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Theravāda in History¹

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I. RECONNAISSANCE

“Theravāda Buddhism” seems to be a transparent and straightforward term. It is taken for granted as an integral feature of the religious landscape not only of South and Southeast Asia, but also of contemporary Buddhism in the West. The term is regularly used without any attempt at definition, and without asking to what degree “Theravāda Buddhism” is a valid or useful category.² A chapter entitled “Theravāda Buddhism” in one recent book uses the word “Theravāda” and cognate forms forty-one times in about seven pages of text (not counting captions and side-bars).³ Is there anything surprising in this? Perhaps not: but when we consider that the term Theravāda is rare in Pali literature, and that for nearly a millennium it was rarely used in the Pali or vernacular inscriptions, chronicles, or other premodern texts of Southeast Asia, this might give us pause.

This essay is written on the premise that we—historians of Buddhism—do not adequately understand, and have not adequately attempted to understand, the term “Theravāda.” Nonetheless, we have imposed it in our studies to create, in many cases, artificial and ahistorical entities. I believe that we need to reexamine the evidence, to see how the complex of historical movements within Theravāda define and refer to themselves, and to see how they define and refer to others, both Buddhist *nikāyas* and other religions.⁴ I take it as axiomatic that the history of Theravāda cannot be written on the basis of Pali sources alone. We must exploit the full range of sources, including not only the vernaculars of the cultures in which Theravāda has developed from a

monastic aggregation into distinctive social complexes, but also the classical Buddhist languages—Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese—and other vernaculars used by Buddhist traditions. We must take epigraphic, literary, archaeological, iconographical, and anthropological evidence into account.

As a working hypothesis, I suggest that “Theravāda Buddhism” came to be distinguished as a kind of Buddhism or as a “religion”—remembering that “Buddhism” is a modern term and that “religion” is a vexed concept—only in the late colonial and early globalized periods, that is, in the twentieth century. In the pre-colonial and early colonial periods, Europeans grouped non-Christian religions in several ways, and Buddhism was subsumed with Indian, Mongolian, Chinese, and Japanese religions under the categories of “idolaters” or “heathens.” Eventually European savants, for the most part working in milieux that were deeply charged by Christian beliefs and presuppositions, realized that the religious life of certain groups or societies was centered on “Buddha.” Gradually they saw that this religion, which they eventually came to call Buddhism, had different forms or schools. Exactly when “Theravāda Buddhism” gained currency as a discrete category, and how this category in due course entered the consciousness of “Theravādin societies” themselves, is a good question, but it seems that it was rather late in the game—that is, only by the middle of the twentieth century.⁵ We need to bear these points in mind if we are to understand the history of Theravāda.

Theravāda has now become a standard and authoritative term, defined (or mis-defined) even in computer dictionaries. It is a ready-made label that gives us “Theravādin meditation,” “Theravādin philosophy,” “Theravādin psychology,” “Theravādin art,” “Theravādin iconography,” and so on. As a *type of Buddhism*, the very idea of Theravāda is a by-product of globalization. With increased international migration in the second half of the twentieth century, Sinhalese, Burmese, Khmer, Lao, and Thai communities have had to construct identities in a multicultural world, and so have become “Theravāda Buddhists.” Beyond this, we live in an age in which packaging and labeling are essential to the social constitution of both the individual and the group. Ambiguity is not tolerated. Today Theravāda is a self-conscious identity for many, although not necessarily in the societies that have nurtured it for centuries. For most Thai, for example, the primary marker of identity remains to be “Buddhist” (*pen phut*, *pen chao phut*, *naptü*

phra phutthasāsanā). To say “to believe in Theravāda” (*naptū therawāt*) is unnatural.

The evolution of Theravāda as a modern religion is not the concern of this paper. My concern is the use of Theravāda as a historical category. The problem is this: the word “Theravāda” and cognate forms or near-synonyms “Therīya” and “Theravaṃsa” are infrequent in Pali texts. Their use is limited to some of the commentaries and to the historical (*vaṃsa*) literature—literature specifically concerned with school formation and legitimation. But in the pre-modern period, what we call the Theravāda Buddhists of Southeast Asia did not seem to use the term at all. It was neither a marker of identity nor a standard of authority in the inscriptions or chronicles of the region. Nor does the term occur in the early European accounts of the religion and society of the region, whether Portuguese, Dutch, French, or English. Simply put, the term was not part of the self-consciousness of the Buddhists of the region.

The overuse of the term Theravāda in historical studies has led to several misconceptions. One is the idea that there existed some sort of monolithic religion, or institutional entity, called “Theravāda,” that spread throughout the region. This obscures the fact that the Southeast Asian sanghas that renewed their ordination lineages in Sri Lanka were, as soon as they returned to their own lands, autonomous or rather independent entities. They invoked their Lankan credentials as a claim to ritual purity, but they did not maintain binding institutional links with Lanka. The new lineages established their own identities; more often than not within one or two generations they fell into dispute and split into further independent lines.

This state of affairs arises from the nature of ordination, of the independent system of self-reproduction of Buddhist monastic communities. Higher ordination (*upasampadā*) can be performed without reference to any outside authority (except, depending on circumstances, temporal authority, which made efforts to control sanghas for political and economic reasons). The only conditions were the presence of a monk qualified to act as preceptor (*upajjhāya*, who must have a minimum ten years’ ordination) and a quorum of monks to perform higher ordination. It is, precisely, our task to understand how ordination lineages spread, how they defined themselves, how they related to other lineages in the region, and how they contended with each other and with temporal powers for recognition and patronage.

The history of “Theravāda” is, then, a history of ordination lineages. It is not a history of “sects” in the sense of broad-based lay groups, as in Reformation Europe. Monks, rulers, and lay supporters were concerned with establishing or restoring pure ordination lineages in order to sustain the life of the *sāsana* by activating pure “fields of merit” and ensuring the continuity of ritual. The records show little concern for ideas or philosophy. It is this spread of monastic ideals and lineages that we must try to understand, usually through indirect evidence, since despite the importance of claimed descent, lineage records were not maintained or constructed.

Our study must maintain an awareness of the monastic/lay distinction. How should we understand relations between laity and lineage? Even if the monastics were Theravādin, or better (see below) belonged to a Sīhalavaṃsa or some other lineage, can we say this of the laity? To what degree did the laity participate in the distinctions and contentions of monastic lineages? What range of ideas or activities do monastic lineages embrace? How far are they relevant to the social and religious lives of the laity? Traditionally, could categories like Theravāda or Sīhalapakkha apply to laypeople at all? What are the boundaries in terms of individual or society?

The preservation, transmission, and study of the Pali canon and the use of Pāli as a liturgical language—by monastics and laity—is one distinctive and unifying feature of the Theravādin lineages.⁶ But the use of Pali should not overshadow vernacular literature and practice. If Pali was a resource, a database, that offered stability and continuity to a congeries of constantly evolving traditions, it was the vernacular transformations of the Pali—through sermon, gloss, bilingual recitation, and the plastic arts—that enabled what Steven Collins has called “the Pali imaginaire” to function as a vital agent in the religious life of mainland Southeast Asia.⁷

Defining Theravāda

What is Theravāda? If we describe it as a system, what do we mean? A system of thought? A system of ethics? A monastic infrastructure, an economic institution, or a soteriological framework? If it is several or all of these, how does it differ from other Buddhist systems? *Buddhism: The Illustrated Guide* defines Theravāda as follows: “Of the many distinctive schools of Buddhism that formed in the first centuries after the death of the Buddha, only one has survived into the present day—the

Theravāda or ‘Doctrine of the Elders.’ The followers of this tradition trace its origins back to Gautama Buddha himself. They maintain that the Buddha’s teaching has been handed down in an unbroken succession within the Sangha or monastic community, hence the reference to ‘elders’ or venerable members of the Sangha who have protected the tradition’s integrity.”⁸ Unfortunately, the definition misses the point. The term “*thera*” does not refer to a lineal succession of “elders,” but to a specific “historical” or foundational group: the five hundred *arhats* who recited and collected the teachings of the Buddha at Rājagṛha after the first rains-retreat following the death of the Buddha.⁹ This is stated, for example, in the *Dīpavaṃsa*: “because the collection was made by the *theras*, therefore it is called the Theravāda.”¹⁰ For a more accurate definition, we may turn to Ven. Payutto (Prayudh Payutto, Phra Brahmaguṇābharaṇa, 1938–). After describing the events of the First Rehearsal, he writes: “The teachings thus agreed upon that have been handed down to us are called *Theravāda* or ‘the teachings laid down as principles of the Elders.’ The word *Elders* in this context refers to those 500 Arahant elders participating in this First Rehearsal. The Buddhism that is based on the First Rehearsal mentioned above is called *Theravāda Buddhism*. In other words, the Buddha’s teachings, namely the Doctrine and Discipline, both in letter and in spirit, that were thus rehearsed were to be remembered as such and strictly adhered to.”¹¹ One problem with this traditional definition is that all of the eighteen Buddhist schools trace their origins back to the First Council, which is their common heritage. Each of the surviving *Vinayas* and other records preserved in several languages presents its own version of the “Council of the Five-Hundred.” How then, do the Ceylon *theras* differ?¹²

Indo-Tibetan Perspectives

There are several Pali terms for what we call “Theravāda,” including “*Theriya*” and “*Theravaṃsa*.”¹³ Before examining them, however, we will turn to India, to see how the later north Indian Buddhists described the “Theravāda.”

What did the Indian Buddhist schools call what we call “Theravāda,” and how did they present it? To start with, they did *not* call it “*Sthaviravāda*.” “*Sthaviravāda*” and “*Sthaviravādin*” are ghost words. They are Sanskrit neologisms coined on the analogy of Pali “*Theravāda*,” and they have not been found in any Sanskrit text.¹⁴ The word “*sthavira*” does occur, but as a technical *Vinaya* term for a senior

monk, defined as one who has been ordained as a *bhikṣu* for ten years or more (in Pali *thera*, in Hybrid Sanskrit also *sthera*). The term is used by *all* Buddhist schools, and is not a marker of “Theravāda.” It occurs in compounds like *saṃgha-sthavira* and *rāja-sthavira*, or as a prefix to a proper name, as—taking examples from Indian inscriptions—in Sthavira Pūrṇadāsa, Sthavira Mahānāma, or Sthavira Acala.¹⁵ The compound “Siṃghala-sthavira,” found in an inscription from Bodh-Gayā, is ambiguous, although my own interpretation is that it refers to a “Sinhalese senior monk.”¹⁶

The Sthāvira lineage is regularly referred to in Indian doxographic works that were translated into Tibetan and Chinese, but no Sanskrit versions survive. Therefore we cannot say with certainty what Sanskrit terms lie behind the translations. The few available references in Sanskrit suggest a *ṛddhi* form: Sthāvira,¹⁷ Sthāviriya,¹⁸ or Sthāvārī.¹⁹ These are Sanskrit counterparts of “Theriya,” a common Pali and Prakrit counterpart to “Theravāda.” In this essay, I tentatively adopt the form Sthāvira.

In his *History of the Dharma*, Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (1290–1364) defines the Sthāviras as follows:

*gnas brtan 'phags pa'i rigs yin par smra bas gnas brtan pa.*²⁰

Because they assert that they belong to the noble lineage (*āryavaṃśa*) of the Sthāviras they are *Sthāviras.

I am not certain this tells us much—the *ārya-vaṃśa* seems to be, again, a shared quality of Buddhist monastic heritage.²¹

The Four Vinaya Schools and the Four Philosophical Schools

A persistent problem in the modern historiography of Buddhism in India is a denial of tradition—a refusal to try to understand how Indian Buddhism looked at itself. This strikes me as odd. To *believe in* or to *accept* tradition is one thing; but to achieve historical understanding, one must first try to see how Buddhism presented itself, whether or not one believes it or accepts it as historically accurate or viable. A *priori* rejection because the information goes against received opinions or because a source is preserved only in Tibetan amounts to ideologically motivated blindness.

In India, classifications of Buddhism depended on context. In terms of *Vinaya*, there were the “four *nikāyas*”: Sarvāstivāda, Sthāvira, Sāṃmitiya, and Mahāsāṃghika. This classification subsumed the

traditional lists of the (conventionally enumerated) eighteen *nikāyas*. The fourfold classification was widespread in north India by the seventh century, if not earlier, and is reported by Yijing (635–713) in his “Record of the Inner Law Sent Home from the South Seas” and in other sources.²² The four schools are mentioned in tantras and tantra commentaries such as the *Hevajra-tantra* and the *Yogaratnamālā* on the *Hevajra-tantra*.²³

When the four schools are explained in detail, three branches are listed under Sthāvira.²⁴ These are given in Indian sources from the eighth century on preserved in Tibetan, such as Vinītadeva’s *Nikāyabheda*, Subhūtiḥoṣa’s *Sarvayānālokakāra-vaibhāṣya*, the *Śrāmaṇera-ṛcchā*, and the *Bhikṣuvarṣāgra-ṛcchā*,²⁵ as well as in the great Sanskrit-Tibetan lexicon of the late eighth century, the *Mahāvvyutpatti*. The names of the three schools derive from the monasteries in Anurādhapura, Sri Lanka, at which their sanghas were based:

Mahāvihāravāsin	Residents of the Great Monastery
Abhayagirivāsin	Residents of the Abhayagiri Monastery
Jetavanīya	Residents of the Jetavana Monastery.

North Indian accounts agree with the indigenous tradition of Sri Lanka. The *Mahāvamsa* refers to the three schools in several places as “the three *nikāyas*” (*nikāyattaya*); in the twelfth century they were unified by King Parākramabāhu.²⁶ Even if the nature of the unification and the role of the Mahāvihāra vis-à-vis the other schools are debated, we can safely say that before the twelfth century, the Mahāvihāra was not the sole representative of “Theravāda,” and that after the twelfth century the surviving “Theravāda” was only one branch of the earlier Lankan school. The idea of “Theravāda” as an unchanging and perennial lineage contradicts the school’s own history (as well as common sense).

North Indian tradition as preserved in Tibet defines each of the four schools in terms of a fixed set of categories. Gorampa (1429–1489) explains that “among the four root Śrāvaka schools there are four different *Vinayas*, four different languages, four different preceptors, four different numbers of panels of the monk’s robe, and four different insignia on the edge of the robe.”²⁷ In his “Sun of the Land of Samantabhadra,” published in 1699, ’Jam-dbyaṅs Bzad-pa’i-rdorje (Nag-dbañ-brtson-’grus, 1648–1721/2) describes the Sthāviras as follows:

gnas brtan pa ni | skad bi śa tsi śa za'i skad dam 'briñ du 'don pa | mkhan po
rje rigs smyig ma mkhan mtha' 'khob 'dul ba'i mchog tu luñ bstan pa katya
ya na nas | snam phran śia ma ltar dañ | grva rtags 'khor lo miñ lha dañ |
'byuñ gnas dañ | go cha ste | rin chen 'byuñ gnas dañ | śes rab go cha lta bu
yin te | ñes brjod las |

gnas brtan pa la go cha lha ||

sde dañ 'tsho dañ skyoñ ba'o | źes so ||²⁸

The language of the Sthāvira is “Paiśāci,” the “language of the flesh-eaters” (*piśāca*), or the “intermediate recitation.” Their [first] preceptor is the Vaiśya bamboo-maker (*veṇukāra*) Kātyāyana, who was declared [by the Blessed One] to be “foremost among those who convert the border regions.” The robe [*snam* = *snam sbyar* = *saṃghāṭī*] has [from twenty-one to twenty-five panels (*khaṇḍa*)] like that of the preceding [Sāṃmatīyas].²⁹ The insignia on the edge of the robe is the wheel (*cakra*). The names [of monastics end in] *-deva*, *-ākara*, or *-varman*, as for example Ratnākara or Prajñāvarman. According to the *ñes brjod*:

The [names of] Sthāvira [end in] *varman*, *deva*
senā, *rakṣita*, and *pāla*.

In the Pali tradition, Kaccāna or Mahākaccāyana, a direct disciple of the Buddha, is a brahman, as his *gotra* name suggests. It is possible that the reference here is to the enigmatic author of the *Nettipakaraṇa*, but the *gotra* name raises the same problem. None of the other information can be confirmed. If there is any substance to it, the passage—transmitted in various Tibetan sources, but not yet located in an Indian text—may describe the Sthāvira (and other schools) according to north India stereotypes of the Pāla period. Sakya Paṇḍita (1182–1251) summarizes the tradition in his *A Clear Differentiation of the Three Codes*:

The four fundamental communities of the Disciples
had four distinct codes of discipline,
and their canonical languages, too, were four:
Sanskrit, Prākṛit, Apabhraṃśa, and Paiśācī.

The eighteen schools that developed therefrom
had eighteen distinct codes of discipline,
because all these schools differed
in their procedures—for accepting vows
in the beginning; for observing them,
repairing them, and reciting the *Prātimokṣa*
meanwhile; and, finally, for renouncing them.
What one prohibited is permitted for another.³⁰

The Four Philosophical Schools

North Indian tradition grouped Buddhist philosophy under four main schools: Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Cittamātra/Vijñānavādin, and Mādhyamika. This classification was sufficiently current to be adopted in the classical Indian doxography, the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*,³¹ and in other non-Buddhist texts,³² and to be discussed in tantric and Kālacakra literature.³³ Mimaki suggests that the classification was developed by the end of the eighth century;³⁴ it was widely adopted in Tibet where it became standard in any number of doxographic manuals.³⁵ Jam-dbyaṅs Bṅad-pa'i-rdo-rje is somewhat dogmatic about the number of philosophical schools:

*rañ sde bye smra mdo sems dbu ma ba, bṅir nes 'dir ni grub mtha' lñar min
gsuñs.*

Regarding the tenets of our own [that is, the Buddhist] schools, our own schools are limited to the four: Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Cittamātra, and Mādhyamika, for it is said that here there are not five systems of tenets.³⁶

This statement reflects Tibetan scholastic politics rather than the situation in India. Earlier Tibetan works in the genre listed the schools in several ways, one of which names five schools, adding the Sāṃmitīyas. Despite the fact that it is equally valid in terms of the historical evolution of Buddhist thought, the fivefold classification did not find favor in Tibetan scholasticism.

The association of the four philosophical schools with the four *Vinaya* lineages is problematic. The Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas are usually considered to be philosophical movements within the Sarvāstivādin lineage.³⁷ The fundamental Yogācāra works rely on Sarvāstivādin texts, while Mādhyamika is not associated with any particular *Vinaya* tradition. The tenets laid down in the doxographic literature, particularly those of the Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas, may well have existed largely in the textbooks by the time the later manuals were composed. In any case, the Sthāvira tradition is conspicuous by its absence. How do we explain this? Why did north Indian tradition not recognize the Sthāviras as a philosophical school, even when it knew it as a *Vinaya* lineage?

In the absence of evidence, no certain answer can be given. The four-school classification appears to be a curriculum list and may reflect the interests of the professors of Nālandā or other monastic universities

of northeastern India: it is possible that, quite simply, the Sthāvira philosophy was not on the curriculum. The classification also shows a Sarvāstivādin bias, and the Sarvāstivādin texts that we know pay very little attention to the Sthāviras. From the writings of Tāranātha Kun-dga'-sñiñ-po (1575–1635), which are based on Indian sources, we do know that the Sthāviras were active as an ordination lineage in India; but perhaps they were not strong players in the field of philosophy. However, their texts and ideas were known to a degree, as extensive citations from the **Vimuttimagga* are given by Daśabalaśrīmitra in his *Samskṛtāsamskṛtaviniścaya*, which was apparently composed in north India in the twelfth century.³⁸ It is also possible that the Sthāvira texts did not address the interests of late north Indian scholasticism, with its penchant for epistemology and logic. Although later Pali texts, such as the *ṭīkā*s, borrow and adapt Vaibhāṣika categories in their exegesis,³⁹ and show the development of epistemological ideas,⁴⁰ these do not seem to have taken a foothold in the curricula or to have developed into a strong, independent tradition that could enter into dialogue and debate with the north Indian Buddhist and indeed non-Buddhist schools.⁴¹

Part of the problem may lie with the lacuna in sources for the history of Buddhism of south India. The Theravāda that we know today had an important presence in south India, at least in several coastal centers, and the evidence suggests that the Mahāvihāra philosophical and hermeneutical heritage is a south Indian–Sri Lankan phenomenon rather than, as presented in later periods after the eclipse of south Indian Buddhism, exclusively Lankan. But almost no literary records of the once thriving Buddhist traditions of the region—evidenced by rich and unique archaeological remains—survive.⁴² Our reconstruction of Indian Buddhism is very much a Buddhism of the north, based on surviving Gandhari, Buddhist Sanskrit, and Sanskrit sources, as well as those preserved in Chinese and Tibetan. Very few, if any, southern texts were translated into those languages, although here too more research is needed.

Therīya and Mahāvihāra

I am not confident that a convincing narrative history of “Theravāda” is possible. The historical development of the school before the time of Buddhaghosa is, to put it mildly, obscure, and I do not doubt that its origins were complex. I wonder whether the celebrated “Pali

canon,” or at least the *Khuddakanikāya*, did not start out as a practical didactic and recitative collection rather than an official or exclusive dogmatic corpus. It is possible that the school drew on Vibhajjavādin traditions; certainly at a later, uncertain point the Mahāvihāra identified with that tradition.⁴³ A colophon to a section of the *Vinaya Cullavagga*, at the end of the *Samuccayakkhandhaka*, represents the textual tradition as:⁴⁴

*ācariyānaṃ vibhajjavādānaṃ⁴⁵ tambapaṇṇidīpapasādakānaṃ mahāvihāra-
vāsinaṃ vācanā saddhammaṭṭhitiyā.*

This is the text of the Vibhajjavādin teachers, who brought faith to the island of Tambapaṇṇi, the residents of the Great Monastery, for the perpetuation of the true dharma.⁴⁶

The phrasing may be compared with that of several inscriptions from Andhra Pradesh in south India, such as a copper-plate charter from Kallacheruvu, Dist. West Godavari, which mentions the “Mahāvihāra of Tāmraparṇi,”⁴⁷ and the verse preambles and colophons of the works of Buddhaghosa, especially his commentaries on the four *Āgamas* or *Nikāyas* and his *Visuddhimagga*.⁴⁸ Of the three Theravāda schools, it seems to have been mainly the Mahāvihāra that established the South Asian connections in what the late R. A. L. H. Gunawardana (1938–2010) called “the world of Theravādin Buddhism,” although Abhayagirivihāra had its own overseas network, in Southeast Asia if not in India as well.⁴⁹

“Mahāvihāra” or “Great Monastery” itself has several referents, and more research is needed into the scope of the term. In India there were many Mahāvihāras, some of which belonged to Sarvāstivādin or other sanghas, and are known from inscriptions, monastic sealings, and textual references. The term was carried to China and Japan.⁵⁰ It is usually assumed that within the Theravādin lineage, and in most Ceylonese documents, the term refers to the ancient institution of the Mahāvihāra at Anurādhapura. But this is not always the case, and there were other Mahāvihāras in later periods. The relevance and significance of the term in the post-Polonnaruwa period, when the three Theravādin lineages were merged, remains to be clarified. They were replaced by a system of eight *mūlas*, fraternities or groups, which flourished from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, the Polonnaruwa period. The *ārañṇikas* maintained their identity, and “beginning in the twelfth century, the distinction between the ‘village monks’ (*gāmaṃvāsīn*) and ‘forest monks’ (*ārañṇavāsīn*) became more salient.”⁵¹ These two

categories became basic to the Thai hierarchy by the Ayutthaya period, as we shall see.

Theravāda in History

Modern definitions of Theravāda tend to situate themselves outside history, and choose to ignore the complexity and relative lateness of the tradition.⁵² The fact that the Theravādin lineage transmits an ancient collection of scriptures—the justly renowned “Pali canon”—has obscured the fact that what defines the tradition is the fifth-century commentaries and the later sub-commentaries and manuals. As a system of thought and code of practice it is disseminated through manuals and digests—for example the *Suttasaṅgaha* or the all-important *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* of Anuruddha (date uncertain: tenth/eleventh century?), and through vernacular texts and sermons. The centering of “Theravāda” in the Pali canon, above all in the “four main *Nikāyas*,” is a child of the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. It has grown up to become what we might call a “new Theravāda,” largely anglo-phonetic but increasingly international in influence and outreach.⁵³ This new trend should be respected and recognized as one of the Buddhisms active today. But should it be read back into the past? The prominence given to an essentialized and ahistorical Theravāda inhibits the study of the history of ideas and the history of social expressions of South and Southeast Asian Buddhism. Theravāda is not an unchanging entity: to assume so would contradict the law of impermanence. It is a “tradition in progress”—and are not all traditions?—one that has responded and adapted to changing circumstances and environments for more than two thousand years. This has given Theravāda its endurance, vitality, and relevance.

The definitions of Theravāda given above are ideal definitions: they emphasize the pure lineage of the dharma and *Vinaya*. This lineage is a monastic or *Vinaya* lineage, a *vaṃsa* or *paramparā*. But *Vinaya* lineages—communities of monks and nuns—developed in the world, in society. Monasteries became social and economic institutions; for centuries they were grand estates with land, fields, and serfs. *Nikāyas* came to be defined not by shared allegiance to ideas or to *Vinaya* lineage but as legal entities and as landholders. Gunawardana writes of early medieval Sri Lanka that “[T]he main monastery of the *nikāya* closely supervised the administration of the property of hermitages belonging to the *nikāyas*; these hermitages had to submit their annual statements

of accounts for approval by the monks of the main monastery. Hence, in the ninth and tenth centuries, the *nikāya* was not merely a fraternity of monks subscribing to a particular school of thought;⁵⁴ it was also a body which owned a vast extent of land and had supervisory control over these lands through institutions representing the *nikāya* which were spread over many parts of the island.”⁵⁵ To an extent book-keeping may have been more significant in the development of monasticism than spiritual practice or ideas. The economic history of the *nikāyas* can be gleaned from inscriptions and chronicles. According to the *Mahāvamsa*, for example, Aggabodhi I granted a village to the ascetics of the Thera tradition.⁵⁶ *Mahāvamsa* states that King Kassapa V restored and donated a *vihāra* to “monks belonging to the lineage of the Theras” (*theravaṃsajabhikkhu*).⁵⁷ Mahinda IV had a “betel-*maṇḍapa*” built, and dedicated the revenue that it would generate to monks of the Theravaṃsa for the purchase of medicines.⁵⁸ He constructed a residence named Mahāmallaka and donated it to nuns (*bhikkhuni*) belonging to the Theravaṃsa.⁵⁹

As a monastic order, Theravāda is further defined by its rituals—the performance of *upasampadā* and *kammavācā*, and the recitation of *paritta*, in Pali. Ritual demarcates physical boundaries (temples, monastic residences, and within them special sanctuaries). Ritual delineates social boundaries and identities—“Buddhist,” monk, nun, novice monk, novice nun, *upāsaka*, *upāsikā*, donor, supporter. Ritual orders time—daily, weekly, monthly, annual rites. Ritual dictates economic imperatives—royal expenditures and the import of precious commodities such as aromatics and precious substances.

II. TOWARDS A HISTORY OF BUDDHISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

For the early history of Buddhism in Southeast Asia we have no ancient indigenous chronicles. There are scattered Chinese accounts of Buddhism in states that are usually difficult to pinpoint on the modern map. There are inscriptions, generally fragmentary and mostly removed from their original contexts. These include many Pali citation inscriptions from the sixth to the eighth centuries in the Irrawaddy Delta in lower Burma and across central Thailand. There are images of buddhas and bodhisattvas, and there are architectural remains. In Thailand we face a collection of epigraphic riddles: a Pali-Khmer inscription and massive pair of footprints in Prachinburi; a reference to Anurādhapura in a brief Mon inscription in a cave in Saraburi; the

bhikṣu-mahāyāna-sthavira ordered to maintain ascetic and ritual practice for King Śrī Sūryavarmadeva in a Khmer inscription from Lopburi; and a mention of Abhayagiri—a mountain rather than a *vihāra*—in a bilingual Sanskrit-Khmer inscription from Nakhon Ratchasima. No continuous narrative emerges from these fragments of the written records of the past. All that can be said is that a school that used Pali as its scriptural language was prominent in the Chao Phraya Basin and in lower Burma, and that the school, or more probably schools, were likely to have been descendants of the Theriya lineage. It is simplistic to say that this Buddhism “came from Ceylon.” Trade and political relations were complex; the many communication routes from India and Lanka to Southeast Asia allowed diverse cultural contacts. Given the (I believe) complete silence of extant Mahāvihāra literature on relations with Southeast Asia before the Polonnaruwa period, it does not seem likely that the dominant *Vinaya* lineage in the Chao Phraya basin was that of the Mahāvihāra. Nor is there compelling evidence (at least for the mainland) for an affiliation with the Abhayagiri. I tentatively conclude that a Theriya lineage, or Theriya lineages, were introduced at an early date, that is, in the early centuries CE, from India—at several times and in several places, and that these lineages developed into a regional lineage or regional lineages in its or their own right, with their own architecture, iconography, and (now lost) literature.

For later periods—starting with the second millennium of the Christian era—we have more sources. Here again they are often fragmentary, or they were composed or edited centuries after the events that they purport to describe. These sources include inscriptions in Mon, Thai, Khmer, and Pali from Hariphunchai, Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Lanna, and Lanchang, and chronicles in the same languages. Despite the availability of these sources, the study of the history of religion in Southeast Asia remains undeveloped compared, for example, to that of Tibet, China, or Japan. Current and widely distributed books give unreliable and dated accounts. Harvey, for example, writes of Burma that “In northern Burma, Sarvāstivāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism, along with Hinduism, were present from the third century AD, with Tantric Buddhism arriving by the ninth century. A change came about when a northern king, Anawratā (1044–1077) unified the country and gave his allegiance to the Theravāda of the Mons; for he was impressed by the simplicity of its doctrines.”⁶⁰ Anawratā’s adherence to Theravāda was questioned forty years ago by Luce, whose arguments were

summarized by D. G. E. Hall in his influential *History of South-East Asia*.⁶¹ Since, as Hall notes, “not a single authentic inscription dates from his reign, save for votive tablets briefly inscribed,” how are we to know that King Anawratā was “impressed by the simplicity” of Theravāda? Harvey’s section on Thailand reads as follows: “In the region of modern Thailand, a mix of Mahāyāna and Śaivism was present from the tenth century. In the thirteenth century, the Tai people, driven south from China by the Mongolians, entered the area and drove out its Khmer rulers. Theravāda missions, sent from Burma from the eleventh century, found a response from the ruler of the Tais, once followers of Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism. Theravāda then became the dominant religious tradition.”⁶² This is outdated and inaccurate on every count. It could be reasonably recast as:

In the region of what is today modern Thailand, a tradition or school that used Pali and must be related to the Theriya tradition—perhaps from India more than from Sri Lanka—seems to have been predominant in the first millennium of the Christian Era.⁶³ Cults of bodhisattvas like Avalokiteśvara and of brahmanical deities like Viṣṇu, Śiva, and Sūrya were also active.⁶⁴ In the thirteenth century, as the power of the Khmer waned, the Tai people became ascendant, establishing states in the area of Chiangmai, Sukhothai, Suphanburi, and Ayutthaya. Not much can be said about the religious protohistory of the Tai in terms of the Buddhisms that we know today (except that they were never “followers of Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism” and were not driven south from China by the Mongolians, and there were never any “Theravāda missions” from Burma). It is, however, evident that there was continuity between the earlier traditions of the Mon Theravāda lineage, both in the central plains (through so-called Dvāravatī) and in the north (through Hariphunchai) and the traditions of the Tai. Brahmanical cults, a legacy of the central plains tradition and of the previously predominant Khmer civilization, continued to be maintained, both at the court and popular level, well into the Ayutthaya and indeed the Bangkok periods. Local Brahmins and Brahmanical rites have played a significant ritual role up to the present.⁶⁵

Skilton, in his *A Concise History of Buddhism*, writes that “Though later to be universally dominated by the Theravāda form of Buddhism, the early history of the Dharma in South-east Asia is more piecemeal and eclectic. The later history of Buddhism in the region is characterized by a strong correlation of religion and national identity, and the promulgation of an ultra-orthodoxy derived from the works of Buddhaghosa,

on the model of developments in Sri Lanka and the Mahāvihāra.”⁶⁶ One can agree that the early history of the dharma in Southeast Asia is “piecemeal and eclectic”—indeed, no master narrative can be written—but one wonders what this abstract “Theravāda form of Buddhism” which “universally dominated” Southeast Asia might be. It seems as if Sri Lanka was a kind of Rome or Constantinople, and that Southeast Asian sanghas had no autonomous or local histories or development. It more likely that “Theravāda,” including that of Lanka, was a constant exchange and adaptation in response to the realities of patronage, economics, and social change.⁶⁷ The idea of “the promulgation of an ultra-orthodoxy derived from the works of Buddhaghosa” is decidedly odd and cannot be justified, or even located, in Thai religious, social, or political history.⁶⁸

As mentioned above, the categories “Buddhism” and “religion” raise their own problems.⁶⁹ The most common word used by Buddhists for what today we call “Buddhism” is *śāsana*, “the teaching or dispensation,” a term used by all Indian Buddhist schools.⁷⁰ In Siam, the inscriptions of Sukhothai use several combined forms:⁷¹

<i>buddhaśāsana</i>	Inscriptions 49-14, 69-1-6
<i>phra buddhaśāsana</i>	Inscription 1-2-12
<i>śāsana phra buddha</i>	Inscription 3-1-54, 57
<i>śāsana phra buddha pen chao</i>	Inscription 3-1-46
<i>śāsana phra chao</i>	Inscription 9-1-32; Inscription 14-2-14
<i>śāsana phra pen chao</i>	Inscription 3-1-31, 43, 59; Inscription 14-1-37, 2-18

Śāsana most frequently refers to the dispensation of Gotama or Śākyamuni. In inscriptions or aspirations it may also refer to the dispensation of the next buddha, Maitreya.

If the term “Theravāda” was not used in Southeast Asian records, there is no dearth of alternate terms. I give below a few examples.

Sihala-śāsana

In the Thai principalities, and throughout Southeast Asia, the monastic lineage of Sri Lanka had enormous prestige. Monks went to Lanka to be reordained and returned to start new monastic lines. As a result, lineage is frequently phrased in terms that show its Lankan pedigree.

An inscription from Chiang Rai, for example, records that in BE 2041 (= CE 1498) “twenty-five senior monks (*mahāthera chao*) went to bring the *śāsanā* of Phra Buddha Chao in Laṅkāḍīpa to Muang Hariphunchai.”⁷² Chapters of the northern Thai Pali chronicle *Jinakālamālinī* (completed 1527 CE) bear the titles “Sīhalasāsanāgamanakāla”—the “period of the arrival of the *śāsanā* from Ceylon”—and “Sīhalasāsanajotanakāla.”⁷³ The body of the text uses the terms *Sihala-sāsana* and *Sihala-saṅgha*. The fifteenth-century Thai literary classic *The Defeat of the Yuan* (*Yuan Phai*) relates that when King Paramatrailokanātha decided to enter the monkhood, he sent his son to Ceylon (Laṅkādvīpa) to invite pure monks, free of defilement, to assist in the ordination ceremony.⁷⁴

Gāmvāsī and Araññavāsī

As mentioned above, important division of the sangha in Lanka from the twelfth century on was that of “town-dwellers” (*gāma-vāsī*) and “forest-dwellers” (*arañña-vāsī*).⁷⁵ These are ancient *Vinaya* terms, shared by the *Vinayas* and texts of all Buddhist schools. Sukhothai inscriptions refer to both, and suggest that they maintained separate ordination lineages.⁷⁶ In the Ayutthaya Buddhism of central Siam, the sangha was administered as a well-organized bureaucracy. Broad administrative divisions paralleled old civil divisions into Right, Center, and the Left. They included:

Forest-dwelling groups (*fāy arañnavāsī*), the Center
 Fraternity of town-dwellers (*gaṇa gāmvāsī*), the Left
 Town-dwellers (*gāmvāsī*), the Right, under Phra Vanaratna of
 Wat Pā Kaew.

Within these were further stratifications, with a Phra Khru at appointed temples. The Phra Khru (*phra khru* [hybrid Pali, *garū*]) was a subordinate but powerful office in the monastic hierarchy, itself divided into several ranks. Under the Araññavāsī were:

Phra Khru of the section of insight meditation (*phra khru fāy vipassanā*)
 Phra Khru, head of the Mon fraternity (*gaṇa rāmañ*)
 Phra Khru, head of the Lao fraternity (*gaṇa lao*).⁷⁷

Under the Right Gāmvāsī were the *gaṇa* or fraternities of the southern principalities.

The Southeast Asian orders transmitted scriptures in different scripts and languages. In Thailand alone Pali, initially written in

the so-called Pallava script, came to be written in the Mon, Lanna, Tham, Khom, and Burmese alphabets; as a liturgical language it was pronounced and recited differently in different cadences. When King Rāma I of Bangkok sponsored a recitation-redaction of the Pali texts, manuscripts in Thai, Mon, and Lao were consulted, with some manuscripts brought from Nakhon Si Thammarat in the South.⁷⁸ Further, each vernacular had its own script or scripts, and interacted with Pali or Sanskrit in multiple ways. There was no single, standard or uniform interface between the “Pali database” and the living ritual repertoires and narrative *imaginaires*.

The “Four [Lañ]kā Lineages” in Nakhon Si Thammarat

At an uncertain date, certainly in the Ayutthaya period, in Nakhon Si Thammarat and Phatthalung, the sangha was described in terms of “four *kā*.” Local oral tradition explained that, from the beginning, the relics at Nakhon Si Thammarat were protected by four flocks of crows (*kā*) of four colors in the four cardinal directions. When legendary king Prayā Śrī Dharmāśoka⁷⁹ built a *stūpa* for the relics, the names and colors of the four flocks of crows became the titles of the four Phra Khru who oversaw the *stūpa*. In fact, the “four *kā*” are four monastic lineages believed to have come from Lañkā:⁸⁰

Kā Kaew	Pa Kaew (Vanaratana) lineage	white
Kā Rām	Rāmañña (Mon) lineage	yellow
Kā Jāta	Pa Daeng lineage	red
Kā Döm	Former lineage	black

The origins and evolution of these orders are obscure, but most are ancient, and their lineage networks extended to Sukhothai, Chiangmai, and the Shan principalities. In the South, the lineages were enduring, and the terms continued to be used until the Bangkok period. With the constant travel to and fro there were many locally or chronologically differentiated lineages within the Sinhala traditions. At the time *Jinakālamālinī* was compiled (beginning of the sixteenth century), there were three lineages in the north: the Nagaravāsī, the Pupphavāsī, and the Sīhaḷabhikkhus (i.e., the City-Dwellers, the Suan Dok monks, and the Wat Pa Daeng monks).⁸¹

The Four Nikāyas of Present-Day Siam

Since the late nineteenth century four monastic traditions have been officially recognized in Siam:

Mahānikāya	The “Great or Majority <i>Nikāya</i> ”
Dhammayuttika	The “ <i>Nikāya</i> Devoted to the Dhamma,” ⁸² founded by King Mongkut
Cīna-nikāya	The “Chinese <i>Nikāya</i> ,” brought to Siam by southern Chinese immigrants
Annam-nikāya	The “Annamite <i>Nikāya</i> ,” brought to Siam by immigrants from Vietnam

Mahānikāya and Dhammayuttika are not necessarily exclusive. The twentieth-century northeastern master Ajahn Chah (Bodhiñāṇa, 1918–1992), for example, studied under Ajahn Mun Bhūridatto (1870–1942)⁸³ and other Dhammayuttika masters, but maintained his Mahānikāya lineage. Laypeople are neither Dhammayuttika nor Mahānikāya, though some may prefer to support monks of one or the other lineage. Representatives of all four traditions are invited to important royal or state ceremonies (although the status of the Cīna- and Annam-nikāyas is inferior to that of the two Theravāda lineages). At funerals both Theravādin and Chinese or Annamite monks may be invited to chant and conduct rites, depending on the ethnicity and wishes of the sponsors. The Chinese and Annamite monks perform rituals and recite *dhāraṇīs* in southern Chinese or Annamite styles that were imported in the nineteenth century or earlier.

Ahistorical Inventions: Ariya Buddhism and Other Chimera

Modern scholarship has compounded the confusion by coining new terms for the Buddhism of Southeast Asia.⁸⁴ These late twentieth century neologisms include “Lopburi Hīnayāna” and “Ariya Buddhism,” “Tantric Theravāda,” “Siamvaṃsa school,” and “Sukhavatī school.” This is not the place to address the problem of these curious inventions, and I will briefly take up only one example, Tantric Theravāda. Neither Thai nor Khmer Buddhism, as seen above, represents itself as “Theravadin”—let alone “Tantric.” In India itself the word “tantra” is contested—there is no agreement as to what the long-lived, diverse, multicultural, multireligious term “tantra” means.⁸⁵ It is noted in the *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* that “Tantra in Western nomenclature has achieved forms of signification independent from its Sanskritic use and

has become a somewhat promiscuous category applied to various rituals not easily classified.”⁸⁶ The word “tantra” is not used in Southeast Asian Buddhism to describe either texts or practices (and the adjective *tāntrika* is equally unknown). There is no problem in drawing parallels (if there are any): that is our job. But when we place Khmer or Southeast Asian practice within a category alien to it, then, inevitably, everything else about tantra is associated with it, and confusion reigns.

III. INCONCLUSION

At the end of this rather desultory excursion into history, I remain with more questions than conclusions. One is whether a precise terminology is possible or even desirable. It is inevitable that terminology be *ad hoc*, and that it changes as questions and data change. I do not propose that we abandon the use of the term Theravāda—that would be absurd—but I do suggest that we do our best to understand its historical context, and that we keep it in rein. It is inevitable that there are imbalances and inconsistencies in our terms for the complex phenomena of Buddhism. It is common to delimit Buddhisms by geographic, ethnic, or national names, without, perhaps, addressing questions of significance and appropriateness. Thus we have Indian, Sinhalese, Tamil, Newar/Nepalese, Tibetan/Himalayan, Mongolian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese Buddhisms. In some case we refine these with names of reigns or capitals: Tang, Song, Ming, and Qing Buddhisms; Nara, Heian, Kamakura, Edo Buddhisms; Koryō, Silla, Paekche Buddhisms; Kandyan Buddhism; and so on. We delimit the range by a period/place in a straightforward way, without imposing preconceptions (although there is certainly room for debate about center and periphery, elitism, and so on, but they are not really precluded by the terms). Perhaps we need to experiment further in our descriptions of the Buddhisms of Southeast Asia.

NOTES

1. This is a considerably revised recension of a paper presented under the title “Ubiquitous and Elusive: In Quest of Theravāda” at the conference “Exploring Theravada Studies: Intellectual Trends and the Future of a Field of Study,” hosted by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, Singapore, August 12–14, 2004, and organized by Guillaume Rozenberg and Jason Carbine. I am grateful to the organizers of the conference for inviting me to speak, to the participants for their comments, and to colleagues too

many to mention for discussions in the intervening years. I especially thank Giuliana Martini for her comments on and corrections to the final draft.

Note: “Sanskrit” and “Prakrit,” rather than “Samskr̥ta” or “Prākṛta,” have been widely accepted in Indological writing for decades. I see no reason to persist with the use of “Pāli” and “Gāndhārī,” and I therefore use “Pali” and “Gandhari” throughout. In addition, taking into account the compelling evidence presented by Gouriswar Bhattacharya, I write “bodhisatva” rather than “bodhisattva”: see Gouriswar Bhattacharya, “How to Justify the Spelling of the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Term Bodhisatva?” in *From Turfan to Ajanta: Festschrift for Dieter Schlingloff on the Occasion of his Eighteenth Birthday*, ed. Eli Franco and Monika Zin (Rupandehi: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2010), 35–50.

2. See, for example, John Clifford Holt, Jacob N. Kinnard, and Jonathan S. Walters, eds., *Constituting Communities: Theravāda Buddhism and the Religious Cultures of South and Southeast Asia*, SUNY Series in Buddhist Studies (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003). The standard monograph remains Richard F. Gombrich, *Theravāda Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo* (1988; 2nd ed., London: Routledge, 2006). The title is problematic insofar as it implies that “Theravāda” began in “ancient Benares,” that is, the Deer Park at Sarnath: however, the sermon at Sarnath is the foundation of *all* that later became Buddhism—not only Theravāda, but *all* schools.

3. Kevin Trainor, ed., *Buddhism: The Illustrated Guide*, rev. ed. (London: Duncan Baird, 2004), 120–131.

4. Other *nikāyas* seem to be grouped under the general name *ācariyavāda*, a term not used, as far as I know, in other Buddhist schools. Another term met with in Pali is *nikāyantara*, which is also used in Sanskrit texts. Further research is needed to determine how “Theravāda” has viewed the “Other” through its long history, during which it has been in constant interaction with other religions and practices.

5. I refer to the research paper of Todd Perreira presented at the XVth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, June 2008), to be included in Jason Carbine and Peter Skilling, eds., *How Theravāda Is Theravāda?* (Taipei: Dharma Drum Publishing Corp., forthcoming). Guruge states that “Resulting from the reaction of Buddhists of South and Southeast Asia to the use of the rather pejorative term ‘Hīnayāna’ to designate the form of Buddhism practiced in the region, the term ‘Theravāda’ came to be applied to it around mid-twentieth century.” See Ananda W.P. Guruge, “Does the Theravāda Tradition of Buddhism Exist Today?” in *Buddhist and Pali Studies in Honour of the Venerable Professor Kakkapalliye Anuruddha*, ed. K.L. Dhammajoti and Y. Karunadasa (Hong Kong: Centre of Buddhist Studies, 2009), 97.

6. For a lucid and reliable account of the Pali canon and Pali literary traditions, see Oskar von Hinüber, “Pali, Buddhist Literature in,” in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr., 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 2:625–629.
7. Steven Collins, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali Imaginaire*, Cambridge Studies in Religious Traditions 12 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). See now the abridged version, Steven Collins, *Nirvana: Concept, Imagery, Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
8. Kevin Trainor, ed., *Buddhism: The Illustrated Guide*, rev. ed. (London: Duncan Baird, 2004), 120.
9. Note that it is not true that the Theravāda is the only school that has “survived into the present day,” since up to the present a Sarvāstivāda monastic lineage is followed in Tibet and a Dharmaguptaka lineage is followed in East Asia.
10. *Dīpavaṃsa* 4:6, *therehi katasamgaho theravādo ’ti vuccati*.
11. P. A. Payutto, *Phra traipidok: sing thi chao phut tong ru / The Pali Canon: What a Buddhist Must Know* (Bangkok: privately printed, BE 2546 = CE 2003), 17. I prefer, however, to translate “*thera*” as “senior” or “senior monks” rather than “elder.”
12. One significant distinction is that the Theravāda tradition maintained that it preserves the original redaction, while in north India it was admitted that the original redaction (*mūlasamgīti*) was no longer extant: see Peter Skilling, “Scriptural Authenticity and the Śrāvaka Schools: An Essay towards an Indian Perspective,” *The Eastern Buddhist* 41, no. 2 (2010): 1ff.
13. *Mahāvamsa* 3:40cd, *thereh’ eva katattā ca theriyāyaṃ paraṃparā*; 5:1, *yā mahākassapādīhi mahātherehi ādito, katā saddhammasamgīti theriyā ti pavuccati*.
14. I am not certain when or by whom the term Sthaviravāda was coined. It is already used by Lamotte, and might have been given currency by A. K. Warder in his *Indian Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), *passim*. There is no equivalent—**Gnas brtan smra ba’i sde?*—in Tibetan. Sometimes “Sthaviravāda” is reconstructed in European translations from the Chinese, but on investigation the Chinese turns out to be something like **Sthavira-nikāya*. The key point is the absence of the suffix *-vāda*.
15. Keisho Tsukamoto, *A Comprehensive Study of the Indian Buddhist Inscriptions*, part 1 (Kyoto: Heirakuji-Shoten, 1996), I: Bihar 1.5, I: Bodh-Gayā 21, and III: Ajaṅṭa 68.6. For feminine forms of the term see Peter Skilling, “A Note on the History of the Bhikkhunī-saṅgha (I): Nuns at the Time of the Buddha,” *World Federation of Buddhists Review* 31, nos. 2–3 (April–September BE 2537 = CE 1994): 47–55.
16. Claudine Bautze-Picron, *The Art of Eastern India in the Collection of the Museum*

für Indische Kunst, Berlin: Stone and Terracotta Sculptures, Monographien zur indischen Archäologie Kunst und Philologie, Band 12 (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1998), no. 305.

17. The Peking edition of the *Mahāvvyutpatti* has *Ārya-sthābirāḥ* (*'phags pa gnas brtan pa*); see Daisetz T. Suzuki, ed., *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Peking Edition—Kept in the Library of the Otani University, Kyoto*, vol. 144 (Tokyo–Kyoto: Tibetan Tripitaka Research Institute, 1957), *no mtshar bstan bcos, go*, 305b1. The Sanskrit index of Ryōzaburō Sakaki's edition of the *Mahāvvyutpatti* (orig. pub. 1925; repr., Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, Reprint Series 1, 1962, Index volume, 162) gives the form *sthāvira*, but the text (§9095) gives *Ārya-sthāviraḥ*, which is presumably a misprint (see note at Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, Vol. II, Dictionary [orig. pub., New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1972], 105b, s.v. "Ārya-sthāvira"). N. D. Mironov's edition (*Mahāvvyutpatti*, Bibliotheca Buddhica XIII [orig. pub. 1911; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992], § 275.18) and the edition of Yumiko Ishihama and Yoichi Fukuda (*A New Critical Edition of the Mahāvvyutpatti, Sanskrit-Tibetan-Mongolian Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology* [Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1989], §9032) have *Ārya-sthāviraḥ*.

18. See Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, Vol. II, Dictionary, 105b.

19. D. L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study*, London Oriental Series, vol. 6 (orig. pub. 1959; repr., London: Oxford University Press, 1980), II 5, 68.

20. *Bu ston Chos 'byuñ* (Kruñ go bod kyi śes rig dpe skrun khañ, 1988), 133.13. The phrasing of 'Jam-dbyaṅs Bžad-pa is slightly different: *gnas brtan 'phags pa'i rigs yin par ston pas gnas brtan pa* ('Jam-dbyaṅs Bžad-pa'i-rdo-rje, *Grub mtha'i rnam bśad kun bzañ žiñ gi ñi ma* [Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khañ, 1992], 264.10).

21. See Mori Sodō, "Ariyavaṃsa and Ariyavaṃsa-kathā," in *Studies on Buddhism in Honour of Professor A.K. Warder*, ed. N.K. Wagle and F. Watanabe (Toronto: University of Toronto, Centre for South Asian Studies, 1993) (South Asian Papers, no. 5), 100–112.

22. Śramaṇa Yijing, *Buddhist Monastic Traditions of Southern Asia: A Record of the Inner Law Sent Home from the South Seas*, translated from the Chinese (Taishō Volume 54, Number 2125) by Li Rongxi (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research [BDK English Tripiṭaka 93-I], 2000), 11. The four-school model is vouchsafed by Indian sources for, at any rate, the seventh century on. Chinese sources also know a five-school model which seems to reflect the situation in the Northwest. This model deserves further attention, given that it includes the Dharmaguptakas, with whom many of the recently discovered Gandhari manuscripts are believed to be associated. For sources and for the historiography of the study of the four- and five-school models in European scholarship up to about 1945, see Lin Li-Kouang,

Introduction au Compendium de la loi (Dharma-Samuccaya): L'aide-mémoire de la vraie loi (Saddharma-Smṛtyupasthāna-sūtra): recherches sur un sūtra développé du Petit Véhicule, introduction by P. Demiéville (Publications du Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque d'études, t. 54) (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1949), 176–216.

23. Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra*, I, 49; II, 5–6, 90, 149, and 156; Ch. Willemen, *The Chinese Hevajratāntra: The Scriptural Text of the Ritual of the Great King of the Teaching, the Adamantine One with Great Compassion and Knowledge of the Void* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1983), 38–39, 97–98; G. W. Farrow and I. Menon, *The Concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra with the Commentary Yogaratnamala* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992), 20–21, 225. The four philosophical schools are also mentioned in Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra*, part II, p. 156. In dPa'-bo Gtsug-lag-phreṅ-ba's (1504–1566) *Chos 'byuñ mkhas pa'i dga' ston* (Mi rigs dpe skrun khañ, 1986), part I, p. 71 there is an interesting note—originally inter-linear?—on this:

'di la gnas brtan pa kho na sde pa'i rtsa bar 'dod pa dañ thams cad yod smra rtsa bar 'dod pa sogs bśad lugs mañ du yod kyañ gsañ sñags su dgyes rdor dañ sambhuṭar rtsa 'khor lo bži la sde pa bži'i miñ du gsuñs pa dañ dus 'khor du źal bži las sde pa bži spros pa sogs yod pas rtsa ba'i sde bži kho nar 'thad pa yin no.

Herein, because the Sthaviras want [their school] alone to be the root *nikāya*, the Sarvāstivāda want [their school alone] to be the root *nikāya*, there are many methods of explanation [of the emergence and relations of the schools]; in the Mantra [system] the *Hevajra* and *Sampuṭa* [tantras] apply the names of the four main *nikāyas* to the *cakras*, while the *Kālacakra* [system] applies them to the four faces, only the four main *nikāyas* are accepted.

24. Many of these sources are preserved in Tibetan translation, which uses *gnas brtan* for *sthavira*, and *gnas brtan sde* for *Sthāvira-nikāya or, perhaps, *Sthāviriya, etc.

25. See Peter Skilling, “Theravādin Literature in Tibetan Translation,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 19 (1993): 154–155. Yijing refers to three divisions of the Sthāvira without naming them.

26. See Heinz Bechert, “The *Nikāyas* of Mediaeval Sri Lanka and the Unification of the *Saṅgha* by Parākramabāhu I,” in *Studies on Buddhism in Honour of Professor A.K. Warder*, ed. N. K. Wagle and F. Watanabe (Toronto: University of Toronto, Centre for South Asian Studies, 1993) (South Asian Papers, no. 5), 11–21.

27. Go-rams-pa Bsod-nams-señge, “Sdom gsum rab dbye'i rnam bśad rgyal ba'i gsuñ rab kyi dgoñs pa gsal ba,” in *Sdom pa gsum gyi rnam gźag ston pa'i gźuñ gces btus* (New Delhi: Institute of Tibetan Classics, 2009) (Bod kyi gtsug lag gces btus vol. 12), 152.4.

28. 'Jam-dbyaṅs Bzad-pa'i-rdo-rje, *Grub mtha'i rnam bśad kun bzañ zñ gi ñi ma* (Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khañ, 1992), 267, penult.

29. This means that it is the same as that of the Sāṃmitīyas, described as *snam phran ñer gcig nas lña yan chad*. According to Bu-ston (*Bu ston chos 'byuñ*, 133.14), both number of panels and insignia are shared with the Sāṃmitīyas (*snam phran dañ brtags mañ pos bkur ba dañ mthun par brag go*). The phrase *snam phran* has been misunderstood in previous translations (Obermiller uses “fringe” of the “mantle” in Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub, *History of Buddhism [Chos-ñbyung]* by Bu-ston, trans. E. Obermiller [Heidelberg: In Kommission bei O. Harrassowitz, 1931–1932], II, 99–100; Vogel, “strips” of the “waist-cloth” in Claus Vogel, “Bu-ston on the Schism of the Buddhist Church and on the Doctrinal Tendencies of Buddhist Scriptures,” in *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur, Erster Teil*, ed. Heinz Bechert, Symposien zur Buddhismusforschung, III, 1 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985], 107–108). The Sanskrit terminology may be gleaned from the *Vinaya-sūtra: khaṇḍasaṃghāṭyāṃ nava pabhṛtyā pañcaviṃśater yugmavarjam* = *snam sbyar gyi snam phran dag ni dgu yan chad ñi śu rtsa lña man chad de zuñ ma gtogs so* (reference from J.S. Negi, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*, vol. 7 [Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 2001], 3243b). These are the dimensions given for the Sarvāstivādins by Bu-ston and 'Jam-dbyaṅs Bzad-pa. For Thai tradition see Somdet Phra Mahā Samaṇa Chao Krom Phrayā Vajirañāṇavarorasa, *The Entrance to the Vinaya, Vinayamukha*, vol. 2 (Bangkok: Mahāmakut Rājavidyālaya Press, BE 2516 = CE 1973), 13–18, esp. 15: “A *civara* must have not less than five *khaṇḍa*, but more than this can be used provided that the numbers of them are irregular—seven, nine, eleven. Many *khaṇḍa* may be used when a *bhikkhu* cannot find large pieces of cloth.”

30. Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltshen, *A Clear Differentiation of the Three Codes: Essential Distinctions among the Individual Liberation, Great Vehicle, and Tantric Systems*, trans. Jared Douglas Rhoton, ed. Victoria R.M. Scott (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), vv. 173–175 (for the Tibetan text see p. 287). For a “quintessential summary” in prose, see Sa pan's “Letter to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Ten Directions,” *ibid.*, p. 244. For Gorampa's commentary, see Go-rams-pa Bsod-nams-señge, “Sdom gsum rab dbye'i rnam bśad rgyal ba'i gsuñ rab kyī dgoñs pa gsal ba,” 150ff.

31. *Sarva-darśana-saṃgraha of Sāyana-Mādhava*, ed. Mahāmahopādhyāya Vasudev Shastri Abhyankar, 3rd ed. (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1978), chap. 2 line 41: *te ca bauddhās caturvidhayā bhāvanayā paramapuruṣārtham kathayanti. te ca mādhyaṃika-yogācāra-sautrāntikavaibhāṣikasamjñābhiḥ prasiddhā bauddhā*.

32. See Katsumi Mimaki, *La réfutation bouddhique de la permanence des choses (sthīrasiddhidūṣaṇa) et la preuve de la momentanéité des choses (kṣaṇabhaṅgasiddhi)*, Publications de l'Institut de Civilisation Indienne, Fascicule 41 (Paris: Institut

de Civilisation Indienne, 1976), 67–69 for a list of sources—Indian Buddhist, Indian non-Buddhist, Tibetan Buddhist, and Tibetan Bon po—for the four schools. These and other sources are cited in 'Jam-dbyaṅs Bzad-pa'i-rdo-rje, *Grub mtha'i rnam bśad kun bzañ žiñ gi ñi ma*, 246–248.

33. For *Kālacakra*, see Vesna A. Wallace, *The Kālacakratantra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā* (New York, NY: American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2004), 241–247; and citations in Khedrup Norsang Gyatso, *Ornament of Stainless Light, An Exposition of the Kālacakra Tantra* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004), 570–573.

34. Mimaki, *La réfutation bouddhique*, 69.

35. Perhaps the earliest notice of the four philosophical schools to be published in a European language was that presented by the pioneering Hungarian scholar Alexander Csoma de Kőrös in his “Notices on the Different Systems of Buddhism Extracted from the Tibetan Authorities,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 7, no. 1 (1838): 142; reprinted in Alexander Csoma de Kőrös, *Tibetan Studies, Being a Reprint of the Articles Contributed to the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and Asiatic Researches*, ed. E. Denison Ross (orig. pub. 1912; repr., New Delhi: Gaurav Publishing House, 1991), 73–79. For doxographic literature see Katsumi Mimaki, *Blo gsal grub mtha': Chapitres IX (Vaibhāṣika) et XI (Yogācāra) édités et Chapitre XII (Mādhyamika) édité et traduit* (Kyoto: Zinbun Kagaku Kenkyusyo, Université de Kyoto, 1982); Jeffrey Hopkins, “The Tibetan Genre of Doxography: Structuring a Worldview,” in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, ed. José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger R. Jackson (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 1996), 170–186. For translations of works in this genre see Geshe Lhundup Sopa, *Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism*, trans. Jeffrey Hopkins (London: Rider and Company, 1976) (Part Two gives a translation of Dkon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po's [1728–1791] *Precious Garland of Tenets*).

36. 'Jam dbyaṅs bzad pa'i rdo rje, *Grub mtha'i rnam bśad kun bzañ žiñ gi ñi ma*, root-text, 8.8, commentary, 246–248; translation from Daniel Cozort and Craig Preston, *Buddhist Philosophy: Losang Gönchok's Short Commentary to Jamyang Shayba's Root Text on Tenets* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 2003), 143 v. 1.

37. I doubt whether Sautrāntika in particular ever represented a historical body or even lineage. It represented, perhaps, a hermeneutic stance. Can we compare the term to, for example, “Marxist”? Some historians identify their approach as Marxist; others criticize or condemn Marxist historiography: that is, the term can be positive, negative, or neutral. Marxist historiography has evolved and changed considerably with time. Historians who consider themselves Marxist may disagree on fundamental points, they do not belong to any formal school, and they may be professionally associated with a variety of unrelated institutes. For Sautrāntika see the collection of essays devoted to the school in the special issue of the *Journal of the International Association of*

Buddhist Studies 26, no. 2 (2003), and Collett Cox, *Disputed Dharmas: Early Buddhist Theories on Existence: An Annotated Translation of the Section on Factors Dissociated from Thought from Saṅghabhadra's Nyāyānusāra*, *Studia Philologica Buddhica Monograph Series XI* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1995), 37ff.

38. Peter Skilling, "The *Samskṛtāsamskṛta-viniścaya* of Daśabalaśrīmitra," *Buddhist Studies Review* 4, no. 1 (1987): 3–23; Peter Skilling, "Theravādin Literature in Tibetan Translation," *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 19 (1993): 69–201.

39. See the examples connected with the *indriyas* in Peter Skilling, "Discourse on the Twenty-Two Faculties Translated from Śamathadeva's *Upāyikā-tīkā*," in *Dharmapracicaya: Aspects of Buddhist Studies*, ed. Lalji 'Shravak', Prof. N.H. Samtani Felicitation Volume (New Delhi: Buddhist World Press, forthcoming).

40. See for example Y. Karunadasa, *The Dhamma Theory: Cornerstone of the Abhidhamma Philosophy*, Wheel Publication 412/413 (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1996).

41. This is, however, something that warrants further investigation. My description of *pramāṇa* as a concern of North Indian Buddhists may be an overstatement, given the epistemological material in the Tamil *Maṇimekhalai* and the importance of epistemology in Indian thought in general, including the noteworthy Jaina contributions.

42. Fortunately recent research reconstructs at least some of the scope of Buddhism in the south: see for example Anne E. Monius, *Imagining a Place for Buddhism: Literary Culture and Religious Community in Tamil-Speaking South India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

43. Our sources for the Vibhajjavāda are inconclusive and contradictory. For recent studies see L.S. Cousins, "On the Vibhajjavādins: The Mahiṃsāsaka, Dhammaguttaka, Kassapiya and Tambapaṇṇiya Branches of the Ancient Theriyas," *Buddhist Studies Review* 18, no. 2 (2001): 131–182; and Y. Karunadasa, *The Theravāda Abhidhamma: Its Inquiry into the Nature of Conditioned Reality* (Hong Kong: Centre of Buddhist Studies, The University of Hong Kong, 2010), Appendix: "Theravāda and Vibhajjavāda," 282–293. Oliver Abeynayake, "The Theravāda Tradition: Its Identity," *Journal of Buddhist Studies, Centre for Buddhist Studies Sri Lanka* 7 (2009): 90–100, generally follows Karunaratne. The phrase *vibhajjavādimaṇḍalaṃ otarivā*, rendered by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli as "one who keeps within the circle of the Vibhajjavādins," as the first of a series of qualifications of the attitude of who explains dependent origination is intriguing if inconclusive. See *Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosācariya*, ed. Henry Clarke Warren, revised by Dharmananda Kosambi, Harvard Oriental Series, Volume 41 (orig. pub., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1989), § XVII, 25; Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans., *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga) by Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa*

(Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1975), § XVII, 25.

44. *Vinaya* (Pali Text Society edition) II 72.27.

45. I follow the Syāmratt̥ha edition (vol. 6, 298) in reading *-vadānaṃ*. The Pali Text Society and Chaṭṭhasaṅgīti editions read *-padānaṃ*: Chaṭṭhasaṅgīti, *Cullavaggapāli*, 187.10 with footnote that Sihala editions read *vibhajjavādīnaṃ*.

46. This is a rare example of an explicit statement of school affiliation in a colophon. As far as I know it is the only case in the Pali scriptures. The only North Indian texts that identify their school affiliation are those of the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins.

47. For a brief report see *Indian Archaeology 1997-98: A Review* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 2003), 206–207. The inscriptions were published in B.S.L. Hanumantha Rao et al., *Buddhist Inscriptions of Andhradesa* (Secunderabad: Ananda Buddha Vihara Trust, 1998), copper plates of Siri Ehāvala Chāntamūla, 191–193 and Pl. VI (c); also, and better, *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India* 25 (1999): 114–121, copper plates of Mādhavavarma, 207 foll. Another inscription also mentions *mahāvihāra*, but this seems to be a local monastery.

48. For examples see Cousins, “On the Vibhajjavādins.”

49. R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, “The World of Theravāda Buddhism in History: Relevance of a Territorial Category as a Conceptual Tool in the Study of History,” in Asanga Tilakaratne et al., eds., *Dhamma-Vinaya: Essays in Honour of Venerable Professor Dhammavihari (Jotiya Dhirasekera)* (Colombo: Sri Lanka Association for Buddhist Studies, 2005), 55–89.

50. See the entries by H. Durt and A. Forte, s.v. “Daiji” (*mahāvihāra*), in *Hôbôgirin: Dictionnaire encyclopédique du bouddhisme d’après les sources chinoises et japonaises, Sixième fascicule: Da-Daijizaiten* (Paris: Librairie d’Amérique et d’Orient Adrien-Maisonneuve and Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1983), 679–711.

51. Stephen C. Berkwitz, *South Asian Buddhism: A Survey* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 147–148. One of the curiosities of Buddhist studies is that Ceylon is often located in Southeast Asia—presumably because of its putative Theravādin status (for which we turn to *Dīpavaṃsa*, *Mahāvāṃsa*, and the Pali texts, rather than to the distinctive archeological record, which has its own trajectory, not adequately integrated into current “Sri Lankan history”). This logical anomaly is rather like situating the Philippines in Southern Europe because it is predominantly Roman Catholic. See, for example, the “Timeline of Buddhist History” for Southeast Asia in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr., 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 2:935–936, which in its general unreliability undoes the good done by the better entries in the *Encyclopedia*. One is grateful to Berkwitz for relocating Sri Lanka in South Asia, and for putting the category of “South Asian Buddhism” back on the table.

52. For the lateness of Theravāda in relation to Mahāyāna see, for example, Peter Skilling, “Mahāyāna and Bodhisattva: An Essay towards Historical Understanding,” in *Phothisatava barami kap sangkhom thai nai sahatsawat mai* [*Bodhisattvaparami and Thai Society in the New Millennium*], ed. Pakorn Limpanusorn and Chalermpon Iampakdee, Chinese Studies Centre, Institute of East Asia, Thammasat University (proceedings of a seminar in celebration of the fourth birth-cycle of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn held at Thammasat University, 21 January 2546 [2003]) (Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, BE 2547 = CE 2004), 139–156.
53. Note the recent establishment of Association of Theravāda Buddhist Universities (ATBU).
54. I doubt that in any *nikāya* the monks and nuns as a whole subscribed to the “particular school of thought” of their *nikāya*: the relations between ordination, belief, and thought is another point that needs serious consideration.
55. R. A. L. H. Gunawardana, *Robe and Plough: Monasticism and Economic Interest in Early Medieval Sri Lanka*, Association for Asian Studies: Monographs and Papers, No. 35 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1979), 85–86.
56. Wilhelm Geiger, ed., *Cūlavamsa, Being the Most Recent Part of the Mahāvamsa* (orig. pub. 1925, 1927; repr., London: The Pali Text Society/Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 42:17: *theriyānaṃ tapassināṃ*. Cf. also 41:99. I prefer to follow the manuscripts in calling the whole work *Mahāvamsa* rather than to follow the European convention of calling the later parts *Cūlavamsa*.
57. *Ibid.*, 52:46.
58. *Ibid.*, 54:46.
59. *Ibid.*, 54:47: *upassayaṃ karitvāna mahāmallakanāmaṃ, theravaṃsamhi jātānaṃ bhikkhunīnaṃ adāpayī*.
60. Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 143. Every sentence in the paragraph contains errors, most of them major.
61. D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, 4th ed. (orig. pub. 1955; repr., London: Macmillan, 1985), 158–161.
62. Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism*, 144.
63. See Peter Skilling, “The Advent of Theravāda Buddhism to Mainland South-east Asia,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 20–21 (1997): 93–107; Peter Skilling, “The Place of South-East Asia in Buddhist Studies,” *Buddhist Studies (Bukkyō Kenkyū)* 30 (2001): 19–43; Peter Skilling, *Buddhism and Buddhist Literature of South-East Asia: Selected Papers by Peter Skilling*, ed. Claudio Cicuzza (Bangkok and Lumbini: Fragile Palm Leaves, 2009 [Materials for the Study of the Tripiṭaka Volume 5]); and esp. Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, *The*

Ascendancy of Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast Asia (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2010).

64. For Sūrya see Peter Skilling, “A Recently Discovered Sūrya Image from Thailand,” in *Prajñādhara: Essays on Asian Art, History, Epigraphy and Culture in Honour of Gouriswar Bhattacharya*, ed. Gerd J.R. Mevissen and Arundhati Banerji (New Delhi: Kaveri Books, 2009), 455–465 and pls. 46.1–10. For the hybrid nature of “Thai religion” see Peter Skilling, “Worship and Devotional Life: Buddhist Devotional Life in Southeast Asia,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, 15 vols., 2nd ed. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA/Thomson Gale), 14:9826–9834; Peter Skilling, “King, Saṅgha, and Brahmans: Ideology, Ritual and Power in Pre-modern Siam,” in *Buddhism, Power and Political Order*, ed. Ian Harris (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 182–215.

65. Skilling, “King, Saṅgha, and Brahmans.”

66. Andrew Skilton, *A Concise History of Buddhism* (Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 1994), 156.

67. For the intricacies of Siamese Buddhism, see Peter Skilling, “Geographies of Intertextuality: Buddhist Literature in Pre-modern Siam,” *Aséanie - Sciences humaines en Asie du Sud-est* 19 (June 2007): 91–112. For Thai Buddhism in the Ratanakosin or Bangkok period see Peter Skilling, “For Merit and Nirvāṇa: The Production of Art in the Bangkok Period,” *Arts Asiatiques* 62 (2007): 76–94; Peter Skilling, “Similar Yet Different: Buddhism in Siam and Burma in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Emerald Cities: Arts of Siam and Burma, 1775–1950*, ed. Forrest McGill (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture, 2009), 46–73.

68. The problem for any synthetic writing on Southeast Asian Buddhism—that is, on over two thousand years of prehistory and history in a dozen cultures over a vast and diverse ecological and cultural landscape—is the dearth of reliable materials in European languages and the persistence of outdated information and frameworks. The thumbnail sketch is difficult if not impossible to achieve, and most fail, scuppered on the reefs of overgeneralization and inaccuracy. Recent sources that give more reliable and perceptive accounts include (for the early period) Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, *The Ascendancy of Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast Asia*; Kate Crosby, “Theravāda,” in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr., 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 2:836–841; Robert L. Brown, “Southeast Asia, Buddhist Art in,” in *ibid.*, 2:782–788; Bonnie Brereton, “Theravāda Art and Architecture,” in *ibid.*, 2:841–844; and (the very brief) Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 256–257. For the dynamics of regional developments on the broader global canvas, see Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800–1830, Volume 1: Integration on the Mainland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

69. For “Buddhism” see John Ross Carter, *On Understanding Buddhists: Essays on the Theravāda Tradition in Sri Lanka* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), especially chaps. 1 and 2.

70. See C. A. F. Rhys Davids, “Sāsana,” in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, 12 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1922), 11:200–201. The early use in Western scholarship of the word “dispensation” for *sāsana* is intriguing, and smacks of biblical influences.

71. After Piriya Krairiksh, “Towards a Revised History of Sukhothai Art: A Reassessment of the Inscription of King Ram Khamhaeng,” in *The Ram Khamhaeng Controversy: Collected Papers*, ed. James R. Chamberlain (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1991), 78.

72. *Chareuk lanna phak 1 lem 1: Chareuk changwat Chiang Rai Nan Phayao Phrae/Lanna Inscriptions Part I, Volume I: Inscriptions from Chiang Rai, Nan, Phayao and Phrae: Texts* (Bangkok: Amarin Printing Group Ltd. [published by James H. W. Thompson Foundation on the auspicious occasion of the third birth-cycle of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn], BE 2534 = CE 1991), Inscription Chiang Rai 4. For plate see *ibid.*, Part I, Volume II, plate 7.

73. A. P. Buddhadatta, *Jinakālamāli* (London: Pali Text Society, 1962), 95.2, 119.15.

74. Yuan Phai v. 76, in *Photchananukrom sap wannakhadi thai samai ayutthaya: khlung yuan phai* (Bangkok: Rājabanditayasathan [The Royal Academy], BE 2544 = CE 2001), 100; A. B. Griswold and Prasert ṇa Nagara, “A Fifteenth-Century Siamese Historical Poem,” in *Southeast Asian History and Historiography: Essays Presented to D. G. E. Hall*, ed. C. D. Cowan and O. W. Wolters (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1976), 144. Griswold and Prasert translate the phrase *choen chuay song phu phaew kaletklai* as “to invite a saintly monk,” but given that Thai nouns have no plural form, and that an ordination requires a chapter of five to ten monks, I prefer to interpret *song* (= Pali *saṅgha*) as plural here. It seems more logical that, in order to lend authority to the ordination, a number of revered Lankan monks would have been invited to conduct the ceremony together with local monks.

75. Other monastic categories from Ceylon, such as *paṃsukūlika*, do not seem to have been introduced to Siam, although there was a brief *paṃsūkūlika* lineage in Tibet.

76. G. Coedès, in *Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam, Première partie, Inscriptions de Sukhodaya* (Bangkok: Bangkok Times Press, 1924), takes the liberty of adding the word “sect” where the Thai has simply *upasampada nai gāṃavāsī*, *upasampada nai araṇāvāsī*: Inscr. 9, Wat Pa Daeng, p. 136: “[il] eut reçu l’ordination dans la secte des Gāṃavāsīs en sakkarāja 705 . . . il reçut l’ordination dans la secte des Araṇāvāsīs en sakkarāja 710 . . .”

77. In this context, “Lao” refers to a wide cultural and linguistic zone from Chiang Mai in Thailand to Luang Prabang and northern Laos, once a band of Tai principalities—it does not refer to the modern state of Laos.

78. “Kham prakāt devatā khrang saṅgāyanā pī wok samritthi sok pho. so. 2331 rajakāl thi 1,” in Phrachao Boromawong Thoe Kromaphra Sommot Amonphan, ed., *Prakāt kām phra rājābidhī* lem 1 (Bangkok: Ongkankha khong Khurusapha, BE = 2508 = CE 1965), 304.

79. Phrayā Śrī Dharmāsoka, to judge from inscriptions, was a historical title or figure (ca. twelfth century CE?), but we know more about him from local legends from several regions of Thailand.

80. Prince Damrong Rājanubhab, *Tamnān gaṇa saṅgha* (Bangkok: Ho Phra Samut Vajirañāṇa [Vijarañāṇa Library]/Rongphim Sophonphiphatthanakorn, BE 2466 = CE 1923), 39–41; Sutthiwong Phongphaibun, “Kā 4 fāy: khana song,” in Sutthiwong Phongphaibun, ed., *Sārānukrom wathanatham thai phāk tai pho. so. 2542*, 10 vols. (Bangkok: Amarin Kanphim, BE 2542 = CE 1999), 1:176–178. See also Chaiwut Piyakun, “Kalapanā Wat Khian Bāng Kaew,” in *Sārānukrom wathanatham thai phāk tai*, 1:283–285; Lorraine M. Gessick, *In the Land of Lady White Blood: Southern Thailand and the Meaning of History* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1995). The identity of Kā Jāta is not certain. Prince Damrong interpreted it as a lineage of monks from Lanka itself (taking *jāta* as *jāti*). If we take *jāta* in the sense of “red,” the name suggests the Pa Daeng lineage.

81. Hans Penth, *Jinakālamālī Index: An Annotated Index to the Thailand Part of Ratanapañña’s Chronicle Jinakālamālī* (Oxford: The Pali Text Society/Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1994), 171; see Penth’s individual references and see Saeng Manavidura, “Some Observations on the Jinakālamālīpakaraṇa,” in *The Sheaf of Garlands of the Epochs of the Conqueror: Being a Translation of Jinakālamālīpakaraṇam of Ratanapañña Thera of Thailand . . . With an Introductory Essay by Saeng Manavidura*, trans. N.A. Jayawickrama, Pali Text Society Translation Series No. 36 (London: The Pali Text Society, 1978), xlv–xlvi.

82. Given the many significances of “dhamma,” I leave the word untranslated. It is simplistic to call Dhammayuttika a “reformed *nikāya*,” both in its inception and in its evolution.

83. Note that the name is commonly romanized as “Mun,” but is pronounced “Man” with a short “a” as in “fun.”

84. The invention of schools of Buddhism is not unique to the region. For Nepal see David N. Gellner, “Hodgson’s Blind Alley? On the So-Called Schools of Nepalese Buddhism,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 12, no. 1 (1989): 7–19. For the problems of the concept of the “Pure Land school” see Robert H. Sharf, “On Pure Land Buddhism and Ch’an Pure Land Syncretism in Medieval China,” *T’oung Pao* 88 (2002): 282–331. For the

problems that surround the concept of Chan–Zen, see John R. McRae, *Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

85. André Padoux, “What Do We Mean by Tantrism?” in *The Roots of Tantra*, ed. Katherine Anne Harper and Robert L. Brown (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002), 23. Louis de La Vallée Poussin’s entry on “Tantrism (Buddhist),” in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, 12 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1922), 12:197 may still be consulted with profit. Robert Sharf launches a sharp critique in his “Does Indian Buddhism Have Tantra Nature?” paper presented at the panel “A Response to Ronald M. Davidson’s *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*,” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, GA, November 2003.

86. Ronald M. Davidson and Charles D. Orzech, “Tantra,” in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr., 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 2:820. For another discussion of the term see the editor’s introduction to David Gordon White, ed., *Tantra in Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).