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AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST ETHICS

This systematic introduction to Buddhist ethics is aimed at anyone interested in Buddhism, including students, scholars and general readers. Peter Harvey is the author of the acclaimed *Introduction to Buddhism* (Cambridge, 1990), and his new book is written in a clear style, assuming no prior knowledge. At the same time it develops a careful, probing analysis of the nature and practical dynamics of Buddhist ethics both in its unifying themes and in the particularities of different Buddhist traditions. The book applies Buddhist ethics to a range of issues of contemporary concern: humanity's relationship with the rest of nature; economics; war and peace; euthanasia; abortion; sexual equality; and homosexuality. Professor Harvey draws on texts of the main Buddhist traditions, and on historical and contemporary accounts of the behaviour of Buddhists, to describe existing Buddhist ethics, to assess different views within it, and to extend its application into new areas.

PETER HARVEY is Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Sunderland. Co-founder of the UK Association for Buddhist Studies, he was the first Professor specifically of 'Buddhist Studies' in the UK. He also serves on the editorial board of the very successful Internet *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* and that of *Contemporary Studies in Buddhism*.

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Foundations, Values and Issues

PETER HARVEY

University of Sunderland



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Not to do any evil,
to cultivate what is wholesome,
to purify one's mind:
this is the teaching of the Buddhas

(Dhammapada, verse 183)

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Note that below:

Th. = a text of the Pali Canon or later Theravān literature

My. = a Mahāyāna text in Sanskrit, Chinese or Tibetan

- A.* *Anguttara.Nikāya* (Th.); (tr. F. L. Woodward and E. M. Hare), *The Book of Gradual Sayings*, 5 vols., London, PTS, 1932–6.
- A. A.* Commentary on *A.*; untranslated.
- AKB.* *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣyam* [of Vasubandhu; a Sarvāstivāda work]; (tr. from Louis de La Vallée Poussin's French translation by Leo M. Pruden, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*), Berkeley, Calif., Asian Humanities Press, 1988–90. References are to chapter and section numbers in original text.
- Asl.* *Aṭṭhasālinī* [Buddhaghosa's commentary on *Dhs.*] (Th.); (tr. Pe Maung Tin), *The Expositor*, 2 vols., London, PTS, 1920 and 1921.
- ASP.* *Ārya-satyaka-parivarta* (My.); (tr. L. Jampal), *The Range of the Bodhisattva: A Study of an Early Mahāyānasūtra, Āryasatyakaparivarta*, *Discourse of the Truth Teller*, Columbia University Ph.D. thesis, reproduced on microfiche, Ann Arbor, UMI, 1991 (Tibetan text and translation, with introduction, pp. 1–73). References are to page numbers of the translation.
- Asta.* *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñā-pāramitā Sūtra* (My.); (tr. E. Conze), *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines, and its Verse Summary*, Bolinas, Four Seasons Foundation, 1973.
- Bca.* *Bodhi-caryāvatāra* [of Śāntideva] (My.); translations as in: Shantideva, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life (Bodhisattvacharyavatara)*, tr. from Tibetan by S. Batchelor, Dharamsala, India, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1979. References to chapter and verse. Other translations are:

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- Crosby, K. and Skilton, A., *Śāntideva: The Bodhicaryāvatāra*, World's Classics, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Matics, M. L., *Entering the Path of Enlightenment: The Bodhicaryāvatāra of the Buddhist Poet Śāntideva* (from Sanskrit), London, George Allen & Unwin, 1971.
- BCE Before the Christian era.
- BPS Buddhist Publication Society
- Bv.* *Buddhavamsa* (Th.); (tr. I. B. Horner), in *Minor Anthologies*, vol. III, London, PTS, 1975. Also includes translation of *Cp.*
- c.* *circa.*
- CE Christian Era.
- Cp.* *Cariyāpiṭaka* (Th.); (tr. I. B. Horner), in *Minor Anthologies*, vol. III, London, PTS, 1975. Also includes translation of *Bv.*
- D.* *Dīgha Nikāya* (Th.); (tr. T. W. and C. A. F. Rhys Davids), *Dialogues of the Buddha*, 3 vols., London, PTS, 1899–1921. Also translated by M. Walshe, *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, London, Wisdom Publications, 1987, in one volume.
- D. A.* Commentary on *D.*; untranslated.
- Dhp.* *Dhammapada* (Th.); (tr. Nārada Thera), *The Dhammapada*, London, John Murray, 1954 (the same translation, accompanied by the Pali text, is also published by the Buddhist Missionary Society, Kuala Lumpur, 1978 – available from Wisdom Publications, London); (tr. Acharya Buddhārakkhita), *The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom*, Kandy, Sri Lanka, BPS, 1985. In verse.
- Dhp. A.* *Dhammapada Commentary* (Th.); (tr. E. W. Burlingame), *Buddhist Legends*, 3 vols., Harvard Oriental Series, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1921; repr. London, PTS, 1979.
- Dhs.* *Dhamma-saṅgaṇī* (Th.); (tr. C. A. F. Rhys Davids), *Buddhist Psychological Ethics*, London, PTS, 1900, 3rd edn, 1974.
- It.* *Itivuttaka* (Th.); (tr. F. L. Woodward), *As it was Said*, in *Minor Anthologies, Part II*, London, PTS, 1935; also tr. J. D. Ireland, *The Itivuttaka: The Buddha's Sayings*, Kandy, Sri Lanka, BPS, 1991.
- Ĵ.* *Ĵātaka with Commentary* (Th.); (tr. by various hands under E. B. Cowell), *The Ĵātaka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births*, 6 vols., London, PTS, 1895–1907.
- Khṇ.* *Khuddaka-pāṭha* (Th.); (tr. with its commentary, Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli), *Minor Readings and Illustrations*, London, PTS, 1960.
- Khṇ. A.* Buddhaghosa's commentary on *Khṇ.*

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- Kvu.* *Kathāvatthu* (Th.); (tr. S. Z. Aung and C. A. F. Rhys Davids), *Points of Controversy*, London, PTS, 1915.
- M.* *Majjhima Nikāya* (Th.); (tr. I. B. Horner), *Middle Length Sayings*, 3 vols., London, PTS, 1954–9. Also tr. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, Boston, Mass., Wisdom, 1995, in one volume.
- M. A.* Commentary on *M.*; untranslated.
- Miln.* *Milindapañha* (Th.); (tr. I. B. Horner), *Milinda's Questions*, 2 vols., London, PTS, 1963 and 1964.
- Miln. T.* Commentary on *Miln.*, untranslated.
- Mvs.* *Mahāvastu* [of the Lokottaravāda school]; (tr. J. J. Jones), *The Mahāvastu, Translated from the Buddhist Sanskrit*, 3 vols., London, PTS, 1949–56.
- Nd. II.* *Cullaniddesa* (Th.); untranslated.
- Ps.* *Paṭisambhidā-magga* (Th.); (tr. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli), *The Path of Discrimination*, London, PTS, 1982.
- PTS Pali Text Society.
- Pug.* *Puggala-paññatti* (Th.); (tr. B. C. Law), *Designation of Human Types*, London, PTS, 1969.
- Pv.* *Petavatthu* (Th.); (tr. H. S. Gehman), *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon, Part IV* (also includes a translation of *Vv.* by I. B. Horner), London, PTS, 1974. References to chapter and story number.
- RPR.* *Rāja-parikathā-ratnamālā* [of Nāgārjuna] (My.); (tr. J. Hopkins and Lati Rinpoche), *Nagarjuna and the Seventh Dalai Lama, The Precious Garland and the Song of the Four Mindfulnesses*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1975 (also includes translation of a short text by the Seventh Dalai Lama). Reference is to verse number.
- S.* *Samyutta Nikāya* (Th.); (tr. C. A. F. Rhys Davids and F. L. Woodward), *The Book of Kindred Sayings*, 5 vols., London, PTS, 1917–30.
- S. A.* Commentary on *S.*; untranslated.
- Skt Sanskrit.
- Sn.* *Sutta-nīpāta* (Th.); (tr. K. R. Norman), *The Group of Discourses (Sutta-Nīpāta) Volume I* (in paperback, *The Rhinoceros Horn and Other Early Buddhist Poems*), London, PTS, 1984; revised translation by Norman, with detailed notes, *The Group of Discourses (Sutta-Nīpāta) Volume II*, Oxford, PTS, 1992. Also tr. H. Saddhātissa, *The Sutta-Nīpāta*, London, Curzon Press, 1985. In verse.

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- Ss.* *Śikṣā-samuccaya* (My.); (tr. C. Bendall and W. H. D. Rouse, *Śikṣā Samuccaya: A Compendium of Buddhist Doctrine, Compiled by Śāntideva Chiefly from the Early Mahāyāna Sūtras*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1971 (1st edn, 1922). References are to translation pagination.
- Svb.* *Suvarṇa-bhāṣottama Sūtra* (My.); (tr. R. E. Emmerick), *The Sūtra of Golden Light*, London, Luzac & Co., 1970. Reference to Sanskrit pagination, as indicated in Emmerick's translation.
- Taishō* *Taishō Daizōkyō*: Japanese edition of the Chinese Buddhist Canon, published 1924–9.
- Thag.* *Thera-gāthā* (Th.); (tr. K. R. Norman), *Elders' Verses*, vol. 1, London, PTS, 1969. In verse.
- Thig.* *Therī-gāthā* (Th.); (tr. K. R. Norman), *Elders' Verses*, vol. 11, London, PTS, 1971. This translation is also found, with C. A. F. Rhys Davids' 1937 translation of the texts and extracts from the commentary, *Psalms of the Sisters*, in C. A. F. Rhys Davids and K. R. Norman, *Poems of Early Buddhist Nuns*, Oxford, PTS, 1989. In verse.
- Thig. A.* Commentary on *Thig.*; (tr. W. Pruitt), *The Commentary on the Verses of the Therīs*, Oxford, PTS, 1998.
- Ud.* *Udāna* (Th.); (tr. F. L. Woodward), *Verses of Uplift*, in *Minor Anthologies Part II*, London, PTS, 1935. Also tr. P. Masefield, *The Udāna*, Oxford, PTS, 1994, and J. D. Ireland, *The Udāna: Inspired Utterances of the Buddha*, Kandy, Sri Lanka, BPS, 1990.
- Ud. A.* Commentary on *Ud.* (tr. P. Masefield), *The Udāna Commentary*, vol. 1, Oxford, PTS, 1994.
- Uss.* *Upāsaka-śīla Sūtra* (My.); (tr. Heng-ching Shih), *The Sutra on Upāsaka Precepts*, Berkeley, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai, 1994 (translation from Chinese of Taishō, vol. 241034a–1075b, no. 1488). References are to translation pagination.
- Vc.* *Vajracchedikā Prajñā-pāramitā Sūtra* (My.); (tr. and explained by E. Conze), in *Buddhist Wisdom Books: The Diamond Sutra and the Heart Sutra*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1958.
- Vibh.* *Vibhaṅga* (Th.); (tr. U. Thittila), *The Book of Analysis*, London, PTS, 1969.
- Vin.* *Vinaya Piṭaka* (Th.); (tr. I. B. Horner), *The Book of the Discipline*, 6 vols., London, PTS, 1938–66. *Vin.* III and IV are translated as *Book of the Discipline*, vols. 1, II and III, and *Vin.* I and II are translated as *Book of the Discipline*, vols. IV and V. Note, also, that in

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List of abbreviations

Horner's translations, the page number of the original Pali text, which appears in bold in the midst of the English, means 'Page *x* ends here.' In all other translations by the PTS, it means 'Page *x* starts here.'

- Vin. A.* Commentary on *Vin.*; untranslated directly into English, but translated from the Chinese translation: Bapat and Hirakawa, 1970.
- Vism.* *Visuddhimagga* [of Buddhaghosa] (Th.); (tr. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli), *The Path of Purification*, 3rd edn, Kandy, Sri Lanka, BPS, 1975, and 2 vols., Berkeley, Calif., Shambhala, 1976.
- Vv.* *Vimānavatthu* (Th.); (tr. I. B. Horner), *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon, Part IV* (also includes a translation of *Pv.* by H. S. Gehman), London, PTS, 1974. References to story number.
- Vv. A.* Commentary on *Vv.*; untranslated.
- WFBR* *World Fellowship of Buddhists Review*.

Most of these works are still in print; reprints have only been mentioned where the publisher differs from the original one. Translations given in this book are not necessarily the same as the cited translations, particularly in the case of translations from Pali. For Theravāda texts, the references are to the volume and page number of the edition of the text by the PTS, or to the verse number for texts in verse. The page numbers of the relevant edition of an original text are generally given in brackets in its translation, or at the top of the page. The volume number of the translation generally corresponds to the volume of the PTS edition of the texts, except for the *Vinaya* (see above).

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[More information](#)*A note on language and pronunciation*

Most of the foreign words in this work are from Pali and Sanskrit, which are closely related languages of ancient India. Pali is the scriptural, liturgical and scholarly language of Southern Buddhism, one of the three main cultural traditions of Buddhism. Sanskrit, or rather ‘Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit’, is the language in which many of the scriptures and scholarly treatises of Mahāyāna Buddhism came to be written in India. Northern and Eastern Buddhism, where the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism predominates, generally use the Tibetan or Chinese translations of these texts. Many works on Buddhism give only Sanskrit versions of words, but this is artificial as Sanskrit is no longer used by Buddhists (except in Nepal), but Pali is still much in use.

This work therefore uses Pali versions of terms for most of early Buddhism, for Southern/Theravāda Buddhism, and when discussing Buddhism in general. Sanskrit versions are used when particularly discussing Mahāyāna forms of Buddhism, for some early schools which also came to use Sanskrit, and when discussing Hinduism. Sanskrit is also used for certain key terms that have come to be known in English: *Nirvāṇa* (Pali *Nibbāna*), *karma* (Pali *kamma*), *Bodhisattva* (Pali *Bodhisatta*) and *Stūpa* (Pali *Thūpa*). In many cases, Pali and Sanskrit terms are spelt the same. Where they are spelt differently, the Pali spelling is the simpler.

Both Pali and Sanskrit have more than twenty-six letters, which means that when they are written in the roman alphabet, the extra letters need to be represented by the use of diacritical marks. Once the specific sounds of the letters are known, Pali and Sanskrit words are then pronounced as they are written, unlike English ones. It is therefore worth taking account of the diacritical marks, as they give a clear guide to pronunciation. The letters are pronounced as follows:

- (i) **a** is short and flat, like the *u* in ‘hut’ or ‘utter’
i is short, like *i* in ‘bit’
u is like *u* in ‘put’, or *oo* in ‘foot’

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*A note on language and pronunciation***e** is like *e* in ‘bed’, only pronounced long**o** is long, like *o* in ‘note’ (or, before more than one consonant, more like *o* in ‘not’ or ‘odd’).

(ii) A bar over a vowel makes it long:

ā is like *a* in ‘barn’**ī** is like *ee* in ‘beet’**ū** is like *u* in ‘brute’.(iii) When there is a dot under a letter (**ṭ, ḍ, ṇ, ṣ, ṛ, ḷ**), this means that it is a ‘cerebral’ letter. Imagine a dot on the roof of one’s mouth that one must touch with one’s tongue when saying these letters. This produces a characteristically ‘Indian’ sound. It also makes **ṣ** into a *sh* sound, and **ṛ** into *ri*.(iv) **ś** is like a normal *sh* sound.(v) Aspirated consonants (**kh, gh, ch, jh, th, dh, th, dh, ph, bh**) are accompanied by a strong breath-pulse from the chest, as when uttering English consonants very emphatically. For example:**ch** is like *ch-h* in ‘church-hall’**th** is like *t-h* in ‘hot-house’**ph** is like *p-h* in ‘cup-handle’.

When aspirated consonants occur as part of a consonant cluster, the aspiration comes at the end of the cluster.

(vi) **c** is like *ch* in ‘choose’.(vii) **ñ** is like *ny* in ‘canyon’; **ññ** is like *nyyy*.(viii) **ṃ** is a pure nasal sound, made when the mouth is closed but air escapes through the nose, with the vocal chords vibrating; it approximates to *ng*.(ix) **ṅ** is an *ng*, nasal sound said from the mouth, rather than the nose.(x) **ḥ** is like a normal *h* sound, but followed by a faint echo of the preceding vowel.(xi) **v** may be somewhat similar to English *v* when at the start of a word, or between vowels, but like *w* when combined with another consonant.(xii) Double consonants are always pronounced long: for example *nn* is as in ‘unnecessary’.

All other letters are pronounced as in English.

ō is used to denote a long *o* in Japanese (as in ‘note’, rather than ‘not’). For Tibetan words, this book gives a form which indicates the pronunciation, followed by the Wylie form of writing Tibetan in roman script, which includes unpronounced letters.