A Monkey Jumps and Britain Awakens to Mahayana:
Aspects of the Westward Spread of Chinese Buddhism

T. H. Barrett

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These lectures look at the transmission of Chinese Buddhism to the West from three perspectives. The first explores an early phase, before formal translation, of talk about animals, reminiscent of Indian animal stories in early Chinese *jātaka* literature. The second outlines British academic teaching and writing on Chinese Buddhism, showing how the patterns of British colonialism reduced East Asian Buddhism to an unduly peripheral position. The third demonstrates how in the absence of academic teaching various interested parties, not all with a clear view of Buddhism, worked to make or remake translations of one text, the *Awakening of Faith*, sometimes, as the archive shows, experiencing linguistic challenges.

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Aspects of the Westward Spread of Chinese Buddhism

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Cover image: Tibetan lamas in an Indian crowd, c. 1900.
By William Touch (later Touche), 1858–1914, of the Bank of India.

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Preface

The three chapters contained in this publication derive from a series of lectures delivered online to Hong Kong in January 2022 in my then capacity as the 9th MaMa Charitable Foundation Visiting Professor in Buddhist Studies. I am conscious of the extraordinary generosity of the Centre of Buddhist Studies, The University of Hong Kong, in nominating me to this role, in that I had already been sponsored to come to Hong Kong in person in June 2019, to deliver four lectures on "Buddhism and the Book in China". These lectures are related to the information that I published as "Buddhism and Print Culture in China" in the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia, Religion online*, also in 2019.

The 2022 lectures, however, did not relate to anything that I have subsequently published elsewhere. They are still available online as videos, but as discussion at the time indicated, the viewer will not always be aware of the sources used, which were too numerous to be mentioned during oral presentation. Here I have done nothing to disguise the origins of these remarks by suppressing the markers of oral delivery, but I have provided as fully as possible the reading and other evidence upon which my remarks were based. In the case of the first lecture, the materials used, while quite disparate, were all published sources, but thereafter though predominantly basing my observations on a range of past publications I did touch at times on personal reminiscence and, in the final chapter, on a small amount of archival research.

Here, too, I have tried further to supplement the evidence drawn upon, so there is slightly more to read than there is to listen to on the videos. While the first lecture contained material that I had long been interested in and had even presented in an earlier form at a 2018 conference at the University of British Columbia entitled "Buddhist Beasts: Reflections on Animals in Asian Religions and Cultures", I revised my original study to bring out the role of animals in cross-cultural encounters and have further extended that approach in this new version. Some additions have likewise been made to the next two chapters. In this case I was able to present my new findings to an October 2022 conference in Berkeley, California, entitled "A Celebration of Buddhist Philology: A Conference in Honor of the Legacy of Yehan Numata and BDK's Contribution to the Study of Buddhist Texts". My presentation, "Translating Chinese Buddhist Texts in the United Kingdom: History and Prospects", was recorded, but is not openly available online.

I hope that the three chapters in their written versions will now clarify the basis for my oral presentations. In revising my remarks, I have noticed one unspoken assumption, namely that the audience for what I had to say would want to know more on the topics treated because of a pre-existing interest

in the spread of Buddhism. It may be that in their written form they may come to the attention of readers who do not share that assumption. I have therefore added a brief 'Afterword' to my work to explain why the content of my lectures might merit some wider attention beyond the audience that I initially sought to address. There is of course much more that could be said in defence of the studies surveyed here, and I hope to find an occasion to do so in future, but for the moment these few brief indications will have to suffice.

Much of the writing and rewriting contained here was carried out during the recent pandemic, when travel and so access to libraries was highly restricted. My first debt is therefore to the many teachers, students, and other friends who have kindly given me books over the years that have made independent study and research in my own home possible. I could never have completed the work you now have before you on my own slender resources. Those who have helped me in this category stretch back over decades — I will never forget the kindness of David McMullen in giving me a copy of the *Li Wengong ji* 李文公集 when I was only an undergraduate — and are alas too numerous to mention. But regarding my recent travels and presentations I can thank not only the MaMa Charitable Foundation but also colleagues and friends in several places.

Thus the 2018 conference was organized by Jinhua Chen (UBC) and Phyllis Granoff (Yale University) and sponsored by the Glorisun Charitable Foundation, Tzu-Chi Canada, SSHRC Partnership FROGBEAR Project, and the UBC Buddhist Studies Forum. Barbara Ambros and Reiko Ohnuma kindly helped me in preparing the initial version of my work for publication in the journal *Religion* before pressure of other work forced me to abandon this plan. The second chapter was prompted by a question from Li Zijie 李子捷. I hope he finds my answer helpful. In Hong Kong I am grateful to all the colleagues and staff then at the Centre of Buddhist Studies, The University of Hong Kong, especially Ven. Sik Hin Hung, Georgios T. Halkias, Guang Xing, Pu Chengzhong, Amy Yu, and Carol Li. In California I must thank not only all the organisers at the Numata Center for Buddhist Studies, University of California at Berkeley, especially Sanjyot Mehendale, and my panel chair, Mark Blum, but also Michael Nylan for her hospitality and for arranging my visit to Berkeley, and my friend Lillian Nakagawa for helping with a mobility problem I encountered during that time. In Surrey my visit in search of information concerning the Shrine of Wisdom was greatly assisted by the kindness of Derek and Julie Parker, Librarian and Manager respectively at the Fintry Trust, Godalming, in September 2021.

It is customary when acknowledging help explicitly to exonerate everyone mentioned from any errors of fact or interpretation that may be found in an author's work. In this convention I concur; no one should bear the blame for mistakes that are mine alone. But I would like to go a little further. I wish I

had more to show in the way of an outcome from all this support. In every topic treated here I certainly feel there is much more research that might have been carried out and much more that could have been said. All I can hope is that others will see the need to carry forward the work initiated here.

T. H. Barrett
Letchworth Garden City
27 September 2023

Introduction

The genesis of these lectures has been explained in my preface, but to explain the reasons for what may appear to be their unusually diverse scope may need a few words more. Though in a sense they would appear to start in the middle, with a response to a request for information, the first lecture was designed to signal a broader approach, one that should perhaps be made explicit, though the final appended remarks do return to my underlying theme. Our age is one in which those of us who look back on the past of mankind must rise to the challenge of writing world history rather than confining our vision to the intellectual heritage with which we are most familiar, and amongst the world phenomena that we must now make part of our investigations, the great religious traditions are precisely those that must surely have an immediate claim on our attention, since some at least have long shown a remarkable ability to transmit their messages successfully across the barriers of completely unrelated languages, and over many centuries. Think of the seventy scholars of the Septuagint, translating Hebrew to Greek, or the translators of the subsequent Greek Bible through Latin into Gothic.

This last example has been investigated by Max Deeg for comparative purposes, probing the possibility of learning lessons for the study of Buddhist translation.[1] The voice of the Buddha, the 'Lion's Roar', has after all echoed through the centuries across many very different cultures, leaving a rich legacy of written scriptures and less prestigious though still important materials in a wide variety of ancient and medieval languages. The investigation of early Buddhist renderings of South Asian materials into Chinese is just one example where immense strides have been made in recent years, though the number of persons linguistically qualified to look closely at the evidence is limited, making the loss of such scholars and friends as Karashima Seishi 辛島静志 (1957–2019) and Stefano Zacchetti (1968–2020) all the harder to bear. I lack the philological expertise to join such a select group, but I do read their work with avid interest, and I have therefore noted Max Deeg's observation that for China we are missing almost all the 'workshop' information that we have from Christian Gothic Germany showing the actual details of how translators went about their tasks.[2]

But for the transmission of Buddhist materials into European languages at a much later period, including very recent times, we are better served, and indeed we can even reach back to a period corresponding to one before the texts that remain the primary evidence for Karashima, Zacchetti, and their

1 Max Deeg, "Creating Religious Terminology – a comparative approach to early Chinese Buddhist translations", *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 31.1–2 (2007), pp. 83–118.

2 Deeg, "Creating Religious Terminology – a comparative approach to early Chinese Buddhist translations", *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 31.1–2 (2007), p. 64.

peers who deal with the advent of Buddhism in China. For that distant epoch any transmission other than in the scriptures we still possess is very hard to pin down, even if we may suspect that there was a 'pre-translation' phase before qualified monks sat down to translate texts. The original oral transmission of Buddhism to China is mentioned in one early source, but this has long been treated as a doubtful story of unclear transmission.[3] The story is not, however, intrinsically unlikely, since we know that the Buddha's message was originally transmitted orally, and Mark Allon for one has done much to illuminate exactly how this was organized; we also know that some Chinese translations relied on texts not written down but dictated from memory.

But the oral transmission of memorized material would not have been the only non-written way of spreading the Buddhist message. Some Buddhist ideas may have been spread quite informally as part of everyday conversations. Thus to my mind there is one expression of a religious idea in Chinese that suggest an origin in the oral (and not necessarily accurate) communication of Buddhism, but once more conclusive proof is still lacking.[4] Again, there appears to have been another, intermediate form of the spread of Buddhism that was based not on the verbatim memorization of distinct scriptures but on the retelling in more fluid form of 'traditions'.[5] Amongst these tales of the Buddha's past lives in animal form, widely distributed throughout Asia, were — to judge from their later popularity — of some significance from the start. So, we may guess that storytelling about animals constituted from quite early days an important adjunct to the Buddhist message in China, even if such content does not show up until the third century CE. And to revert to Max Deeg's point about our relative lack of details about transmission in late antiquity, by contrast the movement of animal stories from Europe to East Asia can be quite securely dated: *Aesop's Fables* arrived in a Jesuit Japanese translation from Latin in 1593.[6] In China they were translated orally from English via Mandarin into simple literary Chinese in 1840.[7]

But meanwhile the earliest Buddhist story to travel westwards, that of the Buddha's life, had already made it across Asia via Arabic into Georgian, by which time the Buddha had been transformed into a Christian saint, and thence

3 Eric Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* (Leiden: Brill, 1959), pp. 24–25.

4 Timothy Barrett, "Buddhist Nirvana and its Chinese Interpreters: A Note", in Victor H. Mair, ed., *Buddhist Transformations and Interactions: Essays in Honor of Antonino Forte* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2017), pp. 53–64.

5 Such as that noted by Faxian 法顯 that he heard during his stay in Sri Lanka in the early fifth century, which was explicitly designated by its preacher as non-canonical: see Jean-Pierre Drège, ed. and trans., Faxian, *Mémoires sur les Pays Bouddhiques* (Paris: Les Belles Letters, 2013), p. 76.

6 Masaaki Kubo, "Francis Xavier and Aesop's Fables" *Bulletins de l'Académie Royale de Belgique* 5.7–12 (1994), pp. 393–402.

7 Robert Thom, *Esop's Fables written in Chinese by the learned Mun-Mooy Seen-shang*, Canton: Canton Press Office, 1840. Thom translated the fables orally in Mandarin, and his teacher put them into an acceptable written style.

to Greek and on to Latin, arriving back in this form in Japan via another Jesuit translation in 1591.[8] Formal textual translation from language to language in a westerly direction across the Eurasian land mass was evidently well under way by medieval times, though in this case the story plainly travelled from scribe to scribe in written form. Can we even so catch a glimpse of the less formal, 'pre-translation' forms of transmission by oral communication for the westward spread of Buddhism in the medieval world? My research as presented in the first lecture suggests that we can, that once we know what animal stories were being told in China, the records of the intrepid European religious figures who availed themselves of the Eurasian links established by the Mongol Empire to travel to East Asia do bear witness to this process.

In this way my hope is that the reader will see that the spread westward of Chinese Buddhism is not just a matter of bibliography but involves human stories too. This hope also informs the second lecture too, though here any individual stories, including those of individuals I did know personally, are set within a wider narrative that a straightforward bibliographical approach would tend to efface. Translation, whether formal or informally within cross-cultural conversations, always takes place after all within broader historical changes. Thus, a study of Anglophone renditions of Buddhist sources to my mind has from the outset to account for the nature of the British presence in Asia, and thus to include an explicit if necessarily concise avowal of the course of British imperialism. Even the strongest current defenders of that imperialism find the initial British intervention in China on behalf of opium traders utterly unpardonable, so it is not easy to raise this topic.[9] The Anglophone missionary effort in China, too, stimulated among many a highly partisan and negative image of Chinese Buddhism, even if as we shall see some missionaries discovered that people whom their leaders denominated as heathens were not devoid of religious insight.[10] But one or two of these more broadminded missionaries and a former consul or two then found retirement posts in the United Kingdom associated with Chinese studies, and it was these veterans who tended to make whatever impact on the academic study of Chinese Buddhism Britain was able to have before the twentieth century.

On these hesitant advances no doubt there is and will be much more to be said, though even in the mid-twentieth century those who wished to use Chinese to investigate Buddhist materials had as far as I can see to shift for

8 Donald S. Lopez Jr. and Peggy McCracken, *In Search of the Christian Buddha: How an Asian Sage Became a Medieval Saint* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2014), p. 178, citing the remarkable work of Ikegami Eiko 池上恵子, to whom reference is made, together with her husband, in my second lecture.

9 Nigel Biggar, *Colonialism: A Moral Reckoning* (London: William Collins, 2023), pp. 219–220.

10 Lian Xi, *The Conversion of the Missionaries: Liberalism in American Protestant Missions in China, 1907–1932* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1997), pp. 183–189; one of the missionaries concerned, Dwight Goddard, we shall meet again in the third lecture.

themselves rather than expect to acquire formal taught qualifications in the language.[11] To confine my remarks solely to Buddhist translation within an academic context seemed to me therefore to miss the bigger picture, since very significant developments were for better or worse taking place elsewhere. It was here, moreover, that I was able to find the very thing that Max Deeg identified as absent for earlier historical periods, namely surviving material traces of the translation process itself. To hold in my hands, thanks to the generosity of its custodians, an actual notebook containing painfully transcribed Chinese characters from a Buddhist text with their meanings jotted down beside them got me as close to the experience of those heroes of the long-distant past like Kumārajīva or Xuanzang as I am likely to get.[12] But this third lecture, like its predecessors, is not presented as a goal achieved but simply as a suggestion as to what might lie ahead in the study of the transmission of Buddhism. The preservation of the records of Buddhism's journey to the West from East Asia seems for the moment quite random and accidental. One example I raise in the Afterword concerns the linguistic practice of Japanese Zen masters communicating Chinese concepts in California, where it is possible to find records of translation practice within teaching sessions.[13] How much material of this sort exists I do not know, nor do I know of anyone who has systematically sought it out. To undertake a survey of such evidence would be one obvious starting point. But the reflections on practice by translators themselves surely need to be collected too. I recall my late friend John R. McRae (1947–2011), when discussing his translation of the *Vimalakīrti sutra*, told me that he had talked with that scripture's Japanese translator, Ishida Mizumaro 石田瑞麿 (1917–1999), and admired his determination to render the work as far as possible into a truly Japanese style without undue reliance on a Chinese vocabulary, the default practice when making Chinese Buddhist texts readable in Japan. Where are the autobiographies of Chinese to English Buddhist text translators? And who is collecting the material evidence? Surely translators' notebooks from current projects could and should be archived as well, as has already been done at the Fintry Trust.

These lectures, then, were never designed to provide that valued academic item, a 'brick in the wall'; more of a 'finger pointing at the moon'. If they stimulate others to go further and to do better, my purpose will have been achieved.

11 Though not without success, in some cases, especially when the language was acquired within an academic context: see Tim Barrett, "The Sinological Writings of John Brough (1917–1984)", *Bulletin of the British Association for Chinese Studies* (1984), pp. 31–33.

12 I will confess to some very brief experience of intercultural and interlinguistic interpreting in 1974, but never in a Buddhist context.

13 Shunryu Suzuki, *Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness: Zen Talks on the Sandōkai* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 137–146.

CHAPTER ONE

A Monkey Jumps: The First Recorded Cross-Cultural Contact of Chinese Religion and its Implications

It is always a pleasure to be back in the unique ambience of Hong Kong, even remotely, and I am very grateful to all those who have made possible the opportunity to talk to you again about Chinese Buddhism as I see it. Last time I was here, I pointed out that since I was a student at the time of the Cultural Revolution, I was only able to learn to read Chinese, and never had the chance subsequently to spend any more time in East Asia than a year or so in Japan, so my understanding has consequently been very much based on reading books, with all the limitations that that entails. Reflecting further on my experience, I have begun to develop an interest in the transmission of Chinese Buddhism more generally, in part to Japan, but under the restricted conditions that have prevailed recently and limited my access to libraries, I have been obliged to work more about Europe, and especially to the United Kingdom. My remarks will naturally turn therefore to the study and translation of Chinese Buddhist sources in what we may broadly call the West, but before doing so I would like to spend some time on the nature of cultural contacts more generally. Most people are not academics, and for most people interaction with an unfamiliar culture does not involve the study of books at all. Indeed, books are probably not as illuminating about this process of interaction as material culture, a field that is not well known to me, and upon which I do not propose to comment.

But occasionally in old books one does find echoes of the many purely oral conversations between persons from different cultures that must antedate our written sources. Look for example at the early translated materials in Chinese that introduced Buddhism from South Asia. Much space is taken up by *Jātaka* tales, stories about past lives of the Buddha in which he is not a human but an animal, and these tales, like Aesop's Fables in the West, and oral folk tales around the world, rely for their simple messages on our ability to recognise the typical behaviour of animals, whatever our particular cultural background: foxes; for example, are always cunning, tigers are fierce, tortoises are slow. By appealing to our common perceptions alien messages are rendered more palatable.

I have long been especially fascinated by one animal, the monkey, or ape. Not all languages are particular in distinguishing the tailless apes who look more like us from the monkeys who sport in addition to four limbs a long tail as well. So if I do not preserve this distinction in what follows, it is because my sources are not themselves always clear about it, though macaques (*mihou* 猕

猴) in East Asia with tails are generally translated as monkeys, and gibbons (*yuan* 猿) without tails are translated as apes. Conceptually all such animals tend always to be related, whatever word is used, so I have often resorted to the non-specific adjective 'simian' to emphasize this commonality. The salient common characteristic of the Asian macaque or gibbon is its capacity for leaping about, and it is perhaps this energetic way in which it surpasses humans despite its relative similarity of appearance that makes it frequently the hero of stories about leaping over boundaries of culture and geography. But as we shall see from the human point of view this superior ability is often seen as problematic, something demanding restraint or control by a human or rather more often a superhuman figure.

Many of the stories I intend to tell exhibit these two elements of energetic leaping and superior suppression in various ways, though before turning to those that involve cultural contact to the West, I would like to introduce a very interesting example of triple cross-cultural transmission symbolised by simian feats of superhuman energy that involves China but represents a more easterly viewpoint based in Japan. It also involves a very basic element in the transmission of Buddhism that is not verbal or even related to material culture but concerns the need to establish Buddhist sacred space in new places. I believe that when Professor Roderick Whitfield gave some lectures under the same auspices here a few years ago he too explored this phenomenon, whereby sacred mountain peaks in India were believed to have flown thence to China, thus making it in a way a new holy land. Several other scholars have commented on various aspects of this pattern, which was extremely widespread across the Buddhist world, or at least the northern part of it. Frequently we find the original Mount Gṛdhrakūṭa, the Vulture Peak 靈鷲山 upon which the Buddha preached, or Mount Wutai 五台山, Chinese home of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, replicated in whole or part across the landscape.[1] But what I did not realise until recently is that the subsequent eastward spread of Chinese Buddhism to Japan resulted also in the spread of these ways of conceptualising spiritual connections at the geographical level right down to quite specific matters of botanical and zoological detail.

Thus in the early fourteenth century in Japan we find the Tendai scholar Kōshū 光宗 (1276–1350), writing in his marvellously rich compilation of 1318 known as the *Keiran shūyōshū* 渓嵐拾葉集 (Leaves Gathered from a Stormy Gulch), asserting that his home on Mount Hiei 比叡山, northeast of Kyoto, is a fragment of the home of his school in China, Mount Tiantai 天台山 in China, which was itself originally in turn a part of Vulture Peak.[2] A bamboo thicket may be found in all three instantiations of this sacred place, he

1 Plentiful examples of this type of phenomenon may be found for example in Susan Andrews, Jinhua Chen, and Guang Kuan, eds., *The Transnational Cult of Mount Wutai: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2021), especially Part Four.

2 Grapard, Allan G. "*Keiran shūyōshū*, A Different Perspective on Mt. Hiei in the Medieval Period", in Richard K. Payne, ed., *Re-visioning "Kamakura" Buddhism* (Honolulu: University

says, in which lives a white ape 白猿 *baiyuan*. It was this numinous creature who had at the command of the highest power that controlled him, that power manifest both as the Buddha and the god of Mount Hiei, transported the peak from India to China, and thence to Japan. Mighty leaps indeed!

The idea of a supernatural simian assistant, who could move parts of the landscape around on a transcontinental scale, seems as far as I have been able to discover a purely Japanese invention on the part of Kōshū or someone in his lineage. It is true that the Indian monkey god Hanuman does pick up a mountain in the north of India and takes it to Sri Lanka in his hurry to transport a medicinal herb that grows on the mountain, which suggests that some form of depiction of this feat may have inspired someone in East Asia, but the context is entirely different.[3] Certainly the notion of a white ape associated with transferring part of Vulture Peak to China goes back to several centuries earlier, since as Meir Shahar has established, it is already alluded to in the eleventh century there, specifically with reference not to the Tiantai range but to a peak very close to the lake at Hangzhou 杭州, by the Lingyin Monastery 靈隱寺. Here the fourth century Indian monk known as Huili 慧理, to whom the foundation of the monastery had long been attributed, is said to have recognised the fragment of his homeland, and verifies this connection by calling on a white ape that had made its home in the holy place while in India to come out of the place where it was still concealed, so unambiguously demonstrating its origins.[4] But a few years after Kōshū recorded the adaptation of this well-known story, a small group of foreigners appeared at the Hangzhou Monastery, led by the Friulian Dominican missionary Odoric of Pordenone (1286–1331) and including a 'James of Ireland', first of his nation known to have visited China, well ahead of any recorded Englishman, silent witness to the earliest recorded Chinese Buddhist conversation with a European cleric.

And what was this conversation about? A monk at the monastery, says Odoric, sounded a gong, and out trooped large numbers of monkeys, who lined up and received food from him, after which he sounded the gong again and they returned once more whence they had come.[5] When Odoric asked the meaning of this spectacle, the monk informed him that the simians were reincarnated

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of Hawaii Press, 1998), pp. 55–69. For one of the passages alluded to here, see his p. 65, though relevant material recurs more than once in Kōshū's text.

3 The episode is briefly alluded to in Romesh Dutt, *The Ramayana and Mahabharata Condensed into English Verse* (London: J. M. Dent, 1910), p. 157.

4 Shahar, Meir, "The Lingyin si Monkey Disciples and the Origins of Sun Wu-kong", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52 (1992), pp. 193–224. Shahar misses a helpful early reference to this story shortly thereafter in the second fascicle of the Chan encyclopedia *Zuting shiyuan* 祖庭事苑 of 1108, but otherwise gives a good picture of the story as it developed up to the time of Kōshū.

5 For some recent philological commentary on this passage, see the early French translation of Odoric edited by Alvise Andreose and Philippe Ménard, *Le Voyage en Asie d'Odoric de* Pordenone (Geneva: Droz, 2010), pp. 42–43, and notes, pp. 166–170; note too A. C. Moule.

humans, a notion which the Dominicans of course rejected immediately. As it happens, half a millennium later, at the time that one of the first British Protestant missionaries arrived at the same monastery in 1858, the zoological landscape had been changed by the introduction in the late Ming of more conspicuous measures to protect all animal life, including even reptiles, in special enclosures.[6] But exactly the same thing happened: the Protestant asked what was going on, and was given the same explanation.[7] In any case, at a place famous for its marvellous simian inhabitant it was, in the first place, the presence of monkeys that triggered the initial interreligious encounter and brought out at once the contrast between Buddhist and Christian world views. Or might there have been an even earlier episode of this type?

For even earlier than Odoric and Irish Seumas, a Fleming, William of Rubruck (c. 1220-c. 1293; his hometown is now part of France), reached the court of the Mongol Great Khan Möngke (r. 1251–1259) late in 1253 before the conquest of the whole of China. Though he got no further, he did come back to Europe with that first recorded conversation held with a Chinese person, and his account, while never widely read, has even so survived. And once more a simian story seems to have been at the heart of the matter. In times past it has sometimes been assumed that the 'Cataian priest' with whom William conversed was not Chinese but rather Tibetan, since he was not wearing the type of drab robe typical of the Chinese Buddhist clergy, but something of a much brighter and more reddish hue. But eminent Chinese clerics might be awarded by imperial favour the so-called 'purple robe' – in fact the dictionaries show that the word covered a range of possibilities from violet to rouge – which was a sign of distinction dating back to the seventh century. Antonino Forte, who examined the origins of this practice, remarked however that such robes were bestowed on Daoists even earlier than Buddhists.[8] We know, too, from a tale synopsized in the last monograph published by the late Glen Dudbridge, that in the tenth century at least Daoist and Buddhist robes were identical.[9] But since, if we read on, William's account of his conversation is followed with a summary of Chinese beliefs in the islands of immortality, the former seems the most probable.[10]

Quinsai, with Other Notes on Marco Polo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), pp. 34–35.

6 Eichman, Jennifer, *A Late Sixteenth-Century Chinese Buddhist Fellowship: Spiritual Ambitions, Intellectual Debates, and Epistolary Connections* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), pp. 170–205, gives a full account of this.

7 Robson, William, *Griffith John of Hankow* (London and Glasgow: Pickering and Inglis, n.d.), p. 28.

8 Forte, Antonino, "On the Origin of the Purple *kāṣāya* in China", *Buddhist Asia* 1 (2003), pp. 145–166.

9 Dudbridge, *A Portrait of Five Dynasties China From the Memoirs of Wang Renyu (880–956)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 217.

10 Jackson, Peter, with David Morgan, *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1990), pp. 202–203.

Though these honours in textile form were handed out quite rarely in earlier times, by the time William arrived, purple robes were a mark of relatively routine distinction, as historians of Song Buddhism in particular have observed.[11] We also are aware from Daoist sources that the Great Khan entertained good relations with the Daoists, and granted them, in at least one instance, clothing much grander than mere purple — nothing less than a hat of gold and brocade raiment.[12] William, by contrast, a mere Franciscan friar, apparently found his own ecclesiastical garb left him feeling distinctly under-dressed at the Khan's court. On one occasion he even accepted the loan of some more impressive vestments from a fellow countryman, a Parisian goldsmith working at the Khan's behest.[13] No wonder, therefore, that William would have asked through an interpreter how the Chinese priest's splendid garment had been made. The priest's response, which was probably conveyed through the goldsmith's adopted son or some other convenient intermediary, bears repeating at length, following Peter Jackson's translation.

> ..in the east of Cataia there are soaring crags inhabited by creatures who are built like human beings in every respect except that their knees do not bend and they move along in a kind of hopping, and that they are only one cubit tall and the whole of their little body is covered in hair. They live in inaccessible caves; and when men go hunting them, they take with them the most intoxicating ale they can brew and make cup-shaped hollows in the rocks, which they fill with the ale… So the hunters lie hidden, and these creatures emerge from their caves and sample the drink, crying 'Chinchin', and it is from this cry that their name is derived, for they are known as *chinchin.* They then gather round in very great numbers, consume the ale, become drunk and fall asleep on the spot. At this point the hunters come forward and tie their hands and feet while they are asleep; and the next day they open up a vein in their necks and extract from each one three or four drops of blood before letting them go free. The blood [...] is of the greatest value for making purple dye.[14]

Evidently the interpreter did not speak French entirely distinctly, for the priest's story, to judge from the Chinese source most similar to it, concerns not east but west China.[15] It also, alas, has nothing to do with our salutation 'chin-chin', as Paul Pelliot observed over a century ago in correcting the implication to this effect that may be found in the second edition of Yule and Burnell's glossary of Anglo-Indian vocabulary, *Hobson-Jobson,* since this derives rather from the pidgin adaptation of Chinese *qing, qing* 請請

11 Guo Peng 郭朋, *Song-Yuan fojiao* 宋元佛教 (Fuzhou: Fuzhou renmin chubanshe, 1981), p. 8.

12 Zheng Suchun 鄭素春, *Quanzhen jiao yu Da Menggu guo dishi* 全真教與大蒙古國帝師 (Taibei: Taiwan xueshang shuju, 1987), pp. 75, 181.

13 Jackson and Morgan, *Friar William*, pp, 215–216.

14 Jackson and Morgan, *Friar William*, p, 202.

15 Or so it would seem from the Chinese source cited in the note to this translation: as we shall see below, other sources put such tales in the south.

("please, please").[16] In today's Mandarin, as Pelliot and others since him have argued, the term William encountered most likely would have been *xingxing* 猩猩, which was and still is the name of an animal.[17] Reconstructions of the Mandarin of the Yuan dynasty certainly prompt this thought, but we should bear in mind that the equation also involves considerations of medieval French phonology.[18] Mercifully for the outsider to the considerable technicalities of this field, William makes clear in his own text how he would have pronounced initial 'Che' or 'Chi', since he refers to a ('very ugly') daughter of the Khan as, variously, Cirina, Cherinne and Chirine.[19] Since we know from other sources that this plain princess bore the well-known Persian name Shirin, the equation seems quite incontrovertible.[20]

This does not, however, dispose of the question of what a *xingxing* was. Today the term is used for the orang-utan, and most scholars, including historians of Chinese zoology, seem to assume that it always did so.[21] I remain to be convinced, and in this I feel I am in good company, since the late E. H Schafer discusses the dye referred to by the Cataian priest under the name "gibbon's blood" without mention of the orang-utan at all.[22] True, one of the stories he repeats about the animal from an early eighth century source, confirming its reputation as a toper, places it in today's North Vietnam. One supposes, it is conceivable that in earlier historical times the orang-utan's original range did extend so far north.[23] There are certainly other sources concerning the *xingxing* that do not in the least treat them as alien to less exotic parts of Tang China, such as one from about a century later that remarks on their fondness for sandals as well as wine and that describes how the former also impede their escape when they are lured into putting them on while thoroughly inebriated.[24]

16 Paul Pelliot, "Compte rendu: H. Yule and A. C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: The Anglo-Indian Dictionary,* second edition, ed. W. Crooke, 1903", *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 3 (1903), p. 478.

17 Thus most recently on this passage, Carla Nappi, *The Monkey and the Inkpot: Natural History and Its Transformations in Early Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2009), p. 197, n. 65, referring also to a very early Chinese source on this creature.

18 Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin* (Vancouver: UBC Press 1991), p. 334.

19 Jackson and Morgan, *Friar William*, p. 178.

20 For the original Shirin, see Wilhelm Baum,. "Shirin — Christian Queen of Persia: History and Myth", in Roman Malek, ed., *Jingjiao: The Church of the East in China and Central Asia* (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2006), pp. 475–483.

21 Guo Fu 郭郛, Joseph Needham and Cheng Qing-tai 成慶泰. *Zhongguo gudai dongwu xue shi* 中國古代動物學史 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1999), pp. 75, 103.

22 E. H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotica (*Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 208–210.

23 Zhang Zhuo 張鷟 (667–731), *Chaoye qianzai* 朝野僉載 (Collected Records from Court and Country), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), p. 135.

24 Li Zhao 李肇 (c. 806–825), *Tang Guoshi bu* 唐國史補 (Supplement to the Tang State History) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1979), p. 64. The seventh century source used by Schafer cited in the next note below attributes this information to Li Daoyuan 酈道元,

But most telling of all against the orang-utan hypothesis is the source Schafer cites regarding the production of the dye, which allegedly derived from blood taken from the animal under duress, but (since the *xingxing* supposedly could talk) with its verbal agreement. Schafer translates the term for the entrepreneurs responsible for this extraction process, *hu* 胡, as 'Westerners', and though this might well in his seventh century source indicate Sogdians, who ranged as traders from Central Asia to the tropics, a passage from the composition that he cites, which he does not translate, describes an aspect of *xingxing* behaviour that is both credible and very hard to reconcile with what we know of the behaviour of the orang-utan. The author of his text, Pei Yan 裴炎 (d. 684), prefaces his retelling of the wine and sandals ploy with the information that the *xingxing* roam in the mountains in packs of several hundred, something that no orang-utans seem ever to have done, since they are by far the least social of the great apes, tending very much to the solitary rather than the convivial, whereas the numbers given for a *xingxing* troop, even if exaggerated, seem much more characteristic of some species of monkey, or gibbon.[25]

William probably was not treated to the full range of possible Chinese *xingxing* lore, for we find that just as old as accounts of its fondness for wine and foot ware are further allegations of more mysterious faculties such as "knowing the past but not the future".[26] But the account of its inebriation would perhaps have made sense to a medieval traveller, since as Schafer also notes in his account, bibulous simians were already known in Europe in the works of classical writers such as Aristotle and Pliny. Certainly, the *xingxing*, even if not so frequently encountered in real life, remained vividly in the Chinese imagination, for we hear of one seventeenth century gentleman, Huang Chunyao 黃淳耀 (1605–1645) dreaming of the creature speaking to him.[27] He was evidently influenced by its canonical appearance in the *Book of Rites*, where it is given as an example of the animal mimicry of human speech without the human capacity for moral behaviour — something that the Victorian translator James Legge (1815–1897) dismissed flatly as impossible in an ape, though a century earlier Europeans too had been far less categorical.[28]

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but there is nothing to this effect in the current text of his *Shuijing zhu* 水經注. Compare Li, in Yang Shoujing 楊守敬 and Xiong Huizhen 熊會貞, eds., *Shuijing zhushu* 水經注疏 (Commentary on the Annotated Water Classic), (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe 1989), p. 3047, which does however situate the *xingxing* in the Vietnam area. In fact, as we shall see below, much *xingxing* lore — including this story — seems to have derived ultimately from a lost *Nanzhong zhi* 南中志, which seems to antedate the Tang dynasty.

25 Schafer cites Pei's piece from the *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 (in the original palace edition), pp. 168.1a–2b. Pei seems to have drawn on earlier information from a source such as the early Tang commentary on *Hou Han shu* 1965, p. 2850, which quotes both the *Shuijing zhu* and the *Nanzhong zhi*.

26 Guo, Needham and Cheng, *Zhongguo gudai dongwu*, p. 170, citing *Huainan zi* 淮南子.

27 Lynn Struve, "Psyching a Paragon: A Sinitic Excursion in Practical Ethics", *Journal of the British Association for Chinese Studies* 3 (2013), p. 43.

28 James Legge, *The Li Ki*, *Books I–X* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), p. 64; Stefaan Blanke, "Lord Monboddo's *Orang-Outang* and the Origin and Progress of Language", in Marco Pina and Nathalie Gontier, eds., *The Evolution of Social Communication in Primates* (Cham,

What William made of the information he gleaned about the *xingxing* and its role in the manufacture of clerical garb he does not tell us, though he does say he was dubious about the tales of immortality that apparently followed from his informant. The less theologically provocative story of simian bloodletting, on the other hand, he probably took in his stride. After all, if he knew his *Aesop's Fables*, as many did in his day, one of the many monkeys encountered in that corpus appears hung up in a butcher's shop, its humanoid features no defence against being sold as food.[29] And medieval Europe fully understood Asia possessed a superior level of knowledge of dyeing techniques that extended to some fairly exotic items, such as 'dragon's blood', which was certainly sold as an animal product, though it is actually of vegetable origin.[30]

William's story in the context of other Chinese tales of simians — and of their masters

But be that as it may, the most important point that Schafer makes about the *xingxing* and textile dyeing is that the whole story is a myth, since no gibbon blood known to man is of any use as a pigment. Yet it was by no means the only myth concerning apes and monkeys to have circulated in China during the time that William and Seumas were in East Asia. Indeed, Valerie Hansen has pointed out that despite the reluctance of the Song government to recognize officially the worship of deities in animal form (other than dragons), we find in a source dating to the early thirteenth century a record of an official cult of a *baiyuan* 白猿, usually translated as 'White Ape'.[31]

The most famous figure under this name is undoubtedly the much-discussed subject of a Tang short story, a somewhat sinister if not monstrous simian, an abductor of women and master of the magic arts, who is encountered in the far south of China, in present-day Fujian province.[32] But evidently by Song times the White Ape had become tolerably respectable, for we find in the Daoist Canon two texts that have been tentatively assigned a Northern Song origin wherein he appears as the patron of various magical techniques.[33]

Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2014), pp. 31–44. Note that Lord Monboddo was in the eighteenth century just as inconsistent as pre-modern Chinese in applying his terminology for what are now recognised as different species.

29 Laura Gibb, trans., *Aesop's Fables* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 254.

30 Franco Brunello, *Marco Polo e le merci dell'Oriente* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1986), p. 112.

31 Valerie Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127–1276* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 182–183.

32 There is a readily available translation of this tale in Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, trans., *Tang Dynasty Stories* (Beijing: Panda Books, 1986), pp. 144–149, besides earlier renderings.

33 See Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, *The Taoist Canon* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2004), Volume Two, pp. 978–979, on texts nos. 858 and 861 (entries by Marc Kalinowski). My own reading of these texts would incline me towards a later date: mention of the Jin 金 'bandit army' on p. 16b of no. 858 suggests that some of the material in it dates back to the late Northern Song at the earliest, and probably the Southern Song, while no. 861 appears to be later still. Dominic Steavu, *The Writ of the Three Sovereigns: From Local Lore to Institutional Daoism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii

The possible relationship between the White Ape and the Monkey King is a very complex issue, and not one that can be treated exhaustively in a brief discussion; it deserves separate treatment. But there is one aspect of the cult reported by Valerie Hansen and others that connects it not only with tales of the Monkey King but also of other similar figures, and that is the depiction of simian power restrained. In a sense, Odoric and Seumas witnessed such restraint, in that the story of their travels emphasizes the orderly behaviour of the animals they saw, coming when called to be passive recipients of Buddhist charity, while William's ape is subdued by alcohol — a topic on which Pei Yan's piece expatiates by means of a reported sermon on the *xingxing* by a Buddhist monk.

To explore the full background to this depiction of holy men and animals would of course take these remarks a long way from the monkeys of medieval Hangzhou. In both East and West, to be brief, the capacity to form friendships with normally dangerous carnivores has been seen as a clear sign of sanctity in the hagiographical imagination.[34] To take one example, as a result of this urge to embellish the biographies of religious figures with indications of extraordinary powers of dominance over the non-human, even a fairly bookish holy man, such as the Chinese Buddhist traveller to India and translator Faxian 法顯 (c. 337–422), is in later retellings of his travels said to have been untroubled by the attentions of lions. Despite the fact, that he made no such claim for himself, just as Saint Jerome certainly nowhere claimed to have kept a lion in his library in the fashion depicted by later legend.[35] Apes, however big, are by contrast not generally known to eat people, but their restlessness and agility are seen as antithetical to the calmness commonly associated with sanctity. In Buddhist scriptures and in East Asian culture under Buddhist influence therefore, the monkey is associated with the restlessness of the unenlightened mind.[36] Agility, however, also connects it with a long tradition of martial arts practice, best exemplified by the White Ape, as already mentioned.

The officially recognised White Ape cult of the early thirteenth century is different in the way that its power is subdued by sanctity, for in it the animal is said to have become intoxicated by consuming a Daoist elixir (somewhat like the Monkey King of the novel), but his intoxication results in drowning. He would not be the only underwater primate known to Chinese folklore, even discounting the fact that the Monkey King lives in a cave behind a

Press, 2019), pp. 195–197, situates these texts in an ancient tradition, but again suggests a Song date.

34 T. H. Barrett, "The monastery cat in cross-cultural perspective: Cat poems of the Zen masters", in James A. Benn, Lori Meeks, and James Robson, eds., *Buddhist Monasticism in East Asia: Places of Practice* (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2010), p. 117.

35 Jean-Pierre Drège, *Faxian: Mémoire sur les pays bouddhiques* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2013), pp. 54, 154.

36 Glen Dudbridge, *The Hsi-yü chi: A Study of Antecedents to the Sixteenth Century Chinese Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 167–176.

waterfall: at least one other monster of simian appearance condemned to live a sub-aquatic life beneath a mountain by a greater (sometimes Buddhist) holy power has had a long history in China, as demonstrated by Poul Andersen in his wonderful monograph *The Demon Chained Under Turtle Mountain*.[37] Imprisonment beneath a mountain is also most famously the punishment meted out by the higher deities in the Ming novel to the Monkey King for his bad behaviour as an 'unruly god', in an initial section that is a sort of 'back story' before he even teams up with his Buddhist master. It is, however, unclear when this episode became part of his story, since in the 'Kōzanji 高山寺 version' of the *Journey to the West,* which may predate Friar William's visit, all that we learn about the Monkey King's past is that he was dispatched to a cave for stealing the Peaches of Immortality from the Queen Mother of the West, Xiwang Mu 西王母.[38] Though the overt narrative structure of Xuanzang's journey is of course emphatically Buddhist, the Queen Mother, however exotic her origins may or may not have been, was, and is still, a figure of greater significance to the Daoist tradition.[39] It is also material relating in the first instance to the Daoist tradition that illuminates some important aspects of restraining the magic ape that appear in the fourteenth chapter of the Ming novel.

In the classic Ming novel, Xuanzang first encounters his future acolyte trapped in a stone casket under a mountain, and even after he is released the monkey is kept under restraint by a band around his head that can be tightened by the monk's recitation of a mantra. But the mountain and the enclosing casket are not removed manually: they only stay put on top of the monkey because the Buddha has placed a seal upon the casket consisting of six syllables written in golden characters, which the monk's prayers easily remove. We may turn from the novel to a source from before the time of William's travels that would have been readily available to whoever wrote the Ming novel at least. The story in question is preserved in the one hundred and fortieth fascicle of the great repository of Tang and earlier stories, the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, which was widely circulated for the first time in the late sixteenth century.[40]

37 Poul Andersen, *The Demon Chained Under Turtle Mountain: The History and Mythology of the Chinese River Spirit Wuzhiqi.* Berlin: G + H Verlag, 2001. Cf. also my review of this work in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 64.3 (2001), pp. 427–428.

38 *Da Tang sanzang qu jing shihua*, 大唐三藏取經詩話 (How the Tang Monk Gained the Scriptures), Author unknown (Shanghai: Zhongguo wenxue chubanshe, 1955), p. 24. On this 'Kōzanji version', see Dudbridge, *The Hsi-yu chi,* pp. 25–45.

39 Suzanne E. Cahill, *Transcendence and Divine Passion: The Queen Mother of the West in Medieval China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

40 Thus Glen Dudbridge, *The Tale of Li Wa* (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), p. 10). The story may be found under a title drawn from the first name mentioned in the piece, that of the first owner of the property described, Wang Feng 汪鳳, not only in plain editions of the *Taiping guangji* but also in at least one annotated selection, Wang Rutao 王汝濤, *Taiping guangji xuan* 太平廣記選 (Selections from the *Taiping Guangji*), (Jinan: Qilu chubanshe, 1980), pp. 63–66.

In this narrative, once apparently (according to the note in the larger repository) included in the *Jiyi ji* 集異, *Record of Collected Marvels*, of Xue Yongruo 薛用弱, who seems to have put this collection of strange tales together in about the third or fourth decade of the ninth century, a rich man observes that two dark vapours, thick as arrow shafts, ascend taut and sharp up to the heavens from the property of a neighbour. Suspecting the presence of buried treasure, he buys the property and starts to dig. First, he comes across a huge rock. Having removed this, he finds a stone chest, intricately made, shackled fast and closed with metal and with lime. On each side are seven seals in an unintelligible script, like seal script but more complex. Attacking this with a hammer and tongs, he finds inside a bronze cauldron covered with a bronze lid, closed together with lead and tin. Here are nine more seals, in a yet more outlandish script. Removing the lid, he sees that the mouth of the cauldron is covered with three layers of purple silk. These are lifted off. Out jumps a huge monkey, which has soon bounded off out of sight. Inside the cauldron, inscribed on a stone, are the words:

> Fifteenth day of the seventh month of 587; the Mao-shan Daoist Bao Zhiyuan 茅山道士鮑知遠 imprisoned a monkey god in here. Should it be let out there will be a great upheaval of barbarian soldiery twelve years later; the world will be covered in the smoke of battle, and the person responsible will soon perish with all his family.

Sure enough, the rebellion of An Lushan breaks out twelve years later, and within the year the rich man and his family are dead.

This is of course not a Daoist source, and the Daoist named does not seem to be as far as I have discovered a real individual. But it should alert us to the fact that despite the importance of monkeys in Buddhist lore, non-Buddhist Chinese found them both troublesome and potentially divine, 'unruly gods', too. The theme of chaos unleashed by imprudence, the 'Pandora's box' element in the tale, some time ago attracted comparison with a similar (but non-simian) tale of trouble let loose upon the world in the opening chapter of another famous vernacular novel, the *Water Margin,* though a quick trawl through the internet suggests that its significance for the *Journey to the West* is also appreciated now.[41] It is not actually the formation of the Monkey King figure that ultimately concerns me here, but before leaving his tale we should return to the 'Kōzanji version' and to an incident depicted on the pilgrim group's journey, in which the Monkey King turns a beautiful woman into a pile of grass, and back again.[42]

41 Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書. 1979. *Guanzhui bian* 管錐编 (Worm's eye views) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), Vol. 2, pp. 690–691, seems to have been the first to suggest a parallel with the *Water Margin*, and with European myth; the former connection is noted by Wang Rutao (previous note).

42 *Da Tang sanzang qu jing shihua,* pp. 9–10.

Beyond the simian in Chinese tales of mastery

Such tricks are of course part of the stock in trade of the Chinese magician, but it is still perhaps significant that we find something almost identical happening with another small party venturing westwards at a somewhat earlier date than Xuanzang's seventh century pilgrimage. In a description of Laozi's last journey into the unknown after bequeathing the *Daodejing* to posterity, which may be found in a twelfth century text, it is Laozi who creates a beautiful woman out of rushes to test his own brutish acolyte.[43] This is not the only parallel between accounts of Laozi's travels and the *Journey to the West*: when Laozi reaches the region of Kashmir a disobliging monarch tries in vain to fry him in a cauldron, just as a foreign king tries to fry up the Monkey King also, not only in the novel, but in at least one fourteenth century Daoist precursor.[44] Although the biography of Laozi that offers these parallels was banned under the Mongols, at least in its original form, we know that before then Buddhists were certainly included in its readership, since it is listed in the bibliography of a Buddhist encyclopaedia of the mid-thirteenth century.[45]

Censorship, then, has made the entire history of the origins and development of the tale of Laozi's journey to the West a matter for careful specialist treatment, but it would seem that the figure of Laozi's acolyte, Xu Jia 徐甲, in all probability goes back to the fourth century at least, since he is in a biography of Laozi that is normally taken to have been written at that time.[46] Rather, however, than attempt to argue that this tale served as a template for the Buddhist one (though the exploration of parallels might prove of interest) I would prefer to draw attention to the analogous relationship between the leaders of the two travelling groups and their chief subordinates.

For Xu Jia has been left out of the picture so far because he is not an ape — he is actually an even more improbable Inner Asian travelling companion, in that he is a zombie. And even in our earliest source Laozi controls him through a written talisman, without which, as he demonstrates when Xu Jia is distracted by the prospect of a pretty wife into betraying his master, he is nothing but a heap of bones.[47] But Xu, like the Monkey King, has a very long history, and like the Monkey King or indeed the White Ape, he has attracted worshippers himself — not regular Daoists, but (as it were) their

43 *Hunyuan shengji* 混元聖紀, 3.10a, in the edition of the Daoist Canon, text no. 770, for which see Schipper and Verellen, *Taoist Canon*, Volume Two, pp. 872–874).

44 Cf. Dudbridge, *The Hsi-yu Chi* p. 182; *Hunyuan shengji* 4.10a.

45 *Fozu tongji*, preface, p. 132a23–24, in the edition of the Taishō Canon, Vol. 49, where it is listed among Daoist references under the alternative title for its original edition, *Laojun shilu* 老君實錄.

46 Robert Ford Campany, *To Live As Long As Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 202–203.

47 On the talisman in question, see note 249 by Robert Campany in the translation just cited.

camp followers, priests who themselves practice less elevated forms of religion but who are prepared to assist Daoist priests in their ceremonies.[48] I have termed this type of religion 'ancillary' in that it characterizes cults often loosely described as 'shamanic' in which gods are sometimes quite explicitly subordinate to those of religious traditions like Buddhism and Daoism, founded on texts and with a self-conscious belief in their superior status.[49] Such ancillary forms of religion would include not only 'unruly gods' who have been obliged to make their peace with higher powers but also figures like the Buddha's filial disciple Mulian 目蓮, who possesses the 'shamanic' attribute of being able to see into the world of the dead.[50] It is perhaps indicative of this shamanic function in the case of the Monkey King and White Ape that they are described as having burning eyes, or eyes that emit beams of light, since this is probably a sign of their ability to see into the depths of the spirit world.[51] It has been suggested to me therefore that the 'Sage Equal to Heaven' (to quote the title of the Monkey King) is in fact the Sage of Hell.[52] One may remark, in passing, that this would imply that both White Ape and Monkey King are descendants of some earlier simian god, but that the former underwent a conversion to Daoism, the latter to Buddhism, leaving their kinship, though recognisable, somewhat obscured.

The role of the master's companion

But if such dangerous companions — meaning now Xu Jia (whose early assumption of the role of travelling companion would have precluded the White Ape's presence) and the Monkey King – have both been co-opted for the westward journey, does this not tell us something about its destination? Glen Dudbridge, both in his initial study of the background to the novel, and in a later survey of further research by other scholars, turns ultimately to the ritual aspects of the *Journey to the West* cycle still apparent today, and especially to the use of these rituals in coping with the final journey of the

48 For a succinct account of Xu Jia's history and recent role, see the entry on him by Livia Kohn in Fabrizio Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism* (London: Routledge 2008), pp. 1122–1123).

49 Livia Kohn, *Daoism Handbook* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), xxiv.

50 Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 140–167. There are arguments for restricting the use of the word 'shaman' more narrowly than is done by most writers on Chinese religion, but theoretically more appropriate alternatives such as 'spirit medium' do not quite capture the dangerous quality of the figures concerned, so here the majority usage is adopted, *pro tem*.

51 The Ming novel opens with the Monkey King sending forth rays of light; the White Ape's 'furious eyes flickered like lightening', in the translation of Yang and Yang, *Tang Dynasty Stories*, p. 147; the White Ape of Daoist Canon text no. 561 also transforms into a white light; other examples could be cited. I am grateful to Benjamin Penny for referring me to reports of 'glowing eyes' due to retinal reflection as a surprising feature of unfamiliar anthropoid animals, collected in Jean Boyd and Colin Boyd, *The Evidence for Bigfoot and Other Man-Beasts* (Wellingborough: Aquarian Press, 1984), pp. 28–29.

52 By John Lagerwey, following my presentation of some material related to the White Ape/Monkey King question in Cambridge in 1982, for which I can now offer my much belated thanks.

soul to the realm of the dead.[53] In doing so he situates the whole story firmly at the heart of Chinese culture, in a way that challenges those who would see the Monkey King as the product of exotic influences, as no more than an East Asian version of the South Asian monkey god Hanuman. To proponents of such a theory, the appearances of the White Ape in the Southeast and Southwest, those parts of China most open to South Asian influence directly overland or by sea via South-east Asia, argue very much in favour of the Hanuman hypothesis.[54] Certainly, any search focussing primarily on origins here tends to distort significance within the Chinese situation: after all, Xu Jia seems to be entirely Chinese, while Mulian is equally a figure of clear South Asian derivation, but both are quite at home in their Chinese roles. In fact, the distribution of the early White Ape stories — many dating back long before the Tang — suggests, in conjunction with Chinese descriptions of the White Ape's behaviour, an intermediate possibility. Rather than an import from further afield, some scholars have preferred to see the original of the White Ape as a mountain god worshipped among the early non-Han cultures of the southwest.[55] Abducting women might have appeared unacceptable to educated Chinese — no sage kings of old indulged in such behaviour – but other mythologies in the region, some of which talk of simian ancestry, seem less concerned.[56] Even today the Yao claim dog ancestry, albeit perhaps under Chinese influence a dog properly married to its human bride.[57] Those of us who inhabit a continent named after a young woman who was abducted by a god in the form of a bull are in any case hardly in a position to criticize. And of course, real apes no more abduct women than bulls do.[58]

As well as such uncanny non-human assistants, the theme of the civilised hero accompanied by a less cultured 'enforcer' who is still counted as human also occurs in stories from China, and examples of this sort may perhaps be found in many other cultures too.[59] But although frequently other people's gods are depicted as demons, in the case of the White Ape and the Monkey King, the superhuman abilities of the simian god, duly restrained

53 Dudbridge, *Hsi-yu Chi*, pp. 165–166, and *Books, Tales and Vernacular Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 271–275.

54 Hera S. Walker "Indigenous or foreign? A Look at the Origins of the Monkey King Sun Wukong" *Sino-Platonic Papers* 81, 1998. This paper draws on some important research, published after Glen Dudbridge's second survey, by Wu Hung.

55 Nariyuki Masao 成行正夫."Hakuenden no keifu" 白猿傳の系譜 (The Filiation of the Tale of the White Ape)". *Geibun kenkyū* 藝文研究 23 (1974), pp. 64–74.

56 As is already pointed out in Dudbridge, *Hsi-yu Chi*, p. 116.

57 Shiratori Yoshirō 白鳥芳郎. *Tōnan Ajia sanchi minzoku shi* 東南アジア山地民族誌 (Ethnography of the Mountain Peoples of Southeast Asia) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1979), pp. 79–82, 295.

58 Robert van Gulik, *The Gibbon in China: An Essay in Animal Lore* (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1967), p. 67.

59 A famous example in China of the ninth century is one in which the hero is assisted by a muscular, exotic yet still human slave, apparently possessed of magical powers; cf. Marc S. Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 93.

by superior knowledge based on literacy, proved all too useful in dealing precisely with those parts of the world — including the spirit world — into which the Chinese of former times hesitated to venture. Something of the same motivation seems in my view to have prompted the rise of the city god cults in China in medieval times, as population pressures forced Chinese settlers, fearful of all sorts of unknown horrors, into new areas where their own ancestral ghosts and spirits had never been.[60] In confronting the wider world much further from home, what better ancillary help could one wish for than a not quite Chinese — even not quite human — assistant? Here again the animal helps bridge a cultural gap, albeit one within what is normally accounted Chinese territory.

Recapitulation: animals and boundaries

So, to sum up, it may be no more than happy coincidence that the earliest Western contacts with China known to us should have involved apes and monkeys. For the holy man addressed through his interpreter by William did not claim to have directly subdued any *xingxing*, even if he derived some benefit from its subjection. Neither did the scene observed by Irish James and Odoric at the Lingyin Monastery place the simians there in quite the same relationship to their Buddhist informant as that of the Monkey King and his Buddhist master. Or if one turns to look at the viewpoint of the Chinese, confronted with intruders from the strange, uncanny further recesses of Eurasia, could the thought that the powers of East Asia's simians remained on their side have provided some reassurance? For the reasons already discussed, connected with the difficulty in assessing the cultural specificity of ideas about simians, it is not possible to come up with clear answers to such questions.

But if we do step back from the immediate Chinese cultural context to consider the issues more broadly, the coincidence — if that is all it is — that in both cases the talk turned to monkeys even so seems appropriate. These creatures stand at the boundary between man and the non-human world, and stories about them reflect in both East and West (as Schafer's observations on ancient images of the simian tend to suggest) our ambivalent feelings about that boundary.[61] And paradoxically, across the boundaries that divide humans it is this ambivalence itself that unites us, so it is no puzzle to me that William, Odoric and no doubt Irish James found their monkey stories worth reporting.

60 I have touched on these problems in T. H. Barrett, "Buddhism, Taoism and the rise of the city gods", in T. Skorupski, ed., *The Buddhist Forum*, II (London: SOAS, 1991), pp. 13–25, and T. H. Barrett, "Human Sacrifice and Self-sacrifice in China: A Century of Revelations", in Jan N. Bremmer, ed., *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice* (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2007) pp. 237–257.

61 Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, pp. 209–210.

As we have already noted, type and motif indexes of folk literature overflow with animal tales, after all, many of them shared by the vast corpus of Buddhist birth stories, in which they evidently served to carry the Buddhist message across cultural barriers. In historical situations where the focus on cultural boundaries was prominent and often even stressful, might not the boundary between human and animal have functioned as a common yet pragmatically flexible baseline, so that the telling of such tales perhaps served to diminish cultural differences, or at least anxieties? If so, then William's Chinese encounter among the Mongols maybe affords us a glimpse of an important if little known process. Here is one overlooked record, and it could be that there are others. But in fact, to turn back finally to what all this teaches us about the transfer of knowledge from one culture to another, and to this specific case of Chinese Buddhism to the West, the point I would wish to make is that shared elements such as beliefs in the wiles of foxes, the courage of lions and the agility of monkeys are not the only factors we should bear in mind. Yes, the first recorded contacts with Europeans in China concerned animals, but China was not in fact the best place for animals' stories of the type known both from Aesop and from Buddhist South Asian folk tales, for the simple reason that in almost all Chinese sources the generality of animals do not speak, since the majority of those responsible for recording popular lore did not themselves see speaking animals as anything but a vulgar fantasy.[62]

But as will have emerged from the earlier discussion, it is furthermore not just elite cultural preferences that lie like a shadow across these first contacts. When compared with the assumed commonality cross-cultural images of animal conduct with which I introduced the topic of trans-cultural storytelling, in the case of the monkey or ape it seems inadequate simply to map out the connotations of the words used in any particular collection of materials.[63] This is because, quite apart from any cultural specificities involved in understanding animals, all such cultural understandings were also enmeshed in ongoing historical processes in which meanings shifted within culture. Such shifts were probably true of all animals, for which after all each had its own history in relation to man.[64] There are certainly some

62 Thus Wolfram Eberhard, *A History of China* (London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 167, 268–269, who specifically suggests that in China animals do not usually speak with each other, and that the stock of animal stories is thus not as large as one might expect.

63 One substantial study, Linda L. Easton, "Mapping Animal and Human Transformations: Yüan Apes in China", Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, 1980, already exists on the 'ape', but though this provides a great deal of detail on two tenth century collections of primary sources and many secondary sources, it executes a close formal analysis of the sources in question that is very different in character from the much more exploratory remarks offered below, and its methodology has therefore not been followed here at all.

64 For China this is now clear from Roel Sterckx,, Martina Seibert, and Dagmar Schäfer, *Animals Through Chinese History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), who draw attention on p. 15 to some of the historical shifts in understanding animals documented in their collection of essays.

advantages to making simple structural comparisons of the type undertaken by students of folklore.[65] But in considering the sources we have on the theme of the suppressed ape in China we surely also have to acknowledge that it is possible to detect an ongoing shift from the ape as a frighteningly powerful, perhaps chthonic, yet perhaps originally alien deity of the non-Sinophone south, to a monkey king much more like the figure more familiar in the West due to works based on the Ming novel, a beguiling trickster full of magical prowess but also full of irreverent fun.[66] For what it is worth, a similar shift has been independently detected too in the simian history of Japan.[67] And who is to say to what degree this process had evolved in Karakorum or Hangzhou by the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries?

But my aim in all this has been simply to set the scene for a discussion of Buddhist text translation from Chinese to English. By moving from mere oral anecdote to written textual norms, we might be thought to be moving beyond the volatile world of oral literature to one of a stable literary heritage, safely locked inside the repository of the Buddhist Canon. Maybe, but if we turn from the multilayered realities of Chinese religious culture and the hidden tales that for William, Odoric and James lay behind the simple assertions about animals that they report, we are still obliged to deal with further shifts within the cultures of Europe that received these Daoist or Buddhist messages. For this reason, in my next lecture, I will turn to the British culture that had by the nineteenth century evolved a capacity for translating Buddhist works from Chinese, and how that evolution had come about.

65 See for example the standard study of the Buddhist animal in China, Pu, *Ethical Treatment of Animals in Early Chinese Buddhism: Beliefs and Practices* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 106, n. 24, on 'partial structural similarities' between two animal stories unlikely to reflect cultural contact.

66 His story has made a degree of impact in the United Kingdom at least, at first through translations of the novel, *Monkey,* of which three established versions now exist in English, but also through the importation of a Japanese television series based on the novel and since 2007 through the creation by Damon Albarn and James Hewett of what has been termed a 'circus opera', *Monkey: The Journey to the West.* I have also noticed a video game, *Enslaved: Odyssey to the West,* which retains the monkey hero of earlier narratives while substituting a female character for the Tang monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) who features in the traditional tale. The best starting point for historically oriented 'Monkey' studies remains Dudbridge, *The Hsi-yü Chi*.

67 Thus for Japan, where the cultural role of the monkey has been surveyed by Emiko Ohnuki-Tierny, the tame trick-performing comic monkey seems to have displaced in popular consciousness some earlier, more dangerously ambivalent understandings of the significance of the trickster macaque: see Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *The Monkey as Mirror: Symbolic Transformations in Japanese History and Ritual* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987) – my thanks to Barbara Ambros for drawing my attention to this.

CHAPTER TWO

In the Service of Empire:
Chinese Buddhism in British Academic Life

A question about translation history

Thank you for coming back to another lecture in this series in which I am looking at the spread of an awareness of Chinese Buddhism in Europe and primarily the British Isles from several different perspectives. Last week I went back to the very earliest contacts in medieval times and tried to bring out some of the complex background to the telling of animal stories to visitors from another culture. Some of you may have felt that this was just all too much monkey business, and I will readily admit that ever since childhood trips to the zoo I have long been impressed by monkeys, and particularly impressed by the elegance of gibbons, so perhaps I was a little self-indulgent. But these days sooner or later as we grow up, we are very likely to meet someone brought up in another culture, and then problems of communication come very quickly to the fore, whether we talk about apparently simple topics like animals or attempt to discuss more evidently profound matters.

When I was twenty-one, I met a Japanese Professor of Anglo-Saxon, but I could not speak to him because he did not speak English; he had never lived outside Japan and had never had the chance to learn my language. His wife, however, did speak English, and she told me that he found Anglo-Saxon England very interesting, but he found the religion quite unfamiliar and difficult. My situation, as I pointed out in my last lecture, has been very similar in terms of linguistic limitations. But I for my part found the China that existed at the same time as Anglo-Saxon England very interesting, and because I likewise found the religion of that period unfamiliar and difficult, I grasped the opportunity to learn more about it in America, studying with a man who had graduated from a Japanese university. Stanley Weinstein (1929–2017) was a remarkable scholar in the field of Buddhist Studies who was originally from New York. After military service and study in East Asia, followed by doctoral work at Harvard, he had started his teaching career in London, though he subsequently moved to Yale in the USA. In 2018 his Japanese university, Komazawa, invited a group of his students to their campus for a memorial meeting, and it was there that I met a young Chinese scholar, who moved thereafter from Japan to London. It was he who asked me an important question that I tried to answer in a lecture I gave about a year ago, and which I have now slightly revised and extended for you. It involves a consideration of some broad historical issues that I hope will be of some value even to those who are not interested in studying Buddhism, or even religion of any sort. I should tell you right away that his follow up question

after considering what I had to say was how about the British study of Tibet? I am almost completely ignorant when it comes to Tibetan studies, and I know not a word of the Tibetan language, but this time I have tried to add a few words on that topic also, based on the work of other researchers. I apologise if this is little more than a cursory addendum to what I had to say last year.

But the initial question was quite straightforward. What research was done on Chinese Buddhism in the English academic world before Stanley Weinstein started teaching in London? My questioner had noticed that in the standard history of the study of Buddhism in Europe and America there were only some mentions of works on China at the end of chapters and wondered what the reason for this was. Of course, he was perfectly aware that the standard history that he was using was not comprehensive, and that the relative lack of mention of research from the United Kingdom on Chinese Buddhism might be the outcome of the specific interests of the scholar who compiled it, so if you do not know the work in question, I should offer a few words of explanation about it. The author was a very distinguished Dutch professor who spent much of his career in Australia, J. W. de Jong (1921–2000), and his book, entitled *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America*, makes plain the relative limits of his remarks:

> The main emphasis has been put on philological studies. From a geographical point of view India is the principal country dealt with, but developments in the Theravāda countries and in China and Tibet have not been entirely neglected.[1]

But we need to say a little more. The author was certainly well qualified to compose a broader survey, since he not only read all the major languages of Europe, including Russian, and of course the classic South Asian Buddhist languages of Pāli and Sanskrit, but also Chinese and Japanese, plus Tibetan and Mongol.[2] His little book was also the outcome of a considerable process of expansion from the time that his first survey of the topic appeared in a Japan-based journal in 1974.[3] In 1983 a Chinese translation of this first instalment of his work was published in Hong Kong by Fok Tou-hui (Huo Taohui, 霍韜晦), together with some other materials relating to Professor de Jong, including a very useful bibliography of his publications up to 1980, 391 in all.[4] From these sources it is plain to see that his characterisation of his work does indeed reflect the main directions in which his personal interests lay.

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1 J. W. de Jong, *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America* (Tokyo: Kōsei Publishing, 1997), p. 10.

2 For de Jong's achievements, one may consult the three notices by F. J. Kuiper, David Seyfort Ruegg and Minoru Hara reprinted in H. W. Bodewitz and Minoru Hara, eds., *Gedankschrift J. W. de Jong* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 2004), pp. xi–xx.

3 The basic history of this development is covered in de Jong, *A Brief History*, pp. 7–8, but this ignores the Chinese translation of his initial survey listed in the next footnote.

4 Di Yongyuan 狄雍原 (i.e., J. W. de Jong), trans. Huo Taohui, *OuMei Foxue xiaoshi*歐美佛學研究小史, Hong Kong: Fojiao fazhu xuehui 佛教法住學會, 1983.

But if we are to understand the pattern of the publications in Britain that should be mentioned to supplement his work, then we must start a long way back, and we must talk not only about the books in question or even about the scholars that produced them and their own individual preferences, but about the whole pattern of British imperial history in Asia. This takes us some way back, but not as far back as the times of William of Rubruck that I mentioned last week, since it was not until the beginning of the fifteenth century and the disappearance of the last great Welsh leader Owain Glyndŵr that the English became the masters even of the southern half of the island on which they live, and for most of the rest of that century the land was torn by civil wars, until the emergence of a ruler who was perhaps fortunately of partly Welsh descent. Thus, England did not become an effectively centralised kingdom until the sixteenth century, at which point it found itself not well placed to compete with threatening continental powers such as France and Spain. Lacking the resources to defend itself against them, it subcontracted the necessary violence to sea captains willing to attack enemy shipping in return for being allowed to keep most of the profits from any captured cargo. Spain together with Portugal had set up a global empire which shipped considerable wealth back home, making it a prime target for such attacks, and it was this piratical activity that drew the first English ships into Asian maritime trade routes. There they discovered that the most lucrative trade was in spices, which could be traded at great profit even where there were no Spanish ships full of gold to attack – though as a mode of warfare this system persisted for over two centuries.

But in this alternative business of trade, they tended to lose out in competition in the Spice Islands of Indonesia with another group of seafaring interlopers, the Dutch. In economic affairs the English state had to offer its agents rewards other than plunder, and the predominant way of doing this without drawing on taxation was through granting monopolies, including monopolies on defined areas of overseas trade. In this way an East India Company was organised as a private business and found that its best opportunities were in South Asia rather than Indonesia. The English move from piracy to trade was certainly not a smooth one: I note that Timothy Brook in his recent book *Great State: China and the World* devotes a fascinating chapter to how an English merchant in Bantam, Indonesia, in 1604 felt obliged to torture to death a Chinese goldsmith involved in trying to rob him, despite the Englishman's efforts at establishing himself and his newly arrived fellow-countrymen as fair minded traders.[5] The notion that the best way to make a profit was through violence was still very much in the forefront of British minds even later, but when the Company under Sir Josiah Child (1630–1699) attacked the Mughal empire, which in the late seventeenth century covered much of

5 Timothy Brook, *Great State: China and the World* (London: Profile Books, 2021), pp. 180–200; note especially p. 179 with reference to English attempts at claiming the moral high ground.

the subcontinent of South Asia, they were completely defeated, and Sir Josiah was forced literally to kowtow and apologise to the Mughal emperor, who was generous enough to allow him to continue trading. Unfortunately for South Asia, however, the Mughal state, though prosperous and usually tolerant, was not strongly centralised, and it fell apart in the eighteenth century. This gave opportunities not only to Indian rivals but also to outsiders, which included now not only the English but also the French. Since France had once again become even more than Spain the main target of British hostility, expanding British influence in South Asia became both a business venture and at the same time part of a global effort against the omnipresent French threat.

Imperialism and the languages of Buddhism

In this way the East India Company moved during this period from being a trading organization to acting as the effective government of large parts of the South Asian region. To administer this territory some knowledge of local legal traditions became necessary, and rather than simply looking to the Islamic modes of jurisprudence that had prevailed in the Mughal empire the British found that they had to draw on the ancient Sanskrit-language sources of their majority Hindu subjects, and study of these materials was well under way by the end of the eighteenth century. The whole story as to how this came about, and what the consequences were is a complex one that fortunately has been told elsewhere. I was particularly interested to read for example that at first the only language of law known to any Briton was Persian, so initially the legal compendium put together for the British in Sanskrit by local experts had to be translated into Persian, via an oral rendering in Bengali, with slightly mixed results.[6]

As the nineteenth century unfolded, given the position of British authority in the subcontinent, the further question of how to educate their Indian subjects so that they could assist in the imperial enterprise came to the fore.[7] There was much to be said in the wake of industrial and scientific development in Europe for introducing new knowledge using the English language as a vehicle. But the social norms rooted in Indian society were also recognised as the product of earlier Sanskrit culture, and in Sri Lanka as deriving from the norms enshrined in the related language of Pāli, in much the same way that the heritage of Western civilisation was seen as transmitted through the study of Latin and of Greek. Now, however, some saw the gap between the learning that was there to be conveyed in the English language and that embodied in both Hindu and Muslim materials was so great that the

6 Rajesh Kochhar, *Sanskrit and the British Empire* (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2022), p. 33.

7 Though the account of South Asian developments offered here is of necessity drawn from standard overviews rather than original research, anyone wishing to grasp at first hand the issues raised in the evaluation of Sanskrit studies for education is welcome to study Lynn Zastoupil and Martin Moir, eds., *The Great Indian Education Debate: Documents Relating to the Orientalist-Anglicist Controversy, 1781–1843* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999).

languages of the latter traditions should be abandoned entirely. In 1835, quite notoriously, Thomas (later Lord) Macaulay declared that

> It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanscrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England.[8]

But his view was fortunately strongly contested by better informed persons: Lancelot Wilkinson (c. 1805–1841) for example was impressed by the everyday achievements of Indian learning in such matters as predicting eclipses, and also felt that "the attempts to educate the mass of the people through the means of English must fail".[9] Linguistic imperialism did not in the end triumph entirely.

Indeed, very fortunately, the encounter with Sanskrit as the language of Hindu law had entailed the realisation that it was in fact genetically related to Latin and Greek, together indeed with the Persian that had been the language of the Mughal rulers. So given that the British elite were educated in Latin and Greek, it became just one more step for some of them to go on to study the Indo-European languages of Asia with an eye to government in India. The Orientalism that as has been pointed out forcefully in recent decades represents not simply appreciation of Asian culture but also in some respects a desire to affirm superiority through appropriation. In part that sense of superiority was bolstered by influences from the Protestant Christianity that had long been the hallmark of a British identity, embracing England, Wales and even Scotland, though only partially in the case of Ireland. Spreading Protestant Christianity became a motive for mastering all forms of Asian language, even those like Tamil that were unrelated to Indo-European. But this sense of superiority was never unchallenged, and faded during the twentieth century, in no small part because of the response of South Asian scholars to the experience of imperialism, which was of course but one facet of the greater struggle for independence. Though Buddhism has not over recent centuries been so much in evidence as part of the cultural heritage in the Indian subcontinent beyond Nepal and Sri Lanka, a rich tradition of modern Buddhist studies has arisen, including some such as Prabodh Chandra Baghchi (1898–1956) who embraced the study of Chinese materials in reconstructing the history of the Indian past.[10]

Buddhist studies and the great philologists

Thus, this involvement of Britain with the cultural traditions of India is the reason that a good number of British scholars may be found mentioned in the pages of de Jong's little history. One or two of these names are certainly there

8 Zastoupil and Moir, *Great Indian Education Debate*, p. 165.

9 Kochhar, *Sanskrit and the British Empire*, p. 84.

10 Bangwei Wang and Tansen Sen, *India and China: Interactions through Buddhism and Diplomacy, A Collection of Essays by Professor Chandra Baghchi* (Delhi: Anthem Press, 2011).

because they developed an interest in Buddhism and so learned the requisite Indian languages, as is usually the case today, as indeed others similarly now learn out of an interest in Hinduism. Miss I. B. Horner (1896–1981) would be a good but distinctly unusual example of such a pioneer. But most are there because they encountered Buddhism as an outcome of their philological interests, a point that is worth stressing because the age that produced these figures is now passing into history with the death in November 2020 of K. R. Norman (1925–2020), like Miss Horner a scholar of Pāli. His path into Buddhist studies was well described after his retirement from teaching, in a book articulating an outlook that had already become very uncommon in 1994.[11] The same held true also for his Cambridge colleague John Brough (1917–1984), who unfortunately died before reaching retirement: Brough's own posthumously selected papers make clear enough his broader linguistic perspectives beyond the study of Buddhism, no matter how important his contributions to that field. And in any case I can vouch from personal knowledge of both men that whatever their understanding of the Buddhist religion, or indeed of Jainism (for Roy Norman) or Hinduism (for John Brough), they both affirmed a solely philological motive for reading Buddhist and other sources.[12] In one remarkable instance occasional publication on Buddhist philological topics was just part of an omnivorous appetite for learning ancient tongues that did lead to a Professorship of Sanskrit, but almost incidentally in the course of uncovering the further reaches of Indo-European and even beyond. Sir Harold Bailey (1899–1966) is said to have remarked that 'once one has learned thirty or so languages, the principles become obvious and it is only a matter of spending a few days with the vocabulary'.[13]

In all fairness, I should point out that scholars like those mentioned who engaged imaginatively with the cultural riches of South Asia were truly exceptional men and women. Even at the height of empire the United Kingdom had fewer than one sixth of the professorships of Sanskrit that Germany did, while provision in British India was if anything yet worse, despite the benefits that understanding the Indian heritage could have brought to British imperial rule, which was quite explicitly acknowledged. [14] In Britain when we think of the relations between our country and South Asia we think most readily of the great writers, whether those who like Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) who defended imperialism or those more alert to its hypocrisies

11 K. R. Norman, *A Philological Approach to Buddhism: The Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai Kectures 1994* (London: SOAS, 1997).

12 Minoru Hara and J. C. Wright, ed., John Brough, *Collected Papers* (London: SOAS, 1996), pp. v–xi, give an editorial introduction to Brough's considerable achievements.

13 Nicholas Sims-Williams and George Hewitt, "Sir Harold Bailey, 1899–1996", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 60.1 (1997), pp. 109–116.

14 A. A. Macdonell, "The Study of Sanskrit as an Imperial Question", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (July, 1906), pp. 673–689. The United Kingdom is fortunate in that after imperialism, in the second half of the twentieth century, distinguished scholars from South Asia with a knowledge of Buddhism, such as B. K. Matilal (1935–1991) and P. S. Jaini, have been prepared to teach in its universities.

like E. M. Forster (1879–1970) — and for all his undoubted faults Kipling was well enough informed to take an interest in Buddhism and to make a Tibetan lama a figure in his book *Kim*.[15] But this is misleading: if one turns to writers who were popular but less accomplished writers such as Ethel M. Dell (1881–1939) one finds that India is simply used as an exotic backdrop in which the only important protagonists are British, and nothing of Indian culture is even mentioned, let alone found worthy of exploration.[16] Despite the widespread admiration in Victorian Britain for the Roman Empire, the British capacity for sympathetic interaction with the peoples they encountered, unless connected on occasion with the propagation of Christianity, was much more limited. At best as has been suggested in the narrative so far, Britain like Rome can be seen in some respects as conquering the world in self-defence. The motive of material gain is much more evident; provided that the money came in, and there was no threat of interruption to its flow, the cultures whence the income derived were of no consequence. Where it was necessary to administer territory, this might change, but primarily only insofar as concerned understanding other societies was necessary to maintain law and order. A few administrators did reflect on the nature of the societies for which they were responsible: a good example would be Sir Arthur C. Lyall (1835–1911), who was intrigued enough by the Indian dominions for which he was responsible to compare them with the China over which his Manchu contemporaries ruled, well before Max Weber (1864–1920) interested himself more famously in such matters.[17] But again it should be stressed that Lyall was exceptional; most administrators seem to have reflected very little on their situation. As for the wider British public, writers like Kipling diffused a certain image of India, but the study of South Asia was not thereby encouraged.

British imperialism and China: the missionary factor

If we now turn to China, the general outline of British imperial aggression towards China will be widely known to the Chinese public, but so far is, as with India, much less known to a British public still unaccustomed to considering the study of China a regular part of British education. Comparison with the Indian case is, however, instructive. The Manchu empire was, unlike the Mughal Empire, from first to last an effectively centralised state, never removed from power by external attack, but only in the end by the actions of its subjects, in China by the Chinese, in Mongolia under Buddhist leadership by the Mongols, and so forth.[18] When the East India Company

15 J. Jeffrey Franklin, *The Lotus and the Lion: Buddhism and the British Empire* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008), pp. 128–176.

16 This interpretation is based on a perusal of Ethel M. Dell, *The Lamp in the Desert* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1919).

17 Sir Alfred C. Lyall, *Asiatic Studies, Religious and Social, Being a Selection from Essays Published under that Title in 1882 and 1899*, London: Watts & Co., 1907.

18 C. R. Bawden, *The Modern History of Mongolia* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1989), pp. 194–195.

and other such bodies came to trade, they were soon effectively confined to Canton, and so long as the trade remained advantageous to both sides, all went well. When matters started to go less well, the first aspect of China that the British concerned themselves with was Chinese law, in 1810.[19] After ascertaining what the laws of the Qing dynasty were, in the interest of profit they then proceeded to break them and eventually to attack China, though unlike India the resistance was sufficient for the Manchus to lose only a relatively small amount of territory, so administrative concerns were for the British not urgent, and reliance on local custom tended to prompt an interest in Buddhist matters only in a quite limited way.[20] But the breakdown of trading relations with China that precipitated the sorry tale of conflict and British semi-colonial intrusion in China coincided with the appearance there of a new group of Britons who had not been initially of importance in the Indian situation, though their presence did become relevant also to that colonial dynamic. These were the missionaries of Protestant Christianity.

They were of course by no means the first European missionaries to reach Asia, and not even the first Protestants, in the case of India. British missionary enterprise followed a pattern quite different from that of the various Catholic orders that did so much to introduce Chinese civilisation to Europe. The efforts of the Catholics after all were exerted as agents of a single centralised authority, and though when that papal authority could not be reconciled with that of the Manchu emperor their work was curtailed; at least they had no family responsibilities and were well funded, thanks to the piety of wealthy groups such as the French aristocracy. By contrast the first Protestant missionary to China was underfunded and isolated, and his disparate group of backers had at first not wanted to evangelise China anyhow, because they suspected it might be easier elsewhere; in the end he was obliged to seek employment with the East India Company to support himself and his family.[21] But when the study of Sanskrit at length took hold in England there were at least some Britons in China whom the first students of Buddhism could contact, other than the traders and soldiers who dominated the operations of the Company. First results, however, were not very promising. As well as the Pāli texts of Sri Lanka, the British discovered in Nepal texts in Sanskrit, some of which were sent to France.[22] In Paris the French, who have a tendency to intellectual interests, had already established chairs of both Chinese and Sanskrit in 1814,

19 Li Chen, *Chinese Law in Imperial Eyes: Sovereignty, Justice and Transcultural Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

20 The nature of British administration of Chinese territory, including Buddhist institutions, is well captured from the British perspective in Austin Coates, *Myself a Mandarin: Memoirs of a Special Magistrate* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 147–166. For an account of the one British legal scholar who did devote considerable attention to Buddhism and Chinese law, see the obituary notice by Michael Palmer, "Anthony R. Dicks (1936–2018): An Appreciation", *China Quarterly* 240 (2019), pp. 849–854.

21 Christopher Daily, *Robert Morrison and the Protestant Plan for China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013).

22 De Jong, *Brief History*, p. 24.

and so they had become aware that a considerable Buddhist literature existed in Chinese translation, but it was not clear even to the best of these scholars which language this literature had derived from.[23] The British when told about this seem to have opted for Pāli, and sent off via the governor of Hong Kong to ask if any such texts could be found there. The answer came back, from the Pomeranian interpreter of Chinese for the British, and simultaneous missionary, the controversial Karl Gützlaff (1803–1851), that nothing in the Pāli language could be found, but plenty in translation, and he supplied a list of 156 books, many in his view containing Pāli. [24] His annotations, however, show that he had very little understanding of what he was talking about; the *Diamond Sutra*, for example, the fifth title in the list, is confidently described as "Some tales about the disciples of the Buddha; mostly in Pali".[25]

But as the French translated more Chinese Buddhist works on travel to India, light began to dawn. The impact of early French studies of Buddhism on all subsequent scholarship was considerable: it has been shown by Matthew King, for example, that the earliest French translation of a Chinese Buddhist account of India stimulated further translations from that version in the 1840s in Russia into Mongol, and thence into Tibetan.[26] While unaware that they had been overtaken by Buryat Buddhology, Britons also began to pay attention to the Indological implications of Francophone studies of Chinese Buddhist sources. Horace Hayman Wilson (1786–1860), from 1832 the first Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, drawing on some remarks of Xuánzàng in French translation, realized in 1854 that the Indian language the pilgrim described could only be Sanskrit. [27] A second letter was sent to the then current governor of Hong Kong, this time specifically asking after the Sanskrit works that had been carried back to China from India by that famous traveller. This time the reply came from a more scholarly missionary, Joseph Edkins (1823–1905), and this time a more helpful reply giving

23 Eugène Burnouf, trans. Katia Buffetrille and Donald J. Lopez, Jr., *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2010), p. 65. This seminal work by Burnouf (1801–1852) is also mentioned by de Jong, *Brief History*, p. 24.

24 On Gützlaff, see Jessie Gregory Lutz, *Opening China: Karl F. A. Gützlaff and Sino-Western Relations, 1827–1852* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

25 William Henry Sykes, "On a Catalogue of Chinese Buddhistical Works", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 9 (1848), pp. 199–213; Sykes (1790–8872) seems to have suspected that something was amiss, since he introduces the document as 'a curious catalogue' and describes his own attempts to make sense of the annotations.

26 Note that Matthew King, *In the Forest of the Blind: The Eurasian Journey of Faxian's Record of Buddhist Kingdoms* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022), p. 64, places one copy of the Mongol translation in 1844, whereas the English translation of the French, listed on p. 274 of his bibliography under its author, J. W. Laidley, dated to 1848.

27 H. H. Wilson, "On Buddha and Buddhism", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 16 (1856), pp. 229–265; pp. 236–238, present his deductions based on the translation of Stanislas Julien (1797–1873), part of which (though not the section on grammar) is reproduced in the same issue of the journal, pp. 340–345. Wilson had been following developments in French scholarship on Chinese sources concerning India since 1838: see his "Account of the Foe Kúe Ki, or Travels of Fa Hian in India, translated from the Chinese by M. Remusat", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 5 (1839), pp. 138–140.

(when due allowance is made for misprints) a much more coherent series of bibliographical notes, and separately even a few volumes of Buddhist texts, arrived back at the Royal Asiatic Society in London in 1855.[28]

The educated Edkins went on to explore what he could of Chinese Buddhism, and in 1880 published in London a full volume of observations that were reissued substantially unchanged in a 'popular' edition in 1893. His remarks are not without interest throughout, though for present purposes it is his thoughts on Chinese Buddhist studies in Britain that are of the greatest value. "I began studying Chinese Buddhism more than forty years ago. Dr. Eitel, Rev. Samuel Beal, and Mr. Consul Watters followed me, and have done well", he says in 1893.[29] Ernst Johann Eitel (1838–1908) was another German missionary in British government employment, but his doctoral studies on Chinese Buddhism were carried out for his German university, even though he did publish in English.[30] Samuel Beal (1825–1889) was for many years a naval chaplain, though he eventually became Professor of Chinese at University College, London. The first of his many translations of Chinese Buddhist materials, on the travels of Fǎxiǎn, was heavily criticized by Herbert Giles (1845–1935), who produced his own version, but Edkins remarks that neither of their publications was annotated to the same level as the earlier work by French scholars on the same text.[31] Thomas Watters (1840–1901) is mentioned by de Jong, but primarily because of a lengthy review of his posthumously published study of Xuánzàng written by the great French scholar Paul Pelliot (1874–1945), who applauded his understanding of the Chinese sources but faulted his historical research, and especially his weak grasp of Chinese historical phonology.[32]

One important translator of Chinese not mentioned as such by Joseph Edkins turned to Buddhist works only in the late nineteenth century, but still deserves some mention. James Legge (1815–1897) is still best known as a translator

28 H. H. Wilson, "Notes of a Correspondence with Sir John Bowring on Buddhist Literature in China, With Notices of Chinese Buddhist Works Translated from the Sanskrit. By Rev. E.[*sic*] Edkins", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 16 (1856), pp. 316–339.

29 Rev Joseph Edkins, D.D., *Chinese Buddhism: A Volume of Sketches, Historical, Descriptive, and Critical* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd. [1893]), p. xv.

30 Peter Wesley-Smith, "Eitel, Ernst Johann", in May Holdsworth and Christopher Munn, *Dictionary of Hong Kong Biography* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), pp. 132–134.

31 For Giles on Beal, see p. 18 of Charles Aylmer, ed., "The Memoirs of H. A. Giles", *East Asian History* 13/14 (1997), pp. 1–90; for Edkins on Beal and Giles, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 408, with reference to Samuel Beal, *Travels of Fa-Hian and Sung-Yun, Buddhist pilgrims: from China to India* (London: Trübner, 1869), and Herbert Allan Giles, *Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms* (London, Trübner, 1876); both authors later revised their translations, in 1884 and 1923 respectively (see Aylmer, p. 18, and pp. 76–77).

32 De Jong, *Brief History*, p. 47, with reference to Thomas Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, 629–645 A.D.*, 2 vols. (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1904–05), and Paul Pelliot, review of vol. 1, *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 5 (1905), pp. 423–457.

of Confucian texts who also provided some Daoist works in translation for the famous series Sacred Books of the East. Perhaps in translating in 1886 the same travel record already available in French, and at that point in two English translations by Beal and one by Giles, plus a substantial review of them all by Watters, he was as he suggests primarily trying to educate himself. But Norman J. Girardot, in discussing the development of Legge's progress from Presbyterian missionary in China to Oxford professor, notes a broader context of his slowly developing Buddhist interests against the background of similar trends among other missionaries, a background which might also account for his 1893 study of a later Buddhist Chinese work of apologetics.[33] His sketch does however make clear that Legge was in both cases also indebted especially for the provision of superior textual resources to an East Asian Buddhist whom he had become acquainted with in Oxford, Bunyiu Nanjio (1849–1929), to use the form of his name most familiar within that university. Chen Jidong陈继东, who has carried out extensive research on this Nanjō Bunyū南條文雄, has shown that Europeans were not the only ones who were looking for lost Buddhist scriptures in Sanskrit in China, in that Japanese had some hopes of finding them too, while both Chinese and Japanese realized that by the late nineteenth century Europeans had secured elsewhere in Asia copious Buddhist materials in Sanskrit of which they had been unaware. The connection between British Indology and imperialism was, as Chen Jidong demonstrates, perfectly evident to these visitors from East Asia, but they hoped to benefit from their studies in Europe even so.[34]

Buddhism and British university sinology

When it came to Chinese Buddhism, however, they had very little to learn. Those few Britons who managed to secure university posts as professors of Chinese after their retirement from East Asia were translators rather than scholars of Buddhism. Watters was no doubt capable of somewhat more, since he had books on Sanskrit with him during his consular postings, but he never had the opportunity to teach anyone, and he was very much the exception in a profession that more generally ended in alcoholism, madness, or suicide.[35] No wonder, then, that in the early twentieth century, those Chinese who wished to study Indology went to Germany rather than the United Kingdom.[36] The works that these Britons produced have been expertly

33 Norman J. Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 406–417.

34 Chen Jidong, "In Search of the Original Scriptures: The Formation of Modern Buddhist Studies and Sino-Japanese Exchange", in Hsun Chang and Benjamin Penny, eds., *Religion in Taiwan and China: Locality and Transmission* (Taipei: Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, 2017), pp. 1–35, which refers also to his weighty and extremely useful monograph on Sino-Japanese Buddhist contacts at this point in Japanese.

35 P. D. Coates, *The China Consuls* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 274.

36 The best-known example would be the celebrated Ji Xianlin 季羡林 (1911–2009), on whom see for example Zhang Guanglin 张光璘, *Ji Xianlin xiansheng* 季羡林先生 (Beijing: Renmin jiaotong chubanshe, 2019), but note now Chen Huaiyu 陈懷宇, *Zai Xifang faxian*

surveyed by Max Deeg of Cardiff University, who is well qualified in both Indology and Sinology to give a considered verdict on their impact.[37] He does give the translators of the so-called 'pilgrim' records some credit in inspiring archaeological workers under the British Raj, though it was again initially French scholarship that guided the first uncertain efforts of these men, who came mainly from a military background.[38] He also notes in his conclusions that the exclusively Indological context that had prompted calls for their translation effectively divorced any understanding of these Chinese Buddhist texts from their original environment, and did not even encourage further research in that direction.

This is all too evident in their work. Giles, who rejoiced in his ability to detect errors in the Chinese translations of others, kept up his efforts in this direction in respect of the travel writing of Faxian from his first attempts at supplanting the work of Beal in an 1870s Shanghai newspaper right through to his revised translation published by Cambridge University Press in 1923. This version was even reappeared from another press in London as late as 1956. Yet still that republication contains an initial error of his that had already been accounted for by Beal and Legge. When Faxian is in Sri Lanka, he witnesses a parade based on representations of *jātaka* stories, including one based on the story of Śyāma, whose name is transcribed in Chinese by a character *shǎn* 睒, which Giles took as meaning a flash of lightning. He does this by assuming it stands for a homophone, since usually it means to glance in a blink of an eye. His translation of the word, which still appears in the 1956 reprinting, has the Buddha manifesting in this form, when surely, he should have known not simply that there is no record of any past life of the Buddha as a meteorological phenomenon, but also that such a manifestation could not count as a life at all.[39] Giles contrasts strongly with Legge in any number of ways, given that his interests lay more in the direction of literature than missionary work or even comparative religion after the fashion then emerging in Oxford, but neither scholar was in any case quite on top of all the problems that our sources exhibit.[40]

Chen Yinke 在西方發现陈寅恪 (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 2015) on the earlier studies of Chen Yinke (1890–1969).

37 Max Deeg, "The Historical Turn: How Chinese Buddhist Travelogues Changed Western Perception of Buddhism", *Hualin International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 1.1.(2018), pp. 43–75.

38 Charles Allen, *The Buddha and the Sahibs* (London: John Murray, 2003), pp. 205–212, gives a popular account of this.

39 H. A. Giles, *The Travels of Fa-hsien (399–414 A.D.), or Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), p. 71. On this passage, see T. H. Barrett, "Faxian and the Meaning of *bianwen* 變文: The Value of His Biography to the Study of China", *Hualin International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 2.1 (2019), pp. 1–15.

40 For the contrast between the two men, see David Jasper, "The Translation of China in England: Two 19th century English Translations of the Travels of Fa-hsien (399–414 A.D.", *Literature and Theology* 28.2 (2014), pp. 186–200.

But to return to the contacts explored by Chen Jidong, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902–1923 did continue to bring Japanese students to Britain, and they began to exert a cultural influence which coincided with influences especially through the export of Japanese art that did have some limited effect on British awareness of Chinese-language Buddhism. From 1919 to 1923 the School of Oriental Studies even commanded the services of an American academic who had had a substantial Japanese Buddhist training, William Montgomery McGovern (1897–1964). His publications, while limited to reproducing what he had learned in Japan, show that he had been well taught there; unfortunately an unauthorized trip to Lhasa in disguise precipitated his enforced resignation.[41] But Japanese connections may also be seen throughout the career of Arthur Waley (1889–1966), who also taught in a voluntary capacity at SOAS (as it became), but mainly as an aftermath to a career from 1913 to 1929 at the British Museum. It should be observed at the outset that Waley's attitude to Japanese imperialism was always negative. True, his first reaction to the rise of Japanese militarism was silence rather than explicit condemnation, but this may well have been because friendships with Japanese individuals constrained his public utterances lest he caused them trouble with the authorities.[42] By 1938, even so, he was active in the China Campaign Committee and contributed to a book designed to raise funds to help China, so it is quite clear where his sympathies lay.[43]

At the same time he was from the start attentive to Japanese scholarship, as is clear from the fact that he was ready to enlist Japanese authority to defend his translation work, in a spat with Herbert Giles over his renderings of Chinese poetry in 1918.[44] According to Walter Simon (1893–1981), he had encountered Sanskrit as an undergraduate while studying Classics at Cambridge, and on entering the British Museum took steps to improve his knowledge.[45] In his early years, to be sure, in dealing with Sino-Japanese Buddhism his reach sometimes may have exceeded his grasp.[46] But even if

41 I have touched on McGovern as a forerunner to Stanley Weinstein in T. H. Barrett, "Stanley Weinstein and the study of Sino-Japanese Buddhism", *Buddhist Studies Review* 8.1–2 (1991), pp. 87–96.

42 John Walter de Gruchy, *Orienting Arthur Waley: Japonism, Orientalism, and the Creation of Japanese Literature in English* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), p. 158.

43 Arthur Clegg, *Aid China: A Memoir of a Forgotten Campaign* (Beijing: Beijing Publishing House, 2016), p. 97; E. R. Hughes, *China: Body and Soul* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1938), pp. 157–166, prints Waley, "Chuang Tzu and Hui Tzu: Intuition Versus Intellect", which the following year was incorporated into his *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China.*

44 See p. 132 of T. H. Barrett, "Herbert Giles as Reviewer", in Christiaan Engberts and Herman Paul, *Scholarly Personae in the History of Orientalism, 1870–1930* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 118–142.

45 Walter Simon, "Obituary: Arthur Waley". *Bulletin of the School of African and Oriental Studies, University of London* 30.1 (1967), pp. 268–71.

46 T. H. Barrett, "Arthur Waley, Xu Zhimo, and the Reception of Buddhist Art in Europe: A Neglected Source", *Hualin International Journal of Buddhist Studies*, 1.1 (2018), pp. 226–247.

he presented himself to the wider reading public simply as a translator, he reviewed widely, including publications on Chinese Buddhism, in the course of which he showed himself well acquainted with developments in the relevant scholarship.[47] Certainly his reviews, even the longest, do not generally adduce much in the way of new evidence relating to Chinese Buddhism, but none the less by the time that his working life at the British Museum drew to an end, he had a much surer sense of what was significant for the development of Buddhist Studies, and did not fail to point it out.[48] Though the bulk of his mature technical studies in journals tend to focus on early China, one journal article published in 1932 does touch on Indological matters and has retained its importance to this day.[49] This was a study entitled "Did the Buddha die of eating pork?", which appeared in the first volume of the Belgian series *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques*.[50] But one notes that when he adds to a popular work like *The Real Tripitaka* some minimum annotation on Buddhist topics, it is usually Chinese translations of Indian works that he cites.

Chinese Buddhist studies in Britain before the 1960s

The academic study of Chinese Buddhism in Britain did not quite remain solely the responsibility of one man between the departure of McGovern and the arrival of Weinstein, but beyond the work of Waley there is not much to report. William Soothill (1861–1935) continued the tradition of missionary scholarship while back from China and installed in an Oxford professorship by for example co-compiling a dictionary of Chinese Buddhist terms, though this still readily available item is markedly inferior to its Japanese equivalents. In fact in his preface Soothill makes it quite clear that his work was well under way before he became aware of the existence of any Japanese predecessor.[51] Sir Reginald Fleming Johnston (1874–1938) brought back from China to his London professorship a number of Chinese Buddhist periodicals reflecting his deep interest in Buddhist topics, but did not publish

47 T. H. Barrett, "Arthur Waley, D. T. Suzuki, and Hu Shih: New Light on the 'Zen and History' Controversy", *Buddhist Studies Review* 6.2 (1989), pp. 116–121.

48 Waley's reviews, which often touch on Buddhist topics, are listed in Francis A. Johns, *A Bibliography of Arthur Waley*, revised and expanded edition (London: Athlone Press, 1988), pp. 109–121; the longest, E54 on p. 114 in the enumeration of Johns, published in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 5.1 (1928), pp. 162–169, covered a massive publication by Yabuki Keiki (wrongly listed by Johns as 'Keiki, Y.'); it simply introduces some of the content and underlines the importance of the book rather than offering a critical assessment.

49 See most recently Ji Yun 紀贇, "Fotuo zuihou de wucan: gudian fojiao zhong de seng-su huxiang moshi ji qi dui dongya fojiao de yingxiang 佛陀最後的午餐：古典佛教中的僧俗互動模式及其對東亞佛教的影響, in Zhanru et al., eds., *Shushi chaomai chushi, niudai duo guo jiefen: fojiao yu dongya zongjiao shiyuan de duozhong shehui zuoyong yu gongneng guoji yantaohui lunwenji* 淑世超邁出世、紐帶多過界分：佛教與東亞宗教寺院的多重社會作用與功能國際研討會論文集 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 2019), pp. 46–72; Waley's work is recapitulated on pp. 54–56.

50 Cf. Johns, *Bibliography*, pp. 92–3, C37

51 William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1937), p. viii.

any research on the basis of his reading.[52] In her 1961 review of the existing translations of texts from the Chan tradition, Ruth Fuller Sasaki (1892–1967) lists one translation by Arthur Waley, but also another of the same work by the British expatriate R. H. Blyth (1898–1964), and three more of other texts by another Englishman abroad, John Blofeld (1913–1897). Her one time British son-in-law, Alan Watts (1915–1973), though a very successful popularizer in America, did not contribute to academic studies of Buddhism.[53] At the other end of the academic spectrum, however, the conjunction of two successive professors of Sanskrit capable of using Chinese sources with a professor of Chinese interested in philological issues did lead to substantial progress in understanding early Chinese Buddhist translations. The late Seishi Karashima (1959–2019), in reviewing progress in this field, remarks that it was the 'Cambridge trio' of Sir Harold Bailey, John Brough, and the sinologist Edwin G. Pulleyblank (1922–2013) that brought to prominence the study of what Bailey christened Gāndhārī, the Middle Indo-Aryan language underlying the Chinese texts produced by the first translators.[54]

But that is not quite the end of the story, since despite Waley's formal isolation from academic responsibilities — an invitation to show an interest in the Chair of Chinese at Cambridge provoked the response "I would rather be dead" — Waley did teach, and so did pass on some of his knowledge of Chinese Buddhism. In a classroom he was not known to show the least enthusiasm for his subject, but on a one to one basis he could be extremely helpful.[55] His assistance is indeed mentioned in a number of books.[56] It appears from the preface to *Early Mādhyamika in India and China* by Richard H. Robinson (1926–1970) that Waley in fact formally co-supervised his doctorate at SOAS together with the Dutch Indologist and expert on Buddhist thought there, David Friedman (1903–1984).[57] Though Robinson, a Canadian who

52 Francesca Tarocco, *The Cultural Practices of Modern Chinese Buddhism: Attuning the Dharma* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), pp. 8–9.

53 Ruth Fuller Sasaki, "A Bibliography of Translations of Zen (Ch'an) Works", *Philosophy East and West* 10.3–4 (1960–1961), pp. 149–166: note pp. 150, 156–157. We return to Blyth and Blofeld below.

54 Karashima Seishi 辛嶋静志, *Chō Agonkyō no gengo no kenkyū* 『長阿含経』の原語の研究 (Tokyo: Hirakawa shuppansha, 1994), p. 5. Karashima studied in Cambridge with Roy Norman after his doctoral work with Ji Xianlin, so he had ample opportunity to assess the environment he describes. Note that Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 403, had already suspected the influence of an unknown Prakrit, but lacked the philological means to verify this.

55 For an account of Arthur Waley's performance as a teacher I am indebted to Michael Loewe, who specifically mentioned his kindness to Carmen Blacker (1924–2009). Waley's view of the Cambridge professorship is cited by the editor in Ivan Morris, ed., *Madly Singing in the Mountains* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), p. 85.

56 Johns, *Bibliography of Arthur Waley*, pp. 125–134, notes a good number of acknowledgements of his help, from Ezra Pound (1885–1972) to Douglas Hurd (1930–); it is unlikely in view of what follows that this list is at all comprehensive.

57 See Richard Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in India and China* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), p. vii. On Friedman, one of many outstanding scholars who arrived in Britain as a consequence of Nazism, see Tuvia Gelblum, "David Friedman, 1903–1984", *Journal of the International Association for Buddhist Studies* 8.2 (1985), pp. 149–150.

had grown up like Pulleyblank in the region of Calgary, Alberta, died all too young in a tragic accident, he did while teaching in Madison, Wisconsin, lay the foundations for the further development of Buddhist studies in North America through his training of a number of very influential students, such as Lewis Lancaster, Jeffrey Hopkins, and Charles S. Prebish.[58]

And Robinson's doctoral work is not the only British volume on Buddhism of the 1960s to acknowledge the guidance of Arthur Waley and David Friedman.[59] Richard S. Y. Chi (1919–1986) pursued several careers over several continents, ending up in Bloomington at Indiana University.[60] He had, it seems, doctoral degrees from both Oxford and Cambridge, an unusual distinction for any academic, though as a pioneer in the formidably difficult area of Buddhist formal logic his research has inevitably been the subject of much revision, initially and not least from himself.[61] Chinese sources are but one from the range of materials upon which he drew, but as a native speaker of Chinese he was apparently pressed into service in the 1960s as a language teacher at Oxford, where his genial personality was expressed through his irrepressible amusement at the woeful attempts of British students at speaking his language.[62] Given the very slim productivity concerning the study of Chinese Buddhism in Britain before the arrival of Stanley Weinstein, and indeed the similarly slim record after his departure for Yale in 1968, when he was replaced by a SOAS Indological doctoral student, the Japanese scholar Inagaki Hisao (b. 1929), and that only until 1981, surely such an engaging scholar deserves to be remembered. It is with this brief account of Richard Chi's sojourn in the United Kingdom that I close my narrative, before turning briefly to the matter of Tibet.[63]

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58 Robinson's career as a teacher, scholar, and Buddhist, is outlined in Wendy Biddlecombe Agsar, "The Most Important Scholar of Buddhism You've Never Heard Of", *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, Summer, 2019, consulted 28 December 2020 , online at https://tricycle.org/magazine/richard-robinson-buddhism/.

59 R. S. Y. Chi, *Buddhist Formal Logic* (London: Luzac, 1969), p. lxxii.

60 As far as I have been able to discover, the most detailed but still rather tantalizing obituary notice concerning his wandering life is that which was produced by his colleagues in Indiana, consulted 28 December 2020: http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/bfc/view?docId=B05-1987.

61 Tom J. F. Tillemans, "Some Reflections on R. S. Y. Chi's *Buddhist Formal Logic*", *Journal of the International Association for Buddhist Studies* 11.1 (1988), pp. 155–171.

62 This I was told in 1971 by Philippa Hawking (now Hufton), on whom note Martin Bernal, *Geography of a Life* (n.p.: Xlibris, 2012), p. 371.

63 Inagaki's doctorate, based on Sanskrit and Tibetan sources, was completed in 1968: Leonard H. D. Gordon and Frank J. Shulman, *Doctoral Dissertations on China: A Bibliography of Studies in Western Languages, 1945–1970* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1972), p. 178. Professor Inagaki has published works on Chinese Buddhism since leaving the United Kingdom; though I know of no doctoral students, his classes were attended by Frances Wood, author with Mark Barnard of *The Diamond Sutra: The Story of the World's Earliest Dated Printed Book*, London: British Library, 2010, and by Jim Stokes, translator of Soko Morinaga Roshi, *Pointers to Insight: The Life of a Zen Monk* (London: The Zen Centre, 1985).

Britain and the study of Tibet

As I have made clear in discussing India, the English of the early modern period fixed their ambitions on becoming a naval power, and one thing that may be said of Tibet without controversy is that it is a long way from the ocean. So, we should not be surprised that any dawning awareness of Tibet in the United Kingdom came a long time after the first contacts of the Russians with Tibetans, which may be seen as an inevitable consequence of that people's advance into Asian lands occupied by descendants of their erstwhile rulers, the Mongols, who looked to Tibet for spiritual guidance. Recent research into this history of Tibetological contacts traces Russian knowledge back to the late seventeenth century, with library resources in Tibetan building up significantly in the next century. True, thanks to an Armenian merchant a copy of a 1688 Tibetan passport was published in Oxford in 1700, but no one seems to have paid any attention to that.[64]

So, when because of political changes in a small kingdom between Tibet and the East India Company territory in Bengal a missive arrived from the Panchen Lama at the British governor's residence in 1774, no one seems to have had much of an idea as to who he was. Since trading possibilities were evidently involved, readily exciting the governor's cupidity, a diplomatic mission under an amiable Scot was sent back in response. But the fact that this man, George Bogle (1746–1781), had to scrabble hard to find anything in Calcutta about the country he was asked to visit, beyond some less than detailed maps and other information gathered over half a century earlier by Jesuits in Manchu employ, demonstrates how far behind British knowledge was.[65] Some other accounts of even earlier Catholic missionary explorers had been translated into English in London by 1747, but up to date sources were much harder to come by.[66] Nevertheless, Bogle's mission was a start, and the Buddhism of Tibet gradually began to be mentioned more in the English language, as I will have occasion to mention again in my next lecture. I have already today noted too that British interest in Nepal resulted in the acquisition in 1837 of some Sanskrit Buddhist texts; along with these, it seems, came some Tibetan materials as well.[67] But once again it was Francophone scholars who exploited the new materials, not British researchers.[68]

64 Alexander Zorin, *Tibetan Studies in Russia: A Historical Sketch* (Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 2020), pp. 13–16.

65 Kate Teltscher, *The High Road to China: George Bogle, the Panchen Lama and the First British Expedition to Tibet* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), pp. 22–24.

66 'John McGregor', *Tibet: A Chronicle of Exploration* (New York: Prager, 1970), pp. 53–55, cites some of the account by Johan Grueber, SJ (1623–1680), but on pp. 121–122 in summarizing the information theoretically available in Calcutta in 1774 he does not make clear what publications from Europe about the Catholic missions had in fact arrived in Bengal, other than the map.

67 Thus p. 137 of Hildegard Diemberger, "The Younghusband-Waddell Collection and Its People: the Social Life of Tibetan Books Gathered in a Late-colonial Enterprise", *Inner Asia* 14.1 (2012), pp. 131–171; on p. 138 she notes the acquisition in 1870 of some further Tibetan texts from Nepal.

The true pioneer of Tibetan studies in the Anglophone world was the lone Hungarian adventurer, Sándor Csoma de Kőrös (1784–1842), who was at least employed by the colonial administration in Calcutta as a librarian. But he seems to have had only one student, an Anglican clergyman of Swiss origin named Solomon Caesar Malan (1812–1894), to whom he donated a collection of Tibetan books before departing on his final journey to Darjeeling. Malan soon left India and eventually secured a clerical living in a remote part of Dorset, where he did use the gift in compiling an immense cross-cultural commentary on the Book of Proverbs in three volumes, a work of such daunting erudition that it seems to have been read by no one at all. Towards the end of his life, mindful of the origin of his materials, he sent almost all his Tibetan collection to Hungary, while bequeathing the balance of his library in many languages to the Bodleian Library in Oxford.[69] He taught not one student, and no one appears to have been interested in calling on his unusual expertise. The British did not administer any Tibetan territory themselves, so it seems that they regarded the beliefs of the inhabitants of that region of no consequence at all. What they really wanted to know was how Tibet might be traversed by either friend or foe — thinking now of their better-informed Russian imperial rivals, for instance. They therefore dispatched agents from among their Indian subjects to survey the country in utmost secrecy, measuring the mountains while ignoring the people.[70]

Eventually such knowledge proved to be not merely academic, for heightened imperial competition, as is well known, prompted the British invasion of Tibet in 1903 at the initiative of Sir Francis Younghusband (1863–1942). Younghusband took with him as chief of his military medical staff Laurence Austine Waddell (1854–1938), who had learned Tibetan in Darjeeling, and who was considerably less bloodthirsty than his leader.[71] It was he who encouraged Younghusband to secure by purchase but also apparently by looting a quantity of Tibetan Buddhist texts, the importance of which were stressed to him by Frederick William Thomas (1867–1956), librarian at the India Office Library in London, who had been informed by Russian visitors just how inferior British holdings of Tibetan materials were to those contained in Russian institutions.[72] Waddell returned to a professorship of Tibetan in University College, London, from 1906 till his retirement in 1908, and much

68 Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 158–159.

69 This sequence of events is treated in detail in Gyula Paczolay and Lauren F. Pfister, "From Ladakh to Budapest via Broadwinsor: The Journey of an Unusual Gift of Tibetan Books", in Lauren F. Pfister, ed., *Polyglot from the Far Side of the Moon: The Life and Works of Solomon Caesar Malan (1812–1894)* (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2022), pp. 229–252.

70 'McGregor', *Tibet: A Chronicle of Exploration*, pp. 251–277.

71 Note Younghusband's dismissal of Waddell quoted in Patrick French, *Younghusband: The Last Great Imperial Adventurer* (London: HarperCollins, 1994), p. 245.

72 The entire story is well documented in Diemberger, "The Younghusband-Waddell Collection".

acclaim as an expert on Tibetan Buddhism, especially through his book on Tibetan Buddhism that had first appeared in 1895; a revised edition of 1934 was reprinted as a work that "has never been superseded" as late as 1967.[73]

This was not entirely helpful: the aspects of Tibetan Buddhism that had long reminded Europeans of Roman Catholic observances affronted his deeply Scottish Presbyterian soul, so that his presentation of what he called 'Lamaism' is skewed in a distinctly Protestant and polemical direction, a phenomenon to which we return in the next lecture.[74] But while Waddell in his master work provides plenty of information about the outward observances that so offended him, he seems to be little interested in the inner life of Tibetan Buddhists. Fortunately E. B. Cowell (1826–1903), the Professor of Sanskrit in Cambridge, encouraged the study of Tibetan, even though coming to it only in his late career he failed to learn the language, and indeed even though he suspected pessimistically that it was just a bit too exotic for dull British tastes.[75] At least F. W. Thomas, the librarian and later professor, was able to pursue a career using his command of Tibetan as well as Sanskrit; he is even mentioned in passing by de Jong.[76] The outstanding scholars whom I have already mentioned from the mid-twentieth century, Brough and Bailey, also used both Tibetan and Chinese for Indological research, and the latter did study with Thomas, though I am not sure where and when Brough learned the language.

Certainly, it is safe to say that no continuous tradition of Tibetan studies was established in the United Kingdom before the Second World War. The inadequacy of Britain's linguistic response in that crisis was however so obvious that in 1947 Lawrence Roger Lumley, 11th Lord Scarbrough (1896–1969), a former Governor of Bombay, was commissioned to produce a report on the situation that resulted eventually in a lectureship at SOAS solely in Tibetan, where the Professor of Chinese, Walter Simon, whom I have mentioned already in connection with Arthur Waley, had learned Tibetan for philological purposes in Germany before fleeing Hitler and coming to London.[77] The new post was filled in 1950 by David Snellgrove (1920–2016), who had started his studies of Asian languages at Cambridge in 1946, studying Sanskrit with Bailey, after first contacts with Tibetans in India during the war. But Snellgrove makes it quite clear in his autobiography that his main Tibetological education took place from 1949 onwards not in Britain but in Italy with the great Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984).[78]

73 The quotation is from the dust jacket of L. Austine Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1967).

74 Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, pp. 34–36.

75 Diemberger, "The Younghusband-Waddell Collection", p. 151.

76 De Jong, *Brief History*, p. 39.

77 This philological approach was sustained as well; the linguist R. K. Sprigg (1922–2011), another Tibetan specialist, was also recruited to SOAS as Lecturer in Phonetics in 1948.

78 David Snellgrove, *Asian Commitment: Travels and Studies in the Indian Sub-Continent and South-East Asia* (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2000), pp. 54–55.

Later, a second lectureship in Tibetan was created that went to a Japanese Buddhological student of John Brough, Yamada Isshi (1933–2017), who eventually left SOAS for Northwestern in the USA in 1971. From 1965, Philip Denwood too had joined SOAS to work on topics such as Tibetan material culture, and he it was who replaced Yamada.[79] Meanwhile a post in Tibetan in Cambridge had come and gone, attracting over two decades by one count a sum total of three students, none of whom seems to have persevered to postgraduate research.[80] From 1976, however, Michael Aris (1946–1999), the husband of Aung San Suu Kyi, started to promote Tibetan in Oxford. There is undoubtedly much more that could be said on this topic, though I am not the one to say it. A full account of the study of Tibetan Buddhism in British academic life up to the present would for example certainly have to include Paul Williams (b. 1950), who is indeed together with Snellgrove mentioned by de Jong.[81] But in bringing these very sketchy remarks back to the much more magisterial overview with which I started it is time for me to leave the British academic scene. The remaining question is, of course, what else was taking place in Britain regarding the study of Buddhism, and this topic I intend to address in my next lecture with one final account, based not on a survey but on a single and partial example, even if yet once more my example is treated in what I take to be its larger historical context. I hope it will illuminate what I have been saying from an entirely different angle.

79 Snellgrove, *Asian Commitment*, p. 201.

80 See p. 270 of John T. Ramsey, "David Roy Shackleton Bailey", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 152.2 (2008), pp. 267–278.

81 de Jong, *Brief History*, p. 115.

CHAPTER THREE

The Story of the Awakening of Faith across Three Continents

Britain and Buddhism between India and China

In my last lecture, I presented a quick sketch of the study of Chinese Buddhist texts by British academics, laying the emphasis on the connections between this pattern of study and British Indology, which has long been recognized as marked by a pragmatic bent not unconnected with Britain's imperial involvement in South Asia. Edward Said, for example, in his classic depiction of Orientalism, quotes a French scholar of the imperial era who remarked at the time that Britain's political interest in India kept its studies of the area tied to concrete realities whereas "France seeks out the human mind as it manifests itself in India in the same way that it is interested in China".[1] In accounting for the relative insignificance of the study of Chinese Buddhism before Stanley Weinstein there are of course some other factors that should be kept under consideration, for example the obvious truth that all the nineteenth and early twentieth century figures I mentioned in my survey entirely lacked any academic training in even the most basic Chinese studies at all. The first translator of Chinese Buddhist texts to have formal university training in the Chinese language, albeit briefly, was John Blofeld, who studied at SOAS, but both he and R. H. Blyth sustained their lives in Buddhist countries by teaching English literature, not by developing teaching about East Asia for Anglophone students.[2]

But it would be misleading to suggest that until the twentieth century interest in Chinese Buddhism was entirely subsidiary to concerns about the British Raj. It is possible to compose a fuller picture, and in Chinese such an account already exists in a very helpful survey of Western writing on Chinese religious sources up to 1911.[3] One of the scholars I mentioned in my last lecture as a translator of Chinese accounts of India, Samuel Beal, did as it happens produce a good number of Buddhist translations from Chinese

1 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 264, quoting Sylvain Lévi (1863–1935).

2 John Blofeld, *My Journey in Mystic China: Old Pu's Travel Diary* (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 2008), pp. 159, 245. Blofeld also completed a Cambridge degree, but not in Chinese, that he had interrupted much earlier. Blyth had a University of London degree in English and learned his East Asian languages while teaching that subject: see Adrian Pinnington, "R. H. Blyth, 1898–1964", in Ian Nish, ed., *Britain & Japan: Biographical Portraits* (Folkstone: Japan Society Publications, 1994), pp. 252–267.

3 Li Xinde 李新德, *Ming-Qing shiqi Xifang chuanjiaoshi Zhongguo Ru, Dao, Shi dianji zhi fanyi yu quanshi* 明清时期西方传教士中国儒道佛典籍之翻译与诠释 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2015), pp. 347–387.

that are based on texts originally produced in South Asian languages, but though Beal takes due cognizance of this background, his main motive seems to have been the rendering into English of works well regarded amongst the Chinese populations he encountered, rather than the reconstruction from Chinese sources of the religious life of ancient India.[4] He also seems to have been the only Anglophone person working in the field of Chinese Buddhism at the time who paid more than passing attention to the text known as the *Awakening of Faith* (*Dasheng qixinlun* 大乘起信論).[5] Today if one consults a standard source such as Wikipedia on this famous source, we find that its composition, though attributed to the poet Aśvaghoṣa (c. 80-c.150 CE), is now usually seen as purely Chinese, with the attribution of its translation to Paramārtha (499–569) likewise believed to be erroneous; a second version under the name of Śikṣānanda (652–710) is regarded as a rewriting rather than a translation. These reassessments as it happens reflect doubts that in some circles went right the way back to soon after the appearance of the work in sixth century China, but were not widely heard before the twentieth century, and so were unknown to Samuel Beal.[6]

Instead, the Reverend Professor took the interpretation of this famous text off in an entirely different direction that was to bemuse the Anglophone world for almost eighty years. It was this misadventure that I hope to illuminate today, though since it involves three different continents, and I have spent the past two years of study confined to only one, my account is of necessity uneven in its coverage, concentrating on what may be discovered in Britain rather than in East Asia or North America. I have derived great benefit in putting together these remarks from a succinct survey by Jason Clower that is available online, and while generally agreeing with his assessments have mainly made it my task simply to probe a little further into the circumstances surrounding the production of the relevant writings.[7] One day perhaps someone living in better times may be able to provide a more comprehensive investigation. But even so my hope is that the one corner of the problem lifted here may suffice to draw attention to aspects of the spread of Buddhism hinted at but not fully explained in my earlier historical sketch.

4 This conclusion is provisional, since I have not examined all his translations in detail, but see T. H. Barrett, "The Chinese Perception of Jainism 耆那教"in Anne Cheng and Sanchi Kumar, *India–China: Intersecting Universalities* (Paris: Collège de France, 2020), chapter 1, nn. 8, 9 (open access).

5 Joseph Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 278, refers to it by title, but says nothing of its contents, though his own passing remark on p. xv about Christian influence on Buddhism suggests that he would have been sympathetic to Beal's views.

6 For the earliest doubts, see John Jorgensen, Dan Lusthaus, John Makeham and Mark Strange, *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 6.

7 Jason Clower, "*The Awakening of Faith*", in Richard K. Payne, ed., *Oxford Bibliographies in Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Missionary musings and Protestant assumptions

The passage that started the story may be found in a little survey of 1884 on Chinese Buddhism for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, a well-known charity dating back in England to the end of the seventeenth century that in Victorian Britain had launched 'Non-Christian Religious Systems', described as "A Series of Manuals which furnish in a brief and popular form an accurate account of the great Non-Christian Religious Systems of the World", a sort of down-market version of the better-known translation series *Sacred Books of the East*.[8] On the topic of Aśvaghoṣa, he states that "His writings still survive in a Chinese form, and when examined will probably be found to be much tinged with a pseudo-Christian element". In particular, he continues,

> there is one book, the "K'i-sin-lun," or, "treatise for awakening faith", which has never yet been properly examined, but, so far as is known, is based on doctrines foreign to Buddhism and allied to a perverted form of Christian dogma.

He concludes that a "fusion of foreign religious doctrines took place when the Christian dogma and ritual were first carried to the East by the Apostles and their successors".[9]

Now though his remarks here on the *Awakening of Faith* are novel, his explanation of the book's supposedly Christian background draws on ideas already long discussed in Europe. In fact, we need to go back in the first instance to the Renaissance and Reformation in the sixteenth century, and to the first Catholic missions of that period to Asia. As Urs App notes, the outward similarities that the Catholic clergy discovered with their Buddhist counterparts proved disconcerting from the start, swiftly prompting talk of diabolical imitation.[10] In some of his early writing the great Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) seems to have picked up this theme and to have suggested that the envoys sent by the Han to the West to import the true faith were heading for Judea but unfortunately stopped at India.[11] But more optimistically he also ventured to suggest that in India the apostle St. Thomas or perhaps another apostle, Bartholomew, had introduced a Christianity that had influenced Buddhism as it had been imported to China; by the end of the seventeenth century, according to this speculative scenario, St. Thomas was alleged to have come to China himself.[12] This may seem unfortunate, but we will

8 The quotation is taken from their advertisement in R. K. Douglas, *Confucianism and Taouism*, fourth edition (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1895), p. [288], by which point the series had grown to eight titles.

9 Samuel Beal, *Buddhism in China* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1884), pp. 138–139.

10 Urs App, *The Cult of Emptiness: The Western Discovery of Buddhist Thought and the Invention of Oriental Philosophy* (Wil, Switzerland: UniversityMedia, 2014), p. 13, citing Guillaume Postel (1510–1581).

11 App, *Cult of Emptiness*, p. 94.

12 Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 46–48

recall that the notion that Buddhism was a debased form of something else, namely Daoism, thanks to Laozi's travels to India, a tale which we touched upon already in describing Laozi's adventures with his zombie assistant, had equally excited Chinese imaginations long before this point.[13]

But while Roman Catholic missionaries continued to have to struggle with the outward similarities of Buddhist observances with those of their own church, especially as we have noticed in Tibet, to Protestants the matter was of little consequence. Take, for example, the *Purchase His Pilgrims* of the translator Samuel Purchas (c. 1575–1626), who was the first to introduce the writings of the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) to the English reader in 1625. A close study of his extensively edited translation has shown not simply that material putting a Jesuit point of view has been edited out, but also that Ricci's remarks on the outward similarities between the observances of Buddhism and of his own religion have been pointed up with a rather British editorial insertion: "The rites of this prophane Sect have great affinitie with our (*Romish*) Ecclesiasticall".[14] Protestant distaste for elaborate ritual easily led to condemnation of China as all too reminiscent of the old enemy, France. Thus Lord Macartney (1737–1806), first British ambassador to China, concluded

> The paraphernalia of religion displayed here – the altars, images, tabernacles, censors, lamps, candles, and candlesticks – with the sanctimonious deportment of the priests and the solemnity used in the celebration of their mysteries, have no small resemblance to the holy mummeries of the Romish Church as practiced in those countries where it is rich and powerful.[15]

It is true that Tibet offered the most obvious opportunity to poke fun at Catholics: the one time Romantic rebel Robert Southey (1774–1843), whose later switch to supporting the establishment saw him end up as poet laureate and a strong opponent of Catholic Emancipation, in a work of 1826 clearly enjoys greatly the Anglican sport of referring to "The Pope of Tibet" and "The Dalai Lama of Rome".[16] But China gave pretext enough for this sort of patriotic British game: Sir John Francis Davis (1795–1890), writing in 1836, states that the "mummeries of Buddhists are a parallel to the worst parts of Roman Catholicism", and, turning the genetic argument for their similarity around very neatly, "To those who admit that most of the Romish ceremonies and rites are borrowed directly from paganism, there is less

13 See Fabrizio Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism* (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2008), pp. 492–494.

14 See p. 98 of Nicholas Koss, "Matteo Rici on China via Samuel Purchas: Faithful Re-Presentation", in Christina H. Lee, ed., *Western Visions of the Far East in a Transpacific Age, 1522–1657* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 85–100.

15 Quoted in Eric Reinders, *Buddhist and Christian Responses to the Kowtow Problem in China* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 114.

16 Robert Southey, *Vindiciae Ecclesiae Anglicanae: Letters to Charles Butler, Esq.* (London: John Murray, 1826), p. 384.

difficulty in accounting for the resemblance".[17] In short, who cares where St. Thomas went, since the upshot was that both sides became corrupt. Corruption too gets a different but equally forthright treatment two years later in the pages of the British missionary 'Charles Gutzlaff', in earlier life the Pomeranian Karl Freidrich August Gützlaff, in his remarks on those he calls the "Shamanists, who are virtually the same with the Buddhists" – or indeed identical, since by 'shaman' he means the *shamen* 沙門, *śramaṇa,* the mendicant renunciant of the Buddhist tradition in China.

> For many of their rites, they are indebted to the depraved Nestorian Christians, who had found their way into Central Asia. The great resemblance to the superstitions of Popery, which was so universally spread during the middle ages, induces us to think that the absurdities of Shamanism in Tibet received their present form during the eleventh and twelfth centuries of our era. The dress of the Lamas, their beads, missals, vespers, mass, cloisters, nunneries, priests with shaven heads, celibacy, & c. strike even the most superficial observer as very similar to the institutions of the Romish church.[18]

The comparison itself naturally becomes part of the stock in trade of later British Protestant missionary writing, and further examples are not hard to find in the late nineteenth century, as superficial observers multiplied.[19] Explanations for the phenomena observed, however, did not multiply, but tended to follow precedent. The American missionary Justus Doolittle (1824–1880), after engagingly describing the similarities that would have been observed not by scholars but by 'the common people' of China, summarized the possible causes very succinctly for his colleagues:

> Huc, the Lazarist, seems pleased with this striking similarity, and says *Buddhism has an admixture of truth with holy Church.*
> Premare, another distinguished Romanist, says, *the devil has imitated Mother Church to scandalize her.*
> Protestants ask, Has not Romanism borrowed from paganism?[20]

To concede that the devil had decided to target the Church of Rome, of course, would have been to admit that it had an importance deserving such diabolical attentions, which Protestants were perhaps reluctant to do. On the other hand, one might have expected the genetic approach to have faded as the religious history of Asia in general and more specifically of the Buddhist tradition became clearer during the nineteenth century.

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17 John Francis Davis, *The Chinese: A General Description of the Empire of China and its Inhabitants,* (London: Charles Knight & Co., 1836), I, p. 165; II, p. 79.

18 Charles Gutzlaff, *China Opened* (London: Smith, Elder and co., 1838), p. 275.

19 For example Norman J. Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2002), p. 713, n. 64, mentions that Legge himself commented on the "curious resemblance" between Buddhism and Roman Catholicism, though in unpublished materials.

20 Justus Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese* (London, New York, Bahrain: Kegan Paul, 2002, reprint of 1876 edition), p. 22, referring to Évariste Régis Huc (1813–1860), famous for his travels in Tibet, and the earlier Jesuit, Joseph de Prémare (1666–1736).

But it was a religious history rather too useful to be abandoned in a hurry. We find therefore John Henry Gray (1823–1890), first archdeacon of Hong Kong, perfectly willing in 1878 to write

> It has been remarked that Buddhism — especially Lamaism — has many external points of resemblance to Roman Catholicism. The many Christian forms and ceremonies which were pressed into the service of paganism by the priests of Tibet, were probably derived from Nestorian and Roman Catholic missionaries who laboured in Central Asia.

After however recounting the same litany of similarities as his many predecessors, he does own up that he is "unable to speak with certainty on *all* these points", explaining in conclusion

> From Tibet many of these ceremonies found their way into China, but they are much less numerous in the *cultus* of the Buddhist priests of the Empire, than in that of the lamas of Tibet, Mongolia, and Mantchuria.[21]

It will be noticed that in returning to the possible influence of the Church of the East in China, Gray is much more civil than Gutzlaff and avoids accusations of depravity. There may well be a reason for this. Michael Keevak has shown in his extended examination of the reception history of the Tang period Christian stele of Xi'an that for a long time after its early seventeenth century discovery its reputation was clouded, especially in Protestant circles, by the suspicion that it might be a Jesuit fake. Such doubts began to wane in the middle of the nineteenth century, and in particular after the Scottish Presbyterian missionary Alexander Williamson (1829–1890) was able to examine the object himself.[22] Beal does not mention the inscription, which provides solid evidence with other sources for the presence of Christianity in seventh and eighth century China. But he does speculate at some length about early Christian influence in India, since a king Gondophares mentioned in tales of St. Thomas had at the time that he was writing recently been attested at about the right period of history by numismatic evidence.

The emergence of Buddhist voices

In this way the *Awakening of Faith* had been identified as a crypto-Christian text in a well-known English-language account of Buddhism in China, with no dissent that we know of from the Chinese Buddhist community. In Japan, however, writers were beginning to emerge who could debate Western ideas about Buddhism in English based on a wide knowledge of Chinese sources, even if as we noted in the last lecture their absorption of Western Indological knowledge was only at an early stage. The career of D. T. Suzuki as one

21 John Henry Gray, *China: A History of the Laws, Manners and Customs of the People* (London: Macmillan, 1878), volume one, p. 137.

22 Michael Keevak, *The Story of a Stele: China's Nestorian Monument and its Reception in the West, 1625–1916* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008), pp. 102–109.

of the leaders in the West of 'Eastern Buddhism' is well known, and much attention has been given to his background in Meiji Japan and his formative years in the United States. Judith Snodgrass notes how Suzuki, as a disciple of the Zen master Shaku Sōen 釋宗演 (1859–1919), was soon involved as an amanuensis in exchanges with an American clergyman, Rev. F. F. Ellinwood (1826–1908) as to the status of Mahayana Buddhism, in which Ellinwood affirms concerning Eastern Buddhism that it "comes nearer to the doctrine of the apostle Paul than Sakyamuni", and she concludes "In other words, any positive conceptions present in Eastern Buddhism were the result of contact with Christianity".[23]

On Suzuki's arrival in the USA, he set to work therefore under his American patron and publisher Paul Carus (1852–1919) to produce a work that would show the benefits of using Chinese sources for Indological research, and also demonstrate that Mahayana Buddhist philosophical thought was well established at an early date. That is precisely what his translation of the second Chinese version of the *Awakening of Faith* achieves, showing what an abundance of information about the life and times of Aśvaghoṣa may be gleaned from Chinese works, which situate him in the first century CE at the latest, but no grounds are found for bringing in any apostles, and the focus is much more on the Buddhist King Kanishka. That done, he turns to Beal, beginning

> I cannot help saying a few words here about the importance of Aśvaghosha's main work which is scarcely known in the West, and if so, wrongly. Even Samuel Beal who is considered one of the best authorities on Chinese Buddhism, makes a misleading reference to our author in his *Buddhism in China*.

As evidence that "he had a very insufficient knowledge of the subject" Suzuki quotes his sentence describing the contents of the *Awakening of Faith* as "a perverted form of Christian dogma", and rounds this off by saying "The incorrectness of this statement will readily be seen by the reader when we proceed further on".[24]

Suzuki's works have been reprinted incessantly throughout the twentieth century: a remark about the *Awakening of Faith* in his First Series of essays of 1927 has therefore appeared several times in their postwar guise.[25] But he never returned to this early translation, for reasons that may discerned already in his 1932 translation *The Lankavatara Sutra: A Mahayana Text*, where he quietly concedes that the traditional ascription of the *Awakening of*

23 Judith Snodgrass, on p. 58 of "Publishing Eastern Buddhism: D. T. Suzuki's Journey to the West", in Thomas DuBois, ed., *Casting Faiths: Imperialism and the Transformation of Religion in East and Southeast Asia* (London: Palgrave McMillan, 2009), pp. 46–72.

24 Teitaro Suzuki, *Açvaghosha's Discourse on the awakening of faith in the Mahāyāna* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1900), pp. 41–42.

25 D. T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism, First Series* (London: Rider, 1985), p. 68, is the latest I have; there seems to have been a further reprint in the 1990s.

Faith may be wrong, while describing the suspicion that it was composed in China as "not well grounded".[26] His postwar *The Zen Doctrine of No-Mind* simply says "usually ascribed to Asvaghosha".[27] The origins of the text are indeed problematic, and in his later years he cannot be blamed for not hurling himself into the very complex arguments involved.

A Welsh intervention

Unfortunately, however, someone else had read Beal's remarks, with very different consequences, namely the Welsh Baptist missionary, Timothy Richard (1845–1919). His work as the first British translator of the *Awakening of Faith* has been examined in a pioneering study by Francesca Tarocco that also adds some remarks on Suzuki, so here I do not attempt to improve upon her findings.[28] Richard had first become aware of the importance of the text in 1884 through a meeting with Yang Wenhui 楊文會 (1837–1911), the famous Buddhist layman and friend from his time as a diplomat in England of Nanjō Bunyū, mentioned already in my last lecture. Yang was a great promoter of the treatise, and by the missionary's own account in the preface to his translation set Richard to reading a copy, which immediately impressed him with its Christian overtones. He goes on:

> Three months later, I was in a bookseller's shop in Edinburgh, and, looking through his new books, I came across Beal's little book on Buddhism, then just published. Turning up a certain chapter in it, I found that he referred to *The Awakening of Faith* as a pseudo-Christian book which it was desirable to have translated![29]

He accordingly on his return to China and meeting Yang again engaged him to assist in reading a style that no dictionary could help him with and that no ordinary Confucian scholar could advise on either. By 1894 the deed was done, though not with any intimation to Yang of the very Christian tenor of his interpretation; when Richard eventually found time to publish it in Shanghai in 1907 with Yang listed on the title page as having helped, Yang was understandably not best pleased at all.[30]

The English-language press of Shanghai was vibrant, but its impact in the wider Anglophone world was not great. In 1910, however, Richard published as *The New Testament of Higher Buddhism* an expanded version, lacking

26 Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *The Lankavatara Sutra: A Mahayana Text* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1932), p. xxxix.

27 Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *The Zen Doctrine of No-Mind* (London: Rider and Company, 1949), p. 41.

28 Francesca Tarocco, "Lost in translation? The *treatise on the Mahāyāna Awakening of Faith* (*Dasheng qixin lun*) and its modern readings", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 71.2 (2008), pp. 323–343.

29 Timothy Richard, *The New Testament of Higher Buddhism* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1910), p. 45.

30 Tarocco, "Lost in translation?" p. 335, notes that he complained to Nanjō. The original publication was Rev. Timothy Richard, Litt. D., assisted by Mr. Yang Wen Hui, *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana Doctrine: The New Buddhism, by the Patriarch Ashvaghosha* (Shanghai: Christian Literature Society, 1907).

Yang's name on the title page and with additional material such as a synopsis of the *Lotus Sutra*, through T. and T. Clark of Edinburgh, who were then and still are well respected publishers of theological and other works. This is the edition that had the wider impact, though the introductory material retains much of the same content. Worthy of sone note is that it is made quite explicit that the publication of the 1894 draft translation was made necessary by the appearance of Suzuki's book. He draws explicitly on Suzuki's research for the details of the life of the supposed author of the original treatise, which was of course based on a reading of Chinese sources that would have been beyond him.[31] But he objects to Suzuki's overall approach: this turns up first at the start of the 'General Introduction', where the Japanese scholar is flatly contradicted, and again later after the account of meeting Yang Wenhui he is attacked again, and equally bluntly:

> In Suzuki's introduction, he quotes a large number of different authorities about Ashvagosha. But as he approaches the subject from the non-Christian point of view, the light which comes from a comparison between it and Christianity is denied him.[32]

Yet the Christianity Richard propounds is slightly unexpected. There are no decadent Nestorians here, and even Saint Thomas has only put in a brief appearance as a possible influence:

> Where Ashvaghosha got his ideas we do not know. Some say from the Apostle Thomas, who is supposed to have been with him in the court of Gondophorus or Kanishka. But we await further light on the historic meeting-place of Christianity and New Buddhism.[33]

For though his attack on Suzuki looks like straightforward polemics, reading a little further the matter becomes more complex. Two pages after dealing with his Japanese rival we find a section entitled "Common Origin Around Babylon" that strikes a more ambiguous note:

> It is getting clearer each year now that those common doctrines of New Buddhism and Christianity were not borrowed from one another, but that both came from a common source, Babylonia.

Not only that, but after bringing in Babylonia he goes on to say

> It is also getting clearer each year that different truths, wherever found, cannot be antagonistic. They do not neutralize, but complement each other; they do not destroy, but fulfill one another.[34]

This is, in short, something new to both Christianity and Buddhism. Some seem swiftly to have found the message welcome. In 1912 a William Gemmell of Glasgow produced a translation of the *Diamond Sutra* that quotes approvingly

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31 Richard, *New Testament*, p. 50.

32 Richard, *New Testament*, pp. 3, 47.

33 Richard, *New Testament,* p. 27.

34 Richard, *New Testament*, p. 49.

as a famous Buddhist tract the *Awakening of Faith* by 'Asvaghocha', "who flourished A. D. 50, under the Indo-Scythic king, Gondophares", and that also commends Timothy Richard for translating the Chinese term for Tathāgata as 'God'.[35] But already in 1908 the Anglican Bishop of Mid-China, G. E. Moule (1828–1912) had expressed strong misgivings about a publication that seemed to set at naught basic Christian doctrines such as the Crucifixion.[36] And Richard's biographer, William Soothill, is obliged to express himself very carefully on the topic of his friend's orthodoxy: in his *Timothy Richard of China* he sees Richard as actually ultimately stressing the link with the Nestorians, and concludes "Richard's contribution to the study of Buddhism may be described as more valuable for its suggestiveness than for its literal accuracy".[37] Perhaps the best that can be said is that his efforts a Buddhist translation were not as bad as his attempt at showing that the story of the Monkey King was also a crypto-Christian text, for while I have suggested that this superb simian story did have a complex background, whatever it was, it was not that.[38]

An American Buddhist response

In fact, Richard left the *Awakening of Faith* dangerously suspended in a sort of religious no man's land, a prize for any free-spirited pilgrim of the imagination. Even Suzuki's impeccably Buddhist version was probably not helped by the preface from Paul Carus, which adduces in explaining Suchness (*zhenru* 真如) its equivalence in his view to "Plato's realm of ideas".[39] No wonder perhaps that the second translation to be undertaken in America, while criticizing its predecessors, ignores *The New Testament of Higher Buddhism* entirely. This was a version included by Dwight Goddard (1861–1939) and appears in the first expanded edition of his *A Buddhist Bible*, self-published in Thetford, Vermont, in 1938. I do not propose to say much about this undertaking,

35 William Gemmell, *The Diamond Sutra (Chin-Kang-Ching) or Prajna-Paramita* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trübner, 1912), pp. 9, 73–74. A William Gemmell is listed as a China Inland Mission missionary in the 1900s in a place, 'Chenchow' (? Chenzhou 郴州) in Hunan, that seems to have been familiar to this writer, who acknowledges the help of Buddhist clerics there; though the theology of that mission would not normally have encompassed the opinions expressed in this book, it may be that his original outlook had shifted. CF. Anon., comp., *Directory of Protestant Missionaries in China, Japan and Corea* (Hong Kong: Daily Press Office, 1904), p. 10.

36 Cite by Li Xinde, *Ming-Qing shiqi Xifang chuanjiaoshi*, p. 381, from the *Chinese Recorder* 42.3 (1911), pp. 347–351.

37 William Soothill, *Timothy Richard of China* (London: Seeley, Service & Co., 1924), p. 319.

38 Some measure of the baffled reactions to Richard on the *Journey to the West* may be found on pp. 312–314 of an account of another version with broad religious sympathies, published later by Helen M. Hayes, viz. Wu Xiaofang 吴晓芳, "Duoyuan zongjiao de duihua" 多元宗教的对话, in Lawrence Wang Chi Wong 王宏志, ed., *Studies in Translation History* 翻译史研究 2017 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2017), pp. 245–320; cf. also her study "A Literary Experiment of "Mahayana Christianity": On Timothy Richard's English Translation of *Xiyou ji*", in T. H. Barrett and Lawrence Wang-chi Wong, eds., *Crossing Borders: Sinology in Translation Studies* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2022), pp. 297–340, which contains several details on his earlier *Awakening of Faith* effort to supplement Francesca Tarocco's observations..

39 Suzuki, *Awakening of Faith*, p. v.

since though Goddard is mentioned in sources on American Buddhism, they say little about his co-translator Wai-tao whose support was clearly crucial, given that though Goddard had been a missionary in China at one point he did apparently not have the capacity to translate Buddhist Chinese unaided.[40]

Now Goddard certainly knew Suzuki. He had met the Zen master Sokei-an曹溪庵 (1882–1945) who was the future husband of Ruth Fuller Sasaki in New York in 1928, and this had inspired him to travel to Japan to meet Suzuki too in person, and to study his writings, including his 1900 translation. His initial enthusiasm for this is well captured in a self-published work of 1933, *The Principle and Practice of Mahayana Buddhism: An Interpretation of Professor Suzuki's Translation of Ashvaghosha's Awakening of Faith*.[41] This restatement of the Suzuki translation is preceded by an introduction that gives a remarkably frank account of Suzuki's attitude to the project, quoting from a letter sent to its author:

> Dear Mr. Goddard: Although I am not in agreement with your idea of epitomising my old Ashvaghosha, I can not prevent you from doing your own work in your own way, can I? Please do your best.

Suzuki then goes on to say that he is not happy with his old translation and had long wanted to make a new one. The introduction also briefly puts paid to Timothy Richard: "he was so intent upon harmonising it with Christianity that he ruined its value as an understandable translation of a Buddhist text". He also notes another translation spread over four issues of the magazine *The Shrine of Wisdom* in 1929–1930, which is by contrast damned with some very faint praise. "It is an understandable translation, but by their unfamiliarity with Buddhist metaphysics they miss the esoteric significance of the Mahayana".[42] By 1938 much of this had changed.

He is at that date more careful about the authorship of the *Awakening of Faith* than Suzuki had been in 1900, for in the bibliographic appendix to his compilation the note on the text states only that it is "generally credited to the great Indian poet and controversialist, Ashvaghosha".[43] But he is also surprisingly unenthusiastic now about Suzuki's translation, going on

> There have been two English translations of note; Dr. Suzuki's made in 1900 and now long out of print. This was marred by too great an interpretation of it as a metaphysical treatise.

I can only suppose, given that he states in the note that he and Wai-tao made their translation in 1936 and 1937, when the War of Resistance Against Japan

40 This emerges from Robert Aitken, "The Christian-Buddhist Life and Works of Dwight Goddard", *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 16 (1996), pp. 3–10, on whose biographical information concerning Goddard I draw here.

41 Thetford, Vermont, 1933.

42 Goddard, *Principle and Practice*, pp. xi, xii.

43 Dwight Goddard, ed., *A Buddhist Bible, Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged* (Thetford, Vermont: Dwight Goddard, 1938), p. 668, referring back to the translation itself, p. 357.

was just getting under way, that Wai-tao was a patriot who saw Japanese Buddhists as better at theory than practice. Since the 1933 synopsis is not obviously drawn upon in the new work, it is probable that Goddard and his Chinese friend did go through the text together and did throw out much that had been based on the work of the Japanese scholar. But as it happens, Mrs. Sasaki was in turn not very polite about Goddard's edition in his Bible of the first *Platform Sutra* translation of Shanghai, 1930: "This version of the translation suffers from the editor's limited knowledge of the Chinese language and his dependence upon personal intuition rather than scholarship. It cannot be used as a text for the serious study of Zen".[44]

A discovery in Surrey

But what Goddard now says about the second translation known to him is, as I have now discovered, very significantly inaccurate. This is what he says:

> Another was made by several Sanskrit scholars from a Sanskrit text remade from the Chinese, and misses the profound esoteric significance of the original. This was published in the magazine *The Shrine of Wisdom* in 1929 and 1930.

Now *The Shrine of Wisdom* still exists, as the publishing arm of what is now known as the Fintry Trust, of Brook near Godalming, Surrey. Thanks to the kindness of the current administrator and librarian I was able to visit the Trust in September 2021 and consult archives relevant to the translation, and to secure copies of the magazine that Goddard refers to. Presumably what he is saying is that the 'several Sanskrit scholars' had some knowledge of Chinese and used it to hypothesize the original Sanskrit from which the *Awakening of Faith* had been translated, after which they rendered that reconstruction into English. This was simply not the case at all, nor does anything in the four-part magazine translation of 1929 to 1930 remotely suggest that that is what happened. Both the Editors of *The Shrine of Wisdom* and Goddard and Wai-tao include Sanskrit words like karma, dharma, bodhisattva and so forth in their translations. Because as I have stressed, Indological awareness of Buddhism surpassed any familiarity with Buddhist Chinese, as it happens for this period as much in North America as in the United Kingdom.[45]

The anonymous translation was the work of an American who had already achieved remarkable distinction in the field of photography, Alvin Langdon Coburn (1882–1966), together with his wife, Edith Wightman Coburn (1880–1957). In his posthumously published autobiography he devotes a chapter to "The Inner Life", which begins,

> In October 1923 I met a great and good man, who influenced my life more profoundly and changed it more completely than any

44 Sasaki, "Bibliography of Translations", p. 153.

45 The translation, "The Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna, by Asvaghosha", is contained in *The Shrine of Wisdom* XI, 42 (1929), pp. 147–155; XI, 43 (1930), pp. 202–211; XI, 44 (1930), pp. 219–229; XI, 45 (1930), pp. 287–294.

> other person I have ever known, and I am deeply grateful to Divine Providence for having placed this supreme experience in my path,

and tells how their first meeting was extended by a lengthy conversation in a Chinese restaurant in London.[46] The Fintry Trust is connected to an international group known as the Universal Order, but this prefers a measure of anonymity rather than any cult of personality, so the great and good man is not named. The balance of the chapter is devoted to D. T. Suzuki, whom Coburn met in London in 1936 when Suzuki visited the World Congress of Faiths, an organization founded by Sir Francis Younghusband, for a great fortnight long public meeting of international religious leaders. You will recall Younghusband from the last lecture as the bloodthirsty invader of Tibet, but fortunately after this expedition he had a change of heart and pursued the paths of peace or at least spirituality for the remainder of his life.[47] The archives of the Fintry Trust preserve six letters from Suzuki to Coburn relating to a notable photograph he took of Suzuki at this point.[48] Coburn's autobiography shows a keen appreciation of Chinese thought and food, but this by no means marked the limit of his enthusiasms: in 1935, for example, he became a Lay Reader in the Church of Wales, after having become a British citizen in 1932.[49]

The translation is preceded in the first issue by an editorial preface, introducing the author, based on Suzuki's biographical research in Chinese sources and naming the first two translations, without comment beyond saying that they are out of print, further saying "The present free and interpretative translation is by the Editors of *The Shrine of Wisdom*". A couple of pages of explanations of some of the terminology represented by Sanskrit in the translation follows, in one case noting that *Bhūtatathātā*, "the Godhead considered from the Metaphysical aspect" may have been translated by Suzuki as Suchness and by Richard as True Form, but "it has been thought advisable to use the original Sanskrit word".[50] The evidence that the translation was based on a reading of the Chinese text by the Coburns is found in various notebooks on Chinese vocabulary preserved by the Fintry Trust and also a copy of a very unusual edition of the Timothy Richard translation produced by the Methodist Publishing House in Shanghai in 1918, which appends an edition of the Chinese text originally published in Japan in 1888 by Fujii Genshu 藤井玄珠 (1812–1895) under the title *Daijō Kishinron kōchū* 大乘起信論校註. The Fintry Trust also preserves a copy of H. A. Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary* of 1892, which would have been the largest such work available at the time. Unfortunately, as we noted in the last lecture,

46 Helmut and Alison Gernsheim, eds., *Alvin Langdon Coburn, Photographer: An Autobiography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 120.

47 French, *Younghusband*, pp. 365–369.

48 Gernsheim and Gernsheim, *Alvin Langdon Coburn*, plate 29, opposite p. 68.

49 Gernsheim and Gernsheim, *Alvin Langdon Coburn*, pp. 116, 124.

50 "Awakening of Faith" [I], pp. 149–150.

Giles is not always good at understanding Buddhist material; he does in this dictionary as presented online correctly equate *chan* 禪 with Sanskrit *dhyāna*, for example, but some of the phrases under that headword are not quite accurately glossed.

File 296 at the Fintry Trust contains correspondence suggesting that the Editors intended to improve upon their efforts from quite early on. Not all the correspondence is dated, but it seems that by 1944 at the latest the revisions had come to involve A. F. Price and other members of the editorial team.[51] Arnold F. Price is best known for his translation of the *Diamond Sutra* originally published by the Buddhist Society in London in 1947 with a preface by W. Y. Evans-Wentz (1878–1965); this translation has reached an even wider readership since 1969 when it was combined with the Buddhist Society 1953 republication of the 1930 Shanghai translation of the *Platform Sutra* and published in North America by Shambhala in Berkeley; this popular combination of both works has been reprinted repeatedly into the twenty-first century. The revised version of the *Awakening of Faith* was eventually published as a slim volume by the Shrine of Wisdom in 1964. A cursory inspection shows that while there are some excisions, for example a shortening of the biography of Aśvaghoṣa and the removal of the reference to the translation terminology of Suzuki and Richard, the new edition is most significantly marked by expansion, chiefly in the form of further introductory information on the history of Buddhism and on the meaning of Nirvana. Unfortunately a letter dated 20th November 1931, still at the Fintry Trust, from E. H. Johnston (1885–1942), soon to be Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, was overlooked, for in response to a question about Aśvaghoṣa he writes "The 'Awakening of Faith' is almost certainly not his; it is a Mahāyāna work of great interest, written perhaps two centuries later".[52] This translation is still available from the Trust, along with almost a score of other short works.

These publications, along with the content of the Shrine of Wisdom periodical, give a good conspectus of the interests of the Editors. Several translations derive from Daoist works, for example *The Classic of Purity, Qingjing jing* 清靜經, first published as a seven-page pamphlet in 1934 and reprinted in 1980. Rather than displaying anything of the late nineteenth century preoccupation with Nestorian influences on Buddhism, the main Western tradition represented is Neo-Platonism, often through edited excerpts from the work of Thomas Taylor (1758–1835), an unusually diligent and influential translator of the relevant Greek materials. We may recall that Plato imagined an ideal world beyond our immediate senses, and his thought was taken up in the early centuries of the Common Era by several thinkers who adapted his approach

51 'Tommy' [Francis Brook)] to Alvin [Coburn], 11 November 1944: "I thought I was to send the 'Awakening' to Brother Arnold".

52 On Johnston, who is here drawing on European Indology rather than East Asian scholarship, see de Jong, *Brief History*, pp. 45, 72.

to the religious environment of the age, apparently with some awareness of non-European beliefs, though in the view of at least one contemporary Buddhist without incorporating actual Buddhist influence.[53]

With the waning of the Middle Ages a revived interest in this tradition had emerged in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as the rigidity of Western European thought now required some flexibility to cope with wider intellectual perspectives. One trend that achieved this end was an interest in *prisca theologia*, 'Ancient Theology', drawing on materials apparently compatible with Christianity that were attributed to remote antiquity. The Jesuit missions to China exploited this trend in trying to locate a long-lost monotheism in the Chinese past that might be reconciled with their own efforts at converting the adherents of Confucius. Another label that emerged in the sixteenth century was *philosophia perennis*, 'The Perennial Philosophy', meaning the wisdom of the ages that was the common heritage of mankind, and this especially appealed to those with leanings towards Neo-Platonist thought. Late seventeenth century Britain showed an interest in these ideas, too, that was still recalled by those in the early nineteenth century who were beginning to engage seriously with Asian thought.[54] Meanwhile Thomas Taylor's writings seem during the latter era to have had a considerable impact on literary figures of the Romantic period. Given this background, in more recent times the combination of a high regard for Neo-Platonism with openness to Asian religion that we find in Shrine of Wisdom publications would no doubt have delighted Paul Carus, though Bishop G. E. Moule may have taken more persuading.

Translations retrieved; translations refurbished

In fact, this combination of Neo-Platonic and Asian interests was quite widespread in the twentieth century Anglophone world. In 1945 Aldous Huxley (1894–1963), who had been living in the USA since 1937, even published a substantial anthology under the title *The Perennial Philosophy* that became a very widely read source of information for a popular readership on both sides of the Atlantic and beyond, and the antepenultimate chapter of this famous volume includes a quotation of 'Ashvaghosha' running to over three pages taken from Goddard's *Buddhist Bible*.[55] Others writing in the same vein looked elsewhere: W. Y. Evans-Wentz, whose *Tibetan Book of the*

53 Stephen Batchelor, *The Awakening of the West: The Encounter of Buddhism and Western Culture* (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 1994), pp. 25–29.

54 In an essay on Thomas Manning (1772–1840) I point out a couple of references by Manning and by a French contemporary to Ralph Cudworth (1617–1688), a leading figure in early British investigations of Neo-Platonism: see p. 102 of T. H. Barrett, "Learning and Outcomes in Early Anglophone Translation", in T. H. Barrett and Lawrence Wang-chi Wong, eds., *Crossing Borders: Sinology in Translation Studies* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2022), pp. 99–143, and cf. also for the Neo-Platonism of Manning in its contemporary context, pp. 83–84 of Edward Weech, "Thomas Manning (1772–1840)", in Barrett and Wong, pp. 75–97.

55 Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1946), pp. 330–333; this was the first British edition.

Dead naturally features along with some of his other writings in Huxley's bibliography, though aware of the *Buddhist Bible,* refers to both the Suzuki and Richard versions of the *Awakening of Faith*, along of course with a fair helping of Neo-Platonism, in *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*.[56] Given the standing of Evans-Wentz in Buddhist Studies, especially with regard to Tibet, Don Lopez Jr. has been at pains to point out that his religious background was originally in Theosophy, and that he was (if I may put it this way) more of an impresario of translation than a translator.[57] Writers such as these, however, certainly will have generated some curiosity about a spiritual classic not to be readily found in English, other than in the version buried in Goddard's *Bible*, which was reprinted in the 1950s.

In view of the limited distribution of the *Shrine of Wisdom* publication, it is no surprise than an Englishman in the 1960s, while not attempting to address the original Chinese text, should have hit upon the idea of updating the Richard version to make it more palatable to the readership of his day. Alan Hull Walton (1917–1989) produced his edited *Awakening of Faith* in London in 1961.[58] The author is described by Jason Clower as "writer on erotica". True, his publisher in this instance, Charles Skilton, turns out according to information on the internet to have been an engaging fellow who made his money from selling postcards of London life, supplemented by his Luxor Press, purveyors of the mild pornography permissible in those days. But the dust jacket of my copy conveys a self-image that does not mention this at all:

> Alan Hull Walton was born in 1917, in Northumberland, and educated at The Royal Grammar School and Durham University. Before settling in a flat overlooking Hampstead Heath he travelled extensively, and visited France for lengthy periods. Described by one critic as "a medieval scholar set down in the present day", he possesses a library of over 6,000 volumes. He first came to notice during 1941, when his translations from the poetry of Baudelaire were well received both here and abroad. His reputation was established by works in the fields of sociology, morals, and religion. He is also an expert bibliographer.

Nor does the enthusiast for the *Awakening of Faith* reveal that before his French translation "came to notice" he had devoted much of his early life to trying to establish himself as a poet. After acquiring a copy of his slim volume *Ballet Shoe* of 1943, I feel rather confident in concluding that in this

56 W. Y. Evans-Wentz, *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), commends Goddard's work in a footnote on p. 99; the footnotes from pp. 210 to 233 contain some nine references to the Suzuki and Richard translations, with the majority coming from the latter.

57 Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, pp. 47–71.

58 Ashvagosha, translated by Timothy Richard, D. D., edited with an introduction by Alan Hull Walton, *The Awkening of Faith.* London, Charles Skilton, 1961. A note on the reverse of the title page states that the text is from the T & T Clark edition.

he failed. Reactions to poetry are of course quite subjective and I do not claim to be anything other than an insensitive reader. But there are aspects of his poem that grate with me, which I can explain in rough and ready way. To contrast with *Ballet Shoe*, I selected a volume of verse by Ogden Nash, not for its aesthetic quality but because it is my belief that he is regarded as quite an emphatic fellow: "Candy is dandy, but liquor is quicker", and so forth. A painstaking survey revealed that even so less than a quarter of the verses in the anthology I selected, *Family Reunion* of 1950, contained exclamation marks. Only a quarter of the pieces in *Ballet Shoe* do not contain an exclamation mark.

Punctuation apart, Hull Walton cannot be described as adventurous. His musings show a fondness for Paris, certainly, but the wider world seems to have remained somewhat beyond his ken, even if a muted taste for exoticism surfaces from time to time. In his introduction he states that

> one of the great missions of poetry is to stimulate the imagination, to recreate an emotion, sometimes to mystify, and in any case to render life more sweet. That is why I like Chinese poetry and Arabian poetry. Sometimes I find it difficult to interpret, it sets my mind wandering away from the earth and daily toil; and whatever conclusions I may finally arrive at I always find that it brings a certain pleasure, a certain deliciousness into life. Thus I rise from my volume of Oriental versification more refreshed than if I had just stepped from my bath![59]

I must confess that this ablutionary aspect of Chinese verse translation had passed me by, but be that as it may I think it is clear that any linguistic engagement with Chinese lay well beyond his ambitions.

By contrast his prominence as a writer of erotica of necessity seems to have become established for the most part only after 1961, with the relaxation of British obscenity laws after the 1960 D. H. Lawrence *Lady Chatterley's Lover* trial, though of course earlier than this he may have been writing under a pseudonym. In 1964 he published a translation of de Sade's *Justine* that was soon reissued in a popular paperback series, and in 1965 he seems to have started to contribute to *Penthouse* magazine; in fact a study of the liberalization of the writing during this period points out that he had been advocating greater openness on sexual matters also since 1943, though without gaining much attention.[60] But clearly he must have found out that sex sold better than religion in the new climate, for apart from one Dumas translation that was published in 1975 he appears to have kept mainly to works on aphrodisiacs and the like thereafter. I do not know how long he

59 Alan Hull Walton, *Ballet Shoe* (London: The Fortune Press, 1943), p. 8.

60 H. G. Cocks, on pp. 483–484, "Saucy Stories: Pornography, Sexology, and the Marketing of Sexual Knowledge in Britain c. 1918–70", *Social History* 29.4 (2004), pp. 465–484. Hull Walton had also published his very slim volume of verse in the same year; it is clear from this that some of his inspiration came from pioneers of sexology such as Havelock Ellis: note his poem in *Ballet Shoe*, p. 17.

and his books continued to inhabit Highgate, nor what may have become of them: his library does not seem to have included Goddard's *Bible* or the serially published *The Shrine of Wisdom* translation. But he does mention the Suzuki version, and reading between the lines, we find his reason for ignoring this also in his subsequent account of the Richard alternative:

> Quite apart from its interest for the scholar and theologian, this particular version seems admirably suited to those readers with a Christian background, yet who lack more than a slight acquaintance with Buddhist thought.[61]

In short, Suzuki knew too much about what the text meant for the average British reader.

But rescuing the Christian *Awakening of Faith* from its missionary background plainly involved some ruthless interventions, beyond jettisoning almost all the introduction to the Richard translation. In place of the excised material, we get a completely different context for the understanding of the work. The general tenor of Hull Walton's approach is signaled already by the Foreword, which is by Aldous Huxley and dated Los Angeles, 1960. Though this is short, to the point of making no observation whatsoever on the quality of the introduction or the translation, it soon becomes apparent in the text of the introduction itself that a guest appearance by Huxley is not merely decorative. After a brief nod to 'Dr. Carl Jung of Zürich' and William James, we learn with regard to the study of religion that

> Huxley, the most erudite of living writers in this field, combining the knowledge of the scientist, the perception of the psychologist, and the vision of the seer, has, in his profoundly important anthology and commentary *The Perennial Philosophy*, given infinitely further ground for believing that the basis of genuine religion rests on inward experience, rather than on strict adherence to orthodoxy and its outward ritual.[62]

Next, after an appearance from Evans-Wentz and the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, the Neo-Platonist Plotinus arrives, and, summing up, our author states

> The One Mind, the Cosmic Mind, the Divine Mind, whether of Buddhist, Neo-Platonist, or Christian Mystic, are, as Aldous Huxley has clearly demonstrated, one and the same.[63]

Now this, from our contemporary perspective sixty years later, could come across as Orientalism in its very purest form, something that Timothy Richard was perhaps only groping towards. What this is saying effectively is that you Orientals (though in fact no Asian readership is ever envisaged) cannot understand your ancient scriptures, but we superior Westerners, with our

61 Richard/Hull Walton, *Awakening of Faith*, p. 29.

62 Richard/Hull Walton, *Awakening of Faith*, p. 9.

63 Richard/Hull Walton, *Awakening of Faith,* pp. 14, 20, 21. Huxley's clear demonstration is footnoted as being established in *The Perennial Philosophy*.

knowledge of Greek and Christian philosophy, can sort everything out for you. I could go on to detail how to achieve this aim Hull Walton expunges all trace of the Chinese missionary background within the text, replacing Chinese with Sanskrit, as he admits, and where he does not understand a Chinese term eliminating it altogether. But on the other hand, he is entirely judicious in rejecting the notion of Christian influence in the formation of the Mahayana, while somehow conceding possible later influences in Tibet.[64]

Translation in the academy: a new era

All in all, however, it was probably a good thing that in 1968 Columbia published the Hakeda translation, a volume that is perhaps not entirely beyond criticism, but that rendered into English an understanding of the text based on a considerable body of both traditional and modern Chinese and Japanese scholarship. The translator commends Suzuki for his understanding of the text, though not the version he chooses to translate, and cites enough from Richard's introduction to show that his approach, while sympathetic, was more Christian than Buddhist. Towards Goddard and Wai-tao he is more severe:

> To begin with, the translation is incomplete. In addition, it is often difficult to identify the translated passages with the original, and there are many interpolations and unwarranted interpretations.[65]

The Shrine of Wisdom translation he has seen mentioned by Goddard but was unable to locate; the Hull Walton rewriting of Richard he does not know at all.

Like all translators who published in the 1960s he also seems not to have noticed that an academically qualified scholar had published a brief excerpt from the text in English in 1954, and that this excerpt had been republished in America in 1964. Arthur Waley's one page attempt at conveying something of the quality of the original is placed firmly in the Chinese section of the larger anthology to which he was contributing, and this may explain why those who still sought an Indian origin for the work never found it. This does not explain Hakeda's oversight, but admittedly it is so slight a piece for the omission to be of no consequence.[66] Even so Waley does certainly anticipate Hakeda in one respect, namely in placing the composition of his text in China, probably in the sixth century. The likelihood that the *Awakening of Faith* could have been written by a Sanskrit poet of the first or second centuries CE is in Hakeda's work also flatly rejected, and the possibility of Chinese

64 Richard/Hull Walton, *Awakening of Faith*, pp. 23–24.

65 Yoshito S. Hakeda, *The Awakening of Faith, Attributed to Asvaghosha* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 9, 16–17.

66 Waley's translation may be found in Edward Conze, I. B. Horner, David Snellgrove and Arthur Waley, eds., *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 290, reprinting the Oxford: Bruno Cassirer edition of 1954; the short excerpt is the equivalent of Hakeda, *Awakening of Faith*, pp. 34–35. It will be seen from a comparison of these two that even well qualified translators may diverge considerably. But here we leave any further commentary, since it is the consequences of inadequate preparation that concern me most.

composition brought forward.[67] We can at last bid farewell to Gondophares; Neo-Platonism, too, is nowhere mentioned. In the most recent translation, by John Jorgensen, Dan Lusthaus, John Makeham and Mark Strange, it has therefore been possible to move on at last to discuss the problematic aspects of the thought of the *Awakening of Faith* within its Chinese Buddhist context.[68]

Is there anything to be learned from this story? One conclusion might be that a translator of Buddhist works in Chinese should only work within a study well stocked not simply with every commentary written in East Asia, but also with all the necessary resources for understanding the original within its historical and cultural context. But maybe there is something more besides. Having to pay some attention to British studies of Tibet has obliged me to re-read David Snellgrove's autobiography with some attention, and I note that Snellgrove, a Catholic convert and a religious man, experienced some difficulty in his relations with teachers who read texts for exclusively linguistic reasons.[69] So let me tie things up this way. We may or may not have a shared interest in the deeds of monkeys; we may or may not have a shared interest in the ultimate truth. But if we come from our different cultures with our different histories to any of these matters, we will need a disciplined process of education if we are to move beyond shared interest to shared understanding. That is what the Centre of Buddhist Studies here supports; that is what this lecture series supports; that is what in my own way it has been my privilege to support in these lectures too.

67 Hakeda, *Awakening of Faith*, pp. 5–7.

68 See n. 6, above.

69 Snellgrove, *Asian Commitment*, p. 55.

Afterword

Since delivering these lectures, I have had the opportunity not simply to reread them but also to think about the whole question of translating Buddhist materials from Chinese into English. Why do that? After all, it is not impossible to acquire a good enough reading knowledge of Chinese Buddhist style to read these sources in the original. I hope in future to explore this question in greater detail, but at this point I can see three reasons that may already be worth mentioning briefly.

First, it is obviously not necessary to sit down and translate a text to convey a Buddhist message originally couched in Chinese. Japanese teachers of Zen in North America have been doing that for decades, with some success, even if they also produced a small number of translations. But whatever one's mother tongue, working through a text and seeking as far as possible a precisely equivalent meaning in English is an exercise that cannot be done without thinking more deeply about what words relating to Buddhism mean, and this is an invaluable exercise regardless of any further aims or lack of them relating to the possible dissemination of the results, and whatever the nature of one's personal engagement with the content. From the reading I have done especially for the third lecture I would judge that this is best done in an academic situation where dictionaries and existing translations of similar materials may be consulted, though of course the facilities provided by the internet remove some — though not to my mind all — elements in the need for access to a physical library.

But secondly it seems to me to be necessary to move from text to context, to understand where these sources come from, and what information they may convey about those times and places. Conversely, knowing what those times and places were like may deepen our understanding of the text. I was originally asked to become familiar with Chinese Buddhist sources by one of my history teachers, who could see that without reading them it would be difficult to make much sense of many aspects of the Chinese past, or even perhaps the present. Again, it seems to me that an academic context is the best situation which to pursue this approach, consulting not only the Buddhist sources but also contemporaneous records by non-Buddhists, even by their rivals. In many instances the arguments of Chinese Buddhists become more intelligible when one knows what they were arguing against, or who they were trying to impress.

But finally Chinese Buddhist materials do not simply relate to China, but rather tell a very important global story. Today tensions between very different outlooks in different parts of the globe threaten to hamper the joint efforts required to meet the considerable challenges ahead for humanity. Yet

cross-cultural communication of important ideas has been, and no doubt still is possible, and it is our Chinese Buddhist sources that show that, on a scale far eclipsing any other from premodern times. Civilisations may not be transparent to each other, but they are not bound to clash, and it is Buddhist sources that hold the evidence for that. The study of the large-scale process of transmitting an entire religious tradition expressed in a multitude of written materials across the very different cultures of South and East Asia ideally involves a knowledge of Indic languages as well as Chinese, and those who can rise to the challenge of mastering the requisite linguistic knowledge form a rather select group. But even so just looking at the evidence of the Chinese side is a timely task that can and should be undertaken, and the results need to be communicated to the English-speaking world, a world that badly needs an expansion of its humanistic perspectives. Perhaps the story I have told may provide a few pointers towards this further adventure.

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