

THE JOURNAL  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
BUDDHIST STUDIES

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*Volume 8*

*1985*

*Number 1*

# CONTENTS

## I. ARTICLES

1. Nāgārjuna's Arguments Against Motion, *by Kamaleswar Bhattacharya* 7
2. *Dhāraṇī* and *Pratibhāna*: Memory and Eloquence of the Bodhisattvas, *by Jens Braarvig* 17
3. The Concept of a "Creator God" in Tantric Buddhism, *by Eva K. Dargyay* 31
4. Direct Perception (*Pratyakṣa*) in dGe-lugs-pa Interpretations of Sautrāntika, *by Anne C. Klein* 49
5. A Text-Historical Note on *Hevajratantra* II:v: 1–2, *by Leonard W. J. van der Kuijp* 83
6. Simultaneous Relation (*Sahabhū-hetu*): A Study in Buddhist Theory of Causation, *by Kenneth K. Tanaka* 91

## II. BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

### *Reviews:*

1. *The Books of Kiu-Te or the Tibetan Buddhist Tantras: A Preliminary Analysis*, *by David Reigle*  
*Dzog Chen and Zen*, *by Namkhai Norbu*  
(Roger Jackson) 113
2. *Nagarjuniana. Studies in the Writings and Philosophy of Nāgārjuna*, *by Chr. Lindtner*  
(Fernando Tola and Carmen Dragonetti) 115
3. *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravāda Buddhism*, *by Steven Collins*  
(Vijitha Rajapakse) 117

4. *Self and Non-Self in Early Buddhism*, by Joaquin Pérez-Remón  
(Vijitha Rajapakse) 122
5. *The World of Buddhism*, edited by Heinz Bechert and Richard Gombrich  
(Roger Jackson) 126

*Notices:*

1. *Tibetan Blockprints in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections*, compiled by Leonard Zwilling  
(Rena Haggarty) 134

OBITUARY 135  
LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS 138

quotations of *Yuktiśaṣṭikā*'s stanzas (19, 33, 34 and 39), that are found in other authors' works. We think it is useful that we indicate now the other quotations that Professor Lindtner points out. They are: *stanza 1* in *Sekoddeśaṣṭikā*, p. 48 (ed. M.E. Carelli, Baroda, 1941); *stanza 5* in Āryadeva, *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇā*, 24 (ed. Patel); *stanza 6* in *Ratnakīrtinibandhāvalī*, p. 139 (ed. A. Thakur, Patna, 1975); *stanza 30* in *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, p. 385 (ed. C. Bendall, *Le Muséon*, N.S. IV, 1903, p. 385), and *Nyāyaviniścayavivarana* II, pp. 17–18 (ed. M.K. Jain) both with variants; *stanzas 46–48* in Haribhadra's *Āloka*, p. 161 (ed. Wogihara, Tokyo 1932-35 = pp. 343–344 ed. P.L. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1960); and *stanza 55* *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa*, already quoted.

We also avail ourselves of this opportunity to correct some small misprints that appear in our article, in the Sanskrit texts of pages 96 and 97 and in the Tibetan text edited by us: *stanza 33a* read *proktaṃ* instead of *proktaṃ*; *stanza 2d* read *śṛṅṣva* instead of *śṛṅṣva*; *stanza 1b* read *śiṃ* instead of *iś*; *stanza 6c* read *yoṅs* instead of *yoṅś*; *stanza 7d* read *sgyu* instead of *sgu*; *stanza 14d* read *daṅ* instead of *das*; *stanza 19c* read *dños por*<sup>14</sup> instead of *dños por*; *stanza 36a* read *gyo* instead of *g-yo*; *stanza 49c* read *stsogs* instead of *sogs* (as in *Sde-dge* edition; cf. *stanza 44*, and Lokesh Chandra, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary* II, p. 1916, who refers to *Mahāvvyutpatti* 9228); *stanza 56b* read *bzlog* instead of *bzlog*; *stanza 59b* read *gyo* instead of *g-yo* (twice).

Fernando Tola and Carmen Dragonetti

*Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravada Buddhism*, by Steven Collins. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982. Pp. ix + 323.

Buddhist teachings on the nature of the self (the celebrated *anattā* doctrine) clearly stood against the established views on the subject that were upheld in India's various other religious and philosophical systems. A radical anti-metaphysical outlook as well as a striking analytical procedure are evident in these teachings; hence, there is much room to link the latter with the standpoints of Western empiricists, both old and new. Yet this, significantly, is not the perception that guides the discussions in the *Selfless Persons*. On the contrary, the exposition of Theravāda thinking

on selfhood and personality that is offered here actually proceeds on the assumption that this thinking is entirely "alien" to Western ideas and beliefs.

What Collins undertakes in this book is certainly a "new account of a familiar doctrine"; for he departs notably from traditional patterns of exegesis. It must be also observed that there is much that is controversial in his discussions; whether his conclusions are always persuasive is likely to be very much disputed, especially by Theravāda believers. In any event, readers would do well to recognize that despite professions of a philosophical intent, this account is not developed on the basis of a simple consideration of the interpretative criteria associated with logic and philosophy. The author believes in the existence of subtle links between religious doctrines and society, ideas and their background. Hence, the approaches adopted in recent sociological and anthropological explanations of religion in general and Buddhism in particular are consciously drawn into the discussions in this book. Indeed, some of Collins' more notable claims and interpretations (as, for example, the assertion that the Buddhist denial of the self is a "linguistic taboo" geared to provide "intransigent symbolic opposition" to Brahminism, or again the arguments that support his elucidation of Theravāda imagery), all stem in the main from the adoption of sociologically inspired approaches. And, strikingly enough, what underlies these approaches is the view that Buddhism's informing ideas invariably touch upon or are addressed to "socially derived concerns." Now it is not impossible to entertain reservations regarding methodological perspectives of this kind; some Theravāda scholars might perhaps feel that Collins' approaches frequently lead to an improper exteriorization of the products of a tradition of religious thinking whose basis is after all pre-eminently interior or esoteric. Nevertheless, *Selfless Persons* fully merits careful attention, for its discussions bear witness to the application of interesting new viewpoints; besides, these discussions are on the whole supported by a rather impressive review of Pāli textual sources that deal with the *anattā* doctrine.

The main contents of this book (which follow an introductory clarification of its aims) are presented in four parts organized under a total of eight chapters. The first part prepares in large measure the background to the study, and deals with the cultural and social setting of Buddhist thought. Its focus falls initially on pre-Buddhist (Brahmanical) ideas that influenced Buddhism (*samsāra*, *karma* and the like) and then shifts to a consideration

of the overall framework within which "self" and "person" came to be viewed by Buddhism itself. The discussions in the next three parts of the book revolve around Theravāda thinking as well as its expressions as they relate to these latter subjects. Thus, Part II considers the doctrine of non-self; Part III delves into the question of personality and re-birth; and Part IV examines the notion of continuity. These discussions indeed serve to bring to light some characteristic features of Theravāda thought and imagery; but what is very distinctive of the treatment of the above topics is of course the conscious effort to forge links between the mental and the social worlds of the Buddhists. Collins, to be sure, takes the view that Theravāda texts which deal with selfhood and personality, as well as the interpretations given to them, are subtly connected with the ambient background.

This line of thinking forms the basis for many of Collins' arguments and interpretations. Thus, he regards a distinction which figures in some later expositions of the *anattā* doctrine, namely that between "conventional" (*sammuti*) and "ultimate" (*paramattha*) truth to be the "main means by which Buddhist intellectualism has oriented itself in society and culture" (p. 147). Further, he discerns a specificity in Buddhist imagery, the origins of which are traced to the peasant society of South Asia. The images themselves are regarded as key structures, providing access to the ingrained features of the Buddhist mentality. According to Collins, the various strata of Buddhist society, from scholarly monks to peasant believers, are actually united into a single cultural world by this imagery.

Many patterns of imagery found in the Pāli texts are identified and examined in the course of Collins' study, and some of the details highlighted are worth brief notice. Thus, imagery associated with houses and dwelling places are held to play a major role in the entire soteriological scheme of Buddhism, woven around the need to overcome the desires that sustain existence in *samsāra*. Village imagery, he finds, sometimes replicates house imagery, with an extended simile referring to the border town liable to attack. Some other emphases of Buddhism, according to him, are conveyed with the help of vegetation imagery drawn from the preoccupations of South Asian peasant agriculturalists. Examples cited in this connection include "root" and "seed" (used in explanations of causality), as well as "ripening" and "fruit" (used to bring out the idea of effect or result). Collins observes perceptively that some of the finer points of Theravāda thinking on the self are actually clarified through

imagery. The burning lamp-flame, for example, is held forth as a classic means of bringing out the import of *anattā*, especially in relation to the prospect of a life beyond, while streams, running waters and moving chariots are identified as images which highlight continuity (or in some instances, desire). Lastly, water in the deep or placid state is noted as an image that is commonly invoked to portray the condition of the mind stilled and calmed—not only of the disciple, but also of the Buddha himself.

Though Collins concedes in passing that some kinds of Buddhist imagery (streams in particular) figure in non-Buddhist systems, he does not really favor “cross-cultural” comparison. What he seeks instead is to “understand Theravāda thought and imagery in its own terms” (p. 258). The adoption of this attitude actually leads him to attempt a firm disengagement of Buddhist accounts of change and continuity from Western ones (like those of Heraclitus and Bergson), with which they are often compared. These positions, it must be noted, are open to criticism. But, then, many of his findings and conclusions regarding the nature and the basis of the *anattā* doctrine itself are even often more so. What many commentators (especially those philosophically inclined) usually see in this doctrine is an insightful interpretation of our total being. Such commentators are apt to be attracted by its logical features above every thing else. T.H. Huxley’s remarks in his *Evolution and Ethics* (1894) exemplify this rather strikingly. Huxley hailed Buddhism’s rejection of the notion of an abiding soul-substance as “a metaphysical *tour de force* of great interest to the student of philosophy,” and he viewed this stance as “a remarkable indication of the subtlety of Indian speculation.” Yet, what Collins recognizes here is finally the product of a localised cultural imagination. Not only does he incline towards the position that the *anattā* doctrine is “counter intuitive” (and hence an unlikely vehicle for the religious aspirations of ordinary people), but he also maintains that it is “Buddhist scholasticism” which has ensured its survival by upholding it as an unquestionable dogma. And, as indicated above, this in turn prompts him to assign the character of a “linguistic taboo” to the Theravāda view of the self. The role it has performed, he contends, is symbolic—that of preserving the identity and integrity of Buddhism as a system separate from Brahmanical Hinduism.

It is somewhat difficult to conceive of anyone without a penchant for a particular kind of sociological explanation accepting many of the conclusions in *Selfless Persons*. Admirers of Theravāda Buddhism can hardly be faulted if they get the impres-

sion that the notably philosophical character of the *anattā* doctrine (and its meaningfulness and considerable viability within an empiricist framework of thought) is unfairly de-emphasized here in order to pave the way for a confidently reductionist, sociologically inspired accounting. Aspects of this accounting as it relates to both Theravāda thought and imagery are especially vulnerable to criticism. This can be substantiated by delving into a few details.

It might be argued, for example, that the principle underlying the "two truths" need not, after all, be given an exclusively sociologically-slanted interpretation. Collins himself identifies it at one point as a "metapsychological schematization" (p. 156), and a philosophically informed inquirer is likely to discern two levels of empirical analysis here. It should be observed that there is a parallel of a sort to it in the famous distinction between statements in the "formal" and "material" modes which the contemporary philosopher Rudolph Carnap has elaborated in his *Logical Syntax of Language*. As regards imagery, one may indeed concede that it does play a certain role in Theravāda thinking. Yet there is again some room to wonder whether the images Collins highlights can be really called the unifying structures of Buddhist culture and, still less, that they hold the keys to some highly important but hitherto unrecognized facts about the collective Theravāda psyche. As against Collins, one may indeed say that what serves to unite Buddhists into a single cultural world are the thoughts behind the images, rather than the images themselves. In any case, it is possible to dispute Collins' tacit assumption that Theravāda imagery is wholly stereotyped. The immensely influential *Dhammapada*, for example, uses a rich and varied stock of images; and, significantly, they cannot be always related to a narrow range of agricultural activities. Fletchers and their shafts, the herdsman and his kine, bees, flowers and swans figure in many of its famous couplets. It should be recalled that the mind's unsteady nature is compared here to the wriggings of a fish taken out of water, an evocative, but still not typically agricultural image that could have issued from the "moulds" Collins' account seems to set up. All in all, the limitations of Collins' findings on the question of imagery tend to become even more evident when one examines the role images play in another influential religious tradition, the Christianity of the Gospels. Pastoral and agricultural activities, as well as the fishing which sustained West Asian peoples among whom Christianity originated, have indeed left unmistakable imprints on the language and the idiom of the Christian message set forth in the Gospels.



Yet would it not be somewhat naive to say baldly that Christians are united into a single cultural world by this imagery, forgetting the underlying ideas? Moreover, Collins' contentions regarding the "specificity" of Theravāda imagery might be considerably undermined by a wider review of Gospel imagery. It is well to remember that Christianity also refers to houses and homes, and in particular to fields, plants, seeds and fruits in order to clarify its doctrinal points.

To sum up, *Selfless Persons* is an interesting book incorporating several strands of argument, many of which are unusually thought provoking and sometimes controversial as well. Its findings on Theravāda positions on selfhood and personality might be sociologically illuminating, but doubts can be entertained as regards their philosophical, and in particular religious, acceptability. Collins' attempt to link the thoughts and images relating to these positions to their contextual social factors is a noteworthy effort. Still, it is possible to detect some shortcomings in the way he addresses himself to this very complex task. But even those who object to some of the book's conclusions will no doubt recognize that the investigation pursued here has many innovative features. The focus on Theravāda imagery is especially worthy of recall in this connection. This, to be sure, is something that could be extended and viewed on the basis of other, less "reductionist" perspectives. It must be reiterated that *Selfless Persons*, finally, is not likely to prove very attractive to admirers of Theravāda thought. But even this category of readers might be instructed in some ways by paying heed to the critical vistas it opens.

Vijitha Rajapakse

*Self and Non-Self in Early Buddhism*, by Joaquín Pérez-Remón. The Hague, Paris and New York: Mouton Publishers, 1980. xii + 421 pp.

Buddhism dispenses with the traditional notion of an abiding self, a position which appears to be somewhat paradoxical for a religious system. Still, certain Buddhist schools (like the Theravāda) did place great emphasis on this position, sometimes treating it as the focal point of Buddhist thinking as a whole.