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Queering Buddhist Traditions

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Summary

Buddhist traditions intersect with queer lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, intersex, queer/querying (and more) subjectivities and belongings in a multifaceted way. *Queer theory* (QT) can enrich Buddhist thought and practices as well as Buddhist studies by inserting a challenging method of deconstruction, troubling and resisting oppressive and harmful socioreligious scripts with regards to, and beyond, sexuality and gender. There is a nascent reception of the queering impulses within Buddhist traditions, yet QT and foundational queer theorists lack comprehensive Buddhist appraisal: Queer “dharmology” has yet to be systematically developed.

When discussing perspectives and practices regarding sexuality/ies and sex/gender in Buddhist thought and cultures, a distinct genealogy of nonheterosexual desires and sex/gender diversity emerges. Buddhist views on sexualities anchor on the psychology of desire and attachment in terms of religious philosophy and soteriology; at the social level, biopolitical regulations of Buddhist life focus on the dichotomy of celibate monastic vs. householder lay contexts. The variety of sex/gender subjectivities in Buddhist traditions include the historical stigmatized third and fourth sex/gender categories of the *pañḍaka* (“gender-deficient,” usual thought of as “male-deficient”) and the *ubhatobyañjanaka* (“both-sexed”). However, neither category maps neatly onto contemporary queer and trans* subjectivities, leading to confusion, debate, and discretion in contemporary Buddhist cultures.

The complex picture of both surprisingly pragmatic and inclusive as well as discriminatory and hostile paradigms emerges from Buddhist thought and practices in the divergent traditions of Theravāda, East Asian Mahāyāna, Tibetan Buddhism, and in ecumenic or demi-/post-denominational forms of Buddhism and Neo-Buddhism in the Global North (“Western” Buddhism), both historically and in contemporary global-glocal-local traditions.

Queer (post)modern Buddhist subjectivities are increasingly emerging as powerful voices within constructive-critical and reflective emic modes of Buddhist thought and practice. A contemporary queer Buddhist “theology” or queer (/trans*-affirmative) dharmology can be successfully developed in a framework of five parameters: (1) *reflexivity*, (2) *hermeneutics*, (3) *conceptualization*, (4) *signification*, and (5) *application*. Focusing on the parameter of conceptualization, QT-immersed queer dharmology can start with the specific, “messy,” complex, contextual, ever-changing and conditioned human experiences, and interactional negotiations or *be(com)ing and interbe(com)ing*. A “this-worldly” (socio-saṃsāric) focus also averts the danger of spiritual bypassing and “*dharma*-splaining.” Instead, complex Buddhist notions such as *karma* and interdependence become powerful instruments of *Buddhist queering*, that is, challenging any normative societal script that causes suffering.

Keywords: queer theory, cultural theory, Buddhist ethics, Buddhism and sexuality, Buddhism and gender identity, *pañḍaka*, LGBT Buddhists, Buddhist constructive-critical reflection, dharmology, queer liberation theology

Subjects: Buddhism

Introduction: QT Meets Buddhism

Developed in the 1990s by foundational thinkers such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Butler, and David Halperin, Queer Theory (QT) is rooted in multiple strands of feminist thought and critical theory (CT) and CT's developments in, among others, Derridean deconstruction, Foucauldian poststructuralism, and various postmodern schools of thinking.¹

The “queer” in QT points to the subversive and dissident challenge that queer subjectivities pose to hegemonic and normative systems of sex/gender and sexual belonging and governance. Reappropriating a pejorative term for homosexuals, “queer,” as a noun (broadly conceived) points to (the counterhegemonic aspects of) LGBTIQ+ subjectivities (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, intersex, queer/querying, and more) and is used as such, stressing the interconnected mesh of both gender and sexual subjectivities and belongings; some scholars, however, prefer to differentiate trans* theory (gender) from QT (sexualities). QT's “queers” are not simply LGBTI people but are and aim to be *Querschläger*—societal ricochets exploding compulsory identitarian essentialism and exclusive dualisms/binarisms.²

As a verb, “queer(ing)” covers the semantic field of critiquing, challenging, subverting, resisting, undoing, and exploding oppressive and monolithic societal scripts of sex, gender, and sexualities.³ Queering can be regarded as a trans- and interdisciplinary function of undoing: both epistemic and practical, theoretic and applied, permeable and focused, open and concrete. Organically the queering impulse resonates, intersects, overlaps, and synergizes with “cripping,” decolonizing, and other modes of undoing that take various forms of marginalization as critical starting points, yet counterflow to and disrupt the oppressive societal scripts and centers that create the margins.⁴ Hence, QT is both an engine for, and a beneficiary of, “intersectional theory”—which includes critical race theory, postcolonial theory, and critical disability studies, among others.⁵

It follows that the academic study of queer(ing) Buddhism(s), while partially overlapping, differs substantially in method and scope from investigations into Buddhism(s) & gender and Buddhism(s) & sexuality/-ies while exploring diachronically through the ages, and synchronically across different cultures and geographies, how the various Buddhist traditions have manifested a multitude of complex and divergent philosophical and ethical perspectives and regulations around sexualities and diverse sex/gender subjectivities.⁶

The academic study of Buddhist traditions remains dominated by “phallogocentric” (Derrida) modes of inquiry: textual-philological, historical and (traditional-)philosophical inquiry with some space for “acceptable” anthropological and sociological research. Buddhist studies as a field has been slow to adapt critical modern and postmodern theoretical impulses which include scholars-cum-practitioners as Buddhist constructive-critical thinkers (academic “dharmologists” or “Buddhist theologians”); some professional bodies such as the American Academy of Religion (AAR) have taking steps to address the pertinent issues of the hegemonic politics of scholarship and have opened up to dharmological, intersectional, queer and trans* perspectives.⁷

Prominently, the work of the late Rita Gross opened Buddhist studies to second-wave, “white” feminist thinking, which, in turn, has been powerfully critiqued by persons of color (POC) Buddhist feminist perspectives.⁸ Notably, Gross’s student Hsiao-Lan Hu extended Buddhist feminist thinking to third-wave feminism.⁹ However, queer-intersectional strands of feminist inquiry are not yet sufficiently systematically explored in Buddhist studies.

Among the pioneer adapters of critical cultural theory and philosophy is the scholar of East Asian Buddhism Bernard Faure who in 1991 named Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida among his “cardinal and tutelary deities.”¹⁰ Faure continued his fruitful reception of Foucault in his trailblazing monograph on Buddhism and sexuality, *The Red Thread*.¹¹ Since then, Buddhist studies has explored the influence of Foucault and of “postmodern” philosophers such as Levinas and Deleuze, as well as some more detailed work on Buddhism and Derrida.¹² However, a systematic Buddhist appraisal of contemporary cultural/social theories and postmodern philosophies remains still embryonic although important inroads have been made by, among others, Simon Gareth Smith, Carl Olson, Jin Y. Park, and Edwin Ng.¹³

In the case of QT and of foundational queer theorists, any comprehensive Buddhist appraisal is lacking. At the same time, there is a nascent reception of the queering impulses within global Buddhist traditions (see section entitled “Queerness in Contemporary Global Buddhist Traditions”), but there is of yet a lack of systematic attempts of queer Buddhist constructive-critical reflection or dharmology.¹⁴

Buddhist Views on Sexuality/-ies and Sex/Gender Diversity

Research into the complex and interpellated fields of sexuality/-ies and sex/gender diversity in Buddhist traditions has often been marred by the traps of historicism and conceptual conflation.¹⁵ This article treats the fields as separate for pragmatical reasons but acknowledges the multiple blurred lines and overlapping queer subjectivities and (un)belongings.

Buddhist Views on Sexuality/-ies

In philosophical terms, sensuality (Pāli *rāga*) and sensual passion (*kāma*) are regarded in Early Buddhism as manifestations of clinging/attachment (*upādāna*). *Kāmuṇupādāna* (“sensual grasping”) counts among the four major categories of *upādāna* in Early Buddhist scholasticism.¹⁶ Sexual activity is therefore usually an enactment of desire/craving (*taṇhā*), Sanskrit (Skt.) *trṣṇā*, *lobha*—one of the three core (*mūla*) afflicting emotions (“defilements” *kilesa/kleśa*) that cease with enlightenment. This perspective means that all sexual activities can potentially be viewed as a “problem,” but it does not automatically render Buddhist traditions “sex-negative.”¹⁷ Rather, sexuality features simply among bodily expressions and functions: “sex is just something that people do”¹⁸ and, as such, connected with attachment; hence, sexuality is a training field for the cultivation of ethics (*sīla/sīla*) and right conduct (*sammā-kammanta/samyak-karmānta*). Non-(cis-)males, however, are persistently characterized as possessing untamed, predatory, and aggressive sexuality and are regarded as a threat to (male) monastic purity.¹⁹ In consequence, female monastics are subjected to additional restrictive rules (including the eight “reverence

rules”: *garudhammas/gurudharmas*) and the ordination of anyone outside the normative male/female gender spectrum is prohibited (see the section “Buddhist Views on Sex/Gender Diversity”).

In practical and in sociolegal terms, Early Buddhist texts discuss sexuality (and sex/gender diversity) within the context of monasticism. The monastic code (*vinaya*) regulates in detailed form the social life and the social interactions of monks and nuns including their sexuality. The monastic vow of celibacy (*brahmacariya/brahmacārya*/Chinese 梵行 *fàn xíng*, Tibetan [Tib.] *tshangs par spyod pa*) features prominently and the different Early Buddhist *vinayas* casuistically detail prohibited sexual acts and the scale of monastic punishments up to expulsion for each specific breach of celibacy. The extensive monastic rules and their legalistic etiology (origin cases) in sexual matters underline the foundational importance of monastic vows in a rhetoric trope of polarization that is arguably at times humorous.²⁰ In the context of breach of celibacy, the *vinayas* simply acknowledge that monastics can experience polymorph sexual desires and attractions including same-sex desire. Among the breaches of celibacy, nonheteronormative desires and sexuality are not particularly singled out and are not more stigmatized than heterosexual acts.²¹

Sexual ethics for laypeople is only sparsely circumscribed in the vague formula of avoidance of “sexual misconduct” (*kāmesu micchācāra*). Sexual harming is primarily conceptualized as “sleeping with another’s wife” (*Kesaputtiya-sutta* AN 3, 65 [2, 2, 5] i 189 PTS) and/or status/dependency violation (such as guardian status, existing marriage or engagement, *Cunda-sutta* AN 10, 176 [4, 2, 10] v 264). The texts consistently assume a patriarchal and heteronormative default perspective of men who desire women (or other nonnormative sex/genders, see section “Buddhist Views on Sex/Gender Diversity”). The socioreligious stigmatization of intragender desire as such appears to surface in South Asian history only during the Kuṣāṇa period (in the first four centuries CE).²² During this period, the influential Buddhist compendia such as the *Yogācārabhumisāstra* and the *Abhidharmakośa* and their respective commentarial traditions attest to a shift in the production of sexual values. During this shift, intragender desire and sexual activity becomes condemned explicitly and in generalized terms; sexuality is being regulated in terms of time, location, and context to procreative penetrative acts of married male-female couples. The emerging monastic/scholastic view on lay sexual practices prominently emphasized the prohibition of “unnatural” (*anaṅga*) oral and anal sex and both male-male and male-third gender (see the section on “Buddhist Views on Sex/Gender Diversity”) sexual acts become explicitly prohibited.²³ In the same period, Mahāyāna scriptures such as the (*Saddharma-*) *Smṛtyupasthāna-Sūtra* emerge, detailing hell punishments for various sexual crimes and actors, including men who have sex with men.²⁴ This social attitude has taken hold and prevails in most subsequent Buddhist civilizations—for example, in Tibet through influential religious compendia such as Gampopa’s *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* (12th CE) and, meeting (Neo-) Confucian family values, in Chinese and Korean Buddhism.²⁵ In Japan, conflicting attitudes towards same-sex relations arose within the Medieval Buddhist traditions, most notably Shingon (真言), prominently including the praise of sexual relationships and mentorship between senior monks and novices.²⁶

Buddhist Views on Sex/Gender Diversity

The conceptual differentiation between “sex” in terms of biology and “gender” in terms of culture is a product of modernity; premodern South Asia conceptualizes sex/gender not in neatly separated biological essentialized or culturally constructed terms but in terms of “faculties” (*indriya*) that express themselves in a hegemonic male and female binarism despite the early development of theoretical three- and fourfold sex/gender systems.²⁷ Already in Vedic times, an abject “third” sex/gender is acknowledged;²⁸ classical Buddhist and medical scholars developed a fourfold sex/gender system analogous to the fourfold system of Indian logic (tetralemma, Skt. *catuṣkoṭi*).²⁹ The philosophical “male–female” binary was completed with the third “neither–nor” and the fourth “both ... and” categories.

The “both ... and” sex/gender is termed *ubhatobyañjanaka* (二根 èr gēn) which roughly translates into “both-sexed.” The term points to the occurrence of varieties in human sexual biology and development that are contemporarily subsumed under the larger umbrella of intersex; however, some intersex variants appear to be included in the third category as congenital third sex/gender person (*jāti-/napuṃsaka paṇḍaka* 扇攏 shàn chuāi);³⁰ East Asian Buddhist traditions sometimes collapse the third and fourth categories.³¹ The term “hermaphrodite” that is used commonly as a translation of *ubhatobyañjanaka* is overwhelmingly regarded as offensive in contemporary intersex communities; hence, “both-sexed” appears to be the most neutral translation. Early sources do not provide much detail about *ubhatobyañjanakas*.³² Yet it is evident that they were socially stigmatized and not admitted to ordination in the Buddhist sangha.

The term most commonly used in Buddhist texts for the third sex/gender category is the Vedic term *paṇḍaka* meaning “(a person) without testes.”³³ The etymology of *paṇḍaka* points to their lack of maleness (one early Chinese translation is literally “non–male”: 不男, bù nán), that is, lack of normative sex/gender faculties as seen in comparison to the default male position.³⁴ The male (cis/hetero-) patriarchal lens on the third sex/gender is made clear by the fact that using a female starting point of comparison for *paṇḍaka* necessitates explicit qualification of the term as “female *paṇḍaka*” in Early Buddhist literature.³⁵ The Early Buddhist treatise *Milindapañhā* (*Questions of Milinda*, Miln. 93) notes the female sex/gender’s intrinsic inferiority (*ittaratā*) and the intrinsic ambiguity (*anekamaṃsikatā*) of the third sex/gender: *paṇḍakas* cannot be identified as either male or female (“neither ... nor”).

How, then, to conceptualize and to translate the *paṇḍaka*? Early Pāli Buddhist sources such as the late-canonical *Kathāvatthu* (Kv II, 1=167 PTS) point at (male) infertility and at impotence (*vossa* DN-a i 97 at DN 1, 12).³⁶ Only the commentarial scholasticism of the 4th and 5th century CE provides five descriptive *paṇḍaka* subcategories covering a variety of biological–procreative and psychosexual/gender–normative impotencies: infertilities and sexual behavior that contravenes nucleolar default–gender norms.

1. *jāti-/napuṃsaka-paṇḍaka* congenital impotence which might include some intersex varieties of sex indeterminable at birth.
2. *pakkha-paṇḍaka* fortnightly cyclical impotence.
3. *opakkāmika-paṇḍaka* impotence inflicted as punishment.

4. *īrṣya-p./usūya—paṇḍaka* “jealousy” psycho/sociosexual impotence expressing itself in voyeurist behavior.
5. *āsitta—paṇḍaka* “sprinkled” psycho/sociosexual penetrative impotence assuming a passive sexual role of fellator (oral).

While infertile or, as a punishment, castrated males hence feature within the *paṇḍaka* category, the translation of the term as “eunuch,” common in older literature, is misleading and, at least partially, anachronistic. Similarly, Leonard Zwilling’s early article on homosexuality in Indic Buddhism overemphasizes sexual acts as described in the *paṇḍaka* subcategories 4 and 5; his still oft-quoted definition of *paṇḍakas* as “a socially stigmatized class of passive, probably transvestite, homosexuals”³⁷ is an example of the “doing the history of homosexuality” (hotly debated in early QT) as historicism, that is, by (anachronistic) readings of contemporary Global Northern “queer” subjectivities and belongings into pre- and early modern, and various Global Southern contexts.³⁸ John Powers in his study of masculinity in Early Buddhism uses the term “sexual deviants”³⁹ in doing so, he misses the crucial sex/gender element. While it is clear that *paṇḍaka* subcategories are connotated in Classical South Asian Buddhist texts with nonnormative sexual practices, it remains important to stress that the term *paṇḍaka* does not primarily denote a sexual orientation, sexual nonnormativity, or “queerness;” *paṇḍaka* denotes, if one so wishes, a “genderqueerness”: a queerness of sex/gender faculty (*indriya*). José Ignacio Cabezón in his foundational study on sexuality in Classical Indian Buddhism uses the broad term “queer” for *paṇḍaka* with the explicit Wittgensteinian caveat of context.⁴⁰ Cabezón is perfectly explicit about *paṇḍaka* as a (sex/) gender signifier. Unfortunately, and perhaps unavoidably, at times, in the subsequent employment of the “queer” in Cabezón’s translations and conceptual evaluations various Indic and Tibetan concepts beyond *paṇḍaka* (Tib. ma ning) collapse; additionally, the term “queer” transports contemporary and QT usages which makes it as a translation for *paṇḍaka* into a somewhat infelicitous shortcut that problematically thrusts and collapses complex contemporary connotations onto the premodern term. Hence, the term *paṇḍaka* should remain untranslated or, if necessary, be described with the unsexy, yet more accurate term “gender-deficient.”

In terms of sex/gender change, Buddhist texts are embedded in the wider premodern South Asian tradition whose literature abounds in narratives of sex/gender changes as either (a) unexpected and unwelcome (usually male to female, MtF, e.g., due to a curse); (b) unexpected and welcome (e.g., female to male, FtM); or (c) expected and welcome (e.g., by propitiating a supernatural being or deliberate magic).⁴¹ Buddhist sex/gender change narratives reflect these patterns; commentators tend to emphasize the agency of karma, the ripening of wholesome causes for FtM and of unwholesome for MtF.⁴² Importantly, the occurrence of sex/gender change is simply accepted as a regular phenomenon (Miln. 267, *Dilemmas* 7.4). In the *vinaya*, the Buddha laconically and pragmatically accepts the change of sex/gender of monastics and confirms them in their changed sex/gender community.⁴³ While premodern Buddhist understandings of sex-change differ from modern and contemporary sexological views on trans* people and transgenderism, the clear precedents in the Early Buddhist foundational texts should be basis enough to safeguard against transphobia and trans* discrimination (although not necessarily for nonbinary and genderfluid individuals); unfortunately, transphobia is prevalent throughout

traditional Buddhisms, due to the conflation of trans* with the third (and, to less extent, the fourth) sex/gender categories and the general cultural mechanics of cis-hetero-patriarchal “aphallophobia” (which includes sexism, homo-, lesbo-, bi-, queer- and transphobia).⁴⁴

Queerness in Contemporary Global Buddhist Traditions

The spectrum of contemporary Buddhist attitudes to queerness range from total rejection to wholehearted embrace and, thus, reflects the polyphone and, at times, conflicting complexity of *global-glocal-local* and context-specific Buddhist traditions in their diachronic and synchronic messiness. Examples of queerphobic hate speech from Buddhist leaders do not help the attempts to queer Buddhist dialogues and the emerging of integrated intersectional subjectivities. The 2019 recording of a senior Burmese Buddhist monk mocking the suicide of a gay librarian, before whipping up a lynch mob against all homosexuals, is a chilling reminder of the plight of LGBTIQ+ Buddhists in many traditionally majority Buddhist countries and some of their transnational satellites in Global Buddhist contexts.⁴⁵

Theravāda

Within contemporary Theravāda traditions, anti-LGBTIQ+ sentiments and proof-texting regularly occur. For example, the influential modernist Vipassanā teacher Satya Narayan Goenka (1924–2013) viewed homosexuality as dangerous.⁴⁶ Within conservative Thai Buddhist discourses, both the Western category “gay” (คนลักเพศ *khon lakphet*, lit. “unnatural person”) and the indigenous Thai trans* category “*kathoei*” กะเทย (also often written as *kathoei* and frequently translated as “lady-boy”) are regularly conflated and identified with the (abject) *paṇḍaka*—the third sex/gender category in premodern South Asia as mentioned in Buddhist scripture.⁴⁷ In the cases *kathoei* are ordained, the prerequisites are: intact male genitals; ordination at a minor temple far away from the public eye; and the compassionate discretion of the preceptor.⁴⁸ However, in most cases, *kathoeis* and *khun laphet* continue to be excluded from ordination.⁴⁹ Prominently, in the early 2000s, Phra Phayom Konyano พระพยอม กลฺยาโณ called for a purge of gay monks from the sangha.⁵⁰ In March 2014, the popular *Woody Talk Show* featured a *kathoei* who became a monk; one year later, the military government moved to explicitly outlaw the ordination of “homosexuals” and provides prison sentences for homosexual monks.⁵¹ Monasteries such as Wat Krueng Tai วัดครึ่งใต้ in the Northern Thai town Chiang Khong เชียงของ even function as a Buddhist equivalents to Christian “pray-the-gay-way” anti-LGBTIQ+ “conversion therapy” or “re-education” camps.⁵² The existence of such practices also within Buddhist contexts appears to have eluded the signatories of the *European Buddhist Union* who called for an end of (Christian) conversion therapy in a declaration of March 1, 2018.⁵³ At the progressive spectrum within Thai Buddhist discourses, Ven. Wontham (Waradhammo) พระวชิรธรรม is an outspoken proponent for queer rights;⁵⁴ he is calling for the ordination of anyone regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.⁵⁵ Transnational Thai Theravāda traditions also include prominent inclusive voices such as the British Ajahn Brahm, and the Australian Ajahn Sujato.⁵⁶ Sujato’s compatriot Akālika Bhikkhu describes himself as “an out and proud queer Buddhist monk.” He founded the interdenominational *Rainbodhi Sangha* in 2019.⁵⁷

East Asian Mahāyāna

Following the genealogy of Buddhist sexual ethics in East Asia, contemporary Sinitic Mahāyāna includes examples of the “hell and brimstone” end of the spectrum such as the influential Chan (禪 chán) Master and globalizer Hsuan Hua 宣化 (1918–1995) who founded the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association. He condemns homosexuality with strong apocalyptic tropes of hell and of the doom of humanity.⁵⁸ In contrast, contemporary Sinophone Buddhist leaders such as the Humanistic Buddhist Master Hsing Yun of Fo Guang Shan stress acceptance and tolerance “as a form of generosity and a form of wisdom.”⁵⁹

The most vocal pro-LGBTIQ+ voice among contemporary Sinitic Buddhist leaders is the scholar-nun Ven. Chao-Hwei (昭慧, Zhāo Huì) of the intermonastic *Hong Shi Buddhist College* 佛教弘誓學院 (Taiwan).⁶⁰ Ven. Chao-Hwei has published widely on matters of Buddhist ethics and conducted the first Buddhist same-sex marriage ceremony in Taiwan in 2014.⁶¹

Vietnamese Chan (Thiền) is the main source of the socially engaged transnational mindfulness *Community of Interbeing*, founded by Thich Nhat Hanh (Thích Nhất Hạnh), with its seat in Plum Village, France. This community provides queer-inclusive and affirmative spaces since the 1990s.⁶²

Japanese derived transnational Buddhist movements feature among the most LBGTIQ+ inclusive forms of contemporary Buddhism: the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA, 米国仏教団) is the long-established US branch of the Nishi Hongan-ji 西本願寺 Jōdo Shinshū 淨土真宗 (True Pure Land School) and has evolved to become a vocal advocate of inclusivity. BCA Revd. Koshin Ogui conducted the first same-sex marriage in the early 1970s in San Francisco.⁶³ In 2000, the Nishi Hongan-ji, the head temple in Kyoto for ten thousand plus affiliated Shin temples, issued a statement by the highest doctrinal expert that there were no objections to marriages involving same-sex couples and/or “transsexuals”; the liturgical text was changed from reading “husband” and “wife” to “spouse.”⁶⁴ Still, some tensions remain with gender essentializing doctrines.⁶⁵ Gender-queer visibility in Japanese Buddhism has been heightened by the activities of the Jōdo Shū (淨土宗) priest Revd. Kōdō Nishimura 西村 宏堂 (b. 1989) who is gathering transnational fame as a makeup artist.⁶⁶

SG-I (Sōka Gakkai 創価学会-International), a highly active *Lotus-Sūtra* Buddhist and Nichiren-derived global NRM (new religious movement) gradually developed to be explicitly queer-affirming.⁶⁷ Some parts of the movement have welcomed LGB[TIQ] people since the 1980s and LGBT groups were established since the early 1990s; since 2015, such groups use the new umbrella “Courageous Freedom.” In 1995, SG-I official policy changed to allow same-sex commitment ceremonies.⁶⁸

Tibetan Buddhism

In line with the developments in Buddhist sexual ethics in the Tibetan cultural sphere, 20th and 21st-century Tibetan Buddhist voices often inhabit a conflicted mid-spectrum; among others, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has been, since 1997, on an evolving learning curve after causing

consternation (and hurt) with traditionally Tibetan prohibitive views on masturbation, oral and anal sex, and homophobic remarks.⁶⁹ The Tibetan Buddhist struggle in exile and (post)modernity to reconcile traditionally Tibetan queerphobic attitudes with transnational (post)modernist values can also be exemplified at the position of the late Fourteenth Shamarpa (zhwa dmar pa), Mipham Chokyi Lodro (mi pham chos kyi blo gros, 1952–2014), the second most senior leader of the Karma Kagyu (karma bka' -brgyud) school. For Shamarpa, LGBTIQ+ is a private matter which should not interfere with “civilized society” (read: the nucleolar heteronorm).⁷⁰

While these high Tibetan Buddhist masters apparently maintain in public traditional heteronormative mindsets, transnationally and on a personal level, diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity appear to be non-issues for most Tibetan masters. For example, senior leaders of the Nyingma tradition such as the late Dudjom (bdud 'joms) Rinpoche (1904–1987) appear to have never problematized homosexuality.⁷¹

One of the most influential “crazy yogi” globalizers of Tibetan Buddhism, Chogyam Trungpa (chos rgyam drung pa, 1939–1987), was overtly sex-positive and LGB inclusive.⁷² Trungpa’s organization Vajradhatu/Shambhala attracted a significant number of gay and bisexual disciples: “In the Vajradhatu of Trungpa’s day, gays as singles or couples were open and common, as was bisexual experimentation. The anecdotes are endless and outrageous.”⁷³ Contemporary Shambhala has an active LGBTQ Network.⁷⁴ However, sexual scandals appear to weave like a red thread through Trungpa’s controversial Buddhist (and post-Buddhist) legacy, from alleged coercion (in 1975) by Trungpa (the Merwin scandal), irresponsible transmission of HIV by Trungpa’s bisexual dharma heir, up to the abuse scandal (starting 2018) around the Sakyong Mipham, Trungpa’s son and heir to *Shambhala International*.⁷⁵

Among the younger generation of transnational senior Tibetan Buddhist leaders, His Holiness Ogyen Tinley Dorje (o rgyan 'phrin las rdo rje, 1985–) has been publicly supportive of the LGBTIQ+ community, as have the 12th Gyalwang Drukpa (rgyal dbang 'brug pa), Jigme Pema Wangchen ('jigs med padma dbang chen), and the prolific Tibetan Buddhist modernist Bhutanese master Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche (dzong gsar 'jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse rin po che, 1961–), among many others.⁷⁶

In Tibetan communities in exile, monastic-normative views on sexual ethics continue to be influential, while the reality of prohibited (both monastic and lay) sexual practices is widely acknowledged in Tibetan medical literature.⁷⁷ Contemporary Tibetan lay tantric and medicine masters such as Dr. Nida Chenagsang do not regard queerness and queer sexuality as deviance and simply advocate for safe sex.⁷⁸

The Tibetan category of the *ma ning* (as translation of *paṇḍaka*) is historically polysemous and in tantric and medical contexts sometimes highly positively connotated.⁷⁹ The category is, however, regularly mapped onto contemporary Tibetan (and Mongolian) queer and trans* subjectivities in a pejorative sense and conflated with other Tibetan derogative terms such as *polo molo/poli moli*.⁸⁰ Tibetan LGBT people appear to prefer to identify with English categories or neutral Tibetan descriptors.⁸¹ Some attempts have been made in Global Northern convert Tibetan Buddhism to adopt the protector deity Maning Mahākala for queer tantric dharmology.⁸² Since

2016, Tibetan trans* visibility has increased through the publication on social media of an interview (in Tibetan language) given by ex-monk and trans woman, Tenzin Mariko (bstan 'dzin ma ri ko).⁸³

Within contemporary Tibetan Buddhism, this range of responses is consistent with the complexity of the globalization of the tradition while navigating premodern, modern, and postmodern modes of praxis (g)locally and transnationally.⁸⁴

“Western” Buddhism

Queer Buddhists in the Global North are navigating the minefield of traditional prejudices with increasing confidence.⁸⁵ The San Francisco Bay area saw the early gay-friendly activities of the Jōdo Shinshū BCA in the 1970s and one pioneering and still active network was established there in the 1980s in the form of the Gay Buddhist Group, later called the Gay Buddhist Fellowship.⁸⁶ The Gay Buddhist Group also spawned the Hartford Street Zen Center whose abbot Roshi Issan Dorsey (1933–1990) was a former drag queen and dharma heir of Zentatsu Baker-Roshi; Dorsey established a hospice for people dying of AIDS in the 1980s early epidemic.⁸⁷ Trungpa's transnational Tibetan Neo- and Post-Buddhism also provided queer spaces. LGBT (later LGBTIQ+) retreats were also held in America since the 1990s by Eric Kolveig and lesbian teacher Arinna Weisman.⁸⁸ Thich Nhat Hanh's transnational *Plum Village* community established a dedicated gay and lesbian network in 1992.⁸⁹

In the context of the Western Neo-Buddhism, *Triratna* (formally known as the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, FWBO) has developed into a queer-embracing space.⁹⁰ The movement was founded by Dennis Lingwood (Sangharakshita, 1925–2018) whose homosexual orientation was an open secret; that did not prevent Lingwood from acting in distinctively transphobic ways towards transman Michael Dillon/Lobzang Jivaka.⁹¹ However, the order has ordained trans* members who are recognized in their affirmed gender as indicated by 2016 ordination and retreat events.⁹² Similarly to the Tibetan (Post)Buddhist Shambhala movement (see subsection “Tibetan Buddhism”), FWBO/Triratna has been marred by sexual scandals; these include allegations against Lingwood and other senior male leaders relating to sexual misconduct and abusive sexual coercion of other junior male (mostly heterosexual) members.⁹³ Lingwood issued a statement of deep regret about his behavior on December 30, 2016, but the order continues to face criticism about its handling of the abuse also from a progressive group of ordained members who call themselves *Interkula*.⁹⁴

(Post)Modern Queer Buddhists and Dharmology

Queer-feminist Buddhism can be regarded as a third wave of LGB(TIQ+) liberation within Buddhist culture. In Global “Buddhism beyond Modernity”⁹⁵ intersectional, inclusive practices and voices are increasingly appearing and produce nascent forms of queer dharmologies.

Queer Buddhists beyond Modernity

LGBTIQ+ subjectivities still face similar challenges in Buddhist contexts as in most traditional environments of vestigial governmentalities (such as “religions”).⁹⁶ Queer and trans* make uneasy bedfellows, also because any intersection of “queer/religion” can become contentious from both sides. Queer people might feel that they are asked to exchange their identitarian agency for the belonging and soteriology a religion offers and which comes interpellated with biopolitical regulation; hence the second-wave global LGBT liberation (the “Gay International”) often and dogmatically construes the ill-defined yet efficacious Western category of “religion” as hostile to queers/queering: this “homosecularism” sees queerness and religiosity as mutually exclusive.⁹⁷

In Asian Buddhist contexts, queer and queer-inclusive Buddhist voices become more prominent. For example, in Thailand, Phra Wontham (Waradhammo) พระวธธรรม connects queer Buddhist practitioners through his *Neo-Buddhism* blogspot <<https://neobuddhism.blogspot.com/>>.⁹⁸ Vernacular Thai Buddhism also features strongly in Thai queer cinema enriching the societal discourse and queer cultural production.⁹⁹ In addition to the already mentioned Revd. Kōdō Nishimura’s activities to increase gender-queer visibility in Japan (subsection “East Asian Mahāyāna”), in 2019 the *Sangha Japan* magazine featured the first Japanese language article on Buddhist LGBT issues.¹⁰⁰ In the East Asia-Pacific, some trans* networks are consciously adapting as their icon the bodhisattva of compassion Guanyin (Guān [shì] yīn 觀[世]音).¹⁰¹ Guanyin is ambigender in East Asian Buddhism traditions since the Tang (Táng 唐) dynasty, yet remains male-only in the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist traditions (Skt. Avalokiteśvara, Tib. sPyan ras gzigs “Chenrezig”).¹⁰²

In the Global North, the generally positive (orientalized and romanticized) image of the (post)modernist brand of “Buddhism” is often conducive to the search for a spiritual and/or religious home that some LGBTIQ+ people undergo within a tension between traditional religious rejection and “homosecularism.” Queer and trans* people increasingly embrace various (post)modernist global and transnational forms of Buddhism and/or secularized Buddhism-derived meditation practices. In doing so, some have found their new Buddhist practice a catalyst of de-emphasizing or de-queering their queer subjectivities;¹⁰³ some are giving into strong hetero-/and homonormative pressures.¹⁰⁴ Other LGBTIQ+ Buddhists have “expressed that their queer identities functioned as a profound ‘doorway into dharma’” and “felt that there was a special compatibility between foundational Buddhist teachings and queer identities.”¹⁰⁵

Long after the trans* pioneer monastic Michael Dillon/Lobzang Jivaka (see “Western Buddhism”), multiple global (post)modernist traditions feature increasing visibility of queer and trans* ordained and authorized lay teachers, such as Catriona Reed who transitioned in 1996, four years after her authorization by Thich Nhat Hanh;¹⁰⁶ the Sōtō 曹洞 Zen 禅 teacher Fugan 普願 Eugene Bush (authorized in 2010 by Katherine Thanas). A Vipassanā teacher from the Philippines, La Sarmiento, came out as gender nonconforming in 2012.¹⁰⁷

Equally, postmodern modes of Buddhism feature intersectional voices such as Larry Yang of the Spirit Rock Meditation Center.¹⁰⁸ The African American Zen master Earthlyn Manuel has been arguing powerfully for an intersectional Buddhist approach to ending discrimination.¹⁰⁹ Lama Rod Owens, angel Kyodo Williams, and Jasmine Syedullah have developed a “Radical Dharma” approach which spawned camps and groups for queer and POC practitioners.¹¹⁰

Popular nondenominational English language magazines aimed at Global Northern Buddhists such as *Lion’s Roar* and *Tricycle* have featured popular queer/trans* Buddhist articles and reflections, as have some organization-specific publications.¹¹¹

Trans* Buddhist practitioners initiated an online virtual sangha in 2014, in order “to address systemic exclusion of transgender and gender nonconforming people from Buddhist spaces.”¹¹² *Sakyadhita—International Association of Buddhist Women* has hosted LGBT dharma workshops during the biennial conferences since 2010.¹¹³ The European Buddhist Union established a “Rainbow Sangha” queer Buddhist network.¹¹⁴ In Australia, the *Rainbodhi Sangha* was founded in 2019 as a “a community group for LGBTQIA+ Buddhists and friends.”¹¹⁵ In March 2018, Thich Nhat Hanh’s European Institute of Applied Buddhism organized an LGBTIQ* retreat in Germany.¹¹⁶

Queer Dharmology

So, where from here for queer(ed) Buddhism and queer Buddhist “liberation theology”?¹¹⁷ Five key queer-affirmative parameters can be suggested for the emerging queer and trans* Buddhist liberation dharmology:

1. *Reflexivity*: Self-reflective clarity and awareness of the cultural-specific (post)modernist positionalities that queer, trans, secular, POC, dis/abled, etc., Buddhist thinkers inhabit.
2. *Hermeneutics*: Liberatory hermeneutical strategies that challenge, defy, and subvert persistent anti-LGBTIQ+ proof-texting of premodern scriptures and traditional practices.¹¹⁸
3. *Conceptualization*: The development, in dialogue with QT, of constructive-critical queer readings of Buddhist tenets (such as karma, No-Self, emptiness).
4. *Signification*: The excavation and (re)signification of queer/trans-affirmative paradigms, symbolism, and role models.
5. *Application*: The adaptation of queer/trans* affirmative spaces and technologies of the (No-)Self in Buddhist practice including meditation.¹¹⁹

Carefully positioned (parameter 1) Buddhist liberation hermeneutics (parameter 2) can hence complicate and counter, for example, the conflation of Buddhist scriptural sex/gender/sexual behavior categories (see “Buddhist Views on Sexuality/-ies and Sex/Gender Diversity”) with contemporary Global Northern LGBTIQ+ subjectivities. Such hermeneutics can demonstrate the power and governmental agenda behind any questionable “*dharma-splaining*” of “aphallophobia,” including homo-, bi-, and transphobia.¹²⁰

A philosophical queering (parameter 3) of Buddhist thought refers to the de- and reconstructive examination and the complicating of Buddhist core tenets such as karma and No-Self.

Mythopoetic-narrative excavation and resignification of queer/trans-affirmative icons (parameter 4) can focus on Avalokiteśvara—Guanyin 觀音 or tantric deities, working with tantric dharmologies around the ultimate identity of conceptual thought and orgasmic bliss.¹²¹

Also, the development of LGBTIQ+ specific and/or affirmative spaces for Buddhist practice (parameter 5) is documented in the subsection “Queer Buddhists beyond Modernity.” Generally no prominently queer(ing) modification to any practice is being deemed necessary; Jeffrey Hopkins has proposed a detailed gay adaptation to Buddhist tantric sexual yoga.¹²² However, it is implicit that any advanced practitioner of sexual yoga adapts the practices from the inherent andro- and heterocentric paradigms to their own situation.¹²³ It remains to be seen if and/or how queer(ed) radical Buddhist practices in terms of dehegemonizing and decentering power, authority, and privileged bodies will emerge.

The concluding discussion focuses on the opportunities for queer readings of Buddhist concepts; tenets such as “No-Self” and “emptiness” have been frequently mentioned as productive reference points for individual practitioners.¹²⁴ However, queer-inclusive scholar-practitioner voices such as Ven. Chao-Hwei have suggested that, when addressing systemic Buddhist discrimination of LGBTIQ+ people, it is urgent to, first, challenge simplistic understandings of *karma* 業 yè (“action,” causality) and to stress the sociostructural dimensions of suffering and the karmic responsibility of a society.¹²⁵ Similarly, the queer-inclusive Thai Buddhist monk Shine [Chai] Wontham (Waradhammo) stresses that individuals are LGBT not due to “bad” *karma*; rather, society incurs unwholesome karma by discrimination and hate speech and, specifically, Thai society by means of its patriarchal-oppressive structures.¹²⁶

By deconstructing popular reductionist karma theories espoused in homiletic and didactic contexts, queering karma can then reject any essentializing and, judgmentally, individualizing understanding of rebirth and personhood as inherently contradictory to the philosophy of No-Self (Skt. *anātman* 無我 wúwǒ) and emptiness (Skt. *sūnyatā* 空 kōng) of the intrinsic existence of all phenomena and (empirical) persons (*puḍgala-dharma-nairātmya* 人法無我 rénfǎ wúwǒ).¹²⁷ Instead, a more sophisticated view on karma and LGBTIQ+ subjectivities reaffirms that all re-becoming in Buddhism is without sameness, *continuity without identity* wherein empirical subjectivities express karmic continuations of past possibilities; the actualization of a human subject is accompanied by a subject-contextual merit potential; while limited by various societal blueprints and scripts (such as compulsory able-bodiedness,¹²⁸ heterosexuality, and gender binarism), those scripts are in themselves impermanent, changing, and in flux; Buddhist traditions are not the dharma but are ever-changing contexts and accessories of the dharma. Where they contribute to or produce systemic suffering, changing the scripts is the meritorious activity of Buddhist compassion. In this context, a misplaced discourse of No-Self might brush over the embodied identitarian facets that are subject to systemic suffering, such as gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation, race, able-bodiedness, among others. Hence, ill-placed discourses of No-Self and emptiness will de-emphasize social justice action.¹²⁹ Such dogmatic,

mystic, or normative utilizations of No-Self and emptiness as Buddhist wisdom (*prajñā*) erases the complex and embodied experiences of the oppressed and marginalized and constitutes the *spiritual bypassing* of suffering in the conditioned world (*saṃsāra*).¹³⁰

QT (as introduced in the section “Introduction: QT Meets Buddhism”) is a tool for resisting harmful societal scripts and can aid the compassion (*karuṇā*)-centered, “this-worldly” (socio-saṃsāric) focus in Buddhist thought and practice, as exemplified in various contemporary forms of socially engaged Buddhism and “Humanistic” Buddhism (人間佛教, *rén jiān fó jiào*), QT, and Buddhist philosophies that oppose essentialism with regard to human identity. Judith Butler has put forward her foundational notion of *performativity*;¹³¹ this concept organically resonates with the Buddhist philosophy of *No-Self* and the Buddhist notion of *pratītyasamutpāda*, the nexus of inter- and codependently arising of all conditioned reality. Similarly, as Hsiao-Lan Hu as demonstrated, Butler’s concept of *sedimentation* can be made fruitful for Buddhist approaches to *karma*.¹³² Hence both Buddhist philosophies and QT focus on the specific, “messy,” complex, contextual, ever-changing, and conditioned human experiences, and interactional negotiations, or *be(com)ing and interbe(com)ing*.¹³³

But QT’s deconstruction and antisocial turn/nihilism as seen in the important thought of Leo Bersani and Lee Edelman can also meaningfully be transformed by the *neither ... nor* of the Buddhist middle way and emptiness; as can QT utopianism (proposed by Michael Snediker and José Esteban Muñoz) and *disidentification* find a meaningful grounding and reconnection in Buddhist altruistic virtue ethics.¹³⁴

Review of the Literature

The section “Introduction: QT Meets Buddhism” introduces QT with literature and discusses the partially overlapping fields of Buddhisms & gender and Buddhisms & sexuality, Buddhist feminism, Buddhist studies’ reception of critical cultural theory (including Foucault, Derrida, Levinas, and Deleuze), and the sparse amount of Buddhist studies literature engaging with QT literature.

Previous scholarship on Buddhism and LGBT(IQ+) subjectivities include early 1990s work by José Ignacio Cabezón and Leonard Zwilling who, together with Michael Sweet, trailblazed research in Early Buddhist and Indian medical taxonomy of sexual and gender diversity.¹³⁵ However, the pioneering “doing the history of queerness in the Buddhist traditions” entailed the danger of anachronisms (as discussed in the subsection “Buddhist Views on Sex/Gender Diversity”) in the case of the third sex/gender category *paṇḍaka*. Hence, literature on the *paṇḍaka* is more fully reviewed in that section.

In 1990, John Stevens authored a slim volume on Buddhism and sex aimed at a general audience.¹³⁶ L. P. N. Perera’s 1993 PhD thesis on sexuality in the Pāli *vinaya* contains a chapter on “Hetero- and Homosexual Deviations and Intersexualities” and gives “a useful review of evidence on sexual practices” mixed at times with “inappropriate opinions.”¹³⁷

Bernard Faure's *The Red Thread* constitutes the first substantial scholarly monograph on Buddhism and sexuality, with a wealth of material with emphasis on East Asian (in particular, Japanese) Buddhism.¹³⁸

Peter Harvey deals with sexuality and gender diversity in his *Introduction to Buddhist Ethics* in the chapter "Homosexuality and Other Forms of 'Queerness.'" ¹³⁹ Harvey combines historical-textual sources with the discussion of contemporary practices. His analysis is limited due to a lack of detailed familiarity with non-Indic material.

Janet Gyatso's 2003 article "One Plus One Makes Three" advances scholarship into gender diversity by the careful examination of Indic and Tibetan traditions; John Powers' 2009 monograph *A Bull of a Man* revisits the Indic material for male sexualities.¹⁴⁰ Bee Scherer's 2016 article "Variant Dharma" addresses some of the gaps in previous literature while combining textual studies with anthropology and dharmology.¹⁴¹

The new benchmark in the field is without a doubt José Ignacio Cabezón's opus magnum of 2017, *Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism*.¹⁴²

While the study of queerness in contemporary Thai Buddhism had already been pioneered by Peter A. Jackson in the 1990s, hybrid and/or anthropological studies on queerness within Global (Northern) Buddhist contexts are rare before the 2010s, but emerge then steadily.¹⁴³

Queer academic dharmology was pioneered by Roger Corless and includes the voices of José Ignacio Cabezón, Jeffrey Hopkins, Hsiao-Lan Hu, Bee Scherer, and Robert Shore-Goss.¹⁴⁴ Practitioner voices are increasingly represented since the pioneering publication of the two edited volumes of *Queer Dharma*.¹⁴⁵ In 2019, Trans Buddhist Voices were gathered in a dedicated anthology.¹⁴⁶ The section "(Post)Modern Queer Buddhists and Dharmology" provides ample literature.

Primary Sources

Relevant primary sources are mentioned in the main body of this article. They include the vast amount of (para)canonical and commentarial texts pertaining to aspects of sex/gender and sexuality/celibacy. Such sources have been thoroughly considered, for example, in the benchmark works by José Ignacio Cabezón (*Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism*, for classical South Asian and Tibetan sources) and Bernard Faure (*The Red Thread*, for East Asian sources).

For example, the *vinaya* (monastic discipline) of the different Early Buddhist traditions is of particular interest. The Pāli (Sthavira-/Theravāda) *vinaya* is easily accessible in Isaline B. Horner's classic translation.¹⁴⁷ However, as Shayne Clarke has pointed out, the study Early Buddhist monasticism calls for a closer attention to the other five *vinayas* in Sanskrit (Mūlasarvāstivāda, fragments only), Tibetan (Toh. 1-7, Mūlasarvāstivāda), and Chinese (T. 1421-1464), such as T. 1421 (Mahīśāsaka), T. 1425 (Mahāṃghika), T. 1428 (Dharmaguptaka), T.1435 (Sarvāstivāda), and T. 1441 (Mūlasarvāstivāda).¹⁴⁸

Import sources for East Asian *Mahāyāna* precepts include the precept manual section of the Chinese *Brahmajāla Sūtra* T. 1484 and its **Mahāyāna-pratimokṣa*.¹⁴⁹

Among the ethical-doctrinal compendia of particular interest are the *Abhidharmakośa(-bhāṣyam)* by Vasubandhu and the relevant passages of the vast *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (T. 1579), attributed to Asaṅga.¹⁵⁰ Relevant Tibetan Buddhist ethical literature include the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* by Gampopa (sGam po pa).¹⁵¹

Further Reading

Anderson, Carol S. "Gender in Pāli Buddhist Traditions." In *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Philosophy and Gender*, edited by Veena R. Howard, 197–215. London: Bloomsbury, 2020.

Cabezón, José Ignacio *Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom, 2017.

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Kemp, Jonathan. "Queer Past, Queer Present, Queer Future [_<http://www.gjss.org/sites/default/files/issues/chapters/papers/Journal-06-01--01-Kemp.pdf>.](http://www.gjss.org/sites/default/files/issues/chapters/papers/Journal-06-01--01-Kemp.pdf)" *Graduate Journal of Social Science* 6, no. 1 (2009): 3–21.

Langenberg, Amy Paris. "Sex and Sexuality in Buddhism: A Tetralemma." *Religion Compass* 9, no. 9 (2015): 277–286.

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Williams, angel Kyodo, Rod Owens, and Jasmine Syedullah. *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2016.

Notes

1. For an accessible introduction into QT, see Jonathan Kemp, “Queer Past, Queer Present, Queer Future” <<http://www.gjss.org/sites/default/files/issues/chapters/papers/Journal-06-01--01-Kemp.pdf>>,” *Graduate Journal of Social Science* 6, no. 1 (2009): 3–21; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993); and David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Toward a Gay Hagiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
2. B[ee] Scherer, “Introduction: Queering Paradigms,” in *Queering Paradigms*, ed. B[ee] Scherer (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010), 1–6; 1–2.
3. See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Queer and Now,” in *Tendencies*, ed. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 8.
4. See Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).
5. Bee Scherer, “QueerThinking Religion: Queering Religious Paradigms,” *Scholar & Feminist Online* 14, no. 2 (2017).
6. For initial overviews of these fields, see, e.g., Amy Paris Langenberg, “Buddhism and Sexuality,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Buddhist Ethics*, ed. Daniel Cozort and James Mark Shields (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 567–591; and Liz Wilson, “Buddhism and Gender,” in *Buddhism in the Modern World*, ed. David L. McMahan (New York: Routledge, 2012), 257–272. See also “Review of the Literature” section.<Production: Please add anchored hyperlink to the “Review of the Literature” section.>
7. This is largely due to the presence of the *Buddhist Constructive-Critical Reflection Unit* in the AA R; in contrast, the *International Association of the History of Religion* and many national bodies continue to explicitly reject theological modes of inquiry.
8. See Rita Gross, *Buddhism after Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993); and Hsiao-Lan Hu, “The White Feminism in Rita Gross’s Critique of Gender Identities and Reconstruction of Buddhism,” in *Buddhism and Whiteness: Critical Reflections*, ed. George Yancy and Emily McRae (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019), 293–308. For the study of Buddhist nuns, the theoretical frameworks of “liberal feminism” have been critiqued and complicated by Nirmala S. Salgado in her *Buddhist Nuns and Gendered Practices: In Search of the Female Renunciant* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), see, in particular, the first three chapters.
9. Hsiao-Lan Hu, *This Worldly Nibbāna: A Buddhist-Feminist Social Ethic for Peacemaking in the Global Community* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2011).
10. Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), xi.
11. Bernard Faure, *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998). Faure continues this line of inquiry in *The Power of Denial: Buddhism, Gender and Purity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).
12. E.g., Adrian Konik, *Buddhism and Transgression: The Appropriation of Buddhism in the Contemporary West* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009); and Malcom Voyce, *Foucault, Buddhism, and Disciplinary Rules* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2017); Jae-seong Lee, *Postmodern Ethics, Emptiness, and Literature: Encounters between East and West* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015); Tony See and Joff Bradley, eds., *Deleuze and Buddhism* (London: Palgrave

Macmillan, 2016); Simon Sullivan, “A Life between the Finite and Infinite: Remarks on Deleuze, Badiou and Western Buddhism,” *Deleuze Studies* 8, no. 2 (2014): 256–279; Youxuan Wang, *Buddhism and Deconstruction: Towards a Comparative Semiotics* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001); and Jin Y. Park, ed., *Buddhism and Deconstructions* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2006).

13. Simon Gareth Smith, *Buddhism and the Postmodern: The Nature of Identity and Tradition in Contemporary Society*, PhD diss., University of Leeds, 1997; Carl Olson, *Zen and the Art of Postmodern Philosophy: Two Paths of Liberation from the Representational Mode of Thinking* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000); Jin Y. Park, *Buddhism and Postmodernity: Zen, Huayan, and the Possibility of Buddhist Postmodern Ethics* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008); and Edwin Ng, *Buddhism and Cultural Studies: A Profession of Faith* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

14. See “Review of the Literature” section. <Production: Please add anchored hyperlink to the “Review of the Literature” section here and below.>

15. See “Review of the Literature” section.

16. See *Saṅgīti-Sutta* DN 33 iii 230 PTS; *Sammādiṭṭhi-Sutta* MN 9 i 51; *Visudhimagga* xvii, 240–569 PTS; 三聚經 (sān jù jīng, *Discourse on the Three Groups*) DĀ (Chin) 12 (T12 [1] 229b6–7); the other three *upādānas* are clinging to views (*diṭṭhi-*), to rules & rituals (*sīlabatta-*), and to the belief in an essential Self (*attāvāda-*).

17. See Paul David Numrich, “The Problem with Sex According to Buddhism,” *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 48, no. 1 (2009): 62–73; see also Amy Paris Langenberg, “Sex and Sexuality in Buddhism: A Tetralemma,” *Religion Compass* 9, no. 9 (2015): 277–286.

18. Janet Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World: An Intellectual History of Medicine in Early Modern Tibet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 34.

19. Bee Scherer, “Variant Dharma: Buddhist Queers, Queering Buddhisms,” in *Queering Paradigms VI: Interventions, Ethics and Glocalities*, ed. Bee Scherer (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2016), 253–273; 259; and Alan Sponberg, “Attitudes toward Women and the Feminine in Early Buddhism,” in *Buddhism, Sexuality, and Gender*, ed. José Ignacio Cabezón (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992), 3–36; 20.

20. Faure, *The Red Thread*, 79; Gregory Schopen, “The Learned Monk as a Comic Figure: On Reading a Buddhist Vinaya as Indian literature,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 35, no. 3 (2007): 201–226; and Shayne Clarke, “Locating Humour in Indian Buddhist Monastic Law Codes: A Comparative Approach,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 37, no. 4 (2009): 311–330.

21. For an overview, see Scherer, “Variant Dharma,” 262–263; for a focus on female monastics, see Carol S. Anderson, “The Agency Buddhist of Buddhist Nuns,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 27, no. 1 (2010): 41–60; for fuller discussions, see John Powers, *A Bull of a Man: Images of Masculinity, Sex and the Body in Indian Buddhism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), Ch. 3 (“Sex and the Single Monk,” 67–111); and José Ignacio Cabezón, *Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom, 2017), Ch. 3 (“Monasticism: Just Saying No to Sex,” 173–219).

22. Scherer, “Variant Dharma,” 263–266.

23. On the prohibition of oral and anal sex see Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* at 4, 74a–b (p. 244 Pradhan); on wider prohibitions of sexual acts see the discussion in Scherer, “Variant Dharma,” 263–265; and *Viniścaya-saṃgrahani* of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* T. 1579 (30) 631b14–15 (Chinese), bsTan 'gyur D4038 132b (Tibetan).

24. Cabezón, *Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism*, 45–65. Interestingly, the Old Uyghur (Silk Road) Buddhist hell traditions lack detailed interest in punishments for sexual wrongdoing and appear to reflect the vaguer and more general Early Buddhist attitude to lay sexual ethics (see Scherer, “Variant Dharma,” 265).

25. sGam po pa, *Thar rgyan*, p. 74, ed. Sonam Gyatso; B[ee] Scherer, “Macho Buddhism: Gender and Sexuality in the Diamond Way,” *Religion and Gender* 1 (2011): 99; Taehyeon (Daehyeon) 太賢 (大賢), *Beommggyeong gojeokgi* 梵網經古迹記 T. 1815 on the **Mahāyānapratimokṣa* of the *Brahmajāla Sūtra* (8th CE); A. Charles Muller, *Exposition of the Sutra of Brahma’s Net* (Seoul, Korea: Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, 2012), p. 281; see Scherer, “Variant Dharma,” 264.
26. Paul G. Schalow, “Kūkai and the Tradition of Male Love in Japanese Buddhism,” in Cabezón, *Buddhism, Sexuality, and Gender*, 215–230; and Faure, *The Red Thread*, 233–240.
27. See Carol S. Anderson, “Gender in Pāli Buddhist Traditions,” in *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Philosophy and Gender*, ed. Veena R. Howard (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 207–212.
28. See Michael J. Sweet and Leonard Zwilling, “The Evolution of Third-Sex Constructs in Ancient India: A Study of Ambiguity,” in *Invented Identities: The Interplay of Gender, Religion and Politics in India*, ed. Julia Leslie and Mary McGee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 99–132, 100–107.
29. See B[ee] Scherer, “Gender Transformed and Meta-gendered Enlightenment: Reading Buddhist Narratives as Paradigms of Inclusiveness,” *REVER* 6, no. 3 (2006): 65–76; 68–69; and Scherer, “Variant Dharma,” 259.
30. Janet Gyatso, “One Plus One Makes Three: Buddhist Gender, Monasticism, and the Law of the Non-Excluded Middle,” *History of Religions* 43, no. 2 (2003): 89–115; 96, note 16.
31. See the discussion of Saṅghabhadra’s *Shanjian lu piposha* 善見律毘婆沙, T. 1462, 722b10–11 in Scherer, “Variant Dharma,” 258.
32. See Anderson, “Gender in Pāli Buddhist Traditions,” 203–205.
33. On *paṇḍakas*, see Albrecht Welzer, “Sanskrit paṇḍá- / páṇḍaka-*,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 148 (1998): 261–276; Powers, *A Bull of a Man*, 82–85; Scherer, “Variant Dharma,” 254–260; Cabezón, *Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism*, 407–410; and Anderson, “Gender in Pāli Buddhist Traditions,” 205–207.
34. The most common term in Chinese Buddhist texts is 黃門 huáng mén (“yellow door,” after the later Han court harem area, see A. Charles Muller, “黃門,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* (n.d.), accessed January 18, 2020 (login as “guest,” password “guest”).
35. On the female *paṇḍaka* in the Pāli tradition, see Carol S. Anderson, “Defining Women’s Bodies in Indian Buddhist Monastic Literature,” in *Refiguring the Body: Embodiment in South Asian Religions*, ed. Karen Pechelis and Barbara Holdredge (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2016), 255–284; 263–265; for the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition, see Cabezón, *Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism*, 433–441.
36. Scherer, “Variant Dharma,” 257.
37. Leonard Zwilling, “Homosexuality as Seen in Indian Buddhist Texts,” in Cabezón, *Buddhism, Sexuality, and Gender*, 209; see the critique in Scherer, “Variant Dharma,” 257–258.
38. This debate in early QT was initiated by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in her *Epistemology of the Closet*, in which she criticized Michel Foucault and David Halperin’s views on the conceptual genealogy of “the homosexual” in the 19th century. Halperin’s decisive response against historicizing gender and sexualities was his *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002).
39. Powers, *A Bull of a Man*, 82–85.
40. Cabezón, *Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism*, 13.

41. See William Norman Brown, “Change of Sex as a Hindu Story Motif,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 47 (1927): 3–24; for a short survey, see Scherer, “Gender Transformed,” 70–71.
42. See Scherer, “Gender Transformed”; this in line with the orthodox Theravāda and Mahāyāna view that any woman needs to be reborn as a man first before realizing enlightenment.
43. See Scherer, “Gender Transformed”; Carol S. Anderson, “Changing Sex in Pāli Buddhist Monastic Literature,” in Scherer, *Queering Paradigms VI*, 231–251; Carol S. Anderson, “Changing Sex or Changing Gender in Pāli Buddhist Literature,” *Scholar & Feminist Online* 14, no. 2 (2017); and Petra Kieffer-Pülz, “Sex-Change in Buddhist Legal Literature with a Focus on the Theravāda Tradition,” *ARIRIAB—Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* 21 (2018): 27–62.
44. Bee Scherer, “Atypical Bodies: Queer-Feminist and Buddhist Perspectives,” in *Cultural History of Disability in the Modern Age*, ed. David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 19–28.
45. “Buddhist Monk Plays Suicide of LGBTQ Librarian for Laughs,” *Equality Myanmar*, July 4, 2019.
46. Roger Corless, “Coming Out in the Sangha: Queer Community in American Buddhism,” in *The Faces of Buddhism in America*, ed. Charles S. Prebish and Kenneth T. Tanaka (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 253–263; 255.
47. See Peter A. Jackson, “Male Homosexuality and Transgenderism in the Thai Buddhist Tradition,” in *Queer Dharma: Voices of Gay Buddhists*, ed. Winston Leyland (San Francisco, CA: Gay Sunshine Press, 1998), 55–89; 65–69; Paisarn Likhitpreechakul, “Semen, Viagra and Paṇḍaka: Ancient Endocrinology and Modern Day Discrimination,” *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies* 3 (2012): 91–127; on the complexity of premodern and modern *kathoe* identities, see Peter A. Jackson, “Performative Genders, Perverse Desires: A Bio-History of Thailand’s Same-Sex and Transgender Cultures,” *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* 9 (2003); see also Megan J. Sinnott, *Toms and Dees: Transgender Identity and Female Same-Sex Relationships in Thailand* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004).
48. Phra Wontham (Waradhammo) พระวรธรรม, “ชายข้ามเพศ’ บวชพระได้หรือไม่? <<https://www.teenpath.net/content.asp?ID=21408#XnZU5qieSUK>>” [“Should ‘Transmen’ Be Ordained or Not?”], *Teenpath.net* (December 13, 2016).
49. This appears to be the standard interpretation of the 1944 *Monastic Ordination (Preceptor) Code*, section 14, see, e.g., พระอธิการรัตน์ รตโน (บัวทอง) Phra A-thikanratana Ratano (Buathong), “การบริหารจัดการ การอบรม ผู้บวช ชระยะสั้น ของ คณะสงฆ์ จังหวัด อ่างทอง <<http://oldweb.mcu.ac.th/userfiles/file/%E0%B8%A7%E0%B8%B4%E0%B8%97%E0%B8%A2%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%99%E0%B8%B4%E0%B8%9E%E0%B8%99%E0%B8%98%E0%B9%8C/%E0%B8%9B%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%B4%E0%B8%8D%E0%B8%8D%E0%B8%B2%E0%B9%82%E0%B8%97/%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%A3%E0%B9%80%E0%B8%8A%E0%B8%B4%E0%B8%87%E0%B8%9E%E0%B8%B8%E0%B8%97%E0%B8%98/2562/MCU62020938.pdf>> Training Management for Short-Term Ordained Monks of Sangha in Ang Thong,” [in Thai], MA diss., Mahachulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 2018, 16–17. One example is the widely publicized case of the former “Miss Tiffany Universe” winner in 2009; see Cabezón, *Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism*, 532–533.
50. Phra Phayom is also known under his honorific name Phra Pisan Thamphati พระ พิศาล ธรรมพาที (see “ประวัติ พระพยอม,” [Prawat Phra Phayom, “The History (Biography) of Phra Phayom <<https://www.kanlayano.org/home/history/>>,” *Kanlayano.org*], accessed January 13, 2020); on see incident see Peter Hacker, “Buddhism Grapples with Homosexuality <<http://www.365gay.com/newscontent/070403thai Priests.htm>>,” *365Gay.com* (July 4, 2003); see also Damien Keown, *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 62.

51. Andrew Potts, “Thai TV Discusses Cross-Dressing Gay Buddhist Monks for First Time <https://www.gaystarnews.com/article/thai-tv-discusses-cross-dressing-gay-buddhist-monks-first-time280414/>,” *Gay Star News*, April 28, 2014; and Kongpob Areerat, “Junta to Pass Law Banning Homosexuals from Monkhood <https://prachatai.com/english/node/4843>,” *Prachatai*, March 10, 2015.
52. Ian MacKinnon, “Buddhist Temple Encouraging Ladyboys to Be Masculine <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/thailand/8647239/Buddhist-temple-encouraging-ladyboys-to-be-masculine.html>,” *The Telegraph*, July 19, 2011; Dominique Mosbergen, “Two-Faced Thailand: The Ugly Side of ‘Asia’s Gay Capital’ https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/lgbt-thailand_n_5616472ee4b0dbb8000d30a6,” *Huffington Post*, October 20, 2015; and Chanatip Tatiyakaroonwong, “There Is No Heaven for LGBTI Here: Torture of LGBTI in Thai Society and in the World Context <https://prachatai.com/english/node/8118>,” *Prachatai*, June 27, 2019.
53. See “European Buddhists Call for a Ban on ‘Conversion Therapy’ <http://europeanbuddhism.org/news/european-buddhists-call-for-a-ban-on-conversion-therapy/>,” *European Buddhist Union*, February 28, 2018.
54. See, e.g., Chaiyot Yongcharoenchai, “Young Monks Struggle with Gender Issues <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/special-reports/351847/gay-and-transgender-katoey-struggle-with-buddhism>,” *Bangkok Post*, May 26, 2013; Gaspar Ruiz-Canela, “The Rebel Buddhist Monk Who Supports Abortion and LGBT Rights <https://www.efe.com/efe/english/life/the-rebel-buddhist-monk-who-supports-abortion-and-lgbt-rights/50000263-4151275>,” *EFE English edition*, January 16, 2020.
55. See Phra Wontham, “ชายข้ามเพศ บวชพระได้หรือไม่? <https://www.teenpath.net/content.asp?ID=21408#.XnZU5qieSUK>”
56. Ajahn Brahm, “Gay Marriage, Why Not? https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=GOPcbFhCEj0&feature=emb_logo,” YouTube video, March 21, 2012; the British Theravāda monk Ajahn Brahm (b. 1951) is abbot of a Ajahn Chah อาจารย์ชา (Achan Cha, *Bodhiñāṇa Thera* / Phothiyan Then โพธิญาณเถร) Thai Forest Sangha lineage monastery in Western Australia; in 2009, he presided over the ordination of four bhikkhunīs (full nuns) and was consequently excommunicated from this Sangha lineage (with headquarters in Wat Nong Paphong วัดหนองป่าพง, Ubon Ratchathani); and Ajahn Sujato, “Why Buddhists Should Support Marriage Equality <https://sujato.wordpress.com/2012/03/21/1430/>,” *Sujato’s Blog*, March 21, 2012.
57. “About Us,” *Rainbodhi*, accessed January 15, 2020.
58. Hsuan Hua 宣化, “Avoid Defying Natural Creation http://www.longbeachmonastery.org/Q&A_Avoid_Defying_Natural_Creation.htm” (n.d., according to web.archive.org, first web-archived on July 1, 2011); see also Corless, “Coming Out in the Sangha,” 255.
59. See Richard Madsen, “East Asian Buddhist Ethics,” in Cozort and Shields, *The Oxford Handbook of Buddhist Ethics*, 279–291; 287–288.
60. See Hsiao-Lan Hu, “Buddhism and Sexual Orientation,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Buddhism*, ed. Michael Jerryson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 662–677; Hu’s important essay develops largely in dialogue with Chao-Hwei’s thought.
61. See Hu, “Buddhism and Sexual Orientation,” 664 and 676 (references); on conducting same-sex marriage see p. 663. One of Chao-Hwei’s books is available in English: Zhao Hui, *Buddhist Normative Ethics* (Taoyuan, Taiwan: Dharma-Dhatu Publication, 2014).
62. See the testimonial by Laurie Arron, “On Love and Being Gay <https://www.mindfulnessbell.org/archive/2015/03/on-love-and-being-gay/>,” *Mindfulness Bell* 48 (Summer 2008), 32–33.

63. See Jeff Wilson, “All Beings Are Equally Embraced by Amida Buddha’: Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and Same-Sex Marriage in the United States <http://www.globalbuddhism.org/jgb/index.php/jgb/article/view/125/140>,” *Journal of Global Buddhism* 13 (2012): 31–59; 37.
64. Wilson, “All Beings,” 39.
65. See Thea Rae Maggard, “Queering Trans(theo)phobia: A Comparative Analysis between Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism and Roman Catholicism on Transgender Issues <http://religioneincidenciapublica.gemrip.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/05%20Maggard%20%282014%29%20-%20Queering%20Trans%28theo%29phobia.pdf>,” *Religión e Incidencia Pública: Revista de Investigación de GEMRIP* 2 (2014): 109–136.
66. See, e.g., Helen Nianias, “Heard the One about Miss Universe and the Buddhist Monk <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-make-up-artist-monk-vcs890dwj?>,” *The Times*, February 2, 2017; Revd. Nishimura featured also in the popular *Queer Eye* TV franchise, in *Queer Eye: We’re in Japan*, “Ep. 2: Crazy in Love” (Netflix, US release: November 1, 2019).
67. Corless, “Coming Out in the Sangha,” 256; see also, e.g., Sharon E. Smith and Sally R. Munt, “The Dragon King’s Daughter: Gender and Sexuality in Western Buddhist New Religious Movements,” *Theology & Sexuality* 16, no. 3 (2010), 229–260.
68. “Courageous Freedom: SGI-USA’s LGBTQ Community <https://www.sgi-usa.org/2016/05/19/courageous-freedom-sgi-usas-lgbtq-community/>,” *Soka-Gakkai International—USA*, May 19, 2016.
69. A video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFW2YT2ZK4M> of the Dalai Lama’s 1997 remarks was released in 2018, see Ben P. Joffe, “White Robes, Matted Hair: Tibetan Tantric Householders, Moral Sexuality, and the Ambiguities of Esoteric Buddhist Expertise in Exile,” PhD diss., University of Colorado, 2019, 319–324; see also the autoethnographic vignette in Cabezón, *Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism*, 1–5; see further, Dennis Conkin, “The Dalai Lama and Gay Love,” in Leyland, *Queer Dharma*, 351–356; Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values and Issues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 411–434; and James William Coleman, *The New Buddhism: The Western Transformation of an Ancient Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001), 164–165.
70. Shamar Rinpoche, *Creating a Transparent Democracy: A New Model* (New Delhi: New Age Books, 2007), 23.
71. See Coleman, *The New Buddhism*, 165.
72. See Scherer, “Macho Buddhism,” 96 and 99–100; and B[ee] Scherer, “Globalizing Tibetan Buddhism: Modernism and Neo-Orthodoxy in Contemporary Karma bKa’ brgyud Organizations,” *Contemporary Buddhism* 13, no. 1 (2012): 125–137; 126–128.
73. Michael C. Hyman, “Practicing Together as a Gay Couple,” in Leyland, *Queer Dharma*, 127–147; 136.
74. “Queer Dharma <https://shambhalaonline.org/queer-dharma/>,” *Shambhala Times*, accessed January 13, 2020.
75. Georg Feuerstein, *Holy Madness: Spirituality, Crazy-Wise Teachers, and Enlightenment*, rev. and exp. ed. (Prescott, AZ: Hohm Press, [1990] 2006), 95–96; Sandra Bell, “Scandals in Emerging Western Buddhism,” in *Westward Dharma: Buddhism beyond Asia*, ed. Charles S. Prebish and Martin Baumann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 232–235; and “Report to the Community on the Wickwire Holm Claims Investigation into Allegations of Sexual Misconduct <https://shambhala.org/files/2019/02/2-3-19-WH-Report-Final-Package.pdf>,” *Shambhala Interim Board*, February 3, 2019. However, in December 2019, the board already cleared the path back to power for the Sakyong, deeply disappointing the victims of sexual abuse; in consequence, the bestselling author and nun Pema Chödrön

resigned from Shambhala as an “Acharya” (senior teacher) of Shambhala (Ani Pema aka Pema Chödrön, “Letter to the Acharyas and Shambhala Board Members <https://shambhalatimes.org/2020/01/16/letter-from-ani-pema-chodron/>,” January 14, 2020.

76. Karmapa Ogyen Tinley is one of the two Seventeenth Karmapa hierarchs/claimants of the Karma Kagyu branch of Tibetan Buddhism. Ogyen Tinley was recognized by Karma Kagyu regent Tai Situpa and gained the backing of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama; the other Seventeenth Karmapa, Trinley Thaye Dorje (phrin las mtha' yas rdo rje, 1983–) was recognized by the senior regent, the Fourteenth Shamarpa. In October 2018, the two Karmapas met in mutual respect and embarked on the path to healing the divided Karma Kagyu school, see Gabriel Lefferts, “Karmapas Unite <https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/karmapas-meet/>,” *Tricycle*, October 11, 2018; see also, e.g., “The 17th Gyalwang Karmapa Expresses Support for LGBTQ Relationships <https://tibetanequalityproject.wordpress.com/2017/11/01/the-17th-gyalwang-karmapa-expresses-support-for-lgbtq-relationships/>,” *Tibetan Equality Project*, November 1, 2017; on the 12th Gyalwang Drukpa see Ross Murray, “Spiritual Leader Visits GLAAD, Shares ‘Live to Love’ Philosophy https://www.glaad.org/blog/video-spiritual-leader-visits-glaad-shares-live-love-philosophy?page=1&response_type=embed,” *GLAAD blog*, June 25, 2014; and on Dzongsar Khyentse see “Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche Urges Respect for LGBTQ People <https://www.lionsroar.com/watch-dzongsar-khyentse-rinpoche-urges-respect-lgbtq-people/>,” *Lion’s Roar*, February 6, 2015.

77. See Joffe, “White Robes, Matted Hair,” 335–337; and Gyatso, *Being Human*, 33–34.

78. See Joffe, “White Robes, Matted Hair,” 346 and 519 (note 230).

79. Gyatso, “One Plus One Makes Three,” 100–101; and the more detailed discussion in Gyatso, *Being Human*, 321–341.

80. On the term, see Cabezón, *Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism*, 531 (note 1342).

81. See Joffe, “White Robes, Matted Hair,” 519 (note 229); see also Joffe’s field notes on contemporary gay sexual culture, 315–317.

82. Dallas J. Baker, “Return of the Eunuch: Gender Disobedience as a Path to Awakening in Buddhist Tantra,” *Postscripts* 4, no. 3 (2008), 339–366.

83. See Joffe, “White Robes, Matted Hair,” 519 (note 229); the interview can be found on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=511487795728663>.

84. See Scherer, “Macho Buddhism”; and Bee Scherer, “Trans-European Adaptations in the Diamond Way: Negotiating Public Opinions on Homosexuality in Russia and in the U.K. <http://journals.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php/religions/article/view/17362/11173>,” *ONLINE—Journal of Religions on the Internet* (December 6, 2014): 103–125.

85. See “Review of the Literature” section. <Production: Please add anchored hyperlink to the “Review of the Literature” section.>

86. Wendy Cadge, “Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Buddhist Practitioners,” in *Gay Religion*, ed. Scott Thumma and Edward R. Gray (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2005), 139–151; 143–144; Roger Corless, “Gay Buddhist Fellowship,” in *Engaged Buddhism in the West*, ed. Christopher S. Queen (Boston, MA: Wisdom, 2000), 269–279; and “About <http://gaybuddhist.org/v3-wp/>,” *Gay Buddhist Fellowship*, accessed January 13, 2020.

87. Roshi Dorsey himself died of AIDS related complications; see Cadge, “Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Buddhist Practitioners,” 144–145.

88. Justin Whitaker, “Intersections of Gender, Identity, and Buddhism: An Interview with LGBTIQ Meditation Teacher La Sarmiento <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/americanbuddhist/2015/02/intersections-of-gender-identity-and-buddhism-an-interview-with-lgbtqi-meditation-teacher-la-sarmiento.html>,” *Patheos*, February 23, 2015.

89. GLOBAL (Gay and Lesbian Organization of Buddhist Activists for Liberation) Sangha; see “Announcements [<https://www.mindfulnessbell.org/archive/2016/03/announcements-20>](https://www.mindfulnessbell.org/archive/2016/03/announcements-20),” *Mindfulness Bell* 7 (1992), accessed January 15, 2020.
90. See Andrew Kam–Tuck Yip and Sharon Smith, “Queerness and Sangha: Exploring Buddhist Lives,” in *Queer Spiritual Spaces: Sexuality and Sacred Places*, ed. Kath Browne et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 111–138; 127–131.
91. See Pagan Kennedy, *The First Man-Made Man: The Story of Two Sex Changes, One Love Affair, and a Twentieth-Century Medical Revolution* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2008), 155; and Cabezón, *Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism*, 535–536.
92. Michael Vermeulen, “The Rise of Rainbow Dharma: Buddhism on Sexual Diversity and Same-Sex Marriage [<http://europeanbuddhism.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/TheRiseOfRainbowDharma-UNSpecialRapporteurOnFORB-CompilationOfArticlesOnFORBAndSexuality-Sep-2017.pdf>](http://europeanbuddhism.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/TheRiseOfRainbowDharma-UNSpecialRapporteurOnFORB-CompilationOfArticlesOnFORBAndSexuality-Sep-2017.pdf),” in *Compilation of Articles on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Sexuality*, ed. UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief (Geneva: UN OHCHR, 2017), 27–41; 38.
93. See Coleman, *The New Buddhism*, 171; and Robert Bluck, *British Buddhism: Teachings, Practice and Development* (London: Routledge, 2006), 155–156.
94. “A Statement by Ugyen Sangharakshita [<https://thebuddhistcentre.com/news/statement-ugyen-sangharakshita>](https://thebuddhistcentre.com/news/statement-ugyen-sangharakshita),” *Triratna News*, January 4, 2017; “Triratna: How Are We Doing Now? A Triratna Interkula Survey to Assess How the Triratna Community Feels Now about Allegations of Past Misconduct–Survey Results and Report [<http://www.interkula.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Interkula-survey-report-final.pdf>](http://www.interkula.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Interkula-survey-report-final.pdf),” *Interkula* October 30, 2018; and Jamie Doward, “Buddhist, Teacher, Predator: Dark Secrets of the Triratna Guru [<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/21/sangharakshita-guru-triratna-buddhist-dark-secrets>](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/21/sangharakshita-guru-triratna-buddhist-dark-secrets),” *The Guardian*, July 21, 2019.
95. See for example Ann Gleig, *American Dharma: Buddhism beyond Modernity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019).
96. Naomi R. Goldenberg, “The Category of Religion in the Technology of Governance: An Argument for Understanding Religions as Vestigial States,” in *Religion as a Category of Governance and Sovereignty*, ed. Trevor Stack, Naomi Goldenberg, and Timothy Fitzgerald (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 280–292.
97. Scherer, “QueerThinking Religion.”
98. Phra Wontham (Waradhammo) พระพรหมวชิรญาณ, *Neo-Buddhism* blogspot [<https://neobuddhism.blogspot.com/>](https://neobuddhism.blogspot.com/) (in Thai), accessed March 23, 2020; see Waradhammo’s “blogger profile and statement [<https://www.blogger.com/profile/00211455288588558108>](https://www.blogger.com/profile/00211455288588558108)” (in Thai), accessed March 23, 2020.
99. See Arnika Fuhrmann, *Ghostly Desires: Queer Sexuality and Vernacular Buddhism in Contemporary Thai Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).
100. Bee Scherer, “流転輪廻という混沌を体現する—クィア仏教的「解放の神学」を目指して” (Embodying the Messiness of Saṃsāra: Towards Queer Buddhist “Liberation Theology”). Translated into Japanese with an introduction and notes by Kanae Kawamoto, “川本佳苗,” *サンガジャパン* 32 (2019): 211–234.
101. See Cathryn Bailey, “Embracing the Icon: The Feminist Potential of the Trans Bodhisattva, Kuan Yin,” *Hypatia* 24, no. 3 (2009): 178–196.
102. Independently, Taiwanese American LGBTIQ Buddhist scholar Hsiao-Lan Hu has developed an outline of Avalokiteśvara-based queer-intersectional Engaged Buddhism, see Hu, “Buddhism and Sexual Orientation,” 669–673.
103. See Yip and Smith, “Queerness and Sangha,” 137.

104. See B[ee] Scherer, “Queer as Kagyu: Negotiating Dissident Identities in Neo-Orthodox Buddhist Spaces,” in *Queering Paradigms, Vol. 3: Bio-Politics, Place, and Representations*, ed. Kathleen O’Mara and Liz Morrish (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013), 145–155.
105. See Ann Gleig, “Dharma Diversity and Deep Inclusivity at the East Bay Meditation Center: From Buddhist Modernism to Buddhist Postmodernism?,” *Contemporary Buddhism* 15, no. 2 (2014): 312–3312;318; see also the testimony of a young transgender SG-I member (“Courageous Freedom <https://www.sgi-usa.org/2016/05/19/courageous-freedom-sgi-usas-lgbtq-community/>,” *Soka-Gakkai International—USA*).
106. See Catriona Reed, “Coming Out Whole <https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/transgender-buddhist/>,” *Tricycle*, June 19, 2019; and Emily DeMaioNewton, “A Transgender Buddhist Trailblazer 20+ Years Later: Interview with Caitriona Reed <https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/caitriona-reed/>,” *Tricycle*, June 19, 2019.
107. Whitaker, “Intersections of Gender, Identity, and Buddhism <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/americanbuddhist/2015/02/intersections-of-gender-identity-and-buddhism-an-interview-with-lgbtq-meditation-teacher-la-sarmiento.html>”; see also Hu, “Buddhism and Sexual Orientation,” 663 and 673.
108. See, e.g., Larry Yang, “Toward Freedom and Enlightenment Queerly: LGBTQ and Dharma https://www.huffpost.com/entry/towards-freedom-and-enlig_b_1173926,” *Huffington Post*, January 8, 2012. Yang focuses on training spiritual leadership within communities of color and LGBTQI communities. In 2016, Young was San Francisco Pride Parade’s Community Grand Marshall (see Larry Yang, “Awakening Together: About Larry http://00597e6.netsolhost.com/larryyang/?page_id=75,” accessed January 13, 2020).
109. See Zenju Earthlyn Manuel, *The Way of Tenderness: Awakening through Race, Sexuality, and Gender* (Boston, MA: Wisdom, 2015); see the discussion in Hu, “Buddhism and Sexual Orientation,” 665, 669, 673.
110. See angel Kyodo Williams, Rod Owens, and Jasmine Syedullah, *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2016); and *Radical Dharma* <https://radicaldharma.org/>, accessed January 13, 2020.
111. See the collection of articles with links in Haleigh Atwood, “LGBTQ Buddhists: Teachings, Profiles, and Conversations <https://www.lionsroar.com/lgbtq-buddhism/>,” *Lions Roar*, June 13, 2019; see also, “Category: LGBT,” *Tricycle*, January 13, 2020; and *Mindfulness Bell* <https://www.mindfulnessbell.org/search?q=LGBT> (*Community of Interbeing*, Thich Nhat Hanh); and posts tagged “Queer Dharma,” *Shambhala Times* <https://shambhalatimes.org/tag/queer-dharma/> (accessed January 13, 2020).
112. “Mission Statement <https://transbuddhists.org/>,” *Transbuddhists*, accessed January 13, 2020.
113. The first LGBT workshop Sakyadhita hosted took place at the conference from December 28, 2009–Jan 2, 2010, in Vietnam. The pioneer of these workshops was the German lesbian/genderqueer Tibetan Buddhist (and dharma rapper) Rotraut Jampa Wurst; see also her testimonial: Rotraut Jampa Wurst, “Negotiating Spiritual Violence in the LGBT Community,” in *Negotiating Spiritual Violence in the Queer Community*, ed. Jeff Sapp and Paul Chamness Iida (Charlotte, NC: Information Age, 2019), 146.
114. “Rainbow Sangha <http://europeanbuddhism.org/activity/rainbow/>,” *EBU*, accessed January 13, 2020. The network is facilitated by Michael Vermeulen who also reported on sexual minorities in Buddhist cultures at a UN conference in Geneva, June 2016; see “Sexual Minorities and the Buddhist Spiritual Path <http://europeanbuddhism.org/news/un-conference-freedom-of-religion-or-belief-and-sexuality/>,” *EBU*, United Nations, Geneva, June 2016; and Vermeulen, “The Rise of Rainbow Dharma.”
115. “About Us <https://rainbodhi.org/about-us/>,” *Rainbodhi*, accessed January 15, 2020.

116. “Coming Out, Coming Home—Coming Together—LGBTIQ” <<https://www.eiab.eu/termine?action=ShowDetails&id=ceef8cf4-c6c1-11e7-92b2-9edb35d8d899>>,” EIAB, accessed January 13, 2020.
117. See Scherer, “Variant Dharma,” 267–270.
118. On “Liberation Hermeneutics,” see Bee Scherer, “Translating the Lotus Sūtra into Social Action: Hermeneutics and Public Dharmology,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 39 (2019): 147–168 and particularly 149–152. The circular argumentation regarding sexual ethical conduct is discussed in Cabezón, *Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism*, 525–526.
119. Michel Foucault denotes processes that change the relation to one’s own subjectivity as “technologies of the self” (see Michel Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” in *Technologies of the Self*, ed. Luther Martin, Huck Butman, and Patrick Hutton (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 16–49.
120. Scherer, “Atypical Bodies.”
121. On Guanyin see Bailey, “Embracing the Icon”; Hu, “Buddhism and Sexual Orientation,” 669–673; on tantra see also queer practitioner perspectives such as Baker, “Return of the Eunuch”; Nick Dickinson, “The Path of Freedom: Gender in the Tantric Tradition of Arya Tara,” in Sapp and Iida, *Negotiating Spiritual Violence*, 73–78; see also Jeffrey Hopkins, “The Compatibility of Reason and Orgasm in Tibetan Buddhism: Reflections on Sexual Violence and Homophobia,” in Leyland, *Queer Dharma*, 335–347; 346–347; and Scherer, “Macho Buddhism,” 103.
122. Jeffrey Hopkins, *Sex, Orgasm, and the Mind of Clear Light: The Sixty-Four Arts of Gay Male Love* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1998).
123. See Joffe, “White Robes, Matted Hair,” 352 and 520 (note 238).
124. Looking at No-Self and emptiness is a main feature in Global Northern queer dharmology, relevant to Buddhist practitioners (see Gleig, “Dharma Diversity,” 316 and 318), and in the thought of Roger Corless, José Ignacio Cabezón, and Jeffrey Hopkins (see the overview in Langenberg, “Buddhism and Sexuality,” 588); see also Scherer, “Atypical Bodies,” 27–28.
125. Ven. Chao-Hwei, “「同志」豈必承負罪軛? <<http://www.hongshi.org.tw/writings.aspx?code=A2A35E55C42B4B2E3D64CCB01E451784>>” Tóngzhì'qǐ bì chéng fù zuì è? [Why must LGBT people be stigmatized?] *Hóngshì shuāngyuèkǎn* 弘誓雙月刊 83 (October 2006), accessed January 15, 2020; see the discussion in Hu, “Buddhism and Sexual Orientation,” 665. Independently, Bee Scherer has made similar arguments as a Buddhist scholar-teacher, e.g., in a lecture in Patan (Nepal), January 2, 2013, documented in Scherer, “Variant Dharma,” 268; see also Scherer, “Atypical Bodies,” 28.
126. Phra Wontham (Waradhammo) พระวธธรรม, “เกย์ – เลสเบี้ยน วิชากรรมของใคร <https://child1968.blogspot.com/2006/12/blog-post_2796.html>” [“Gays and Lesbians—Who Has the Bad Karma?”], *สะดือไก่อัลย์: คนนอก* <<https://child1968.blogspot.com/>> (Navel[gazing] Solely [=Skt. kevala]—Outsider] *Blog* (December 20, 2006), accessed March 21, 2020.
127. This terminology has developed in the tradition of the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (T. 670 & 672) and in the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* (T. 677).
128. McRuer, *Crip Theory* (see “Introduction,” 1–32).
129. See the arguments put forward by Larry Yang (Gleig, “Dharma Diversity,” 324); Zenju Manuel (Hu, “Buddhism and Sexual Orientation,” 673); and Scherer, “Variant Dharma,” 268.

130. See Robert Augustus Masters, *Spiritual Bypassing: When Spirituality Disconnects Us from What Really Matters* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2010). Examples of spiritual bypassing in Buddhist Feminism can be found Rita Gross's work; see also, Hu, "The White Feminism," 297–298.
131. Butler, *Bodies That Matter*.
132. Hu, *This Worldly Nibbāna*, Ch. 4 ("Person-in-Kammic-Network," 91–125).
133. "Interbeing" is the term used by Thich Nhat Hanh for his mindfulness and socially engaged take on the *pratīyasamutpāda*; see Thich Nhat Hanh, *Interbeing: Fourteen Guidelines for Engaged Buddhism*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley, CA: Parallax, 1998).
134. Leo Bersani, *Homos* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); J[ack] Halberstam, "The Anti-Social Turn in Queer Studies" <<http://gjss.org/sites/default/files/issues/chapters/papers/Journal-05-02--07-Halberstam.pdf>>," *Graduate Journal of Social Science* 5, no. 2 (2008): 140–156; Michael Snediker, *Queer Optimism: Lyric Personhood and Other Felicitous Persuasions* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009); José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); Scherer, "Variant Dharma," 269–270; and Scherer, "Atypical Bodies," 28.
135. José Ignacio Cabezón, "Homosexuality and Buddhism," in *Homosexuality and World Religions*, ed. Arlene Swidler (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993), 81–101; Zwilling, "Homosexuality as Seen in Indian Buddhist Texts"; Michael J. Sweet and Leonard Zwilling, "The First Medicalization: The Taxonomy and Etiology of Queerness in Classical Indian Medicine," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3, no. 4 (1993): 590–607; and Sweet and Zwilling, "The Evolution of Third-Sex Constructs."
136. John Stevens, *Lust for Enlightenment: Buddhism and Sex* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 1990).
137. L. P. N. Perera, *Sexuality in Ancient India: A Study Based on the Pali Vinayapitaka* (Kelaniya, Sri Lanka: Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, 1993), Ch. VII, 110–163; and Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, 72 (note 5).
138. Faure, *The Red Thread*, see chapters entitled "Buddhist Homosexualities" (Ch. 5, 207–240) and "Boys to Men" (Ch. 6, 241–278).
139. Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, 411–433.
140. Powers, *A Bull of a Man*.
141. Scherer, "Variant Dharma."
142. The responses to this monumental work include a *Review Symposium*, ed. Carol S. Anderson, *Religion* 49, no. 4 (2019): 717–751, with contributions by Carol S. Anderson, Sarah Jacoby, Amy Paris Langenberg, and a response by José Ignacio Cabezón. A more in-depth treatment of specifically female sexualities in South Asian Buddhism (and beyond) remains a desideratum, see Amy Paris Langenberg, "Reading against the Grain: Female Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism," *Religion* 49, no. 4 (2019): 728–734.
143. Jackson, "Male Homosexuality"; see also Peter A. Jackson, *Dear Uncle Go: Male Homosexuality in Thailand* (San Francisco, CA: Bua Luang Books, 1995); Peter A. Jackson and Gerard Sullivan, eds., *Lady Boys, Tom Boys, Rent Boys: Male and Female Homosexualities in Contemporary Thailand* (New York: Haworth, 1999); Jackson, "Performative Genders, Perverse Desires"; Cadge, "Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Buddhist Practitioners"; Corless, "Coming Out in the Sangha"; Roger Corless, "Hermeneutics and Dharmology: Finding an American Buddhist Voice," in *Buddhist Theology*:

Critical Reflections by Contemporary Buddhist Scholars, ed. Roger Jackson and John Makransky (London: Curzon, 2000), 95–107; Corless, “Gay Buddhist Fellowship”; Ann Gleig, “Queering Buddhism or Buddhist De-Queering? Reflecting on Differences amongst Western LGBTQI Buddhists and the Limits of Liberal Convert Buddhism,” *Theology & Sexuality* 18, no. 3 (2012): 198–214; Gleig, “Dharma Diversity”; Scherer, “Macho Buddhism”; Scherer, “Queer as Kagyu”; Scherer, “Trans-European Adaptations”; Smith and Munt, “The Dragon King’s Daughter”; and Yip and Smith, “Queerness and Sangha.”

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