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JAMES AND THE 'EAST'

Buddhism and Japan

David Scott

Williams James – physiologist, psychologist and philosopher – wrestled with the mind and its role in consciousness and experience. His sympathetic awareness of Eastern perspectives, in particular that of Buddhism rather than Hinduism, showcases James's own multifaceted philosophical mind and his continuing relevance in contemporary philosophical debate (Scott 2000; Benke 2011). James's ideas were received particularly well in Japan.

1. James's references to Buddhism

James readily acknowledged materials related to Buddhism. His 1902 *Varieties of Religious Experience* cited Carl Koeppen's 1857 *Die Religionen des Buddha* for an accurate, detailed rendering of Buddhism's *dhyana* meditation levels leading to Nirvana; Hermann Oldenberg's 1882 *Buddha* for the 'Middle Way' position of Buddhism; and Henry Warren's 1898 *Buddhism in Translation* for the popular ethical Jataka Tales. James also owned and annotated other books like Max Muller's 1860 *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* and Paul Carus's 1894 *Gospel of Buddha*.

The charismatic Buddhist spokesman, Dharmapala, recalled attending a lecture of James's at Harvard in December 1903 while visiting America. On recognizing him, James is supposed to have said to him, 'Take my chair. You are better equipped to lecture on psychology than I'. At the end of Dharmapala's exposition, James then declared, 'This is the psychology everybody will be studying twenty five years from now' (Dharmapala 1965: 681). This incident is apocryphal but often repeated. The fact that it was the 'psychology' aspects of Dharmapala's message that James supposedly focused on rather than abstract doctrine is no surprise.

An extended sense of James's images and usage of Buddhism and wider Eastern (yoga, Sufism) spiritual experience is apparent in his Gifford Lectures (King 2005), later published as *Varieties*.

James was one of the earliest persons to bring Buddhism into the academic debate over what the term 'religion' can or should mean or involve. As he put it, 'controversy comes up over the word divine, if we take our definition in too narrow a sense', for 'there are systems of thought, which the world usually calls religious, and yet do not positively assume a God. Buddhism is in this case'; but nevertheless 'we must therefore, from the experiential point of view, call these godless, or quasi-godless creeds "religions" (VRE: 36).

James approved of the Buddha teaching the Middle Way (*madhyama-pratipad*) between severe ascetic mortification and wallowing materialism, and instead seeking 'inner wisdom' (VRE: 288).

With regard to ethics (*shila*), James wrote that 'the humility as to one's self and the charity towards others', we find them in Stoicism, in Hinduism, and in Buddhism in the highest possible degree where they reflect selfless 'unifying states of mind' (VRE: 225).

Within that path, James precisely noted the meditation (*dhyana*) stages used in Theravada Buddhism as the road to Nirvana. Of significance were the 'higher stages' of emptiness (*sunyata*) and still further 'neither ideas nor absence of ideas' (VRE: 318). He also further noted 'the self-control attained by the Japanese through their practice of the Buddhist discipline' (Zen) which undercut an otherwise 'divided self' (VRE: 150).

With regard to Buddhist wisdom (*prajna*), James felt that 'as I understand the Buddhist doctrine of Karma, I agree in principle with that' (VRE: 411). He continued, 'for Buddhism', karma's '"judgment" here means no such bare academic verdict or platonic appreciation', as 'it means in Vedantic or modern absolutist systems'; for, having differentiated Buddhism from Hinduism, 'it [Buddhism] carries on the contrary, *execution* with it' (VRE: 411). In other words, a piece of doctrine (secondary) was useful for generating practical (primary) results.

2. James's thematic overlaps with Buddhism

One broad overlap between James and Buddhism is a general sensitivity toward inner depths and wider potentialities. He had a sense of wider, levels to explore, 'the farther limits of our being plunge' into 'an altogether other dimension of existence from the sensible and merely "understandable" world' (VRE: 406). These other 'dimensions' involve the issues of consciousness, integration, language, philosophy and truth claim criteria.

With regard to *consciousness*, James reckoned that 'I have no doubt whatsoever that most people live, whether physically, intellectually or morally, in a very restricted portion of their potential being', and unfortunately thus 'make use of a very small portion of their possible consciousnesses' (James 1920, II: 253). He felt:

> Our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness. . . . No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded.
>
> (VRE: 308)

Buddhist meditation (*dhyana*) is essentially mental cultivation (*citta-bhavana*) to awaken, unfold and explore deeper level of consciousness (*citta*).

Consciousness for James is wrapped up with movement: '*no state once gone can ever recur or be identical with what it was before*' (PP: 224). He felt that 'experience is remoulding us every moment, and our mental reaction on every given thing is really a resultant of our experience of the whole world up to that date' (PP: 228). This view of experience is similar to that propounded by the Buddha in the Pali Canon (Gunawardane 2001).

Elsewhere James used the metaphor of the stream, for 'every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it' (PP: 246). He argued that 'consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits', rather 'it flows', leading to his conclusion that 'a "river" or a "stream" are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. *In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness*' (PP: 233). This has unmistakable similarities to the Buddhism's 'stream of consciousness' (*vinjnana-sota*), which does not

constitute an abiding static mind substance; which in turn goes back to the inherent change (*anitya*) in all things and processes. James's reductionist view on selfhood is analogous to the basic Buddhist assumption of no-Self (*anatta/anatman*), itself derived from Buddhism's axiom of impermanency/change (*anicca/anitya*), the third and first of the three universal characteristics (*tri-lakshana*) of existence (Ramlakhan 2018; also Kaag 2012; Jiang and Zhou 2019).

James looked inwards and outwards from the narrow ego-driven consciousness. He made frequent references to the subliminal 'transmarginal' forces of the subconscious. It was 'the larger part of each of us', 'for it is the abode of everything that is latent and the reservoir of everything that passes unrecorded or unobserved'; and 'in it arise whatever mystical experiences we may have. . . . our supra-normal cognitions. . . . it is the fountainhead of much that feeds our religion' (VRE: 381). This view has similarities with the consciousness-teaching (*vijnana-vada*) school in Mahayana Buddhism (Shaw 1987); with its framework of a subliminal pre-conceptualization storehouse consciousness (*alaya-vijnana*), a repository of seeds of tendencies from which selective discriminatory conscious choices could then be made by the mind (*manas*).

In terms of comparisons, James's dynamic, flowing, relational view of 'consciousness' seems closer philosophically to Buddhism than to Hume (Mathur 1978). James himself distinguished this Buddhist-like 'shifting of consciousness' from what he sees as the blanket, perhaps static, 'super-consciousness' of monistic Hindu Vedanta (VRE: 407, fn. 31). James's sense of a 'that' rather than a 'what' in experience is comparable to the classical Mahayana Buddhist focus on the thusness/suchness (*tathata*) of things, amid a Buddhist rejection particularly in the Madhyamika school of holding on to of any Absolutist positive or negative 'thing-ness' or 'what-ness'. James's 'pure experience' has some similarities to the Zen Buddhist sense of a natural pre-conceptualizing, pre-discriminatory setting, which Zen called one's original face or no-mind (*mushin*). Both James and Zen Buddhism had a sense of the 'fluidity of experience' (Ishida 2013). He worried that he might be misunderstood; 'to deny that [individual] "consciousness" exists seems so absurd on the face of it – for undeniably "thoughts" do exist', hastening to clarify that 'let me then immediately explain that I mean only to deny that the word stands for an entity, but to insist most emphatically that it does stand for a function' (ERE: 4).

With regard to *integration*, there are Buddhist parallels to James's general view that 'the transition from tenseness, self-responsibility and worry, to equanimity, receptivity, and peace' is 'the most wonderful of all those shiftings of inner equilibrium, those changes of the personal centers of energy' with 'this concentration of the consciousness upon the moment of the day' (VRE: 233). In Buddhism, meditation generates an inner dynamic equilibrium equanimity (*upeksha*). In certain Theravada, Tibetan and Zen meditation techniques, the focus is the moment as it arises, treated with 'mindful-ness' yet not clung to or over-speculated about in advance or in retrospect.

James distinguished 'saintliness', with its degree of moderation, from outright asceticism. James decried the extremes of pessimism and optimism, dogmatism and 'systematic scepticism' (VRE: 266); advocating meliorism as a better, 'midway' position (P: 137–38). This moderate position is akin to Buddhism's Middle Way (*madhyama-pratipad*) rejection of world-wallowing materialism at one extreme and severe asceticism at another extreme, and blanket sceptics, 'eel-wrigglers' (*amaravikkhepa*) at the other end. Both James and Buddhism emphasized experiential verification.

With regard to *language*, for James, selection and discrimination by the senses applies to concepts and language. James acknowledged he was 'vainly seeking to describe by words what I say at the same time exceed either conceptualization or verbalization', warning that 'as long as one remains talking, intellectualism remained in undisturbed possession of the field' and that 'the return to life can't come about by talking. It is an act' (PU: 131). Zen Buddhism matches

this distrust of language and of intellectual formulations. Along its formal meditation come a whole range of Zen ways ('dos'); which include sounds, physical jolts, humour, ridicule, verbal paradoxes ('koans'), aesthetic expressions like calligraphy and the tea ceremony, martial arts like archery and swordplay. All of these techniques are intended to undermine what James considered this tyranny of intellectualism, conceptualization and verbalization.

Yet where did language come from? James argued that 'when the reflective intellect. . . . in the flowing process. . . . distinguishing its elements and parts', these 'these salient parts become identified and fixed and abstracted'; so that 'experience now flows as if shot through with adjectives and nouns and prepositions and conjunctions' (ERE: 46). Or again, 'the essence of life is its continuously changing character; but our concepts are all discontinuous and fixed', so that 'the only mode of making them coincide with life is by arbitrarily supposing positions of arrest therein' (PU: 113). These categories are still arbitrary or secondary since they 'are not parts of reality, not real positions taken by it, but suppositions rather'; at best limited and at worst delusional since 'you can no more dig up the substance of reality with them than you can dip up water with a net, however finely meshed' (PU: 113). Again there are parallels here to the Buddhist sense of inherent change (*anitya*). Both the Madhyamika and Vijnanavada schools viewed language and concepts, as a secondary, or construct (*vikalpyate*) used by an individual's mind (*manas*).

Before/underneath/beyond secondary language was 'pure experience the name I give to the immediate flux of life which furnishes the material to our later reflection with its conceptual categories' (ERE: 46). He refused to define it, for it was 'an experience pure in the literal sense of a *that* which is not yet any definite *what*, though ready to be all sorts of whats' (ERE: 46). Being pre-conceptual and pre-categorizing, 'experience' in its original immediacy is not aware of itself. It simply is. It is a 'that' rather than a 'what' object. James did not seek any (static) ultimate reality to be experienced, for 'although for fluency's sake I myself spoke earlier in this article of a stuff of pure experience', he went on that 'I have now to say that there is no *general* stuff of which experience at large is made'; instead 'there are as many stuffs as there are "natures" in the thing experienced' and 'there appears no universal element of which all things are made' (ERE: 14–15). But in the light of the inherent limitations of conceptual systems, how is 'truth' to actually be established? This problem concerned both James and Buddhism.

With regard to *philosophy*, James's caution over language and priority given to experience, left abstract philosophy as of small importance:

> Philosophy lives in words, but truth and fact well up into our lives in ways that exceed verbal formulation. There is in the living act of perception always something that glimmers and twinkles and will not be caught, and for which reflection comes too late. . . . In the religious sphere, in particular, belief that formulas are true can never wholly take the place of personal experience.
>
> (VRE: 360)

James's 'epistemic primacy of experience' (Suckiel 1995: 7, 39) was on show with James's letter to Frances Morse on April 12–13, 1900, where re-writing the second chapter of *Varieties* he considered his role was 'to defend "experience" against "philosophy"' (James 1920, II: 127). At the time Japanese reformers like Inoue Enryo had argued that 'I believe that philosophy can learn from Buddhism's pragmatic framing of metaphysics and epistemology', for 'philosophy should recall its existential impulse' (Schulzer 2019: 248). Systematic formulas may be useful, but they are not in themselves absolutes for James (or Enryo), rather 'philosophic and theological formulas are secondary products' (VRE: 341). To bicker over secondary doctrine at the expense of primary exterior and interior actions is wasteful diversion.

James's holistic vision was not of a static absolute but of a dynamic pluralistic universe. He denied that the world could be explained in terms of any absolute force or scheme mechanistically determining the interrelations of things or events. Instead, he held that the interrelations are just as real as the things themselves:

> Without being one throughout, such a universe is continuous. Its members interdigitate with their next neighbours in manifold directions, and there are no clean cuts between them anywhere.
>
> (PU: 115)

> Our 'multiverse' still makes a 'universe'; for every part, tho it may not be in actual or immediate connexion, is nevertheless in some mediated connexion, with every other part however remote, through the fact that each part hangs together with its very next neighbours in inextricable interfusion.
>
> (PU: 146)

Opposing categories like approach–contact, presence–absence, unity–plurality, independence–relativity, mine–yours and this connection–that connection are for James flawed, since 'in the real concrete sensible flux of life experiences compenetrate each other' (PU: 113). Consequently

> past and future, for example, conceptually separated by the cut to which we give the name of the present, and defined as being the opposite side of that cut, are to some to some extent, however brief, co-present with each other throughout experience.
>
> (PU: 113)

Similarly, Buddhism's Middle Way rejected both extremes of uniform monism and fragmented unconnected atomism. In Mahayana Buddhism, Nagarjuna's Madhyamika school emphasized how conceptual opposites are in reality dependent upon each other. James's interrelations also parallel the general 'systems' framework of Buddhism. The idea of dependent origination (*pratitya-samutpada*) was further developed in the Hua-Yen school's concept of interpenetration and metaphor of 'Indra's Web'.

With regard to *truth claim criteria*, in contrast to evangelical Christian certainties of his time, James was much more cautious:

> He who acknowledges the imperfectness of his instrument, and makes allowances for it in the discussing of his observations, is in a much better position for gaining truth than if he claimed his instrument to be infallible. . . . Nevertheless, dogmatism will doubtless continue to condemn us. . . . The wisest of critics is an altering being, subject to the better insight of the morrow, and right at any moment only 'up to date' and 'on the whole'. When larger ranges of truth open, it is surely best to be able to open ourselves to their reception, unfettered by our previous pretensions.
>
> (VRE: 267)

In an explicit call for a comparative approach, James felt that 'pragmatism has to postpone dogmatic answer, for we do not know certainly which type of religion is going to work best in the long run' – a call for a comparative approach, since 'the various overbeliefs of men, their several faith-ventures, are in fact what are needed to bring the evidence in' (P: 144). At the time, faced with what he considered as 'essential contrast' in doctrine between Christianity and 'its greatest

rival Buddhism'; Josiah Royce was disturbed that 'recent pragmatism. . . . in the form empha-sized by James' argued that 'truth is mutable' (Royce 2001: 192, 140, 291; also Glidden 2018).

The inherent change (*anitya*) of all physical, mental and conceptual things propounded in Bud-dhism has some similarities to James; as indeed does the Madhyamika, Tibetan and Zen caution against linguistic rigidity and dogmatism. This is akin to Madhyamika Buddhist deconstructionist talk of using emptiness (*sunyata*) as 'the antidote for all dogmatic views' (Candrakirti 1979: 150–51).

In considering the 'very notion of truth', James rejected the idea that 'opinion ought to be expected to be absolutely uniform in this field' and instead argued from a self-proclaimed stance of empiricism that 'different functions in the organism of humanity allotted to different types of men' (VRE: 267–68). He suggested the 'relativity of different types of religion to different type of need' (VRE: 115). This has echoes of the Mahayana notion of skilful means (*upaya kausalya*), whereby different teachings and techniques are pitched at and are appropriate at different levels for different types of persons.

James gave an 'empiricist criterion' for evaluating religion – 'by their fruits ye shall know them [Matthew 7.16], not by their roots', so that 'results are to be the grounds of our final spir-itual estimate of a religious phenomenon' (VRE: 26). He considered that theories were only of use if they have a practical result:

> You must bring out of each word its practical cash-value, set it at work within the stream of your experience. It appears less as a solution, then, than as a program for more work, and more particularly as an indication of the ways in which existing reali-ties may be changed. *Theories thus become instruments.* . . . Pragmatism unstiffens all our theories. . . . in always appealing to particulars. . ., in emphasizing practical aspects. . ., in its disdain for verbal solutions, useless questions, and metaphysical abstractions.
>
> (P: 31–32)

For James, 'pragmatism' as a philosophy shapes one's attitude toward religion, both in terms of what actually constitutes 'religion' and in considering religious pluralism; for '*if theological ideas prove to have value for concrete life, they will be true, for pragmatism, in the sense of being good for so much*' (P: 40).

The idea of theories as instruments of change echoes the functionalist disposition in Bud-dhism (Scott 1995). In the Pali Canon, the Buddha was asked, 'What is the Dhamma?' *Dhamma*, or *dharma*, loosely translated, means 'teachings'. Instead of replying with specific formulations, the Buddha is given as replying: 'Of whatsoever teachings you can assure thyself' conduce to 'dispassions, to detachment, to frugality, content, energy, delight in good'; then 'of such teach-ings you may with certainty affirm "This is the Dhamma"' (Woodward 1973: 186). This text gives an explicit functionalist listing of traits of character, through which one can recognize the worth of teachings. Wisdom thus involves tangible transformations of personality rather than abstract definitions.

James also counselled against metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable:

> Is the world one or many? – fated or free? – material or spiritual? – here are notions either of which may or may not hold good of the world; and disputes over such notions are unending. The pragmatic method in such cases is to try and interpret each notion by tracing its respective consequences. What differences would it practically make to any one if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical differ-ence whatsoever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle. . . . It is astonishing to see how many philosophical disputes

collapse into insignificance the moment you subject them to this simple test of tracing a concrete consequence.

<div align="right">(P: 28, 30)</div>

The Pali Canon contains the famous 'Unanswered Questions', which the Buddha refused to answer. These 'abstract', metaphysical questions are ultimately distractions. Buddhism similarly argues that one should instead do something about the here and now, where change can be brought about. As the Buddha says of those Unanswered Questions in the *Culamalunkya sutta*:

> Why, Malunkyaputta, has this not been explained by me? It is because it is not connected with the goal, is not fundamental to the brahma-cariya ['holy life'], and does not conduce to turning away from, nor to dispassion, stopping, calming, superknowledge, awakening, nor to Nibbana. Therefore it has not been explained.

<div align="right">(MN 1975: 101)</div>

Traditional speculation about the past and future is not effective. Buddhist commentators have argued that this particular episode from the *Culamalunkya sutta* identifies the Buddha as 'a Pragmatist' (Jayatilleke 1963: 470–71). Similarly, the *Sabba sutta* is identified by Kalupahana (1969) as a specifically 'empirical' tract. Elsewhere in the Pali Canon, the *Abhayarajakumara sutta* characterizes *dhamma* sometimes as pleasant or unpleasant, depending on the situation; as factually truthful, and above all as useful (*atthasamhitam*). Theravada Buddhism is pragmatic in a sense through some 'truths' being in turn 'useful' and so worth teaching in terms of actual human liberation and transformation. Here, Theravada Buddhism converges with the Mahayana sense of skilful means (*upaya kausalya*). Daisetz Suzuki, in a deliberate nod to James, similarly considered that the Buddha had a 'pragmatic conception of the intellect' and of the uselessness of 'idle speculation' (Suzuki 1949: 50). In other words, the Buddha's teachings are intended to bring about actual change in the individual, whether the teachings are or are not pleasant to hear. The method of judging truth is the pragmatic one of usefulness.

James distinguished 'theoretic knowledge which is knowledge about things' with 'living contemplation'; in which if 'as metaphysicians' we are curious about 'the inner nature of reality or about what really *makes it go*', then 'we must turn our backs upon our winged concepts altogether' and 'dive back into the flux. . . . if you wish to *know* reality' (PU: 112–13). This could have equally come from standard Buddhist teachings. James's introspection overlaps with Buddhist mindfulness and experiential enquiry (Stanley 2012). James and early Buddhism have a similar epistemological attitude, though stressing the centrality of perceptual knowledge (Kalupahana 1986). Indeed, we are left with the suggestion that 'the parallels between the Buddha's non-substantialist philosophy and that of William James are so many' that 'one begins to wonder about the extent to which the latter may have been influenced by the former' (Kalupahana 1987: 10).

3. Japanese reception of James

James's explorations had a marked welcome in Japan among religious (Buddhist), philosophical (Kyoto school), psychological (New Psychology) and literary circles. This can be followed in figures like Daisetz Suzuki, Kitaro Nishida, Tanaka Odo, Yujiro Motora, Kazuo Fukumoto, Tomokichi Fukurai, Hagiwara Sakutaro, and Natsume Soseki. Suzuki is further important for feeding his Buddhist appropriation of James back into America and the wider West.

James's views were picked up by Japanese philosophical circles. Here we come full circle. James's views on consciousness and 'pure experience' had been passed on to the Kyoto School

leader Kitaro Nishida by Daisetz Suzuki, then in America. Suzuki wrote to Nishida in September 1902, recommending James's recently published *Varieties of Religious Experience* and urging Nishida to focus on James's idea of religious experience which he said helped him to understand his own Buddhist insight experiences. Nishida replied to Suzuki, 'the book you mentioned, varieties of Religious Experience by Professor James, sounds very interesting, and I would certainly like to read it' (Nishida 1902). Later on, in July 1907, Nishida told Suzuki that 'I want to build my philosophy on the reality of the mind [*shinri*] instead of on abstract theory [*ronri*] on which most philosophies have been based', and that 'in this connection I find William James quite interesting' (Yusa 2002: 89). Nishida was particularly attracted by James's take on 'pure experience' (Dilworth 1969; Friedl 2001; Krueger 2006; Shimizu 2016). Nishida followed James's emergence; having his own annotated copy of James's 1890 *Principles of Psychology*, his 1902 *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and the various essays that went into James's 1912 *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. In his 1911 major work *Zen no kenkyu* ('An Inquiry into the Good'), Nishida cited with approval James's 1904 essay 'A World of Pure Experience' and 'The Stream of Thought', which is chapter 9 of James's 1890 *Principles of Psychology* (Nishida 1990: 5, 33). In his 1929 paper *Shodo to shisho* ('Impulse and Thought'), the leading light in Japanese pragmatism, Tanaka Odo, credited James with re-orienting psychology in a new direction, 'replacing atomistic rationalism and crude empiricism with a fresh and elegant functionalism' (Nolte 1987: 45).

Japanese psychology circles were also attracted by James. In *Rikugo zasshi* ('Cosmos Journal'), Yujiro Motora, the founding father of Japanese psychology, presented James's pragmatism as early as 1888; and with Kazuo Fukumoto translated James's *Principles of Psychology* into Japanese in 1902, followed by *Pragmatism* in 1910. Tomokichi Fukurai, a student of Motora's, published *Zemusu-shi Shinrigaku* ('The Psychology of James') in 1900, and *Jiga to ishiki* ('The Self and Consciousness', an abridged translation of James's *Principles of Psychology*) in 1917.

Finally, literary circles in Japan also picked up on William James. The dynamics of this further dissemination of James is indicated with the poet Hagiwara Sakutaro, who wrote to a fellow poet Taja Fuji that 'I recently read James' The Ego and Consciousness, abridged in Professor Fukurai's translation' and 'found it of the greatest interest', for 'it's everything a psychology should be' (Mehi 2015: 259). In his own 1928 *Shi no genri* ('Principles of Poetry'); with regard to questions of the relation of self, perception and consciousness, Sakutaro considered that 'William James, a great modern psychologist, has given a clear and well-known answer' with his formulation 'the stream of consciousness' (Mehi 2015: 273). James's 1890 *Principles of Psychology* and 1902 *Varieties of Religious Experience* were also cited with approval in Natsume Soseki's 1907 *Bungakuron* ('Principles of Literature'), an 'extended empiricism' in which, like James, Soseki moved from treating sensory data in terms of discrete impressions to favouring an analysis of continuous variation, with consciousness as a flow or stream of instantaneous moments (Soseki 2009: 18, 74).

4. Back to America for James

Daisetz Suzuki, in America from 1897 to 1909, had translated *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* in 1900 and published his own *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism* in 1907. Suzuki was known to James, leading some to wonder whether Suzuki's talk of satori as 'an insight into the Unconscious' was influenced by James (Copleston 1982: 63). Suzuki's feedback to Nishida has already been noted, but in 1949 Suzuki returned to America, where he re-presented links between American pragmatism and Zen Buddhism (Suzuki 1954). The links and overlaps between James, pragmatism and Suzuki's Zen were immediately picked up by American commentators (Ames 1954, 1955). Suzuki cited James's experiential focus in his discussion of enlightenment (*satori*), 'that there is noetic quality in mystic experiences has been pointed out

by William James' (Suzuki 1956: 103); and in a nod to James noted Buddhism's 'pragmatic tendency' (Suzuki 1964: 36).

David Kalupahana, during his ongoing academic career at Hawai'i, further reinforced this pragmatism-Buddhism linkage, mediated explicitly in part through James (John 2013). In Kalupahana's *A History of Buddhist Philosophy*, the Buddha is termed 'a radical empiricist and a pragmatist', followed by a long extract by Kalupahana from James's 1896 lecture *Will to Believe* (Kalupahana 1992: 87).

However, pragmatism has not been the only fertile area for philosophical convergence between James and Buddhism. James's stance was developed by Alfred North Whitehead into process philosophy. The subsequent interaction between American process philosophy and Buddhism continued with Charles Hartshorne, David Hall, Nolan Jacobson, Jay McDaniel, David Miller and Robert Neville (Inada and Jacobson 1991).

Something of a double spiral is apparent between Buddhism and American pragmatism. Inada reckoned that 'the whole American pragmatic movement was one in which the holistic experiential nature of things remained constantly at the forefront', that 'the Buddhist presence in America made way for new contact with the pragmatic nature', and 'in fact the mere exposure of Americans to Buddhism in all its forms is already a clear indication that this pragmatic nature is being stirred or aroused' (Inada 1991: 76). Consequently, some argue that 'William James's radical empiricism of "pure experience" both anticipated and directly influenced the transmission of Zen in the West' (Bricklin 2003: 85).

Finally, current East-West discussions involve some of James's explorations of physiology and psychology. Writing of Buddhist mindfulness of breathing meditation technique, and the talk of the observing the flow of the 'stream of breathing' by James (ERE: 19); one Buddhist practitioner was struck by the similarity of 'James' extraordinary observation' that 'what we call the stream of consciousness is a process' that 'when scrutinized reveals itself to consist chiefly of the stream of one's breathing' (Laycock 1994: 260, fn. 185). James's focus on 'pure experience' has been linked to the neuroscience of Buddhist mediation (Holder 2013), while his focus on the psychology of religion has fed back into Asian Studies (Taylor 1978).

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