

INSIDE MÜLLER'S WORKSHOP:
MAX MÜLLER'S COLLABORATION WITH
NANJŌ BUN'YŪ AND KASAHARA KENJU
ON THE TRANSLATION OF *BUDDHIST TEXTS FROM JAPAN*

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Abstract

This thesis examines the forgotten collaboration that occurred between Max Müller, founder of the Science of Religion, and Nanjō Bun'yū, a Japanese priest of the Shin Buddhist sect, as they worked on the first English translations of sutras that would become *Buddhist Texts from Japan*. Building on Tomoko Masuzawa's extensive scholarship on Müller and through the lens of Charles Hallisey's theory of *intercultural mimesis* and Anne Blackburn's related method of *locative pluralism*, Müller's legacy as a Edward Said-styled Orientalist is reconsidered in light of the evidence of this cross-cultural exchange. Aligned with the work of Hallisey, Blackburn and others, including Richard King, this thesis is part of an emerging movement to revisit assumptions about Victorian scholarship founded in Edward Said's theory of *Orientalism* and recover the voices of Buddhist practitioners who collaborated on, contributed to and, in some cases, were the primary influencers of Western scholarship's first ideas about Buddhism.

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"Are you doing work today, Daddy?"

"No, my work is all done."

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Introduction

Max Müller, widely considered the founder of the discipline of Religious Studies in his formation of a Science of Religion, has received surprisingly little scholarly consideration in the 100 years since his death. Tomoko Masuzawa, in her essay “Our Master’s Voice: F. Max Müller After A Hundred Years of Solitude”, reports that only three PhD theses and one Masters thesis have been written on Müller in the intervening years.¹ Published scholarly writings on Müller in the past century have been limited to one scholarly biography and an edited collection of Müller’s essays, as well as some miscellaneous book chapters and essays. Building on the writings of Masuzawa, who has worked to correct the dismissal of Müller’s scholarship as uniformly racist and Orientalist, I will show Müller as explicitly non-Orientalist in his collaborative methodology as a translator of Buddhist texts. In illuminating this forgotten part of Müller’s legacy—his demonstrated commitment to making room in Western scholarly discourse for practitioners within the Buddhist tradition to have their own voices heard—a different figure emerges. Yet, even as he breaks with the Orientalism of the era, certain Orientalist tendencies remain within Müller’s work, such as an overarching tendency to privilege ‘text’ as central to religious traditions. However, rather than look at Müller through binaries to define his work as other scholars have done—asking ‘Is he or isn’t he an Orientalist?’ or ‘Is he or isn’t he working from a Christian religiosity?’—I will employ *locative pluralism* as advocated by Anne Blackburn as a methodology for re-interpreting the 19th-century Western encounter with Buddhism to allow for a more nuanced picture of

¹ Tomoko Masuzawa, “Our Master’s Voice: F. Max Müller After A Hundred Years of Solitude,” *Method and Theory In The Study Of Religion* 15.4 (2003): 306.

the scholarship of the Victorian era.² Through detailed examination of Müller's collaboration with Japanese priests Nanjō Bun'yū and Kasahara Kenju on the 1881 publication of *Buddhist Texts from Japan* as detailed in personal letters, and his forwards to translations and commentary on the translation process, my thesis will trace Müller's views of Buddhism as they become transformed by his collaboration with the Japanese priests Nanjō and Kasahara. As such, this thesis finds its place among the work of a growing group of scholars including Anne Blackburn and Charles Hallisey³, whose respective methodology and concepts of *locative pluralism* and *intercultural mimesis* I employ. Such scholarship is challenging assumptions about the 19th century production of knowledge about Asian traditions such as Buddhism and seeks to uncover the unreported cross-cultural exchange that occurred in the creation of foundational Western scholarship about Asian traditions.

Establishing Müller as, in part, non-Orientalist in his approach to translation and in his willingness to draw upon local authority in his understanding of Asian traditions and texts represents a departure from the image of Müller as the typical 19th-century Orientalist. Even in reading the forward to Jon Stone's *Essential Max Müller*, one of those few dedicated books on Müller, the standard narrative of Müller reads as follows:

Max Müller represents the best—and at times the worst—of nineteenth-century intellectual life. His work in the origins and growth of language, mythology, and religion typified Victorian armchair scholarship: bold, adventurous, pioneering,

² Anne M. Blackburn, *Locations of Buddhism: Colonialism and Modernity in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 203.

³ Charles Hallisey, "Roads Taken and Not Taken in the Study of Theravada Buddhism," in *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, ed. Donald S. Lopez (Chicago, Ill.: U of Chicago, 1995), 31-61.

sometimes triumphalistic, but always convinced of its social and cultural superiority.⁴

Such statements stand in stark contrast to those of Tomoko Masuzawa, who describes Müller in *The Invention of World Religions* in very different terms: “He was atypical and even eccentric in view of the prevailing opinions of the philologists and comparative religionists of his time.”⁵ Masuzawa has written about Müller in three works and, perhaps, more in-depth than any other contemporary scholar. Critical to establishing Müller as non-Orientalist is Masuzawa’s work in untangling the threads contributing to perceptions of Müller as a racist, and as the father of Aryan race theory. Masuzawa’s 2005 book *The Invention of World Religions* offers her most explicit thesis on Müller in her attempt to correct misinterpretations of his work. In correcting any racist perceptions of Müller, Masuzawa dissects the misuse of Müller’s creation of ‘Aryan’ as a language category and how ‘Aryan’ was appropriated for racist purposes. Says Masuzawa:

The figure most representative of the scholarly propagation of ‘Aryan’ was, in fact, a vocal opponent of Aryanism, or what might be more precisely called Aryan separatism. Yet the failure of his efforts to convince others was so complete that the fact of his opposition seems to have been largely erased. Indeed, he was often relegated to the camps of his enemies.⁶

Masuzawa establishes that Müller publicly battled the racist ‘polygenesis’ camps that sought to establish multiple origin races for human beings and was viewed by these scholars as too overtly tinged by his Christian beliefs in supporting a monogenesis position. Masuzawa differs greatly in her opinion of Müller from Stone and others, but, having extensively researched Müller in a range of books and publications, she is the

⁴ F. Max Müller and Jon R. Stone, *The Essential Max Müller: On Language, Mythology, and Religion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) xxi.

⁵ Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 244.

⁶ *Ibid*, 242.

scholar from whom I take my cue. In light of the explicit stance Müller took towards racist ideologies, his chapters on Kasahara and Nanjō in works such as *Biographical Sketches* take on a new light. Müller is not just sympathetic to Buddhism and inclusive of Buddhist practitioners in his translation practice—he actually affords room for their voices to speak in their own terms. In an era of institutionalized Orientalism this stance of Müller's did not come without its costs, including Müller's exclusion from the Sanskrit chair at Oxford. Müller's non-Orientalist tendencies may, in fact, have led to beginning of the dismissal of contributions even in his last years. Says Stone: "By the 1890s, German scholarship had become stereotyped throughout Britain and America as anti-religious, or, more specifically, anti-Christian... he [Müller] nevertheless refused to retreat from his position but pressed further his comparative examination of the evolutionary development of religion."⁷ While at a cursory glance there is evidence of Müller's inclusion of Buddhist practitioners, the question is of the extent and the boundaries of this collaboration. Does Müller's work with the Japanese priests goes beyond consultation to a relationship of equals? This thesis explores whether the input of Nanjō and Kasahara—*their authority*—is subordinated to Müller's existing views of Buddhism or transforms Muller's outlook.

In acknowledging that both Nanjō and Kasahara made lasting impressions on Müller and his understanding of Buddhism, here I will note the reasons that Nanjō and Müller's collaboration is the primary subject of my thesis, while Kasahara is relegated to a secondary role. Firstly, in reading elements of the texts, it appears that Nanjō is the senior priest and Kasahara the junior and therefore Nanjō more in the foreground.

⁷ Müller and Stone, *Essential*, 17.

Secondly, the translations in *Buddhist Texts from Japan*, including the *Land of Bliss Sutra* and the *Heart Sutra*, are specifically co-credited on each title page as collaborations between Nanjō and Müller, although we know from the forward that Kasahara assisted with elements of collation and translation. Finally, Kasahara died of tuberculosis shortly after returning to Japan and there are no letters written between Müller and Kasahara, whereas Nanjō and Müller carried on a life-long correspondence, the passages of which are essential background to understanding the relationship between these scholars.

Although Müller did collaborate with Kasahara, without evidence of direct correspondence with Kasahara, it is difficult to discern the nature of their relationship and, using the method of locative pluralism, that is was a relationship with the potential of equality rather than that of student/teacher. Müller does acknowledge throughout both his public and private writings the affect that Kasahara had on him and his views of Buddhism, but without more of Kasahara's side of the narrative, I believe it is more prudent to focus of the nature of the relationship between Nanjo and Müller. Aside from the lack of correspondence, in contrast to Nanjō who provided a background on Shin Buddhism in *Buddhist Texts from Japan* and wrote his own unedited autobiographical chapter in *Biographical Essays*, Kasahara is not given the opportunity to speak directly to a Western audience about his background and about his conceptions of Buddhism. These omissions, partly due to Kasahara's premature death, leave him as a figure that is commented upon rather than discoverable on his own terms.

Re-Imagining Orientalism:

In searching for a more nuanced view of Müller's translation of Buddhist texts, Richard King's *Orientalism and Religion* points to Charles Hallisey's theory of *intercultural mimesis* as a potential framework for re-imagining Edward Said's original assertions about the nature of Orientalism and the role it played in early Western scholarship about 'the East'. Building on Charles Hallisey's work, Richard King defines intercultural mimesis in *Orientalism and Religion* as "the cultural exchange that occurs between the native and the Orientalist in the construction of Western knowledge about 'the Orient'".⁸ With intercultural mimesis, knowledge of Eastern traditions produced by early Western scholars is revisited with an eye to the influences of 'Orientals' in the original production of that knowledge. This offers a corrective to the view of Orientalism as a monolithic process imposed by Western scholars that denies any cross-cultural exchange—a view that is, in itself, a continuation of Orientalism. As Hallisey writes, "This omission has the ironic effect of once more denying any voice to 'Orientals'".⁹ The fact that Müller and Nanjō's translation work was indeed collaboration is evident in the forwards to works such as *Buddhist Texts from Japan* where, in 1881, Müller says:

I have great pleasure in acknowledging the ready help which I received, while preparing this text, from my two Japanese pupils, Mr. Bun'yū Nanjō and Mr. Kasahara. Many of the collations, particularly where there existed Japanese or Chinese transliterations, were made for me by them, and must rest on their authority.¹⁰

Müller's crediting of the two Japanese priests with co-creation of the translations is in sharp contrast to the standard narrative of Müller's lone discovery of these Buddhist texts,

⁸ Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and 'The Mystic East'* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 148.

⁹ As cited by King, *Postcolonial*, 149.

¹⁰ Max Müller, ed, *Anecdota Oxoniensia: Texts, Documents and Extracts Chiefly from Manuscripts in the Bodleian and Other Oxford Libraries. Aryan Series. Vol. 1- Part 1. Buddhist Texts from Japan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881; reprint New York: AMS Press, Inc.), 18.

in which his students are background players at best. This impact of his relationships with Kasahara and Nanjō on Müller, both in his scholarship and personal belief, can be extrapolated from the correspondence Nanjō and Müller shared, from Müller's shifting views on Buddhism, both publicly and privately, and in the room Müller afforded Nanjō to present his own autobiography and story of his Shin Buddhist beliefs to a Western audience in his own voice. Rather than “deny any voice to ‘Orientals’”¹¹ as Hallisey describes as the standard orientation of Said's model of Orientalism, Müller, as asserted by Masuzawa, was decidedly anti-racist in his work. As described in my Methodology chapter, Anne Blackburn's *locative pluralism*—along with the work of other scholars in this emerging project—is firmly rooted in Hallisey's concept of intercultural mimesis. Therefore, seeing Müller as non-Orientalist, or perhaps partaking in a more nuanced form of Orientalism, becomes not only a partial redemption of the scholar's reputation, but also is a part of the larger ongoing project to re-visit past scholarship and recover the voices of local practitioners who contributed to that body of original Western knowledge about Asian traditions. With the recovery of those voices of local practitioners, another avenue of inquiry opens up as well: the merit of the original works of scholarship, including translations, as records of transmission from insiders of the studied traditions. To this end, it is worth briefly exploring the merits of Müller's reputation as a translator.

The Unexamined Müller:

¹¹ As cited by King, *Postcolonial*, 149.

“Even in his own lifetime, it was not infrequently said that Friedrich Max Müller had outlived his fame and usefulness,” says Tomoko Masuzawa as she begins her chapter on Müller in *The Invention of World Religion*.¹² This “fame”, as Masuzawa identifies it, has resulted in an overemphasis on Müller’s theoretical work as his lasting legacy. Yet, even in Müller’s own estimation, his translations, such as those of the landmark *Sacred Books of the East* were to be his lasting contribution to scholarship. Shifting our gaze to Müller’s translation work corrects the overemphasis that scholarship has placed on Müller’s theories and places it where Müller himself weighted his importance. In *The Essential Max Müller*, Jon Stone says, “Interestingly, the “science” upon which Müller is best known and upon which he has received the most scathing criticism—both in his lifetime and into the present—is the one about which he wrote the least”.¹³

Examining this split legacy, between Müller the translator and Müller the theorist allows us to isolate a portion of Müller’s massive body of work, his translations, that has remained largely unexamined. To date, Müller’s reputation, and the scant scholarship that exists, rests on Müller’s theoretical work. However, despite his own interests in the origins of religion, it is now widely accepted that Müller was not a sound theorist. Strong and Kitagawa, in their often-cited chapter on Müller from Ninian Smart’s *Nineteenth-Century Religious Thought in the West* characterize Müller’s theoretical legacy as follows: “His methodology and theoretical constructs are now quite outmoded and his

¹² Masuzawa, *Invention*, 207.

¹³ Müller and Stone, *Essential*, 2.

opinions have been devastatingly and deservedly criticized”.¹⁴ Examining this divide, between the translation work and the theoretical, we see that Müller’s theoretical work largely occurred in the public realm of lectures and newspaper articles for a general audience. His translation work, by contrast, was Müller’s area of specialty and intended for a small, scholarly audience and for the scholars who would follow him. “He is satisfied with bringing to light the ore which he has extracted by patient labour from among the dusty MSS,” says Müller in describing the kind of scholar he thought he was.¹⁵ Strong and Kitagawa say, “His fifty volumes of *The Sacred Books of the East*—a series which he founded and edited—rightfully remain the constant companions of Orientalists and historians of religion alike and still continue to orient (and to prejudice) our studies in these fields”.¹⁶ In the authors’ estimations, these translations continue—or at least as recently as 1985—to have merit or, at the very least, implications for modern scholars. To date, no one—including Masuzawa, Stone or Strong and Kitagawa—has considered the merits of Müller the translator.

Müller’s legacy as a translator has been largely unexamined and offers opportunity for new scholarship on this largely ignored yet foundational figure of Religious Studies. Müller left an incomparable volume of translation, both as editor and primary translator. Müller, in his translation methodology, gives us examples of a more nuanced approach to translation than the label of Orientalist would suggest. Richard King, writing in *Orientalism and Religion*, uses Müller as his primary example of the

¹⁴ Joseph M. Kitagawa and John S. Strong, “Friedrich Max Müller and The Comparative Study of Religion,” in *Nineteenth-Century Religious Thought in the West*, ed. Ninian Smart (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 207.

¹⁵ Max Müller, *Chips From a German Workshop, Part One* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, And Co., 1873), 183.

¹⁶ Kitagawa and Strong, “Müller”, 179.

unreported collaboration—that is, of “intercultural mimesis”—that occurred in the early translation of Asian texts and of “the crucial role played by native informants in the construction of Western knowledge of ‘the Orient’”.¹⁷ However, by focusing on Müller’s collaboration with Japanese monk Nanjō Bun’yū on translation, it is possible to locate a relationship between these two scholars that is more than that of Western scholar and ‘native informant’. It is, in Müller’s own framing of it, a relationship between equals. Nanjō, who comes to Müller as a student, becomes, over time and as credited publically in the forwards to their translations as well as Müller’s essays, a ‘friend’ and ‘co-worker’.

To briefly outline the content of this thesis, the first and second chapters present a Review of Literature and Methodology. The Review of Literature examines both primary and secondary sources. The scope of primary sources is those writings and translations of Müller’s directly related to topics of either Buddhism or translations, supplemented by Müller’s private posthumously published letters. Secondary sources provide an overview of Müller’s current reputation in scholarship by contrasting the extensive work of Tomoko Masuzawa on Müller with other points of view. The Methodology chapter presents Charles Hallisey’s theory of *intercultural mimesis* and Anne Blackburn’s method of *locative pluralism* in the context of the contemporary movement to revisit Edward Said’s theory of *Orientalism* and its implications on scholarship of the Victorian era. Chapters Four to Six comprise the main examinations of the data and present a chronological reading of Müller’s public and private writings in context of major life events and his collaboration with Nanjō and Kasahara. Chapter Four examines Müller’s earliest writings on Buddhism and the influence of Müller mentor Eugene Burnouf on his

¹⁷ King, *Postcolonial*, 150.

first essays such as “Buddhist Nihilism”. Chapter Five covers the period of collaboration between Müller and Nanjō and centers on the translations found in *Buddhist Texts from Japan*. Chapter Six traces the continuing influences of Nanjō and Kasahara on Müller’s late writings on Buddhism. In the Conclusion, along with a summary of findings, potential threads for future research are included.

Review of Literature

Introduction:

Tomoko Masuzawa, in her essay reflecting on the centennial of Müller's death—"Our Master's Voice: F. Max Müller After A Hundred Years of Solitude"—outlines the scope of Müller scholarship that exists and is my starting point for identifying essential secondary sources for my thesis.¹⁸ In actuality, Masuzawa's essay is an outline of the "sepulchral silence" that has resided over Müller in the past century and points to the dearth of dedicated scholarship on his legacy. Only three PhD theses and one Masters thesis on Müller have been completed in the past 100 years, according to Masuzawa, with Jon Stone's anthology of Müller writings *The Essential Max Müller* and Loren van den Bosch's biography *Friedrich Max Müller: A Life Devoted to the Humanities* standing as the only dedicated scholarly works in existence. "In truth, he is hardly read these days and, so far, no one has urged that he should be," says Masuzawa.¹⁹

Other secondary sources I have located mention Müller only in passing, but have proved useful in establishing the conventional view of Müller as an 'armchair Orientalist'. Two works that explicitly comment on the relationship and collaboration between Max Müller and Nanjō Bun'yū are those by Jan Nattier and Judith Snodgrass. While Snodgrass's *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West* provides remarkable insight into the Meiji-era politics of Japan and its effect of Buddhist emissaries to the

¹⁸ Masuzawa, "Master's", 305.

¹⁹ Tomoko Masuzawa, *In Search Of Dreamtime: The Quest For The Origin Of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 59. A forthcoming book from Oxford University Press entitled *Friedrich Max Müller And The Sacred Books Of The East* by Arie L Molendijk is evidence that there might, in fact, still be interest in some quarters in the Müller legacy. This book is not yet available, but is scheduled for release in 2016.

West during that period, her representation of Müller and Nanjō's time together is contrary to the example of collaboration found in the texts and letters. Other sources, such as survey texts or overviews of the history of Buddhist Studies that I have included, describe Müller as a typical Orientalist of the Victorian era. Even in reading Jon Stone's *Essential Max Müller*, one of those few dedicated books on Müller that Masuzawa identifies, the narrative of Müller is that of the typical Victorian Orientalist. This statement stands in stark contrast to Masuzawa's perception of Müller in *The Invention of World Religions* and her other works.

For primary sources, works of Müller's specifically related to Buddhism and translation provide the essential data for this thesis. These scholarly works of Müller's are then used as a point of comparison with Müller's private letters found in *The Life and Letters of Max Müller*. Masuzawa points to as a potential reason for the lack of Müller scholarship. "This precisely may have been the problem: the prodigious quantity of relevant material and consequently, the enormity of the task of covering his 'life and work', no matter how particularly and specifically focused an account one may seek to give."²⁰ Masuzawa herself admits to not having read all of Müller's work in its entire scope, despite three books with dedicated sections on Müller. My scope then, is five representative works on Buddhism from three different periods of Müller's life: early writing influenced by his mentor Burnouf, writings directly related to his collaboration with Nanjō, and writing near the end of his life that demonstrate Nanjō and Kasahara's lasting influence on Müller's conception of Buddhism.

²⁰ Masuzawa, "Master's", 307.

As an overview to Müller's overall attitudes to translation, I have reviewed what is perhaps Müller's best-known work, *Chips from a German Workshop, Volume 1*. The essays contained in 'Chips' offer Müller's explicit attitudes to translation work and are valuable as a preface to seeing collaboration in his work.

Secondary Sources:

Works by Tomoko Masuzawa

Masuzawa has written about Müller in three works and, perhaps, more critically and more in-depth than any other contemporary scholar. Her earliest book to address the Müller legacy, and the lack of interest or debate among contemporary scholars about Müller, was 1996's *In Search of Dreamtime: The Quest for the Origins of Religion*. In this book, Müller is examined in context with other founders of origin of religion theories—Sigmund Freud and Emile Durkheim. Masuzawa's interest in *Dreamtime* is two-fold: while examining the oversights of logic of the theories themselves, she is as equally interested in the stance that contemporary scholars haven't taken in eschewing any investigation into an origin of religion. This timidity, says Masuzawa, is part of the reason past masters are denigrated for the errors in their methodology:

Nothing is more comforting than the knowledge of the limits and the specificities of one's own research area, of which each accomplished scholar is supposed to be a master and custodian, however modest the territory may be. For the chastily finite claim to mastery on our part seems to assure a safe haven from any guilt with the masters of yore.²¹

²¹ Masuzawa, *Dreamtime*, 31.

For the purposes of my thesis, *Dreamtime* is of interest as a background to the dearth of contemporary interest in Müller, but provides very little about Müller's translation methodology or even biographical information. Also significant in determining the usefulness of Masuzawa's chapter on Müller for my own thesis is that she is covering what she considers to be Müller's early and middle periods—from 1856 to 1871. This period pre-dates Müller's involvement with his Japanese students. As well, *Dreamtime* provides virtually no background on Buddhist topics or translation, instead focusing on Müller as a theorist.

Masuzawa's next writings on Müller—2003's "Our Master's Voice: F. Max Müller After A Hundred Years of Solitude" from *Method and Theory In The Study Of Religion*—is perhaps the most useful and most succinct description of Müller's legacy, reception and scholarship that exists. Masuzawa list includes only two scholarly books of note on Müller that have been published, both in 2002—Lourens P. van den Bosch's *Friedrich Max Müller: A Life Devoted to the Humanities* and Jon R. Stone's *The Essential Max Müller: On Language, Mythology and Religion*. (Masuzawa also mentions other books, including a biography of Müller by Nirad Chaudhuri written in 1974 and published in India, but describes this work as "not exactly scholarly".)²² In "Our Master's Voice", Masuzawa opens up themes about Müller that she says will be pursued further in her upcoming book—the book that became 2005's *The Invention of World Religions*. Aspects of Müller's life and work that have been misconstrued are explored by Masuzawa, including his religious temperament and elements of his theories that have

²² Masuzawa, "Master's", 306.

been perceived as racist. Masuzawa as well outlines the many gaps in Müller scholarship that leave room for new research.

Masuzawa's 2005 book *The Invention of World Religions* offers her most explicit thesis on Müller in her attempt to correct misinterpretations of his work. In correcting any racist perceptions of Müller, Masuzawa's chapter on Müller dissects the misuse of Müller's creation of 'Aryan' as a language category and how 'Aryan' was appropriated for racist purposes. At the same time that he was combatting these scholars on the misuse of 'Aryan' categories of language being applied to race, Müller, as a German, was suspect for his "questionable Christian orthodoxy" by his fellow Christians in both England and Scotland and found himself passed over for the Sanskrit chair at Oxford as a result.²³ Other Christian authorities, such as those calling for the cancellation of his Gifford Lectures series after his first presentation, placed Müller further under assault for the perceived placing Christianity on a plane with other traditions such as Buddhism. To assert that other traditions may, at bottom, contain truths from the same Christian god, Müller uses the arguments of St. Augustine: "What is now called the Christian religion, has existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race, until Christ came into the flesh: from which time the true religion, which existed already, began to be called Christian."²⁴ That Müller is being attacked on two fronts also speaks to his "his oddity, his isolation"²⁵ as Masuzawa terms it and, perhaps, the ready need to tear down his contributions shortly after his death. "Nor is there much evidence that Müller had many sympathizers within his own profession, says Masuzawa. "No other prominent

²³ Masuzawa, *Invention*, 211.

²⁴ Müller, *Chips*, xi.

²⁵ Masuzawa, *Invention*, 254.

philologist spoke in strong support of his protest against the racialized use of philology.”

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In light of the explicit stance Müller took towards racist ideologies, his chapters on Kasahara and Nanjō in his collection of notable figures entitled *Biographical Sketches* take on a new light. Müller does not render a biography of Nanjō Bun'yū—he published an autobiographical sketch that he points out, has been remained virtually unedited by him before publication. Likewise, in his sketch of Kasahara Kenju, he provides a preamble to Kasahara's letters, published posthumously.

Scholarly Writings on Müller- van den Bosch and Stone

Lourens van den Bosch's Friedrich Max Müller: A Life Devoted to the Humanities

As the only scholarly biography of Müller that exists, Bosch's book does surprisingly little to illuminate sources that are not already accessible in other published forms. The book relies almost exclusively on *The Life and Letters of Max Müller* for examples of Müller's private thoughts and correspondence and provides few references to Müller's letters in the Bodleian library or any other collection. Masuzawa, in “Our Masters' Voice”, describes the biographical section of Bosch's book as “amounting to a condensed and more fluently narrated version of the two-volume *Life and Letters*.”²⁷ As for the relationship with Nanjō Bun'yū, two passing references are made. Jarringly, the

²⁶ Ibid, 242.

²⁷ Masuzawa, “Master's”, 308.

name is misspelled, as per Müller's spelling, which was also pointed out in Masuzawa's article "Our Master's Voice". Here, the author uses the monk's work ethic as a contrast with Müller's concerns for his son's lack of direction. Buddhism as a topic is framed within Müller's theories of religion and his belief in the commonality of truth. Work on translation, or on the sutras, is never mentioned. Covering some of the same ground of Masuzawa's chapter on Müller in *The Invention of World's Religions*, Bosch provides evidence from Müller's correspondence and public statements that demonstrate that, despite the categorization of Müller's 'Aryan' language theory as the roots of 'Aryan' racism, Müller was not a racist and did not intend his formulation of the 'Aryan' language group as a frame work for the racism that is would germinate from it. Bosch's anecdotes of Müller's early life—fighting duels as a student, the poverty of his early scholarly life—are fascinating in their own right, but contribute little to understanding his writings on Buddhism. These anecdotes are, again, borrowed from previously published sources that are readily available such as Müller's unfinished, posthumously published *My Autobiography* from 1901. The bulk of Bosch's book, beyond the biographical section, is devoted to exploration of Müller's various theories at length and contains nothing about *The Sacred Books of the East* project or Müller's approach to translation.

Jon R. Stone's The Essential Max Müller: On Language, Mythology and Religion

Edited by Stone in 2002, this is a collection of Müller's writings presented chronologically and attempting to show the evolution of Müller's work and primary concerns. In the preface Stone admits that Müller's scholarly projects did not evolve as

neatly as such a timeline might suggest. Translation and philology, for example, were essential work not simply relegated to the beginning of Müller's career, but continued until the end of his life. In fact, Stone highlights an important picture of Müller's self-estimation of own life work that he presented in *Contributions to the science of mythology* in 1897, three years before his death. Stone says:

Interestingly, the "science" upon which Müller is best known and upon which he has received the most scathing criticism—both in his lifetime and into the present—is the one about which he wrote the least. Noticeably missing from his sketch is the science of mythology, again, the area upon which much of his notoriety rests.²⁸

Here we see that the over examined theoretical part of Müller's work was, in his own estimation, a very small part of his legacy.

Müller in Survey Texts

Strong and Kitagawa's chapter from Nineteenth-Century Religious Thought in the West entitled "Friedrich Max Müller and The Comparative Study of Religion"

Strong and Kitagawa's chapter from the series edited by Ninian Smart in 1985 is a touchstone work often cited in articles that reference the Müller legacy. It offers a brief biographical sketch of Müller before delving into Müller's work in two sections: 'Müller's thought and theory' and 'Müller and the history of religions'.

²⁸ Müller and Stone, *Essential*, 2

Despite the focus on Müller's theories and science of religion, the authors begin by stating that "his methodology and theoretical constructs are now quite outmoded and his opinions have been devastatingly and deservedly criticized."²⁹ The chapter, then, is primarily a dissection of the flaws of Müller's studies, presented in the context of its reception, criticism and impact on the discipline. However, as to Müller's other output—his translations—Strong and Kitagawa give only cursory attention.

The criticism that emerges from Strong and Kitagawa—and reoccurs both among Müller's contemporaries and in modern scholarship by scholars such as Jon Stone—is that Müller's painstaking approach in his philological work is in sharp contrast to his theoretical work. "This cautious side of him—his hard-headed restraint about historical and philological facts—is often forgotten in light of his own subsequent speculations about nature mythology, the origins of religion, the relationship between religion, language, thought, and so forth."³⁰ Similarly, Strong and Kitagawa speak of Müller as "carried away" by romanticism and "emotions for nature".³¹ While the authors write at length about Müller the theorist, they establish early on that "Nowhere does Müller give evidence of possessing an original philosophical mind... We cannot underestimate the fact that Müller effectively retired from strictly philosophical combat while still a young student."³²

Strong and Kitagawa devote the majority of their energy to dissecting the legacy of Müller's better-known discredited theoretical work such as his 'solar mythology' with

²⁹ Kitagawa and Strong, "Müller", 179.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 192.

³¹ *Ibid*, 195.

³² *Ibid*, 188.

little mention of his translations. Here, though Strong and Kitagawa offer Müller's own thoughts on this part of his legacy:

Müller was to complain later that because he devoted some of his early studies specifically to the subject of solar myths, it had wrongly been concluded that he taught that the whole of the world's mythology was solar in nature. There is some truth in this. Many of his later works make very little reference to solar myths, and it is clear that some critics were unfair in exaggerating this aspect of his thought.³³

That Müller himself saw his translation work as the culmination of his career supports a revisiting of Müller's legacy outside of his theoretical work.

Jan Nattier's 'A Few Good Men'

As an example of the narrative of the Müller/Nanjō collaboration, Jan Nattier's article gives a succinct version of the standard reading. Nattier, a reputable scholar who has written extensively on the Heart Sutra—including a widely-cited article on the Heart Sutra as being Chinese in its Sanskrit origin. Nattier acknowledges but downplays any involvement Nanjō might have had in the first translation of the Heart Sutra:

But if the initial phase of western Buddhist Studies consisted largely of the analysis and digestion of Sanskrit and Pali texts, an important feature of the second phase of its development (which might be described as extending from the late 19th to the early 20th century; see de Jong 1997) was the beginning of active collaboration between European and Japanese scholars. With the reopening of Japan to foreign contacts in 1868 after two and a half centuries of isolation, Japanese students of Buddhism began to travel to Europe to study Sanskrit and Pali with leading western scholars. One of the first to take on such students was F. Max Müller, who published the first Western editions of the Sanskrit Heart Sutra, Diamond Sutra, and shorter and longer Sukhavativyuha sutras based on

³³ Kitagawa and Strong, "Müller", 198.

manuscripts preserved in Japan (Müller 1881). The existence of these Sanskrit texts had been made known to him by his students, among whom numbered Nanjo Bun'yu, whom later collaborated with the Dutch scholar Hendrik Kern to produce the first published Sanskrit edition of the Lotus Sutra (Kern and Nanjō 1908-1912).³⁴

Judith Snodgrass', Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West

As another example of the rendering of the Müller/Nanjō relationship, Judith Snodgrass, in her 2003 book *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West*, depicts the collaboration in terms remarkably less flattering than Nattier:

Müller's denigration of the Mahayana only confirms what one could deduce from his attitude to the highly trained and specially selected Japanese priests sent to study with him. Instead of seeing their presence at Oxford as a unique opportunity to expand the scope of his study of religion into a new area, he wanted only their skills in reading Chinese. Nanjo Bunyu, the first Japanese priest sent by the Nishi Honganji to study Sanskrit with Müller in 1876, was put to work cataloging the Chinese Tripitaka in the India Office library, again principally for its value in dating Sanskrit literature.³⁵

Along with Müller's translation efforts, the Müller/Nanjō relationship as a subcategory of interest in the Müller legacy seems to have merited very little notice. However, as an example of Müller's non-racist attitudes, as well as early collaboration and "intercultural mimesis" in the production of Western knowledge about Buddhism it is a fascinating but so far unexamined part of Müller's history.

³⁴ Jan Nattier, *A Few Good Men: The Bodhisattva Path According to the Inquiry of Ugra (Ugraparipṛcchā)* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 6.

³⁵ Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 110.

Primary Sources:

Among my primary sources, *The Life and Letters of Friedrich Max Müller* has provided the most useful information.³⁶ It has ordered events in an easily accessible chronology that has allowed me to find other sources—such as Müller's essays—and the circumstance surrounding their writing. *Life and Letters* provides insight into Müller's personal thoughts and relationships in a way not available in scholarly writings or essays.

Surveying the entirety of Müller's writing, selected chapters or essays directly related to Müller's views on Buddhism or translation provided a timeline covering the entirety of Müller's career. "Buddhist Nihilism", found in Jon Stone's edited collection of Müller's writings, is among Müller's earliest writing on Buddhist and reflects the influence of his mentor Eugene Burnouf.³⁷ *Buddhist Texts from Japan* contains the translations that Nanjō and Müller collaborated on, with commentary from Müller on the nature of their work. It also contains five pages written by Nanjō on the Shin Buddhist sect. Chapters from *Biographical Essays* on Nanjō and Kasahara provide essential personal detail, and demonstrates Müller's regard for his students and his respect as he once again provides a space for Nanjō to supply his own autobiography to a Western audience.³⁸ "Coincidences" is an essay written by Müller on the subject of Buddhism and

³⁶ Max Müller, *The Life and Letters of Friedrich Max Müller, Vol. 1 and 2*, ed. Georgina Max Müller (New York: Longmans, Green, 1902; reprint New York: AMS Press, 1976).

³⁷ Müller and Stone, *Essential*, 81.

³⁸ Max Müller, *Biographical Essays* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884) archive.org.

Christianity near the end of his life.³⁹ “Buddhism and Christianity” was written just days before his death and is revealing in Müller’s deathbed reflections on Buddhism.⁴⁰ *Chips from a German Workshop* offers insight into Müller’s approach to translation and allows us to see someone open to collaboration and perhaps modern in his ideas.

The Life and Letters of Friedrich Max Müller, Vol 1. and 2

Published posthumously, *The Life and Letters of Friedrich Max Müller* was edited by Müller’s wife Georgina Müller and first appeared in print in 1902. Along with selected letters presented chronologically, Georgina Müller offers commentary on important incidents in his career and personal life. For my purposes, I focus on some key aspects from these two volumes: Georgina Müller’s commentary on Müller’s view of Buddhism, Müller’s comments on Buddhism in the wake of the death of his daughter, Müller’s thoughts on Buddhism and the nature of the soul in his last days, Müller’s letters to Nanjō Bun’yū, and, finally, miscellaneous incidents related to Buddhism.

Early Period Buddhist Writings

“Buddhism” and “Buddhist Nihilism”

³⁹ Max Müller, “Coincidences” in *Last Essays: First Series*. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1901) archive.org.

⁴⁰ Max Müller, *Last Essays: Second Series* (New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green and Co., 1901; reprint New York: AMS Press, 1978) 300.

Written in 1869, this essay is taken from a lecture delivered by Müller to a public audience. The themes of Buddhist Nihilism are striking similar to Müller's 1860 essay entitled "Buddhism" found in *Chip from a German Workshop*. In both essays, Müller's interpretation of Buddhism derives its authority from the work of Burnouf and Burnouf's reading of the Tripitaka. Atheism and Nihilism are, for Müller, the confounding center points of Buddhism, yet Buddhism also offers what he believes to be a system of morality on par with Christianity. However, this admiration is tempered by the view of Buddhism as ultimately nihilistic in its lack of a creator god, and denial of such. One notable development in "Buddhist Nihilism" is Müller's call—divergent from that of Burnouf—to view the Buddhist Tripitaka not as 'Gospels', but as a divergent group of writings with conflicting messages that could perhaps be further investigated for the authentic message of the Buddha.⁴¹

Middle Period Buddhist Writings

Buddhist Texts from Japan

Buddhist Texts from Japan contain translations of The Vagrakkhedika (The Diamond Cutter Sutra), the Sukhavati-vuyuha (The Land of Bliss), and the Pragna-Paramita (Heart Sutra) in both long and short forms with Chinese commentary. There is

⁴¹ Müller and Stone, *Essential*, 84.

an overall introduction, as well as introductions to each Sutra. G. Buchner provides an afterward. This text is explored in detail in the section on Müller's middle period.

Biographical Essays

Two chapters on Japanese Buddhist monks Bun'yū Nanjō and Kenju Kasahara come from 1884's *Biographical Essays* and provides a view of Müller's relationship with his two student, both in Müller's own words and in his students' provided letters and autobiographical sketches contained within. In the posthumously published *The Life and Letters of Max Müller*, Georgina Müller writes about the reception of *Biographical Essays*:

In defending himself from the charge of writing about many men whose work in life is but little known, he says 'Much of the best work in the world is done by those whose names remain unknown, who work because life's greatest bliss is work, and who require no reward beyond the consciousness that they have enlarged the knowledge of mankind, and contributed their share to the final triumph of honesty and truth.'⁴²

Although the relationship Müller has with these two monks begins as that of teacher and student, it becomes, with Nanjō Bun'yū, a friendship maintained over the decades and at a distance by ongoing correspondence.

Along with outlining the warmth of the relationship between Müller and his two Japanese students, several points that illuminate the character and attitudes of both Müller and his students become apparent. Some of Müller's attitudes towards Buddhism, particularly Shin Buddhism, are stated. As well, some of the obligations, as well as social and political dynamics, that circumscribe Nanjō's life choices are also evident in his

⁴² Müller, *Letters*, V.1, 169.

personal testimony. Evidence that Müller was sympathetic to Buddhism, and became so with his acquaintance with these two students, comes from Georgina Müller who detailed this evolution in *The Life and Letters of Max Müller*.⁴³

Aside from these very personal sketches, these essays also provide us with a starting point for context of the era and for the translation of the Heart Sutra. In Kasahara's story, we see glimpses of the negotiation that took place in order to get a copy of the 'palm-leaf' *Heart Sutra*. Nanjō's sections also include essential details of their translation. The monk's primary mission, of regaining knowledge of Sanskrit, occurs against the backdrop of the end of the Tokugawa period and the beginning of the Meiji era. The Association of United Buddhist Sects, as Nanjō names it, is the pan-Buddhist movement seeking to align Buddhism with the new government and to consolidate its position in an era that is marked by open hostility to Buddhism by educated elites in Japan.

Late Period Buddhist Writings

"Coincidences" from Last Essays: First Series

Written just four years before Müller's death, this essay shows Müller's preoccupations with Christian aspects of Buddhism during his final years—themes, as shown in the analysis of *Life and Letters*, that Müller continued to work through until his

⁴³ Müller, *Letters*, V.2, 202.

last days. The first footnote of the essay provides the place and context for Müller's presentation on the similarities between Christianity and Buddhism: "A Paper read before the Royal Society of Literature, May 27, 1896."⁴⁴ Georgina Müller reports on this reading in *Life and Letters*:

It called forth a good deal of criticism at the time...As the Buddhist Canon was written down a century before the Christian era, it is evident that *if* there were any borrowing, it was by Christianity from Buddhism; though it is possible that the coincidences in teaching may be accounted for by the universality of essential ethics. The Lord Chancellor, who was present, objected greatly to Max Müller's deductions. On the other hand, a venerable clergyman wrote to him: 'Don't despair; you have done a great work in your time, which will bear fruit, if not sooner, some 500 years hence. The progress of truth is very slow—the purchase of blood and sweat, as I suspect you have discovered in spite of your great successes.'⁴⁵

"Buddhism and Christianity" from Last Essays: Second Series

Müller's last essay on Buddhism and Christianity in China that he worked on days before his death was published in *Last Essays: Second Series* and it gives us insight into his concerns in his final days. One of Müller's primary concerns in this essay is how the Mahayana Buddhist tradition emerged in China and how it differed from the Theravada—the Hinayana as Müller terms it. Müller's thoughts on the Buddhist afterlife interpretations—a preoccupation in his last days, as detailed in *Life and Letters*—show a dramatic evolution of his thought on Buddhism that is modeled on the Pure Land Buddhism of Nanjō.

⁴⁴ Müller, "Coincidences", 251.

⁴⁵ Müller, Letters, v2. 365.

Surveying Müller's Attitude to Translation

Chips From A German Workshop, Part One

Müller's *Chips From A German Workshop, Part One* ('*Chips*') is not the pinnacle of his career, or even central to the body of Müller's life work. As the name suggests, the writings contained within this collection of public speeches, newspaper articles and essays are fragments—chips—of thoughts produced as byproducts of the main object of his scholarly endeavors. His main works, such his 50-volume translation of *The Sacred Books of The East*, were his primary focus and the work he intended for a scholarly audience. However, as *Chips* was meant for a more public audience, the essays it contains are highly accessible and an excellent entry point into Müller's theories of language and religion, as well as window into his personality and personal beliefs. The first essay in *Chips From A German Workshop* is a lecture on the Vedas delivered in Leeds to a general audience. The second, "Christ and His Masters", is a review of a book by the same title. The entire volume is a mixture of these book reviews, public lectures and response essays on selected topics. *Chips* arose, as Müller tells it in the introduction to the book, from a social debt to his patron Baron Bunsen for the financial support he received via the East Indian Company to work on his Rig-Veda opus. "Now you've got a work for life—a large block that will take years to plane and polish. But mind," he added, "Let us have from time to time some chips from your workshop'."⁴⁶ As a cross-section of his thought,

⁴⁶ Müller, *Chips*, vii.

Chips is a representative record of his methodology and theories and an excellent place to revisit Müller's legacy in light of modern criticism.

Methodology

Locative Pluralism: 'A Methodological Example':

Using Max Müller's correspondence as a point of comparison with his published scholarly work, I will employ Anne Blackburn's "methodological example" of *locative pluralism* to demonstrate Müller's often-ignored anti-Orientalist attempts at validating and including Buddhist practitioners in the production of Western knowledge about Buddhist traditions. Comparing Müller's public comments with what is revealed in private correspondence offers us the opportunity to glimpse the boundaries of what is publically permissible in the Victorian era, especially when studying and comparing Christianity to other emerging 'world religions' remained suspect and potentially career-limiting. In establishing *locative pluralism* as a viable method for re-interpreting the collaboration between Müller and Nanjō in a new light, it is important to trace Blackburn's method of *locative pluralism* back to its source as an offshoot of *intercultural mimesis*, Charles Hallisey's theory of the cross-cultural exchange of knowledge that occurred in historical interactions between Asian and Western countries.⁴⁷ As a new theoretical groundwork for viewing interactions such as Müller and Nanjō's collaboration on the translation of Buddhist sutras, *intercultural mimesis* seeks to act as a corrective to the assertions of the theory of *Orientalism* as established in Edward Said's epoch-making publication by the same name, a book that cast all Western scholarship on

⁴⁷ Hallisey, "Roads", 33.

the East, past and ongoing, into suspicion as a potential tool of colonialism and Western subjugation of the East.⁴⁸

Edward Said and 'Authority' in Orientalism:

Grounded primarily on the work of Michel Foucault and his assertion about the nature of power and authority, Edward Said's 1968 book *Orientalism* offered an in-depth critique of academia's complicity in the historical project of Western colonialism. In the wake of this groundbreaking book, a great swath of Western scholarship on the East that came before this new modern era suddenly became suspect. Richard King, in *Orientalism and Religion*, offers a concise summary of the central arguments of Said's theory. Says King:

According to Said, 'Orientalism refers to three interrelated phenomena. First, an 'Orientalist' is 'anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient – and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian or philologist' in other words, anyone claiming to have expert knowledge or understanding of oriental cultures. Second, 'Orientalism is a style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological distinctions made between "the orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident".' This is a large and fairly amorphous category that would include the thoughts and writing of anyone who effectively divided the world up in this bipolar manner. Third, and most significant for Said: 'Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient...in short, Orientalism as a Western style for domination, restructuring and having authority over the Orient.'⁴⁹

A point to add to King's synopsis of Orientalism is Said's own concise definition from the first page of Introduction section of the 25th Anniversary edition of *Orientalism*:

⁴⁸ Edward Said, *Orientalism: 25th Anniversary Edition* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

⁴⁹ King, *Postcolonial*, 82-83.

Unlike the Americans, the French and British—less so the Germans, Russians, Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, and Swiss—have had a long tradition of what I will I shall be calling *Orientalism*, a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience.⁵⁰

In the decades since its publication, 'Orientalism' and 'Orientalist' have become the bywords for past Western scholarship on Asian religious traditions and the attendant scholars who created it. Said's original depiction of Orientalism and the Orientalist cuts across many disciplines, including that of the 'philologist'. While Said's own area of study was Comparative Literature, it is useful to place Orientalism in a context specific to Religious Studies by returning to Anne Blackburn who, in her chapter "The Text and The World" in *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, catalogues the charges against early Religious Studies scholars in light of a post-colonial critique—a critique whose genesis she directly points to as originating from Said's *Orientalism*.⁵¹ A working list of the aspects of 'an Orientalist', according to Blackburn are: the privileging of text as the defining feature of religion, the belief that the earliest "stratum of texts" represents the essence of the "original" religious tradition, the belief that later texts and developments are "degenerate", the selective use of these texts as the "data" of a "science of religion" and finally, the creation and imposition of non-existent categories of religious "-isms"—"Hinduism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism" onto cultures—all in service of the colonial goals and ambitions of European powers. Müller, as a scholar of text, at a glance clearly fits some of the categories provided by Blackburn. However, aside from assumptions of who and what typify the Orientalist, and before reviewing Blackburn's

⁵⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, 1.

⁵¹ Anne Blackburn, "The Text and The World," in *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, ed. Robert A. Orsi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 151-167.

Religious Studies-specific list of character traits of the Orientalist against a portrait of Müller, we might first ask if Müller can be directly indicted as an Orientalist by returning to Said's own work. Placing 'philologists' at the very origin of Western Orientalism, Said says:

The great philological discoveries in comparative grammar made by Jones, Franz Bopp, Jacob Grimm. And others were originally indebted to manuscripts brought from the East to Paris and London. Almost without exception, every Orientalist began his career as a philologist, and the revolution in philology that produced Bopp, Sacy, Burnouf, and their students was a comparative science based on the premise that languages belonged to families, of which the Indo-European and the Semitic are two great instances. From the outset, then, Orientalism carries forward two traits: (1) a newly found scientific consciousness based on the linguistic importance of the Orient to Europe, and (2) a proclivity to divide, subdivide, and redivide its subject matter without ever changing its mind about the Orient as being always the same, unchanging, uniform, and radically peculiar object.⁵²

Here, Müller is clearly highlighted as one of those students of Burnouf and an inheritor of the philological pursuit of the origin of Asian religious traditions. However, three points from Said's original work would allow us to view Müller as a potential outlier from the field of the Victorian Orientalists right from the outset. These are: Müller's status as a 'German philologist', his willingness to find a source outside of text and Said's own admission that his original theory was a prompt to critical thought and did not encapsulate all academics of the past. On the first point, that of the work of German scholars, Said's introductory definition of Orientalism, previously referenced, does point to English and French scholars as the primary perpetrators of Orientalism while creating a lesser category for 'Germans, Russians, Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, and Swiss'. However, Richard King presses this 'exception' for German scholars in the propagation of Orientalism even further:

⁵² Said, *Orientalism*, 97.

Not only has Said's work ignored important currents within European Orientalist discourse, it has also tended to affect the colonizer as well as the colonized. Indeed, examples of German Orientalist, on the one hand, and Japan, on the other, cast doubt upon Said's thesis that Orientalist discourse is always associated with an imperial agenda, since Germany had no Eastern empire to manipulate and control, and Japan was subjected to Orientalist discourses without even being colonized by the West.⁵³

Seeing Japan as an uncolonized Asian country and Müller as a German scholar sets the scene for a meeting between Müller and Nanjō as outside the bounds of Orientalism even before Hallisey's theory of *intercultural mimesis* attempts to dismantle the monolithic claims of Said's theory. In fact, in reconsidering the Müller legacy against a critique of Orientalism, it is useful to examine Said's direct comments on Müller in the introduction to the 25th anniversary edition of *Orientalism*:

Any work that seeks to provide an understanding of academic Orientalism and pays little attention to scholars like Steinthal, Müller, Becker, Goldziher, Brockelmann, Noldeke—to mention only a handful—needs to be reproached and I freely reproach myself. I particularly regret not taking more account of the great scientific prestige that accrued to German scholarship by the middle of the nineteenth century.⁵⁴

Noteworthy, then, is the fact that Müller's work was a remarked-upon omission from Said's original critique. On the final point, of Müller's willingness to move beyond text to the authority of living Buddhist practitioners for an understanding of Buddhism, as I will outline in following chapter through the evidence of correspondence and published text, becomes the strongest claim to Müller's non-Orientalist tendencies.

Müller Through the Lens of Locative Pluralism:

⁵³ King, *Postcolonial*, 8.

⁵⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 18.

Viewed over the lifetime of his writing career, Müller's mid and late-career writings on Buddhism come to reflect an understanding of Buddhism as shaped by his collaboration with Nanjō Bun'yū. However, for Müller, pushing forward this insider-informed view of Buddhism comes at the risk of professional and social status. By examining Müller's public writings and attendant private commentaries, as well surrounding controversies and criticism from other academics of the era, we can see the limits of dissent from the accepted view of Christianity that was permissible. In *Locations of Buddhism*, Blackburn asserts: "If our sources are sufficiently rich, we will begin to comprehend, and to develop a nearly instinctive awareness of, worlds of sentiment and value that orient and richly motivate human action."⁵⁵ When placed in sequence, the orientation of Müller's later writing on Buddhism, even up until his final days, shows the profound and lasting influence of his Japanese collaborators and their period of collaboration at Oxford.

In analyzing Müller's writing for his perceptions on Buddhism, I have isolated pieces that reflect three distinct periods: 'pre-contact' writings by Müller such as *Buddhist Nihilism* that reflect his training with his mentor with Eugene Burnouf; writings generated directly from the collaboration with Nanjō during their period together at Oxford, such as *Biographical Sketches* and *Buddhist Texts from Japan*; and later period writings of Müller's such as *Coincidences* that continue to reflect a conception of Buddhism created by the collaboration.

⁵⁵ Blackburn, *Locations*, 202.

Blackburn in Context:

Anne Blackburn's book *Locations of Buddhism* and its usage of *locative pluralism* as a method for revisiting Edward Said's original postulation of Orientalism is just one work in an emerging body of contemporary scholarship that is looking at the influence of local authority in early contact between Western scholars with Asian traditions. While Charles Hallisey's term "intercultural mimesis" has emerged as the dominant signifier for examining this collaboration, other scholars conducting research in this area, including Richard King, Thomas Tweed and Sven Bretfeld, use a variety of terminology to describe their area of inquiry. Bretfeld, in his April 2012 essay for *Religion* entitled "Resonant Paradigms in the Study of Religions and the Emergence of Theravāda Buddhism" catalogues a number of scholars working in this area and the varied terms and language used to describe this cross culture exchange in the creation of 19th century Western knowledge, and the corrective it offers on the standard reading of Orientalism:

A similar Eurocentric outlook is revealed when postcolonial deconstructions overlook the fact that the images of Orientalism are not merely 'Western' projections, completely embedded inside European culture. In this respect Hallisey criticizes the work by Almond for his omission to take into account Buddhist thought and practice in Asia in the 19th century that 'influenced the investigator to represent that culture in a certain manner.' This 'intercultural mimesis' becomes evident in 'productive elective affinities' between certain paradigms of Oriental scholars and traditional Buddhist exegesis, which in turn shaped the manner in which early Buddhist Studies were accomplished and organized. Hallisey's 'intercultural mimesis' is a concept to capture cross-cultural interactions from the perspective of a global interrelatedness of cultures and, without negating the asymmetries of power shaping these processes, tries to avoid the pitfall of degrading 'Orientals' to mere passive recipients of 'Western' Orientalist projections. In Buddhist Studies, this concept was further developed by King and Blackburn... We are in need of new models to capture the multi-layered dynamics of the encounters that have 'produced' modern Buddhism. Its production, then, can no longer be explained as an invention triggered by

scholarly imagination, but as a relational process of the mutual exchange of questions and answers, action and reaction. Some recent theories and conceptual metaphors like 'intercultural mimesis' (Hallisey, 1995), 'hybridity' (Bhabha 1994)), 'intercultural flows' (Tweed 2006) and 'network approaches' (Vásquez 2008) have been proposed as a more precise way of coming to grips with this field of research.⁵⁶ (276-277)

Evident here is that, as of Bretfeld's writing in 2012, the project of uncovering 'intercultural mimesis' as a more complex imaging of Orientalism is still in a period of relative infancy with no consensus on terminology and methods. To return to Hallisey, more than 70 citations of 'intercultural mimesis' on Google Scholar since his first usage of the term in the 1998 book *Curators of the Buddha* shows it as perhaps the dominant emerging term for the cross-cultural exchange. For my purposes, I have also chosen Hallisey's term intercultural mimesis as the description of the exchange between Nanjō and Müller, as it similarly is the term on which Blackburn has based her writings.

Locative Pluralism as a Method:

Blackburn's *Locations of Buddhism*, anchored by her method of locative pluralism, finds an entry point into the 19th century Sri Lankan Buddhism encounter with Western scholarship through the life and biographical details of one monk, Hikkaduve Sumangala. Blackburn explicitly describes this work as a "methodological example, suggesting how one may achieve greater historical precision in evaluations of colonial impacts on colonized persons and regions by developing small-scale histories of

⁵⁶ S. Bretfeld, "Resonant Paradigms in the Study of Religions and the Emergence of Theravāda Buddhism," *Religion* 42.2 (2012): 276-277.

individuals and their networks.”⁵⁷ While Blackburn’s study of Hikkaduve Sumangala is in a context of a colonized Sri Lanka, many of the elements of her work and my thesis overlap: the Western—and specifically British—encounter with Buddhism, the time frame of the 19th century, the ‘lifeworld’ of one eminent scholar/monk, and the unreported or underreported role of ‘intercultural mimesis’ and Buddhist practitioners in the production of knowledge by Western scholars about Buddhism in the 19th century.

While Max Müller’s writing on Buddhism span the entirety of his scholarly career, it is through his personal thoughts and correspondence we glimpse more overtly how the relationship with Nanjō and Kasahara helped evolved his position. *The Life and Letters of Max Müller*, edited by Georgina Müller and published posthumously, provides a chronological guide to the personal circumstances serving as the backdrop to Müller’s career milestones. Key moments in Müller’s evolution in his thinking on Buddhism include: his first meeting with these two Japanese monks; the translation and publication of key Buddhist texts; deaths of Kasahara and of Müller’s daughter; and Müller’s writing on Buddhism during his last years and up until days before his death.

In reading Müller’s scholarly and published writings on Buddhism through the lens of locative pluralism, we can trace the competing influences of a Western Orientalist framework as it interacts with the ‘local authority’ of Müller’s Japanese collaborators. These competing influences reflect Said’s original thesis in *Orientalism*, the role of authority in the production of knowledge:

Taking the late eighteenth century as a very rough starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, settling it, ruling over it; in short,

⁵⁷ Blackburn, *Locations*, 203.

Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restricting and having authority over the orient. I have found it very useful here to employ Michel Foucault's notion of a discourse, as described by him in *Discipline and Punishment*, to identify Orientalism.⁵⁸

Accepting that Müller was working in an environment of institutionalized Orientalism, his personal orientation and beliefs—if we can discern that he was non-Orientalist—must still navigate what is permissible in the public sphere, or as Said terms it, what may be filtered through the 'accepted grid': "Continued investment made Orientalism, as a system of knowledge, as system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness."⁵⁹

Examining Müller's resulting published work on Buddhism, including the translation of sutras from Japan, through the the lens of intercultural mimesis, the question becomes: what 'local authority' has appeared and what has been 'filtered' out. "It is more revealing to assume that the persons we study exemplify locative pluralism, acting simultaneously in relation to plural and shifting *collectives of belonging* to which they feel a sense of responsibility and emotional investment," says Blackburn in describing locative pluralism and the opportunities that this method offers in exploring the often-complicated layers of influences that intersect in cross-cultural exchanges and collaborations.⁶⁰ Here, reading Müller's private letters, in comparison to published writings gives us Müller's competing 'collectives of belonging': his loyalty, respect and friendship with Nanjō and respect for Nanjō's authority; Müller's own Orientalist biases that influence his writing; and what Müller dares to write for public consumption. With

⁵⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

⁵⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 6.

⁶⁰ Blackburn, *Locations*, 205.

these two groups of writing, Müller's letters and published writings involving Buddhism, as our data for this thesis, the conflict between the public and private 'collectives of belonging' emerges in Chapters Four, Five and Six of this thesis.

Müller and Nanjō: A Microhistory

Before examining the documents related to Müller and Nanjō's translation efforts for evidence of a non-Orientalist collaboration, it is important to ask the question of whether the divide between these two men, of Orientalist teacher and 'Oriental' student in Victorian England, could possibly be bridged so that a collaboration of equals was indeed possible. Said's original thesis of Orientalism takes its foundation in the theoretical work of Michel Foucault and his interest in the power dynamics of individuals in the context of institutionalized power inequalities. Müller, as described in the preceding Methodology section, was working within an 'institutionalized Orientalism' of Victorian England, yet, despite his own scholarly Orientalist tendencies, was ready to make room for Buddhist practitioners to have their own voices heard on the subject of Buddhist at a point when Buddhist studies was in a state of complete infancy—Müller's mentor Eugene Burnouf being the originating point of a Western conception of Buddhism, one that Donald Lopez contends is the overarching understanding of Buddhism embedded in both popular and scholarly ideas about Buddhism to this day. Details of the biographies of both Nanjō and Müller give us clues about how a relationship that could potentially be defined by the power imbalance between Western teacher and Asian student might evolve to become collaboration between equals. Examining a brief biographical sketch or 'microhistory' brings us back to the core of the methodological concerns of Anne Blackburn's locative pluralism.

In *Locations of Buddhism*, Blackburn champions the merits of microhistory through individual biography when she says:

On this scale, it is possible to combine historical orientations that we might call 'social,' 'institutional,' 'intellectual,' and 'religious or devotional' history. Thus, we attempt to discern the problems and concerns of a particular Buddhist at a certain point in time and the repertoire of conceptions of history, collective belonging, proper conduct, and social obligation on which that person drew in response to these central problems and concerns.⁶¹

By focusing on a 'microhistory' surrounding the collaboration between Müller and Nanjō on a single collection of translations, that of *The Buddhist Texts from Japan*, we locate a moment in time where collaboration between 'East' and 'West' is taking place, and within which we can dissect the Blackburn's layers of 'social,' 'institutional,' 'intellectual,' and 'religious or devotional' history that are being negotiated by each man through their own backgrounds, experiences, loyalties and biases. In examining the act of the translation of *The Land of Bliss Sutra* and other texts from Japan using Blackburn's 'layers of history', we may ask what are the aspects of history and personal biography that inform the collaboration between Müller and Nanjō? Do these aspects of biography allow us to see the possibility of a non-Orientalist collaboration, one that also allows these individuals to move past a student/teacher relationship to a meeting of equals? Using Blackburn's previously identified collectives of belonging, or what she terms elsewhere as "intersecting spheres of belonging" should allow us to see the relationship as multi-layered rather than defined by any one aspect.⁶²

Viewed through the threads of biographical details, it is possible to see Müller and Nanjō as sharing 'intersecting spheres' that could supersede or redefine the relationship of student and teacher and allow for the possibility of genuine collaboration. For example, two "spheres" shared by Müller and Nanjō shared are those of 'scholar' and 'foreigner'.

⁶¹ Blackburn, *Locations*, 202.

⁶² Blackburn, *Locations*, 23.

Against the backdrop of the Orientalism of Oxford and Victorian England, these connections between a German and a Japanese scholar, equally recognized by their societies as gifted in languages, might find enough common ground to develop their working relationship, or some essence of it, into a friendship between equals. Both Müller and Nanjō are emerging from cultures experiencing convulsions of change. In Japan, it is the beginning of the Meiji, an era of societal upheaval and an opening to West and outside influences. In England and the West, the theories of Charles Darwin have called into question the religious underpinning of Western society and, as well, opened up a new era of inquiry about religious traditions not possible just a generation before. In this moment of possibility, these two scholars meet. Furthermore, to offer one potential counter-narrative, one that sees the power in the relationship rest with Nanjō rather than Müller, we might view the relationship as one between proselytizer/initiate rather than that of student/teacher. Nanjō, as a missionary of Shin Buddhism, is part of the larger effort to position Japanese culture, and Japanese Buddhism, as on par with the best of Western culture. Nanjō's success in indoctrinating Müller to specific view of Shin Buddhism and having his unmediated narrative of Shin Buddhism presented to a mass Western audience, such as found in *Biographical Essays*, exists as one potential counter-narrative and allows us to acknowledge that perhaps, despite the student/teacher relationship and the overarching 'grid' of institutionalized Orientalism, the power in the relationship did not rest entirely with Müller.

Nanjō Bun'yū: A Shin Buddhist Missionary and Scholar from Meiji Japan:

The appearance of Japanese monks in England in the 19th century occurs at a singular, unprecedented moment in history—the first in which Japanese would travel to the West. Nanjō and Kasahara's arrival at Oxford occurred just as Japan's Tokugawa era ended, and with it a 200-year period of self-imposed Japanese seclusion. This end of the Tokugawa Era and the opening up of Japan represented a significant societal shift that left Buddhism in a precarious position and precipitated the emergence of a Japanese pan-Buddhist movement intended to preserve Buddhism as the heart of Japanese identity. The politics of this era also involve Japan's movement back to an imperial reign, as well as the adoption of Western-style nationalism. Rapid adoption of Western technology, ideas and dress was changing day-to-day life in Japan, especially among the educated classes. Technology and the ability to travel around the world were now open to Japanese as never before. In the intellectual sphere, Michael Pye, among others, establishes that Japan had evolved its own science of religion outside of Western influence. In his article entitled "Modern Japan and the Science of Religions" Pye says:

There is a widespread assumption that the academic study of religion(s) is a Western cultural project which, in some cases, has been adopted elsewhere in a derivative fashion...Japan is a significant counterexample. The academic study of religion(s) in Japan has an extremely significant history with a complex relationship to its own intellectual history and to modernity.⁶³

Seeing Nanjō's travel as not simply as reaction to Western influences, but informed by internal pressures and Japan's own intellectual tradition is important. Japan, and the projection of Japanese Buddhism to the West, is not in totality a part of the Western

⁶³ Michael Pye, "Modern Japan and The Science of Religion," *Method and Theory In The Study Of Religion* 15.1 (2003): 1.

colonial project—a point that runs counter to Said's original thesis of Orientalism. In the case of Nanjō, he is sent forth in part as a missionary of Buddhism, part of the overarching project to position Buddhism at the heart of Japanese intellectual and cultural life, while the entirety of Japan is lurching forward in the Meiji era to adopt Western-style technology. Japan and its emissaries in this era are seeking to identify Japanese culture and society to the West as an entity on par with the cultural and intellectual history of Western nations and Buddhism is an essential part of Japan's self-defined identity. During this moment, a new, scholarly Buddhism that aids in building the modern Japanese identity is emerging. As Judith Snodgrass frames it:

The Meiji government policy of *shinbutsu buri* severed the relationship between Buddhism and the ruling powers that had existing in various forms since Buddhism had been introduced to Japan... In the early Meiji years of Buddhist persecution, restoring links with the state was vital for the defense of the religion.⁶⁴

This relationship with the state is evident when Nanjō says that in 1875 he “became a preacher of the tenth degree, receiving my appointment from the Minister of Religion in the Imperial Government.”⁶⁵ Nanjō's mission to revive Sanskrit is part of a larger political shift that has occurred in Japan.

From birth, Nanjō's life is circumscribed by choices made for him because of his religion, culture and family structure. Yet, against this backdrop, he excels as a student of languages. Language becomes a focus throughout his life, and his skill with language leads him to Oxford. Along with his identity as a gifted scholar, Nanjō is a missionary priest of the Shin Buddhist sect and as such is sent to Oxford by his superiors. In

⁶⁴ Snodgrass, *Japanese*, 127-129.

⁶⁵ Max Müller, *Biographical Essays* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884), 190.

recounting the events of his life in *Biographical Essays*, Nanjō tells us that he began preaching at age 13 and the fact that he and Kasahara are “missionaries” is always in the foreground.⁶⁶ He is, at once, a very ordinary priest of the Shin Buddhist sect following in the family tradition from a very young age and completing the same steps of his formal training and education as his peers, while at the same time constantly excelling in any group into which he is placed. Nanjō mentions that among his studies, he learns of all the different Japanese Buddhist sects at the Theological College of the Eastern Honganji before proceeding to learn classical Chinese. He later published a book on the 12 sects of Japanese Buddhism.

Max Müller: A German Scholar and Christian in Victorian England:

When Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* was first published in 1859, Müller was in his first year at Oxford and already working towards his own ‘origin’ theory. Thomas Tweed, in writing about the American experience of the 19th century, points to a “spiritual crisis” in the West following Darwin. Science, in this era, begins to challenge the authority of religion in a way not possible just a generation before. In place of religious certainty, questions are being asked about Christianity and other religions that would have been impossible in another era. A ferment of inquiry occurs in this era—an example of which is the emergence of lectures on religion attended by the general public. The Gifford Lectures are an example of this, of which Müller delivered the first and, twelve years

⁶⁶ Ibid, 188.

later, William James delivered *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Müller is working in an era of opening inquiry, yet comes dangerously close to alienating himself from the rest of the scholarly community and the public. Among his public controversies, he was passed over for the Chair in Sanskrit at Oxford and accused of being anti-Christian for the material he delivered in the Gifford Lectures. Just how 'religious' Müller was is an issue of contention, with scholars arguing based on specific quotes or lectures that would purport to reveal the contents of Müller's true position. Taking Blackburn's model, I would rather overturn the *is/isn't* binary and talk about an evolving 'locative' religiosity for Müller. Instead of a binary relationship, his beliefs about both Christianity and Buddhism change over the course of his lifetime.

Along with Müller's letters and translations, his public statements on Buddhism, viewed chronologically, show evidence of the influence his students had on him. This influence and change is even more remarkable when set against the methodology and beliefs about Buddhism that Müller inherited from his mentor Burnouf. Breaking with his contemporaries and mentor marks Müller out as "... atypical and even eccentric in view of the prevailing opinions of the philologists and comparative religionists of his time."⁶⁷

Although Müller is credited as the founding father of Religious Studies, time and again Müller casts himself more as a humble tradesman plying his craft than a high-minded scholar. This language of trade and work, found in the title of *Chips*, is also borne out in other metaphors of translation and scholarship in the book. "The Sanskrit scholar by profession works and publishes chiefly for the benefit of other Sanskrit scholars," he

⁶⁷ Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 244.

says in the essay entitled *Buddhism*. “He is satisfied with bringing to light the ore which he has extracted by patient labour from among the dusty MSS.”⁶⁸ In *The Buddhist Nirvana and Its Western Interpreters*, Guy Richard Welborn outlines Müller’s view of his own place in scholarship, in Müller’s description of himself in *Lectures on the Science of Religion*:

In the preface to his translation of the Dhammapada (1869), Müller freely acknowledges his indebtedness to a number of Buddhist scholars. The fact that he considered himself—somewhat over-modestly to be sure—a ‘humble gleaner’ rather than a savant in Buddhist studies is of some importance... Let no one imagine that Müller’s Buddhist studies were trivial. But it should be kept in mind that some of his failings in the interpretation of Buddhism are directly attributable to the fact that he was not a specialist. (105)

Müller was first and foremost a philologist and took pains to present himself as such. His forays into the origins of a particular tradition such as Buddhism or larger theories of the origins of religion, as in public lectures such as the Gifford Lectures, were a minor aspect of his work—the “chips”. Yet it was this public aspect of his work that came to define him. Says Masuzawa; “It was the fame of the ‘solar mythology’ that eclipsed almost everything that was ever philological about Müller’s theory.”⁶⁹ Yet, despite its repeated association with him, nature mythology was never part of Müller’s core claims as a theorist. “Müller was to complain later that because he devoted some of his early studies specifically to the subject of solar myths, it has wrongly been concluded that he taught the whole of the world’s mythology was solar in origin.”⁷⁰ In fact, we find a total of three mentions of the Müller ‘solar’ nature myth in *Chip from A German*

⁶⁸ Müller, *Chips*, 185.

⁶⁹ Masuzawa, *Dreamtime*, 68.

⁷⁰ Kitagawa and Strong, “Müller”, 198.

Workshop, Part One, with only one lengthy passage of any detail.⁷¹ Instead, we find lengthy ruminations on the development of particular religious traditions in context of their cultures, not on overarching theories of religion's origins as a function or aspect of humanity. Müller, as a scholar of text, spends the bulk of his efforts on the "revealed" religions, as he classifies them—Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism—and leaves the nature religions as outside his field. "Whenever we can trace back a religion to its first beginnings, we find it free from many of the blemishes that offend us in its later phases. The founders of the ancient religions of the world, as far as we can judge, were minds of high stamp."⁷² In line with Blackburn's categorization of the Orientalist scholar of religious traditions, Müller's preoccupations remain with origins, specifically as can be discerned from the examination of text. Müller's Orientalism here is not only that of a bias to text, it is also overwhelmingly Christocentric in its evaluation of other traditions. Although Müller frequently points to the merit of other traditions, it is always in the light of a Supreme Deity, "He" who is the Christian conception of God. These Orientalist biases of Müller's towards the textual origins of religious traditions and a Christian-styled monotheism remained throughout his life, even in his encounter with Buddhist practitioners. However, the preceding quote, written in 1867, predates his contact with Nanjo and Kasahara. With this contact, as will be examined in Chapters Four through Six, Müller's Orientalism becomes tempered by the inclusion of insider perspectives and lived traditions. This opportunity for openness is anticipated in Müller's willingness—often out of step with his contemporaries—to see

⁷¹ Müller, *Chips*, 234.

⁷² Müller, *Chips*, xxiii.

merit in other traditions as more than superstition. Frequently Müller refers to Augustine, whom he quotes in his preface as saying: “What is now called the Christian religion, has existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race, until Christ came into the flesh: from which time the true religion, which existed already, began to be called Christian.”⁷³ Corruption of original traditions occurs when “the foreign and world elements encroach...and human interests mar the simplicity and purity of the plan which the founder has conceived.”⁷⁴

Although Müller's work is in philology and primarily dealing with texts, his approach to translation was not ahistorical or without cultural context. “If we want to understand the religions of antiquity, we must try, as well as we can, to enter into the religious, moral and political atmosphere of the ancient world. We must do what the historian does,” he says.⁷⁵ In debating with another scholar, Dr. Haug, about what is revealed about the structure and development of Indian religious specialists 300 years ago, Müller says, “comparing similar developments in Chinese and Jewish culture are of no help in determining the (Indian) developments. We must take each nation by itself, and try to find out what they themselves hold as to the relative antiquity of their literary documents.”⁷⁶

In re-evaluating the usefulness of Müller legacy for today's scholars, the essential questions we must ask are not about his varying use of theory and his commitment at any particular time to a theoretical model, but how, and if, his voluminous translations of texts

⁷³ Ibid, xi.

⁷⁴ Ibid, xxii.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 59.

⁷⁶ Müller, *Chips*, 110.

from The East, including those of *Buddhist Texts from Japan*, are coloured by either a theoretical, Christian or Orientalist bias. In the chapter entitled *The Progress of Zend Scholarship*, we get our clearest picture of Müller's theory and methodology in the act of translation. Rather than viewing translation as staid process than seeks to render a one-time authoritative passage, Müller is very open and very postmodern in his approach.

This view of translation mirrors what Martin Kavka calls for in his chapter *Translation* from *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*—“inconclusiveness.”⁷⁷ Says

Müller:

The fact that different scholars should differ in their interpretations, or that the same scholar should reject his former translation, and adopt a new one that possibly may have to be surrendered again as soon as new light can be throw on points hitherto doubtful and obscure... (it) produces very little effect on the minds of those who understand the reason of these changes, and to whom each new change represents but a new step in advance in the discovery of truth.⁷⁸

Taken together and viewed through these two streams of biographical detail—Müller as uncommonly open to the potential worth of traditions other than Christianity, and Nanjō as an explicitly-identified missionary of Japanese Buddhism—that Müller emerges from the collaboration by introducing Nanjō's Shin Buddhism to a Western audience as “the most influential and liberal-minded sect of Buddhism” gives us enough ground to suggest Nanjō's ‘mission’ was at least partially successful.⁷⁹ Framed by Nanjō as compatible with Christianity, specifically ‘liberal-minded’ Protestant Christianity, Shin Buddhism emerges for Müller as his primary example and reference for Buddhism in

⁷⁷ Martin Kavka, “Translation,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, ed. Robert A. Orsi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 196.

⁷⁸ Müller, *Chips*, 129.

⁷⁹ Müller, *Biographical*, 183.

general. While this re-alignment of relationships offers an alternate view of the power dynamics of student/teacher, it is only one of multiple possible readings of the Müller/Nanjō relationship. Through the lens of Blackburn's work, the intersection of multiple influences and power dynamics does not allow for one reductionist reading in an individual's life. For our purposes, before examining the attendant data of translations and commentaries, it is enough to allow that the backgrounds and biographical detail of each man open up the possibility of power on each side of the equation and, from that, the potential for a relationship of equals rather than one circumscribed by a one-sided, hierarchical power dynamic. Viewed as part of Blackburn's 'intersecting sphere of influence', the biases, roles and agendas that each man brings to the collaboration—and never completely abandon—compel us to see the relationship as occurring on multiple planes at once and irreducible to one defining relationship: the power dynamics diverge as student/teacher, initiate/proselytizer, and Orientalist/monk, but converge in their shared experiences as foreigners, scholars, and outsiders, but, most especially, as friends.

Expatriates, Prodigies, Polyglots:

Despite the differences in the two men's cultural and religious backgrounds, areas of similarity between the two give us rich material for seeing the basis of a friendship. Both are expatriates in a foreign country. As both were scholars and prodigies of language, Müller would have found in Nanjō not just a protégée but also an equal in ability, and someone with a mastery of an area—Chinese and Classical Chinese—that was outside of his own realm of expertise. That their working relationship was negotiated

in a language that was neither Müller's nor Nanjō's mother tongue—English, the language for their translations—adds another layer of common ground. Finally, like Müller, Nanjō was equally curious about the commonalities of Christianity and Buddhism. Nanjō's openness to the common ground of Christianity and Buddhism is shown before his departure for England in 1879. In the biographical essay entitled, "Bun'yū Nanjō: His Life and Work", M. Zumoto tells us of Nanjō's days as a student monk in Kyoto: "The subject that attracted the wildest attention at the Institute was Christianity. The students of the academy were of course free to attend any of the lectures or take part in the debates that were constantly carried on. Bun'yū remembers having participated in a discussion of the relative merits of Buddhism and Christianity."⁸⁰

As an addendum to details of Müller's life, and as further background to the Nanjō collaboration, it is worth highlighting how Müller, remembered primarily now as the failed theorist even within the field of Religious Studies itself, had the move from philologist to that of theorist forced upon him because of his perceived foreignness and lack of Christian orthodoxy. Here, quoting Tomoko Masuzawa at length gives us essential, succinct biographical detail as she traces the circumstances through which Müller reluctantly shifts from an emphasis on translation to that of theory. Masuzawa's starting point is a timeline of essays on mythology and theory, the last of these being Müller's essay 'On the Philosophy of Mythology' in 1871 and its significance as a milestone for Müller's development of his now-rejected theoretical work:

⁸⁰ M. Zumoto and J. Takakusu, "Bun'yū Nanjō: His Life and Work," *Pacific World Third Series*, 6 (2004 [1928]): 223.

By this last date [1871], Müller had already held the Chair of Comparative Philology at Oxford University for some time, a position specially created for him as a belated recompense for having denied him the Boden Chair of Sanskrit some years before. That denial was in part due, it was generally believed, to his foreign origins, and to his "questionable Christian orthodoxy", at least according to the appraisal given from the Anglican standpoint.

As it appears, his disappointment had a fateful significance for the rest of his career: it marks the beginning of the shift in his professorial identity from that of a more or less orthodox Sanskrit to whatever it was that was yet to be named. As a way of retrospect, Müller's widow and editor of the two-volume posthumous publication, *The Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Friedrich Max Müller*, Georgina Grenfell Max Müller offers this observation: 'Had he been successful [in attaining the Boden chair], he must have devoted his great powers almost exclusively to Sanskrit, and by doing so would no doubt have remained... 'the first Sanskrit scholar in Europe.' It was the Chair of [Comparative] Philology, founded some six years later specifically for him... that led him on from the Science of Language to the Science of Thought and Religion.'" Be that as it may, his disappointment at the time was palatable, as he wrote to his mother: 'I was sorry, for I would have gladly devoted all my time to Sanskrit, and the income was higher'.⁸¹

Thus, Müller, today remembered as the failed theorist, was moved into a position as a theorist not of his volition, but by the circumstances of his being perceived as a foreigner with questionable Christian credentials—an outsider. This would hardly be the picture of the Orientalist invested in the system of English colonialism. With Nanjō, Müller would return to his first love of Sanskrit translation with another foreigner whose deepest and most enduring was language and who had also been buffeted by superiors and circumstance into an assigned role in a foreign country.

⁸¹ Masuzawa, *Dreamtime*, 63-64.

In the Shadow of Burnouf: Müller's Early Writings on Buddhism

On March 20th of 1845, Max Müller met with the teacher and mentor who will set the course of his life and academic career, Eugene Burnouf. Their relationship and the influence of Eugene Burnouf on the young Max Müller is remarked upon both by Müller himself in works such as *My Autobiography* and throughout the secondary sources. As is frequently noted, it was Burnouf who pushed Müller to pursue a translation of the Rig-Veda as a career-making work.⁸² On the scale of the influence his mentor had over his life, Müller himself says, "I can never adequately express my debt of gratitude to him. He was of the greatest assistance to me in clearing my thoughts and directing them into one channel."⁸³ Burnouf, credited as the founder of Buddhist Studies, not only places Müller on the career track that will take him to England and Oxford, he also shapes Müller's early views on Buddhism.

That Müller was a student of Burnouf's in 1845 also places Müller at the very beginning of Buddhist Studies as a field of inquiry. Burnouf's 1844 book *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism* is a forgotten work that has continued to shape Western perceptions of Buddhism through its landmark approach to scholarship and translation of Buddhist sutras and in its original, influential assertions about the nature of Buddhism that have filtered down through scholarly and popular thought about Buddhism to this day. In the forward to the 2010 translation of the book into English, Donald Lopez says:

This masterpiece, first published in 1844, is largely neglected today. One might argue that the book has all but disappeared and remains unread and unexamined,

⁸² F. Max Müller, *My Autobiography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 178.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 178.

not because it is outdated or has been superseded (although it is and has been on a number of individual points), but because it became so fully integrated into the mainstream representation of Buddhism, which is helped to create, that it is no longer visible.⁸⁴

As the seminal work on Indian Buddhism, *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism* is pointed to by figures such as Donald Lopez and Richard King as the originating work of Buddhist Studies. Surprisingly, the 2010 translation of *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism* into English is its first ever from the French. Like Müller, Burnouf was an influential figure of his day who remains a relatively unexamined today—at least in the English language. Lopez, in the foreword to the translation, details at length Burnouf's assertions about Buddhism, and how those assertions have become commonly accepted as truths that continue to influence popular and scholarly ideas about Buddhism. Lopez outlines Burnouf's defining taxonomy of Buddhism in *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism* as follows:

These would include that Buddhism was an Indian religion, that the Buddha is a historical figure, and, perhaps of particular consequence, that the Buddha was the teacher of a religion (or perhaps a philosophy) that preached ethics and morality, without recourse to dogma, ritual, or metaphysics. The consequences of his portrayal would be profound.⁸⁵

In an era when Buddhism had been postulated as having sources as varied as Norse and African, Burnouf painstakingly created a relatively accurate, if flawed, picture of the Indian origins of Buddhism without any other sources to draw on except the collected sutra he had obtained by way of missionaries.

⁸⁴ Eugene Burnouf, *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism*, ed. Donald Lopez (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 1.

⁸⁵ Burnouf, *Introduction*, 25.

Burnouf's influence on the early-period Buddhist writing of Müller can be found throughout essays published before his contact with the Japanese priests Nanjō and Kasahara. Even after Burnouf's death in 1852, clear evidence of Burnouf's continuing influence on Müller can be found in essays such as 1869's "Buddhist Nihilism", republished in Jon Stone's 2002 book *The Essential Max Müller*. Müller begins the lecture by noting the surprise that one might find in the admiration that missionaries returning from Buddhist countries have for Buddhism. Müller also notes that these missionaries often see in Buddhism parallels to Christianity morality. However, this admiration of the missionaries is tempered by the view of Buddhism as ultimately nihilistic because of its denial of a creator god. Says Müller:

We find the same judgment, in almost identical words, pronounced by the most eminent scholars who have written on Buddhism...the work of the man whose place has not yet been filled, either in the French Academy, or on the Council Board of German Scientism—the work of Eugene Burnouf, the true founder of a scientific study of Buddhism. Burnouf too, in his researches arrives at the same result, viz.: that Buddhism, as known to us from its Canonical books, in spite of its great qualities, ends in Atheism and Nihilism.⁸⁶

The theme of Müller's writings in 1869 in "Buddhist Nihilism", of Buddhism's central atheism, nihilism and lack of a Creator God, can also be found in earlier works, such as the 1860 essay "Buddhism" in *Chips from a German Workshop Volume 1*: "Difficult as it seems to us to conceive it, Buddha admits no real cause of this unreal world. He denies the existence not only of a Creator, but of any Absolute Being."⁸⁷ Here, again, Müller makes the assertion found in the writings of Burnouf. On another of Burnouf's categorizations of Buddhism, its status as system of thought or moral philosophy rather

⁸⁶ Müller and Stone. *Essential*, 82.

⁸⁷ Müller, *Chips*, 227.

than a metaphysical religion, we find Müller struggling with and returning to this point over the course of his writings on Buddhism. This inability of Buddhism to fit neatly into the categories of religion for Müller, which remains a point that he will work on throughout his life, will become a key meeting place for his understanding of Buddhism as he interacts with Nanjō and Kasahara. However, as we continue to look to those pre-contact writings, we see that in 1857's "Buddhist Pilgrim", in *Chips from a German Workshop Vol. 1*, Müller says, "We must distinguish, it seems between Buddhism as a religion, and Buddhism as a philosophy."⁸⁸ Müller returns to this interpretation of Buddhism again in 1862's "Buddhism", saying:

The most important element of the Buddhist reform has always been its social and moral code, not its metaphysical theories. That moral code, taken by itself, is one of the most perfect which the world has ever known. On this point all testimonies from hostile and from friendly quarters agree.⁸⁹

That Müller is writing this in the essay "Buddhism" in 1862—10 years after his mentor's death—shows he is continuing unabated on his master's path.

Müller's continued cleaving to Burnouf's rendition of Buddhism becomes particularly clear in his defense of Burnouf's categories against the claims of other academics. To discern just how loyal Müller was to his master's thesis on Buddhism we can turn to the last exchange between Burnouf and Müller recorded in *Life and Letters*, from 1848. Burnouf writes: "It is a long time since I heard anything from you and enough has happened here to make me forget any one to whom I was less attached than I am to

⁸⁸ Müller, *Chips*, 243-244.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 217.

you.”⁹⁰ Burnouf continues that he has kept track of Müller's recent work, including writings related to Buddhism and says:

The work is well done, and I have observed with great satisfaction among other things a virtuous attack on the modernizers of Brahmanism in the interest of Buddhism, which has nothing to gain by outraging history and good sense. I venture that notwithstanding their pretensions, the dilettante authors of these heteroclitic hypotheses understand neither Brahmanism nor Buddhism. I am now working on my second volume of my Introduction to Buddhism.⁹¹

In Müller's reply he says, “Yet the second volume of Buddhism will be a welcome gift to many, to some not welcome, as it will destroy their last heteroclitic hypotheses.”⁹² Here, the conversation on ‘heteroclitic hypotheses’ refers to the continuing assertion of Buddhism as being, among a few proposed ideas, Norse or Egyptian in origin. However, Burnouf did not get to finish this second volume on Buddhism before his death just four years after this exchange. As such, it is left to Müller to continue on with Burnouf's work against the “dilettantes” in his essays. As evidence, if any scholars should still be potentially clinging to the theories of the past as late as 1862, 18 years after Burnouf's landmark publication, Müller says:

And nothing shows more strikingly the rapid progress of Sanskrit scholarship than that even Sir William Jones, whose name has still, with many, a more familiar sound than that of Colebrook, Burnouf, and Lassen, should have known nothing of the Vedas; that he should never had read a line of the canonical books of the Buddhists, and that he actually expressed his belief that Buddha was the same as the Teutonic deity Wodan or Odin, and Sakya, another name of the Buddha, the same as Shishac, king of Egypt.⁹³

That factions with differing opinion about Buddhism on points as fundamental as the country of origin even into the 1860s hints that “heteroclitic hypotheses” persisted.

⁹⁰ Müller, *Letters V.1*, 84.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 85.

⁹² *Ibid*, 85.

⁹³ Müller, *Chips*, 183.

Beginning with an overview of Buddhist scholarship in this period of the 19th century, it is worth noting that, even as competing interpretations of Buddhism still vied for consideration, the field of battle for all these Western interpreters of Buddhism in this era remains the text. In “Buddhism”, Müller’s Orientalist preoccupation with the primacy of text goes so far as to clearly place it as the authority over “depraved” lived traditions:

Even Christianity has been depraved into Jesuitism and Mormonism, and if we, as Protestants, claim the right to appeal to the gospel as the only test by which our faith is to be judged, we must grant a similar privilege to Mohammedans and Buddhists, and all who possess a written and, as they believe, revealed authority for the articles of their faith.⁹⁴

Müller’s preoccupation with text says nothing of actual Buddhist practitioners, except to allude to the possibility that the truth of Buddhism is not to be found there. However, as of “Buddhist Nihilism”, we may detect Müller’s pulling away from his mentor’s work on Buddhism and suggesting the possibility of viewing the texts of Buddhism in a different light, as Müller says:

Thus we are not by any means without an authority for distinguishing between Buddhism and the teaching of Buddha; the question is only whether such a separation is still practicable to us? My belief is that all honest inquiries must oppose a No to his question. Burnouf never ventured to cast a glance beyond the boundaries of the Buddhist canon. What he finds in the canonical books, in the so-called Three Baskets, is to him the doctrine of Buddha, similarly we must accept, as the doctrine of Christ, what is contained in the four Gospels. Still the question ought to be asked again, and again, whether, at least with regard certain doctrines or facts, it may not be possible to make a step further in advance, even with the conviction that it cannot lead us to results of apodictic certainty.⁹⁵

While Müller continues to appeal to Burnouf’s authority in establishing that the underlying beliefs of Buddhism are ‘Atheist’ and ‘Nihilistic’, we find in this passage—and in significant portions of “Buddhist Nihilism”—Müller’s questioning the

⁹⁴ Müller, *Chips*, 182-183.

⁹⁵ Müller and Stone, *Essential*, 84.

inconsistencies of the Tripitaka, or “Three Baskets” and with it, Burnouf’s reading of these Buddhist writing as “Gospels” that are authoritatively the collected teachings of the Buddha. Here, Müller is searching for “an authority for distinguishing between Buddhism and the teaching of Buddhism”. This point is essential, as it returns us again to issues of authority and power as defined by Said, via the theories of Foucault, as the central defining thesis of the paradigm of Orientalism. Who or what, then, operates as Müller’s authority on Buddhism? It is clear, in referring to the litany of aspects about Buddhism originally established in *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism*, that Burnouf remains Müller’s defining authority on Buddhism in this early period even as he begins to question the scope of his mentor’s work and, with this questioning, admitting a possibility for interpretations of Buddhism beyond texts as an authoritative “Gospel”. Interestingly, once Müller has contact with living Buddhists—Nanjō and Kasahara—Burnouf is no longer mentioned in any of the works of Müller’s middle and later period writings on Buddhism, including *Buddhist Texts from Japan*, *Biographical Sketches*, “Coincidences” or “Buddhism and Christianity”. In line with the method of locative pluralism, here it is helpful to reference *The Life and Letters of Max Müller* again as to Müller’s own later views on his early Buddhist writings such as “Buddhist Nihilism”, and how they stand in contrast with the writing that follow contact with the Buddhist priests Nanjō and Kasahara. In *Life and Letters*, Müller’s Georgina Müller, tells us:

In 1869 Max Müller gave an address at Kiel on Buddhist Nihilism ... Those among Max Müller’s friends who know his own strong convictions as to the immortality of the soul, may perhaps feel surprised at the increasing interest he took in Buddhism as years went on... It was when preparing a translation of the Dhammapada in 1870, afterwards revised, and published as Volume X of the Sacred Books of the East, that the extreme moral beauty of Buddha’s teachings powerfully attracted Max Müller’s sympathy for Buddhism, and this was further

increased when two years later he came in contact with living Buddhists, his pupils Bun'yū Nanjō and Kenju Kasahara, and still later Professor Takakusu, and saw the purity of their character, their true and gentle dispositions, and entire devotion to duty.⁹⁶

With the information provided in this reference from Georgina Müller, we see a demarcation between Müller's early views on Buddhism such as those in "Buddhist Nihilism" from those that would flow from having met with actual Buddhist practitioners.

⁹⁶ Müller, *Letters V.1*, 79.

Intercultural Mimesis: Collaboration on The Translation of Buddhist Texts

In 1879, just 11 years after the end of Japan's Tokugawa era and a 200-year period of self-imposed Japanese seclusion, two Japanese Shin Buddhist priests arrived at Oxford sent on a mission by their superiors to recover the Sanskrit tradition. The internal politics of Japan during the early years of the Meiji Restoration and the precarious position Buddhism found itself in was sufficient to precipitate a Japanese pan-Buddhist movement to protect the position of Buddhism in that society. Boosting Buddhism's intellectual and cultural claim to the roots of Japanese culture and society was part of that project. This scholarly exchange, of Japanese priests coming to Victorian England, does not fit the typical Orientalist picture of colonial imposition of Western constructs onto Eastern traditions.

Max Müller had been acquainted with Buddhism—as least the writings of Buddhism—well before the arrival of his Japanese students. However, his meeting with these two Shin Buddhists priests, Nanjō Bun'yū and Kenju Kasahara, had a measurable effect on him and his subsequent public and private writings on Buddhism. What began as a student/teacher relationship became, as evidenced by the correspondence between Nanjō and Müller until his final days, a friendship. Examining the writings contained in the books *Buddhist Texts from Japan* and *Biographical Sketches* as representative of Müller's 'middle period' in his life-long writings on Buddhism, we see that that the translations are indeed collaborations and, in fact, works in which Nanjō and Kasahara directly address a Western audience with their life stories and sect-based view of Buddhism. Beyond their years of collaboration together, as evidenced in Müller's later

writing, the main sutra of the Shin Buddhist sect, the *Land of Bliss Sutra*—the *Sukhavativyuha*— becomes Müller's chief descriptor of the Buddhist afterlife in his later writings. That the Shin Buddhist version of Buddhism, as one particular sect of Buddhism among many, should come to define Müller's understanding of Buddhism speaks to the impact of Nanjō and Kasahara's influence on his thinking. Even as Müller elevates Buddhist to the status of a revealed religion sharing Christian truths, it reinforces his Orientalist bias towards a Protestant-style Christianity as the essential truth of all revealed religions.

Over the course of their four years at Oxford in the 1880s, Müller collaborated with his Japanese students on various translation projects, including the first English translation of the *Heart Sutra* and the *Land of Bliss Sutra*. Nanjō and Kasahara, aside from their affiliation with Shin Buddhism, were outstanding scholars in their own right, with knowledge of Classical Chinese that Müller did not possess. The fact that their work on these sutras was indeed collaboration is evident in the forwards to *Buddhist Texts from Japan*, where Müller says “I have great pleasure in acknowledging the ready help which I received, while preparing this text, from my two Japanese pupils, Mr. Bun'yū Nanjō and Mr. Kasahara. Many of the collations, particularly where there existed Japanese or Chinese transliterations, were made for me by them, and must rest on their authority.”⁹⁷ This critical point, of authority on Buddhist topics, is worth highlighting again as it marks out a chief concern of Said's in establishing who creates the narrative about Asian traditions in Western knowledge. This crediting of collaboration by Müller is in contrast

⁹⁷ Müller, ed., *Texts*, 18.

to the standard narrative of Müller's lone discovery and translation of these texts, as will be discussed below.

Returning to Judith Snodgrass' description again as one of the few accounts of the relationship between Müller and his student monks, it reads as follows:

Müller's denigration of the Mahayana only confirms what one could deduce from his attitude to the highly trained and specially selected Japanese priests sent to study with him. Instead of seeing their presence at Oxford as a unique opportunity to expand the scope of his study of religion into a new area, he wanted only their skills in reading Chinese. Nanjo Bun'yū, the first Japanese priest sent by the Nishi Honganji to study Sanskrit with Müller in 1876, was put to work cataloging the Chinese Tripitaka in the India Office library, again principally for its value in dating Sanskrit literature.⁹⁸

That the tenor of the Müller/Nanjō relationship was quite different than Snodgrass's presentation can be deduced in reading Nanjō's own reporting of the relationship in *Biographical Sketches*, and the correspondence of the two men over Müller's lifetime. As to the particular task of Nanjō's translating of the Tripitaka, again in *Biographical Sketches*, Nanjō's own description of the project reads quite differently. Rather than trumpet his own accomplishment, the intricacy of the work involved in compiling a catalogue of the Tripitaka and its importance to future Buddhist Studies is encapsulated by Nanjō when he quotes at length from an unidentified 'notice' printed at the time of the publication of Nanjō's catalogue:

Mr. Bun'yū Nanjō has not only prepared a complete catalogue of this enormous Canon, but he has restored most if the original titles in Sanskrit, a task of great difficulty... he has also fixed the dates of most of the Chinese translations, and thereby rendered a lasting service to all students of Sanskrit by enabling them to fix certain land-marks in the history of Indian literature. In this respect his catalogue will form a new starting-point in the study of Indian history and Indian literature.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Snodgrass, *Japanese*, 110.

⁹⁹ Müller, *Biographical*, 194.

Like Burnouf's guiding Müller to a reputation-making project in the translation of the Rig-Veda, Müller likewise directed Nanjō to create what Müller describes as a "magnum opus."¹⁰⁰ From the same essay we are told that copies of the Catalogue were delivered, according to Nanjō, to "the Emperors of China and Japan, to the King of Siam, and also to many scholars and learned societies in Europe and Asia."¹⁰¹

Ahead of the collaboration on translation, the procurement of the texts from Japan is also an overlooked aspect of their arrival at Oxford, with Müller generally credited in Western sources as having 'discovered' them. For example, even in the Final Appendix to *Buddhist Texts from Japan* itself, in a section entitled "Palaographical Remarks on the Horiuzi Palm-Leaf MSS." by G. Buhler, the first line reads, "Professor Max Müller's discovery of the Horiuzi palm-leaves and the acquisition of trustworthy facsimiles of these documents, which we owe to his sagacity and untiring energy, are events the importance of which for Indian palaography cannot be estimated too highly."¹⁰² Nowhere in this section is Nanjō or Kasahara's contribution or involvement credited or remarked upon. So begins the scholarly narrative of Müller's "discovery". Counter to that narrative, Müller's introduction to *Buddhist Texts from Japan* takes considerable time to recount Nanjō's brokering of their delivery to Oxford and the extraordinary efforts taken by religious and government officials in Japan to have copies delivered. Müller says that upon the arrival of Nanjō and Kasahara in 1879, "I strongly urged them to make inquiries among their friends at home about the existence of Sanskrit MSS or printed texts, and in

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 194.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 196.

¹⁰² Müller, ed., *Texts*, 63.

December (1879) Mr. Bun'yū Nanjō brought me a book which a Japanese scholar, Mr. Shuntai Ishikawa, had sent to me, containing a Sanskrit text, which he wished for me to correct and send back."¹⁰³ Müller continues in his description of the role that Nanjo and Kasahara had in quickly initiating making the search for Sanskrit texts in Japan:

The wish which I expressed that somebody acquainted with Buddhist literature should visit that monastery and send me copies of these ancient palm-leaves was fulfilled more readily than I had any right to expect... On the 2nd of August (1880) Mr. Bun'yū Nanjō wrote to me that he had received a letter from Japan, dated 23rd of May, written by Mr. Shigefuyu Kurihara in Kioto, who says that he, in company with two young Buddhist priests, Kuken Kanematsu and Yiukey Ota, were commissioned by their monastery, the eastern Hongwanzi in Kioto, to visit several places in search of Sanskrit MSS.¹⁰⁴

The important point for consideration in weighing the contribution of Nanjō to the translation project of the sutras found in *Buddhist Texts from Japan* is that it is not only collaboration that is occurring, that is, the creation of content, but it is the choosing, editorializing, prioritizing of the sutras to be translated and included that shows Nanjō and Kasahara's influence on the overall project—especially in the inclusion of the *Land of Bliss Sutra*, the *Sukhavativyuha*. The priority of this sutra for Nanjō and Kasahara is informed by their identities as 'missionaries', a title they explicitly give to themselves in *Biographical Sketches*. To this end, choosing the *Sukhavativyuha* for translation and inclusion was driven by the Shin Buddhist priests rather than Müller and its inclusion can be seen—at least in part—as a success in their overall mission. If further examples of the central importance of the *Sukhavativyuha* for Nanjō and Kasahara is needed, and of its

¹⁰³ Ibid, 1.

¹⁰⁴ Müller, ed., *Texts*, 3.

centrality to Shin Buddhism, an anecdote on Nanjō's familiarity with the text from a very young age found in *Biographical Sketches* provides the necessary context:

In my sixth year, 1854, I could recite the 'Thirty Verses' composed by Shinran, the founder of the Shin-shui sect (who died in 1262 A.D.) and likewise Kumaragiva's Chinese translation of the Smaller Sukhavativyuha. These are the first books which boys of the Shin-shiu priests have to learn to read and recite.

In my seventh year, 1855, I could read two more Chinese versions of the longer Sutras, one of them being that of the Larger Sukhavativyuha.¹⁰⁵

Looking to the title page of the *Sukhavativyuha* section of *Buddhist Texts from Japan*, the translation is explicitly credited as co-edited by Müller and Nanjō. Müller's firm desire to recognize Nanjō as co-author of this new translation of the *Sukhavativyuha* becomes exceptionally clear when we cross-reference this moment with thoughts recorded in Müller's letters. In a letter to Nanjō dated July 23, 1882, Müller says:

I still hope to find time to publish the Sukhavati-Vyuha before you return to Japan, but I want to publish it jointly with you, so as to have your name on the title-page with my own, and I hope to be able to do the same for the Dharma-Samgraha with Kasahara, so that there will be a permanent memorial of your stay at Oxford, and of our work during the last three years.¹⁰⁶

Further to this, Müller says that the five versions from which they worked for a translation were collated by Kasahara and Nanjō.¹⁰⁷ Müller adds to this in a later comment and gives even greater authority to the monks. In the forward to *Buddhist Texts from Japan*, Müller says:

I have only to add that the credit, and likewise the responsibility, for the accurate collation of the four MSS. Of (sic) the Sukhavati-vyuha belongs to my friend and pupil, Mr. Bun'yū Nanjō. To him is also due the translation of the Chinese version

¹⁰⁵ Müller, *Biographical*, 190.

¹⁰⁶ Müller, *Letters*, V.2., 126.

¹⁰⁷ Müller, ed., *Texts*, xi.

of the Gatha portions occurring in the Sukhavati-vyuha, printed with the Chinese text, at the end of this edition, pp.79-91.

For the sake of students in Japan and China, and chiefly for the benefit of the members of the Shin-shiu Sect, or, as it is called in China, the Sect of the 'Pure Land' i.e. Sukhavati, from the pen of Mr. Bun'yū Nanjō, will show the true importance of the texts here published in the history of religious thought, and prove, I hope, acceptable to European students of religion to whom hitherto this important branch of Buddhism or Bodhism has been but little known.¹⁰⁸

What follows this introduction to the Sutra by Müller is five pages under the title "History of the 'Pure-Land' Sect, in China and Japan" written by Nanjō. What is remarkable here is that Nanjō is writing, in his own words, a description of the True Pure Land Buddhist sect. Much as Müller provides an introduction to Nanjō's autobiographical sketch in *Biographical Essays*, Müller is much more than a sympathetic collaborator with Buddhist practitioners on issues of Buddhism—he gives room for them to tell their own story and describe their own religion in their own words. This is in line with what we expect from inclusive scholarship today and a stark contrast to the overt racism of the Victorian era.

Turning to *Biographical Essays* for evidence of authority, Nanjō and Kasahara's status as authorities on Buddhism is similarly shown in the material included, that is, first-person accounts of Buddhist practices, rather than interpretations by Müller. In fact, in the chapter on Nanjō, Müller does not render a biography of Nanjō Bun'yū, but instead offers a brief forward to Nanjō's own autobiographical essay that Müller says has remained virtually unedited by him before publication. Likewise, in his sketch of Kasahara Kenju, Müller provides a preamble to Kasahara's letters, published posthumously. Providing this forum for Japanese Buddhist priests to deliver an unmediated version of Buddhism to a Western audience, as was similarly included in *Buddhist Texts from Japan* with Nanjō's

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, xviii.

description of Shin Buddhism, is a decidedly non-Orientalist aspect of Müller's approach to Buddhism. However, the divide between what Müller is attempting to do and how it is actually received by his contemporaries is phenomenal. To throw this contrast into sharp relief with the prevailing attitudes of the day, part of a newspaper review of *Biographical Essays* is recorded in *Life and Letters*. Kenju Kasahara and Nanjō Bun'yū, having laid out their autobiographical credentials as preeminent Japanese scholars and the selected emissaries of Shin Buddhism, are characterized as follows by the reviewer:

The equal patience, kindness, and generosity of the Master, who had unwittingly drawn these children of an alien faith, older than our creed and outnumbering the Catholic Church itself, across seas and lands to sit at his feet, and spell out, through two languages, their way back to the authentic fountains of their own spiritual force!¹⁰⁹

Contrary to reviewer's Orientalist perception that Müller was leading Nanjō and Kasahara to "the authentic fountain" of Buddhism, we see—especially as we now approach Müller's 'late-period' writings on Buddhism in the next Section of this thesis—that Nanjō and Kasahara's lived experience and interpretation of Buddhism changes Müller's views.

Beyond the scholarly regard Müller had for Nanjō and Kasahara as collaborators on the translations, their character and work ethic makes a lasting impression on him and colours his overall impression of Buddhism. Looking to the lasting influence of the collaboration between Müller and the Shin Buddhist priests, his estimation of Buddhism, Shin Buddhism in particular, as a moral system, is one legacy. Müller describes Shin Buddhism in *Biographical Essays* in similar terms as he does in other places throughout

¹⁰⁹ Müller, *Letters*, V.2., 169.

this period, as the “The most influential and liberal-minded sect” of Buddhism.¹¹⁰ The emphasis on morality reflects Burnouf’s original assertions and their continuing influence on Müller. However, by the end of this ‘middle period’ Müller has now modified his own understanding of Buddhism. Adding to the inheritance of Burnouf’s interpretation of the texts of Buddhism on Müller’s thinking and the stories of returning missionaries that Müller had recounted in earlier writings such as “Buddhist Nihilism”, Müller now had his own experiences with living Buddhists to draw on.

¹¹⁰ Müller, *Biographical*, 1.

Controversies and Incidents: Müller's Late-Period Writings on Buddhism

The opportunity for Max Müller to work closely with Nanjō Bun'yū and Kasahara Kenju, Buddhist priests of the Shin sect, gave Müller a perspective into lived Buddhism that augmented his previous understanding of Buddhism that had been primarily shaped by his own reading of text, from the stories of missionaries and from his mentor Eugene Burnouf. Despite having only spent four years together, Kasahara and Nanjō appeared to have shaped an impression of Buddhism and Buddhists for Müller that would be sustained throughout the rest of his life. Evidence of this influence in Müller's later writings on Buddhism can be found in the essay "Coincidences", first delivered as a public lecture in 1896, and in the essay "Buddhism and Christianity", Müller's last essay written and edited just days before his death. Two aspects emerge in these works as examples of the lasting impression the Japanese priests made on Müller's conception of Buddhism: the belief in Buddhism as a moral system on par with Christianity, a perception that began with Burnouf, the stories of missionaries that he had heard and his own reading and translation of the Dhammapada but confirmed by his meeting with Buddhist practitioners; and the lasting Shin Buddhist presentation of the Land of Bliss—the Sukyuvaki—as the dominant, and final, image of the Buddhist afterlife for Müller.

Kasahara and Nanjō departed Oxford in 1882 and 1885 respectively, never to return. While Nanjō and Müller continued a correspondence until the end of Müller's life, Kasahara died of tuberculosis in 1883, not long after his return to Japan. Müller reports on the impact of this loss in *Life and Letters*:

Losing my Japanese pupil was a great loss to me in every respect... With him Nirvana had become a Paradise, an island with beautiful lakes, trees of gold and silver, steps of emerald and lapis, birds flying about and singing the praises of Buddha Amitabha—Endless Light—who sits in the centre, while all who believe in him recline on large lotus flowers, lost in contemplation. You see human nature will have its way, even with Buddhists. What is most interesting is that this Buddha Amitabha was once an ordinary mortal, and rose to his supremacy by endless lives devoted to virtue and truth. That supremacy may, in fact, be reached by everybody; only it will take a few *eternities* to reach it. There is a truly human element in all religions and in all philosophies; and it would be very strange if honest thought should not lead every one of us to the truths of Buddhism, or Platonism, or Christianity.¹¹¹

An echo of this loss of Kasahara occurs for Müller with the death of his daughter three years later on September 3, 1886 and is recorded as an incident of great impact, one from which Müller descended into a period of depression. On September 19, 1886, Müller writes to an acquaintance: “Life cannot be again what it was, it will have to be lived and even to be enjoyed, til a new blow comes to remind us of the conditions of our stay on earth.”¹¹² On December 13, 1886 he wrote to another friend: “Your letter has made me very miserable. Yes, I know indeed what it means to look into the open grave of a child; we are much the same again—the heart within us becomes petrified, the joy of life is gone.”¹¹³ In between these September and December letters he carries on a correspondence with W.S. Lilly, Esq. on topics related to Materialism and Buddhism.

From Dec. 5th:

Materialism is a welcome refuge for souls troubled by a bad conscience, but as a rule I find the honest Materialist is a serious-minded and contentious creature. Criminal statistics ought to be studied much more carefully than they are. In Buddhist countries, where religion is atheistic, in the usual sense of the word, morality is wonderfully high. Even now, when India has been infected with many European vices, it stands very high, I believe, in the tables of morality... Our

¹¹¹ Müller, *Letters*, V.2, 155.

¹¹² Müller, *Letters*, V.2, 207.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 213.

society is rotten—but why? I believe it is the *unreality* of all religion which is the principle cause. People read the Psalms every day, and tolerate adultery in their private houses. No religion, and atheism, would be better than hypocrisy... An honest belief in Karma, such as the Buddhists have and really have, does more good than all the Ten Commandments.¹¹⁴

The next letter to Lilly on January 24, 1887 follows up the previous conversation: “I have had to write ... about Materialism in the last chapter of my book...It is a book I have written for myself, and I doubt whether it will produce the slightest effect. But I believe in Karma—it is done: that is enough.”¹¹⁵ Reflecting on Müller’s writings on Buddhism in his ‘early’ period, Georgina Müller’s passage on the essay “Buddhist Nihilism” and Müller’s growing sympathy to Buddhism, especially in the wake of meeting the Japanese Buddhists and being impressed by “the purity of their character, their true and gentle dispositions, and entire devotion to duty”¹¹⁶, stands in sharp contrast to the morality and religiosity of the Western society as he sees it. The essays of Müller’s later period, “Coincidences” and “Buddhism and Christianity”, concern themselves with finding common ground between these two religions, and are rooted in the understanding of Buddhism that Müller took from his time with Nanjō and Kasahara.

In 1896 Müller delivers a controversial address entitled “Coincidences”, contained in the posthumously published *Last Essays: First Series*. Written just four years before Müller’s death, this essay shows Müller’s preoccupations with Christian aspects of Buddhism during his final years—themes, as shown in the analysis of *Life and Letters*, that Müller continued to work through until his last days. The first footnote of the essay provides the place and context for Müller’s presentation on the similarities between

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 213.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 216.

¹¹⁶ Müller, *Letters*, V.1, 79.

Christianity and Buddhism: "A Paper read before the Royal Society of Literature, May 27, 1896".¹¹⁷ Georgina Max Müller reports on this reading in *Life and Letters*:

It called forth a good deal of criticism at the time...As the Buddhist Canon was written down a century before the Christian era, it is evident that *if* there were any borrowing, it was by Christianity from Buddhism; though it is possible that the coincidences in teaching may be accounted for by the universality of essential ethics. The Lord Chancellor, who was present, objected greatly to Max Müller's deductions. On the other hand, a venerable clergyman wrote to him: 'Don't despair; you have done a great work in your time, which will bear fruit, if not sooner, some 500 years hence. The progress of truth is very slow—the purchase of blood and sweat, as I suspect you have discovered in spite of your great successes.'¹¹⁸

Müller begins his presentation with remarks on the similarities that first travellers to Tibet noticed between Tibetan Buddhism and Roman Catholicism. Müller reports that, "These coincidences were so extraordinary, nay, so revolting, in the eyes of Christian missionaries, that the only way to account for them seemed to be to ascribe them to the devil, who wished to scandalize pious Roman Catholics who might visit Tibet."¹¹⁹ At this point Müller catalogues similarities that might be the result of cross-pollination between the two traditions, similarities that are, in his opinion, too alike to be believed as having developed on their own. The fact that trade routes existed, for Müller, should allow for open-minded inquiry. "Such a channel through which these old Roman Catholic customs could have reached Tibet, can be shown to have existed," says Müller.¹²⁰ Müller then gives an outline of the historical development of Buddhism through the Mahayana and Theravada traditions (or Hinayana as Müller terms it) before he says:

¹¹⁷ Max Müller, *Last Essays: First Series*. (New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green and Co., 1901; Reprint New York: AMS Press, 1978), 251.

¹¹⁸ Müller, *Letters*, V.2, 365.

¹¹⁹ Müller, *Last*, 252.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 257.

In comparing Christian with Buddhist theories, it was found out that the Buddhist version could claim chronological priority. If the celibacy of the clergy, if confessions, fasting, nay, even rosaries, were all enjoined in the Hinayana-Canon, it followed, of course, that they could not have been borrowed from Christian missionaries. On the contrary, if they were to be borrowed at all, the conclusion would rather be that they were taken over by Christianity from Buddhism. I have always held that the possibility of such borrowing cannot be denied, though at the same time I have strongly insisted on the fact that the historical reality of such borrowing has never been established.¹²¹

Thus, Müller has spelled out his scandalous thesis that Christianity may have borrowed core elements from Buddhism. Müller devotes a significant portion of the remaining essay to comparing specific fables, myths and parables from Buddhist sources and Western traditions. "It is well known," says Müller "that Indian, nay Buddhist, influence has been suspected in some of the oldest Greek fables, and in parts of the Old and New Testament."¹²² Some parallel stories such as Jesus' birth and the Buddha's can be accounted for without borrowing, even with such similarities as a star over the place of their births.¹²³ However, says Müller, "There are stories in the Old and New Testaments also which have been traced in the Buddhist *Jataka*. How is that to be explained? No one can look at Buddhism without finding something that reminds him of Christianity."¹²⁴

It is perhaps easy to see why Christians attending this lecture might have been offended. This controversy is a version of the same resistance he faced with his Gifford Lecture and he alludes to other presentations he had made on the same topic in period of post-contact with Nanjō and Kasahara. "I have to say again what I said at Cambridge in 1882, in my lectures on 'India: what can it teach us?' 'that I shall feel extremely grateful

¹²¹ Ibid, 262.

¹²² Müller, *Last*, 264.

¹²³ Ibid, 278.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 276.

if anybody would point out to me the historical channel through which Buddhism influenced Christianity. I have been looking for such a channel all my life, but hitherto I have found none.”¹²⁵ Was Müller searching his whole life for this link between Buddhism and Christianity? It still occupied him in his last days. Müller's appeal to the Royal Society of Literature is for open-minded inquiry where these coincidences could point to knowledge.

And this leads us on to the consideration of another class on coincidences between Buddhism and Christianity. If religion is the natural outcome of the human mind, when brought face to face with that truly divine revelation which speaks to us with irresistible force from every part of nature, it would be strange, indeed, if we did not find certain coincidences between almost all the sacred books of the world. They exist, and they ought to exist and be welcome to every believer in the dignity and destinies of the whole human race. We lose nothing by this recognition; nor does any truth lose its value because it is held, not only by ourselves, but by millions of human beings we formerly called unbelievers.¹²⁶

That Müller had met Buddhists—Nanjō and Kasahara among them—and held them in such high regard and of such exemplary character is part of what has shaped his view of Buddhism as a belief system. Here, Müller identifies Buddhists as among those possessing ‘true divine revelation’ and being no longer among the ‘unbelievers’. That Müller places Buddhists on the same plane with Christians in this very late work sets the stage for Müller's last essay of his life, when he at last reconciles the ‘nihilism’ of the Buddhist afterlife as being—at least in the Shin Buddhist version—compatible with Christianity in the vision of the Land of Bliss, or Sukhavati.

In his last days, the very last work that Müller finished just 10 days before his death was an essay on Buddhism and Christianity in China. Georgina Max Müller describes

¹²⁵ Ibid, 279.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 259.

Müller preparing this final work for publication as follows: “The first was on Confucianism, the second on Taoism, and the third on Buddhism and Christianity; the proof-sheets of the last Max Müller corrected within a fortnight of his death.”¹²⁷ She adds further comment that this article on Christianity and Buddhism was the last thing that he worked on. As late as September there is a note in Georgina Müller’s diary: “‘M busy with me on the German on Laotze.’ . . . Ten days later he corrected the article on Buddhism and Christianity for the November number of the *Nineteenth Century*, dictating an entirely new ending to the article.”¹²⁸ This would have been October 10th and Georgina Müller tells us, “On October 17th Max Müller left his room for the last time.” He died on October 28th.¹²⁹

Georgina Müller gives us only one description of the conversations and the preoccupations of Müller’s mind in the time between his death and taking to his room.

Rev Bidder, who would preside over his funeral, reports on his last days as follows:

The future life of the soul was a subject which naturally occupied his thoughts: he felt the difficulties which beset our belief in the immortality of the individual. . . . I gathered his views to be that the material world was only a temporary instrument and the condition for perfecting individual realizations of the universal, whilst at the same time the individual was always striving to overcome his material conditions. . . . No one can really know the thoughts and beliefs of another, least of all when the thoughts are greater than our own.¹³⁰

Here, this echo of ‘materialism’ in Müller’s conversation about the nature of the soul returns to the subject matter preoccupying Müller during the period of depression after his daughter’s death. Likewise, his thoughts about Buddhism—Shin Buddhist beliefs in

¹²⁷ Müller, *Letters*, V.2, 438.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 440.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 442.

¹³⁰ Müller, *Letters*, V.2, 443.

particular—recall the period in which Müller grieved for Kasahara and for his daughter. Müller's last essay on Buddhism and Christianity was published in *Last Essays: Second Series* and it gives us concrete insight into his concerns in his final few days. One of Müller's primary concerns in this essay is how the Mahayana Buddhist tradition emerged in China and how it differed from the Theravada, or the Hinayana, in its conception of the afterlife.

The Mahayana admits a personal God, such as Amitabha (Endless Light), residing in paradise of Sukhavati, and it evidently believes in the existence of personal souls. After death the souls enter into the calyx of a lotus, and remain there for a longer or shorter time, according to their merits, then rise into the flower itself and, reclining on its petals, listen to the Law as preached for them by Buddha Amitabha.¹³¹

Müller's conception of a Mahayana afterlife is of the Pure Land, as he would have learned of it from his two Japanese monks friends at Oxford, as evidenced in *Life and Letters*. On Kasahara, the Pure Land and on the subject of death, an anecdote from 1881 provided by Georgina Müller is worth relaying in detail:

Just before Commemoration of this year a great sorrow came to Max Müller in the death of his friend Dr. Rolleston... To escape Commemoration, for which he had no heart, he went to West Malvern, accompanied by his Japanese priests. It was on this visit that an incident occurred which Max Müller was fond of narrating. Coming home one evening along the ridge for the hills, they stood still to watch one of those glorious sunsets which are so often seen from the Malvern range. 'The western sky was like a golden curtain, covering we know not what, when Kasahara said to me, "That is what we call the Eastern Gate of Sukhavati, the land of Bliss." He looked forward to it, and he trusted he should meet there all who had loved him, and whom he had loved, and that he should gaze on the Buddha Amitabha—the Infinite Light.'¹³²

West Malvern was a place that Müller retreated to in times of distress and especially loss.

Including this visit after the death of a friend, Müller went to West Malvern to rest the

¹³¹ Müller, *Essays*, 304-305.

¹³² Müller, *Letters*, V.2, 106.

year after the death of his daughter. On his own deathbed he once again was reflecting on the Land of Bliss—the Sukhavati of the *Sukhavativyuha sutra*—and has gone from his 1869 assertion that Buddhism is nihilistic to belief that Buddhism is compatible with Christianity and that Mahayana Buddhism, as articulated in Shin Buddhism, allows for a belief in a personal God, a personal soul and an afterlife in a paradise.

Is Müller's resolution of Buddhist and Christian conceptions of the afterlife and the soul as compatible the realization of his stated life-long desire to find the place where Buddhism influenced Christianity? Returning to his deathbed conversation with Rev. Bidder, it is a way of "perfecting individual realizations of the universal". This universal, biased to the beliefs of Shin Buddhism and potentially tinged with Orientalism in its mostly Christian-compatible design, nevertheless brings Müller's life and work to a close with the belief that Buddhists and Christians look forward to the same divine paradise.

Conclusion

Despite his often-credited position as the founder of Religious Studies, Max Müller has received relatively little consideration with the discipline. Existing scholarship on Müller, where it exists, relies on inherited opinions on his character and legacy that were set in motion by his enemies during his lifetime and immediately after his death. That a certain body of Müller's work, notably his theoretical claims, should be set aside has been argued in detail. Here, even Müller himself in his own lifetime disavowed certain theoretical constructs such as his solar mythology thesis, yet these parts of his scholarship remain the elements he is best known for.

In summary, viewed from inside the emerging project of revisiting past scholarship through the lens of intercultural mimesis, Müller becomes a scholar worthy of reassessment where once he may have been a footnote in the development of Religious Studies. Where Müller might have been viewed as "eccentric" and "atypical" by his contemporaries, we might now view him as prescient in his insistence on the importance of local knowledge and the involvement of practitioners in understanding religious traditions. Certainly, his inquiry into other traditions always remained biased by a belief in the primacy of a Protestant Christian truth and the Orientalist tendency to weigh text as most important aspect of religious traditions. However, this textual bias is tempered in his later life, at least in the example of Buddhism explored in this thesis, by placing equal value the knowledge of practitioners. Perhaps most significantly, we can say that did Müller did more than listen to Buddhists and convey their message to a Western audience—he opened a forum for Buddhists to have their own untempered voices heard

at the very first moment when Buddhism is being presented to the Western world. The implications of this transmission of an insider view of Buddhism at this very early date in the Western awareness of Buddhism leave room for potential future scholarship. In terms of Müller's legacy, numerous examples show that his stance on considering the worthiness of traditions other than Christianity had its cost on his career and reputation. Future scholarship might also conclusively show that Müller's non-Orientalist tendencies, especially his controversial late writings on Buddhism, contributed to his wholesale dismissal shortly after his death, even when, barring his flawed theoretical work, his translations might have continued to have merit for scholars.

One other potential avenue for future inquiry is the influence Müller had on popular conceptions of Buddhism down to this day through the writings of Paul Carus, and Paul Carus' student and influential proponent of Zen Buddhism in America, D.T. Suzuki. Müller is quoted liberally by Paul Carus in 1894's *The Gospel of Buddha* and also, as quoted below, in 1894's *Buddhism and Its Christian Critics*—texts in which Müller is positioned as showing Buddhism as a spiritual equal to Christianity.

Happily there are Christians who see deeper, and they feel no animosity against Buddhism on account of its many agreements with Christian doctrines," says Carus. "As their spokesman we quote Prof. Max Müller, who says: 'If I do find in certain Buddhist works doctrines identically the same as in Christianity, so far from being frightened, I feel delighted, for surely truth is not the less true because it is believed by the majority of the human race.'¹³³

This potential link—from Nanjō and Kasahara to Müller to Carus to Suzuki—is hinted at in the writings of Robert Sharf, who highlights Suzuki's deliberate efforts to downplay

¹³³ Paul Carus, *Buddhism and Its Christian Critics* (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1897), 270-271.

the role of Carus in his entry into the American consciousness as a leading figure representing Buddhism:

It would appear that historians of contemporary Zen have utterly neglected the extent and nature of Carus's influence on the young D. T. Suzuki, an influence that began even before Suzuki left Japan. As we shall see below, this may be due in part to the fact that Suzuki himself, in what appears to be a deliberate attempt to understate his relationship with Carus.¹³⁴

Examining fields as varied as the American development of Buddhist thought or Sanskrit Studies in Japan as possible future entry points, Müller appears as a figure embedded in origins of modern Buddhist Studies. As a student of Burnouf, Müller built upon the work of his mentor and moved beyond text as a sole and definitive authority with his collaboration on translation with Nanjō and Kasahara. Future Sanskrit experts might also examine those resulting translations in detail to yield even more insight about the choices in translation and what those choices reveal about the collaboration that took place. It is my contention that a renewed interest in the importance of *Buddhist Texts from Japan* might now be found as a text revealing intercultural mimesis occurring at the beginning of a cross-cultural exchange occurring between Buddhism and 19th century Western scholarship—between the first Buddhist emissaries from Japan to the West and the founder of the Science of Religion.

¹³⁴ Robert Sharf, "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism," *History of Religions*. 33.1 (1993): 5.

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