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“Buddhism as a Psychological System: Western
Reception, Contemporary Dialogues, and
Perspectives”

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**Buddhism as a Psychological
System: Western Reception,
Contemporary Dialogues, and
Perspectives**

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1 Introduction: Buddhism and Western psychology and psychotherapy

[Klammertext]

The dialogue between East and West is one of the most significant events of our century. If, as Jung confidently asserted, the West should create its own Yoga in the centuries to come, it will not be on the foundations of Christianity alone, which was his contention, but rather on the new global foundations laid as a result of that dialogue between the two halves of planetary humankind. At any rate, it is important to understand that this dialogue is necessarily a personal matter, which occurs on the stage of each individual's heart and mind. That means we—you and I—must initiate and nurture it. (Feuerstein, 1998, p. xxxii)

Why should the West foster the reception of an Eastern system as Buddhism?¹ Why does it make sense to incorporate a system that is seemingly so unconnected with Western history, cultures, religions, and

societies, and many of their values? Critical minds may ask these and similar questions. In this project, I provide some answers from a psychological ethical perspective, which clarify why East-West dialogue may play an important role in the future of Western societies.

Buddhism can be considered a fruitful dialogue partner for current Western ideas about experience and behaviour, because it has proved to be effective as a psychological theory and practice since its intensified reception in the West in the twentieth century. From a psychological and psychotherapeutic perspective, there are recognisable advantages to be had from the integration of Buddhist thought and practice regarding questions of mental structures and qualities. Buddhist approaches to experience and behaviour are helpful within a psychological or psychotherapeutic framework for clarifying the factors of the individual's development and potential, embedded in a bigger whole of cause and effect.

This way of approaching Buddhist psychology – by evaluating its effectiveness with Western psychological and psychotherapeutic means and integrating parts of the system of Buddhism into psychology and psychotherapy – is one example of how contemporary dialogues between Buddhism and psychology/psychotherapy manifest. I will also describe two other ways: one is to analyse parts of Buddhism as an indigenous psychology that can provide specific answers to questions with which psychology and psychotherapy are dealing; the other is to approach Western

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psychology and psychotherapy (or, in a broader sense, Western science) from a Buddhist perspective and integrate findings about human experience and behaviour into the system of Buddhism.

One main discourse in contemporary religious studies, which is of special importance for the dialogue between Buddhism and Western approaches to experience and behaviour, addresses the construction of foreign religions through Western religious scholarship. The language we use and are used to when dealing with religions signifies a certain perspective of how religions are received as specific cultural phenomena. Over the last few decades religious studies' research has especially focused on how the subject itself has formulated and to a large extent created its objects – that is, religions (Gladigow, 2005). These creations show culturally specific characteristics of how they describe and systematise foreign societal institutions as religions (Gladigow, 2001).

The creation 'Buddh-ism' appeared in the seventeenth century. That Buddhism is primarily seen as a religion as distinct from other societal institutions is a particular Western creation, which never took place in the same way in Asian countries.² In the seventeenth century four main religions were distinguished in the West: Christianity, Judaism, Islam (or variants of Mohammedism), and Paganism (or Idolatry). The making of other religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, etc. – is marked by a successive replacement of the broader term Paganism with more specific

terms of describing the foreign approaches that were included under the headline of ‘Paganism’ (Lopez, 2005). The problem of compartmentalisation of foreign cultural and societal institutions is reductionism. Phenomena are shaped into a certain way of methodological thought connected with the history of the culture in which the compartments are constructed. When ‘Buddhism’ was created and analysed as a religion, it was constructed from a Western perspective and specifically distinguished from other societal institutions; in this connection, for example, science.

Considering current religious studies, I regard a signification for Buddhism as a ‘system’ as being most useful (Schumann, 2005), which may be clarified by specifying additions. In this work, Buddhism is explored from a psychological perspective. As this perspective, from an emic Buddhist point of view, is intertwined with ethics, I refer to ‘Buddhism as a psychological and ethical system’ (see especially Chapter 2). Seen in this way, Buddhism is a dialogue partner for current psychology and psychotherapy and may also be referred to as ‘Buddhist psychology’ (Gómez, 2004; Kalupahana, 1987).

The other dialogue partners within this work – psychology and psychotherapy – also face problems of how they developed as specific systems in Western societies in relation to foreign cultures. As a modern science, psychology has to a large extent constructed non-Western cultures from its Western psychological perspective — often based on political and

power interests, as took place in the same way in the creation of foreign religions (Guthrie, 1976/2004; Seeley, 2000/2006). Psychology is one of the last disciplines of the humanities and social sciences that slowly becomes a part of the postmodern movement and in many fields it still holds modern philosophy-of-science orientations very strongly. The psychological dialogical perspectives presented here are postmodern. The integration of Buddhism and to a large extent the dialogue itself would not work within a modernist scientific paradigm. In the system of Buddhism the stating of truths in a strictly discursive and dualistic way is a source of human suffering. The Western reception of Buddhist thought often agrees with critical postmodern approaches in psychology and psychotherapy, which are grounded in ethical questions and intercultural sensitivity, and actively strive after revealing the weaknesses of modern psychology by deconstructing modern myths and trying to correct the problems caused by them (Slunecko, 2008; Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009).

The following articles in this cumulative thesis outline fundamentals within the three approaches of receiving Buddhism as a psychological system, and discuss the philosophical considerations that are briefly tackled in this introduction. The article *The Western reception of Buddhism as a psychological and ethical system: developments, dialogues, and perspectives* provides a concise overview of the current research within these three approaches, with a special focus on philosophy of science and

perspectives based on epistemological considerations. In connection with this introduction and the conclusion, it serves as an exploration of the research and practice field [the ‘Klammertext’], on which analyses in the following articles are grounded. *Experiencing sati: a phenomenological survey of mindfulness in Buddhist psychology* explores the concept of mindfulness from the perspective of Buddhist phenomenology. Mindfulness is the central Buddhist idea concerning the reception of Buddhist psychology in current psychotherapy. *Bewusstsein und Beziehung im Mahāyāna-Buddhismus: Ein integrativ religionspsychologischer Ansatz* tackles epistemological concepts, which directly and indirectly are present as soon as experience and behaviour are addressed from a Buddhist viewpoint. Thus, this piece is an example of approaching (Mahāyāna-) Buddhism as an indigenous psychology. How critical terms in different systems – in this case, ‘intersubjectivity’ – can create spaces for dialogue is explored in *Dimensions of intersubjectivity in Mahāyāna-Buddhism and relational psychoanalysis*. Crucial points are the consideration of the cultural backgrounds, as well as the different connotations and utilisations of terms in distinct world views and languages. The dialogue between relational psychoanalysis and Buddhism is one example of how postmodern ideas, such as interdisciplinary work and epistemological humility, can manifest in practice, with contemporarily recognisable impacts on both dialogue partners.

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¹ A general East-West distinction is problematic. ‘The West’ here refers to cultures and societies whose philosophy is based on ideas about human nature with origins in Western, especially Greek, philosophy. The way in which different ideas about the human predicament have shaped human minds, embedded in their specific cultural settings, is one of the main considerations for a comparison between Buddhist and Western cultures.

² For example, in approaches of the yoga tradition the Sanskrit term *vidyā* is used to describe certain ideas and their practical applications. These are usually still considered to be religious (and not scientific) from a Western perspective. *Vidyā* from the root *vid* (referring to inner knowledge) can be translated as ‘scholarship, knowledge, or science’; e.g., *haṭha vidyā* ‘the science of hatha (yoga)’, or *ātma vidyā* ‘the science of the Self’. Hence, what is described as unscientific from a modern Western perspective, is specifically designated as scientific and based on empiricist knowledge in the traditional Indian context.

2 The Western reception of Buddhism as a psychological and ethical system: developments, dialogues, and perspectives

[Klammertext]

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Three dimensions of how Buddhism is received in the West as a psychological and ethical system are outlined, based on the connection between mental balance and ethical behaviour in the Buddhist system: Buddhism as an indigenous psychology; parts of the system of Buddhism integrated in Western psychotherapy; and new movements in Western Buddhism, which are in critical dialogue with scientific methodologies and findings. The article

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tackles questions of how the reception and integration of Buddhism as a psychological ethical system might continue to have an impact on Western cultures and societies, especially regarding epistemological questions that underlie (post-)modern sciences. Buddhist phenomenological psychology is a tool for analysing scientific and social developments, referring to the Buddhist ethical notion of non-distinction between individual and collective wellbeing.

Keywords: Buddhism; psychology; psychotherapy; philosophy of science; epistemology; postmodernism

The history of Buddhism is a history of reception in different cultures and societies, with integration into already existing cultural prerequisites. The transference from India to China, for example, was accompanied by an incorporation of (and into) established Chinese religious and societal systems. In today's Western societies there is a growing dialogue between Buddhism and science. Buddhism has become one of the most important dialogue partners particularly for Western psychotherapy.

Interest in Buddhist psychology in the United States, which is the main starting point for the contemporary dialogical developments in the Western

World, increased primarily after the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago 1893 (Coleman, 2001; Hughes Seager, 1995; Snodgrass, 2003). At this point, writer and publisher Paul Carus was attracted by presentations of Zen Patriarch Shaku Sōen (1906/2004). His foremost student, Suzuki Daisetsu Teitaro (usually known in the West as D.T. Suzuki), consequently moved to the United States to assist Carus in promoting and developing Buddhist thought in the West (Verhoeven, 1998).

One of Suzuki's scholarly emphases was Buddhist psychology. He portrayed Zen Buddhism as a genuine Asian practice for revealing the full capacities of the human mind. He was interested in fostering a dialogue between Eastern and Western psychologies and influenced by religious psychological thinkers (such as William James). This dialogue led to cooperations with psychotherapists and psychoanalysts, followed by the first classic works in this field (with Carl Gustav Jung & Erich Fromm; Fromm, Suzuki, & Martino, 1960; Suzuki, 1964); and to the Zen boom in the 1960s (Fields, 1992).

Though many statements of these early beginnings have been widely criticised in recent years, the importance of the dialogue between Buddhism and psychology/psychotherapy is not now generally questioned, on the contrary it is growing and expanding. Critics mainly pointed to biases due to specific cultural interpretations of the dialogue partners. As a consequence of explorations of Buddhism and Western psychology/psychotherapy from

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certain constructional viewpoints, interpretations tended to be orientalist or occidentalist respectively: Western psychological thinkers analysed Buddhism through the eye of Western psychological/psychotherapeutic methodology; Asian scholars, like D.T. Suzuki, drew East-West distinctions that were highly influenced by a certain Asian cultural and religious background (Sharf, 1995; Snodgrass, 2003). Therefore, the early dialogical works in this field are marked by reductionism and misunderstandings.

The situation today is different, as Buddhism has become the subject of more intense and interdisciplinary study and research (in both Asian and Western countries) and an integrated part of Western cultures itself. Western adaptations and innovations are often informed by scientific ideas. Studies in Buddhism in the West nowadays are based on textual sources and Buddhist teachings in their specific cultural contexts and original languages. Yet there are also attempts to create a new Western Buddhism centred on basic Buddhist teachings, which can provide answers to the pressing contemporary problems of a globalised world (Ivy, 2005).

Three main current approaches regarding the relation between psychology/psychotherapy and Buddhism can be observed and worked with in practice: Buddhism as an indigenous psychology; parts of the system of Buddhism integrated in Western psychotherapy; and new movements in Western Buddhism, which are in critical dialogue with scientific methodologies and findings. As psychology and psychotherapy are highly

informed by different scientific disciplines, the dialogue needs to be placed in a broad network of scientific influences and analysed as underlain by contemporary Western philosophy(-of-science) streams, which most importantly shape psychological methodologies and findings and provide the background for innovations in the dialogues with Asian religious psychological thought and practice. The following exploration of the three approaches places the Western reception of Buddhism as a psychological and ethical system within this wider cultural and societal context, in which psychological and psychotherapeutic theory and practice are embedded.

Buddhism as an indigenous psychology

The term “Buddhism”, like other Asian -isms (Hinduism, Jainism, etc.), is a Western construct. It can be traced back to the beginnings of systematic religious studies, when the Western Christian religious world began to superimpose more specific descriptions onto foreign (from that point of view, paganish) systems, which addressed the human predicament within the cosmos. That Buddhism is now mainly named and analysed as a (world) *religion* – and in this way distinguished from other cultural and societal institutions – is the result of these early constructions and developments within Western culture (e.g., Gladigow, 2001, 2005; Lopez, 2005).

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A skilful way for solving nomenclatural issues is the designation of Buddhism as a “system” (Schumann, 2005). Within this system many “compartments” or “sub-systems”, can be observed and analysed (e.g., religious, psychological, philosophical, ethical) without the need to fit the whole system into one specific sphere from a certain cultural perspective, which, in fact, describes how the receiving (Western) culture tries to understand the foreign system and not the received foreign system itself. This postmodern, deconstructive approach is the starting point for interdisciplinary work beyond the borders of, from a Western perspective, often clearly distinguished societal institutions, such as religion and science.

If Buddhism is analysed as a system, the second question is what, within this system, might be called psychological, or Buddhist psychology. Does the Buddhist system have an indigenous approach to human experience and behaviour and can Buddhist ideas about experience and behaviour be paralleled with Western psychology, and called a psychology? These questions were analysed in early translations of Buddhist literature. Western psychological terminology was utilised to tackle certain concepts in Buddhist languages. The direct connection and dependency between psychological method and Buddhist practice are implied by titles of Buddhist translations: for example, Rhys Davids (1900/2004) depicts the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* (Pāli, “Enumeration of Phenomena”, the first book of the *Abhidhammapiṭaka*¹) as “A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics”;

Anacker (2005) calls the Yogācāra² philosopher Vasubandhu a “Buddhist Psychological Doctor”.

Within the system of Buddhism, it is often difficult to draw clear lines between, for example, “religious” parts – such as worship, rituals and other daily structures in Buddhist monastic settings – and “psychological” parts – such as meditation practice in all its variants, as well as the teacher-student relationship and the direct transmission of insight and knowledge. Considering the definition of modern psychology as “the study of the nature, functions, and phenomena of behaviour and mental experience” (Colman, 2009, p. 619), Buddhism provides psychological methods of analysing human experience and inquiring into the potential and capacities of the human mind. Many Buddhist scriptures are kinds of psychological instruction manuals, which point to the practical realisation of their contents.

The characteristic method of approaching Buddhist indigenous psychology is hermeneutical work with primary sources and interpretations from a psychological perspective (e.g., De Silva, 2005; Kalupahana, 1987; Komito, 1987). The main assumption of Buddhist psychology is its strict phenomenological approach to nature, and, hence, the human predicament as a part of nature. The indivisibility of ethics and psychological wellbeing and, consequently, the connection between collective and individual are based on this phenomenology (see Ghose, 2007).

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From the Buddhist viewpoint, there cannot be an inner stable core, like a Self or soul (Sanskrit *ātman*), which underlies human experience and behaviour, as all phenomena (*dharma*s) are transient and dependent on impulses from other phenomena. Human experience and behaviour are based on cause-and-effect principles and analysed within a network of causation (Virtbauer, 2010a). Thus, a human being is a specific accumulation of phenomena and in interdependent connection with all other sentient beings, or, in a broader sense, with being itself. Each phenomenon can only be understood within its relation to other phenomena. For example, Dōgen (1200–1253) describes this phenomenal connection from an emic Mahayana Buddhist perspective:

Whether you speak of ‘living beings,’ ‘sentient beings,’ ‘all classes of living things,’ or ‘all varieties of living beings,’ it makes no difference. The words entire being [*shitsuu*] mean both sentient beings and all beings. In other words, entire being is the Buddha-nature: I call the whole integral entity of entire being ‘sentient beings.’ Just as the very time when things are thus, both inside and outside of sentient beings are, as such, the entire being of the Buddha-nature (from Busshō (Japanese, “Buddha-nature”); trans. Waddell & Abe, 2002, pp. 60–61).

All experience and behaviour of a certain individual, as a part of entire being – that is, Buddha-nature – refers to and is informed by everything else in an interdependent phenomenal relation.

In the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha (abbr. Abhidh-s) – the main concise “textbook” of Pāli Abhidhamma psychology,³ and another textual example for the connection between psychology and ethics in Buddhism – the relation between states of consciousness (Pāli *cittas*), mental factors (*cetasikas*) that accompany consciousness and the ethical value of the factors is indivisibly interwoven. A psychological quality in experience is always connected with an ethical value, on which the state of consciousness in this moment is based. For example, greed (*lobha*), as an unwholesome factor, accompanies greed-rooted *cittas*, whereas wisdom (*pañña*) or non-delusion (*amoha*), as a wholesome factor, manifests in *cittas* that are associated with wholesome qualities, deeper meditational states, insight and concentration (see translation and discussion of Abhidh-s I, II in Bodhi, 2007, pp. 23–113, and discussion in Kashyap, 2006).

Buddhism, analysed as an indigenous psychology with Western psychological terminology, always needs to be tackled as a psychological *and* ethical system. This perspective is of special interest as soon as Buddhism is engaged in dialogue with streams of Western psychology and psychotherapy, in which the connection between psychology and ethics is not considered a given reality in the same way.

Buddhist psychology integrated in Western psychotherapy

In recent years, the integration of Buddhist theories of the mind and practical techniques has been a flourishing innovation particularly in newer psychotherapeutic approaches (Heidenreich & Michalak, 2004; Wallace & Shapiro, 2006). The second approach in the reception of Buddhism as a psychological ethical system is the integration of parts of Buddhist teachings into already existing psychological or psychotherapeutic lines of thought. The most significant current scientific endeavours within Western approaches to experience and behaviour, regarding the dialogue with Buddhism, are the integration of theories and techniques from the Buddhist system into postmodern psychoanalysis and behaviour therapy. These developments are innovative and radical, insofar as both classical psychoanalysis and especially behavioural approaches within psychotherapy were firmly grounded on a modern scientific worldview that was opposed to the possibility of integration of (from this Western scientific perspective) unscientific speculative religious ideas about the human body, mind, and consciousness.

The psychotherapeutic approaches in the dialogue between Buddhism and psychotherapy are underpinned by a postmodern philosophy of science. The development from modernity to postmodernity in psychology and psychotherapy can, for example, be clearly recognised in the development from Freudian to contemporary (relational) psychoanalysis. The concept of

science, from a postmodern viewpoint, is characterised by non-dogmatism and interdisciplinary work. As one of the most important innovators in psychoanalysis in the late twentieth century, Mitchell (1993), points out: “... all knowledge, including scientific knowledge, is regarded as perspectival, not incremental; constructed, not discovered; inevitably rooted in a particular historical and cultural setting, not singular and additive; thoroughly contextual, not universal and absolute” (p. 20). In this sense, interdisciplinary and intercultural work, as in the dialogue with Buddhism, is helpful in de- and reconstructing psychological theoretical frameworks and understandings of certain psychological fundamentals.

A critical term, both in relational psychoanalytical streams and Buddhism, is “intersubjectivity” (Virtbauer, 2010b), which is psychoanalytically shaped within a circularly dialogical process, in which the circles and paradigms of acquiring knowledge are repeatedly passed through and relativised (Walach, 2005). The dialogue between postmodern psychoanalysis and Buddhist psychology can create new tools for expanding possibilities of addressing mind-states in a broader picture of cause and effect (Magid, 2002; Safran, 2003). In relational psychoanalysis, in contrast to classical psychoanalysis, the constituting components of the individual’s psyche (especially drives) are not analysed anymore as unchangeable somatic source energies. Their development is placed within an intersubjective matrix of relationships. Buddhism and postmodern

psychoanalysis can meet in their understanding of how relationships form the psychological possibilities of the individual. However, in Buddhism this psychology is placed within a phenomenological worldview, of which the components that constitute a human individual are parts (Bobrow, 2010; Epstein, 2007; Virtbauer, 2010b).

In current behavioural and cognitive theories and interventions, four main approaches need to be mentioned, which are either partly built on Buddhist ideas of awareness or show similarities with Buddhist ideas: Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression (MBCT), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). All four approaches are described as “third wave” developments within behaviour therapy (Hayes, 2004).

Traditional Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT, the “second wave” in behaviour therapy)⁴ is mainly concerned with the contents of the mind. The goal is to change thoughts in a way that they do not conflict with and are conducive to the client’s values and aims in life. Psychological health depends on how one is able to deal with and restructure the contents of the mind, which in turn changes, step by step, the perception and apperception of the person.

“Third wave” approaches, on the other hand, emphasise the relationship between the person and his/her feelings and thoughts. The healing process is based on the ability of the client to learn to become a neutral and mindful observer of thought processes without attempts to suppress or change them. Acceptance and mindfulness, the two critical terms in these approaches, refers to the detachment from any kind of habitual and automatic reactivity. A person should only actively engage in processes that are conducive to personal goals and wellbeing (Hayes, Follette, & Linehan, 2004; Heidenreich & Michalak, 2004).

Jon Kabat-Zinn’s work on mindfulness, which led to the “third-wave” approach MBSR (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, 1994; see Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society, 2011), is the basis for both MBCT and DBT. MBSR is a highly evaluated program, which is currently internationally established as an effective way for reducing stress by incorporating mindfulness into all activities in daily life, and, beside this basic focus, a therapy for illnesses and psychological disorders (e.g., Davidson et al., 2003; Miller, Fletcher, & Kabat-Zinn, 1995; Tacon, McComb, Caldera, & Randolph, 2003). The core MBSR program is an eight-week course that should enable participants to change their relation to their experience and behaviour and develop the necessary skills to progress further on their own. Although religious terminology is almost completely excluded from MBSR theory, the MBSR methods all relate to yogic

approaches to experience and behaviour. Beside the classical Buddhist background (Kabat-Zinn was himself a student of Korean Zen master Seung Sahn) of the MBSR methods of body scan and sitting and walking meditation, MBSR also includes hatha yoga practices.

MBCT by Segal, Williams, and Teasdale (2002) is an adaptation of MBSR to treat and prevent depression. It is based on the same ideas about the power of mindfulness as MBSR and includes elements from cognitive behaviour therapy. The effectiveness of MBCT has been proven in different settings, and it is currently used for a wide range of applications beyond its specific focus on the prevention of relapse of depression (e.g., Heidenreich, Tuin, Pflug, Michal, & Michalak, 2006; Williams, Duggan, Crane, & Fennell, 2006).

“Technologies of acceptance” in DBT (Linehan, 1998) are partly drawn directly from Buddhist meditation techniques. Marsha Linehan has a close connection to Zen Buddhism and incorporates her understanding of acceptance in Zen meditation into the dialectical process of the therapy.⁵ She refers to “radical acceptance” when describing an approach of welcoming even the most painful mind states without the need to react, or to change them. With the dialectical strategy DBT attempts to stabilise the relationship between therapist and client, reduce highly destructive behavioural patterns, and teach the client the necessary life skills to reach his/her goals. Linehan (1998) states four areas: skills in emotion regulation,

interpersonal effectiveness, distress tolerance, and mindfulness “that is, the ability to observe, describe, and participate in a manner that is nonjudgmental, effective, and experiential of the present moment” (p. 24).

A further highly evaluated and broadly used newer behavioural and cognitive intervention is ACT (spoken as one word), which does not have a direct connection to eastern philosophies (ACT is philosophically based on Relational Frame Theory (RFT); Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999; Hayes & Strosahl, 2004; see Association for Contextual Behavioural Science [ACBS], 2011). Regarding certain behavioural patterns, ACT arrives at comparable assumptions to Buddhist psychology. ACT is therefore one of the new therapies that are analysed in close relation to Buddhist practice and theory (Heidenreich & Michalak, 2004). Comparable to Buddhist mindfulness techniques, a nonjudgmental acceptance of all parts of the present experience – especially difficult thoughts connected with inner language – is emphasised. The intended shift is a focus away from inner conditioned language and behaviour shaped as a result of thoughts and feelings, to a commitment to following one’s own personal values, also (and in many situations especially) in opposition to inner thoughts and modes of reacting. Hence, the general emphasis in ACT is to learn not to habitually and automatically react, but to respond in ways that are conducive to achieving personal goals (Hayes, 2004). The aim of ACT is thus psychological flexibility, which should enable the client to reach his/her

personal goals in life and to act practically from deeply rooted personal values (Hayes, Luoma, Bond, Masuda, & Lillis, 2006).

An examination of the psychoanalytical as well as “third-wave” approaches, which are also referred to as the “spiritual turn” in behaviour therapy, from a religious studies’ perspective reveals a critical point regarding the contemporary developments: a historically critical exploration of how certain terminologies, techniques, and practices have developed within the Buddhist tradition itself is only partly included in this dialogue and current psychotherapeutic literature.

To broaden this dialogical endeavour, it will be necessary for more interdisciplinary collaboration to develop, as parts of the Buddhist system play a significant role in different contemporary Western approaches to experience and behaviour. As these parts can only be scientifically explored in depth when analysed within the whole Buddhist system, it is critical to understand their developments both out of the history of Buddhism and from a contemporary practical experiential perspective.

Comprehensive interdisciplinary research in how core concepts and practices, such as mindfulness (Pāli *sati*, Sanskrit *smṛti*), are presented in the scriptural Buddhist tradition compared to the Western received understanding of these concepts in psychology and psychotherapy is currently missing, but critical for a holistic understanding (see Christopher,

Charoensuk, Gilbert, Neary, & Pearce, 2009; Gómez, 2004). From this perspective, suggestions to take methods, such as acceptance and mindfulness, out of their religious and spiritual traditions and conceptualise and research them solely from a Western scientific point of view within psychology and psychotherapy (see Hayes, 2002; Kabat-Zinn, 2003) seem not to be feasible. Interdisciplinary research in this area ideally involves emic and etic Buddhist approaches — that is, conceptions within Buddhist traditions, and historical and comparative (meta) perspectives as in religious and Buddhist studies. If Buddhist psychological concepts and practices are to be integrated in Western psychology and psychotherapy an understanding of Buddhist ideas grounded on their developments within Buddhist traditions is crucial. Such an understanding reveals the connection between psychological states and ethical conduct in Buddhism, as shown in the first approach above.

Indigenous Buddhist psychology and newer streams in Western psychotherapy, which integrate Buddhist practices, share certain methods, but differ in their broader aims. While the goal of Buddhist psychology is enlightenment based on complete insight into human nature, Western psychotherapies are symptom-oriented and focus on acceptance and change of certain experiential and behavioural patterns. Psychotherapies do not address the complete change of the world- and self-view of the person in the same way, as it is implied by Buddhist psychology.

Buddhist psychology and modern science: critical examination and integration

As in the case of ACT, science and Buddhism are currently meeting and informing each other in creating an expanded field for understanding reality and despite starting from different points, often arrive on common ground (Lopez, 2008; Wallace, 2007, 2009). In the “Mind and Life” conferences topics are addressed in a dialogue of scientists and Buddhist scholars and teachers, according to the principle of “building a scientific understanding of the mind to reduce suffering and promote well being” (Mind & Life Institute, 2011). That there is a profitable dialogue for both sides can, for example, be observed by the attitude of the Dalai Lama that Buddhism must be open to change, if there were scientific results that would imply a modification of certain Buddhist ideas.

A third approach of how Buddhism is received in the West as a psychological ethical system can be detected in these dialogues. Whereas in the second approach parts of Buddhism as a psychological system are integrated into Western psychological streams, this third approach conversely refers to modifications of Buddhist traditions in Western societies, based on the confrontation and dialogue with Western sciences.

The departure from parts of the Asian institutional background, such as in gender questions, is for some Buddhist traditions a necessary step in

integrating Buddhism into Western society; especially in the sense of an altruistic, socially, and politically active Buddhism that addresses global problems and engages in presenting solutions from a Buddhist perspective. This new engaged Buddhism (Brazier, 2001; Coleman, 2001; Ivy, 2005) is shaped out of a dialogue with the societal conditions Western Buddhists are living in, and, hence, especially highly informed and influenced by Western social and psychological theory (Queen, 2000a).

Movements in Western engaged Buddhism are intended to address current problems in the societal surroundings and the interdependent global connection of harmful developments. Areas such as prison work, end-of-life care, or environmental protection are dealt with from a Buddhist standpoint in dialogue and connection with science (Cohn Parkum & Stultz, 2000; Queen, 2000b; Rushton et al., 2009; Stanley, Loy, & Gyurme, 2009). Psychology and psychotherapy are Western systems that are most conducive to build a framework for dialogue with newer developments in Buddhism, because the Buddhist analysis of the human predicament starts with individual experience, which is seen as connected with all phenomena. But only the individual, him-/herself, can experience this non-distinction. The modern scientific definition of psychology, as a science of experience and behaviour (referring to individual development), is therefore a link to Buddhism as a psychological and ethical system.

Buddhism as a Psychological System

Recently, systems of Buddhist psychotherapy have also arisen, for instance, Brazier's (1995) "Zen Therapy", which are integrations of Western psychotherapeutic psychological questions and problems. Newer developments in East-West psychology, such as "Zen Therapy" or Mikulas's (1995, 2007) "Conjunctive Psychology", suggest that a merging of Buddhism and psychology may create new holistic ways of understanding the means and ends of Western science from a psychological perspective (see Watson, 2008). From a Buddhist point of view, the development of the human collective is not divided from individual consciousness, but intertwined in an interdependent connection.

What does this mean for the dialogue between science and Buddhism? Has science – or more precisely, the way that science creates our contemporary life world – changed, because of the reception of Buddhism in the West? The impact of Buddhism on modern science is still at an early stage because although there is interest in the Buddhist approach to nature the underlying epistemology of modern science has not yet been questioned in a way that might be possible in the dialogue with the Buddhist system; indeed, that might be necessary, if the system of Buddhism is understood in its entirety as a holistic approach to nature. Currently, Buddhism is often a new research object for Western sciences, which is examined with the same repertoire of methods and from the same scientific perspective as other objects. This enables the establishment of Buddhist ideas as, from a

scientific point of view, fruitful – as in the second approach above; and hence, the integration of Buddhist ideas into scientific approaches to human experience and behaviour.

As Loy (2003, 2008a) points out, social *dukkha* (Pāli, “suffering”) is based on the same grounds (the three roots of evil (*akusala-mula*): greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*)) as individual *dukkha*. Given the non-division of collective and individual wellbeing in Buddhism (especially recognisable in the Bodhisattva-ideal of Mahayana Buddhism), suffering always needs to be addressed in a holistic approach to entire being (see Dōgen’s remark above). From this Buddhist perspective, Buddhism and modern science ideally share similar goals: Creating happiness by alleviating suffering through an increasingly refined understanding of how nature works (see Davidson & Harrington, 2002). From the Buddhist perspective, experiential interdependence of all phenomena is the soil from which such understanding can grow. Therefore, a dualistic subject-object distinction is an illusion, which becomes problematic, when it is taken as a dogmatic instrument for tackling reality. The subject-object problem is one main theme in postmodern philosophy of science as well, as it is the starting point for positivistic objectivity, which is questioned and, as in Buddhism, seen as an illusory approach to understanding reality in a deeper sense.

The German philosopher of science, Picht (1989), addressed the problem of subject-object distinction in modern science with his statement: “A

knowledge that reveals itself in destroying what it wants to know cannot be true (*Eine Erkenntnis, die sich dadurch bezeugt, daß sie das, was erkannt werden soll, vernichtet, kann nicht wahr sein*)” (p. 80). He argues that natural sciences that destroy their objects – in being divided from their objects, exactly by objectifying them – cannot be true. Even if they produce “correct” results (Picht refers to Immanuel Kant), they are not “true”, as long as the results destroy the basis on which they are grounded (i.e., in Picht’s work, natural sciences on nature). If natural science findings provide more and more means that destroy nature, the paradigm on which these findings are based is wrong, even if they, out of their specific scientific paradigm, describe mechanisms in nature correctly; and make these mechanisms practically useable, based on certain interests.

Feyerabend (1984) and, from a Buddhist perspective, Loy (2003, 2008b) propose as one important step concerning the question of how sciences function within Western societies, that there should be a focus on a mutually dialogical and democratic decision making process regarding scientific developments. This would help expand the field in which decisions that have national or global effects are made, and increase individual responsibility within collective decision-making structures.

From the Buddhist perspective, psychological ethics is based on a direct experience of interdependence. This realisation and the actual changes in

one's behaviour, based on this realisation, are the keys for inner liberation, as well as for skilful changes of outer circumstances.

Notes

1. The Pāli canon comprises three parts, called the “three baskets” (Pāli *tipiṭaka*). The third part of the canon contains the “higher doctrine” (*abhidhamma*), which is a classification of Buddhist thought.
2. The Yogācāra (Sanskrit, “yoga practice”) school emerged around the fourth century CE and is one of two main early Indian Mahāyāna-Buddhist streams, the other being the Madhyamaka (“middle school”).
3. The Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha (Pāli, “a compendium of Abhidhamma”) by Ācariya Anuruddha (ca cent 11th CE) is a summary of the main ideas of the third part (the Abhidhamma piṭaka) of the Pāli canon. See note 1.
4. Behaviour therapy is the branch of modern psychotherapy that has developed with a strict scientific paradigm, based on neuropsychological findings and theories of learning and operant conditioning, among other scientific evaluated approaches within psychology (Yates, 1970). As cognitive approaches have gained

increasing importance in psychology since circa the 1970s, also behaviour therapy has become a part of the cognitive movement, and partly departed from its behaviourist psychological roots. Hence, CBT is referred to as the “second wave”.

5. Linehan (1993) developed DBT mainly to treat patients with borderline personality disorder (BPS). BPS is characterised by suicide attempts and a high suicide rate, and the difficulty to predict therapy outcomes (Gunderson, 1984). DBT addresses the difficulties therapists and clients face in the therapeutic process with a dialectical strategy. The aim is to change the client’s behaviour based on acceptance of the whole life situation and problems. The process is dialectical referring to “technologies of change” and “technologies of acceptance”, and, hence, a middle way between these two seemingly contradictory strategies (Linehan, 1998).

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3 Experiencing sati: a phenomenological survey of mindfulness in Buddhist psychology

Virtbauer, G. (editor assignment completed, under review). Experiencing
sati: a phenomenological survey of mindfulness in Buddhist psychology.
Mindfulness.

‘Mindfulness’ (Pāli *sati*, Sanskrit *smṛti*) in Buddhist psychology
and its reception in Western psychology and therapy have
become widely researched subjects. However, there are hardly
any accounts that focus on phenomenological qualities of
mindfulness (*sati*) in Western psychological idiom. This article
is a step towards filling this gap and addresses the experience of
sati, based on Pāli Buddhist source texts, from a
phenomenological psychological perspective. In this
intercultural and interdisciplinary approach the first person
experience of mindfulness in indigenous Buddhist psychology is

expounded in a way that is conducive to direct comparisons and dialogues within a Western psychological or therapeutic framework.

Keywords: Buddhism, *sati*, mindfulness, psychology, phenomenology, therapy.

Phenomenology can be briefly defined as ‘the study of the relationship between consciousness and its objects’ (A. Giorgi, 2006, p. 45). As such, it is ‘a method for knowing or investigating the way we know reality’ (Cox, 2010, p. 25). The phenomenological method has developed in many directions and it is particularly fruitful in the research of religious experience (Sharma, 2001; Cox, 2010). Phenomenological psychology is a specific approach to human experience and behaviour that is based on the direct observation of experiential phenomena. Its results and consequent theories are entirely related to first-person experience. Phenomenological psychology focuses on the possibilities of realising the objects (phenomena) that manifest in one’s consciousness and on the analysis and description of the objects themselves.

Husserl (1913/1983) developed phenomenology as a descriptive and eidetic (Greek *eidos*, ‘form, appearance’) discipline. His basic assumption is

that humans can recognise the pure form of an experiential phenomenon. The way to arrive at the *eidos* – the true essence of a phenomenon – is characterised by the ability to be with a thing exactly as it manifests in experience, without any presuppositions. This means that an experiential phenomenon is put out of its natural environment and analysed without the direct connection to the conditions in which it evolved. Husserl refers to this procedure as the *epochē* ('bracketing'). The transcendental idea of 'bracketing' in Husserl's work is philosophical. It is used in a modified way in the empirical methodology and applications of phenomenological psychology, which focuses on the appearances of phenomena within the lifeworlds of individuals. The cultural and societal settings in which an experiential phenomenon manifests are taken into account. However, the practical goal of phenomenological psychology's methodology is to reduce the cultural, societal, and individual preconceptions that mould one's conditioned experience to such an extent that the relation between these preconceptions and the nature of the phenomenon itself becomes clear (Ashworth, 1996). Reduction thus manifests in a contextual psychological sense and not in a fully transcendental *epochē* (Husserl, 1925/1977; B. Giorgi, 2006).

The psychological teachings of the Buddha, as preserved in the Pāli canon,¹ appear to be the first fully developed phenomenological psychology in recorded and documented history. There are three main characteristics of

these teachings. They are (1) psychological in the sense of current psychology, as the Buddha was mainly concerned with individual experience and behaviour. The goal of his teachings is (2) therapeutic. He does not stop at a descriptive psychological analysis, but presents both a theory of how suffering (*dukkha*²) arises in human experience and a practical way that should lead to liberation from all suffering. The crucial means in this practice is ‘mindfulness’ (*sati*). The Buddha’s teachings are (3) phenomenological, as he is ultimately interested in the inherent nature of the phenomena that constitute human experience. In this sense, the Buddha meets with Husserl in the aim of finding the true forms of phenomena (in Husserlian terms their *eide*), though the historical and philosophical backgrounds, practical methods, and resulting theories are distinct.

The focus of this article is on phenomenological qualities of *sati*, mainly from the perspective of Pāli Buddhist psychology. It is the focus on first-person perspectives of experience that underlies dialogical developments in postmodern discourses, particularly in the dialogue between Indian and Western psychology and therapy (see Rao, 2008; Pickering, 2006; Virtbauer, forthcoming). In Buddhist psychology, the direct experience of mindfulness is the key to a shift from an ego-centred way of experiencing to an understanding of the interdependent processes that constitute individual experience and behaviour. This shift completely reshapes the framework in

which individual experience takes place. From the Buddhist perspective, this is the way to the end of suffering in life.

***Sati* and Buddhist phenomenological psychology**

Following a general principle that is also crucial in current therapeutic settings, the Buddha met and addressed people in their specific life situations and in a language they could comprehend. All Buddhist schools agree that there are two levels of statement. There are two truths discernible in the Buddha's teachings—a relative truth (*sammutisacca*) expressed in everyday language and an ultimate truth (*paramatthasacca*) that describes processes at a phenomenological level in philosophical language (Warder, 1980). Both methods of teaching are considered to be truths and the difference in quality must be understood in a contextual sense concerning different situations and audiences with certain needs. The characteristic of the teachings of the Abhidhammapiṭaka ('The basket of the higher teaching') is their focus on ultimately true phenomena (*dhammas*) (Nyanatiloka, 2008).

The books of the Abhidhammapiṭaka and its commentarial literature, particularly the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha (Abhidh-s; Bodhi, 2007; Wijeratne & Gethin, 2002), are an important means to understand the place of *sati* in Buddhist phenomenological psychology, specifically from the viewpoint of

Theravāda Buddhism (Nyanaponika, 1998). There are four categories in which ultimately real phenomena (*dhammas*), which constitute human experience, are classified: consciousness (*citta*), mental factors (*cetasika*), matter (*rūpa*), and the awakened state (*nibbāna*) (Abhidh-s (1).2). Conditioned experience is based on phenomena (*dhammas*) that belong to the first three categories. *Nibbāna* is a state in which the human potential to step out of the conditioned cycle of experience is realised (Abhidh-s 6.62–65).

From the Buddhist perspective as expounded in the Abhidhamma, a human being is an interdependent succession of certain conditioned physical and mental phenomena that can be categorised in consciousness (*citta*), mental factors (*cetasikas*), and matter (*rūpa*). Experience thus is a sequential stream of one state of consciousness after the other. It is based on cause and effect without an inner core or fixed guiding entity, such as a self or soul (*attā*). The belief of an individual in an inherent self independent of the cause-and-effect nexus can be explained through the subtlety of the sequence of consciousnesses, which appears to the non-awakened or cognitively untrained person as an inner, and maybe even unchangeable, identity. The task of Buddhist mindfulness practice is to train one's mental capacity in a way that the subtle dimensions that constitute experience can be discerned with increasing clarity of their ultimate characteristics.

Mindfulness (*sati*) is classified as a distinct mental factor (*cetasika*), and termed a universal beautiful mental factor (*cetasika sobhanasādhāraṇa*) (Abhidh-s 2.6). It is considered to be an ultimately real phenomenon (*dhamma*) that manifests in beautiful consciousness (*sobhanacittāni*) (Abhidh-s 1.14). Consciousness (*citta*) and its mental factors (*cetasikas*) are interdependent categories. From the Abhidhamma perspective, consciousness is the process of the cognition of a mental or physical object. This cognition always takes place accompanied by certain qualities of the mind³, which are determined by the mental factors. Hence, how an object is cognised – that is, the state of one's consciousness at a certain moment – is directly related to the *cetasikas* (mental factors) that accompany this state. Consciousness and mental factors are themselves in interdependent relation to the physical aspects of being (*rūpa*).

The practice of *sati* directly relates to the cultivation of inner states that enable beautiful consciousness (*sobhanacittāni*) to manifest in the individual. Beautiful consciousness comprises all those states of consciousness that are themselves wholesome or the result of wholesome states of consciousness. This includes the states of supramundane consciousness (*lokuttaracittāni*), in which the awakened state (*nibbāna*) itself becomes the object of meditation. It also refers to the so-called functional (*kriyā*) consciousness of individuals who have realised the

awakened state (*nibbāna*) and all states of consciousness that are necessary to cultivate the potential to awakening (see Abhidh-s 1.14–43; Bodhi, 2007).

Sati is defined as a mindful recollection (*anussati paṭissati*). It is a quality that is necessary for clear remembrance (*saraṇatā dhāraṇatā*). Mindfulness is the opposite of superficiality and obliviousness (*apilāpanatā asammussanatā*) (Dhs 14). In the presence of mindfulness the complete mental immersion (*ogāhanaṭṭhena*) into the object of consciousness becomes possible (As 220–221, 253).

In terms of phenomenological psychology *sati* is a mental phenomenon that is crucial for the cultivation of states of consciousness that lead to increasing understanding of the processes of nature. From the perspective of Buddhist psychology it is the experiential insight into the nature of phenomena, physical and mental, which enables the individual to overcome suffering. *Sati* is necessary for the realisation of insight (*vipassanā*), which is based on a non-wavering consciousness that can immerse into its present object. It is a part of the awakened states of consciousness in which insight is accomplished and suffering is overcome. From the Buddhist perspective, personal well-being depends on the cultivation, direct experience, and application of this mental factor, which is the crucial tool for Buddhist meditation practice.

Meditation and mindfulness

Two different approaches to meditation can be broadly distinguished in Buddhist traditions. One approach is a direct discernment of the interdependence of phenomena, which should qualify one's self-experience and directly place it in the context of mutual causation. Another approach is a gradual training of the mind, where the constituents of suffering that generate a self-centred way of experiencing are identified. Sustained identification results in an increasing understanding of the characteristics of these constituents, which are without an inherent self-nature (*attā*) and in constant phenomenal interdependence. In both ways the goal is the same: complete liberation from suffering based on insight (*vipassanā*) into the nature of phenomena, which leads to wisdom (*paññā*) and awakening (*bodhi*), but the emphases in the meditation practices are different.

Right mindfulness (*sammāsati*) is the key Buddhist method for meditation practice, which is included in the four noble truths (*ariyasacca*) as the seventh method in the noble eightfold path (*ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga*; see Dhammacakkappavattanasutta, SN Mahāvagga 12.1081; Bodhi 1984/2006). The different understandings of mindfulness in Buddhism mirror the sudden (direct) and gradual ways of meditation. Dunne (2011) distinguishes 'Innateist' and 'Constructivist' approaches to mindfulness.

Buddhism as a Psychological System

Innateist, or sudden, approaches directly focus on the non-dual nature of subject and object. This direct focus on interdependence should enable the individual to drop conceptual understandings of him-/herself that stand against the reality of nature. A famous quote of the Japanese Zen master Dōgen Kigen (1200–1253) conveys the practical meaning of this suddenness:

To learn the Buddha Way is to learn one's self. To learn one's self is to forget one's self. To forget one's self is to be confirmed by all dharmas. To be confirmed by all dharmas is to cast off one's body and mind and the bodies and minds of others as well. All trace of enlightenment disappears, and this traceless enlightenment continues without end. (from Genjōkoan (Japanese, 'Manifesting Suchness'); Waddell & Abe, 2002, p. 41)

If one is able to completely 'forget one's self', one directly realises the interdependent nature of being—one is 'confirmed by all dharmas [phenomena]'. This direct approach to mindfulness in meditation, such as in the Sōtō-Zen practice of 'just sitting' (Japanese *shikantaza*; see Looi, 2002) or in the Tibetan Buddhist practices of the 'great attitude' (Sanskrit *mahāmudrā*) and the 'great perfection' (Sanskrit *mahāsandhi*; see Wallace

& Steele, 2000), asks the meditator to immediately let go of the very foundations of selfhood and to realise that a human being is a process of different phenomena without any constant self-existence—‘to cast off one’s body and mind and the bodies and minds of others as well’. From this perspective, everyone is in a deeper sense already enlightened—‘all trace of enlightenment disappears, and this traceless enlightenment continues without end’. It is a wrong focus in the experience of humans that prevents the direct realisation of interdependence. As soon as this focus shifts, suffering ends. Cook (2002) comments: ‘A Buddha is someone who is totally at one with his experience at every moment. This practice is simple, but difficult. And the difficulty lies in not adding something extra to the events of our life’ (pp. 10–11). In non-dual approaches to meditation the emphasis lies in a direct experience of this oneness: ‘We live an experience one-hundred percent, without adding any subjective judgment to it’ (Cook, 2002, p. 9). The concept of mindfulness in Buddhist streams that emphasise direct, Innateist meditation practice ultimately refers to a non-judgemental and non-dual presence and not to the sustained concentration on an object of meditation (such as, for example, the breathing process). From this perspective of Buddhist practice, any duality between subject and object is a construct of the mind that is directly addressed and qualified (see Virtbauer, 2010).

Innateist, non-dual descriptions of mindfulness correspond to how the concept of mindfulness is primarily defined in Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) in Western psychology; ‘... as an openhearted, non-judgmental, present-moment awareness, the direct, non-conceptual knowing of experience as it unfolds, in its arising, in its momentary lingering, and in its passing away’ (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 128), or ‘... as a kind of nonelaborative, nonjudgmental, present-centered awareness in which each thought, feeling, or sensation that arises in the attentional field is acknowledged and accepted as it is’ (Bishop et al., 2004, p. 232).⁴ Kabat-Zinn (2011), the originator of MBIs, developed a non-dual approach to mindfulness in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)—mainly informed by his Zen practice and Theravāda Buddhism, but also by other influences from Asian psychology, such as Hindu yoga and Advaita Vedānta. However, mindfulness in MBIs is usually defined operationally and contextually and involves adapted practices from both gradual and sudden Buddhist approaches (see Williams & Penman, 2011).

The gradual or Constructivist (Dunne, 2011) approach to the cultivation of mindfulness can be found in the treatises of the Pāli canon and in current interpretations of these teachings in different Buddhist traditions (see Bodhi, 2011; Anālayo, 2003). Rapgay & Bystrisky (2009) refer to these methods that are conveyed by the Buddha in early canonical sources as ‘classical mindfulness’.

The main Buddhist psychological treatise in the Pāli canon on ‘classical mindfulness’ is the Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta (‘The great discourse on the presence of *sati* (mindfulness)’⁵; DN Mahāvagga 9⁶). In this sutta the Buddha describes a fourfold way of establishing mindfulness, which he considers the ‘direct way’ (*ekāyana*⁷) to overcome suffering: the contemplation (*anupassanā*) of body (*kāya*), feelings (*vedanā*), consciousness (*citta*), and the contemplation of how phenomena (*dhammas*) psychologically manifest in the individual. These four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhānas*) are regarded as a direct way to realisation, because they enable a thorough analysis of all phenomena that constitute the experience of humans.⁸ The ability to directly observe how phenomena arise, how they are present for a certain moment in a unique constellation, and how they cease should enable the individual to develop a clear understanding of his/her personal way of experiencing and behaving. This ability can be systematically trained through mindfulness (see Wallace, 2011; Sīlānanda, 1990).

The four *satipaṭṭhānas* (contemplations of body (*kāyānupassanā*), feelings (*vedanānupassanā*), consciousness (*cittānupassanā*), and specific psychological qualities (*dhammānupassanā*)) in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta provide thirteen meditation methods,⁹ which are tools for progressing on the path to a deeper understanding of causation. According to this sutta, the perfection of the practice of these meditations leads to *nibbāna*.¹⁰

The contemplation of body (*kāyānupassanā*; DN Mahāvagga 9.374–379) includes six techniques: the cultivation of mindfulness in regard to (1) the breathing process (*ānāpāna*)—a thorough analysis of the in- and out-breaths, the experience of the breath in the body, and the calming effect of the breath on the body; (2) the different postures of the body (*iriyāpatha*)—walking, standing, sitting, and lying down; (3) the deliberate (*sampajāna*) observation of all activities in which one is engaged;¹¹ (4) the anatomical parts of the body with attention (*manasikāra*) to their impurity (*paṭikūla*);¹² (5) the material elements (*dhātus*) that constitute the body—earth, water, fire, and air;¹³ (6) the different stages of decay of the body after death—in all ‘nine charnel ground’ (*navasivathikā*) reflections, which range from the observation of a corpse that has been dead for one to three days to the observation of the dusty remains of a skeleton that has completely disintegrated.

In (7) the contemplation of feelings (*vedanānupassanā*; DN Mahāvagga 9.380) two aspects of mindfulness are emphasised. From the Buddhist perspective, as elaborated in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta, feelings are pleasant (*sukha*), unpleasant (*dukkha*), or neutral (*adukkhamasukha*). One should mindfully observe the quality of feelings as they arise, as they are present, and as they cease in one’s experience. The additional characteristics of the three qualities are their connections to sensual desires (*sāmisa*); or the freedom thereof (*nirāmisa*) – which refers to non-sensual feelings that arise

in meditation and are free from any desire or attachment. The task is to mindfully discern the six different states of feeling: the three qualities of feelings (pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral) combined with the two characteristics (sensual or non-sensual) of how these qualities can manifest.

Sixteen paired qualities, or states, of consciousness are described in (8) the contemplation of consciousness (*cittānupassanā*; DN Mahāvagga 9.381). As in the contemplations of body and feelings, the task in the contemplation of the different states of consciousness is to be in the role of a detached observer of oneself, and to note which state of consciousness is present at the moment of observing. Six states of consciousness are connected with the unwholesome (*akusala*) and wholesome (*kusala*) roots (*mūla*) of mental occurrences. The mind can be affected by the unwholesome roots of greed (*rāga*), hate (*dosa*), or delusion (*moha*); or the opposite qualities can be present in the mind—the wholesome roots of non-greed (*virāga*), non-hate (*adosa*), or non-delusion (*amoha*) (see Vism XIV 162–163, 171, 143; Nyanaponika, 1986). The next two states are either an attentive (*sāṅkhitta*) consciousness or a distracted (*vikkhitta*) consciousness. These four pairs, or eight states of consciousness, refer to ‘ordinary’ mind states, whereas the next eight states qualify ‘higher’ states of the mind (see Anālayo, 2003). These eight higher states are connected with absorptions (*jhānas*) and deeper experiences in meditation (see Gunaratana, 1985): the ‘positive’ (in the sense that the higher quality is present in the mind) parts of

these four pairs are an expanded (*mahaggata*) consciousness that is developed through the meditative absorptions, an unsurpassable (*anuttara*) consciousness that has reached the highest level of meditation, a concentrated (*samāhita*) consciousness with deep meditative states of concentration, and the liberated (*vimutta*) consciousness of an enlightened person (*arahant*). The ‘negative’ parts are a not expanded (*amahaggata*) consciousness, a consciousness that still ‘has something above’ (that is, a ‘surpassable’ (*sa-uttara*) consciousness that can be further trained through meditation), a not concentrated (*asamāhita*) consciousness that still can reach higher levels of concentration through meditation, and a consciousness that is not fully liberated (*avimutta*).

The last five ways of cultivating *sati* address specific phenomena and their psychological manifestations—the contemplation of *dhammas* (*dhammānupassanā*; DN Mahāvagga 9.382–403).¹⁴ The basic task of detached observation and noting is the same as in the contemplations of body, feelings, and consciousness. The mindfulness meditations in this last contemplation are concerned with an analysis of: (9) the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) on the way to mental balance: sense desire (*kāmacchanda*), aversion (*byāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thinamiddha*), agitation and worry (*uddhaccakukkucca*), and doubt (*vicikicchā*); (10) the arising and passing-away of the five aggregates of clinging (*upādānakkhandha*): form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), mental formations (*saṅkhārā*), and

consciousness (*viññāṇa*);¹⁵ (11) the six internal (*ajjhattika*) and external (*bāhira*) sense spheres (*āyatana*): eye and visible object (*cakkhu* and *rūpa*), ear and sound (*sota* and *sadda*), nose and odour (*ghāṇa* and *gandha*), tongue and flavour (*jivhā* and *rasa*), body and tangible object (*kāya* and *phoṭṭabbha*), and thought and mental object (*mano* and *dhamma*);¹⁶ (12) the seven factors of wisdom, or awakening factors (*bojjhaṅgas*): mindfulness (*sati*), investigation (*vicaya*) of the ‘law of nature’ (*dhamma*), energy (*virīya*), joy (*pīti*), tranquillity (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*);¹⁷ and (13) the four noble truths (*ariyasacca*).

The Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta’s enormous importance for Buddhist psychology lies in its systematic description of all the ways in which mindfulness (*sati*) can be cultivated (see Kuan, 2008). It is the main manual for the cultivation of this mental factor. Whereas the direct way to liberation of the Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta implies a systematic training in all thirteen meditation methods, the meditation focus can also be on certain practices. The *satipaṭṭhāna* approach is flexible. One might focus on the development of all four *satipaṭṭhānas* as outlined in the sutta and practice all thirteen methods, or one might develop one of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, for example, the contemplation of body (*kāyānupassanā*; see Kāyagatāsatisutta, MN Uparipaṇṇāsa 2.9), or one might only engage in a single meditation method, for example, meditation on the breathing process (see Ānāpānassatisutta, MN Uparipaṇṇāsa 2.8). Each *satipaṭṭhāna*, or a certain meditation method

alone, can indirectly generate all four *satipaṭṭhānas* and lead to liberation (see Anālayo, 2003; Nyanaponika, 1962).¹⁸

Rapgay & Bystrisky (2009) describe ‘classical mindfulness’, as it is expounded in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta, as the simultaneous practice of sustained bare attention and awareness. The distinction between attention and awareness is crucial for an understanding of the psychological mechanisms of ‘classical mindfulness’ in Pāli Buddhism. Attention (*manasikāra*) is a necessary component of all conscious perception and apperception. It builds the bridge between a physical or mental object and the mental state associated with the object.¹⁹ In the presence of mindfulness, attention can be developed to the level of ‘sustained bare attention’, which is the prolonged focused concentration on a consciously chosen object. In regard to the establishing of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta many objects that are described in the thirteen meditation methods are suitable to develop this bare one-pointed attention. Often the breath is chosen as the object of attention in meditation, because it is the most easily discernible and natural bodily process on which one can focus (see Ānāpānassatisutta, MN Uparipaṇṇāsa 2.8). Sustained bare attention should be developed to such a degree, that one is able to use the breath (or another object of meditation) as an anchor of concentration to which one can return willingly at any time. In this way, one can control the

thinking process and train the mind to consciously return to a one-pointed focus on a certain object.

In Pāli Buddhist psychology focused attention is necessary to broaden the field of awareness. If the mind is focused and attentive to a meditation object (such as the in- and out-breaths) one can at the same time develop deeper awareness of the physical and mental field in which experience takes place. Bare attention and open awareness are thus the means to analyse experiences of the body and mind as described in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta. *Sati* is a technique that enables one to be a detached observer of oneself through its two aspects of sustained attention to an object, which leads to one-pointed concentration (*samatha* or *samādhi*), and simultaneous open awareness of the arising, momentary presence, and passing-away of experiences. As soon as these two aspects of mindfulness are cultivated and naturally complement each other one automatically starts to analyse the causes and effects of certain states of body and mind. From the Buddhist perspective, this phenomenal analysis based on clear comprehension (*sampajañña*; cf. note 11) leads to insight (*vipassanā*).²⁰

Insight enables the individual to let go of harmful and unskilful mental and bodily reactions and cultivate responses to mental and bodily events that are conducive to personal balance and well-being. From the Buddhist perspective, through insight into the nature of phenomena one stops identifying with the states of body and mind in a conditioned self-centred

way. Thus the ongoing mental recreation of a certain construction of one's self-identity comes to an end and is replaced by psychological flexibility that is based on the ability to observe one's mental life in a detached way. Hence, the cultivation of *sati* should lead to flexibility on a psychological level and to the realisation of phenomenal interdependence on an ontological level.

Experiential qualities of *sati*

The basic Buddhist notion of non-self (*anattā*) is important for an understanding of how *sati* is felt as a quality in one's experience. Ultimately it is not an individual, in the sense of an 'I', that trains him-/herself to become more mindful, but mindfulness is an inherent human potential to fully develop the capacities for well-being and liberation. *Sati* is a part of a phenomenal process that manifests within or, in a wider sense, as the individual being who experiences it. The main concern in the Buddhist training of *sati* in both the gradual and sudden approaches to mindfulness meditation is a shift in the relationship to the constructed 'I'. In the words of Zen scholar Sekida (1985) through meditation one aims '... to give existence its eye to see itself, to reconstruct the way of consciousness, emancipated from its delusive habit, and to let existential life start its proper

development' (p. 119). The meditator steps out of the self-construction and becomes a spectator of it, rather than its fulfiller or victim.

Psychological flexibility as a result of mindfulness meditation is the opposite of craving (*taṇhā*), which is the root cause of suffering as described in the four noble truths (see Mahāsatipatṭhānasutta, DN Mahāvagga 9.400). In Pāli Buddhist psychology the result of craving is clinging (*upādāna*), which can psychologically be explained as conditioning (see Abhidh-s 7.7, 8.4–13). Through the practice of mindfulness meditation it should become clear how the flow of one moment of consciousness after the other gets transformed through conditioned ways of relating to physical and mental objects. This relation is based on craving after phenomena in certain ways, which leads to clinging to specific ideas of how phenomena are to be perceived and apperceived. These ideas constitute an individual's conditioned self-identity, which, from the Buddhist perspective, is a wrong view (*ditṭhi*) based on delusion (*moha*) or on ignorance (*avijjā*) of the interdependent nature of phenomena (Abhidh-s 2.5, 20; see Bodhi 2007).

Sati should enable the individual to connect to a subtle dimension of consciousness that is usually hidden to the cognitively untrained by the process of conceptual proliferation (*papañca*; see Kuan, 2008). Conceptual proliferation refers to the framing of an experiential phenomenon into the perspective of the conditioned 'I'. Thus in apperception a split occurs between the experiencer and the experienced. It is not the phenomenon itself

that is recognised, but the conceptually proliferated version of the phenomenon, which derives from the individually conditioned way of relating to the phenomenon. Mindfulness is the means to make the processes of perception and apperception clear; that is, both the phenomenon itself in its true interdependent form and the process of relating to the phenomenon and of transforming it in a way that it becomes a part of the individual's conditioned worldview are recognised.

The question that arises here is why the practice of stepping out of the constructed ego and learning to watch the phenomenal mental processes of human nature without direct entanglement in them is connected with profound well-being and, in the final stage, liberation from all suffering. The crucial statement of the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta*'s refrain (see note 9) is that mindfulness leads to detachment. One stops to cling to anything in the world. Paradoxically, this non-clinging to anything in the world, which is based on the realisation that the human predicament is a part of phenomenal interdependent processes without an inherent self, enables the individual to fully engage in the world. It seems that the innermost human potential can only start to flourish if the main hindrance of habitual reactivity connected with a conditioned 'I'-identity is overcome. This means that one's own construction of reality is relativised and clearly seen as a construction. A person's activities in daily life after the realisation of the processes of consciousness in this way might not change, but one becomes free from the

suffering that is caused by identification – in the sense of a fixed self-identity – with these processes.

From the Buddhist psychological perspective, what *sati* practically does is to correct or re-align the relation to psychological processes in a way that this relation does not conflict with the ultimate interdependent characteristics of phenomena. The immediate result of this re-alignment is increasing mental and physical well-being, happiness, and balance. The explanation for these effects seems to be simple: *sati* is a means that allows natural processes to work undisturbed and these processes in their pure form do not cause mental suffering. At the same time *sati* heals the damages that are based on past disturbances. This healing is the result of growing understanding (*vijjā*), which itself is the consequence of one's mindfulness meditation. Understanding enables one to modify behaviour that does not conform with the natural phenomenological processes that one has realised through the practice of mindfulness.

Another important aspect of the experience of *sati* refers to the notion of non-self (*anattā*). Because subject and object of experience are understood within the broader context of phenomenal interdependence, all individual experience and behaviour directly relates to the collective. Ethics in the system of Buddhism mirrors the understanding of one's experience, which is a part of an interdependent process and does not belong to an isolated 'I' (see Harvey, 2000). On a relational psychological level interdependence

manifests as intersubjectivity; that is, one recognises that within the cause-and-effect nexus there are ultimately no boundaries between oneself and others (see Wallace, 2001; Virtbauer, 2010). In Western philosophical phenomenology intersubjectivity and empathy are crucial means of discerning the objective, and in this sense collective, characteristics of phenomena beyond individual perception (see Husserl, 1999). The unique feature of Buddhist phenomenology is its concept of interdependence. Physical and mental phenomena lack an inherent self-nature and have to be analysed in a network of causation. *Sati* is the practical tool that enables one to understand how phenomena interrelate.

The notion of conformity or inference (*anvaya*) is crucial for the understanding of causation in Buddhist phenomenological psychology. Inference in the context of the Buddha's teachings suggests '... that the laws of nature, as we may call them, discovered by the Buddha ... are always true. The inference follows that whoever, whenever, discovers them must find them to be the same' (Warder, 1980, p. 117). This means that the Buddha's teachings must be open to contemporary scientific inquiry and are not to be understood as a doctrine that is to be followed without direct proofs of the results of the practice in one's experience. Thus beyond its reception and application in current psychology and psychotherapy the practice and experience of *sati* can play an important role within a continuous Enlightenment movement in the postmodern age.

Notes

1. In this psychological article, Pāli canonical literature is treated in a traditional way as the body of scriptures of the Buddha's teachings. For a critical philological account on Pāli canonical literature see, e.g., von Hinüber (1996/2000).
2. All Buddhist technical terms are in the Pāli language, if not otherwise stated.
3. *Citta* refers to the central mental and emotional faculty. In this article, depending on the context, it is rendered with 'consciousness' or 'mind'.
4. Cf. Kuan's (2008, pp. 41–42) interpretation of 'simple awareness'.
5. See Anālayo (2003) regarding translations of the term *satipaṭṭhāna*.
6. There are two *Satipaṭṭhānasuttas* in the Pāli canon—DN Mahāvagga 9 and MN Mūlapaṇṇāsa 1.10. In the VRI-CS edition they are identical. In the Pali Text Society (PTS) edition the MN version has a shorter exposition of the four noble truths.
7. See Gethin (2001) regarding different renderings of *ekāyana*.
8. In the Abhidhamma the four *satipaṭṭhānas* are included in the 37 requisites of awakening (*bodhipakkhiya-dhammā*), among which the mental factor (*cetasika*) mindfulness (*sati*) plays a central role

(Abhidh-s 7.30–41; see Bodhi, 2007; Gethin, 2001; Ledi Sayādaw, 1977/2007).

9. The systematisation of thirteen meditation methods is based on recurring similar sections in the sutta after each of these methods; Anālayo (2003) calls these sections the ‘refrain’ of the Satipaṭṭhānasutta; Walshe (1995) refers to them as ‘insight[s]’. In these sections the Buddha recalls the processes and goals of the specific methods. The ‘refrain’ occurs thirteen times in the sutta after each of the thirteen specific methods of developing *sati*.
10. The Buddha states that the perfected practice of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* for seven days (though the number seven most likely has a more symbolic meaning here indicating completion and totality, as it occurs frequently in the Buddha’s discourses; see Anālayo, 2003) is enough to reach either ‘perfect insight in this present lifetime’ (*diṭṭheva dhamme aññā*; this refers to awakening) or the ‘condition of the non-returner’ (*anāgāmitā*) (Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta, DN Mahāvagga 9.404). In Pāli literature, the non-returner (*anāgāmin*) is considered to be reborn in one of the highest heavens and to reach awakening there. He/she does not return to human existence.

11. See Bodhi (2011) on the importance of the terms *sampajāna* and *sampajañña* ('clear comprehension') in connection with the Pāli canonical concept of *sati*.
12. This reflection on the impurity of different aspects of the body (31 parts of the body are listed in the sutta here) is a means to detach from the self-identification with the transient aspects of the body (see Vism VIII 42–144).
13. These are the so-called four great essentials (*mahābhūtas*), which are considered to be the primary elements (*dhātus*) from which all material phenomena derive (see Abhidh-s 6.3).
14. The term *dhamma* in this context is difficult to render satisfactorily. Anālayo (2003) and Sīlānanda (2001) leave it untranslated. Anālayo (2003) gives the following description, which reveals the diversity of this term in Buddhist usage: '... contemplation of *dhammas* [*dhammānupassanā*] skilfully applies *dhammas* (classificatory categories) as taught in the *Dhamma* (the teaching of the Buddha) during contemplation in order to bring about an understanding of the *dhamma* (principle) of conditionality and lead to the realization of the highest of all *dhammas* (phenomena): *Nibbāna*' (p. 186). *Dhammas* in the context of *dhammānupassanā* classify specific phenomena or

qualities, which are not tackled in the first three contemplations in this way, and their psychological manifestations in the individual.

15. In the Suttapiṭaka ('The basket of the discourses') the Buddha uses this categorisation of the groups in which phenomena that constitute a human being are analysed. The five aggregates correspond to the four ultimately real phenomena (*dhammas*) as described in the Abhidhamma (see above) in the following way: form (*rūpa*) is the same in both categorisations; feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), and mental formations (*saṅkhārā*) correspond to the mental factors (*cetasika*); and *viññāṇa* is *citta* in the Abhidhamma classification (Bodhi, 2007).
16. One should observe the psychological connection between perception and the perceived and analyse how a fixed bondage (*saṃyojana*) – i.e., a habitual conditioned way of perceiving – between the two can arise, can be overcome, and can be prevented from arising in the future. In this way, perceptions within the six sense spheres (Buddhism includes thought (*mano*) – the thinking mind – as a sixth sense) should be 'freed' from fixed connections to certain outcomes; e.g., the visual perception of an object and the following craving for the object should be clearly recognised as three interdependent phenomena: the object, the perception of the object through the eye, and the bondage

(craving) that can arise because of a certain conditioned way of relating to the object.

17. The awakening factors are opposites of the five hindrances mentioned above and develop naturally in a conditional order through the deepening of one's practice, as soon as the first factor, mindfulness, is firmly established. Hence, in the establishment of mindfulness one should also analyse the quality of one's mindfulness (*sati*) itself. From the Buddhist perspective, as soon as *sati* is firmly established, it will naturally lead to the other qualities that are necessary on the way to liberation (*nibbāna*).
18. An understanding of all other aspects of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* can (indirectly) arise, as soon as one *satipaṭṭhāna*, or even only one meditation method (such as the development of mindfulness of the breathing process), is completely mastered. The suitability of certain meditation methods or one specific meditation method depends on the present life situation of the aspirant.
19. Rewata Dhamma & Bodhi (in Bodhi, 2007) comment: 'Attention is like the rudder of a ship, which directs it to its destination, or like a charioteer who sends the well-trained horses (i.e., the associated states) towards their destination (the object)' (p. 81). In Buddhist psychology attention is one of the ethically variable universal factors

of consciousness. ‘These factors perform the most rudimentary and essential cognitive functions, without which consciousness of an object would be utterly impossible’ (p. 78; see Abhidh-s 2.2).

20. This interpretation stresses the importance of mindfulness for the development of both concentration and insight. In the Theravāda school, traditionally there is a preference to interpret mindfulness as the factor that leads to insight and awakening, whereas the development of concentration plays a less important role (see Kuan, 2008).

References

Abbreviations

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| Abhidh-s | Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha [VRI-CS – references to pariccheda (‘definition’) number and paragraph(s)]; trans. see Bodhi (2007) |
| As | <i>Darlegung der Bedeutung (Atthasālinī): Der Kommentar zur Dhammasaṅgaṇī</i> . (2005). (B. Nyānaponika, Trans.). Oxford: Pali Text Society. [references to page(s)] |
| Dhs | Dhammasaṅgaṇī [VRI-CS – references to sections of the main text]; trans. see Rhys Davids (1900/1974) |

DN	Dīghanikāya [VRI-CS – references to vagga (‘chapter’), sutta number, and paragraph(s)]
MN	Majjhimanikāya [VRI-CS – references to paṇṇāsa (‘group of fifty texts’), vagga (‘chapter’) number, sutta number, and paragraph(s)]
SN	Samyuttanikāya [VRI-CS – references to vagga (‘chapter’), samyutta (group of discourses) number, and paragraph(s)]
Vism	<i>The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga) by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa. (1957/1999). (B. Ñāṇamoli, Trans.). Onalaska, WA: BPS Pariyatti Editions.</i> [references to chapter and paragraph(s)]
VRI-CS	Vipassana Research Institute (VRI) Chatṭha Saṅgāyana (CS) edition of the Pāli Tipiṭaka and commentaries

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Buddhism as a Psychological System

Williams, M., & Penman, D. (2011). *Mindfulness: a practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world*. London: Piatkus.

4 Bewusstsein und Beziehung im Mahāyāna- Buddhismus. Ein integrativ religionspsychologischer Ansatz

Virtbauer, Gerald. (2011). Bewusstsein und Beziehung im Mahāyāna-Buddhismus. Ein integrativ religionspsychologischer Ansatz. *e-Journal Philosophie der Psychologie*, 15. Retrieved from <http://www.jp.philo.at/texte/VirtbauerG2.pdf>

One of the main Buddhist epistemological bases—interdependence—is explored from a phenomenological psychological point of view, by focusing on human consciousness and the relational experience connected with psychological processes. Two crucial Mahāyāna teachings—the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* and the metaphor of the net of Indra—serve as the grounds on which central psychological fundamentals of Mahāyāna-Buddhism are outlined. Through the phenomenological method of working through the emic perspective of

treatises Buddhism is analysed from the non-distinction between teachings and personal experience, which is the characteristic of the Buddhist system.

Ein Grundkennzeichen des menschlichen Beziehungserlebens aus Mahāyāna-buddhistischer Sicht ist Interdependenz, die sich aus der Nicht-Ich(Sanskrit *anātman*)-Lehre¹ des Buddhismus ergibt. Im Buddhismus wird der Mensch in einem Feld von phänomenalen Beeinflussungen und Abhängigkeiten betrachtet, was zu einer Relativierung der individuell abgeschlossenen Person führt und sie selbst, als Person, aus einem größeren Kontext heraus erklärt. Die Erkenntnis dieses größeren Kontexts ist für das einzelne Individuum der entscheidende Schritt um das Leiden (*duḥkha*) im Leben zu überwinden. Dieses entsteht nach buddhistischer Anschauung durch die Folgen der bewussten Ausschließung der phänomenalen Beeinflussungen, da sich nur in deren Geflecht das individuelle Dasein verstehen lässt.

Anhand eines bedeutenden *sūtras*, das der Yogācāra-Philosophie zuzurechnen ist (Lusthaus & Muller, 2000; Schmithausen, 2007), sowie der Metapher des Netzes von Indra, zeige ich einige psychologische Punkte auf, die für das Verständnis von Darlegungen gegenwärtiger buddhistisch Lehrender und den Dialog mit westlich psychologischen und

psychotherapeutischen Zugängen entscheidend sind (siehe Jiang, 2006). Methodisch orientiere ich mich an den Vorgaben, die an eine postmoderne (in diesem Fall auf philosophisch religionspsychologische Aspekte ausgerichtete) Religionsphänomenologie gestellt werden (siehe Michaels, Pezzoli-Olgiati, & Stolz, 2001; Sharma, 2001).

Um zu verstehen, wie Aspekte von religiösen Systemen allgemein gegenwärtig im Dialog mit Wissenschaften Anwendung finden und, konkret in diesem Fall, worauf Rezeptionswege und Formen des Buddhismus als psychologischem System im Westen im Dialog mit der Psychologie und Psychotherapie aufbauen (Wallace & Shapiro, 2006; Virtbauer 2008b), erscheint mir ein phänomenologisch ausgerichtetes Arbeiten sehr zweckdienlich. Zwei Punkte gilt es meines Erachtens dabei besonders zu beachten. Zum einen ist ein subjektiver Anteil, der auf die kulturelle und gesellschaftliche Einbettung, sowie persönliche Geschichte des Autors verweist, in einer religionswissenschaftlichen Hermeneutik ein integrierter Bestandteil (siehe z.B. Faure, 1998), der, positiv umgesetzt, wichtige weitere Anstöße zur Thematik und kritische Reflexionen fördern kann und soll. Zum anderen, und dieser Punkt ist die Folge des ersten, kommt dabei deutlich ein zirkulärer, kreishafter Prozess von Wissensgewinn zum Vorschein, wobei die Kreise des Verstehens und Erkennens immer wieder neu durchlaufen werden (Walach, 2005). In diesem Prozess ist religionsphänomenologisches Arbeiten, das in der Lage ist, gegenwärtig

gelebte religiöse Praxis mit geschichtlichen Grundlagen der Religion zu verknüpfen, von entscheidender Bedeutung (Waardenburg, 2001).

Bewusstsein im Buddhismus

In der Psychologie des Buddhismus² spielt die Frage des Bewusstseins des Menschen eine herausragende Rolle. Die buddhistische Konzeption von Bewusstsein, auf die im Folgenden näher eingegangen wird, kennzeichnet das letzte der fünf Aggregate (*skandhas*), deren Zusammenspiel den Menschen als Individuum konstituieren.³ Bewusstsein (*viññāna*) stellt traditionell ein sechsfaches Bewusstwerden von Sinneseindrücken dar: Seh-, Hör-, Geruchs-, Geschmacks-, Tastsinn, sowie geistige Vorgänge. *Viññāna* kommt dabei eine ordnende und organisierende Rolle zu, die letztendlich den Menschen als in seiner Weise charakteristisches, erlebendes Wesen ausmacht. Mentale Denkvorgänge (als sechster Sinn) werden in gleicher Weise wie Sinneseindrücke behandelt. Als psychische Instanz verweisen sie auf die Geschichte des Individuums und liefern das Fundament für die Realisation des, dem Menschen innewohnenden, Potentials von Erkenntnis.

Das *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* und der menschliche Geist

Ein in Bezug auf dieses Potential sehr entscheidender indischer Mahāyāna-Text, vor allem für die spätere Herausbildung des Chan(Chinesisch

„Meditation“, Japanisch Zen)-Buddhismus in China, ist das *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*.⁴ Die philosophische Psychologie dieses *sūtras* beschreibt den menschlichen Geist (Sanskrit *citta*) als Ausgangspunkt jeglicher Erfahrung. Der Geist spiegelt sowohl eine absolute Sichtweise, im Sinne einer Verbindung und Nichtunterscheidung sämtlicher Erfahrungen bewussteinfähiger Wesen, als auch eine relative, im Sinne des individuellen Geistes der einzelnen Person, wider. Die Problemsituation, in der sich der Mensch dabei befindet, ist gekennzeichnet durch die Tendenz, sich der verbindenden Erfahrung, die vom Individuum selbst erlebt werden kann, nicht zu öffnen und in einer Abgrenzung und Unterscheidung sein individuelles Selbst zu entwickeln und zu stärken. Nach Mahāyāna-buddhistischer Anschauung ist es gerade diese Abgrenzung und scheinbare Stärkung und Versicherung, die Leiden (*duḥkha*) verursacht, da sie sich der natürlichen Voraussetzung des Menschen—der Verbindung und Nichtunterscheidung—gegenüberstellt und daher die, im Sinne des Mahāyāna, eigentliche Natur des Menschen (Buddha-Natur (*buddhatā*)), die nicht auf einer Selbst-Konstruktion beruht, in ihrer Entfaltung behindert. Die Paradoxie, mit der sich der Buddhismus in dieser Konzeption logisch sprachlich konfrontiert, ist die Schwierigkeit zu beschreiben, wie Nichtunterscheidung und Unterscheidung zur gleichen Zeit möglich ist, da einerseits das Streben und Ziel der menschlichen Natur auf Nichtunterscheidung ausgerichtet ist, andererseits die individuelle Person

sich nur unterscheidend als solche erfahren kann (Virtbauer, 2010). Nichtunterscheidung charakterisiert eine Erlebensqualität, in der die Verbindung jeglicher Phänomene hervortritt und das eigene Dasein als (abgegrenztes) Individuum relativiert wird.⁵

Letztendlich übersteigt die Erkenntnis dieser Verbindung jegliche sprachliche Ausdrucksform und verweist im Buddhismus auf praktisches Bemühen und durch die buddhistische (Meditations-)Praxis entwickelte Fähigkeiten des Erkennens. Im Zen-Buddhismus wird in der Vermittlung dieser Praxis betont, dass es sich wesentlich um eine nicht diskursive, wortlose, nicht auf Schriften basierende Übermittlung (Japanisch *furyū monji*) handelt, die von Herz-Geist zu Herz-Geist (*ishin denshin*) geschieht. Autoren buddhistischer *sūtrās* versuchen diese Paradoxie auch in sprachlichen Ausdrucksformen bis zu einem gewissen Grad zu lösen. *Sūtras* sind in diesem Sinne metaphorisch der Finger, der auf den Mond zeigt, vermitteln jedoch nicht den letztendlichen Gehalt der Erfahrung—in diesem Gleichnis den Mond selbst (Fischer-Schreiber, Ehrhard, Friedrichs, & Diener, 1986/2001, S. 113; Golzio, 1995, S. 199, 227; Suzuki, 1930/1999, S. 105ff.). Das *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* stellt aus psychologischer Sicht einen solchen Fingerzeig dar, wobei besonderer Wert auf das *viññāna* gelegt wird. Dieses ‚Organ‘ der Erkenntnis erfährt im *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* eine spezielle Ausgestaltung.

Acht *Vijñānas*, *Ālayavijñāna*

Das *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* unterscheidet insgesamt acht *vijñānas*. Die Einteilung in sechs *vijñānas* weicht einer Anordnung in fünf Sinnen-*vijñānas*, *monovijñāna*, *manas-vijñāna*, und *ālayavijñāna*.

Das *ālayavijñāna* ist direkt auf die Wahrnehmung gerichtet. Es kann als großer Speicher gedacht werden, der neben allen persönlichen Eindrücken des Individuums, auch auf das *citta* (den Geist) in seiner absoluten Form verweist. Der *ālaya* (Sanskrit ‚Wohnung, Haus‘) trägt in sich alle Eindrücke, die das Individuum in seiner Geschichte gesammelt hat und die seine Bewusstseinsfähigkeit durch die Kette von Ursache und Wirkung in der Gegenwart ausmachen, zugleich aber auch den diese Verursachungskette tragenden absoluten Geist (*citta*), der als alle bewusstseinsfähige Wesen verbindender Grund nicht denkbar ist, sondern nur durch die durch ihn hervorgebrachten geistigen Phänomene in deren Ausformung erlebbar wird, was wiederum auf den relativen, dem Individuum zugehörigen Geist verweist (Waldron, 2003).

Der *ālaya* ist daher das ‚Haus‘ sämtlicher Faktoren (oder Eindrücke), die die menschliche Entwicklung der Bewusstseinsfähigkeit ausgemacht haben und die gegenwärtige Bewusstseinsmöglichkeit des Individuums widerspiegeln—in dem Sinne ein kollektiver und zugleich individueller Bewusstseinspeicher, wobei sich beide im jeweils anderen widerspiegeln.

Das Speicherbewusstsein trifft, als wahrnehmende Bewusstseinsbasis, keine Unterscheidungen; es speichert ungefiltert alle Eindrücke im Leben des jeweiligen Menschen. Diese Eindrücke, oder erste Stufe von Erfahrung, liefern den Ausgangspunkt von weiterer Verursachung, die sich von Eindruck zu Eindruck fortsetzt und entwickelt. Das *ālayavijñāna* stellt so den Grund dar, auf dem sich durch Ursache-und-Wirkungs-Verknüpfung unterscheidende Bewusstseinsfunktionen ausbilden können. Diese Funktionen erschaffen das, was in einer—aus dieser buddhistischen Sicht—falschen Anschauung als objektive Welt erlebt wird, die vordergründig durch eine Subjekt-Objekt-Aufspaltung gekennzeichnet ist (Golzio, 1995, S. 59ff.).

Manas-vijñāna, Manovijñāna

Im *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* wird der Prozess zu einem unterscheidenden, bewertenden Bewusstsein über die Vermittlung des *manas* (‘Denken’) beschrieben, das die reine Wahrnehmungsverarbeitung hin zu einem sich dem Erfahrungsprozess gegenüberstellenden Bewusstsein steuert. Die Einordnung der Tätigkeit des Denkens erfolgt über das *manovijñāna* (‘Denkerkennen’), das, als unterscheidendes Bewusstsein, den entscheidenden Schritt zu einer Einteilung der durch die geistigen Prozesse hervorgerufenen Vorstellungen durchführt. Die *vijñānas* der fünf Sinne

(Seh-, Hör-, Geruchs-, Geschmacks- und Tastsinn) sind mit dem *manovijñāna* als ordnender Instanz verbunden und bilden zusammen die Voraussetzung der Ausbildung eines Ich-Bewusstseins (Golzio, 1995, S. 66ff.).

Alle den Menschen als Individuum ausmachenden Bewusstseinsfaktoren sind miteinander verbunden, arbeiten aber auch als eigene Entität, was die Erkenntnis und Erkenntnisfähigkeit des Individuums ermöglicht. Nach der Psychologie des *Laṅkāvatārasūtras* erlebt sich der Mensch dann als abgeschlossenes Ich-Subjekt, wenn er die verschiedenen Bewusstseinssysteme und deren Verursachungen und wechselseitige Beeinflussung, die ihn als denkendes Wesen ausmachen, nicht als verschieden erkennt, sondern in deren Zusammenspiel als inneren Wesenskern (Selbst) der Person annimmt. Dies führt aus buddhistischer Sicht zu Leiden, da es der eigentlichen Realität des Daseins zuwiderläuft.

Spiegelungen des Geistes

Zugleich wird im *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* jedoch darauf hingewiesen, dass die Verursachungen, die das ‚Material‘ der Denktätigkeit des Menschen liefern, selbst nichts anderes als Spiegelungen des Geistes sind. Die reale oder objektive Welt, die das Individuum in Abgrenzung und Einordnung konstruiert, ist nur eine geistig erschaffene und als solche, wenn das relativ,

vom jeweiligen Individuum Wahrnehmbare als real interpretiert wird, eine Illusion, die den Menschen von der wahren Erkenntnis seiner inneren Natur (Buddha-Natur) abhält. Dass die Welt auch kollektiv objektiv konstruiert werden kann, ist über die Verbindung jeglichen individuellen Bewusstseins zu einem *citta* als All-Bewusstsein erklärbar. Diese objektive Welt kann daher, der *Laṅkāvatāra*-Psychologie folgend, in der Wahrnehmung verschiedener Menschen mehr oder minder die gleichen Ausprägungen ausbilden.

Es ist der Verstand des Individuums selbst, der die objektive Welt erschafft, indem das durch *manas* vermittelte Erleben der Sinnen-*viññānas* nicht als individuelle und zur gleichen Zeit jedoch durch das absolute *citta* verbundene Bewusstseinsfaktoren erkannt werden. Da diese objektive Welt bei ähnlichen karmischen Voraussetzungen von verschiedenen Individuen ähnlich erschaffen wird, kann die Illusion selbiger Bestand haben und wird so im *manoviññāna* als unterscheidender Verursachungskomplex verankert.

Dieser Verursachungskomplex, der selbst schon eine Illusion ist, nährt dann weitere unterscheidende Bewusstseinsvorgänge, die sich in der Wahrnehmung und Einordnung des Wahrgenommenen zeigen. Unterscheidende Bewusstseinsvorgänge entstehen so aus einer sich andauernd fortsetzenden Ursache-Wirkungs-Kette, wobei auch diese Kette und deren Geschichte eine rein geistig erschaffene ist—und ebenso keine objektive Entität—und als solche zugleich existent wie nicht-existent

(Golzio, 1995, S. 80ff.). Diese Paradoxie in der Erkenntnistheorie des *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* ist eine Grundvoraussetzung, um auf das Unaussprechbare und diskursiv nicht Erfassbare in der Erkenntnis hinzuweisen.

Geist und Erfahrung

Das alles umfassende *citta* ist eine reine Erlebensqualität und nicht durch eine diskursive Logik beschreibbar, bringt aber selbige zugleich hervor. Der Mensch kann sich in seinem gegenwärtigen Erleben nur aus seiner individuellen Geschichte, die durch eine Ursache-Wirkungs-Kette entsteht, verstehen. In diesem Erleben selbst spiegelt sich aber zugleich die Relativierung des Erlebens oder individuellen Erleben-Könnens wider, da die Art und Weise der mentalen Verarbeitung und daraus folgenden Konstruktion der unterscheidenden Erfahrung immer relativ auf die Verursachungen des Individuums zurückzuführen sind. Es kann daher keinen inneren Wesenskern im Individuum geben, sondern nur eine geschichtliche Verknüpfung von Bewusstseinsinhalten, deren Realisation, aus dieser buddhistischen Sicht, den Ausgangspunkt liefert, um die dahinterliegende bewusstseinsverbindende Qualität zu erkennen und die unterscheidende Qualität der Bewusstseinsinhalte relativiert.

Im *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* wird die Bewusstseinspsychologie, die das System der *viññānas* und deren gegenseitiges Aufeinander-Bezogensein darlegt, an einer Stelle derart zusammengefasst:

Infolge des Sichstützens auf die Ursache entstehen die sieben Viññanas. Das Manovijñāna besteht fort durch das Anhängen am Unterscheiden der Bereiche und wird ernährt durch Eindrücke des Ālayavijñāna. Das Manas bildet sich zusammen mit dem Begriff des Ich und dem, was dazugehört, an dem es hängt und worüber es nachdenkt. Es hat keinen selbständigen Körper und kein selbständiges Merkmal. Das Ālayavijñāna ist seine Ursache und seine Stütze. Die Gesamtheit des Geistes entwickelt sich in gegenseitiger Bedingtheit infolge des Anhängens an der Sichtweise, daß die Welt, die der Geist selbst ist, real ist. Wie die Wellen des Ozeans entsteht und vergeht die Welt, die der Geist selbst ist und die vom Wind der Sinnenwelt aufgewühlt wird. Deshalb, wenn man vom Manovijñāna befreit ist, ist man auch von den sieben Viññanas befreit. (Golzio, 1995, S. 135)

Hier wird das *manovijñāna* dem *ālayavijñāna*, *manas-vijñāna* und den fünf Sinnen-*viññānas* gegenübergestellt. Befreiung, oder das Ende eines Konstruierens der äußeren Welt als real oder objektiv durch ein

unterscheidendes Bewusstsein, geschieht durch die Erkenntnis, dass dieses Bewusstsein (das *manovijñāna*) nicht unabhängig von einem verbindenden Bewusstsein, aus dem heraus es selbst entsteht, erlebt werden kann. In diesem Sinne ist die Verbindung, die den Ausgangspunkt jeglicher Individualität ausmacht, in den Vordergrund getreten.

Unterscheidung und Nicht-Unterscheidung

Von Unterscheidung befreit zu sein, meint aber nicht, dass Unterscheidung nichtig wird, sondern dass im Erleben selbst die Relativierung eines unterscheidenden Erlebens stattfindet. Jeder Bewusstseinsakt trägt die Möglichkeit in sich, den Grund dieses Bewusstseinsaktes zu erkennen. Dieser Grund spiegelt sich im *ālayavijñāna* wider, aus dem die anderen unterscheidenden Bewusstseinsakte entstehen. Die Entstehung von Bewusstseinsakten selbst wird so in diesem System die Erklärung der Möglichkeit die Entstehung zu relativieren und richtig einzuordnen.

Im *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* wird das Ziel der buddhistischen Praxis—eine vollkommene Erkenntnis der Entstehung von Erleben durch Erleben selbst —mit dem Begriff *tathāgatagarbha* („Embryo des So-Beschaffenen [ein Titel für Buddha]“, was auf die Buddha-Natur in jedem Individuum verweist) in Verbindung gesetzt. *Citta*, *ālayavijñāna* und *tathāgatagarbha* werden im *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* sinngemäß oft synonym verwendet (Suzuki,

1930/1999), da das Speicherbewusstsein—*ālayavijñāna*—in sich die Potentialität der Verwirklichung eines Bewusstseins, das in der Wahrnehmung selbst alle Faktoren erkennt, die die Wahrnehmung und geistige Verarbeitung von Erlebensinhalten ausmachen, trägt. Diese potentielle Umkehr des Bewusstseinsgrundes im *ālayavijñāna* (Golzio, 1995, S. 223ff.), auf der aufbauend alle Bewusstseinsvorgänge klar erkannt werden können, stellt das letztendliche Ziel der buddhistischen (Meditations-)Praxis dar (Brown, 1991).

Die Befreiung aus einer geschichtlichen Situation, die das Erleben des Individuums geprägt hat und seine jetzigen Erlebensmöglichkeiten und darauf folgendes Verhalten ausmacht, erfolgt, der *Laṅkāvatāra*-Psychologie nach, in jedem Moment des Erkennens in der geschichtlichen Situation selbst. Erleben relativiert Erleben, indem der Grund dieses Erlebens klar hervortreten kann. Der Grund—*tathāgatagarbha* oder *citta* (oder *ālayavijñāna* im gerade erläuterten Sinne)—übersteigt jegliches unterscheidendes Bewusstsein, ist aber ohne dieses nicht erlebbar. Bewusstseinserkenntnis bedeutet im Hier und Jetzt des erkennenden Menschen ein Heraustreten und zugleich Eingebettet-Sein in die gegenwärtige Bewusstseinsfähigkeit, da sich beides gegenseitig bedingt und erfordert.

Indras Netz

Eine weitere, auf der *Cittamātra*(„Nur-Geist“)-Bewusstseinspsychologie aufbauende, für den Buddhismus entscheidende Frage betrifft das Zusammenwirken von Erleben und Beziehung. Ein Bild aus einer bedeutenden Richtung des Mahāyāna-Buddhismus—der Huayan(Chinesisch ‚Blumengirlande‘, Japanisch Kegon)-Schule—verdeutlicht eine phänomenale Verbindung und Abhängigkeit, in die das menschliche Erleben eingebettet ist.⁶ Es beschreibt das Netz des Gottes Indra.⁷ Dieses besteht aus einem in alle Richtungen unendlich weit reichenden Netzgewebe, das mit Juwelen an seinen Knoten behangen ist. Die Juwelen hängen derart, dass man in der Spiegelung eines Juwels—wenn man seine Oberfläche betrachtet—alle anderen Juwelen im Netz sehen kann. Dies gilt für jedes einzelne, betrachtete Juwel und da es unendlich viele Juwelen sind—das Netz hat keine Beschränkung—spiegelt sich in jedem einzelnen eine unendliche Anzahl von anderen Juwelen wider. Die Spiegelungen selbst, die die gesamte Struktur begleiten, sind daher ebenfalls unendlich (Cook, 1977; Cleary, 1983).

Dieses Bild des Kosmos als interdependentes Geflecht, indem sich in jedem einzelnen Phänomen die Gesamtheit aller Phänomene widerspiegelt, bildet die Grundlage für Erleben aus der Sichtweise dieser buddhistischen Philosophie. In jedem Ding (Sanskrit *dharma*) zeigt sich in der tieferen Erkenntnis des Aufeinander-bezogen-Seins und In-Dialog-Stehens der

Phänomene die absolute Wahrheit dieses Phänomens. Nach der Huayan-Philosophie ist die Erkenntnis, dass alle Phänomene nur aus ihrer Beziehung zueinander als einzelnes, charakteristisches Phänomen Bestand haben können, ein Erkennen der inhärenten Leere (*śūnyatā*) aller Phänomene.⁸

Erleben phänomenaler Interdependenz

Phänomene stehen immer in Beziehung zueinander und sind nur aus ihrer Interdependenz in Bezug auf andere Phänomene erklärbar. Cook (1977) beschreibt das Verhältnis von Identität und Interdependenz von Phänomenen als zwei Seiten derselben Münze, was für ein Verständnis dieses dynamisch-dialogischen Erlebens und daraus folgendem Verhalten wichtig ist. Erleben ist grundsätzlich als in Beziehung stehend zu betrachten. Das Erleben des Einzelnen entsteht in einem Beziehungsgeflecht, einem Raum, in dem sich aus Einflüssen und Impulsen heraus ein statisches Element, wie eine Ich- oder Selbst-Identität, entwickeln kann. Die dynamische Bezogenheit dieses Ich zu allen anderen Phänomenen lässt die Ich-Identität als nur aus der Beziehung heraus ergreifbar beschreiben. Ein Ich, das selbst Beziehung ist und aus Beziehung hervorgeht, kann sich nicht der Beziehung gegenüberstellen.

Wie können Erlebensdimensionen in dieser Beziehung verstanden werden? Fazang⁹ gibt eine Erklärung zu Indras Netz, die sich in Bezug auf diese Frage weiter zu verfolgen lohnt.

This [the contemplation of the net of Indra] means that with self as principal, one looks to others as satellites or companions; or else one thing or principle is taken as principal and all things or principles become satellites or companions; or one body is taken as principal and all bodies become satellites. Whatever single thing is brought up, immediately principal and satellite are equally contained, multiplying infinitely – this represents the nature of things manifesting reflections multiplied and remultiplied in all phenomena, all infinitely. This is also the infinite doubling and redoubling of compassion and wisdom. (Cleary, 1983, S. 168)

Die Netzwerkmetaphorik verweist auf Entstehen in Abhängigkeit in der Erfahrung selbst. Erfahrung im Moment ist das Produkt einer Ursache-Wirkungs-Vernetzung, die aus mehreren Richtungen heraus beschrieben werden kann. Zum einen kommt dabei deutlich der geschichtliche Aspekt des individuellen Erlebens zum Vorschein. Jedes gegenwärtige Erleben ist ein Produkt einer Verursachungskette, die die eigene Geschichte als

Individuum und darüber hinaus die Beeinflussungen, die diese Individuumsgeschichte in Gang gesetzt haben, deutlich werden lässt. Diese Geschichte steht aber zugleich immer auch in einem relationalen Netzwerk, das selbst wiederum geschichtlich gesehen werden kann.

Da laut Huayan-Philosophie sich in jedem Teil das Ganze widerspiegelt, ist Erleben selbst nicht auf ein Individuum beschränkt. Individuelles Erleben ist netzwerkartig als Ganzes mit menschlichem Erleben an sich verbunden und menschliches Erleben ist wiederum mit anderen Phänomenen verknüpft —was sich unendlich fortsetzen lässt. Somit ist der Teil das Ganze und das eigene Erleben ist das andere Erleben. Dies gilt für jedes *dharmā* („Phänomen“), das entsteht, und beschreibt damit auch geistige Vorgänge— die aus dieser buddhistischen Sicht genauso wie alle anderen Dinge der Verursachung unterliegen und daher auf derselben phänomenalen Ebene zu betrachten sind—, die sich letztendlich immer nur aus einem Beziehungsgeflecht bilden können.

Dabei kommt sehr stark ein kommunikativ-interdependenter Aspekt in Bezug auf psychische Vorgänge zur Geltung. Denk- und Erlebensvorgänge verlieren ihre Bezogenheit auf ein Ich oder Selbst und bilden ihrer Natur nach einen kommunikativen Raum aus—jeder psychische Vorgang ist in gewisser Hinsicht eine Kommunikation mit unendlich vielen anderen Phänomenen, da er aus diesen Phänomenen entsteht und selbst diese Phänomene widerspiegelt, die nicht getrennt vom Vorgang selbst sein

können. Jegliches Erleben und Verhalten findet in einem kommunikativen Netzwerk mit anderen Phänomenen statt und es ist dieses Netzwerk, das die gegenwärtige Aktion des Menschen bestimmt.

Die eigene Impulssetzung im Handeln kann nur dann im Sinne dieses Netzwerkes sein, wenn man sich der gegenseitigen, phänomenalen Abhängigkeit als Ausgangssituation nicht widersetzt und nicht in einer Identitätsbestimmung, die auf Abgrenzung basiert, gedankliche Verursachungen erzeugt, was nach buddhistischer Auffassung zu Leiden führt. Der Mensch kann daher nie bei sich selbst sein, oder bleiben, sondern ist immer ein ‚Zwischen-Wesen‘. Leben bestimmt sich als ein Dazwischensein, da Interdependenz und Identität eine dynamische Einheit bilden und in jedem Augenblick die Relationalität hervortritt, die im Moment entsteht und die gegenwärtige Situation des Individuums ausmacht.

Noten

¹ *Anātman* (‚Nicht-Ich, Nicht-Selbst‘) stellt den Gegenpol zu *ātman* (‚Ich, Selbst, Seele‘) dar. Der Buddhismus verneint einen inneren, ewigen Wesenskern im Menschen.

² ‚Psychologie des Buddhismus‘ oder ‚Buddhistische Psychologie‘ bezeichnet in diesem Artikel Anteile buddhistischer Traditionen und Schriften, die sich in besonderem Ausmaß mit den Grundlagen

menschlichen Erlebens und Verhaltens auseinandersetzen (Kalupahana, 1987). Es handelt sich dabei um eine konstruierte Unterscheidung, da der Buddhismus selbst, als System, keine disziplinären Abgrenzungen kennt (Virtbauer, 2008a). Inwieweit es gerechtfertigt ist, diese Konstruktion ‚Psychologie‘ zu nennen, wird innerhalb der Buddhismuskunde kontrovers diskutiert—siehe Gómez (2004), der auch auf wesentliche Rezeptionen innerhalb der westlichen Psychologie eingeht. Drei gegenwärtige Zugänge im wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten mit dem Buddhismus als psychologischem System beschreibe ich in Virtbauer (2008b).

³ Die anderen Komponenten, Substanzgruppen oder Aggregate sind Formfaktoren (*rūpa*), Empfindung (*vedanā*), Perzeption (*saṃjñā*) und Willensfaktoren (*saṃskāra*).

⁴ Die klassischen Arbeiten zum Sanskritoriginal dieses *sūtras* führten Nanjio Bunyiu (1923) und Suzuki Daisetsu Teitaro (1930/1999; 1932; 1934) durch. Eine neuere Übersetzung aus dem Sanskrit, die ich hier als deutschsprachiges Referenzwerk für Verweise verwende, stammt von Karl-Heinz Golzio (1995). Die von mir argumentierte, psychologische Systematik von Leitgedanken ist angesichts der Komplexität des *sūtras* und der daher mannigfaltigen Ausgestaltungen von Interpretationen zu Detailpunkten seiner Philosophie nicht zwingend gegeben (siehe Dumoulin, 2005; Schmithausen, 2007; Sutton, 1991). Der systematische Fokus verweist auf die Möglichkeit von interdisziplinärem Dialog zwischen der

Cittamātra (Sanskrit ‚Nur-Geist‘)-Philosophie des *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* und westlich philosophisch psychologischen und psychotherapeutischen Zugängen und auf die Intention und praktisch gegenwärtige Bedeutung des *sūtras*, in dem die buddhistische (Meditations-)Praxis im Vordergrund steht (Golzio, 1995, S. 95ff.).

⁵ Siehe die Beschreibungen Dōgens (Japan, 1200–53) zu dieser Nichtunterscheidung im *Shōbōgenzō*-Faszikel *Busshō* (Japanisch ‚Buddha-Natur‘; Waddell & Abe, 2002; Virtbauer, 2009). Er löst die entscheidende Frage des Mahāyāna und Zen, wer oder welche Wesen die Buddha-Natur besitzen, indem er auf die logisch-diskursive Unlösbarkeit dieser Frage anspielt, da eine Erlebensqualität wie Buddha-Natur mit allen Phänomenen verbunden ist und alle Phänomene erfasst: „Whether you speak of ‘living beings,’ ‘sentient beings,’ ‘all classes of living things,’ or ‘all varieties of living beings,’ it makes no difference. The words *entire being* [*shitsuu*] mean both sentient beings and all beings. In other words, *entire being* is the Buddha-nature: I call the whole integral entity of *entire being* ‘sentient beings.’ Just as the very time when things are thus, both inside and outside of sentient beings are, as such, the *entire being* of the Buddha-nature” (Waddell & Abe, 2002, S. 60ff.).

⁶ Die Schule führt ihren Namen, Huayan, auf die gleichnamige Schrift *Huayan jing* (Sanskrit *Avataṃsakasūtra*; Cleary, 1993) zurück, die die Grundlage ihrer philosophischen Psychologie bildet.

⁷ Indra ist eine alt-indoarische Gottheit (an der Spitze des vedischen Pantheons), die in der buddhistischen Kosmologie eine wichtige Rolle spielt.

⁸ Die *śūnyatā* liegt Interdependenz auf einer tieferen Ebene in der Huayan-Philosophie zugrunde. Das Konzept kann zu missverständlichen, vor allem nihilistischen, Interpretationen führen. Für eine psychologische Beschreibung dieses Konzepts in Bezug auf Nāgārjunas *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* siehe Virtbauer (2008a).

⁹ Fazang (643–712) ist der dritte Patriarch der Huayan-Schule in China und die für die Entwicklung und Etablierung selbiger wohl wichtigste Persönlichkeit.

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5 Dimensions of intersubjectivity in Mahāyāna-Buddhism and relational psychoanalysis

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Buddhism has become one of the main dialogue partners for different psychotherapeutic approaches. As a psychological ethical system, it offers structural elements that are compatible with psychotherapeutic theory and practice. A main concept in Mahāyāna-Buddhism and postmodern psychoanalysis is intersubjectivity. In relational psychoanalysis the individual is analysed within a matrix of relationships that turn out to be the central power in her/his psychological development. By realising why one has become the present individual and how personal development is connected with relationships, the

freedom to choose and create a life that is independent from inner restrictions should be strengthened. In Mahāyāna-Buddhism, intersubjectivity is the result of an understanding of all phenomena as being in interdependent connection. Human beings are a collection of different phenomena and in constant interchange with everything else. Personal happiness and freedom from suffering depends on how this interchange can be realised in experience. The article focuses on the philosophical psychological fundamentals in both approaches and emphasizes clarification of to what the term ‘intersubjectivity’ exactly refers. This clarification is essential for the current dialogues, as well as further perspectives in this interdisciplinary field.

If we reflect deeply, we will discover that every way we have defined ourselves has always been in relation to something or someone else. If this is true, who are we beyond our self-definitions? (Flickstein 2009, 1)

The dialogue between Buddhism and psychoanalysis has become an important and integrated part of different theoretical and practical approaches within psychotherapy. Influences of Buddhist thought and

practice are currently recognisable in nearly all schools of psychotherapy and signify one approach of how Buddhism is absorbed as a psychological system (Virtbauer 2008b). In this article I consider the concept of intersubjectivity in its significance for an understanding of human experience and behaviour. Intersubjectivity is a critical term in the discourses between Mahāyāna-Buddhism and relational psychoanalysis (Wallace 2001; Mitchell 2000; Safran 2003).

The reception of Buddhist thought in western countries is the starting point for this dialogue. In this reception a clearly visible shift has taken place in psychology and psychotherapy within the past decades, as many of the early shortenings and misunderstandings about Buddhism could be overcome through interdisciplinary work and more detailed scholarships, as well as the global dialogue with Buddhist teachers (Epstein 2007; Langan 2006; Mathers, Miller, and Ando 2009; Pickering 1997; Safran 2003; Wallace and Shapiro 2006).

Developments in western Buddhism are, to a significant extent, influenced by the dialogue with science (especially psychology) and some describe them as the evolution of a new Buddhism (see, for example, Brazier 2001; Coleman 2001; Ivy 2005). Considering the history of Buddhism these developments are not surprising, as Buddhism has adapted to and incorporated existing approaches to human experience and behaviour in new cultural settings.

In the following, I compare the Mahāyāna-Buddhist with the relational psychoanalytical concept of intersubjectivity, and show possibilities of links and integrations. The main focus lies on psychological bases of the two approaches to experience and behaviour. The intersubjective fundamentals on which many of the current dialogues between Buddhism and postmodern psychoanalysis are based should be clarified. Buddhism is thereby mainly tackled from a Zen-perspective within Mahāyāna philosophy, considering the important role this perspective plays in the contemporary dialogues between psychoanalysis and Buddhism (see, for example, Cooper 2004; Magid 2005; Mruk and Hartzell 2003; Suler 1993).

The significance of intersubjectivity in Mahāyāna-Buddhism

A quote from Thich Nhat Hanh is a good starting point for a discussion of Buddhist practice, and the behaviour based on this practice:

When you understand, you cannot help but love. You cannot get angry.
To develop understanding, you have to practice looking at all living beings with the eyes of compassion. When you understand, you love.
And when you love, you naturally act in a way that can relieve the suffering of people. (Thich Nhat Hanh 1987, 14–5)

In this piece a connection can be clearly seen, which is one of the central points in Buddhist practice—the connection between understanding and behaviour. From a Buddhist perspective, the main challenge for human beings is to face the transience of being, and the role phenomena¹ play concerning the human predicament. Buddhist practice should be a methodical support for facing this challenge and proceeding on the way. Thich Nhat Hanh states compassion (Sanskrit *karuṇā*) for all living beings as the means that should lead to understanding. Further, understanding and love build a logical unity in transforming one's own suffering (*duḥkha*) in life, which is always connected with the suffering of others.

Seeing clearly into the characteristics of one's own existence and the connection that creates this existence, and in which it is embedded, is the goal of Buddhism, which should lead to an ending of suffering. Suffering is the result of the opposite; the less clearly the characteristics of being are recognised, the more a human being suffers in life.

Buddhism developed as a doctrine of Non-Self (*anātman*). This doctrine is the main requisite for learning what intersubjectivity indicates from a Buddhist point of view. In one of the most important Zen treatises, the *Shōbōgenzō* (Japanese, 'Treasury of the true dharma eye'), the Japanese Zen patriarch Dōgen (1200–53 CE) gives the following explanation of how to study the Self in connection with Zen practice:

To learn the Buddha Way is to learn one's self. To learn one's self is to forget one's self. To forget one's self is to be confirmed by all dharmas. To be confirmed by all dharmas is to cast off one's body and mind and the bodies and minds of others as well. (Waddell and Abe 2002, 41)

Dōgen emphasises the study of the human Self within Buddhist practice ('the Buddha Way'; Virtbauer 2009).² As soon as one learns (what) the Self (is), one forgets it. This points to features of the human psyche, which is seen without an inner and unchangeable core. Humans are characterised as a collection or accumulation of different substantial and insubstantial (mental) aggregates (Sanskrit *skandhas*). The interplay of these aggregates constitutes the individual. Natural phenomena (*dharmas*) are in a communicating connection, and humans are embedded in this connection ('confirmed by all *dharmas*'). This means that human individuals need to be analysed as a part within nature, on a communicative, phenomenal level. From a Buddhist perspective, all *dharmas* refer to a cause-and-effect-principle. Thoughts and mental phenomena are, like form-factors of the human predicament, analysable within their historical development. Within the cause-and-effect-relation, all phenomena interrelate and each individual phenomenon can only be analysed in its specific characteristic in connection with its particular development. This development always refers to other

phenomena that have given the impulses for the formation of the specific phenomenon in a network of causation.

A specific perception of a human being, for example, is always connected with an individually unique history that constitutes the person in this certain moment in a way that he perceives exactly through his own and unique shaping of the perceived. This fact, which is similarly recognised in western psychology of perception, is also connected with a broader phenomenal level in Buddhist thought. Not only is the psychological accentuation of the perceiving individual but also the whole development and history of phenomena explained through causation. The human being who perceives at a certain moment is a collection of phenomena that acquire their specific characteristics within a network of causation. The person can only be characterised as an individual within this phenomenal interplay (see, for example, Sekida 1985).

The idea of a Self—as the innermost core of the person—develops if different attributes, in their interplay, are not recognised as divided entities and, due to their interdependence, connected at the same time. This is the result if the individual sees himself/herself apart from the personal history that creates perception and thinking, and interprets the psychological connections, which are the result of cause and effect, as an inner base or core of himself/herself. This base, core, or soul does not exist in the Buddhist understanding of the person. In the Buddhist way of approaching

human nature, a human being—as a being which consists of specific ‘heaps’ or collections of phenomena—is subject to constant change. This change is the result of interdependence and interchange on a phenomenal level, which refers to the law of cause and effect. Phenomenal interdependence and change, which constitute the individual, are in the same way connected with outer phenomena. The division between a human’s inner life and the relationship to other individuals, or—in a broader sense—the outer phenomenal world, vanished in this worldview. Phenomena and also the individual—as a specific accumulation of phenomena—are only analysable within their connection to other phenomena.

An example in which this connection and linking between all phenomena comes across very vividly is the net of Indra,³ which signifies the importance of interdependence and intersubjectivity for humans in Mahāyāna-Buddhism. Indra’s net is depicted as an endless fishing net with jewels on its knots. The jewels hang in such a way that in each jewel all other jewels are reflected. When looking at one jewel, one sees all other jewels within this particular jewel. Because of the infinity of the net, each jewel, in fact, reflects infinitely many other jewels. The characteristic appearance of each single jewel is only guaranteed due to the connection and mutual dependence to all other jewels (Cleary 1983; Cook 1977). This picture clarifies the interdependent connection between phenomena. The

characteristic of one phenomenon can only be tackled in its association with other phenomena.

The psychological situation of humans and an understanding of the present mental occurrences always depend on a mutual interdependent connection to the outer world (Thuan 2001). Inner and outer are relativised through this connection. Thus, intersubjectivity is one main characteristic of Buddhist psychology (Wallace 2001). To learn the characteristics of human experience requires the examination of the individual within her specific network-like connections. As Dōgen states in the last part of the quotation above, this examination should enable a human being to discard conditioned ideas and constructions about the own body and mind ('cast off one's body and mind') and others' bodies and minds.

Psychoanalysis and intersubjectivity

The term intersubjectivity, referring to the psychological development of the individual and the curative effect of psychoanalysis, has recently assumed greater importance for the discourses within psychoanalysis due to the development of relational psychoanalysis. This intersubjective turn within psychoanalysis is marked by a paradigm change concerning the psychological human structure (Altmeyer and Thomä 2006; Hoffman et al. 2005; Mitchell 2000). Relational psychoanalysis mainly developed due to

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Steven Mitchell's (1988) attempt to integrate different psychoanalytic streams and a new and different reading of Freud's fundamentals—based on cultural and societal changes that required philosophy-of-science and practical innovations.

Freud (1905/1999) expounds, in his drive theory, a view on the human predicament, which was determining for the further development of psychoanalysis. At this point, he stated that sexual drives were the source of psychological development. Later he introduced a duality between sexual life and aggressive death drives (Freud 1920/1999). One important factor that he illustrates especially in his structural theory (Freud 1923/1999) is put into perspective in relational approaches. The basic human motivation that leads to the development of psychological attributes is always connected with a particular somatic state which forces the individual to react in some way or another. The ego of the person plays the negotiating role between the somatic source and following drives (id qualities), inhibitions (super ego qualities), and outer circumstances. Ego-strength enables the human individual to control and organise his/her behaviour in a way that is compatible with the cultural demands for a life together with others. A developed and fulfilling life together within the cultural framework is the final goal in Freud's psychology. Psychoanalysis is the method of analysing and clarifying the human predicament and potential. A cultural and societal setting that helps to balance the sublimation of drive-energy into cultural

achievements and the possibility of living one's sexuality without too many restrictions can lead to alliance and happiness.

The natural predisposition of humans is opposed to the possibility of a peaceful life together (Freud 1927/1999, 1930/1999). It is marked by somatic states of tension, which manifest in the duality of life and death drives. Human nature is determined to, first of all, search for the reduction and removal of these states. Therefore, it is in many ways directed against other beings. For Freud (1927/1999), the protection of humans against their own innermost nature is thus one of the main tasks of culture.

Freud's objectifying scientific approach comes to light in his view on (human) nature and the systematic linking of bodily and psychological states. He sees the human mind in analogy with science, and both converge in their ability to get an objective hold on reality. This way of approaching science—as was the common, modern way in Freud's time—not only theoretically but, in the case of the intersubjective turn within contemporary psychoanalysis, also practically reaches its limits very quickly.

Relational psychoanalysis's philosophy of science is grounded in postmodern thought, which denies the possibility of objectifying and generalizing certain approaches to reality (including sciences and religions). The Freudian approach to reality and the clarifying quality of psychoanalysis, which he puts opposite to societal illusions (as e.g.

philosophy, or religion), lose their justification. Science itself, like psychoanalysis, which Freud (for example 1933/1999) always placed emphatically within the scientific worldview, is seen on the same level as other (non-scientific) human approaches to reality and experience. It is one of many specific approaches to the life world and reality (Mitchell 1993).

A change from substantial and rational thinking to thinking in proportion is the foundation of relational psychoanalysis. Metaphorically, the process is changed from a linear way of acquiring knowledge, in which more and more facts and theories resemble the state of the science, to a circular happening in which the circles and paradigms of acquiring knowledge need to be passed through and relativised again and again (Walach 2005). Hence, the primary purpose of psychoanalysis is not to provide the patient conceptual accounts of his experience divided from the therapeutic interaction and collect in this way more and more realised ‘facts’ about the individual. On the contrary, the patient’s experience and behaviour is seen in a circular, intersubjective relation that has formed the psychological possibilities and characteristics of the person. The therapeutic interaction should help in clarifying this relation (Stolorow and Atwood 1992; Orange, Atwood, and Stolorow 1997).

Mitchell (1993) describes this change of focus as a shift in the therapeutic interaction—from an interpreting knowledge of inner events to a realisation out of the analytic relationship, in which the patterns that have

shaped the psychological characteristics of the individual can manifest in the intersubjective action between individuals (analysand and analyst). The notion of an intersubjective development of the human psyche is foundational for this therapy setting and is mirrored in the form of interaction.

Mind has been redefined from a set of predetermined structures emerging from inside an individual organism to transactional patterns and internal structures derived from an interactive, interpersonal field. (Mitchell 1988, 17)

The Freudian starting point concerning human experience and behaviour—his drive theory—shifts in this approach from the source to a part within an intersubjective matrix that is the basis for an understanding of all aspects of human development, including drives.

Structural features of intersubjectivity

The deeper meaning of the term ‘intersubjectivity’ from a Buddhist and psychoanalytic perspective can be revealed in its significance as a forming factor for the psychological human structure. One of the early and, from my point of view, most important psychoanalytic approaches to an

intersubjective understanding of human development, which can be connected to Buddhist ideas, comes from Hans Loewald. His approach is very much based on Freudian terminology, which, however, he interpreted in his own characteristic way. Loewald's impulses are essential for the development of relational psychoanalysis (Chodorow 2004; Mitchell 2000). The main idea in his psychoanalysis is an experience of unity between individual inner life and the outer world.

A unitary, global experience is the basis of an understanding of individual development, as well as cultural and societal states, which reveal themselves for example in arts or religions. Loewald defines this experience as follows: 'This unitary experience perhaps may best be called being, if we do not immediately think of it as contrasted with "having been," "becoming," "having," or "doing"' (1978/2000a, 553). The striving after an experience of wholeness is the main motivation in life for the individual and mirrors life itself. Loewald's idea of a fulfilled and, clinically speaking, healthy and developed experience is based on the psychological possibility of integration of this very often hidden and unconscious striving into the whole of daily life. At the same time, it is essential to discover it in all activities in daily life.

For Loewald, the experience of unity is comparable with Freud's idea of the id within the psychological structure. In Loewald's approach, the experience of unity underlies the structural development. He, like Freud,

states that the infant experiences a unity with the mother in early developmental stages, which is not based on divisions such as inside and outside, past and present, or physical and psychological. These distinctions, on the contrary, develop in a gradual process out of an experience of complete unity, which first manifests primarily in the experience with the mother.

Unlike Freud, Loewald asserts that not the somatic drive source, but the interactions with the outer world are the base of the development of distinctive functions. The duality and distinction between mine and yours, or inner and outer, develop slowly out of intersubjective actions. The starting point for psychological, structural elements—id, ego, and super ego—lies in internalised interactions with the environment (object relations). Internalisation and externalisation, in the sense of a working-through of intersubjective experience and relating to the outer world, based on this working through, are the basis of the psychological structure. Hence, this structure is grounded on an experience of unity, which continues to be the main force in human experience. Experience itself gets more and more refined with years of ongoing development of detaching from the environment in which this experience itself is embedded (Loewald 1978/2000c). This detachment is important for growing up and effective living in the world, but might at the same time become a big problem if it prevents an experience of unity.

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For Loewald the keys for a deep and holistic human experience and happiness in life are the possibility of inner dialogue, and the integration of the experience of unity into a rational psychological apperception that is opposed to this experience. Loewald describes this dialogue as an action in which primary and secondary process's elements converge. Freud's approach to the primary and secondary processes thereby undergoes an intersubjective change. Freud (1900/1999) explains the primary process (*Primärvorgang*) as the action of the human psychological system, which is, with the somatic drive source as its origin, directed to straight reduction and, in this way, to a direct expression of drives in (re)actions. In the secondary process (*Sekundärvorgang*), the energy is directed into other, more conscious ways. This second process may work more or less well, depending on the psychological capacities of the individual. For Freud, a strong ego is essential for the integration of unconscious and repressed psychological contents into consciousness. Ego-strength enables the individual to not get lost within the 'chaos' of inner demands and outer reality. The individual should be able to make conscious decisions through the integration of repressed contents.

Loewald interprets a classic saying by Freund with a dialogical turn:

Where id was, there ego shall come into being. Too easily and too often ego is equated with rigid, unmodulated, and unyielding rationality. So today we are moved to add: where ego is, there id shall come into being again to renew the life of the ego and of reason.
(Loewald 1978/2000a, 541)

Unconscious contents of the id, which manifest within the primary process, are for Loewald of similar importance as conscious, secondary process psychological inner work. He talks of different modes of reality (Loewald 1978/2000a). Human development can only progress fully in a dialogical confrontation and a swinging between unconscious and conscious. This communication goes beyond the borders of language (Loewald 1978/2000b) and enables a human being to be again and again caught and surprised through and in life. In this way, child-like curiosity and irrationality should not be sacrificed too much for a rigid and rational self that constructs reality. In Mitchell's words: 'For Loewald, only the enchanted life is a life worth living' (2000, 29). The enchanted life always happens within an intersubjective space in which inner psychological qualities connect in a live interchange with the outer world. A natural change of different conscious and unconscious realities within mentation allows the person to experience the whole of being.

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If intersubjectivity is within all experience, also the understanding of deviating experience and behaviour needs to be modified. Within a relational matrix, there cannot be a normative structure that is superimposed from outside, because every human's development can only be recognised within a unique connection of relationships. Mitchell (1988) distinguishes the two poles within the healing process in psychoanalysis as the realisation of infant experiences of relationships, which are the main forming factor for patterns in the development of further relationships, as well as, on the contrary, the freedom and openness for new ways of relational experience. An 'objective' psychopathology yields to an interaction in which the patient learns to connect his/her history of relationships with the experience of a personal 'logic' in his/her experience and behaviour, which is based on how relationships have shaped the person's approaches to himself/herself and others. Realisations in the therapy, therefore, happen through the intersubjective action between analyst and analysand, and are not determinations of either one of them (Hoffman 1999; Stark 1999). The inner freedom for the patient in how to make decisions in life, which increase well-being and happiness, should in this way improve more and more.

If intersubjectivity between individuals is tackled in Buddhism, comparably with psychoanalysis, the human individual must be analysed on a phenomenological level. Intersubjectivity is the result of an understanding of human beings as being embedded in an interdependent net of phenomena.

All phenomena are in an indivisible connection to each other. The structure of this netting can be recognised and experienced by learning to understand cause and effect within experience in the phenomenal interplay. One of the most important textual treatises of how this mindfulness can develop through meditation and humans can come nearer to their original nature as described in Buddhism is the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (Pali Canon, Dīghanikāya 22/Majjhimanikāya 10; for translation see Vipassana Research Institute 2009)—‘The Great Discourse on the Establishing of Awareness’. The *Sutta* can be regarded as the foundation of meditation practice from different Mahāyāna perspectives. It describes how the interplay between phenomena can be realised through concentration. Human experience should become clear in its wholeness as embedded in this interplay.

The basic Buddhist statement concerning the human nature and potential, as described in this text, is that, through mindfulness in all activities in life, a more and more refined and clear realisation of the flow of experience will unfold. The means to reach this goal is a meditation that helps to focus on moment-to-moment-experience and to clarify the characteristics of this experience. In this way, the connection between certain sensations and thoughts, the further working through of thoughts, as well as feelings and associations, which accompany them, can be recognised in meditation.

In the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* the method of how to develop mindfulness in meditation is described fourfold: referring to the body

(contemplative observing of the body, Pali *kāyānupassanā*), feelings (*vedanānupassanā*), mind (*cittānupassanā*), and mind objects (*dhammānupassanā*). The main characteristic of the Buddhist meditation technique is the ability to watch the succession of experiences. The basic prerequisite is a way of meditating that helps to focus on psychological occurrences and reduce their intensity (*samatha* meditation); for example, by concentration on a bodily phenomenon (like the breath). This should help to reduce the great diversity of psychological events and calm down the pace of how they occur. The calm and focused mind should, in a further step, be able to realise the connections and successions of different bodily and mental phenomena (*vipassanā* meditation).

In Mahāyāna-Buddhism, one main characteristic for this realisation, as shown with the example of Indra's net, is the non-dividedness of phenomena in the sense of an ongoing interdependent interchange. Seeing psychological phenomena in this way, it is clear that human beings lack an innermost, fixed core like a Self or (eternal) soul. Hence, in individual human experience there is ongoing dialogical action with other humans and their experiences. But also the individual experience itself is already an expression of dialogue, which would not be possible without the interdependent connections. Thich Nhat Hanh (1987/1998) talks of 'interbeing' (Vietnamese *tiếp hien*); humans are always 'between', in a

constant interchange with phenomena. The border between human inner life and the outer world is thus put into perspective.

Buddhist experience is to a large extent connected with the possibility of relativising one's own experience—as something that belongs to an encapsulated Self which connects with the outer world—which is comparable with Loewald's concept of unitary experience. On a logical, discursive level this relativisation is not possible, because it is an experiential quality that goes beyond dualistic, logical, and linguistically distinguishable borders. From a Buddhist perspective, man and environment are in a deeper sense one and the same. Only in the phenomenal connection of the two can both be realised as (distinguished) entities. One concept in Mahāyāna-Buddhism, which tackles this non-thinkable experiential quality also in a logic and linguistic way, is the description of all phenomena as themselves empty.

Nāgārjuna (India, ~ second to third century CE; in the Zen-Buddhist traditional lineage, Nāgārjuna is seen as the 14th Indian patriarch; see Cleary 1998), the most important philosopher of the middle school within Mahāyāna—Madhyamaka—develops the idea of emptiness (Sanskrit *śūnyatā*) in relation to the psychological situation of humans.⁴ In the most significant work that is attributed to Nāgārjuna, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* ('The root Statement in Verse on the Middle School')—see especially the 18th chapter regarding the examination of the Self (*ātma parīkṣā*); for

example, translation (Tibetan version) with commentary by Garfield (1995) —the method of clarifying the middle way, between nihilistic thinking and a concept of Self, works by showing the borders of a discursive logic. A discursive logic is confronted with a paradoxical, intuitive logic. Each statement that marks a certain occurrence is in the same way analysed with the opposite meaning. From this perspective, for example, the statement ‘I (as a distinguished individual) am divided from you (as another distinguished individual)’ would be complemented with the statement ‘I am not divided from you’, and both are true at the same time ($A = \text{Non-}A$). Nāgārjuna introduces four phrases of differentiation (*catuṣkoṭikā*; see Westerhoff 2006) in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (XVIII: 8), which show a logic in which each phenomenon is A, Non-A, A and Non-A, and neither A nor Non-A. This tetralemma refers to the necessity of interdependence of all phenomena and, hence, the impossibility of stating any characteristic of a phenomenon in a discursive way. Also the terminus ‘interbeing’ from Thich Nhat Hanh points to this experiential, intuitive logic, which, ultimately, cannot be put in words.

In this connection, the teaching of the two truths (*satyadvaya*) is of crucial importance. Nāgārjuna does not deny, in a conventional sense (or relative truth; *saṃvṛtisatya*) that is based on language, distinguishable characteristics in nature, human life and its organisation. Language itself and therefore also philosophy and making statements about nature (even if

these statements—referring to Nāgārjuna’s and Dōgen’s philosophies—deconstruct and relativise dualistic propositions and, hence, in a deeper sense also themselves; Loy 1999) are based on distinguishable components.

However, within this conventional truth always also an absolute, experiential and intuitive truth (*paramārthasatya*) that is beyond words and distinctions reveals itself. Only if this absolute truth of reality is integrated into the relative can life unfold in its natural way. All discursive and language-based thoughts or statements about reality are relative truths and thus, in a deeper sense, an illusion. Still, they are true in how the mind, in conventional thinking, is detached from wholeness, which is to a certain degree also necessary for responding to experience in daily life. These two truths can be psychologically compared with how Loewald describes the necessity of a live communication of conscious and unconscious levels of mentation. Yet, in the concept of the two truths, experience is tackled, like all other things, on a phenomenal level.

Phenomena are empty from Nāgārjuna’s perspective, because they are not describable as distinct phenomena, but only in their interdependent connection. Experience itself is, in a deeper sense, beyond logically conceptual cognition. Constructions of reality out of this cognition are questioned. The key to an understanding of phenomena, as well as the human psyche, lies in the relationality of the interdependent connection that marks, from a Buddhist perspective, the final realisation that determines

human being. Intersubjectivity is the result of this connection. A human being is always in a phenomenal inter-space in which her individuality is constituted. Man is, in a deeper sense, an inter-subject, because in each individual the relational connection to everything else is always manifested.

Consequences of intersubjective realisation

The possibilities, as well as borders, in the dialogue between Buddhist and psychoanalytic approaches to human experience and behaviour can be observed best in the consequences for individual behaviour, based on the realisation of intersubjective experience. It thus becomes clear that Buddhism is a system which goes beyond a scientific theory and methodology from a postmodern western philosophy-of-science perspective. In Buddhism the discovery of truth comes to the fore, whereas relational psychoanalysis is grounded in a postmodern way of thinking that denies the possibility of finding general truths.

However, streams of Mahāyāna-Buddhism are especially suitable for a dialogue with psychotherapies and psychologies, which are based on postmodern scientific thought. The final, absolute truth (*paramārthasatya*) in the lives of individuals cannot be discursively described or explained, but it is a subjective experience. Buddhism, in this sense, is primarily a method

out of which a realisation may follow, which transcends rational human logic.

An annotation of Fazang (China, 643–712 CE; the third patriarch of the Huayan school in China, which philosophy focuses specifically on interdependence) on the metaphor of Indra's net helps to clarify why ethical behaviour is the result of an intersubjective experience in Buddhism:

This [the contemplation of the net of Indra] means that with self as principal, one looks to others as satellites or companions; or else one thing or principle is taken as principal and all things or principles become satellites or companions; or one body is taken as principal and all bodies become satellites. Whatever single thing is brought up, immediately principal and satellite are equally contained, multiplying infinitely—this represents the nature of things manifesting reflections multiplied and remultiplied in all phenomena, all infinitely. This is also the infinite doubling and redoubling of compassion and wisdom.

(Translation in Clearly 1983, 168)

An infinite number of aspects of interplay between phenomena can always be recognised in human experience, referring to Fazang. Depending on the point of view, they may seem principal or peripheral, while in a deeper

sense this distinction does not exist. From a psychological point of view, this means for human experience that all experiences one has in the contact with others refer back to the own situation of this individual, within an interdependent matrix.

The logic of Buddhist ethics can be recognised clearly in the *bodhisattva*-ideal of Mahāyāna-Buddhism, which hints at the potential of humans (Leighton 2003). A *bodhisattva* (Sanskrit, literally ‘capable of enlightenment’, or ‘enlightenment-being’) is a being that makes every effort to help, out of her realisation, all beings. Freedom from suffering is only possible in connection with freeing all others from suffering as well. The intention of a human being to devote her whole life to the well-being of others is thus not primarily an emphatic self-sacrifice, but the result of an experience that is not divided from others’ experiences. Intersubjectivity and the following affection and felt responsibility for others is the logical result of an extension and, finally, overcoming of the own Self. Other beings are for the *bodhisattva* therefore a part of his own being. To conduct a life of service and responsibility for others is the way to serve being itself and hence overcome suffering (see, for example, Cho 2000).

The description of human nature (‘Buddha nature’, *buddhata*), or the human potential of developing his innermost nature, has definitive character in Mahāyāna-Buddhism in connection with the *bodhisattva* ideal. A human being is in her natural state and experiences life as it really is, if she

develops and fosters qualities that help to overcome all borders and distinctions, which lead to a strengthening of an ego-centred experience (see, for example, Brazier 1995).

The consequences of an intersubjective experience in relational psychoanalysis are practical, patient-oriented and therefore subjectively healing. Primarily, a postmodern psychoanalysis can be tackled as a means of deconstruction and reconstruction within a culturally, societally, and individually constructed world. The aim is to help the patient to become freer within his own experience through recognition of his own constructions and their histories. Restrictions that lead experiences in directions which distort the qualities of experience and produce suffering should, in this way, become clear. For the typical patient in contemporary psychoanalytic settings, who often does not have severe symptoms (Mitchell 1993), the embeddedness and adaptation within cultural settings is not the solution, as it often was in Freud's time, but the problem.⁵ If a too rigid 'functioning' reduces the whole of experience to a more and more rational focus, the freedom for decision-making might be cut off in a way that causes suffering and the ongoing feeling of restrictions. Mitchell describes the goal of contemporary psychoanalysis:

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A successful analysis results in a much more complex experience of oneself than that with which one began. The analysand learns that there is much more to him than he has previously fully known or been able to use. The analyst's attitude toward her own theories, themselves shifting and evolving products of mental life, becomes an important model in the expansion of the analysand's experience of his own mental life. And at crucial points in any analysis, the analytic method itself becomes the focus of analytic inquiry and, in some sense, needs to be reconstructed, rediscovered in the context of each particular analytic dyad. (1993, 83–4)

The process includes all those involved—the analysand, the analyst, as well as the method of psychoanalysis itself. Psychoanalysis as a means of cultural, societal, and personal decipherment is itself a part of the constructed reality. As a theory and practice, developed by humans for humans, it finally cannot be excluded from the analysis itself and becomes a part of the dynamic interaction. In this integrative, contextual approach, the points of surprise and open-mindedness for new or revived contents of experience—which especially Loewald focuses on—have also effects on the therapy theory itself. Only through this openness can psychoanalysis meet the needs of intersubjective experience.

Intersubjectivity in the psychoanalytic therapy reveals itself in the underlying setting, and this relativity serves the patient in his/her experience and behaviour as a guideline. The aim of relational psychoanalysis lies in the subjective finding of meaning and the possibility of active integration of freedom into the analysand's experience. This is the result of the fundamentally intersubjective orientation.

The possibilities of expansion of the respective approaches can be detected as well through the borders in the dialogue between Buddhism and psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is a scientific method, while Buddhism—seen from a postmodern scientific point of view—shows elements that exceed a scientific system. A contemporary psychoanalysis should not be a worldview (Kernberg 2000) and also should not support the dichotomy of illusions (referring to Freud, e.g. religion) and scientific rationality. As a method that distances itself from general statements of how to understand what truth means, it is yet based on the experiences of humans in which these statements, or the experience of personal truth, are a fundamental factor in life.

Buddhism can provide philosophical and practical elements referring to personal meaning and truth, as it is not stated what truth is, but at the same time it is the core of the teachings as a quality of experience. The development and refining of mindfulness, of how experience subjectively unfolds for the individual, is decisive for both approaches. Only through the

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possibility of mindfully being with the moment-to-moment-perception, a freer way of dealing with experience in the here-and-now can mature, as well as a realisation of the hindrances to this freedom. For Buddhist practice in western societal environments the psychoanalytic approach is very helpful, because the starting point of all Buddhist practice is an understanding of the cultural and societal characteristics, which essentially mould the human mind (in a relative sense) also from a Buddhist point of view.

Buddhism—like all religious systems—is a cultural institution that cannot be analysed apart from its cultural surroundings and their particular histories. The overcoming of the limitations of the human mind, which are connected with these histories, is the aim of Buddhism. The way to arrive at this goal, however, is based on the possibility to reach humans in their actual circumstances, which refers back to an understanding of the specific situation and history.

Psychoanalysis, as a method that developed out of a confrontation with western religious and scientific history, provides elements that might lead to a clarification of the individual situation and choices within this situation. Both Buddhist psychology and psychoanalysis are thus indigenous psychologies, and the unfolding dialogue, based on their specific approaches to human experience and behaviour, points to further possibilities for exchange.

Notes

1. The term ‘phenomenon’ in connection with Buddhism refers to Sanskrit *dharma*. *Dharmas*, used in this context, mean the individual components, which constitute in their wholeness the empirically perceivable world of humans. ‘Some of these elements (dharmas) are external to the perceiver and others are internal psychological processes and traits of character. It is in this context that the Madhyamaka school denied the substantial reality of dharmas, claiming that all phenomena were “empty” (*śūnya*) of any substantial reality’ (Keown 2004, 74). Regarding the psychological significance of this term in the Madhyamaka school, see below.
2. The following, psychological explanations of the human Self should be qualified by considering that explanations with words in all approaches in Mahāyāna, and especially in Zen, are limited in how they can express the experience that underlies the scriptures; and from a hermeneutical perspective within psychology and psychotherapy it is exactly this experience that is most interesting. In Zen, this is uttered with four characteristics—a teaching outside of scriptures, not based on words and directly pointing to the human mind, which should lead to a realization of the own nature and Buddhahood (*kyōge betsuden*, *furyū monji*, *jikishi jinshin*, *kenshō jōbutsu*; see Welter 2000). Buddhist insight always points to an individual wordless

experience and written conceptions of this experience are mainly aids, which do not include the whole spectrum of the experience (see Virtbauer 2008a).

3. Indra is a god from indo-aryan, vedic origins (the head of the vedic pantheon), who plays an essential role in Buddhist cosmology.
4. The name of this Mahāyāna-Buddhist stream (Madhyamaka) refers to a main question from a psychological perspective. On the one hand, Buddhism denies the existence of a Self as an inner human core or an eternal soul, but on the other hand also nihilistic thinking that would not go along with the Buddhist cause-and-effect-principle (the karma teaching). In the middle way, philosophy is done between these two extremes.
5. The descriptions, which are given here, refer to these patients.

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6 Conclusion: Buddhist psychology – present and future

[Klammertext]

The enormous interest in mindfulness theory and practice within western science, medicine, healthcare and education will continually bring new challenges and also new opportunities. Ancient and modern, Eastern and Western modes of inquiry and investigation are now in conversation and cross-fertilizing each other as never before. Indeed, we could say the field of mindfulness-based applications is in its infancy and there is great promise that it will continue to yield new insights and avenues for research as it develops in multiple directions.

(Williams & Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 16)

Shortly after Chapter 2 of this cumulative thesis was accepted for publication a special issue of *Contemporary Buddhism* on ‘mindfulness’ appeared (see Williams & Kabat-Zinn, 2011). This issue is an important step towards interdisciplinary innovations in the research of mindfulness from

both so-called ‘first-person’ and ‘third-person’ perspectives. The characteristic of indigenous Indian psychology is that individual (first-person) insight into qualities of human nature through certain practices is regarded as a scientific way of investigation (see Rao, 2008, and cf. Chapter 3 on first-person experience in Buddhist and Western phenomenological psychology). Mainstream Western psychology operates within a clear subject-object distinction – a third-person perspective. The first-person approach in Buddhist psychology may play an important role in the continuous development of a holistic psychological science that can provide results of greater ecological validity and relevance. The fruitfulness of the meeting between theories and applications that are based on direct experiential knowledge, as is the case in Buddhist psychology, and their investigation through modern scientific methods can be seen in the current discourses that are tackled in the articles of this thesis. Buddhist psychology has established itself as an integrated part of Western psychology, particularly of the mentioned therapies, because its theories of the human mind and consciousness, which are based on first-person experience, and applications have proved to be effective from the perspective of third-person scientific investigation.

In regard to the three approaches that are introduced in this thesis (cf. Chapter 2), especially the discourses between science and Buddhism may be of relevance to future psychological innovations. Will Buddhism help to

foster a postmodern scientific Enlightenment movement that focuses on the development of new ways of understanding human nature within a broader context of cause and effect? Will such a movement be a transformative answer to scientific materialist reductionism and lead to a deeper understanding of the lifeworld through mutual interdependence and intersubjectivity? Will it be possible to establish a scientific psychological understanding that acknowledges the interdependence of individual and collective developments, as is expounded in Buddhist phenomenological psychology? Will it provide workable solutions to pressing current global questions? Will science become a more ethical endeavour because of Buddhist influences? How will science continue to globally transform Buddhism?

These are some of the questions of relevance to future research to which the current discourses point. In contemporary contributions there is growing sensitivity to the transformative processes in the reception of Eastern thought in Western science. Intercultural psychological sensitivity is crucial for the continuous dialogue and critical examination of the cultural presuppositions that manifest in the involved systems (see Dorjee, 2010; Grossman & Van Dam, 2011).

The dialogue between Buddhist and Western psychology unfolds in the broader context of postmodernism. It points to new understandings of the potential of human nature that go beyond the borders of disciplines,

systems, and certain cultural preconceptions of what it means to be human. It is about a deeper understanding of the very phenomena that constitute human nature. Such an absolute understanding can only manifest in the relative realm of the historical development of certain systems. However, from a Buddhist perspective it is considered to be possible to psychologically analyse how the absolute reveals itself through and in the relative, and vice versa (cf. Chapters 4 and 5). To include such an understanding of reality into the systemic framework of science appears to be a possible, and from the perspective of this work desired, future consequence of the current discourses. Within Western scientific psychology a ‘future contemplative science’ (see Wallace, 1999) that focuses on phenomenological psychological questions through a practice-oriented and first-person experiential methodology may grow. It may be characterised by interdisciplinarity and cooperation with various scientific disciplines and societal institutions. The increasing influence of Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) at different levels of Western society (see Williams & Penman, 2011) may be a step towards such a contemplative science. Mindfulness appears to be the crucial psychological transformative power for future epistemological innovations in postmodern science that are necessary for a new understanding of the means and ends of science as a dominant constituting factor of the lifeworld.

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7 Abstracts

The cumulative thesis *Buddhism as a psychological system: Western reception, contemporary dialogues, and perspectives*, which includes four articles, an introduction, and a conclusion, outlines fundamentals within three approaches of receiving Buddhism as a psychological system: Buddhism as an indigenous psychology; parts of the system Buddhism integrated in Western psychology and psychotherapy; and new movements in Western Buddhism that are in critical dialogue with contemporary scientific methodologies and findings. The article *The Western reception of Buddhism as a psychological and ethical system: developments, dialogues, and perspectives* provides a concise overview of the current research within these three approaches, with a special focus on philosophy of science and perspectives based on epistemological considerations. In connection with the introduction and the conclusion, it serves as an exploration of the research and practice field [the ‘Klammertext’], on which analyses in the following articles are grounded. *Experiencing sati: a phenomenological survey of mindfulness in Buddhist psychology* explores the concept of mindfulness from the perspective of Buddhist phenomenology. Mindfulness

is the central Buddhist idea concerning the reception of Buddhist psychology in current psychotherapy. *Bewusstsein und Beziehung im Mahāyāna-Buddhismus: Ein integrativ religionspsychologischer Ansatz* tackles epistemological concepts, which directly and indirectly are present as soon as experience and behaviour are addressed from a Buddhist viewpoint. Thus, this piece is an example of approaching (Mahāyāna-) Buddhism as an indigenous psychology. How critical terms in different systems – in this case, ‘intersubjectivity’ – can create spaces for dialogue is explored in *Dimensions of intersubjectivity in Mahāyāna-Buddhism and relational psychoanalysis*. Crucial points are the consideration of the cultural backgrounds, as well as the different connotations and utilisations of terms in distinct world views and languages. The dialogue between relational psychoanalysis and Buddhism is one example of how postmodern ideas, such as interdisciplinary work and epistemological humility, can manifest in practice, with contemporarily recognisable impacts on both dialogue partners.

Die kumulative Dissertation *Buddhism as a psychological system: Western reception, contemporary dialogues, and perspectives*, die sich aus vier Artikeln, einer Einleitung und abschließenden Bemerkungen zusammensetzt, adressiert die Rezeption des Buddhismus als psychologischem Systems im Zusammenhang mit drei Zugängen:

Buddhismus als indigene Psychologie; Teile des Systems Buddhismus integriert in westlicher Psychologie und Psychotherapie; und neue Ausformungen innerhalb des westlichen Buddhismus, die kritisch wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse und Methodologien reflektieren und teilweise inkorporieren. Der Artikel *The Western reception of Buddhism as a psychological and ethical system: developments, dialogues, and perspectives* gibt einen Überblick der gegenwärtigen Forschung in Bezug auf diese drei Zugänge und zeigt neue Perspektiven, die sich aufgrund der Buddhismusrezeption im Westen aufzeigen. Der Schwerpunkt liegt auf wissenschaftstheoretischen und epistemologischen Fragestellungen. Zusammen mit der Einleitung und den Perspektiven in den abschließenden Bemerkungen fungiert er als Klammer- und Klammertext, der das breitere Forschungs- und Praxisfeld des Dialoges zwischen Buddhismus und Psychologie und Psychotherapie darlegt. *Experiencing sati: a phenomenological survey of mindfulness in Buddhist psychology* führt in das buddhistische Konzept der Achtsamkeit und dessen Praxis ein. Dieses ist für die gegenwärtige Psychotherapie von herausragender Bedeutung. In *Bewusstsein und Beziehung im Mahāyāna-Buddhismus: Ein integrativ religionspsychologischer Ansatz* werden epistemologische Konzepte im Buddhismus analysiert, die – direkt und indirekt – immer präsent sind, sobald menschliches Erleben und Verhalten aus buddhistischer Perspektive analysiert werden. Der Artikel ist ein Beispiel einer Auseinandersetzung mit

dem (Mahāyāna-)Buddhismus als indigener Psychologie. Neue Dialogperspektiven anhand von Schlüsselbegriffen in den Systemen – in diesem Fall der Terminus ‚Intersubjektivität‘ – werden in *Dimensions of intersubjectivity in Mahāyāna-Buddhism and relational psychoanalysis* aufgezeigt. Im Vordergrund stehen kulturelle Unterschiede, die sich in der Verwendung und den Konnotationen von Begriffen in verschiedenen Weltanschauungen und Sprachen manifestieren. Der Dialog zwischen relationaler Psychoanalyse und Buddhismus ist ein Beispiel von praktischer Umsetzung postmoderner Ideen. Aus der interdisziplinären Begegnung resultieren neue Möglichkeiten für beide Dialogpartner, Ansätze in den eigenen Systemen zu reflektieren und weiterzuentwickeln.

8 Transliteration and pronunciation of Sanskrit and Pāli

Devanāgarī (देवनागरी, ‘divine city writing’)

is one of the scripts in which Indo-Aryan languages such as Sanskrit and Pāli are commonly written and printed in India. It is the crucial script for the Sanskrit syllabary. The columns provide the devanāgarī letter, the scientific Roman transliteration, which is used in this work, as well as an example of how the letter is roughly pronounced. The pronunciation examples are from M. L. Gharote (2008). *The Glossary of Yoga Texts*. Lonavla: The Lonavla Yoga Institute (India). pp. 10–11; A.K. Warder (1991). *Introduction to Pali* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Pali Text Society. pp. 3–4; and Swami Yogakanti, & Bihar School of Yoga (2007). *Sanskrit Glossary of Yogic Terms*. Munger, Bihar, India: Yoga Publications Trust. p. viii. The emphases are mine.

Buddhism as a Psychological System

अ	a	cup
आ, ठ	ā	far
इ, ि	i	hill
ई, ी	ī	feel
उ, ु	u	pull
ऊ, ू	ū	wool
ऋ, ृ *	r̥	clarity
ॠ, ॡ *	r̄	marine
ऌ, ॣ *	l̥	rivalry
ॡ, ॢ *	l̄	rivalry (<i>prolonged</i>)
ए, ै	e	grey (Pāli bed, before a double consonant)
ऐ, ॳ *	ai	aisle (<i>not drawled out</i>)
ओ, ो	o	over (Pāli not, before a double consonant)

औ, ॐ *	au	<i>ounce (not drawled out)</i>
.	m	<i>map/nap, Pāli also sing</i>
: *	h	<i>ah</i>
क्	k	<i>king</i>
ख्	kh	<i>inkhorn</i>
ग्	g	<i>go</i>
घ्	gh	<i>yoghurt</i>
ङ	ṅ	<i>sing</i>
च्	c	<i>check</i>
छ्	ch	<i>churchhill</i>
ज्	j	<i>joy</i>
झ्	jh	<i>hedgehog</i>
ञ्	ñ	<i>canyon</i>
ट्	ṭ	<i>ton</i>

Buddhism as a Psychological System

ठ्	ṭh	<i>anthill</i>
ड्	ḍ	<i>dog</i>
ढ्	ḍh	<i>redhead</i>
ण्	ṇ	<i>and</i>
त्	t	<i>water (dental)</i>
थ्	th	<i>thumb</i>
द्	d	<i>then</i>
ध्	dh	<i>adhere (more dental)</i>
न्	n	<i>not</i>
प्	p	<i>paw</i>
फ्	ph	<i>top-heavy or photo</i>
ब्	b	<i>rub</i>
भ्	bh	<i>hob-house</i>
म्	m	<i>mat</i>
य्	y	<i>yoga</i>

र	r	red
ल	l	love
ळ**	ḷ	<i>l (retroflex)</i>
ळह**	ḷh	<i>l-h (retroflex aspirated)</i>
व	v	svelte
श्*	ś	ashes
ष्*	ṣ	assure
स्	s	sun
ह	h	hum
क्ष*	kṣ	rickshaw
ज्ञ*	jñ	gnu

* Letter or conjunct does not appear in Pāli.

** In Vedic Sanskrit and Pāli.

9 Curriculum vitae

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Cand. Dr. phil., Psychology; University of Vienna,
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2009 European Diploma of Advanced Study in Psychology
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University of Louvain (UCL – Université Catholique
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2007 Mag. phil. (with distinction), Religious Studies,
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Research emphases

Indian psychology (esp. psychology of yoga and Buddhism) and its
reception in Western psychology and therapy

Experience

2010/09– External lecturer; Department of Transcultural and
Historical Research in Psychotherapy, English-
Language Programmes; Sigmund Freud University
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Courses taught

Mindfulness in Buddhism and behaviour therapy: epistemology and
practice; Introduction to dhyāna yoga: meditation in Hinduism and
Buddhism

Media

Books

Virtbauer, G. D. (2010). *Intersubjektivität: Psychologisch-anthropologische Grundlage in Mahāyāna-Buddhismus und relationaler Psychoanalyse*.

Wien: Sigmund Freud PrivatUniversitäts Verlag. [2]

Virtbauer, G. (2008). *Psychologie im Erkenntnishorizont des Mahāyāna-Buddhismus: Interdependenz und Intersubjektivität im Beziehungserleben*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. [1]

Articles

Virtbauer, G. (forthcoming). The Western reception of Buddhism as a psychological and ethical system: developments, dialogues, and perspectives. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*. doi: [10.1080/13674676.2011.569928](https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2011.569928) [5]

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Organisation

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Presentations

Virtbauer, G. (2011, October 24). *Buddhism as a psychological system: Western reception, contemporary dialogues, and perspectives.*

Presentation of doctoral project, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna. [3]

Virtbauer, G. (2011, May 17). *Intersubjectivity: Buddhist and relational psychoanalytic approaches to human nature.* Lecture presented at the Conference Psychotherapy East & West: Contemporary Theoretical and Practical Perspectives, 16–20 May 2011, Sigmund Freud University Vienna. [2]

Virtbauer, G. (2011, May 16). *Buddhist psychology and the West: epistemology and practice.* Lecture presented at the Conference Psychotherapy East & West: Contemporary Theoretical and Practical Perspectives, 16–20 May 2011, Sigmund Freud University Vienna. [1]

Fellowships

2008/09–	Scholar-resident; Path of Service Program; Upaya
2009/06	Institute and Zen Center, Santa Fe, NM, USA; three-month fellowship from University of Vienna

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2009/07/22 *Postmodernism and Psychotherapy: Understanding the
Essentials*. Developed by Louis Hoffman, Ph.D. Online
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