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Religion, Self-Help, Science: Three Economies of Western/ized Buddhism

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Scholars of Buddhism in the United States have attempted to give order to the varieties of Buddhism that they encounter. Typically, such studies have focused on doctrinal, lineal, or socio-historical factors that are, in many ways, already familiar in the field of Buddhist studies. What has been less explored is the ways in which Buddhism has become institutionalized in the United States. This study explores how three pre-existing models of institutional organization have structured the forms that various Buddhisms have taken, regardless of their doctrinal, lineal or socio-historical background. Religion, self-help, and science comprise this three-fold structure. Understanding this three-fold structure involves adding a third term to the common opposition of religion as the transcendent sacred and science as the mundane secular. That third term is the immanent sacred, which is generally suppressed by semiotic pairing of the other two terms, but which is present in the culture of self-help. After discussing the historical background of the three-fold structure, the different economies of the three forms of institutionalization are considered, as well as two additional institutional forms and also hybrid forms.

Keywords: self-help, science, religion, church, institution, economy, ideology

Introduction

Much has been written attempting to characterize, identify and categorize Buddhisms as they have moved into Euro-American culture (Hickey 2015). Some of the attempts to do so have employed geo-political, ethnic, regional, or nation-state categories, such as the countries from which a particular tradition or group of traditions originates, or the countries in which they now exist. Such categories give rise to conundrums, however. For example, when "Japanese Buddhism" moves to Brazil, the question that arises is whether this is Japanese or Brazilian (Rocha 2000)? Similarly, for "Tibetan Buddhism" in Germany, the corollary question would be is this Tibetan or German? The conundrums that follow from a theoretical organization based on these kinds of categories is compounded by the metaphors of adoption and adaptation. When does

"Japanese" Buddhism stop being Japanese and become just one more kind of "American" Buddhism? Has it been adopted? Or, has it adapted? It should also be noted that while these two processes—adoption and adaptation—are each the semiotic inverse of the other, they carry significantly different understandings of agency (Ama 2011). And, given the artificiality of such categories as "Japanese" and "American," how is this putative process of transformation to be measured, or compared and contrasted between different groups?

Another approach to organizing and categorizing has been sectarian/lineal in nature (e.g. Zen Buddhism, Pure Land, Theravada, Gelug, and so on). Two of the difficulties with these kinds of categories are revealed when one considers, first, the arbitrary nature of the categories themselves, and second, the relation between instances in their source countries versus how they exist in the United States today. In what way is "Zen" a coherent category, when there are three different lineages in Japan—Sōtō, Rinzai, and Ōbaku—as well as the various Korean forms of Sŏn, Chinese forms of Chan, and related forms, such as those found in Vietnam, Thi`ên. Seen in this light, at times "Zen" functions to identify something as narrow as the Sōtō lineage of Suzuki Roshi found at San Francisco Zen Center, and at other times it functions as broadly as a cover term for all of the forms indicated above. In turn, how is "Zen" (in any meaning along the range indicated above) to be compared with "Gelug"? And in turn, how is the Gelug lineage of monastics, both in Tibet today and in exile, to be compared with the large number of Western converts or interested adherents who in some sense follow the Dalai Lama, but who may well lack any significant understanding of what differentiates Gelug from Sakya, Nyingma, or Kagyud?

Some scholars have employed socio-historical categories such as "immigrant," "convert," "baggage," "import," "export," and the like. Yet another strategy has been ideological, such as drawing distinctions along the lines of traditionalist and secular, or conservative and modernizing. As with the other categories discussed above, these can also entail their own difficulties. In the case of "convert Buddhism" for example, "conversion" to a Christian denomination connotes certain characteristics that are probably not appropriate in a Buddhist context, such as conversion being a "sudden and total change in belief" (Baer 2014, 25). Similarly, paired oppositional categories such as traditionalist and secular, and conservative and modernizing, usually introduce covert value judgements that distort a sociological approach to understanding the dynamics of change involved.

Despite the problematic character of these categories in the abstract, when they have been employed in relation to some specific research question they have contributed to our understanding. However, any typology is only useful when it is being employed in answering some research question—including the typology being developed here. More accurately, we should say that the categories or typology should be motivated by the question being asked, rather than being simply accepted in the abstract and applied as an interpretive schema. This raises the issue of what question the threefold typology developed below assists us to answer.

Several years ago, I was struck by the self-congratulatory tone of announcements following an interfaith meeting between Buddhists and Catholics. Setting aside such obvious matters as explicit doctrinal differences, there were a number of issues upon which they found themselves in agreement. What the announcement failed to take into account when lauding their shared values

was that the representatives on both sides were only monks, i.e., celibate males living in monastic institutions. The failure to take institutional context into account in this case suggested to me a much larger issue. That issue is the need for attention to institutional context when thinking about the development of Buddhisms in the United States. This perspective is found in the anthropological study of religion, as for instance in a study of the Jola of Senegal discussed by Simon Coleman. He points out that analogous to the social institutions of many societies, the Jola have both a "highly developed wet-rice system" and a "greatly elaborated spirit-shrine system" (Coleman 2006, 341). He notes that

> these two are inextricably connected. Within the local political economy, control over important resources such as raw materials and instruments of production is ultimately in the hands of spirit-shrines and their representatives, the shrine-keepers, who are also elders of the community. The spirits (acting through shrines) are not purely transcendent entities that are seen as separate from society: they are directly implicated in political and economic matters, and need to be placated with care (341).

To generalize, the relation between economic institutions and religious ones with their attendant ideologies is not incidental, but integral within a society.

The need for scholarly attention to institutional context in the study of the Buddhisms of the United States is nested with a concern about the ways in which the economic system of the United States establishes an overriding set of values (thinking in terms of costs and benefits, for example), procedures (accounting for income and expenses for tax reporting, for example), and legal and institutional structures (incorporation as a for profit or not for profit, for example). In other words, institutional forms function at a societal level, contributing to the organization and structure of Buddhisms in the United States in ways entirely separate from any of the ways suggested by the more commonly employed categories, whether ethnic, doctrinal, ideological, or geo-political. One effect of globalization is that the kinds of institutional, legal and financial standards found in the United States and western Europe are becoming normative around the world. Further, the claim being made here is that, being nested in social systems, such institutional structures also have ideological consequences. One instance is the pressure toward professionalization of religious leaders, and for them to be treated as employees who work at the discretion of a temple board (Quli 2010, 75, 97, 187). Jeff Wilson, in his contribution to this issue, mentions the employee status of one Zen center's abbot, and the fact that because of economic exigencies, he could be dismissed from service. In other words, institutional structures are not value neutral, but instead constellate attendant social values and economic relations.

Three Varieties of Buddhist Institutions

In order to answer questions about the development of various Buddhisms in Europe and Northern America, I propose a three-part schema that reflects an integral relation between institutional structure, economics, and ideology. This is loosely based on the three-fold system of religion, magic, science long familiar from religious studies literature. This three-fold system originates with Auguste

Comte (1798–1857) whose teleological sociology was structured by a general evolutionary theory of the "law of three stages." For Comte, these three were theological, metaphysical, and positive, corresponding to religion, magic and science. The system is therefore both modern, and Euro-American (using this more specific socio-cultural compound in place of "Western"), making it problematic as a universal schema. The three parts of the system, and their relative relations may, in other words only reflect modern Euro-American developments, rather than being the universal teleological process imagined by Comte (Guest 2009, 651). However, the developments in Buddhism that are being examined here are likewise modern, and Euro-American. In other words, the threefold system is integral to modern Euro-American thinking, and therefore it is not inappropriately applied to the development of Buddhism in that context. My argument is that this three-fold categorization is formative both for modern conceptions about Buddhism and for how Buddhist institutions have developed in modern Euro-American society. While "religion" and "science" are viable ways of identifying the institutionalized forms we are interested in, "magic" has a largely pejorative quality that, despite the stipulative efforts of some scholars, continues to stain the category as indicating an inferior kind of religiosity. In order to avoid the issues created by such pejorative connotations, we will be referring to "self-help Buddhism" rather than "magical Buddhism." When understood specifically as the self-identified magical tradition of medieval and premodern Europe, rather than deployed pejoratively, much of what characterizes magic continues in the culture of self-help. The role of what Catherine Albanese has identified as "American metaphysical religion" in naturalizing these characteristics will be discussed more fully below.

Rather than being purely one or another of the three types discussed here, many or perhaps most Buddhist institutions actually constitute hybrid forms. In other words, they integrate more than one kind of institutional structure, attendant economy, and ideological self-representation. There are also two additional institutional forms, traditional monastic Buddhism and higher education, which involve different kinds of institutional, legal and financial relations. However, there seem to be relatively few of each of these, and these two are therefore not included in our discussion here as fourth and fifth parts of the system being developed. We will briefly discuss these following the main section that focuses on the threefold structuring of Buddhist institutions.

Model Of and Model For

The three-fold system of magic, religion and science has become largely naturalized, that is, the three categories are accepted as natural ways of categorizing belief systems (or worldviews) in religious studies scholarship and pedagogy. In the United States, at least, this system of magic, religion and science is frequently found in religious studies curricula, and also in the social sciences. Consequently this system of categories seems to be rarely subjected to critical reflection. In other words, the category system is uncritically presumed, and travels at a level Jørn Borup described as "below the radar of conscious thinking" (Borup 2016, 42). The categories are not independent of one another, but rather interact in a threefold semiotic. In Geertz's terms the system also acts both as a model of and a model for—"of" in an analytic sense as motivating our reflecting on the nature of religious institutions, and "for" in a strong sense of constraining the options available (Geertz 1973, 95).

As a model for, the three-fold system structures the options available for the establishment of Buddhist institutions, and creates three different kinds of economic relations supporting those institutions. These conceptual categories are not in some vague sense "simply" social, but instead take on the coercive force of law through such matters as incorporation requirements, property rights, tax law, constitutional separation of church and state, and so on.

As a model of, the three-fold system of magic, religion, and science structures the ways in which we understand different instances of Buddhism. Since the three have been naturalized, there is a tendency to apply the three-fold structure analytically, that is, as models of. In other words, it seems "natural" to scholars trained in a religious studies framework, such as the way the field is formulated in the United States, that magic, science, and religion are the only three possible forms of social discourse and conceptual organization.

Historical Background: religion as transcendent, science as mundane, metaphysics as immanent

It is now widely recognized that "religion" was constituted as a universal category, that is, one applicable to all people in every time and culture, in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Masuzawa 2005). However, it is important to add a nuance to this perspective by relating the category of religion as a human universal to the earlier bifurcation of the transcendent from the mundane during the Protestant Reformation.

Carlos Eire notes that prior to that bifurcation, "the medieval Christian world pulsated with accessibility to the divine, replete as it was with material points of contact with the spiritual realm" (Eire 2016, 79). That sensibility of the divine as immanently present in this world was suppressed as part of the Protestant Reformation. The fundamental formulation of the thesis regarding the impact of the Reformation as dividing the sacred as transcendent from the secular as mundane goes back to Max Weber. It is in Weber's formulation that the Protestant Reformation bifurcated the world, setting the sacred in the realm of the transcendent and leaving the mundane world stripped of the enchanting sense of the magical (Gregory 2012, 26). This is the idea, no doubt familiar to sociologists and anthropologists, that Protestant theology contributed to or created the conditions for the "disenchantment" of the world, laying the groundwork for a "focus on 'this world' as the ultimate reality and, eventually, toward the rise of rationalism and the secularization of the West" (Eire 2016, 93). Eire makes a stronger claim that this transformation of cultural religiosity is one "best described as *desacralization*, in which we see the earth becoming less charged with the otherworldly and supernatural" (Eire 2016, 92). Eire suggests that secularization created by the Protestant worldview "should be understood as a process whereby the realm of the sacred was redefined and contained within a more constricted sphere, both privately and publicly" (Eire 2016, 77).

I am not suggesting that such a restructuring has become as universal as the Protestant Reformers may have intended. Instead, the point here is that the structure of the category "religion" is informed by this bifurcation, represented by the common dichotomy between religion and science (see also, Lambek 2008). In order to understand the institutionalization of Buddhism in the United

States we need an additional category, one corresponding to the third category, magic, identified above. Instead of a two-part system of transcendent reality and mundane ephemerality ("secularity," as per Charles Taylor's explanation as "locked in time," Taylor 2007), what we find today is a three-fold system. In addition to religion as the transcendent sacred contrasted with the mundane secular, we propose here a third term: the immanent sacred, i.e., the sacred located within the world, rather than exclusively transcendent to it. In other words, the pre-Reformation sensibility of the divine as immanent, while suppressed, never disappeared.

Thus, instead of a teleological progression as per Comte and Frazer, the three categories of religion, metaphysics and science identify three different discursive cultural modes, all of which are part of the present social reality. In addition, the three manifest in institutional and economic forms. This is *not* to claim that individuals necessarily operate only in one of these three discursive cultural modes. All three of these are "normative ideational systems in the same society" between which people can switch depending on context (Lambek 2008, 279, quoting Evans-Pritchard). "Empirically (and logically) it is the case that people always have recourse to incommensurable ideas and practices" (Lambek 2008, 280). This is why there is no actual personal inconsistency, despite religious claims of exclusivity, when someone is simultaneously a member of a Presbyterian church, listens to podcasts by a Buddhist meditation teacher, attends mindfulness sessions offered by their employer, and practices yoga at their local YMCA.

Institutionally, we often identify religion with churches, or synonymous institutions such as temples, synagogues, and so on. As "religion institutionalized," however, the category of church generally instantiates the Reformation emphasis on the transcendent, dismissing immanent presence of the sacred on theological grounds. This theological position, however, does not hold a monopoly. This is evidenced by Holiness, Pentecostal, and other institutionalized forms employing the term church, whose theology allows for a much greater sense of the sacred as immanent.

The sharp dichotomy between transcendent and mundane left a vacuum where the immanent sacred had been, a space that was filled not only by such experientially oriented Christian traditions as Holiness and Pentecostalism, but also by such social forms as psychotherapy, occultism, neo-paganism, and mental healing (Hickey 2019). Their existence within the shared social space of what has been called "metaphysical religion," in which the sacred is immanent, explains why there is so much interaction between these forms. This is the "New Age" mélange, where practicing mindfulness meets up with wearing crystals or magnets, astrology, dream interpretation, hatha yoga, cleansing diets, and so on.

As a social space, "metaphysical religion" is bounded on the one side by a conception of the sacred as exclusively transcendent, and on the other by a material mundane world. Buddhism entered Euro-American awareness at the same time as and as part of the creation of the modern category of religion theorized as universal. A consequence of this historical synchronicity is that Buddhism came to be defined as one of the world religions (Masuzawa 2005, 121–146). But this conceptualization of religion in the nineteenth and early twentieth century simultaneously established the other two categories. This three-fold system of religion as transcendent, metaphysical religion as immanent, and secular reality as mundane creates three different

conceptual categories within which Buddhism came to be formed in modern Euro-American social order. The three corresponding forms of Buddhism may be called "church Buddhism," "self-help Buddhism," and "denatured Buddhism." This neologism, "denatured Buddhism," is being used as a cover term for Buddhist practices and teachings that have been decontextualized from their "natural" location in a traditional system of belief and practice. Schematically, then, the three categories align as follows:

religion	magic/metaphysical religion	science
church Buddhism	self-help Buddhism	denatured Buddhism
transcendent sacred	immanent sacred	secular

Varieties of Economies

In addition to its other characteristics, the modern category of religion identifies religion with churches, or other institutional forms with similar organizational structures, whether called specifically by the title of church. Some economic theorists have labelled the organizational structure as "congregational," while Laurence R. Iannaccone and Feler Bose have described them as "economic clubs" (Iannaccone and Bose 2011; Witham 2010, 13). Iannaccone and Bose suggest that the category of economic clubs complements microeconomics. Microeconomics focuses on the individual and provides no "bridge" to macroeconomic concepts such as "supply and demand, monopoly versus competition, government regulation, household production, religious capital, time-money trade-offs, and much more" (Iannaccone and Bose 2011, 325). Like business firms, economic clubs are collective institutional forms, and are therefore located between macroeconomic and microeconomic analyses. The authors argue that analyses of religion can be greatly enriched "by the fact that some religions have a much stronger collective orientation than others, operating like economic clubs and emphasizing the collective, congregational production of religious rewards. Others operate more like standard commercial firms, producing private goods and services that can be consumed by isolated individuals" (Iannaccone and Bose 2011, 325–326; see also Witham 2010, 13).

In contrast to economic clubs and firms, economists also describe private economic relationships. Sometimes these are called "client-practitioner" economic relations, and which Iannaccone and Bose refer to as "private religion." They exemplify the difference between private and collective forms of religions,

> noting that collective and private religions provide different solutions to the problem of religious risk, the former through repeated interaction and shared information, the latter through diversified consumption across portfolios of religious products and producers. Collective religions are congregationally oriented and capable of sustaining distinctive lifestyles, strict moral codes, and high levels of commitment, activity, and mutual support. Private religion is less capable of generating

> commitment but is also less susceptible to free-rider problems, and hence less exclusive, demanding, and moralistic. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are collective religions par excellence, especially in their more sectarian forms—such as Orthodox Judaism, Mormonism, Adventism, Fundamentalist Christianity, and Wahhabism and radical Shiite Islam. The private style is more typical of American "New Age" spirituality, Japanese Shinto and Buddhism, Chinese folk religions, and Greco-Roman paganism (Iannaccone and Bose 2011, 326).

The two categories of congregational religion and private religion have a certain analytic utility. However, when thinking about these in relation to Buddhism, the examples given in this quote seem to reflect simplistic understandings that require nuancing.

Nuancing: From Two to Three, and Hybrids

We should not, however, be misled into thinking that the examples of congregational (collective: clubs and firms) and private religion given by Iannaccone and Bose above are fixed and unchanging. Nor are the characterizations, being simplifications, entirely accurate—as indicated by the examples they give, which categorize Shinto and Buddhism as instances of private religion. The two-part system does not, in other words, translate well into universal categories, but appear to be constrained by familiarity with modern instances, particularly those located in Euro-American contexts. A personal experience that contrasts with the characterization of Shinto given by Iannaccone and Bose above provides an example of the need for greater nuance.

In 1982 and 1983, after moving down from the mountain town of Kōyasan to Kyoto, my family and I lived in the eastern part of the city while I continued with my fieldwork on the Shingon *goma* (Skt. *homa*). In contemporary "modern" Japan, Shinto temples are often associated with a specific locale. I learned, for example, that because we lived in Awata-guchi, we were considered to be in the domain of Awata *jinja*, the Shinto shrine further up the hill behind our house. Thus, although one is not a "dues-paying" member, one is considered to have a relationship that might be termed "affiliation" rather than explicit membership, an affiliation based simply on residing within the deity's territory. Thus, while some of the ways that Shinto functions in present-day Japan can be described as a client-practitioner or private religion, the complexity of affiliation indicates that the dualism between congregational and private religions is inadequately nuanced in its characterization. The two-category system proves to be a blunt analytic instrument that can obscure complexity.

Three Economies—Three Ideologies

Church Buddhism

Many of the immigrant forms of Buddhism have adopted the model of Protestant churches for their organization (Quli 2010; Payne 2005; Eastman 2009). In some cases, this also reflects changing institutional organization in the source country, such as, Japan in its process of modernization (Ama

2011). The adoption of a church model is a social and legal matter, but also an economic one. The nature of membership is one example of the economics of this form of institutional organization. The choice of many immigrant Buddhist groups to organize as churches meant incorporating as a not-for-profit religious organization. And, indeed, through the end of the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century, that may have been the only option evident for them.

One example is the Buddhist Churches of America, where over three decades I observed that membership was frequently a matter of contention. Are people members of the national organization, such as seems to be implied when the national organization provides estimates of membership? Or are they primarily members of their local temple, and the temple part of a federation? The primary point of contention that these different conceptions have relates to annual dues. Dues are paid by temples as a whole, but on the basis of a per-capita allocation based on self-reported membership.

The adoption of a church model is more than just a matter of cultural style, or of purposeful camouflage taken on to blend into the religious landscape of the United States, but also has economic consequences. It also has the seemingly unintentional consequence of moving the ideology of such institutions toward a theology of transcendence similar to that shared by other churches, institutions that are seen as their co-equals. The social expectations of what constitutes a church impel a kind of ideological convergence. Not only Sunday services, but the language of transcendence is, for example, employed by many ministers as one way of talking about the Pure Land of Amida. The dynamics of such ideological adaptations is not a simple one of imposition, however.

This emphasis on interpreting the Pure Land as transcendent is probably overdetermined by the apparent similarity of Christian conceptions of heaven as transcendent and Pure Land conceptions of Sukhāvatī as not merely a description of meditative experiences. Western understandings of religion as conveying a message of postmortem transcendence of this world is congruent with longstanding resistance to Yogācāra-influenced, or Chan/Zen interpretations of the Pure Land as mental (see Jones 2000; Sharf 2002; Payne 2015). The apparent similarity contributes to both Pure Land teachings being heard as promoting transcendence, but also to themes of transcendence being used in the presentation of Pure Land teachings. The trope equating the Pure Land of Amida with Heaven, once common and still occasionally encountered, was also reinforced by the equally now outdated equation of the Pure Land movement of Hōnen and Shinran with the Protestant Reformation (Payne 1998). This latter equation was itself dialectially molded and reinforced by conceptualizing Hōnen and Shinran as "founders" of a "church," with all of the presumptions about their motivations and the character of their teachings entailed by those concepts as employed in modern religious studies.

A key marker of church Buddhism is membership relations between individuals and the institution, and they are in this way part of Iannaccone and Bose's economic club model. However, what is true of churches generally is also true of church Buddhism—income from membership dues are not adequate to cover all costs. Thus, as noted by Wilson (in this issue), other kinds of fundraising activities are necessary. By extension, one would expect most Buddhist institutions, whether church, self-help, or denatured, to have somewhat hybrid economies. What we are pointing to here is the

predominant economic relationship: membership for church Buddhism, direct client–practitioner fee for service for self-help Buddhism, and mediated fee for service for denatured Buddhism.

Self-Help Buddhism

As noted above, we are adapting Frazer's system of three categories— magic, religion and science— as an analytic schema here. The term magic has today such a strongly pejorative character that an alternative is needed for a modern academic category. One possibility is the term "metaphysical," used by Auguste Comte in his own three-part teleological system to identify much the same category as Frazer's magic. More proximately, however, in her study of religion in the United States Catherine Albanese uses metaphysical to identify the American extension of the European traditions of magic (Albanese 2007, 21). Albanese identifies four characteristics of American metaphysical religion: a preoccupation with psychic powers, a belief in the theory of correspondences, dominant metaphors of energy and movement, and "a yearning for salvation understood as solace, comfort, therapy, and healing" (Albanese 2007, 15). These four characteristics form an integral system, such that "For American metaphysicians...being aligned with spirit (the goal) meant standing in the free flow of spirit energy. This energy would heal and restore, bring correspondence with the macrocosm back again, and end the sin of separation that had been inscribed on bodies, minds, and the physical terrain" (Albanese 2007, 15). It is this vision of energy and spirit as forces that are both effective in the lived world and potentially under some degree of human control that we refer to here as the immanent sacred and is manifest in the ideology of the self-help movement generally.

Thus, American metaphysical religion provides the ideological groundwork for "self-help Buddhism." (We are using the term self-help here for what is also called self-improvement, rather than "do-it-yourself," which is also sometimes referred to as self-help.) While the self-help movement today has a strongly American character, its own roots are found perhaps originally in Stoicism. Closer to the development of self-help are Renaissance ideas of "self-fashioning" (Greenblatt 2005), and Protestant conceptions of "spiritual discipline" of the self (Schmidt 2005, 30). The American commitment to self-determination, originating in the Enlightenment and forged in the Western expansion of the American frontier, contributes a morality and a politics to this nebula of ideas (Payne 2016). Much of the Buddhist modernist rhetoric regarding Buddhism being a philosophy, or a philosophy of life, becomes entwined with the understanding of Buddhism as providing a repertoire of tools for self-help.

In mid-twentieth-century America, the structures of the culture of self-help no doubt looked like readily available technologies for the propagation of Buddhism. Promoters began to structure teachings into workshop formats, and into progressive sets of teachings and practices packaged in book form. As with so many other of the phenomena under consideration here, the idea of progressive teachings is itself over-determined—path literature being easily reconceptualized as a time-structured sequence of activities to be undertaken as a regimen of self-improvement.

Along with this restructuring of Buddhism into self-help forms came the marketing and promotion of workshops, books, and tapes (now podcasts), and so on. As Catherine Albanese has noted, this is a difficult institutional style to study since in contrast to congregational forms of

religion in America, "historians of the metaphysical must take account of networks that appear especially temporary, self-erasing, self-transforming" (Albanese 2007, 8).

In addition to constituting a culture, with values, ideological commitments and institutional forms, we can consider self-help to constitute a technology—literally a way of doing things, of accomplishing some goal. While, on the one hand, self-help rhetoric often employs the notion that there is a true self, and that the task is to discover it, on the other there is an effectively Foucaultian awareness of the self-construction of the self by means of a modern "technology of the self" (Kelly 2013, 517). As with any other technology, however, self-help is not neutral. Like the person wielding a hammer who sees nails, the Buddhist promoter who employs the culture of self-help soon comes to think in terms of market opportunities and customers. This last is important, for example, because it is effectively a complete reversal of the long-standing donor relation that has been the main economy of Buddhism since its founding. Rather than voluntary or customary support of the sangha by the laity, or as demonstration of royal largesse, customers pay for services rendered.

An anecdote demonstrates this: A good friend, a scholar of tantric Buddhism at a small liberal arts college in the US, thought that it would be beneficial to offer a meditation class for anyone interested, both students and other community members. In order to do this, since it was not an "official" college activity, he had to compensate the college for the use of space, which, though a relatively nominal amount, was not something he could himself maintain out of his own funds for a sustained period of time. In keeping with the practice of the tradition in which he was trained, he invited participants to make offerings (*dana*) voluntarily. Weekly meeting after weekly meeting, however, the bowl provided for offerings remained empty. When he asked some of the students with whom he was friendly about this, they said that they felt no compulsion to pay for something that they could get for free. This well-intended effort floundered on the shoals of the consumerist protocols/values of the culture. This example demonstrates, however, the nature of the client–practitioner model. In the context of self-help culture, traditional *dana* that generates merit for the donor has generally been replaced with fee-for-service as the economic model. The complexity of the economics of merit are explored by Jeff Wilson in his contribution to this collection.

In addition to church Buddhism (congregational), structured according to the ideology and values of religion (as conceived in present-day America), the economics of the self-help culture constitute the second form of the relation between Buddhism and economics (client-practitioner). Completing the three-part schema, the third dimension is the conception of Buddhism within the framework of science. This involves the removal of Buddhist practices and teachings from their Buddhist context, creating "denatured Buddhism."

Denatured Buddhism

Denatured Buddhism is most closely allied with the science element in the three-part schema adapted here. But excluded from our analysis here is the entire discourse on Buddhism and science. This includes not only speculations about the coherence of some aspect of Buddhist thought with the most recent theory in physics or neuroscience, but also environmentalism and psychology (Cho 2017; Wallace 2008). Though that discourse forms part of the apologetics—reasoned justification—of both

church Buddhism and self-help Buddhism, as a discourse it is not a social institution with an economics as such.

One example of the institutionalization of denatured Buddhism is medicalized meditation, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and other similar programs or interventions (Wilson 2014, 84–92). Because of the way that the religious/secular dichotomy plays out in the US, for entry into many publicly supported institutions, whether hospitals and hospices, schools, jails and prisons, or the military, those characteristics identified as "religious" are stripped away, a process more complicated than the rhetoric of essence versus cultural accretion suggests (Brown 2019). This decontextualizing of Buddhist practice involves removing whatever qualities and characteristics are, because of the religious/secular dichotomy, identified as religious, and therefore inappropriate for publicly supported institutions. Such decontextualization constitutes the "denaturing" of Buddhism. We could also describe this as sublation, employing the Hegelian term encompassing both the abstraction of a concept from its context through interaction with another concept—in this case secularity, and at the same time the preservation of some aspects of the concept—in this case the ambiguous connections to Buddhism as the historical source of a decontextualized practice. The contradictory functions implied by denaturing Buddhist practice lead to the tensions over its ideological significance discussed below.

A consequence of the institutional location of denatured Buddhism is a third kind of economics, at least in the US. As providers of services, the institutional structures of hospitals and insurance companies, public schools, jails, prisons, the military and the state require both economic relations and less directly ideological commitments. (We note here that a medicalized or psychologized application in these settings is to be distinguished from the activities of chaplains who do bring a distinctly religious inflection to their work in such institutions.) Those institutions intervene between their employee who actually provides services and their clients. This is then a third kind of economic relation, distinct from direct fee-for-service as in self-help Buddhism or membership dues as in church Buddhism, one in which a secular institution mediates between the service provider as employee or subcontractor and the client receiving the services.

Reflecting the broader therapeutic culture within which both exist, self-help and denatured understandings of Buddhist practice are similar in sharing a therapeutic approach. This first pathologizes the subject as, for example, anxious, depressed, overweight, and so on, and then offers a mental technology as the means to a cure. However, in ideological commitments the self-help and denatured approaches are distinct from one another. Where self-help focuses on the (quasi-)magical power of the mind to generate or direct the immanent sacred, denatured applications tend to focus on scientific tests as demonstrating the effectiveness of the practice.

Hybridity

Up to this point we have been explicating a category system comprised of three institutional forms: church Buddhism, self-help Buddhism and denatured Buddhism. In addition to institutional structure, each of these has a distinctive economics and ideology. The three categories are, however,

abstractions, and any particular institution will most probably display hybridity of one kind or another.

One instance of a hybrid institution is the 1440 Multiversity, located in the Santa Cruz mountains south of San Francisco. (While it offers continuing education credits for some of its programs, it is part of the 1440 Foundation, operating as a 501(c) 3 tax exempt organization, and not incorporated as an educational institution, and does not offer degrees or certificates [personal communication, 1440 Multiversity representative via online chat, Thursday, March 1, 2018].) 1440 Multiversity offers a wide range of self-help technologies, including mindfulness training programs. In some cases these are identified as relating to Buddhism, while in others not. For example, in Fall 2017 1440 Multiversity offered a three-day program titled "Mindfulness, Intuition, and Inspiration: Open yourself up to the Oneness!" The program was taught by "psychic medium" James Van Praag, and the course description makes no mention of Buddhism. Tuition cost for this program was $425, plus a requisite two nights stay. Accommodations include all meals and begin at $165 per person per night for a shared room, up to $455 per night for a single suite (1440 Multiversity 2017). While in this case, "mindfulness" seems little more than a catchword, other programs offered at 1440 Multiversity are more specifically oriented toward mindfulness meditation *per se*, and they do make mention of Buddhist connections (1440 Multiversity 2018). The general programmatic context, however, makes of Buddhism simply one of a wide range of self-help and self-improvement technologies on offer, on a par with kundalini yoga, journaling, and leadership training. Although operating in the culture of self-help, as an institution 1440 Multiversity employs an economic model similar to that of denatured Buddhism: the institution intervenes between the client and the provider of services. As will be noted in the conclusion, we are not claiming a linear, causal relation from economics to ideology, but rather an interrelated network of relations between ideology, economics and institutional form. This example of a hybrid institution, that is, mediated economic relations conjoined with self-help ideology, might be called "corporate self-help."

We find a different kind of hybridity in the program for training MBSR teachers offered by the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society founded by Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Currently, program tuition is either $8,625, $8,675, or $9,165 depending on combination of courses, and the program does offer tuition assistance. In describing "MBSR Principles" the program claims a "confluence" of science, medicine, and psychology with Buddhist teachings and practices. However, the program presents meditation as both universal and secular, in fact disconnected from Buddhism as a religious or cultural form. Thus, denatured Buddhism (universal and secular) is distinguished from both church Buddhism (sectarian and religious), and self-help Buddhism (universal and religious).

This strategy of presenting meditation as both universal and secular allows a medicalized practice of mindfulness to establish its own systems of authorization and professionalization of which this training program is an instance. However, although the program is presented as a secular, medical training program, and the medical benefits of meditation are explained by reference to scientific studies, in this instance the program also participates in an ideology shared with self-help. The location of MBSR in secular clinical settings is justified by making a Perennialist claim that "the

Dharma is in essence universal" (Center for Mindfulness 2017), stripping away any identification of meditation as a specifically Buddhist practice. Although offered as justifying MBSR in a secular context, Perennialist ideology simply deploys a different set of religious commitments, which, while comparable to Buddhist ones, are effectively invisible to many people because they pervade popular religious culture in the United States.

The ideological impact of such denaturing has been the topic of much discussion (Williams and Kabat-Zinn 2011; Semple and Hatt 2012; Brown 2019). Two dimensions of this discussion have been the history and identity of mindfulness, and whether mindfulness is effective (or the nature of its efficacy) in the absence of Buddhist values and beliefs (Dreyfus 2011; Walsh 2016). In order to operate in a secular institution, although the origin of mindfulness in Buddhism may be acknowledged, its present identity is asserted to be purely a secular, mental technology. As summarized by Monteiro, et al., "Specific concerns include a potential weakening of the concept of right mindfulness and, as a corollary, misunderstanding the intent [of] mindfulness as being a technique for symptomatic relief. With respect to the absence of explicit ethics in the teachings, concerns are expressed that this omission risks misappropriating mindfulness practices so that they do more harm than good" (2014, 1).

More generally, while one of the three economic models (member, client-practitioner, or mediated) will usually be the predominant one for any institution, many also have hybrid economic forms as distinct from the hybridity of institution, economics and ideology of the two examples just given. Such hybrid institutions can, for example, depend on both member-based donations (both monetary and in-kind) and fee for service. Individual teachers may participate in all three economies, having a member-based group, conducting workshops or trainings on a fee-for-service basis, and have teachings made available through a mediating institution. Both Shambhala Publications and Wisdom Publications, which began as traditional book publishers, now offer a variety of podcasts, author videos, and training programs, thus functioning as a mediating institution, in this way similar to 1440 Multiversity. The degree of hybridity is therefore scalar along three axes, and the location of any specific institution is subject to change over time.

But what about those other two?

In addition to the three abstracted forms and their hybrid forms discussed above, there are two additional institutional forms worth noting. These are traditional monastic institutions, and educational institutions.

While there are some instances of traditional monastic institutions in the United States, these largely remain marginal and specialized in their appeal. Most actually have a certain degree of economic hybridity. Hybridity is evident in those monastic institutions that combine institutional activities, such as providing lodging for lay people, or as a venue for workshops. This latter case blending together with self-help Buddhism.

Also, some Buddhist groups have initiated educational institutions, which necessarily conform to legal requirements in the same way that churches do, as discussed above. At a basic level, state laws of incorporation as a not-for-profit educational corporation impose authority and decision-

making structures of a specific kind, often divergent from those ecclesiastical relations "native" to the form of Buddhism venturing into the area of education. At another level, accreditation organizations add other kinds of requirements. For example, there is a widely shared expectation in Westernized cultures for an educational institution to adhere to such principles as academic freedom. Originating in nineteenth-century Germany, this principle encourages individual freedom of thought by protecting faculty and students who develop new interpretations of teachings.

Conclusion

The client-practitioner relations of both self-help Buddhism and denatured Buddhism generally appear to be more oriented toward offering substantive training or other direct service, which the individual then employs in expectation of some (non-material) benefit. In contrast, church Buddhism either supports practice on an ongoing basis or directly offers some (non-material) benefit.

As mentioned at the outset, the literature on Buddhism in the West has given very little attention to the effects of institutionalization and economics. Adapting the now-classic and naturalized categorization of magic, religion and science, we proposed that three corresponding institutional forms exist: self-help Buddhism, church Buddhism, and denatured Buddhism, respectively. Our thesis here has been that institutional form, economic relations and ideology are dynamically interrelated, not that there is a unilinear causal relation directed from any one of the three aspects to the others. These institutional forms are, however, more determinative of similarities and differences in the various kinds of Buddhism in the United States than more familiar categories of doctrine, lineage, sect, or nation-state. That is, institutional form, economics and ideology tend to converge for different kinds of Buddhism. For church Buddhism, the economics are largely through membership (a congregational or collective economy), and in the context of Western religious culture, being identified as a church (or temple) motivates an ideology of transcendence. Self-help Buddhism is more commonly characterized by client–practitioner relations, that is, the economy of private religion (fee-for-service). As a consequence of its heritage, the culture of self-help locates the sacred with all its powers for growth, well-being, wholeness, happiness, and so on, in this world, that is the sacred as immanent. When in secular or medicalized settings, Buddhist practices are decontextualized in that they do not entirely lose their connections to their origin. This creates the ambiguities of a denatured form of Buddhism. The institutional location intervenes between the client or patient and the trainer, who is treated as an employee of the institution, thus creating a third kind of economic relation, a mediated one.

Viewed in these economic terms, different forms of Buddhism—church, self-help, denatured—will share certain ideological similarities regardless of lineage, doctrine or nation of origin. This is not an argument for a unilinear causal relation, but rather an argument that there is a systemic relation between institutional (and legal) forms, cultural expectations regarding ideology, and economic structures.

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