

TEACHING BUDDHISM IN NEW ZEALAND UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an investigation into the university-level teaching of Buddhism in New Zealand, which has developed as part of the international spread of education about Buddhism for both Buddhists and non-Buddhists. The study was based on *Interpretivism* and accordingly sought to understand and interpret university teachers' perceptions and experiences about their teaching of Buddhism; as they engage with the students' learning in this field.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were employed as the primary research method. All seven university teachers who teach Buddhism in New Zealand were invited to be the participants. Six university teachers participated in this research-study. Five of them were academic teachers, respectively teaching at Religious Studies of Massey, Victoria and Otago. Another one was a New Zealand-born Zen teacher who had been teaching a Zen meditation workshop at Auckland University of Technology for several years, and taught two Buddhism-related courses at the University of Auckland. These participants were chosen according to the information provided on official websites of New Zealand universities.

The findings from the study showed that the university-level teaching of Buddhism in New Zealand, though growing, had been limited by the number of teachers and students. As fewer students were primarily interested in Buddhism, outward funding support appeared to be a very important factor for its future development. In terms of teachers' role, *objective-outsider* remained the main position for scholars and scholar-practitioners in teaching Buddhism in university classroom. In addition to the pursuit of knowledge, there were also alternative educational opportunities, such as Zen workshop, for university staffs and students to learn Buddhism, outside university classroom.

This thesis is significant in that it provided a bibliography and a set of data for the university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West, particularly New Zealand. It established a space for future educational research into the university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West, as part of the field of 'Buddhism and Education.' In future studies, the limited approaches to teaching Buddhism in universities could be investigated on the basis of the literatures and findings of this study.

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.

Li Ting Huang: _____

Date: _____

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers an introduction to the background of the researcher as well as a brief account of the recent development of Buddhist Studies in the West; in particular that of *New Zealand and Australian universities*, as these facts motivated me to seek an understanding of the teaching of Buddhism in New Zealand universities. An outline of the structure of the thesis follows.

1.1 My Research Journey

Personal Background

As an international student from Taiwan and a novice Buddhist nun, this thesis played a critical role in the cross roads of my own life. I became a Buddhist nun, half way into my study period at Auckland University of Technology. At that time, I faced the dilemma of keeping the pursuit of knowledge in university or turning to the journey of mindfulness in my temple.

Being a novice Buddhist nun in New Zealand, returning to study in the Buddhist colleges and universities in my home countries had been the only opportunity for me to get a systematic education of Buddhist doctrines and practices. However, the current Buddhist monastic education offered in Taiwan seems to lack sufficient educational opportunities to develop English language skills and cultural understandings of the West. I firmly believed that the research experience and English language learned through this study would be helpful to my future life in New Zealand. These factors prompted me to continue my studies at Auckland University of Technology. With the temple and my Master's support, I took up this challenge.

My supervisors encouraged me to conduct a study about Education and Buddhism. I was amazed by this opportunity to combine academic learning with my religious pursuits. To begin my research about the educational opportunities about Buddhism for Buddhists and non-Buddhists in New Zealand, I searched for information about the study of Buddhism in the West.

Buddhist Studies Springing Up in the West

Many universities in the West have been offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses about Buddhism. A wide array of undergraduate courses is offered in many study areas, such as Asian Studies, Art History, and various Eastern languages. Furthermore, the graduate programs in Religious Studies or Philosophy with a specialization in Buddhist Studies are now available in thirty-five universities in the United States, six in Canada, six in the United Kingdom, and two respectively in Denmark and Switzerland (C. Muller, 1997, H-Buddhism Updated, 2008). In addition to visiting Buddhist temples and meditation centres, one who intends to learn more about Buddhism has an alternative: to enrol in a course unit with Buddhism components, or to conduct a research project with a Buddhism-related topic.

These are, probably, due to “*the unexpected surge of scholarly interests in Buddhism in general* (Prebish, 2002, p. 17)” and the establishment of centres for Buddhist Studies within Western universities. Most of the universities mentioned above employed up to two scholars who are doing research and giving lectures in Buddhism. In particular, thirteen of these universities had three or more academics who are interested in Buddhist Studies. These academics generally found their employment within departments of Asian (Oriental/Indian) Studies or Religious Studies. In addition, in 1961, the first Buddhist Studies centre was established in the University of Wisconsin at Madison in the United States, and began to award PhD degrees in Buddhist Studies. By 1977, the International Association of Buddhist Studies was set up under the avocation of scholars in the UW-Madison. Its publication, *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, has been one of the flagship professional journals in Buddhist Studies. (Lee, 2004a) Thereafter, many Buddhist Studies centres and associations have been set up in the West. These trend-setting research centres have been offering academic programs/courses units leading to undergraduate or postgraduate degrees specialising in Buddhist Studies.

For example, by 2009, the University of California at Berkeley and Los Angeles in the United States offered between thirty and forty Buddhist Studies and Buddhism-related courses. As the official webpage of UCLA Center for Buddhist Studies (2009) claimed, “*several hundred students take courses on Buddhism every year at UCLA, the largest enrolments of any university in the United States.*” Students who were interested in Buddhism could seek a PhD and MA degree in Buddhist Studies, or a Bachelor in Religious Studies, Asian Religions or East Asian Languages and Cultures.

Likewise, in Australia, the University of Sydney is offering a Buddhist Studies program for postgraduate students. Students can seek a Master degree in Buddhist Studies by research which includes a supervised research project as preparation to enter a research postgraduate degree such as MPhil or PhD. In addition, academic organisations such as the University Buddhist Education Foundation and Australian Association of Buddhist Studies were respectively set up in 2000 and 2004 in Australia for the purpose of funding the teaching of Buddhist Studies within universities and building connects among individual scholars and research students who are interested in Buddhism. Furthermore, in 2004 a memorandum of academic exchange was established between the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies of the Dharma Drum University in Taiwan and the Department of Studies in Religion of the University of Sydney. ("Highlights Of Ddmba Sydney 2004," 2005)

At that time, a more important question for me was: how many universities in New Zealand are teaching Buddhism-related course? Even more surprisingly, from the university official websites, I found that five New Zealand universities were offering introductory and advanced courses in Buddhism in both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

University-level teaching of Buddhism in New Zealand

In New Zealand, the department of Religious Studies at the University of Canterbury used to be well-known for its Buddhist Studies section. Nevertheless, besides two papers on Sanskrit, its Buddhist Studies courses had become not available since the only one academic specialising in Buddhism, Dr Paul Harrison, had gone to the Centre for Buddhist Studies of Stanford University. Fortunately, as the official pages indicated, Massey University, the University of Otago, and Victoria University of Wellington were still offering Buddhism-related courses.

It is a pity that Buddhist Studies had not been set up at the two universities in Auckland. Even though, there were still some courses and activities about Buddhism. In the University of Auckland, Buddhism-related contents are taught within two sessions of '*Philosophy of Religion (PHIL 207/327)*'. Its Centre for Continuing Education offered three introductory courses about Buddhism in 2007 as well: '*Introduction to Zen*' and '*Women in Buddhism*' by a New Zealand-born Buddhist preacher and '*Great Names in Buddhist Philosophy*' by James Stewart who just completed a MA thesis in Buddhist philosophy. Respectively in 2007 and 2008, Dr Koji Tanaka's seminar on 4 April 2007

entitled “*On Nagarjuna’s ontological paradox*” and a PhD candidate’s seminar on 12 Mar 2008 entitled ‘*How can a Buddha Come to Act - The Possibility of a Buddhist Account of Ethical Agency.*’ Although Buddhism is not taught in the academic curriculum of Auckland University of Technology, there is a spirituality group consists of staff and students who practice ‘Zen (Buddhist meditation)’ in a multi-faith space at lunchtime every Monday.

In terms of academic outcomes, there were *four* PhD dissertations with Buddhism-related topic awarded by New Zealand universities, and at least *three* are work in progress. Also, there were *twenty-one* Master theses with Buddhism-related topics awarded, which are primarily in the field of Religious Studies and some in architecture, anthropology, theology, philosophy, or art & design. (cf. Appendix B) Furthermore, student societies for Buddhists within Auckland University of Technology, Massey University and the University of Auckland revealed that Buddhism has been gradually integrated into New Zealand university life.

In this case, it is not unreasonable to say that New Zealand universities have been following the international trend of undergraduate teaching, postgraduate supervision and academic research in Buddhism throughout the scholarly world.

Small Conclusion

“The current globalisation of university-level educational opportunities prompts us to ask: what kinds of education about ‘Buddhism’ are available where and to whom; and what knowledge and skills are appropriate for a successful teacher of Buddhism in a multi-religious and multi-cultural world? “ – Brian Bocking, 2003 (Buddhist Studies and the Study of Religions)

As the academic study of Buddhism occupies a significant place in the curriculum of Western universities, university-level teaching of Buddhism is influential in contributing insights into Buddhism for Buddhists and non-Buddhists in the West. For this reason, the teaching of Buddhism in universities has been brought to attention of both teachers of Buddhism and Buddhist communities. Considering the complexity owing to teachers and students’ cultural backgrounds or religious identities and the variety that Buddhism itself offers, the teaching of Buddhism in university actually involves a broad array of interrelated philosophical and pedagogical debates.

However, as I will indicate in the literature review, much had been addressed on the history of Buddhist Studies and the development of Buddhist communities in the West,

but very few attempts had been made to describe or investigate teaching Buddhism in universities. In the case of New Zealand, Spuler (2002) and Kemp (2007) respectively wrote on the arrival and development of Buddhism in New Zealand, and now seems to be a good time to explore the university-level teaching of Buddhism here.

With these concerns, the study aims to investigate into the teaching of Buddhism in New Zealand universities, which has developed as part of the international spread of education about Buddhism. Even though New Zealand universities is a distinct group of universities, it originated from and are still having much to do with the Western scholarly world. Therefore, this study can be regarded as constituting a kind of ‘case study’ of Western university practices in teaching Buddhism.

The thesis is thus a good place to start to broaden the space of the issue about teaching Buddhism in the West as part of the field of educational research. By investigating the teaching of Buddhism in New Zealand Universities, I expect to contribute to a “sympathetic understanding” and “personal evaluation” (Reynolds, 2001, p.9) concerning the current university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West, from a two-fold perspective: that of a Buddhist nun and an international student from Taiwan.

1.2 Chapter Overviews

This chapter provides background information of the topic and an introduction to the aim of this thesis.

Chapter Two offers a brief account of Buddhist Studies as a Western discipline by reviewing a small but critical body of literature about the university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West. An introduction to the scholarly publications on ‘Buddhism and Education’ follows, as a knowledge base of the methodology chapter of this study.

Chapter Three provides a theoretical background to my research and discusses the methods and techniques that were employed for conducting the research and for the collection and analysis of the data.

Chapter Four presents the results of interviews and the analysis on the emerging themes. It gives some insights into the philosophical and pedagogical bases of the teaching Buddhism in universities in the West.

Chapter Five discusses the findings by connecting the emerging themes extracted from the findings with existing research studies and literature of Chapter Two.

Chapter Six draws conclusions from these findings, and indicates the implications. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are also considered.

CHAPTER 2

TEACHING BUDDHISM

IN UNIVERSITY

This Chapter offers a brief introduction to a body of Western literature on teaching Buddhism in university and a synthesis discussion of the purpose, methods, contents, and people involved in the university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West.

2.1 A Brief Introduction to Western Literature

Although there had been an arguably substantial growth of the academic arena for Buddhologists in the West, it was noted that comparatively little literature had focused on the teaching of Buddhism in college and university settings. (Fenn, 2001, p. 44; Prebish, 2002, p. 31)

Prestigious Buddhologist Charles Prebish (2002) conducted two surveys to elicit demographic information about American scholars of Buddhist Studies and their enterprises, respectively in 1992 and 1995, by distributing a questionnaire to a list of 125 and (an updated list of) 140 chosen scholars “*whose primary teaching and research work fell within the discipline of Buddhist Studies* (p.28)” with 69.6 and 75.7 percent response rate. There are three major findings of Prebish’s surveys. Firstly, Buddhist Studies in America was suggested as “*a young discipline, with the 1995 data showing 1980 as the average year for earning the PhD.* (p. 28)“ The earliest doctoral degree of the respondents of the survey was awarded in 1948. Second, many scholars have multiple specializations among Japanese, Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, Korean and other area’s Buddhism. Third, in terms of scholarly publications, mostly were referred articles, chapters and book reviews. In the end of that report, he noted that:

“Interestingly, none of the material included in Hart’s Religious Studies survey or in the narrative response to mine offered any information about teaching Buddhism in the college or university setting.

In addition, of the 25 panels and 75 individual section of papers of the recent Twelfth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, including more than 200 speakers, no single paper addressed the issue of teaching Buddhism. (p. 31)“

Even though, by a synthesis of the data collected in his two Buddhist Studies surveys, the publication figures reported in Hart's 1991 survey and the result of an item entitled "*Faculty Attitudes and Characteristics: Results of a 1998-99 Survey*" of the September 3, 1999 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Prebish pointed out that "*the majority of Buddhist Studies scholars surveyed are equally involved in teaching as their primary enterprise.* (p. 31)" This statement provides statistical evidence for Prebish's point that the teaching of Buddhism, like the research of Buddhism, occupies an important place in Buddhist Studies scholars' enterprise, which is one of the more intriguing issues of the last few decades. This can be demonstrated again with teachers' voices found in the literature.

Earlier Western Literature (1981-1993) on Teaching Buddhism

Voices of Western scholars on teaching Buddhism in universities were primarily found from the thirteen monographs of the International Conference on Buddhist Education. The International Conferences on Buddhist Education have been held by the Hua-Fan University in Taiwan every two years since 1981. Buddhologists from North America and Europe were invited to speak on the education of/about Buddhism from Western perspectives.

Among these, the university-level teaching of Buddhism had been one of the most important issues of discussion. For example, Gard (1981) discussed the place of Buddhist Studies in university curriculum; Chappell (1986) spoke on the introduction of a doctoral programme in Buddhist Studies at the University of Hawaii; Willemen (1983) reported the role of Buddhism in the teacher-training programmes at Belgium state universities; Gard (1994a, 1994b, 1996) spoke on the correlation between Buddhism and Science in a college of Engineering and the way to integrate humanities, technology, and modern Buddhist education; Redmond (1990) presented a Buddhist perspective on medical education; Bechert (1995) talked about Buddhist Studies as a subject of university teaching in the West using the case of Germany and Austria. In addition, there were also some voices arguing the importance of incorporating the study about Buddhism with other subject disciplines.

Later discussions after 1990 on this topic can be found in panels about Buddhist education and articles as reflections to the discipline Buddhist Studies. According to Hori (2002a), there were three sponsored panels entitled "*Using the Lotus Sutra to Teach the Course in Buddhism* (1992)," "*Teaching the Course on Zen* (1993)," and

“Teaching the Course in Japanese Religion (1993)” held in the United States, into the issues of teaching Buddhism in the West. These very well-attended panels revealed university teachers’ efforts in reflecting and seeking to improve their teachings of Buddhism in the West. (Hori, 2002a, p. ix) Lack of further information about these panels has made it impossible for me to obtain the relevant documents.

Teaching Buddhism Conference (1999) at Mc Gill University

With the growth of the field of Buddhist Studies in the recent three decades and the expansion of Buddhist communities in the West, a ‘Teaching Buddhism Conference’ was held at Mc Gill University, Canada in 1999. Buddhist Studies teachers (mostly from North American colleges and universities) gathered to share their experiences on teaching all levels of undergraduate courses about Buddhism. The conference posed three critical questions, which reflected Buddhist Studies teachers’ major concerns on teaching Buddhism in university:

“How should Buddhism, a religion which is ultimately ‘foreign’ to Western experience, be taught?”

How should one teach central Buddhist doctrines and ideas?

Should one teach Buddhist practice, and if so how? “

(“Amazon UK Book Description,” 2002)

The conference has contributed to the developing agenda of teaching Buddhism in universities in the West. Its outcomes included two editions of collection of the fourteen conference proceedings (Fenn; Greider; Grimes; Hori; Jarow; Jenkins; Lewis; Mattis; Prebish; Reynolds; Waldron; Waterhouse; Wotypka) and a website that offers information for teachers who teach Buddhism in the West. Since the time, a few participants have been continuously addressing the issue of teaching Buddhism in university; and some of the university teachers wrote to respond. For instance, Reynolds (2001) and Park (2002) respectively presented a revised version of their conference proceedings on ‘Teaching Theology and Religion’ and ‘Hsi Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism.’ Specifically, Mavi Fenn (2001) presented the results of her preliminary study on the academic teaching of Buddhism in the West on ‘the Journal of Global Buddhism,’ which is the only one research in the topic until now.

Since then, many voices on teaching Buddhism in Western universities have been emerging through academic journals. In the last five years, we can see the growing

concerns of the Western academy concerning on the university-level teaching of Buddhism (Berkwitz, 2007; Corless, 2003; Sarbacker, 2005; Thurman, 2006; J. N. Tsai, 2008) from academic journals such as *Journal of American Academy of Religion*, *Journal of Global Buddhism*, *Journal of International Association of Buddhist Studies*, and *Teaching Theology and Religion*.

Fenn's Survey (2001) on Teaching Buddhism

Mavis Fenn, a lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Waterloo, completed a preliminary study on teaching Buddhism in the West based on the statistics compiled by *online questionnaire* conducted in August 2000. Thirty-one colleges and universities (mostly in the United States of America and Canada) participated in the study. Victoria University of Wellington and Australian National University took part in this survey.

The survey investigated the *place* and *features* of Buddhist Studies in universities and colleges in the West by 2001. Departmental information was investigated by asking questions about institution scale, its location at university, department focus (on teaching, research or both), number of student enrolments in Buddhist Studies as and not as their main focus, the period of time with the largest enrolments in Buddhist Studies, the extent of specialisation, and the length of time that a specialisation or relevant courses had been offered. Questions about curriculum features were raised on the number of graduate and undergraduate courses offered on Buddhism; topics covered and main foci of the Buddhist Studies elements of their program or non-program course offered; language as a teachable subjects offered; and teachers' attitudes toward web-based courses. This study exhibited four major findings:

- (1) On examining the responses regarding enrolment, the academic teaching about Buddhism as a teaching field "*had remained somewhat stable increases* (p. 3)." This was not in accord with Fenn's predictions. She supposed that "*an earlier period of time* (p. 3)," in particular the 1970s, would be referred as the highest period of enrolment. However, three-quarters participants listed "*current*", namely in August 2000, as their highest period of enrolment, and one participant remarked that enrolment had been stable from the 1970s to the present.
- (2) In terms of departmental focus, a ratio of sixty percent (19 out of 31 respondents) showed a fairly equal division between teaching and research, while respectively five respondents felt that teaching predominated and

research predominated. Further, the traditional foci of Buddhist Studies programs were seen to be “*historical*” in combination most often with “*textual*” and “*anthropological*.”

- (3) A great majority (80.65 percent) of the institutions joined in this survey had been offering language study as a teachable subject, mostly in Chinese and Japanese; Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Pali followed. However, a shift “*toward a more contemporary focus frequently combined with social scientific method* (p. 3)“ was presented by half of the institutions. Fenn indicated that such a shift was manifested on the fact that nearly sixty percent reported topics covered in the context of Western Buddhism, American Buddhism, Engaged Buddhism, and Buddhist Ethics. Western Buddhism was most often mentioned, while topics in American Buddhism, Engaged Buddhism and Buddhist Ethics were added within that context.
- (4) Only two institutions had been offering web-based courses on Buddhism, and one institution had offered part of its introductory course on-line. An overall ratio of forty-five percent to fifty-five percent responded but only slightly in favour of web-based courses. Eight stated that web-based courses would be bad. Concerns regarding web-based courses included time and resources for preparation, possibly bad impacts on their survey course, “*the loss of face to face teaching*”, “*intellectual ownership*”, and the risk of injuries due to increasing work load at the computer.(p. 4)

Compared with perceptions and experiences shared by individual teachers in panels and conferences, Fenn’s findings added relatively macroscopic aspects on teaching Buddhism in the West. However, as reported by Fenn, the reliability of these findings appeared a little weak due to the small sample size, the low return rate, and the absence of some institutions where Buddhist Studies has traditionally been important (p. 4). The absence of many universities outside of North America could be seen as another weakness. In the case of New Zealand, although Victoria University of Wellington participated in Fenn’s study, other universities teaching Buddhism in New Zealand were left out. This is probably due to the fact that the study has been done more than five years ago, or due to the online questionnaire method it adopted. Furthermore, Fenn’s study, as a quantitative study, did not include enough discussion on ‘teaching.’ Therefore, I suggest that a qualitative research is required for the topic. Consequently,

an extended discussion on the relationship between teaching and Buddhism is an exciting first step.

2.2 Teaching Buddhism in University

This section discusses the purpose, contents, methods, and people involved in the university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West, on the basis of the given Western literature. A few remarkable pieces of the Eastern literature were drawn as additional resources.

Why Study/Teach Buddhism in University?

(1) Historical Background: The Origin of Buddhist Studies in the West

Buddhist Studies in the West, as a study discipline, have had a hundred-year history. Since much has been written on the history of Buddhist Studies in the West, we need not rehearse the detail, but only identify some of the major features as a background of the teaching about Buddhism in Western universities.

As De Jong (1987, pp. 5-13) noted in his famous work “*A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America*,” although Europeans had had little information about Buddhism early since the middle ages, it was not until the nineteenth century the Western academia began to study Indian sources of Buddhism in Pali and Sanskrit. Notably, Buddhism first became known in the West as a subject of academic studies rather than as a consequence of missionary activities emanating for Buddhist communities (Bechert, 1995, p. 51). This is expressed best by Almond (1988, p. 7) when he says the following:

“Buddhism was ‘discovered’ in the West during the first half of the nineteenth century. It was at this time that the term ‘Buddha’ (‘Buddoo’, ‘Bouddha’, ‘Boudhou’, etc.) began to gain currency in the English- and French- speaking worlds, and that the term ‘Buddhism’ first made its appearance in English and in the scholarly journals which appeared, in part at least, as a consequence of the developing imperial interests of both England and France in the Orient.”

Due to this interest in the Orient, Sanskrit and Pali manuscripts became much easier to obtain in Europe, and this contributed to the emergence of Indiology and Buddhology. The early academic studies in Buddhism were thus philological.

During the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, Buddhist Studies became available in the United States. In 1844, a section of translation of the Lotus Sutra from French to English was published on The Dial of Boston. Later, in 1891, American scholar C. R. Lanmann, who laid a foundation for the academic tradition of Buddhist Studies in the North America, founded the Harvard Oriental Series. (Lee, 2004a)

(2) Professors' Reasons of Teaching Buddhism in University

From the literature, we can find the efforts of university teachers to explicate the purpose of teaching Buddhist Studies in Western university and justifying its place in the academic curricula.

Richard A. Gard (1981, pp. 6-7), a Lecturer in Buddhist Studies at Yale University who had been invited to be a Visiting Professor of Hua Fan University in Taiwan for many years, presented an article entitled “*The Place of Buddhist Studies in University Curriculum*” at the First International Conference of Buddhist Education. He brought up three questions that need to be answered in order to introduce Buddhist Studies to others in university:

- (a) *What is the nature and scope of Buddhist Studies in academic sense?*
- (b) *Where its place should be in the whole university curriculum?*
- (c) *What are its roles in contributing to the general scholarship in universities?*

First of all, he indicated that ‘*the triratna* (three jewels: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha)’ has been the prime concern of Buddhist Studies, while all approaches to Buddhism such as Buddhist art, literature, history, and practice has been secondary considerations. Secondly, he argued that the place and roles of the primary and secondary fields of Buddhist Studies in university curricula needed to be suitably determined. Based on this statement, Gard pointed out that Buddhist elements, namely, “*historical traditions, literary expressions, intellectual attainment, meditative techniques, moral conduct, cultural achievements, and several institutions, activities, and rules* (p.7),” must be recognized as important parts of the content of many disciplines or subjects other than that of religion; these subjects being history, linguistics, science, philosophy and art. He argued that Buddhist Studies should not be isolated from other departments. Gard reasoned that (a) Buddhism is not ‘a religion in Western notion’; (b) in addition to Religious Studies, the academic study of Buddhism employs various methods and data of many disciplines. However, these two statements had been controversial: the first one is obviously associated with the question ‘what Buddhism is’; the second one is

involved with the methodological concerns when studying Buddhism where some voices have argued that the various academic approaches such as anthropology or post-modern theology employed to study Buddhism do bring many benefits but also some problems of secularization (Smith, 1968) or gaps (between Buddhism and Postmodern Theology) existing “*over the nature of emptiness* (Glass, 1995).”

Gard’s second claims may best be supported by Frank E. Reynolds (2001, p. 9-10), a Professor of Buddhist Studies and History of Religions at the University of Chicago Divinity School. Reynolds, who opposed “*the rigid idea that liberal education is the study of some fixed core of Western values* (Hori, 2002b, p. 170),” argued that the main purpose of teaching Buddhism in the undergraduate context is to contribute to the process of liberal education in postmodern age that takes serious account of the globalisation and pluralism. In addition, Waldron (2008), an Associate Professor of Religion at Middlebury College indicated that teaching Buddhism can help students to bridge the humanities and the sciences. He argued that modern education of science and social science can be seen as a foundation of Buddhist Modernity in dealing with the complex challenges of worldly prevailing notions of scepticism, secularization, relativism respectively based on modern scientific, democratic, and pluralistic values. In terms of Religious Studies, Berkwitz (2004) indicated that teaching Buddhism, especially the discussion of Western Buddhism, as it has “*innovative*” features, can contribute to the examination of “*the contested issues of authenticity and change in religious traditions.*” (p.141) Julius Tsai (2008) also argued that university teacher can contribute to “*comparative perspectives*” in the teaching about religion in the Western academy, through teaching about the three Buddhist concepts ‘*selflessness*,’ ‘*skillful means*,’ and ‘*awakening (bodhi)*.’ These claims, however, specifically speak to persuade people of other study disciplines or departments.

Corless, in his review of conference proceedings of the Teaching Buddhism Conference, offered a rather in-depth observation on the hidden issues and identified the two major problems scholars met when teaching Buddhism in Western university: “*a hostile environment*” and “*bored students*”. Evidence of the hostile environment for Buddhist Studies in university is well founded. For example, on 8 June, 2008 the Sunday Mail reported University of Queensland postgraduate students’ concerns about their Centre of Buddhist Studies and Eastern Religions courses being “*downgraded*,” which may lead to their Centre being closed. (Dibben, 2008) In addition, Mattis, in the Teaching Conference, pointed out that many university teachers of non-Western traditions were

not well supported by their institution because their schools “*had maintained their traditional emphasis on the study of Western culture and placed priority on examination of the worldview most likely to have shaped the students’ own thinking.* (p.142)” In corresponding with the hostile environment, Corless saw the efforts of the participants of the Teaching Buddhism Conference made in justifying the university-level teaching of Buddhism by (a) connecting the nature of the university with Buddhist thoughts as well as by (b) challenging the objective approach to teaching and studying about Buddhism. An alternative perspective of the hostile environment is seen in Hori’s article “*Liberal Education and the Teaching of Buddhism,*” as an Associate Professor of Japanese Religion at MC Gill University, pointed to different purposes of liberal education corresponded to different times:

“Reynolds notes that in Renaissance liberal education, the ‘liberal’ in liberal education referred to the ‘free man’ whose background and education fitted them to inherit and transmit the religious and cultural values of the West.

In modern liberal education, it came to refer to the freedom which a critical education provided in exposing the unexamined religious and cultural prejudices of inherited tradition.

But what meaning, if any, does ‘liberal’ have in the postmodern period? Reynolds does not directly discuss the question. In the postmodern period, is there still some real sense in which to become educated is to become free, or has ‘liberal education’ become the latest oxymoron?” (p.172)

Hori indicated that Reynolds used the meaning of ‘liberal’ in the postmodern university to argue against Western values confinement of knowledge, which was a kind of “*intellectual disagreement.*” But Hori argued in advance that, the meaning of ‘liberal’ in the postmodern university ought to be implemented in actual institutional practices “*which both respects and enhances the anatomy of the student.*” That is to say, his focus on ‘liberalism’ in university is not merely in terms of having as many choices within university curriculum as possible, but also about “*self-conscious disagreement,*” rather than “*unreflective agreement*” of conservative and top-down “*institutional procedures outside the classroom.*” (p. 173- 177)

Furthermore, by contrast of the former three, O’Hyun Park (2002, p. 195-196), in advance, argued that teachers ought not only to duplicate other disciplines but also to help students be engaged in “*the inwardness of Buddhism.*” Furthermore, Robert Thurman (2006, p. 1768), a professor as well as a previous Western Lama of Tibetan Buddhism wrote that teaching meditation in university can assist the academic

community in becoming a vital arena “*to heal, enlighten and empower individuals to live better and create a more humane society.*” Both appeared more in accord with Buddhist thoughts and claims on the aims of teaching Buddhism in university.

How to Teach Buddhism in University?

As Gard (1981) indicated in his article ‘*the Place of Buddhist Studies in the University Curriculum,*’ the teaching methods used in teaching Buddhism in American university classroom are generally no different from other study disciplines: within a 50 minute class, a teacher usually gave a lecture for 40 minutes, and left 10 minutes for answering questions and conducting discussions; with a course outline or syllabus that outlined general topics and main points of every week as well as around 100-pages-per-week of reading assignments including a particular text book and selected readings from various books. Students were usually required to read the assignments before the lecture. In terms of assessment, there is a written examination given by the end of a semester, while sometimes a short 30 minutes test is given each week during class to ensure that students have completed the reading assignments. In addition, from website, such as that of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), it is not difficult to find out that *lecture* and *seminar* are used as the major teaching method for undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Three Levels of Cultural Divide

Hori (2002a) noted that almost all of the university teachers addressed and dealt with the issue of cultural divide in one way or another. In other words, teaching material and strategies were organized to deal with the ‘culture divide.’ However, what the cultural divide actually is problematic. Although Hori didn’t explicitly write down what the problem is, it is not difficult to identify three levels of cultural divide from the literature:

The first level of ‘cultural divide’ is related to the second problem given by Corless when seeing the Buddhologists’ attempts to overcome two problems as the major considerations of the Teaching Buddhism Conference: bored students. Although Corless didn’t explain why the students were bored, the problem of bored students might be related to the ‘cultural divide.’ To quote Hori (2002a, p xv), the vast majority of Westerners, including university students, “*usually do not share the same cultural background of the people, texts and religious institutions they teach or learn about.*” Jenkins also noted that:

“Even for scholars who regard themselves as committed Buddhist practitioners, the study of Buddhism is an instance of intercultural, if not intra-religious, dialogue. It is a moment when a person of one collective inter-subjectivity, most often through their intentional acts of communication.” (p.75)

As human beings, Western teachers and students should not have more difficulties in understanding Buddhist textual and practical traditions than Asian Buddhists; however, it may be rather difficult to motivate a non-Buddhist university student in the West to become interested in and to explore Buddhist thoughts and cultures. Why should a university student in the West be interested in an ‘Asian religion’ or ‘Eastern philosophy’ that has had very little connection with his/her social life? Would a university student in the West feel his/her beliefs or faiths are shaken when doing Buddhism-related course in university?

In addition, the second level of ‘cultural divide’ is the confusing gap between contemporary Buddhist practices and historical records of Buddhist thoughts and practices. It has been noted that, even if a student is interested in and wants to explore Buddhism, *“it still comes as a surprise to some when Buddhism, as lived, fails to meet the standards portrayed in the Buddhist canonical texts* (Bocking, 2002, p. 5).”

The third level of ‘cultural divide’ is related to the dilemma in choosing between subjective and objective approaches. As Jenkins (2002) argued, there is a general trend in American Buddhist Studies toward a “*critical self-consciousness*” of Western way of knowing and representing Buddhism that has challenged the objective regime of Classical Western scholarship. This is best described by Jenkins when he said that:

“As most would now agree, in studying Buddhism we are not treating a static external object. What we perceive is powerfully conditioned and contextualized by our own cultural defined ways of seeing. ... The object of our study arises within our own subjectivity; it is necessary therefore for us to engage in self-examination before and in the process of engaging another culture or religion.” (p.71)

Hori (2002a, p.xv) in reviewing Jenkins’s paper also noted that,

“Even though teachers may be sensitive to the danger of cultural distortion, there is no assurance that students will be so careful and self-conscious.”

Teaching Methods Designed To Deal with Cultural Divide

In the light of the three levels of ‘cultural divide,’ there are three major problems associated with cultural divide that need to be solved:

- (1) Students are bored (probably) due to the lack of background information and reason to study Buddhist thoughts and cultures, as an Asian religion or Eastern philosophy
- (2) The gap exists between textual records and contemporary practices when studying Buddhism
- (3) The dilemma in choosing between subjective and objective approach in studying Buddhism.

With these in mind, I have looked at the teaching methods designed by the conference participants to deal with ‘cultural divide.’

Field Trip and Digital Journey

To motivate apathetic and bored students who lack of motivation to study Buddhist thoughts and cultures, Corless (2003, pp. 36-37) saw the 1999 Teaching Buddhism conference participants’ endeavours by “*leaving the traditional classroom entirely*” with a digital journey and a field trip.

Regarding the digital journey, Fenn (2002) and Grieder (2002) respectively presented a paper based on experiences using an Internet-based teaching and learning interface. On ‘*the Teaching Buddhism website*,’ I found Muller’s article that introduced a wide variety of digital scholarly resource for Buddhist Studies and Hayes’s article on the use of digital media and technologies in studying Buddhism. Muller (1999, pp. 1-2) indicated that since the late '80s the digital media and technology have had considerable impacts on the Western academia; besides using the computer for article composition and using e-mail for communication, the World Wide Web, with its rapid development from 1994, has become “*a vitally important medium for the exchange of scholarly information.*” However, with the explosive growth of information on WWW, Muller also noted that “*the wide range in quality of resources and the ephemeral nature of the web links ...will no doubt continue to obstruct its viability.*” He wrote of Western Buddhologists’ effort in sorting and arranging the online resources and gave examples such as World Wide Web Virtual Library and the Electronic Buddhist Text Initiative (EBTI).

Buddhologists have made use of the Internet to publish e-journals and to build up digital Buddhist Canons. Furthermore, as Grieder pointed out, the growing dependence on the Internet and the World Wide Web, its impacts on societies, cultures and the future of education, its hyper-linked features, and its wide encompassing of vital information and

“most popular forms of cultural-texts” (i.e. multimedia) have created a space for the university-level teaching and learning about Buddhism, which I think is probably the strongest appeal for younger generations. (pp. 212-213)

Fenn shared her positive experiences in providing students *“the opportunity to further their research or personal interest by using a series of links to various Buddhist resources on the Web;”* for example, the breadth of online resources offers opportunities for students in *“weighing and accessing the variety of materials to which they have been exposed—an application of critical thought”* and the potential of e-mail discussion to bring students’ capacity of *“asking profound or provocative questions”* into full play. (pp. 202-203) This is probably associated with what Hayes (1999, p. 168) mentioned regarding the utilization of e-mail and news groups that *“enable people to express their more shadowy thoughts and doubts—ideas to which they might hesitate to give free expression in the presence of a lama or a Zen master,”* and (I suggest) also university teachers. Nevertheless, as Fenn noted, until 1999, there had been only one distance education course offered in Canada. She analyzed university departments and teachers’ concerns in resistance to distance teaching and learning, such as students’ individual conditions of accessibility, the *“faculty labour intensive feature”* of distance education, the crisis of *“value-colonization”* and *“the commodification of education,”* the dilemma between limited budget and quality control, and the crisis of *“redundancy”* and losing faculty identity for teachers and students with the deprivation of the classroom. In addition to these general concerns, Grieder addressed Herschok’s warning against the risk of *“technologies colonizing human consciousness”* when teaching Buddhism using information technologies, and asked: *“Is renunciation of technology s corollary of Buddhist teaching, or are all things appropriate in a kind of vajra-vehicle for the Dharma (p.213-215)?”*

In contrast to the virtual journey in the digital world, Jarow (p.107) reported his *“peripatetic experiment”* by leaving the rigid classroom as well as the *“disembodied pedagogy”* inherited from classical Western scholarship (in particular academic study of religion *“that must uphold non-engagement as a prerequisite for serious scholarship”*) and walking in the university campus. During the peripatetic class, he asked students to *“pay attention to what they heard and felt as well as to what they saw,”* and found that:

“...the walking class complemented the text-based classroom, with embodied experiences becoming automatic mnemonic devices that brought

home a number of concepts that had previously been difficult to grasp.”(p.113)

Such a trip is quite different from ‘field trips’ in common sense that usually take students to visit Buddhist meditation centres or Buddhist monasteries, but each has its advantages. Field trips to Buddhist institutions could develop students’ knowledge about Buddhist practices and settings; while, on-campus field trip would assist students’ embodiment of their cognition of ‘what Buddhism is’ from lectures and tutorials. As Jarow explained, his idea of ‘walking class’ was inspired by the stories of ancient sages: Aristotle, Gandhi, and the historical Buddha who walked alone or with their students. Then he mentioned a story of Buddha. After achieving enlightenment sitting under the Bodhi tree, the Buddha walked, as the origin of ‘walking Zen.’ Jarow gave some examples of how he led walking classes in the Vassar College, for instance, addressing the issue of violence and non-violence when walking through a farm by asking:

“How would a Buddhist feel about stepping on ants, about the inevitable loss of life that occurs in the agricultural endeavour (this thread often leads to a discussion of the Jain tradition whose growth was somewhat concurrent with the Buddhist Sangha, and how they handled the issue of harming other living beings)?” (p. 113)

The digital journey might overcome many obstacles in terms of time, space, or dull text-based/oral teaching; yet, the war between technologies versus humanities seems never stops. The campus trip not only leaves the traditional classroom but also modern technologies; meanwhile, it enables students to think, thus to achieve a better understanding of Buddhist thoughts, and hopefully combine it with university life. However, this kind of teaching method, returning to the original nature of teaching and learning, to a large extent, depend on the teachers’ personal cognition and embodiment of Buddhism. One question is, to what extent, can Buddhist cultures be understood better without Buddhist settings?

Heuristic Dialogues & Creative Tasks Used in Conveying Buddhism

Waldron (2002) and Wotypka (2002) shared their experiences in dealing with the epistemological gap between textual records and contemporary practices when studying Buddhism. As Waldron noted, the discrepancy between pre-assumptions brought to classroom and early Buddhist thoughts had perplexed university students when stepping into the academic study of Buddhism. He further indicated that students were even more confused “*by the standard presentation of the Buddhist catechism with its time-honoured stock formulas—the Four Noble Truth, the Three Marks, and so forth.*”

Wotypka illustrated two features of the students in her introductory course of Buddhism (p.95):

- (1) although, almost all ever had seen some films about Buddhism, *“95 percent of the class had taken no other courses in which Buddhism was discussed;”*
- (2) as the index cards that were filled by students revealed, *“approximately 90 percent of the students were in the class to fulfil their Arts Option”* because another interesting course was full.

In the light of these, Waldron and Wotypka respectively employed some alternative teaching strategies.

Waldron argued that using scientific analogies can *“provide explanations, a working vocabulary, and a useful set of categories”* and bridge the conflicts between traditional Western worldviews and Buddhist traditions. He believed that Buddhist worldviews can liberate teachers and students from the *“persisting mode of thinking and expression derived from substantialist Greek philosophy or from theistic religion.”* Given that modern Buddhist Studies have appropriated notions and terms from existing religious philosophy or religious studies, he critiqued the appropriation of terminology from Religious Studies and Philosophy in teaching Buddhist thoughts, which coincidentally offered a supportive evidence for what Tsai argued the marginalized place of Buddhist Studies in university. For implementation, he adopted dialogic method with biological ideas such as *“trunk and roots, sees, fields and fruits”* to demonstrate *“vegetative metaphors and similes used in Buddhist texts.”* Waldron gave examples of his teaching about Buddhist conceptions of ‘dependent arising’ and ‘non-self,’ respectively using the analogies of river and evolution; however, this is too complicated to be examined in detail here. (p.84-87) Here what Waldron argued, in his paper *“Modern Education as Foundation of Buddhist Modernity”* presented at 2008 Vietnam Celebration of Vesak Day, is noteworthy that *“the relation between Buddhist thought and science and the role that science could possibly play in engaging Buddhism more fully with modernity (p.1);”* obviously, his teaching strategy fully addressed this central concern.

Before turning to the discussion of creative tasks, let me draw your attention to other cases of using dialogic approaches to teaching Buddhism: Gard (1981), Hori (2002b), and Sarbacker (2005). Gard noted that he developed a lecture by asking two or three questions relevant to the topic to be presented and discussing with students. In addition to group discussions, Hori specified that one-on-one dialogues between teacher and

individual students have long been most influential teaching strategies, which enforce students to be active participants in class. Hori explained his way of answering questions:

“When students ask questions of fact, I will give a straightforward answer. But when students ask questions of interpretation or meaning, I often do not answer but instead turn the question or statement back to the student and try to engage the student in dialogue. ... many such student questions cannot be given a neat and simple answer because the questions proceed from wrong assumption invisible...or from rather vague concept.... So instead of answering, I ask the student to examine his or her own question.” (p.178)

He noted that this worked well in upper-level class, but left lower-level student frustrated. Even so, Hori refused to rephrase students' answer, but left the responsibility of making good expression and articulation to students. He argued that *“the learning process is student-driven, not teacher-driven. The teacher's task is to motivate the student to take the initiative, to be the responsible party.”* (p.179) What is more, he pointed out the responsibility of a teacher is to let students know clearly what they say is correct, mistaken, or irrelevant without vagueness or ambiguity.

Notably, these are partly coincident with what Taiwanese scholar Nam (1994) quoted, the 'Four Remarks 四記' adopted by the Buddha to answer questions, from the section 6 of 'Fó Dì Jīng Lùn 佛地經論,' which is also found in the section 26 of 'Zhì Dù Lùn 智度論' and section 19 of 'Jù Shě Lùn 俱舍論.' (F.-B. Ding, 1984) For questions such as 'Will all the arising result in cessation? 一切生者決定滅耶' or 'Are the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha the best merit field? 佛法僧寶良福田耶,' the Buddha directly answer Yes (or No)—向記 because the answers are definite and impossible to change 此義決定. For questions such as 'Will all the ceasing arise again? 一切滅者定更生耶' or 'Are there only one Buddha, one Dharma and one Sangha? 佛法僧寶唯一耶,' the Buddha helped them to distinguish if the situation is proper or not before giving remarks 分別記 because the answer depends 此義不定. For questions such as 'Are the ten stages of Bodhisattva upper or lower? 菩薩十地為上為下' or 'Is the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha better or worse? 佛法僧寶為勝為劣,' the Buddha countered these questions with another question rather than giving remarks 反詰記 because the questions are not clear 汝望何問. For questions such as 'Is the essence of Buddha Nature good or evil? 實有性我為善為惡' or 'Is the skin of the children of women who cannot have sex with others black or white? 石女兒色為黑為白,' the Buddha kept silence rather than giving remarks 默置記 because these question are paradoxical or

metaphysical. This is not necessary for real practice so the Buddha did not give remarks 不應記故. These four principles would be helpful for modern teachers to handle students' questions.

Sarbacker, in her article "*Skilful Means: What Can Buddhism Teach Us about Teaching Buddhism*," indicated that "*dialogic pedagogy*" corresponds to 'skilful means' (The methodology of Buddhist pedagogy) in many aspects; especially it's allowing others to make up their own minds rather than proselytism could be the best selling point of Buddhism to Western students. To carry out this, Sarbacker gave how she dealt with issues of religious identity and authority as an example. In dealing with the teacher's own religious identity, her strategies is basically "*tell if asked*." However, Sarbacker noted that her practice-experiences in both The Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism "*seem to either [be] appreciate[d] as a mark of authority or as proof of my inability to speak from anything other than a Buddhist position*." To solve the kind of doubts (of non-Buddhist students), her strategy was to say something like "*the purpose of this course is not to 'make' you a Buddhist; however, if you are not challenged by the ideas presented in this class, I will have failed* (p.267)." Regarding students' religious identities, Sarbacker thought outside the box of simple dichotomy between 'Christians/non-Christians' or 'Buddhists/non-Buddhists,' and analyzed the difference between students from various Buddhist communities. In addition to following the two well-known categories in American Buddhist tradition coined by Jan Nattier: (1) the ethnic Buddhists and (2) the convert Buddhists, Sarbacker added (3) "the 'potential' Buddhists". She identified the characteristic of the 'potential' Buddhists:

"These are individuals who say such things (often unsolicited) as 'I wanted to take this course because I am looking for a religion and Buddhism may be the one for me' or simply 'I am becoming a Buddhist. Though some of these potential Buddhists are soon weeded out...nevertheless some perceive the course as an opportunity to delve deeper into their own personal exploration of the faith (p.269)."

Most importantly, Sarbacker indicated the importance of the teacher to recognize students' "*non-academic experiences*" with their traditions, and to encourage them to augment the class experiences with their own "*personal narrative*." When teaching the history of religion, Sarbacker employed emptiness as a pedagogy and took used of Ira Shor's model of 'dialogic negotiations' that broke down the material "*into generative, topical, and academic themes*," so as to create a space to push ahead critical thoughts in dealing with religious identity. In terms of emptiness, she gave the example of teaching

the “*Madhyamaka presentation of the danger of clinging to emptiness itself*” as Buddhist conception of ‘relativism.’ Sarbacker argued that the crisis of misunderstanding ‘emptiness’ and ‘selflessness’ as “*nothingness*” (nihilism) in classroom can also be a turning point for a teacher to push the students: (1) “*to deal with the cognitive dissonance of multiple competing truth claims*” (such as materialism, idealism, and constructivism); (2) to counteract buying into the “*prepackaged*” worldview as opposed to one’s own thoughts; and (3) to “*put their own tradition into perspective*” through self-reflection in a more sophisticated way. For point one and two, she consoled students’ feelings of “*antipathy*,” “*disillusioned*,” and “*turned off*” with an emphasis of “*the negative absence of essence*” and “*the positive affirmation of interdependence and mutual causality*.” For point three, she guided a group of students to observe a religious service using “*thick description*.” In terms of dialogical negotiation, Sarbacker gave the example of how she taught the Four Noble Truth, Buddhist Ethics, and Indian asceticism beginning with students’ daily experiences (generative), then bringing out “*relevant contemporary issues*” in order to build up themes that student ever or never heard about (topical), and finally addressing relevant scholarly concerns (academic). In teaching the Four Noble Truth, for instance, she began with a question of how everyone in the society “*engaged in a struggle with and against suffering, especially in the forms of sickness, old age, and death*,” then, moved to contemporary issues such as medical research and plastic surgery, so as to build up themes like Clonaid (human or animal cloning) or Tylenol (a kind of drug for relieving pain, which can hurt one’s liver when overdosed) onto the scholarly concerns such as ‘why is suffering so important?’ and “*whether or not it would be good if we could examine death and live forever (practically and philosophically?)*.” As space is limited, the remaining two examples are left out.

In addition to teacher-student dialogues in classroom, Wotypka designed five creative tasks: (1) picking a figure of the future Buddha (2) explaining ‘emptiness’ to a person not in that class; (3) living the Five Precepts for two days and keeping journals; (4) writing a haiku (Japanese genre of short poetry) about a Buddhist concept; (5) drawing a picture of modern Bodhisattva who can offer guidance for one of the social problems in contemporaries. As Wotypka reported, all five tasks promoted amazing reflections from the students: In Task (1) to select a person and compare his/her life story to the life stories of the Gautama Buddha, each student chose different modern figures such as the family of previous American President Clinton and other celebrities Simpsons, et al.,

which created a space in one's mind for the concept of 'Buddha' engaging modernity. Task (2) to explain 'emptiness' to anyone except their classmates created a chance for mother-child dialogues on Buddhism in home-setting, since that Wotypka found that *"most common victims of the students were their mothers (Hori, 2002a, xvii)." Wotypka noted:*

"Most students felt that they had failed to adequately explain the concept, but admitted that having to try forced them to explain it to themselves as well. They were forced to think and reason and be articulate when faced with the task of relaying information to another person." (p.98-99)

Task (3) to live the Five Precepts for 48 hours, as students' favourite task, gave the opportunity for students to engage themselves in Buddhist practices. As Wotypka noted,

"Having to do this task forced the students to choose an interpretation and live every moment of the forty-eight hours in awareness of what they had decided, and in the results of their actions."

Task (4) and (5) to write a short poetry and draw a picture of modern Bodhisattva inspired students' creativity to develop their own artistic expression of Buddhist concept like 'emptiness,' 'suffering,' 'reincarnation,' and 'Bodhisattva.' To the teacher's surprise, students' works were full of visions:

"Many students turned in more than one haiku, and many were superb: 'Emptiness is relative/Coke without a label/ is only pop;' 'Writing a great paper/ can of coke spills on keyboard/ the file disappeared;' and 'the Gameboy Tetris Haiku 'placing blocks in rows/ random pieces meet/ shapes and lines vanish—empty.' " (p.100)

Wotypka attached three pieces of students' work of modern image of Bodhisattva: the Bodhisattvas of tropical vacations, bureaucracy, and water retention. To my mind, this poetry and these drawings first looked entirely disconnected from traditional explanations, but the meanings underlying inform me much about what the author really thought 'emptiness' and 'Bodhisattva' in modern sense should be. These five tasks, to some extent, may compensate for the epistemological split between textual records and contemporary practices when studying Buddhism, on a personal level.

Pizza Effect: Western Lens or Mirror on 'exotic cultures'?

In the light of the new self-consciousness in dealing with the methodological issue in choosing between subjective and objective approach to study Buddhism, Jenkins argued that the objectivity of academic study actually arises within one's own subjectivity. He

thus called for a sensibility for students to pay dual attention to both the subjectivity of Buddhism and their own subjectivity:

“We must begin by asking who we are, how we construct the other, and how our imagination of others effects them. Raising the student’s awareness in this regard breaks down the subject-object split. On a personal level, it means recognising their encounter with Buddhism as a transformative dialogue unfolding from within their own subjectivity. On a cultural level, it makes them aware of the incredible damage we have done to others and that worlds may be at stake in our choice of ways of knowing. (p.75)”

“If we should start by asking who we are, then the next step is to ask what characteristic the dominant American religious presuppositions, to evaluate the dream against which, or within which, all other dreams must struggle for validation, not only nationally, but increasingly on a global level. (p.79)”

Jenkins employed Raimundo Pannikar’s ‘intra-religious dialogue’ in examining the historical encounter of Buddhism and the West. He used the oppressed sub-cultures on campus in the 1960s that manifested private reality and personal identity in stylizations as an example to show how easy a worldview (i.e. vision of reality) can threaten or even violate another worldview by depriving its self-understandings. And, he used visual representations and textual descriptions of Westerners to help students to *“consider their own erotic selves from the outside. (p.78)”* In addition, he used extreme examples of ritual cannibalism, torture, or divine victim (to die or abuse oneself for the reason of divine) to deepen students’ feeling on how truly ‘exotic’ a religion can be in their mind. Here Jenkins emphasized that:

“The focus here is on White Christians, particulars Protestants, as the ultimate arbiter of reality in America. Students of other races and religions, even Catholics, are far less in need of learning what it feels like to be exotic or to have their worldview threatened. (p.78)”

He asked students to *“imagine reverse Westernisation”*: what if Western politicians and common people in America were all in kimonos, a traditional Japanese dress? With these issues as a foundation in students’ mind, Jenkins appropriated the ‘Pizza Effect (feedback loop)’ as an amusing strategy to explain students how one constructed and then misinterpreted a foreign culture (Hori, 2002a, p. xvi) by explaining to the students how the emergence of ‘pizzerias’ in Italy for meeting American expectations of ‘authentic Italian pizza’ had contributed to the *“developed chains of ‘authentic’ Italian brick-oven pizzerias”* in America. Jenkins also addressed his own experience with harsh yoga-training but realized later that it was a special ‘workout’ to meet American’s

searching for authenticity. He then turned to the story of Olcott & Blavatsky going to Sri Lanka, and their impacts on the emergence of Protestant Buddhism as “*taylor-made to fit the predispositions of Westerners*” by Ven. Bhikkhu Dharmapada who received Western education under colonialism and Ven. Bhikkhu Rahula who had been a Western Buddhologist before being ordained, as instances of the *feedback loops* in the presentation of Buddhism to the West (p. 82-83).

Mattis also shared her experiences of introducing Buddhist thoughts in courses focus on the Western philosophies, although she noted a premise: “*this can be done legitimately only if the presentation of Buddhism can be integrated with the themes and concepts for the rest of the course.*” Mattis gave her teaching in an undergraduate course on postmodernism as an example, in which she introduced the Madhyamaka thoughts to students after teaching about Nietzsche, Saussure, and Derrida that respectively makes a convincing case in Western thoughts that parallels the Buddhist repudiation of truth claims and the objectivity of languages, parallels “*the most radical Buddhist visions of emptiness, relative existence.*” She compared Nietzsche’s pioneering arguments of “*the idea of a thing freed from all relationships is a logic absurdity*” to Buddhist conception of ‘*nih-svabhava*’ (無自性, lacking its own-existence), i.e. “*every existence is a relative existence.*” Mattis thus pointed out the importance of the Swiss linguist Saussure’s Structuralism as a leading stream in Western tradition that “*parallels*” the Madhyamaka “*line of reasoning,*” and as a basis for Post-Structuralism. As Mattis described, Saussure argued that the meaning of each word is significant at its differences between the other elements. Such an argument shattered traditional belief that “*the meaning of a concept lies in its reference to an object.*” Mattis didn’t directly indicate the connection between Saussure’s and Nagarjuna’s reasoning, but we can get a better understanding of this through what Sarbacker indicated, the *Madhyamaka* emphasis on “*the constructed nature of knowledge and the problematic nature of essentialist presentations.* (p. 271)” Such a connection is proved clearly when Mattis concluded that:

“*Our language and its ‘difference’ are matters of convention, and what we call ‘reality’ or ‘truth’ is a construct of this conventionally established linguistic system.*”

Mattis then turned to the post-structuralist conception about “*the ‘deferral’ and ‘undecidability’ of meaning*” first developed by Derrida on the basis of Saussure, which suggested that “*reality is always mediated by language, the relativity and mutual contamination which holds for concepts is true of the thing conceived, of reality itself.*”

She found the idea of ‘trace’ can be linked with the Madhyamaka thought of emptiness and argued that:

“Derrida’s vision of the absence of separate identity and interpenetration of all cognized beings approximates the most radical Buddhist visions of empty, relative existence.”

Mattis explained that, as Derrida suggested, each element of a language system “holds in itself the ‘trace’ of those meaning from which it differs, including the traces of prior association and the anticipated effects of future configurations.” She indicated that dichotomies like subject/object, essence/accident, eternal/temporal, etc. particularly show clearest the traces. Mattis gave the “binary opposition” between ‘subject/object’ as an example, which I think is cite-worthy in dealing with the dilemma in choosing between subjective and objective approaches in teaching and studying Buddhism:

“We can only understand the meaning of the “subject” if we distinguish it from and relate it to the “object.” Rather than being a reality separate from the object, the subject is determined and defined by the object; in Derrida’s image, the subject is ‘contaminated’ by the object.”

It is noteworthy that Mattis noted that students felt less pain in understanding the Madhyamaka epistemology on the basis of postmodern-thoughts.

Here it is interesting to make a comparison between Jenkins and Mattis’ different perspectives in discussing the issue of subject/object, as a basis for their pedagogy in teaching Buddhism. Jenkins argued the importance of ‘self-examination’ when studying Buddhism so as to avoid cultural distortion, in which he argued that “*the objectivity of academic study actually arises within one’s own subjectivity*,” while, Mattis introduced Buddhist thoughts utilizing the classroom and course contents of Post-modernism, in which she followed post-structuralist reasoning that “*the subject is determined and defined by the object*.”

Whether ‘it is the subject brings the objects’ or ‘it is the objects determine and define the subject,’ from Jenkins to Mattis, from ‘subject-object split’ to subject-object in between, it is not unreasonably to say that university teachers had tried to fill the gap between the studying one (subject) and the being studied (object), i.e. teachers/students and Buddhist traditions. To extend in meaning, a question arises here: how teachers and student find a position in between Buddhist experiences/practices (more subjective) and the textual record/academic studies of Buddhism (more objective)?

What the Buddhologist Taught?

Teaching material is important in shaping students' knowledge and impressions of Buddhism. A few university teachers had some reflections about the material in teaching Buddhism in university. Gard, in 1981, noted that university teachers rarely wrote out the full text for a course but quite often did so when preparing to publish a textbook; rather most has been done as course outline or syllabus. Two decades after, there is now much more choices of academic textbooks, which was well described in Prebish's articles.

An Emphasis on Western Buddhism

Specifically, Berkwitz (2007, p. 141) indicated an exponential growth in academic textbooks on Western or American Buddhism. Like Jenkins, Berkwitz also attached importance to encourage students to become aware of "*the habit of treating Asian religions in the West as exotic and marginal.*" He thus argued that a discussion of 'Western Buddhism' can contribute to "*muting the differences drawn between covert and ethnic Buddhist communities.*" This remark is very interesting because it not only responded to the issue of 'cultural divide' but also indicated approaches for the classroom in between subjective and objective perspectives.

Hayes (1999) and Fenn (2001) also pointed out the significance of 'Western Buddhism' respectively in online discussions and university curriculums in the West. Hayes, in his article "*The Internet as Window onto American Buddhism,*" indentified some major themes from his observation of online discussion, including religious authority, doctrine, practice, and personal identity. Among these issues, the core of all question is actually consistently revolves around Western Buddhism. What is more, Fenn's survey result indicated an interesting shift of course focus from a primarily historical one to a "*more contemporary focus frequently combined with social scientific method* (p. 46)." She explained that such a shift was manifested by the figure that nearly 60 percent institutions in her survey provided courses in Western Buddhism, American Buddhism, Engaged Buddhism, or Buddhist Ethics. These courses revealed departments' efforts in engaging the study of Buddhism with Western cultures and societies students dwell in.

Four Internal Problematic Tendencies in Teaching Buddhism

Early in 1991, Reynolds noted that: “*there is no one appropriate way to introduce students of the liberal arts to Buddhism. There are a number of inappropriate ways in which this introductory process is often carried out.* (p. 71)“ He pointed out four internal problems needed to be resisted when teaching Buddhism in university classroom, which could be seen as useful advises for teachers in choosing materials:

- (a) the tendency of transmitting an overly simplistic notion of what ‘Buddhism’ really is;
- (b) the tendency to interpret Buddhism as a tradition that has followed an uni-directional track characterized either by progressive evolution or progressive degeneration;
- (c) the tendency to romanticize the tradition; and,
- (d) the tendency to present Buddhism as an ‘other-worldly’ religion that has little or no concern or involvement with those aspects of reality that we ordinarily designate as ‘social,’ ‘political,’ or ‘economic.’

Three Complexes of Correlated Elements in Introducing Buddhism

Reynolds, in advance, gave his suggestion for the most adequate sort of introduction to Buddhism, which included three complexes of correlated elements:

- (a) A corpus of Buddhist teachings and a symbolic representation of the Buddha’s ‘presence;’
- (b) Various Buddhist traditions from India to Japan; and,
- (c) The hierarchically organized conception of cosmology and society that is characteristic of most classical forms of Buddhist tradition.

These four problematic tendencies and three clusters of big idea could be used in the examination of introductory courses about Buddhism in university.

Curriculum Example: University of Sydney, Master of Buddhist Studies

As mentioned in last chapter, the University of Sydney offers some Buddhism-related papers and a postgraduate programme of Buddhist Studies. As indicated in its official webpage, its Buddhism-related papers are offered through the Asian Studies Program, in Indian and Buddhist philosophy, religion, history and culture; such as ‘*Buddhist Philosophy*,’ ‘*India-Tradition and Modernity*,’ ‘*Buddhism in Modern Asia*.’ This is to say, undergraduate students who are interested in Buddhism cannot choose Buddhist Studies as their major.

Postgraduate students can enrol in a Buddhist Studies programme that, like all study disciplines, offers two choices: by coursework (Master of Buddhist Studies, Graduate Diploma in Buddhist Studies, or Graduate Certificate in Buddhist Studies) or by research (Master of Arts, Master of Philosophy, or Doctor of Philosophy). Here it seems useful to review the structure of the postgraduate coursework of Buddhist Studies, for a clearer image of what a programme of Buddhist Studies could be in Western universities.

The postgraduate coursework of Buddhist Studies contains eight units of study (48 credit points) that takes one year full-time study or two to four years part-time study. Its aim, as described in the online introduction, is to offer “*units covering the full spectrum of Buddhist culture and practice, as well as language studies,*” which is primarily conducted by the departments of ‘Studies in Religion’ and ‘Indian Sub-Continental Studies’ in the Faculty of Arts, with some Buddhism-related papers supplied through the Asian Studies Program. The Master degree of Buddhist Studies contains a core course entitled “*Foundations of Buddhist Studies*” (6pts) that offers an introduction to methodological issues of Buddhist Studies as an academic discipline by providing an historical, doctrinal and cultural overview of Buddhist traditions.

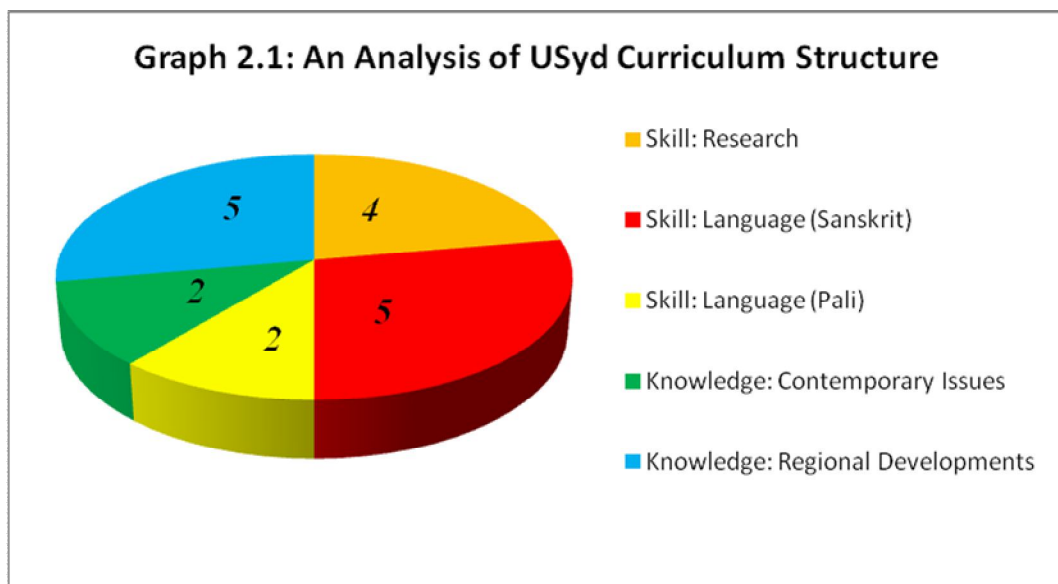
In addition, students can choose other seven units of study from eighteen elective papers. Table 2.1 offers a taxonomy that reflects four categories of course that respectively designed to develop students’ research techniques, language ability, in-depth knowledge about regional developments, and critical understanding of contemporary issues.

Course Title	Category	Pts
Academic Communication for Postgraduates	Skill: Research techniques	6
Academic Research Project	Skill: Research techniques	6
Dissertation Part 1	Skill: Research techniques	6
Dissertation Part 2	Skill: Research techniques	6
Pali for Postgraduates 1	Skill: Language ability	6
Pali for Postgraduates 2	Skill: Language ability	6
Sanskrit for Postgraduates 1	Skill: Language ability	6
Sanskrit for Postgraduates 2	Skill: Language ability	6
Sanskrit for Postgraduates 3	Skill: Language ability	6
Sanskrit for Postgraduates 4	Skill: Language ability	6
Sanskrit for postgraduate Research 2	Skill: Language ability	6
Central Asia From Alexander to Islam	Knowledge: Regional development	6
Buddhism and State in North East Asia	Knowledge: Regional development	6
Tibetan Buddhism	Knowledge: Regional development	6
Buddhism in Gandhara and Central Asia	Knowledge: Regional development	6
The Archaeology of Buddhism in South East Asia	Knowledge: Regional development	6
Mysticism, Religion and Cognition	Knowledge: Contemporary issues	6
Gender and Buddhism: Western Perspectives	Knowledge: Contemporary issues	6

Table 2.1 An analysis of the University of Sydney Buddhist Studies curriculum structure

I tried to test it with Bloom's three types of learning: the former two tend to be of skill (psychomotor learning) category, and the later two tend to be of knowledge (cognitive learning) category. We can represent the curriculum structure in a pie Figure (see figure 2.1), which depicts two features:

- (a) Besides the four research papers, language training and knowledge are respectively one half of available choices;
- (b) Within language training and knowledge, this programme put particular emphasis on Sanskrit and regional developments.



A criticism of the curriculum structure is probably its lack of courses designed for the 'attitude (affective learning),' which, as Bloom (1956) argued, involved students' growth in terms of attitude change and emotional development that could be 'faith' in the area of religious studies or 'ethics' in the area of philosophy. (Salkind, 2008, p. 592) Even though, such a MA programme is worthwhile; it is rarely offered in comprehensive universities that are not funded by Buddhist communities.

Teaching Buddhist Practices or Not

When discussing the place of Buddhist Studies in University Curriculum, Gard (1981) mentioned that, "*It should, but they don't always teach about the practice of Buddhism in university studies.*" In the 1999 teaching Buddhism conference, Prebish (2002, p. 25) indicated a list of "*Practitioner-friendly programs*" compiled by a PhD candidate at Harvard University in 1997, which "*encourage or support Buddhist practice and scholarship among students.*" A general feature of these programs was allowing the

students to “*pursue a degree in the context of Buddhist priestly training courses in the practice of Buddhism that complement academic study, or an emphasis on Buddhism from a normative point of view.* (Williams, 1997 as cited in Prebish 2002, p.25)” From these Figures, it is not difficult to see the expanding of spaces for Buddhist practices in higher education in the recent two decades.

In addition, Grime (2002) shared his “*participatory pedagogy* (p.169)” in teaching the course “*Zen Meditation, Zen Art,*” which could be an alternative viewpoint of the issue of teaching practices or not. He took the concept of ‘ethnographic field work’ to explain and justify the function of ‘tasting’ Zen meditation, Zen Photography, and Zen writings when teaching Zen Buddhism, as offering opportunities for the students in “*attending to actual performances in local places at specific times* (p.155)” so as to adequately describe and prescribe Zen Buddhism. Most interestingly, he also pointed out that unlike students in the 70s, the students came between 1999 and 2000, “*were not looking for masters or expecting to be enlightened* (p.157).”

2.3 The Place and Dilemma of Buddhist Studies in University

Is Buddhism a Philosophy, Religion, both, or neither?

Having discussed the purpose, method, contents, and people involved in the university teaching of Buddhism in the West, we can go on to consider the place of Buddhist Studies in university curriculum. Central to this issue is the question: ‘*What is Buddhism?*’ At least, as Harrison (2003, p. 11) noted, “*...we [people from Buddhist monastery and university campus] may be divided by our ideas about what Buddhism is.*”

First of all, Buddhism, as an English term, refers to ‘*the teachings of the Buddha.*’ However, Japanese buddhologist Kimura, Kiyotaka (2006, pp. 38-39) argued that the English suffix ‘*-ism*’ here is not so appropriate, since it would negate the Buddha expounding ‘detaching from any distinctive stand or position.’ Kimura then suggested that, as to the use of Western language, particularly in terms of English expression, using ‘Buddhist cultures (or the Buddhist Culture)’ is more appropriate to express the fact that ‘the teachings of the Buddha’ have had impacts on the formation and development of different cultures. What is more, using ‘Buddhist thoughts (or the Buddhist Thought)’ is more appropriate, when focus on the thoughts that constitute the core of various cultures under the impacts of ‘the teachings of the Buddha.’

Buddhism is mainly taught in university as an Asian religion or part of the Eastern philosophy, but, as Ven. Bhikkhu Hui-Kai (2001, p. 196) indicated, whether Buddhism is a philosophy, religion, both, or neither had been a question that remains unsettled. Corless (1990, p. 27), in his article ‘*How is the Study of Buddhism Possible,*’ offered a vivid depiction of wide-spread but vague notions on Buddhism as ‘religion’ or ‘philosophy’ in universities:

“In our universities, we find Sakyamuni Buddha included in the textbooks of what are called the Great World Religions. ... for the Western academic establishment, a figure to be reckoned with. He is ‘the Buddha,’ and he founded ‘Buddhism,’ which is a ‘religion,’ or perhaps a ‘philosophy’ or even a ‘religion-philosophy,’ or might it be, a religion which includes a philosophy and a psychology and maybe all sort of things. What this seems to mean is that... the ‘Buddha’ is on a par with philosophers like Socrates: he came up with some jolly good ideas and they’re certainly worth thinking about. Or, perhaps he was like Muhammad who (says the professors, although Muslims deny it) ‘founded’ the ‘religion’ of Islam.”

Such a notion has much to do with the narrative about the origin of Buddhism, which is common to all Buddhist traditions in the world. The term Buddha originates from the Sanskrit word ‘*budhi*,’ which means ‘to wake up.’ The Buddha, as ‘the Awaken one’, taught his disciples the ‘Dharma (non-dual truth or reality),’ and founded the ‘Sangha (an assembly of Buddhist monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.).’ (Dhammika, 1987)

To place Buddhism under the context of modern studies in university, three general variants of the contemporary notion of Buddhism were described to capture its *multidimensionality*. Most frequently, Buddhism is widely compared to philosophy (Ruegg, 1995). In addition, Buddhism is well known as a ‘*non-theistic religion*’ (Glasenapp, 1970) or a ‘*religion without a God*’ (Billington, 2002) on the basis of Buddhist ideas such as ‘impermanent god’ and ‘no creator or ruler of worlds.’ Furthermore, more and more voices argued that “*Buddhism, though non-theistic, resembles other religions in depending on mystical notions* (Southwold, 1978, p. 362),” which to a large extent means it can be called ‘polytheistic’ or ‘pantheistic’ as well. Apparently, it remains controversial to locate various Buddhist schools among many ‘-ism’ about religion, namely theism, atheism, pantheism, polytheism, or humanism etc. As the purpose of the thesis is concerned, it is not necessary to discuss the debate itself here in detail.

I mention this only for informing the problematic issue about the place of Buddhist Studies in university as follows in the next paraFigure. As American buddhologist

Malcolm David Eckel (1994, pp. 1107-1108) noted in his article ‘*The Ghost at the Table: On the Study of Buddhism and the Study of Religion*,’

“... the biggest unsettled question in the study of Buddhism is not whether Buddhism is religion or even whether the study of Buddhism is religious; it is whether scholars in this field can find a voice that does justice to their own religious concerns and can demonstrate to the academy why their kind of knowledge is worth having.”

Two-Fold Marginalized Place in University Curriculum

Taiwanese Buddhologist Tsai, Yao-Ming (2006, p. 26, my translation) indicated the “*two-fold marginalization phenomena* 雙重邊緣化” of the university-level teaching of Buddhism— both in terms of educational regime [教育] 體制 and religious connotation [宗教] 內涵. This reflected the hostile environment, as already mentioned by Corless and to some extent by Eckel.

He gave Buddhist Studies in the United States as an example. On the one hand, compared with Theology or Christian Studies, the university-level teaching of Buddhism in America is still fragmentary and scattered over departments of religious studies, comparative religion, or affiliated to other departments, such as philosophy, psychology, art history, Eastern languages, literature/cultural studies, and area studies on South Asia, East Asia and South East Asia.

On the other hand, Tsai indicated that the university-level teaching of Buddhism needed more professional and leading religious discourses, which are based on the Buddhist doctrine itself. Rather, modern Buddhist Studies have *appropriated notions and terms from existing religious philosophy or religious studies*. What is more, due to the affiliating place of Buddhist Studies in university, teachers tend to lay special emphasis on the genres and styles of the department, rather than on the core issues of Buddhism such as meditative concentration, salvation/liberation, sacralisation, and awakening. (pp. 25-29)

Etic/ Emic Distinction in Study Approach to Buddhism

The “*two-fold marginalization phenomena*,” to my mind, is associated or even rooted in the dilemma “*how to study and teach Buddhism emically as well as etically*” that was argued by Corless (1990, p. 37) nearly two decades ago.

Corless appropriated the ‘etic/ emic distinction’ to explain the conflicts occurred in the studying Buddhism in universities, due to the contrasted worldviews of Western classical scholarship and Buddhist teachings. The terms *etic* and *emic*, according to Lett (2008), were derived from the suffixes of the words *phonetic* and *phonemic* that had its origin of neologism developed by linguistic Kenneth Pike (1967). Pike compared the two perspectives employed to study a society’s cultural system to the two perspectives employed to study a language’s sound system. While studying about cultures or languages, scientific observers as linguists’ perspectives, which rely on “*extrinsic concepts and categories*,” have been the sole judges of the validity of *etic* accounts. By contrast, the perspectives of the members of a given society or the native speaker of a given language, which base on intrinsic consciousness and cognitions have been the sole judges of the validity of *emic* claims. (Lett, 2008)

In terms of the study of Buddhism, Corless restated the tricky question ‘Was the Buddha a Buddha?’ and examined the presuppositions under three positions in answer this question: emic, etic, and postmodern. The matrix in Table 2.2 summarises three major positions. Corless’s words on the emic answer and the etic answer are cited in *italic*; while, my interpretations on the titles of each row and what Corless gave accounts of the postmodern answer by citing Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Jacques Derrida, and David Hume, on the basis of my knowledge about post-modernism, are printed in normal style.

Positions	Answer	Epistemology	Ontology	Cosmology
Emic	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Plural Realities</i>	<i>Nothing Goes Anywhere</i>	circularity
Etic	<i>No</i>	<i>One Reality</i>	<i>Everything Goes Somewhere</i>	linearity
Postmodern	<i>Who Knows?</i>	Corresponding Truth	<i>Nothing could be determined, returned to the backgammon.</i>	relativity

Table 2.2 Three epistemological positions in answering the question ‘Was the Buddha a Buddha?’

As the table above indicates, Buddhists (who give the *emic* claims) and Classical Western scholars (who give the *etic* accounts) have contrasting worldviews. In addition, Corless noted that a Buddhist might indicate the postmodern answer ‘Who knows? Nothing could be determined!’ just replace “*the incorrect view of Eternalism*” (of the etic account) by “*the incorrect view of Nihilism*” (p. 33); while, both Eternalism and Nilhism are just what the Buddha rejected.

The purpose of writing, for Corless, was obviously to think outside the box of classical and contemporary Western scholarship. He argued that “*not getting involved is a vitally important part of the Western academic enterprise known as ‘study’*” (p.34),” which, however, has led to some problems. He instanced the paradox for university teacher in teaching Buddhist traditions from the historical approach as an example,

“...it is impossible to teach Buddhism as a universal system (as required by the non-denominational objectivism of academics) using any of the traditional forms of Buddhism, since they are lineage-specific. One may indeed teach a history of The Theravada, ...but how can one teach ‘Buddhism101’ without using the lineage-neutral tool of history, a tool which, however, destroys (or at least attacks) the very data it claims to expose?” (Corless, 1990, p. 34)

Corless appropriated the ‘etic/ emic distinction’ to demonstrate the paradox of classical and contemporary Western scholarship in teaching and studying Buddhism. However, the gap between two usages of the ‘etic/ emic distinction’ need an extended discussion, if using it is equal to agreeing with its theoretical assumptions. Several years after Pike, anthropologist Marvin Harris (1976, pp. 329-330) integrated the ‘etic/ emic distinction’ into his paradigm of ‘Cultural Materialism.’ Harris discussed the ‘*etic*’ and ‘*emic*’ options to study human behaviours versus human mental experiences, and clarified the central epistemological gap that restraints scientific inquiry of events, entities, and relationships: between “*explicit, logical-empirical, inductive-deductive, quantifiable public,*” and *replicable operations adopted by materialists* versus “*un-operational, vernacular, metaphysical terms*” used by idealists. As Headland (1999) noted, there are many difference between Pike and Harris’ theoretical bases in studying human behaviour (as shown in table 2.B) and asked “*how could these two scientists with such different approaches--theories not even within the same discipline--come to use the same concept as a major tool in their theories?*”

	Theory	Time & Usage	Role	Ontological assumption	Epistemological Foundation
Pike	<i>tagmemics</i>	<i>1950s as a way of analyzing human languages</i>	<i>linguist</i>	<i>theist</i>	<i>idealist</i> concept of culture
Harris	<i>cultural materialism</i>	<i>1960s as a way of understanding and interpreting human culture</i>	<i>anthropologist</i>	<i>naturalist</i>	<i>materialist</i> concept of culture

Table 2.3 Comparison between the Theoretical Base of Pike and Harris

Corless didn't state that from whom (Pike or Harris) he appropriated the 'etic/ emic distinction.' To be sure, whether it was from Pike (theist/ idealist) or from Harris (naturalist/ materialist), there would be still some disputes on ontological as well as epistemological assumptions underlying the two usages.

Firstly, it has been argued that Buddhism is neither idealistic 唯心論的 nor materialistic 唯物論的; rather, it's based on 'dependent arising' in which **mind** and **substance** are fair and equal 心色平等的緣起論. (Shih Yin-Shun, 1941b, p. 40) Although the Buddhist belief 'Consciousness Only' proclaims that "*the three realms are nothing but the mind; all things are nothing but the Consciousness* 三界唯心 萬法唯識 (Huo, 1983, p. 311)," the 'nothing' here neither negates substances nor denies objects (Shih Sheng-Yen, 1997). This is well proved by the Agama Sutra, in which the Buddha said: "*conditioned by name-and-form there is consciousness; conditioned by consciousness there is name-and-form* 識緣名色 名色緣識." Taken in this light, it is doubtful if Buddhist thoughts could be understood as 'emic' voices/claims that entirely "*based on intrinsic consciousness and cognitions*" or "*unoperational, vernacular, metaphysical terms*" as cited above. This is perhaps the best reason in support Corless's argument to study Buddhism both emically as well as etically.

Headland saw the 'etic/ emic distinction' as an extension of the insider/ outsider debate. From table 2.4, we can also see the distinction between the two camps Buddhist perspective (as insider) and scholastic perspective (as outsider). In the case of the study of Buddhism, for example, it is not difficult to find the gap between traditional Buddhist scholarship and modern Buddhist Studies due to the emic- and etic- approaches they respectively employ. However, according to Lett (2008), "*in both cases, it is possible to take the point of view of either the insider or the outsider.*" This implies an emerging paradox (as shown in figure 2.2) interlocking the 'etic/ emic distinction' and the 'insider/ outsider debate,' due to the increasing number of scholar-monks/nuns or scholar-practitioners today.

	Insider (Buddhist Community)	Outsider (Academic Scholars)
Emic	Insider (Emic) (Buddhists)	Emic - Outsider (Scholar-Practitioners)
Etic	Etic- Insider (Scholar-monks/nuns)	Outsider (Etic) (Scholars)

Table 2.4 a Matrix of Religious Identity and the Position of Interpretation

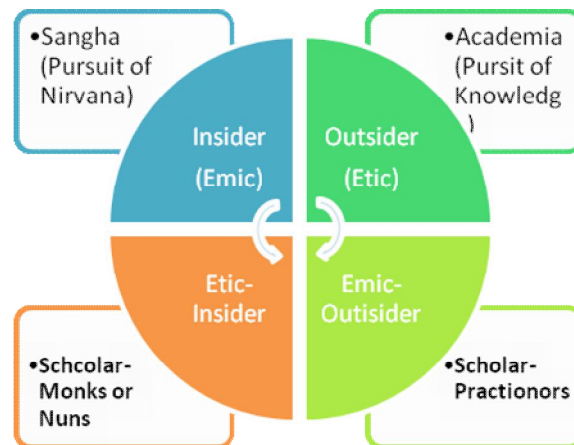


Figure 2.2 Diagram for the Matrix of Religious Identity and the Position of Interpretation

One may say that, despite of the ‘Outsider-Etic,’ the other three groups are actually ‘*emic*.’ However, it is not difficult to find the existing but hidden grey zones within the Black-and-White dichotomy of the etic/ emic distinction. As Harrison (2003, p. 11) described:

“not all Buddhist scholars are academics, not do all members of the Sangha, in its broadest sense, live in monasteries. Furthermore, there are many who possess dual citizenship, who are both Sangha-members and academics.”

What is more, Bocking (2002) also noted that

“as mass higher education increasingly becomes the norm in advanced societies, so academic perspectives are in fact becoming more widespread. ... In matters of religion, the gulf which used to exist between the academic scholar and the average religious believer, between the researcher and the researched, is in many cases far narrower than before.”

The ‘*insider-etic*’ or ‘*outsider-emic*’ accounts themselves, however, could not be the sole judges of their own validity. In the two long traditions, some doubts remain about the feasibility of the approaches employed by the two renewal groups who hold half scholarly half Buddhist ancestry. This is probably due to the *anti-intellectual* and *de-sanctification* tendencies, as tacit assumptions, respectively held by the traditional Sangha (especially Zen) and modern academia.

Academic/ Sectarian distinction in Teaching Buddhism

Are ‘both emic and etic approach,’ as Roger Corless suggested, viable for Buddhist Studies in universities? If yes, why the problem seems to remain unsettled until today, nearly many decades later? Most interestingly, Jan Nattier (1992) in her review of the

textbook ‘The Vision of Buddhism’ written by Corless questioned the “*intra-Buddhist perspective*” with an anti-history tendency. Nattier criticized that the “*Mahayana-oriented agenda*” underlying his arguments (emptiness) may leave readers numerous misconceptions, in particular “*that the Pali texts are ‘biased’ in a way that other Buddhist texts are not* (p.525).” Seemingly, if one wants to speak from an emic perspective, he may be criticized as not so academic or just sectarian.

Here the ‘*etic/ emic distinction*’ must be associated with the ‘academic/sectarian distinction’ in teaching Buddhism as a religion in university, which has its origin in American Law, the Enabling Act (North Dakota, 1889) based on the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom that affirms the right for public schools in the United States, including state-supported American universities and colleges, “*to be free from sectarian control* (Boyer, 1992).” In other words, teacher in public schools are allowed to teach that ‘*about*’ religion, but not allowed to teach that ‘*of*’ religion. The American law in promoting the secularization of teaching and studying religions has been both the cause and the effect of that modern sense to discount religious accounts but to lavishly praise on scholarly perspectives as described below:

“Since accounts of religion (one’s own or another) presented by religious representatives are prone to be discounted as biased, often the scholarly perspective is often the only viable alternative to traditionally hostile and often uninformed press representations of religious movements(Bocking, 2002).”

Both Bocking (2002) and Harrison (2003) noted some problems arise when religious adherents came to university and achieved higher-level academic qualifications. Bocking argued that,

“One is to simply to understand more about his/her religion, using the huge range of conceptual and methodological tools developed within the secular academy. ... In this respect, the aims of the Buddhist (etc.) student are aligned with the general aims of liberal education; the pursuit of knowledge more or less for its own sake. Another aim may be far more closely bound up with the issue of representation.... By becoming an academic authority, a religious adherent may gain a degree (literally!) of credibility, prestige and authority which might not be accessible through the religion itself.”

Obviously, Bocking mentioned such a problem in order to address the point that it’s important for teachers of Buddhism to be “*truly international and cross-cultural in outlook and experience, as well as academically qualified in Buddhist Studies.*”

However, I cannot bring myself to accept the presupposition that “*credibility, prestige*

and authority” is a problem arising only when religious adherents access academia. Couldn’t it be said that some many academic scholars also gain and even enjoy the “*credibility, prestige and authority*” as a bonus for their studies of religion? From a different angle, would it be a problem in a university setting or a worldly setting, not only for the religious adherents but also for all in academia and even the Sangha, when one’s intrinsic pursuits of knowledge, wisdom, liberation, etc are hindered by rather extrinsic pursuits of fames, profits, and so on. Perhaps, the real problem of the so-called ‘sectarian teaching’ of Buddhism or other old traditions regarded as religions is its opposition to secularisation or de-sanctification (or, to be accurately, materialization within educational regimes 教育體制的物質化操作) as a result of industrialization, modernisation and globalisation.

Australian buddhologist Paul Harrison, who once taught Buddhism in University of Canterbury, in his article ‘Relying on the Dharma and not the Person: Reflection on Authority and Transmission in Buddhism and Buddhist Studies,’ gave a tangible account of the gap between academia and the Sangha. He indicated that a convergence of the two long traditions and their approaches to the study of Buddhism indeed has experienced some problems “*because of different cultural presuppositions and ways of doing things, or divergent understandings of what education and scholarship are about, as any Western academic who has supervised Asian Sangha-members as graduate students can testify* (Harrison, 2003, p. 13).”

Small Conclusion

The remarks of Corless, Bocking, and Harrison are very interesting because they shows that both Eastern and Western buddhologists totally understand the conflict between traditional studies and modern scholarship of Buddhist Studies and its causes and have been seeking to resolve it. Corless, in 1990, proposed a solution to such a dilemma. In order to “*study Buddhism authentically*”, he suggested that one should “*allow the material itself to provide us the appropriate methodology*.” (p. 37) This looks in accord with Ven. Bhikkhu Yin-Shun (1956)‘s approach that “*to study Buddha-dharma using Buddha-dharma*.”

To conclude, in light of the discussion above, we can see that the controversy of ‘what Buddhism is’ between emic/sectarian and etic/academic perspectives has much to do with our “*divergent understandings of what education and scholarship are about,*

(p.13)” as argued by Paul Harrison. I now turn to the issue ‘Buddhism and Education’ that consider the divergence between Buddhism and Modern Education.

2.3 Buddhism and Modern Education

Brief Introduction to Scholarly Publications

As Ven. Bhikshuni Shih, Jian-Run (1998) noted in her review on ‘Buddhism and Education,’ it was not until the recent era had Buddhist doctrines been connected to modern educational issues. The question is: *when, why and in what way does ‘Buddhism and Education’ enter the awareness of the Buddhist communities as an important issue or even problem, and that of academia as a researchable topic?*

A full study of the discussion among Buddhist communities on ‘Buddhism and Education,’ lies outside the scope of this thesis. Here a brief introduction to the scholarly publications about ‘Buddhism and Education,’ as a researchable topic in academia would lead us into that specialised area of the university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West. The authors of these scholarly publications are generally scholars or monk-scholars at PhD level or above, from China, India, Japan, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Thailand. Their writings thus could be considered as a valuable and reliable source of literature for this topic.

Early Voices between the 1930s and the 1980s

Early in 1947, the Indian Mookerji presented his MA plus PhD dissertation entitled ‘*Ancient Indian Education: Brahmanical and Buddhist.*’ One-third of it offered historical accounts of the emergence and development of early Buddhism as an educational system of ancient India. It offered a philosophical analysis of the relationship between Hinduism and Buddhism as ancient Indian education. However, its declaration such as “*Buddhism as a phase of Hinduism (p. 374)*” made the affiliated place of Buddhism to Hinduism in Indian scholarship stand out.

Later, Saroj Buasri (1970), a Thai educator, published her PhD dissertation entitled ‘*A Philosophy of Education for Thailand: The Confluence of Buddhism and Democracy.*’ Buasri sought to present an academic work that deduces a viable educational philosophy strictly in terms of the Buddhist worldview and doctrines using a scientific way (problem-solving and reflective thinking), but “*excluding all the mysticisms and miracles that as a rule encompass a religion (p.4).*” Specifically, she pointed out that

“as a [-n educational] philosophy, it [Buddhism] is more of an ethical philosophy than anything else (p.77).”

In 1971, Japanese Buddhologist Mizuno, Kogen wrote an article on *“Educational Thoughts of the Original Buddhism (原始佛教における教育思想)”*, and regarded the Four Noble Truth and Eightfold Path as the curriculum of the original Buddhism. In the same year, Japanese Buddhist Research Association (日本仏教学会) published a monograph ‘Problems of Buddhism and Education (仏教と教育の諸問題).’ Later, Respectively in 1978, 1979, and 1980, Saito, Akitoshi 齊藤昭俊 (1930-), a Professor of Taisho University in Japan, published three books ‘A Study on the History of Japanese Buddhist Education: Ancient Times, the Middle Ages, and Pre-modern (日本仏教教育史研究：上代・中世・近世),’ ‘The Dictionary of Buddhist Education (仏教教育辞典),’ and ‘Introduction to Buddhist Education (仏教教育入門).’ Later in 1988, Chinese scholar Ding (G. Ding, 1988) published his research entitled *“Buddhist Education in China: Comparative Studies of Confucians, Buddhist, and Taoist Education.”*

These earlier references on ‘Buddhism and Education’ have contributed considerably to our understanding of the educational nature of Buddhism. However, the scholarly publications mentioned above tended to be kind of philosophical analyses or historical accounts of the development of the Sangha, which to a large extent is different from educational accounts and is still not sufficient to explain why ‘Buddhism and Education’ is becoming an important research field today.

Efforts Undertaken During the 1990s

It was since the 1990s did many voices emerge to give educational accounts of Buddhism. In 1993, Saito again published a book entitled *“The World of Buddhist Education (仏教教育の世界).”* In 1994, Japanese scholar Mizuno, Kogen published a book *“The Sakyamuni Buddha’s Education in the Human Realm (釋尊の人間教育).”* Between 1993 and 1994, Ven. Dr. Bhikkhu Hui-Min, a monk who received full ordination in a Mahayana order in Taiwan, conducted a research project about the materials and instruction for teaching Buddhist meditation as a course of general education in university. In 1995, he presented a paper that offered a brief analysis of doctoral dissertations awarded by American universities with topics about “Meditation and Education”. In 1997, Ven. Dr. Bhikkhu Bodhi, an American Buddhist monk who received full ordination in a Theravada order in Sri Lanka in 1973, wrote an article

“*Aims of Buddhist Education*.” And the Indian scholar Singh (1997) also published a book on “*The Origin and Development of Buddhist Monastic Education*.”

By 1998, there had been twelve master thesis and two doctoral dissertations, which investigated in linking Buddhism and education, awarded by universities in Taiwan and Hong Kong. (Yang, 2000) Most interestingly, from the topic and abstract of those research articles, I found a shift of research interests from philosophical discussions of Buddhist educational thoughts to the practices of these thoughts in formal or informal educational systems. Among these, two touched ‘school education,’ two dealt with ‘adult education,’ but none studied university-level teaching about Buddhism.

In 1993, Saito published a book entitled “*The World of Buddhist Education* (仏教教育の世界)” and in 1994, Japanese scholar Mizuno, Kogen published a book “*The Sakyamuni Buddha’s Education in the Human Realm* (釋尊の人間教育).” Between 1993 and 1994, Ven. Dr. Bhikkhu Hui-Min conducted a research project about the materials and instruction for teaching Buddhist meditation as a course of general education in university. In 1995, he presented a paper that offered a brief analysis of doctoral dissertations awarded by American universities with topics about ‘Meditation and Education.’ And the Indian scholar Singh (1997) published a book on “*The Origin and Development of Buddhist Monastic Education*.”

Furthermore, in 1999, three Taiwanese buddhologists respectively presented a paper on their curriculum design in teaching Buddhist meditation and Buddhist literature in common universities and for the department of religious studies of a Buddhist University in Taiwan. At another conference in 2000, Ven. Bhikkhu Hui-Min presented a paper that explored the curriculum design for Students in the Buddhist Informatics Program at the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies in Taiwan.

Maturation Seen between 2000 and 2008

Coming to the 21st century, ‘Buddhism and Education’ seems to have matured. Taiwanese buddhologist Tsai Yao-Ming (2006), in his book “*Buddhist Studies: Research Methods and Scholastic Information*,” offered a thoughtful discussion of the place of Buddhist Studies in university curriculum and its connotation. Most recently, Most recently, Indian scholar R. N. Salve (2008) and Rachita Chaudhuri (2008) respectively published their PhD dissertation about Buddhism and Education. Salve

took a sociological approach while Chaudhuri took a historical approach to unfold the meaning of Buddhism into the field of educational research.

As mentioned before, many Western buddhologists also wrote reflect their teaching enterprises. ' (Berkwitz, 2007; Corless, 2003; Sarbacker, 2005; Thurman, 2006; J. N. Tsai, 2008) In addition, global concerns on 'Buddhism and Education' are well found in international conferences and/or regional associations of Buddhist Studies and Buddhist Education, in which 'Buddhist Scholarship 佛學研究' and 'Buddhist Higher Learning 佛教高等教育' is always an important topic of discussion. For example, in addition to numerous academic centres of Buddhist Studies in universities worldwide and the thirteen international conferences on Buddhist Education held every two years between 1981 and 2006 in Taiwan, as motioned before; in April 1992, the Nippon Buddhist Education Research Association was set up for communication between researchers and practitioners who are concerned with Buddhist Education in Japan. Their work includes the publication of annual academia journals and the establishment of annual conferences on Buddhist Education. In May 2000, an international conference on Buddhism and Education was held in Yangzhou, China.

Furthermore, with the development of Buddhist Studies in state universities and the emergence of Buddhist universities, the Sangha and buddhologists have cooperated to establish institutions to support the teaching about/of Buddhism in universities. In December 2000, the University Buddhist Education Foundation (UBEF) was established for the purpose of funding the teaching of Buddhist Studies within universities in Australia. In May, 2007, a '*Symposium of Buddhist Universities*' was undertaken as part of the program of the IV International Buddhist Conference in Bangkok, Thailand; the International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU) was established; and in December 2007 the Fifth Annual Symposium on Buddhist Studies was held in Nepal, discussed "*Buddhist Education: Tradition & Modernity*." In May 2008, a Symposium on '*Buddhist Education: Continuity and Progress*' was held as part of the United Nation's Day of Vesak Celebrations in Vietnam.

The Educational Nature of Buddhism

Nowadays, Buddhism is often referred, by Buddhists and Buddhologists, as '*the Buddha's education 佛陀的教育*' (Mizuno, 1993; Shih Tai-Xu, 1931), '*Enlightened Education 覺之教育*' (Shih Hiu-Wan, 1981; Shih Yin-Shun, 1941a), '*Contemplative Education* (Goss, 1999, p. 215)', an '*ancient Indian education*' (Chaudhuri, 2008;

Mookerji, 1947; Singh, 1997), or more generally as one of the non-Western educational traditions (Reagan, 2000), which appears to be an alternative for the controversy question “*what Buddhism is.*”

Sarbacker (2005, p. 264), in her article ‘*Skilful Means: What Can Buddhism Teach Us about Teaching Buddhism?*’ mentioned a point that Buddhism often places teaching and ‘the teacher (Buddha)’ as the core of its sense of self-identity. As Gard (1981) pointed out, *the triratna* (the Buddha, the Dharma, and Sangha) is the field of Buddhist Studies; Sarbacker (2005, p. 264) indicated that Buddhism, is “*a tradition that frames itself around the triratna...which include an awakened teacher (Buddha), his teachings (Dharma), and a community of awakened disciples (Sangha).*” In fact, the teacher-student relationship between the Buddha and his followers is always seen in the Buddhist canons -- the collections of dialogues between the Buddha and various interlocutors (Buddhists or non-Buddhists). In Buddhist canons, Buddhists have all along esteemed the Buddha as the mentor of human and supreme beings 天人師 and thus we declared ourselves to be disciples of the Buddha 佛弟子. Such a narrative is common to all Buddhist traditions.

Wills Stoesz (1978) and Bert Chen (1980) wrote to authenticate the Buddha as teacher as seen in the canonical scripture of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Both Stoesz and Chen’s work can be seen as the representatives respectively in the West and the East that held up some very high ideals for Buddhist educators to inspire to and work for. Stoesz examined the Buddha as teacher by means of etymology. He pointed out that the Pali term ‘*sattha*’ (teacher and/or master) is the major term naming the Buddha as teacher, which applied only to the Buddha. The Buddha, as “*an authoritative figure who wished his disciples to discover truth (dhamma),” founded the Sangha that “a community growing from his teaching which made a point of its inner cohesiveness involving both monastics and laity, specialists in human excellence and admirers of that excellence, in interrelated roles.” “In this setting the Buddha as teacher combined authority and flexibility, order and freedom, in a way that insures his enduring interest to us* (Stoesz, p. 140).” From these descriptions, it is not difficult to distinguish the features of Buddhist education: the Buddha as the teacher, the Dharma as the curriculum, the Sangha as the students, the world as the classroom.

Likewise, Chen characterized the Buddha as teacher on the basis of educational psychology, using a great deal of examples. He indicated personal traits of the Buddha as a good teacher recorded in the Mahayana cannon, which includes

- (a) a good understanding of his students,
- (b) being master of what he is teaching and devoted to the truth,
- (c) constant learning and extensive interests,
- (d) selfless, democratic and cooperating attitudes,
- (e) being enthusiastic and interested in teaching others, being compassionate, being master of language and eloquent in argument,
- (f) having a healthy body and mind in a dignified manner,
- (g) being fully patient and firmly confident, presenting vivid and fascinating speech and a sense of humour,
- (h) being keen on performance of various postures and motions,
- (i) using skilful means and being good at giving systematic guidance.

Other skills were: to enable his disciples to grasp reality and the central problem, to encourage his disciples to solve problem by themselves by cueing attitudes, methods and focal points of solving problems, to help his disciples to set up concrete targets and appropriate aims so as to muster them up, to create a harmonic and pleasant setting so as to foster good habits and interests that will lead to healthy body/mind and integrated-whole personality, and so on. (Chen, 1980, p. 9, my translations) These, to some extent, imply that Buddhism is educational.

The Scope of Buddhism and Education

Tsai (2006, p. 14) indicated three-fold meanings ‘Buddhism and Education’ in the modern times. This can be integrated with the literature reviewed above and be extended into three sub-areas of ‘Buddhism and Education’ as a researchable topic:

Buddhist Monastic Education 佛教僧院教育

This kind of education stands on the assumption that the teachings of the Buddha forms the basis for a sound education. In this sense, Tsai explained, Buddhist practices are not different from modern educational activities (i.e. lifelong learning, social education, adult education, or death education), which were “*suitable for educational research, in which their ideals, principles, characteristics, affiliates, settings, methods, orders, effects, and reformation are worthy of further exploration and analysis* (p. 14).”

A body of literature by many Buddhist monks/nuns and scholars contributed to this sub-area. These authors include, Agocs, 2007a; Altekari, 1965; Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1997; Buasri, 1970; Chang, 1983; Chaudhuri, 2008; C.-C. Chen, 1994; N.-C. Chen, 1984; Johnson, 2002; Lin, 2006; Mookerji, 1947; Peng, 1986; Salve, 2008; Shih Cheng-I, 1984; Shih Heng-Ching, 1993; Shih Hui-Wan, 1983, 1984; Shih Sheng-Yen, 1985, 1999; Shih Sheng-Yin, 1983; Shih Tai-Xu, 1931; Shih Xing-Yun, 2002; Shih Yin-Shun, 1941a; Tu, 1984; Upasak, 1977; L.-C. Wang, 2006.

From the literature, I found two characteristics of 'Buddhist monastic education':

- (a) It focused on the function of Buddhism in personal, social, and mindful transformation through religious practices, such as meditation, chanting, reciting Buddha's name, and so on;
- (b) Most authors studied the educational ideals and thoughts of the Buddha from Buddhist sutras and doctrines, using philosophical analysis of Buddhist sutras and doctrines.

Modern Buddhist Education 佛化教育

This kind of education argues the viability and importance to apply some ideas or methods of Buddhist traditions to secular educational systems. Tsai pointed out that 'Enlightened Education' in Hua-Fan University led by Ven. Bhikshuni Hui-Wan as an instance of such kind of education. In addition, the Buddhist-founded colleges and comprehensive universities in Burma, Japan, Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Nepal et cetera are also good examples of such kind of education.

Much has been written on 'Modern Buddhist Education,' for example: Chang, 1982, 1983; N.-C. Chen, 1984; Y.-Y. Chen, 1996; Chuan-Chu, 1982; Gard, 1986, 1988, 1994a, 1994b, 1996; Gong, 1996; Hsieh, 1984; Hsing, 1981, 1982; Hsiung, 1983; R. Huang, 1994; X.-N. Huang, 2007; Hwang, 1996; Kao, 1992; Kuan, 1984; Kwai, 1986; C.-F. Lee, 1984; M.-H. Lee, 1992; Li, 1984; Peng, 1984; Shih Cheng-I, 1984; Shih Da-Zhong, 1982; Shih Hui-Wan, 1983, 1986; Sung, 1996; Tien, 1994; S.-H. Wang, 1992; Yang & Yeh, 1994; Yeh, 1996; Yin, 1994.

From the literature, we can find two characteristics of 'Modern Buddhist Education' are:

- (a) It also focused on the function of Buddhism in personal, social, and mindful transformation, the pursuit of knowledge about Buddhism in curriculum design has gained an equally (or even much more) important place with Buddhist Practices.
- (b) Many authors made use of modern definitions of ‘education’ to offer a theoretical framework for the educational functions of Buddhist doctrines; and took use of social problems of states and the globe to manifest the importance of Buddhist ethics.

The Academic Teaching of Buddhism 佛學教育

As Tsai indicated, this kind of education made use of academic tools, methods, and genres of writing and expression to develop learners’ abilities and insights in studying Buddhist traditions in the setting of modern academic institutions, so as to explore the traditions that are directly or indirectly relevant with Buddhism in rigorous and methodical ways.

The sub-area had had a relatively little literature. In addition to a Western literature offered in the beginning of this chapter (Bechert, 1994et al.; Berkwitz, 2001, 2007; Chappell, 1986; Fenn, 2001; Prebish, 2002; Frank E Reynolds, 2001; Sarbacker, 2005; Thurman, 2006), the academic teaching of Buddhism in university has been brought to public attention in the Sangha and Buddhologists in the East. (Chang, 1982, 1983; Y.-Y. Chen, 1994, 1996; Hsing, 1982; Hsu, 1994; Hwang, 1996; Kwai, 1986; Li, 1984, 1986; Reymond, 1994; Shih Hiu-Wan, 1986; Tien, 1994; Wai, 1994; Wong, 1996; Yang & Yeh, 1994; Yeh, 1996; Yin, 1994) Most interestingly, whether in Buddhist teachings or scholarly publications, many have regarded some Buddhist monasteries such as Nalanda temple, ancient seats of Buddhist higher learning, as Buddhist universities in ancient India. (Chaudhuri, 2008; Mookerji, 1947; Salve, 2008; Shih Xing-Yun, 2002; Sitaramanna, 2002; Upasak, 1977) In addition, it should also be added that British Journal of Religious Education had a volume and some article on teaching Buddhism in primary and secondary schools. (Baxter, 1986; The Buddhism Resource Project “, 1986; Connolly & Connolly, 1986; Cush, 1986; Fernando, 1986; Keightley, 1986; Morgan, 1986; Teece, 2008) A volume of articles about Eastern educational philosophies was published in 2008, in which some authors studied educational thoughts related to Buddhism. (Eppert, 2008; Hattam, 2008; Hendry, 2008; Jagodzinski, 2008; Nakagawa, 2008; Vokey, 2008) Table 2.3 showed the distinguishing features and rough categories of the three sub areas in the field of ‘Buddhism and Education.’

	Buddhist Monastic Education	Modern Buddhist Education	Academic Teachings of Buddhism
Tacit Assumption (Tsai, 2006)	Buddhism is Education	Buddhist pedagogies can inform & improve modern education	Academic tools can contribute to a better understanding of Buddhism
Possible Location in Modern Education	Lifelong Learning Social Education Death Education	School Education Religious Education Tertiary Education Teachers Education	Higher Education General Education Specialising Education Academic Training
Educator	Mostly the Sangha	The Sangha & Buddhologists	Mostly Buddhologists
Learner	Buddhist & non-Buddhist	Tertiary students School students	Tertiary students
Venue/ Setting	Buddhist Monasteries Buddhist Monastic Colleges	Buddhist Schools Buddhist Universities	State-supported & Private Universities
Core Curriculum	Buddhist Practices Buddhist Scholarship	The Study and Practices of Buddhism	Buddhist Studies

Table 2.5 Three Kinds of Sub-Area of ‘Buddhism and Education’

2.4 Rationale of the Present Study

The literature review helped provide a glimpse of the place, dilemma, and core educational issues of university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West. However, most of the literature was from the North American context. What is more, almost no research has been done in the field of educational research.

As Reynolds (1991, p.73) noted, “*the appropriateness of a course will vary depending on the background, the interests and the style of the teacher, as well as the background, the academic capacities and the motivations of the students.*” In New Zealand the university teaching of Buddhism as a researchable lacks data and seems to be an area where educational research is desirable.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter *described* the research strategy that I used to study the teaching of Buddhism in university. Building on the historical background and some basic issues presented in chapter 2 and 3, I considered the philosophical basis of the project and approaches I might use.

3.1 Philosophical Base

Researcher's Roles & Concerns

Understanding my place in the research is a key to a better understanding of this thesis. I am a Buddhist nun, and I am an international student from Taiwan, an island country in which one-third of the population is Buddhists (Laliberte, 2004). I am a Master of Education student involved in the Western discipline 'educational research.' Due to the multiple identities I hold, in the study, I am primarily interested in the current teaching about Buddhism in NZ universities; and secondly I am concerned with the future potential of university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West.

Furthermore, in respect of the efforts that have been taken by all venerable Buddhist monks and nuns in the present and past to preach 'the teachings of the Buddha', I am always concerned about the essence and implications of teaching Buddhism, an Awakening Education, to the contemporary world.

Becoming Part of 'Buddhism & Education'

To integrate my inner self as a Buddhist and worldly learning as an international student in New Zealand, I anticipated locating my study about the teaching of Buddhism in university within the field of 'Buddhism and Education.'

The study focused on the academic teachings of Buddhism, as part of Higher Education, which occurs between Buddhologists and tertiary students within state-supported or private universities. As given in table 2.5, the sub-division is based on the tacit assumption that academic tools can contribute to a better understanding about Buddhism. (Y.-M. Tsai, 2006)

University Buddhologists, as researchers, teachers and supervisors using academic tools in teaching and studying Buddhism, have contributed to not only the accessibility for tertiary students to learn about Buddhism but also worldwide understanding of Buddhism in the West. Taken in this light, their perceptions and experiences could reflect the current situation and potentials of the university-level teaching of Buddhism.

Negotiating With Mahayana Buddhist Worldviews

In this study, Interpretivism was employed as a ‘middle way’ between Positivism and Constructivism to seek an understanding of the teaching of Buddhism as a social reality. The researcher as a Buddhist nun prefers to employ a research methodology in this study that is mostly in accord with the Mahayana Buddhist worldviews. As discussed in the literature review, Buddhism is based on the principle ‘dependent arising’ in which mind (subject) and substance (object) are fair and equal. Taken in this light, both the ontological assumption and epistemological position of Positivism and those of Constructivism are apart from the Mahayana Buddhist worldviews. Positivism, as based on Objectivism, tends to be materialistic and to give undue emphasis on natural reality; while Constructivism tends to be idealistic and to give undue emphasis on social reality. By contrary, Interpretivism, as argued by Wilhelm Windelband *et al.* and agreed by Max Webber, rejects the existence of “*some kind of real distinction between natural reality and social reality* (Crotty, 1998, p. 67); and this sounds mostly in accord with the Mahayana Buddhist world views.

According to Crotty (1998), Interpretivism “emerged historically in the threefold guise of Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, and Symbolic Interactionism.” From the theoretical perspective, this study was based on Interpretivism, while its philosophical roots emerged from phenomenology. Phenomenology is a human science that sets out to study individuals (Manen, 1990) in order to find out “*possibilities for new meaning*” or to “*witness at least an authentication and enhancement for former meaning* (Crotty, 1996a as cited in Crotty, 1998, p. 78).”

As phenomenologists argued, phenomena of human world cannot be adequately described apart from human mind and behaviours, and vice versa. Here the important point to note is the concept intentionality as part of psychical phenomena, which “*denotes the essential relationship between conscious subjects and their objects.*” As phenomenologists understood, each subject’s understandings of objects themselves

actually learned “*in a complex and subtle process of enculturation.*” Our cultural heritage thus shapes and impacts on our thinking and behaviours throughout our lives. Phenomenology, however, requires us to “*lay aside the prevailing understandings*” of phenomena in the world that we had been saddled with, and to “*engaged with*” those phenomena and “*make sense of them directly and immediately.*” (Crotty, 1998, pp. 78-79)

The phenomenological concept of intentionality, to my mind, is in accord with the Mahayana Buddhist worldviews; especially, in light of the Yogacara (Consciousness Only) school of Mahayana Buddhism, which indicates that the objects, phenomena, or the world are actually “*nothing whatsoever apart from what you have discerned (Vijnatpi) through the sensorium, the domain of sensory experience* (Lusthaus, 2002, p. 1).” Due to such an epistemological orientation, this research-study is designed for “*the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it* (Schwandt 1994 as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 597).”

“*In the Avatamsaka Sutra, the young Sudhana is looking everywhere for mentors. Most of the teachers he is visiting do not talk about anything else but what they themselves do* (Y.-S. Shih, 2004, p. 24).” This study, as a phenomenological inquiry mining meanings in the academic teachings of Buddhism in the West, articulated the possibilities for new meaning or for enhancement for former meaning from university teachers’ “*lived experiences*” when teaching Buddhism in New Zealand. (Creswell, 2003, p. 91)

3.2 Research Theory

Unlike the Positivist approach that seeks to generalize “*universal applicable social laws,*” the Interpretivist approach seeks to learn “*what people know and how they understand their lives.*” (Schutt, 2004, p.75) Interpretivists argue that “*social reality is socially constructed and that the goal of social scientists is to understand what meanings people give to reality, not to determine how reality works apart from their interpretations* (Schutt, 2004, p. 75).” This study accordingly sought to understand the university teachers’ own experiences and perceptions of their work in teaching Buddhism in New Zealand. As the teachers engage with the students' learning in the field of Buddhist Studies, they are contributing to meanings in the topic (teaching Buddhism). (Marshall & Rossman, 1999)

But then, what kind of meanings the Interpretivists really want to ‘construct?’ Notably, unlike Constructivism, the Interpretivists approach seeks to solicit the participants’ “claims, concerns and issues” about this topic and to reach “consensus” among them. (Schutt, 2004, p.77) In other words, Interpretivists do want to construct, but let the participants to construct their own meanings, rather than making meanings with the researcher’s own judgements.

The researcher as an international student from Taiwan is aware of the important role that cultural differences and historical factors play in cross-culture dialogues. The interpretivist approach “*looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life world.*” (Crotty, 1998, p.67) Taken in this light, ‘enculturation’ is a key idea for the researcher to understand the experiences and perceptions of the participants without being interfered with personal preference and prejudices, in particular those derived from her cultural heritage. Through this process, the researcher herself may have become closer to Western culture and thoughts.

3.3 Research Method & Strategy

Semi-structured in-depth interviews

Based on Phenomenology-oriented Interpretivism that allows me to study persons, the research-study took the approach of “*multiple case studies* (Merriam, 1998, p. 18).” I employed semi-structured in-depth interviews as the strategy of data collection in order to elicit information about teachers’ ideas and experiences of teaching Buddhism in NZ universities; and hopefully, to use these cases to develop knowledge and insights into the university-level teaching of Buddhism in universities in the West.

Interviewing, is accordingly “*the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individuals* (Merriam, 1998).” In my design, it is a series of conversation to find out how teachers have organized their teachings of Buddhism in university and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the teaching of Buddhism in Western universities.

To ensure the space and flexibility for university teachers to share with me and my potential academic audience, the interviews were less-structured. A set of open-ended questions were designed to assure the space for my interviewees to “create the options for responding (Creswell, 2008, p. 225).” In other words, the questions were worded

flexibly that allowed the participants to tell me their stories and allow me to seek further clarification during interviewing. The literature search played an important role in the development of interview questions, which were based on the identified themes together with my general research question.

The interviews with each university teacher were one-hour in length, one-on-one and face to face, to avoid a relatively chaotic process of data collection and “*the difficulty for systematic analysis of the intermingling voices*” it might lead to (Kvale, 1996, p. 101). During interview, conversations with the interviewees were recorded as audio files, with the participants’ permissions. Although recording may have had some impact on participants’ wordings and expressions, it ensured that the conversations were accurately recorded. With the recording, I could concentrate on the conversations with university teachers during interview. Also, I could listen to the conversations several times afterwards to gain a deeper understanding.

All seven teachers who teach Buddhism in NZ universities were invited to be the interviewees; six consented and participated in the interviews. The number of interviewees looks small; however, it represents almost the whole population of university teacher who teach Buddhism in NZ.

Before the interviews, consent forms detailing information about the research in writing were sent to the participants (cf. Appendix B & C). In the consent form, a question was posed politely about the participants’ preference of using true name or a pseudonym; with a notice that even if only one of them decides to remain anonymous, the researcher used pseudonyms for them all. All participants consented to use their true names.

Interviewing Skills

Elite interviewing skills were drawn upon and applied during the interviews to reveal each interviewee’s unique enterprises. As the six participants were selected for interviews on the basis of their enterprise in teaching Buddhism in universities, they could provide an overall view of the university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West. Notably, working with these academic elites was really demanding on the ability of the interviewer by “*projecting an accurate conceptualization of the problem through thoughtful questioning* (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, pp. 105-106).”

Although I became a Buddhist nun, I still had no ideas about how and what to teach Buddhism in Western university. By contrast, all the participants are the experts as a

crucial group for understanding the sector of teaching Buddhism in university as a whole in NZ academy. They are all well-trained in the area of Buddhist Studies (as part of Religious Studies) or Buddhist practices. Therefore, I was willing to let the university teachers teach me “what the problem, the question, the situation, is” in the area of ‘Buddhism & Education’ as a research field.

Before the interview, a pilot interview was conducted to pre-examine my questions. Thus I got some practices in interviewing and learnt which questions might confuse my interviewees and required rewording.

Ideal position questions and hypothetical questions were the major type of questions posed. I asked the teachers to “describe an ideal situation” and to speculate about responses in a particular situation that are usually “descriptions of the person’s actual experience (Merriam, 1998, p. 77)”. For example, I posed ideal position questions such as: What do you hope your students to learn from your courses about Buddhism? and, “What do you think the ideal program of Buddhism in university would be like?” Hypothetical question was used to pose sensitive questions into the issue of religious identity, for example: “Suppose you are asked about your own religious beliefs in class. What would the answer be like?”

Listening and then generating follow-up questions and probes were important skills to get more depth during the interviews. Although I had a list of written questions it was important to listen carefully to what the teachers wanted to tell me, and adjust my questions according to their responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 148). Interpretive questions were used during interviewing to accelerate “*tentative interpretation*” and interaction of what the teacher had been saying (Merriam, 1998, p. 77). For instance, when moving into the issue of cultural divide, I might ask that “Would you say that teaching and learning Buddhism in the West is somewhat more difficult than that in a Buddhist country in the east?” In addition, devil’s advocate questions were used during interviewing to deal with controversial issues in order to get the teachers’ opinions and feelings. For example, when moving into the issue of educational philosophy, I might ask that ‘*Some people would say that Buddhism is not a religion in the Western notion. What would you say to them?*’

3.4 Data Analysis

The research reported in this thesis includes qualitative descriptions of participants' perceptions, my own interpretations, and further discussions and conclusions. An interpretivist perspective was used to seek to understand and describe the reality of the university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West.

After interviews, the audio files and transcripts (on MSWord) were reviewed several times and themes were extracted. The literature review, general research questions and my own background provided initial guidelines for "*testing the emergent understanding*" so as to evaluate the data for their centrality and usefulness (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 152 & 157), and some general themes were defined from these.

As data was collected and reviewed, these themes were reviewed, refined and added to so as to search for, identify and describe other, plausible explanations and the linkage among different perceptions.

3.5 Potential Bias of the Researcher

Traditional quality measures, such as validity and reliability, are not particularly appropriate in this kind of study. The small number of cases in this study cannot ensure validity; however, the six participants generally represent the population, because there were only seven teachers teaching Buddhism in university by 2009. Furthermore, difficulty clustered around language barrier and cultural differences during interviewing and data interpretation.

As mentioned above, to a large extent, the study was conducted under the context of the researchers' multiple identities: as a Buddhist nun, an international student from Taiwan, and a Master of Education student in NZ.

I have great respect for the participants in the study. Face-to-face talking with the participants during the case studies proved to be an inspiring process. However, in order to reflect my own identity as a Buddhist nun with academic rigor, I must also examine my own values and my own changing consciousness throughout this study.

My interest in Buddhism should not affect the overall research, as Buddhist insights cannot be presented adequately within the scope of the academic teaching of Buddhism in university.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Chapter Four identified the methodology and research methods I employed to investigate the research propositions. This chapter will report the outcomes of the interviews, which will be analyzed in relation with the main research questions posed in research design.

Dr. Erica Baffelli

New Japanese religious movements
Lecturer in Asian Religions, Religious Studies Programme
The University of Otago, Dunedin

As suggested by her beautiful surname, Baffelli came from Italy. She completed her Bachelor of Arts and Honours in Asian Area Studies and Ph.D. in East Asian Studies at Venice International University. As an undergraduate, she learned about Japanese language, literature, history, art history, religion, and philosophy. She chose religion and philosophy as her main orientation, and thus did more papers on Indian, Chinese and Japanese religions.

In 2005, Baffelli was awarded a PhD with her dissertation about Japanese new religions and their use of media communication, such as comic books, advertisement, campaign, television etc. As an extension of this she is now working on the use of Internet in the Japanese new religious movement. Most recently, she presented a paper entitled “*Sōkagakkai and Buddhist politics*” at the NZASR 2008 Conference in Rotorua during 2-4 July 2008.

Baffelli came to New Zealand in 2007. Prior to her arrival of Otago, she worked as a visiting researcher at Hosei University in Tokyo, Japan. At the time of interviewing, she had been teaching at Otago for nearly two years. In 2008, there were 15 papers involving some aspects of Buddhism offered at Otago; Baffelli taught a conjoint paper an introductory and advance course on “*Zen Buddhism*” and 2 papers with Buddhism-

related contents, respectively on “*Religion and the Internet*,” and “*Charisma and Healing in Alternative Religion*.” She will teach two other papers with Buddhism-related contents: “*New Religious Movements*” in winter 2009 and “*Religion and popular culture*” in spring, 2009. She told me that, since 2007, the University of Otago offers a New ZealandD \$ 2500 scholarship for two students who have the highest grade in the ‘Hinduism and Buddhism’ Paper.

The Zen Buddhism Paper is the only paper completely on Buddhism. It was a mixed class of 33 students in their second or third year of study. Most were not Religious Studies majors, nor did they have a Buddhist Studies background. Baffelli thus started the course with a historical introduction to the early formation of Chinese Ch’an as part of Mahayana Buddhism in China, and its spreads into Japan and Korea. Then, she could discuss the problematic issues of Zen in contemporary Japan, including its development during the World War Two, the role of women in Zen, and its relationship with the New Religious Movements. After that, she led discussions about the arrival of Zen to the West and its reconsolidation, including the famous Buddhologist D. T. Suzuki and Zen teachers in America and Europe.

In addition, Baffelli also took a critical approach to analyze and deepen students’ knowledge about Zen. Instead of introducing a list of names and dates, Baffelli often analyzed traditions that were actually invented through all the legends around the patriarchs, from the perspective of cultural history. She explained that, remembering Chinese or Japanese names is sometimes very difficult for the students.

Lecture and discussion were the primary methods used in teaching Zen Buddhism. The last part of lecture was often left for answering questions. The students actually asked a lot of questions, which sometimes prompted Baffelli to revise the next lecture according to what the students really wanted to know. After every three lecture sessions, Baffelli usually led a 1-hour discussion in a tutorial time, in which the second-year and third-year students were divided into two groups, given different questions of discussion, and gathered at the end of the session. For students who didn’t have a Buddhist Studies background, she conducted two special tutorials to introduce them to Buddhism concepts and Buddhism history (including the Theravada tradition).

Baffelli had three criteria in choosing course materials.

- (a) She used the most recent translations of the Zen text. Sometimes she read relevant reviews in academic journals to check if the text was suitable for university students.

- (b) She preferred texts using a more critical and historical approach, rather than those texts tended to justify Zen or to represent Zen as the soul of Japan.
- (c) She used some online materials or collections of the academic writings about Zen or translations of Zen text written or edited by university scholars.

She used primary texts in a few lectures only to show the students what the text is and what it sounds like. She most often adopted English translations of Zen texts because most of the students didn't have that level of Japanese required to do textual analysis. The assessment included an essay analysing some aspects of Zen history or discussing how Zen has been constructed and presented.

To show what a Zen monk or Zen temple looks like for students who had never been to Japan and China, Baffelli used video materials and visual images. Part of these materials was from the university library, and many were from her own photos collected when she visited Zen temples in Japan.

We talked about the controversial issue of practice, which is particular significant when it comes to teaching Zen. In the very beginning, Baffelli informed the students that she, as a lecturer in university classroom, was not there to teach Zen practice. She pointed out the aims and approaches of teaching Zen in university (an academic institution) should be different from that in a Zen centre (a religious institution). Teaching Zen in university, as part of Religious Studies, should contribute to developing students' abilities to be *critical*: to be engaged and understanding a religion. For instance, when it came to a Zen meditation class, she gave the students its background, including where this group came from, what they are saying, why they are saying that, and what their aims are.

In the case of Zen Buddhism paper, Baffelli aims at guiding the students “*to think critically*” of the Zen texts, concerning with the specific social context and the specific historical moment; namely, to understand Zen in the context of Japan or the arrival of Zen in the context of 19th century America. To examine, why it was so popular, what was the condition, what had happened. Baffelli emphasized that such an approach is not only used in introducing Zen to the students, but also, all the other Asian religions.

Dr. Will Sweetman

Hinduism, The Theravada Buddhism, Western Buddhism
 Senior Lecturer in Asian Religions, Religious Studies Programme
 The University of Otago, Dunedin

Sweetman was born in Zimbabwe and educated in England. He obtained a BA in Philosophy at Lancaster University in 1993, and a MPhil in Religious Studies at the University of Cambridge in 1995; both, however, were primarily on Western traditions. In 2000, Sweetman received his PhD with a dissertation on “*Mapping Hinduism: 'Hinduism' and the study of Indian religions, 1630-1776*” in which he studied the history of European writing about Indian religions during the colonial and pre-colonial period, mostly Hinduism and Buddhism.

His primary research interests are thus on the cross-cultural encounter between European and Asian religions, which led him into the academic teaching of Buddhism. Before he finished the PhD, Sweetman taught for a couple of years in London and lectured on ‘Hinduism and Buddhism’ at the University of Newcastle, with a focus on the Mahayana tradition. Prior to his arrival of Otago, between 2003 and 2004, Sweetman held a research fellowship at the University of Halle in Germany.

Sweetman has been teaching at Otago since 2005. In 2008, he taught three of the fifteen Buddhism-related papers, respectively an introductory on “*Hinduism and Buddhism*,” and two papers with Buddhism-related contents: “*Asian Religion and the West*” and “*Love & Heroism: Religions of South India*.” The paper “*Asian Religion and the West*” is primarily based on his PhD research.

The Buddhism component of the “*Hinduism and Buddhism*” paper primarily introduced the Theravada tradition. It used to also include the Mahayana tradition, but it was too much for the students to learn about both in one paper. “*Asian Religion and the West*” also contained much about Buddhism, which is mostly about the encounter between the West and Asian religious traditions, mostly in the 18th and 19th century. Some of the major developments in the 20th century, such as Hollywood’s encounter with Buddhism and some films about His Holiness the Dalai Lama, were also introduced.

“*Love & Heroism: Religions of South India*” primarily introduced Hinduism but included several sections on the Buddhist, Christian, and Islamic tradition in South India. This paper mainly dealt with the basic distinction between in the writings in

Akam ('interior' i.e. love poetry) and those about Puram ('exterior', i.e. epic or war poetry). Sweetman explained that the Akam writings, as religious texts about the interior-emotion and domestic spaces, can be seen as the "*literature of love*."

Meanwhile, the Puram writings, as cultural texts about the exterior-public realm (war, politics, etc), can be seen as the "*literature of heroes*." These two sorts of literature were actually a whole set of genres for further conventions in writing poetry; for example, the Buddhist texts from South India used these cultural conventions to convey Buddhist ideas. The paper thus took the students to cross the boundary between religion and culture (the inner and outer) and to examine how a religion used the language to survive in a particular region.

"It's not just that we look different on the outside but actually we are inside the way we think about the world is also different. We don't have to be the same inside to be deserving of respect and equality, but we can appreciate difference as well."

Sweetman indicated that, a grand view of the aims of teaching Buddhism and other Asian religions in university was to contribute to an understanding of 'difference' for the students and to get rid of what he calls "the Disney view of the world." The moral of the cartoon was that even if the animals looking different, everybody was all the same inside and wants the same thing.

However, on a more basic level, the aims of teaching Buddhism would be just to help the students to understand enough about the history and ideas of the Buddhist and Hindu tradition, so they could go on to study at higher levels. He explained that, a few of his students have grown up in Buddhist cultures and had some ideas about Buddhist thoughts, but most had not. Therefore, as the majority had never touched Buddhist culture and thought, the first problem is "*simply to understand what it is like to see the world from the inside of a different culture*."

I was surprised when Sweetman pointed out that, in his experience, students who are not from a Buddhist background but have converted to Buddhism, mostly when they were teenagers, are more resistant to having their ideas about Buddhism challenged as they usually have a very fixed idea about what Buddhism should be because that is what they chose and converted to. By contrast, students who have been brought up as Buddhists, tend to be much more accepting of a variety of possible ways of being Buddhist. He explained that, some students came thinking of becoming Buddhists, with some very fixed ideas, such as "*Buddhism is a religion without Gods*" or "*the main*

Buddhist practice is meditation.” Therefore, they found quite difficult when discovering the fact that most Buddhist communities certainly acknowledge the existence and roles of divine beings and that many Buddhists actually engage in other more devotional practices. In addition, the students often find difficult when discovering their idea of meditation is much narrower than the Buddhist conception of meditation as a path to a cultivation of mindfulness for the whole life.

When teaching religions, including Buddhism, it was important to develop the students’ ability to be critical. He set some controversial topics for the students to ensure they read different points of views and contributed to discussions. For example, some scholars claimed that Buddhism ought to be an “*egalitarian*” tradition, which is very positive to the issue of gender. Sweetman led the students to debate if there are evidences of the Buddha to be purely an egalitarian by reading and discussing what the Buddha said about Buddhist nuns when he accepted Mahāprajāpati, the first female to request ordination from the Buddha and to join the Sangha. He led the students to look for some other issues in the text and compare different arguments on that point put forward by different scholars, which encourages the students to take a critical view.

“In some ways they would be able to study a lot more about Buddhism in Thailand, but they come here and they want to study how Buddhism is understood in a Western university.”

A few students who come from a Hindu or Buddhist background wanted to find out about their own tradition, as an addition and interest. Some students who are doing Asian studies might take this as part of that programme. Interestingly, Sweetman said that, when he taught a 100-level paper on Buddhism in London, he had a student who had been a monk in the Theravada order for ten years. The monk student came to study in UK, because he hadn’t studied it from a scholarly point of view. In that class, Sweetman tried to use the monk’s experience; for example, when teaching about the history of ordination and the changing ordination ceremonies, the monk student brought his photographs when he was ordained at about eight years old, and talked to the students about his experiences to be ordained. Students who had a Buddhist family background usually find what they learn in the university classroom was quite different from what they were told from their grandmother or so. He gave an interesting example from a 5-week, elective paper for medical students, half were from Buddhist families, one from Japan, a couple from Singapore, and a few from Sri Lanka; these students

found issues that they never understood because they had never been taught Buddhism formally, but only have been taken to temples and so on.

“...we do discuss it, that there are different ways you can understand Buddhism, but my answer is that there are enough things about Buddhism that are religious for us to study as a religion.”

Sweetman never asked students about their own religious identity, but some students volunteered the information. As for the controversy question if Buddhism is a religion, Sweetman answered that students often said Buddhism is not a religion; rather, it's a philosophy or a way of life. However, it was not difficult to see the religious dimensions of Buddhism if one visited a Buddhist temple and watched people's making offerings and performing rituals.

I asked, how he taught the concept of Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism to the students. Sweetman replied that he demonstrated to the students how the kind of supreme beings, i.e. Bodhisattva, functioned as if 'gods' in Buddhist countries. What is more, he also distinguished the tiny difference that the divine beings have almost unlimited extraordinary powers but they are not usually regarded as one who created the universe. Rather, it is exactly from the way how Buddhists reacted to the divine beings can we see their function as gods in their traditions, particularly when they were in trouble and calling upon the name of a Bodhisattva. Surprisingly, Sweetman indicated that most of the students, except those doing theology, don't know much about Christianity; even those supposedly brought up in a Christian country and in a Christian family did not know much about the history of Christianity or Christian doctrine. Therefore, it is often very difficult to explain something that was happened in Buddhism by comparing it to a similar movement in Christianity.

“It's possibly true that you can't really understand what it's like to be a Buddhist, but that's not what we're trying to do.”

Regarding the issue of teaching Buddhist practice or not, Sweetman indicated the distinction between teaching Buddhism in temples and universities is 'to teach someone to be a Buddhist' or 'only to teach something about Buddhism.' He gave an analogy that in the psychology department, scholars teach what a psychological phenomenon is, but both the teacher and the students don't have to live that psychological phenomenon in order to study it. In universities, scholars teach the perceptions and deeds of the Buddhists, but do not require students to engage in Buddhist practices. Students who are interested in meditation are encouraged to find somewhere outside of the university and

do a couple of meditation classes. Another reason for not teaching meditation in university classroom is probably the limited semester time. Within a ten- or twelve-week course, the students wouldn't learn very much about meditation.

Regarding teaching materials, Sweetman prefers not to prescribe one single textbook for the students, but rather to give them a selection of readings from different scholars that give a general introduction to the depth of the Buddhist traditions. What is more, he tries to choose fairly recent literature that students will engage more quickly with, rather than the older literature that are valuable but written in a way that students find difficult to read.

Another aspect of students' difficulty clustered in terms of language. Sweetman pointed out that often the students do not like to use "*foreign words*," but he insist that they need to, because the key terms in Buddhism, such as '*anatta* (Sanskrit. non-self)', "*have a range of meanings in their original context*." He explained, these primary terms couldn't always be translated into one word in English; or, it is running the risk of including other ideas that are not Buddhist ideas. Therefore, although the students do not read Sanskrit texts, they must understand the multiple meanings of some key terms in Sanskrit for Buddhists and Hindus. For the paper "*Hinduism and Buddhism*," an assessment task is thus to complete a glossary with 100 terms; half from the Hindu tradition and half from the Buddhist tradition. Some terms are the same in both traditions. For instance, both Hindus and Buddhists talked about '*karma*,' so in both sections the students have to fill in and explain what they understand this term to mean respectively for Buddhists and Hindus.

The assessment included an essay that is worthy 40 or 50 percent and a written examination for the remainder. For the paper of South Indian religions, one exam question posed, could the Buddhist text "*Manimekalai*," which is written in Tamil be translated into any other languages, and if so, would it remain a Buddhist text or a Tamil Buddhist work. The point of discussion was to understand through the text how Buddhism had to imbed itself in Tamil culture. Students usually answer that it is a Tamil Buddhist work and that one couldn't just take this text to another context because of its using Tamil conventions and so on.

The "*Hinduism and Buddhism*" paper was also available for distance learning since two years ago. Each semester has between 12 and 15 distance students. Sweetman prepared a whole package of materials and used 'Blackboard' for online discussions and for

delivering articles, images and video clips used in lectures. By this semester, full lecture notes were provided, and there may be videotapes of lectures in the future.

Most interestingly, from 2009, the University of Otago began to offer the “*Hinduism and Buddhism*” paper to final-year students at secondary schools throughout NZ, which served as a bridge course between secondary school and university and gave students a taste of university. Students could take the credit and count it as part of their degree when going to university. As it gave their students an extra choice, the ‘Hinduism and Buddhism’ paper appeared to be very appealing to many small schools in rural areas where it is difficult for the school to provide a wide range of choices for the students. Sweetman explained that, this is not first paper in the department delivered to secondary school students by distance. For example, the theology school has offered a paper on church history for several years. There were about 120 students enrolled in that paper. The schools provided some supports by setting up a teacher who supervised the students. Between 20 and 30 schools joined the plan and each contributed a few students.

Furthermore, he added, the school of Religious Studies just made an agreement with a Thai Buddhist Foundation for sending Thai Buddhist students to NZ to learn about the academic study of Buddhism and to prepare for research. At the same time, the Buddhist Studies courses at Otago have been increasing so as to attract more students into that programme. By spring 2009, there is to be a full paper on Mahayana Buddhism and a paper on the life of the Buddha, and those some high level papers for preparing students to do academic research.

I asked if there are differences between teaching Buddhism in UK and NZ, because Sweetman used to teach in UK. He answered that, the difference is quite small. Sweetman maintained that, the students’ background is actually distributed broadly the same, but it’s much easier in the UK to expose students to a Buddhist environment, than in NZ, in particular in the South Island. When teaching at Newcastle, Sweetman organized trips to a Buddhist temple and a Buddhist monastery in the UK. But he did take his students to visit a Tibetan Stupa at the Otago peninsula, which is one of the rare formally designated Buddhist sites close to Dunedin.

Dr. Chaisit Suwanvarangkul

Mahayana Buddhism

Associate Lecturer in Asian Religions, Religious Studies Programme

The University of Otago, Dunedin

Suwanvarangkul came from Thailand, a Buddhism country in South East Asia. After obtaining a Bachelor in Pharmaceutical Science from Chulalongkorn University, he had ordained at Wat Phra Dhammakaya as a monk. After the third year of monk life, he won a scholarship to study abroad as a research student at Kyoto University. In two years, he passed the examination and began to study Master of Arts and conducted a research into Mahayana Buddhism, particularly into the Yogacara for two more years. When staying in Japan, Suwanvarangkul also taught meditation, particular in Tokyo.

In 2000, he came back to Bangkok and stopped his monkhood, and then went to India for three years and earned a PhD in Buddhist Studies from the University of Delhi. While studying in Japan and India, he learned Japanese, Tibetan, and Sanskrit. In 2004, Suwanvarangkul returned to Bangkok and taught both The Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism at Wat Dhammakaya Temple and at the Mahachulalongkorn-Rajavidyalaya Buddhist University for about three years.

A few months before our interview, Suwanvarangkul came to Dunedin with the consent of his Master, a Thai Buddhist Monk who established a lot of meditation centres in Australia and NZ. His teaching job at the school of Religious Studies is under a contract made between the University of Otago and the 60th Dhammachai Education Foundation in Sydney, Australia, with Elizabeth Guthrie as the go-between. Dr. Elizabeth Guthrie was the only Otago teacher who didn't participate in this study taught about the life of the Buddha in 2009. According to the contract, the Foundation will also send some Thai students to study in the University of Otago.

On August, 2008, Suwanvarangkul and Elizabeth cooperated to lead a classical Sanskrit reading group. He will begin to teach a course on Mahayana Buddhism at the University of Otago by spring 2009, which is offered both in classroom and by distance. He is also planning to introduce a new course on The Theravada Buddhism in 2010.

By spring 2009, he taught a paper on “*Mahayana Buddhism*” for both the second- and third-year students. Suwanvarangkul was now making his own “*Mahayana Buddhism Course Book*” with references from famous authors such as Edward Conze, D.T. Suzuki,

and Nalinaksha Dutts. In addition to the course reader, Suwanvarangkul was also preparing a collection of relevant scholarly publications in the library for the students. He explained that, some authors were old and some of them had passed away but their books were still very precious.

Suwanvarangkul initiated the course reader with an introduction to the history and development of early Buddhism; and then moved into main topics of Mahayana Buddhism such as '*the Six Pāramitā* (The Six Perfection)' and '*Daśabhūmi* (Ten Stages)' of the bodhisattva. Suwanvarangkul then moved to Madhyamika thoughts on 'emptiness' and Yogacara thoughts on 'Buddha nature.'

To introduce 'the Six Perfection' of a bodhisattva, Suwanvarangkul made a comparison between the Theravada and Mahayana conceptions. He explained that, in the Theravada tradition, a bodhisattva is a human being who endeavours to become a Buddha in the future, by completing his own perfection and helping others to get out of the reincarnation cycle. In the Mahayana tradition, however, there are two kinds of bodhisattva: One is the same as the Theravada concept. Another is 'Maha-(Great) Bodhisattva' such as the Avalokiteśvara (Guan Yin) and the Mañjuśrī (Wénshūshili), who has supreme powers that are often seen as functioning as if a god in some Buddhist societies. But, Suwanvarangkul also indicated that, from a Mahayana Buddhists' perspective, a Maha-Bodhisattva may function like a god, but is definitely not the 'God' who created and controlled the world. Rather, all the bodhisattva is staying in the world not entering nirvana until all the sentient beings getting out of the cyclic existence.

I asked if he would encourage students to read the abundant story narratives in Mahayana sutras. Suwanvarangkul indicated that, for an undergraduate course, he had to simplify the contents because he has only one-hour class time to introduce a whole sutra. For graduate courses, the students had to read through many of the sutras, such as the Lotus Sutra or Pure Land Sutras.

I wondered if there would be any difference between teaching Mahayana Buddhism in Thailand and NZ, because Suwanvarangkul used to teach in Bangkok. He answered that there would be a few differences. In Bangkok, he had to compare Mahayana ideas with the Theravada tradition because in Thailand almost all of his students had studied about the Dharma of the Buddha, such as the Four Noble Truth, at school; and often listened to the Jataka stories about the deeds of the Buddha in his previous lives, from the monk in Buddhist temple when they were children. Therefore, when teaching the Mahayana

tradition, he thus compared its sameness and differences with the Theravada tradition. Regarding to the assignments for Thai students, he usually took use of group study and classroom presentation. For example, in a class with fifteen students, there would be five groups in each with three students and a topic for discussion such as the six Paramita and make comparison between the Mahayana and The Theravada tradition. The three Students wrote a 5000 or 10 000 word essay together and did a presentation in class; at the same time, Suwanvarangkul would run further discussions.

In contrast, when teaching Buddhism in NZ, Suwanvarangkul didn't suppose the students had any previous knowledge or experiences prior to the class. Therefore, he would simplify the course and teach from first step, step by step, from very easy to more difficult. The assignment for NZ students would be a set of reading assignments of the course reader and a 1500-2500 words essay on the chosen topic from five choices. What is more, he would also use films, CDs, or meditation tapes in teaching Buddhism.

Due to the fact that Suwanvarangkul was once ordained as a Monk, I was most interested in his answer to the controversial issues 'what Buddhism is' and 'if Buddhism is a religion or not.' I asked, what his answer would be like to the question what Buddhism is. Suwanvarangkul indicated that, for him, Buddhism is a way of life that offers guides for happiness of human life, which requires practice. He maintained that, some people would regard Buddhism as a science because many classical teachings of the Buddha, such as the law of karma, are tried-and-true.

Regarding to the question that 'whether Buddhism is a religion in Western thought,' Suwanvarangkul analyzed that the answer could be both. He affirmed that Buddhism is a religion, but some people have argued that Buddhism is not merely a religion in Western thoughts because the teachings of the Buddha as talking about 'facts' are more like science, which require not just to-believe but also to-do by oneself.

If the students ask, Suwanvarangkul will answer that he is a Buddhist but with an emphasis that he doesn't expect to change the students' religion identities through the paper. He emphasized that Christian students can study Buddhism with no need to change his/her religion to be a Buddhist. I asked his thoughts about practices. Suwanvarangkul affirmed the importance in Buddhism to practice, such as doing meditation every day. However, he also said: *"If we have time we should practice meditation in our house, but it has no marks, I mean any mark to give if you meditate everyday or not. If you don't want to meditate, it is okay, it's not compulsory."*

Dr. Douglas Osto

South Asian Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism
Lecturer, Religious Studies and Philosophy
Massey University, Palmerstone North

“I have both a personal and an academic interest in Buddhism. My personal interest in Buddhism has motivated me in my academic study. Without my personal motivation, I would not have been able to do what I have done.”

It was in his second year as an undergraduate at Grinnell College in the United States, where he met Prof. Dan Lusthaus (at that time a lecturer finishing a PhD in Buddhism), Osto decided to become a scholar and a lecturer specializing in Buddhist Studies. As a result, he took Religious Studies as major and obtained the first degree in 1991. Such a decision is by no means fortuitous, since that he first encountered Buddhism, as an Asian religion, through a course on ‘*oriental culture*’ at high school. Before that, he had learned ‘*Transcendental Meditation (TM)*’ for two years and had become interested in Asian religions and philosophies.

By 1995, Osto had obtained a Master degree of Theological Studies (MTS) from Harvard University. In 1999, he obtained a MA from the University of Washington. In 2004, Osto was awarded a doctoral degree by the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London with his dissertation entitled “*The Gandavyuha-Sutra: a study of wealth, gender and power in an Indian Buddhist narrative.*”

On December, 2008, he published a book entitled “*Power, Wealth and Women in Indian Mahayana Buddhism: The Gandavyuha-sutra*” as part of the Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism. He is an active member of the Australian Association of Buddhist Studies (AABS). In 2006 and 2007, he respectively presented a paper on the annual conferences of AABS, which were entitled “*Proto-Tantric Elements in the Gandavyūha-sūtra*” and “*Money, Merchant-Bankers and the Mahāyāna.*” (AABS Website, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c)

He has been teaching Religious Studies courses at Massey since 2005, and has designed four papers, including a survey course ‘*Hinduism and Buddhism*’ and three other papers with Buddhism-related contents. By spring 2009, “*Hinduism and Buddhism*” and “*Sex, Gender and Religion*” are offered both internally and extramurally; while, “*Asian Philosophies*” and “*East Asian Religions*” are offered only for extramural students. On average, every year he has about 40 students taking Buddhism-related courses. He also

designed a distance package for each course for extramural students at Massey.

Surprisingly, he also leads a meditation group outside the campus. In 2010 Osto hopes to develop a Sanskrit course that not only Buddhists but also Yoga teachers and Hindus would be interested in.

Being both a Buddhist and a historian of religion, his role at university had been a focus for questions throughout the interview. Certainly, one can think from both a Buddhist- and a Scholar- perspective; however, can a university teacher teach from both lines of reasoning?

Osto claimed that it is important and not impossible to separate personal beliefs and scholastic works. He described the two identities as two hats. He attempts to be a Buddhist when sitting on a meditation cushion; to teach the teachings of Buddha as a path to achieving enlightenment when teaching meditation; to teach Hinduism and Buddhism use in “*that sort of detached way*” by using “*all the scholarly tools.*”

“I tell them I’m a Buddhist. For a lot of times on the first day of class, I will just say ‘I am a Buddhist but I am not here to teach you as a Buddhist, but if you’re interested in learning more about me as a Buddhist, I can tell you outside of class’. I think this is an honest way of doing it.”

Osto explained that he got the idea from a professor of philosophy when he was an undergraduate. The professor taught about the whole range of philosophy; but when students asked him, ‘what do you think?’ The professor would say, “*Oh, well, we can have a cup of coffee after class and I’ll tell you what I think. It’s not my job to tell you what I think. It’s my job to teach you about philosophy.*”

Throughout the interview, he addressed such a distinct position of university teacher over and over:

“When I’m in a classroom teaching Hinduism and Buddhism, I don’t teach Buddhism as a path to enlightenment because the people in the classroom aren’t there to learn about Buddhism as a path to enlightenment. They’re there to learn about Buddhism within an academic setting.”

“I can’t get up there as if I’m giving a Dharma talk and try to convert everybody to the Buddha Dharma because that’s not my job. That’s not what Massey hired me to do. But if say a student said, ‘I’m personally interested in Buddhism’, I would say ‘Okay, well we could have a cup of coffee after class and talk about what it means to practice Buddhism.’”

To justify such a position, Osto indicated that “*the beauty about human beings is that we’re complex and we assume different roles given our position.*” He gave an example,

in family one was a son to his/her mother and a brother/sister to other children, in society a friend to one's own friends, and so in university classroom an 'academic teacher' to the students.

"After 41 years of being me, I've actually realised that I'm not one; and if you believe in the idea of no-self in Buddhism, what part of you is so desperate to try to hold onto the singular identity, and like I said before, you are what you are in relation to others."

In response to my reflection that University Buddhologists are playing an important role to introduce Buddhism for Western teachers and students, Osto address two points concerning that: firstly, he affirmed the significance of increasing one's knowledge about other religions would be helpful to decrease the level of fear that occurred through ignorance, and thus breed more tolerance; so this should be a goal of Religious Studies. In terms of Religious Studies scholars, it would be helpful to create "*a neutral space*," whether physical or virtual, for Religious Studies scholars to exchange and disseminate information about one's publications or teachings, "*regardless of their faith commitments*." Secondly, he emphasized the importance to respect individual choices of religious beliefs, so the teacher is to inform, not to convert the students or anybody else to his beliefs:

"As far as I know no one has converted to any religion because I taught them about it! And again, it's not my job. If they did, then that's great, but if they didn't, it's not what I do for my job."

To introduce Buddhism for university students, Osto tends to take a historical approach that focuses on the historical context that offers a larger framework of Buddhism, and then its doctrines and practices in different periods of the past. In addition to a historical approach, Osto indicated that there is another more anthropological or modern approach that tends to focus on the contemporary performances of Buddhism.

Students are encouraged to visit Buddhists if they wish to, whereas a tour to Buddhist temple or Zen centre is not a component of his teaching, because Osto only teaches the introductory stuffs for the beginners and he thought the only reason to lead a tour to Buddhist temples or Zen centre is when students have to deepen their understanding of the historical reasons for these. Osto explained that a tour without deep discussions of the complex historical contexts and reasons of doing chanting or rituals (such as ringing a bell or doing bows) is likely just "*figure gestures showing a tiny amount*" of the 2550-years history of Buddhism.

Compared to extramural teaching, Osto usually had a relatively small class of internal students. Therefore, in addition to lectures, he most often runs his classes as seminars; namely, a two-hour class contains short lectures spaced by ‘question and answers’ in-between that allows the teacher and his students to ask questions between each section of lecture. Class attendance and participation count for 20% of assessment, which, to some extent, also motivate the students to contribute to the class.

For the course of ‘Hinduism and Buddhism,’ Osto had used “*The Foundations of Buddhism*” as the textbook until this summer, but switched to “*Buddhism: the E-Book*,” an electronic book published through the Journal of Buddhist Ethics. Both of these two books take a historical approach to introduce Buddhism that offer information about how Buddhist thoughts first developed in and spreads outside India and what are its main ideas and changes with time and space.

Osto shifted to an electronic book because most of his teaching is done extramurally through a study guide he designed, which includes an administration guide, study notes, and readings from sets of textbook. This summer, he attempted to “*move away from clunky paper medium*” and “*create a more dynamic learning experience*” for extramural students by using E-Book, Web-CT, and e-mail. He pointed out three features of the E-Book that are suitable for extramural teaching:

- (1) affordable prices (only about one-third of common textbooks);
- (2) downloadable format (as a PDF file that can be saved onto hard drive);
- (3) hyperlinked (to good legitimate websites picked up by scholars).

Osto indicated that the extramural setting is a great benefit to students living far away from Massey University or employed full-time. He pointed out that most of his students coming from around NZ, but he also has some overseas students living in the United States, Japan, and Europe. An extramural student can study with the study guide and Web CT at his/her expense, ask questions or participate in discussions through online-board or e-mail. Through the Web-CT, students can access much information about Buddhism through the Internet and have *real time chats* with the teacher and other students. The teacher, in Osto’s experience, can have lengthy, detailed discussions with individual students that are quite difficult in a university classroom. What is more, students can take final examinations in university or some places set up by the university, in Auckland or other areas.

As a non-sectarian Buddhist, Osto introduces Buddhist concepts such as ‘no-self’ and ‘emptiness’ using the basic model used in Buddhist tradition to explain them. When teaching about ‘no-self,’ for example, he begins with ‘the Five Aggregates’ that suggests our existence as clusters of the five compositional elements: Form, Feeling, Perception, Impulse, and Consciousness; and gives the very famous example of the dialogue between the King Malinda and Ven. Bhikkhu Nagasena that elucidated Buddhist conception of no-self using the analogy of a chariot [, which is not only the combination of pole, axle, wheels, framework, flag-staff, yoke, reins, or goad, but also not outside this combination.] What is more, he employs ‘the Sūtras of the Perfection of Wisdom’ and Nagarjuna’s Madhyamaka (contemplation of the themean [I don’t know what themean means??]) with his ‘dialectical logic’ in teaching about Buddhist conceptions of ‘emptiness.’

Osto explained that, he use these original models because he doesn’t believe the sort of “*rhetoric*” that suggested the split between so called Western and Eastern mind or between European and Asian mind, which can be traced back to Orientalism that defined people into some categories who think in a certain way because of genetic or biological factors.

Osto does agree with the cultural differences existing among students from different countries. He maintained that, a teacher must “*realize*” and “*respect*” that students from different languages or customs may look upon things and phenomena from divergent points of view and “*make the learning environment as multi-cultural as possible.*”

“Some people just have different backgrounds; and, sometimes it’s really hard for people to grasp the idea of no-self. I do the best I can”

Interestingly, he gave more weights to individual differences. He argued that, whether born in the East or the West, we human beings have the same physiology, the ‘discrepancy’ thus exist more among individuals. He gave students’ conception of ‘no-self’ as an example that some students just grasped the idea easily, whereas some students had a hard time understanding:

“Sometimes students that will write about no-self and they will refer to a soul in Buddhism, saying that in Buddhism ‘the soul is a no-self’. But in Buddhism there isn’t a soul that’s a no-self. No-self means there is no self, there is no soul. It’s not a real thing that exists.”

Osto gave the Buddhist concept of dependent arising to view the so-called cultural divide as individually conditioned states, which I think may resolve the dilemma:

“I’m always sensitive to those kind of multi-cultural issues, ... there is a bias because I was trained in Anglo-American academic environment; I teach in English, I read some ancient Buddhist languages, and you know, I’m teaching in NZ. So there’s going to be a bias there. I can’t help this, because I’ve been conditioned in a certain way, but what I can do is try to be aware of the bias as much as possible and be as inclusive as I can in my approach and also be as honest as I can.”

Osto, in advance, distinguished the difference between ‘detaching from the idea of oneself’ and ‘knowing a concept called no-self.’ The former one is associated with *the actual sort of intuitive understanding*” of ‘no-self’ that what Buddhists called Wisdom (prajna) or Insight (vipassana); namely, to detach from the idea of ‘me’ and ‘self’ and into ‘no-self’ is part of transforming an unenlightened person to an enlightened one. “However, the academic teaching of Buddhism in university concerns only the kind of intellectual understanding of the concept ‘no-self’ itself.

Dr. Michael Radich

Chinese Buddhism

Lecturer in Asian Religions, Religious Studies Programme

Victoria University of Wellington

“Ever since I was about seventeen, I knew that I wanted to be a scholar. The question for me has only ever really been what kind of scholar would I be.”

Radich is a NZ born Buddhologist. Although he had decided to become a scholar when seventeen, his encounter with Buddhism changed his previous plan of life which had been to become a scholar specialising in music.

“At one point I thought about being a scholar of Chinese philosophy.”

It was because one of his best friends at high school was returning to China (with his younger brother) to visit their sick-grandmother and invited Radich to go with them, Radich decided to learn some Chinese in order to talk in the vernacular on his first trip to China. He quickly lost his heart to the Chinese language and literature. Later, Radich won a scholarship from the NZ government to study in China. He still flew to China with his best friend, but he stayed in Shanghai and Nanjing for three years studying Mandarin and Chinese Philosophy. At the time, Chinese Philosophy, in particular Daoism, appealed to him. Therefore, after returning to NZ, Radich did his Master dissertation on the Zhuangzi. Through studying Daoism, Radich relished reading Ch’an Buddhism, and then broadened his readings to various kinds of Buddhism.

“I thought Buddhism was the most interesting thing that I'd ever run across.”

Radich elucidated that he chose Buddhism over other things due to two philosophical characters of Buddhism. Firstly, Buddhism, as “*an extremely unusual system of thought*” its sceptical attitude, which “*suggests that so much of what we think we know is wrong,*” strongly attracted him. Secondly, he is particularly interested in the development of Buddhist ideas and their connections to the historical events and the cultures that they are founded on. This had greatly impacted on his research interest in investigating the “Sinification” of Buddhist ideas in China. He explained that there were not many cases like Buddhism in China, as an Indian system with large body of ideas transferred to China, an entirely different civilization before the modern era.

Radich thus decided to study Buddhist philosophy. He applied to eight programmes of American universities, some on Buddhist Studies and some on Chinese Philosophy. Radich was firstly accepted to study Chinese Philosophy at Harvard University, where he studied Chinese Buddhism with Robert Gimello and Chinese thoughts under Michael Puett. He took some courses about Chinese Buddhism so as to change specialization to Buddhist Studies, due to having no background in Buddhist Studies before he went to the United States.

In 2007, Radich received his PhD with a dissertation entitled "*The Somatics of Liberation: Ideas about Embodiment in Buddhism from Its Origins to the Fifth Century C.E.*" In the thesis, he examined how Buddhism had been embodied in the world through the developmental idea of 'the three forms of body of the Buddha.'

Radich is now teaching four papers across different levels at Victoria University of Wellington. For freshmen, he taught an introductory course "*Paths to Enlightenment: Introducing Asian Religions*" with about a hundred and fifty students. He taught three of the twelve weeks of lectures on Buddhism, as an example of broader phenomena of religion. The Buddhism part contained basic facts about Buddhism and some Buddhist practices in the Indian and Chinese context and the problems arising when people think about whether it's real Buddhism or not, i.e. issues of authenticity. For third-year students, Radich is now preparing to introduce a special topic about the body in religious practice and theory from spring, 2009; including the bodies of the Buddha as an example, which has much to do with his PhD dissertation.

Second and fourth year courses contain much material about Buddhism. For second year Radich teaches a survey course "*An Introduction to Buddhist Studies*" with between forty and seventy students. He structured this course as a set of instances of critical themes in Religious Studies' using Buddhist materials, so as to "*make sure that students who are not primarily interested in Buddhism still find the course helpful as part of a degree in general Religious Studies.*" In addition, Radich aimed to give students a good sense of the spectrum of Buddhist traditions and the range of interesting questions in the study of Buddhism in the West or the modern university system. In this paper, he spent a lot of time attempting to "*counteract the stereotypes*" coming with the students and showed them that Buddhism is more varied than they thought. Radich pointed out that, students often came into the class with two preconceived ideas:

(1) *“They come to the course thinking Buddhism is not a religion or a philosophy”* To deal with this, he had lectures on Pure Land Buddhism, for example, to show the students that Buddhism also contains religious components that look like Catholicism.

(2) *“They come thinking that Indian Buddhism is more authentic than other kinds of Buddhism ... and, that original Buddhism is more authentic than later kinds of Buddhism. But ironically, they also think that somehow the Buddhism that has come to the West is pure and true, and there has been no transformation as it arrived.”* Radich explained that, for example, students often perceived Kianu Reeves, who played the role of the historical Buddha in the film ‘Little Buddha,’ represents something about real Buddhism. To deal with issues of authenticity and transformation, he had lectures on the miraculous beliefs about the Gautama's bodies that became golden and eighteen feet high, and had forty teeth, and so forth when he became the Buddha.

For Honours students, Radich offered a paper on *“Advanced Studies in Asian Religions,”* which is seminar-style with topics changing every year. Although the paper is a graduate course, many students come to the course without having taken the second year course on Buddhism and without any background in Buddhism at all. Therefore, Radich tried to teach basic and in-depth contents of Buddhism at the same time. He leads students to read Buddhist texts and picked an interesting problem in Buddhist Studies to learn more in-depth for twelve weeks. For spring 2009, for example, the course was the Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāna Sutra and its reception in China, which were first translated into Chinese in the early fifth century. The sutra was translated three times and contributed to the establishment of the Nirvāna School, one of the important schools in fifth and sixth century Chinese Buddhism.

“The definitions of things are often a matter of your perception or your starting point, so you need to be really careful that you don’t just find what you are looking for...”

In regard to the question ‘what Buddhism is,’ Radich indicated that the second-year paper *“Buddhism: the Noble Path”* effectively dealt with this; and, throughout the course, a point he dwelled on was that *“there is no simple answer to that question.”* Likewise, Radich indicated that the other difficult question regarding Buddhism as a religion or not is what most of the Buddhism paper dealt with; and, the answer of such a *“circular question”* depends on one’s definition of religion. To my surprise, he pointed out that:

"It's very easy to stipulate a definition of religion that would exclude Buddhism. All you have to do is to say there has to be a creator God, for example, or that there must be some central tenet of faith that everybody has to profess in order to for them to count as a member of the religion, and you can instantaneously eliminate Buddhism by these means."

Radich emphasized that, when teaching Buddhism as part of the larger course of Religious Studies, a quite difficult but more interesting and important approach to the issues of basic definitions of religion is probably: *"How we can define religion generally enough, that our definition would fit both Buddhism and Judaism?"* He then suggested an interesting approach here is to see some features that Buddhism shares with other religions, including its functions. Therefore, he often worked out such a sense for the students from a broad comparative perspective, by finding out on the similarities and dissimilarities among various kinds of Buddhism and among other major religions.

On the one hand, he reminded the students *"to be very careful of saying that any one thing is the essence of Buddhism, because usually you'll find an exception somewhere."* A short version of the answer given to the students was thus *"Buddhism is more like a family of religions than one single religion."*

On the other hand, he argued against some extreme relativist thoughts, which claimed that *"Buddhism is infinitely varied,"* because there are indeed basic ideas common to most kinds of Buddhism; such as understanding that this world is 'suffering' and that the ultimate goal of whatever sorts of Buddhist practices one engages in is to *"either escape suffering entirely, or in some cases simply to lessen it,"* while many means were *"designed to make it easier along the way"* toward that goal.

Furthermore, Radich indicated that 'Buddhism' suggested that one could not escape or lessen suffering by means other than knowing the right thing, such as martyrdom (dying for the faith). This is quite different from other major religions in which the greatest things one can do directly lead to the highest rewards that the religions offer.

"It's not my job to "hijack" their education, as it were, and try and tell them so much about Buddhism that I lose sight of those other things."

When it comes to the differences between postgraduate level and undergraduate level teaching of Buddhism, Radich answered that it depends on where one is teaching. In the case of NZ, he had only a few students here who were mainly interested in Buddhism. Namely, undergraduate students usually studied Buddhism as part of a degree in

Religious Studies or Cultural Studies. [Reason for this deletion is this PhD is in next paragraph] Therefore, teaching about Buddhism at the undergraduate level in NZ is actually aiming to contribute to a more general understanding of scholarly approaches and basic academic skills (such as critical thinking, close reading, and healthy kind of scepticism etc) related to religions, their place in societies, and people's ways of thinking about religions other than academic perspectives in other part of their lives. What is more, Radich maintained that in NZ there is an Honours year that works like a kind of transitional year after graduation, its aims remain very similar to undergraduate education because so few students are primarily interested in Buddhism.

On rare occasions, Radich has some graduate students who seriously intend to pursue Buddhism to PhD level. The primary goal of teaching Buddhism at graduate level is thus to *“get them equipped with basic skills for the academic study of Buddhism.”* He pointed out that, the academic study of Buddhism demands the students acquire a lot of skills, including a broad knowledge base about Buddhist texts and the history of Buddhist traditions, a very challenging suite of language skills, and an understanding of the state of Buddhist Studies as a huge research field with a great number of publications, which the students usually would not have done at undergraduate level. Therefore, these graduate students needed to learn much about the development of scholarly works about Buddhism, different ways of thinking about various Buddhist phenomena from academic or other perspectives, and ideally needed to know English, French, German, Chinese, Japanese, Sanskrit, Pali, and Tibetan as preparation for their own original research projects, which would make a significant contribution to the field of Buddhist Studies. Radich maintained that, although the research project is always done by individual graduate students independently, the supervisor will need to be *“trying to push the student to think of something that's new, which is often a matter of trying to connect their own life experience, or their interests, to their academic work.”*

I asked him about an ideal programme of Buddhist Studies in university. He answered that, he would like Buddhist Studies to be like other subjects where students start at the beginning and have enough time to get through. So, ideally, he would like students to do a four-year, undergraduate degree entirely in Buddhist Studies; at the time, they would be required to learn basic different Buddhist traditions and two or three languages. At Master's level, students could be specializing in particular issues or traditions and deepen their knowledge of one of the primary languages. What is more, Radich added, a programme specialising in Buddhist Studies should also include,

among foundational studies on Buddhism, broader studies in religions, and broader studies in related disciplines, such as history, philosophy, anthropology etc that left choices for the students' individual interests and also help to perceive many of the most interesting features of Buddhism as an object of study. He explained that, such a concern is based on the fact that *“much of the best work in Buddhist Studies is partly generated (1) out of the ways Buddhism is illuminated by knowledge of other aspects of the societies it is in; or, (2) by comparative consideration of problems partially analogous to those found in other religious traditions.”*

Radich indicated that some individual students who are amazingly having very strong languages skills. He spoke of a friend at Harvard, who was about 22 or 23 when going to Harvard, could already read German, French, English, Sanskrit, and Pali and then learned Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese in his first two years at Harvard. However, in most cases, students did not have a strong knowledge base or language skills, and then he thought that the three-year PhD of the NZ system was not ideal for serious graduate students who sought the level of excellence in scholarship of Buddhist Studies which often require seven to ten years in the North American system or the European system. Radich gave his own story as an example; he spent seven years to complete his PhD at Harvard, but finished his PhD dissertation in last three years. When he began the PhD, he already had a Masters in Chinese Philosophy and could already speak modern Chinese and Japanese fluently and could read classical Chinese.

Given that the NZ system is based on the expectation that students will get through in three years and there is pressure from government funding on universities to make they finish in three years, Radich himself would actually advise serious graduate students to go overseas, if possible. An alternative to going overseas is to learn the languages without being enrolled in university, at the same time reading the second language literatures under guidance; then, it would be reasonable to begin the PhD research with these prerequisites and expect to complete in three years.

Radich thought that the impact of cultural divide in teaching Buddhism is not very large. He wouldn't change what to teach in the essentials, but rather a little bit of the teaching style so as to adapt to basic difference of learning style between Eastern and Western students.

When introducing Buddhism to university students, Radich generally focused on two sets of ideas. One is Buddhist conceptions of Buddhism and themselves; the other is the

Religious Studies scholars' ideas on Buddhism including the idea that "*Buddhism is not just a philosophy.*" He tried to teach the students that "*Buddhism has changed a great deal over time and space,*" that Buddhism contains many religious things, and that it is not just a difficult problem but also a meaningful question to "*find out what is common to all the historical and cultural forms of Buddhism.*"

When introducing Buddhist conceptions, it is important to introduce the distinction between Mahayana and non-Mahayana Buddhism as well as what Buddhist know the meanings of the Four Noble Truths, non-self, emptiness, etc. In addition, he also introduced the students what Buddhist know a stupa is and what they do when going to stupas. Also, he explained to the students what Buddhists think the reason why stupas are the most wide-spread form of Buddhist architecture.

Surprisingly, Radich indicated that using Western philosophical languages would not make it more accessible because many of the students come with no idea about Western philosophy. In teaching the Buddhist conception of emptiness, for example, if talking to the students about 'essence' and 'accidents,' they don't know these terms from the Platonic or Aristotelean traditions. Therefore, he had to teach from the ground up, using simple languages and series of examples.

For instance, to elucidate the Buddhist conception of 'emptiness,' Radich used the example of the relative relationships between words and given things to work out the idea of dependent arising, the basic idea of 'emptiness' that indicates our thinking bias to perceive everything as a discrete entity that exists independently from other things. In addition, he tried to let the students know that the Buddhist conception of emptiness, like other Buddhist philosophical ideas, is generally "*not just a philosophical idea in the sense that Western philosophical ideas are often taken, where it's a sort of speculative argument about the real nature of the world, that's interesting just as a description of things.*" Rather, he tried to teach the students to understand that Buddhism was supposed to save human beings from suffering, which is a dimension that Western philosophical ideas often don't have. He pointed out, Buddhist philosophers like Nagarjuna, and Asanga, and Vasubandhu, and Dōgen, for example, "*were only interested in ideas if they thought the ideas could save people, ultimately.*"

Furthermore, Radich indicated there is a difference between the academic perspective and the tradition-internal perspective. In the university you are not really teaching Buddhist practice, however, it is important to teach Buddhist concepts in the context of

Buddhist practices. Therefore, he preferred not to merely present plain ideas in Buddhist books, but also more broad knowledge on real practices; for example, the forms of practices people engage in around ‘*merit*’ or ‘*meditation*.’ This helped to counteract the very narrow stereotyped set of ideas about Buddhist practices student brought to the classroom.

Regarding course materials, Radich usually assigned scholarly works by reputable scholars. He also indicated the importance of using primary texts so the students would understand how much work of interpretation and construction goes into a textbook. With primary materials, he chose reliable and accurate scholarly translations. In the case of Zen, there are lots of poetic and interesting translations of text, but most of them are quite poor and cannot convey very well what a Chinese reader or Japanese reader would think if they read the Chinese or Japanese. For undergraduates, however, he really only gave them a small taste of fairly famous texts from the Pali canon that are easy to understand and might come up again one day and give the students a feeling of accomplishment. He explained that, in his experience, if most undergraduates read more than five pages of a Buddhist text, they will just give up because it’s too hard.

Regarding teaching tools, Radich used a lot of PowerPoint slides and always made the PowerPoint slides available to the students for revision. The PowerPoint slides usually included two sorts of material: (1) pictures; (2) lists of information, such as technical terms that is difficult to write down, a few websites, YouTube clips, and other readings and films they might do after class. Radich didn’t show many films in classes because the lecture time is scarce. He pointed out, the usage of films depends on the topics. For instance, he did show films when teaching a ritual or Tantric meditation so as to convey these vividly and learn more than one can learn by reading for a week.

For assessment, he often assigned two essays and a test at the end, and each week the students are required to write a short response to the readings, answering a set question such as “*What is the difference between Mahayana and non-Mahayana Buddhism?*” Sometimes he also used quizzes in class in order to give the students an incentive to read what was assigned.

Sensei Amala Wrightson

Zen Priest, Teacher and Instructor

Auckland Zen Centre, AUT University & the University of Auckland

Sensei Amala Wrightson is an Auckland-born Zen Priest and Teacher of an American branch of Japanese Buddhism that integrated both Soto and Rinzai Zen tradition. She grew up in Auckland, worked in theatre with her husband, Richard von Sturmer, and had spent half of her life in Zen practice since the 80s.

Amala and her husband got in touch with Buddhism in about 1980 and began Zen practice in 1982 after attending a workshop led by Roshi Philip Kapleau in Sweden. Meanwhile, she completed an MA in Italian at the University of Auckland.

“I needed to be able to make the teachings of Buddhism real in my life, not just have them as something that I read about, and that’s what got me interested in meditation.”

With a strong resolution to practice Buddha Dharma from 1988 onward Amala travelled repeatedly to the United States and threw herself into full-time Zen training at the Rochester Zen Centre in New York, for about thirteen years. The Rochester Zen Center was set up in 1966 by Roshi (the highest title for Zen teacher) Philip Kapleau (1913-2004) who practiced Zen under three Soto or Rinzai Zen Masters when studying overseas in Japan, and was ordained as a Zen priest in 1965. Amala was ordained as a Zen priest in 1999. By August 2004, her teacher, Roshi Bodhin Kjolhede, gave her the formal permission to teach Zen.

Amala gave as the reason why she chose Zen rather than other life styles, her deep karma with Buddhism, she guessed that she had probably been a Buddhist nun in China in her previous life. Also, she maintained, the teachings of the Buddha, which appear to be “*practical, simple, not dogmatic, and providing effective, proven methods to come to awakening,*” strikes a chord in her heart.

“Really for me the work I do in universities is mostly just about planting seeds; you have more possibilities when you are young, when you are in university, so it is a good time to be exposed to new ideas.”

After finished her training in the United States in late 2003, Amala came back to New Zealand with the plan to start up a Zen centre teaching meditation in New Zealand. The Auckland Zen Centre first began from a very small group. Therefore, she had extra time and thus approached both the University of Auckland (UoA) and AUT University

(AUT), offering to volunteer as a Buddhist chaplain. UoA wasn't interested but AUT said: *"Yes, we would love to have you because we want to have a multifaith chaplaincy programme."* Amala indicated that she thought that AUT was interested in having a chaplain because it has had a very strong tradition of taking care of students well, looking after the needs of the whole person, not just the academic person.

Amala is now teaching Zen meditation in the Auckland Zen Centre. She also leads weekly meditation class at AUT. What is more, she has taught two papers at the Centre for Continuing Education of the UoA: *"Introduction to Zen"* and *"Women in Buddhism."* Amala described how she ran meditation classes as part of her service as a chaplain at AUT; while she introduced the Dharma intellectually when teaching at UoA as a way of getting information out to people about Buddhism and Zen.. So, people came to AUT once a week to learn meditation and ask questions, and some of the students at UoA later took up dharma practice as well.

For her, teaching Zen-related courses or workshops in universities is more like just planting an idea in people's minds, whereas the ongoing weekly meditation sittings at the Zen Centre is much more fundamental, as the people who come are developing an ongoing daily practice which will change their lives.

Amala indicated, most of the people came to the Zen class at AUT were actually staff members. While, people enrolled at the two courses at UoA were generally slightly older people who have some leisure, usually they are quite well educated and most have university degrees and professional jobs. In both universities, the students do not all identify themselves as Buddhists but some of them do. Most importantly, Amala indicated that most students at the Zen Centre and most students at universities have pretty stressful lives. Again and again she heard from people, in all kinds of walks of life, that they worked longer hours, felt busier, and felt like that they had less time than they used to.

"Why are we here? What is our purpose? How can we help? How can we really make a difference? It is vital that young people ask these questions, but often they are not addressed in university courses."

Regarding her teaching 'of' and 'about' Zen at universities, Amala indicated that university life, when the students are not already tied down to a career or a family, is the best time to be exposed to new things, such as Zen which enables university students to develop inner stillness and calmness, and more importantly to find out answers about

birth and death. Amala explained, people often came to the practice group at AUT just because they felt stressed out and needed some calmness in their stressful life; but, usually those who stayed and actually kept going are looking for “*more clarity about their lives.*” Therefore, what really motivated people to keep meditating are their wishes “*to be able to live more effectively*” and “*to act out of compassion and understanding, rather than out of attachment.*”

What is more, Amala explained, people often enrolled at the “*Introduction to Zen*” course, which Amala ran with her husband, because of curiosity or artistic interest in Japanese culture. Many people have heard about Zen through such things as temple-aesthetics, haiku poetry, or brush painting, which brought them along to the course. Some others looked for spiritual meaning in their lives, and so wanted to try Zen out. Also, some of the students were doing martial arts and came to learn about the philosophy of Zen underlying their discipline. In addition, almost all of the students in the “*Women in Buddhism*” class were women; often they would have an interesting feminism and spirituality. Some of the students had already become Buddhists and came to learn more about the history of women in Buddhism. Most interestingly, she pointed out, the only man, a Sri Lankan monk living in New Zealand who found that there were lots of women in his community, came to learn more about how he could help them. After the class, they still see each other and have become friends.

When she started at AUT, at first Amala offered office hours for students to drop in but very few people came. Then she started doing a few meditation workshops followed by sessions where people did just meditation and nothing else, but this was a little hard for beginners. Thereafter, Amala changed the format to a lunchhour class consisting of thirty minutes answering people’s questions, talking about different things that were going on their lives followed by a thirty-minute period of sitting meditation. She said people seemed to find the class format really helpful. Therefore, Amala now offers a couple of introductory workshops at the beginning of each semester. After that people can join in with the regular Monday class in the multi-faith space of AUT, they have a supply of meditation cushions there which they bring out each time for the meditation sessions.

The “*Women in Buddhism*” paper focused on not only the status of women but also the way women have become part of Buddhism across the whole history from the time of the Buddha to later on in China, Japan and Tibet. Through the paper students learn

about how women managed to find a way to practice the teachings of the Buddha and not to be discouraged by discriminations that sometimes happened. For example, she pointed out that women actually have been involved right from the very beginning of Buddhism in China, when Buddhist nuns came there from Sri Lanka and established the Bhikshuni Order. What is more, she told students that looking at all the literature about the history of Zen, it is almost all about men, but actually there were lots of Buddhist nuns who wrote beautiful poetry, who were fine teachers, who had deep understanding, but we had not heard so much about them.

The “*Introduction to Zen*” paper was primarily an academic course that dealt with the history of Zen and its impacts on vernacular cultures through a series of instruction on the influence of Zen in Japanese culture, literature, art, architecture, garden design. She explained, she taught all these different things because they are really accessible for people; so students can learn about the teachings of Zen from something concrete like a garden or a building. Even though, Amala indicated that “*the most important thing to communicate with people about Zen is that it’s practical; it’s not an intellectual exercise.*” Therefore, after introducing Zen on the first night, the second class is an invitation for all students to come to the Zen centre and learn to sit. In this class the students were given some practical instructions so that they would know what is behind the Zen texts; that sitting practice was at the core of Zen teaching; and that for most people aspiring to awaken sitting practice is indispensable.

As mentioned above, Amala invited her students to visit the Auckland Zen Centre at the second class of the “*Introduction to Zen*” paper. The field trip generally begins with showing them around the Zen Centre and explaining what happens in it, including the meditation hall where has the instruments used for chanting and two other rooms respectively for having tea and interviews. She explained to the students the significance of the Buddha figure and the reason why Buddhists have offerings such as fruit and flowers. Also, she elucidated the Buddhists’ belief that we are not bowing to a statue when we bow, but rather bowing to an image of our own true nature, as a way of reminding Buddhists of who we really are enlightened beings.

The second half of the field trip is about the different postures when doing meditation, including how to sit on the floor comfortably, following the breath, counting the inhalations and exhalations, and talking about its importance. Namely, she talked about “*the oneness of body and mind,*” including how one can work on his/her mind using a

good posture and how one can affect his/her body when using mind in a healthy way. Through the tour around the Zen Centre and the short Zen practice, she wished the students to get a little practice so that if they want to they can try it out to get some idea about the practical side of Zen as well as the history and the philosophy of Zen.

Amala didn't teach the students how to chant, but she showed them the instruments and talked about the purpose of chanting. The students do not usually get this on the field trip, but if some of them come back to the Zen Centre for a sitting or join in the beginner's night every Tuesday, in which the sittings are shorter than the other nights and end with a chanting service, they will experience the chanting and deep bowing. She pointed out that chanting and bowing are often "*culturally hard for some people in the West, at least in the beginning,*" so teaching them about their meaning is important. Westerners need to understand the reasons behind the way we do things.

Rather than the dichotomy of Buddhist and non-Buddhist, Amala distinguished more between people who are practising regularly and people who are not, because some people come along in the beginning to learn meditation not to hear about Buddhism. Recently she was invited to teach a group of Work & Income staff members, who are dealing with a rising number of unemployed people and thus in quite a stressful environment.

During that class, rather than saying that 'Buddhism says such-and-such,' she just talked about meditation as being a skilful thing to do that helps you "*to be more patient with people, to be able to listen better, to not get so stressed, to not get caught up in other peoples anxious states or angry states, things like that.*" However, this doesn't mean that she was trying to hide that it was a Buddhist teaching; rather, it was actually still Buddhism but without using Buddhist terminology.

Amala believed that, through her responding to individuals' questions, students were experiencing the Dharma in an accessible way. She maintained that the Zen class actually talked about whatever people brought along to the class, because there would always be something relevant that the teacher can work on with the students rather than tackling abstract questions such as 'What is Buddhism?' She just asked them what they are really asking and what are they looking for. The way she used to teach Zen, to my mind, has much to do with her answer about the Zen viewpoint of 'liberation,' which claims that if one is fully present, then he or she is actually liberated, so one must work

on his/her own liberation right here and right now, and the way to do that is “*to learn to be present.*”

Amala indicated, one of the reasons why she went to the United States for training, rather than in Japan, was because the American teachers of her tradition had done a lot of the work to adapt the teaching of Zen to western culture, which was helpful for her. Going for training in Japan was not impossible, but quite difficult due to language barriers. Indeed, she pointed out, American culture is a little different from New Zealand culture although with globalisation it is getting more similar in some ways. Therefore, part of her ongoing job is to find out what works and what doesn't work in New Zealand.

Amala gave the status of Zen teacher as an example. In Japan, a Roshi or a Sensei is paid a great deal of respect. The students are very respectful of their teacher. So Japanese Zen tradition is a very hierarchal culture, where rank is very important, which is absolutely appropriate in Japan. By contrast, American society is much more egalitarian and so Zen teachers are still respected but are not as distant from or above the students. Thus, the way students talk with the teacher changed.

In addition, she indicated, New Zealand is even more egalitarian than America. She maintained, one had to join as a member before you could practice at the centre she trained in the United States. However, “*that doesn't work in New Zealand because people are used to being able to just go and try things out.*” Therefore, she allowed anybody who has been to an introductory workshop to come to the Centre without the need of a membership and they can stay like that as long as they like and are just asked to make a voluntary donation when they come. to make a voluntary donation when they come.

Emerging Themes

Various Roads leading to the study of Buddhism

All five university lecturers have PhDs and the Zen teacher has a Master degree. Among the six teachers, three are specialising in Buddhist Studies, two in Asian Studies (Philosophy and Area Studies), and one in Zen practice.

At the undergraduate level, all participants were in different study areas, including Asian religions, Chinese Literature, Italian, Japanese Literature and Religion, Pharmaceutical Science, Religious Studies, and Western Philosophy. In addition, four participants came into contact with Buddhist Studies at the graduate level, while two participants learned about Buddhism before university. This, to some extent, reflected the fact that, very few undergraduate students seemed primarily interested in Buddhist Studies. This is at least true in the case of NZ, as Radich indicated before, although it may also reflect the fact that few undergraduate courses exist.

The Internationalizing Feature of Modern Buddhist Studies in New Zealand

The backgrounds of the six participants reflected the international influence on modern Buddhist Studies in NZ. While two participants were born in NZ, the rest participants were from Italy, Thailand, the United States, and Zimbabwe. They received their Higher Education from America, England, Italy, India, Japan, Thailand, and NZ.

Generally the participants had contacts with the two worldly centres of modern Buddhist Studies: the United States and Japan. Two participants were educated in the United States. Four participants had been to Japan for research or study.

The two who were born in NZ had received their PhDs and Zen training in the United States. Two others had received their Higher Education in Europe. In light of this, it is not unreasonable to say that, the teacher training of Buddhist Studies in NZ to a large extent depends on Europe and the United States.

New Zealand University Teachers' Conception of Buddhism

The NZ teachers did discuss the issue '*what Buddhism is*' with students in class. For the participants, this discussion was aimed to help students to understand the multi-dimensionality of Buddhist thoughts and cultures. This has been done by recognizing the surface features of Buddhism that are similar to those of philosophy, science, and

religions: Like philosophy, Buddhism is a way of life that guides human happiness, which requires practice. Like Science, the teachings of the Buddha, such as the law of Karma, talk about '*facts*' that can be examined, rather than just '*beliefs*.' What is more, it is also not difficult to find its religious features, such as making offerings and performing rituals in Buddhist temples.

I had not expected participants seemed to see the question '*if Buddhism is a religion or not*' as one of the ways to '*eliminate*' or '*exclude*' Buddhism from the field of Religious Studies. Indeed, all five lecturers are working for departments of Religious Studies and to ask them if Buddhism is not a religion, is probably like asking a salesman if the fruits on sale are not sweet. Their answers, however, offered a solution to the dilemma between conceiving Buddhism as religion or non-religion. Notably, Radich noted that the controversy arose on the "*circular*" nature of the sort of question; namely, its answers actually depend on one's definitions of religion. He thus argued two more interesting ways of understanding Buddhism: (a) to see the features of Buddhism that are shared with other world religions and (b) to find out how Buddhism has functioned as a religion in the world.

What to Teach about Buddhism in University

Between 2008 and 2009, NZ universities offered twenty courses about Buddhism, in which six papers and two no-credit courses were specialising in Buddhist Studies. The rest were Religious Studies courses with Buddhism-related contents.

Until 2009, all formal education of Buddhism in NZ has been located in Religious Studies, at Massey, Otago, and Victoria. Informal education of Buddhism is also offered by the Continuing Education Centre at the University of Auckland and the Chaplain at AUT University. While, what was offered at UoA was still academic. AUT University offered some opportunity of Buddhist practices.

Massey and Otago offered an introductory course on Hinduism and Buddhism for first-year students, while Victoria offered a specialising course solely on Buddhism for second-year students. The University of Otago, as it has four teachers who can teach about Buddhism, offered specialist courses on Zen Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism, and Life of the Buddha for second- and third-year students. Dr. Elizabeth Guthrie, the only Otago teacher who didn't participate in this study taught about the life of the Buddha in 2009. Both Victoria and Otago offered graduates course with Buddhism-related contents for their students. Despite the introductory course, most Buddhist

Studies or Buddhism-related paper were shared by second-year and third-year or by third-year and honours students. Although AUT University and the University of Auckland didn't have formal courses on Buddhism, they respectively offered a free Monday Zen workshop and two no-credit courses for Continuing Education students.

Furthermore, participants often developed their courses based on their PhDs and ongoing research, such as religion and body, religion and gender, religion and the internet, and so forth. Specifically, both Otago and Victoria offered a paper on religion and body.

Table 5.1 Buddhist Studies Courses in New Zealand Universities

Institution	Lecturer	S	Course	09	D	Level
Massey	Douglas Osto	✓	Hinduism and Buddhism	✓	✓	1
			East Asian Religions	✓		2/3
			Sex, Gender and Religion	✓	✓	2/3
			Asian Philosophies	✓		2
Victoria	Michael Radich	✓	Buddhism: The Noble Path			2
			S/T: The Body in Religion			3
			Advanced Studies in Asian Religions			4
Otago	Erica Baffelli	✓	Zen Buddhism	✗		2/3
			Religion and the Internet	✗		2/3
			Charisma and Healing in Alternative Religion	✗		3/4
			S/T: Religion and popular culture			3/4
	Will Sweetman		New Religious Movements			2/3
		✓	Hinduism and Buddhism			1
			Religion and Globalisation			1
	Chaisit Suwanvarangkul		The Body in Asian Religions			2/3
		✓	Mahayana Buddhism			2/3
	Elizabeth Guthrie	✓	Life of the Buddha			3/4
Auckland	Amala Wrightson	✓	Introduction to Zen	✗		C
		✓	Women in Buddhism	✗		C
AUT		✓	Zen Workshop			-

C= Continuing Education Centre; D= Available for Far Distance; S= Specialising in Buddhism; S/T = Special Topic.

Buddhist Studies was Limited within Religious Studies

The five academic teachers participated in this study were all teaching at the department of Religious Studies. However, many of their students were from other departments. This suggested that the university-level teaching of Buddhism in NZ had contributed to the knowledge acquisition about Buddhism of the university students from other departments. My findings, however, gave no indication regarding whether Buddhist data had been identified and integrated into disciplines other than Religious Studies. Therefore, it seemed that university teaching of Buddhism, in terms of curriculum, was still isolated from other departments.

Objective Approach to Teaching Buddhism

All six participants talked about their own religious identities. Of the six participants, half were scholar-practitioners, and half were non-Buddhists. Notably, their religious identities seemed not to have great impact on their teaching about Buddhism. Rather, participants in the study deliberately tended to teach as detached, objective outsiders in university classrooms which were neutral space.

Whether Buddhists or non-Buddhists, all five university lecturers tended to separate academic content from personal interest, thoughts and beliefs. During class, they usually neither actively asked students' own religious identity nor talked about their own religious identities and practices. When asked, the teachers often told the students to talk *outside* the classroom.

Even the Zen teacher did not tell the students of the Zen Workshop at AUT that she was teaching Dharma, Buddhism, or Zen, so that she could adapt to the needs of non-Buddhist students.

Using Similar Teaching Methods with Other Disciplines

In terms of teaching methods and assessment, the university-level teaching of Buddhism in NZ appeared to be not so different from other disciplines; lectures and seminars remained the two major teaching methods. Course outlines with a list of further recommended readings, PowerPoint slides, visual images, video materials, terminology list, were used to assist lectures and seminars. Essays and written examinations remained the two major forms of assessment, with both focused on *intellectual understanding* of Buddhism, rather than *intuitive understanding*.

Smaller Impacts of Cultural Difference on Teaching Methods

The participants generally thought that cultural differences had only a small impact on their teaching methods; rather, they put more emphasis on individual differences in terms of *personal comprehension* and *prior knowledge base* in the field of Buddhist Studies.

Sweetman and Baffelli taught about the adaption of Buddhism to the West, which indeed dealt with the potential problem of Western lens on 'exotic cultures.' Sweetman taught about the understanding of difference (in contrast of 'the Disney view of the world'); and Baffelli taught about the arrival of Zen to the West and its reconsolidation.

Students' Lack of Prior Knowledge Base on Basic Buddhism

Almost all participants indicated that, students often came to the classes without any academic knowledge base of basic Buddhism but came with many mythic thoughts about Buddhism. This was common from freshman to honours classes.

Using Buddhist Line of Reasoning in Explaining Buddhist Ideas

Although lecture and seminar are the major modes in classroom, my research participants tended to use Buddhist lines of reasoning in explaining major Buddhist ideas; for example, no-self or emptiness. This was probably because, as Radich and Sweetman indicated, students were not familiar with either Christian history or Western philosophy.

The Use of Technology in Teaching or Research

To my surprise, the NZ academy had had many interactions and cooperation with local and international Buddhist communities, in particular the Sangha; AUT, Otago, and UoA provided the best evidence for this. As half of the participants are scholar-practitioners, I think the NZ academy appeared to be “*practitioner-friendly* (Goss, 1999, p. 215).” The case of Sensei Amala, in particular, showed the potential of NZ universities in broadening the spaces out of classroom that allow students and staffs to learn Buddhist practices.

Interactions and Cooperation with Buddhist Communities

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Separated Spaces Offered for Studying and Practicing Buddhism

The teaching ‘about’ Buddhism in NZ university classrooms and the teaching ‘of’ Buddhism somewhere in a university but outside university classroom have been separate, but both seem to be running well. This was evidenced by what Baffelli, Osto, Radich and Sweetman mentioned about the different aims of teaching Buddhism and

the different roles of teachers in different spaces. Participants' descriptions could be integrated into table 5.2 below.

	Emerging Categories	Buddhist Monastic Education/ Modern Buddhist Education	The Academic Teaching of Buddhism
Baffelli	Type of Institution	<i>Zen centre [or Buddhist Temple] as religious institution</i>	<i>university as academic institution</i>
Osto & Radich	Purpose of Learning	<i>As a path of Enlightenment</i>	<i>As a part of Knowledge in Religious Studies</i>
	Evaluation Method	<i>Intuitive Understandings</i>	<i>Intellectual Understandings</i>
Sweetman	Purpose of Teaching	<i>to teach someone to be a Buddhist</i>	<i>only to teach something about Buddhism</i>

Table 5.2 A Synthesis of Participants' descriptions of aims and methods for different spaces

Limits and Opportunities of the University-level Teaching of Buddhism in NZ

Overall, each undergraduate paper about Buddhism in Massey, Otago, and Victoria usually had between 30 and 40 students. However, as Radich indicated, whether in the undergraduate or postgraduate level, many of the students were not primarily interested in Buddhism nor in Religious Studies, and this would have limited the development of Buddhist Studies in NZ universities.

Surprisingly, by spring 2009, Otago had four teachers who teach about Buddhism and offered over *ten* courses about Buddhism for the students. With a The Theravada monk's funding, they are hoping to establish a section of Buddhist Studies in the future.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

As stated in Chapter 1, this study aims to contribute to a “*sympathetic understanding, critical analysis, and personal evaluation* (Reynolds, 2001, p. 9)“ on the current and potential roles of scholars teaching Buddhism in Western universities, from a two-fold perspective: that of a Buddhist nun and of an international student from Taiwan.

By and large, the findings from the interview data gave us a glimpse of the university-level teaching of Buddhism in New Zealand. This chapter attempts to make some critical analysis and personal evaluation on the findings by discussing the findings with the themes found in existing research studies and literature given in Chapter 2, which included two main topics:

- (a) The place and dilemma of Buddhist Studies in NZ universities.
- (b) The purpose, methods, and contents of teaching Buddhism in NZ universities, and the people delivering these.

Given that most of the literature on teaching Buddhism in the West was North American; and most of the literature on Buddhism and Education was from Buddhist countries, my discussion of the findings has been done with a focus on the similarities and differences between NZ and North America, or between NZ and Buddhist countries.

5.1 The Place and Dilemma of Buddhist Studies in NZ universities

Five New Zealand Universities Providing Teaching about Buddhism

By 2009, Massey, Otago, and Victoria were the three major NZ universities offering Buddhist Studies and Buddhism-related courses, in which the university-level teaching of Buddhism primarily dwelled in Religious Studies. Massey and Victoria both had only one scholar teaching Buddhism. By comparison, the teaching of Buddhism in Otago was by four lecturers with funding from a Buddhist foundation, and this appears to have the potential to grow further in the near future.

While both AUT and UoA offered some opportunities to access Buddhist Studies or practices, I am concerned about the future development of the Monday Zen workshops and the continuing education papers due to the fact that they led to no credits and were run without significant institutional support.

On the whole, Buddhist Studies in New Zealand was still in its infancy. On the one hand it appeared to be similar with the two-fold marginal place of Buddhist Studies in North American universities as discussed by Tsai (2006), but it was comparatively fragmentary with a scattered curriculum and there seemed to be a need to put more focus on core issues of Buddhism (rather than issues and notions appropriated from Religious Studies). On the other hand, compared with Europe and North America, its growth is actually limited by less demand due to a smaller population and a smaller proportion of students specifically interested in Buddhism.

Fortunately, as the case of Otago has shown, university-level teaching of Buddhism is not only offered to local Buddhist or non-Buddhist students in NZ, but also to international students from Buddhist countries. The English-language environment and a comparatively lower living and educational costs might be a major factor attracting international students to learn Buddhist Studies in New Zealand.

Teaching Buddhism as Part of Internationalizing Buddhist Education

Broadly speaking, the teachers' international educational background and their interactions with Buddhist communities revealed that the university-level teaching of Buddhism in New Zealand is running as part of the internationalization of Buddhist Education.

Here, Buddhist Education is addressed in its broad sense, which refers to the teaching and learning of/about Buddhism for both Buddhists and non-Buddhists. In other words, contemporary Buddhist Education not only aims to educate Buddhists but also non-Buddhists. Admittedly, the university-level teaching of Buddhism in New Zealand, whether academic or practical, has offered university students more opportunities to access Buddhism. Some of the teachers and students are/are not Buddhists, and some of them have become Buddhists. From a Buddhist perspective, the more people who can appreciate Buddhism, the better it is for the development of Buddhist communities in the future. Following that, it is arguable that such a definition would be more compatible with Peters' concept of education: (1) worthwhileness, (2) cognitiveness, (3) voluntariness. Notably, I found that Peters' concept of education is also perfectly

compatible with Buddhist pedagogy. Therefore, in the following of this chapter, I also discussed if the university-level teaching of Buddhism in New Zealand is compatible with this.

5.2 Purpose, Methods, Contents and People

‘What Buddhism Is’ as the Central Question of Exploration

Regarding to the purpose of teaching and studying Buddhism in university, as Radich indicated, the question ‘what Buddhism is’ was all the Buddhist Studies or Buddhism-related courses wanted to answer. Namely, **a pursuit of knowledge about Buddhism** is the central purpose of teaching Buddhism in university. In light of the historical background of Buddhist Studies that initiated and developed by scholars’ discovery of Buddhism, as part of Indiology, this finding was hardly surprising

For the five university lecturers, Buddhism has many features and functions working like a religion. A partial explanation for this may lie in the fact that they are all teaching Buddhism at Religious Studies. What is more, only one participant mentioned her teaching Buddhism in university as ‘planting seeds,’ and other participants thought their teaching Buddhism in university as a job based on their academic enterprise about Buddhism.

To my mind, this supported my assumption that many claims on the purpose of teaching Buddhism in university given in literature review might speak to persuade people of other study disciplines or departments. To be simple and clear, for the five lecturers, studying Buddhist thoughts is part of their interest and profession, teaching Buddhism is part of their job and enterprise. A partial explanation for this may lie in the fact that I as interviewer, a Buddhist nun (insider), saw no need for the participants to justify their teaching of Buddhism in university. Rather, the participants tried to justify their job as an academic teacher teaching ‘about’ Buddhist thoughts, not teaching ‘of’ Buddhism. However, this is not in accord with what Corless indicated the efforts of the participants of the Teaching Buddhism Conference made in justifying the university-level teaching of Buddhism by

- (1) connecting the nature of the university with Buddhist thoughts; as well as by
- (2) challenging the objective approach to teaching and studying about Buddhism.

Knowledge as the purpose, Academic skills as the tools

As I interpreted the findings, the pursuit of knowledge and academic skills are the main purposes for teaching Buddhism in university. This is in accord with the tacit assumption of the academic teaching of Buddhism that “*academic tools can contribute to a better understanding of Buddhism*,” given in Chapter 2.

However, it is still a debatable point if the pursuit of knowledge and academic skills also worked as constraints on the university-level teaching of Buddhism in university. Given by Harrison (2003) in Chapter 2, the understandings of ‘what education and scholarship are about’ had led to a gap between academia and Buddhist communities; what is more, the materialization within educational regimes had limited the teaching of Buddhism within formal educational systems, as an old tradition that has much to do with human consciousness. From the data collected we have no definite information on this. Therefore, I left the problem untouched in this study, and hopefully it will be dealt with in future research.

Objective Outsider Remains the Main Teaching Position

As the findings indicated, all six participants took an objective approach to teaching Buddhism in university. Therefore, when locating them in the ‘etic-emic/outsider-insider’ square given in Chapter 2, it is not unreasonable to interpret that *outsider (etic or emic)* remains the main teaching position in NZ universities.

Three of the six participants had been engaged in Buddhist practices; their backgrounds were very different, and I interpreted their locations respectively as: *Insider* (Buddhists), *Etic-Insider* (Scholar-Bhikkhu/ Bhikshuni), and *Emic Outsider* (Scholar-Practitioners). This, to some extent, reflected the fact that the classical distance between scholars (observers) and practitioners (the observed), university and the Sangha, had become shorter and shorter, as mentioned by both Bocking and Harrison (date). Most interestingly, I did find that participants who are Buddhologists, such as Osto and Radich, tended to answer most of the interview questions using Buddhist line of reasoning. I interpret this to mean that the differences on each camp’s worldview (of Buddhists and of Buddhologists) may have entered a process of integration.

However, As for what Corless (1990, p. 37) argued: “*how to study and teach Buddhism emically as well as etically*,” to separate teachers’ roles in university classroom and in a Buddhist practicing space couldn’t be a good solution. Such a strategy didn’t get rid of what Corless indicated the two features of the Western academic enterprise that may

have negative impacts on the understanding and interpretation of Buddhism not getting involved in studying Buddhism.

Taking a Historical Approach to Teaching Buddhism

As for the contents, the foci of the university-level teaching of Buddhism appeared to be in accord with the traditional foci of Buddhist Studies programs given in the result of Fenn's study, as 'historical' in combination with 'anthropological' and 'textual.' In particular, the four Western lecturers generally took a historical approach to teaching Buddhism in university. A partial explanation for this lies in the fact that there are almost no Buddhist temples, meditation centres, or sites around Massey, Otago, and Victoria.

Again, a possible critic can be drawn from Corless' argument that using 'lineage-neutral' tool of history in teaching and studying 'lineage-specific' Buddhist thought and cultures might attack the very data it claims to expose. Furthermore, as Reynolds (1991, p.73) emphasized, although a course must be structured according to the teachers' and students' backgrounds and interests, that it is important to apprise the students "*the specific advantages and the specific limitations of whatever approach is taken.*"

Examining the Findings with Reynolds's Four Problematic Tendencies

Examining the findings with the four problematic tendencies in teaching Buddhism given by Reynolds (1991), I found that NZ university teachers generally were highly aware of and carefully resisted in transmitting an overly simplistic notion of what 'Buddhism' really is. This is well supported by the case of Osto and Radich. What is more, both Baffelli and Sweetman took a critical approach by discussing about the legendary Zen lineage and by debating the evidence for the imagination of Buddhism as an *egalitarian* tradition so as to avoid romanticizing the tradition. The five university lecturers also introduced Buddhist traditions with many aspects of reality in the world, such as the social, political, and economic spheres.

Less Variation of Teaching Methods

Most of the literature in chapter 2 originated from North America and Europe. Compared with North American or European universities, the university-level teaching of Buddhism in NZ appeared to be less varied in terms of teaching methods and assessments. A partial explanation for this may lie in the fact that teaching Buddhism in NZ universities was only initiated in the last five or ten years, and the number of

students and courses is relatively small. These factors may well limit the development of the university-level teaching of Buddhism in NZ.

Weaker Connections with Study Disciplines Other than Religious Studies

Compared with the case of North America, the university-level teaching of Buddhism in NZ had fewer connections with study disciplines other than religion. For example, consider the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), it offered undergraduate courses about Buddhist Art for Art History and courses about local development of Buddhism in different areas of Asia for Chinese, Japanese and Korean. No secondary field of Buddhist Studies in university curricula in NZ has yet emerged. This corresponded to what Gard argued as important—the teaching of Buddhist ideas in courses other than Religious Studies.

Fewer Concerns on Cultural Differences

Unlike the 1999 Teaching Buddhism conference that indicated North American need to deal with cultural differences, the study revealed that teachers who teach Buddhism in NZ universities felt that cultural differences are not strong obstacles for teaching Buddhism. Rather they were concerned about *individual comprehension*. For instance, students' lacking of knowledge base had led to teach some basic Buddhist ideas in higher-level courses. Although they generally took a critical approach to deal with the adaption of Buddhism to the West as part of cultural divide, the various methods employed by North American teachers are worthy of reference.

More Opportunities for Far Distance Learning about Buddhism

Surprisingly, both Massey and Otago offer Buddhist Studies and Buddhism-related courses for distance students. Otago even offered the 'Hinduism and Buddhism' paper for secondary school students by distance. Given in Fenn's (date?) study, by 2000 web-based course were not popular and were only offered by two institutions participating in that study. I suggest that the discrepancy between my findings and Fenn's survey results may be either due to the change of time or because of the change of space. Namely, as time goes by, the acceptability of technology for university teachers and students would have grown. Another possible explanation is that both Massey and Otago are located out of main cities, such as Auckland or Wellington, thus the use of distance teaching and learning is important so that the two universities can appeal to students from other parts of NZ.

Buddhist Studies Curriculum in Progress

Buddhist Studies in NZ had existed as part of Religious Studies. The number of course is limited by the number of teachers and students. Compared with the curriculum of Buddhist Studies at University of Sydney, NZ lacks both language education and a knowledge base about contemporary issues of regional development which are crucial for Buddhist Studies. I interpret this to mean that serious students would be advised to go overseas.

Funding from Buddhist Communities

As I observed, the funding from Buddhist communities has become important for the operation and development of the teaching of Buddhism in university. This is well proved by the case of Otago, and by many cases in North America.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the university-level teaching of Buddhism in New Zealand, though still growing, was limited in terms of the number of students. Its future development, to a large extent, would depend on the number of Buddhologists employed and on external funding support. The University of Otago obtained funding from a Buddhist foundation and appeared to have the most potential for Buddhist Studies in NZ in the future.

The findings indicated a separation of spaces in universities used in teaching ‘about’ and ‘of’ Buddhism, as two different kinds of educational activities with different functions. The role of a teacher shifted according to the space. Teaching Buddhism in university classroom, as part of the pursuit of knowledge about Religious Studies, required an objective attitude and the using of scholarly tools. The case of the Zen teacher’s teaching Buddhism outside the university classroom, by contrast, is fairly elastic in terms of teaching methods, which offered a pursuit of inner peace for university staffs and students. At Massey University Dr. Osto taught ‘about’ and ‘of’ Buddhism inside and outside university classroom and this appeared to be the only New Zealand university that currently has both kinds of educational activity.

If possible, I would like to see some cooperation among NZ and Australia universities in allowing students to enrol at Buddhist Studies or Buddhism-related course not offered in their own universities. This would save time and money in developing an independent Buddhist program for each university while the number of teachers and students who are primarily interested in Buddhist Studies is still small. Also, I am hoping to promote more interactions and cooperation between the academia and the Sangha in NZ, as this would accelerate the growth of Buddhist Studies here, which would also offer opportunities for NZ students to know about Buddhist ideas.

Contributions to the Researcher and Buddhist Communities Here

This study helped me to learn more about university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West, in particular, the NZ experiences. It informed my understanding of the current

situation and the potential in educating tertiary students (Buddhist and non-Buddhist) in the West.

Through the process of data collection, I came to know Buddhologists and Buddhist Studies sources here. This will be really helpful in my future academic journey. I am hoping this study will draw more attentions to Buddhist communities here, in terms of participating or assisting the development of the university-level teaching of Buddhism in NZ.

Contributions to the field of 'Buddhism and Education'

In this study I described university teachers' perceptions and experiences in teaching Buddhism in NZ, which, to some extent, informed the current situation and future potential of the university-level teaching of Buddhism in NZ. I hope that the interviews will be of some benefit for the participants in terms of providing them with an opportunity to reflect on their work and the work of colleagues.

In this thesis I attempted to integrate a body of western literature on the university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West and offer a bibliographical list of Eastern literature about Buddhism and Education. I hope that these will be useful as a source for other researchers and teachers who teach Buddhism in university.

This thesis has significance in terms of providing a bibliography and a set of data for the university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West, particularly in NZ. It may contribute to Buddhist communities by providing a better understanding of university-level teaching of Buddhism in New Zealand, its current situation and limits, and the potential opportunities for cooperation. I hope that my study will help establish a space for future educational research within university-level teaching of Buddhism in the West. Under the context of internationalizing Buddhist Education, the thesis also justified the nature and broadened the scope of 'Buddhism and Education,' and thus provided a broader space for future studies.

Limitations of This Study

The method of this study is not without problems. While Fenn's Survey in 2001 offered an overview of the place and features of Buddhist Studies in Western universities, this study presented a small qualitative investigation. The number of cases in this study was smaller (Fenn had replies from 31 universities, and this study had only 6 lecturers), thus we need to exercise caution in its interpretation.

What is more, unlike the 1999 Teaching Buddhism Conference, it did not contribute much in terms of teaching methods and course contents. Taken in this light, this study is actually only a sort of preliminary study. One explanation for this is that the university-level teaching of Buddhism as a researchable topic requires more time, budgets, and research skills for further explorations. Given the exploratory nature of this study, any teaching implications based on these preliminary findings should be treated with caution. Furthermore, the researchers' lacking of research experiences and knowledge about Buddhist Studies had limited the information-elicitation and data interpretation *during* and *after* interview.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research is obviously required, but for me this has been an exciting first step. Neither my literature review nor my interview findings touched on the differences between teaching Buddhist practices and teaching practical knowledge about Buddhist practices. Since the pursuit of knowledge is the main purpose of the university-level teaching of Buddhism, my question is: Should the knowledge about Buddhism taught at university be practical? If yes, how? After all, the teachings of the Buddha, like other systems of knowledge, not only originated from but also worked for living experiences, rather than plainly textual or spoken analyses.

I am hopeful that future research will extend the discussion into:

- (a) the refinement of two-fold marginal dilemma,
- (b) the limited approaches to the teaching of Buddhism in university, and
- (c) the potential use of Buddhist pedagogy in university classroom.

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Appendices

Appendix A: A Further List for Reading

The list offers some information and saves time for future researchers who are interested in this area. It outlines the papers and articles about ‘Buddhism and Modern Education’ mentioned in section 2.3 but not cited in the reference. As space is limited, I didn’t discuss this body of literature for detail, but I believe that this body of literature is important for the theoretical base of this thesis and future research.

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Appendix B: NZ dissertations and theses with Buddhism-related Topic

The following are PhD and Master theses awarded by NZ universities between 1985 and 2007, based on my preliminary search from university official websites, in particular their library catalogues.

PhD dissertations

- * *How can a Buddha come to act? - The Possibility of a Buddhist account of ethical agency.* / By Bronwyn Finnigan (PhD student in Philosophy, in progress, University of Auckland)
- * *Stupas Down Under: Materialising Convert Buddhism in the Antipodes.* / By Sally McAra (PhD student in Anthropology, in progress, University of Auckland)
- * *Buddhism in New Zealand.* / By Hugh Kemp (PhD candidate in Religious Studies, in progress, Victoria University of Wellington)
- 1. *A study of the history and cult of the Buddhist earth deity in mainland Southeast Asia* / By Elizabeth Guthrie (PhD in Religious Studies, 2004, Canterbury University)
- 2. *Early Indian logic and the question of Greek influence* / By Gordon Victor Aston (Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy, 2004, Canterbury University)
- 3. *Logic and the basis of theology : an investigation into the help logic can give to the understanding of different theologies, following the contributions to both disciplines of Arthur Prior, 1914-1969* / By Llewelyn Richards (Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies, 2003, Victoria University of Wellington)
- 4. *A study on the Sku- 'bum: T'a-erhssu monastery in Ch'ing-hai* / By Karsten, Joachim Günter (PhD in Chinese, 1997, University of Auckland)
- 5. *What is a mountain? : an ethnohistory of representation and ritual at Pure Crystal Mountain in Tibet* / By Toni Huber (PhD in Religious Studies, 1993, Canterbury University)

Master theses

1. *Luminosity and illusion in the Bardo* / By Mark Ryan (Master of Art and Design, 2007, AUT) For abstract, see <http://hdl.handle.net/10292/27>.
2. *Dignāga's theory of perception : between ordinary and extra-ordinary* / By Atsushi Iseki (Master of Arts in Philosophy/Religious Studies, 2006, Victoria University of Wellington)
3. *Looking Through the Dharma-Eye: The Supermundane in Buddhist Ethics* / By James Stewart (Master of Arts, 2005, University of Auckland)
4. *Curing the shadow of the heart: a critical analysis of the major theological emphases of the Rev. Dr Aloysius Pieris in relation to inter-religious dialogue, with particular reference to Christian-Buddhist relationships in Sri Lanka* / By Bandara, Rohan Dharmapriya (Master of Theology, 2005, University of Auckland)
5. *The gentle art of mindfulness in Buddhist psychology and embodied psychotherapies* / By Donna L. Cameron (Master of Arts in Education, 2003, Massey University)
6. *Dunhuang architecture: a study on the space and scale of cave temples* / By Wang, Liqing (Master of Architecture, 2003, University of Auckland)
7. *An investigative and documentary study of music and change within a Buddhist comm. unity in Christchurch, New Zealand* / Benjamin Le Heux (Master of Arts, 2002, Canterbury University)
8. *Mahayana architecture: the design research for the design and construction of future Buddhist architecture* / By Lin, Henry Yen-Hung (Master of Architecture, 2002, University of Auckland)
9. *Of the progress of the bodhisattva: the bodhisattvamārga in the Śikṣāsamuccaya* / By Richard Mahoney (Master of Arts in Religious Studies, 2002, Canterbury University)
10. *Buddhist influences in Burmese political history* / By Dona Hendry (Master of Arts, 2001, University of Otago)

11. *“The land of the stupa and sacred puriri” : Creating Buddhism in the Tararu Valley, New Zealand* / By McAra, Sally (Master of Arts in Anthropology, 2000, University of Auckland)
12. *Impacts of religious tourism in Thailand* / By Isaree Baedcharoen (Master of Tourism, 2000, University of Otago)
13. *Pārājika: the myth of permanent and irrevocable expulsion from the Buddhist order: a survey of the Śikṣādharmakāśa in early monastic Buddhism* / By Shayne Neil Clarke (Master of Arts in Religious Studies, 1999, Canterbury University)
14. *Dāna in the Śānti and Anuśāsana parvans of the Mahābhārata* / By Steven Columbus (Master of Arts in Religious Studies, 1996, Canterbury University)
15. *The turning wheel: an exploration of Buddhist temple design in a contemporary New Zealand setting* / By Huang, Renji Roger (Bachelor of Architecture, 1995, University of Auckland)
16. *Khmer Buddhism in New Zealand* / By Elizabeth Guthrie (Master of Arts in religious studies, 1992, Otago)
17. *Taking the dharma into their lives: a study of New Zealand women who have chosen to undertake Buddhist practice* / By Margaret Ellen McKee (Master of Arts in Religious Studies, 1991, Canterbury University)
18. *Buddhist logic: on inference in medieval Indian philosophy* / By Gordon Victor Aston (Master of Arts in Philosophy, 1990, Canterbury University)
19. *A pilgrimage to La-phyi: a study of sacred and historical geography in south-Western Tibet* / By Antoni M. Huber (Master of Arts in Religious Studies, 1989, Canterbury University)
20. *The Puṅgalavāda controversy in Indian Hīnayāna Buddhism* / By Valerie Perrett (Master of Arts, 1986, University of Otago)
21. *Suffering and love in Buddhism and Christianity: a comparative study* / By Ock-youn Jang (Master of Theology, 1985, University of Otago)

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

November 2008



Project Title:

Teaching Buddhism in Universities: the Cases of New Zealand

An Invitation

Dear Dr. _____,

My name is Li Ting Huang. My friends and lecturers call me Lily. I am a Master of Education student at Auckland University of Technology, and Andy Begg is my supervisor. I am a novice buddhist nun. I would like to invite you to participate in my research project about the academic teaching of Buddhism in the West. I am interested in exploring your perceptions and experiences in teaching courses about Buddhism in New Zealand.

I want to find out what and how you are teaching courses about Buddhism; how your own perceptions and experiences of Buddhism influence you; and what factors motivate you to invest time on teaching and research in Buddhism. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without any adverse consequences.

This study will be monitored by my supervisor. The report that results from this work will be submitted as a thesis in fulfilment of the requirements of Master of Education degree. I will seek to have a shortened version published in journals for an academic audience (e.g. “Teaching Religion and Theology” or the “Journal of Global Buddhism”).

What is the purpose of this research?

Through investigating New Zealand teachers’ perceptions and experiences on teaching Buddhism in universities, I expect to gain a better understanding of the roles of university teachers in the academic teaching of Buddhism in the West. I also expect to complete the requirements for my Master of Education. I believe that my reports will interest others involved in the teaching of Buddhism for Buddhists and non-Buddhists.

How were you chosen for this invitation?

I am inviting all teachers who teach courses about Buddhism in New Zealand universities to be participants.

What will happen in this research?

Your participation will involve a one-hour interview. During interviewing, I will take notes, and if you give permission our conversations will be recorded as audio files.

After the interview, I will ask if you are willing to provide me with course outlines. This will contribute to me better understanding about the buddhist-related course you teach, and give me some information about the reading materials and other resources used in the course.

What are the discomforts and risks?

I do not expect any discomfort because there will be no compulsion about answering questions.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

N/A. A Draft Question Sheet of the Interview is included with this document. Please cross out any questions you do not wish to answer. I will give you a copy of the transcript of your interview. You will be able to make any changes you want. You will be able to withdraw from the study at any time.

What are the benefits?

I appreciate your giving time to this study. I hope that our interview will be beneficial for you in providing opportunity to reflect on your work. It will help me learn more about the academic teaching of Buddhism in the West, in particular, New Zealand experiences.

How will my privacy be protected?

It will be your choice whether or not your name appears in my thesis. Out of respect, I would prefer to use your name as an interviewee, but only if you are happy with this.

I would like to list your full name as one of the participants in the acknowledgement in my thesis, but this will not be identified anything you say to me. I believe the interview

will not involve confidential material. If you prefer your details (name and institution) to remain confidential, I will ask you to specify a pseudonym that you prefer to use.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

About one hour for the interview.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

It is expected that your participation in the research process will be about one week. You have already responded to my preliminary invitation, but you may withdrawal at any time before and after our interview.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

On the date of interview, I will ask you to sign the consent form before we start the interview.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Firstly, the transcripts will be returned to you so that you can make changes if you wish. Secondly, on completion of my research, I will send a copy of my thesis to you if you wish me to.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to my Supervisor, Andy Begg, andy.begg@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999 ext 7355.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, ATEC, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 8044.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Li Ting Huang, crz6243@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999 ext 7509

Supervisor Contact Details:

Andy Begg, andy.begg@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999 ext 7355.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on Nov 2008, ATEC

Reference number: 08/268

Appendix D: Consent Form

Project title: **Teaching Buddhism in Universities:
The Cases of New Zealand**

Project Supervisor: **Andy Begg**

Researcher: **Li Ting Huang**



- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated **November 2008**.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one):
Yes ☐ No ☐
- ☐ I wish to use my **full name** in the report from the research (please tick one) :
Yes ☐ No ☐
- ☐ I wish to use a **pseudonym** in the report from the research (please tick one) :
Yes ☐ No ☐ (If Yes, please specify a pseudonym:)

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details:

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on Nov 2008 AUTECH

Reference number: 08/268

Appendix E: Semi-Structure Interview questions

Personal Background

The first question I have here is about your encounter with the study of Buddhism. Could you please tell me about the story about your journey becoming a teacher teaching Buddhism in university?

What are the most important factors that have motivated you to come into the study and teaching of Buddhism?

Suppose you are asked about “What is Buddhism?” What would the answer be like?

Some people would say that “Buddhism is not a religion in the western notion”. What would you say to them?

Educational Philosophy

What do you think the aims of teaching Buddhism in undergraduate level? How about that of post-graduate level?

What do you think the ideal program of Buddhism in university would be like?

Curriculum Design/Pedagogy

How do you start, maintain, and end your course about Buddhism?

Do you include your study into the course you teach? If so, how?

From your perspective, what are the most interesting parts of your course?

From your perspective, what are the key issues or topics that must be contained in an introductory course of Buddhism?

From your perspective, what are the most important concepts that student have to understand if they want to have a better understanding on Buddhism?

How will you help students to learn about these issues and concepts?

As I know, there are now many thousand English books about Buddhism. How do you choose your textbook or reading materials?

In addition to lecture, do you recruit teaching tools such as film or online resource in your course?

What are the key assignments of your courses?

Some people would say that “Buddhism cannot be taught without practice”. What would you say to them?

What do you hope your students to learn from your courses about Buddhism?

What do you think that motivate students to be enrolled in courses about Buddhism?

What are they looking for?

Cultural Divide, Religious Identity & More

Do you think cultural differences have any impacts on your ways of teaching Buddhism in your class? If yes, how did you overcome that?

Would you say that teaching and learning Buddhism in the west is somewhat more difficult than that in a buddhist country in the east?” If yes, how did you overcome that?

Did you ever be asked about your own religious beliefs in the class? Suppose you are asked about your own religious beliefs in class. What would the answer be like?

Thank you for the gift of your ideas and time. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

If you have any further ideas or reflections about our talk, please feel free to contact me. My details are on the information sheet.