Truth and Transformation: Foucault, Urgyen Sangharakshita, and Buddhism as Technology of the Self

by Matt Drage

AUTHOR

Matt Drage is a Buddhist practitioner, scholar and writer living in London. He started practising with Triratna in 2008, and asked for ordination in 2012. He is currently working on an academic monograph based on his doctoral research into the history of the secular mindfulness movement in Britain and America.

ABSTRACT

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, philosopher and historian Michel Foucault attempted to recover an alternative, spiritually-oriented tradition in Western epistemology, seeking to oppose the lingering dominance of Cartesianism. According to the tradition that Foucault excavated, reason alone is insufficient for knowledge. Instead, if it is to lead to genuine knowledge, reason must be exercised in the context of radical ethical self-transformation, undertaken within a community of practice. In this article, I use Foucault's analysis of the relationship between ethical self-transformation, knowledge and truth to elucidate key aspects of Sangharakshita's presentation of the Dharma. I argue that Foucault's analysis can help free us from confusions in our understanding of the Dharma caused by our Cartesian intellectual heritage, and can thereby help us better understand what is distinctive and valuable about the Spiritual Community that Sangharakshita envisioned.

INTRODUCTION

Urgyen Sangharakshita emphasises the Buddhist tradition's tendency to present Dharma practice as leading, stepwise, into insights that deepen as the mind of the practitioner is refined. Indeed, for Sangharakshita this principle of progression 'constitutes the basic principle of the path as taught by the Buddha' (Sangharakshita, 2001, p.24). This emphasis has the further implication that statements about the nature of mind, self and world as they can be found within canonical Buddhist literature do not themselves constitute final truths. Rather, they are to be taken as provisional formulae, given to, and deployed by, practicing Buddhists to enable them to transform themselves into beings

capable of progressively deeper insights into the nature of phenomena; insights which far outstrip the expressive capacity of language.

Understanding the path towards the highest form of human knowledge as a path of self-transformation stands in stark contrast to much mainstream modern epistemology, especially that which stems from the modern Western philosophical tradition. One of that tradition's founders, the Enlightenment thinker René Descartes, is widely understood to have argued that absolute knowledge is available immediately to reason and thought, irrespective of what kind of person happens to be doing the thinking. It was thus that Descartes was able to claim that anybody in possession of the statement, 'I think, therefore I am' (*cogito ergo sum*), is also in possession of a final truth about both the self and about reality in general – including certain knowledge of the existence of a creator God. This truth is attained through a sequence of inferences attained through, and in, thought 'alone'. As such, for Descartes, full knowledge of absolute truths could arise independently of all conditions external to abstract thought.

This picture of Descartes' philosophy is almost certainly an oversimplification and, as I'll discuss in this article's conclusion, can – indeed, probably should – be understood from a very different perspective: a perspective which takes into account the religious context in which Descartes worked. Accurate or not, however, this Cartesian caricature continues to hold sway in the way we think about the relationship between knowledge and truth. Indeed, the image of the solitary thinker using reason alone to resolve (or, in the case of Kant, set aside as irresolvable) foundational metaphysical and epistemological problems has become the defining image of knowledge for Western modernity.

The French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault spent the last decade of his life in a sustained attempt to challenge this image of thought, and to recover an alternative tradition within Western thought. He argued that there has been a current in the history of Western philosophy, alive since antiquity, that can be used to resist the Cartesian picture of knowledge as a function of reason abstracted from the life and actions of the thinker; a picture according to which, as Foucault puts it, '[t]he philosopher (or the scientist, or simply someone who seeks the truth) can recognise the truth and have access to it in himself and through his acts of knowledge alone, without anything else being demanded of him and without his having to alter or change in any way his being' (Foucault, 2001/2005, p.17). Foucault locates the beginnings of this alternative epistemico-spiritual current in ancient Greek thought, kept alive through medieval Christian monasticism, reaching modernity through the Reformation piety movements of the 16th and 17th centuries. According to this current, knowledge (usually, but not always, knowledge of God) comes about

through an involved and concerted effort towards self-transformation, made possible through detailed self-knowledge (Foucault, 2005, pp.1–25).

Foucault sometimes calls the practices, techniques and social forms that emerged within this tradition 'technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988a). He means *technologies* in the sense of a human *technique* or *craft* (from the Greek, *techne*) concerned with the manipulation and shaping of a specific material: human subjectivity itself. Foucault undertook to examine those tools, techniques and practices by which individuals have worked to 'transform themselves in order to attain a state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality' (Foucault, 1988a, p.18). His aim in identifying this tradition was to provide a model for human knowledge as embedded within ethical frameworks, frameworks which are in turn dependent upon living communities of practice (Davidson, 2001/2005). He wished thereby to mount a critique of the still-prevalent idea that knowledge and truth have little or nothing to do with the way we live our lives.

In this essay, I suggest that Foucault's work on the technologies of the self offers some helpful clarifications when applied to Buddhism as we practice it within Triratna, with its emphasis, following Sangharakshita, on the centrality of total self-transformation in our quest for awakening. I argue that Foucault's approach is especially helpful (1) in making more visible the ways in which Cartesian thinking about knowledge continues to cause us confusion about the nature and orientation of dharma practice, and (2) in showing us how Sangharakshita's teaching can take us beyond that confusion.

'HAIL, MY SWEETEST OF MASTERS…'

In the early 1980s, towards the end of his life, Michel Foucault started to give lectures setting out a broad schematic analysis of the ways, since Antiquity and throughout medieval Christendom, people sought to reshape themselves. This was something of a departure from the body of thought for which Foucault is most famous (and, in some quarters, infamous), on the dynamics of *power*. Foucault spent much of his career examining the interactions between the self and society (e.g Foucault, 2008; 1995). He was broadly concerned with examining how social conditions helped give rise to specific kinds of selves or – to use his terminology – 'subjects'. That is to say, he wanted to show how selves become *subject to* institutional, governmental or religious rule, and how they emerge as selves in the process.

Towards the end of the 1970s, Foucault began to take seriously the criticism, often levelled at his work, that he had been too much concerned with the mechanics of power and social control, and too little concerned with individual agency. Moving away, at least outwardly, from the radical political agenda that had marked his career in the 1960s (Foucault, 1988a, p.19; Miller, 1994,

pp.319–354), Foucault began a sustained attempt to retrieve an ethico-spiritual tradition from within the history of Western thought that could ground new possibilities for understanding and enacting human agency (Foucault, 1982). In doing so, he sought to show how we might take the power of social conditions seriously without negating the possibility that individual people, or groups of people, could effect lasting transformations both upon themselves and upon society as a whole (Foucault, 1982).

In the various works he wrote on this subject in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Foucault begins his examination of the relationship between technologies of the self, the social forms that make them possible, and the kinds of knowledge thereby generated, by focusing on Greek and Roman practice. He notes that although the famous words inscribed on the temple at Delphi were 'know yourself', these words were, at that time, always taken within the context of a far more important injunction: *care for yourself* (*epimelia heautou*) (Foucault, 1988a, pp.19–20). Foucault argues that while Greco-Roman thought was concerned primarily with caring for, shaping and crafting the self in a way such that virtue and wisdom would arise, Western philosophy came to divorce practices of self-transformation from knowledge. For the great Greco-Roman philosophers, 'Knowing oneself becomes the object of the quest of concern for self'. Knowing oneself would only be possible through practices aimed at bringing about self-knowledge; and self-knowledge in its turn was a precondition of the effective care of the self (Foucault, 1988a, pp.19–23; 2005, pp.1–25).

By way of example, Foucault describes measures which Pliny suggests to a friend in order 'to prepare for misfortune or death' (Foucault, 1988a, p.27). This preparation was to be achieved by, for example, 'taking notes on oneself to be reread, writing treatises and letters to friends to help them, and keeping notebooks in order to reactivate for oneself the truths one needed' (Foucault, 1988a, p.27). In this way, Pliny was advising his friend to prepare for misfortune or death by engaging in a process by which he rendered his self *legible*, both to himself and to others. This then allowed practices of self-transformation to gain greater traction: the more capable one became of tracing the intricacies of one's own subjectivity, the more precisely could one begin to work upon it. The most powerful technologies of the self were those which set out techniques for detailed, precise knowledge of the self.

Although it may, on the face of it, appear that this kind of procedure might not require one to be in communication with others (Pliny's friend could, perhaps, simply have kept a journal and prepared for death without having been prompted to do so), this is to ignore the complex social conditions necessary for this kind self-transformation even to be conceivable. While the technologies of the self were concerned with the fine details of the self's relationship with itself, they also depended for their meaning on supporting

social forms and institutions, marked most often by close personal relationships: teacher and pupil, priest and disciple, sinner and confessor. Foucault explains to us that, for example, Marcus Aurelius's quest for self-knowledge (for it was self-knowledge upon which all other philosophical and political projects rested, in his view) was undertaken within the erotically charged intimacy of his relationship with his master and teacher, Fronto (Foucault, 1988a, p. 28). It is worth, with Foucault, quoting one of their epistolary exchanges at length to show the ways in which self-reflection and friendship were interwoven.

> Hail, my sweetest of masters.
>
> We are well. I slept somewhat late owing to my slight cold, which seems now to have subsided. So from five A.M. till 9, I spent the time partly in reading some of Cato's Agriculture, partly in writing not quite such wretched stuff, by heavens, as yesterday. Then, after paying my respects to my father, I relieved my throat, I will not say by gargling – though the word *gargarisso* is, I believe, found in Novius and elsewhere but by swallowing honey water as far as the gullet and ejecting it again. After easing my throat I went off to my father and attended him at a sacrifice. Then we went to luncheon. What do you think I ate? A wee bit of bread, though I saw others devouring beans, onions, and herrings full of roe. We then worked hard at grape-gathering, and had a good sweat, and were merry and, as the poet says, "still left some clusters hanging high as gleanings of the vintage." After six o'clock we came home ... Farewell, my Fronto, wherever you are, most honey-sweet, my love, my delight. How is it between you and me? I love you and you are away. (Foucault, 1988a, pp. 28–29)

Aurelius' friendship with Fronto was at the centre of his regime of self-care and self-knowledge. By rendering the minutest details of his life (his diet, his health, his relations with his parents, his education) legible to Fronto, he also renders them legible to himself. As Foucault puts it, "these details are important because they are you—what you thought, what you felt." (Foucault, 1988a, p.29). The minutiae of Aurelius' life and inner thought *were* his self; the self which it was his duty as a Roman citizen, and as a human, to care for and thereby to know. Thanks, however, to the recursive nature of the techniques he was using, his self was also *itself* constantly changing and developing. The process of rendering-legible was itself a process of transformation through which the powers of friendship, intimacy and self-reflection could hold even greater sway over Aurelius' soul, elevating him as he matured as a philosopher, a citizen and a ruler, to ever-greater heights of knowledge and virtue.

BUDDHISM AS A TECHNOLOGY OF THE SELF

For practising Western Buddhists – and perhaps especially for the principal intended audience for this article, members of the Triratna Buddhist Community – this story of friendship between teacher and student will be familiar. Encouraged by the canonical records of the Buddha's suggestion that friendship is 'the whole of the spiritual life' (*Saṃyutta Nikāya* (S) 45: 2 pts v.2), we strive to make our inner lives known to ourselves and each other through detailed, intimate conversations to our friends. And in doing so, we bring our *selves,* such as they are, into view, ready for reshaping. As it was for Foucault's Aurelius, this making-visible and reshaping of the self is part of a much larger ethical and spiritual project: the self is being worked upon with great purposes in mind, purposes which extend far beyond the practising individual. Where Aurelius sought to transform himself into (amongst other things) a citizen capable of just and wise rule over a vast empire, many Buddhists in our tradition train in accordance with (again, amongst other things) the Bodhisattva Ideal, in preparation for endless lifetimes spent helping all sentient beings to awaken. Just as Fronto, Aurelius's master, stood in a 'vertical' relationship to his student as the latter tried to bring about this transformation within himself, so to do many of us feel that we stand in relation to our own teachers – either to Bhante Sangharakshita, or to our more immediate spiritual friends, or both (Sangharakshita, 2019, pp.505–40).[1]

That there are resonances between Foucault's account of self-formation and transformation and Buddhist practice is probably not accidental. Foucault was actively involved in American Zen Buddhism in the late 1970s, and had around that time visited Japan to speak to Zen monks (Konik, 2016). His interest in Zen, as in the medieval Christian confessional and Greco-Roman discipleship, grew from a concern with showing how the West might draw upon cultures which emphasised self-transformation to create new ethico-spiritual practices, empowering individuals to make more effective interventions in society.[2] His

---

[1] The practice of referring to Sangharakshita as 'Bhante' emerges from the traditional Indian Buddhist term of address for one's social or spiritual superiors. In the Triratna Buddhist Community, the term 'Bhante' is reserved exclusively for Sangharakshita to mark his centrality as the founder and main teacher of that community. 'Bhante' has come thereby to act as a proper name used by those who consider themselves his followers, marking their respect and devotion to him.

[2] Foucault's work on the subject of self-transformation was profoundly influenced by his colleague Pierre Hadot, whose long essay *Spiritual Exercises and Ancient Philosophy* (Hadot, 2017) Foucault had read in 1977 and whom Foucault approached personally in 1980, while in the process of completing his own work on the subject, *The Care of the Self* (Davidson, 1990). Hadot was in turn read by, and may have somewhat influenced, Bhante. I relegate this to a footnote as I am unable to find any definitive evidence of

work was socially oriented insofar as it sought, by presenting these technologies of self-transformation and their mechanics in detail, to provide readers with schemas which would enable them to implement them in their own lives, whilst at the same time understanding their dependence upon, and power to affect, the social contexts in which they are deployed.

In the second volume of his *History of Sexuality*, entitled *The Care of the Self* (Foucault, 1988b), Foucault provides a schematic analytic framework for understanding the relationship between the seemingly disparate elements amongst that make up self-transforming practices. I set out my interpretation of his framework in this section, and give a few examples of how we might use it to understand how Buddhists (or, how they aim to) conduct themselves.

I do this for two reasons. First, I hope to contribute my own (by no means novel) view on how the practices undertaken within the Triratna Buddhist Community fit together in the service of the ideals and aims of the Buddhist path. Second, I want to show how Buddhism as we practice it can be understood in relation to very old Western ethico-philosophical tradition; one which almost certainly continues to influence the way we think about the self and its transformation. Doing so, I suggest, places us in a better position to see what is distinctive about (a) Buddhist practice in general, and (b) Triratna Buddhist practice, and the teachings set out by Bhante, in particular.

A few notes before we begin. First, the framework I am about to describe does not seek to be complete, encompassing everything that is important about any given ethico-spiritual tradition. The analytic categories that make up this framework are instead intended to bring certain important features of such traditions to light, for the purposes of analysis. Second, these categories are emphatically *not* meant to refer to stable realities; instead, they refer to hermeneutical strategies, deployed by individuals and groups of individuals as part of regimens of self-transformation. They are strategies used to enable individuals to become more fully legible to themselves for the purpose of ethical, epistemic or spiritual development. Foucault's categories here thus provide a way of allowing us to understand some of the various ways in which self-transformation can be *deliberately* effected by the individual. He argues that this can be done about by framing and reframing one's own sense of oneself in particular ways. However, these ways of framing selfhood are not themselves stable realities. Rather, they are radically dependent on their contexts. Indeed, as will hopefully become clear, this is the central thrust both of Foucault's argument and of my own.

Hadot's influence on Bhante, and it is certain that the latter's emphasis on community and friendship as the primary context for spiritual practice was fully developed long before Hadot had published his work on this subject. (Hadot & Davidson, 1995).

Foucault's framework distinguishes four interconnected categories of thought and action which together make up a functioning technology of the self: *teloi* (aims or ends), ontologies, practices and self-identities.[3] I will give my own account of this framework here, along a discussion of how each element might elucidate Buddhism as practised within Triratna.

Telos

The *telos* (aim or end) of a technology of the self is the good or desirable state towards which it points. Foucault suggests that the primary aim of Socrates' ethical life was, for example, 'wisdom, truth and the perfection of the soul' (Foucault, 1988a, p.20). As we just saw, however, there can be multiple aims for any given action taking place under the rubric of a given technology of the self. Aurelius' letter to Fronto, and the act of self-examination it required, could at once have aimed at the perfection of his (Aurelius') soul *and* – as a means of achieving this perfection – at maintaining his friendship with Fronto. As I mention above, a given aim, as well as being itself divisible into sub-aims, can also operate upon multiple ontologies simultaneously. One can enact transformation upon one's friendships, upon one's desires, or upon one's own soul.

The highest *telos* of Buddhist practice, as taught by much of the Buddhist tradition, is Perfect Buddhahood – the culmination of the lifetimes-long Bodhisattva path (Sangharakshita, 2001, pp.437–90). For Buddhists working according to this conception of the path, as for Aurelius, there are very many sub-*teloi* help the practitioner to move closer to this goal. Bhante suggested that a realistic goal for members of the Order he founded is Stream Entry (Sangharakshita, 2009, p.22): reaching a point of spiritual development from which there can be no falling back, with Buddhahood as an inevitable eventual outcome – if not in this lifetime, then in some future life. However, there are of course very many other possible sub-goals, even for those who accept this overall *telos*. A given period of meditation, activity, or period of life, can be given its own aim: to cultivate *mettā*; to act with more generosity; to deepen friendship. These aims can be understood as Buddhist insofar as they align with, and contribute to the realisation of, the overall *telos* of Buddhist practice.

The possibility of multiple, changing ways of stating and understanding the aims of people engaged in self-technological assemblages (that is, constellations of techniques and ideas aimed at transforming the self) is, as we will see, extremely important in Foucault's analysis. Foucault views not only the *telos*, but all of the elements that make up a given regimen of self-transformation, as comprising an interdependent matrix when taken in their entirety. I try to

---

[3] These are my simplified translations of the terms that Foucault uses himself. For his original terminology, see (Foucault, 1988b, pp.25–28).

describe how this matrix functions, in the case of Buddhism, in the sections that follow.

Ontology

The ontology of a given practice or technique of the self is its *substance*, the stuff with which is it concerned and aims to work upon. This substance might be action, relationships, emotions, or the flesh – to give just a few of the examples Foucault provides (Foucault, 1988b, p.26). By this is not meant 'substance' in a metaphysically realist sense. Rather, it is simply the phenomenal "stuff" of the self – thoughts, feelings, tendencies, memories, and so on. Philosopher Jane Bennet has introduced a more specific term for the kind of flexible, pragmatic conception of ontology that Foucault's approach presupposes: 'weak ontology' (2001). A weak ontology, for Bennett, is an ontology which is held provisionally for specific, explicitly stated purposes. When Foucault is talking about substance or ontology, in my view he means it in this way - although it is important to note that those whose ontologies he is discussing might still *themselves* be realists about their *own* ontologies.

Both across different self-technological assemblages, and within the same assemblage, variety of ontologies can be invoked for different purposes at different times. If one is aiming to transform one's body, rather than one's soul, one's ontology will comprise physical, rather than spiritual, material. For Aurelius, the substance or ontology upon which he worked was his own soul. However, it was also necessary to assume the existence of other ontological categories in order to *mediate* this work upon the soul. Aurelius was thus immediately concerned with working upon his own body and upon his relationship with Fronto, conceived of as a means of working upon his soul.

Aurelius was probably not himself a weak ontologist: he likely took the body and the soul as fixed realities. In most of the Buddhist tradition, however (and certainly in Bhante's teaching), there is a strong emphasis on the provisional nature of all ontological categories: indeed, a weak ontology is central to most versions of the Buddhist project of self-transformation. I will start with an obvious example, to illustrate this point. For many Buddhists, much of the time, *karma* is the 'stuff', the ontological ground, of our practice, the stuff whose existence we have to presuppose if we are to make progress on the path (even if we know that karma does not 'exist' in any absolute sense). If we take its simplest definition – *action* – karma is the constitutive *substance* of agency itself. As Subhuti puts it, karma 'comes into play once intelligence becomes self-reflective, capable of forming an idea of self as a centre of action and experience' (Sangharakshita & Subhuti, 2018, p.52). The Buddhist path's primary focus is upon learning to relate to and understand the self in a very different way (i.e. as marked by its lack of a fixed, independent existence). Self-reflective agency – that is, the

capacity we have to be conscious of ourselves as 'selves' in the first place – therefore stands as the primary material in need of transformation. For this reason, we must (provisionally) treat karma – and the self as karmic agent – as an existent reality. Ethical practice and meditation both aim at the transformation of karma; and karma stands as their ontological basis. At the same time, this kind of practice, when undertaken as part of the Buddhist path, gradually leads to a shift in view according to which the self-as-karmic-actor lacks a fixed, stable existence.

The provisionality of ontology within Buddhism means that as one progresses on the path towards awakening, one's ontology will by necessity undergo changes. That this is the case is clear from various foundational Dharma teachings. The Buddha emphatically taught that *all* phenomena (except nirvāna) were fabricated, dependent upon conditions, and not fixed (e.g. S 22:59 pts iii.666). This means on the one hand that what 'exists' for the practitioner will change as they progress in their practice, and as their mind changes; and, on the other, that the teacher can effect changes in the practitioner by pointing them towards a more skilful relationship to ontology. The skilful re-ordering of perceptual phenomena – kind of ontological re-fashioning – is deployed for the purpose of alleviating *dukkha* and moving closer to awakening. Indeed, this is one way of understanding what meditation practice fundamentally *is*; for in meditation one uses one's own perceptual faculties to re-imagine and reconfigure the phenomenal world in a way such that awakening becomes possible. The transcendent skill of the Buddha, and of our own tradition's central teacher, Bhante Sangharakshita, is partly in their overall grasp of and ability to steer individual practitioners through the complex, progressive series of linkages and conditioned reciprocities that emerge when one participates in this process. As a practitioner moves from the most basic stages of the path (for us, this might be the mindfulness of breathing) to the most advanced stages of the path (e.g. realising the emptiness of emptiness), their teacher must continually help them to revise their conception of what exists, and of the purpose of Dharma practice. The ability to move between radically different metaphors, images and descriptions of the path, to guide disciples through successive stages of spiritual development, whilst avoiding reifying any particular ontology *and* keeping the final goal constantly in view, is a characteristic 'higher knowledge' (*abhiññā*) of a Buddha.[4] And – it seems to me – it was also, if to a lesser extent, one of Bhante's special abilities.

---

[4] This is, at any rate, one way of understanding one of the characteristic supra-mundane knowledges (*abhiññā*) of a Buddha: the *dibba-cakkhu;* or 'divine eye'. As used in the Pali Canon, this refers to a Buddha's ability to see the karmic trajectory of living beings he encounters. See, for example, the Mahāsaccaka Sutta, *Majjhima Nikāya* (M) 36 PTS i.237.

If we accept inherently unstable nature of ontology within the Buddhist path, this provides us a good reason to entertain ontological claims that do not fit easily into the default, materialist scientific ontology – an ontology according to which only one kind of substance exists in the world, that this substance has a real, final existence, and in no way depends on the perceptual situation of those who posit its existence. Take the example of rebirth. In his short essay 'Rebirth Revisited', one of his last pieces of writing prior to his death, Bhante quoted Anālayo's recent work on the subject: 'Rebirth is [...] intrinsically intertwined with the different levels of awakening recognised in early Buddhist thought' (Anālayo, 2018, p.35). That is to say, the *telos* of the path, awakening, is according to Anālayo closely interwoven with ideas about whether or not the phenomenon of rebirth takes place. Bhante illustrates this point, with which he agrees, with the example of the Bodhisattva path, which 'by its very definition' implies rebirth, because the practitioner is 'working towards the attainment of Buddhahood not simply in [their] present existence, but for aeons upon aeons of lives' (Sangharakshita, 2018, p.1). If one does not accept the ontology of rebirth, one's *telos* will be different. To put it another way, if you don't believe – at least in some sense – that rebirth happens, you can't aim to be reborn as a Bodhisattva or a Buddha! As I discuss below in relation to a different example, this will also inevitably have implications for the way one practices, both in terms of intensity, and in terms of the kinds of practice one undertakes. And this will in turn inevitably have ramifying, reciprocal effects on the context of practice and on practitioners themselves. One cannot easily therefore 'simply' reject the idea of rebirth: doing so will also involve a radical – if subtle – transformation across the whole 'world' of one's Dharma life.

This way of looking at Buddhism helps us bring out those features of it that cut against the grain of the Western epistemological default. Buddhism offers a perspective which cannot ever be commensurate with the stable, objective reality that scientific materialism presupposes – that is, a fixed reality to be perceived and measured by a neutral, rational, isolated subject. Such a set of presuppositions, if clung to, would stand as an insurmountable obstacle to moving forward through the shifting ontological terrains that unfold as one progresses towards awakening. Further, seeing Buddhism in this way shows that the path to awakening cannot be pursued in isolation: context of practice matters, especially when it comes to the practitioner's relationship to others more advanced in the path: what we call, in Triratna, (vertical) spiritual friendship.

So although (as is often emphasised, especially by Western Buddhists) the Buddha taught the importance of testing teachings in our own experience, when viewing things from the perspective from which I am now writing it is very difficult to imagine how a path to enlightenment could emerge without an awakened, or partially awakened, teacher as guide. For without a teacher to

guide us with more of a view of the path than we have ourselves, it is not easy to see how we could find our own way through the shimmering, unfolding, increasingly subtle perspectives that the Buddhist tradition tells us will come into view as we move towards enlightenment. The increasingly refined and hard-to-discern links of conditionality that take us in the direction of awakening are held within the consciousnesses of the Buddha and lineage of his disciples. As Bhante puts it, the Buddha, upon his awakening, surveyed the various possible paths to enlightenment 'just as one who a has ascended a mountain height can look back and see clearly that, of the numerous paths winding up from the valley below, some come to an end at the edge of a precipice or a foaming torrent, while others lead safely to the summit' (Sangharakshita, 1956, p.82).

Self-identity
The third constitutive element of a technology of the self is, Foucault suggests, the self-identities that practitioners take on as they engage with that technology. Foucault terms this aspect of technologies of self-transformation their 'mode of subjectification', where subjectification means something like 'becoming-subject' or 'becoming-subjectivity'. For Foucault, mode of subjectification means something like *the category of being in relation to which one constructs one's selfhood.* Foucault uses this complex-sounding idea as the answer to what is actually relatively simple question: In what form, or as what type of being, does an individual works to transform his or her subjectivity? As a citizen, a friend, a penitent or a Bodhisattva? Aurelius was practicing as a citizen – and, later, as ruler of the Roman Empire. This was his mode of subjectification: the kind of subject or self as which he understood himself and worked to become. For the sake of readability, I'll use 'self-identity' to stand for 'mode of subjectification' in what follows, but I mean 'self-identity' in this specific, Foucauldian sense: the ways in which a practitioner self-identifies in relation to the larger self-technological apparatus in which they participate, *specifically for the purpose of transformation by means of that apparatus*.

As with aims and ontologies, self-identities both affect, and depend upon, the other parts of the larger self-technological assemblage. To take an example grounded in our own community and tradition: someone who attends Triratna Buddhist centres, but who has not committed to becoming a Mitra, will view themselves differently in relation to Triratna, Bhante, and the Buddhist tradition to someone who is either just a casual visitor, or a full member of the Triratna Buddhist Order. The public commitment to practice the five precepts made by someone becoming a Mitra implies a shift in that person's ontology. The material of the self, upon which the Mitra works, comes (at least ideally) to be understood as *karma*. And the aim of practice comes to be more focused on the formulations of the goal of the path current within our specific tradition –

for example, the aims given in Bhante and Subhuti's presentation of the Five Stages of the Path (Sangharakshita & Subhuti, 2018, pp.40–72). This in turn opens up a range of practices specifically aimed at moving the Mitra towards those goals, exemplified by their commitment to practicing the five precepts. More broadly, the shift of identity that takes place when someone becomes a Mitra also draws that person's subjectivity closer to the unfolding process of linked ontologies and aims which, eventually, lead to awakening; a process which is intensified and deepened if a Mitra makes the transition into the Order. This last shift in identity has the potential to bring about an even more dramatic change in aims (represented by the ordination vows), practices (e.g. taking up *sadhana*) and ontologies (perhaps, as a result of taking up a *sādhana*, seeing the *sambhogakāya* as a key ground of practice).

Identifying as a Buddhist, a Mitra, or a Dharmacārin thus has dramatic effects on the highly contingent, mutable array of ontologies, aims and practices that make up one's life as a dharma practitioner. Perhaps this fact helps us to see why some people (myself included) find it important to self-identify as 'Buddhist'. Common in Western Buddhist traditions is the idea that by refusing to identify as a Buddhist, one will thereby avoid unnecessary reified self-identifications and move closer to a view of the self as lacking stable self-nature (*anatta*) (e.g. Kornfield, 1977, p.308). The foregoing discussion I hope shows that deliberate, conscious self-identification is emphatically *not* the enemy of self-transformation, or of enlightenment. There is no contradiction between aiming towards an *anatta* view, according to which the appearance of independent selfhood is seen to arise on the basis of conditions, and practicing various kinds of self-identification and self-cultivation in the service of that aim. Indeed, within our own community, as I have briefly discussed, there is a sophisticated array of practical and social forms which draw on the power of self-identification to support the path to awakening.

The power of deliberate self-identification to enable progress on the path has two further consequences. First, Foucault's schema makes it clear how far technologies of the self depend on the communities that give rise to them. The stability and meaning of one particular way of self-identifying depends on a community to recognise and reinforce its significance. To be an Order Member, there must also be an Order. The same is also true, of course, of the other categories within Foucault's framework. Without a body of people practicing the teachings and talking to each other about them, ontological categorisations like those detailed in the *skandha*s will make little sense; and neither will the practices used to transform oneself in relation to a particular *telos* (e.g. the *telos* of being able to see each of the *skandha*s as empty, arising and passing away in dependence upon conditions). Yet the importance of community is perhaps especially stark when it comes to self-identity, since this

category is explicitly to do with being one kind of person (i.e. belonging to a particular community of people) rather than another.

Second, as I hope is now clear, one's mode of self-identification has broad, complex, ramifying effects across a given self-technological constellation. This has the implication that one cannot be doing exactly the same thing as, for example, a self-identified Buddhist, *without oneself identifying as a Buddhist.* Precisely how differences between modes of self-identification might affect one's path towards enlightenment remains an open question.[5]

Practice
The practices within a given self-technological assemblage – that aspect of the assemblage that Foucault calls 'ethical work' – are its constituent techniques. In Aurelius' case, these include prayer, bathing, meditation, letter-writing, and friendship.

For Buddhists within our tradition, there are very many practices to draw upon for the purpose of making and remaking the self in pursuit of awakening. Some of these are central, and taught to practitioners at the earliest stages: the mindfulness of breathing and *mettā bhāvanā* meditations, *pūjā*, Dharma study, various reflection practices, and spiritual friendship. These core practices, which together constitute a rough orthodoxy for Triratna Buddhists, are often subdivided in various ways, and grow in complexity and variety as one's commitment and involvement in the tradition deepens - dramatically so after ordination, when there is institutional support for various visualisation and spiritual death practices to be fully integrated into one's overall regimen. At the same time, there is also a vast array of practices which are sometimes seen as supportive of, but not of a piece with, more orthodox practices. These practices may not (or at least not explicitly) be Buddhist, and include various forms of

---

[5] While I do not wish to comment on the possible usefulness of different kinds of self-identification for individual Dharma practitioners (either within Triratna or other within traditions), it is clear that the act of *refusing* to identify as a Buddhist has its own distinctive social function. If a Dharma practitioner refuses to identify as 'Buddhist' (in spite of an obvious dedication to practicing the Buddha's teachings), they tacitly enact *another,* equally potent, form of self-identification: identification with the community of those who are expressly committed to the Buddha's teachings who refuse to identify as Buddhists! In practice, as sociologist of religion Wendy Cadge (2004, pp.161–69) shows in her ethnographic study of an Insight Meditation community in Massachusetts, self-identifying in this way (i.e. as 'a Dharma practitioner but not Buddhist') usually means that one is participating in a quite a different regimen of practice, and a different set of aims *for* practice to those of other, more 'traditional' forms of Buddhism; a set of aims often grounded in a hybrid Buddhist/scientific-materialist ontology, and an individualistic perspective on spiritual life. Also see Braun (2017) and McMahan (2008) for a detailed description of this phenomenon.

psychotherapy and body work, the writing of poetry and fiction, and other non-Buddhist forms of meditation. There are also parallel but linked emergent traditions of practice that Triratna Buddhists draw upon, such as the internet forum-based platform 'Liberation Unleashed' (LU), where practitioners are guided into seeing the emptiness of the self through semi-public online exchanges. Or, perhaps more prominently, Triratna Buddhists use modes of practice inspired by the secular mindfulness meditation movement.

Practice, as will probably already be obvious, is closely linked to ontology, telos and self-identity. Often a change in the kind of practice undertaken means a change in ontology. Certain practices, such as the physical yogas of Tibetan Vajrayāna Buddhism, or the 'mindfulness of the body', take the body itself, and awareness of the body, respectively, as their primary ground. These practices engage with our capacity to perceive our own bodies, and work to make that perception (and the body perceived) calmer and more stable – a body more capable of sustaining the kinds of mental states necessary for transcendental insight to emerge. Other practices, for example, require reflection on the emptiness of awareness itself, bracketing off all but the subtlest aspects of volitional mental activity, and taking a highly refined remainder as their ontology. Deliberate reflection on the emptiness of the *vijnana skandha* is an example of this. Or – to take a different example again– *friendship* and the deepening of friendship is can be seen as the stuff of practice, bringing with it its own specific aims and sub-categories.

One of *my* aims in making such mutual dependencies clear is to begin to make sense of some of the controversies practices and ways of thinking surrounding contexts like LU, or secular mindfulness. These are contexts that sometimes seem to operate in parallel with, or along similar lines to, those within our tradition, while at the same time appearing (to some) difficult to reconcile with some of our own tradition's key values and ideals. Such overlaps are often productive, but can also cause confusion, conflict and misunderstanding. I now wish to show how Foucault's analysis can help us understand why such controversies and misunderstandings emerge.

No given set of practices, taken as it were 'out of context', constitutes a technology of the self in the sense Foucault meant it – or a path to awakening as the Buddha meant it. As will already be clear, practices are nothing in themselves without a substance on which to work (that is, an ontology), or an aim; and any selection of practices, aims and ontologies will be recursively affected by the identity under which a practitioner is operating. All of these things in turn require a community of practitioners whose views and aims are similar enough for these aspects of the overall self-technological assemblage to function. For this reason, practices cannot be simply lifted from one context to another without being dramatically changed, in ways that are infinitely complex and subtle, for practices of self-transformation stand in ineluctable

relations of dependence on aims, identities and ontologies. Someone practicing mindful awareness as a non-Buddhist (perhaps, as a mindfulness teacher) and doing so with the aim of improving the mental health of others, will necessarily be doing something quite different from someone who is practising mindfulness as a member of a committed community of self-identified Buddhists, with the intention of seeing the conditioned nature of all phenomena. In my own ethnographic and historical research into mindfulness communities in Britain and America (Drage, 2018), I found that 'mindfulness' took a place within, and helped to establish, an ontology, a system of practice and a social context very indeed different to that of Triratna Buddhism.

To reiterate: there is, for Foucault (and I agree with him) no such thing as a 'practice' taken independently from the other three categories. As soon as a practice is put into use, it is put into use with an aim in mind (aim), and a substance to work upon (ontology). Practices are intricately bound together with aims, ontologies and ways of becoming, linked in mutually dependent relays and clusters, working together to transform subjectivity. This, as we have seen in the discussion of identity above, never happens in isolation, but in communication with communities: what a practice is *for, what* it works upon, and *who* does it, is decided communally in complex processes of mutual negotiation. This has the important consequence that a body of practice that looks both similar to, and helpful for, the Buddhist path within our own tradition, *but which emerged from a different context,* will necessarily be distinct from a comparable body of practice within our own tradition. Subtle, hard-to-discern differences anywhere in the matrix of aims, practices and identifications that makes up something as large and complex as a Buddhist community cannot help but have ramifying affects across the entire assemblage, which will in turn colour and condition the aim, meaning and result of a given practice.

It goes without saying, even within a single community, a very great range of practices can be found, meaning that multiple, overlapping, even conflicting self-technological assemblages can be in operation. Our own community's range of views about and orientations towards 'Insight Practice' is a good illustration of this. These differences are even more pronounced between distinct but connected communities. For example, the Liberation Unleashed community – at least as I understand it as an external observer – unfolds within a closely related, but also distinctive, assemblage of practices, aims, ontologies. This is an assemblage whose telos is sometimes structured according to a specific interpretation of the 'fetters' model of spiritual progress. That model is in turn approached through a community based primarily online. And that community seems (on the basis of informal conversations I have had with LU practitioners) generally to assume a primarily psychological ontology, or ground, for practice, rather than, say, a ground which emphasises *sambhogakāya* elements such as the Five *Jina*s. The self that a practitioner *exclusively* dedicated

to LU constructs in pursuit of seeing the truth of 'not-self' within this assemblage will inevitably be different – though in ways that might not always be immediately obvious – to the self that an Order Member who exclusively bases themselves in a community of practice grounded in Bhante's framework will construct. Such different self-constructions will understand, interpret and act on any experiences they have in meditation in very different ways, in dependence upon the conceptual and practical conditions which enable those experiences and their discussion with others.

Moreover, since what is at stake here *is* fundamentally the production of the self – as in, what kind of self, and therefore what kind of self-experience, is produced through a given technology of the self – there is another important consequence. Transcendental insight is surely in some sense always the same, wherever and in whomever it appears. However, *experiences of* transcendental insight will be interpreted differently – perhaps even significantly differently – depending on the self-technological context of the practitioner in whom the insight arises. This of course creates perfect conditions for violent misunderstandings to occur between overlapping but distinctive communities. These are misunderstandings in which apparently equivalent terms of art relating to the loftiest aims of spiritual practice – e.g. 'breaking the fetters' – can have radically divergent meanings and link to quite different constellations of aims, ontologies and identities.

These misunderstandings are especially hard to disentangle because our culture does not train us to look for them: instead, it trains us to see concepts through a Cartesian lens, according to which knowledge is, or at least, should be, stable and identical across all contexts, and that therefore signifiers for certain types of knowledge (e.g. 'breaking the third fetter') will also remain stable.

In my view, however, the Dharma tells us something altogether different: it tells us that all things are dependent upon conditions. If one's context of practice is strongly defined by the Bodhisattva Ideal, one will interpret experiences of insight in accordance with this ideal – along with its cosmology of rebirth, and its presiding aim of becoming a Buddha oneself. And as a result, one will work to develop oneself according to the appropriate self-technological assemblage of practices, aims, and ontologies. If, however, those who participate in a given context understand insight in relation to a single lifetime, and through the lens of materialist cosmology, they will build on that insight accordingly. This does not necessarily mean that the insight *itself* was different in different contexts; but the self that one builds as a result of that insight (assuming that one has not decisively seen through all self-clinging altogether, and thus attained wisdom which transcends karmic conditionality) will create a very different set of conditions for further self-transformation, and for further practice on the basis of the self that thus emerges. This side of full enlightenment, given different

conditions, different subjectivities will arise for individual practitioners in dependence upon context. Some subjectivities will be supported by their context in such a way that they unfold in the direction of awakening; others will not.

CONCLUSION: VIEWS AND CONTEXTS

In 1956, pre-empting by many years Foucault's observations about the intimate entanglement of truth and self-transformation, Bhante noted that

> From the viewpoint of traditional spirituality [...] the way in which a man lives is not unrelated to his capacity of the apprehension of Truth, and his ability to understand doctrines of a transcendental nature is thought in part to be determined not only by the integrity of his approach to these doctrine themselves, but also by the integrity of his character in all the relations of his life. (Sangharakshita, 2001, p.41).

Ironically, Descartes himself – who is, as I noted above, often held up as the founding figure of exactly the opposite epistemic perspective – probably himself held a view in some respects similar to Bhante's. It is unlikely that he would have agreed straightforwardly with the modern 'Cartesian' notion that one's capacity to know the truth has nothing whatever to do with the way one lives one's life. Although it does not form a part of his explicit epistemology, his *Meditations* – where he set out the famous *cogito ergo sum* – were modelled closely on the spiritual retreat developed by Ignatius Loyola, in whose Jesuit tradition Descartes had been trained. The meditations were part of a broader regimen of ascetic practice. It may well have been that Descartes saw the solitude of retreat and practices of ethical purification associated with it as crucial, enabling him to attain the mental and spiritual purity necessary for his great philosophical project: using reason to establish the certainty of God's role in the cosmic order (Vendler, 1989).

A crucial feature of Bhante's dharmic writings and activities has been his attempt show that Buddhism, to be effective, must be practiced within a total ethical, epistemic and cosmological context – a context in some ways similar, in its structure if not in its aims, from that which Descartes himself occupied as an early modern Christian. Pre-modern religious cultures were able to provide a setting for spiritual practice in which, as Bhante wrote, 'Every aspect of life, even the lowest and most mundane, is given a transcendental orientation that enables it to function, in a general way, as a support, if not for the actual living of the spiritual life, then at lest for a more or less constant awareness of the existence of spiritual values' (Sangharakshita, 2001, p.48). This is the type of context he and his followers have sought to develop through the Triratna Buddhist Community.

Foucault too aimed to highlight the importance of a cohesive context like that which Triratna seeks to create, and within which Descartes probably himself operated – a context which acts as the ground for complexly harmonised arrays of practices, aims and ontological commitments aimed at transforming the self. He also wanted to show that we already have the materials we need for creating such an epistemico-moral context within our own society on the basis of our Christian and Greco-Roman heritage.

Recent research in the history and sociology of science, carried out in the Foucauldian tradition, strongly suggests that while an emphasis on *askesis* and community context as preconditions for knowledge was desacralised, it never fully disappeared. Scientists, as historian of science Steven Shapin notes in his book *The Scientific Life* (Shapin, 2010), are put through a rigorous training which works to instil in them epistemic virtues such as objectivity, observational rigour and neutrality – values which have a strong but well-hidden moral subtext. Even if we do not agree with the aims and values associated with scientific, it maintains the link between capacity to see truth and moral character; a link which – according to the rhetoric of mainstream science – has been long-since severed. Foucault's analysis of the technologies of the self shows us that we have in our midst what is necessary to cut through the illusion that access to knowledge does not depend on the qualities and virtues of the knower. It shows that we have what we need and to empower individuals to take responsibility for their own agency by better understanding the conditions for their own transformation.

I say this because I wish to re-affirm the point – a point which Bhante makes repeatedly – is that there is no separating what Buddhists call *views,* from the context in which those views emerge. If we look beneath the rhetoric that surrounds ideas of scientific objectivity, it is clear that scientists do not have access to undiluted truth through unmediated contact with the world of things. Rather, their views about the objectivity of scientific knowledge, about the real existence of material things, or about the efficacy of experimentation in yielding truth, are the result of a long, rigorous training within articulated assemblages of practice. As Bhante again makes clear through his discussion of right view, 'views' are not simply a set of philosophical propositions. They are deeply embedded, profoundly engrained orientations towards the world that have roots in the deepest parts of the self; this is why they are so hard to root out and transform (Sangharakshita, 2001). It is with all of this in mind that we should approach the view, held within some quarters of the Buddhist world that a 'scientific' approach to Buddhism is preferable to those which pre-modern, traditional perspectives prescribe.[6] Knowledge, even scientific knowledge, does

---

[6] See Donald Lopez, *The Scientific Buddha*, for a detailed analysis of this phenomenon (Lopez, 2012).

not come from nowhere: it emerges in dependence upon conditions in profound and unexpected ways. By preferring 'scientific' views over 'traditional' ones, we should acknowledge that we are giving preference to one regimen of self-formation over another, a regimen which inevitably leads to its own, very specific, conceptions of what we are (self-identity), what constitutes our world (ontology), what our lives are for (telos) and how we should live them (practice). Reflecting on this might, I hope, give pause to those who assume that while science is 'objective' and 'real', the Dharma is merely concerned with the human mind. In *all* cases, knowledge, truth and subjectivity are intimately interwoven. It is up to us to choose which of the available technologies of self-transformation we want to place at the centre of our lives.

Foucault's schema might thus not apply just to *deliberate* self-transformation. If it applies to the half-conscious self-formation of scientists, then it probably also applies to the processes of self-making that all humans continually enact. For we *all* have some conception, however vague and conflict-ridden, of *who* we are (self-identity), what exists (ontology), what we do (practice), a sense of what our lives are for (*telos*). Such conceptions are in turn shaped by, and made possible on the basis of, the varied social contexts in which we move. Through reflexive *Gestalten* of understanding – often unconscious – we make futile attempts to turn these heterogeneous elements as a coherent, convincing, lasting whole. It is surely in the midst of this chaotic, protean situation that *wrong views*, in the Buddhist sense, emerge.

And it is in these murky waters that Buddhism seeks to make its intervention. Buddhism, as Bhante conceives it, tells us that our views can be deliberately (re-)shaped and (re-)focused by going for refuge to the Three Jewels. Or, to put this in Foucault's terms, Buddhism tells us that our views can be re-formed by taking up and whole-heartedly engaging the coherent, systematic self-technological assemblage that has been handed down to us by the lineage of the Buddha's disciples. Foucault's argument implies what Bhante has argued explicitly: there is no possibility of the radical transformation of view which stands as the *telos* of the Buddhist path without a proportionately radical transformation of the self. Bhante's writing futher reminds us, with Foucault's, that we cannot undertake such a transformation alone. We must carry it out in the presence of a community, who can affirm its reality, reflect back its necessity, and make sense of its consequences for the individual. The spiritual community is not just an appendix to the self-technological matrix that is dharma practice: it is its constitutive material.

All this has a further practical implication. Significant conflicts within a single community over the ontological grounds of practice, over the telos of the path, or over which norms ought to govern self-identification, might make it difficult or even impossible for that community to share and support each other in the spiritual life, because such conflicts may well lead its members to develop

mutually incommensurable views. To say that view profoundly 'depends' on context and community is to understate the matter: right view is in a sense *constituted by* the context of practice and selves that occupy it. Right view is made up of the transformations made within the individual as they progress towards perfect vision *within a given context*. This helps us explain Bhante's emphasis on creating supportive, coherent contexts for practice. For Bhante, perfect vision requires us to build a Buddha land; and the arising of the Buddha land is itself coterminous with the farthest reach of self-transformation itself: *saṃyaksaṃbodhi*, Perfect Enlightenment.

REFERENCES

Anālayo. (2018). *Rebirth in early Buddhism & current research*. Boston: Wisdom.

Braun, E. (2017). Mindful but not Religious: Meditation and Enchantment in the Work of Jon Kabat-Zinn. In D. L. McMahan & E. Braun (Eds.), *Meditation, Buddhism, and science* (pp. 173–197). Oxford University Press.

Cadge, W. (2004). *Heartwood: The first generation of Theravada Buddhism in America*. University of Chicago Press.

Davidson, A. (2005). Introduction. In F. Gros (Ed.), *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College de France, 1981-82*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. (Original work published 2001).

Davidson, A. I. (1990). Spiritual Exercises and Ancient Philosophy: An Introduction to Pierre Hadot. *Critical Inquiry*, *16*(3), 475–482. https://doi.org/10.1086/448542

Drage, M. (2018). Of mountains, lakes and essences: John Teasdale and the transmission of mindfulness. *History of the Human Sciences*, *31*(4), 107–130. https://doi.org/10.1177/0952695118790429

Foucault, M. (1982). The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry, 8*(4), 777–795.

Foucault, M. (1988a). Technologies of the Self. In L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. H. Hutton (Eds.), *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. London: Tavistock Publications.

Foucault, M. (1988b). *The History of Sexuality, Volume 2* (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.; 2nd Vintage Books ed). New york: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (2005). *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College de France, 1981-82* (F. Gros, Ed.). London: Palgrave Macmillan. (Original work published 2001)

Foucault, M. (2008). *The birth of biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79* (M. Senellart, Trans.). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hadot, P. (2017). *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*. Paris: Michel Albin.

Hadot, P., & Davidson, A. I. (1995). *Philosophy as a way of life: Spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Konik, A. (2016). Reconsidering Foucault's dialogue with Buddhism. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, *35*(1), 37–53. https://doi.org/10.1080/02580136.2015.1118610

Lopez, D. S. (2012). *The scientific Buddha: His short and happy life*. Yale University Press.

Miller, J. (1994). *The passion of Michel Foucault* (1st Anchor Books ed). New York: Anchor Books.

Sangharakshita. (2001). *A survey of Buddhism: Its doctrines and methods through the ages* (9th ed). Birmingham: Windhorse.

Sangharakshita. (2009). *What is the Western Buddhist Order*. https://www.sangharakshita.org/interviews/What_is_the_Western_Buddhist_Order.pdf

Sangharakshita. (2018). *Rebirth Revisited*. https://www.sangharakshita.org/pdfs/rebirth-revisited-for-website.pdf

Sangharakshita. (2019). *The Three Jewels 1* (Kalyanaprabha, Ed.; Vol. 2). Cambridge: Windhorse Publications.

Sangharakshita, & Subhuti. (2018). *Seven Papers* (3rd Edition).

Shapin, S. (2010). *The scientific life: A moral history of a late modern vocation*. University of Chicago Press.

Vendler, Z. (1989). Descartes' Exercises. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, *19*(2), 193–224.