

MONASTERY WITHOUT BOUNDARY

by Hudaya Kandahjaya*

ABSTRACT

Not long after taking full ordination under the Chinese Mijiao lineage in 1995, an Indonesian monk - Venerable Nyanaprathama - began his social and ecological engagements in Sumatra, Indonesia. He started with establishing the usual social welfare institutions within the compounds belonging to his monastery, for instance, schools, scholarships, and health-care facilities for the underprivileged members of the society. Afterward he launched and oversaw projects totally unrelated to his monastery but connected to overall environmental aspects, e.g., in conservation of natural resources and in assisting indigenous people make the most of their resources against the pressure from global economy. He maintains that those projects represent efforts in helping all sentient beings as advocated by Buddha Dharma. These ecological activities raise an alternative paradigm whereby the monk and his sangha take advantages of all resources available to them while working collaboratively with private as well as public (government) agencies for the benefit of preserving nature, educating, training, and developing the society in general regardless of their social, ethnic, or religious affiliations. His approach to exchanges with the sangha at large has not only generated a number of thriving undertakings including but not limited to Barumon eco-tourism, rainforest conservation, organic agriculture (coffee, mushroom, etc), goldmine protection, and holistic healing, but also has developed a community within as well as beyond

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the conventional monastery wall as if the monastery has no boundary at all.

1. INTRODUCTION

In modern day Buddhism of the 20th to 21st centuries, Buddhist social activism has been popularly known as ‘engaged Buddhism’. The term was originally coined by Thich Nhat Hanh in his seminal book titled *Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire* (Thich 1967:42). As noted by Queen and King (1996:34) there was a claim that the term was already used earlier in 1963, though there seems to be no clear information to support this claim.⁽¹⁾ The monograph that Queen and King published in 1996 gave an overall survey of the state of nine engaged Buddhist movements in seven Asian countries up to early 1990s. Lately more and more leading Buddhist scholars have become involved and published portions of engaged Buddhism.⁽²⁾ In recent publication on the commemoration of the 2550th anniversary of the Mahāparinirvāṇa of Lord Buddha two special sections comprising almost half of the volume size have been devoted to various aspects of engaged Buddhism (Mungekar 2009:231-440).

By the time Thich Nhat Hanh’s started his action, there had already been some who did similar activism. For example, in China, there was Taixu who started Buddhist activism commonly called ‘humanistic Buddhism (*renjian fojiao* 人間佛教)’ around 1910s (Welch 1968:55ff; Pittman 2001; Goodell 2008). In India, such action is usually associated with Dr. Ambedkar who began his Buddhist Liberation movement in 1956. Although, scholarship on Ambedkar movement does not seem to recognize earlier attempt by Rahul Sankrityayan who performed a number of socio-politico-religious actions starting around 1916 and who also appealed to restore Maha Bodhi Temple in 1922.⁽³⁾ This latter piece of

1. See further Queen and King 1996:321-364. Doyle (2003:253) mentions the year 1963 as well, but does not show the source.

2. The OCLC WorldCat lists 24 more books published with subject on engaged Buddhism in between 1997 to 2018, and 5 of them are dissertations. If, however, the type of publications is expanded to include articles, chapters, etc., the number of publications exceeds 700 pieces.

3. For example, Queen and King (1996:45-72) says Ambedkar started in 1956, while at the same time there seems no record at all about Rahul here. Doyle (2016) too while discussing

information is important due to the fact that Rahul inherited such activism not only from Bhadanta Bodhananda but also from Anagārika Dharmapāla, who is on the other hand considered being the first carrying the spirit of engaged Buddhism.⁽⁴⁾

Reference to Dharmapāla and reading numerous discourses on engaged Buddhism provide clues about the types of activity as well as problematics inherent in the field. The range of activities includes various movements from establishing social institutions like schools to hospitals to political movements and actions to preserve environment. But, as already insinuated by a number of scholars, there has been quite a struggle within the Buddhist community for justifying and finding authoritative bases for doing engaged Buddhism.⁽⁵⁾ Variety of responses have already been suggested.⁽⁶⁾ And yet the struggle seems to continue. For instance, King (2009:13-27) offers a number of concepts—such as karma, the four noble truths, and compassion to serve as key Buddhist concepts for engaged Buddhism. However, we may wonder if this list answers the problem, or are we actually running in place?

As is traditionally held, being Buddhist means not merely taking refuge to the Triple Jewels, but also being observant to Buddhist doctrines and practices. In general, a lay person shall keep five precepts while maintaining a good understanding of Buddhist concepts listed above, go to temple where members of the Buddhist sangha hold services, and whenever possible shall also practice meditation, charities, including lend a support to the sangha. The lay person may hope that all these shall lead the person at least to attaining a happy life. On the other hand, while leading the Buddhist community, Sangha members shall do similar routines but perhaps in a more committed way and in a stronger intensity while striving

the liberation of the Maha Bodhi Temple does not seem to recognize Rahul's action. See Chudal (2016:142-145) for the context within which Rahul became involved in activism and specifically with the appeal to restore the Maha Bodhi Temple.

4. Queen and King (1996:20) consider Dharmapāla being the first who carried the spirit of engaged Buddhism.

5. For example: Queen and King (1996:1-44); Winston (2001); Heine and Prebish, *eds.* (2003:3-6); King (2005:231-249)

6. For example: Queen *et al, eds.* (2003:37-94); Neusner and Chilton, *eds.* (2005:88-158); Mungekar 2009:231-440.

to achieve enlightenment, the highest Buddhist goal. Their activities too are mainly monastery-centric. This pattern has been proven to be able to survive for more than two millennia. It has been virtually based on key Buddhist concepts suggested by King as listed earlier. Thus, if that has been the case, then we could say that the same list of key concepts ironically are also the foundation upon which Buddhists have all along been being justified to be disengaged from worldly affairs.

Regardless, as it becomes more and more apparent, the whole spectrum of challenges that people including Buddhists must face in today's environment are increasingly more complex and intrude into the day to day life at a greater speed. In other words, we can no longer assume that the slow pace of changes occurring in the past two millennia is going to happen as we move into the future. There are many instances showing the tough road lying ahead. But here let us consider two contrasting situations.

At one end, for instance, the plundering of rain forest⁽⁷⁾ is just one example of how actors of global and local economy today endeavor to achieve quick economic gains.⁽⁸⁾ Such rush into instant economic gratification may ravage human and natural resources at a rate which may speedily harm not only the ecological systems but also some defenseless population. While Buddhists may claim having no involvement in such activities, and thereby not being responsible for the resulting damages, at some point Buddhists too eventually might not be able to avoid the impact of unsustainable ecology (Jones 2003:27) or simply cannot afford doing nothing while being surrounded by vulnerable societies.

At a different end, even though the society at large has sometime ago experienced cashless transaction, a cashless society which now steadily becomes a new reality has a totally distinct underpinning due to a rapid and progressive use of digital methods while making monetary exchanges. This cashless systems presents us with a

7. Myers (1992: xviii) says "the annual destruction rate seems set to accelerate yet further, and could well double in another decade."

8. Jones (2003:159-172) devotes one chapter discussing this issue of profit making and describes the whole thing being like "A World in Flames."

fresh problem (Sivabalan 2017). Those who are reluctant to digital methods may be shunned away from using cashless systems and might thereby be at risk or at least marginalized. Though seems to be farfetched, Buddhists are not exempted from this situation. Ready or not they too are one day forced to be part of the digital and cashless society with all its ramifications.

Hence, in the face of such ever rapid changing society and environment, the more or less stable conditions which have presumably sustained the traditional way of being Buddhist will evaporate steadily. Consequently, there is a greater probability that the Buddhist traditional premise in the past two millennia may no longer be appropriate nor be able to tackle the quickly approaching adversities.

This paper attempts to showcase an alternative paradigm by which Buddhists around the world may be prepared to engage in new challenges and move forward with full confidence while overcoming all kinds of hardships due to the shifting milieu. This paper is a preliminary attempt to describe the paradigm and thereby might have contained incomplete information and unnecessary shortcomings. In case one wonders whether or not this alternative paradigm is justified, this paper offers a survey of relevant doctrinal background from which one could see its alignment with Buddhist teachings.

2. ALTERNATIVE PARADIGM⁽⁹⁾

An Indonesian monk—Venerable Nyanaprathama—was born by given name Kuslan in Bagansiapi-api on 7 April 1974. In his teenage years he was active at the Tri Ratna temple in Tanjung

9. I first met Venerable Nyanaprathama on 23 June 2015 while attending the 14th International Conference on Buddhist Women, organized by Sakyadhita in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It was at this coincidental encounter I perceived an unprecedented paradigm by which Buddhists might have a better chance moving forward. I compile the following concise description based on his oral description at the time, my subsequent meeting and visit to Padangsidempuan, North Sumatra on 20 to 25 August 2016, and a number of articles (Yang 2011, *Harian Andalas* 2016, Yang 2018, and Tanwijaya 2018a) as well as additional personal correspondences with Tanwijaya in December 2018. I would hereby extend my gratitude to Venerable Nyanaprathama and Tanwijaya who have generously given me their invaluable time and information regarding the activities set forth by Nyanaprathama.

Balai, North Sumatra. He became a novice following the lineage of Guanghuasi (廣化寺) on 6 April 1994 under the tutelage of Venerable Aryamaitri (釋定盛). Under this lineage he thereby received the name Shi Xueyuan (釋學源). More than a year later he undertook full ordination under the Chinese Mijiao (密教) lineage. He was ordained by Venerable Liaozhong (釋了中) on 17 December 1995 at (now) the Hsuan Chuang University (玄奘大學), Hsinchu, Taiwan. For the range of his social and ecological engagements (which will be briefly explained below), Nyanaprathama received an award from the Indonesian Social Responsibility Institute (Lembaga Indonesia Social Responsibility) on 17 November 2014. His twenty years of monkhood was celebrated in Medan, North Sumatra, on 5 March 2016.

Nyanaprathama started his engagements with the usual social welfare activities in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, in 1997. One day he met several Chinese girls and asked them why they did not go to school during school hours. The girls answered that because they were just girls, they do not have to read books. Their answer surprised him and wondered why they had such kind of opinion. He thought that behind a successful man there is usually a mother and a wife, and if women are not educated the society would have problems. This encounter has ever since motivated him to address education and other related social issues.

Nyanaprathama first established a scholarship program called Metta Jaya in 1997. It was followed by a free health-care clinic in 1999 and much later a dental clinic in 2007. In the meantime he was eventually able to establish a general education school named Bodhicitta in 1999. All of these have assisted many children and underprivileged families.

A major change in his activism began around the year 1998. While undergoing monk training in Taiwan, Nyanaprathama witnessed passionate activities by a number of environmental protection agencies. Back to Indonesia in 1998, Nyanaprathama involved in preventing the scooping of topsoil out of the area of Mount Sinabung in Tanah Karo, North Sumatra. In the same year, an Indonesian environmental protection organization invited five religious representatives to participate in an environmental

conference. Nyanaprathama was a Buddhist representative and attended the meeting. The conference started with a suggestion that Chinese people were the enemy of environmental protection because they logged down Indonesian forests and therefore were to be driven away. Nyanaprathama stood up and said that the idea that the Chinese were destroying the forest was debatable. In 1970s to 1980s the government asked businessmen to develop forests. The businessmen who were not all Chinese took the opportunity to gain profit. This situation indicated that both sides—the government and the businessmen—benefited each other. Nyanaprathama continued that the actual participants in the deforestation were actually local residents, who were mostly indigenous people, who did not even understand environmental protection nor the consequence of deforestation. Therefore, instead of simply blaming the Chinese, the problem should be solved comprehensively. Meanwhile, in the ensuing years after attending an international conference on global water crises in Taiwan in 2003, Nyanaprathama did a vigorous effort to make Indonesia be the host for a pilot project for research on water crises. The effort was successful as Indonesia was nominated to be the country for such pilot project in 2006. The regency of Humbang Hasundutan in the Toba Lake region in North Sumatra was selected to be the area for research. The regent being the official government officer from the regency welcomed the designation and was invited to Taiwan to sign off the international collaborative work agreement.

All of these triggered and kept his enthusiasm in the field of environmental protection. All the while, Nyanaprathama was able to found the Indonesian Bodhicitta Mandala Assembly (Pesamuhan Bodhicitta Mandala Indonesia) in 2004. The assembly is to promote Buddha Dharma in all aspects of life, as he believes that helping living beings means helping all beings regardless of their attributes, status, or categories. The assembly gathers members of the Buddhist sangha and laypeople. It also strives to include activities in conservation of natural resources and in assisting indigenous people make the most of their resources against the pressure from global economy.

In the years 2005-2006 while being a sangha member assigned

to serve the Province of Nanggroe Aceh Darusallam in the northern end of Sumatra, Nyanaprathama observed how coffee farmers in the village Bener Meriah, at the foothill of Mount Burni Telong lacking the know-how on cultivating coffee plants as well as on processing coffee beans. This deficiency forced them to sell their beans at a very low price and thereby were not economically supportive to their own family. Nyanaprathama then studied not just coffee cultivation and processing but also other agroindustrial and forest products, including but not limited to patchouli and agarwood (*nilam* and *gaharu*). He imparted the skill to local farmers or entrepreneurs and let the government take over after the recipients ready to grow their business. Entrepreneurs, like Tabo and Tonggi Sipirok, are among those who received Nyanaprathama's assistance in their early stage of business.

Further change in his activism happened when Nyanaprathama started a conservation program to protect the rain forest in North Sumatra. Being a home to the third largest rain forest in the world, Indonesia is losing acres of rain forest each year due to extensive logging and global warming. After establishing Bodhicitta Mandala Conservation program in 2007, Nyanaprathama has been on a campaign to save a 6,000 hectare rainforest in Sandean, North Sumatra. Along with this program, Nyanaprathama initiated a tree bank which he called the "Movement of 1,111,111 Trees" (*Gerakan 1.111.111 Pohon*). Various parties donated trees to this bank from which trees were then distributed all over the region of North Sumatra.

Nyanaprathama believes that the country is losing 30 to 40 Sumatran tigers annually. Thus, these tigers may be extinct within 10 years. In this context, he started in 2012 the Barumon Nagari Wildlife Sanctuary covering an area around 40,000 hectares at North Padang Lawas, in South Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra. The sanctuary is now a home to six endangered species animals known in Sumatra (Sumatran tigers, elephants, orangutans, hornbills, siamangs, and tapirs). This sanctuary also serves as an area for developing ecotourism and conserving the rainforest.

As such, the assembly that Nyanaprathama brought into being has generated an alternative paradigm. The ecological activities allow the monk and his sangha takes advantages of all resources

available to them while working collaboratively with private as well as public (government) agencies for the benefit of preserving nature, educating, training, and developing the society at large regardless of their social, ethnic, or religious affiliations. His approach to exchanges with the sangha at large has not only produced a number of thriving undertakings briefly described above, but also has developed a community within as well as beyond the monastery wall as if it has no wall at all.

3. RELEVANT BUDDHIST BACKGROUND

In support of the alternative paradigm presented above, this section will first examine some causes for the struggle in justifying engaged Buddhism, and proceed with a presentation of a collection of Buddhist concepts or teachings supportive of social action.⁽¹⁰⁾ As it will become clear below, these teachings are coherent with the emerging paradigm.

Rahul Sankrityayan published an article titled “Buddhist Dialectics” in January 1956 issue of the *New Age*, a political monthly of communist party of India (Sankrityayan 1956:42-48). This publication was written when Rahul reached his culminating years after his life-long participation in social action in India from which he was also imprisoned a number of times. It was also written after Rahul accomplished retrieving Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts and studying their essential tenets and philosophy. Thus, though short, this essay is one additional proposition which deserves attention from Buddhist social activists. Not only does it contain a summary of Rahul’s fundamental idea in social action movement, but it also an example of an early struggle in Buddhist activism.

Rahul’s article was later published post humously in a collection of essays of similar thought in 1970 titled *Buddhism: The Marxist Approach*.⁽¹¹⁾ It was from this publication that most readers usually

10. In my ongoing study on engaged Buddhism I have written and presented fragmented results sporadically in a number of papers, such as Kandahjaya 2014, 2015, 2016, 2016, 2017a, 2017b, and 2018. This is my initial attempt to integrate them here.

11. In Sankrityayan *et al* 1970:1-8. In this collection, there are four other essays written by Debiprosad Chattopadhyaya, Y. Balaramamoorthy, Ram Bilas Sharma, and Raj Anand showing different aspects of Marxist approach.

know about Rahul's essay. Though, perhaps unknown to Rahul himself,⁽¹²⁾ it is interesting to note that Rahul's 1956 publication received a particular attention from the Chinese communist party who published its Chinese translation in 1957.⁽¹³⁾ Then it was from this Chinese translation that a Chinese monk, Jinhui 晉惠, in 1960 cited Rahul's opinion to support the idea that Buddhism was atheistic and thereby did not contradict the Chinese Communist party policy nor the establishment of Chinese government's official religions.⁽¹⁴⁾

Rahul's *Buddhist Dialectics* offers us a number of important observations critical for understanding the background of Buddhism and Buddhist praxis of our era. First, Rahul observes that Buddhist commune economic communism could not continue for long (Sankrityayan *et al* 1970:2). Perhaps, seeing this Buddhist socio-economic failure, Rahul was looking for a new basis to support Buddhism into the future. Hence, Rahul evokes another observation. As cited by Jinhui, Rahul starts with an assertion that Buddhism is atheistic and likely scientific,⁽¹⁵⁾ and from there on the basis of his reading of Dharmakīrti's⁽¹⁶⁾ comes to Hegelian as opposed to Marxist dialectical materialism as a way to tackle Buddhist social economic issues. Probably it was from this line of thinking that he titled his essay Buddhist dialectic.

While Rahul's observation on Buddhist commune economic communism is justifiable, his assertion on atheistic and scientific attributes of Buddhism are debatable. In the early period of Buddhist studies—within which Rahul was in—such attributes including being rational and not dogmatic were prevailing.⁽¹⁷⁾

12. I got this perception from a personal conversation with daughter of Rahul, Jaya Sankrityayan, on 16 March 2018, during a conference commemorating Rahul's life accomplishment.

13. The Chinese translation was in the journal *Xuexi yicong* 學習譯叢 3 (1957):11-15.

14. Pacey 2017:5. Jinhui published his article titled 'Fodian zhong "wushenlun" sixiang' 佛典中「無神論」思想 in *Xiandai Foxue* 現代佛學 5 (1960): 25-27.

15. The essay starts with "In Buddhism there is no place for god (creator of the universe) or for a revealed book" (Sankrityayan *et al* 1970:1). On page 6-7, Rahul defines reality according to Buddhist thinkers being: "that which is capable of objective action." And then "...only the objective action or experiment is the touchstone of reality... The entire progress of science is based on this principle—that we accept object as our guide."

16. Sankrityayan quotes Dharmakīrti at least three times (Sankrityayan *et al* 1970:6-8).

17. During the period, reason is often considered the utmost excellent property as opposed to faith or particularly dogmatic faith. Along this line, we had, for instance, the first edition of

Sir Edwin Arnold was among the early proponents of such view (Wright 1957:171). Anagārika Dharmapāla met with Arnold in London in August 1893 before attending and delivering his address at the Parliament of Religions, Chicago, on 18 September 1893. In this address Dharmapāla mentioned the *Kalama Sutta* (Guruge 1965:9) and was likely the first to popularize it. The *Kalama Sutta* has ever since become the most quoted teaching of Buddha to demonstrate the scientific property of Buddhism. It was an open possibility that Rahul being the inheritor of Dharmapāla's spirit of engaged Buddhism was also initiated into that attributive property of Buddhism. Although, today, as demonstrated by Bhikkhu Bodhi (1998), such a view especially when the *Kalama Sutta* is taken as the support is actually unjustifiable.

On atheistic Buddhism, Heinz Bechert (1981:13) reveals that this atheistic attribute became problematic for Indonesian Buddhists who in the period right after the failed communist coup in 1965 had to prove to the government of Indonesia that Buddhism is theistic and in agreement with the Indonesian state principle of Divinity. In contrast to many Buddhist scholars' opinion and as has already been shown by Helmuth von Glasenapp (1966:89), an 8th century Sanskrit-Old Javanese Buddhist text titled the *Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan* (hereafter SHK) records a Buddhist doctrine which has pronouncedly monistic trend. It has also been made evident that this text is validly related to early cycle of the *Guhyasamāja* family of texts as well as to the lineage of Dignāga.⁽¹⁸⁾

George Grimm's book written in German titled *Die Lehre des Buddha: die Religion der Vernunft* published in 1915 (later translated into English titled *The Doctrine of the Buddha: The Religion of Reason* published in 1920), which from its title strongly shows rationalistic leaning and—as we read inside—atheistic inclination. Related to this trend, McMahan (2008:3-14) shows how the Protestant Reformation, the scientific revolution, European Enlightenment, and Romanticism all influenced Buddhism when it initially emerged and spread throughout the world. See also Lopez Jr., *ed.* (1995). And, prior to these, Gananath Obeyesekere coined the term 'Protestant Buddhism' to denote the development of Buddhism in Sri Lanka which had already been influenced by Western culture and Christianity. The term was published initially in his article (1970:43-63), then republished in Smith, *ed.* (1972:58-78), and discussed furthermore in Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988:202-240). See also Prothero (Summer 1995:281-302). On page 296, Prothero described Olcott as 'The most Protestant of all early Protestant Buddhists.'

18. For the examination of the SHK, see Kandahjaya 2016.

The SHK is likely the earliest scripture which records the term Ādi Buddha and its connotation here is in line with the concept of Ādi Buddha in the Kālacakra system. Then, it was from this breed of Buddhism that Javanese Buddhists built Borobudur, the most magnificent Buddhist temple in the world, and in the 14th century a Javanese Buddhist scholar, Mpu Tantular, composed a *kāvya* work titled the *Kakawin Sutasoma*. An old Javanese phrase *bhinneka tunggal ika* (meaning: distinct yet one) in a verse from this work becomes the Indonesian state motto. Thus, from this inspection it is clear that the assertion of Buddhism being atheistic is also not fully defensible.

In the SHK, besides being theistic, the doctrine shows a set of procedures for attaining the perfect enlightenment which is quite unlike the one commonly ascribed to the Mahāyāna or Theravāda traditions known today. For instance, when the SHK calls ten *pāramitās* (*daśa pāramitā*)—being the perfection path (*paramamārga*)—it comprises the six *pāramitās* (*ṣaṭ pāramitā*) and the four *brahmavihāras* or *pāramitās* (*catur pāramitā*). Although, while the SHK procedure differs to those commonly recognized today, it is on the other hand consistent with the procedure prescribed in older authoritative Buddhist scriptures, some of which are less known today or even are no longer in use, such as the *Akṣayamatīsūtra*, the *Ratnameghasūtra*, or the *The Brahmā's Net Sutra* (T. 1484 *Fanwang jing* 梵網經).⁽¹⁹⁾ In other words, the inclusion of the four *brahmavihāras* into the SHK procedure for attaining the enlightenment is an ancient procedure clearly advocated by older Buddhist texts but which is hardly known in today's received traditions.

By contrast, we know that by around the 5th century Bhadantācariya Buddhagosa devoted one whole chapter on the *brahmavihāras* while compiling his *Visuddhimagga*. In this commentary, Buddhagosa explains that practicing the *brahmavihāras* could only lead one to the brahma-worlds, although

19. For the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra*, see Braarvig 1993. I met Bhikṣuṇī Vinitā Tseng during the Buddhist Studies Workshop, LMU (Ludwig Maximilian Universität), München, on June 15th – 16th, 2018. She said that she is in possession and in the process of editing a Sanskrit copy of the *Ratnameghasūtra*. The procedure is in the first fascicle of *The Brahmā's Net Sutra*, see Muller and Tanaka 2017, which prior to this publication is hardly known.

at his final paragraph of this chapter he seems to suggest otherwise that the practice could lead one to perfection. Reading it this way, it is a controversial proposition. Richard Gombrich has taken the task to clarify the cause for such discrepancy (Gombrich 2009:75-91), but unfortunately most in the Theravāda tradition has usually taken the first part of Buddhagosa's commentary and ignored the final paragraph and thereby dismissing the controversial proposition.⁽²⁰⁾

The practice on *brahmavihāras* as suggested by Buddhagosa and as generally uphold in the Theravāda tradition is likely the reason why to some extent the four *brahmavihāras* have been construed merely as the subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*). While quite the reverse, if we follow the instructions written in the older Buddhist texts, the practice on *brahmavihāras* could actually be the source for one's actions toward other beings. For example, here is the meaning of loving kindness (P. *mettā*, Skt. *maitrī*, OJ. *metri* or *metrī*) in the SHK which parallels to the same in the *Akṣayamatisūtra*.

The so-called *metri* is: the nature of performing meritorious action for the welfare of others (*parahitakāḥṛtva*), the state (*ākāra*) of *jñāna* of Sañ Satva Viśeṣa. The so-called Sañ Satva Viśeṣa: diligently does one's best in *ṣaṭ pāramitā* and *catur pāramitā*, he is the so-called Satva Viśeṣa. The state of his *jñāna* is working for the well-being of others. The so-called others (*para*) is: all beings (*sarbva satva*), low, middle, or high (*kaniṣṭhamadhyamottama*), this loving kindness (*sih*) towards others without expectation of reward (*tan phalāpekṣa*) is the so-called *metrī*.⁽²¹⁾

This kind of interpretation - we may exceptionally note here - in

20. For instance, Nyanaponika (2008:7) concludes that: "The meditations on love, compassion, and sympathetic joy can each produce the attainment of the first three absorptions, while the meditation on equanimity will lead to the fourth only, in which equanimity is the most significant factor."

21. The commentary in the SHK in Old Javanese is as follows: "*Metri nāranya: parahitakāḥṛtva, ākāra niñ jñāna sañ Satva Viśeṣa. Sañ Satva Viśeṣa nāranya: tumakitaki ṣaṭ pāramitā mvañ catur pāramitā, sira ta Satva Viśeṣa naran ira. Ākāra niñ jñāna nira gumave hayva niñ para. Para nāranya: sarbva satva, kaniṣṭhamadhyamottama, ikañ sih riñ para tan phalāpekṣa, ya metrī nāranya.*"

fact occurs in the Sarvodaya movement where the *brahmavihāras* have been taken contrarily as guidelines for social action.⁽²²⁾

It is also in the course of one's actions toward other beings that other beings mean all living beings regardless of all categories which may be attached to them. Those beings are not solely Buddhists, and are not even solely human beings. To this end, this concept is in compliance with Buddha's exhortation to his first 60 disciples to disseminate his teachings for the good of the many, which clearly implicates not merely Buddhists (per historical narrative there were no other Buddhists besides those 61) nor human beings. This exhortation too points to the fact that the teachings carried by the first 60 disciples could not be exactly the same as those codified in the commonly acknowledged Tripiṭaka today. And, even codified teachings during the first council cannot be considered complete because there was at least one incidence right after the first council suggesting that the compilation was not accepted by Purāṇa, the leader of a group of at least five hundred monks, who would only bear in his mind and practice the teaching that he heard directly from the Buddha Śākyamuni himself.⁽²³⁾

Further implication of this fact directs us to acknowledge that Buddha's teachings cannot really be limited to just the received canonized Tripiṭaka. This understanding is corresponding to

22. Queen and King 1996:126-127. Sulak Sivaraksa echoes similar view, see Queen and King 1996:219-221. Jones (2003:105) suggests that the *brahmavihāra* meditation is a practice directly related to social activism. However, here it is clear that the suggestion is merely related to meditation practice and not to physical action. Thus far, I have not been able to find references from the Theravāda tradition which point the notion of *brahmavihāra* to physical action.

23. In the Pali Canon of the *Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tripiṭaka*, in the *Cūlavagga* of the *Vinayaṭṭakā*: “*Tena kho pana samayena āyasmā purāṇo dakkhiṇāgirisimīṃ cārikaṃ carati mahatā bhikkhusaṅghena saddhiṃ pañcamattehi bhikkhusatehi. Atha kho āyasmā purāṇo therehi bhikkhūhi dhamme ca vinaye ca saṅgīte dakkhiṇāgirisimīṃ yathābhirantaṃ viharitvā yena rājagahaṃ yena veḷuvanaṃ kalandakanivāpo yena therā bhikkhū tenupasaṅkami, upasaṅkamtivā therehi bhikkhūhi saddhiṃ paṭisammoditvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. Ekamantaṃ nisinnaṃ kho āyasmantaṃ purāṇaṃ therā bhikkhū etadavocuṃ – ‘therehi, āvuso purāṇa, dhammo ca vinayo ca saṅgīto. Upehi taṃ saṅgīti’nti. ‘Susāṅgītāvuso, therehi dhammo ca vinayo ca. Apica yatheva mayā bhagavato sammukhā suttaṃ, sammukhā paṭiggahitaṃ, tathevāhaṃ dhāressāmi’ti.’*” Oldenberg 1880. English translations: Rhys Davids and Oldenberg, *The Mahāvagga* 1881-1900:380-381. Horner 1997:401-402.

a phrase we have constantly heard from within the Buddhist tradition that there are 84,000 kinds of teachings (*dharmaskandha*) or 84,000 dharma doors (*dharmamukha*, *dharmadvāra*, or *dharmaparyāya*), or even universal door to teachings of Buddha (*samantamukha*). The universality of the teachings of Buddha is indeed maintained and exposed in the chapter of the *Samantamukha* (*samantamukhaparivarta*) of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*.

Similar in essence to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* is the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra*. While extolling the protagonist Sudhana who studies all knowledge and practices in order to attain the highest Buddhahood, the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra* advocates a variety of sources for achieving enlightenment. Teachers of Sudhana, called the *kalyāṇamitras*, are fifty two in number and come from all walks of life. This group of *kalyāṇamitras* consists of members of different spiritual schools known at that time, and includes boys and girls, merchants, ascetics, monks, bodhisattvas, up to *brāhmaṇas* (Jayoṣmāyatana and Śivarāgra), a *bhāgavatī* (Vasumitrā), and a *deva* (Mahādeva). At Borobudur, Mahādeva is depicted as Śiva Mahādeva. Then, in this group, about forty percent of these *kalyāṇamitras* can be identified as female. The diversity of *kalyāṇamitras* in the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra* emphasizes the idea that perfect enlightenment can be attained by all via many paths and that this kind of enlightenment does not belong exclusively to just one spiritual school.

The *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra* also reminds us about Sudhana's meeting with one of his teachers, Indriyeśvara, whose teaching confirms that secular sciences—as we call them now—were not considered a separate domain outside the boundaries of religious or spiritual path. Instead, secular sciences were considered part of religious practice and doors to the highest spiritual enlightenment. As such, the meeting of Sudhana with Indriyeśvara, the *samantamukhaparivarta*, the *pāramitās* as well as Buddha's exhortation to the first 60 monks are probably the most relevant discourses which expound Buddhist teaching in support of all kinds of social Buddhist engagement activities in all sorts of fields beyond the customary monastic boundaries.

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