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Introduction

Family and the Construction of Religious Communities

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Today my birth is fruitful. Today my human life is justified. Today I am born into the family of the Buddha. Now I am the Buddha's son. So that there may be no blemish upon this spotless family, I must now act as becomes my family.

—Śāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 3.25–6[1]

The familial ties that bind us in kinship networks are some of the most powerful social forces operating in our lives. Obligations to one's kin can promote both virtue and vice, and they can both empower and disempower individuals in relation to one another. Family membership imposes obligations on social actors. Just as peer pressure motivates children in classrooms, the pressure of family expectations motivates individuals to act in particular ways. Family membership can be a huge motivational tool for the aspiring Buddhist, as suggested by the quote above (from Śāntideva's compendium of the Mahāyāna Buddhist path). Family ties are thus capable of performing a great deal of social labor. Family ties can bind us to people whom we respect and whose moral examples provide support for our religious lives. Family ties can also come into conflict with our religious objectives and bind us to people who don't share our values. For those who seek to find a congenial community with like values, nonkin communities such as those found in monasteries or other intentional communities offer alternative forms of belonging. Such alternative

nonkin communities, however, are often structured by fictive kinship ties. To invoke family relationships and take one's monastic colleagues as brothers and sisters and one's superiors as parents integrates the individual into the community and draws on the affective powers of sibling and parental relationships to maintain communal bonds.

The chapters in this volume explore how Asian Buddhists create intentional communities, construct religious authority, and guard religious privilege through invoking family ties. Focusing on the construction of religious community through the manipulation of familial and pseudofamilial structures, contributors to this book show how Asian Buddhists in a wide range of historical and geographical circumstances relate as kin to their biological families and to the religious families they join through ordination as monastics or initiation as adepts. The chapters show that the language of family and lineage constitutes a remarkably wide-ranging discourse that thrives in a variety of Asian Buddhist cultural contexts. Countering the widely held assumption in Buddhist studies that Buddhism began as a world-renouncing religion that is essentially antithetical to family life, this volume amply demonstrates that kinship making is a foundational form of practice in Buddhism.

What does it mean to take the robes and precepts of a Buddhist monk or nun? The action of joining the *sangha* through ordination is described as a termination of ties to home and family. The monastic is one who "goes forth from home into the homeless life" (Pali, *agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajjati*). What does this entail? Early Buddhist literature describes the renouncer as one who completely severs all family ties. The *Rhinoceros Horn Discourse* of the *Sutta Nipāta* explains that the renouncer should abandon family and wealth for an autonomous lifestyle: "Leaving behind son and wife, and father and mother, and wealth and grain, and relatives, and sensual pleasures to the limit, one should wander solitary as a rhinoceros horn."[2] In many passages found in Sanskrit and Pali sources, the Buddha declares it impossible to practice celibacy (*brahmacarya*) while living at home. This passage from the *Mahāvastu,* a Sanskrit biography of the Buddha, has many counterparts in Pali literature: "Now this householder life is constricting. One must go forth to an open space; it is not possible for one to practice the utterly specified, utterly irreproachable, pure, clean celibate life (*brahmacarya*) while staying in a house. I will go forth from home to homelessness."[3] Such passages in the Buddhist textual record depict the life of the renouncer as completely separate from and even antithetical to family life. And it would seem that families in India perceived monasticism as an antifamilial force. Indian Buddhist literature contains passages representing families condemning the Buddha and his monastic community as threats to their continuity. For example, the Pali *vinaya* records the disapproval of some

of the distinguished families of Magadha who lost their men to the sangha: "That monk Gotama is on a path that takes away people's children. That monk Gotama is on a path that makes widows. That monk Gotama is on a path which destroys families."[4]

In contrast to the portrait of the Buddha and his monastic followers rejecting family life that the passages above suggest, scholars such as Gregory Schopen and Shayne Clarke have offered literary and material evidence that many Indian monks and nuns continued relationships with their families even after going forth from home to homelessness. Gregory Schopen's analysis of inscriptional evidence from a variety of Indian sites shows that Indian Buddhist monastics made donations to the sangha in order to benefit their parents, both those who were living and those who had died.[5] Comparing inscriptions of donations made by laity to those made by monastics, Schopen suggests that the concern for parents is even more evident in inscriptions recording donations made by monastics than in inscriptions by lay people.[6] And Schopen indicates that some of the monastic donors whose gifts were earmarked for the benefit of their parents were titled, educated monks, "teachers and transmitters of 'official' Buddhist literature," and not just uneducated monks who might not be expected to know the official norms.[7] Schopen has also argued that Indian monks had considerable family-based economic resources at their disposal, making donations to monasteries that would not have been possible if they strictly adhered to precepts about handling money. Rulings found in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* that Schopen has analyzed suggest that even after going forth from home to homelessness, Indian monastics living under that monastic code enjoyed the right to inherit family property.[8]

Shayne Clarke has also found evidence from Indian Buddhist sources that challenges the centrality of the image of the renunciant who has severed all family ties. Clarke has found inscriptional and textual indications that relationships between renouncers and their families did not end with ordination. In his analysis of inscriptions from various sites around the Indian subcontinent, Clarke shows that monks and nuns made donations together with family members and that monks and nuns continued to identify as members of families when describing themselves in inscriptions.[9] Moreover, Clarke suggests that the line between celibate renunciant and sexually active lay person is not as clear as received wisdom in Buddhist studies would have it, arguing that only the Pali *vinaya* mandates expulsion for those who violate the precept on celibacy. The other five *vinayas* presuppose that violations will occur and make provisions so that violators are able to stay.[10] Clarke maintains that attention to *vinaya* literature provides a useful focusing lens for exploring issues of family life in Indian monasticism. Extant *vinayas* are much more permissive of

ongoing relationships between renunciants and their families than one would guess from the portrait of the renouncer found in sutra literature. Sutra literature presents an idealized portrait of the renouncer because, according to Clarke, it represents what monastic institutions wished to show the public. The monastic codes offer scholars a more accurate window onto Indian monasticism as a set of mundane practices.[11] The work of Clarke and Schopen, taken together, suggests that going forth from home to homelessness may have been more a matter of rhetoric than a matter of reality on the ground, as indicated by inscriptional evidence and evidence from extant *vinayas*.

Scholars of Buddhism have risen to the challenge that this data provides. Many scholars are rethinking what it means to retire from the world and offering models of monastic life that include familial relations as a feature of monastic institutions. The time has come for a work that summarizes contributions made so far and highlights emergent trends. A volume like this is much needed. There is no one comprehensive monograph on the topic, only a number of articles and monographs on family in East Asian, South Asian, and other culturally specific Buddhist sites in Asia.[12] One will not find an entry on "family" in *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*.[13]

The studies gathered here show a range of ways in which family informs Buddhist practice. Some of the work featured here shows families engaged in Buddhist practice together, drawing sustenance in their practice from their familial bonds. Other studies included here focus on individuals who have taken ordination as monks and nuns but who remain embedded in the lives of the families in which they were born, men and women who carry out their Buddhist monastic practices in ways that promote family interests. In the examples analyzed here, we see interdependence between monastics and families in terms of financial support, care giving, and ritual labor. The work collected here also looks at familial ties as a structuring principle of religious community and considers the role of the fictive kinship ties as a force that helps to shape the religious practices of individuals.

Of the many ways that family can intersect with the institution of renunciation, three in particular offer some analytical precision and provide a helpful organizing structure for the materials we explore here.

1. Renunciation as the Creation of a New Family

Renunciation, as suggested above, often leads to a communal existence that is organized along familial lines, thus giving a pseudofamilial quality to the social lives of those who renounce. As Richard Cohen suggests, "Kinship need not

be a matter of blood and bones. Kinship is a system of meaning, communicating the existential embeddedness of social relations joining individuals, communities, and divinities."[14] Fictive kinship structures have long provided the ordering principles that have enabled Buddhist monastic communities to work effectively. Scriptures such as the *Aggañña Sutta* show the Buddha describing members of the monastic community as his spiritual offspring: "He whose faith in the Tathagata is settled, rooted, established, solid, unshakable . . . can truly say: 'I am a true son of the Blessed Lord, born of his mouth, born of Dhamma, created by Dhamma, an heir of Dhamma.'"[15] Monks and nuns thus constitute the offspring of the Buddha; they are born from the *dhamma* or the teachings that constitute the Buddha's deathless body. Paul Mus argues that in formulating the notion of the Buddha as the father of a monastic family, Buddhists in India drew on Brahmaṇical notions of kinship that entail the transfer of personhood from father to son after the death of the father; Mus describes this transfer of personhood in this way: "One does not inherit *from* one's father; instead, one inherits one's father."[16] To claim to be a son of the Buddha has serious consequences, according to John Strong. To claim to be a son of the Buddha is potentially to stake a claim to the possibility of Buddhahood for oneself, as Strong has shown in reference to key figures in *avadāna* literature.[17] Mus suggests that *Aggañña Sutta* passage cited above provides a kind of blueprint for the Indian Buddhist community's development, with different interpretations of this kin relationship leading to different sectarian orientations. Richard Cohen offers an example of how the language of fictive kinship allows for assertions of authority by a specific sectarian group claiming the position of sole inheritors of the Buddha's legacy. In an article on the way that assertions of kinship with the Śakya clan were used in Mahāyāna texts as a social marker of the bodhisattva, Cohen shows how a narrowly defined group claimed to constitute an elite family within the broader Buddhist family. From examples such as these, it should be clear that the language of kinship serves to help Buddhists articulate who they are in relation to idealized figures of the past as well as to get a better purchase on whom they are in relation to present-day sectarian alternatives.

2. Renunciation for the Sake of Family

Despite the recorded words of Indians apprehensive about Buddhist monastic institutions "stealing sons" and causing hardship for families, there can be many benefits that accrue to the families of those who ordain and many reasons why families would support the ordination of their members. Renunciation can be

an action that one does for the benefit of the biological family. One example of renunciation for the sake of family is the custom of temporary ordination as practiced today in Thailand and Burma.[18] Boys and young men often take ordination and spend some time in the monastery as novices or full-fledged monks before resuming lay life. There are a variety of motivations for taking robes as a monk for a time. Spending time in monastic settings can offer educational opportunities not otherwise available, thus leading to the possibility of upward social mobility. But a primary motivation is to assist one's family through the generation of merit. Entering the sangha is thought to generate merit both for oneself and for one's parents (especially one's mother) and ancestors. In this way, a young man can "repay" his parents the debt he owes them for giving him life and raising him. Support for the renunciant community can also redound to the benefit of the family, both those who are living and those who lived in the past. During the Ghost Festival, Buddhist temples in East Asia promote support for the renunciant sangha as a means of helping deceased parents and ancestors.[19] Festival participants offer gifts to monastics while narrating accounts of how the Buddha's disciple Maudgalyāyana (Pali, Mogallana; Chinese, Mulian) generated merit through such offerings as a way to ensure his mother's release from hell. Renunciation has served as a way for elite families to maintain their hold on power and property, in cases where renunciant members entitle the clan to possession of monastic properties. It is not uncommon, for example, for abbots of land-owning temples in Sri Lanka to select their nephews as successors, thus ensuring that the family keeps its entitlement to monastic property holdings.[20]

3. Renunciation Together with Family

In biographies of the Buddha, renunciation is often represented as an extended family affair in which the entire Śākya clan of Gotama Siddhartha plays a role.[21] The historical Buddha leaves his family to seek awakening, but he returns after achieving his goal to teach them what he has learned. In the process, he brings key members of his extended family into his spiritual family. Even before the Buddha's awakening and return home, while he is in the forest practicing extreme forms of self-denial in the pursuit of awakening, the Buddha's chief wife is said in some texts to practice her own version of asceticism, turning her home into a domestic hermitage. She wears saffron robes, eats a limited diet, and engages in other forms of self-discipline even while living in the palace. After the Buddha's awakening and return, many members of his

family joined him in taking up the renunciant life. The Buddha is shown to have focused special attention on some resistant family members in order to bring them into the monastic fold. For example, on the day when his step-brother Nanda was to be married and made king, the Buddha intervened to ensure that Nanda would instead take robes as a monk, despite Nanda's reluctance to do so.

This attention to the importance of family ties is also well established in literary records of the past lives of the Buddha. Many past life stories show the Buddha practicing asceticism while maintaining ties with family members. jātaka tales show the bodhisattva practicing asceticism along with kinsmen (often biological brothers) who are depicted as having shared the renunciant life with him on many occasions in past lives. In a preface to the *Sāma Jātaka*, we learn of a man who becomes a monk. After seventeen years away from home, he learns that his aged parents have been exploited by their retainers and are starving. So this monk leaves his hermitage and goes to his parents' home, feeding them food that he acquires as alms and clothing them with clothes obtained the same way. Other monks grumble that this monk is doing wrong by supporting his parents with alms. The matter is relayed to the Buddha, and the Buddha praises the monk for his actions. Telling the story of his past life as Sāma, the Buddha explains that he himself looked after his blind parents in that past life and that he regards such filial practices as highly meritorious.[22]

From these wide-ranging examples, it should be clear that renunciation has historically not meant only one thing to Buddhists, but has taken vastly different forms in Buddhist practice. If one is to survey the ways that kinship making has served as a fundamental form of Buddhist practice, one should be prepared to look at a broad array of social structures and institutions. This is what the work in this volume attempts to do. The following section details specific contributions of each chapter.

Historical Families, Imagined Families

The first part of this book, on historical families and imagined families, explores some of the links between historical families and the family-like structures typical of many Buddhist institutions such as monastic communities. We can see in the examples considered in this part of the book several instances of renunciation as the creation of a new family as well as instances of renunciation practiced together with the family.

In "Serving the Emperor by Serving the Buddha: Imperial Buddhist Monks and Nuns as Abbots, Abbesses, and Adoptees in Early Modern Japan," Gina Cogan focuses on an elite premodern Japanese style of monasticism closely connected with the imperial court. In Tokugawa, Japan, it was common for the emperor to adopt men and women from elite families and appoint them as abbots and abbesses of monasteries and convents. Such people remained important figures in the life of the imperial court while also pursuing monastic practices. Indeed, regulations guiding the behavior of these aristocratic clerics were classified among the regulations pertaining to court life, not monastic life. Cogan's review of the documents shows us how elite men and women became monks and nuns precisely to enact family roles rather than to abandon them. Using genealogical records of the imperial family and of aristocrats, as well as the diaries of courtiers, Cogan shows that the Buddhist ritual activities of imperial abbots and abbesses were not perfunctory, but rather were integral to their functioning as actors in the cultural and political circles of the court. Renunciation was practiced together with the family for the benefit of the state. Thus Cogan shows how problematic it is to apply the world-renouncer paradigm to premodern Japanese Buddhism.

In his chapter "The Tantric Family Romance: Sex and the Construction of Social Identity in Tantric Buddhist Ritual" David Gray shows that what appear to be descriptions of incest in Buddhist tantric communities in India are better understood as attempts to construct a religious identity for groups surrounding tantric gurus by describing them as the spiritual families of those religious teachers. The familial terms present in tantric texts appear to designate, and call for the production of, an alternative "family" centered upon the figure of the guru and consisting of his male and female disciples. Gray shows how this tantric Buddhist analogy between esoteric communities and patriarchal joint families draws on older Buddhist traditions that conceptualize the monastic order in similarly lineage-based, familial terms.

Amy Holmes-Tagchungdarpa also works with tantric materials in "Bone and Heart Sons: Biological and Imagined Kin in the Creation of Family Lineage in Tibetan Buddhism." She focuses on family traditions of Himalayan Tibetan Buddhism in order to better understand their potency and potential for innovation, as well as the methods used to consolidate them and ensure their continuity. This chapter studies the cultivation of a wider idea of family through the recognition of "heart sons"—close students who although not born into a family lineage continue that lineage by working together with the family, thereby creating an "imagined" family community. The life of Se Phagchog Dorje, an early-twentieth-century religious leader, serves as a rich

illustration of the fluidity and elasticity of family traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. His life story is an interesting example of some of the different patterns available to members of family lineages, patterns that keep such lineages vital and stretch them to new potentials.

Jeffrey Samuels' chapter, "Families Matter: Ambiguous Attitudes toward Child Ordination in Contemporary Sri Lanka," takes an ethnographic approach to the question of relationships between natal families and monastic institutions in contemporary Sri Lanka. Rather than uncritically accepting the commonly stated idea that monastic ordination is universally celebrated as a path to upward mobility, Samuels went into the field to explore varying reactions of parents to the novice ordination of their sons, analyzing these reactions through the lenses of social class and gender. Despite the conception of ordination as a meritorious act, parents whose children become monastics often find themselves dealing with a wide range of emotions: joy, grief, excitement, dread, confidence, and loss. Focusing on two case studies of children who chose to become Buddhist novices, Samuels' chapter explores how parents react, experience, and attempt to make sense of their loss at home. By considering each family's reactions within their own socioeconomic environments, this chapter highlights how attitudes toward ordination, while affected by larger cultural and religious worldviews and ideas, are further shaped by individual backgrounds and experiences. Finally, in comparing and contrasting the reactions of the boys' mothers with those of their fathers, this chapter reflects upon the varied, sometimes opposing ways in which men and women resolve tensions, find meaning, and construct and reconstruct their self-identity as mothers and fathers of children in robes.

Parents and Children

The second part of the book contains chapters on the relationships of Buddhist parents and children as seen from various vantage points. The chapters in this part of the book examine narratives and ritual practices concerning the mothers of Buddhas and the mothers of Buddhist saints in premodern South Asia and East Asia. They also analyze texts and cultural institutions that construct ideal relationships between parents and children.

In "The Passion of Mulian's Mother: Narrative Blood and Maternal Sacrifices in Chinese Buddhism," Alan Cole shows how renunciation is a family affair for medieval Chinese Buddhists. In his *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism*, Cole offers a reading of medieval Chinese Buddhist texts associated

with the Buddhist festival of Yulan Pen—often called "the Ghost Festival"—that show how Chinese Buddhists garnered support for the sangha and its renunciant projects by leveraging family ties, particularly the ties between mothers and sons. The Ghost Festival has as its narrative core the legend of Mulian (one of the Buddha's two chief disciples, renowned for his mastery of psychic powers) who learns of his mother's grim postmortem fate and, as a good filial son, learns how to make donations to the Buddhist monasteries in order to save her. Ghost Festival narratives coopt the virtue of filial piety for Buddhist ends, bringing the resources of the family to the monastery door. In his chapter in this volume, Cole focuses on versions of the story from the late Tang, where Mulian's mother undergoes extensive physical tortures in hell that are graphically described, and asks whether the annual rehearsal of Mulian's mother's death and salvation might be fruitfully considered as a sacrificial drama. Mulian's mother goes to hell for practicing animal sacrifice, along with being too sensual and greedy. A popular late-Tang text equates giving birth to animal sacrifice (both involve agony and the shedding of blood). Using the work of Nancy Jay on sacrificial cults that contrast male and female forms of generativity, Cole shows how the process of childbirth is negatively situated in Mulian narratives by alignment with pre-Buddhist modes of animal sacrifice. Like Mulian's mother, all women are guilty of transgression when they give birth, and all mothers must be saved by "pure" sacrifices of a Buddhist type. Through an inventive inversion of older sacrificial themes, Buddhists were able to disavow sacrificial bloodshed *and* at the same time participate in a facsimile of it. With their yearly gifts to the monastery, Buddhists could absorb older pre-Buddhist modes of sacrifice while mobilizing the resources and commitments that those sacrifices entailed.

In "Māyā's Disappearing Act: Motherhood in Early Buddhist Literature" Vanessa R. Sasson examines Indian Buddhist narratives about Māyā, the biological mother of the historical Buddha, focusing on early Pali and Sanskrit hagiographical writings. What we find in analyzing these accounts is that Māyā's most dominant character trait as mother, from her previous lives as recorded in the Jātaka tales to her final life as queen Māyā, is her passivity. The writers of the early literature strip Māyā of virtually all agency. She is limited in her maternal role to that of a mere container for the fetus she carries. Hagiographical materials demonstrate an ideal of motherhood that deprives mothers such as Māyā of agency while investing children, such as the fetal Buddha-to-be, with a great deal of agency. Sasson's chapter suggests the extent to which the textual focus on the Buddha's renunciant agenda sidelines his maternal connections. This set of narratives serves as an example of

the gap between the values of the renunciant and the values of the Indian family.

Liz Wilson takes up the question of the agency of mothers using a different set of materials in "Mother as Character Coach: Maternal Agency in the Birth of Sīvali." Secondary literature on Buddhist narratives of the birth of saints and Buddhas tends to give precedence to the character of the child-to-be rather and to view the character of the mother as a vicarious expression of that of the child she is bearing. This chapter explores the seven-year gestation and seven days of difficult labor described in Pali accounts of the birth of the popular Theravada saint Sīvali from his long-suffering mother Suppavāsā. The article examines various models of fetal development circulating in premodern South Asia, suggesting that it is not a foregone conclusion that Buddhist redactors would have viewed pregnancy solely by means of a fetus-centered model. Focusing on present-life narratives that show Suppavāsā using Buddhist teachings as a source of insight and relief from suffering and modeling this liberative stance for her son, this chapter suggests that maternal influence helps Sīvali to succeed in achieving his aims as a renouncer. Furthermore, it suggests that Suppavāsā's role as an eminent donor models the proper relationship between lay givers and monastic recipients in a way that sets up her son as a potent receiver of gifts and bringer of prosperity. Thus while Sīvali is a renouncer and his mother is not, narratives about this saint's special birth suggest that the style of renunciation that Sīvali develops owes much to his mother.

Wives and Husbands

The third part of the book focuses on the relationship of wives and husbands. We begin this section with the wife of the historical Buddha. Ranjini Obeyesekere explores South Asian narratives about the chief wife of the historical Buddha in "Yasodharā in the Buddhist Imagination: Three Portraits Spanning the Centuries." The sutra literature that records the teachings of the Buddha gives no details about the Buddha's wife. However, sutra literature does mention the Buddha's son, Rāhula, implying the existence of a wife. Monastic codes that we know today depict a shadowy, agency-less "Rāhula's mother." But with the composition of hagiographic literatures like apadāna and avadāna as well as full biographies of the Buddha such as the *Buddhacarita*, the *Lalitavistara* and the *Mahāvastu*, this vague wifely figure emerges as a personality with a viewpoint of her own. Known as Yasodharā (and also as Bimbā), she emerges as a figure whose story and character interested subsequent generations of

storytellers working in prose and poetry. Obeyesekere's study explores representations of Yasodharā as they developed in the poetic and storytelling traditions of Sri Lankan Buddhism with a focus on postcanonical traditions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These postcanonical traditions give narrative flesh to the trials of a couple engaged together in fulfilling the husband's renunciant vision by stressing what it means for a wife to be yoked together to her husband though time, with Yasodharā making continual efforts through many lives to be a steadfast partner to her renunciant husband. Yasodharā laments the suddenness of her husband's departure from the palace on the evening of the great departure and asks why he left without telling her when she had supported him in his quest for Buddhahood through many lifetimes. Obeyesekere shows how the recorded words of the Buddha's wife have been used liturgically in Buddhist laments that are still heard today in funerals and other religious contexts.

Amy Paris Langenberg considers how Indian Buddhist storytellers working in Sanskrit attempted to persuade men not to take up the social role of husbands but instead to join the celibate sangha. She focuses on persuasion techniques directed at married men in "Evangelizing the Happily Married Man through Low Talk: On Sexual and Scatological Language in the Buddhist Tale of Nanda." Langenberg explores a Sanskrit Buddhist story cycle concerning Nanda, the younger half-brother of the Buddha, with a focus on those versions that add a very clinical description of the impurities of the womb and the process of gestation. Through an analysis of various rhetorical strategies found in different redactions of the story of Nanda, Langenberg shows how the use of scatological and sexual imagery in descriptions of the fetid nature of the womb was intended to create fellow feeling between married men and monks at a time when Buddhism was expanding its bases of lay support in North India.

In "Runaway Brides: Buddhist Women and Tensions Surrounding Marital Expectations in the *Avadānaśataka*," Phillip Green examines literary depictions of the lives of premodern Indian women saints with an eye to how these texts strategically uphold wifely dependence on husbands as a dominant social ideal while also honoring independent religious agency in women. The basis for the essay's argument is a selection of Buddhist narratives about enlightened women from the eighth section of the Sanskrit *Avadānaśataka*. Like other examples of avadāna literature composed by Buddhists in South Asia, these narratives illustrate the workings of karma and rebirth and explain the accomplishments of individuals in the present through reference to the past. One of the concerns of the narratives about enlightened women is to reinforce

society's structure by illustrating the karmic benefits that accomplished Buddhist women accrued from their past conformity to normative familial roles such as wife and mother that ensure society's continuance. In short, it seems clear that many of these avadānas first reaffirm and reinforce domestic images concerning women before depicting female protagonists acting outside the domestic sphere in attaining enlightenment. Only once these ideal images of wifely dependence on husbands have been portrayed in a satisfactory manner do the narratives turn their attention to issues of independent achievement by women, such as the achievement of enlightenment. Thus Green offers an example of women forging new, extrafamilial identities through renunciation. At the same time, it is the women's past conformity to familial expectations that serves as a prerequisite for their attainments as nuns. Green's study of avadāna literature shows how familial life shapes the possibilities for religious practice.

Lori Meeks explores the family lives of premodern Japanese Buddhist monks through surveys of legal codes, lineage charts, land transfer documents, biographies, and images of the physical spaces in which such monastics lived in her chapter, "The Priesthood as a Family Trade: Reconsidering Monastic Marriage in Premodern Japan." Though the analysis of such source materials, Meeks shows that priesthood came to be viewed as a matter of biological continuity during the late Heian and early Kamakura periods in Japan. Men appointed to monastic posts at elite institutions often lived with their wives and families. Indeed, the living arrangements of such monks appear to have differed little from those of courtiers: not only did they marry and have children, but they also lived with their families and servants. The documents Meeks analyzes show that what mattered to the public during this era was the technical knowledge of Buddhists texts and practices that a person had at his or her disposal. One's adherence to precepts involving celibacy mattered less than mastery of priestly canons and protocols. Like other forms of knowledge in premodern Japan, the technical knowledge of Buddhist teachings was typically passed down within the family. Meeks chronicles the development of family monopolies over particular monastic posts and shows how women participated in the priesthood as a family trade.

The essays in this book offer different perspectives on the ways that familial and kinship concerns shape Buddhist practice. We utilize a variety of methodological orientations in order to ensure that we do not perpetuate the almost exclusive reliance on canonical texts that was the prevalent in early Buddhist studies. The chapters gathered here offer a range of approaches, some based on ethnographic fieldwork, some on archival work, some on

analysis of architecture and other lived spaces, and some on textual analysis. The types of texts utilized for evidence in this volume encompasses postcanonical texts, including those preserved in vernacular languages, and not just canonical texts. Using a broad range of methodologies and forms of evidence gives us a better purchase on wide range of historical and geographical circumstances. It also ensures that our data is not slanted toward educated elites but opens windows onto the religious commitments of other social classes as well. The chapters in this volume offer new ways to conceptualize and frame the social and religious labor that familial concerns perform in the lives of Asian Buddhists.

Notes

1. Śāntideva, *The Bodhicaryāvatāra*, trans. Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 22.
2. Trans. K. R. Norman, *The Group of Discourses (Sutta-nipāta), Vol. 2: Revised Translation and Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1995), 7.
3. Émile Senart, ed., *Mahāvastu Avadānaṃ. Le Mahāvastu: texte sanscrit publié pour le premier fois et accompagné d'introductions et d'un commentaire*, 3 vols. (Paris: Société Asiatique, 1882–1897), 2:117. Parallel passages in Pali are to be found at several points in the *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Dīgha Nikāya*, and the *Vinaya Piṭaka*.
4. H. Oldenberg, ed., *Vinaya Pitaka*, 5 vols. (London: Pali Text Society, 1879–1883), 1:43.
5. Gregory Schopen, "Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism: A Question of 'Sinicization' Viewed from the Other Side," in *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 62–64.
6. Ibid., 65.
7. Ibid.
8. "Monastic Law Meets the Real World: A Monk's Continuing Right to Inherit Family Property in Classical India," *History of Religions* 35 (1995): 101–23.
9. Shayne Clarke, "Family Matters in Indian Monastic Buddhism," PhD diss. (The University California-Los Angeles, 2006), see esp. 57–72.
10. Shayne Clarke, "Monks Who Have Sex: Pārājika Penance in Indian Buddhist Monasticisms," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 37 (2009): 1–43.
11. Ibid., 18.

12. The most comprehensive treatment of the topic is a chapter on Buddhism by Alan Cole in the collection *Sex, Marriage, and Family in World Religions*, ed. Don S. Browning et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). Although focusing largely on women, Charlie Hallisey offers a helpful overview of some of the issues for the study of family in Buddhism in his chapter "Buddhism" in *Women and Families*, ed. Jacob Neusner (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1999). A number of studies focus on East Asian Buddhist formations; see especially Stephen Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); Alan Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); Richard M. Jaffe, *Neither Monk nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Stephan Covell, *Japanese Temple Buddhism: Worldliness in a Religion of Renunciation* (University of Hawaii Press, 2006).

13. See Donald S. Lopez, *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

14. Richard Cohen, "Kinsmen of the Son: Śākyabhikṣus and the Institutionalization of the Bodhisattva Ideal, *History of Religions* 40, no. 1 (2000): 11.

15. *Aggaññā Sutta* 9, *The Dīgha Nikāya*, T. W. Rhys Davids and J. E. Carpenter, eds., 3 vols. (London: Pali Text Society, 1889–1910), 3:81; Maurice Walshe, trans., *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom, 1995), 409.

16. Paul Mus, *Barabudur: Esquise d'une histoire du Bouddhisme fondée sur la critique archéologique des texts*, 2 vols. (Hanoi: Ecole Française d'Extreme Orient, 1935; New York: Arno, 1978), 1:12.

17. See Strong's discussion of Buddhist monks as "sons of Śākyamuni" (Śākyaputra) and "heirs of the Dharma" (*dharmadāyada*) in *The Legend of King Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 82. See also instances in the *Aśokāvadāna* where this language is used in by the elder Upagupta in assertions of power: ibid., 187–88, 217, 259.

18. Donald Swearer, *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 53–54; Richard Gombrich, "Temporary Ordination in Sri Lanka." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 7, no. 2 (1984): 41–65.

19. Stephen Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); Alan Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

20. On the transmission of monastic property within family lineages in Theravada settings, see Heinz Bechert, *Buddhismus Staat und gesellschaft in den Laendern des Theravada Buddhismus*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt and Berlin: Alfred Metzner Verlag, I966), 225–6; Hans-Dieter Evers, "Kinship and Property Rights in a Buddhist Monastery in Central Ceylon," *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 69 (1967): 703–10; Hans-Dieter Evers, "Monastic Landlordism in Ceylon: A Traditional System in a Modern Setting," *Journal of Asian Studies* 28, no. 4 (1969): 685–92.

21. See John S. Strong, "A Family Quest: The Buddha, Yaśodharā, and Rāhula in the Mālasarvāstivāda Vinaya," in *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia*, ed. Juliane Schober, 113–28 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997).

22. Jātaka 540. Trans. R. Chalmers, et al., *The Jātaka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births,* 6 vols. (London: Pali Text Society, 1895–1907; reprinted in 3 vols., 1973), 6:38–52.

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