



**The Value of Human Differences: South Asian Buddhist Contributions
Toward an Embodied Virtue Theory**

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Introduction(1)

Virtue theory offers important resources for the study of Buddhist ethics, as recent work by scholars such as Charles Hallisey, Damien Keown, and James Whitehall demonstrates.(2) Virtue theory, which has its roots in ancient Greek philosophy, especially that of Aristotle, draws attention to ethical issues of concern to Buddhists past and present. These include character formation, the cultivation of feelings, desires, and dispositions conducive to right living, and images of a good life that serve to define particular ways of living as right or good. Virtue theorists, of which there are different varieties, generally define a good life as one that enables and is enabled by the practice of virtues — however these be defined.(3)

In this paper I address an issue that has received little attention in studies of Buddhist ethics: the relationship between virtues and bodies. I ask, What are virtues? Are these best described as cognitive and affective aspects of a person's psyche, as is commonly the case, or can virtues also be described as features, postures, and movements of a person's body? In posing this question, I take up a challenge issued by the feminist philosopher and theoretician of bodies, Elizabeth Grosz. Rejecting a Cartesian mind-body dualism, Grosz asks us to reconceptualize human beings in such a way that we acknowledge the corporeal specificity of human beings.⁽⁴⁾ This exploration of the relationship between virtues and bodies in South Asian Buddhist traditions will foreground the corporeal specificity of ethical agents and suggest how the South Asian Buddhist interest in bodies and bodily differences can be a resource for contemporary studies of ethics— Buddhist and otherwise.⁽⁵⁾

The Privileged Status of Mind in the Study of Buddhist Ethics

Discussions of Buddhist ethics almost always address the notion of *cetanā*, a term usually translated as "intention," "motive," or "volition," but more recently by Keown as "moral psychology."⁽⁶⁾ As is well-known, Buddhists place great weight on "the inner dimension of the moral life,"⁽⁷⁾ taking into account the cognitive and affective states of an agent — that is, his or her *cetanā* — in evaluating his or her actions.⁽⁸⁾ Buddhist ethical discourse thus defines karma as volitional acts.⁽⁹⁾ Some negative karmic debt (*pāpa*) may accrue to me if I inadvertently run over a dog with my car (particularly if I have been careless), but the karmic consequences will be far less grave than had I done so on purpose. Hence, studies of Buddhist ethics often quote the following: "It is intention (*cetanā*), O monks, that I call karma."⁽¹⁰⁾ Given the importance Buddhist ethical discourse attributes to *cetanā*, it is not surprising that scholars have tended to characterize virtues as cognitive and affective states or dispositions.⁽¹¹⁾ Such

characterization is certainly not wrong; it could hardly be so in a tradition that insists that the mind is the forerunner of all deeds. A key aim of this paper, however, is to demonstrate that characterizing virtues *exclusively* as cognitive and affective qualities without considering the relationship of virtues to bodies overlooks an important area of Buddhist ethics.

Virtues have been not been defined exclusively as mental qualities by all persons in all times and places. For instance, Homer values the virtue of physical strength because for him the ideal ethical agent is a warrior. Aristotle, on the other hand, espouses a very different ethical ideal and, hence, gives priority to different virtues. Alasdair MacIntyre argues that "[t]he mind receives from Aristotle the kind of tribute which the body receives from Homer."[\(12\)](#) Yet, as MacIntyre and Martha Nussbaum both note, Aristotle's ideal ethical agent — the Athenian gentleman — is by no means a universal ethical agent. Nussbaum's extensive description of the sex, age, physical appearance, and social status of this ideal ethical agent renders problematic any account of virtues that does not investigate the relationship of these to bodies.[\(13\)](#) Scholars of Buddhist ethics have not been alone in privileging the role of the mind in moral life. Modern Western ethicists have often grounded their moral theories in notions of reason, logic, or will, emphasizing the role of cognition at the expense of both bodies and emotions. The relative disinterest in bodies on the part of scholars of Buddhist ethics is likely due as much to the influence of modern Western ethical discourse as to the privileged status of mind in Buddhist ethical discourse.

Before exploring the relationship between virtues and bodies in South Asian Buddhist literature, let me define what I mean by *virtues* and *bodies*. Virtues are, as Lee Yearley, argues, "a group of related and relatively well-defined qualities that most individuals in a group think reflect admirable characteristics," although "[t]he exact boundaries of the category always will be a matter of dispute."[\(14\)](#)

There is no exact or exclusive equivalent in Sanskrit (or the related South Asian languages of Pali and Sinhala) to the Greek *aretē* or Latin *virtus*, which we translate into English as "virtue." Instead, Buddhist Sanskrit literature makes use of quite a number of different terms, each with slightly different connotations, referring to qualities (*guṇa*, *dharma*), physical characteristics or attributes (*lakṣaṇa*), merit (*puṇya*), and morality (*śīla*); in some Pali literature even the term *maṅgala* (auspiciousness, luck, good fortune) designates moral virtues.(15)

Along with this broad range of vocabulary, Buddhist literature presents us with an even broader range of virtues. Often, these are codified in lists, such as the perfections (*pāramitā*), the precepts (*śikṣāpada*), and the path of the ten skillful deeds (*daśa-kuśala-karma-patha*); we also find discussions of numerous particular virtues, including compassion (*karuṇā*), faith (*śraddhā*), gratitude (*kṛtajñā*), reverence or respect (*ādara*, *gaurava*), humility (*nirmāna*), mindfulness (*smṛti*), fear (*bhaya*), and shame (*lajjā*).(16)

My analysis of bodies is influenced by the work of contemporary theorists of bodies who emphasize that bodies are constituted *as particular types of bodies* by a combination of genetic and environmental factors.(17) Thus, Grosz draws attention to the ways in which features, such as dress, hair style, various forms of adornment, gait, and posture, render bodies culturally meaningful.(18) For example, female sex is marked as much by particular forms of dress and body language as by particular biological features. Grosz's work is helpful for analysis of Buddhist discourse on bodies because such discourse likewise displays an interest in the variety of ways in which bodies — for which there is a diverse Sanskrit vocabulary — assume particular form and meaning.(19) For instance, monastic bodies are marked as such by a range of features, including shaven head, robes, begging bowl, and decorous gait. Significantly, as Grosz would argue, monastic dress and deportment are not simply added to monastic bodies, but constitute these as monastic bodies in the first place.

Hence, my discussion of the relationship between virtues and bodies includes reference to modes of adornment and deportment. The word "bodies" refers broadly in this paper not only to "naked" bodies, but also to bodies that are adorned and in motion.

It is still a common misperception that Indian Buddhists, especially "early Buddhists," ascribed little value to bodies because these are impermanent and without enduring essence (*ātman*, *sāra*).⁽²⁰⁾ Although bodies have indeed been regarded as impermanent and without enduring essence, this fact has not prompted all Buddhists to devalue or ignore bodies. To the contrary, Buddhist ethical discourse displays great interest in bodies because bodies are closely associated with virtues. The relationship between virtues and bodies is complex. In what follows, I shall illumine several different ways in which Buddhist ethical discourse construes the nature of this relationship: (1) Bodies are the material effects of practicing virtues; (2) bodies are the material conditions for practicing virtues; (3) certain kinds of bodies can influence others to practice virtues; and (4) certain features, postures, and movements of bodies constitute in and of themselves virtues. These perspectives are not mutually exclusive. I treat them separately in this paper for heuristic purposes only. In actuality, Buddhist ethical discourse is often able to suggest multiple perspectives simultaneously.

Bodies are the Material Effects of Practicing Virtues

Because of the Buddhist belief in karma, bodies are rarely conceived of as morally neutral in Buddhist literature.⁽²¹⁾ Rather, they are portrayed as the material effects of past virtues and vices.

Consequently, Buddhist ethical discourse devotes considerable attention to bodies. I shall begin my analysis of the relationship between virtues and bodies with a story because this story — as so many in South Asian Buddhist traditions — displays an implicit assumption that virtues are closely associated with bodies. The story,

told in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* section of the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vinaya*, concerns Devadatta, a contemporary and rival of the historical Buddha.(22) In this cycle of stories, Devadatta attempts at different points to take over either the leadership of the monastic community or the kingdom of Kapilavastu. The former act would make him a Buddha and the latter a king. Periodically, Devadatta appeals to his supporter, King Ajātaśatru, for aid in taking over the monastic community. It should be noted that King Ajātaśatru rules primarily because under Devadatta's bad influence he has his own father, King Bimbisāra, thrown into prison where he dies of hunger. Devadatta, therefore, on one occasion, tells the king: "I established you in kingship; establish me too in Buddhahood."(23) The king refuses. Why? Because Devadatta does not look like a Buddha. The king objects that whereas the Buddha has a golden-colored body (*suvarṇa-varṇa kāya*), Devadatta does not.(24) Undaunted, Devadatta visits a goldsmith and has himself gilt in gold. The story ends with Devadatta screaming in pain. In another version of this story in the same *Vinaya*, King Ajātaśatru refuses to establish Devadatta in Buddhahood because Devadatta does not have the sign of a wheel on the soles of his feet, as is the case with the Buddha.(25) With remarkable perseverance, Devadatta commissions a blacksmith to brand his feet with the sign of a wheel, but once again gets nothing for his efforts but severe pain.

Unfortunately for Devadatta, a Buddha's looks are hard to fake. A golden complexion and the sign of a wheel on the soles of one's feet are two of the thirty-two auspicious features of a Great Man (*mahāpuruṣa*) that adorn Buddhas. These features are the material effects of many eons spent practicing diverse virtues, particularly the perfections (*pāramitā*). "Bodies," Grosz argues, "have all the explanatory power of minds."(26) The Buddha's physical features — as much, if not more than, his cognitive and affective qualities— mark him as a Buddha in these *Vinaya* stories because his body is the material effect of his virtues. The Buddha's body is thus very different

from all other bodies. According to the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vinaya*, the Buddha has a body that consists of an adamantite-body (*vajra-kāya-sarīra*) and that is further described as a large body (*brhat-kāya*).⁽²⁷⁾ The distinctiveness and greatness of the Buddha's moral and spiritual status is marked by an equally distinct and great body.

A story in the Sinhala collection, the *Saddharma Ratnāvaliya*, makes explicit what was implicit in the Mūlasarvāstivādin story, namely, the close relationship between virtues and bodies. This story, entitled "Wearing the Ochre Robe," also concerns Devadatta, or Devidatta as he is called in Sinhala.⁽²⁸⁾ A community of lay people must decide to whom they should give a beautiful golden robe. They opt for Devadatta rather than Śāriputra (Sriyutta in Sinhala) because Devadatta spends more time with them. However, they eventually regret their decision:

This robe is better suited to the Venerable Sriyutta,
Captain of the Doctrine, whose body is golden like a
garland of *Katukarandu* flowers, whose mind is golden
because it is free of Defilements. It is not suited to this
monk on whom it sits like a decoration hung on a pole.
Why does this monk wrap himself in it and walk about
like a toothless man trying to sing?⁽²⁹⁾

In this story, a golden body is associated with a golden mind, that is, a mind free of defilements such as passion, hatred, and delusion. These stories about Devadatta suggest that virtues cannot be defined exclusively as cognitive and affective qualities because they clearly also have a physical dimension. Buddhists in South Asia are not alone in positing a close relationship between virtues and bodies. Scholars of Hindu traditions, such as Ronald Inden, Ralph Nicholas, McKim Marriott, and E. Valentine Daniels, have argued for some time that in South Asia morality is closely associated with bodies.⁽³⁰⁾ When speaking of Bengal, Inden and Nicholas state that there is "no absolute

separation between natural and moral orders or material and spiritual orders."(31) Inden's and Nicholas' observations are pertinent to South Asian Buddhist traditions as well. Buddhist literature is replete with detailed descriptions of living beings who literally stink with sin or are disfigured by vice, and, conversely, living beings who are scented or adorned with virtues. Significantly, bodies are regarded as the material effects of past as well as of present virtues or vices. Although ugly skin complexion may be considered the result of vices committed in past lives, such complexion may at the same time also be considered the result of vices committed in the present. Hence, bodies become visible markers of a person's moral character. Steven Kemper provides the following insightful commentary on the association of virtues with bodies in contemporary Sri Lanka:

The most attractive monks, ones with reputations for great virtue or learning, are said to be *pin pāṭa*. Literally, they have the "color" or "look" of merit. They have accumulated such great amounts of merit that, like mastery over the self, their virtue shows itself in their appearance. Lay people are drawn to such monks because to be *pin pāṭa* is to be *saumya* (moonlike and, hence, beautiful). Certain physical traits are associated with being *pin pāṭa*. For a man to be so, he must be heavily set, if not slightly obese, his face must be smooth and full, and his skin tone must be vital and light brown in color. In a word, he must look "healthy."(32)Kemper notes that although Sri Lankans believe it is possible to have the "look of merit" without in fact being meritorious, most often it is assumed that good looks bespeak good character.(33)

Buddhist ethical discourse associates a wide range of physical characteristics with virtues or vices. These include one's realm of rebirth (*gati*) — that is, whether one is reborn as a god, human, animal, hungry ghost (*preta*), demon (*asura*), or hell-being. If reborn as a human, the following are also associated with moral character: physical beauty, health, longevity, the absence or presence of physical

or mental disability, sex, caste (*varṇa*, *jāti*), and family (*kula*).⁽³⁴⁾ Let us recall that bodies are constituted *as particular types of bodies* by a combination of genetic factors, including biology, forms of bodily adornment, and deportment. Thus, the way a person dresses or carries himself or herself may also serve as a marker of moral character. This point is of particular relevance to consideration of monastic bodies. Monastic *Vinayas* place great emphasis on training in etiquette and deportment. Along with biological features (such as complexion), the neatness of dress, postures, gestures, and movements of monastics are widely regarded to reflect a monastic's moral character.

Buddhist ethical discourse is interested in bodies and bodily differences because these mark moral differences. Virtues and vices are closely associated with bodies. As such, there is a pronounced attention in Buddhist literature to the details of bodily differences. For instance, texts do not simply declare that the practice of particular virtues or vices will result in a good or bad rebirth; they specify in precise detail the nature of that rebirth. Thus, a Mahāyāna monastic handbook entitled *The Compendium of Training* (*Śikṣāsamuccaya*) predicts the following karmic consequences of unrestrained sexual desire: rebirth in a variety of demonic forms (*kumbhāṇḍas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, and *piśācas*); those reborn as humans will be one-eyed, lame, tongueless, deformed, blind, deaf, or insensible; those reborn as animals will be dogs, pigs, camels, donkeys, monkeys, elephants, horses, cows, tigers, moths, or flies.⁽³⁵⁾ Another list of negative rebirths contained in the same text includes the possibility of being reborn blind, retarded, tongueless, as an outcaste (*caṇḍāla*), a *ṣaṇḍaka* or *paṇḍaka* (nonnormatively sexed person), a permanent servant (*nityadāsa*), a woman, dog, pig, donkey, camel, or venomous snake.⁽³⁶⁾

Given the interest Buddhist ethical discourse displays in bodies and bodily differences, it is not surprising that the moral significance of particular conditions — for instance, sex and caste — have been

debated by Buddhists past and present. Interest in bodies is bound to generate debate over the significance of particular kinds of bodies as well as bodies in general. The very fact, however, that Buddhists who may have rejected an association of virtues with bodies had to argue their case indicates that they were dissenting from a widespread point of view. Moreover, it has yet to be determined whether arguments, such as those concerning gender equality in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, for example, entail a wholesale rejection of the notion that virtues and bodies are related or if such arguments address more narrowly the moral significance of gender. Vimalakīrti himself is described as adorned with the "auspicious signs and marks" of a Great Man.(37)

In marked contrast to some modern Buddhist traditions, many premodern South Asian Buddhist traditions presume a hierarchical, rather than egalitarian, society and cosmos. Humans are better than animals, men better than women, monks better than laity, upper castes better than lower castes, and so forth. Yet there are some unexpected features of traditional Buddhist cosmology that suggest that even physical and moral imperfections can have a positive value. Some Buddhist literature displays a preference for a physically and morally diverse world over one that is perfect in all ways, but devoid of diversity. For instance, according to traditional Buddhist cosmology, there is a continent called Uttarakuru to the north of Mount Sumeru that is characterized by physical and moral perfection. All the inhabitants "live according to the five moral precepts without ever ceasing."(38)

Consequently living beings are always beautiful, healthy, live for 1,000 years without visibly aging, and enjoy great luxury and pleasure without any toil.(39) When women give birth they place their children by the side of the road and everyone who passes by takes care of them. Children never want for anything, but they also never know their parents. All people are the same to these children because they are equally good and thus equally beautiful: "Though the children grow up

in the community, the children do not know their mothers, and the mothers do not know their children; neither of them recognizes the other. This is because each of these people is equally beautiful."⁽⁴⁰⁾ The physical and moral perfection of the people in Uttarakuru efface to a significant degree human differences.⁽⁴¹⁾ Although life in Uttarakuru is idyllic, rarely does anyone aspire to be reborn there. It seems that an imperfect but diverse world such as ours is preferable to a perfect but homogenous world such as Uttarakuru. This point will become important below when I consider whether the South Asian Buddhist focus on bodies and bodily differences has something to offer to contemporary ethicists in spite of its problematic adherence to a hierarchical ranking of living beings.

We have seen so far that in speaking about virtues, it is necessary to speak as well about bodies because the two are closely associated in Buddhist ethical discourse. Virtues have a physical as well as a cognitive and affective dimension. One way of construing the relationship between virtues and bodies is to regard bodies as the material effects of practicing virtues in past and present lives. In the following sections, we shall see that bodies are also regarded as the material conditions for practicing virtues. Most importantly, we shall see that certain kinds of bodies, such as the disciplined bodies of monastics, can even become the condition for others to practice virtues.

Bodies are the Material Conditions for Practicing Virtues

A key concern of virtue theory is to understand what it is that enables us to act rightly or wrongly. The South Asian Buddhist material suggests that the corporeal specificity of ethical agents plays an important role in shaping a person's moral character. Charles Hallisey has recently characterized some Theravāda Buddhist ethics as a form of "ethical particularism," arguing that people in Theravāda communities have different moral responsibilities, depending upon

their position in that community.(42) Parents have different obligations than children, mothers than fathers, elderly than their younger married children, laity than monks, and so forth. Thus, not all virtues are appropriate for all persons in all situations. For instance, celibacy is a virtue among monks, but not among householders. Similarly, although nonviolence is generally regarded as a virtue, kings are obligated to kill to protect their people and maintain morality in their kingdoms.

The ethical particularism evident in some Theravāda traditions — and I would argue in other South Asian Buddhist traditions as well — implies an awareness of how bodies, marked by sex, age, health, social rank, and so forth, shape the nature of one's moral character by enabling or disabling the practice of particular kinds of virtues. For example, not everyone is eligible to become a monastic. As John Strong notes, to this day candidates for ordination in South and Southeast Asia are still asked during the ordination ceremony: "Are you a human being?"(43) Additionally candidates must meet other physical criteria: they must be of a certain age, in good health, and normatively sexed.(44) Monastic regulations specify the physical diseases and disabilities that would prohibit one from ordaining; such regulations likewise prohibit the ordination of nonnormatively sexed persons (*ṣaṇḍakas*, *paṇḍakas*, etc.), who are characterized by a wide range of sexual practices, sexual dysfunctions, and anomalous anatomies.(45) Additionally, because female ordination lineages have not been as consistently maintained as male ordination lineages, in certain times and places full ordination has been available only to men. Similarly, descriptions of negative rebirths demonstrate that certain kinds of bodies make the practice of virtues difficult, if not impossible. For example, rebirth in the hell realms is undesirable not only because of the horrific suffering one endures there, but also because one has little or no opportunity to earn merit. Buddhist ethical discourse reflects a keen awareness of the extent to which both the kinds of

virtues one practices and the very capacity to practice any virtues at all is dependent in part on the nature of one's body.

One way of interpreting the emphasis Buddhists place on gaining a good rebirth is to regard merit-making activities as an attempt on the part of ethical agents to create the material conditions for future moral agency. If bodies are important conditions for practicing virtues, then gaining a good body is critical to one's ability to live rightly in the future. Obviously, the desire for a good rebirth is motivated in large part by the desire for a good life, but Buddhist literature, like virtue theory, makes clear that a good life is one that is both enjoyable and conducive to right living. The Buddhist material indicates that investigations of what enables persons to act rightly or wrongly need to take into account the fact that bodies as well as psyches shape moral character. I turn now to the role Buddhists attribute to certain kinds of bodies in enabling *others* to practice virtues.

Certain Kinds of Bodies are the Conditions for Others to Practice Virtues

My interest in the role bodies play in shaping the moral characters of others is influenced by Charles Hallisey's research on "the ethics of care and responsibility" in Theravāda Buddhism. Hallisey draws attention to the role human relationships play in the formation of moral character, arguing that we do not become virtuous by ourselves, but are made virtuous through relationships with others. Buddhist narratives frequently emphasize the moral effects that certain kinds of bodies have on other beings. Thus, there are countless stories in which the sight of a Buddha, *Arhat*, or monastic induces beings to take refuge, request ordination, or engage in other acts of merit. A full investigation of the ways in which bodies shape the moral characters of others — both for good and ill — will require attention to the range of bodies represented in Buddhist literature. For the purposes of this

paper, however, I wish to focus on the positive moral effects that ensue from seeing the bodies of well-disciplined monastics.

Again I turn to a story to make my point because this story demonstrates that Buddhist ethical discourse attributes to monastic bodies a morally transformative power. The story occurs in the *Sinhala Thūpavaṃsa* and describes King Aśoka's conversion to Buddhism.⁽⁴⁶⁾ According to the *Thūpavaṃsa*, King Aśoka converted to Buddhism after seeing a young novice monk and *Arhat* named Nigroodha.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Nigroodha's deportment was impeccable: His movements were graceful, his sense faculties were restrained, he walked with eyes downcast, he was properly dressed, and his mind appeared tranquil. Nigroodha is described as possessed of "evident virtue" (*pasak guṇa*).⁽⁴⁸⁾ His appearance caused a great stir as he entered the royal city. The very sight of him prompted all the people on the road to express their admiration for the Buddha's teaching and monastic community, which had produced such a fine monk. Nigroodha's appearance and deportment contrasted favorably with that of other religious figures who came to the king's palace for alms. For instance, these "heretics" seated themselves however they pleased, without any regard for distinctions between young and old. They ate, sat, and stood in an erratic fashion causing the king to reflect, "There is not even a trace of virtue in the minds of mendicants such as these."⁽⁴⁹⁾ Nigroodha established the king along with his retinue in the Three Refuges and Five Precepts. Subsequently, King Aśoka, "having cut off the food he was giving to the 60,000 brahmins and heretics," became a zealous patron of Buddhism, supporting 60,000 monks and establishing 84,000 monasteries and *dāgabas*.⁽⁵⁰⁾

The attractive features, postures, and movements of monastics figure prominently in a number of conversion narratives, a point John Strong has also noted with reference to the *Catuṣpariṣat sūtra*.⁽⁵¹⁾ According to this *sūtra*, Śāriputra requests that the monk Aśvajit instruct him in the *Dharma* upon observing that Aśvajit's "way of

moving and looking about, of wearing his robes and holding his bowl, was strikingly serene."⁽⁵²⁾ Some time later, Maudgalyāyana requests Śāriputra to instruct him in the *Dharma*, asking, "Venerable One, your senses are serene, your face is at peace, and the complexion of your skin utterly pure. Did you reach the deathless state?"⁽⁵³⁾ Clearly these stories demonstrate that the features, gestures, and movements of monastics are regarded as visible markers of their moral character — that is, as the material effects of having practiced virtues in the past and present. But these stories also demonstrate that the very sight of monastics possessed of "evident virtue" can also inspire others to practice virtues. King Aśoka becomes a Buddhist patron, and Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana become Buddhist monks. Buddhist conversion narratives suggest that the physical qualities of persons — as much as their cognitive and affective qualities — have powerful moral effects on others.

Monastic *Vinayas*, no less than Buddhist narratives, assume that monastic bodies can have beneficial moral effects on others. Hence, *Vinayas* provide detailed instructions on etiquette and deportment. Witness, for instance, the numerous *śaikṣa dharmas* of the Mahāsāṃghika and Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vinayas*. I list but a few from the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Prātimokṣa*:

We will not put on the robe raised too high. . . . We will not put on the robe too low. . . . We will go amongst the houses well restrained . . . [with the body] well covered . . . with little noise . . . looking at the ground. . . . We will not go amongst the houses jumping . . . with arms akimbo . . . shaking the body . . . shaking the head. . . . We will not sit down on a seat amidst the houses pulling up the feet . . . stretching out the feet . . . exposing the genitals. . . . We will not eat alms food in overly large mouthfuls. . . . We will not open the mouth

when the morsel has not arrived. . . . We will not utter inarticulate speech with a morsel in the mouth. . . . We will not eat alms food stuffing the cheeks . . . making a smacking noise with the tongue.(54)

Such regulations indicate that the appearance and deportment of monastics have significant moral effects on others. Although these effects are diverse, one particular effect is highlighted repeatedly in Buddhist literature. The sight of well-disciplined monastics, like the sight of a Buddha or *Arhat*, is frequently said to produce the experience of *prasāda* (Pali, *pasāda*). *Prasāda* has a broad range of meanings, including joy, elation, pleasure, satisfaction, clarity, brightness, purity, serenity, and calmness.(55) *Prasāda* is a morally transformative experience that manifests in acts of merit such as worship — acts, moreover, which serve as further occasions for an experience of *prasāda*, thereby ensuring that these acts will be repeated in the future.(56) Thus, one experience of *prasāda* can set in motion a lifetime of virtuous deeds. In the *Sinhala Thūpavaṃsa* account of King Aśoka's conversion, that conversion is described as an experience of *prasāda* (Sinhala, *phda*). (57) The immediate cause of this experience is the sight of the monk, Nigroodha, particularly his impeccable deportment.(58) As a result of this morally transformative experience, Aśoka becomes a lifelong patron of Buddhism.(59)

The bodies of well-disciplined monastics enable other persons to practice virtues because these bodies serve as occasions for an experience of *prasāda* that, in turn, manifest in diverse acts of merit. Thus, the Mahāyāna monastic handbook *The Compendium of Training* explicitly links a monastic's ability to generate *prasāda* in others to proper training in etiquette and deportment. In a chapter devoted to matters of etiquette and deportment, the compendium asserts that the ideal monastic is one who behaves "in such a way that upon seeing him alone beings experience *prasāda* (*satvāḥ pras īdeyuh*)."(60) Both

monastic regulations and conversion narratives demonstrate that the sight of well-disciplined monastic bodies can generate a morally transformative experience in others. This idea suggests more broadly for the study of Buddhist ethics that we pay attention to the ways in which the physical, as well as cognitive and affective, qualities of persons shape the moral characters of others.

Certain Features, Postures, and Movements Constitute Virtues in Themselves

Attention to the descriptions of the physical features, postures, and movements of monastics can help to illustrate the different ways in which Buddhists have construed the relationship between virtues and bodies. Buddhist ethical discourse defines the relationship between monastic bodies and virtues as follows:

1. A monastic's appearance and deportment are regarded as markers of his or her moral character because they are the material effects of practicing virtues in the past and present.
2. A monastic's appearance and deportment also constitute the very conditions for a monastic's own practice of virtues. Not only must one have a certain kind of body to become a monastic, but the correct performance of monastic regulations, including those concerning etiquette and deportment, is conducive to attaining virtues such as mental calm and spiritual insight, as Michael Carrithers argues.⁽⁶¹⁾ Thus, according to *The Compendium of Training*, the very act of donning monastic robes is conducive to a state of peace (*upaśama*).⁽⁶²⁾
3. Monastic bodies also serve as conditions for others to practice virtues. A monk's morality — the visible marker of which is his appearance and deportment — is thus aptly described in Theravāda commentarial literature as "a fragrance which permeates the universe."⁽⁶³⁾

I turn now to a fourth way in which Buddhist ethical discourse defines the relationship between virtues and bodies. Certain features, postures, and movements of bodies constitute, in and of themselves, virtues. Again I shall make my point by focusing on monastic decorum, notably, as described in *The Compendium of Training*.

The Compendium of Training offers detailed instructions on etiquette and deportment. For example, monks are instructed on how to eat properly — that is, they are told not to stuff their faces, squirm around while eating, or make noises as they eat. They are also advised to speak in pleasing tones of voice and guard against vices such as gossip.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Significantly, the instructions on etiquette and deportment occur in the context of a discussion of mindfulness (*smṛti*) and awareness (*saṃprajanya*). Mindfulness and awareness are important virtues because these help prevent misconduct. According to *The Compendium of Training*, the mind is the source of all virtues and vices.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Yet, this does not mean that virtues and vices are regarded as purely cognitive and affective qualities. The very fact that instructions on etiquette and deportment are placed within the context of a discussion of mindfulness and awareness suggests that these virtues have distinct physical dimensions. Indeed, although mindfulness and awareness are defined as states of mental alertness, their practice is explicitly described in the text as graceful movements, pleasant tones of voice, or the absence of undue fidgeting.

The Compendium of Training's discussion of mindfulness and awareness blurs the distinction between virtues and bodies, suggesting that certain features, postures, and movements of bodies constitute in and of themselves virtues. Mindfulness and awareness are, among other things, a way of walking, talking, or eating. The same can be said of other virtues extolled in *The Compendium of Training*. For instance, monastics are admonished to cultivate, among other feelings, intense respect (*tīvra gaurava*) for their beautiful friend (*kalyāṇamitra*), that is, their religious teacher.⁽⁶⁶⁾ (Note that *kalyāṇa* means both

beautiful and good; a beautiful friend's beauty is, of course, a material effect of his goodness.) Intense respect is not only a cognitive and affective state, but also a physical state. Thus, intense respect for one's beautiful friend is expressed in physical acts of worship and respect, like bowing, prostrating, circumambulating, gazing again and again at one's beautiful friend, and even weeping at the sight of his omniscience — an omniscience, moreover, that, like his goodness, is evident in his very demeanor.⁽⁶⁷⁾

Buddhist literature displays a pervasive assumption that virtues are closely associated with bodies: bodies are the material effects of practicing virtues, bodies are the material conditions for practicing virtues, certain kinds of bodies can induce others to practice virtues, and certain kinds of features, postures, and movements constitute in and of themselves virtues. Yet bodies have received little attention in studies of Buddhist ethics.⁽⁶⁸⁾ These studies have instead focused on issues like the moral precepts and metaphysical doctrines, such as selflessness, emptiness, or interdependent origination, while those interested in the study of particular virtues or virtues in general have tended to define these exclusively as cognitive and affective qualities. Bodies have been overlooked in studies of Buddhist ethics in part because of a Buddhist as well as a modern Western tendency to privilege the role the mind plays in moral life. However, I suspect that bodies have also been overlooked because the assumption that virtues are associated with bodies is both so basic and ubiquitous in South Asian Buddhist ethical discourse that we simply do not see it. Indeed, often the association is merely implied rather than explicitly argued in narratives, like the Mūlasarvāstivādin story about Devadatta or the *Sinhala Thūpavaṃsa* story about King Aśoka. The close association of virtues with bodies is perhaps best understood as an example of what Geoffrey Harpham has called "sub-ethics," that is, in the words of Hallisey and Anne Hansen, "the most basic and inevitably under-determined conditions and characteristics of ethical discourse and

moral life."⁽⁶⁹⁾ I hope in this paper to have demonstrated that we cannot fully understand South Asian Buddhist ethics until we examine one of its most basic assumptions, namely, that the corporeal specificity of persons helps define and shape the moral character of both self and others.

The Value of Human Differences

Although bodies have been important historically in South Asian Buddhist ethical discourse, it remains to be seen what this discourse can contribute to the work of contemporary ethicists. I am specifically interested in how a Buddhist concern with bodies and bodily differences can help ethicists to articulate an embodied virtue theory. Given the fact that the association of virtues with bodies in Buddhist literature presupposes a hierarchical rather than egalitarian society and cosmos, many who espouse egalitarian ideals might feel that we have little to gain from the Buddhist focus on bodies and bodily differences. It is thus not surprising that contemporary Buddhist ethicists have generally chosen to emphasize our human commonalities rather than differences — for example, by taking inspiration from certain egalitarian statements in Buddhist scriptures concerning caste and/or women, by stressing our universal capacity to attain liberation, by positing a common nature to all beings (such as the desire to avoid pain and find happiness), or by invoking a notion of two truths in order to argue for the ultimate insignificance or "emptiness" of all conventionally valued differences. Such approaches have often met with success, the Ambedkar movement to fight caste discrimination in India being a striking case in point. The approaches we take, however, are dictated by our particular socio-historical circumstances. Therefore, although it may be useful and even necessary in certain circumstances to stress our commonalities, it can also be helpful in other circumstances to explore the value of human differences. I am especially interested in how an embodied virtue theory that draws

upon South Asian Buddhist ethics can offer intellectual resources to ethicists concerned with diversity issues in the U.S. today.

Lata Mani has argued that scholars should be sensitive to the fact that their work may be interpreted and appropriated differently by different kinds of communities, particularly in this age of multinational reception.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Because various forms of discrimination have been justified by recourse to a notion of bodily difference, I wish to make clear that the South Asian Buddhist focus on bodies and bodily differences is useful to contemporary ethicists only if subjected to an egalitarian critique. The challenge is, in the words of ethicist Jean Grimshaw, to "recognize *difference* without ascribing *deficiency*."⁽⁷¹⁾ In order to avoid essentialist interpretations of my work, I wish to underscore that, like Grosz, I believe that the experience and representation of bodies and bodily differences are culturally and historically conditioned.⁽⁷²⁾ Moreover, bodies — however these be conceptualized in a given place and time — are constantly changing as evident in the aging process. Any investigation of the relationship between virtues and bodies must take into account the fact that at both personal and cultural levels the ways in which we experience and represent bodies and bodily differences vary over time.

What do we have to gain from an embodied virtue theory, particularly one that draws inspiration from South Asian Buddhist ethics? Many contemporary theorists across disciplines have argued that an egalitarian rhetoric often masks the existence of enormous injustice and inequality. Feminists, in particular, have been extremely suspicious of ethical theories that presume a generic universal subject because this subject is frequently implicitly male. Feminist theory itself has been subjected to critique by many women for its common presumption of a Western, white, middle- or upper-middle-class, heterosexual subject, masquerading as the generic woman. Consequently contemporary feminist theorists such as Grosz, among others, have begun to explore how a variety of human differences such

as sex, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and physiognomy shape our identities. (73) This heightened awareness of the need to take seriously the corporeal specificity of ethical agents has led one scholar to argue that all ethics should "take the body as its fundamental point of departure." (74) An embodied virtue theory thus serves as a useful corrective to ethical theories that efface human differences.

By foregrounding the corporeal specificity of ethical agents, the South Asian Buddhist material makes at least two potential contributions toward an embodied virtue theory, both of which have relevance to current debates over diversity in the U.S. The Buddhist material draws attention to the particularity of ethical agents, and it also underscores the value of human differences. Specifically, the Buddhist material raises the following critical question for ethicists: In the traditions we study, how and to what extent does the corporeal specificity of ethical agents enable or disable the practice of particular kinds of virtues? This question requires not only investigation of discriminatory practices, but also consideration of the ways in which the corporeal specificity of ethical agents might influence how these agents define what it is that constitutes virtues and a good life in the first place. Societies, particularly those as diverse as the present-day U.S., offer multiple and even competing ethical ideals. An embodied virtue theory requires us to ask whether and how we create communities that foster the practice and expression of different kinds of virtues and that also render visible and culturally legitimate different visions of a good life. In other words, an embodied virtue theory does not presume a generic ethical agent, but instead investigates how human differences generate potentially diverse ethical practices and ideals. Moreover, an embodied virtue theory can be sensitive to the ways in which bodily changes experienced at an individual level, such as pregnancy or aging, alter or nuance these practices and ideals. It should be noted that respect for diverse conceptions of a moral life does not negate the need for critical

judgment at either personal or societal levels. Rather, it requires that such judgment be founded upon critical engagement with ethical perspectives and traditions perhaps at present less visible in our society.

Perhaps the most important contribution South Asian Buddhist ethics makes toward an embodied virtue theory — particularly one sensitive to the presence of diversity in pluralistic societies — is its insistence on the value of human differences. The bodies of Buddhas, *Arhats*, and monastics possess a morally persuasive power precisely because they are different from other bodies. The Buddhist material suggests that individual moral growth is dependent upon the presence of various forms of human difference in communities. Life in Uttarakuru is idyllic, but few wish to be reborn in a place where basic human differences are effaced to such an extent that a child cannot even recognize his or her mother. The Buddhist material displays a preference for a physically and morally diverse universe.

Yet, clearly the Buddhist valorization of human differences will be of little use to contemporary ethicists unless it is subjected to an egalitarian critique. Certain kinds of difference are valued in Buddhist literature, while other kinds are reviled. Few of us would subscribe to a simplistic hierarchical ranking of bodies, even if some might wish to hold in particular esteem certain forms of human difference, such as those that constitute a Buddha, *Arhat*, or monastic. If the Buddhist valorization of human differences is to be of benefit to contemporary ethicists, it will be necessary to recognize the positive value of the full range of human differences present in communities. Specifically, we need to consider how diverse forms of bodily difference create the conditions for the cultivation and practice of diverse kinds of virtues. This is particularly the case for those forms of bodily difference frequently characterized in Buddhist literature as deficiencies. The Buddhist material offers contemporary ethicists an important insight, namely, that human differences should be valued because these

differences play an integral role in shaping the moral character of both self and others. If we can learn to recognize — and indeed value — difference without ascribing deficiency, South Asian Buddhist ethics offers critical resources for articulating an embodied virtue theory in which diversity itself is construed as a moral virtue.

Notes

- (1) I would like to thank Stephen C. Berkwitz, Karen Derris, Charles Hallisey, and Kesaya Noda for their insightful comments on this essay.
- (2) Charles Hallisey, "In Defense of Rather Fragile and Local Achievement: Reflections on the Work of Gurulugomi," in *Religion and Practical Reason: New Essays in the Comparative Philosophy of Religions*, ed. Frank E. Reynolds and David Tracy (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 121-160; Damien Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), especially 193-227; James Whitehill, "Buddhism and the Virtues," in *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics*, ed. Damien Keown (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000), 17-36; first published as "Buddhist Ethics in Western Context: The 'Virtues' Approach" *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 1 (1994): 1-22.
- (3) The following provide good introductions to virtue theory: Roger Crisp and Michael Slote, ed., *Virtue Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), and Greg Pence, "Virtue Theory," in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1991; reprint with corrections, 1993), 249-258.
- (4) Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
- (5) South Asian Buddhist traditions refer in this paper to Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna traditions. It should be noted that the association of virtues with bodies cuts across sectarian distinctions in South

Asia and is, thus, evident in the literature of both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna schools.

- (6) Damien Keown, *Buddhism & Bioethics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 39.
- (7) Keown, *Buddhism & Bioethics*, 39.
- (8) See Peter Harvey, "Vinaya Principles for Assigning Degrees of Culpability," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 6 (1999): 271-291.
- (9) Padmasiri de Silva, "Buddhist Ethics," in *A Companion to Ethics*, 61.
- (10) A.III.415 qtd. in Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values and Issues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 17. See also de Silva, "Buddhist Ethics," 61 and Richard F. Gombrich, *Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 246.
- (11) de Silva, "Buddhist Ethics," 64; Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 18; Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*, especially 203-211; S. J. Tambiah, "Purity and Auspiciousness at the Edge of the Hindu Context — in Theravāda Buddhist Societies," in *Purity and Auspiciousness in Indian Society*, ed. John B. Carman and Frdrique Apffel Marglin (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 96.
- (12) Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Nature of the Virtues," in *Virtue Ethics*, 119. First published in Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London: Duckworth, 1985), 169-189.
- (13) Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 54-56.
- (14) Lee H. Yearley, *Mencius and Aquinas: Theories of Virtue and Conceptions of Courage* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 13.

- (15) See Charles Hallisey, "Auspicious Things," in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 412-426.
- (16) Fear and shame are regarded as virtues in Buddhist ethical discourse when, for instance, one fears the karmic consequences of misdeeds or feels shame at having violated monastic vows.
- (17) Grosz, 142.
- (18) Grosz, 142.
- (19) Sanskrit terms for "body" include *ātmabhāva*, *kāya*, *deha*, *rūpa*, and *śarīra*, each of which suggests a complex range of meanings. For a preliminary study of "body" vocabulary as found in one Mahāyāna text, see Susanne Mrozik, "The Relationship Between Morality and the Body in Monastic Training According to the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*," (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1998), chapter one.
- (20) For instance, see Bernard Faure, "Substitute Bodies in Chan/Zen Buddhism," in *Religious Reflections on the Human Body*, ed. Jane Marie Law (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 211.
- (21) In Abhidhamma literature, the analytical category of *rūpa* (form) is classified as morally indeterminate (*avyākata*) — that is, it produces no results, whether good or bad. Scholarship on Abhidhamma literature thus defines *rūpa* as morally neutral, or "unmoral," (Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids, trans., *A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics* [1900; reprint, New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corp., 1975], xxxi). But it should be noted that even Abhidhamma literature displays an assumption that virtues are associated with bodies. Witness the bodily effects manifest by the Buddha upon contemplating the contents of the last of the seven Abhidhamma texts. According to the *Atthasālinī*: "But the blood of the Lord of the world became clear (*pasīdi*) as he contemplated such an exquisite and subtle Dhamma. His

material body (*vatthu-rūpa*) became clear. His complexion became clear" (*Sanḥasukhumadhammaṃ pana sammasato Lokanāthassa lohitaṃ pasīdi, vatthurūpaṃ pasīdi, chavivaṇṇo pasīdi*). (Edward Miller, ed., *The Atthasālinī: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Dhammasaṅgaṇī* [1897; rev. ed., London: Pali Text Society, 1979], 15).

- (22) The story can be found in Raniero Gnoli, ed., *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu: Being the 17th and Last Section of the Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādin*, part II (Rome: Istituto Italiano Per Il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente, 1978), 163-164.
- (23) Gnoli, ed., 163: *mayā tvam rājye pratiṣṭhāpitaḥ mām api tvam buddhatve pratiṣṭhāpaya iti*
- (24) Gnoli, ed., 163.
- (25) Gnoli, ed., 164-165.
- (26) Grosz, vii. Cf. Bernard Faure *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 60; and Kate Blackstone, "Damming the Dhamma: Problems with Bhikkhuniis in the Pali Vinaya," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 6 (1999): 296.
- (27) Gnoli, ed., 93. This statement occurs in a story about an illness of the Buddha (Gnoli, ed., 93-95). The physician, Jīvaka, decides to give the Buddha a larger quantity of medicine than normal because of the unusual nature and size of his body. Devadatta sees this and insists on being given an equal quantity of medicine even though Jīvaka warns him that he will not be able to digest the medicine. But Devadatta insists: "I too have a diamond body (*aham api vajraśar īraḥ*)" (Gnoli, ed., 93). Needless to say, Devadatta becomes very sick. He is healed when the Buddha performs a truth statement (*satya-upayācana*) on his behalf (Gnoli, ed., 94).

- (28) Ranjini Obeyesekere, trans., *Jewels of the Doctrine: Stories of the Saddharma Ratnāvaliya* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), 140-146.
- (29) Obeyesekere, trans., *Jewels of the Doctrine*, 141-142.
- (30) Ronald B. Inden and Ralph W. Nicholas, *Kinship in Bengali Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977); McKim Marriott, "Hindu Transactions: Diversity Without Dualism," in *Transaction and Meaning: Directions in the Anthropology of Exchange and Symbolic Behavior*, ed. Bruce Kapferer (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1976), 109-142; McKim Marriott and Ronald B. Inden, "Toward an Ethnosociology of South Asian Caste Systems," in *The New Wind: Changing Identities in South Asia*, ed. Kenneth David (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1977), 227-238; E. Valentine Daniel, *Fluid Signs: Being a Person the Tamil Way* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
- (31) Inden and Nicholas, *Kinship in Bengali Culture*, 65.
- (32) Steven Kemper, "Wealth and Reformation in Sinhalese Buddhist Monasticism," in *Ethics, Wealth, and Salvation: A Study in Buddhist Social Ethics*, ed. Russell F. Sizemore and Donald K. Swearer (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 167.
- (33) Kemper, 167-168.
- (34) Caste (*varṇa*, *jāti*) and family or clan (*kula*) are defined as biological and social categories in South Asia.
- (35) Cecil Bendall, ed., *Śikshāsamuccaya: A Compendium of Buddhist Teaching Compiled by Śāntideva Chiefly from Earlier Mahāyāna-Sūtras*, Bibliotheca Buddhica 1 (1897-1902; reprint, Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1970), 80.1-4, 7-8.
- (36) Bendall, ed., 69.4-12.
- (37) "He appeared to be adorned with ornaments, yet always was endowed with the auspicious signs and marks" (Robert A. F.

Thurman, trans., *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti: A Mahāyāna Scripture* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), 21. Note also the descriptions of the physical beauty of the Buddha and beings from another Buddha-field (13, 80).

- (38) Frank E. Reynolds and Mani B. Reynolds, trans., *Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Thai Buddhist Cosmology* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1982), 125. This is also the case for the continents of Pūbbavideha and Aparagoyāna, but the people in Uttarakuru are morally and physically superior to those inhabiting all other continents (126).
- (39) The description of Uttarakuru also assumes an association of virtues with the physical environment — an association, moreover, that finds wide resonance in the literature of many Buddhist schools. Because the people in Uttarakuru keep the moral precepts and have earned much merit, their physical environment, like their bodies, is perfect (see especially Reynolds and Reynolds, trans., *Three Worlds According to King Ruang*, 126-128). E. Valentine Daniel's ethnographic research on Tamil village life suggests some fruitful avenues of exploration for scholars of Buddhist ethics on this point. Daniels argues that contemporary Tamil villagers believe that not only are their bodies constituted by both material and moral qualities, but so too is the very soil of their villages. Hence physical environments, as much as bodies, are regarded as the material effects and also material conditions of virtues and vices (E. Valentine Daniel, *Fluid Signs*, 61-104).
- (40) Reynolds and Reynolds, trans., *Three Worlds According to King Ruang*, 132.
- (41) Note also that other ways of marking bodily differences, notably, with clothing and adornments, are also erased. When young men swim they take off their clothes and other adornments. Upon

emerging from the water they put on whatever they find first. Again, this lack of physical differentiation is due to their high degree of morality: "When they come out, whoever is first takes adornments that belong to anyone and dresses and decorates himself first; as for those who come up afterwards, they also take clothes and adornments that belong to anyone and put them on. They do not say that one thing is theirs and another is someone else's; they are never angry with one another concerning such matters. They never curse one another or quarrel with one another" (130-131).

- (42) Charles Hallisey, "Ethical Particularism in Theravāda Buddhism," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 3 (1996): 32-43; see also Kevin Schilbrack's response to Hallisey and Hallisey's rejoinder (Kevin Schilbrack, "The General and the Particular in Theravāda Ethics: A Response to Charles Hallisey," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 4 (1997): 98-111, Charles Hallisey, "A Response to Kevin Schilbrack," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 4 (1997): 184-188.
- (43) John S. Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism: Sources and Interpretations* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1995), 61.
- (44) Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism*, 61; Bernard Faure, *The Red Thread*, 72-73.
- (45) Michael J. Sweet and Leonard Zwilling, "The First Medicalization: The Taxonomy and Etiology of Queerness in Classical Indian Medicine," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3:4 (1993): 592.
- (46) Stephen C. Berkwitz has kindly brought this story to my attention. All translations are his, and I am likewise indebted to him for quotations in Sinhala. The story can be found in W. S. Karunatilake, ed., *Sinhala Thūpavaṃsaya* (Colombo: M. D. Gunasena, 1994), 88-93.
- (47) Stephen C. Berkwitz, personal communication. Aśoka is predisposed to feel affection for Nigroodha because in a previous

lifetime Nigroodha had been his elder brother. The text underscores that Nigroodha's appearance and deportment trigger these affectionate feelings in Aśoka in his present lifetime.

- (48) Karunatilake, ed., *Sinhala Thūpavaṃsaya*, 91.
- (49) Karunatilake, ed., *Sinhala Thūpavaṃsaya*, 90.
- (50) Karunatilake, ed., *Sinhala Thūpavaṃsaya*, 93.
- (51) Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism*, 50.
- (52) Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism*, 50.
- (53) Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism*, 51.
- (54) Charles S. Prebish, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline: The Sanskrit Prātimokṣa Sūtras of the Mahāsāṃghikas and Mūlasarvāstivādins* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), 97-103.
- (55) See Kevin Trainor, *Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism: Rematerializing the Sri Lankan Theravāda Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 166-168 and John Ross Carter, *Dhamma: Western Academic and Sinhalese Buddhist Interpretations, A Study of a Religious Concept* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1978), 105, n. 173.
- (56) See Trainor, 169-171.
- (57) Karunatilake, ed., *Sinhala Thūpavaṃsaya*, 89.
- (58) Karunatilake, ed., *Sinhala Thūpavaṃsaya*, 91.
- (59) According to another text, the *Aśokāvadāna*, Aśoka became a Cakravartin and patron of Buddhism because in a previous lifetime he had made a vow to this effect and had offered the Buddha a gift of dirt. Both the vow and gift were motivated by an experience of *prasāda* at the sight of the Buddha's beauty (Sujitkumar Mukhopadhyaya, ed., *The Aśokāvadāna* [New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1963], 31). As discussed above, Steven Kemper argues that lay people are attracted to monks with the "look of merit" (*pin pāṭa*) because they are *saumya*, that is, moonlike and thus beautiful. It should be noted that to be *saumya*

is not only to be beautiful, but also to have a cooling or calming effect on others. Such an effect bears resemblance to the calming effect of *prasāda*.

- (60) Bendall, ed., 124.6-8.
- (61) Michael B. Carrithers, "'They will be Lords upon the Island': Buddhism in Sri Lanka," in *The World of Buddhism: Buddhist Monks and Nuns in Society and Culture*, ed. Heinz Bechert and Richard Gombrich (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1984), 133.
- (62) Bendall, ed., 136.3-4.
- (63) Carrithers, "'They will be Lords upon the Island': Buddhism in Sri Lanka," 134; and Steven Collins, "The Body in Theravāda Buddhist Monasticism," in *Religion and the Body*, ed. Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 196.
- (64) These instructions are found in chapter six of *The Compendium of Training* (Bendall, ed., 118-143).
- (65) See Bendall, ed., 122.6-7.
- (66) Bendall, ed., 37.13-14.
- (67) Bendall, ed., 36.8-14. Intense respect may even lead to bodily self-sacrifice. *The Compendium of Training* cites the story of Sadāprarudita from the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* as an example of intense respect (Bendall, ed., 37.13-41.6).
- (68) Notable exceptions include Steven Collins, "The Body in Theravāda Buddhist Monasticism"; Sizemore and Swearer, ed., *Ethics, Wealth, and Salvation*; the work of John S. Strong who has consistently drawn attention to the "rupalogical" dimension of Buddhist thought and practice ("The Transforming Gift: An Analysis of Devotional Acts of Offering in Buddhist *Avadāna* Literature," *History of Religions* 18.3 (February 1979): 221-237; *The Legend of King Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983]); and

- Paul Williams, "Some Mahāyāna Buddhist Perspectives on the Body," in *Religion and the Body*, 205-230.
- (69) Charles Hallisey and Anne Hansen, "Narrative, Sub-ethics, and the Moral Life: Some Evidence from Theravāda Buddhism" *Journal of Religious Ethics* 24:2 (Fall 1996): 308.
- (70) Lata Mani, "Multiple Mediations: Feminist Scholarship in the Age of Multinational Reception" *Feminist Review* 35 (Summer 1990): 24-41.
- (71) Jean Grimshaw, "The Idea of a Female Ethic," in *A Companion to Ethics*, 493.
- (72) For a good overview of the divergent feminist perspectives on essentialism see Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 13-24, and Grosz, "Sexual Difference and the Problem of Essentialism," in her *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 45-57.
- (73) For instance, Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); bell hooks, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981); Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, ed., *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Cherre Moraga, Gloria Anzalda, ed., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color* (1981; 2nd ed., Latham, New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983); and Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).
- (74) Arthur W. Frank, "For a Sociology of the Body: An Analytical Review," in *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth, and Bryan S. Turner (London: Sage Publications, 1991), 95.