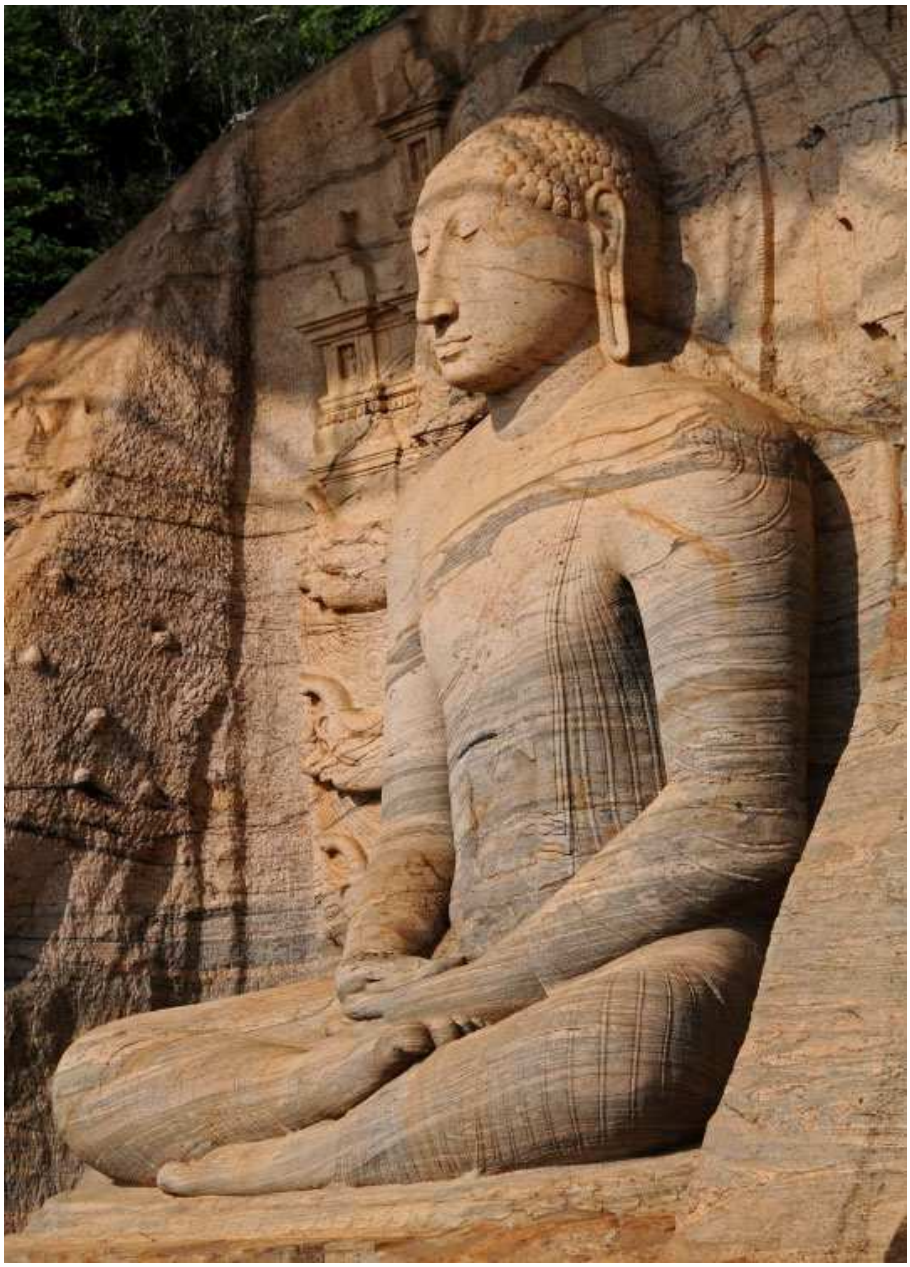
Buddhism's Relation to Christianity

A Miscellaneous Anthology with Occasional Comment



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PREFACE

There is an ancient proverb found throughout India, expressed in many of its languages. One version of this proverb, in the Tamil language, is:

ரிஷிமூலம் நதிமூலம் ஆராயக்கூடாது.
Rishi-mūlam nadhi-mūlam ārāya-k-kūḍāthu.

One should not inquire too deeply into the origin of ṛishis (God-men) or rivers.

The sources of mighty rivers may be tiny, muddy streamlets. The origin of God-men may be . . . well, very different from what one might have expected! Nevertheless, I have, instead, taken to heart the biblical admonition, "Test everything; hold to that which is correct", and I have presented, in the selected works and the commentary thereon, the results of serious investigations in archaeology and linguistics. The scholarship, in the Ninth Section especially, leads to conclusions which are startling and extraordinary in the extreme, and which therefore requires extraordinary evidence to support them. It has been my goal to present this evidence as accurately as possible, sometimes even assuming the role of *Advocatus Diaboli*.

The Introductory Section features a select, annotated bibliography highlighting almost two hundred years of scholarly work on the remarkable parallelism between the messages and lives of the Buddha and Jesus. It will become apparent that much of the serious and often radical study of this parallelism has been written in German and Dutch – and that the English speaking world has been slow and half-hearted in getting around to translating the radical works.

The Second Section deals with Buddhist sculptures, a number of which were created in the centuries BCE. They are paralleled by episodes in the Christian scriptures. For example:

Plate II.25, where the birth of the Bōdhisattva (the future Buddha) is shown accompanied by music of the heavenly hosts. **Parallel:** *Luke 2:13-14*, where the birth of Jesus is accompanied by music of the heavenly hosts.

Plate II.29 & **II.30**, the visit of aged Asita to the royal palace is shown, where he holds the baby Bōdhisattva – represented only by his footprints on the cloth in Asita's hands. **Parallel:** *Luke 2:25-33*: aged Simeon's temple visit, where he holds the baby Jesus.

Plate II.70, Māra (the Devil) is shown with his army, after having tempted the Bōdhisattva, who is represented, on the extreme left, only by a throne beneath the bo (bōdhi) tree. **Parallel:** *Luke 4:1-13*: the Devil's temptation of Jesus.

Plate III.42, the Buddha (represented by a throne beneath the bo tree) is shown receiving homage from animals, and, later, from angels (*devas*) – *Majjhima-Nikāya* 36. **Parallel:** *Mark 1:12-13*: the Spirit sent Jesus away into the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was among the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Plate III.14, the Buddha (represented by his footprints) walks on water. **Parallel:** *Matthew 14:22-27*: Jesus comes walking on the water, approaching his disciples in a boat.

The Third Section considers several of the stone inscriptions of King Aśōka, who, in the middle of the third century BCE, ruled over most of India, and beyond, into what is now Afghanistan. These inscriptions reveal the spreading of Buddhist doctrine (Dharma) abroad

through Indian missionary monks, as far as Egypt and other countries around the Mediterranean. There are many parallels between Buddhist doctrine and Christian doctrine.

The Fourth Section examines the strange story of the most widespread legend of Christian sainthood during medieval times. It is the story of the two saints, Barlaam and Josaphat. Their sanctity was made official in the 16th century by the Roman Catholic Church. But by the 19th century, scholars in Europe had argued convincingly that this Christian legend was actually based on the life of the Buddha. Josaphat *was* the Buddha! Barlaam and Josaphat were, therefore, removed from Christian sainthood.

The Fifth Section discusses several instances of parallel parables. It may be of interest to note that only Buddhism and Christianity have made such extensive use of parables. I have also introduced into the discussion the idea of the 'meta-parable'.

The Sixth Section lists various parallels in the sayings of the Buddha and Jesus. Such parallels are found widely repeated on the internet.

The Seventh Section attempts to emphasize certain pioneering developments achieved by Buddhism, as a missionary religion, prior to similar developments in Christianity.

The Eighth Section takes up the contentious debate about the historicity of Jesus, considering many arguments for – but only a few against – his being historical.

And, finally, we come to the Ninth Section, which deals with two examples of extreme revisionism. Both of these theories argue that Jesus is not a historical person. And, further, they both hold that the evangelists who wrote the gospels of the New Testament were actually Buddhists. Christianity, according to these theories, is a Judaized branch of crypto-Buddhism. The pioneer of this extreme revisionism is the Danish Sanskrit scholar, Christian Lindtner. The strong reactions to his radical views have illustrated the basis of the Indian warning not to inquire too deeply into the origin of God-men or rivers.

Michael Lockwood
November 9, 2010

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply grateful to Michael Anthony Barry for the instructive dialogue we have had throughout the writing of this book. His comments on, and insights into, the wide range of issues we have discussed were, indeed, a great help to me.

The writing of this book would not have been possible without the use of computers. My thanks to Google and Wikipedia for their invaluable services.

'When I was a child, my speech, my outlook, and my thoughts were all childish.
When I grew up, I had finished with childish things.'
– I Corinthians 13:11

'Let no one ignorant of geometry enter here'
(Inscription above the entrance to Plato's Academy)

'Let no one ignorant of languages and literature enter here'
(Words to be inscribed above the entrance to every theological seminary)

Photograph (2007) on title page
Meditating Buddha, Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka

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1

Bibliographic Introduction

For nearly two hundred years, distinguished scholars have observed in their writings that there is a remarkable parallelism between the messages and lives of the Buddha and Jesus. As a brief – and by no means exhaustive – introduction to this book's illustration and examination of some of those parallelisms, a select, annotated bibliography is presented in this opening section.

Though it is safe to say that most Christians, including clergy, have not read these books, various lists of them can be found cited again and again on the internet. Some added insight concerning these books is given in the annotations on the following pages – brief quotations from two outstanding recent books which deal with the influence of Buddhism (and other Indian sources) on Christianity:

1. *Buddha and Christ: Nativity Stories and Indian Traditions* (***BC***), by Zacharias P. Thundy (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993).

2. *The Original Jesus: The Buddhist Sources of Christianity* (***OJ***), by Elmar R. Gruber & Holger Kersten (Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books Ltd., 1995), being the English translation of *Der Ur-Jesus* (Munich: F.A. Herbig Verlagsbuchhandlung GmbH, 1995).

A Select, Annotated, Roughly Chronological Bibliography (1828 to 2009) of Works Suggesting that the Christian Gospels Have Borrowed Much from Buddhism

1828 – Isaac Jacob Schmidt (1779-1847)**.**

Schmidt's work referenced in *The Original Jesus* [***OJ***] (1995), by Gruber and Kersten:
Ueber die Verwandtschaft der gnostisch-theosophischen Lehren mit den Religionssystemen des Orients, vorzüglich dem Buddhaismus (Leipzig: Bei Carl Cnobloch, **1828**).

Comment in *OJ*, pp. 26-27: "Schmidt . . ., a Russian diplomat, arrived in Sarepta among the Kalmucks of Central Asia. . . . [He] wrote a very scholarly study that has remained a trail-blazer up to the present day, demonstrating that the Christian and Gnostic concepts that emerged everywhere between Alexandria and Syria at the beginning of the first century AD were closely related to Buddhism. His Buddhist-influenced writings about Schopenhauer also made a considerable contribution towards Western philosophy taking such ideas seriously."

1851 – Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)**, Philosopher:**

Schopenhauer as quoted in *Buddha and Christ* [***BC***] (1993) by Zacharias P. Thundy, pp. 1-2 [from *The Essential Schopenhauer* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962 [from *Parerga und Paralipomena*, **1851**]), p. 24]:

> The New Testament . . . must be in some way traceable to an Indian source: its ethical system, its ascetic view of morality, its pessimism, and its Avatar, are all thoroughly Indian. It is its morality which places it in a position of such emphatic and essential antagonism to the Old Testament, so that the story of the Fall is the only possible point of connection between the two. For when the Indian doctrine was imported into the land of promise, two very different things had to be combined: on the one hand the consciousness of the corruption and misery of the world, its need of deliverance and salvation through an Avatar, together with a morality based on self-denial and repentance; [and] on the other hand the Jewish doctrine of Monotheism, with its corollary . . . that 'all things are very good'. . . . And the task succeeded as far as it could, as far, that is, as it was possible to combine two such heterogeneous and antagonistic creeds. . . .
>
> [T]he Christian faith [is] sprung from the wisdom of India.

Comment in *OJ*, p. 26:

> Schopenhauer made no secret of his view that the New Testament had to derive from an Indian, and particularly a Buddhist, source. All the important elements of the New Testament were said to entail amazing correspondences with Indian precursors. The ascetic attitude to life, the ethical system, the pessimistic undertone, and even the idea that divine consciousness incarnates itself in earthly form, were claimed to be characteristically Indian. In addition Schopenhauer maintained that Brahminism, Buddhism and the New Testament were essentially similar.

1857 – L'Abbé M. Huc, Missionary Apostolic (1813-1860)**:**

"The miraculous birth of Buddha, his life and instructions, contain a great number of the moral and dogmatic truths professed in Christianity." [Huc, *Christianity in China, Tartary, and Thibet* (London, **1857**), p. 327.]

1873 – Max Müller (1823-1900)**, Professor:**

"Between the language of The Buddha and his disciples, and the language of Christ and his apostles, there are strange coincidences. Even some Buddhist legends and parables sound as if taken from the New Testament, though we know that many of them existed before the beginning of the Christian era." [Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion* [***ISR***] (London, **1873**), p. 243.]

1882 – Max Müller, in a letter reprinted in his book, *India: What Can It Teach Us?* (London, 1899), p. 284, wrote[(1)]:

That there are startling coincidences between Buddhism and Christianity cannot be denied, and it must likewise be admitted that Buddhism existed at least 400 years before Christianity. I go even further, and should feel extremely grateful if anybody would point out to me the historical channels through which Buddhism had influenced early Christianity. I have been looking for such channels all my life, but hitherto I have found none. What I have found is that for some of the most startling coincidences there are historical antecedents on both sides, and if we once know those antecedents, the coincidences become far less startling. If I do find in certain Buddhist works doctrines identically the same as in Christianity, so far from being frightened, I feel delighted, for surely truth is not the less true because it is believed by the majority of the human race.

[(1) Christian Lindtner, "Comparative Gospel Studies in Review"]

1875 – Samuel Beal (1825-1889)**, Professor:**

"We know . . . that the *Fo-pen-hing* [*Legends of Buddha*] was translated into Chinese from Sanscrit [the ancient language of Hinduism] so early as the eleventh year of the reign of Wing-ping (*Ming-ti*), of the Han Dynasty, *i.e*., 69 or 70 A.D. We may, therefore, safely suppose that the original work was in circulation in India for some time previous to this date." [Beal, *The Romantic Legend of Sâkya Buddha: From the Chinese-Sanscrit* (London, **1875**), p. vi.]

"[The] points of agreement [of the Buddhist legends] with the Gospel narrative arouse curiosity and require explanation. ¶ If we could prove that they were unknown in the East for some centuries *after* Christ, the explanation would be easy. But all the evidence we have goes to prove the contrary." (*Ibid*., pp. viii-ix.)

1880 – Ernest de Bunsen (1819-1903)**:**

"With the remarkable exception of the death of Jesus on the cross, and of the doctrine of atonement by vicarious suffering, which is absolutely excluded by Buddhism, the most ancient of the Buddhistic records known to us contain statements about the life and the doctrines of Gautama Buddha which correspond in a remarkable manner, and impossibly by mere chance, with the traditions recorded in the Gospels about the life and doctrines of Jesus Christ." [*The Angel-Messiah of Buddhists, Essenes, and Christians* (London, Longmans, Green & Co. **1880**), p. 50.]

1882, 1884 – Rudolf Seydel (1835-1892)**, Professor:**

Seydel's works referenced in ***BC***, p. 2:
Das Evangelium von Jesu in seinen Verhältnissen zur Buddha-Sage und Buddha-Lehre (Leipzig, **1882**).

The above work and the following are referenced in ***OJ***, p. 28:
Die Buddha-Legende und das Leben Jesu nach den Evangelien: Erneute Prüfung ihres gegenseitigen Verhältnisses (Leipzig, **1884**).

Comment in *BC*, p. 2: "In **1882** Rudolf Seydel argued for Buddhist influence in the New Testament from the *Lalitavistara*, especially in the infancy gospels. Seydel believed that he was able to establish a Buddhist literary source for the gospels from fifty-one parallels, for which he was praised by admirers and damned by detractors."

Comment in *OJ*, pp. 28-29: "Seydel . . . , Professor of Philosophy at Leipzig University, . . . made a name for himself with an outstanding presentation and evaluation of Schopenhauer's work. In two highly scholarly studies, he succeeded in showing that the Gospels are full of borrowings from Buddhist texts. This meticulous work led Seydel to conclude that a text he characterized as a Christian working of a Buddhist gospel must have served as the basis of the writings of the New Testament. That would mean that even before the Christian Gospels were written down a Buddhist text was in circulation in Syria and Palestine, which was then adapted by followers of Jesus to accord with their views."

1887, 1909 – Arthur Lillie (1831-Nov. 1911)**.**

Lillie's works referenced in ***BC***, pp. 2-3:

Buddhism in Christianity (London, **1887**).
India in Primitive Christianity (London, **1909**).

Comment in *BC*, pp. 2-3: "Arthur Lillie, while a civil servant in India, became fascinated by the Indian religions and wrote two books on the relationship between Buddhism and early Christianity; Lillie was so convinced by the parallels of virginal conception by Mary and Maya, the annunciation by the angels, the star in the east, the tree that bends down to aid the mother, and the old sage who predicts the child's future that he argued that early Christianity was heavily influenced by Buddhism."

Comment by ML: The second book, *India in Primitive Christianity* (1909), is really an update of an earlier edition of the same title, published in 1893, which, in turn, was an enlarged version based on his 1887 publication, *Buddhism in Christianity*. Lillie added, in 1909, a discussion of the increasing influence of Śaivite "Left-handed Tântrika" rites on Buddhism.

1894 – T.W. Rhys Davids (1843-1922)**, Professor:**

"There is every reason to believe that the Pitakas [sacred books recording the teachings of, and legends about, the Buddha] now present in Ceylon [Śrī Laṅkā] are substantially identical with the books of the Southern [Buddhist] Canon, as settled at the Council of Patna about the year 250 B.C. As no works would have been received into the Canon which were not then believed to be very old, the Pitakas may be approximately placed in the fourth century B.C., and parts of them possibly reach back very nearly, if not quite, to the time of Gautama (Buddha) himself." [Rhys Davids, *Buddhism: Being a Sketch of the Life and Teachings of Gautama, the Buddha* (London, **1894**), p. 10.]

1902, 1909 – Albert J. Edmunds (1857-1941) – honorary degree from the University of Pennsylvania, in 1907**.**

Edmunds' work referenced in ***OJ*** and ***BC*****:**

Buddhist and Christian Gospels Now First Compared from the Originals [***BCGNFCO***].

Comment in *OJ*, p. 29**:** "The comparative material assembled by . . . Edmunds is a real treasure trove. Without clarifying the question of dependences, he simply selected texts from the great wealth of Buddhist writings and compared them with passages from the New Testament." [ref. to ***BCGNFCO***, 1st ed., single vol. (Philadelphia, **1902**)]

Comment in *BC*, p. 3**:** "In the first decade of this [20th] century, the American scholar Albert J. Edmunds published his two-volume work in comparative religion, in which he brought together a large number of parallels from Buddhist scriptures and the New Testament with the purpose of fostering mutual understanding between both religions, after repeatedly asserting that the loan problem was only incidental. He wrote:

> I believe myself that Buddhism and Christianity, whether historically connected or not, are two parts of one great spiritual movement – one cosmic upheaval of the human soul, which burst open a crater in India five hundred years before Christ and a second and greater one in Palestine at the Christian Advent. Whether the lava which the twain ejected ever met in early times or not is of little moment: it came from the same fount of fire. And now, over the whole planet, the two have assuredly met, and the shaping of the religion of the future lies largely in their hands. [***BCGNFCO***, 4th ed., vol. 2 of 2 (Philadelphia: Innes & Sons, **1909**), pp. 71-72]

"Edmunds' continued research gradually convinced him that the Buddhist-Christian parallels were more than coincidental. In later articles he made a case for the influence of Buddhism on Christianity in several parts of Luke's infancy narrative, in the story of the Good Thief, in the story of the temptation of Jesus and in John 7:38 and John 12:34 (II:97). Edmunds suggested in a study: 'My general attitude toward the Buddhist-Christian problem is this: Each religion is independent in the main, but the younger one arose in such a hotbed of eclecticism that it probably borrowed a few legends and ideas from the older, which was quite accessible to it. . . .' "

[This last quote by Thundy of Edmunds is from Richard Garbe's citation in *India and Christendom*, p. 19, which is, in turn, from Edmunds' article, "Buddhist Texts Quoted in the Fourth Gospel", *The Open Court*, vol. xxv, no. 5, May 1911, p. 262..]

1904 – G.A. van den Bergh van Eysinga (1874-1957)**, Professor:**

Van Eysinga's work, *Indische Einflüsse auf evangelische Erzählungen* (Göttingen, **1904**), commented on in ***OJ***, pp. 105-106**:**

> "The theologian . . . van Eysinga thought that the following eleven correspondences were particularly convincing, and six additional ones worthy of consideration:
>
> 1. the story of Simeon
> 2. the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple
> 3. Jesus's hesitation about being baptized (according to Matthew and the Epistle to the Hebrews)
> 4. the temptation
> 5. Mary's beatitude
> 6. the widow's mite
> 7. Jesus walking on the water
> 8. the Samaritan woman at the well
> 9. 'out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water' (John 7:38)
> 10. the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27)
> 11. the world on fire in the Second Epistle of Peter (3:8-11).
>
> The lesser parallels he suggests are:
>
> 12. the Annunciation (Luke 1:29-33)
> 13. the selection of the disciples (John 1:35-43)
> 14. the statement about Nathanael
> 15. the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)
> 16. the man born blind
> 17. the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36)."

1914 – Richard Garbe (1857-1927)**, Professor:**

Garbe's work referenced in ***OJ***, p. 29:

Indien und das Christentum: Eine Untersuchung der religionsgeschichtlichen Zusammenhänge (Tübingen, **1914**).

Garbe, as quoted in *BC*, p. 4:

> Whereas a *direct* Buddhist influence is unmistakable in the apocryphal gospels, only an *indirect* reflection glimmers through the canonical writings, and then merely in a few stories that are of Buddhist origin but [which] lost their specifically Buddhist character in passing from mouth to mouth outside the realm of Buddhist expansion and finally became assimilated to the Christian genius. [Garbe, *India and Christendom* (La Salle, IL, 1959 [translation]), pp. 21-22 – original German, *Indien und das Christentum* (**1914**).]

2009 – D.M. Murdock: *Christ in Egypt* (Seattle: Stellar House Publishing, **2009**).

2

Buddhist Parallels in Sculpture

A number of examples of Buddhist sculptures are presented in the following pages – some created in the centuries B.C. – which illustrate themes paralleled in the narratives of the New Testament and in Christian non-canonical works.

All of the illustrations in this section are from the book, *The Way of the Buddha* (Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1956).

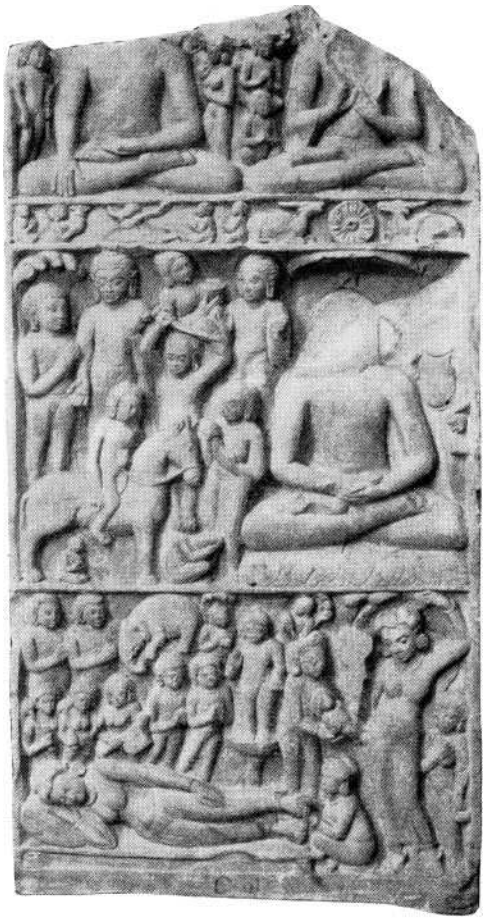
Each illustration is explained in the present work by its original caption, above it. The numbers preceding each caption locate the illustration: the Roman numeral indicates the section in the original book where it is found; the Arabic numeral, its ordinal position within that section. (For example, **III.42** indicate the 42nd illustration in Section Three.)

II.4. ***Buddha's Life in Epitome.*** *Stone, Sārnāth, 5th century A.D., National Museum, New Delhi. This sculpture depicts a large number of scenes from Buddha's life.*

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 289]

Read from the bottom panel up!

The topmost portion which probably represented the Buddha's Parinirvāṇa (death) has broken off.



Upper panel:

(1) Māra's attack, Bodhisattva's enlightenment, and
(2) Buddha's First Sermon

Middle panel:

(1) The Great Departure
(2) Chandaka receiving the royal robes and ornaments from his Master
(3) The Bodhisattva cutting off his hair
(4) Sujātā's Offering
(5) Bodhisattva in conversation with Nāga Kālika
(6) Bodhisattva's Meditation

Bottom panel:

(1) Māyā's Dream (the descent of a white elephant into the womb of Māyā) and the Birth of Buddha
(2) The infant Buddha being bathed by the Nāga kings, Nanda and Upananda

Comment:

In Indian literary and artistic works, the image of an elephant often signifies a cloud – a form of water, the fructifying, feminine element in the world. It is also a regal symbol, often pictured on coins and royal seals.

Indian art (both literary and visual) relishes the paradoxical. A Westerner, not familiar with Eastern ways, may be excused for viewing this imagery of an elephant entering the womb of a woman with puzzled surprise. The ancient Indian viewer, however, would have enjoyed this visual paradox and would have understood its resolution by realizing that it is only Māyā's dream telling us that the Bōdhisattva came down to earth enveloped in a white cloud (his heavenly amniotic environment) and entered forthwith into her womb.

Thus, the image of an elephant has significance, here, at these two levels: 1) as a white cloud, an amniotic envelopment of the Bōdhisattva descending from heaven into the womb of Queen Māyā, and 2) as a symbol of a supreme (spiritual) leader.

Zacharias P. Thundy, in his book *Buddha and Christ*, p. 88, draws attention to the symbol of the Holy Spirit in the form of a white elephant or a white dove descending from heaven and impregnating women (Queen Māyā, in Buddhist accounts, and Hannah, the mother of Mary, in a Christian non-canonical work):

> In the Buddhist tradition, it is in the form of a white elephant that the Bodhisattva enters the womb of his mother. Interestingly, this idea is preserved in a Christian apocryphal work where the metaphor of the white elephant is changed into that of a white dove. The Ethiopic *History of Hanna* describes the birth of Mary as follows:
>
> > [The Holy Spirit] appeared unto her that day in a vision of the night, in the form of a White Bird which came down from heaven. . . . Now this was the Spirit of Life, in the form of a White Bird, and it took up its abode in the Person of Hanna, and became incarnate in her womb . . . [as] the Body of our Lady Mary.[1]

We may safely conclude that the metaphoric mechanism of the Buddha's conception was well known to early Christian writers.

---

[1]Quoted from E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Legends of Our Lady Mary the Perpetual Virgin and Her Mother Hanna* (London, 1933), p. 19.

II.8. ***The Bodhisattva in the Tuṣita Heaven.*** *Limestone, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, 3rd century A.D.*

The panel shows the Bodhisattva seated on a throne in the Tuṣita heaven, while the gods around him beseech him to appear on earth to preach the Dharma to mankind.

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 290]

* * * * * * * * *

***John 1:1-2*:**

When all things began, the Word [i.e., Jesus, being identified with his Message of Salvation, his 'Dharma'] already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was.

***John 1:15*:**

Here is John's [the Baptist's] testimony to him: he cried aloud, 'This is the man I meant when I said, "He [Jesus] comes after me, but takes rank before me"; for before I was born, he already was.'

– The New English Bible

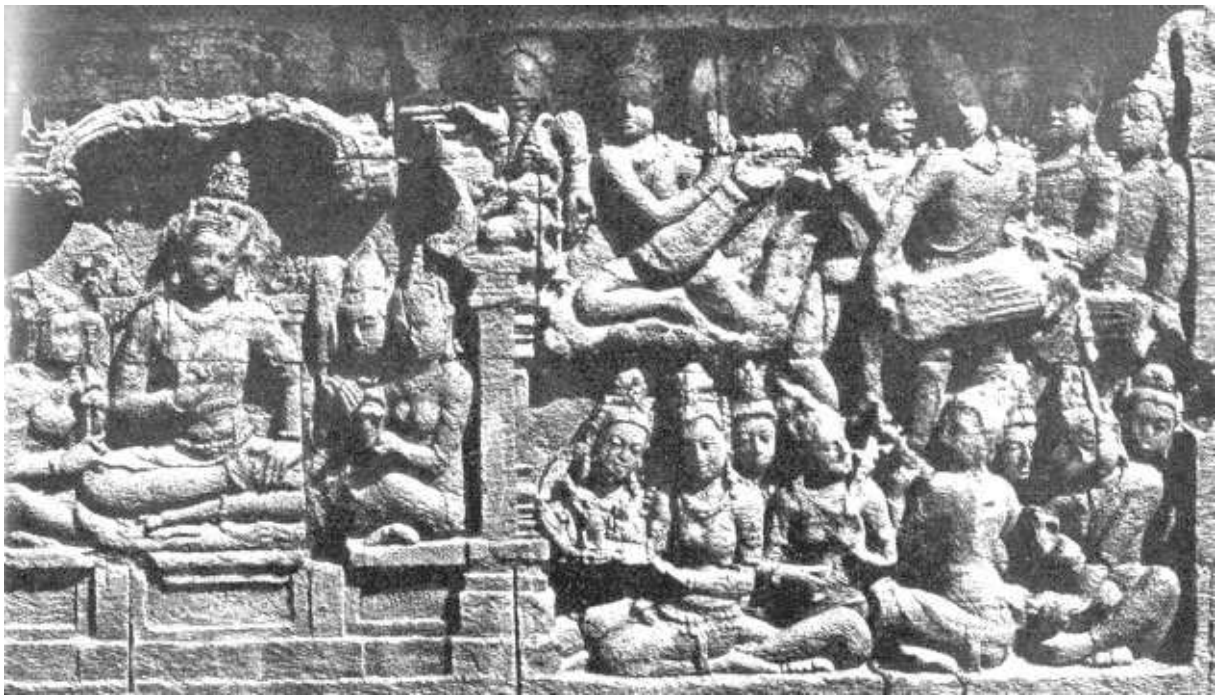
II.9. ***The Bodhisattva in the Tuṣita Heaven.*** *Stone, Borobudur, 8th century A.D.*

The Bodhisattva is shown here in a pavilion seated on a throne with *apsaras* [angelic maidens] on either side. The musical instruments in the hands of the gods are indicative of the *tūrya-dhvani* ['sounds of music'] amidst which he was requested to descend to earth for the salvation of mankind.

Buddhist legends recount that, before his advent in this world, Gautama Buddha was a Bodhisattva or Buddha *potentia* in the Tuṣita heaven. It was at the request of the Tuṣita gods that he agreed to descend to earth to preach the Dharma for the salvation of mankind. He considered the time, continent, country and family in which he would choose to be born for the last time and decided that his mother should be queen Māyā and his [putative] father Śuddhodana, the chief of the Śākya clan of Kapilavastu in Jambudvīpa [i.e., in India].

According to the story in the *Nidāna-kathā,* it was the time of the festival of the full moon in the month of Āṣāḍha (June-July). For seven days preceding the full moon, queen Māyā watched the festival, avoiding all intoxicants and spending her time in giving alms and listening to scriptures. On the seventh night she dreamt that four divine kings carried her in her bed to the Himālayas. Their queens then bathed her there with the water of the lake Anotattā to free her from human stain, clothed her in heavenly raiment and anointed her with celestial perfumes. The Bodhisattva then appeared in the form of a white elephant and entered her right flank.

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 290]



***Luke 2:13-14*:**

All at once there was with the angel a great company of the heavenly host, singing the praises of God:

'Glory to God in highest heaven,
and on earth his peace for men on whom his favour rests.'

– The New English Bible

II.11. ***Māyā's Dream: the queens of the four guardian kings of the quarters [North, East, South, and West] bathing her with the water of lake Anotattā.*** *Limestone, Amarāvatī, 2nd century A.D., Government Museum, Madras [Chennai].*

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 290]

The Virginal Conception – Virginal Before the Birth of the Future Buddha

As Thundy explains in *Buddha and Christ* (pp. 84 ff.), the conception of the future Buddha was considered to be a 'virginal conception' in the sense that his mother, Queen Māyā, was believed to have conceived him without sexual intercourse with any man:

> . . . Ānanda, the favorite disciple, recites . . . the events of conception and birth . . . that he heard from the Lord:
>
> > . . . Ānanda, when the future Buddha is descending into his mother's womb, she is pure from sexuality, has abstained from taking life, from theft, from evil conduct in lusts, from lying, and from all kinds of wine and strong drink, which are a cause of irreligion.[1]
> >
> > She abided in penances like a hermit, always performing penances along with her consort. Having obtained the sanction of the king, he had not entertained carnal wishes for thirty-two months. In whatever place she sat . . . there dazzled her celestial nature, resplendent by her attachment to virtuous actions. There was not a god, nor a demon, nor a mortal, who could cast his glance on her with carnal desire. All of them, throwing aside all evil motive, and endowed with honorable sentiments, looked on her as a mother, or a daughter. . . . Like unto her, there was none to be seen worthy of the venerable being, or one more fully endowed with good qualities, or compassion – that mother is Māyā (*Lalitavistara*, iii).

The Virginal Conception of Jesus

As narrated in ***Luke 1:26-35***:

> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, with a message for a girl betrothed to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David; the girl's name was Mary. The angel went in and said to her, 'Greetings, most favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was troubled by what he said and wondered what this greeting might mean. Then the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for God has been gracious to you; you shall conceive and bear a son, and you shall give him the name Jesus. He will be great; he will bear the title "Son of the Most High"; the Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David, and he will be king over Israel for ever; his reign shall never end.' 'How can this be?' said Mary; 'I am still a virgin.' The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy child to be born will be called "Son of God".'
>
> *– The New English Bible*

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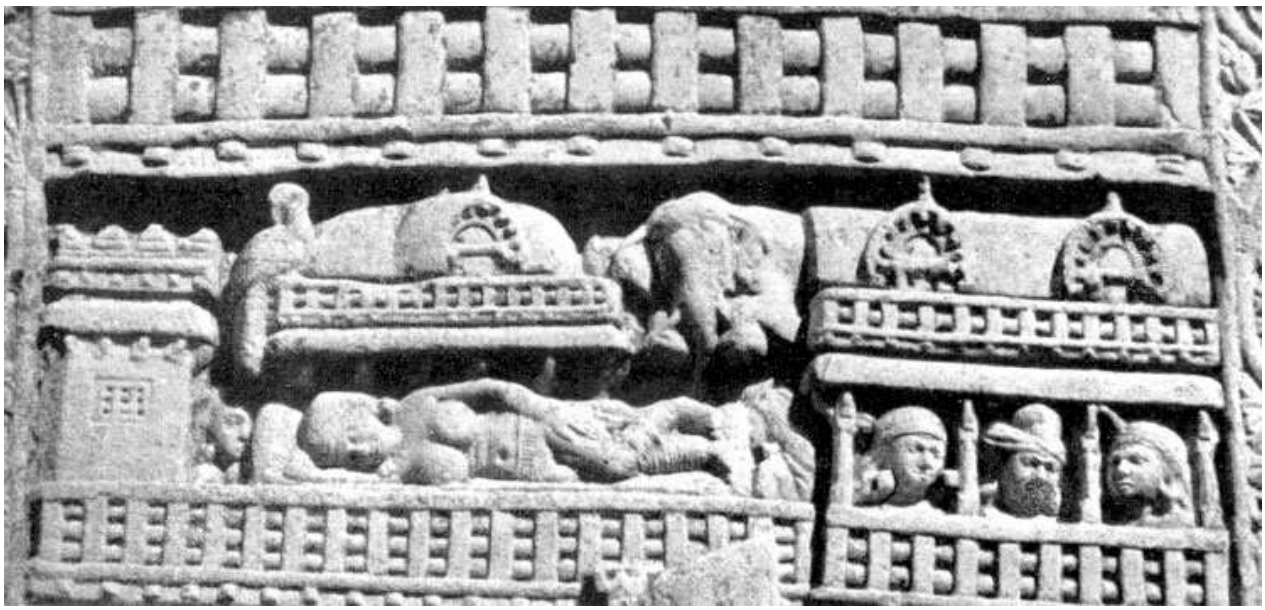
[1] Passage in the *Majjhimanikāya*, cited by Albert. J. Edmunds in *Buddhist and Christian Gospels: Being Gospel Parallels from Pali Texts*, edited by Masaharu Anesaki, 3rd ed. (Tokyo, 1905), p. 173.

II.14. ***Māyā's Dream: the descent of a white elephant (Bodhisattva) into her womb.*** *Stone, Bhārhut, 2nd century B.C.*

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 290]

II.15. ***Māyā's Dream: the descent of a white elephant (Bodhisattva) into her womb.*** *Stone, East Gate, Stūpa I, Sāñcī, 1st century B.C.*

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 290]



The Annunciation to King Śuddhodana

Thundy writes, in *Buddha and Christ*, p. 89:

> Immediately after the miraculous conception, Māyā Devī sent messengers to [her husband, King Śuddhodana] expressing her desire to see him. According to the *Lalitavistara* (vi):
>
> > The king was agitated with delight by the message, and, rising from his noble seat, proceeded . . . to the Aśoka grove. . . . Now, the Devas [angels, godlings] of the class Śuddhavāsakāyika (pure in body and dwelling) . . . came under the sky, and addressed the king Śuddhodana in a Gāthā [verse]: "O king, the noble Bodhisattva, full of the merits of religious observances and penances, and adored of the three thousand regions, the possessor of friendliness and benevolence, the sanctified in pure knowledge, renouncing the mansion of Tushita [the Tuṣita heaven], has acknowledged sonship to you by entering the womb of Māyā. . . ."
>
> – Rajendralala Mitra, *The Lalitavistara* (Calcutta, 1987), p. 95.

The Annunciation to Joseph

As narrated in ***Matthew 1:18-21 & 24-25***:

> Mary his mother was betrothed to Joseph; before their marriage she found that she was with child by the Holy Spirit. Being a man of principle, and at the same time wanting to save her from exposure, Joseph desired to have the marriage contract set aside quietly. He had resolved on this, when an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. 'Joseph son of David,' said the angel, 'do not be afraid to take Mary home with you as your wife. It is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She will bear a son; and you shall give him the name Jesus (Saviour), for he will save his people from their sins.' . . . Rising from sleep Joseph did as the angel had directed him; he took Mary home to be his wife, but had no intercourse with her until her son was born. And he named the child Jesus.
>
> *– The New English Bible*

Comment:

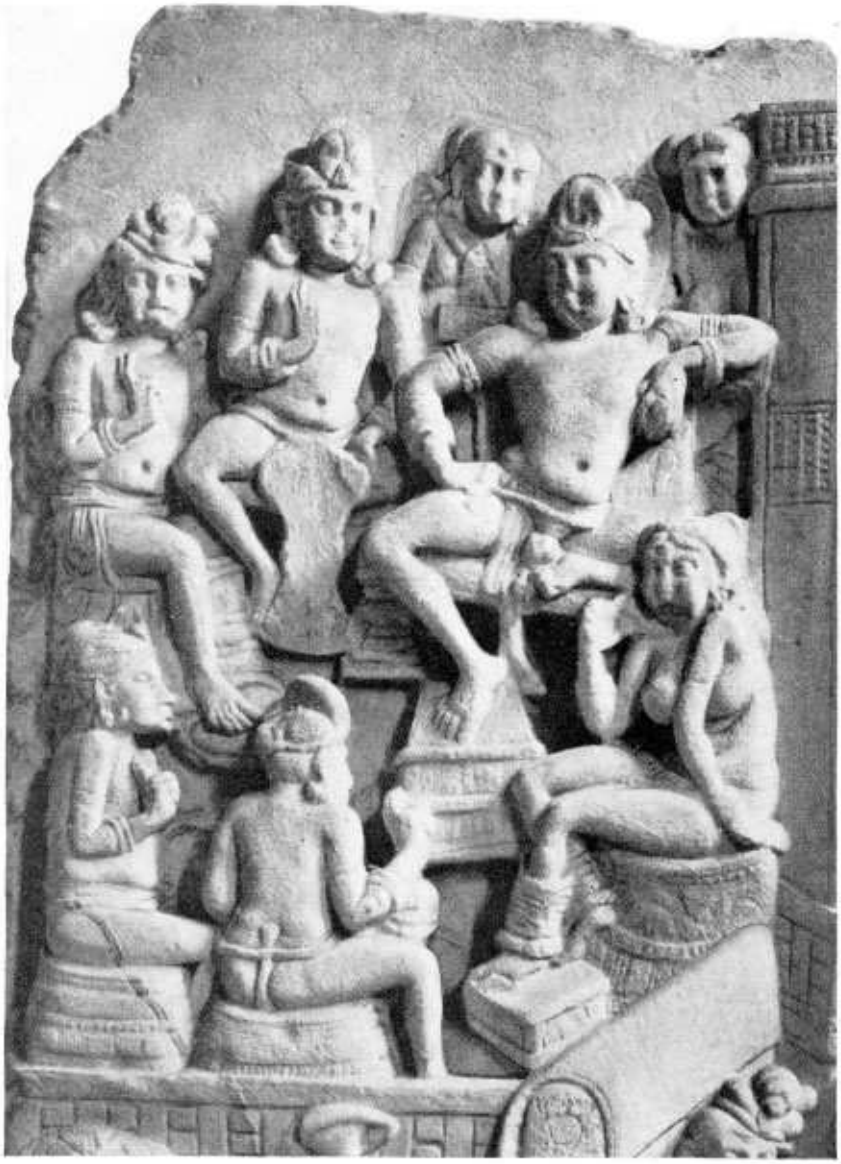
In both the above narratives, heavenly beings ('*dēvas*' [godlings or angels] in the Buddhist account and an 'angel' in the gospel) announce to the husbands that their wives have conceived holy children independently of them. Both King Śuddhōdana and Joseph are portrayed as having abstained from sexual intercourse with their wives during the time periods relevant to their child's conception and birth.

II.21. ***The Interpretation of the Dream.*** *Limestone, Amarāvatī, 2nd century A.D., British Museum, London.*

The panel shows the Brāhmaṇas (who were called to interpret the dream) seated close to King Śuddhodana. Queen Māyā is seated on a stool by the king's side.

The Brāhmaṇas interpreted the dream to them thus: "A great son shall be born unto you. Two paths lie before the child to be. If he stays at home, he will be a universal monarch. If he leaves his home, he will be a Buddha."

[*The Way of the Buddha*, pp. 290-91]



II.22. ***Māyā proceeding to the Lumbinī Garden.*** *Stone, Borobudur, 8th century A.D.*

Towards the end of the 10th lunar month when the time of her confinement drew near, Queen Māyā set out on her journey in a horse drawn carriage accompanied by a number of women, including her sister Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī. The present relief shows a detailed treatment of this theme.

Queen Mahāmāyā on the way to her father's house wished to stop at the Lumbinī Grove which, according to the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hein, was 50 li (some ten miles) to the east of Kapilavastu. As the queen stood, with her right hand on a bough of śāla tree, the throes of birth came upon her. The Bodhisattva appeared from the right side of his mother and was received at once by the gods of the quarters and later by men. He then came down from their hands and took seven steps, exclaiming triumphantly: "I am the foremost of the world, I will reach the highest heaven. This is my last birth, I will cross the ocean of existence."

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 291]

* * * * * * * * *

Meta-comment:

These sculpted panels, like art throughout the ages, from earliest cave and rock paintings, statically portray important scenes (brief instants) in the lives of their subjects. In the Bṛihadīśvara temple at Tañjāvūr, South India, there is a series of carved panels demonstrating various positions of the body of a classical Bharatanāṭya dancer during her continuous, *non-stop* movement. These thousand-year-old panels statically portray brief instants in the fluid artistry of the dancer. Today, the performing artist, while dancing, will often strike one of these positions and stop – *holding it for a few seconds*. This is a case of the performing artist mimicking the static graphic arts in order to emphasize the meaning of a particular pose! I suggest that a similar *narrative* freezing of movement gives emphasis in the story of the birth of the Buddha-to-be. (See the next page and pages 26 & 28.) At this most glorious moment when the Buddha-to-be is born, the whole universe is described as coming to a 'breath-holding' stop.

It is my suggestion that this 'World Stood Still' device in Buddhist narratives arose in the minds of Buddhist narrators who had – as all other Buddhist devotees had – been circumambulating the stūpas, which were decorated all the way around with a frieze of painted/sculpted images portraying important events in the life of the Buddha, his parents and other characters. Though the images were, of course, static, the graphic artists had infused them with a sense of movement. The onlooker's world of experience still flows on, but the world portrayed in the images has been frozen. Like the sculptors of the South Indian Bharatanāṭya dancer's positions, the Buddhist narrators have inserted this 'World Stood Still' device into their flowing narrative to give emphasis to the moment!

Can one imagine that early Christianity had a comparable artistic development of its own to give rise to such a sophisticated literary device? If not, then any Christian use of it is most likely indebted to Buddhism.

II.23. ***The Birth of Buddha and the Seven Steps.*** *Limestone, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, 3rd century A.D.*

On the left of the panel stands Māyā, holding the branch of a śāla tree. A royal umbrella with two fly-whisks indicates the presence of the Bodhisattva while the water-pot at the bottom shows the bathing of the child. The right side of the panel denotes the four Mahārājas [of the four quarters] holding a long piece of cloth with tiny foot marks indicating the seven steps of the Bodhisattva.

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 291]

Comment:

There are two remarkable incidents in the *Lalitavistara's* account of the birth of the Bōdhisattva (the future Buddha) which are echoed in non-canonical Christian texts. The first one is that, after the Bōdhisattva passes miraculously out of his mother's womb from her right flank, he immediately is able, unaided, to take a series of seven steps. These precocious seven steps are, similarly, found in the Christian *Protoevangelium*, where it is Jesus' *mother* who, at the age of six months, takes seven steps. Her feet don't touch the ground, being slightly elevated above the earth. This only follows the ancient Indian belief that divinities, when disguising themselves as mortals on earth, are nevertheless betrayed by the fact that their feet do not touch the ground and their eyes remain always unblinking.

The second remarkable incident (when the world stood still) in the *Lalitavistara's* account of the birth of the Bōdhisattva is truly astonishing. It foreshadows a peculiar trick of a few contemporary commercials on TV, where an active, lively scene is suddenly frozen, though the camera continues to freely change its perspective of this frozen scene, and one of the characters in the scene may continue to move within this static framework. Just such a frozen world is described in the Buddhist *Lalitavistara*! And, surprisingly, this type of incident is repeated in the Christian non-canonical work, the *Protoevangelium.*

The fact that these two types of incidents in the *Lalitavistara* are echoed in a Christian non-canonical work, and not in a canonical text, does not lessen the remarkable conclusion which still may be drawn: Within the early Christian communities in Egypt, there was an intimate knowledge of Buddhist writings.

II.24. ***The Birth of Buddha and the Seven Steps.*** *Schist, Gandhāra, 3rd-4th century A.D. Indian Museum, Calcutta.*

The Bodhisattva emerges from the right side of his mother as she stands holding the branch of a śāla tree. Śakra [Indra, the king of the gods] receives him on a golden cloth. Behind Śakra is the god Brahmā. The child is seen in the foreground taking seven steps.

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 291]

The birth of the Bōdhisattva (the Buddha-to-be)

From Zacharias P. Thundy's book, *Buddha and Christ*, p. 105:

According to the *Lalitavistara* (vii), all movement in the world of nature and humanity ceases [momentarily] at the birth of Buddha. The half-opened flowers cease to bloom; birds pause in their flight; the wind stops blowing; the rivers no longer flow when Buddha's holy feet touch the earth; sun, moon, and stars stand still; all human activity is paralyzed:

> When the Bodhisattva [the Buddha-to-be], immediately after his birth, **advanced seven steps**, innumerable millions then **stood firm** on the adamantine spot. . . .
>
> The adamantine earth, possessed of vigor and might, **stood still**, when the great preceptor [the Buddha-to-be], the destroyer of decay and death, the noblest of physicians, the giver of the best medicine, standing [preternaturally] on his two feet marked with a beautifully colored lotus and a wheel, **advanced seven steps**. [Rajendralala Mitra, *The Lalitavistara* (Calcutta, 1987), p. 131 – emphasis added]

II.25. ***The Birth of Buddha and the Seven Steps.*** *Schist, Gandhāra, 3rd-4th century A.D. Patna Museum, Patna.*

The treatment is similar to the preceding one. The musical instruments at the top of the panel indicate the rejoicing of the gods at the birth of the Bodhisattva.

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 291]

Comment:

The passages below are based on the translation of *The Lalitavistara* as found on the internet at the following site: < http://www.borobudur.tv/lalitavistara_2.htm >, as retrieved in Nov., 2006:

> The Bodhisattva, appearing at the end of ten full months, emerging from the right side of his mother's body, fully formed, in full possession of both memory and knowledge and unsullied by the impurity of the mother's womb.
>
> Filled with profound reverence, the gods Brahmā and Śakra [Indra] received the Bodhisattva and wrapped him in a silk garment of gold and silver threads [the Indian prototype of Jesus' swaddling clothes? - ML]. . . . When the Bodhisattva descended to the ground, the earth split open and a great lotus rose to receive him. . . .
>
> Without any man's help, the Bodhisattva took **seven steps** to the east and said: "Behold I shall be the first of all dharmas that are the virtuous roots of salvation." . . . And at every spot where the Bodhisattva was setting his foot, a lotus sprang up to support it.
>
> Taking **seven steps** to the south, he said: "I shall be worthy of the offerings of both gods and men." Then taking **seven steps** to the west, he exclaimed: "I am the finest in the World, for this is my final birth." Taking **seven steps** to the north, the Great Being said: "I shall be unequaled among all beings."
>
> The Bodhisattva looking downward, took **seven additional steps** and proclaimed: "I will extinguish the fires of hell with the rain of the Great Cloud of Dharma, filling the inhabitants of hell's realms with great joy."
>
> Taking **seven more steps**, facing the zenith, he said: "It is on high that I shall be visible to all beings."

For Buddhists, hell is only one of the possible *temporary* and potentially recurrent links in the long chain of re-births. The Christian view of hell, in contrast, is of a place of 'No Return'!

This series of seven-step movements marks out symbolically the entire universe as the 'theater of operation' for the future reach of the Dharma to be preached by the mature Buddha. As the *Lalitavistara* is a work of Mahāyāna Buddhism, this series of seven steps may be viewed as an answer to the Vaiṣṇava legend of Lord Viṣṇu's 'Three Strides' ('*Trivikrama*') – the Vaiṣṇava assertion that the god Viṣṇu pervades the entire universe (the three realms: Earth, the Heavens (seven of them!), and the Underworlds (seven of them!). The last two sets of seven steps taken by the newborn Bōdhisattva are first, down into hell, where

the Dharma will bring great joy and relief to the sufferers there, and then upward into the heavens (symbolizing the future ascension of the Buddha and his return to the highest heaven at the end of his life: his '*parinirvāṇa*'). This would seem to be the prototype of the Christian creed's claim of Jesus' Descent into Hell and his following Ascension. (Cf. also *John 12:32*.)

Mary, the mother of Jesus, when she was a precocious toddler

The following passage – which we have edited – is from the Christian non-canonical work, the *Protoevangelium* (6:1-3), a work dated c. 150 A.D., translated by A. Bernhard from the Greek text in Ronald Hock's 1996 edition of *The Infancy Gospels of James* [*The Protoevangelium*] *and Thomas* – emphasis added:

> Day by day, the child grew stronger. When she was six months old, her mother went to set her on the ground to test whether she could stand. And after **walking seven steps**, she came to her mother's breast. And her mother picked her up, saying, "As the Lord my God lives, you will not walk on this earth again until I take you to the temple of the Lord."

Jesus

The following passage, describing the moment when the 'world stood still' at the time of Jesus' birth, is also from *The Protoevangelium* (18:1-11) – emphasis added:

> And he [Joseph] found a cave and led her [Mary] there and stationed his sons to look after her, while he went to find a Hebrew midwife in the land of Bethlehem.
>
> But as I was going [said Joseph] I looked up into the air, and I saw the clouds **standing still**. With utter astonishment I saw that even the birds of the sky were **not moving**. And I looked at the ground and saw a bowl lying there and workers reclining. And their hands were in the bowl, and they appeared as though in the act of chewing, but they were **not chewing**. And as though picking up food, but they were **not picking it up**. And as though putting food in their mouths, but they were **not moving**. Rather, all their faces were looking up.
>
> And I saw sheep in the act of being driven, but the sheep **were motionless**. And the shepherd lifted up his hand as if to strike them, but his hand **remained motionless** above them. And I saw the rushing current of the river **motionless**, and I saw goats with their mouths in the water, but they were **not drinking**.
>
> And suddenly everything was changed back into the ordinary movement of events.

Visitation

Zacharias P. Thundy has pointed out parallelism between the following Buddhist and Gospel traditions:[1]

> There are two points where the Buddhist and gospel traditions converge: one, in the visibility and recognition of the Master in the womb of the mother; two, the praise of the mother by the visitor. . . . As for Elizabeth's salutation: "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Luke 1:42), there are the expressions: "most blessed" (Judges 5:24) and "O daughter, you are blessed by the Most High God above all women on earth" (Judith 13:23). Granting that these phrases were in the mind of the evangelist, let me point out that these utterances were not made in the context of a birth. However, I do not find a better parallel than the one in the Buddhist version, where heavenly men and women come to see and address the pregnant mother of Buddha. *The Mahāvastu* reports:
>
> > All these immortals ecstatically bowing their heads and raising their joined hands, lauded the virtuous Maya, the Conqueror's mother, and alighted on the terrace. Then in great excitement a large throng of deva-maidens carrying fair garlands came, eager to see the Conqueror's mother, as she lay on the bed. . . . They said . . . "She will bear a great man. . . . You are a worthy woman, supreme among women. And your son will be the Pre-eminent of Men, who has abandoned lust and is rid of passion. What more can you want, O queen?"

---

[1]The passages quoted are from Thundy's book, *Buddha and Christ*, p. 141; the passage excerpted from *The Mahāvastu* is from J.J. Jones' translation of the work, in *The Mahāvastu*, Vol. II (London: 1973), 7.

Genealogy

Zacharias P. Thundy (in ***BC***, p. 81) compares the genealogies of Gautama Buddha and Jesus Christ:

> Several versions of the life of Buddha, like the Chinese version of the *Abhinishkramaṇasūtra*, contain a genealogy of kings related to Buddha belonging to the present æon (*bhadra kalpa*). The *Dīgha-nikāya* (I:113) speaks of Buddha's lineage on his father's side and mother's side for seven generations. In most traditions, Gautama Buddha is the son of King Śuddhodana and Queen Māyā. Rudolph Seydel has a chapter on the genealogies of Buddha and Christ. The portion he cites has a strong analogy with the Christian lists:
>
> > King Mahasammata had a son named Roja, whose son was Vararoja, whose son was Kalyana, whose son was Varakalyana, whose son was Mandhatar, whose son was Varamandhatar, whose son was Uposatha, whose son was Kara, whose son was Upakara, whose son was Maghadeva.[1]

Thundy continues (p. 82):

> Obviously, the purpose of Matthew is to connect Jesus not only with the royal Davidic family but also with Israel, not only as children of Jacob but also as children of Abraham. Luke, on the other hand, traces the genealogy of Jesus all the way to Adam. Luke's purpose probably is to indicate that Jesus is the savior not only of the children of Israel but also of all mankind. Another purpose of Matthew in the genealogy section is to refute the slanderous accusation that Jesus was of illegitimate birth. Apparently the slander was very old since it is alluded to in John: "We are not born of fornication" (8:41). . . . Of course, a . . . comparison of the Buddhist-Christian texts could suggest that the Christian writer Judaized the Buddhist idea of the royal genealogy of Buddha and applied it to the case of Jesus, especially since the Davidic origins of Jesus is historically unreliable.[2]

———————

[1]R. Seydel, *Das Evangelium von Jesu* (Leipzig, 1882), 106; cited by Arthur Lillie, *Buddhism in Christendom* (London, 1887), p. 10.

[2]Thundy, pp. 82-83.

* * * * * * * * *

Comment:

There is a curious aspect of Matthew's account of Jesus' genealogy (*Matt 1:1-17*). Attempting to follow Jewish tradition, and with the aim of establishing Jesus as the Messiah, he traces Jesus' ancestry through the male line of descent, but, in passing, he *only* mentions collaterally five wives of five of Jesus' male ancestors: 1) Judah's wife, ***Tamar***, who was accused of harlotry; 2) Salma's wife, ***Rahab***, a former harlot; 3) Boaz's wife, ***Ruth***, a non-Jew (a Moabite, the despised clan which the Hebrew Bible traces back to a son born out of the incest committed by Lot and his elder daughter [Gen 19:30-38]); 4) ***Bathsheba***, first, the wife of Uriah, seduced by King David (committing adultery), and then, after Uriah was killed, she became wife of King David, and the mother of King Solomon; and 5) Jesus' mother, ***Mary***, a suspected adulteress. By mentioning the first four women, is Matthew actually trying to deflect Jewish criticism from Mary?

II.29. ***The visit of Asita.*** *Limestone, Amarāvatī, 2nd century A.D., British Museum, London.*

The sculpture shows Asita holding the infant Buddha (represented by a piece of cloth with footmarks) in the palace of Śuddhodana. His nephew, Naradatta, is also present in the scene.

Asita's visit was a popular theme with artists both in India and abroad.

As stated in the Nālaka Sutta of the *Sutta-nipāta*, Asita was a sage dwelling in the Himālayas. When he found that there was rejoicing in the heaven of the thirty-three gods, he asked what the occasion was. Upon being told that the Bodhisattva had been born in the Lumbinī Garden for the salvation of the world, he hastened to Kapilavastu and asked Śuddhodana to show him the child. When it was presented to him, he predicted the child would be a perfectly accomplished Buddha. At the same time, he wept at the thought that he himself would not live long enough to hear his doctrine [i.e., the Dharma which he would preach], and advised his nephew, Naradatta, to become a disciple of Buddha. He paid homage to the child, before departing.

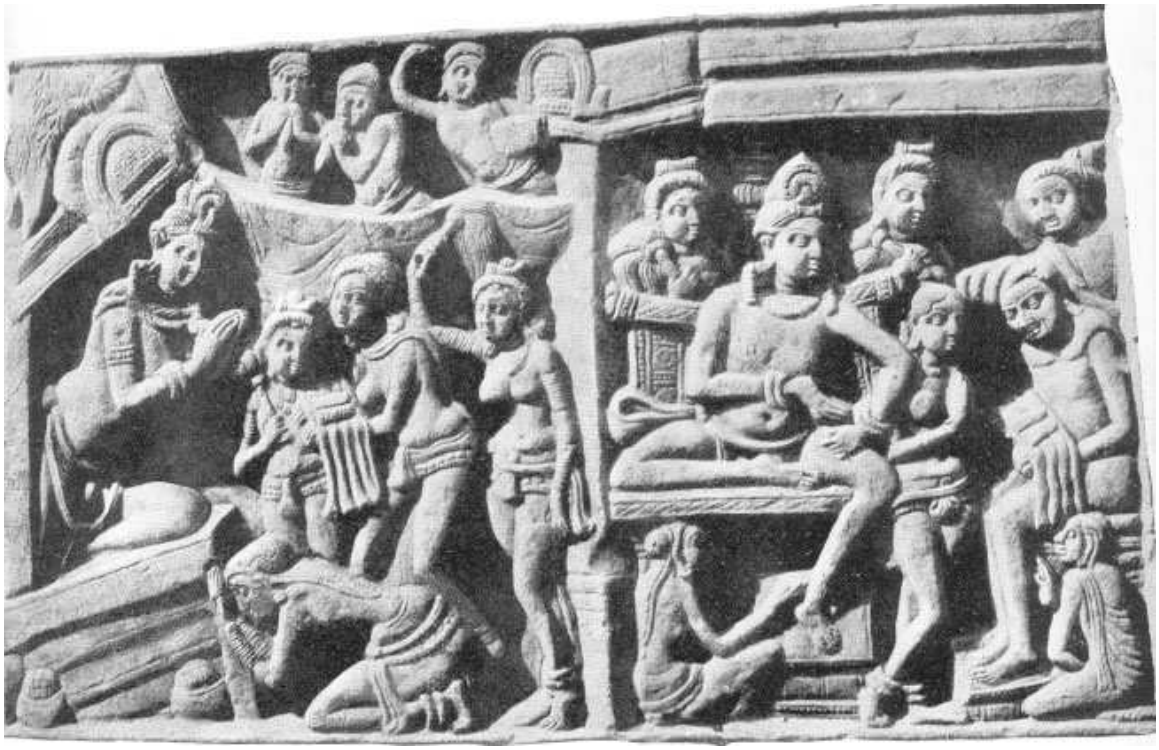
[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 291]

II.30. ***The Visit of Asita.*** *Limestone, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, 3rd century A.D.*

*The treatment is similar to the preceding one.**

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 292]

*Note that the little child Siddhārtha's (the future Buddha's) *standing* presence is indicated only by his footprints on the cloth on Asita's lap. Asita has, thus, taken the child in his arms! – **ML**



* * * * * * * * *

Compare *Luke 2:25-33*:

There was at that time in Jerusalem a man called Simeon. This man was upright and devout, one who watched and waited for the restoration of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been disclosed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary under the Law, he took him in his arms, praised God, and said:

'This day, Master, thou givest thy servant his discharge in peace;
now thy promise is fulfilled.
For I have seen with my own eyes
the deliverance which thou has made ready in full view of all the nations;
a light that will be a revelation to the heathen,
and glory to thy people Israel.'

The child's father and mother were full of wonder at what was being said about him.

– The New English Bible

II.36. ***The Bodhisattva going to school.*** *Schist, Gandhāra, c. 4th century A.D., Victoria and Albert Museum, London.*

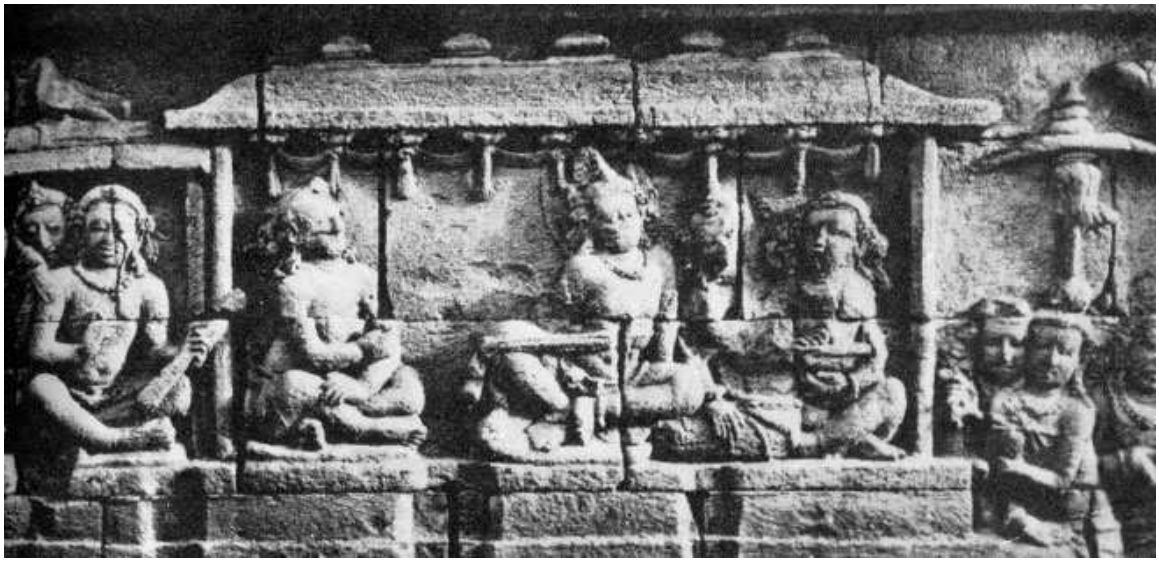
The Bodhisattva is on his way to school in a ram cart, while his companions follow on foot with inkpot and other writing materials.

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 292]

II.38. ***The Bodhisattva at school.*** *Stone, Borobudur, 8th century A.D.*

The Bodhisattva is seen here seated like a prince with his [right] knee in a sling.

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 292]



From the Buddhist *Lalitavistara*, describing the above relief: *The Bodhisattva's first day at school.*

On the first day that the Bodhisattva attended school, the schoolmaster fell forward and buried his face in the ground because he was so overwhelmed by the Great Being's shining radiance. After picking up a writing tablet, the Bodhisattva asked the schoolmaster the following question.

"Well, schoolmaster, which of the 64 writing scripts will you teach me today?"

The prince then recited the names of the 64 scripts, many of which the schoolmaster himself did not know.

"How could I instruct one who has attained an unsurpassed knowledge of scripts, who through his power shall instruct even the wise?" exclaimed the schoolmaster.

As the school children began to sound the first syllable of the alphabet "ah," through the Bodhisattva's blessing, the sound was transformed into a phrase that expounded one of the teachings of the Dharma. Then as the children sounded each of the alphabet's other eleven vowels and the thirty-three consonants, each of the sounds was transformed into another Dharma phrase. By the time that the children produced the forty-sixth and final syllable, the entire Dharma of the future Buddha had been expounded.

* * * * * * * * *

Compare with the non-canonical Christian *Infancy Gospel of Thomas 20:1 ff.*:

There was also at Jerusalem one named Zacheus, who was a schoolmaster. And he said to Joseph: 'Joseph, Joseph, why dost thou not send Jesus to me, that he may learn his letters.' Joseph agreed. . . . So they brought him to that master, who, as soon as he saw him, wrote out an alphabet for him. And he bade him say Aleph; and when he had said it, the master bade him pronounce Beth. . . . Then the Lord Jesus . . . said to his master, 'Take notice how I say to thee'; then he began clearly and distinctly to say Aleph, Beth, Gimel, Daleth, and so on to the end of the alphabet. At this the master was so surprised, that he said, 'Thou hast brought a boy to me to be taught, who is more learned than any master'. . . .

Water Baptism and Spiritual Baptism

***Mark I. 7, 8*:**

There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy [Spirit].

***John IV. 2*:**

Jesus himself baptized not [with water], but his disciples.

* * * * * * * * *

Albert J. Edmunds, in his *Buddhist and Christian Gospels Now First Compared from the Originals*,[1] pp. 231 & 230, quotes the above two passages from the New Testament and then translates passages from the Buddhist scriptures which reveal the basis of the emphatic break that Jesus is to make with John the Baptist – in John's own words: "I baptized you [people] with water, but he [Jesus] shall baptize you with the Holy [Spirit]." Nowhere in the New Testament do we find a description of Jesus baptizing anyone with water. If the disciples were sent out to baptize the world, it was to recognize the acquisition of a new Spirit (Logos, Dharma) essentially – and used water only symbolically!

Edmund's translation (pp. 230-233) of the relevant passages of the Buddhist scripture is taken from the "Classified Collection", VII. 2. 11:

Place: Sāvatthi.

On this occasion there was a Brahmin named Saṅgāravo living at Sāvatthi, and he was a Baptist (literally, a water-purity-man), and believed in purity by means of water. He continued devoted to the practise of descent into the water, evening and morning.

Now St. Ānando, having drest[2] betimes, took bowl in robe and entered Sāvatthi for alms. And having traverst the city and returned from the quest of alms, in the afternoon he called on the Lord, saluted him and sat on one side. And so sitting, St. Ānando said unto the Lord: "Master, there is living here in Sāvatthi a Brahmin named Saṅgāravo, who is a Baptist and believes in purity by water: he continues devoted to the practise of descent into the water evening and morning. Good Master, may the Lord, out of compassion, call at the abode of Saṅgāravo the Brahmin."

The Lord consented by being silent.

Then the Lord having drest betimes took bowl in robe and called at the abode of Saṅgāravo the Brahmin, and sat on a seat prepared for him. And the Brahmin, approaching the Lord, exchanged civilities with him, and then sat on one side. While he so sat, the Lord asked him: "Brahmin, is it true that you are a Baptist and believe in purity by water? Do you continue devoted to the practise of descent into the water evening and morning?"

"Yes, Gotamo."

"What significance do you see, Brahmin, in being a Baptist and in water-purity? Why do you continue this practise evening and morning?"

"Well, Gotamo, the fact is that whatever bad deed I have done during the day I wash away at evening by ablution; and whatever bad deed I have done in the night I wash away at morning by ablution. This is the significance, Gotamo, that I see in being a Baptist and why I believe in purity by water. And so I continue devoted to the practise of descent into the water evening and morning."

[The Buddha said:]

> "Religion is a lake, O Brahmin, and ethics is the baptistry[3] thereof,
> Untroubled, esteemed by the wisest of the wise,
> Where indeed Vedic scholars their ablutions make:
> As those who cross with limbs unwet unto the farther shore!"

[Whereupon the Brahmin is converted on the spot.]

Comment:

To paraphrase the Buddha's closing stanza: Religion is like a lake, and ethics is like a sacred bathing-place on the lake's shore, a place untroubled, esteemed by the wisest of the wise, where indeed those who truly come to understand the Vedic scriptures "carry out their ablutions". Thus, as these expressions are merely metaphorical, the limbs of those who truly understand need not actually be made wet by any physical water, as they "cross over" that metaphorical "water" representing *Saṁsāra* (the innumerable rebirths that an individual must experience) before reaching the "farther shore" (the metaphoric goal, standing for *Parinirvāṇa*, the final Bliss in the freedom from rebirth!).

What the Buddha is saying is that physical water has nothing to do with cleansing a person spiritually. To claim that it does, is to mistake the metaphor for reality – it is only by moral insight and training that one is "cleansed"! And that is the significance of the words put in the mouth of John the Baptist by the gospel writer, Mark.

Setting metaphor aside, what are the details of the Buddha's 'Way' to attaining moral insight and training? The answer is found in learning the Four Noble Truths and following the Noble Eightfold Path (Way). This was the Dharma (Logos/Gospel) which the Buddha preached.[4] He could also claim to be (metaphorically) the 'Life', as he had found the 'Way' (through the Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path) to conquer death. He is often hailed as 'Conqueror of Death'. The Buddha, at times, identified himself with the Dharma he preached. He therefore could also declare (metaphorically), "I am the Way; I am the Truth and the Life":

> [As the Buddha's earthly life was coming to a close, he] said: 'It may be that you will think, "The Teacher's instruction has ceased, now we will have no teacher!" It should not be seen like this, for what I have taught and explained to you will, at my passing, be your teacher.'
>
> *– Dīgha Nikāya 16:6:1*

> 'He who sees the Dharma, he sees me; he who sees me, sees the Dharma.'
>
> *– Kindred Sayings, III, Khanda-Vagga Middle Fifty, Ch. 4, 67*

Compare *John 14:9 &11*:

> 'Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. . . . Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father in me.'
>
> *– The New English Bible*

* * * * * * * * *

Notes

[1]*Buddhist and Christian Gospels Now First Compared from the Originals: Being "Gospel Parallels from Pāli Texts," Reprinted with Additions*, 4th edition, vol. 1 of 2 (Philadelphia: Innes & Sons, 1908).

[2]Edmunds' use of a 'modern' reformed type of English spelling – 'drest' for 'dressed', etc. – is only following a practice which was popular in America during the early 20th century.

[3]'Baptistry', from Pāli *tittho*, Sanskrit *tīrtha*, a sacred bathing-place.

[4]For specific passages of Buddhist scriptures which were recommended by King Aśōka (mid-3rd century B.C.) to Buddhist monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen, as representing the very essence of the 'Buddha's Gospel', see his 'Calcutta-Bairāt Rock Inscription', illustrated and discussed on p. 52.

II.70. ***Māra's Attack and Temptation.*** *Stone, North Gate, Stūpa I, Sāñchī, 1st century B.C.*

Māra is seen seated [just to the left of] the middle of the panel as a god of the sixth heaven with an umbrella over his head. The Bodhi tree at the left represents the would-be Buddha symbolically. Sujātā [the small figure, to the extreme left] appears with an offering of food for him. The figure opposite [standing, immediately to the right of the tree] also represents Māra [worshipping the Buddha-to-be, post-conflict] with one of his sons and daughters. On the extreme right are the grimacing figures of his army. The panel portrays the contest between Māra, the lord of the world of desire, and the Bodhisattva, the annihilator of lusts and desires.

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 295]

* * * * * * * * *

Comment:

Māra, the 'Great Tempter', appearing to the left of center, is portrayed as the handsome god, Kāmadēva (the Indian 'God of Love'). He is seated, with the royal parasol held above his head by an attendant. Just to the right of this, Māra, again seated on a throne, is portrayed for the third time in the panel. Now, however, his frightening and grotesque aspects, and those of his wife, sons, daughters, and his army are shown in all of their repulsiveness. Kāmadēva leads the way to procreation, but with Birth comes Death! The alter ego of Kāmadēva is thus the disturbing aspect of Yama (Death). This portrayed transformation in the panel echoes dramatically the transformation in the Bōdhisattva's mind when, earlier in his life as Prince Siddhārtha, he gazed on his sleeping harem, dishevelled and in disarray, late one night, and felt repulsion. The goal of all his efforts, then, was to break the chain of rebirth and achieve *mōkṣa* (*nirvāṇa*) – free at last from rebirth!

***Luke 4:1-13*:**

Full of the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan, and for forty days was led by the Spirit up and down the wilderness and tempted by the devil.

All that time he had nothing to eat, and at the end of it he was famished. The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread'; Jesus answered, 'Scripture says, "Man cannot live on bread alone."'

Next the devil led him up and showed him in a flash all the kingdoms of the world. 'All this dominion will I give to you,' he said, 'and the glory that goes with it; for it has been put in my hands and I can give it to anyone I choose. You have only to do homage to me and it shall all be yours.' Jesus answered him, 'Scripture says, "You shall do homage to the Lord your God and worship him alone."'

The devil took him to Jerusalem and set him on the parapet of the temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down; for Scripture says, "He will give his angels orders to take care of you", and again, "They will support you in their arms for fear you should strike your foot against a stone."' Jesus answered him, 'It has been said, "You are not to put the Lord your God to the test."'

So, having come to the end of all his temptations, the devil departed, biding his time.

– The New English Bible

Further Comment:

The earliest Buddhist biographical materials in the canonical texts – for instance, in the *Mahāsaccaka Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* – don't mention the temptation of the Bōdhisattva. Only in later works do the presumed doubts and temptations of Gautama, the Buddha-to-be, become personified in the figures of Māra, his daughters, sons, and hosts. This is a process of progressive allegorization, well understood in India.

All three synoptic gospels introduce the temptation of Jesus by the devil/Satan immediately after Jesus' baptism by John: *Mark*, just in passing, but *Matthew* and *Luke*, in some detail.

The passage in *Luke* just quoted ends on a note suggesting some further impending struggle between Jesus and the devil: "So, having come to the end of all his temptations, the devil departed, *biding his time*."

John's gospel, however, makes no mention of the temptation of Jesus by the devil. In fact, this episode is ruled out as a possibility, as, on the day that John the Baptist saw Jesus approaching him and acknowledged Jesus as the 'Lamb of God' that takes away the sin of the world, Jesus went on next to enlisting five men as his first disciples, and then to performing miracles and preaching. (The Buddha also had five disciples at the beginning of his preaching the Dharma.)

In regard to the temptations of the Buddha, Ananda W.P. Guruge has observed:

> As the biography of the Buddha came to be presented systematically, temptations by Māra began to figure as a major element in relation to several decisive steps taken by the Buddha. A number of such occasions representing critical points in [his] career before and immediately after the Enlightenment had been identified by the time the introduction to the Jātaka Commentary was composed. This introduction, which contains perhaps the oldest continuous life story of the Buddha, mentions six such occasions [the first four of which are:]
>
> (i) At the time of the renunciation, when Māra is represented as trying to persuade the future Buddha to return home on the ground that he would, in seven days, become a universal monarch. . . .
>
> (ii) During the period of austerity, when the future Buddha was in a very weak condition and Māra approached urging him to give up the struggle.
>
> (iii) On the eve of the attainment of Buddhahood, when Māra is said to have come with his hosts and challenged the future Buddha's right to his seat. This is the occasion of the great victory over Māra symbolizing the Enlightenment.
>
> (iv) During the fourth week after the Enlightenment, when Māra is presented discouraging the Buddha from preaching: "If you have realized the safe path to immortality, go your way alone by yourself. Why do you want to admonish others?"[1]
>
> The recurring idea behind all these episodes is that doubts, anxieties, and longings which arise in the lonely mind of the Buddha or a disciple are personified as Māra. With a firm resolve, they vanish, and that is what Māra's disappearance signifies.[2]

Thus, we see from the many Buddhist temptation episodes that, at each failure, the Tempter, 'biding his time', awaits his next chance to attack the Buddha.

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[1]"The Buddha's Encounters with Māra the Tempter", *The Wheel*, Publication No. 419 (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1997), p. 11.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 9.

II.63. ***The Austerities of the Bodhisattva.*** *Schist, Gandhāra, 2nd-3rd century A.D., Central Museum, Lahore.*

The sculpture gives a vivid idea of the severity of the Bodhisattva's austerities and their effect upon him.

Resolved to undertake the Great Effort (Mahāpadhānam), he came to Uruvelā near Gayā. There he selected a delightful spot near the river Nerañjarā for his meditation. He practised rigid austerities and was reduced to a skeleton. Yet real knowledge eluded him. He then realized that the practice of austerities was not the way to achieve enlightenment. He, therefore, began to partake of food again for the sustenance of his body.

The first offering of food was made by Sujātā, daughter of a rich householder.

[*The Way of the Buddha*, pp. 294-95]

The Austerities of the Bodhisattva

Comment:

Luke's account holds that Jesus fasted for forty days and that "all that time he had nothing to eat, and at the end of it he was famished." The devil, therefore, first tempted Jesus to turn a stone into bread to end his hunger.

In the Buddhist scriptures, the fasting of the Buddha-to-be is described at length and in great detail, emphasizing its final extreme degree, as the above sculpture dramatically illustrates. When the Bōdhisattva is near death by starvation, Māra approaches and urges him to give up his struggle for enlightenment. The Buddha-to-be, realizing that extreme austerities were not bringing him enlightenment, does give up his fasting – but not his pursuit of enlightenment, which he finally achieves through meditation (*dhyāna*).

III.42. ***Buddha receiving Homage from the Animals of the Forest.*** *Stone, middle architrave, back, East Gate, Stūpa I, Sāñchī, 1st century B.C.*

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 302]

* * * * * * * * *

Comment:

According to all three of the synoptic gospels, after Jesus' baptism, he immediately began a period of fasting for forty days and was tempted by the devil. But Mark's gospel has just this brief statement on that period:

***Mark 1:12-13*:**

> Thereupon the Spirit sent him away into the wilderness, and there he remained for forty days tempted by Satan. He was among the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.
>
> *– The New English Bible*

* * * * * * * * *

As for the expression, in Mark's gospel, that the angels waited on Jesus, the earlier Buddhist version is found in the Southern Canon, in the Majjhima-Nikāya 36 (Mahāsaccakasutta), where Gautama is thinking to himself about cutting off completely his intake of food:

> "I thought: 'Suppose I were to practice going altogether without food.' Then angels (*devas*) came to me and said, 'Dear sir, please don't practice going altogether without food. If you go altogether without food, we'll infuse divine nourishment in through your pores, and you will survive on that.' I thought, 'If I were to claim to be completely fasting while these angels are infusing divine nourishment in through my pores, I would be lying.' So I dismissed them, saying, 'Enough.'"[1]

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[1]Trans. by Thanissaro Bhikkhu, < http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.036.than.html >, with slight editing by ML.

III.14. ***[The Buddha Walks on Water:] The Conversion of the Kāśyapas.*** *Stone, East Gateway, Stūpa I, Sāñchī, 1st century B.C.*

Buddha had to perform a series of . . . miracles before he could fully convince the Kāśyapas [followers of Kāśyapa] of his superiority and convert them. Once a heavy rain fell . . . and there was a flood in all the land. The Kāśyapas thought that Buddha had been carried away by the water and hastened in a boat to rescue him.

This panel shows the elder Kāśyapa and . . . his disciples, hastening in a boat over the river Nerañjarā in flood, presumably to the rescue of the Master. In the lower part of the picture, the Buddha (represented by his promenade [the horizontal beam-like slab just above the heads of the four figures at the bottom of the panel]) is [indicated as] walking on the surface of the waters [by his footprints on it – just as in later, early-Christian art, Jesus' presence is indicated only indirectly (throne, etc.)]. In the foreground, the figures of Kāśyapa and his disciples are twice repeated, on dry ground, and doing homage to the Master (represented by the throne at the right hand bottom corner of the panel).

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 298]

The Buddha Walks on Water

Comment:

In India, accounts of the paranormal ability of walking on water are as old as the ancient epic, *Mahābhārata* – long before the time of the Buddha. In the *Dīghanikāya* and *Majjhimanikāya*, this ability is claimed for the Buddha, and in the *Mahāvagga* and *Mahāvaṁśa*, there are stories about this.

Gruber and Kersten (***OJ***, pp. 98-99) have given an informative account of the story in the *Mahāvagga* which is illustrated in the Sāñchī panel, above:

Let us . . . consider the story of Buddha walking on water as handed down in the *Mahavagga*.[1] This narrative is linked with the conversion of Kassapa [Skt., Kāśyapa], the leader of a group of religious ascetics. The incident occurred during the rainy season when water was falling so violently from the skies that it was soon no longer possible to walk around dry-footed. Gautama was not interested in going for a walk but rather in meditating while walking. Special paths were established in monasteries for this important Buddhist practice. Gautama used his extraordinary abilities to keep [this] area free of water so that he could meditate. Kassapa was much concerned about the revered teacher. Fearful that the Awakened One [the Buddha] could be swept away by the raging waters, he jumped into a boat to seek him. Then he saw . . . Gautama . . . walking on the water [to meet him] without getting wet. Kassapa was so surprised that he first disbelievingly asked: 'Are you there, great mendicant monk?' With the words 'It is I, Kassapa' the Buddha calmed the fearful man and came to the boat. Kassapa and the Buddha then started talking, and the ascetic had no choice but to accept the Enlightened One's spiritual superiority and to convert to his faith.

The Buddha's Disciple Walks on Water

From "The Internet Sacred Text Archives" – Introduction to Jātaka No. 190 ("*The Sīlānisaṁsa-Jātaka*"):

> South of Sāvatthi is a great river, on the banks of which lay a hamlet of five hundred houses. Thinking of the salvation of the people, the 'World-honored One' [the Buddha] resolved to go to the village and preach the doctrine. Having come to the riverside he sat down beneath a tree, and the villagers seeing the glory of his appearance approached him with reverence; but when he began to preach, they believed him not.
>
> When the world-honored Buddha had left Sāvatthi, Sāriputta [who was to become one of his foremost disciples] felt a desire to see the Lord and to hear him preach. Coming to the river where the water was deep and the current strong, he said to himself: "This stream shall not prevent me. I shall go and see the Blessed One", and he stepped upon the water which was as firm under his feet as a slab of granite. When he arrived at a place in the middle of the stream where the waves were high, Sāriputta's heart gave way, and he began to sink. But rousing his faith and renewing his mental effort, he proceeded as before and reached the other bank.
>
> The people of the village were astonished to see Sāriputta, and they asked how he could cross the stream where there was neither a bridge nor a ferry. Sāriputta replied: "I lived in ignorance until I heard the voice of the Buddha. As I was anxious to hear the doctrine of salvation, I crossed the river and I walked over its troubled waters because I had faith. Faith, nothing else, enabled me to do so, and now I am here in the bliss of the Master's presence."
>
> The World-honored One added: "Sāriputta, thou hast spoken well. Faith like thine alone can save the world from the yawning gulf of migration and enable men to walk dryshod to the other shore." And the Blessed One urged to the villagers the necessity of ever advancing in the conquest of sorrow and of casting off all shackles so as to cross the river of worldliness and attain deliverance from death. Hearing the words of the Tathāgata, the villagers were filled with joy, and believing in the doctrines of the Blessed One, embraced the five rules and took refuge in his name. [Cf. Luke 7:50 & Mark 5:34.]

Comment:

Zacharias P. Thundy has noted that W. Norman Brown "made a careful and comparative study of the Indian and Christian miracles of walking on the water and has addressed the theory of [their] independent origin. . . ."

> He [Brown] finds that both traditions illustrate the miraculous idea of walking on the water and the efficacy of faith; both have two main characters: the disciple who has faith and the Master on whom the faith rests; both show faith functioning and disfunctioning; the main difference is that in the Christian tradition the disciple does not renew the faith in the same episode, whereas in the Buddhist tradition the disciple renews faith and restores the miracle. There is no question on the issue of which tradition is older; the Buddhist story is represented on the Sanchi stūpa built c. 250 B.C., while the Christian stories date only from the first century [A.D.] even in [their] oral form. (***BC***, p. 153.)

***Matthew 14:22-32*:**

> Then [Jesus] made the disciples embark and go on ahead to the other side, while he sent the people away; after doing that, he went up the hill-side to pray alone. It grew late, and he was there by himself. The boat was already some furlongs from the shore, battling with a head-wind and a rough sea. Between three and six in the morning he came to them, walking over the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake they were so shaken that they cried out in terror: 'It is a ghost!' But at once he spoke to them: 'Take heart! It is I; do not be afraid.'
>
> Peter called to him: 'Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you over the water.' 'Come', said Jesus. Peter stepped down from the boat, and walked over the water towards Jesus. But when he saw the strength of the gale he was seized with fear; and beginning to sink, he cried, 'Save me, Lord.' Jesus at once reached out and caught hold of him, and said, 'Why did you hesitate? How little faith you have!' They then climbed into the boat. . . .
>
> *– The New English Bible*

Further Comment:

William Norman Brown (1892-1975), one of the world's great Sanskrit scholars, majored in Greek at Johns Hopkins University, and then received his Ph.D. in 1916 for his work on Sanskrit. His book, *The Indian and Christian Miracles of Walking on the Water* (Chicago, 1928) is devoted to the problem of the relation between these two traditions:

> [A]lthough a single idea of fiction might arise spontaneously in different quarters of the world, it is wholly unlikely that parallel stories containing a number of similar ideas woven together into a coherent whole should so originate. If we regard the incidents and psychic motifs of stories as units, we may say that similar units may exist independently in widely separated communities, but similar groupings of incidents are not likely to exist independently. . . .
>
> Thus it is barely possible that in India and Palestine there should have arisen in each without reference to the other the notion that human beings may miraculously walk on the water. More, each might independently have got the

purpose of illustrating some religious notion by means of a miracle based upon that belief. But that they should separately have combined this notion and this purpose in a story, have used them in connection with the same doctrine, faith, and have developed stories closely similar in incident is so improbable as to be almost impossible. Finally that both should carry their story to the same most unusual conclusion, namely the cessation of the miracle on the diminution of faith, is completely incredible. For in that a coincidence between the experiences of Peter when his faith grew weak and of the Buddhist lay disciple in the same circumstances lies the most cogent reason for considering the two legends connected. . . . To find this sort of most recondite handling of miraculous material at all in two separate bodies of religious literature should arouse suspicion, but to find it . . . attached to similar stories seems to me compelling testimony that the two stories are genetically connected. [Brown, 59-60, as quoted by Thundy, 153-54.]

* * * * *

Endnote

[1]N. Klatt, *Literakritische Beiträge zum Problem christlich-buddhistischer Parallelen* (Cologne, 1982).

III.70. ***Buddha's Body as preserved by the Mallas before Cremation.*** *Schist, Gandhāra, 2nd-4th century A.D., Archæological Section, Indian Museum, Calcutta.*

The arrangements for the cremation of Buddha's body were left to the Mallas. According to the Tibetan tradition, the body was wrapped in five hundred layers of cotton cloth and deposited in an iron case (filled with oil) inside iron covers.

The . . . relief [below] shows this receptacle between two śāla trees, attended by Vajrapāṇi [i.e., Indra, the king of the gods] and grief-stricken monks.

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 305]

* * * * * * * * *

Comment:

Following the death of the Buddha there was a meeting (Council) of the monks to determine how best to preserve his teaching. During the deliberations, there was an incident in which the Buddha's close attendant, Ānanda, was, at first, being excluded from the Council because he had, together with several other wrongful acts, allowed women to be the first to salute the body of the Master. This 'salute', as we shall see, involved wailing, beating of breasts, and shedding of tears on the feet of the Buddha!

B. Jinananda has given the following account of this incident in the First Council:

> Mahā-Kassapa [Skt. Mahā-Kāśyapa] took the initiative and chose four hundred and ninety-nine bhikkhus to form the Council. It is stated in the *Çullavagga* and confirmed in the *Dīpavaṁśa* that the number of monks was chosen in pursuance of a vote by the general congregation of monks assembled on the occasion and at the place of the parinibbāṇa [i.e., death] of the Master. There is general agreement that the [final] number of the monks selected was five hundred. [This addition of one more member of the Council was due to the] protest regarding the omission of Ānanda from the number chosen. . . .
>
> Ānanda was eventually accepted by Mahā-Kassapa as a result of the motion on the part of the monks. The procedure followed regarding Ānanda [had], however, given rise to a controversy. It will be observed that Ānanda was brought to trial in the course of the proceedings. . . .[1]

Jinananda reports that one of the five charges brought against Ānanda was this: "He permitted women to salute first the body of the Master, because he did not want to detain them. He also did this for their edification."[2]

We now quote passages in the New Testament which give accounts of how women anointed Jesus' feet with tears and costly oil in preparation, Jesus himself says, for his burial:

Matthew 26:6-13

Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, when a woman came to him with a small bottle of fragrant oil, very costly; and as he sat at table she began to pour it over his head. The disciples were indignant when they saw it. **'Why this waste?'** they said; 'it could have been sold for a good sum and the money given to the poor.' Jesus was aware of this, and said to them, '**Why must you make trouble for** the woman**? It is a fine thing she has done for me. You have the poor among you always; but you will not always have me.** When she poured this oil on my body it was her way of preparing me for burial. **I tell you this: wherever in all the world this gospel is proclaimed, what she has done will be told as her memorial.**' [Bolding added to indicate duplication with bolded passages, below, in Mark. All four quotations on this page are from *The New English Bible*. – ML]

Mark 14:3-9

Jesus was at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper. As he sat at table, a woman came in carrying a small bottle of very costly perfume, pure oil of nard.**3** She broke it open and poured the oil over his head. Some of those present said to one another angrily, **'Why this waste?** The perfume might have been sold for thirty pounds (literally 300 denarii) and the money given to the poor'; and they turned upon her with fury. But Jesus said, 'Let her alone. **Why must you make trouble for** her**? It is a fine thing she has done for me. You have the poor among you always,** and you can help them whenever you like; **but you will not always have me.** She has done what lay in her power; she is beforehand with anointing my body for burial. **I tell you this: wherever in all the world the Gospel is proclaimed, what she has done will be told as her memorial.'**

Luke 7:36-50

One of the Pharisees invited him to eat with him; he went to the Pharisee's house and took his place at table. A woman who was living an immoral life in the town had learned that Jesus was at table in the Pharisee's house and had brought oil of myrrh in a small flask. She took her place behind him, by his feet, weeping. His feet were wetted with her tears and she wiped them with her hair, kissing them and anointing them with the myrrh. When his host the Pharisee saw this he said to himself, 'If this fellow were a real prophet, he would know who this woman is that touches him and what sort of woman she is, a sinner.' Jesus took him up and said, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' 'Speak on, Master', said he. "Two men were in debt to a money-lender: one owed him five hundred silver pieces, the other fifty. As neither had anything to pay with he let them both off. Now, which will love him most?' Simon replied, 'I should think the one that was let off most.' 'You are right', said Jesus. Then turning to the woman, he said to Simon, 'You see this woman? I came to your house: you provided no water for my feet; but this woman has made my feet wet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss; but she has been kissing my feet ever since I came in. You did not anoint my head with oil; but she has anointed my feet with myrrh. And so, I tell you, her great love proves that her many sins have been forgiven; where little has been forgiven, little love is shown.' Then he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' The other guests began to ask themselves, 'Who is this, that he can forgive sins?' But he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'

John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover festival Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived whom he had raised from the dead. There a supper was given in his honour, at which Martha served, and Lazarus sat among the guests with Jesus. Then Mary brought a pound of very costly perfume, pure oil of nard,**3** and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped them with her hair, till the house was filled with the fragrance. At this, Judas Iscariot, a disciple of his – the one who was to betray him – said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for thirty pounds [300 denarii] and given to the poor?' He said this, not out of any care for the poor, but because he was a thief; he used to pilfer the money put into the common purse, which was in his charge. 'Leave her alone', said Jesus. 'Let her keep it till the day when she prepares me for my burial; for you have the poor among you always, but you will not always have me.'

Comment:

Arthur Lillie, a century ago, in 1909, in his *India in Primitive Christianity*, p. 216, pointed out that the then newly discovered fragments of the *Gospel of Peter* revealed an intriguing connection between the foregoing passages in the New Testament's four gospels and earlier Buddhist narratives:

> The newly-discovered fragments of the Gospel of Peter give us a curious fact. They record that Mary Magdalene, "taking with her her [female] friends," went to the sepulchre of Jesus to "place themselves beside him and perform the rites" of wailing, beating breasts, etc. Āmrapālī and other courtesans did the same rites to Buddha, and the [male] disciples were afterwards indignant that impure women should have "washed his dead body with their tears." [Quotes from Rockhill, "Tibetan Life," p. 154]*
>
> In the Christian records are three passages, all due, I think, to the Buddhist narrative. In one, "a woman" anoints Jesus; in John (xii. 7), "Mary" anoints him; in Luke, a "sinner," who kisses and washes His feet with her hair. Plainly these last passages are quite irrational. No woman could have performed the washing and other burial rites on a man alive and in health.

As the incident in *Matthew* and *Mark* takes place in the house of Simon the leper, Lillie has counted their duplicated narrative as 'one' passage, which is then added to the passages in *Luke* and *John* to total '3'.

In the passage from the *Gospel of Peter* about Mary Magdalene and her women companions, Mary is called a ***disciple*** of Jesus:

> Now at the dawn of the Lord's Day, Mary Magdalene, a disciple of the Lord (who, afraid because of the Jews since they were inflamed with anger, had not done at the tomb of the Lord what women were accustomed to do for the dead beloved by them), having taken her women friends with her, came to the tomb where he had been laid. And they were afraid lest the Jews should see them and were saying, 'If indeed on that day on which he was crucified we could not weep and beat ourselves, yet now at his tomb we may do these things.'[4]

Luke 23:50-54 & 24:1-2

> Now there was a man called Joseph, . . . from Arimathæa. . . . This man now approached Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. . . . It was Friday, and the Sabbath was about to begin. The women who had accompanied him from Galilee followed; they took note of the tomb and observed how his body was laid. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes; and on the Sabbath they rested in obedience to the commandment. But on the Sunday morning very early they came to the tomb bringing the spices they had prepared.

---

*W. Woodville Rockhill (trans.), *The Life of the Buddha and the Early History of His Order: Derived from Tibetan Works in the Bkah-Hgyur and Bstan-Hgyur: Followed by Notices on the Early History of Tibet and Khoten* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1907), p. 154:

> [Kāśyapa said: "T]hou didst show to corrupt women the golden body of the Blessed One [i.e., the Buddha's], which was then sullied by their tears."**
>
> "I thought," replied Ānanda, "that if they then but saw the Blessed One, many of them would conceive a longing to become like him."

- - - - - - - - - - - - -

[Rockhill's footnote:] This alludes to the woman who, worshipping the body of the Buddha after his death, let her tears fall on his feet. See Beal, Four Lectures, p. 75.*

- - - - - - - - - - - - -

***[Checked by ML, from Samuel Beal's *Four Lectures on Buddhist Literature in China* (London, 1882), p. 75]:

> Kāśyapa said again, "Because you did not prevent the woman polluting the feet of Buddha you were guilty of a dukkata (offence), and you should now confess and repent of it."
>
> Ānanda replied, "A woman with a tender heart worshipping at Buddha's feet, her tears falling fast upon her hands, soiled the (sacred) feet as she held them to her. In this I am conscious of no crime; nevertheless, venerable sir! in submission to your judgment, I now confess and repent."

Endnotes

[1]"Four Buddhist Councils", by B. Jinananda, in *2500 Years of Buddhism*, ed. by P.V. Bapat (Delhi: Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1956), pp. 31-33.

[2]Ibid., p. 33.

[3]**'Spikenard'** (*Nardostachys grandiflora*; also called **'nard'**, 'nardin', and 'muskroot') is a flowering plant of the Valerian family that grows in the Himalayas of India and Nepal. The plant grows to about 1 meter in height and has pink, bell-shaped flowers. Spikenard rhizomes (underground stems) can be crushed and distilled into an intensely aromatic amber-colored essential oil, which is very thick in consistency. Nard oil is used as a perfume, an incense, a sedative, and an herbal medicine said to fight insomnia, birth difficulties, and other minor ailments.

The oil was known in ancient times and was part of the Ayurvedic herbal tradition of India. It was obtained as a luxury in ancient Egypt, the Near East, and Rome, where it was the main ingredient of the perfume nardinium.

Bibliography: Andrew Dalby, "Spikenard", in Alan Davidson, *The Oxford Companion to Food*, 2nd ed. by Tom Jaine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Retrieved, in brief, from Wikipedia < http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spikenard >

[4]*Gospel of Peter* (12:50-52), after Raymond Brown's translation, accessed on the internet at: < http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/gospelpeter.html >.

III.71. ***The Cremation of the Buddha.*** *Schist, Gandhāra, 2nd-4th century A.D., Peshawar Museum. Two Malla chieftains are extinguishing the blazing pyre after the cremation of Buddha's body.*

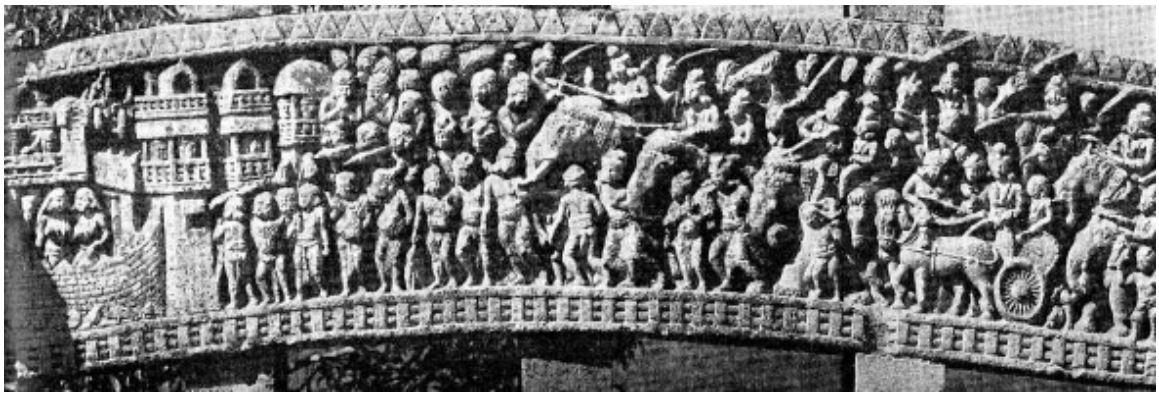
[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 305]

* * * * *

III.74. ***The War of the Relics.*** *Stone, back, middle architrave, Stūpa I, Sāñchī, 1st century B.C.*

The panel represents the seven rival claimants advancing for the siege of the City of Kusinārā to have a share of the Buddha's relics.

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 306]



The Sharing of the Relics. *Gandhāra, 2nd-3rd century A.D., ZenYouMitsu Temple, Tokyo.*

The Brahmin, Drōṇa, is dividing the Buddha's relics after the cremation of his body.

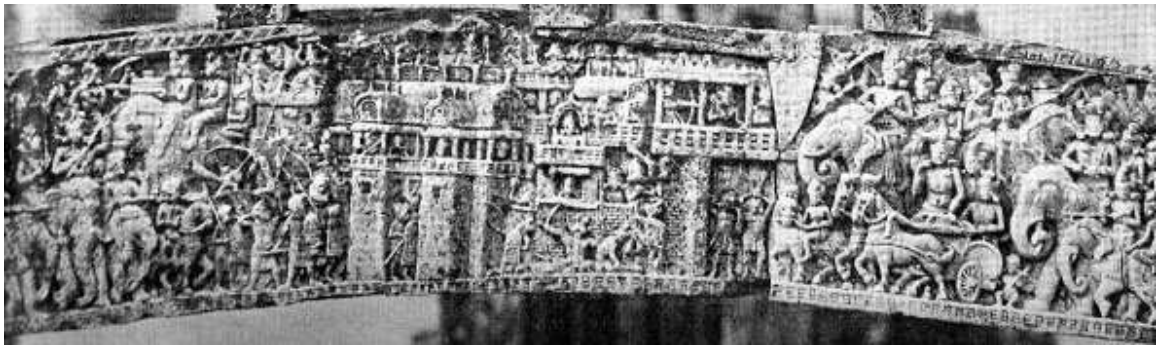
[*Photo, in the public domain, from Wikipedia's article on 'Gautama Buddha'*]

The Division of the Buddha's Relics

III.75. ***The War of the Relics.*** *Stone, South Gate, Stūpa I, Sāñchī, 1st century B.C.*

The centre of the panel depicts the siege of Kusinārā by the chiefs of seven other clans. To the right and left are shown the victorious chiefs departing with their share of the relics.

[*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 306]



3
Buddhist Parallels in Inscriptions

King Aśōka's Royal Edicts, engraved in stone, in mid-3rd century, B.C., give expression to Buddhist ideals remarkably similar to those which were later preached by Jesus.

A. Aśōka Turns from Military Conquest to Conquest through Dharma 50
B. Aśōka Recommends the Study of Buddhist Texts 52
C. Aśōka's Missionary Monks Spread Buddhism to the Biblical Lands 53
D. Aśōka Sends Medical Missionaries to the Biblical Lands 54
E. Aśōka Extols Ecumenical Harmony 55
F. Difficulty for the Rich to Enter the 'Kingdom of Heaven' 56
G. Aśōka Bids His Officers to Give Relief to Prisoners 57
H. A Greek and Aramaic Version of an Aśōkan Edict 58
I. Aśōka on 'Living Water' (Dharma) 60

A.
King Aśōka Turns Away from Military Conquest to Conquest through Dharma

Third century B.C. Rock Edict XIII – at Eṟṟaguḍi, Āndhra Pradēsh
From *Aśokan Studies*, by D.C. Sircar (Calcutta: India Museum, 1979), pp. 34-36:

(I) [The country of] the Kaliṅgas was conquered for King 'Priyadarśin', 'Beloved of the Gods' [favorite titles of King Aśōka†], eight years after his coronation.

(II) [In this war in Kaliṅga], men and animals numbering one hundred and fifty thousands were carried away [captive] from that [country], [as many as] one hundred thousands were killed there [in action], and many times that number perished.

(III) After that, now that [the country of] the Kaliṅgas has been conquered, the 'Beloved of the Gods' is devoted to a zealous discussion of Dharma, to a longing for Dharma and to the inculcation of Dharma [among the people].

(IV) Now, this is [due to] the repentance of the 'Beloved of the Gods', on having conquered [the country of] the Kaliṅgas.

(V) Verily, the slaughter, death and deportation of men, which [did†] take place there in the course of the conquest of an unconquered country, are now considered extremely painful and deplorable by the 'Beloved of the Gods'.

(VI) But what is considered even more deplorable by the 'Beloved of the Gods' is [the fact that] injury to or slaughter or deportation of the beloved ones falls to the lot of the Brāhmaṇas, the Śramaṇas, the adherents of other sects and the householders, who live in that country [and] among whom are established such [virtues] as obedience to superior personages, obedience to mother and father, obedience to elders and proper courtesy and firm devotion to friends, acquaintances, companions and relatives as well as to slaves and servants.

(VII) And, if misfortune befalls the friends, acquaintances, companions and relatives of persons who are full of affection [towards the former], even though they are themselves well provided for, [the said misfortune] as well becomes an injury to their own selves.

(VIII) [In war], this fate is shared by all [classes of] men and is considered deplorable by the 'Beloved of the Gods'.

(IX) Excepting the country of the Yavanas [Greeks†], there is no country where these two classes, [viz.] the Brāhmaṇas and the Śramaṇas, do not exist.

(X) And there is no place in any country where men are not indeed [sincerely] devoted to one sect [or other].

(XI) There, [the slaughter, death or deportation] of even a hundredth or thousandth part of all those people who were either slain or died or were carried away [captive] at that time in Kaliṅga, is now considered very deplorable by the 'Beloved of the Gods'.

(XII) Now the 'Beloved of the Gods' thinks that, even if [a person] should wrong him, that [offence] would be forgiven if it [were†] possible to forgive it.

(XIII) And the forest-[folk] [who live] in the dominions of the 'Beloved of the Gods', even them he entreats and exhorts [in regard to their duty].

(XIV) [It is hereby] explained [to them] that, in spite of his repentance, the 'Beloved of the Gods' possesses power [enough to punish them for the crimes], so that they should turn [from evil ways] and would not be killed [for their crimes].

---

†D.C. Sircar has used square brackets liberally throughout all of his translations of Aśōka's edicts. Therefore, the present writer has marked his own bracketed interpolations with this sign: [†].

(XV) Verily the ‘Beloved of the Gods’ desires [the following] in respect of all creatures, [viz.] non-injury [to them], restraint [in dealing with them], impartiality [in the cases of crimes committed by them, and] mild behaviour [towards them].

(XVI) So what is conquest through Dharma is now considered to be the best conquest by the ‘Beloved of the Gods’.

(XVII) And such a conquest has been achieved by the ‘Beloved of the Gods’ not only here [in his own dominions] but also in the territories bordering [on his dominions], as far away as [at the distance of] six hundred Yojanas, [where] the Yavana king named Antiyoka [is ruling and where], beyond [the kingdom of] the said Antiyoka, four other kings named Tulamāya, Antikeni, Maka and Alikasundara [are also ruling], [and] towards the south, where the Cōḍas and Pāṇḍyas [are living], as far as Tāmraparṇī.

(XVIII) Likewise here in the dominions of His Majesty, [the ‘Beloved of the Gods’], – in [the countries of] the Yavanas and Kambojas, of the Nābhakas and Nābhapaṅktis, of the Bhoja-paitryaṇikas (i.e., hereditary or tribal Bhojas) and of the Āndhras and Paulindas, everywhere [people] are conforming to the instructions in Dharma [imparted] by the ‘Beloved of the Gods’.

(XIX) Even where the envoys of the ‘Beloved of the Gods’ have not penetrated, there too [men] have heard of the practices of Dharma and the ordinances [issued and] the instructions in Dharma [imparted] by the ‘Beloved of the Gods’, [and] are conforming to Dharma [and] will continue to conform to it.

(XX) So, [whatever] conquest is achieved in this way, verily that conquest [creates an atmosphere of] satisfaction everywhere [both among the victors and the vanquished].

(XXI) In the conquest through Dharma, satisfaction is derived [by both the parties].

(XXII) But that satisfaction is indeed of little consequence.

(XXIII) Only happiness [of the people] in the next world is what is regarded by the ‘Beloved of the Gods’ as a great thing [resulting from such a conquest].

(XXIV) And this record relating to Dharma has been written [on stone] for the following purpose, [viz.] that my sons and great-grandsons [who may flourish after me] should not think of any fresh conquest [by arms] as worth achieving, that they should adopt [the policy of] forbearance and light punishment [towards the vanquished, even if they] themselves achieve the conquest [of a people by arms], and that they should regard the conquest through Dharma as the [true] conquest.

(XXV) Such [a conquest] brings happiness [to all concerned both] in this world and in the next.

(XXVI) And let all their intense joys be what is pleasure associated with Dharma.

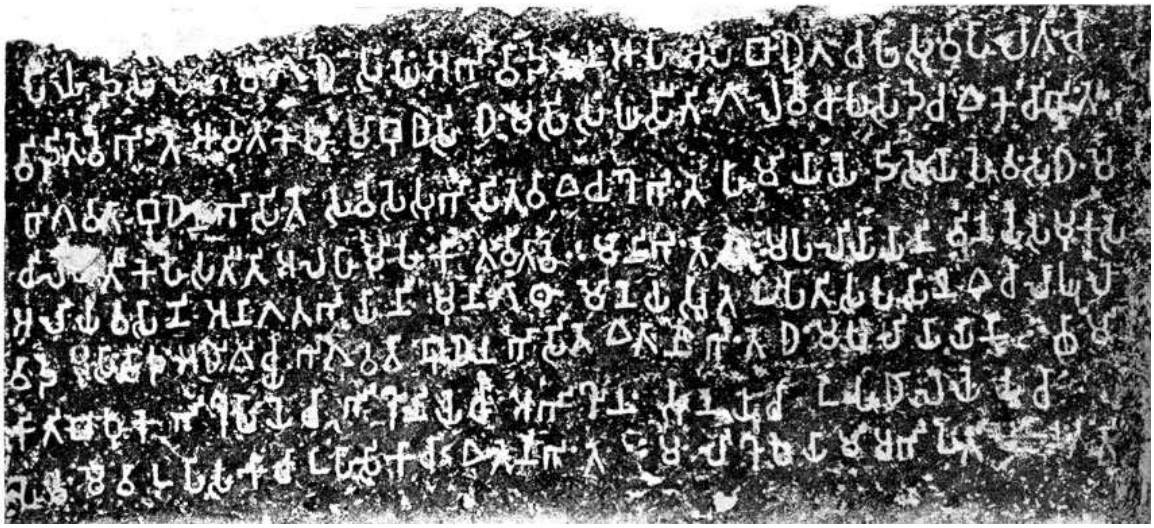
(XXVII) For this brings happiness in this world as well as in the next.

B.

IV.20. ***The Calcutta-Bairāt Rock Inscription of Aśōka****, where he recommends the study of the Buddhist texts, namely, Vinayasamukasa, Aliyavaṁśas, Anāgatabhayas, Muni-gāthās, Mōnēya-suta, Upatisapasina and the Sermon to Rāhula as essential for the monks as well as the laymen. Stone, 3rd century B.C.*

This inscription proves beyond doubt Aśōka's personal allegiance to the religion of Buddha.†

[*The Way of the Buddha*, pp. 308-309]



'Piyadasi' [Aśōka], King of Magadha, saluting the Sangha and wishing them good health and happiness, speaks thus: "You know, reverend sirs, how great my faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma and Sangha is. Whatever, reverend sirs, has been spoken by Lord Buddha, all that is well-spoken."

These Dhamma texts – Extracts from *The Discipline*, *The Noble Way of Life*, *The Fears to Come*, *The Poem on the Silent Sage*, *The Discourse on the Pure Life*, *Upatisa's Questions*, and *The Advice to Rahula* which was spoken by the Buddha concerning false speech – these Dhamma texts, reverend sirs, I desire that all the monks and nuns may constantly listen to and remember. Likewise the laymen and laywomen.

– Minor Rock Edict Nb3 (trans. S. Dhammika)

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†Thanissaro Bhikkhu has provided a full English translation of these seven extracts from Buddhist works referred to by King Aśōka, together with an enlightening commentary, all freely available on the internet [second (revised) electronic edition, 1996]:

http://halfsmile.org/buddhadust/www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/modern/thanissaro/asoka.html

The title of Thanissaro Bhikkhu's paper is: *That the True Dhamma Might Last a Long Time: Readings Selected by King Asoka*.

C.
Dharma, the Gospel of Buddhism, is Spread to Biblical Lands by King Aśōka's Missionaries in the 3rd Century, B.C.

King Aśōka's 13th Edict (Boulder B-1, lines 21-25) – at Eṟṟaguḍi, Āndhra Pradēsh
From *Aśokan Studies*, by D.C. Sircar (Calcutta: India Museum, 1979), pp. 31-32, & 35:

Text (pp. 31-32):

21 (**XVI**) *Iyaṁ [cu mokhya]-mu[te] vija[y]e Devānaṁpiyasa e dhaṁ-*

22 *ma-vijaye* (l*) (**XVII**) *Se mana ladhe Devānaṁpiyasa hida [va] bā(ca) [save]sū ca aṁ[tēsu] ā [sasu yo-]*

23 *[jana-satesu] Aṁtiyoke nāma Y[o]na-[lā]ja [palaṁ] [p]i t[e]nā Aṁtiyokenā catā[li] [lā]j[i]me*

24 *[Tula]maye [nāma] Aṁt[i]k[e]ni n[āma]*

25 *[Maka nāma] Alika[sunda]le nāma nitiyaṁ Co[ḍā] Paṁḍiyā ā Ta[ṁ]bapaniye* (l*)

Translation (p. 35):

(**XVI**) So, what is conquest through Dharma is now considered to be the best conquest by 'The Beloved of the Gods' [i.e., by Aśōka†].

(**XVII**) And such a conquest has been achieved by 'The Beloved of the Gods' [by Aśōka†] not only here [in his own dominions] but also in the territories bordering [on his dominions], and as far away as six hundred Yojanas, [where] the Yavana king named *Antiyoka*[1] [is ruling and], beyond [the kingdom of] the said *Antiyoka*, [where] four other kings named *Tulamāya*,[2] *Antikeni*,[3] *Maka*[4] and *Alikasundara*[5] [are also ruling]. . . .

---

[1]*Antiyoka* = Antiochus-II Theos (regnal years 261-246 **B.C.**), Greek ruler of the Seleucid Empire (stretching from Syria to Bactria, in the east), and who was therefore a direct neighbor of Aśōka. His capital city was Antioch, future arena of dramatic incidents in St. Paul's life. . . .

[2]*Tulamāya* = Ptolemy-II Philadelphus (r.y. 285-247 **B.C.**), the Greek ruler of Egypt.

[3]*Antikeni* = Antigonas Gonatas of Macedonia (r.y. 277-239 **B.C.**).

[4]*Maka* = Magas of Cyrene (r.y. ca. 288-258 **B.C.**) [Cyrene is approximately today's Libya.]

[5]*Alikasundara* = Alexander-II of Epirus (r.y. 272-255 **B.C.**) [Epirus, today's Greece and Albania.]

These footnotes are by ML. The identifications and dates are after W. Norman Brown's, in his book, *The Indian and Christian Miracles of Walking on the Water* (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1928), p. 63.

D.
Medical Missionaries are Sent to the Biblical Lands by King Aśōka, in the 3rd Century, B.C.

IV.22. ***Aśōka's Rock Edict No. II, Girṇār,*** *recording his benevolent measures, such as the establishment of medical treatment for men and cattle and also the plantation of trees and digging of wells, etc., 3rd century B.C.* [*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 309]

King Aśōka's Second Rock Edict – Its Version Found at Erraguḍi, Āndhra Pradēsh
From *Aśokan Studies*, by D.C. Sircar (Calcutta: India Museum, 1979), pp. 15-16:

Text [please note that this version is *slightly* different from that which is illustrated above] (p. 15):

1. (I) *Savatā vijitasi Devānaṁpiyasa Piyadasin[e] lājine e ca aṁtā athā [C]oḍā Paṁḍiyā Satīka-[pute Taṁbapaṁni Aṁtiyo]-*
2. *ge [nāma Yona-lājā] e ca aṁne tasa [sāmaṁta] Aṁtiyogasa lājāno savatā Devānaṁpiya[sā] Piyadasine [lājine du][ve*] [cikisā]*
3. *kaṭa munisa-cikis[ā] ca pasu-cikis[ā] ca* (l*) (II) *O[sa]dhāni [ca munis-o]pakā [ca] pasu-opakā ca ata atā nathi savata [hālāpitā ca lopāpi]-*
4. *tā ca* (l*) (III) *[Hem=e]va [mūlāni ca] phalāni [ca savata] ata ata nathi [hā]lāpit[ā] ca lopāpitā ca* (l*) (IV) *Ma[ge]su lukhāni lopāpitāni udupānān[i] ca*
5. *khā[nā]pitāni paṭibhogāye pasu-munisānaṁ* (l*)

Translation (pp. 15-16):

(I) Everywhere in the dominions of king 'Priyadarśin' [i.e., Aśōka†], 'Beloved of the Gods', and likewise [in] the bordering territories such as [those of] the Coḍas [and] Pāṇḍiyas [as well as of] the Satīyā-putras [and in] Tāmraparṇī [and in the territories of] the Yavana king named *Antiyoka* and also [of] the kings who are the neighbours of the said *Antiyoka* – everywhere King 'Priyadarśin', 'Beloved of the Gods', has arranged for two kinds of medical treatment, [viz.], medical treatment for men and medical treatment for animals.

(II) And, wherever there were no medicinal herbs beneficial to men and beneficial to animals, everywhere they have been caused to be imported and planted.

(III) In the same way wherever there were no roots and fruits, everywhere they have been caused to be imported and planted.

(IV) On the roads, trees have been caused to be planted and wells have been caused to be dug for the enjoyment of animals and men.

E.
King Aśōka Extols Ecumenical Harmony

Third century B.C. Rock Edict XII – at Eṟṟaguḍi, Āndhra Pradēsh
From *Aśokan Studies*, by D.C. Sircar (Calcutta: India Museum, 1979), pp. 37-38:

Translation:

(I) King 'Priyadarśin' [i.e., Aśōka†], 'Beloved of the Gods', honours men of all religious communities with gifts and with honours of various kinds, [irrespective of whether they are] ascetics or householders.

(II) But the 'Beloved of the Gods' does not value either the [offering of] gifts or the honouring [of people] so [highly] as the following, viz. that there should be a growth of the essentials [of Dharma] among [men of] all sects.

(III) And the growth of the essentials [of Dharma is possible in] many ways.

(IV) But its root [lies] in restraint in regard to speech, [which means] that there should be no extolment of one's own sect or disparagement of other sects on inappropriate occasions and that it should be moderate in every case even on appropriate occasions.

(V) On the contrary, other sects should be duly honoured in every way [on all occasions].

(VI) If [a person] acts in this way, [he] not only promotes his own sect, but also benefits other sects.

(VII) But, if [a person] acts otherwise, [he] not only injures his own sect but also harms other sects.

(VIII) Truly, [a person who†] extols his own sect and disparages other sects with a view to glorifying his own sect owing merely to his attachment [to it, he] injures his own sect very severely by acting in that way.

(IX) Therefore restrained speech is commendable, because people should learn and respect [the fundamentals of] one another's Dharma.

(X) This indeed is the desire of the 'Beloved of the Gods' that persons of all sects become well informed [about the doctrines of different religions] and acquire pure knowledge.

(XI) And those who are attached to their respective [sects] should be informed as follows:

(XII) "The 'Beloved of the Gods' does not value either the [offering of] gifts or the honouring [of people] so [highly] as the following, viz. that there should be a growth of the essentials [of Dharma] among [men of] all sects.

(XIII) Indeed, many of my officers are engaged for the [realization of] the [said] end, [such as] the Mahāmātras in charge of [the affairs relating to] Dharma, the Mahāmātras who are superintendents [of matters relating to] the ladies [of the royal household], the officers in charge of [my cattle and] pasture lands and other classes [of officials].

(XIV) And the result [of their activities, as expected by me], is the promotion of one's own sect and the glorification of Dharma.

* * * * * * * * *

IV.23. ***Aśoka's Rock Edict No. XII, Girṇār,*** *commending the restraint of speech and religious tolerance, 3rd century B.C.* [*The Way of the Buddha*, p. 309]

F.
Difficulty for the Rich to Enter the 'Kingdom of Heaven'
King Aśōka's Remarks in the 3rd Century, B.C.

King Aśōka's Rock Edict X – at Eṟṟaguḍi, Āndhra Pradēsh
From *Aśokan Studies*, by D.C. Sircar (Calcutta: India Museum, 1979), pp. 29-30.

Text (p. 29):

1. (I) *Devānaṁpite piyadasi lāja yaso va kiṭi vā no mahaṭha-vahaṁ manati aṁnata tadātāye āyatiyā ca jane dhaṁma-s[u] sūsaṁ*

2. *sususatu me dhaṁma-yu(vu)taṁ ca anuvidhiyatū [ti]* (l*) (II) *Ryskāye Devānaṁpi[ye] Piyadasi lāja yaso vā kiṭi vā ichati* (l*)

3. (III) *[Yaṁ] cu kichi palakamati Devānaṁpiye Piyadas lāja savaṁ taṁ palatikā[ye vā] kīti sakale apa-palisave [siyā]ti*

4. *[ti]* (l*) (IV) *Esa cu palisave e apune* (l*) (V) *Dukale [cu kho] esa khudakena va vagenā usaṭena va aṁna[ta] agena palakamenā*

5. *savaṁ palitijitu* (l*) (VI) *Heta cu kho usaṭen=eva dukale* (l*)

Translation (pp. 29-30, bolding added):

(I) King Priyadarśin [i.e., Aśōka†], 'Beloved of the Gods', does not consider either glory [in this life] or fame [after death] as of great consequence, except [in regard to] the following, [viz.] that, at present as well as in future, the people [of his dominions] would practise obedience to Dharma [as instructed] by him and also that they would act in accordance with the principles of Dharma.

(II) On this account [alone], king Priyadarśin, 'Beloved of the Gods', desires glory and fame.

(III) Whatever endeavours are made by king Priyadarśin, 'Beloved of the Gods', all those are made only for the sake of [the people's happiness in] the other world [and] in order that all men should have little [corruption†].

(IV) And what is sinful is [corruption†].

(V) This [freedom from corruption†] is indeed difficult to achieve both by the poor class and the rich if they do not make great efforts by renouncing all [other aims].

(VI) **Between [the two classes], [this] is certainly [more] difficult for the rich [to achieve].**

* * * * * * * * *

***Mark 10:17-25*:**

As [Jesus] was starting out on a journey, a stranger ran up, and, kneeling before him, asked, 'Good Master, what must I do to win eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: "Do not murder, do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not give false evidence; do not defraud; honour your father and mother."' 'But, Master,' he replied, 'I have kept all these since I was a boy.' Jesus looked straight at him; his heart warmed to him, and he said, 'One thing you lack: go, sell everything you have, and give to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; and come, follow me.' At these words his face fell and he went away with a heavy heart; for he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked round at his disciples and said to them, 'How hard it will be for the wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!' They were amazed that he should say this, but Jesus insisted, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.'

– The New English Bible

G.
King Aśōka Bids His Officers to Give Relief to Prisoners

Third century B.C. Rock Edict V – at Eṟṟaguḍi, Āndhra Pradēsh
From *Aśokan Studies*, by D.C. Sircar (Calcutta: India Museum, 1979), pp. 23-24:

(I) Thus saith king 'Priyadarśin' [i.e., Aśōka†], 'Beloved of the Gods'.

(II) It is difficult to do good [to others].

(III) He who starts doing good [to others] accomplishes what is difficult [indeed].

(IV) Many a good deed has, however, been performed by me.

(V) And, [among] my sons and grandsons and the generations coming after them till the destruction of the world, [those who] will follow [this course] in the said manner will do an act of merit.

(VI) But whosoever among them will abandon even a part of it will do an act of demerit.

(VII) It is indeed easy to commit sin.

(VIII) And formerly, in the ages gone by, there were no [officers] called Dharma-Mahāmātras [i.e., Ministers of State concerned with religious sects and their adherence to Dharma†].

(IX) So indeed I created the [posts of] Dharma-Mahāmātras thirteen years after my coronation.

(X) These [officers] are occupied with all the religious sects for the establishment of Dharma and for the promotion of Dharma as well as for the welfare and happiness of those who are devoted to Dharma [even] among the Yavanas [Greeks†], Kambojas and Gandhāras, and the Rāṣṭrika-paitryaṇikas (i.e. hereditary or tribal Rāṣṭrikas) and other peoples dwelling [beyond†] the western borders [of my dominions].

(XI) They are occupied [not only] with the welfare and happiness of the servile class and the Āryas (i.e. the traders and agriculturists) as well as the Brāhmaṇas and the ruling class [i.e. Kṣatriyas] and likewise of the destitute and the aged, [but also] with the release of the adherents of Dharma [amongst them] from fetters.

(XII) They are [similarly] engaged with the fettered persons [in the prisons, for working in] the following order: for the distribution of money to those amongst them who are encumbered with progeny, for the unfettering of those who have [committed crimes] under the instigation [of others] and for the release of those who are aged.

(XIII) They are engaged everywhere – here [at Pāṭaliputra, Aśōka's capital city†] and elsewhere in all the towns, in the households of my brothers and sisters and other relatives.

(XIV) These Dharma-Mahāmātras are engaged everywhere in my dominions among the adherents of Dharma [to determine] whether a person is [only] inclined towards Dharma or is [fully] established in Dharma or is [merely] given to charity.

(XV) This record relating to Dharma has been written [on stone] for the [following] purpose, [viz.], that [it] may last for a long time and that my descendants may conform to it.

* * * * * * * * *

***Matthew 25:34-36 & 40*:**

> Then the king will say to those on his right hand, "You have my Father's blessing; come, enter and possess the kingdom that has been ready for you since the world was made. For when I was hungry, you gave me food; when thirsty, you gave me drink; when I was a stranger you took me into you home, when naked you clothed me; when I was ill you came to my help, when in prison you visited me." . . . "I tell you this: anything you did for one of my brothers here, however humble, you did for me."
>
> *– NEB*

H.
Concerning a Greek and Aramaic Version of Aśōka's Minor Rock Edict IV

From *Aśokan Studies*, by D.C. Sircar (Calcutta: India Museum, 1979), pp. 45-46:

In 1958, a rock edict of the Maurya emperor Aśoka was discovered in Southern Afghanistan at a place called Shar-i-Kuna near Kandahār in the vicinity of the site of the ancient city of 'Alexandria among the Arachosians', founded by Alexander the Great. It is a bilingual record, one of the versions being Greek meant for the Greek or Yavana subjects of the Maurya emperor. The other version is in Aramaic which was the language of the Achæmenian administration and was apparently meant for the Kambojas who were Iranians settled in the north-western region of the Maurya empire and are mentioned in Aśoka's edicts . . . as a subject people.

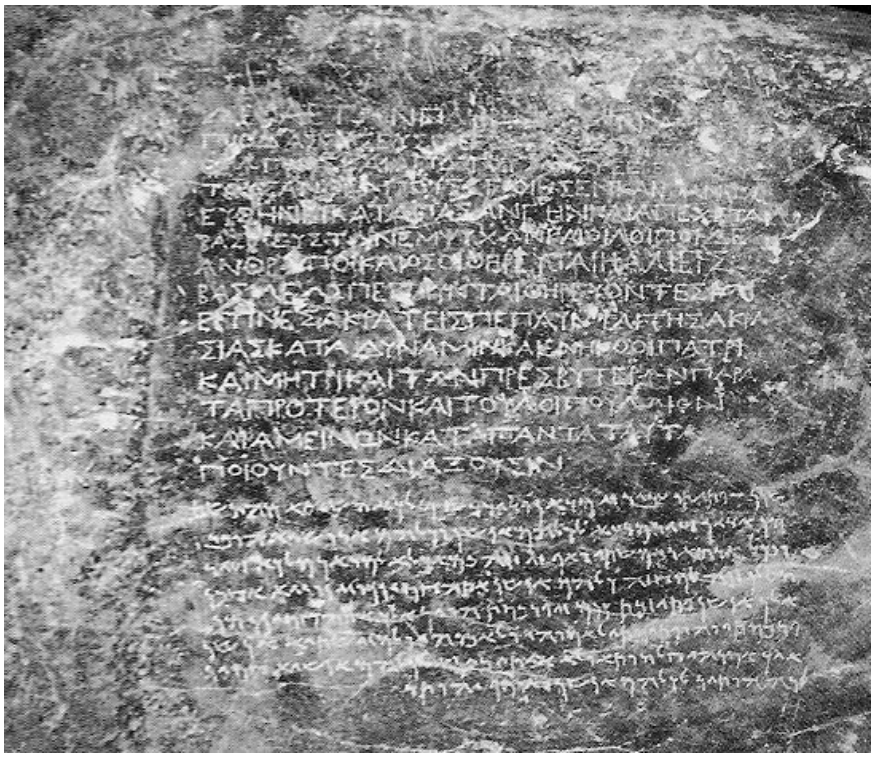
The contents of the said edict, which we have called Minor Rock Edict IV, prove that the Kandahār region formed a part of the empire of Aśoka. Its Greek version begins with the passage "Ten years having elapsed since his coronation, king Priyadarśin (Aśoka) has been showing piety to the people. And since then, he has rendered the people more pious, and all people prosper on the whole earth." It goes on to say, "And the king abstains from the slaughter of living beings, and other people including the king's hunters and fishermen have given up hunting. And those who could not control themselves have now ceased not to control themselves as far as they can. And they have become obedient to their father and mother and to the old people, contrary to what was the case previously. And, henceforth, by so acting, they will live in an altogether better and more profitable way."

Likewise the Aramaic version, which mentions the Maurya emperor as 'our lord', and 'our lord, the king', has the following passage at the beginning: "Ten years having passed, it so happened that our lord, Priyadarśin (Aśoka), became the Institutor of Truth. Since then, evil decreased among all men, and all misfortunes he caused to disappear, and here are now peace and joy in the whole earth." It then speaks of Aśoka's Dharma regulations and their results: "And, moreover, there is this to note in regard to food: for our lord, the king, only a few animals are killed; having seen this, all men have given up the slaughter of animals; even the fishermen are now subject to prohibition. Similarly, those who were without restraint have now ceased to be without restraint. And obedience to mother and father and to the elders flourishes now in conformity with the obligations imposed by fate on each person." In conclusion, it says, "And, for all the pious men, there is no final Judgment. This (i.e. the practice of Dharma) has been profitable to all men and will be more profitable in future."

In the year 1964, another Greek inscription of Aśoka, which substantiates the evidence of the Græco-Aramaic edict referred to above, was discovered near Kandahār which appears to have been the head-quarters of a province in which the concentration of the Greek (Yavana) and Kamboja subjects of Aśoka was the most conspicuous, even though both the peoples may have had other settlements in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This new Greek inscription corresponds to Rock Edicts XII and XIII, though the earlier part of RE XII and the latter part of RE XIII are lacking. The above fact suggests that the present record is a continuation of what was engraved elsewhere in the neighbourhood and was itself continued in another place. From this it may be legitimately concluded that a Greek version of the whole set of the fourteen major Rock Edicts of Aśoka was engraved at the place concerned. It is also possible to conjecture further that, side by side with the said Greek version, an Aramaic version of the fourteen Rock Edicts was also engraved for the Kamboja people of the locality.

* * * * * * * * *

The image and written matter on the facing page are reproduced from Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia. The translation there of Aśōka's bilingual inscription is by G.P. Carratelli. According to Wikipedia:



Bilingual inscription (Greek & Aramaic) of King Aśōka, from near Kandahār (Kābul Museum)

Greek text

1. δέκα ἐτῶν πληρη[....]ων βασι[λ]εὺς
2. Πιοδασσης εὐσέβεια[ν ἔδ]ε[ι]ξεν τοῖς ἀν·
3. θρώποις, καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου εὐσεβεστέρους
4. τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐποίησεν καὶ πάντα
5. εὐθηνεῖ κατὰ πᾶσαν γῆν• καὶ ἀπέχεται
6. βασιλεὺς τῶν ἐμψύχων καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ δὲ
7. εἴ τινες ἀκρατεῖς πέπαθνται τῆς ἀκρα-
8. σίας κατὰ δύναμιν, καὶ ἐνήκοοι πατρὶ
9. καὶ μητρὶ καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων παρὰ
10. τὰ πρότερον καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ λῶιον
11. καὶ ἄμεινον κατὰ πάντα ταῦτα
12. ποιοῦντες διάξουσιν.

Aramaic text

1. שנן 10 פתתיתו עביד זי מראן פרידארש מלכא קשיטא מהקשט
2. מן אדין זעיר מרעא לכלהם אנשן וכלהם אדושיא השבד
3. ובכל ארקא ראמשתי ואף זי זנה במאכלא למראן מלכא זעיר
4. קטלן זנה למחזה כלהם אנשן אתהחסינן אזי נוניא אחדן
5. אלך אנשן פתיזבת כנם זי פרבסת הוין אלך אתהחסינן מן
6. פרבסתי והופתיסתי לאמוהי ולאבוהי ולמזישתיא אנסנ
7. איך אסרהי חלקותא ולא איתי דינא לכלהמ אנשיא חסין
8. זנה הותיר לכלהמ אנשן ואוסף יהותר.

English translation:

1. Ten years (of reign) having been completed, King
2. Piodasses (Ashoka) made known (the doctrine of)
3. Piety (*εὐσέβεια*, Eusebeia) to men; and from this moment he has made
4. men more pious, and everything thrives throughout
5. the whole world. And the king abstains from (killing)
6. living beings, and other men and those who (are)
7. huntsmen and fishermen of the king have desisted
8. from hunting. And if some (were) intemperate, they
9. have ceased from their intemperance as was in their
10. power; and obedient to their father and mother and to
11. the elders, in opposition to the past also in the future,
12. by so acting on every occasion, they will live better
13. and more happily.

I.
King Aśōka's "Living Water" (Dharma)

Third century B.C. Rock Edict IX – at Eṟṟaguḍi, Āndhra Pradēsh

From *Aśokan Studies*, by D.C. Sircar (Calcutta: India Museum, 1979), pp. 40-41:

Translation:

(I) Thus saith king 'Priyadarśin' [i.e., Aśōka†], 'Beloved of the Gods'.

(II) People perform various [kinds of] auspicious ceremonies on the occasion of illness, the wedding of a son, the wedding of a daughter, [and] the birth of children.

(III) On these and similar other occasions, people perform many [kinds of] auspicious ceremonies.

(IV) And on such [occasions], the womenfolk [in particular] perform many and diverse [kinds of] ceremonies which [are†] trivial and meaningless.

(V) An auspicious rite, however, [may†] certainly be performed.

(VI) But the said [kind of rites] in fact produces [limited†] results.

(VII) [On the other hand], such a ceremony as is associated with Dharma produces great results.

(VIII) In it are [comprised] the following, [viz.] proper courtesy to slaves and servants, reverence to elders, restraint in [one's dealings with] living beings, [and] liberality to the Śramaṇas and Brāhmaṇas.

(IX) These and similar other [virtues] are indeed the ceremonies of Dharma.

(X) Therefore, whether [one is a person's] father, or son, or brother, or friend, or acquaintance, or [even a mere] neighbour, one ought to declare [to him as follows]:

(XI) "This [kind of rite associated with Dharma] is good."

(XII) "One should observe this practice until one's [desired] object is attained and [resolve that] this [practice] will be observed by him again [and again] even after the object is attained."

(XIII) The auspicious ceremony [of kinds] other than this is indeed of dubious [value].

(XIV) Perchance a person may attain his object [by performing these ceremonies], perchance he may not.

(XV) Moreover, [performance of those ceremonies] may produce results in this world only.

(XVI) But the [said] rite of Dharma is not restricted to time.

(XVII) If [a person performs it but] does not attain his object in this world, even then endless merit [for him] is produced [by it] in the next world.

(XVIII) And, if [a person] attains his object in this world, both [the results] are obtained [by him, viz.], that the [desired] object [is attained] in this world as also endless merit is produced [for him] in the next world by that ceremony of Dharma.

* * * * * * * * *

***John 4:7-15*:**

The disciples had gone away to the town to buy food. Meanwhile a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' The Samaritan woman said, 'What! You, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a Samaritan woman?' (Jews and Samaritans, it should be noted, do not use vessels in common.) Jesus answered her, 'If only you knew what God gives, and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.' 'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have no bucket and this well is deep. How can you give me "living water"? Are you a greater man than Jacob our ancestor, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, he and his sons, and his cattle too?' Jesus said, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water that I shall give him will never suffer thirst any more. The water that I shall give him will be an inner spring always welling up for eternal life.' 'Sir,' said the woman, 'give me that water, and then I shall not be thirsty, nor have to come all this way to draw.'

– The New English Bible

4

The Buddha Becomes a Christian Saint

Throughout the Middle Ages, the story of two saints, Barlaam and Josaphat, became the most widely spread legend of Christian sainthood. By the 16th century, the sanctity of these two was officially recognized by the Roman Catholic Church. But, three centuries later, becoming thoroughly knowledgeable about the details of the story of the life of the Buddha, European scholars realized that the details of the life of this legendary Josaphat suspiciously paralleled those of the Buddha. The Christian legend was, in actuality, a transmutation of the life of the Buddha! Barlaam and Josaphat were then removed from the ranks of Christian saints by the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Oriental Orthodox churches.

This transmutation of a Buddhist legend into a Christian legend must have occurred sometime between the 3rd and 7th century, A.D., since the Manichæan version (3rd century, A.D.) is clearly Buddhist and the Christian version is first known only from the 6th or 7th century.

In regard to the 3rd century, un-transmuted Buddhist story which was circulating in the West, Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, in his book, *Gnosis on the Silk Road* (1993), has this to say:

> A well-known Buddhist story tells of the three encounters of the Bodhisattva, that is, the Buddha to be, namely with an old man, a sick man, and a dead man. They make him aware of the fact that all life in the world is subject to suffering. It is only when he encounters a monk with a serene and peaceful countenance and composed bearing that he discovers the possibility of overcoming earthly woe and suffering. A portion of the Buddhist story is preserved in this Manichæan fragment. The unusual spelling of the word Bodhisattva (as *bodisaw*) shows that it was translated from a Sogdian version. The Sogdian Manichæan version must have been the prototype of the story of Barlaam and Joasaph, the Buddha legend that came to be known in Europe. We have here, then, a Turkish translation of what is probably the earliest Manichæan version of Buddha's three encounters.[*]

---

[*] *Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Texts from Central Asia* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), p. 313.

Barlaam and Josaphat

From the online *Catholic Encyclopedia*:

> [Barlaam and Josaphat are t]he principal characters of a legend of Christian antiquity, which was a favourite subject of writers in the Middle Ages. The story is substantially as follows: Many inhabitants of India had been converted by the Apostle St. Thomas and were leading Christian lives. In the third or fourth century King Abenner (Avenier) persecuted the Church. The astrologers had foretold that his son Josaphat would one day become a Christian. To prevent this the prince was kept in close confinement. But, in spite of all precautions, Barlaam, a hermit of Senaar, met him and brought him to the true Faith. Abenner tried his best to pervert Josaphat, but, not succeeding, he shared the government with him. Later Abenner himself became a Christian, and, abdicating the throne, became a hermit. Josaphat governed alone for a time, then resigned, went into the desert, found his former teacher Barlaam, and with him spent his remaining years in holiness. . . . Barlaam and Josaphat found their way into the Roman Martyrology (27 November), and into the Greek calendar (26 August). Vincent of Beauvais, in the thirteenth century, had given the story in his "Speculum Historiale". It is also found in an abbreviated form in the "Golden Legend" of Jacobus de Voragine. . . .
>
> The story is a Christianized version of one of the legends of Buddha, as even the name Josaphat would seem to show. This is said to be a corruption of the original Joasaph, which is again corrupted from the middle Persian Budasif (Budsaif = Bodhisattva). . . .
>
> The Greek text of the legend [was] written probably by a monk of the Sabbas monastery near Jerusalem at the beginning of the seventh century. . . . Latin translations (Minge, **P.L., LXXIII**), were made in the twelfth century and used for nearly all the European languages, in prose, verse and in miracle plays. Among them is prominent the German epic by Rudolph of Ems in the thirteenth century (Königsberg, 1818, and somewhat later at Leipzig). From the German an Icelandic and Swedish version were made in the fifteenth century. At Manila the legend appeared in the Tagala language of the Philippines. In the East it exists in Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Hebrew.

* * * * * * * * *

The text (in translation) of an edition of this legend, based on that published as *St. John Damascene: Barlaam and Ioasaph*, said to be composed c. 676 - 749 **A.D.** (trans. & ed. by G.R. Woodward & H. Mattingly) – which is in the Public Domain in the United States – has been edited, proofed, and prepared by Douglas B. Killings, and is available as "Online Medieval and Classical Library Release #20" at: < http://omacl.org/Barlaam/ >.

Killings' Note:

> Readers of this work will note some startling similarities between the story of Ioasaph and the traditional Tale of Buddha. The work seems to be a retelling of the Buddha Legend from within a Christian context, with the singular difference that the "Buddha" in this tale reaches enlightenment through the love of Jesus Christ.
>
> The popularity of the Greek version of this story is attested to by the number of translations made of it throughout the Christian world, including versions in Latin, Old Slavonic, Armenian, Christian Arabic, English, Ethiopic, and French. Such was its popularity that both Barlaam and Josaphat (Ioasaph) were eventually recognized by the Roman Catholic Church as Saints, and churches were dedicated in their honor from Portugal to Constantinople. It was only after Europeans began to have increased contacts with India that scholars began to notice the similarities between the two sets of stories. Modern scholars believe that the Buddha story came to Europe from Arabic, Caucasus, and/or Persian sources, all of which were active in trade between the European and Indian worlds. – **DBK**

Killings' Selected Bibliography:

- Original Text – ed. & trans. by G.R. Woodward & H. Mattingly: *St. John Damascene: Barlaam and Ioasaph* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1914). English translation with side-by-side Greek text.
- Recommended Reading – David Marshall Lang (trans.): *The Balavariani: A Tale from the Christian East* (California University Press, Los Angeles, 1966). Translation of the Georgian work that probably served as a basis for the Greek text.

Barlaam and Josaphat

Excerpt from Chapter 21 of Herbert Christian Merillat's book, *The Gnostic Apostle Thomas: "Twin" of Jesus* (Xlibris, 1997), pp. 161-63 – on the internet: < http://www.gnosis.org/thomasbook/ch21.html >:

> The story of the Buddha's life underwent an extraordinary transmutation as it moved west and became what is one of the most widespread legends ever told – the story of Barlaam and Josaphat. More than sixty translations, versions, or paraphrases have been identified. It was altered to fit the religious climate of each language and culture. As it moved westward, the story was adopted and adapted by Manicheans in central Asia, and then it became Christianized.
>
> In its new version, Barlaam was a Christian monk who had converted Josaphat (the name was a linguistic development from the word Bodhisattva – one capable of Buddhahood). It may be that Georgian Christians in the Caucasus were the first to give the story a Christian cast, in the sixth or seventh century. A Christian version in Greek was known at least as early as the eighth century. A papal librarian translated it into Latin in the ninth century and it later gained wide popularity throughout the West.
>
> The Ethiopic version is found in one of the surviving texts. It opens with a reference to Thomas's mission in India, and so do Greek and Syriac texts. There follows the story of Josaphat, the son of an Indian ruler whose priests were alarmed by the spread of Christianity. When he was born, all the sages and astrologers predicted a splendid future for him except one, who foretold that he would become a Christian.
>
> To prevent such an outcome, the king brought up his son in secluded palaces and protected him from all contacts with the world. But a Christian sage, Barlaam, disguised himself as a merchant and inveigled his way into the youth's presence. He taught the prince Christian doctrine and finally converted and baptized him. The king tried to win back his son by every means he could think of, including an offer of half his kingdom. All the king's efforts failed. Josaphat abandoned his princely life and became an ascetic in the desert, joined there by his preceptor, Barlaam. The severely ascetic flavor of Barlaam and Josaphat and the story's glorification of monastic life presumably made it useful to Manicheans. The tale became a great favorite among Christian monks in the Middle Ages.
>
> Barlaam and Josaphat were treated in Europe as Christian saints throughout the Middle Ages, and their story became part of the thirteenth-century *Golden Legend, or Lives of the Saints*. The Genoese bishop who collected and published the work wrote that "Barlaam fell asleep in peace about the year of the Lord 380." Barlaam and Josaphat were not fully canonized until the sixteenth century. Their day was fixed as November 27. Thus the historic Buddha and his guru became Christian saints, although no one seems to have made the Buddhist connection until scholars pointed it out late in the nineteenth century. The two have now been desanctified. . . .
>
> For explorers of Thomas traditions, the Ethiopic version of Barlaam and Jehosaphat is of particular interest. It opens, as we have noted, with a description of the apostle's missionary trip to India. As in the *Acts of Judas Thomas*, the Twelve are sent "unto all peoples."
>
> > Thomas, great in holiness, . . . was sent to the country of India, and he preached unto the Indians the preachings of salvation. . . . And Thomas destroyed and made to be forsaken the country that had been wont to offer up sacrifices to graven images, and he converted the people thereof from their error.
>
> The Ethiopic text goes on to say that after numerous companies of monks were established in Egypt, reports of their abstinence reached India, "and at length the Indians made themselves like unto [the Egyptian Christian monks†] in the beauty of their life and works." As we now know, it is far more likely that the exact opposite happened, that the example moved the other way; Buddhist monastic establishments were set up in the land of Gundaphorus [i.e., India] long before their Christian counterparts came into being in Egypt.

Christian Legend Transforms the Buddha into a Christian Saint

Excerpt from D.M. Lang's Introduction to the Loeb Classic edition of *St. John Damascene, Barlaam and Ioasaph*, Harvard University Press, 1914:

> There are few medieval Christian worthies whose renown exceeds that of Barlaam and Josaphat, who were credited with the second conversion of India to Christianity, after the country had relapsed into paganism following the mission of the Apostle Thomas. Barlaam and Josaphat were numbered in the roll of saints recognized by the Roman Catholic Church, their festival day being 27 November. In the Greek Church, Ioasaph (Josaphat) was commemorated on 26 August, while the Russians remember both Barlaam and Ioasaph, together with the latter's father, King Abenner, on 19 November (2 December Old Style). Sir Henry Yule once visited a church at Palermo dedicated to 'Divo Josaphat.' In 1571 the Doge Luigi Mocenigo presented to King Sebastian of Portugal a bone and part of the spine [supposedly] of St. Josaphat. When Spain seized Portugal in 1580, these sacred treasures were removed by Antonio, the Pretender to the Portuguese crown, and ultimately found their way to Antwerp, where they were preserved in the cloister of St. Salvator.
>
> After the European settlement of India, and the arrival there of Roman Catholic missionaries, certain enquiring spirits were struck by similarities between features of the life of St. Josaphat, and corresponding episodes in the life of the Buddha. Early in the seventeenth century, the Portuguese writer Diogo do Conto remarked that Josaphat "is represented in his legend as the son of a great king in India, who had just the same upbringing, with all the same particulars that we have recounted in the life of the Buddha . . . and as it informs us that he was the son of a great king in India, it may well be . . . that he was the Buddha of whom they relate such marvels." Diogo do Conto was on the right track, though it was not until the 1850s that scholars in Western Europe embarked on a systematic comparison between the Christian legend of Barlaam and Ioasaph, and the traditional life of Gautama Buddha, and came to the startling conclusion that for almost a thousand years, the Buddha in the guise of the holy Josaphat, had been revered as a saint of the principal Churches of Christendom.

Comment:

This legend of 'Barlaam and Josaphat' may serve as a paradigm, an epitome, a model of the relation of Buddhism to Christianity. Scholars, for nearly two hundred years, have been pointing out the influence of Buddhism on the origin of Christianity, but Christian theologians have, in the main, been indifferent to a serious study of this relationship. Such a study would require that they acquire a deep historical knowledge of Buddhism and a mastery of the languages of Pāli, Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese, among others.

* * * * * * * * *

From G. MacQueen's article, "Changing Master Narratives in Midstream: *Barlaam and Josaphat* and the Growth of Religious Intolerance in the Buddha Legend's Westward Journey", in the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, Vol. 5 (1998), p. 144:

Abstract

As the legend of the Buddha moved into Europe in the medieval period in the form of the story of the Christian saints Barlaam and Josaphat, it became marked for the first time by deep religious intolerance. The article finds this structural shift to have been accomplished through two separate but integrated moves: a master narrative of emancipation through enlightenment is replaced by a master narrative of salvation through faith, and a model of religions as linked and overlapping is replaced by a perception of religions as closed systems that compete with and endanger each other.

The full article, available on the internet, provides a study in depth of this shifting aspect of the transmogrification of Buddhism into Christianity: < http://jbe.gold.ac.uk/5/macqn981.pdf >.

5
Parable Parallels

The parallel parables in this section are presented without reference to datable sculptural examples from Buddhist art. Therefore, the priority of the Buddhist versions must be established on literary or other bases.

A. Buddhist Parable of the Prodigal Son 66

B. Christian Parable of the Prodigal Son 68

C. Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard 70

D. Meta-Parable of the Samaritan Woman at the Well 73

E. Meta-Parable of the Outcaste Woman at the Well 74

F. Parable of the Good Samaritan 78

Note the following definition of 'Parable':

> The word 'parable' comes from the Greek '*parabolē*', the name given by Greek rhetoricians to any fictive illustration in the form of a brief narrative. Later it came to mean a fictitious narrative, generally referring to something that might naturally occur, by which spiritual and moral matters might be conveyed.[1]

We have used the term 'meta-parable' to indicate that there are two or more levels of fictitious narratives in the gospels. Jesus and his disciples are allegorical, non-historical characters mixed together with historical characters (such as Pilate and some Temple priests), with Jesus relating parables, which the evangelists have fashioned out of similar parables in Buddhist scriptures. The story of the 'Samaritan Woman at the Well' (*John 4:1-42*) is also a kind of fictitious story/meta-parable based on the Buddhist version: the 'Outcaste Woman at the Well'. Even the story of the 'Outcaste Woman at the Well' is a fictitious meta-narrative, though involving the, perhaps, historical persons of the Buddha and his 'beloved' disciple, Ānanda – if indeed *they* are historical!

Mahātma Gandhi, a contemporary ṛishi of our day, with his understanding of the Indian penchant for stories within stories, discriminated between what is meta-narrative and what is at the heart of the matter:

> I may say that I have never been interested in a historical Jesus. I should not care if it was proved by someone that the man called Jesus never lived, and that what was narrated in the Gospels was a figment of the writer's imagination. For, the *Sermon on the Mount* would still be true for me.
>
> – M.K. Gandhi, *The Message of Jesus Christ*
> (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1971)

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[1]From H.W. Fowler, *Modern English Usage*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1958.

The Buddhist Parable of the Prodigal Son

(From the abridged rendering of *The Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*
produced for WBO Day 1999)

This rendering of *The Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* is an abridgement derived by using selected excerpts from *The Lotus Sūtra* translated by Burton Watson (Columbia Press '93), Soothill's *Lotus of the Wonderful Law* ('30), *The Threefold Lotus Sūtra* trans. Bunno Kato (Weatherhill, '84), *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* trans. Leon Hurvitz (Columbia '76), *The Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* H. Kearn (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xx1). Whilst intending to remain as faithful to the original texts as much as possible, the reader should bear in mind the inevitably interpretative means employed with such an extensive abridgement.

Cittapala – March 1999

"It is like a youth who, on attaining manhood, abandoned his father and ran away. For a long time he lived in another country, for perhaps ten, twenty or more years. As he grew older, he found himself increasingly poor and in need. He wandered from place to place in search of clothing and food, roaming farther and farther afield.

"The father meanwhile had been searching for his son without success and eventually had taken up residence in a certain city. And at this time the father became powerful and very wealthy, with immeasurable riches and treasures. Gold, silver, lapis lazuli, corals, amber, crystal and other gems all filled and overflowed from his storehouses. He had many grooms and menservants, clerks and attendants, and elephants, horses, carriages, oxen, and herds beyond number. His business ventures extended far and wide, and his traders and customers were constantly coming and going. He was held in high esteem and affection by the king, ministers and noble families. For all these reasons his guests were many.

"Meanwhile the impoverished son roamed from place to place, scraping his livelihood together, until at last he came by chance to the great city where his father had settled. Although they had been parted for a long time the father thought constantly of his son; but, he had never told anyone else about the matter. He merely pondered to himself, his heart filled with sadness, regret and longing. He thought to himself, 'I'm old and worn; I have great wealth and possessions: gold, silver, and rare treasures; my granaries and storehouses are overflowing. But I do not have my son. One day I will die, and all my wealth and possessions will be scattered and lost, for I have no-one to entrust them to.'

"In this way he'd constantly reflect, and earnestly repeat to himself, 'If only I could find my son and entrust my wealth and possessions to him, how contented and happy I would be!'

"World-honoured One, one day the son, drifting from one kind of employment to another, famished, weak and gaunt, covered with scab and itch, came by chance to his father's mansion. As he stood at the outer gate, in the distance he was amazed to see a rich man (who he did not recognise as his father), seated on a lion throne, his legs supported by a jewelled foot-rest, while Brahmins, noblemen, and householders, uniformly deferential, surrounded him. Festoons of pearls worth thousands, or tens of thousands, adorned his body, and clerks, grooms, and menservants holding white fly-whisks stood in attendance to left and right. A jewelled canopy covered him, with flowered banners hanging from it, perfumed water had been sprinkled over the ground, heaps of rare flowers were scattered about and precious objects were ranged here and there. Clerks came and went, some counting up gold, silver and precious things, some recording in ledgers incoming and outgoing goods, and noting down bonds. Such were the rich man's many different types of adornments, the emblems of prerogative and marks of distinction.

"When the son saw how great was the rich man's power and authority, he was filled with fear and awe and regretted he had ever come to such a place. In some alarm, he thought to himself: 'This must be some king, or very powerful man. This is not the sort of place where I can hire out my labour and gain a living. It would be better to go to some poor village where, if I work hard, I will find a place and can easily earn food and clothing. If I stay here for long, I may be seized and pressed into service!' With this in mind, he hurried away.

"But, his father, seated on his lion throne, had instantly spied his son recognising him immediately. His heart was filled with great joy and at once he thought: 'My thoughts have constantly been with this son of mine, but I had no way of seeing him. But now quite unexpectedly he has come, and my longing is satisfied. Though worn with years, I yearn for him as of old. Now at last I have someone to whom I can give my wealth!'

"Immediately he dispatched an attendant to go after the son as quickly as possible and bring him back. When the attendant caught up with the son, he laid hold of him. The poor man, surprised and scared, cried out angrily, 'I have done nothing wrong! Why am I being seized?' But the attendant held on to him all the more tightly and forcibly started to drag him back.

"The son, thinking to himself, 'I'm innocent! I have not committed any crime; why should I be arrested? Surely I am going to be put to death!', was so terrified that he sank to the ground and fainted with despair.

"His father, observing this from a distance, immediately sent a messenger, saying, 'Leave the man alone; I have no need of him. Sprinkle cold water on his face so he will regain his senses. Then say nothing more to him!'

"Why did he do that? Because the father, seeing that his son's disposition was now so humble, knew his own rich and eminent position could only cause his son more distress. Whilst knowing very well that this was his son, he tactfully refrained from saying to anyone, 'This is my son.'

"When the son had revived, the messenger said to him, 'You're free to go now, wherever you wish.' Delighted the son quickly left to look for food in some poor village.

"Then the father, hoping to entice his son back again, decided to resort to a device. So he sent two of his attendants, men who were lean, haggard and shabby in appearance, saying to them, 'Go and find that poor man; approach him casually. Tell him you know a place where he can earn twice the regular wage. If he agrees, then bring him here and put him to work. If he wants to know what sort of work he will be put to, say that he is hired to move dung and filth, and that the two of you will be working with him.'

"The two men then set out at once to find the son, and when they had done so, put their proposition to him. The son, getting his wages in advance, decided to join them in their work.

"From that day the father secretly gazing out his window would constantly observe his son, his body, gaunt and emaciated, filthy with dust and sweat and from the dung and excrement he was clearing away. When the father saw how happily his son engaged in this menial work, he was struck with both pity and amazement. From time to time the father would take off his necklaces, his soft fine garments and his other adornments, and disguising himself in clothes that were ragged and soiled, he would smear dirt on his body. Carrying a dung-hod and acting as a foreman, he would gruffly order the labourers around saying, 'Get on with your work! Don't be lazy!' By this device, he was able to approach his son. "After some time had passed, the rich man called his son to him and said, 'Now then, young man! You stay and work here; you have no need to go elsewhere! I will increase your wages, and give you whatever you need, whether it is food, clothes or bedding; I also have an old servant I can lend you whenever you need him. Set your mind at ease: I will be like a father to you, so you need worry no further. Why do I say this? You are not like the other workers: all the time you've been working here, you have never been deceitful, lazy, angry or grumbled. I am getting old, but you are still young and sturdy. From now on, I will treat you like my own son.' And then the rich man gave his son a new name, treating him as if he were his own child, allowing him to come and go in his own house.

"Whilst the son was delighted at this turn of events, he nevertheless still thought of himself as a menial worker. Because of this, he continued in his original job, clearing away excrement for a long time, and continued to live in his grass hut outside the rich man's gates. But during this time, the son's self-confidence became stronger and, feeling that he was understood and trusted, he came and went at ease.

"World-honoured One, one day the father fell ill, and bearing in mind that he might soon die, he spoke to his son, saying, 'I have great quantities of gold, silver, and rare treasures that fill and overflow from my storehouses. I want you to become my steward, to take complete charge of the accounting, the income and

expenditure. So you must keep your wits about you and see that there are no mistakes or losses. This is what I have in mind, and I want you to carry out my wishes.'

"So the son, taking up his new job, took over attending to all the rich man's goods, gold, silver, rare treasures, and various storehouses. In spite of all this wealth he never once thought of appropriating for himself so much as the cost of a single meal. Indeed, he still continued to live where he had before, and at first was unable to abandon his sense of inferiority.

"Nevertheless as time passed, the father saw that his son was bit by bit becoming more self-assured and that with a changing view of himself he was become more ambitious and ashamed of his former low opinion of himself. Realising that his own end was fast approaching, the father ordered his son to arrange a meeting with his relatives, as well as the king's representative, high ministers, and noblemen. When they were all gathered together, the father addressed this great assembly saying, 'Gentlemen, know that this is my son, who was born to me. It is over fifty years since from a certain city he left me and ran away, and for long time he wandered about suffering hardship. But by chance, we met up again. This is in truth my son, and I in truth am his father. Now everything that belongs to me, all my wealth and possessions, shall belong entirely to this son of mine.'

"When the son heard his father speak, he was overjoyed at this unexpected news, and he thought to himself, 'Although I have never thought to want or look for such wealth, now it has come of its own accord!'"

* * * * * * * * *

Jesus' 'Parable of the Prodigal Son'

***Luke 15:11-32*:**

[Jesus] said: 'There was once a man who had two sons; and the younger said to his father, "Father, give me my share of the property." So he divided his estate between them. A few days later the younger son turned the whole of his share into cash and left home for a distant country where he squandered it in reckless living. He had spent it all, when a severe famine fell upon that country and he began to feel the pinch. So he went and attached himself to one of the local landowners, who sent him on to his farm to mind the pigs. He would have been glad to fill his belly with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they can eat, and here am I, starving to death! I will set off and go to my father, and say to him, 'Father, I have sinned, against God and against you; I am no longer fit to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants,'" So he set out for his father's house. But while he was still a long way off his father saw him, and his heart went out to him. He ran to meet him, flung his arms round him, and kissed him. The son said, "Father, I have sinned, against God and against you; I am no longer fit to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Quick! fetch a robe, my best one, and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us have a feast to celebrate the day. For this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." And the festivities began.

'Now the elder son was out on the farm; and on his way back, as he approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what it meant. The servant told him, "Your brother has come back home, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has him back safe and sound." But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and pleaded with him; but he retorted, "You know how I have slaved for you all these years; I never once disobeyed your orders and you never gave me so much as a kid, for a feast with my friends. But now that this son of yours turns up, after running through your money with his women, you kill the fatted calf for him." "My boy," said the father, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. How could we help celebrating this happy day? Your brother here was dead and has come back to life, was lost and is found."'

– The New English Bible

Comment:

Jesus' version of the 'Parable of the Prodigal Son' is very different from the Buddhist one. The younger son (representing the sinful ways of mankind) demands his inheritance prematurely from his father (who represents the love and mercy of God), and proceeds to foreign lands where he spends it all in sinful living. Having then been forced to take up menial and degrading work to keep himself alive, he comes to his senses, and with heartfelt repentance returns to his father with the acknowledgment of his sins and the intended plea that he be employed at least as one of his father's servants. But his father rejoices greatly in his younger son's return and treats him with such a celebration that the older son is, understandably, upset.

In the Buddhist 'Parable of the Prodigal Son', the one and only son simply runs away from home. There is no talk of his asking for any inheritance. There is no older brother in this version, no jealous sibling who becomes angry over his father's forgiving attitude and joyous celebration of the younger son's return.

'Belief and Understanding' is the (translated) heading of Chapter IV of the *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka-Sūtra*. The 'Parable of the Prodigal Son', in this chapter, is told to illustrate the difference between the elevated stage, of '*belief*' in the principles and teaching of the Buddha attained by monks who have become Arahats, on the one hand, and the higher stage, of '*understanding*', on the other, which is ultimately to be attained by monks as Bōdhisattvas. As a major work of later (Mahāyāna) Buddhism, the *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka-Sūtra*, is suggesting that the earlier development of Buddhism had only emphasized the stage of *Belief*, whereas the later stage of Mahāyāna Buddhism has disclosed the truly ultimate stage of *Understanding*. The son, leaving home for a self-indulgent life in another land, stands for the ordinary person with uncontrolled desires, eventually suffering their consequences. When such a person returns to his 'father' (the Buddha) and is gradually introduced by him to the early Buddhist disciplines of lay life and then of monastic life, he eventually reaches the stage of an *arahat* (*believing* in the teachings of the Buddha, but still lacking true *understanding*). It is only at the end of the parable, that the father reveals to the son that all of the father's treasures are to be his son's treasures. These treasures metaphorically stand for the resulting spiritual powers flowing from a full *Understanding* of the Dharma attained by a Bōdhisattva.

Is the Buddhist 'Prodigal' parable with its far more abstract and extended metaphorical structure a later version of the shorter, more vivid New Testament parable? Or is it the other way around? Or did each arise independently of the other? In reaching an answer to these questions, one should keep in mind the already well-established and well-documented reach of the Buddhist 'Dharma' to 'all nations' – westward from India, to the shores of the Mediterranean, in the third century B.C., through the efforts of King Aśōka's missionary monks, and eastward to China, during the first century A.D.

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

This parable treats in greater detail the problem of jealousy and sense of unfairness which is illustrated in Jesus' version of the 'Parable of the Prodigal Son'. The underlying metaphorical structure is subtle!

***Matthew 20:1-16*:**

> 'The kingdom of Heaven is like this. There was once a landowner who sent out early one morning to hire labourers for his vineyard; and after agreeing to pay them the usual day's wage he sent them off to work. Going out three hours later he saw some more men standing idle in the market-place, "Go and join the others in the vineyard," he said, "and I will pay you a fair wage"; so off they went. At midday he went out again, and at three in the afternoon, and made the same arrangement as before. An hour before sunset he went out and found another group standing there; so he said to them, "Why are you standing about like this all day with nothing to do?" "Because no one has hired us", they replied; so he told them, "Go and join the others in the vineyard." When evening fell, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, "Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with those who came last and ending with the first." Those who had started work an hour before sunset came forward, and were paid the full day's wage. When it was the turn of the men who had come first, they expected something extra, but were paid the same amount as the others. As they took it, they grumbled at their employer: "These late-comers have done only one hour's work, yet you have put them on a level with us, who have sweated the whole day long in the blazing sun!" The owner turned to one of them and said, "My friend, I am not being unfair to you. You agreed on the usual wage for the day, did you not? Take your pay and go home. I choose to pay the last man the same as you. Surely I am free to do what I like with my own money. Why be jealous because I am kind?" Thus will the last be first, and the first last.'
>
> *– The New English Bible*

* * * * * * * * *

Comment:

In his "Commentary on the *Gospel of Thomas*,"[1] Swami Nirmalananda Giri has made the following enlightening remarks on Matthew's 'Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard', revealing a possible interpretation with an unusually deep meaning:

> The idea behind all [of the metaphor] is that the goal [the 'Kingdom of God', 'liberation', or '*nirvāṇa*'] is absolutely the same, and the attainment for each one of us is identical, whether we reach it early or [late]. It is often supposed that some people attain liberation very easily in a short time, but this does not take into account what may be hundreds of previous lives of spiritual effort. Conversely, someone who may seek for an entire lifetime before attaining any perceivable result may only have a comparatively few lifetimes of effort behind him. But at the end all are the same, for all spirits are identical in scope of consciousness. In the kingdom of heaven there are no greater and lesser citizens, only divine rays of the Divine Light.

Swami Nirmalananda Giri's views are supported and illustrated in the *Lotus Sūtra* of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which we examine next.

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[1]Available on the internet: < http://www.atmajyoti.org/ch_gospel_of_thomas_5.asp >.

The Lotus Sūtra (*Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka-Sūtra*)[1]

Passages from a commentary on this work which are quoted below have been taken from an article by Alfred Bloom entitled, "The *Lotus Sūtra*: Its Spiritual Significance", appearing in the Hawaii Pacific Press, 15 Aug. 2007. These passages, especially the fifth paragraph, have been selected to further clarify the significance of what Jesus was saying in the 'Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard':

> The *Lotus Sūtra* itself has sometimes been called the "New Testament of Asia" and comparisons have been made with the Gospel of John focussing on the issues of the universality of salvation and the hope of eternal life. However, the *Lotus Sūtra* is an expression of Mahāyāna Buddhism which evolved out of the long history of Buddhism and it has had influence in the lives of hosts of people in China, Tibet, Mongolia, Korea, Japan, [and] extending to the West where there are now several translations available.
>
> The text began to take shape from about 100 BCE, and has been translated into many languages. In Buddhist devotions and rituals, it has been read faithfully for some 2,000 years. It is also a source of philosophy, as well as religious faith. Actually, it is a compilation of texts comprised of twenty eight chapters created by unknown authors. It offers many themes and parables which have contributed to its popularity.
>
> A major reason for the popularity of the *Sūtra* lies in its emphasis on lay people. They are described as the good men and good women or as bōdhisattvas or Buddhas-to-be. Together with its missionary perspective, the *Sūtra* declares the principles of universal salvation and eternal life.
>
> The teaching on universal salvation has as its background various divisions of early Buddhism. According to the principle of universality, all beings ultimately and equally *attain the enlightenment of Buddhahood, despite the fact that individuals may follow paths suited to their own character and spiritual need*. It is a way of proclaiming the ultimate unity of all religion in the face of diversity. The *Sūtra* relates that even Dēvadatta, who is something on the order of Judas in the Christian tradition, as the symbol of a very evil person, will finally gain Buddhahood. According to the *Sūtra*, Dēvadatta was a teacher of Śākyamuni in past lives, but as the cousin of Gautama Buddha in his lifetime, he suffered from envy and conspired either to kill Buddha or take over the Order. There are many legends surrounding him. But the *Sūtra* indicates that ultimately, as a result of his good karma from that distant past, even he will be enlightened, giving hope to even the most evil person.
>
> Another interesting illustration of the universality of enlightenment is the account of the Buddhahood of the Nāga or Dragon king's daughter. On the occasion when Buddha taught at the home of her father, she instantly believed the Buddha's message and was immediately transformed to a Buddha. Buddha's disciples were amazed and questioned what happened on the ground that the instantaneous attainment of Buddhahood is impossible, seeing how long æons of time it had taken for Śākyamuni himself to attain it. They were also disturbed that a woman would be able to become Buddha, since in Indian and early Buddhist teachings, women were barred from enlightenment for many, many æons of time until they were reborn as men.[2] To attain enlightenment instantaneously was simply unbelievable for them. With these vivid stories and teachings the *Lotus Sūtra* brought hope into the lives of countless numbers of people in Asia who were destined for occupations considered low, menial or impure. Women held particularly low status in patriarchal Asian cultures.
>
> Not only does the *Sūtra* teach the universality of enlightenment, but it also proclaims the principle of faith. In chapter two, enlightenment and Buddhahood are assured to all those who aspire for it whether they express it in establishing great stūpas, images or monasteries or even so much as scratching an image of Buddha on a wall or at play making a stūpa of sand. It teaches that it is one's aspiration and intention that is primary and not the form which may vary by skill or wealth.
>
> As a Mahāyāna sūtra, the text constantly contrasts its ideal with the earlier Hīnayāna (smaller vehicle) followers who aspired merely for Nirvāṇa and a passionless life of salvation for oneself. The Mahāyāna (the larger vehicle) is always presented as the way of compassion by which bōdhisattvas strive for the enlightenment of all others besides themselves.
>
> Another prominent feature of the *Sūtra* related to the principle of Universality of Salvation is its educational theory. Mahāyāna Buddhism was a great missionary religion. The principles we have outlined were intended to be shared. It is the bōdhisattva's task to bring joy and release into the lives of people by revealing their true destiny. They attempt to abolish fear and anxiety, by revealing the truth of reality. They tell us who we are when we are blind to our own potential. This teaching also appears in other Mahāyāna sūtras. The principle is called *hoben* in Japanese or *upāya* in the Sanskrit. It is a truly compassionate view of human relations and guidance.

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Endnotes (ML's)

[1]The Sanskrit word '*sūtra*' is only one meaning of the Pāli word '*sutta*', another of which could, alternately, have been translated by the ancients more meaningfully into Sanskrit as '*sūkta*' ('good news'): The Good News (*Sūkta*) of the Lotus-Like (*Puṇḍarīka*) Righteous Path/Way (*Sad-Dharma*) – '*Sad-Dharma-Puṇḍarīka-Sūkta*'.

[2]Compare the reaction of the Buddha's male disciples to the supreme enlightenment of the Nāga king's daughter, above, with that of Jesus' disciple, Simon Peter, against Mary Magdalene, in the final entry of "The Gospel of Thomas":

> **114** Simon Peter said to them [the disciples], "Make Mary [Magdalene] leave us, for females don't deserve life."
> *2* Jesus said, **"Look, I will guide her to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males.** *3* **For every female who makes herself male will enter the domain of Heaven."**

The translators give the following, not unreasonable explanation of this passage:

> In v. 3 Jesus is not suggesting a sex-change operation, but is using "male" and "female" metaphorically to refer to the higher and lower aspects of human nature. Mary is thus to undergo a spiritual transformation from her earthly, material, passionate nature (which the evangelist equates with the female) to a heavenly, spiritual, intellectual nature (which the evangelist equates with the male).

[The quoted passages, above, are from *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*, translation and commentary by R.W. Funk, R.W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), p. 532.]

For scholars with a thorough knowledge of Buddhist literature, however, the ultimate source of this Gnostic gospel passage can be traced back to the Buddhist *Lotus Sūtra*:

> Then the venerable Śāriputra said to that daughter of Sāgara, the Nāga-king: "Thou hast conceived the idea of enlightenment, young lady of good family, without sliding back, and art gifted with immense wisdom, but supreme, perfect enlightenment is not easily won. It may happen, sister, that a woman displays an unflagging energy, performs good works for many thousands of Æons, and fulfils the six perfect virtues (*Pāramitās*), but as yet there is no example of her having reached Buddhaship, and that because a woman cannot occupy the five ranks, viz. *[1]* the rank of Brahmā; *[2]* the rank of Indra; *[3]* the rank of a chief guardian of the four quarters; *[4]* the rank of Chakravartin [a Universal Monarch]; *[5]* the rank of a Bōdhisattva incapable of sliding back."**[a]**
>
> Now the daughter of Sāgara, the Nāga-king, had at that time a gem which in value outweighed the whole universe. That gem the daughter of Sāgara, the Nāga-king, presented to the Lord [Buddha], and the Lord graciously accepted it. Then the daughter of Sāgara, the Nāga-king, said to the Bōdhisattva Prajñākūṭa, the senior monk Śāriputra: "Has the Lord readily accepted the gem I presented him or has he not?" The senior monk answered: "As soon as it was presented by thee, so soon it was accepted by the Lord." The daughter of Sāgara, the Nāga-king, replied: "If I were endowed with magic power, brother Śāriputra, I should sooner have arrived at supreme, perfect enlightenment, and there would have been none to receive this gem."
>
> At the same instant, before the sight of the whole world and of the senior monk Śāriputra, the female sex of the daughter of Sāgara, the Nāga-king, disappeared; the male sex appeared**[b]** and she manifested herself as a [male] Bōdhisattva, who immediately went to the South to sit down at the root of a tree made of seven precious substances, in the world Vimala (i.e. spotless), where he showed himself enlightened and preaching the law, while filling all directions of space with the radiance of the thirty-two characteristic signs and all secondary marks.*****

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[a]All these beings are, in Sanskrit, of masculine gender; hence their rank cannot be taken by beings having feminine names.

[b]In ancient times such a change of sex [in literature] is nothing strange. . . . [These footnotes are Kern's. – ML]

• • • • • • • • • •

Well, well! Lindtner's philological argument for the equation of 'Śāriputra' with 'Simon Peter' is found below (p. 263):

Śāri-Putra = Simon-Peter
son

son son
Jina-Putra = Bar-Jona

Compare Śāri-Putra, the Buddha's heir apparent (see mid-p. 84), who doubts that women can directly attain Enlightenment, with Simon-Peter, Jesus' heir apparent, who says Mary Magdalene, as a woman, shouldn't 'enter the domain of Heaven' (i.e., 'attain Nirvāṇa'!). And compare Śāri-Putra's walking on water (see p. 41), with Peter's similar feat: Matt **14:23-32**.

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*****Quoted from Hendrik Kern's translation of *The Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka, or, The Lotus of the True Law*, in Vol. X of *The Sacred Books of the East* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), pp. 252-53. Kern's translation addresses Śāriputra as 'senior priest'; I have replaced the word 'priest' with the more appropriate term 'monk' and have modernized the transliteration system. – ML

The Samaritan Woman at the Well: A Meta-Parable

***John 4:7-15*:**

> The disciples had gone away to the town to buy food. Meanwhile a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' The Samaritan woman said, 'What! You, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a Samaritan woman?' (Jews and Samaritans, it should be noted, do not use vessels in common.) Jesus answered her, 'If only you knew what God gives, and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.' 'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have no bucket and this well is deep. How can you give me "living water"? Are you a greater man than Jacob our ancestor, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, he and his sons, and his cattle too?' Jesus said, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water that I shall give him will never suffer thirst any more. The water that I shall give him will be an inner spring always welling up for eternal life.' 'Sir,' said the woman, 'give me that water, and then I shall not be thirsty, nor have to come all this way to draw.'
>
> *– The New English Bible*

***John 7:37-38*:**

> On the last and greatest day of the festival Jesus stood and cried aloud, 'If anyone is thirsty let him come to me; whoever believes in me, let him drink.' As Scripture says, 'Streams of living water shall flow out from within him.'
>
> *– N.E.B.*

* * * * *

Comment: There is a **Buddhist *avadāna*[1] story** which, astonishingly, parallels Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well – at least in its beginning. This Buddhist tale is found in a collections of *avadānas* in the *Divyāvadāna*. It is called "Śārdūlakarṇa: Love of the Untouchable". The main character of the story is the "untouchable", outcaste (Chaṇḍāla/Mātaṅga) maiden named Prakṛitī.[2] This story of Śārdūlakarṇa and Prakṛitī was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese in 265 A.D. Naturally, the tale must have originated earlier.

I quote below two Buddhist passages which provide an epigrammatic introduction to the meaning of 'living water' in both the Buddhist and Christian stories:

> Listen attentively with one heart. A man whose spirit shines brightly, a man whose mind is completely unified, a man whose virtue excels everyone – such a man will truly appear in this world. When he preaches precious laws, all the people will totally be satisfied just as the thirsty drink sweet drops of rain from heaven. And each and every one will attain the path of liberation from struggles.
>
> *– Sūtra of the Great Accomplishment of the Maitreya*

> During the short æons of maladies, they [the bōdhisattvas] become the best holy medicine; they make beings well and happy, and bring about their liberation. During the short æons of famine, they become food and drink. Having first alleviated thirst and hunger, they teach the Dharma to living beings."
>
> *– Vimalakīrtinirdesha*, 8

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[1]The *avadānas* are tales of how, through the Law of Karma, the past lives of the Buddha and/or his disciples have affected their present lives in some instructive way. Two different root meanings are given for the word *avadāna* in Monier-Williams' Sanskrit dictionary. The second, 'cutting or dividing into pieces', is the appropriate root meaning for the translation of '*avadāna*' in the present context: the sense of persons *reaping* rewards or punishments in their present life for their actions in some previous life.

[2]In the 19th and 20th centuries, two important works were inspired by this Buddhist tale of the outcaste maiden Prakṛitī. Richard Wagner, in 1856, after reading the French translation of the legend by the oriental scholar, Eugène Burnouf, composed his operatic sketch, *Die Sieger* (*The Victors*). Some 82 years later, Rabindranath Tagore, in India, wrote an important play, *Chaṇḍālikā*, based on the legend.

The Outcaste Woman at the Well: A Meta-Parable*

The Master was sojourning near Śrāvastī and Ānanda used to enter the town daily on his begging round. Once as he was returning from the town, he became thirsty and saw a Chaṇḍāla maiden, named Prakṛitī, fetching water from a well.

"Sister," he said to her, "give me some water to drink."

Prakṛitī replied, "I am a Chaṇḍāla girl, revered Ānanda."

[The Chaṇḍālas of India were outcastes, untouchables of the lowest kind – their shadow, or even their sight, was polluting to those of caste – the Samaritan woman of the New Testament would be no match to such an extreme level of social degradation! – ML]

"Sister," said Ānanda, "I do not ask you about your family and your caste, but if you have any water left, give it to me and I will drink."

(**Note** that so far the similarity with Jesus and the Samaritan woman is surprising [*John 4:7 ff.*], but the whole course of the narrative further down in the Gospel is so different that we can scarcely think of any connection between the Buddhist and Christian Scriptures.) [This note is by Nariman – not by ML!]

The maiden hands him the water to drink and falls deeply in love with him. She tells her mother that she will die or have Ānanda for her husband. The mother, who is a sorceress, prepares a potent philtre and, chanting *mantras*, casts her spell on Ānanda. The process is described in a way similar to the incantation in the Kaushikasūtra of the Atharva-Veda. The charm is successful, Ānanda is drawn by the spell into the house of the Chaṇḍālas where the joyful Prakṛitī has prepared a bed. But in this moment of extreme [!!] danger, Ānanda breaks into tears and prays to the Buddha in his distress. The Buddha hastens to protect him with his own counter *mantras*. Ānanda is thus able to escape the Chaṇḍāla home and return to his monastery. The sorceress declares to her heartbroken daughter that the *mantras* of Gautama, the Buddha, are superior to her own. But Prakṛitī, the Chaṇḍāla maiden, is not yet cured of her love. She goes into the town and follows Ānanda day after day as he goes forth on his mendicant's circuit. Once more Ānanda in his consternation turns to the Buddha for help. The latter summons Prakṛitī to himself and ostensibly consents to her desire that Ānanda should be her husband. Soon, however, he brings her to a frame of mind in which she takes the vow of chastity and turns a nun. She not only has her hair shaved and puts on the nun's habit, but she dives into the profundity of the four Noble Truths and, in time, comes to understand the religion of the Buddha in its entirety.

When, however, the Brahmans, Kshatriyas and other citizens of Śrāvastī hear that the Buddha has accepted a Chaṇḍāla daughter as a nun, they are greatly perturbed, and convey their concern to the king, Prasenajit. The latter immediately sets out to meet the Master and remonstrate with him. A crowd of Brahmans, Kshatriyas and other citizens of Śrāvastī also gather together there. Then the Buddha relates to them the story of Triśaṅku, the Chaṇḍāla chieftain. The latter, ages ago, wished to have his learned son Śārdūlakarṇa marry the daughter of the proud Brahman Pushkarasārin. The Brahman rejected his overtures with disdain, and then there followed a most interesting dialogue in which Triśaṅku subjects to searching criticism the caste system and the Brahmanic code of morality. He demonstrates that between members of the various castes there exists no such natural difference as between diverse species of animals and plants. Moreover there could be no fixed caste according to the doctrines of transmigration and the theory of karma inasmuch as each individual is reborn in accordance with his own deeds. Finally, Pushkarasārin is convinced of the erudition of Triśaṅku and consents to the marriage. And, concludes the Buddha, the Brahman's daughter was in a former birth none other than the Chaṇḍāla maiden Prakṛitī. The Buddha himself was, in that age, Triśaṅku; and who else could be Śārdūlakarṇa, but Ānanda.

* * * * *

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*Excerpted from *Literary History of Sanskrit Buddhism*, by J.K. Nariman (Bombay: Motilal Banarsidass, 1st edition, 1919, 2nd edition 1923, reprinted, Delhi, 1973, 1992), pp. 55-57. I have modified much of the Victorianisms in Nariman's language (ML).

Comment:

Let me now take issue with J.K. Nariman's claim, already quoted on the previous page:

> Note that so far the similarity with Jesus and the Samaritan woman is surprising (*John 4:7 ff.*), but the whole course of the narrative further down in the Gospel is so different that we can scarcely think of any connection between the Buddhist and Christian Scriptures.

The 'connection' certainly *has* been blurred by the different cultural environment in which the Gospel was written – compared with that of Buddhist India – and by any redactions of the Gospel which may have occurred in the following centuries. But, as Zacharias P. Thundy has indicated in the proposal for his book, *The Trial and Death of Jesus: Gospel Narratives and Their Indian Sources*, p. 8, there *are* some signs of such a connection in John's Gospel:

> [T]he author of the Fourth Gospel, deeply immersed in Buddhist thought, [could not] totally disguise his Buddhist sources, as can be seen in the following case: Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water'" (7:37-38). Of course, no Hebrew Scripture makes that statement, but only the Buddhist Scriptures![1] Nor could John resist the temptation of reproducing the story of Prakṛtī, the Mātaṅga [/Chaṇḍāla] Woman, offering Ānanda water to drink at the well; however, the evangelist transformed the Mātaṅga Woman into the Samaritan Woman and Ānanda into Jesus! So, scholars familiar with the Buddhist and Greek sources do find fault lines or evidence for the presence of the absent so-called Q-source for the gospels. At this juncture we can probably suggest that the expunging of possibly almost all "pagan" references from the books of the New Testament and the inclusion of a large number of proof texts from the Old Testament was most likely due to the editorial work of redactors of the books of the New Testament rather than that of the original authors. In retrospect we can say that the Jerusalem Council's decision was a spectacular success with far-reaching consequences down through the centuries for the development of Christian thinking and practice, even to the extent that all the Christian churches accept the Old Testament as the revealed word of God.

There are two major themes in the Buddhist tale about Prakṛtī. The first is the advocacy of the leveling of caste distinctions. The second theme is the illustration of how the Law of Karma can mix up the caste or sex of any individual when he/she is reborn. (Of course, the Law can also transform a human into an animal in his/her next birth.)

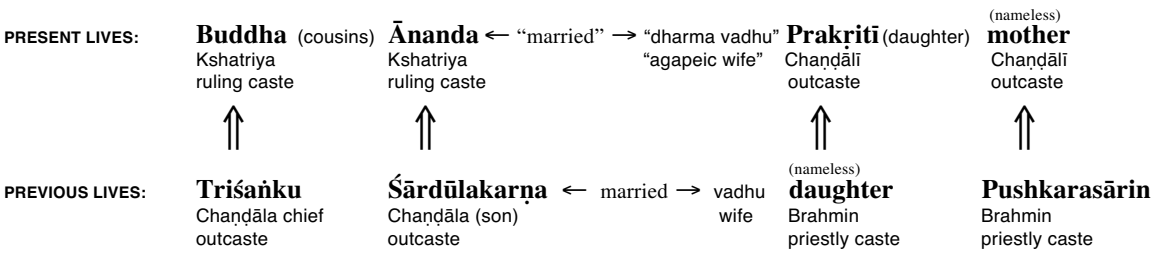
The first theme is also expressed in the *Dīgha Nikāya* in the following way:

> It is mere empty words to give it out among the people that the Brahmans are the best caste and every other caste is inferior, that the Brahmans are the white caste, every other caste is black, that only the Brahmans are pure, not the non-Brahmans, [and] that the Brahmans are the legitimate sons of Brahmā.[2]

And again from the Pāli Canon:

> Whether kindled by a priest, a warrior, a trader or a serf, from whatsoever type of fuel, a fire will emit light and heat; even so, all men, regardless of caste, are equally capable of the highest spiritual attainment.[3]

The second theme is illustrated in the concluding part of the *avadāna* story, after the Buddha accepts Prakṛtī, an outcaste *woman*, as his disciple. The people of Śrāvastī are outraged. In justifying his action, the Buddha describes how he himself was, in a previous life, a Chaṇḍāla chieftain named Triśaṅku – how many lives earlier is left unspecified. At that earlier time, Ānanda was his learned, outcaste son, named Śārdūlakarṇa, and Prakṛtī was the daughter of a Brahmin priest, named Pushkarasārin. As illustrated in the diagram below, I suggest that Pushkarasārin was fated to be reborn as an outcaste *woman*! – socially, the lowest of the low.



It's true that the Sanskrit *avadāna* story only specifies that the Buddha was, in an earlier incarnation, an outcaste chieftain, and that at that time Ānanda was his outcaste son, and that Prakṛitī was at that same time a maiden of the highest, Brahmin caste – it *does not* say anything about the transmigratory identity between her (previous life) Brahmin father and (present life) sorceress mother. However, having researched the topic of 'metatheater and Sanskrit drama' in some depth,[4] it seems obvious to me that that is how the original story went. Pushkarasārin, as a Brahmin, has been vain and unsympathetic toward lower-caste/outcaste people (and all women) for most of his life, and now he has been reborn as the mother of his reborn daughter, Prakṛitī – both *outcastes*! (Poetic justice.) Perhaps, the idea that a learned but misguided Brahmin priest could, because of the Law of Karma, be reborn as a Chaṇḍāla sorceress, was too over the top, and redactors ended up softening the ignominy for him by not specifically mentioning it at the end of the story.

In any case, Triśaṅku and his son, Śārdūlakarṇa, followed a different route, allaying their 'thirst' (*tṛishṇa*) – controlling those desires which lead persons astray from the straight and narrow 'Eight-fold Path' to be preached by the future Buddha – and consequently they were able to mount up the ladder of transmigration to their present (and final!) illustrious lives, before achieving *parinirvāṇa*. What, then, in this Buddhist tale, is the 'living water' which, if anyone were to drink it, one would thirst no more? Of course, it is the Dharma, one of the 'Three Gems' of Buddhism.[5] What, then, in Christianity, is the 'living water' which if anyone were to drink it, that person would thirst no more? It is the 'Logos' – in the terminology of the Fourth Gospel: the teachings of Jesus (a meta-version of the Buddha's 'Dharma').

We have learned that the Buddha personally instructed his outcaste disciple, Prakṛitī, thus:

> He brings her to a frame of mind in which she takes the vow of chastity and turns a nun. She not only has her hair shaved and puts on the nun's habit, but she dives into the profundity of the four Noble Truths and, in time, comes to understand the religion of the Buddha in its entirety.

A parallel development is missing in the account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. But we understand that such an outcome should be assumed.

Nariman, has failed to notice a further subtlety in the development of Prakṛitī's story. As we have maintained, 'thirst' (*tṛishṇa*) stands for all the self-centered desires that burn in our hearts. Prakṛitī is overcome with an infatuation for the kindly, young monk, Ānanda. Remember that, in an earlier life as a Brahmin woman, she was the wife (Skt. *vadhu*) of that learned outcaste, Śārdūlakarṇa (alter ego of Ānanda). The word '*vadhu*' has various meanings. 'Bride' and 'wife' are perhaps the most common. But '*vadhu*' can also mean a young woman who is not married. This ambiguity of '*vadhu*' is central to the further development of our story. The Buddha, when he first converses with the young Prakṛitī, agrees – on certain conditions – to a "marriage" between Ānanda and herself, using the word '*vadhu*', intending the meaning that she could become Ānanda's '*dharma vadhu*' ('dharmic bride/wife'), but knowing full well that Prakṛitī will understand him to be granting her permission to marry (in the ordinary sense) Ānanda. She, of course, enthusiastically accepts the conditions to be laid down by the Buddha – which, at this point, she knows not what they may be.

The conditions which the Buddha subsequently lays down are those involved in her becoming a Buddhist nun: studying the Buddhist Dharma thoroughly, having her hair shaved off, wearing a nun's habit, and – most challenging! – taking a vow of chastity (a shock to her). Though, as Nariman puts it: "in time, she comes to understand the religion of the Buddha in its entirety" – and, thus, to prize her "dharmic" marriage to Ānanda above the 'ordinary' marriage with him for which she had originally so passionately 'thirsted'.

In the diagram on the previous page, I have used the expression 'agapeic' to connote the sense of 'platonic', a loving relationship which is not erotic – the kind which the Buddha wishes to inculcate in Prakṛitī. Here, I would like to suggest that this whole aspect of the little *avadāna* story can be considered a paradigm for the Catholic ritual of a woman taking the vows of a nun and becoming a 'bride of Christ' – which, in the eyes of the Church, is the *best* of all marriages!

The Catholic Catechism says:

> ***923*** "Virgins who, committed to the holy plan of following Christ more closely, are consecrated to God by the diocesan bishop according to the approved liturgical rite, are betrothed mystically to Christ, the Son of God, and are dedicated to the service of the Church." By this solemn rite (*Consecratio virginum*), the virgin is "constituted . . . a sacred person, a transcendent sign of the Church's love for Christ, and an eschatological image of this heavenly Bride of Christ and of the life to come."

In the *avadāna* story of Prakṛitī, the Buddha intentionally uses ambiguity to lead the young Chaṇḍāla woman down the path of 'salvation'. This is a kind of skillful leading by – in the beginning – misleading. There is a technical Sanskrit term for this type of guidance: '*upāya-kauśalya*'. The word '*upāya*' has several meanings: 'come near, approach'; 'that by which one reaches one's aim'; 'stratagem'; and the word '*kauśalya*' = 'skill'. That contemporary 'arch-heretic', Christian Lindtner, whose books generated, in Denmark, a demand that they be withdrawn (burned?), has accused Mahāyāna Buddhism and Christianity of fraud in employing *upāya-kauśalya* as a propagandistic tool:

> The best example of a typical *SDP* [*Sad-Dharma-Puṇḍarīka-sūtra*] pious fraud is to be found in *1 Cor 15[:6-7]*, as I have pointed out long ago in my essay "Who was Kleophas?". The "more than 500 brethren", "most of whom are still alive", who are among those cited as eyewitnesses to Christ as raised from the dead, were originally the 500 Buddhist monks present at the death of the Buddha as related in the *MPS* [*Mahā-Parinirvāṇa-Sūtra*] (part of the *MSV* [*Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-Vinaya*]). So, here Paul reveals himself, if we know the original source, as being guilty of a pious fraud, indeed.[6]
>
> In the *SDP* the Tathāgata [Buddha] often tells 'white lies.' The reason is, so it is claimed, that his listeners would not understand him were he to speak the plain truth. Jesus also makes this distinction between insiders and outsiders: 'To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.' *Matthew 13:11*.[7]

What we have here is a most extreme example of New Testament revisionism. But, whatever the truth may be which lies behind the creation of these stories, it seems to me that in the Buddhist parable of the 'Outcaste Woman at the Well', the intentional equivocation by the Buddha does not merit the accusation of fraud. Nor does the deception, practised by the loving father in the Buddhist version of the 'Prodigal Son'.

Notes

[1]I agree with the main thrust of Thundy's argument, but I would suggest that *Isaiah 55:1-3* is a worthy Old Testament overtone in Jesus' declaration, here. The fact is that the evangelist is a master of taking the Buddhist source and fitting it in with Old Testament scripture and 1st century Palestine.

[2]Quoted in S.V. Viswanatha's *Racial Synthesis in Hindu Culture* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1928), p. 153.

[3]Quoted in Sangharakshita's *The Eternal Legacy: An Introduction to the Canonical Literature of Buddhism* (London: Tharpa Publications, 1985), p. 35.

[4]Lockwood and Bhat, *Metatheater and Sanskrit Drama: Second, Revised and Enlarged Editio*n (Madras: Tambaram Research Associates, 2005).

[5]If the 'Logos' of John's Gospel corresponds to the Buddha's 'Dharma', one of the 'Three Gems' of Buddhism, what, in the New Testament, would correspond with the 'Buddha' and the 'Sangha', the other two 'Gems'? Here is a suggestion:

Buddha (***Father***) = **Dharma** → The 500 monks, coming together in the First Council, form the **Sangha,** preserving the teachings of the Buddha – who is thus 'resurrected'.

Logos = Christ (***Son***) → The 500 Apostles and followers, coming together at Pentecost, form the **Church** when they are filled with the ***Holy Spirit***, thus resurrecting Christ in their midst.

The 'Buddha', here, should not be confused with the historical Gautama Buddha, but rather understood as the transcendent Being of the Mahāyānists, whose counterpart, in Jewish minds, might be represented by the four-lettered (*tetra-grammaton*) **YHWH** (in Sanskrit: **यःवः** [**YḤVḤ**]), with whom mystics experience an inexpressible union.

[6]Lindtner's "Response to Dr. Burkhard Scherer", on the following internet site:
< http://www.jesusisbuddha.com/SCHERER1.html >.

[7]Lindtner, "A New Buddhist-Christian Parable", in *Exactitude: Festschrift for Robert Faurisson to his 75th Birthday*, eds. Countess, Lindtner, Rudolf (Chicago: Theses & Dissertations Press, 2004), p. 54.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

***Luke 10:25-37*:**

> On one occasion a lawyer came forward to put this test question to [Jesus]: 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said, 'What is written in the Law? What is your reading of it?' He replied, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' 'That is the right answer,' said Jesus; 'do that and you will live.'
>
> But he wanted to vindicate himself, so he said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was on his way down to Jericho when he fell in with robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went off leaving him half dead. It so happened that a priest was going down by the same road; but when he saw him, he went past on the other side. So too a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him went past on the other side. But a Samaritan who was making the journey came upon him, and when he saw him was moved to pity. He went up and bandaged his wounds, bathing them with oil and wine. Then he lifted him on to his own beast, brought him to an inn, and looked after him there. Next day he produced two silver pieces and gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Look after him; and if you spend any more, I will repay you on my way back." Which of these three do you think was neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He answered, 'The one who showed him kindness.' Jesus said, 'Go and do as he did.' (*NEB*)

Buddhist Scripture

"Suppose a sick and ailing man, grievously ill, were to go along the highway – it might be with no village near ahead or near behind – unable to get proper food, to get proper medicine, to get proper attention, to get a guide to some village boundary; and suppose another man, also going along the road, were to see him; verily it might raise pity in that man, raise compassion, raise commiseration, so that he might say to himself: 'Alas for this man! He ought to have proper food, proper medicine, proper attention; he ought to have a guide to some village.' Wherefore? Lest he suffer even here wasting and destruction.

"Just so, sirs, regarding one whose ways are impure, who obtains no mental clarity, mental calm – truly, for such a person pity ought to arise, compassion ought to arise, commiseration ought to arise that prompts one to say to oneself, 'Alas for this person! He should give up bad habits in act, in speech, in thought, and develop good habits.' Why? Lest that person on the breaking up of the body, after death, arise in the wayward way, the ill way, the abyss, hell."

Aṅguttara Nikāya 5.17.2[1]

The Sūtra on Upāsaka Precepts:

> If an *upāsaka* [layman] who has taken the precepts comes across a sick person along the road and does not look after and arrange a place for him but deserts him, he commits a grave offense.[2]

Compare also Jesus' Parable with the following account of **two Buddhist 'Good Samaritans':**

> Although the whole topic has received little attention, it appears that Buddhist monastic communities of the sort envisioned in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, were ideally suited to provide care to the old and infirm and to the sick and dying. There was, moreover, a distinct social need for such services, or at least the redactors of our *Vinaya* seem to have thought so. They seem to have thought that because of taboos concerning purity and pollution, brahmanical groups at least were not willing to provide services of this sort, even for their own. This much it seems can be deduced, for example, from texts like one that is found in the *Śayanāsanavastu* (Gnoli) 13.24-33. Here it is said that a young brahmin was staying in a hostel for young brahmins (*māṇavakaśālā*), but he fell ill with vomiting and diarrhea. Rather than attend to him, however, the other brahmins, "from fear of pollution" (*aśucibhayād*), threw him out and abandoned him. It is only the Buddhist monks Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana who, when they chanced upon him, "cleaned him with a bamboo brush, rubbed him with white earth and bathed him." Because they also "taught" the Dharma for him – and here this almost certainly can refer only to a kind of deathbed recitation ['Last Rites'? – ML] – he died in a good state of mind and was reborn in heaven. The function of Buddhist monks here is hard to miss – they, not one's fellow brahmins, care for the sick and dying.[3]

The scholar Gregory Schopen, who wrote the above lines, has shown that archæological (architectural and epigraphical) evidence does indeed support the kind of 'good Samaritanism' portrayed in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* story about the Buddhist monks Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana:

> Buddhist monasteries . . ., at least those envisioned by the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, were – unlike brahmanical hostels – ideologically, organizationally, and even architecturally suited to provide such services. Such monasteries not only would have had "infirmaries" but also would have had the manpower and organization to provide nurses and care to those who would otherwise not have them. The *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, moreover, put a great deal of emphasis on just such services. We have already seen a rule that was designed to provide funding for such services for poor monks who could not themselves afford it, and this is not the only rule of this kind. Elsewhere (GMs iii 2, 128.1-131.15), when the Buddha himself finds another poor monk sick and "lying in his own urine and excrement," he does exactly what Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana had done for the young Brahmin – with his own hands he cleans and bathes the sick monk. He then gives orders to the monks:
>
> > "Monks, apart from you, their fellow-monks, those who are sick have no mother, nor father, nor other relative. As a consequence, fellow-monks must attend to one another (*tasmāt sabrahmacāribhiḥ parasparam upasthānaṁ karaṇīyam*)! A preceptor (*upādhyāya*) must do so for his co-residential pupil (*sārdhaṁvihārin*); a co-residential pupil for his preceptor; a teacher (*ācārya*) for his disciple (*antevāsin*); a disciple for his teacher . . . etc., etc. One who is bereft of an assembly and little known (*alpajñāta*), to him the community must give an attendant monk after determining the state of his illness – one or two or many, even to the extent that the entire community must attend to him!"
>
> This is a remarkable passage. If, for example, the roles of preceptor (*upādhyāya*) and teacher (*ācārya*) were ever conceived of primarily in terms of teaching functions, they certainly are not here. Here both roles are defined exclusively in terms of caregiving functions, and they are also so defined elsewhere in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*.[4]

This Buddhist organizational model of compassionate and equalitarian medical and social service to one and all was actively continued by Christians during the days of Julian the Apostate. It was the one thing he admired about the otherwise detested Christians. And he was determined to imitate the Christians in this:

> [L]etters show specifically the issues Julian wanted to address by structuring pagan leadership on the Christian model. . . . In 362 [A.D.] Julian sent this missive to Arsacius, high priest of Galatia. He complained that while the traditional [pagan] rituals had been restored, the Christians continued to gain converts. This angered Julian because he considered Christians atheists. Julian went on to demand that the [pagan] priests in Galatia put their beliefs into positive social action, such as copying Christian charity, care for the dead, and a holy lifestyle. He then proceeded to lay down a series of prohibitions. No priest was to go to a tavern, frequent the theatre, or engage in a base profession. Julian then commanded that Arsacius set up hostels for charity in every city in Galatia. Furthermore, 1/5 of 30,000 modii of wheat and 60,000 pints of wine allocated to Galatia were to be used for charity distribution. Julian told Arsacius that the helping of the community by the priests was the way of the forefathers, with such practices dating back to the time of Homer.[5]

Endnotes

[1]Quoted by René Salm, *Buddhist and Christian Parallels: Compiled from the Earliest Scriptures* (2004), p. 13. < www.iid.org/uploads/6/2/0/6/6206024/rfinal_salm_publication.pdf >

[2]*The Sūtra on Upāsaka Precepts*, translated by Shih Heng-ching from the Chinese of Dharmarakṣa (Taishō, Vol. 24, No. 1488) (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation & Research, 1994), p. 83.

[3]Gregory Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters: Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), pp, 7-8.

[4]*Ibid*., p. 8.

[5]Walter E. Roberts and Michael DiMaio, Jr., in the "Online Encyclopedia of Roman Emperors", the section on Emperor Julian Augustus (the 'Apostate') – 360 to 363, A.D.

6
Parallel Sayings

There are innumerable collections of sayings of Jesus paralleling the sayings of the Buddha. These collections are available on the internet and in various publications. The parallelism isn't word-for-word, because different original languages are involved: the Pāli, Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese of Buddhism. and the Greek of the New Testament. And the contexts can be quite different, too. Some parallels, however, are truly striking. Consider the Buddha's words (from the *Majjhima Nikāya* – 'Middling Collection' – Dialog 21):

> Monks, if robbers or murderers should cut you asunder, limb from limb, with a two-handled saw, then whosoever should fall into a rage would not be following my instruction. In such case, O monks, you should train yourselves to think: "Our heart shall not be altered; we will not let an evil speech escape, but continue kind and compassionate, with loving hearts instead of hateful ones; and we will continue to suffuse that individual with thoughts of love; we will continue to suffuse that object and the whole wide world with thoughts of love, widespread, grown great, measureless, without anger or malice."
>
> Phagguno, if any one in the presence of the nuns were to give thee a blow with hand, clod, staff or sword, thou shouldst renounce all common feelings and reflections, and train thyself in the thought: "My heart shall not be altered; I will not let an evil speech escape, but continue kind and compassionate, with a loving heart instead of a hateful one."[1]

And then note Jesus' admonition in his 'Sermon on the Mount/Plain':

> 'You have learned that they were told, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth." But what I tell you is this: Do not set yourself against the man who wrongs you. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn and offer him your left. If a man wants to sue you for your shirt, let him have your coat as well. If a man in authority makes you go one mile, go with him two. Give when you are asked to give; and do not turn your back on a man who wants to borrow.' – *Matthew 5:38-42 (**NEB**)*
>
> 'But to you who hear me I say: "Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who treat you spitefully. When a man hits you on the cheek, offer him the other cheek too; when a man takes your coat, let him have your shirt as well. Give to everyone who asks you; when a man takes what is yours, do not demand it back. Treat others as you would like them to treat you."' – *Luke 6:27-31 (**NEB**)*

Comment:

Christian theologians have found it difficult to take these words of Jesus literally. A number of ingenious arguments have been advanced in order to avoid taking them at face value – even by some literalists, fleeing from literalism! Check this out, in Wikipedia, under the topic of the 'Sermon on the Mount': a list is there of *eleven* of these arguments (from H.K. MacArthur's *Understanding the Sermon on the Mount*, 1978).

There would have been no such difficulty for Indians, during the time of the Buddha or of Jesus, to take the Buddha's words literally. You won't find, among the Buddhists, any arguments to the contrary. Over a span of some three thousand years there have been religious practitioners in India who have aimed at the extreme observance of not being swayed either by pleasures or by pains. And there is the famous example of Zarmanochegas (Skt., '*śramaṇāchārya*'), the Indian 'gymnosophist' ('naked sage'), who immolated himself at Athens. Strabo (in *Geographer*, XV, 1.73) states, on the authority of Nikolaos of Damascus, that this Indian came to Syria in the train of the ambassadors who were sent (c. 20 AD) to Augustus Cæsar by the great Indian King called Poros (or Pandion). These ambassadors, he says, "were accompanied by the person who burnt himself to death at Athens". This act probably prompted St. Paul's (Buddhistic?) cry, in *First Corinthians 13:3*:

I may dole out all I possess, or even give my body to be burnt, but if I have no love, I am none the better.

(The editors of *The New English Bible* mention, in a footnote: "Some witnesses read *even seek glory by self-sacrifice*.")

In this regard, it should be noted that the Buddha's words, on the previous page, are addressed to his monks. He might not have been expecting most of his lay followers to be capable of heeding his advice in the extreme cases which he mentions – being assaulted or cut apart limb from limb. In the Indian context of the almost universal belief in the immensely long cycle of innumerable rebirths that each individual endures, there is no need of a zealous urge for salvation (*mōkṣa*, *nirvāṇa*) in the span of a single life-time. Neither the gods nor fate condemn anyone to *eternal* damnation. Punishment is *time measured* and, where due, is meted out by the inescapable Law of Karma – ironically, a kind of 'eye for eye, tooth for tooth' retribution brought about by the presumed impersonal action of this law – a law capable of spanning multiple lives of an individual.

So, when a person commits a violent act against another, he will be punished for it, if not in this life, in some future life. And if the person who is wronged returns violence for violence, even that person will be creating bonds which will entail rebirth. But for one who aims at freeing oneself totally from the cycle of rebirths, one would need to follow the path of the Buddha:

> Let one conquer wrath by [non-violence],
> Let one conquer wrong by goodness,
> Let one conquer the mean man by [generosity],
> And a liar by the truth.[2]

(An important side issue: Question – Did Jesus' disciples believe in rebirth? Reply – How else can one explain their question [*John 9:1-2*] addressed to him: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents? Why was he born blind?" A number of ingenious solutions, again, have been advanced by Christian theologians to explain away the obvious inference. The belief in rebirth was, in fact, to be found among early Christians before it was eventually stamped out as a heresy.)

To conclude: 'turning the other cheek', which would have been taken quite literally by monks in the Buddha's time, has become 'hyperbole', etc., in the minds of many contemporary Christians. On the other hand, think of such recent heroes of 'Peace' as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., who have taken quite literally the words of the Buddha and Jesus.

---

[1]Translated by Albert J. Edmunds, in *Buddhist and Christian Gospels: Now First Compared from the Originals: Being Gospel Parallels from Pāli Texts*, 1914, p. 612.

[2]Quoted from the *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. X, Part 1, p. 58, in Edmunds' book, *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*, p. 215. I have interpolated the expression 'non-violence' for the original translation, 'meekness' – an English translation which is totally inadequate for conveying the kind of courageous behavior recommended by the Buddha – behavior demonstrated by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Assorted Parallel Sayings[1]

The Buddha and Jesus were both asked, "Are you the Promised One?"

Pōkkharasati said to Aṁbattha, 'Gautama is staying in the dense jungle. And concerning that Blessed Lord a good report has been spread about: "This Blessed Lord is a fully enlightened Buddha." Now you go see the ascetic Gautama and find out whether this report is correct or not, and whether the Reverend Gautama is as they say or not.' *– Dīgha Nikāya 3:1:4*[2]

Deep awe fell upon them all, and they praised God. 'A great prophet [Jesus] has arisen among us', they said, and again, 'God has shown his care for his people.' The story of what he had done ran through all parts of Judæa and the whole neighbourhood. John [the Baptist] too was informed of all this by his disciples. Summoning two of their number he sent them to the Lord with this message: 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to expect some other?' *– Luke 7:16-19*

* * * * *

Both reborn in Spirit:

[The Buddha said:] 'There are these two gifts, the carnal and the spiritual. Of these two gifts the spiritual is preëminent. He who has made the spiritual offering – such a one, the best of mankind, is honored by all beings as one who has gone beyond.' *– Itivuttaka 4:1*[3]

[Jesus said:] 'In truth, in very truth I tell you, unless a man has been born over again he cannot see the kingdom of God.' 'But how is it possible', said Nicodemus, 'for a man to be born when he is old? Can he enter his mother's womb a second time and be born?' Jesus answered, 'In truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born from water and spirit. Flesh can give birth only to flesh; it is spirit that gives birth to spirit. You ought not to be astonished, then, when I tell you that you must be born over again.' *– John 3:5-7*

* * * * *

Both consorted with sinners:

'The Bōdhisattva [the Buddha-to-be] made his appearance at the fields of sports and in the casinos, but his aim was always to mature those people who were attached to games and gambling. To train living beings, he would appear at crossroads and on street corners. To demonstrate the evils of desire, he even entered the brothels. To establish drunkards in correct mindfulness, he entered all the taverns.' *– Vimalakīrti-nirdēśa Sūtra 2*[4]

When Jesus was at table in the house, many bad characters – tax-gatherers and others – were seated with him and his disciples. The Pharisees noticed this, and said to his disciples, 'Why is it that your master eats with tax-gatherers and sinners?' Jesus heard it and said, 'It is not the healthy that need a doctor, but the sick. Go and learn what that text means, "I require mercy, not sacrifice." I did not come to invite virtuous people but sinners.' *– Matthew 9:10-13*

* * * * *

Both promoted freedom from worldly attachments:

'Then the Lord [Buddha] addressed the monks, saying: "I am freed from all snares. And you, monks, are free from all snares." ' *– Vinaya, Mahāvagga 1:11:1*[5]

[Jesus] said to them, 'When I sent you out barefoot without purse or pack, were you ever short of anything?' 'No', they answered. *– Luke 22:35*

* * * * *

Both had similar ideas about what defiled a person:

'Stealing, deceiving, adultery; this is defilement. Not the eating of meat.' – *Sutta Nipāta 242*[6]

['N]othing that goes into a man from outside can defile him; no, it is the things that come out of him that defile a man'. . . . Thus he declared all foods clean. He went on, 'It is what comes out of a man that defiles him. For from inside, out of a man's heart, come evil thoughts, acts of fornication, of theft, murder, and adultery, ruthless greed, and malice; fraud, indecency, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly; these evil things all come from inside, and they defile the man.' – *Mark 7:15, 21-23*

* * * * *

Both stressed compassion and care for the humble and sick:

[The Buddha said to his monks:] 'If you do not tend one another, then who is there to tend you? Whoever would tend me, he should tend the sick.' – *Vinaya, Mahāvagga 8:26:3*[7]

[Jesus said to his disciples:] "I tell you this: anything you did for one of my brothers here, however humble, you did for me." – *Matthew 25:40*

* * * * *

Both laid down similar commandments:

[The Buddha said:] 'Abstain from killing and from taking what is not given. Abstain from unchastity and from speaking falsely. Do not accept gold and silver.' – *Khuddakapāṭha 2*[8]

[Jesus said:] 'You know the commandments: "Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not give false evidence; do not defraud; honour your father and mother."' – *Mark 10:19*

* * * * *

Both preached freedom from worldly corruption:

[The Buddha said:] 'Just as, brethren, a dark blue lotus or a white lotus, born in [muddy] water, comes to full growth in the water, rises to the surface and stands unspotted by the water, even so, brethren, the Buddha, having come to full growth in the world, passing beyond the world, abides unspotted by the world.' – *Saṁyutta Nikāya 22:94*[9]

[Jesus prayed:] 'I have delivered thy word to them, and the world hates them because they are strangers in the world, as I am. I pray thee, not to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are strangers in the world, as I am.' – *John 17:14-16*

* * * * *

Both are credited with similar miracles:

'As soon as the Bōdhisattva was born, the sick were cured; the hungry and thirsty were no longer oppressed by hunger and thirst. Those maddened by drink lost their obsession. The mad recovered their senses, the blind regained their sight, and the deaf could once more hear. The halt and the lame obtained perfect limbs, the poor gained riches, and prisoners were delivered of their bonds.' *Lalitavistara Sūtra 7*[10]

There and then [Jesus] cured many sufferers from diseases, plagues, and evil spirits; and on many blind people he bestowed sight. Then he gave them his answer: 'Go', he said, 'and tell John what you have seen and heard: how the blind recover their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, the poor are hearing the good news. . . .' *Luke 7:21-22*

* * * * *

Both spoke of mega-miracles possible by those with great faith or concentration:

[The Buddha said:] 'A monk who is skilled in concentration can cut the Himālayas in two.' – *Aṅguttara Nikāya 6:24*[11]

[Jesus said,] 'Your faith is too small. I tell you this: if you have faith no bigger even than a mustard-seed, you will say to the mountain, "Move from here to there!", and it will move; nothing will prove impossible for you.' – *Matthew 17:20*

* * * * *

Both criticized opposing religious leaders as the blind leading the blind:

[The Buddha said:] 'When these Brahmins teach a path that they do not know or see, saying, "This is the only straight path," this cannot possibly be right. Just as a file of blind men go on, clinging to each other, and the first one sees nothing, the middle one sees nothing, and the last one sees nothing – so it is with the talk of these Brahmins.' – *Tēvijja-sutta, Dīgha Nikāya 13:15*[12]

[Jesus] told them a parable: 'Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit?' – *Luke 6:39-40*

* * * * *

Both are portrayed as though establishing a line of succession after their departure:[13]

[The Buddha said:] 'Were it to be said of anyone: "He is the son of the Blessed One, born of his breast, an heir in the dharma, not an heir in material things," it is of my follower **Śāriputra** that this should be said. The matchless wheel of dharma is to be kept rolling by Śāriputra.' – *Majjhima Nikāya 111:22-23*[14]

Then Jesus said: '**Simon son of Jonah**, you are favoured indeed! You did not learn that from mortal man; it was revealed to you by my heavenly Father. And I say this to you: You are Peter, the Rock; and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall never conquer it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; what you forbid on earth shall be forbidden in heaven, and what you allow on earth shall be allowed in heaven.' – *Matthew 16:17-19*

* * * * *

Both advocated the forsaking of family ties in order to become their followers:

[The Buddha said:] 'Just as the great rivers, on reaching the great ocean, lose their former names and identities and are reckoned simply as the great ocean, so do followers lose their former names and clans and become sons of the Buddha's clan.' – *Vinaya, Çullavagga 9:1:4*[15]

And looking round at those who were sitting in the circle about him [Jesus] said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God is my brother, my sister, my mother.' – *Mark 3:34-35*

* * * * *

Both live on in their 'Word': 'Logos'/'Dharma':

'And the Lord [Buddha] said: "It may be that you will think: The Teacher's instruction has ceased, now we will have no teacher!" It should not be seen like this, for what I have taught and explained to you will, at my passing, be your teacher.' – *Dīgha Nikāya 16:6:1*[16]

[Jesus said:] 'But when your Advocate [*Paraklêtos*/*Prātimōkṣas* ('Substitute Teacher': the Four Noble Truths)] has come, whom I will send you from the Father – the Spirit of truth that issues from the Father – he will bear witness to me.' – *John 15:26*

* * * * *

Both warn of the Karmic 'Wages of Sin':

> [The Buddha said: 'S]ome man is of an angry and irritable character; when criticized even a little, he is offended, becomes angry, hostile, and resentful, and displays anger, hate, and bitterness. Because of performing and undertaking such action, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, or even in hell.' – *Majjhima Nikāya 135:9*[17]

> [Jesus:] 'I tell you this: Anyone who nurses anger against his brother must be brought to judgement. If he abuses his brother he must answer for it to the court; if he sneers at him he will have to answer for it in the fires of hell.' – *Matthew 5:22*

* * * * *

And both warn of future degeneration setting in because of misguiding leaders and false prophets:

> 'Monks who are untrained will give guidance to others, and they will not be able to lead them in the way of higher virtue. And those in turn who have not been trained will give guidance to others and will not be able to lead them.' – *Aṅguttara Nikāya 5:79* [18]

> 'Many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold.' – *Matthew 24:11-12*

* * * * *

But both hold out the promise of the return of the 'Holy One':

> [The Buddha:] 'There will arise in the world a Lord, a fully enlightened Buddha endowed with wisdom and conduct, enlightened and blessed, just as I am now. He will teach the dharma and proclaim the holy life in its fullness and purity.' – *Dīgha Nikāya 26:25* [19]

> [Jesus:] Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the blessed One?' Jesus said, 'I am; and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.' – *Mark 14:61-62*

> [Jesus, speaking to his disciples:] '[Y]our Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will call to mind all that I have said to you.' – *John 14:26*

* * * * *

Notes

[1] The parallel sayings in this section are adaptations of a number of parallel sayings appearing in the on-line publication of a "Comparative Religion Compilation" (Chp. 11: 'Buddhist Faith'), 1st ed., 2000; see: < www.sfu.ca/~cabs/Kerns/11-Buddhist.doc >. The notes following below (except the 13th) are derived from the same publication. The New Testament quotations are from *The New English Bible*.

[2] Maurice Walshe (trans.), *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1987), p. 112.

[3] F.L. Woodward (trans.), *The Minor Anthologies of the Pāli Canon, Part 2: Udāna: Verses of Uplift, and Itivuttaka: As It Was Said* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 188-89.

[4] Robert A.F. Thurman (trans.), *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti: A Mahāyāna Scripture* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), p. 21.

[5] I.B. Horner (trans.), *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Piṭaka): Volume IV (Mahāvagga)* (London: Luzac & Company, 1951), p. 28.

[6] H. Saddhatissa (trans.), *The Sutta Nipāta* (London: Curzon Press, 1985), p. 27.

[7] Horner, *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Piṭaka): Volume IV (Mahāvagga)*, p. 432.

[When I looked at the passages again, in *Matt 25 & 26*, I noted that in these two chapters Jesus is speaking *privately* to his disciples. So Jesus' remark in *Matt 25:40*, ". . . anything you did for one of my brothers *here* . . ." is out of joint with the context of these two chapters. This fact goes to confirm its dependence on the Buddhist passage, where the context is that, on one occasion, the Buddha finds a sick monk who is lying unattended by his fellow monks! The Buddha reprimands the inattentive monks: "If you do not tend one another, then who is there to tend you?" The Buddha's remark is wholly consistent with the wider context of the *Mahāvagga's* passages. But Jesus' remark is not consistent with the wider context of chapters 25 & 26, *Matt*. One little slip like this by the author of Matthew is enough to convince one that the Gospel passage is dependent on the *Mahāvagga's* passage!! – **ML**.]

[8] Albert J. Edmunds and Masaharu Anesaki (trans. and eds.), *Buddhist and Christian Gospels: Now First Compared from the Originals: Being Gospel Parallels from Pāli Texts, Reprinted with Additions*, in 2 Vols., 4th edition (Philadelphia, PA: Innes & Sons, 1914), pp. 1-2.

[9] F.L. Woodward (trans.), *The Book of the Kindred Sayings (Saṁyutta Nikāya) or Grouped Suttas: Part 3, Pāli Text Society Translation Series, Nr. 13*, ed. by Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys-Davis (London: Luzac & Company, 1954), p. 118.

[10] Gwendolyn Bays (trans.), *The Lalitavistara Sūtra: The Voice of the Buddha: The Beauty of Compassion* (Berkeley, CA: Dharma Publishing, 1983), p. 133.

[11] E.M. Hare (trans.), *The Book of the Gradual Sayings (Aṅguttara Nikāya), Or More Numbered Suttas: Volume 3 (Also known as the Book of the Fives and Sixes) (Pāli Text Society Translation Series, Nr. 25)* (London: Luzac & Company, 1952), p. 222.

[12] Walshe, p. 189.

[13] Although this passage indicates a special regard for his disciple, Sāriputta (Skt. Śāriputra), by the Buddha, which is somewhat similar to the passages in the New Testament where Jesus shows special favor to Peter, Buddhist tradition holds that Śāriputra predeceased the Buddha, and it was left to the Buddha's disciple, Mahā-Kāśyapa, to become Buddhism's first 'Patriarch'. Buddhist sects have claimed unbroken lineages of 'Patriarchs' traced back through Mahā-Kāśyapa to the Buddha, himself (see, later in the present work, pp. 96 ff.). Christianity, several centuries afterward, has followed this same Buddhist practice. (ML)

[14] Bhikkhu Nyanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya* (Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications, 1995), p. 902.

[15] I.B. Horner (trans.), *The Book of Discipline (Vinaya-Piṭaka): Volume V (Çullavagga)* (London: Luzac and Company, Ltd., 1952), p. 334.

[16] Walshe, pp. 269-270.

[17] Bhikkhu Nyanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, pp. 1054-1055.

[18] E.M. Hare, pp. 84-85.

[19] Walshe, pp. 403-404.

7
Firsts Established by Buddhism

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(1) Disciples sent out as Missionaries to All Nations

Albert J. Edmunds and Masaharu Anesaki* wrote:[1]

At that time there were sixty-one Arahats [fully enlightened monks] in the world.**

And the Lord said unto the monks: "I am delivered, O monks, from all fetters, human and divine. Ye, O monks, are also delivered therefrom. Go forth, O monks, on your journey, for the weal and the welfare of much people, out of compassion for the world, and for the wealth and the weal and the welfare of angels and mortals. Go no two[2] of you the same [way].*** Preach, O monks, the Doctrine which is glorious in its origin, glorious at the climax, glorious at the end, in the spirit and letter. Proclaim a religious life wholly perfect and thoroly pure. There are beings whose mental eyes are darkened by hardly any dust, but unless they hear the Doctrine they will perish. They will understand it."

Paul Carus has pointed out to me the significant fact that the preaching of the Gospel to the nations is a later addition to the New Testament. This is borne out by the archaic oracle in Matthew:

> Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. . . . Ye shall not have gone thru the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come.
>
> (*The Missionary Charge in Matthew 10:5-6 and 23*)

It is Luke alone who invents the mission of the Seventy (i.e. to the seventy nations of the world according to Jewish geography). As I pointed out in April, 1900, there is a parallel here with the sixty-one Arahats sent forth by Gotamo [Skt. '*Gautama*', the Buddha]. That Luke invented the story of the Seventy is betrayed by himself, for, in *22:35*, he agrees with the Petrine and Matthean tradition, in ascribing the prohibition of shoes to the Charge to the Twelve from which he has wrested them to make up his ideal Charge to the Seventy:

> When I sent you forth without purse and wallet and shoes, lackt ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

Luke puts the words,– no purse, no wallet, no shoes, in the Charge to the Seventy (*10:4*), while in the Charge to the Twelve he reads: nor wallet, nor bread, nor money; neither have two coats. But there is no mention of shoes. (*Luke 9:3*)

In the Gospel tradition generally the great Missionary Charge is the one given after the resurrection:

> Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. (*Matthew 28:19*)

The Trinitarian formula betrays the lateness of the redaction, but the passage is older than the redaction, for the substance of it is found in the Fourth Gospel: Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. (*John 20:21*) I have little doubt that the Matthean charge read originally: **baptizing them into my name**, simply; to which Rendel Harris assented when, in 1900, I pointed this out to him. After reading the present statement (*Open Court*, September, 1902), he wrote to me as follows:

> [I]n regard to the last verse of Matthew, we are now in a position to speak more positively. As the result of Conybeare's examination of the manner in which Eusebius quotes the closing passage, it may be taken as proved that the Old Cesarean form was as follows:
>
> Go and make disciples of all nations in my name, and teach them everything that I have commanded you.
>
> (See Preuschen's *Zeitschrift* II. p. 275.)

So there was not even a baptismal command, any more than a mention of Trinity.

Edmunds and Anesaki's Notes

*Two Chinese Vinaya texts (N.C. Nos. 1117 and 1122) preserve the passage [on this page] in simpler manner [cf. Major Section on Discipline, I. 10, 11, translated in *Sacred Books of the East*, XIII, p. 112; S.P. (N.C. No. 680)]. Here we [Edmunds and Anesaki] take the correspondence from the Chinese Mahāvastu (N.C. No. 680) which in this respect agrees best with the Pāli. Further compare my [Anesaki's] book on *Buddhism*, pp. 50-51. (MA)

**Rendel Harris suggests a parallel, if not a connection with Luke's Seventy who went to the Gentiles, the 70 nations of Hebrew tradition. "As the hammer that strikes emits a multitude of sparks, so is every word emanating from the Holy One – Blessed be He – heralded in seventy different languages." (Babylonian Talmud, Tract Sabbath, chap. 9.)

*** In *Māra und Buddha*, p. 91, Windisch translates into German: Let not two go at once.

Christian Missionary Apostles:

Matthew 10:5, 9-10

[The] twelve [Apostles] Jesus sent out with the following instructions: . . . 'Provide no gold, silver, or copper to fill your purse, no pack for the road, no second coat, no shoes, no stick. . . .'

[These five New Testament passages are taken from *The New English Bible*]

———————

Mark 6:7-9

[Jesus] summoned the Twelve and sent them out in pairs on a mission. He . . . instructed them to take nothing for the journey beyond a stick: no bread, no pack, no money in their belts. They might wear sandals, but not a second coat.

———————

Luke 9:1-3

[Jesus] now called the Twelve together and gave them power . . . to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. 'Take nothing for the journey,' he told them, 'neither stick nor pack, neither bread nor money; nor are you each to have a second coat.'

Luke 10:1-2, 4

After this the Lord [Jesus] appointed a further seventy-two ['*Some witnesses read* seventy'] and sent them on ahead in pairs to every town and place he was going to visit himself. He said to them: '. . . . Carry no purse or pack, and travel barefoot.'

Luke 22:35-36

[Jesus] said to them, 'When I sent you out barefoot without purse or pack, were you ever short of anything?' 'No', they answered. 'It is different now,' he said; 'whoever has a purse had better take it with him, and his pack too. . . .'

* * * * * * * * *

Endnotes
(by ML)

1. This passage (on p. 88) is taken from the book by Albert J. Edmunds and Masaharu Anesaki (trans. and eds.), *Buddhist and Christian Gospels: Now First Compared from the Originals: Being Gospel Parallels from Pāli Texts, Reprinted with Additions*, in 2 Vols., 4th edition (Philadelphia, PA: Innes & Sons, 1914), pp. 225-28.

2. The Buddhist rule (of which there is a record belonging to the early Common Era) was that a monk *must* have a traveling companion with whom there is a reciprocal 'dependent' relationship:

> The *Kṣudrakavastu*, for example, says that a monk can be without a recitation teacher (*klog pa'i slob dpon*), but not without a monk on whom he is dependent (Derge Tha 214a.6); in the same *Vastu*, monks are forbidden to travel without a monk in regard to whom they have entered into dependence; and numerous monasteries were said to have passed ordinances denying traveling monks who lacked such a supporting monk the right to accommodations for even one night (Derge Tha 71b.7-72b.4). [Derge = *The Tibetan Tripiṭaka: Taipei Edition*, ed. A.W. Barber (Taipei: 1991)]

Quoted from Gregory Schopen's book, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters: Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), p. 9.

Should Edmunds' translation, therefore, be interpreted as: 'No *twosome* should go the same way (that any other *pair* goes)'? No 'duplication' of the missionary effort! See Romans 15:20-22.

(2) Monasteries

This short account of the 'Buddhist vihāra' follows the version found in the online encyclopædia Wikipedia:

Buddhist Monastery (in Sanskrit and Pāli, **'vihāra'**). Originally, this word may have meant a simple 'dwelling' or 'refuge', such as those used by wandering monks during the rainy season.

In the early decades of Buddhism, the wandering monks of the Sangha had no fixed abode, but during the rainy season (*vassa* – for three months) they began to be allowed to stay in temporary shelters. These dwellings were simple wooden constructions or thatched bamboo huts. However, as it was considered an act of merit not only to feed monks but also to shelter them, sumptuous monasteries began to be created by rich lay-devotees.[1] These monasteries were located near settlements, close enough for the monks to beg alms from the population, but with enough seclusion so as not to have their times of meditation disturbed.

Life in the 'vihāras' was codified early on. This was the object of that part of the Pāli canon called the *Vinaya Piṭaka* or "Basket of Monastic Discipline".

In the second century BCE a standard plan for a vihāra was established. It could be either structural, which was common in the south of India, or rock-cut like the *chaitya-gṛihas* of the Deccan. These latter consisted of a walled, quadrangular court, flanked by small cells. The front wall was pierced by a door, the side facing it, in later periods, often incorporated a shrine for the image of the Buddha. The cells were fitted with rock-cut platforms for beds and pillows.[2] This basic layout was still similar to that of the communal space of an *āśrama* [āshram] ringed with huts in the early decades of Buddhism.[3]

Ideal locations for vihāras were near trade routes, where donations from wealthy traders would increase their economic strength. By the first century of the Common Era, some vihāras, due to the increasing demand for teaching in Mahāyāna Buddhism,[3] had developed into important educational institutions. And as these institutions became established, a few of them evolved into major Buddhist universities, with thousands of students – such as Nālandā.

The northern India state of Bihar derives its name from the word 'vihāra', probably due to the abundance of Buddhist monasteries which were built in the past in that region. The Uzbek city of Bukhāra also probably takes its name from 'vihāra'.

In Buddhist canonical texts, there are references to five different kinds of dwelling (*pañcha lēnāni*) which are found to be fit for monks, namely, *vihāra*, *addayōga*, *pasāda*, *hammiya*, and *guha*. Of these five, only two, the *vihāra* (monastery) and *guha* (cave),[4] have survived through the ages.

Comment:

The earliest vihāras were a development out of the āshrams which had existed in India for centuries before Buddhism. But the Buddha introduced the far more elaborate system of monasticism, with its monks and nuns, who lived in quiet remove from village, town, or city, but in active relation with laymen and laywomen living in those villages, towns, or cities – receiving alms, property, housing, and other material and monetary support from them, offering in return compassionate spiritual and medical care, and general education.

The earliest, pre-Christian monasteries in Egypt and the Holy Land, therefore, almost certainly were evolved from those introduced by Emperor Aśōka's missionary monks. Can the archæologists establish otherwise? Some of the early Christian Fathers, themselves, considered the Therapeutæ to be Christian – they had no idea that these movements existed long before the presumed birth of Jesus. If Christianity was an outgrowth of these Buddhist movements, then the Christian Fathers were partly correct. [ML]

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[1]Chakrabarti, D.K. (1995). "Buddhist sites across South Asia as influenced by political and economic forces." *World Archæology* 27 (2): 185-202.

[2]Mitra, D. (1971). *Buddhist Monuments*. Sahitya Samsad: Calcutta.

[3]Tadgell, C. (1990). *The History of Architecture in India*. Phaidon: London.

[[4]It should be noted that a *guha* (cave) is not just any natural cavern, but rather, it is an elaborate reproduction "underground" of the internal spaces – the cells and hall – of a regular *vihāra* by skillful artisans excavating solid rock! (ML)]

(3) Nuns' Subjection to Monks

The Buddha's mother is said to have died seven days after giving birth to him. Her sister, Mahâ-Pajâpatî brought him up and cared for him as a child. Earlier than the beginning of the account below, the ageing Mahâ-Pajâpatî had personally asked the Buddha three times to allow her and other women to join the Buddhist Order. Three times the Buddha had turned her down. The Buddha then traveled some distance away to another location. Mahâ-Pajâpatî decided to follow him and demonstrate her determination.

The Buddha, in the following passages, is addressed by his honorific titles, 'The Blessed One' and 'The Tathâgata':

'The Admission of Women to the Order'

From *Buddhism in Translations* (1896), by Henry Clarke Warren[1]

Translated from the *Çullavagga* (**X**.12-16), a canonical work predating the Christian Era.

Then Mahâ-Pajâpatî Gotamî [Mahâ-Prajâpatî Gautamî (Skt.), belonging to the Gautama royal lineage] had her hair cut off, put on yellow garments, and with a number of Sakka [Śâkya clan] women departed towards Vesâlî and going from place to place, she drew near to Vesâlî, and to the Pagoda Hall in the Great Wood. And Mahâ-Pajâpatî Gotamî with swollen feet, and covered with dust, sorrowful, sad, and tearful, stood weeping outside in the entrance porch.

Now the venerable Ânanda saw Mahâ-Pajâpatî Gotamî with swollen feet, and covered with dust, sorrowful, sad, and tearful, stand weeping outside in the entrance porch. And he spoke to Mahâ-Pajâpatî Gotamî as follows:

"Wherefore dost thou, O Gotamî, with swollen feet, and covered with dust, sorrowful, sad, and tearful, stand weeping outside in the entrance porch?"

"Because, alas! O Ânanda, reverend sir, The Blessed One permitteth not that women retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata."

"In that case, O Gotamî, stay thou here a moment, and I will beseech The Blessed One that women retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata."

Then the venerable Ânanda drew near to where The Blessed One was; and having drawn near and greeted The Blessed One, he sat down respectfully at one side. And seated respectfully at one side, the venerable Ânanda spoke to The Blessed One as follows:

"Reverend Sir, here this Mahâ-Pajâpatî Gotamî with swollen feet, and covered with dust, sorrowful, sad, and tearful, stands weeping outside in the entrance porch, and says that The Blessed One permitteth not that women retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata. Pray, Reverend Sir, let women retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata."

"Enough, Ânanda, do not ask that women retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata."

And a second time the venerable Ânanda spoke to The Blessed One as follows:

"Pray, Reverend Sir, let women retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata."

"Enough, Ânanda, do not ask that women retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata."

And a third time the venerable Ânanda spoke to The Blessed One as follows:

"Pray, Reverend Sir, let women retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata."

"Enough, Ânanda, do not ask that women retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathāgata."

Then thought the venerable Ânanda, "The Blessed One permitteth not that women retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata; what if now, by another route, I beseech The Blessed One that women retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata?"

Then the venerable Ânanda spoke to The Blessed One as follows:

"Would women be competent, Reverend Sir, if they were to retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata, to attain to the fruit of conversion, to attain to the fruit of once returning, to attain to the fruit of never returning, to attain to saintship?"

"Women would be competent, Ânanda, if they were to retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata, to attain to the fruit of conversion, to attain to the fruit of once returning, to attain to the fruit of never returning, to attain to saintship."

"Since, then, Reverend Sir, women are competent, if they were to retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata, to attain to the fruit of conversion, to attain to the fruit of once returning, to attain to the fruit of never returning, to attain to saintship, consider, Reverend Sir, how great a benefactress Mahâ-Pajâpatî Gotamî has been. She is the sister of the mother of The Blessed One, and as foster-mother, nurse, and giver of milk, she suckled The Blessed One on the death of his mother. Pray, Reverend Sir, let women retire from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata."

"If, Ânanda, Mahâ-Pajâpatî Gotamî will accept eight weighty regulations, let it be reckoned to her as her ordination: –

[1] "A nun of even a hundred years' standing shall salute, rise to meet, entreat humbly, and perform all respectful offices for a monk, even if he be but that day ordained. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

[2] "A nun shall not keep residence in a district where there are no monks. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

[3] "On each half-month a nun shall await from the congregation of the monks the appointing of fast-day, and someone to come and administer the admonition. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

[4] "At the end of residence a nun shall invite criticism in both congregations in regard to what has been seen, or heard, or suspected. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

[5] "If a nun be guilty of serious sin, she shall undergo penance of half a month toward both the congregations. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

[6] "When a female novice has spent her two years in the practice of the six rules, she shall seek ordination from both the congregations. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

[7] "A nun shall not revile or abuse a monk in any manner. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

[8] "From this day on the nun shall not be allowed to reprove the monks officially, but the monks shall be allowed to reprove the nuns officially. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

"If, Ânanda, Mahâ-Pajâpatî Gotamî will accept these eight weighty regulations, let it be reckoned to her as her ordination."

Then the venerable Ânanda, when he had received from The Blessed One these eight weighty regulations, drew near to Mahâ-Pajâpatî Gotamî; and having drawn near, he spoke to Mahâ-Pajâpatî Gotamî as follows:

"If now, O Gotamî, you will accept eight weighty regulations, it shall be reckoned to you as your ordination: –

[1] "A nun of even a hundred years' standing shall salute, rise to meet, entreat humbly, and perform all respectful offices for a monk, even if he be but that day ordained. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

[2] "A nun shall not keep residence in a district where there are no monks. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

[3] "On each half-month a nun shall await from the congregation of the monks the appointing of fast-day, and someone to come and administer the admonition. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

[4] "At the end of residence a nun shall invite criticism in both congregations in regard to what has been seen, or heard, or suspected. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

[5] "If a nun be guilty of serious sin, she shall undergo penance of half a month toward both the congregations. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

[6] "When a female novice has spent her two years in the practice of the six rules, she shall seek ordination from both the congregations. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

[7] "A nun shall not revile or abuse a monk in any manner. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

[8] "From this day on the nun shall not be allowed to reprove the monks officially, but the monks shall be allowed to reprove the nuns officially. This regulation shall be honored, esteemed, revered, and worshiped, and is not to be transgressed as long as life shall last.

"If now, O Gotamî, you will accept these eight weighty regulations, it shall be reckoned to you as your ordination."

"Just as, O Ânanda, reverend sir, a woman or a man, youthful, young, and fond of ornament, having bathed the head, and obtained a wreath of blue lotuses, or a wreath of jasmine flowers, or a wreath of atimuttaka flowers, would take it up with both hands, and place it on the head, the noblest part of the body; in exactly the same way do I, O Ânanda, reverend sir, take up these eight weighty regulations, not to be transgressed as long as life shall last."

Then the venerable Ânanda drew near to where The Blessed One was; and having drawn near and greeted The Blessed One, he sat down respectfully at one side. And seated respectfully at one side, the venerable Ânanda spoke to The Blessed One as follows:

"Mahâ-Pajâpatî Gotamî, Reverend Sir, has accepted the eight weighty regulations; the sister of the mother of The Blessed One has become ordained."

"If, Ânanda, women had not retired from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata, religion, Ânanda, would long endure; a thousand years would the Good Doctrine abide. But since, Ânanda, women have now retired from household life to the homeless one, under the Doctrine and Discipline announced by The Tathâgata, not long, Ânanda, will religion endure; but five hundred years, Ânanda, will the Good Doctrine abide. Just as, Ânanda, those families which consist of many women and few men are easily overcome by burglars, in exactly the same way, Ânanda, when women retire from household life to the homeless one, under a doctrine and discipline, that religion does not long endure. Just as, Ânanda, when the disease called mildew falls upon a flourishing field of rice, that field of rice does not long endure, in exactly the same way, Ânanda, when women retire from household life to the homeless one, under a doctrine and discipline, that religion does not long endure. Even as, Ânanda, when the disease called rust falls upon a flourishing field of sugar-cane, that field of sugar-cane does not long endure, in exactly the same way, Ânanda, when women retire from household life to the homeless one, under a doctrine and discipline, that religion does not long endure. And just as, Ânanda, to a large pond a man would prudently build a dike, in order that the water might not transgress its bounds, in exactly the same way, Ânanda, have I prudently laid down eight weighty regulations, not to be transgressed as long as life shall last."

* * * * * * * * *

Endnote

[1]The passages in this section are excerpted from the book, *Buddhism in Translations* (pp. 442-447), by Henry Clarke Warren (1854-1899), published in 1896 as Vol. III of the *Harvard Oriental Series*. This book was accessed on the internet < http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/bits/bits099.htm > from the text reduced to HTML by Christopher M. Weimer, Feb. '02, rev. Jul. '02, and made available freely for any noncommercial use. I have taken the liberty of making some changes to Warren's 'Victorian' translation (ML).

Comment: With what historical value are we to credit this highly patriarchal account? In answer, it would be helpful, perhaps, to take note of Gregory Schopen's words of caution (*Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, p. 94) regarding such passages in the *vinayas* – in these works which deal with the rules and regulations of Buddhist monastic life:

> Although we do not know anything definite about any hypothetical earlier versions of these *vinayas*, we do know that all of the *vinayas* as we have them fall squarely into what might unimaginatively be called the Middle Period of Indian Buddhism, the period between the beginning of the Common Era and the year 500 C.E. As we have them, then, they do not – and probably cannot – tell us what monastic Buddhism "originally" was, but they do provide an almost overwhelming amount of detail about what it had become by this time.

I do not wish to be accused of over-emphasizing the patriarchal direction which Buddhism was taking in its treatment of nuns during the early centuries of the new millennium. Therefore, let me suggest for further reading two articles by women authors who establish that there are many positive things to be said about Buddhism's effect on the status of women in such mainly Buddhist countries as Śrī Laṅkā, Thailand, Burma, and Tibet when compared to non-Buddhist societies in Asia:

1) "Women in Early Buddhist Literature", *The Wheel*, Publication No. 30, by Isaline Blew Horner (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1961 [1982]), freely available on the internet in PDF form.

2) "The Position of Women in Buddhism", *The Wheel*, Publication No. 280, by Lorna Srimathie Dewaraja (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1981), also freely available on the internet.

Of the eight regulations which the Buddha is reported to have laid down for women to accept before they could be ordained as Buddhist nuns, the second and third were these:

[2] "A nun shall not keep residence in a district where there are no monks.

[3] "On each half-month a nun shall await from the congregation of the monks the appointing of fast-day, and someone [senior!] to come and administer the admonition."

These two regulations concerning Buddhist nuns are echoed in the arrangements made for Christian nuns in Egypt's 4th century monasteries for women, as described in *The Lausiac History* by Palladius (emphasis added):

CHAPTER XXXIII: THE TABENNESIOT NUNS*

1 **THEY** also had a monastery of women with some 400 members; it had the same constitution and the same manner of life [as the monastery for men had], except for the sheep-skin coat. And the women are on the far side of the river, the men opposite them. So when a virgin dies, the (other) virgins, having prepared her body for burial, act as bearers and lay it on the river bank. But the brethren, having crossed in a ferry boat, with palm-leaves and olive branches, take the body across, singing psalms the while, and bury it in their own cemetery. But apart from the **priest** and the **deacon** no man goes across to the women's monastery, and they, **only on Sunday**.

2 In this women's monastery the following thing happened. A tailor, living in the world, crossed the river in ignorance and sought work. A young sister came out – the place was deserted – and met him involuntarily and gave him the answer: "We have our own tailors." *3* Another sister saw the meeting; and when some time had elapsed and a contention arose, actuated by diabolic motives inspired by great wickedness and an outburst of temper, she denounced the other before the sisterhood. A few others also joined her from malice. So that sister, distressed at having endured a calumny of a kind that had never even entered her thoughts, and being unable to bear it, flung herself into the river secretly and lost her life. *4* Likewise the calumniator, recognizing that her calumny was wicked, and that she had committed this abomination, went and hanged herself, she too being unable to bear (the shame of) the affair. So when the **priest** came, the rest of the sisters told him the affair. And he ordered first that the sacrifice should not be offered for either of them; and as for those who had not kept the peace, since they had been accomplices of the calumniator and had believed the scandal, he separated them (from the rest) for seven years, depriving them of **Communion**.

• • • • • • • • •

Comment continued:

We learn from this account that, like Buddhist nunneries, the Christian nunnery was also located nearby the men's monastery, and that senior members, **clergy** (a **priest** and a **deacon** – not ordinary monks), were the only males to enter the monastery for the express purpose of celebrating the sacrament of **Communion**. Did these Christian **clergy** also conduct the sacrament of Confession/Penance for the nuns? For this is what is implied by regulations 4, 5, and 6, laid down by the Buddha for nuns:

[4] "At the end of residence, a Buddhist nun shall invite criticism in both congregations in regard to what has been seen, or heard, or suspected.

[5] "If a nun be guilty of serious sin, she shall undergo penance of half a month toward both the congregations.

[6] "When a female novice has spent her two years in the practice of the six rules, she shall seek ordination from both the congregations."

The expression "at the end of residence" means 'at the end of the three months of the Indian annual monsoon season spent in residence at a sheltering monastery'. After this rainy period, nuns would then be free to move about. Before they left, they were to "invite criticism in both congregations (men's and women's)". The monks, of course, would invite criticism only in the men's congregation! This account harks back to the earliest Buddhist practice, when monks were truly homeless wanderers.

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*From *The Lausiac History of Palladius*, trans. by W.K. Lowther Clarke (London: The Macmillan Company, 1918), pp. 116-117 – text transcribed by Roger Pearse, 2003:

< http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/palladius_lausiac_02_text.htm#C33 >

Necklace with lineage of 18 heads of Buddhist Arhats (Lohan) – Far East

(4) Lineages of Patriarchs

As quoted earlier, in Section 6 on 'Parallel Sayings', the following statement of the Buddha, from the *Majjhima Nikāya*, might be interpreted as establishing, in the person of Sāriputta (Skt. *Śāriputra*), the foundation of a lineage of future patriarchs. If so, such an establishment could be viewed as a prototype of the later, Christian example, as recorded in *Matthew*. The Buddha said:

> "Were it to be said of anyone: 'He is the son of the Blessed One, born of his breast, an heir in the dharma, not an heir in material things,' it is of my follower **Sāriputta** that this should be said. The matchless wheel of dharma is to be kept rolling by Sāriputta." – *Majjhima Nikāya 111:22-23*

> Then Jesus said: '**Simon son of Jonah**, you are favoured indeed! You did not learn that from mortal man; it was revealed to you by my heavenly Father. And I say this to you: You are Peter, the Rock; and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall never conquer it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; what you forbid on earth shall be forbidden in heaven, and what you allow on earth shall be allowed in heaven.' – *Matthew 16:17-19 NEB*

However, Sāriputta (*Śāriputra*) never became the founding Patriarch of Buddhism, as he predeceased the Buddha. The honor of being "Founding Father" of Buddhism went to Kassapa (Skt. *Kāśyapa*), who was chosen by fellow monks to preside at the First Council, a few months after the death of the Buddha.

It is a historical fact that Buddhist sects have, over the centuries, recorded lineages of patriarchs. For example, consider the following edited quotation from the Wikipedia article on 'Bōdhidharma':

> the idea of a lineage of Chan [Zen] Buddhism in China dates back to the epitaph for Faru (**C**ommon **E**ra 638-689), a disciple of the 5th patriarch Hongren (**C.E.** 601–674), which gives a line of descent identifying Bōdhidharma as the *first* patriarch [in *China*]. But Bōdhidharma, was considered the *28th* patriarch of Chan/Zen [taking into consideration the prior patriarchs in *India*], and he is said to have been a disciple of Prajñātāra, thus establishing the latter as the 27th patriarch in India.
>
> In the *Song of Enlightenment* of Yongjia Xuanjue (665-713) – one of the chief disciples of Huineng, the 6th patriarch [in China] of Chan [Zen] Buddhism – it is written that Bōdhidharma was the 28th patriarch in a line of descent [in India] from Mahā-Kāśyapa, a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha, and the first patriarch of Chan [Zen] Buddhism:
>
> Mahā-Kāśyapa was the first, leading the line of transmission;
> Twenty-eight Fathers followed him in the West [i.e., in India];
> The Lamp was then brought over the sea to this country;
> And Bōdhidharma became the First Father here:
> His mantle, as we all know, passed over six Fathers,
> And by them many minds came to see the Light.
>
> The idea of a line of descent from Śākyamuni Buddha became an important part of the lineage tradition of the Chan/Zen school.

Now, consider some of the **Patriarchal claims of various Christian churches** (gathered from Wikipedia, under the topic of 'Patriarch' – note: this is *not* an exhaustive list, by any means):

1. The Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church of ALEXANDRIA belongs to a lineage of patriarchs going back to the 'Apostolic Throne of St. **MARK**'.
2. The Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, ROME, belongs to a lineage of patriarchs going back to the 'Apostolic Throne of St. **PETER**'.
3. The Greek Patriarch of ANTIOCH, presiding over the Bishops of Antioch, also belongs to a patriarchal lineage claiming to go back to the 'Apostolic Throne of St. **PETER**'.
4. The Catholicus of the Jacobite Syrian Christian Church, a.k.a. the Metropolitan of the KERALA (INDIA) St. Thomas Christians, belongs to a Patriarchal lineage going back to the Apostle, St. **THOMAS**.
5. The Greek Orthodox can trace their JERUSALEM Patriarchy back in a direct and uninterrupted line to St. **JAMES**, the Just, brother of Jesus.

Comment:

As with most parallels between Buddhism and Christianity, the question arises whether or not the Christian practice has been influenced by the earlier Buddhist practice. We have already seen how some Buddhist practices have arisen out of previous centuries of Indian culture: *vihāras* (monasteries) out of *āśramas* (āshrams) and the 'turn the other cheek' precept out of one of the core goals of the Indian ascetic life: to remain internally undisturbed by either pleasurable temptations or pains. What the Buddha, himself, appeared to have uniquely added to this goal was to urge an attitude of pacifistic compassionate love toward even those who may persecute you. Christianity had no such ancient Middle East antecedents in these matters – only missionary Buddhism from South Asia. Thus, over the centuries, Christianity's reaction to Jesus' command to 'turn the other cheek' has often become the view that it is only hyperbolic, etc. The compelling inference, from these examples, therefore, is that Christianity was, indeed, originally influenced by Buddhism, though the various cultural environments of the Middle East would soon greatly transform those influences.

The same direction of influence can be perceived with respect to the Christian system of Patriarchy. In India, this system is called '*Guru Parampara*' and existed in India centuries before the Buddha's time. The on-line 'Hinduism Dictionary on *Guru Parampara*' gives this definition:

> '*guru-parampara*' (Sanskrit) 'Preceptorial succession' (literally, 'from one teacher to another'). A line of spiritual gurus in authentic succession of initiation; the chain of mystical power and authorized continuity passed from guru to guru.

Another similarity between the Buddhist and Christian systems of Patriarchy must be mentioned. Both systems have used elections to choose the person who should carry on the tradition. In Buddhism, the monks of the order would elect its Patriarch's successor. In Roman Catholicism, it is the long-standing practice that the Cardinals elect a Pope's successor.

However, there is a difference between early Buddhism and Roman Catholicism when it comes to the nature and limit of the authority which is passed on in the leadership succession. There is nothing in early Buddhist tradition to equal the New Testament passage already quoted, where Jesus seems to be passing on an unlimited, supernatural authority to Peter:

> 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; what you forbid on earth shall be forbidden in heaven, and what you allow on earth shall be allowed in heaven.'

Buddhist 'Guru Parampara'

A.J. Bahm's passage, in his book, *Philosophy of the Buddha* (p. 123), quotes some of the Buddha's last words of advice before he died – words which are totally different in import from the sweeping authority granted by Jesus to Peter in Matthew's Gospel:

> Evidence that Gotama himself had no intention of imposing a specific set of regulations upon his followers may be seen in the following report. When Gotama was getting old, ill, and about to die, Ananda expressed the hope that Gotama 'would not pass away until at least he had left instructions as touching the Order'. 'What, then, Ananda? Does the Order expect that of me? I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine; for in respect of the truths, Ananda, the Tathagata [i.e., the Buddha] has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher, who keeps some things back. Surely, Ananda, should there be anyone who harbours the thought, "It is I who will lead the brotherhood," or, "The Order is dependent upon me," it is he who should lay down instructions in any matter concerning the Order. Now the Tathagata, Ananda, thinks not that it is he who should lead the brotherhood, or that the Order is dependent upon him. Why then should he leave instructions in any matter concerning the Order? . . . Therefore, O Ananda, be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge to yourselves.' (***D**ialogues of the **B**uddha*, **P**t. II, pp. **107**, **108**; also ***T**he **B**ook of the **K**indred **S**ayings*, **V**ol. **V**, p. **132.**)

Christian 'Guru Parampara'

In passages from < http:www.geocities.com/paulntobin/apostolicaim.html >, the writer makes it clear how, in the early churches, the question of religious authority depended on establishing a convincing Patriarchal lineage with which one could attempt to overcome one's opponents, turning them into heretics:

In their battle with heretics during the second century C.E., the early church fathers heavily relied on the concept of apostolic succession. To these proto-orthodox Christians, theirs was the true faith because their theologies came from the apostles themselves, guaranteed by the succession of bishops who were themselves appointed by the apostles. Two prominent examples are given below from the works of Irenæus (c.120-c. 200) (*Against Heresies*) and Tertullian (c.160-c. 225) (*Prescription Against Heretics*):

Irenæus – *Against Heresies 3:3:1*

> It is within the power of all, therefore, in every Church, who may wish to see the truth, to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world; and we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and [to demonstrate] the succession of these men to our own times; those who neither taught nor knew of anything like what these [heretics] rave about.

Tertullian – *Prescription Against Heretics 21*

> Since the Lord Jesus Christ sent the apostles to preach, (our rule is) that no others ought to be received as preachers than those whom Christ appointed. . . . If, then, these things are so, it is in the same degree manifest that all doctrine which agrees with the apostolic churches – those moulds and original sources of the faith must be reckoned for truth, as undoubtedly containing that which the (said) churches received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, Christ from God. Whereas all doctrine must be prejudged as false which savors of contrariety to the truth of the churches and apostles of Christ and God. It remains, then, that we demonstrate whether this doctrine of ours . . . has its origin in the tradition of the apostles, and whether all other doctrines do not ipso facto proceed from falsehood. We hold communion with the apostolic churches because our doctrine is in no respect different from theirs. This is our witness of truth.

Two contemporary commentaries on the Buddhist 'Lineage of Patriarchs'

1) English version of *Buddhapia* [on-line encylopædia of subjects relating to Buddhism = '*Buddhapædia*']
< http://eng.buddhapia.com/_Service/**BUDDHAPIA**/0000000163/ >

"Dharma Lineages (or Buddhist Genealogy) of the Great Buddhist Masters"

Dharma lineages are the "family tree" of the Buddhist tradition. These genealogical charts show how the Buddhist Dharma or true teachings have been passed down through the ages. Dharma lineages usually begin with Śākyamuni Buddha and extend down through a line of Buddhist Masters up to the present day. In the Seon (Zen) Buddhist tradition, the Buddhist lamp – that is the "mind of Śākyamuni" – is said to be directly transmitted from master to disciple. The Japanese Seon (Zen) Master Dogen once wrote he received the Dharma transmission from his master "finger to finger, face to face." While this emphasis on direct transmission is particularly characteristic of Seon (Zen), the passing on of the Buddhist teachings from teacher to student has played an important role in all Buddhist schools. By investigating the Dharma Lineages of the Great Buddhist Masters, we catch a glimpse of how Buddhist schools have evolved through the ages.

2) And, again, another passage from an on-line source, the Korean Conference of Buddhist Professors 2004: Karl Werner's article, "Buddhism and Peace: The Theory and the Reality in Historical Perspective":

> Sectarian divisions [in Laṅkā] were [ended] by royal decree under Parakrāma Bāhu the Great (1153-1186) who ruled from Polonnaruva. He ordered unification of sects under the authority of Mahāvihāra. Thēravāda tradition has remained dominant on the island ever since despite some temporary clandestine Tantric practices. Its [the Thēravāda tradition's] reputation brought, in 1476, to Laṅkā a delegation from Pegu in Burma seeking the renewal of unbroken ordination succession for its Sangha. Burma reciprocated in 1597 when ordination succession on Laṅkā was lost due to wars after the arrival of the Portuguese.

The lineage of family heritage (via transmission of **DNA**) is, here, replaced by the lineage of transmission of the Buddha's knowledge (**Dharma** and other doctrine). Among the Brahmins, different clans traced their (**DNA**) lines (*gōtras*) back to various legendary sages, and their sacred knowledge of the Vēdas, back through a system of *guru parampara* which was severely restricted to caste members only. Among the ruling caste (Kṣatriyas), there were those who traced their (**DNA**) line back to the legendary progenitor of the Solar

Dynasty, and others, to the progenitor of the Lunar Dynasty. The Buddhists adopted, from the Brahmins, the tradition of transmission of spiritual wisdom, *but without any caste restriction!*:

> [The Buddha said:] "Just as the great rivers, on reaching the great ocean, lose their former names and identities and are reckoned simply as the great ocean, so do followers lose their former names and clans and become sons of the Buddha's clan." – *Vinaya, Çullavagga* ***9:1:4***

The Buddha's knowledge, then, was to be passed down generation after generation of monks, under the guidance of leading Elders, ('*mahā-thēra-s*') who had attained a thorough knowledge of the doctrine. It is in this sense that the term '*thēraputta*' came to be applied to Buddhist monks in a monastery under the leadership of a *Mahā-Thēra* ('Great-Elder'). '*Thēraputta*' (Pāli) is a compound of the two words: *thēra* = elder, and *putta* = son(s). The fem. of the Pāli word *thēra* ('elder') is *thērī*, from (Skt.) *sthavirī* or *sthavirā*, and 'daughter', (Skt.) *putrī*. Emperor Aśōka's medical missionary monks who arrived in Alexandria, Egypt, in the 3rd century **B.C.E.**, and their followers and converts were to be known by this name, which, to the Greeks, would sound like '*therapeutai*'. These monks' skill in healing the sick, both physically and spiritually, would enhance a medical connotation of the Greek term, '*therapeutai*', and its later English offshoots, 'therapy', 'therapeutics', etc.

> [Besides t]he Homeric noun *therapon*, Homer also has the denominative verb *therapeuein*, meaning "to serve". It's from that root that Greek formed Philo's noun *therapeutes* by adding the "doer" suffix, *-tes*, a very ordinary Greek formation. . . . (LSJ's earliest exx. for *therapeutes* are from Plato and Xenaphon).[1]

The different meanings in the Skt./Pāli and Greek terms are conflated as follows:

> Sanskrit: *sthavira-putra* (masc. sing.) > Pāli: *thēra-putta*, conflates w/ Greek: *therapeutai* (masc. pl.)
> Sanskrit: *sthavira-putrī* (fem. sing.) > Pāli: *thēra-putri*, conflates w/ Greek: *therapeutrides* (fem. pl.)

No wonder Philo was uncertain of the etymology of the terms! But the conflation of the various meanings of the Sanskrit/Pāli and Greek was extremely apt. The Greek idea of the verb "to serve" was not as a servant or slave, but as a companion or as a devotee of a god – or, even more meaningfully, as a son who would happily serve his parents (or vice versa). Philo makes this aspect abundantly clear while describing the Therapeutæ's pentecostal banquet in his work, "On the Contemplative Life" (ll. 71-72):

> In this holy banquet there is as I have said no slave; but free men do the serving, performing their menial chores not under compulsion or awaiting orders but freely anticipating the demands with eagerness and zeal. Nor is it any and every free man . . . , but young members of the society . . . selected with all care and according to merit . . . men of good character and nobility, who are pressing on to reach the summit of virtue. These give their services gladly and eagerly as true sons do to their fathers and mothers, regarding [the older members] as their common parents, as more their own than those who are so by blood, since to the right-minded there is no closer tie than nobility of character.[2] Ungirt and with loose-flowing tunics they enter to do their serving, so that no trace of servile mien be introduced.[3]

The Therapeutæ in Egypt

By the first half of the 1st century **C.E.** – almost three hundred years after Aśōka's Buddhist medical missionary monks first arrived in Egypt – the number of converts of the Therapeutæ seems to have gradually expanded and morphed into, largely, groups of Jewish/Coptic proto- or quasi-Christians. In his book, *Coptic Egypt: The Christians of the Nile*,[4] Christian Cannuyer writes about the "**first Christians of Egypt**":

> There is little doubt that the first Egyptian Christians were Jews. Indeed, the largest community of the Jewish diaspora was in Alexandria, the great Greco-Egyptian trading city on the Mediterranean coast. Alexandria was the cosmopolitan metropolis *par excellence* – a melting pot in which the tradition of Greek thought, ancient Eastern religions, and new mystery cults all intermingled. . . . Around the year 50 [or 30 **C.E.**] Philo of Alexandria, a Hellenistic (Greek) Jewish philosopher, . . . described a community of Jewish ascetics, the Therapeutæ, who lived some distance away from the metropolis in the semidesert district of Lake Mareotis. His narrative sheds some light on the lifestyle of these earliest Christian monks. According to the Acts of the Apostles (2:10), Jewish pilgrims from Egypt had taken part in the Pentecost in Jerusalem, going forth to preach the Christian Gospel after the first Easter. The apostle Paul, who died c. 65, had . . . debated an Alexandrian Jewish preacher named Apollos, described in the Acts of the Apostles (18:24-28) as "knowing only the baptism of John," who had become a Christian "in his country."

Below are three passages from, "On the Contemplative Life",[5] in which Philo describes the Therapeutæ in ways which are very reminiscent of the words of Jesus:

(*2*) [T]he purpose and will of [these] lovers of wisdom is discovered in their very name and title; for they are most fitly called Therapeutæ (healers, male gender) and Therapeutridæ (healers, female gender).

(*13*) But then, out of their yearning after the immortal and blessed life, they esteem their mortal life to have already ended, and so leave their possessions to their sons or daughters, or, in default of them, to other kinsmen, of their own free will leaving to these their heritage in advance; but, if they have no kinsmen, to their comrades and friends. . . .

(*18*) So soon, then, as they have divested themselves of their properties, without allowing anything to further ensnare them, they flee without turning back, having abandoned brethren, children, wives, parents, all the throng of their kindred, all their friendships with companions, yes, their countries in which they were born and bred.

Compare:

[Jesus said:] 'No man is worthy of me who cares more for father or mother than for me; no man is worthy of me who cares more for son or daughter; no man is worthy of me who does not take up his cross and walk in my footsteps.' – *Matthew 10:37-38*

[A man said to Jesus:] 'I will follow you, sir; but let me first say good-bye to my people at home.' To him Jesus said, 'No one who sets his hand to the plough and then keeps looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.' – *Luke 9:61-62*

These forceful views of the Therapeutæ and Jesus go against Jewish culture and the laws of Moses (Jesus: "Let the dead bury the dead" vs. "Honor your father and mother"). They are, in fact, far more compatible with Buddhist monasticism![6]

* * * * * * * * *

Notes

[1]Communication from Marc Wilkin. For a thorough analysis of these terms, see Joan Taylor's book, *Jewish Women Philosophers of First-Century Alexandria: Philo's 'Therapeutae' Reconsidered*.

[2]The translator notes Mark 3:35, and I would also note Jesus' lesson of washing his disciples' feet.

[3]*Philo of Alexandria: The Contemplative Life, The Giants, and Selections*, translation and introduction by David Winston (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1981), pp. 53-54.

[4]Translated from the French (*Egypte copte*) by Sophie Hawkes (Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001), p. 18.

[5]Geza Vermes and Martin D. Goodman, eds., *The Essenes according to the Classical Sources* (Sheffield: Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies and JSOT Press, 1989).

[6]G. Schopen, however, in *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997) and in *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), has shown that Indian monks and nuns, early in the Common Era, were not quite ready to disassociate themselves as absolutely from their parents, other relatives, and friends as their religious precepts might suggest.

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(5) Buddhist Bōdhisattvas / Christian Saints

Har Dayal, in his book, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, points out that at the beginning of the Christian Era, the Mahāyāna Buddhists had already begun the process of deifying the Buddha:

> The *devas* [the gods, demigods /'angels' of the Indian pantheon] were regarded by the Buddhists as glorified super-men, who enjoyed bliss and power, but who were subject to the law of death and rebirth and needed wisdom and liberation as much as the human beings on earth. They were far inferior to the Buddha in character and knowledge. They visited him as disciples and suppliants, and even rendered menial service to him. . . . As the Buddhists despised the *devas*, they put the Buddha in their place. . . . As a matter of fact, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* (Pāli: *Veṇhu* and *Isāna*) are mentioned only as secondary deities in the list of *devas* in the *Dīgha-Nikāya*. They are not regarded as the equals of the old *devas*, *Brahmā* and *Śakra* [*Indra*].[1]

Phases of Development of the Doctrine:

> The *bodhisattva* [Pāli *bodhisatta*] doctrine probably originated in the second century B.C. The word *bodhisatta* is very old and occurs in the Pāli *Nikāyas*. Gautama Buddha speaks of himself as a *bodhisatta*, when he refers to the time before [his] attainment of Enlightenment. This seems to be the earliest signification of the word. It was applied to Gautama Buddha as he was in his last earthly life before the night of Enlightenment. The following clause recurs frequently in the *Majjhima-Nikāya*: "In the days before my Enlightenment, when as yet I was only a *bodhisatta*, etc." The word also seems to be used only in connection with a Buddha's last life in the *Mahāpadānasutta* (*Dīgha-Nikāya* ii, 13) and the *Acchariy-abbhuta-dhamma-sutta* (*Majjhima-Nikāya* iii, 119). In the *Kathā-vatthu*, certain questions are raised with regard to the *bodhisatta's* actions; the signs on his body, his rebirth in a state of woe, and the possibility of his harbouring heretical opinions or practising asceticism are discussed. It is clear that the previous lives of Gautama Buddha and other saints have now begun to excite interest and speculation. But there was no new systematic doctrine in the middle of the third century B.C., when the *Kathā-vatthu* was composed. The idea of a *bodhisattva's* renunciation of personal *nirvāṇa* is stated clearly and unequivocally in the *Pr. Pā Aṣṭa.* [*Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra*]; and *bodhi* is set up as the new ideal in the *Sad. Pu.* [*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*]. These treatises belong mainly to the first century B.C. We may infer that the Mahāyāna doctrine in its earliest form was definitely formulated in the second century B.C. This was also the period of the Hindu revival under the *Śuṅga* dynasty. Most scholars are of opinion that the Mahāyāna doctrine originated in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era.[2]

We see, then, that in the 2nd or 1st centuries B.C., the Mahāyānists began to raise the Buddha to the superhuman, abstract status of a god. The common folk began to direct their devotion to intermediaries:

> The *bodhisattvas* were thus chosen for worship and adoration in order to satisfy the needs of the devout and pious Buddhists. The *bodhisattva* doctrine may be said to have been the inevitable outcome of the tendency towards *bhakti* and the new conception of Buddhahood. This view seems to be confirmed by the fact that the Hīnayānists, who did not de-humanise and universalise the Buddha, did not feel the necessity of inventing and adoring the *bodhisattvas*. The analogy of other religious movements also proves that uneducated men and women require some attributes of human personality in the superhuman beings, whom they are willing to worship. They feel more at home with such helpers. They shrink from the measureless immensity and unapproachable sublimity of the universal Spirit, whether it is called *Brahman*, *Dharma-kāya*, *Allah* or *God*. The development of saint-worship in Islam and Christianity was due to the same causes as led [earlier] to the cult of the *bodhisattvas* in Buddhism. Both Islam and Christianity teach that God has personality and love and answers prayers; but millions of Moslems and Christians have found solace in the worship of the saints. They have felt the need of these human intercessors as intermediate objects of worship. They have placed them between God and Man. Saint-worship was firmly established in the Christian Church as early as the fourth century A.D., as P. Dörfier and H. Thurston have pointed out.[3]

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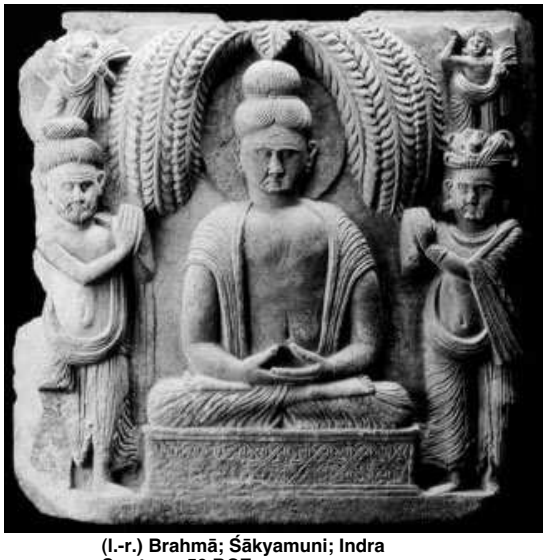
[1]Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.,1932), p, 33. [2]Ibid., p. 43-44. [3]Ibid., p. 35.

Earliest Images of the Buddha

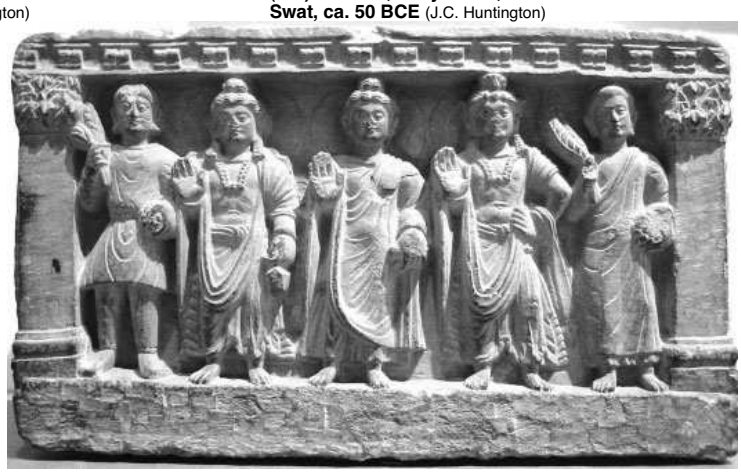
Buddhism gave rise to a great movement of art. But during the first four centuries, the Buddha's image is not to be seen. His presence is only indicated by symbols, as you will have noticed, in the various panels already illustrated in this book.

(l.-r.) Brahmā; Śākyamuni; Indra
Swat, ca. 100 BCE (J.C. Huntington)

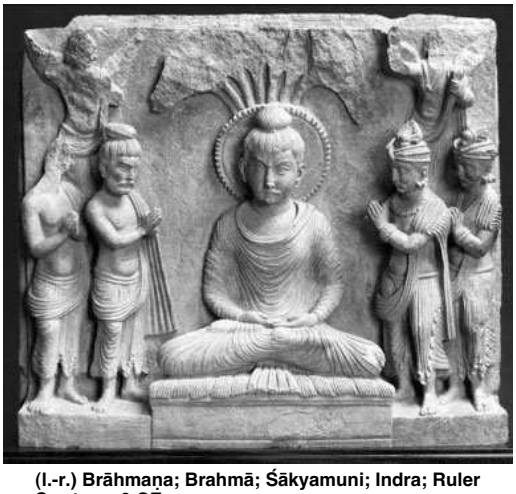


(l.-r.) Brahmā; Śākyamuni; Indra
Swat, ca. 50 BCE (J.C. Huntington)

(l.-r.) Indra; Śākyamuni; Brahmā
Bajur, ca. 100 BCE (J.C. Huntington)



(l.-r.) Devotee; Maitrēya; Buddha; Avalōkitēśvara; Monk
Gandhāra, 2nd - 3rd CE (Wikipedia)



(l.-r.) Brāhmaṇa; Brahmā; Śākyamuni; Indra; Ruler
Swat, ca. 0 CE (J.C. Huntington)

(l.-r.) Maitrēya; Brāhmaṇa; Buddha; Ruler; Avalōkitēśvara
Gandhāra, ca. 123 CE (J.C. Huntington)

(6) Veneration of the Relics of the Buddha, Bōdhisattvas, and Christian Saints

> A relic is an object, especially a piece of the body or a personal item of someone of religious significance, carefully preserved with an air of *veneration* as a tangible memorial. Relics are an important aspect of Buddhism, some denominations of Christianity, Hinduism, shamanism, and many other personal belief systems. – *Wikipedia*

This topic deserves a heading separate from the previous one because of the remarkable fact that the Christian veneration of the relics of saints and martyrs was viewed by some non-Christians in the Western world as a repugnant practice, even after Constantine's conversion to Christianity. This fact is revealed in the writings of Julian "the Apostate", who ruled briefly as emperor, from C.E. 360 to the 26th of June 363. Julian was certainly one of the best educated of all the rulers of the Roman Empire. Given a grounding in Christianity during his youth, he later became strongly critical of that religion, as the following selections from Book I of his work, *Against the Galilæans*, bear witness. The Julian passages, here, are quoted in Cyril of Alexandria's work, *Contra Julianum*, ed. and trans. by Wilmer Cave Wright, in vol. 1 of *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, 3 vols. (London, 1923), pp. 413-418. Julian writes scathingly of the Christian practice of "worshipping" the relics of their saints and martyrs:

> But you [Christians] are so misguided that you have not even remained faithful to the teachings that were handed down to you by the apostles. And these also have been altered, so as to be worse and more impious, by those who came after. At any rate neither Paul nor Matthew nor Luke nor Mark ventured to call Jesus God. But the worthy John, since he perceived that a great number of people in many of the towns of Greece and Italy had already been infected by this disease, and because he heard, I suppose, that even the tombs of Peter and Paul were being worshipped – secretly, it is true, but still he did hear this, – he, I say, was the first to venture to call Jesus God. And after he had spoken briefly about John the Baptist he referred again to the Word which he was proclaiming, and said, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." [*John* 1:14] . . .
>
> [W]ho could but detest as they deserve all those doctrines that you have invented as a sequel, while you keep adding many corpses newly dead to the corpse [of Jesus!] of long ago?* You have filled the whole world with tombs and sepulchres, and yet in your scriptures it is nowhere said that you must grovel among tombs and pay them honour. But you have gone so far in iniquity that you think you need not listen even to the words of Jesus of Nazareth on this matter. Listen then to what he says about sepulchres: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres; outward the tomb appears beautiful, but within it is full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." [*Matthew* 23:27] If, then, Jesus said that sepulchres are full of uncleanness, how can you invoke God at them? . . .
>
> Therefore, since this is so, why do you grovel among tombs? Do you wish to hear the reason? It is not I who will tell you, but the prophet Isaiah: "They lodge among tombs and in caves for the sake of dream visions."† You observe, then, how ancient among the Jews was this work of witchcraft, namely, sleeping among tombs for the sake of dream visions. And indeed it is likely that your apostles, after their teacher's death, practised this and handed it down to you from the beginning, I mean to those who first adopted your faith, and that they themselves performed their spells more skilfully than you do, and displayed openly to those who came after them the places in which they performed this witchcraft and abomination.

Julian's explanation, here, which traces the Christian practice of venerating relics back to the type of witchcraft condemned by the prophet Isaiah, is of course totally mistaken! What strikes me as remarkable is that

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*For the collection of the "bones and skulls of criminals," and the apotheosis of the martyrs as it struck a contemporary pagan, see Eunapius, *Lives* p. 424 (Loeb edition). Julian, in *Letter* 22. 429d, commends the Christian care of graves; here he ridicules the veneration of the relics of the martyrs, which was peculiarly Christian and offensive to pagans. [These two footnotes are W.C. Wright's.]

†In part from *Isaiah* 65:4; the literal meaning of the Hebrew is "[they] that sit in graves and pass the night in secret places," a reference to incubation [i.e., visitation by spirits] for the sake of dream oracles, a Hellenic custom. Julian professes to believe that this practice, which Isaiah abhorred, was kept up by the Christians.

Julian is so completely clueless about Christianity's debt to Buddhism in this matter! The Emperor Aśōka had spread the memorial relic tumuli (*stūpas*) all over India, across to Śrī Laṅkā, and westward into the land which is, today, called Afghanistan. And there is the 'historical' document in Śrī Laṅkā, the *Mahāvaṁśa*, which records that thirty thousand Buddhist *bhikkhus* (monks) traveled from the Greek city of Alexandria to this island, around 140 **B.C.E.**, to attend the dedication of the Buddha's relics and the laying of the foundation stone of the Great Stūpa, in Anurādhapura. The presiding patron at this ceremony was the illustrious Śrī Laṅkan king, Duṭṭhagāmaṇi. The monks who had come there formed the largest gathering of religious devotees on record, in ancient times. Here is the role call of the groups of monks and their leaders coming from *outside* the island of Śrī Laṅkā (most of them from India):

80,000 monks from the *Rājagaha* region in India, led by *Thēra Indugutta* (Skt. Indu-gupta)
12,000 monks from *Isipatāna*, near Benares, led by *Mahā-Thēra Dhammasēna* (Dharma-sēna)
60,000 monks from the *Jētarāma* monastery, India, led by *Mahā-Thēra Piyadassi* (Priya-darśi)
18,000 monks fr. the *Mahāvana* monastery, Vaiśālī, led by *Thēra Urubuddharakkhita* (Uru-buddha-rakṣita)
30,000 monks from the *Ghōṣitarāma* monastery, Kōśambi, led by *Thēra Uru-dhamma-rakkhita*
40,000 monks from the *Dakkhināgiri* monastery, Ujjēni, India. led by *Thēra Uru-saṁgha-rakkhita*
160,000 monks from the *Aśōkarāma* monastery, Pupphapura (Puṣpapura/Pāṭalipura) led by *Thēra Mittinna*
280,000 monks from the *Kaśmīr* country, led by *Thēra Uttinna*
460,000 monks from the *Pallavabhōgga* (N. Karṇataka-Andhra-Tamiḻnāḍu area), led by the 'wise' *Mahādēva*
30,000 monks from *Alasanda* (**Alexandria**), led by the *Yōna* (**Greek**) *Thera Mahā-Dhamma-rakkhita*
60,000 monks from the *Viñjhia* (Vindhya) forest mountains, Central India, led by *Thēra Uttara*
30,000 monks from the *Bōdhimanda* monastery, located ??, led by *Mahā-Thēra Cittagutta* (Chitra-gupta)
80,000 monks from the *Vanavāsa* country, S. Karṇataka, led by *Mahā-Thēra Candagutta* (Chandra-gupta)
96,000 monks from the *Mahā-Kēlāsa* monastery, Himālyas, led by *Mahā-Thēra Sūriyagutta* (Sūrya-gupta)

1,436,000 monks, **TOTAL**, from **outside of Śrī Laṅkā**

The great number of monks gathering from *within* the island of Śrī Laṅkā was not recorded in the *Mahāvaṁśa*.

If the total number of foreign monks mentioned above (1,436,000) seems excessive, keep in mind the much bigger numbers of religious devotees (Indian and foreign) attending the Mahā Kumbh Mēlā, held in India every 12 years. This is a report of the Mēlā in 2001:

> The world's largest congregation of religious devotees in history – 100 million people at Mahā Kumbh Mēlā in Allahabad, India, celebrated a powerful planetary alignment – January, 2001. . . . Himālayan saints, sages, seers, sādhus, and yogis . . . make their rare appearance at Kumbh Mēlā in Prayāg, the confluence of the Ganges, Jamunā, and mythical Saraswatī Rivers. Kumbh Mēlā takes place during an auspicious planetary position that is believed to medicate the Ganges waters and turn the river into nectar. Millions arrive to purify their inner self through holy bathing rituals.
>
> – From the internet: < *www.divinerevelation.org/KumbhMela.html* >

The number 100 million (1/10th the population of present day India and, roughly, 1/3rd the population of the U.S.A.!) may seem to be a great exaggeration, but all observers would agree that the number, in 2001, was far greater than 1.5 million. But to get back to the Greek connection with the mammoth rally at the Great Stūpa in Anurādhapura, Śrī Laṅkā, the passage in the *Mahāvaṁśa* (chp. 29) which mentions 'Alexandria', has been translated by Wilhelm Geiger (1912) as follows (emphasis and clarifying interpolations added):

> From *Alasanda* [Alexandria], the city of the *Yonas* [Greeks], came the *thera* [elder] *Yona-* [the Greek] *Mahā-Dhammarakkhita* [Skt. Mahā-Dharmarakṣita] with thirty thousand *bhikkhus* [monks].

Which may be rephrased as:

> From Alexandria, the city of the Greeks, came thirty thousand monks led by the Greek Elder, Great-Dharmarakṣita.

The first problem the historian faces is to decide which Greek city called Alexandria is being referred to in the *Mahāvaṁśa*.

The second problem will be to decide which of the several *Mahā-Dhammarakkhitas* (Great-Dharmarakṣitas) on record is meant?

First let me give a list (after Wikipedia's) of the many cities called 'Alexandria' that sprang up in the wake of the military conquests of Alexander the Great:

1. Alexandria in Egypt: the site was chosen in Jan., 330 **B.C.E.**; and the city was founded on April 7th. This was a largely Greek city, although it had a native quarter and a Jewish quarter.
2. Alexandria in Susiana, not far from the mouth of the Tigris
3. Alexandria in Troas (a town near Troy)
4. Alexandria by the Latmus
5. Alexandria near Issus (modern Iskenderun in Turkey)
6. Alexandria in Aria (modern Herāt, Afghanistan)
7. Alexandria in Arachosia (modern Kandahār, Afghanistan)
8. Alexandria in the Caucasus
9. Alexandria Eschat
10. Alexandria on the Oxus
11. Alexandria in Margiana
12. Alexandria on the Indus

At this point let me suggest that determining which Greek city 'Alexandria' or which Greek Buddhist elder by the name of 'Mahā-Darmarakṣita' is being referred to in the *Mahāvaṁśa* is not all that crucial for the purpose of establishing the profound cultural intercourse between the Hellenic world and Buddhist lands.

The most natural interpretation of the expression 'Alexandria, the city of the Greeks', in the context of the existence of twelve cities of that same name, is to take it as the greatest of those Greek cities. Each of the eleven satellite Alexandrias would hardly boast a population of 30,000 Buddhist monks. Would it not be reasonable to assume that the 30,000 monks came from all areas of the Hellenic world, with the bulk coming from Egypt with its capital city, Alexandria? And the Greek Mahā-Dharmarakṣita who led them could have come from any one of the twelve Alexandrias – but, again, most probably, from Egypt's.

That Egypt had a considerable population of 'Greek' Jewish and Gentile Buddhist converts, at the very beginning of the **C**ommon **E**ra, some 140 years after the enshrining of the Buddha's relic in Śrī Laṅkā, is made clear by the 'Greek' Jew, Philo of Alexandria, in his work, *On Ascetics*, where he wrote (c. 30 **C.E.**) of the *Therapeutæ*, a Buddhist, proto-Christian sect:

> Now this class of persons may be met with in many places, for it was fitting that both Greece and the country of the barbarians [non-pejorative term, here, for 'non-Greeks' – mainly Indians?] should partake of whatever is perfectly good; and there is the greatest number of such men in Egypt, in every one of the districts, or *nomi* as they are called, and especially around Alexandria; and from all quarters those who are the best of these *Therapeutæ* proceed on their pilgrimage to some most suitable place as if it were their country, which is beyond the Mareotic lake, lying in a somewhat level plain a little raised above the rest, being suitable for their purpose by reason of its safety and also of the fine temperature of the air.*

Philo, himself, does not seem to be aware of the Buddhist/Indian significance of the name *Therapeutæ*, but his interpretation of it (as "Healers") indicates to us that their forebears were, indeed, the "medical" missionaries of the Indian emperor, Aśōka.

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*From *On Ascetics* [a title more commonly translated as *On the Contemplative Life*], by Philo Judæus of Alexandria, in Oliver J. Thatcher, ed., *The Library of Original Sources* (Milwaukee: University Research Extension Co., 1907), Vol. III: *The Roman World*, pp. 355-369 (Section III). Scanned by: J.S. Arkenberg, who has modernized the text. This text is part of the *Internet Ancient History Sourcebook*. The *Sourcebook* is a collection of public domain and copy-permitted texts related to medieval and Byzantine history.

The Efficacy of Relics

The following four paragraphs are from the Wikipedia article on "Relic":

> Many tales of miracles and other marvels were attributed to relics beginning in the early centuries of the church; many of these became especially popular during the Middle Ages. These tales are collected in books of hagiography such as the *Golden Legend* or the works of Cæsar of Heisterbach. These miracle tales made relics much sought after during the Middle Ages.
>
> There are also many relics attributed to Jesus, perhaps most famously the Shroud of Turin, which is claimed to be the burial shroud of Jesus, although this is disputed.
>
> **[T]he "virtue" of relics**
>
> In his introduction to *Gregory of Tours*, Ernest Brehaut analyzed the [6th century] Romano-Christian concepts that gave relics such a powerful draw. He distinguished Gregory's constant usage of "*sanctus*" and "*virtus*", the first with its familiar meaning of "sacred" or "holy", and the second, the mystic potency emanating from the person or thing that is sacred. . . .
>
> The transmissibility of this potency, this *virtus,* is still reflected in the Roman Catholic classifications of relics in degrees, as mentioned above. By transmission, the "*virtus*" might be transmitted to the city. When St. Martin died, November 8, 397, at a village halfway between Tours and Poitiers, the inhabitants of these cities were well ready to fight for his body, which the people of Tours managed to secure by stealth.

Incredibly, this bellicose incident over the bodily relics of a Christian saint has a very famous forerunner in Buddhism. Kevin Trainor, in his book, *Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism* (1997), p. 119, recounts the following occasion, after the death of the Buddha. The ceremonies are being

> conducted by the Malla people of Kusinara, in whose region the Buddha has died. [W]ord spreads of the Buddha's death; seven of the clans from the surrounding territories send emissaries, each proclaiming his clan's right to a share of the relics. The Mallas of Kusinara, in response, announce their intention to keep all the relics for themselves, on the ground that the Buddha died in their territory. Though the text does not actually describe the various groups drawing up their armies in preparation for the battle, this image of an imminent armed conflict became deeply etched in the imagination of later Buddhists, as we know from the bas-reliefs at Sāñcī depicting this scene. [See the illustrations of these two pre-Christian Era panels on p. 48.] A major blood-bath is averted only by the intervention of a Brahmin named Dōṇa (Drōṇa, in Sanskrit), who proposes that the relics be divided into eight equal portions and distributed to the eight claimants. Calling to mind the Buddha's great forbearance, he points to the incongruity between the Buddha's teaching and the aggressive behavior of his followers.

The Sharing of the Relics. *Gandhāra, 2nd-3rd century C.E., ZenYouMitsu Temple, Tokyo.*

The Division of the Buddha's Relics by the Brahmin Drōṇa
(Wikipedia)

History of Christian relics (from < *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relic* >)

One of the earliest sources cited to support the efficacy of relics is found in *2 Kings* 13:20-21:

> *20* Elisha died and was buried. Now Moabite raiders used to enter the country every spring. *21* Once while some Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a band of raiders; so they threw the man's body into Elisha's tomb. When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet. (*NIV*)

These verses are cited to claim that [the very fact of] the Holy Spirit's indwelling [within a physical body] also affects the physical body, that God can do miracles through the bodies of His servants, or both. Also cited is the veneration of Polycarp's relics recorded in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* (written 150–160 **A.D.**). With regards to relics that are objects, an often cited passage is *Acts 19:11–12*, which says that Paul's handkerchiefs were imbued by God with healing power:

> [*And through Paul God worked singular miracles: when handkerchiefs and scarves which had been in contact with his skin were carried to the sick, they were rid of their diseases and the evil spirits came out of them.* (*NEB*)]

Roman Catholic classification and prohibitions

Saint Jerome declared, "We do not worship, we do not adore, for fear that we should bow down to the creature rather than to the creator, but we venerate the relics of the martyrs in order the better to adore him whose martyrs they are" (*Ad Riparium*, i, P.L., XXII, 907).

First-Class Relics

Items directly associated with the events of Christ's life (manger, cross, etc.), or the physical remains of a saint (a bone, a hair, a limb, etc.). Traditionally, a martyr's relics are often more prized than the relics of other saints. Also, some saints' relics are known for their extraordinary incorruptibility and so would have high regard. It is important to note that parts of the saint that were significant to that saint's life are more prized relics. For instance, King St. Stephen of Hungary's right forearm is especially important because of his status as a ruler. A famous theologian's head may be his most important relic. (The head of St. Thomas Aquinas was removed by the monks at the Cistercian abbey at Fossanova where he died.) Logically, if a saint did a lot of travelling then the bones of his feet may be prized. Current Catholic teaching prohibits relics to be divided up into small, unrecognizable parts if they are to be used in liturgy (i.e., as in an altar; see the rubrics listed in 'Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar').

Second-Class Relics

An item that the saint wore (a sock, a shirt, a glove, etc.). Also included is an item that the saint owned or frequently used, for example, a crucifix, book etc. Again, an item more important in the saint's life is thus a more important relic. The Chains of Saint Peter, preserved in San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome, [are] a second-class relic.

Third-Class Relics

Anything which has touched a first or second class relic of a saint.

Importance of Relics in Medieval Christianity

Since the beginning of Christianity, patrons have seen relics as a way to come closer to a person who was deemed divine and thus form a closer bond with God. Since Christians during the Middle Ages often took pilgrimages to shrines of holy people, relics became a large business. The pilgrims saw the purchasing of a relic as a means to bring the shrine back with him or her upon returning home in a small way, since during the Middle Ages the concept of physical proximity to the "holy" (tombs of saints or their personal objects) was considered extremely important (Brown, 89). [The *sale* of relics has since been strictly forbidden by the Church.]

Buddhist relics

In Buddhism, relics of the Buddha and various saints are venerated. Originally, after the Buddha's death, his body was divided for the purpose of relics, and there was an armed conflict between factions for possession of the relics. Afterward, these relics were taken to wherever Buddhism was spread.

Some relics believed to be original relics of Buddha still survive including the much revered Sacred Relic of the tooth of the Buddha in Sri Lanka.

In chapter IV, entitled 'Deaths, Funerals, and the Division of Property', of Gregory Schopen's *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, he writes (p. 98) the following about the origins of the Buddhist 'relic cult':

> Section IV [of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, known to have been translated into Chinese, 405-406 C.E.] . . . describes the origins of what we call the "relic cult" in Monastic Buddhism. Like section III, it deals with questions of access and control and shows the monks and the laity jockeying for position; the monks win, of course, for they wrote the account. Like several other of our selections, its denouement deals not so much with devotion as with "dollars."

And, continuing on pp. 100-101:

> Access and control, however, are not the only issues here. Relics gave rise to festivals; festivals gave rise to trade; trade gave rise to gifts and donations. It is this, in the end, that our text may be about. But to appreciate this particular monastic interest in monastic relics, an established principle of *vinaya* law must be kept in mind. Virtually all the *vinayas* contain rules stipulating that any donation made to the *stūpa* of a Buddha belongs to that *stūpa*, that is, to the Buddha himself, and could not, except under special circumstances . . ., be transferred to, or used by, either the monastic community or an individual monk. . . . [Our text] acknowledges that a token part (the "first fruit" offerings) of the donations in question is to be given to the Buddha in the form of the "Image that Sits in the Shade of the Jambu Tree." This was, apparently, an image of the Buddha that represented him in his first youthful experience of meditation. There are several references to it in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* . . ., and an inscribed second-century image of this sort has been found at Sāñcī. A small part of the donations is also to be used to maintain the *stūpa* of Śāriputra. But the rest – and in this case that is a goodly amount – is to be divided among the monks. Our text hastens to add that in this instance there is no offense, because the donations were not to a *stūpa* of the Buddha but to a *stūpa* of a specific disciple. . . . Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra*, a fifth- to seventh-century monastic handbook . . ., paraphrases our passage as "that which is given to the *stūpa* of a disciple belongs indeed to his fellow monks." Such *stūpas* could, then, come to be a legitimate source of revenue for the monks, and such a possibility may explain what Faxian, a fifth-century Chinese monk, said he saw in India: "wherever monks live they build up *stūpas* in honor of the saints Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, and Ānanda."
>
> We have no idea, of course, if any of the things narrated in our account actually occurred. If, as seems very likely, this account was compiled in the Middle Period [in this case, in the 1st to 4th centuries, C.E.], then it was written hundreds of years after the events it is supposed to be describing and has, in one sense, no historical value at all. But in another sense it is an extremely important historical document: it shows us how Mūlasarvāstivādin *vinaya* masters in the Middle Period chose to construct and to present their past to their fellow monks; it shows us how the issue of who controlled sacred relics had – at least for this period – been settled; more generally it shows us *vinaya* masters in the Middle Period seriously engaged with questions of power, access, relics, and money. These monks almost look like real people.

In chapter X of the same book, Gregory Schopen discusses what the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* has to say about the efficacy of Buddhist relics – or as *Gregory of Tours* puts it, their "*virtus*":

> On the death of the Buddha's peerless disciple, Śāriputra, while he was away on a journey, Śāriputra's attending novice, Cunda (*Chunda*), carried out the cremation of his guru's body, along with the required rituals.
>
> [O]nly after that were his remains (*ring bsrel*), bowl, and robe taken back to Rājagṛha. . . . Cunda hands the remains of Śāriputra over to Ānanda – and here we can begin to use our word "relic". . . . [p. 298]

Ānanda is disconsolate, and the Buddha speaks to him at length to assuage his grief. As Schopen puts it:

> [T]he narrative says, in effect, that first of all what remains are "relics" . . .; but the homily says that the "accumulation, heap, substratum, or material form" . . . of morality, concentration, wisdom, release, and knowledge and vision of release [also] remains. [*Ibid.*]

Schopen goes on to suggest that some early inscriptions from the Northwest, the great Buddhist author Aśvaghōṣa, and a late book of the *Milindapañha*, all "seem to dissolve the distinction between the two and to suggest that one – the "relic" – is permeated, saturated, infused, and enlivened by the other." [p. 299]

This article published on the internet by 'Mountain Butorac' gives a modern day tourist/pilgrim's thoughts on European Christian relics:

Hanging [Out] with the Dead — Relics and the Incorruptibles

October 31, 2007

One of the more fascinating and dare I say haunting encounters one has while traveling is with the relics and incorruptible bodies found in churches throughout the world. Some are hard to find, such as the incorruptible body of St. Antoninus of Florence. He's in the far back corner of the Church of San Marco, which is not found in many guidebooks. Others are prominently displayed, like St. John Vianney. With his head tilted slightly as if waiting to hear a confession, he's above the main altar in the Sanctuaire d'Ars, in Ars, France.

As many are celebrating Halloween and we are approaching All Saints Day, I would like to present to you some of the strangest relics and incorruptible bodies one can find. I mean, really, why pay to be chased around a haunted house by some guy wielding a chain-saw when you can visit these places that are both peculiar and holy?

One of the most curious examples of the dead on display is in the Cappuccin Crypt of Santa Maria dell'Immacolata Concezione in Rome. The crypt contains six chapels, five of which are decorated in the bones of the deceased friars. And by decorated I do not mean a few bones placed in reliquaries. No, they went all out. Just look at the names of these chapels: Crypt of the Skulls, Crypt of the Pelvises, Crypt of the Leg Bones and Thigh Bones, and the Crypt of the Three Skeletons. The bones of over 4000 monks who died between 1528 and 1870 artistically line the walls and ceilings. They have chandeliers made of bones, arches, floral arrangements and even a clock, all made from bones. Some of the monks are still intact. These are in various poses. Some resting in niches, some mounted on the wall and a few are hanging from the ceiling.

While some, perhaps most, may find this display macabre, the message is simple, if a little eerie:

Noi eravamo quello che voi siete, e quello che noi siamo voi sarete. That is, "We were what you are; and what we are, you will be."

This inscription is written in, you guessed it, bones.

Let's move from one of the most curious to one of the most mysterious: St. Rita of Cascia, patron saint of lost causes. A wife, a mother, a widow and a nun, she lived a devout life and is one of our incorruptible saints.

An incorruptible is one who is unpreserved and yet, be it deliberate, accidental or natural, has not shown the decay typical of someone who has died. In most all cases not only are the incorruptibles, well, incorrupt, but they are also still quite flexible and moist.

Now St. Rita being an incorruptible is not scary; it's amazing! Of course, being face to face with someone who has been dead for over 500 years can make even the most devout feel a bit uneasy. The spookiness with St. Rita comes from a few events that have taken place after she died. Her body rests in a glass sarcophagus located about eye level to most visitors. For hundreds of years pilgrims have come to pray at her tomb. On several occasions there are reported cases of St. Rita opening her eyes, changing position, and even elevating. All of these events were recorded by multiple eyewitnesses. Imagine praying at her tomb, looking up and seeing her open eyes looking back at you.

St. Rita's body is, for the most part, whole. Let's visit another saint whose body is not, Saint Catherine of Siena.

Saint Catherine died in Rome and was buried just outside of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. Knowing how much it would please the people of Siena to have the remains of their great fellow citizen among them, her confessor sent her head to Siena. Don't worry, it's been said that her tomb was not very tightly sealed and her body was exposed to dampness, so she was not forcefully decapitated. Her head just popped right off. The Church of San Domenico in Siena has her head as well as one of her fingers. Other parts of her can be found in Venice and England.

When one thinks relic, often one thinks of a piece of cloth, hair, perhaps a piece of skin, or even a small bone But, throughout the world, Europe in particular, it's not hard to find heads, hands, arms, feet, fingers, shoulder blades, brains even hearts of our holy men and women.

And for me that beats a haunted house any day. Not only can I get the chilling feeling one gets in the presence of the dead, but I also feel a sense of peace. For being with these saints I am truly in the presence of holiness.

* * * * *

How would Emperor Julian the Apostate have reacted to the above views?

As Buddhists monks usually cremated their dead, this meant that they would not be able to appeal to incorruptibility of their bodies as a mark of holiness. Instead, there is an interesting twist in the bodily glorification story – the origin of which certainly predates the Christian Era by decades, if not by centuries. Toward the end of Chapter X (p. 318) of *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, Schopen notes that a

> startling display of bodies occurs in the account of the funeral of Mahāprajāpatī. After the bodies of Mahāprajāpatī and the five hundred nuns who died with her are set down at the place for cremation, the text says:
>
> > The Blessed One [i.e., the Buddha] then, having laid aside the upper robes from the bodies of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and those five hundred nuns, spoke to the monks: "Look, monks! Although Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and these five hundred nuns have lived for a hundred and twenty years, there are no wrinkles or white hair on their bodies – they look like girls of sixteen."
> >
> > *de nas bcom ldan 'das kyis skye dgu'i bdag mo chen mo go'u ta mi dang | dge slong ma lnga brgya po dag gi lus las bla gos phud nas | dge slong rnams la bka' stsal pa | dge slong dag skye dgu'i bdag mo chen mo go'u ta mi dang | dge slong ma lnga brga brgya po 'di dag lo brgya nyi shu long yang | lus la gnyer ma dang skra dkar med cing | bu mo lo bcu drug lon pa lta bu la ltos |* ([*Kṣudrakavastu*] Ta 172a.3)

Schopen goes on to indicate that this exhibition is "intended for and explicitly directed toward the monks." It is "apparently meant", he says, "for their edification, not for that of a group of admiring lay devotees"; and, moreover, it reflects "a strong positive value placed on holy bodies." (p. 319)

This incident, recounted in the *Kṣudrakavastu*, is certainly not historical, but, nevertheless, it is a memorable expression of what was considered holiness overcoming the corruptibility of the ageing process. Incorruptible corpses are only an extension of this same idea, but long after death.

There is one point, perhaps, which I should clarify for the reader: in ancient India, well into the **C**ommon **E**ra, topless attire for women was not considered in any way unusual. So the Buddha – in the context of his holiness and the legendary setting – in "laying aside the upper robes" of the women's bodies, would not have appeared as surprising to the ancients as it must, to modern readers.

Mahāprajāpatī was the sister of the Buddha's mother, and had become the infant Buddha's foster mother when his own mother had died suddenly, seven days after giving birth to him.

One further point of clarification, which Schopen is quick to make, is that the above bodily glorification story goes quite against the general Buddhist attitude toward the body. This negative view, Schopen writes (p. 319),

> can be documented within this *Vinaya* itself. In one of the infrequent passages in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* that refers to "mental cultivation" we find the following:
>
> > The Blessed One [the Buddha] said: "The practice of sitting is called yoga (*niṣadyā ucyate yogaḥ*). Monks, you should observe that this body (*kāya*), from the soles of the feet upward, from the hair of the head downward, is bounded by skin, and as it stands, as it obtains, is full of various sorts of impurity. There are in this body hairs of the head, body hairs, nails, teeth, dirt, filth, skin, flesh, bone, sinew, veins, kidneys, spleen, lung, intestines, mesentery, stomach, abdomen, bladder, liver, shit, tears, sweat, phlegm, grease, lymph, marrow, fat, bile, mucus, pus, blood, and piss. The body thus is to be observed."*

**Poṣadhavastu*, N. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. III, Pt. 4 (Calcutta: 1950), 72.16 ff.

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(7) Confession and Absolution

The Buddhist Confession and Absolution of Monks

Translated from the *Mahâvagga* (ii.11): [pp. 404-410:]

Then The Blessed One, in the evening of the day, rose from his meditation, and on this occasion and in this connection, after he had delivered a doctrinal discourse, addressed the monks:

"O monks, it happened to me, as I was just now seated in seclusion and plunged in meditation, that a consideration presented itself to my mind, as follows: 'What if now I prescribe that the monks recite a confession of all those precepts which have been laid down by me; and this shall be for them a fast-day duty?' I prescribe, O monks, that ye recite a confession. And after this manner, O monks, is it to be recited:

"Let a learned and competent monk make announcement to the congregation, saying, 'Let the reverend congregation hear me. Today is the fast-day of the fifteenth day of the half-month. If the congregation be ready, let the congregation keep fast-day, and recite the confession. What is the first business before the congregation? Venerable sirs, the proclaiming of your innocency. I will recite the confession, and let as many of us as are here present listen carefully and pay strict attention. If any-one has sinned, let him reveal the fact; if he has not sinned, let him remain silent; by your silence I shall know that your reverences are innocent. But now, in assemblages like this, proclamation is made up to the third time, and each one must make confession as if individually asked. But if, when proclamation up to the third time has been made, any monk shall remember a sin and not reveal it, it will be a conscious falsehood. But a conscious falsehood, reverend sirs, has been declared by The Blessed One to be a deadly sin. Therefore, if a monk remember having committed a sin, and desire again to be pure, let him reveal the sin he committed, and when it has been revealed, it shall be well for him.'"

• • • • • • • • •

A 19th Century Eyewitness Account of the Buddhist Ritual in Śrī Laṅkā

Reprinted from a paper, by J.F. Dickson, in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1875:

On the 2nd of January, 1874, being the full-moon day of the month Phussa, I was permitted, by the kindness of my friend Kaewitiyâgala Unnânsê, to be present at a chapter of monks assembled for the recitation of the Pâtimokkha or office of the confession of monks. The chapter was held in the Sîmâ or consecrated space in the ancient Lohapâsâda, or Brazen Palace, in the city of Anurâdhapura, and under the shadow of the sacred Bo-tree, grown from a branch of the tree at Buddha Gayâ, under which, as tradition relates, the prince Siddhârtha attained to supreme Buddhahood. The branch was sent to Devânampiyatissa, King of Ceylon [Śrī Laṅkā], by the Emperor Aśoka, in the year 288 B.C., now upwards of two thousand years ago. It was in this remarkable spot, under the shadow of the oldest historical tree, and in probably the oldest chapter-house in the world, that it was my good fortune to be present at this service. The building has none of its original magnificence. The colossal stone pillars alone remain as a memorial of the devotion of the kings and people of Ceylon to the religion which was taught them by Mahendra [Aśoka's son], the great apostle of Buddhism. In place of the nine storeys which these pillars once supported, a few in the centre are now made to carry a poor thatched roof no larger than that of a cotter's hut, and hardly sufficient to protect the chapter from the inclemencies of the weather. Still there was a simple and imposing grandeur in the scene. At the back of some dozen or more of these gigantic pillars were stretched pieces of white calico, to form the sides of the room: the ceiling in like manner was formed by stretching white calico above the pillars to conceal the shabby roof, the bare ground was covered with clean mats, two lamps gave a dim light, the huge columns, grey with age, stood out against the white calico. At the top of the long room thus formed was hung a curtain of bright colors, and through a space left for the entrance were visible, row after row, the pillars of the ancient palace, their broad shadows contrasting with the silvery brightness of the tropical moon.

Accompanied by a friend, I went to the chapter-house about seven o'clock in the evening; we were met at the door by the monks, who showed us to the places prepared for us – two cushions on the floor at the bottom of the room, at a distance of about two fathoms from the place reserved for the monks. The ordinances of Buddha require that all persons who are not ordained monks, free at the time from all liability to ecclesiastical censure, shall keep at a distance of two and a half cubits from the assembled chapter. It was on my pointing out that this was the only direction of Buddha on the subject that the monks consented to make an exception in my favor, and to break their rule of meeting in secret conclave.

After we were seated the monks retired two and two together, each pair knelt down face to face and made confession of their faults, one to another, in whispers. Their confessions being ended, they took their seats on mats covered with white calico, in two rows facing each other. The senior monk, the seniority being reckoned from the date of ordination, sat at the head of one row, the next in order at the head of the opposite row, the third next to the senior monk, and so on right and left down the room. The senior monk remained sitting, the others knelt and made obeisance to him, saying –

Permit me. Lord, give me absolution from all my faults committed in deed, or word, or thought.

The senior then says –

I absolve you, brother. It is good to grant me absolution. All reply – Permit me. Lord, I absolve you.

The second in order of seniority now resumes his seat, and all his juniors kneel and receive and give absolution, saying, Permit me, etc., as above; he then takes his seat, and the others kneel to him, and so on, till no one has a junior present, that is to say, if there are thirty monks present, the senior will receive obeisance from the twenty-nine others together, the second from the twenty-eight, and so on down to the twenty-ninth, who will receive obeisance from one. After all are seated, they fall together on their knees and say –

Praise be to the Blessed one, the holy one, the author of all truth. (This is said three times.)

We believe in the Blessed one, the holy one, the author of all truth, who has fully accomplished the eight kinds of supernatural knowledge and the fifteen holy practices, who came the good journey which led to the Buddhahood, who knows the universe, the unrivalled, who has made subject to him all mortal beings, whether in heaven or in earth, the Teacher of Gods and men, the blessed Buddha. Through life till I reach Nirvâṇa I will put my trust in Buddha.

I worship continually
The Buddhas of the ages that are past,
And the Buddhas of the ages that are yet to come,
And the Buddhas of this present age. [p. 408, *JRAS*.viii.671]

I have no other Refuge,
Buddha is the best Refuge;
By the truth of these words
May I conquer and win the victory.

I bow my head to the ground, and worship
The sacred dust of his holy feet.
If in aught I have sinned against Buddha,
May Buddha forgive me my sin.

The Dharma ['Logos', the 'Word'] was graciously preached by Buddha, its effects are immediate, it is unlimited by time, it is conducive to salvation, it invites all comers, it is a fitting object of contemplation, the wise ponder it in their hearts. Through life till I reach Nirvâṇa I will put my trust in the Dharma.

The Dharma as it has been in the ages that are past,
The Dharma that will be in the ages that are yet to come,
The Dharma as it is in this present age,
I worship continually.

I have no other Refuge,
The Dharma is my best Refuge;
By the truth of these words
May I conquer and win the victory.

I bow my head to the ground and worship
The Dharma, the noble doctrine of the Three Baskets.
If in aught I have sinned against the Dharma,
May the Dharma forgive me my sin.

Buddha's holy Church [Sangha], the congregation of righteous men that lead a godly life, that walk in the straight way, in the way of wisdom, that walk faithfully in the four paths of holiness, the eight orders of the elect, worthy of offerings from afar, worthy of fresh offerings, worthy of offerings of the daily necessaries of life, entitled to receive the respectful salutation of joined hands raised in homage to the forehead, this holy Sangha produces merit which, like unto a rich field, yields its increase for the benefit of this world of men.

Through life till I reach Nirvâṇa I will put my trust in the Sangha.
The Sangha as it has been in the ages that are past,
The Sangha as it will be in the ages that are yet to come,
The Sangha as it is in this present age,
I worship continually.

I have no other Refuge,
The Sangha is my noble Refuge.
By the truth of these words
May I worship and win the victory.

I bow my head to the ground and worship
The Sangha, threefold and best.
If in aught I have sinned against the Sangha,
May the Sangha forgive me my sin.

Buddha and the Dharma, the Pacceka-buddhas,
And the Sangha are my lords.
I am their slave.
May their virtues ever rest on my head.

The three refuges, the three symbols and equanimity,
And lastly, Nirvâṇa,
Will I worship with bowed head, unceasingly.
Thus shall I receive the benefit of that threefold power.

May the three refuges rest on my head,
On my head may there rest the three symbols.
May peace rest on my head,
May Nirvâṇa rest on my head.

I worship the Buddhas, the all-merciful,
The Dharma, the Pacceka-buddhas;
The Sangha and the three sages
I worship with bowed head.

I worship every saying
And every word of the Great Teacher.
I worship every shrine,
My spiritual superior and my tutor.

By virtue of these feelings of reverence
May my thoughts be freed from sin. [p. 410, *JRAS*.viii.697]

The monks here rise from their knees and resume their seats. The senior, or some other deputed in his stead to officiate, then takes a seat at the top between the two rows. The interrogatories are then proceeded with as will be found explained in the following translation of the Pâtimokkha. The interrogatories being ended, the Pâtimokkha is intoned after the manner followed to this day by the Roman Church.

The office for nuns . . . has been omitted in the present edition, because the order of nuns is not now recognized by the orthodox Buddhists [in Ceylon/Śrī Laṅkā].

The text of this edition is derived from MSS. in use at the Malwattê Monastery in Kandy, and it will be found divided into ten chapters, as follows: –

I. Interrogatories relating to the requisites for forming a chapter.
II. The Introduction.
III. The four deadly sins.
IV. The thirteen faults involving temporary separation from the priesthood.
V. The two undetermined offences.
VI. The thirty faults requiring confession and absolution, and involving forfeiture of the article in reference to which the offence has been committed.
VII. The ninety-two faults requiring confession and absolution.
VIII. Four offences requiring confession.
IX. The seventy-five rules of conduct.
X. The seven rules for settling cases.

The whole is sometimes known as the two hundred and twenty-seven precepts.

* * *

What we have here (as we have seen with other topics) is a very detailed and developed ritual which certainly had arisen first, over the centuries, in south Asia independently of any Christian influence.

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Christian Rituals of Confession and Absolution

< http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confession >

Below are brief excerpts from the article in Wikipedia which cover the topics of Confession and Absolution within some Christian traditions:

In Roman Catholic teaching, the sacrament of Penance (commonly called confession but more recently referred to as Reconciliation, or more fully the Sacrament of Reconciliation) is the method given by Christ to the Church by which individual men and women may confess sins committed after baptism and have them absolved by a priest. This sacrament is known by many names, including penance, reconciliation and confession (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Sections 1423-1442). While official Church publications always refer to the sacrament as "Penance", "Reconciliation" or "Penance and Reconciliation", many laypeople continue to use the term "confession" in reference to the sacrament.

Roman Catholics believe that priests have been given the authority by Jesus and God to exercise the forgiveness of sins here on earth, through His authority. This is to say that the priest during the Sacrament of Penance is a stand-in for Jesus whose authority it is to forgive sins. This power belongs to Jesus alone; however, God can and does exercise it through the Roman Catholic priesthood.

The basic form of confession has not changed for centuries, although at one time confessions were made publicly. In theological terms, the priest acts *in persona Christi* and receives from the Church the power of jurisdiction over the penitent. The penitent must confess mortal sins in order to restore his/her connection to God's grace and not to merit Hell. The sinner may confess venial sins. The intent of this sacrament is to provide healing for the soul as well as to regain the grace of God, lost by sin. The Council of Trent (*Session Fourteen, Chapter I*) quoted John 20:22-23 as the primary Scriptural proof for the doctrine concerning this sacrament, but Catholics also consider Matthew 9:2-8, 1 Corinthians 11:27, and Matthew 16:17-20 to be among the Scriptural bases for the sacrament.

Absolution in the Roman rite takes this form (with the essential words in bold letters):

> God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son, has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and **I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

. . .

The penitent must make an act of contrition, a prayer acknowledging his/her faults before God. It typically commences: *O my God, I am heartily sorry*. . . . The reception of sacramental absolution is considered necessary before receiving the Eucharist if one has guilt for a mortal sin. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the Sacrament of Penance is the only ordinary way in which a person can receive forgiveness for mortal sins committed after baptism. However, perfect contrition (a sorrow motivated by love of God rather than of fear of punishment) is an extraordinary way of removing the guilt of mortal sin before or without confession (if there is no opportunity of confessing to a priest). Such contrition would include the intention of confessing and receiving sacramental absolution. For the absolution to be valid, contrition must be had. Imperfect contrition (sorrow arising from a less pure motive, such as fear of Hell), is sufficient for a valid confession, but is not, by itself, sufficient to remove the guilt of sin.

. . .

It is a widely held belief of the faith that if a person guilty of mortal sin dies without either receiving the sacrament or experiencing perfect contrition with the intention of confessing to a priest, he will receive eternal damnation.

. . .

In the **Eastern Churches**, clergy often make their confession in the sanctuary. A bishop, priest, or deacon will confess at the Holy Table (Altar) where the Gospel Book and blessing cross are normally kept. He confesses in the same manner as a layman, except that when a priest hears a bishop's confession, the priest kneels.

It is required of all that they go to confession before receiving any of the Sacred Mysteries (Sacraments), including not just Holy Communion, but Unction, Marriage, and the rest. Orthodox Christians should go to confession at least four times a year; often during one of the four fasting periods (Great Lent, Nativity Fast, Apostles' Fast and Dormition Fast). Many pastors encourage frequent confession and communion. In some of the monasteries on Mount Athos, the monks will confess their sins daily.

. . .

Among the most famous subterranean confessions of Rome are those in the churches of S. Martino al Monti; S. Lorenzo fuori le Mure, containing the bodies of St. Laurence and St. Stephen; S. Prassede containing the bodies of the two sisters Saints Praxedes and Pudentiana. The most celebrated confession is that of St. Peter. Over the tomb of the Apostle Pope St. Anacletus built a memoria, which Constantine when building his basilica replaced with the Confession of St. Peter. Behind the brass statues of Sts. Peter and Paul is the niche over the grated floor which covers the tomb. In this niche is the gold coffer, the work of Benvenuto Cellini, which contains the palliums, generally to be sent to Metropolitan archbishops. All through the Middle Ages the palliums after being blessed were let down through the grating on to the tomb of the Apostle, where they remained for a whole night (Phillips, Kirchenrecht, V, 624, n. 61). During the restoration of the present basilica in 1594 the floor gave way, revealing the tomb of St. Peter and on it the golden cross weighing 150 pounds placed there by Emperor Constantine I, and inscribed with his own and his mother St. Helen's names.

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(8) Buddhist Councils / Christian Councils

A. Four Early Buddhist Councils*

The First Council [c. 483 **BCE**]

According to Pāli tradition recorded in canonical and non-canonical literature, three Saṅgītis (recitals) or Councils were held to draw up the canonical texts and the creed in their pure form. The First Council was held at Rājagṛha immediately after the parinirvāṇa of the Buddha. It is accepted by critical scholarship that the First Council settled the Dharma and the Vinaya and there is no ground for the view that the Abhidharma formed part of the canon adopted at the First Council. It is held that Mahā-Kāśyapa presided over the assembly in which Upāli and Ānanda took important parts. [T]he Council was necessitated by the pious determination of the disciples of the Lord to preserve the purity of his teaching. . . .

It is stated in the Pāli Chronicle that the Saptaparṇi Cave [venue of the First Council] was situated on the side of Mount Bēbhara and that a pandal was erected at the instance of King Ajātashatru outside of this cave. . . . It was evidently selected because accommodation was plentiful and there was no difficulty about supplies. It is also said in the Dulva that Rājagṛha was selected because King Ajātashatru was a firm believer in the Buddhist faith and that he would, therefore, make ample provision for food and lodging. . . .

The meeting actually took place in the second month of the rainy season. . . . Mahā-Kāśyapa took the initiative and chose four hundred and ninety-nine bhikkhus to form the Council. It is stated in the *Çullavagga* and confirmed in the Dīpavaṁśa that the number of monks was chosen in pursuance of a vote by the general congregation of monks assembled on the occasion and at the place of the parinirvāṇa of the Master. There is general agreement that the number of the monks selected was five hundred. There was, however, some protest regarding the omission of Ānanda from the number chosen. . . .

Ānanda was eventually accepted by Mahā-Kāśyapa as a result of the motion on the part of the monks. The procedure followed regarding Ānanda has, however, given rise to a controversy: It will be observed that Ānanda was brought to trial in the course of the proceedings. The Dulva, however, places the trial before the meeting of the Council.

Charges against Ānanda

(1) He could not formulate the lesser and minor precepts, as he had been overwhelmed with grief at the imminent death of the Master.

(2) He had to tread upon the garment of the Master while sewing it, as there was no one to help him.

(3) He permitted women to salute first the body of the Master, because he did not want to detain them. He also did this for their edification.

(4) He was under the influence of the evil one when he forgot to request the Master to enable him to continue his study for a kalpa.

(5) He had to plead for the admission of women into the Order out of consideration for Mahā-Prajāpatī Gautamī, who nursed the Master in his infancy. . . .

Briefly, the proceedings of the First Council achieved four results: (1) the settlement of the Vinaya under the leadership of Upāli, (2) the settlement of the texts of the Dharma under the leadership of Ānanda, (3) the trial of Ānanda, and (4) the punishment of Channa [the erstwhile charioteer of Prince Siddhārtha].

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*Excerpted from Chapter IV, written by B. Jinananda, in *2500 Years of Buddhism*, general editor, P.V. Bapat (Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1956), pp. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39-40.

The Second Council

The Second Council was held at Vaiśālī (Pāli Vēsālī) a century after the passing of the Master. The time recorded should be taken as a round number. It is recorded in the *Çullavagga* that the monks of the Vajji country were in the habit of practising the Ten Points (*dasa vatthuni*) which were regarded as unorthodox by Yasa, the son of Kākaṇḍaka. . . . Seven hundred monks met in a Council, but there was much rambling talk and fruitless discussion. In order to avoid further waste of time and irrelevant discussion, the matter was referred to a committee consisting of four monks from the East and four from the West. Bhikkhu Ajita was appointed the seat-regulator [moderator]. The Venerable Sabbakāmi was elected president. . . . The unanimous verdict of the [committee and the] assembly declared the conduct of the Vajjian monks to be unlawful.

The Third Council [c. 247 BCE]

The Third Council was held at Pāṭaliputra under the ægis of the celebrated Buddhist monarch, Priyadarśi Aśōka. Aśōka was won over to the Buddhist faith within a few years of his accession to the throne. The occasion for the Third Council was supplied by the need to establish the purity of the Canon which had been imperilled by the rise of different sects and their rival claims, teachings and practices. According to Kern, the Third Council was not a general Council but a party meeting of the Sthaviravādins or Vibhajjavādins. Tissa Mōgaliputta, who is reputed to have converted the Emperor to the Buddhist faith, was pained to observe the corrupt practices that had crept into the Brotherhood and the heretical doctrines preached by sectarians of various description. . . . The most significant outcome of the Council was that he restored the true faith and propounded the Abhidharma treatise, the Kathā-vasthu, during the session of the Council. . . .

An intervening Wikipedia note on two rival claimants to the title of 'Fourth Buddhist Council':

"By the time of the Fourth Buddhist councils, Buddhism had long since splintered into different schools. The Thēravāda had a Fourth Buddhist Council in the last century BCE in Tāmbapaṇṇi, i.e. in Śrī Laṅkā, under the patronage of King Vaṭṭagāmaṇi. It is said to have been devoted to committing the entire Pāli Canon to writing, which had previously been preserved [only] by memory.

"Another Fourth Buddhist Council [this one in India] was held in the Sarvāstivāda tradition, said to have been convened by the Kushāṇ emperor Kanishka, around 100 CE at Jalandhār or in Kashmir. It is said that Kanishka gathered five hundred Bhikkhus in Kashmir, headed by Vasumitra, to systematize the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma texts, which were translated from earlier Prakrit vernacular languages (such as Gandhārī in Kharōṣṭhī script) into the classical language of Sanskrit. . . . Although the Sarvāstivāda is no longer extant as an independent school, its traditions were inherited by the Mahāyāna tradition."

The Fourth Council (in India)

The Fourth Council was held under the auspices of Kanishka, who was a powerful Kushāṇ king of the Śaka or Turushka race. He held sway over a wide tract of country including Kābul, Gandhāra, Sindh, North-West India, Kashmir and part of Madhyadēsha. He was esteemed as highly by the Northern Buddhists as was Aśōka. From numismatic evidence it appears that originally he was an adherent of some form of Iranian religion and was later converted to the Buddhist faith. Though we have no indisputable evidence of the date of his conversion, it is almost certain that the date of the Council held under his inspiration and patronage was about 100 CE [or, more likely, c. 140 CE (ML)]. . . . The Southern Buddhists do not recognize this Council and there is no reference to it in the Chronicles of Ceylon [Śrī Laṅkā]. According to a Tibetan record, one of the results of the Council was the settling of the dissensions in the Brotherhood. [Kanishka] was anxious to put an end to the dissensions in the Church. The King built a monastery for the accommodation of 500 monks who were called upon to write commentaries on the Piṭakas. . . . And it appears that the doctrines which enlisted the greatest common measure of agreement were the most strongly stressed.

B. Early Christian Councils*

The period of Christianity from the First Council of Nicæa (325 Common Era) to the Second Council of Nicæa (787 CE) is called the period of the Seven Ecumenical Councils.

- **325 CE** (1) **First Council of Nicæa** – convened by Roman emperor Constantine-I; it is uncertain who presided over the sessions; Patriarch Alexander of **Alexandria** and his fellow bishop, Athanasius, had leading roles; the Council repudiated *Arianism* and *Quartodecimanism*, and adopted the original Nicene Creed. This and all subsequent councils are not recognized by non-trinitarian churches – e.g. Arians, Unitarians, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Bishop Hosius, was present at the Council as the legate of the Patriarch of Rome, Sylvester.
- **381 CE** (2) **First Council of Constantinople** – convened by Theodosius-I (Emperor of the Roman Empire, East and West); Meletius, Bishop of Antioch, presided first, but suddenly died; next Gregory of Nazianzus, newly appointed Bishop of Constantinople presided; but when Patriarch Timothy of **Alexandria** arrived, Gregory's appointment as bishop was invalidated; Nectarius was baptized and consecrated in Gregory's place as Bishop. He then presided over the Council till its conclusion. No representatives of the Patriarchate of Rome were present at this Council. The Council revised the Nicene Creed, its present form used in the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches, and prohibited any further alteration of the Creed without the assent of an Ecumenical Council.
- **431 CE** (3) **First Council of Ephesus** – convened by Byzantine emperor Theodosius-II; Patriarch Cyril of **Alexandria** presided, the Council repudiated *Nestorianism* (which argued that Christ had completely separate human and divine natures), and proclaimed the Virgin Mary to be Theotokos, "God-bearer" or more commonly "Mother of God". This and all following councils are not recognized by the Assyrian Church of the East.
- **Each of the two following councils has been claimed by its supporters to be the 4th Ecumenical Council (the supporters of each council did not recognize the other council [thus marking the beginning of the shift of primal ecclesiastical authority in the Councils from Alexandria to Rome]:**

  - **449 CE** (4) **Second Council of Ephesus** – convened by Byzantine emperor Theodosius-II; Patriarch Dioscorus of **Alexandria** presided, finding *Eutyches* to be orthodox and deposing Archbishop Flavian of Constantinople. Physical violence broke out and Flavian died shortly after the Council [so much for the Princes of Peace!]. This Council was not recognized by the Chalcedonians (Catholics and Byzantine Orthodox). After the Council of Chalcedon, Patriarch Dioscorus reversed himself on *Eutyches*, declaring him anathema.

  - **451 CE** (4) **Council of Chalcedon** – convened by Byzantine emperor Marcian; presided over by the legates of Leo-I, Patriarch of **Rome**; **deposed Dioscorus** of **Alexandria!** [pay-back time for Patriarch Leo-I]; repudiated the *Eutychian* doctrine of *monophysitism*. Its Canon #15 (1) declared the following: *No woman under 40 years of age is to be ordained a deacon, and then only after close scrutiny*. This appears to have been the last time in church history, up to the modern era, that the ordination of women was mentioned as a routine practice in any form. This and all following councils are not recognized by the Oriental Orthodox Communion. This council was not accepted by Catholics till the Second Council of Lyon of 1274.
- **553 CE** (5) **Second Council of Constantinople** – convened by Byzantine emperor Justinian-I; Eutychius of **Constantinople** presiding; **condemned Origen** of **Alexandria** (e.g. his belief in **metempsychosis**[1]); reaffirmed decisions & doctrines affirmed by previous Councils; condemned new *Arian*, *Nestorian*, and *Monophysite* writings.
- **680-81** (6) **Third Council of Constantinople** – convened by Byzantine Emperor Constantine-IV; Patriarch George-I of **Constantinople** presiding; repudiated *Monothelitism*, affirmed that Christ had both human and divine wills. The Emperor had not intended an *ecumenical* Council, but all five patriarchs were present or represented.
- **787 CE** (7) **Second Council of Nicæa** – convened by Byzantine emperor Constantine-VI; Patriarch Tarasios of **Constantinople** presiding; this was the last of the seven church councils commonly accepted as authoritative by both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. The Council voted to end the period of iconoclasm and allow the veneration but not the worship of icons. This Council is rejected by some Protestant denominations, who instead prefer the **Council of Hieria** (**754 CE**), which had also described itself as the "Seventh Ecumenical Council" and had condemned the veneration of icons.

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*This account follows the Wikipedia article on the expression, 'Ecumenical council'. It is noted in this article that the New Testament's "*Acts of the Apostles* records the Council of Jerusalem, which addressed the tension between maintaining Jewish practices in the early Christian community with Gentile converts. Although its decisions are accepted by all Christians[2] and later definitions of an ecumenical council appear to conform to this sole biblical Council, no Christian church includes it when numbering the ecumenical councils" – ML.

Notes by ML

[1]There has been a never-ending debate over several questions concerning the fifteen anathemas brought against Origen and his doctrines during the Fifth Ecumenical Council (the Second Council of Constantinople), which was held in 553 CE. One of the positions in the present day debate claims that Origen was a reincarnationist and that it was his reincarnationism which had, some two hundred years after his death, stirred up the attack by emperor Justinian and other anti-Origenists at the Second Council of Constantinople. As the Catholic Church has striven mightily to rehabilitate Origen and his doctrines, to the extent, some would say, of suppressing evidence of his reincarnationism, we nevertheless present the following two excerpts from an article appearing on a Catholic platform, which presents the rather clear counter-evidence of his reincarnationism:

St. Jerome's Letter 124 (To Avitus)

> Avitus to whom this letter is addressed is probably the same person who induced Jerome to write to Salvina (see Letter LXXIX. [79], §I, ante). The occasion of writing is as follows. Ten years previously (that is to say in A.D. 399 or 400) Pammachius had asked Jerome to supply him with a correct version of Origen's *First Principles* to enable him to detect the variations introduced by Rufinus into his rendering. This Jerome willingly did (see Letters LXXXIII. [83] and LXXXIV. [84]) but when the work in its integrity was perused by Pammachius he thought it so erroneous in doctrine that he determined not to circulate it. However, "*a certain brother*" induced him to lend the manuscript to him for a short time; and then, when he had got it into his hands, had a hasty and incorrect transcript made, which he immediately published much to the chagrin of Pammachius. Falling into the hands of Avitus a copy of this much perplexed him and he seems to have appealed to Jerome for an explanation. This the latter now gives forwarding at the same time an authentic edition of his version of the *First Principles*. The date of the letter is A.D. 409 or 410. . . .
>
> [Para.] 7. Hellfire, moreover, and the torments with which holy scripture threatens sinners he [Origen] explains not as external punishments but as the pangs of guilty consciences when by God's power the memory of our transgressions is set before our eyes. "*The whole crop of our sins grows up afresh from seeds which remain in the soul, and all our dishonourable and undutiful acts are again pictured before our gaze. Thus it is the fire of conscience and the stings of remorse which torture the mind as it looks back on former self-indulgence*." And again: "*but perhaps this coarse and earthly body ought to be described as mist and darkness; for at the end of this world and when it becomes necessary to pass into another, the like darkness will lead to the like physical birth*." In speaking thus he clearly pleads for the transmigration of souls as taught by Pythagoras and Plato. And at the end of the second book in dealing with our perfection he has said: "*when we shall have made such progress as not only to cease to be flesh or body but perhaps also to cease to be souls our perfect intelligence and perception, undimmed with any mist of passion, will discern reasonable and intelligible substances face to face*."
>
> [Translated by W.H. Fremantle, G. Lewis, and W.G. Martley, from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, Vol. 6, edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893). Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. < http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001124.htm >]

[2]In the English translation, *A History of the Councils of the Church*, Vol. II, p. 328, Karl Josef von Hefele's commentary on the second canon of Gangra notes:

> We further see that, at the time of the Synod of Gangra [mid-4th century, in Turkey], the rule of the Apostolic Synod with regard to blood and things strangled was still in force. With the Greeks, indeed, it continued always in force, as their Euchologies [books of instructions for various rituals] still show. Balsamon also, the well-known commentator on the canons of the Middle Ages, in his commentary on the sixty-third Apostolic Canon, expressly blames the Latins because they had ceased to observe this command. What the Latin Church, however, thought on this subject about the year 400, is shown by St. Augustine in his work *Contra Faustum*, where he states that the Apostles had given this command in order to unite the heathens [Gentiles] and Jews in the one ark of Noah; but that then, when the barrier between Jewish and heathen converts had fallen, this command concerning things strangled and blood had lost its meaning, and was only observed by few. But still, as late as the eighth century, Pope Gregory the Third ([elected in] 731) forbade the eating of blood or things strangled, under threat of a penance of forty days. No one will pretend that the disciplinary enactments of any council, even though it be one of the undisputed Ecumenical Synods, can be of greater and more unchanging force than the decree of that first council, held by the Holy Apostles at Jerusalem, and the fact that its decree has been obsolete for centuries in the West is proof that even Ecumenical canons may be of only temporary utility and may be repealed by disuse, like other laws. [This last sentence was put in fine print by ML.]

Strangely, in the 1876 second edition of this work, the last sentence above evidently proved offensive and was deleted!

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(9) Buddhism Gives Birth to the Printing of Scriptures

Emperor Aśōka spread the gospel of Buddhism (the Dharma) all over India and Afghanistan, and abroad to the Near East, and Egypt. This evangelism was accomplished by special officers of his administration, within his empire, and by Buddhist missionary monks, sent abroad. Aśōka also ordered his efforts to propagate the Dharma of Buddhism to be recorded in a series of edicts, engraved in stone, all over his empire, from North to South, in what is present day India and Pakistan, and Westward to what is present day Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, some of them were written in Greek and Aramaic. These inscriptions remain today as an invaluable historical record of the spread of Buddhism in the mid-third century, B.C.

These edicts of Aśōka were engraved centuries earlier than the 2nd century A.D. inscriptions of the Chinese emperor, as mentioned in the eArticle below.

A Short History of Printing

[From < http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ab78 > as retrieved on Nov. 13, 2006]

Engraved texts: 2nd - 8th century AD

The emperor of China commands, in AD 175, that the six main classics of Confucianism be carved in stone. His purpose is to preserve them for posterity in what is held to be authentic version of the text. But his enterprise has an unexpected result.

Confucian scholars are eager to own these important texts. Now, instead of having them expensively written out, they can make their own copies. Simply by laying sheets of paper on the engraved slabs and rubbing all over with charcoal or graphite, they can take away a text in white letters on a black ground – a technique more familiar in recent centuries in the form of brass-rubbing.

Subsequent emperors engrave other texts, until quite an extensive white-on-black library can be acquired. It is a natural next step to carve the letters in a raised form (and in mirror writing) and then to apply ink to the surface of the letters. When this ink is transferred to paper, the letters appear in black (or in a colour) against the white of the paper – much more pleasant to the eye than white on black.

This process is printing. But it is the Buddhists, rather than the Confucians, who make the breakthrough.

Printed Buddhist texts in Korea and Japan: AD 750-768

The invention of printing is a striking achievement of Buddhists in east Asia. Korea takes the lead. The world's earliest known printed document is a sūtra printed on a single sheet of paper in Korea in AD 750.

This is closely followed in Japan by a bold experiment in mass circulation (precisely the area in which printed material has the advantage over manuscript). In AD 768, in devoutly Buddhist Nara, the empress commissions a huge edition of a lucky charm or prayer. It is said that the project takes six years to complete and that the number of copies printed, for distribution to pilgrims, is a million. Many have survived.

The first printed book: AD 868

The earliest known printed book is Chinese, from the end of the T'ang dynasty. Discovered in a cave at Dunhuang in 1899, it is a precisely dated document which brings the circumstances of its creation vividly to life.

It is a scroll, 16 feet long and a foot high, formed of sheets of paper glued together at their edges. The text is that of the Diamond Sūtra, and the first sheet in the scroll has an added distinction. It is the world's first printed illustration, depicting an enthroned Buddha surrounded by holy attendants. In a tradition later familiar in religious art of the west, a small figure kneels and prays in the foreground. He is presumably the donor who has paid for this holy book.

The name of the donor, Wang Chieh, is revealed in another device which later becomes traditional in early printed books in the west. The details of publication are given in a colophon (Greek for 'finishing stroke') at the end of the text. This reveals that the scroll is a work of Buddhist piety, combined with the filial obligations of good Confucian ideals: 'Printed on 11 May 868 by Wang Chieh, for free general distribution, in order in deep reverence to perpetuate the memory of his parents.'

The printing of Wang Chieh's scroll is of a high standard, so it must have had many predecessors. But the lucky accident of the cave at Dunhuang has given his parents a memorial more lasting than he could have imagined possible.

Cutting round the characters: 9th - 11th century

The separate sheets making up the Diamond Sūtra are what would now be called woodcuts. They are printed from pieces of wood in which the white areas on the page have been carefully cut away, until the remaining parts of the flat surface represent (in reverse) the shapes to be printed, regardless of whether they are to be text or image. Printing is achieved by covering the flat surface with ink, placing a piece of paper on it and rubbing the back of the paper.

Chinese publishing: 10th - 11th century

Printing from wood blocks, as in the Diamond Sūtra, is a laborious process. Yet the Chinese printers work wonders. In the 10th and 11th centuries all the Confucian classics are published for the use of scholar officials, together with huge numbers of Buddhist and Daoist works (amounting to around 5000 scrolls of each) and the complete *Standard Histories* since the time of Sima Qian.

The carving of so many characters in reverse on wood blocks is an enormous investment of labour, but the task is unavoidable until the introduction of movable type. This innovation, once again, seems to have been pioneered in China but achieved in Korea.

Movable type: from the 11th century

Movable type (separate ready-made characters or letters which can be arranged in the correct order for a particular text and then reused) is a necessary step before printing can become an efficient medium for disseminating information.

The concept is experimented with in China as early as the 11th century. But two considerations make the experiment unpractical. One is that the Chinese script has so many characters that type-casting and type-setting become too complex. The other is that the Chinese printers cast their characters in clay and then fire them as pottery, a substance too fragile for the purpose.

Type foundry in Korea: c. 1380

In the late 14th century, several decades before the earliest printing in Europe, the Koreans establish a foundry to cast movable type in bronze. Unlike earlier Chinese experiments with pottery, bronze is sufficiently strong for repeated printing, dismantling and resetting for a new text.

The Koreans at this time are using the Chinese script, so they have the problem of an unwieldy number of characters. They solve this in 1443 by inventing their own national alphabet, known as *han'gul*. By one of the strange coincidences of history this is precisely the decade in which Gutenberg is experimenting with movable type far away in Europe, which has enjoyed the advantage of an alphabet for more than 2000 years.

(10) Alms-Rounds

In Buddhism, one form of almsgiving is an expression of respect given by lay Buddhists to Buddhist monks and nuns. This is not 'charity' as presumed by Western interpreters. The visible presence of monks and nuns is a stabilizing influence. This act of almsgiving is a way of connecting the laity to the monastics. As the Buddha has stated:

> Householders and the homeless [monastics]
> in mutual dependence
> both reach the true Dhamma. . . .
>
> – *Itivuttaka* 4.7

[Thanissaro Bhikkhu (trans.) (2001) < http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/iti/iti.4.100-112.than.html >]

In Theravada Buddhism, monks (Pāli: *bhikkhus*) and nuns go on a daily almsround (or *piṇḍacara*) to collect food. This is typically perceived as giving the laypeople the opportunity to attain merit (Pāli: *puñña*).

– Abstracted from Wikipedia's entry under "Alms"

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Palladius of Galatia, Bishop of Helenopolis, an ancient city in Bithynia, was the author of the *Lausiac History*, a work archiving the lives of the 'Desert Fathers' (early Christian monks – and nuns!), which he wrote in 419-20 CE at the request of Lausus, chamberlain at the court of the Byzantine emperor, Theodosius-II. The poignant story of Mârîâ/Maryânâ, from this *Lausiac History*, is presented below because it provides *very early recorded evidence of Christian monks going out from the monastery on alms-rounds on the highways* – just like their forebears, Buddhist monks! The bracketing of the words 'hard' and 'to beg', below, is by the translator.

The History of Maria – the Blessed Woman Maria*

There was a certain worldly man who wished to become a monk, and he had a little daughter who besought him to take her with him to the monastery; now she was a maiden, and he entreated her, saying, "If thou wishest to become a nun let me take thee to a house for virgins," but she said to him, "I cannot be separated from thee." And her father, being much distressed about her because she wept by night and by day and begged that she might not be separated from him, made up his mind to take her with him, and he changed her name that it might not be known that she was a maiden. Now her name had been "Mârîâ," but her father gave her the name of Maryânâ as if she had been a boy; then he committed the matter to God, and took her and went into a monastery without anyone perceiving that Maryânâ was a girl, and after several years Maryânâ's father died performing the excellent works of the monastic life. Now the archimandrite saw that Maryânâ was working [hard], and was excelling in spiritual excellence, and he rejoiced in him, not knowing that he was not a boy, and he commanded that he should not be sent out on the highways [to beg] because he was a child; and the brethren were envious against Maryânâ because he did not go out on the highways with them.

And when the archimandrite saw that the brethren were envious against Maryânâ because he did not go out on the highways as they did, he called to Maryânâ and said unto him, "Since the brethren are envious against thee because thou dost not perform the work on the high roads as do they, I command thee to do so"; then Maryânâ fell down before the archimandrite and said unto him, "Whatsoever thou commandest me to do I will do gladly, O father." Now the brethren of the monastery wherein lived Maryânâ, whensoever they went out on the high roads, visited a certain believer, in order to rest a little and to refresh themselves, and since Maryânâ was sent out, even according to what had been ordered by the archimandrite, the believing man whom the brethren visited saw him, (for he knew all the brethren of the monastery because he used to go to their monastery continually); and the believing man saw Maryânâ at the season of evening, and he took him and brought him to his house, so that he might rest there for the night. And the believing man had a daughter, and on the night wherein Maryânâ stayed with him a certain man seduced [the daughter], and he who had fallen upon her and seduced her commanded her, saying, "If thy father saith unto thee, Who is he that hath seduced thee? say thou unto him, 'It was Maryânâ, the monk.'" And as soon as Maryânâ had departed from them, the father of the maiden knew that his daughter had been seduced, and he asked her, saying, "Who hath seduced thee?" And she said unto him, "Maryânâ, the monk, is he who hath seduced me." Then the father of the maiden rose up straightway, and went to the monastery, and with tears he spake before the archimandrite and the whole brotherhood, and said, "What offence have I committed against you that ye

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*From the "Histories of the Fathers"/ *Lausiac History* by Palladius, Bishop of Helenopolis, in *The Paradise of the Holy Fathers*, translated from the Syriac by Ernest A. Wallis Budge (London: Chatto & Windus, 1907), Vol. I, Bk. 2, Chp. 25, pp. 248-51. (Note that this story does not mention Jesus.)

should seduce my daughter?" Now when the archmandrite heard this he was greatly moved, and he said to him, "What sayest thou? Who hath seduced thy daughter? Tell me who he is that I may expel him from the monastery forthwith"; and the man said unto him, "It is Maryânâ who hath seduced my daughter." Then the archimandrite commanded that Maryânâ should be called so that he might go forth from the monastery, but having been sought for throughout all the building Maryânâ could not be found, and then they knew that he was out on a journey for the monastery; and the archimandrite said unto the father of the maiden, "There is nothing further which I can do except this: when Maryânâ returneth from the highway I will not allow him to enter the monastery," and he gave orders to all the brethren of the monastery saying, "When Maryânâ returns he is not to be allowed to enter the monastery."

And when Maryânâ came back from the road they would not allow him to enter the monastery, and he wept at the door thereof and said, "What is my offence that I am not permitted to enter the monastery?" Then the doorkeeper said to him, "[Thou art not permitted to enter] because thou hast seduced the daughter of the believing man whom the monks visit"; and Maryânâ entreated the doorkeeper, saying, "For the Lord's sake go in and persuade the archimandrite to permit me to enter the monastery, and whatsoever he ordereth me to do because of my fall I will do." So the doorkeeper went in and told the archimandrite everything which Maryânâ had said, and the archimandrite said to him, "Go and tell Maryânâ, [saying], 'Because thou has done this thing thou shalt never see my face again; get thee gone to whatsoever place thou pleasest.'" When Maryânâ heard these things he was greatly afflicted, and he sat by the door of the monastery night and day, and wept because of what had happened to him; and he besought those who went in and those who came out to entreat the archimandrite on his behalf, and although very many folk did so, and begged him to let Maryânâ come into the monastery, the archimandrite would not be persuaded [to do so].

And after the maiden, through whom Maryânâ had been trodden in the dust, had given birth to her child, her father took the boy to whom his daughter had given birth, and brought it to Maryânâ, and said unto him, "Behold, here is thy son, take him and rear him"; and Maryânâ took the child, saying, "Glory be to God Who can endure and bear with sinners like myself." And each day he took the child and went up the mountain to the goats of the monastery, and suckled him goats' milk, and when the child was suckled Maryânâ returned to the door of the monastery; now he never left the door of the monastery except when he went to give the child milk, and he besought those who went in and those who came out, with tears, to unite with him in making supplication to God to forgive him his sin. And he sat by the door of the monastery for four years, and tears were never absent from his eyes, neither by night nor by day, and every one who heard the sound of his weeping was grieved for his sake. Now after Maryânâ had suffered affliction by the door of the monastery for four years and had shewn the child to every man, saying, "Pray ye for me, for I fell into fornication, and this child is the result thereof," God moved the mind of the archimandrite to bring Maryânâ into the monastery, for His mercy was revealed upon him, and He commanded the archimandrite to bring Maryânâ in.

And as soon as Maryânâ heard that they were going to bring him into the monastery from the man who told him about it beforehand, he rose up straightway, and fell down before the Lord, and said, "Glory be to Thee, O Lord, Who hath not been unmindful of such a [great] sinner as I am! I give thanks unto Thee for all the goodness which Thou has shown unto me. What have I to give unto Thee in return therefor? For Thou hast brought me into the monastery, by the door of which I had decided in my mind that I must die." And as soon as those who had been been sent to bring Maryânâ into the monastery had done so, Maryânâ fell down before the archimandrite, and before the whole brotherhood of the monastery, now he was carrying the child and was weeping, and sighing, and groaning, and he said unto them, "Forgive ye me, O masters and fathers, for I have angered God with [my] evil works, and you I have afflicted greatly; but pray for me, that God may forgive me the fall wherewith I fell."

And after many years Maryânâ, having prevailed mightily in the great labours of spiritual excellence, delivered his soul to our Lord, and none of the brethren had ever seen him laugh or smile; on the contrary, he mourned all the days of his life. And when he was dead, the brethren drew nigh to anoint him with oil, according to the custom, and then they saw that Maryânâ was a woman. Then the brethren ran quickly and called the man who had made the accusation against Maryânâ, and when he had come and seen her, great wonder laid hold upon him, and he besought God to forgive him the great sin and wrong which he had done to Maryânâ; and all those who heard and saw this glorified God that His saints fight so bravely for His Name's sake.

Friar[1]

[From Lat. *frater*, through O. Fr. *fredre, frere,* M. E. *frere;* It. *frate* (as prefix *fra*); Sp. *fraile* (as prefix *fray*); Port. *fret*; unlike the other Romance languages French has but the one word frère for friar and brother].

A friar is a member of one of the mendicant orders.

[‘**mendicant**, noun: a beggar; a member of one of the religious orders that originally relied solely on alms: *a mendicant friar*. **ORIGIN** late Middle English: from Latin ***mendicant–***‘begging’, from the verb ***mendicare***, from ***mendicus*** ‘beggar’, from ***mendum*** ‘fault’. Note that the word ‘mendicant’ has a pejorative root: ‘fault’. We have seen, above (pp. 122-123), how the monks of Egypt had a dislike of going on alms-rounds. Such begging probably seemed very strange and demeaning to many non-Christians – and thus the Latin root ***mendum*** ‘fault’! It is interesting that the Pāli word for a Buddhist monk is ***bhikkhu***, Sanskrit, ***bhikṣu*** ‘beggar’. Its root ***bhikṣ***, ‘to wish to share, partake’, is non-pejorative, and Buddhism goes to great length to characterize the monk’s behavior in accepting alms as an exchange of support (spiritual advice, comfort, or merit) for food, and to thus distinguish the monk’s behavior from that of ordinary beggary! The next article following the present article will make this distinction clear.]

Use of the word

In the early Church it was usual for all Christians to address each other as *fratres* or brothers, all being children of the one Heavenly Father, through Christ. Later, with the rise and growth of the monastic orders, the appellation began gradually to have a more restricted meaning; for obviously the bonds of brotherhood were drawn more closely between those who lived under the rule and guidance of one spiritual father, their abbot. . . .

The word *friar* is to be carefully distinguished in its application from the word *monk*. For the monk retirement and solitude are undisturbed by the public ministry, unless under exceptional circumstances. His vow of poverty binds him strictly as an individual but in no way affects the right of tenure of his order. In the life of the friar, on the contrary, the exercise of the sacred ministry is an essential feature, for which the life of the cloister is considered as but an immediate preparation. His vow of poverty, too, not only binds him as an individual to the exercise of that virtue, but, originally at least, precluded also the right of tenure in common with his brethren. Thus originally the various orders of friars could possess no fixed revenues and lived upon the voluntary offerings of the faithful. Hence their name of mendicants. This second feature, by which the friar’s life differs so essentially from that of the monk, has become considerably modified since the Council of Trent. [In 1563, in] Session XXV, ch. iii, “*De Regular.*”, all the mendicant orders – the Friars Minor and Capuchins alone excepted – were granted the liberty of corporate possession. The Discalced[2] Carmelites and the Jesuits have availed themselves of this privilege with restrictions (cf. Wernz, *Jus Decretal.*, III, pt. II, 262, note). It may, however, be pertinently remarked here that the Jesuits, though mendicants in the strict sense of the word, as is evident from the very explicit declaration of St. Pius V (Const. “*Cum indefessæ*”, 1571), are classed not as mendicants or friars, but as clerics regular, being founded with a view to devoting themselves, even more especially than the friars, to the exercise of the sacred ministry (Vermeersch, *De Relig.*, I, xii, n. 8).

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[1]Gregory Cleary, “Friar.” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 6 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), 15 Oct. 2009 < http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06280b.htm >.

[2]‘**discalced**’ [dis’kalst] adjective – denoting or belonging to one of several strict orders of Catholic friars or nuns who go barefoot or wear only sandals. **ORIGIN** mid 17th cent.: variant, influenced by French ***dechaux***, of earlier *discalceated*, from Latin ***discalceutus***, from ***dis-*** (expressing removal) = ***calceatus*** (from ***calcus ‘shoe’***). First, note that no such behavior as going on alms-rounds is to be found in the Near East in any other religion than ‘Christianity’ – ancient Egyptian religion, included! Second, it should be noted that Buddhist monks in Thailand, who otherwise wear sandals when walking outside their monasteries, and who may not every day go on alms-rounds, when they *do* go, they walk barefooted! Who is copying whom?

Orders of friars

The orders of friars are usually divided into two classes: the four great orders mentioned by the Second Council of Lyons (can. xxiii) and the lesser orders. The four great orders in their legal precedence are: (1) the Dominicans (St. Pius V, Const. "*Divina*", 1568); (2) the Franciscans; (3) the Carmelites, (4) the Augustinians.

• The Dominicans, or Friars Preachers, formerly known as the Black Friars, from the black cappa or mantle worn over their white habit, were founded by St. Dominic in 1215 and solemnly approved by Honorius III, in Dec., 1216. They became a mendicant order in 1221.

• The Franciscans, or Friars Minor (Grey Friars), were founded by St. Francis of Assisi, who is rightly regarded as the patriarch of the mendicant orders. His rule was orally approved by Innocent III in 1209 and solemnly confirmed by Honorius III in 1223 (Const. "*Solet*"). It is professed by the Friars Minor, the Conventuals, and the Capuchins.

• The Carmelites, or White Friars, from the white cloak which covers their brown habit, were founded as a purely contemplative order, but became mendicants in 1245. They received the approbation of Honorius III (Const. "*Ut vivendi*", 30 Jan., 1226) and later of Innocent IV (Const. "*Quæ honorem*", 1247). The order is divided into two sections, the Calced and Discalced Carmelites.

• The Augustinians, or Hermits of St. Augustine (Austin Friars), trace their origin to the illustrious Bishop of Hippo. The various branches which subsequently developed were united and constituted from various bodies of hermits a mendicant order by Alexander IV (Const. "*Iis, quæ*", 31 July, 1255, and Const. "*Licet*", 4 May, 1256). . . .

Sources

REIFENSTUEL, SCHMALZGRUEBER, and other writers on titles xxxi and xxxvi of Bk. III of the *Decretals of Gregory IX*; FERRARIS, *Bibliotheca: Relig. Regulares* (Rome, 1885-96), I, 24; SUAREZ, *De Virtute et Statu Religionis* (Mainz, 1604), pt. II tract. ix; BARBOSA, *Juri Eccl. Universi* (Lyons, 1699), I, c. xli, n. 207; VERMEERSCH, *De Relig. Inst. et Personis* (2nd ed. Bruges, 1907), I, 38; WERNZ, *Jus Decretal.* (Rome, 1908), III pt. II, 262; HEIMBUCHER, *Die Orden und Kongregationen* (2nd ed., Paderborn, 1907) 1, 39; also popular works, with plates showing the different religious habits, such as MALLESON AND TUKER, *Handbook to Christian and Ecclesiastical Rome*, III (London, 1900); STEELE, *Monasteries and Religious Houses in Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1903). HÉLYOT, *Hist. des ordres religieux* (Paris, 1714-19); republished by MIGNE as *Dict. de ordres religieux* (Paris, 1847-69).

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Comment:

The giving of alms may have two very different contexts. Laypersons do give alms to the poor and indigent. But we are concerned here only with laypersons offering food to religious ascetics. A Buddhist monk on his morning alms-round may only receive as much food as will furnish him one meal to sustain himself for that day. This was the practice which the Buddha initiated at the beginning of his ministry: he was a wandering, homeless preacher of the Dharma, who walked the length and breadth of India with his alms bowl, accepting food from the wealthy and poor, from the high and the low, and imparting his wisdom to all. St. Francis of Assisi follows very closely in the Buddha's footsteps. It's surprising that as the mendicant orders evolved in Europe, some of them moved very far away from the spirit of their founding father, Francis – even becoming key agents of the Mediæval Inquisition!

BLOG: http://sucitto.blogspot.com/

Reflections: Ajahn Sucitto

Sunday, 31 May 2009

Alms and the human

Just as the willingness to both give and receive is a mark of any sound human relationship, the giving and receiving of alms (free-will offering of material support) has always been a part of most cultures. It centres people around kindness and humility and reminds us that although we are all subject to the changeable fortune of the world, our values and relatedness can remain constant. For this reason, alms-round (**'*piṇḍapāda*' = 'scrap-gathering'**) is the heart of the livelihood of a Buddhist monastic (or '*samaṇa*'). We are alms-people, not 'monks' or 'nuns', and certainly not priests. To rely for sustenance on what arises through bringing one's presence as a Gone Forth person into the market place takes trust in humanity. In fact just being in the market place and yet not a part of it entails the faith that the disturbance of one's presence will generate some positive ripples. So alms-rounds set a lot of nerve endings twitching – for both the samaṇa and the townsfolk. Maybe out of what turns up, one's needs will be met. And if not, then through being open and upright, one's mind will at least be clear, undistracted and free from craving. Because when you practise this, any craving for food, or even to get away from the public gaze, stands out so starkly as the creator of suffering and stress that you have to let it go. Instead you just maintain presence.

A lot of the time in modern monasticism, the edge is taken off the alms-faring by living in a monastery where food is almost certainly guaranteed to be given by its supporters, and where food is often stored up by lay attendants living in the monastery. (And thank you all very much.) This means that with not having to walk to the town, spend an hour or so on an alms-round, and then walk back again, there's more time to do other things – meditate, teach, manage the place, have meetings, etc. So faring out for alms frequently gets put aside. However in terms of the '*tudong*', the long-distance unaccompanied walk that I'm currently in the middle of, the alms-round is frequently the only way I'll get food for the day.

On some days it's the case that I've been hosted by supporters . . . but on others the routine is to wake up in my tent at dawn, meditate to gather my energies for an hour or two, brew up a hot drink to get the cold out of, and the energy into, my body. . . . Then break camp, stuff everything into a backpack and walk the few miles to the nearest town. It can be a slow walk, partially because the pack is heavy and the body is empty, and partly because there's no point in getting to the town much before 11 a.m. as the majority of shoppers who may provide me with food won't be heading for the shops until around that time.

Eventually I find a street with some shops in it, and a spot near a food outlet, a supermarket or bakers. According to the training, one should not intrude in the human flow of the street; one should not solicit alms by any gesture or speech or eye-contact and one should hold one's alms-bowl 'well-covered.' In other words, one should not beg, but merely be available for those who are inspired enough by what one represents to wish to offer food. This is all quite appropriate in a country where people know what a shaven-headed person in brown robes carrying a bowl is about. In England, the first thought that regularly comes to mind as I tuck myself back from the main flow of the street and haul my bowl out of my backpack, is that there is no way that this is going to work. No-one knows who I am, no-one knows what I'm doing – and even if they did, why should these hardworking townsfolk pause in the flurry and bustle of the street and getting their shopping done to offer me anything? Yet, here I am with no other way of obtaining the food to get me through the next 23 hours and the next twelve miles of walking. So this is a great 'out of the bubble' occasion, a time when I can't do my thing and go my way at my pace; I can't demonstrate wisdom or give an inspiring talk, I have to just be here, conspicuous but impotent. Ah well.

I settle into standing. Walking up and down looks suspicious, and standing presents who I am in a clear and simple way. I stand in my boots, trying to relax my stiff legs and sore feet, and look on with a soft focus. It's easy to feel compassion for all these people hurrying to manage their lives, thronging past in the ongoing human comedy. It's a 21st century version of Breugel: mothers trying to steer their children (some of whom are asking who that funny man is); teenagers with their iPods inserted; men making deliveries; styles of dress, of gait, of manner; dogs doing embarrassing doggy things. Everyone is busy going somewhere, getting something done, making purchases. Everyone except me. Thirty, forty minutes pass by; occasionally someone makes a friendly remark, but for most it seems I'm not on their screen. And yet . . . in the course of this last month, I've been prayed over, joked with, engaged with in inquiries about the Dalai Lama, and yes, greeted with curious joy and given food. Or rather the robes and bowl have triggered off a range of responses, as surely they were meant to do. However and whoever I am, I'm a break in the pattern, a snag in the flow of the daily human business – and that moves minds. I find all this deeply engaging and very much a space to drop into. It's both intimate and anonymous, discreet and revealing at the same time. Interesting to sense what it brings up. It's a real bubble breaker; it tips me out of my self-involved world . . . And others too.

Here's one story of how an alms-round affects the human world. It's set in a shopping mall in a small town near Bristol. At first, the arcade looked like the prime place for an alms-mendicant: a tide of people moving along the spacious pavements between several major supermarkets. Plenty of space to tuck away in a corner without bothering anyone. So, suitably parked near a shop, I stand and let a half-hour wash over me. Then a woman stops and asks me if I went to school with a friend of hers called Deirdre – I say 'No,' so she says: 'I'll get you some food then' and ducks inside the supermarket. It's like that: the donors often express no spiritual inclinations or interest, but somehow dare to break through the membrane that forms around strangers in the street. Once even a minimal human contact is made, they inexplicably dive into a nearby store, or ask what they can get me. Slightly bemused I await this woman's return – but then along comes a man in a uniform. 'Do you realize that it's against the law to collect money in this area?'

'I'm not collecting money. I'm standing for alms-food.'

'Do you realize that it's against the law to collect food in this area?'

'No, otherwise I wouldn't be doing it. I'm a monk and have no wish to transgress the laws of the land or cause problems in any way.'

(He softens a tad.) 'Well, I'll have to ask you to move on. This precinct is privately owned.'

He is a security guard, and this area of town, like many in Britain, has been bought by a property developer and turned into a shopping mall over which they have rights of access – and the right to evict anyone considered 'unsuitable' (i.e. not shopping). Naturally I agree to move but as I'm packing, I ask him how his day is and whether he has to deal with many problems on the street. He softens a little more and talks about his day. Nothing much happens – a kid on drugs yesterday was the event of the week. What a job. I notice he has studs in his ears and try to imagine his life outside his uniform. He is quite young and has a local accent; probably grew up in this town. He asks me what I'm doing in a genuinely interested way, and I talk about how I've walked up from Sussex and am heading towards Wales. He takes all this in, along with the robes, and seems receptive. Could he recommend a place where standing for alms would be permitted? (I'm starting to worry about the woman in the shop – what if she emerges to find me gone?) He recommends the High Street, then pauses, thinks again and mentions another large supermarket nearby – but outside of this arcade. Just then my donor turns up, plonks a sandwich and some fruit into my bowl with a brief 'Here you are then!' and scurries off. The security man grins: 'Well that's helped you on your way for today!' he says. Then he helps me get my pack on my back and we part company amicably.

Outside the other supermarket the show is much the same. Someone stops by and talks to me about his visit to Nepal, Tibetan tea and how hospitable and cheerful the monks had been. 'You've made my day!' he exclaims as he hurries off. Well that offering, although immaterial, is something. I'm starting to feel happy at being around: that the sign of a samaṇa can be a source of uplift in the world. Maybe one sandwich and a

banana is enough for the day. Then a woman hastily pops a small pack of tomatoes in my bowl. Perhaps that is enough . . . Anyway I move further away as I might possibly be too near the entrance to the store – and as I do so, right on cue, the manager appears.

'Excuse me – some of the customers have commented on your standing here, and apparently collecting. . . . This area does belong to (. . .) and I'm afraid I'll have to ask you to move along.'

'Fair enough. I have no wish to cause a disturbance.' Suddenly feeling like a bum or a drunk panhandling for coins, I stuff my bowl in my pack . . . but as the manager walks away, an elderly woman stops in front of me: 'You are a monk! Can I get you some food? I'm a Christian, what can I get you to eat?'

I mention maybe something small will do just fine, but she interjects: 'No, no, they make hot food in here, I'd like to buy you a proper meal.' So, with her late teens' daughter shouldering my pack, we march in to the cafeteria area of the supermarket that I've just been shooed away from. The ripple effect is palpable. Large, bald, robed being striding down the aisle following two women, one of whom is carrying a bulky backpack. The servers behind the counter give me guarded looks, but make no comments as I order up a breakfast and take a seat.

My sponsor explains she is a lapsed Catholic. 'Every time I went to church I would just weep and weep. So I stopped going. Now I sit at home, let my eyes rest in the middle distance and empty my mind. This is my way of praying.' I commend her on her meditation. . . . 'But I have a problem with devotion. I suppose I need to find other people to pray with.' An engaging conversation ensues. I refuse more food (I still have the sandwich to complete the meal) and give her a list of contact addresses that might help. Suddenly she's off. Then her daughter re-appears with bags of nuts and dried fruit, offers them with a smile and, like her mother, hastens off.

I don't need this extra food. I can't store it. What to do? Meanwhile wondering if I have been a nuisance to the store, and feeling unhappy about the contact I had with the manager, I decide to seek him out and explain things. It seems like the proper thing to do. So I head for customers' enquiries.

'I'd like to speak to the manager, please.'

They phone him up. 'He's busy right now, can you wait ten minutes?'

'Sure.'

Eventually he comes bustling along.

'Hello. The last time we met I was standing outside your store, and I'd just like to apologize if I was causing any disturbance to your customers. That was not my intention. Why I'm in here is because shortly after you left me, a woman came along and invited me in to have a meal. As it happened, her daughter also offered me some food, which I don't need and am not allowed to keep, so I'd like to offer it as a gesture of apology.'

He didn't blink, but seemed to be regaining his breath.

'You see, I'm a monk, and I live on alms food. I'm not allowed to ask for anything directly or even make a sign. I'm supposed to stand in a way that doesn't interrupt whatever's going on . . . but still some people, one in two hundred, see me and feel inspired to offer me food. Actually your store has made out of my standing outside it.'

The manager found some breath and sighed: 'I feel really crestfallen. I should have asked further what you were doing and given you a chance instead of jumping to conclusions.'

I say I sympathize with his situation and that he has to care for the effective running of his store ('Nice store you have here, by the way') and that some his customers might find people like me a bit disturbing. He appreciates it that I can see his point of view . . . and we get to talking. . . .

'I'm really grateful that you've taken the time to come back and explain this to me,' he says. 'I could never do what you're doing,' (we're on first-name terms now) but next time you or any of your fellows are coming through, phone and let me know and I'll arrange it so that you can collect food.'

Much hand shaking and so we part.

Humans! Sometimes all this practice is about is getting people to come out of their roles and programs for a moment and trust being human. It's an awkward, nervy kind of process, but this alms-mendicant sign is meant to instigate just that. Come to think of it, I'm *supposed* to be a disturbance.

After I've eaten, I find I still have the small pack of tomatoes. On the way out of town, I try giving it away. After two sets of people have reeled back in shock at being approached by a robed man with backpack bearing down on them proffering tomatoes, I find an old people's nursing home and hang them on the railings of the front gate. There the bag dangles, suspect emissary from a human world, until someone dares to peek inside it.

Meditating Buddha, Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka, 2007

8

The Historicity of Jesus

(From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

The historicity of Jesus concerns the historical authenticity of Jesus of Nazareth. Scholars often draw a distinction between Jesus as reconstructed through historical methods and the Christ of faith as understood through theological tradition. The historical figure of Jesus is of central importance to various religions, but especially Christianity and Islam, in which the historical details of Jesus' life are essential.

Most scholars in the fields of biblical studies and history agree that Jesus was a Jewish teacher from Galilee who was regarded as a healer, was baptized by John the Baptist, was accused of sedition against the Roman Empire, and on the orders of Roman Governor Pontius Pilate was sentenced to death by crucifixion.[1] On the other hand, mythologists,[2] and a minority[3][4] of biblical and historical scholars argue that Jesus never existed as a historical figure, but was a purely symbolic or mythical figure synthesized from various non-Abrahamic deities and heroes.[5]

The four canonical Gospels (most commonly estimated to have been written between 65 and 110 A.D.[6]) and the writings of Paul of the New Testament are among the earliest known documents relating to Jesus' life. Some scholars also hypothesize the existence of earlier texts such as the Signs Gospel and the Q document. There are arguments that the Gospel of Thomas is likewise an early text.

Scholarly opinions on the historicity of the New Testament accounts are diverse. At the extremes, they range from the view that they are inerrant descriptions of the life of Jesus,[7] to the view that they provide no historical information about his life.[8] As with all historical sources, scholars ask: to what extent did the authors' motivations shape the texts, what sources were available to them, how soon after the events described did they write, and did these factors lead to inaccuracies such as exaggerations or inventions?

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Earliest known sources

Christian writings

Jesus is featured throughout the New Testament and other Early Christian writings, as can be seen in such works as the Gospels, the Pauline Epistles, the book of Acts, non-canonical texts, and the writings of the early Church Fathers.

Gospels

The most detailed accounts of the life of Jesus in the Bible are the four canonical Gospels: the Gospel of Matthew; the Gospel of Mark; the Gospel of Luke; and the Gospel of John.[9] These Gospels are narrative accounts of part of the life of Jesus. They concentrate on his ministry, and conclude with his death and resurrection. The extent to which these sources are interrelated, or used related source material, is known as the synoptic problem. The date, authorship, access to eyewitnesses, and other essential questions of historicity depend on the various solutions to this problem.

The four canonical Gospels are anonymous. The introduction to Luke mentions accounts of what was handed down by eyewitnesses, and claims to have "diligently investigated all things from the beginning". The epilogue to John states that "these things" are testified to by the beloved disciple, whose "testimony we know . . . is true".[10] The authors in antiquity who discussed the authorship of the Gospels generally asserted the following:[11] Matthew was written by Matthew, one of the Twelve apostles of Jesus; Mark was written by Mark, a disciple of Simon Peter, who was one of the Twelve; Luke was written by Luke, who was a disciple of Paul, who was the Apostle to the Gentiles; John was written by John, who was one of the Twelve.

The first three Gospels, known as the synoptic gospels, share much material. As a result of various scholarly hypotheses attempting to explain this interdependence, the traditional association of the texts with their authors has become the subject of criticism. Though some solutions retain the traditional authorship,[12] other solutions reject some or all of these claims. The solution most commonly held in academia today is the two-source hypothesis, which posits that Mark and a hypothetical 2nd source, called the Q document, were used as sources for Matthew and Luke. Other solutions, such as the Augustinian hypothesis and Griesbach hypothesis, posit that Matthew was written first and that Mark was an epitome. Scholars who accept the two-source hypothesis generally date Mark to around 70, with Matthew and Luke dating to 80-90.[13] Scholars who accept Matthean priority usually date the synoptic gospels to before 70, with some arguing as early as 40.[14] John is most often dated to 90-100,[15] though a date as early as the 60s, and as late as the second century have been argued by a few.[16]

> Thus our prime sources about the life of Jesus were written within about fifty years of his death by people who perhaps knew him, but certainly by people who knew people who knew him. If this is beginning to sound slightly second hand, we may wish to consider two points. First . . . most ancient and medieval history was written from a much greater distance. Second, all the Gospel writers could have talked to people who were actually on the spot, and while perhaps not eyewitnesses themselves, their position is certainly the next best thing.[17]

Mainstream scholars hold that the authors wrote with certain motivations and a view to a particular community and its needs. They regard it as virtually certain the authors relied on various sources, including their own knowledge and the testimony of eyewitnesses. The later authors did not write in ignorance of some texts that preceded them, as is claimed explicitly by the author of Luke.

The extent to which the Gospels were subject to additions, redactions, or interpolations is the subject of textual criticism, which examines the extent to which a manuscript changed from its autograph, or the work as written by the original author, through manuscript transmission. Possible alterations in the Gospels include: Mark 16:8-20, Luke 22:19-20, 43-44, John 7:53-8:11.

Other issues with the historicity of the Gospels include possible conflicts with each other, or with other historical sources. The most frequent suggestions of conflict relate to the Census of Quirinius as recounted in Luke, the two genealogies contained in Luke and Matthew, and the chronology of the Easter events.[18]

Pauline Epistles

Jesus is also the subject of the writings of Paul of Tarsus, who dictated[19] letters to various churches and individuals from c. 48-68. There are traditionally fourteen letters attributed to Paul, thirteen of which claim to be written by Paul, with one anonymous letter. Current scholarship is in a general consensus in considering at least seven of the letters to be authored by Paul, with views varying concerning the remaining works. Paul seems to nowhere report his own eyewitness account of Jesus' life, but did claim knowledge of Jesus through visions (Gal 1:11-12 and 1 Cor 11:23). He met some of those described as Apostles of Jesus in the Gospels referring to them as Apostles (Gal 1:18-20, and 1 Cor 9:5). In his letters, Paul often refers to commands of Jesus or events in his life that seem consistent with the Gospel accounts. Paul in many places and in a combative way relates other preachers' differing view of Jesus, suggesting that even as early as 20 years after his crucifixion Jesus was a very strong interest of Jewish moral teachers preaching to Gentiles.

In his First Epistle to the Thessalonians Paul writes in chapter 2:14-15, referring to his fellow Jews, that they ". . . killed the Lord Jesus . . ." (though we should note that the authenticity of this passage has been doubted by some[20] [21]). He also refers to the "Lord's own word" in chapter 4:15 discussing the future coming of the Lord.

In his Epistle to the Galatians, Paul writes that after God "revealed his Son" in him (Gal 1), he did not discuss it with those who had been Apostles before him, but traveled to Arabia then back to Damascus. It was three years later that he went to Jerusalem where he saw the Apostle Cephas/Peter, and James, "the Lord's brother" (or "the brother of the Lord", 1:18-20), believed by many to be James the Just. Paul then 14 or more years later had a meeting with Peter, James, and John, the Council of Jerusalem.

In Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians he says in chapter 2:8 that the ". . . rulers of this age . . . crucified the Lord of glory . . .". In 7:10-11 he gives what he says are commands of "the Lord" regarding divorce. In 9:5 he refers to "the Lord's brothers" (or "the brethren of the Lord"), and refers to what "the Lord has commanded" in 9:14. Paul gives a description of the Last Supper in 11:23-26, which he says he received directly from "the Lord". In 15:3-8, he talks of the death and resurrection of Christ and witnesses to resurrection appearances.

In his letter to the Philippians 2:5-11, Paul writes that Christ Jesus had the form of God, and speaks of his "appearance as a man" and his "human likeness". In his letter to the Romans, 1:1-4, Paul describes "Christ Jesus", as the "Son of God" and says that Christ Jesus was from the seed of David, "according to the flesh". He says that Jesus was a Jewish human being in Romans 9:3-5.

Acts of the Apostles

Acts of the Apostles, written at least twenty, but probably thirty or forty years after Galatians, gives a more detailed account of the Council of Jerusalem in chapter 15. Acts also claims Jesus' family, including his mother, were members of the early church (1:12-14).

Ancient Creeds

The authors whose works are contained in the New Testament sometimes quote from creeds, or confessions of faith, that obviously predate their writings. Scholars suppose that some of these creeds date to within a few years of Jesus' death, and were developed within the Christian community in Jerusalem.[22] Though embedded within the texts of the New Testament, these creeds are a distinct source for early Christianity.

First Corinthians 15:3-4 reads: "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." This contains a Christian creed of pre-Pauline origin.[23] The antiquity of the creed has been located by many Biblical scholars to less than a decade after Jesus' death, originating from the Jerusalem apostolic community.[24] Concerning this creed, Campenhausen wrote, "This account meets all the demands of historical reliability that could possibly be made of such a text," [25] whilst A.M. Hunter said, "The passage therefore preserves uniquely early and verifiable testimony. It meets every reasonable demand of historical reliability." [26]

Other relevant creeds which predate the texts wherein they are found that have been identified are 1 John 4:2: "This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God",[27] 2 Timothy 2:8: "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, this is my Gospel",[28] Romans 1:3-4: "regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord",[29] and 1 Timothy 3:16: "He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory," an early creedal hymn.[30]

New Testament apocrypha

Jesus is a large factor in New Testament apocrypha, works excluded from the canon as it developed because they were judged not to be inspired. These texts are almost entirely dated to the mid second century or later, though a few texts, such as the *Didache*, may be first century in origin. Some of these works are discussed below.

Gnostic texts

The Gnostics' opinion of **Jesus** varied from viewing him as docetic to completely **metaphorical**, in all cases treating him as someone to allegorically attribute gnostic teachings to, his resurrection being regarded an **allegory for enlightenment**, in which all can take part. Nonetheless, certain Gnostic texts mention Jesus in the context of his **earthly existence**, and **some scholars** have argued that Gnostic texts could contain plausible traditions.[31] Examples of such texts include the *Gospel of Truth*, *Treatise on Resurrection*, and the *Apocryphon of John*, the latter of which opens with the following:

> It happened one day when John, the brother of James – who are sons of Zebedee – went up and came to the temple, that a Pharisee named Arimanius approached him and said to him: "Where is your master whom you followed?" And he said to them: "He has gone to the place from which he came." The Pharisee said to him: "This **Nazarene** deceived you all with deception and filled your ears with lies and closed your hearts and turned you from the traditions of your fathers."[32]

Of all the Gnostic texts, however, the *Gospel of Thomas* has drawn the most attention. It contains a list of sayings attributed to Jesus. It lacks a narrative of Jesus treating his deeds in a historical sense. Some date it to the second century, while other scholars contend for an early date of perhaps 50, citing a relationship to the hypothetical Q document among other reasons.[33][34]

Early Church fathers

Early Christian sources outside the New Testament also mention Jesus and details of his life. Important texts from the Apostolic Fathers are, to name just the most significant and ancient, Clement of Rome ([fl.] 96),[35] Ignatius of Antioch [d. c. 117],[36] and Justin Martyr [c. 100-165].[37]

Perhaps the most significant Patristic sources are the early references of Papias and Quadratus (d. 124), mostly reported by Eusebius in the fourth century, which both mention eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry and healings who were still alive in their own time (the late first century). Papias, in giving his sources for the information contained in his (largely lost) commentaries, stated (according to Eusebius):

> [I]f by chance anyone who had been in attendance on the elders should come my way, I inquired about the words of the elders – that is, what according to the elders Andrew or Peter said, or Philip, or Thomas or James, or John or Matthew or any other of the Lord's disciples, and whatever Aristion and the elder John, the Lord's disciples, were saying.[38]

Thus, while Papias was collecting his information (c. 90), Aristion and the elder John (who were Jesus' disciples) were still alive and teaching in Asia minor, and Papias gathered information from people who had known them.[39] Another Father, Quadratus, who wrote an apology to the emperor Hadrian, was reported by Eusebius to have stated:

> The words of our Savior were always present, for they were true: those who were healed, those who rose from the dead, those who were not only seen in the act of being healed or raised, but were also always present, not merely when the Savior was living on earth, but also for a considerable time after his departure, so that some of them survived even to our own times.[40]

By "our Savior" Quadratus means Jesus, and by "our times" it has been argued that he may refer to his early life, rather than when he wrote (117-124), which would be a reference contemporary with Papias.[41]

Greco-Roman sources

There are passages relevant to Christianity in the works of four major non-Christian writers of the late 1st and early 2nd centuries – Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny the Younger. However, these are generally references to early Christians rather than a historical Jesus. Of the four, Josephus' writings, which document John the Baptist, James the Just, and possibly also Jesus, are of the most interest to scholars dealing with the historicity of Jesus (see below). Tacitus, in his *Annals* written c. 115, mentions popular opinion about Christus, without historical details (see also: Tacitus on Jesus). There is an obscure reference to a Jewish leader called "Chrestus" in Suetonius. Pliny condemned Christians as easily-led fools.

Josephus

Flavius Josephus (c. 37 – c. 100), a Jew and Roman citizen who worked under the patronage of the Flavians, wrote the *Antiquities of the Jews* in 93 C.E. In these works, Jesus is mentioned twice. The one directly concerning Jesus has come to be known as the Testimonium Flavianum.

The Testimonium's authenticity has attracted much scholarly discussion and controversy of interpolation. Louis H. Feldman counts 87 articles published during the period of 1937-1980, "the overwhelming majority of which question its authenticity in whole or in part".[42]

In the second, very brief mentioning, Josephus calls James "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ".[43] For this shorter passage, most scholars consider it to be substantially authentic,[44] while others raise doubts.[45]

More notably, in the Testimonium Flavianum, it is written:

> About this time came Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it is appropriate to call him a man. For he was a performer of paradoxical feats, a teacher of people who accept the unusual with pleasure, and he won over many of the Jews and also many Greeks. He was the Christ. When Pilate, upon the accusation of the first men amongst us, condemned him to be crucified, those who had formerly loved him did not cease to follow him, for he appeared to them on the third day, living again, as the divine prophets foretold, along with a myriad of other marvellous things concerning him. And the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has not disappeared to this day.[46]

Concerns have been raised about the authenticity of the passage, and it is widely held by scholars that at least part of the passage is an interpolation by a later scribe. Judging from Alice Whealey's 2003 survey of the historiography, it seems that the majority of modern scholars consider that Josephus really did write something here about Jesus, but that the text that has reached us is corrupt to a perhaps quite substantial extent. In the words of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* entry for Flavius Josephus, "The passage seems to suffer from repeated interpolations." There has been no consensus on which portions are corrupt, or to what degree.

In antiquity, Origen recorded that Josephus did not believe Jesus was the Christ,[47] as it seems to suggest in the quote above. Michael L. White argued against authenticity, citing that parallel sections of Josephus's *Jewish War* do not mention Jesus, and that some Christian writers as late as the third century, who quoted from the *Antiquities*, do not mention the passage.[48] While very few scholars believe the whole testimonium is genuine,[49] most scholars have found at least some authentic words of Josephus in the passage.[50] Certain scholars of Josephus's works have observed that this portion is written in his style.[51]

There is one main reason to believe Josephus did originally mention Jesus and that the passage was later edited by a Christian into the form we have now. There is a passage from a 10th century Arab historian named Agapius of Manbij who was a Christian. He cites Josephus as having written:

> At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good, and (he) was known to be virtuous and many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not desert his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.[52]

The text from which Agapius quotes is more conservative and is closer to what one would expect Josephus to have written. The similarities between the two passages imply a Christian author later removed the conservative tone and added interpolations.[53]

Pliny the Younger

Pliny the Younger, the provincial governor of Pontus and Bithynia, wrote to Emperor Trajan c. 112 concerning how to deal with Christians, who refused to worship the emperor, and instead worshiped "Christus":

> Those who denied that they were or had been Christians, when they invoked the gods in words dictated by me, offered prayer with incense and wine to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for this purpose together with statues of the gods, and moreover cursed Christ – none of which those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do – these I thought should be discharged. Others named by the informer declared that they were Christians, but then denied it, asserting that they had been but had ceased to be, some three years before, others many years, some as much as twenty-five years. They all worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and cursed Christ.[54]

Tacitus

Tacitus (c. 56 - c. 117), writing c. 116, included in his *Annals* a mention of Christianity and "Christus", the Latinized Greek translation of the Hebrew word "Messiah". In describing Nero's persecution of Christians following the Great Fire of Rome c. 64, he wrote:

> Nero fastened the guilt of starting the blaze and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius 14-37 at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judæa, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.[55]

R.E. van Voorst noted the improbability that later Christians would have interpolated "such disparaging remarks about Christianity".[56] For this reason the authenticity of the passage is rarely doubted, but there is disagreement about what it proves. It has been controversially speculated that Tacitus may have used one of Pilate's reports to the emperor as the source for his statement that "Christus" had been crucified by Pilate.[57] Biblical scholar Bart D. Ehrman wrote that: "Tacitus's report confirms what we know from other sources, that Jesus was executed by order of the Roman governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate, sometime during Tiberius's reign."[58] Others would say it tells us only what the Christians in the year 116 believed, and is not therefore an independent confirmation of the Gospel reports. For example, historian Richard Carrier writes "it is inconceivable that there were any records of Jesus for Tacitus to consult in Rome (for many reasons, not the least of which being that Rome's capitol had burned to the ground more than once in the interim), and even less conceivable that he would have dug through them even if they existed. . . . It would simply be too easy to just ask a Christian – or a colleague who had done so. . . . [T]here can be no doubt that what Pliny discovered from Christians he had interrogated was passed on to Tacitus."[59]

Suetonius

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (c. 69 - 140) wrote the following in his *Lives of the Twelve Cæsar*s about riots which broke out in the Jewish community in Rome under the emperor Claudius:

> As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he (Claudius) expelled them from Rome.[60]

The event was noted in Acts 18:2. The term Chrestus also appears in some later texts applied to Jesus, and Robert Graves,[61] among others,[62] consider it a variant spelling of Christ, or at least a reasonable spelling error. On the other hand, Chrestus was itself a common name, particularly for slaves, meaning good or useful.[63] In regards to Jewish persecution around the time to which this passage refers, the *Jewish Encyclopedia* states: ". . . in 49-50, in consequence of dissensions among them regarding the advent of the Messiah, they were forbidden to hold religious services. The leaders in the controversy, and many others of the Jewish citizens, left the city".[64]

Because these events took place around 20 years after Jesus' death, the passage most likely is not referring to the person Jesus, although it could be referencing Christians – who were the instigators of Jesus and his legacy – whom Suetonius also mentioned in regards to Nero and the fire of Rome.[65] As such, this passage offers little information about Jesus.[58]

Others

Thallus, of whom very little is known, wrote a history from the Trojan War to 109 BC, according to Eusebius. No work of Thallus survives. There is one reference to Thallus having written about events beyond 109 BC. Julius Africanus, writing c. 221, while writing about the crucifixion of Jesus, mentioned Thallus. Thus:

> On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in his third book of History, calls (as appears to me without reason) an eclipse of the sun.[66]

Lucian, a second century Romano-Syrian satirist, who wrote in Greek, wrote:

> The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day – the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. . . . You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws.[67]

Celsus, a late second-century critic of Christianity, accused Jesus of being a bastard child and a sorcerer.[68] He is quoted as saying that Jesus was a "mere man".[69]

The Acts of Pilate is purportedly an official document from Pilate reporting events in Judea to the Emperor Tiberius (thus, it would have been among the *commentaii principis*). It was mentioned by Justin Martyr, in his First Apology (c. 150) to Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, and Lucius Verus, who said that his claims concerning Jesus' crucifixion, and some miracles, could be verified by referencing the official record, the "Acts of Pontius Pilate".[70] With the exception of Tertullian, no other writer is known to have mentioned the work, and Tertullian's reference says that Tiberius debated the details of Jesus' life before the Roman Senate, an event that is almost universally considered absurd.[71] There is a later apocryphal text, undoubtedly fanciful, by the same name, and though it is generally thought to have been inspired by Justin's reference (and thus to post-date his Apology), it is possible that Justin actually mentioned this text, though that would give the work an unusually early date and therefore is not a straightforward identification.[72]

Jewish records

The Talmud Sanhedrin 43a, which dates to the earliest period of composition (Tannaitic period) contains the following:

> On the eve of the Passover, Yeshu was hanged. Forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried: "He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Any one who can say anything in his favour, let him come forward and plead on his behalf." But since nothing was brought forward in his favour he was hanged on the eve of the Passover.[73][74]

Jesus as a historical person

The Historical Jesus is a reconstruction of Jesus using modern historical methods.

Paul Barnett pointed out that "scholars of ancient history have always recognized the 'subjectivity' factor in their available sources" and "have so few sources available compared to their modern counterparts that they will gladly seize whatever scraps of information that are at hand." He noted that modern history and ancient history are two separate disciplines, with differing methods of analysis and interpretation.[75]

In *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, E.P. Sanders used Alexander the Great as a paradigm – the available sources tell us much about Alexander's deeds, but nothing about his thoughts. "The sources for Jesus are better, however, than those that deal with Alexander" and "the superiority of evidence for Jesus

is seen when we ask what he thought." [76] Thus, Sanders considers the quest for the historical Jesus to be much closer to a search for historical details on Alexander than to those historical figures with adequate documentation.

Consequently, scholars like Sanders, Geza Vermes, John P. Meier, David Flusser, James H. Charlesworth, Raymond E. Brown, Paula Fredriksen and John Dominic Crossan argue that, although many readers are accustomed to thinking of Jesus solely as a theological figure whose existence is a matter only of religious debate, the four canonical Gospel accounts are based on source documents written within decades of Jesus' lifetime, and therefore provide a basis for the study of the "historical" Jesus. These historians also draw on other historical sources and archæological evidence to reconstruct the life of Jesus in his historical and cultural context.

Jesus as myth

The existence of Jesus as an actual historical figure has been questioned by a few scholars and historians, some of the earliest being Constantin-François Volney and Charles François Dupuis in the 18th century and Bruno Bauer in the 19th century. Each of these proposed that the Jesus' character was a fusion of earlier mythologies.[77] [78] [79] [80]

The views of scholars who entirely rejected Jesus' historicity were summarized in Will Durant's *Caesar and Christ*, published in 1944. Their rejections were based on a suggested lack of eyewitnesses, a lack of direct archæological evidence, the failure of ancient works to mention Jesus, and similarities early Christianity shares with then-contemporary religion and mythology.[81]

More recently, arguments for non-historicity have been discussed by George Albert Wells, by Earl Doherty (*The Jesus Puzzle*, 1999), and by biblical scholar Robert M. Price.

Nevertheless, non-historicity is still regarded as effectively refuted by almost all Biblical scholars and historians.[82] [83] [84] [85]

Notes

1. Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave* (New York: Doubleday, Anchor Bible Reference Library, 1994), p. 964; D.A. Carson, et al., p. 50-56; Shaye J.D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Westminster Press, 1987), pp. 78, 93, 105, 108; John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (HarperCollins, 1991), pp. xi-xiii; Michael Grant, pp. 34-35, 78, 166, 200; Paula Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), pp. 6-7, 105-110, 232-234, 266; John P. Meier, vol. 1: pp. 68, 146, 199, 278, 386, vol. 2:726; E.P. Sanders, pp. 12-13; Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), p. 37; Paul L. Maier, *In the Fullness of Time* (Kregel, 1991), pp. 1, 99, 121, 171; N.T. Wright, *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions* (HarperCollins, 1998), pp. 32, 83, 100-102, 222; Ben Witherington III, pp. 12-20.
2. Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*, trans. Philip Mairet (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 170.
3. "The nonhistoricity thesis has always been controversial, and it has consistently failed to convince scholars of many disciplines and religious creeds. . . . Biblical scholars and classical historians now regard it as effectively refuted." – Robert E. Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament: An Introduction to the Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), p. 16.
4. "There are those who argue that Jesus is a figment of the Church's imagination, that there never was a Jesus at all. I have to say that I do not know any respectable critical scholar who says that any more." R. Burridge & G. Gould, *Jesus Now and Then* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004), p. 34.
5. Michael Martin; John Mackinnon Robertson.
6. Burton L. Mack (1996), *Who Wrote the New Testament?: The Making of the Christian Myth* (Harper)
7. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), pp. 90-91.
8. Howard M. Teeple (March 1970), "The Oral Tradition That Never Existed", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 89 (1): 56–68. doi:10.2307/3263638.
9. On John, see S. Byrskog, "Story as History – History as Story", in *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 123 (Tübingen: Mohr, 2000; reprinted Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 149; Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), p. 385.

10. John 21:24.

11. See the commentary by St. Augustine on hypotyposeis.org; also see the fragments in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History,* 3.39.1, 3.39.15, 6.14.1, 6.25.

12. For an overview of the synoptic problem that discusses the traditional view in detail, see Drane, *Introducing the New Testament* (San Francisco: Harper Row, 1986), chapter 11. Also, see Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990).

13. Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Anchor Bible).

14. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), pp. 86-92.

15. Brown, 7.

16. For an early date, see: J.A.T. Robinson, "Redating the New Testament", and William F. Albright, "Towards a More Conservative View", in *Christianity Today* (18 January 1963); for a late date, see R. Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, for a brief overview; see also this article at <bethinking.org>.

17. Jo Ann H. Moran Cruz and Richard Gerberding, *Medieval Worlds: An Introduction to European History* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), pp. 44-45.

18. Genealogies, Brown, p. 236, B.D. Ehrman, *The New Testament*, p. 121; census, Brown, p. 321; Ehrman, p. 118; Easter events, Ehrman, p. 277; and see *An Easter Challenge For Christians* by Dan Barker.

19. Joseph Barber Lightfoot in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* writes: "At this point [Gal 6:11] the apostle takes the pen from his amanuensis, and the concluding paragraph is written with his own hand. From the time when letters began to be forged in his name (2 Thess 2:2; 3:17), it seems to have been his practice to close with a few words in his own handwriting, as a precaution against such forgeries. . . . In the present case he writes a whole paragraph, summing up the main lessons of the epistle in terse, eager, disjointed sentences. He writes it, too, in large, bold characters (Gr. *pelikois grammasin*), that his handwriting may reflect the energy and determination of his soul."

20. First Thessalonians 2:13-16: "A Deutero-Pauline Interpolation", Birger A. Pearson, *The Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 64, No. 1 (Jan., 1971), pp. 79-94.

21. First Thessalonians 2:13-16: "Linguistic Evidence for an Interpolation", Daryl Schmidt, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 102, No. 2 (Jun., 1983), pp. 269-279.

22. A basic text is that of Oscar Cullmann, available in English in a translation by J.K.S. Reid, titled, *The Earliest Christian Confessions* (London: Lutterworth, 1949).

23. Neufeld, *The Earliest Christian Confessions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 47; Reginald H. Fuller, *The Formation of the Resurrection Narratives* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), p. 10; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus – God and Man* trans. Lewis Wilkins and Duane Pribe (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), p. 90; Oscar Cullmann, *The Early Church: Studies in Early Christian History and Theology*, ed. A.J.B. Higgins (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966), p. 64; Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress 1969), p. 251; *Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament*, vol. 1, pp. 45, 80-82, 293; R.E. Brown, *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus* (New York: Paulist Press, 1973), pp. 81, 92.

24. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus – God and Man*, trans. Lewis Wilkins and Duane Pribe (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), p. 90; Oscar Cullmann, *The Early Church: Studies in Early Christian History and Theology*, ed. A.J.B. Higgins (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966), p. 66-66; R.E. Brown, *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus* (New York: Paulist Press, 1973), p. 81; Thomas Sheehan, *First Coming: How the Kingdom of God Became Christianity* (New York: Random House, 1986), pp. 110, 118; Ulrich Wilckens, *Resurrection*, trans. A.M. Stewart (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew, 1977), p. 2; Hans Grass, *Ostergeschen und Osterberichte*, 2nd edition (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1962), p. 96; Grass favors the origin in Damascus.

25. Hans von Campenhausen, "The Events of Easter and the Empty Tomb," in *Tradition and Life in the Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), p. 44.

26. Archibald Hunter, *Works and Words of Jesus* (1973), p. 100.

27. Cullmann, *Confessions*, p. 32.

28. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, Vol 1, pp. 49, 81; Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, trans. Norman Perrin (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 102.

29. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus – God and Man*, trans. by Lewis Wilkins and Duane Pribe (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), pp. 118, 283, 367; Neufeld, *The Earliest Christian Confessions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), pp. 7, 50; C.H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), p. 14.

30. Reginald Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology* (New York: Scribner's, 1965), pp. 214, 216, 227, 239; Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, trans. Norman Perrin (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 102; Neufeld, *The Earliest Christian Confessions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), pp. 7, 9, 128.

31. James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977), and especially his essay in Hedrick and Hodgson, *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1986); Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 1979); R.E. Brown, "The Christians Who Lost Out", in *The New York Times Book Review*, 20 January 1980, p. 3; Koester in Robinson, *Nag Hammadi in English*, vol. 2, pp. 4, 47, 68, 150-154, 180. It is important to stress that all these scholars, with perhaps the exception of Pagels (whom the rest were critical of on this point) distanced themselves from using the texts as historical sources for the most part, and only proceeded to consider information therein with great caution.

32. *Apocryphon of John* 1:5-17.

33. Helmut Koester & Thomas O. Lambdin (trans.), "The Gospel of Thomas", in James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (rev. ed.), Leiden, New York, Cologne: E.J. Brill, pp. 125. ISBN 9004088563

34. Miller, 6; it also is not quoted in any contemporary writings, and suffers from a paucity of manuscripts, see these articles at answers.org and ntcanon.org.

35. Clement, Corinthians 42.

36. Ignatius, *Letter to the Trallians*, 9; *Letter to the Smyrneans*, 1, 3.

37. Justin, *First Apology*, 30, 32, 34-35, 47-48, 50; *Dialogue with Trypho*, 12, 77, 97, 107-108, &c.

38. Translation by Richard Bauckham in his *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006), pp. 15-16.

39. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006), pp. 15-21.

40. Quoted in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 4.3.2, translation by Richard Bauckham in his *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006), p. 53.

41. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006), p. 53l.

42. Feldman (1989), p. 430.

43. Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20:9.1.

44. Louis H. Feldman, "Josephus", *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 3, pp. 990-91.

45. "Testimonium Flavianum": < EarlyChristanWritings.com >. Retrieved on 2006-10-07.

46. Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.3.3.

47. Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*, 10.17; *Against Celsus*, 1.47.

48. Michael L. White, *From Jesus to Christianity* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2004), pp. 97–98.

49. I.e., Henri Daniel-Rops, *Silence of Jesus' Contemporaries*, p. 21, and G.R. Habermas, *The Historical Jesus*, p. 193.

50. John Drane, *Introducing the New Testament* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986), p. 138; John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew* (Anchor Bible Reference Library, 1991), vol. 1; also, James H. Charlesworth, *Jesus Within Judaism* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1988), p. 96.

51. Henri Daniel-Rops, *Silence of Jesus' Contemporaries*, p. 21; J.N.D. Anderson, *Christianity: The Witness of History* (London: Tyndale, 1969), p. 20; F.F. Bruce, *New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1967), p. 108.

52. Agapius, *Kitab al-'Unwan*, 239-240.

53. F.E Peters, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam vol.1, p. 149.

54. Pliny to Trajan, *Letters*, 10.96-97.

55. Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.44 (Latin and English).

56. Robert E. Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament: An Introduction to the Ancient Evidence*, (W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), p. 43; see also the criterion of embarrassment.

57. F.F. Bruce, *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), page 23.

58. B.D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, p. 212.

59. "Did Jesus exist?: Earl Doherty and the argument of ahistoricity", by Richard Carrier: http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/richard_carrier/jesuspuzzle.html

60. *Iudæos, impulsore Chresto, assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit*.

61. See his translation of Suetonius, *Claudius*, 25, in *The Twelve Cæsars* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1957), and his introduction, pp. 7, 197.

62. Francois Amiot, *Jesus: A Historical Person*, p. 8; F.F. Bruce, *Christian Origins*, p. 21.

63. R.T. France, *The Evidence for Jesus* (Regent College Publishing, 2006), p. 42. ISBN 1573833703

64. *Jewish Encyclopedia*: "Rome: Expelled Under Tiberius".

65. Suetonius, *Nero*, 16.

66. "Julius Africanus, Extant Writings", XVIII, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), vol. VI, p. 130.

67. Lucian, "The Death of Peregrine", 11-13, in *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, trans. H.W. Fowler (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949), vol. 4.

68. Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician: Charlatan or Son of God?* (1978), pp. 78-79.

69. "www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/Ap0301/CELSUS.htm".

70. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 48.

71. See Tertullian, *Apology*, V.

72. For a discussion, see Daniel-Rops, *Silence of Jesus' Contemporaries*, p. 14.

73. *The Babylonian Talmud*, translated by I. Epstein (London: Soncio, 1935), vol. 3, Sanhedrin 43a, p. 281.

74. *The Babylonian Talmud* edited by I, Epstein of Jews' College, London, folio 43a.

75. Paul Barnett, "Is the New Testament History?", p. 1.

76. Sanders (1993), p. 3.

77. Van Voorst, p. 8.

78. Constantin-François Volney, *Les ruines, ou Méditations sur les révolutions des empires* (Paris: Desenne, 1791); English translation, *The Ruins, or A Survey of the Revolutions of Empires* (New York: Davis, 1796).

79. C.F. Dupuis, *Origine de tous les cultes* (Paris: Chasseriau, 1794); English translation, *The Origin of All Religious Worship* (New York: Garland, 1984).

80. Will Durant. *Cæsar and Christ* (New York: Simon and Schuster), 1972.

81. Durant (1944), pp. 553-7.

82. F.F. Bruce (1982), *New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (InterVarsity Press). ISBN 087784691X

83. W.R. Herzog II (2005), *Prophet and Teacher*. WJK, ISBN 0664225284

84. J.E. Komoszewski, M.J. Sawyer, & D.B. Wallace (2006), *Reinventing Jesus* (Kregel Publications), pp. 195 f. ISBN 978-0825429828

85. Walter P. Weaver, *The Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century, 1900-1950* (Continuum International, 1999), page 71.

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External links

• From Jesus to Christ, a PBS site.

• The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?, by F.F. Bruce.

• The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede, by Albert Schweitzer.

• Jesus – History or Myth? (debate between historical scholars).

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9

Two Examples of Extreme Revisionism

(Christianity is a Judaized Branch of Crypto-Buddhism)

In the previous section (the Wikipedia article on 'The Historicity of Jesus'), there is no mention of Buddhism and its possible relevance to questions about the historical nature of Jesus. The Wikipedia article is rather brief with, and dismissive of, those who view 'Jesus as myth'. We have considered the views of Zacharias P. Thundy, in his path-breaking book, *Buddha and Christ: Nativity Stories and Indian Traditions* (1993), as well as the views of Elmar R. Gruber and Holger Kersten, in their book, *The Original Jesus: The Buddhist Sources of Christianity* (1995). These authors do not consider Jesus to be a mythical character. They appear to believe that Jesus did actually live in the early decades of the first century of the Common Era. They only hold that Christian scriptures (canonical and non-canonical) borrow much from India, and from Buddhism, in particular.

It is the Danish academic, Christian Lindtner, who has truly pioneered the argument that the so-called first century CE person of Jesus is really a disguised projection of the historic Buddha by the New Testament evangelists who are, themselves, Buddhists, basing much of their writings on Indian Buddhist Sanskrit and Pāli sources. Lindtner's theories and writings, quite predictably, have been considered outrageous and hurtful by Christian circles. Some of his critics have also accused him of being a Holocaust-denier and of having various other moral flaws. These accusations have no relevance whatsoever to academic issues – his critics, in this, commit the *ad hominem* fallacy in reasoning, the most widespread of fallacies! There have been, thus, very few qualified attempts to refute Lindtner's views, as there are very few persons with the linguistic qualifications to support such refutations: a command of the various languages of the Buddhist scriptures and writings, as well as a command of the languages of the Jewish and Christian scriptures and writings.

After presenting Lindtner's brief two page introduction to his 'Theory' (the '**C**hristian **L**indtner **T**heory [**CLT**] of the Buddhist Origins of the New Testament Gospels') and his more extensive address ("A New Introduction to the Body of *Tathāgatas*") at the International Seminar, 'The Sanskrit and Buddhist Sources of the New Testament', Klavreström, Sweden, Sep. 11, 2003, we will also present another theory which proposes that the forerunner of Christianity (crypto-Buddhism) was launched in Alexandria, two and a half centuries BCE: the 'Out of Egypt Theory'.

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Note: The symbol ***Q***, appearing on the following pages, stands for the German word '***Quelle***' (which means '**source**', in English). In New Testament scholarship concerning the relationships among the three Synoptic Gospels, the "Two-source Hypothesis" holds that the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were written independently, each using Mark and a second document called ***Q*** as a **source**. The symbol ***Q***, thus, has been taken to stand for a hypothetical written **source** of sayings of Jesus which are found in both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke but are not found in the Gospel of Mark. Christian Lindtner, in his revolutionary fashion, has not only identified the so-called hypothetical ***Q Source*** as a group of already *published* Buddhist scriptures, he has also demonstrated that these scriptures were a ***source*** for far more than just the "sayings" of Jesus and were a ***source*** for *all four* Gospels as well as for the Epistles!

A. Christian Lindtner

Q = MSV + SDP and other Buddhist texts

Introductory remarks

Q[uelle] is the main Buddhist source of the four gospels of the New Testament. It is also a major source for most of the other books of the New Testament, above all, The Acts and Revelation.

Q = MSV+SDP: Major parts of the ***Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-Vinaya*** (***MSV***) were first edited on the basis of the Gilgit Manuscript ([***Saṁgha-Bheda-Vastu***] ***SBV***), by the Italian Sanskritist Raniero Gnoli in 1977-78. For references, see the review of Chr. Lindtner in *Acta Orientalia 43* (1983), pp. 124-126. There is still no translation into a modern language.

Other important parts of the *MSV*, namely ***Catuṣ-Pariṣat-Sūtra*** (***CPS***), and ***Mahā-Parinirvāṇa-Sūtra*** (***MPS***), were edited, along with parallel texts in other ancient Buddhist languages, by the late Ernst Waldschmidt, Berlin 1952-1962, and 1950-1951, respectively. For further references, I recommend the standard work of E. Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, Louvain, 1988.

Q not only refers to *MSV*, but also to the ***Sad-Dharma-Puṇḍarīka-sūtram*** (***SDP***), also known as the *Lotus Sūtra*. English translations by H. Kern and W.E. Soothill are readily available. The emphasis on mere faith in the Buddha as sufficient for salvation, and the idea that tricks, puns, symbolic language, codes, parables, etc., should be used by Buddhist missionaries to convert all living beings to the secret of the Buddha, derives directly from the *SDP*. The Sanskrit text is also available, most recently as edited by the Indian scholar P.L. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1960.

A few other Sanskrit texts have also been copied by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These authors also copied passages from the Old Testament, as known, often without giving the source. That they copied *Q* in the same way, should therefore not really come as a surprise to us. The Greek text of the Gospels is often obscure, ambiguous or otherwise odd. This partly has to do with the fact that the editors had to leave out or add words in order to get the numerical patterns right, but it also reflects Sanskritisms. In a sense, the "Hebrew dialect" (Papias) of the Greek language of Matthew etc. could be called "Greekskrit". Some examples are provided in the 2001 paper by CL [Christian Lindtner]: "Some Sanskritisms in the New Testament Gospels".

The earliest translations of Buddhist texts on Dharma into Greek date back to the time of king Aśoka. Bilingual coins of king Menander etc. are, as known, very common. People must have known Greek as well as Indic dialects related to Sanskrit. As J. Duncan M. Derrett observes in his important book, *The Bible and the Buddhists*, Sardini, 2000, p. 95, there is an old Bactrian inscription that reproduces the standard homage to the Buddhist Trinity.

The Sanskrit is: *namo Buddhāya, namo Dharmāya, namo Saṁghāya*.

The imitation, originally in Greek letters: *namô o bodo, namô o douarmo, namô o saggo*.

Jesus imitates the Buddhist Trinity in his own way in his "last wish", Matthew 28:19. But, with an ambiguity that is only too typical, he imitates not only the *namo* to the Buddha, to the Dharma and to the Saṁgha. He also has puns on the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit of the *SDP*.

The secret of the Holy Spirit is also the secret of the *SDP*. You have to dip all people into the name (*namô*) of the *Tri-ratnas*, the *Trinitas*. But the Greek word for 'name' also imitates the Sanskrit word for 'homage'. A typical ambiguity!

As pointed out in my 9/11 Klavreström paper, Revelation 13:18:

a-rith-mos gar an-thrô-pou es-tin

provides a perfect and typical imitation of:

sad-dhar-ma-puṇ-ḍa-rī-ka-sūt-ram.

If you have a bit of *sophia*, as required, you cannot fail to see that the Greek imitates the sense, the sound and the numerical value of the Sanskrit, for the numerical value of *puṇḍarīka* is, of course, 666. So the Man is the *Puṇḍarīka*. Who, then, can deny that *SDP* is a part of *Q*?

Examples Illustrating That *Q* = *MSV* + *SDP*

1. Matthew 1:1 runs:

biblos geneseôs, ´Iêsou Khristou, huiou Daueid, huiou ´Abraam.

Book of descent, of Jesus Christ, of son David, of son Abraham.

Commentary [Lindtner's!]**:**

. . . The source is the introduction to the *MSV*. *Ma-hā-Maud-gal-yā-ya-nam*, becoming the *Math-thai-on le-go-me-non*, Matthew 9:9, introduces the *MSV* by relating the legend of the *vaṁśas* = *biblos* of the *kula*, genitive, *kulasya* = *geneseôs* of the Śākyas in Kapila-vastu, alias *Ka-phar-naoum*. The *MSV* (***SBV*** [***S****aṁgha-****B****heda-****V****astu*]) begins by providing a long list of kings. This is combined with the list of the seven last Buddhas, each of whom is associated with 6 individuals, giving us 7x6 = 42. This text (*Mahāvadānasūtram*) also belongs to *MSV*. The seven Buddhas belong to three different periods.

These lists of names are combined and imitated by Matthew, and assimilated to Old Testament names. The names constituting the *biblos geneseôs* = *kulasya vaṁśas*, are assigned to three periods each of which has "fourteen generations". So, Matthew introduces his book by imitating the pattern and the numbers of his sources.

The hero of the *MSV* is the *kṣatriyas* [ruling-warrior-caste-man] called *Śākyamunis* [the Ascetic of the Śākyas, i.e., the Buddha]. There are numerous puns on *Śākyamunis* later on in Matthew. The numerical value of *Śākyamunis* is 932 = the numerical value of *to haima mou*.

The genitive form of *kṣatriyas*, son of a king, is *kṣa-tri-yas-ya*. These four syllables in Greek become *´Iê-sou Khris-tou*. As will be seen, when comparing the Greek and the Sanskrit, all the syllables and consonants of the original Sanskrit have been preserved. This means, in this case, that the *-sou* of *´Iêsou* represents the genitive ending of *kṣatriyasya*, namely *-sya*. Moreover, the *´I* represents the *y*. There are, to be sure, several Sanskrit originals behind Jesus. More about this later on. Normally Sanskrit *kṣatriyas* becomes *ho Khristos* in the Greek. The article *ho* is there in order to imitate the three syllables of the original. So, as a rule, Sanskrit *kṣa-tri-yas* is translated as *ho khris-tos*. Such a *kṣatriyas* is also anointed. Thus the Greek represents not only the sound but also the sense of the Sanskrit perfectly. The sense is, of course, at the same time assimilated to that of the Messiah.

The *kṣatriyas* is, in *Q*, the son (Sanskrit *putras*) of the king, called *deva*. He is, therefore, a *deva-putras*, a son of the king. Sanskrit *devas* also means god. He is, therefore also the son of god. This is nicely assimilated to the king *Dauid*. So the *deva-*, god and king, is nicely assimilated to the king David. Note also, that the Greek has no word for "of". It says "son David". The reason is clear. It has to have four syllables only, as does the Sanskrit.

Finally, he is the son (of) Abraham. The Sanskrit original is Brahmā. The *kṣatriyas* descends from the world of Brahmā. He is, as such, one of the numerous sons of Brahmā. Thus it is easy to see that the son of Abraham – a chronological absurdity – was originally the son of Brahmā.

But Matthew is always ambiguous. He has many cards up his sleeves. The *kṣatriyas* often describes himself as a *brāhmaṇas*, the descendant of Brahmā. Thus, the final two words in Matthew 1:1 also render Sanskrit *brāhmaṇas*. Later on Matthew will offer other nice versions of *brāhmaṇas*, the happiest of which is *phro-ni-mos*, which represents the form and the sense of the original just perfectly.

So, to sum up: The Sanskrit original of the initial eight words of Matthew, runs, in Romanization:

kulasya vaṁśas kṣatriyasya deva-putrasya brāhmaṇasya.

The total number of syllables, is of course, the same in both sources. The reader who consults the first few pages of the *MSV* (being here *SBV* I) will easily be able to make further identifications. Let me only add, that the *kṣatriyas* was supposed to be the next king of Kapilavastu. He was the son of a king. But things turned out otherwise.

So, we have the son of a king who never became a normal king. He did, however, become a king of Dharma. Just like *ho khristos*.

This is, in brief, the secret of Christ. The same person, under the same circumstances, tells the same story of the same story: The *kṣatriyas* in the disguise of *ho khristos*.

– http://www.jesusisbuddha.com/Q.html

The Christian Lindtner Theory (CLT) of the Buddhist Origins of the New Testament Gospels

A New Introduction to the "Body of *Tathāgatas*"
alias
The "New Testament"

by Chr. Lindtner
Klavreström 9/11 2003

Introduction

The best way to engage in a serious study of the four New Testament Gospels, is, I claim, to start by counting the number of verses, the number of words, the number of syllables and the number of letters that the Greek text, of course, consists of. The [original,] Greek text is easily available, even online.

You may be startled by my rather prosaic claim that one has to start by counting the words, the syllables and the letters of God in the good news of his son, Jesus Christ. None of the numerous modern introductions to the New Testament starts out by inviting the student to start counting. When you start counting, however, you will soon see that the unknown authors of the Gospels must have paid extreme attention to each word and syllable, to their number and to their numerical value, what the Greeks call *psêphos*. In a lecture published in 1970, the Dutch NT scholar Joost Smit Sibinga observed, with regard to Matthew, that he,

> arranged his text in such a way that the size of the individual sections is fixed by a determined number of syllables. The individual parts of a sentence, the sentences themselves, sections of a smaller and larger size, they are, all of them, characterized in a purely quantitative way by their number of syllables.

Subsequent research, notably by Smit Sibinga himself, M.J.J. Menken and others, has proved that Smit Sibinga's observation applies not only to Matthew but also to the other evangelists, probably even to all the 27 writings constituting the body of the NT.

A few examples already pointed out by Menken and Smit Sibinga: John 1:19-2:11 is a unit having the size of 1550 syllables, which is also the numerical value of *ho Khristos* (70+600+100+10+200+300+70+200 = 1550), mentioned in John 1:20 & 25. Again, John 1:1-18 has the size of 496 syllables, identical with the numerical value of *monogenês* (40+70+50+70+3+50+8+200 = 496), mentioned in John 1:14 & 18.

Acts 26 consists of 1275 syllables, carefully arranged and calculated, which is equal to the sum of the *psêphos* of the two main characters, namely *kurios* (= 800) and *Agrippas* (= 475). It is hardly a matter of mere coincidence, that the technical term *psêphos* occurs in 26:10. Peter's speech about Jesus in Acts 2:14-36 consists of two halves of each 444 syllables, giving us a total of 888 – the *psêphos* of *ʹIêsous*.

Some numbers are more important than others, of course. In 1972, Christoph Rau pointed out that there are exactly 36 "I am" phrases in John. Likewise, there are exactly 36 verbal forms in John 4:46-53.

Concentric patterns also occur. For instance, in Matthew 1:1-13, the center is formed by verse 7, consisting of 27 syllables. Around the center we find 47+40+45+27 syllables in verses 1, 2-3, 4-5 and 6; and 32+45+40+47 in verses 8, 9, 10, 11-12. This gives us a total of 350 syllables. Verse 13, the conclusion, consists of 20 syllables, giving us a total of 370 syllables.

Another striking example has to do with the name of Peter. In one place, John 1:42, Jesus calls him *Kêphas*, the *psêphos* of which amounts to 729. In another place, Matthew 16:13, Peter is described as a stone, *petra*, the *psêphos* of which is 486. Both figures refer to a foundation stone, the surface area of which is 486, and the number of smaller cubes within which is 729.

From these few examples one can conclude that the authors of the NT paid great attention to the size of syllables, words and sentences. The technical term for this phenomenon is gematria, from the Hebrew *gymtryʹ*, which, again, is from the Greek *geômetría* (first attested in Herodotus).

The number of examples given above could easily be increased. They show us something very significant, namely that the authors of the Gospels were very much concerned with lines, with areas and with circles, in short with gematria. It is obvious that their texts have been construed, and that they have been construed with a very specific purpose, namely that of arriving at one or more specific numbers that somehow point back to various geometrical figures. It would, therefore, be wrong to read the Gospels as if they were merely reporting certain historical events without paying attention to the form of that report. The form of the report is obviously of greater concern to them than its contents. One could say, that the Gospels, at least to some extent, report geometrical figures, rather than historical facts.

CLT

Dr. Countess (in his "Final Draft": 27 August 2003) refers to my thesis as the CLT – the 'Christian Lindtner Theory', and I will adopt this convenient abbreviation.

The CLT states, briefly, that the Gospels, perhaps even the NT as a whole, is a Pirate-copy of the Buddhist Gospels, or of the Buddha's Testament. These terms will be defined in due course.

I have also spoken of translations, whereby I mean imitations. To be more precise, I should speak of Pirate-copies in the sense of universal imitations. When I speak of "universal" imitations, I mean to say that the Gospels not only imitate the sense of the Sanskrit originals. The Gospels also imitate the form and the numerical values found at various levels in the original. When I speak of a Pirate-copy, I wish to suggest that the authors of the Gospels (and the NT as a whole) also wanted to keep their sources secret. The secret of the Christ, *ho khristos*, is the secret of the *kṣatriyas*. The kingdom of heaven was "received without pay", Matthew 10:8, "and men of violence take it by force", Matthew 11:12. It is in this sense I speak of copies made by unknown pirates. The authors of the NT wished to remain unknown, exactly as the authors of the original Buddhist texts wished to remain unknown to posterity. It must always be kept in mind that the authors wished to keep their true identity secret.

The fact that we are, if I am not mistaken, speaking of secret imitations, Pirate-copies, obviously does not make it easier for us to identify the sources of the Gospels.

My friend, Dr. J. Duncan M. Derrett, who, incidentally, sends his cordial greeting to the participants of this symposium, says, with Garbe: "To require close verbal similarity is to ask too much".

But here my learned friend is simply too modest in his demands.

As you all are aware, there is a so-called synoptic problem. Matthew, Mark and Luke have a lot in common. But there are some differences. The synoptic problem has to do with the mutual relationship among the three Gospels. It is discussed in any modern introduction to the NT. Augustine held that Mark depended on Matthew, and Luke on Matthew and Mark. A modern theory saying that Mark was the first evangelist, and that Matthew and Luke depended not only on Mark but also on a source, now termed Q(uelle), but no longer available, has found fairly general (but not universal) acceptance. The hypothesis of Q, however, cannot account for what Q actually looked like, who made it, its language, whatever became of Q etc., and it fails to explain the origin of Mark.

The CLT has a simple answer to the Q problem. Q, understood as the source not only of Matthew, Mark and Luke, but even of John and the other writings of the NT, can, according to the CLT, be defined in terms of the Buddhist sources in Sanskrit. These texts are, fortunately, still available to scholars.

Unfortunately, not all of them have been translated into modern languages. The main Buddhist sources are the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* (*MSV*) and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* (*SDP*). The *Sukhāvatīvyūha* is the source of Luke 10:17. The first words of Jesus are from the *Prajñāpāramitā*. There are a few other Buddhist sources, and, of course, the numerous quotations from the Old Testament, but the main sources are, without any shadow of doubt, the *MSV* (parts of which, again, prove more important than others), and the *SDP*. The *SDP* is available in modern translations.

It is in this general sense that the CLT claims that Q = *MSV*+*SDP*.

How do we prove the CLT?

The CLT can, of course, only be considered serious and scientific if it can be verified. The thesis that Q = *MSV+SDP* must not only be supported by reasons and examples. It must also be possible for scholars who take the trouble to learn Sanskrit and Greek to verify it. There is a nice Sanskrit term for this, namely *ehi-paśyi-ka*, or *ehi-paśya-ka*, said of the Buddhist *Dharmaḥ*. It is an adjective meaning "come (and) see (it for yourself)". Incidentally, John 1:46 imitates the sense, the sound and the size of this technical term, when he says: *erkhou kai ide*, "come and see".

So, the CLT is presented as an *ehi-paśyika* or as an *erkhou kai ide* thesis. The thesis can be considered as a "theory", but only in the original Greek sense of that word.

How does one prove that something is a copy of something else? Surely, one must have the original as well as the copy at hand. Scholars have failed to identify Q simply because they did not consider reading *MSV* and *SDP* in the original Sanskrit. It is as simple as that.

I started out by inviting the reader to start counting the words and syllables in the Greek text of the NT, starting with Matthew. Fortunately, it is no problem to get hold of a Greek text, preferably the most recent one of Nestle-Aland. See www.ntgateway.com/greek.

The counting of letters can be done by computer analysis. There are some interesting numerical patterns already here in Matthew 1:

1-2: 45 + 91 = 136 letters
3-5: 91 + 82+91 = 400 letters
6-7: 76 + 73 = 149 letters
8-9: 75 + 74 = 149 letters
10-11: 77 + 73 = 150 letters
12-13: 88 + 81 = 169 letters
14-15: 71 + 79 = 150 letters
16-17 : 73 + 166 = 239 letters
18-19: 128 + 78 = 206 letters
20: = 156 letters
21-22: = 153 letters
23: = 107 letters
24-25: 92 + 64 = 156 letters

The right place to start counting, however, is probably not on the level of letters, even though the repetitions of the figures 149, 150 and 156 etc. already in the first chapter of Matthew seem to suggest that the author was having some sort of numerical pattern(s) in mind.

It must not be forgotten, when we count, that the division into verses and chapters is, for all we know, a fairly modern one. Thus, the division into chapters is believed to have been due to Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury (1207-1228), whereas Robert Estienne (Stephanus) is supposed to have devised the division into verses (1550) – see: < www.skypoint.com >.

Counting by verses and syllables is the most convenient way of getting hold of the numerical patterns. There are other divisions, quite naturally so. New sections may be introduced by a *kai* - the most common word in the Gospels, I think, or by "and then" or similar indications of time and place etc. One is seldom in doubt as to where new sections begin and end. Words spoken directly by, e.g., Jesus form units in their own right, as do those spoken by his disciples etc. As a rule, the verses, or groups of verses also reflect certain units of sense. If a given unit has a nice numerical value on the level of words as well as on the level of syllables we can, I think, be sure that we are on the right track. Such sections were also in the mind of the original editors. When the numbers of words or syllables in a given unit correspond to the numerical value of the main person(s) mentioned in that unit we are also, I think, on the right track.

So, as said, I suggest that the reader makes a list of each chapter of Matthew etc., indicating the number of words – and even syllables – in each chapter. One should also be aware that the numerical patterns may not be confined to one single chapter. Units may extend from one chapter to another. It goes without saying that one here has to consult the various editions of the Greek text, not just the eclectic modern one of Nestle-Aland. Here and there there are certain textual problems. Some of these can, in fact, be solved by counting words and syllables. Whether a variant reading is to be adopted or not, can in some cases be decided on a numerical basis.

Assuming that the reader has this table in front of him, I suggest that there are certain code numbers, so to speak, the most important of which is 108 and its divisors, viz. 27, 36, 54 etc. On the other hand we have the round number 100, and its divisors, 50, 150, 180 etc.

I maintain, on the basis of numerous examples rooted in units of sense, that the reader with the figure 108-100 in mind has the code to the numerical technique of all the writings in the NT in his hand. There is, in other words, a double column that determines the numerical pattern of each chapter. If we have a unit of 136 words or syllables, the editor was thinking of 36, 1/3 of 108, and the round number 100.

The numbers we are searching for are:

27 (= 1/4 of 108)
36 (= 1/3 of 108)
54 (= 1/2 of 108)
63 (= 1/4 + 1/3 of 108)
72 (= 2/3 of 108)
81 (= 3/4 of 108)
90 (= 1/3 + 1/2 of 108)
99 (= 1/4 + 2/3 of 108)
— — —
108 undivided in itself
— — —
117 (= 3/4 + 1/3 of 108)
126 (= 1/2 + 2/3 of 108)
144 (= 4/3 of 108)
153 (= 2/3 + 3/4 of 108)
216 (= 2 x 108)
324 (= 3 x 108)
432 (= 4 x 108)
612 (= 4 x 153)
etc.

Moreover, we must look for 100, 120, etc., and for 111, 222, 666, 888 etc.

The total size of, say, a given chapter, cannot, of course be determined simply by thinking of 108 and 100, and their divisors. Here, other figures come into consideration. Thus, Matthew 12 consists of exactly 888 words – the numerical value of the name *῾Iêsous*. Matthew 18 consists of exactly 666 words – another highly significant figure, well-known from Revelation 13:18, and from Q.

Incidentally, Revelation 13:18 is an important one also in another respect. It posits a very close relationship between *sophia*, wisdom, and numbers, or counting the numerical value of words and letters. Luke 7:35, otherwise obscure, surely also has to be seen in this light. He says that *sophia* is to be justified by its children, or, with a variant reading, by its works. He means to says that wisdom consists in calculating the numerical value correctly, or so I assume.

So, when I invite the reader to count, I am also appealing to his *sophia*. If we do not count we shall not understand. I am, to make myself quite clear, saying that if one has wisdom one must start out by counting.

Assuming, moreover, that the reader agrees with me that 108-100 as well as 666-888 are basic lucky numbers for the authors or editors of the NT, the next question – also not seriously faced by scholars before now – has to do with the historical background. Why was 108 considered, so to speak, their lucky number? (The figure 108 is never explicitly mentioned in the Bible, neither in the OT nor in the NT.) Hence, the interest in the figure 108 must have another historical background. That background, I claim is found in India, where 108, as known, is widely considered as a holy number. The Buddhist rosary consists of 108 beads. Even the old name of the Christian rosarium is an imitation of the Buddhist rosary. The Sanskrit *japa-mālā*, a garland for recitation, was taken as a *japā-mālā*, a garland of roses. The "original" reading is, of course, *japa*, not *japā*. The distortion is typical, and not without wit. But here I am talking about the figure 108 in a purely literary context. It is the "lucky number" of the evangelists.

A simple answer about the historical background of the figure 108 in the NT is offered by the CLT which speaks of the Gospels as universal imitations, Pirate-copies, of the Buddhist Gospels. The imitation, as said, is universal in the sense that it works at many or even all levels. It also imitates the numerical patterns of the Buddhist texts.

Incidentally, there is a Sanskrit term for "Pirate-copy", and I readily confess that I have imitated it. The Sanskrit is *PRaTi-RūPaKa*, often found in Q, i.e. *SDP*. In Danish this becomes *PiRaT-KoPieR* – all the original consonants, the number of syllables as well as the sense is preserved. That is briefly how the imitations were made. The expression "Pirate-copy" is itself an example of a Pirate-copy.

To establish my point with regard to the figure 108 etc. in Buddhist originals, I can do no better than refer to what is universally regarded as a basic Buddhist text. It is the famous sermon on the so-called Middle Path.

The Sanskrit is found in the *MSV*, the most important part of Q. It was edited by Waldschmidt in 1963 (p. 445), by Gnoli in 1977 (p. 134). Here is the text (with my divisions, and in Romanization):

I

Tatra Bhagavān pañcakān bhikṣūn āmantrayate sma: dvāv imau bhikṣavôntau pravrajitena na sevitavyau na vaktavyau na paryupāsatavyau; katamau dvau? Yaś-ca kāmeṣu kāmasukhālayānuyogo hīno grāmyaḥ prākṛtaḥ pārthagjanikaḥ; yaś cātmaklamathānuyogo duḥkhônāryônarthopasaṁhitaḥ; ity etāv-ubhāv-antāv-anupagamya – asti madhyamā pratipac-cakṣuṣkaraṇī jñānakaraṇī upasamasaṁvartanī abhijñāyaiva saṁbodhaye nirvāṇāya saṁvartate. Madhyamā pratipat-katamā? Āryāṣṭāṅgo mārgaḥ.

II

Tasya saṁyagdṛṣṭiḥ saṁyakṣaṁkalpaḥ saṁyagvāk saṁyakkarmāntaḥ samyagājīvaḥ saṁyagvyāyāmaḥ saṁyagsmṛtiḥ saṁyakṣamādhiḥ. Asakad Bhagavān pañcakān bhikṣūn anaya samjñaptyā saṁjñapayitum; dvav ca Bhagavān pañcakānāṁ bhikṣūnāṁ pūrvabhakte avavadati; trayo grāmaṁ piṇḍaya praviśati; yat trivargôbhinirharati tena sadvargo yāpayati; triṁś-ca Bhagavān pañcakānāṁ bhikṣūnām paścādbhakte avavadati; dvau grāmaṁ piṇḍāya praviśataḥ; yad dvivargôbhinirharati tena pañcavargo yāpayati; tathāgataḥ pratiyaty-eva kālabhojī.

The texts requires a careful analysis on the level of words and on the level of syllables. The following observations are not exhaustive but sufficient to establish my point:

The text as a whole falls, first of all, into two clearly defined units. The first (I) from *Tatra bhagavān* . . . to . . . *Āryāṣṭāṅgo mārgaḥ*. The second (II) from *Tasya* . . . to . . . *kālabhojī*. Each half consists of exactly 54 words, giving us a total of 108 words. The prose is, in several places, rather clumsy. Sanskrit scholars are puzzled at the lack of *saṁdhi* and other peculiarities. The editor was obviously more concerned with form or shape than with contents. The first half, again, can, from the point of view of sense, be divided into two halves, each of which consists of exactly 27 words. It ends with *pārthagjanikaḥ*. The second half, on the other hand, consists of 9+45 words. From the point of view of sense, there is hardly any natural connection between the two units. The 45 words seem to have been added to the 9 words, that belong there, in order to attain 108, the lucky number of the Buddhists.

As said, the 9 initial words of the second half naturally belong to the first half, giving us a total, for this unit, of 54+9 = 63, and 63 = 1/4+1/3 of 108. The division, on the level of words, into two halves serves to place the basic concept, the *āryāstāṅgo mārgaḥ*, the two final words, in the focus.

When we then move to the level of syllables, there are also significant numerical patterns, leaving us in no doubt that words as well as syllables have been carefully counted. In the first half (54 words, as said), there is a syllabic pattern consisting of 44+44+20 syllables, i.e., 108 syllables, the lucky number. The figure can naturally be divided into 100 + 8, where the 8 puts focus on the basic technical term: *as-ti madh-ya-mā pra-ti-pad*: "There is a middle approach". Then follows exactly 50 syllables. Thus the first half of the unit consisting of 108 words consists of 108 + 50 syllables, or ½ of 100.

This, as said, is the famous section on the Middle Way, the *madhyamā pratipad*. In the *MSV* this section forms a part of a larger section, beginning on p. 133 (Gnoli), ending on p. 137.

There are five major units, and the total number of words in these five units is exactly 888. The figure 888 is arrived at by adding the number of words found in each of the five sections (pp. 133-137), viz.: 268+108+325+50+137 = 888.

The "lucky numbers" in this rather typical passage are, therefore, 108 (36, 54, etc.), 100 (= 2x50, etc.) and 888.

Another typical example is found in the section of the conversion of king Śuddhodana (Gnoli, p. 198). It consists of 3 main units. The first unit consists of 27+33 = 60 words. The 33 words form a unit that is repeated very often. The number of syllables is here exactly 108. Many of the words given here are repeated in the confession, Matthew 16:17-20. The second unit (from *āha ca* and six verses) consists of 36 words, or 1/3 of 108. The third unit (from *atha rājā* . . . to . . . *abhiṣiktaḥ* on the following page) consists of exactly 144, or 108+36 words. These patterns can be considered typical. 108, or its divisors, are combined with 100, or its divisors. Such patterns are to be found in an enormous number of cases in the *MSV*.

Another example is the story of the *Kinnara* and the *Kinnarī* ([***S**aṁgha-**B**heda-**V**astu*] ***SBV***, II, p. 41). Parts of it were copied in Matthew 8 and 15. (The unique *Khananaia* in Matthew 15:22 is a copy of Sanskrit *kinnarī*, a fact, of course, unknown to our NT dictionaries.) Here the numerical pattern is: 36+36+25+27+9, i.e., 108 and 25 (1/4 of 100). Such numerical patterns are also typical of the gospels. The typical original combination of prose and verse was, incidentally, also copied by the gospel writers. The genre of the four gospels is in no way unique, as generally held by NT scholars. It is a direct imitation, in all respects, of Q.

The basic numerical patterns in the NT are, I claimed, exactly the same. Since the Buddhist texts enjoy the chronological priority – similar patterns are present in Pāli texts brought to Ceylon, 3rd century B.C. – there can hardly be any doubt that the Christian texts are, as said, Pirate-copies.

It should now, I think, be clear why counting words and syllables may lead to such significant results. The numerical similarities, unknown from other sources, show in an objective come-and-see way that the Greek depends on the Sanskrit. The relationship is a direct one. Had there been any sort of indirect relationship (e.g. "Aramaic"), the numerical patterns could hardly have survived intact.

Obviously each larger unit consists of bricks or chips consisting of an even smaller number of words and syllables. This goes for the Greek as well as for the Sanskrit text.

To some extent the Greek text can be divided into minor units, beginning with *kai*, *tote* etc. (The odd Greek *apo tote*, that has puzzled many scholars, imitates the Sanskrit *tato'pi*.)

I now claim that each of these units (apart, of course, from the OT chips) is a direct imitation of the sense, of the sound, of both, or of the numerical value of the original Sanskrit. The length of a given unit in a Greek sentence can hardly be determined if one does not know the original Sanskrit. Here I give only two examples:

The indication of time given in the first 8 words of Matthew 28:1. The RSV translates: "Now after the sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week. . .". But the strange expression is actually fabricated by combining 3 different and independent Sanskrit phrases, not so combined in the original. Each of them consists of 6 syllables, in the Sanskrit and in the Greek. The unique *tê epiphôskousê*, "on the becoming light"

is especially revealing. The Sanskrit is the equally rare *praty-ūṣa-samaye* (in the *CPS* 24g4 of the *MSV*). The logical agent is missing in the Greek, but present in the Sanskrit *rātryāḥ*. The Greek is thus a mutilation of an unmutilated original.

Then there is the celebrated episode of the visit to Martha and Mary – actually one and the same person. The pericope as a whole, Luke 10:38-42, is purely fictitious. Each word and phrase can be traced back to the *MPS*. To illustrate the technique: *atha-Āmra* becomes *hê de Mar-tha*, 10:40. The "water-jewel", Sanskrit *u-da-ka-ma-ṇi* becomes *di-a-ko-ni-an*. The Martha Martha was originally an *Āmra*, *Āmra*. The *tên agathên merida*, "good part" was originally Sanskrit *Tathāgatam* and *dharma*, or *Tathāgata-dharmam*. In the original it is also said that one dharma is sufficient. Luke says that one is necessary – but fails to say which one is needed, or necessary. Leaving part of the full meaning out is an extremely common device deliberately used to mystify, and attract the attention of the readership.

These few examples suggest that the Greek is highly misleading taken at its face value. You must know Sanskrit to understand the Greek properly. Otherwise you are totally lost.

There is without any doubt a "hidden sense" in the Greek text. One has to count the letters, the syllables and the words to discover the hidden sense.

Conclusion

Buddhists have a long tradition of counting the number of words and syllables in their gospels. They also have a deep experience in translating Indian texts into foreign languages. It goes back to the time of king Aśoka. 108 is the lucky number. Even the *Ṛgveda* is said to consists of 10800 x 40 syllables. Many texts have titles indicating the number of syllables that they consists of. Masters of counting are often extolled in the Buddhist texts. They are said to be masters of *gaṇanā* or *gaṇite*.

There is still a long way ahead of us, but we can already now see the light at the end of the tunnel. It is a fact that the Buddhist and Christian evangelists counted the words and syllables and that they were aware of the numerical values of each letter. My book gives some examples and each day new examples are brought to light.

How they managed to construe careful numerical patterns on several levels at the same time is still a puzzle to me. Did they employ some sort of mechanical device – or did they possess some extraordinary powers of memorizing?

The example with *Kêphas* and *Petra* shows that sometimes the evangelists were thinking in geometrical patterns. It is therefore natural to search for geometrical patterns behind, on the one hand, 108 and 100 etc., and on the other, behind 888 and 666. If we are a bit familiar with the more occult Western traditions, the numbers mentioned above point in the direction of various geometrical figures, above all the pentagon and pentagram and the so-called magic square, inscribed in circles.

For details I refer to the drawings of the Pentagram and the Magic Square.

Some interesting 108 cases in the New Testament

1. Mark 1 begins his gospel about *'Iêsou Khristou*, Sanskrit *kṣatriyasya*, with an OT quotation. OT is also a part of the real Q, of course. Then follows a unit of 108 words in 4-9. This is followed by 6 other units of 108 words, viz. 18-24, 21-27, 23-29, 31-38, 32-39 and 33-40. Moreover, the first four verses along with the two final verses, 44-45, add up to 108 words. The beginning-end pattern, the alpha-omega pattern, is repeated in Mark 13, where the first 3 verses and the last 4 verses add up to 108 words.
2. Mark 5 displays another pattern with 108 in the focus. Verses 1-20 consist of 324, or 3x108 words. Verses 24-37 consist of 216, or 2x108 words. The "missing" verses, namely 21-23 and 38-43 add up to 158, or 108+50, or ½ of 100. Verses 25-31, a unit about the woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years, also consists of 108 words. All the stories, including the figures, can be traced back to the *MSV*.
3. Mark 14 has four cases of 108, viz. 28-34, 36-41, 40-45 and 53-59. All words can be traced back to *MSV*.

4. Paul's Romans 16:20b-27 consists of two units, 20b-24, and 25-27, each of which consists of 54 words, giving a total of 108 words. To this is added a final *amên*, the numerical value of which is 99, or 11/12 of 108. Stylistically, the final *amên* obviously reflects the use of a final Sanskrit *iti*. The first half shows a nice concentric pattern on the syllabic level also: 46+23+46 syllables for verses 20b-24, or 5x23 syllables. The second half, 25-27, consists (without the *amên*) of exactly 116 syllables, i.e. 115+1, or 4x29 syllables. The total number of syllables thus adds up to 115+116+2, or 233. Now, 233 is exactly 1/4 of 932, which is the numerical value of *Śākya-munis*, and *to haima mou*, "the blood of mine", Matthew 26:28. *Paulos*, whose name, incidentally, has the same numerical value as *Sophia*, namely 80+1+400+30+70+200 = 781, cannot possibly been unaware of the *psêphos* of *to haima mou*, or *Śākya-munis*.

5. John 2:1-25 provides us with 4x108 words. Verses 1-7 consist of 108 words, and 8-12 also consist of 108 words. Verses 13-20 consist of 135 words, and 18-25 also consist of 135 words. It both cases John must have 108+27 in mind. Verse 9 consists of 27 words, 1/4 of 108, and 23-24 consist of 36 words, or 1/3 of 108.

6. John 15 shows another 108 pattern. Verses 1-4 (= 72 words) and 12-14 (= 36 words) add up to 108 words, just as 4-5 (= 54 words) and 9-11 (= 54 words) also add up to 108. In other words: When he counts 36, 54, 72 etc., he does so with the figure 108 in the back of his mind.

7. John 19 ends in a unit, about the odd Joseph of Arimathea, verses 38-42, a unit of 108 words. In the printed editions of the NT, John 19:16 is broken into two: 7 words belong to the previous section. Then we have 4 words belonging to a new section. This section, 19:16b-22, forms a new unit consisting of 108 words. This example shows how the 108 principle follows the sense, not the verse divisions. This, again, shows that the figure 108 is "authentic". Q is here *MSV*.

8. Matthew 1:1-14 consists of 216, or 2x108 words. The figure 216 is arrived at by adding the 99 (= 27+2x36) words of 16 to the 117 (= 3x27+36) words of 7-14. Moreover, verses 1-9 consist of 144 words. Verses 8-12 consist of 72 words, and 10-14 also consist of 72 words. Verses 3-4 and 4-5 consist of 36 words, and 2-4 of 54 words. The pattern of building up on the basis of 27 and 36 words goes on almost ad infinitum in Matthew and the other gospels.

9. The number of letters in Matthew 2: 8-13 amounts to 720. The number of letters in the verses that follow, 14-16, is 360. This gives us a sum of 3x360 = 1080, which is 30x36, or 10x108. The first verse consists of 111 letters. The chapter as a whole displays several interesting patterns already at the level of letters.

10. Matthew 11:1 looks odd in the modern editions. It seems to belong to Matthew 10. But actually verses 1-14 consist of exactly 216, or 2x108 words, as in Matthew 1:1-14. Here, again, the division into verses can be misleading. The break occurs after the 3 initial words of verse 8, an independent question. Thus, 1-8a and 8b-14 gives us 108+108 = 216 words.

11. Matthew 12:22-32 is the episode about Beelzeboul. It, again, consists of 216, or 2x108 words. The source, Q, is the *SDP*. The number of words in verses 1-9 is 144, or 4x36, or 108+36. The total number of words is 888, the numerical value of the name of *ʹIêsous*. Verses 35 and 40 contain several puns on Q, which is here *SDP*. I can come back to the puns, only recalling here that the numerical value of *puṇḍarīka* is, in fact = 80+400+50+4+1+100+10+20+1 = 666 – the total number of words in Matthew 18, and also the number assigned to 'man' in Revelation 13.18, where the full phrase *a-rith-mos gar an-thrô-pou es-tin* beautifully renders *sad-dhar-ma-puṇ-ḍa-rī-ka-sū-tram*. All the 9 syllables have been retained. The Greek has 10 vowels, 13 consonants. The Sanskrit has 9 vowels, 14 consonants. Each text has 23 letters. As an *r* may be taken as a semivowel, both texts have the same number of vowels and consonants. The consonants are the same in both languages.

12. Matthew 17:1-27 displays another 108 pattern. 108 words occur in 2-7, 10-16 and 19-24, respectively. There is a gap of 2 verses. The "missing" verses, 1+8-9+17-18+28-29 add up to 181, or 100+3x27.

13. Matthew 21. Verses 12-16 is a unit consisting of 108 words. Verse 17 consists of 12 words. Then follows a unit, verses 18-22, consisting of 54+44 = 98 words. The corresponding number of syllables is 200. The number of syllables spoken by Jesus himself is 50. The source is *MSV*, and there are some wonderful puns on *Śākya-muniṁ*: *sukên mian, monon*. There is thus an intersection of 108 and 100 on the level of syllables and words.
14. Matthew 24:32-33 is also about the *sukê* from the same source, *MSV*. Here is also an intersection of words and syllables. There are 36 words, 75 syllables, giving us a total of 111 units, or 1/6 of 666. It has never been realized that the subject in verse 33 is the apparently adverbial *epi thurais*, Sanskrit *udumbaras* – the fig. There are, to be sure, other cases of such "substantivized prepositional phrases", e.g. *ek pneumatos* (*estin*) *hagiou*, Matthew 1:18&20. They are, of course, bound to escape those ignorant of the Sanskrit original. The pun is on *SDP*.
15. Matthew 25:1-13 consists of 168 words, or 370 syllables. Verses 14-30 consists of 292 words, or 612 syllables. The figure 612 is the numerical value of Zeus and also of *Buthas*. It is exactly 1/2 of the extremely significant figure 1224. The final verses, 38-46, consist of 153 words, or 1/4 of 612.
16. Luke 3:2-9 consists of 153 words, arrived at by adding 2-6 = 81+ 7-9 = 72. It contains 3-4 = 36 words, and 8-9 = 54 words. Round numbers are provided by 2-8 = 130, 4-8 = 100, and 6-9 = 80. Then follows a unit, verses 10-16 = 126 words. It contains verses 10-11 = 27 words, and 13-15 = 54 words. Verses 1-21 add up to 370 words, 18-38 to 250 words. Units of 100 words are provided by 4-8, 14-17, 16-20, 18-22, 29-38.
17. Luke 17 starts by giving 108 words in 1-6 as well as 6-11. The final verses, 30-37, also add up to 108 words. Verses 30-38 contain 90 words etc.
18. Luke 20 consists of exactly 700 words – the numerical value of *Munis*. All the evangelists were familiar with *Munis*, short for *Śākya-munis*, having the numerical value of 932, the *to haima mou*. Chapter 6 consists of 931 words, at least in the practical edition of Gebhardt-Tischendorf, Lipsiae 1912. Other editors give different numbers. The original may have had exactly 932 words. It goes without saying that the *apparatus criticus* always has to be consulted before reaching any final numerical conclusion.

Numbers and names – which came first?

This is a highly relevant and extremely important question. If the numbers came first and the names were construed or chosen only for their numerical value – what, then, becomes of the historicity of the persons having that name assigned to them? If, alternatively, the names came first, how, then, can we account for the fact that so many names "just happen" to have a highly significant numerical value?

It seems unlikely that *'Iêsous* just happens to be 888, or that *Kêphas* and *Petra* "just happen" to be 729 and 486 – two figures representing a cube. It seems unlikely that *Paulos* and *Sophia* "just happen" to be 781. We have seen that *Sophia* is closely associated with counting, and we have seen examples that "*Paulos*" was extremely good at counting. *Paulos* and *Sophia* are intimately associated, just as *Prajñā* and *Upāyas* form a pair. Is *Paulos*, in fact, not simply *Upāyas* in fairly obvious disguise? There is, in fact no independent evidence to support that either Jesus or Paul were historical persons. We only have the word of the NT for it, and that is not enough. It seems unlikely, does it not, that *Munis*, *Tathāgatas* and *Śākyamunis*, always in the nominative form, "just happen" to be 700, 816 (2/3 of 1224) and 932, respectively. And does it not seem unlikely that *axôn*, *omphalos* and Sanskrit *Sūrias*/*Sūryas* "just happen" to be 911 – just as its seems unlikely that certain significant events "just happen" to take place 9/11 – even today.

In his remarkable book *Jesus Christ: Sun of God*, 1993, David Fideler (pp. 72-73) points to some striking examples suggesting that the canon of Greek gematria, going back to the time before Plato, presupposes that the names of the major divinities and mythological figures were consciously codified in relation to the natural ratio of geometry to equal specific numerical values. If this is true, and I think it is, this means that the

numbers came before the gods and the mythological figures, in other words that the gods etc., or at least their names, were simply made up, or fabricated. Examples are provided by the solar divinity Abraxas that in Greek has the numerical value of 365, the number of days in a solar year. Mithras, in the most common spelling, equals 360, the value of a year in some places, but several old writers purposefully add an extra "*e*" to make the name total 365, a more precise reckoning of the solar years. Likewise, says Fideler, the name of every single one of the Hebrew planetary spirits and intelligences was consciously formulated, by someone, to bring out the precise number from the appropriate "magic square".

The most striking example is that of Zeus, having the number 612 – just like *Buthas*, I may add. The value of Hermes is 353, and that of Apollo is 1061. It was the British writer William Sterling who in 1897 pointed out that the numerical values of these three "numerical gods" relate precisely to one another through the ratio of the square root of 3, i.e. an irrational number, approximately 1.7320508- etc. See Figure 15 in Fideler's book, p. 71.

I find Sterling's discovery to be extremely important. It more than suggests that the names of the principal gods were simply made up to achieve certain numbers relating to certain geometrical figures. And what, indeed, remains of the gods if stripped of their names? Nothing – or rather, nothing apart from geometrical figures.

Fideler (*op. cit.*, p. 75) rightly observes that Sterling's modern discovery, or rediscovery, confirms Plato's celebrated statement that "geometrical equality prevails widely among both gods and men." To repeat: The names of major divinities are pure fabrications made up so that their numerical values equal natural ratios of geometry. The observation not only applies to the Greek canon of gematria. It is also found in Hebrew names. I think that my numerical analysis has suggested that the rule about numbers before names, to put it simply, also applies to words and names in the NT: 888 came before *ʹIêsous*, and 729 and 486 came before *Kêphas* and *Petra* etc. Words, names and sentences etc. were made up in order to achieve certain numbers pointing to natural ratios of geometry.

The NT figures of 666 and 888 point towards the circle symbolizing the sun. The other figures, 27, 36, 54, 72, 108 etc., pointed out above, definitely reflect the angles in a pentagram. The pentagon and the pentagram can well be inscribed in their own solar circle. This explains why the evangelists combine 108 with 360, 180, 90 etc. Exactly the same observation applies to some of the canonical Buddhist texts in Sanskrit.

Q, i.e, *MSV* and *SDP*, shows unmistakable influence from Greek astronomy and science. Buddhist art in Gandhāra etc. leaves no doubt about influence from Greek art. Greek artists knew all about the canon of Greek gematria. The Parthenon, Athena's temple, designed by Ictinus and Callicrates about 447 B.C., encapsulates the central values of Greek gematria: 353 for Hermes, 318 for Helios, 1061 for Apollo, 612 for Zeus etc. (see the figure in Fideler, p. 219). You can still marvel at the beauty of the Parthenon, if not among the ruins in Athens itself, then in Nashville, Tennessee, where Pallas still shines in all her pristine majesty from a modern replica. The pentagram is generally considered a Pythagorean symbol, once secret, no longer so.

The pentagram is the basic geometrical figure of the New Testament, possibly also of at least some of the Buddhist canonical texts. The figures 36, 54, 108, combined with 100 etc., certainly point in that direction, i.e. in the direction of a Pythagorean background. Gematria, therefore, provides the key to New Testament studies. Therefore one must start by counting.

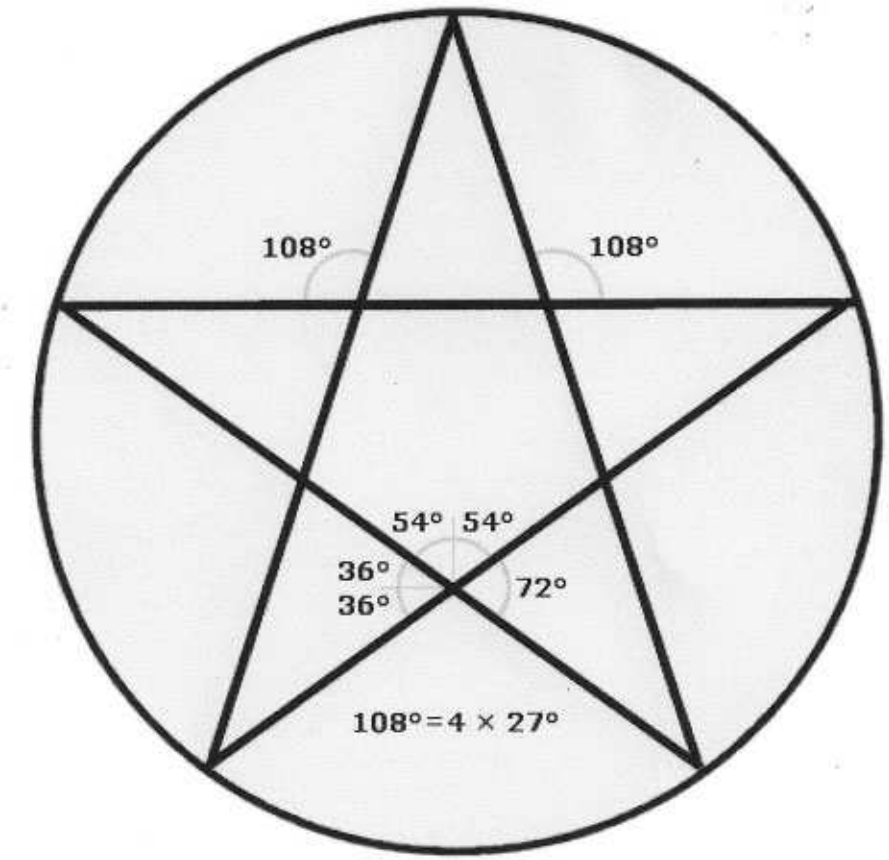
I promised to say a few words about the title "The New Testament" itself. Again, one must start by counting. The Greek is, of course, *hê kainê diathêkê*. This is a translation of the Sanskrit *Tathāgatasya kāyam*, from Q, more precisely *MPS* 42:10, a part of *MSV*. Luke 22:20, and Paul I Cor 2:25 prefer the rendering *hê kainê diathêkê*, 7 syllables. Here Sanskrit *kāyam*, "body" becomes Greek *kainê* (*kā-yam* = *kai-nê*), and *di-a-thê-kê* imitates *ta-thā-ga-ta-*, but one dental is missing. The *hê* is there so that all the 7 syllables of the original are preserved. The genitive of the original is also lost in Luke and Paul.

Matthew, 26:28, on the other hand, manages to preserve the original genitive with his *tês di-a-thê-kês*, i.e. *ta-thā-ga-tas-ya*, 5 syllables. He adds an extra *s*, however, and the syntax is obscure. The *kāyam* in Matthew becomes *sôma*, in 26:26, and *haima* in 26:28. (For Jews, blood is a synonym of the body, as known.) At the same time, *to haima mou* in Matthew also has the numerical value of Sanskrit *Śākyamunis*, viz. 932. There is an overlapping, as often. Our authors constantly work at different levels at the same time. The *tou-to-gar-es-tin* imitates Sanskrit *ta-thā-ā-ga-tam*, "For this is a fact": Here is yet another trap for Greek scholars ignorant of the Sanskrit original, as in Matthew 28:1 etc. etc. Trinity – *sit venia verbo* – appears as unity. And the *psêphos* of *kāyam* (= 72) and *Tathāgatas* (= 912) is, of course, 888, the *psêphos* of *'Iêsous*.

The New Testament, therefore, is The Body of *Tathāgata*. The Body of *Tathāgata* is, at the same time, the same as Jesus, and the same as *Śākyamunis*.

The lucky number is 108, the Buddhist number. Hardly surprising, there are 4 gospels, and 27 books in the Body of *Tathāgata*. Needless to add: 4x27 = 108.

– Chr. Lindtner, 9-11, 2003



B. The 'Out of Egypt Theory'

Three major sources came together in Alexandria, Egypt, in the mid-3rd century, BCE, to produce the organizations which would eventually give rise to Christianity in the first/second century, CE:

I. **Buddhism** (with its carefully *memorized* scriptures and its monastic traditions);

II. **Judaism** (with its carefully *written* scriptures, monotheistic God, and prophesies of the coming of a savior messiah before the world's end);

III. **Egyptian Religion** (with its priestly ritual, and its epigraphic and archæological record revealing the world's most ancient belief in monotheism and resurrection of body & soul in an eternal heavenly abode).

I. Buddhism

The initiating source of Christianity was the arrival in Alexandria, mid-3rd century, BCE, of the missionary monks sent out by King Aśōka from India to Egypt. These monks were tasked with three goals:

1) to spread the Gospel of Buddhism (the Dharma) throughout the known world,

2) to provide, abroad, medical treatment for men and medical treatment for animals, and

3) to import and plant, in these foreign lands, medicinal herbs beneficial to men and beneficial to animals, wherever there were no such medicinal herbs – and, in addition, to import and plant roots and fruits for the benefit of men and animals. [See page 54 of this anthology for the full, detailed statement engraved in Aśōka's Rock Edict No. II, Girnar, mid-3rd century, BCE.]

King Aśōka tells us in his Rock Edict No. XIII, Erraguḍi, that after victoriously waging a particularly bloody campaign against the neighboring Indian province of Kaliṅga, where one hundred thousand people had lost their lives, and countless numbers had been injured, displaced, and taken into captivity, the king was profoundly affected by the slaughter, and turned away from 'Conquest by Force' to 'Conquest through Dharma' (the world's first 'Salvation Army', their uniforms, the monk's habit). Aśōka's conversion to the Buddha's 'Spirit of Non-Violence', led to his desiring, "in respect of all creatures, non-injury to them, restraint in dealing with them, impartiality, in the cases of crimes committed by them, and mild behaviour towards them". (See pp. 50-51 for the full declaration by King Aśōka, engraved in stone, mid-3rd century, BCE.)

In this same edict (No. XIII), King Aśōka claims "Conquest through Dharma" of the following lands to the west (emphasis added):

(**XVI**) So, what is conquest through Dharma is now considered to be the best conquest by [Aśōka†].

(**XVII**) And *such a conquest has been achieved* by 'The Beloved of the Gods' [i.e., by Aśōka†] . . . as far away as six hundred Yojanas, [where] the Yavana king named *Antiyoka*[1] [is ruling and], beyond [the kingdom of] the said *Antiyoka*, [where] four other kings named *Tulamāya*,[2] *Antikeni*,[3] *Maka*[4] and *Alikasundara*[5] [are also ruling]. . . .

King Aśōka claims in these lines engraved in stone that ***he has achieved 'conquests through Dharma' in the following lands to the west of India***: Antiochus-II's Seleucid Empire (stretching from Bactria to Syria, farther west), Ptolemy-II's Egypt, Antigonus Gonatas's Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene's kingdom (approximately today's Libya), and Alexander-II's realm of Epirus (today's Greece and Albania).

It is Aśōka's claim of "conquest through Dharma" of Ptolemy-II's Egypt which signals the earliest steps of what, centuries later, developed into Christianity. This "conquest" began as a friendly exposition of the Way of the Buddha. It must have been welcomed by the ruler of Egypt, himself (Ptolemy-II). But, in their later propagation of the Dharma, the Buddhist monks quietly planted their doctrines within a Jewish framework – so effectively so, that Western academics, today, widely view the Therapeutæ and Essenes as wholly Jewish sects. These sects were, originally, crypto-Buddhist/Egyptian forms within Judaism: proto-Christianity!

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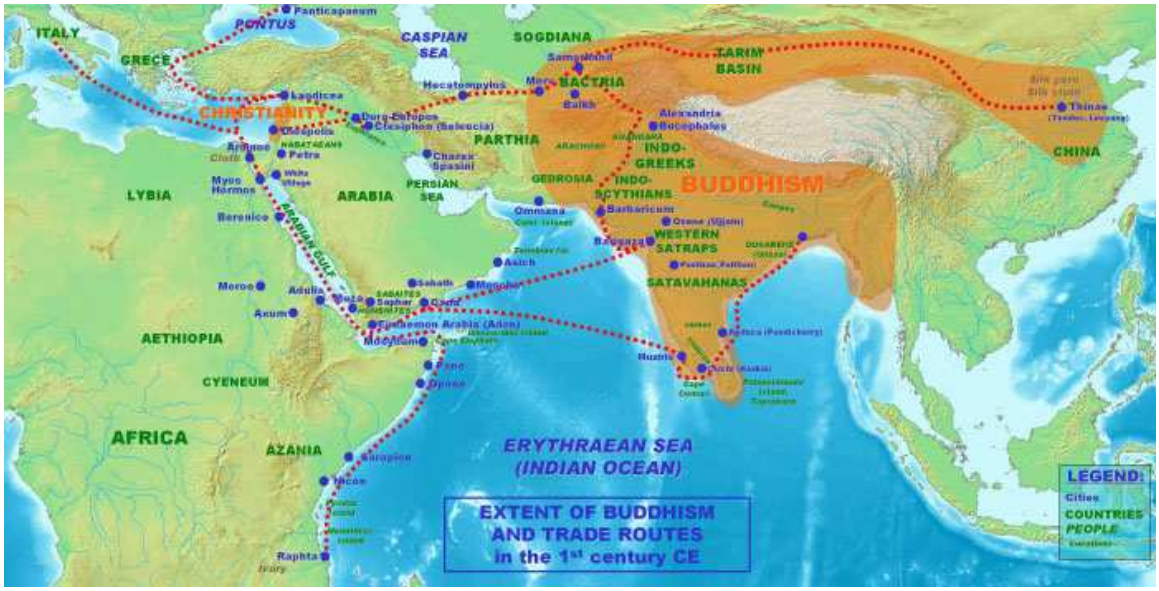
[1] *Antiyoka* = Antiochus-II Theos (regnal years 261-246 BCE), Greek ruler of the Seleucid Empire (stretching from Bactria to Syria, in the west), and who was therefore a direct neighbor of Aśōka.

[2] *Tulamāya* = Ptolemy-II Philadelphus (r.y. 285-247 BCE), the Greek ruler of Egypt.

[3] *Antikeni* = Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia (r.y. 277-239 BCE).

[4] *Maka* = Magas of Cyrene (r.y. ca. 288-258 BCE). [Cyrene is approximately today's Libya.]

[5] *Alikasundara* = Alexander-II of Epirus (r.y. 272-255 BCE). [Epirus, today's Greece and Albania.]



Map of the extent of Buddhism and Trade Routes in the 1st century CE – *Courtesy of Wikipedia*

The above map estimates that the extent of Buddhism, in the 1st century CE, had spread westward from India across Bactria and had *only* edged into Parthia. This map is mistaken! Actually, Buddhism, in the 1st century CE, was already well established, though in profoundly modified and varied forms, across the whole breadth of Egypt. For, in the western lands, beyond Parthia, Buddhism had, from the beginning (mid-3rd century BCE), changed its strategy of proselytizing, and, in the following centuries, morphed into crypto-Buddhist/Egyptian forms of Judaism, resulting in the Egyptian monastic communities of the Therapeutæan Essenes, the Palestinian Qumranite Essenes, and various flavors of Gnosticism. Some of these movements had, by mid-2nd century CE, begun to develop into various types of Christianity, and spread over the Near East and beyond into Europe. Christianity is, thus, a hybrid!

How did this come about? First, hear what Aśōka, in one of his edicts, has to say about inter-faith study:

> (I) King 'Priyadarśin', 'Beloved of the Gods' [i.e., Aśōka†], honours men of all religious communities with gifts and with honours of various kinds, [irrespective of whether they are] ascetics or householders. . . .
>
> (IV) . . . [Dharma's†] root [lies] in restraint in regard to speech, [which means] that there should be no extolment of one's own sect or disparagement of other sects on inappropriate occasions and that it should be moderate in every case even on appropriate occasions. . . .
>
> (X) This indeed is the desire of the 'Beloved of the Gods' [Aśōka†] that persons of all sects become well informed [about the doctrines of different religions] and acquire pure knowledge.
>
> [This Rock Edict No. XII, Erraguḍi, in its entirety is given on p. 55 of this anthology – ML.]

When Aśōka's missionary monks reached Alexandria, in mid-3rd century BCE, they would have approached the study of other religions with this open-minded curiosity.

According to *The Times Atlas of the Bible* (London: Times Books, 1996 edition), p. 142:

> Under the Ptolemies, the Jewish population began to increase. Jews had settled in Egypt after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC (*cf* JER 43.5-7, 44.1), and the Elephantine Papyri reveal a Jewish colony near Aswan acting as a Persian frontier garrison. In 312 BC, Ptolemy [I] added Jewish captives from Jerusalem; some, according to the letter of Aristeus, were later repatriated [by Ptolemy II] in exchange for a copy of the Torah which was taken from Jerusalem to Alexandria and translated into Greek for Ptolemy II's library.

Aśōka's missionary monks first went to Alexandria during the reign of Ptolemy-II Philadelphus. It is well known that Ptolemy-II, like King Aśōka, had an open-minded attitude toward a variety of religions. He is recorded by Pliny the Elder as having sent an ambassador named Dionysius to Aśōka's court. (*The Natural History*, chp. 21, source: Wikipedia's article, "Buddhism and Christianity")

On the following two pages, the Five Precepts (*pañca śīla*) of Buddhism (the number sufficient for the laity) and its two augmented versions: Eight Precepts (enhanced for the laity) and Ten Precepts (for novices and ordained monks and nuns) are set out (p. 160), and the Ten Commandments of Moses (p. 161). Compare and contrast the Buddhist Precepts with the Ten Commandments of Moses, keeping in mind the underlying influence that the Buddhist Precepts could have had in "Christianizing" the Jewish "Didache", a process which will be discussed on pp. 189-193.

The Five, Eight, and Ten Buddhist Precepts

The **Five Precepts** (Pāli: *pañca-sīla*; Sanskrit: *pañca-śīla*) refer to those moral precepts (1-5) which all devotees of the Buddha (laypersons and monastics) are to strive to follow.

Three more precepts are added to the five to make **Eight Precepts** for lay followers who may wish a more ascetic regimen on special occasions or in general.

Buddhist novices and ordained monks and nuns are to be guided by all **Ten Precepts** (Pāli: *dasa-sīla*; Sanskrit: *daśa-śīla*):

1. Abstention from killing or harming sentient creatures is our precept.
2. Abstention from taking things not offered is our precept.
3. Abstention from unchaste behavior is our precept. [For novices, monks & nuns: celibacy required.]
4. Abstention from idle or misleading speech is our precept.
5. Abstention from taking intoxicants is our precept.

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6. Abstention from taking food at inappropriate times is our precept. [I.e., don't eat after noon.]
7. Abstention from song, dance, music or attending entertainment programs is our precept.
8. Abstention from wearing perfume, cosmetics and garlands is our precept.

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9. Abstention from sitting on ostentatious chairs and sleeping on raised, soft beds is our precept.
10. Abstention from accepting gold or silver is our precept. [I.e., don't touch money.]

The first four of the **B**uddhist **P**recepts can be seen to correspond roughly to four of the **M**osaic **C**ommandments:

BP 1 = MC 6
BP 2 = MC 8
BP 3 = MC 7
BP 4 = MC 9

But these Buddhist Precepts are more ascetic, rigorous and general than the corresponding Mosaic Commandments:

BP 1 is to abstain from killing or harming, not only humans, but all sentient beings; whereas MC 6 is only not to 'murder' – leaving open many excuses for humans to kill humans, and for the blood sacrifice of animals at the Jerusalem Temple.

BP 2 is to abstain from taking things not offered; whereas MC 8 is only not to steal.

BP 3 is to abstain from unchaste behavior (and for Buddhist novices, monks, and nuns, to become totally celibate!); whereas MC 7 is only not to commit adultery.

BP 4 is to abstain from idle and misleading speech; whereas MC 9 is only not to bear false witness against one's neighbor.

As the founder of a religion that maintained, in its early stages, a resolutely dismissive attitude toward all gods, the Buddha was against the worship of idols (concurring with MC 2). As the Buddha also expressly forbid the making of any image of himself, Buddhist art, for over four hundred years, never showed any image of him, either as Bodhisattva or as the Buddha. His actual presence in the sculpted scenes of his life was indicated by various symbols: his throne, regal parasol, or alms-bowl, etc. Surprisingly, such leading Hindu deities as Brahmā and Indra (Śakra) *were* depicted in this early art – not as gods to be worshipped, but as mere subordinates, adoring the human sage, Gautama, indicated by the symbol representing his invisible presence. The earliest extant physical images of Gautama Bodhisattva/Buddha date to c. 100 BCE. (A few of these images are illustrated on p. 102 of this anthology. In these images, the Bodhisattva/Buddha is flanked by diminutive subordinate images of Brahmā and Indra.) **Note**: *early Christian art passes through this same metamorphosis from symbols of the invisible presence of Jesus to the bodily representation of him.*

The six remaining Buddhist Precepts (Nos. 5-10), are distinctly ascetic in nature, well suited to monastics, and thus have no counterparts among the Mosaic Commandments.

Division of the Ten Commandments by Religion/Denomination (*After Wikipedia*)

Commandment	Jewish (Talmudic)	Anglican, Reformed and other Christians	Orthodox	Catholic, Lutheran
I am the LORD your God.	1	Preface		
You shall have no other gods before me.	2	1	1	1
You shall not make for yourself an idol.		2	2	
You shall not make wrongful use of the name of your God.	3	3	3	2
Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.	4	4	4	3
Honor your father and mother.	5	5	5	4
You shall not murder.	6	6	6	5
You shall not commit adultery.	7	7	7	6
You shall not steal.	8	8	8	7
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.	9	9	9	8
You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.	10	10	10	9
You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.				10

The fifth Mosaic Commandment, 'Honor your father and mother', has no counterpart in the Buddhist Precepts. This is not surprising, considering the following ascetic, monastic pronouncement by the Buddha:

> "Just as the great rivers, on reaching the great ocean, lose their former names and identities and are reckoned simply as the great ocean, so do followers lose their former names and clans and become sons of the Buddha's clan." – *Vinaya, Çullavagga* ***9:1:4***

Philo's account of the monastic Therapeutæ (in *Contempl.*) reveals a similar abandonment of family and parents:

> (***13***) [O]ut of their yearning after the immortal and blessed life, they esteem their mortal life to have already ended.
>
> (***18***) So soon, then, as they have divested themselves of their properties, without allowing anything to further ensnare them, they flee without turning back, having abandoned brethren, children, wives, parents. . . . (See ref., p. 100, n. 5.)

The New Testament (*NEB*) recounts a similar monastic message from Jesus:

> [A man said to Jesus:] 'I will follow you, sir; but let me first say good-bye to my people at home.' To him Jesus said, 'No one who sets his hand to the plough and then keeps looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.' – *Luke 9:61-62*

From Piyadassi Thera's work, *The Buddha: His Life and Teaching* (eEdition: Buddhist Publication Society, transcribed PDF, 1995), pp. 38-39:

Buddha
'The Peerless Physician'

The Buddha is . . . known as the peerless physician (*bhisakko*), the supreme surgeon (*sallakatto anuttaro*). He indeed, is the unrivalled healer.

The Buddha's method of exposition of the Four Noble Truths is comparable to that of a physician. As a physician, he first diagnosed the illness, next he discovered the cause for the arising of the illness, then he considered its removal, and lastly applied the remedy.

Suffering (*dukkha* [*duḥkha*]) is the illness; craving (*taṇhā* [*tṛishṇā*]) is the arising or the root cause of the illness (*samudaya*); through the removal of craving, the illness is removed, and that is the cure (*nirodha-nibbāna* [*nirodha-nirvāṇa*]); the Noble Eightfold Path (*magga* [*mārga*]) is the remedy.

The Buddha's reply to a brahmin who wished to know why the Master is called a Buddha clearly indicates that it was for no other reason than a perfect knowledge of the Four Noble Truths. Here is the Buddha's reply:

"I knew what should be known,
What should be cultivated I have cultivated,
What should be abandoned that have I let go.
Hence, O brahmin, I am Buddha,
The Awakened One." – *S.V,588; M. No. 92; Vin.I,45; Thag. 828.*

Comment: It can be said that the Buddha was not only a Great Physician, he was the world's first, great Medical Researcher in the field of psychotherapy, a field which is decidedly empirical! This is in stark contrast to Jesus' method as understood by those who would interpret the New Testament scriptures literally. For literalists, Jesus is considered a Great Physician because he carried out numerous healings through the miraculous power of God, along with the receptive faith of the patients or of their loved ones who were with Jesus. These miracles ranged from curing blindness, leprosy, various physical disabilities, demon possession, even death.

For the 'Out of Egypt Theory', these accounts of such miraculous cures should be viewed within the literary framework of allegory. The links between the two Physicians demand it.

If the Buddha had met a young boy who had broken his arm, he would have turned to one of his own monks who was trained in the excellent procedures of secular healers in India to take care of the boy. The Buddha, himself, was ill at various stages in his life, but he did not miraculously cure himself. It seems quite clear from the edicts of King Aśōka, when he sent out the first Salvation Army to the West (including Egypt!), that he did not expect miracle cures from them for illnesses such as malaria, broken bones, etc. We read from the king's edicts that his Buddhist missionaries were to take with them medicinal plants and introduce them into countries which did not have them, for the benefit of humans and animals! But when it came to ills of the heart and mind, then the Buddha's insight (Enlightenment) came into play. And, of course, the disturbed mind is also the source of very physical illnesses, and of even death. It is in this light that one should study the **Four Noble Truths**:

1. Diagnosis: Life is shot through with suffering (*Duḥkha*): "This is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering." – *Bodhi quote from Wikipedia*

2. The Cause (*Samudaya*) of Suffering: "This is the noble truth of the origin of suffering: it is this craving which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there, that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for extermination." – *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta* (*SN* 56.11), trans. Bodhi (2000).

3. The Elimination (*Nirodha*) of Suffering: "This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering: it is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, nonreliance on it."

4. The Way (*Mārga*) Leading to the Cessation of Suffering: "This is the **Noble Eightfold Path**:

i. Right View [Understanding], ii. Right Intention [Aspiration], iii. Right Speech,
iv. Right Conduct [Action], v. Right Livelihood, vi. Right Effort, vii. Right Mindfulness, and
viii. Right Concentration.

"These eight aspects are not to be viewed as successive stages, isolated from one another, but are different dimensions of a total way of life."

The Miracles of Jesus*

According to the canonical Gospels, Jesus worked many miracles in the course of his ministry. The bulk of His miracles were healings or various cures. There are also a large number of exorcisms, three raisings of dead persons to life, and various other miracles that all include the healing of either the mind, the body or the soul. They include:

1. Cure of centurion's servant (son):	Mt 8:5-13 (servant),		Lk 7:1-10 (serv.),	Jn 4:46-54 (son).
2. Cure of a demoniac:		Mk 1:23-28,	Lk 4:33-37.	
3. Cure of Peter's mother-in-law's fever:	Mt 8:14-15,	Mk 1:29-31,	Lk 4:38.	
4. Cure of a leper:	Mt 8:1-4,	Mk 1:40-45,	Lk 5:12-19.	
5. Cure of a paralytic at Capharnaum:	Mt 9:1-8,	Mk 1:40-45,	Lk 4:12-19.	
6. Cure of a sick man at Bethesda:				Jn 5:1-15.
7. Healing of a man's withered hand:	Mt 12:9-13,	Mk 3:1-6,	Lk 6:6-11.	
8. Raising of the son of the widow of Nain:			Lk 7:11-17. [***1 Kings 17:19-24***][1]	
9. Healing of a blind and dumb demoniac:	Mt 12:22.			
10. Expulsion of demons in Gadara:	Mt 8:29-34,	Mk 4:35-41,	Lk 8:26-39.	
11. Raising (curing) of Jairus' daughter:	Mt 9:18-26,	Mk 5:21-43,	Lk 8:40.	
12. Healing of a woman with a hemorrhage:	Mt 9:20-22,	Mk 5:24-34,	Lk 8:43.	
13. Restoration of two men's sight:	Mt 9:27-31.			
14. Healing of a mute demoniac:	Mt 9:32-34.			
15. Exorcism of a Canaanite woman:	Mt 15:21-28,	Mk 7:24.		
16. Healing of a deaf-mute:		Mk 7:31-37.		
17. Restoration of a man's sight at Bethsaida:		Mk 8:22.		
18. Exorcism of a possessed boy:	Mt 17:14-21,	Mk 9:13-28,	Lk 9:37-43.	
19. Healing the blind man Bartimaus:				Jn 9:1-38.
20. Healing many crippled, blind, mute:	Mt 15:29.			
21. Healing of a woman on the Sabbath:			Lk 13:10-17.	
22. Raising of Lazarus from the dead:				Jn 11:1-44.
23. Healing of a man with dropsy:			Lk 14:1-6.	
24. Healing of ten lepers:			Lk 17:11-19.	
25. Healing of two blind men at Jericho:	Mt 20:29-34,	Mk 10:46-52,	Lk 18:35.	
26. Healing of High Priest's servant's ear:	Mt 26:51,	Mk 14:47,	Lk 22:50-51,	Jn 18:10-11.

Of all the miracles Jesus performed, only five do not include a healing or cure. They are also the five miracles of Jesus considered metaphors by theologians or are generally not accepted by all Christians. They include:

1. Turning water into wine:				Jn 2:1-11.
2. Feeding the 5000: [***Exodus 16:14 & 31***][2]	Mt 14:13-21,	Mk 6:34-44,	Lk 9:12-17,	Jn 6:1-15.
3. Walking on water: [***Joshua 3:9-17***][3]	Mt 14:22,	Mk 6:45-52,		Jn 6:16-21.
4. Calming a storm at sea:	Mt 8:23-27,	Mk 4:35-41,	Lk 8:22-25.	
5. Convert bread/body & "wine"/blood:	Mt 26:26-30,	Mk 14:22-26,	Lk 22:14-20,	1 Cor 11:23-26.

---

[1]Elijah brought a widow's son back to life (in ***1 Kings 17:19-24***), centuries before Jesus is said to have lived. ***Luke 9:18-19***: Jesus = Elijah "reincarnated"? He, like Elijah, also brings a widow's son back to life (***Luke 7:11-17***)! Jesus' miracle would certainly conjure up the Elijah story in the minds of the earliest Christians. This is *dhvani*!

[2]More than a millennium earlier than Jesus (in ***Exodus 16:14 & 31***), Moses had performed a similar miracle in a deserted place, and instructed the crowd also to sit in 50s and 100s, the typical size of military companies – the food miraculously provided: 1) birds and 2) manna, the leftovers also being gathered afterward into baskets!

[3]This miracle follows immediately after the miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. In ***Mark 6:45-52***, Jesus was not walking to meet his disciples but passing them by! This brings to mind Joshua taking the Hebrews and the Ark of the Covenant across the Jordan into the Promised Land (***Joshua 3:9-17***)! Jesus did the same, proclaiming the Kingdom of God and a New Covenant! Both Joshua and Jesus crossed the Jordan from the East. With Joshua were 12 priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant. On the fishing boat, there were the 12 disciples of Jesus. The most direct parallel, however, is their names (Jesus and Joshua – in Hebrew Jesus' name is Joshua!). [These three footnotes are by ML, after ideas presented in Brock Gill's video, "The Miracles of Jesus"!]

A contemporary **[1997]** view from: http://webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/buddhapsych.html

Towards a Buddhist Psychotherapy
By C. George Boeree

What follows is my effort at showing the relevance of Buddhism to western psychotherapy, especially existential therapy. Although it may not sit well with purists, I hope that this article captures the spirit of the Buddha's message.

The **Four Noble Truths** sound like the basics of any theory with therapeutic roots:

1. Life is suffering. Life is at very least full of suffering, and it can easily be argued that suffering is an inevitable aspect of life. If I have senses, I can feel pain; if I have feelings, I can feel distress; if I have a capacity for love, I will have the capacity for grief. Such is life.

Duḥkha, the Sanskrit word for suffering, is also translated as stress, anguish, and imperfection. Buddha wanted us to understand suffering as a foundation for improvement. One key to understanding suffering is understanding ***anitya***, which means that all things, including living things, our loved ones, and ourselves, are impermanent. Another key concept is ***anātman***, which means that all things – even we – have no "soul" or eternal substance. With no substance, nothing stands alone, and no one has a separate existence. We are all interconnected, not just with our human world, but with the universe.

In existential psychology, we speak of *ontological anxiety* (dread, angst). It, too is characterized as an intrinsic part of life. It is further understood that in order to improve one's life, one needs to understand and accept this fact of life, and that the effort one makes at avoiding this fact of life is at the root of neurosis. In other words, denying anxiety is denying life itself. As the blues song points out, "if you ain't scared, you ain't right!"

Impermanence also has its correlate in the concept of *being-towards-death*. Our peculiar position of being mortal and being aware of it is a major source of anxiety, but is also what makes our lives, and the choices we make, meaningful. Time becomes important only when there is only so much of it. Doing the right thing and loving someone only have meaning when you don't have an eternity to work with.

Anātman – one of the central concepts of Buddhism – is likewise a central concept in existential psychology. As Sartre put it, *our existences precede our essences*. That is to say, we are a kind of "nothingness" that strains to become a "something." Yet only by acknowledging our lives as more a matter of movement than substance do we stand a chance at authentic being.

2. Suffering is due to attachment. We might say that at least much of the suffering we experience comes out of ourselves, out of our desire to make pleasure, happiness, and love last forever and to make pain, distress, and grief disappear from life altogether.

My feeling, not quite in line with some Buddhist interpretations, is that we are not therefore to avoid pleasure, happiness, and love. Nor are we to believe that all suffering comes from ourselves. It's just that it is not necessary, being shot once with an arrow, to shoot ourselves again, as the Buddha put it.

Attachment is one translation of the word ***ṭrishṇa***, which can also be translated as thirst, desire, lust, craving, or clinging. When we fail to recognize that all things are imperfect, impermanent, and insubstantial, we cling to them in the delusion that they are indeed perfect, permanent, and substantial, and that by clinging to them, we, too, will be perfect, permanent, and substantial.

Another aspect of attachment is ***dvesha***, which means avoidance or hatred. To Buddha, hatred was every bit as much an attachment as clinging. Only by giving those things which cause us pain permanence and substance do we give them the power to hurt us more. We wind up fearing, not that which can harm us, but our fears themselves.

A third aspect of attachment is ***avidyā***, meaning ignorance. At one level, it refers to the ignorance of these Four Noble Truths – not understanding the truth of imperfection and so on. At a deeper level, it also means "not seeing," i.e. not directly experiencing reality, but instead seeing our personal interpretation of it. More than that, we take our interpretation of reality as more real than reality itself, and interpret any direct experiences of reality itself as illusions or "mere appearances!"

Existential psychology has some similar concepts here, as well. Our lack of "essence" or preordained structure, our "nothingness," leads us to crave solidity. We are, you could say, whirlwinds who wish they were rocks. We cling to things in the hopes that they will provide us with a certain "weight." We try to turn our loved ones into

things by demanding that they not change, or we try to change them into perfect partners, not realizing that a statue, though it may live forever, has no love to give us. We try to become immortal, whether by anxiety-driven belief in fairy-tales, or by making our children and grandchildren into clones of ourselves, or by getting into the history books or onto the talk shows. We even cling to unhappy lives because change is too frightening.

Or we try to become a piece of a larger pie: The most frightening things we've seen in this century are the mass movements, whether they be Nazis or Red Guard or Ku Klux Klan or . . . well, you name them. If I'm just a little whirlwind, maybe by joining others of my kind, I can be a part of a hurricane! Beyond these giant movements are all the petty ones – political movements, revolutionary ones, religious ones, antireligious ones, ones involving nothing more than a style or fashion, and even the local frat house. And note the glue that holds them together is the same: hatred, which in turn is based on the anxiety that comes from feeling small.

Finally, existential psychology also discusses its version of ignorance. Everyone holds belief systems – personal and social – that remain forever untested by direct experience. They have such staying power because built in to them is a catch-22, a circular argument, that says that evidence or reasoning that threatens the belief system is, ipso facto, incorrect. These belief systems can range from the great religious, political, and economic theories to the little beliefs people hold that tell them that they are – or are not – worthy. It is a part of therapy's job to return us to a more direct awareness of reality. As Fritz Perls once said, "we must lose our minds and come to our senses!"

3. Suffering can be extinguished. At least that suffering we add to the inevitable suffering of life can be extinguished. Or, if we want to be even more modest in our claims, suffering can at least be diminished.

I believe that, with decades of practice, some monks may be able to transcend even simple, direct, physical pain. I don't think, however, that us ordinary folk in our ordinary lives have the option of devoting those decades to such an extreme of practice. My focus, then, is on diminishing mental anguish rather than eliminating all pain.

Nirvāṇa is the traditional name for the state of being (or non-being, if you prefer) wherein all clinging, and so all suffering, has been eliminated. It is often translated as "blowing out," with the idea that we eliminate self like we blow out a candle. This may be a proper understanding, but I prefer the idea of blowing out a fire that threatens to overwhelm us, or even the idea of taking away the oxygen that keeps the fires burning. By this I mean that by "blowing out" clinging, hate, and ignorance, we "blow out" unnecessary suffering.

I may be taking a bit of a leap here, but I believe that the Buddhist concept of *nirvāṇa* is quite similar to the existentialists' *freedom*. Freedom has, in fact, been used in Buddhism in the context of freedom from rebirth or freedom from the effects of *karma*. For the existentialist, freedom is a fact of our being, one which we often ignore, and which ignorance leads us to a diminished life.

4. And there is a Way to extinguish suffering. This is what all therapists believe – each in his or her own way. But this time we are looking at what Buddha's theory – dharma – has to say: He called it the **Eightfold Path**.

The first two segments of the path are referred to as ***prajñā***, meaning wisdom:

1) Right view – understanding the Four Noble Truths, especially the nature of all things as imperfect, impermanent, and insubstantial and our self-inflicted suffering as founded in clinging, hate, and ignorance.

2) Right aspiration – having the true desire to free oneself from attachment, hatefulness, and ignorance. The idea that improvement comes only when the sufferer takes the first step of aspiring to improvement is apparently 2500 years old.

For the existential psychologist, therapy is something neither the therapist nor the client takes lying down – if you will pardon the pun. The therapist must take an assertive role in helping the client become aware of the reality of his or her suffering and its roots. Likewise, the client must take an assertive role in working towards improvement – even though it means facing the fears they've been working so hard to avoid, and especially facing the fear that they will "lose" themselves in the process.

The next three segments of the path provide more detailed guidance in the form of moral precepts, called ***śīla***:

3) Right speech – abstaining from lying, gossiping, and hurtful speech generally. Speech is often our ignorance made manifest, and is the most common way in which we harm others. Modern psychologists emphasize that one should above all stop lying to oneself. But Buddhism adds that by practicing being true to others, one will find it increasingly difficult to be false to oneself.

4) Right action – behaving oneself, abstaining from actions that hurt others (and, by implication, oneself) such as killing, stealing, and irresponsible sex.

5) Right livelihood – making one's living in an honest, non-hurtful way. Here's one we don't talk about much in our society today. One can only wonder how much suffering comes out of the greedy, cut-throat, dishonest careers we often participate in. This by no means means we must all be monks: Imagine the good one can do as an honest, compassionate, hard-working accountant, business person, lawyer, or politician!

I have to pause here to add another Buddhist concept to the picture: ***karma***. Basically, karma refers to good and bad deeds and the consequences they bring. In some branches of Buddhism, karma has to do with what kind of reincarnation to expect. But other branches see it more simply as the negative (or positive) effects one's actions have on one's integrity. Beyond the effects of your selfish acts have on others, for example, each selfish act "darkens your soul," and makes happiness that much harder to find. On the other hand, each act of kindness, as the gypsies say, "comes back to you three times over." To put it simply, virtue is its own reward, and vice its own hell.

The nature of moral choice has been a central concern of existentialism as well. According to existentialists, we build our lives through our moral choices. But they view morality as a highly individualistic thing – not based on simple formulas beginning with "thou shalt not . . ." and handed down to us directly from God. Actually, moral choice is something involving a real person in a real situation, and no one can second guess another's decisions. The only "principle" one finds in existentialism is that the moral decision must come from a certain position, i.e. that of *authenticity*.

Perhaps I should also pause here to explain what is meant by the existential idea of authenticity. The surface meaning is being real rather than artificial or phony. More completely, it means living one's life with full acceptance of one's freedom and the responsibility and anxiety that freedom entails. It is often seen as a matter of living courageously. To me, it sounds suspiciously like enlightenment.

There is another similar ethical philosophy I'd like to mention: the *situated ethics* of Joseph Fletcher. He is a Christian theologian who finds the traditional, authoritarian brand of Christian ethics not in keeping with the basic message of Christ. Needless to say, he has raised the hackles of many conservative Christians by saying that morality is not a matter of absolutes, but of individual conscience in special situations. He believes that, if an act is rooted in genuine love, it is good. If it is rooted in hatred, selfishness, or apathy, it is bad. Mahāyāna (northern) Buddhism says very much the same thing.

It is always a matter of amusement to me that my students, unaware of all the great philosophical and religious debates on morality, all seem quite aware that intentionally hurting others (or oneself) is bad, and doing one's best to help others (and oneself) is good. If you look at Buddha's pronouncements on morality – or Christ's – you find the same simplicity.

The last three segments of the path are the ones Buddhism is most famous for, and concern ***samādhi*** or meditation. I must say that, despite the popular conception, without wisdom and morality, meditation is worthless, and may even be dangerous.

6) Right effort – taking control of your mind and the contents thereof. Simple, direct practice is what it takes, the developing of good mental habits: When bad thoughts and impulses arise, they should be abandoned. This is done by watching the thought without attachment, recognizing it for what it is (no denial or repression!), and letting it dissipate. Good thoughts and impulses, on the other hand, should be nurtured and enacted. Make virtue a habit, as the stoics used to say.

There are four "sublime states" (***brahma-vihāra***) that some Buddhists talk about. These sublime states are fully experienced by saintly creatures called **bodhisattvas**, but the rest of us should practice them every moment of every day as an exercise in self-improvement. They are loving kindness to all you meet, compassion for those who are suffering, joy for others without envy, and equanimity or a peaceful, evenly balanced attitude towards the ups and downs of life.

7) Right mindfulness – mindfulness refers to a kind of meditation involving an acceptance of thoughts and perceptions, a "bare attention" to these events without attachment. It is called ***vipassanā*** in the Theravāda (southern Buddhism) tradition, and ***shikantaza*** in the Ch'an (Zen) tradition. But it is understood that this mindfulness is to extend to daily life as well. It becomes a way of developing a fuller, richer awareness of life, and a deterrent to our tendency to sleepwalk our way through life.

One of the most important moral precepts in Buddhism is the avoidance of consciousness-diminishing or altering substances – i.e. alcohol or drugs. This is because anything that makes you less than fully aware sends you in the opposite direction of improvement: into deeper ignorance.

But there are other things besides drugs that diminish consciousness. Some people try to avoid life by disappearing into food or sexuality. Others disappear into work, mindless routine, or rigid, self-created rituals.

Drowning oneself in entertainment is one of today's favorite substitutes for heroin. I think that modern media, especially television, make it very difficult to maintain our balance. I would like to see a return to the somewhat Victorian concept of "edifying diversions:" see a good movie on PBS or videotape – no commercials, please – or read a good book, listen to good music, and so on.

We can also drown awareness in material things – fast cars, extravagant clothes, and so on. Shopping has itself become a way of avoiding life. Worst of all is the blending of materiality with entertainment. While monks and nuns avoid frivolous diversions and luxurious possessions, we surround ourselves with commercials, infomercials, and entire shopping networks, as if they were effective forms of "pain control"!

8) Right concentration – meditating in such a way as to empty our natures of attachments, avoidances, and ignorance, so that we may accept the imperfection, impermanence, and insubstantiality of life. This is usually thought of as the highest form of Buddhist meditation, and full practice of it is pretty much restricted to monks and nuns who have progressed considerably along the path.

But just as the earlier paths provide a foundation for later paths, later ones often support earlier ones. For example, a degree of "calm abiding" (***shamatha***), a beginning version of concentration, is essential for developing mindfulness, and is taught to all beginning meditators. This is the counting of breaths or chanting of mantras most people have heard of. This pacifying of the mind is, in fact, important to mindfulness, effort, all moral practice, and even the maintaining of view and aspiration. I believe that this simple form of meditation is the best place for those who are suffering to begin – though once again, the rest of the eightfold path is essential for long-term improvement.

Most therapists know: Anxiety is the most common manifestation of psychological suffering. And when it's not anxiety, it's unresolved anger. And when it's not anger, it's pervasive sadness. All three of these can be toned down to a manageable level by simple meditation. Meditation will not eliminate these things – that requires wisdom and morality and the entire program – but it will give the sufferer a chance to acquire the wisdom, morality, etc.!

Beyond recommending simple meditation, therapists might recommend simplification of lifestyle, avoidance of sensationalistic or exploitative entertainment, a holiday from the news, a retreat to a monastery, or a simple weekend vacation. One of my favorite expressions is "less is more!"

As I mentioned earlier, some Buddhists have an expression "***nirvāṇa** is **saṁsāra***," which means that the perfected life is this life. While there is much talk about great insights and amazing enlightenments and even paranormal events, what Buddhism is really all about, in my humble opinion, is returning to this life, your very own little life, with a "new attitude." By being more calm, more aware, a nicer person morally, someone who has given up envy and greed and hatred and such, who understands that nothing is forever, that grief is the price we willingly pay for love, . . . then this life becomes at very least bearable. We stop torturing ourselves and allow ourselves to enjoy what there is to enjoy. And there is a good deal to enjoy!

My Buddhist friends often use the term "practice" for what they do. They encourage each other to "keep on practicing." Nobody is too terribly concerned if they aren't perfect – they don't expect that. As long as you pick yourself up and practice a little more. A good basis for therapy.

* * * * * * * * *

Comment (ML):

All of the various accounts in the Hebrew Bible of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments stress the supernatural: the LORD God speaking to Moses with the voice of thunder, the lightning, the smoke rising up from the mountain, etc. Some of the accounts of the commandments have not ten but fourteen or more of them, and some of these additional ones are little heeded. Finally, there seems little doubt that even the Ten are indebted to earlier civilizations – primarily the Egyptian.

And, if this is true for the Hebrews, the same could be claimed with respect to some of the Buddhist precepts. But whatever ancient Egyptian or other source might be pointed out as precedent for these later commandments or precepts, the Buddha never did put forward any supernatural claims for his movement's Precepts (Five, Eight, Ten) – this in sharp contrast to the Hebrews, Egyptians, and others!

If we look for the authority which underlies the Buddhist Precepts, we find it in the Four Noble Truths which conclude with the Noble Eightfold Path. There is nothing supernatural about the source of these Truths: they had been validated by a mortal man after his years of striving and deep meditation.

All the supernatural embellishments in the various stories about the Buddha should be understood as literary accretions, as parables or meta-parables, which convey certain values and truths to the young and uneducated. If the uneducated were to take them as literal, historical truth, they would be in the same condition as Christian fundamentalists claiming historical inerrancy for all of the Gospel stories.

Speaking of the Four Noble Truths, a major criticism of the view that Buddhism has influenced Christianity is expressed in this question: Why do we not find any clear statement of the Four Noble Truths in the whole wide range of early Christian writings, canonical and non-canonical?

Let me answer that question. Again and again throughout the first chapter of Genesis, God saw that what he was creating *was good* (emphases added to the text from the *NEB*):

> *1* **IN THE BEGINNING OF CREATION** . . . *13* God saw that the light *was good*, and he separated light from darkness.
>
> *21* God then created the great sea-monsters and all living creatures that move and swarm in the waters, according to their kind, and every kind of bird; and God saw that it *was good*. So he blessed them and said, *22* 'Be fruitful and increase, fill the waters of the seas; and let the birds increase on land.'
>
> *25* God made wild animals, cattle, and all reptiles, each according to its kind; and he saw that it *was good*.
>
> *27* So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. *28* God blessed them and said to them, '**Be fruitful and increase**, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven, and every living thing that moves upon the earth.
>
> *31* God saw all that he had made, and it *was very good*.

Now consider the *negativity* (from the Biblical point of view) of the Buddha's **First Noble Truth**:

> **The Nature of Suffering (*Duḥkha*):** "This is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering."

The enlightened Buddha looked out on the suffering, sick world and discovered three more Truths:

> The **Second Noble Truth:** The cause for much of this suffering is the **craving for renewed existence**.
>
> The **Third Noble Truth:** The stopping of this suffering can be brought about by the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving.
>
> The **Fourth Noble Truth:** The Way to achieve this is detailed in the **Noble Eightfold Path**.

Buddhism's basic principle of proselytizing (*upāya-kauśalya*) would have warranted withholding such negative doctrines (negative from the Jewish point of view) until a later stage of the development of their communities (*sanghas*) within Egypt. Were the Four Noble Truths passed on only orally as part of the secret, ancient traditions which Philo hints at in his descriptions of the Therapeutæ? It is uncertain. But there is every reason for the Buddhists to have downplayed such clearly anti-Mosaic views in the early years of their missionary work in Egypt.

* * * * * * * * *

Here is how Buddhism was representing the Creator god (Brahmā) of popular Hinduism, in the first century BCE:

(l.-r.) Brahmā; Śākyamuni; Indra
Swat, ca. 100 BCE (J.C. Huntington)

The Creator god, Brahmā, stands on the left of the seated Śākyamuni (the "Sage of the Śākya Clan", i.e., the Buddha or Buddha-to-be, depending on one's view of the stage of his enlightenment portrayed). On the right stands the 'King of the Gods', Indra, representing the glory and power of earthly rulers being raised to heavenly realms! Both of these mighty Hindu gods are shown here in diminutive form, standing humbly beside the human Sage, with hands clasped in the worshipful gesture of *añjali mudrā*.

The Buddha and early Buddhism took an agnostic stance against the widespread polytheism of the masses. However, in India, one fights mythology with mythology.

We have seen how the Buddha, in his search for enlightenment, had been attacked by the Great Tempter, Māra, his alluring daughters, and his troops (see above p. 36). The temptations represented by Māra's daughters were blatantly sexual, of course, and sexuality was considered a fundamental component of the god Brahmā's powers. Māra, also, more than once attempts to persuade the Buddha to give up his ascetic life, with the assurance that he would then become a universal monarch on earth, like the god, Indra, in heaven. Thus the two gods represent the two realms in which the Buddha-to-be/Buddha had been assailed: 1) the sexual and procreative realm of Brahmā, and 2) Indra's realm of wealth, power, and fame. The gods, however, stand, flanking him in subdued submission.

This Buddhist icon has an ancient lineage going back to the Indus Valley civilization and even earlier to the Sumerian. Thomas McEvilley, in his book, *The Shape of Ancient Thought* (p. 248), has a figure which illustrates this fact with an Indus valley seal impression from Mahenjo Daro, 3rd to 2nd millennium BCE, showing a "*dompteur*" or "Gilgamesh" type figure of a hero "standing between two lions [tigers, here] who symmetrically flank him and whom he is holding in a gesture of mastery."*

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*Thomas McEvilley, *The Shape of Ancient Thought: Comparative Studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies* (New York, NY: Allsworth Press / School of Visual Arts, 2002), p. 249.

Comparing the two illustrations, we see in the ancient Indus Valley icon a hero subduing his opponents (the two tigers flanking him) by the throttling force of his arms, whereas, in the Buddhist icon, we see that the seated Sage, in deep meditation, has peacefully subdued his internal opponents: lustful, sexual desires (represented by the Creator god, Brahmā) and desires for wealth, power, and fame (represented by the king of the gods, Indra). ***This is a turning away from 'conquest by force' to 'conquest through Dharma'!***

Māra, the Great Tempter, operates as a complex demigod, subservient to both Brahmā and Indra. On the left side of the carved panel shown on page 36, above, Māra appears as Kāmadēva, the handsome 'God of Love', with his beautiful daughters. But on the right side, they are shown in their true ugliness, along with the fearsomeness of Māra's troops. This carving, thus, reveals that Kāmadēva, the handsome 'God of Love', is actually an illusive form of the truly ugly and fearsome Māra, who, in turn, represents true elements of the Creator god, Brahmā! To the early Buddhists, these elements represented the snares and delusions which keep one bound to the seemingly endless cycle of rebirths. The Buddhists' goal was to break free of them.

When King Aśōka's missionary monks began their efforts of proselytizing the Jews, Greeks, and Copts of Alexandria by blending their Buddhist Dharma into a Judaic framework, they wisely chose not to start challenging some of the most fundamental beliefs of the Jews, especially their belief that all of the LORD God's creation "*was very good*", and that God had commanded humans to "Be fruitful and (sexually) multiply"!

In the days of the Buddha, the Creator god, Brahmā, did not represent, in Indian thought, the Supreme Being, the unmanifest Brahman, which unlike Brahmā, is beyond all discursive thought and description. Thus, early Buddhism in India treated the god Brahmā (mythologically) in the same dismissive manner that various "heretical" crypto-Buddhist Christian Gnostic sects were later to treat the Creator God of the Hebrew Bible (*Genesis*), as an inferior Demiurge. It would, then, seem that, by the end of the first century of the Common Era, this underlying, more ancient view of Buddhism had begun to be openly preached by various crypto-Buddhist/Gentile/Jewish groups in Egypt, giving up the earlier tactic (*upāya-kauśalya*) of the leaders hiding views which were strikingly contrary to Judaism.

The 'Out of Egypt Theory' (OET) suggests that Greek terms derived from '*gnosis*', which have been applied by scholars to a numbers of sects, Christian, pre-Christian, and non-Christian, should be recognized as translating the meaning of the Sanskrit, '*bōdhi*', from which come 'Bōdhisattva', 'Buddha', 'Buddhist', and 'Buddhism'! After Aśōka's initial evangelistic efforts, some of the monastic groups – and 'lapsed'-monastic offshoots – which multiplied and spread throughout Egypt and elsewhere, for more than two hundred years, began to distance themselves from some elements of the Judaic framework which they had long employed in their proselytizing efforts. The OET further suggests that it was around the first century BCE that some began openly to criticize certain Judaic beliefs, adhering, instead, to basic principles of Buddhism:

1) its dismissive attitude toward any creator Demiurge (such as Judaism's YḤWḤ),

2) its prohibition of taking intoxicants (such as wine),

3) its insistance on celibacy (for monks and nuns) and on the superiority of the celibate state over the married, and

4) its view that "salvation" is to be achieved through individuals reaching an 'Enlightened' state of *gnosis* and behavior.

These are "orthodox" principles of Buddhism. But before and after the beginning of the Common Era, these orthodoxies were opposed by views of other crypto-Buddhist groups which, in the centuries BCE, had morphed away from holding cenobitic monasticism as a central ideal into various other forms. Through the triumphant attainment of religious and secular power under the Roman emperor, Constantine-I, these other groups, which from the Buddhist point of view would have been heretical, turned their own heresy into orthodoxy and made heretics out of their Gnostic opponents!

* * * * * * * * *

Following are accounts of two of the Gnostic ascetic movements which continued to uphold the Buddhist orthodoxies listed above but whose members were destined to become criminalized heretics under the power of the Roman empire: the Apotactics and the Encratites.

Ascetic Gnostics

Presented below are a couple of short essays from *The Catholic Encyclopedia* on two strictly ascetic Gnostic groups considered 'heretical' by 'orthodox' Christians: the **Apotactics** and **Encratites**. There are other less ascetic Gnostic groups, such as the Valentinians (followers of Valentinus), Basilideans (followers of Basilides), Satornilians (followers of Satornilos [Greek]/Saturninus [Latin]), Tatians, Manichæans (followers of Mani), the Hydroparastatæ (who used water instead of wine in the Eucharist), the Saccophori (who wore sackcloth), and, later, the Cathari.

Apotactics*

(From Greek, *apotassomai*, to renounce)

The adherents of a heresy which sprang up in the third century and spread through the western and southern parts of Asia Minor. What little we know of this obscure sect we owe to the writings of St. Epiphanius. He tells us that they called themselves Apotactics (i.e. renunciators) because they scrupulously renounced all private property; they also affected the name of Apostolics, because they pretended to follow the manner of life of the Apostles. The saint [Epiphanius] regards them as a branch of the Tatians, akin to the Encratites and the Cathari:

> Their sacraments and mysteries are different from ours; they pride themselves upon extreme poverty, bring divisions into the Holy Church by their foolish superstitions, and depart from the divine mercy by refusing to admit to reconciliation those who have once fallen, and like those from whom they have sprung, condemn marriage. In place of the Holy Scripture, which they reject, they base their heresy on the apocryphal Acts of Andrew and Thomas. They are altogether alien from the rule of the Church.

At the time when St. Epiphanius wrote, in the fourth century, they had become an insignificant sect, for in refuting them he says:

> They are found in small groups in Phrygia, Cilicia, and Pamphylia, whereas the Church of God, according to Christ's promise, has spread to the ends of the earth, and if marriage is an unholy thing, then they are doomed to speedy extinction, or else they must be born out of wedlock. If they are born out of wedlock, then they themselves are impure. And if they are not impure, although born in wedlock, then marriage is not impure. . . . The Church praises renouncement, but does not condemn marriage; she preaches poverty, but does not intolerantly inveigh against those who possess property inherited from their parents with which they support themselves and assist the poor; many in the church abstain from certain kinds of food, but do not look with contempt upon those who do not so abstain.

St. Basil mentions these heretics in his Epistles. He gives them the name of *Apotaktitai* (Apotactites) and says that they declared God's creatures defiled (*inquinatam*). They are also briefly mentioned by St. Augustine and by St. John Damascene. They were condemned in the Code of Theodosius the Great as a branch of the Manicheans.

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*Excerpted from the article by Benedict Guldner, "Apotactics." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907); 10 Aug. 2009 < http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01650a.htm >. Source: St. Epiphanius, *Adversus Haereses*, in *P.G.*, **XLI**, 1040 sqq.

Encratites*

[*'Egkrateîs* (Irenæus) *'Egkratetai* (Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus)]

Literally, "abstainers" or "persons who practised continency", because they refrained from the use of wine, animal food, and marriage. The name was given to an early Christian sect, or rather to a tendency common to several sects, chiefly Gnostic, whose asceticism was based on heretical views regarding the origin of matter.

History

Abstinence from the use of [animal food] is much older than Christianity. Pythagoreanism, Essenism, Indian asceticism betrayed this erroneous tendency, and the ***Indian ascetics*** [Buddhists/Jains] ***are actually quoted by Clement of Alexandria as the forerunners of the Encratites*** (*Stromata* I.15)[**!!**] Although St. Paul refers to people, even in his days, "forbidding to marry and abstaining from meats" (*1 Timothy* 4:1-5), the first mention of a Christian sect of this name occurs in **Irenæus** (I, xxviii). **[**The *Timothy* passage reads:

> The spirit says expressly that in after times some will desert from the faith and give their minds to subversive doctrines inspired by devils, through the specious falsehoods of men whose own conscience is branded with the devil's sign. They forbid marriage and inculcate abstinence from certain foods, though God created them to be enjoyed with thanksgiving by believers who have inward knowledge of the truth. For everything that God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected when it is taken with thanksgiving, since it is hallowed by God's own word and by prayer. – *The New English Bible*

And in a previous chapter (*I Timothy* 3:2, emphasis added):

> Our leader, therefore, or bishop, must be above reproach, ***faithful to one wife***, sober, temperate, courteous, hospitable, and a good teacher. . . ! – *NEB***]**

[**Irenæus**] connects [the Encratites'] origin with Saturninus and Marcion. Rejecting marriage, they implicitly accuse the Creator, Who made both male and female. Refraining from all *'émpsucha* (animal food and intoxicants), they are ungrateful to Him Who created all things. "And now", continues Irenæus,

> "they reject the salvation of the first man [Adam]; an opinion recently introduced among them by Tatian, a disciple of Justin. As long as he was with Justin he gave no sign of these things, but after [Justin's] martyrdom Tatian separated himself from the Church. Elated and puffed up by his professorship, he established some teaching of his own. He fabled about some invisible æons, as the Valentinians do; and proclaimed marriage to be corruption and fornication, as Marcion and Saturninus do, but he made the denial of Adam's salvation a specialty of his own."

The Encratites are next mentioned by **Clement of Alexandria** (*The Pedagogue* II.33; *Stromata* I.15; *Stromata* VII.17). The whole of the third book of the *Stromata* is devoted to combating a false *encrateia*, or continency, though a special sect of Encratites is not there mentioned. **Hippolytus** (*Philos*., VIII, xiii) refers to them as "acknowledging what concerns God and Christ in like manner with the Church; in respect, however, of their mode of life, passing their days inflated with pride"; "abstaining from animal food, being water-drinkers and forbidding to marry"; "estimated Cynics rather than Christians". On the strength of this passage it is supposed that some Encratites were perfectly orthodox in doctrine, and erred only in practice, but *tà perì toû theoû kaì toû christoû* need not include the whole of Christian doctrine. Somewhat later this sect received new life and strength by the accession of a certain [Roman emperor, Septimius] Severus (**Eusebius**, *Church History* IV.29), after whom Encratites were often called Severians. . . .

But the account given by **Epiphanius** of the Severians rather betrays Syrian Gnosticism than Judaistic tendencies. In their hatred of marriage they declared woman the work of Satan [whose real source is the Buddhist Māra! – ML], and in their hatred of intoxicants they called wine drops of venom from the great Serpent, etc. (*Adv. Haer*., xiv). **Epiphanius (310-20 to 403)** states that in his day Encratites were very numerous throughout Asia Minor, in Psidia, in the Adustan district of Phrygia, in Isauria, Pamphylia, Cilicia, and Galatia. In the Roman Province and in Antioch of Syria they were found scattered here and there. They split up into a number of smaller sects of whom the Apostolici were remarkable for their condemnation of private property, the Hydroparastatæ for their use of water instead of wine in the Eucharist. In the Edict of 382, [the emperor Flavius] Theodosius[†] [I] pronounced sentence of death on all those who took the name of Encratites, Saccophori [wearers of sackcloth!], or Hydroparastatæ, and commanded Florus, the *Magister Officiarum*, to make strict search for these heretics, who were Manichæans in disguise.

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*John Arendzen, "Encratites," *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* Vol. 5 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), 5 Sept. 2009 < http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05412c.htm >. **Bolding** added throughout – ML.

[†]This Theodosius, who pronounced sentence of death on these so-called heretics for their vegetarianism, their refusal to celebrate the Eucharist drinking wine, and their holding celibacy above marriage, has actually been considered a "just and mighty Catholic emperor" by the Church for, in part, executing these not so 'cryptic' Buddhists! – ML.

II. Judaism

Aśōka's Buddhist missionary monks in Alexandria, faced with the difficulties of spreading their own doctrine among the mixture of Greek, Egyptian, and Jewish peoples, adopted a clever scheme (in fact, their supreme exercise of the principle of '*upāya-kauśalya*'): deeply interested in the translation of the Hebrew scriptures from Hebrew into Greek, at Ptolemy-II's great library, and making a study in depth of these scriptures, they discovered passages and persons – prophets – whose messages were harmonious with the principles of Buddhism. For example, they found the "suffering servant" Savior Messiah ('Anointed One') of Isaiah, and proceeded to preach to their Jewish, Coptic, and Greek followers the Buddhist Dharma embodied in this prophesied Savior – transforming Isaiah's "Prince of Peace" into a meta-Buddha.

The translation of Hebrew Scriptures initiated by Ptolemy-II is known as the Septuagint. To give something of its background, the following passages have been excerpted from Joel Kalvesmaki's compilation, "The History of the Septuagint, and its Terminology", which is posted on the internet, and, as of this writing, last updated in February, 2008:

> The Septuagint, derived from the Latin word for "seventy," can be a confusing term, since it ideally refers to the third-century BCE Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, executed in Alexandria, Egypt. But the full story behind the translation and the various stages, amplifications, and modifications to the collection we now call the Septuagint is complicated.
>
> The earliest, and best known, source for the story of the Septuagint is the Letter ['Pseudepigraph'] of Aristeas, a lengthy document that recalls how Ptolemy (Philadelphus II [r.y. 285-247 BCE]), desiring to augment his library in Alexandria, Egypt, commissioned a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. Ptolemy wrote to the chief priest, Eleazar, in Jerusalem, and arranged for six translators from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The seventy-two (altered in a few later versions to seventy or seventy-five) translators arrived in Egypt to Ptolemy's gracious hospitality, and translated the Torah (also called the Pentateuch: the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures) in seventy-two days. Although opinions as to when this occurred differ, 282 BCE is a commonly received date.
>
> Philo of Alexandria (fl. 1st century CE) confirms that only the Torah was commissioned to be translated, and some modern scholars have concurred, noting a kind of consistency in the translation style of the Greek Pentateuch.

This Letter of Aristeas is full of polemic embellishments. The Septuagint, according to Philo was welcomed by Hellenized Jews of Alexandria, and an annual celebration of its translation was being held by them up to Philo's time. However, it was not long, then, before this Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures, so revered by early Christians, was being viewed with jaundiced eyes by Jewish authorities. The copies of the Septuagint which exist today have all come down to us, over the centuries, through a long and complex lineage of, first, Jewish copyists and crypto-Buddhist/Judaic copyists, and later, in Christian times, through some of the 'descendants' of the crypto-Buddhists': through Christian copyists.

In contrast, the whole body of Buddhist wisdom, from its beginning in the early 5th century BCE, and for several centuries thereafter, had only been passed down *orally* from generation to generation, following the Brahmanic Vēdic tradition of group and individual chanting.

> Recently an important archæological discovery was made [in 1994], consisting of the earliest known Buddhist manuscripts, recovered from the ancient civilization of Gandhāra in north central Pakistan (near Taxila just south of the capital Islamabad). These fragments on birch bark, [some of which] are dated to the 1st century [CE], have been compared to the Dead Sea Scrolls in importance.
>
> *– 'Buddhist texts', Wikipedia*

We should consider the possibility that it was the third century BCE Alexandrian interchange between the Buddhists with their scriptures and the Jewish scholars with the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew scriptures which led the Buddhists, after they had set up monasteries/āshrams at suitable peaceful locations away from cities and towns in Egypt, gradually, to adapt their Dharma to a Jewish religious environment, welcoming Jews, Copts, and Greeks as members, within a framework combining pronounced Judaic characteristics with their own monastic traditions, quietly apotheosizing the Buddha in the guise of the Jewish Heavenly Father, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, transforming the hoped-for Jewish

Messiah/'Anointed One' into a Buddha-type Son. (Would not an understanding of this process clarify the oft repeated statements in John's Gospel, ". . . know that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" [10:38] and "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" [14:10]?) In the first century, CE, this Messiah would be incarnated in Bethlehem, would have a very short ministry of only 1 to 3 years, would ascend to heaven at the end of his life, and would be devoutly expected to return to earth, some day.

The Buddhist missionaries created a cast of allegorical characters anchored in "reality" through a web of prophecies and references taken from the Hebrew scriptures. After 2 1/2 centuries, however, Jewish Apocalyptic fervor, at the beginning of the Common Era, would finally limit the Buddhist tradition of an endless series of Buddhas to the promise of one, final return of the Savior before the world's expected fiery end!

In the last couple of centuries, BCE, it must have been a congenial exercise for the Buddhists to embody the Buddha in the form of the anticipated Jewish Messiah. Consider, for instance, the following Jewish view of this 'Messiah' described in < JewishEncyclopedia.com >:

> The ideal king to whom Isaiah looks forward will be a scion of the stock of Jesse, on whom will rest the spirit of God as a spirit of wisdom, valor, and religion, and who will rule in the fear of God, his loins girt with righteousness [Dharma] and faithfulness (xi. 1-3a, 5). He will not engage in war or in the conquest of nations; the paraphernalia of war will be destroyed (ix. 4); his sole concern will be to establish justice among his people (ix. 6b; xi, 3b, 4). The fruit of his righteous [Dharmic] government will be peace and order throughout the land. . . .

The above passage reminds one of King Aśōka, who, as we have seen, turned away from the 'Conquest by Force' to 'Conquest through Dharma' – that is, 'through Righteousness' (Greek: '*Eusebeia*'). The *Jewish Encyclopedia* article goes on to caution us about the use of the 'Messiah' expressions in the Old Testament:

> "The Messiah" (with the article and not in apposition with another word) is . . . not an Old Testament expression, but occurs for the first time in apocalyptic literature. . . . The oldest apocalypse in which the conception of a preexistent heavenly Messiah is met with is the Messiological section of the Book of Enoch (xxxvii.-lxxi.) of the first century B.C. The Messiah is called "the Son of Man. . . ."

Michael O. Wise, in his book, *The First Messiah: Investigating the Savior before Jesus** (pp. 271-272, 273), discusses the significance of one of the Dead Sea Scrolls:

> Known technically as 4Q521 and more popularly as *Redemption and Resurrection*, the scroll in question dates, according to the paleography, to the early first century B.C.E. The relevant portions [in translation from the Hebrew] read as follows:
>
> > *. . . Surely the Lord seeks the pious, and calls the righteous by name. Over the poor his spirit hovers, and in his strength he renews the faithful. He will glorify the pious upon the throne of his eternal kingdom, setting prisoners free, opening the eyes of the blind, raising up those who are bo[wed down.] . . . For he shall heal the wounded, resurrect the dead, and preach glad tidings to the poor. . . .*†
>
> [The] last line of the text is . . . remarkable, for it contains perhaps the closest, most direct parallel to a New Testament text ever discovered in the scrolls. . . .
>
> We read in Matthew and Luke that after John the Baptist had been imprisoned by Herod Antipas, he sent several disciples to inquire of Jesus, "Are you the Coming One [i.e., the Messiah], or do we look for

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*Michael O. Wise, *The First Messiah: Investigating the Savior before Jesus* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1999).

†[Wise's note no. 24 of chapter 10:] The translation of 4Q521 Frag 2 + Frag. 4 Col. 2:1-13 follows, with modification, Abegg in Wise, Abegg, Cook, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 421. For the *editio princeps*, see É. Puech, "4Q Apocalypse Messianique (4Q521)," *Revue de Qumran* 15 (1992): 475-522. Further on this text, see [Wise's] joint articles with James Tabor, "The Messiah at Qumran," *Biblical Archæology Review* 18, no. 6 (1992): 60-65, and "4Q521 'On Resurrection' and the Synoptic Gospel Tradition: A Preliminary Study," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 10 (1992): 151-63.

another?" Jesus couched his answer in terms of certain signs (italics mark key words): "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, *the dead are raised up*, *the poor have glad tidings preached to them*" (Matthew 11:4-5; Luke 7:22-23).

Notice that the language of *Redemption and Resurrection's* last line is almost identical to the italicized portion of Matthew and Luke. The Christian "signs of the messiah" were foreshadowed in the older Jewish writing found buried in the bat dung of the Judaean caves. . . .

[The words of Jesus in reply to John the Baptist, acknowledging himself as the Messiah (in Mt 11 and Lk 7), resonate with the much earlier Old Testament passage of ***Isaiah 61:1-4*:**

> The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me
> because the LORD has anointed me;
> he has sent me to bring good news to the humble,
> to bind up the broken-hearted,
> to proclaim liberty to captives
> and release to those in prison;
> to proclaim a year of the LORD's favour. . . . – *NEB*]

These same words of Isaiah also appear in another strand of the Gospel traditions, Luke 4:18-21. In this latter passage, as in the Matthew-Luke parallel on which we are focusing, Jesus refers to himself as fulfilling Isaiah's words. . . .

[***Luke 4:18-21*:**

> 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me;
> he has sent me to announce good news to the poor,
> to proclaim release for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind;
> to let the broken victims go free,
> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' – *NEB*]

. . . In the entire Hebrew Bible nothing at all is said about a messiah raising the dead. Yet the reference to the messiah raising the dead, linked to preaching glad tidings for the poor, appears in both Luke and Matthew (quoting from Q[uelle]). The two phrases are presented as signs of the messiah: *the dead are raised up*, *the poor have glad tidings preached to them* – precisely as in *Redemption and Resurrection*.

This remarkable parallelism between key passages in the New Testament and passages in a Dead Sea Scroll, found near the Qumran settlement raises questions about the nature of the group occupying it. Were they Essenes? What is known about them? The *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1901-6), < JewishEnclopedia.com >, under **'ESSENES'**, has this to say about the Essenes and their possible relation to Christianity (emphasis added):

> The similarity in many respects between Christianity and Essenism is striking: There were the same **communism** (***Acts 4:34-35***); the same belief in **baptism** or bathing, and in the power of prophecy; the same **aversion to marriage**, enhanced by firmer belief in the **Messianic advent**; the same system of **organization**, and the **same rules for the traveling brethren** delegated to charity-work . . . ; and, above all, **the same love-feasts or brotherly meals**. . . . Also, between the **ethical** and the **apocalyptic** teachings of the Gospels and the Epistles and the teachings of the Essenes of the time, as given in **Philo**, in **Hippolytus**, and in the **Ethiopic and Slavonic Books of Enoch**, as well as in the **rabbinic literature**, the resemblance is such that the **influence of the latter** [teachings of the Essenes] **upon the former** [teachings of the Gospels and the Epistles] **can scarcely be denied**. Nevertheless, the attitude of Jesus and his disciples is altogether anti-Essene, a denunciation and disavowal of Essene rigor and asceticism; but, singularly enough, while the Roman war appealed to men of action such as the Zealots, men of a more peaceful and visionary nature, who had previously become Essenes, were more and more attracted by Christianity, and thereby gave the Church its otherworldly character; while Judaism took a more practical and worldly view of things, and allowed Essenism to live only in tradition and secret lore.

* * * * * * * * *

Were the Essenes Primitive Christians?

Two Sections from Philo's work, ***Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit***, are given below, as they throw a flood of light on Essene communities of his time. The passages are bolded in them which emphasize the great similarity between the Essene community and what we know of the early churches of Christianity. The early church Father, Eusebius, was quite right in considering the Therapeutæ and Essenes as earlier forms of Christianity. They were the type of communities out of which Christianity had developed by the introduction of the allegorical gospels of Jesus. – ML

Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit ["Every Good Man Is Free"]*

(Sections XI-XII)

XI. (*71*) Since, then, we have such great assistance towards arriving at virtue, must we not blush to assert that there is any necessary deficiency of wisdom in the human race, when we might, by following it up, like a spark smouldering among wood, kindle it into a flame? But the fact is, that we do display great hesitation and incessant slackness in the pursuit of those objects towards which we ought to hasten eagerly as most closely connected with and nearly akin to us, and by this hesitation and indolence the seeds of virtue are destroyed; while, on the contrary, those things which we ought to neglect we show an insatiable desire and longing for. (*72*) It is owing to this that **the whole earth and sea are full of men who are rich and of high reputation, and who indulge in all kinds of pleasure; but that the number of those who are prudent, and just, and virtuous, is very small; but that of which the numbers are small, though it may be rare, is nevertheless not non-existent.** (*73*) And all Greece and all the land of the barbarians is a witness of this; for in the one country flourished those who are truly called "the seven wise men," though others had flourished before them, and have also in all probability lived since their time. But their memory, though they are now very ancient, has nevertheless not been effaced by the lapse of ages, while of others who are more modern, the names have been lost through the neglect of their contemporaries. (*74*) And **in the land of the barbarians, in which the same men are authorities both as to words and actions, there are very numerous companies of virtuous and honorable men celebrated.** Among the Persians there is the body of the Magi, who, investigating the works of nature for the purpose of becoming acquainted with the truth, do at their leisure become initiated themselves and initiate others in the divine virtues by very clear explanations. **And among the Indians there is the class of the gymnosophists, who, in addition to natural philosophy, take great pains in the study of moral science likewise, and thus make their whole existence a sort of lesson in virtue.**

XII. (*75*) Moreover Palestine and Syria too are not barren of exemplary wisdom and virtue, which countries no slight portion of that most populous nation of the Jews inhabits. There is a portion of those people called **Essenes, in number something more than four thousand in my opinion, who derive their name from their piety**, though not according to any accurate form of the Grecian dialect, because they are above all men devoted to the service of God, **not sacrificing living animals**, but studying rather to preserve their own minds in a state of holiness and purity. (*76*) These men, in the first place, live in villages, **avoiding all cities** on account of the habitual lawlessness of those who inhabit them, well knowing that such a moral disease is contracted from associations with wicked men, just as a real disease might be from an impure atmosphere, and that this would stamp an incurable evil on their souls. Of these men, some **cultivating the earth**, and others devoting themselves to **those arts which are the result of peace**, benefit both themselves and all those who come in contact with them, **not storing up treasures of silver and of gold**, nor acquiring vast sections of the earth out of a desire for ample revenues, but providing all things which are requisite for the natural purposes of life; (*77*) **for they alone** of almost all men having been **originally poor and destitute**, and that too rather from their own habits and ways of life than from any real deficiency of good fortune, **are nevertheless accounted very rich, judging contentment and frugality to be great abundance**, as in truth they are. (*78*) Among those men you will find no makers of arrows, or javelins, or swords, or helmets, or breastplates, or shields; no makers of arms or of military engines; no one, in short, attending to any employment whatever connected with war, or even to any of those occupations even in peace which are easily perverted to wicked purposes; for they are utterly ignorant of all traffic, and of all commercial dealings, and of all navigation, but they repudiate and keep aloof from everything which can possibly afford any inducement to covetousness; (*79*) and there is **not a single slave among them**, but they are all free, aiding one another with a reciprocal interchange of good offices; and **they condemn masters**, not only as unjust, inasmuch **as they corrupt the very principle of equality**, but likewise **as impious**, because they destroy the ordinances of nature, which generated them all equally, and brought them up like a mother, as if they were all

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*From: Oliver J. Thatcher, ed., *The Library of Original Sources* (Milwaukee: University Research Extension Co., 1907), Vol. III: The Roman World. [Emphasis added – ML.]

legitimate brethren, not in name only, but in reality and truth. But in their view this **natural relationship of all men to one another has been thrown into disorder by** designing **covetousness**, continually **wishing to surpass others** in good fortune, and which has **therefore engendered alienation instead of affection**, and **hatred instead of friendship**; (***80***) and leaving the logical part of philosophy, as in no respect necessary for the acquisition of virtue, to the word-catchers, and the natural part, as being too sublime for human nature to master, to those who love to converse about high objects (except indeed so far as such a study takes in the contemplation of the **existence of God** and of the **creation of the universe**), they devote all their attention to the moral part of philosophy, using as instructors the laws of their country which it would have been impossible for the human mind to devise without divine inspiration. (***81***) Now these laws they are taught at other times, indeed, but most especially on the seventh day, for the seventh day is accounted sacred, on which they abstain from all other employments, and frequent the sacred places which are called synagogues, and there they **sit according to their age** in classes, the **younger sitting under the elder**, and listening with eager attention in becoming order. (***82***) Then one, indeed, takes up the holy volume and reads it, and another of the **men of the greatest experience** comes forward and explains what is not very intelligible, for a great **many precepts are delivered in enigmatical modes of expression, and allegorically, as the old fashion was**; (***83***) and thus the people are taught piety, and holiness, and justice, and economy, and the science of regulating the state, and the knowledge of such things as are naturally good, or bad, or indifferent, and to choose what is right and to avoid what is wrong, using a threefold variety of definitions, and rules, and criteria, namely, the **love of God**, and the **love of virtue**, and the **love of mankind**. (***84***) Accordingly, the sacred volumes present an infinite number of instances of the disposition devoted to the love of God, and of a continued and uninterrupted purity throughout the whole of life, of a careful avoidance of oaths and of falsehood, and of a strict adherence to the principle of looking on the Deity as the cause of everything which is good and of nothing which is evil. They also furnish us with many proofs of a love of virtue, such as **abstinence from all covetousness of money**, from **ambition**, from **indulgence in pleasures**, **temperance**, **endurance**, and also **moderation**, **simplicity**, **good temper**, the **absence of pride**, obedience to the laws, steadiness, and everything of that kind; **and, lastly**, they bring forward **as proofs of the love of mankind**, **goodwill**, **equality** beyond all power of description, and **fellowship**, about which it is not unreasonable to say a few words. (***85***) In the first place, then, there is **no one who has a house so absolutely his own private property, that it does not in some sense also belong to every one**: for besides that they all dwell together in companies, the house is open to all those of the same notions, who come to them from other quarters; (***86***) then there is **one magazine** among them all; their **expenses are all in common**; **their garments belong to them all in common**; their **food is common**, since they **all eat in messes**; for **there is no other people among which you can find a common use of the same house, a common adoption of one mode of living, and a common use of the same table more thoroughly established in fact than among this tribe**: and is not this very natural? For whatever they, after having been working during the day, receive for their wages, that they do not retain as their own, but bring it into the common stock, and give any advantage that is to be derived from it to all who desire to avail themselves of it; (***87***) **and those who are sick are not neglected because they are unable to contribute to the common stock, inasmuch as the tribe have in their public stock a means of supplying their necessities and aiding their weakness, so that from their ample means they support them liberally and abundantly**; and they **cherish respect for their elders, and honor them and care for them, just as parents are honored and cared for by their lawful children**: being supported by them in all abundance both by their personal exertions, and by innumerable contrivances.

Philo is describing here a male communal organization, with common housing, dining (mess), magazine (store-room), even clothing! Philo doesn't mention women among the Essenes. The younger males are said to "cherish respect for their elders, and honor them and care for them, just as parents are honored and cared for by their lawful [i.e., genetic] children." These observations should be compared with Philo's similar remarks (see p. 99) about the Therapeutæ:

> [Young men of the society] give their services gladly and eagerly as true [i.e., genetic] sons do to their fathers and mothers, regarding [elder members] as their common parents, as more their own than those who are so by blood.

And both of these statements by Philo should be compared with the Buddha's far more ancient pronouncement:

> Just as the great rivers, on reaching the great ocean, lose their former names and identities and are reckoned simply as the great ocean, so do followers lose their former names and clans and become sons of the Buddha's clan.
>
> **–** *Vinaya, Çullavagga* ***9:1:4***

The spirit of compassionate service by the Therapeutæ and Essenes to the ill and old was also evident in the early Christian church. The Roman emperor, Julian 'The Apostate', who detested Christianity, nevertheless, begrudgingly admired the Christians' compassionate and equalitarian medical and social service to one and all. The tradition in the Therapeutæ and Essenes must go back long before the beginning of the first century CE. Philo very clearly says that these traditions are ancient – as ancient, we would suggest, as the time of the arrival of the Buddhist missionaries in Alexandria, during the 3rd century, BCE! (And, thus, ultimately, to the first Buddhists – see pp. 78-79 of this anthology.)

*Eusebius on Philo's Account of the Ascetics of Egypt**

Chapter XVII of Eusebius of Cæsarea's *Church History*

1 It is also said that Philo in the reign of Claudius became acquainted at Rome with Peter, who was then preaching there.[1] Nor is this indeed improbable, for the work of which we have spoken, and which was composed by him some years later, clearly contains those rules of the Church which are even to this day observed among us.

2 And since he describes as accurately as possible the life of our ascetics, it is clear that he not only knew, but that he also approved, while he venerated and extolled, the apostolic men of his time, who were as it seems of the Hebrew race, and hence observed, after the manner of the Jews, the most of the customs of the ancients.

3 In the work to which he gave the title, *On a Contemplative Life or On Suppliants*,[2] after affirming in the first place that he will add to those things which he is about to relate nothing contrary to truth or of his own invention,[3] he says that these men were called Therapeutæ and the women that were with them Therapeutrides.[4] He then adds the reasons for such a name, explaining it from the fact that they applied remedies and healed the souls of those who came to them, by relieving them like physicians, of evil passions, or from the fact that they served and worshiped the Deity in purity and sincerity.

4 Whether Philo himself gave them this name, employing an epithet well suited to their mode of life, or whether the first of them really called themselves so in the beginning, since the name of Christians was not yet everywhere known, we need not discuss here.

5 He bears witness, however, that first of all they renounce their property. When they begin the philosophical[5] mode of life, he says, they give up their goods to their relatives, and then, renouncing all the cares of life, they go forth beyond the walls and dwell in lonely fields and gardens, knowing well that intercourse with people of a different character is unprofitable and harmful. They did this at that time, as seems probable, under the influence of a spirited and ardent faith, practicing in emulation the prophets' mode of life.

6 For in the Acts of the Apostles, a work universally acknowledged as authentic,[6] it is recorded that all the companions of the apostles sold their possessions and their property and distributed to all according to the necessity of each one, so that no one among them was in want. "For as many as were possessors of lands or houses," as the account says, "sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet, so that distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."[7] *7* Philo bears witness to facts very much like those here described and then adds the following account:[8]

> Everywhere in the world is this race[9] found. For it was fitting that both Greek[9a] and Barbarian should share in what is perfectly good. But the race particularly abounds in Egypt, in each of its so-called nomes,[10] and especially about Alexandria. *8* The best men from every quarter emigrate, as if to a colony of the Therapeutæ's fatherland,[11] to a certain very suitable spot which lies above the lake Maria[12] upon a low hill excellently situated on account of its security and the mildness of the atmosphere.

9 And then a little further on, after describing the kind of houses which they had, he speaks as follows concerning their churches, which were scattered about here and there:[13]

> In each house there is a sacred apartment which is called a sanctuary and monastery,[14] where, quite alone, they perform the mysteries of the religious life. They bring nothing into it, neither drink nor food, nor any of the other things which contribute to the necessities of the body, but only the laws, and the inspired oracles of the prophets, and hymns and such other things as augment and make perfect their knowledge and piety.

10 And after some other matters he says:[15]

> The whole interval, from morning to evening, is for them a time of exercise. For they read the holy Scriptures, and explain the philosophy of their fathers in an allegorical manner, regarding the written words as symbols of hidden truth which is communicated in obscure figures. *11* They have also writings

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*From Volume I, Book II, of the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, ed. & trans. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1890), pp. 117-19.

of ancient men, who were the founders of their sect, and who left many monuments of the allegorical method. These they use as models, and imitate their principles.

12 These things seem to have been stated by a man who had heard them expounding their sacred writings. But it is highly probable that the works of the ancients, which he says they had, were the Gospels and the writings of the apostles, and probably some expositions of the ancient prophets, such as are contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in many others of Paul's Epistles. *13* Then again he writes as follows concerning the new psalms which they composed:[16]

So that they not only spend their time in meditation, but they also compose songs and hymns to God in every variety of metre and melody, though they divide them, of course, into measures of more than common solemnity.

14 The same book contains an account of many other things, but it seemed necessary to select those facts which exhibit the characteristics of the ecclesiastical mode of life. *15* But if any one thinks that what has been said is not peculiar to the Gospel polity, but that it can be applied to others besides those mentioned, let him be convinced by the subsequent words of the same author, in which, if he is unprejudiced, he will find undisputed testimony on this subject. Philo's words are as follows:[17]

16 Having laid down temperance as a sort of foundation in the soul, they build upon it the other virtues. None of them may take food or drink before sunset, since they regard philosophizing as a work worthy of the light, but attention to the wants of the body as proper only in the darkness, and therefore assign the day to the former, but to the latter a small portion of the night. *17* But some, in whom a great desire for knowledge dwells, forget to take food for three days; and some are so delighted and feast so luxuriously upon wisdom, which furnishes doctrines richly and without stint, that they abstain even twice as long as this, and are accustomed, after six days, scarcely to take necessary food.

These statements of Philo we regard as referring clearly and indisputably to those of our communion. *18* But if after these things any one still obstinately persists in denying the reference, let him renounce his incredulity and be convinced by yet more striking examples, which are to be found nowhere else than in the evangelical religion of the Christians.[18] *19* For they say that there were women also with those of whom we are speaking, and that the most of them were aged virgins[19] who had preserved their chastity, not out of necessity, as some of the priestesses among the Greeks,[20] but rather by their own choice, through zeal and a desire for wisdom. And that in their earnest desire to live with it as their companion they paid no attention to the pleasures of the body, seeking not mortal but immortal progeny, which only the pious soul is able to bear of itself.

20 Then after a little he adds still more emphatically:[21]

They expound the Sacred Scriptures figuratively by means of allegories. For the whole law seems to these men to resemble a living organism, of which the spoken words constitute the body, while the hidden sense stored up within the words constitutes the soul. This hidden meaning has first been particularly studied by this sect, which sees, revealed as in a mirror of names, the surpassing beauties of the thoughts.

21 Why is it necessary to add to these things their meetings and the respective occupations of the men and of the women during those meetings, and the practices which are even to the present day habitually observed by us, especially such as we are accustomed to observe at the feast of the Saviour's passion, with fasting and night watching and study of the divine Word. *22* These things the above-mentioned author has related in his own work, indicating a mode of life which has been preserved to the present time by us alone, recording especially the vigils kept in connection with the great festival, and the exercises performed during those vigils, and the hymns customarily recited by us, and describing how, while one sings regularly in time, the others listen in silence, and join in chanting only the close of the hymns; and how, on the days referred to they sleep on the ground on beds of straw, and to use his own words,[22] "taste no wine at all, nor any flesh, but water is their only drink, and the relish with their bread is salt and hyssop."

23 In addition to this Philo describes the order of dignities which exists among those who carry on the services of the church, mentioning the diaconate, and the office of bishop, which takes the precedence over all the others.[23] But whosoever desires a more accurate knowledge of these matters may get it from the history already cited. *24* But that Philo, when he wrote these things, had in view the first heralds of the Gospel and the customs handed down from the beginning by the apostles, is clear to every one.

Notes

[1]This tradition that Philo met Peter in Rome and formed an acquaintance with him is repeated by Jerome (*de vir ill.* 11), and by Photius (*Cod.* 105), who even goes further, and says directly that Philo became a Christian. The tradition, however, must be regarded as quite worthless. It is absolutely certain from Philo's own works, and from the otherwise numerous traditions of antiquity that he never was a Christian, and aside from the report of Eusebius (for Jerome and Photius do not represent an independent tradition) there exists no hint of such a meeting between Peter and Philo; and when we realize that Philo was already an old man in the time of Caius (see above, chap. 4, note 8), and that Peter certainly did not reach Rome before the later years of Nero's reign, we may say that such a meeting as Eusebius records (only upon tradition, λόγος ἔχει) is certainly not historical. Where Eusebius got the tradition we do not know. It may have been manufactured in the interest of the Philonic authorship of the *De Vita Contemplativa,* or it may have been a natural outgrowth of the ascription of that work to him, some such explanation suggesting itself to the reader of that work as necessary to explain Philo's supposed praise of Christian monks. Philo's visit to Rome during the reign of Caligula being a well-known historic fact, and Peter's visit to Rome during the reign of Claudius being assumed as likewise historic (see above, chap. 14, note 8), it was not difficult to suppose a meeting between them (the great Christian apostle and the great Jewish philosopher), and to invent for the purpose a second visit of Philo to Rome. It seems probable that the ascription of the work *De Vita Contemplativa* to Philo came before the tradition of his acquaintance with Peter in Rome (which is first mentioned by Eusebius); but in any case the two were mutually corroborative.

[2]περὶ βίου θεωρητικοῦ ἢ ἱκετῶν; *De Vita Contemplativa.* This work is still extant, and is given by Mangey, II. 471–486. Eusebius is the first writer to mention it, and he identifies the Therapeutæ described in it with the Christian monks, and assumes in consequence that monasticism in the form in which he knew it existed in the apostolic age, and was known and praised by Philo. This opinion was generally adopted by the Fathers (with the single exception of Photius, *Cod.* 105, who looked upon the Therapeutæ as a Jewish sect) and prevailed unquestioned until the Reformation, when in the Protestant reaction against monasticism it was denied that monks existed in the apostolic age, and that the Therapeutæ were Christians at all. Various opinions as to their identity have been held since that time, the commonest being that they were a Jewish sect or school, parallel with the Palestinian Essenes, or that they were an outgrowth of Alexandrian Neo-Pythagoreanism. The former opinion may be said to have been the prevailing one among Christian scholars until Lucius, in his work entitled *Die Therapeuten und ihre Stellung in der Gesch. der Askese* (Strassburg, 1879), proved (what had been asserted already by Grätz and Jost) that the Therapeutæ are really to be identified with Christian monks, and that the work *De Vita Contemplativa* is not a genuine work of Philo's. If the former proposition is proved, the latter follows of necessity, for it is absolutely impossible to suppose that [Christian!] monasticism can have existed in so developed a form (or indeed in any form) in the time of Philo. On the other hand it may be proved that the work is not Philonic, and yet it may not follow that the Therapeutæ are to be identified with Christian monks. And so some scholars reject the Philonic authorship while still maintaining the Jewish character of the Therapeutæ (e.g. Nicolas, Kuenen, and Weingarten; see Schürer, *Gesch. der Juden im Zeitalter Jesu Christi,* p. 863). In the opinion of the writer, who agrees therein with the great majority of scholars, Lucius has conclusively demonstrated both his propositions, and has shown that the work *De Vita Contemplativa* is the production of some Christian of the latter part of the third century, who aimed to produce an apology for and a panegyric of monasticism as it existed in his day, and thus to secure for it wider recognition and acceptance. Lucius concludes with the following words: "Wir haben es demnach in *D.V.C.* mit einer Tendenzschrift zu thun, welche, da sie eine weit ausgebildete und in zahlreichen Ländern verbreitete Askese, so wie Zustände voraussetzt, genau wie dieselben nur im Christenthum des dritten Jahrhunderts vorhanden waren, kaum anders aufgefasst werden kann, als eine, etwa am Ende des dritten Jahrhunderts, unter dem Namen Philo's, zu Gunsten der Christlichen Askese, verfasste Apologie, als erstes Glied eines an derartigen Producte überaus reichen Litteratur-zweige der alten Kirche." Compare with Lucius' work the reviews of it by Hilgenfeld in the *Zeitschrift für wiss. Theol.,* 1880, pp. 423-440, and by Schürer in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung,* 1880, No. 5. The latter especially has added some important considerations with reference to the reasons for the composition of this work under the name of Philo. Assuming then the correctness of Lucius' conclusions, we see that Eusebius was quite right in identifying the Therapeutæ with the Christian monks as he knew them in his day, but that he was quite wrong in accepting the Philonic authorship of the work in question, and in concluding that the institution of monasticism as he knew it existed already in the apostolic age (compare note 19, below).

[3]It may fairly be doubted whether the work does not really contain considerable [material] that is not in strict accordance with the facts observed by the author, whether his account is not to an extent idealized, and whether, in his endeavor to emphasize the Jewish character of the Therapeutæ, with the design of establishing the antiquity of monasticism (compare the review of Schürer referred to above), he has not allowed himself to introduce some imaginative elements. The strong asseveration which he makes of the truthfulness of his account would rather increase than allay this suspicion, and the account itself at certain points seems to bear it out. On the whole, however, it may be regarded as a reasonably accurate sketch. Were it not such, Eusebius would not have accepted it, so unreservedly as he does, as an account of Christian monks. Lucius' exhibition of the points of similarity between the practices of the Therapeutæ, as described here, and of early Christian monks, as known from other sources, is very interesting (see p. 158 sq.).

[4] θεραπευταί and θεραπευτρίδες, "worshipers" or "physicians"; from θεραπεύω, which means either to do service to the gods, or to tend the sick.

[5] See Bk. VI. chap. 3, note 9.

[6] See Bk. III. chap. 4, note 14.

[7] Acts ii. 45.

[8] *De Vita Contemplativa,* §3.

[9] Namely, the Therapeutæ.

[9a] Heinichen omits, without explanation, the words και τὴν Ἑλλάδα, which are found in all the other editions that I have examined. Inasmuch as Heinichen gives no hint of an alternate reading at this point, I can conclude only that the words were accidentally omitted by him.

[10] Egypt, exclusive of the cities Alexandria and Ptolemais, was divided into land districts, originally 36 in number, which were called νομοί (see Mommsen's *Provinces of the Roman Empire,* Scribner's ed. I. p. 255 sq.).

[11] πατρίδα. This word, as Schürer points out (*Theol. Literaturzeitung,* 1880, No. 5), is not a noun, as it is commonly regarded (and hence translated "fatherland"), but an adjective (and hence to be translated "eine vaterländische Colonie," "a colony of the fatherland"); the οἰκουμένη, mentioned in the previous paragraph, being the fatherland of the Therapeutæ.

[12] ὑπὲρ λίμνης Μαρίας. In Strabo the name is given as ἡ Μαρεῶτις or Μαρεία λίμνη. The Lake Mareotis (as it is most commonly called) lies in the northern part of the Delta, just south of Alexandria. It was in ancient times much more of a lake than it is now, and the description of the climate as given here is quite accurate.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] σεμνεῖον καὶ μοναστήριον

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.* §4.

[18] See *Ibid.* §8. [Claudius's regnal years: 41-54 CE]

[19] How Eusebius, who knew that Philo lived and wrote during the reign of Claudius, could have overlooked the fact that Christianity had not at that time been long enough established to admit of virgins growing old within the Church, is almost inexplicable. It is but another example of his carelessness in regard to chronology which comes out so often in his history. Compare Stroth's words: "*In der That ein wichtiger Beweis, der gerade der irrigen Meinung des Eusebius am meisten entgegen ist. Denn sie hätten alt zum Christenthum kommen müssen, sonst konnten sie ja zu Philo's Zeiten unmöglich im Christenthum alt geworden sein, dessen Schrift Eusebius selbst in die Regierung des Claudius setzt. Es ist beinahe unbegreiflich, wie ein so guter Kopf, wie Eusebius ist, in so grobe Irrthümer fallen konnte.*"

[20] For a description of the religious cults among the Greeks and Romans, that demanded virginity in their priests or priestesses, see Döllinger's *Heidenthum und Judenthum,* p. 182 and 521 sq.

[21] *De Vita Contemplativa,* §10.

[22] *Ibid.* §9.

[23] *Ibid.* §§8–10. The author of the *D.V.C.* mentions young men that serve at table (διακονοῦντες) and a president (πρόεδρος) who leads in the exposition of the Scriptures. Eusebius is quite right in finding in these persons deacons and bishops. The similarity is too close to be merely accidental, and the comment of Stroth upon this passage is quite unwarranted: "Was einer doch alles in einer Stelle finden kann, wenn er es darin finden will! Philo sagt, dass bei ihren gemeinschaftlichen Gastmählern einige bei Tische dienten (διακονοῦντες), hieraus macht Eusebius Diakonate; und dass bei ihren Untersuchungen über die Bibel einer (πρόεδρος) den Vorsitz habe; hieraus macht Eusebius die bisch fliche würde (ἐπισκοπῆς προεδρίαν)."

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Comment: Note **23**, above, discusses Eusebius's view that the Therapeutæ are among the earliest of Christians: the young men serving at table, the earliest of Christian deacons, and the presiding elder, one of the earliest of bishops. This subject is discussed further on pages 184-85.

The Essenes and Therapeutæ seem to have vanished from the historical scene by the end of the first century, CE. It is often thought that everything we know about the Therapeutæ comes from the writings of Philo of Alexandria. But this may not be true. Some five hundred years after Philo described the Therapeutæ in detail, a Christian (probably Syrian) bishop, c. 500 CE, writing under a pseudonym and commonly referred to today as 'Pseudo-Dionysius', not only described Therapeutæ of his day in some detail, he wrote to them – and they were Christians – very likely historically linked with Philo's group. Out of ten letters of his which have been saved for posterity, four of them are addressed to Gaius and another letter, to Demophilus:

Letter I: To Gaius ***Therapeutes*** [Monk].
Letter II: To Gaius ***Therapeutes*** [Monk].
Letter III: To Gaius ***Therapeutes*** [Monk].
Letter IV: To Gaius ***Therapeutes*** [Monk].
Letter V: To Dorotheus ***Leitourgos*** [Deacon].
Letter VI: To Sopatros ***Hiereus*** [Priest].
Letter VII: To Polycarp ***Hierarch*** [Bishop].
Letter VIII: To Demophilus ***Therapeutes*** [Monk].
Letter IX: To Titus ***Hierarch*** [Bishop].
Letter X: To John, ***Theologos*** [Theologian]

We know from passages in Pseudo-Dionysius's work, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, that the title 'Therapeutes' was being used interchangeably with the title 'Monk':

> [O]f all the initiates the most exalted order is the sacred rank of the monks which has been purified of all stain and possesses full power and complete holiness in its own activities. To the extent that is permissible, it has entered upon sacred contemplative activity and has achieved intellectual contemplation and communion. This order is entrusted to the perfecting power of those men of God, the hierarchs [bishops], whose enlightening activities and hierarchical traditions have introduced it [the order of monks], according to capacity, to the holy operations of the sacred sacraments it has beheld. Thanks to their [the bishops'] sacred understanding, it [the order of monks] has been uplifted into the most complete perfection proportionate to this order. This is why our blessed leaders considered such men to be worthy of several sacred designations; some gave them the name of "therapeutæ," or servants,* and sometimes "monks," because of the purity of their duty and service to God and because their lives, far from being scattered, are monopolized by their unifying and sacred recollection which excludes all distraction and enables them to achieve a singular mode of life conforming to God and open to the perfection of God's love. Hence the sacred ordinance has bestowed a perfecting grace on them and has deemed them worthy of a sanctifying invocation which is not the business of the hierarch [bishop!] (he only confers clerical ordination) but of the devout priests who sacredly perform this secondary rite of the hierarchy.†

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*Pseudo-Dionysius is interpreting the term 'therapeutæ' in the sense of a fixed servanthood for monastics, forever subordinated to a superior clergy. He misses the root idea of 'seniority' among the first century Therapeutæ: all members, from their entrance (birth) into the community, gain seniority as time goes by. There is no sense of fixed 'subordination' in Philo's account of their view of 'service'. If a man of, say, age 40 joins the monastic group, he will be junior to a member of age 20 who had joined the group earlier. The promising 'young' ones are 'deacons' ('waiters at table' – like St. Stephen). One of the most accomplished 'senior' members (the 'ephemereut') presides only '*pro tem*' at their gatherings!

†This passage is the concluding, 3rd section of chapter 6 of Pseudo-Dionysius's work, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, translated by Colm Luibheid in his book, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 244-45. In the translator's footnote, 177, marking the end of the quotation above, he notes that:

> . . . In terms of the triad of powers, the monks are associated with perfection; they are thus entrusted to the "perfecting power" of the hierarchs [bishops]. . . . Yet it is not the hierarch [bishop] at the ceremony by which they become monks, but rather a priest. . . [!]

This passage underscores breathtaking developments which were probably accelerated by the civil unrest during the period of the three Jewish/Roman conflicts, 68 through 135 CE. Active crypto-Buddhist/Judaic movements survived in the form of household gatherings and worship, whose members also frequented synagogues, and in the writings of scholars, and in the sermons of itinerant preachers. As a result there was a shift of authority away from ascetic monastics to what would become a supra-monastic hierarchy of secularized (even married!) "bishops" and "deacons". How could such '*lapsed*'-ascetic leaders achieve this? They seemed to have done it by transforming their hierarchical *secular* version of the crypto-Buddhist/Judaic movement into the 'Church' of the Messiah/'Anointed One'/Jesus, whose life, teachings, death, and resurrection provided the means of salvation. The clergy achieved their vital roles in the Church by introducing sacraments as requisite supra-monastic rituals, assuring salvation.

The early Church, thus, turned its Buddhist monastic heritage on its head! In the process, the Therapeutæ's monasticism, the supreme mark of crypto-Buddhism, was brought low, and by the end of the fifth century CE, the monastics were being subordinated along with the "laity"! Paul Rorem and John C. Lamoreaux, in their book, *John of Scythopolis and the Dionysius Corpus* (1998), remark that Pseudo-Dionysius' Letter 8 to the insubordinate Therapeutes (Monk) Demophilus involved the most

> direct and impassioned arguments for hierarchical authority over against the evils of disorder, . . . asserting that the rank of monks should be distinguished from the rest of the laity. . . .*

Most monks aren't clergy. *How had they become subordinated to the secular clergy*? – even though they were considered by the clergy to be "distinguished from the *rest of the laity*" as "the most exalted sacred order of monks"! What kind of logic was this? In the minds of John Scythopolis and Pseudo-Dionysius, their topsy-turvy logic was legitimized by the clergy's assumption of a battery of rites (sacraments)!

The tension, in Letter 8, between Pseudo-Dionysius, and a member of the "sacred order of monks" is obvious. The bishop's ten Epistles (Letters) written to religious persons of different ranks, make his concern for maintaining a fixed 'hierarchy' abundantly clear. An article on 'Pseudo-Dionysius' in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* points that out:

> The ten letters appear to be arranged in a roughly hierarchical order, letters 1-4 being addressed to a monk (a certain Gaius, also the name of one or more of St. Paul's companions), letter 5 to a deacon, letter 6 to a priest, and letters 7 and 9 to hierarchs or bishops. Letter 8 disrupts this order since it is addressed to a monk charged with disrupting the hierarchical order itself![†]

Pseudo-Dionysius's Letter 8 begins: "To Demophilus Therapeutes [Monk]: About minding one's own business"! What was Demophilus's offense? Apart from other shortcomings, he had dared to criticize a priest, a member of the clergy, an ecclesiastical rank which is decisively superior to the order of monks! 'Bishop' Pseudo-Dionysius wants to firmly put Therapeutes (Monk) Demophilus in his subordinate place.

No Buddhist monk ever faced such an 'external' humiliation – there is no ecclesiastical authority outside of the Buddhist monastic framework. Similarly, in Philo's very detailed account of the Therapeutæ, there is no hint of any such ecclesiastical authority outside their monastic organization. (Though Philo says that the monastic community of the Therapeutæ, located near the shores of the Alexandrian lake, Mareotis, was prominent in attracting Therapeutæ from all over Egypt, there is no suggestion that any *pro tem* 'ephemereut' elder at Mareotis ever acted as some sort of superior general.) Philo's account of the Essenes also provides no evidence of any ecclesiastical style control from outside of their communes.

Note: The early Eastern Orthodox Church avoided, to a large extent, the schizophrenic division between monks and clergy which appeared in the early Western Church. Besides having to be ordained clergy, Eastern Orthodox bishops *also had to be monks*. Nevertheless, sacraments still triumphed over monasticism.

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*Paul Rorem and John C. Lamoreaux, *John of Scythopolis and the Dionysius Corpus: Annotating the Areopagite* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 63.

[†]Kevin Corrigan and Michael Harrington, "Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = < http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/pseudo-dionysius-areopagite/ >.

Ordination

> The custom has its origins in the early church, when the clergy were elected by the entire church community, including the laity. This was based upon the precedent set in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:15-26; Acts 6:2-6).* It must be noted that election and Ordination (Greek: *cheirotonea* – literally, "laying-on of hands") are two separate actions. The election was accomplished by all, the laying-on of hands by the [apostles] only (1 Timothy 4:14). Because of the danger of politicizing the process, and electoral corruption, the clergy began [sometime later] to be appointed by the episcopate alone (a priest or deacon is appointed by the ruling bishop; a bishop is elected by a Synod). However, the biblical participation of the laity is still fulfilled, when the newly-ordained is being vested and presented to the people by the Bishop, they will exclaim, "Axios! Axios! Axios!" to show their approval.
>
> *– Under 'Axios', Wikipedia*

Comment (by ML): The Church, sometime after the events described in Acts, must have raised in importance and in the sense of sacred mystery the ritual of 'laying on of hands', while the Church soon replaced elections for the lowest ranks of the clergy with the appointment of them by the higher ranks – reserving election for only the highest ranks by the next highest ranks: archbishops/patriarchs by bishops. Sacred authority was seen flowing downward in direct lineage from the original apostles by the means of this magical/sacred "sacrament" of ordination, the 'laying on of hands'. In this way, the semi-worldly Essenes and various types of Christian 'voluntary associations' in towns and cities secured dominance over the monastic isolation of the Therapeutæ – the dominance of the very public magical power of sacraments over the withdrawn, private meditative search for God within! The monastics were thus subordinated to the lapsed-monastics!

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*In Acts 1:15-26, the apostle Peter proposes to the Christian gathering of some one hundred and twenty persons in Jerusalem that someone be chosen to replace the apostle Judas. **Note:** no mention is made of any 'laying on of hands' in this most important choice. Verses 23-26 describe the procedure:

> Two names were put forward: Joseph, who was known as Barsabbas, and bore the added name of Justus; and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, 'Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, declare which of these two thou hast chosen to receive this office of ministry and apostleship which Judas abandoned to go where he belonged.' They drew lots and the lot fell to Matthias, who was then assigned a place among the twelve apostles. (*NEB*)

In Acts 6:2-6, the growing number of the followers of Jesus, in Jerusalem, and their division into Greek and Hebrew speakers had given rise to complaints from the former group that their widows "were being overlooked in the daily distribution":

> So the Twelve called the whole body of disciples together and said, 'It would be a grave mistake for us to neglect the word of God in order to wait at table. Therefore, friends, [seek] out seven men of good reputation from your number, men full of the Spirit and of wisdom, and we will appoint them to deal with these matters, while we devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word.' This proposal proved acceptable to the whole body. They elected Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch, a former convert to Judaism. These they presented to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. (*NEB*)

It is evident from Acts 1, that the apostles, themselves, did not directly appoint a new apostle to replace Judas. They simply proposed a replacement. The whole body of some one hundred and twenty persons approved the suggestion and selected two candidates. The approval of the group seems to be fundamental. The final selection of Matthias was by lots! Not by the apostles. This whole exercise seems to be following the non-hierarchical practice of such contemporary organizations as the Therapeutæ in Egypt and of Buddhist brotherhoods.

In Acts 6, were the apostles actually 'waiting at tables' and thus neglecting the Word of God? The author of Acts seems to be writing from hearsay, removed in time from the events imaginatively reported. Stephen and six others were elected to "wait at tables" – the original 'deacons'! – by the general group. The apostles did not select them, they only 'laid hands on' the young men who were elected. Philo's account of the young men of the Therapeutæ who were selected to 'wait at tables' – also referred to as 'deacons' – throws illuminating light on the election, in Acts, of Stephen and six other young men to the same task:

In Buddhism, the term 'ordination' is used when a layperson is determined to be worthy of becoming a monk or nun. No 'sacred'/magical sacrament such as laying on of hands, etc., is involved. It is only a formal recognition that a person has passed requisite intellectual, spiritual, and moral training. The change of clothing, the tonsure, etc., are simply the outward signs of what has (hopefully) been attained inwardly. In the case of monks and nuns, their robes and tonsure become permanent marks of their religious affiliations. By the fourth century, however, Christian monks were being subordinated to the developing hierarchical rule of a clergy: this supra-monastic clergy had introduced rituals which inducted some laypersons into what was being called, with conciliatory euphemism, "the most exalted order, the sacred rank of the monks". And, of course, the clergy would officiate, again, at the ordination of those very few monks who would go on to become priest-monks (hieromonks).

It is in the fourth century, we learn, that some Egyptian 'Desert Fathers' are being ordained as priests after they had become monks. For example:

1) The monk, Macarius, was born in Upper Egypt c. 300 AD. A late tradition places his birthplace in the village of Shabsheer (Shanshour), in Al minufiyah Governate, Egypt. At a young age, Macarius was forced to get married against his will. Thus, he pretended to be sick and asked for his parents' permission to go to the wilderness to relax. At his return, he found that his wife had died, and shortly after, his parents departed as well. Macarius subsequently distributed all his money among the poor and needy. Seeing his virtues, the people of his village brought him to the **bishop of Ashmoun who ordained him priest**.

2) The monk, Moses the Black, born c. 330 AD, a former Ethiopian slave, became the spiritual leader of a colony of hermits in the Egyptian Western Desert. Later, **he was ordained a priest**. At about age 75, about the year 405 AD, word came that a group of Berbers planned to attack the monastery. The brothers wanted to defend themselves, but Moses forbade it. He told them to retreat, rather than take up weapons.

In this holy banquet there is as I have said no slave; but free men do the serving, performing their menial chores not under compulsion or awaiting orders but freely anticipating the demands with eagerness and zeal. Nor is it any and every free man . . . , but young members of the society . . . selected with all care and according to merit, . . . men of good character and nobility, who are pressing on to reach the summit of virtue. These give their services gladly and eagerly as true sons do to their fathers and mothers, regarding [the older members] as their common parents, as more their own than those who are so by blood, since to the right-minded there is no closer tie than nobility of character. Ungirt and with loose-flowing tunics they enter to do their serving, so that no trace of servile mien be introduced.

Philo's information thus explains to us the importance of this selection to 'wait at tables'. Senior members would *not* have been chosen – only juniors. So Stephen and the other six were probably *young* men "selected with all care and according to merit, men of good character and nobility". It is the young man, Stephen, full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, who goes out to spread the Word of God so vigorously that the members of the Council of the Jerusalem Temple lay hands on him for blasphemy. He defends himself, and after an extended summary of the Hebrew nation's past, he preaches the Gospel to his accusers and roundly criticizes them: "How stubborn you are, heathen still at heart and deaf to the truth!" With these words, he earns his martyrdom.

In regard to the Timothy passage mentioned above (whose dating and authorship is controversial), 'Paul', in writing to his disciple, is referring to such magical/sacred powers which he believes accompanies the 'laying on of hands' (1 Timothy 4:13-14):

Until I arrive devote your attention to the public reading of the scriptures, to exhortation, and to teaching. Do not neglect the spiritual endowment you possess, which was given you, under the guidance of prophecy, through the laying on of the hands of the elders as a body. (*NEB*)

To the early monastics (the crypto-Buddhist Therapeutæ), the 'laying on of hands', if practised at all, would have been merely symbolic of spiritual accomplishments already secured through meditative processes and study. To 'Paul', however, the 'laying on of hands' has begun to be turned into a power only handed down hierarchically – a power to be most dramatically exemplified, later, in the practice of the Eucharist involving a supposed magical/sacred transubstantiation of the Host.

He and seven others remained behind and greeted the invaders with open arms, but all eight were martyred by the bandits on 24 Paoni (July 1). A modern interpretation honors Saint Moses the Black as an apostle of non-violence. His relics and major shrine are found today at the Church of the Virgin Mary in the Paromeos Monastery.

3) John the Dwarf, born c. 339, **was ordained a priest by Pope Theophilus** and became abbot of the monastery he founded around the Tree of Obedience. When the Berbers invaded Scetes in 395, John fled the Nitrian Desert and went to live on Mount Colzim, near the present city of Suez, where he died.

– after Wikipedia

Even if the bishop of Ashmoun or bishop Theophilus were monks as well as bishops, we appear to have three examples of such supra-monastic clergy administering the ordination sacrament to monks.

But consider the case of St. Pachomius (c. 292-348), who was older than Macarius, Moses, and John, and had organized and overseen the running of several monasteries in Upper Egypt. His attitude toward the possibility of his own ordination was distinctly negative! As James Goehring puts it in his book, *Ascetics Society, and the Desert* (1999)*:

[p. 210] When one turns to the . . . Bohairic *Life of Pachomius* [the version of the *Life* written in the southern, Bohairic dialect of the Coptic language, more reliable, historically, than the first of the Greek versions], . . . [it] reports that when Athanasius [archbishop of Alexandria] came south to the Thebaid, Pachomius went into hiding to avoid being ordained by the archbishop.[44] His effort to avoid ordination indicates his fear of losing personal control over his spiritual life to the bishop. . . . [In] the Bohairic version Athanasius praises Pachomius to the monks, there is no report of Pachomius's view of Athanasius. The account simply concludes that "after the archbishop had gone away our Father Pachomius came out of the place where he had been hiding."[45]

[p. 256] This is not meant to suggest that Pachomius was opposed to Athanasius, but merely that he did not link closely the authority of his monastic enterprise with the ecclesiastical authority centered in Alexandria.[77] . . . Ordination, of course, [would have] made one subject to the bishop. . . .

It must be stressed that this understanding of Pachomius is not meant to call his theology into question. It is rather to underline the fact that what was primary to Pachomius was his understanding of the charismatic authority inherent in the monastic enterprise and the distinction of this authority from that of the church.[80]

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44. Bohairic *Life of Pachomius* (*Bo*) 28; Lefort, *S. Pachomii vita vohairice scripta*, 28-30; Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 1.51-52.

45. Translation from Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 1.52.

77. Robinson, "Introduction," 18; Chadwick, "Pachomios," 18.

80. Two excellent studies of the dichotomy between monastic and ecclesiastical authority are Karl Holl, *Enthusiasmus und Bussgewalt beim Mönchtum: Eine Studie zu Symeon dem neuen Theologen* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1898; reprint, Hildesheim, Olms, 1969), and Rousseau, *Ascetics* [1978]. [For the 'Out of Egypt Theory', the ***hiding*** response of Pachomius certainly ***does*** indicate a profound theological opposition between monk and priest – which was electrifyingly confirmed by the archæological discovery of the "Nag Hammadi Library", heretical works ***hidden***, no doubt, by Pachomian monks from their nearby monastery, avoiding the attention of orthodox authorities! **– ML**]

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Norman Russell, in his article, "Bishops and Charismatics in Early Christian Egypt", published in *Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West*, comments on the divisions and tension between the episcopate of Alexandria and the various Christian monastic organizations spread throughout Egypt:

For most of the fourth and fifth centuries the activities of spiritual élites in the monastic settlements of Nitria and the Nile valley were a source of anxiety to the ecclesiastical establishment. The bishops of

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*James E. Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999).

> Alexandria, tentatively at first but then in an increasingly authoritarian way, sought to bring the monks into a closer relationship with the episcopal leadership. The welding together of monk and urban layman into a unified body with the same sense of the obligations of church membership was the result of a long and painful process.†

Thus began a subtle process of reducing these monastic 'élites' to the level of being lumped along with the common 'urban layman' in their subordination to the secular clergy. The Alexandrian bishops were to achieve this goal by, in part, adopting the tactic of ordaining select leaders of the monastics as bishops and priests! In this way, the wielders of the sacred Sacraments would triumph over the Meditators. But this victory was not achieved without difficulty. The monastics had isolated themselves in monasteries with high walls and guarded entrance. How would persons devoted to this way of life adapt to the ways of bishops and priests? There were intellectual and spiritual differences too. In footnote 4, p. 100, Russell comments:

> Compare Antony, as reported by Evagrius: "My book is the nature of created things; and it is present for me, when I wish, to read the words of God" (*Praktikos* 92; quoted by Socrates *HE* 4.23) with [archbishop] Athanasius: "We have the divine Scriptures for salvation. . . . In these books alone the teaching of piety is proclaimed" (*Festal Letter* 39 [367 CE], trans. Brakke, *Athanasius*, 329). [Thus, with regard to Antony, are we to imagine that, in his most eremitic retreat, he was partaking of the Eucharist? – ML]

Russell continues, on pp. 101-102, noting eight more monks who were ordained as bishops:

> Athanasius' *Letter to Dracontius* gives us a valuable insight into the process by which monks were co-opted into the episcopate.[6] Dracontius had been head of a monastery. Having been elected bishop of Hermopolis Parva, he had gone into hiding to escape what he saw as the destruction of his monastic vocation. Hermopolis, however, was a key nome capital in the "regio Alexandriae." . . . Dracontius is not the only monk to have been made a bishop – Athanasius mentions seven others, including Serapion of Thumuis and Paul of Latopolis. . . . By bringing monks into the episcopate, Athanasius "mitigated somewhat," as Brakke says, "the moral superiority granted to the monks."[7] He established a "principle of reciprocity" by which the monks had to serve the church as bishops if they wanted clergy for the monasteries [to provide the sacraments! – ML].

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[6]PG 25, 523-34; trans. L.W. Barnard, *The Monastic Letters of Saint Athanasius the Great* (Oxford: SLG Press 1994), 4-9. It should be noted that there were no metropolitans in Egypt apart from Libya and Cyrenaica. The bishops of the Delta and the Nile valley were all suffragans of Alexandria.

[7]Brakke, *Athanasius*, 110.

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Later, in the fourth century CE, two bishops who succeeded Athanasius (Timothy and then Theophilus) sought the ordination of four notable monks, the so-called 'Tall Brothers': Ammonius, Eusebius, Euthymius, and Dioscorus. Ammonius, who "presided over a large community of ascetics, . . . had cut off his left ear to avoid being made a bishop by Timothy"![‡] (Russell 106) "Eusebius and Euthymius had been ordained to the priesthood by Theophilus and invited to Alexandria to assist in church administration, but had withdrawn to Nitria in disgust at the practices they had witnessed." (Ibid.) Theophilus's "idea of the church centred on the people gathered round their bishop and participating in the Eucharist, not on a circle of disciples sitting at the feet of a charismatic teacher showing them a higher way to heaven." (106-7)

[†]*Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West: Festschrift for Bishop Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia,* eds. John Behr, Andrew Louth, and Dimitri Conomos (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), pp. 99-100.

[‡]This little incident reveals to us that the 'Christian' ecclesiastics were following the Jewish and pagan idea that a person with physical defects is ineligible to perform priestly functions in the temple. From the early Buddhist monastic point of view, this would have been nonsense – in fact, from this point of view, the whole idea of an elite priesthood was flatly rejected! Whether of men or of men and women.

Jerome's *Preface to the Rule of Pachomius*

Translated by Esmeralda Ramirez de Jennings
Edited by the Revd D.R. Jennings, with corrections by the Monachos.net Library Project

. . . I accepted to receive the books that the man of God, the priest Silvan, used to send me. He himself had received them from Alexandria with the purpose of giving them to me to be translated. Since he told me that at the monasteries of Thebaid and at the monastery of Metanoia, . . . many Latins live in ignorance of Coptic and Greek – languages in which the Rule of Pachomius, Theodore, and Orosius have been written. These men are the ones who established the foundation of the cœnobia in the Thebaid region and in Egypt. . . .

. . . I was urged to start working by the priest Leoncio and other brothers. . . . So, after they sent a secretary to me, I dictated in our language [Latin] the rules that had been translated from Coptic to Greek [so that] our brothers could follow the examples of the Egyptian monks, I mean from Tabennesi. These monks have priests, financial accountants, people who rotate weekly to be in charge of the choir and the altar, subaltern officers, and family heads, who are the chairmen. Each house gathers around forty brothers who have to obey their chairmen. According to the number of brothers, a monastery has thirty or forty houses that are united in tribes or groups of three or four. Those who live in these groups go to work together and succeed each other by rotating during weekly service.

Whoever had joined the monastery first, has also the first place while sitting, walking, chanting, eating and receiving communion at the church. It is not the age of the brothers that determines their position but the date of their entering the profession.

In their cells they do not have more than a doormat and the following objects: two tunics (a kind of an Egyptian sleeveless dress) and a third used tunic that they use to sleep or work, and a linen mantle, a goat skin which they call *melota*, two cowls, a small belt of linen, shoes and a cane as a walking companion.

The sick are restored to health thanks to the admirable care and copious meals they get. The ones who are healthy are benefited by a more severe abstinence; they fast twice a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays, except during the time from Easter to Pentecost. The rest of the days, **the ones who desire to eat after six and in the evening they set the table for those who work, the elders, and the youths; and they do this after six because of the intense heat. Some eat a little the second time, some are satisfied with just one meal: breakfast or dinner. Some take just a little bit of bread and leave the room where the food is served. Everybody eats at the same time. When someone does not want to go to the table, he receives in his cell only bread, water and salt, once a day or twice a day depending on what he wishes.**

The brothers who practice the same craft congregate in a house under the authority of a chairman. For example: the ones that knit linen get together in a group, the ones that make the doormats constitute just one family. The same thing happens with the tailors, the ones that manufacture small carts, the workers, the shoemakers; these groups are governed each by their chairman, and each week they settle accounts to the priest of the monastery. **The priests of all of the monasteries have just one superior who dwells in the monastery of Pbow. At Easter, everybody, except those whose presence is indispensable in their monasteries, gets together around him, so that almost fifty thousand men celebrate together the Passion of the Lord.**

In the month of Mesori, namely **August, as an example of the jubilee year (see *Leviticus* 25) there are days in which everybody is forgiven for their sins, and the ones that have had an altercation also reconcile.** Then they designate the chiefs, the financial accountants, the chairmen, and the subaltern officers of the different monasteries according to their needs. The ones from the Thebaid still say that Pachomius, Cornelius and Syrus (this last one is still alive and they say that he is more than 110 years old), learned from the mouth of an angel a mysterious language that allows them to write and to communicate with the help of a spiritual alphabet, insinuating under certain signs and symbols, hidden sentiments. We have translated these letters into our language, which have also been read among the Coptic and Greek monks, and when we found those same signs (from the mystic alphabet) we have copied them.

We have imitated the simplicity of the Coptic language, moved by the cares of giving a faithful interpretation, not wanting to produce one using fancy words that the laity would not understand because doing so would create a false idea about the character of those apostolic men who were completely filled by the grace of the Spirit.

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Didache[1]

By Solomon Schechter and Kaufmann Kohler

A manual of instruction [in Greek] for proselytes, adopted from the Synagogue by early Christianity, and transformed by alteration and amplification into a Church manual. Discovered among a collection of ancient Christian manuscripts in Constantinople by Bryennios in 1873, and published by him in 1883, it aroused great interest among scholars. The book, mentioned by Eusebius ("Hist. Eccl." iii. 25) and Athanasius ("Festal Letters," 39) in the fourth century, had apparently been lost since the ninth century. The most acceptable theory among the many proposed on the character and composition of the "Didache" is that proposed by Charles Taylor in 1886, and accepted in 1895 by A. Harnack (who in 1884 had most vigorously maintained its Christian origin) – that the first part of the "Didache," the teaching concerning the "Two Ways" ("Didache," ch. i.-vi.), was originally a manual of instruction used for the initiation of proselytes in the Synagogue, and was converted later into a Christian manual and ascribed to Jesus and the Apostles. To it were added rules concerning baptism, fasting, and prayer, the benedictions over the wine and the bread and after the communion meal, and regulations regarding the Christian community (ch. vii.-xvi.). The Jewish student is concerned chiefly with the first part, the title and contents of which are discussed here.

Title of the Book.

The composite character of the "Didache" is shown by the double title or heading. The first words, "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," form the general title, and therefore need not now be considered. But of the second heading, which refers to the original book, ch. i.-vi., only the words "Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles" (Διδαχὴ Κυρίου τοῖς Εθνεσιν) are genuinely Jewish; the words "through the Twelve Apostles," which assume that the word "Lord" refers to Jesus, are a Christian interpolation. The book known to Christians as the "Teaching of the Two Ways" corresponded probably with the "Hilkot Gerim" (Rules Regarding Proselytes) referred to in Ruth R. i. 7 and 16 as having been studied by Ruth under the direction of Naomi, the words דרך ("way") and הלך ("walk") in both verses being taken as indications that the necessary instruction in the "Two Ways" had been duly given to Ruth (compare Baraita Yeb. 47a, and Massek. Gerim, the abrupt beginning of which gives evidence of the existence of other rules concerning the admission of proselytes during the Temple time).

Contents of the "Didache."

The whole teaching is summarized in the first two verses (ch. i. 1-2): "There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and wide is the difference between. The way of life is this: First, thou shalt love God thy Maker [after Deut. vi. 5]; second, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself [after Lev. xix. 18]. Now the teaching of these two words is this: 'Whatsoever thou wouldst not have done unto thee, neither do thou to another.'"

Here is a great lacuna, nothing being said about what love of God implies; and what follows is only very loosely connected with the preceding verses. Whether taken from an old Essene document (see Hippolytus, "Refutatio Hæresium," ix. 23 [18]) or from some Christian collection of "Sayings" older than Matt. v. 39-48 and Luke vi. 27-39, verses 3-4 are certainly out of place; they interrupt the order. So do verses 4-5, in which "the commandment of charity" is treated from the Jewish point of view, though they have parallels in Matt. v. 26; Acts xx. 35.

Ch. ii. 1 begins as if the first part of the Decalogue, comprising the law of the love of God, had been treated in the preceding chapter: "And the second commandment of the Teaching [that is, love of our fellow man] is: Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. xx. 13; see verse 2).

2: "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. xx. 14). (This includes: "Thou shalt not commit sodomy nor fornication.") "Thou shalt not steal" (Ex. xx. 15). . . . "Thou shalt not use witchcraft nor practise sorcery" (Ex. xxii. 18; Lev. xix. 26). (This belongs obviously to the eliminated first part comprising the duties toward God.) "Thou shalt not procure abortion, nor shalt thou kill the new-born child" (compare Wisdom xii. 5). (This is the amplification of Ex. xx. 13, and belongs to verse 1.) "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods" (Ex. xx. 17; see verse 6).

3-5: “Thou shalt not forswear thyself.” . . . (This again belongs to the eliminated first part.) “Thou shalt not bear false witness” (Ex. xx. 16). “Thou shalt not speak evil nor bear malice. Thou shalt not be doubled-minded nor double-tongued, for duplicity of tongue is a snare of death. Thy speech shall not be false nor vain, but filled with deed.”

6: “Thou shalt not be covetous nor rapacious [amplification of Ex. xx. 17], nor a hypocrite, nor malignant, nor haughty. Thou shalt not take evil counsel against thy neighbor” (amplification of Ex. xx. 16).

7: “Thou shalt not hate any one; but some thou shalt rebuke [Lev. xix. 17], and for some thou shalt pray [compare Tosef., B. 2. ix. 29 with reference to Job xlii. 8; Gen. xx. 17; see Matt. v. 44], and some thou shalt love above thine own soul” (compare “Epistle of Barnabas,” xix. 11, and another “Didache” version, Harnack and Gebhard, “Texte u. Untersuchungen,” xiii. i. 7 *et seq.*). (This is the interpretation of Lev. xix. 18; compare above, i. 3.)

Ch. iii. 1 dwells on lighter sins, and begins by laying down the following principle: “My child, flee from every evil and from whatsoever is similar to it.” This well-known maxim, לעולם יהא אדם בורח מן הכיעור ומן הדומה לכיעור, is ascribed in Tosef., Ḥul. ii. 24 to R. Eliezer of the second Christian century, and in Ab. R. N. ii. (ed. Schechter, pp. 8, 9) to Job, and is explained: “Avoid light sins in order to escape grosser sins” (compare also Ḥul. 44b; Derek Erez Zuṭa, viii.; I Thess. v. 22; and Bacher, “Die Agada der Tannaiten,” i. 113, 281). In this sense are the commandments of the Decalogue further amplified:

2 warns against anger and contention as leading to murder.

3, against lust, lascivious speeches and looks as leading to fornication and adultery.

4, against divination, astrology, and other heathen practises as leading to idolatry.

5, against lying, avarice, and vanity as leading to theft.

6-9, against an irreverential and presumptuous attitude toward God as leading to blasphemy.

10, enjoining the disciple to accept every seemingly evil happening as good because coming from God.

Ch. iv. 1-13 refers again to the duty toward God, stating that the honor of God includes the study of His Word; the honor of the teacher, the support of the students and practisers of the Law; the honor of the father, the support of the household; and after having positively enjoined hatred of hypocrisy and of whatever is evil (see Ab. R. N. xvi. [ed. Schechter, p. 64]), it declares in a genuinely Jewish spirit that “the commandments of the Lord should all be kept; none to be added, and none to be taken away” (compare Deut. iv. 2, xiii. 1 [xii. 32]).

Ch. v. recapitulates the prohibitory laws under the heading “This is the Way of Death”; the enumeration, however, shows lack of order.

Ch. vi. contains a warning against false teachers, and addressing the proselyte in verse 2, it says: “If thou art able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord, thou wilt be perfect; if not, do what thou canst.” This is obviously an allusion to the two classes of proselytes Judaism recognized: the full proselyte, who accepted all the laws of the Torah, including circumcision, Sabbath, and the dietary laws; and the semi-proselyte, who accepted only the Noachian laws as binding. For the latter verse 3 contains the warning not to eat meat which has been offered to idols, which is forbidden also to the Noachidæ.

The “Two Ways.”

As a matter of course, this Jewish manual could not be used in its entirety by the Church from the moment when she deviated from Jewish practises and views. Just as the Shema’ Yisrael in the saying of Jesus (Mark xii. 29) was dropped by the other Gospel writers, so was the whole first part of the “Didache,” dealing with monotheism, tampered with by the Christian editor. The whole book has fallen into disorder, and much of it is misunderstood and misinterpreted by Christian scholars, who judge it only from the point of view of the Church. The fundamental ideas of the “Didache” are indisputably Jewish. The teaching of the “Two Ways,” the one of life and the other of death, runs as a leading thought throughout Jewish literature. Just as Moses set before the people of Israel “life and good, death and evil” (Deut. xxx. 15-19; Jer. xxi. 8), so is the choice between the two roads to be made ever anew (Ps. i. 6; Prov. ii. 12-20, vi. 23; Eccles. [Sirach] xv. 17; Slavonic Enoch, xxx. 15; IV Ezra iii. 7, iv. 4; Pirke R. El. xv.; Gen. R.

viii., ix., xxi.; Targum to Gen. iii. 22; Enoch, xciv. 2 *et seq.*; Baruch iv. 2; Apoc. Baruch, xlii. 5 *et seq.*, lxxxv. 13; Book of Jubilees, xxii. 17-29; Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Asher, 1; Abot R. N. xv.; Ber. 28b; Sifre, Debarim, 43, 54, based on דרך ["the way"]; Deut xi. 28; Gen. R. lxx. to Gen. xxviii. 20 [ירך = see Targum]; Ex. R. xxx.; Deut. R. iv.; Midrash, Tehillim to Ps. ii. 3, with reference to ירך ; Isa. ii. 3; Ps. xxvi. 5, xxxix. 2, xl. 2, lxviii. 21, cxix. 9, cxlvi. 9; Midrash Prov. i. 15 [ירך]. This twofold way was especially emphasized in the preaching to the Gentiles, who were to be won over to the right way (Sibyllines, Proœmium 24; iii. 11, 233, 721; viii. 399). And a faint reminiscence of the twofold way appears to be preserved in the later Halakah insisting that the applicant for admission into Judaism be informed of the death-penalties attached to certain transgressions (see Yeb. 47a, b; compare Ruth R. i. 17 with reference to the Biblical words "Where thou diest will I die"). Another leading idea of the "Didache" is the twofold duty: love of God and love of man; both being prefaced by the word ואהבת = "And thou shalt love" (Deut. vi. 4; Lev. xix. 18; see Sifre, Debarim, 32; Ab. R. N. xvi. [ed. Schechter, p. 64]; Gen. R. xxiv, end). Upon God as "the Maker of man" rests the claim of the fellow man to love (Job xxxi. 15).

It is noteworthy that the "golden rule" is given in the "Didache" according to the traditional Jewish interpretation – negatively: לא תעבד מה דעלך סני לחברך (see Targ. to Lev. xix. 18; Tobit iv. 15; Philo in Eusebius, "Præparatio Evangelica," viii. 7; "Apostolic Constitutions," i. 1; compare Taylor, "Sayings of the Jewish Fathers," 2d ed., p. 142), exactly as Hillel and Akiba taught it when instructing the proselyte regarding the chief commandment of the Law (Shab. 31b; Ab. R. N., B, xxvi. [ed. Schechter, p. 53]). On the other hand, the New Testament (Matt. vii. 12; Luke vi. 31) has it in a positive form (compare Matt. xxii. 35-40 and Mark xii. 29-31, which discussion is based on the "Didache," not vice versa).

Based on the Decalogue.

A third characteristic of the teaching is the use of the Decalogue as the exponent of ethics in its twofold aspect: duty to God, and duty to man (compare Taylor, *l.c.* pp. 216 *et seq.*). Evidently the original [Jewish] "Didache" contained a systematic exposition of the Ten Commandments, whereas the "Didache" in its present [Christian] shape has preserved only fragments, and these in great disorder. Thus, for instance, iv. 9-11, and possibly iv. 1, 2, dwelling on the relations of the members of the household to one another, refers to the fifth commandment, nor is it likely that the Sabbath commandment was omitted (compare xiv. 1, where the Christian Sabbath is referred to). The Decalogue and the Shema', as fundamental elements of Judaism, were recited every morning in the Temple (Tamid v. 1), and only because the early Judæo-Christians (Minim; see Irenæus, "Adversus Hæreses," iv. 16) claimed divine revelation exclusively for the Ten Commandments, discarding the other Mosaic laws as temporary enactments, was the recital of the Decalogue in the daily morning liturgy afterward abolished (Yer. Ber. i. 3c). Philo still regarded the Decalogue as fundamental ("De Decem Oraculis"; compare Pes. R. xxi.-xxiv.; Num. R. xiii. 15). The later Halakah insists that the proselyte should be acquainted instead with the 613 commandments of the Law (Yeb. 47b), whereas the Christian Apostles laid all the greater stress on the second part of the Decalogue (Rom. xiii. 9).

A fourth distinguishing feature of the "Didache" is the accentuation of the lighter sins and lighter duties as leading to graver ones: "Flee from every evil and from whatsoever is similar to it" (iii. 1). This is not a proof of "the superiority of the Gospel ethics over the law" (Schaff, note *ad loc.*), but the very essence of the Pharisaic interpretation of the Law. The same idea is expressed in Ab. R. N. ii. (ed. Schechter, pp. 8, 9, 12; comp. Ab. i. 1): "Make a fence around the Law"; (Schaff, note *ad loc.*), and in the adage "Go around the vineyard, they say to the Nazarite, but dare not to enter it" (Shab. 13a). Upon this principle the whole rabbinical code of ethics is built up, of which the Sermon on the Mount is only the echo (see Ab. R. N. *l.c.*, and Ethics; compare Taylor, "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," pp. 24 *et seq.*). The later Halakah also sets down the rule that the proselyte has to be made acquainted with some of the lighter and some of the graver commandments – קלות ומקצת מצות חמורות מקצת מצות (Yeb. 47a).

Dependence upon Jewish Custom.

It must accordingly have been simply in imitation of the Jewish example which was offered by the "Didache" that the epistles of Paul, of Peter, and of John were made to close with moral exhortations, all of which point to a common source or archetype. Familiarity with the "Two Ways" of the "Didache" furthermore accounts for the term "way" or "way of God" given to the Christian religion as preached to

Gentiles (Acts ix. 2; xviii. 25, 26; xix. 9, 23; xxii. 4; xxiv. 14, 22); and the expression "I am the Way and the Life" (John xiv. 6); also "the way of truth" and "the right way" (II Peter ii. 2, 15). Finally, the "Didache," after adaptation to Christian use, circulated in different versions. It was attached to the "Epistle of Barnabas" (xviii.-xx.); it was worked into the form of "Sayings of the Twelve Apostles" (Κάνονες Εκκλησιαστικοὶ 'τῶν 'Αγίων' Αποστόλων), and as such propagated in the various churches of the East. An older version is attached to the "Didascalia" as the beginning of the seventh book of the "Apostolic Constitutions." Whether the latter part was also worked out after a Jewish model, or whether the whole Jewish "Didache" did not originally also contain rules concerning baptism, prayer, and thanksgiving similar to those of the Church manual, is difficult to say. Much speaks in favor of this hypothesis: on the one hand, the antagonistic spirit which transferred the Hebrew Ma'amadot fasts from Monday and Thursday, and on the other hand, the expression "Take the first-fruit and give according to the commandment" (xiii. 5, 7). But the dependence upon Jewish custom is especially indicated by the following thanksgiving formulas:–

(1) Over the cup: "*We give thanks to Thee, our Father, for the holy wine of David Thy servant which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy servant*." This strange formula is the Jewish benediction over the wine, "*Blessed be Thou who hast created the fruit of the vine*" Christianized (compare Ps. lxxx. 15, Targum; cxvi. 13 refers to David at the banquet of the future life; Pes. 119b; John xv. 1; compare Taylor, *l.c*. pp. 69, 129).

(2) Over the broken bread: "*We give thanks to Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy servant. As this broken bread, scattered upon the mountains and gathered together, became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom!*" (compare the benediction "Raḥem" according to Rab Naḥman, which contains a reference to Ps. cxlvii. 2; Ber. 49a).

(3) Over the meal: "*We thank Thee, O holy Father, for Thy holy name, which Thou hast caused to dwell* [κατεσκηνωσας, reference to the Shekinah] *in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy servant. Thou, Almighty Lord, didst make all things for Thy name's sake; Thou gavest food and drink to men for enjoyment that they might give thanks to Thee, but to us Thou didst freely give spiritual food and drink and life eternal through Thy servant. . . . Remember, O Lord, Thy Church to deliver her from all evil and to perfect her in love of Thee, and gather her together from the four winds, sanctified for Thy Kingdom which Thou didst prepare for her. Let grace come and let this world pass away! Hosanna to the Son of David*" (ix.-x. 6).

The original Jewish benediction over the meal was a thanksgiving for the food and for the Word of God, the Torah as the spiritual nurture, and a prayer for the restitution of the kingdom of David. The Church transformed the Logos into the incarnated son of God, while expressing the wish for His speedy return to the united congregation (the Church). It is the prayer of the Judæo-Christian community of the first century, and this casts light upon the whole Christianized "Didache." As to the relation of the "Didache" to Phokylides, see Pseudo-Phocylides; see also Didascalia Bibliography.

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S. S. K.

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Comment:

The Didache, which is is a manual for the initiation of converts to Christianity, has a title "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles". Schechter and Kohler suggest, however, that its first six chapters are really just an adaptation of an earlier Jewish manual of instruction for the initiation of proselytes in the Synagogue. They have also pointed out that the teaching in these chapters is characterized by "the use of the Decalogue as the exponent of ethics in its twofold aspect: duty to God, and duty to man":

> Evidently the original [Jewish] "Didache" contained a systematic exposition of the Ten Commandments, whereas the "Didache" in its present [Christianized] shape has preserved only fragments, and these in great disorder.

And they note that the Christian version concentrates only on the second part of the Decalogue (*Rom*. xiii. 9).

On the 'Out of Egypt Theory', these so-called "Judæo-Christians" who adapted the original Jewish "Didache", creating the present Christian version of it, can be viewed as crypto-Buddhist Christians: Jews, Copts, Greeks, and others. Remember Philo's remarks (above, p. 178) about the Therapeutæ?:

> Now this kind [ref. to the Therapeutæ] exists in many parts of the inhabited world [*oikoumene*], for both Greece and the non-Greek world must share in the perfect good, but it abounds in Egypt in each of the so-called nomes and particularly around Alexandria. But those who excel in every way settle in a certain favorable spot as in their fatherland [*patrida*[11]]. This place is situated above the Mareotic Lake. . . .*

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[11] πατρίδα. This word, as Schürer points out (*Theol. Literaturzeitung,* 1880, No. 5), is not a noun, as it is commonly regarded (and hence translated "fatherland"), but an adjective (and hence to be translated "eine vaterländische Colonie," "a colony of the fatherland"); the οἰκουμένη, mentioned in the previous paragraph, being the fatherland of the Therapeutæ. [This is Philip Schaff's note from his translation – see, above, p. 181.]

*This translation is by David Winston, in *Philo of Alexandria: The Contemplative Life, The Giants, and Selections* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1981), p. 45.

Buddhism, in Egypt, had, from the third century BCE, adapted itself to a Jewish form (pursuing its strategy of *upāya-kauśalya*). At that time, Buddhism was in the process of spreading its Dharma throughout the inhabited world and by the first century CE, Buddhism had spread to every district (*nome*) of Egypt, its followers, there, named 'Therapeutæ', 'Gnostics', etc. By the first century, after times of violent unrest, many of its followers may have forgotten their Buddhist roots, 250 years earlier! Some followers were solitary hermits, some were 'homeless', traveling preachers of the 'Dharma' (like "Jesus"), others formed groups which gathered in homes and synagogues, and still others lived in various forms of monasteries. (The earliest recorded use of the Greek word, *monasterion*, is by Philo [in *Contempl.*, 25], in the early first century [Winston, 317, n. 15].) Buddhist monasticism is the chief progenitor of these different forms of apparently Jewish sects, but with the incorporation of doctrinal admixtures from the Egyptian religion and other sources.

III. Egyptian Religion

D.M. Murdock (Acharya S), ***Christ in Egypt: The Horus-Jesus Connection*** **(2009), Stellar House Publishing.**

Reviewed by Robert M. Price[1]

Yes, she published it herself. So did Hume. Nuff said.

Some may think to accuse Ms. Murdock of committing the fallacious appeal to authority because she peppers her text with information ascribed to various scholars and includes their professional titles or academic posts. But she is not thereby trying to lend a weight to her thesis which it would not possess on its own. Rather, she is trying to help us place the specialists whose work she is discussing. I am no Egyptologist, so it helps me to know who I am "listening to" here and that it is never just some convenient crank.

This is no doubt the best book by this controversial author. Any and every fault, real or perceived, that one might have detected in *The Christ Conspiracy* was already absent from *Suns of God*, and it is hard even to remember them while one is reading *Christ in Egypt*. Just so no one will suspect Acharya paid me to puff this thing, I suppose I ought to supply a couple of minor criticisms. My main one is that, as in the case of the great Robert Eisenman, she seems to me to over-document her case, almost to the point that I fear I will lose track of the argument. But, like all good teachers, she periodically pauses to draw the threads together. And of course the danger is implied in the scope of the subject. She quotes a previous scholar concerning this occupational hazard: "Unhappily these demonstrations cannot be made without a wearisome mass of detail" (Gerald Massey, *Ancient Egypt: Light of the World*, p. 218, cited p. 313).

The book is more extensive and encompassing than many dissertations I have read, containing over 900 sources and nearly 2,400 citations in several languages, including ancient Egyptian. The text abounds in long lost references many of them altogether new to English rendering, including *de novo* translations of difficult passages in handwritten German. This is the kind of thing that gives me, as a researcher, a migraine as soon as I see them coming in the distance!

Besides random judgment calls re this or that proposed parallel or conclusion, my only continuing disagreement with Acharya is on her model whereby a committee of creators sat down to formulate the Christian religion. Such a scenario is by no means impossible, but it seems unnecessary to me. I prefer the old Romantic idea of Hölderlin and the early form-critics of an anonymous and nebulous "creative community." It is hard to track down rumors, myths, or ascendant religious symbols to specific names. But this difference hardly matters. We are in agreement on the thoroughly syncretic character of primitive Christianity, evolving from earlier mythemes and rituals, especially those of Egypt. It is almost as important in *Christ in Egypt* to argue for an astro-religious origin for the mythemes, and there, too, I agree with the learned author. Let me outline the main argument that persuades me, some of it learned here, some already assimilated and facilitating my acceptance of much that Acharya offers.

First, I find it undeniable that, as Ignaz Goldziher (*Mythology among the Hebrews*) argued, following the lead of "solar mythologist" Max Müller (yes, the great historian of comparative religion and world scripture), many, many of the epic heroes and ancient patriarchs and matriarchs of the Old Testament were personified stars, planets, and constellations. This theory is now ignored in favor of others more easily made into theology and sermons, but it has never been refuted, and I find the evidence overwhelming. And once you recognize these patterns in the Old Testament, you start noticing them, albeit to a lesser degree (?), in the New. Hercules' twelve labors surely mark his progress, as the sun, through the houses of the Zodiac; why do Jesus' circumambient twelve disciples not mean the same thing? And so on.

Second, for Egyptian influence to have become integral to Israelite religion even from pre-biblical times is only natural given the fact that from 3000 BCE Egypt ruled Canaan. We are not talking about some far-fetched borrowing from an alien cultural sphere. The tale of Joseph and his brethren is already transparently a retelling of Osiris and Set. The New Testament Lazarus story is another (Mary and Martha playing Isis and Nephthys). And so is the story of Jesus (Mary Magdalene and the others as Isis and Nephthys). Jesus (in the "Johannine Thunderbolt" passage [1 John 5:20: "*We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true – even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life*"], Matthew 11:27// Luke 10:21 ["*All things have been committed*

to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."// "At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure"]) sounds like he's quoting Akhenaten's Hymn to the Sun. Jesus sacramentally offers bread as his body, wine as his blood, just as Osiris offered his blood in the form of beer, his flesh as bread. Judas is Set, who betrays him. Mourning women seek for his body. The anointing in Bethany ("Leave her alone! She has saved the ointment for my burial!") is a misplaced continuation of the women bringing the spices to the tomb, where they would raise Jesus with the stuff, as Isis raised Osiris. In fact, Jesus "Christ" makes more sense as Jesus "the Resurrected One" than as "Jesus the Davidic Scion." In the ritual reenactments, three days separate the death and the resurrection. Jesus appears on earth briefly, then retires to the afterworld to become the judge of the living and the dead – just as Osiris does.

Osiris is doubly resurrected as his son Horus, too, and he, too, is eventually raised from the dead by Isis. He is pictured as spanning the dome of heaven, his arms stretched out in a cruciform pattern. As such, he seems to represent the common Platonic astronomical symbol of the sun's path crossing the earth's ecliptic. Likewise, the Acts of John remembers that the real cross of Jesus is not some piece of wood, as fools think, but rather the celestial "Cross of Light." Acharya S ventures that "the creators of the Christ myth did not simply take an already formed story, scratch out the name Osiris or Horus, and replace it with Jesus" (p. 25). But I am pretty much ready to go the whole way and suggest that Jesus is simply Osiris going under a new name, Jesus, "Savior," hitherto an epithet, but made into a name on Jewish soil. Are there allied mythemes (details, really) that look borrowed from the cults of Attis, Dionysus, etc.? Sure; remember we are talking about a heavily syncretistic context. Hadrian remarked on how Jewish and Christian leaders in Egypt mixed their worship with that of Sarapis (= Osiris).

Third, Eusebius and others already pegged the Therapeutae (Essene-like Jewish monks in Egypt) as early Christians, even Philo (the Jewish Middle Platonist of Alexandria) as a Christian! Philo and various Egyptian Gnostic sects experimented with the philosophical demythologizing of myths such as the primordial Son of Man and the Logos. Philo equated the Son of Man, Firstborn of Creation, Word, heavenly High Priest, etc., and considered the Israelite patriarchs, allegorically, as virgin-born incarnations of the Logos. All, I repeat, *all*, New Testament Christological titles are found verbatim in Philo. Coincidence? Gnostic texts are filled with classical Egyptian eschatology. Christian magic spells identified Jesus with Horus. It seems hard to deny that even Christians as "late" as the New Testament writers were directly dependent upon Jewish thinkers in Egypt, just like the Gnostic Christian writers after them. And if the common Christian believer saw no difference between Jesus and Horus in Egypt (or between Jesus and Attis in the Naasene Hymn), why on earth should we think they were innovators?

I find myself in full agreement with Acharya S / D.M. Murdock: "we assert that Christianity constitutes Gnosticism historicized and Judaized, likewise representing a synthesis of Egyptian, Jewish and Greek religion and mythology, among others [including Buddhism, via King Asoka's missionaries][2] from around the 'known world'" (p. 278). "Christianity is largely the product of Egyptian religion being Judaized and historicized" (p. 482).

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NOTES

[1]This review accessed at: < www.robertmprice.mindvendor.com/.../murdock_christ_egypt.htm >.

[2]This square bracketed comment is Price's. Other square bracketed passages are ML's additions.

IV. Discussion of the Egyptian, Jewish, Buddhist, and Other Influences

Comment by ML: Prof. Robert M. Price's solid endorsement of Āchāryā Murdock's book, *Christ in Egypt*, is well taken. The 'Out of Egypt Theory' would concur with his positive assessment of her wide-ranging research. Let the critics read her book and digest in detail the mass of information she presents. Where the OET differs from her is in its claim that the *dominant source* which fashioned the Christian religion was Buddhism in Egypt. The OET also differs with Prof. Price's view that the source of Christianity was some anonymous and nebulous "creative community," an "idea of Hölderlin and the early form-critics." Christian Lindtner's revelations have confirmed, rather, that the source of Christianity was crypto-Buddhism. Therefore, consider the interplay of the Buddhist source of Christianity with Judaism and the Egyptian religion.

Lindtner has already published several books and articles arguing that the mysterious Quelle (Source) behind the canonical Gospels is to be found mainly in specific Buddhist Sanskrit and Pāli writings. (Samples of these writings by Lindtner have been presented on pp. 144-156.) Unfortunately for the wider dissemination of his ideas, his books, written in Danish, Swedish, and German, have not been translated into English. And, again unfortunately, because only scholars with an adequate knowledge of Buddhist literature in Pāli and Sanskrit (in addition to the biblical and classical languages) would be in a position to credibly refute his theories, and because of his reputation as a Holocaust denier (which allegation, of course, is irrelevant in these matters), there is hardly anyone to come forward to oppose him, and thus make public these important issues.

As indicated, the OET will argue that it was the crypto-Buddhists, in Egypt, who were the most important foundational source of the Christian religion. In the beginning, it was the Indian ruler, the Buddhist Aśōka, "King of Magadha" (in Greek: '*Magadan*', cf. Matt 15:39), who, in mid-third century **BCE**, introduced monasticism into Egypt and other kingdoms around the Mediterranean. His missionary monks gave rise to the monastic and pre-Christian Gnostic ways of life in Egypt, which, over a period of two and a half centuries, grew and changed into a variety of ascetic movements – and a few non-ascetic, & some "*fallen*" ones! Around the end of the first century, some of these Gnostic communities were transformed into Christian Gnostic communities by the introduction of sacramental ritualism involving *allegorical* narratives of a righteous teacher named Jesus – a Judaized Buddha figure, who taught his followers the way of Gnosis – Wisdom's Salvation: 'Know thyself.' Jesus was an *allegorical* figure modeled on the founder of Buddhism and his *fifth century* ***BCE*** style of preaching: that of the homeless, wandering monk. Jesus said (in *Luke 9:58*):

> Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests,
> but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.

It seems certain, though, that the monks sent out by King Aśōka to the western Hellenic kingdoms in the third century **BCE** as propagators of the Dharma were not the "homeless, wandering mendicants" of earliest Buddhism. Aśōka's evangelists were scholar-monks, linguists, botanists, and medically trained missionaries.

It was against the background framework of the Hebrew Bible that this allegorical Jesus/Buddha has been portrayed (with *deep irony*), in the New Testament, by the (*Buddhist*-"Christian") Evangelists as a pacifist descendant of the great warrior king, David, and as a kind of pacifistic "reincarnation"***** of key militaristic characters in the Hebrew Bible: for instance, Moses, who established a new Covenant with the **LORD** and led his people to freedom, and Joshua, Jesus' namesake, the tribocidal commander of the Israelites as they fought their way into the Promised Land. This strange metamorphosis from Jewish royal and bloody military leaders to pacifist Jesus is a meta-narrative echo, no doubt, of King Aśōka's transformation: first, when he began to deeply regret his own very bloody, victorious military campaign (similar to Joshua's even more terrible campaigns), and, second, then his converting to – being 'reborn' as – a pacifistic Buddhist ruler (a 'Prince of Peace' – as would be the future Buddha allegorization, Jesus), who sends out missionary monks to the four corners of the world to spread the Buddha's Dharma, his Gospel of Peace – which action, historically, is only a replay of the Buddha's sending out his disciples to preach the Dharma for the welfare of all the world, more than 200 years earlier than Aśōka's reign.

*****See my three footnotes on page 163.

"Fallen" Gnostic sects

The initial rise of Gnosticism in the Greek kingdoms of the West is, therefore, to be seen as stemming primarily from the extraordinary resourceful energy of King Aśōka's missionary monks. This Buddhism, exported from India in the third century BCE, was from the more conservative Theravādin school. But as the decades rolled by, the Mahāyānists became more apparent. The Christian evangelists based much of their writings on works of the Sarvāstivādins and Mahāyānists, as Lindtner has clearly shown. Jesus' preaching and his parables can be traced back to Buddhist scriptures, such as the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-Vinaya (MSV), especially on its concluding portion, the Mahā-Parinirvāṇa-Sūtra (MPS), as well as on other widely known works, such as the Sad-Dharma-Puṇḍarīka-sūtra (SDP), the "Lotus Sūtra".

Among the various Gnostic communities in the Near East and Egypt, at the beginning of the Common Era, were some that had broken away from the basic precepts laid down in early Buddhism: its non-violence, its teetotalism, and – for monks, nuns, and novices – its strict celibacy. Among these "fallen" gnostic sects were the Borborians of Egypt and the Nicolaitans, located in Ephesus and Pergamon, which were alleged to be licentious and even, with regard to the latter, cannibalistic. To understand the influence of India on these 'left-handed' Gnostic sects, Arthur Lillie's book, *India in Primitive Christianity* (1909), should be consulted. The book suffers from a seeming haste in its compilation, poor referencing by the author, atrocious editing, and a wide variation in the persuasiveness of its arguments. But the vast majority of Western scholars remain totally unaware of the possible Indian influence on such sects as the Borborians and Nicolaitans from what Lillie calls 'Śiva Buddhism' or – using Śiva's fierce manifestation – '*Bhairava*-Buddhism'. 'Bhairava' is the form Śiva takes in his role of 'Destroyer' – in the ongoing cycle of birth and death of all creatures and, at great intervals, the annihilation of the whole universe! (A good question is whether this Indian view of the cyclical annihilation of the universe is the source of Jewish and Christian apocalypticism.) Various Śaivite unorthodox sects, in India, were associated with this frightening aspect of Śiva, sects such as the Kāpālikas and Kālamukhas which indulged in licentious rites and sometimes bloody sacrifices. Lillie has attempted in his book to describe how these unorthodox Śaivite practices may have, at first, affected Buddhism in India and Ceylon (Śrī Laṅkā) and, then, influenced the crypto-Buddhist Gnosticism in the Near East and Egypt.

As a succinct summary of some of these so-called 'libertine' communities, I quote brief passages from Antti Marjanen's work, "*The Woman Jesus Loved: Mary Magdalene in the Nag Hammadi Library and Related Documents*, Vol. 40 Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies/Vol. 40 of Philosophia Antiqua (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 189-190:

> Epiphanius ascribes the *Great Questions of Mary* to a libertine group whose identification leaves a lot to be desired. In the heading of the twenty-sixth chapter of his work (*Panarion*), Epiphanius claims to write this part of his book against Gnostics or Borborites. Elsewhere in this chapter, he states that this sect can also be called Koddians, Stratiotics, Phibionites, Zacchaeans, and Barbelites (26.3, 6-7), depending on the geographical locality where they appear.[2] In the proemium of the entire work, where he presents the sects which he treats in various chapters of his work, he still adds to these names Secundians and Socratists (Proemium I 4,3). The readers of Epiphanius are also given to understand that this particular libertine group is closely associated with the Nicolaitans whom he introduces in his preceding chapter. Yet it seems apparent that Epiphanius does not describe here one particular existent Gnostic group or school but has collected in this chapter information he has to offer about obscene habits of libertine Gnostics in general.[3] To what extent his description corresponds to the actual behavior of some Gnostic groups is strongly debated.[4] Nonetheless, there is no reason to doubt that libertine Gnostics did exist.[5]

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[2]See also the post-Epiphanius Anacephalaeosis II 26, 1-2.

[3]Chapters 25 (Nicolaitans), 27 (Carpocratians), and 32 (Secundians) also contain references to Gnostic groups with libertine practices.

[4]For the discussion, see Benko 1967, 103-119; Gero 1986, 287-307, Goehring 1988, 338-339.

[5]Most recently this has been advocated by Dummer 1965, 191-219; Benko 1967, 103-119; Gero 1986, 287-307; Goehring 1988, 338-344 (see also his footnote 43 on page 339) and with some reservations by Wisse 1975, 71-72. The view is contested by Kraft 1950, 78-85; Koschorke 1978, 123-124. They argue against the possible existence of libertine Gnostic groups by pointing out that no libertine tendencies are revealed by authentic Gnostic sources. They only appear in the writings of the heresiologists which serve religious polemics and which are often based on scanty and obscure evidence. To be sure, an accusation against obscene practices is a feature typical of religious polemics, and it has not only been directed against Gnostic Christians but against ecclesiastical groups as well (see e.g. Origen, *Contra Cels*. 6, 27; Minucius Felix, Octavius 9; Mandaeans accuse Christians of consuming both bodily emissions and aborted infants; for references, see F. Williams 1987, 86). It is equally true that very often the only evidence of debauchery of a given group is the firm conviction of the heresiologists that a false doctrine automatically leads to immoral behavior (see Wisse 1975, 66). Nevertheless, not all the information given by the heresiologists can be explained away as a sheer expression of religious polemics. Goehring (1988, 339) has rightly emphasized that e.g. Epiphanius' account (*Pan*. 26) is too detailed, complex, and personal to be a mere literary fiction. In addition, the inner consistency between theology and ritual as well as sometimes rather ingenious scriptural support of the religious practices presented in the text suggest that in his description of libertine Gnostic groups Epiphanius does not simply give a free rein to his imagination but depends on his personal experiences and some authentic literary or oral sources.

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Selection from Chp. XVII of Arthur Lillie's book, *India in Primitive Christianity*:

ALEXANDRIA[1]

I will open this chapter with a noteworthy description of the Supreme Buddha as conceived in the Buddhist books that came from Nālandā to Nepal. It is given to us by Brian Hodgson. I will then quote what [Prof. Jacques] Matter tells us of the God of Basilides. Linked together, the passages read curiously.

According to Hodgson the Buddhists hold that Īśvara, the Supreme God, the Absolute, is *Nirvṛitti*, and

> *Nirvṛitti* is this: to know the world to be a mere semblance, unreal, and an illusion, – and to know God to be one, and *Pravṛitti* to be the opposite of this sublime science, and in fact the practice and notions of ordinary men. Therefore, according to *Nirvṛitti*, Ādi Buddha is the author and creator of all things without whom nothing can be done, whose care sustains the world and its inhabitants, and the moment he averts his face from them they become annihilated, and nothing remains but himself."[2]

Now, from [Prof.] Matter we learn that the God of Basilides was "unborn, unmanifested, nameless – He who hides himself in the plenitude of his perfections."

When he manifests these they take the form of countless beings, all analogous to himself. Each of these is not a mythical fancy without substance. Each is really God; and without him they and their words fade away into nothingness.

In connection with these emanations, [Prof.] Matter details what he considers a curious piece of letter puzzle, the "Abrasax." These letters make up three hundred and sixty-five, and Abrasax is the God that rules the Pleroma, the manifested world, the Indian *Pravṛitti*, as distinguished from the unmanifested, the Gnostic Buthos[/Abyss], the Indian *Nirvṛitti*. Abrasax is plainly the year-god.

In this letter puzzle the mightiest mysteries were said to be concealed.[3]

[Prof.] Matter tells us also that *Meithras*, the Persian Buddhist divinity, has a name whose Greek letters also make up three hundred and sixty-five, and who is also called "Word." Tertullian said of this god that it imitated the "Mystery" of the Resurrection. Fermicus, a Christian controversialist who lived in the fourth century, tells us what that "mystery" was. Every year Mithras was supposed to die at Easter. In the form of a stone he was buried with great pomp in a cave. Then in a day or two he rose again with much rejoicing. . . .

But the most important of the ideas recorded by [Prof.] Matter as held by Basilides, I take to be this: – That Abrasax was at once a single divine being, and also the entire body of the Emanations that were manifested (*la totalité des intelligences qui composent le Pleroma*).[3] Does not this bring strangely together the Buddhist and the [Gnostic] Christian Vice-God? Sangha also is at once: one individual and all the congregation of faithful souls. And St. Paul held the same idea that the "Christ" was the body of all the faithful: – "For in him the Pleroma of Divinity wholly dwelleth" (Col. 2:9).

Whilst Christianity remained Jewish all art illustration was impossible, as Mr. King in his "Gnostics" points out. This gives an importance to the Gnostic gems which filtered in as talismans.

[Prof.] Matter tells us that certain stones (*les pierres de Basilides*) were viewed with special importance. These are plainly what in England we call the "Gnostic Gems."

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[1]Excerpted from chapter XVII of Arthur Lillie's book, *India in Primitive Christianity* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1909), pp. 262-68.

[2]Hodgson, "Religion of Nepal," p. 46. [ML – Let me expand this too brief footnote by Lillie: Brian H. Hodgson, *Essays on the Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepāl and Tibet: Together with Further Papers on the Geography, Ethnology, and Commerce of those Countries* (London: Trübner & Co., 1874).]

[3]Matter, "Histoire du Gnosticisme," p. 413. [ML – Again Lillie is too brief & fails to mention a vol. no. – let me expand this also: Jacques Matter, *Histoire critique du gnosticisme, et de son influence sur les sectes religieuses et philosophiques des six premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne*, vols. I, II, & III (Paris: F.G. Levrault, 1828).]

Plate 24 gives some of the most important.

They throw much light on our special subject.

Epiphanius tells us that certain "heretics" even in his day had a god with serpent legs, "and they called it Abrasax." Tertullian also attacks certain Christians "who have taken unto themselves gods with wings, or with the heads of dogs, or of lions or serpents from the legs downwards."

Basilides died A.D. 136, and Epiphanius lived to about A.D. 400, so Abrasax (see Pl. 24, Fig. 1) must have been the symbolised representation of the manifested Supreme, the Logos, for a considerable time.

"Philo," says Keim, "described his god as a simple entity. He disclaimed for him every name, every quality, even that of the Good, the Beautiful, the Blessed, the One. Since he is still better than the good and higher than the Unity, he can never be known as _____ but only that he is. His perfect name is only the four mysterious letters J.H.V.H. – that is, pure being. It was the problem of theology as well as religion to shed the light of God upon the world and lead it again to God. But how could this being which was veiled from the world be brought to bear upon it. By Philo, as well as by all the philosophy of the time, the problem could only be soved illogically. Yet by modifying his exalted nature it might be done. If not by his being, yet by his work, he influences the world. His powers, his angels, all in it that is best and mightiest, the instrument, the interpreter, the mediator and messenger of God, his pattern and first-born, the Son of God, the Second God, even God himself, the divine Word which is Logos, communicate with the world."[4]

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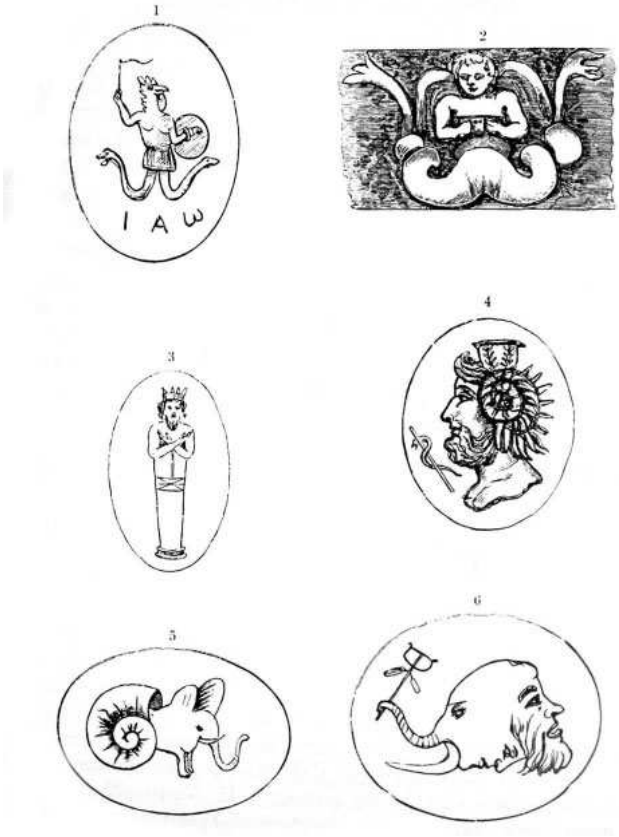
[4]Keim, "Jesus of Nazara," Vol. I, p. 281.

PLATE 24.



GNOSTIC GEMS.

The popular idea is that Philo got all his ideas about the Logos from Plato, but in Alexandria at Philo's date there were ideas added that could not have come from that source. The Yoga Śāstra of Patañjali was the chief Bible of the Mahāyāna Buddhists as we have seen, and in that work the inconceivable, the Great Absolute, took no interest in mortal affairs. This doctrine was transferred to Alexandria, and even to the Christians, for a French wit has styled Tertullian's "Placid" God a "*Dieu inutile*"; but Plato's rigid logic would not probably accept such a God, for if we can know nothing about the Great Absolute, how can we know that he takes no interest in mortal affairs? Then again the Word by the Gnostic Kabbalists was practically interpreted to mean the letters J.H.V.H., made into a divine being. This was plainly derived from the A.U.M. of the Yoga Śāstra. A third question that arises is this – Did Philo know anything of the Çingalese god Kattragam, and had Kattragam (or Kārttikeya) connection with the Gnostic time god, Abrasax. Kārttikeya as the God of War was very popular in Ceylon for the seaman Knox tells us that the shrines of the Dewales [Sanskrit: *devālayas*] bristled with weapons, but the Vihāras were quite without them.

Kattragam (like Abrasax) used the cock for a symbol. It figured on his banner. His temple was more honoured than the vihāra erected for the worship performed by the King. He received from Buddha the chief power to cure the sick, "especially those of royal blood"; also to perform miracles; to assist men in distress; and to do good to animals. Once a year he had in Ceylon a magnificent festival. All Ceylon assembled, and also Hindus from the Malabar and the Coromandal Coasts [of India]. . . .

Now, Abrasax and Padma-pāni, the Buddhist "Præsens Divus," according to Hodgson,[5] have each two serpents for legs. (See Fig. 2, Pl. 24, of Padmapāni, taken from a bas relief of the sculptures of Jemalgiri.) And the ritual of the followers of Śiva, when scrambling for the flesh and blood of Śiva as the dying year, seems certainly to have reached the Buddhists, for we find this amongst Hodgson's quotations: – "From between his (Padmapāni's) shoulders sprang Brahmā, from his forehead Mahā-deva [Śiva], from his two eyes the sun and moon, from his mouth the air, from his teeth Sarasvatī," and so on.[6] Remember that from the belly of the Śivan Victim sprang the Serpent King. Abrasax was certainly two serpents from the belly downwards.

Let us now compare Kattragam and the Logos.

"The Logos is superior to all the Angels." (*De Profugis*[/*De Fuga et Inventiones*, 101])

Kattragam as the god of war commands all the Devas [demigods / angels].

"The Logos is the Physician that heals all evil."

Kattragam in Ceylon is the chief healer as well as the chief fighter, practically identical functions when healing means battling with evil spirits. Hence the importance of Kattragam's gold sword, and the big shield of Abrasax.

Says Philo: – "The just man when he dies is translated to another state by the Logos, by whom the world was created; for God by his said Logos, by which he made all things, will raise the perfect man from the dregs of this world, and exalt him near himself." (*De Sacrificiis*)

Abrasax has a whip which makes him the Lord of Hell and supreme judge. The Christos of the Gnostics had the same function. Also he brought not peace but a sword, and could summon more than twelve legions of angels.

All this sheds a flood of light upon the Gnosticism of Alexandria. It was Buddhism filtered through Kappooism[7] of Ceylon. Samana Deva-rāja with his Nāgas is reproduced in Ialdibaoth, a serpent God with his seven serpent-headed sons. Then the Goddess Pattinee is equally prominent. It was the aim of Philo, one of the Gnostics, ever to be the "Servant of Sophia," the inspirer of all that is good. The most holy book of the Alexandrine version of the scriptures is called "The Book of Wisdom" (*Sophia*) in the same way that the tractates of the higher mysticism of the Buddhists are called *Prajñā-Pāramitā*, the "Wisdom of the other Bank."

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[5]Hodgson, "Religion of Nepāl," p. 88.

[6]Cited by Hodgson (p. 88) from the "*Guṇakāraṇḍa Vyūha*."

[7][*Kalpa*-ism / 'Apocalypticism', a vision based on Śiva's cyclical annihilation of the universe after the ever-repeating series of four ages (gold, silver, bronze, and iron). – **ML**]

Comment continued:

I would like to dilate on Āchāryā Murdock's remark that "the creators of the Christ myth did not simply take an already formed story, scratch out the name Osiris or Horus, and replace it with Jesus" (*Christ in Egypt*, p. 25). But, first, let me quote her at greater length (same page):

> Like the scholars of Egyptian myth who must create a narrative by piecing together bits of "biographical" material, it is our contention that the creators of the gospel tale likewise picked various themes and motifs from pre-Christian religions and myths, including and especially the Egyptian, and wove them together, using also the Jewish scriptures, to produce a unique version of the "mythos and ritual." In other words, the creators of the Christ myth did not simply take an already formed story, scratch out the name of Osiris or Horus, and replace it with Jesus.

And then let me quote Christian Lindtner's more specific view:

> The New Testament gospels are, by and large, literary mosaics, fabricated by lifting words and phrases from Buddhist gospels, combining them with words and phrases from the Old Testament. We are, therefore, not dealing with history, but with fiction.*

While, generally, agreeing with both these scholars, the Out of Egypt Theory would side with Lindtner's emphasis on the evangelists being well grounded in, and motivated by, Buddhist scriptures as they created what were to become the canonical Christian gospels.

The OET would suggest that in carrying out their work, these 'Christian' evangelists have created gospels which involve exceedingly complex multi-layered meta-narratives, and that this degree of complexity is to be found elsewhere only in the literature of India.

The great South Indian poet Daṇḍin, in the seventh century (CE), is credited with having composed a type of poem, called *dvisaṁdhāna-kāvya*. This poem could be read either as an account of the epic *Rāmāyaṇa* or, alternately, of the epic *Mahābhārata*. One particular manner of arbitrarily (vocally/mentally) dividing the long compound Sanskrit passages would result in the whole poem recounting the epic of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. But if the compound expressions were divided differently, it was instead the epic of the *Mahābhārata*. Which epic did Daṇḍin's *dvisaṁdhānakāvya* really relate? The answer is: Both. Unfortunately, this work of Daṇḍin's has been lost. We only have admiring reports of it.

In the same century, the great playwright, King Mahēndra-I, wrote one of the earliest extant Indian farces, *Bhagavadajjukam*. It is quite a coincidence, in the present context, that my colleague Prof. Bhat and I published an edition and translation of this Sanskrit farce as far back as 1978, and continued to study it over the next 27 years, issuing three more, revised editions of the play, the last two editions, under the title *Metatheater and Sanskrit Drama*.** What the poet Daṇḍin accomplished with his *dvisaṁdhāna-kāvya*, Mahēndra equaled in his own way with multiple suggested layers of drama *sustained* throughout the play, from beginning to end! In the nearly thirty years of our research on the metadramatic structure of Sanskrit drama, it never entered my mind that such a study would be relevant to gaining an understanding of the meta-narrative structure of passages in the New Testament. It was when I read such works as those of Lindtner and Murdock that I perceived the multi-layered domains of reference of passages in the Gospels. As Lindtner has remarked, the result is not only multi-layered but is also a 'literary mosaic' assembled from multiple sources! Or to use another metaphor, an impressive multi-layered literary patchwork quilt.

But the analogy I would like to use to explain these multi-layered domains of reference in the New Testament is from music. The words written in the New Testament passages represent one voice in a five part harmony (to deal only with the five *most important* sources). The other four voices represent the four

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*From "Be it Far from Thee, Lord!" (dated 14 Jan 2010) – one of Lindtner's short, "weekly" episodic discussions on various "News" topics on his 'Jesus is Buddha' site: < www.jesusisbuddha.com/ >.

***Metatheater and Sanskrit Drama* (Madras: Tambaram Research Associates, 1994, & Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1995); *Metatheater and Sanskrit Drama: Second, Revised and Enlarged Edition* (Madras: Tambaram Research Associates, 2005).

different layers of *suggested* meaning or reference. To illustrate this analogy, let us first consider Lindtner's treatment of [1] passages in the New Testament recounting the events around the 'Last Supper', which he sees as being derived primarily from [2] Buddhist scriptures. I will then continue commenting on the three other major layers of implied reference [3], [4], [5]. In my analysis, these are the five major layers or 'domains' of reference of the 'Last Supper':

[1] Christian (NT Gospels) . . . . . Last Supper
[2] Buddhist scriptures . . . . . Buddha's 'Last Supper'
[3] Jewish (Hebrew Bible) . . . . . Jewish 'Last Supper' (Passover & Shewbread)
[4] Egyptian inscriptions . . . . . Osiris's 'Last Supper' (in Annual Passion Play)
[5] Astrotheological myths . . . . . Stars & Annual Nile Flood & Seasonal Vegetal Rebirth

[2] *The Buddhist Voice with Its Domain of Scriptural Overtones*

Çundas – The Buddhist Judas – And an Old Song

Christian Lindtner, "News Bulletin": December 14, 2009

The main Buddhist sources for the legend of the Passover and the Traitor, are, as usual, to be found in the **M**ūla-**S**arvāstivāda-**V**inaya (**MSV**). Thus, in the **M**ahā-**P**arinirvāṇa-**S**ūtra (**MPS**) 26 (last part of the MSV), we read about how the Lord and the monks had their last (Sanskrit *paścimam*) meal in the home of a certain Çundas, the son of a smith, Sanskrit *karmāras*. The Christian version, a copy, is mainly found in Matthew 26:17-25; Mark 14:12-21; Luke 22:7-13, and John 26:20-25.

We are on the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread – a curious expression, rendering[, in fact,] Sanskrit *pūrvāhne*, or *pubbanhasamayam* (Pāli), MPS 26:14, i.e., 'early in the morning'. The Greek *asumôn* reflects the Sanskrit *samayam*. The Sanskrit word for "last" is *paś-ci-mam*, which becomes Greek *to pas-kha*, the Passover. In both sources there is the last meal taken with all the monks/disciples, but only in the New Testament is the last meal combined with the last words. I shall come back to this.

In Matthew, the disciples are instructed to prepare the last meal in the house of "a certain man", Greek: *ton deina* – not very helpful! The Greek *ton deina*, as will be obvious in a moment, is a pun on *Çun-daṁ-tha* accusative form of Çundas. Mark and Luke are a bit more helpful, for they describe the unknown host as bearing a pitcher of water. Poor disciples, for what if there were several unknown men in that town bearing pitchers of water? The person in question is the Buddhist Çundas, said to be the son, *putras*, of a smith, *karmāras*, MPS 26:14. The Buddha and the monks had their last meal together at Çundas' place.

The son of a *karmāras* becomes a man carrying a pitcher, *keramion*, of water. Sanskrit *karmāras* (accusative: *karmāram*) becomes Greek *keramion.* As they are sitting there together, one evil monk steals a golden bowl (other versions say it was of copper) and hides it in his sleeve. Only Çundas and the Lord notice this case of theft, whereby the evil monk obviously betrays the Buddhist "path".

In the Christian version, the man who puts his hand in the bowl is defined as the traitor, and his name is *Joudas*. John adds that he, *Joudas*, is the son of *Simôn Iskariotês*. The sense of that name is obscure, but here probably intended as a translation of the Sanskrit *karmāra-putras*. In Matthew 26:26 and the parallels, Jesus says: "Take (this, and) eat (it), for this is my body" The Sanskrit original is to be found a little later in the same Buddhist source, viz. MPS 42:10. Here, Tathāgata is surrounded by the monks, and he says to them: "Behold, monks, my body. See, monks, my body!" These are explicitly described as his last words to the monks, MPS 42:11.

The point of his words, I assume from the context, is to make the monks aware of his physical decrepitude that will soon end in his passing away. Not only does the Greek retain the two imperative forms of the verb, addressed to the same group of disciples/monks, but the *tou-to gar es-ti* – "for this is" – also renders the five syllables *ta-thā-ga-tas-ya* quite nicely. The disciples of Jesus are, in other words, invited to take and eat the body of Tathāgata – i.e. to become Buddhists. This becomes more easy to understand, when one recalls that the Tathāgata is an embodiment of the Buddhist Dharma. The bread, Greek *artos*, that Jesus took, reflects the Sanskrit *dharmas*.

Since the bread is the dharma, it follows that the bread-body is originally the *dharma-kāya*, familiar to all Buddhists. And this is what numerous Christians have been doing and still are doing – on many a Sunday. The purpose and sense of taking part in the Eucharist then, is to have a share in the body of the Tathāgata, the dharma-body. What else is the Lord's Supper?

After these incidents, Matthew 26:30 reports that they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. What hymn, exactly, did they sing? Matthew does not say. (Personal views of modern theologians are irrelevant.) The hymn they sang, or rather the hymn that the Lord sang, can be identified as Sutta-Nipāta, verses 83-90. These verses describe four kinds of monks, ending with the one who betrays the Path of Buddhism, i.e. by being a thief.

These verses are not only incorporated in the MPS, but, as said, they are also available in the old text Sutta-Nipāta, in Pāli and other versions. I am not aware of any Buddhist scholar prepared to question [the claim] that [the] Sutta-Nipāta belongs to the earliest strata of Buddhist literature. They are, in other words, pre-Christian. These verses are, therefore, the hymn to which Matthew alludes, 26:30.

Now someone may argue: Yes, it cannot be denied that Matthew and the other evangelists have words, phrases, motives etc. in common with MSV / MPS. But could it not be that the Buddhists copied from the New Testament? Answer: In that case the Buddhists would also have copied verses found in the old pre-Christian Sutta-Nipāta from some Christian source. But there is no such Christian source.

But could the Sutta-Nipāta not have belonged to some old, now lost Christian source, from which the Buddhists then copied? Answer: Perhaps, hypothetically, but in that case that early Christian source would have had to be in some Indian language (Pāli? Sanskrit?), and the contents would have been Buddhist, for it speaks of four kinds of Buddhist monks. That early Christian hymn would, in other words, have to be Buddhist!

Conclusion: Tathāgata had his last meal with the monks at Çundas' place. His last words, later, in another place, to the monks were: "Behold my body! See my body!"

The Christians made a new legend out of this. Çundas becomes J(o)udas, and J(o)udas became the name of the traitor, who was in fact the evil monk who stole a precious bowl. The thief was not identical with Çundas, but was present at his house and observed by Çundas.

The Lord's Supper first took place in the house of Çundas, which is said to have been in a village (*grāmaka*) called Pāpā, or – if we prefer the Pāli form – Pāvā, MPS 26:2. The second part, with the body of Tathāgata in the focus, took place later, in Kuśinagarī, MPS 42:11. The evangelists combined the last meal and the last words into a new unit. All this, therefore is fiction, not history.*

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Comment:

With this brief analysis of the connection between Buddhist and Christian versions of the "Last Supper", Lindtner solves, in an instant, the great Judas 'problem' arising from the wild variation between the canonical gospel accounts, on the one hand, and an apocryphal version, the newly translated Gospel of Judas, on the other. How could these different groups, so shortly after the presumed historical crucifixion of Jesus, hold such wildly variant interpretations of the character of Judas? Lindtner's solution is to show that Christian versions of the "Last Supper", both canonical and apocryphal, are free *non-historical* adaptations of pre-Christian Buddhist stories which are still extant today in the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-Vinaya / Mahā-Parinirvāṇa-Sūtra and other scriptures. In their free adaptations, the 'Christian' evangelists have combined two Buddhist characters (Çundas, a good and faithful lay-disciple, and the anonymous 'evil' thief of a monk) into one Christian disciple, Judas. The canonical evangelists chose to portray Judas, stressing only his semi-alter-ego, the evil thief of a monk. The author of the Gospel of Judas, on the other hand, has chosen to portray Judas as Jesus' close disciple (a *good* disciple like the Buddha's faithful Çundas) striving to carry out the wishes of Jesus – but, in doing so, appearing to others as a betrayer (in the manner of the evil Buddhist monk).

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*From "Çundas – the Buddhist Judas – and an Old Song" (dated 14 Dec 2009) – one of Lindtner's short, "weekly" episodic discussions on various "News" topics on his 'Jesus is Buddha' site. Slightly edited by ML.

In the Buddhist accounts, Çundas *does*, in a way, cause the Buddha's death. Çundas unwittingly serves a dish, supposedly a delicacy, to the Buddha, which in actuality turns out to cause his fatal food poisoning! This is purely accidental on the part of Çundas. And he is terribly upset. The Buddha sends his companion monk, Ānanda, to console Çundas and assure him that he was not at fault. So we can now understand how the Christian versions (canonical and apocryphal) of the Last Supper have combined in different ways Çundas and the 'thief of a monk with his hand on the bowl' to create their very different portraits of Jesus' disciple, Judas. (See Appendix A.)

Another Buddhist 'Judas'?

To complicate the matter further, the anonymous thief of a monk in the episode above is not the monk usually identified as the Buddhist counterpart to Judas Iscariot. That role of dishonor is typically assigned to the Buddha's disciple, Devadatta, variously said to be a cousin, cousin *and* brother-in-law, or no relative at all of the Buddha.

Reginald Ray, in his book, *Buddhist Saints in India*, has produced a penetrating study of Devadatta, among the other saints. As with Judas, there are two diametrically opposed points of view of Devadatta in the Buddhist scriptures:

> Devadatta appears prominently in the Nikāya texts as the Buddha's cousin and archrival, who consistently competes with the Blessed One and tries to overthrow him. As depicted in his legends, Devadatta is, in fact, an inveterate evildoer who is driven by ambitious and hateful intentions and performs a variety of pernicious deeds. Thus he tries, at various times, to supplant the Buddha, to bring the *saṁgha* to ruin, and even to kill the master through one or another diabolical scheme. . . .
>
> But the portrait of Devadatta as an evildoer is, within the Indian Buddhist corpus, not entirely consistent. In fact, there are indications, however slight, of another, quite different Devadatta, an impecable saint whose sanctity is acknowledged by other Buddhist saints, including Śāriputra and even the Buddha himself. In the *vinaya* of the Sarvāstivāda, for example, we learn that for twelve years following his admission into the order, Devadatta conducts himself with faultless deeds and thoughts. He reads and recites the *sūtras*, lives according to proper discipline, and strives in his practice of dharma; in the Aṅguttaranikāya Devadatta reveals himself as one who has the right view and can preach the correct doctrine. . . .
>
> The theme of Devadatta's saintliness is affirmed in the *Udāna*, where it is the Buddha who praises him. Devadatta is mentioned as a Buddhist saint among other great Buddhist saints. In this account, eleven saints approach the Buddha, Devadatta and ten others – including the greatest disciples of the Buddha, listed, in the Pāli, as (1) Sāriputta, (2) Mahāmoggallāna, (3) Mahākassapa, (4) Mahākaccāyana, (5) Mahākoṭṭhita, (6) Mahākappina, (7) Mahācunda, (8) Anuruddha, (9) Revata, and (11) Ānanda; Devadatta is tenth in this list, between Revata and Ānanda.*

Ray then raises the question of "why Devadatta is on the one hand vilified as the very embodiment of evil and on the other depicted as a realized saint" (p.163). His answer will be that these diametrically opposed views grew out of a fourth century BCE schism in the Brotherhood (Sangha/*Saṁgha*) which at first reflected only a difference in views about the proper form that Buddhism should take – the different positions being these: on the one hand, the view of the legendary "Devadatta" that Buddhism had become too lax and should return to the earlier, more ascetic form of Buddhism, in which the *bhikṣus* were homeless, wandering mendicants, forest dwellers – while on the other hand, a view upholding the "classical settled monasticism" (as it had come to exist in the fourth century BCE). The legend of Devadatta as an evil disciple of the Buddha began to take form only after the Sthaviras (Pāli: *Thēra*s) had split from the Mahāsāṁghika, in the fourth century BCE. According to the legend, Devadatta, together with four other monks, approached the Buddha to ask him to institute five ascetic practices, making them mandatory on all monks, for life!**

> Lord, the lord in many ways speaks in praise of desiring little, of being contented, of expunging (evil), of being punctilious, of what is gracious, of decrease (of the obstructions), of putting forth energy. Lord, these five items are conducive, to contentment. . . .

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*Reginald A. Ray, *Buddhist Saints in India: A Study in Buddhist Values and Orientations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 162. [The ***12th***, unmentioned, disciple was surely Āmrapālī! – ML]

**Ibid., p. 164

[1] It were good, lord, if the monks for as long as life lasted, should be forest dwellers; whoever should betake himself to the neighborhood of a village, sin [*vajja*] would besmirch him.

[2] For as long as life lasts let them be beggars for alms; whoever should accept an invitation [to dine], sin would besmirch him.

[3] For as long as life lasts let them be wearers of robes taken from the dust-heap; whoever should accept a robe given by a householder, sin would besmirch him.

[4] For as long as life lasts let them live at the foot of a tree; whoever should go under cover, sin would besmirch him.

[5] For as long as life lasts let them not eat fish and flesh; whoever should eat fish and flesh, sin would besmirch him.*

The Buddha gave a measured reply to Devadatta and his companions based on the concept of the "Middle Way" enunciated in his very first teaching after he became enlightened:

> Enough Devadatta. . . . Whoever wishes, let him be a forest-dweller; whoever wishes; let him dwell in the neighborhood of a village; whoever wishes, let him be a beggar for alms; whoever wishes, let him accept an invitation; whoever wishes, let him wear rags taken from the dust-heap; whoever wishes, let him accept a householder's robes. For eight months, Devadatta, lodging at the foot of a tree is permitted by me. . . . Fish and flesh are pure in respect of three points: if they are not seen, heard or suspected (to have been killed for him).**

As Ray summarizes (p. 164): "The Buddha, in effect, will allow Devadatta's austerities as optional practices for *bhikṣus* but will not make them compulsory on all and certainly not 'for as long as life lasts'."

Ray (pp. 169-70) quotes André Bareau's analysis identifying the three stages in the development of the Devadatta legend in the *Skandhaka* section of the *vinaya* of the schools:

1. In the earliest, pre-schism account of *Saṁghabheda* in the *Skandhaka*, Devadatta does not appear at all (Mahāsāṁghika).

2. Devadatta enters the post-schism Skandhaka of the schools deriving from the Sthaviras. Here he provokes the division of the community because he wishes to insist on a certain standard of rigor for all bhikṣus. Bareau comments, "the only fault of this person is having caused a temporary rupture in the saṁgha and revealing himself more strict than the Buddha. Nothing leads to doubt about his sincerity or permits the attribution to him of bad motives."

3. Finally, in the latest stratum, Devadatta is accused of being filled with greed, pride, and ambition and of attempting various crimes, to set himself in the Buddha's stead. . . . Bareau remarks, "the desire to condemn Devadatta and to make him completely odious is too clear for one to have confidence in this new portrait, which is nothing but pure calumny."***

Ray concludes (p. 172):

> It seems clear that the core of the Devadatta legend, and particularly the vitriolic nature of the condemnation of this saint, is best understood as the expression of a controversy between a proponent (and his tradition) of forest [ascetic] Buddhism and proponents of settled monasticism, a controversy that in the sources is seen from the viewpoint of the monastic side.
>
> There can be no doubt that Devadatta's schism is not an event imagined by Buddhist authors, but is a historic fact, as shown by the evidence provided by the two Chinese pilgrims, Fa-hsien and Hsüan-tsang. Fa-hsien, for example reports that near Śrāvastī there was a community of disciples following Devadatta who rendered homage to the three previous buddhas, but not to Śākyamuni. . . . Hsüan-tsang, some two hundred years later, in the seventh century C.E., confirms the existence of disciples of Devadatta living in

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**Vinaya* (Pāli) 3:171 in I.B. Horner, trans., *The Book of Discipline*, vol. 1, *Suttavibhanga*, pp. 296-97.

***Vinaya* (Pāli) 3:171 in I.B. Horner, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

****André Bareau, "Étude du bouddhisme," *Annuaire du Collège de France*, 1988-89, p. 542.

three monasteries in Bengal "in which in accordance with the teaching of Devadatta, milk products were not taken as food."[1] This passage suggests adherence to a code more strict than those typical of Buddhist monks (though in Hsüan-tsang's time Devadatta's disciples live in monasteries!) . . . still in existence long (at least a millennium) after its separation from mainstream Buddhism.[2]

Parallel Schisms Created Parallel Traitors?

What parallels could we find between 'Çundas+thieving monk/Devadatta', on the one hand, and Judas Iscariot, on the other?

The earliest schism in the young Christian churches seems to have arisen between Jewish and Gentile Christians. R. Dean Anderson, in an internet essay, "Jews, Judaisers and Paul,"[3] notes that:

> From *Acts 15:5* (cf. *Acts 21:20-24*) we learn that a number of Pharisees became Christians, and yet . . . they insisted on both circumcision and the keeping of the law of Moses. Out of this group came the Judaising ***heretics*** who converted the churches in the region of Galatia to their doctrine (see [Paul's] letter to the Galatians). [Page 2, emphasis added]

Anderson adds to these New Testament passages the voices of early church fathers:

> Already mid. second century we hear in general terms from Justin Martyr (*dial*. 47) of the Judaising churches which uphold all the laws of Moses. Other sources describe the sect known as Ebionites. Irenaeus (*haer*. 1.26) tells us that they followed the laws of Moses, repudiated the apostle Paul as an apostate from Moses (cf. Origen *Cels*. 5.65), held the earthly Jerusalem in high esteem, and used only (a form of) the Gospel of Matthew. They seem to have also denied the virgin birth of Jesus, who was taken to be a son of Joseph. . . . [P. 4]

And:

> It is perhaps worthwhile to briefly note that the churches of the Judaisers continued to exist throughout the period of the early church, not only in Palestine and Syria but also in Asia Minor. Apart from various testimonies among the early church fathers we also have the evidence of Judaistic-Christian grave inscriptions (particularly from Asia Minor). [Same page]

Warren E. Berkley, in another internet essay, "Zeal without Knowledge,"[4] writes:

> The converted Jew in the first century might still have some lingering questions about some things that had happened under the power and influence of the gospel:
>
> The annulling of the Mosaic law.
>
> The inclusion of Gentiles in God's family.
>
> The end of the Jewish theocratic system.
>
> These three chapters [*Romans*, chps. 9, 10, and 11] are concerned with these very real problems and questions entertained by Paul's Jewish readers.

I think we can reasonably conclude from these comments that Judas Iscariot is a stand-in for those Jewish Christians – "heretics" in the eyes of Paul and the evangelists – who refused to give up their cherished Jewish heritage. And, sometimes, the evangelists seem to be including in their wrath even Jews who were not believers in Jesus the Messiah.

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[1]Thomas Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, 629-645 A.D.*, 2 vols., T.W. Rhys Davids and S.W. Bushnell, eds., London, 1904-1905; reprint, Delhi, 1973, p. 191. [Yuan Chwang = Hsüan-tsang.]

[2]Bareau, *op. cit.*, 544.

[3]Rev. Dr. R. Dean Anderson's posting on < katwijk.gkv.nl/anderson/pdfenglish/Judaisers.pdf >, last revised on 10 Aug 2006 – excerpts.

[4]Warren E. Berkley's posting on < www.bible.ca/ef/expository-romans-10-1-3.htm >, from Expository Files 5.9; September 1998.

Further Comment:

The church father Origen (see *De Principiis*, iv. 1, 22 and *Contra Celsum*, ii, 1) understood the Ebionites' name to have the meaning of 'the Poor', which he ironically interpreted as being '*poor* in understanding'! Obviously, it wasn't their understanding but rather their ascetic lifestyle which was 'poor'. Now, in Mark 2:18, we see that Jesus and his disciples' lack of asceticism had come in for criticism:

> Once when John's disciples and the Pharisees were keeping a fast, some people came to him [Jesus] and said, 'Why is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?'
>
> *– The New English Bible*

If we turn to John 12:1-6, we find Jesus at another banquet:

> Six days before the Passover festival Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived whom he had raised from the dead. There a supper was given in his honour, at which Martha served, and Lazarus sat among the guests with Jesus. Then Mary brought a pound of very costly perfume, pure oil of nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped them with her hair, till the house was filled with the fragrance. At this, Judas Iscariot, a disciple of his – the one who was to betray him – said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?' He said this not out of any care for the poor, but because he was a thief; he used to pilfer the money put into the common purse, which was in his charge. . . .
>
> *– NEB*

According to the 'Out of Egypt Theory', these accounts are meta-parables – allegory – not historical happenings. The evangelist is writing in the 2nd cent. CE about allegorical happenings portrayed as taking place in the 3rd decade of the 1st cent. CE, but reflecting the criticism leveled against the Buddha, himself, in the 6th cent. BCE, before his Enlightenment, by his first five disciples, when he gave up his extreme fasting – as well as the criticism, in later centuries, by various Indian ascetic groups which considered the Buddha and his monks to have abandoned ascetic ways altogether!

So, to bring this section to a close, do we have here, then, a crypto-Buddhist 'Christian' variation on an earlier Buddhist theme: a schism between severe ascetic factions, on the one hand, and the merely 'low maintenance' major group, on the other? Devadatta and the nameless 'thief of a monk' get vilified in the fourth century BCE by the 'settled monastics' and Judas Iscariot gets vilified in the second century CE by the so-called "orthodox" evangelists.

'Heretical' ascetic groups accept as a challenge 'non-heretical' groups' wide-spreading allegorical tales (myths), obviously aware that they are only that, but answer them with counter-allegorical tales. Over the decades and centuries, some of these tales have become accepted as Gospel Truth. This process was going on in both India and in the Mediterranean countries to the west. Allegorical battles were also waged in India between other religious groups, not involving the Buddhists, such as between sectarian Śaivites and Vaiṣṇavites, and between Hindus and Jains.

[3] *The Jewish Voice with Its Domain of Hebrew Bible Overtones*

The New Testament evangelists, in creating their legendary account of the first century CE life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, were continually and openly relating Jesus and his activities to personalities, prophecies, and events recorded in the Hebrew Bible, while keeping their Buddhist sources deliberately hidden. This was the process by which they were transforming their Buddhist sources into Judaic meta-narratives in order to propagate the Buddhist Dharma among the nations of the West.

Even in the domain of the Hebrew Bible there are multiple resonances associated with New Testament events. Thus, an event in the New Testament, may have multiple Hebrew Bible overtones which enhance its meaning. The word in Sanskrit for 'overtone', in both its musical and suggestive literary sense, is '*dhvani*'.

Jon D. Levenson, in his book, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity*, describes how some of the multiple overtones of sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible resonate in passages of the New Testament's 'Last Supper'. For instance, consider Levenson's connecting the 'Joseph story' to the Judas story:

> What the Joseph story more than any of the other tales of the beloved son contributes to the Gospels is the theme of the disbelief, resentment, and murderous hostility of the family of the one mysteriously chosen to rule. In the Christian story, this theme is concentrated in the figure of Judas, who betrays Jesus in exchange for thirty pieces of silver (Matt 26:14-16, 20-25, 47-56 and parallels). It would seem more than possible that the episode of Judas has been molded upon the sale of Joseph for twenty pieces of silver in Gen 37:26-28 (if "they" in v 28 is understood to be the brothers rather than the Midianite traders), an arrangement suggested by none other than his brother Judah. The names are the same. The number in Genesis correlates with Lev 27:5, which fixes the worth of a male between five and twenty years of age at twenty shekels. It will be recalled that Joseph is seventeen when he is sold into slavery (v 2).*

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*Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 202-203.

Throughout Levenson's book, the crucifixion of Jesus is connected by him to that and other earlier sacrifices in the Hebrew Bible:

> For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. (John 3:16)
>
> The way in which God is likely to have "given" (*edōken*) his son should not be missed. The verb takes us back to where we began our inquiry, with the gruesome command of Exod 22:28b: "you shall give Me the first-born among your sons." This half-verse is not alone in its indication that the father's *gift* of the son was the way in which the ancient practice of child sacrifice was conceived. The nature of the "giving" to which John 3:16 refers merits special emphasis, for among many Christians the tendency to sentimentalize the notion of love that pervades the New Testament and attains special prominence in John is longstanding and powerful. So let it be said directly: the father's gift that the Fourth Gospel has in mind is one that necessarily entails a bloody slaying of Jesus, very much, as we have seen, along the lines of the slaughtering of the paschal lamb that Jesus becomes and also supersedes. In John's theology, the killing of Jesus, like that of the passover offering, enables those marked for death to live nonetheless. In a sense, Jesus provides those who believe in him with immortality by dying in their stead – except that, as in the cases of the beloved sons [Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph] in the Hebrew Bible, Jesus' brush with death proves reversible and he is, like them, miraculously restored to those who love him but have had every reason to give up all hope for his return.**

Besides analyzing the meaning of the Gospels' accounts of the 'Last Supper' and the impending crucifixion of Jesus, Levenson also discusses the Pauline idea of 'salvation'. As *Advocatus Diaboli*, I quote from his book, p. 213, asking to be pardoned for my perhaps antagonistic and jarring interpolations:

> An Isaac-Jesus typology does indeed develop in early [crypto-Buddhist] Christian literature, but it must not be projected into texts that move in another, and much more radical direction. For Gal 3:13-14 cannot be detached from vv 15-16, and v 16 makes clear that Isaac does not foreshadow Jesus at all. Rather, Paul argues that the "descendant" who is the heir of the promise to Abraham is not and never was Isaac or the Jewish people collectively. His whole point about the putative semantic singularity of the word "and to your descendant" is to connect the promise with Jesus[/Buddha] alone. The descendant of Abraham who is Isaac has disappeared from the story altogether. Paul never mentions his name. If Gal 3:13-16 is still to be seen as a typology, it is a typology of such intensity that the [Buddhist/Christian] antitype has dislodged the [Jewish] archetype: in Paul's theology Jesus[/Buddha] has so thoroughly displaced Isaac that even Genesis testifies not to the second of the Jewish patriarchs, but to the [crypto-Buddhist] messiah of Christian belief. Paul's [Buddhist] Jesus does not *manifest* Isaac. He *supersedes* him.

If the author of the Pauline letters was a successor of the Buddhist missionary monks who were sent west to the Mediterranean area kingdoms, in the third century BCE, as my interpolations above are meant to suggest, why did he and the evangelists transform the demise of their founder, Buddha, from a death by accidental food poisoning to the cruel crucifixion/impalement of his allegorical stand-in, Jesus? Levenson has pointed to the answer in his book, p. 225:

> John's statement in 3:16 that God gave his only begotten son in order to secure life for the believers thus almost certainly found rich resonance in the religiously syncretistic world of Greco-Roman antiquity. For it not only drew upon the classic Jewish elaboration of the theme of the beloved son but also recalled the ancient but persistent Canaanite story of the deity who sacrificed his only begotten son. . . .

(We, thus, see that the Greco-Roman and Canaanite cultures are further implied domains in addition to the five major ones initially listed above. The evangelists wanted to attract a wide spectrum of converts!)

Levenson has dealt, here, with Hebrew Bible overtones struck by passages in the New Testament dealing with the betrayal, crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. These are only a few of such overtones. Consider the great number of overtones from Matthew's gospel which are listed on the following page and note that, though a large number, it still does not include the parallels mentioned by Levenson in the last paragraph, facing page.

**Ibid., p. 223.

Courtesy of Kenneth Humphreys (< http://www.jesusneverexisted.com/matthew.htm >), here is a list of passages from Matthew's Gospel, with references to corresponding passages in the Hebrew Bible which produce a symphony of Jewish scriptural overtones (fine print added by ML):

Referenced by	**Matthew**	
Matthew	1:23	(Isaiah 7:14) "A virgin (LXX) / young woman (MT) will be with child and will give birth to a son."
Jewish leaders	2:6	(Micah 5:2) "[O]ut of you [Bethlehem] will come for me, one who will be ruler over Israel."
Matthew	2:14,15	(Hosea 11:1) "When Israel was a child, . . . out of Egypt I called my son."
Matthew	2:16,18	(Jeremiah 31:15) "Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted. . . ."
Matthew	2:23	(Judges 13:5) ". . . because the boy is to be a Nazirite."
Matthew	3:3	(Isaiah 40:3) "A voice of one calling in the desert. . . ."
Jesus	4:4	(Deuteronomy 8:3) ". . . man does not live on bread alone but on every word. . . ."
Devil	4:6	(Psalm 91:11,12) "[H]e will command his angels . . . to guard you in all your ways."
Jesus	4:7	(Deuteronomy 6:16) "Do not test the LORD your God as you did at Massah."
Jesus	4:10	(Deuteronomy 6:13) "Fear [/worship] the LORD your God, serve him only. . . ."
Matthew	4:16	(Isaiah 9:1,2) "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light."
Jesus	5:21	(Exodus 20:13) "You shall not murder."
Jesus	5:27	(Exodus 20:14) "You shall not commit adultery."
Jesus	5:31	(Deuteronomy 24:1) ". . . he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce. . . ."
Jesus	5:38	(Exodus 21:24) ". . . eye for eye, tooth for tooth. . . ."
Jesus	5:43	(Leviticus 19:18) ". . . love your neighbor as yourself." (But Lev. doesn't mention hating one's enemy!)
Jesus	6:11	(Proverbs 30:8) ". . . give me only my daily bread."
Matthew	8:17	(Isaiah 53:4) ". . . he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. . . ."
Jesus	9:13	(Hosea 6:6) ". . . I desire mercy, not sacrifice. . . ."
Jesus	10:35,6	(Micah 7:6) ". . . son dishonors his father, a daughter rises up against her mother [etc.]"
Jesus	11:10	(Malachi 3:1) "I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me."
Jesus	12:7	(Hosea 6:6) "I desire mercy, not sacrifice."
Matthew	12:18,21	(Isaiah 42:1,4) "Here is my servant . . . and he will bring justice to the nations."
Jesus	13:14,15	(Isaiah 6:9,10) "You will be hearing, but never understanding; . . . seeing, but never perceiving."
Matthew	13:35	(Psalm 78:2) "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old."
Jesus	15:4	(Exodus 20:12; 21:17) "Honor your father and your mother."
Jesus	15:8,9	(Isaiah 29:13) "These people . . . honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."
Jesus	18:16	(Deuteronomy 19:15) "A [crime] must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."
Jesus	19:4	(Genesis 1:27) "God created man in his own image, . . . male and female he created them."
Jesus	19:5	(Genesis 2:24) "A man will leave his father & mother & be united to his wife, & they will become one flesh.
Jesus	19:18,19	(Exodus 20:12,16) "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land. . . ."
Matthew	21:5	(Zechariah 9:9) "[Y]our king comes to you, . . . gentle and riding on a donkey."
	21:9	(Psalm 118:26) "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." **[Unreferenced overtone – crowd]**
Jesus	21:13	(Jeremiah 7:11) "Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you?"
Jesus	21:16	(Psalm 8:2) "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise."
Jesus	21:42	(Psalm 118:22,23) "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone," etc.
Jesus	22:32	(Exodus 3:6) "I am . . . the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob."
Jesus	22:37	(Deuteronomy 6:5) "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your strength."
Jesus	22:39	(Leviticus 19:18) "[L]ove your neighbor as yourself."
Jesus	22:44	(Psalm 110:1) "The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand' . . . ."
Jesus	23:39	(Psalm 118:26) "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."
Jesus	24:15	(Daniel 9:27) ". . . on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation. . . ."
Jesus	24:29	(Isaiah 13:10; 34:4) "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light."
Jesus	26:31	(Zechariah 13:7) "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."
Matthew	27:10	(Zechariah 11:12,13) "So they paid me thirty pieces of silver." **[Gospel's passage incorrectly says Jeremiah!]**
	27:35	(Psalm 22:18) "They divide my garments among them, and cast lots for my clothing." **[Unreferenced – Matthew]**
	27:46	(Psalm 22:1) "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" **[Unreferenced overtone – Jesus]**

Comment:

In the Hebrew Bible, the earliest overtones foreshadowing the elements of the Eucharist which commemorate Jesus' sacrifice are to be found in the incident of the blessing of Abra[ha]m by Melchizedek (*Genesis 14:18-20*). Abram and his men were returning after defeating his foes and rescuing his nephew Lot together with his dependents and flocks:

> 18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of
> God Most High, 19 and he blessed Abram, saying,
>
> "Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
> Creator of heaven and earth.
> 20 And blessed be God Most High,
> Who delivered your enemies into your hands."
>
> Then Abram gave him a tenth of all the spoils of war.

• • • • • • • • •

Melchizedek*

King of Salem [Jerusalem] and priest of [God] Most High in the time of Abraham. He brought out bread and wine, blessed Abram, and received tithes from him (Genesis 14:18-20). Reference is made to him in Psalm 110:4, where the victorious ruler [in the psalm] is declared to be "priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." . . . The fact that he [Melchizedek] united the royal with the priestly dignity, like all ancient (heathen) kings, made him a welcome type to the composer of the triumphal song (Psalm 110).

Type of Ancient Monotheism.

But to the Jewish propagandists of Alexandria, who were eager to win proselytes for Judaism without submitting them to the rite of circumcision, Melchizedek, appealed with especial force as a type of the monotheist of the pre-Abrahamic time or of non-Jewish race, like Enoch. Like Enoch, too, he was apotheosized. He was placed in the same category with Elijah, the Messiah ben Joseph, and the Messiah ben David. . . . The singular feature of supernatural origin is ascribed to all four, in that they are described as being "without father and without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the son of God abiding forever" (Hebrews 7:2-3; comp. Ruth. R. 5:3, where the original text [see "Pugio Fidei," p. 125] referred also to Psalm 110:4, Isaiah 3:2, and Zechariah 6:12, comp. Yalk., Reubeni Bereshit, 9d; Epiphanius, "Hæresis," 4:3). According to Midr. Teh. to Psalm 37, Abraham learned the practise of charity from Melchizedek. Philo speaks of him as "the logos, the priest whose inheritance is the true God" ("De Allegoriis Legum," 3:26).

The Samaritans identified the city of Salem with their sanctuary on Mount Gerizim (see LXX., Genesis 33:18; comp. Eusebius, "Præparatio Evangelica," 9:17).**

The Melchizedek priesthood and Christianity***

[Some] Christians believe that Jesus is the Messiah spoken of as "a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4), and so Jesus plays the role of High Priest once and for all. Jesus is considered a priest in the order of Melchizedek because, like Melchizedek, Jesus was not a Levite, and thus would not qualify for the Levitical priesthood (Heb. 7:13-17).

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the New Testament discusses this subject considerably, listing the following reasons for why the priesthood of Melchizedek is superior to the Aaronic priesthood:

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*Excerpt from the article by Isidore Singer and Kaufmann Kohler, downloaded from the online version of the 12 volume *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1901-1906), < JewishEncyclopedia.com >, which recently became part of the public domain.

**Bibliography: Friedländer, *Antichrist*, 1901, pp. 88-89.

***From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: < en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melchizedek_priesthood >.

1. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek; later, the Levites would receive tithes from their countrymen. Since Aaron was in Abraham's loins then, it was as if the Aaronic priesthood were paying tithes to Melchizedek (Heb. 7:4-10).
2. The one who blesses is always greater than the one being blessed. Thus, Melchizedek was greater than Abraham. As Levi was yet in the loins of Abraham, it follows that Melchizedek is greater than Levi (Heb. 7:7-10).
3. If the priesthood of Aaron were effective, God would not have called a new priest in a different order in Psalm 110 (Heb. 7:11).
4. The basis of the Aaronic priesthood was ancestry; the basis of the priesthood of Melchizedek is everlasting life. That is, there is no interruption due to a priest's death (Heb. 7:8, 15-16, 23-25).
5. Christ, being sinless, does not need a sacrifice for his own sins (Heb. 7:26-27).
6. The priesthood of Melchizedek is more effective because it required a single sacrifice once and for all (Jesus), while the Levitical priesthood made endless sacrifices (Heb. 7:27).
7. The Aaronic priests serve (or, rather, served) in an earthly copy and shadow of the heavenly Temple, which Jesus serves in (Heb. 8:5). . . .

Melchizedek gave Abraham **bread** and **wine**, which [some] Christians consider symbols of the [prospective] body and blood of Jesus Christ, the sacrifice to confirm a covenant.

• • • • • • • • •

Comment:

This is a very interesting episode, indeed! A Gentile, royal high priest blesses the Hebrew Patriarch, Abra[ha]m, in the name of their presumably jointly worshipped 'God Most High'! No genealogy is given in the Hebrew Bible for Melchizedek. If there had been, there could have been a rival tribal population to compete with the Israelites – and one which could claim superiority over the Israelites, since their king and high priest was the one who blessed Abra[ha]m, and, thus, he would be considered superior to the one he blessed!

But the mysterious nature of Melchizedek, a person without known mother or father, birth or death, allowed some Christians to claim that their apotheosized Messiah was the Divine Royal Priest and Judge in the order of Melchizedek as prophesied in Psalm 110. Some Christians went even further, claiming that Melchizedek *was* Jesus pre-incarnate-in-Bethlehem. Of course, anyone who makes this last claim would have to accept re-incarnation!

Not all Christians were happy with this equation. First, the blessing of Abra[ha]m's military success would hardly fit comfortably the Prince of Peace! Second, neither would the monastic crypto-Buddhist/Christians be happy with a blessing which involved an offering of the intoxicant wine!

This brings us to the very heart of the great parting of ways of various groups of the crypto-Buddhist/Christians. On the one hand, the proto-Christians such as the Therapeutæ would not have had anything to do with drinking wine. Neither would some of the Essenes. Monastic Christianity, which developed out of pre-Christian crypto-Buddhist-Judaic (but multi-ethnic) monasticism, would have followed this teetotaling path, as far as its members' personal practice was concerned. Lapsed-monastic Christianity, in towns and cities, would have been open to adopting the behavior of other religious groups and would probably have accepted the (moderate) consumption of wine, and even the ritual use of wine along with bread, as in the Jerusalem Temple.

Gnostic Christian groups, in general (but *not* the so-called 'libertines'), followed Buddhism's original spirit more closely, keeping to its monastic ideals, and openly turning away from Jewish views out of tune with Buddhism, demoting the Judaic creator God to the status of an inferior Demiurge.

It should be remembered that Buddhism, from its beginning, was against priestly ritualism, especially its primitive form involving bloody sacrifice. So the priestly ritualism of the Jerusalem Temple, with its offerings of sacrificed animals and the intoxicant wine would have been intrinsically objectionable.

What process, then, in crypto-Buddhist Christianity made way for what eventually would become Christianity's central 'sacrament': the Eucharist? To solve this riddle, one should come to an understanding that the Gospels (canonical and non-canonical) are not to be taken as historical accounts, but rather as long narrative meta-parables. We may even hazard a guess that the canonical Gospels' Passion narratives may have been deliberately fashioned after a crypto-Buddhist/Christian reinterpretation of the Osirian Passion Play, performed annually in Alexandria,

in an effort to gradually wean away Egyptian converts from their immensely ancient and immensely popular tradition. This practice would have followed the crypto-Buddhists' skillful stratagem (*upāya-kauśalya*) of proselytizing by adapting their Buddhistic message of the Dharma to local conditions and then, hopefully, slowly elevating the converts' understanding to a higher, closer approach to the True Dharma. However, as the decades rolled by, their adaptation of the Osirian drama resisted supersession. And Christianity today has, embedded in itself, the contradiction of the *hope* of resurrection to an earthly-type of life-everlasting, on the one hand, together with Buddhist monasticism's *wariness* of life's pleasures, on the other! If our analysis is accurate, it would provide another reason why Alexandria should be viewed as the real birth-place of Christianity – not Jerusalem and its surrounding country. However, Jerusalem, as the sacred center of Judaism, would have been central to the setting of any Judæo-Christian reinterpretation of the Osirian Passion Play, with its Holy Family of Osiris, Isis, and Horus. The crypto-Buddhist reinterpretation of the dramatic Serapean festivities, with its bloody crucifixion or impalement of their apotheosized Master, was only an allegorical illustration of the Buddha's compassionate precept of being ready to lay down one's life for others. However, the metropolitan Christian churches, in the second and third centuries, *re*-reinterpreted this allegory and transformed it into the basis of a doctrine of atonement through vicarious suffering – requiring only faith in the Redeemer! This new doctrine was launched along with changes to the Therapeutæ's simple bread-and-water thanksgiving ritual at their dining table, borrowing from the Egyptian (Serapean) and mystery religions the idea of sharing in their god's triumph over death when consuming bread and drink, which now represent the divine presence within them. Only in the third century, were the metropolitan bishops able, gradually, to introduce into the monasteries this sacramental interpretation of the bread-and-water ritual. For some decades, of course, the monastics would not accept the use of wine as drink and would stick to water. The secularized city clergy would have begun to adopt the long-standing custom of other religions and use wine with the bread. Note, however, that the canonical Gospels, diplomatically, never use the word 'wine' – only '*cup*'! – thus acknowledging the great divide. The challenge for the historian is to bridge the gap between the 'Pentecostal' (every 50 days) banquets of the proto-Christian crypto-Buddhist Therapeutæ, with their regular diet of bread and *water* as substitute for the Jerusalem Temple's Shewbread and *Wine*, with no hint yet of any Gospel Eucharist, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the later Christian Agape feasts highlighted by the Gospel's commemorative Eucharist, with the sacred elements, the Bread and the '*Cup*'.

Philo describes how the Therapeutæ view their banquet as being ritually related to the thank-offering of the Shewbread and drink to YḤWḤ in the Jerusalem Temple, the Therapeutæ elders (both men and *women*) taking on, in a fashion, the role of the Jewish priests! This amounts to an abolishment of any elite priesthood!:

> *81* When [the singing of hymns is over], the young men [deacons] bring in the table . . . on which is the supremely hallowed food, leavened bread seasoned with salt mixed with hyssop, out of reverence for the holy table set up in the sacred vestibule [of the Jerusalem Temple]. *82* For on the latter [the table of the Jerusalem Temple] lie loaves and salt without condiments, the bread unleavened and the salt unmixed. For it is fitting that the simplest and purest food be assigned to the highest class, that of the [Temple] priests, as a reward for their ministry, and that the others [the Therapeutæ], while aspiring to similar things, should desist from identical ones, so that their superiors may retain their privilege.*

Clearly, Philo is being ironic here. How could he have possibly considered the Jewish priests to have been superior to the Therapeutæ in matters of food, when, a few paragraphs earlier, he has stated the following?:

> *73* In this banquet [of the Therapeutæ] – I know that some will be amused at this, though only those whose actions are a matter for tears and lamentations – wine is not brought in . . ., but only water of the most translucent clarity. . . . The table too is kept clear of animal flesh, but on it are loaves of bread for nourishment, with salt as a seasoning, to which hyssop is sometimes added as a relish to satisfy the fastidious. *74* For as right reason instructs the priest to sacrifice while sober, so it enjoins them [the Therapeutæ] to spend their lives in the same state. For wine is the drug of folly, and sumptuous cuisine arouses the most insatiable of animals, desire.**

Philo has thus studiously avoided any mention of the wine and the flesh of sacrificed animals which were being consumed by the Jerusalem priests. In fact, it is rather difficult to find out details about the offering of wine to YḤWḤ in the Jerusalem Temple. So we present a brief account on the next page.

**Philo of Alexandria: The Contemplative Life, The Giants, and Selections*, trans. by David Winston (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1981), pp. 55-56 (square-bracketed interpolations added by ML).

**Ibid., p. 54.

Libation, or Drink Offering*

by Gabriel Fink

The word 'libation' is defined in Webster's 1828 dictionary as: 'The act of pouring a liquor, usually wine, either on the ground, or on a victim in sacrifice, in honor of some deity.' The Hebrews, Greeks and Romans practiced libation. This was a solemn act and accompanied with prayer.

. . .

The first time this type of offering is mentioned in the [Hebrew] scriptures is in Gen. 35:14:

> And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Beth-el.

When it comes to the practice within the Jerusalem temple, Fink continues:

While not directly mentioned, it can be inferred that the drink offering mentioned within the scriptures was administered by using the [vessels] on the Table of Shewbread. So what is the drink offering?

. . .

The drink offering is mentioned many times in Lev. 23 and Num. 28. The offering was 1/4th of a Hin, or approximately 1 liter of wine. There were several restrictions on the use of the wine in the drink offering that help illustrate its use. It should be noted that this type of offering has no set guidance in the scriptures as to how it was administered as [have] the other sacrificial offerings.

Here are the scriptures which dictate the use of wine within the Tabernacle:

. . .

Num. 28:7 – The drink offering was to be poured out unto the Lord in the holy place [but not within the inner sanctuary, the holy of holies: Lev. 10:9-11]. The act of pouring is the "libation" referred to in the alternate Hebrew translation of Ex. 25:29. The scriptures do not state the location of where this was poured within the holy place.

. . .

Ex. 29:38-40 – Dictates [that] the drink offering is to be performed two times on a daily basis to accompany the daily burnt offerings.

. . .

Based on these conclusions, . . . the drink offering was poured from a [flagon] into a bowl which sat upon the Table of Shewbread. These [vessels] are mentioned in Ex. 25:29. The priests would then remove the wine either weekly, or on a daily basis outside of the holy place, and consume it as they did the loaves of shewbread.

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*These notes are excerpted from Gabriel Fink's informative site < theholyhouse.org/table.aspx >. Most sites give detailed information about the 'shewbread', but hardly a word about the 'drink libation'!

Shewbread*

A.R.S. Kennedy

v. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RITE.–The rite of 'the presence-bread' is one of the fairly numerous survivals from the pre-Mosaic stage of the religion of the Hebrews, and goes back ultimately to the native conception that the god, like his worshippers, required and actually partook of material nourishment. No doubt, as W. R. Smith has pointed out, this idea 'is too crude to subsist without modification beyond the savage state of society' (RS1 212). . . . In any case the custom of presenting solid food on a table as an oblation to a god is too widespread among the peoples of antiquity to permit of doubt as to the origin of the rite among the Hebrews.

The *lectisternia*,which the Romans borrowed from the Greeks, afford the most familiar illustration of this practice (see Smith's *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antiqs*.3 s.et). In the OT itself we hear of Jeremiah's contemporaries kneading cakes for the queen of heaven (Jer 7:18), and, at a later date, of the table which even Jews spread to Fortune (GAD, Is 65:11 RV). In the religious literature of the ancient Babylonians, again, particularly in the ritual tablets to which the attention of scholars has lately been turned, we find numerous references to the various items of food and drink to be presented to the deities of the Babylonian pantheon. The tables or altars, also, on which the food was set out are frequently represented on the monuments (see, e.g., Eenzinger, *Heb. Arch*. 387; Riehm's *HWB* 2 1. 148, etc.). And not only so, but, as Zimmern has recently shown, the loaves of sweet or unleavened bread thus presented are, frequently at least, of the number of 12, 24, or even as many as 36 (see the reff. in Zimmern's *Beitrage zur Kenntnis der Babylon. Religion*, 1901, p. 94 f.). These numbers, we can hardly doubt, have an astronomical significance, 12 being the number of the signs of the Zodiac, 24 the stations of the moon, and 36 those of the planets (see 2 K[ings] 23:5 RVm, Job 38:32, and art. BABYLONIA in vol. i. p. 218a). The knowledge of this ancient practice of offering food on the tables of the gods survived to a late period; see Epist. of Jeremy, v. 28 ff. and the fragment of Bel and the Dragon (esp. v. 11; note also that the food of Bel comprised *'twelve* great measures of fine flour'). Hence, if the loaves of the presence-bread were 12 in number from the earliest times,– though of this we have no early testimony,– we should have another of the rapidly increasing instances of early Babylonian influence in the West (cf. Josephus' association of the 12 loaves with the 12 months, *Ant*. in. vii. 7).

While, however, it must be admitted that the rite of the presence-bread had its origin in the circle of ideas just set forth, it is not less evident that, as taken up and preserved by the religious guides of Israel, the rite acquired a new and higher significance. The bread was no longer thought of as J[ehovah]'s food . . . in the sense attached to it in an earlier age, but as a concrete expression of the fact that J[ehovah] was the source of every material blessing. As the 'continual bread'. . . , it became the standing expression of the nation's gratitude to the Giver of all for the bounties of His providence. The number twelve was later brought [from its astronomical significance] into connexion with the number of the tribes of Israel (cf. Lv 24:8), and thus, Sabbath by Sabbath, the priestly representatives of the nation renewed this outward and visible acknowledgment of man's continual dependence upon God. The presence of the shewbread in the developed ritual, therefore, was not without a real and worthy significance. It may here be added, in a word, that the explanation of the shewbread hitherto in vogue among the disciples of Bahr, according to which 'the bread of the face' was so named because it is through partaking thereof that man attains to the sight of God, accords neither with the true significance nor with the history of the rite.

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*A.R.S. Kennedy, "Shewbread," in *A Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. J. Hastings, Vol. 4 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902, p. 497: < faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/Ted.../02.../Kennedy-Shewbread-**HBD**.pdf >.

Showbread*

W. Dommershausen and Heinz-Josef Fabry

The earliest biblical reference to the showbread is 1 S[amuel] 21:2-7(1-6). Ahimelech, the priest at the sanctuary of Nob, gave five of these sacred loaves to David and his followers, who were fugitives but had kept themselves from women and were therefore ritually clean; the loaves had just been replaced by fresh bread and would normally have been eaten only by the priests and members of their families. Saul had the priests of Nob slain for thus supporting David. The priest Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech, escaped the bloodbath; David installed him as priest in Jerusalem, and we may assume that the use of showbread came to Jerusalem with him. The tradition in 1 K[ings] 7:48, which says that Solomon made a golden table for the showbread, is therefore probably in error. For the postexilic temple, the showbread is attested by Neh. 10:34(33); 1 Mc. 1:22: 2 Mc. 1:8. A representation on the arch of Titus shows that a showbread table was still part of the inventory of the Herodian temple.

The practice of setting bread before the deity "to eat" was common to ancient Near Eastern civilization. The Egyptians practiced the custom of placing bread that had been censed and sprinkled with wine on mats and platters before the deity as a guarantee that the sacrificial offerings would endure forever. Babylonian ritual texts speak of placing bread offerings on tables; they also mention the number twelve. This bread, however, was removed with the other gifts after the offering, rather than being left continuously before the deity. Bel (LXX Add. Dnl. 14:)3, 8, 11, 14 also mentions the practice of setting food for the Babylonian deity Bel on a table in the temple.

The showbread represents a food offering in its original form: food for God. It is a relic of a meal of bread and wine offered to the deity. The wine is suggested by the bowls and flagons mentioned in Ex. 25:29; 37:16; Nu. 4:7. People offered food and drink to feed and thus gain favor with the deity. The custom of placing bread before the "face" of God is simply an ancient tradition that was retained with a different meaning. From the staff of life, the bread of its table, Israel makes an offering to Yahweh, and Yahweh permits all Israel (the number twelve), represented by the priests to share his table. This continuous offering acknowledges Yahweh as the giver of food and life; it gives thanks to him as the giver of all good things. It signifies that God's table fellowship with his people will endure. Dt. 26:10 with its offering of firstfruits may be seen as a parallel. To further underline the sacrificial meaning of the custom, later practice turned the showbread into a "fire offering" by burning at least the incense.

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Comment:

The ritualization of the offering of Shewbread and Wine to YḤWḤ, thus, had arisen out of the practice of offering food and drink to idols, and had been 'purified' by the Israelites by symbolic abstraction into a thank-offering. But the prophets very clearly proclaimed that such offerings would be worthless if they came from a people in whose hearts injustice and unrighteousness reigned:

Amos 5:22-24

Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them.
Though you bring choice fellowship offerings,
I will have no regard for them.

Away with the noise of your songs!
I will not listen to the music of your harps.

But let justice roll on like a river,
Righteousness like a never-failing stream!

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*"Showbread", *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol. 7, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, Heinz-Josef Fabry, Eng. trans. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), p. 527.

Isaiah 1:13

Bring your worthless offerings no longer,
Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and
sabbath, the calling of assemblies –
I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly.

Isaiah 44:19

No one recalls, nor is there knowledge or understanding to say,
"I have burned half of it in the fire and also have baked bread over its coals.
I roast meat and eat it. Then I make the rest of it into an abomination,
I fall down before a block of wood!"

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Micah 6:6-7

With what shall I come to the LORD
And bow myself before the God on high?
Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings,
With yearling calves?

Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams,
In ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

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There is one outstanding *historical* Jewish figure who taught in Jerusalem during the last three decades, BCE, and first decade, CE, who did embody the ideals of justice and righteousness (Dharma) yearned for by the prophets:

HILLEL THE ELDER[(a)]

Solomon Schechter and Wilhelm Bacher

Hillel the Elder: – Doctor of the Law at Jerusalem in the time of King Herod; founder of the school called after him, and ancestor of the patriarchs who stood at the head of Palestinian Judaism till about the fifth century of the common era. Hillel was a Babylonian by birth. . . . Nothing definite, however, is known concerning his origin, nor is he anywhere called by his father's name, which may perhaps have been Gamaliel. When Josephus ("Vita," § 38) speaks of Hillel's great-grandson, Simeon ben Gamaliel I, as belonging to a very celebrated family . . ., he probably refers to the glory which the family owed to the activity of Hillel and Gamaliel I. . . . [T]his much may be true, that Hillel went to Jerusalem in the prime of his manhood and attained a great age. His activity [in Jerusalem] of forty years is perhaps historical; and since it began, according to a trustworthy tradition (Shab. 15a), one hundred years before the destruction of Jerusalem, it must have covered the period 30 BCE to 10 CE.

The Golden Rule.

. . . Love of man was considered by Hillel as the kernel of the entire Jewish teaching. When a heathen who wished to become a Jew asked him for a summary of the Jewish religion in the most concise terms, Hillel said: "What is hateful to thee, do not unto thy fellow man: this is the whole Law; the rest is mere commentary" (Shab. 31a). With these words Hillel recognized as the fundamental principle of the Jewish moral law the Biblical precept of brotherly love (Lev. xix. 18). Almost the same thing was taught by Paul, a pupil of Gamaliel, the grandson of Hillel (Gal. v. 14; comp. Rom. xiii. 8); and more broadly by Jesus when he declared the love of one's neighbor to be the second great commandment beside the love of God, the first (Matt. xxii. 39; Mark xii. 31; Luke x. 27). It may be assumed without argument that Hillel's answer to the proselyte, which is extant in a narrative in the Babylonian Talmud (comp. also Ab. R.N., recension B., cxxvi. [ed. Schechter, p. 53]), was generally known in Palestine, and that it was not without its effect on the founder of Christianity.

. . . Hillel seems to have connected the precept of brotherly love with the Biblical teaching of man's likeness to God, on which account he calls the love of man "love of creatures". . . .

Love of Peace.

The exhortation to love peace emanated from Hillel's most characteristic traits – from that meekness[(b)] and mildness which had become proverbial, as is seen from the saying: "Let a man be always humble and patient like Hillel, and not passionate like Shammai" (Shab. 31a; Ab. R. N. xv.). Hillel's gentleness and patience are beautifully illustrated in an anecdote which relates how two men made a wager on the question whether Hillel could be made angry. Though they questioned him and made insulting allusions to his Babylonian origin, they were unsuccessful in their attempt (*ib*.). In the anecdotes about proselytes in which Hillel and Shammai are opposed to each other, Hillel's mildness and meekness[(b)] appear in a most favorable light. In a paradoxical manner Hillel praised humility in the following words (Lev. R. i. 1): "My humility is my exaltation; my exaltation is my humility" (with reference to Ps. cxiii. 5). . . .

. . . No miracles are connected with Hillel's memory. He lived, without the glory of legend, in the memory of posterity as the great teacher who taught and practised the virtues of philanthropy, fear of God, and humility.

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Would it be too presumptuous to suggest that Hillel may have, himself, been influenced by crypto-Buddhist Judaic thought, and that he, in turn, influenced further the currents of Christian thought, giving rise to the legend circulating in Christian circles that Hillel's grandson, Gamaliel-I, was the teacher of Saul/Paul and was a crypto-Christian, himself?

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[(a)]Excerpts from the article on 'Hillel' by Schechter and Bacher, downloaded from the online version of the 12 volume *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1901-1906), < JewishEncyclopedia.com >. – ML

[(b)]The word 'meekness' too often conveys the meaning of 'submissiveness'. A better choice would have been the word 'imperturbability'. – ML

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[4] *The Ancient Egyptian Voice with Its Domain of Textual and Cultural Overtones*

If we keep to the musical analogy, the musical form most appropriate to these various voices would be a fugue. And, if so, the opening voice of this fugue of ours would certainly be Egyptian because of the great antiquity and breadth of its cultural influence, evidenced by its rich archæological and inscriptional remains as well as by its "melodies" which have been taken up and repeated by the other "voices" in the "fugue".

As an example of one such repeated "melody" or "theme" is a list of ethical precepts or commandments. The Hebrew Bible's Ten Commandments are patently based, largely, on Egyptian prototypes. The Buddhists have their own version of ten precepts. And, in turn, the New Testament (a crypto-Buddhist creation) has incorporated commandments from the Hebrew Bible.

Osiris's 'Last Supper' had been an element in the Egyptian Passion Play re-enacted annually for more than a millennium prior to the birth of the Buddha, and thus more than a thousand five hundred years before the reported time of Jesus. Here is a short excerpt from Ilona Rashkow's brief summary of the Osiris, Isis, Seth drama:

Briefly summarized,[5] Osiris, the great-grandson of Re, grandson of Shu, and first son of Geb and Nut, succeeding his father as king in Egypt, married his sister, Isis. Osiris, widely regarded as a just and wise king, organized the agricultural, religious and secular life of his people, and assisted by Isis, acquired additional territory through many peaceful foreign conquests. This happy state of affairs was soon destroyed, however, by Seth, the younger brother of Osiris who, jealous of Osiris's power and prestige, wanted the throne and accolades for himself. When Osiris returned to Egypt from travels abroad, Seth invited him to a banquet at which 72 accomplices were also present. During the festivities, a beautifully

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[5]Unfortunately, no complete account of the myth of Isis and Osiris has been preserved in an Egyptian text, although several references and additional and varying details are found in Egyptian religious writings and monumental inscriptions. The only extant text of the whole legend is Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, a late form of the myth with several Greek influences. However, Plutarch does provide a very useful story outline. In depicting this myth I have relied on J.G. Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980); R.B. Parkinson, *Voices from Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Middle Kingdom Writings* (London: British Museum Press, 1991); and Judith Ochshorn, *The Book of the Goddesses: Past and Present* (New York: Crossroad, 1988). [Rashkow's footnote #5]

decorated casket specifically built to the measurements of Osiris was brought into the hall. Seth promised that the much-admired casket would be given to the person who fit inside it perfectly. Of course, when it was Osiris's turn to try it out for size, it was . . . just right! Seizing the opportunity to usurp his brother's position, Seth and his followers closed the lid, fastened it securely [by *nailing* it down], and threw the casket into the River Nile in the hope that it would be carried out to the Mediterranean Sea and lost forever. Unfortunately for Seth, the casket washed ashore near the city of Byblos on the Syrian coast, close to the base of a young tamarisk tree, which quickly grew to enclose the casket inside its trunk. The king of Byblos noticed the tree, ordered it to be cut down, and had it made into a column to support the hall roof in his palace.*

To fast-forward the story, Isis is able to find and retrieve the casket and her husband/brother's body. She hides it in the marshes of Lake Mareotis. Rashkow's account continues:

> One night, Isis left the casket unattended and Seth discovered it. Determined to destroy his brother's body permanently, he cut it up into 14 pieces and distributed them over all of Egypt. When Isis became aware of this outrage, she travelled throughout the country searching for the various body parts, assisted by her sister Nephthys (who also happened to be the wife of Seth). Gradually they found 13 of the 14 pieces, reassembled them and reanimated them. The only part of Osiris's body she could not find was his penis that had been eaten by a Nile fish. To replace this irretrievably lost member, Isis created a simulacrum – the Phallus. The resurrected Osiris had no further part to play on earth. Thus he became the ruler of the dead and Isis superseded Osiris as the fertility deity in Egypt. The simulacrum of Osiris's penis was now an object of veneration, and in honor of this Phallus, according to Plutarch 'the Egyptians even at the present day celebrate a fertility festival'.[6] Herodotus graphically describes the celebration:
>
> > [T]he Egyptians . . . have . . . eighteen-inch-high images, controlled by strings, which the women carry round the villages; these images have a penis that nods and in size is not much less than all the rest of the body. Ahead there goes a flute-player, and the women follow, singing in honor of Osiris. Now why the penis is so much bigger and is the only movable thing in the body – about this there is a sacred story told.[7]

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[6]'Of the parts of Osiris's body the only one which Isis did not find was the male member . . . but Isis made a replica (*mimema*) of the member to take its place, and constructed the Phallus, in honor of which the Egyptians even at the present day celebrate a festival' (*Moralia*, V [trans. Frank Cole Babbit; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936], p. 47).

[7]Herodotus, *The Histories: Book 2* (trans. David Grene; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 152.

The "orthodox" crypto-Buddhist Christians, naturally, were totally against this sexually explicit aspect of Osiris, ignoring it completely, borrowing, instead, these aspects: his Betrayal, Death, Resurrection, Ascension to the Judgment Throne, and the Awarding of Life Everlasting or Second, Final Death (to all mortals).

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*Ilona Rashkow, "Oedipus Wrecks: Moses and God's Rod", *Exodus to Deuteronomy: A Feminist Companion to the Bible (Second Series)*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 60-61.

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[5] *Egypt's Astrotheological and Seasonal Voice with Its Ever-Cycling Overtones*

Osiris has many personalities. He is connected with the annual flood waters of the Nile, with the wheat and other grains that are planted at the time of the rising waters, with the moon, one of the two great time-keepers of the heavens. The myth of Osiris's brother, Seth, cutting his body into 14 parts is clearly an allegorization of the darkening fortnight, the 14 days of the waning moon, and his sister/wife Isis's gathering them up again is the waxing fortnight. That 14th member, eternally missing, accounts for the darkish blemish on the moon's face, even when it shines at its brightest. The constellation 'Orion' is Osiris's starry presence in the heavens

– the counterpart to India's lord Śiva, who catches the heavenly Gaṅgā (the Milky Way) in the locks of his hair. The heavenly Osiris controls the mighty Nile. The two myths share a common ancestry. Śiva also loses his phallus, with the result that it is *the* object of veneration in all Śiva temples. Most Śiva worshippers have long since forgotten the phallic connection, and some have accused Western scholars of fabricating the idea.

Every season when grain was planted in the earth, the Egyptians considered the mythical Osiris, in death, was being buried, only to be reborn anew in the fresh crops. To quote references from Wikipedia's article on 'Osiris':

> George Albert Wells refers to Plutarch's account and asserts that Osiris dies and is mourned on the first day and that his resurrection is celebrated on the third day with the joyful cry "Osiris has been found". He also notes further arguments that St. Paul's comparison of bodily resurrection with a seed being planted, and grain then growing (1 Cor 15:35-38), is based on Ancient Egyptian concepts in which the germinating seeds in Osiris beds represent resurrection.**[1]**
>
> Egyptologist Erik Hornung observes that Egyptian Christians continued to mummify corpses (an integral part of the Osirian beliefs) until it finally came to an end with the arrival of Islam and argues for an association between the passion of Jesus and Osirian traditions, particularly in the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus and Christ's descent into Hades. He concludes that whilst Christianity rejected anything "pagan" it did so only at a superficial level and that early Christianity was "deeply indebted" to Ancient Egypt"**[2]**
>
> **Wheat and clay rituals**
>
> Contrasting with the public "theatrical" ceremonies [of the annual Osirian Passion Play] sourced from the I-Kher-Nefert stele, more esoteric ceremonies were performed inside the temples by priests, witnessed only by chosen initiates. Plutarch mentions that two days after the beginning of the festival "the priests bring forth a sacred chest containing a small golden coffer, into which they pour some potable water . . . and a great shout arises from the company for joy that Osiris is found (or resurrected). Then they knead some fertile soil with the water . . . and fashion therefrom a crescent-shaped figure, which they clothe and adorn, this indicating that they regard these gods as the substance of Earth and Water." ("Isis and Osiris", [*Plutarch*, Vol. V,] p. 39).**[3]** . . . In the Osirian temple at Denderah, an inscription (translated by Budge)**[4]** describes in detail the making of wheat paste models of each dismembered piece of Osiris to be sent out to the town where each piece was discovered by Isis. At the temple of Mendes, figures of Osiris are made from wheat and paste placed in a trough on the day of the murder, then water was added for several days, until finally the mixture was kneaded into a mold of Osiris and taken to the temple to be buried (the sacred grain for these cakes were grown only in the temple fields). Molds were made from the wood of a red tree in the forms of the sixteen [14?] dismembered parts of Osiris, the cakes of 'divine' bread were made from each mold, placed in a silver chest and set near the head of the god with the inward parts of Osiris as described in the Book of the Dead (XVII).**[5]**
>
> From the stele of Khent-em-semti,**[6]** an official of Åmen-em-ḥāt at Abydos, we learn that Osiris was at that time called the "Lord of life," "Governor of eternity," and "Ruler of Åmenti," *i.e.*, the Other World, and that Abydos was the place to which all souls flocked to obtain blessing, to eat bread with the god, and to "come forth by day" [*i.e.*, to be resurrected].**[7]** [Please note: this inscription was engraved more than 2000 years before the Common Era! – ML]

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[1]George Albert Wells, *Can we Trust the New Testament?: Thoughts on the Reliability of Early Christian Testimony* (Chicago, IL: Open Court Publishing, 2004), p. 18.

[2]Erik Hornung, *The Secret Lore of Egypt: Its Impact on the West* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 73-75.

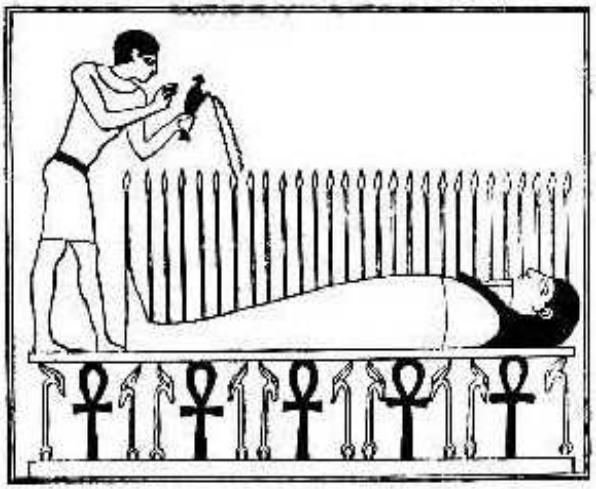
[3]"Isis and Osiris", *Plutarch*, Vol. 5 of Loeb Classical Library, trans. by Frank Cole Babbitt (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927).

[4]E.A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection*, Chap. XV [Vol. II] (London: The Medici Society, Ltd., 1911 / New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1973 reprint), p. 4.

[5]Wikipedia, "Osiris".

[6]British Museum, No. 146 (574).

[7]Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection*, p. 4.



Osiris-Nepra, with wheat growing from his body.
From a bas-relief at Philæ.[8] The sprouting grain implied resurrection.[9]

Plutarch and others have noted that the sacrifices to Osiris were "gloomy, solemn, and mournful . . ." ("Isis and Osiris", 69) and that the great mystery festival, celebrated in two phases began at Abydos on the 17th of Athyr[10] (November 13th) commemorating the death of the god, which is also the same day that grain was planted in the ground. "The death of the grain and the death of the god were one and the same: the cereal was identified with the god who came from heaven; he was the bread by which man lives. The resurrection of the god symbolized the rebirth of the grain." (Larson 17*) The annual festival involved the construction of "Osiris Beds" formed in the shape of Osiris, filled with soil and sown with seed.[11]

The first phase of the festival was a public drama [Passion Play] depicting the murder and dismemberment of Osiris, the search for his body by Isis, his triumphal return as the resurrected god, and the battle in which Horus defeated Seth. This was all presented by skilled actors as a literary history, and was the main method of recruiting cult membership. According to Julius Firmicus Maternus of the fourth century, this play was re-enacted each year by worshippers who "beat their breasts and gashed their shoulders. . . . [But] when they pretend that the mutilated remains of the god have been found and rejoined, . . . they turn from mourning to rejoicing" (*De Errore Profanorum Religionum*).

> "The Egyptians of every period in which they are known to us believed that Osiris was of divine origin, that he suffered death and mutilation at the hands of the powers of evil, that after a great struggle with these powers he rose again, that he became henceforth the king of the underworld and judge of the dead, and that because he had conquered death the righteous also might conquer death. . . . In Osiris the Christian Egyptians found the prototype of Christ, and in the pictures and statues of Isis suckling her son Horus, they perceived the prototypes of the Virgin Mary and her child."[12]

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[8] Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection*, p. 58.

[9] *Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, George Hart, p. 119.

[10] "Isis and Osiris", *Plutarch*, Section 13, p. 356 C–D. Retrieved 2007-01-21:
< http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Moralia/Isis_and_Osiris*/A.html#T356c >

*Martin Alfred Larson, *The Story of Christian Origins: Or, The Sources and Establishment of Western Religion* (Washington[, DC]: J.J. Binns, 1977).

[11] *Britannica Ultimate Edition* 2003 DVD.

[12] E.A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Religion* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1899), Chp. 2.

Comment continued:

Before we end this topic, here are Paul's words in *First Corinthians 15:35-38*:

> *35* But, you may ask, how are the dead raised? In what kind of body? *36* How foolish! The seed you sow does not come to life unless it has first died; *37* and what you sow is not the body that shall be, but a naked grain, perhaps of wheat, or of some other kind; *38* and God clothes it with the body of his choice, each seed with its own particular body.
>
> *– The New English Bible*

The *Geneva Study Bible* has the following commentary on the above passage:

> *But some men will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?*
>
> Now that [Paul] has proved the resurrection, he demonstrates their doltishness, in that they scoffingly demanded how it could be that the dead could rise again: and if they did rise again, they asked mockingly, what manner of bodies they should have. Therefore he sends these fellows, who seemed to themselves to be marvellously wise and intelligent, to be instructed of poor rude farmers.

It is clear to the modern mind that if the ancient Egyptians and, later, Paul literally believed that the seed must die before being brought miraculously back to life, they were simply mistaken. The seed is no more dead than the frozen human semen is in our present-day fertility clinics. The mystery, then, of resurrection or rebirth is not solved or established by this farming analogy – it remains a mystery. And the Buddha's contesting insight continues to remain viable.

To return to a discussion of the ancestral line of the development of the sacred elements of the eucharist, the ancient Egyptians, from a time earlier than 2000 years **BCE**, consumed bread and beer, in remembrance of Osiris's Passion. The Egyptians' sacred bread and beer became the sacred bread and wine of the Israelites, consecrated to YḤWḤ as an ever-present thank-offering from the time of Moses to the final destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, in 70 **CE**. Aśōka's missionary monks, sometime in mid-third century **BCE**, soon after their arrival in Alexandria, adapted their preaching of the Dharma to a Judaic framework, but, because their fifth moral precept is to abstain from taking any intoxicant, they modified the Jewish Shewbread-and-*Wine* thanksgiving ritual to an ascetic 'Bread and *Water*' act of thanksgiving at their dining table every time they ate together. Since, as Buddhists, they rejected any elite priesthood, all members of the "Sangha" participated, both men and *women*, in their ascetic version of the Shewbread-and-Wine ritual. This fits Philo's description of the Therapeutæ, two and a half centuries after Aśōka's monks arrived in Egypt.

The remaining vital connection to be made is between the Therapeutæ and the earliest Christian monastics (at least those for whom we have any substantial record): Saints Antony and Pachomius. But the general investigation of this connection seems to have been thwarted by some invisible, repelling aura surrounding it.

Let me begin with a profoundly important book written by Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals*, Oxford Early Christian Studies Series (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1999).

Let us, first, approach McGowan's book indirectly through selected passages of a review of it by Michael Philip Penn. Penn's opening paragraph:

> *Ascetic Eucharists* examines the diversity of foods used in early Christian ritual meals. McGowan is especially interested in Eucharists where participants drank water instead of wine. He argues that this form of the Eucharist was not a late ascetic modification of "orthodox" ritual practice but stemmed from a first-century liturgical pattern. McGowan sees communities that employed this bread-and-water tradition as opposing a "cuisine of sacrifice." In their rejection of wine (and often meat as well), the behavior of these Christian groups cannot be labeled simply as ascetic, but also should be understood as standing polemically against the Greco-Roman sacrificial system that these foods represent.*

And, it might be added, 'also against what was the Jewish sacrificial system!', with its slaughter of animals and offering of wine! Traditional theologians will surely be left in a state of puzzlement, if not distress, by

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*****_Church History_, June 2000.

McGowan's thesis. Why would there be such early diversity in the interpretation of Jesus' command? But Penn presses on, noting that McGowan "reevaluates the evidence for early eucharistic diversity, especially those sources suggesting the existence of a *widespread bread-and-water tradition*." [Emphasis added]

> Chapters 4, 5, and 6 focus on the bread-and-water tradition. For seventy-five pages McGowan lists and critically examines the various accounts of Eucharists that use water instead of wine. McGowan concludes that the bread-and-water tradition is a widespread liturgical pattern especially prominent in Syria and Asia. McGowan argues that the geographical clustering of witnesses and the theological diversity of those adhering to this ritual form suggest that this is not an ascetic modification of a dominant bread-and-wine practice but rather is founded on a common, primitive tradition. [Fifth para.]

Penn then observes that in his Seventh chapter, McGowan "looks to the New Testament to find evidence for this early form of the bread-and-water Eucharist. McGowan begins with Paul's letters to the Corinthians and the Romans and he notes that the attempts of some members of these congregations to avoid a cuisine of sacrifice appear very similar to the concerns of second- and third-century followers of bread-and-water traditions."

> Finally, he [McGowan] suggests that 1 Timothy's statement that Timothy should drink some wine may reflect a polemic against an already established bread-and-water tradition. McGowan also looks at how those who support a bread-and-water tradition interpret New Testament references to the Last Supper. McGowan notes that passages that discuss a bread-and-water Eucharist *are much less likely to refer directly to the Synoptic or Pauline Last Supper stories*. [Sixth para.; emphasis added]

My own observation is that neither McGowan nor Penn have made any serious attempt to consider the possible connection between the bread-and-water eucharist of the Therapeutæ and the "*widespread bread-and-water tradition*" of the early Christians! In fact, McGowan, in his book, *Ascetic Eucharists*, seeks to discount such a connection by expressing various doubts. In considering the "value of the evidence concerning the forms of Jewish meals for understanding the eucharistic meals of early Christianity . . .", he says:

> I approach two or three further, and somewhat marginal, sets of data on Jewish meals, the meal of the Therapeutae described by Philo of Alexandria and the meals of the Qumran community and/or of the Essenes, having again emphasized this point so that the value of these is not seen as dependent upon any organic or specifically genetic connections with Christian ritual meals. . . . (page 56)

McGowan seems as though he wants to downplay the value of this evidence by calling these sets of data "somewhat *marginal*"! In contrast, the 'Out of Egypt Theory' would consider this evidence to be of 'central' importance. And on the next page (57) of his book, after succinctly and accurately summarizing Philo's description of the Therapeutæ's ritual meal, McGowan issues the following wry warning:

> It would seem that readers, too, might well take this meal with a grain of salt. Even if we assume that the Therapeutae did exist, the description of the meal seems to owe much to classical models, admittedly by way of contrast as much as of comparison. Philo's own philosophical bent may lessen any confidence that some real picture, even of sectarian Jewish practice, could be discerned in this description.

"*Grain of salt*"! "*Even if we assume that the Therapeutae did exist*"! Joan E. Taylor's *Jewish Women Philosophers of First-Century Alexandria: Philo's 'Therapeutae' Reconsidered*, published in 2003, has a telling rebuttal of such skepticism:

> In the first lines of his treatise [*On the Contemplative Life*] Philo himself insists on the veracity of his account: 'I will absolutely go about telling the actual truth' (*Contempl.* 1). One could lean back cynically and suggest that this is what he might very well say, even if he were presenting a complete fabrication, for it is necessary only that his audience believe the account to be true. However, if it were necessary for his audience to believe his account to be true, then Philo might have situated his group much further away from Alexandria. It is characteristic of the genre of utopian fantasies that the ideal society is found on a very far-off island, towards the edges of the world, as in Iambulus' idealizing account of the 'children of

the sun' (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl. Hist.* 2: 55-60), written c. 165-150 BCE. No one could dispute the reliability of Iambulus' fantasy of peaceful, happy people with forked tongues, bendable bones, and amazing longevity because no one could travel far enough to the fabulous island on which they apparently lived. This type of utopian fantasy relies on the framework of a *voyage extraordinaire*, which takes the author far beyond the known world, as we find replicated in much later literary works such as Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. The further away one went from civilization, and the closer one got to the edges of the earth, the more incredibly bizarre things became (so Herodotus, *Hist.* 3: 116). But Philo locates his (decidedly unfantastical) group exactly, to a particular hill (*Contempl.* 22-3) between the Mediterranean Sea and Lake Mareotis, just outside Alexandria. This city [which was Philo's 'home town' – ML] was a Roman provincial capital, the seat of the Roman prefect, station of Roman troops, and one of the greatest centres of Hellenistic civilization in antiquity. Situating a group outside Alexandria, on a busy lake, was like situating it in the suburbs of New York, rather than on the Pacific Island of Nanomana. It was reachable and verifiable. No one who wished to convince an audience of the truth of [the fiction one was writing] would make it so easy to be found out.

Secondly, the other Jewish group Philo uses for the sake of his rhetoric of 'the good', the Essenes, appears really to have existed, and his accounts of Essene characteristics in *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* and the *Hypothetica* have certain parallels with the independent accounts of Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 5: 17: 4 (73)) and Josephus (*War* 2: 119-61; *Ant.* 15: 371-3; 18: 18-22). If the Essenes were a real group, then there is every reason to suppose that the 'Therapeutae' were also.*

"Nuff said." Perhaps the fact that the book, *Ascetic Eucharists*, began as a doctoral dissertation, and that too, at a Catholic university (Notre Dame, USA), explains McGowan's reticence to seriously investigate a possible *genetic* connection between the Therapeutæ ritual meal and the "widespread bread-and-water Eucharist" of early Christian tradition.

McGowan, himself, on page 80 of his book, notes that:

While the use of bread, water, and salt might have been easy to reconcile with Jewish food practices, these elements do not seem to be chosen because of any identifiably Jewish concern. As we have seen, they are in fact typical of Graeco-Roman asceticism, not only in their simplicity or frugality but especially in the absence of meat. Philo explains these choices to some extent; the reason that the bread is leavened and that even these modest condiments are used to distinguish this food from that of the bread offered in the Temple and to make it thus seem only second-best ([*Contempl.*] 82). Implicit in this account is that the Temple offerings themselves are superior according to a principle of simplicity and purity, which is not that of *kaśrut*. In any case this comparison with the Temple cuisine makes explicit, albeit in a softened form, the opposition between the ascetic diet and cultic or sacrificial meals, present also in dissident pagan responses to religion.

McGowan needs to recognize the deep *irony* in Philo's remarks about the Therapeutæ modeling their meal on the Shewbread and Wine ritual of the Jerusalem Temple. (See my comments on page 213.) The Therapeutæ have absolutely rejected the blood sacrifice and wine offering of the Temple. But, in doing this, the Therapeutæ have, in effect, purified and transformed the Jewish Temple ritual into one which is pacifistic, teetotaling and 'communistic'. The communism of the early Christian Church can very reasonably be genetically linked, thus, to the Therapeutæ. And two and a half centuries behind this peaceful revolution (non-violent to both humans *and animals*) is genetically linked the missionary effort of that Prince of Peace, King Aśōka.

What we have here is, on its surface, an ascetic reformation of Judaism being carried out by the Therapeutæ. Underneath the surface is the 250 year old engine of missionizing crypto-Buddhism. The Roman destruction of the Jerusalem Temple along with its bloody rituals, in 70 CE, accomplished violently what the Therapeutæ could only have hoped for, peacefully.

The relation between Temple and Therapeutæan rituals was certainly genetic – though wrenchingly transmutational in its development. Philo probably thought of himself as a 'proper' Jew, and he was certainly

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*Joan E. Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers of First-Century Alexandria: Philo's 'Therapeutae' Reconsidered* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press Inc., 2003), pp. 8-10.

a leading representative of the Alexandrian Jews. But one must wonder whether he actually participated in the bloody sacrifices of the Jerusalem Temple.

The Therapeutæ thought of their own ritual as a reformed version of that of the Jerusalem Temple, where the Therapeutæ, whose membership was without any national, tribal, class, or gender restriction (anticipating Paul), replaced the exclusive Aaronic, male priesthood of the Temple, and whose presiding elder (presbyter) was only a *pro tempore*-president, whose title, '*ephemereut*' (think 'ephemeral') was a constant reminder that he (or she) was only one of the elders – no power-hungry high priest here! And then note that the Therapeutæ were organized in ways very similar to those of the early Buddhist Sangha.

For the record, McGowan's book, *Ascetic Eucharists*, has no remarks whatsoever in it about Buddhism!

Here is what that early retiree from the 19th century British Army in India, Arthur Lillie, sans doctorate or other specialized degrees, had to say, in the 1880s, about genetic connections between Buddhism and the Therapeutæ:

Assisted by Philo, let us draw up some . . . points of contact between the Therapeut and Buddhist monks:–

1. Enforced vegetarianism, community of goods, rigid abstinence from sexual indulgence, also a high standard of purity, were common to both the Buddhists and the Therapeuts.

2. Neither community allowed the use of wine.

3. Both were strongly opposed to the blood sacrifice of the old priesthoods.

4. The monks of both communities devoted their lives exclusively to the acquirement of a knowledge of God.

5. Long fastings were common to both.

6. With both silence was a special spiritual discipline.

7. The Therapeut left "for ever," says Philo, "brothers, children, wife, father, and mother," for the contemplative life. This is Buddhism.

8. Like the Buddhists, the Therapeuts had nuns vowed to chastity. These were quite distinct, as Philo points out, from the vestals of the Greek temples. With the latter the chastity was enforced, with the former voluntary.

9. The preacher and the missionary, two original ideas of Buddhists, were conspicuous amongst the Therapeuts. This was in direct antagonism to the spirit of Mosaism.

10. The Therapeut, as his name implies, was a healer (or "curate," as Eusebius calls him) of body and soul. The buddhist monks are the only physicians in most Buddhist countries. They cure by simples, and by casting out devils. [Remember, these observations were being made in the 1880s. – ML]

11. The Therapeut squatted on a "mat of papyrus" in his sanctuary. The monks "took their seats on mats covered with white calico," says Mr. Dickson, describing a general confession in a Buddhist temple (*Pātimokkha*, p. 2). [For Dickson's article, see above, pp. 111 ff. – ML]

12. The Therapeuts were classed as, first, presbyters (elders) an exact equivalent for the word arhat, used in Buddha's day for his fully initiated monks. Under the presbyters were the deacons. . . . These novices were servant-pupils [but not slavish, by any means, as we have noted earlier – ML]. An ephemereut, or temporary head, presided at the Therapeut service, as in Buddhism. That the Christians should have taken over this ephemereut and these presbyters . . . and deacons as their three chief officers is perhaps the greatest stumbling-block in the way of those writers, chiefly English and clerical, who maintain that there was no connection between Christianity and mystic Judaism [i.e., the Therapeuts].*

**Religious Systems of the World: National, Christian, and Philosophic* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1890), pp. 159-160. This publication is a collection of lectures delivered by various persons on Sunday afternoons at the South Place Institute, London, during 1888-1889. No editor is mentioned. Arthur Lillie's lecture "Buddhism in Christianity" appears on pages 147 to 171. Ironically, in later editions of these lectures, Lillie's article was dropped and replaced with one by Prof. T.W. Rhys-Davids!

Earlier in his lecture (p. 159), Lillie notes an important observation which Father Simon de la Loubère, in his book, *Description du Royaume de Siam*, has made of a Buddhist noontime service, "La Méridiane" – noonday prayers. Lillie says: "[Loubère's] description of a sermon with a text taken from the sayings of the Buddha is most interesting. The monks are ranged on one side of the temple, and nuns on the other. At the close they say solemnly, "This is the word of God!" The Catholic Father cites some of their text: "Judge not thy neighbour. Say not, 'This man is good'; 'This man is wicked!' "*

Compare Father Simon's account of the Siamese co-ed gathering of Buddhist monks and nuns with Philo's description of the Therapeutæ's similar get-together:

> [O]n the seventh day they get together for a general assembly and seat themselves in order according to their age [seniority as to the date of their joining the community – another Buddhist touch! – ML] with the proper dignity. . . . Then the eldest who is also best versed in their doctrines comes forward, and composed both in expression and in voice, holds forth with reasoned arguments and wisdom. . . . [The] common sanctuary in which they meet every seventh day is a double enclosure, one part set off for the men, the other for the women. For women too customarily form part of the audience possessed by the same fervor and sense of purpose. The partition between the two chambers is built up to three or four cubits [roughly 4 1/2 to 6 feet] above the floor in the form of a breastwork, while the space above up to the roof is left open. This serves two purposes: that the modesty proper to women's nature be maintained and that the women seated within ear-shot with nothing to obstruct the voice of the speaker may obtain easy apprehension.**

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*As this was a lecture of Lillie's, and the publication was without an acknowledged editor, no reference is given for Lillie's quotes of Loubère's passages. The original publisher of Loubère's book, *Description du Royaume de Siam*, was Jean Baptiste Coignard of Paris, 1691. (Siam, of course, is modern Thailand.) Loubère's book was also translated into English, in 1693, with the title, *A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam* – and since Lillie's quotes are in English, presumably he had access to the English translation.

**_Philo of Alexandria_, trans. David Winston, p. 47.

Two Disparaging Assessments of Arthur Lillie's Scholarship

First Critique: an unsigned review in *The Literary World: Fortnightly*, Vol. 24, No. 14, Whole No. 484 (Boston: S.R. Crocker, 15 July 1893), p. 223:

Buddhism and Christianity.*

MR. ARTHUR LILLIE was, we believe, a soldier in the British Army in India. While there he embraced the doctrines of Gautama and became a partisan of Buddhism. He has written a work on Buddhism in Christendom and a popular life of Buddha. He shows the characteristics of a new convert – dislike, even to venomous hatred, of his old religion; zealous desire to propagate the new faith; and a roseate view of the progress of Buddhism in Europe. To the two invasions of the West by the Oriental faith founded by Buddha – one at the birth of Christianity, and the second "when the Templars brought home from Palestine cabalism, sufism, and freemasonry," he thinks is to be added one more, "which is even now like a conqueror advancing with giant strides. . . . Germany, America, England are overrun with it. . . . In Paris there are 30,000 Buddhists at least. . . . A French frigate came back from China the other day with one third of the crew converted Buddhists."

As he is not by any means a trained scholar, Mr. Lillie's latest *brochure*, like each of his former volumes, is a scrap-book rather than a well-digested monograph. It will be useful as an index or help to references, but is not of much value to the student who wishes to inquire impartially how far the two religions in their origins influenced each other. The main thesis here is the influence of Buddhism on primitive Christianity. After a preliminary chapter on Moses, Mr. Lillie gives a short life of Buddha, noting its points of contact with the life of Jesus, continuing the resemblances between the two lives through three chapters. He works his theme with more industry than convincing skill or power. A wide reader without great power of mental digestion, his results are interesting but indecisive. We imagine that at many points in the vast literatures gathering around two great heroes or religious teachers there would be found resemblances or analogies more or less striking. Mr. Lillie has read periodicals, reviews, monographs, and piles of translations, but there is little evidence of acquaintance with the originals of either the Hebrew, Greek, or Buddhist Scriptures. He has gathered numerous parables, anecdotes, and sayings from Buddhism. These he sets under alleged likenesses in the life of Jesus. What value as science these have may be shown in one, out of scores, taken at random (page 67): "'They parted my garments.' The Abbé Huc tells us (*Voyages*, II, page 278) that on the death of the Bokté Lama his garments are cut into little strips and prized immensely." The connection between the gambling of executioner-soldiers for the victim's garments as their perquisite and the eager quest of holy relics of a saint by devout devotees is not clear to one studying the influence of Buddhism on early Christendom.

Most of the remainder of Mr. Lillie's little work of 180 pages is devoted to proving that in the New Testament there is an Essene and an anti-Essene Christ; modern biographers have failed in their attempts to combine the two. Christ was an Essene monk, while Christianity was Essenism, and Essenism was a phase of Buddhism.

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******The Influence of Buddhism on Primitive Christianity*. By Arthur Lillie. Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons. [*The Literary World's* footnote – ML]

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Comment:

The anonymous reviewer is contemptuous of Arthur Lillie's works, especially his 'little *brochure*' which is under review. A book of one hundred and eighty pages is not 'little', and definitely not a mere '*brochure*'! The reviewer accuses Lillie, as a convert to Buddhism, of displaying a "dislike – even a venomous hatred, of his old religion [Christianity]". If the reviewer had read Lillie with a more open mind, he would have understood that Lillie was not dissing Christianity as a whole but only the direction which it took when the non-mystical, non-ascetic (*non-Essenic*) branches of Christianity crushed and subordinated the mystical, ascetic (*Essenic – Buddhistic!*) branches. Many thoughtful 'well-trained scholars' might agree with Lillie on this. The 'Out of Egypt Theory' is in harmony with many of Lillie's insights, only it is more radical than Lillie, maintaining that Jesus is an allegorical apotheosis of the Buddha, which was created in Alexandria, mainly in the first half of the second century, by Buddhist proselytizers who projected their founder as a radically different type of Jewish Messiah (a Prince of Peace, who was ready to lay down his life for the salvation of others), and, in some writings, as having been born in Bethlehem during the last years of Herod the Great and crucified under the authority of Pontius Pilate.

Second Critique: a far more elevated critic of Lillie than *The Literary World's* reviewer was Albert Schweitzer, one of the towering intellects of the past century, possessor of three doctorates: in music, medicine, and theology. His book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (three editions: 1906, 1913, and 1950), was very influential, and touches on many issues taken up in the present book – but hardly touches on Jesus' relation to Buddhism. Its Index gives only one Buddhist entry: 'Buddha', which takes one only to an inconsequential passing mention of the Master. Slightly less inconsequential is the entry, 'Lillie', which routes one to page 519 and to the sole mention of Lillie, in a fragment of end-note 32 (for page 291), which reads:

> In a certain limited sense A. Lillie, *The Influence of Buddhism on Primitive Christianity*, London 1893, is to be numbered among the fictitious works on the life of Jesus. The fictitious elements consists in Jesus being made an Essene by the author, and Essenism being equated with Buddhism.*

This abrupt dismissal of Lillie by the great theologian was unwarranted. One must question whether Dr. Schweitzer had digested the writings of professors Friedrich Schelling, Max Müller, Rudolf Seydel, G.A. van den Bergh van Eysinga, Richard Garbe, philosopher Schopenhauer, and others, whose professional qualifications and intellects can hardly be questioned so easily. It seems not. The question of the relation of Buddhism to Christianity is considered hardly worthy of mention by Dr. Schweitzer.

In defense of Lillie, a passage from his 1887 book, *Buddhism in Christendom* (pp. 265-68), which exhibits his keen insight (contra *The Literary World* and Dr. Schweitzer), is given here:

> We now come to the two texts most relied on by those who hold, with Bishop Lightfoot, that mysticism and asceticism are "inconsistent with the teaching of the gospel."[1] On these a vast superstructure has been raised from the date of Irenæus and Pope Victor to modern times. Let us read each with its context.
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> > And when the messengers of John [the Baptist] were departed, He [Jesus] began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts. But what went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist, *but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he*. And all the people
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> [1][J.B. Lightfoot,] "Epistle to the Colossians," p. 173 [1875].

**The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, trans. by W. Montgomery et al., the First Fortress Press edition (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), p. 519.

that heard Him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. *And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you and ye have not wept. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!* But wisdom is justified of all her children" (Luke 7: 24-35).

It is a singular fact that this short passage has been made the chief armoury of the disciples of gastronomic [non-ascetic, non-mystical, non-*Essenic* Christianity] and also of interior [ascetic, mystical, *Essenic*] Christianity. Thus Migne's "Dictionaire des Ascétes" cites it to show that Christ approved of the asceticism of the Baptist. Does not this at starting seem to argue two teachings, and, as a corollary, two distinct teachers? If we omit the passages that I have marked in italics it is difficult to find a more eloquent eulogy of ascetic mysticism. The Buddhist mystics are called the Sons of Wisdom (Dharma or Prajñā) and Christ adopts the same terminology. Plainly the gist of the passage is that the children of the mystic Sophia have no rivalry and no separate baptism. The lower life of soft raiment and palaces is contrasted with John's ascetic life amongst the "reeds" that still conspicuously fringe the rushing Jordan. John is pronounced the greatest of prophets, and his teaching the "counsel of God." Then comes my first passage in italics, the statement that the most raw catechumen of Christ's instruction is superior to this the greatest of God's prophets. It completely disconnects what follows from what precedes, and involves the silliest inconsequence, as shown by the action of Christ's hearers. It is said that they crowded to the "baptism of John." Had that speech [of Jesus] been uttered, of course they would have stayed away from it.

The subsequent insertion of the gospel of eating and drinking and piping and dancing involves a greater folly. It betrays a writer completely ignorant of Jewish customs. The fierce enmity of anti-mystical Israel to the Nazarites pivoted on the very fact that the latter were pledged for life to drink neither wine nor strong drink. This was the Nazarite's banner, with victory already written upon it. Hence the fierce hatred of the Jewish priesthood. If Christ in their presence had drunk one cup of wine, there would have been no crucifixion, and certainly no upbraiding.

This is the second passage that anti-mystical Christianity builds upon –

And they said unto Him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but Thine eat and drink? And He said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. *No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better* (Luke 5:33-39).

I have again resorted to italics. . . . [Christ's] doctrine was "new wine" and it was quite unfit for the "old bottles" of Mosaism. The gravity of this speech was felt by the Roman [proto-Catholic] monks who were trying to force the new wine into the

old bottles (with much prejudice to the wine), so they tried to nullify it with flat contradiction let in both above and below.

"For the old is better."

This completely contradicts Christ's eulogy of the Christian's "new wine." Moreover, the words are not found in Matthew's version, which makes the cheat more palpable. There, too, we have the gospel of eating and drinking, a gospel that did not require an avatāra of the Maker of the Heavens for its promulgation.

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Comment:

The heart of the issue between Albert Schweitzer, on the one hand, and Arthur Lillie and Christian Lindtner, on the other, is to determine whether the 'fictitious elements' are in Lillie and Lindtner's theories or in the Gospels, themselves. The following dispatch represents Lindtner's stand:

Jesus – The Famous Sanskrit Scholar

Christian Lindtner, "News Bulletin": December 21, 2009

If one claims that Jesus was a historical person able to talk and to write, and that he also was the author of the celebrated Parable of the Ten Virgins – known to us only from Matthew 25:1-13 – then one is also compelled to admit that Jesus was indeed a Sanskrit scholar – the most famous of all Sanskrit scholars, surely. How so?

As I have shown in my book and in several essays, the **M**ūla-**S**arvāstivāda-**V**inaya (**MSV**), which includes the **M**ahā-**P**arinirvāṇa-**S**ūtra (**MPS**), is one of the main sources of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. There is hardly a chapter in the MPS that has not left traces in the New Testament gospels.

The direct source of Matthew 25:1-13 is to be found in MPS, Chapter 4. This chapter is available not only in Sanskrit, but also in Pāli, as well as in several old Chinese versions from the now lost Sanskrit originals. (There are also Tibetan and Mongolian versions, to be sure.) When one compares these various versions, there are interesting variants, but the basic story is the same:

The Tathāgata (the Buddha) delivers a sermon on *pramādas* and *apramādas*. Sanskrit ***PRaMāDaS*** means negligence, carelessness. Sanskrit ***aPRaMāDaS*** means the opposite, i.e. carefulness, heedful attention, vigilance. There are five disadvantages associated with ***PRaMāDaS***, e.g. after passing away, an immoral person goes to Hell. Likewise, there are five advantages associated with ***aPRaMāDaS***, e.g. after passing away, a good person goes to heaven (*svarga*). Stupid people engage in ***PRaMāDaS***, whereas wise people are very concerned about ***aPRaMāDaS***. The sermon is delivered to brahmans and householders from the town of Pāṭali.

The purpose of the Parable of the Ten Virgins, Matthew 25:1-13, is clearly to make the point that one must be ready and prepared for the coming of the Lord – in other words, for heaven (mentioned in the first verse). Vigilance is the focus. This was also the purpose of the Buddhist sermon on vigilance. The Sanskrit word for the world of heaven is *svarga-loka* (verse MPS 4:17). There are five wise virgins, and there are five foolish virgins. All ten virgins have lamps, but five of the ten forget about the oil. They are like a man, we may say, wanting to go for a ride in his car, but forgetting all about oil and gas.

Comparing the Buddhist and the Christian textual units, we cannot fail to see that they are related. But, more precisely, how did the "translations" take place? In the usual fashion: In the Greek version the focus is on the ten virgins and the ten lamps. The Greek for virgin is ***PaRTheNoS***, and the Greek for lamps, in the accusative plural, is ***LaMPaDaS***. The Sanskrit original had five kinds of ***aPRaMāDaS***, and five kinds of ***PRaMāDaS***, as mentioned above. It is thus clear that the Greek ***P-R-T(h)-N-S*** and ***L-M-P-D-S*** are but two different versions of the 5 Sanskrit consonants found in ***aPRaMāDaS*** as well as ***PRaMāDaS***, i.e. ***P-R-M-D-S***.

I need not remind the reader that in the ancient Jewish scripts the vowels were left out, and that in Sanskrit *r* and *l* often interchange (e.g. *lājā*, king, for *rājā* etc.). The consonants *d* and *t* are both dentals, and *m* and *n* are nasals. 'What an odd way of translating!', the modern reader may exclaim. But if the modern reader finds it hard to believe that anyone would translate in this way, this just betrays his ignorance of ancient rabbinical hermeneutics. For it goes without saying that those who translated these Buddhist texts were also familiar with the Old Testament and thus also with rabbinical hermeneutics (without a knowledge of which the Old and New Testaments are completely unintelligible). If two words have the same set of consonants they also have the same numerical value, for each consonant has a numerical value of its own. For

example 3+4+5 is the same as 5+4+3. Thus a "bag" and a "bug" are in a sense the same – for the number based on the consonants are the same. (One can easily imagine the fun: bar and beer, bear and rib etc. etc.)

To repeat: The five kinds of disadvantage associated with carelessness becomes five stupid virgins with five lamps without oil. The five kinds of advantage associated with vigilance become the five wise virgins with five lamps with oil. It is a common Buddhist dogma that carefulness, vigilance, is conducive to rebirth in heaven. (This is not typically Christian, where the emphasis is on grace.) The Buddhist source explicitly says that carelessness is the cause of an immoral person going to hell after passing away. This reference to hell is left out in Matthew. When one compares many other words in Matthew 25:1-13 with the Sanskrit (and Pāli), one will be able to identify many other Greek words in the Sanskrit – the 'cry', the 'wise', the 'foolish' etc.

The conclusion is that the Buddhist text gives the "full picture". Much is left out in the Christian copy – with the result that the reader is puzzled. To leave the reader puzzled – and the commentators busy – is a deliberate trick on the part of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. People are and have always been attracted by mysterious sayings, puzzles, and riddles. This is also a common Buddhist trick – to attract people by entertaining and fooling them. It is, at the same time, a typical rabbinical trick (see e.g. Hermann L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, New York 1959, pp. 93-98).

But there is more:

The Dutch theologian Smit Sibinga – who was completely unaware of the Sanskrit source (as he kindly informed me in a personal communication) – has made a numerical analysis of Matthew 25:1-13, and pointed out that "Matthew" carefully counted the number of syllables and arranged the verses in such a way that there is a clear center with "circles" of the same number of syllables around that center. This fine observation proves, in itself, that "Matthew" counted syllables. That he counted syllables also means that he paid attention to each syllable – i.e., to the spelling of each word. The man who is responsible for Matthew 25:1-13 knew Sanskrit as well as Greek.

The general view of scholars is, by now, that the Greek text of Matthew was not translated from some "Aramaic original", giving the words of Jesus in "his own tongue". The Greek text of Matthew – at least for this parable – must have been translated directly from some Sanskrit original coming very close to the MPS (ed. Ernst Waldschmidt, Berlin 1951). The consonants would have been lost had the translation not been direct. (There is also an old Pāli version of MPS. It has often been translated into modern languages. An English version by Trevor Ling is available in Everyman's Library as "The Buddha's Philosophy of Man", London 1981. The Pāli text of the 2 x 5 etc. is found in the Mahāvagga of the Vinayapiṭaka. For all the references, see Ernst Waldschmidt, *Die Überlieferung vom Lebensende des Buddha*, Göttingen 1944, p. 52.)

To conclude: If it is claimed that Jesus is the author of the Parable of the Ten Virgins, it also follows that this Jesus knew Sanskrit – and Greek, of course – and that he counted syllables and words, i.e. that he was a mathematician of some sort.

To avoid this dangerous conclusion, one may argue that "Matthew" has not represented Jesus correctly. This may, again, either mean that Jesus never expressed this parable at all – which makes Matthew totally unreliable. Or it may mean that Jesus was indeed, responsible for this parable – but in another form. But even so, not only is this pure speculation, but it is impossible to conceive of the ten virgins, the ten lamps, the importance of vigilance for rebirth in heaven etc. isolated from the Buddhist context, which is coherent and logical. So: either Jesus is responsible for a good and "faithful" version of the Sanskrit – as in Matthew 25:1-13. Or else he is responsible for a bad and totally confused version.

In any case, Jesus must have a been a Sanskrit scholar, and since Jesus still is such a famous man, we can say: Jesus was a famous Sanskrit scholar. About the relative chronology there can, to be sure, be no doubt. The Pāli version of the parable is found in the Vinaya, which belongs to the earliest strata of Buddhist literature. Moreover, the dogma of vigilance leading to heaven only makes sense in the context of a theory of karma, retribution – which is not exactly typical for Christianity! Who would claim that the Buddhist doctrine of karma and rebirth is derived from Jesus called Khristos? The only way to avoid this conclusion is to accept the fact that Jesus is not a historical person at all. And that is a conclusion we often come to. And it is a safe one, too. But the Sanskrit scholar behind the parable remains.

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Who Wrote the New Testament Gospels?

Christian Lindtner, "News Bulletin": April 27, 2010

There are still theologians who claim that all that we read in the New Testament is "the word of God". Other theologians, more critical and sceptical, admit that perhaps not all that we read can be ascribed to God Himself. Some things – especially silly things – may be due to the evangelists. But who were the evangelists? Or more precisely: Who is responsible for the Greek text of the Gospel according to Matthew, the Gospel according to Mark, etc.?

I here assume that the reader is familiar with modern discussions such as Burton L. Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament?*, San Francisco 1995; or Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, Oxford 1987 (and later). Neither of these erudite theologians has come to any conclusion about the identity of Matthew or Mark – to whom I shall here confine my attention.

The reason they have failed to identify Matthew and Mark is extremely simple – they have been looking in the wrong place. If you want to pick apples or flowers, you do not go out in a boat and pick them on the ocean. Likewise, if you want to identify Matthew and Mark, you want to look for them in the Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya (MSV) – one of the main sources for the New Testament Gospels in general.

The MSV (p. 5) starts out thus: The Śākyas of Kapilavastu are staying in the assembly hall of Kapilavastu. They would like to hear more about their own origins, and invite the Lord to tell them. The Lord, however, does not want to praise himself, and asks his disciple, the Great Maudgalyāyanas to tell the story of their origins. This Maudgalyāyanas is sitting in the assembly. He enters a state of trance, then rises up from that state, and obeys the request of the Lord. He then tells the story much like the one that we have now found in the Gospel of Matthew (p. 6).

What he narrates is a *sūtram* – from *su-*, meaning "good", and *uktam*, meaning "said, spoken, statement". So, a *sūtram* can mean a good statement, a good message – a gospel. The Greek *eu-aggelion* is a synonym, it means: good *eu-*, and *aggelion*, message". Theologians often claim that the *euaggelion* genre is unique, that there is nothing really comparable in Greek or Hebrew. Sure. But there *is* something like it in Sanskrit and Pāli. The Greek simply imitates the Sanskrit. As said, Maudgalyāyanas then narrates, and what he narrates can easily be traced in the New Testament Gospels.

I have already pointed out in my book *Geheimnisse um Jesus Christus*, how Matthew 9:9 is a direct translation of the Sanskrit found in the MSV, p. 6. Matthew 9:9 runs: "Jesus left that place, and as he walked along he saw a tax collector, named Matthew, sitting in his office. He said to him, 'Follow me,' and Matthew got up and followed him."

This is precisely what goes on in the Buddhist source: The venerable Maudgalyāyanas is sitting in the assembly. The Lord, Bhagavān speaks to him and asks him to narrate the story of the origin of the Śākyas. Maudgalyāyanas gets up from a trance (*samādhi*), and obeys the request.

The "man named Matthew" is therefore none other than "the venerable Great Maudgalyāyanas". The story narrated by Matthew is, essentially, the story narrated by Maudgalyāyanas. When the colophons of the Greek manuscripts describe the text as the "Gospel according to Matthew", what they mean to say is that this text is based on a collection of *sūtras* – good sayings – found in the MSV. The term *ev-aggelion*, therefore has the same sense as "scripture" *graphê*, the synonym used by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:3 & 4.

We do not have to read many pages of the original Gospel according to Matthew – i.e. the MSV – before we meet a man, a very young man, who later became transformed into the evangelist Mark – or *Markos* (the Greek form). According to an old well-known Christian legend, poor Mark had a crooked finger – he was *colobodaktulos*, i.e. his finger, or fingers, were short, or maimed. In their usual floundering fashion, theologians have speculated what that is supposed to mean. Did he cut off or shorten his fingers to avoid military service? Or does it perhaps mean that his fingers were too short to finish the Gospel transmitted under his name?

The explanation is found on p. 57 of the MSV. According to the legend, when the Buddha was still but a 'young prince' (Sanskrit *kumāras*), he was extremely strong. Thus, there was a golden bow[l][1], and it was so heavy that not even horses could pull it. But *KuMāRaS* only needed to bend his finger, or

fingers, forming them into a hook. With his fingers serving as a hook he was then able to grab the heavy golden bow[l] and pull it away. The Sanskrit term for "with his fingers as a hook" is *kuṭilāṅgulikayā*, and it is extremely rare, perhaps only found here. It is formed according to the rules of Sanskrit grammar, and there are in the Buddhist scriptures several other terms formed in the very same way (instrumental case). The compound is a "real" Sanskrit compound.

Likewise, the Greco-Latin term *kolobo-daktulos*. It, too, is extremely rare, found perhaps only here (and in later passages depending on this passage; for a discussion see e.g. Holger Mosbech, *Nytestamentlig Isagogik*, Copenhagen 1946, p. 178). The Latin form is *colobo-dactylus*. The Christian usage clearly depends directly on the Buddhist usage. The Greco-Latin form was fabricated by a person knowing Sanskrit. From *KuMāRaS* we get *MaRKoS*. Thus Mark – at least here – was originally none other than *Kumāras* – the Buddha while still a young prince. This person cannot possibly be held responsible for having written the Greek gospel. We also hear that Mark was the interpreter of Peter. The origin of this legend is from the same passage in the MSV, still p. 57. It is said that the golden bow[l] was pulled by *kumāras* with his crooked finger(s). The Sanskrit for the bow[l] here is *pātrī*. This becomes Latin *Petri* (*p-t-r*). And when the Latin says that he was *interpres* ["interpreter"], that again is a pun on the Sanskrit *pātrī*.

To conclude: Mark was the Buddha as a young prince, and Matthew was one of the disciples of the Buddha – the one who rose and followed the request to tell this and many other legends. The general conclusion is, as always: The Christian gospels are pirate copies of the Buddhist gospels.

I started out by asking the question: Who is responsible for the Greek texts presented to us as the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark? We can be sure that the Greek texts were not written by Maudgalyāyanas or by *Kumāras*. (The same goes for the Sanskrit – it was not written *by* Maudgalyāyanas, but *about* Maudgalyāyanas and *about Kumāras*.) And since the names of Matthew and Mark are directly derived from the Sanskrit, we can also conclude that these two gospels were not composed or written by these people. . . .

According to an early Christian tradition, a certain Pantænus[2] went to India, where he found a copy of the Gospel according to Matthew. . . . It is reported to have been in Hebrew letters. It was said to have been brought there and left there – in India – by a certain Bar-tholomew. What are we to make of that? The first piece of information is, as we have seen, quite true: The Gospel of Matthew has its home in India. But what about the second part – the legend of Bartholomew having brought it there?

The answer is simple – provided you know the Buddhist sources. Just like the disciples of Jesus often have more than one name, the disciples of Buddha also have more than one name. Maudgalyāyanas also has other names, and one of these is indeed one that can be translated as "son", *bar*, of *thalama*.

The early Christian tradition about Pantænus going to India, where he found the Gospel of Matthew said to have been brought there by Bartholomew, now becomes clear. Matthew and Bartholomew are the same person – the Buddhist Maudgalyāyanas. So what Pantænus found was the Gospel of Maudgalyāyanas – i.e. the MSV, or parts of it. That should not come as a surprise by now.

When the Buddhist gospels were eventually translated into other Oriental languages, it was the MSV version that was regarded as "canonical". This was the Gospel according to Maudgalyāyanas. And this was what Pantænus found in India.

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[1]This word in Lindtner's article is 'bowl'. I have bracketed his 'l' because I believe that the Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya version of this legend has been garbled in transmission from an earlier version in which Prince (*Kumāra*) Siddhārtha (the future Buddha) is the last to compete in ***archery*** with other eligible young men for the hand of the princess. With every '***bow***' which is given to him, he draws back the bowstring with such strength that it shatters the bow. Finally, the only ***bow*** left in the kingdom is one so heavy and difficult to string that nobody has succeeded in handling it. Prince Siddhārttha does so with ease, and with ***hooked*** fingers he draws back and lets fly the winning arrow.

[2]Pantænus was Head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria around 180 CE and still alive in 193, according to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*. [These two footnotes are ML's.]

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The Mission of Pantænus and Saint Bartholomew the Apostle, in India

1. The Mission of Pantænus in India

About a hundred and twenty years (ca. 180 to 190) after the traditional date of the martyrdom of Saint Thomas the Apostle, a second Christian mission is reported to have reached India. The great Church in Alexandria, center of Egyptian Christianity, sent its most famous scholar, Pantænus, head of the theological School in that city, "to preach Christ to the Brahmans and philosophers there", wrote Saint Jerome in the fifth century.[1]

A deputation from India reached Alexandria some time in 179 or 189 AD. Impressed by the erudition of Pantænus, according to Saint Jerome, they asked Demetrius to send him to India for discussions with their own Hindu philosophers and it is to the credit of the good bishop that he judged the Christian world mission to be no less urgent a priority then the advancement of Christian learning. Without hesitation he took his most famous scholar from the theological school and sent him as a missionary to the East. Church historian Eusebius of Cæsarea also gives an early account of this mission.

Both Eusebius and Saint Jerome have reported that Pantænus found the Gospel of Matthew reported to have been left there in India by Saint Bartholomew. Some writers have suggested that Pantænus, having difficulty with the language of Saint Thomas Christians, misinterpreted their reference to Mar Thoma (Bishop Thomas) as Bar Tolmai (the Hebrew name of Bartholomew). Others say Eusebius and Saint Jerome confused India with Arabia or Persia as was done by some other classical writers.

Interestingly, the pupils and successors of Pantænus, Clement and Origen, wrote about India as if they knew more of that land than passing myths and in no way did they confuse it with Arabia and Persia. They may have heard this from Pantænus himself. They speak of "Indian Brahmans" and "gymnosophists" and Clement writes discerningly of the difference between "Sarmane" and "Brahmans" describing the former in terms that suggest the "hermits" or "holy men of India".[2]

2. The Mission of Saint Bartholomew the Apostle in India

Two ancient testimonies exist about the mission of Saint Bartholomew, the Apostle in India. These are of Eusebius of Cæsarea (early fourth century) and of Saint Jerome (late fourth century). Both these refer to this tradition while speaking of the reported visit of Pantænus to India in the second century.

According to Eusebius, Pantænus "is said to have gone among the Indians, where a report is that he discovered the Gospel according to Matthew among some there who knew Christ, which had anticipated his arrival: Bartholomew, one of the Apostles, had preached to them and had left them the writings of Matthew in Hebrew letters, which writing they preserved until the afore-said time."

Saint Jerome would have it that Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, sent him [i.e., Pantænus] to India, at the request of legates of that nation. In India Pantænus "found that Bartholomew, one of the twelve apostles, had preached the advent of Lord Jesus according to the Gospel of Matthew, and on his [Pantænus's] return to Alexandria he brought this with him written in Hebrew characters."

In these testimonies Eusebius appears to be not quite sure of what is reported. Saint Jerome, while writing to Marcellus, acknowledged the primacy of Saint Thomas, the Apostle in India:

> He (Jesus) was present in all places with Thomas in India, with Peter in Rome, with Paul in Illyria, with Titus in Crete, Andrew in Greece, with each apostle and apostolic man in his own separate region.[3]

2.1 Opinion of Authors about Saint Bartholomew the Apostle's Mission in India

Previously the consensus among scholars was against the apostolate of Saint Bartholomew, the Apostle in India. A majority of scholars are skeptical about the mission of Saint Bartholomew, the Apostle in India. Stililingus (1703), Neande (1853), Hunter (1886), Rae (1892), Zaleski (1915) are authors who have supported the Apostolate of Saint Bartholomew in India. Scholars such as Sollerius (1669), Carpentier (1822), Harnack (1903), Medlycott (1905), Mingana (1926), Thurston (1933), Attwater (1935) et al. did not support this hypothesis. Their main argument is that the India that Eusebius and Jerome refers to here should be Ethiopia or Arabia Felix.

2.2 Kalyan – the Field of Saint Bartholomew, the Apostle Missionary

The recent studies of Hormice C. Perumalil and G.M. Moraes hold that the Bombay region on the Konkan coast, a region which has been known after the ancient town Kalyan, was the field of Saint Bartholomew the Apostle's missionary activities and his martyrdom.

The town of Kalyan, was an ancient port and it is supposed to be the Kalliana which the traveler Cosmas Indicopleustes visited in the 6th century as he reports in his "Christian Topography".

According to Pseudo-Sophronius (7th century), Saint Bartholomew preached to the "Indians who are called Happy" and according to the Greek tradition the Apostle went to "India Felix". The word '*kalyan*' means '*felix*' or 'happy' and it is argued that the Kalyan region came to be known to the foreign writers as "India Felix" and its inhabitants, Indians, were called 'the happy ones'.

Perumalil interprets the "India Interior" of Hieronymian Martyrology as Western India, and the "India" of the 'Passio Bartholomei' as the Maratha Country.[4]

There is no local tradition about the mission of Pantænus or the mission of Bartholomew the Apostle, in India. According to Moraes this is due to the fact that the history of Christians of Bartholomew got intermingled with those of the Thomas Christians (the Syriac tradition is that Saint Bartholomew preached in Armenia). According to Perumalil, Bartholomew Christians continued as a separate community till the coming of the Portuguese and then got merged with the Christians of Bombay.[5]

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[0]< http://nasrani.net/2007/02/13/saint-bartholomew-mission-in-india/ >

[1]Jerome, *Epistola LXX ad Magnum oratorem urbis Romæ*.

[2]Clement, *Stromata*, 15.

[3]Jerome, *Epistola LIX ad Marcellam*.

[4]Perumalil, "The Apostles in India".

[5]Moraes, *A History of Christianity in India AD 52-1542*.

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Comment:

In the above article, full details for the references are lacking. Additional information with regard to two pivotal studies is given below. Presumably one would be able to track down the other references of the above article with these two books in hand:

[4]Perumalil, Hormice C., "The Apostles in India", in *Christianity in India: A History in Ecumenical Perspective* (Alleppey, Kerala, S. India: Prakasam Publications, 1973).

[5]Moraes, G.M., *A History of Christianity in India AD 52-1542*, Vol. 1 (Bombay: Manaktalas, 1964).

One can gather from the above article, that there is a lot of uncertainty about the presumed apostle Bartholomew's missionary visit to India.

CHAPTER IX*

The Bishops under Commodus.

After Antonius[1] had been emperor for nineteen years, Commodus received the government.[2] In his first year Julian[3] became bishop of the Alexandrian churches, after Agrippinus had held the office for twelve years.

[1]I.e. Marcus Aurelius. . . .

[2]March 17, 180 A.D.

[3]Of this Julian we know nothing except what is told us by Eusebius here and in chap. 22, where he is said to have held office for ten years. In the *Chron.* he is also said to have been bishop for ten years, but his accession is put in the nineteenth year of Marcus Aurelius (by Jerome), or in the second year of Commodus (by the Armenian version).

CHAPTER X

Pantænus the Philosopher.

About that time, Pantænus,[1] a man highly distinguished for his learning had charge of the school of the faithful in Alexandria.[2] A school of sacred learning, which continues to our day, was established in ancient times,[3] and as we have been informed,[4] was managed by men of great ability and zeal for divine things. Among these it is reported[5] that Pantænus was at that time especially conspicuous, as he had been educated in the philosophical system of those called Stoics. They say that he displayed such zeal for the divine Word, that he was appointed as a herald of the Gospel of Christ to the nations in the East, and was sent as far as India.[6] For indeed[7] there were still many evangelists of the Word who sought earnestly to use their inspired zeal, after the examples of the apostles, for the increase and building up of the Divine Word. Pantænus was one of these, and is said to have gone to India. It is reported that among persons there who knew of Christ, he found the Gospel according to Matthew, which had anticipated his own arrival. For Bartholomew,[8] one of the apostles, had preached to them, and left with them the writing of Matthew in the Hebrew language,[9] which they had preserved till that time.

After many good deeds, Pantænus finally became the head of the school at Alexandria,[10] and expounded the treasures of divine doctrine both orally and in writing.[11]

[1]Pantænus is the first teacher of the Alexandrian school that is known to us, and even his life is involved in obscurity. His chief significance for us lies in the fact that he was the teacher of Clement, with whom the Alexandrian school first steps out into the full light of history, and makes itself felt as a power in Christendom. Another prominent pupil of Pantænus was Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem (see below, Bk. VI. chap. 14). Pantænus was originally a Stoic philosopher, and must have discussed philosophy in his school in connection with theology, for Origen appeals to him as his example in this respect (see below, Bk. VI. chap. 19). His abilities are testified to by Clement (in his *Hypotyposes*; see the next chapter, § 4), who speaks of him always in terms of the deepest respect and affection. Of his birth and death we know nothing. Clement, *Strom.* I. 1, calls him a "Sicilian bee," which may, perhaps, have reference to his birthplace. The statement of Philip of Side, that he was an Athenian, is worthless. We do not know when he began his work in Alexandria, nor when he finished it. But from Bk. VI. chap. 6 we learn that Clement had succeeded Pantænus, and was in charge of the school in the time of Septimius Severus. This probably means not merely that Pantænus had left Egypt, but that he was already dead; and if that be the case, the statement of Jerome (*de vir. ill.* 36), that Pantænus was in charge of the school during the reigns of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, is erroneous (Jerome himself expressly says, in *ibid.* chap. 38, that Clement succeeded Pantænus upon the death of the latter). Jerome's statement, however, that Pantænus was sent to India by Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, is not necessarily in conflict with the indefinite account of Eusebius, who gives no dates. What authority Jerome has for his account we do not know. If his statement be correct, the journey must have taken place after 190; and thus after, or in the midst of, his Alexandrian activity. Eusebius apparently accepted the latter opinion, though his statement at the end of this chapter is dark, and evidently implies that he was very uncertain in regard to the matter. His whole account rests simply on hearsay, and therefore too much weight must not be laid upon its accuracy. After Clement comes upon the scene (which was at least some years before the outbreak of the persecution of Severus, 200 A.D. – when he left the city) we hear nothing more of Pantænus. Some have put his

*From Volume I, Book V, (Eusebius, "Hist. Eccl.") *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, ed. & trans. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1890), pp. 224-25. **Please note:** the numbered notes are the editor's. – ML.

journey to India in this later period; but this is contrary to the report of Eusebius, and there is no authority for the opinion. Photius (*Cod*. 118) records a tradition that Pantænus had himself heard some of the apostles; but this is impossible, and is asserted by no one else. According to Jerome, numerous commentaries of Pantænus were extant in his time. Eusebius, at the close of this chapter, speaks of his expounding the Scriptures "both orally and in writing," but he does not enumerate his works, and apparently had never seen them. No traces of them are now extant, unless some brief reminiscences of his teaching, which we have, are supposed to be drawn from his works, and not merely from his lectures or conversations (see Routh, *Rel. Sac*. I, p. 375-383).

2The origin of this school of the faithful, or "catechetical school," in Alexandria is involved in obscurity. Philip of Side names Athenagoras as the founder of the school, but his account is full of inconsistencies and contradictions, and deserves no credence. The school first comes out into the light of history at this time with Pantænus at its head, and plays a prominent part in Church history under Clement, Origen, Heraclas, Dionysius, Didymus, &c., until the end of the fourth century, when it sinks out of sight in the midst of the dissensions of the Alexandrian church, and its end like its beginning is involved in obscurity. It probably owed its origin to no particular individual, but arose naturally as an outgrowth from the practice which flourished in the early Church of instructing catechumens in the elements of Christianity before admitting them to baptism. In such a philosophical metropolis as Alexandria, a school, though intended only for catechumens, would very naturally soon assume a learned character, and it had already in the tine of Pantænus at least become a regular theological school for the preparation especially of teachers and preachers. It exercised a great influence upon theological science, and numbered among its pupils many celebrated theologians and bishops. See the article by Redepenning in Herzog, ad ed. I. 290-292, and Schaff's *Ch. Hist*. II. 777-781, where the literature of the subject is given.

3Jerome (*de vir. ill*. c. 36) states that there had always been ecclesiastical teachers in Alexandria from the time of Mark. He is evidently, however, giving no independent tradition, but merely draws his conclusion from the words of Eusebius, who simply says "from ancient times." The date of the origin of the school is in fact entirely unknown, though there is nothing improbable in the statement of Jerome that ecclesiastical teachers were always there. It must, however, have been some years before a school could be developed or the need of it be felt.

4. . . .

5. . . .

6Jerome (*de vir. ill*. 36) says that [Pantænus] was sent to India by the bishop Demetrius at the request of the Indians themselves, – a statement more exact than that of Eusebius, whether resting upon tradition merely, or upon more accurate information, or whether it is simply a combination of Jerome's, we do not know. It is at any rate not at all improbable (see above, note 1). A little farther on Eusebius indicates that Pantænus preached in the same country in which the apostle Bartholomew had done missionary work. But according to Lipsius (*Dict. of Christ. Biog*. I. p. 22) Bartholomew's traditional field of labor was the region of the Bosphorus. He follows Guschmid therefore in claiming that the Indians here are confounded with the Sindians, over whom the Bosphorian kings of the house of Polemo ruled. Jerome (*Ep. ad Magnum*; Migne, *Ep*. 70) evidently regards the India where Pantænus preached as India proper. (*Pantænus stoicæ sectæ philosophus, ob pracipue eruditionis gloriam, a Demetrio Alexandria episcopo missus est in Indiam, ut Christum apud Brachmanas, et illius gentis philosophos prædicaret*.) Whether the original tradition was that Pantænus went to India, and his connection with Bartholomew (who was wrongly supposed to have preached to the Indians) was a later combination, or whether, on the other hand, the tradition that he preached in Bartholomew's field of labor was the original and the mission to India a later combination, we cannot tell. It is probable that Eusebius meant India proper, as Jerome certainly did, but both of them may have been mistaken.

7. . . Eusebius seems to think it a remarkable fact that there should *still* have been preaching evangelists. Evidently they were no longer common in his day. It is interesting to notice that he calls them "evangelists." In earlier times they were called "apostles" (e.g. in the Didache), but the latter had long before Eusebius' time become a narrower, technical term.

8See note 6.

9If the truth of this account be accepted, Pantænus is a witness to the existence of a Hebrew Matthew. See above, Bk. III. chap. 24, note 5. It has been assumed by some that this Gospel was the Gospel according to the Hebrews (see Bk. III. chap. 25, note 24). This is possible; but even if Pantænus really did find a Hebrew Gospel of Matthew as Eusebius says (and which, according to Jerome *de vir. ill*. 36, he brought back to Alexandria with him), we have no grounds upon which to base a conclusion as to its nature, or its relation to our Greek Matthew.

10Eusebius apparently puts the journey of Pantænus in the middle of his Alexandrian activity, and makes him return again and teach there until his death. Jerome also agrees in putting the journey in the middle and not at the beginning or close of his Alexandrian activity. It must be confessed however, that Eusebius' language is very vague, and of such a nature as perhaps to imply that he really had no idea when the mission took place.

11See above, note 1.

Comment:

First, here is the expanded reference for the previous two pages: *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, *Second Series, Translated into English with Prolegomena and Explanatory Notes under the Editorial Supervision of Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, in Connection with a Number of Patristic Scholars of Europe and America*, Vol. I, *Eusebius:* Church History*,* Life of Constantine the Great*, and* Oration in Praise of Constantine (New York: The Christian Literature Co./Oxford and London: Parker & Co., 1890), pp. 224-25.

Second, what are we now to make of the reports by Eusebius and Jerome of Pandænus's trip to India? The fact that Eusebius and, before him, Clement and others of Alexandria were well informed of various Indian religious types – *śramaṇas*, *brāhmaṇas*, and gymnosophists (stark naked Jains or Ājīvakas or any minimally clothed Indian sage) – would make it highly unlikely they were confusedly referring to Persia, Arabia, or Ethiopia, rather than to India. Now with Lindtner's revelations, we know with certainty that there was indeed a connection between the Alexandrian 'School' and India proper, since the canonical Gospels are full of Buddhism.

Christian Lindtner holds that much in the canonical Gospels of the New Testament has been derived from Buddhist literary works, and that much of the Gospel of Matthew was derived from the Buddhist narrative of one Maudgalyāyana in the Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya. Maudgalyāyana was a leading disciple of the Buddha. Further, one of Maudgalyāyana's sur-names was 'Son of *Thalama*' – from which was derived the name 'Bar-tholomew'. Matthew and Bartholomew are, therefore, two different names for the same allegorical disciple of Jesus. And 'Mark' ('*Markos*'), the name of the presumed author of that Gospel, is actually derived from '*Kumāras*' = '*Prince*' Siddhārtha, the future Buddha, himself.

Is there anything which sounds familiar about the story of Pandænus being invited by the Indians to come and preach Christianity to them? Do you remember the much later legend of Barlaam and Josaphat?* Barlaam, a Christian ascetic sage, converts Indians, including the young, princely Bodhisattva (Josaphat – the future Buddha), to Christianity! We have seen that the Manichæans, in the third century, CE, were circulating a version of this story, in the West, which was clearly Buddhist.** And that story would sometime afterward be turned by crypto-Buddhist Christians into the greatest of Christian legends, wherein, Barlaam, a Christian ascetic sage, converts the Bodhisattva, himself, to Christianity! This is '*Upāya-Kauśalya*' ('Skillful Stratagem') taken to the limit!

No wonder, all is vagueness concerning what Pandænus was doing on his trip to India and the dates of his mission. That there is, according to the Syrian Christian Network article, no local tradition, in India, about the second century mission of Pandænus or the first century mission of 'Bartholomew the Apostle' is no surprise, either. Bartholomew was not flesh and blood, but allegorical! And Pandænus, though flesh and blood, was involved in a secretive mission *from* India to the West on behalf of Buddhism! By the time we hear of Pandænus, the Alexandrian School had behind it over three hundred years of development from the initial arrival of King Aśōka's missionary monks. This Alexandrian School became the real womb of Christianity.

The burning question, then, is: When did the 'allegorical conception' of Christianity take place? Certainly not before the last decade of the first century, CE. The years between the presumed crucifixion of Jesus and the last decade of the first century are blank. None of the Epistles of Paul were written in those early days (the Out of Egypt Theory goes along with the view of the Radical Dutch School on this matter). And the four canonical gospels were all composed later.

To arrive at a better understanding of the chronology of events, let us turn to passages from an online article written by Clyde Curry Smith:

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*Cf. pp. 61 ff. of the present work.

***Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Texts from Central Asia*, trans. by Hans-Joachim Klimkeit (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), p. 313.

Demetrius (Bishop 189/190?-233? A.D.): The Ancient Christian Church in Alexandria, Egypt*

By Clyde Curry Smith

Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-340) initiated his *Ecclesiastical History* with reference to "the successions from the holy apostles" [I.1], thereby enunciating the principal one of those several themes by which he intended to tell his story. As a consequence, those major urban centers of the Roman imperial world, including its second city, Alexandria, could provide Eusebius with the main points of reference wherein he could document literally by named persons those who were in that succession and thereby presided over the ministry of their respective urban communities.

Concluding what little Eusebius knew of those who had served in the episcopal office at Alexandria through the episcopate of Julian, he observed that "in the tenth year of the reign of Commodus, Victor [bishop of Rome, 189-198] succeeded Eleutherus", while in that same year "when Julian had completed his tenth year, Demetrius was entrusted with the ministry of the communities at Alexandria" [*H.E.*V.22]. Philip Carrington, trying to portray Alexandrian Christianity in the second Christian century, comments:

> We have a list of bishops, however, with the number of years they held office, which is preserved in the pages of Eusebius. If we start in the year 62, a number obtained by working backwards from 190, the approximate date of the accession of Demetrius, we find that it works out like this: *Annianus* (or *Hananiah*) 62, *Avilus* 84, *Cerdon* 98, *Primus* 109, *Justus* 119, *Eumenes* 130, **Marcus** 143, **Celadion** 153, **Agrippinus** 167, **Julian** 178, and **Demetrius** 190. **Demetrius** is the first bishop about whom we have any real information. *Annianus* occurs in legend. The rest are mere names. [**1957**:II.44]
>
> [Names italicized by ML = 'bishops of the circumcision'; names bolded = Gentile bishops.]

Carrington's observation was not new. As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, Adolf von Harnack had commented [through English translation] that

> ["The worst gap in our knowledge of early church history is our almost total ignorance of the history of Christianity in Alexandria and Egypt . . . up till {189} A.D. (the episcopate of Demetrius), when for the first time the Alexandrian church appears in the daylight of history. It is then a stately church with a powerful bishop and a school of higher learning attached to it by means of which its influence was to be diffused and its fame borne far and wide. (**1908**:158-59)" – ML]

This theme had been reiterated by Walter Bauer: "We first catch sight of something like 'ecclesiastical' Christianity in Demetrius, the bishop of Alexandria from 189 to 231." [**1934**:53]

Then, to paraphrase Smith, he (Smith) goes on to note Eusebius's important observation (which is not self-evident from the mere listing of names up to Demetrius) that after the Jewish War with Rome (132-135), which occurred under the imperial administration (117-138) of the Roman emperor Publius Ælius Hadrianus, the church in Alexandria was composed of Gentiles, such that the first Gentile to be entrusted with the ministry of its members, in succession to the 'bishops of the circumcision', at approximately mid-second century, was Marcus, or "Mark the Bishop" – implying thereby that the influence in the Alexandrian "church" throughout the first century of the Common Era had been primarily derived from Hellenistic Jews, with its leadership made up of Jewish bishops (endorsing circumcision) from Annianus/Hananiah through Eumenes (*H.E.*IV.6.4).

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*These excerpts are from Clyde Smith's article on the internet (< ww.dacb.org/stories/egypt/demetrius.htm >), which was posted in 2005.

References

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• • • • • • • • •

Comment:

What can one gather from all this information? By the early second century, CE, there were these three different major types of crypto-Buddhist Christian organizations in Egypt: **1)** monasteries, evolved from those of the Therapeutæ, with two ranks of ascetic inmates of both sexes (deacons [novices/assistants] and presbyters [elders]), with a temporary (*pro tem*) presiding role for individual presbyters, who would be referred to as an *ephemereut* – but only for the duration of a particular gathering!, **2)** the churches of town and city, closely involved with the laity, with three *attenuated-monastic* ranks of clergy (deacons [novices/assistants], presbyters [elders], and bishops [overseers] – this 3rd, superior rank of bishops making permanent the merely *pro tem* and rotating role of the *ephemereuts*, and **3)** the School of Alexandria, with its scholars who were creating the evolving allegorical 'Christian' doctrine. All three organizations were ethnically mixed even from earliest "Christianity" and from the earlier communities (the Therapeutæ, Essenes, and Gnostics) which were their immediate "ancestors", whose own roots stretched back to the ethnically mixed monastic and scholarly communities created in the mid-third century BCE by Buddhist medical missionary monks and scholar-monks from India.

The Out of Egypt Theory proposes that the pseudonymous writers of the four Gospels ('Matthew', 'Mark', 'Luke', and 'John') were all directly associated with the School of Alexandria, where material from the Buddhist scriptures (the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-Vinaya [MSV], Sad-Dharma-Puṇḍarīka-sūtra [SDP], etc.) were used to create, transformingly, the canonical Gospels. Lindtner has detailed a great number of these transformations. The Gospels are complex, multi-layered, allegorical *literary* works – very different from most of the apocryphal works which do not possess such sophistication. The evangelists must have had a mastery of Sanskrit and Pāli, in addition to Greek and Hebrew, to have produced the punning and other effects that went into the cross-linguistic creation of the Gospels. So subtle and intentionally mystifying was this method that even secular scholars have not grasped these facts.

If, in 143 CE, as Eusebius reported, "bishop" Marcos was the first Gentile to succeed the long line of Jewish leaders, the Church in Alexandria, at that time, being "composed of Gentiles", then the OET suggests that we should mark the year 143 as the time when there is clear evidence that the Alexandrian Church was turning away from Jewish customs. The Didache belongs to a period shortly before this, when Jewish leaders were only beginning to face opposition. No Jewish person would easily conceive of celebrating a Eucharist where wine or any other liquid was conceived of as representing 'blood'! The 'cup' (with wine [in city church] or water [in monastery]), in the Didachean ritual, represented the vine of David, the Lord's servant. There is no mention of Jesus' Passion: his Crucifixion, Resurrection, and act of Redemption. Instead, the Didachean ritual[1a] was very close to that of the Therapeutæ, who, in their ritual (as described by Philo), had replaced the wine of the Jerusalem Temple with pure water! Since the author of the Didache makes numerous references to the Gospel of Matthew (citing, quoting, and alluding to it), as well as to the Hebrew Bible, it appears that Pandænus had already "brought that Gospel of Matthew back from India" – i.e., Pandænus, or others, somewhat earlier than 143, had composed the Gospel of Matthew, it being deceptively claimed to have been originally taken to India, in the first century, by the alleged (*allegorical!*) apostle, Bartholomew ('Bar-*Thalama*' < 'Bar-Ptolemy'?).

Harnack, in 1908, had noted: "The worst gap in our knowledge of early church history is our almost total ignorance of the history of Christianity in Alexandria and Egypt. . . ."[1b] Walter Bauer, in 1934, repeated Harnack's observations, adding:

> Eusebius, who "found nothing in his sources about the primitive history of Christianity in Alexandria," had in any event searched very diligently in them. . . . He traces a succession of ten bishops from [St.] Mark down to the reign of the Emperor Commodus (180-192).[2] But this list, which he owes to Sextus Julius Africanus, serves only to make the profound silence that hangs over the origins even more disconcerting. "There is absolutely no accompanying tradition" – since this is so, what may be gathered at best is still almost less than

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[1a] It's the 'missing link' between the Therapeutæan ritual and the more traditional 'Last Supper' Christian Eucharist.

[1b] Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity* (1908), p. 158. [Footnotes 1a & 1b by ML]

[2] *EH* 2.24, 3.14, 3.21, 4.1, 4.4, 4.5.5, 4.11.6, 4.19, 5.9. For the various names, see the *GCS* [*Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte* (Leipzig and Berlin)] ed. by Schwartz, vol. 3: p. 9. [*EH* = *Ecclesiastical History*, by Eusebius, ed. by E. Schwartz-T. Mommsen, *GCS* 9 (1903-1909); English translation by (H.J. Lawlor and) J.E. Loulton (London: SPCK, 1927).] [This footnote is Bauer's. – ML]

nothing.[3] . . . The first ten names (after Mark, the companion of the apostles) are and remain for us a mere echo and a puff of smoke; and they scarcely could ever have been anything but that.[4]

The OET's explanation of this embarrassing gap in our knowledge is simple: Christianity came into existence only with the introduction of the *allegorical* narratives of the gospels around the end of the first century, since there was no historical Jesus crucified under the order of Pontius Pilate in c. 30 CE! It took the better part of the second century before these allegories began to be accepted and transformed into accepted "historical" beliefs which became the foundation of newly created Christianity. There is, therefore, no need for embarrassment. The first ten names after "St. Mark" are therefore only proto-Christians – not Christians! What is needed is a paradigmatic shift – a Lindtnerian Revolution – in outlook, which, of course, will entail a change in outlook far more unsettling to traditional Christianity than even Darwin's Theory of Evolution!

The Church of Alexandria, which probably had developed out of an Essenic type of community that did not require celibacy or asceticism – a community which in turn had developed out of crypto-Buddhist monasticism which did expect celibacy and moderate asceticism in its monks and nuns – can be seen as an organization run by *attenuated-monastics*, exhibiting a secularized form of its ancestral monasticism's "voluntary association"[5] with its division of deacons and presbyters / ephemereuts. But the Alexandrian Church did not adopt monasticism's universal upward mobility for the Church's clergy (its deacons and presbyters), nor did it apply the *pro tem* limitations of the ephemereut to its own presiding officer (the bishop), whose active term was usually brought to an end only by the bishop's death or incapacitation. A further development was that, by the episcopate of Demetrius (189-231), the bishop had begun to assume definite "monarchical" characteristics – characteristics which are not found in early crypto-Buddhism.

"What reason could they [Eusebius's sources] have had for being silent about the origins of Christianity in such an important center as Alexandria if there had been something favorable to report?", asks Bauer (p. 45). Are the "ten names (after [*Markos* = St. Mark] the companion of the apostles) a mere echo and puff of smoke", as Bauer asserts? Lindtner has, indeed, demonstrated that '*Markos* the companion of the apostles' is, himself, a puff of smoke (an allegorical transmogrification of '*Kumāras*' [the '*young Prince*'] Siddhārtha, the future Buddha). But, what about the ten predecessors of bishop Demetrius? It's true that we may not have learned much about them – yet we do know their names and the length of their service in number of years. This is not the zero that Bauer frustratedly proclaims (p. 45). The Out of Egypt Theory provisionally accepts the view that these ten names may refer to flesh and blood persons of Alexandria, actual predecessors of bishop Demetrius. But, even so, according to the OET, the earliest of them could not be classified as 'Christian'. The allegorical narratives of 'Christianity' had not yet been introduced into this 'proto-Christian' organization. When exactly the allegorical narratives of Christianity were effectively introduced into this proto-Christian organization is not known, and it might have taken some time, in the minds of the 'proto-Christians', before the allegorical narratives of Jesus were turned into supposed *historical* accounts of a Savior, a Jewish rabbi, who, after preaching a (generally peaceful) reformative Messianic message within Judaism, laid down his life for the redemption of his followers, and was crucified under the authority of Pontius Pilate, enjoining his disciples to go out into the world and make disciples of all nations. We have seen (on p. 88 of this present work) how the great Missionary Charge (*Matthew 28:19*), in an earlier form, may have simply read:

Go and make disciples of all nations in my name, and teach them everything I have commanded you.

In this abbreviated form there is no mention of *baptizing* the nations in Jesus' name *or in the names of the Trinity*. These expressions, evidently, were later additions to the crypto-Buddhist Gospel of Matthew which Pandænus is supposed to have 'brought back from India'!

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[3] Harnack, *Geschichte* 2 (*Chronologie*) .1 (1897): 205 f. [This footnote is Bauer's.]

[4] W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, p. 45. [Footnotes 4 & 5 by ML]

[5] *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. by J.S. Kloppenborg and S.G. Wilson (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), with its especially relevant Chapter 12, "Jewish Voluntary Associations in Egypt and the Roles of Women", by Peter Richardson and Valerie Heuchan, a chapter which studies two 'Jewish' groups in Egypt: 1) the Therapeutae and Therapeutrides at Lake Mareotis, and 2) the Temple Community at Leontopolis.

We have seen, however, that it is more likely that this Gospel was actually created in Alexandria, around the end of the first century, as the Out of Egypt Theory hypothesizes, and there is, therefore, no surprise in Bauer's comment that neither in the writings of Philo of Alexandria (in the first half of the first century CE) nor in the correspondence of the Emperor Claudius (r.y. 41-54 CE) is there the slightest hint that there were Christians in Alexandria.[7] And, moreover, Bauer accuses Eusebius, who was faced (c. 324 CE) with this dearth of information from his sources, of having desperately identified the Therapeutæ as being the earliest Christians. Bauer will have none of this, and he brings his discussion of the matter to a close with the following declaration (p. 47):

> [N]o one today would dare to suppose with Eusebius (*EH* 2:16-17) that Philo's "Therapeutae" were Christians.

The Out of Egypt Theory, in this day and age, takes up the challenge. It does dare! But Bauer's way of phrasing his challenge reveals his misunderstanding. Bauer's challenge is like declaring:

> No one today would dare to suppose that the Bodhisattva was the Buddha.

No indeed! Prince Siddhārtha, when he was the 'Bodhisattva', was not yet the 'Buddha' (the 'Awakened One'), but the Buddha was the *same person* as Prince Siddhārtha! Similarly, the early Christian Church developed out of one or more of the various forms of crypto-Buddhist 'Judaism' which had been evolving in Alexandria for over three hundred years. At the *beginning* of the Common Era, there were these non-Christian "blood relatives": (1) the crypto-Buddhist/Gnostic ('Judaic') Therapeutæ (the *monastics* described by Philo) in *every district* of Egypt, (2) the Buddhist/Gnostic ('Judaic') scholars of the famous School of Alexandria (who were not yet Christian! – they would only begin to translate/compose the allegorical narratives of the canonical Gospels around the end of the first century), and (3) an assortment of various other crypto-Buddhist/Gnostic groups (some of which were pro-'Judaism', others, anti-'Judaism'): [a] the crypto-Buddhist/Gnostic proto-Judæo-Christian 'churches'/synagogues of city and towns (not identifiable as Christian until around the end of the century – many of which then, after the Jewish-Roman Wars of 115-117 and 132-135, turned away in varying degrees from Jewish leadership and customs), [b] several 'schools' of crypto-Buddhist Gnosticism (some of which viewed the Hebrew God, YḤWḤ, as a mere Demiurge, while others, around the end of the first century, would begin to morph into various forms of Judæo-Christianity).

Theologians and church historians, in viewing the allegorical Gospel narratives as history, have not understood the 'genetic' relation of Christianity, as a crypto-Buddhist organization, to its crypto-Buddhist forebears in Alexandria. Once this relation is grasped, then Eusebius's viewing the monastic Therapeutæ as the earliest of Christians makes sense when we realize that:

> Christianity = crypto-Buddhist Judaism *after* it attained "Enlightenment" through the introduction of the allegorical narratives of the canonical Gospels into its belief system.

Just like:

> The Buddha = Siddhārtha Gautama *after* he attained Enlightenment!

Another factor which clouds the issue is that the early 'Church' of Alexandria had evolved out of a secularized organization which, being *attenuated-monastic*, had nevertheless retained a hierarchy of officials (its 'clergy') which mimicked those of the *monastic* Therapeutæ: their deacons, presbyters, and ephemereuts. The *pro-tem* aspect of the ephemereuts' brief moments of officiating was *not* adopted by the proto-Judæo-Christian 'church'/synagogue of Alexandria, which opted for life-time appointments for their presiding officers, the bishops. Note that the Roman Catholic distinction between its 'secular clergy' and *monastic* 'regular clergy' stems from the pre-Christian divisions in the crypto-Buddhist organizations of Alexandria. Over a span of some three hundred years of missionary work in Egypt, up to the end of the first century CE, the crypto-Buddhist view would have been that members of their monastic organizations, the monks and nuns, were the true bearers of religious authority, whereas the officers of crypto-Buddhist secularized organizations – "voluntary associations" such as the 'churches'/synagogues – would have had no such authority.

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[7] Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, p. 47.

What happened, then, was to bring about an amazing transfer of authority – where officers of the secular organization (the 'church') struggled to assume paramount authority over the monastics – brainwashing the monastics, eventually, into believing that they, the monastics, were somehow *subordinate* – though with special merit! This struggle took the better part of the second century, with the tide turning in distinct favor of the ecclesiastics during the episcopacy of Demetrius (189-231 CE). However, monastics continued to resist this usurpation of authority and power until the First Council of Nicæa (325 CE), when the authority and power of the Roman empire stepped in to give overwhelming support to the ecclesiastics.

What were the developments which led to this revolutionary transfer of authority from monastery to church? What was it that transformed, within the span of two centuries, a subordinate crypto-Buddhist Judaic secular organization into the Church Catholic, allied with the Roman empire?

With the crushing decimation of the Jews in the two Jewish-Roman Wars of 115-117 and 132-135, we have seen from Eusebius's remarks that the Jewish membership and leadership within the church of Alexandria was obliterated by the ravages of these wars. By 143 CE, the church "was composed of Gentiles", according to Eusebius. This was at the beginning of the episcopate of the Gentile, Marcus, "the first to be entrusted with the ministry of [the church's] members, in succession to the bishops of the circumcision."

The Out of Egypt Theory would suggest that it was at this unsettled time, during the two wars, that Egyptian members, very likely dominant now within the church, supported the addition of a Passion Episode for the Gnostic Jesus which would compete with the Osirian Passion Drama, celebrated annually in Alexandria and throughout Egypt. Such a development would make intelligible that peculiar letter (dt. 134 CE) of the Roman emperor Hadrian to the Consul Servianus quoted by Flavius Vopiscus, *Vita Saturini* 8. Walter Bauer's discussion of that letter in his book, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, is most thorough. He says (pp. 46-47):

> [A] historian of the stature of H. Gelzer regards it as authentic, and Harnack is also willing to give it consideration.[9] According to the context, this letter comes from the writings of Phlegon,[10] the freedman of Hadrian. In the letter, the emperor remarks that he is well acquainted with the Egyptians as frivolous and avid for novelties:
>
> > Here those who worship Serapis are [at the same time] Christians, and those who call themselves bishops of Christ are also devotees of Serapis. Here there is no synagogue leader of the Jews, no Samaritan, no Christian presbyter who is not also an astrologer, a haruspex, and *aliptes*" (8.2 ff.).[11]

Comment: A personal anecdote may throw some light on this strange letter. When I was a child, my family lived part of the year in the south Indian hill station of Kodaikanal. Once a year, a procession passed by at night on the road behind our home, with drums beating and fireworks lighting up the sky. Several images on platforms fixed to poles were carried on the shoulders of devotees. A casual visitor to Kodaikanal could be excused if he were to think that this was a Hindu procession. It had all the characteristics of a Hindu procession with idols – but it was, in fact, a procession of Catholic laypersons, under the watchful eye of a single priest. The images of St. Mary, St. Joseph, and others were not idols but icons (to be venerated, not worshipped, presumably – though it would have been difficult to explain what that difference was). These images were being carried down from St. Mary's Church to the church of La Salette, where their clothes would be renewed on the following day, and then, in a daylight procession, they would be returned to St. Mary's.

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[9] Gelzer, *Sextus Julius Africanus und die byzantinische Chronographie*, I (Leipzig, 1880): 16; Harnack, *Mission*[2], 2: 159 f. n. 4 (= German[4] 2: 707, n. 3).

[10] See W. Weber, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Hadrianus* (Leipzig: Tuebner, 1907), pp. 97 ff.

[11] *Scriptores historae Augustae*, ed. E. Hohl (2 vols., Leipzig 1927): *Aegyptum . . . totam didici levem pendulam et ad omnia famae momenta volitantem, illic qui Serapem colunt Christiani sunt et devoti sunt Serapi qui se Christi episcopas dicunt, nemo illic archisynagogus Iudaeorum, nemo Samarites, nemo Christianorum presbyter non mathematicus, non haruspex, non aliptes*. The final word is from the Greek *aleiphein*, to anoint. [The haruspex performs divination by interpreting the entrails of sacrificial victims.] [These three footnotes are Bauer's and the square brackets in the quoted passages are the editors', except the first set and this one, which are mine. – ML]

This is certainly a case of local congregations of the Catholic Church in India adopting practices which have the appearance of Hinduism. Of course, from a wider perspective, the Hindus, themselves, had only adopted these practices from ancient Egypt!

Thus, the question at hand is this: Did the church of Alexandria adopt practices which had the appearance of Egyptian Osirism? And did that 'casual visitor', Emperor Hadrian, touring Egypt shortly before his death, fail to distinguish the Passion Drama of Jesus from that of Osiris? If so, the riddle of his letter to Servianus is solved.

Employing the proselytizing principle of *upāya-kauśalya*, the early church in Alexandria may have, in the beginning, purposely instituted a Jesus Passion Drama very similar to the Osirian Passion Drama. If so, the Alexandrian church set a kind of precedent which the Kodaikanal Catholic churches have followed, almost two thousand years later!

Speaking of early Christianity "borrowing" from Egyptian mythology to create its own Christian characters, D.M. Murdock has this to say about the god Anubis (in *Christ in Egypt*, p. 235, emphasis added):

> When we are aware of . . . the importance and pervasiveness of the Egyptian religion around the Mediterranean and elsewhere at the time, knowing how its myths and ritual were *usurped* in numerous instances, as well as that several of its major players have essentially been morphed into Christian characters, we may logically ask what happened to the others, especially one as important as Anubis? Who replaced Anubis with the Christian mythos and ritual? A scientific analysis reveals John the Baptist to represent the most likely candidate.

Surely the Buddhist-"Christian" evangelists, in creating the canonical Gospels, thought they were borrowing only to reform and purify what they had "borrowed" ("usurped") from Egyptian mythology and the Hebrew scriptures. But the direction which the resulting Christian church later took was often far away from what must have been crypto-Buddhism's original intention.

The question, now, is: How extensive was this borrowing by the early Christian church from Egyptian mythology? According to Murdock, astoundingly extensive! Speaking of the parallels between the Egyptian god Horus and Jesus, here is a list repeated on p. 44 in *Christ in Egypt* from her earlier book, *The Christ Conspiracy* – keeping in mind the interchangeability of Osiris with Horus (sometimes father and son; other times *alter egos*!):

- Horus was born on "December 25th" (winter solstice) in a manger.
- He was of royal descent, and his mother was the "virgin Isis-Mery."
- Horus's birth was announced by a star in the East and attended by three "wise men."
- At age 12, he was a child teacher in the Temple, and at 30, he was baptized.
- Horus was baptized by "Anup [the god Anubis] the Baptizer," who was decapitated.
- The Egyptian god [Horus] had 12 companions, helpers or disciples.
- Horus performed miracles, exorcised demons and raised Osiris [his father, here] from the dead.
- The god walked on water.
- Horus was "crucified" between two "thieves."
- He (or Osiris) was buried for three days in a tomb and resurrected.
- Horus/Osiris was also the "Way, the Truth, the Life," "Messiah," "Son of Man," the "Good Shepherd," the "Lamb of God," the "Word made flesh," the "Word of Truth," etc.
- Horus's personal epithet was "Iusa," the "Ever-becoming Son of the Father." He was called "Holy Child," as well as the "Anointed One," while Osiris was the *KRST*.
- Horus battled with the "evil one," Set/Seth.
- Horus was to reign for one thousand years.*

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*See Acharya S / D.M. Murdock's, *The Christ Conspiracy: The Greatest Story Ever Sold* (Kempton, IL: Adventures Unlimited Press, 1999), p. 115.

Most of these Horus/Osiris//Jesus parallels are also parallels which we have already encountered between the Buddha and Jesus:

- The Buddha was of royal descent, and his mother, Māyā, "virginally" conceived him.
- The Buddha's birth was announced by a star in the East and attended by three "wise men."
- At age 12, he was a child teacher, and at around 30, he was baptized.
- He *requested* initiation, "baptism", from sage Āḷāra Kālāma, whom, however, he soon outstripped!
- The Buddha had 12 disciples.
- He performed various miracles.
- He walked on water.
- The Buddha, dying a painful death by food poisoning, reclining between two trees (one at his head, one at his feet) and between two men, one of whom was an elderly layman who, at this final hour, became the last convert of the Buddha, praying that he might pre-decease his Lord – a prayer which was answered – presumably resulting in his attaining "Heaven" on the same day as the Buddha, himself!
- The Buddha's body was wrapped in 500 layers of cotton cloth and "entombed", several days prior to cremation, in an iron casket filled with oil and covered with a heavy iron lid (calling to mind the "entombment" of Osiris in a casket and the entombment of Jesus, with a heavy stone "cover" rolled in front of the tomb's entrance).
- The Buddha was also the "Way, the Truth, the Life," the "Word (Dharma) of Truth," etc.
- And he battled with the "evil one," Māra.

One can see that the Buddhist-"Christian" evangelists were composing incredibly intricate and sophisticated multi-layered literary works in creating the canonical "Christian" Gospels. The different layers would be appealing to different ethnic and religious backgrounds: the Hebrew Bible's "mythical" layer, appealing to the Jews; the Egyptian mythical and astrotheological layers, to the Egyptians (the Copts); and the Buddhist *foundational* layer, to the knowledgeable crypto-Buddhist "Christians"! What a magnificent fugue – with most of the original melodies being ancient Egyptian! But the composers were Buddhists!

• • • • • • • • •

How Aware are Contemporary Scholars of Buddhist Influence on Christianity?

Let us consult a sampling of prominent scholars who have written about early Egyptian Christianity to see what, if anything, they might have to say about its possible relation to Buddhism, Therapeutæan monasticism, or Essene Communism.

Philip Rousseau, in his book, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (1985), has nothing whatsoever to say about Buddhism's relation to Christianity. But his book's Index entry for '*therapeutai*' is promising: "*therapeutai*, as described by Philo: possible antecedent to Egyptian monasticism, 12-14". Rousseau, of course, means "antecedent to Egyptian *Christian* monasticism", since the Therapeutæ, themselves, *were* Egyptian monastics:

> If we are seeking earlier Egyptian analogues to the monastic life, perhaps it is to the devotees of Serapis or the *therapeutai* of Alexandria that we should look. . . .[8]

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[8]Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 12.

Rousseau uses the terms 'antecedent' and 'analogue' – but he doesn't see the 'caterpillar' (Essene)→'butterfly' (Christian) relationship! Speaking of Eusebius of Cæsarea and his historical writings, Rousseau says:

> A dearth of evidence and a desire to make a point rendered him often helpless. We cannot take refuge as he did in mythology or misconception. But we have to accept that his account may have done much to shape the mind of the church in Egypt as elsewhere during the century in which [Christian] monasticism developed [– the fourth century CE]. He also prompts us to look more closely, in the light of our other evidence, at leading figures and events in the Christian history of the province.
>
> Take, for example, his [Eusebius's] portrayal of the early Christian community at Alexandria. He felt himself informed above all on that subject by the writings of Philo, who died about 50 A.D. That author's famous *therapeutai* Eusebius resolutely believed to be Christian. He was wrong, but – so importantly for his own generation – he was able by virtue of his error to present the young church as having been rigorously ascetic, open to philosophy, espousing poverty and a partial withdrawal from city life, and inspired by the first Christians of Jerusalem, as described in the *Acts of the Apostles*. And we are therefore impelled to look at Philo's *De vita contemplativa* directly and to note those elements in his account that could, and in some cases could not, be taken as antecedents of monasticism as Pachomius embraced it.[9]

Without Rousseau's being aware of the 'Buddhist' connection, the Therapeutæan and Essene caterpillars are, for him, different creatures from their Christian butterfly forms, and the *Acts of the Apostles* is straightforward history!

Birger A. Pearson is another outstanding scholar who, in two of his books, *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity* [*GJEC*] (1990),[10] and *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt* [*GCRCE*] (2004),[11] is totally unaware of any 'Buddhist' connection. In the first of these two books (on pp. 10-11), Pearson describes for us the setting of his study established by Moritz Friedländer, in 1898:

> Much is currently being written on the question of the origins of Gnosticism[2] and the relationship of Gnosticism to Judaism.[3] It seems to me useful, for the purpose of further discussion, to exhume from the dust of many decades some interesting and provocative ideas set forth by Moritz Friedländer, whose theses did not meet with the approval of his contemporaries, but which may very well be taken more seriously now. In a book entitled *Der vorchristliche jüdische Gnosticismus* [1898],[4] Friedländer put forth the thesis that Gnosticism is a pre-Christian phenomenon which originated in antinomian circles in the Jewish community of Alexandria. This Gnosticism against which Philo polemicizes, came early to Palestine; and the rabbinic polemics against the Minim are directed specifically at such Gnostics. Christian Gnosticism is simply a secondary version of the older Gnosticism, which attached itself to the emergent Christian sect and appropriated for itself the figure of Jesus Christ.

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[2]See esp. Bianchi, *Origini dello gnosticismo*. A complete bibliography of scholarship on Gnosticism since 1948 is now available: Scholer, *Nag Hammadi Bibliography* supplemented annually in *Novum Testamentum*. See also the important work by K. Rudoph, "Gnosis and Gnostizismus, ein Forschungsbericht," *ThR* 34 (1969) 121-75; 181-231; 358-61; and 36 (1971) 1-16; 89-124.

[3]See, e.g., several of the chaps. in this book.

[4](Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1898; repr. Farnborough: Gregg International, 1972). Reference will also be made in this article to an earlier work of his, "La secte de Melchisédec et l'epître aux Hébreux," *REJ* 5 (1882) 1-26; 188-98; and 6 (1883) 187-99.

In the Introduction of his book (*GJEC*, p. 6), Pearson outlines the analysis of another important book (Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy* [1934]) which he will make in the final chapter of *GJEC*:

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[9]Rousseau, p. 13.

[10]Birger A. Pearson, *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990).

[11]B.A. Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt* (New York: T & T International, 2004).

> I take up for discussion the difficult problem of the origins and early history of Christianity in Egypt, with special attention to the role played in that history by Gnostics and Gnosticism. In the course of the discussion I have occasion to consider the pioneering work [*Orthodoxy and Heresy*] of Walter Bauer, whose views on early Egyptian Christianity are widely endorsed by scholars. The position that I take here, on the basis of my reading of the evidence challenges Bauer's thesis of a heretical origin for Egyptian Christianity.

Pearson summarizes (p. 196) Bauer's views on early Egyptian Christianity as follows:

> The ancient and still common view regarding heresy is that it is already preceded by an orthodoxy, from which it is seen to deviate. In the Christian case, the orthodoxy in question is that pure doctrine purportedly handed down by Jesus to his apostles, and by the apostles to the church. While such a simplistic notion has long had its challengers . . . Walter Bauer first took up this question in a systematic way. The method he used was to examine the available evidence for the development of Christianity in various geographical areas. He concluded from his scrutiny of this evidence that heresies, as later defined in ecclesiastical circles, were often the original and only forms of Christianity in many areas. The orthodoxy that eventually came to prevail in such areas did so under the later influence of the Roman church and its ecclesiastical establishment.

Pearson says, about Bauer, that in "order for him to maintain his theory of the heretical (Gnostic) origins of Egyptian Christianity, Bauer must assess the earliest Christian literature attributable to Egypt in a manner consistent with the theory" (p. 197). And, Pearson continues (pp. 197-198):

> . . . Bauer is essentially correct in his observation that the earliest Alexandrian Christians of which we have solid historical knowledge are the heresiarchs Valentinus, Basilides, and Carpocrates. But the significance of that fact is not so clear. In arriving at his conclusions as to the heretical character of the earliest Christianity in Egypt, Bauer must extrapolate backward in time from the reign of Hadrian (117-138 C.E.), when these heretics were flourishing, and color the result with the hues exhibited by the second-century Gnostics. We know no more (and probably less) about Christian Gnosticism in first century Egypt than we do about non-Gnostic Christianity in first-century Egypt.

Thanks to the revelations of Lindtner's research, we are now in a position to surmise that Christianity simply didn't exist in any form so early! The allegorical stories of the New Testament (the four Gospels) had not even begun to be created or introduced into circulation until around the very end of the first century. And these Gospels were soon to be creations of four Buddhist-"Christian" *literary* scholars!

So, from a Lindtnerian perspective, this whole debate about Gnosticism: whether it preceded Christianity, etc., etc., is superseded by the question: Can the origin of the various forms of what have been called 'Gnosticism' and 'Christianity' be extrapolated backward in time to the arrival of King Aśōka's Buddhist missionary monks in Alexandria, mid-third century BCE? The Out of Egypt Theory says: 'Yes it can!'

Let's start with a discussion of the etymology of the word, '*gnosis*'. It comes to us from Greek. The cognate word in Sanskrit is '*jñāna*', and in Pāli '*ñāna*'. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, '*jñāna*' had, by the first century CE, come to mean 'non-conceptualizing' or 'non-dual' awareness, sometimes used synonymously for '*bodhi*' ('Enlightenment'). The early Buddhist missionaries, in the Greek kingdoms, using their '*upāya-kauśalya*' approach to proselytizing, would have steered clear of any term relating directly to 'Bodhi' or 'Buddha'. The reason for their avoidance is beautifully explained by Pearson's eleventh 'essential feature' of 'Gnosticism'. But we will come to that a little later. Consider, now, Pearson's introduction to what he considers to be Gnosticism's 'essential features' (pp. 7-9,), and, here, to the first of these:

> What are the essential features of Gnosticism, and why should Gnosticism be treated as a historically discrete religious phenomenon? . . . Suffice it to say here, by way of summarizing my own views on the matter, **first**, that adherents of Gnosticism regard *gnosis* (rather than faith, observance of law, etc.) as requisite to salvation. The saving "knowledge" involves a revelation as to the true nature both of the self and of God; indeed, for the Gnostic, self-knowledge *is* knowledge of God. [Bolding emphasis added]

Gnosticism's regarding "*gnosis* (rather than faith, observance of law, etc.)" as essential would certainly agree perfectly with standard Buddhist belief. But early Buddhism was agnostic about 'God'. The later

Mahāyānists, however, could, by the first century CE, easily have accommodated themselves to the use of the term 'God' for some aspect of the Buddha:

> Gnosticism also has, **second**, a characteristic *theology* according to which there is a transcendent supreme God beyond the god or powers responsible for the world in which we live.

We have seen, above (pp. 169-170), how, in India, the creator god, Brahmā, was subordinated to the transcendent Buddha in Buddhist Mahāyāna mythology. And, further, Māra and his alter ego, Kāmadēva, who represent different aspects of Brahmā, could be seen as being powers which prevent humans from attaining enlightenment. This negativity in Buddhist thought about the world's make-up is also in agreement with the next 'essential feature' treated by Pearson:

> **Third**, a negative, radically dualist stance vis-à-vis the cosmos involves a *cosmology*, according to which the cosmos itself, having been created by an inferior and ignorant power, is a dark prison in which human souls are held captive.

The fourth 'essential feature' can also be seen, allegorically, as in agreement with Buddhism:

> Interwoven with its theology and its cosmology is, **fourth**, an *anthropology*, according to which the essential human being is constituted by his/her inner self, a divine spark that originated in the transcendent divine world and, by means of gnosis, can be released from the cosmic prison and can return to its heavenly origin.

But the fifth 'essential feature' in Pearson's list has nothing to do with Buddhism!:

> The notion of release from the cosmic prison entails, **fifth**, an *eschatology*, which applies not only to the salvation of the individual but to the salvation of all the elect, and according to which the material cosmos itself will come to its fated end.

This apocalypticism is more directly an input from Judaism. And if an Indian source is sought for, behind that, then one would have to look to the influence on Buddhism by Śaivism, with its ever-cycling æons-ending conflagrations!

> [T]here is, **sixth**, a *social* dimension to Gnosticism.

Every religion has this feature.

> Closely tied to this is, **seventh**, a *ritual* dimension as well, for the Gnostics had religious ceremonies of various kinds.

The value of rituals for Buddhists doesn't reside in the rituals, themselves. Rituals should assist in enhancing the *practice* of the Eight-fold Path, for instance. A good example, illustrated above, on pp. 111 ff., is the section on 'Confession and Absolution'. The Eight-fold Path also lays down the characteristics of Buddhist ethics – the original standard from which all of the ethical systems of the various branches of Gnosticism had evolved over more than two and a half centuries, and against which they all must be judged:

> There is, also, **eighth**, an *ethical* dimension, though in this area there was considerable variation from group to group. Most characteristic, reflecting the acosmic nature of Gnosticism, is the propensity toward withdrawal from engagement with the cosmos, which in its most extreme forms involved abstinence from sex and procreation.

The monks and nuns of Buddhism were, indeed, expected to withdraw from any engagement in sex or procreation – but not the laity! In any case, the ascetic life of the monks and nuns is portrayed in Buddhist scriptures as one of joyful freedom – much like Pearson's ninth 'essential feature' of Gnosticism:

> That all of the aforementioned features of Gnosticism involved, **ninth**, an *experiential* dimension almost goes without saying. Religious experience, for the Gnostic, involved joy in the salvation won by gnosis, as well as an extreme alienation from, and revolt against, the cosmic order and those beings attached to it.

Only the last characteristics of Pearson's ninth 'essential feature' are totally inapplicable to early Buddhism: "an extreme alienation from, and revolt against the cosmic order and those beings attached to it." The Buddha and his followers were not in revolt against the cosmic order or the beings attached to it, and they were not suffering any extreme alienation from it, either. They were – or should have been – detached, totally calm, as

the sculpture of the Śākyamuni (the Bōdhisattva/Buddha) on page 169, above, illustrates! Then, let us turn to Pearson's tenth 'essential feature' of Gnosticism:

> **Tenth**, what holds everything together for the Gnostic is *myth*. One of the most characteristic features of Gnosticism is its mythopoesis, its impulse to create an elaborate mythical system giving expression to all that gnosis entails.

Myths or allegories were developed by various crypto-Buddhist non-Christian Gnostic and crypto-Buddhist Christian Gnostic groups – as well as by the so-called "orthodox" (also crypto-Buddhist) Christians – as '*upāya-kauśalyan*' instruments for proselytizing. After more than two and a half centuries of development some of these mythical systems had strayed far away from the original, underlying intentions of King Aśōka's missionary monks!

Now we come to Pearson's statement about the eleventh and last in his list of the 'essential features' of Gnosticism (pp. 8-9):

> [W]hat makes Gnosticism so hard to define is, finally, its *parasitical* character, a feature that constitutes an **eleventh** dimension of Gnosticism. This brings up the problem of the relationship between Gnosticism and other religions, chiefly Judaism and Christianity. From the foregoing discussion of the essential features of Gnosticism the question would inevitably arise: What has this religion to do with Judaism? Or with Christianity? Precisely such questions are taken up in various ways in this book. In the ensuing chapters we shall see that **parasitical** dimension of Gnosticism.
>
> I conclude . . . with **two examples** [of relationships between Gnosticism and other religions], both of which will be further elaborated in the chapters to follow. The **first example** is the relationship between Gnostic myth and Judaism, more precisely, Jewish scriptures and exegetical traditions. That relationship is **parasitical** in that the essential building blocks of the basic Gnostic myth constitute a (revolutionary) borrowing and reinterpretation of Jewish scriptures and traditions. But the resulting religious system is anything but Jewish!

This is remarkably keen insight on the part of Pearson – but the irony is that he doesn't see that what he has just said about Gnostic myth applies equally well to the myth of "orthodox" Christianity! We adapt Pearson's statement in order to emphasize our point:

> With regard to the relationship between the myth of the New Testament Gospels and Jewish scriptures and exegetical traditions, that relationship is **parasitical** in that the essential building blocks of the basic Christian myth constitute a (revolutionary) borrowing and reinterpretation of Jewish scriptures and traditions. But the resulting religious system is anything but Jewish!

We have seen this parasitical operation of borrowing and reinterpretation of Jewish scriptures illustrated above (on pp. 208-209) in passages of Jon D. Levenson's book, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son*, especially in the second of the two lengthy passages of his which are quoted above on page 209. And as we have tried to make clear, earlier, this "parasitical" action of Christian myth often operates simultaneously on more than one "host" (Jewish scriptures and traditions): for example, in the case of the 'Last Supper' myth, we have already seen (above, pp. 203 ff.) how it draws sustenance from at least four different levels: Buddhist scripture, Jewish scripture, Egyptian mythology, and, most ancient, Astrotheological mythology.

Turning to Pearson's second example of Gnosticism's relationship with other religions (p. 9), he has this to say:

> The **second example** is the relationship between the revealer of gnosis in Gnosticism and Christianity, more precisely, the figure of Jesus Christ. In Christian Gnosticism (or Gnostic, i.e., "heretical" Christianity), Jesus Christ is the revealer of gnosis; the entire Gnostic myth is attributed to him (as, e.g., in *Ap. John*). What seems to be reflected here, historically, is an attempt on the part of Gnostics to gain entry into Christian communities, or to gain Christian adherents to their communities, by means of equating their own gnosis with alleged secret teachings of Jesus.

From the perspective of the Out of Egypt Theory, the Gnostics were *not just* attempting "to gain entry into Christian communities, or to gain Christian adherents to their communities," but rather, after two and a half

centuries of development and diversification from their common Alexandrian origin in the mid-third century BCE crypto-Buddhist/*Gnostic* Judaic *monasticism* founded by King Aśōka's missionary monks, there were, at the pre-Christian beginning of the Common Era, three different major types of crypto-Buddhist Judaic organizations in Egypt: (1) gnostic monasteries (such as the Mareotic monastery of the Therapeutæ described by Philo); (2) *lapsed-monastic* gnostic 'voluntary associations'/synagogues, and (3) gnostic schools – the outstanding one being the great School of Alexandria.

Then, around the end of the first century CE, the allegorical narratives of the New Testament Gospels began to be introduced into these gnostic crypto-Buddhist voluntary associations/synagogues (the proto-'Christian churches') by the *literary* scholars of the School of Alexandria. To imagine that these scholars and later 'Christian' incumbents of their positions were mere catechists, at the service of ministers or bishops, is a monumental misunderstanding. Early Gnostic scholars were, in fact, the very creators of what were to become the canonical Gospels of the New Testament – allegorical narratives about Jesus, the Messiah, composed using a strange but ingenious process of 'transcreating' from a patchwork of various Sanskrit and Pāli Buddhist scriptural passages into the Greek of the NT, transforming the Buddhist elements into fresh narratives, now set within first century Palestine, with hundreds of incidents anchored to the Hebrew Bible by allusions claimed to be the fulfillment of OT prophecies.

In the earliest versions of the Gospel, around the end of the first century, Jesus the Nazarene is a Jewish transmogrification of Buddha, the Monastic. This Jesus/Buddha is portrayed, in the Didache (in 9:3), as a Gnostic guide to Life ("*We thank you, our Father, for* ***the life and knowledge*** *which you have* ***revealed [to us] through Jesus, your child***"), and to the Way of attaining 'heaven' (as in the Gospel of Thomas, for instance). The Out of Egypt Theory suggests that in the earliest drafts of what were to become the canonical Gospels, there was nothing about Jesus' death on the cross, his Resurrection, his Vicarious Atonement on behalf of humankind, or his 'Last Supper'. Chapter 9 of the Didache, which presents the Eucharist, is reproduced below. In it there is a complete absence of any mention of Jesus' Last Supper or his Passion in connection with the Eucharist. The translation is C. Richardson's, from his book, *Early Christian Fathers* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 175:

Chapter 9 of the Didache

Now about the Eucharist:[47]

[47]I.e., "the Thanksgiving." The term, however, had become a technical one in Christianity for the special giving of thanks at the Lord's Supper. One might render the verbal form ("give thanks"), which immediately follows, as "say grace," for it was out of the Jewish forms for grace before and after meals (accompanied in the one instance by the breaking of bread and in the other by sharing a common cup of wine) that the Christian thanksgivings of the Lord's Supper developed.

This is how to give thanks: 2 First in connection with the cup:[48]

[48]It is a curious feature of the Didache that the cup has been displaced from the end of the meal to the very beginning. Equally curious is the absence of any direct reference to the body and blood of Christ.

"We thank you, our Father, for the holy vine[49]

[49]This may be a metaphorical reference to the divine life and knowledge revealed through Jesus (cf. ch. 9:3). It may also refer to the Messianic promise (cf. Isa. 11:1), or to the Messianic community (cf. Ps. 80:8), i.e., the Church.

of David, your child, which you have revealed through Jesus, your child. To you be glory forever."

3 Then in connection with the piece[50]

[50]An odd phrase, but one that refers to the Jewish custom (taken over in the Christian Lord's Supper) of grace before meals. The head of the house would distribute to each of the guests a piece of bread broken off a loaf, after uttering the appropriate thanksgiving to God.

[broken off the loaf]:

"We thank you, our Father, for the life and knowledge which you have revealed through Jesus, your child. To you be glory forever.

4 "As this piece [of bread] was scattered over the hills[51]

[51]The reference is likely to the sowing of wheat on the hillsides of Judea. [Or: '***distributed*** over the hills' (Jn 6:11) – ML]

and then was brought together and made one, so let your Church be brought together from the ends of the earth into your Kingdom. For yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever."

5 You must not let anyone eat or drink of your Eucharist except those baptized in the Lord's name. For in reference to this the Lord said, "Do not give what is sacred to dogs."[52]

[52]Matt. 7:6.

Compare Richardson's translation of chapter 9 of the Didache – the earliest description of the Christian Eucharist (earlier than our present day, redacted versions of the four Gospels) – with the following translation of some of the same passages (see above, p. 192) by Schechter and Kohler, in their *Jewish Encyclopedia* article (bolding and all square-bracketed interpolations added by ML):

> **[The Didachean Eucharist's]** dependence upon Jewish custom is especially indicated by the following **thanksgiving formulas**:
>
> **(1) Over the cup:** "*We give thanks to Thee, our Father, for the holy wine of David Thy servant which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy servant*." This strange formula is the Jewish benediction over the wine, **"***Blessed be Thou who hast created the fruit of the vine*", Christianized (compare Ps. lxxx [80].15, Targum; cxvi [116].13 refers to David at the banquet of the future life; Pes. 119b; John xv [15].1; compare Taylor, *l.c.* pp. 69, 129).
>
> **(2) Over the broken bread:** "*We give thanks to Thee, our Father, for* ***the life and knowledge*** *which Thou hast* ***made known to us through Jesus Thy servant****. As this broken bread, scattered upon the mountains and gathered together, became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom!*" (compare the benediction "Raḥem" according to Rab Naḥman, which contains a reference to Ps. cxlvii [147].2; Ber. 49a).
>
> **(3) Over the meal:** "*We thank Thee, O holy Father, for Thy holy name, which Thou hast caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy servant. Thou, Almighty Lord, didst make all things for Thy name's sake; Thou gavest food and drink to men for enjoyment that they might give thanks to Thee, but to us Thou didst freely give spiritual food and drink and life eternal through Thy servant. . . . Remember, O Lord, Thy Church to deliver her from all evil and to perfect her in love of Thee, and gather her together from the four winds, sanctified for Thy Kingdom which Thou didst prepare for her. Let grace come and let this world pass away! Hosanna to the Son of David*" (ix.-x. 6).
>
> The original Jewish benediction over the meal was a thanksgiving for the food and for the Word**[/Logos/Dharma]** of God, the Torah as the spiritual nurture, and a prayer for the restitution of the kingdom of David. The Church**[/Sangha]** transformed the Logos**[/Dharma]** into the incarnated son **[Jesus/Buddha]** of God, while expressing the wish for His **[Jesus/Buddha's]** speedy return to the united congregation (the Church**[/Sangha]**). It is the prayer of the Judæo-Christian community of the first century **[end, or early second century?]**, and this casts light upon the whole Christianized "Didache."

You will have noticed that Richardson in his translation has the expressions '**David, your child**' and '**Jesus, your child**', whereas, Schechter and Kohler translate: '**David Thy servant**' and '**Jesus Thy servant**'. The Greek word for '**servant**', '**child**' (*pais* – Strong's G3817) is often translated '**boy**' ("as often beaten with impunity"), or (generally) '**child**'; specifically a '**slave**' or '**servant**' (especially a minister to a king; and by eminence to God): – '**child**', '**maid**' (-**en**'), (**man**) '**servant**', '**son**', '**young man**'.

Richardson had chosen not to capitalize either the word '**your**' (the LORD God of Israel's) or '**child**' (Jesus), whereas Schechter and Kohler have chosen to capitalize '**Thy**' (the LORD God of Israel's), but not '**servant**' (Jesus). To capitalize or not to capitalize is purely a matter of the translator's discretion – it is not warranted either way by the Greek. What cannot be hidden, though, by the English language's conventions of capitalization is the equalization of King David and Jesus and their joint subordination to the LORD God. Of course, with our background knowledge that the 'LORD God' is really an allegorical expression for the heavenly, eternal form of the Buddha, and that Jesus is the allegorical transcreation of the earthly Buddha, we can supply those meanings to these passages.

A quick rundown on the internet turned up the following translations of these expressions (in 9:2) by several other translators of the Didache, with their choice of words and decisions regarding capitalization:

van den Dungen: **'David Your servant', 'Jesus Your servant'**
Philip Schaff: **'David Thy servant', 'Jesus Thy servant'**
Roberts-Donaldson: **'David Thy servant', 'Jesus Thy Servant'**
Ivan Lewis: **'David Your servant', 'Your Servant'**

Ben H. Swett: **'your son David', 'your son Jesus'**
J.B. Lightfoot: **'Thy son David', 'Thy Son Jesus'**
Charles H. Hoole: **'David thy Son', 'Jesus Christ thy Son'**
Kirsopp Lake: **David thy Child', 'Jesus thy Child'**
Herbert W. Armstrong: **'your boy David', 'your boy Jesus'**

We saw from Philo's description (above, p. 213) how the Therapeutæ viewed their banquet of bread and water as being ritually related to the thank-offering of the shewbread and wine to YḤWḤ in the Jerusalem Temple. Christianity had not yet entered the picture.

By the end of the first century CE, the allegorical narratives of the New Testament Gospels had begun to be introduced in the crypto-Buddhist churches/synagogues (which, of course, were *lapsed-monastic*). As we have noted, in the earliest versions of the Gospel, Jesus the Nazarene is a Jewish transmogrification of the Buddha of India. During the first half of the second century, however, were added accounts of his death and resurrection, versions, of sorts, of the Egyptian god Osiris's death and resurrection – the Christian Passion competing with the very ancient and compelling Osirian Passion Drama which was being staged annually in Alexandria. From the beginning, like Osiris, Jesus/Buddha was portrayed as a guide in life (through gnosis) with the final goal of attaining 'heaven' (as in the Gospel of Thomas, for instance). The 'Christian' Gnostics believed in reincarnation/metempsychosis, and in this they were only following the common view of Buddhism – which had been, for several centuries, the 'orthodox' view of the various crypto-Buddhist organizations, in Egypt.

The sequence of events: "Mark the Bishop", in 143 CE, becomes the first Gentile to be entrusted with the ministry of the members of the church of Alexandria, after the disastrous Jewish War with Rome (132-135 CE). The church was now "composed of Gentiles". Suddenly, the group of Egyptian members of the *attenuated-monastic* church must have become much more influential. Is it possible that, at this point in time, the church began to turn away from the Buddhist beliefs in reincarnation and in *monastic* gnosis as the means of gaining liberation from the cycle of rebirth and the attainment of heaven / *nirvāṇa*? – the point in time, then, when gnosis, the enlightenment sought from within oneself, and pursued by ascetic monks, was beginning to be challenged by a system of 'sacraments' administered externally by the priests of the church, who assured their 'lay' church members that salvation and life eternal was achievable within their own lifetime, as long as they believed in the doctrines of the church and received the sacraments in good faith?

If so, the Out of Egypt Theory would suggest that the crucial development in this 'sacramental' revolution by the church was made possible by the transformation the church brought about in the interpretation of the Eucharistic (Agape) banquet, inherited from the pre-Christian monastic Therapeutæ, for whom it was a democratic and ascetic bread and water version of the Jerusalem Temple's thank-offering of 'shewbread' and wine.

What we have here (from the crypto-Buddhist perspective) is a revolutionary assumption of power by 'heretical' *attenuated-monastic* clergy, in competition with the original elites, the monastics! But it would take almost two hundred more years before the invasion of the sacraments and priests into the monasteries could declare 'Mission accomplished!' – that would be at the time of the First Council of Nicæa (325 CE), when the might of the Roman Empire started to officially support the revolutionaries.

Let us pause for a moment and reflect on what this revolution was all about. The Buddha-to-be was in a personal search of Truth when he was initiated by the sage, Āḷāra Kālāma (his 'John the Baptist'):

> [The Buddha-to-be:] "When I had approached Āḷāra Kālāma, I said this: 'Good Kālāma, I wish to take up the holy life in this [your] *dhamma* [*dharma*] and discipline.'
>
> "Having said this, Āḷāra Kālāma said this to me: 'Let the venerable one live [here]. This *dhamma* is such that, a wise person would soon master it and dwell in it, having understood and realized for himself his teacher's doctrine,' So I very soon and quickly mastered this *dhamma*. I [recited] the doctrine of knowledge and the doctrine of the elders, as far

> as mere lip service and repetition were concerned. I acknowledged – I as well as others – that I know and I see.' . . .
>
> [After some time had passed and the Buddha had learned the *dhamma* and doctrine which the sage Kālāma taught, the Buddha thought to himself:] "It is not only Āḷāra Kālāma who has wisdom, but I, too, have wisdom. . . . Having understood and realized this for myself, I entered into and dwell in it.' . . .
>
> "Then I approached Āḷāra Kālāma. Having approached him, I said this to Āḷāra Kālāma: 'Is it to this extent that you, reverend Kālāma, proclaim this *dhamma* which, having understood and realized it for yourself, you entered it?'
>
> [Āḷāra Kālāma:] "'Friend, it is to that extent that I proclaim this *dhamma* which, having understood and realized it for myself, I entered into it.'
>
> [Buddha-to-be:] "'Friend, it is to that extent that I, too, entered into and dwell in this *dhamma*, having understood and realized it for myself.'
>
> [Āḷāra Kālāma:] "'I proclaim this dhamma that I have entered, having understood and realized it for myself, is the dhamma that you entered and dwell in, having understood and realized it for yourself. That dhamma which you entered and dwell in, having understood and realized it for yourself, is the dhamma that I proclaim that I have entered, having understood and realized it for myself. This *dhamma* that I know is the *dhamma* that you know. This *dhamma* that you know is the *dhamma* that I know. **Whatever I am, that you are. Whatever you are, that I am.**'"

These remarkable passages from the 'Discourse on the Noble Quest' ('*Ariyapariyesana Sutta*')[12] reveal an approach to knowledge which, like mathematics, is intuitively ascertainable by all keen minded seekers. Kālāma is like Socrates viewing himself as a kind of midwife, assisting each of his hearers to 'give birth' to their own self-generated knowledge. This is nothing like rote learning, nor is it anything like being told to have faith in the saving grace of an external divine being. And if one views Jesus (the Son) as an allegorical apotheosis of the Buddha (the Father), created by the Buddhist-"Christian" evangelists, then the last two sentences quoted above would bring to mind Jesus' statement in *John 14:10*: "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" The Buddhist view would be that all persons (male or female) can be "in the Father/Buddha" and can also have the "Father/Buddha in them". What "unites one in the Buddha" is the understanding of the Dhamma/Dharma and the *practicing* of it (following the Eightfold Path).

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[12]From the *Majjhima Nikāya* 1.160-175, translated by John J. Holder, *Early Buddhist Discourses* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2006), pp. 6-7.

The Last Words of The Buddha

(A re-wording by ML of an account found in:
< salted.net/dharma/the-last-words-of-the-buddha/ >)

We might expect that the Last Words of the Buddha would be exempt from any lack of certainty, but this is not the case. There are countless translations and interpretations of his Last Words. All these various translations and interpretations can be divided into two camps.

The **First grouping** of translations captures the centrality of life's impermanence and the necessity of diligence/earnestness (Pāli *appamāda*; Sanskrit *apramāda*) with regard to following the Dharmic Eightfold Path in striving to attain Nirvāṇa. Such interpretations are based on the Mahā-Parinibbāna-Sutta (*sutta* 16 of the Dīgha-Nikāya), and has, as one example, the following translation:

Vayadhammā saṁkhārā appamādena saṁpādethā ǀ
"All compound things are subject to vanish. Strive with earnestness!"

The **Second set** of translations of the Last Words takes a more radical tone, especially when compared with the rigid orthodoxy of Buddhism as it is today. In these versions, the Buddha's Last Words call for maintaining a radical scepticism (as in the Kālāma Sūtra) while proceeding by self-verified steps down the path to one's enlightenment – a method very much like the one illustrated in the passages from the 'Discourse on the Noble Quest' quoted above!

From this general point of view, the last words mean simply:

Vayadhammā saṁkhārā appamādena saṁpādethā ǀ
"Doubt everything. Be your own light."

Comment:

These two ways of translating the Buddha's Last Words are not necessarily exclusive. Prof. Bhat and I devoted a book, *Metatheater and Sanskrit Drama*, to the investigation of the multi-layered structure of Indian classical Sanskrit drama and poetic writing in general. And I have no doubt that these last four recorded words of the dying Buddha were intentionally multi-layered in their meaning, also.

Consider the extreme complexity of polysemy which was attained by an Indian poet in the 11th century AD. Reproduced below is a publication announcement by the French Institute, Pondicherry, India:

La geste de Rāma: poème à double sens de Sandhyākaranandin (Introduction, texte, traduction, analyses)
Editor and translator: Sylvain Brocquet, Collection Indologie nº 110, IFP/EFEO, 2010, vii, 523 pp.
Language: French
ISBN (IFP): 978-81-8470-174-6.
ISBN (EFEO): 978-2-85539-676-7.

The *Rāmacaritam* by Sandhyākaranandin, a narrative poem of 215 stanzas (of which 215 survive), is a perfect example of poetry with two meanings: by constant use of śleṣa, it contrives to summarize the plot of the Rāmāyana and to relate the recovery of Eastern Bengal, during the eleventh century AD, by Rāmapāla, a ruler of the Pāla dynasty. The last chapter extends beyond the martial story and deals with the succession of the epic hero and of the historical king. Some thirty stanzas add a third meaning, of theological character, to the two main ones.

This book provides the transliterated Sanskrit text (the transliteration is duplicated to reveal the different morphological analyses), a separate translation of each meaning, and a close analysis of polysemous sequences. An introduction sheds light on the literary and historical context on the one hand, on the linguistic and rhetorical devices which generate polysemy on the other hand. The book is complemented with several appendices containing: another famous literary example of double entendre, a list of known inscriptions issued by the rulers who are referred to in the poem, and the text and the translation of one of the main epigraphs. Two indices record all the polysemous words and all those of historical or geographical purport.

Writers of no other country have ever matched the level of polysemy attained in India. And four hundred years before Sandhyākaranandin, an even greater poet, Daṇḍin, who hailed from the Pallava country of South India, composed a famous poem which could be read through from beginning to end recounting the epic of the *Rāmāyana* – or by varying the verbal division of the same compound Sanskrit words throughout, it was turned into a recounting of the epic of the *Mahābhārata*!

If the four canonical Gospels are studied from this perspective, evidence may emerge that the evangelists were, indeed, Indian – or persons trained in India or by Indians.

Michael Fuss: *Buddhavacanam and Dei Verbum*. Brill, Leiden 1991.
Pp. xvi & 479. ISBN 90 04 089918.

J. Duncan M. Derrett: *The Bible and the Buddhists*, Sardini 2000.
Pp. 131. ISBN 88-7506-174-2.

Comparative Gospel Studies in Review by Christian Lindtner[1]

Way back in 1882, in a letter on a topic of our present concern, reprinted in his celebrated book *India: What Can It Teach Us?*, London 1899, p. 284, Max Müller wrote:

> That there are startling coincidences between Buddhism and Christianity cannot be denied, and it must likewise be admitted that Buddhism existed at least 400 years before Christianity. I go even further, and should feel extremely grateful if anybody would point out to me the historical channels through which Buddhism had influenced early Christianity. I have been looking for such channels all my life, but hitherto I have found none. What I have found is that for some of the most startling coincidences there are historical antecedents on both sides, and if we once know those antecedents, the coincidences become far less startling. If I do find in certain Buddhist works doctrines identically the same as in Christianity, so far from being frightened, I feel delighted, for surely truth is not the less true because it is believed by the majority of the human race.

In the decades that followed there were numerous valuable contributions to the problem taken up by Max Müller. The most important and well-informed of these was probably Richard Garbe, *Indien und das Christentum*, Tübingen 1914. Eight years later, Dr. Hans Haas published a 45-page '*Bibliographie zur Frage nach den Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Buddhismus und Christentum*', as an appendix to his rare and important book *"Das Scherflein der Witwe" und seine Entsprechung im Tripiṭaka*, Leipzig 1922.

Opinions were divided. In 1935, the Indologist M. Winternitz wrote that, "the view must be rejected that Buddhist literature has exerted a direct influence upon the gospels" (quoted from Derrett, *op. rec.*, p. 21). The Danish Indologist Poul Tuxen (1880-1955), among many others, while fully aware of the many parallels, expressed a similar conviction in his book *Buddha: Hans Lære, dens Overlevering og dens Liv i Nutiden*, Copenhagen 1928. According to Tuxen, the parallels, though striking, are not to be explained as a result of any historical influence from Buddhism, which certainly would have the chronological priority, but rather as a result "of some typical features, spontaneously arising in a religious mind writing about a great personality" (p. 77). And thus the matter would seem to have been settled for good. What Tuxen means by these obscure remarks remains a puzzle, and, of course, he was unable to point out any set of scriptures describing some other great personality in similar words and details.

The last major work before WW II was H.W. Schomerus: *Ist die Bibel von Indien abhängig?*, München 1932 (omitted in Derrett's Bibliography). Schomerus accepted many parallels but did not find it necessary to assume that the gospels were dependent on Indian or Buddhist sources. The recent decade, however, has witnessed an increasing interest, even a revival, of the old problem of possible Buddhist influence on early Christianity, including the New Testament with its four canonical gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Derrett finds that recent research has "set up a case to be answered", and his book is an attempt to do so (p. 17). The search for Max Müller's "historical channels" can no longer be dismissed as irrelevant.

In the opinion of M. Fuss (*op. rec.*, p. 2), there is an "eminent theological enrichment" which can be drawn "from an encounter between Christianity and Buddhism". The Saddharmapuṇḍarīka (SDP) has been called the "Bible of Asia" and "the Eastern commentary on the Gospel of John" (p. 4), or even the New Testament of the East. The book [*Buddhavacanam . . .*] is designed as a phenomenological and theological comparison of scriptural inspiration in the SDP and in the Christian tradition. Its author is inspired by the Vatican II teaching about the "seeds of the Word" in non-Christian religions.

An Introduction to the study of the SDP discusses the genre and the title of the SDP, its complex textual history, its canonicity, its language and its compilation (interpolations, interdependence of *gāthās* and prose, form-critical classification, and redaction analysis). This is followed by chapters on the Catholic teaching on Scriptural Inspiration (pp. 197-248), on elements for a Contemporary Reflection on Scriptural

Inspiration (pp. 249-306), on the Inspiration of the SDP as paradigm for scriptural inspiration of non-Biblical scriptures (pp. 307-359).

The aim of the SDP, Fuss concludes (p. 358) is missionary proclamation (. . .) and thus similarity with the kerygmatic genre of the Christian Gospels. In its narratives it concentrates on the constitutional core of Buddhist religion: on the inspirational experience of the Buddha and his proclamation of the Eternal Dharma. The Lotus Sūtra becomes the concise embodiment of the achievement of enlightenment: the transcendent dynamism of the Supreme Dharma (p. 358).

The moral of this contribution to an inter-religious dialogue, then, is: 'Only a mutual openness in the common listening to the one "Word" of salvation beyond theoretical conceptions will orientate both scriptural traditions in "Spirited Life" towards the blissful and liberating experience of an IN-SPIRED DIA-LOGUE' (p. 359).

Appendix 1 (pp. 361-419) provides a survey, a classification of the manuscripts etc. having to do with the textual history of the SDP. Appendix 2 lists selected "Christian parallels to the SDP", and finally documents concerning "*Dei Verbum*" are given as Appendix 3 (pp. 435-454). An extensive Bibliography, completed March 1983, concludes this learned book (pp. 455-479).

When it comes to the "intricate problem" of a presumed dependence of any of these Buddhist-Christian parallels, Fuss (p. 421, n. 1) simply refers to the statement of T.W. Rhys Davids in *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion* (= *The Hibbert Lectures* 1881), London 1906, p. 151 f.:

> I can find no evidence whatever of any actual and direct communication of any of these ideas from the East to the West. Where the Gospel narratives resemble the Buddhist ones, they seem to me to have been independently developed on the shores of the Mediterranean and in the valley of the Ganges. . . . The similarities of idea are evidence not of any borrowing from one side or the other, but of similar feelings engendered in men's mind by similar experiences.

Fuss (*ibid.*) dismisses the "intricate problem" – thus at least indirectly admitting its being there – by a mere reference to the rich bibliography of Buddhist-Christian parallels listed in Norbert Klatt, *Literarkritische Beiträge zum Problem Christlich-Buddhistischer Parallelen*, Köln 1982. Klatt's small book is, in fact, an important contribution to our field, Comparative Gospel Studies (CGS), if I may coin that phrase. Unfortunately, this little book has been generally ignored. I hope that I am not transgressing the limits of discretion when, to suggest the reasons for this neglect, I quote Klatt himself (personal communication of 15 August 2001): "*Die Ignorierung meiner Arbeit beruht nach meiner Auffassung nicht auf wissenschaftlichen, sondern weltanschaulichen Aspekten. Man möchte nicht, dass ein indischer Einfluss im NT nachgewiesen wird. Vor dieser Situation steht jeder, der sich mit dieser Thematik befasst.*"

Klatt, of course, is right, and so is Derrett (p. 15) when writing that the only person to deal conclusively with the matter must not only be fluent in Sanskrit, Greek, Hebrew etc., but he must also have a personality that will "charm and persuade the prejudiced and the indifferent". "Unlike many gifted linguists we know, will he enter into original, and highly controversial work? Will he possess the stamina to sustain a great enterprise? To the first miracle a second miracle must be added."

Zacharias P. Thundy, the author of *Buddha and Christ: Nativity Stories and Indian Tradition*, published two years after Fuss, also by Brill in Leiden, belongs to the happy few who will not let themselves be deterred. Unlike Fuss et al., he does not dismiss the "intricate problem". This attitude may have something to do with his Indian and Christian background, as he himself notes.

Thundy's book is also a contribution to East-West dialogues, but, compared to Fuss, along entirely different lines. In his opinion, New Testament authors have written under Buddhist influence. He agrees with Schopenhauer and others, that "The New Testament must be in some way traceable to an Indian source" (p. 1). His book is, primarily, an exercise in comparative literature (p. 18). The Gospel of Matthew reflects a process of imitation-emulation (p. 31). A close look at the first two chapters of Luke reveals extensive use of revisionism, Thundy claims (p. 34). What we find in the exegesis of the NT writers is *deconstructionist midrash* (*ibid.*, my emphasis), as can be seen e.g. by a close look at the OT parallels to Luke 1. What we see by comparing the parallel passages is that Luke used several books of the OT, but he did not just copy

passages from OT; he rather "judiciously used words, phrases, sentences, and motifs to advance his views on the person and the details of the life of Jesus" (*ibid.*, p. 37). This is "plagiarism" – even theft – in the sense that it is artistic adaptation of the words and ideas of another without crediting the source or presenting a new and original idea derived from an existing source (p. 43). Many Western Christians, Thundy observes, are unduly disturbed when it is suggested that the gospel writers may have borrowed literary motifs from the East (p. 44). Even though the gospel writers use unacknowledged Buddhist and other subtexts they do not appear to be doing so; this is because these writers make these subtexts as their own original text (p. 46).

In Thundy's opinion, the Christian gospel writers did not use any particular version of the Buddha-story from beginning to end from a literary text, but rather at random and selectively from oral traditions (p. 79).

The numerous Buddhist and Christian Infancy Parallels relate to (pp. 79 ff.): 1. Pre-existence, 2. Royal origin and genealogy, 3. Universal Salvation, 4. Virginal Conception – *virginitas ante partum*, 5. Dream Vision, 6. White Elephant vs. White Dove, 7. Annunciation to the Husband, 8. Turmoil at Birth, 9. Masters in Mothers' Wombs, 10. Virgin Birth – *virginitas in partu*, 11. Virginity – *post partum*, 12. Righteous Fosterfather, 13. Kṛshṇa and Jesus, 14. Angels and Others at Birth, 15. Earthquakes and the Redemption of the Dead from Hell, 16. Harrowing of Hell, 17. Nature Miracle, 18. The Taking of Seven Steps at birth, 19. Marvelous Light/Star, 20. The Baby in Swaddling Clothes, 21. The Naming Ceremony, 22. The Taming of Wild Animals, 23. The Miracles of the Bending Tree and Gushing Water, 24. The Fall of Idols, 25. Healing Miracles, 26. Annunciation of Birth by a Woman, 27. Giving of Gifts, 28. Presentation in the Temple, 29. Asita and Simeon, 30. Illumination of Hearts, 31. Buddha's Mother, 32. Anna and Shabari/Old Women, 33. Lost and Found, 34. Mother-Son Dialogue, 35. The Infant Prodigy, 36. The Magi's Visit, 37. The Appellation of King , 38. Mahāprajāpatī and Mary: Two Influential Women, 39. Preparing the Way, 40. Growing Up, and finally, 41. Reference to Signs – all in all 41 parallel cases having to do with the infancy of Buddha, Christ, and, to a lesser extent, Kṛshṇa.

The juxtaposition of this long list of obvious parallels permits us to conclude that this is "more than a fortuitous convergence of universal fo(l)kloric motifs simply because nowhere else do we see such a convergence of literary motifs. . .". *Cum singula non prosunt, multa juvant*, as Derrett (p. 113) would submit.

Thus Thundy's main argument in support of his assertion consists in the cumulative evidence provided by a long list of convergent literary motifs. And, I may add, it is exactly this mass of cumulative evidence, easily to be enlarged, that serves to reject the scepticism of previous researchers such as Tuxen et al.

Furthermore, Thundy's book contains some fine and well-written chapters on Gnosticism, The New Testament and India, and India and the West in Antiquity. They serve well to corroborate his point about the NT gospels as Eastern religious texts. I completely agree that Thundy's analysis of the Infancy gospels shows that Indian influence was deep and pervasive, and that Christian writers must have been familiar, not just vaguely but thoroughly, with the Indian religions (p. 272). As he himself says, to be sure: "I could do this kind of analytic work only within the liberal framework of modern literary criticism which endorses the methods of deconstructionism, intertextuality, and new historicism in comparative literary studies" (*ibid.*). Thundy, finally, admits that a distinction should be made between the literary and the theological approach: "Doing violence to one diminishes the beauty and destroys the integrity of the other" (p. 271). Here, however, he may be wrong.

Not listed in the extensive Bibliography is the 1982 *Literarkritische Beiträge* of Klatt, mentioned above. Here, with even greater attention to the little details than Thundy, the German theologian comes to much the same conclusion as Thundy, though on a significantly smaller scale. Klatt mainly focused on the legend of *Jesu und Buddhas Wasserwandel* / Walking on the Water of Jesus and of Buddha – to quote the title of the booklet published privately by Klatt, Göttingen 1990. Here (p. 30), Klatt concluded his careful comparison with these words:

> It is quite impossible to explain the obvious concordance between the two stories which the analysis of structure demonstrates from the "nature" of things, for walking on water is contrary to the ordinary laws of nature. Nor can a psychological explanation account for the complex structure and the particularities

> of the story found to be common to the Buddhistic and the Christian tales. And thus we are led to conclude that the only probable explanation for the astounding congruence which the structural analysis shows is that the story of the walking on the water found its way from one culture into another. And although we cannot determine unequivocally the original Buddhistic text, we may affirmatively state, based on the historical priority of the Buddhistic tale, as for example in the pre-Christian Pāli canon, that the direction of the borrowing is from the Buddhistic source into the Christian gospels.

By way of "structural analysis", Klatt came to a "probable explanation", that, if true, would establish at least one small "historical channel". But one channel would also render it likely that more could be found. Elmar R. Gruber and Holger Kersten cover much of the same ground as Thundy in their book *The Original Jesus: The Buddhist Sources of Christianity*, Shaftesbury, Dorset 1995. The first part deals with "India and the West", the second with "Jesus – the Buddhist", the third with "The Way of the Original Jesus".

What the book is mainly concerned with is suggested by the mention of "Die Gesellschaft der Nazarener" [the Nazarene Institute] established by Holger Kersten "so as to better co-ordinate and more meaningfully activate future research on the historical Jesus and his Buddhist-influenced teachings, and also to make findings accessible to those interested" (p. vii).

The Bibliography (pp. 252-259) of this well-written book refers to the books of Klatt, Thundy etc., but not to that of Fuss. The authors conclude (p. 243):

> Buddhist sources in Christianity can no longer be denied, even though they have been crushed under the theologically prescribed reworkings. What is more important though is the fact that this Buddhist material was originally disseminated by Jesus himself. That discovery adds a completely new dimension to the discussion of Buddhism in the New Testament: the true teachings of Jesus, his Buddhist teachings. . . . Christianity – and even the Christian message – is completely different from what Jesus taught. . . .

To some extent Gruber & Kersten are right. About their thesis that "the historical Jesus" was a Buddhist, I am more than sceptical. Nearly everything said about Jesus in the gospels can, in fact, according to my own investigations through the last five years, be traced back to Buddhist sources. So what remains, and what do we know about "a historical Jesus"? About as much as we know of "the historical Little Mermaid"!

That "Jesus lived in India" – to quote the title of a much-publicized 1983/1986 book by Holger Kersten – is definitely wrong. Klatt has unravelled the confusions that let to this unhappy thesis in his much neglected booklet: *Lebte Jesus in Indien? Eine religionsgeschichtliche Klärung*, Göttingen 1988. It was not Jesus who (lived and) died in Kashmir, but Yus Asaf/Yudasaf/Bodhasaf = Bodhisattva, who, according to the legend, died in Kuśinara; see also David M. Lang, *The Wisdom of Balahvar*, London 1957, pp. 129-130. Eventually, scholars will have to concede – in my opinion – that the "Jesus" of the gospels is a purely fictitious figure, like Donald Duck or Hercules – as already argued e.g. by the philosopher Arthur Drews (who seems to have remained unknown to all the authors here under review) in his excellent, though somewhat outdated, *Die Christusmythe* I-II, Jena 1910-11.[2]

But, in spite of all this, more conservative spirits are still searching for "the historical Jesus". Currently, some scholars speak of the "third quest" for Jesus. There seems to be something highly elusive about (– of all persons –) the Son of God, the Son of David (both of which actually render Sanskrit *deva-putra*) – also known as *ekeinos ho planos* (Matthew 27:63, translating, in fact, Sanskrit *pāpakāry-asau*, in Saṁgha-bhedavastu I, p. 26, q.v.). For one of the many recent surveys, I may refer to Marcus Borg, *Jezus: gezocht en onderzocht: De renaissance van het Jezusonderzoek*, Zoetermeer 1998. In spite of the title – the English original from 1994 was: *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* – the author, typically, simply ignores the sort of comparative research that occupies us here. In the long run such arrogance is doomed to backfire. How can one find what one is looking for when neglecting the pertinent sources?

Buddhismus und Christentum: Geschichte, Konfrontation, Dialog is the title of an informative book of 805 pages written jointly by Michael von Brück and Whalen Lai, München 1997. (For a review, see *Buddhist Studies Review* 16/2 [1999] 259-263.) A second edition appeared 2000 as a cheap-priced *Sonderausgabe* at DM 48,–.

Referring mainly to R.C. Amore, *Two Masters – One Message*, Nashville 1978, and to the books of Thundy and Klatt (p. 680, n. 5), these two authors take the standpoint that: "*Selbst wenn man Amores Textanalysen und Vergleichen zustimmen würde, erg be sich, dass der Einfluss des Buddhismus auf das Christentum marginal war und nicht die zentralen Inhalte der Botschaft Jesu betrifft*" (p. 316). So, for these authors, as for Fuss et al., the Holy Sepulchre remains safe from comparative incursions, as it were. *The Original Jesus*, now rare, is not mentioned by Michael von Brück and Whalen Lai. Perhaps it appeared too late. In any case they would hardly have been prepared to subscribe to its thesis, for they are obviously what Derrett would call "minimalists". As for the book of Amore, a title closer to the historical truth – as I see it – would have been: *One Master – Two Messages*; for the gospels are largely free and highly artificial translations of the Buddhist "subtexts" (to use Thundy's term). "Jesus" is rather a Buddha in disguise – a bad disguise.

J. Duncan M. Derrett is the learned author of *The Bible and the Buddhists*, published in Italy by Sardini Editrice, December 2000. The book is an important one, perhaps the most important of its kind to this day. I have written a long review article for *Buddhist Studies Review* 19/2 (2001) 1-14, to which I may perhaps refer the interested reader. My main objection to Derrett's book has to do with one of his criteria for classifying parallels (p. 30). According to Derrett, we are asking too much if we require "close verbal similarity". This conviction Derrett seems to share with virtually all previous researchers, even "maximalists" prepared to admit even more Buddhist influence in the NT than Derrett himself. One important exception to the rule, ignored by Derrett, is Edward Conze who already in 1959 called attention to "close verbal coincidences":

> Occasionally we find close verbal coincidences between the Christian and the Mahāyāna scriptures. Just one instance must suffice. At the time when *The Revelation of St John* was written down in Greek in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Mahāyānists produced in the South of India one of their most revered books, *The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Lines*. *Revelation* (v. 1) refers to a book "closely sealed" with seven seals, and likewise *The Perfection of Wisdom* is called a book "sealed with seven seals". It is shown to a Bodhisattva by the name of "Everweeping" (*Sadāprarudita*), and St John "weeps bitterly" (v. 4) because he sees no one worthy to open the book and to break its seals. This can be done by the Lamb alone, slaughtered in sacrifice (v. 9). In the same way, chapters 30 and 31 of the Mahāyāna book describe in detail how Everweeping slaughtered himself in sacrifice, and how he thereby became worthy of the 'Perfection of Wisdom' (see pp. 302-303). This parallel is remarkable not only for the similarities of the religious logic, but also for the fact that both the number seven and the whole notion of a "book with seven seals" point to the Judaeo-Mediterranean rather than to the Indian tradition. Here is a fruitful field for further study. [R.C. Zaehner (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the World's Religions*, London 1959, p. 293.]

On this issue, close verbal similarities, I disagree decisively with virtually all my predecessors – apart from Conze – in the field of CGS. For my reasons for doing so, I will have to confine myself to referring to my forthcoming papers and books in which numerous verbal similarities are pointed out. See, for instance, "Āmrapāli in the Gospels", which has just come out in *The Adyar Library Bulletin* 64 (2000), 151-170. The gospels were largely translated according to the rules (*middoth*) of *gematria*, *notarikon*, *neged* etc., current among learned bilingual Jews in those days.

Derrett has a high opinion of Gruber's and Kersten's *The Original Jesus*:

> This was a beautifully produced, thoughtful and scholarly culmination of a renewed trend to elevate Buddhism as the source of Christianity, to depict, in effect, Jesus as a student of the Buddha. These authors make mighty, impressive assumptions, while drawing attention to many relevant facts. They rightly point (p. 22) to the Mahāyāna as the form of Buddhism from which parallels can be expected. They rightly show that communication between India and the Middle East was far easier than we used to suppose . . . (Derrett, p. 16).

Among those who "used to suppose", I may insert, Derrett himself is surely one of the most distinguished. His six volumes of *Studies in the New Testament*, published by Brill in Leiden between 1977 and 1995, are a mine of erudition with a wealth of new observations and suggestions for solving old problems pertaining to the text and interpretation of the gospels. Also, Derrett has many other books and articles to his credit.

As a rule, they too have been totally – and unduly – neglected by New Testament scholars. But back to Gruber & Kersten, who, on the other hand, also "ignore factors as significant as their own. Buddhist borrowings from Greece and Israel have left them unmoved. They sometimes ask the wrong questions, and their sensational results could be vitiated by such flaws as those" (Derrett, p. 17).

In *The Bible and the Buddhists* (BB), Derrett argues 11 cases where the NT may have gained from Buddhist models, about 19 cases where Buddhists seem to have adopted NT material, some 11 cases where the literatures may have gained reciprocally, and finally 16 cases where it is impossible to claim that either influenced the other. I shall, as said, not here repeat my critique of Derrett already advanced in my review article in the *BSR* (ref. *supra*). In my opinion, virtually all the parallels adduced by Derrett belong to the first category, i.e. where the NT depends on Buddhist sources. We must, as said, look for close verbal similarity to establish the historical relationship on a firm basis. Derrett's basic idea, reasonable though it may appear, that a sort of collaboration between Buddhists and Christians took place; that they were entrepreneurs in the same line of business, as it were, and that they "put their heads together", is, nevertheless, unhappy. In my view hardly one of the examples marshalled by my learned British colleague supports his point. And when it comes to the precise identity of the Buddhist sources, I differ decisively from all my predecessors. My claim is that the writers of the gospels copied directly, above all from the Sanskrit text of the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-Vinaya (MSV) – including the Catuṣ-Pariṣat-Sūtra (CPS) and Mahā-Parinirvāṇa-Sūtra (MPS) as well the Saṁghabhedavastu (SBV). For the Gnoli edition of the Sanskrit text of the SBV, see my review in *Acta Orientalia* 43 (1983) 124-126.

By comparing these Sanskrit texts carefully with the Greek NT we shall be able to detect numerous cases of literal correspondence that conclusively serve to establish my thesis that the NT gospels are to a large extent direct – but also highly artificial – translations of the Sanskrit.

Even though Klatt occasionally came close to the proper method, and even though Thundy, Gruber & Kersten, and Derrett came to some correct conclusions, they unfortunately failed to insist on close verbal similarity to establish the historical dependence. Klatt, regrettably, failed to consider the evidence of the MSV.

More precisely this close verbal similarity on which I insist as the main – but far from sole – criterion, has to do with the numerical literary techniques used by all the writers of the gospels. Now this may come as a surprise to many, even NT scholars, but the fact is that the translations directly from Sanskrit to Greek (leaving no room for a hypothetical intermediate Aramaic source) in numerous cases were done on the basis of a computation of the numerical value of words, or names – a well-known practice in antiquity, in Jewish literature known as gematria (Hebrew: *gymtry'*, imitating Greek *geômetria* and possibly also, with typical ambiguity, *grammateia*). In Greek we have the technical term *isopsêphos*, "equal in numerical value", Latin *conpar*.

In a highly significant monograph, *Numerical Literary Techniques in John*, Leiden 1985, M.J.J. Menken has analysed the composition of selected passages from John (viz. 1:19-2:11; 5; 6; 9:1-10:21;17), coming to the firm conclusion that "the author of the Fourth Gospel made use of numbers of syllables and words" (*op. cit.*, p. 269). Previously, the employment of this quantitative technique had been pointed out by J. Smit Sibinga in a communication to the *Journées Bibliques*, of Louvain, in 1970, where he discussed "a literary technique in the Gospel of Matthew". Investigating a series of Matthean passages, J. Smit Sibinga has convincingly established that the author of the First Gospel has "arranged his text in such a way, that the size of the individual selections is fixed by a determined number of syllables. The individual parts of a sentence, the sentences themselves, sections of a smaller or larger size, they are, all of them, characterized in a purely quantitative way by their number of syllables" (Menken, *op. laud.*, p. 21).

Now, this technique of making two members of a period equal in length was already known to Aristotle as *parisôsis*. Alexander, in his second century C.E. *De figuris*, speaks of *parison* (= *isokolon*): "*parison estin hotan duo ô pleiona kôla synenôthenta malista men kai tas syllabas isas ekhê, alla ge kai ton arithmon ton ison en pasi lambanê*:" "There is a *parison*, when two or more united *cola* have above all their syllables equal, but obtain also in all their parts equal rhythm. . .". The Latin term is *conpar*, defined by the *Rhetorica*

ad Herennium 4,20,27 thus: *conpar appellatur quod habet in se membra orationis . . . quae constent ex pari fere numero syllabarum* (Menken, p. 15). These members that consists of an almost equal number of syllables bring us to the heart of the matter.

Let me repeat that the numerical analysis of J. Smit Sibinga and M.J.J. Menken et al. (in Scandinavia: Birger Gerhardsson, *Jesu liknelser*, Lund 1999, passim) has established beyond any doubt that the writers of the NT gospels made extensive use of [measured] syllables and words in the composition of their works.

Now, again and again, when comparing the Sanskrit and the Greek, we cannot fail to observe the principle of *conpar*, of *gematria*, being at work. This is an objective fact, something that can be counted and measured. It is quantitative. It is, I repeat, an objective fact that can be verified by any scholar of Sanskrit and Greek willing to see for himself: *ehipasyika*, a technical Buddhist term, is translated by the most cunning of the evangelists, John 1:46: *erkhou kai ide*. The authors of the four gospels often reproduced precisely not only the number of the syllables and words of the Sanskrit, but, what is more, even the sense, the word classes, and the sound patterns of the original. Just one example: John 10:1-18 the *Pastor bonus*, is a *gematria* translation of the celebrated *mṛgapatiḥ* legend MPS 40d: 40-51 (ed. E. Waldschmidt, pp. 476-478). The number of syllables is the same in both sources (namely 604), and an amazing number of the original consonants have likewise been reproduced in the Greek. The sense is thus automatically distorted, as when Sanskrit *parvata*, mountain, becomes Greek *probata*, sheep, etc. Now we understand how naïve it has been of us to ask for a similarity of ideas to establish a possible historical relationship. The evangelists often pay more attention to similarity of sound than to similarity of ideas. What we should ask for, is primarily: similarity of syllables, of consonants, of words, and of numbers. Once we are aware of *conpar* and *gematria* we have also – finally – identified one of the major "historical channels" that Max Müller and many other scholars had been searching for so long without success. If one text speaks of mountains, and another of sheep, we see no similarity. But when we see that *parvata* has become *probata*, only then the identity is seen.

The modern reader may remain sceptical when he reads these words, but let me remind him of the "translation" of LXX done by Aquila. As we can see from the remaining fragments it was often merely a matter of playing on words (see Natalio Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, Leiden 2000, pp. 116-117 for a list of amusing examples, exactly like those of the evangelists).

In passing it may be mentioned that B. Scherer has just published a German translation of "Der gute Herdenführer", in his *Buddha*, Gütersloh 2001, pp. 92-94. Commenting on the nativity legend, the young German scholar observes (p. 86): "*Es ist durchaus möglich, dass diese buddhistischen Motive von den frühen Christen für Jesus von Nazereth übernommen und angepasst wurden*".

Returning to Fuss and Derrett, it is quite true that the evidence of the SDP – apart from that of the MSV – also "turns out to be crucial for our quest" (Derrett, p. 15). No fully satisfactory edition of the [SDP] Sūtra exists. Some portions seem to be older than others. The text may have grown. Fuss criticized Kern's well-known translation etc.

Fuss, it will be recalled, was not inclined to descend from his venture of phenomenological and theological comparison down to the solid ground of philology and literary criticism. Should it turn out that the writers of the gospels borrowed some of their materials from the SDP – what , then, would become of *Dei Verbum*? A more appropriate title of his book, then, would be: *Buddhavacanam alias Dei Verbum*. If the NT depends on the SDP, then it is hardly Buddhism that might participate in the seed of the Biblical *Verbum Dei*, but rather vice versa. The Word of God would then be reduced to the words of the translators. Or *Deus* would be a Lord of *gematria*. Is this not *blas-phêmia*? Well, at least *pari-bhāṣā*, or (SDP) *pari-bhāsana*! It makes a world of difference whether one takes a phenomenological-theological or a philological-historical approach to this issue. The former surely presupposes the latter.

Let me conclude by drawing attention to one or two significant parallels that emerge when one compares the SDP with the gospels. The first serves to establish the priority of the SDP. It is generally agreed that there is a close relationship between SDP XIV and Matthew 27:51-52, but opinions are divided as to which source has the priority (Derrett, *op. cit.*, p. 74 *et passim*). In Kern's edition of the Sanskrit (p. 309) we find the

phrase *adhastād-ākāśadhātu-*. This I claim, is rendered by Matthew 27:51 as *anôthen heôs katô eis duo*. First, the *adhastāt*, downwards, is rendered precisely by the synonym *anôthen* reproducing the sense, form and number of syllables of the original. The following word, *ākāśa*, is then artificially split up, as if *ā + kāśa*, giving us *ewV* as a correct translation of Sanskrit *ā-*, until. As for the rest of the phrase, the four consonants in the Greek, viz. *k-t-s* and *d* (i.e. a guttural, two dentals and a sibilant), they faithfully reproduce the guttural, the two dentals and the sibilant of the Sanskrit. And this sort of "translation" is not at all uncommon. It is, in fact, quite typical of the sort of translation seen in all the gospels. By way of anagram, the sense has been changed. So *ākāśa-dhātu* is rendered twice, so to speak. Its five syllables are preserved in the three Greek words: *heôs katô eis duo*. The translation, it can be argued, is "formally" correct, but the original sense is surely distorted. This sort of translation may appear odd or absurd to us, but it was (and is) typical of rabbinic hermeneutics (see e.g. Hermann L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, New York 1959, pp. 93-98). It being inconceivable that the Sanskrit *ākāśadhātu* in this case should have been based on the Greek *heôs katô eis duo*, this small example serves to establish the priority of the Sanskrit, i.e. the SDP.

A second example shows that Matthew can also be faithful to the sense of of the SDP – and it also serves to reject Derrett's view that the influence from Buddhism did not concern doctrine, but only presentation (Derrett, p. 97). In SDP II we read that *Śāri-Putras* first had some doubts about the Dharma etc. Then the Buddha asks him to give up all doubt and uncertainty, presenting himself as the King of Dharma. He then adds: "Let this mystery be for thee, *Śāri-Putra*, for all disciples of mine, and for the eminent Bodhisattvas, who are to keep this mystery" (III,138-139). In SDP, *Śāri-Putra(s)* expresses his doubts about the true identity of the Buddha. Is he perhaps Māra? In reply, the Buddha promises that *Śāri-Putras* shall be the most excellent of men, so unsurpassed (III,32). Also, in SDP, II, 61 *Śāri-Putras* is addressed by the Buddha as *Śāri-suta*, and, *passim*, as *Jina-putra*.

Once these passages are kept in mind, it is easy to recognize one of the main sources for the celebrated confession of Peter, Matthew 16:13-20. *Śāri-Putras* has become *Simon Petros*. The mystery of the King of Dharma has become the mystery of the the Christ – the king who was never anointed. *Jina-putra* becomes *Bar-iôna*, Son (*putra*) of Jona (*jina*), Matthew 16:17 only. So even the motive of making puns on the name of the chief disciple is inherited from the Buddhist source.

And Simon? There are many Simons in the NT. What is the original Sanskrit behind Simon? A clue is given when John 21:7 very oddly writes *Simôn oun Petros*. How are we to explain that a proper name is split up by an *oun*? This odd phenomenon suggests that Simon is not part of a proper name but rather a title of some sort. Behind Simon, I suggest, we find Sanskrit *āyuṣmān*. All the original consonants (*s-m-n*) are preserved, the semivowel *y* having been left out. Another frequent translation of *āyuṣmān* we find when Jesus identifies himself with *zôê*, as is often the case. It is hard to understand how Jesus "is life", but easy to grasp that he is considered *āyuṣmān*. The solution to the secret that W. Wrede (*Das Messiasgeheimniss in den Evangelien*, 1901) et al. have written so much about, therefore, finds its simple solution in SDP.

The words put into the mouth of Jesus by Matthew, however, are not to be found in the SDP. But they often occur in other Buddhists texts, as I shall point out in my forthcoming monograph on the Buddhist sources of Matthew. Let me conclude this review article by pointing out the source of John 7:38, which as Derrett (p. 41) says, as part of John 7:37-44, "is largely incoherent as well as repugnant". The syntax is obscure. It is not obvious that the *autouautou* is to be taken with *ho pisteuôn eis eme*. The insertion of the *kathôs eipen hê graphê* makes it unlikely. The Sanskrit is Saṁghabhedavastu I, p. 25: *asya . . . dvau sukrabindū sarudhire nipatitau*. John 19:34 plays on the same words: *kai exêlthen euthus haima kai hydôr*. . . . It is also the source of Luke 22:44: *kai egeneto ho hidrôs autou hôsei thrombai haimatos katabainontes epi tên gên*. The reader can also easily recognize Mark 15:21: *Aleksandrou kai Rouphou* as an imitation of the sound, syllables and/or sense of Sanskrit *sukrabindū sa-rudhire*. Matthew 27:25 also comes close: *to haima autou eph' hêmas kai epi ta tekna hêmôn*. And when one finally compares Saṁghabhedavastu I, pp. 21-26 as a whole with Matthew 26-28 par, there cannot remain much doubt that for the words and motives, the legend of Gautama who was impaled on a stake (*sūle samāropita*) served as a major source of the celebrated Passion Narrative.

Derrett's six volumes of *Studies in the New Testament* display his wonderful command of the ancient Jewish sources. They should be constantly consulted by the student of *The Bible and the Buddhists*. Repeatedly Derrett succeeds in throwing new light on old problems in the gospels thanks to his familiarity with these sources. The same goes for his other books, such as *The Anastasis: The Resurrection of Jesus as an Historical Event*, 1982; *The Making of Mark*, I-II, 1985; *New Resolutions of Old Conundrums: A Fresh Insight into Luke's Gospel*, 1986; *The Victim: The Johannine Passion Narrative Reexamined*, 1993; and *Some Telltale Words in The New Testament*, 1997– all published by and still available from Peter I. Drinkwater, 56 Church Street, Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire, England. It is a great pity that these learned volumes are so little known among theologians. But it is also surprising how often Derrett finds the wrong solutions to familiar problems in Jewish sources where the right ones are to be found in the Buddhist sources. It is indeed his constant contention that New Testament material cannot be understood without the cultural and intellectual environment of the people amongst whom it emerged. That this environment was largely Jewish cannot be denied.

Derrett claims to be a detective who does not care where evidence leads him. That sounds good. That may be so. But Derrett is a naïve detective, for he never raises the question of the seriousness of the gospels. Where is the proof that the evangelists were serious and trustworthy witnesses to the events they pretend to be describing? If they translated from the Sanskrit as Aquila translated from the Hebrew – how can they be considered serious authors? Just one proof!

Endnotes
(by ML)

[1]Lindtner's undated article is available at: < http://www.jesusisbuddha.com/review.html >.

[2]This book by Arthur Drews is available in two parts in English: *The Christ-Myth*, Part I, translated by C. Delisle Burns from the revised and enlarged 3rd German Edition (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1911), and *The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus*, Part II, trans. by Joseph McCabe (London: Watts & Co., 1912); this latter volume is freely available as a PDF download on the internet.

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Two Drops of Water with Blood – The Buddhist Source of Mark 15:21, Etc.

Christian Lindtner, "News Bulletin": February 11, 2010

Here are three New Testament passages that, at first sight, seem to have nothing at all in common:

First, **appearing** only to **Mark 15:21**, the otherwise unknown Simon of Cyrene, who was forced to carry the cross of Jesus, was the father of two sons, Alexander and Rufus.

Second, according to **Luke 22:44**, which is left out in several modern editions of the New Testament (but attested by many early fathers of the Church), Jesus, in his great anguish, prayed even more **fervently/intensely**; his sweat was like drops of blood, falling to the ground.

Third, according to **John 19:34**, when Jesus was hanging on the cross (*stauros*), one soldier plunged his spear into his side, and at once blood and water poured out.

As said, apparently these three accounts have nothing in common.

So why combine them here?

If one is familiar with the legend of the crucifixion of Gautama in the **M**ūla-**S**arvāstivāda-**V**inaya (**MSV**), pp. 24-25, it is not difficult to recognize that we are here dealing with three different versions of one and the same Buddhist source.

A simple observation with highly important consequences:

Gautama has been impaled on a stake (*stauros*) for murdering a prostitute, Bhadrā, even though – as it turns out later – he was innocent. The real murderer escaped in the crowd.

As he is hanging there in great anguish, his teacher (*upādhyāya*), a certain Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyanas, turns up. They talk together for a while. Gautama is about to pass away, but he has left no offspring. What can be done?

Then it starts to rain. The water is mixed with the blood from the innocent man (Gautama alias Jesus). Two drops of water mixed with blood fall to the ground. Two eggs develop from the blood (which is in accordance with traditional Indian embryology). The egg-shells break. The Sanskrit noun for egg-shells is *kapālāni* – which also means 'skulls'. (Hence Golgotha is called the place of the Skulls.)

Gautama passes away when the sun is most intense (*bhāsuratarā*) – hence the **'intensely/fervently'** in Luke 22:44. Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana becomes the father, i.e. the foster father of the two sons who developed from the two eggs.

The Sanskrit for the two drops of water (semen) and blood is: *dvau sukra-bindū sa-rudhire* (p. 25, line 6), i.e.: two water-drops with-blood.

In Mark the two drops of water with blood become *Alexandrou kai Rouphou* – Simon of Cyrene's sons, Alexander and Rufus – two boys otherwise not known from early Christian sources. Sanskrit *sa-rudhire* becomes *kai Rouphou*; the *sa-* means *kai*, 'and'; and *rudhira* means 'red', like Rufus. *Alexandrou* (genitive) is from *sukra-bindū*, with the genitive in the Greek coming as close as one can to the dual Sanskrit ending *-ū*.

It thus does make sense when Mark says that Simon of Cyrene was the father of Alexander and Rufus, for Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana was indeed the foster father of the two boys that developed from the two drops of water (semen) with blood.

Sanskrit *-dvaipāyana* means "from an island". Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana is thus the "Black-islander".

This man, then, in Mark, becomes *Kurênaios ap ʹagrou* – Kṛṣṇa from the field.

In Luke 22:44 – which has always embarrassed interpreters – the sweat of Jesus, like drops of blood falling to the ground, is an accurate translation of the Sanskrit: *sukra-bindū sa-rudhire*. The Sanskrit verb is the same as the Greek. Moreover, the adjective, in comparative form is the rare *ektenesteron*, Luke 22:44. It is an exact rendering of the Sanskrit comparative *bhāsuratarā* – even more **intense**, more **fervent**. It fits better with the rays of the sun than with the mode of prayer. The MSV makes best sense.

Finally, in John 19:34, blood and water pour out from the side of the man on the cross. This is due to the spear – an echo of the pole on which Gautama was impaled in the original Buddhist source.

To conclude, it is thus clear that one and the same Sanskrit compound was translated and employed in three different ways by three different evangelists.

The evangelists knew the same story and they were, all of them, very much interested in the Sanskrit compound: *dvau sukra-bindū sa-rudhire* – the two drops of semen (or water) that, mixed with blood, and fell to the ground.

The Sanskrit original is not entirely free from obscene connotations. But this is typical of classical Sanskrit literature.

In Mark, Luke and John there are no obscene connotations. This does not necessarily mean that they were motivated by prudishness.

In their version of the Buddhist legend there was no room for the hero to have children.

The unknown authors were very competent in Greek as well as Sanskrit. The three evangelists worked together, comparing their "translations".

It will be easy for the reader to identify the innocent man on the "cross", the man who got away etc. The events took place near *Potalas* – becoming Pilatos (*Peilatos*) etc. etc.

Without a good knowledge of Sanskrit – how can one understand New Testament Greek?

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NB: This essay could not be published in any theological journal – where there is no room for original Sanskrit sources. [This is Lindtner's note. – ML]

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Comment:

In an earlier "News Bulletin" (see, above, pp. 232 f.), Lindtner has described the setting for the above episode of the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-Vinaya, wherein the sage Gautama is presented as the founder of the Gautama dynasty, to which prince Siddhārtha (who becomes the Buddha) and his father and other ancestors belong:

> The MSV (p. 5) starts out thus: The Śākyas of Kapilavastu are staying in the assembly hall of Kapilavastu. They would like to hear more about their own origins, and invite the Lord to tell them. The Lord, however, does not want to praise himself, and asks his disciple, the Great Maudgalyāyanas to tell the story of their origins. This Maudgalyāyanas is sitting in the assembly. He enters a state of trance, then rises up from that state, and obeys the request of the Lord.

Maudgalyānas then begins to relate the story of the sage Gautama, the ancient founder of the Gautama royal dynasty.

The Story of the Sage Gautama, Ancient Founder of the Buddha's Royal Dynasty

Introduction by Michael Lockwood

A few years ago (2003), in an article on the internet, "The Sanskrit Sources of the Gospel Narrative of the Trial and Death of Jesus and a Dialogue with Christian Lindtner", the scholar Zacharias P. Thundy pointed out some parallels between the New Testament narratives of the trial, death, and resurrection of Jesus on the one hand and similar incidents in the Sanskrit drama, *Mṛcchakaṭikam*, on the other. Thundy held that the *Mṛcchakaṭikam* was written sometime in the last couple of centuries BCE. In our own study and translation of the play, *Chārudattam*,* the original play from which the *Mṛcchakaṭikam* was adapted by a later writer, we have argued that both plays belong, respectively, in the 7th and 8th centuries CE, not in any period BCE. But the important parallels that Thundy has discussed are certainly there between the *Mṛcchakaṭikam* and the passion narratives of the Christian Gospels.

At about the same time that Thundy published his article, the Danish Sanskrit scholar Christian Lindtner wrote about important parallels that he had discovered between the Buddhist story of "The Passion and Death of Gautama", found in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, the concluding part of the *Saṁghabhēdavastu,* a work of the Sarvāstivādins, on the one hand, and the passion narratives of the Gospels, on the other:

> The crucifixion of Jesus is totally dependent on Buddhist sources. In the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya*,** . . . one can read how the innocent Gautama was crucified [impaled] on a *śūla* [stake], and the details about the skulls, etc. are also there. Most of the remaining details about the two robbers, the supernatural phenomena etc. are to be found at the end of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* and in the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīkasūtra*. One merely has to compare the Sanskrit and the Greek carefully. A phenomenological comparison based on mere translations is bound to lead to a scholarly parinirvāṇa. There is hardly anything in the gospels that cannot be traced back to these Buddhist sources.***

It must be noted that this Gautama is *not* Gautama, the Buddha – he is a legendary, ancient ancestor of the Buddha who stood at the origin of the Gautama dynasty.

As this story of "The Passion and Death of Gautama" was not widely known, and translations of it were hard to come by, my friend and colleague Prof. A. Vishnu Bhat and I decided to make our own translation of it – which, sadly, was only shortly before Prof. Bhat's untimely death in 2007.

This story has many aspects which seem strangely un-Buddhistic. It looked to us as though it was based on an ancient pre-Buddhist legend about the origin of the Ikṣvāku dynasty, which was later adapted in order to account for the rise of the Buddha's own clan, the Gautamas.

From our three decades of research on the Pallavas, we held that both *Chārudattam* and *Mṛcchakaṭikam* are great **Pallava** literary works – and hence our interest in making our own translation of "The Passion and Death of Gautama".

Chārudattam: 'Torso of a Masterpiece'*, translated by M. Lockwood and A. Vishnu Bhat (Madras: Tambaram Research Associates, 2005).

**See the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya*, the 17th and last section of the Vinaya in the Gilgit Manuscript of the *Saṁghabhēdavastu*: Part I, edited by Raniero Gnoli with the assistance of T. Venkatacharya, Roma, Istituto italiano per il medio ed estremo oriente, 1977, pp. 21-26.

***This is a brief excerpt from Christian Lindtner's review of the German publication, *Jesus oder Buddha: Leben und Lehre im Vergleich*, by Ulrich Luz and Axel Michaels (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2002), and its English translation, *Encountering Jesus and Buddha: Their Lives and Teachings*, translated by Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006). Lindtner's review was available on the internet: < http://www.jesusisbuddha.com/lebenundlehre.html >.

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The Story of the Sage Gautama, Ancient Founder of the Buddha's Royal Dynasty

Translated by A. Vishnu Bhat and Michael Lockwood

Karṇasya gautamā rājñō dvau gautamō bharadvājaś ca;
Tayōr gautamō naiṣkarmyābhi-nandī;
Bharadvājō rājyābhi-nandī;
Sa pitaraṁ paśyati dharmādharmēṇa rājyaṁ kārayantam;[3]
Sa saṁlakṣayati «Aham-api pitur-[4] *atyayād rājā bhaviṣyāmy-aham-api dharmādharmēṇa rājyaṁ kārayitvā narakaparāyaṇō bhaviṣyāmi;*
Kim-atra prāptakālam agārād-anagārikāṁ pravrajiṣyē» iti viditvā yēna karṇō rājā tēnōpasaṅkrāntaḥ ।
Upasaṅkramya pādayōr nipatya vijñāpayati[5]*;*
Tātānujānthi māṁ pravrajāmi śraddhayā agārād anagārikām-[6] *iti;*
Sa kathayati «Putra yasyārthē yajñā ijyantē, hōmā hūyantē, tapāṁsi tapyantē tat tava karatalagataṁ rājyam; Mamātyayād rājā bhāviṣyasi । Kim-arthaṁ pravrajasīti?» ।
Sa kathayati «Tāta na śakyaṁ mayā dharmādharmēṇa rājyaṁ kārayitum[7]*; Tad-anujānīhi pravrajāmīti»;*
Tatō rājñā avaśyaṁ nirbandhaṁ jñātvā anujñātaḥ ।
Tēna khalu samayēna anyatamasmin-n-āśramapadē kṛṣṇadvaipāyanō nāma ṛṣiḥ prativasati[8]*;*
Tatō gautamaḥ rājñā samanujñātō hṛṣṭatuṣṭapramudita udagraprītisaumanasyajātō[9] *yēna kṛṣṇadvaipāyanō ṛṣis tēnōpasaṅkrāntaḥ;*
Upasaṅkramya vinītēryāpathapādābhivandanaṁ[10] *kṛtvā kathayati, pravrajyārthī pravrajāyasva mām-iti ।*
Sa tēna pravrajitaḥ; Kṛṣṇadvaipāyanō ṛṣiḥ phala-mūlāṁbubhakṣaḥ;
Tasyāpi gautama ṛṣiḥ gautama ṛṣiḥ iti saṁjñā saṁvṛttā[1] *।*
Yāvad-aparēṇa samayēna karṇō rājā kālagataḥ[2]*;*
Bharadvāja-kumārō rājyaiśvaryādhipatyē pratiṣṭhāpitaḥ pitryaṁ rājyaṁ kārayati;
Yāvad-aparēṇa samayēna gautamō ṛṣir-upadhyāyāsya kathayati
«Upādhyāya na śaknōmi āraṇyakābhir-ōṣadhībhir-yāpayitum; Grāmāntaṁ samavasarāmīti»;
Sa kathayati «Putra śōbhanam; Grāmē vā araṇyē vā prativasatā ṛṣiṇā sarvathā indriyāṇi rakṣitavyānīti; Gaccha tvaṁ pōtala-sāmantakēna[3] *śākhāparṇakuṭiṁ kṛtvā vāsaṁ kalpaya»;*
«Ēvam-upādhyāya» ity-uktvā gautama ṛṣiḥ pōtalakasāmantakēna śākhāparṇakuṭiṁ kṛtvā avasthitaḥ;
Tēna khalu samayēna pōtalakē nagarē bhadrā nāma rūpājīvanī prativasati;
Mṛṇālaś ca nāmnā dhūrtapuruṣaḥ; Tēna vastrālaṅkāram-anuprēṣitaṁ paricāraṇāya;
Sā tad-vastrālaṅkāraṁ prāvṛtya saṁprasthitā;
Anyatamaś ca puruṣaḥ pañca-kārṣāpaṇa-śatāny-ādāyōpasthitaḥ; «Bhadrē āgaccha paricāraya» iti;
Sā saṁlakṣayati «Yadi gamiṣyāmi pañca-kārṣāpaṇa-śatāni lapsyē;
Adākṣiṇyaṁ caitad gṛhāgataṁ pratyākhyāyānyatra gamanam-» iti;
Tayā prēṣyadārikābhihitā «Gaccha mṛṇālasya kathaya āryā kathayati na tāvad-ahaṁ sajjā, paścād-āgamiṣyāmīti»;
Tayāpi tasya gatvārōcitam;
Sôpi puruṣō bahukaraṇīyaḥ; Sa tāṁ paricārya prathama ēva yāmē prakrāntaḥ ।
Sā saṁlakṣayati «Mahatī vēlā vartatē śakṣyāmy-ahaṁ tasyāpi cittagrāhaṁ kartum-» iti;
Tayā punar apy-asau dārikābhihitā «Gaccha mṛṇālasyārōcaya, āryā sajjā saṁvṛttā, kathaya katarad-udyānam-[4] *āgacchatv-» iti;*
Tayā tasmai gatvārōcitam; Sa kathayati kṣaṇēna tavāryā sajjā kṣaṇēnāsajjēti;
Sā dārikā tasyāḥ sāntarā; Tayā samākhyātam:
«Āryaputra nāsāv-asajjā; Kiṁ tarhi; Tayā tvadīyēna vastrālaṅkārēṇānyēna puruṣēṇa sārdhaṁ paricāritam-» iti;
Tasya yattat kāmarāga-paryavasthānaṁ tad vigatam;
Vyāpādaparyavasthānaṁ samutpannam; Sa saṁjātāmarṣaḥ kathayati,
«Dārikē gatvā bhadrāyāḥ kathaya, mṛṇālaḥ kathayaty-amukam-[1]*udyānaṁ nirgacchēti»;*

.

1 King Karṇa, O Gautamas, had two [sons], Gautama and Bharadvāja.
2 Of these two, Gautama took pleasure in living withdrawn from action.
3 Bharadvāja craved the rulership of the kingdom.
4 [Gautama] observed how his father ruled the kingdom, now upholding dharma, then, again, failing to.
5 He thought, "If I should become king, I, like father, would sometimes manage to uphold dharma, sometimes not – and I would suffer in the netherworld for [those failures].
6 Perhaps I should take to the life of homeless wandering." Concluding thus, he approached King Karṇa,
7 Prostrating himself at his feet, he said,
8 "Father, permit me to abandon home for the life of homeless wandering."
9 [The king] said, "Son, this kingdom, for whose sake sacrifices are offered, libations poured, penance performed, this kingdom will be in your hands. After me, you will be king. Why become a mendicant?"
10 [Gautama] replied, "Father, I cannot rule the kingdom, part with, part against, dharma. Permit me to wander."
11 Then, realizing his son to be adamant, [the king] gave his permission.
12 At this same time, there lived in a certain hermitage a ṛishi by the name of Kṛishṇadvaipāyana.
13 Having King Karṇa's permission, Gautama joyfully and with intense satisfaction went to this Ṛishi Kṛishṇadvaipāyana,
14 Approaching humbly, prostrating himself, he said, "I wish to become a wandering mendicant, please initiate me."
15 [Gautama] was initiated by him. Like Kṛishṇadvaipāyana, he subsisted on fruit, roots, and water.
16 This way Gautama also became a ṛishi and thus became known as Ṛishi Gautama.
17 After some time, King Karṇa died.
18 Prince Bharadvāja was invested with the kingdom's wealth and royal authority inherited from his father.
19 [Again] after some time, Ṛishi Gautama said to his teacher,
20 "Teacher, I am unable to sustain myself only on plants from the forest. I shall go to the outskirts of the town."
21 [The teacher] answered, "Excellent, son. In village or forest, a ṛishi, in all ways, must control his senses. Go to the outskirts of Pōtala[ka], construct a hut out of branches and leaves, and dwell there."
22 "Even so, Teacher", Gautama Ṛishi said, and he went and built a hut on the outskirts of Pōtalaka, dwelling there.
23 At that same time, in the city of Pōtalaka, there was a harlot named Bhadrā
24 and a rogue named Mṛiṇāla. [The rogue] sent ornaments and clothes [to her] in order to have sex with her.
25 She put on these ornaments and clothing and prepared to set out [to join him].
26 But another man approached [her] offering 500 kārshāpaṇas. [He said,] "Bhadrā, let's have sex."
27 She considered, "If I go with him, I shall receive 500 kārshāpaṇas.
28 And it would be inconsiderate to go away and refuse one who has come to my house."
29 She told her servant girl, "Go tell Mṛiṇāla that I am not ready yet, and that I shall come later."
30 And [the servant girl] went away and informed [Mṛiṇāla].
31 [The new patron] was also a very busy person. He had sex with her and left in the first watch of the night.
32 She thought, "There is plenty of time, I shall be able to gratify [Mṛiṇāla] also."
33 Again, [Bhadrā] told her servant girl, "Go tell Mṛiṇāla that I am ready now. Ask him in which park we are to meet."
34 She went and informed him. [Mṛiṇāla] said, "One moment your mistress is not ready, the next, she is ready."
35 The servant girl was harboring ill-feelings toward her mistress, and blurted out:
36 "Sir, it isn't that she wasn't ready. In fact, wearing your clothes and jewelry, she had sex with another man!"
37 Whatever state of anticipation for sensual pleasure [Mṛiṇāla] had been in, it now vanished.
38 An obsession for revenge welled up in him, and, full of wrath, he said:
39 "Girl, go to Bhadrā and tell her that Mṛiṇāla says, 'Go over to such and such a park.'"

40 Tayā gatvā bhadrāyā ārōcitam;

41 Tataḥ sā tad-udyānaṁ nirgatā;

42 Mṛṇālēna dhūrta-puruṣēnōktā «Yuktaṁ nāma tava madīyēna vastrālaṅkārēṇānyēna puruṣēṇa sārdhaṁ paricārayitum-» iti;

43 Sā kathayati «Āryaputrāsty-ēva[2] mamāparādhaḥ; Kiṁtu nityāparādhō mātṛgrāmaḥ; Kṣamasvēti»;

44 Tatas tēna saṁjātāmarṣēṇa niṣkōśam-asiṁ kṛtvā jīvitād vyaparōpitā;

45 Tatas tayā prēṣyadārikayā mahān kōlāhalaḥ śabdaḥ kṛtaḥ āryā praghātitā āryā praghātitēti;

46 Śrutvā samantā-j-janakāyaḥ pradhāvitaḥa[3] yāvat tasmin-n-ēvāśramapadē gautama-ṛṣiḥ prativasati;

47 Tatôsau mṛṇālō dhūrtanuruṣaḥ saṁtrastō rudhiram-rakṣitam-asiṁ gautamasya ṛṣēḥ purastā-c-chōrayitvā tasyaiva mahājanakāyasya madhyaṁ praviṣṭaḥ;

48 Mahājanakāyaś[4] ca rudhiram-rakṣitam-asiṁ dṛṣṭvā kathayati «Anēna pravrajitēna bhadrā jīvitād vyaparōpitēti» ।

49 Tatas taṁ gautama-ṛṣiṁ parivārya sañjātāmarṣāḥ[5] kathayanti «Bhōḥ pravrajita ṛṣi-dhvajaṁ dhārayasi, īdṛśaṁ ca karma karōṣīti» ।

50 Sa kathayati «Kiṁ kṛtam?[6]»;

51 Tē kathayanti «Bhadrayā[7] tē sārdhaṁ paricāritaṁ, sā ca jīvitād vyaparōpitēti»;

52 Sa kathayati śāntaṁ, nāham-asya karmaṇaḥ kārīti;

53 Sa śāntavādy-api tēna mahājanakāyēna paścād-bāhu-gāḍhabandhana-baddhō rājñē upanāmitaḥ dēvānēna pravrajitēna bhadrayā sārdhaṁ paricāritaṁ, sā jīvitād vyaparōpitā iti;

54 Aparīkṣakā rājānaḥ;

55 Kathayati «Yady-ēvaṁ gacchata;[8] Ēnaṁ śūlē samārōpayata; Parityaktôyaṁ mayā pravrajita» iti ।

56 Tatôsau pravrajitaḥ karavīra-mālāsakta-kaṇṭhaguṇō nīlāṁbara-vasanaiḥ puruṣair-udyata-śastraiḥ saṁparivāritō rathyā-vīthī-catvara-śṛṇgāṭakēṣu śravaṇā-sukhēṣv-anuśrāvya dakṣiṇēna nagara-dvārēṇa niṣkāsya jīvan-n-ēva śūlē samārōpitaḥ;

57 Tasyāsāv-upādhyāyaḥ kālēna kālaṁ tasyāśramapadam-[1] upasaṅkrāmati;

58 Yāvad-aparēṇa[2] samayēnōpasaṅkrāntaḥ na paśyati, sa itaś cētaś ca samanvēṣitum-[3] ārabdhō yāvat paśyati śūla-samârōpitam ।

59 Sa bāṣpa-gadgada-kaṇṭhaḥ aśruparyākulēkṣaṇaḥ karuṇādīna-vilaṁbitākṣaraṁ kathayati «Hā vatsa kim-idam?»

60 Sôpi gadgada-kaṇṭhō marma-vēdanōparōdha-janita-viṣādaḥ kathayaty-«Upādhyāya karmāṇi; Kim-anyad bhaviṣyatīti» ।

61 Sa kathayati «Vatsa nāsi kṣata nāsi kṣata upahatō vā»;

62 «Tāta kṣatôhaṁ kāyēna nō tu cittēna»;

63 «Vatsa kathaṁ jñāyatē»;

64 «Upādhyāya satyōpayācanaṁ kariṣyē, śṛṇu, yēna satyēna[4] satya-vacanēna kṣatôhaṁ kāyēna nō tu cittēna, tēna satyēna satya-vacanēna yēyam-upādhyayasya[5] kṛṣṇa-varṇā-c-chavir-iyaṁ suvarṇa-varṇā bhavēt»;

65 Bhāvitādhyāśayôsau mahātmā;

66 Vacanāvasāna-samanantaram-ēva kṛṣṇadvaipāyanasya ṛṣēḥ kṛṣṇavarṇā-c-chavir-antarhitā; Suvarṇavarṇā saṁvṛttā[6] ।

67 Sāmantakēna śabdō visṛtaḥ kṛṣṇadvaipāyana-ṛṣiḥ suvarṇaḥ saṁvṛtta iti ।

68 Tasya suvarṇadvaipāyanaḥ suvarṇadvaipāyana iti saṁjñā saṁvṛttā; Sa paraṁ[7] vismayam-upagataḥ;

69 Tatôsau gautama-ṛṣiḥ kathayati «Upādhyāya itaś-cyutasya mē kā gatir bhaviṣyati, kā upapattiḥ, kôbhisaṁparāya» iti ।

70 Sa kathayati «Vatsa brāhmaṇāḥ kathayanti» «Aputrasya[8] gatir nāstīti; Asti tvayā kiṁcid-apatyam-utpāditam-?»

71 «Upādhyāya kumāra ēvāham; Strī-tantrē aprakṛtijñaḥ; Pitrā rājya-nimittaṁ prōtsāhyamānaḥ pravrajitaḥ; Kutō mamāpatyasamutpattiḥ »;

72 «Vatsa yady-ēvaṁ pūrvōpabhukta-viṣayānusmaraṇaṁ kuru»;

73 «Upādhyāya[9] gāḍhayēdanābhvāhatasya mē idānīṁ chidyamānēṣu marmasu[10] mucyamānēṣu sandhiṣu maraṇaikāntamanasaḥ kathaṁ pūrvōpabhukta-viṣayānusmaraṇaṁ bhavati?»

74 Sa tasyōpādhyāyaḥ pañcābhijñālābhi[1]; Tēna ṛddhyā mahān vātavarṣō nirmitaḥ;

75 Tasya varṣa-bindavaḥ kāyē nipatitāḥ; Tataḥ śītala-salila-vāta-sparśād vēdanā viṣṭaṁbhitā;

40 She went and told Bhadrā.
41 Thereupon [Bhadrā] went out to the park.
42 The rogue, Mṛiṇāla, said to her, “Was it proper for you to have sex with another man in those clothes and ornaments [which I sent you]?”
43 [Bhadrā answered:] “Noble sir, it is indeed my fault. The female sex is ever liable to err. Forgive me!”
44 Then, he drew his sword and killed her.
45 [Seeing this], the servant girl screamed out loudly, “Mistress has been murdered! Mistress has been murdered!”
46 Hearing [her screaming], a great crowd came running from all sides to the hermitage where Gautama lived.
47 Then, the rogue, Mṛiṇāla, terrified, threw down the blood-stained sword in front of Gautama and melted into the great crowd.
48 When the great crowd saw the blood-stained sword in front of Gautama, they cried out, “This mendicant has killed Bhadrā!”
49 They surrounded Gautama Ṛishi and furiously shouted, “Oh mendicant! You, the upholder of the Ṛishis’ Banner, have committed such a deed as this!”
50 He said, “What deed?”
51 They said, “You had sex with Bhadrā and then killed her.”
52 He said calmly, “I did not do that.”
53 In spite of his calm demeanor, they bound him with ropes around his shoulders and dragged him before the king. They bowed and said, “This mendicant had sex with Bhadrā, and then killed her.”
54 (Kings, often, do not look into such matters carefully.)
55 [The king] said, “If it is as you say, go impale him on a stake. I hand over the mendicant [to you].”
56 Then, having hung a garland of oleander around the mendicant’s neck and surrounding him with men clothed in blue, with drawn swords, they announced [the death sentence] at the cross-roads, and drove him out through the southern gate of the city [to the place of execution], where he was impaled alive on a stake.
57 [Gautama’s] teacher, Kṛishṇadvaipāyana, happened to arrive a little later at [Gautama’s] hermitage.
58 But, when, sometime after his arrival there, he had still not seen [Gautama], he began to search here and there until he found him impaled on the stake.
59 Bursting into tears and sobbing, his voice breaking, because of his pity and grief, asking, “Oh, son, what is this?”
60 [Gautama,] also sobbing and in torment because of the pain of his mortal injuries, answered, “Teacher, [it is because of] my karma! What else could it be?”
61 [Kṛishṇadvaipāyana] asked, “Son, are you not hurt or injured?”
62 [Gautama:] “I am wounded in body, but not in mind.”
63 [Kṛishṇadvaipāyana:] “Son, how could I be sure of that?”
64 [Gautama:] “Teacher, I’ll satisfy your doubts. Listen! My statement that I’m wounded in body, but not in mind, is as true as the pronouncement, which I now make, that your dark skin, Teacher, will turn to a golden color.”
65 That Mahātma [Gautama] had a well-developed will-power.
66 Immediately after making his pronouncement, the dark color of the skin of Ṛishi ‘Kṛishṇa-dvaipāyana’ [‘Dark-Dvaipāyana’] became golden colored.
67 Soon the saying had widely spread that ‘Dark-Dvaipāyana’ had become ‘Golden-Dvaipāyana’.
68 In this manner, his name changed to ‘Suvarṇa-Dvaipāyana’ [‘Golden-Dvaipāyana’]. He was utterly astonished.
69 Thereupon, Gautama Ṛishi said, “Teacher, when I have departed this life, what will become of me? What will my future rebirth be?”
70 [His teacher] answered, “Son, Brahmins say that without sons, one sinks into non-existence. Have you offspring?”
71 [Gautama:] “Teacher, I am only a young man, without knowledge of the ways of women. Although my father wanted me to inherit the kingdom, I became a mendicant. How would I have offspring?”
72 [Teacher:] “Son, if that is so, you should try to recall the experience of sexual pleasure [in a previous life].”
73 [Gautama:] “Teacher, right now terrible pains overwhelm me, my vital organs are pierced, my joints loosened, and my mind is focussed on approaching death. How can I recall sexual pleasure [in a previous life]?”
74 His teacher had acquired the Five Superhuman Faculties. By means of these he created a great downpour.
75 The raindrops fell on [Gautama’s] body. Thanks to a cool, wet wind, his pains were alleviated.

Sa pūrvōpabhuktaviṣayān smartum-ārabdhaḥ;
Yāvad-asya maithuna-rāga-samanusmaraṇād[2] dvau śukra-bindū sa-rudhirē[3] nipatitau;
Catvāri sthānāny-acintanīyāni: Ātma-cintā lōka-cintā sattvānāṁ;
karmavipāka-cintā buddhānāṁ ca buddhaviṣaya [cintā] iti;
Tau śukra-bindū dvē aṇḍē prādurbhūtē; Sūryasyābhyudgamana-kālasamayē sūrya-raśmi-paripācitē sphuṭitē;
Dvau kumārau jātau; Tatō nātidūrē ikṣuvātaḥ; Tau tatra praviṣṭau;
Tatas sūrya-raśmayō bhāsuratarā jātāḥ; Gautama-ṛṣiḥ sūrya-raśmi-paritāḥ kālagataḥ;
Tataḥ suvarṇadvaipāyana-ṛṣir-āgataḥ; Paśyati kālagataḥ;
Sa śūla-sāmantakē paśyati aṇḍē sphuṭitē; Kapālāny-avasthitāni;
Sônusaran-n-itaś cāmutaś ca ikṣuvāṭaṁ praviṣṭō yāvat[4] paśyati «Dvau kumārau»;
Samanvāhartuṁ pravṛttaḥ; Kasyaitau putrāv-iti; Paśyati «Gautamasya ṛṣēḥ»;
Tatôsya sutarāṁ prēmā utpannaḥ; Tēna tāv-āśramapadaṁ nītvā āpāyitau, pōṣitau, saṁvardhitau;
Tayōś ca nāmadhēyaṁ vyavasthāpayituṁ pravṛttaḥ;
Sūryasyābhyudgamana-kālasamayē sūryaraśmibhiḥ paripācitau jātau bhavataḥ;
Tasmāt sūryagōtrāv-iti sūryagōtrāḥ sūryagōtrā iti saṁjñā saṁvṛttā;
Gautamasya ṛṣēḥ[5] putrau[6] gautamā gautamā iti dvitīyā saṁjñā saṁvṛttā;
Svāṅgīnisṛtā iti āṅgīrasā āṅgīrasā iti tṛtīyā saṁjñā saṁvṛttā;
Ikṣuvāṭā-l-labdhā ikṣvākā ikṣvākā iti caturthi saṁjñā saṁvṛttā;
Yāvad-aparēṇa samayēna bharadvājō rājā aputra ēva kālagataḥ;
Amātyāḥ saṁnipatya samavāyaṁ kartum-ārabdhāḥ;
«Bhavantaḥ kam-[7] idānīṁ rājānam-abhiṣiñcāma» iti;
Aparē kathayanti tasya bhrātā gautamō ṛṣiṇāṁ madhyē pravrajitaḥ;
Tasyēdaṁ kula-kramāgataṁ rājyam; Tam-abhiṣincāma iti;
Kṛtasañjalpāḥ suvarṇadvaipāyanasya ṛṣēḥ sakāśkam-upasaṅkrāntāḥ;
Upasaṅkramya pādayōr nipatya kathayanti «Maharṣē gautamaḥ kva gata?» iti;
Sa kathayati «Yuṣmābhir-ēva praghātita» iti;
«Maharṣē vayaṁ tasya darśanam-api na samanusmarāmaḥ; Kathaṁ praghātayāmaḥ?»
«Aham-yuṣmān smārayāmi»;
«Śōbhanam»; Tēna tē smāritāḥ kathayanti
«Maharṣē[1] yady-ēvam-alaṁ tasya nāma-grahaṇēna; Pāpakāry-asāv-akīrtanīyaḥ»;
«Kiṁ tēna pāpakaṁ karma kṛtam?»
«Idaṁ cēdaṁ ca»;
«Nāsau pāpa-karma-kāri; Adūṣy-anapakāry-ēva yuṣmābhiḥ praghātitaḥ»;
«Katham?»
Tēna vistarēṇa yathāvṛttaṁ samākhyātam;
Tē saṁjāta-daurmanasyāḥ kathayanti «Maharṣē yady-ēvaṁ vayaṁ pāpa-karma-kāriṇō nāsāv-» iti;
Tē caivam-ālāpaṁ kurvanti;
Tau ca dārakau ṛṣēḥ sakāśam-upasaṅkrāntau;
Amātyāḥ kathayanti «Maharṣē kasyētau dārakau?»;
Kathayati[2] «Tasyaiva putrau»;
Katham-ētau samutpannau kā[3] vā anayōḥ saṁjñā;
Tēna sōtpattikaṁ vistarēṇa samākhyātam;
Amātyāḥ śrutvāpi paraṁ vismayam-[4] uptagatāḥ;
Tais taṁ ṛṣim-anujñāpya tayōr jyēṣṭhaḥ kumārō rājyābhiṣēkēṇābhiṣiktaḥ;
Sôpy-aputraḥ kālagataḥ; Tatôsau dvitīyaḥ kanīyān-abhiṣiktaḥ;
Tasya ikṣvāku-rāja ikṣvāku-rāja iti saṁjñā samvṛttā;
Ikṣvākōr gautamā rājñaḥ putraprapautṛkayā [naptṛpranaptṛkayā] punar-api pōtalakē nagarē ēka-śatam-ikṣvāku-rāja-śatam-abhūt.

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76 He began to recall an experience of sexual pleasure [in a previous life].
77 Due to this recollection of sexual pleasure, two drops of semen mixed with blood fell [on the ground].
78 Four things are hard to conceive: 1) the idea of the soul, 2) the idea of the world,
3) the idea of the ripening of deeds of sentient creatures, and 4) the range of the Buddha power of Buddhas.
79 The two drops of semen metamorphosed into two eggs. When the sun rose and heated them, they cracked open.
80 Two princes were born. Not far away there was a sugar-cane field [*ikshuvāṭa*]. The two young princes entered it.
81 Thereupon the sun's rays became even more intense. Gautama Ṛishi was burned by the sun's rays and died.
82 Then Suvarṇadvaipāyana Ṛishi approached. He saw that Gautama Ṛishi had died.
83 Close to the stake he saw the two cracked eggs. The egg-shells [*kapālāni*, pl. of *kapāla* = shell; skull] lay there.
84 He walked here and there in the sugar-cane field until he beheld what looked like two princes.
85 He wondered, "Whose sons are these?" He realized that they were Gautama Ṛishi's.
86 Affection for them welled up in him. He brought them to his hermitage, gave food and drink, and raised them.
87 He also undertook the ceremony of giving them names.
88 They were born when the sun was rising and were warmed by the rays of the sun.
89 Thus they are said to be of the 'Solar Clan'. Thus did their first name 'Sūrya-Gōtra' ['Solar-Clan'] originate.
90 They were the sons of Gautama Ṛishi. Thus did their second [joint] name, 'Gautamas', originate.
91 They issued forth from [Gautama's] own body [*aṅga*]. Thus did their third [joint] name, 'Aṅgirasas', originate.
92 They were found in a sugar-cane field [*ikshuvāṭa*]. Thus did their fourth [joint] name, 'Ikshvākus', originate.
93 After some time had passed, King Bharadvāja died without having had any sons.
94 The Ministers assembled and began to deliberate:
95 "Gentlemen, whom should we now anoint as king?"
96 Some said, "His brother, Gautama, has become a mendicant among the ṛishis.
97 According to the rules of succession, this kingdom is his. Him we should anoint."
98 They ended their deliberations and went to meet Suvarṇadvaipāyana Ṛishi.
99 Arriving there, they prostrated themselves before him, and asked him, "Great-Ṛishi, where has Gautama gone?"
100 [Suvarṇadvaipāyana] answered, "It was you who had him killed!"
101 [Ministers:] "Great-Ṛishi, we do not even recall what he looked like. How could we then have had him killed?"
102 [Suvarṇadvaipāyana:] "I shall help your memory."
103 "Excellent", [the ministers replied]. When he had refreshed their memory, they said,
"Great-Ṛishi, if it's as you say, his name won't be mentioned any more. As an evil-doer, he won't be praised."
104 [Suvarṇadvaipāyana:] "What evil did he do?"
105 [Ministers:] "This and that."
106 [Suvarṇadvaipāyana:] "He was no evil-doer. It was an innocent, harmless man whom you had executed."
107 [Ministers:] "How so?"
108 [Suvarṇadvaipāyana] then told them in detail how it was so.
109 They were terribly upset and said, "Great-Ṛishi, if this is so, we are the evil-doers, not he."
110 They also made an announcement to that effect.
111 At this moment, the two boys appeared and approached the Ṛishi.
112 [Ministers:] "Whose are these boys? What are their names?"
113 [Suvarṇadvaipāyana] said, "They are [Gautama's] sons."
114 [Ministers:] "How could this happen? And what are their names?"
115 [Suvarṇadvaipāyana] told [the ministers] what had happened, in detail, from the beginning.
116 When the ministers heard all this, they were utterly astonished.
117 Then, having asked permission from the Ṛishi, they anointed the elder prince king.
118 He died [later], however, without having any sons. Then the younger one was anointed king.
119 His name was King Ikshvāku. The name of the Ikshvāku [dynasty] originated in him.
120 O Gautamas! Because King Ikshvāku had sons and grandsons, there continued in the city of Pōtalaka
[a lineage of] 'hundreds' of Ikshvāku kings.

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Comment:

If one thinks the claim is far-fetched that the Indian story of the Passion of the Sage Gautama could have influenced Christianity or other communities in the Near East, then read the following excerpt from Jorunn Jacobson Buckley's, "Libertines or Not: Fruit, Bread, Semen and Other Body Fluids in Gnosticism", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2:1, 1994, pp. 26-27, and meditate on the last paragraph (bolding added):

> In the Mandaean *masiqta*, "raising up"-ceremony, the main ritual for the dead, the food symbolism becomes extremely complex. I shall give a very short outline of the priests' handling of foods in the secret ceremonies inside the hut, the *skinta*.[44] In front of him, each priest has two trays, the right one holds incense and a fire basin, the left one holds this: a small bottle of water; a cup of *misa*; a set number of *faṭiras* (the total number must be sixty, so how many each priest has depends on how many are officiating); a drinking-bowl with four raisins; and, finally, shreds of these foods: slivers of pigeon-meat, grape-seeds, pomegranate, walnut, quince, dates, coconut, almond, and citrus. There is also a twig of myrtle.[45]
>
> Pouring water from the bottle into the bowl with the raisins, the priest kneads the raisins to darken the liquid. It has now become *hamra*. While he macerates the raisins, the priest utters *CP*[*] 33, which speaks of his action as rain fertilizing the earth. As becomes clear later, the *hamra*-bowl is a symbol of the fertilized womb. Many prayers and other acts follow, the priest continually wafting incense from the right tray onto the foods on the left one; he thus envelops the foods in the fragrance of the Lightworld. He next twists the myrtle-twig into a tiny wreath, and receives a pinch of dough from an acolyte. Then comes the recital of the eight *pihta* prayers, *CP* 36-43, for the dough-fragment, and the first of these prayers, "opens the great door of nourishment to the soul and spirit."[46] All eight *pihta* prayers represent the eight months during which the infant matures in the womb.[47]
>
> To make a small break here: it is necessary to know that the *masiqta*'s aim is to effect the ascent of the spirit and soul of the deceased. Together, these two components are eligible for salvation, whereas the body goes back to the earth (this does not preclude the creation of a new, Lightworld body, however). The *pihta* symbolizes the soul, the myrtle-wreath the spirit.
>
> Putting down *pihta* and myrtle-wreath on the tray, the priest now puts his hand on one of the *faṭiras*, and starts to pray *CP* 49, "This, the glory of light and life, is to bring forth the spirit and soul from the body and to clothe the living soul in a living garment."[48] During this very long and important prayer, the priest does this: he folds the wreath carefully around the *pihta*, "clothing the spirit in the soul," but does not let the two ends of the *pihta* meet. Holding the wrapped wreath in his left hand, he arranges each of the *faṭiras* (for example, fifteen biscuits in a set-up with four priests) and puts some of each kind of fruit, seed, and nut on top of it. Then he dips his finger into the sesame-paste and smears each *faṭira* nine times with the paste.
>
> After he has treated each *faṭira* the priest piles all into a heap, utters more prayers, while still holding the wrapped wreath in his left hand. Blessing the heap with his hand, he then lifts his hand, unwraps wreath from *pihta*, and places the wreath on top of the heap. Now he breaks a piece from the upper-most and the lower-most biscuit, "opening the mouth of the soul," and puts the two fragments, along with a sliver of pigeon-meat, onto the *pihta* on the tray, pressing these three items into the dough. Then he pours water from the bottle into the *hamra*-bowl, an act that signifies the mingling of **water (semen)** and ***hamra* (blood)** in the womb of the Cosmic Mother. The *hamra*-bowl is now fertilized. Next, the priest dips the folded-up *pihta* (which holds the three items) into the bowl, pushes aside his mouth-cover, and drops the *pihta*, whole, into his mouth.

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44. For a fuller treatment of the *Ṭabahata masiqta* (the *masiqta* during the five-day intercalary period), see my "The Mandaean Ṭabahata Masiqta," *Numen* 28, 2 (1981): 138-63.

45. See the drawing in, E.S. Drower, *Water into Wine* (London: Murray, 1956), 250 (I used this in my "Ṭabahata Masiqta," p. 141. In what follows, I rely on my article).

[**The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans* (abbr. *CP*), by E.S. Drower (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959), 243 n. 2.]

46. E.S. Drower, *The Thousand and Twelve Questions (Alf Trisar Suialia)*, Veröff. d. Inst. f. Orientforschung (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1960), 242 (148).

47. In the first text of E.S. Drower, *A Pair of Nasoraean Commentaries (Two Priestly Documents). The Great "First World." The Lesser "First World."* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), 15.

48. *CP*, 43.

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Appendix A

A Disciple Causes the Death of His Master

T.W. Rhys Davids (trans.), *Buddhist Suttas*, being Vol. XI of *The Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881), Chap. IV of the Mahā-Parinibbāna-Suttānta (Book of the Great Decease):*

> Now when the Blessed One [the Buddha] had eaten the food prepared by Chuṇḍa, the worker in metal, there fell upon him a dire sickness, the disease of dysentery, and sharp pain came upon him, even unto death. But the Blessed One, mindful and self-possessed, bore it without complaint. [p. 72]

As we have described above on pp. 204-205, Chuṇḍa, the devoted lay disciple of the Buddha, would have been filled with a tremendous sense of remorse at this turn of events. Intending to offer him choice food, Chuṇḍa had, instead, inadvertently been the cause of his Master's fatal food poisoning. Later, as his illness develops, the compassionate Buddha, in an effort to assuage Chuṇḍa's grief, directs Ānanda to convey the following message to him:

> [T]he Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda, and said: 'Now it may happen, Ānanda, that some one should stir up remorse in Chuṇḍa the smith, by saying, "This is evil to thee, Chuṇḍa, and loss to thee in that when the Tathāgata [the Buddha] had eaten his last meal from thy provision, then he died." Any such remorse, Ānanda, in Chuṇḍa the smith should be checked by saying, "This is good to thee, Chuṇḍa, and gain to thee, in that when the Tathāgata had eaten his last meal from thy provision, then he died. From the very mouth of the Blessed One, Chuṇḍa, have I heard, from his own mouth have I received this saying, 'These two offerings of food are of equal fruit, and of equal profit, and of much greater fruit and much greater profit than any other – and which are the two? The offering of food which, when a Tathāgata has eaten, he attains to supreme and perfect insight; and the offering of food which, when a Tathāgata has eaten, he passes away by that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains behind – these two offerings of food are of equal fruit and of equal profit, and of much greater fruit and much greater profit than any others. There has been laid up by Chuṇḍa the smith a karma redounding to length of life, redounding to good birth, redounding to good fortune, redounding to good fame, redounding to the inheritance of heaven, and of sovereign power.'" In this way, Ānanda, should be checked any remorse in Chuṇḍa the smith.' [pp. 83-84]

We have here Chuṇḍa, a disciple of the 80-year-old Indian sage, the Buddha, accidentally causing his death – and undoubtedly suffering great remorse as a result. This incident is roughly paralleled in the canonical gospels' account: Judas, a disciple of Jesus, facilitates the arrest of Jesus, which leads to Jesus' death – and then Judas suffers remorse unto death. The gnostic *Gospel of Judas's* version of the disciple's actions leading to the death of his guru keeps closer to the Buddhist tale than do the versions of the canonical gospels. *The Gospel of Judas's* confusing portrayal of Jesus showing special favor to Judas while privately endorsing Judas's impending role of turning him over to the authorities – and to his death – becomes at least a little more intelligible when it is seen as an *upāya-kauśalyan*, proselytizing transmutation of the Buddhist Chuṇḍa incident. And like the Buddhist account, where there is no suicide by Chuṇḍa, there is also no suicide by Judas in the *Gospel of Judas*!

Marvin Meyer, in his introduction to the translation of *The Gospel of Judas*, in the book *The Gnostic Bible*, perceptively stresses the gnostic tone of that work.

> Christian gnostic spirituality . . . is harshly critical of anything that smacks of sacrifice, such as the death of Jesus understood as sacrifice, or the celebration of the eucharist as a sacrificial meal. . . . The death of Jesus, while only alluded to in the Gospel of Judas, is to be a sacrifice, to be sure, but only a sacrifice of the mortal body that the true, spiritual Jesus has been using – "the man who bears me," as Jesus describes it in the gospel. All of this is presented in the Gospel of Judas in a tone more reminiscent of the serene death of the wise man Socrates at the conclusion of the *Phaedo* than anything like a violent sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world. In the end, the message of the Gospel of Judas is not darkness and death but light and life.**

Meyer is evidently unaware that, more than being reminiscent of the death of Socrates, *The Gospel of Judas* can be traced back to the Parinirvāṇa of the Buddha!

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*I have modernized the transliteration in the two passages – ML.

**Willis Barnstone & Marvin Meyer, eds., *The Gnostic Bible, Revised Edition* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2009), p. 136.

Appendix B

A Selection of Christian Lindtner's Bulletins

The Anointing at Bethany - Matthew 26:6-13 par

Christian Lindtner, "News Bulletin": August 11, 2010

When the authors of the New Testament Gospels composed their work, they did so by combining bits and pieces meticulously compiled from different sources in different languages: Greek, Hebrew, Latin and – above all – Sanskrit. In so doing they followed certain rules – the so-called middoth cherished by learned rabbis, even to this day. Here and there they had to add a few words of their own, e.g. conjunctions such as *kai*, "and". But even indications of time and place were copied directly from Buddhist sources. They always carefully counted the number of words and syllables, reflecting their deep interest in gematria. The Buddhists shared this interest in gematria, the background of which is, of course, Greek. Already in the Old Testament we see that the *Septuaginta* is based on Greek textual *geômetria* – from which we have 'gematria'.

Nearly all the motifs found in the New Testament Gospels can be found in other ancient sources – healings, walking on water, flying in the air, resurrection from the dead etc. etc. Scholars have already long ago traced most of these to Buddhist, Egyptian, Greek and other sources etc. In spite of its age, Carl Clemen's *Religionsgeschichtliche Erklärung des Neuen Testaments*, Giessen 1924 (repr. 1973), still provides an authoritative discussion of most of the parallels.

Our task as philologists is clear: We want to look over the shoulders of "Matthew" and his colleagues as they were sitting there in their workshop at the table compiling and pasting together bits and pieces from various sources, as said, from various languages.

The Hebrew sources have been collected by Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck in their indispensable *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*; and for the classical sources we have the Old and the New Wettstein – as far as it goes. Wettstein, when he published his *Novum Testamentum Graecum*, Amsterdam 1751/52, collected about 30,000 parallels from Greek and Latin authors. *Der neue Wettstein*, which is being published by Udo Schnelle and Manfred Labahn, in Halle, continues this important work. The first volume, being a commentary on Mark, presents about 1300 texts from Hellenistic authors. The rules according to which the New Testament Gospels were fabricated may be found in Hermann L. Strack's book: *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, New York 1959. What is still needed to complete the picture of the New Testament sources is a set of reference volumes collecting the Buddhist sources of the New Testament.

It goes without saying that it follows from source criticism that Jesus, the hero of our story, is a literary figure . . . – not at all a historical person, like Augustus.

The episode of the Anointing at Bethany is reported by all four evangelists, with significant variants: Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:36-50, and John 12:1-8. The Lord is staying in a house in Bethany (not mentioned by Luke). A certain woman, a sinner (*hamartôlos*) comes to him with an alabaster jar filled with an expensive perfume (*muron barutimon*), which she then pours on his head etc. The motif of a woman bringing precious perfume to the Lord so that its fragrance spreads all over town, has been taken from another Buddhist text, closely related, in fact, to the MPS, the *Avadānaśatakam* (see H.W. Schomerus, *Ist die Bibel von Indien abhängig?*, München 1932, p. 172). Here the woman with *sandal* perfume falls down at the feet of the Lord, and prays that she will be reborn as a man. The motif of the fragrance that spreads all over town has left its scent in John 12:3: "The sweet smell of the perfume filled the whole house."

But the main Buddhist source is, as so often, the Mahā-Parinirvāṇa-Sūtram 12:4 par. (ed. Waldschmidt, Berlin 1951, p. 188). Here it is the famous courtesan (*gaṇikā*) Āmrapālī who comes and serves a meal to the Lord and his disciples, the monks. The food, with which she serves them, is described as *sucinā pra-ṇītena* (instrumental case). She serves it "with her own hand".

Matthew speaks of a *muron* that is *barutimon* – a perfume (oil) that is very precious. Mark speaks of a *muron* (made) of nard that is pure (and) very expensive. Luke only mentions the perfume, *muron*. John has a *muron* of nard that is *pistik* and *polutimos*. The nard, also mentioned by Pliny et al., is the name of an Indian plant used for perfume (*Nardus spica Valeriana*; Sanskrit *naladam*). The Sanskrit *pra-ṇītena* (four syllables) is rendered by *baru-timon* (Matthew), by *polu-telês* (Mark), and by *poly-timos* (John) – three variant renderings, equally valid, of one and the same original Sanskrit adjective.

It should be noted that the Sanskrit combines the two adjectives without a word for "and". The Greek of Mark and John imitates the *asyndeton*. The rare *pistikos*, only given by Mark and John, is a perfect rendering of Sanskrit *sucinā* (instrumental case of *suci-*). In normal Greek *pistikos* means "reliable, trustworthy". The context suggests "pure" – which is confirmed by the Sanskrit original, which, in fact, simply means "pure".

This all goes to show that Mark and John used the same source as Matthew, but also that they used it independently. In particular, they all struggled with the Sanskrit adjective *pra-ṇītas* (masc. nom.). They offered three different versions, Luke left it out.

There are, moreover, several puns on the name of the celebrated courtesan from Vaiśālī (later becoming Vézelay of Mary Magdalene in France!), *Āmra-pāli-gaṇikā*:

1. The *muron* in all four evangelists, has a pun on *Āmra*.
2. The *gunê hê-tis*, a certain woman, in Luke, contains a pun on *gaṇi-kā* (where *-kā* is taken as if a pronoun, still acc. to middoth) – Luke's *en tê polei hamartôlos*, in the town, is clearly an echo of *-pālī* and *Āmra-pālī(s)* – with *t* for *p* in – *tôlos*.
3. The *apôleia* in Matthew and Mark is yet another pun on her name.

When John mentions Lazaros, this name is a pun on Licchavis, with whom Āmrapālī is explicitly associated. John is also the only evangelist here to identify the woman as Mariam – i.e. as *Āmram* (accusative form), the "Mango girl".

According to Jesus, the woman poured perfume over his body in order to prepare it for burial ahead of time. That is, of course, a ridiculous explanation for her odd behaviour, but it shows nicely what kind of paradoxes one can run into when combining several different sources as the evangelists did here, as elsewhere.

But for the oil in connection with the burial – or rather: cremation – of the Lord, they again used the same Buddhist source – the Mahā-Parinirvāṇa-Sūtram [MPS]. The same source also has the Lord explain to his disciples how they have to prepare for his cremation. Since episodes from the MPS are attested in Buddhist art dating from B.C., there can be – if only for this reason – no doubt about the priority of the sources. As I have already pointed out, the 46 syllables of Luke 10:38 were also based on the same source, Mahā-Parinirvāṇa-Sūtram 10:3 = 11:1 and 15:4 – cf. my book *Geheimnisse um Jesus Christus*, p. 111, for some details.

John 12:6 mentions the thief and the rare *glôssokomon*, far too freely translated as "money bag". This refers to the evil monk who, during the last meal of the Lord, stole a *loha-karoṭakam*, a bowl of copper (or gold, or iron), as mentioned in MPS 26:16. John's explanation of the behaviour of the thief is different. He, the traitor, wants to sell the perfume so that he can steal the (ridiculously) large amount of money it would bring. In the Buddhist original the monk steals the bowl because he is an evil monk. In the Buddhist original the thief becomes a traitor by stealing. In John he already is a traitor, who also wants to steal.

It is a great pity that authors still publish books about Mary Magdalene, passing over the direct Buddhist sources as if they did not exist (cf. e.g. Margaret Starbird, *Magdalene's Lost Legacy: Symbolic Numbers and the Sacred Union in Christianity*, Rochester, Vermont 2003). Please note that some of the observations made here were first published in *The Adyar Library Bulletin* 64 (2000), pp. 151-170. A few repetitions were unavoidable.

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More Than 500 Witnesses – All False
Buddhist sources of 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Christian Lindtner, "News Bulletin": December 29, 2009

Absolutely fundamental to any sort of Christianity is the belief in the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. If the dead are not raised and if Christ has not been raised, then the Christian faith is a delusion and Christians are lost in their sins.

Such is the view of Paul. Such is the faith of Christians. But as historians we must ask: What is the evidence or proof of the resurrection of Christ and of the dead?

The common opinion of Christian theologians and believers is that "the oldest and most reliable" evidence or proof of the resurrection of Christ is provided by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. There may be a few other witnesses, mainly women, but they cannot be considered very reliable. But how can we be sure that Paul is reliable, and that 1 Cor. 15:1-11 provides the oldest and best evidence?

The mere fact that a given witness makes a claim does not make him reliable. One must ask for his sources. He may be wrong, he may be a liar. Now Paul does in fact refer to certain sources, for he says that he has his information from certain scriptures. Unfortunately, these scriptures cannot be identified. All theologians agree that there are no scriptures in Greek or Hebrew that can be identified as the sources of Paul's claims concerning resurrection. At this point, therefore, we cannot decide the value or validity of the testimony provided by Paul. Is he, as a witness, reliable or is he not reliable? If we want to be honest, we cannot decide. The case must be left *sub judice*.

Now, fortunately, help is on its way – not to Paul, but to historians. In this case, as in so many other cases, the source of Paul can be traced back to the **M**ahā-**P**arinirvāṇa-**S**ūtra **(MPS)**, which is available in Sanskrit and in Pāli. Anyone familiar with the MPS can easily see that Paul has combined two chapters from that text, namely chapters 9 and 48 (in the edition of Waldschmidt, Berlin 1951, pp. 162-171 & 420-425).

Here are the main points:

MPS 9: In the village of Nādikā a large number of brothers and sisters have passed away. What will become of them? It is explicitly said that "more than 500 brothers have passed away". This sentence is available in the Sanskrit (9:15) and in the Pāli (Waldschmidt, p. 166). The Pāli has been translated into English, e.g. by Trevor Ling: "More than five hundred devout men of Nādikā who have died" (*The Buddha's Philosophy of Man*, London 1981, p. 159). This accounts for the "more than five hundred brothers . . . of whom some have died", in 1 Cor. 15:6, a statement that has always caused the greatest embarrassment to theologians. The more than 500 brothers are never mentioned in any other ancient Christian sources – with one exception, a Coptic source that says that the more than 500 were Indian priests (see R. Garbe, *Indien und das Christentum*, Süderbrarup 2004, p. 292). There is, as we have just seen, some truth in this. There was an Indian source for the 500.

The Buddhist text then explains that some of those who have passed away will never return again, whereas others will return "once", Sanskrit *sakṛd*. This accounts for the Greek *ephapax*, "at once" in 1 Cor 15:6. Greek *ephapax* simply translates the Sanskrit synonym *sakṛd* – once, at once. Immediately before he mentions the "more than five hundred brothers, Paul mentions *Kêphas* and "all twelve" (some translators add "apostles", but the Greek does not mention apostles at all). The twelve were not "apostles" at all – they were Buddhists: Again, Paul follows the MPS, which, as said, has been transmitted to us in several versions. One of these, now only in Chinese, explicitly speaks of exactly 12 brothers who have been reborn among the gods (this is the Dīrghāgama, translated by Waldschmidt, *Überlieferung* . . ., Göttingen 1944, p. 71).

Other versions give different numbers here (one Chinese version gives the number 10), and it is quite remarkable that the Latin *Vulgata* speaks of eleven, not twelve, 1 Cor. 15:6.

Paul also mentions *Kêphas* and *Iakôbos*, and here one must pay attention to the spelling: There are three consonants in both cases: *k-b(ph)-s*. Both names translate the Sanskrit name of *Kāśyapa(s) – k-p-ś*. Chapter 48 of the same MPS provides us with the second source of Paul. Here we meet *Kāśyapas* who, along with five hundred monks, finally arrive and become witnesses to the cremation of the physical body of the Lord. His "jewel body" goes up to the world of Brahmā, i.e. in flames. The Sanskrit verb for "went up", *agaman*, MPS 49:23, corresponds to the Greek for "raised".

To summarize: Paul refers to scriptures that are not available in Greek or Hebrew. But they are available in Sanskrit and Pāli. These scriptures are, therefore, Buddhist scriptures.

It is quite true, as Paul says, that more than five hundred brothers, along with *Kāśyapas*, were witnesses to the "resurrection", i.e. cremation of the Lord. The Lord was a *kṣatriyas*, a nobleman, and Sanskrit *kṣatriyas* becomes Greek *ho Khristos*, in the usual way. Hence, Paul is careful not to speak of Jesus, but of *Khristos*. When Paul combines two different chapters, and two different episodes from the Buddhist original, he does so not entirely at random but according to certain rules. According to rabbinical hermeneutics, it is allowed to combine two otherwise different scriptural passages provided they have a significant number in common. This rule, in Hebrew, is called Neged, "corresponding significant number". An example is provided by the Old Testament, when Numbers 13:25 mentions 40 days, and Numbers 14:34 mentions 40 years. The two otherwise unrelated passages have a corresponding significant number, viz. 40. In exactly the same way, Paul combines two passages in the same Buddhist text, the MPS, where one chapter mentions more than 500 brothers, and another mentions 500 monks.

All this means, of course, that the "proof" or "evidence" provided in support of the faith in the historical resurrection of Christ, and the dead in general, is purely fictitious. Paul refers to scriptures, i.e. Buddhist scriptures, that describe some events that took place – or did not take place – far away in Magadha [in India] a long time ago. (Magadha, it will be recalled, was mentioned only by Matthew 15:39 [Greek spelling: '*Magadan*' – Aśōka was king of Magadha, the Indian state in which his capital city, Pāṭaliputra, the modern city of Patna, was located! – ML].) He, Paul, then combined events from that Buddhist text into a new unit. He then transferred this piece of literary fiction to another place, to another time, to another person. How can, for example, events said to have taken place in India centuries ago, prove the historicity of events said to have taken place in, say, New York quite recently! Paul cannot have been unaware of what he was doing. Paul cannot have been unaware that he was a falsifier of history [a meta-fier of history? – ML]. Paul cannot have been unaware that he was himself a false witness [a meta-witness? – ML]. Once we recognize this to be so, we also understand why Paul compares [his meta-experience] to a "miscarriage" [a birth out of time: 1st century CE vs. 5th century BCE – ML], an *ektrôma*, as it were, in 1 Cor. 15:8. Paul justifies himself by stating that he is what he is – that is: a false witness [a meta-witness – ML] – thanks to the grace of God.

What is that supposed to mean? What does "grace of God" mean in this context? It can only mean that deliberate deceit is a good thing provided it can bring about some desirable result. There is no evidence at all to suggest that Jesus existed or had been raised from the dead, but if people could feel happy when fooled into believing so – fine and good. The same fundamental attitude is reflected well in Romans 3:7, which in plain words simply says that untruth is fully acceptable provided it serves the greater glory of God. Such a Jesuitic attitude is also typically Buddhist. In the Lotus Sūtra, Buddhist missionaries are advised to employ tricks, white lies etc. for the greater glory of the Buddhas.[1]

If people like to be deceived – let them be deceived! And in our modern world we speak of propaganda, or, to use a euphemism, mass communication. Thus, Paul, when it come to the evidence for resurrection of Christ and of the dead, proves to be a prominent false witness. That he himself, however, may have believed in the resurrection of the dead, need not be doubted.

This belief is typically Buddhist. Due to their bad karma, people may go down with the dead in hell. After some time, they may come back to this world. The "dead" in hell are not really dead. They can come back to normal life and suffering. They have thus been raised from the world of the dead.

The Buddhist background of Paul is thus clear. When he presents himself as a Christian, however, and fails to acknowledge his Buddhist sources explicitly, he then can be described as, well, an *ektrôma* (to use his own term).

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[1]Lindtner is, I think, being unnecessarily confrontational here: the early "doctors" of the Church were all allegorists – warning enough that they would interpret the scriptures as being only meta-historical, and that they would understand the evangelists and "Paul" as being allegorists, too! What the ancient clergy (and modern scholars) have done with the scriptures, is another matter.

A Visit to Granhult Buddhist Church, Sweden
(September 14, 2003)

by Christian Lindtner

A convenient and delightful way to learn more about the Buddhist background of Christianity is to pay your local church an occasional visit. In almost any church anywhere in the world, you will be able to see and hear Buddhism in disguise.

True, the local priest or guide may not be able to assist you in revealing the Buddhist sources or "subtexts" of what he has to show you. He or she may even become surprised or offended when you tell him the true story. For this, the true story, you will need a Buddhist guide such as the book "Hemligheten om Kristus", published in Klavreström on 9/11, 2003. Not far from Klavreström you will find one of the few surviving medieval timber churches in Sweden. It was erected not later then 1220. You can learn more about the old church from an official guide by Marian Ullén.

In the south inner wall of the chancel you cannot fail to observe a hole, the so-called hagioscope, by means of which those forbidden to enter the church could follow the mass.

There is a Buddhist background for this. Being a mere human, the father of the Buddha, the king of Kapilavastu, was forbidden to enter the church in which the Buddha first preached his sermon to the Gods. He had to remain outside the building. Still he could look and listen to what went on inside, thanks to the power of the Buddha.

Hagioscopes were common in the Middle Ages even though their Buddhist background may have remained unknown to those who devised them for the benefit of those not permitted to enter the church.

Even the bells, known from all churches, have a Buddhist background. Our Buddhists sources relate that the king of Kapila-vastu – better known disguised as Capernaum (Greek: *Kaphar-naoum*) – would have the bells rung in order to summon his subjects for some important event.

Most interesting are the paintings, and among these the crucifix and the background picture by Torbern Röding from Växjö, 1699.

When Torbern did this painting, more than 300 years ago, he certainly was thinking of Matthew 27:51-53:

> And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Torbern would, I assume, have been highly surprised to learn that the very same events had already been related in Buddhist scriptures that antedate the Gospels of the New Testament.

Comparing the Buddhist and the Christian scriptures all the events become much clearer:

A Buddha is sitting inside a stūpa, and he calls out: Good, Good, Śākyamuni! ('Śākyamuni' is the name of the Buddha, who preaches the Buddhist Gospel.) All those who are present are amazed. Where does the voice come from? Who is the man inside the stūpa? With his finger, Śākyamuni then tears the cover in two, not from top to bottom, but from bottom to top. Inside the stūpa, we now see, is an emaciated Buddha. He was the one who cried out in Sanskrit: *Sādhu, sādhu, Śākyamune!* Now we begin to understand why "Jesus", "from the cross", cried: *Eli, Eli, la'ma sabach-tha'-ni!*

The Buddhist source then goes on to relate how the earth shakes, how the rocks split and how the tombs were opened and an enormous number of so-called bodhisattvas, holy men, emerged from the earth. Coming up from the earth – see Torbern's picture – they went up to the stūpa, where the two Buddhas were now sitting together.

By comparing the sources, you can now easily see how the original stūpa, the front of which was split in two, is assimilated to the temple, the curtain of which was torn in two. It is only with the help of the Buddhist original that you

will understand who these many saints really were. According to that source, the life of the Buddha is almost without beginning and end. This means that for millions of years he has converted numerous human beings to his so-called Dharma. Where have all these holy men been staying for such a long time? Answer: In their tombs. This explains why they now no longer sleep but are raised. Now that help is needed! They promise to help spread the 'Gospel of the Lotus-Sūtra' – the source of all these events.

As a rule, the authors of the Christian Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, combined several different Buddhist sources, thus fabricating a new hybrid version. The new version they would then assimilate to temples, stories etc. found in the Old Testament. It is in this sense that Christianity can be described as Mahāyāna Buddhism in disguise. The Buddhist sources were disguised by means of words and ideas taken from the Old Testament.

On Torbern's picture you not only see the holy men, the rocks, the temple, and the figure on the cross. You are also struck by the rather unusual oval form in which the picture is enframed.

Another Buddhist source explains what this egg is all about.

The Christian version of the Crucifixion has, in fact, three different Buddhist sources. It is, therefore, pure fiction or fabrication, having nothing to do with real history.

In the original Buddhist source, one Gautama Ṛishi, a predecessor of Śākyamuni, has been impaled, or "crucified". Hanging there on the pole, he emits two drops of semen with blood. Not without a sense of humour, Mark 15:21 imitates the sound and syllables of the original Sanskrit, and the two drops of semen with blood thus become – Alexander and Rufus! This is a most typical way of "translating".

From the two drops of semen, two eggs develop. The Sanskrit word for egg and skull is the same. The place where Gautama gave birth to "Alexander and Rufus", you see, was also the place of eggs/skulls.

The third Buddhist source describes the dying Buddha in the middle, with a śāl-tree on each side. By combining these different Buddhist sources it is fairly easy to see how Matthew and the others arrive at the picture of Jesus hanging in the middle, with a so-called criminal on each side. The Gospels imitate the general picture, the motive, but also, at times with confusing results, each word and phrase in the original.

Now you understand why Golgotha, according to Matthew 27:33, was the place of skulls.

When you go deeper into the Sanskrit sources, comparing them with the Greek, you will find that there is almost nothing in the Greek that is not already present in the Sanskrit.

This means that we can only [truly] understand the Gospels when we know the Sanskrit originals.

Our brief visit to the oldest church in Sweden has given us a good example of how one can learn more about Buddhism and Christianity, well, simply by going to church with an open mind, of course, for the historical background for what is seen and said.

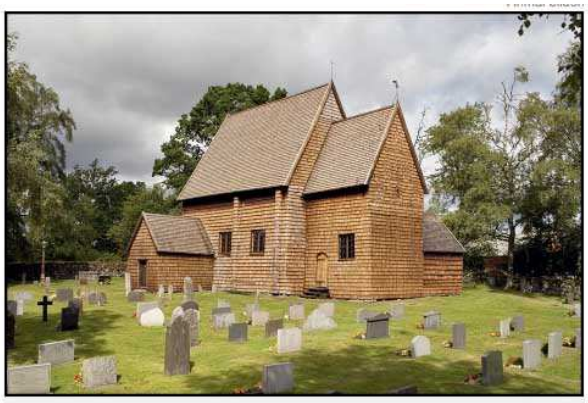
Leaving the old church you will notice the curious form. Note the shape of the roof. Such buildings are also known from our Buddhist sources. The Sanskrit word is *kūṭāgāra*. a compound made up of *kūṭa+āgāra*. The noun *kūṭa-* means "horn, peak, top", and *āgāra* simply means "dwelling, house". The old building, therefore, is a "peak-house".

But there is more:

Curiously, the Sanskrit word *kūṭa* also means "deception, fraud".

Thus, the word *kūṭāgāra* can also be translated as "house of [pious] fraud"!

Such ambiguities are, in fact, very, very typical of the Buddhist and the Christian texts to which I have here referred!



Granhults kyrka Uppladdad av: -Stefan Lindberg-

The Rising of the Saints from the Tombs:
The Buddhist *Lotus Sūtra* Source of Matthew 27:51-53

Christian Lindtner, "News Bulletin": May 19, 2010

When Jesus gave up his spirit, many odd phenomena occurred. One of these, obviously intended as a sort of evidence for the . . . Christian doctrine of physical resurrection, is mentioned by Matthew 27:51-53:

> . . . and the earth was shaken, and the rocks were rent, and the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared to many.

The identity of the bodies of these saints who came out of their graves and went into the holy city, has always been somewhat of an embarrassment to even the most naive among modern theologians. One learned Danish theologian – Mogens Müller – suggests that the reference is to the prophets and righteous men of the Old Testament. Another theologian, Donald A. Hagner, admits "that the rising of the saints from the tombs in this passage is a piece of theology set forth as history."

One cannot but smile at the opposition or conflict between theology and history that Hagner here inadvertently expresses. For what he says is simply that Matthew is not speaking the truth. However, the rising of the saints from the tombs is not merely a case of theology, or myth, but a manifest case of [pious] plagiarism. We have already seen that "the best and the earliest" evidence for the physical resurrection of Jesus, and for Christians in general, has been copied by "Paul" from Buddhist sources – the "more than 500 brethren" etc. (1 Cor. 15). [Refer, above, to pp. 278-79.]

And when it comes to the saints rising from the tombs, we again have a Buddhist source, namely the celebrated *Lotus Sūtra* – the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtram* – still available in Sanskrit as well as Chinese, Tibetan etc. Chapter **XIV** (in the Sanskrit edition, and English translation of H. Kern; Chapter **XV** in the Chinese version of Kumārajīva, translated by W.E. Soothill) is entitled: "The Issuing of the Bodhisattvas from the Gaps of the Earth".

Here are the main points:

The multitude of Bodhisattvas say to the Lord that they would like to read, write, worship and devote themselves to the *Lotus Sūtra*. But the Lord replies that this is not necessary, for he already has an enormous number of Bodhisattvas able to do that.

> No sooner had the Lord uttered these words than the Saha-world [the Earth] burst open on every side, and from within the clefts arose many hundred thousand myriads of *koṭis* [myriads of *tens of millions*] of Bodhisattvas with gold-coloured bodies . . . who had been staying in the element of ether underneath this great earth, close to this Saha-world. These then on hearing the word of the Lord came up from below the earth. . . . They cannot be numbered, counted, calculated, compared, or known by occult science, these Bodhisattvas-Mahāsattvas [-Great Beings] who emerged from the gaps of the earth to appear in the Saha-world. And after they had successively emerged they went up to the Stūpa of Precious Substances which stood in the sky, where the Lord Prabhūtaratna, [a former] Tathāgata, was seated on a throne along with Lord Śākyamuni [the Tathāgata of our age]. Thereafter they saluted the feet of both Tathāgatas, etc., as well as the images of Tathāgatas produced by the Lord Śākyamuni from his own body. . . .

From the Chinese version of Kumārajīva:

> When the Buddha has thus spoken, the earth . . . trembles and quakes and from its midst there issue together innumerable thousands, myriads, *koṭis* [*tens of millions*] of Bodhisattvas-Mahāsattvas. . . . These Bodhisattvas, hearing the voice of Śākyamuni Buddha preaching, spring forth from below. . . . When these Bodhisattvas have emerged from the earth, each goes up to the wonderful Stūpa of Precious [Substances] (jewels) in the sky, where are the Tathāgata, 'Abundant-Treasures', and Śākyamuni Buddha.

Conclusion:

The saints that issue from the earth are not really the prophets etc. of the Old Testament, but the Bodhisattvas of the *Lotus Sūtra*. The cry of Jesus up there on the cross, was the cry of the Lord up there in the Stūpa in the sky.

The holy city, to which they went, was the Stūpa up there in the sky. By comparing the original text of the *Lotus Sūtra*, the reader will find many more parallels, all of them to the effect, that "Matthew" (who gets his name from a famous Buddhist monk) and his cohorts copied the *Lotus Sūtra* when they fabricated the legend of Jesus, combining, of course, with bits and pieces taken from the Old Testament etc.

In Chapter **X** of the *Lotus Sūtra*, on the Buddhist preacher, the Lord endorses [the stratagem] that, after his Nirvāṇa [death], the *Lotus Sūtra* be communicated "in secret or by stealth" (*rahasi caurenāpi*; Sanskrit ed. Kern, p. 227). This is, as we have now seen, indeed what happened, when "Matthew" plagiarized the legend of the *Lotus Sūtra* about the Bodhisattvas that issued from the earth upon the Lord's cry from the Stūpa in the sky.

In the old wooden church of Granhult in Småland (Sweden), there is a painting in the nave showing the physical resurrection of the Bodhisattvas. Christian readers will, in the interest of historical truth, be happy to know that all the alleged witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus, are, in fact Buddhist witnesses. Should they not be happy about that, there is some consolation to be had from yet another fact, namely that all the Buddhist witnesses are, themselves, also not fact but myth, or fabrications of vivid Buddhist imagination.

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The Five Thousand of Matthew 14:21 par

Christian Lindtner, "News Bulletin": June 7, 2010

Our source criticism has already demonstrated [on the previous page] that the more than five hundred brothers of 1 Corinthians 15:6 were invented by combining two different Buddhist sources: one that spoke of five hundred Buddhist monks present at the cremation of the body of the Tathāgata [the Buddha], and one that spoke of the more than five hundred laymen that had recently passed away.

But what, then, about the 5000 men, beside women and children, mentioned by Matthew 14:21? And what about the five loaves and that which remained over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full?

To find the answer, we must identify the source, and the source is to be found in the second chapter of the 'Lotus Sūtra' – the **S**ad-**D**harma-**P**uṇḍarīka-sūtram (**SDP**). I here refer to the translation of Hendrik Kern.[1]

The assembly of the Lord consists, on the one hand, of twelve hundred Arhats headed by Ājñāta-Kauṇḍinya (head of the group of the Buddha's first five disciples [Kern, p. 34]) and, on the other hand, of five thousand proud monks, nuns, and lay devotees of both sexes (p. 38; repeated on p. 44). The five thousand men and women leave the assembly, and the twelve hundred, headed by the five, are thus left behind in the assembly. With this image in mind, it is easy to see how Matthew, Mark, and Luke handled their Buddhist source, i.e., in this case, the SDP.

In Matthew 14:15 the disciples wanted to send the multitudes away. In the SDP the five thousand proud monks, nuns, and laypersons actually did leave the assembly. Once they had left the assembly, that which remained over of the broken pieces, were "twelve baskets full". The twelve hundred Buddhist disciples have thus been transformed into twelve baskets full.

The five Buddhist disciples (Ājñāta-Kauṇḍinya & the other four) are transformed into five loaves. According to Mark 6:43-44, the men that ate the loaves were five thousand. The Lord sends them away (Mark 6:45).

[John] 6:15 has the curious remark, that they wished to make Jesus a king, but that he withdrew. The background for this is again the same chapter of the 'Lotus Sūtra' (Kern, p. 58), where the Lord says: "I declare that I am the King of the Law (*Dharmarāja*); I am urging others to enlightenment, but I am here without disciples."

The Lotus repeatedly sanctions the employment of symbolic or code language (Kern, p. 59): "They have spoken in many mysteries; hence it is difficult to understand (them). Therefore try to understand the mystery (*sandhā*, *sandhāya*, etc.) of the Buddhas, the holy Masters of the World; forsake all doubt and uncertainty: you shall become Buddhas; rejoice!" Only insiders, i.e. the closest disciples know the code.

The modern reader of the feeding of the five thousand is, of course, left deeply mystified.

That he is left mystified is according to the book, i.e. in accordance with the message of the SDP. To solve the mystery, one must identify the source.

The two fish that are eaten but still survive has another obvious Buddhist source to which I shall come back later. (Pieces of flesh of two fish are eaten, but the fish survive, and the next day the two fish provide yet another meal, etc., etc.) Mark 6:39-40 is significant for the distributive compounds "*sumposia-sumposia*" and the "*prasiai-prasiai*", only to be found here. They are often translated by "into groups" and "in rows". It is a great pity that our New Testament grammars have failed to identify them as Sanskritisms: *saṁghāt saṁgham . . . pūgāt pūgam* (from the **MPS** [**M**ahā-**P**arinirvāṇa-**S**ūtra], passim, cf. my paper "Some Sanskritisms in the New Testament Gospels", in *The Adyar Library Bulletin 65* [2001]). It shows that Mark now and then used the Buddhist source independently.

The rule that allows the combination of corresponding significant numbers – e.g. 40 days with 40 years – is, as known, sanctioned by traditional rabbinical hermeneutics (see e.g. Hermann L. Strack, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrash*, München 1921, p. 107, with ref.).

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[1]Hendrik Kern, trans., *'The Saddharma Puṇḍarīka' or 'The Lotus of the True Law'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884) – ML.

Solving the Unsolved Question of Matthew 22:41-46

Christian Lindtner, "News Bulletin": July 21, 2010

All Buddhists and Buddhologists are familiar with the curious fact that the Buddha, according to the scriptures, left certain questions unsolved, undecided or unanswered; e.g., Is the world eternal or is it not eternal?, etc. The reason for his silence could, in theory, be that he considered such questions irrelevant to salvation or tedious, or that he simply did not know the answer. Such questions, dogmas, or issues (*vastu*) are termed *avyākṛita* in Sanskrit or *avyākata* in Pāli ['unexpounded' – ML]. (For references please see, e.g., V. Trenckner et al. [eds.], *A Critical Pāli Dictionary*, Vol. I, Copenhagen 1944, p. 484.)

Matthew 22:41-46 provides an important example of a question raised by the Lord, but in this case neither he himself nor his opponents come up with an answer. Moreover, modern scholars have also failed to come up with a satisfactory answer to the question posed.

Here, then, we have a nice case of an *ayvākṛita-vastu* in the New Testament. It will not, therefore, be superfluous for me to offer a solution to the old unsolved question raised by Jesus according to Matthew 22:41-46.

The question is: How can Christ be son and Lord of David – i.e., at the same time? A slight paraphrase will make the paradox more clear: How can Bob be the father and the son of Bill at the same time? Hard to say!

No wonder, then, that "from that day on no one dared ask him any more questions" (Matthew 22:46). No one was able to answer – Greek *apo-krithênai* (pun on Sanskrit *avyākṛitāni*, nom. plur.!). But there is an answer, and the answer is quite simple – provided one knows where to look for it.

Jesus, also known as Christ, as *Emmanouêl*, Son of David, the Lord, etc., knew the answer, but did not reveal it: The answer is to be found at the level of gematria, or textual geometry: The number for Christ, *Khristos*, is 1480. The number for 'son', *huios*, is 680, and the number for 'Lord', *Kurios*, is 800. So, since 680 + 800 add up to 1480, he is the Christ, since *Khristos* is also 1480. So Christ is 'Son' and 'Lord', since 1480 is 1480.

But there is more: Jesus, or Christ, is said to be the 'son of David', *huios Daueid* = 1224. He is also said to be the 'Lord of David', *Kurios Daueid* = 1104.

Next step: 1224 and 1104 add up to 2328. As known, *Khristos* translates *Messias*, which is 656. The *Messias* is thus 70 + 656 = 726. He is also to be called Emmanuel, or *Emmanouêl*, (Matthew 1:23), and *ho Emmanouêl* gives us 70 + 644 = 714. When we add 726 and 714, we arrive at 1440.

Together with 888 for 'Jesus' (familiar to most early Christians), we get 2328 (888+1440). In other words 2328 = 'Son of David' and 'Lord of David' = 'Jesus', 'Emmanuel', the 'Messiah'.

Moreover, 2328 is the number of 1480 and 848, which is 'king', Greek *basileus*.

Thus the number 2328 provides the geometrical proof that: Christ is the son and the Lord of David, that Jesus or Emmanuel is the Messiah, and that Christ is a king – i.e., King of the Jews, or of Israel, of course.

We may take yet another step: It has been shown that Christ is Lord, or 'the Lord', *ho Kurios* = 870. Subtracting 870 from 1480, we are left with 610, and there is nothing to prevent us from taking 610 as 'the Teacher', Greek *ho Didaskalos*, 70 + 540 = 610 (any concordance for the New Testament ref.).

Also, Jesus is the 'son of Joseph'. In other words: Joseph is (the father) of the Teacher, Greek *Iôsêph ho Didaskalou* = 2328. Hence, an angel also calls Joseph "son of David" (Matthew 1:20). Somehow, father and son are one, united in (the) Christ.

In this passage, Christ certainly proves that he is a teacher – a teacher who teaches at two different levels: Buddhist readers will be instantly reminded of the celebrated stanzas in Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 24:8-10:

> The Dharma teaching of the Buddhas actually presupposes two realities: the relative (superficial) reality of the world and Reality in its ultimate (profound) sense. Those who do not understand the distinction between these two truths do not understand the truth in the profound instruction of the Buddha. The ultimate sense cannot be shown without the support of language; without understanding the ultimate sense, nirvāṇa remains unapproachable. (Quoted from my book *Master of Wisdom: Writings of the Buddhist Master Nāgārjuna*, Berkeley, CA, 1986,1997, p. 340.)

The importance of these simple observations – that have not, to the best of my knowledge, been made before – cannot be overestimated: If the student of the New Testament fails to make a clear distinction between the level of language and the level of numbers, he cannot understand the truth in the profound instruction of the "Christ".

The distinction, in Mahāyāna, between two truths serves a specific purpose – the attainment of nirvāṇa.

Is this also the case in the New Testament? Perhaps we shall find time to see what Emmanuel has to say about nirvāṇa at some later point.

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The Mysterious Comforter (*Paraklêtos*) of John

Christian Lindtner, "News Bulletin": September 17, 2010

Once the Mahā-Parinirvāṇa-Sūtra (MPS), part of the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-Vinaya (MSV), and the Sad-Dharma-Puṇḍarīka-sūtra (SDP), a.k.a. the 'Lotus Sūtra', have been identified as the two main Buddhist sources of the four New Testament Gospels, it is not difficult to identify the original behind the mysterious "Comforter", or *Para-klêtos*, mentioned by John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7; and 1 John 2:1.

From these New Testament passages we learn that Jesus promises his disciples that his Father, God, will give them another *Paraklêtos*, that he, Jesus, will send to them from the Father, God, and that the *Paraklêtos* will come only after the departure of Jesus.

In 1 John 2:1 this mysterious *Paraklêtos* is identified with Jesus Christ, being with the Father. The other Gospels do not mention the *Paraklêtos*. This is all we have. The Latin is either *Paraclitus*, which is not helpful, or *Advocatus*, misleading, as will be seen. The Buddhist source is obvious – it is MPS 41.2 (ed. Waldschmidt, Berlin 1951, p. 386). The Lord Buddha comforts the monks by saying that once he has passed away there will be another teacher, or refuge (*niḥśaraṇam*).

This teacher or refuge is the *Prāti-mokṣas* that the Lord has presented to the monks twice a month. The *Prātimokṣas* is the name of the set of rules or precepts Buddhist monks have to follow. Buddhist scholars, for various reasons (style, language, etc.), agree that the *Prātimokṣas* belongs to the early strata of Buddhist literature. The etymology of the noun *prāti-mokṣas* (Pāli *pātimokkha*) is unclear. The usual Tibetan translation is *so sor thar pa*, suggesting "individual release".

The meaning of the term is, however, clear from the context: Normally, the Lord is the teacher who gives the rules etc. for monks (and, later, nuns) to abide by. Once the person, the Lord as a teacher is no longer there, the set of rules will serve as replacement, as substitute.

John 14:15 confirms that the *para-klêtos* has to do with "rules", *entolas* (acc. plur.). Now, the New Testament Gospels are not addressed to Buddhist monks, but to ordinary people, Jews and others, in general – lucky people, poor in spirit, who will win the Kingdom of God, or heaven (i.e., the Christian *nirvāṇam*). Thus it would be quite unreasonable to expect a Greek version of the entire *Prātimokṣas*. The term *Para-klêtos* thus necessarily becomes vague, or general, compared to the strict set of regulations and precepts that are so characteristic of the Buddhist *Prātimokṣas* in its numerous recensions.

In the Sermon on the Mount there are several echoes of the *Prātimokṣas*, to which I shall come back elsewhere. English translations include "Helper", "Comforter", etc., but thanks to the Buddhist original we see that "Replacement", "Substitute" [-Teacher] comes closer to the meaning intended in both sources. This, again, may be helpful for understanding the original meaning of the term *Prāti-mokṣas*. Sanskrit *prati-* not only has a distributive sense ("individual", as the Tibetan *so sor* has it), but can also mean "instead of". Along with a noun for a "nose", for instance, it comes to mean "an artificial nose" – a new nose (artificial) instead of the old (natural) one. Sanskrit *mokṣas* definitely means "liberation, release". In a compound, with *prati-* becoming *prāti-*, it acquires the sense of a release instead of the normal one – the one provided by the Lord as a teacher of precepts.

The *Prātimokṣas* thus comes to carry the sense of a body of precepts serving as a teacher of *liberation* when the real teacher has passed into final *nirvāṇam*. Sanskrit *Prāti-mokṣas*, just as Greek *Para-klêtos*, thus means "the personification of the precepts as a teacher replacing the real one once he has passed away." In other words – the Preceptor (to retain the masculine noun) serving as a Substitute, or Replacement, for the original one.

Actually, the basic idea is quite simple, and fundamental to the Lotus Sūtra: The *sūtram* contains the words of the Lord. Once the Lord has passed away, we are left with his words in the *sūtram*. The *sūtram* thus embodies the Lord. The cult of the Lord is replaced by the cult of the *sūtram*. The cult of the *sūtram* finds its culmination in the recitation of the title of the *sūtram*. This is why there are so many puns on the title of the Lotus Sūtra – as I have already pointed out in my book *Geheimnisse um Jesus Christus*.

I need not add that though one can conceive of Christianity without the mysterious *Para-klêtos*, one cannot conceive of (early) Buddhism without the *Prāti-mokṣas*. In other words: The New Testament must here have been influenced by Buddhism – not the other way around. So the identification of the *Paraklêtos* is also important for the problem of relative chronology.

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Appendix C

The Mocking of a *Real* Jewish King[1]

The death of Herod the Great's son, Philip, in 34 AD, left the tetrarchy of Panias and Batanæa without a local king. In 39, Caligula sent Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa, into exile. Caligula now turned to Herod the Great's grandson, ***Herod Agrippa***, for a client king, and Agrippa was made ruler of all the Jewish lands apart from Judæa.

On the voyage home from Rome, this new ***King of the Jews***, stopped over in Alexandria where his presence in the city provoked anti-Jewish riots. Agrippa became the target of ridicule and lampoon.

Philo described the course of events in his work named for the anti-Jewish governor of Egypt, Flaccus. His work was familiar to the early Christians when decades after his [Philo's] death they composed the gospels. One passage of *Flaccus* contains a curious pre-figuring of several famous verses found in the Gospels. . . .

The Works of Philo Judæus – Flaccus, VI[2]	***Matthew***
(36) There was a certain madman named **Carabbas** . . . this man spent all his days and nights **naked** in the roads, minding neither cold nor heat, the sport of idle children and wanton youths;	**27:26** Then released he **Barabbas** unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.
(37) and they, driving the poor wretch as far as the **public gymnasium**, and setting him up there on high that he might be seen by everybody, flattened out **a leaf of papyrus** and **put it on his head** instead of a diadem, and **clothed the rest of his body with a common door mat** instead of a cloak and instead of a sceptre they **put in his hand a small stick of the native papyrus** which they found lying by the way-side and gave to him;	**27:27** Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the **common hall**, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. **27:28** And they **stripped him**, and **put on him a scarlet robe.**
(38) and when, like actors in theatrical spectacles, he had **received all the insignia of royal authority,** and had been **dressed and adorned like a king**, the young men bearing sticks on their shoulders stood on each side of him instead of spear-bearers, in imitation of the **bodyguards of the king**, and then **others came up, some as if to salute him**, and others making as though they wished to **plead their causes before him**, and others pretending to wish to consult with him about the affairs of the state.	**27:29** And when they had **platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head**, and **a reed in his right hand**: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, ***Hail, King of the Jews!***
(39) Then from the multitude of those who were standing around there arose a wonderful shout of men **calling out *Maris!***; and this is the **name by which it is said that they call the kings** among the Syrians; for they knew that Agrippa was by birth a Syrian, and also that he was possessed of a great district of Syria of which he was the sovereign. . . .	

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[1]By Kenneth Humphreys (< www.jesusneverexisted.com/philo.html >). These 2 footnotes are ML's.

[2]*The Works of Philo Judæus, The Contemporary of Josephus*, trans. fr. the Greek by Charles Duke Yonge, Vol. IV, Work 31: A Treatise against Flaccus**,** Section VI**:** (London: H.G. Bohn, 1855), pp. 68-70; **INTERNET ARCHIVES**: Canadian Libraries < http://www.archive.org/details/theworksofphiloj04yonguoft >.

Appendix D

Table of Parallels

From *The Jesus Parallels* (2007), by Roger Viklund
http://www.jesusgranskad.se/jesus_parallels.htm

The life of Jesus according to the Gospels	The Jesus parallels						
	J	As	Ap	H	D	M	B
He stays in heaven as a spiritual being before his birth	●						●
His parents are told in a revelation that their child is Holy	●		●				●
The birth is a miracle accompanied by heavenly revelations	●	●	●				●
His mother is a virgin (not Ap, D) impregnated by God, and he is a son of God	●	●	●	●	●		●
But he has a mortal stepfather	●	●		●			●
He is born on a journey, yet said to hail from his father's hometown (J, H)	●	●		●			●
He is born in a cave (not As), and worshipped by shepherds	●	●				●	
As a child he lies in swaddling-clothes in a cradle	●				●		
He is of royal birth; wise men see signs and they look him up (not B)	●			●			●
As newly born, he is paid tribute to by an old wise man	●						●
As a child, he is persecuted and his parents hide (run away with) him	●			●			
The persecutor kills many newly born innocent children (J, Krishna, Moses)	●						
As a child he is wise and teaches people in the temple or at school	●		●				●
As a boy, he is lost on a journey and his father (or mother) finds him	●						●
He lives in solitude, he fasts (not H), is tempted and resists the temptation	●			●			●
He is c. 30 when he begins his mission, he is baptized with heavenly joy (not H)	●			●			●
He is a wandering preacher	●		●				●
He fulfils his father's mission; he receives the confirmation prophetically	●			●			
He has followers/disciples, and they are twelve (not Ap)	●		●			●	●
His disciples are ordinary people and they, too, work miracles	●						●
He leads a simple life and moves with the poor in society	●		●				●
He is a suffering God	●			●	●		
He is a Saviour, is called the Saviour	●	●		●	●	●	●
He speaks in riddles (and challenges the priests – J, B)	●		●				●
He calms storms (not H), prevents earthquakes (not H, B), walks on water	●		●	●			●
He turns water into wine (not B), and works food miracles (not D)	●				●		●
He cures the lame, blind, deaf (J. B), dumb (J, As) and expels evil spirits	●	●	●		●		●
He resurrects people from the dead	●	●	●	●			
He cures by touching; they must believe; they carry away their stretchers	●	●					
He even cures people at other places	●	●					
He predicts the future, (his own death, J, Ap). He reads people's mind (not D)	●		●		●		●
He is transfigured in front of his disciples	●						●
He rides on a donkey in triumph	●				●		
He has a last meal (with his disciples – J, B)	●					●	●
They drink (is – J) the blood and eat (is – J) the flesh	●				●	●	
He is betrayed and the traitor commits suicide (not B – he only goes to Hell)	●			●			●
He is arrested and prosecuted for pretending to be God	●		●				
He is questioned and ignores the leader who finds him innocent	●		●				
He is hung on a tree or crucified	●				●		●
His mother (not B) and favourite disciple is with him when he dies	●			●			●
He invokes his father and says that he will come and that it is fulfilled	●			●			
When he dies, an earthquake and a solar eclipse occur	●			●			●
He rises from the dead	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
He appears to his mother (not Ap), and to his disciples (not B, H)	●		●	●			●
He goes to heaven	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

100% 27% 38% 42%
J = Jesus, As = Asclepius, Ap = Apollonius, H = Heracles,
D = Dionysus, M = Mithras, B = Buddha.
27% 16% 69%

Appendix E

http://www.egodeath.com/ScholarViewsHistJesusPaulAuth.htm

Matrix of Scholars' Views on Historical Jesus and Pauline Authenticity

By Klaus Schilling. Formatted and uploaded by Michael Hoffman, July 13, 2005.

	1. All Pauline epistles are from the Paul whose social and chronological framework is given by a literal or rational reading of the Apostolic Acts.	2. The Paul of the Acts is the solid base of the Paulina, but got expanded by patristic tradition.	3. Like [2.], but also heretical schools contributed actively to the letters.	4. The core of the Paulines is non-orthodox, going back to a distinguished Paul of pre-fall Jerusalem. The church later revamped the writings into orthodox shape.	5. The Paulina are completely late pseudoepigraphy and forgery by both heretics and orthodoxy
1. There was a Historical Jesus who is identical with the Christ of Faith	1-1 Luke Timothy Johnson, Gleason Archer, Lee Strobel, Hanegraaf, Falwell, Mel Gibson, Shmuel Boteach, Ratzinger, Graham, Linnemann, Pat Robertson, van Impy, Michael Green (jm), Holding	1-2	1-3	1-4	1-5
2. There was an HJ who laid the schemes for the CoF described in the gospels and may be distilled rationally from the same.	2-1 Reimarus, Deschner, Scala, Nietsche	2-2 Grondin, Goodacre, Jeffrey Gibson, Crossan, Mack, Luedemann, Schleiermacher, Renan, Harnack, Schmiedel, Windisch, Volkmar, FC Baur, Morton Smith, Spong, King, Weller, Leon Albert (jm)	2-3 Kuchinsky	2-4	2-5
3. There was an HJ vaguely related to the CoF, but it's not possible to clearly see the fire of the HJ through the smoke of the gospels.	3-1	3-2 Wells, Bultmann, Dibelius, Schmithals, Holtzmann, Wellhausen, Pfleiderer, Gunkel, Elaine Pagels, Schopenhauer	3-3 Loisy, Guignebert, Goguel, Clabeaux	3-4 Sammer, Willoughby	3-5 van Manen, Loman, Ebbinghaus
4. There was an HJ, but the connection to the gospels is deliberately distorted and constructed.	4-1	4-2 Drewermann, Eisler, Rougier	4-3 Turmel, Gys-Devic, Jay Raskin (jm), Ellergaard	4-4 Wautier, Margaret Mead, Helena Blavatskij, Rudolph Steiner, Heindl, van Rijkenborgh, Annie Besant, Alice Bailey, Leadbeater	4-5 Robert Price, Cascioli, Daniel Masse'
5. There was no HJ.	5-1	5-2 Earl Doherty, Rod Green (jm)	5-3 Alfaric, Fau, Las Vergnas, Joseph Atwill, Reuchlin	5-4 Georges Ory, Alvin Boyd Kuhn, Timothy Freke, Peter Gandy, Jean Magne, Tom Harpur, Higgins, Drews	5-5 Hermann **Detering**, GAvdB**vE**, HPhWE vdBvE, **Bolland**, Klaus **Schilling** (jm), **Acharya** S, Max Rieser, Bruno **Bauer**, Couchoud, Edwin Johnson, Michael Hoffman (jm)

(jm) means an active member of the JesusMysteries discussion group.

Klaus also wants to categorize:
Hyam Maccobi
Burton Mack
Marcus Borg
Geza Vermes
Jonathan Z. Smith
John M. Allegro
Birger Pearson
Harold Leidner
JM Robinson
Reitzenstein
Gershom Scholem