it for their own purposes; and if Modernism became an international currency then Indian artists' responses to some of its formal means could reasonably be called the other side of the same coin.

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Body Language. Indic Śarīra and Shèlì in the Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sūtra and Saddharmapuṇḍarīka. By Jonathan A. Silk. (Studia Philologica Buddhica, Monograph Series XIX) pp. 102. The International Institute for Buddhist Studies of The International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies, Tokyo, 2006.
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The basic meaning of the Sanskrit expression *śarīra* (in Pāli *sarīra*) is 'body', but it appears most frequently in the Pāli texts in the compound *sarīrapūjā* usually translated as 'relic worship'. In the context of Buddhism it refers to the worship of the Buddha's relics usually enshrined in a stūpa. The worship of the relics of the Buddha, both by his lay followers and monks, has been a widespread feature of Buddhist devotional practice since very early times if not right from the day on which the Buddha died and was cremated (probably in 483 BC). When the great Emperor Aśoka (*c.* 269–232 BC) converted to Buddhism, he built many stūpas all over his realm and enshrined in them splinters of relics from the original eight stūpas. Later, when relics were no longer available, manuscripts of *sūtras* were substituted indicating the presence of the Dharma and eventually stūpas came to be venerated as symbols of the presence of the Buddha or of the eternal Dharma even if they did not contain anything.

Practically every Buddhist monastery has a stūpa in its precinct. To begin with the worship of the Buddha's relics by monks may not have been permitted practice since, strictly speaking, their sole task was to aim for their individual liberation from rebirth by following the Buddha's instructions; any attachment to external phenomena or special regard for some of them even if they had a link to the personality of the Buddha while he was alive would be regarded as an obstacle on the path to freedom. But the matter still appears not quite resolved.

With lay followers of the Buddha's teaching it was different. Reverence for anything which would have had some link to his person would have been regarded as a help on the spiritual path and a guarantee of a favourable rebirth. Many people would expect from it also worldly benefits such as health, well-being and prosperity and some ascribed to the Buddha's relics magic powers which they could use to their advantage if they were in possession of them. To own them was therefore an ambition particularly of kings and chiefs of communities so that they apparently would not even shrink from a fight to acquire them. As reported in the Pāli *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, after the Buddha's cremation the king of Magadha, five aristocratic clans including Sakyas (the Buddha's clansmen), a Brahminic settlement and two communities of the Malla tribe claimed the relics. The Malla community on whose territory the Buddha passed away initially refused to part with any portion of them. All the claimants promised to erect a stūpa over the relics and hold a festival honouring them. As transpires from the words of the Brahmin Doṇa, a follower of the Buddha and himself a famous teacher who was also present, strife was brewing, with possible 'war and bloodshed', over the custody of the Buddha's relics. So Doṇa suggested their partition into eight portions and his authority prevailed. Verses at the end of the *sutta* (probably a later interpolation) mention that apart from the distributed bones, four teeth of the Buddha were preserved separately. One is in *tāvatiṁsa* heaven, brought there, according to a commentary, by the god Sakka/Indra who took it from Doṇa as he tried to hide it in his turban, one became the object of worship in the city of Gandhāra, another is revered by Kings of the Nāgas and one was brought to the country of Kāliṅga from where, according to later accounts, it was sent for security reasons to Sri Lanka (where it is still worshipped in the specially built Temple of the Tooth

in Kandy). The clan of Moriyas, the ancestors of the later powerful dynasty of Mauryas (324–187 BC) from which Aśoka emerged, were late-comers and received the ashes, while Doṇa, deprived of the tooth he had tried to spirit away, kept the urn. All the ten beneficiaries erected stūpas over their acquisitions and honoured them as promised. Only one of the ten stūpas was identified in modern times – the one built by the Sakyas near their capital city Kapilavatthu (today at Piprahwa near the Nepalese border). Early in 1976 during archaeological excavations of the site an opening was dug out on the eastern side of the stūpa. The excavation reached into the virgin soil underneath and in the middle, under the foundations, was found a clearly marked casket with the Buddha's relics. (To add a personal note: when visiting the site on 3 April 1976 I was allowed to climb into the stūpa and inspect the spot where the casket had been found. To my disappointment I was told that it had been sent to Nagpur the day before.)

Whether monks should abstain from worshipping the relics of the Buddha or not depends on the interpretation of the reply the Buddha gave to Ānanda who had asked him shortly before his demise: "How do we act, Sir, with respect to the Tathāgata's body?" (*katham mayam bhante tathāgatassa sarīre paṭipajjāmā*). The Buddha answered, using the second person plural meaning presumably all monks: "Do not concern yourselves, Ānanda, with honouring the Tathāgata's body" (*avyāvatā tumhe ānanda hotha tathāgatassa sarīrapūjāya*). Instead they should strive for the true goal (*sadattha*); various wise nobles, brahmins and householders would do honour to his body (or relics? – *tathāgatassa sarīrapūjaṁ karissanti*).

The word *sarīra* when used in other texts in the singular, both in Pāli and in Sanskrit, does invariably mean 'body' as mentioned above, but in the plural it can refer, in connection with a deceased person, to the remnants of his body after cremation, mostly bones. In the compound *sarīrapūjā* it can mean either since it can stand there for either singular or plural. The compound can therefore be translated as 'honouring the body' or 'honouring the relics', the latter meaning often worded as 'the worship of the relics' or 'relic worship'.

Ānanda, after the Buddha's admonition to monks to see to their liberation rather than be bothered with honouring his body (or relics), slightly modified his question: "How, then, Sir, should the Tathāgata's body be acted upon (*katham pana bhante tathāgatassa sarīre paṭipajjitabban*)?" The Buddha replied that his body should be treated in the same way as the body of a universal monarch (*yathā kho ānanda rañño cakkavattissa sarīre paṭipajjanti evaṁ tathāgatassa sarīre paṭipajjitabban*). After a further question from Ānanda the Buddha described in detail how the body should be prepared and added that after the cremation a stūpa should be erected for the Tathāgata (*tathāgatassa thūpo kātabbo*).

The Buddha's use of the word Tathāgata instead of *sarīra* which, in this context, would have to mean 'relics' and be in the plural may be significant for the later development of buddhology, but it does not solve the dilemma as to the meaning of *sarīrapūjā* in his reply to Ānanda's first question. Ānanda does not help us either. When he urges the Buddha not to pass away (*parinibbāyatu*) in an insignificant town in the jungle like Kusināra, but to go near a big city where people would render him due honour after his demise, he uses the same ambiguous compound (*tathāgatassa sarīrapūjaṁ karissanti*). Only the eight claimants' request for "a portion of the Lord's relics" (*bhagavato sarīrānaṁ bhāgaṁ*) has the unambiguous plural.

The ambiguity of the Buddha's reply to Ānanda's original question created a confusion already quite early in the post-canonical Pāli texts and different interpretations still occur. Thus T.W. and C.A.F Rhys Davids obviously regarded the first part of the compound as plural and translated the Buddha's reply to Ānanda's first question as follows: "Hinder not yourselves, Ānanda, by honouring the remains of the Tathāgata" etc. (PTS *Dialogues of the Buddha,* 1910). Moreover, these scholars let themselves be unduly influenced by this interpretation and wrongly translated the expression *sarīre* (singular locative) in Ānanda's first as well as second (modified) question as 'remains' instead of the correct 'body' and so also in the above quoted passage concerning the body of a universal monarch. This is, of course, grammatically inadmissible.

Contrary to this, the BPS translation of the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* (in *Last Days of the Buddha*, Kandy, 1964) translates *sarīre* correctly as 'body' in all three instances (possibly following the German scholar Ernst Waldschmidt, whose work – published in the 1940s and 1950s – would have been known to the BPS editor Nyanaponika Thera, himself a German).

The author of the study under review concentrates on this vexed question of the meaning and interpretation of the word *sarīra/śarīra* and the way it is understood in different texts translated into Chinese. He also sets out to explore how translations, which can 'function as a form of commentary or exegesis' and 'restate a (perceived) meaning' of some words 'can, naturally, have valuable implications for our understanding of older literature of Indian Buddhism'.

The starting point for him is the confusion which arose, as explained above, when the usage of the compound *sarīrapūjā* in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* in the Buddha's reply to Ānanda in the sense of 'honouring the body' of the Tathāgata was misinterpreted in post-canonical Pāli texts as referring to his relics. This confusion, he maintains, reverberates also in some Chinese translations and has affected even some modern scholars in Japan. The author, it seems, was prompted to undertake this study by Gregory Schopen, who turned to the problem in the 1950s and interpreted the term *sarīrapūjā* in Buddha's answer to Ānanda's first question as referring to "the ritual handling and preparation" of the body for cremation and possibly also to the cremation itself (which would also be, of course, a ritual process since the Buddha mentioned Brahmins among those who would do honour to his body and they would certainly ritualise the process in their traditional way).

As is clear from my earlier reference to Waldschmidt above, Schopen's interpretation is nothing new, but what is important is his understanding of 'doing honour' to the Buddha's body (*sarīra-pūjā*) after his demise as its '*ritual* handling and preparation'. This is what the monks were advised by the Buddha not to be concerned with – which means, by implication, that *sarīrapūjā* in the sense of honouring or worshipping the Buddha's relics was not prohibited to them. (At least according to the version in the Pāli Canon. Since it was written down about 400 years after the death of the Buddha when relic worship by monks was an accepted practice, how can we know that the text was not worded so as to make it permissible?)

It is not, further, without interest to note that the Buddha expected as a matter of course and was not at all averse to having his funeral arrangements conducted according to the Brahminic ritual which was at the time already age-old, going back to the time of the Vedas. It can be taken for granted that monks who died before the Buddha or soon after had their funeral arrangements made by their lay supporters in a similar way with the participation of Brahmins, of course on a much more modest scale. Later on, however, funeral services conducted by monks were developed and are arranged also nowadays on request even by Theravāda monasteries for Buddhist followers in the West.

The author of the book scans various texts in Pāli, Sanskrit and Chinese for comparison of meanings given to *śarīra/sarīra* and finds that some Chinese translations correctly recognise its contextual meaning. They even have separate terms for the body before cremation – *shēn* or *tǐ* or the compound *shēntǐ*, while *shèlì* denotes post-cremation relics. But in some texts translated into Chinese there are also divergences and ambiguities. The examples quoted and references to sources are truly valuable.

Some of the author's deliberations go further and touch on problems associated with making use of ancient Indian Buddhist literature for comparative philological purposes, for example when trying to establish the original linguistic form of a (lost) text from which a translation into Chinese or Tibetan was made. Sometimes it may have been originally in Pāli or Gandhāri or some other Prākrit and may have been subsequently recast or re-written in Sanskrit. This poses for him many questions and possibilities for exploration. His interest is mainly linguistic, lexicographic and semantic. But when he comes across a new conception or meaning which, he senses, lurks behind familiar terms, he recognises that this points beyond the terms of reference within which he works. He expresses it thus:

"The key to understanding what is going on here is the realization that the issue is less one of philology than of doctrine". This remark refers to a passage in *Sadddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* which he chose to illustrate how clearly the *Lotus-sūtra* distinguishes the difference between singular and plural use of *śarīra*. In this passage the Buddha says that wherever an exposition of his Dharma will be presented, a precious shrine should be built for the Tathāgata, but "Tathāgata's relics (*tathāgataśarīrāṇi*) need not necessarily be installed there. Why? [Because] the Tathāgata's body is truly placed there [already] as one compact substance (*ekaghanam eva tasmiṁs tathāgataśarīram upanikṣiptaṁ bhavati*)". This statement satisfies the author by its grammatical correctness, but he is intrigued by its possible meaning. He quotes also Kumārajīva's translation and finds it equally grammatically accurate (*shèlì* for *śarīrāṇi* and *quánshē* for *śarīrā*), but no less puzzling.

What the author does not seem to take into account is the context of the *Lotus-sūtra*, a Mahāyāna text dating from around the turn of our era. The Buddha Śākyamuni who is preaching it is a cosmic personage; the historical Buddha on this earth, the originator of the teachings recorded in the Pāli Canon, came to be viewed within the circles which produced the *Lotus-sūtra* as only one of the innumerable manifestations of this personage in the course of his teaching career spanning innumerable cosmic periods. He himself is also just one of the innumerable Buddhas active in innumerable worlds of this vast 'multiverse'.

The *Lotus-sūtra* of course addresses Buddhist followers of its time when stūpa worship was widespread. The text's assertion, put into the mouth of the cosmic Buddha Śākyamuni, that no relic need be placed in stūpas since the Tathāgata was already present in them with his full substance may have been a further elaboration of the Buddha's instruction in the Pāli Canon, referred to above, that after his cremation a stūpa should be built for the Tathāgata. The *Lotus-sūtra* also represents, among other things, a stage in the development of buddhological ideas culminating in the Trikāya doctrine. But that is beyond the scope of this review and the work reviewed.

The work itself is a valuable piece of primary research and is evidently meant for experts specialising in textual research across language barriers. It makes interesting, but rather difficult, reading for a religionist studying the development of Buddhist doctrines, because of its style. The author presented earlier versions of this work and the basic contents of its final form to academic audiences in Japan and benefited from their feedback. The style of the published form still makes the impression of an elaborated summary from a discussion forum in a draft form. Many afterthoughts and explanations are in footnotes and quite a few relevant observations in the main text appear in subclauses of complicated sentences. At the end we get 'Inconclusive Concluding Thoughts' instead of a coherent summary, although the ideas thrown up in it suggest that the author was aware of the deeper significance of the manipulations of the term *śarīra* for the reinterpretation of the status of the Buddha. After that still come six lengthy 'Additional Notes' which should have been worked, I think, into the main text. The work would certainly merit republication after a thorough restructuring of its contents and rethinking of some of its formulations.

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On the Problem of the External World in the *Ch'eng wei shih lun* (Studia Philologica Buddhica, Occasional Paper Series XIII). By Lambert Schmithausen. pp. 66. Tokyo, The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 2005.
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Ch'eng wei shih lun is a commentary to Vasubandhu's work *Triṁśikā*. It was compiled by the Chinese scholar Xuanzang (Hsüan-tsang, 602–664) on the basis of materials he collected when on pilgrimage in