



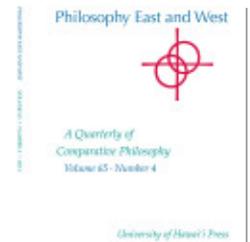
PROJECT MUSE®

Mādhyamikas on the Moral Benefits of a Self: Buddhist Ethics and Personhood

Leah McGarrity

Philosophy East and West, Volume 65, Number 4, October 2015, pp. 1082-1118 (Article)

Published by University of Hawai'i Press
DOI: [10.1353/pew.2015.0088](https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2015.0088)



➔ For additional information about this article
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/pew/summary/v065/65.4.mcgarrity.html>

MĀDHYAMIKAS ON THE MORAL BENEFITS OF A SELF: BUDDHIST ETHICS AND PERSONHOOD



Leah McGarrity

University of New South Wales, Australia
l.mcgarrrity@unsw.edu.au

Introduction

Given the centrality of the Buddhist doctrine of ‘no-self’ (*anātman*), those instances in which the Buddha does indeed seem to advocate a self (*ātman*) have always provided significant sites of hermeneutic inquiry within the Buddhist tradition. They have necessitated a range of sophisticated exegetical tools such as the division of the Buddha’s pronouncements into those of provisional meaning and those of ultimate meaning (*neyārtha* and *nītartha*, respectively); the centrality of discerning the Buddha’s real, as opposed to apparent, intention (*abhiprāya*); and of course the notion of the Buddha’s utilization of his skillful means (*upāyakaśālya*) specifically to hone his teaching to cater to the different capacities of his various audiences.

This article examines how certain Mādhyamikas—namely Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Buddhapālita, Bhāviveka, and, especially, Candrakīrti—participate in this tradition, not just in terms of how they undertake a retrospective act of ‘hermeneutic retrieval,’ that is, making sense of the Buddha’s words when he seems to advocate a self and recovering his intended meaning, but also in terms of how they provide a prospective theorization of the positive function of a self. This, it will be suggested, may itself be of philosophical and ethical interest in its own right. Or, rather, the positive function of a self provides an instance in which philosophical and ethical speculation cannot be divorced from the hermeneutic and pedagogical context within which it is embedded. Nevertheless, I will attempt here to take seriously the philosophical implications, in their own right, of how Mādhyamikas consider this positive self, redressing a predominant tendency simply to dismiss Madhyamaka teachings that advocate a self as merely strategic devices typifying the expediency of skillful means to the exclusion of any further consideration—although there have been some notable exceptions to this trend (Arnold 2005, pp. 167 ff.; Arnold 2012, pp. 225–239; Ganeri 2007, pp. 107–115, 196–203; Duerlinger 2013, pp. 32–54).

This is not at all to suggest that the doctrine of ‘skillful means’ does not indeed provide an overall framework for understanding the conventional deployment of a self from a ‘Buddha’s eye-view,’ or the way that a self may be ‘worn’ by bodhisattvas in the mode of “ironic engagement” in their dealings with the world (Siderits 2003, pp. 99–111). Rather, this article is instead more concerned with the function that this self is meant to fulfill from *within* the perspective of the beginning practitioners and the lived ethical frameworks in which they find and orient themselves. We cannot, I suggest, even take the pedagogical *strategy* of advocating a self seriously if we only

ever consider it as *just* a strategy, lest the stance of “ironic engagement” adopted by the bodhisattva be confused with the ‘ironic disengagement’ of the skeptic or cynical nihilist.

In this article, I wish to pursue this issue along three interrelated lines of inquiry. First, I will examine the sort of self Mādhyamikas feel it is necessary to advocate and under what circumstances, taking into account what function it serves and the ethical assumptions underpinning its usage. Second, I will briefly examine the metaphysical backdrop that provides the underlying theoretical framework, or the ‘mechanics’ that they presuppose for doing so, especially as developed by Candrakīrti. And, third, I will suggest ways in which a deeper consideration of this conception of a self as being, to some degree, morally beneficial might allow us to rethink attempts to locate Buddhist conceptions of ethics and selfhood in terms of Western paradigms. Although we may of course also regard this self as the ‘conventional’ or ‘provisional’ sense of self, I will also argue for its fulfilling the role and function of the ‘person,’ at least as the term ‘person’ has come to be used in philosophical parlance to denote that which enables the most basic and rudimentary conceptualization of a narrative sense of first-person being.¹

Who Needs to Be Taught a Self, and Why?

The *locus classicus* in early Madhyamaka for the benefits of a self is found at *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (MMK) 18.6, in which Buddhas are described as at times advocating a ‘self,’ ‘no-self,’ and ‘neither self nor no-self.’ The issue is explored in anticipation of an opponent charging the Buddhists with inconsistency in regard to the self. In Bhāviveka and Candrakīrti’s direct commentaries on MMK 18.6, *Dhammapada* (DhP) 160 is cited in the lead-in as the sort of typical instance occasioning such criticism. There, the Buddha challenges his audience with the refrain “The self being the master of the self, who else would be the master?” (DhP 160:45; *Prajñāpradīpa* [PP] 185b.5; *Prasannapadā* [PPMv] 354.5–8). The need to render such sentiment doctrinally consistent with the teaching of *anātman* initially places the issue in a hermeneutic context, providing a platform from which then to embark upon further philosophical speculation. The MMK itself then reads:

The “self” is designated (*prajñāpitam*) and “no-self” is taught (*deśitam*); [yet] “neither is there taught any self nor no-self” is taught by the Buddhas (*ātmety api prajñāpitam anātmety api deśitaṃ/buddhair nātmā na cānātmā kaś cid ity api deśitaṃ//*). (MMK 18.6:302)²

As Bhāviveka and Candrakīrti would imply at the most immediate level, the self positively urged as “the master of the self” (*attano nātho, ātmano nāthaḥ*) in the DhP verse that they quote is then to be identified with this self that is “designated” (*ātmety api prajñāpitam*) at MMK 18.6. It is, as Candrakīrti puts it, an everyday self based on worldly convention (*loke vyavasthāpitam*) (PPMv 357.4). Following the implication of the verse itself, Buddhapālita, Bhāviveka, and Candrakīrti follow two lines of inquiry in their discussion of this “designated” self. First, they set out the sort of

audience to whom the Buddha teaches such a self and why, and second, they provide a description of the sort of self assumed by non-Buddhists, with the implication being that the latter is, at least to some circumscribed degree, employed by the Buddha for the sake of the former, although this is to somewhat simplify the matter, as we shall see.

Candrakīrti states that this self is posited by the Buddha in accordance with his wisdom, skillful means, and great compassion “for the sake of turning back from evil inferior students who commit evil deeds” (*PPMv* 357.3–4; de Jong 1978, p. 227). *Buddhapālita*, *Bhāviveka*, and *Candrakīrti* all suggest, either directly or indirectly, that these ‘committees of evil deeds’ hold the view of the Materialists, that is, the *Cārvākas*; further on, *Candrakīrti* names them specifically as the ‘*Lokāyatikas*.’ The *Akuto bhaya* (*ABh*), *Buddhapālita*, *Bhāviveka*, and *Candrakīrti* all repeat the familiar Buddhist refrain describing the Materialist view as consisting in the belief that “this world does not exist” and “the next world does not exist,” as well as that a “sentient being does not arise” (*ABh* 70b.1; *Buddhapālita mūlamadhyamakavṛtti* [*BMv*] 242a.2–3; *PP* 185b.6–7; *PPMv* 356.6–7). *Bhāviveka* and *Candrakīrti* add the implied corollary to this to the effect that the Materialists assume that “the ripening of the fruits of actions of good and evil deeds does not exist” (*PP* 185b.7; *PPMv* 356.7).

Accordingly, these *Mādhyamikas* understand ‘nihilism’ (*nāstikatva*) as entailing precisely the doctrine denying any relation between causes and effects (*apavāda*), or, more significantly, actions and their results—and by implication the relation between this world (*ayaṃloka*) and the next (*paraloka*). This understanding is found in the first chapter of *Nāgārjuna’s Ratnāvalī* (*RĀ*), in which it is also stated that such a belief leads to a bad rebirth (*durgati*) (*RĀ* 1.18, 1.57:8.9–17, 24.5–8). *Candrakīrti* in his *PPMv* analysis describes those who hold such a belief as “facing a fall,” a “mighty plunge into such realms as hell” (*PPMv* 356.9). *Bhāviveka* clarifies that the materialist view leads to one’s mind being inclined toward a constant intent upon the demeritorious, and it is this which places one on the brink of the abyss of hell (*PP* 185b.6–186a.1). *Candrakīrti* similarly refers to this hell rebirth as being the direct outcome of the Materialists’ being constantly “engaged in the formative innate tendencies of evil actions” (*PPMv* 356.8–9). It is thus not the materialist view *per se* that leads to a hell rebirth, but rather it is the evil deeds committed, and demerit thus accumulated, on the basis of the materialist view that does so.

The overall point, though, seems clear enough: assuming that there is no such thing as hell is a sure way to end up there; never do we find ourselves more acutely trapped within the entanglements of our actions and their consequences than when we believe ourselves to be immune from them. Noticeably, it is simply taken for granted that non-belief in future rebirth automatically entails the disregarding of the ethical consequences of actions and the moral responsibility for them. While this might be a rather limited and simplistic, even questionable, assumption, it may be more to the point here that an audience made up of such “inferior vessels” (*hīnavineya*) is only considered capable of operating under such a limited and simplistic assumption, rather than whether or not it actually is the case (evaluating the objective validity of this claim is beyond the scope of this article, and is not its concern in any case).

Bhāviveka and Candrakīrti provide greater detail than Buddhapālita on what they consider to be the Materialist conception of the person. Both in his *PPMv ad MMK* 18.6 and earlier in his *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* (*MABh*) (*ad Madhyamakāvatāra* [MA] 6.101), Candrakīrti follows Bhāviveka in citing an unknown Lokāyatika verse in which the Materialist states that the person exists only to the mere extent of the sense-powers (*inidriya*) and their respective spheres (*gocara*); anything else is merely the concoction of a faulty inference drawn from a phony “wolf’s paw-print” (*vṛkapada*), which hoodwinks the supposedly “much learned” (*ba-huśrutāḥ*) (*PP* 186b.4; *MABh* 209.19–210.2; *PPMv* 360.6–7).³ Bhāviveka also states, more fully, that these Materialists hold that “there is only the mere assemblage of body, senses, and the intellect” (*PP* 186b.2–3). Candrakīrti describes the Materialists as having

[as] their utmost allegiance the mere reality of what can be assigned to earth, water, fire, and air. . . . [T]hey claim the mind has only come together based on the mere gestation of the elements, such as the fetus does. (*PPMv* 356.3 . . . 5)

Equally problematic, and effectively a crypto-Materialist position, is to envisage a self *without* the next world, that is, a self *reducible* to the material elements, or reducible to possession by the physical body, which perishes at death. Such a compromise position whereby the material/physical body *possesses* selfhood, as opposed to an outright rejection of the self, is, Candrakīrti argues elsewhere, merely tantamount to the nihilism of the Materialist view anyway, if only by implication (*MABh* 6.101–102). At *MABh* 6.127–128, Candrakīrti advances a similar argument, but perhaps aimed more at his fellow Buddhists, to the effect that if one simply identifies a self with the *skandhas* (*phung po bdag na*) (*MA* 6.127a:245.15), then there would ensue the annihilation of such a self (as *skandhas*) at the time of *nirvāṇa* (*mya ngan ‘das tshes nges par bdag chad ‘gyur*) (*MA* 6.128a:247.9)—in which case this would likewise result in grasping at the ‘annihilationist’ extreme of nihilism (*chad pa’i mthar ‘dzin*) (*MABh* 247.15). It would thus be no better than merely identifying the self with the material elements, and, crucially, it is also stated that such a scenario would, in exactly the same way, also entail a nihilistic absence of any connection between actions and their results (*las rnam ‘bras bu dang ‘brel pa med pa nyid*) (*MABh* 248.20–249.1). In the more explicit context of the identification of the self with the elements at *MA* 6.101, Candrakīrti first of all argues:

It is not the case, [as espoused] by certain [teachers], that those material elements [account for] selfhood, that is, as the possessors of a selfhood reducible to the sphere of [material] objects, just as accords with your [the crypto-Materialist’s] understanding. When [your] mind is in such pitch darkness with regard to this very [world], how would [you] correctly comprehend the next world? (*MA* 6.101:210.14–17)

He then focuses on the question of the ontological status of the possessor of such selfhood, speculating on what might act as the basis (*rten*, **āśraya*) for a ‘materialist self.’ He again stresses that taking the body to be the possessor of selfhood, that is, acting as its basis, is no better than the Lokāyatika view:

When one undertakes the refutation of the next world, selfhood is then liable to be conceived in terms of the erroneous view, which assumes an inherent nature consisting of [one's] objects of cognition [i.e., the material elements]. Since [maintaining] the existence of the body in possession [of selfhood] is [merely to maintain] a basis identical in kind [to that propounded] in their [the Lokāyatikas'] view, so, therefore, when one admits the existence of selfhood consisting in the elements [i.e., having the body as its basis], then, so likewise, [does one concede the Lokāyatika view]. (MA 6.102:211.4–7)

(*Bhāṣya*) As to that basis [for selfhood]: to such an extent that it would not be possible to either (1) hold a view that countenances the existence of the next world, but only as would come about from a mind [that has as its basis] the material elements, or (2) hold the very [extra-material] basis which [you yourself] deny, to such an extent, [in either case] there would still ensue a basis identical to that entailed by the false view, which heaps scorn upon the next world. Thereby, even if one assumes selfhood to be [reducible to] the material elements, the existence of the body as the possessor [of such selfhood merely constitutes] a basis identical in kind to the view of it [the self] held by the Lokāyatikas. (MABh 211.15–212.1)

In arguing that the refutation of the next world invariably involves a reification of the material elements themselves, Candrakīrti assimilates the specific argument here to the wider critique of inherent nature (*svabhāva*). This allows him to pare down the ensuing Materialist stance to two key characteristics, one ontological and one ethical. Candrakīrti concludes:

[T]here are thus two instances which occasion that [Materialistic view]: one is on the occasion of understanding there to be an inherent nature of the material elements; the other is on the occasion of the denial of the next world (*'di ltar de'i gnas skabs ni gnyis te gcig ni 'byung ba'i rang bzhin khong du chud pa'i gnas skabs so // gzhan ni 'jig rten gzhan la skur pa 'debs pa'i gnas skabs so*). (MABh 212.1–3)

Accordingly, the Mādhyamika's initial positing of a self that (1) is irreducible to the material elements / the body and (2) acts as an agent of actions and the experiencer of the results of these actions in the next world can thus be seen to provide the most straightforward and efficient means of countering both of these characteristics in one fell swoop. At the ontological level, this provisional self provides a sense of identity that is not reducible to the material or the body (thereby avoiding the material elements' reification in terms of inherent nature), while at the ethical level this provisional self enables a sense of future orientation (countering the denial of the next world).

Taken together as an *ontological-ethical whole*, these two components provide the rudiments of a Mādhyamika conception of personhood—the unique significance of personhood being precisely that it represents both an ontological *and* an ethical category.⁴ Crucially, neither of these two basic personhood-comprising components—an irreducibility to the material and a future orientation—would seem, purely in and of themselves, to be at all in question even when more sophisticated teachings on selfhood are espoused. That is, whether the teaching of 'no-self' or the teaching of 'neither self nor no-self' is in play, these two fundamentally 'non-

negotiable' components of the person would still remain intact. Rather, what *would* be modified is the progressive subtlety of each respective teaching on selfhood ('no-self' and then 'neither self nor no-self') that ultimately underpins these twin characteristics of irreducibility and continuity.

This conventionally "designated" self that thus emerges may be seen to fulfill an immediate 'bare minimum' ethical requirement, providing a moral outlook and a sense of responsibility based on self-interest in its most literal and basic sense of a 'self to be interested in,' or, better, 'a self that one *cannot but* be interested in.' The point I wish to stress is that even if it is just a preliminary stage, we should not take this strategy lightly. It provides the means of situating the immediacy of first-person being itself, in all its totality, in terms of actions and their results. This incorporates actions and their consequences, and by implication moral activity, into basic self-identification, self-understanding, and self-reflection. Emphasis is placed on enabling a lived continuity understood teleologically, as a narrative oriented toward certain future ends and endowed with a sense of purpose. One's identity, one's very relation to oneself, is framed in terms of such a teleological orientation. Ethics thus becomes already incorporated into the construction of personhood, or, to put it another way, a structure is enabled whereby the sphere of morality as action ('doing') is able to be brought into the purview of ethical 'being.'⁵

Buddhapālita insists that without this basic future orientation—or, as he puts it, in disregard of the next world—one shuns the ordinary ways of the world (*BMv* 242a.3). The implication is that even ordinary conventional morality in the present operates under the assumption, whether implicit or explicit, of future interests, and some relation to them that is enacted in our agency in the present. Indeed, it is the very presupposition of this relation that enables one even to *be* an agent. What emerges is the notion of the person as self-interested agent or, as Jonardon Ganeri has put it, as "prudential egoist" (2007, p. 115). In effect, the term 'self' refers in this context not to a punctual self that might be sought out under critical analysis, but rather to an identification with the totality of this nexus between present actions, future results, and an orientation that necessarily presupposes a relation between them—in sum: agency. The initial appeal to *self*-interest or 'prudent egoism' as the most rudimentary driving principle holding this nexus together at least enables a situation in which *interest* and prudential concern are stimulated and shown to be (morally) relevant.

What Sort of Self, Self and No-self?

So much for what we may infer about this provisional self based on what Mādhyamikas *reject* in the Materialist stance. But what can we piece together by way of *positive* description? Buddhapālita, Bhāviveka, and Candrakīrti do not dwell on this self's positively defined aspects, but rather stress only its aforementioned negative function in warding off a nihilistic outcome. Nevertheless, according to Buddhapālita and the *ABh*, this baseline understanding of the person as self-interested agent assumes the existence of a self as (1) the agent of good and evil actions and as (2) the experienter

of the intended and unintended results of these (actions), and thus it acts as that which is (3) bound (within *saṃsāra*) and liberated (from it) (*ABh* 70b.1–2; *BMv* 242a.4). Bhāviveka explains that this self is assumed to be (1) permanent, (2) subject to transmigration across all states (of rebirth), (3) autonomous with respect to (carrying out) meritorious and demeritorious actions, and (4) the experiencer (of results) (*PP* 186a.2). Candrakīrti, for reasons I will suggest in a moment, is noticeably silent in regard to providing such a positive description.

But, at this point, a caveat: these explicit positive descriptions do not actually occur directly in relation to the preliminary “self that is designated” (*MMK* 18.6a: *ātmety api prajñāpitam*) but rather must be gleaned from the description of the sort of self held by those for whom the subsequent teaching of no-self is deemed necessary (*MMK* 18.6b: *anātmety api deśitam*). Buddhapālita, Bhāviveka, and Candrakīrti are understandably wary of overtly equating the self to be refuted with the self that they themselves had advocated in refuting the Materialists. Nevertheless, purely in and of themselves, the bare criteria listed (an agent of actions and experiencer of future results, etc.) would seem to suggest that a strong degree of overlap is indeed implied, and we would be safe to assume they are synonymous. The difference, of course, is the attitude displayed toward these basic components of selfhood: in the case of the Mādhyamika, the ‘agent,’ ‘experiencer,’ et cetera are understood correctly as conventionally useful categories, while they are mistakenly reified by those students who, as a result, then require the *anātman* teaching. Specifically, such students are described as being of intermediate ability; they are prone to obsessive attachment both to this self and to a good rebirth, “seized,” as Buddhapālita puts it, between the jaws of the “crocodile of grasping at the notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine’” (*BMv* 242a.5). In another analogy introduced by Bhāviveka and then taken up by Candrakīrti, they are compared to birds who, although they have flown a long way, are nonetheless held back by the cord of self-attachment tied to their claw (*PP* 186a.3–4; *PPMv* 357.7–8).

The short term advantages of having a self are soon outweighed by the more insidious long-term plight of what Mark Siderits has termed the “existential suffering” that accompanies having a self (2007, p. 288).⁶ Buddhapālita would seem to evoke such a state when he concludes that those who cling to a self do so only because “otherwise, [for them] if there was no self, it would accordingly give rise to the view that considers everything to be pointless” (*BMv* 242a.5). Limited by their self-interested ‘bare minimum’ moral outlook, their entire sense of meaning and purpose is bound up with the real existence of the self, hence their existential despair when it comes under threat.

Now, in interpreting *MMK* 18.6ab, our commentators operate first and foremost in a prescriptive mode, enjoining self and no-self as strategies to be utilized in addressing specific audiences. But by way of concluding the *ātman-anātman* dynamic, they adopt a more descriptive stance and provide a reworking of *MMK* 18.6ab. Rather than putting forward why a self *ought* to be designated, they set out who actually *does* designate a self; rather than why no-self *ought* to be taught, they set out who actually *does* teach no-self. In doing so, they specifically have in mind the views

of rival teachers and formal philosophical positions. As David Eckel has noted with reference to Bhāviveka’s analysis (1986, p. 254), the specific terms of the root verse itself—*ātmety api prajñāpitam* and *anātmety deśitam*—are effectively transplanted from being just prescriptive strategies of the Buddhas and placed into the mouths of both those rival teachers (*tīrthikas/tīrthyas*) who espouse a Self and the Materialists who do not. This then enables the specific terms of the verse to serve also as shorthand descriptions of distinct philosophical views (although Candrakīrti is somewhat more cautious in assuming this, as we shall see). The very fact that Buddhapālita and Bhāviveka especially, and Candrakīrti to a lesser degree, are all able to slide between these prescriptive and descriptive modes of interpretation, and that they utilize the idea of the designation of the self—right down to the exact phrasing of the root verse’s *ātmety prajñāpitam*—as the common pivot enabling them to do so, would seem to further confirm our impression that the self that Mādhyamikas advocate against the Materialists is indeed, then, meant to be identified with the self that is subsequently refuted in debate with the *tīrthikas*.

Describing the *tīrthikas*, Buddhapālita refers to “certain fearful [teachers] who posit the self.” He describes them as “self-conceited know-allers who do not know it all!” (*thams cad shes pa ma yin par thams cad mkhyen par mngon pa’i nga rgyal can*) and as “followers of their own reasoning” who suppose that “if there were no self, nothing would be possible” (*BMv* 242b.1–2). At the opposite extreme, he characterizes the advocates of nihilistic materialism as being of “foolish intellect”: merely on account of the fact that “action and states of rebirth are hidden [from the senses], they teach the non-existence of the self” (*BMv* 242b.2–3). Bhāviveka, following the *Abh* (70b.3–4), provides a more technical analysis, referring to the *tīrthikas* as those for whom

composite factors being without a self [entails] them consisting of a nature that is destroyed from moment to moment; having posited that if there is no self belonging to different continuants over different phases of time, then there is no action and result[.] [T]hose [*tīrthikas*], afraid [of all that this entails], posit that the self exists. (*PP* 186b.1–2)

Bhāviveka characterizes the Materialist extreme, on the other hand, with the aforementioned description of the person as the mere assemblage of the senses, body, and intellect. For these Materialists,

composite factors, which are reckoned as comprising the sentient being, are without a self; lacking in steadfastness, they [the composite factors] do not maintain any stability. For them [the Materialists], *saṃsāra* is considered impossible; they are ignorant as to the process of causal relation. (*PP* 186b.3–4)

Now, there is as much concern here with the affective characteristics of each position as there is with these more technical distinctions concerning the momentary nature of composite factors (*saṃskāras*), et cetera. We hear of the self-conceit (*nga rgyal*, **abhimāna*) and the desperate need to keep at bay a sense of futility that both lurk beneath the promotion of a self, as well as the deluded intellect behind the denial of a self and any causal relation. Most significant is the fear, highlighted by the

Akutobhaya, Buddhapālita, and Bhāviveka, underlying the *ātmavāda* position. These positions are not so much critiqued here as exposed; the point is not simply to provide an account of the nuances of momentariness and the nature of selfhood in terms of continuity, steadfastness, and stability, but also to shed light on the deeper existential implications beneath the surface of these finer philosophical or technical points.

Candrakīrti, in his *MA*, however, is more considered in differentiating between these two dimensions. The self, as asserted in a philosophical setting, is set out at *MA* 6.121ab, where Candrakīrti describes the *tīrthikas* (*tīrthyas*) as imagining the self to be (1) of a permanent form, (2) a non-agent, (3) the experiencer (of results), (4) without differentiating qualities, and (5) not subject to causal production (*MAV* 6.121ab:235.5–6; *PPMv* 344.5–8), and this follows the Sāṃkhya description of the *puruṣa*. Clearly, the fact that this self is both permanent and a non-agent already differentiates it from an everyday self or person that Mādhyamikas accept conventionally. This differentiation of the person, as agent, from a self (or Self), as non-agent, would seem to reflect assumptions held more widely in Classical Indian thought (Mohanty 1993, pp. 74–85). Further on, at *MA* 6.140, Candrakīrti stresses that this theoretical and abstract conception is only one part of the view of the self (*bdag lta ba*, **ātmadṛṣṭi*). Understanding *anātmān* in terms of simply discarding the notion of a permanent self (*rtag pa'i bdag*, **nityātmā*), such as maintained by the *tīrthikas*, is not enough to remove the more fundamental existential problem of ego-grasping (*ngar 'dzin*, **ahaṃgrāha*) (*MAV* 6.140:264.2–5). So, while Buddhapālita and Bhāviveka, in their analysis of *MMK* 18.6, hint at the more fundamental existential dimensions—self-conceit, futility, fear, et cetera—*implicit* in the formal philosophical assertion of a self (or Self), Candrakīrti, at *MA* 6.140, makes much the same point, but he does so by instead making the distinction between these two components of selfhood more *explicit*: the theoretical/formal philosophical assertion of a (permanent) Self necessarily entails the existential condition of ego-grasping, but not vice versa.

This may inform the manner of Candrakīrti's more descriptive treatment of the *ātman-anātmān* dynamic in *MMK* 18.6. Although utilizing terms virtually identical to Bhāviveka and the *Akutobhaya*, he seems less inclined to entangle the existential and formal philosophical dimensions of selfhood. He restricts himself to a more neutral description of each philosophical position; there is a distinct absence of explicit value judgments. Unique among the commentators, Candrakīrti also names actual points of view, associating the 'bare minimum' moral outlook of the self-interested agent with the Sāṃkhyavādins, and nihilistic materialism with the Lokāyatikas. They are taken as distinct philosophical positions on the self, not just vague stand-ins for wider tendencies concerning selfhood, as they are for Buddhapālita and Bhāviveka. Candrakīrti instead provides a crisp, succinct summation of each position:

Having assumed that composite factors perishing from moment to moment do not possess any connection between actions and their results, the Sāṃkhyas et cetera designate the 'self.' 'No-self,' on the other hand, is designated by the Lokāyatikas, who do not see as necessary a self as the wanderer in *saṃsāra*. (*PPMv* 358.3–4)

In this context, the question of a self (as agent) clearly hinges on the existence of a relation between actions and their results. Unlike Buddhapālita and Bhāviveka, Candrakīrti does not simply transpose the root verse's *anātmety deśitam* into his description of the Materialist position, altering this instead to the Lokāyatikas' merely 'designating no-self' (*anātmety api prajñāpitam*), paralleling the Saṃkhyavādins' designation of the self (*ātmety api prajñāpitam*). He may be more careful than Buddhapālita and Bhāviveka about not appearing to equate the Buddhas' *teaching* (*deśitam*) of no-self with the views of the Lokāyatikas. The slide between the prescriptive and descriptive modes of interpreting the verse is not so straightforward for Candrakīrti.

Noticeably, too, and again unlike Buddhapālita and Bhāviveka, the Saṃkhyavādins' designation of a self as a philosophical postulate is bracketed off from any more fundamental and pervasive underlying condition of ego-grasping—and its accompanying self-conceit and fear—about which Candrakīrti remains, in this instance, silent. Candrakīrti seems acutely aware of the danger of simply limiting the refutation of the self to the refutation of the *tīrthikas'* formal philosophical conception of the self and thereby leaving ego-grasping unaffected. Given his more careful distinction between the existential and philosophical modes of selfhood in his *MA*, Candrakīrti's distinctly neutral and somewhat clipped description of the Saṃkhyavādins' assertion of the self here in his *PPMv* analysis of *MMK* 18.6 may reflect how he is at pains to avoid even appearing to suggest that a mere description of the *tīrthikas'* conception of the self is in any way enough to convey the full existential weight of why a self ought, at a prescriptive level, to be refuted. Buddhapālita and Bhāviveka, for their part, seem more inclined to simply lump these formal philosophical and existential aspects of selfhood together.

The 'Welfare of the Self' (Hitam Ātmanah)

The benefits of a self become further clarified when we consider another instance in which Mādhyamikas advocate its usage, this time at *Catuḥśataka* (*CŚ*) 287, and especially in the light of Candrakīrti's *Catuḥśatakaṭīkā* (*CŚt*) commentary. Here, Āryadeva proclaims:

Better the [teaching of the] I-notion (*ahaṃkāra*) for the poor [practitioner] than the teaching of no-self. [Through the teaching of the latter,] one [i.e., the poor practitioner] ends simply in calamity [i.e., a hell rebirth], but the extraordinary [practitioner] reaches the state of spiritual beatitude itself [i.e., awakening]. (*CŚ* 287 : 37)

While Āryadeva refers to the '*ahaṃkāra*,' 'I-notion,' here, Candrakīrti glosses this with *ātmadeśana*, the 'teaching of a self,' which more clearly brings out the contrast with the teaching of selflessness, which can be taught to the "extraordinary" (*netara*) practitioner (*CŚt ad CŚ* 287 : 37). As well as possible metrical concerns, the use of the term '*ahaṃkāra*,' rather than 'self' (*ātman*), is also notable as it may suggest a certain degree of caution on Āryadeva's part in denoting what exactly it is better to advocate for the poor practitioner. The shift in terminology from *ahaṃkāra* in the root verse to

ātmadeśana in the commentary may also suggest a certain ‘softening’ of attitudes toward the *ahaṃkāra*. The ‘I-notion,’ *ahaṃkāra*, may, in Āryadeva’s time, have been more controversial and regarded more negatively, closer in impact to the *ātmadarśana* itself, hence its acting here as a counterweight to the *nairātmyadarśanam*. The impact that, earlier on, Āryadeva assumed that merely advocating the *ahaṃkāra* would have on poorer practitioners—steering them away from evil actions, nihilism, and a calamitous rebirth—may have needed to be conveyed more forcefully with the actual ‘teaching of a self’ by Candrakīrti’s time.

Certainly, it is clear, at least on Candrakīrti’s reading, that the *ahaṃkāra* in Āryadeva’s root verse is of the same weight and significance, and performs the same role, as the designation of a self at *MMK* 18.6a. Mirroring his *PPMv* explanation that advocating a self was “for the sake of turning back from evil inferior vessels [i.e., students] who commit evil deeds,” Candrakīrti here regards the teaching of a self as being better for poor practitioners “due to its being conducive to turning back negative deeds” (*CŚ* ad *CŚ* 287:37). However, while in relation to *MMK* 18.6 such pedagogical concerns are presented indirectly as an extension of a hermeneutic or exegetical problem (how to understand instances in which the Buddha assumes a self), here, the setting is more directly pedagogical or “protreptic” (Ganeri 2007, pp. 98–106)—although, as we have noted, the distinction between exegesis and pedagogy/protreptics is somewhat blurred.

Here, a provisional self, and all that goes with it, is seen as having a further pedagogical function. Namely, the Buddha’s advocating a self is aligned with the need to avoid the danger of reifying emptiness as a metaphysical view, the implication being that the poor student who is taught selflessness will do just that. In the lead-up to Āryadeva’s root verse, Candrakīrti cites the ‘Kāśyapaparivarta’ of the *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra* as a precedent for this strategy. There, the Buddha states:

It is better indeed, o Kāśyapa, that a Mt. Sumeru-sized view of the person (*pudgaladṛṣṭi*) is relied upon than for one who adheres to non-existence to hold the view of emptiness. For what reason is that? Because, o Kāśyapa, emptiness is the relinquishment of all views. He, moreover, who holds emptiness itself to be a view, I declare to be incorrigible. (*CŚ* 35; *PPMv* 248.9–11)

Here, the teaching of the self is expressed in terms of the view of the person (*pudgaladṛṣṭi*—whether or not a reference to an actual *pudgalavāda* as such), and ‘selflessness’ is expressed here in terms of ‘emptiness,’ while the view of nihilism/annihilationism corresponds to what the sūtra describes as “adherence to non-existence” (*abhāvābhiveśā*). Unsurprisingly, Candrakīrti cites this same excerpt in relation to Nāgārjuna’s proclamation at *MMK* 13.8 to the effect that “The conquerors proclaim emptiness to be the relinquishment of all views. But those for whom emptiness is a view, they are said to be unable to be rectified” (*MMK* 13.8:214)—which virtually acts as a condensed summation of the point made more colorfully in the ‘Kāśyapaparivarta.’ Effectively, as this sūtra citation in both instances would suggest, Candrakīrti sees Āryadeva’s root verse (*CŚ* 287) advocating the benefit of the *ahaṃkāra*

as an intermediary link that brings together (1) Nāgārjuna’s argument at *MMK* 18.6a on the designation of a self and (2) the point made at *MMK* 13.8 about the incurability of those who grasp at emptiness as a metaphysical view. There is thus a parallel envisaged between holding the nihilist/materialist view and the erroneous reification of emptiness. And in both instances the same remedy (advocating a self/person) is prescribed as a measure to prevent the same disastrous outcome (the incurability of a practitioner headed for a bad rebirth). On the other hand, advocating a self/person at least renders the practitioner ‘curable.’

However, Candrakīrti does not actually mention the Materialists explicitly here. The emphasis on viewing the benefits of a self in terms of avoiding the reification of emptiness suggests that a more specifically Buddhist audience is envisaged, as is reflective also of the more overtly pedagogical import. Rather than simply being a teaching aimed at combating the Lokāyitika view, there is a more nuanced approach here that does not map smoothly onto discussion of *MMK* 18.6, which, for its part, seems more inclined to implicate non-Buddhists as well. Here, in his *CŚt*, Candrakīrti highlights two specific problems associated with teaching selflessness to such a poor practitioner: either (1) the teaching will simply be met with a flat rejection (*parikṣepa*), or else (2) it will be subject to an incorrect understanding (*viparyāśabodha*), both of which will result in harm to practitioners’ body-mind continuum such that they face a poor rebirth (*CŚt ad CŚ* 287:37). In these terms, it is clear that the Lokāyitikas would not simply reject the teaching of selflessness since, superficially anyway, they would agree with it; however, they would still be guilty of misunderstanding it, given their reduction of the person to the material elements. On the other hand, the *tīrthikas*, as *ātmavādins*, would indeed simply reject *nairātmya*, given their fear and misunderstanding that the absence of a self entails existential meaninglessness. But of course, in relation to *MMK* 18.6, these *tīrthikas* were understood as precisely those who *do* require the teaching of selflessness, so they may not necessarily be whom Candrakīrti envisages here in relation to *CŚt* 287 as *not* being ready for the teaching of selflessness.

Nonetheless, the *CŚt* account provides the setting for Candrakīrti’s clearest articulation of the fundamental principle at work in both instances. He states:

That [poor practitioner], seeking the welfare of the self [i.e., of themselves] (*hitam ātmanah*) out of pursuit of their self-attachment, thinks much of turning back evil deeds. Their evil turned back, a good rebirth comes about easily for them. (*CŚt ad CŚ* 287:37)

This principle of “the welfare of the self” (*ātmahitam*), or, better, ‘the welfare of *one-self*,’ effectively provides Candrakīrti’s own articulation of what we might term ‘legitimate self-interest.’ The assumption is that a self, that is, oneself, cannot—or rather *should* not—be taken as a neutral object of inquiry. One cannot but take an interest in its welfare; otherwise it has not been properly understood—it has not been *personalized*. And it is this interest that can of course then later lead to excessive clinging to ‘I’ and ‘mine’ (*ātmātmīyagrāha*). To reapply this principle of interest in the self’s welfare back to the terms of the *MMK* 18.6 discussion, the Materialist is, in effect,

portrayed as lacking any such basic interest in the welfare of the self. Moreover, in the terms of Candrakīrti's *CŚt* analysis as to who ought *not* to be taught selflessness, that is, those who would either reject it or misunderstand it, we might suggest that while the Materialists implicated in the *MMK* 18.6 discussion may not actually pose any rejection (*parikṣepa*) to the doctrine of selflessness, they nonetheless do not hold what the Buddhists consider to be the adequate or 'morally workable' level of self-interest, or concern for 'the welfare of the self,' such as that which the subsequent *anātman* doctrine will then necessarily presuppose in order to have any traction or impact. This lack of interest, in turn, provides the ethical aspect of their perverted understanding (*viparyāśabodha*) of selflessness, while their reduction of the person to the material elements expresses its ontological dimension.

Can a Self be Meritorious? Its Place on the Gradual Path

Inasmuch as it is regarded as conducive to turning back evil deeds and thereby promoting a good rebirth, this commonsense concern for the 'welfare of the self' is thus taken to ensure a baseline workable level of moral engagement, which operates in terms of a value system based on 'merit' (*puṇya*) (i.e., oriented toward a better rebirth), rather than a value system based on what has been understood as 'virtue' or the 'wholesome' (*kuśala*) (i.e., an orientation toward *nirvāṇa*). Now, does this then imply that the teaching of a self can itself be 'meritorious,' if not actually 'virtuous'?

There has been disagreement in modern scholarship over the precise relation, more generally, between these *puṇya* and *kuśala* orientations (Keown [1992] 2001, pp. 116–128, 177–181; Siderits 2003, pp. 110 ff.; Velez de Cea 2004; Adam 2005). However, specific discussion of the conventional place of a self has not been brought into the discussion. In attempting to rescue Buddhist thought from the amorality of the 'transcendence thesis' whereby by *nirvāṇa* is 'beyond good and evil,' Damien Keown subsumes meritorious actions into the sphere of virtuous (*nirvāṇa*-oriented) action, arguing that "moral and intellectual perfection are integral components of the Buddhist *summum bonum*" (Keown [1992] 2001, p. 83). He thereby incorporates meritorious activity into a larger, eudaemonic 'virtue ethics' model such that "[t]he right [= *puṇya*] and the good [= *kuśala*] . . . are inseparably intertwined" (p. 177). This, in turn, has been disputed by Abraham Velez de Cea, who criticizes Keown for downplaying the place of meritorious action in its own right, leading to an unwarranted "marginalization" of actions oriented toward what Velez de Cea terms "proximate goals," such as favorable rebirth (2004, p. 125). Drawing on Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* (and *Bhāṣya*) (*AkośBh*) 4.45–47, Mark Siderits (2003, p. 110) has likewise critiqued Keown's eudaemonic model, arguing instead for a consequentialist reading whereby meritorious action holds an instrumental relation to virtue.

In ways unexplored by Siderits, I suggest that this same *AkośBh* account is especially pertinent for situating the place of a self and its legitimate 'welfare' within the framework of merit and virtue. There, Vasubandhu classifies action as being threefold:

(1) action virtuous, non-virtuous, and otherwise, that is, conducive to peace and tranquility, non-conducive to peace and tranquility, and otherwise [respectively]; (2) [action] meritorious, demeritorious, and unable to be agitated [toward either merit or demerit]; and (3) [action] oriented toward an object of pleasant sensation, et cetera. (*Akoś* 4.45:227.6, 11)

Vasubandhu thus sets out three distinct, yet overlapping, axes by which to evaluate actions: (1) the ‘virtue (*kuśala*) axis,’ understood in terms of an action’s conducive-ness to ‘peace and tranquility’ (*kṣema*); (2) the ‘merit (*puṇya*) axis,’ understood in terms of the agitation or rousing of karmic fruition (*vipāka-iñja* / *vipāka-kampana*); and (3) the action’s ‘orientation toward an object of pleasant sensation’ (*sukhavedya* / *sukhavedanīya*), the latter perhaps approximating valuation according to an ‘aesthetic’ axis. Determining what exactly constitutes ‘good action’ (*śubhakarṃa*) involves understanding the various relations and intersections between these different axes. In the Desire realm (*kāmadhātu*) and as far as the first three *dhyānas* (‘meditative attainments’), good (*śubha*) action is considered synonymous with meritorious action. This is because meritorious action is characterized precisely by the fact that it rouses or agitates karmic fruition (*vipāka-iñja* / *vipāka-kampana*), such as a good rebirth. However, such agitation or rousing of karmic fruition only applies within the Kāmadhātu, and not beyond it (*AkośBh* 227.21). Above the Kāmadhātu, action is characterized as ‘good’ precisely due to its non-rousing or non-agitation of karmic fruition (*Akoś* 4.46ab:227.14). That is, non-agitated action is precisely what constitutes virtuous action in the Form and Formless realms (*AkośBh* 227.15; *Akoś* 4.46cd:227.20). Likewise, beyond the third *dhyāna* there is no sensation (*vedanā*) of pleasure (*sukha*) or pain (*duḥkha*), which are the results of meritorious and demeritorious action, respectively, but *kuśala*, virtue, nonetheless still remains applicable (*Akoś* 4.47abc:228.4–11).⁷

Clearly, the benefits of a self are only applicable within the framework of merit applicable to the Kāmadhātu and up to the third *dhyāna*, in which karmic fruition can still be roused. However, this does not necessarily suggest that a self is meritorious *per se*. Rather, as we have seen, a concern for the welfare of the self promotes an interest in *turning back* evil, or ‘non-virtuous,’ action (*akuśalakarṃa*). To this extent, it is only *indirectly* conducive to a good rebirth. The teaching of a self thus plays a negatively framed preventative role (discouraging evil action); to such an extent, the conventional validity of a self can be said to be at best indirectly meritorious, but it cannot be considered directly meritorious in and of itself. Significantly, Vasubandhu notes that

demeritorious action, on the other hand, is acknowledged in the world as being ‘non-virtuous,’ and so in that case why be at pains to pursue a point that is acknowledged [even] from the perspective of worldly convention? (*AkośBh* 228.1)

On this Abhidharma understanding (in contrast to Mahāyāna conceptions that we will consider in a moment), the demeritorious can only be non-virtuous; action characterized by the former must also be characterized by the latter. According to Vasubandhu, there is no need to pursue this any further than mere worldly convention.

This point is especially instructive for our discussion of a self at a conventional level. There is no reason at all, I would suggest, to suppose that Vasubandhu's remarks here on the overlap between *apuṇya-* and *akuśala-karma* are not equally applicable to the Mādhyamika commentators' analysis of *MMK* 18.6a, especially given the terminology they employ. Buddhapālita, Bhāviveka, and Candrakīrti are all in agreement that this self, as well as indirectly promoting the merit that ensures a positive rebirth, is also specifically aimed at countering *non-virtuous* action (*akuśal-akarmakāriṇām akuśalādnivartayitum*), suggesting that they, too, share this wider assumption of an overlap between *apuṇya-* and *akuśala-karma*, at least insofar as it concerns the beginning or inferior practitioner. They all note, too, that this self is in accord with worldly convention, and Vasubandhu's delineation enables a more nuanced explanation for why this might be so. Namely, the purely negative or preventative role of the self is applicable to both the demeritorious and the non-virtuous, the rejection of both of which is simply determined precisely in accord with worldly convention. This in effect then frames in ethical terms the scope for the self's participation in conventional morality, insofar as one need not go beyond worldly practice in regard to turning back evil (non-virtuous) action. Or, to put this another way, participation in the conventional morality that underpins worldly practice (which is enough to determine the overlapping sphere of the demeritorious/non-virtuous) sets the parameters for the valid construction of a conventional self or person (whose role is encouraged precisely so as to turn back the overlapping demeritorious/non-virtuous).

The extent of the validity of the conventional worldly standards by which the demeritorious is identified with the non-virtuous is thus coextensive with the conventional validity of a self, which, in its purely preventative or negatively framed role, can indirectly promote merit, and, indeed, to some extent, virtue. It is, however, in taking this a step further and attempting to articulate a positively framed function, and with it a positivistically framed conception, of the self that the *kuśala* orientation parts company with worldly convention and *ātma/ahaṃ-grāha* sets in, at which point the teaching of no-self becomes necessary.

The conception of a self in terms of merit and demerit also allows us to situate the *ātmadarśana* within the Mahāyāna schema of a graduated pedagogical approach—although we have already implied as much. The step-by-step nature of the respective 'self,' 'no-self,' and 'neither self nor no-self' teachings is not explicitly set out in Nāgārjuna's root verse (*MMK* 18.6) itself, but Buddhapālita, Bhāviveka, and especially Candrakīrti clearly take it as implied. As we have seen, they explicitly arrange Nāgārjuna's listing of the Buddhas' different teachings on selfhood into a progressive and hierarchical sequence; and with his earlier promotion, at *CŚ* 287, of the *ahaṃkāra* for poorer, in contrast to extraordinary, students, Āryadeva also seems to come closer than Nāgārjuna himself to depicting selfhood in terms of a 'Gradual Path' upon which the practitioner progresses. Candrakīrti concludes his *PPMv* discussion of *MMK* 18.6 by citing two specific expressions of gradual, sequential stages found in early Madhyamaka. First, from Āryadeva's *CŚ* 189:

That one who understands, first, the rejection (*vāraṇam*) of the non-meritorious; at the intermediate stage, the rejection of the self; and, finally, the rejection of all, is a wise person. (*PPMv* 359.8–9; *CŚ*, 189:82)

Second, Candrakīrti refers to Nāgārjuna’s *RĀ* 394–396:

Just as a grammarian [first] teaches [students] to read a letter chart, so likewise the Buddha explained the Dharma according to the capability of [His particular] students. [In accordance with the capability] of some (*keṣāṃcit*), he explained the Dharma in order to turn [them] from evils (*pāpēbhyo vinivṛttaye*); [in accordance with that] of some [others], for the sake of the accomplishment of merit (*puṇyasiddhyartham*); [according to the capability] of some, [he taught Dharma as] reliant upon duality, [while in accordance with the capability] of a few (*ekeṣāṃ*), [he taught the Dharma as] unreliant upon duality: profound, terrifying for the timid, [to] the few [students capable of receiving it, he taught the Dharma,] which is the means for achieving awakening, the essential ground of which is emptiness and compassion. (*PPMv* 359.11–14; *RĀ* 394–396:128–130)

The citation of these models suggests that, for Candrakīrti, they fill in the general background against which the multiplicity of teachings on selfhood should be understood, operating as they do under the broader pedagogical principle of the Buddha’s wisdom, (skillful) means, and great compassion (*prajñopāyamahākaruṇā*). While the *RĀ* account simply sets out a multiplicity and clear hierarchy of different teachings, with a ‘developmental’ pedagogical sequence only implied, this sequential aspect is at the forefront of Āryadeva’s initial, intermediate and final rejections (*vāraṇam*). In both instances, the positing of a conventional self would be situated within the familiar entry point of turning students back from evil and demeritorious action. In Āryadeva’s model, the listing of the ‘turning back of the self’ as occurring subsequent to the initial ‘turning back of the demeritorious’ also implicitly aligns the conventional designation of a self with this initial stage, such that there is an implicit correspondence envisaged between this designation of a self in *MMK* 18.6a and the initial turning back of the non-meritorious at *CŚ* 189a, before the more obvious correspondence between the teaching of no-self (*anātmadarśanam*) at *MMK* 18.6b and the turning back of the self (*ātmano vāraṇam*) at *CŚ* 189b.⁸

Nāgārjuna’s comments on the diversity of teachings here at *RĀ* 394–396, including the turning back of evil and, by implication, the teaching of a self, also occur within the explicit context of his account of the Mahāyāna (the ‘Great Vehicle’) and its contrast with the Śrāvakayāna (the ‘Vehicle of the Hearers’) (*RĀ* 366–398). The (bodhisattva’s) ability to accommodate a diversity of approaches in accord with the needs of different students, is, Nāgārjuna implies, fundamental to what makes the Mahāyāna ‘great’ (*mahā*). Such preliminary teachings as those concerned with merit and turning back evil deeds, hence those necessitating a self and a concern for its welfare, would presuppose practitioners of a lesser ‘Hīnayāna’ orientation not yet ready for the bodhisattva path; indeed, it presupposes even those below this without any such orientation at all, not even a self-centered one, hence their basic need for a self. The fact that the Mahāyāna is ‘greater’ is what allows it to *subsume* and *accommodate* such a lesser ‘self-centered’ orientation; it is not a case of it marking an

outright dismissal of such ‘lesser’ orientations. Indeed, Nāgārjuna states here that “those whose devotion is [still] to themselves ought not to engage in hatred toward the Mahāyāna” (*mahāyāne . . . dveṣo nātmakāmaiḥkṛto ‘rhati*) (RĀ 389cd:126). It is such self-interested practitioners who are considered lesser (*hīna*) precisely because it is *they* who despise the Mahāyāna. There is a certain irony here: while the Mahāyāna is able to accommodate such self-interest, and even engage with it on its own terms, lesser practitioners, precisely because of their self-interest, are not (yet) able to engage with the Mahāyāna.

I mention all this bearing in mind especially the conception, most explicitly formulated later in the Tibetan fourfold *grub mtha’ (siddhānta)* ‘tenet system,’ whereby the Abhidharma analysis is incorporated into a broader Mahāyāna vision, but from a ‘lower’ Hīnayāna perspective. This would seem to vindicate our contention that there would be no reason, at least not to the limited extent that a self remains beneficial, for Candrakīrti et al. to be in any sort of disagreement with the Abhidharma assumptions of *AkośBh* 4.45–47 with regard to the overlap between demeritorious and non-virtuous action, despite the fact—or, indeed, actually precisely *because* of the fact—that they are committed Mahāyānists. On the other hand, those exceptional instances in which the demeritorious and non-virtuous part company would presuppose the Mahāyāna orientation of the bodhisattva. But from what we have gleaned from the Mādhyamikas we have considered, such exceptional instances are simply not relevant to the issue of providing the sort of baseline level of ethical orientation that the promotion of a self affords. Keown’s eudaemonic model, which emphasizes the value of merit to the extent that it is informed by virtue, may thus find some support in Mādhyamikas’ promotion of a self. But it is applicable in a way addressed only implicitly by Keown, namely purely to the extent that the continuity that Keown urges between *puṇya* and *kuśala*—the ‘right’ and the ‘good,’ in his terms—is conceived in purely preventative or ‘negative’ terms based on the conventionally assumed overlap between non-meritorious and non-virtuous action, which, in turn, corresponds to precisely what the equally conventionally assumed self may assist in ‘turning back.’ The strategy can only be indirectly meritorious and, indeed, indirectly virtuous—the latter at least until the existential plight of ‘ego-’ or ‘self-grasping,’ *ahaṃ/ātma-grāha* sets in.

More broadly though, it would not seem so far-fetched to suppose that the *general strategy* involved here, namely a basic framing of agency and first-person being in ethical terms, in contrast to the *specific content* of this strategy, namely the teaching of a self, might have further long-term implications that are indeed soteriologically relevant, that is, applicable for a nirvāṇic, and not just a *puṇya*-based, orientation. This may also lend some support to the overall thrust of Keown’s argument.

On the other hand, there also seems to be support for Velez de Cea’s criticism of Keown over his apparent neglect or “marginalization of proximate [e.g., ‘merit-based’] goals” in their own right (Velez de Cea 2004, p. 126). Promoting meritorious conduct and its results, such as a better rebirth, via the teaching of a self, directly situates one’s basic conception of *oneself* in terms of such conduct; one is ‘personally’ implicated such that there is an *identification* with the very continuum of ac-

tions *constitutive of* a better rebirth. The point seems to be precisely the impact of this ‘personalization.’ This in turn sheds light on the issue of just how ‘proximate’ or ‘marginal’ such goals may be, thereby supporting Velez de Cea’s insistence that their significance not be downplayed. It is difficult indeed to imagine what could be less proximate, less marginal, and more immediate, than one’s sense of selfhood, or, for that matter, the given or ‘natural’ circumstances into which one finds oneself (re)born.

This unique immediacy of selfhood also enables a rethinking of Siderits’ understanding of the merit-based orientation in instrumental or consequentialist terms. From an overall perspective, or in terms of an ‘external’ point of view, such a reading is entirely valid: the teaching of the self is of value as a *means* of promoting merit, which is in turn of value as a *means* toward the more advanced and subtle approach of the practitioner whose aspiration is for *nirvāṇa* itself. Expanding on points raised by Ganeri (2007, p. 110), I would suggest, however, that simply to leave it at that and reduce teachings on selfhood in such a way seems to miss something vitally important; it seems not to take seriously enough the distinct and unique significance of *selfhood*, and the promotion of a certain type of *self-understanding*, as a basis for meritorious conduct, not least of all since such a consequentialist reduction sidelines the ‘internal’ first-person point of view of the beginning practitioners themselves. And yet it is, after all, this beginning practitioner at whom the teaching is aimed, and this beginner’s point of view that necessitates this teaching in the first place. Can, or indeed should, *one’s own* sense of selfhood, and the unique totality of first-person being that it entails, be reducible *in toto* to being merely a means to an end? Can, or should, one conceive of *oneself* in purely consequentialist terms?

An implicit theme running through the instances we have considered is that such a detached instrumental—perhaps ‘ironic’—stance toward oneself is understood to be beyond the ability of the beginning practitioner, and, more importantly, it is actively discouraged for them. Instead, it is considered less dangerous if such a practitioner is encouraged, in a more or less commonsense manner, to take the self as an end in itself, as presupposed in the underlying principle of *ātmahitam*. This teleological promotion of good conduct by way of urging one to *identify* with the continuum of actions *constitutive of* beneficial outcomes seems far stronger than a basic consequentialist model whereby good conduct is promoted simply *for the sake of* positive outcomes, or evaluated solely in terms of those outcomes (see also on this Dreyfus 1995, pp. 41–43). Both models may presuppose self-interest as a motivating factor, but the latter seems to imply, perhaps even encourage, a conception of the person solely as a detached moral agent concerned with the results of actions, while the former, precisely by bringing selfhood itself to the fore, seems to conceive of the person as an embedded ethical subject who ‘lives,’ and is subject to, these actions and their results—which seems closer to what Mādhyamikas take to be the prerequisite for a baseline sense of ethical responsibility. While a certain sense of expediency and a consequentialist type of concern with results is clearly relevant for an overall understanding of why and to whom a self is taught, the initial emphasis on the ‘welfare of the self’ that we find in the work of Candrakīrti et al. suggests that the very

ability even to frame one's actions in a consequentialist mode, that is, as being of value in terms of their results, is seen to *derive from* and *out of* an 'embedding' or personalizing identification with these actions via the initial promotion of a self: what makes consequences *matter* is, first and foremost, that they are experienced by, and matter to, *me*.⁹

Locating the Person: Candrakīrti and the Metaphysics of Moral Agency

Before concluding, I briefly want to consider the metaphysical status of this self or person and the 'mechanics' that underpin its usage, noting how Candrakīrti's remarks especially take place in the context of wider Buddhist concerns with explaining precisely how the *skandhas* may account for personhood. Broadly speaking, such concerns are expressed (1) in terms of the need to account for personal identity (e.g., 'Devadatta') as an experienced ('vertical') continuity between actions and their results, implicating both the issue of moral agency and the workings of memory; and (2) in terms of the secondary need to account for ('horizontal') differentiation between individuals (e.g., 'Devadatta' as distinct from 'Yajñadatta'), that is, accounting for distinct action-result continuities experienced as distinct streams of personal identity running parallel to one another (see esp. *AkośBh* 472.16–473.13; Kapstein 2001, pp. 113–133; Duerlinger 2013, pp. 191–195).

As we have seen, Candrakīrti refers to this self as being "a self as based on worldly convention" (*PPMv* 357.4), as do Buddhapālita and Bhāviveka. However, the key term in explaining what precisely this entails ontologically is already signaled in Nāgārjuna's use of the term *prajñāpitam* at *MMK* 18.6a when he states that this "self is *designated*" (*ātmety api prajñāpitam*). This suggests the status of this self as a *prajñāpti*, a 'designation,' or, as Dan Arnold has argued for, an 'indication' (2005, p. 163). More importantly in Nāgārjuna's framework, it also suggests the conventional self's status as an *upādāya prajñāpti*, a 'dependent designation' or, again following Arnold (2005, pp. 164–165), "relative indication," which is first made explicit further on in his root verses (*MMK* 24.18: 426).¹⁰ There, Nāgārjuna extends his argument for the synonymy of dependent arising and emptiness to entail as well the dependent nature of designations/indications (*yaḥpratītyasamutpādaḥ . . . sā prajñāptir upādāya*) (*MMK* 24.18a, c: 426). The most significant of such 'dependent designations' / 'relative indications' is the 'self' as designated dependent on the *skandhas*, although this is only implicit in *MMK* 24.18 itself.

At *MAv* 6.134–163, Candrakīrti provides his most extensive application of the *upādāya prajñāpti* principle to the question of the person, breaking selfhood down to an appropriative relationship that necessarily entails both an 'appropriator' (*upādātṛ*) and a basis of appropriation (*upādāna*). The person as the 'self-*prajñāpti*' is accounted for as this agent of appropriation relative to, or dependent upon, the *skandhas*, which, in turn, constitute its 'basis,' that is, the material *subject to* appropriation. As such, the *skandhas* are more correctly in this sense the *upādānaskandhas*, 'the *skandhas* as subject to appropriation.' Most significant for the status of the person is that Candrakīrti extends the scope of the *upādāya prajñāpti* formulation to encompass not just

this ‘unidirectional’ dependence of the self as designated in dependence on the *skandhas*, but, more radically, a ‘bi-directional’ dependence whereby the *skandhas* as the appropriated basis are equally only designated dependent on the self as the agent of appropriation. He states:

just as action is to be designated as such dependent on an agent, and the agent also [designated] dependent on action, so likewise is the agent of appropriation (*nye bar len pa po*, **upādātṛ*) to be designated as such dependent on the basis of appropriation (*nye bar len pa*, **upādāna*), and the basis of appropriation is [designated] dependent on that same agent of appropriation. (*MABh* 261.11–14)

Elsewhere, Candrakīrti describes the *upādāna-upādātṛ* relationship as being simply a case of mutual establishment, that is, that each of the terms in this dyadic relation is only established relative to the other (*parasparāpekṣā siddhi*), hence their merely conventional status rather than existing in terms of inherent nature (*na svābhāvikīti sthitam*) (*PPMv* 200.3). Dan Arnold has summed up this dynamic particularly well:

Just as the *skandhas* must remain in play as the “basis” of the relationship of existing “relatively” (*upādāya*), for Candrakīrti to allow the self as, conventionally, the “appropriator” (*upādātṛ*) of the aggregates is thereby to say that the self cannot, in the end, be eliminated from the account. That is, because the analytic categories to which the self can be reduced are no more “really” existent than the self is, these analytic categories make sense (i.e., as *upādāna*, “what is appropriated”) only relative to the (relatively real) self, which remains in play as their *upādātṛ*. . . . [A]ll that is real . . . is the fact of relationship. . . . No part of that relationship can be held to have privileged status. (Arnold 2005, p. 167)

The contours of this arrangement whereby Candrakīrti is able to ensure that a self “remains in play” simply as the ‘appropriator’ have been further clarified by Arnold such that for Candrakīrti “it’s just as true that any causal factors [e.g., the *skandhas*] one could specify can themselves ‘come into view’ only relative to the self as it is that the latter emerges only relative to the former” (Arnold 2012, pp. 228–229), and its unique dynamics have also been noted by Jonardon Ganeri (2007, pp. 200–201). Albeit framing it somewhat differently, James Duerlinger seems to make the same observation, noting that for Candrakīrti, “there is no independent reference to anything else on the basis of which a dependent reference [i.e., *upādāya prajñapti*] to ourselves is made. So the only object of reference, in his [Candrakīrti’s] view, is ourselves” (Duerlinger 2003, p. 35). The reciprocal establishment presupposed between the self and the *skandhas* as *upādātṛ* and *upādāna*, respectively, that is, their lack of any independence from each other, effectively means that for Candrakīrti any question of the ontological status of the *skandhas* beyond their status as *upādānaskandhas* is simply not relevant to accounting for the status and functioning of personhood.¹¹

Candrakīrti also draws into his *MAv* account the older Buddhist formulation of the ‘view of existent selfhood’ (*satkāyadṛṣṭi*), whereby the self is rejected as being neither (1) identical to, (2) different from, (3) based on, (4) the basis of, nor (5) located

in, the *skandhas*. The overall implication, most clearly drawn out by Candrakīrti, is that the self as an *upādāyaprajñapti* is incompatible with any of these various permutations of possible self-*skandha* relations covered in the *satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*. More specifically, though, Candrakīrti seems most acutely concerned in his *MABh* account with the first of the *satkāyadr̥ṣṭi* relations, namely the identification of the person with, or reduction to, the *skandhas*. In marked contrast to the Abhidharmika assumption, expressed most explicitly by Vasubandhu, that the whole point of distinguishing the self as existent in terms of a designation (*prajñaptisat*) is precisely to suggest the self's reduction to the *skandhas* as substantially existent (*dravyasat*), Candrakīrti instead repeatedly argues that the relation of appropriative reciprocal dependence entails the irreducibility of the 'self-*prajñapti*' or 'person' to the *skandhas*. We have noted already, drawing upon *MABh* 6.128, that Candrakīrti does not regard the attempt to identify the person (as *prajñaptisat*) with the *skandhas* (as *dravyasat*) as being all that far removed from the materialist identification of the person with the material elements, inasmuch as it entails, on his reading, the annihilation of such a self (as *skandhas*) at the time of *nirvāṇa*.

In the course of the *MABh* 6.134–163 analysis, Nāgārjuna's *MMK* 10.1–14 discussion of fire and kindling (*agnīndhana*) is drawn into the debate, especially the critique of their identity (*MMK* 10.1 : 166), and, most significantly, *MMK* 10.15 (175), in which Nāgārjuna draws the *satkāyadr̥ṣṭi* mode of critique applied to the 'fire-kindling' relation back to the relation between the self and the (*upādāna*-)*skandhas*. The direct *PPMv* analysis of *MMK* 10.15 occasions Candrakīrti's clearest definition of the (conventional) self:

[T]he 'self' (*ātmā*) is described as that which is designated in dependence upon those [*skandhas*]; that is, it is the appropriator, grasper, or accomplisher (*yas tān upādāya prajñāpyate sa upādātā grahitā nispādaka ātmety ucyate*). (*PPMv* 212.18–213.2)

In his *CŚṭ*, Candrakīrti provides a nearly identical definition of the person (*pudgala*):

[T]hat which is called the person (*pudgala*) is designated in dependence upon the *skandhas*, that is, as the appropriator of what are termed the fivefold appropriated *skandhas* (*pudgalo nāma yaḥ skandhapañcakasyopādānākhyasopātātā skandhān upādāya prajñāpyate*). (*CŚṭ ad CŚ* 287 : 39–41)

And he assumes as much elsewhere, too, describing the conventional world as consisting in the "person being designated in dependence upon the *skandhas*" (*skandān upādāya prajñāpyamānaḥ pudgalo loka ity ucyate*) (*PPMv* 492.9). Candrakīrti obviously takes the terms 'self' (*ātman*) and 'person' (*pudgala*) to be synonymous in this context, with both used interchangeably to denote the appropriator of the *skandhas*. The allusion to the *upādātṛ-upādāna* dynamic in conjunction with the *upādāya prajñapti* arrangement clearly informs Candrakīrti's approach, enabling him to articulate a precise metaphysical framework underpinning the conventional usage of the terms 'self' and 'person.'

Now, Candrakīrti's formulation—indeed, the specific phrasing—that he repeatedly employs, namely the self or person as "designated in dependence on the

skandhas" (*skandhān upādāya prajñāpyate*), also resonates with other Buddhist conceptions of personhood. There are striking echoes of the exact formulation Vasubandhu attributes to the Vātsīputrīyas in their espousal of *pudgalavāda*, the doctrine of the person as existing in some sense over and above the *skandhas*.¹² The Vātsīputrīyas are said to hold that

the person is designated in dependence upon *skandhas* that are (1) one's own [i.e., not another's], and (2) appropriated [by the person] and in the present [i.e., contemporaneous with the person] (*ādhyātmikān upātān vartamānān skandhān upādāya pudgalaḥprajñāpyate*). (*AkośBh* 461.20–21)

The clear, shared terms of reference and near identical phrasing (*skandhān upādāya . . . prajñāpyate*) provide hints of how the wider controversy over *pudgalavāda* looms over the Mādhyamika discussion, however implicitly; *pudgalavāda* is, in effect, as Dan Lusthaus has put it, the "elephant in the room" (personal communication, June 2011).

As an alternative Buddhist explanatory account of the ethical and psychological continuity of personhood, *pudgalavāda* effectively comes to set the boundaries of the conversation, not least of all since, as fellow Buddhists, the *pudgalavādins* share and presuppose so many of the terms and concepts in which the wider discussion of personhood is couched, for example the model of 'appropriation' (*upādāna*), the understanding of the person in terms of a *prajñāpti* in a 'fire-fuel' (*agnīndhana*) relation with the *skandhas*, and so on (*AkośBh* 461.24–462.10; Duerlinger 1982, pp. 151–158; Kapstein 2001, pp. 350–375; Lusthaus 2009, pp. 276–280). Moreover, as has been noted by both Ganeri (2007, p. 194) and Duerlinger (2003, pp. 26, 34; 2013, pp. 50–54), there is a significant point of overlap between Candrakīrti and the Vātsīputrīyas that sets them both against Vasubandhu (at least as he is presented in *AkośBh* 9); namely, they both assume that the person cannot be reduced to the *skandhas*, inasmuch as the person is held to be neither identical to nor different from them. The difference, however, is, of course, that Candrakīrti understands this irreducibility in terms of the merely reciprocal establishment (*paraspekṣasiddhi*) that pertains between the appropriated *skandhas* and the agent of appropriation. Nonetheless, Candrakīrti clearly presupposes many of these shared terms of reference, and is just one of a number of participants in a much wider conversation.

In and of itself, Candrakīrti's assumption that 'reciprocal appropriation' may account for personhood seems a distinctly Mādhyamika claim. Buddhapālita and Bhāviveka assume as much, too. However, they do so less explicitly, and they balk at actually using the terms 'person' or 'self' to denote the relatively determined 'appropriator.' They are, in this sense, one further remove from the *pudgalavādins* than Candrakīrti. In their discussions of *MMK* 10.15, they distance themselves from any such legitimate use of the term 'self,' or indeed 'person'; nor do they allude to the '*upādāya prajñāpti*' formulation. They certainly do not use the terms 'self' and 'person' interchangeably, as Candrakīrti does in this context. Buddhapālita sees the *a priori* nonexistence of the self as simply ruling out any possibility of its place in an appropriative relation, either as an appropriator or non-appropriator of the

skandhas (BMv 209a.7). For Bhāviveka, the mere process of ‘*skandha*-appropriation’ experienced as a given continuum of personal identity (i.e., ‘Devadatta-*skandhas*’ experienced as ‘Devadatta’) cannot be understood as a process undertaken by a self *belonging to* that personal identity (e.g., belonging to ‘a self of Devadatta’ / ‘Devadatta-self’) (PP 136a.5–6). While the relation between the label ‘Devadatta’ and ‘Devadatta-*skandhas*’ is compatible with mere relative dependence, to actually bring a ‘self’ into the account is, for Bhāviveka, to go a step too far, as it presupposes actual difference from the *skandhas*, that is, an independent self that ‘enters into’ an appropriative relation (PP 136a.3).

Elsewhere, Bhāviveka states that the term ‘self’ is simply imputed onto consciousness (PP 181b4); the ‘self’ can thus be explained as belonging to the *vijñāna-skandha* on account of the conventional designation of a self taking consciousness as its object (PP 180b.3–4).¹³ However, unlike Candrakīrti, Buddhapālita and Bhāviveka understand the relative dependence between the agent of appropriation and the *skandhas in toto* as simply incompatible with talk of a self. They are less flexible than Candrakīrti: they do not consider a ‘self’ as capable of being ‘collapsed down’ by way of identification with precisely this reciprocally determined appropriator; it is simply too loaded a term to be ‘relativized’ in such a way.

Note, finally, that for Candrakīrti, the need to explain the precise metaphysics underpinning the conventional self is closely related to just those ethical issues we have already considered, namely the efficacy of a self in avoiding, and refuting, the materialist denial of the karmic ripening of results. He explains:

it has been stated that “although an agent is not ascertained, nonetheless both actions and their ripening exist,” from which one ought to understand the refutation to be of an agent endowed with inherent nature. It is not, however, to be understood as a refutation of even the conventionally constituted [agent], which is necessarily to be designated in dependence [on the *upādānaskandhas*]. And as is widely taught, too: “This person, beset by ignorance, conditions even the [karmic] development of merit, that is, [the merit] to be developed subject to [karmic] conditioning” (*bsod nams mngon par ‘du bya ba yang mngon par ‘du byed, *abhisamṣkāryaṃpuṇyam apy abhisamṣkaroti*). (MABh 261.20–262.6)

Again, what appears, on the face of it, to be merely a matter of exegesis actually serves a distinct ethical and ontological point, namely that the very non-reducibility of the self to the *skandhas*, which makes the person ethically operative at a conventional level (as an appropriator merely conceived relatively), goes hand in hand with the ultimate non-findability of an inherently existing self (e.g., as being ‘really’ or inherently the *skandhas*, or ‘really’ other than them). Interestingly, Candrakīrti does not bring in any psychological dimension by addressing personal continuity in terms of the workings of memory, unlike Vasubandhu (*AkośBh* 472.16–473.13). Instead, Candrakīrti *directly* relates the metaphysics of personhood to its ethical implications. The irreducibility of the person as articulated in an ethical context, that is, its irreducibility to the material elements and the *skandhas*, would, for Candrakīrti, seem to find its metaphysical counterpart in the conventional self as an irreducible *upādāya pra-*

jñapti, which itself constitutes a Madhyamaka re-imagining of the wider Buddhist conception of the person as a *prajñapti*.

Mādhyamikas and the Moral Ontology of the Person

Beyond this digression, I do not wish to dwell any further on the specific critical metaphysical claims that Mādhyamikas bring with them to an ethical account of persons, actions, and results. These have already been discussed extensively elsewhere (e.g., Goodman 2009, pp. 121–130; Finnigan and Tanaka 2011; Tillemans 2010/2011). Rather, I have meant to draw attention to, and take seriously, the more straightforward pre-critical metaphysical claims that Mādhyamikas make for the ethical significance of personhood in their teaching of the provisional benefits of a self, much of which is simply suggestive of wider assumptions that they share with their fellow Buddhists. While it may be less of an issue to leave aside such (apparently) straightforward or preparatory concerns in a purely epistemological or ontological analysis, it can, I suggest, be disastrous in the realm of ethics. What are overlooked are the basic claims for personhood presupposed by Mādhyamikas, whereby an ethically embedded conception of first-person agency, and first-person being and self-understanding in general, are considered foundational.

In sketching this picture of a self (as person) as the agent of actions and the experiencer of results, Buddhapālita, Bhāviveka, and Candrakīrti more or less simply restate the standard fundamental role that *karma* plays in Buddhist and Indian thought in general. But in doing so, I would argue that they are also undertaking a more subtle task somewhat akin to that which Iris Murdoch sets herself in her work *The Sovereignty of Good*:

[T]he image which I am offering should be thought of as a general metaphysical background to morals and not as a formula which can be illuminatingly introduced into any and every moral act. (Murdoch 1971, p. 41)

This may seem simple enough, like *karma* itself. But the significance of Murdoch's analysis lies in the fact that she presents this "image" as a "general metaphysical background" *in which* the moral subjects find themselves embedded, and neither as an autonomous realm *against which* the moral subjects hold an intentional stance nor as a realm of injunctions and prohibitions that the detached rational agent *enters into* having weighed up the pros and cons of doing so in the course of their own decision making, as is presupposed in the "formula"-oriented model that prevails in applied ethics. Murdoch seeks to restore an ontological dimension to moral action: she insists that the act of 'doing' is also an issue of 'being,' just as ontology is itself morally charged; elsewhere, she refers to the "the ubiquity of moral quality *inherent* in consciousness" (1992, pp. 169—my italics). Murdoch may be situated within a larger movement in ethics also associated with figures such as Charles Taylor (1989) and Alasdair MacIntyre ([1981] 2007, esp. pp. 6–35). This movement has sought to revive a sense of "moral ontology" (Kerr 2004, pp. 84–104), restoring metaphysical questions of 'being' and the 'inner life' to the purview of ethical inquiry, and it has

set itself most significantly against utilitarian and deontological models, which prioritize external decision making, rule following, and 'doing' in general. In the process, these thinkers have also tended to involve themselves, to varying degrees, in re-imagining conceptions of virtue and 'the Good' in post-metaphysical settings. Their insights have been brought into a Buddhological setting by Georges Dreyfus (1995, pp. 33–35) and Matthew Kapstein (2001, pp. 135–160) especially, and it is in following their appropriation of Murdoch, Taylor, and others that I have sought to present the introductory teaching of a self as a means of rethinking the karmic dimension of Buddhist ethics in terms of the basic, and indeed necessary, ontology of the person.

While *karma* is, by definition, about 'doing'—a truism, in fact—initially positing a self, as Mādhyamikas do, seems an especially strong and profound way of conveying the basic propositional fact that there is a continuity between actions and their results. Rather, it is indeed, I suggest, precisely a matter of 'being' that these Mādhyamikas wish to bring in by inculcating and framing 'doing' in such a way, that is, by 'embedding' subjectivity *within* this *karmic* realm. It is not simply a matter of content, that is, *the bare fact that* actions happen to have results, but it is instead a matter of presenting *karma* as a mode of embedded self-understanding at the most basic and fundamental ontological level and orientating one's own sense of first-person being accordingly. The mere continuity between actions and their results is not the whole story; rather, as suggested by conveying *karma* by initially teaching a self, what matters is the framing of personhood itself as a lived (narrative) continuity between the *undertaking of* actions and the *experiencing of* results, somewhat akin to MacIntyre's conception of "internal goods" as intrinsic to the construction of the person in terms of the narrative "unity of a human life" ([1981] 2007, pp. 204–225).

There may be some acknowledgment of this distinction in the characterization of Buddhist ethics as 'character consequentialism' in the work of Damien Keown (1996) (a modification of his earlier 'virtue ethics' model), and more recently, Charles Goodman (2008; 2009, pp. 70–72) and Barbra Clayton (2009), and also in Mark Siderits' account of 'aretaic consequentialism' (2003, p. 110). Such qualifications may be attempts to restore precisely this lived 'being' component of *karma*, 'softening' its connotations of mere action in isolation. The 'character' or 'aretaic' inflection would seem to take into account the *teleological* dimension of karmic continuity, viewed 'from within,' as it were, from the perspective of the agents themselves, complementing its *consequentialist* aspect, viewed 'from without.' I would suggest that this aspect of 'character' may already be set in place with the apparently simple preparatory teaching of a self and the stress upon personalizing—or 'person-building'—that it implies. The teaching provides a foundation *from which* to understand the consequentialist mode of *karma* rather than being a mere afterthought to it, as the qualifiers 'character' or 'aretaic' might imply. Drawing upon Murdoch and Taylor's concern with 'moral ontology,' Dreyfus (1995, pp. 33 ff.) and Kapstein (2001, pp. 135–137, 154–156), by contrast, emphasize precisely this teleological mode, and its role as constitutive of personhood or self-understanding, as primary. Kapstein in particular draws upon what he terms Charles Taylor's "magisterial *Sources of the Self*" (Kapstein 2001, p. 137), especially Taylor's broader model of selfhood as a lived first-person

narrative understood in terms of an inescapable orientation toward the Good, that is, as an orientation toward that which gives one's life ultimate significance and meaning. Dreyfus and Kapstein find, in the work of Murdoch and Taylor, respectively, a resource for restoring the primacy of ongoing, progressive inner *self-cultivation* in the presentation of Buddhist ethics.

In advocating 'character consequentialism,' however, Charles Goodman considers the conception of selfhood advocated by Taylor to be incompatible with, and even antithetical to, Buddhist thought. In his *Consequences of Compassion*, Goodman cites a key passage from *Sources of the Self* in which Taylor ponders what it might mean to be without a self, that is, without any framework in which to understand one's life as a narrative continuity framed in terms of an orientation to the Good. Taylor argues that, in lacking such a self,

a person wouldn't know where he stood on issues of fundamental importance, would have no orientation in these issues whatsoever, wouldn't be able to answer for himself on them. If one wants to add to the portrait by saying that the person doesn't suffer this absence of frameworks as a lack, isn't, in other words, in crisis at all, then one rather has a picture of frightening dissociation. In practice, we should see such a person as deeply disturbed. . . . [S]uch a person without a framework altogether would be outside our space of interlocution where the rest of us are. We would see this as pathological. (Taylor 1989, p. 31; Goodman 2009, p. 111)

Goodman has argued that, from a Buddhist perspective, Taylor is "suffering from a failure of imagination" here due to his inability to "deeply understand what it would be like to transcend it [the self]" (2009, p. 111). I wonder, though, whether Goodman is somewhat restrictive here, both with respect to Taylor and with respect to the broader spectrum of Buddhist conceptions of selfhood.

The portrait that Taylor paints seems to me perfectly of a kind with the amoral vacuum that we saw Mādhyamikas associate with the Materialists. The sort of self that Taylor sees as necessary to provide both (1) a basic moral orientation and (2) a personal narrative in which to situate this orientation seems akin to what Mādhyamikas are driving at in advocating a self when dealing with those who lack such an accepted 'bare minimum' moral orientation understood in narrative terms—a lived 'personal narrative' understood in a Buddhist context in terms of a karmic continuity between actions and results. What's more, and most striking, given the significance of the *anātman* teaching in Buddhist thought, is that both Taylor and these Mādhyamikas take the construction of a self to be the most immediate and effective way of providing this most basic orientation. Like Taylor's "pathological" figure, who lacks any orientation to the Good and thereby falls "outside our space of interlocution" (Taylor 1989, p. 31), the Materialists, who, at least for Mādhyamikas, fail to recognize a karmically framed sense of personal responsibility, seem, for very similar reasons, also to fall outside the Buddhists' moral universe. They are simply beyond the pale; initially advocating a self is the only way to bring them within a shared moral outlook or "space of interlocution," if only by way of self-interest. By contrast, the sort of self/ego-grasping that does indeed require the *anātmadarśana* does at least presuppose

some moral outlook or orientation to the Good; it is just that this outlook or orientation is mistaken and limited by the stifling dictates of self-interest.

But it is not *having an orientation per se* that is the problem by this point, nor is the *lack of an orientation* any longer an issue. I am not sure that the figure sketched by Taylor necessarily suffers from ‘self-’ or ‘ego-grasping’ in the way that this condition is described by Buddhapālita, Bhāviveka, and others. Taylor’s “deeply disturbed” person does not even appear capable of self-grasping or of the excessive pride associated with it and the underlying fear of existential meaninglessness. And this fundamental, and practically *inhuman* incapability, is Taylor’s whole point. This situation he portrays does not seem the right context for the no-self teaching, and from what we can glean from their remarks, Buddhapālita, Bhāviveka, and Candrakīrti do not seem to think so either.

For Taylor, selfhood—that is, the basic framing of a sense of personhood and self-understanding constitutive of a moral orientation—would actually also seem inclusive of the function of the *anātma* teaching. ‘No-self’ provides a description of selfhood, and a normative description of self-understanding that is precisely meant to be taken *personally* as providing a sense of moral orientation. Along with the initial teaching of a self and the culminating teaching of ‘neither self nor no-self,’ the teaching of ‘no-self’ would go to making up the broader moral topography of Buddhist selfhood, at least in Taylor’s more expansive model of the self. Indeed, the Mādhyamikas we have considered would seem to share with Taylor a fundamental, and all too easily overlooked, insistence that the legitimate construction of a self (as person) is purely a moral concern; it is both metaphysically incoherent and ethically misguided to posit any ‘bare existence’ of the self beyond, or apart from, its sphere of embedded moral significance. In Buddhist terms, beyond its conventional role as an agent of actions and experiencer of results, a self is redundant, and invariably detrimental. Properly attending to when, and why, Mādhyamikas, and Buddhists in general for that matter, do indeed see the need to posit a self provides, I think, an especially eloquent rejoinder to Goodman’s criticism of Taylor; the concerns these Buddhists raise in initially inculcating a self—basically constructing an ethically informed and embedded sense of personhood—seem very similar indeed to Taylor’s. Perhaps any apparent disagreement can be dispelled if we think not so much in the narrow terms of a ‘self’ as such, but rather as inculcating what we tend to mean when we speak of a ‘*sense of self*.’ The point is that this becomes normatively framed as an ethically embedded ‘sense of self.’

Certainly, despite what Goodman’s criticisms might appear to suggest, it is not the case that Taylor is simplistically advocating the sort of existent self that, in Buddhist terms, cannot be found ‘under ultimate analysis.’ Rather, he is seeking to move away from any analysis that reduces selfhood to such terms. Taylor’s critique is directed toward precisely such positivistic accounts as would associate selfhood with its findability under detached analysis at a given point in time and place, that is, the punctual or ‘neutral’ self “defined in abstraction from any constitutive concerns” (1989, p. 49). Associating such a view with figures such as Locke and Hume, Taylor’s critique is directed not at their conclusion as such (i.e., the non-findability of such a

self), but rather the assumptions that inform their ‘search,’ as summed up most famously in Hume’s famous empirical act of introspection whereby “I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception” (Bk 1.4 § 6:252; italics in original). Taylor’s point is that if we conceive of the self in such narrow and reductive terms as to even consider it the sort of ‘thing’ amenable to being ‘found,’ then it is little wonder that we cannot find it (see also on this MacIntyre [1981] 2007, p. 217). The conclusion is already shaped by the narrow range of the premises. As Taylor rather dryly notes, “[t]his is the self that Hume set out to find and, predictably, failed to find” (1989, p. 49). The impoverished terms of the inquiry—most notably the exclusion of any moral concern from its purview—render the non-findability of the punctual self not so much mistaken as trivial, even somewhat banal. It is the exclusion of moral concerns from Hume’s investigation that troubles Taylor, and the ways that the resultant non-findability of the self has come to inform the exclusion of metaphysical investigation into selfhood from moral inquiry in general; it is not the outcome of the investigation *per se* that is the issue.

This delineation here also enables a further refinement of how better to situate the *anātman* teaching and Buddhist reductionist approaches to the self. For thinkers such as Hume and Locke who stand at the head of the wider project of secular modernity, the reductionist approach to the self, and its resultant non-findability, becomes part of a greater move toward *excluding* metaphysical investigation into first-person being and selfhood, and inner attitudes, from moral concerns and indeed the proper business of philosophy in general. The assumption is that if a self cannot be found, or, more simply, if no consensus as to its status can be reached, then any such metaphysically inclined investigation into it must be bracketed off as simply irrelevant to moral inquiry, which, for its part, becomes stripped of any metaphysical connotations and refocused instead on the question of correct judgment and decision-making in response to external injunctions and prohibitions.

This seems a situation far removed from Buddhist investigation into selfhood. The later Indian Mādhyamika, Śāntideva, is probably the best known and most eloquent proponent of the direct *moral* significance of the *anātman* teaching and the sustained investigation into the metaphysics of selfhood. Most famously, at *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (BCA) 8.90–103, he directly links the lack of a self to the practice of compassion: the self’s non-findability renders absent anyone *to whom* suffering occurs (8.101c: 158.27), the realization of which is said to entail a morally compelling sense of equality between oneself and others (*parātmāsamatā*) (8.90ab: 155.29) (8.95ab: 157.8). Fear and pain are unpleasant both to myself and to others (8.96ab: 157.13); hence, alleviating their pain becomes just as urgent as alleviating my own. We are left with the rather sobering question: “what distinction pertains to [my]self that I safeguard it [from pain] but do not [safeguard] others?” (8.96cd: 157.14). While the validity of this argument has been called into question (Williams 1998, pp. 104–166; Siderits 2000; Harris 2011), significant for our purposes is not only the clear moral import that Śāntideva accords the *anātmadarśana*, but also the set of *a priori* assumptions—taken more or less for granted—that one would indeed already have a personalized interest in protecting oneself from pain and that this interest is of such a type that the

equality between oneself and others would serve to broaden, rather than narrow, its sphere. It is in these *a priori* assumptions, perhaps more so than in Śāntideva's argument itself, that would seem to lie the seeds of what is seen to make the argument *morally*, rather than logically, compelling. This is brought out more starkly when we consider Śāntideva's further question:

If [I] do not safeguard [others against pain] supposing that the distress [incurred] through their pain is not my own, then why is it that [I] safeguard against the pains of ['my'] future body?—its distress is not mine [either]. (BCA 8.97:157.17–18)

Śāntideva's rhetorical question here clearly assumes that he is operating *within* what we saw Taylor refer to as a pre-assumed shared "space of interlocution," from which the Materialists, at least as the Buddhists portray them, are excluded. He assumes that one does indeed already safeguard against any pain that might be experienced by their future body. If this much were not already assumed, then the argument would not make any sense at all, as there would then be no basis upon which to argue for a concern for safeguarding others against pain, which is of course the whole point here. Unlike the Materialists, at least on the Buddhists' reading, there is an assumption here that one *already assumes* a sense of personal continuity, indeed, according to Prajñākaramati's *Pañjikā* (BCAP) commentary, a personal continuity across rebirths. Practitioners are already assumed to be in possession of a sense of personalized interest, such that they are capable of orienting their present actions according to long-term future outcomes. Śāntideva does not even consider it necessary to spell out, or justify, the basic fact of this personalized interest in future states, which his move to concern for others presupposes; he simply takes it for granted.

In his *Pañjikā*, however, Prajñākaramati provides some further detail. Drawing on the sense of a 'body' (*kāya*) as a constructed 'accumulation' or 'conglomeration' of organized components, he explains that "the [future] 'body' is as such on account of its being fashioned out of disengagement from evil and engagement in virtue [in the present]" (*kāya iti prakṛtatvāt pāpān nivartanāt kuśale pravartanāc ca*) (BCAP 157.23–24). On Prajñākaramati's reading, it is practically impossible even to have a body independent of any moral framework; a morally embedded conception of personhood is set at a foundational ontological level as being formative (cf. *prakṛtatva*) of the body itself. This is the very opposite of the Materialist conception of the person as reducible 'back' to the material body, insofar as the body itself is held to be reducible back to the fundamental *moral ontology* of personal continuity. Noteworthy is how this most basic 'body-formative' (not just 'body-concerned') future orientation is understood: it is framed in the familiar terms of 'disengagement' or 'turning back' from evil (*pāpān nivartanāt*) and engagement in virtue (*kuśale pravartanāt*). The practitioner's presupposed future orientation is likewise framed against the familiar specter of a potential hell rebirth; one is oriented toward safeguarding "against the pain of a future body as will exist in the next world, that is, born in such [realms] as hell, [a future body] by nature, subject to pain" (BCAP 157.21–22). In other words, the foundational assumptions presupposed in Śāntideva's argument are explained by Prajñākaramati in precisely those terms in which we have also seen the initial

benefits of a self couched. In his arguments for the moral significance of the no-self teaching, Śāntideva presupposes a figure who is in possession of just those key components of personhood that the envisaged audience of the self-teaching is seen to lack.

This would seem to further confirm our impression that shoring up these implicit baseline, presupposed moral assumptions is indeed intimately bound up with all that we have seen as underscoring the need to initially posit a self. The practitioner envisaged in Śāntideva's arguments has an adequate sense of *ātmahitam*. Securing these basic moral foundations, and embedding the agent's basic self-understanding accordingly, would seem to be meant precisely as a means of ensuring that the self in question is most emphatically *not* "defined in abstraction from any [morally] constitutive concerns," again to borrow Taylor's phrase (1989, p. 49). This personalized 'embedding' is meant to ensure that the metaphysically oriented investigation into selfhood, and the subsequent fact that a self cannot be found, does not degenerate either into the sort of triviality that Taylor associates with the detached empiricism of Hume and Locke or, for that matter, into the sort of amoral hedonism that the Buddhists, rightly or wrongly, associate with the Lokāyatikas. Candrakīrti's careful distinction between merely refuting the Tīrthikas' formal teaching of a permanent Self (*nityātma*) and redressing the more fundamental condition of 'self-' or 'ego-grasping' (*ātma/ahaṃ-grāha*) seems relevant too: the refutation of the permanent Self may not necessarily have any moral impact unless it also takes into account self-grasping or ego-clinging (*ātma/ahaṃ-grāha*). Maybe it is a question of a personally 'involved' or ethically 'embedded' reductionism rather than an impersonal 'detached' reductionism. And here, Goodman may indeed have a point: Taylor's model does not countenance the possibility that the very non-findability of the self can *in and of itself* be of moral significance. But of course, Taylor is not dealing with Śāntideva et al., but with the very different historical and cultural milieu of early modernity.

Conclusions

There are, as I have tried to show, significant ethical assumptions already at work in the Mādhyamikas' preparatory teaching of a self and in the crudest of appeals to—or even basic formation of—the beginner's self-interest or concern for the 'welfare of themselves' (*ātmahitam*). Most significant of all is the emphasis on promoting an irreducible sense of personhood and a teleological orientation toward future ends, and with it an accompanying sense of personal responsibility. In effect, these preparatory teachings advocating a self constitute, as I have argued, the primary construction of the person as ethical and narrative agent—the point being that such ethical and basic narrative agency cannot be separated. In ways all too often overlooked, the broader ethical assumptions implicit in this construction of personhood then continue to shape and inform more refined and sophisticated levels of Buddhist discourse on the self and its non-findability. Fully appreciating this wider ethical landscape, even cosmology, of selfhood, and the accompanying foundational picture that begins to emerge, is perhaps a task not so much for applied ethics, or even critical

philosophy, but more a matter of providing a descriptive account of the broader 'philosophical anthropology' that these Mādhyamikas presuppose.¹⁴ The benefits of a self as Mādhyamikas see it, and the circumstances under which they advocate such a self, also raise significant issues for our own interpretive horizon and the question of a modernized or naturalized Buddhism; many Western Buddhists, for instance, would probably hold a minimal set of metaphysical commitments rather closer to that of the Cārvākas or Lokāyatikas than to any other Classical Indian school. Certainly, Madhyamaka, indeed Buddhist, attitudes to selfhood are rather more nuanced than any overly reductive or decontextualized application of the *anātman* doctrine.

Notes

This work was supported by an Academy of Korean Studies (KSPS) Grant funded by the Korean Government (MEST) (AKS–2012–AAZ–104). I am grateful to Professor Malcolm David Eckel, who was kind enough to read through an earlier draft of this article, as well as for the efforts of anonymous reviewers for their comments and feedback. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Dan Arnold for his comments and suggestions in the course of conversations during our brief meeting in August 2012.

Abbreviations are used in the text and References as follows:

- ABh* *Akutobhaya*.
D3829: vol. tsa, *sDe dge bsTan 'gyur*, vol. 68. Oakland: Dharma Publishing, 1982.
- AkośBh* *Abhidharmakośa* with *Bhāṣya*.
Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu. Edited by Prahlad Pradhan Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, (1967) 1975.
- BCA/BCAP* *Bodhicaryāvatāra* / with *Pañjikā*.
Bodhicaryāvatāra of Śāntideva with the Commentary Pañjika of Prajñā-karamati. Edited by P. L. Vaidya. Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1960.
- BMv* *Buddhapālitamūlamadhyamakavṛtti*.
D3842: vol. tsa, *sDe dge bsTan 'gyur*, vol. 68. Oakland: Dharma Publishing, 1982.
- CŚ/CŚt* *Catuḥśataka(kārikā)* with *Ṭīkā*.
Materials for the Study of Āryadeva, Dharmapāla and Candrakīrti: The Catuḥśataka of Āryadeva. . . . Vol. 2, Texts and Indices. Edited by Tom J. F. Tillemans. Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 1990.
- CŚ₁* *Catuḥśataka(kārikā)*.
Āryadeva's Catuḥśataka: On the Bodhisattva's Cultivation of Merit and Knowledge. Edited by Karen Lang. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1986.

- DhP* *Dhammapada*.
Dhammapada: With a Complete Word Index. Edited by Oskar von Hinüber and Kenneth Roy Norman. Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1995.
- MA* *Madhyamakāvatāra* (see next item)
- MABh* *Madhyamakāvatāra* with *Bhāṣya*.
Madhyamakāvatāra par Candrakīrti: Traduction tibétaine. Edited by Louis de la Vallée-Poussin. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, (1907–1912) 1992.
- MMK* *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Edited by Ye Shaoyong. Beijing: Research Institute of Sanskrit Manuscripts and Buddhist Literature, 2011.
- PP* *Prajñāpradīpa*.
D3853: vol. tsha, *sDe dge bsTan 'gyur*, vol. 68. Oakland: Dharma Publishing, 1982.
- PPMv* *Prasannapadā (Mūlamadhyamakavṛtti)*.
Mūlamadhyamakakārikās de Nāgārjuna avec la Prasannapadā commentaire de Candrakīrti. Edited by Louis de la Vallée-Poussin Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, (1903–1913) 1992.
- RĀ* *Ratnāvalī*.
Nāgārjuna's Ratnāvalī, Vol. I: The Basic Texts (Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese). Edited by Michael Hahn. Bonn: Indica und Tibetica, 1982.

- 1 – On this technical sense of the 'person' in the context of philosophical investigation, especially ethics, see especially Collins 1982; Collins 1985, pp. 46–82; Taylor 1985, pp. 96–114; Taylor 1989, pp. 25–52; Rescher 1990, pp. 6–21; Winquist 1998, pp. 225–238; and Smith 2010, pp. 59–89, 399–412.
- 2 – All translations from Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Pali throughout this article are my own.
- 3 – Ramkrishna Bhattacharya provides the most extensive treatment of the 'wolf's paw-print' image and this unknown verse (2011, pp. 175–192), especially as cited in Jain sources, most notably Haribhadra's *Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya* (81–84). I am grateful to Dr. Krishna del Toso for referring me to Bhattacharya's work (personal communication, September 28, 2012), as well as to Geshé Dadul Namgyal for referring me to Tibetan understandings of this image (personal communication, January 18, 2012). To summarize the point of the 'wolf's paw-print' image: the supposedly 'much-learned' *paṇḍitas* are satirized by the Materialists as wrongly inferring the presence of a wolf based on the mere observation of a supposed wolf's paw-print. But in actual fact, the supposed 'paw-print' was drawn on the ground by the Materialist himself for the very purpose of demonstrating just how unreliable inference (*anumāna*) can be, hence the untenability of any sort of extrasensory knowledge of the next world.

- 4 – This is most eloquently expressed by Nicholas Rescher: “The crux of our mandatory commitment to personhood lies in the region where axiology and ontology meet—in the value that it has for us as the salient feature that determines our place in the world’s scheme of things” (1990, p. 21).
- 5 – This distinction between ethics and morality is perhaps most clearly and usefully articulated in the work of Bernard Williams (1985, esp. pp. 174–195). Although he does not draw on Williams’ work, this distinction is brought into the context of Buddhist thought by Georges Dreyfus (1995, p. 39).
- 6 – Mark Siderits explains his conception of “existential suffering” in this way:

There is, in fact, a significant net increase in overall suffering that comes about when we take too seriously the idea that we are persons. Thinking of myself as a person typically leads to the belief that my life has meaning, value and purpose. But the fact of impermanence, once its implications are fully appreciated, undermines my efforts to sustain the sense that my life has value in the long run. This gives rise to frustration, alienation, despair—in short, to existential suffering. (2007, p. 288)

However, where Siderits uses the term “person” here, I suggest we substitute ‘self.’ It seems to me that it is not taking ourselves as persons *per se* that is the problem but rather our basing this personhood on the reified existence of a self. Even underpinned by the more rarefied conceptions of ‘no-self’ and ‘neither self nor no-self,’ there can still be a sense of personhood in the sense of an irreducibility to the material realm and also a future orientation. Siderits’ terminology here, his treatment of the ‘person’ *per se*, without distinction from the self, would seem overly reductive. The problem is not “Thinking of myself as a person” but rather ‘thinking of myself as a self,’ or better, ‘seeking to ground my personhood in the existence of a self.’ Elsewhere, however, Siderits does indeed countenance the idea of “empty persons,” which would suggest that he does make such a distinction between ‘self’ and ‘person’ (Siderits 2003, pp. 197–209).

- 7 – Worth noting is the larger cosmological backdrop against which conceptions of the good are determined; there is no ‘one size fits all’ model for all times and places. But, on the other hand, this does not suggest that the determination of the good is ‘anti-realist’ as such. That is, the ethical model is indeed realist to the extent that the good does indeed reflect ‘real’—or at least external physical or ‘natural’—states of affairs; it is just that these states vary according to the respective *dhātu* or *dhyāna*.
- 8 – The Tibetan translation of Āryadeva’s root verses renders this climactic ‘rejection of all things’ (*sarvasya vāraṇam*) as a ‘rejection of all views’ (*lta ba kun bzlog pa*), as do Tibetans thereafter. See McGarrity 2009 on the possible reasons for this alteration.
- 9 – It may be that the teleological and consequentialist models are entirely reconcilable, and indeed it seems precisely the assumption of the *Madhyamaka*

analysis that they are. In effect, they are two sides of the same coin: an orientation that may from an ‘internal’ first-person perspective (of the beginning practitioner, for example) be understood to be teleological may from an ‘external’ third person point of view (that of a Buddha for example) be regarded as consequentialist.

- 10 – Dan Arnold has more recently suggested ‘manifestation’ and ‘relative manifestation’ for *prajñapti* and *upādaya prajñapti*, respectively (personal communication, August 2012). The connotations of the conventional self as being ‘manifested’ and not just ‘designated’ by the Buddhas is worth bearing in mind, especially given its being *manifested* by the Buddhas out of their wisdom and compassion.
- 11 – I am grateful to Dan Arnold for clarifying this point for me so succinctly (personal communication, August 2012).
- 12 – I refer to *pudgalavāda* (lower case) rather than Pudgalavāda (proper noun), following Dan Lusthaus, who notes that the term *pudgalavāda* “is not the proper name of a school or sect, but a label attached to the Vātsīputrīya, Saṃmitīya, etc. schools by their opponents” (2009, p. 275).
- 13 – I am grateful to Professor Malcolm David Eckel in pointing out to me Bhāviveka’s comments here (personal communication, April 2013).
- 14 – On just what such a ‘philosophical anthropology’ might entail, and hence what it might mean, by implication, to think in terms of a ‘Mādhyamika’ or even simply ‘Buddhist philosophical anthropology,’ see especially Rescher 1990, pp. 1–21; Mohanty 1993, p. 84; Archer 2000, pp. 253–288; and Aitkins 2008, pp. 80–103. Less explicitly, but in a similar vein, see also Kapstein 2001, p. 156.

References

- Adam, Martin T. 2005. “Groundwork for a Metaphysic of Buddhist Morals: A New Analysis of *Puñña* and *Kusala*, in Light of *Sukka*.” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 2:62–85.
- Aitkins, Kim. 2008. *Narrative Identity and Moral Identity: A Practical Perspective*. New York: Routledge.
- Archer, Margaret S. 1990. *Being Human: The Problem of Agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Arnold, Dan. 2005. *Buddhists, Brahmins, and Belief: Epistemology in South Asian Philosophy of Religion*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 2012. *Brains, Buddhas, and Believing: The Problem of Intentionality in Classical Buddhist and Cognitive-Scientific Philosophy of Mind*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Bhattacharya, Ramkrishna. 2011. *Studies on the Cārvāka/Lokāyata*. London and New York: Anthem Press.
- Clayton, Barbra R. 2009. "Śāntideva, Virtue, and Consequentialism." In John Powers and Charles S. Prebish, eds., *Destroying Māra Forever: Buddhist Ethics Essays in Honor of Damien Keown*, pp. 15–29. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications.
- De Jong, J. W. 1978. "Textcritical Notes on the *Prasannapadā*." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 20:25–59 and 217–252.
- Dreyfus, Georges B. J. 1995. "Meditation as Ethical Activity." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 2:28–54.
- Duerlinger, James. 1982. "Vasubandhu on the Vātsīputriyas' Fire-Fuel Analogy." *Philosophy East and West* 32, no. 2: 151–158.
- . 2003. *Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons: Vasubandhu's "Refutation of the Theory of a Self"*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.
- . 2013. *The Refutation of the Self in Indian Buddhism: Candrakīrti on the Selflessness of Persons*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Eckel, Malcolm David. 1980. *A Question of Nihilism: Bhāvaviveka's Response to the Fundamental Problems of Mādhyamika Philosophy*. Ph.D. diss., Harvard University.
- Finnigan, Bronwyn, and Koji Tanaka. 2011. "Ethics for Mādhyamikas." In The Cowherds, eds., *Moonshadows: Conventional Truth in Buddhist Philosophy*, pp. 221–231. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ganeri, Jonardon. 2007. *The Concealed Art of the Soul: Theories of Self and Practices of Truth in Indian Ethics and Epistemology*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Goodman, Charles. 2008. "Consequentialism, Agent-Neutrality, and Mahāyāna Ethics." *Philosophy East and West* 58, no. 1: 17–35.
- . 2009. *Consequences of Compassion: An Interpretation and Defense of Buddhist Ethics*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Harris, Stephen. 2011. "Does *Anātman* Rationally Entail Altruism? On *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:101–103." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 18:93–123.
- Hume, David. (1739–1740) 1888. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kapstein, Matthew T. 2001. *Reason's Traces: Identity and Interpretation in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist Thought*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Keown, Damien. (1992) 2001. *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*. New York: Palgrave.
- . 1996. "Karma, Character, and Consequentialism." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 24:329–350.

- Kerr, Fergus. 2004. "The Self and the Good: Charles Taylor's Moral Ontology." In Ruth Abbey, ed., *Charles Taylor*, pp. 84–104. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lusthaus, Dan. 2009. "Pudgalavāda Doctrines of the Person." In William Edelglass and Jay L. Garfield, eds., *Buddhist Philosophy: Essential Readings*, pp. 286–296. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. (1981) 2007. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. London: Duckworth.
- McGarrity, Andrew. 2009/2010. "Āryadeva's Gradual Stages: Their Transmission from India to Tibet." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 32, nos. 1–2: 151–212.
- Mohanty, J. N. 1983. "Subject and Person: Eastern and Western Modes of Thinking about Man." In Purushottama Bilimoria, ed., *J. N. Mohanty: Essays on Indian Philosophy Traditional and Modern*, pp. 74–85. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Murdoch, Iris. 1971. *The Sovereignty of Good*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- . 1992. *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Rescher, Nicholas. 1990. *Human Interests: Reflections on Philosophical Anthropology*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Siderits, Mark. 2000. "The Reality of Altruism: Reconstructing Śāntideva." *Philosophy East and West* 50, no. 3: 412–424.
- . 2003. *Personal Identity and Buddhist Philosophy: Empty Persons*. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate.
- . 2007. "Buddhist Reductionism and the Structure of Buddhist Ethics." Reprinted in Purushottama Bilimoria, Joseph Prabhu, and Renuka Sharma, eds., *Indian Ethics: Classical Traditions and Contemporary Challenges, Volume 1*, pp. 283–295. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate.
- Smith, Christian. 2010. *What is a Person? Rethinking Humanity, Social Life and the Moral Good from the Person Up*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Taylor, Charles. 1985. *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1989. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tillemans, Tom J. F. 2010/2011. "Madhyamaka Buddhist Ethics." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 33, nos. 1–2: 359–378.
- . 2011. "How Far Can a Mādhyamika Buddhist Reform Conventional Truth? Dismal Relativism, Fictionalism, Easy-Easy Truth, and the Alternatives." In The

- Cowherds, eds., *Moonshadows: Conventional truth in Buddhist Philosophy*, pp. 151–165. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Velez de Cea, Abraham. 2004. "The Criteria of Goodness in the Pāli Nikāyas and the Nature of Buddhist Ethics." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 11.
- Williams, Bernard. 1985. *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Williams, Paul. 1998. *Altruism and Reality: Studies in the Philosophy of the Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon.
- Winqvist, Charles E. 1998. "Person." In Mark C. Taylor, ed., *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, pp. 225–238. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.