

Buddhism and the Ethics of Nature —Some Remarks

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I. Preliminary Remarks

1. This article is the slightly revised version of a paper presented at Waseda University in January 1999. I had no intention of publishing it, but for certain reasons publication has become inevitable. Being fully aware of the tentative and provisional character of some parts of the paper even in its revised form, but not being in a position to further improve it at present, I can only hope that it may, as it stands, still have some clarifying and stimulating effect.¹

2. I have borrowed the concept “*ethics of nature*” from the work of the German philosopher Angelika Krebs.² Following Passmore, she defines nature as

*that part of our world which has not been made by human beings,
but comes into existence and vanishes, changes and remains constant in virtue of itself.*

¹ I take this opportunity to thank all discussants—at Waseda University as well as on the panel on *The value of nature in Buddhist tradition* at the IABS conference in Lausanne in August 99 where some facets of the present paper were presented—for their most valuable criticisms and suggestions. I am also extremely grateful to Peter Schwabland and, especially, Anne MacDonald, who kindly corrected my English.

² Angelika Krebs, *Ethics of nature* (Berlin & New York: de Gruyter, 1999); cp. id. (ed.), *Naturethik* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1997), pp. 7–12 and 337–379.

Examples would be animals, plants, stones, rivers, mountains, and planets.

The opposite of “*nature*” in this sense is “*artefact*”, something made by human beings: tables, computers, statues, and so on.³

Nowadays, however, *pure* nature has become rare on this earth; almost everywhere it has now been remodeled or affected by human activity. On the other hand, there are no *pure* artefacts either, because everything is, in the last analysis, made of raw materials taken from nature. Thus, today, most of reality is distributed on a scale between the extremes “pure nature” and “pure artefact”.⁴ We may designate something as “natural” in the proportion to which the natural in it outweighs human influence. *Man* as a biological entity is, to be sure, basically “natural”, but I follow Krebs in that in the ethics of nature man figures merely as the subject whose behaviour is at stake, and not as object, as, e.g., in medical ethics.⁵

3. Within the ethics of nature, Krebs makes a distinction between *animal ethics*, concerned with the sentient part of nature, and *environmental* or *ecological ethics*, concerned also with the other part of nature.⁶ However, according to this definition, animal ethics would seem to be merely a special area of the wider field of ecological ethics. Furthermore, as Krebs herself points out,⁷ the distinction tends to become additionally blurred when not only animals but also other parts of nature—e.g. plants, or even the whole earth (“Gaia”)—are regarded as somehow sentient. For this reason, I suggest a slightly different distinction, viz. between *ethics of nature concerned with individuals*, on the one hand, and *ecological ethics*, on the other. As for individuals, I primarily think of *sentient* individuals, subject to some form or other of *suffering* (like pain, fear, or stress), hence, in the first place, of *animals* (as individuals: “animal ethics”). But plants and even formations of the elements may also be taken into account when they are focussed upon as individuals (as, e.g., a single tree), still more so if they, too, are regarded as sentient. In contrast to this, I take *ecological* ethics to be concerned with

³ Krebs 1999, p. 6; 1997, p. 340.

⁴ Krebs 1999, p. 6; 1997, pp. 340–341.

⁵ Krebs 1997, p. 341. In Krebs 1999, p. 9, the limitation is expressed by the terms “ethics of nature” in a narrow sense, or “ethics of nonhuman nature”.

⁶ Krebs 1997, p. 8; 1999, p. 9.

⁷ Krebs 1997, pp. 8–9.

eco-systems, or landscapes, and with *biodiversity* (i.e., *species*), hence with levels normally regarded as supra-individual.⁸

To be sure, both levels are somehow interrelated: individuals *belong* to a species and *exist* in an eco-system, species become extinct if all individuals belonging to it die, and the collapse of an eco-system may cause the death of individuals inhabiting it. Nevertheless, the 'interests' (if I may say so) or values at stake in ethics concerned with individuals on the one hand and in ecological ethics on the other do not always coincide and may at times conflict. Individuals want to survive and to achieve maximum propagation, whereas the eco-system and its biodiversity is based on balance,⁹ involving the death of surplus individuals. An endemic species may be threatened with extinction by an intruding species, and in order to preserve the endangered species it may be necessary to remove or even kill the intruders; but such an action is definitely not in the interest of the intruders as individuals. From the point of view of ecological ethics, members of an endangered species would be more valuable than members of a common species,¹⁰ whereas animal ethics would not apply this criterium but might posit, e.g., a gradation of value in accordance with psychic complexity or sensitivity (which would hardly work as an ecological criterium). Nor would it, in the context of animal ethics, matter to what extent animals are natural in the sense of not having been transformed by domestication, breeding or gene technology:¹¹ a domestic animal is just as liable to experience suffering as a wild one.

I admit that even given this distinction, the delimitation between ecological ethics and ethics referring to individuals tends to become less clear-cut if not only individual animals but even individual plants, not to speak of individual formations of the elements, are regarded as being sentient and hence (or for some other reason) as entitled to being treated on ethical principles. But as a *categorical* distinction, the delimitation between ecological ethics and ethics referring to individuals would seem to remain valid. This becomes clear when one recalls the view of at least mainstream Jainism that, e.g., a lake is not only a habitat for animals but consists, at the same time, of innumerable minute drop-like individual (and dimly sentient) water-beings.¹²

⁸ Cp. also Steven C. Rockefeller in: T/W, pp. 318–319.

⁹ Which is not of course an entirely static state: see § III.0.

¹⁰ Cp. Rockefeller in: T/W, p. 318; cp. also the authors quoted in Yamamoto 1998, p. 164.

¹¹ Although the transformation process itself may run counter to the principles of animal ethics if, e.g., it results in a disabled creature.

¹² Walter Schubring, *Die Lehre der Jainas* (Berlin/Leipzig, 1935), p. 133.

4. In the following sections of my paper I shall try to ascertain, mainly from the point of view of a historian of ideas, to what extent and in which way some form of ethics of nature is rooted in the Buddhist tradition. In view of limits of time and competence, I shall confine myself almost entirely to the *Indian* Buddhist tradition, primarily to its *earlier* phase which forms the basis for all later developments. From a Far Eastern Buddhist point of view, completely different answers and solutions may be available.¹³

II. Ethics of nature concerned with individuals

II. A. Animal ethics

1. Animal ethics is firmly rooted in traditional Buddhism from the outset, and is perhaps the most important contribution Buddhism has to make to a new ethics of nature.¹⁴ As is well known, *not to kill living beings* is the first moral precept or commitment of both Buddhist monks and lay people,¹⁵ and as a matter of course, living beings (*pāṇa*, *prāṇa/-ṇin*) include animals.¹⁶ Additionally, both monks and pious lay people are recommended to cultivate friendliness (*mettā*, *maitrī*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) with regard to the whole world, including animals.¹⁷ This implies that Buddhists should also abstain from hurting or torturing animals, and should help them in cases of

¹³ Cp., e.g., Paul O. Ingram, Steve Odin, Graham Parks, and Ruben L.F. Habito in: T/W, pp. 71–128 and 165–175; Ōtani 1993; Yamamoto 1998 and 1999 (with further references on p. 941).

¹⁴ Cp. Rockefeller in: T/W, p. 318.

¹⁵ Abstention from killing living beings is not explicitly mentioned as an element of spiritual practice (of solitary renunciants) in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, the typical parts of which rather insist on the futility of right behaviour or morality (*sīla*, e.g. *Sn* 790; 839ab). But apart from the fact that notwithstanding their undoubted antiquity, the position of these texts in the development of early Buddhism is problematic (cp. Tilmann Vetter, “Some remarks on older parts of the Suttanipāṭa,” in: David Seyfourt Ruegg and Lambert Schmithausen [eds.], *Earliest Buddhism and Madhyamaka*, Leiden etc.: E.J. Brill, 1990, pp. 42–52), the futility of *sīla* hardly means that it may be dispensed with (cp. *Sn* 839cd) but rather that it is not sufficient (*Sn* 898) and that one should not cling to it (*Sn* 798d) or boast about it (*Sn* 782–783; 887).

¹⁶ Cp. S/M, pp. 181–182.

¹⁷ Friendliness or compassion with regard to animals: e.g. *AN* II 72–73 = *Vin* II 109–110; *Vin* III 62; *Sn* 967b (*mettāya phasse tassa-thāvarāni*, including both animals and plants: cp. *Plants*, p. 62); monks who kill animals being accused of lack of friendliness or compassion: *T.* 1421 (XXII) 58a25; 1425 (XXII) 377b9–10; 1428 (XXII) 677a1–5. Cp. also the emphasis on sympathy (*dayā*) and caring (*anukampā*) in the detailed formulation of the first precept (see below § 2.a); cp. S/M, pp. 183–184.

emergency.¹⁸ From a traditional Buddhist point of view, slaughtering or hunting animals for food or other requirements, not to mention for fun, is blameworthy and unwholesome.¹⁹ The same would hold good for the modern mass rearing of fowl and other animals. Even animal experiments for medical research would seem to be highly problematic if they involve killing or the inflicting of pain, the more so animal tests for other purposes, and vivisection.²⁰

2. What do the texts present as the reason or *motive* for abstention from killing or injuring?

a) At least in the Pāli canon, *lay persons* are mainly induced to abstain through being made aware of the karmic result, which is usually desirable rebirth (mostly in heaven) for abstention from killing, and evil rebirth for killing, especially for *habitual* killing or slaughtering.²¹ Similarly, cultivating friendliness and compassion is, especially in the case of lay persons, often recommended as a unique source of ‘merit’ or as a means for rebirth in Brahmā’s heaven.²² In the case of *monks* (and nuns), on the other hand, abstention from killing any living being is both an element of formal monastic discipline²³ (i.e. a matter of purity of conduct as expected of renunciants by society) and a basic requirement for the path to liberation²⁴ (i.e. an ele-

¹⁸ Cp., e.g., *MN* II 371; *Ud* II.3 (pp.11–12: the Buddha upbraids boys beating a snake). Gift to animals recommended: *S/M*, pp. 184–185; cp. also Aśoka, Pillar Edict 2: *dupada-catupadesu pakhi-vālicalesu vividhe me anugahe kaṭe*. Saving fish from an evaporating lake: *Suvarṇabhāsottama-sūtra* (ed. Johannes Nobel, Leipzig, 1937), ch. XVII. On the problems of ceremonial release of animals (which presupposes or even encourages previous capture) see Duncan Ryūken Williams in: *T/W*, pp. 155–156; also *S/M*, p. 201 with ns. 181–182.

¹⁹ Cp., e.g., *MN* I 343–344, etc.; *AKBh* 240,19–20 (*tatra lobhaja<h> prāṇātipāto yathā taccharīrāvayavārtham arthārtham kriḍārtham* [text °tā °] *ca prāṇinam jīvitād vyaparopayati*) and 243,4–9; Cp. also Toni Huber, “The Chase and the Dharma: The Legal Protection of Wild Animals in Pre-modern Tibet,” in: John Knight (ed.) *Wild Animals in Asia*, London: Curzon Press (forthcoming).

²⁰ An engaged pleading, by a Western Buddhist, against animal experiments and vivisection is found in Tony Page, *Buddhism and Animals* (London: Ukavis, 1999), pp. 148–171.

²¹ E.g. *MN* I 285–288; 313–315; III 203; *AN* I 211; II 226; 253; III 35; 204; 275–276; 432; IV 251–255 etc.; V 264–268; 283–287, etc. Similarly injuring: *MN* III 204.

²² E.g., *DN* I 251; II 250–251; *MN* II 194–195; *AN* II 128–129; IV 151; V 342.

²³ For details see below (§ 4.a).

²⁴ Fa-tsang’s commentary to the *Fan-wang-ching* (*T.* 1813 (XL) 609c15–16) states that killing living beings is a gross evil act that prevents one from entering the Path.

ment of spiritual purity). In the latter context, the texts prefer to use a more elaborate formulation of the first precept which stresses that its observance is based on sympathy (*dayā*) with and concern (*anukampā*) for living beings.²⁵ These attitudes are closely related to the meditative cultivation of friendliness and compassion, which serves to eliminate unwholesome emotions like hatred and the drive or readiness to injure others.²⁶

b) That abstention from killing or injuring ought to be based on sympathy (or empathy) with living beings (and not merely on fear and expectation) is further corroborated by the fact that in order to impress right behaviour on people—renunciants as well as lay people—recourse is sometimes taken to the ‘Golden Rule’: Just as one oneself wants to live and be happy but is afraid of death and suffering, so too all other living beings; how then could one kill or injure them?²⁷ Since *animals* are living, sentient beings, the Golden Rule holds good with regard to them as well.²⁸ The Golden Rule is, to be sure, not specifically Buddhist,²⁹ but it has the advantage of appealing directly to the heart, and of being independent of doctrinal presuppositions, including that of karma and rebirth. And it is its own reward in that “restraint with regard to living beings is innocuous happiness”.³⁰

I do not think that respecting animals as sentient beings in early Buddhism is a consequence of the idea that animals may be reborn as humans and vice versa, since arguments for ethical behaviour towards animals based on the perviousness of forms of existence in the context of rebirth seem to emerge only later.³¹ It was rather the common property of sentient life that was

²⁵ E.g., *DN* I 4; 63; 171; 181; *MN* I 179; 267; 345; III 33; *AN* II 208; V 204. This formula is occasionally also used in connection with lay people—to indicate ideal behaviour (*MN* I 287; III 203; *AN* V 266, etc.; cp. also *Sn* 117) and, regularly, in connection with *uposatha* (*AN* I 211; IV 249, etc.)—, but much less frequently than the non-elaborate formula (which does not mention sympathy and concern), which in its turn is rarely used in connection with monks. The close connection of abstention from killing with sympathy and concern is also explicit at *AN* II 176,27–33. According to Fa-tsang’s commentary to the *Fan-wang-ching* (T. 1813 (XL) 609c17–18), killing runs counter to compassion.

²⁶ E.g., *AN* III 290–291; *DN* III 247–248; *AKBh* 452,7.

²⁷ *SN* V 353–354; *Ud* p. 47 (V.1); *Dhp* 129–130.

²⁸ *Sn* 704–705; cp. K.R. Norman, *Collected Papers* III (Oxford: PTS, 1992), p. 68; *Plants*, pp. 59–65.

²⁹ S/M, p. 203 n. 195.

³⁰ *Ud* II.1; *Uv* XXX.18; cp. *DN* I 70,4–5.

³¹ See below § III.3.c and n. 193.

decisive for including animals in the precept not to kill (see also below § II.5.a).

c) There is a tendency in contemporary writings on Buddhist ethics to derive compassion and caring for others from the specifically Buddhist doctrine or awareness of the non-existence of a true Self (*ātman*).³² There is no doubt that in most later schools this doctrine (henceforward: doctrine of “no-Self”) was central, but in the early canonical texts there is, as far as I know, hardly any unambiguous explicit formulation,³³ though some passages may come close to it.³⁴ What is frequently found are statements that the constituents of a person—body etc. —, or even all *dhammas*, are not the or a Self (henceforward: “not-Self”). But I am not aware of any canonical passage deriving compassion from this idea, and even in later literature such a derivation appears to be rare.³⁵ According to the basic canonical text on “not-Self”, the insight that the constituents of a person, etc., are not Self or Mine because they are impermanent and hence unsatisfactory only leads to becoming disgusted with them (*nibbidā*), and this results in detachment (*virāga*) and lib-

³² E.g. Malcolm David Eckel in: T/W, pp. 342–346, esp. 344 (“... this basic Buddhist conceptual movement from no-self to interdependence to compassion”).

³³ The *Sabbāsavasutta* (MN I 8), e.g., criticizes not only the *view* (*diṭṭhi*) that one has a Self (*atthi me attā ti*) and that it is permanent and unchangeable, but likewise the view that one has no Self (*n’atthi me attā ti*). Even the *Alagaddūpamasutta* (MN I 135–136, taken by K.R. Norman, *Collected Papers* II [Oxford: PTS 1991], pp. 200–209, to prove the non-existence of a Self) actually seems to reject merely a specific Vedic *view* of Self because due to it one might misunderstand the teaching of the Buddha as *ucchedavāda* (cp. Ernst Steinkellner, “Lamotte and the Concept of Anupalabdhi,” *Asiatische Studien* 46.1 [1992]: 406; id., “*Asati* in the *Alagaddūpamasutta*,” forthcoming in *Felicitation vol. for Sree Jambuvijayajī*; Kamaleshwar Bhattacharya, “Once More on a Passage of the *Alagaddūpama-sutta*,” in: *Bauddhavidyāsudhākaraḥ* [see n. 68]: 25–28; id., *Some Thoughts on Early Buddhism*, Pune: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1998, pp. 9–13). And *Dhp* 62 (*attā hi attano n’atthi, kuto puttā, kuto dhanam*; cp. *Uv* I.20) is more naturally understood in a spiritual sense than in a doctrinal one: “One does not [even really] own oneself (since one may, e.g., die at any time), how much less sons or wealth!”

³⁴ The most advanced one is probably *SN* I 135 (the nun Vajirā; cp. *AKBh* 465,22–466,4 and *SĀ* no. 1202: Śāilā; *AKBh* 466,8–13 (= *Yogācārabhūmi: Paramārthagāthā* 2–4) has no counterpart in the Pāli *Pārāyaṇa*.

³⁵ Most remarkable, to my knowledge, is *Bodhicaryāvatāra* VIII.101–103 (critically discussed in Paul Williams, *Altruism and Reality*, Richmond Surrey: Curzon Press 1998, pp. 104–176). Cp. also *Śrāvakabhūmi* (ed. Karuneshu Shukla, Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1973), p. 378,15–19 (cp. Mudagamuwe Maithrimurthi, *Wohllullen, Mitleid, Freude und Gleichmut* [Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999], pp. 279 and 298 [i; cp. also ii]).

eration (*vimutti*).³⁶

According to my (admittedly rather conservative) understanding of early monastic Buddhism, its primary aim was the individual's liberation from suffering and rebirth. In keeping with this, a person who has attained *arhat*-ship states that this was his (or her) last birth and that he (or she) will not return. As is well known, the central cause for rebirth is craving (*taṇhā*), which may be understood as being rooted in or consisting in self-centeredness, and this is also the basis for other unwholesome emotions like hatred or aggressiveness.³⁷ Hence, many spiritual practices are, directly or indirectly, aimed at breaking up self-centeredness, either by "imploding" it (like the contemplation of "not-Self") or by "exploding" it (like the cultivation of friendliness or compassion extended to all living beings, or the Golden Rule, which takes the notion of 'self' and 'others' for granted but transcends the boundary by realizing the analogy). Thus, as spiritual practices, the contemplation of not-self on the one hand and compassion or the Golden Rule on the other are independent of each other, or at best complementary.

Logically, too, the mere "implosion" of self-centeredness by means of the contemplation of "not-Self" does, to be sure, eradicate selfish activity, but does not seem to entail, of necessity, active concern for others unless an *additional* "explosive" momentum emerges, probably due to previous cultivation of empathy or compassion. When the spirituality of "*not*-Self" became dogmatized into a *doctrine* of "*no*-Self" in which holistic persons and living beings were dissolved into mere bundles of factors, this resulted in a certain tension or even incompatibility between this level of ultimate denial of Selves or holistic living beings on the one hand and compassion as essentially referring to just living beings³⁸ on the other, with the tendency to

³⁶ E.g., *Vin* I 13–14; *MN* I 138–139; III 19f; *SN* II 124–125, etc.; *Mahāsūtras*, ed. Peter Skilling, I (Oxford: PTS 1994), pp. 100–106 and 125–126.

³⁷ This is expressly stated in later sources: e.g. *AKBh* 461,4: *ātmagrāha-prabhavās ca sarva-kleśāḥ*; Dharmakīrti, *Pramāṇavārttika* II.135 and 212 (see Tilmann Vetter, *Der Buddha und seine Lehre in Dharmakīrtis Pramāṇavārttika*, Wien: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien, 1984, pp. 42 and 112).

³⁸ Cp., e.g., *AK(Bh)* 452,5; 453,8f; 454,1; *ASBh* 124,12. In Mahāyāna there is, to be sure, a threefold pattern of friendliness and compassion referring to living beings, *dharma*s and nothing (or *tathatā*), respectively, but in my opinion this is precisely an attempt to harmonize compassion with the doctrine of "no-Self" and Emptiness (cf. my paper quoted in the following note, § 5; cp. also Maithrimurthi, op.cit. [see n. 35], pp. 250; 258–262; Wakahara Yūshō 若原雄昭, "Mu-en no jihi" ("Compassion without object: caturapramāṇa in Yogācāra Tradition"), in: *Bukkyō ni okeru wahei, Nihon bukkyō gakkai nempō* 61 (1996): 91–108).

relegate compassion to the conventional level. This tension between “no-Self” (or Emptiness, for that matter) and compassion is occasionally palpable even in Mahāyāna sources.³⁹

d) As against that, in early Yogācāra sources the experience of the selfless- or essencelessness of all *dharmas* is in fact understood as the starting-point for attaining, on a deeper level of experience than that accessible by way of the mere Golden Rule, the notion of the equality of self and others or the “view of a vast self” (*mahātmadr̥ṣṭi*) which leads to Great Compassion motivating the inclusion of all living beings into one’s striving for liberation.⁴⁰ But here, what is decisive for the inclusion of others into one’s notion of self is not merely the “implosive” aspect of selflessness but more the “explosive” aspect of its all-pervasiveness (*sarvatragatā*), the fact that it is the *dharmadhātu* or true essence of oneself as well as of others. Perhaps this development was prepared for by the introduction of the concept of *tathāgata-garbha*, of latent or potential Buddhahood, whose presence and essential identity in all living beings, *including animals*,⁴¹ is, e.g. in the *Aṅgulimāliyasūtra*,⁴² expressly used to demonstrate why Buddhas do not kill any living being and do not even eat meat.⁴³

3. What is the *value* preserved or gained through abstaining from killing, or, conversely, the value that is destroyed or lost through killing or injuring a

³⁹ Cp., e.g., *Bodhicaryāvatāra(-pañjikā)* IX.76; Kamalaśīla, 1st *Bhāvanākrama*, in: Giuseppe Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts* II (Rome: Is.M.E.O. 1958), pp. 217,18–19 and 221,11–15 (read *lokottarajñāna-prayoga*^o, and probably °*bhāvinī* and °*niveśinī*). For further evidence and discussion see L. Schmithausen, “Mitleid und Leerheit: Zu Spiritualität und Heilsziel des Mahāyāna,” in: A. Bsteh (ed.), *Der Buddhismus als Anfrage an christliche Theologie und Philosophie* (Studien zur Religionstheologie, 5), Mödling, 2000, §§ 4 and 5.

⁴⁰ E.g., *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra(-bhāṣya)* (ed. Sylvain Lévi, Paris 1907) XIV.30–31 and 37–38; cp. IX.23 and 70–71 (cp. also Naoya Funahashi, *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra (Chapter I, II, III, IX, X)*, Tokyo 1985, and, for ch. XIV, Akemi Iwamoto in: *Zen Bunka Kenkyūjo Kiyō* 21 [1995], pp. 10–29); *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya* (ed. Gadjin M. Nagao) 35,10–11.

⁴¹ *RGV* I.119f, following the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*.

⁴² *Kanjur* (Peking), mDo, vol. Tsu: 203b7–8; 204b1 and 3–4; T. 120 (II) 540c2–4; 22–23; 26–27; cp. Seyfort Rugg 1980 (see n. 122), p. 236. According to *RGV* I.166, the doctrine of *tathāgata-garbha* leads to respect for all sentient beings and great benevolence.

⁴³ Yamamoto (1999, p. 942), if I understand him correctly, takes me to have propounded, in *BN*, a restriction of Buddha-Nature to animals, that is, its exclusion from plants, for the sake of underpinning the present-day need for people to give up eating meat. Actually, it is

living being? This is no doubt an important question, but not an easy one to answer, because, as far as I can see, it is not systematically dealt with in the early sources.⁴⁴ The following reflections are largely hypothetical and entirely provisional.

a) If we start from the motivations for abstaining from killing (and injuring) living beings discussed above (§ 2.a), it is, in the first place, the Golden Rule that points to values at stake, viz. *life* and *happiness*. Accordingly, dying and pain (or suffering) are indicated as anti-values.⁴⁵ The reason why these two pairs are, respectively, values and anti-values is the fact that *living, sentient beings*⁴⁶ naturally experience them in this way. In the context of practical behaviour towards other living beings (including *animals*), this has to be respected.

b) However, in the crucial context of liberating insight both life and happiness, at any rate in the ordinary sense of biological life and pleasure or feel-

the *Indian sources* that teach the presence of the *tathāgata-garbha*, or *buddha-dhātu*, as a soteriological principle (which does not make sense for Yamamoto because he excludes the doctrine of rebirth: see n. 99), in all sentient beings including animals (but of course not plants because by that time plants have come to be explicitly excluded from the realm of sentient beings: see *Plants*, p. 82), and it is in the *Āṅgulimāliya-sūtra* that this presupposition is explicitly employed for the sake of discouraging meat eating. I admit that I personally try to avoid meat if possible, but this is simply my reaction as a consumer to the cruelties of the modern mass rearing of cattle and poultry and to brutal and ecologically unsound fishing methods. It is not that I feel perfectly at ease with eating or cutting plants (something I cannot avoid), enigmatic forms of life as they are. But even if (as Yamamoto, loc.cit., states) the border-line between animals and plants may be blurred (just as, for that matter, the one between animals and humans, especially if we take former stages of evolution into account), this does not mean that there is no significant difference between the bulk of the animal and the vegetable kingdom. Just as over-stressing this difference may be motivated by the optimistic hope to be on the safe side through practising vegetarianism, so ignoring the difference may be an excuse for a reluctance to renounce meat.

⁴⁴ A late but interesting passage enumerating a tenfold intention of the precept (for *bodhi-sattvas*) not to kill any living being (which may also contain hints at the values involved) is found in Fa-tsang's commentary on the *Fan-wang-ching*: T. 1813 (XL) 609c13–610a7.

⁴⁵ In other contexts like the canonical explanation of the first Truth of the Nobles, dying is subsumed under what is painful. At *MN* I 371, the painfulness of dying is pointed out with special reference to animals being slaughtered.

⁴⁶ Though we do find, in later Theravāda dogmatics, the idea of purely material (vegetable) life (*Plants* § 30), what is taken into consideration by Buddhists in the ethical context is merely *sentient* living beings.

ing happy, turn out to be ultimately unsatisfactory in view of their impermanence and hence can no longer be regarded as values, at least not as *ultimate* values. The ultimate value, from this point of view, must rather be liberation,⁴⁷ *nirvāṇa*. But what is it that makes *nirvāṇa* a value? May it not be taken as a special, exalted form of life or happiness?

c) *Nirvāṇa* is, to be sure, normally attained while the person is still alive, but as with ordinary persons, so also in the case of a liberated person biological life invariably ends with dying,⁴⁸ is hence impermanent and hardly an ultimate value. Though liberation is often declared to entail the highest form of happiness,⁴⁹ this happiness, flowing as it does from detachment or from an anticipation of final *nirvāṇa* to be attained at death, does not appear to be an aim in itself but rather a harbinger or foretaste of final *nirvāṇa*, nor does it of necessity protect the liberated person from physical pain.⁵⁰ Actually, in contrast to ordinary living beings, saints (i.e. fully liberated persons, arhats) do *not* regard their biological life as something valuable and are indifferent to it,⁵¹ or are even glad to get rid of it.⁵² According to the Sarvāstivāda tradition, such persons may go as far as to voluntarily abandon their life-span impulses (*āyuh-samskāra*) in order to die prematurely,⁵³ and the Buddha himself is reported to have done so after he found that his Teaching was

⁴⁷ Thus expressly *NA* 715b10: 聖教中, 解脫偽貴; 714c4: 聖教中, 唯以解脫偽貴; cp. *TSi* 257c15-16.

⁴⁸ Cp. the general statement *SN* I 97,28 and *Uv* I.23.

⁴⁹ E.g., *Dhp* 203–204; *Uv* xxvi.6; XXX.17–19; 28–31, etc.

⁵⁰ Thus explicitly *Mil* 44,19–31; cp. also Lambert Schmithausen, *Der Nirvāṇa-Abschnitt in der Vinīścayasamgrahaṇī der Yogācārabhūmiḥ* (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften 1969), pp. 40–43 (§ 1.b).

⁵¹ E.g. *Th* 20 and 606; *Mil* 44,32–45,6.

⁵² Cp. *Th* 710ff; *Upasenāsūtra*, in: E. Waldschmidt, *Von Ceylon bis Turfan* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), p. 341; *AKBh* 44,2–3; *Vi* 656c17–18; cp. also *MN* III 269,7–15.

⁵³ *AKBh* 43,15–17 (quotation from the *Jñānaprasthāna*) and 43,24–44,1 (*atha kimartham utsrjanti? alpaṃ ca parahitaṃ jīvite paśyanti, rogābhibhūtaṃ cātmabhāvam*; cp. *Vi* 656c12–16); Schmithausen 1969 (see n. 50), p. 42–43 (not all arhats are capable of abandoning their life-span impulses); cp. also *Ud* VIII.9, but the (convincing) interpretation of the text in terms of abandoning the *āyu-saṅkhāras* is rejected by the “orthodox” Theravāda commentator (*Ud-a* 431,18–432,7). On the other hand, if a saint prolongs his life it is only for the sake of the welfare of others or for the continuation of the Buddhist Teaching (*AKBh* 43,23–24; *Vi* 656a20–b5). Cp. also *Mil* 195,25–196,12, stating that the *Vinaya* prohibits suicide because virtuous monks should remain in the world for the benefit of living beings.

firmly established.⁵⁴ There are even a couple of canonical suttantas obviously reporting cases of saints committing suicide by means of a knife or sword on account of intolerable physical pain or in order to prevent themselves from losing their spiritual attainment.⁵⁵ To be sure, part of the Buddhist tradition has taken exception to the idea of *arhats* being unwilling to endure physical pain and hence prematurely ending their lives, especially because they employ a violent method.⁵⁶ But according to the Sarvāstivāda tradition such an act is legitimate when loss (*parihāṇi*) of the *arhat* status⁵⁷ is at stake (as in the case of Godhika/Gautika).⁵⁸ And even the Vinaya tradition allows a sick monk to stop eating (at the risk of him fasting to death) when he is sure that his spiritual perfection is close at hand.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ *DN* II 104–108.

⁵⁵ *SN* nos. 22.87 (Vakkali; *SĀ* no. 1265), 35.87 (Channa, = *MN* no. 144; *SĀ* no. 1266) and 4.23 (Godhika; *SĀ* no. 1091; *SĀ2* no. 30; the latter version expressly states that Gautika has eradicated *ātmadrṣṭi*: *T.* 100 (II) 382c12: 斷於我見). There are numerous studies on the problems posed by these texts: see Damien Keown, “Buddhism and Suicide: The Case of Channa,” *JBE* 3 (1996): 8–31 (with further references on p. 9, n. 1); Padmasiri de Silva, “Suicide and Emotional Ambivalence: An Early Buddhist Perspective,” in: Frank J. Hoffman and Deegalle Mahinda (eds.), *Pāli Buddhism*, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996, pp. 117–132, esp. 124–130; Sugimoto Takushū, *Gokai no shūhen* (Kyoto: Heirakuji-shoten, 1999), pp. 75–109 (further references: *ibid.*, p. 109 n. 6).

⁵⁶ E.g., *SN-a* I 183–184; *Mil* 44,31–34. According to this tradition, the persons committing suicide are not yet *arhats* and become so only after having carried out the fatal act, liberating insight flashing up just when they are on the verge of death: cp. *SN-a* II 372,11–22; Keown, *op.cit.* (see n. 55); *T.* 125 (II) 642b29–643a22 (*Ekottara* version of The Vakkali story). Cp. also *TSi* 257c14–17, *AKBh* 376,4–6 and the opponent at *NA* 715a23–28 and 710b3–6, where similar views are advocated against the Sarvāstivādin view of loss of *arhat*ship. Nevertheless, in the *AKBh* passage the attainment of *arhat*ship when one is on the verge of death is linked up with the person’s disregard for his body and life (*kāya-jīvita-nirapekṣatvāt*).

⁵⁷ The loss may be due to prolonged illness: *TSi* 257b29–c1; cp. *AKBh* 373,5–6 and *SN-a* I 183,4. At any rate, as Thomas Oberlies suggests in an unpublished paper, the *arhat*’s resorting to *violent* suicide makes sense in view of the *urgency* of the situation which excludes a smooth but slow method like fasting to death. In addition, the specific method of “taking the knife” may perhaps indicate a *ḷṣatriya* background.

⁵⁸ Cp., e.g., *Vi* 320b9–19; *NA* 715a14–c8; cp. also the definitions of the category of the *cetanādharmān arhat* at, e.g., *Vi* 319c10 and *NA* 710a20–b3. A detailed investigation into the problem of suicide in Indian and Chinese Buddhism will be undertaken by my student Martin Delhey.

⁵⁹ *Sp* 467; cp. Damien Keown, “Attitudes to Euthanasia in the Vinaya and Commentary,” *JBE* 6 (1999): 260–270, esp. p. 268.

d) Thus, the ultimate value is obviously not (biological) life but *nirvāṇa*, especially final *nirvāṇa*, i.e. the state a liberated person attains at death. Now Damien Keown⁶⁰ suggests that life is a value in Buddhism (not, it is true, an absolute one, but a basic one) because it reaches its perfection in final *nirvāṇa*. But as far as I can see, at least in the Pāli canon the terms used for biological life, viz. *āyus* (“life-span”) and *jīvita*, are never applied to final *nirvāṇa* (after death), and thus it appears that “life” was felt to be inextricably linked up with dying, and “life-span” with limitation. On the other hand, in early Buddhism the term *amata/amṛta* is used for *nirvāṇa* but not for biological life, and as an equivalent of *nirvāṇa* it need not imply anything but that *nirvāṇa* is a state unaffected by dying.⁶¹

At best, one could refer to the scarce vestiges of a view, more or less expurged by tradition, that in final *nirvāṇa* the liberated person’s *vijñāna*, the sentience that kept his body alive, dissolves into cosmic *vijñāna*.⁶² Doubtless sentience, or sentient life, is a basic *presupposition* for the Buddhist version of the Golden Rule in that it determines its range of application. But even if, in spite of its rejection by the mainstream canonical tradition,⁶³ the idea that sentience somehow continues into final *nirvāṇa* is accepted, what would be of ultimate value would not be sentience in *any* condition but sentience in the condition of *nirvāṇa*. The reason why sentient living beings should not be killed or tortured might then be assumed to lie in the fact that they are, so to speak, sanctified because their sentience includes the potential to attain or realize this ultimate value. But there does not seem to be any canonical textual support for this idea.

e) Whereas the terms for biological life do not seem to be applied to final *nirvāṇa* (after death), its characterization as happiness (*sukha*) is occasionally met with.⁶⁴ On the whole, however, this qualification, too, tends to be avoided, probably in order to avoid the connotation of a temporary psychic state. There is, however, no problem in designating final *nirvāṇa* as freedom

⁶⁰ Keown 1995, pp. 49–50 and 59.

⁶¹ I take *mṛta* in this compound as an action noun (cp. Jakob Wackernagel & Albert Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik* II.2, p. 586, line 1).

⁶² Cp. Tilmann Vetter, *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism* (Leiden, 1988), pp. 44 and 65–66. Cp. also Bhattacharya 1998 (see n. 33), pp. 24–31.

⁶³ Especially by the line *DN* I 223,17 obviously “correcting” 223,12–16 (cp. *MN*, I 329,30–31). A similar situation may be reflected in *MN* no. 38. Cp. also *Ud* VIII.1.

⁶⁴ *Ud* VIII.10 (*Uv* XXX.35–36); *Itivuttaka* p. 37 (no. 43; cp. *Uv* XXVI.22–23); probably *SĀ* 298b7–9. But cp. *Ud* I.10 (*sukha-dukkhā pamuccati*).

from dying and suffering. Hence, it may be preferable to define the ultimate value in negative or abstract terms like “state where there is no dying” (*amata/amṛta*), “end of suffering” (*dukkhass’ anto*),⁶⁵ “freedom from danger/fear” (*abhaya*),⁶⁶ “security” or “welfare” (*khema*),⁶⁷ or “ultimate security from bondage” (*anuttara yogakkhema*),⁶⁸ all of which occur, along with further quasi-synonyms pointing in the same direction, as designations of nirvāṇa,⁶⁹ no matter whether nirvāṇa is envisaged as being attained or expe-

⁶⁵ Cp., e.g., *Ud* VIII.1 and 4; *Uv* XXVI.20; 24–25.

⁶⁶ Cp. also *Therīgāthā* verse 512; *SN* I 33,9: *abhayā nāma sā disā* (*SN-a* I 87: *nibbānaṃ sandhāya*).

⁶⁷ Cp. also *AN* I 142,18–21 (cp. *Uv* XXX.17); *Th* 227; *MN* I 227,10–13; *Vimānavatthu*, ed. E.R. Gooneratne (London: PTS 1886), p. 53,25; *Uv* VI.20a; VIII.15b.—Security (*khema*) as the ultimate value is also compatible with the *Aṭṭhakavagga* (*Sn* 809d; 896d; 953d; cp. also the anti-value *bhaya* at *Sn* 935 (*Attadaṇḍa-sutta*)), though in this collection emphasis is decidedly on inner peace (cp. *Sn* 837) in this life. Yet, I presume that destiny after death was no matter of concern because this inner peace was experienced as irreversible (for this reason, even if *Sn* 877cd *bhavābhavāya na sameti dhīro* is, perhaps, part of a secondary textual layer, it still seems plausible that when the question whether the wise man will be reborn became acute it was, of course, denied; cp. also *Sn* 902cd). Anyway, I fail to perceive, in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* collection, any life-affirming ideal (as suggested by Grace G. Burford, *Desire, Death and Goodness*, New York etc.: Peter Lang 1991, p. 13), in the sense that if all attachment is abandoned, life may become something worthwhile or may even be experienced as a state of pure happiness (ibid., p. 188; the only occurrence of *sukha* in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* is at *Sn* 873, where the condition due to which both suffering and happiness will disappear is asked for). Rather, even the typical texts of the collection (cp. Vetter 1990 [see n. 15]), not to mention the less typical ones, suggest an ideal of solitude (*Sn* 844; cp. 810; 821), of radical non-involvement or non-commitment, and of complete freedom from attachment and clinging to both this world and the other (801: *idha vā huraṃ vā*), to both life (cp. *Sn* 804) and death (cp. *Sn* 856cd: *bhavāya vibhavāya vā taṇhā yassa na vijjati*).

⁶⁸ Cp. K.R. Norman, *Collected Papers IV* (Oxford: PTS 1993): 278–279; Shozen Kumoi, “The Concept of *Yoga* in the *Nikāyas*,” in: Petra Kieffer-Pülz and Jens-Uwe Hartmann (eds.), *Bauddhavidyāsudhākarah: Studies in Honour of Heinz Bechert*, (Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica, 1997), pp. 408–412.

⁶⁹ *SN* IV 369–373 (for parallel materials see L. Schmithausen, “Yogācārabhūmi: Sopadhikā and Nirupadhikā Bhūmiḥ,” in: Li Zheng et al. [eds.], *Papers in Honour of Prof. Dr. Ji Xianlin on the Occasion of His 80th Birthday*, [Peking] 1991, [p. 710] n.104; in the *Nirupadhikā Bhūmi* of the *Yogācārabhūmi* [loc.cit., § 3], the terms are definitely listed as quasi-synonyms of final nirvāṇa). Cp. also *AN* IV 454f, referring, to be sure, to nirvāṇa in this world (i.e. before death), but in the special context of *saññā-vedayita-nirodha* which I take, in this stratum, as a mystical anticipation of final nirvāṇa, in spite of the objections by G.A. Somaratne (in a lecture delivered on May 22th, 1998 at the 43rd International Conference of Eastern Studies in Tokyo) whose argument is based on the assertion that in the stereotyped sentence *paññāya c’assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti* the past participle with *hoti* expresses the plu-

rienced already in this life or as final *nirvāṇa* after death. Actually, it is essentially this same set of values—which may be summarized as “welfare”—that is sought for by ordinary living beings (be it here on earth or in the afterlife), but for them it is linked up with biological life and with the aspiration for happiness as a psychic (and even physical) state, and is hence constantly jeopardized.⁷⁰ Even in this flawed form, the value of “welfare” is basically genuine, and the striving for it legitimate. The Golden Rule points out that this holds good, and should be respected, in the case of other sentient beings as well, and that therefore they must not be killed or tortured but should be treated benevolently.

f) However, as was pointed out in § 2.a, empathy (expressed in the Golden Rule) is not the only motive leading one to respect the life (and integrity) of other living beings. The *karma doctrine* makes clear that killing, injuring or damaging them has evil consequences for the perpetrator himself in the yonder world, i.e. that his gross infringement upon the welfare of others jeopardizes his *own* welfare. Conversely, offering others freedom from danger and fear (*abhaya*) through abstaining from killing, etc., entails freedom from danger and fear, and happiness, for oneself.⁷¹ This holds good also with regard to animals because the karma doctrine appears to have integrated (and ethicized)⁷² the archaic idea (documented also in Vedic literature)⁷³ that killed sentient beings, especially animals, try to take revenge on the killer in the yonder world.⁷⁴ Hence, one’s own attainment of welfare and

perfect, while actually its meaning is a state that has been reached (and continues): see Heinz Bechert, “Über den Gebrauch der indikativischen Tempora im Pāli,” *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft* 3 (1953/ 1958), p. 60 (“den erreichten Zustand”).

⁷⁰ From an ultimate point of view, the whole of *samsāra* is insecure: *AKBh* 202,21.

⁷¹ *AN* IV 246: *pāṇātipātā paṭivirato...ariyasāvako aparimāṇānaṃ sattānaṃ abhayaṃ deti..., ...datvā aparimāṇassa abhayaṃ...bhāgī hoti.*

⁷² I.e. by substituting automatic retribution or punishment for individual revenge.

⁷³ Cp., esp., *Śatapatabrāhmaṇa* XI.6.1 and *Jaiminīyabrāhmaṇa* 1.42–44.

⁷⁴ I still think that Hanns-Peter Schmidt (“The Origin of *ahiṃsā*,” in: *Mélanges d’Indianisme à la mémoire de Louis Renou*, Paris 1968: 625–655, esp. 643–649; “*Ahiṃsā* and Rebirth,” in: Michael Witzel [ed.], *Inside the Texts, Beyond the Texts* [Harvard Oriental Series, Opera Minora 2, Cambridge, 1997]: 207–234, esp. 214–215) is right in pointing out the importance of this belief for the origin of the *ahiṃsā* concept. This does not necessarily mean that this concept was developed by the ritualist Vedic tradition. The belief that killing animals entails the danger of revenge is far-spread in hunter-gatherer-cultures and was hardly a specific belief of Vedic ritualists. Thus, it may well have formed the background for the

security is *dependent* on one's offering it to all other living beings, *including animals*.

g) In the case of ultimate, *complete* security, i.e. nirvāṇa, this principle would seem to imply *complete* avoidance of killing or injuring *any* living being, even the smallest one. Actually, after a saint *has* attained the transcendent and ineffable state of *final* nirvāṇa (after death) such complementarity, that is, of receiving and offering complete security, is a matter of course.⁷⁵ Moreover, abstention from killing and injuring is, to be sure, required as a *precondition* for attaining this state. But in Buddhism abstention from killing and injuring (as well as from other unwholesome actions) is not considered sufficient, and at the same time not normally inculcated in such a meticulous form as in Jainism. For Buddhists, bondage is essentially based on *attachment* and other unwholesome psychic, *internal* attitudes, dispositions or drives, and in order to attain liberation it is, in the first place, these internal factors that have to be eliminated by means of *spiritual* practices. Abstention from killing and injuring living beings is one of the pre-suppositions of these practices and at the same time turned by them into a spontaneous, natural habit because they eliminate greed, hatred and (intellectual) disorientation which are the sources of unwholesome actions like killing.⁷⁶ It stands to reason that this holds good for *intentional* or conscious killing and injuring but hardly for unintended, accidental killing. This is not clearly expressed in the earlier, inherited Suttapiṭaka formulation of the basic precepts which, like the early Jaina sources, uses the term *pāṇātipāta* for killing a living being. But it is explicitly stated in the more advanced formulation, found in the Vinayapiṭaka and some suttantas, which employs

origin of the *ahimsā* concept if this took place in circles of non-ritualist or even non-Vedic renouncers or ascetics (as Henk W. Bodewitz proposes in "Hindu *ahimsā* and its roots," in: Jan E.M. Houben and Karel R. van Kooij [eds.], *Violence Denied*, Leiden: Brill, 1999: 17–44). It should also be taken into account that the idea that the victim (or its congeners) will try to take revenge already presupposes a (maybe unreflected) assumption that the feelings and reactions of other living beings are analogous to one's own feelings and reactions. In the different milieu of renouncers, this awareness may easily have developed into the self-conscious empathy expressed in the Golden Rule, and gained additional momentum through the "irreproachable happiness" such kind of behaviour entails (see above § 2.b with n. 30).

⁷⁵ This would hold good even if nirvāṇa after death is understood, with *AKBh* 92,5–6, 93,4–12 and 94,8, as mere annihilation.

⁷⁶ *AN* I 201–202; 134–135; III 338–339; *AKBh* 240,15–16 (see *SĀ* 274b24–26) and 240,18–241,17.

jīvitā voropeti.⁷⁷ It is the latter terminology that is used in the statement that a monk in whom the unwholesome influxes have disappeared (i.e. an *arhat*) is incapable of *intentionally* killing a living being,⁷⁸ thus implying that involuntary, accidental killing of a living being may occur for such a person but does not impair his saintly status. One might perhaps say that in Buddhism an archaic structure of a factual, objective reciprocity of security has become *overlaid* (but by no means replaced)⁷⁹ with a more subjective, spiritualized concept in which true security or welfare is, in the first place, envisaged as a *spiritual* state of complete *detachment* basically dependent on one's own *spiritual* attainments (eradication of greed, hatred, etc.).

h) It would be interesting to follow the value question into later forms of Buddhism (especially Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna, and also into the regional forms of Theravāda Buddhism) and to investigate whether there are any changes that might have affected animal ethics, but in this paper I can only roughly indicate some important shifts that would seem to have taken place concerning the value of welfare: Firstly, in contrast to early Buddhism where, roughly speaking, one's own welfare seems to be the primary goal and being concerned about the welfare of others a presupposition for the former,⁸⁰ in Mahāyāna, at least for the *bodhisattva*, caring for the welfare of others becomes the dominant goal.⁸¹ Secondly, in accordance with this

⁷⁷ For the chronological significance of this change in terminology, see Oskar VON HINÜBER, *Das Pātimokkhasutta der Theravādin*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1999: 22 ff and 44 ff. On the meaning of *pāṇātipāta* "killing living beings" see C. Caillat, "Words for Violence in the 'Seniors' of the Jaina Canon," in: *Jain Studies in Honour of Jozef Deleu*, Tokyo, 1993: 213–216. The expression *jīviyāo vavaroveti* is absent from the so-called "seniors" of the Jaina canon but is found in *Isibhāsiyāim* (ed. W. Schubring, Hamburg, 1969) 34 (p. 538, 26–30) and, e.g., in the *Avassaya-sutta* (4.6: Jaina Āgama Granthamālā vol. 15, p. 337, 16) and the *Bhagavatī Vīyāhapaṇṇatti* (ib., vol. 4.1, p. 207, 19, etc.).

⁷⁸ *MN* I 523 = *AN* IV 370–372 = *DN* III 235: *abhabbo khīṇāsavo bhikkhu sañcicca pāṇam jīvitā voropetum*.

⁷⁹ Cp., in this connection, the case, mentioned in Fa-tsang's commentary on the *Fan-wang-ching* (*T.* 1813 (XL) 611b14–16; cp. *T.* 1804 (XL) 49a28–b1), of a mountain ascetic who in a *neutral* state of mind pushed a stone and happened to kill an ant, which was then reborn as a boar that in its turn happened to kick a stone which killed the ascetic.

⁸⁰ This does not, of course, preclude concern for others from continuing after liberation.

⁸¹ A nice passage is found in Fa-tsang's commentary on the *Fan-wang-ching* (*T.* 1813 (XL) 609c25–26), where a *sūtra* is quoted according to which the reason why a *bodhisattva* abstains from killing is that he has *offered* the gift of freedom from fear (i.e. *abhaya-dāna*) to all living beings, and where it is added that by killing he would offend against and compromise this gift.

altruistic goal and with believers' expectation of protection and welfare in this world, there is a tendency to conceive of the Buddha (or of *buddhas*) as remaining *alive* for aeons. Thirdly, there is a tendency to conceive of ultimate welfare definitely as a *blissful* (and glorious, powerful) state. This means that the value of (ultimate) welfare in fact tends to be envisaged as a sublime continuation of *life* and *happiness*. What may, however, be more important in connection with *animal* ethics is not so much changes of aspects of the value "welfare" itself but rather a shift concerning the means by which one expects to attain it, especially (but not only) on the mundane level, purely religious elements like devotion and ritual tending, at least in some developments, to supersede ethics, especially animal ethics.

4. Let us now see whether the preceding assumptions can help to explain some of the features of Buddhist animal ethics.

a) Buddhist sources presuppose and sometimes expressly refer to a hierarchy of living beings,⁸² which also expresses itself in a gradation of the gravity of killing. It is well known that according to the *Pātimokkha-sutta*, the monastic code, killing a human being is a much more serious offence (one leading to expulsion from the Order: *pārājika* no. 3) than killing an animal (which is merely an offence to be atoned: *pācittiya* no. 61). But the verdict of the *Pātimokkha* is not, or at least not primarily, guided by purely ethical (or karmic) evaluations but rather by considerations concerning the internal harmony of the Order and its reputation in secular society.⁸³ From this point of view, it is evident that keeping murderers within the Order would have brought the Order not only into disrepute but also into conflict with secular authorities. Abstaining from killing animals, on the other hand, was more a matter of ascetic purity than of social concern, provided that no offence against property was involved (from this point of view, the incident which, according to the canonical commentary, occasioned the *Pātimokkha* precept not to kill animals, viz. a monk shooting at *crows*, appears quite fitting). It would, however, be unwarranted to deduce from the comparatively lesser

⁸² E.g. in the context of the beneficial effect of gifts: *MN* III 255; *AKBh* 270,5–6 and 11–14. Cp. also Alan Sponberg in: T/W, pp. 351–376.

⁸³ Cp. Heinz Bechert, "Die Gesetze des buddhistischen Sangha als indisches Rechtssystem," in: B. Kölver (ed.), *Recht, Staat und Verwaltung im Klassischen Indien* (München, 1996), p. 54; Oskar von Hinüber, *A Handbook of Pāli Literature* (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter), § 13; cp. also *Plants*, pp. 16–17 n. 94.

gravity assigned to the killing of animals in the monastic code that it was regarded as a petty offence also from a moral (karmic) or spiritual point of view, comparable, e.g., to expressly asking for delicious food on one's alms-round⁸⁴ (which may be spiritually detrimental but hardly a matter of karmic concern). From a karmic point of view, killing an animal is of course a violation of the first precept. In a Vinaya passage (I 97)—where it looks as if the third *pārājika*, as an item of monastic law, was on the point of being separated out from the older, ethico-ascetic precept not to kill any living beings⁸⁵—animals are expressly included (see below: § 5.a); and when the *suttantas* contrast persons who keep the precept with those for whom breaking it is typical, the characterization of the latter as “cruel, with bloody hands, devoted to killing and striking, and merciless with regard to all creatures”⁸⁶ clearly reminds one of the category of persons who torture others and do cruel jobs, among whom we find not only dacoits and executioners but also butchers, hunters and fishermen.⁸⁷

This does not, however, exclude that killing a human being was considered to have more serious, perhaps even much more serious, *karmic* consequences than killing an animal. Actually, such a difference in gravity is, occasionally, also expressed in the *Sutta-piṭaka*, e.g. *AN* III 301–303, where it is stated that even a fisherman⁸⁸ or a butcher who looks at the animals to be killed with an ill-disposed mind (i.e. with the resolve to kill them, and actually does so,) and sells them (or their meat) will not become wealthy, *how much less* a person (executioner?) who looks in such a way at a human being to be killed.⁸⁹ The text adds that such a person will also go to hell after death, leaving the impression that this holds good *only* for the person who killed a human being, though this may not have been the intention of the author.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ *Pācittiya* 39.

⁸⁵ Cp. von Hinüber 1999 (see n. 77), pp. 41 ff.

⁸⁶ *MN* I 286: *luddo lohita-pāṇi hata-pahate nivīṭṭho adayāpanno (sabba-)pāṇabhūtesu*; *AN* V 264; *T.* 99 (II) 271b20–22; cp. *YBh* 171,6–10; Siglinde Dietz, *Fragmente des Dharmaskandha* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), p. 80,22–23.

⁸⁷ *MN* I 343; 412; *AN* II 207.

⁸⁸ *macchikāṃ maccha-bandhaṃ*: the implication is that the person also kills fishes (*AN-a* III 351,5: *macchikāṃ maccha-ghātakaṃ*) and sells them.

⁸⁹ Cp. *T.* 1509 (XXV) 192a16–17 (É. Lamotte, *Le traité de la grande vertu de sagesse de Nāgārjuna* II [Louvain 1949], p. 1073): in Buddhism, friendliness towards all living beings prevents one from killing even an ant, *how much less* a human being.

⁹⁰ The sentence may well be an addition whose purpose is to underscore the evil karmic

At any rate, the Theravāda commentaries⁹¹ expressly state that killing a saint is worse than killing an ordinary person, and killing a human worse than killing an animal. The reason adduced is that ordinary persons have few and animals no qualities (*guṇa*). It is obvious that these qualities are *spiritual* qualities, and in terms of the underlying value proposed in § 3 these spiritual qualities would have to be taken as actually or potentially enabling their owners to attain ultimate security (i.e. *nirvāṇa*), which is inextricably linked to one's own offering security to others and thus renders the life of such a person more precious for others.⁹² The top position in the hierarchy of living beings is, of course, occupied by the *Buddha*, because he offers security to others in a much wider sense on account of his having initiated and organized the preaching of the Dharma, and, on an even broader scale, because he came to be viewed as a supra-mundane protector and saviour. As for ordinary human beings, their "qualities" probably consist in that they are, in contrast to animals, regarded as having at least the *capacity* for spiritual perfection conducive to ultimate welfare, and this is why human life is considered more valuable than animal life,⁹³ the more so since being reborn as a human being is regarded as a rare chance difficult to attain.⁹⁴ It is hence particularly harmful to deprive another living being prematurely of this rare opportunity. For the same reason, prematurely ending one's own life by sui-

result of murder, but not necessarily in an exclusive sense implying a denial of a similar karmic result in the case of habitual slaughtering of animals. Unfortunately, according to Akanuma's *Comparative Catalogue* no Chinese parallel seems to be available.

⁹¹ *MN-a* I 198; *DN-a* I 69; *Atthasālinī* (ed. Edward Müller, London: PTS, 1897), p. 97. Cp. Keown 1995, pp. 96–99.

⁹² It is true that the idea that—besides killing one's parents (which cannot of course be explained by the principle of *spiritual* worthiness but simply reflects the value pattern of secular society)—killing an *arhat* is the most serious and baneful form of killing (one of the *ānantaryas*) may also be viewed as a kind of spiritualized remodelling of the Hindu idea that the most heinous form of killing is murdering a brahmin (an aspect to which my colleague Oskar von Hinüber kindly draws my attention), but since in Buddhism the decisive point is *spiritual* superiority this would not invalidate the foregoing assumptions.

⁹³ In the context of abstention from killing expressly so *T.* 1813 (XL) 611a11–12: "From the point of view of [the result of] karmic maturation (i.e. rebirth in different forms of existence): [Killing of] a human being is grave, [killing of] an animal etc. is light, because [only] humans are, according to both Mahā- and Hīnayāna, generally recipients of (i.e. qualified for) the Path."

⁹⁴ This idea is, however, not specifically Buddhist: Cp. Minoru Hara, "A Note on The Hindu Concept of Man," *Journal of the Faculty of Letters, The University of Tokyo, Aesthetics* 11 (1986): 45–60.

cide is considered detrimental,⁹⁵ even though the *karmic* unwholesomeness of suicide (in contrast to the *spiritual* unwholesomeness of the psychic state by which it is normally motivated and accompanied) is a matter of dispute within the Buddhist tradition.⁹⁶

The higher value of human life as compared with animal life has, however, not always been undisputed. In some non-Theravāda Buddhist texts, we find a controversy on whether it is worse to kill an ant or a person who has entirely eradicated his spiritual potentiality (*samucchinna-kuśalamūla*). Some masters are, indeed, reported to assert that killing a human is always worse. Others, however, are said to have decided in favour of the ant because it is spiritually on a higher level, for as an animal it does not hold the wrong views which account for a radical eradication of spiritual potentiality.⁹⁷ Similarly, Fa-tsang's⁹⁸ statement that to kill an animal that has produced *bodhicitta* is more serious than killing a human being with wrong views is likewise based on the principle that the value of a living being rises in accordance with its spiritual advancement. In this connection, one must not, of course, lose sight of the fact that in the traditional Buddhist worldview the superiority of humans over animals is, as far as individuals are concerned, only a synchronic one and does not, in a diachronic perspective, preclude their crossing the border-line in either direction by way of rebirth.⁹⁹

Concerning the relative gravity of killing animals of different species, the above-mentioned Theravāda sources¹⁰⁰ regard killing a large animal to be worse than killing a small one¹⁰¹ because the former requires more exertion (*payoga*). This would seem to imply a firmer intention and a greater amount of violence. Actually, a few lines further the same sources adduce the inten-

⁹⁵ For the special case of *arhats* see above § 4.c.

⁹⁶ Cp. *TSi* 294c17–29 and 295b15–22; cp. also *T.* 1509 (XXV) 149a5–9 and 154c13–14 (Lamotte, op. cit. [see n. 89], pp. 740–742 and 785), and *T.* 1813 (XL) 610b17–24: suicide in an evil mental state (hatred), suicide in a good mental state (disgust with one's body, but at least for a *bodhisattva* still a defilement, sc. disorientation, though a very light one), and self-sacrifice for other living beings or for the Dharma (meritorious: see § III.4.b).

⁹⁷ *T.* 1539 (XXVI) 588a21–26; *Vi* 184c10–18; *T.* 1548 (XXVIII) 139a18–25; *Tanjur* (Peking ed.) vol. Tu: 278b7–279a1; even more radical the *Mahāyāna-Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra: T.* 374 (XII) 460b5–21 and 562b3–7 = *T.* 375 (XII) 702c9–25 and 808c8–11; cp. S/M, pp. 211–213.

⁹⁸ *T.* 1813 (XL) 611a13–14.

⁹⁹ This aspect is deliberately excluded by Yamamoto 1998, p. 166; implicitly also 1999, p. 942.

¹⁰⁰ See n. 91; cp. also *Sp* 864: *mahante pana upakkama-mahattā akusala-mahattaṃ hoti*.

¹⁰¹ As against this, Tibetans, quite understandably from the perspective of the economic

sity of the evil motives and the degree of violence (*upakkama*) involved in order to decide relative gravity in cases where the size of the victim is the same. On the other hand, Richard Gombrich¹⁰² reports the opinion of a Ceylonese monk according to whom gravity is entirely dependent on the intention of the actor. In a non-Theravāda source,¹⁰³ this principle is even applicable to the relative gravity of killing a human being or an animal: Killing an insect or ant in a state of a violent outburst of mental defilement is more serious than killing a human being [in a mild state of mind, e.g. out of compassion]¹⁰⁴. This looks very much like a pure ethics of intention or mental attitude, in which karmic gravity appears to be simply equated with spiritual gravity.

b) A crucial question in connection with animal ethics arises in cases where the precept not to kill would seem to come into conflict with the spirit of empathy and *compassion*, i.e. when an animal is hopelessly ill or injured and heavily suffering. According to oral information from M. Maithrimurthi, in the traditional Buddhist society of Sri Lanka, even killing an agonizing animal is (or was?) not considered appropriate. The reason is that *any* killing is considered wrong and that the animal, even if in a state of intense pain, still clings to life and resists being killed.¹⁰⁵ Monks, on the other hand, would point out that the act of killing is *always* associated with hatred (or aggressiveness)¹⁰⁶ and is hence unwholesome for the actor.

Unfortunately, textual material concerning this issue seems to be scarce,¹⁰⁷ not only as regards animals but also with reference to killing a *human* being out of compassion. The Theravāda *Vinaya* unambiguously states that even by recommending suicide to a sick person out of compas-

constraints of nomads, stress that it is less evil to kill one big animal than to kill many small ones. Cp., e.g., Marcy Vigoda, "Religious and Socio-Cultural Restraints on Environmental Degradation Among Tibetan Peoples—Myth or Reality?," *The Tibet Journal* 14.4 (1989), p. 29.

¹⁰² *Precept and Practice*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971, p. 257.

¹⁰³ *TSi* 291a11–12: 如人以深厚纏殺害虫蟻重於殺人.

¹⁰⁴ Cp. the *ad sensum* quotation of this **Tattvasiddhi* passage at *T.* 1804 (XL) 49a12–13: 故成論, 害心殺蟻, 重於慈心殺人.

¹⁰⁵ Cp. *Jātaka* VI 211,3f: *n'evā migā na-ppasu no pi gāvo āyācanti attavadhāya keci.*

¹⁰⁶ This is the same position as in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma (see below, with n. 120).

¹⁰⁷ The issue need not have been perceived as a problem from the outset (perhaps the idea of killing an animal out of compassion was just out of the question), or may deliberately have been left in suspense.

sion¹⁰⁸ or by asking an executioner, obviously again out of compassion,¹⁰⁹ not to torture the sentenced person but to kill him with one blow,¹¹⁰ a monk commits the *pārājika* offence of murder. But it should be kept in mind that judgements from the point of view of the Vinaya are valid for monks and nuns only, that they are guided not so much by moral or spiritual as by social considerations, and that for outsiders the motive of the monk may be unknown or doubtful. Apart from this, in the Vinaya of the Mahīśāsakas killing out of compassion is expressly declared to be *no* offence.¹¹¹

This reminds one of certain Mahāyāna texts according to which a *bodhisattva* (who may be, of course, a layman and even a *kṣatriya*) is, in certain situations, allowed, nay recommended to kill out of compassion, but, as far as I can see, to do so only in order to prevent a *human* being from committing a heinous crime, i.e. in cases where the *otherworldly welfare* of that person is seriously endangered.¹¹² Therefore, these cases only prove that otherworldly welfare is a higher value than biological life. However, in the case of killing an intensely suffering living being (human or animal) out of sympathy because one cannot stand its suffering, it is only secular welfare that is at stake. According to a Chinese Mahāyāna text¹¹³ which deals with

¹⁰⁸ *Vin* III 79; cp. *T.* 1813 (XL) 48c26–27 (a monk, seeing another person disgusted with life, provides him with an implement for [causing] his death; vaguely referring to *T.* 1425 (XXII) 253c22–254a16, 254a17–b10 or b11–25, and expressly interpreted by Tao-hsüan as motivated by sympathy [*T.* 1804 (XL) 48c28; cp. also the commentary *T.* 1805 (XL) 259a20–21]).

¹⁰⁹ Thus explicitly the parallel in the Vinaya of the Mahāsaṅghikas (*T.* 1425 (XXII) 256c20–22) and Tao-hsüan, *T.* 1804 (XL) 48c27–28.

¹¹⁰ *Vin* III 86; cp. *T.* 1425 (XXII) 256c16–257a4.

¹¹¹ *T.* 1421 (XXII) 9a9–10: “No offence, when in a mental attitude of compassion [or] without the intention to kill” (不犯者、慈愍心、無殺心). I was almost certainly wrong in referring, in *BN* § 51, this passage to killing an *animal* out of compassion, with the argument that animals are mentioned shortly before (9a8). As can be gleaned from a comparison with the final portions of the other *pārājikas*, the structure of the text speaks against such an assumption. In analogy to the treatment of the other *pārājikas*, in the case of murder, too, a casuistic clarification with reference to *monks* (ending with the case of killing an animal) is followed by a sentence clarifying the gravity of the offence (i.e. of killing a *human* being) for nuns and, subsequently, for *śikṣamānās* and novices (for whom it is *duṣkṛta*, but, in analogy to 5a27 and *T.* 1428 (xxii) 577b6, definitely one which leads to their dismissal), and the treatment concludes with a remark on cases where no offence is incurred (by killing a *human* being, though, of course, *a fortiori* also by killing an animal)

¹¹² Cp. L. Schmithausen, “Aspects of the Buddhist Attitude towards War,” in: *Violence Denied* (see n. 74), p. 59; Kōkan Fujita, “On the so-called ‘Taking Life’ in the Śīlapaṭala of the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi*” (in Japanese), in: *Mikkyō Bunka* 191 (1995): 152–136.

¹¹³ Fa-tsang’s commentary on the *Fan-wang-ching*: *T.* 1813 (XL) 611b10–13.

bodhisattva behaviour from the point of view of both discipline and karma (i.e., roughly, ethics), such killing is, to be sure, formally a breach of the first grave *bodhisattva* precept, just as any other killing. But from the karmic point of view it is judged to be only a light offence because it arises from a wholesome state of mind. It is, nonetheless, karmically unwholesome. According to the Japanese commentator Gyōnen (1240–1321)^{114,115} the state of mind it arises from merely somewhat *resembles* a wholesome state of mind, but the act that follows from it contradicts ethical principles. It is actually only the initial attitude that is compassionate and hence wholesome. But it is mixed with ignorance,¹¹⁶ and the act of killing itself is *always* completed in a mental state of hatred, albeit, in the present case, a faint one.¹¹⁷ This explanation would seem to be in basic accordance with the doctrine of the Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣikas who, basing themselves on a sūtra,¹¹⁸ declare that killing is invariably initiated either by greed or by hatred or by (intellectual) disorientation¹¹⁹ and invariably completed in a state of hatred (*dveṣa*) or ill-will (*vyāpāda*).¹²⁰

In some Tantric texts, however, the position of the above-mentioned affirmation of killing out of compassion is continued and explicitly extended also to animals. Yet, it has to be done in a ritual manner, and here too its purpose is not so much the freeing of an animal from acute suffering but rather the animal's liberation from its sad and spiritually unfavourable mode of existence, allowed only on the condition that the practitioner is capable of cancelling the bad karma of the victim and of advancing its spiritual progress.¹²¹ Hence, just as in the prophylactic killing of a malefactor, the engagement in violence and the infringement on the value of life—flawed though it is in the case of animals—are considered justified only by the pro-

¹¹⁴ *Hōbōgirin*, Fasc. annexe (repr. Paris & Tokyo 1978), p. 253.

¹¹⁵ T. 2247 (LXII) 73c2–74a1, esp. c17–21 and 25–26.

¹¹⁶ T. 2247 (LXII) 73c14 = T. 1805 (XL) 259a18–19.

¹¹⁷ T. 2247 (LXII) 73c24–25.

¹¹⁸ *SĀ* 274b24–25, quoted *AKBh* 240,15 and *Vi* 605c1–3.

¹¹⁹ *AKBh* 240,19–241,1; *Vi* 605c3–22.

¹²⁰ *AKBh* 242,7–8. One would expect the cases of *arhats* killing themselves in order to avoid loss of their saintly status to be exceptions to this rule.

¹²¹ S/M, pp. 220–221; Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, trsl. by Gyurme Dorje (Boston: Wisdom Publ., 1991) I, pp. 603 and 767; Cathy Cantwell, “To Meditate upon Consciousness as *vajra*: Ritual ‘Killing and Liberation’ in the rNying-ma-pa Tradition,” in: H. Krasser et al. (eds.), *Tibetan Studies* (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997), p. 108 n.8; cp. also p. 107 n.3.

motion of the higher value of otherworldly or even ultimate welfare.

c) Another important issue in connection with animal ethics is *meat eating*.¹²² To be sure, meat (including fish) is not normally available unless animals are killed, but the rule is not without exceptions if the meat of animals who died naturally is taken into account. Further, it would seem to make a difference if the animal is killed by the person who wants to eat the meat or through his order or with his consent, or rather without his participation (e.g. by a beast of prey, or by professional hunters or butchers). In the latter case, there is no voluntary personal involvement in the killing on the part of the eater. For this reason, in early Buddhism even monks and nuns are, on principle, allowed to eat meat if it is offered to them as almsfood. Yet, the *Vinaya*¹²³ adds that they must not accept the meat if they have seen, have heard or suspect that the animal has been slaughtered especially for them, which means that they should try to make sure that they are not even the *involuntary* cause of the slaughter. This may be a concession to Jaina criticism, as the introductory story suggests. From a *spiritual* (and also a karmic) point of view it would be sufficient that the monk has not *intentionally* contributed to the killing and that he partakes of the meat without greed and in an attitude of friendliness in order to protect himself from aggressive thoughts.¹²⁴ By analogy, lay Buddhists have tended to buy publicly available meat (and fish) from professional hunters, fishermen and butchers. Apart from special cases like King Aśoka who must have been aware of his direct responsibility for the production and consumption of meat at his court, the mechanism of consumption stimulating the market is largely ignored in conservative Buddhism. It is only in one strand of

¹²² For a detailed treatment of the problem of meat eating in Buddhism I may refer to a separate study of mine under preparation. The most important scholarly contributions to this subject so far are Ludwig Alsdorf, *Beiträge zur Geschichte von Vegetarismus und Rinderverehrung* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1962); David Seyfort Ruegg, "Ahimsā and Vegetarianism in the History of Buddhism," in: Somaratna Balasooriya et al. (eds.), *Buddhist Studies in honour of Walpola Rahula* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1980): 234–241; Masahiro Shimoda, "«Sanshu no jōniku» saikō" ("On the Subject of 'Trikoṭi-pariśuddha-māmsa'"), *Bukkyō Bunka* 22 (1989): 1–21 (in Jap.); id., "Higashi-Ajia bukkyō no kairitsu no tokushoku: nikujiki kinshi no yurai o megutte" ("The Origin of Vegetarianism in the Buddhism of Far East Asia"), *Tōyō Gakujutsu Kenkyū* 29.4 (1990): 98–110 (in Jap.); id., *Nehan-gyō no kenkyū* (*A Study of the Mahāparinirvānasūtra*) (Tokyo: Shunjū-sha, 1997), pp. 388–419 (in Jap.).

¹²³ *Vin* I 238; cp. II 197 and *MN* I 369.

¹²⁴ Cp. *MN* I 369 (*Jīvakasutta*).

Mahāyāna Buddhism that, in a changed cultural ambience, friendliness and compassion are used as an argument against meat eating and the argument that the buyer and the consumer are *indirectly* responsible for the killing is recognized.¹²⁵

5. a) At the beginning of this chapter (§ II.A.1), I stated that the Buddhist precept not to kill living beings doubtlessly includes animals. Still, one may ask: to what extent? D. Keown¹²⁶ suggests that tiny animals in the water may not be included because “it is unlikely that these tiny organisms would be regarded by Buddhism as karmic life”, i.e., because they do not seem to belong to the “karmic community”. He thinks that the *Pātimokkha* rule that monks must not consciously drink or spill water containing such minute animals¹²⁷ is more a matter of decorum than of ethics. This may be true and is even supported by Buddhaghosa who classifies these rules as referring to offenses that are faults merely because the Buddha has stipulated them as such (*paññatti-vajja*).¹²⁸ But Buddhaghosa adds that this is so because the monk, though aware of the fact that there are animalcules, partakes of the water with the idea that it is [just] water¹²⁹ (i.e. he merely wants to drink water and is devoid of any intent to kill the tiny animals), thus tacitly admitting that *intentionally* killing them would not be a matter of mere protocol. Indeed, they are expressly called “tiny living beings” (*pāṇaka*), this appellation being a diminutive of the same word as that which denotes the living beings every Buddhist is expected not to kill. Still, the fact that there are separate rules prohibiting a monk from drinking or spilling water containing such tiny animals shows that these animalcules were a kind of border-line case. But monks were expected to be strict also in such border-line cases,¹³⁰ and occasionally we even hear of a pious layman (an army leader!) who carried a strainer with him to avoid killing animalcules while drinking water.¹³¹

¹²⁵ *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, ed. Bunyiu Nanjio (repr. Kyoto: Otani Univ. Press, 1956), p. 252, 15–253, 1.

¹²⁶ Keown 1995, p. 48.

¹²⁷ *Pācittiya* 20 and 62 (*Vin* IV 49 and 125).

¹²⁸ *Sp* 786 and 865.

¹²⁹ *Sp* 865: *sappāṇaka-bhāvaṃ ṇatvā pi udaka-saññāya paribuñjitabbato paññatti-vajjātā veditabbā*.

¹³⁰ Cp. also I-ching, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago*, transl. by J. Takakusu (repr. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1966), pp. 30–33 (see *T.* 2125 (liv) 208a13–b29; S/M, p. 187).

¹³¹ Valentina Rosen, *Der Vinayavibhaṅga zum Bhikṣuprātimokṣa der Sarvāstivādins*

Without doubt, modern knowledge about the presence of *microscopic* animals in any natural fresh water would have rendered a complete observation of the precept impossible, but the Buddha would probably have ignored the existence of such animals for the sake of practicability. But there can be little doubt as regards insects. At *Vin* I 97 (see above: § 4.a) it is explicitly stated that an ordained monk should not kill any living being even up to a tiny insect or ant (*antamaso kuntha-kipillikaṃ upādāya*),¹³² and in the Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda¹³³ canonical texts this expression is also used in the formulation of the precept for lay people.¹³⁴ This suggests that the term “living beings” and the precept not to kill them was, in principle, understood to include all, at least all visible, animals. At *AN* V 289, scorpions and centipedes are even mentioned among the animals as which one may be reborn, and *MN* III 168 suggests the same for worms and maggots.

b) Yet, it is true that, as far as lay people are concerned, the *Pāli* canon is, in contrast to that of the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādins,¹³⁵ content with a *general* formulation of the precept which does *not* contain the explicit inclusion of even small ants into the category of living beings not to be killed.¹³⁶ And (as

(Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1959), p. 120 (see *T.* 1435 (XXIII) 58a8–24; S/M, p. 189). This is a nice case of “qualified *ahiṃsā*” in accordance with the limits of practicability dictated by one’s “profession” (largely determined by one’s caste affiliation!); cp. the explicit recognition of such “qualified *ahiṃsā*” in Vyāsa’s *Bhāṣya* on *Yogasūtra* 2.31. Cp. also the army leader (*senāpati!*) Siha (*Vin* I 237; *AN* IV 187–188).

¹³² On *kuntha-kipillika* see Peter Ramers, *Die “Drei Kapitel über die Sittlichkeit” im Śrāmaṇyaphala-sūtra*, PhD dissertation Bonn, 1996, pp. 46–48; von Hinüber, op.cit. (see n. 77), p. 46 n. 100.

¹³³ The justification of this distinction has recently been questioned by Fumio Enomoto (*IBK* 47.1 (1998): 400–392). In the present context, it is used merely to point to different versions or recensions of the canonical texts.

¹³⁴ E.g. Herbert Härtel, *Karmavācanā* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1956), p. 54; *T.* 26 (I) 501b15; Dietz (see n. 86), p. 80,23–24; *YBh* 172,4–5; cp. also *Gilgit Manuscripts* (ed. N. Dutt) III.2 (Srinagar, 1942), p. 43,12–13 (*Cīvaravastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya*). In the Chinese parallel of *AN* V 263–268 (no. 176: *Cunda*), contained in the Chinese *Samyuktāgama*, the reference to ants is found in the formula of the unwholesome pattern (*SĀ* 271b20–23) but not in the formula of the wholesome pattern (271c22–24). In this tradition, the reference to ants is of course also found when the precept is formulated for monks or nuns: cp., e.g., Ramers, op.cit. (see n. 132), pp. 40–42 and 45 (with n. 37).

¹³⁵ Cp. also *T.* 21 (I) 264b24f.

¹³⁶ Reference to ants is also missing in the *Dirghāgama* of the Dharmaguptakas (*T.* 1 (I) 83c14–15 and 88c20) as well as in the separate translation *T.* 22 (I) 272c11–13, at

already pointed out in § 4.a) when characterizing evil behaviour, the texts speak of people for whom killing is *typical*,¹³⁷ who have “bloody hands” and are cruel and devoid of mercy: obviously the same kind of people that are specified in another context as “professional” killers, including, among others, hunters, butchers and fishermen—occupations Buddhists were expected to avoid at all costs.¹³⁸ Such a lack of explicit emphasis, in the case of lay people, of the fact that the precept actually extends to *all* animals could well have been intentional, with the aim of avoiding pressuring lay people beyond practicability.¹³⁹ Thus, killing dangerous animals in self-defence or in order to protect one’s family or crops, or swatting bothersome insects, would certainly run counter to the precept, but the express stating of this in a way that would concern lay people seems to occur only in later sources.¹⁴⁰ The explicit addition, in Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda canonical sources, that in the case of lay people, too, the precept holds good even with regard to small ants may indicate a tendency towards rigidity, perhaps under the influence of a corresponding tendency in Brahminical circles, but for the time being this is a mere guess. The problem is that overtasking entails either inescapable feelings of guilt or the introduction of means of atonement or compensation. The danger is, on the one hand, that the availability of such means may undermine the binding force of the precepts, and, on the other hand, that monastic institutions may exploit their privileged position to offer such means for their own profit. In addition, at least in predominantly Buddhist societies, the ostracizing of occupations connected with the killing of animals tends to entail the social discrimination of the

Ekottarāgama (T. 125 (II)) 625b15–18 and 756c28–29, and also at *Daśabhūmikasūtra* (ed. Johannes Rahder, Paris/Louvain, 1926) p. 23,7–9. (No attempt has been made to be exhaustive.)

¹³⁷ *pāṇātipātīn*; for the function of the suffix °in, cp. Paul Thieme, *Kleine Schriften* II (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1971), pp. 678–679.

¹³⁸ This, and only this, would seem to have been the original aim of ostracizing these occupations. The problem is that even in the pluralistic society of ancient India the rigidification of the caste system rendered it extremely difficult for members of the respective social groups to give up their inherited occupations unless they became ascetics (cp. *Jātaka* VI 71–72; S/M, pp. 192).

¹³⁹ This would, in a sense, agree with the Jōdoshin position as characterized by Ōtani 1993, p. 26.

¹⁴⁰ *Vi* 605c14–16; *AKBh* 240,21 (read *ātma-suhr̥t-paritrāṇāya vā*) and 24 (read *upaghātakā* or *upatāpakā*). According to the **Tattvasiddhi* (*TSi* 292a21–23 and 26–27) persons who kill noxious animals in order to help people earn, to be sure, “merit” from their help but at the same time accumulate bad karma from injuring the animals.

respective groups,¹⁴¹ which is particularly unfair if for economic or social reasons a part of the society cannot avoid resorting to these occupations, and if their products are urgently needed or at least eagerly utilized by the rest.¹⁴²

6. As for the actual everyday life in traditional Buddhist countries, I gather from observations and reports¹⁴³ that the precept not to kill or injure animals is most effective in situations where human interests are not involved and where killing or injuring would be an act of mere wantonness.¹⁴⁴ In proportion to the duration and intensity of Buddhist influence, people may even accept some degree of inconvenience in order to avoid killing, though with considerable variation according to culture, social strata and individual character or religious engagement. But except for very pious persons, most lay people will tend to break the precept when their vital interests, or their very lives, are seriously jeopardized.

II. B. Plants and elements

1. As for ethics referring to individual plants or forms of the elements, the Indian Buddhist position is weaker than in the case of animals because, at least later on, plants and elements are expressly denied sentience, and destroying them is expressly declared not to be unwholesome karma.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Cp. *TSi* 293c27–294a2.

¹⁴² This does not of course mean that everybody should join fishermen, butchers or hunters in killing animals in order to prevent himself from despising them. Nor does one have to consume fish or meat in order to prevent these groups from becoming jobless (just as one would not feel obliged to drink alcohol merely in order to support breweries, or, for that matter, to become a criminal lest policemen lose their jobs). What is necessary is merely the sharing of the responsibility for the killing if one eats fish or meat, and the counteracting of arrogance if one does not.

¹⁴³ For further details and references see *S/M*, pp. 195–201.

¹⁴⁴ In Hindu sources, it is often precisely wanton or useless (*vythā*) killing that is prohibited, but this is mostly defined as slaughtering animals (or eating their meat) outside the ritual (cp. Hara Minoru 原實, “A Note on *ahiṃsā*,” *Journal of the International College for Advanced Buddhist Studies* 1 (1998), pp. 273–269 [in Japanese]). Hence, this prohibition may, to be sure, exclude useless killing, but at the same time it aims at providing a legitimizing framework for killing for the sake of food. There is nothing comparable in early Buddhism.

¹⁴⁵ See *Plants* p. 75; cp. also Chinese sources like *T.* 1828 (XLII) 356b2–3: 殺草木非業道; 1829 (XLIII) 47a10–11.

Nevertheless, monks and nuns are enjoined not to injure plants or dig in the earth.¹⁴⁶ As I have tried to show in an earlier monograph, in earliest Buddhism, plants, at least, may still have been felt to be a kind of border-line case.¹⁴⁷ Historically speaking, this attitude, replacing as it did the more archaic belief in the full sentience of plants, may have helped to reduce archaic inhibitions against the indiscriminate utilization of plants (especially against the felling of trees). Nowadays, some awareness of the mysterious nature of vegetable life, different, to be sure, from animals but clearly not the same as inorganic matter as well, may be worth reconsidering in order to counteract ruthless, wanton destruction of plant life, without, however, rendering life entirely impracticable.

2. Wide-spread in traditional Buddhism is the belief that plants (especially large trees) as well as earth, lakes, rivers, etc., are inhabited by spirits or deities who might become irritated if their abode or domain is destroyed or polluted.¹⁴⁸ This looks very much like a mere variant of the idea of the sentience of plants, etc., and occasionally a tree is conceived of almost like the body of the spirit in that he will be killed if the tree is felled;¹⁴⁹ but in most

¹⁴⁶ *Plants* pp. 5–36; 46–51.

¹⁴⁷ See *Plants*, esp. pp. 66–70.—Interesting in this context is perhaps the sequence of food in the mythic primeval period according to the *Aggaññasutta* (*DN* III 85–88): tasty earth (*rasapaṭhavi*), *bhūmipappaṭaka* (a kind of mushroom[?], i.e. something growing but not green), a creeper (green plant), rice (seed); no meat, so far.

¹⁴⁸ To confine myself to a haphazard selection of references and materials concerning Indian Buddhism: O. Viennot, *Le culte de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954), pp. 108–117; 124–125; *Plants* §§ 5.3–4 and 26.2; cp. also *ibid.* n. 201 (water deity); Okada Mamiko 岡田真美子, “Ecoparadigm in Buddhist Narrative Literature: Plants and Trees and Ecoethics,” *IBK* 47.1 (1998): 285–281 (in Japanese); *ibid.* p. 281 n.13 (ocean and river deities); *SN* III 250–253 (plant deities, cp. *SN-a* II 350 and *T.* 1464 (XXIV) 879b29–c5); 254–257 (wind and cloud deities); IV 302 (plant deities); *Visuddhimagga*, ed. Henry Clarke Warren & Dharmananda Kosambi (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1950) IX.69 (tree deity); *T.* 1435 (XXIII) 75a24 (tree, fountain and river deities, but also spirits of houses, roads, etc.); *Lalitavistara*, ed. S. Lefmann (Halle 1902–1908), p. 319 (earth deity); *T.* 183 (III) 458b15 (mountain and tree deities); *Suvarṇabhāṣottama-sūtra* (see n. 18), p. 163 (XII.55; cp. p. 115,9); *Khuddakapāṭha-aṭṭhakathā* p. 166 (spirits in the soil, in trees and creepers, and on mountains); *Mahāmāyūrī*, ed. Shūyo Takubo (Tokyo: Sankibo, 1972), p. 15,6–11 (*yaḥṣas* inhabiting mountains, forests, rivers, ponds, etc., but also cross-roads, towns, etc.; for city gods (*nagara-devatā*) in Indian Buddhist sources see T.H. Barrett, “Buddhism, Taoism and the Rise of the City Gods,” in: *The Buddhist Forum* 2 [1991], pp. 22–23). For the elements cp. also *DN* II 259,15.

¹⁴⁹ *Jātaka* IV 153–157, esp. 154,5–6 and 156,1–2; see *Plants*, p. 15.

cases¹⁵⁰ the connection is less close,¹⁵¹ and the spirits have a certain independence from their abodes and are usually considered to be capable of moving to another one.¹⁵² Utilization of plants and elements is then possible without killing, and permission can be asked for from, or even enforced upon, the spirit by appropriate rituals.¹⁵³

3. One might also argue that, consciously or unconsciously, a mental state of ill-will or aggressiveness is often involved when plants, especially large trees, or formations of the elements are destroyed, just as when one kills an animal (see § II.A.4.b). However, as a Buddhist one should not even become angry towards a burnt stump of a tree, still less so towards a sentient being, because this is *spiritually* unwholesome for the *actor*.¹⁵⁴ Yet, the same would hold good with reference to artefacts as well.

III. Ecological ethics

0. As was stated above, ecological ethics is concerned with the value and preservation—be it for their own sake or for the sake of some other value—

¹⁵⁰ The Buddhist tradition is normally fully aware of the difference between regarding plants *themselves* as sentient beings and considering them merely as *inhabited* by (mythic) sentient beings; cp. the analogous distinction of the belief that certain trees are themselves numinous (*dibba*) and the belief that they are merely *inhabited* by numinous beings (*dibbādhivuttha*), explicitly made at *MN-a* I 119,27–29.

¹⁵¹ In a sense, one might regard the structure of the belief in nature spirits as “mytho-ecological” insofar as smaller or larger parts of nature are envisaged as the “*habitat*” of mythic beings (just as they are the habitat of animals: cp. *T.* 1435 (XXIII) 75a23–26!). A respectful attitude and behaviour with regard to (parts of) nature under the influence of this belief could then be understood as a kind of traditional (mytho-)ecological ethics.

¹⁵² *Plants*, p. 74 with n. 416.

¹⁵³ For examples see *Plants*, § 39.1.2 (cp. also Tokiya Kōki 釋舍幸紀, “The *Anityatā-sūtra* Quoted in the Tibetan Version of a Mūlasarvāstivāda Text,” *IBK* 34-1 [1985], p. 169 [in Jap.], and Gregory Schopen, “On Avoiding Ghosts and Social Censure: Monastic Funerals in the Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 20 [1992], p. 34). Ritually requesting/forcing the Earth Goddess to allow the use of a site for Vajrayāna practice: Cathy Cantwell, “The Earth Ritual: Subjugation and Transformation of the Environment,” in: Eliot Sperling (ed.), *Tibetan Studies; Proceedings of the Eighth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies* (Bloomington, 1998), forthcoming. Cp. also Stephanie Kaza in: *T/W*, pp. 234, mentioning a ceremony for a tree that had to be taken down in an American Zen center (though without reference to a tree spirit and probably because the tree itself is regarded as a living being).

¹⁵⁴ Cp. *Divyāvadāna* (ed. P.L. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1959), p. 122,24–25; *Plants*, pp. 60–61;

of species and biodiversity as well as of eco-systems or, nowadays,¹⁵⁵ *the* global eco-system, but not with individual animals or plants unless they belong to an endangered species. What has aroused awareness of and concern with ecological problems are not so much change, destruction and extinction as such; for just like individuals, eco-systems and species are—in agreement, by the way, with the Buddhist analysis of existence—subject to *natural* change and ultimately impermanent. The crucial point is rather the tremendous acceleration of these processes and their problematic direction as we face them nowadays on account of excessive *human interference*.

As is well known, there exists, among contemporary Buddhists, a strong movement, sometimes called “eco-Buddhism”, that stresses ecological ethics and corresponding activity as a central issue of Buddhism, and tends to understand the Buddhist tradition, or at least what is regarded as its genuine strand, as having anticipated or at least prepared such a position. In my own study of the subject,¹⁵⁶ I have not found the historical situation to be so simple. Rather, I have come to the conclusion that the tradition comprises different strands, some of which are not favourable or are even counter-productive from an ecological point of view, while others supply positive clues, albeit not a ready-made ecological ethics, not at any rate in early Buddhism and probably not in later Indian Buddhism either.

This has earned me the reproach of being reckoned, beside Ian Harris and

T. 1796 (XXXIX) 759a25–b6.

¹⁵⁵ As for concern with global problems as a feature of modern thought (in contrast to a local perspective in traditional cultures), see Toni Huber & Poul Pedersen, “Meteorological knowledge and environmental ideas in traditional and modern societies: the case of Tibet,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3.3 (1997): 577–598.

¹⁵⁶ See, besides *BN* and *EBT*, my articles “Buddhismus und Natur,” in: Raimundo Panikkar and Walter Strolz (eds.), *Die Verantwortung des Menschen für eine bewohnbare Welt im Christentum, Hinduismus und Buddhismus* (Freiburg etc.: Herder, 1985): 100–133; “Buddhism and Ecological Responsibility,” in: Lawrence Surendra et al. (eds.), *Stories they tell* (Madras: Earthworm Books, 1996): 57–75 and 83–93 (full of awful printing mistakes [like p.69 “satiric” for “soteric”!], especially in the notes, because no proofs were sent to the author; reproduction of my contribution to the discussion unauthorized); “Heilsvermittelnde Aspekte der Natur im Buddhismus,” in: Gerhard Oberhammer, Marcus Schmücker (eds.), *Raumzeitliche Vermittlung der Transzendenz* (Wien, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999): 229–262; *Maitrī and Magic: Aspects of the Buddhist Attitude Toward the Dangerous in Nature* (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997).

Hakamaya Noriaki, “among the strongest critics of ecoBuddhism”.¹⁵⁷ I must confess I find this somewhat misleading. My criticism is not at all directed against eco-Buddhism itself as a creative response to the contemporary situation of the eco-crisis.¹⁵⁸ What I have been criticizing is merely the way in which some eco-Buddhists not only make the textual tradition suit their point of view but (and *this* is the problem) do so with an express historical and philological claim, explicitly directed against the understanding of modern Buddhologists and also that of traditional exegetes. This is of course legitimate, but it is equally legitimate for the philologist and historian to rejoin if the argumentation fails to convince him/her. This does not, however, mean that time-bound beliefs or attitudes should be perpetuated in a fundamentalist way. It is vital for a living tradition to resort to creative thinking, either on traditional or on new tracks. But just as this fact has to be acknowledged by historians, creative thinkers should, to my mind, acknowledge the historian’s and philologist’s commitment to historical and philological objectivity (or rather the attempt to come as close to it as one can), regardless of personal predilections or expectations.¹⁵⁹ I find it impor-

¹⁵⁷ Donald K. Swearer in: T/W, p. 37.

¹⁵⁸ Cp. EBT, p. 41, n. 23.

¹⁵⁹ There is, to be sure, a constant danger that the personal commitment or bias of the researcher may influence his or her understanding or interpretation of the sources, and hence it is necessary that one makes one’s commitment explicit (as I believe to have done in my 1985 article [see n. 156], p. 101, in *BN* §§ 1–5 and in *EBT* pp. 3–10). But I dare to doubt that, as Paul J. Griffiths asserts (see Jamie Hubbard & Paul L. Swanson [eds.], *Pruning the Bodhi Tree*, Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1997, pp. 438–439 n. 31; cp. *ibid.*, pp. 157–162), such commitments must of necessity *permeate* one’s reading of the Buddhist tradition to the extent of inevitably preventing one from understanding what the authors actually meant. To a certain extent at least, this danger can be counteracted by deliberately watching out for evidence that runs counter to one’s own commitments (and, what may be more dangerous, also for such evidence as runs counter to the position one has come to adopt and advocate as a *scholar*). The tacit presupposition is, of course, that at least in the case of doctrinal texts, the authors had, as a rule, a tolerably clear idea in their minds (just as most of us would probably claim for ourselves), and that it is normally possible to retrieve this idea, at least *approximately*, by patient listening to the text, provided that the text is sufficiently explicit and/or sufficient background information available (cp. also Vetter 1991 [see n. 216], p. 179: “Inhärent ist dieser Philologie die Zuversicht, dass der *direkte* Inhalt von Aussagen in der anderen . . . Sprache prinzipiell nicht jenseits unseres Begreifens liegt, dass er sich, von ungünstigem Material abgesehen, gründlichem Nachdenken und Vergleichen langsam erschliesst, . . .”). If the hope and endeavour to come as close as possible to what the authors of the texts actually wanted to say (i.e. to *understand* them as they themselves wanted to be

tant for both sides to understand and acknowledge each other's motives and to discuss controversial issues in a matter-of-fact way.

In this sense, I should like to discuss, or re-discuss, a few points that caused me difficulties when reading the interesting essays in the volume *Buddhism and Ecology* recently edited by Tucker and Williams.

1. Some authors¹⁶⁰ accord *compassion* a central function in connection with ecological ethics. But compassion or empathy normally¹⁶¹ refer to *individual sentient beings* (as does also the traditional precept not to kill living beings)¹⁶², and I can hardly imagine a species as such, and definitely not biodiversity, to be a sentient being. One may *deplore* the disappearance of species as a loss of natural beauty or of human resources, but it does not seem to make sense to have *compassion* or empathy with a *species as such*, because a species as such does not feel pain and hence does not suffer from its becoming extinct. Nor is an eco-system as such, beyond the individual animals and perhaps plants populating it, normally understood as a sentient being on its own, except perhaps, in a sense (see below: 2.b), in some forms of Tantric and Far Eastern Buddhism (and, of course, in modern *Gaia* Buddhism)¹⁶³, and even in these cases (*Gaia* Buddhism apart) the sentiment which caused people to refrain from destructive behaviour was hardly compassion but rather respect or awe. Anyway, unless species, or eco-systems, or the earth as a whole, are hypostatized as sentient living beings that are liable to suffer because of human mistreatment, it does not seem possible to simply jump from compassion to ecological ethics, as is often done, because the categories involved are fundamentally different.

This does not of course exclude that the two levels are, somehow, interrelated (see § 1.3). But their interrelatedness need not be a matter of awareness

understood) is positivism, okay, then I am a positivist, even if this is nowadays *pratisrotogāmin* (and, for some, perhaps also **pratiśrotragāmin*).

¹⁶⁰ E.g. Alan Sponberg (T/W, p. 367) and Malcolm David Eckel (T/W, pp. 342–344, in what is after all a remarkably thoughtful essay).

¹⁶¹ I disregard the threefold Mahāyānist pattern of friendliness and compassion referring to living beings, *dharmas* and nothing (or *tathatā*) because as far as I can see it was developed for an entirely different purpose (see above: n. 38).

¹⁶² It is only by way of a *creative* interpretation (the legitimacy of which I have no intention to question) that it can directly be extended to the environment or ecosystem and to species (as is done by John Daido Looi in: T/W, p. 179).

¹⁶³ A suggestion in this direction is also found in Ōtani 1993, p. 28 (with n. 23).

or interest. Thus, the compassionate or at least considerate behaviour of traditional Buddhists towards individual animals and to a certain extent also plants probably did have an ecologically beneficial effect. But this was largely a mere *by-product*, the express aim being, apart from one's own spiritual perfection and welfare, the welfare of *individuals* as sentient beings regardless of their ecological significance. To be sure, occasionally the interrelatedness of the individual level and the ecological one is explicitly recognized, e.g. when the precept not to injure plants is accounted for by the fact that they are the *abode* of various insects and other animals.¹⁶⁴ But even here the primary value at stake is the life or welfare of an assembly of *individual* animals, not the preservation of species. Moreover, the interrelatedness of the two levels is an ambivalent one, allowing not only of coinciding but also of conflicting "interests", and the ecological by-product of compassionate action may well be negative, as in the case of feeding stray cats in the vicinity of a bird sanctuary which provides refuge for endangered species, to choose a comparatively innocent example.

2. Some papers of the volume explicitly or implicitly create the impression that care (or at least true care) for nature is possible only on an advanced level of spiritual perfection.¹⁶⁵ To my mind, this view involves two problems: a practical one and a historical one.

a) The *practical* problem is that this view might be understood to imply that ecological ethics is accessible only to a spiritual élite. Supposing Buddhist spirituality or cultivation of the mind did result in ecological concern, this concern would surely be on a higher spiritual level (e.g. less self-centered,

¹⁶⁴ T. 1435 (XXIII) 75a23–26 and 1442 (XXIII) 776b18–20; see *Plants* p. 12 with n. 62; cp. also *ibid.*, p. 36 n. 204. Similar interpretations are given for the rule not to pollute water (see *Plants* § 11.1).

¹⁶⁵ E.g. Ruben L.F. Habito (T/W, pp. 165–175; cp. p. 166–167: “. . . the three poisons of greed, anger, and selfish ignorance, which the serious practitioner feels one must first battle with and attempt to uproot from within, before being able to address the issue of the toxic wastes ‘outside’.”); Buddhadasa according to Donald K. Swearer (T/W, pp. 27; 29–30: “When . . . this law of the very nature of things is firmly in our hearts and minds, then we will overcome selfishness and greed. By caring for this inner truth we are then able to truly care for nature.”); perhaps also Alan Sponberg (T/W, esp. p. 374: “. . . that meaningful change in our environmental practice can come about only as part of a more comprehensive program of developing higher states of meditative awareness, along with the increased ethical sensibility which this evolution of consciousness entails.”).

based on deeper insight) than in the case of an ordinary person. Yet, what is required is an ecological ethic for everybody, and especially for the unadvanced lay person; for in the field of ecology it is, after all, primarily lay people, and particularly businessmen, so important as adherents and supporters of Buddhism from the outset,¹⁶⁶ who actually decide the fate of nature. The situation is analogous to that of animal ethics: the precept or commitment not to kill animals has to be taken by every Buddhist from the outset, even though their compassion may still be on a low level, and notwithstanding the fact that their sensitivity will considerably increase as they advance on the Path.

b) I must leave it to scholars of Far Eastern Buddhism to decide whether in some of its traditions awakening actually results in an increase of *ecological* awareness and commitment. As for Indian Buddhism, at any rate those forms I am tolerably familiar with, I have some reservations. One might adduce, in this connection, a few passages from the *Theragāthās*, where the hermit declares that the natural surroundings fill him with delight.¹⁶⁷ But it may well be that they fill him with delight because they are the surroundings in which he attained arhatship, so that it is not just the transient *beauty* of the natural surroundings but their *spiritually helpful* function that renders them truly delightful.¹⁶⁸ This is not quite the same, but nevertheless imparts them a certain value to which an ecological concern might recur. Apart from this, as indicated before (§§ II.A.2.c–d), even an automatic outflow of compassion arising from the liberating experience of truth or true reality seems to find little textual support before the introduction of the *tathāgatagarbha* theory, and I am not aware of any passage suggesting an automatic outflow of ecological concern.

I do not exclude the possibility of a creative re-interpretation of *Yogācāra* or *tathāgatagarbha* thought in an ecological sense, but, as far as I can see, the Indian sources of these movements do not reveal much concern for ecology or a positive valuing of nature. Although the *tathāgatagarbha*, latent or potential Buddhahood, is expressly stated to be present also in animals, it imparts value to them as sentient individuals only, not *as animals*, as mem-

¹⁶⁶ Cp. Lewis Lancaster in: T/W, pp. 9–10; 12; 15.

¹⁶⁷ Esp. *Th* 13; cp. Schmithausen 1999 (see n. 156), pp. 239–241.

¹⁶⁸ Cp. also verses like *Th* 991 or the comm. on *Th* 110; cp. Schmithausen, op.cit., p. 241 n. 42.

bers of this or that *species*. Rather, their animal body is compared with a foul and stinking garment!¹⁶⁹

More promising from this point of view is perhaps the Tantric idea that certain mountainous areas are physical representations of the body or *maṇḍala* of a Tantric deity,¹⁷⁰ or the idea that the whole world is the body of the cosmic Buddha Vairocana.¹⁷¹ As regards the embodiment of a Tantric deity in a specific area, Toni Huber has shown in detail how in the case of Pure Crystal Mountain (*dag-pa śel-ri*) of Tsa-ri in south-eastern Tibet this idea involved a protection of the respective area from hunting and other exploitation.¹⁷² But he also draws attention to the important fact that what renders the area valuable is its “particular status as a divine embodiment” and not, as in modern ecological thought, the presence of certain *species* of animals or plants, or mere aesthetic beauty.¹⁷³

As for the Vairocana cosmology, Klimkeit¹⁷⁴ quotes a Turkish Buddhist text from Central Asia according to which the fact that earth, rivers, lakes, plants and animals are all replete with the essence of Vairocana entails that a monk who raises his hand against any of them sins against the Buddha

¹⁶⁹ *RGV* I.118–120.

¹⁷⁰ E.g. Ti-se, La-phyi and Tsa-ri in Tibet, regarded as *maṇḍalas* of Cakrasamvara; cp. Toni Huber, *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain*, New York-Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999; further references *ibid.*, p. 234 n.1.

¹⁷¹ Cp. Schmithausen 1999 (see n. 156), pp. 251–254; cp. also the Central Asian artistic representations of Vairocana’s body covered with cosmic symbols: Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism* (London & New York: Routledge, 1989) p. 137 (referring to S. Gaulier et al., *Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia*, Leiden: Brill, 1976, pt. 1); Nobuyoshi Yamabe, “The Significance of the ‘Yogalehrbuch’ for the Investigation into the Origin of Chinese Meditation Texts,” *Bukkyō Bunka (Buddhist Culture)* 9 (1999), p. 25. Cp., however, the different interpretation of these Buddha images in Angela F. Howard, *The Imagery of the Cosmological Buddha* (Leiden 1986).

¹⁷² Toni Huber, “Traditional Environmental Protectionism in Tibet Reconsidered,” *The Tibet Journal* 16.3 (1991), pp. 70–72; *The Cult ...* (see n. 170), pp. 197–99 and 208–09; but cp. also p. 218 (ecological and biological limits).

¹⁷³ *The Cult ...* (see n. 170), pp. 199–200; T. Huber, “Overcoming Degradation?,” in: James Veitch (ed.), *Can Humanity Survive? The World’s Religions and the Environment* (Auckland: Awareness Book Company 1996), p. 32.

¹⁷⁴ Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, “Apokryphe Evangelien in Zentral-und Ostasien”, in: A. van Tongerloo u. S. Giversen (Hrsg.), *Manichean Studies I (Manichaica selecta: Studies presented to Professor Julien Ries on the occasion of his seventieth birthday)*, Lovanii 1991, p. 158, referring to P. Zieme, “Uigurische Steuerbefreiungsurkunden für buddhistische Klöster”, *Altorientalische Forschungen* 8 (1981), p. 242, n. 46.

Vairocana. As against this, the Chinese Ch'an chronicle *Ching tê ch'uan têng lu* (景德傳燈錄) has the master Hui-chung (慧忠) expressly reject practical consequences from the fact that the whole earth is the body of Vairocana.¹⁷⁵ What would be required for the everyday practice of ordinary people is an intermediate position of respect towards nature within the limits of practicability. Moreover, it is not easy to see how, if the whole world is the body of Vairocana, only nature would be sanctified thereby, and not also artefacts of all sorts.¹⁷⁶

3. According to almost all papers on Buddhism and ecology, ecological thought or ethics in Buddhism is based on the idea of universal or cosmic interconnectedness, interrelatedness or interdependence, and in this sense *pratītyasamutpāda* is often translated as “interdependent co-origination” or the like.¹⁷⁷ However, from an historical point of view, the indiscriminate attribution of this idea to “Buddhism” appears somewhat problematic.

a) Indeed, it occasionally becomes evident that the source of inspiration is, directly or indirectly, Hua-yen/Kegon philosophy.¹⁷⁸ Yet, as far as I can see, in canonical (at any rate pre-Abhidharmic) Buddhism, no universal interde-

¹⁷⁵ T. 2076 (li) 438b12–14; cp. *BN* n. 141. Cp. Takasaki Jikidō 高崎直道, “On the Concept of Non-sentient Beings Preaching the Dharma,” *IBK* 47.1 (1998): 1–11 (in Japanese), esp. pp. 7–8. In the English translation of Prof. Takasaki’s article presented at the Waseda symposium the passage concerned is paraphrased as follows (p. 11): “The monk remarks that if the whole land were Buddha-body, our excrements would defile it. Is it not a sin? Huizhong replies that since all living beings are Buddha-body, then who could be held responsible for such a thing?” To be sure, the monk’s question aims at *impracticable* consequences, but Hui-chung’s answer would seem to hold good for *any* actions.

¹⁷⁶ Cp. Schmithausen 1996 (see n. 156): 71–72.

¹⁷⁷ E.g. T/W, pp. 29 (Donald K. Swearer, quoting or paraphrasing Buddhadasa: “. . . the world is a mutual, interdependent, cooperative enterprise. . . . My own personal well-being is inextricably dependent on the well-being of everything and everyone else, and vice versa. . . . the interdependent co-arising nature of things (*paṭicca samuppāda*)”); 33 (“mutual interdependence of all life forms”); 140 (Christopher Key Chapple: “interconnectedness of life”); 295–296 (Rita M. Gross: “universal and all-pervasive interdependence,” “cosmic interdependence,” etc.); 318 (Steven C. Rockefeller: “interdependence of humanity and nature,” “interconnectedness of all members of the larger community of life”); 342–343 (Malcolm David Eckel: “interdependent co-origination”); 353 (Alan Sponberg: “the distinctly Buddhist conception of the interrelatedness of all things”; cp. also pp. 368–374, arguing against *reducing* Buddhism to this “vertical” dimension .).

¹⁷⁸ E.g. in the case of Gary Snyder; see David Landis Barnhill in: T/W, pp. 189–190.

pendence or mutual causality of everything with everything is expressed anywhere, and the rendering of *pratīyasamutpāda* by “interdependent co-origination” is unjustified here. In the central application of *pratīyasamutpāda*, namely to explain suffering or the process of rebirth, mutual causality of members is exceptional.¹⁷⁹ Especially in the case of the twelve-membered chain, attempts to interpret its original meaning in the sense of mutual causality or even conceptual interdependence are anachronistic and incompatible with textual evidence, as I have tried to show on another occasion.¹⁸⁰ To understand the expression *pratītya* as “interdependent” is unwarranted and, as far as I know, not supported by traditional explanations. And although the ubiquitous rendering of *samutpāda* as “co-origination” is in accordance with some later commentarial explanations, it is by no means in accord with all of them (not even, e.g., the one given at the beginning of the *Prasannapādā!*),¹⁸¹ and hardly in accordance with the original purport, for in the twelve-membered chain, as well as in many other contexts, at least some items (like *vedanā* or *trṣṇā*) are not envisaged as clusters. Thus, *sam-* has more likely the function of indicating the completion of the action,¹⁸² as in *sambodhi*, which to my knowledge is not normally translated by “co-awakening”.

It was an interesting experience for me to hit upon a passage of the paracanonical *Śālistambasūtra* explicitly characterizing, in a résumé, the twelve-membered *pratīyasamutpāda* as *anyonyahetuka* and *anyonyapratyaya*.¹⁸³ Schoening¹⁸⁴ translates this by “that arises from reciprocal causes [and] from reciprocal conditions”, but the Tibetan rendering has “arising from respectively different causes and conditions”,¹⁸⁵ which is

¹⁷⁹ This is explicitly stated at *YBh* 230,4–15 (discussing the 10-membered formula), esp. 12–13: “. . . as a means to show that in this single case [viz. *vijñāna* and *nāmarūpa*] there is mutual conditioning” (*tatraīkatrānyonyapratyatva-saṃdarśana-tayā*). Cp. also Musashi Tachikawa, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nāgārjuna*, Delhi, 1997, p. 117.

¹⁸⁰ EBT pp. 52–55, ns. 65 and 67.

¹⁸¹ Cp. *ibid.* pp. 56–57, n. 73.

¹⁸² Louis Renou, *Grammaire Sanskrite* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1975), p. 145.

¹⁸³ Jeffrey D. Schoening, *The Śālistamba Sūtra and Its Indian Commentaries* (Wien: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 1995) II, p. 723; I prefer the reading *anyonyapratyayo*.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* I, p. 312.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.* II, p. 422,2–3 and 8–10: *rgyu gzhan dang gzhan las byung ba / rkyen gzhan dang gzhan las byung ba* (cp. also II, pp. 508,4 and 654,7). In the first occurrence of the expression, this seems to be the only rendering. It is only in the second occurrence that a divergent ren-

equally possible in Buddhist Sanskrit.¹⁸⁶ Actually, in the preceding section of the text there is no reference at all to mutual causality, and even the 8th century commentator Kamalaśīla explains the expression to mean that there are many different causes, similar and dissimilar ones.¹⁸⁷

b) The most important traditional applications of origination in dependence (I prefer this rendering of *pratītya-samutpāda*) are enumerated in the *Yogācārabhūmi* and the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*.¹⁸⁸ But these sources would not appear to express the view that *everything* in the world, or for that matter in the universe, is conditioned by *everything* else in a significant way. The most interesting of these applications in the context of ecological ethics is no doubt the cosmogonical one, asserting as it does that the external world arises in dependence on the common karma of living beings.¹⁸⁹ This view may not stem from the earliest period, but already in the Pāli canon we encounter the idea that the external world is decisively influenced by the *moral* and *spiritual* behaviour of living beings or at least that of human beings, and that this influence has repercussions for the situation of human beings; e.g., moral misbehaviour of people may cause lack of rain, which in its turn causes famine.¹⁹⁰ In the *Aggaññasutta*,¹⁹¹ too, it is greed and the greedy intake of food and other gradually increasing spiritual and moral

dering by *gcig gi rgyu gcig / gcig gi rkyen gcig* corresponding to mutual causality is attested in the *Them-spangs-ma*-derived editions (L, R, T).

¹⁸⁶ See Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1953), p. 42 (s.v. *anyonya*).

¹⁸⁷ Schoening, op.cit. II, p. 508,4–5; “similar causes” refers to the fact that each factor is the effect of a preceding similar one, whereas “dissimilar causes” are the conditions mentioned in the twelve-membered chain: cp. *ibid.* I, p. 312, ns. 2 and 3.

¹⁸⁸ *YBh* 203,7–11; *AS* 28,1–3; *ASBh* 35,1–13. Cp. also the **Ādi-viśeṣa-vibhāga-dharma-paryāya*, *T.* 716 (XVI) 833c18–834a13 and *T.* 717 (XVI) 841a3–25. These sources enumerate eight contexts of origination in dependence: arising of perception (*viññāna*), arising of crops (*sasya*), dying and rebirth (*cyuty-upapatti*), cosmogony (i.e. evolution and destruction of the outer world (*bhājana-loka*)), subsistence of living beings on nutriment (*āhāra*), karmic retribution, arising of supernormal power (*prabhāva*), and spiritual purification (*vyavadāna*, *viśuddhi*).

¹⁸⁹ *ASBh* 35,5–6: *sarva-sattva-sādhārana-karmāhipatyam pratītya mahāprthivy-ādinām utpādāt*. Cp. *YBh* 30,21–22; *AKBh* 179,3 and 11–12; 192,3–5; Takasaki 1998 (see n. 175), p. 2

¹⁹⁰ *AN* I 159–160.

¹⁹¹ *DN* no. 27, esp. III 85–92.

misbehaviours that lead to a gradual deterioration not only of the bodies of human beings but also of the external world, which in its turn exerts a certain feed-back on the bodies and behaviour of human beings. Though greed may indeed have a negative effect on nature in that it causes over-exploitation, one should not overlook that in the above-mentioned texts the behaviour of people is not criticized from an ecological but from a moral or spiritual point of view, and that the causality considered to be at work is the karmic one, or at least one analogous to it. Moreover, the ideal state of the environment which is lost through this misbehaviour is not one of unimpaired nature but is represented either as a highly civilized world, densely populated by human beings, or as one of primeval undifferentiatedness, somehow reminiscent of descriptions of transcendent final Nirvāṇa, but certainly not of colourful biodiversity.

c) Another interesting idea in this connection is the occasional reference to the *family relationship*¹⁹² of all living beings: It is difficult to find a living being who in the course of beginningless *samsāra* has not formerly been one's mother, father, brother, sister, son, or daughter. This idea lends itself to ethical consequences, but in the canonical text where it is found,¹⁹³ it merely serves to illustrate the unfathomable beginninglessness of *samsāra* and to arouse detachment. Apart from a somewhat doubtful passage in an Arameo-Iranian inscription of Aśoka,¹⁹⁴ it is only in later sources that ethi-

¹⁹² There are also passages that state karma-based mutual influence among living beings as a universal fact (Hakamaya Noriaki, “*Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* ni okeru āraya-shiki no kitei,” *Tōyō-bunka Kenkyū-jo Kiyō*. 79 [1979], p. 37–38, § 5.b.3; *AS* 55,13–16 [unreliable reconstruction; see *Tanjur*, Peking ed., vol. Li: 102b8–103a1]; *ASBh* 67,6–7; *Viṃśatikā Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, ed. Sylvain Lévi, Paris, 1925, verse 18ab), but not necessarily in the sense that every living being exerts such an influence on every other at all times. But cp. also below (§ d).

¹⁹³ *SN* II 189–190 (nos. 15.14–19), corresp. to *SĀ* 243a6–12 (*sūtra* no. 952) and *SĀ* 2 488a26–b5 (*sūtra* no. 345); cp. *YBh* 198,4–6.

¹⁹⁴ See Gikyō Itō, “Aśokan Inscriptions, Laghmān I and II,” in: *Studia Iranica* 8 (1979), pp. 176 and 180–181: “. . . Priyadarśi the King rejected (and) banished from the righteous the killing which discriminated against fishes (and) living beings, relatives (of human beings)”. The syntax of the line does not, however, seem to be unambiguous. Humbach (G. Djelani Davary & Helmut Humbach, *Eine weitere aramäoiranische Inschrift der Periode des Aśoka aus Afghanistan*, Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1974, pp. 11–13) translates “. . . Quälen von Fischen, Lebewesen, Verwandten . . .” and suggests that the passage may be based on an original phrase similar to Rock Edict IV, describing the decrease of killing and injuring animals (*pānālabhe vihisā ca bhūtānaṃ*) and of improper treatment of relatives (*nātinam asaṃpaṭipati*) under Aśoka's rule. At any rate, Itō's (op.cit., p. 177) reference to the idea that

cal applications of this idea of relationship to all living beings are found: in order to motivate friendliness towards them¹⁹⁵ and even in order to motivate abstention from meat eating.¹⁹⁶ Yet, this is all ethics referring to individuals, not ecological ethics. It is not easy to see how this relationship argument could be used to impart value to other species *as species* or to *biodiversity*, unless it were creatively re-interpreted in the modern sense of the theory of descent.¹⁹⁷

d) It may well be that in some later Indian theories some kind of universal interdependence came to be asserted, but it may be important to determine the precise import and intention. In Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma, e.g., the “cause in general” (*kāraṇa-hetu*) and the “influencing condition” (*adhipati-pratyaya*) of a given conditioned *dharma* are defined as all other *dharma*s with the exception of that *dharma* itself,¹⁹⁸ but most of them are the cause or condition for that *dharma* merely in the very weak sense that they remain unobstructive in regard to its origination, regardless of whether they possess an obstructive capacity or not.¹⁹⁹ This is clearly a minimalistic view of universal interdependence. But Vasubandhu²⁰⁰ also suggests a somewhat stronger one, in the sense that every *dharma* is at least indirectly (*kramaṇa*), by mediation of a sequence of causes (*kāraṇa-paramparayā*), capable of contributing to the arising (*utpatti*) of any other conditioned *dharma*, even if it is never its direct condition. Thus, the unconditioned (and invisible) entity of *nirvāṇa* may, indirectly, even become a condition for visual perception²⁰¹ if the latter succeeds a mental cognition (*manovijñāna*) for which *nirvāṇa* had been the object-condition (*ālambana(-pratyaya)*). In this way, there is a kind of increasing diffusion of the conditional effectivity of a given factor in the course of time. Though the main aim of these texts is to explain

all sentient beings have inborn buddhahood is definitely anachronistic.

¹⁹⁵ *Visuddhimagga* (see n. 148) IX.36; *Śrāvakaḥmi* (see n. 35), p. 379,8–11.

¹⁹⁶ *Āṅgulimāliya-sūtra*, *Kaṅjur* (Peking), mDo, vol. Tsu: 204b1–3; *T.* 120 (II) 540c23–26 (cp. Seyfort Rugg [see n. 122], p. 236); *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (see n. 125), pp. 245,10–246,4.

¹⁹⁷ Cp. Macy 1991 (see n. 208), p. 202. Duncan Ryūken Williams (T/W, p. 151) suggests the idea of a “deeper ecological self” as a parallel.

¹⁹⁸ E.g. *AKBh* 82,23–24; 100,11–12 and 15; *Vi* 103c25–27; cp. 104a16–18.

¹⁹⁹ E.g. *AKBh* 82,24 (read *utpādaṃ praty avighna-bhāvāvasthānāt*) and 83,2–7; *Vi* 104c7–8; 105a2–6; *NA* 417b16–18.

²⁰⁰ *AKBh* 83,11–15. As far as I can see at a superficial glance, this alternative does not seem to occur in “orthodox” Sarvāstivāda sources.

²⁰¹ At *AKBh* 83,12, read *caḥsur-vijñāne* instead of °*naṃ*.

conditions and effects of spiritual practices and moral activities, the aforementioned theories are formulated in a general way and hence valid within and with reference to the natural world as well.²⁰²

It would no doubt be appropriate to continue by discussing further Buddhist theories suggesting universal or large-scale interconnectedness, like mutual dependence in Madhyamaka,²⁰³ the visions of universal interpenetration in the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*,²⁰⁴ or the interrelatedness of living beings and their worlds in the elaborate theories of the subconscious developed in Hsüan-tsang's school of Yogācāra/Fa-hsiang, and to try to ascertain to what extent, or whether at all, their genuine purport coincides with the interconnectedness of everything in the world with everything else as this idea is used in the ecological discourse. However, a satisfactory investigation of this exceeds the limits of time available for this paper.

e) Whatever the result would be, the traditional Buddhist emphasis on dependent origination and the acceptance of *interdependent* relationship wherever it presents itself would seem to make it easy for Buddhists to *integrate* modern scientific insights into complex networks of mutual dependence and interconnectedness. Still, this should not lead to a blurring of distinctions, for what is involved is not merely historical truthfulness but also spiritual or practical essentials.

²⁰² Cp. *AKBh* 83,1, referring to the sun preventing one from perceiving the stars (read *sūryaprabhā ca jyotiṣāṃ darśanasya*, sc. *vighnam*).

²⁰³ From a *very preliminary* perspective, it would seem to me that mutual dependence in Madhyamaka arguments starts from related *concepts* like cause and effect and that the interpretation of the mutual dependence of concepts in terms of *ontological* conditioning aims at *de-establishing* the (ultimate) reality of the entities envisaged by these concepts (cp. in this connection Claus Oetke, "Rationalismus und Mystik in der Philosophie Nāgārjunas," *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 15 [1989]: 1–39, esp. pp. 10–15). I am not at all sure whether Mādhyamikas would extend this analysis to the level of everyday experience, on which, after all, ethical as well as ecological behaviour takes place.

²⁰⁴ As for the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*, see the important article by Phyllis Granoff, "Maitreya's Jewelled World: Some Remarks on Gems and Visions in Buddhist Texts," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 26 (1998): 347–371. According to Granoff (pp. 369–370), these "visions are not primarily proof texts for the unreality of the world, but examples of a transformed reality . . . brought about by a change in consciousness, . . . experiences of a higher, expanded reality." This "transformed reality" seems to be a far cry from our natural world with its limitations and shortcomings, and it seems by no means clear whether (or to what extent) the latter is considered to participate in the interpenetrative structure of the former.

In this connection, too, the idea of the *total* interdependence of *everything* in the world or even in the universe with *everything* else strikes me as problematic. To be sure, the cultivation of this idea may be an excellent *spiritual* exercise, apt to support an *attitude* of universal transcending or widening of the self. But from the point of view of facts as well as practicability I have some doubts. I am far from calling into question the fact that changes at one place on the earth may produce far-reaching effects in other continents, and that large-scale cosmic events, or the collision with a sufficiently large meteor, may affect or even destroy the global eco-system. I agree that we should carefully consider the effects our actions may have on our neighbourhood as well as on distant areas, and that we should not be unconcerned by events taking place far away. But does not the view that the slightest movement affects every corner of the world or universe exaggerate things, or at least render life entirely impracticable? Should we not take into account that minor, and still more so, major systems have a certain capacity for absorption, so that our primary concern should merely be to know and respect the limits of this capacity? Does the neglect of these aspects not overburden the individual with an entirely *unrealizable* responsibility?²⁰⁵

From a different angle, universal interconnectedness may be taken to entail that everyone is co-responsible for what anyone else is doing at the other end of the world. As John Daido Looi puts it: “And because someone in South America is doing it, that does not mean we are not responsible. We are responsible as if we are the ones clubbing an infant seal or burning a hectare of tropical forest.”²⁰⁶ But in such an unqualified form, we would all be hopelessly enmeshed in guilt. This would perhaps be in line with Shinran’s view but hardly with the tendency of earlier Buddhist traditions to keep ethical demands somehow within the limits of practicability. In fact,

²⁰⁵ Please excuse the example: Even if the theory that the farts of the ever growing number of cattle contribute to global warming should prove to be correct: must I really be afraid of having contributed to the death of a penguin at the South Pole (or even on Sirius, if any exist there) if I happen to break wind?

²⁰⁶ T/W, p. 179. Cp. also Kenneth Kraft (T/W, p. 285), where the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (“When others are in the wrong, I am partly responsible. . . .”) is quoted in support of Looi’s position. But apart from the fact that the text of the apodosis is doubtful (variant: “I am *not* responsible”: cp. Philip B. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, New York & London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1967, pp. 18 and 161), I am not at all sure that the author of this saying was actually thinking of persons outside his immediate circle.

such a tendency is documented in some Sarvāstivāda texts²⁰⁷ precisely in connection with the problem of the ethical consequences of universal interdependence: If everything is a condition of everything else just by the mere fact that it does not prevent its coming about, would this not imply that just like the killer so also all other people would be guilty of killing since in a sense they had enabled this act by not preventing it? The answer is that one is guilty of killing only by actively contributing to the act (*kāraka-bhāvena*) and because one does so with evil thoughts. To be sure, this stance may not be entirely satisfactory, as it does not seem to include the responsibility of the one who did not prevent the killing although he was in a position to have done so. And in the modern context of ecological ethics, we would, e.g., have to stress the co-responsibility of the consumer. But apart from that, the aspect of practicability would seem to be reasonable in the case of ecological ethics as well.

4. The mere interconnectedness of the world would anyway not be sufficient to motivate ecological ethics aiming at preserving, at a local or global level, humanity or life in general (threatened with extinction by human activities), or a certain state of the world including sufficient intact natural areas and biodiversity (equally threatened by human activities). Interconnectedness is, to be sure, the reason why damaging a part may affect other parts or even the whole, and possibly result in a lashing back at the damaging subject. But an ethical response to this presupposes that some *value* is threatened: either human existence or welfare, or the existence or welfare of all living beings, or of the world as a whole with all its biodiversity, appreciated as valuable. Eco-Buddhists like Joanna Macy or Gary Snyder are quite explicit in adopting the last possibility and take the whole eco-sphere of the planet as a community.²⁰⁸ Their position is emphatically *world-affirming*.

Macy even speaks of falling in love with the world, of the world as

²⁰⁷ *AKBh* 83,9–11 (read *anāvarenaṅabhāvena cet sarva-* [or: *sarve*] *dharmā hetavo bhavanti* . . .); *Vi* 106c7–12.

²⁰⁸ See Joanna Macy, *World as Lover, World as Self* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1991), p. 185 (“joyful communion with all your fellow beings”); cp. pp. 193–205. For Snyder, see *T/W*, p. 187. Later on, he appears to have focussed, in a more practical perspective, on a *regional* community of all beings: see Charles R. Strain, “The Pacific Buddha’s Wild Practice: Gary Snyder’s Environmental Ethic,” in: Duncan Ryūken Williams and Christopher S. Queen (eds.), *American Buddhism: Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship*, Richmond Surrey: Curzon, 1999: 143–167, esp. pp. 152–154.

lover.²⁰⁹ And when she finds it necessary to expand the self so as to include all living beings or to experience the whole world as our body,²¹⁰ this is not merely the traditional *bodhisattva*'s compassion for suffering fellow-beings, but an affirmation of the value of the world as an eco-system and of its biodiversity. This is very appealing but at variance with the predominant evaluation in at least Indian Buddhism which tends to view animals as unhappy and to imagine an ideal world as highly civilized and inhabited by many people but by few or no animals,²¹¹ and which sometimes even has the plants in ideal regions consist of jewels, so that there is no decomposition. But there is no reason why such time- or culture-bound ideas and ideals should not be exchanged for others in a completely different situation as ours, as seems to have also happened in the Far East.²¹² Still, there are two more points which seem to cause problems from an Indian Buddhist point of view.

a) One is the *radical this-worldliness* of this kind of eco-Buddhism which ascribes *ultimate* value to the world (as an intact²¹³ eco-system). As a consequence, Macy, e.g., emphatically rejects both the legitimacy and the possibility of *escaping* from the world. For her, the interpretation of Buddhism as aiming at liberation from mundane existence is a misunderstanding on the part of Western scholars.²¹⁴ But as a historian I can only state that at least for early monastic Buddhism, as reflected in the vast majority of the canonical as well as of later texts, precisely this was the ultimate goal.²¹⁵ Why do per-

²⁰⁹ Macy, op.cit., pp. 8–11 and 241. For similar ideas in Snyder see Strain, op.cit., pp. 156–157.

²¹⁰ Macy, op.cit., pp. 11; 184; 192.

²¹¹ Cp. EBT, pp. 24 and 28–29. As for a different strand, see *ibid.*, pp. 26–27 and 31–32.—The question whether animal life (in the wild) is predominantly happy or unhappy is, of course, a serious one for ecological ethics. If the life of animals were in fact predominantly unhappy, the Buddhist ideal of a world without animals (not of course because they have been killed but because none are born) could claim a higher ethical status than the argument for their presence just for the sake of human aesthetic demands or recreation.

²¹² Cp. Lewis Lancaster in: T/W, pp. 14–15; Schmithausen 1985 (see n. 156), p. 107.

²¹³ Cp. Strain, op.cit. (see n. 208), p. 154: "Insecticides, totalitarian regimes, and nuclear weapons *are* part of the whole but in the manner of rogue elements."

²¹⁴ Macy, op.cit., p. 240; cp. *ibid.*, p. 190.

²¹⁵ In a comparatively early collection like the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, emphasis is no doubt on inner peace in this life, but even in such a text I fail to find a life- or world-affirming attitude (see n. 67).

sons who have just attained *arhat*ship rejoice in the statement that for them “birth is exhausted, the task fulfilled, no return to this world ahead”? And at least in Indian Mahāyāna—I am not concerned here with the Far East—, *bodhisattvas* remain in this world only in order to help others to attain liberation, and not because they find the world nice, or attribute an absolute value to it.²¹⁶

b) The second point is that affirmation of the natural world as it is implies affirmation of its basic structures, among which the *food chain* is the most scandalous one because it involves an awful amount of killing and pain. Joanna Macy is, as far as I remember, somewhat reticent in this regard, but Gary Snyder, consistent with his ecological approach, openly professes an affirmative valorization of the food chain, which he calls “the scary, *beautiful* condition of the biosphere”.²¹⁷ For him, the food chain is a “sacramental energy exchange”, “a giant act of love”.²¹⁸ The food web is the communion of beings which constitutes the net of Indra which is made not of jewels but of flesh.²¹⁹ Snyder refers to the Native American belief that the animal offers itself to the worthy hunter and does not mind being killed and eaten by him.²²⁰ Actually, in the Buddhist *Jātaka* and *Avadāna* tales, similar ideas are occasionally found, as when in the *Śaśajātaka*²²¹ the hare offers his own body to the ascetic because he has nothing else to give. I am not sure whether Snyder, or Native Americans for that matter, would also accept an inversion of the situation and offer themselves to a worthy grizzly, but at least in the *Avadāna* literature even humans may offer their body to animals, as in the well-known story where the Bodhisattva as a prince sacrifices himself for a hungry tigress.²²² However, in traditional Buddhism, not only self-

²¹⁶ Vgl. auch Tilmann Vetter, “Zur religiösen Hermeneutik buddhistischer Texte,” in: Gerhard Oberhammer (ed.), *Beiträge zur Hermeneutik indischer und abendländischer Religionstraditionen* (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1991), p. 189: “. . . der Grund dafür ist aber nicht die Empfänglichkeit für die wunderbaren Erscheinungsformen des Kosmos, sondern das Besorgtsein um die darin lebenden Wesen.”

²¹⁷ Cited from D.L. Barnhill in: T/W, p. 188.

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 189.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 190.

²²⁰ Ibid., pp. 196–197.

²²¹ For texts, paintings and secondary literature see Dieter Schlingloff, *Studies in the Ajanta Paintings*, Delhi: Ajanta Publications 1987, pp. 123–129.

²²² Cp. Schlingloff, op.cit. (see n. 221), pp. 145–146. Neither this story nor that of King Śibi

sacrifice of humans for animals but also self-sacrifice of animals for humans is an *exceptional*, “un-natural” act of heroic self-denial. The usual evaluation of the food-chain is rather a negative one. The fact that the stronger eats the weaker is one of the reasons why animal existence is regarded as a bad form of existence full of suffering, and occasionally even serves to prove that animals are inferior also from a moral point of view.²²³ Monks are to contemplate food as repulsive, like the flesh of one’s own child, to be consumed merely for the sake of keeping the body alive and fit for spiritual practice.²²⁴ This does not, however, imply any attribution of a positive value to the food chain but merely means one has to put up with it as inevitable. Even when, in what I call the “hermit strand”, uncultivated nature is appreciated in its beauty, the food chain is almost invariably either simply ignored²²⁵ or suspended by a utopian peace in nature (even between prey and predator) under the spiritual influence of the hermit.²²⁶

5. After these critical considerations, the reader may ask what my own solution would be like. As a mere historian of Buddhist ideas who does not pretend to be a Buddhist,²²⁷ I may not be obliged or even entitled to offer any. After all, I have much sympathy with eco-Buddhism as a creative movement. Yet, if a remark is expected after all, I might offer a few suggestions that might be acceptable to the tradition as well as practicable for ordinary lay Buddhists (and perhaps even non-Buddhists).

offering his flesh to a falcon (Schlingloff, op.cit., pp. 86–92) is found in the Theravāda tradition. This may mean that at least the abandoning of the soteriologically more precious human life for the soteriologically less valuable life of an animal was considered inappropriate by this tradition. Cp. also I-ching’s remark (*The Buddhist Religion* [see n. 130], p. 198) that such self-sacrifice is not seemly for *monks*. On the other hand, he accepts it as an element of *bodhisattva* practice. Accordingly, it is expressly valorized as meritorious in Fa-tsang’s commentary on the *Fan-wang-ching* (T. 1813 (XL) 610b21–24).

²²³ Cp., e.g., *MN* III 169; *T.* 26 (I) 761b21–25; *SĀ* 317c12–15 (see Fumio Enomoto, *A Comprehensive Study of the Chinese Saṃyuktāgama, Pt. 1: *Saṃgītanipāta*, Kyoto: Kacho Junior College 1994, p. 37); *T.* 184 (III) 467b18–23; *YBh* 87,13–14.

²²⁴ Cp., e.g., *AN* IV 49–50; *SN* II 98–99.

²²⁵ As, e.g., at *Th* 13.

²²⁶ Cp. EBT, p. 32; cp. also Monika Shee, *tapas und tapasvin in den erzählenden Partien des Mahābhārata*, Reinbek: Inge Wezler 1986, pp. 311 and 314.

²²⁷ In the volume *Buddhism into the Year 2000* (Bangkok: Dhammakaya Foundation 1994, p. 286) I have, it is true, been honoured by being appointed a Buddhist, but I had no chance to rectify the data.

a) In one strand, at least, of traditional Buddhism, intact nature is an especially suitable place for meditation and spiritual self-perfection (though not the only possible one). A later Buddhist poem expresses this aptly by stating, in Hindu imagery, that the god Viṣṇu created the Himalayan plateaus exactly for the solitude of holy men (*vivekāyaiva sādḥūnām*).²²⁸ This contrasts nicely with the idea, found in other traditions, that animals and plants were created for utilization by man,²²⁹ or for sacrifice²³⁰. Nature may also offer particularly suitable objects of meditation, and thus, in a sense, act as a teacher.²³¹ Thus, it would seem that Buddhists, and particularly *bodhisattvas*,²³² must not contribute to the destruction of natural areas but, nowadays, rather be active for the sake of their preservation or even restitution. Moreover, there is no reason why, in a *secular* frame of reference, scientific insight and a thorough reversal of prevalence in the relation between nature and civilization should not result in a revision of Buddhist conceptions about the ideal world; for though it would be unrealistic to ignore or even glorify the cruel and dangerous sides of nature,²³³ there would seem to be good reason to assume that nowadays preservation and restitution of natural eco-systems or such as are close to nature is helpful and perhaps even of vital importance for most, if not all, human beings, both from a viewpoint of physical welfare as well as under social, aesthetic and psychological aspects.

b) Even if such an assumption should turn out to be unwarranted, the basic principles of Buddhist ethics concerning individuals would seem to suggest (if not necessitate) a proceeding beyond this essentially anthropocentric position. As was pointed out in § II.A.2, abstention from killing and injuring living beings as well as caring for their welfare holds good not only with regard to humans but also with regard to other living beings, especially *animals*. If in the case of humans this includes keeping their habitat in the condition which is most suitable to their welfare, it is difficult to see why the same should not hold good for animals as well. According to the Golden

²²⁸ *Meghajātaka* vs. 72, in: Michael Hahn, "Die Einladung der Pratyekabuddhas: Gopadattas *Meghajātaka*," *Berliner Indologische Studien* 9–10 (1996), pp. 172 and 192.

²²⁹ Cp., in this connection, the view criticized at *AKBh* 241,1.

²³⁰ *Manusmṛti* V.39 (cp. Hara 1998 [see n. 144], p. 279). Cp. *Vi* 605c12–14.

²³¹ Cp., e.g., Takasaki 1998 (see n. 175).

²³² Cp. Yamamoto 1999, pp. 947–946.

²³³ Cp. Lewis Lancaster in: T/W, pp. 10 and 14–15.

Rule, just as oneself wants to live in a favourable surrounding, so do animals. In other words: for animals, too, living in a habitat most suitable for *their* welfare is a value which humans ought to respect just as they are obliged to respect their lives. This means that the precept should be understood as implying not only abstention from killing and injuring the very body of animals but also abstention from destroying or polluting their habitats (which, after all, may entail their death).²³⁴ As was indicated above (§ III.1), this idea is not alien to the tradition. And it is probably for the same reason that in his 5th Pillar edict Aśoka prohibits the burning of chaff with small animals in it and the unnecessary burning of forests. In positive terms, caring for the welfare of living beings including animals would imply caring for their habitat. Though this argumentation envisages, in the first place, the welfare of individual beings, their requirements differ in accordance with species. Thus, we arrive at least at a “zoo-centric” ecological ethics, in which not only humans, but also animals (and, on the border-line or by way of deliberate extension, perhaps even plants) would be the points of reference.

To be sure, there are many problems. One is that the ecological requirements or “interests” of different species may conflict, especially those of man along with his domestic animals on the one hand and those of such wild animals as require uncultivated eco-systems on the other. The traditional Buddhist hierarchy of living beings, to be sure, tends to privilege man,²³⁵

²³⁴ Cp. also Keown 1995: 48–49. Cp. also the (modern?) idea of *stealing* the habitat of animals: *BN* § 47.1; John Daido Looi in: *T/W*, p. 179.—One might argue that from a karmic or spiritual point of view, the destruction of a habitat cannot be evaluated as an unwholesome action unless killing the animals inhabiting it is *intended* (or some other unwholesome state of mind involved). But then why are, already in the canonical texts, Buddhist lay followers prohibited from trading with meat, weapons or poison (*AN* III 208; *Arthaviniścayasūtra*, ed. N.H. Santani, Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute 1971, p. 40,10–12)? Clearly, the merchant has no intention to contribute to the killing of animals or people and just wants to earn money. Yet, he of course knows that his business involves killing. Hence, in this connection we find a concept of responsibility that takes unintended but foreseeable damage into account. This is all the more remarkable in that it addresses lay Buddhists, especially businessmen. In the modern ecological context, even responsibility for unforeseeable damage due to carelessness would have to be included, and the prohibited kinds of trade ought to include, e.g., dealing with wood stemming from the indiscriminate cutting down of tropical forests, not to mention active participation in deforestation.

²³⁵ Cp. Yamamoto 1998, p. 165: “. . . environmental thought in Buddhism might be ‘anthropo-prioritism’ standing on ‘fundamental biospheric egalitarianism’ and ‘life-centrism’”. Cp. also Alan Sponberg in: *T/W*, pp. 351–376.

but—though this appears difficult in the case of microbes and parasites for which man himself is both food and a kind of transient habitat—some solution or compromise will have to be sought, in a way similar to that required in traditional Buddhist ethics in the case of conflicts between human individuals and individual animals. One of the important issues in this context is, of course, the excessive growth of human populations.²³⁶ Though the normative Buddhist texts do not celebrate maximum reproduction, the matter is more complicated than it might seem at first glance, and cannot be discussed here.

Another problem, already indicated in § III.1, is that, mainly due to excessive human interference, situations may arise in which ethics of nature referring to individuals comes into conflict with ecological ethics, as in the case of the stray cats threatening endangered species in a bird sanctuary. In such cases, for me at least, it is difficult to imagine that a *traditional* Buddhist, for whom the precept not to kill a living being *intentionally* is primary, could opt for killing the cats in order to protect the birds.²³⁷ A Buddhist solution might be to catch the cats and bring them to an asylum. But it will not always be that easy.

Yet, as I said before, these are only a few modest suggestions from an historian's point of view. Buddhist thinkers are, of course, free to opt for more creative responses to contemporary problems. It is not my opinion that these two approaches are incompatible.

²³⁶ Cp. Rita M. Gross in: T/W, pp. 291–311.

²³⁷ Yamamoto (1999, p. 943) pleads for an ethical precedence of the ecological perspective and of the aspect of avoiding *cruel treatment* of living beings over the traditional emphasis on avoiding single acts of killing individuals, and he thinks that killing for food is unavoidable and less grave, and may be compensated by “good” acts of protecting living beings. In principle, this sounds reasonable for our present-day situation, but the idea of compensation must not be misused as an excuse for neglecting minimization of killing, or for ignoring the indirect effects of one's consumption habits (which may reinforce both killing *and* cruel treatment of animals *and* ecological havoc). Not everything can be blamed upon the economic system; some renunciation may be inevitable for the sake of both animal ethics and ecological ethics (cp. also Ōtani 1993, p. 29).

Abbreviations

(For Pāli texts, quotations are according to the Pali Text Society editions unless specified otherwise.)

-a = -aṭṭhakathā.

AKBh = *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya of Vasubandhu*, ed. P[rahlad] Pradhan (Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute 1967).

AN = *Āṅguttaranikāya*.

AS = *Abhidharmasamuccaya of Asanga*, ed. Pralhad Pradhan (Santiniketan: Vishva—Bharati 1950).

ASBh = *Abhidharmasamuccaya-bhāṣyam*, ed. Nathmal Tatia (Patna 1976).

BN = Lambert Schmithausen, *Buddhism and Nature* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies 1991) [*Studia Philologica Buddhica*, Occasional Paper Series VII].

Dhp = *Dhammapada* (quoted acc. to verse number).

DN = *Dīghanikāya*.

EBT = L. Schmithausen, “The Early Buddhist Tradition and Ecological Ethics”, *JBE* 4 (1997): 1–74.

IBK = *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū (Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies)*.

JBE = *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*.

Keown 1995 = Damien Keown, *Buddhism and Bioethics* (New York: St. Martin’s Press).

Mil = *Milindapañha*.

MN = *Majjhimanikāya*.

NA = **Nyāyānusāriṇī* of Saṅghabhadra: T. 1562 (XXIX).

Ōtani 1993 = Ōtani Kōshin 大谷光真, “Bukkyō to shizen-hogo: shiron” (“*Buddhism and the Preservation of Nature—a Preliminary Study”), in: *Shūkyō-teki shinri to gendai: Undō Gidō kiju-kinen rombunshū* (Religious Truth and the Present: Essays in Honor of the Seventy-seventh Birthday of Professor Undo Gido), Tokyo: Kyōiku shinchō sha 1993: 23–31.

Plants = Lambert Schmithausen, *On the Problem of the Sentience of Plants in Earliest Buddhism* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies 1991) [*Studia Philologica Buddhica*, Monograph Series VI].

RGV = *Ratnagotravibhāga Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra*, ed. E.H. Johnston (Patna 1950).

SĀ = *Samyuktāgama* in Chinese: *T.* 99 (II).

SĀ2 = incomplete *Samyuktāgama* in Chinese: *T.* 100 (II).

S/M=L. Schmithausen & M. Maithrimurthi, “Tier und Mensch im Buddhismus”, in: Paul Münch u. Rainer Walz (eds.), *Tiere und Menschen* (Paderborn: Schöningh 1998): 179–224.

Sn = *Suttanipāta* (quoted acc. to verse number).

SN = *Samyuttanikāya*.

Sp = *Samantapāsādikā* (*Vin-a*).

T. = *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, Tokyo 1924 ff.

Th = *Theragāthā* (quoted acc. to verse number).

TSi = **Tattvasiddhi* of Harivarman: *T.* 1646 (XXXII).

T/W = Mary Evelyn Tucker & Duncan Ryūken Williams, *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press 1997).

Ud = *Udāna*.

Uv = *Udānavarga*, ed. Franz Bernhard, vol. I (Göttingen 1965).

Vi = (*Mahā-*)*Vibhāṣā(-śāstra)*: *T.* 1545 (XXVII).

Vin = *Vinayaṭīkā*.

Yamamoto 1998 = Yamamoto Shūichi 山本修一, “Contribution of Buddhism to Environmental Thoughts”, *The Journal of Oriental Studies* [Tokyo] 8 (1998): 144–173.

Yamamoto 1999 = id., “Environmental Ethics and Issues in Buddhism”, *IBK* 47.2 (1999): 947–941 (in Japanese).

YBh = *The Yogācārabhūmi of Ācārya Asaṅga*, ed. Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya (Calcutta 1957).

Addendum to § II.A.5.a (p. 52):

As for imperceptible animalcules in drinking water, cf. *T.* 1440 (XXIII) 552b21-25 where the Buddha is stated to have expressly confined the animalcules which must not be contained in drinking water to those that can be perceived by normal eye-sight or are caught by straining the water, explicitly excepting those that are perceived only by the “divine eye.”