered to go off and start her own Zen center, host meditation retreats or trainings, attract students, and go on to become a *rshi* herself without necessarily traveling to Japan to engage in traditional and rigorous ordination rituals.

Just as one can peel back the layer of traditionalism in the BCA case to discover modernism, here one can pull back the layer of modernity to discover traditionalism. Whereas the process of Dharma transmission seems unregulated and even antiauthoritarian, it remains nevertheless grounded on an extremely traditionalist understanding of Zen, that is, the authority of lineage. Zen is rooted in the belief that there has been a direct, mind-to-mind transmission of the Dharma, "outside the scriptures," in an unbroken lineage dating back to kyamuni Buddha himself, when he famously and silently held out a flower before his disciples—and only Mahkyapa smiled, knowingly. The assumption that one can be a Zen Buddhist teacher only after receiving this Dharma transmission is very much akin to Weber's "authority of the eternal yesterday," a traditional form of authority or domination, a notion that runs counter to the idea that American convert Zen rejects traditionalism in all its forms. Furthermore, the level of power

traditional authority figures have within the tradition is perhaps most acutely felt when teachers abuse this power. Arguably, the only way that one can abuse power is if she or he has power to abuse in the first place, and the history of American convert Zen is, regrettably, rife with examples of Zen teachers doing just that. Without dwelling on the abuses of power by such teachers as Richard Baker and Maezumi Rshi or the more recent case of Shimano Roshi, it is arguable that the broader American Zen community invests within its leaders a significant amount of authority and power despite its more democratic and egalitarian tendencies. Finally, it would be naive to think that the American convert Zen scene is driven by free-wheeling antiestablishment types with neither a concern for organized structures nor the authority of traditional Japanese institutions. The opposite is true and evident in such organizations as the Soto Zen Buddhist Association, which provides resources and training for the American Zen community and the Soto Zen Text Project that cooperates with the traditional Sotoshu Shumucho hierarchy in Japan to translate and standardize Zen Buddhist liturgical and canonical texts. Thus, while the tradition cultivates a particular rhetoric of iconoclasm and a democratic ethos, traditional authority figures and structures are easy to locate within the community, once again bespeaking the complex ways in which Buddhists both embrace and reject various modernist narratives.

Superstition and Ritual

The second hallmark of modernity under consideration here is the rejection of traditional Buddhist cosmology and superstitious ritualized practices, both of which run counter to "modern" (Western) scientific, psychological, or rational knowledge. In this regard, American convert Zen fits well within the modernist category, employing as it does a rhetoric grounded on the efficacy of seated meditation practices. *Zazen* in convert Zen communities is framed almost exclusively as a primarily psychological experience stripped of both its cosmological and ritual aspects. As Sharf (1995a) has noted, this primacy of experience runs counter to the ways that meditation has been thoroughly ritualized in premodern forms of Buddhism. Despite this rhetoric that foregrounds meditation practice while either deemphasizing or denigrating ritual, ritual is nevertheless easy to locate within any given Zen center. In addition to formal meditation practice, most Zen centers will enact several traditional Sotoshu rituals replete with the chanting of sutras and mantras as well as ritualized prostrations before altars, ritual behavior that is based on traditional Japanese cultural practices and grounded in nonscientific cosmologies or merit-making behavior endemic to Buddhism at large. Even when recast as somehow "modern," generalized ritual behavior pervades most Zen centers: one is expected to enter the *zendo* or Buddha hall on the right foot while one's hands are clasped in *shashu* and held just above the navel; silence is maintained throughout a session; members bow before altars, before their meditation cushions, and reflexively bow to one another. This behavior is most often dismissed as merely "etiquette," and it is rhetorically recast as "practice," as an "opportunity for mindfulness." However, it is precisely this type of repetitive behavior that is subsequently given symbolic meaning that lies at the heart of ritualized practice.[9]

Apart from this type of generalized ritual behavior, specific ritual practices are easy to locate in convert Zen. As Wilson has noted in *Mourning the Unborn Dead* (2009), a post-pregnancy loss ritual known as *mizuko kuy* (literally, "water baby ceremony") has become widely popular in American Zen communities. This ritual originated in Japan as a response to women who had lost children either through miscarriage, still birth, or abortion and were concerned about their unborn child's future rebirth. Japanese versions of this ritual typically employ devotion to Jiz, the Japanese incarnation of the Bodhisattva Kitigarbha. Thus, the ritual relies on a host of traditional Mahayana concepts and cosmologies that run counter to the "rational" or antisuperstitious nature of "modern" Buddhism. Wilson's research discloses that the American version of *mizuko kuy* departs dramatically from the Japanese version. Whereas in Japan the ritual is conducted in a rather private manner between a priest and a single family, the American version includes multiple families coming together in a style not unlike a group therapy session modeled more on Western psychotherapy than Eastern esotericism. However, let us not be fooled by this obviously modernist construction. During the American "water baby ceremony," participants ritually sew bibs that will then be placed on small statues of Jiz, and Wilson notes that the rhetoric surrounding the ritual speaks very much to notions of prayer and a sense among the participants that they are getting in touch with some

inner spiritual part of themselves. This is not to suggest that convert Zen ritualists are deluding themselves and undermining their rational tendencies while embracing a superstitious mythos. Rather, it merely raises a question: Where do we draw the line between "rational" or modernist thinking and "superstitious" ritualistic behavior? At what point does a ritual cease to be little more than a reflection of superstitious appeal to some traditional cosmology and become a rational attempt to engender psychological healing?

The American Shin case is somewhat more problematic. Pure Land Buddhism is based on longstanding Mahayana Buddhist cosmologies that posit the existence of multiple world systems to which one can travel either through meditative practices or through death-bed rituals and attain a favorable rebirth. In the soteriology of Jodo Shinshu, the karmic mechanism of this rebirth, however, is not located in the individual ego-self but rather in the external workings of the Buddha of Infinite Light. This reliance on an externalized and powerful Buddha, superficially similar to Christian notions of grace, coupled with complex otherworldly depictions of paradisiacal pure Buddha fields, superficially similar to Christian notions of heaven, have given Jodo Shinshu the reputation of being a superstitious and antirational form of Buddhism, that is, very much not modern.

However, once again we can find hints of the modern in early Shin Buddhist history. As Shinran was spreading Pure Land teachings outside the capital, a debate emerged within the early community regarding the efficacy of performing rituals to the local *kami* or spirits endemic to Shinto practice. Shinran and his immediate successors generally denounced such practices using normative Pure Land doctrine; if there is nothing one's limited ego self can do to affect one's rebirth in the Pure Land, believing that self-centered, egoistic local spirits would care at all about one's awakening is just illogical. Now, this is not to suggest that Shinran and his early followers' conversation about whether or not they should engage in local spirit cults is similar in any way to contemporary debates regarding traditional superstitions versus modern science. Rather, it is merely to point out that this early rejection of Shinto ritualism within Shin Buddhism set a precedent that has stuck with the tradition much in the same way that the lay-centric spirit has stuck as a result of Shinran's rejection of his monastic status. As a consequence of this historical rejection of ritual, in contemporary Japan Shin Buddhism is widely regarded as the least superstitious brand of Buddhism, the one most rational and consonant with the modern world. In contrast, Zen and esoteric forms of Buddhism are generally considered to be less modern and more superstitious, exactly the opposite as in the United States. What accounts for this reversal of roles?

The answer can be found in ritual. Because Jodo Shinshu has long rejected self-powered practices and embraced a rhetoric that suggests that rituals are more or less pointless, despite the fact that the tradition engages in a wide variety of ritual behavior, Shin Buddhists have cultivated an anti-ritualistic mythos and rhetoric. In contrast, other forms of Buddhism have long embraced ritual as being extremely efficacious not only in affecting one's awakening but in affecting all manner of changes in the phenomenal world. Once in the modern period, this embrace of ritual has worked against Japanese Buddhist institutions as they came under attack for being anathema to modern (Western) scientific understandings of the world. Since the Meiji period, Buddhist institutions have been widely regarded as little more than "funeral Buddhism," more concerned with charging the laity for complex funeral rites whose stated intent is to help the dead achieve favorable rebirth (a decidedly traditional aim) while unscrupulously taking money from the common masses. For example, as Wilson (2009, 21–22) has noted, because Shin Buddhism rejects self-powered practices, Japanese Shin Buddhism generally does not engage in *mizuko kuy* rituals, thus saving the community from the critique of being traditionalist.

This is not to suggest that American scholars have gotten it wrong, that Zen is traditional whereas Shin is modern. We merely point out that what is "modern" on this side of the Pacific turns out to be "traditional" on the other. Any attempt to employ "modern" as an objective qualifier is undermined by the subjective and culturally conditioned way in which "modern" is used within different Buddhist communities and for different ends. Clearly, one way to employ the traditional/modern dichotomy is in a polemic argument either for or against a particular practice. Contemporary Japanese critics of "funeral Buddhism" may employ a rhetoric that rejects traditionalism in order to champion a type of secular modernism. What is modern then is very much at the whim of one's particular location and is more often than not a reflection of polemical arguments whose true intent is to define which Buddhists are more or less authentic.

CONCLUSIONS

We share with Obadia the view that the category of "modernity" represents a type of *discourse* (a narrative) that is deeply colored by the cultural patterns and subjectivities of the storyteller. This is as true about scholars using the term as it is about the people scholars seek to describe and understand. In this sense, modernity "est un récit, un narrative selon la terminologie anglo-saxonne, un «texte» culturel, pour emprunter l'expression à Clifford Geertz, un «mythe», pour les plus enclins à y voir soit de la pure fiction imaginative, soit de la pensée religieuse en acte—un mythe au sens anthropologique du terme" (Obadia 2006).[10] Rather than a neutral descriptive term, "modernity" is a narrative category used by scholars, not infrequently as part of a larger project involving a theoretical paradigm based on ideas of rupture and discontinuity.

Obadia (2006) has noted the presence of a rhetoric of "crisis" in much of the literature concerned with Buddhist modernism. This literature is by and large not a neutral assessment of continuities and discontinuities in Buddhist traditions. More often than not, it becomes a veiled judgment of authenticity, usually made through arguments concerning pollution due to cultural mixing (Quli 2009; see also Stewart and Shaw 1994). Spencer notes that the idea of "tradition," rather than an innocent category of analysis, is "a central weapon in arguments about what Buddhism is and what it should try to be in the contemporary world" (Spencer 1990, 130; quoted in Samuels 2007, 120). Given (1) that traditions inevitably change over time, (2) that we lack a clear and concise definition of "tradition," and (3) that the list of possible indications of Buddhist modernism is so lengthy, one wonders: Exactly how much innovation makes something, to use the word Gombrich and Obeyesekere employ to describe certain orientations in Sri Lankan Buddhism, a "pseudo-tradition" (1988, 242)? Exactly how much integration of modernist narratives makes a group representative of Buddhist modernism rather than "traditional" Buddhism?

For the preceding reasons, we do not find "Buddhist modernism" (in the singular) a useful analytic tool for understanding Buddhist traditions in the United States. Rather than providing a neutral assessment of continuities and discontinuities in Buddhist traditions, the singular, acultural concept of Buddhist modernism essentializes traditions by denying their ongoing transformation throughout history, characterizing the modern as a radical rupture from the past and ignoring not only the fluid and contested nature of culture and traditions but the continuity of adaptations with forms from the past. This Buddhist modernism paradigm does not provide succinct definitions that would draw a defining boundary between "modernity" and "tradition," instead preferring an ambiguous definition of "Buddhist modernism" and using "tradition" as a mere placeholder or "empty" term (AlSayyad 2004; Blackburn 2010, 211). "Buddhist modernism" is so all-encompassing in its ambiguity that no contemporary group can escape being characterized as having some trait associated with it, making it useless in terms of offering a category to differentiate between groups. The applications of the theory often conflate modernity with the West and tradition with the East (and with this distinction comes much baggage from orientalism), which is especially problematic in terms of Asian American Buddhist groups (who are, by definition, a mixture of West and East). It is a not-so-veiled judgment of authenticity but with no valid argument pointing to how much cultural mixing is permissible before "spoiling" a pure and authentic tradition. It is a dualism that does not capture the richness and messiness of lived religion. And finally, in its application by Western academics, it displays the "salvage" paradigm that anthropologist Renato Rosaldo has described as a symptom of "imperialist nostalgia," the colonial agent's longing for pre-Western traditional culture that she herself destroyed (Rosaldo 1989; see also Quli 2009, 4). For all of these reasons, we favor a cultural model of modernities that recognizes the presence of multiple modernist narratives and subnarratives, which are appropriated selectively by individuals and groups to meet their religious needs. In this respect, we see both contemporary Jodo Shinshu and Zen as appropriating various narratives associated with Buddhist modernism while simultaneously cultivating more traditionalist narratives, producing groups that could be called either "modernist" or "traditionalist," depending on one's vantage point and political purpose.

NOTES

Parts of this chapter are adapted from Quli (2010).

1. For critiques of the Protestant Buddhism paradigm, see Blackburn (2010) and Harris (2006).
2. This is an important distinction to make in Buddhist studies, where the dominant paradigm of "Buddhist modernism" currently en vogue is largely indebted to a sociological, acultural, Weberian model of modernity and its assumption of a universal march toward a monolithic rationality. The notion of a "this-worldly" development as part of Buddhist modernism, for example, reveals the strong Weberian influence underlying dominant uses of the term in Buddhist studies. For more on Weber's importance in Theravada studies in particular, see Choompolpaisal (2008).
3. This is the classic secularization theory as proposed by Max Weber. Secularization theory has been challenged not only on theoretical grounds but based on evidence in Western societies such as the United States, where religion continues to be a major component of people's lives—despite the premonition of the destruction of religion in "modern" societies. For more on the state of secularization theory in contemporary sociology, see Christiano, Swatos, and Kivisto (2008).
4. We use the term "tradition" here to refer simply to cultural forms with some recognized historic continuity, though all traditions are by nature in conversation with the present and are necessarily in some sense "modern." For more on the difficulty in decisively distinguishing "traditional" from "modern," see AlSayyad (2004).
5. On "invented" traditions, see Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) and, to a lesser extent, Kemper (1984).
6. What follows is based on fieldwork conducted between 2004 and 2010 within several BCA and Zen communities. See S. Mitchell (2006, 2008, and 2010).
7. It is worth mentioning that in Sri Lanka, too, there was a premodernist tradition of lay clergy/temple owners called *gainnnses* (see Blackburn 2003, 132–134, 139; and Malalgoda 1976, 54, 57–58, 59, 65), drawing our attention to the danger of using laicization as an indicator of modernist influence.
8. For a discussion of how immigrant groups are impacted by US laws pertaining to the incorporation of religious institutions, see Cadge (2008); cf. Ama (2010).
9. For a fuller discussion of how ritualized practice is enacted within North American Zen communities, see Preston (1988).
10. Modernity "is a story, a narrative in Anglo-Saxon terminology, a cultural 'text' to borrow an expression from Clifford Geertz, a 'myth,' best seen as either pure imaginative fiction, or religious thought in action—a myth in the anthropological sense of the term." Quli's translation.