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Buddhism and the formation of the religious body

A Foucauldian approach

Introduction

Western conceptions of the body have often prejudiced our understanding of the body in Buddhist thought. We are often inclined, as Andrew Tuck has noted, to engage in a kind of isogesis, a kind of reading into texts values that reveal as much about ourselves as interpreters as it does about the text being examined (Tuck 1990: 9–10). I suggest these projections include ideas about monasticism, the transition from 'Hinayana to Mahayana', the notion of the authority of the Buddha in regard to his disciples, and the conception of the Vinaya as 'law'. Along with this list of topics we may also include the 'body'. The terms and issues I have listed reflect preoccupations of the modern age and are too often burdened with modernist meanings to be of much use (Reynolds 2005: 226).[1]

Some dominant discourses in Western society have often emphasized the body as a physically and biologically given fact, to be understood like other 'natural' phenomena, through empirical investigation (Wright 2000: 1). The body in certain readings has been constructed as a caricature of the true inner being as a volatile animal with the soul as its prisoner (Bordo 2004: 3). For instance Plato in the *Phaedo* saw the passions of the body as a distraction to the philosopher.[2] Augustine emphasised the animal aspect of human nature and by contrast seventeenth century thought saw the body as a programmed system that could be controlled (Bordo 2004: 4).

Poststructuralist debates around the body (Foucault 1977, Bordo 1990, Grosz 1994) have demonstrated how our knowledge of the body is constituted in specific cultural and historical circumstances and in the context of particular relations of power. This chapter develops this approach to the body

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1   Writing of the term 'power'.
2   See Plato's *Phaedo* 65 (c), 66 (c). In later dialogues such as the *Symposium* and *Timaeus* Plato had a more positive view of the body.

in Buddhism and thus attempts to show how the body has been represented within different discourses in Buddhist texts.

Implicit in my account is the remedying of the failure in some Buddhist scholarship to recognise different types of bodies (negative and positive) and to show how these aspects of the body, as enumerated by texts, operate together to constitute forms of identities capable of being constituted within different historical moments out of the pressure of new social and material changes. At the same time the body is seen as being capable of self modification in terms of that discourse.

I use the term 'body' in this chapter in a sense that it implies not only a physical aspect (flesh, bones, liquids etc.), but that it is connected to various cognitive and emotional capacities as outlined in the *khandhas* (see below) explanation of the human constitution. My concern in my treatment of the body is to avoid the problems of psychological analysis, as this form of analysis often implies the existence of a psyche or soul along with the ideas of complete individual self-determination.

The theoretical approach to this chapter

Michel Foucault made only a few references to Eastern religions in his work (Carrette 1999: 113).[3] However, his writings influenced Edward Said and his work on *Orientalism* (1978), and were instrumental for those who have followed Said (Karlis 2005, Lieberman 1989, King 1999, Stoler 1995, Bendle 2002). Jeremy Carrette and David Bernauer in several of their books have also contributed to the connection between Foucault and religion.[4]

Foucault's interests in religion were reflected in his various 'case studies' on the complex workings of the relationship between religious structures, military establishments, educational institutions, and the role of these in shaping subjects. *Discipline and Punish* (1977) implied that a new type of punishment was the model for the control for an entire society within factories, and schools and hospitals, modelled on the modern prison.

He showed that 'disciplinary society' had three primary techniques of control: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and the 'examination'.

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3   For scholars who have used a Foucauldian approach to Buddhism, see Zhang 2005, Konik 2009, Wicking 2010.

4   Carrette 1999, 2000; Bernauer & Carrette 2004. These works have on the whole dealt with theology. See also McSweeney 2005.

An illustration of the first two of these forms of control may be seen in hospitals or schools where patients and students are subject to an objective truth, contained in medical analysis and pedagogy. The third form of control, the 'examination', elicits truth about those examined, and initiates procedures to supervise individuals' behaviour by forcing them to study by directing their course of treatment.

Foucault linked examples from these various examinations together and showed that there was a distinctive overlapping and borrowing between disciplinary regimes. This is clear, as he notes how the 'decury' (an ancient military unit) was taken from the Roman army and transferred to the Benedictine monasteries and later to some Jesuit schools. Monasticism was thus seen by Foucault as one of the earlier paradigm structures of disciplinary concepts (Foucault 1977: 315; Carrette 2000: 118).

The notion of the physical body is a cultural theme in Foucault's writings, as the body may be disciplined and controlled by various sorts of ideological regimes.

The institutions referred to above had similarities in that they contained disciplinary practices that shaped the individual's body (Foucault 1991: 109–41). One of the developments from Foucault's work (Coakley 1997, Brown 1988, Turner 1992) was the interest of a group of scholars[5] who recognized that belief is a form of practice which is inscribed or reflected in the physical body. This approach argues that religious beliefs are not free floating, as they regulate the subject: the individual within the disciplinary regime concerned (Carrette 2000: 150).

In the monastic environment bodily desires are clearly visible, and their physical manifestations subject to correction (Stoler 1995: 165–87).[6] While some Buddhist texts offer meditative practices built on the rejection of the body, they need to be balanced by other texts which emphasise the virtues of the body as a vehicle for Enlightenment (Mrozik 2004, 2007).

My objective in describing different administrative regimes for monastic communities in Buddhism is to critique how institutional structures shape and form the religious body. I see my study as sociological in a broad sense, in that it deals with the inner formation of monks, based on a study of how organisational mechanisms structure internal meaning for participation.

5   For Buddhist material on the 'body' see Collins 1997: 185–204; Williams 1998: 205–30.

6   On Buddhist education see Blackburn 1999 and 2001, McDaniel 2008, Samuels 2005 and 2010.

Buddhism as a path of self-cultivation of body and mind

Western psychology emphasises the vital importance of developing a sense of 'continuity, identity and on-goingness in existence' and a positive conception of self (Enger 1984: 25; Klein 2003: 331). From a Buddhist perspective, a secure identity although necessary in early years, is intrinsically problematic. Personal development is premised in Buddhism on the relinquishment of the subtle error of ontology about the permanence of the body and the idea of a fixed self (Hopkins 1983: 296–304; Ruben 1997: 79–108).

At the same time Buddhists have in general expressed an equivocal view of the idea of an authoritative canonical teaching[7] and central ecclesiastical authority. Rather, the Buddha insisted on the primacy of self-knowledge and rational self-inquiry (Waida 1987: 3). Buddha suggested rigorous tests for religious seekers who wished to pursue their own religious path by providing a set of criteria to evaluate the authority of a teacher, religious teachings in general, or to provide a test to check on their personal development.[8]

The Buddhist path leading to the end of suffering and the path to Enlightenment is often summarised as a threefold cultivation: of virtue, consisting of ethical integrity and action or interaction (*sīla*), of meditative concentration to develop the heart and mind (*samādhi*), and of penetrating insight where one sees the illusion of a separate ego (*prajñā*) (Rothberg 2001: 165).

Buddhism evolved an array of techniques and practices. Different types of practices may be given to different temperaments.[9] Such practices may also involve a wide variety of activities; charitable practices, journeys to visit

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7   The word 'canon' must be used with caution as while the Theravada tradition is seen by some scholars to have a canon, the Mahayana 'canon' is seen to be an 'open canon', Veidlinger 2006: 19. See Collins 1990: 97. Steven Collins has argued that the Pali tradition remained open, as monks and nuns continued to recite both oral and written texts, see Collins 1992.

8   See for instance the 'four reliances' found in Digha Nikāya 3.108. Another formulation was seen in the Kalama-Sutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya 1.188 ff.). See the discussion of this sutta in Bond 1982: 8–15. Here I also mention the Mahapadesa-sutta in the Digha-Nikāya. This text sets out a procedure and criteria for determining whether a teaching should be accepted as the word of the Buddha (*Buddhavacana*). See Lamotte 1983 and 1988.

9   The Abhidharma and commentarial literature classifies personalities into six different types of temperaments: greedy (*rāja-carita*), hating (*dosa-carita*); deluded (*moha-carita*); faithful natured (*saddhā-carita*); intelligent (*buddhi-carita*); and speculative (*vitakka-carita*). See the Visuddhimagga 1976: 101 f. See also Huxley 2004.

venerable monks living in secluded places and so on (Dreyfus 2003). Here I note meditational practices.[10] Meditation has been seen as a 'disciplinary *mise au pas* of recalcitrant minds and bodies' (Faure 1996: 259) and part of what Elster calls 'the highly paradoxical goal of character planning (Elster 1983: 54). Meditation also helped practitioners deal with issues of sexual lust and desire in general, as the aim of such practices is to promote tranquillity of mind through the realisation of the impermanence of all things such as the nature of identity and the stability of the body.

Meditation practices may also lead to an analysis of the body and mind into component parts with the objective of discovering that there is no essential basis for these parts. Instead the student may learn through this experience that all these parts are baseless, conditioned and contingent (Boisvert 1995). The realisation of emptiness may enable monks to build themselves up: emptiness provides the opportunity for scrutiny and to 'produce an interiorised subjectivity' (Gyatso 1998: 184). In Buddhism changes in attitude and mind, as I have indicated, are fostered by methods of training. The texts in general, argues Naina Devdas (2004: iii), maintain that changes in attitude are possible because consciousness has the capacity to be aware of its own conditioning and can diversify its response to different influences.

Buddhist theories of consciousness are complex and locating the possible 'I maker', or the causal element in the process of self-formation, is not a straightforward process. In technical terms the doctrine of causality (dependent origination or *pratīyasumutpāda*) holds that all phenomena, including the self and the surrounding world, arise out of a network of relationships dependent upon other causes and conditions. The self is not to be understood as an essential, independent entity, but rather as a manifestation of complex causes, both mental and physical (Cuevas 2003: 713).[11] At the same time Theravada Buddhism posits that there is no overriding idea embodying the notion of will or self-mastery (Devdas 2008: 111).

Theravada scholars describe how *saṅkhāras*, or dispositions, form over time and how they generate and guide behaviour. These dispositions are not seen as autonomous, but arise and gradually develop from past decisions and behaviour. The suttas explain the relationship between *cetanā* (volition) and mental dispositions as follows.

10   The word that most closely is associated with meditation in Sanskrit is *dhyana*, *bhavana* and even *samadhi*. Robert Thurman (2010) says these ideas all indicate mind–body complexes that are sufficiently different from sensory or intellectual receptive states, although they may include these states sometimes.

11   On causality in Buddhism also see Macy 1991, Kalupahana 1975.

Purposeful thoughts and the processes of decision-making (*cetanā, sañce-tanā*) generate actions (*kamma*) and these actions consequently generate tendencies and dispositions. These dispositions constitute the gradual shaping of character, which consequently becomes the basis for any future action and behaviour.[12] David Kalupahana argues that 'while volition (*cetana*) may be the immediate act of deciding, "dispositions" (*saṅkharās*) represent the gradually built-up character involved in decision making. The gradual forming of mental dispositions constitutes a will (*cetanā*) generated by past tendencies and dispositions.' (Kalupahana 1995: 52.) In this context, Kalupahana argues that *cetanā* signifies an immediate intention or decision that generates from a mental action.

One classic account makes an analysis of the human individual based on the description of the body as constituting five *khandas* or *skandas* (Sanskrit).[13] While the body as a whole may be seen as consisting of different parts, the path to Enlightenment involves the appropriate working of each 'aggregate', as each khandha is responsible for specific and different aspects of a human being. Collectively the five *khandas* are conceived of as being interdependent and mutually conditioned: it is by acting together that they produce the psychophysical continuum of an individual (Hamilton 1996: 172). The body thus conceived has no reliable basis for a self identity, in that it is seen as a composite and constructed entity that is linked to the world and which continues to exist wholly interdependently of self or other (Gray 2006: 296).

The five khandhas are usually translated as 'material form' (meaning the body, *rūpa*); 'feeling' or the hedonic tone of any experience (*vedanā*); 'cognition' which classifies and interprets the mind (*saññā*); 'constructing activities' (*saṅkhāras*); and 'consciousness' (*viññaṇa*) (Harvey 1995: 4).

Sue Hamilton writes that it appears that these terms are being understood in terms of one's physical body and mental activities as a whole, as the physical locus of one's experience (Hamilton 1996: 70). In this view the body is seen to be made up of the four great elements: earth, water, fire and wind, each of these processes abstractly corresponding to features of the processes of the body. A central feature of this active body is the senses, which are; seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and mind. These senses are doors to the body as the body provides us the door to the experience of the objective

12   I rely here on Devdas 2004: 28.
13   Standard studies include Gethin 1986, Harvey 1993, Boisvert 1995, Chang 1975, Bodhi 1976. The principle sources are the four primary Nikayas and the first three works of the Abhidamma-pitaka.

world. In this activity the mind and the body are interrelated and cannot be separated.

The *khandhas* may be seen as a class of phenomena which are subject to the laws of dependent origination (see below) in that they continuously rise and fall away (Gethin 1986: 49). The teaching of the *khandhas* is often deployed to exemplify one of the central ideas of Buddhism. These are the ideas of conditioned existence and the radical denial of soul, self or any form of substantial substance (Paniker 1990: 27).

The linguistic items translated lexically as 'self' and 'person' are expressed in Pāli as *attā*, *purisa/puggala*, and in Sanskrit as *ātman*, *puruṣa/pudgala* respectively. However while the self is seen not to exist, the expression is used in a number of contexts without there being a suggestion that there is a conflict with the doctrine of no-self or *anattā* (Collins 1982: 71). In other words terms such as the 'self', 'I', or the body do not designate independent substances; these terms are merely convenient designations for psychophysical substances (Mackenzie 2008: 263).[14]

I intend to show that there are a variety of discursive approaches to the body, as on one hand it may be seen as attractive and as an appropriate vehicle for realisation and on the other hand as undesirable or loathsome. Before I undertake this presentation I describe first religious organisational context which structured monastic communities.

14   The doctrine of no-self has been interpreted in various ways (Collins 1982, 1994; Pietz 2005: 188–210; Faure 1996: 242–68; Harvey 1995; Albahari 2006). The best interpretation according to Christopher Gowans is that 'substance-selves have no reality and that process-selves have no independent reality but do have a dependent reality' (Gowans 2003: 72). In the Buddhist system of ideas the Sanskrit terms (*svasaṃvedana* or *svasaṃvitti* have been translated as 'self-cognition, 'self-awareness' or 'reflexive-awareness' to signify a form of self consciousness (Yao 2006: 1). These terms have been interpreted by *Dharmakīrti* and his followers (Dreyfus 1997, see also Yao 2006, Williams 1998) as a particular type of consciousness called self-cognition. This may be compared with what western scholars call apperception, or the knowledge we have of our own mental states (Dreyfus & Thompson 2007: 103). Pāli texts use the term *ahaṃkāra* or 'I maker' to describe the situation where the 'I' is conscious of its own self-awareness and how it is bought about (Collins 1982: 100–3, 263; Mackenzie 2008: 247). Here I note that the Pāli term to connote resolve or volition is *cetanā*. Translators have not given a consistent interpretation of this term and there is a debate over whether the term refers to a cognitive function with intention or is a factor which produces a goal directed action (Devdas 2008: 2, 3).

The organisational structure of the Sangha

Should we consider the shaping of a young novice in a monastery, after a period of time we might easily conceive that he/she would be a different person than the one that initially entered into the monastic fraternity. To consider the shaping of a monk we might consider the whole structure and format of restraining and supportive factors in personal development.

When recruits left householder life to join the Sangha they joined what the Buddha described as a superior life style, where a man or woman could pursue their spiritual vocation without the worries of family life. In this new life, ones' spiritual companions were seen as fellow brothers or sisters as they had only each other to depend on for support. At the same time, monks had responsibilities to each other and to the members of the lay community.[15]

Traditional sources indicate that within a Buddhist Sangha there was a division of tasks. In the Theravada tradition each monk was under a religious preceptor as well as an Abbott.[16] In this tradition the relationship between the teacher and the novice was conceived as being like that between a father and son, the older monk providing guidance and instruction, with the student caring for his mentor (Powers 2009b: 143). Apart from the checks and balances provided by these relationships, matters regarding the integrity of the order were subject to the collective decisions of the order (Powers 2009a: 150).

The different Vinaya recensions also tell us of the Vinayadharas, or monastic experts, who were responsible for the study and exposition of the Vinaya (Dhirasekera 1981: 10). These experts traced their lineage back to Upali, who first recited the Vinaya. It is generally agreed that these officials were the group of experts responsible for drafting complex rules, such as those necessary for knowing how to lend money with interest and how to write up contracts (Schopen 2004).

With this object in mind I delineate several aspects of monastic culture to illustrate how long lasting communities require special means of socialisation. George Dreyfus suggests, like Foucault (Foucault 1977: 170; see also Weber 1978: 253), that monastic arrangements need technologies of power to form efficient members of a community, and as such communities need

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15   On the role of friendship in the Sangha see Powers 2009a: 141–63. On the concept of duty within the Sangha, see Gombrich 1978. As regards the relationship between master and pupil and the shifting power factors see Elstein 2009.

16   See Wijayaratna 1990: 137–40 writing on the position as set out in the Pāli canon. For an account of the recent Tibetan tradition see Dreyfus 2003: 50, 61.

'micro-practices' aimed at forming effective members of a community and transforming the community into 'docile bodies' (Dreyfus 2003: 65).

One aspect of the formation of the self that interested Foucault was how the individual turned him/herself into a subject by means of knowledge, such as that produced by awareness of one's sexuality, by which individuals were led to focus on their own subjectivity (Foucault 1977: 218). Thus Foucault says he sought 'to analyse the practices which focus their attention on themselves, to decipher, recognise, and acknowledge themselves as subjects of desire' (Foucault 1984: 5). In the context of monasticism, disciples had to face and deal with their sexual impulses by denial, sublimation, or through the institution of confession (Voyce 2009). I take Foucault's suggestion here to indicate that a variety of forms of self-reflection were necessary as part of the personal training regime in which their sexual decision was the 'occasion' but not the exclusive occasion (Foucault 1984: 5). Foucault implies we should consider desire in general along with other mental distractions, disturbances or neuroses and consider by what means these negative states are transformed.

Buddhist texts deal extensively with how to achieve Enlightenment and they describe techniques to be applied to acquire spiritual progress.[17] My goal is not to discuss those techniques *per se*, or to discuss the indications of how Buddhist texts might be 'interpreted'.[18] My emphasis is not hermeneutical[19] but 'processional' as I am interested in the configurations of individual behaviour, both mental and physical, which develop through the interpretation process.[20]

The Vinaya rules and the practices it extolled were one of the facilities within monastic life, along with other systems of mental and emotional training, such as meditation practices, ritual observances, sutra reading and so on. For example the *Compendium of Training* (Śiksamuccaya 1972), an eighth century text by Santideva prescribed many types of disciplinary practices for Bodhisattvas, such as the study of scriptures, confessional liturgies, forms of

17   See idea of 'path' in Chu 2003.
18   David Klemm here draws a useful distinction between two types of hermeneutics. *Hermeneutics as interpretation* happens when the emphasis is on the meaning as understood by the reader and asks the question about the author's intention or what the original audience understood; it seeks invariant meaning. The second one is called *hermeneutics as practical philosophy* where the focus of the inquiry shifts to the activity of understanding. (Klemm 1986: 1–53.)
19   A literature is now emerging on a hermeneutical approach to Buddhist texts, see Lopez 1988, Nimanong 2006.
20   In this sense I am interested in Klemm's form of *hermeneutics as practical philosophy*.

meditation, codes of ethical conduct and observances of monastic etiquette and deportment (Mrozik 2007: 5 and 2004). Taking these practices as a whole I am enquiring 'what do these practices do for those who participate in them?' In other words I am asking how personal programs shape and inscribe themselves on the body and thus create a certain subject (Schilbrack 2004: 8).

In terms of my approach these questions seek to give an account of the cultural processes of self-formation. Foucault's work reflected a new interest in ancient Hellenistic ethics and the idea of philosophy as training in virtue (Foucault 1984 and 1986, Nussbaum 1994, Hadot 1995).[21] He attempted to examine 'lived ethics' and to recover the meaning of askesis as a set of exercises in self-training or self-formation (Antonaccio 1998: 70). Foucault used this word within its Greek meaning, in a positive and productive sense as regards the ideal of perfecting one's self, developing one's capacities and becoming who one is (McGushin 2007: xii). Such modalities of being include beauty, tranquility, gracefulness and a number of other attributes. These attributes were to be obtained by an application of 'techniques of the self'[22], or what Hadot (1995) called 'spiritual exercises'. An art of living was thus a *tekhne* in the sense of the Greek term for a skill or savoir-faire (Prado 2000: 137).

Two aspects of Foucault's work are important in the construction of a religious subject. Foucault's method implies we should examine the dynamics of religious institutions and the methods they utilise, such as confessional practices (Voyce 2009), ritual worship, and even modes of transgression.[23] Such practice 'orders, defines and controls' the religious subject through objectify-

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21   On *Askesis*, see McGushin 2007. For a recent examination and overview of the literature of the comparison between Buddha's teaching and Hellenistic philosophy see Gowans 2003: 42–5.

22   A 'technique of the self' may be seen as a practice which permit individuals by their own means to have operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality', Foucault 1988: 18. This approach has been developed by other scholars in Indian studies, see Hattam 2004, Samuel 1994 and 2005, Ali 1998.

23   See Voyce 2010. Here the argument is made that 'transgression' serves the role of assisting practitioners to break out of the numbing encasement of rules. Sexual expression in the view of this author may be seen as a positive way to transcend mundane existence. In this regard see Gyatso 2005: 275 and 271–90, Gross 2000, Glassman 2003, Faure 1998. This view must be nuanced by the role of precepts in monastic life and the degree of conformity by monks as regards the precept over the misuse of sexual energies. It must also be remembered that there is no monolithic view on sexuality and that, as evidenced by Tantra, a variety of views on sexuality exist in Buddhism.

ing and normalising the disciple (Carrette 2000: 39). I call this 'mode one' of the construction of the 'religious body'.

A central aspect of this approach is that belief may be seen as embodied'[24] or inscribed upon and within a physical person. As Mary Douglas writes (1973: 137–9): 'the powers and prohibitions of a given culture are reproduced on the bodies of its members.'[25] Foucault argues that physical practices, as well as spatial arrangements,[26] were intended to have physical as well as moral effects (Foucault 1977).

Several scholars have shown how the body is variously portrayed to present an apparent paradox in Buddhism in that while the body in some texts may appear as 'loathsome' or 'bad smelling', other accounts show that the body may be seen as a vehicle for enlightenment, or as a reward for good *kamma* (Collins 1997: 185–204; Dissanayake 1993; Wilson 1996: 63–6).

In these negative accounts the body is seen as a 'repulsive amalgamation of bones, skin, sinews and malodorous dirt' (Dissanayake 1993: 126). The body is further afflicted by old age, disease, death and suffering.

Some scholars have thus emphasized a negative account of the body in Buddhism showing it to be worthless or a handicap in spiritual development. For instance J. E. Bateson writing in the 1908 edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* summarises this Buddhist attitude to the body arguing that the 'body can never be the abode of anything but evil and that final deliverance from all bodily life, present and to come, is the greatest of all blessings the highest of all booms, the loftiest of all aims' (Bateson 1908: 758).[27]

In other accounts the body is exalted rather than degraded. A classic example is seen in the perfectly controlled and decorous body of a monk (Hamilton 1996: 171). In other texts the receipt of a beautiful or wholesome body is seen as an appropriate vehicle for spiritual progress. This second form of literature praises the merit of the body as a necessary vehicle for spiritual progress. These sentiments find expression in several contexts that by implication indicate the approach of the middle way and the rejection of harsh asceticism. At the same time the gift of the body is considered as the fullest

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24　There has been a growing interest in the sociology of the body since the 1980s. See for instance, Turner 1992, Shilling 1993, Brown 1988. In the Buddhist context see Collins 1997: 185–204; Dissanayake 1993: 123–44; Hamilton 1996: 169–93.

25　For the development of this theme in Foucault's work see Carrette 2000: 109–28.

26　Few scholars have referred to the importance of the spatial arrangements of Buddhist monasteries and how these reinforce discipline through constant scrutiny and observation. However, see Faure 1998: 260.

27　Bateson quotes Sir Monier Monier-Williams (1899), the source of this view here.

embodiment of a Bodhisattva's charity, contrasting with the gift of lesser items such as material goods (Ohnuma 1997, 2000).

John Powers (2009a: 9) argues that in Indian literature there was a pervasive concern with ideal manhood, so that such elegant and beautiful deportment seemed 'natural and given' and thus was normative (Foucault 1977: 128).

Notions of ideal manhood resonate with depictions of the Buddha, and his impressive physical characteristics. The Buddha was skilled in wrestling, archery and the martial arts, as well as being attractive to women. The Buddha's good qualities and appearances were displayed on his body and should be read as a canvas for the proof of his spiritual attainment and the achievement of the purification of karma over previous lives (Powers 2009a: 19 and 2009b).

Through the observance of monastic rules and appropriate deportment, Bodhisattvas produced serene features and gestures. The effects of these practices would thus manifest in postures and movements of bodies. Thus the intention of these practices was to produce virtuous bodies as well as virtuous minds (Mrozik 2007: 5–6).

Buddhist monks and nuns also needed to demonstrate the high standard of deportment expected in general among religious ascetics (Powers 2009a: 19). One incident in the Vinaya tells of a complaint by laypeople that monks went into a village with swaying hips and swinging their arms. Thus the Buddha laid down a rule that monks should keep their bodies straight and upward and when walking into a town they should fix their eyes on the ground a few feet in front of them, in order to avoid looking at women.[28]

The bodies of Buddhist monks were viewed as 'public spaces' on which their virtue was displayed. Bodily gestures were an important part of status formation, or part of what Habermas (1989: 7) calls a 'representative publicity', where lords and leaders were represented not as abstractions but through demonstrable bearing, conduct and insignia (Ali 2008: 25–56). Physical beauty and a calm exterior were associated with morality. Any lapse of morality could be criticised by laypeople, who by their donations had made a personal investment in the purity of monks (Powers 2009a: 90–1).

Second, Foucault indicated that while individuals may be structured or modified by institutional factors, they may also be formed by working and monitoring their own internal behaviour. Thus a person's religious body is generated through certain cultural processes, which may be internalised as

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28   See the *sekhiyā* rules in the *Pātimokkha*, rules 7 and 16 the *Pātimokkha* (2001: 91, 93). For corresponding rules for nuns see *sekhiyā* rules in *Pātimokkha* 2001: 17, 233.

one of their own resources. I call this 'mode two' of the construction of the religious body.

Buddhist thinkers were interested in the reflexive nature of self-consciousness. In other words they were concerned with a 'subjectless self-consciousness'.[29] This form of consciousness may be understood in the light of the previous ideas about the *khandhas* and the idea that the *khandhas* are more than a list of components that make up a human being as they are a series of psychophysical events which are without permanence.

In following the indications of Foucault I argue that the development of the individual took place through the monastic engagement in self-formation as an 'ethical subject'.[30] In other words the disciples produce by way of scrutiny a subject (and a body) that might not have been there before (Foucault 1977: 194, 1986: 60–8, 1988: 16–49).

I have indicated that Buddhist monks utilize their bodies as objects of contemplation and as a locus of self-transformation. The path to enlightenment involves the whole human being as part of a physical process which is not separate from the mind, but which is dependent upon, or interrelates with the mind. I have indicated that Buddhist texts provide a wide variety of meditations that concentrate on the body. One of these meditations for instance is on the stages of the decomposition of the corpse.[31]

By involving themselves in meditations on the body monks have an opportunity to see into the transient impermanence of life and so to overcome desires and craving for conditioned existence. The body, through meditational practices, 'may be seen as a visceral reproduction in which, ultimately, a copy of a body can be re-transformed and restored into an original: into a body once again' (Kilma 2001: 569).

29 Frank 1991, cited in Yao 2006: 157. According to Manfred Frank there were three other types of consciousness which he described as subjective, relational and self-conscious.

30 Foucault indicated that there were different modes of working on one's self which he divided into four subsidiary questions or areas. The first concerns the *determination of the ethical substance*; the second is the *mode of subjection*; the third concerns the *forms of elaboration or ethical work*; the fourth concerns the *telos of the ethical subject*. See Foucault 1984: 27. For useful discussion of these ideas and applications in different contexts, see Dean 1999 and 1995.

31 For a comprehensive treatment of this topic see Visuddhimagga 1.178–9; Wilson 1996: 41–76; Boisvert 1996.

The role of authority and power in the shaping of the religious body

I have focussed on the process of the institutional shaping of monks. I now wish to focus on the issue 'that given the emphasis on self-development within Buddhism, what role does 'authority' and organizational structure (rules or forms of social hierarchy) play in self-formation and the construction of the religious body?

To develop this approach I explore some of the indications given by Foucault, and how his ideas might be used to examine the formation of the body in Theravada and Tibetan Buddhism.

As part of my inquiry into how monks are shaped by institutional practices I outline possible approaches to 'religious authority' to discuss how the religious body was shaped. My approach does not seek to locate where authority lies, or is held in institutionalised positions. Rather my approach is to locate how authority shapes or facilitates the production of the religious body.

Louis Gomez (1993) argues that the concept of authority has a wide semantic field in Buddhism and to understand how this concept operates in Buddhism we should examine in effect how the concept is *operational* (Gomez 1993: 8, my emphasis). To do this I argue it is necessary to discuss the relationship between 'authority' and 'freedom'[32] and how aspects of these notions combined may create the religious body.

In the context of western ideas of authority, authority is seen as binding an alleged subject: 'authority has an exigency that advice lacks' (Green 1987: 584; Waida 1987). John Locke (1967: 324) put this idea as: all private judgment is excluded. Joseph Raz (1986) in a similar way expressed this idea in arguing that authoritative reasons pre-empt or exclude other reasons.

The above ideas of 'authority' are often based on the notion of 'compelling power' or 'domination' (Luke 1978, Flathman 1980). This approach is deficient as regards the monastic context. We might therefore make a distinction between two types of power, a 'power-over', or domination, and a 'power-to' (Wartenberg 1992: 781; Valantasis 1995).[33]

This revised version of 'authority' instructs us to locate authority (or what I now prefer to call 'power') in the actions of subjects, where subjects recog-

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32   The notion of authority is elusive as it is associated in modern times with a bundle of concepts such as the rise of the 'nation state' and the concerns of 'political legitimacy' and notions of 'duty' (Poggi 2006: 27–30; Konty 2007: 225–9; Iverach 1908: 249–54).

33   On an application of this approach to monasticism in other contexts see Krawiec 2002: 50–5.

nise themselves as products of their own self reflection and self-regulation (Prado 2000: 68).[34] It is implicit in such an account that authority is localised and that authority may be seen to be encouraging a desirable course of conduct. What we may call 'ways of doing things' may not depend on authority, but on habits, inculcated by self-experience following the recommendations of a master (Hart 1994: 17). In Buddhism, 'authority' may be conceived of as the power to persuade others about the validity of certain judgments about truth and judgment. Authority also refers to the things that possess authority, whether that is a person, doctrine or object (Gomez 1995: 2). Authority, as I now proceed to explain has other qualities.

'Authority' Gomez argues, utilising Mahayana sources, is guaranteed by the presence of the Buddha who has self-validating authority and whose sacred presence appoints or intrudes (Sanskr. *adhitiṣṭhati*) (Gomez 1995: 13)[35] into the 'passive recipient of sacred power'. I thus follow Gomez, in his approach to the concept of authority, and the notion that authority is connected to the idea of 'authorisation' or 'empowerment' and the idea of 'bringing to life or activating', through the bestowing of identity (to a disciple) through the power to inspire and fill with awe. In this sense the 'self' and the body thus participates in authority (Gomez 1995: 17–18). My conception of authority has a connection to Max Weber's ideas of 'charismatic authority' when such

34 Foucault indicates we must examine power as a socially dispersed activity. Foucault indicates power, as an inherently relational force, is continually being co-created or co-constituted by interdependent presences. He insists power cannot be privatised, possessed or personally acquired, power may only be exercised. No solitary entity can ever produce, reserve, administer, take over, or transfer power. Secondly, he argues that since power is an interdependent and socially produced activity it is never solely at anyone's command. Power relations involve a co-creator and co-participants. Power relations connect heterogeneous and multidimensional actors. Thirdly, although power itself is a perpetually dynamic exercise, it possesses no lasting substance; it nevertheless leaves behind material imprints in a relatively solid world of beings and objects. Finally, he argues that although power shapes and defines persons and communities, there are always those who escape the relations of power. His indications on power occur in several places in his writings, see Foucault 1988: 208–26. For an account of power in a religious context, see Schuld 2003.

35 Gomez does not cite any particular textual source in his article (1995) but there exists a discussion of this term and its various interpretations elsewhere. See Suzuki 1930: 202–5, 377–8. T. D. Suzuki defines this word as 'sustaining power', see Suzuki & Idzumi 1953: 79–82. Edward Conze (1973: 312) defines this word as 'authority'. Paul Harrison (1990: 191) sees the term as 'empowerment'. For a recent discussion of the term see Otto 2008: 142. I discuss more this term later.

authority creates transformations through 'shamanic power', as in Vajrayāna Buddhism (Samuel 1994: 54).[36]

The formation of the religious body

A more nuanced approach to authority suggests we might not conceive of a one-way direction of power from one who embodies it onto one who is powerless. Second, we should acknowledge that power (should we see it as domination) limits the exercise of power, as the exercise of power requires a social interaction and the limitation on the abuse of power (Valantasis 1995). Third, we should differentiate authority from domination, as the approach to power I adopt encompasses and promotes resistance and agency (Foucault 1977: 194).

A supplement to these ideas is suggested by Foucault: that we should acknowledge that power is productive in that it 'produces subjects'. Authority may therefore be seen as containing the capacity to kindle self-authority through self-activation and self-regulation (Gomez 1993: 13–18). This approach may be further utilised to understand the formation of the religious body and the role of the individual in self-formation.

The term 'power' rather than the term authority captures the idea of a transformation, or 'flow of influence', or 'inspiration', which occurs 'when there is someone who confers it, and someone who can and does receive it and something, namely inspiration, that is conferred and received (Berzin 2010). The uplifting of a disciple may also depend on the spiritual merit (Sanskr. *punya*) of a disciple and their capacity to receive inspiration and their commitment to their self-development (Berzin 2010). The concept of power in this context includes 'magical power' as seen variously in the Theravada and Tibetan traditions.[37]

36 Pāli texts contain terms which could be associated with charisma that cover ideas of 'supreme rule' 'supremacy', 'mastery', 'power' and 'miraculous powers', see Piyasilo 1992: 82–3. For an analysis of charisma as interpreted by Weber, see Silber 1999: 180; Ray 1994: 423.

37 The word *iddhi*, which may be translated from the Pāli tradition as 'power', pertains to supranormal powers (clairaudience, clairvoyance etc). Theravada Buddhism doctrinally rejects the importance of otherworldly powers such as those pertaining to gods and other spirit beings, as they are seen as not ends in themselves. However, as several studies have shown, the 'spiritual world' was incorporated into Buddhist mythology and figured in monastic practice. Blackburn 1999. For good accounts of how spiritual mythologies and ideas of magic have been incorporated

Conclusion

I have indicated some of the discursive conditions for the production of the 'body' in Buddhist texts. I have not been concerned with the debate over the description of what actual physical and physical factors constitute each of the five *khandas*. I am concerned more with the structuring of the religious body through disciplinary and organisational regimes.

I have two issues to deal with. First, in the light of Foucault's writings on power, 'what is the nature of power and its role in the production of the body, in the context of monastic Buddhism?' To answer this question I discuss the role of power in the Vajrayana tradition.[38] Second, I ask what was the role of the Vinaya in the creation of the body?

I understand the word 'power' in two senses: as a relational force that might shift between the participants in a community[39] and as a 'presence' or 'force' which operates to shape a subject within the monastic context. While I have dealt with the former, I now deal with the latter.

The concept of *adhishāna* implies that power might be conceived of 'as the ability to manipulate and control reality' and when given to another as form of endowment, which when placed in another, becomes self-validating within that other.[40] Implicit within this account of power is the facility of a monk to internalise the Buddha's own Enlightenment, or to be self-authoritative (Makransky 2003: 111–36). In this sense power is productive in that it

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into Buddhism, see Ling 1962: 75 ff.; Marasinghe 1974: 233 ff. For a recent study see Terwiel 2001.

38   I chose this tradition for analysis as this tradition has a greater emphasis on 'other power' and the use of 'empowerment' which took place through a series of consecration ceremonies where the *lama's* power or blessing was transferred to the student. Geffrey Samuel has described this tradition as containing 'shamanic elements' (Samuel 1993: 244).

39   David Elstein (2009) has well shown that the relationships between a master and student may not necessarily reflect hierarchical factors, but may reflect more the relativity in spiritual proclivities of those involved in such a relationship.

40   Gomez 1993: 17. Charles Orzech argues (1998: 58) the term *adhishāna* has a range of meanings. However he argues the basic meaning is to provide a benediction. In a dialogue in the *Berzin Achives* it was suggested by a 'questioner' that this connotation may wrongly imply theistic connotations. In Tibetan the expression *byi-gyis brlabs* indicates a blessing, thus opening up the possibility that a transformational process 'through shamanic power' can bring about a real change in the world (Samuel 1994: 54). Alexander Berzin also emphasizes the idea of a 'transformation, by means of a brightening, into a state of possessing power and ability' (Berzin 2010).

produces bodies, in that it facilitates monks to construct forms of self-under-standing and self-knowledge.

I have referred to the array of techniques available for monastic training. While Buddhism does not posit a self, or 'autonomous will', it concedes that there are functions of consciousness that initiate action (Federman 2010: 1–19). Buddhist salvation entails a transformation of the self through a process of re-conditioning to understand that the body and the mind are not divisible, but are based on interdependent factors. The 'self' is thus not limited to the corporeal constraints of the physical body (Grey 2006).

The 'self' and the body imply a relationship with surrounding things and events. These may include the element of power connected with the person conferring the 'inspiration', the spiritual readiness of a disciple and the merit of the disciple involved. No item in this summary has its own singular causal influence. When some of these factors are present disciples may experience transformation (Berzin 2010). The body is thus a product arising from the relationship between organisational structure, power and 'self cultivation'.

I now deal with the second question and the role of the Vinaya in the production of the body. I argue that part of the formative process of monks is directed under the Vinaya as a 'training scheme'. I do not argue that the Vinaya is a form of law in the western sense. The perception of an individual subject to law in the eyes of many contemporary western scholars is often envisaged as a rounded, autonomous person, typically seen as a product of the European Enlightenment (Gray 2006: 295). Under this view of law such a person is localised, disengaged and exhibits an individual independent self (Taylor 1989: 190 f.). However I ask 'what is the *legal* concept of the body in the Vinaya?' I put the word legal in italics as I have argued the Vinaya is a 'training scheme' rather than a law in a European sense. Buddhist monks do have a conception of the Vinaya as a form of training, as the 'rules' are bought home to them on formal ritual days such as those involved in ordination,[41] confession and the end of the retreat (*Pavārāna*). Monks are also constantly aware of the laity pointing out infractions.

The *Pātimokkha* recital and the confession of faults ceremony promote self-disclosure and self-examination as well as a form of communal bonding and discipline. This form of disciplinary ceremony elevates the Sangha into a collective–individual body, as both confessor and confessant are complicit in the creation of self-awareness and the features of bodily structure. This wider conception of the Sangha as a 'collective self' is reflected in collaborative ac-

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41   At the ordination ceremony monks must know the rules, see Crosby 2000.

tivity and a wider form of self-consciousness and bodily consciousness.[42] The body in this sense was embodied in an individual and in the collective (Kasulis 2001: 62–3).

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