Introduction

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Although the last decade has seen the appearance of several works that deal in part with issues concerning the place of women in the religious traditions of Asia\(^1\) and some that deal specifically with women in Buddhism,\(^2\) to date little scholarly work in the field of Buddhist Studies has employed gender as a variable to elucidate the dynamics of religious symbols, philosophical concepts, and social groups.\(^3\) What is more, except for very cursory studies that include Buddhism as one among other world religious traditions,\(^4\) there is a tremendous dearth of scholarship relating to Buddhism and sexuality in general and to homosexuality in particular. A great deal of work has been done concerning the issues of gender and sexuality in the context of Western religions. Only recently, however, has the Western scholarly community come to realize that much of the methodology of gender studies is as relevant to the Asian religious traditions as to the West, that the Asian traditions contain a great wealth of material deserving of analysis, and that this material is not only interesting in its own right but also a comparative springboard for more general and theoretical discussions.

The essays in this collection focus on issues related to gender and sexuality in different Buddhist traditions. They prod us to think not only of the status of women in the Buddhist tradition, something they all address to a greater or lesser extent, but on a wide range of questions related to the more general notion of gender, culturally constructed concepts of maleness and femaleness. In having gender and sexuality as their primary analytic variables, the contributors to this volume offer a perspective on Buddhism that is either frequently overlooked or else not treated with the scholarly rigor it deserves.

Gender Studies as an academic discipline maintains that the concepts of gender and sexuality are crucial variables in the understanding of the world in which human beings live and interact.\(^5\) In its most general form the claim is that the myriad expressions of human
creativity — artistic, intellectual, social, and so forth — are both *created and experienced* by gendered and (at least potentially) sexual beings. Neither human creativity within these areas nor the human experience of them is gender neutral. Our nature as sexual and gendered beings is a crucial factor that must be taken into account in the analysis of all areas of human concern. This is the most fundamental premise of the essays in this book.

We find that the papers collected here fall naturally into five groups: two that deal with gender principally in the context of institutional history (in classical India and in Sri Lanka), two that discuss gender and sexuality in contemporary Buddhist cultures (in Japan and India), two that explore the rhetoric of gender in Buddhist texts (in India and China), two that concern gender and symbolism (in India-Tibet and China), and two that deal with Buddhism and homosexuality (in India and Japan).

The first essay, the longest, sets forth the groundwork for much that follows in the volume. Although providing an introductory overview of many of the pivotal issues, Sponberg's principal goal is to identify four distinct attitudes toward women and the feminine during different periods in Indian Buddhist history. Is it possible to identify a single Buddhist attitude concerning the status of women? Sponberg suggests that these attitudes did not constitute a monolithic unchanging world-view. Instead, at least four distinct attitudes can be identified: (1) soteriological inclusiveness, (2) institutional androcentrism, (3) ascetic misogyny, and (4) soteriological androgyny. His major contribution is to provide us with a framework from which to analyze Indian Buddhist perceptions of women in a historical perspective.

Tessa Bartholomeusz in a sense takes up where Sponberg leaves off. Her case study of the history of the female mendicant in Sri Lanka spans the entire history of the nuns’ order in a Theravada Buddhist society. Relying on texts of the classical period, on archival material from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and on interviews with contemporary Sri Lankan women, she weaves for us the fascinating picture of the evolution of the movement of women religious, from its founding on the island until modern times. In so doing she demonstrates the extent to which movements to reestablish the order have looked back to (and drew considerable inspiration from) its "mythical" founding. Perhaps more important still, she shows us how contemporary revitalization movements are not the mere descendants of similar Burmese movements but instead are traceable to a complex series of events that led to the separation of *sangha* and
State in Śrī Laṅkā, a phenomenon referred to as the "disestablishment" of Buddhism.

Of the two essays that focus on gender and sexuality in contemporary Buddhist cultures, Bardwell Smith's essay deals with a Buddhist memorial rite for aborted fetuses extremely popular in Japan today. In his study Smith demonstrates how, at the institutional level, Buddhist temples serve the very important function of consoling women who have had abortions or miscarriages. He argues, however, that the high incidence of abortion in Japan is due in large part to women's place in the society, in turn a symptom of a greater cultural malaise, to their relationship to men (their husbands, their doctors, and so on), and to an insufficient range of procreative choice, making abortion the most commonly used means of birth control. Hence, although Buddhist institutions assuage the feelings of women during this moment of crisis, the crisis itself is to a great extent the result of women's position in Japanese society, a position that Buddhist institutions themselves have a part in creating and from which they stand to profit, the income derived from such rituals being significant in the budget of many temples.

From a woman's perspective, what does it mean to be Buddhist? Eleanor Zelliot uses interviews and written material solicited from ex-untouchable women converts to Buddhism in Maharashtra (India) to examine women's perception of themselves as Buddhists. Her goal is to characterize ex-untouchable women's unique religious self-identity. What makes her own essay unique is that built into the very nature of her subject matter is the question of race-caste, another crucial variable often overlooked by those who analyze religious cultures, symbols, and institutions. Moreover, because she presents us with information concerning women of different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, she fully takes into account a third major variable in her analysis, that of socioeconomic class. In this way Zelliot demonstrates how the variables of gender, race-caste, and class are all factors in the religious self-identity of ex-untouchable women.

Although all of the essays in the volume rely on Buddhist texts of one form or another, in these first four essays we find that the analysis of texts, both oral and written, is more a means than an end. Though Sponberg makes extensive use of Pali and Sanskrit canonical material and though Bartholomeusz relies on Pali historical-religious works and on Śrīhala materials in her study, both utilize them as historical source material. Smith's and Zelliot's essays fall under the rubric of what might be called contemporary cultural criticism. Relying more on the methodologies of sociology and folklore studies, their use
of oral texts is essential. However, as in the case of Sponberg's and Bartholomeusz's essays, where the focus is clearly historical, texts are used in the service of a methodology and goal that is not explicitly textual.

By contrast, the third group of essays are concerned more overtly with texts qua texts. The principal methodology here is literary criticism and the primary focus of both Richman's and Levering's essays is the persuasive power of words, rhetoric. Paula Richman looks at the sixth century Tamil Buddhist epic *Maṇimēkalai*, a tale of a courtesan's daughter who becomes a Buddhist nun. She shows how the author, Čāṭtaṇār, employs a "rhetoric of persuasion" that has at its core a sophisticated understanding of gender. Čāṭtaṇār seems to have taken upon himself the task of making more palatable to the Tamil society of his day the role of the celibate Buddhist monastic life for women. Richman shows how, to that end, Čāṭtaṇār draws upon culturally constructed notions of gender to enhance the status of the woman renunciant, contrasting it to that of the beautiful and sexually active courtesan.

Also focusing on the analysis of rhetoric related to gender in Buddhist texts, Miriam Levering's essay on the Lin-chi (Rinzai) tradition of Chinese Ch'yan (Zen) Buddhism, shows the tension that exists between a "rhetoric of equality," which stresses how the distinction between men and women is irrelevant to the project of enlightenment, and a "rhetoric of heroism," which characterizes such an accomplishment as heroic qua male attribute. Though the epithets of the *hero* are also applied to women, Levering suggests that "in associating a 'masculine' ideal through gender-linked qualifiers to a feminine subject...one is leaning over backward in making the application for the sake of flattery or an insincere rhetorical effect." She also demonstrates that despite the Ch'yan masters' repudiation of the gender distinction at the ultimate level, they are only too aware of its effectiveness as a rhetorical device on the phenomenal level (that is, at the level of words and conventions). What is more, the metaphors that are at the core of such rhetorical devices, she concludes, are clearly informed by the conceptions of gender that exist within the culture, conceptions not always favorable to women.

Much of the background essential to the understanding of the essays of Bartholomeusz, Richman, and Levering will be found in Sponberg's historical piece. The diverse attitudes toward women in the different periods of the history of women mendicants in Sri Lankā, as well as the diverse voices of both the Buddhist epic with which Richman deals and the Ch'yan texts that are the focus of Levering’s
piece, are echoes of the multifarious voices that Sponberg identifies in his essay. For example, though the latter discusses the idea of "inclusiveness" principally from a historical perspective and the other more from the viewpoint of literary criticism, it is no accident that both Sponberg and Levering focus on this notion as a concept essential to the understanding of Buddhist history and texts, respectively.

With the next two essays we pass from the use of texts as sources for the study of rhetoric to the use of texts as the sources of symbols. How do symbols of the feminine function in Buddhism? Do they always serve to elevate the status of women and console them? In contrast to the double entendres that seem to characterize the rhetoric and symbolism of heroism in Ch’ an texts, Barbara Reed’s essay investigates how the female imagery associated with the bodhisattva of compassion, Kuan-yin, has been predominantly positive for women. Relying on both textual and art historical data, Reed traces the evolution of the gender symbolism of Kuan-yin from shortly after the introduction of Buddhism to China until modern times. She shows how Kuan-yin has been a symbol of liberation for women, especially since Sung times, and, in turn, how women have been the disseminators of this symbolism. In the texts that Reed examines we see Kuan-yin portrayed as liberating women from marriage, sexuality, and the perceived impurity of menstruation and childbirth. Here there are resonances with Richman’s essay, in which the courtesan is liberated from a sexual encounter with the prince through the intercession of a goddess. Thus, Reed shows how in both premodern and modern times the female symbolism of Kuan-yin has helped women to cope. Whereas the premodern accounts of Kuan-yin emphasize independence (from marriage, family, sexuality, childbearing) as a possibility for women, we find that contemporary works stress women’s coping within male-dominated families.

In my own essay I also explore the ambiguous value of gender-related symbolism by examining how Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophical literature depicts wisdom as feminine and affective states, such as love and compassion, as masculine. Contextualizing the use of this gender imagery reveals the extent to which those who wield symbols rely on social conceptions of gender that are not always liberating for women; at the root of an apparently positive symbol there abides a patriarchal presupposition concerning the nature of the feminine. Relying primarily on the scriptural and postcanonical material of the Indo-Tibetan tradition, I examine the nature of the perceived tension between "analytical states," such as wisdom, and "affective states," such as love; and I show how gender polarity is used to express it.
Yet the association of analytical mental states with the feminine contrasts not only with the Western model, where love and compassion are considered feminine in tone, but with Indo-Tibetan social conceptions of gender as well.

If for a moment we change our focus and view the last four essays not from the perspective of subject matter (rhetoric and symbolism) but from the way in which that subject matter is or was used in Buddhist cultures, a number of common features emerge that transcend both geographical and temporal barriers. In widely disparate times and places we seem to find gender-based imagery used in liberating ways— in a sixth century Tamil epic to enhance the status of the female renunciant and in post-Sung China to give women a positive and liberating role model. At the same time we find that in both India and China an ambiguity to gender-related symbols can exist; for example, the conception of the 'hero' applied to women in Ch’an texts or the symbol of wisdom as mother in the texts of Buddhist scholasticism in India and Tibet. Moreover, this ambiguity casts aspersions both on the sincerity with which words and symbols are used and on the presuppositions from which the corresponding imagery develops. Perhaps the lesson to be learned here is this. Although symbols liberating to women are an important part of the Buddhist tradition throughout its history, no symbol can be accepted as a positive one prima facie. Only after it is analyzed and properly contextualized, taking into account the social conceptions of gender from which a symbol derives and to which it refers, can its true character be assessed.

Sexuality, at the very least, is a secondary theme of almost all of the essays in this volume. Consideration of the nature of sexual relations between men and women in Japan, both inter- and extra-maritally, is pivotal to Smith’s study of abortion. The theme of woman as sex object and the transcendence of such a role in the monastic life, though perhaps most clear in Richman’s essay, is also central to Sponberg’s and Reed’s. Even the poems of the women converts to Buddhism in Maharashtra speak of the ‘‘heart-melting fire and the fearful awakening power’’ behind Siddhārtha’s farewell kiss to ‘‘Yashu,’’ his wife, the memory of which has managed to keep only her ‘‘between the closed eyelids of Siddhārtha.’’ Where sexuality becomes the principal variable of analysis, however, is in the essays of Zwilling and Schalow. Given the dearth of scholarly research devoted to homosexuality in Asian cultures in general and in Buddhist cultures in particular,9 these two essays are a particularly important contribution to this volume.
Basing his analysis on the monastic and metaphysical literature of both the Pali and Sanskrit traditions, together with their commentarial literature, Leonard Zwilling examines homosexuality in light of Buddhist sexual morality as a whole. He analyzes how Indian Buddhists understood homosexuality, its psychological and ethical implications, and the status of sexual nonconformists as religious or lay followers of Buddhism. He concludes that the Buddhist view of homosexuality in the sources he surveys is “at least consonant with a contemporary view of homosexuality as a probably organically or genetically based orientation, with the same moral significance (or insignificance) as heterosexuality.”

Understanding the essential neutrality of Indian Buddhism on the question of homosexuality, I believe, is pivotal for understanding how sexual diversity was tolerated in other Buddhist cultures and how in Japan male love actually came to be extolled. This is the subject of Paul Schalow’s essay, a study of homosexual love as practiced by the Buddhist clergy of Japan. We find as a paradigm of this relationship the older monk’s taking the young temple acolyte as lover; and Schalow gives us examples of the way in which this love is encouraged in a wide variety of texts. He also examines the popular tradition that homosexuality was introduced into Japan from China by Kōbō Daishi (774–835), or as he was more commonly known, Kūkai. In his study Schalow concludes that, far from detracting from his image and status, linking the importation of male homosexuality into Japan to this important figure in Japanese Buddhist history reciprocally enhances the status of both Kūkai and of male love. Ultimately, the legend of Kūkai’s introduction of male love into Japan was considered one of his many accomplishments.

Just as concepts such as time, society, and culture are used as principal variables in other disciplines (history, sociology, anthropology), gender is the principal variable of analysis in the field that has come to be known as Gender Studies. To say that gender is an important variable in the analysis of religious concepts, symbols, rituals and institutions is to say that these are religious phenomena created and experienced by human beings as gendered individuals—that is, by men and women who are part of a culture that constructs ideas of male and female in particular and culturally specific ways—and that this cannot be overlooked in any enterprise that seeks to characterize them.10

What does it mean, then, to use gender as a variable? How does gender function as a category when we examine religious phenomena? In reading the essays in this volume it will become clear that at play
are four major modes of analysis using gender as a variable. These are neither completely distinct nor unrelated, but insight is to be had from discussing them separately. The first mode explores the role that religion, itself a social phenomenon, plays in the creation of social conceptions of gender. The second examines the way in which religious texts, institutions, and symbols take up the norms that in any given society determine what it means to be male or female. Hence, the former mode explores religion’s role in the construction of gender whereas the latter explores the obverse, how religious institutions and symbols incorporate those preexistent conceptions of gender.

The last two modes of analysis assume these social conceptions of gender and go on to explore their relationship to distinct religious phenomena. Taking these socially constructed notions of maleness and femaleness as a given it is possible to then inquire as to how gender influences the creation of different religious elements, be they texts, symbols, rituals, or institutions. The third form of analysis, then, generates questions distinct from the first two. For example, under this rubric one might explore how the religious institutions created by men and women differ, or one might ask what role the gender of an individual plays in the way she or he writes religious poetry. We can also set aside the question of the gender-related origins of, say, a religious text, however, taking it as a given, and then ask, in a way typical of the fourth mode of analysis, whether from the perspective of its reception, that is, from the viewpoint of the reader, gender plays a role. Do men and women read religious texts or interpret religious symbols in the same way? Do they perform rituals in the same way? Hence, gender is not only a factor in the creation of everything religious, it is also a factor in its experience. Let us examine these four modes of analysis in more detail, paying attention to the way they manifest themselves within the essays in this book.

The first form of analysis is dedicated to determining how religion conditions the social conceptions of gender; for example, how the claims about women and men or the use of male and female symbols in a religious-philosophical text affects a society’s perception of what it means to be a woman or man. Of course, one of the major preoccupations of scholars involved in the feminist critique of religion is to determine how the patriarchal symbols of religious texts and traditions have affected and continue to affect a society’s conception of women, oftentimes, with a view to change. In this collection, Bardwell Smith’s examination of how Buddhist theological-institutional attitudes toward the fetus and abortion have affected Japanese women, their mental health, and their status in society is a prime example
of such analysis. Paula Richman asks a related question. In her essay she examines not how the gender-based rhetoric in the Tamil Buddhist epic *Mahimēkalai* affected the society’s conceptions of women (and specifically of celibacy as an option for women), which is a historical question. Instead, by determining the presuppositions of Tamil society as it existed at the time the epic was written, she shows how the gender-laden rhetoric had the capacity to change these conceptions, which of course is one of the author’s goals as a Buddhist apologist. In a similar vein, Miriam Levering explores how the gender-based, and specifically masculine, rhetoric of Chinese Zen texts during the Sung dynasty might have affected women’s spiritual self-identity.

Typical of the questions that emerge within the second mode of analysis is one of how gender, as the construct of a particular society or time, influences religion. Put in another way, what kinds of cues do religious institutions take from societal norms concerning gender? In this book, for example, Bartholomeusz shows the impact that Anglo-American attitudes toward women prevalent among the Theosophists and other Western expatriots living in Śrī Laṅkā — attitudes that, by comparison to traditional views, were quite liberal — had on the movements to reestablish the nuns’ order in that country. Zwilling asks how a society’s notions of manhood or womanhood, and the attitudes toward homosexuality that derive from this, affect the status of gay men and lesbian women in Buddhist institutions. From the essays of Zwilling, who treats classical India, and Schalow, who focuses on medieval Japan, it is possible to glean how two distinct attitudes toward same-sex relations led to radically different situations for gay people in Buddhist institutions. In my own essay I show how, when we take into account certain societal presuppositions concerning gender, religious symbols that seem unconditionally liberating on first inspection may turn out to be only partially so.

Questions that might fall under the rubric of the third form of analysis have in common their preoccupation with how gender influences distinct religious elements: literary, philosophical, institutional, and so forth. We might cite as a specific example the analysis of how the gender of the writers of religious texts influences the theological symbols and styles that emerge from their writings. In this book, Barbara Reed discusses women’s use of the symbolism of Kuan-yin, and Eleanor Zelliot cites several examples of Buddhist women’s unique expression of Buddhist truths, including the beautiful poem with which she concludes her essay. Both Reed’s and Zelliot’s work, at least in part, are exemplary of this form of analysis.
Finally, the fourth mode might be characterized as an analysis of the way in which gender differentiation leads to a divergence in the experience of religion. The issues of men’s unique mode of textual interpretation and philosophical discourse or women’s understanding of doctrine or their unique use of ritual would all fall under this heading.\textsuperscript{14} Eleanor Zelliot’s study of the way in which ex-untouchable women understand Buddhist doctrine (and their relationship to it) is the clearest example of this mode of analysis among the essays here.

There is one final form of analysis that, strictly speaking, does not involve the use of gender as an analytical variable. Nonetheless, it is probably the most common preoccupation of the essays in this volume. I am referring to the elucidation of Buddhist conceptions of maleness and femaleness. The determination of the way in which a particular religious literary-philosophical genre conceives of the feminine, the masculine or distinct sexual orientations is exemplary of this analytical approach.\textsuperscript{15} Although all of the essays in this volume are preoccupied to a greater or lesser extent with this type of question, Alan Sponberg’s and Tessa Bartholomeusz’s essays, that trace attitudes toward women-nuns historically in early Indian and Sri Laṅkān Buddhism, respectively, and Leonard Zwilling’s (that engages in the equivalent task with attitudes toward homosexuality) are perhaps the clearest example of studies that take this as their central theme.

Although all the essays in this collection focus on a single religious tradition and use gender and sexuality as their primary variables of analysis, we can see how these variables function differently in each of them. This diversity in functional approaches allows the reader to glean answers to the variety of questions that can be posed of various Buddhist traditions at different points in time. This functional diversity, moreover, is concomitant with diversity in other areas: methodological, temporal, and geographical. The contributors to this volume approach their common subject matter through a variety of disciplines and methodologies that include the textual-philological, historical, philosophical, sociological, and literary critical. The periods studied span all of Buddhist history, from early Buddhism to modern times. The geographical diversity is equally great: from Sri Laṅkā in the South to Tibet in the North, from the Western coast of India to Japan. Yet despite functional, methodological, historical, and geographical diversity, the essays all focus on a single religious tradition, Buddhism, and they are all committed to the use of gender and sexuality as primary variables.

If one principal insight is to be gained from the papers in this volume as a whole, it is the realization that the Buddhist tradition
is permeated with a complex and sophisticated understanding of gender. As these essays illustrate, from very early times gender has been either consciously perceived or implicitly utilized by Buddhists—philosophers, artists, literary figures, and ordinary women and men—for various ends. The realization that gender is a cultural construct of course is a unique insight of modernity, as is the explicit use of gender as an analytical variable. Nonetheless, the essays of this volume demonstrate that, even without a self-conscious theory of gender as cultural construct or analytical variable, from the earliest times, Buddhists have been cognizant of issues of gender. Though certainly not the rule, a few isolated cases even exist in which we find some notion of gender different from biological sex. This is not to imply that Gender Studies as a discipline existed as part of the Buddhist tradition. The occasional and often only implicit presence of a conception of gender different from sex in a tradition does not imply that tradition’s ability to utilize that conception as a variable of analysis. That very analysis is the function (and a unique insight) of the modern. Engaging in this form of analysis with the end of deepening insight into Buddhism is the purpose of this volume.

Notes

This volume has its origins in a panel of the Buddhism Section of the 1987 meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Boston. Three of the contributors to this volume (Zwillings, Schalow, and Cabezon) read papers on that occasion. Thanks must go to a number of individuals who have contributed to this project in a variety of ways. Anne Klein (Rice University) was the fourth member of the original panel and Elizabeth Napper (Stanford University) was the respondent. Their comments and interest in this project are greatly appreciated. Jamie Hubbard (Smith College) was instrumental in facilitating the meeting of several members of the panel at a very early date; without his help neither the panel nor the ensuing volume would have come about. Several colleagues have also been kind enough to read this introduction and have been generous with comments: William Silva and Barbara Sicherman (Trinity College), Paula Richman, whose very detailed comments were especially valuable, and Sally Davenport. Though this introductory essay benefits greatly from their remarks, needless to say, the final product ultimately is my own.

1. For example, J. Plaskow and J. A. Romero, eds., Women and Religion (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1974); N. Falk and R. Gross, eds., Unspoken Worlds: Women’s Religious Lives in Non-Western Cultures (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980); a new revised edition of this important work is now available (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing, 1989); R. M. Gross, ed., Beyond


6. Though obviously related, the status of human beings as gendered and their status as potentially sexual are two issues that should not be conflated. The types of analysis that involve gender as the primary variable and those that involve sexuality or sexual preference as primary variables, as the essays in this volume demonstrate, can yield radically different sets of questions and answers. I focus on the differences in the two approaches where the differences between the analyses that take gender as the principal variable and those that take sexuality or sexual preference as the principal variable arise (for example, in the discussion of the essays on homosexuality).

7. I am aware that their treatment of homosexuality does not preclude Zwilling and Schalow’s essays from being subsumed within any of the preceding categories. I find that their common and unique subject matter, however, far outweighs their methodological affinity to either of the other groups as regards criteria for their categorization.

8. I am not being completely facetious when I say that if the courtesan had been Chinese her saving goddess would undoubtedly have been Kuan-yin. Put another way, if Avalokiteśvara, a male deity who is the Indian
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counterpart to Kuan-yin, had changed sex before he went to China perhaps he—or rather she—would have been cast in the part of the saving goddess.

9. For bibliographical references on works related to Buddhism and homosexuality, see my essay by the same name in a forthcoming volume from SUNY Press on homosexuality in the worlds’ religions, ed. I. Swidler.

10. See Carolyn Walker Bynum’s comments in the Introduction to Bynum et al., *Gender and Religion*, pp. 7 passim.

11. Accepting their existence without necessarily agreeing to their validity as determinant of what it means to be male or female, of course.

12. A prime example of this is the volume edited by Atkinson et al., *Immaculate and Powerful*. Anne Klein’s essay in that volume, showing as it does the partial failure of doctrinal egalitarianism to translate into social equality in Tibetan society, is particularly relevant.

13. Though Mary Daly deals as well with the social implications of male symbols of perfection, this is certainly part of her task; see *Beyond God the Father* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974). This same theme—namely, how the gender of religious writers affects the nature of symbols and style utilized in their work—is the subject of several essays in Bynum et al., *Gender and Religion* (Hawley’s essay, comparing the poetry of Sur Das and Mira Bai, is perhaps the most notable in this regard).

14. As regards the first example, much of the work of the contributors to the volume edited by Sandra Harding and Merill B. Hintika, *Discovering Reality* (Dordrecht: R. Reidel, 1983) comes to mind, even though it does not deal directly with themes in Religious Studies. In the second case, the collection of essays edited by Nancy Falk and Rita Gross, *Unspoken Worlds*, provides a clear example of this approach.

15. Several examples of this approach in scholarly articles are to be found in Bynum et al., *Gender and Religion*. The essays of Black, “Gender and Cosmology in Chinese Correlative Thinking”; Williams, “Uses of Gender Imagery in Ancient Gnostic Texts”; and Bynum herself, “...And Woman His Humanity”: Female Imagery in the Religious Writings of the Later Middle Ages,” are the clearest examples of studies that ask this type of question.

16. Zwilling’s treatment of the “powers” (indriya) of masculinity and femininity are perhaps most illuminating in this regard. See p. 206. It is clear from his comments that these “powers” come very close to what we consider gender.