

Article

# Becoming Animal: Karma and the Animal Realm Envisioned through an Early Yogācāra Lens

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**Abstract:** In an early discourse from the *Samyuttanikāya*, the Buddha states: “I do not see any other order of living beings so diversified as those in the animal realm. Even those beings in the animal realm have been diversified by the mind, yet the mind is even more diverse than those beings in the animal realm.” This paper explores how this key early Buddhist idea gets elaborated in various layers of Buddhist discourse during a millennium of historical development. I focus in particular on a middle period Buddhist *sūtra*, the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*, which serves as a bridge between early Buddhist theories of mind and karma, and later more developed theories. This third-century South Asian Buddhist Sanskrit text on meditation practice, karma theory, and cosmology psychologizes animal behavior and places it on a spectrum with the behavior of humans and divine beings. It allows for an exploration of the conceptual interstices of Buddhist philosophy of mind and contemporary theories of embodied cognition. Exploring animal embodiments—and their karmic limitations—becomes a means to exploring all beings, an exploration that can’t be separated from the human mind among beings.

**Keywords:** Buddhism; contemplative practice; mind; cognition; embodiment; the animal realm (*tiryaggati*); karma; *yogācāra*; *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*

## 1. Introduction

In his 2011 book *Becoming Animal*, David Abram notes a key issue in the field of philosophy of mind, an implication of the emergent full-blown physicalism of the modern scientific materialist episteme. He writes:

Very few of those participant in the current “turn toward the body” seem to notice the wider, more subversive implications of their work. While they assert that the entirety of the body is integral to the mind, surely (they assume) it is only the *human* body that has this privilege, and not the body of an elk, or an aspen grove, or the dense flesh of the ground itself. Surely the gushing body of a river, or the ebb and flow of the breeze, has no real part in intelligence! (Abram 2011, p. 109)<sup>1</sup>

Abram’s observation captures a problem that South Asian religious and philosophical traditions have been grappling with for several millennia. In early South Asia, a number of ascetic groups—most notably the Jains and the Buddhists—acknowledged that humans find themselves on a spectrum with other embodied (and disembodied) beings, from single-faculty beings such as plants and trees

<sup>1</sup> Abram (2011, p. 10) acknowledges his indebtedness to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari for the phrase ‘becoming animal.’ He also notes that, as a phenomenologist, he takes the idea along very different avenues than Deleuze and Guattari do. The present paper is inspired by these phenomenological avenues of Abram’s thought.

to beings with a full range of six senses (with the mind as the sixth), such as humans or deities<sup>2</sup>. The relationship of the human being and the nonhuman being has particular relevance for the question of how the mind is embodied. After all, in South Asian traditions—particularly the *śramana* or ascetic traditions—the drives and urges central to the problem of suffering are those fundamental instincts most closely associated with basic forms of animal behavior: desiring food for sustenance and sex for procreation<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. The Buddha and the Ascetics

We find evidence in early Buddhist sources of various ascetic practices reflecting an understanding that human beings are not particularly distinct from animals on many counts<sup>4</sup>. The *kukkuravata* or the “vow to behave like a dog” and the *govata* or the “vow to behave like an ox” were ascetic practices involving naked ascetics enacting the behavior of a dog or a cow, respectively<sup>5</sup>. These practices, which quite literally enjoin a person to *become animal*, ostensibly allow a practitioner to experience how their human constitutions are not very far from those of animals. It appears that such practices aimed at allowing ascetics to publicly express their animal aspect and thereby master it.

Historical details about such practice traditions are meager, as no such early South Asian ascetic traditions have survived into the present day. But one thing is clear about these accounts: some early South Asian ascetics *practiced* to become animals—imitating animal behaviors and attempting to embody animal modes of consciousness—in an attempt to come to terms with who they were as humans. We can read such practices as an acknowledgment of, and response to, the entailments Abram notes of the more recent “turn toward the body” in modern metaphysics: “... once we acknowledge that our awareness is inseparable—even, in some sense, indistinguishable—from our material physiology, can we really continue to maintain that mind remains alien to the rest of material nature?” (Abram 2011, p. 109)

While Abram here participates conceptually and semiotically in the peculiar epistemology of the moderns, his solution to the question of embodiment and its entailments is not very different—except perhaps in scope and practical engagement—from that of the early South Asians who engaged in

<sup>2</sup> Amber Carpenter notes that, in much of South Asian thought, “when we do think about animals, it is not to learn by contrast about the human but to learn by communion” (Carpenter 2018, p. 67).

<sup>3</sup> I take for granted in this article a simple distinction between the human and the nonhuman, allowing that these categories might be treated in a more complex way.

<sup>4</sup> As this article is primarily interested in Buddhist and South Asian contemplative/ascetic practices, and how they relate to the foundational philosophical underpinnings of the Buddhist tradition in history, I do not here engage Buddhist narrative literature, much of which is populated by animal protagonists. Preeminent in this body of literature are *jātaka* stories, many of which present past lives of the Buddha as an animal. I have spent much time reading these lively stories—and their parallels in other Indian traditions—but the nature of their composition and transmission remains murky. For a recent attempt to use such narrative literature to speculate on “animals in the Indian Buddhist imagination,” see (Ohnuma 2017). To understand the difficulties of assessing the historical contexts of the *Jātaka* literature, see (Appleton 2010) and (Anālayo 2012).

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, MN 57 and DN 24. The commentary on DN 24 interprets the terminology used to describe one who has taken up the *kukkuravata* as follows, “*Acela* means naked. ... *Kukkuravatika* means one who has taken up the dog-vow, who sniffs and eats like a dog, sleeps in the ash of cook-fires, and enacts other activities of dogs. *Catukkundāka* means one who strikes [at] four [points, who] goes about by placing his two knees and two elbows on the ground. ... *mukhen’ eva* means that he eats using only his mouth, without touching the food with his hands.” (“*acelo*” *ti naggo*. ... “*kukkuravatiko*” *ti samādinna-kukkuravato sunakho viya ghāyitvā khādāti, uddhanantare nipajjati, aññam pi sunakhakiriyam eva karoti*. “*catukkundāko*” *ti catusaṅghaṭṭito dve jāṇūni dve ca kappare bhūmiyaṃ ṭhapetvā vicarati*. ... “*mukhen’ evā*” *ti hatthena aparāmasitvā khādanīyaṃ mukhen’ eva khādāti, bhojanīyaṃ pi mukhen’ eva bhūñjati* [Sv III, p. 819]). The commentary on MN 57 describes the “dog-duty ascetic” *Seniya*, who comes to speak with the Buddha, as follows, “*Kukkuravatiko* means one who has taken up the dog-vow: he enacts the activity of dogs in every way. Both of the companions were also those who wore discarded rags. *kukkuro va palikujjitvā* means sitting near the master pawing the ground with two feet and yapping with dog yaps. With the intention of enacting the role of a dog, he sat down after greeting the teacher by pawing the ground, shaking his head, and making the sound ‘bhū bhū’ while stretching out his arms and legs like a dog.” (“*kukkuravatiko*” *ti samādinna-kukkuravato, sabbaṃ sunakhakiriyam karoti. ubho p’ ete sahapamsukilīkā sahāyaka*. “*kukkuro va palikujjitvā*” *ti sunakho nāma sāmikassa santike nisīdanto dvēhi pādehi bhūmiyaṃ vilekhitvā kukkurakūjitam kūjanto nisīdati. ayam pi “kukkurakiriyam karissāmi” ti bhagavatā saddhīṃ sammoditvā dvēhi hatthehi bhūmiyaṃ vilekhitvā sīsaṃ vidhunanto “bhū bhū” ti katvā hatthapāde samīñjitvā sunakho viya nisīdi* [Ps III, pp. 100–101]).

dog-duty and ox-duty ascetic practices<sup>6</sup>. He models a relationship to the world of physicality that allows humans—in their experiential relationship to the senses, things, and beings—to *become animal*: to participate in sentience as constitutive of a world of “material nature,” rather than being distinct from it.

But for me it remains a question just how tenable it is that such a lived philosophy might be fully carried out, enacted, practiced, and performed, when most humans remain in large part cognitively restricted—victims of hard-wired experiences—by our current modes of embodiment. While Abram models beautifully in his writing a series of meditations involving connecting with material nature and the senses, these approaches do not appear to touch the more basic and elemental cognitive forces that structure human and animal cognition: cognition that constitutes experiencers through a sense of separation of awareness and objects of awareness, a sense of interiority and exteriority<sup>7</sup>.

### 3. Karma and the Animal Realm

It is in the context of this practical challenge that we might turn to the history of Buddhist thought—and some of its particular modes of metaphysical deliberation—in an attempt to discern how the Buddha and his followers took on this issue.

We might begin with a depiction of the Buddha’s response to the ox-duty (*govatika*) naked ascetic (*acela*), Puṇṇa, when asked about the dog-duty practice (*kukkuravatika*) of his friend Seniya. After repeatedly exhorting Puṇṇa not to ask about such a topic, the Buddha agrees to comment on it:

Here, Puṇṇa, someone develops the dog-duty (*kukkuravata*) fully and uninterruptedly; he develops the dog-habit (*kukkurasiḷa*) fully and uninterruptedly; he develops the dog-mind (*kukkuracitta*) fully and uninterruptedly; he develops dog-behaviour (*kukkurākappa*) fully and uninterruptedly. Having done so, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in the company of dogs. But if he has such a view as this: “By this virtue or observance or asceticism or holy life I shall become a deity or some other divine incarnation,” that is wrong view in his case. Now there are two destinations for one with wrong view, I say: hell or the animal realm. (Adapted from [Ñānamoli and Bodhi 1995, pp. 493–94])<sup>8</sup>

Whether this is a fair assessment of the context and aims of such a practice is impossible to say. What this passage seems to indicate, however, is that some ascetics engaging in such practices considered them to lead to liberation from gross forms of embodiment—such as animal and human embodiments—through rebirth as some kind of divinity.

By suggesting that someone who adopts such ideas holds wrong views, the Buddha here presents his own theory of karma. This analysis turns primarily on the idea that all habits and behaviors (*siḷa*) are inevitably constituted through certain modes of cognition. By understanding how the constraints of our cognition condition a network of action within which we are enmeshed, ascetic practitioners might come to see ways to embody cognition that are conducive to dismantling or skillfully navigating that

<sup>6</sup> While pushing back against the constraints of such categorizations in many respects, Abram nonetheless takes for granted, in his conceptualization of the notion of “nature,” the key divisions outlined by Latour (1993) in his delineation of the modern constitution.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Descola’s treatment of what he terms “schemas of practice” might be brought to bear on the discussion here (Descola 2013, pp. 91–125). His analysis of the experiential foundations of various ontologies across cultures fits well with the types of distinctions I am trying to highlight. Such distinctions are also amenable to the basic categories of “interiority” (*ajjhatta/adhyātma*) and “exteriority” (*bahiddha/bahirdha*)—commensurate with Descola’s “interiority” (*intériorité*) and “physicality” (*physicalité*)—outlined in the practice models of early Buddhist awareness/mindfulness practices.

<sup>8</sup> *idha, Puṇṇa, ekacco kukkuravatam bhāveti paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam, kukkurasiḷam bhāveti paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam, kukkuracittam bhāveti paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam, kukkurākappam bhāveti paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam. so kukkuravatam bhāvetvā paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam, kukkurasiḷam bhāvetvā paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam, kukkuracittam bhāvetvā paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam, kukkurākappam bhāvetvā paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam kāyassa bhedaṃ paramaṃ maraṇā kukkurānam saḥabyatam upapajjati. sace kho paṇassa evaṃdittṭhi hoti: “imināham siḷena vā vatena vā tapena vā brahmacariyena vā devo vā bhavissāmi devaṇṇataro vā” ti, sāssa hoti micchādittṭhi. micchādittṭhissa kho aham, puṇṇa, dvinnam gatīnam aṇṇataram gatim vadāmi: nirayam vā tiracchānayanonim vā (MN 57 at MN I, pp. 387–88).*

network. (It is, of course, essential to point out that this approach to practice can't really be understood outside of a thought system that takes for granted the reality of rebirth.)

So, while knowledge of the nonhuman, in general, and animal behavior, in particular, are certainly essential for the Buddha or his disciples to fully come to terms with their predicament as embodied, suffering beings, yet another kind of knowledge becomes paramount for the practicing Buddhist in early South Asia: namely, knowledge about how cognition is variously embodied on an even broader spectrum of karmic possibility. The Buddha expresses this idea in the *Samyuttanikāya* when discussing the diversity of species in the animal realm (*tiracchānagati*):

I do not see any other order of living beings so diversified (*citta*) as those in the animal realm. Even those beings in the animal realm have been diversified (*cittitā*) by the mind (*cittena*), yet the mind is even more diverse than those beings in the animal realm. Therefore, monks, constantly inspect your own mind [as follows]: 'for a long time this mind has been defiled by desire, aversion, and delusion.' Beings are defiled due to mental defilements. Beings are purified due to purification of mind. (Bodhi 2000, p. 958)<sup>9</sup>

Here the Buddha puts human minds/cognition on a spectrum with animal minds/cognition, while at the same time pointing to a broader spectrum of possibility, one that goes beyond the great diversity of the animal realm. He also prescribes the discernment of the processes of the mind, asserting the given of the mind's pollution and the possibility of its purification. Such statements point to two overlapping ideas in early Buddhist thought: (1) Instances of various forms of embodiment (suffering) cannot be separated from instances of various forms of cognition and (2) the discernment of the process of cognition allows beings to intervene in that process and either shut it down or escape from it.

While one might read these aspects of early Buddhist thought as amenable to David Abram's (among others') ideas about "the current 'turn toward the body'" in philosophy of mind, two aspects of the Buddha's teaching are difficult to reconcile with it: The first is the notion of rebirth within a vast cosmology, including immaterial realms constituted entirely of minds or acts of cognition. This cosmology pushes beyond the ontology of a materialist episteme and allows for subtle material modes of embodiment, non-material agencies, and disembodied modes of cognition. It also has (a certain type of ideal) humans at its center, and gives them a paramount, if not the paramount, position<sup>10</sup>. The second is the practical engagement with the mind, which is prescriptively modeled as discernibly distinct from material bodies in the context of embodied experience. While in these contexts the mind/cognition and body are indeed inseparable, as Abram would have it, they are not indistinguishable. Rather, they are experientially distinct as phenomena. The ideal Buddhist is a human who has found a way to carry out such discernment.

<sup>9</sup> "nāhaṃ, bhikkhave, aññaṃ ekanikāyaṃ pi samanupassāmi evaṃ cittaṃ: yathayidaṃ, bhikkhave, tiracchānagatā pāṇā. te pi kho, bhikkhave, tiracchānagatā pāṇā cittaṃ eva cittaṃ, tehi pi kho, bhikkhave, tiracchānagatēhi pāṇēhi cittaññeva cittataraṃ. tasmā-t-īha, bhikkhave, abhikkhaṇaṃ sakaṃ cittaṃ paccavekkhitabbaṃ: 'dīgharattam idaṃ cittaṃ saṃkiliṭṭhaṃ rāgena dosena mohena' ti. cittaṃsaṃkilesā, bhikkhave, sattā saṃkilissanti; cittaṃvodaṇā sattā visujjhanti" (SN III, pp. 151–52). It is noteworthy that a parallel to this passage in Chinese translation speaks of the variegated nature of the *carāṇa* bird (嗟蘭那鳥), as opposed to the variegated nature of beings in the animal realm in general. See SĀ 267 at T II, p. 69c18–25. The Pāli tradition takes the term *carāṇa* to refer to a kind of painting containing various worldly scenes that gets carried from town to town as a prop for traveling performers. See Spk 7.4 at Spk II, p. 114 and (Stuart [ ]), n. 8.

<sup>10</sup> A number of scholars have suggested that the preeminence of the human in Buddhist thought has led to speciesism within much normative Buddhist doctrine. For an excellent analysis of this issue, see (Schmithausen 2000). Similar issues become apparent more broadly within South Asian religious traditions in dialogical encounters with recent models of ecological ethics. Cort (2002) and Dundas (2002) capture the problems surrounding such issues with great clarity in the context of the Jain tradition. The purpose of the current article is not to construct, reflect on, or critique a normative Buddhist approach to animals. Rather, it is to engage dialogically with a number of non-normative developments of Buddhist practice that emerge as elaborations on more normative doctrinal sources.

#### 4. Contemplative Elaborations

It is precisely at the conceptual interstices of these aspects of the Buddha's teachings on the one hand, and contemporary theories of embodied cognition on the other, that I would like to explore a middle-period Buddhist textual tradition and its depiction of the nonhuman animal realm, among others.

As I have shown in a number of recent publications, the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* is a middle-period *sūtra* probably produced in Greater Gandhāra (Stuart 2015a, 2015b, 2017a, 2017b). It is a meditation text that outlines how a Buddhist practitioner can come to a state of omniscience with respect to karma and its results through the cultivation of the establishment of awareness/mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna*). It is a soteriologically transitional text that presented middle period South Asian Buddhists with a possible path to fully awakened Buddhahood by way of traditional early Buddhist meditation practices (Stuart 2015a, vol. I, pp. 198–24; Stuart 2015b). It is also one of the most elaborate texts on Buddhist cosmology ever written, and became an important source for saṃsāric or cosmological imaginaries throughout East Asia<sup>11</sup>.

What is particularly salient here, in the context of this collection of articles, is the text's treatment of the animal realm (*tiryaggati*), its extravagant use of extended animal metaphors, and its practice-oriented theory of mind. A central method by which the text develops its theory of mind is through a reworking of the above-quoted early *sūtra* from the *Samyuttanikāya*. The *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* prescribes a meditation practice that involves a meditator envisioning—in a process of cultivating knowledge of the process of rebirth (*cyutyupapattijñāna*)<sup>12</sup>—the variegated ways in which the mind, like a painter, paints a world of saṃsāric experience in/as the five realms of the cosmos: (1) the human realm, (2) the hell realm, (3) the realm of hungry ghosts, (4) the realm of nonhuman animals, and (5) the realm of deities<sup>13</sup>. A meditation practitioner's ability to envision the entirety of the cosmos in this way hinges on his capacity to observe the mind constantly and in all possible modes by way of the establishment of mindfulness/awareness of *dharma*s (*dharmasmṛtyupasthāna*). Here we see the traditional practice of the establishment of mindfulness of *dharma*s refigured into a metacognitive visionary practice oriented towards the discernment of the process of karma writ large.

The most basic form of this practice, as it pertains to the realm of animals, can be found in the second chapter of the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*, in a depiction of a meditator monk discerning aspects of perception:

And further, the *yoga* practitioner dwells observing *dharma*s among internal *dharma*(s): . . . Further, that monk, seer of the reality of feeling, having accomplished the work [pertaining to] the six groups of feeling, distinguishes the aggregate of perception, marks it off (*nimittīkaroti*): . . . “[The flow of existence is long] for creatures that live in water, who devour one another, and are unaware of the knowledge of what is and is not [sexually] approachable. [They] are constantly agitated by thirst, are parched to the core, and live in fear of being caught. [They are:] porpoises, hunter fish, crabs, sharks, crocodiles, alligators, leviathans, oysters, conch, and so on. They are constantly intent on eating one another—the large [dominating] the small—and live in fear of getting caught in a lowered net. Similarly, [the flow of existence is long] for creatures that live on the earth [such as]: deer, water buffaloes, boars, elephants, bulls, horses, donkeys, oxen, antelope, bears, rhinoceros, and so on. [These animals] are agitated by hundreds of thousands of various kinds of suffering [such as:] bondage, being killed by swords, disease, old age and death, and being attacked by others. Similarly, [the

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, (Matsunaga and Matsunaga 1972).

<sup>12</sup> It is noteworthy that knowledge of the process of rebirth (*cyutyupapattijñāna*) gets deliberately conflated in the text with the arising and passing away of *dharma*s (*udayaṅvayo dharmāṅāṃ*). This association brings the knowledge of rebirth explicitly under the umbrella of the practice of the establishment of awareness/mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna*).

<sup>13</sup> For an analysis of this early canonical metaphor and its reworking in the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*, see (Stuart []).



flow of existence is long] for creatures that move in the sky [such as:] crows, owls, geese, peacocks, cocks, lapwings, doves, pigeons, gallinules, shrikes, storks, *jīvajīvaka*s, vultures, cuckoos, and other various types of birds. They are filled with terrible fear, and are afflicted by poisoning, bondage, swords, hunger and thirst, other animal predators, and cold and heat. The flow [of existence] is long for these animals, who live and move in three places—the earth, water and sky.” [In this way,] he takes as an object the sign of perception [of length].” (Stuart 2015a, vol. I, pp. 408–11)<sup>14</sup>

Here we see the taxonomic sensibility of the text, the need to categorize animal life according to different types of suffering. But the text also explicitly places animals on a spectrum of beings who can become conscious of their suffering and be liberated from it:

“There are those [animals] who—[though] fearful of predation, of threats, beatings, cold, heat, and bad weather—if capable, disregard their trembling and, just for a moment, arouse a mind of faith towards the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha. The flow [of existence] is short for those animals.” [In this way,] he takes as an object the sign of perception [of shortness]. (Stuart 2015a, vol. I, pp. 414–15)<sup>15</sup>

Here the prospect of liberation from suffering for animals turns on their capacity to generate faith in the triple gem: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha. This is also something that is possible in the realm of hungry ghosts (*pretas*). In other words, animals have the capacity for cognition beyond their basic instinctual tendencies, but instances of such cognition are rare and unlikely in the context of such modes of embodiment<sup>16</sup>.

Most importantly, however, this contemplative encounter allows a human practitioner not only to taxonomize animal embodiment and modes of cognition, but also to identify with beings in such situations. One becomes animal by envisioning the cognitive possibilities of animals in acts of human perception. The text, then, acknowledges the general constraints of various sorts of embodied cognition while at the same time enacting perception as a distinguishable and unique aspect of mental life, capable of building mental realities over and above normative bodily-cognitive constraints.<sup>17</sup> The embedded narrative frames of the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*, which represent a monk going through these cognitive exercises while a *yogācāra* or master meditation practitioner simultaneously observes those very exercises as *dharmas*, points to a further metacognitive perspective on such relationships<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> “*parasparabhakṣaṇāgamyaṅamyaṅjñānavimukhānām jalacarānām nityaṃ pipāsārditānām «pariśuśkahrdayagrahaṇabhītānām śīsumāralubdhakodratimitimīṅgilakumbhīranakramakaraśuktiśāṅkhaṇapramukhānām nityaṃ parasparasthūlasūksmabhakṣaṇataparānām vāgurāvārohaṇagrahaṇabhītānām, tathā sthalacarānām mṛgamahisavarāhanāgarājavarṣabhāśvakharagavayaruriksagaṇḍakaprabhṛtīnām vīvidhaduḥkhabandhanaśastramāraṇavyādhijarāmarāṇaparaparapīḍāśatasahasrārditānām, tathāntarīkṣacarānām kākolūkahamsabarhikukkuṭakoyaṣṭikapārāpatakapotadātyūhavāśasatapatrachāyāvalīnājīvajīvakaśampātaparabhṛtīnām anyeṣāṃ ca śakunijātīnām, vaiśavadhābandhanaśastrakṣutpipāsāparasparabhakṣaṇaśītoṣṇapīditānām trīsthānagatānām sthalajalajāntarīkṣacarānām tiryaggatānām dāruṇapratibhayānām dīrghaḥ samsārah,» sañjñānimittam ālambati.*

<sup>15</sup> “*parasparabhakṣaṇatarjanatādānaśītoṣṇadurdinabhayabhītās te, yadi śaknuvanti, kṣaṇaviṣkambham aganayitvā, kṣaṇam apy ekam cīttaprasādam buddhadharmasaṅghaṃ prati kartum, hrasvas teṣāṃ tiryakṣu samsārah,» sañjñānimittam anulambati.*

<sup>16</sup> Ohnuma (2017, pp. 24–40) discusses the role of *prasāda* or the generation of faith as a central theme in Sanskrit Buddhist narrative literature.

<sup>17</sup> I use the verb ‘enacting’ here (and elsewhere) in a general sense, but also to invoke the idea of the ‘enactive’ as a term of art in Philosophy of Mind. For an excellent philosophical engagement with normative Buddhist karma theory and the emergent ‘enactive approach’ in philosophy of mind, see (Mackenzie 2013). I am hesitant to whole-heartedly adopt approaches such as that of MacKenzie precisely for the same reasons that I distinguish David Abram’s approach to becoming animal from that of a premodern South Asian Buddhist contemplative. While enactivism has its roots in Buddhist philosophy (see [Varela et al. 1991]), as this approach comes into its own in the field of Philosophy of Mind, those developing it appear to assume a physicalist metaphysics that may or may not be amenable to Buddhist approaches to the mind in a final analysis. See, for example, (Hutto and Myin 2012).

<sup>18</sup> On the narrative structure of the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* and how it constructs such a meta-cognitive approach to Buddhist practice, see (Stuart 2015b).

## 5. Meditation and Metaphor

This contemplative strategy gets more fully developed in a series of extended contemplative metaphors, the most significant of which is the painter metaphor already mentioned. We find several versions of this metaphor in the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*, and in all of them the realm of nonhuman animals is depicted as one among five possible realms of rebirth:

That monk sees [the state of beings]: “How is it that these beings have various forms, live in various states, are born in various realms, and have various types of bodies?”

He sees: “Because these beings have various mental states, are intent on various types of bodies, and perform various types of actions, therefore they have various forms, live in various states, are born in various realms, and have various types of bodies. It is just like a skilled painter or his apprentice, who sits on a perfectly clear, firm and attractive piece of ground (*bhūmi*) and, with the power of his mind, produces various types of beautiful images [on it], using various colors and pigments. Similarly, the actions of the mind, like a painter or his disciple, produce intentions (*adhimuktikara*) and [thus] generate beings on the perfectly clear ground of the three realms, the firm (*dr̥ḍha*) ground of the flow [of existence], which contains various states, various realms, and various types of bodies [produced through] the ripening of the fruits of action. . . .

“Further, the actions of the mind, like a painter using a yellow pigment, generate the realms of animals. With yellow appearance, they drink one another’s blood, eat one another’s flesh, and kill one another, yellowed (*pītākṛta*) by desire, aversion and delusion.” (Stuart 2015a, vol. I, pp. 486–89)<sup>19</sup>

Here the focus is on one of the most basic aspects of animal life: predation. But what is of central import here is the practice of discerning how basic cognitive proclivities condition various forms of embodiment (or disembodiment). The painter metaphor extends a basic idea of the early Buddhist tradition and brings it into a new soteriological context, one that allows that such discernment constitutes the foundation for omniscience about karma, the kind of knowledge accessible only to the Buddhas.

In so doing, the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* remains open to new cosmological and natural taxonomies, and refigures foundational Buddhist meditation practices to encompass them. This can be seen in the text’s elaborate accounts of Buddhist hells, the realm of hungry ghosts, the nonhuman animal realm, and the realm of deities, which are some of the most developed of such accounts in the history of Buddhism. But in the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* such accounts are always framed as visionary experiences, which can only be perceived after a practitioner has fully come to discern the entire array of cognitive possibilities for humans in the universe.

One way of presenting this process of discernment is the painter–mind metaphor. But an additional set of metaphors—likewise drawn from early Buddhist canonical texts—also helps to illustrate this refigured form of Buddhist practice. The visionary enactment of several nonhuman animal metaphors is particularly revealing of this project. The text describes a meditator deep in meditation, discerning the activity of the mind in metaphorical terms as (1) the activity of a monkey, and (2) the activity of a river fish. These are metaphors from the early Buddhist tradition, but in the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*

<sup>19</sup> *sa bhikṣuḥ paśyati: “kathaṃ amī sattvā nānārūpā nānāvasthā nānāgatikā nānāvidhāśrayāḥ?” sa paśyati: “yasmād ete sattvā nānācittā nānāvidhāśrayādādhimuktā nanavidhakarmaṇaḥ, tasmād ete sattvā nānārūpā nānāvasthā nānāgatikā nānāvidhāśrayāḥ. tadyathā dakṣaś citrakaro vā citrakarāntevāsī vā suśuklāṃ dr̥ḍhāṃ ālokyaramyāṃ bhūmim āsādyā, nānāvidhai raṅgair nānāvidhais citrair nānāvidhāni śobhanāni rūpāni cittavaśāt kurute. tathāyaṃ cittacitrakarmakaraś citrakarmakarāntevāsī vādhimuktikaraḥ suśuklāyāṃ tridhātubhūmau dr̥ḍhāyāṃ karmaphalavipākāyāṃ saṃsārabhūmau nānāvasthāyāṃ nānāgatikāyāṃ nānāvidhāśrayāyāṃ sattvāṃś cittacitrakarmakaro ’bhiniṃvartayati. . . . “punar api sa cittacitrakarmakaraḥ pītaṃ raṅgam upādāya, abhiniṃvartayati tiryaggatāni. te ’pi paraspareṇa pītaraṅgavaśāt pibanti rudhirāṇi, khādanti māṃsāni, ghnanti ca parasparato rāgadveṣamohena pītākṛtāḥ.”*

they are literarily expanded and redeployed in the context of the text's new soteriology. The river fish metaphor serves here as an example of such redeployment:

Further, that monk sees the fish-mind as similar to a river fish: "Just as a fish in a mountain river breaks the surface of, and is [then] submerged by, its constantly frothy and turbulent [waters], its deep, swift flow and the powerful surge of its current, which is capable of washing away many trees, and whose constant fierce activity is unstoppable due to the power of its swiftness, similarly the fish-mind breaks the surface of, and is [then] submerged by, the river of craving. Its constantly frothy and turbulent [waters] are [the waters of] the three realms of existence. It runs [in parts] deep to the Vaitaraṇī river of the realm of sensuality, and [at others] supremely deep to the realm of Avīci hell. Its swift flow is the swift flow of wholesome and unwholesome actions. Its powerful current is the current that makes it very difficult for all foolish worldlings of the world to cross over to the other shore [of *nirvāna*]. Its 'surge' is the surge of the river of the five destinations [that carries beings onward] for many eons. Its swift stream of sense-objects is capable of carrying away [the mind]. Its 'constant fierce activity is unstoppable due to the power of its swiftness.' [This refers to] the constant fierce activity of impermanence, which is unstoppable due to the power of its swiftness. The fish-mind [first] breaks the surface of the river of craving, [to be born] among deities and men, and is then submerged [by it, to be born] among denizens of hell, hungry ghosts and animals." (Stuart 2015a, vol. I, pp. 497–99)<sup>20</sup>

Metaphors that were once used in didactic teaching contexts to describe the mind's activity in categorically negative terms are now refigured and deployed in various modes of contemplative discernment in such a way that, through them, a Buddhist adept can reach a state of omniscience. Rather than shutting down the mind as an uncontrolled animal agent of karma, the adept follows and accounts for all possible paths of action that the mind might take, applying the discernment of Buddhist wisdom to every facet of embodied (and disembodied) life. In this soteriological and contemplative context, the phrase 'becoming animal' takes on a differently charged connotation. One becomes the cognitive process by becoming animal.

## 6. Envisioning the Animal

It is with this foundational orientation that the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* can expand the scope of its contemplative prescriptions to encompass the discernment of karmic ripening in all possible modes of psycho-physical life. It does so systematically. After detailing the basic mindfulness meditation practices that allow a monk to attain supernormal visionary capacities, the text goes on to detail extensively the envisioning of the hell realms, the realm of hungry ghosts, the realm of nonhuman animals, and the realm of deities<sup>21</sup>. While the text is most developed in its descriptions of the process of envisioning the hell realms and heavenly embodiments, a substantial portion of the text is devoted to the discernment of the constitution of the animal realm.

This treatment of the animal realm takes the practitioner into a vast and variegated world of animal life, a world of cognitions and actions far beyond the basic taxonomy of animal species outlined in the initial contemplations of the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* presented above. In this analysis,

<sup>20</sup> punar api sa bhikṣur nadīmīnavat paśyati cittamīnam: "yathā hi mīnaḥ pratatatarāṅgākulāyāṃ gambhīraśiḅhrasrotoduroviśahagatipracārāyāṃ anekavṛkṣāpakarṣanasamarthāyāṃ pratataśiḅhravegānīvāryakarmacaṇḍāyāṃ girinadyāṃ unmajjaty avamajjati, evam evāyaṃ cittamīnaḥ pratatatarāṅgākulāyāṃ tribhavatarāṅgākulāyāṃ, kāmadhātuvaitarāṅgambhīrāyāṃ avīciparamagambhīrāyāṃ, śiḅhrasrotāyāṃ śubhāśubhakarmasrotāyāṃ, durviśahagatyāṃ sarvalokabālaprthagjanapāragamanaduroviśahagatyāṃ, 'pracārāyāṃ' iti pañcaḅgatinadyāṃ pracārāyāṃ anekakalpāyāṃ ca, karṣanasamarthāyāṃ viśayaśiḅhrasrotāyāṃ, 'śiḅhrapratatavegānīvāryacaṇḍāyāṃ' iti anityatāpratatavegānīvāryacaṇḍāyāṃ, nadyāṃ tṛṣṇānadyāṃ cittamīna unmajjananimajjanaṃ kurute. unmajjati devamanuṣyeṣu, nīmajjati narakapretīryakṣu sa cittamīnaḥ tṛṣṇānadyāṃ."

<sup>21</sup> These elaborate visionary contemplations of the four realms beyond the human constitute approximately 93% of the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* as it has come down to us.



the text does begin with basic taxonomies of common animals, but it then also goes on to describe a range of supernormal animals, and it is this visionary elucidation that constitutes the majority of the text's treatment of the animal realm. The framing of this contemplative envisioning of the animal realm runs as follows.

Using knowledge of scripture, he sees according to reality that the 340 million types of animals, which come into existence ordered by their mental proclivities, are the most numerous of any of the five classes of beings. [They] wear various coats and have by nature [a variety of] manifestations, gaits, types of food, aims and adversaries. [They] are hostile or amicable, friendly and unfriendly, inclined to companionship or inclined to solitude. ... By way of what karma do living beings have various manifestations, gaits, and types of food? ... Using knowledge of scripture, he sees that because living beings have various mental states (-*cetasah*), they are ordered such that they enact various kinds of actions. ... [The monk] contemplatively explores those actions of theirs. ... <sup>22</sup>

Such psychologization of animal behavior is constitutive of the text's treatment of nonhuman animals. Beasts, birds, fish, and insects behave according to mental proclivities based on past actions, and their cognitive constraints condition what kinds of actions they are likely to participate in. However, an even more diverse conception of such embodiments and the spectrum of possibilities in the animal realm emerges when the text extends its treatment of nonhuman animals to the realm of *nāgas* (supernormal reptilian beings) and *asuras* (demigods possessed by anger who are somewhat idiosyncratically included in the animal realm)<sup>23</sup>. *Nāgas* and their cognitive proclivities are responsible for weather patterns on earth, while *asuras* are constantly intent on the conquest of the deities of the Heaven of the Thirty-three (Trayastrimśa) in battle.

The text provides elaborate descriptions of these agents of the animal realm. Most important, however, is the larger set of karmic and cosmological relationships that emerges from these descriptions. This is best exemplified in the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra's* treatment of *asura* embodiment, which is dominated by vehemence and the compulsion to wage war with deities. It presents a detailed description of a battle between the *asuras* and the deities, the end of which is marked by the *asuras* turning tail and fleeing back to their animal abodes beneath the earth (Ms, pp. 116b5–130a4 [T XVII, pp. 114c12–124c24; D ra, pp. 26a4–53a6]). A key moment of this narrative is when Indra/Śakra, the king of the deities, notifies the *asuras* that their attempts to wage war are futile:

Why are [the *asuras*] desperately intent on hostility, having created this situation of self-destruction involving the loss of life of innumerable *asuras*? Even in this day and age there are righteous (*dhārmika*) men in the realm of humans who practice according to the teachings [of the Buddha] (*dharmānuparvartin*). The victory of the deities over you is dependent on [the state of righteousness of] humans. Because [you are] not cognizant of the appropriate time and place, this desperate hostility that has been enacted brings about self-slaughter. <sup>24</sup>

Here the state of affairs in the entire cosmos, and the possibility of actions being accomplished in various realms—human, nonhuman, animal, and nonanimal—is interdependent with human cognition

<sup>22</sup> *tatvataḥ sa paśyati śrutamayena jñānena tiryāṇcastriṃśatkoṭiprakārā yathācittāyattavidheyopapannāḥ pañcebhyo gatibhyaḥ sarvabhūyīṣṭatārā nānāveśadharā rūpagatyāhārapakṣapratipakṣapra*<sub>[102b2]</sub>*dvīṣṭādoṣīṣṭamitrāmitrasahacarāsahacarajātikās ... tatra kataraṇa karmmaṇā nānāveśarūpagatyāhārā bhavanti prāṇināḥ | sa paśyati śrutamayena jñānena [yasmā]*<sub>[102b3]</sub>*n nānācetasāḥ prāṇināḥ prāṇīno vidheyā nānāvidhāni karmmāni kurvanti ... teṣāṃ karmmāṇi vicārayati |* (Ms, p. 102b1–3)*prāṇīno ] corr.; prāṇīna Ms*

<sup>23</sup> For a brief overview of this chapter of the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*, see Stuart (2015a), vol. I, pp. 82–87.

<sup>24</sup> *kim idam ā[ḡ]tasthānaṃ yam evātmanaḥ kṛtam abhāvāyānek[e]śām asurānāṃ jīvītāpahārār[th]āya nirarthakam vairam anubaddhāḥ santi? adyāpi manuṣyaloke dhārmikāḥ puruṣā dharmānupar[ivar]tt[īnaḥ].* <sub>[129b2]</sub> *manuṣyānām āyatto hi devānāṃ jayaparājayo yūyam. ajñātāvā deśakālaṃ nirarthakam idaṃ vairaṃ kṛtam ātmanaghatāya.* (Ms, p. 129b1–2 [T XVII, p. 124b3–7; D ra, p. 51b4–5])*anubaddhāḥ ] corr. (?); anubaddhā (?); zhugs pa D; n.e. Tmanuṣyānām ] corr.; manuṣyānām Ms; thams cad brtan pa dag yod na D; 以人修善。天有勝力。人行不善。天則破壞。Tjayaparājayo ] em.; yajaparājayas te Ms; rgyal ba dang pham pa ni D; 以人修善，天有勝力。人行不善，天則破壞。T*

and ethical practice. This moment of the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* brings one aspect of its broader contemplative narrative—a meditator monk waging war against Māra—into relief against a larger perennial cosmological narrative involving supernatural beings from the realm of animals and the realm of deities<sup>25</sup>. In this reading of the text, *becoming human* as a Buddhist contemplative involves acknowledging that one is interconnected with, and ontologically responsible for, the state of affairs in every state of cognition in the universe. The process of becoming animal, therefore—to the extent that one might account for a prospective 340 million types including *nāgas* and *asuras*—is entailed in the process of truly becoming human.

Another way to read the text is to take the interdependence elucidated in this constellation of relationships as evidence of an epistemological idealism, a stance that takes the human animal organism as its point of departure while remaining agnostic about whether the worlds of experience presented in the cosmological visions of the text have anything to do with an externalist account of the cosmos. Such an interpretation gets complicated, however, by another account of animal life in the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*, depicted once again in the context of the painter–mind metaphor:

Further, one discerns: “Which karma-color is it that paints animals?” It is the color[s] black-red. When [an animal] experiences extreme suffering and extreme fear, this is black pigment. When [animals] predate one another, this is red pigment. Using such colors, the painter–mind paints [the realm of animals]. Further, in brief we speak of the animals of the three spheres, who are frightened of one another, afraid of slaughter, afraid of being caught, subject to predation. Those that move through the air are birds, such as peacocks, pheasants, and geese. Those that travel on earth are animals such as water buffalo, pigs, and horses. Those that live in water are fish of various sorts. They are colored black. If they do not fear slaughter, they are colored red, as, for example, the images [of animals] in the realm of deities.<sup>26</sup>

(Excerpted from Stuart [])<sup>27</sup>

This very last reference to animals, or images of animals, in the realm of deities takes the question of epistemological idealism—with the human organism as a point of departure—and subjects it to further complication. If the birds that beautify heaven may simply be mental projections of deities, and deities may simply be the mental projections of humans, where does the locus of the projection begin and end?<sup>28</sup> It appears, then, that an externalist reading of Buddhist cosmology must be accepted at some level for the possibility of arguments about an organism-centered epistemological idealism to hold water. This appears to be what is at issue in the philosophical moves of the famous Yogācāra-vijñānavāda idealist Vasubandhu when he proposes in his *Viṃśikā* the example of hungry ghosts perceiving the water of a river as pus as part of developing an argument for an epistemological idealism<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> On the tiered narrative of the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*, see (Stuart 2015b).

<sup>26</sup> 謂天中象 T; mtho ris kyi bya rnam D: Here the Tibetan translators refer specifically to heavenly birds. Lin Li-kouang (Lin and Demiéville 1949) interpreted the Chinese text as referring to the celestial elephant Airāvāṇa, Indra’s mount. This is quite possibly the correct interpretation.

<sup>27</sup> 又復觀察：何業采色畫作畜生？謂黑赤色。彼若受於第一苦惱，第一怖畏，是黑色畫。若相殺害是赤色畫。如是色者，是心畫師，畫如是色。又復略說畜生三處，迭相怖畏，畏殺，畏縛，被他食肉。虛空行者，所謂孔雀、雉、鵝等鳥。陸地行者，謂牛水牛、豬、馬等畜。水中行者，所謂魚等。彼黑色畫。若不畏殺，彼赤色畫，謂天中象。(T no. 721, at T XVII, pp. 287b6–287b14)

<sup>28</sup> Reiko Ohnuma (2017, p. 17 and nn. 44) makes reference to this aspect of doctrinal concern for early Buddhist scholasticism but seems to have missed the philosophical issues of karma theory and philosophy of mind at the center of such distinctions. Instead, she interprets such issues to be related to a Buddhist speciesism. It does not appear to me that such interpretations are borne out in this instance in the sources cited.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, the third verse of Vasubandhu’s *Viṃśikā*: “Constraint of place is proved, taking the example of dreams. The example of hungry ghosts additionally proves the constraint of the individual cognitive continuum, since they all see rivers of pus etc.” (*deśādīnīyamah śiddhah svapnavat pretavat punah | samtānānīyamah sarvaih pūyanadyādidarśane || 3 ||* (Lévi 1925) On the *Viṃśikā* as a classical example of epistemological idealism in South Asian philosophy, see (Kellner and Taber 2014).

Such developments show how texts like the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* serve as a bridge between what appear to be more realist conceptions of karma theory and the realms of existence—such as those of earliest Buddhism—and idealist philosophical developments exemplified by the works of scholars such as Vasubandhu within the Yogācāra-vijñānavāda tradition. The text also indicates that the latter make little sense without the former, and that an organism-centric and cognition-centric approach can never be fully abandoned in Buddhist epistemology and Buddhist practice.

Therefore, it is hardly surprising that an analysis of animal life becomes one key way for the Buddha and those that followed after him to reflect on the problems of being human; however a truly organism-centric approach to the mind has certain implications. Even when one understands that coming to terms with oneself involves coming to terms with the mind or intelligence “as an attribute of nature in its entirety” (Abram 2011, p. 109), such a process must take into account the vicissitudes of the cognitive and the imaginal. The real–unreal–hyper-real worlds of cognition may be a human’s only experiential way into “nature in its entirety.” David Abram’s notion of ‘becoming animal’ perhaps overlooks this issue, and the solution to it that some Buddhist models of practice offer.

## 7. Mind and the Wriggling Insects Below

However there are multiple approaches to this issue within Buddhist thought, too. One interesting historical moment—which connects indirectly to the transmission of the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* in China—is relevant to the issues raised here. This moment is pivotal in the process of the emergence of Chan Buddhism in China, and it connects to how proto-Chan distinguished itself early on from other forms of Buddhist thought and practice available in China<sup>30</sup>.

One key player in the proto-Chan community that formed around Bodhidharma and his close disciples was the Buddhist exegete Tanlin (曇林), otherwise known as “armless Lin” (無臂林). Tanlin was responsible for the composition/revision/redaction of *The Treatise on Two Entrances and Four Practices* (二入四行論), an important proto-Chan text attributed to Bodhidharma, as well as the collection of a number of proto-Chan records. These materials have been studied by scholars of early Chan (Yanagida 1969; Jorgensen 1979; McRae 1986; Broughton 1999). Tanlin was also the Chinese translation attendant for a number of important sixth-century translation projects, including the translation of the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* (T 721) and a translation of Vasubandhu’s *Vimśikā* (T 1588), with the Indian pundit Gautama Prajñāruci.

In several proto-Chan documents associated with Tanlin and the early cult around Bodhidharma and his followers, we find critical echoes of some of the ideas we have been exploring in the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*. These passages make an ontological distinction as to what it means for the mind to be “an attribute of nature in its entirety”—as Abram would have it:

I really thought that the heavenly mansions were another country and the hells another place, that if one were to attain the path and get the fruit, one’s bodily form would change. I unrolled sutra scrolls to seek blessings, engaging karmic causes for purification. In confusion I went around in circles, chasing my mind and creating karma; thus I passed many years not finding a moment of rest. Then for the first time I dwelled upright in dark quiescence and settled my attention on the kingdom of mind. However, I had been cultivating false perceptions for such a long time that my disposition led me to continue to see characteristics. I came to the point where I wanted to probe the difficulties inherent in these illusory transformations. In the end I clearly apprehended the Dharma Nature and engaged in a course practice of Thusness. For the first time I realized that within the square inch [of the mind] there is nothing that does

<sup>30</sup> On the distinction between proto-Chan, early Chan, middle Chan, and Song-dynasty Chan, see (McRae 2004, pp. 11–21). McRae suggests that early Chan emerged as a set of “loosely defined factions/groups” between 600 and 900 CE after a 100-year period of proto-Chan from 500 to 600 CE. He notes that Proto-Chan had no known institutional base or explicit lineage theory, while later forms of Chan appear to develop under the “unifying ideology” of specific lineage claims.

not exist. The bright pearl brilliantly permeates and darkly penetrates the deep tendency of things. From the Buddhas above to the wriggling insects below there is nothing that is not another name for false thought. (adapted from Broughton [1999], p. 12)<sup>31</sup>

And further:

What mind is the substance of the path? The mind that is like trees and stones. It is as if there were someone who painted dragons and tigers with his own hand, and yet, upon looking at them, became frightened. Deluded people are also like this. The brush of thought and consciousness paints Razor Mountains and Sword Forests, and yet it is thought and the consciousnesses that fear them. If you are fearless in mind, then false thoughts will be eliminated. The brush of the mind and the consciousnesses discriminates and draws forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touchables, and, upon looking at them in turn, produces craving, aversion, and delusion. Sometimes it is engaged and sometimes it is disengaged. Due to discrimination of thought, mind, and the consciousnesses, various sorts of karma are in turn produced. If you can realize that thought and the consciousnesses from the outset have been void-quiet and also avoid seeing the locus [of the arising of thought and consciousness], then you are cultivating the path. (adapted from Broughton [1999], pp. 20–21)<sup>32</sup>

These passages—reminiscent in some ways of early Perfection of Wisdom ideas—reduce the mind and (human) consciousness to the level of the sentience of trees, stones, and insects. Here *becoming animal* involves *becoming mind*, as the basic sentience of nonhumans that are without cognition in the traditional Buddhist sense. This resonates with David Abram's notion that mind remains inseparable from the rest of material nature. The putative contemplative practice context of proto-Chan, however, makes the stance in these passages even more difficult to fathom than some of the early Perfection of Wisdom literature, since it leaves open the question: How might one practice to express such an inexpressible state of sentience?

## 8. Concluding Reflections

Abram's wilds-immersed meditations on the mind as an attribute of nature provide a rich fabric of experience through which to ground a conception of interdependence with the physicality of a natural world, even if they do not fully account for the vicissitudes of cognition<sup>33</sup>. The *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*, on the other hand, provides an elaborate practice framework that foregrounds the vicissitudes of cognition and prescribes an explicit negotiation with those vicissitudes. This emphasis provides a broad framework of practice, but may come at the expense of the notion of a necessary interdependence with a material context. The proto-Chan stance, perhaps too eager to undercut practice approaches such as those enjoined in the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*, suggests a conceptual framework amenable to Abram's while leaving a vacuum in terms of practice prescriptions that might allow a skilled enactment of such a framework. This vacuum leads, in the end, to the delightful and useless (無所可用) absurdities of a fully developed Chan ritualism.

<sup>31</sup> 實謂天堂別、地獄他方、得道獲果、形殊體異。披經求福、潔淨行因。紛紛繞繞、隨心作業、向涉多載、未遑有息。始復端居幽寂、定境心王。但妄想久修、隨情見相、其中變化、略欲難窮。末乃洞鑒法性、粗練真如、始知方寸之內、無所不有、明珠朗徹、玄達深趣。上自諸仏、下及蠢動、莫非妄想別名、隨心指計。(Yanagida 1969, p. 47). See also (Jorgensen 1979, p. 250).

<sup>32</sup> 問、云何心是道體。答、心如木石。譬如有人以手自作竜虎、自見之還自恐怕。惑人亦如是。心識筆子画作刀山樹、遠以心識畏之。若能無心畏、妄想悉除。意識筆子分別画作色香味觸、遠自見之、起貪咀痴、或見或捨、還以心意識分別、起種種業。若能知心識從本已采空寂所、即是修道。(Yanagida 1969, p. 98). See also (Jorgensen 1979, pp. 277–78).

<sup>33</sup> The culmination of Abram's piece on becoming animal, where he becomes a raven under the tutelage of a Himalayan shaman, evokes powerful possibilities for the transcendence of certain human cognitive constraints (Abram 2011, pp. 201–58). It does not quite go the distance, however, in providing a detailed nuts and bolts accounting of the practical structures of cognition in the way that some Buddhist contemplative traditions have.

It is at the complicated intersection of these various approaches to the mind that the modern human animal often finds itself in attempting to make a way in the world. This spectrum of philosophies of mind—and possible attendant modes of practice—points up the way in which the animal world, from beings with six faculties to “trees and stones” and “the wriggling insects below”, serves as a space for the investigation of human reality and what constrains it.

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## Abbreviations and Sigla

Be	Burmese edition of the Pāli canon (Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana CD-ROM from Dhammagiri, Version 3)
corr.	corrected
D	Derge Edition of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka, published by the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center 2002 (based on a scanning of the photomechanical reprint of the <i>par phud</i> printing published in Delhi by Karmapae chodhey gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1976–79).
em.	emended
MN	<i>Majjhimanikāya</i>
Ms	a photocopy of the single known Sanskrit manuscript of the <i>Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra</i> kept in the collection of the China Tibetology Research Center (Box 12, No.1), the original of which is held at Norbulingka in Lhasa
n.e.	no equivalent in
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī Majjhimanikāya-aṭṭhakathā</i>
Psk	<i>Sāratthapakāsinī Saṃyuttanikāya-aṭṭhakathā</i>
punct.	punctuated
Saddhsu	<i>Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra</i>
SĀ	<i>Saṃyuktāgama</i> (Taishō no. 99)
SN	<i>Saṃyuttanikāya</i>
Sv	<i>Sumaṅgalavilāsini Dīghanikāya-aṭṭhakathā</i>
T	Taishō
{ ... }	elided by the editor
< ... >	added by the editor
[ ... ]	unclear in Ms
]	a lemma marking off a chosen reading from actual readings in the textual witnesses

References to Pāli texts are to Pali Text Society editions unless otherwise noted. References to the Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon are to the CBETA 電子佛典集成光碟 2011 version. I regularly repunctuate both PTS, Be, and Taishō texts.

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