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Mahāyāna Ethics: The Practice of Two Truths

Hoi Kong

Religious Studies
McGill University, Montreal

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Abstract

Despite its considerable influence Damien Keown's The Nature of Buddhist Ethics has not received an extended criticism, and the goal of this thesis is to attempt this task. I direct two general criticisms against the text. The first questions its teleological model of Buddhist ethics and the second interrogates its binary model of human psychology, which excludes the notion of the will.

Bien que l'ouvrage de Damien Keown intitulé The Nature of Buddhist Ethics exerce une influence notable, il ne reçoit encore qu'une critique accrue. Ainsi donc, cette thèse essaie d'accomplir cette tâche. L'ouvrage est soumis aux deux critiques suivantes: la première remet en cause son modèle du bouddhisme téléologique et la deuxième son modèle binaire de la psychologie humaine qui exclut la notion de la volonté.

Introduction

A survey of writings on Buddhist ethics shows that most scholars have summarized the ethical rules that are found in Buddhist sources, but have not interpreted this data in terms of an ethical theory.1 In The Nature of Buddhist Ethics Damien Keown departs from this trend and thereby makes a valuable contribution to this newly emerging academic field. Moreover, his teleological interpretation of Buddhist ethics has greatly influenced the field. For example, Stephen J. Lewis and Galen Amstutz associate the "dominant recent argument about Buddhism" with Keown's reading (Lewis and Amstutz 3), and James Whitehill argues that his own interpretation of Buddhist ethics as "an ethics of virtue" follows a line of thought that Keown's analysis "originates" (Whitehill 5). However, despite its influence Keown's text has not received an extended criticism, and the goal of this thesis is to attempt this task.

After first summarizing his position, I focus on two areas that I consider to be open to criticism. The first is his teleological model of Buddhist ethics and the second is his binary model of human psychology, which excludes the notion of the will.

In the first chapter, I will argue that neither his attempt to protect his teleology against charges of antinomianism, nor his effort to exclude the will from ethical reflection succeeds. In the second chapter, I will argue that the **Mahāyāna** doctrine of two truths

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1 A. Razzino makes this point when he writes that the "bulk of literature on Theravāda Buddhist ethics has been descriptive" (qtd. in Keown 1992, 4). In the field of Mahāyāna ethics, Shundo Tachibana's The Ethics of Buddhism is a typical purely descriptive account.

challenges Keown's description of the **Mahāyāna** as a teleology. Finally, I will argue that Keown's claim that the will is absent from **Mahāyāna** thought is false, and that the two-truths influenced notion of intentionless activity undercuts his teleological description of the **Mahāyāna**. In the final argument, I will provide examples of behavior that evidences the two truths doctrine; I will describe exemplars of the practice of two truths.

Chapter One: The Nature of Damien Keown's Text

To give the reader a picture of the position against which I will argue, this chapter will begin by summarizing Keown's text. In addition, it will criticize Keown's attempt to defend his teleological model against possible charges of antinomianism by positing that model as "universal", and it will challenge a similar attempt that he makes when interpreting Michael Pye's understanding of the Mahāyāna doctrine of upāya.

Buddhism and Aristotle. Teleology and the Binary Character

Keown interprets Buddhist ethical thought as a teleological theory similar to that of Aristotle. In The Nature of Buddhist Ethics, Keown claims that Aristotelian and Buddhist texts posit "second-order ends" for human behavior.[2] For the former, the end is eudaemonia and for the latter, it is nirvana.[3] .Keown notes the similarity and differences between eudaemonia and nirvana when he writes:

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2 Keown argues that a second order is similar to the notion of a summumbonum, and he describes the latter as including the following characteristics: "(a) it is desired for its own sake; (b) everything that is desired is desired for the sake of it; (c) it is never chosen for the sake of anything else" (Keown, 1992 199). In contrast, Keown argues that first-order ends combine to make up a second-order end. He defines eudaemonia as a second-order end. and describes its relationship with first-order ends when he writes:

> Conceptually, eudaemonia can be characterised as a second-order end--a kind of umbrella covering a range or cluster of primary or first-order ends. These first-order ends will be selected on the basis of their conformity with the second-order end, and will be pursued to the extent that they form a harmonious combinatin with other first-order ends. (Keown 1992, 196)

3 Before defining nirvana as a second-order end, Keown writes that he is concerned "only with that nirvana in terms of which ethical goodness can be predicated of a

> I will argue that **eudaemonia** and nirvana are functionally and conceptually related in that both constitute that final goal, end and **summum bonum** of human endeavor. It is not suggested that they are experientially identical or have the same metaphysical or soteriological consequences (e.g., the end of rebirth). (Keown, 1992 195)

Keown further defines a second-order end as an aggregate of subsidiary, or first-order ends. According to Keown, Aristotelian and Buddhist texts argue that only when s/he achieves and sustains all subsidiary ends, does the Aristotelian or Buddhist realize the second-order end.[4] Keown describes the Aristotelian second-order end when he writes: "it will include a number of good things (yet to be defined) in harmonious combination: this is how we are to understand **eudaemonia** or human flourishing" (Keown 1992, 199). Keown

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human subject" (Keown 1992, 19). With this narrowing of the scope of the term, Keown intends to exclude one meaning in particular--the "final or post-mortem **nibbāna** (**nirupādisesa-nibbāna**)" (Keown 1992, 91). Keown claims that only in this nirvana does "ethical predication and evaluation become problematic due to the absence of an identifiable moral subject" (Keown 1992, 91). In contrast, says Keown "**nibbāna** as an event in life (**sopādisesa nibbāna**)" (Keown 1992, 91) assumes the existence of "an identifiable moral subject" who must achieve **sīla**.

4 Keown contrasts second-order ends with dominant ends. One who achieves a second-order end, says Keown cannot discard the subsidiary ends that led to the achievement of the second-order end. In contrast, while one who has achieved a dominant end, must also have acquired some ends that led to this achievement, s/he can discard these ends. Alasdair MacIntyre has given skill in chess as an example of a second-order end. One who has attained skill in chess has also attained the subsidiary ends "analytical skill, strategic imagination and competitive intensity" (MacIntyre 188). One cannot achieve the secondary end of being a skillful chess player, and discard these ends.

In contrast Keown gives the example of a man who construes power as a dominant end. Such a man, says Keown may view telling the truth, being honorable, and cultivating friendships as necessary for attaining power. However, for such a man these three are subsidiary ends that he can sacrifice if they stand in the way of his attaining power. Keown writes: "The person who desires power may find it can only be purchased at the expense of subverting truth, honor and friendship" (Keown 198).

argues that Buddhist texts envision nirvana as consisting of two main subsidiary ends. He describes nirvana when he writes:

> the final perfection to be attained by those who follow the path of Arhatship is best understood in terms of a binary model, that is to say as the perfection of morality (sīla) together with the perfection of insight (paññā). (Keown 1992, 38).

After giving these basic definitions, Keown begins the description of his model of Buddhist ethics by refining the notion of sīla. He posits "virtue" as one possible translation of sīla (Keown 1992, 19) and defines "virtue" as

> moral excellence, a settled attitude which conduces to habitually good action in some respect. The intellectual virtues (e.g., wisdom) are distinguished from the practical virtues (e.g., courage), the former being associated with the life of contemplation, the latter with the life of wisdom. (Keown 1992, 62)

This definition contains two elements. It posits "virtue", or sīla as denoting both a positive element or dharma within a person's psyche, and "a settled attitude". Under the first meaning of sīla, Keown claims that dharmas are "the basic constituents or elements of reality; they are the ultimate reals or ontologically grounded existents which cannot be further subdivided or analyzed" (Keown 1992, 58), and he gives "Liberality (arāga), Benevolence (adosa), and Understanding (amoha)" (Keown 1992, 62) as examples of positive dharmas. The opposites of these virtues are the negative dharmas, or vices and these include "greed (rāga or lobha), hatred (dosa) and delusion (moha)" (Keown 1992, 64).

In addition, Keown asserts that the first meaning of sīla involves a description of "the reality of human nature". From this assertion he argues that Buddhist ethical theory is "of universal extent". He writes:

> virtues and vices--since they are **dharmas**--are objective and real. They are not part of the realm of mental construction (**prajñapti**), but are actually "found" within the psyche. This means that Buddhist ethics is naturalistic: good and bad are not abstractions to be apprehended by observers according to their various intuitions and sensibilities. ... what is to count ultimately as good or bad is not determined by accidental factors but grounded in the reality of human nature. Since human nature is everywhere the same the moral teachings of the Buddha are of universal extent and will hold good at all times and in all places. The corollary of this is that Buddhist ethics cannot be a self-contained system which is intelligible only in its own terms or within its own frame of reference. (Keown 1992, 64)

Under the second meaning, sīla (as a "settled attitude") has a dual structure consisting of intellectual and emotional aspects, and this binary model excludes the notion of the will. One who realizes sīla, says Keown acquires a "complex"[5] within the psyche that chooses (cetanā) right action (kusala), and combines the ability to discern what is good with the desire to act according to this knowledge.

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5 Keown gives several descriptions of cetanā. He describes it as "the particular configuration or deployment of psychic potential which is found within the individual human subject" (Keown 1992, 213). He invokes the definition of cetanā in the Expositor (Attasālinī), which states: "Cetanā is that which intends: the meaning is that it arranges the associated (mental) states as objects in line with itself" (qtd in Keown 1992, 213). He claims that cetanā describes "the general moral stance or posture adopted by the psyche and its orientation with respect to ends" (Keown 1992, 213). Finally, he describes cetanā as being synonymous with saṅkhāra, and thereby consisting of "the underlying, perhaps unconscious as well as conscious, motivations and drives inherited in the form of predisposing complexes (saṅkhāras)" (Keown 1992, 214). I intend the term "complex" to cover all these descriptions.

Cetanā, says Keown is synonymous with the Aristotelian notion of prohairesis and "stands at the crossroads of reason and emotion" (Keown 1992, 213). He describes the crossroads when he quotes J.A. Ackrill's description of prohairesis:

> Since the pursuit of an objective involves thinking of it, while carrying out things necessary to be done depends on having a desire to do them, thought and desire seem to be involved with one another at each stage of effective deliberation and action. (qtd. in Keown 1992, 209)

Moreover, Keown argues that one who discerns correctly, must always act in accordance with the moral precepts, or pañcasīla. For one achieves "moral perfection", the observation of precepts is necessary but not sufficient (one must also cultivate a character, or cetana that manifests the virtues and excludes the vices). Keown argues against J.C. Holt's contention that the precepts are only an expedient, and are not necessary. The latter argues "that a disciplined lifestyle is only of instrumental and provisional validity: 'The raft itself that has aided one should be discarded. It is only a means to an undisclosed end, nibbāna'" (qtd. in Keown 1992, 34). In opposition to this position, Keown writes: "It is difficult to see how discipline can characterize the behavior of an Arhat and yet not be retained ultimately" (Keown 1992, 34).

Keown's reading is open to several challenges including the charges that: 1 despite his announced intention to do so, Keown does not succeed in deriving an ethic "of universal extent"; 2 although Keown intends his model to cover both the Theravāda and Mahāyāna

traditions[6], his reading of Mahāyāna sources has several flaws; and 3 Keown does not provide a convincing argument for excluding the notion of the will from ethical discussion.

From "Is" to Universal "Ought"

I contend that Keown attempts to defend his teleological model against charges of antinomianism, and I further contend that when he defends his teleology by appealing to the notion of a "fact", he is open to challenge. Before moving to my critique of Keown, I will first outline teleological and deontological positions.

Generally speaking, deontological and teleological models provide contrasting views of prescriptive statements. Deontologies argue, without appeal to consequences that any prescription X is a good in itself. In contrast, teleologies argue that prescription X is good only insofar as it leads to the end of Y.

The flaws and strengths of the two models form a unified mirror image. Deontologies can claim that their prescriptions have a universal scope, but are susceptible to the charge that these prescriptions are arbitrary. In contrast, teleologies can claim that their prescriptions are reasonable, but are susceptible to the charge that these prescriptions only have a particular scope.

By definition, an imperative that is a good-in-itself is (or at least is intended to be) a universal command; all persons without exception

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6 Keown writes: "Those writers who have confined their attention to Theravāda sources in isolation have suffered from a lack of sensitivity to the subtle shifting pattern of development within the tradition as a whole" (Keown 1992, 5).

are subject to it. However, the critic may charge that the putative self-justifying nature of such imperatives is not obvious at all. Rather, s/he might claim that such a description of the imperative is simply an arbitrary assertion that is without foundation.

On the other hand, teleological prescriptions can claim to have a rational support. Whether one accepts a prescription depends on whether that prescription leads to a particular end, or not and one can rationally assess this condition. However, this rational aspect also potentially leads to an antinomianism. Each prescription is expressed in a contingent statement of the form "if one follows prescription x, then y" and this contingency seems to limit the scope of the prescription x to those who want to achieve y. If one does not consider y to be a valuable end then it seems that one is not under any obligation to accept x. The antinomian can claim against the teleologist that if one rejects all ends, then one need not accept any prescriptions.

Keown defends against a possible charge of antinomianism by claiming that the particular prescriptions of his teleology, like the prescriptions of a deontology are universal and he argues that they are universal because they are descriptive statements. I contend that there are two problems with this argument: 1. he does not argue convincingly for the move from descriptive to prescriptive statements and 2. he does not show that his descriptive statements are universal. I also argue that even if one generously interprets Keown as providing a strong argument for a move from descriptive to normative statements, his position still falls to the antinomian charge against the teleologist.

When Keown describes Buddhist ethical theory as naturalistic and contrasts it with emotivist readings, he wants to draw a line between on one hand, legitimate ethical theories, and on the other, illegitimate antinomian theories. In contrast with emotivist interpretations says Keown, a naturalist reading of ethics asserts that

> good and bad are not abstractions to be apprehended by observers according to their various intuitions and sensibilities. Nor can morals be reduced to questions of taste or personal preference ... . (Keown 1992, 64)

In other words, the naturalist, unlike the emotivist fends off the charge that norms are simply arbitrary choices.

Further, Keown distinguishes these two kinds of ethical theories when he claims that in "naturalist" readings, ethical statements are said to be descriptions of "facts" while in "emotivist" readings, ethical statements are said to entail subjective judgments. However, with this contrast, Keown expresses an assumption that is open to criticism. Such a contrast assumes that descriptions of facts and subjective expressions exist in a mutually exclusive relationship. This assumption is not obviously true. Because something is a description of a fact, it does not necessarily follow that it cannot also be a subjective value judgment. For instance, a statement of a law can be both a description of a social fact, and a subjective evaluation that is made by those who frame the law. A law might state, for example that all acts of racial discrimination are illegal. This statement is a description of a social fact--all such acts of discrimination are punishable by the state, where being punishable by the state is the defining characteristic of the adjective "illegal". However, in addition to this descriptive function, a law can express the subjective judgment

of the people who frame the law. In the aftermath of World War Two, German judges adopted such a usage. The judges recognized that Nazi laws accurately described social facts--those acts which the laws designated as illegal were in fact, punishable by the state. However, the judges also argued that Nazi laws were themselves unjust. The laws rested on the subjective evaluations of the Nazis, and in the opinion of the judges, such evaluations were flawed.[7] This counter-example demonstrates that contrary to Keown's assumption, there is no necessary separation between descriptions and subjective evaluations.

Moreover, the distinction that Keown draws between descriptive and subjective statements resembles that distinction which has been drawn since Hume between descriptive and evaluative claims. John Searle has criticized this "classical empirical picture" and I feel that this criticism can also be directed towards Keown. I claim that because Keown does not adequately define a "fact", he does not show that his prescriptions are "of universal extent."

Searle contests the claim that "No set of statements of fact by themselves entails any statement of value" (Searle 120) and provides a counterexample that leads to "a theory which will generate an indefinite number of counterexamples" (Searle 120). The counterexample claims that the statement "Jones uttered the words, I promise to pay you, Smith five dollars" is one of fact, and that it leads to the prescription "Jones ought to pay Smith five dollars", without the importation of any normative premises (Searle 121-6). The second

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7This example comes from Lon L. Fuller's article "Positivism and Fidelity to Law--A reply to Professor Hart".

follows from the first, says Searle because the first is an institutional fact. According to Searle, the theory behind such a fact leads to further counterexamples.

The key to such a theory lies in the distinction between "brute" and "institutional" facts. That a piece of paper is green is a brute fact, but that a piece of green paper is money is an institutional fact. The former is always a fact, but the latter requires the institution of money for it to be so. "Similarly, a man gets married or makes a promise only within the institutions of marriage and promising. Without them all he does is utter words or make gestures" (Searle 130). Such institutions, says Searle are systems of rules which "constitute (and regulate) forms of activity whose existence is logically dependent on the rules" (Searle 131)[8] From the fact that there are institutional facts that arise from constitutive rules, it follows says Searle that certain "obligations, commitments, rights and responsibilities" are also institutional facts. For instance, the institution of promising places one who promises under an obligation to fulfill the promise and the notion of an obligation carries a prescriptive aspect. So, says Searle when one describes Jones as promising to pay Smith five dollars, one is committed to claiming that (all things being equal) Jones is under an obligation and he **ought** to pay Smith five dollars (Searle 125). This theory of institutional fact can further generate an indefinite number of counterexamples to the assertion of a rigid separation between description and prescription.

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[8]In contrast to these "constitutive rules" are "regulative rules", which govern preexisting forms of behaviour. Table manners are rules that govern the activity of eating, and this activity exists before table manners. Chess, however is an activity that exists only with the rules of chess.

For the purposes of this thesis, Searle's argument is interesting because the failure of the "classical empirical picture" to distinguish brute from institutional facts is also Keown's failure. Keown claims that dharmas are simultaneously "facts" (they are "objective and real" and "grounded in the reality of human nature", where "human nature is everywhere the same") and evaluative notions that determine "what is to count ultimately as good or bad". From this claim, Keown wants to argue that the "moral teachings of the Buddha", or prescriptions which follow from such dharmas are "of universal extent". Keown thus hopes to avoid the charge that prescriptions of Buddhist ethics are simply arbitrary choices.[9]

However, Keown does not show that this conclusion necessarily follows from the premises, because he provides no arguments to show that dharmas are brute rather than institutional facts. Rather, Keown simply asserts that dharmas are self-evident facts, as if this assertion were as obviously true as the statement "American dollar bills are green." Moreover, if dharmas are examples of institutional facts, and if they resemble the institutional facts of baseball, promising or marriage then the prescriptions that follow from dharmas extend only as far as the borders of a limited institution. In this case, the institution would be comprised of those who agree to describe human nature in terms of dharmas, namely Buddhists. It seems that if dharmas are institutional facts then contrary to what Keown claims, the scope of Buddhist ethical prescriptions is limited to Buddhists.

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[9]He writes that as a result of these moves, "Buddhist ethics cannot be a self-contained system which is intelligible only in its own terms or with in its own frame of reference" (Keown 1992, 64).

The third argument against the claim to "universal extent" arises even if one generously interprets Keown as providing a strong argument for the move from descriptive to normative statements. Although such an interpretation strengthens Keown's position insofar as it fulfills one goal of his argument, it does not show that the resultant normative statements are of "universal extent". Instead, the position opens itself to the antinomian critique of teleology.

The generous interpretation begins by claiming that according to Keown, Buddhxism asserts that a human being can only be called good if s/he achieves the end of nirvana. In "Goodness and Choice", Philippa Foot establishes an analogous claim by first describing functional words. Foot argues that "knife" is a functional word because the meaning of "knife" depends on the knife's function of cutting.[10] She writes that what "is peculiar about a word such as 'knife' is that it names an object which has a function, but also that the function is involved in the meaning of the word. I shall call such words functional in the strong sense" (Foot 134).[11] Next, Foot argues

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10 In her explanation of the functional words, Foot abstracts away from manufactured things (knives, pens) and things that are not manufactured but necessary for human beings (eyes, lungs). She argues that a thing that is neither manufactured, nor necessary for human beings can also possess a function when she writes that "any part of a plant or animal may have a function" (Foot 135). By this process of abstraction, Foot expands the notion of a function such that it covers anything "which has a particular point" (Foot 136). Foot's notion of a function thereby approaches the Aristotelian notion of a telos.

11 Against the counter-example of a knife that does not cut, Foot writes:

> one can have things which are so to speak, degenerate knives, used only as ornaments, hung upon the wall, and perhaps manufactured for this purpose; it is another matter to suppose that in a community which use knife-like objects only for the purpose of ornaments which names them would be properly translated as "knife" (Foot 135).

that if a thing has a function, "the primary (but by no means necessarily the only) criterion for the goodness of that thing will be that it fulfills its function well" (Foot 135). In addition to functional words, she argues that certain words do not have functions, but "when joined with 'good' they yield criteria of goodness as functional words were seen to do" (Foot 136). Examples of such words are "rider", "liar" and "farmer".[12] Foot claims that although the word "farmer" does not entail a function, a farmer is named "in respect of something that he does" (Foot 136). Moreover, she describes the similarity between the "goodness" of these words, and that of functional words when she writes:

> We say that a man is a good farmer only because of his farming, while what counts as good farming must be e.g., maintaining crops and herds in healthy condition, and obtaining the maximum from the soil ... the standards by which farming is judged depend on the meaning of the word, since what counts as farming is only something which has a particular point. (Foot 136)

Keown's notion of a human being is similar to Foot's notion of a farmer. A human being, says Keown is named in respect of his/her activity of achieving nirvana. Under this interpretation of Keown, he asserts that a "good" human being achieves the "particular point", or telos of nirvana. Keown ascribes to Buddhism this understanding of

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12 Foot claims:

> It would be comic to speak of the function of a rider or a liar, and we can only think of a farmer as having a function if we think of him in some special way, as serving the community. In any ordinary context, we should be puzzled if asked for the function of a farmer, thinking the questioner must mean something very odd. (Foot 136)

human beings and the good when he writes of Buddhism's belief in "the continual expansion of individual capacity towards the goal of complete perfection" (Keown 1992, 202). Buddhism, says Keown "provides the framework for personal cultivation and accomplishment ... through a series of lives structured in accordance with a specific conception of human nature and its telos" (Keown 1992, 203). The "continual expansion of individual capacity" is a defining characteristic of human beings under Keown's reading of Buddhism, and the accomplishment of the "telos" is what defines a human being as "good".

Under such an understanding of the "good", "ought" statements seem to follow from "is" statements. In addition to showing that a thing's function, or a human being's role determines the criteria by which one judges a thing or person as good, such an understanding posits a connection between the function/role of a thing/person, and the activity of choosing. Because a thing has a function, when one selects it, s/he does not make an arbitrary choice. In most cases, one chooses a thing only if it fulfills its particular function. For instance, in general I choose a knife because it can cut.[13] Similarly, if a person wants to fulfill a role, s/he chooses those actions that fulfill the role, rather than those actions which do not fulfill the role. His/her choices are determined by the role, and are not arbitrary. For example, if one wants to fulfill the role of a pilot, s/he will choose

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13 In exceptional cases, one might choose a thing to fulfill a function that is different from the particular functiton of that thing. In either case, a function determines the choice--the choice is not arbitrary. For example, I might choose a dull, brightly coloured knife because it reminds of childhood trips to the circus, but the function of satisfying my sentimental feelings determines the choice.

to land a plane rather than sit in economy class during a landing, because landing planes is part of a pilot's role.

It seems to follow that a person who assumes a role is committed to obeying "ought" statements, which enjoin behavior that fulfills the role. These commands have the form of conditional (as opposed to flatly assertive) statements, and the general form of such commands states: "if one accepts role x, s/he ought to choose those actions that fulfill, rather than those that do not fulfill this role". The particular form states: "if one accepts role x, s/he should do y (where y is an action that fulfills role x)." For instance, from fact that one is a pilot it seems to follow that one is committed to accepting an injunction that states: "if one wants to be a pilot, one should land, rather than not land planes (where the former is an action that fulfills the role of the pilot)."

Similarly, because Keown describes a human being in terms of the activity of achieving nirvana, and asserts that a human being can be described as good only if s/he achieves nirvana (despite his failure to make this argument himself) it seems to follow that for Keown, human beings are committed to accepting those ought statements, which enjoin them to act in such a way that they can achieve nirvana. The general form of Keown's command might state "If one wants to fulfill the role of a human being, one ought act in such a way as to fulfill rather than not fulfill this role," and the precepts are the specific commands that lead one to fulfill the role of a human being.[14]

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14 As I have shown, Keown asserts that observing the precepts is a necessary part of achieving sīla (see above, pp. 8-9), and claims that achieving sīla is a necessary aspect of achieving nirvana (see above, p. 3-4).

Consequently, Keown's human being seems to be committed to adhering to the precepts, and the precepts seem to follow from Keown's definition/description of a human being.

After imputing this argument to Keown, and defending him against the charge of not arguing convincingly for the move from descriptive to prescriptive statements, it is still the case that Keown does not demonstrate that (his reading of) Buddhist ethics is "of universal extent".[15] Even his reinforced position falls to the antinomian's charge against the teleologist. Under the interpretation that I have imputed to Keown, Buddhism defines human beings in terms of their activity of achieving the telos of nirvana, and in the argument that I have sketched above, Buddhist prescriptions are binding because they describe how people must act if they are to fulfill their telos. However, if this definition of a human being is not accurate, then because achieving the telos of nirvana would not be the defining characteristic of a human being, Keown's account does not give any reason to accept the precepts as binding.[16] By challenging the telos, one undercuts the precepts. Moreover, the only people that he presents as accepting this definition are Buddhists and, it appears

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15 Under the terms of the argument that I have sketched above, the assertion that the precepts are universally binding is convincing. Unlike other roles, the role of a human being qua human being is not chosen. While one may say :"I do not want to fulfill the role of a pilot", it does not seem possible to say: "I do not want to fulfill the role of a human being"--everyone accepts the role of human being. Since the precepts are those commands that lead one to fulfill the role of a human being, it seems that everyone is committed to accepting the precepts as binding.

16 In contrast to Keown, MacIntyre has recognized that if he is to defend his interpretation of Aristotelian ethics, he must do so on grounds other than Aristotle's definition of human nature. MacIntyre labels this definition a "metaphysical biology" and writes that "any adequate generally Aristotelian account must supply a teleological account which can replace Aristotle's metaphysical biology" (MacIntyre 162).

that the only criterion for accepting this understanding is that one be a Buddhist. Far from presenting a universal ethic, Keown appears to give a set of prescriptions to which only Buddhists adhere.

Missing Michael Pye: the Doctrine of Upāya and the "Mythical" Mahāyāna

Since Keown asserts that one who has attained nirvana follows the precepts, and since he wants to argue that Buddhist ethical theory is not antinomian, if he is to be consistent he must argue against several canonical Mahāyāna texts, which claim that when engaging in a certain form of **upāya**, Bodhisattvas and Buddhas (who have attained nirvana) violate the precepts. In this section, I will show that Keown's arguments against these Mahāyāna texts contain flaws, and argue that he misinterprets the source that he uses to support his arguments (Michael Pye's Skillful Means).

Keown distinguishes between two kinds of **upāya** that are present in canonical **Mahāyāna** sources. The first, **upāya**$_1$ is simply activity that observes the precepts. Keown claims that it "covers roughly the same ground" as **sīla** (Keown 1992, 157). Like **sīla**, says Keown this kind of **upāya** requires that one observe the precepts. According to him, the **Mahāyāna** understanding of **upāya**$_1$ allows

> a slight degree of latitude in respect of minor offences. This does not amount to a slackening in discipline and there is evidence that the Mahāyāna became stricter in its discipline than the Hīnāyāna. **Upāya**$_1$ does not enjoin laxity in moral practice ... (Keown 1992, 159)

Upāya1, says Keown governs the actions of a **bodhisattva**-in-training.

In contrast, says Keown **upāya2** governs the actions of the accomplished **bodhisattvas**, and allows such **bodhisattvas** to transgress the precepts if they have good motivations, and if the consequences of their actions are good. Keown writes: "while a **bodhisattva** is engaged in the process of self-cultivation through the **pāramitās**, he is concerned only with **upāya1**, and only after he achieved the perfection of insight and means does the possibility of **upāya2** arise" (Keown 1992, 159). Keown describes the transgressive aspect of **upāya2** when he writes: "a **bodhisattva** may perform acts of deception and inflict suffering on beings if it leads them into discipline (**vinaya**)" (Keown 1992, 150).

Keown further describes the notion of **upāya2** when he compares it with Situation Ethics. Keown argues that "a case could be made out according to which the **upāya2** doctrine, if taken as referring to normative ethics, could be regarded as structurally similar to Situation Ethics" (Keown 1992, 188). Like Situation Ethics he says, **upāya2** emphasizes the importance of motivation and consequences in ethical action, and downplays the significance of rules. Keown writes that for the Situation Ethicist, "a loving motivation and a successful outcome provide absolute justification--it is by reference to these two criteria that we determine the rightness of actions" (Keown 1992, 190). Similarly, Keown says that Mahāyāna text claim:

> The **bodhisattva** who is motivated by **karuṇā** will seek the well-being of his fellow creatures and choose that course of

> action which has best consequences irrespective of moral norms which might prohibit it (Keown 1992, 189).

In addition, "in certain Mahāyāna passages, a breach of the precepts on the basis of **upāya** results in good karmic consequences" (Keown 1992, 190).

Keown claims that the doctrine of **upāya2** "does not concern normative ethical conduct" (Keown 1992, 159), but I will show that the three pieces of evidence that support this claim are problematic. The first asserts that the texts present "the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas" as "embodiments of supreme value" (Keown 1992, 159), and claims that because they adhere to it, **upāya2** does not provide a model for ethical behavior. Rather, **upāya2** is a "symbolic as opposed to normative statement of the importance attached by the Mahāyāna to concern for others" (Pye, 1978: ch.4) (Keown 1992, 159). This argument raises a contradiction. In the conclusion to the text, Keown claims that insofar as the Buddha is a paradigm, Buddhists should emulate his behavior (see above, p. 7-8). The notions "paradigm" and "embodiment of supreme value" have similar meanings. To say that a person is a paradigm, is to say that the person embodies some value. For instance, to say that Janet Reno is a paradigm of integrity, is at the same time to say that she embodies integrity. Because Keown does not distinguish the two notions, he makes contradictory claims. The first states that because the Buddha is a paradigm, one should follow his behavior, and the second asserts that because they are paradigms ("embodiments of supreme value") one should not follow the behavior of Buddhas and Bodhisattva

In his second piece of evidence, Keown appeals to Chapter Four of Michael Pye's Skillful Means[17] to support his claim that the upāya2-inflected actions of the Buddhas and the bodhisattvas are "mythical", and he asserts that because they are "mythical" they cannot entail prescriptions. Keown writes that these actions "are located primarily in the domain of myth and symbol (Pye, 1978: ch. 4), which alerts us to the fact that such activity requires interpretation rather than simple imitation" (Keown 1992, 162). Consequently, says Keown, upāya2 "does not have direct normative implications" (Keown 1992, 162).[18] However, from the fact that something is mythical, it does not necessarily follow that it is non-prescriptive. A skeptic can claim, for example that the story of Jesus Christ is a myth. If s/he makes this claim, s/he can still interpret Christ's actions as setting an example, and the notion "setting an example" includes a prescriptive component. For instance, when a mother acts to set an example for her child, she expects the child to imitate her. Implicit in the notion of setting an example is the command "follow the

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17 It is not clear that Pye's text illustrates Keown's assertion. Although Pye shows that the texts use mythological devices to describe these actions, he does not argue thereby that one ought not interpret these actions as being prescriptive. The text only states that: "Mythological elements in Mahāyāna Buddhism are always related in the last analysis to its central grasp of what Buddhism means and how it works" (Pye 60).

18 When Keown links the notion "myth" with the characteristic "non-prescriptive", he allows for a strong and weak reading. Under the strong reading, a myth is non-prescriptive because it does not include any kind of prescription. In contrast, under the weak reading a myth is non-prescriptive only insofar as it does not entail a prescription to simply imitate the actions of the myth's characters. For example, the strong reading would not allow one to interpret any prescriptive statements as arising from the mythical action of a compassionate bodhisattva who transgresses norms to save others. In contrast, the weak interpretation would only exclude that interpretion which reads the myth as commanding: "engage in transgressive behaviour to save others". However, the weak interpretation does allow one to interpret the mythical action as enjoining other kinds of actions--i.e., acting to save others, or being compassionate.

example". If one interprets Christ's actions as "setting an example", one attributes this command to these actions. The skeptic can interpret Christ's "mythical" act of forgiving the Roman soldiers as entailing a strong prescription to imitate him (i.e., as commanding: "When others cause you extreme suffering, forgive them."), or s/he can read the action as entailing a weaker command to follow the example without imitating it (i.e., as commanding one to act compassionately towards others. This counter-example demonstrates that one can interpret myths as providing prescriptions, and consequently, it undercuts Keown's attempt to dismiss the notion of upāya2 by associating myths with the characteristic "non-prescriptive".

In his third piece of evidence, Keown appeals to historical evidence to argue against the notion of upāya2. He asserts that the scarcity of appeals made to upāya2, and the adherence of the majority of Mahāyāna practitioners to the precepts are evidence that upāya2 is a marginal doctrine. Keown argues that because people did not appeal to upāya2, it was not used as an ethical principle. He writes that "there is little sign that upāya2 was adopted as a basic principle of ethics in Mahāyāna countries, and there is clear evidence that in Japan at least it was not (Pye, 1978 ch. 8)" (Keown 1992, 162).

However, Keown misreads the source that he uses to support his contention that there is "little sign" that adherents of Mahāyāna appealed to the notion of upāya2. Although Keown cites Chapter Eight of Michael Pye's Skillful Means as supporting his contention that in Japan, there is "clear evidence" that upāya2" was "not adopted as a basic principle of ethics"(Keown 1992, 162), neither of the two

central (nor any of the subsidiary) arguments of that the chapter make any such claim. The more "tentatively advanced" argument neither confirms nor refutes Keown's reading of the text. Pye argues that several Japanese Buddhist sects use the notion of **hóben** (Skt. **upāya**) polemically. Each sect contrasts the notions "skillful" and "essential", and argues that its opponents' teachings are "merely" skillful, while its own are essential. Pye claims that "some Buddhists think of **hóben** as being mere devices for the ignorant which have little to do with the true Buddhist doctrine and practice which they themselves cultivate" (Pye 152). Although this argument shows that in some instances, the Japanese Buddhist usage of the notion "**hóben**" does not correspond to **upāya2**, it does **not** demonstrate Keown's claim that Japanese Buddhists do not adopt a usage that corresponds to **upāya2** as "a basic principle of ethics".

In contrast, the main argument of Chapter Eight shows that Japanese Buddhist do adopt such a usage. The argument presents Japanese Buddhist authorities as arguing against confusing the technical notion of **hóben** (Skt **upāya**) with the colloquial expression "**uso mo hóben**". The latter expression, says Pye translates roughly into English as "white lie", and the founding president of Risshó Kósei-kai, Niwano Nikkyo[19] objects to conflating this term with the technical usage because it does not "stress the correctness and lack of deviousness" (Pye 148) involved in the technical usage of **hóben**. By the phrase "lack of deviousness", Pye understands Niwano Nikkyo to mean that although **hóben**, under the technical usage allows for the

19 The Risshó Kósei-kai is according to Pye, "a modern ecumenically-minded lay movement based mainly on the Tendai-Nichirenite tradition" (Pye 3, note).

transgressing of norms, it requires that an individual act without a selfish intention to secure the good of "insight". In contrast, the colloquial expression does not rule out acting with a selfish intention. Pye claims that one using **hóben** (in the technical sense) can act against a norm prescribing truth-telling when he writes: "A Buddhist 'skillful means' may in itself be an inaccurate description of a state of affairs ... " (Pye 140). He argues that a Buddhist can use **hóben** only with good intentions when he writes that:

> the criterion for distinguishing between a genuine **hóben**, which is ethically respectable and a mere trick, which is not lies in the intention of the person who establishes the measure in question. If the intention is one of love, as of a father to his children, and if it leads to the wisdom or insight of Buddhahood, then it is a genuine Buddhist skillful means. (Pye 148)

In contrast, Pye argues that the colloquial usage of **hóben** does not rule out acting with selfish intentions when he argues that it rests on "a desired future situation for one's self, however much it may be beneficial for others as well" (Pye 140). Far from presenting "clear evidence" that Japanese Buddhists do not appeal to the notion of **upāya2**, Pye's argument demonstrates that Japanese Buddhists' understanding **hóben entails** the distinguishing features of **upāya2**--a disregard for rules, an emphasis on good intention, and a concern for good consequences. Keown appeals to Pye's text to argue from the premise "people did not appeal to **upāya2**" to the conclusion "**upāya2** did not function as an ethical principle." My summary of Pye

demonstrates that the premise is false, and that consequently, Keown's argument is unsound.

In each of the pieces of evidence that Keown puts forward to argue against the **Mahāyāna**, he attempts to claim that despite appearances, the school does not allow for the transgression of precepts, and by extension does not allow one to describe the **Mahāyāna** as favoring antinomianism. Moreover, Keown's attempts at arguing against antinomianism in the **Mahāyāna** are also efforts to defend his own description of the **Mahāyāna** as conforming to a teleology, where such a teleology excludes antinomianism. However, as I have shown, his attempts to so exclude antinomianism do not succeed.

Reading the Will

In this section, I will argue that Keown's attempt to dismiss the notion of the will is problematic. Keown argues that Buddhist texts construct a binary model of ethical decision-making (and of the human psyche) that consists of only emotional and intellectual elements. Correct choice, says Keown requires only that one be able to discern the good and desire it. By contrast, incorrect choice results from either an inability to discern the good or to desire it (see above, p.6-7). According to Keown there is no evidence of the notion of the will in Buddhist texts, and he asserts that this absence is due to the fact that it is an untenable notion.

The notion of the will, says Keown originated with Augustine, and he quotes A. Dihle's definition of the will: "From St. Augustine's

reflections emerged the concept of a human will, prior to and independent of the act of intellectual cognition, yet fundamentally different from sensual and irrational emotion ... " (Keown 1992, 215). Further, Keown asserts: "A theory of the will as defined above is not to be found in Aristotle or Buddhism, and perhaps for good reason" (Keown 1992, 215). This "good reason" is found in Kenny's description of contemporary philosophers' rejection of the will. Kenny argues that "this whole conception of volition and freedom has been subjected, in our own time, to decisive criticism by philosophers such as Ryle and Wittgenstein" (qtd. in Keown 1992, 215). I will leave until chapter three a description of the will and the question of whether the notion of the will is present in Buddhist (and especially, Mahāyāna) texts,. At this point, I will only indicate two general problems with Keown's presentation of the notion of the will.

First, Keown's presentation is misleading. He links the notions freedom and volition, and seems to argue that because the notion freedom of the will is misleading, the notion of the will is untenable. However, freedom of the will and the will are not equivalent notions, and by defeating one of these notions one does not automatically defeat the other. One can imagine ways in which the notion freedom of the will is vulnerable to criticism. It seems plausible that a proponent of the notion of a free will would claim that human action is free only if it is uncaused, and a critic can demonstrate that this claim rests on a false dichotomy. The opposite of freedom is not being caused, but being coerced and the opposite of being caused is being uncaused. However, this argument only shows that this claim about

free will is problematic, it does not show that the will is a bogus concept.

Second, it seems that Keown's emotion/intellect model cannot account for the common phenomenon of weak-willed behavior. A person who is addicted to an activity can desire to quit and s/he may believe that it is best to quit, yet not quit. The emotion/intellect model does not account for this inability, and it seems reasonable to attribute this failing to a faculty that is distinct (though not necessarily separate) from the emotions or the intellect. Of course, a defender of Keown's model could argue for more and more expansive definitions of desire and intellect that cover this kind of weakness. S/he could argue that the inability to act according to one's (correct) feeling and reasoning is itself a form of either misshapen desire, or inadequate reasoning. However, such retreats appear to be simply attempts to save the model, and such an expansion of definition seems to distort the notion of a desire or a belief.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined Keown's position, and shown some difficulties with his arguments, all of which seem to cluster around two claims. The first claim is that Buddhist, and especially Mahāyāna ethics are describable in teleological language, which excludes possible charges of antinomianism, while the second claims that the human psyche can be adequately depicted in a binary model,

which consists of the intellect and the emotions, and which excludes the notion of the will.

The sections of this chapter, which concerned institutional facts, and functional definitions argued against Keown's attempt to defend his position against antinomianism. There, I questioned his description of the prescriptions and the end of his teleology as "facts", and his consequent claim that his prescriptions were "of universal extent" by examining the notion of a "fact". I showed that his telos and his prescriptions were not obviously "facts" that would yield universally accepted norms.

Similarly, the arguments that contested Keown's claim that upāya2 is absent from the Mahāyāna showed that his attempt to exclude an interpretation that posits the Mahāyāna as antinomian via a rejection of the precepts, does not succeed. His arguments contain contradictions, and his sources do not support his claim.

Finally, I have begun to question his reading of the will in general terms, and in a later chapter, I will present a more directed criticism. Before moving to that discussion, I will in the next chapter argue that far from excluding antinomianism, the Mahāyāna logic of two truths seems to allow for it.

Chapter Two: Two Truths, the Bodhisattva and No-Teleology

In this chapter I will extend a line of criticism that I began in the first chapter, and direct it against the core of Keown's argument; I contend that the Mahāyāna doctrine of two truths undercuts Keown's teleological description of (all) Buddhist ethical reflection. I will claim that Keown's description of the Buddhist telos does not account for the non-dual logic that is present in Mahāyāna practice, and I will assert that this non-dual logic opens the Mahāyāna to the possibility of antinomianism.

In support of these claims, I will show that two aspects of the two truths doctrine, as presented by the seminal Mahāyāna thinker Gadjin Nagao present problems for Keown's teleology. First, the logical moves of the doctrine challenge a common-sense understanding of distinctions, which is central to a teleological vision of ethics. Second, the doctrine's presentation of the bodhisattva career challenges Keown's vision of the end of Buddhist practice.

Before moving to Nagao's texts, I anticipate a possible objection from Keown. In the first chapter, Keown excludes the Buddhist doctrine of "no-self" from consideration when he writes:

> to pursue the issue of the ultimate ontological constitution of individual natures in this context is to confuse ethics with metaphysics, and does not make for a fruitful line of enquiry. (Keown 1992, 19)

Keown might level this criticism against my analysis of the two-truths doctrine. He might claim that discussions of two truths concern ontology and consequently do not address ethical issues.

I believe that the actual and potential criticisms are misguided. According to the definition that Keown cites, an ethical statement is

> a statement expressing the acceptance of an action-guide that claims superiority and that is considered legitimate, in that it is justifiable and other-regarding. (qtd. in Keown 1992, 19)

I will set aside questions such as "who considers" and "what are the criteria for determining a statement's being 'legitimate', 'justifiable' or 'other-regarding'", to argue that given this definition one should not *apriori* posit a divide between ontological and ethical doctrines. It seems that for Keown, the defining characteristic of an ethical statement is that it is an "action guide". Moreover, it seems that it is this characteristic which Keown imagines to be missing from "ontological" notions such as no-self. While ethical statements regulate activity he seems to argue, ontological statements are merely speculative. However, although the doctrine of no-self does concern ontology, as a component of a soteriology, it also regulates behavior. It seems that if one accepts the doctrine of no-self (as well as the other Noble Truths), s/he alters her behavior in, and beliefs about the world.[20] Consequently, it seems that Keown posits a false dichotomy between ontological and ethical statements. One can also offer this defense against a potential criticism of the two-truths doctrine. From

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[20]In addition, the doctrine of no-self seems to be "other-regarding", insofar as it discourages self-regarding activity, and since countless Budhist texts have justified the doctrine, they have rendered it "justifiable". The no-self doctrine seems to satisfy all three of Keown's criteria.

the fact that this Mahayana keystone is speculative, or "ontological" it does not necessarily follow that it is not "an action-guide."

Gadjin Nagao's Two Truths

> ... even within this our fallen existence, an aspiration toward what is above rises up spontaneously. All striving for understanding, goodness and beauty are ascendant, even when one is unaware and unconscious of anything beyond the world. ... Even the most vile actions like theft and murder are performed in the hope of some betterment. (Nagao 1989, 46)

In the above quotation, Nagao provocatively claims that the actions of even the most depraved, unenlightened being are attempts to achieve salvation and I will argue that although the claim contains teleological language, the underlying logic counters Keown's teleology thesis.

Nagao's writing on the two truths doctrine in the Mahdyāmika school presents a three-stage logic, which poses problems for the understanding of distinctions that is present in Keown's teleology. While such an understanding argues that distinctions exclude relationships of identity, the two truths logic undercuts this exclusive relationship between distinction and identity in three moves. The first stage of the logic affirms accurate distinctions, the second negates this affirmation by positing relationships of identity, and the third affirms and negates distinctions.

Stage One: Distinctions

In The Foundational Standpoint of Madhyāmika Philosophy (hereafter, FSMP), Nagao contrasts a valid form of description with a non-linguistic state. He labels the former "true worldly convention" and the latter "ultimate meaning".[21] True worldly convention, says Keown is an accurate description of the world, while ultimate meaning is ineffable silence. Under Nagao's reading, when one understands the world using sound senses s/he describes the world in the terms of true worldly convention. Such a description, says Nagao argues that all objects in the world exist in a relationship of dependent co-arising. True world convention, says Nagao undercuts notions of essence or self-hood. According to Nagao, Nagarjuna claimed that

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[21]Besides this contrast, Nagao distinguishes between inaccurate and accurate distinctions. Nagao characterizes the first as a mistaken description of the world. According to Nagao, this description consists of false notions of essence and self-hood, and Nagao claims that people describe the world in this way because their perceptions are impaired, or their reasoning is flawed. He describes the content of the false worldly convention when he writes:

> Everything experienced belongs to the realm of dependently co-arising beings, which appear as having self-essences precisely because the world is shrouded in primal ignorance. Within appearances come illusions and fantasies--like the "self" of unbelievers ... (Nagao 1989, 57).

Nagao describes how this mistaken understanding arises when he compares one who holds the false worldly convention with those who have defective sense organs, or make errors in reasoning. He writes:

> a person with defective eyes may see colors flickering in the sky or a person with a hearing abnormality may hear sounds that are not there. For such persons, those sights and sounds are real, but one whose senses are normal and healthy will reject them as hallucinations. Not only illness or defective organs are responsible for false perceptions. Buddhist literature gives other examples as well, like the blind men who mistake the flank of an elephant for a wall; or the people who see pools of water in the mirages of the noonday sun or shrink from a piece of rope see on a road at dusk, thinking it must be a snake. (Nagao 1989, 56)

> dependent co-arising entails the emptiness of beings and their absence of essence, and that it cannot be explained from an essentialist perspective. In Mādhyamika philosophy dependent co-arising is referred to as "dependent on this" (idaṃ pratyayatā), and that which is dependently co-arisen is referred to as "a designation having recourse" (upādāya-prajñapti) to beings that are dependently co-arisen. (Nagao 1989, 5)

At this stage in the logic, there is not yet any conflict between it and Keown's model. Despite the differences in terminology, the concerns are similar. Just as Keown's analysis of prescriptions and the telos emphasizes descriptive categories like dharmas and "human nature", this stage of the two truths logic stresses the descriptive notion of dependent co-arising.

Stage Two: No Distinctions. a Preliminary Challenge

However, Nagao next argues that although true worldly convention might be an accurate description of the world, it is not as valuable as ultimate meaning and at this stage, Keown's model receives its first challenge as the two truths logic favors the obliteration of distinctions over their affirmation. According to Nagao, there are two central points of contrast between true worldly convention and ultimate meaning.

First, Nagao claims that while one who uses true worldly convention makes distinctions, one who uses ultimate meaning does not. It seems that Nagao here uses a common-sense meaning of the notion "making a distinction." In general, when one discusses similarity or difference, s/he must first specify a dimension of comparison (color, size, use, etc.). So, for instance when I distinguish a

black car from a white one, I first specify the dimension (color) that I am comparing, and then I claim that a difference in this dimension is sufficient to differentiate the two objects.[22] When I make such a distinction, I am committed to claiming that the black car is not identical to the white car. In contrast, an individual fails to make distinction when, in spite of the presence of (at least) one characteristic that distinguishes two objects, s/he believes that the two objects are identical. I fail to make a distinction, for instance when I say that nothing distinguishes a black car from a white car, and when I make this claim, I am also committed to stating that a black car is identical to a white car.[23] Nagao expresses this understanding of identity[24] when he contrasts true conventional truth (or "worldly convention") with ultimate meaning. He writes:

> Once ultimate meaning is seen to exist apart from the generation of words and concepts, there is no differentiation of meaning between self and other, unity and difference and so forth ... Because it is unfabricated and ineffable, ultimate meaning is inaccessible to worldly convention. (Nagao 1989, 68)

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[22]Another way of expressing this distinction is to say that the two object exist in an either/or relationship vis-a-vis the distinguishing characteristic. When one makes a distinction, s/he claims that an object has **either** one aspect of the characteristic, **or** another. To use the example from my argument above, each of the two cars can **either** be black **or** white.

[23]Again, another way of expressing this failure to make a distinction is to say that the two objects exist in a both/and, or a neither/nor relationship. When one fails to make a distinction, s/he claims that an object has **both**, or **neither** aspects of a characteristic. If I do not distinguish between a black car and a white car, I am committed to claiming that the cars are **both** black and white, or **neither** black nor white.

[24]In addition to this way of "failing to make a distinction" is one where a binary distinction implies a third term, the maker of the distinction. When I distinguish the left side of a building from the right, I imply my position relative to the sides. I can "identify" the terms by simply altering my position. So, if instead of comparing left and right from the front of the building, I walk to the back, what was previously left is now right. However, what Nagao seems to have in mind is the first form of identity, where there are true binary terms and no implied third positions.

This process of making distinctions seems to be inherent in the descriptive use of language. When one uses language descriptively, s/he ascribe exclusive predicates. Any predicate P defines a logical space which is divided into two, one labeled P and the other labeled not-P, and any entity that one considers falls into one of the two categories (but not in both). To use terms that more closely approach ethical language, when one describes oneself as not-other s/he draws a demarcation line that is as firm as that between the logical spaces occupied by the predicates.

Nagao's second contrast states that while true worldly convention is always implicated in descriptive language, and therefore in distinctions, ultimate meaning is always silent, where being in silence entails no distinctions. Nagao argues that true worldly convention necessarily entails language when he writes that its

> appearance and manifestation (v ṛ t) arise in the birth-death cycle ... But even though "manifestation" does manifest itself as perfected suchness, that perfected suchness is not known just as it is. It is a process of verbal manifestation, a bringing of doctrine to speech, not full perfection itself. It is enunciated suchness, not ineffable suchness. In this sense, it must be worldly and conventional because it moves within the sphere of language. (Nagao 1989, 45).

Nagao describes the silence of ultimate meaning when he writes: "In contrast to the world of speech and reasoning, ultimate meaning is always ineffable and silent" (Nagao 1989, 27).

Nagao further claims that ultimate meaning is superior to accurate description when he argues that one attains a state of wisdom if and only if, s/he ceases to make distinctions. Nagao writes:

> subject and object cannot be separated. When we speak of the subject, we do not mean to imply a preexistent knower who comes to know objects. In its simplest form, knowing occurs prior to the dichotomy between subject and object; it embraces the differentiations of truth and falsity, and of reality and illusion, as well as that of worldly convention and ultimate meaning. Because of the absolute opposition between wisdom and foolishness, true ultimate meaning and false worldly convention are absolutely contradictory to each other. (Nagao 1989, 61)

These moves present a preliminary challenge to Keown's teleological description of the Mahāyāna. The challenge is at two levels. First, the justification of Keown's model requires descriptive language. His teleology's prescriptive statements, and the telos itself stand or fall based on the accuracy of his description of the dharmas and of human nature. Any logic that obliterates distinctions, removes the criterion of accuracy from consideration. If accuracy and inaccuracy are identical, then one need not accept either the precepts, or the goal, and if one rejects these, the model falls. Second, the structure of the model requires that distinctions be preserved. Keown's teleology rests on central distinctions such as the means versus the end. If one eliminates this distinction, the model loses its character, and moreover, it loses its ability to justify its prescriptions. Any particular prescription is justified because it leads to an end, if one cannot distinguish means from ends, then the justification is lost. However, the two truths logic does not rest here, and matters become more complicated for the logic of two-truths, and for Keown's analysis as the logic moves into a stage that allows for the simultaneous affirmation and negation of distinctions.

Stage Three: No-Distinctions. a Fundamental Challenge

The figure of the **bodhisattva** introduces the complication. To this point, the logic presents a clear-cut and common-sense distinction between silence and language, although (perhaps) contrary to intuition it favors the former over the latter. However, since the **bodhisattva**, who is motivated by compassion insists on teaching about ultimate meaning, a problem arises: s/he seems to be forced to use language to talk about that which negates language.

In Yogācāra and Madhyāmika (hereafter, YM), Nagao describes the motivation of the **bodhisattva**. Nagao echoes Har Dayal when he argues that the **Mahāyāna** posited the figure of the **bodhisattva** in reaction to the (perceived) selfishness of the **arhant**.[25] Nagao makes this argument when he analyzes the notion of **apratiṣthita-nirvāṇa**. **Apratiṣthita-nirvāṇa**, according to the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary is "the **Mahāyānistic nirvāṇa** in which the **Tathāgata** returns (in the capacity of a **Bodhisattva**) to worldly life to save creatures ..." (qtd. in Nagao 1989, 25, ellipses in the original). The **bodhisattva** returns, argues Nagao "for the purpose of benefiting others, helping others, and making service to others ..."

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[25]Dayal claims that the **arhant**

> knew that he would not be reborn. He had accomplished what was to be done. He attained undefiled and final emancipation of mind and heart. He was alone, secluded, zealous, master of himself. (qtd in Nagao 1989, 23)

Dayal argues that as time passed, **Hīnayāna** monks who emulated the ideal of the **arhant** became selfish. He writes: "They seemed to care only for their own liberation ... were indifferent to the duty of teaching and helping all human beings" (qtd inNagao 1989, 23, ellipses in the original). Dayal goes onto argue: "The **bodhisattva** doctrine was promulgated by some Buddhist leaders as a protest against this lack of true spiritual fervor and altruism among the monks of that period" (Dayal 3).

(Nagao 1989, 29). The **bodhisattva**, who grasps the world as "ultimate meaning" acts to save all sentient beings. This imperative to teach, and to not remain in an ineffable "ultimate meaning" compels the Mahāyānist to talk about ultimate meaning.

The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrtī suggests one solution to the problem of talking about ultimate meaning. In the ninth chapter, Vimalakīrti asks an assembly of **bodhisattvas**: "Good sirs, please explain how the **bodhisattvas** enter the Dharma-door of non-duality" (Thurman 73). In essence, this question asks how one can talk about that which excludes distinctions. After all the members of the assembly offer explanations, they turn to Mañjūśrī and ask his opinion of their answers. He replies:

> Good sirs, you have all spoken well. Nevertheless, all your explanations are themselves dualistic. To know no one teaching, to express nothing, to explain nothing, to announce nothing, to indicate nothing, and to designate nothing--that is the entrance into non-duality. (Thurman 77)

When Mañjūśrī then turns to Vimalakīrtī, and asks for his response the latter "kept his silence, saying nothing at all", and Mañjūśrī applauds: "Excellent! Excellent, noble sir! There is indeed the entrance into the nonduality of the **bodhisattvas**. Here there is no use for syllables, sounds and ideas" (Thurman 77). With his response, Vimalakīrtī avoids the problem of making distinctions by seeming to avoid the use of descriptive language, and this strategy of avoiding seems to be one way of talking about "ultimate meaning" without making distinctions. However, even **this** strategy yields a set of distinctions and is implicated in dualistic language. Vimalakīrti's act of remaining in silence posits a duality between silence and speech and

sets out a logical space that includes/excludes terms. Silence in this instance circumscribes a space which includes that which knows no one teaching, expresses nothing, explains nothing, announces nothing, indicates nothing, and designates nothing. The opposites of all these terms fall out side this space and are "not-silence". The problem of duality remains even in Vimalakīrti's silence.[26]

To resolve this impasse, the two-truths logic introduces a Mahāyānist interpretation[27] of the term "no-distinction" that contrasts with that "no distinction" which simply describes two objects as identical. This reading of "no-distinction", undercuts all distinctions, including those between distinction and no distinction, binding and non-binding prescriptions, and worthwhile and worthless ends.

Nagao claims that under his interpretation of the term, "no-distinction" describes a condition in which two distinct objects are simultaneously identical and distinct. He makes this claim at several points throughout the text and I will present two examples. In the first, he writes:

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[26]It seems, however that this problem arises only when Vimalakīrti asks his question. Ultimate meaning-itself, when it is not described or discussed does not (necessarily) include distinctions, or dualities. This situation seems analagous to that between any object and its description. For instance, that object which I designate as "Sam" is in itself only a collection of so many particles that is in the midst of many more particles. It is only when I designate it as "Sam" (and as an object of description, or "other") that it assumes the characteristics of being ugly, badly dressed, tall etc. and adopts these characteristics while excluding their opposites. Similarly, ultimate meaning-itself does not involve distinctions; it is only when one begins to describe ultimate meaning that one steps into a morass of dualities. Nevertheless, the **bodhisattva's** imperative to teach seems to compel speech about ultimate meaning, so the problem remains.

[27]There are many examples of this use of "no-distinction" in Mahāyāna thought. For instance, Hakuin writes of a Great Death that is beyond the ordinary distinction between life and death (Waddell 26-7).

> Properly understood, however, refutation is not concerned solely with the negation of falsehood. It is a refutation of truth that excludes falsehood, but belongs to the conventional realm where falsehood and truth alike rise and fall from moment to moment. (Nagao 1989, 95)

In a second example, Nagao writes: "The two truths mean that the truth, as ultimate meaning, is also worldly and conventional" (Nagao 1989, 32). In each instance, Nagao argues for the simultaneous affirmation and negation of a distinction. In the first, Nagao claims that "refutation" is distinct from (or "excludes") falsehood. However, at the same time he claims that "refutation" is part of a realm in which "truth and falsity alike arise and fall". With this statement, Nagao seems to argue that refutation is not distinct from falsehood, but rather participates in it. He seems to simultaneously affirm and negate the distinction between refutation and falsehood. Similarly, throughout the text, Nagao consistently distinguishes between truth as "ultimate meaning" and truth as "worldly and conventional" yet in the second example cited above, Nagao argues that the two terms are also indistinguishable. Again, Nagao simultaneously affirms and negates a distinction. When Nagao negates a distinction in each of these instances he claims that there is "no-distinction" between the two terms under consideration. However, a claim that the there is a distinction between the terms accompanies this use of "no-distinction". Rather than simply indicating a relationship of identity, it also denotes a relationship in which the terms are distinct.

Under Nagao's interpretation of the term, "no-distinction" counters the exclusive aspect in the common-sense notion of a

distinction.[28] One may object that Nagao's interpretation simply reinstates this exclusive aspect at another level: the characteristic "non-exclusive" is distinct from the characteristic "exclusive" and this description excludes the possibility of describing the two characteristics as identical. However, I believe that Nagao's reading can answer this objection. Under Nagao's interpretation, the scope of the notion "no-distinction" extends to cover the terms "exclusive" and "non-exclusive"--"no-distinction" describes a relationship that simultaneously affirms and negates the distinction between "exclusive" and "non-exclusive".[29]

This step in the two-truths logic presents a fundamental challenge to Keown's teleological model, since in its defense against antinomianism, his model presupposes sets of exclusive binary relationships. These binary relationships are in evidence at the level

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[28]With this reading, Nagao uncovers a nuance in the common-sense reading of the term "distinction". A common-sense distinction exists, says Nagao when there is a relationship of opposition, which excludes a relationship of identity. Nagao describes this exclusive aspect of the term "distinction" when he writes:

> Suchness and reality are not relative to non-suchness and non-reality. Relationships of opposition like this belong to dependent co-arising, but not to suchness. (Nagao 1989, 53)

[29]One might make the further objection that Nagao's interpretation leads to an infinite regress. The simultaneous affirmation and negation of the terms "exclusive" and "non-exclusive" seems to lead to another distinction between "exclusive and non-exclusive" and "not-(exclusive and non-exclusive)", and so on to infinity. To this second objection, Nagao can reply that rather than weakening, this assertion supports his interpretation. The interpretation, Nagao might say counters every relationship of exclusion--including those which his reading of the term "no-distinction" raises. According to the objector's claim, an infinite number of exclusive relationships arise from the term. It seems to follow (given Nagao's interpretation) that the notion "no-distinction" should continue until infinity to counter the infinite number of distinctions. Because the number of distinctions that can be made is infinite, it seems to follow that the number of times that the notion "no-distinction" counters these distinctions should also be infinite

of particular prescriptions and of the telos. The teleology's ability to fend off charges of antinomianism rests on the claim that a particular prescription leads one to an end, and not following that prescription does not. The particular prescription (and not its opposite) is binding because of this distinction, and so counters the possibility of antinomianism. However, if one places this reasoning in the logic of two truths, a prescription simultaneously does and does not lead to an end, and so one is not necessarily bound to either accepting it or rejecting its opposite. With the loss of this exclusive, binding quality the door is opened to antinomianism.

Similarly, at the level of ends, Keown's teleology must be able to distinguish between worthwhile and worthless goals, or else it cannot justify particular prescriptions. If all goals are simultaneously worthwhile and worthless, no goal, including that of Keown's teleology provides a justification that restricts one from choosing other goals. In the absence of this exclusive quality again, no particular prescriptions are binding, and one faces antinomianism. Moreover, for Keown's model means are distinct from ends, and the exemplar, who has attained the telos engages in virtuous, rather than vice-ridden behavior. The next section claims that the bodhisattva's career resists such a description.

How the Bodhisattva Makes 'No-Distinctions' and Becomes a Bodhi-cheater

YM's description of the bodhisattva's career follows the three-stage scheme of the two truths doctrine, and by yielding a path that is

directed towards an end, presents a kind of teleology. However, the bodhisattva's end is non-dual and so contrasts with Keown's telos.

At the outset of the career, the bodhisattva describes the world in terms of distinctions, and the purpose of making these distinctions, says Nagao is to enable one to stop making distinctions. Nagao describes this stage of the bodhisattva's career as that in which s/he possesses "knowledge held in the stage of preparatory practice" (prāyogika¯jñāna). This knowledge, says Nagao "is itself discriminative but aims for non-discriminative knowledge" (Nagao 1991, 204).

In contrast, at the second stage of the career, the bodhisattva ceases to make distinctions. Nagao describes this stage as that in which the bodhisattva achieves "non-discriminative knowledge" (nirvikalpa-jñāna). This knowledge, says Nagao

> is knowledge in which every form of duality of subject and object has been abolished; hence it is non-dual and non-discriminative and represents the utmost enlightenment in this (the Yogācāra) school. (Nagao 1991, 204)

Finally, at the third stage of the career, the bodhisattva simultaneously does and does not make distinctions. Nagao describes the knowledge, which the bodhisattva possesses at this stage as "knowledge acquired subsequently (tat-pṛṣṭhalabdha-jñāna)." Nagao affirms that the three knowledges form a sequence when he writes:

> Knowledge acquired subsequently (tat-pṛṣṭhalabdha-jñāna), is obtained and arises from the nondiscriminative knowledge. It

> is discriminative and worldly but differs from the first kind of knowledge in that its activity is directed in the direction of descent.

In this passage, Nagao further develops the notion of a sequence when he contrasts the first and second stages of the bodhisattva's career with the third. He describes this three-stage career using the terms "ascent, summit and descent".[30] The second stage, argues Nagao is the summit of Buddhist practice. However, although the second stage is the summit, or "ultimate enlightenment" for the Yogācāra it follows a logic that results in the third stage. The logical move resembles that in which the "no distinctions" of "ultimate meaning" become "no-distinctions" in Nagao's sense of the term. Nagao states that non-discrimination, which nirvikalpa-jñāna entails and which undercuts all discriminations must undercut the distinction between non-discrimination and discrimination. Nagao uses the terms śūnyatā and nirvikalpa-jñāna interchangeably when he writes:

> śūnyatā is not a mere nihilism that engulfs all entities in its universal darkness, abolishing all differences and particularities. On the contrary, śūnyatā is the fountainhead from which the Buddha's compassionate activity flows out. Śūnyatā, the summit is reached, but in the next moment, differentiation and discrimination occurs again, notwithstanding the identity accomplished by śūnyatā. Therefore we can say that the two directions, ascent and descent are simultaneously identical and not identical. (Nagao 1991, 206)

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[30]Nagao claims that the tat-pṛṣṭhalabdha-jñāna differs from the knowledge that is associated with the first stage insofar as the former is "directed in the direction of descent". He states this contrast differently, when earlier in the text he writes that prāyogika-jñāna "is knowledge practiced in the direction of ascent" (Nagao 1991, 204). In the passage that I quoted above concerning nirvikalpa-jñāna, Nagao describes the point from which the two knowledges ascend and descend.

While the above scheme, like Keown's describes a path that is directed towards an end, there is an important distinction. Keown's teleological model preserves distinctions that exclude relationships of identity at the level of preparation, and at the level of the end. The virtuous Buddhist, says Keown must distinguish binding and non-binding norms to attain the end of practice, and one must distinguish good ends from bad. Moreover, s/he must argue that one cannot identify binding and non-binding norms, good ends and bad. In contrast, the **bodhisattva** preserves such distinctions only at the first stage of practice. In the second stage, those distinctions are obliterated and at the third, the exclusive quality of all distinctions is compromised as it is placed in a dialectic that alternates between exclusion and identity. A good end is simultaneously distinguished from and identified with a bad one

This operation also presents a view of the relationship between ends and means that opposes the view given by Keown's teleology. While for Keown, ends and means retain their status even from the perspective of one who has attained the end, this is not the case with the **bodhisattva's** career. For Keown, the practitioner **en route** to the **telos** views his obedience to prescriptions as a means to achieve the **telos**. Similarly, those who have attained the **telos** view their preparatory actions as means that they used to achieve their current status. Not so for the **bodhisattva**. While practitioners on their way to becoming **bodhisattvas** view their actions as means to achieve their end, the **bodhisattvas**, who view the world through non-distinct lenses see what had been means as (also) ends. The **bodhisattva** views her previous lives as manifestations of her

attainment. So, the enlightened old man in the second case of the Mumonkan viewed his past incarnations as a fox to be "five hundred blessed lives" (see below, p.72-3).

This dialectic also challenges Keown claim that the person who has attained the Buddhist telos only acts virtuously. According to the dialectic, the bodhisattva is not so bound. For Keown, virtuous action requires that one exemplify certain virtues such as "Liberality (arāga), Benevolence (adosa), and Understanding (amoha)" (Keown 1992, 62), and that one obey the precepts (Keown 1992, 34 and 129-60). While in Keown's view, the virtuous Mahāyānist must not engage in certain behaviors (vices and violations of precepts) the two truths logic that I have described above does not rule out such behavior. The logic that governs bodhisattvas requires them to affirm and negate the distinction between terms of binary oppositions such as virtue and not-virtue. For the bodhisattva, the notion of violating a precept is simultaneously identical to, and distinct from not-violating a precept. S/he is not necessarily bound to obeying the precepts. Moreover, the bodhisattva views even the distinction between enlightened and unenlightened beings in this way, and so the most depraved actions of murderers and thieves become examples of bodhicitta for Nagao's bodhisattva.

To conclude this discussion, I return to the notion of the bodhisattva's compassion. In my discussion of Dayal and Nagao above (see p. 39), I argued that the notion of compassion is what compels the bodhisattva to teach, and to use language. However, if we submit this notion to the logic of two truths, then the picture of compassion becomes complicated. Throughout this chapter, I have

used the language of self and other to illustrate the two-truths doctrine. If we consider the notion of compassion in the light of this language and logic, then the meaning of the notion departs from the common sense usage that Dayal and Nagao employ. Instead of simply being an activity or sentiment that a subject directs out towards the world of others, compassion under the two-truths logic travels the shifting borders that demarcate self from others. Since, under this logic the **bodhisattva** is self and other, s/he extends compassionate activity to all sentient beings, and receives the activity of all sentient beings as compassionate activity. So, for the **bodhisattva**, even the most depraved, non-virtuous actions of sentient beings manifest her compassion, her attainment. Her **telos**, unlike Keown's includes unconscionable actions

Conclusion

In this chapter, I hope to have shown that the Keown's description of the **Mahāyāna** as a teleology meets with difficulties when it is considered in the light of the two truths doctrine. Through an exposition of that doctrine, and its application to the career of the **bodhisattva**, I have argued that the logic of the doctrine, and the figure of the **bodhisattva** undercut Keown's teleology at several points. It is the task of the next chapter to claim that Keown's assertion that the will is absent from **Mahāyāna** is false, and that his teleology-inflected picture of intention opens itself to challenge when it meets with the two truths-influenced notion of intentionless activity.

Chapter Three: Willful Omissions and the Practice of Two Truths

In the preceding two chapters, I posed challenges to Keown's text that I will elaborate upon here. In the first, I criticized Keown's handling of the notion of the will. In this chapter I will fill in the portrait of the will by appealing to Kenny's text. Moreover, by providing examples of **Mahāyāna** vocabularies that are extensions of the will and I will challenge Keown's claim that there is no mention of the will in Buddhist texts. In the second chapter, I argued that the doctrine of two truths challenged Keown's teleology thesis. Here, I will challenge Keown's teleology-inflected understanding of intention when I introduce the notion of intentionless action. Finally, I will conclude by placing the notion of intentionless action within the logic of two truths, and providing examples of actions that are guided by the logic of two truths.

Anthony Kenny's Will

In the first chapter, I noted that Keown invokes Anthony Kenny's text to support his claim that the will is an untenable notion. However, while Kenny argues that the traditional interpretation of the will (as a faculty separate from and prior to reason and desire) has been "subjected to decisive criticism", he goes onto **formulate** a theory of the will that "will be free of the confusions involved in modern philosophical tradition" (Kenny, vii). Far from dismissing the relationship between "volition and freedom" (where freedom is a

notion similar to voluntariness) Kenny explicitly seeks to link these notions. Keown's selective quoting from the text gives the impression that Kenny simply dismisses the notion of the will, and conceals the constructive aspect of the latter's project.

Further, I feel that Kenny's construction of concept of the will allows for a preliminary picture of the will that I will expand upon in my discussion of the will in Mahāyāna texts. According to Kenny, the will is the aggregate of three qualities: voluntariness, intentionality and rationality (Kenny vii), and I believe that in his discussion of the first lies a description of the will as a faculty that is distinct from (though not necessarily either separate from or prior to) the intellect and emotions.[31]

In a move that avoids an unreflective linking of the notions freedom and will, Kenny interprets Aristotelian sources to carefully describe the notion of voluntariness. Kenny claims that

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[31]Kenny goes describes his conception of rationality when he argues that correct purposive (or intentional) choice must also include a correct rational component, or wisdom. Wisdom, says Kenny is a correct belief about the good as such. It is the "correct appreciation" of this end, and for the virtuous man wisdom "provides the starting point and ultimate basis of his practical reasoning, and his practical reasoning is in its turn the basis of his virtous action" (Kenny 107). Kenny links together wisdom and practical reasoning when he writes that "the origin of conduct--its efficient, not its final cause--is purpose, and the origin of purpose is desire plus means-ends reasoning" (Kenny 90).

For Kenny, practical reasoning consists of four components: an initial premise, a set of conditional premises, an ultimate premise and a conclusion. The initial premise of virtuous practical reasoning, says Kenny is the object to which wisdom assents. It "consists of a statement of the end to be pursued plus a definition, account or theory of the nature of that end" (Kenny 132). The conditional premises are those statements which determine how one is to achieve this end, and they "occur in answer to the question 'By what means'" (Kenny 133). An ultimate premise, for Kenny is a statement describing a particular action and involves "sense-perception and immediate awareness of one's ability" (Kenny 133). Any ultimate premise must, according to Kenny "specify something within the agent's power" (Kenny 135). Finally, the conclusion of a chain of practical reasoning is for Kenny, the decision to act--"it will be an expression of 'I am to pursue this' or 'I am to avoid that'" (Kenny 142).

voluntariness is the absence of certain kinds of desires ("natural fears") and beliefs ("unavoidable cognitive errors"). He also claims (contrary to an advocate of the emotion/intellect model) that this absence does not automatically result in the presence of any **other** desires or beliefs. Rather, Kenny seems to argue that one who acts voluntarily exercises a faculty that is **distinct** from the emotions and the intellect.

Kenny's dismisses the notion that voluntariness can be equated with desire when he describes Aristotle's argument against such an identification: "Aristotle concludes that voluntariness cannot be identified as accord with desire" (Kenny 24). According to Kenny, Aristotle's argument against equating voluntariness with desire does not rule out the possibility that one may act voluntarily while feeling sadness or anger. Rather, according to Kenny, Aristotle argues against the notion that voluntariness is **identical** to desire.

Moreover, when Kenny describes Aristotle's claim that "voluntary action is action performed in a certain state of cognition" (qtd. in Kenny 25), what Aristotle allows as a "state of cognition" is so minimal that it does not seem to qualify as intellectual activity, or a form of correct belief. Aristotle rejects growing old as an example of voluntary action and recognizes that the aging person has "knowledge" of the process of growing old. According to Kenny, Aristotle emphasizes this fact to show that knowledge alone is insufficient to define an action as voluntary. Kenny writes: "voluntariness cannot be defined in terms of knowledge alone" (Kenny 8). In addition, by the term "knowledge" Kenny seems to intend here a simple recognition of the fact of growing old, and this

kind of cognitive activity does not seem to be complex enough to be described as "intellectual" or as a belief.

Kenny's text seems, therefore to describe a faculty that is distinct from the intellect and the emotions, and I argue that evidence of this faculty in several **Mahāyāna** sources undercuts Keown's claim that there is no mention of the will in any Buddhist texts. I will demonstrate that the will plays a central role in Mahāyāna Buddhism, and I will draw on **Mahāyāna** concepts to complete the picture of the will that I began with Kenny's work.

Reading the Mahāyāna's Will

This chapter's contention that Keown has misread the **Mahāyāna** understanding of the will and of intention follows upon an argument that Stephen J. Lewis and Galen Amstutz have already articulated. In "'Teleologized 'Virtue' or Mere Religious 'Character'? A Critique of Buddhist Ethics From the Shin Buddhist Point of View", the authors describe an aspect of the Mahāyāna notion of intentionless activity. The authors argue that for "large sectors of Mahaayaana Buddhism", the relationship between the practice, or "means" of Buddhism and its "telos", enlightenment was not clear, and that consequently, these "sectors" did not interpret enlightenment as resulting from intentional activity. The authors claim: "Enlightenment was, in the final analysis, possibly (or even necessarily) sudden and beyond control" (Lewis and Amstutz 5). Moreover, according to the authors, the Japanese Pure Land tradition argues that it is only by suspending his/her intentional activity and

depending on another that one can attain enlightenment. Lewis and Amstutz assert that "enlightenment did not happen in the final analysis due to action by the individual, but rather by the 'activity of Amida Buddha' ..." (Lewis and Amstutz 5).

When he claims that all Buddhists hold to the binary model in which the human personality is the sum of cognitive/emotional faculties, and from which the will is absent, Keown seems committed to also claiming that all Buddhists only use language that is an extension of the intellect and emotions. If one could show that any Buddhist texts use language that is not an extension of these faculties, and which is an extension of the notion of the will then one could demonstrate that not all Buddhists hold to Keown's binary model.

I begin such a demonstration by contrasting languages that are extensions of intellect and emotion, with those that extend from the will. The language of truth and falsity, it seems is an extension of the concept of cognition, and the language of pro and con desire seems to be an extension of the concept of emotion. Similarly, the language of other/self-reliance and cognate notions such as faith and sincerity are extensions of the notion of the will. It is not obvious that one can reduce this language of the will to that of either intellect or emotion.

Before moving to a discussion of faith and sincerity in the Mahāyāna schools of Pure Land and Zen, I raise one other concept that is central to the Mahāyāna and that necessarily includes the notion of the will--a vow.[32] Although a vow may contain cognitive

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[32]For a recent discussion of the centrality of notion of bodhicitta in the Mahāyāna see the Phd. dissertation by Francis Brassard entitled The Concept of Bodhicitta in Śāntideva's "Bodhicaryāvatāra.

and emotional components, it is not fully describable in these terms. For instance, I may recognize that it is in my best interests to follow a regimen of exercise and balanced diet, and I may also desire such a regimen, but this cognition, and this want need not be (and, in fact are not) sufficient for me to vow to adopt such a life-style. If, as Keown argues, correct knowledge and correct desire lead, through a kind of practical syllogism to a correct decision, a vow to adopt a healthy lifestyle should follow from my knowledge and desire, yet it does not.

What is missing in the above scenario, is a commitment to make the vow, and as a factor that stands outside the emotion/intellect model, commitment seems to be an extension of the concept of will. I contend that this aspect of the will (and not Keown's cognitive and emotional criteria) is a necessary and sufficient condition for making a vow. In the above, even though the cognitive and emotional factors were both present for me to vow to adopt a healthy lifestyle, I did not because I was not committed to such a lifestyle. A commitment was **necessary** for me to undertake a vow. Further, I may commit to a vow in the absence of both correct knowledge and desire; commitment can be **sufficient** for me to make a vow. To take an example from Albert Camus, I may vow to roll a stone up a hill until the end of time, neither because I cognitively recognize it to be a good thing to do, nor because I have a great desire to do it. Rather, the vow is an absurd act, which only occurs because I have decided to commit to the act. In more quotidian circumstances, I may make a whimsical vow to skip across the lawn on my way to school every morning. This act of whimsy lacks either intellectual or emotional foundations, yet I can make the vow based solely on my

commitment to do so. This will-based notion, unlike correct cognition and emotion is necessary and sufficient for me to make a vow.

> May I become the protector of those without protection, the guide for those on the path, the boat the bridge and the causeway for those wishing to go to the other shore. (Bodhicaryātvatāra, qtd.. in Brassard 59)

The case of the bodhisattva's vow illustrates the extent to which vows enjoy independence from cognitive and emotional factors. When the bodhisattvas make their vows, they straddle a cognitive and emotional divide. On one hand, they commit to the vow in addition to knowing something about the end of practice (about becoming the protector, guide etc.), and having a desire to pursue a path of practice that achieves the end. On the other hand, in spite of not knowing the end itself, nor having experienced the emotional state that accompanies that end, bodhisattvas commit to the end. In both cases, the cognitive and emotional components do not fully describe the activity of assuming a vow. In the first place, the bodhisattva's vow is a commitment that supplements the cognitive and emotional conditions. As we have seen above, these conditions are of themselves not sufficient for one to adopt a vow. In the second place, the bodhisattva's vow is an act of faith. It compensates for a lack of knowledge and emotional experience. Contrary to the Aristotelian model, the action occurs in the absence of sufficient cognitive and emotional conditions. With this discussion, I anticipate a topic to which I now turn--the notion of faith.

Like a vow, an act of faith does not seem to be (only) a rational or emotional act, or (only) a combination of such acts. The faithful act

may entail the deliberately willing of an act about which one has insufficient cognitive information or an act for which one has strong negative attitudes. In Fear and Trembling, Kierkegaard asserts that Abraham's faith in God is not a rational choice, and claims moreover, that this absence of rationality is precisely what defines Abraham's actions as faithful. It moreover does not seem accurate to describe Abraham's act as an emotional response. His choice to sacrifice Isaac is not a manifestation of any emotions, although it does counter his feelings of love for his son. Further, while faith is an action directed towards an object (one always has faith in something), the experience of an emotion does not necessarily entail action or an object towards which action is directed. For instance, if I feel joy, I can sit here doing nothing, and my doing nothing is not directed at anyone. Consequently, it seems that if one describes faith as an emotion s/he distorts the former. In Kierkegaard's presentation, Abraham makes a choice that manifests reliance on an Other (God), and such reliance is an act of faith that cannot be accurately described in terms of either the intellect or the emotions.33

Similarly, sincerity is a notion that does not seem to be reducible to rational or emotional terms. For example, when I describe Charles as practicing chess sincerely, what I describe is not a rational, or an emotional quality. The quality of his sincerity does not vary according to rational considerations; he is sincere whether his moves are logical or not. In addition, Charles is sincere whether he feels emotions or

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33 Although one may contest that this is an extreme version of the notion of faith, it does seem to be represented in the Mahayana tradition. I contend below that this description's salient feature of not being reducible to rational or emotional terms is also present in the Pure Land description of faith.

not. He can be sincere whether he is throwing the chess-board across the room in anger, or sitting impassively. As with aspects of Kenny's description of the will, sincerity is not reducible to rational or emotional terms.

Faith in the Pure Land

Even the most casual reader of Pure Land texts should be struck by their use of the vocabulary of other-reliance, and Keown's apparent failure to notice this vocabulary seems to betray a willingness to overlook evidence (as in the case of his readings of Pye and Kenny) to fit the **Mahāyāna** within his Aristotelian model. The Pure Land tradition prior to Shinran provides the most straightforward use of the language of other-reliance and faith, and two passages from canonical Mahayana texts have influenced the tradition. The first, from the Muryojukyo, introduces this language. There, the eighteenth vow of Amitabha states:

> If after obtaining Buddhahood, all beings in the ten quarters should not desire in sincerity and truthfulness to be born in my country, and if they should not be born by only thinking of me for ten times, except those who have committed the five grave offences, and those who are abusive of the true Dharma, may I not attain the Highest Enlightenment. (qtd. in Bloom 3)

The second passage, from the Kammuryojukyo expands upon the eighteenth vow and is, according to Alfred Bloom directed towards even "the lowest grade of being ... particularly those who committed the five deadly sins or the ten evil acts" (Bloom 5). The passage states:

> Even if thou canst not exercise the remembrance of the Buddha, thou may'st, at least, utter the name Buddha Amitayus. Let

> him do so serenely with his voice uninterrupted; let him be continually thinking of the Buddha until he has completed ten times the thought, repeating (the formula), "Adoration to Buddha Amitayus." On the strength of (his merit) of uttering Buddha's name, he will during every repetition expiate the sins which involve him in births and deaths during eighty millions of kalpas. (qtd.. in Bloom 5)

Later authors have drawn from these passages central points that defined the Pure Land school in opposition to others. First, they argued that the Pure Land tradition emphasizes the easy path of recitation, rather than the difficult path of concentration and practice. Second, they claimed that the tradition focuses attention on the lowest, rather than the highest level of practitioner. Both these points stress that the Pure Land practitioner must have faith in, and rely upon the power of Amida Buddha. For instance, the Chinese Pure Land patriarch T'an-luan states:

> In the path of easy practice, one aspires to be born in the Pure Land with solely one's entrusting to the Buddha as the cause, and allowing oneself to be carried by the power of the Buddha's Vow, one quickly attains birth in the land of purity. Supported by the Buddha's power, one immediately joins the truly settled of the Mahayana. (qtd. in Ueda and Hirota, 131)

Similarly, T'ao-cho posits a theory of historical decline, and argues that all who live in the current degenerate age are unable to engage in difficult practices. In the mappo, every practitioner is of the lowest level. T'ao-cho draws this theory from the Daishugatsuzokyo, which quotes Sakyamuni as claiming:

> In the latter days of my Law among the millions upon millions of sentient beings who have practiced the austerities of the way, up to the present there is not a single one who has reached the goal. This age belongs to the latter days of the Law, and it is full of the five corruptions. (qtd. in Bloom 12)

From the fact that all practitioners belong to the lowest level, it follows says T'ao-cho that "it is only through the one gate of the Pure Land alone that men can pass to salvation", and he like all others within the tradition stressed dependence upon the nembutsu as the central practice.

In these examples, as in Kierkegaard, faith or entrusting cannot be adequately described in rational or emotional terms. For the Pure Land patriarchs, it is precisely because practitioners are incapable of making reasoned decisions that they should entrust themselves to the power of Amida. It seems also that one cannot accurately describe this act of entrusting as simply an emotion. As I argued above, faith is necessarily a transitive notion (in this instance, it is directed towards Amida) while emotion is not. By showing that faith is central to the Pure Land tradition (where faith is an act of will that is distinct from reason and emotion), I hope to have shown that Keown's claim that the will is absent from Mahayana texts is false.34

Sincerity

In his text, Keown mentions East Asian forms of Buddhism only briefly, and as I have noted, that mention distorts the text that it invokes (Pye's Skillful Means). This lack of attention to East Asia is puzzling and, since Chinese and Japanese Buddhisms have contributed greatly to Mahayana literature, it weakens Keown's case given that he

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34 In addition, from the foregoing it follows that contrary to Keown's assertion, not all schools of Buddhism claim that the end of practice can only be achieved through the cultivation of moral and intellectual virtues.

intends his analysis to cover Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. One notion that suffers from this inattention is sincerity. Sincerity is central to East Asian thought in general, and to the Ch'an/Zen school of Buddhism in particular. As the language of faith in Pure Land is an extension of the concept of the will, I believe that the language of sincerity is a similar extension for the Ch'an/Zen tradition. Before I move to a discussion of sincerity in Ch'an/Zen, I will first place the notion in the wider context of Chinese thought in general.

Perhaps the clearest exposition of the notion of sincerity in East Asian thought comes from the Confucian tradition. In his source-book, Wing Tsit Chan translates ch'eng as "sincerity", and argues for the centrality of the notion when he writes in the introductory essay to the Doctrine of the Mean that

> The quality that brings man and Nature together is ch'eng, sincerity, truth or reality. The extensive discussion of this idea in the Classic makes it at once psychological, metaphysical, and religious. Sincerity is not just a state of mind, but an active force that is always transforming things and completing things, and drawing man and Heaven (T'ien, Nature) together in the same current. ... if sincerity is to be true, it must involve strenuous effort at learning and earnest effort at practice. (Chan 96)

With this passage, Chan introduces two aspects of sincerity that Tu Wei-Ming elaborates upon. On one hand is the individual, "psychological" component of the term that I have already alluded to in my description above, and with its associated vocabulary of "earnest" and "strenuous" efforts this aspect closely approaches the notion of the will. According to Tu, the Doctrine of the Mean argues that "the profound person feels that he must exert continuous effort

..." (Tu 73). Such efforts are not fully captured by the language of the intellect and the emotions, and I believe that these commentators point to the will as an aspect of human psychology that is not accurately described in terms of truth or falsity, or by appeal to the feelings.

In addition to this "psychological" aspect of sincerity, is a communal component. For Chan, sincerity as "exertion" leads one to moral self-cultivation, and by achieving self-cultivation a ruler fulfills the requirements of the Mandate of Heaven, where the Mandate is a moral law. This moral law regulates relations within a community,[35] and when a ruler fulfills these requirements, he establishes the Mandate of Heaven throughout the state. Chan refers to this fulfillment/establishment as "sincerity". For Tu, an individual's successful attempt at self-cultivation through exertion leads him/her to recognize the Mandate of Heaven, and Tu refers to this Mandate as "sincerity". According to Tu, the Mandate is an "ontological ground" that underlies human community, and when one recognizes this ground, s/he shapes a community into what it ought to be.[36] A sincere individual helps to shape to a sincere community.

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35 Chan writes of Confucius that

He repeatedly referred to the T'ien--Ming, the Mandate, will or order of Heaven. ... with him, Heaven is no longer the greatest of all spiritual beings who rules in a personal manner, but a Supreme Being who only reigns, leaving his Moral Law to operate by itself. This is the Way according to which civilization should develop and men should behave. (Chan 16)

[36]Tu writes:

> The profound person, through a long and unceasing process of delving into his own ground of existence, discovers his true subjectivity not as an isolated selfhood but as a great source of creative transformation. As the inner sincerity of the profound person brings forth an unflagging supply of moral and spiritual

Both these aspects of sincerity are present in the Ch'an/Zen vision of monastic discipline. D.T. Suzuki is an influential twentieth century expositor of the Zen tradition, and in his description of how a Zen adept achieves an experience of satori is evidence of the individual, psychological aspect of sincerity that I described above. An adept achieves satori, says Suzuki only after much earnest striving. Suzuki writes: "The searching mind is vexed to the extreme as its fruitless strivings go on, but when it is brought up to an apex it breaks or it explodes and the whole structure of consciousness assumes an entirely different aspect" (Suzuki 1970, 61). This use of sincerity is present also in the canonical writings of Hakuin when he exhorts the reader to sincere practice:

> I want you patricians penetrating Zen's hidden depths to know that these words of instruction Ch'ien-feng37 addresses to his monks are very difficult--difficult in the extreme. You should never think otherwise. ... Just concentrate yourself steadily and single-mindedly on gnawing your way into Ch'ien-feng's words. Suddenly, unexpectedly you teeth will sink in. (Hakuin 23).

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nourishment for the people around him, the Confucian ideal of society (the fiduciary community) gradually comes into being. (Tu 91)

37 Priest Ch'ien-feng addressed his assembly:

"The Dharma-body has three kinds of sickness and two kinds of light. Can any of you clarify that?"
Yun men came forward and said, "Why doesn't this fellow inside the hermitage know what's going on outside?"
Ch'ien-feng roared with laughter.
"Your student still has his doubts," Yun-men said.
"What are you thinking of?" said Ch'ien-feng.
"That's for you to clarify," said Yun-men.
"If you're like that," Ch'ien-feng said, "I'd say you're home free." (Hakuin 19)

Suzuki ascribes the second, communal aspect of sincerity to Zen monastic communities. In a somewhat idealized portrait of monastic life, he writes:

> The Meditation Hall is regulated with militaristic severity and precision to cultivate such virtues as humility, obedience, simplicity and earnestness in the monkish hearts that are ever prone to follow indiscriminately the extraordinary examples of the old masters ... . (Suzuki 333)

As the "monkish hearts" continue to sincerely strive, they form a community like Tu's that embodies "fiduciary" ideals. Suzuki writes of Zen monks that "No work is considered beneath their dignity, and a perfect feeling of brotherhood and democracy prevails among them" (Suzuki 315). Although this picture may be an exaggeration, it does capture an ideal of Zen training. The sincerity of individuals working in a group leads to a sincere group.

Intention

Thus far in this chapter, I have argued that the notion of the will, through the extensive languages of faith and sincerity is present in Mahayana texts, and consequently, that Keown's claim that the will is absent from Buddhist texts is false. For the remainder of this chapter, I will (following Lewis and Amstutz) argue that the notion of intentionless activity is central to some forms of East Asian Buddhism, and I will show that even if one sets aside the question of the will, intentionless activity undercuts Keown's description of Buddhist ethics.

The concept of intentionality to which Keown seems to subscribe need not include an account of the will. In an article entitled "Intention", the Aristotelian scholar G.E.M. Anscombe defines intention. She writes: "A man's intention is what he aims at or chooses"(Anscombe 325). According to Anscombe, intentions are ideas such as "'to release him from this awful suffering', or 'to get rid of swine'" (Anscombe 325-6). For her an intention is an objective, and holding an objective can be fully described as an emotional and intellectual act. For instance, I might believe that getting rid of swine is a good idea, and I may also feel an overwhelming feeling of joy at the idea of ridding my living room of swine. Under Anscombe's interpretation, one can describe having an intention without appeal to the notion of will.

This understanding of intention is evident in several Aristotelian texts and it is this version that Keown seems to hold. The texts argue that a virtuous man must act with the correct objective in mind, and his desire for the objective must be of the right kind. For instance, the Aristotelian Ethics claims:

> What affirmation and negation are in thinking, pursuit and avoidance are in desire: so that since moral virtue is a state which finds expression in purpose, and purpose is deliberative desire, therefore both the reasoning must be true and the desire right, if the purpose is to be good, and the latter must pursue just what the former asserts. This is the kind of thought and the kind of truth that is practical. (qtd.. in Kenny 91)

Like Anscombe's reading of intention, Aristotle's description of the intention (or "thought") of the virtuous man exclusively uses the language of emotion and intellect.

Similarly, Keown claims that for Buddhist ethical theory, virtuous action must be intentional. In addition, he argues that a correct feeling, namely sympathy is an essential component of forming a virtuous intention. He writes: "Sympathy is not a reason in this sense: it is a non-rational sentiment which precedes the formation of moral objectives" (Keown 74). Moreover, he claims that wisdom is a term with ethical connotations and invokes Mrs. Rhys Davids to define wisdom as "a term of practical import; it is not mere insight, but conduct guided by insight" (qtd.. in Keown 80). All moral action, says Keown must include these intentional components of sympathy and wisdom.

This understanding of intentionality vitally contributes to Keown's work in two ways. First, the entire structure of his teleology presupposes that moral agents (who must seek to attain the telos), act with the intention of attaining this telos. Second, since for Keown, all moral action must be intentional, and since (as we have seen) his Buddhist exemplars must act morally, his exemplars must behave intentionally.

For the purposes of this thesis, I accept the Aristotelian description intention as accurate. However, contrary to Keown I contend that **Mahāyāna** exemplars do not engage in intentional action. Rather, I argue that intentionless activity is an ideal for the **Mahāyāna**. Before moving to a discussion of the **Mahāyāna** version of intentionless activity, I will first place the notion in its wider East Asian context.

No Intention

As I have described it above, the notion of intentional action presupposes two sets of distinctions: between an action and a goal, and between the actor and an action. For instance, when I say that I intend to rid my living room of swine, I distinguish the action of carrying swine from the room from the end of that action--a room without swine. Moreover, I draw a distinction between the subject of the action, the "I" that carries and the action itself, the carrying of the swine from the room.

In Non-Duality: A Study in Comparative Philosophy, David Loy argues that the notion of intentionless action undercuts both sets of distinctions, and his primary example of this notion is the Taoist term wei-wu-wei. According to Loy, this term is "a genuine paradox"; it brings together "two contradictory concepts, nonaction ('nothing is done ...') and action ('... and nothing remains undone')" (Loy 101). Underlying this paradox, says Loy is the assumption that there can be no action without an agent (Loy 102). Taoist authors resolve this paradox, says Loy by using the term wei-wu-wei such that it removes the distinction between the action and the end of the action, and that between subject of the action and the action itself. When one removes these distinctions, says Loy then although there is no agent who acts, the action occurs, and an end results. He claims "(t)he only way to transcend the dualism between self and other is to act without intention--that is, without attachment to some projected goal to be

obtained from the action--in which case the agent can simply be the act" (Loy 106). Intentions, Loy argues are thoughts that are

> "superimposed" upon actions ... the attachment and identification with thought (i.e., the projected goal) gives rise to a sense of duality between the mind that intends (the agent) and the body that is used to attain the intended result. ... when one becomes an action, there is no longer the awareness that it is an action. (Loy 107)

Loy draws the connection between eliminating the end/action distinction and removing the agent/action distinction when he argues that holding an intention is a necessary (and sufficient) condition for being an agent. Loy quotes Stuart Hampshire's argument for linking intention with agency:

> I do distinguish myself, as the inner core that is the source of directed effort, from all my passing states, and it is this sense of myself as the source of meaningful action that gives me the sense of my continuity from the present into the future. ... To be a conscious human being, and therefore a thinking being, is to have intentions and plans and to bring about a certain effect. (qtd.. in Loy, 124)

According to Hampshire, to be an agent means that one holds intentions. For Loy, holding an intention entails thinking of an action as a means to an end, and not holding an intentions means that one acts without thinking of an action as a means to an end. If one acts without intention, s/he undercuts the distinction between an action and its end because s/he removes the end from consideration. If one does not consider an end, s/he cannot draw such a distinction.

From the above, it seems to follow that if one does not hold intentions, then s/he cannot be an agent (Loy 125). It seems also to follow that if one ceases to be an agent, then s/he cannot meaningfully

talk about distinctions between agents and actions. The result of not holding intentions, argues Loy is that actions occur, but no agent acts. He writes that for one who acts without intentions, "there is no longer any awareness that the action is determined: it is experienced as spontaneous and 'self-caused'" (Loy 129). In Loy's terminology, one "becomes a nondual action".

The notion of wu-wei arises often in Chinese texts, and several instances support Loy's reading. For example, the Tao Te Ching, contrasts rulers who act intentionally with those who engage in wu-wei. The twenty-ninth chapter states:

> When one desires to take over the empire and act on it
> (interfere with it)
> I see that he will not succeed.
> The empire is a spiritual thing, and should not be acted on.
> He who acts on it loses it. (Chan 154)

In contrast, the thirty-seventh chapter claims:

> Tao invariably takes no action, and yet there is nothing left undone.
> If kings and barons can keep it, all things will transform spontaneously ...
> And the world will be at peace of its own accord. (Chan 158)

In these two chapters, the text uses the notion of wu-wei to undercut Loy's two distinctions. The text posits rulers who act intentionally ("with desire to take over the empire"), and contrasts them with Taoist kings and barons. The latter engage in wu-wei (action where "there is nothing left undone"), and the contrasting language implies that the Taoists do not act intentionally. They do not consider the ends of their actions, although those actions do have ends, namely the peace of the world. The text thereby undercuts the distinction

between an act and its end by removing the end from consideration. Moreover, since under Loy's reading intentionality is the defining characteristic of an agent, by arguing that Taoist rulers have no intentionality the text seems to claim that they are not agents. If they are not agents, it follows that one cannot distinguish them as agents from their actions.

No Intention in Zen

Loy provides one example of intentionless activity from the Zen tradition. In the eighty-ninth case of The Blue Cliff Record,

> Yun Yen asked Tao Wu, " What does the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion use so many hands and eyes for?"
> Wu said, "It's like someone reaching back grasping for a pillow in the middle of the night."
> Yen said, "I understand." ... (qtd. in Loy 109)

The evocative image of one who reaches for a pillow in the middle of the night illustrates intentionless activity. The bodhisattva, like one asleep acts without intention, and yet as in the case of the Taoist king, nothing remains undone. The bodhisattva still compassionately saves sentient beings.

A more prosaic example comes from monastic training. In response to the critic who argues that a life of intentionless activity is one in which there is no order, Loy presents Ummon's claim that "when the bell sounds we put on our robes and go to the meditation hall" (Loy 131). According to Loy, Ummon's monk responds to the bell without intending to do so. He does not think "the bell has gone, I will put on my robes". Rather, like Pavlov's dog, he simply responds

to the stimulus without thought. Again, although in less esteemed circumstances than the Taoist ruler's, one acts without intention, and yet achieves an end. The monk is fully clothed.

These examples from the Zen/Ch'an tradition are straightforward illustrations of the notion of intentionless activity, and they challenge Keown's teleological model of Buddhist ethics at two points. First, while actions done on the path to Keown's **telos** must be done intentionally, in the example from Ummon it is clear that the monks on the Zen path act unintentionally. Second, while Keown's exemplars must act intentionally, it is evident that the Zen exemplar, the **Bodhisattva** need not. Given that Keown intends his teleological model to describe the **Mahāyāna**, these two counter-examples represent a challenge to his model.

No-Intention in Zen: the Practice of Two Truths

To conclude this thesis, I will place the notion of intentionless action within the logic of two truths, and I will argue that this logic prevents one from holding (only) this kind of activity as normative. The logic of two truths, I contend commits one to no-intention.

In the previous chapter, I argued that the logic of two truths includes three stages, and I claimed that the third stage entails the simultaneous affirmation and negation of binary opposites. There, I discussed the logical moves in linguistic/philosophical terms. I presented the terms "distinctions" and "no distinctions" as opposites, and argued that the third stage of the logic, yields a term, "no-

distinctions" that affirms both terms. At this stage in the thesis, I place the logic within the realm of conduct.

The second case of the Mumonkan provides one example of how the logic of two truths plays out in conduct. The case begins with a story about an old man who in a past life was once asked, "Does an enlightened man also fall into causation or not?" To this, he replied: "He does not," and for this answer, was relegated to living as a fox for five hundred lives. After these lives, the old man approaches Hyakujo, and asks the same questions. Hyakujo replies: "He does not ignore causation," and with this response the old man was enlightened.

Mumon's commentary states:

> "Not falling into causation." Why was he turned into a fox? "Not ignoring causation." Why was he released from the fox body? If you have an eye to see through this, then you will know that the former head of the monastery did enjoy his five hundred happy blessed lives as a fox. (Shibayama 34)

This koan and its commentary provide evidence of the affirmation of opposites in conduct. The commentary states that one who has "an eye to see through this" is able to recognize that the five hundred lives were not a punishment, and the moment of release was not a reward. Mumon seems to enjoin the reader to recognize that the life of an animal, which is conventionally seen as a negative state, and its opposite, the moment of enlightenment, are both "blessed" lives.

If one places the notion of intentionless activity in this logic, an injunction to act with and without intentions seems to follow. The logic seems to make the two kinds of actions equal parts of practice. For example, Hakuin argues that both doing and non-doing are parts

of the practice of one who has "penetrate(d) to see the ultimate meaning of the patriarchal teachers" (Hakuin 30). On one hand, he argues like Loy that one who is enlightened acts unintentionally. Loy notes that for "Pāli Buddhism" one of the "three doors to deliverance (vimokṣa¯mukhāni) is 'wishlessness' or aimlessness'" (Loy 106). This "door" is evident when Hakuin writes, in language similar to Ummon's that if you "see", "(Y)ou will be at liberty to spend your days free from the clutches of circumstance. You will drink tea when it is given; eat rice when it is served" (Hakuin 30). Yet Hakuin does not stop at describing this "nondoing", or intentionless activity. In the next line he introduces the second aspect of no-intention, when he claims: "Doing and nondoing will be firmly in your grasp" (Hakuin 30). For Hakuin's enlightened readers intentionless and intentional actions are equal parts of their practice.

A final example of conduct that is governed by the doctrine two truths comes from a well-known story about Hakuin. A young woman had an illegitimate child, and lied by saying that Hakuin was the father. Upon being hotly accused by the woman's father, Hakuin responded by saying: "Is that so", and he took care of the child while being ostracized by the village. In time, Hakuin's innocence was established, and when the woman's father came back for the child, he exonerated Hakuin and apologized to him. To this Hakuin replied "Is that so" (Reps 7). This anecdote contrasts the dualistic actions of the father with the non-dual activity of Hakuin. While the father vacillated between the poles of a conventional morality--indignant when he believed Hakuin to be guilty, repentant when he found him innocent--Hakuin put into play the logic of non-duality. On one hand,

through his responses, he did not distinguish between guilt and innocence. He made "no distinctions". On the other hand, his actions evinced a moral sense that distinguished responsible from irresponsible behavior. By assuming the obligation to care for the child, he seems to have recognized an obligation. He made a distinction. By balancing the operations of negation and affirmation, Hakuin exemplified "no-distinctions" and thereby, the logic of two-truths.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have argued that through the extensive language of the vow, faith and sincerity, the notion of the will is present in Mahayana thought. Further, I have shown that the notion of intentionless activity plays a central role in at least one Mahayana school. Since such activity requires that one act without holding objectives, it seems to undercut Keown's claim that all Buddhist thought is teleological. A telos is an objective and given that some East Asian forms of Buddhism view intentionless activity as a central part of practice, it seems inaccurate to claim that all Buddhist reflection entails a teleological component.

I conclude this thesis by expressing the hope that I have achieved an accurate extended critique of the prevailing model of Buddhist ethics, and by summarizing the two general lines of criticism that I have leveled against Keown.

I feel that I have challenged Keown's application of the Aristotelian model by questioning his presentations of teleology and

the notion of the will. I argued that the justification for the teleology was open to criticism, and that his application of the teleology to Mahāyāna sources was suspect given the two truths doctrine's challenge to the teleological logic . Further, I criticized his notion of the will in general terms, and then argued that when he applies the Aristotelian model to the Mahāyāna and claims that the will is absent from all Buddhist sources he makes a false claim. Finally, I argued that the Mahāyāna notion of intentionless activity undercuts Keown's teleological understanding of intention.

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