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Jeffrey Hopkins Replies:

My scholarly roots are to be found in classes with the anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn and the psychologist Henry Murray (Social Sciences 4) and the literary critics Reuben Brower and Richard Poirier (Humanities 6) at Harvard in 1958. Kluck hohn and Murray opened me to cultural relativism and psycholanalysis and Brower and Poirier opened me to what was then the New Criticism, a capacity to step into the setting of literature as if in a common social situation. All four professors were very person-oriented, appreciating the significance of human response and human meaning.

I admit to sometimes taking too much for granted these perspectives of cultural relativism (though not of the nihilistic variety—I am almost over that!) and emphasis on personal meaning. I have sometimes been surprised to find that, when I speak from within a system, a few people think that I have assumed that system. I understand the tension that such a voice creates because in my senior year at college T.R.V. Murti gave a course on the classical Indian systems of philosophy (which I audited), and we in the class were struck with his ability to move from system to system describing each in such a vivid way that we felt it was his own. A considerable way into the course, we often conjectured, before class, about what system was his, some people trying to force the matter one way or another. His method of exposition caused us to take more seriously each system, and the tension of wondering what he himself thought brought energy to the classroom.

In this particular case, however, it should be clear from the preface of *The Tantric Distinction* that I wrote the book not as a Buddhist but as someone attempting, by making it more personal, to give a glimpse of a system of another culture as a living phenomenon. The account is "personalized" not in the sense that everything said in it is a matter of my own belief (though it does contain personal anecdote) but in the sense that what are often taken as merely dry abstractions are treated as of human relevance. In the preface, I make reference to Wilfred Cantwell Smith's description of a movement in inter-cultural dialogue to the point where "we all" are talking with each other about "us." As I say:

> This progression means not that we necessarily adopt another culture but that we arrive at the point where it can be seen as a configuration of *our* human spirit.

I include within this rubric not just the more socially salutary features of other cultures, such as techniques for developing compassion, but also the most unsalutary, such as the attitudes that gave rise to murderous Nazism. I feel that it is important, no matter how hard it may at first seem, to view even these as configurations of *our* human spirit, something that my human spirit could manifest under conducive circumstances. (As Jung said, most theory is subjective confession, and thus the theory that I am advancing here may be just a confession of the fluctuations of my own spirit!) The cultural determinist may find it hard to take such an open and playful attitude toward "others'" cultures, but such serious play, essential to philosophy and mathematics, is also helpful in religious and theological studies.

As Mr. Burrill himself points out, the specific section on the history of Great Vehicle teachings that he sees as evincing my own convictions is prefaced by a distancing "is said," since I find it difficult to put on the hat of even pretending to hold that Śākyamuni Buddha said everything that traditional histories say he did. I, of course, either accept the contemporary critical historical scholarship on such matters or have a hunch that it presents what is more likely the case, given the tendency in these traditions to reform history in order to make sectarian points in even more ingenious ways than we do (e.g., kLong chen rab 'byams, who in many ways is to the rNying ma order of Tibetan Buddhism what Tsong kha pa is to dGe lugs pa, is said by at least one dGe lugs pa lama to have become a dGe lugs pa in his very next lifetime!)

Must one say "it is said" at the beginning of every sentence on traditional history or on positions of Indian sages? It is assumed.

My prime interest is in telling a story; remember my literary roots. I do recognize that some persons do not bring the same perspective to my work as I do, and thus it may be necessary to make my position, especially on historical matters, clearer. At the University of Virginia after a lecture on traditional cosmology, a student asked, "Do you really believe the world is flat?"! I have wondered what made him vulnerable even to consider that I might think such.

The second part of the book is explicitly concerned with following out the implications of the differentiation between the sūtra vehicle and the tantra vehicle set forth by the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century scholar, Tsong kha pa. That this section is presenting Tsong kha pa's opinion (1) is clear from the sources given on the part title page, (2) is announced in the

first paragraph, and (3) is structurally obvious throughout the entire section from my use of a list of thirty-one points drawn from Tsong kha pa's exposition of the topic.

Tsong kha pa's argument revolves around understanding that Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika, as he interprets it, presents the only valid view through realization and cultivation of which cyclic existence can be overcome. He argues, explicitly and in detail in several of his works, why this is philosophically so, drawing out the consequence that liberation from cyclic existence cannot be attained through the views of the other schools of tenets. It may turn out that the real drama here is to be found in the sociological need for group distinctiveness, couched in this case in philosophical exclusivity, but we cannot pass off the entire argument until we investigate its many issues.

His arguments that liberation from cyclic existence cannot be achieved without the view as described in Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika apply to philosophical positions of the Theravāda school, which posit selflessness only with respect to persons and not with respect to other phenomena; thus, it would have to be said that from Tsong kha pa's point of view liberation could not be attained merely through realization and cultivation of the selflessness set forth by the Theravāda school. Tsong kha pa makes many claims to having delineated a view of emptiness in Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika that not only differs in its profundity and power from that of other schools but also differs from its interpretation by other great masters in Tibet. For anyone interested in exploring philosophical and theological claims and for anyone interested in an accurate portrayal of Tsong kha pa's estimation of the emptiness of inherent existence, it is necessary to delineate this exclusivity.

Mr. Burrill, in the interests of sectarian harmony within Buddhism, feels that the presentation of these distinctions is necessarily polemical, and he would have me by-pass the issue. He advises that, instead, I should follow the example of certain contemporary dGe lugs pa scholars who, in his experience, do not present Tsong kha pa's exclusivistic claims. Not only would such skirting of central issues do an injustice to the history of dGe lugs pa philosophical discourse but also I would have to forsake my own philosophical interests in exploring Tsong kha pa's claims, for I would have to reduce a presentation of dGe lugs pa views on emptiness to something to which all contemporary Buddhist orders could agree. To do what he suggests would, for me, amount to intellectual dishonesty.

Mr. Burrill seems to assume that I am a dGe lugs pa Buddhist. Let me merely say that when, about ten years ago, a Western monk told me that during the ordination ceremony the Dalai Lama advised the Westerners becoming monks not to think of themselves as dGe lugs pas, I was struck with a sense of amazement at what it might mean for a Westerner to be a dGe lugs pa! Such a possibility had never even occurred to me. It, therefore, is at once amusing and bewildering to be accused of being a dGe lugs pa polemicist.

If Buddhist and Christian scholars can meet in theological encounters, explaining their different philosophies and benefitting from it, I would think that philosophically oriented Buddhists could benefit from exchanging views on the nature of cyclic existence, the means to overcome its root, and so forth, without having to hide from or paste over the implications of exclusivity. As long as the attitude of the participants is to probe the structure and implications of their systems within the spirit of *homo ludens*, inter-sectarian harmony should be improved, especially since so many Buddhists call for investigation and analysis and not mere adherence to dogma. Central to my method is the development of an attitude of vigorous play with the concepts of a system within an attitude of suspended judgement.

Bruce Burrill Replies:

Hopkins' response clarifies what he vaguely stated in his preface, but it does not change my criticism of his book. He is correct in pointing out that it is a powerful didactic method to speak in the voice of the system one is expositing, but without an objective reference, how do we distinguish the statements of one who, for didactic reasons, speaks as a dogmatist from the statements of one who is a dogmatist? Would not the effect of these statements be the same? Other than his vague statement in his preface, there is no sense in this book of a stepping back from the material to give us an objective reference. The last line of Hopkins' response about vigorously playing with concepts "within an attitude of suspended judgement" is quite telling. The suspended judgement is not the suspension of the judgements the dogmatist may make of a competing system, for Hopkins plays that role well; it is the historical and philosophical judgement of the scholar that is suspended. Let us not forget that this