Theories of the Gift in South Asia

Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain Reflections on *Dāna*

Maria Heim

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For my parents

Contents

ABBREVIATIONS LISTED BY TRADITION

Dharmaśāstra

DK *Dānakāṇḍa* of the *Kṛtyakalpataru* of Lakṣmīdhara *(Book on Gift Giving in the Wish-fulfilling Tree of Duties)*

DKh *Dānakhaṇḍa* of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* of Hemādri *(Volume on Gift Giving in the Wish-fulfilling Gem of the Four Aims of Human Life)*

DS *Dānasāgara* of Ballālasena *(Sea of Giving)*

MĀ *Mitākṣarā* of Vijñāneśvara

YSA *Aparārka's* commentary on *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*

Jain

DAP *Dānādiprakaraṇa of* Sūrācārya *(An Exposition Beginning with Gift Giving)*

DAK *Dānāṣṭakakathā (Eight Stories on Giving)*

RKŚ *Ratnakaraṇḍa-śrāvakācāra* of Samantabhadra *(Lay Conduct in a Basket of Gems)*

ŚDK *Śrāddhadinakṛtya* of Devendra Sūri *(Daily Ritual Duties of the Laity)*

TS *Tattvārtha Sūtra* of Umāsvāti *(Discourse on the Meaning of the Truth)*

TSC *Siddhasena Gaṇin's* commentary on the *Tattvārtha Sūtra*

UDh *Upāsakādhyāyana* of Somadeva *(Book on the Laity)*

YŚ *Yogaśāstra* of Hemacandra *(Treatise on Discipline)*

YŚS *Yogaśāstra* with *Svopajñavṛtti* of Hemacandra *(Treatise on Discipline with the Author's own Commentary)*

Theravāda Buddhist

Additional abbreviations are those of the Pali Text Society.

DVU	*Dasavatthuppakaraṇa (Service of the Ten Requisites)*
SAS	*Sāratthasamuccaya (Collection on the Meaning of the Essence)*
SDU	*Saddhammopāyana* of Abhayagiri Kavicakravarti Ānanda Mahāthera *(Gift-Offering of the True Dhamma)*
SRS	*Sārasaṅgaha* of Siddhattha *(Compendium of the Essence)*
SSC	*Suttasaṅgahaṭṭhakathā* of Ariyawansa *(Commentary on the Compendium of Discourses)*
UJA	*Upāsakajanālaṅkāra* of Ānanda *(Ornament of Lay People)*

SERIES EDITORS' FOREWORD

We are pleased to present the ninth in the Routledge first book series: Religion in History, Society and Culture, a series designed to bring exciting new work by young scholars on religion to a wider audience. We have two goals in mind: First, we wish to publish work that extends and illuminates our theoretical understanding of religion as a dimension of human culture and society. Understanding religion has never been a more pressing need. Longstanding academic habits of either compartmentalizing, or altogether ignoring, religion are breaking down. With the entry of religion into the academy, however, must come a fully realized conversation about what religion is and how it interacts with history, society and culture. Our goal is to publish books that self-reflectively utilize and develop contextually sensitive categories and methods of analysis that advance our knowledge of religion generally, of a particular religious traditions and/or of a particular moment in the history of religions in a particular part of the world.

Second, this series will be self-consciously interdisciplinary. The academic study of religion is conducted by historians, sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists, art historians, ethno-musicologists, psychologists, and others. We hope to bring before the interested reader an array of disciplinary lenses through which to view religion. Believing that the instability of the category itself should be a stimulus for further investigation, religion will be broadly understood to encompass a wide range of religiously oriented phenomena that include myths, rituals, ways of thought, communities, political and social movements, legal traditions and systems, performances and texts, artistic productions, gendered roles, identity formation, etc,

In this book, Maria Heim accomplishes a remarkable methodological and substantive breakthrough in the historical study of South Asian religion and religious ethics. At the same time she makes a highly creative intervention in discussions concerning the theory of "the gift"—discussions that have been, at least since the time of Marcel Mauss, a central focus of attention in the philosophy of

religions, the history of religions and religious ethics, and the anthropology of religion and society.

At the level of South Asian studies, Heim breaks important new ground with a sophisticated comparative study that focuses on a particular component in South Asian religious and ethical life (specifically the phenomenon of "*dāna*" or "gift giving") as that phenomenon is presented and interpreted in comparable genres of texts produced within a clearly delineated temporal context (the so-called "medieval period"). In her study of Hindu texts, Jain texts, and Theravāda Buddhist texts Heim highlights for her readers fascinating and often quite unexpected commonalities on the one hand, and equally fascinating and often quite unexpected differences on the other.

At the level of reflection concerning the theory of the gift, Heim's intervention is equally striking and equally innovative. In this context she directly challenges the long dominant Maussian notion that reciprocity is, in all cases, the dynamic structuring force in the gift-giving process. Instead she argues that in the South Asian texts that she is exploring the gift-giving process involves not so much a dynamic of reciprocity, but rather a dynamic in which the crucial elements are the expression and the cultivation of an "ethics of esteem." Her presentation of this new data, and her interpretation of its significance, will be of interest to all those who recognize the importance of gifts and gift giving in religious life and in ethical practice more generally.

Frank Reynolds & Winnifred Sullivan

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

> "Ānanda, there is a person because of a person." That is to say, it is because of, or on account of, one person who is a teacher, that there is a person who is a student. "I say that requital is not easy."
>
> —*Suttasaṅgahaṭṭhakathā*, p. 19 (MA.v.70)

I have been the fortunate recipient of many *vidyādānas* in the course of this study, but above all I am grateful for the guidance and support of my dissertation advisor, Prof. Charles Hallisey. I thank him for his vision in suggesting the topic and approach, his enduring belief in the project, his teaching me how to read texts, and his steady stream of good advice. It is because of being his student that I have begun to comprehend both generosity and esteem.

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Kumar, Renu Singh, and Kantibhai Vora for their hospitality and friendship in Ahmedabad. I am also very grateful to Dr. W.S. Karunatillake for working with me on the *Suttasaṅgahaṭṭhakathā* while he was Visiting Numata Professor of Buddhist Studies at Harvard Divinity School in Spring 1998, and for his generous teaching during my stay in Sri Lanka in summer 2000.

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Amherst, Massachusetts

INTRODUCTION

> "Do not give ear to those slanderers who denounce gift giving, who are pitiable and care just for themselves and do not know Jain scriptures or the scriptures of Buddhists or others, nor even the customs of the world…"
>
> —*Dānādiprakaraṇa,* p. 44.

> Just as something beautiful, lovely, delightful, and well composed is created by a skillful artist, so too a deed done with a wise thought occasions beauty, giving pleasure to the eyes and other senses like something golden, well formed, dressed up, and adorned.
>
> —*Sārasaṅgaha*, p. 182.

To know how to give — to be gracious rather than grasping — is to be civilized. Giving is a response of charity, esteem, or regard for others that brings to social life at least a veneer, and perhaps something deeper, of decency. In premodern South Asia, as the first quotation, from a medieval Jain text, suggests, people who have any acquaintance with religious scriptures even from other traditions, or simply a grasp on the customs and ways of the world, recognize the importance of the gift. To denounce giving is to embrace a pitiable selfishness and thus to stand outside of the religious and cultural norms of the world. Giving is what good people do, no matter which particular religious texts they follow.

Moreover, gifts are, premodern South Asians tell us, beautiful. Our second quotation, from a Theravāda Buddhist discussion on gift giving, envisions a proper gift as analogous to a piece of art, an artifact of human talent and wisdom which brings pleasure and beauty to the world. Gifts and those who know how to give them are attractive and pleasing to the senses. Like art, the gift is done with care and is connected to knowledge. Giving dresses up and adorns our experiences with one another, bringing reverence to human relations.

And of course, gifts are everywhere in both of these traditions and are part of the fabric of life in premodern South Asia. There are gifts of royal largesse, noble

patronage to temples and religious institutions, alms to monks, nuns, brahmans, and wandering holy folk, and hospitality to the stranger. Inscriptions etched on stone and metal across South Asia record the magnificent gifts of great patrons and the pious gifts of the faithful. Stories of magnanimous donors are known to every tradition, captivating the religious imagination and illustrating the nuances of generosity.

Given the ubiquity of the gift, and the civilizational values ascribed to it, it is not surprising that the topic warranted extensive discussion from many quarters in South Asian intellectual history. Like the classical theories of generosity by Aristotle or the Stoic philosopher Seneca in ancient times, and Marcel Mauss's 1925 essay on the gift closer to our own time, South Asians sought to name what gift giving means to their civilization. Formal reflection on the gift offers a site to think through social life in its many ethical, aesthetic, and religious dimensions. Particularly perceptive (and copious) are discussions that treat gift giving (Sanskrit and Pali, *dāna*) in the context of *dharma*, the norms of civilized people. In the brahmanical tradition of Hinduism, the complex cultural standards described in Dharmaśāstra literature investigate the gift exhaustively, particularly in lengthy compendia (*dāna-nibandhas*) composed primarily between 1000-1300 CE. These texts, some of which approach or exceed a thousand pages in length, treat *dāna* as a category of *ācāra*, moral and religious duties.

Analogous genres of theoretical work on the gift can be found in treatises discussing the *ācāra* of lay people in Jain and Theravāda Buddhist literatures. In the same period that Dharmaśāstra authors were composing *nibandhas*, Jain scholastics were compiling *śrāvaka-ācāras*, texts that articulate the moral and religious obligations of the laity. Theravāda Buddhists were also engaged in this period thinking through what a proper gift entails, and also produced compendia on lay morality that investigate *dāna*. In their treatment of gift giving as an element of lay morality, Jain and Buddhist religious discourses conceive of it primarily as a face-to-face encounter of an offering made by a lay person to the religious — to monks and nuns. Dharmaśāstra discourse aims at something different, describing and prescribing standards of culture that exalt and support the religious elite, that is, brahmans; its ideology of the gift is an instrument of this agenda. However, Dharmaśāstra theorists too focus in on the gift moment — the face-to-face hospitality encounter — as a place to examine the religious and moral motivations and responses prescribed in the gesture of generosity.

That gift giving is theorized in religious or sectarian treatises should not obscure its civilizational aspects. *Dāna* is part of something broader — custom, etiquette, morality — that is taken up by religious thinkers doing some of the most important intellectual and cultural work in medieval South Asia. As the texts themselves recognize, *dāna* is a shared practice, part of a cosmopolitan sensibility

that stretches beyond sectarian and regional borders. Each of these traditions has its own criteria for the ideal gift generated out of particular local contexts and intellectual genealogies, but gift giving itself is part of a widespread cultural aesthetic to which all of them are contributing. At a time in which many religious ideas were being voiced in regional terms and vernacular languages, these treatises are articulated in the prestige languages of Sanskrit and Pali, languages that transcend local customs and convey wide-ranging civilizational pretensions. When we consider them together from a comparative perspective, certain broader patterns become evident, even while crucial sectarian distinctions remain sharp. The broader patterns that they share and sometimes contest in their treatment of the elements of face-to-face hospitality relations provide an important angle of vision for grasping the contours of premodern South Asian intellectual history.

While the comparative and civilizational aspects of these ideologies are intriguing for scholars of South Asia, their approaches to *dāna* explore questions also raised by scholars studying the sociological, cultural, and philosophical meanings of the gift. The South Asian theorists ask questions about ethics and culture that gift theorists from other traditions and contexts have also asked. Their contributions to the questions of the gift can reframe how gift giving is understood in modern anthropological theory, critical theory, and ethics in ways that enliven and enrich our notions of exchange and hospitality in human relationships. Together, these three traditions' explorations of *dāna*, particularly prolific in this period, form some of the most perceptive theoretical reflection on the gift available from any civilization. Their reflections and how they might contribute to cross-cultural study of the gift are the subject of this book.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD GIFT?

When a suppliant appears at the door in search of alms, what sort of gift should be given? What should be the donor's intentions, motivations, and dispositions? Should the giver expect something back or anticipate a particular response? Conversely, is the status and character of the recipient relevant? What sort of response should the recipient make? Is the recipient obliged by the gift? And how should the gift be given? With formality? Spontaneity? Reverence? Charity?

The medieval theorists on *dāna* isolate several distinct dimensions of the gift moment that can organize these questions. A Jain discussion of *dāna* describes four criteria as important in a successful gift, locating the gift's "excellence in the donor, the recipient, the procedure, and the substance."[1] This division of the elements of gift giving is quite discerning in that it scrutinizes the chief aspects of the act recognized by medieval theorists in all three traditions, and provides a useful framework to sort out competing claims they make on the ideal gift. The donor

must be properly disposed to make a gift, a suitable recipient must be at hand, the ritual etiquette of the gift must be observed, and the donor must possess a desirable and appropriate substance to give.

We may begin with the donor. The face-to-face gift encounter provides a context-sensitive locus for examining the intentions and motivations that prompt a gift. We will follow in Chapter Two the gift theorists as they turn to the donor to explore the nature of generous dispositions and virtues, and the sorts of anticipations and expectations generosity should generate. Marcel Mauss, whose work on the gift has left a deep imprint on nearly all subsequent work on the gift in our century, suggested that the gift involves obligations; while having the appearance of being free and gratuitous, the gift in fact evokes a countergift on the part of the recipient. In Mauss's view because gift reciprocity fosters balance and mutuality it lays the foundation for social harmony. This makes the gift curiously free yet obligated, appearing to be unilateral while yet forging ties of exchange and mutuality. We will discover that South Asian theorists do not share this reading of the gift, insisting instead that *dāna* is asymmetrical and unreciprocated.

Yet the donor may still harbor expectations and anticipations. Giving's role in merit-making in all of these traditions suggests that gifts may rarely be truly disinterested. At the same time, for the medieval authors considered in this study, merit-making considerations by no means exhaust the range of motivations behind a gift; for them the gift is not aimed simply at religious reward but also concerns relational intentions and dispositions directed toward the recipient. Attention to the donor is a useful place to consider the nuances of ethical intentionality and disposition: where do moral motivations come from and how do they create social connections with others? What sorts of dispositions make generosity possible?

The gift moment also shines light on the recipient. Despite their reputation for being utterly free and gratuitous, gifts are rarely tossed out blindly with no thought to where they land. Gifts should be channeled to appropriate fields. What then, as Chapter Three asks, makes an appropriate recipient? Who has a greater claim on the gift: the worthy or the needy? And how should a beneficiary respond? Considerations of the recipient provide another place to investigate whether the relationship forged is one of obligation or whether gifts can be, as it were, purely gratuitous. Questions of hierarchy, power, and status enter here, since gifts both express and foster particular kinds of structural relationships. Gifts given to the needy may be patronizing, marking the status difference through a relationship of subordination. Conversely, gifts given to those one admires, as tokens and gestures of respect, give rise to a different sort of bond, one that should not degrade the recipient nor mire the recipient in dependency.

Equally important is *how* a gift is given, our topic in Chapter Four. Each gift has its time and place. As the Buddhist text with which we began points out, to be

pleasing and attractive a good act must be connected to knowledge and practiced as a kind of art. Gifts best allow for generosity when given with propriety, and rituals and etiquette are part of all gifts. By way of analogy, consider the ceremonial nuances invoked in contemporary and mainstream American gift-giving practices — giving at required occasions such as holidays and birthdays, the requisite wrapping and unwrapping of presents, the donor's dismissal of the gift as a trifle ("it's nothing, don't mention it"), the recipient's expressions of glee and gratitude, and, either in the same moment or after a polite distance of time, an equivalent (but not *too* equivalent) return. We may hardly notice that such rituals are a part of gift giving — until they are absent. Then we are startled by the clumsy or haphazard gift. South Asian civilization too has its ceremonial nuances, its etiquette and ritual for gifts, as well as a highly articulated body of reflection on them that reveals the gift's subtleties.

Finally, the gift object itself, investigated in Chapter Five, is never entirely irrelevant, though it may recede from view in considerations of the donor's intentionality ("it's the thought that counts") or in assessments of the recipient's worth. What kinds of gifts are best? Are ostentatious gifts better than humble ones? Should gifts be given in accordance with the donor's means or in accordance with the recipient's needs? What social and religious meanings do particular types of objects and substances carry? What sort of symbolic work does the gift object do? In fact, it is on this aspect of the gift that the South Asian theorists often linger longest, listing and classifying material gifts and their appropriateness for the right sorts of occasions and circumstances. Our explorations of these taxonomies of the gift reveal some of the deepest rifts between the traditions under study. In an interesting way, differences of opinion between Dharmaśāstra, Buddhist, and Jain theorists are often most acute not over matters of intentionality of the donor, nor the appropriate sorts of recipients, nor how to properly give, but instead *what* to give. Ideologies of material culture made evident by gift theory can thus help us to grasp sensitivities about religious and sectarian identity in premodern South Asia.

The South Asian theorists of the gift are engaged in both culture work and ethical reflection, aims that are interwoven with one another. As ideological statements these discourses on the gift are imagining an ideal social world through a particular social encounter; for Valentin Groebner (investigating the meaning of gifts from a very different historical context), to speak of gifts is to point to an ideal, "to speak of utopia" (Groebner 2002:157). This may be why treatises on the gift by both philosophers and scholars of culture so often have a moralizing tone; Marcel Mauss no less than the theorists treated here is drawn to the gift relationship as expressing the highest ideals of civilization, where human beings treat one another not with savagery nor calculating self-interest, but with graciousness.[2] As

idealizations of social and religious life such ideological discourses will not go unchecked by rival claims either in their own time or in ours. As culture work, these ideologies embrace hierarchies, religious elitism, and structures of power that are open to contestation when we view the different sectarian traditions together and in light of modern perspectives.[3]

Yet in the course of culture work that aspires to certain imagined utopias, these discourses are also engaging in ethical reflection. The gift encounter provides a site for idealizing and formalizing certain social relationships and interactions, and a locus for moral reflection. The gift moment is a particularist and context-sensitive situation for the study of social and moral life.[4] Giving involves intentions and dispositions, and questions about motivations that are of an ethical order. Gifts create social ties and relationships that confer identities, social roles, and changes in status. In their isolation of the gift moment as a concrete situation of considerable social complexity the South Asian theorists consider ethical issues and ask questions that are also posed by moral philosophers in other locales: can humans be truly disinterested? What are ideal responses to others? How do intentions and motivations work? What do we owe others? Do acts of beneficence oblige us? How should human beings be related to one another and to their things?

Even while it can offer a site for moral reflection, the gift relation also may be heavily freighted with nonmoral considerations: gifts may be simultaneously economic acts, performances, assertions of power, stakes of prestige, or acts of domination and corruption. The very nature of gifts to be unilateral, whether only in appearance as Mauss would have it, or in actuality, entails that the relationship occasioned by the gift may be one of imbalance and inequality. Gift-giving ideologies often reveal a hierarchical social order, and such idealizations may be grounded in discourses riddled with power. The South Asian *dāna*, as we shall see, is in fact unilateral and unreciprocated. As a one-way gesture, usually vertical and aimed upward to the religious elite, it gives rise to a relationship that cannot be defined according to the values of equality, mutuality, and balance cherished in modern perspectives. Moreover, we cannot fail to notice that the ideology of generosity to worthy recipients is here being espoused by those who stand to benefit most from it — high status male clerics in the case of Jains and Buddhists and spokesmen for the brahmanical order in the case of Hindus.

To the modern ear, unilateral and asymmetrical relationships smack of hierarchy, inequities, and power. This raises a central inquiry of this study which may be put in terms of a question: can morality happen in relationships of imbalance and status difference? Much western ethics at least since Kant assumes that morality depends upon assumptions about the sameness of human beings, positing that what is morally relevant about an ethical agent is rationality, something shared by all human beings. Moral philosophy concerned with justice must look past the

perceived differences among human beings and assume a fundamental equality, blind to distinctions and inequalities in social location and human capacities. In contrast, the gift theories considered here describe one-way moral relations imagined in contexts highly attuned to social location and institutionalized hierarchy. Our challenge is to consider how ethical reflection may occur in describing an encounter that marks, if it does not in fact create, gross social inequities, and to consider how moral relationships and deliberation on them might proceed in a civilization that widely embraces certain kinds of social differences and discriminations.

THE COMPARATIVE PROJECT

While our questions are quite far ranging, informed by theoretical insights from many disciplines and from very different gift ideologies (many from non-South Asian contexts), this study is empirically highly focused. It is grounded in comparative engagement with a particular selection of texts which were composed in a two to three hundred year period across South Asia, mostly from western India in the case of the Jain texts, across the Indian subcontinent in the case of the Dharmaśāstra texts, and centered in Sri Lanka in the case of the Theravāda Buddhist texts. These texts often share more with one another in both content and form than they do with other sorts of evidence on the gift from within their same traditions — inscriptional evidence, narrative traditions, or modern ethnographic data, for example. The texts are compendia and commentaries organizing and systematizing their traditions' doctrines of gift giving, at once descriptive of what ideal giving is and moralizing about what people should do. Chapter One introduces the textual sources and their historical contexts, describes the principles of selection of these texts, and suggests how it can be profitable to look at them together comparatively. Readers interested more in the theoretical and ethical aspects of these gift theories and less drawn to the historical aspects of the project are welcome to skip Chapter One and jump right into the gift theories themselves, beginning with the donor in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER ONE

SOURCES

Composing prescriptive literature on gift giving was a substantial preoccupation among premodern South Asia's religious and intellectual elites, reflecting and perhaps invigorating the centrality of gift giving as a religious and cultural practice across the subcontinent. *Dāna* also attracted the literary imagination and was explored as a basic theme in many myths, epic narratives, and stories. And indeed, the vast majority of inscriptions in premodern South Asia are concerned in one way or another with the recording and celebrating of gifts.

A useful way to delimit the extensive intellectual work on the gift is to center on a body of prescriptive literature that found full expression in roughly the eleventh to thirteenth centuries CE across the various indigenous religious traditions in South Asia. During this period the main sources of prescriptive analysis on the gift — Hindu Dharmaśāstra *dāna* anthologies (*nibandhas*) and Jain and Buddhist compendia on lay morality — began to emerge and gain widespread cultural and intellectual consideration. All of these texts are prescriptive treatises which in some cases contain narratives, but on the whole are not story collections. They are all scissors-and-paste digests or summaries of their earlier traditions' reflections on the gift that provide exegesis on what the authors regard as crucial aspects of inherited doctrine. In most cases we know something of the authors and their influence, and their compendia bring critical reflection to the subjects they treat and important texture to the traditions they represent. These texts arguably represent the most systematic theorizations of the gift available from their respective traditions.

Despite their rich theoretical reflections on the gift, as well as other civilizational values, these compendia have attracted only fleeting interest in previous scholarship. Only a fraction of the texts we will consider in this study has been previously translated into any modern language. Perhaps one factor in their neglect is that the medieval period as a whole has been relatively understudied compared to the ancient (or classical) and modern periods. This may be due to the medieval period being marked in modern scholarship as "essentially Islamic" after

a break in India's classical civilization with the arrival of Muslim rule (Inden 2000:17). According to Ronald Inden, the narrative of decline in European narratives about its own medieval age has infected modern scholarship's characterization of India's medieval period, leading us to anticipate the decline of a great civilization as the result of its own decay and foreign conquest (Inden 2000:17-18). Where innovation and creativity are identified in medieval South Asian religiosity, they are found centered on the development of devotional religiosity (*bhakti*). No one expects to find newness and originality looking at brahmanical texts, especially ones that are compendia of earlier literature. Medieval Jain and Theravāda textual traditions have been equally neglected.

Compendia and anthologies have also not attracted much notice in modern scholarship and it may be surprising to some readers that close attention to compendia should yield significant theoretical work on the gift. Often the chief interest modern scholars have taken in the Dharmaśāstra *nibandhas*, for example, is in their practical import for providing quotations that can help us to reconstruct earlier lost or fragmented texts, or for providing variant readings of material found in texts we do have. For Ludo Rocher, the *nibandhas* help us reconstruct the tradition: "the history of Dharmaśāstra shall be a history not so much of the Nibandhas themselves, but of the Smṛti-texts throughout their interpretations in the Nibandhas" (Rocher 1953:6). For Robert Lingat as well, the "first interest" to be derived from the commentaries and anthologies is that they allow us better acquaintance with the earlier *smṛti* literature (Lingat 1998:108). Similarly, for the Theravāda anthologies, Oskar von Hinüber says that "the quotations collected in these anthologies deserve the attention of research as useful indicators for the importance and appreciation of certain texts" (von Hinüber 1996:177). Such approaches see the value of these anthologies in reconstructing earlier canonical tradition and helping us to know and understand *other* texts.

As valuable as medieval anthologies are for these purposes, they are also interesting and important as ideological expressions in their own rights. The project of interpretation involved in codifying and reorganizing traditional textual material in an anthology or compendium marks an important turning point in the development in ethical thought in South Asian intellectual history. Moreover, given how very widespread this trend toward codification was during the period, it is a process that warrants further attention. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, the very process of re-organizing and re-categorizing knowledge, so that certain terms like *dāna* are isolated and given extensive treatment, is in fact a new and different kind of critical reflection and interpretation of traditional values. Robert Lingat, writing on the Dharmaśāstra compendia and medieval commentaries, asserts that the role of such interpretation "offers society the means whereby it can rediscover itself in fact" (Lingat 1973:144). This notion of rediscovery suggests something of

the dynamic interpretative process at work in the medieval compendia. In addition to providing exegesis, the compendium defines different taxonomic categories and displays different logics of organization and resolution of conflicting material from the texts from which the digest draws. Analyzing the compendium's taxonomic choices in this way can become an indispensable tool for interpreting the ideologies of the period.

I have also selected texts from three distinct religious and intellectual traditions. Although modern scholars on South Asian religion have long been interested in the mutual interactions of brahmanism, Buddhism, and Jainism for the first millennium of their presence together in India, little work has been done on their relationships in the medieval period. Politically, the medieval period is marked by regionalization and the increased fragmentation of the political order, which might indicate the dismantling of some forms of cosmopolitan civilization from past periods. Geography is also a factor, especially in the case of Buddhist Sri Lanka, well fixed as the center of Theravāda Buddhism by the eleventh century, and composing an island of cultural and religious distinctiveness in many ways.

Scholars often treat the long historical developments of Indic religions as unfolding of their own impetus quite independently of one another. The religious traditions that produced the prescriptive gift literature on *dāna* have, diachronically speaking, though sharing cultural roots, developed in their own distinctive ways. Yet, while the processes behind the textual production of *dāna* ideologies are complex and in many ways distinctive and particular to each of these traditions, there are ways in which we can profitably view them together. Among the benefits of such a horizontal approach is that it will give a sense of the breadth of ideas and intellectual practices in their occurrence and "ensure that one does not miss out on the simultaneity of many patterns" (Chattopadhyaya 1998:22).

Where in evidence, the "simultaneity of many patterns" can be understood as conditioned by a number of different possibilities. Similarities can suggest analogous ideas in different regional and religious traditions developing independently. In contrast, they can also suggest cross-fertilization, where ideas and values spread from region to region and migrate from one religious tradition to another. A third possibility entertained here (and not exclusive of either of these), is to suggest that they were all participants in something larger than any of them. They may have been partaking of and contributing to a premodern cosmopolitan elite culture that attributes certain values to an encounter that in its very nature denotes civilized life.

Attention to simultaneities can thus allow us to glimpse shared elements of a broader intellectual and elite civilization that may slip past studies concerned with more circumscribed religious communities or regional histories. The presence of similar ideologies in these traditions may come to complicate our notions of

religious identity itself, challenging the validity of reading modern notions of sectarian religious identities and communities — seen as closed, discrete, and exclusive — into the past. Increasingly scholars are rethinking the applicability of modern categories (such as "Hinduism") for accurately describing religious life in premodern South Asia. They suggest that the boundaries in the medieval period between sectarian traditions (and other kinds of communities) were more "fuzzy" than is often recognized (see Kaviraj 1992:25-26).

Sheldon Pollock has provided us with a most articulate and sophisticated model of how we might conceptualize translocal or cosmopolitan culture in South Asia along linguistic lines, one that avoids the pitfalls of reductionism and essentializing Indian history (Pollock 1996, 1998). For Pollock, the "Sanskrit Cosmopolis" was a cultural formation or "ecumene" that gave expression to "a common aesthetics of political culture" voiced in Sanskrit and stretching across regional and religious borders through most of South and Southeast Asia between roughly 300-1300 C.E. (Pollock 1996:199). In charting this formation, regional history never disappears from view; on the contrary it is necessary for seeing larger patterns and continuities. Yet, the idea that the regional histories together can be seen to contribute to larger cultural processes provides a way forward for advancing how we understand the contours of premodern South Asian civilization. For our purposes, this model of a translocal elite civilization allows us to discern and chart part of a similar and overlapping cosmopolitan formation (that also would have included cultural ideals expressed in Pali) that gave expression not only to a political aesthetic, but also to a widely-held cultural pattern of norms and idioms that included ideologies of gift giving.

In this context, it makes sense to begin with a description of the Dharmaśāstra *nibandhas*, a body of literature that projects some of the most all-encompassing civilizational aspirations found in South Asian literature.

THE DHARMAŚĀSTRA *NIBANDHAS*

In the first decade of the twelfth century in Kanauj in northern India, Bhaṭṭa Lakṣmīdhara, minister of King Govindacandra, set out to compose a series of encyclopedic digests that would articulate traditional brahmanical norms concerning every aspect of an ideal life. The first book in the series describes the first of the four human aims (*puruṣārtha*) of a brahman male's life, student celibacy (*brahmacarya),* while the last volume treats the final stage of religious renunciation. In between are treatises on the various duties of householder life concerning worship, gift giving, and pilgrimage. His volume on gift giving is called the *Book on Giving* (*Dāna-Kāṇḍa* [DK]). Lakṣmīdhara entitled his multi-volume work *The Wish-fulfilling Tree of Duties* (*Kṛtyakalpataru*), and ultimately produced a textual

corpus which extends to about one third the size of the *Mahābhārata*. His is the earliest compendium (*nibandha*) extant, the first of a genre that continued across India up through the seventeenth century; later nibandhas were clearly influenced by, and indeed, included wholesale borrowing from, Lakṣmīdhara's work.

The next compendium writer on *dāna* whose works still survive was King Ballālasena, writing in Bengal, though it may be that the works attributed to him were actually written by his minister Aniruddha (Bhattacharya 1956:xxv). Attributed to the Sena court are five treatises which the author entitled "seas": the *Sea of Consecrating Temples* (*Pratiṣṭhāsāgara*), the *Sea of Good Conduct* (*Ācārasāgara*), the *Sea of Religious Observances* (*Vratasāgara*), the *Sea of Giving* (*Dānasāgara*), and finally, the *Sea of Magical Powers* (*Adbhutasāgara*). The content of the *Sea of Giving* (DS*)* (ca. 1168 CE) suggests the author may have been indebted to Lakṣmīdhara, both in copying much of his organization and classification of gifts, and his choices of quotations from the earlier literature. Alternatively, both works could have been borrowing from an earlier compendium which is no longer extant.[1] The *Sea of Giving* is much larger than Lakṣmīdhara's anthology on *dāna*, extending beyond seven hundred pages in its printed edition and illustrating a snowball effect wherein the *nibandha* writers could easily expound on any subject that caught their fancy by quoting additional authoritative (*smṛti* and *purāṇa*) material to elaborate or strengthen their position.

A century and a half after Lakṣmīdhara, another minister wrote an encyclopedic multi-volume composition entitled *The Wish-fulfilling Gem of the Four Aims of Human Life (Caturvarga-cintāmaṇi)*. Hemādri was a minister in charge of court records for Mahādeva, the Yādava king of Devagiri, and then for his son, Rāmacandra. He was a learned scholar and a respected member of government. His work includes volumes on religious observances, pilgrimage, offerings to ancestors, and gift giving. The book on *dāna* (*Dānakhaṇḍa* [DKh]) is the largest of the compendia on *dāna* (over a thousand pages in the printed edition) and attained a certain prominence in the epigraphic record in Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere as an approved authority on giving gifts. In some places the term "*Hemādri-dāna*" came to be used in inscriptions for properly prescribed gifts (Aiyangar 1941:58, n.4; Davis 1995:10-11; Talbot 2001:89). P.V. Kane says that within a few decades of its composition "his *Caturvarga-cintāmaṇi*, particularly its *dāna* and *vrata* sections, came to be looked upon as the standard work in the whole of the Deccan and southern India" (Kane 1941:359).

Other *nibandhas* on *dāna* were written subsequently up through the seventeenth century.[2] *Dāna* also was discussed in a somewhat less comprehensive way in the commentaries (*bhāṣyas*), such as those of Vijñāneśvara and Aparārka. Vijñāneśvara, whose patron was Vikramāṅka or Vikramāditya VI of the Cālukya dynasty of Kalyāṇa (1076 to 1127 CE), preceded both Lakṣmīdhara and Aparārka

and authored the well-known *Mitākṣarā* (MĀ), a commentary on *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*. Yājñavalkya is regarded by the tradition as second only to Manu as a Dharmaśāstra authority, and Vijñāneśvara is his most important commentator. The *Mitākṣarā* came to enjoy almost canonical status, and went on to attract subcommentaries of its own. The *smṛti* is divided into three main books along the lines of the main divisions of Dharmaśāstra: *ācāra*, moral conduct; *vyavahāra*, civil law, and *prāyaścitta*, the rules of expiation and penalty. The topic of *dāna* falls into the area of moral conduct along with other topics such as ancestor worship, the duties of the householder, food rules, marriage, class and caste rules, and so on.

Aparārka of the Śilhāra dynasty of Konkan in South India (1110 to 1140 CE) also wrote a commentary on the Yājñavalkya right about the same time as the composition of the *Kṛtyakalpataru*, which in fact he may have used (Aiyangar 1941:23-4; Derrett 1973:50). His commentary on Yājñavalkya's verses on *dāna* amounts to a virtual *nibandha* covering the topic in well over a hundred pages. I shall refer to both of these commentaries as they bring additional consideration of the topic in a slightly different kind of work.

Commentaries differ from compendia in that since they follow a root text, their choices of organization are more limited than in compendia, but they tend to display more of the author's interpretative skills by actual commentary. The compendia, on the other hand, are anthologies first, commentaries second, and for the most part their writers display their learning by their mastery and selective choice of previous literature, and by their choices in organizing it. The distinction should not be overdrawn, however. It works reasonably well in the case of Vijñāneśvara's commentary which is quite concise, but Aparārka blurs the lines between genres, and uses the root text only as a springboard for writing a very anthology-like commentary. He quotes from most of the same sources as the anthologists and uses many of their same organizational categories. Authors of both types of works demonstrate their extensive knowledge of the body of brahmanical tradition, as well as their expertise in Mīmāṁsā styles of exegesis. Both types of text are dialogical, that is, deeply engaged in conversations with other texts, appropriating, rejecting, repeating, and contesting others' ideas (see Inden 2000). In this sense they were active participants in the world in which they were composed.

One feature of the compendium, however, that is not present in the commentaries, is that often it has a quite critical and carefully specified bibliographical discussion of the texts it is using and those which it is omitting and why. The anthologists laid bare their views of other texts. Ballālasena's "bibliography" is an extremely detailed record of his sources, so much so, in fact, that P.V. Kane was moved to remark that it "evince(s) a bold critical faculty rare in our medieval Sanskrit writers" (Kane 1930:867). From this bibliographical record we can discern

how a medieval writer viewed his tradition, what works were available to him, and how he saw the nature of his own project.[3]

What should be evident even from this cursory treatment of the medieval Dharmaśāstra literature on *dāna* is that at least from the early twelfth century (earlier in the case of the commentaries) there was a sudden and marked literary production of large systematic treatises on *dāna* that continued to be reworked and supplemented until the late medieval period. Robert Lingat calls the production of the *nibandhas* and commentaries a "veritable renaissance" in the writing of Dharmaśāstra texts that for many practical purposes usurped the use of the earlier, more authoritative compositions (Lingat 1998:107,111). This was part of the anthologists' larger program of creating, as Sheldon Pollock puts it, "an encyclopedic synthesis of an entire way of life" (Pollock 1993:105). That ideas and texts were traveling over great distances quickly is apparent from the commentators and anthologists copying from one another, even within the same generation (Aiyangar 1941:22-3). This relatively rapid production and spread of compendia and commentaries as books of merit would have been facilitated by the great movement of people on pilgrimages and by competition among kings to demonstrate their knowledge of the traditional norms. It may also have been stimulated by the advance of Muslim rulers, where the compendia articulated and displayed the core values of the brahmanical elite against the arrival of an alien cultural ideology.

This latter aspect, highlighted by Pollock, suggests a number of significant purposes for the Dharmaśāstra compendium as a genre:

> The fact that the production of *dharmanibandha* discourse, as noted above, almost perfectly follows the path of advance of the Sultanate from the Doab to Devagiri to the Deccan (Lakṣmīdhara, Hemādri, Mādhava) suggests, on the one hand, that totalizing conceptualizations of society became possible only by juxtaposition with alternative lifeworlds, and on the other, that they became necessary only at the moment when the total form of the society was for the first time believed, by the privileged theorists of the society, to be threatened (Pollock 1993:105-6).

The *nibandha* was politically and ideologically driven in a period of cultural instability. Pollock argues that it offered kings and ministers of kings a forum for displaying a comprehensive account of traditional brahmanical norms in an antiquarian or nostalgic fashion. The *nibandhas* articulate and reinstantiate the values of traditional brahmanical culture which was challenged not only from without by the arrival of Islam, but also perhaps from within by increasingly popular devotional, or *bhakti,* traditions.

As idealized portraits of social life, the *nibandhas* were continuing the *śāstric* traditions which Pollock has elsewhere described as "cultural grammars," the textualization of social rules that might remain only at the level of "tacit" or

preconscious knowledge in other cultures. He defines *śāstra* as "a verbal codification of rules, whether of divine or human provenance, for the positive and negative regulation of some given human practices" (Pollock 1985:500-1). The *śāstra* on *dharma*, where *dharma* in its widest sense can be defined as "the correct way of doing anything" or by a Mīmāṁsā definition, "ruleboundedness" (*codanālakṣana*) (Pollock 1985:511), attempt to describe and regulate almost every aspect of human social life, and do so in a language that is highly technical, ahistorical, and all-encompassing.

In several ways, *śāstric* discourse on *dharma* can be seen to have reached its culmination in the compendia where its encyclopedic nature is fully manifest. The sheer bulk of the compendia — often approaching or exceeding one thousand pages on their given topics — demonstrates an effort to describe and legislate comprehensively and totally every relevant detail of the human activity in question. The timelessness of the *dharma* discourse lends itself in curious way to what Robert Lingat has referred to as "pliancy." In his view, Dharmaśāstras were held to convey timeless and completely consistent (*ekavākyatva*) Truth that gave them in some cases legislative authority.

> Placed as they were between on the one hand eternal law, as represented by the rules of dharma, and, on the other, the customs and usages that constitute the living, positive law, the commentators were able, through a clever and sometimes rather subtle argumentation playing with the very diversity of the texts, to suggest a number of different, sometimes contradictory, interpretations, all based on the authority of the Shastras (Lingat 1962:15).

The writers were all learned in Pūrva Mīmāṁsā critical techniques, applied here to law and social practice, that explain away contradictions and settle differences. The *nibandha* covers an extensive range of often conflicting literature, yet flattens it out to read as one completely consistent system, whose sheer volume suggests that it legislates every possible contingency in human practice. Again, Pollock: "the very form of the *nibandha* conspires to produce the impression of the massive and monolithic weight of tradition" (1993:110). Though the compendia are especially useful to the modern historian in that for the first time Dharmaśāstra texts can be pinned down to exact dates, authors, and locations, *śāstric* discourse itself tries to transcend its history and evoke a timeless social order.

Yet even while the compendia present themselves as part of a timeless vision, they also evince glimpses of newness and originality. Though the *śāstric* ideal they depict is meant to be seamless and universal, its instantiation under the pen of Lakṣmīdhara or Ballālasena is regarded by the texts themselves as vital for their historical moment. The authors exalt their own authorship and present their contributions — in codifying and settling matters of *dharma* — as acts of consid-

erable historical import and religious merit. The authors are explicitly stating the "transformative" nature of their texts as they envision it (see Inden 2000:14).

The image of the compendium as a "sea" that Ballālasena uses to entitle his works, is illuminating as to its nature and purposes. A common trope in Indic literature describes the ocean as deep and uniform in the sense that its water is everywhere salty. *Dharma* is also uniform in the sense of being universal. The compendium is an effort to display the uniformity of *dharma* and to occur as an instance of it. But *dharma* is also deep, sometimes murky, and vast, as is the sea. The compendium then plumbs its depths and clarifies its profundity. Ballālasena describes his project as conceived from doubts of his own about the "settling of *dharma* which is hard to comprehend," which led him to worship his brahman teachers.[4] So he wrote the *Sea of Giving* "according to his own wisdom formed by the training of the guru for the best of those who have faith."[5]

As he introduces his work, Ballālasena declares that he has "with faith learned from his teacher the essence of the entire *purāṇic* and *smṛti* literature and desires to compose a compendium on *dāna*, which would be a defeat of the darkness of the Kali Age."[6] This and other references to the Kali Age, the last of the four great epochs of time in traditional Hindu cosmology, are significant in light of a widely cited verse by Manu that reads:

> Essential in the Kṛta Age is austerity (*tapas*), in the Tretā Age knowledge (*jñāna*), in the Dvāpara Age sacrifice (*yajña*), and in the Kali Age gift giving (*dāna*) only (Manu I.86).

The decline of moral and religious conduct in vast eras of time stretches from the golden age of Kṛta to the last age, literally, the Dark Age, in which we (and the *nibandha* composers) now live. Over the vast epochs of time and growing decadence of the world humans grow weak in their conduct and their knowledge of the *śāstra* grows dim. The principal practice now in our grasp and appropriate to our age is *dāna*.[7]

Ballālasena suggests that his treatise on *dāna* should be understood in the context of this sad state of affairs, but that it, like the rule of his dynasty, provides one of the last glimmers of morality in these dark times:

> The Sena lineage, which is from the Moon who is the only relative of the whole world, which is heavy from strict observance of scripture (*śruti*), a mountain among lineages at the high limits of the deportment and duty of *kṣatriyas*, and the end of the line of practices of good people trembling in the Kali Age, appeared as an ornament of the earth with glory like that enjoyed by gods, due to its connections to an eternal and unbroken stream of human virtues, shining as a crystal gem of good conduct.[8]

Ballālasena claims moral authority for his dynasty from its unbroken line to the past when things were better and people knew how to live properly. Notice the metaphors here, as well: his lineage is like a mountain, strong and steady when the world is trembling, rising up to the heights of moral perfection; also his dynasty is like an ornament, a clear jewel especially luminous in the Dark Age.

In his introduction, Lakṣmīdhara sets out to define his methodology. He says that unlike other works, "this concise treatise shall be composed with the essence of the Vedas and *smṛtis*, etc., delighting the wise with its ideas crowned by investigations and its discussions free from defects."[9] About his method he continues:

> Of authorities on an identical topic, a single text has been adopted at one place, and another at another place, as purpose required; that which is based on knowledge has been kept and that which is based on ignorance has been abandoned, even if current; the view adopted fully by the authorities has been taken and that which was ambiguous has been clarified; and where an endless controversy becomes evident, there a settlement is furnished by him (i.e. Lakṣmīdhara).[10]

Here Lakṣmīdhara recognizes difference within the tradition and that it has not come down to him without ambiguity. This "critical apparatus" also shows that he regards himself as settling matters when necessary. Both Lakṣmīdhara and Ballālasena wrote to display their learning, to offer the occasional resolution according to their own intelligence, and to settle questions of *dharma* once and for all.

The authors' prefaces also state that their works are a source of merit for themselves and for others. The production of medieval texts was embedded in a ritual culture. The elaborate praise of the "gift of learning" (*vidyādāna*) and the chapters describing this gift in the works themselves can be useful for suggesting ways in which the authors saw their contributions. The gift of learning was understood as both the production of written books that came to be dedicated to a deity and installed within a temple in a ritual ceremony, and as the transmission of oral knowledge by recitation and exposition. Both types are highly praised and are said to generate great merit for the donor. We are told that "a man who gives Dharmaśāstra prospers in the heavenly realm, and that such a mortal rescues his ancestors from hell for ten Manu ages."[11] That whole chapters are given over to the gift of learning and its particular forms suggests an ideology and practice of ritually gifting the compendia themselves, both as acts of royal largesse and as religious merit ceremonies. Such gifts displayed the king's generosity, his learning, and his merit, both worldly and transcendent.

The compendium, then, is something new made of something old. We see in it, in Steven Collins' phrasing, a place where "the rhetoric of revival may mask the

creation of something new" (Collins 1998:69). On the one hand, the compendium is freighted with ancient tradition, consisting mostly of the writings of previous authors. On the other hand, it belongs ritually and intellectually to an historical moment, composed by a king or his ministers to rearticulate and reestablish traditional values. As Ludo Rocher describes it:

> In a Dharmanibandha two different parts are to be distinguished: on the one side an unchangeable element, *viz*. the quotations from the Smṛti, and the other hand a changeable portion, *viz*. the way in which the author arranges these quotations, how he explains each of them, and how he makes them subservient to one great unity (Rocher 1958:2).

This rearticulation is itself a new interpretation with choices about classification, decisions about what topics and citations to include and what to omit, and the compiler's use of commentary all doing important interpretative work. It is in these choices as presented in the compendia and commentaries that we can locate a fully articulated and systematized "gift theory." It is through the choices of quotations, classifications, and organizations that the authors are framing and delimiting what qualifies as a proper gift. The earlier works from which they quote demonstrate important deliberation on the act of gift giving, and expound gift ideologies, but it is not until the anthologists and commentators attempted to systematize the material, to understand the parts in relation to the whole, that a fully articulated "gift theory" emerges. By "theory" here I mean to suggest that the subject matter is limited and defined, its elements are all considered in relationship with one another, and the resulting systematization can be usefully held up and compared with other gift theories.

Two examples of the way in which the compendia set boundaries for and thus constitute gift theory will suffice here, though close attention to the ways in which the compendia organized and classified the material will be important throughout the book. The first concerns Lakṣmīdhara's *Book on Giving*, which was the first compendium still extant to treat the concept of *dāna* exhaustively, as a separate object of analysis (Aiyangar 1941:71). His treatise sets the terms for what is to count as a *dāna*, and is quite innovative in this endeavor. For example, he was the first to classify public works such as the king's providing water tanks and planting trees along roadways for weary travelers, as a species of *dāna* (Aiyangar 1941:114). These contributions to the public good were certainly valued from the point of view of statecraft, but to bring them under the rubric of *dāna*, despite the fact that they do not correspond to the strict requirements of *dāna* articulated elsewhere in the treatise by having a known and prescribed recipient and so forth, is to endow them with a certain status and religious merit. Lakṣmīdhara's choice here extends

the rhetoric of giving to projects of public welfare. Subsequent anthologists followed suit with the exception of Nīlakaṇṭha, who classified them separately.

A second example of an anthologist's choice of what to include and what to leave out as setting the conditions for a broader discussion of social values is the gift of "fearlessness" or security (*abhayadāna*). This gift involves the protection of life for all beings by a number of activities ranging from rescuing animals from the butcher's block to a king's declaration of amnesty for prisoners. Most of the anthologists and commentators considered it a kind of *dāna* even though in many ways, as in the case of public works, it does not easily conform to the formal features of a prescribed *dāna*. But one anthologist, Govindānanda, quite consciously excludes it from his *dānanibandha*, arguing that in the case of *abhayadāna*, the sense of the word *dāna* is meant only in a secondary or metaphorical sense since it only involves removing fear.[12] These choices of classification are important, because through them we can see how the medieval thinkers differed from one another even within a discourse that usually denies difference. It is through such choices that we can discern how a vision of an ideal social order constructs systems of value. When the virtue of saving life is described as a *gift* a quite distinct set of moral and religious values about religious merit and human obligation surfaces.

Before going on to describe medieval gift theory of the Buddhists and Jains, it remains to specify more exactly the nature of Dharmaśāstra *nibandha* gift theory. Thomas Trautmann's view is that the Dharmaśāstra *dāna* literature is concerned with the gift as a "religious endeavor" on the model of sacrifice oriented primarily towards soteriological purposes (Trautmann 1981:279). He argues that "elements of Mauss's thesis provide a useful foil against which to highlight the peculiarities of the Indian theory" and that "the Dharmaśāstra theory of the gift, then, is a soteriology, not a sociology of reciprocity as is Marcel Mauss's masterwork on the gift" (Trautmann 1981:279). In my view, Trautmann is only partially correct on both counts. That is, to suggest that Mauss's essay is primarily a sociology and that the Dharmaśāstra theory is chiefly a religious enterprise concerned with transcendent aims, is to miss the elements of ethical reflection apparent in both works. In some sense, both Mauss and the Dharmaśāstra authors were composing *moral* treatises.

Mauss's work has indeed been the *locus classicus* of the sociology of exchange, and his insights about traditional societies' obligations to give, to receive, and to return gifts paved the way for further important comparative sociological and anthropological theorizing of the gift. At the same time, Mauss was also profoundly interested in whether "it was possible to extend these observations to our own societies" and lamented how the values of *Homo Economicus* had almost completely eclipsed the "old principles" of the morality of reciprocity

(Mauss 1990:65). His essay on the gift is as much a critique of modern-day market values of cold-hearted industrialism and capitalism, which he saw as being "at odds with morality" (Mauss 1990:66), as it is a sociological or anthropological work. The closing paragraph of the essay pushes well beyond the reaches of scientific sociology: "one can also see how this concrete study can lead not only to a science of customs, to a partial social science but even to moral conclusions, or rather, to adopt once more the old word, 'civility', or 'civics', as it is called nowadays" (Mauss 1990:83). The recent enthusiasm for Mauss in the humanities suggests that his study of manners and customs is often read now as an ethical treatise stimulating humanistic inquiry.

The Dharmaśāstra treatises as well may be read as moral reflections, concerned with the relations between human beings and how these relations are constitutive of a larger social order. It is unduly restrictive to insist that the *dāna* literature is only a soteriology concerned solely with merit-making and religious and transcendent matters. It is true that the orientation of the texts when discussing the fruits of *dāna* are aimed at transcendent rewards, rather than earthly reciprocity, but the texts are also concerned with moral responses and responsibilities in human encounters with others. Much of their discourse on *dāna* never mentions the fruits and merit of giving, but rather centers on the correct use of wealth in this life. The topics treated concern the qualities and virtues of recipient and donor and their proper motivations and dispositions toward each other, and the time, place, and circumstances that make a gift appropriate. In an important sense Dharmaśāstra *dāna* theory is concerned with life *in this world* and how to describe the idealized workings of social etiquette and culture. There is no question here of considering the compendia as descriptions of actual historical reality in the medieval period; instead, they should be considered as a kind of ideological reality or theorizing (generated at a particular moment in history) wherein the social and ethical values of a cultural elite are explored.

An inventory of the stock listings of gifts treated by most of the compendia suggest the variety of concerns here. The gifts of public welfare, the gifts of security and health (the founding of hospitals and the distribution of free medicines), and the gifts of learning all suggest that this gift theory be read as a discourse on the social conditions for human welfare and social harmony. The royal gifts, the *mahādānas*, suggest that the compendia are also treatises on statecraft wherein the descriptions of royal splendor and largesse so critical for maintaining the appearance of imperial might and prestige, could be expounded. The gifts to the gods, the ritual observances, and the general ceremonial aspects of gift giving, whereby *dāna* is linked closely to worship (*pūjā)*, indicate that gift activity is closely linked to the ritual upkeep of the human order in relation to the divine.

I submit, then, that the Dharmaśāstra *dāna* compendia were written with and should be read with a number of primary points in mind. First, they are scholarly treatises, composed to display mastery over a subject. They also have a political and ideological dimension; this corpus, which Pollock describes as "massively subsidized intellectual work emanating from within the very center of the political culture of the time" (Pollock 1993:99), is not idle scholasticism. Kings and ministers of kings were keen to demonstrate their grasp of the traditional authorities at a time in which this authority was perceived to be under threat. This was a response to a powerful — and perhaps for the first time uncontainable — pluralism that belongs to the medieval period. The anthologists set out to reaffirm tradition and settle perceived differences or ambiguities in the old tradition to create a coherent and all-embracing social order. The texts were also meant both to describe and generate merit, in the forms of fame, happiness and admiration in the world as well as religious benefit after death. Never far removed from the ritual culture that they themselves took such care to describe, they were in turn constituted by it and cannot be fully appreciated without attention to these texts as royal and religious display. Finally, as the rest of this study aims to demonstrate, the Dharmaśāstra *nibandhas* were also studied contemplations on the norms and moral values of certain kinds of human social encounters.

JAIN *ŚRĀVAKĀCĀRAS*

The use of Jain and Buddhist sources from the same period helps to put the rhetoric of Hindu Dharmaśāstra — where brahmanical *dharma* is portrayed as singular and all-encompassing — into perspective. In this respect the medieval Jain "lay conduct" *(śrāvaka-ācāra)* literature, which approaches in literary output the extent of the *nibandha* literature, directly challenges and provides fully articulated alternatives to Dharmaśāstra claims of value.

Śrāvakācāras were written throughout medieval times (which for Jains begin roughly the fifth century through the end of the fourteenth), but were mostly concentrated in precisely our period, the eleventh to thirteenth centuries.[13] Probably the first text devoted entirely to lay practice, the *Lay Conduct in a Basket of Gems* (*Ratnakaraṇḍa-śrāvakācāra)*, was quite early, dated by R. Williams to be from the fifth century, and written by a Digambara in Southern India. Yet the real flourishing of textual attention to lay practice occurred right at about the same period that the Dharmaśāstra *nibandhas* began to emerge, and they may have been written for many of the same purposes. That is, like the Dharmaśāstra compendia they articulate a vision of an ideal social order where religious and social values are presented in a concretized fashion against alternative worldviews.

Jains were conscious of writing against the dominant Hindu ideologies. Jain intellectuals had considerable influence in the medieval period and advised and sometimes converted kings, as in the case of the Caulukya dynasty in Patan (in what is now Gujarat). One of the most famous Jain intellectuals was the monk Hemacandra who is said to have converted to Jainism Kumārapāla, king of the Caulukyas, in the twelfth century. His *śrāvakācāra*, the *Treatise on Discipline (Yogaśāstra)*, was presented to Kumārapāla as an alternative to a brahmanical social ethic and appears to have been written as a full-fledged critique of Dharmaśāstra in general and the *Laws of Manu* in particular.[14]

Unlike the Dharmaśāstra materials where the choice of language is unambiguously Sanskrit, the Jain *śrāvakācāras* were written either in Sanskrit or Prakrit (or both), and later in Hindi and Gujarati in the case of Śvetāmbaras, and in Sanskrit, Tamil, or Kannada for Digambaras. This study will be restricted to examining the Sanskrit materials, and to a much lesser extent, some Prakrit material where necessary.

The choice to write in Sanskrit for Jains is a loaded one. When Hemacandra wrote his Sanskrit grammar and chose to write his *Treatise on Discipline* and its commentary in Sanskrit, he was making a choice about participating in Sanskrit culture, presumably since he intended the work to supplant Dharmaśāstra treatises in the Caulukyan court. However, this does not explain the movement from Prakrit to Sanskrit[15] in many of the *śrāvakācāras* prior to Hemacandra and in ones that did not have any apparent courtly role. Paul Dundas has written that the question should be asked "as to why so many medieval texts designed to guide the laity in their daily duties (*śrāvakācāra*) and which would have been of minimal interest in the wider cultural world were written in Sanskrit" (Dundas 1996:148). As Dundas points out, Jains have been quite ambivalent on the use of Sanskrit throughout their history and have adopted "two main stances" towards it:

> As an ideological institution supporting dubious moral and ritual claims of the brahman caste, Sanskrit could only be reacted against, with its supposed non-created nature and ability to 'neutralise' sacrificial violence being denied. On the other hand, as the lingua franca of *śāstra* and general literary culture, that same language could be enthusiastically utilised by the Jains without any danger of compromising their sectarian identity and socio-religious values. Linguistic usage is thus merely one example, albeit a crucial one, of a variety of areas in which the Jains variously redefined, rejected or accommodated themselves to the encircling Indian cultural world (Dundas 1996:156).

Language choice often can be seen to track the political, cultural, and religious aspirations of communities in South Asia. The authors of the Sanskrit *śrāvakācāras* were choosing to demonstrate their knowledge of and competence within

Sanskrit literary culture perhaps as part of a larger project to force entry into the cultural and aesthetic domain that Sanskrit *śāstra* was meant to describe.

Unlike the Dharmaśāstra writers who wrote as though there was a cultural vacuum that only their ideals could fill, the Jains wrote in full consciousness of their status as a minority tradition in a world of varying and conflicting religious values. Participating as masters of Sanskrit culture and language allowed them to demonstrate their knowledge of it and to define themselves within and against it. Hemacandra was fully conversant with Dharmaśāstra even while rejecting it, and his vitriol is evident in his calling the *Laws of Manu* in one place, "instruction on violence" (*hiṃsā-śāstra*).[16] It is also clear, as I will demonstrate throughout this study but especially in Chapter Five, that the Jain theorists were also well-acquainted, more specifically, with Dharmaśāstra gift theory.

The lay conduct literature is the organization of the ideal behavior for lay people in contradistinction to *yāti-ācāra*, the conduct for ascetics. Unlike the first ten centuries of Jainism, the medieval period saw a gradual ascendance in the importance of the lay community, or at least the elite textual tradition's recognition of it. The lay conduct texts reflect and help constitute the institutionalization of the role of the lay person not only in supporting mendicants but in comprising a Jain community. In early Jainism the textual material was for the most part directed to ascetics, and little regard was given to the possibility of lay religiosity.[17] However, about the time of Umāsvāti (fourth or fifth centuries CE), the textual tradition began to acknowledge and incorporate, as Will Johnson puts it, "the social fact of an active lay following" (Johnson 1995:80).

For Jains, the term *saṅgha* includes lay people, and so the social unit understood by the term comprises the four orders: monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. Right conduct could then be qualified into two varieties: "complete" and "incomplete," where the complete was observed by ascetics and the incomplete by lay people.[18] *Dāna* and other religious practices were oriented not only towards providing maintenance for monks and nuns, but also for sustaining the broader community. And as Jains became more prominent politically they saw, as evidenced by Hemacandra's efforts, their influence extend quite beyond the Jain religious community.

The rules for the laity can follow a number of different organizational schemas, but most often detail the twelve vows *(vrata*) of advanced lay practice and their corresponding infractions *(aticāra*). This framework, initiated by the *Gem Basket Treatise* (*Ratnakaraṇḍa)* for the Digambaras and the *Ten Chapters on the Laity* (*Upāsaka-daśāḥ)* for the Śvetāmbaras, became a standard structuring device for describing ideal lay conduct. The first five vows are modified versions of the main vows of the monk: non-violence, truth, not stealing, sexual control, and non-attachment to material things. The next three vows are restricting the distance

and directions one moves in, restricting one's consumption of perishable and durable items, and refraining from purposeless violence. Finally the last grouping of lay vows includes four practices: cultivating mental equanimity and concentration, further restricting one's area of movement, fasting on holy days (*poṣadha*), and lastly, *dāna*. The *dāna* vow is also called "feeding the guest" (where the "guest" is a mendicant) (*atithisaṁvibhāga*),[19] and "performing services to mendicants" (*vaiyāvṛttya*),[20] indicating at the outset a narrower conception of *dāna* than in Dharmaśāstra theory.[21] It is noteworthy that *dāna* comes last in this list of progressively more advanced practices, when in many ways it is understood as the foundational and defining practice of the lay life. *Dāna* is the only one of these vows that involves actual positive activity; all of the other vows require restraint or restriction on activity.[22] It is also significant that in this schema *dāna* is theorized to be a vow, which underscores its formal aspect. This makes *dāna* a religious observance that is formally undertaken by a vow or a promise; in this conception it is not observed casually.

A Digambara listing gives six duties of a lay person: worship of Tīrthaṅkaras, venerating and listening to teachers, study (of the scriptures), restraint, austerities, and *dāna* (Jaini 1990:190). Another well-known schema in which *dāna* figures is the four-fold *dharma* of the laity: *dāna*, morality (*śīla*), ascetic practices (*tapas*), and spiritual attitude *(bhavanā*).[23] Unlike *dāna* as a vow, here it is more the general virtue of generosity, to be cultivated in a less formal manner than as a religious observance *per se*. Jains often define *dharma* in a two-fold manner: as "that which puts the soul in the place of salvation," and, as "that which sustains beings in the cycle of transmigration."[24] As we will see, *dāna* is important for both kinds of *dharma*. For soteriological purposes it is a highly meritorious practice. However, it is also important for its role in *dharma* in the sense of maintaining social relationships in the world.

Unlike the Dharmaśāstra material which for the most part promotes itself as universal and seamless across its textual tradition, the Jain texts are all institutionally coded, not only among the two main schools, the Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras, but also in the sectarian affiliations beginning to emerge in precisely this period within the schools. The Śvetāmbara sects or *gacchas* were starting to form, and the lay conduct texts may be reflecting different sectarian rivalries associated with these movements. Since this study is not intended to document a history of Jain sectarian traditions, I have not attempted to provide a full account of all the different Jain approaches to *dāna* theory. Nevertheless, both the number of works and the possible differences among them make the principles of selection more challenging than it was for the Dharmaśāstra material, where it can be demonstrated that the authors were participating in what they viewed as a single rhetorical voice. The Jain intellectual world was an internally contested one.

We treat here a selection of texts that conveys something of the texture of the Jain literature, but which does not pretend to be representative of the entire tradition. Most of the texts under consideration are Śvetāmbara and from western India, but I will make reference to Digambara sources from time to time. The texts are primarily from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, the period of greatest prolixity of this genre.

The texts considered in this study were selected for their stature within the tradition and for the extensiveness of their attention to the topic of *dāna*. They are not meant to "represent" or stand for *the* Jain gift theory — though their authors may have conceived them to be doing so — since Jainism, as with all religions, speaks with many voices. Rather, I see each author arguing and systematizing material in support of his own view and preferences, which are of course informed and shaped by Jain traditions. Like the *nibandhas*, the *śrāvakācāras* are mostly compendia of previous authoritative sources under given topics, though in some cases the author's commentary is considerable.

Another issue for the Jain material that differs from the Dharmaśāstra material is the matter of how subsequent tradition has shaped the texts' availability and prominence up to the present time. Certain texts, such as Hemacandra's *Treatise on Discipline*, are quite well-known in present-day Jain communities, forming the sources from which monks draw the substance of their sermons. Other texts, such as the *Exposition Beginning With Gift Giving (Dānādiprakaraṇa),* are obscure from the point of view of today's audience, which may or may not reflect the situation as it existed in medieval communities. Part of the challenge of selecting texts then is to suggest a different vision of what was important in the centuries of composition than may be readily apparent from the point of view of subsequent history.

In view of its importance both in twelfth-century Gujarat and today, Hemacandra's *Treatise on Discipline (Yogaśāstra)* (ca. 1150 CE) is an obvious place to begin study of *śrāvakācāra* deliberation on *dāna*. Not only was this treatise and the author's own commentary on it, the *Svopajñavṛtti*, intended to be a calculated response to Dharmaśāstra, but it is also treated by the Śvetāmbaras themselves as the paradigmatic text on lay conduct. Hemacandra, an important statesman at the Caulukya court in Pāṭaṇa, (Patan, Gujarat), is celebrated as one of India's greatest medieval intellectuals. His *Treatise on Discipline* may have enjoyed a similar royal eminence and ritual position as I sketched above for the Dharmaśāstra compendia. Hemacandra, like the *nibandha* writers, is generally not noted for his inventiveness, but is instead admired for his skills in systemization. R. Williams states that "to a greater degree than any other Jaina writer he had a gift for the marshalling of facts and for clear and orderly exposition"

(Williams 1983:10). It is precisely in this systematization and exposition of gift ideology that a delimited "gift theory" emerges.

Another important *śrāvakācāra* author to be considered here is Siddhasena Gaṇin, a 9th century Śvetāmbara commentator on the important *Discourse on the Meaning of the Truth (Tattvārtha Sūtra)* of Umāsvāti.[25] The *Tattvārtha Sūtra*, which Williams calls, "the most authoritative exposition of Jaina doctrine" (Williams 1983:18), was probably not identified with either school but was later claimed by both Digambara and Śvetāmbara writers and commentators as their own. Siddhasena's commentary (TSC) is both concise and very sophisticated, and, although his treatment of *dāna* is quite brief, his probing analysis of the subject made it quite appropriate for inclusion in the present study.

Another important authority on lay conduct who gives a thorough and penetrating treatment of gift giving is Devendra Sūri, who composed the *Daily Ritual Duties of the Laity* (*Śrāddhadinakṛtya* [ŚDK]) (ca. 1270 CE) in Prakrit and its commentary in Sanskrit (the *Svopajñavṛtti*). He departs from the usual *śrāvakācāra* structure of describing the vows and their infractions, and instead organizes his work along the structure of the daily, half-monthly, monthly, and annual ritual duties of a Jain layperson. His description of ritual duties becomes the device by which the rules of morality are delineated. Devendra was a teacher (*sūri)* from Malwa (in Madhya Pradesh).

A fourth important text used here is not a lay conduct text as such, but rather is more like a *nibandha* in form since the entire work is given over to the topic of *dāna*.[26] *An Exposition Beginning With Gift Giving (Dānādiprakaraṇa* [DAP]) of Sūrācārya of the eleventh century is earlier than both Hemacandra and Devendra, and differs from them along important sectarian lines. Paul Dundas has argued that perhaps this Sūrācārya was the same monk who argued on the behalf of the "temple-dwelling monks" *(caityavāsins)* in a famous debate against Jineśvara over issues regarding monks living in temples.[27] That these internal conflicts among Jain monks in the Śvetāmbara community exercised even the heads of state is evident in the fact that the king of Pāṭaṇa organized a debate over the issue that was set in 1024 CE. The temple-dwelling monks, represented by Sūrācārya, argued that monks should be permitted to live in temples or monasteries rather than assume an itinerant lifestyle (*vānavāsin*). The opposing view was held by the monk Jineśvara, who is said to have won the debate. Jineśvara maintained that the temple dwellers were much too lax and permissive, living permanently in temples and even spending their time watching temple dancing women; he went on to found a reform movement called the Kharatara Gaccha. The views expressed in *An Exposition Beginning with Gift Giving* appear to reflect the *caityavāsin* side in that Sūrācārya argues that the gift relationship should not require lay people to censure mendicants on the grounds of lax behavior, and that "religious activity should

centre around the affairs of the temple" (Dundas 1987-8:188-9). Dundas argues that this entire debate should be understood keeping in mind that some of the same issues facing Theravādins with the "domestication" of the Buddhist *saṅgha* during the medieval period may also have been at work in this period for Śvetāmbara Jains; however, in the Jain case the processes of domestication were checked in their early stages (Dundas 1987-8:189-91). *An Exposition Beginning With Gift Giving*, read with such sectarian conflicts in mind, can offer a counterview to and additional perspective on the work of the main lay conduct writers.

The work itself is divided into seven chapters, and the topics which they consider are similar to those of the *nibandhas*, that is, the gifts of learning and scripture, of fearlessness, of food and requisites to monks, and of temples. Unlike the *śrāvakācāra* writers who structured the ideal lay life to include *dāna* as just one component, Sūrācārya sees *dāna* as the main structuring device for the rest of lay practice. In this way, the text uses *dāna* as an entry into a larger social vision in much the same way that the *dānanibandhas* do. Unfortunately the text has survived in just one manuscript, which may itself be evidence of its controversial nature, in that it was suppressed, or at least not actively maintained, by the dominant Tapā and Kharatara *gacchas*.[28] Though not obviously controversial in that it gives a quite conventional depiction of *dāna*, its overall *caityavāsin* flavor may have allowed it to become neglected. The material in the text is entirely in verses which are mostly quotations from other sources, including the *Tattvārtha Sūtra* and even the *Bhagavad Gītā*.[29]

Among Digambara sources, the small and quite early text (450 CE according to Williams), the *Lay Conduct in a Basket of Gems* (*Ratnakaraṇḍa-śrāvakācāra* [RKŚ]) is said to be the first Digambara *śrāvakācāra*, and it contains a few verses on *dāna* within the context of the twelve householder vows. The *Book on the Laity* (*Upāsakādhyayana* [UDh]) of Somadeva, written in 959 CE also occupies an important place within the Digambara tradition as one of its chief lay conduct texts. Somadeva was a South Indian, who wrote the text as part of a larger Sanskrit literary masterpiece the *Yaśastilakacampū.* He was active at the court of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa empire during the reign of Kṛṣṇa III (939 -968 CE), and wrote on matters of statecraft as well (the *Nītivākyāmṛta*). The *Book on the Laity* is organized around the twelve *vratas* and often provides stories to elaborate on the didactic material it presents. For our purposes, this text brings an important and influential Digambara perspective to the analysis.

A further kind of Jain *dāna* material may be found in the narrative literature where stories of the first alms given to the Tīrthaṅkaras and other exemplary acts of *dāna* are recalled.[30] Nalini Balbir has identified what she calls a "micro-genre" of *dāna* stories, correlated to what the tradition has called *dānadharmakathā* and *dānāvadāna* literature (Balbir 1983). These stories contain certain common

motifs, stock formulas, and narrative patterns. These stories were collected in medieval compendia *(saṅgrahas*), the earliest of which, according to Balbir, is the *Eight Stories on Giving* (*Dānāṣṭakakathā)*, which she has edited and translated into French (Balbir 1982). This text tells eight different stories each about a gift given to a monk from a standard list of eight requisites for supporting mendicants: residence, bed, chair, food, drink, medicine, clothes, and an alms bowl. It seems to have been the source for other narrative compendia which copy and supplement it.[31] Dating it is difficult, and Balbir assigns it to anywhere from the ninth or tenth centuries to the fifteenth; manuscripts of the texts have been found in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

BUDDHIST *SAṄGAHAS*

Like Jains, Theravāda Buddhists in the same period were writing texts on lay conduct. This period, the Polonnaruva era in Sri Lanka, is marked by a flourishing of Pali scholarship mostly in the form of writing commentaries and compendia of Pali works. While there are no books given over entirely to the topic of *dāna*, the medieval handbooks on lay conduct, in ways similar to the Jain *śrāvakācāras*, treat the topic as a distinct subject of analysis along with other moral and religious responsibilities.

The production of these Pali texts in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Sri Lanka occurred in the context of a revival of Buddhist scholarship. After a period of political instability, foreign invasion, decline, and schisms in the communities of the Buddhist monastic order (*saṅgha*), King Parākramabāhu I (1153-86 CE) reestablished unity and effected a "purification" of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Parākramabāhu I actively supported Buddhism and, according to the *Cūlavaṁsa,* aspired to the four kingly aspirations: the happiness of the people, the stability of the religion, the protection of the nobility, and the support of the needy (Nicholas 1960:461). He is said to have had new monasteries built, a great alms hall constructed in the middle of the capital city Polonnaru, and even performed the *tulābhāra* ceremony annually. The *tulābhāra* was a magnificent Indic gift ceremony (*mahādāna*) performed by the king having himself weighed against valuables that were then given in charity. Unlike the Jain context of internal division just described, Parākramabāhu I's reign was one of doctrinal unification, in which he unified the *saṅgha* for the first time in Sinhalese history by bringing the three competing schools (*nikāyas)*, the Mahāvihāra, the Jetavana, and the Abhayagiri, together. His purification of the *saṅgha*, involved laicisation of corrupt monks, stricter rules in recruiting clergy (Nicholas 1960:138-9), and making the *saṅgha* as uniform as "milk and water" (*Cūlavaṁsa*, Ch. 78, v.18). Parākramabāhu I was a great supporter of learning and literary activity. He patronized a circle of scholars

and literary figures who were active in writing Pali grammars, lexicographies, poetry, and commentaries and subcommentaries on the *Vinaya*, the *Abhidhamma,* and other canonical and commentarial works.

Pali is of course the language of the Theravāda textual and ritual world emanating from Sri Lanka. Steven Collins defines the "Pali imaginaire" as "a discursive, textual world available to the imagination of cultural elites, and gradually others, in the premodern agrarian societies of Southern Asia" (Collins 1998:18). As with Sanskrit, there is much ideological value attached to Pali as a "sacred silent language" that imagines a translocal and trans-temporal "global community" of Buddhism (Anderson 1991:12-14; Collins 1998:53). The very use of Pali, not only in the Theravāda canon but also in later commentarial literature, makes a claim for universalism. Pali is said to be the natural language or "root language" (*mūla-bhāsā*) that all human beings would naturally speak if they had not been taught other languages by their parents (see Collins 1998:49). For those who command it its reach is considered universal and its expression the most appropriate vehicle for conveying ultimate truth.

The precise nature of the relationship between Pali and Sanskrit intellectual worlds remains largely unstudied, and questions of the extent to which scholars should see these linguistic cultures as closed imaginative and textual worlds remain, for the most part, largely unclear. What is evident is that for the period considered in this study, Sanskrit learning was important in Sri Lanka and it left its mark on Pali textual practices of the period. We see the influence of Sanskrit culture both in the development of a kind of Sanskritized Pali and in the attempt to write Pali works on the model of Sanskrit texts (see Norman 1997:99-100). An example of this is Mogallana's grammar of the Pali language which was composed in the school of South Indian Sanskrit grammatical conventions (Malalasekera 1958:179). Pali works on grammar, lexicography, and prosody were influenced by their authors' study of Sanskrit and the importance of Sanskrit civilization on the literary sphere (Wijesekera 1951).

Not only was this period in Sri Lankan intellectual history significantly influenced by Sanskrit genres and learning, but as in India, it was a period of writing compilations — grand projects of re-presenting the authority of the past for purposes of the present. This project generally took the form of subcommentaries *(ṭīkās)* and compendia *(saṅgaha*s) in which different schools attempted to summarize the various kinds of works that had accumulated since the master fifth-century compiler of tradition, Buddhaghosa, established Theravāda orthodoxy. Authors such as Sariputta who wrote subcommentaries on the *Vinaya* and the *Aṅguttara* and *Majjhima Nikāyas,* and Mahākassapa who wrote a Pali grammar as well as treatises on Abhidhamma and a subcommentary on the *Vinaya*, constituted, with their disciples, a flourishing circle of Pali and Sinhala scholars. Like the

Dharmaśāstra and Jain compendia, there is little new material here since the authors were quoting previous sources. What is new are the forms in which the material is given: summaries, compendia, and commentaries that treat *dāna* as a separate topic of analysis within a summary of lay morality.

Unlike the Dharmaśāstra and Jain materials under consideration, the Pali compendia tend to be summaries rather than encyclopedias. That is, where the direction of the Sanskritic material is expansive, gathering everything known on the subject, the Pali material collects and distills the essentials from a vast literature, and makes them manageable for didactic purposes. This difference should not be overdrawn, however, as some of the Pali works did move in the expansive direction and there are examples in both the Dharmaśāstra and Jain materials that tend towards contraction. But the Pali anthologies more than the others emerge as useful "handbooks" or "manuals" which often usurp the earlier canonical and more authoritative sources in their use as training material for monks up to the present day. As the author of one such summary put it, this kind of work, presented in fact as a gift, is "for those fearful of texts, for the foolish who do not know the ways of *Dhamma* discourse, let [this gift] which does not deviate from accordance with the *sutta*s and is brief, be easy to understand" (Hazlewood 1988:149).

Gregory Schopen, in discussing Guṇaprabha's *Vinaya-sūtra*, a summary of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, demonstrates how the "austere choices" that have to be made to condense a much larger amount of material can be "revealing and at times — at least to some — surprising" (Schopen 1994a:541). The choices Guṇaprabha makes as he constructs an "authoritative epitome" of doctrine from a much larger body of material are interesting in themselves because they show what one interpreter of a tradition regarded as its essentials in a particular historical instance. We glimpse a moment of an individual's specific intellectual work. The tendency of modern scholarship to neglect medieval compilations on the grounds that they are merely redundant reiterations of earlier material is challenged by this kind of analysis. How authors chose to craft an authoritative treatise out of a copious body of earlier sources is instructive in how it historicizes the production of knowledge.

My move in prioritizing the commentarial or anthology literatures from all three traditions is a deliberate attempt not only to draw notice to the historical moment of the ideas discussed in this study, but also to invert the standard scholarly practice of privileging canonical or *sūtra* sources. This choice replaces Indology's traditional fascination with origins with a focus on how South Asians in history have received and made use of knowledge from their pasts.

Texts treating the topic of *dāna* were either compendia of the rules of the lay life specifically, or more general summaries of the *Dhamma*.[32] Unlike the Jain *śrāvakācāra* material but like the Dharmaśāstra texts, the Theravāda material

under study is, in a sense, already preselected for us by what is available from the period. We do not have the same quantity of material devoted entirely to lay conduct as we do for Jains. However, scholars have perhaps somewhat overstated the contrast between Jains and Buddhists on this point, in suggesting that the Buddhists produced only one work, the *Upāsakajanālaṅkāra,* that might be similar to the vast literary output of the Jains systematizing the rules of lay moral practice (Jaini 1990:285f; Norman 1997:111). As I demonstrate here, there are in fact a number of works either devoted entirely to lay conduct or which give significant treatment to it, which simply have not attracted much modern scholarly notice.[33]

Of the texts given over entirely to lay conduct, the *Ornament of Lay People (Upāsakajanālaṅkāra)* composed by Ānanda, is a concise and elegant description of the principal duties of the householder. As Ānanda was part of a forest-dwelling monastic community at Udumbaragiri (Dimbulgala) which was generally more ascetic and disciplined than the larger monastic communities, he was ideally suited to write on austerity and discipline, even for lay people, in a climate of reform. Michael Carrithers discusses how Parākramabāhu's purification movement was led by an elder named Mahākassapa of the Dimbulgala monastery which gave the movement "the double stamp of royal authority and forest-dwelling strictness" (Carrithers 1993:173). Gunawardhana suggests that the fame that the forest monks "gained through scholarly achievement would have attracted the attention and respect of the discerning laity; some of the better known teachers and exegetists of this period belonged to this sect" (Gunawardhana 1979:47). Within this milieu Ānanda was highly praised by his student, Buddhappiya, who called him "a banner unto the island of Ceylon" (Malalasekera 1958:211). He was well-traveled in south India and may have even written the *Ornament of Lay People* there (Saddhatissa 1965:41-2).

The text itself is organized on the principles of morality *(sīla)*, meditation *(samādhi)*, and wisdom *(paññā)*, as is Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*, except that, as Charles Hallisey has pointed out, these practices are here reworked and recommended for lay people (Hallisey 1988:194). *Dāna* is discussed as the first of the standard list of the ten meritorious deeds (*dasapuññakiriyavatthūni)*: giving, morality, mental cultivation, reverence, service, transference of merit, rejoicing in [another's] merit, listening to the *dhamma*, teaching the *dhamma*, and forming correct views.[34] In contrast to the ocean imagery of the *nibandhas*, Ānanda prefers the image of his text as a jeweled ornament which is made by selecting the finest gems from a vast body of literature. In his words: "Just as a noble crown is fashioned by skilled artisans with jewels originating in numerous mines, this lucid [treatise] is here narrated, taking the essence from various discourses."[35] A further metaphor used here and in the titles of some of the compendia, is the language of selecting the "essence" (*sāra*) from a large body of confusing literature.

Belonging to the same period or earlier, since the *Ornament of Lay People* mentions and borrows from it, is the *Gift-offering of the True Dhamma (Saddhammopāyana* [SDU]), attributed to a monk called Abhayagiri Kavi-cakravarti Ānanda Mahāthera.[36] This is a religious poem containing nineteen chapters on such topics as the merits of gift giving, the precepts, meditation, merit-transference, and worship. It is in the form of a letter written by a Buddhist monk to his "dear fellow-student Buddhasoma," intended to offer a concise summary of lay practice (Hazlewood 1988:65). Although Parākramabāhu I is said to have united the three sectarian traditions (*nikāyas)* and the Mahāvihāra school was the dominant sectarian voice of the period, it is notable that this text, thought to have been written by an Abhayagiri monk because of his title, was used and influential in this period and in subsequent literature. The Abhayagiri school was said to have had Mahāyāna leanings, and indeed, these may be evident in the text's presentation of *dāna* theory. Though this was a time of unification of the three schools, that this text was written and preserved in the face of Mahāvihāra orthodoxy, shows some texture and variation in the literature.[37]

Although little is known about the author and date of the next text under consideration, the *Commentary on the Compendium of Discourses* (*Suttasaṅgahaṭṭhakathā* [SSC]*)* of Bhadantachariya Ariyawansa, it is mentioned in the *Ornament of Lay People*, which puts it in or prior to the second half of the twelfth century (Saddhatissa 1965:122; von Hinüber 1996:76). The author treats *dāna* first in his lengthy treatise which is divided into seven main sections: discussion of *dāna,* discussion of morality, discussion of heavens, the [dangers of] desires, exposition on the householder life, rejoicing in merit, and the conduct of the renouncer. This follows roughly the Graduated Sermon as a practical structuring device for instructing both the laity and monks.

The *Collection on the Meaning of the Essence* (*Sāratthasamuccaya* [SAS]), also called the *Catubhānavāraṭṭhakathā,* was also an important text from the period. It was compiled from the existing commentaries of Buddhaghosa and Dhammapāla and adapted for the use of novice monks.[38] The compiler was the pupil of Venerable Ānanda Vanaratana Mahāthero of the Mahāvihāra *paramparā* of the twelfth century, but his name is not known. This text is similar to the *Suttasaṅgahaṭṭhakathā* in that though called a commentary (*aṭṭhakathā*) it is in reality a compilation. It provides previous commentaries on twenty-seven *suttas*, of which I will be considering only one, the *Maṅgalasutta*[39] and then only its discussion on *dāna.*

The *Compendium of the Essence (Sārasaṅgaha* [SRS]*)* is a somewhat later handbook comprised of previous canonical and commentarial texts which the author names and discusses in his introduction. It was composed by Siddhattha, disciple of Buddhappiya, of the Dakkiṇārāma monastery. According to the editor,

G.H. Sasaki, this Buddhappiya is the same as the one mentioned in the *Cūlavaṃsa*, a South Indian from the Chola kingdom. This text was composed in the late thirteenth century probably as a source of instruction for monks (Sasaki 1992:vii). It was used for teaching the essentials of Buddhism to monks, and has been used this way up to the present day in Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Thailand, where it has been translated into all of their regional languages. *Dāna* is discussed as the first in a list of meritorious deeds (*puññakamma*) in a structure similar to that in the *Ornament of Lay People*.

In addition to these works, there are also story anthologies which narrate the benefits of *dāna* and other moral and religious practices. The *Service of the Ten Requisites (Dasavatthuppakaraṇa)* is analogous to the Jain narrative collection on *dāna* stories mentioned above, *Eight Stories on Giving*, in that it celebrates the merit to be obtained for giving each of the ten requisites to monks: food, drink, robes, vehicles, flowers, perfume, ointment, a resting place, dwelling place and lamps. Similar to this anthology are the *Sīhaḷavatthupakaraṇa,* the *Sahassavatthu*, and the *Rasavāhinī,* all of which praise the importance of *dāna*.

That the *Compendium of the Essence* was produced in the century following Parākramabāhu I, in a period not of unification, but of political fragmentation suggests that the production of these compendia was not necessarily or even closely tied to any particular local or political formation. As K.M. de Silva says, "if the fragmentation of the Sri Lanka polity had a deleterious effect on religion, and was inconducive to any remarkable achievement in art and architecture, it scarcely affected development in literature" (de Silva 1981:94). While the Theravāda compendia first began in the reign of Parākramabāhu I in a period of unification and purification, they continued to be produced in Sri Lanka in periods of political instability, and then later came to be composed in Thailand as well under still different circumstances.

Viewed translocally, the stability of this literature across political changes points to an important feature of these discourses not only in Sri Lanka, but across medieval South Asia. The production of the medieval *dāna* discourses, whether by kings or Jain or Buddhist monks is not easily associated with any single political, religious, or social pattern. While the Theravāda compendia were first produced largely during a period of unification of the internal divisions of the Theravāda, the Jain compendia were composed in a period of increasing sectarian and doctrinal schisms. While the Jains enjoyed considerable political prestige and power in Hemacandra's day, the production of *śrāvakācāras* continued even when Jains did not enjoy such status. The production of *dānanibandhas* occurred in periods of increasingly insecure brahmanical power, which in turn were quite different from the role of Buddhist power during the reign of Parākramabāhu I.

That the political conditions that contribute to the production of gift-giving ideologies vary is interesting. On the one hand, as we have seen, state support of literary production on gift giving seems to be a critical element in understanding the advent of these compositions. Kings and learned spokesmen for kings saw in gift-giving rhetoric a mechanism for securing social and political order. Yet, the variety of political conditions that produce these gift discourses is also noteworthy. Production of gift-giving ideologies marches on even in the absence of strong royal support.

Although the medieval shift of attention to writing compendia for lay practice can be understood in part by vertical and internal developments in Sri Lankan history, we can also consider translocal factors that made Buddhists attend to and fortify the position of the laity, which may have resonance with the other two traditions' activity in the same period. By further integrating the laity into the Buddhist tradition, especially through an elaboration of face-to-face giving relations, the Theravāda is unified and strengthened against external foes and internal schisms.

It is should also be noted that Theravāda writers were not in the same kind of immediate contact with Dharmaśāstra norms in the way that the Jain writers were. Although Tamil Hinduism, especially Śaivism, was present, there is no evidence that Theravāda Buddhist authors were aware of or employed Dharmaśāstra theory or law (Huxley 1990). Jains were probably known to them only as shadowy figures from the canonical sources.

Indeed, the exact relations of Sri Lankan intelligentsia to larger intellectual cultures is problematic. Sri Lanka is in many ways part of the Indic cultural and intellectual world, yet sometimes stands apart from it. Though I have noted ways in which Sanskrit learning influenced the production of Pali texts in this period, Sri Lankan intellectual culture never fully embraced Sanskrit. Sheldon Pollock has noted that Sri Lanka is a "hole" in the Sanskrit Cosmopolis, the vast translocal literary and aesthetic culture that stretched outside of India to other places in Southeast Asia, such as Cambodia and Java, and which flourished for a millennium between roughly 300 CE and 1300 CE, before it was gradually displaced by public discourse in the vernaculars (Pollock 1996; 1998). Why Sri Lanka never embraced Sanskrit as its chief language of public and political expression, as its Southeast Asian neighbors did, is not well understood. However, we do know that Buddhist monks throughout their history in Sri Lanka, but particularly in medieval times (eleventh to thirteenth centuries) studied Sanskrit as part of their monastic education, and that there was a steady flow of scholars to and from India. How their participation in Sanskrit and in Sanskrit discourses may have influenced their Pali scholarship and how Pali discourses may have influenced Sanskritic ones has not been fully examined, but considering the Buddhist materials in the light of San-

skrit tradition may be instructive for increasing our understanding both of the Pali intellectual imagination as well as South Asian intellectual history more generally.

The scholar monks' choice to preserve these texts not in the vernacular, but in Pali, a translocal language in its own right, suggests the conscious use of the same kind of rhetorical voice that we have seen in the Dharmaśāstra and Jain texts.[40] It is a voice that attempts to instantiate universal values in a particular place and time, to crystallize the essentials of the tradition, and to deny opposition and difference. One of the challenges of handling this kind of material then is to historicize texts whose self-presentation is ahistorical, to bring multiple levels of analysis to what is essentialist, and to imagine a culturally diverse world which the rhetorical voice in the texts themselves may be trying to suppress.

Finally it should be noted that, while Indian Mahāyāna treatises on moral conduct can offer some intriguing points of comparison, they do not occupy a central role in this study. Again, a translocal and transreligious angle of vision offers a novel perspective that does not unfold along expected boundaries of religious identity. On matters of structural human relationships examined here in the context of gift giving, Theravāda Buddhist theorists share more with their Jain and Dharmaśāstra counterparts than they do with their Mahāyāna cousins. That Theravādins might share more on certain aspects of gift giving ideology with non-Buddhists than with fellow Buddhists may be surprising. But perhaps it is not so surprising after all. The *bodhisattva* ethic is in many ways concerned with rethinking the religious meaning of gift giving, and the Mahāyāna revolution demonstrates a radical departure from Theravāda and other traditional Indic modes of hierarchy and social order.

THE USE OF INSCRIPTIONS

The medieval texts under consideration here overlap historically with a widespread project of recording donative inscriptions in the medieval period, often in the vernacular idiom. Historians working on the epigraphic record in Chola times in Tamil India (Stein 1980; Heitzman 1997; Orr 2000), on donative inscriptions from the ninth century C.E. in Andhra Pradesh (Stein 1959-60; Talbot 2001), on Buddhist sites across the subcontinent (Schopen 1997), and others have generated conclusions about gift-giving practices that differ sharply from what normative texts may lead us to expect. Inscriptions, etched in stone, copper plates, and temple walls across South Asia, depict a medieval world of men and women giving religious gifts which is much more complex sociologically than the normative texts suggest. For instance, while the normative traditions emphasize lay giving of alms to brahmans and monks, we find inscriptions indicating that giving was not solely a lay prerogative. Very often monks, nuns, and brahmans represent themselves in

inscriptions as pious donors with gifts of land and wealth to sustain religious life at temples. Moreover, donors of all sorts are often giving not to individuals but are instead patronizing religious institutions: temples, monasteries, and deities. Inscriptions give us access to concrete public expressions of individual acts of piety and religious giving, with precise records of the donor, the recipient, and sometimes, the donor's motivations for making the gift.

Close work on inscriptional history is necessary and long overdue as a corrective to the overemphasis and privileging of normative and doctrinal accounts of South Asian civilization that characterized the field for much of its history. The textual and normative picture of precolonial Indic civilization has perhaps been for so long regnant that historians delight in uncovering disjunctures between official religious ideology and "real" concrete practices and motivations demonstrable "on the ground." Cynthia Talbot shows through her study of medieval donative inscriptions in Andhra that "how people actually behaved was often not how the *Dharmaśāstra* said they should behave. And such discrepancies make the study of inscriptions particularly rewarding" (Talbot 2001:79). Gregory Schopen exposes modern scholarship's "Protestant" preferences for doctrine and text over archeological and epigraphic evidence, and, quite rightly, derides the uncritical use of normative doctrine as reflecting the actual lives of historical Buddhist men and women (Schopen 1991).

Recent studies of medieval stone inscriptions are thus carried out in dialogue with, but more often against, normative traditions. This is perhaps as it should be, at least for now, as South Asian studies creeps toward a broader use of historiographic tools and frames of reference, and thereby dislodges an overly normative and Sanskritic reading of South Asian civilization. Yet it would be unwise in the present climate to dismiss completely normative and doctrinal textual study. For one thing, as we have seen, the inscriptions themselves sometimes cite the normative texts, such as that of Hemādri. In addition, the normative traditions, though they may represent themselves as timeless and unchanging, are in fact developing and responding to the times in which they were composed and reaffirmed. My focus on the medieval compendia is a choice *not* to treat normative doctrine as ahistorical and unitary, thus countering many modern anthropological and historical writers who allow Manu to stand in for the entire Dharmaśāstra tradition. Rather, this study treats the compendia as products of their time as well as participants in an ancient and enduring tradition. They belong to the medieval world and bring the articulation of textual traditions into view at precisely the time in which many regional practices were involved in articulating gifts and patronage in a public way. They were composed, compiled, commented on, and circulated even while donative inscriptions were being chiseled in stone.

Clearly the study of archeological and inscriptional evidence offers a slice of the past that Dharmaśāstra and Jain and Buddhist doctrinal discourses do not deliver. Inscriptions introduce us to historical persons and actual acts in a way that normative literature does not. Yet, as much as inscriptions allow historians to assign "greatest weight to the documented activities of real individuals rather than to the normative ideals prevalent in much of the contemporary literature" and provide access to social actors of a much greater variety than merely the elite (Talbot 2001:11), a word of caution should be yet be voiced. Inscriptions are public expressions of a particular sort. They record significant gifts to temples and institutions rather than face-to-face generosity of every day gifts between persons. Donors generally did not hire scribes and artisans to record in stone their placing a bit of food in the alms bowl of a traveling monk who dropped by that morning. Moreover, while inscriptions record many different types of donors — religious men and women, merchants, traders, local chiefs and village headmen, soldiers, ministers, kings, queens, and different kinds of brahmans — they are still depicting the prestige and aspirations of those who can afford to give and record noteworthy gifts. Finally, while inscriptions can sometimes allow us to glimpse the personality and circumstances of the donor, they are still formulaic and stylized rather than entirely individual and personal expressions of devotion. They are still idealized representations of practice.

In contrast, what the normative traditions provide for the scholar of religion is imagined possibilities for ideal social and religious encounters between persons. Intriguingly, as evidence from the inscriptional record makes clear, recorded religious giving was increasingly patronage to religious institutions, that is, sites, temples, monasteries, brahman communities *en masse*, and deities. Donative inscriptions record acts of worship similar to other displays of piety and devotion such as making vows and going on pilgrimages. Yet, most of the normative texts considered here are theorizing giving to persons — face-to-face giving or royal and ceremonial gifts to people rather than institutions. They thus offer an ethical view — what people think they should do with and for one another — that is not readily available in the inscriptional record.

THE COMPARATIVE PROJECT

This study is an exercise in cultivating scholarly imaginative practices to consider ways in which ideology and learning circulated in medieval South Asian civilization. Were medieval scholars participating in, reacting to, or outright rejecting larger conversations? What were the ways in which the Theravādins were looking both toward and away from India, by use of language choice, scholastic genre, and ideology? How were Dharmaśāstra writers perceiving the developments of other

similar alternatives to their visions of ethical and social life? In what ways do the Jain sources offer a critique of the dominant Dharmaśāstra ideology of the day?

One of the primary objectives of this book is to draw attention to translocal scholastic practices that were shared across medieval South Asia. Though I am well aware of, and will draw attention to, critical differences among the three traditions' articulations of gift theory, I believe that similarities in genre and ideology across these three traditions' medieval literatures warrant a pan-Indic angle of vision. Moreover, such a translocal and comparative approach will be helpful for understanding each tradition's gift theory in a way that studying them in isolation could not be.

Comparison in this study works on a number of different levels. On one level, the main comparative project is to compare and contrast the textual treatments of *dāna* in the texts outlined in this chapter. The study is confined empirically and historically to a selection of texts mostly from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, from the three religious traditions. The perspective is necessarily partial — no single study could treat comprehensively all of the medieval theoretical output on *dāna*. It is thus not an exhaustive comparative study, but rather more of a well-controlled experiment, in which careful selections of texts are considered together. While results of this comparative project are necessarily tentative, they nevertheless suggest a broader scope of vision that can reconfigure the contours of medieval South Asian civilization and its various religious identities and elite mentalities.

This study also works on another level of comparison. I sometimes refer to texts or stories from South Asia outside of the traditions and the period studied here. Similarly, I refer often to non-South Asian materials in order to suggest analogous or contrasting perspectives on the ethics of the gift. These comparisons are invoked specifically for heuristic purposes, to highlight what is distinctive about a particular idea or theory. Comparison at this level is intended to teach us something about both elements of the comparison that can be usefully illuminated by juxtaposition. Unlike the translocal project of comparison, which sometimes involves a kind of "discovery" of shared and common elements of medieval South Asian gift theory, it is not the aim of this second level of comparison to uncover any underlying commonality (though similarities may emerge). Rather, comparison at this level is meant to do something for our understanding by raising larger questions, highlighting assumptions, and exploring possibilities. It is at this second level of comparison that what is distinctive about the gift theories of many medieval Theravāda, Jain, and Dharmaśāstra writers as well as other thinkers can be cast into sharp relief.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DONOR

EXPECTATIONS OF RECIPROCITY

When Marcel Mauss framed his discussion of gift giving as a set of obligations to give, to receive, and to reciprocate, he was giving voice to a long tradition in European thought that identifies social solidarity and integration in terms of reciprocity. Given this emphasis on mutuality, it is somewhat surprising that Mauss does not mention the Stoic Seneca's *De Beneficiis*, since Seneca's philosophy of the gift has been so influential in European thought and shares much with Mauss on the social value of mutual exchange (see Goux 2002; Davis 2000:8). For Seneca, as with Mauss, the gift is to be given freely and yet it bears obligations for the recipient: "the giving of a benefit is a social act, it wins the goodwill of someone, it lays someone under obligation" (Basore 1958:321). These obligations work as social glue that binds human beings to one another.

Seneca inveighs against nothing so much as ingratitude, for the ingrate fails to realize how mutual exchange is the condition of security and fellowship: "there is nothing that so effectually disrupts and destroys the harmony of the human race as this vice,"

> For how else do we live in security if it is not that we help each other by an exchange of good offices? It is only through the interchange of benefits that life becomes in some measure equipped and fortified against sudden disasters. Take us singly, and what are we? The prey of all creatures, their victims, whose blood is most delectable and most easily secured. For, while other creatures possess a strength that is adequate for their self-protection, and those that are born to be wanderers and to lead an isolated life have been given weapons, the covering of man is a frail skin; no might of claws or of teeth makes him a terror to others, naked and weak as he is, his safety lies in fellowship (Basore 1958:241).

Giving and gratitude create the bonds of fellowship cementing harmonious human relations and security thorough mutual aid and acknowledgement.

Mauss is perhaps not as quick as Seneca to identify gift exchange as the key to human *survival*, but still for him mutual gift exchange, as practiced in pre-modern or clan-based societies much less driven by mores of *Homo Economicus* than modern capitalist societies, is the key to human solidarity. The gift is a moral relation, and Mauss's essay, like Seneca's, has moral implications: Mauss calls for us to return to archaic society, to "social security" and "the solicitude arising from reciprocity and co-operation" (Mauss 1990:69). This is not to suggest that he recognized no tensions in the gift, and that these tensions never cause a breach in the social fabric. The gift courts violence, debt, competition and agonistic conflict. However, apart from excessive gifts such as potlatch, the gift, for Mauss as with Seneca, is the bedrock of human moral relations, and the study of gift circulation is the study of social interconnectedness.

Against this perspective on the gift as a mechanism of social solidarity through mutual exchange, South Asian theories of *dāna* offer a sharp contrast. *Dāna*, according to all formal discussion on it, is not obligated in any way. It does not evoke return from the recipient, and is not premised on a notion of reciprocity and interdependence. As the Dharmaśāstra author Lakṣmīdhara bluntly states: "reciprocal gifts are not part of *dharma*."[1] Moreover, *dāna* does not and should not inspire gratitude from the recipient. Mauss himself was not unaware of these features of *dāna* ideology, and acknowledges, in a footnote, the lack of obligations of return in gifts given to brahmans (Mauss 1990:146-7). Indologists and others have puzzled over the significance of this denial in *dāna* theory of the otherwise apparently ubiquitous principle of reciprocity, both in terms of what it suggests about Indian thought as well as what this large-scale exception might mean for Mauss's general conclusions.[2]

One view of the Indian denial of reciprocity is that while *dāna* theory denies earthly reciprocity it, like the sacrificial cult it replaced, yields religious merit and reward in the afterlife (Trautmann 1981:279-82). *Dāna* is to be given not for earthly recompense from the recipient, but for spiritual merit, wherein one is repaid in the next life for religious gifts given in this life. One gives with an eye fixed not on the recipient's gratitude and counter-gift, but on one's next life where one reaps the rewards of merit. In this view, *dāna* may be an instrument of social life that arranges certain forms of human relationships, but its social dimension is a byproduct rather than a central feature of the gift.

To be sure, there is much in South Asian *dāna* theories that expound the rewards that attend properly bestowed gifts; a standard preoccupation of much narrative literature from the three traditions is to celebrate the merit of gift giving. Yet, simultaneously gifts are discussed in the medieval *dāna* treatises as aspects of

social etiquette incumbent upon those who regard themselves as members of moral communities. The texts have some prescriptive authority, not technically as law books, but as guides to social norms. *Dāna* is not enjoined in these contexts solely as a religious obligation, but also as a moral duty. Their attention to the face-to-face aspects of the gift and the bonds and relationships it creates suggest that viewing the gift only in reference to its soteriological purposes is to deflect the significance of the normative social etiquette that the texts take such care to articulate.

If this is so, how does the social morality of *dāna* ideologies work when it is not based on reciprocity and gratitude? What sorts of human ties are cultivated in non-reciprocated and uni-directional generosity? For Seneca, ingratitude is generosity's opposite; for the South Asian theorists, the ideal forms of generosity disavow any moral significance to gratitude or repayment.[3] How then does *dāna* articulate moral relations outside of gratitude, reciprocity, and mutual exchange?

"PURE" INTENTIONS

Where unidirectional giving is thinkable, one may then wonder if pure and selfless gestures are possible. Is the unreturned gift simply gratuitous, disinterested, free? What motivates the donor to give if it is not reciprocity from the recipient? Such questions direct us to the donor and the nature of the donor's motivations, intentions, and dispositions.

In places, despite the centrality of *dāna* in merit-making calculations, the medieval theorists argue that the best donor gives disinterestedly. All of the Dharmaśāstra compendia idealize the most righteous gift (*dharmadāna*) as "that which is given constantly to worthy recipients without regard to any ends, only with the thought of giving up."[4] The denial of reciprocity itself might suggest the possibility of disinterest. Ballālasena says that a *dāna* is fruitless when given to one's benefactor and Lakṣmīdhara argues that gifts given for the sake of returning a favor are demonic.[5] Lakṣmīdhara says that a *dharmic* gift is given to a worthy recipient and without any consideration of motive.[6] He cites a suggestive verse which he attributes to the *Mahābhārata*:

> [The donor] obtains unseen [fruit] when the gift is seen but not recognized and not returned; for him, the gift is endless.[7]

The gift is seen but not recognized as a gift and so no element of gratitude or reciprocity can enter in. Endless merit occurs when the gift is not even noticed by the recipient, which rules out any possibility of return or acknowledgement.

The verse suggests intriguing parallels to Jacques Derrida's ideas about how the only true gift is the one that is forgotten immediately by both the donor and the

receiver, in order to keep it out of the circuit of exchange: "For there to be gift, not only must the donor or donee not perceive or receive the gift as such, have no consciousness of it, no memory, no recognition; he or she must also forget it right away" (Derrida 1992:16). For Derrida, the paradox of the gift is that once it is perceived as such it is consumed in the cycle of obligation, return, debt, and counter-gift. The giver is filled with a sense of superiority and self-congratulation while the recipient is aware of the obligation generated by the imbalance of the gift. Thus for the gift to happen it must not be recognized as a gift, making the gift, in effect, impossible.

An intriguing tale from an 11th century Jain story collection by Jineśvara Sūri, also anticipates Derrida's skepticism.[8] In the debate, a layman named Jalla doubts the possibility of a "pure gift." In Paul Dundas' rendering, the discussion unfolds along the following lines:

> In particular, Jalla claims, something which has not been reflected upon in advance is impossible, and so everybody is obliged to think about alms to ascetics before the actual act of giving them. Even if there is purity of the object to be given, the pure giver must be the one who gives without expectation of recompense. This cannot be, since everybody gives with expectation, even when giving piously. Jalla clinches his position, at least to his own satisfaction, with the assertion that he himself listens to the religious discourse of his teacher simply in order that he may gain happiness in the next world. So there cannot be purity of giver. Furthermore, there cannot be purity of receiver, since when just one element of morality is missing (and can there really exist an ascetic whose moral control is truly complete?), the whole edifice of morality is destroyed (Dundas 2002:3).

By these exacting criteria, a pure donor must give disinterestedly, without desire for return of any sort. Though *dāna* is usually conceived of as one of the chief merit-making activities in Jainism, and as such is inherently oriented toward merit, here even the expectation of such rewards sullies the purity of the donor. The recipient must also be pure, which here means that he lack even a single moral blemish, restricting *dāna* to giving to the impossibly virtuous. Moreover, much hangs upon these criteria actually being met — it is *dāna* that is said to underpin morality itself.

As Dundas points out, Jalla's views are denounced by the other debaters and probably did not come to have great practical impact; yet such a critique exposes the "hidden tensions" of the gift (Dundas 2002:3). In addition to its resonance with Derrida, the language of purity here will strike those acquainted with recent anthropological theory as familiar. The idea of a pure gift is used in the anthropological literature to denote an altruistic, selfless gift that is given with no expectation of return. Anthropologists often draw a sharp distinction between the

economic self-interest of the market place on the one side and the disinterested gift on the other.[9] The pure gift is defined and valued in opposition to the market place where economic man pursues his own utility. The ideal of the pure gift is everything a market commodity is not: it is unreciprocated, disinterested, based on sentiment, and free. Moreover, the notion of the pure gift is thought to be a modern invention, finding no antecedent in the "primitive" cultures encountered by the anthropologist (Parry 1986:458).

The Jain example then suggests something of an exception in that it articulates in a premodern (though certainly not "primitive") culture a notion of the pure gift. That it emerges from a highly mercantile culture may not be accidental. It is perhaps not unexpected that in traditions close to markets and commercial exchange disinterested giving is highly idealized because it is perceived as rare.

It should be noted that there is a long and revered tradition in South Asian intellectual and religious history that values disinterested action. One need only turn to a central message in the *Bhagavad Gītā* to find a religious ethic of disinterested action. However, a particular concern with absolutely pure disinterested gifts, while not unknown in the *dāna* texts considered, as we have just seen, is not widely enjoined by the South Asian theorists. More feasible, from their point of view, is not to promote disinterest, but to prescribe the right sorts of interests. Certainly one is to be disinterested in a return from the recipient, but there are other returns possible. In a world radically causal through the mechanisms of karma, it is difficult to consistently deny or overlook that spiritual and practical rewards follow from moral action and that they have a part in guiding human morality. Good deeds such as giving result in pleasing merit through karma. It is deemed natural that merit will provide an incentive for inspiring *dāna*.

But even on this point, there are divergent views within each tradition. For some theorists in all three traditions, desire for reward is not problematic as long as the desires are of a higher sort. Merit-mongering rather than more lofty spiritual aims is disdained. The Jain author Hemacandra argues that one should not really consider the karmic merit one gets by the gift, or should at least think of it as incidental. He is expressing here a Jain rejection of "bartering" that regards with distaste yearning after rewards of religious and moral action (Jaini 2000:115). According to Hemacandra, the direct fruit of *dāna* to a worthy recipient is liberation just as grain is the direct result of agriculture, and pleasures, like chaff, are merely by-products; the incidental benefits and rewards are described only for simple people.[10]

The Dharmaśāstra authors had their own typologies for sorting out desires and interests. Ballālasena ranks the motives of merit-making in terms originating from the ancient Sāṅkhya system of qualities: base, passionate, good, and "higher

than the qualities," which come to frame how to understand the motives underlying a gift.

> The fruit of all merit is said by the thoughtful to be fourfold: what is done irregularly and for the sake of cheating others by one overcome with anger or greed is designated as base *(tāmasa).* What is done because of pride is passionate *(rājasa).* O Twice-borns, what is done out of the highest esteem (*śraddhā)* becomes good (*sāttvika).* But what is done without desire should be known as higher than the qualities *(guṇa).* A mortal who enjoys the fruit of what is base has an animal nature in the afterlife. Brahmans, whoever enjoys the fruit of what is passionate becomes mortal. And the one who enjoys the fruit of what is good, [is reborn] in the state of a god — about this there is no doubt. But the fruit of what is done that transcends these qualities is called liberation.[11]

Different shades of motivation are recognized here which in turn determine the nature of the reward. The sense then of "higher than the qualities" or "better in quality"*(guṇottara),* a motive aiming at liberation, allows for a quality outside of the conditioned nature of ordinary existence. This hierarchy of motivation suggests that merit-making is to be done ideally without desire and that such action is of a different order altogether. Ballālasena confirms elsewhere that liberation, alongside such desires as heaven and peace, is an appropriate motivation for *dāna.*[12]

Most of the Buddhist material treats *dāna* as an ethical practice in the context of merit-making, but there are undercurrents that also suggest the only true interest is a desire for liberation.[13] In one place the *Compendium of the Essence* says:

> Whether there is something small such as a meritorious *dāna* of only a handful of vegetables, or something great such as the merit of the *dāna* of Velāma [a famous and generous donor], if one desires success in rebirth (*saṁsāra*), then it is established wrongly because it is connected to rebirth and one is able only to reach rebirth, not liberation. But if one is able to give with the desire for liberation [thinking]: "let my *dāna* lead to the extinction of the cankers," then [this is] established correctly with respect to liberation, even Arhatship, the knowledge of Solitary Buddhas and Omniscience.[14]

That this passage is embedded in larger discussions of merit-making and the worldly and heavenly fruits of *dāna* does not seem to trouble the author. That a gift will have a benefit in *saṁsāra* is not denied. But here it is possible to give for the sake of liberation, and the only true desire is liberation, the extinction of the cankers including desire.[15] As in the Jain case, the renunciation of desiring the fruit of merit-making approaches desireless activity.

The narrative literature also allows that *dāna* can lead to liberation, as evidenced by the well-known story of Vessantara. The Bodhisattva was born as Vessantara in the life just prior to his final birth as Siddhartha, and it was Vessantara's extreme generosity of giving away his wife and children that allowed him to be reborn as Siddhartha who would go on to become the Buddha. Here there is a definite causal relationship between *dāna* and liberation, and the very fact that it was the perfection of *dāna* that the Bodhisattva needed to cultivate in his penultimate birth before he could become the Buddha is significant. It suggests that the most difficult virtue to master is *dāna*, and that the Bodhisattva perfected it by making the most difficult kind of gift, that is, to give away his loved ones.[16]

None of the passages that posit disinterested giving deny that fruits and benefits follow from *dāna*. Instead they try to replace the benefits with higher order desires. Rather than seeking pleasures from *dāna*, practitioners should aspire by their gift to the highest goals of these religious traditions — a state free from desire at all. It may be, as Ilana Silber has argued for similar religious gifts in the 11-12th century Catholic Church, that such spiritual gifts, through their intangibility and remoteness, approach disinterested or pure gifts. For Silber, "whatever the conviction in some form of return, there is thus a potent element of undeterminancy, asymmetry and indirectedness, and an undeniable 'leap of faith' on the part of the donor — features powerfully linking donations to monasteries to Parry's generic category of the 'pure,' religious gift" (Silber 1995:215). In this view, the more spiritualized and abstract the fruits of *dāna* are conceived to be, the more they approach the notion of a "pure" or "disinterested" gift.

It is also evident that giving itself is sometimes conceived as an act of "giving up" whereby the donor can practice religious renunciation, although in none of the texts is *dāna* configured entirely or exclusively in these terms. The Dharmaśāstra authors sometimes define *dāna* as *tyāga*, renunciation,[17] and this same virtue is also praised in a general way by the Theravāda text *The Compendium of the Essence*.[18] In addition, the Buddhist *Ornament of Lay People* claims that a virtuous donor gives with a mind that is not grasping, that is not enveloped with greed, suggesting that *dāna* dislodges attachment and avarice.[19] The Jain commentator Siddhasena Gaṇin, often quite scrupulous, treats the idea of *dāna* as renunciation quite carefully when commenting on the *Tattvārtha Sūtra's* defining of *dāna* in terms of relinquishment (*atisarga*). This relinquishment, according to Siddhasena Gaṇin, is giving up, "but the word giving up (*tyāga*) does not mean here mere abandoning, but rather a special presentation, that is, a presentation to the Tīrthaṅkaras or to fellow Jains."[20] This would indicate that he sees the gift as being oriented in a formal way toward the recipient, rather than merely an opportunity for lay Jain donors to practice the ideals of austerity so prized by their religion by casting off their possessions.

Yet, alongside these highly spiritualized notions of giving there are other voices, which are in fact dominant in the South Asian discourses, that make no apology for the worldly pleasures of all sorts that accompany giving. Much more typical is the view reflected in this statement in the brahmanical *Sea of Giving*: "gods, mortals and brahmans praise giving, for it is by giving that one obtains whatever desires that the mind wishes."[21] That meritorious actions such as *dāna* bring benefit to their agent is simply a fact of a moral theory set against the backdrop of a karmic worldview. As Richard Gombrich puts it, in a karmic worldview "prudence and true morality must necessarily coincide" (Gombrich 1971:288). *Dāna*, as merit-making activity, is importantly teleological in that it is directed toward making religious merit that the giver will enjoy in this world and the next.

The language of "fruit" is central to Indic ethics in that every action is thought to have a karmic consequence, and the world is morally structured in such a way that *dāna* automatically produces a good reward for the donor. Moral action is illustrated by the imagery of sowing or planting good deeds in the world which in turn yield produce or fruits. In gift giving this metaphor of cultivation is particularly germane: one plants the seed of a good action in a suitable field of a recipient which yields, often exponentially, the fruits of one's effort. All actions have effects, and good actions are known to be good because they bring about further good actions or good states in the world. Giving is good and should be done because it yields worldly benefits, such as fame and popularity in this life, and merit, which will bring about a desirable rebirth in the next. All of the elements in gift giving — the donor, the recipient, the gift, and the manner of giving — are evaluated on their ability to yield merit or fruit.

That good actions produce good fruits is simply assumed — few authors ever actually *argued* that merit follows from *dāna* or other meritorious action, because it is so fundamentally part of the religious structure of the world of karma. There are instances in some of the material which indicate that an opposing view was held by heretics who denied *dāna* or the efficacy of it, but they are considered so beyond the pale that they are generally not treated seriously.[22]

Assumed at the philosophical level the doctrine of meritorious consequences of *dāna* is elaborated at the narrative level. Most of the *dāna* stories in all three literatures are simple tales celebrating the earthly and heavenly pleasures one receives from giving. Often the format becomes quite mechanical and predictable — one who gives a dwelling to a monk in one life resides in a gem-studded palace in the next. The narrative anthologies in both the Jain *Eight Stories on Giving* and the Theravādin *Service of the Ten Requisites* consider the process from the side of reaping the benefits. If a person is wealthy and successful in this life, we can know that he or she gave generously in a previous life. The converse of course is also

true and equally elaborated. A person in poverty and wretchedness in this life was clearly mean and stingy in a previous one.

Manu expounds that the nature of the gift determines the nature of the fruit in a manner in which like begets like: the donor of a lamp receives in the next life excellent eyesight, the giver of gold receives long life, of silver, superb beauty (Manu 4.229-30).[23] For the most meritorious *dāna* all of the variables must be properly aligned; the merit will vary as the quality of the recipient or the material gift varies, resulting in complicated calculations of adding merit and subtracting demerit. Anthropologists have observed that such accounting is not always simply idle textual scholasticism. Melford Spiro describes how some of the Burmese villagers he worked with kept actual account books listing their gifts and calculating them so that the benefit from their merit-making activities would be sure to outweigh the demerit acquired by their wrong deeds (Spiro 1982:111).

This kind of calculation suggests a blatant prudential or egoistic morality. The Jain layman's disdain of self-interest in the debate and aspirations of spiritual liberation aside, most Indic theorists saw a natural affinity and association of morality and pleasurable reward. Since the reward for good action follows naturally, there is no reason not to take pleasure in it. Most of the Indic authors under study would find rather odd Seneca's Stoic protest that virtue is never to be associated with pleasure. For Seneca, "virtue despises pleasure, is its enemy, and recoils from it as far as it can" (Basore 1958:207-8). But in a karmic world there is no reason for morality to hate or distrust pleasure since it itself is productive of it. Morality has double effects: it is good for others and good for oneself. In addition to delighting in reaping religious merit, as we shall see, the pleasurable benefits one experiences naturally in providing aid to fellow human beings in no way need distance it from morality.

INTENTIONS, MOTIVATIONS, AND VIRTUES

We cannot always know the inner depths from which human action springs. Human motivations for performing moral actions remain invisible to scholars and observers who necessarily remain outside. The lack of direct access to a donor's intentions and motivations did not deter the medieval *dāna* theorists from attempting to regulate and prescribe them, however. In their view, the intent prompting moral action could be subject to rules and regulations, and the various thought moments that produce and are produced by an ideal *dāna* could be subject to normative analysis.

Native categories for intentionality depict a much wider perspective on the donor's motivation than merely whether or not the donor is disinterested. We find that reflection on *dāna* allows for close scrutiny of interpersonal dispositions and how a donor regards the other aspects of the gift: the recipient, the gift itself, and

the manner in which the gift is given. The motivations and dispositions are often affective, indicating an emotional involvement in the act and toward the recipient.

Not only did most of the medieval authors not prohibit the donor's interest and pleasure in making a gift, but sometimes they even prescribed them. The various moments of feeling and thought that comprise a gift are elaborated in great detail, and pleasure and good feeling are to be present throughout. A verse often quoted in the Theravāda compendia reads

> Before giving, one is happy
> Giving, one calms the mind,
> Having given, one is pleased:
> These are the attainments of giving (*yaññā*).[24]

The verse identifies three discrete moments of *dāna*: before, during, and after. Before the gift one should be happy and willing to give. During the gift, the act itself works on the mind to calm and soothe it, while after the gift one should still retain pleasure at the gift by not regretting it. The final line is also suggestive: it says that these states of mind are *attainments* of giving. As attainments or accomplishments, they are conceived to be caused by the act rather than as mental states that cause the act.[25] There is a markedly nonlinear process at work here in which both the act and the intent generate the pleasure that conditions the other.

Our grasp of the complexity of Buddhist theories of intention is still somewhat limited, but in these compendia we get a sense of the various and complex thought processes that give rise to moral action. Intention is often analyzed as discrete moments occurring over time. The *Ornament of Lay People* says that intentions (*cetanā*) are threefold: before, while giving, and after, and provides this explanation:

> Here "before" means: for the one for whom, for the sake of giving an appropriate gift righteously and justly the thought arises, "I will give," who seeks out a worthy recipient, as long [as it is indeed followed by the actual] transferring or placing the object into the hand of the recipient, then the prior intention occurs. Now, the "intention that occurs during the giving" is the intention of the transference, the intention while placing into the hand of the recipient. "After" refers to the intention in the future that arises for one reflecting [on it] with a happy mind and who does not have any [lingering] attachment for the thing that was given, thinking "it is good and it is great that an excellent gift was given by me!"[26]

The English word "intention" would seem to fail us here, since it usually indicates a prior thought moment prompting an act, rather than thoughts also inspired during the act and future moments of remembrance of it. But for the Theravādins, all of these thoughts are important and relevant for the moral value of the act.

Intentionality is also defined in terms of pleasure pervading the gift process. Giving is to be anticipated, carried out, and recollected with sustained delight.

The Jains elaborate a similar structure of the gift process in their narrative literature on giving and can be seen to share with the Buddhists an emphasis on intention. The donor is happy when he sees the monks arriving thinking that he will give alms, and then he is happy while giving alms, and also afterwards.[27] Siddhasena Gaṇin says that the donor should be joyful in wanting to give, while giving, and after having given. His attentiveness to the details of the thought processes involved in a gift is worth quoting at length.

> Since the recipient is defined as someone with virtue, there should be no ill will [on the part of the donor], which means that [the donor] has forbearance. [The donor has] a pure (or pleased) mind, [thinking] "I am fortunate that ascetics are entering my house." There should be no impatience [and one should not think]: "Everyday they visit us, even though we despise them." And one does not grieve at giving something up, which means one does not regret the food, and so on, which is given. Regret means being downcast [which occurs] for one lacking esteem thinking: "I gave too much, and it is useful in my own house." Instead, having given, one should think this: "my possession is appropriate only for those who have taken the vows." There, "despising" means that one, whose character and nature is contemptuous, is despising, that is, not having respect; for respect means lack of contempt, so one does not despise [the recipient]. Giving with respect [means] one possesses esteem (*śraddhā*) which increases for the recipient who has arrived at the right time and place. This is what it means to want to give. One wants to give upon seeing a monk or when he asks, and one should have supreme joy and horripilation. Indeed, one should horripilate in this way also while giving and having given — at all three times.[28]

This passage is a very close and astute portrayal of the donor's responses. The multiple intentions involved require the donor to resist disdaining the recipient and regretting parting with the gift. The passage censures the possible contempt or condescension that a giver may have toward the recipient. Instead, the donor should feel fortunate to have an opportunity to give and should thrill at the chance, not only before, but even after the gift is given. Horripilation — the experience of goose bumps or having one's hair stand on end through pure delight — indicates that giving should inspire emotional and bodily responses from the donor. The donor should be moved by his or her own generosity.

The Dharmaśāstra compendia do not specifically list three separate moments of intention, but they do state that happiness is one possible basis from which to give *dāna* and also that one destroys the effects of *dāna* by regretting it.[29] One should have a pleased attitude when one gives a gift.[30]

In addition to prescribing intentions and motivations for giving, the Indic authors also elaborated lists of virtues or qualities *(guṇa)* that make a donor qualified to give *dāna*. These virtues suggest habitual modes of behavior or aspects of character in which discrete intentions may be embedded. These lists are quite instructive about religious and cultural values in the different traditions, but not all of them would be considered "virtues" in modern western moral reasoning. The *Sea of Giving* says that the donor should have the following: good conduct, esteem (*śraddhā),* knowledge of the Veda, the best knowledge of *dharma*, and lawfully acquired wealth.[31] Elsewhere it is said that the donor should be free from diseases, righteous, wanting to give, pure, free from attachment, and should practice a faultless livelihood.[32] The emphasis here is on the ritual, social, and physical purity of the donor, his learning, and the righteousness of his actions and acquisitions.

On the face of it, such qualities as being free from disease and having the appropriate education may not appear to be moral virtues. Yet in these discourses one's biological and social position is highly correlated to one's moral status. One is able to be healthy and learned as the result of previous moral and religious action, and these different domains are not in any ultimate sense separated.

The Dharmaśāstra *nibandhas* give highly elaborated analyses of the different kinds of gifts that can be used to understand the motivations, attitudes and dispositions of the donor. There are two possible purposes or reasons *(hetu)* for giving a gift: esteem (*śraddhā)* and devotion *(bhakti).* Here one's purpose is framed within one's relationship to the recipient as an expression of esteem or adoration. In addition, the texts specify that there are six bases *(adhiṣṭhāna)* of *dāna*: one gives out of *dharma*, [self]-interest, passion, shame, happiness, and fear (of extortion).[33] In this listing, the motivational basis of giving is distinguished from one's purpose, and less lofty aspirations are acknowledged.[34] The texts here admit what we must also bear in mind: there are multiple kinds of gifts and meanings attached to them.

The Jains provide varying lists of the donor's virtues *(dātṛguṇas).* Umāsvāti's commentary on the *Discourse of the Meaning of the Truth* says that the donor should lack ill-will *(anasūyā)* toward the recipient, lack sorrow at [parting with] the gift, lack contempt (or condescension) [for the recipient], be joyful in wanting to give, while giving and after having given, have good intentions, disregard worldly fruits, lack deception, and lack motive.[35] Siddhasena Gaṇin's subcommentary on this list, quoted at length above, goes on to interpret much of this in terms of esteem (*śraddhā)*. The donor should have *śraddhā* in his respect for the recipient, which also helps him part with the gift without sorrow. The emphasis here is on the internal states of the donor.

The Digambaras formulated a standard list of seven qualities of a donor: esteem *(śraddhā),* devotion, contentment, zeal, discrimination, disinterestedness,

and forbearance or patience (Williams 1963:153). Somadeva classifies *dāna* by using the terms good *(sāttvik),* passionate *(rājasik)*, and base *(tāmasik)* that we saw earlier in the Dharmaśāstra text. A good donor has the seven qualities and gives to a worthy recipient. A passionate donor gives for ostentation and in deference to the opinion of others. A base donor has his servants give the gift, does so without verifying whether the recipient is worthy, and gives without proper respect (Williams 1963:152).

The Buddhist sources explore the virtues of the donor in a variety of ways. One list describes the five gifts of a good person *(sappurusadāna)*: such a person gives with esteem (*saddhā),* with due honor, in a timely fashion, with a mind that holds nothing back, and without reducing the gift.[36] When giving a good person performs various acts of hospitality including venerating the recipients and the gift itself, inviting the worthy recipients to sit down on an appointed and well-swept seat, and providing them with plentiful and nourishing food without defects.[37] Another list says that a good person gives with due honor, intentionally, with his own hand, does not give leftovers, and gives whenever a guest approaches.[38] Here a virtuous donor is known primarily through his or her actions.

A further Theravāda discussion of the criteria of the donor says that the best donor is a "master of the gift," who is not enslaved to the material gift but instead gives the best that he has while he himself gets by with just anything.[39] Here the emphasis is on the relationship of the giver toward the material gift: the donor should have mastery over the thing.

THE CENTRALITY OF ESTEEM

While these lists emphasize different standards and criteria of an ideal giver, nearly all of them include the term *śraddhā,* which I have been translating in the context of the gift encounter as "esteem" Its recurring presence in all of these treatises warrants further attention.[40]

We have already seen how *śraddhā* occurs in nearly every list of the giver's qualities. The Dharmaśāstra writers emphasize it by treating it as a special topic of analysis in their compendia.[41] Indeed, one technical definition of *dāna* includes *śraddhā*: *dāna* is the presenting of wealth with *śraddhā* when a worthy recipient has arrived.[42] *Śraddhā* is defined as "when someone is full of good will and is cheerful and so on at the sight of recipients and is welcoming and unbegrudging *(anasūyā)."*[43] They say that one who gives with *śraddhā* and devotion *(bhakti)* to a worthy recipient, even if it is just a handful of vegetables, enjoys every happiness.[44] Along with devotion the *śraddhā* of the donor, rather than the amount of the material gift, is one of the causes *(hetu)* of the degree of reward.[45]

Among the Jains, Hemacandra says that if one is discriminating and possesses *śraddhā,* and there is a good gift and a worthy recipient, then liberation is the fruit either immediately or gradually.[46] As we have seen, Siddhasena prescribes that one should have respect, which is obtained by *śraddhā* increasing for the recipient.[47] The donor should not be sorry, that is, lack *śraddhā,* at parting with the gift, thinking, "I gave too much, and it is useful in my own house." Instead he should think, "my possession is only useful for those who have taken the vow."[48]

The Buddhist material often defines *dāna* in terms of *saddhā* (Pali for *śraddhā*).[49] The *Compendium of the Essence* describes four types of *saddhā* that people might have in giving: *saddhā* in the tradition, in the realized ones, in the settling of the mind, and in the purity [of the *dāna*].[50] The term is often linked with the idea of purity or purification. The *Commentary on the Compendium of Discourses* argues to the effect that those whose minds are purified or clear give to noble persons, and they have "pure minds full of *saddhā* before, after, and at the releasing of the *dāna.*"[51]

We shall examine in the next chapter more thoroughly the qualities of the recipient, but even to grasp the appropriate disposition of the donor, some account of the recipient is necessary. This is so because the donor's disposition of esteem is going to depend in an important way on the worth of the recipient. Pan-Indic understandings of *dāna* generally see its ideal instantiation in the giving of gifts to brahmans or mendicants. Despite their opposition to brahmanism more generally, even Jains and Buddhists enjoin giving to brahmans, and giving to religious renunciants of all sorts is a deeply rooted civilizational value. The texts make it explicit that these discussions of *śraddhā* are to be understood in the context of lay giving to the religious elite.

The term *śraddhā* can mean many different things, even when restricted to its use in the context of *dāna*. We can identify three different meanings given to it in the material under study. These three meanings, while not entirely unrelated to each other in the intellectual development of the term, are also quite distinct. The first is its more general usage, as trust or confidence, in an intellectual sense, in the religious tradition itself. Hemādri glosses *śraddhā* as *āstikyabuddhi* (Dkh, 13) which might be translated as a "trusting judgement" according to Hara (1964:142) or an affirmative conviction (bejahene Gesinnung) according to Hacker (1963:151). It may also mean an orthodox judgment or opinion. The *Compendium of the Essence* also shares this sense of *śraddhā* in that one type of *saddhā* is *āgamasaddhā,* faith in the tradition.

But this sense is the least common way of glossing *śraddhā* in the context of *dāna* in the texts under investigation, and usually the term has a more technical orientation. When it is restricted to its more ritual aspects within the context of giving or sacrifice it often means the trust or confidence in the fruit of a meritorious act, and

this can overlap with the sense of *āstikyabuddhi* in that one trusts in the efficacy of the act. Here possessing confidence that one's action is fruitful means one realizes it is good, and reveals confidence in the entire religious and moral structure of the tradition. The Buddhist *Commentary on the Compendium of Discourses* says that *saddhā* means having confidence in the *dāna* and in the fruit of the *dāna.*[52]

The third sense of *śraddhā*, and the one most frequently encountered in the medieval material on *dāna*, depicts a very particular attitude of the donor, not toward the tradition, but toward the recipient of the gift. Paul Hacker has noted that in the gift context *śraddhā* is not so much about a wish or desire, but about a duty in hosting brahmans which is related to the *śrāddha* ceremonies where one is obliged to offer food to the manes (Hacker 1963:186). Along similar lines, Stephanie Jamison follows up on a suggestion made by Paul Thieme that the use of *śraddhā* in gift idioms "expresses the trust or agreement between strangers in a hospitality relation," where "it may refer to the host's obligation to provide for his guests' needs and desires" (Jamison 1996:178). According to Jamison, *śraddhā* is the "unquestioning hospitality" owed to any guest, but particularly to a stranger who appears at the door, and it expresses the obligations of membership within the Aryan community.

Han-Werbin Köhler and Paul Hacker have noted the frequency in which *śraddhā* is used with or glossed as *anasūyā*, a term that has no ready equivalent in English, but is given as "freedom from spite; absence of ill-will or envy" by Monier Williams (1988:27). Used with *dāna* it seems to mean not grumbling about or begrudging the recipient the gift. The *Mitākṣarā* glosses a *dāna* "purified by *śraddhā (śraddhāpūtam)"* as "made pure by *anasūyā*" (MĀ on Yāj. 203). In Köhler's analysis it leads to his understanding of *śraddhā* in the *dāna* context as "Spendefreudigkeit," joy or delight in giving. He interprets *anasūyā* as "not being envious of the privileges of other men and not mentioning the faults of other men" (Köhler 1973:59-60). Despite his criticism of Köhler's interpretation on other points, Hacker is in agreement with him here in that *śraddhā,* when accompanied by *anasūyā,* depicts an attitude of the donor toward the recipient in which he refrains from noticing the donor's faults and praises instead his merits (Hacker 1963:187). The donor abstains from pointing out the weaknesses of the recipient and attempts to see only his virtuous qualities. He is not angry at the recipient nor envious or jealous. When these negative feelings are absent one is filled with delight and zeal in giving.

There is much in the medieval material from all three traditions that would support Jamison, Hacker, and Köhler in their interpretations of *śraddhā*.[53] Ballālasena, commenting on his definition of *śraddhā* which includes *anasūyā* (cited above), says that its opposite, *asūya*, or spite, means that "one uncovers

faults where there is virtue."[54] The *nibandha* authors all quote several verses from Manu to specify that giving with *śraddhā* means that one should give out of high regard for the recipient. These verses are taken from the section given over to the topic of *śraddhā* and elaborate it thus:

> To the best of his means and with a pleased mind, upon meeting a worthy recipient, one should always attend to sacrificial and public acts that are in accord with the duty of *dāna*.
> Anything fit to be given by the one asked (should be done) without ill-will *(anasūyā),* since it will always raise up the recipient and carry him across.
> With whatever attitude *(bhāva)*[55] one gives a gift, the one honored (i.e. the recipient) receives it with that same attitude.
> He who gives a gift out of high regard to virtuous ones obtains wealth, and enjoys [it] with sons and grandsons after death.[56]

Here we find that *dāna* is regarded as a pleasurable obligation. Accompanied by *śraddhā*, it ennobles the recipient and creates worthiness in him. The donor should never give having contempt toward the recipient.[57] When a donor gives with *śraddhā*, the same attitude of respect passes to the recipient making *dāna* not simply a transaction of material objects but of admiration as well. Hemādri quotes a passage from the *Vahni Purāṇa* that says that *śraddhā* should accompany all duties in the beginning, middle and end, which is reminiscent of the three moments of intention in the Buddhist and Jain analyses.[58]

In the Jain Siddhasena Gaṇin's detailed account of the donor's intentions quoted at length in the previous section many of the themes under consideration are in evidence. We find evidence of Köhler's "Spendefreudigkeit," *anasūyā* in the sense of forbearing the weaknesses in the recipient, and *śraddhā,* both in the sense of not begrudging the gift and in the sense of high regard for the recipient.

Minoru Hara has drawn an important distinction between *śraddhā* and devotion (*bhakti)* which is relevant here. Some of the medieval material prescribes devotion as well as esteem, though to a lesser degree, and the differences between the two are important. Hara argues that *śraddhā* denotes a more objective and impersonal attitude toward a person than *bhakti*, which depicts a personal and affectionate devotion (Hara 1964:133). While *bhakti* denotes regard for a person, *śraddhā* denotes regard for some objective quality that a person possesses or represents. Hara says: "In spite of the similar construction found in both *bhakti* and *śraddhā*, we must distinguish the relations involved. One is connected directly to human beings as such, and the other refers implicitly to something objective in a human being" (Hara 1964:136).

Hara's thesis is borne out in the *dāna* literature and its implications yield insight into understanding the precise nature of the ideal donor's attitude toward the monk or brahman standing at the door for alms. The donor is enjoined to give automatically and without hesitation to the proper recipient, recognizing him or her as objectively worthy of gifts. Once a person has been recognized as a proper recipient, the donor's response is clear. The recipient may not be known to the giver personally, but if he meets the requirements of a worthy recipient, *śraddhā* should arise and *dāna* should be given.

Here attention also should be paid to the organizational structure of the texts themselves. Ballālasena first of all describes proper recipients, restricting them primarily to virtuous brahmans, before his sections on the donor, *śraddhā*, and even the definition of *dāna*, thereby setting up the conditions whereby the donor can give with *śraddhā*. That is, *śraddhā* or high regard for an objective excellence in the recipient can not be bestowed on just anyone. But once one knows how to recognize a proper recipient, the right dispositions of the donor may follow. This is a case where the organization of a compendium reflects and, indeed, constitutes the theory itself. Yājñavalkya also begins his discussion on *dāna* by praising brahmans as the best recipients before he gets to defining *dāna*, and so his commentators follow suit.[59] The donor can only have the proper dispositions toward the recipient once the definition and restrictions on what constitutes a proper recipient are known. This special ordering is also evident in the Jain Siddhasena Gaṇin's commentary on the *Discourse on the Meaning of the Truth* in the quotation cited above where he says: "*since* the recipient is defined as someone with virtue, there should be no ill will [on the part of the donor]." Only when the range of possible recipients is narrowed down to a certain class of proper ones, can *śraddhā* and *anasūyā* be enjoined.

But what precisely is the nature of the objective quality that a donor experiencing *śraddhā* is meant to be admiring by making a gift? Though in one case a commentator glosses *bhakti* with *śraddhā*,[60] in all other instances the gift theorists keep the two dispositions conceptually separate, if they mention *bhakti* at all. I suggest that *bhakti* is used less in *dāna* theory because it denotes a personal attachment to the recipient that is not entirely appropriate and can lead to undesirable favoritism in a lay person's relationship to the religious elite that she is obliged to support. It is necessary to emphasize obligations to an objective or even symbolic quality that the recipient represents, rather than allow the duty of *dāna* to rest on personal (and variable) whims or attachments. *Śraddhā*, then, is a term that regulates the emotive aspects of the intentions of the giver and channels them toward respecting the values of the tradition as they are manifest in, or at least represented by, the recipient.

Śraddhā is necessary because the donor of alms to the religious is put in an intolerable ethical dilemma if she is required to judge the monk or nun or brahman who is soliciting food. Religious elites are by definition superior in the religious structure and therefore it should be unthinkable that the donor should be put in a position of pronouncing upon or withholding support on the basis of her own private judgment of their religious worth. Thus when a monk is at the door the donor should see only that there is a monk, *śraddhā* should arise, and she should give.

There are many examples that show that once a proper recipient has been recognized as such, the donor should then refrain from looking too closely at the personal attributes of the particular recipient. The Buddhist theorists work this out in great detail by specifying the requirement that the donor give, not to an individual, but "to the universal *saṅgha* headed by the Buddha." One should not see an individual monk, with all his own personal weaknesses and faults, standing at the door for alms, but instead his presence should indicate an opportunity to give to the *saṅgha*. There is a symbolic element that precedes a personal attachment. The term used here is technical: the gift is said to be, literally, "directed to the *saṅgha*" (*saṅghagata*) rather than given to an individual.[61] The *saṅgha* here is a formal and idealized collective and as such contains no imperfections. To give *dāna* with *śraddhā* is to see only the embodiment of this perfect ideal in the actual monk, disregarding any individual failings the particular monk may possess.

This notion of an impersonal ideal is elaborated in a hypothetical case given in the *Compendium of the Essence* in which a donor goes to the monastery to give alms, but when he is presented with a novice to accept them he wavers because he had been hoping to have the chance to give to an elder. The desire to give to an elder rather than a novice should be, on the face of it, quite natural since by the usual logic the merit of the gift is commensurate with the religious status of the recipient. Yet the text says that this is not proper *dāna*, for "gifts to the *saṅgha* are only for those who are able to pay respect to the *saṅgha*, though respect to the *saṅgha* is difficult."[62] Nor should a donor rejoice at getting an elder to receive the gift, should that happen. Indeed, whether he is presented with a novice or an ordained monk, a youth or an elder, a fool or a learned one, the donor should be agreeable and should consider that his gift is to the *saṅgha* as a whole.[63]

To further develop this point the text tells a story in which a householder wants to give *dāna* to the *saṅgha* and the monastery sends a monk of bad character to him to receive it. In spite of this, the householder treats the monk with all due honor and worships and presents him with a generous *dāna*. But later the monk comes back to borrow a spade, and the householder just kicks it over to him. When people try to censure the householder and doubt that he had given proper respect in giving, he defends himself on the grounds that his behavior and regard for the recipient were impeccable in the *dāna* situation saying, "there was respect for the

saṅgha, not for him."[64] In his casual interaction with the monk he treated him as an individual, but in his ritual obligations of *dāna*, the monk was treated as an instantiation of an ideal. [65]

This story betrays a certain realism with which the *dāna* theorists attempted to cope with the psychological intricacies of *dāna*. If donors are allowed to give only to good monks and good brahmans, the more dubious or disliked characters will go hungry. It would thus be better for the donor to refrain from looking *too* closely into the virtue of the recipient. I believe that this in part explains the emphasis on *śraddhā* in the *dāna* process. *Śraddhā* is the most important virtue a donor can possess since it fills one with respect for both the tradition and the recipient at the same time; it makes one pleased to give, and it prevents one from giving only to one's favorite monks or brahmans.[66] Given the practical importance of economic support of an entire category of religious dependants, *dāna* ideology appeals to the emotive aspects of giving while preserving the sense of obligation.

The Dharmaśāstra texts, even while they distinguish among the different types of recipients and the merit to be had from each, warn that one should not neglect neighboring brahmans (so long as they have not lost caste) in the hopes of giving to virtuous ones which are not at hand.[67] Jamison's "unquestioning hospitality" is in clear evidence here. When a brahman is at the door one should simply give without inquiring into his virtue or character.

Of course the texts must walk a fine line here. On the one hand they want to celebrate the distinctions among recipients and the varying degrees of merit each one effects. The *dāna* relationship is a means of enforcing morality in the recipient. But they also must insist that all brahmans or mendicants (depending on the tradition) get fed, and in light of this must discourage lay people from inspecting the moral status of recipients and from making their generosity depend wholly upon it. This accounts for two different logics at work at the same time, which cannot always be smoothly harmonized. On the one hand the texts encourage a rational calculus where the donor should be highly interested in the moral and religious status of the recipient. But on the other, he should turn a blind eye to failings in a certain class of people, who have already been defined as worthy recipients.

The Jain sources also emphasize giving to worthy recipients without putting them to the test. Somadeva, a Digambara, argues that if it is just a gift of food an inquiry into the moral status of the ascetic is useless; whether he is good or bad does not matter as the donor is purified by the *dāna* regardless.[68] Such reasoning is even more evident in the Śvetāmbara Jain text the *Exposition Beginning with Gift Giving*. Written by a monk who was put on the defensive for his support of perceived laxity and deterioration in the practices of Jain monks of the time, we can see him attempt to have it both ways. He praises the good qualities of monks

while at the same time decrying the advance of the Dark Age (Kali Yuga) in which moral practice is not what it used to be. As in the Buddhist material the *saṅgha* becomes a formal and infallible collective and Sūrācārya encourages giving to the *saṅgha* as a whole rather than to individual monks:

> Anything spent for the *saṅgha* bears special fruit, just like water drops fallen from the oyster shell turns to pearls.
> Even a little sprinkling of the water of *śraddhā* strewn on the field of the stainless *saṅgha* produces great fruit like the banyan from the seed of the banyan tree.
> Wealth spent on that best of recipients, the pure and great *saṅgha*, becomes endless like water thrown into the sea.
> The entire *saṅgha* is honored even when only a part is honored; when a flower is placed on the head (the entire idol) is worshipped.[69]

For Jains, unlike Buddhists, the "*saṅgha*" refers not just to the order of monks and nuns, but to the fourfold community of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. The water imagery does quite a bit of work here — *dāna* to the *saṅgha* is both purified and magnified by being given to the community as a whole, and it loses its individuality like water thrown into the sea.

Sūrācārya argues that even monks lacking virtue should be worshipped and given *dāna.*[70] A monk without good conduct should be worshipped so long as he is inclined to proper insight; in fact he might change his ways [seeing that] the eminent are highly esteemed.[71] It is wicked to search for other virtues in a monk, so long as he has knowledge.[72] It has been predicted by the Tīrthaṅkaras that there will be lapses in monks in our era of decline and so "those noticing offences in anyone due to the faults of the time and who then become indifferent to all only deceive themselves."[73] Nowadays monks have only one of the three gems of the triple gem of the Jain ideal, which includes correct worldview, knowledge and conduct. If they have knowledge or insight, he goes on to say, it is enough. So wise lay people, even though they may see little virtue in a particular monk, should still worship him with great esteem as though he possessed every virtue.[74] Monks in bad times have varied conduct, they have lapses, are negligent, lack good conduct and are slackers. The virtuous may appear vicious and vice-versa, so all monks should be respected.[75]

Sūrācārya explicitly links this quality of overlooking the faults in the recipient with the phrase "pure mind." He says that "great people should accept the virtues and ignore the faults as geese drink the milk and leave the water; for this is the nature of those who are pure."[76] A donor who is not looking for evil and who wants to see only good is pure. Such a mind is not tainted with evil thoughts and is generous and charitable.[77]

The full implications of these views would not necessarily find sympathy among all the medieval Jain writers and perhaps can be said to represent a minority position, given that the tradition holds that Sūrācārya lost the public debate against Jineśvara Sūri (whom we have already met exploring the ambiguities of the pure gift), where he may have championed many of these same arguments.[78] Nor should we ignore the political and economic motives at stake in such a frank apology for the declining moral conduct of monks. Nevertheless, Sūrācārya's argument is really just an extreme stance on more or less the same position that many of these examples of *dāna* theory share. These theorists understood how interpersonal attitudes and dispositions between the donor and the recipient affect the gift process. By inculcating *dāna* theory with a profound emphasis on the esteem that the giver should have for an objective quality that the recipient represents — even when it may not actually be present in the particular monk and the esteem rests upon a kind of misrecognition — they could uphold the religious structure of their traditions by making this respect into a moral virtue in its own right. *Śraddhā* requires the giver to habitually cultivate good will and a non-judgmental disposition as a way of purifying the donor's own mind.

Since the response of *śraddhā* is connected to recognition, or in some cases, misrecognition, of the excellence of the other, it also brings one face-to-face with one's difference from the other. The response of *śraddhā* exposes a gap between self and other which displays to oneself one's own humility. In some Theravāda sources this difference is made explicit by passages with link *śraddhā* with shame (*hiriya).*[79] This term for shame can also mean bashfulness or shyness, indicating a modesty or embarrassment a donor may experience when giving a gift. Shame, like *śraddhā,* is a social virtue or feeling, in that one can only experience it through contact with others. The donor becomes aware of herself in a different way through the encounter with an admired other. That shame is linked to giving suggests that generosity makes evident the difference in rank and virtue between donor and recipient in a way that is to be acknowledged in the donor's emotions.

CONCLUSIONS

This discussion of the donor has retrieved a rich vocabulary for describing the moral values associated with the donor's response and responsibility in the gift encounter, a vocabulary that introduces a range of dispositions, attitudes, qualities, intentions, and responses that are deemed relevant for moral agency. The structural inequality and asymmetry of the gift encounter in all three traditions create a common ground in which these religions can be brought into conversation with one another. Shared and similar vocabulary used to describe the attributes of the

donor allow similar patterns to emerge which help us to identify and clarify points of contact as well as points of departure.

We have traveled considerable distance from Seneca and Mauss. The ideal gift relationships prized in the South Asian discourses do not establish the gift's value on the basis of the give-and-take of human relations or the gratitude due the giver of an unreciprocated gift. Rather the ideal human relationship forged by *dāna* is that of one-way regard and respect. The medieval theorists see the gift as forging social bonds and harmony based on openness and trusting goodwill of the donor, coupled with admiration and regard. These dispositions create the conditions for the ideal ordering of certain social relations. The emphasis on esteem as the ideal social bond established in the gift relation suggests why reciprocity and gratitude are not valued. For what would it mean to be grateful to someone for the esteem they confer? What sort of return could properly be made? Esteem is not a disposition that yields to mutuality since it is an appraisal predicated on human difference and asymmetry.[80]

These theoretical discussions on unreciprocated gifts are not the only places in which asymmetrical gifts are valued or in which they forge social bonds. As discussed in the literature on the subject, Mauss overlooked many types of gifts that are not informed by the three obligations of giving, receiving, and reciprocating. Gifts of care in personal relations — such as the gifts of parents to children — are often never reciprocated nor given with an eye to return (Vaughan 2002). What sets apart *dāna* as a gift that establishes certain moral relations is that it is not premised on love and intimacy, and its sentiments are esteem and regard rather than care. Moreover, *dāna* is not given out of altruism; gifts of esteem to religious elites are explicitly *not* based on altruism and compassion, as we shall explore in the next chapter.

The language of "purity" in giving — to which we will also have opportunity to return again in the next chapter — complicates questions of both obligation and intention. There is no single sense of a "pure" intention of the giver in the Indic material. In several formulations the use of purity is found with the notion of a disinterested *dāna*, but not in the same sense of the disinterested "pure gift" that we find in anthropological theory. In the *dāna* treatises, the donor should be disinterested in any reward, not just recompense from the recipient. But elsewhere "pure" is used not so much for describing a donor's particular motivations at the time of *dāna*, but rather general qualities and dispositions that the donor may possess, including ritual, physical, and moral purity. Giving a gift, the texts tell us, is a bodily, mental, and verbal act. We also find the sense of purity linked to *śraddhā* where it has to do with an attitude of "other-regard" or esteem of the donor toward the recipient. A donor's attitude should be pure in the sense of seeing no faults in, and wanting only the best for, the recipient. The act of *dāna* is an

outward manifestation of the donor's regard for the recipient and for the values of the tradition that the recipient represents.

The emphasis on pleasure and delight in giving challenges the notion of the disinterested gift. The dispositions celebrated in much of the *dāna* literature prescribe not cool disinterested giving, detached from outcome, but rather considerable emotional engagement. The donor is ideally involved, interested, and deeply moved by giving the gift. The intentions and responses described in this chapter suggest that other-regard can not be easily severed from interest, for what would it mean to esteem the other without some *interest* in the other's well-being? Interest in this sense is not far removed from the notion of other-regard, for both set the other in a relationship to self that by its very definition cannot be aloof and detached.[81]

Esteem links pleasure and interest with other-regard. *Śraddhā* is a joyful, pleasurable, uncritical response to the other. Moreover, it is also a virtue or attitude that the medieval theorists thought could and should be developed and cultivated and enjoined. Esteem is the moral value of recognizing excellence in the other and responding to it with a reaction that is at once delighted and obliged, spontaneous and automatic. Esteem depends upon recognition, or in some cases, misrecognition (in the sense of looking past faults in the other), of moral excellence. The ethics of esteem makes possible the simultaneous presence of morality and pleasure, where uncritical regard for others is deemed to be an experience of delight.

The ethics of esteem is inherently tied to the inequality of the social hierarchy that is both assumed and reinforced by the gift encounter. The ethics of esteem does not presume that all human beings should be treated equally or are the same. What is meant by esteem is not the generalized respect one should have for all persons. Philosophers distinguish between respect and esteem in that respect is owed to everyone in virtue of being a human being, whereas esteem is reserved only for those who earn or are entitled to a special regard.[82] An ethics based on esteem assumes and renders explicit difference, hierarchy, special classes of persons who are admired apart from others. The morally relevant response of esteem can arise only in a relationship of unequals, where the superior moral status of the recipient is assumed. In terms of studying comparative ethics, the emphasis on esteem may present a considerable challenge to the standpoint of Enlightenment ethics or modern American ideals, where impartiality, human equality, and fairness are the operative assumptions for justice and moral action. Yet it does begin to give us the tools for understanding moral thinking in traditionally hierarchical cultures.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RECIPIENT

We have seen that the recipient of *dāna* is not obliged to reciprocate a gift or to express gratitude. What we know of the ideal recipient so far is that he or she is regarded, in some objective sense, as worthy of esteem. The language for this in the *dāna* discourses is that the ideal recipient is a "worthy vessel" (*pātra*, *supātra*).

Since esteem is of central importance to *dāna*, the objective qualities by which a recipient should be respected are carefully delineated. The qualities of a worthy recipient are articulated at great length in the medieval treatises. There are lists of ideal attributes, rankings of meritorious recipients, and calculations of merit based on the worthiness of the recipient. In general, however, the worthiest recipient is one who represents the highest ideals of religion. This ideology highlights the tremendous pan-Indic cultural value placed on those who are represented as having dedicated their lives to religious pursuits: brahmans, monks, nuns,[1] and wandering ascetics of various sorts.

The religious life these figures represent is not without apparent incongruities. Their vocation requires economic dependency yet they strive to remain aloof from worldly ties. Mendicants in Jainism and Buddhism have renounced the world and the trappings of the household life. Renunciation for them means freedom from getting-and-spending, but with that freedom from economic activity comes reliance on gifts for their livelihood. While this renunciatory ideal may not have always (or even often) described the actual circumstances of monastic or ascetic life, it was widely held up in the texts as normative for both Buddhist and Jain monks and nuns.[2]

From a renunciatory perspective, brahmans are considerably more ambiguous even as an ideal class. Unlike Buddhist and Jain mendicants, it is not incumbent upon brahmans to practice celibacy or shun householder life. We shall see that the *nibandhas'* descriptions of the ideal brahman describe asceticism, plain living, and piety as virtues, but these can be realized, according to brahmanism, within the householder life. While householder brahmans are highly regarded for their

conformity to social order, also highly idealized is the *saṁnyāsin*, who has chosen renunciation and complete retirement from the world. The option of this kind of renunciation, as one of the four principal *āśramas* or stages of life, may be taken as an alternative to householder life, or it may be taken at the final phase of one's life after one's duties to the maintenance of the social order are discharged.

Despite these important differences over precisely what the ideal form of religiosity entails, which we will consider in some depth, the three traditions share the view that these figures, as recipients, come to the gift relation without obligation either to accept the gift or reciprocate it. They are given gifts because of the religiosity they represent. The recipient is regarded highly in part because he or she is represented as standing outside of the ordinary bonds of reciprocity that accrue to those participating in social and economic intercourse. Interestingly, the renunciatory ideal may in fact lead them away from the gift. There is a sense that the worthiest recipient is least eager to receive: the ideal recipient is also the most elusive.

The texts insist that *dāna* to religious renunciants flows upwards in a hierarchy of persons. The language of *śraddhā* describes and affirms status relationships and, as we have seen, the paradigmatic *dāna* is to those superior in religious status. The worthy recipient, literally, the *pātra* or "vessel," is defined as morally and religiously estimable.[3] The religious and cultural value attached to giving to the esteemed has important implications. From the last chapter it is clear that the recipient should not be despised, pitied, or regarded with contempt by the donor.

These ideals appear to contrast sharply with ethnographic observations from recent fieldwork on householder brahmans in North India. Several studies show that, far from being idealized as virtuous, brahman recipients of *dāna* are despised for their status as dependents. A further serious implication of the doctrine of worthy recipients concerns gifts to the poor, who are generally regarded as objects of pity rather than esteem. Gifts to them will require a quite different rationale than we have seen emerge thus far.

POISON IN THE GIFT?

A key lens through which recent scholarship has viewed South Asian gift relations has been through contemporary anthropological research on gift-giving communities and householder brahmans in North India. The fieldwork studies of both Jonathan Parry and Gloria Raheja, in particular, have shown that brahmanical ideology notwithstanding, brahmans, *qua* recipients, have dubious moral and social status in practice in some places in modern India (Parry 1986, 1989, 1994; Raheja 1989). While there are important differences in their work, both authors show that in the communities in which they did research, *dāna* to brahmans is not a matter

of esteeming superiors, but of disdaining dependents. An essential aspect of gift giving in both studies involves the transference of something — impurity or inauspiciousness — that the donor is keen to be rid of and the recipient is compromised by accepting. Material and social concerns as well are operative: the donor, possessing a certain degree of wealth, autonomy, and power, enjoys higher status than the recipient.

Parry's work focuses on brahman priests in Benares who perform death rites and in so doing receive *dān* (Hindi for *dāna*). But in accepting *dān* the brahmans also accept "sin" and they "liken themselves to a sewer through which the moral filth of their patrons is passed" (Parry 1986:460). *Dān* is the transmission not only of material goods but also something of a "bio-moral substance" from the donor (Parry 1989:133). Instead of bringing forth the best qualities in the recipient, the *dān* relationship brings out the worst. In Parry's work polluting, immoral qualities flow with the *dān* from the donor to the brahman recipients, who are seen as the vessels or repositories of the donor's sin. Not surprisingly, this gives them very ambiguous status not only in their own eyes, but also in the social hierarchy.

Raheja's work in the small North Indian village, Pahansu, documents many of the same features that Parry observed in Benares. Her ethnography challenges both Louis Dumont's essentialist depiction of Indian hierarchy and brahmanical claims to absolute purity. In her study it emerged that rather than a hierarchical ladder of increasing levels of caste purity with brahmans at the top, social relations in the village of Pahansu are organized into what is more adequately envisioned as a circle (Raheja 1988:20–29). The dominant caste is not brahman, but rather Gujar, a *kṣatriya* caste, located at the center of the circle. Gujars are defined chiefly by their status as gift-givers, and the rest of the castes, including brahmans, are organized around them as recipients. The Gujars owe their higher status to the fact that they never receive *dān* (except for *kanyādān*, the gift of a bride), and the brahmans and the other castes are put in the unfortunate position of being "obligated" (rather than "privileged") to receive *dān* from them. The ideological opposition of the system rests not with purity and impurity as for Parry, but with auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. Donors can pass off their inauspiciousness along with a gift, and so recipients are seen as the receptacles of other people's inauspiciousness, and thereby rank in at a lower status than givers.

These observations, as well as work by other anthropologists, have led to structuralist claims about South Asian gift relationships that reflect the exact reverse of the ideology indicated in the compendia literature. McKim Marriott claims that the giver is always regarded as superior in rank, power and nature ("substance-code") to the recipient when the gift is not reciprocated (Marriott 1976:112). Arjun Appadurai urges us to "bear in mind that in Indian society, giving is axiomatically (even if temporarily) the sign of superiority and receiving

the sign of inferiority" (Appadurai 1989:14). These claims, echoing Mauss (1990:65), are drawn from anthropological data rather than textual sources, although some textual support for them can be found in traditional literatures.

Both Raheja and Parry have sprinkled their analyses with a few quotations from the textual sources in order to suggest an historical precedent for a *dāna* ideology that supports their findings in contemporary India. Indeed, scattered references from *smṛti* and epic material can be found in the textual sources, such as one verse from Manu (IV:190) that suggests that a brahman who neither performs penance nor studies the Veda, yet who delights in accepting gifts, sinks with the donor into hell (Parry 1986:460 and 1989:69). Note that one would want to exercise caution here to avoid taking contextual assertions as grand pronouncements about the deep structures of Indic social life. Raheja finds additional textual connections to support her experience in Pahansu in the work of textual scholars such as Heesterman (1964; 1971), O'Flaherty (1976), and Shulman (1985), who provide evidence from Vedic and classical sources to suggest a notion of transferring evil or poison in the gift (Raheja 1988:32-6).[4] Some of these sources also suggest that the donor is thus superior in status to the recipient.

Thomas Trautmann has done perhaps the most perceptive examination of the textual sources on these issues of the status of the giver and recipient, and the dangers in receiving. He describes a "central conundrum" in Indian social ideology in which "two pairs of contrasting modes of exchange, sacred versus profane and noble verses ignoble, are not reducible the one to the other" (Trautmann 1981:285). He goes on:

> either could provide a self-consistent framework of meaning for acts of exchange, but together they contradict one another. The issue implicates what I believe to be the central conundrum of Indian social ideology, namely the relation of brahmin and the king, of spiritual authority (*brahma*) and temporal power (*kṣatra*). For religious gifts flow upward to superior beings, but royal gifts flow down a hierarchy of dependency. The contradiction between the two hierarchies becomes critical at their apexes. The conundrum may be formulated thus: in respect to the king, is the brahmin his superior or his dependent? (Trautmann 1981:285).

According to Trautmann this basic conundrum is woven throughout the epic and *purāṇic* literatures, and he gives examples in which, from the royal point of view, brahmans are depicted as inferior and dependent because they accept gifts.[5] But it is more than simply a matter of dependency. Citing quotations from the *Anuśāsanaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (the bulk of which is given over to the subject of *dāna*), Trautmann elaborates the implications of the issues. The "theory of the gift participates in the theory of pollution" and gifts transmit bio-moral substances from one person to the next (Trautmann 1981:287). It is not simply that recipients

are obliged to or dependent upon donors, but that they are forced to absorb their evil, pollution, or inaupiciousness along with the gift. In this theory, only the purest recipients can absorb others' evil substances and therefore are the least endangered and dangerous recipients.

But who are the purest recipients? In an ironic twist, the purest recipients are those who are the most unwilling to accept gifts:

> Pushed to its logical extreme, the gift finds no recipient. The brahmin, having rejected reciprocity in favor of an asymmetrical, hierarchical form of exchange as a basis on which he deigns to be a party to the social contract, abandons even this one-sided exchange for the individualistic self-sufficiency of the ascetic. The theory of the gift tends toward its own destruction (Trautmann 1981:288).

The purest recipients must decline gifts in order to safeguard themselves from others' moral refuse.

Both Parry and Trautmann see the moral peril and danger in the *dāna* as stemming from its non-reciprocity; its very asymmetry creates inauspiciousness and imbalance (see Parry 1989:76). Parry goes on to draw a distinction between the *saṁnyāsin* who receives *dāna* as alms and the householder brahman. None of the moral peril attaches to the *saṁnyāsin*. Since he is removed from the social world of reciprocity, unlike the brahman who remains (albeit ambiguously) in the world, no lurking sense of poison or danger in the gift accrues to him. The ascetic is thought to be beyond the realm of worldly expectations of give-and-take. But since householder brahmans remain very much a part of the social and worldly order, they are threatening because they do not participate in what one sociologist has called, "the moral norm of reciprocity" (Gouldner 1960). This makes gifts to them highly charged and morally ambiguous.[6]

Parry's observations are of course particular to the contemporary Hindu context and the question of brahmans' religious status. Householder brahmans, with one foot in the social and economic order and the other foot stepping towards religious asceticism, and with a constant preoccupation on their own ritual purity, are seen as compromised by conflicting religious demands. How can they be ideal recipients of gifts given out of esteem for their renunciation if they are at the same time and through the same act also regarded as vessels of others' impurity or inauspiciousness?

The case of Jain and Buddhist mendicants differs considerably. There is no inkling of the poison in the gift, however conceived, in either contemporary anthropological or premodern textual accounts of Jain and Buddhist practices of gift giving (see also Cort 1998a; 2001:108-11; Laidlaw 1995:294; 1996). The logic of the ideal recipient being the one most disinclined to accept gifts is present in the

Buddhist and Jain sources, but it follows from the religious values of renunciation as opposed to ideas about the transference of inaupiciousness or moral evil.[7] Since renouncers are aloof (ideally) from the normal patterns of exchange, Jain and Buddhist monastics are unambiguously free from the cycles of worldly exchange and no ambivalence is encountered in their status as receivers. Their removal from economic intercourse, with its patterns of give-and-take, generates the purity that allows them to receive gifts.

The purest recipients are monks and nuns who are the least eager to receive. The more ascetic and aloof from material support a monastic is, the closer he or she is to the spiritual goal, and so the gift is more fruitful for the donor. This is due not to any alleged poison or danger in the gift, but because of religious values about renunciation and asceticism. An ideal mendicant should not in any way be greedy or attached to *dāna*. Ideally the renouncer cares little whether he receives or not, and never asks for anything. Ironically this leads to a curious structural tension between the donor and the receiver in that naturally the donor will want to give lavishly to such people, even though their accepting such largesse would threaten the very renunciation for which they are so highly esteemed.

There are hints of these views in the Dharmaśāstra *nibandhas* as well. For example, Lakṣmīdhara states that "brahmans who have their hands closed upon receiving (that is, resisting the gift) are capable of saving one."[8] Yet, beyond conveying a general sensibility that it is desirable for brahmans to be aloof from gifts and even resist them (due to ascetic piety), there no evidence in the *nibandhas* to suggest a notion that the gift conveys impurity, inauspiciousness, or any other bio-moral substance. There is no poison in the gift as far as the medieval theorists are concerned, and while ready acceptance of gifts may compromise a recipient's renunciation, it does not mire him in impurity, misfortune, or moral filth.

Though they presumably had the same passages that modern scholars have from which to draw on regarding the perils of accepting gifts (such as the instances cited from the *Anuśāsanaparvan*), the digest compilers deliberately and systematically omitted them in their compendia.[9] Though such an ideology was certainly available to them in scattered references in the literature, and their acquaintance and mastery over the earlier texts is more than established, they scrupulously avoided including it in their gift theory. Why?

Here it should be recalled that the digests were composed either by kings themselves or at their commission. Thus it might seem reasonable to assume that kings would be inclined, in cases of conflict between *kṣatra* ideals and brahmanical ones, to project the *kṣatra* ideal. Kings are rarely bashful about asserting their own status and power. This assumption has not proven to be the case. The compendia writers are not interested in Trautmann's conundrum and present only the brahmanical side of the case, where brahmans' status as recipients is

unambiguously superior. There is no poison in the gift in Raheja's sense[10] and no worries about sin, inauspiciousness, evil, or bio-moral substances, flowing to brahmans.

We might argue that the considerable emphasis given to establishing the brahman's status as a pure recipient — to which all the *nibandhas* devote a good deal of attention and praise — is a counter-measure to the challenges from the ideology of the poison in the gift, but this would be mere conjecture. There is a risk here of reading contemporary ideologies, historically corroborated by only occasional textual references, into the past. The most systematic indigenous gift theory that we have, that is, the *dānanibandha* literature, was quite simply not interested in the poison in the gift, and though the Dharmaśāstra's typical method of coping with outright disagreement is often blatant omission, lack of evidence does not allow for much beyond speculation. Such a conclusion should begin to nuance the views of scholars who have taken it as axiomatic that the giver enjoys higher status than the recipient and that danger or inauspiciousness is always transferred in the South Asian *dāna*.[11]

Though the findings of Parry, Raheja, and Trautmann are suggestive in introducing multiple and conflicting ideologies concerning *dāna*, they should not be taken as the only, or even primary, entry into South Asian theories of the gift. The *dāna* theorists under examination in this study insisted on the superior social and spiritual status of the recipients of religious *dāna*. From the point of view of the gift theory itself, the entire structure of religious *dāna* requires the superiority of the recipient. Only when the recipient is one who can be admired, can the donor experience all of the aspects of *śraddhā* on which the merit from the gift depends, that is, a sense of unquestioning admiration, good will, and pleasure. Only when the recipient's purity is presumed can the donor give with a pure mind. The morally relevant mental state of esteem can arise only in a relationship of unequals, where the superior moral status of the recipient is assumed.

Issues of status and dependency in the gift can benefit from further nuancing by taking the ethical and spiritual values of the texts on their own terms. The image of the dependent and groveling receiver of gifts is not supported by our medieval sources. A Buddhist story describes a king who, out of want for worthy recipients, must beg Solitary Buddhas (*paccekabuddhas*) to come from the Himalayas so that he can give to them. A worthy recipient is rare and precious. The king depends upon them in order to fulfill his duties as a king, to earn merit for future births, and to be moral.[12] In another story a king asks the Buddha to "grant his favor" to people by allowing them to give to him.[13] A common theme in the Jain narratives also laments the lack of truly worthy recipients and the good fortune one must have in order to encounter one. To even have the chance to give to a Jain monk indicates that the donor has great merit, leading to, as we will see, Hemacandra's stipulation

that one should wistfully look out the door longing for the arrival of monks in order to be saved. This can be compared with the statement of the Dharmaśāstra author, Lakṣmīdhara, who says "one should diligently give *dāna* to those equal or superior (to himself) since brahmans, with their wealth of learning and penance, can save him."[14] The lay person needs monks and nuns in order to advance along the religious path, indeed to be "saved."

WORTHY VESSELS

Since the quality of the donor's intentions hangs on the quality of the recipient, the texts take great care to define the morality of recipient. Moreover, the merit the donor receives for a gift depends, in part, upon the moral stature of the recipient. The merit of a gift varies not only with the donor's intentions and etiquette, but also with the qualities of the recipient. As the Dharmaśāstra author Lakṣmīdhara puts it: "the gift becomes better and better due to the excellence of the recipient."[15] Since the donor is not without interest in his or her own bank of spiritual merit, he or she seeks out the worthiest recipient. The donor balances a trusting and suspended judgment with a sharp eye to the qualities and status of recipients. The texts offer very clear guidelines on the best recipients.

For the Dharmaśāstra anthologists the worthiest recipient is a pure, learned, and virtuous brahman: "there is nothing in the world as purifying and meritorious as brahmans."[16] Even among brahmans one can discern different kinds of brahmans on the basis of their moral qualities. According to the *Sea of Giving*'s encomium of brahmans:

> A proper recipient is recognized by three (characteristics): his conduct, which is known by living near him, his purity which is found to be in accordance to well-established convention [or, by his livelihood], and his wisdom which is known by conversation. "Proper Conduct (*śīla*)" is described by Hārīta. According to Hārīta: Proper conduct is thirteen-fold: piety, devotion to the manes and gods, evenness and gentleness, refraining from harming others, lacking ill-will (*anasūyatā*), softness and lack of harshness, friendliness and pleasant speech, having gratitude, being a refuge for others, and tranquility.[17]

Such descriptions do two things: on the one hand they define the category "brahman" as first and foremost a moral category, and on the other, they encourage morality in recipients. The *dāna* relationship was seen by the theoreticians as a means of regulating conduct — material support depends, in part, on moral and religious practice, which in turn sustains the respective traditions.

A Buddhist text recognizes a variety of different recipients, even as it goes on to encourage giving to Buddhist monks:

> Renunciants are those whose wrong deeds are quelled and brahmans are those whose wrong deeds are kept at bay. Paupers are those fallen on hard times, poor people. Wayfarers are travelers, while beggars are those who wander about praising the beauty of *dāna*, saying, "that which is given is pleasing, charming, lovely! Giving will soothe your mind and you will be reborn in the realm of the gods!" Suppliants are those who go around begging, saying "give just a bite, give just a sip."[18]

Brahmans, even among Jains and Buddhists, are recognized as moral categories, though they are not as worthy as monks and nuns. There are different types of needy: weary travelers, the indigent, those who make a profession out of begging, and those who simply ask for food.

For Jains and Buddhists the paradigmatic recipient is the *saṅgha*, in its instantiation in a monk or a nun, but they recognize a hierarchy of recipients. Ideally one would give to the Buddha or the Jina, but these being unavailable, a generous donor should seek out a monk or nun who, in a sense, stands in for the Buddha or Jina. The Buddhist treatises mention fourteen "graded" recipients ranging from animals all the way up to Perfectly Awakened Buddhas, gradually increasing in religious and moral qualities:

> *Dāna* is called "graded" when given in fourteen situations: *dāna* given to animals, *dāna* given to those holding wrong views such as outcastes and fishermen who make their living by oppressing others, *dāna* given to cattle owners and ordinary folk who make their living by trade justly and righteously not by oppressing others, *dāna* given to one who has reached the eight attainments, but who is outside (i.e. non-Buddhist), likewise, to Stream-winners, to those who have reached the fruit of the Stream-winner path, to Once-returners, to those who have reached the fruit of the Once-returner path, to Non-returners, to those who have reached the fruit of the Non-returner path, to Arhats, to those who have reached the fruit of the Arhat path, to Solitary Buddhas, and to Perfectly Awakened Buddhas. *Dāna* given to these fourteen are said to be "graded *dānas*."[19]

This hierarchy is based on a clear categorization of beings with definable moral and spiritual qualities and attainments.

The Jain author Hemacandra ranks Jain ascetics seeking liberation as the best recipients, followed by pious householders, and then ordinary householders. He also provides detailed instructions on how to recognize nonrecipients and bad recipients who should be shunned.[20] The religious value of discrimination or discernment is at work here. One should know who is worthy and by so knowing demonstrate religious knowledge and insight.

A central principle behind religious gifts, as has been articulated by Jean Filliozat, is that in Indic ethics the "good or evil resulting from an action is proportional to the dignity of the object to which it is directed, whether the agent is

aware or not" (Filliozat 1991:240). The agent does not gain merit simply by good intentions or actions, but also by the "secondary effects" of her actions. Filliozat's treatment of the concept of *puṇya* is helpful here. While I have been translating it simply as "merit," he is right to note that it has a wider sense of "well-being," and to show how happiness and joy (both of the agent and others affected by the action) are built into moral benefit. Thus good actions bring about good consequences both for the agent and the beneficiary of the action. As such, the worthiness of the person toward whom the agent acts is morally relevant. There is a rich sense of causality here. When one gives a gift it has multiple effects in the world in that the recipient gains support that leads to wellbeing for the both recipient and donor.

As Filliozat notes and as we have already seen, this leads to a diminishing of the importance of the donor's intentions. Filliozat cites a story in which a young Buddhist monk is impugned as the "son of a slave" by another monk who did not realize that in fact the one he was insulting was an Arhat. Because of the gravity of insulting so exalted a figure — though he was completely unaware of the young monk's real stature — the monk was reborn a slave five hundred times (Filliozat 1991:240). Ignorance is no excuse when Arhats are at stake. What this means is that, in Indic moral theory, the merit and demerit of an action with which an agent is rewarded will often rest outside of the agent. By shifting much of the moral value from the giver to the recipient, a considerable portion of moral responsibility and credit lies outside of the giver's control.

Another story that illustrates how the recipients determine the good consequences of an act is a *jātaka* tale in which a householder gives hospitality to a weary traveler who, *unbeknownst to him at the time*, is in fact the king.[21] Later the king gives him half his kingdom because of his act of generosity. Interestingly, the moral of the story is said to be that gifts should be given only to those who are worthy, even though in the story itself, the donor did not know at the time of the gift that the recipient was a king. Though this seems to add an unfortunate element of mystery to moral action, it does reflect a realistic way of understanding the effect of human action in the world. It often does seem to be the case that our actions cause good or bad consequences for others and for ourselves depending upon whom they affect, a factor that often lies outside of our knowledge and control. This is especially so in a karmic worldview, in which the impersonal mechanisms of karma often remain opaque and hidden from view.

The doctrine of the worthy recipient also involves an assault on karmic causality: one's merit depends upon the virtue others possess. There is a weakening of individual responsibility for one's karmic results. The same act and the same good will can result in different degrees of merit depending upon the moral

and religious piety of the recipient, a factor over which the donor often has little control.

However, not only does the donor's merit or demerit itself depend to a great deal on the recipient, but the donor's own motivations and intentions are conditioned by the recipient as well. As we saw in considering esteem, it is only when a worthy recipient is at the door for alms that the pure feeling of *śraddhā* can well up in a giver. It is the opportunities others create that condition moral responses in the agent.

Such a view does not sit well with much of modern western ethics in which moral praiseworthiness and culpability rest almost entirely with the agent, any more than it does with karmic causality. Allowances might be given in view of "the circumstances," but generally a moral agent is conceived to be an autonomous unit unto herself, and the moral value of her actions is not understood to be dependent upon or conditioned by the moral status of those whom her actions affect. A moral agent may have her moral mettle *tested* by those whom she encounters, but the idea that her very *ability* to be moral depends upon them is foreign to many western ethical formulations.

All of this conspires to make the donor intensely conscious of the beneficiary of the *dāna*. Yet it also, ideally, provides incentives for discipline and piety among potential recipients. The *dāna* relationship creates moral actors. While the donor ideally should be transformed by giving, to become full of *śraddhā*, well wishes and delight — in short, pure-minded — the recipient also must rise to the occasion. *Dāna* reinforces monastic or brahmanical conduct. Hemacandra puts it simply: "The more monks carry out their behavior free from any oppression, the more there is giving without effort, and to the extent possible, there is the prevention of enemies of the Jina's word and slander of the *dharma* of monks."[22] The recipient is obliged to be virtuous to make it easy for the donor to give to him. Moreover, by moral conduct the recipient can protect the Jain religion and keep its critics at bay.

In an intriguing way, the recipient's virtue makes possible the donor's piety. A worthy recipient is needed for there to be a lay person at all. The ritual act of *dāna* to good recipients defines what in fact a good Buddhist or a good Jain is. In Theravāda Buddhist countries, a lay person is called simply *dāyaka*, "giver," underscoring his chief function and identity as a Buddhist who is not a mendicant.

THE RECIPIENT'S RESPONSE AND THE TRANSFORMING GIFT

As we have seen in Chapter Two, the relationship between the donor and the recipient is not one of debt or reciprocity, nor is it one in which the recipient is acknowledged to be obliged to the donor. The implications of this asymmetry are

significant in terms of the moral responses of the recipient in the encounter. Unlike other discussions of the gift that assume an inherent connection between the virtues of generosity and gratitude (see Camenisch 1981), we find little evidence in these discourses for gratitude being expected of the recipient of *dāna*. Though South Asian traditions do not lack a notion of gratitude (*kṛtajñāna*) altogether,[23] it is not a disposition closely associated with *dāna*, and a verbal expression of thanks would be deemed inappropriate in the gift encounter. It is the donor who is to regard herself as fortunate to have an opportunity to give to the recipient. There is nothing perplexing here once we situate this within the moral structure of the ethics of esteem: the object of the esteem is not expected to be grateful for it or to acknowledge the esteem by an expression of thanks.[24]

In Buddhist circles a recipient might respond to a gift with *anumodanā*, a term that some scholars have wanted to see carry an expression of thanks (Streng 1989:44). *Anumodanā* generally means taking pleasure in the good deeds carried out by another. The *Commentary on the Compendium of Discourses* describes *anumodanā* in the following way:

> When people take joy (*anumodanti*) in [another's] *dāna*, saying "this is good, this is great," with clear minds and without envy or selfishness, or when there are those who [assist with another's *dāna*] by rendering physical services, it is not the case that the gift is lessened or diminished by others taking pleasure or assisting in it. On the contrary, it is even more complete. Just as when one lamp is lit from another lamp, the light of the first lamp is not diminished, but instead the light of that lamp together with the single one increases, so too the gift is not diminished by this. Even those who just experience joy and render services are said to be sharers of the merit, that is, they receive a share of the merit.[25]

This discussion is aimed at refuting the idea that *dāna* yields a limited quantity of merit for the donor alone. Instead, those who help with the arrangements of a gift (such as servants, etc.) and those bystanders who take genuine pleasure in seeing someone else offer a gift and themselves touch the gift as it is offered increase and share in the giver's merit.

The recipient can also experience *anumodanā*. When *anumodanā* is the response of the recipient, it is less a response of gratitude or thanks, and more of a response of joyful or even aesthetic approval or acceptance, which can even be meritorious for the recipient. Even the Buddha can experience this pleasure when given a gift. As Masatoshi Nagatomi notes, *anumodanā* "is a response on the part of the Buddha, etc. to the pious act of the spiritually inferior rather than the other way around" (Nagatomi 1989:77). Again, we find a close connection between piety and pleasure, but here delight in the act is experienced by the beneficiary of the gift.

The doctrine of the worthy recipient requires a certain level of virtue and status for the recipient, but also, as we see here, certain types of responses. One of the most interesting responses found in the texts is the possibility that the recipient is transformed by the gift to be worthy of it. A Buddhist story (though not one cited by the texts under study) tells of a monk who receives *dāna* from a layman who, due to his unfortunate circumstances, must go to great personal sacrifice to make this gift. The monk notices his pains and so decides to make the gift more meritorious for the layman by making himself more pious and deserving. Since the reward for the donor is commensurate with the virtue of the recipient, the monk "deems it his duty, he who is the beneficiary, to increase the fruit by making himself greater" (Filliozat 1991:241). So he becomes more diligent in his practice and obtains Arhatship. The donor's gift increases in merit and also brings about a considerable transformation in the recipient. Here the doctrine of the worthy recipient and the dependency of the giver's merit on the recipient's virtue is pronounced. The story also exposes the mutual dependency of the moral status of both the giver and the receiver: the gift encounter turns both participants into moral agents.

Thus, a conscious transformation occurs within the recipient in his role in receiving a gift. The recipient regards himself obliged to be as worthy as he can be in order to increase the merit the donor attains. There is a curious sense of obligation here, perhaps even a whiff of reciprocity in this particular story, in that the recipient "gives" merit (enhanced by his own improved character) to the donor.

While not themselves endorsing this possibility, the Buddhist anthologies do recognize different degrees of virtuosity in monks. Some monks are further advanced than others, and some monks, though they wear the yellow robe, are dubious. In the "graded" recipients described above, the religious are ranked according to their religious accomplishments, that is, how far along the path they are. Since the merit a donor acquires depends upon the recipient's religious and moral attainments, the donor is likely to be highly interested in the quality of the recipient.

The Buddhist materials share with the Dharmaśāstra and Jain texts the sense that the doctrine of the worthy recipient should encourage both religious discrimination on the part of the donor as well as moral virtue on the part of the recipient. Yet they go further to suggest also that the very gift encounter itself can be transformative, making recipients worthy. This possibility may reconcile two opposing logics of the gift in which, on the one hand, the donor should be aware that merit is commensurate with the dignity of the recipient. However, on the other hand, once a worthy recipient is found the donor should not investigate the individual too closely, but should instead give with *śraddhā*, having located an objective quality in him which allows him to give impartially.

One solution to these opposing logics is to suggest that the objective quality arises in the recipient in the moment of *dāna* even if it is not present before. Here

we find a poignant sense of realism in the acknowledgment that it is hard for donors to find a truly worthy recipient. In order to make merit from the gift, one should give to one who, as the texts put it, "possesses the Path," that is the path of morality that leads to the soteriological goals of Buddhism. The *Compendium of the Essence* considers whether it is really possible for donors to give to those who are worthy, that is, to find those who possess the religious path, and suggests a novel solution:

> How is it possible that they give a gift to one possessing the Path? Having taken the bowl from the hand of a beginning meditator standing at the door of the house, they fill it with proper food. At that very moment there is the arising of the Path for the monk, and this is called a gift to one possessing the Path.[26]

This passage suggests an intriguing possibility: when a gift is given, the soteriological path "arises" for the recipient. For one moment at least the recipient receives as a worthy recipient, as the representative of the tradition and its values. At the very moment that a gift is given, the entire moral path is manifest in the recipient and he is transformed to be greater than he is, even if just temporarily. He steps into the role or capacity of being a worthy recipient and is regarded as such. The text admits that this "arising" may be only temporary, but even for that one moment it is morally significant.

If the Path is present in the recipient, it becomes easier for donors to give to him since they are assured of giving to a worthy field of merit. They can give with genuine feelings of respect. It effects a change for the recipient as well to be regarded as morally "on track" in a given face-to-face encounter.

Another way in which Buddhist recipients are deemed to be worthy is that they receive on behalf of the "universal *saṅgha* headed by the Buddha," a reminder of the spiritual path and goal that they represent to others. The *saṅgha*, by its very definition, according to the texts, cannot be immoral.[27] Thus it can purify the *dāna* and its recipient, if only for a moment. At the same time, the texts are not unaware that particular monks may fall short of the *saṅgha*'s ideals. These are called "yellow necks" because they are merely humans wearing the monk's robe, rather than genuine monks. Yet, even their presence does not taint the *saṅgha*, because the timeless *saṅgha* is able to purify itself:

> Who purifies a gift given to a *saṅgha* of yellow-necks? The eighty great elders beginning with Sāriputta and Moggallāna purify it. And since these elders long since attained complete awakening since they were the first elders, Arhats who are living today purify it.[28]

By giving to the "universal *saṅgha* headed by the Buddha," a giver insures that she gives with true respect and that the receiver is purified by the good qualities of the *saṅgha*. What is envisioned here is a very fluid movement of moral qualities.

There is virtue by association and exchange, and the very act of giving creates moral agency.[29]

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY

Religious and moral ideals aside, to what extent might we see economic motivations driving these gift ideologies? To what extent are these moral considerations masking rank economic calculations?

There are obvious political and pragmatic undercurrents here that draw our notice. These are elite treatises written in the main by those who identify themselves as ideal recipients. One way to read such texts is as legitimizing and promoting the maintenance of a privileged class of ideologues who specialize in offering religious mystification or justification for the status quo. It may also be that their religious and moral conceits might not point to much reality outside the texts themselves and the elite circles in which they were reproduced, though this is a matter of considerable contention among modern scholars.[30]

Dāna is not without its practical aspects in its role in supporting religious institutions. R. Williams says about *dāna* in Jainism: "This *vrata* covers the most important single element in the practice of the religion for, without almsgiving by the laity, there could be no ascetics and therefore no transmission of the sacred doctrine" (Williams 1983:149). According to Richard Gombrich on Buddhism: "Giving comes first in the list of the Ten Good Deeds, and it is easy to guess why. The existence of the Sangha and hence of Buddhism, depends, in theory at least, on the generosity of the laity" (Gombrich 1971:289).

And yet, as we have seen, the texts sometimes downplay the dependency of the recipient and instead play up the neediness on the part of the donor to make contact with the admired recipient. This reversal may not be entirely a convenient fiction on the part of the religious elite. A consideration of the socio-economic conditions during which the medieval compendia and commentaries were composed and circulated may indicate how much weight we wish to place on economic factors in the articulation of *dāna* ideologies.

During some periods of South Asian history religious institutions enjoyed considerable autonomy and financial independence. This may suggest that in particular instances in Theravāda monastic history, for example, *dāna* has very little to do with economic purposes and is rather about issues of religious and ethical status and identity. Here a closer look at the social history of the period in which the texts were written is useful for enlarging our understanding of the significant features of *dāna*. The medieval, that is, 11-13th century, Buddhist institutions in Sri Lanka that produced the Buddhist compendia are marked by a process which scholars have called "domestication" of the *saṅgha*. Ivan Strenski has defined

domestication as "a process by and in which the *saṅgha* and laity enter into a complex variety of relationships: residential, ritual, social, political and economic" with the most visible feature of the domesticated *saṅgha* being monastic landlordism (Strenski 1983:466; see also Carrithers 1983; Gunawardana 1979). The medieval *saṅgha* generated most of its wealth first by land grants from kings and then from the money it made off of land ownership. Individual monasteries became powerful and wealthy institutions, owning up to one third of the land at certain times.[31]

The fact that the *saṅgha* was powerful and wealthy undermines any purely material account of the *dāna* relationship. Considering the enormous landed wealth owned by the medieval domesticated *saṅgha* there were clearly periods in which monks were not financially dependent on ordinary lay generosity. They generated most of their livelihood from royal gifts and their own monastic wealth. Nevertheless the texts continue to praise above all the ordinary, face-to-face and day-to-day *dāna* of the four requisites by householders. Speaking directly to this point about the Theravāda, Ilana Silber exclaims: "what strikes me as remarkable is that although the flow of donations could evidently be affected by contextual economic and/or political trends, nothing ever undermined — at least until recently — the basic principle of a gift relationship between monks and laymen" (Silber 1995b:97). Why would the Theravāda authors be largely silent about the royal and lavish giving that provided the basis of their support and autonomy, while praising ordinary "village" alms-giving on which they were not economically dependent? True, they were quoting from earlier material written before domestication of the *saṅgha* in which monks were perhaps more dependent upon individual householders, but why would they rearticulate the same values when such economic dependence was no longer an issue or need?

And yet, scholars considering *dāna* have too often regarded it as purely an economic institution, a view that neglects its social, religious, and ethical aspects. For example, Gombrich acknowledges that monastic landordism may undermine some of the fiscal aspects of *dāna*, but then dismisses it saying, "Beside these circumstances peculiar to Buddhism we may remark that all institutions seem to need cash, and that fund-raising is a prominent feature of all organized religion under the sun" (Gombrich 1971:289). But if *dāna* was principally concerned with fund-raising why are the texts not advocating royal gifts whence they obtained most of their funds?

An answer would suggest that *dāna* theory in the medieval Theravāda formulations was driven not solely by material or political interests but also, perhaps even chiefly, by other concerns, which could best be achieved by its emphasis on cultivating face-to-face relations with the laity. We can posit then, that *dāna* of the requisites to monks is principally concerned with constructing religious and moral

relationships and agency, in ways we have already begun to describe. As David Cheal puts it in a more general context, "gift transactions do not have as their principal purpose the redistribution of resources," but are, "for the most part, redundant transactions that are used in the ritual construction of small social worlds" (Cheal 1996:81). The *dāna* moment creates religious and social identity, builds communities, and marks status. Strenski argues that in Theravāda patterns of exchange, gifts to the *saṅgha* are a form of "generalized exchange" in which *dāna* is an open-ended giving which promotes "social solidarity" (Strenski 1983:471). For Strenski *dāna* has multiple social functions and is a way in which the tradition could honor the laity's religious needs. Ultimately the face-to-face relations of the *dāna* encounter "constitute the basis of what is properly called a Buddhist culture or civilization" (Strenski 1983:465).

It is curious here that when we compare Theravāda *dāna* theory to the *dāna* theory of Jains and Hindus from the same period but perhaps in very different social, economic, and political circumstances, we notice more or less the same vision of face-to-face, day-to-day interaction between lay people and the religious. The medieval Śvetāmbara *saṅgha* resisted, for the most part, the forces of domestication.[32] Jain monks and nuns did continue to remain dependent upon householders providing them with daily requisites rather than monastic landlordism.

Nor are medieval brahmanical institutions identical economically to Buddhist monastic institutions. Many brahmanical institutions would have paralleled monastic landlordism in Buddhism with the rising practice in the medieval period of *brahmadeya*, land grants, which provided brahmans with land and the tax revenue from villages given by the king.[33] Yet many brahmans, to different degrees and probably with a great range of variability across history, geography, and individual circumstance, remained economically dependent to some extent on gifts for their livelihood. Despite different economic variables, all three of these gift theories have produced remarkably similar gift ideals.

Local social history is useful for considering the genesis of texts and enriching our understanding of the contexts in which they arose and which they in turn influenced, but it is not enough to "explain" gift ideologies. A translocal perspective provides a check on how much explanatory power we can get from local social and economic conditions. *Dāna* theory cannot be explained by material dependency alone because its primary ideals remain in place as the variable of economic dependency changes.

If the medieval monks who composed the *Ornament of Lay People* and the *Compendium of Discourses* for instance, did not really need the financial assistance that householders' *dāna* provided, why did they devote so much of their attention and praise to it? I would argue that they were concerned, in a sincere way, with the religious and ethical values they were espousing. *Dāna* creates virtuous

lay people and monks. If monks had been allowed to forget the daily alms-round and live off the profits of their land holdings, their estrangement from their status as *pātras*, in which the central values of the tradition are upheld, could lead to moral and religious decline. Moreover, without daily contact with monks, the laity would be deprived of their chief religious identity and function and may lose interest in religion. Thus in an important way the *dāna* system creates and sustains the religion and the religious culture. *Dāna* cultivates the interpersonal values of respect and admiration for others, of *śraddhā* and devotion to superiors.

DĀNA TO THE NEEDY

What about the poor? It is crucial to note that a clear distinction is drawn between the religious dependent and the ordinary poor person, with the latter not typically regarded as the worthiest recipient. The emphasis on giving to the worthy encourages a keen eye for the moral qualities of the recipient. Charitable gifts made out of altruism and pity rather than esteem are generally not regarded as meritorious as giving to the religious, though they are not prohibited.

The importance placed on the superior status of the recipient makes charity, in the narrow sense of giving to the poor, problematic. It is not clear how the ethics of esteem could accommodate an ethics of altruism. Since charitable gifts are not necessarily religious acts they do not bear merit, at least not to the same degree as gifts to brahmans and mendicants. As such, it may be in charitable gifts that we can expect to find the notion of a pure "disinterested gift" (Silber 1995a:226). This is because the poor can not reciprocate, nor are gifts to them productive of much heavenly or spiritual fruit. Such gifts are, as it were, altruistic.

To be sure, some kinds of gifts are given indiscriminately and in every direction. Some *dānas* are given in support of the poor, to strangers, and to animals. Public works, such as building water tanks and way stations for weary travelers, are given to the public at large, to anyone who may come along and need them. Similarly, the gift of protection (*abhayadāna*) is given to all life, without distinction, and may have special significance for animals. Education and teaching religious doctrine are also articulated in the language of the gift (*vidyādāna*, *dharmadāna*), as a gift given usually by religious specialists often to anyone who may wish to gather and hear a sermon. Finally, the texts recognize gifts that should be given simply to the poor and needy out of compassion.

Yet, despite these gifts, most *dānas* are religious ones, and discussions of the recipient are in the main preoccupied with brahmans in the case of the Dharmaśāstra texts, and monks and nuns in the case of Jains and Buddhists. The medieval authors are somewhat discomfited by the issue of giving to the unfortunate, and this discomfiture is reflected in their choices of classification. Though gifts to the poor are discussed and permitted in all of the materials under study,

they are not always called "*dāna*." The *nibandha* writers, though mostly silent about giving to the needy, cite the *Mahābhārata* that "the lame, the blind, the deaf, the mute, and the diseased should be maintained, but should not be given formal gifts (*pratigraha*)."[34] The trouble with the needy is that their moral status is dubious; the very fact that they are in need means they are likely not supported by others within the fold of the *dharma*. Ballālasena does go on to say that one should give "to those whose livelihood is dancing, acting, or begging, out of pity," but does not use the term "*dāna*" to describe such giving.[35] In the Dharmaśāstra texts, charity and support are to be given, but should not necessarily be labeled *dāna* in its more technical sense. On the other hand, since the compendia are citing from many different sources, it is not surprising that there are sometimes contradictions or inconsistencies. For example, Ballālasena says that giving to the wretched, the blind, the helpless, orphans, mutes, those who are maimed, dwarves, the lame, and those suffering from disease, is very fruitful.[36] What is evident is that such giving is not treated in any systematic way and is mentioned rather sparsely.

This is entirely consistent with what has gone before. *Dāna* requires a worthy recipient and the right dispositions on the part of the donor, and in giving to the miserable, neither is assured. Unlike certain Christian notions toward the poor in which the poor are sometimes seen to have a certain nobility and moral status,[37] poverty and wretchedness in South Asian culture are markers of demerit and moral want owing to past wrongdoing. Therefore, *dāna* to the unworthy is fruitless, akin to "seeds fallen on saline soil, milk into a broken pot, and pouring sacrificial offerings into ashes."[38] Indeed, giving to those who have strayed from the *dharma* can even be risky since, according to one text, it results in the giver eating feces in the afterlife for a hundred years![39] For religious gifts one should have religious discrimination in order to identify a worthy recipient to begin with.

Indeed, although all of these traditions praise and encourage the virtue of compassion elsewhere, it does not feature highly in *dāna* theory since it is inconsistent with the doctrine of the worthy recipient. The attitude of *śraddhā*, of respect and devotion toward a superior, is much more fruitful than an attitude of compassion toward an inferior. Such giving is not usually discouraged,[40] but generally it is not as fruitful as giving to worthy recipients.

The Theravāda compendia often employ a less technical sense of *dāna* so that the term is used freely for all types of recipients, even to animals, though the paradigmatic *dāna* is to monks. The *Ornament of Lay People* tells a story in which a good person gains much merit by merely pointing out the way to an almshouse for beggars.[41] In the listing of the fourteen graded recipients that we saw above, the *Compendium of the Essence* lists giving to animals, lowly folk such as fishermen and ordinary people as the lowest forms of *dāna*, but nevertheless such giving is still *dāna*. What is emphasized, however, and sometimes in quite strong

language, is that a good person (*sappurisa*) would "not spoil or harm [giving] by such things as contempt for the other or by boasting [for that would be to] smear it by doing injury to the virtues of self and other."[42] The aesthetic here is significant, for just as giving with esteem is attractive and pleasing, giving with contempt or self-aggrandizement is morally and aesthetically repugnant.

The Jain texts take great care to distinguish between gifts to worthy recipients made from *bhakti* or *śraddhā*, and gifts to the unfortunate made out of compassion. On the one hand, they wish to confine the extent of their generosity to the boundaries of the Jain religion and would not care to see enemies of the tradition supported. Indeed, according to Somadeva, giving to those attached to false doctrines and evil-doers is like giving milk to snakes. However, if one wants to give to them out of compassion or propriety one may do so, but only leftovers and then away from one's house.[43] The chief thing is that the two domains of giving be kept conceptually distinct; the rules for each are entirely different.

An important but later Jain writer, Yaśovijaya, stipulates that *dāna* to both the worthy out of *bhakti* (which he glosses as *śraddhā*), and to those deserving compassion, out of pity, should be given, but the donor should not mix up the required attitudes toward each. To do so involves a transgression (*aticāra*).[44] Devendra Sūri draws the same sharp distinction between giving out of compassion and giving out of devotion but in the context of giving to monks. His language on this is forceful: he "censures and hates" giving out of compassion or pity to a monk who is suffering, because such an attitude entails passion or contempt.[45] He goes on to illustrate a scenario in which one might give out of pity to monks or brahmans thinking that they are not getting any alms, that they are filthy and rejected by their own people, hungry and without recourse, and so they are to be despised. Giving after having such thoughts is blameworthy compassion, and it causes a long, but inauspicious life. It is wrong because one gives without recognizing the virtues of the monks but instead despises them, which involves a kind of hatred called "censuring the monk."[46] This alludes back to the discussion of *śraddhā* in the previous chapter and the insistence upon recognizing the superior status of the recipient and avoiding noticing his weaknesses. But it also connects the feeling of pity to a kind of contempt.[47] One despises the one for whom one feels pity, an attitude wholly inappropriate in regard to a monk or a brahman. This idea also indirectly offers a justification for why gifts of respect are loftier than gifts of pity — the feelings they invoke in the giver are more honorable.

Hemacandra, in his usual systematic fashion, does not pit respect and compassion against one another, but incorporates both. He describes seven "fields" of *dāna* with the idea that *dāna* should be given in seven different situations by an ordinary lay person established in the vows.[48] The seven fields are: images of the Jina, Jain temples, the Āgamas (i.e. the Jain scripture), monks, nuns, laymen, and

laywomen.[49] The first three are not recipients as such, but rather occasions for giving, and underscore the religious aspect of *dāna*. Giving to the seven fields is a ritual act, either in offering *pūjā*, building temples, causing the scriptures to be copied or recited, or feeding, clothing and housing any of the four orders of the Jain *saṅgha*. Hemacandra goes on to comment that to these seven a pious lay person gives with devotion (*bhakti*) defined as *śraddhā*.[50] The language of fields is appropriate here and Hemacandra speaks of "sowing" wealth in them — the entire discussion is oriented towards the fruitfulness of these acts.

Yet, as Hemacandra's own commentary on this passage goes on to say, a "superior lay person" (*mahāśrāvaka*) should do all this and more, that is, give to others who are not among the seven fields:

> One is called a superior layperson not merely from sowing wealth on the seven fields, but also from sowing wealth on the wretched such as the poor, the blind, the deaf, the lame, and the sick (to whom one gives) just out of pity but not out of devotion. For giving *dāna* is properly for the seven fields accompanied by devotion. Yet it is right to sow one's own wealth out of compassion on the very wretched, without discriminating between recipient and non-recipient and without considering their suitability or non-suitability. For the Bhagavan gave at the time of renunciation a year-long *dāna* out of compassion, where any distinction between recipient and non-recipient was disregarded. Thus, one who sows wealth in the seven fields out of devotion, and to the wretched out of compassion, is called a "superior lay person."[51]

Several points should be noted about this passage. The statement: "for giving *dāna* is properly for the seven fields accompanied by devotion" is interpreted both by Cort (2001:105) and myself as giving a more restricted and technical definition of *dāna*. But what Hemacandra is doing here is saying that a truly remarkable layperson (the *mahāśrāvaka*) gives not just to the seven fields but goes beyond that and gives out of compassion as well, to those who do not meet the specifications of a worthy recipient. With his characteristic skill in systematizing and accommodation, he retains the narrower sense of *dāna* and its logic of the importance of recipient, but expands the *practice* of charitable giving by introducing an additional supererogatory category of the exceptional lay person.

Elsewhere Hemacandra has said that even the whole earth given to non-recipients (*apātra*) and bad recipients (*kupātra*) is fruitless, but just food, given with esteem to a worthy recipient, is very fruitful.[52] Yet he goes on to say, "there is discrimination regarding gifts where the fruit is liberation, yet a gift given out of compassion by those who know the Truth is nowhere prohibited."[53] It may be that only those who know the Truth can do the exceptional act and go beyond the call of duty by giving even where it is not particularly fruitful. An ordinary layperson (*śrāvaka*), when strictly defined,[54] is expected to practice the vow of *dāna*, the twelfth of the lay

vows, restricted to providing support to monks and nuns. But a *mahāśrāvaka* is one who, resolute in his vows, "strews wealth on the seven fields out of devotion, and to the miserable out of compassion."[55]

That giving to beggars or the unworthy was viewed as an exceptional act is supported by Jain and Theravāda narrative literature. In most cases of giving to a greedy brahman or another dubious character the giving is done by either the Bodhisattva or by a Tīrthaṅkara. Seldom are such demanding gifts given by ordinary people. Perhaps only such exalted beings have that perfection of generosity which makes it possible to give even to those who bring in little merit. For example, King Vessantara, who was the Bodhisattva in his last rebirth before being born as Siddhartha and attaining *nirvāṇa*, perfected the final stage of his final virtue in giving away his children to a greedy brahman.[56] This gift, the hardest gift of all, is made more difficult and more exceptional by the vivid description of the recipient's depravity, cruelty, and greed. But such exalted figures as Bodhisattvas and Tīrthaṅkaras need not display their religious discrimination in their generosity because that is already assumed. Instead their generosity is linked to compassion and is generalized to all beings. They are admired for this, but not necessarily emulated.

But if giving to the needy out of compassion is left to extraordinary givers, then what of the moral dilemmas that are bound to arise in the choices ordinary people have to make when giving? Gombrich describes such a dilemma in a contemporary Theravāda context: "If one has to choose between (feeding) an unhungry monk and a hungry beggar one feeds the beggar because of the exigency of the moment, but one gets less merit" (Gombrich 1971:291). Here religious merit is at odds with a moral demand imposed by the presence of hunger.

Giving to the religious rather than to the needy often creates awkwardness in actual experience. James Laidlaw's ethnographic study on Jains in Jaipur brings home some of the problematics of giving to renouncers over beggars. A nun described to him the following scenario:

> If, while a renouncer is receiving food from a household, a beggar should happen to call, the renouncer may not take and eat the food. She must not accept food which the beggar needs and asks for. She can fast, so she does not need the food. However, she cannot give the food to the beggar. She does not own it, she does not own anything, so she cannot give it. She cannot intervene in the affairs of the world, so just as she must not deprive the beggar of food, she cannot be a donor of food either. All she can do is preach to the beggar, to explain to him that karma is the cause of his suffering, and that attachment is the cause of his karma. If only he will follow Jain religion he too will not mind if he does not eat. The renouncer must then fast. The food must be thrown away (Laidlaw 1995:308).

Laidlaw goes on to say: "For a renouncer, the uncompromising rigour implied here is becoming, and the resort to preaching is fitting; but how unthinkable that a rich lay merchant should behave in this way!" (Laidlaw 1995:308). We have no way of knowing whether the medieval Jain theorists would have agreed with the renouncer's "solution" here, but a consideration of it casts strong light on the question of whether or not religious merit takes precedence over feeding the hungry.

The Dharmaśāstra's hesitancy to call charitable gifts "*dāna*" and its paucity of references to such gifts suggests an uneasy fit with the principles of religious *dāna*. Altruism by definition cannot yield fruits and so fares badly in the calculation of religious merit. The implications of hanging religious merit largely on the moral status of the recipient would seem to generate a conflict between altruism and religion. Compassion does not permit discriminating among beneficiaries, while the *dāna* ideology considered here depends upon it. I am not the first to notice this and indeed, a brief consideration of Mahāyāna reflections on *dāna* reveals that some Mahāyāna critics shared this observation.

The nature of generosity was a key site of disagreement with the earlier forms of Buddhism among Mahāyāna innovators. For many Mahāyāna thinkers generosity lies close to compassion, and a *bodhisattva* should not discriminate in either. Since the religious ideal of the laity is to emulate a *bodhisattva* rather than simply admire him, the indiscriminate giving that is part of a *bodhisattva's* generosity is idealized for ordinary Buddhists.

We find in Mahāyāna discussions of the gift a concern about poverty. Śāntideva says: "the perfection of generosity consists in making the universe free from poverty" and "is said to result from the mental attitude of relinquishing all that one has to all people" (Crosby and Skilton 1995:34). The Mahāyāna interpretation of *dāna* is here the perfection of generosity bestowed by a *bodhisattva* on all beings, rather than the face-to-face gifts of the laity to monks and nuns.

Yet despite the sensitivity to the plight of the impoverished, there is also a strong emphasis for Śāntideva on the intentionality of giving rather than the result. Faced with the difficulty that despite the presence of countless *bodhisattvas* giving indiscriminately for countless eons, there is still poverty in the world, Śāntideva asserts that the perfection of generosity is really a mental attitude: "since I cannot control external events, I will control my own mind. What concern is it of mine whether other things are controlled?" (Crosby and Skilton 1995:34-5). Discounting the effect on the recipient, generosity becomes entirely a matter of the donor's intention.

Mahāyāna treatises on lay conduct, such as the *Discourse on the Conduct of the Laity* (*Upāsakaśīla-sūtra*)[57] and the Chinese "Book of Resolving Doubts Concerning the Semblance Dharma,"[58] challenge the Theravāda's priority of *dāna* to the meritorious. The former, a text for the lay *bodhisattva*, articulated the

bodhisattva ideal for lay ethics, which is of course a distinctively Mahāyāna notion. Both texts reinterpret *dāna* so that it is chiefly a matter of compassion. The *Upāsakaśīla-sūtra* argues that "when giving one should not see (whether the recipient is) a field of blessings or not. If a person can practice giving like this, the reward follows him as the calf follows its mother. If one gives merely to gain rewards, this is trading not giving" (Shih Heng-ching 1994:124). Giving even to animals with the right intention is equal to giving to Buddhas. The Chinese text argues that the optimal recipients of giving are not monks, but instead the impoverished, the orphaned, the aged, and animals, etc. The field of compassion is also the best field of merit.

An important Mahāyāna theme present in these texts and elsewhere is discouraging expectations and calculations of reward in giving (Harrison 1987:75-6). This principle too demotes calculations and discriminations about *pātras*, and provides a different logic for giving. Giving comes to be seen as responding to needs in the world rather than a religious practice for gaining spiritual merit. The *Upāsakaśīla-sūtra* repeatedly evokes the plight and sufferings of those in poverty in its discussions of *dāna*, and rails against the evils of poverty. Poverty is an evil aspect of the world and should elicit the response of generosity: "one gives because one deeply sees the faults of *saṁsāra*" (Shih Heng-ching 1994:124). This text's meditations on poverty stand in sharp contrast to the other Indic treatises, which do not use the occasion of *dāna* to reflect on the lot of poor.

As David Chappell points out, *dāna* is interpreted by the *Upāsakaśīla* as compassion (Chappell 1996:360). Selfless giving to the "field of poverty" is a priority for the lay *bodhisattva*. In practical terms, the laity are exalted even above monks, since they have property and can alleviate the condition of the poor with material gifts rather than simply gifts of the teaching (Chappell 1996:364). If one has but a little wealth one should give it first to the poor, second to the *saṅgha* (Shih Heng-ching 1994:35-36). Even enemies should be given gifts. As with Śāntideva, there is a reorienting of the value of giving back to the intentions of the giver and the refusal to discriminate among recipients. The disposition of *śraddhā* is not emphasized nor articulated in terms of the relationship to the recipient. Instead, the ideal intentions for giving are compassion and selflessness. The *bodhisattva* ethic of indiscriminate generosity is enjoined for ordinary lay men and women.

In contrast to this, the Jain, Theravāda, and Dharmaśāstra materials under study do not conflate religious giving with gifts to the poor, and insist that it is a category error to do so. One gives either out of *śraddhā* or *bhakti* to the worthy, or out of pity to others. This is not to suggest that there is no room for compassion or generalized kindness in these gift theories, however. The traditions recognize the importance of gifts of compassion but shelve them elsewhere. This is evident in

the *nibandhas* requiring that gifts of cooked food to non-brahmans be given outside of the sacrificial enclosure.[59] It is not that gifts made out of compassion cannot be accommodated, it is just they must be ritually and conceptually separate.

It should be noted that the Theravādin *Gift-Offering of the True Dhamma* gives more weight to the ideal of giving out of compassion along the lines of the *bodhisattva* ideal than the other texts under study (Hazlewood 1988:110-12). As noted in Chapter One, the author of this text was a monk from the Abhayagiri school in Sri Lanka, which is said to have had Mahāyāna sympathies. The author does not deny that one should give to a recipient who has a tranquil mind and is free of greed, but at the same time argues for giving to the needy along the following lines:

> A liberal donor sees some poor person come begging [and then sees him] gleeful because of obtaining his request; what fruit is greater than that? As for the poor person, obtaining his gift and pleased to attain his desire, his face is lustrous as a full-blown lotus and fairer [than before]. The giver, seeing [that fairer face] and obtaining extraordinary comfort, enjoys [it]; this fruit of giving is enough even if there be no [fruit] in the next world (Hazlewood 1988:111).

Here the author acknowledges that gifts to the needy will not be fruitful in terms of merit, but argues that the aesthetic and moral pleasure from giving to them is reward enough. In the calculation of merit such gifts still fare badly, but a case can be made for giving to the needy on other grounds.

CONCLUSIONS

It is intriguing that the Theravāda shares more with its Jain and Dharmaśāstra neighbors on *dāna* than it does with its Mahāyāna kin. The Mahāyāna texts considered here represent a significant and self-conscious departure from widespread Indic structures of giving to worthy recipients. Not only does this observation shed light on *dāna* as a critical focal point for discerning areas of disagreement between Mahāyāna and Theravāda religious ideals, but it also reconfigures medieval South Asian religious history. Sometimes the differences *within* religions can be greater than *across* them.

For the Theravāda, Jain, and Dharmaśāstra theorists the moral status of the recipient is a primary consideration in how much merit the donor obtains for making the *dāna*. This is due to two distinct lines of reasoning. First, merit is calculated on the basis of the moral worth of the field of merit. Moral and religious activity is fruitful to the extent that it is directed toward rich soil that can nourish and expand the benefits of the gift. This principle seems to have little or nothing to do with the giver's intentions.

But the second reason that the moral status of the recipient is critical is because it can produce the ideal responses in the donor, and then, the intentions of the donor are important. That is, in a face-to-face encounter the nature of the recipient generates the appropriate feelings in the donor. When the recipient is someone whom one can esteem, the feelings of *śraddhā*, respect, and joy, naturally arise. These are among the most noble feelings one can have, and thus it is perfectly appropriate to value these gifts above others. In contrast, gifts to dubious characters are given out of pity, a response that can sometimes approach contempt, which is not endorsed as the ideal moral state from which to act.

In the first kind of reasoning there is a weakening of the agency and intentions of the giver, while in the second, the agency and intentions of the giver are conditioned by the presence of qualities in the recipient. In this latter sense, *dāna* theory draws our attention to the face-to-face encounter and the ways in which moral intentions and dispositions are generated by others. The presence of certain kinds of others conditions the experience of morally and religiously valuable responses. In this regard we can perceive how religious and moral states flow between agents in a gift encounter, but it is not in the same way that recent ethnography on *dāna* describes. In medieval *dāna* theories it is not that bio-moral qualities are transferred along with the gift, but rather that the presence of virtues in others inspires the appropriate internal responses in the agent. One is shaped by the contact one has with others; one needs to have virtuous ones around in order to experience esteem.

In the *dāna* relation the donor and the recipient define each other morally and religiously. A donor cannot gain merit, honor the tradition, or display her piety without the presence of a worthy recipient. This is no less true for royal largesse than face-to-face lay almsgiving: the righteous king cannot perform his kingly duties without true religious beneficiaries to lavish royal wealth on. In a sense, he cannot be a true king. And the recipient requires the support of the donor not just materially, but also spiritually and morally. The recipients are expected to rise to the occasion and receive as worthy representatives of their traditions.

In *dāna* ideology from all three traditions the gift encounter creates religious actors. It marks and displays a lay person, a *dāyaka*, as belonging to a particular tradition. But it also encourages the cultivation of moral and religious virtues in the recipient not only to obtain gifts, but also to be worthy of them. That this basic ideology cuts across all three traditions, even as local socio-economic and historical factors differ, suggests a shared set of moral or cultural values at work in all three of them.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RITUAL

The conceptual scheme which frames our discussion of these Indic analyses of the gift defines the excellence of the gift in terms of the donor, the recipient, the ritual, and the gift object. This chapter considers the third criterion: the procedure or etiquette of the gift, which is elaborated in all of the medieval treatises in formal and ritualistic terms. While it is perhaps not surprising that technical and *śāstri*c discourse should be highly attentive to matters of formal behavior, it is nevertheless a key insight of the medieval writers to identify the ritual procedure as an essential feature of the gift. The ritual procedure describes the nature of the face-to-face encounter between the donor and the recipient. Gift etiquette is to be considered on equal footing with questions of the donor's intention and the status of the recipient.

How the gift is given indicates entry into and participation in the religious and moral worlds the texts describe — etiquette is a code for membership in moral and ideological communities. Gift ritual is a kind of religious aesthetics. The particular "manners" deployed in giving a gift described in the three traditions differ in important ways meant to mark off ideological boundaries, even while certain common patterns demarcate a shared cosmopolitan aesthetic.

Yet the ritual of the gift does more than express symbolically religious and moral ideals. It also is designed to constitute them, to generate moral agency (that is, the capacity for moral dispositions and action), and also moral subjectivity (that is, awareness of oneself as a moral agent). I argue that ritual was seen to stimulate moral disposition. Formalized gift behavior was deemed to inspire generosity on the part of the donor and worthiness on the part of the recipient.

The term "*vidhi*" in the discourses on *dāna* can be translated as rule or formal procedure, as well as conduct or mode of behavior. *Dāna-vidhi* describes the formal ritual injunctions that prescribe the etiquette or correct mode of gift giving. *Dāna-vidhi* and the attention given to the formal properties of the gift articulate the expressions of reverence and respect of the recipient already enjoined in

discussions of the donor and the recipient. The Dharmaśāstra texts also discuss *pratigraha-vidhi,* the rules for acceptance of a gift, which articulate the blessings that should be uttered upon receiving a gift and the patterns of behavior enjoined for the recipient depending upon the nature of the gift received.

While the term *vidhi* is explicitly used by Jains and the Dharmaśāstra authors, the Buddhist texts under consideration do not usually employ this language to describe the formal conduct of the gift, although *dāna-vidhi* is not unknown to Pali discourses on giving (PvA 78). However, they too elaborate the rules of procedure of proper conduct in a formalized way. All of the texts engage in a technical style of "*śāstric*" discourse, a particularly Indic form of articulating highly explicit rule-governed behavior. I am not the first to suggest that *śāstric* discourse bears some resemblance to etiquette manuals (Pollock 1985), but I do argue against the grain of scholars who have seen a sharp distinction between this type of etiquette and a developed moral sensibility.

Etiquette is also useful in terms of what it suggests for describing pan-Indic cultural forms, which may span across religious and intellectual affiliations. Etiquette is usually conservative and operative at the level of culture, and may here suggest widespread South Asian aesthetics of reverence toward religious and social superiors. Etiquette is also relative, however, describing the conventions of moral communities that are specific to them. Considering what is similar and what is different in the etiquette codes of the three traditions can suggest elements of shared cosmopolitan civilization while also illustrating what is particular to each tradition.

Also relevant to the matters of formal behavior are distinctively Indic discussions of the categories of time (*kāla*) and place (*deśa*) in giving. These categories shine a different sort of light on the gift, illuminating a sensitivity to context and circumstance that bears meaning for the gift and circumscribes formal behavior in critical ways. These categories are pan-Indic, invoking formal discussion in all three traditions about what constitutes appropriate times and places for gifts in ways that provide each tradition its own interpretation of wider cultural practices and their variations.

ETHICS AND ETIQUETTE

Many forms of ethical discourse are similar to ritual discourse in that they can both be seen to establish rules and limitations on human behavior, articulate ideal modes of interpersonal interaction which assign central importance to other-regard, and construct and integrate cultural and social systems. And yet, the moral dimensions of etiquette may be difficult to discern for the modern reader. As moderns, we have inherited a longstanding legacy that treats morality and ritual separately. This distinction between ritual etiquette and moral ideals is not always

warranted when we interpret the past, and it may be that it has to be set aside before we can enter into premodern modes of thinking. My discussion of the ritualistic aspects of *dāna* carves out new space apart from two dominant approaches to the relationship of ritual and ethics found in modern scholarship.

The first approach, concerned as it is primarily with questions of meaning, does not even introduce the category of ethics as a possible player in the study of ritual. Scholars of religion have tended to follow anthropologists in approaching ritual from a purely semantic or cognitive angle, where the study of ritual requires deciphering its symbolic or representational meaning. Many studies of ritual then involve scholars arguing about what ritual means or represents, or whether it can be said to have any meaning at all.[1] But how it might be thought to be connected to moral processes is not a subject which has garnered much attention in modern scholarship on religion, comparative ethics, or ritual studies,[2] with a few notable exceptions.[3]

A second approach does consider the relationship of ethics and ritual but sees them as antithetical to one another. In much western moral philosophy particularly since the Enlightenment matters of moral import are viewed in terms of reason, not ritual. Reason determines moral principles by which free and rational agents choose to act. Ritual, on the other hand, is seen as opposed to reason, requiring neither rationality nor much freedom of choice (beyond the decision to engage in it), and it does not proceed by establishing universalizable maxims. In modern western ethical discourses, moral action depends first and foremost upon a robust sense of free will that ritual, as rule-governed procedure, seems to preclude. Ritual fares badly here, being viewed as an activity that can be followed blindly and unthinkingly, and even evincing an irrational preoccupation with trivial details of external form. To make matters worse, ritual is arbitrary in the sense that it is conventional, context-specific, and culturally variable — a domain of human life to which many western philosophical discourses have had little to contribute.

How ritual and ethics could be related to (or opposed to) one another has also occupied scholars of South Asia, in particular within Buddhist Studies. In an interesting way recent work on Buddhist ethics provides a good example of the view that ethics and ritual are in conflict. Richard Gombrich's scholarship on early Buddhism draws a clear contrast between Hindu ritualism and Buddhist ethical thinking.

Gombrich makes an historical argument that the Buddha's rejection of brahmanical ritualism was responsible for the "ethicisation of the world," which he regards as "a turning point in the history of civilisation" (Gombrich 1996:51). The Buddha's definition of karma as intention (*cetanā*) made its ethical relevance bear not on an external act but rather a moral choice. In his view, brahmanism, due to its excessive ritualism, displays only "traces" of the ethicisation of karma, and

"despite Buddhist influence, brahminism has never thoroughly ethicised the concept or completely separated ethics from ritual" (Gombrich 1996:31f.). The implication here is that since it is unable to separate ethics and ritual, brahmanism never advanced to true "ethicisation" the way Buddhism did. "Ethicisation" for Gombrich refers to a shift from communal external form to intention, which is a matter of individual conscience. As he puts it: "since ethical value lies in intention, the individual is autonomous and the final authority is what we would call his conscience" (Gombrich 1988:68). Ritualism, prescribed as it is by systems of rules, concerns itself chiefly with external bodily behavior that allegedly empties it of inner, moral content.

While it is certainly true that the Buddha, as well as the early Jain teachers, reinterpreted ideas about karma and developed their own distinctive moral systems based upon these new ideas, the assumptions lurking here — that ritual is exclusively or primarily concerned with external processes, that it thus precludes ethics, and that the muddling of ritual and ethics impedes the possibility for the genuine development of moral thinking — need further investigation.

I contend that Gombrich's view is a distinctively modern one.[4] It is a modern projection on the past to want to see a sharp division between external forms and inner dispositions. Charles Taylor has argued that modern western individualism has partitioned the inner and outer life of the human person, and that it locates one's "moral sources" as coming from within (Taylor 1989). Reason, free will, rational choice, and moral disposition are all matters of the interior life of the self, and they in turn generate moral response and moral activity in the external world. In this perspective, it is not difficult to see how and why ethics and ritualism would be deemed antithetical to one another: if human beings acquire moral resources from within, there would seem to be an inverse relationship between a preoccupation with external ritual form and the development of internal moral virtue.

Taylor traces out the development of this deeply entrenched individualism in modern western thinking in order to suggest that this is not the way human beings have always regarded themselves, but rather that this is an "historically limited mode of self-interpretation" (Taylor 1989:111). If he is right, it would seem to be misguided to project modern modes of self-interpretation onto discourses that may not share the assumed division between the inner and outer life of a person, or the primacy of rationality in moral thinking. Such projections may not serve us well in the encounter with quite different modes of self-interpretation that portray a closer and more fluid interaction between one's inner and outer selves. This fluidity may make a space for refashioning how ethics and ritualism could be related.

Indeed, it is only since early modern times in the west that a conceptual division of ritual etiquette and morality has developed to distinguish action that is sanctioned by convention from action which can be justified on philosophical

principles. The coining of the word "etiquette" — that is, "little ethics" — by Lord Chesterfield in the 18th century signaled a new pattern in European thought to describe civility that is not explicitly derived from highest moral principles (Arditi 1998:208-211). According to Jorge Arditi, to Lord Chesterfield etiquette described the "lesser talents" or virtues of politeness and affability in one's relations with others that make social intercourse pleasing and agreeable. Manners are "of an order that cannot be deduced from the higher virtues," and so are, according to Chesterfield, a lower order of morals because they are not based on high principle but rather on what will bring the "love and affection" of one's fellows. Moreover, they do not preclude hypocrisy (Arditi 1998:210-211). A disconnection between propriety and ethics begins which, reinforced by the Enlightenment emphasis on securing rational supports for moral choice, still informs modern scholarly treatments of etiquette, ritual, and ethics.

Prior to this, however, medieval Europeans expressed no clear boundaries between systems of behavioral rules and religious and moral ideals (Arditi 1998:4). According to Arditi, older patterns of *courtoisie* affirmed Christian morality as part of "the infrastructure of social relations through which the religious powers fashioned their collective self" (Arditi 1998:4). He argues that "manners involved an aesthetic translation of the ethical code," or the formal expression of the morality of *courtoisie* (Arditi 1998:46). In early medieval European conceptions formal mannered behavior is the expression or translation of moral dispositions. The aesthetic dimensions of etiquette and manners for claiming membership in a moral community closely link aesthetics and morality, suggesting that the first is merely the expression of the second. Manners describe a "language, a formal property through which the group takes shape" (Arditi 1998:210-211). Manners define moral communities; they translate into visible and physical terms shared ideals and values. *Courtoisie* gradually became supplanted by a new infrastructure of social relations associated with *civility*, displacing the centrality of Christian virtue as the mode by which social relations were imagined.

I believe that the earlier European conceptions of *courtoisie*, rather than the later model of civility, more closely compare to the medieval Indic approach to the links between morality and formal conduct. Formal stylized behavior described in *śāstra* expresses a moral code of propriety and rightness, recognizing no gap between moral ideals and infrastructures of social relations we would now call "etiquette."

Another scholar of medieval Europe has also developed a conception of the links between morality and ritual, but in somewhat different ways. Talal Asad, in his work on medieval Christian monastics to which we will return later in this chapter, argues that monastic practices of ritualized discipline are not *expressive* of moral virtue but instead are *productive* of it (Asad 1993). He argues that

medieval Christian monastics viewed ritual as regulative and instrumental for creating moral character. In particular, formalized monastic discipline was aimed at instilling the virtues of obedience and humility (Asad 1993:130). Unlike the domain of formal behavior discussed by Arditi which he sees as revealing inner virtue, Asad considers formal behavior that is aimed at generating certain dispositions and virtues.

Both of these depictions of the connections between morality and ritual etiquette from medieval Europe are useful for undoing modern scholarship's legacy of treating ethics as largely irrelevant or antithetical to ritual. The Indic medieval writers deemed stylized etiquette as not only expressing ideal social relations, but also as generating the dispositions underlying them. Their descriptions of formal gift procedures reveal a close interpenetration of inner disposition and external form, and a sense that in the perfection of behavior lies the perfection of character.

GIFT ETIQUETTE

In our initial foray into the textual descriptions of formal gift etiquette we can begin to see a close interweaving of form and intention and form and disposition. All three traditions recognize three types of acts: physical, verbal, and mental, and all three apply to giving. This delineation of three types of act or karma is critical. Karmic theory across the religious and philosophical traditions in South Asia widely proposes that what one does, what one says, and even what one thinks are all karmically significant. Moreover, the generalized emphasis on esteem is closely correlated to ritual acts of reverence, each supporting the other. While the traditions share these patterns, they also use the ritual *vidhi* as a place for distinguishing their particular values and ideologies.

The Dharmaśāstra *Sea of Giving* has a number of section headings which describe the formal procedure of a gift: the etiquette of giving, the etiquette for accepting, "technicalities," the duties for one who is negligent, and the duties for those who are unfit. Among the procedural rules for giving we find a general stipulation to give and to receive with reverence.[5] All gifts are to be preceded by [the sprinkling] of water and by uttering the greeting "Best wishes" (*svasti*) to the righteous recipients.[6] The recipient should mention the presiding deity of the gift when he formally accepts it (each gift object is associated with a particular deity who should be invoked). Additionally, the rules for receiving are correlated with the social status of the giver. The recipient should conclude the gift with a blessing in a loud voice when receiving from a brahman, in a low voice in the case of a *kṣatriya*, in a whisper in the case of a *vaiśya*, and only mentally to *śūdras*.[7]

In the Dharmaśāstra compendia, the gift bears some of the same ritual and ceremonial significance as ancient brahmanical rites. *Dāna* is generally subject to

the same rules for other religious acts such as making sacrificial offerings to the sacred fire, muttering recitations, and making ancestor offerings. Mantras or sacred spells should be uttered to sanctify and solemnify the gift (unless the gift is made by a *śūdra*).[8] The offering of water should always precede a gift. The donor should mention the name of the thing, say, "I wish to give this," and give water.[9]

Purification, which we will treat with greater detail in the next section, is a chief part of the Dharmaśāstra formalities of the gift. The "technicalities" and the other sections on rules prescribe various forms of ritual purification for the giver, including physical bathing, washing the mouth, avoiding harm to others by body, speech, or mind, the right types of clothing, the presence of the sacred grass, where to put one's feet and the appropriate directions to face. One should always touch water should the rite be interrupted by a minor infraction such as the presence of a cat or mouse, or someone laughing, speaking falsehoods, or shouting.

According to Ballālasena, one can also simply remember Viṣṇu as an atonement should a minor infringement in procedure occur. If one is interrupted by heretics, charlatans, or atheists one should focus on something pure and say the following prayer:

> May the foremost Lord Viṣṇu lead my body, speech, and mind completely to peace, and entering into the eternal heart, be my refuge from evil in this world. Let Viṣṇu whose mind is permanently purified make one internally and externally pure; when free from stains [he can say], "I am always pure." Lord Aja, that is, Viṣṇu, whose soul is eternal, who resides in the heart, and is sinless, purifies both an external violation and one of the mind.[10]

This prayer interweaves mental, bodily, and verbal purification in a way that makes morality essentially a part of the ritual. In addition, a quotation from Yājñavalkya instructs that "one should not harm anyone by acts, mind, or speech" when performing rites.[11]

A Jain definition of *dāna-vidhi* is given in the commentary to the *Discourse on the Meaning of the Truth*: "excellence of the procedure means the right conditions of time and place, esteem, respect, custom, and suitability."[12] This definition and the subcommentary replace brahmanical ritualism with Jain values of renunciation. The right conditions for time and place concern times appropriate for giving clothing and food to monks, and refraining from giving at night (as Jains are prohibited from eating at night), and in areas free from the violent preparation of food. The subcommentary defines "esteem" as desiring to give to the virtuous because of its fruitfulness, and "respect" as the rising to offer one's seat while horripilating. Custom is "whatever is well known in the country with regard to cloth, etc."[13] Finally, "suitability" refers again to specifically Jain concerns about

offering only what is acceptable for food and drink for ascetics, as described by the scriptural tradition.

The Jains thus take standard brahmanical terminology and redefine it according to their tradition. *Vidhi* is no longer suggestive of brahmanical ritualism but becomes Jain procedure for what is appropriate in offering gifts to monastics according to strict rules about food and the use of objects. Retained however is the disposition of esteem — interestingly mentioned as part of procedure — and the physical actions of honoring a guest.

The Jain authors also discuss the formal aspects of the gift as the vow of "sharing with a guest" (*atithisaṁvibhāga*), a technical term for one of the twelve vows obligatory for Jain lay people. The guest is here defined as the monk on his alms round, and thus this vow is the explicit obligation of supporting the monastic community. Here too a correct gift is one that takes into consideration the monastic vows regarding what is and is not appropriate for a Jain mendicant to eat or wear. Devendra Sūri defines this vow largely in terms of the many transgressions (*aticāra*) that may occur in the prescribed rules. The vow is blameworthy if "there is dropping (of the gift) onto living beings, covering it [with living beings], going back [on what is promised], jealousy, or a transgression regarding time."[14] Devendra also discusses this vow in the context of the fasting day, as the offering a lay person should make to monks before breaking his own fast.[15]

In several of their *śrāvakācāra* texts, the Digambaras treat *dāna-vidhi* as comprised of nine elements of hospitality for monastics. The first five are physical actions: reception, giving a seat of honor, washing the feet, worship (with water, perfumes, flowers, incense, fruits, lamps, etc.), and obeisance (garlanding and bowing down to the monk reciting the five-fold salutation).[16] The final four are aspects of purity (*śuddhi*): purity of mind, speech, body, and of the food offered (Williams 1983:159-160). Giving is about concrete acts of homage as well as purity, defined mentally, verbally, and physically.

Much is made of the invitation to monks to come to one's home or the reception one offers them when they arrive unannounced. Hemacandra, citing Haribhadra, describes the lay man who dresses up and heads to the monastery to invite monks to his home at the end of the fasting holiday. The monks have the upper hand here — they can refuse if the lay person is regarded as not observing proper conduct, especially with reference to the limitations of the monks' ascetic regimen. Jain monks may inspect the lay person or his home first to ensure that the rules of nonviolence in food preparation are observed. Should they accept the layman's invitation the following should occur.

> A group of monks — they should not go alone — should go with the layman with the monks in front and the layman following down the road. Then he

> leads them into the house and invites them to sit. If they enter, it is good, if they do not, then he should still observe proper conduct. Then he gives them food and drink, or has food and drink brought to them, and stands as these are given… then, having honored them, he lets them go, and follows them for several feet and then he himself eats. But if there are no monks in the village, then at the time of almsgiving, he should look out the door and think with a pure intention, "if only there were monks, I would be saved." This is the prescription for the conclusion of a fast day.[17]

As these discussions illustrate, the gift is conceived in formal terms as connected to other aspects of the ritual life: the fasting holiday, temple worship (*pūjā*), and the monastic disciplines governing the limits of consumption and violence. Built into the formal actions are thoughts and intentions.

The medieval Theravāda compendia do not mention *dāna-vidhi* explicitly. The term *vidhi* may have had too close an association with brahmanical ritualism for it to be rehabilitated according to the dictates of Buddhist ideas and to command widespread use. Jains often seem more comfortable adopting and redefining Hindu religious terminology than Buddhists (see Williams 1983:xviii-xix). Nevertheless, while the Pali compendia do not deploy the term *vidhi* to articulate their gift etiquette, much of what they do describe as the formal behavior of the gift will seem familiar.

In a frequently cited passage in the Theravāda gift texts, the giving of a "good person" is described. A good person gives with due honor, intentionally, with one's own hand, only what is not discarded, and whenever one sees a guest approach.[18] Another list says that a good person gives with esteem, with due honor, in a timely fashion, with a mind that holds nothing back, and without reducing the gift for oneself or another.[19] Conversely a "bad person" gives in the following manner: he gives without respecting either the recipient or the gift itself which means that he gives grainy or defective rice or he does not sweep off a place for the recipient to sit, or makes him sit just anywhere, or makes him find his own seat. A bad person does not give from his own hand which means that he has his slaves do it. He gives without intention, which is defined as giving without respect as just described. The bad person also gives leftovers, unwanted, and discarded things "as though he were throwing a snake on an anthill." Finally, a bad person gives not heeding the fruit of the gift nor paying attention to the arrival of guests.[20]

Good and bad people are recognized by their behavior. As in the other traditions, and perhaps even more so, the Buddhist ideals of formalized behavior are closely interwoven with elements of intention and disposition. Form displays the intention or lack thereof. Failure to sweep off a seat for one's guest indicates a clear lack of generosity.

According to the *Compendium of the Essence* there are three ways a person might give a gift: bodily, verbally, and mentally.

> Seeing arriving monks, receiving them, following them as they come, sweeping and anointing their seat and hall, giving them a seat, providing them water, are called making merit with the body. Making merit with the voice is when one sees monks on their almsround and calls out [to others]: "give rice milk, give rice, give ghee and fresh butter, worship with fragrances and flowers, etc., keep the Uposattha precepts, listen to the Dhamma, build *stūpas*!" Making merit with the mind is when one sees monks on their almsround and thinks: "may they receive!"[21]

That is, there is a procedure for those who are not actually able to physically give. They can encourage others to be generous or even simply hope that the monks will receive something from someone. In other words, there are really three different types of gifts here, internal, verbal, and external, and each is meritorious.

Like the other traditions, the Buddhists make explicit reference to other ritual acts, such as *pūjā,* worship, when it turns to considerations of *dāna.*[22] As with *pūjā, dāna* is about honoring the admirable in a concrete act of reverence. Particular to the Buddhists, however, is mentioning ritual statements about the transference of merit in the context of correct giving. One may share the merit of a gift by uttering: "may it be for all beings" or "may the merit be for a certain person."[23] This doctrine specifies that if this statement is ritually uttered at the giving of a gift the merit may be shared, just like the light from a flame can be enhanced by spreading it to other lamps.

THE TRANSFORMING GIFT

We have already in the last chapter encountered the possibility that the gift moment can produce a change in the recipient. There is a sense, in least in some Buddhist discussions, that the encounter itself produces moral agency even if temporarily: the recipient rises to the occasion. Yet the texts also describe how the ritual moment of the gift generates the esteem and the disposition for generosity in the donor. In some conceptions the ritual does not so much display generosity as generate it.

Although some modern scholars have been surprisingly resistant to seeing ways in which certain rituals can be conceived to be ethically transformative, thinkers from other times and places have developed very sophisticated analyses of how ritual behavior may be related to moral development. As already noted, the medieval Christian monastics that Talal Asad has studied, for example, had a very well-formulated understanding of how ritual practice can be put to the service of constructing moral agents, and justified a variety of forms of monastic discipline

on the basis of the kinds of virtues such rituals were conceived to cultivate in their participants. Although Asad does not attempt to construct a grand-scale universal theory of ritual, his insights into how medieval Christian monastics understood ritual as productive of moral virtue are helpful for thinking about how the medieval South Asian gift theorists were conceiving of the ritual elements of *dāna*.

Asad argues that medieval Christian monastics viewed ritual as regulative and instrumental for creating moral character. In contrast to many anthropologists who regard ritual as a kind of symbolic activity requiring "decoding" by the ethnographer or interpreter, Asad suggests that in the case of the material he studies, ritual is better understood as practices which create and control dispositions. According to Asad, ritual is

> directed at the apt performance of what is prescribed, something that depends on intellectual and practical disciplines but does not itself require decoding. In other words, apt performance involves not symbols to be interpreted but abilities to be acquired according to rules that are sanctioned by those in authority: it presupposes no obscure meanings, but rather the formation of physical and linguistic skills (Asad 1993:62).

The monastic rituals had a teleological character in that they were seen by medieval Christian monks as being useful for creating a certain kind of moral subject: "monastic rites are analyzed in relation to programs for forming or reforming moral dispositions (that is, for organizing the physical and verbal practices that constitute the virtuous Christian self), in particular the disposition to true obedience" (Asad 1993:130). Formalized monastic discipline was aimed at instilling the virtues of obedience and humility.

In this view physical ritual actions are not *expressive* of mental or emotional states but are the very conditions for them. For Asad, ritual gesture is the "discipline of the body that is aimed at the proper ordering of the soul" (Asad 1993:139). Ritual and monastic discipline were part of a process of power in which ritual discourse encouraged a willful obedience to what was seen as the truth and therefore also to the guardians of the truth. It should be noted that the dispositions and virtues encouraged by monastic authorities are not, according to Asad, universal human virtues but rather "historically specific emotions that are structured internally and related to each other in historically determined ways" (Asad 1993:134).

The medieval South Asian gift theorists had an understanding of ritual action that may be comparable to what Asad depicts. They too tried to articulate the ways in which ritual discipline can be conducive to generating moral virtues or dispositions. The rules and ritual prescriptions in Dharmaśāstric discourse, for example, often seem aimed at creating moral virtue rather than presupposing it. As Mary

McGee, writing on religious observances (*vrata*) in Hindu Dharmaśāstra literature, argues: "each rite chips away at the vices of anger (*krodha*), revenge (*droha*), ill-will (*manyu*), jealousy (*asūya*), greed (*lobha*), and vanity (*māna*), helping to transform them into compassion (*dayā*), generosity (*dāna*) and faith (*śraddhā*)" (McGee 1987:235). Moreover, according to McGee, the "virtues of compassion (*dayā*) and charity (*dāna*) are cultivated by ritual gifting. The insistence of the tradition on economy in gift giving requires honesty (*satya*), especially on the part of the well-to-do, and satisfaction (*santoṣa*), especially on the part of the poor who are asked to realize that whatever one has is enough if given with faith and the right disposition" (McGee 1987:236).

The *dāna* theorists were very interested in how the presence of certain others can have an effect on a person. *Dāna* brings one into contact, even if temporarily, with moral superiors which is itself morally transformative. As the Dharmaśāstra theorist Ballālasena puts it: "Whenever knowledgeable brahmans, who are pious, austere, intent upon truth and restraint, who practice meditation, and whose senses are conquered, approach, they purify *on sight*. What more when there is association [with them]! Upon giving to them, and upon their enjoyment [of the gift], one goes to the highest realm!"[24] Giving as a face-to-face encounter with people who are good is morally purifying.

While this Dharmaśāstra passage uses the language "on sight" to describe the purification of the donor in the face-to-face encounter, a Theravāda text uses the language of "face-to-face." A later compendium, the *Maṅgalatthadīpanī,* says: "'honoring the *saṅgha*' means that something given even to an ordinary [monk] is very fruitful for the one giving; [this is] due to the respect arisen for that individual person as though [the giver] were face-to-face (*sammukhā*) with the *saṅgha*, because of delighting in the virtues of the *saṅgha* while recalling the *saṅgha*'s virtues such as the excellence of its practice."[25] Here the text construes the gift encounter as an opportunity to directly confront the *saṅgha*, as it were, and to recount its virtues, thereby allowing respect or esteem to arise. It is notable that the language of direct contact here is being invoked for an encounter with the idealized, even symbolic, collective of the *saṅgha*. It describes an immediate encounter with an individual, but the giver should regard that individual as an opportunity to make contact with the ideal *saṅgha*.

A Jain text, the *Exposition Beginning with Gift Giving*, claims that it is by practicing *dāna* that numerous virtues are developed:

> Through [practicing] *dāna* there would be firmness in the *dharma* for anyone who is unsteady, a great increase in tender love for the virtuous, high praise for the [Jain] teaching, and in this way, purification of the views and conduct of the donors.

> The donor would obtain excellent generosity, as well as meritorious humility, completely pure wisdom, disgust for evil, and the love of people, which is said to be the principal mark of the *dharma* of the saints.
> Through *dāna*, there is the promotion of the Jain path, a transformation with regard to helping others, the development of a series of stainless qualities such as knowledge, an understanding of [the value of the] loss of one's possessions such as wealth, and the accomplishment of the purification of the Self.[26]

The instrumentality of the act of *dāna* is what leads to the refinement of moral qualities and sensibilities. Here, one becomes generous by practicing *dāna*, rather than practicing *dāna* because one is generous.

A quite explicit statement of how the act of *dāna* can be conceived to generate moral dispositions is found in the Jain author Siddhasena Gaṇin's subcommentary on the *Discourse on the Meaning of the Truth*. This text, as we have already seen, defines the procedure as including dispositions (esteem), bodily reactions (horripilation), a variety of physical actions, time and place, and attentiveness to custom. The act requires a certain mindfulness about what is suitable and when and where a gift is appropriate.

Siddhasena stipulates that the donor should be cognizant of the place, the time, the worthiness or the recipient in accordance with the scripture, and with a mind full of love and joy and with the body "covered in a cloak of horripilation" he should rise at once to offer a seat, worship the guest, rub his feet, honor him, and concentrate his mind on this one particular act. Then Siddhasena makes a critical move. He states that these actions are the "means" (*upāya*) by which the donor, "endowed with the qualities of esteem, energy, zeal, forbearance, discipline and non-attachment (to the thing given), is transformed (*pariṇata*) in this way [to say]: 'I give.'"[27] This is an explicit description of the effect of external gesture on internal virtue, where the actions of hospitality and worship, including the prescribed horripilation, are the "means" that "transform" the giver into one able and willing to make a gift.

Here the ritual etiquette of hospitality involves a transformation of the giver so that he reaches a voluntary desire to say, "I give." The tension between ritualism and morality, where formalized rule-governed behavior does not seem to allow for the free will on which moral action is said to depend, is resolved here. The ritual act of giving does not replace the element of voluntarism; rather it creates a subject who wants to give. The gift as both rule-bound behavior and spontaneous, freely-bestowed generosity are not in opposition here. In a way similar to what Asad sees in his material where monastic discipline was intended to create the moral virtue of voluntary obedience, we see in this passage the forming of a self who is generous.

The passage suggests that ritual activity of worship reinforces the various noble attitudes and dispositions that are so integral to an ethics of esteem. In perhaps the same way that worshipping images of deities is productive of religiously valuable intentions, venerating worthy guests is productive of virtuous and hospitable persons. Ceremonial acts of deference, such as humbling oneself by jumping up to wash the feet of the guest, are productive of humility and esteem toward one's religious superiors.

Siddhasena connects gift giving with an almost necessary pleasure in worship and admiration. The generating of goose bumps or horripilation is enjoined as part of the ritual. Bodily actions or conditions do not so much express internal states, but rather are prescribed right along with them as part of the process. Here a link is forged between admiration and pleasure, between showing and feeling esteem for worthy ones and experiencing an emotional and physical thrill. Hospitality is by no means conceived to be an unpleasant chore.

For the Theravādins as well the ritual act can be seen to produce the intention. A key term here is reverence. The *Ornament of Lay People* defines reverence (*apacāyana*) as: "the intention to venerate that results for one who rises from his seat upon having seen old men who are venerable like his teachers because of their age and their virtues, and carries their requisites, prepares their path, bows with hands pressed together, and offers them a seat, flowers, and scents."[28] Again, close attention to the language employed here is critical: reverence is an intention that *results* for one who is doing these acts. It is not that one has the intention to perform an act and then does so, but rather that the intention occurs *from* engaging in the act.

Reverence, according to the philosopher Paul Woodruff who has done some of the most sustained modern scrutiny of this "forgotten virtue," is an experience of awe and a "sense of one's place in the world" (Woodruff 2001:181). Expressed in one's ceremonious behavior toward others or to the office or position that others hold, it demonstrates "a shared devotion to high ideals" (Woodruff 2001:180). When present in ceremonious behavior it reveals a respect for other people as well as an awareness of one's own humanity and limitations. Reverence turns ritual action — which may otherwise be empty of moral significance — into an ennobling experience, honoring both the agent and the object of the act. The experience of reverence, according to Woodruff, can be separated from religion, ritual, and belief, impoverishing them when it is not present. At the same time, that reverence is not restricted to any particular belief system or practice allows it to transcend narrow conceptions of religion allowing it to be universally available in human experience.

The Theravāda idea that reverence is a kind of intentionality that can occur through an act of veneration turns ritual action into an expression of high ideals,

animating an act of veneration with a sense of awe and respect toward one's elders. Through concrete acts of homage to old men — springing up to greet them, bowing to them, preparing them a seat — one connects them to teachers of one's own who are advanced in age and virtuous. The ritual gestures themselves kindle reverence and esteem.

Another sense of transformation can occur through purification. Language of purification is liberally sprinkled through the Dharmaśāstra and Jain discourses, and it is important to realize at the outset that the language of purification does not denote only physical purificatory rites. Purity (*śuddha*) and purification (*śuddhi*) also have distinctly moral connotations.[29] The language of mental purification, in particular, is concerned largely with moral states.

Purification suggests a transformation, often conceived as an alteration in the agent of the rite. We shall consider in the next chapter the transformative agency that *mahādāna* ceremonies have for changes in prestige and royal status for kings, but what about more ordinary rituals? Certain rituals in the traditional brahmanical context suggest ways in which rituals transform ordinary agents. For example, Ronald Inden and Ralph Nicholas, in their description of the Hindu life-cycle rituals or sacraments of the *saṁskāras* such as the rites of conception, birth, and marriage, have argued that the multiple dimensions of ritual action are viewed as "transformative actions" which "complete, prepare, make over, fully form, and above all, purify" the person (Inden and Nicholas 1977:37). The *saṁskāras*, also discussed at length in Dharmaśāstra treatises, are conceived to transform the agent, both physically and spiritually.

In this view of ritual, the ritual act is credited with an instrumental agency in changing a person on multiple levels. This transformation is variously conceived. In some places, sacramental rites are seen to remove undesirable states, while in others they add desirable qualities or changes in condition. For example, the Mīmāṁsā commentator Śabara asserts that the *saṁskāras* "impart fitness" to perform rites and that such "fitness is of two kinds: it arises by the removal of taints (sins) or by the generation of fresh qualities."[30] Both kinds of "fitness" here suggest a moral transformation, with the more advanced *saṁskāras* bringing a person into new relationships with self and others, with new responsibilities and statuses. Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat has argued that the *saṁskāras* are thought to leave a "perfume" or a "trace" (*vāsanā*) on the memory and personality that is transformative (Filliozat 1988:26). Actions and experiences of the ritual *saṁskāras* leave a lasting imprint on personality, character, and disposition that in turn dispose one toward further action. Actions leave a trace in the memory even after they have passed, just a perfume leaves a scent after the substance itself is gone.[31]

This suggests that even in brahmanical contexts we might see a more complex interrelation of external action and inner disposition than Gombrich's account seems to allow for. There are numerous ways in which ritual action is deemed not merely as expressive, but also as constitutive of intention and disposition.

THE RITUAL USE OF WATER: A THERAVĀDIN EXAMPLE

One important ritual gift practice for both Hindus and Buddhists involves the ceremonial sprinkling or touching of water as a critical element of making a *dāna*. Water could be sprinkled over the recipient's hand or the gift, or merely touched, in a manner that sealed the gift transaction. For example, in describing the proper gift ritual the Dharmaśāstra *Sea of Giving* states that "all gifts are to be preceded by water,"[32] and that "the donor should mention the name of the thing, say 'I wish to give,' and then give water—this is recalled as the procedure for giving."[33] Unfortunately the authors offer no interpretation or analysis of this water; rather it is simply assumed to be an essential feature of the ritual.

There is no mention, however, of the use of water in the descriptions of the gift ritual from the Jain sources considered. Its absence in the *śrāvakācāras* may be due to the fact that, for the Jain theorists, indiscriminate use of water, teeming as it is with life, is inappropriate. To sprinkle water on the gift object or the recipient (who as a mendicant must restrict his or her use of water) is in fact a kind of transgression.[34]

Where it does occur, however, the use of water in *dāna* rituals offers some very rich possibilities for interpretation in considering how ritual activity may be seen to be productive of moral agency. Water can be seen as a medium of change in a number of ways. Its use in Indic rituals is multivalent and highly variable according to which tradition is being considered. What I offer below is one possible suggestion about how the use of the gift water may have been understood by some of the Theravāda theorists under study. I argue that the ritual use of water in making a gift involves a kind of ethical transformation of agents involved. However, here the ritual process does not transform the *donor*, but instead the *recipient*.

I begin with the story of Velāma, told in the *Commentary on the Compendium of Discourses*, which illustrates how the ritual act, particularly the use of the gift water, purifies the recipients. Velāma, the Bodhisattva in a previous birth, was the chaplain of the king of Benares and, due to his fame and learning, was extremely rich. He wanted to give *dāna*, but only to a proper recipient. So he made a proclamation that, upon turning a golden jar full of water upside down, should there be anyone truly worthy to receive the gift the water would flow downwards. The water, however, remained in the jar. Velāma then declared: "if, by the power of the donor the gift will be purified, then when the water issues forth, let the earth take

it."[35] And then the earth did receive it suggesting that through the medium of water recipients may be purified by the virtue of the donor, in this case, by Velāma's own great virtue. Velāma then opened almshouses and gave a magnificent royal gift (*mahādāna)* of the seven precious substances continuously for seven years, pouring forth his wealth "like rivers of water." Water here is the medium by which the giver's virtue can purify the recipients.

A further example of the use of gift water to transform the recipient comes up in another Theravāda discussion which also tries to cope with the absence of worthy recipients in the world. As we have seen, one solution to the problem of the lack of truly worthy recipients is to suggest that one does not give to individuals susceptible to personal failings, but rather to idealized collectives,[36] which are represented by the Buddha himself. In this vein, Theravādin theorists often conceived of the ritual process of *dāna* to the monastic order *(saṅghagata)* on the model of worship to the Buddha. For example, the texts citing the commentary on the "Discourse on the Analysis of Gifts" (*Dakkhināvibhaṅga-sutta)* explain what it would mean to give "to both *saṅghas* (of nuns and monks) with the Buddha at the head":

> Can it be possible to give *dāna* to both *saṅghas* with the Buddha at the head when the Buddha is completely enlightened (i.e. gone)? It is possible. How? An image of the Buddha with a relic should be placed on a stand in front of both [assembled] *saṅghas*, and an almsbowl should be set on a stool, and then, *upon sprinkling the gift-water*, everything should be given to the Teacher first, and then to both *saṅghas*. In this way, a *dāna* is given to both *saṅghas* with the Buddha at the head.[37]

Here, the formalization of the procedure of giving to the collective recipient of both *saṅghas* is represented chiefly by the presence and priority of the Buddha. The Buddha is made visibly and ritually present, which turns the *dāna* into an act of worship.[38]

In the context of *pūjā*, the ritual gift water may help us to advance an interpretation of the use of water for purification in the Velāma story. Water should not be needed to purify (in the sense of cleanse) the Buddha (who is already pure), but is rather sprinkled over the image and then into the hands of the recipients in a mode suggestive of a consecration (*abhiṣeka*). Water functions not so much for cleansing or washing away of impure qualities but rather as providing "sanctification" by adding pure and good qualities.

In the context of medieval Vaiṣṇava rituals of kingship, Ronald Inden has suggested that the use of lustration may be connected to an idea of imbuing a ritual object with divine will or power (Inden 1990:232-6).[39] He argues that in such instances it is not enough to say that the ritual uses of water are for purification,

since "almost every rite in Hinduism can be said to purify somebody or someone" and such an answer is so general as to be of little use (Inden 1990:236). He argues that ceremonial baths were not just for purification but also infused their objects with the energy of the Cosmic Overlord.

> The rites of bathing, in their many forms, were of particular importance in this regard, for they were the rites by which people [i.e. kings], in conjunction with the appropriate gods, not only purified themselves of the darknesses that impeded action; they also imbued themselves with the "luminous energy" of Vishnu (*vaishṇava-tejas*) using as its medium the water into which the royal priests had invited it (Inden 1990:236).

The language here is of using water to infuse or imbue the object of the *abhiṣeka* to transform him into a new and different kind of agent. In this manner a person becomes a king endowed with the very qualities of Lord Viṣṇu himself.

While one would want to be careful about generalizing here, there may be something in Inden's analysis of ritual lustration that is of use for our purposes.[40] In the Theravāda ritual, the water does not cleanse so much as it consecrates or sacralizes the image as well as the two *saṅghas,* which are here brought into association with the Buddha. The water is infusing the physical image and the recipients with the qualities of the Buddha. Water is the medium through which infusion or transference of qualities is possible, but here we see it as adding qualities rather than washing away impurities (or it may be that both processes are simultaneous).

In keeping with their emphasis on considering the recipient an abstract bearer of the collective virtue of the *saṅgha*, the Theravādins regarded the ritual process as actually transforming the recipient into a worthy recipient. This in turn creates or establishes the necessary asymmetry of the gift relationship.[41] Since gifts are made ritually on the model of worship to the Buddha, it becomes impossible to give to an individual monk or nun who might turn out to be undesirable. This idea of the gift water as a kind of consecration that sacralizes or transforms its object creates worthy recipients who are then deserving of esteem. In the Velāma story, the Bodhisattva uses water as a medium to infuse his own moral virtues onto the recipients of his gifts making them worthy. This in turn makes it possible for the donor to experience esteem for the recipient.

In the same text as the Velāma story we find an intriguing passage wherein the ritual etiquette of the gift, done properly, can make up for the lack of a worthy recipient. The story, which we briefly considered in Chapter Two, follows instruction about receiving monks of all sorts equally, be they novices or elders, low or high. This particular donor wants to give a gift to the *saṅgha*, but a monk of bad character is sent to receive the gift on its behalf. Nevertheless, the donor performs the etiquette of hospitality perfectly: "though receiving a bad monk, he propped

up a place to sit, spread out a seating mat, tied a canopy above, worshipped him with fragrant incense and flowers, washed his feet, anointed them with oil, and gave a proper gift with respect to the *saṅgha* as though he were doing service to the Buddha himself."[42] But later, outside of the *dāna* relationship, when the monk returns to borrow a spade, the householder treats him very casually indeed. Not even rising from his seat, he just rudely kicks the spade over to him, saying "take it."[43] When word gets round about this treatment people censure the donor. They cast doubt on the story of his early *dāna*. The donor responds simply, "sirs, there was respect to the *saṅgha*, not to him."[44]

This passage marks a clear separation around the ritual moment. The *dāna* relationship, unlike mundane interaction, is a formalized ritual space that changes its participants, even if just temporarily. In the ritual the recipient was treated in ideal terms with great reverence, but in the mundane encounter, he is treated as an individual. Moreover, the intentionality of the donor is not at issue, except insofar as was directed to the *saṅgha* as a whole, as evidenced by the ritual act. This is an intriguing departure from Buddhism's usual emphasis on intention.

Here we may be aided by Jonathan Z. Smith's insights into how ritual action is, as he puts it, "above all, an assertion of difference" and a "means of performing the way things ought to be in conscious tension with the way things are" (Smith 1987:109). The text deliberately marks off the difference between sacred and mundane action, and regulates the relevant social interactions on the basis of this difference. The story plays with the tension, the difference between the ordinary interaction and the ritualized *dāna* behavior. It creates an extra-ordinary setting, a heightened moral space. For Smith, ritual is a way of focusing attention on an act, of bringing one's conscious mind to attend to the matter at hand in a way that sacralizes its participants. This focused attention on the act is also evident in Siddhasena's passage in which the ritual creates a person who wants to give.

Though I am borrowing from the work of both Asad and Smith, there are important differences between their ideas. For both of them, ritual involves a transformation of the participants. For Asad, monastic discipline creates a certain type of Christian self or character. For Smith, "ritual is not an expression of or response to 'the Sacred'; rather, something or someone is made sacred by ritual" (Smith 1987:105). But, unlike Asad, Smith does not see ritual as having a lasting moral effect on its participants' characters outside of the ritual space; ritual is about marking off an ideal from the rest of human activity. While I would not wish to draw any large-scale conclusions regarding the differences between Buddhism and Jainism on the basis of just two examples, the Theravāda case suggests a more temporary transformation (perhaps what we might expect from a Buddhist emphasis on impermanence), or a more "bracketed" understanding of the *dāna* ritual and its purposes. The recipient is transformed into a worthy recipient for the purposes

of the gift and attracting the esteem of the donor, but returns to his ordinary contemptible self outside of the gift relationship. But the Jain example seems to point to something more suggestive of Asad, that ritual is in the service of creating lasting moral virtues, of a subject who desires to give and who thrills at the opportunity to give. Ritual is not distant from ordinary life because it creates a certain kind of self that continues to act within it.

TIME AND PLACE

We turn now to further categories that formalize and structure the act of *dāna*: time and place. The categories of time (*kāla*) and place (*deśa*) are often mentioned in discussions of the ritual procedure of the *dāna* or when trying to describe the appropriateness of a gift. The Dharmaśāstra writers say that time and place are two of the six elements of a *dāna* (the others being the donor, the recipient, the proper gift, and esteem).[45] Ballālasena has separate sections in his compendium under the headings of "Times for *Dāna*" and "Auspicious Places." Among the Jains, Siddhasena classifies time and place as part of the *vidhi* of *dāna*, and Devendra Sūri mentions time, place and circumstances (*avasthā,* explained as whether or not there is famine) as factors.[46] The Theravāda texts are perhaps less concerned with the category of place, but they mention time in the context of frequently quoting from the "Timely Giving Discourse" (*Kāladānasutta*).[47]

The categories of time and place narrow the focus to the placement of moral actions and their specificity, and provide a very contextual understanding of ethics. Circumstances are as important as the other factors in *dāna*: gifts occur in the world at the beckoning of time and place. The details of time and place generate different kinds of logic than we have encountered so far. They introduce scarcity, auspiciousness, and appropriateness as factors conditioning the giving of gifts.

An example of this shift to context can be found in the Theravāda *Commentary on the Compendium of Discourses,* which provides a detailed exposition on what makes a gift timely. The "Timely Giving Discourse," on which it is elaborating, organizes *dāna* according to time: one gives *dāna* to the guest just arrived, to the traveling monk just setting out, to one who is weary, whenever alms are scarce, and [at the harvest's] first fruits and grains.[48] The commentary states:

> "One gives *dāna* to a guest" etc. since the guest, due to the very fact that he is a visitor, is not knowledgeable about begging at the village and thereby his weariness from traveling is unrelieved, so a *dāna* given to him is a timely *dāna*. And a "traveling monk" is one who wants to go to a foreign country, but [finds himself in the situation that] were he to seek alms he would lose the rest of the caravan and then not reach his desired destination. So a *dāna* given to him in the early morning that he could eat without seeking alms would not

> make him lose the caravan and fail to reach his desired destination; therefore a *dāna* given to him would be a timely *dāna*. And for the "weary" there is the condition of not being able to seek alms because of exhaustion and there is only sporadic alms, or even if he is ill and trembling and can seek alms, what he gets is mixed or unwholesome; therefore there is a timely *dāna* when a *dāna* is given to him. When "alms are scarce," that is, food is hard to get, people are not able to give because they fear famine and so monks go in want of alms. But some are able to give, having overcome even the stain of greed with strong *saddhā*, they give and a *dāna* given at that time is called a timely *dāna*. "Fresh grains" mean first quality grains just harvested. "Fresh fruits" mean the first fruits fresh from the orchard. "One gives [*dāna*] first to the virtuous" means having given first to the virtuous, one can later take food oneself, and that *dāna* would be a timely *dāna*. Those who wish for great reward from *dāna* should never eat unless they have given to a recipient first.[49]

Here, the author takes pains to draw attention to the circumstances that would make a gift more meritorious on the principles of need and scarcity. *Dāna* is a situated practice, not reducible entirely to objective regulations abstracted from actual situations. The contextual nature of this approach is in accord with the remarks of Steven Collins that "any and every morality must accommodate some particularizing and context-sensitive modes of evaluation, since moral agency must in many cases be ascribed to individuals under specific descriptions, as occupying specific roles, permanently or temporarily, rather than simply to human beings as such" (Collins 1998:469). In the passages concerned with the time and place of the gift more attention is applied to its particularity than what we have seen before.

In this regard it is as though the *dāna* theorists anticipated the cautionary stance taken by Pierre Bourdieu, who attempts to demarcate the limits of an overly formalized, structural or "objective" model of the gift. Although he is arguing within a quite different genealogy of gift theory than the medieval material considered here, he recognizes, as Nicholas Dirks puts it, "the need to analyze gifts as symbolic actions that take place in particular contexts and in reference to strategic considerations of individuals in action" (Dirks 1993:133). In his discussion of the structuralist model of the opposition between the gift and the reciprocal exchange revealed by the obligation of a counter-gift, Bourdieu draws our attention to time and the ways in which an objectivist or structural interpretation of the gift neglects it:

> It is all a question of style, which means in this case timing and choice of occasion, for the same act — giving, giving in return, offering one's services, paying a visit, etc. — can have completely different meanings at different times, coming as it may at the right or the wrong moment, while almost all important exchanges — gifts to the mother of a new-born child, or on the

> occasion of a wedding, etc. — have their own particular moments; the reason is that the lapse of time *separating* the gift from the counter-gift is what authorizes the deliberate oversight, the collectively maintained and approved self-deception without which symbolic exchange, a fake circulation of fake coin, could not operate… In short, everything takes place as if the agents' practice, and in particular their manipulation of time, were organized exclusively with a view to concealing from themselves and from others the truth of their practice, which the anthropologist and his models bring to light simply by substituting the timeless model for a scheme which works itself out only in and through time (Bourdieu 1989:6).

While the issues here are completely different — the Indic authors do not recognize the possibility of reciprocity or countergift, so the interval between gifts is not relevant — what is similar is that both Bourdieu and the *dāna* theorists resist a purely objectivist or structuralist rendering of the gift. While the other elements of *dāna* (as discussed in the previous two chapters) are concerned with the more structural logics of the *dāna* relationship, we have in the consideration of time and place a turn to circumstance and the particular. What Bourdieu calls the "full truth of the gift" requires attention to its particularity, its strategic aspects that can only surface by attention to particular occasions.

The strategy of the commentary on the "Timely Gift Discourse" evinces careful attention to the difficulties of the monks' situation and how certain particular circumstances may arise for them. The exigencies of the moment such as scarcity, the hardships of traveling and illness, and fear of famine are far from irrelevant in an account aimed at rendering the "full truth" of the gift.

While the Dharmaśāstra writers also give a nod to the ethical demands of scarcity ("whenever and wherever a substance is difficult to come by would be the best time and place proper for a gift, and not otherwise"[50]), they tend to be much more interested in time and place in terms of notions of auspiciousness.[51] Giving is enjoined for auspicious months and days of the year, but also for periods that are highly inauspicious or dangerous, such as lunar and solar eclipses.[52] The efficacy of a *dāna* given at auspicious times, either astrologically auspicious or due to events such as the birth of a son, is multiplied. On the other hand, giving at inauspicious times such as certain solar transits like the soltice and the equinox, may be crucial to ward off the dangers of these periods.

In his section on "Auspicious Places," Ballālasena describes the length and breadth of Bhārata (that is, the Indian subcontinent which is "north of the oceans and south of the Himalayas").[53] This is the most auspicious land in which one may be born a human, and within it are certain geographical locations most praised for giving *dāna*. Rivers, mountains, and sun temples, areas within a certain radius of a Śiva *liṅga*, and many specific pilgrimage sites are named for their auspiciousness

for giving *dāna* and for performing other religious rituals such as the ancestor rites.

Curiously, circumstance and occasion here are reworked back into the direction of an objectivist rendering with the external demands of the planets and seasons and places dictating the requirements of the religious efficacy of the gift. In light of the foregoing discussion about objectivist and particularist approaches to the gift, we might read the Dharmaśāstra approach to time and place as an attempt to depict even the particular in quite objectivist terms. The Dharmaśāstra compilers chose (unlike the Jains and Buddhists) to describe a religious and moral life as circumscribed not by the vagaries of individual circumstance so much as by the sacredness of the land of India and the workings of the cosmos. To be sure, traditional Dharmaśāstra ideology about authority does concede the importance of local custom (*sadācāra)* and satisfying one's own conscience (*priyam ātmanaḥ*) for moral conduct (identified together with *śruti* and *smṛti* as sources of *dharma*),[54] but these are not usually the subjects of Dharmaśāstric elaboration. It is a notable feature of Dharmaśāstric ritual injunctions that it is not easy to locate an individual responding to a set of subjective circumstances unique to his or her condition. Any particular setting for the performance of a *dāna* can be anticipated in advance with the agent responding to, for example, the movements in the heavens, the ceremonial demands of the birth of a child, or her own presence at a holy river.

The *Mitākṣarā* makes it clear that the circumstances of time and place, while important, should not override the other conditions of the gift:

> Since it is ordained that when a worthy recipient is unavailable, even if the proper place, time and substance are present, then one should abandon [the whole thing] or set it aside for such a person; or, in a case where a worthy recipient is present, but the correct substance is wanting, then one should promise [to give upon the availability of the thing]. But it is established that on no account should something be given to one who is unworthy.[55]

This suggests a hierarchy of principles in which certain rules (concerning the recipient and the substance) are not to be transgressed regardless of circumstances.

As is often the case, there is a ready Jain critique of the Dharmaśāstra view. Hemacandra considers Hindu astrological convictions ridiculous. He says, "a gift on Saṅkrānti or Vyatīpāta or Vaidhṛta, even on Parvan days (all points of time in traditional Indian astrology) is done by greedy ones for it is a delusion of fools."[56] There is nothing special about Hindu pilgrimage spots for *dāna* or ancestor worship: "if ancestors were released by gifts at Gaṅgā and Gayā, and so on, then dried up trees can be caused to sprout up by watering inside the house."[57]

In Hemacandra's view the Hindus have their notions of time and place all mixed up and are largely fanciful.

Instead, the Jain theorists prefer to describe time and place in accordance with the rules of eating and avoiding violence. The best time for a *dāna* is mealtime before one has oneself eaten, and certainly before nightfall when Jains are prohibited from eating. The best place is a place removed from violent activities involved in food preparation. Indeed, one of the major types of infractions for the observance of *dāna*, is the violation of time (*kālātikrama*). Haribhadra argues that "the real value of giving lies in giving at the right time" (Williams 1983:162). The extensive detail the *śrāvakācāra* texts provide regarding such rules and regulations about food preparation and consumption is a means by which the authors imagine all manner of eventuality bearing on a successful gift, and brings a marked degree of particularity to the actions of giving.

Time and place are important because they stress the situatedness of the gift. There are different degrees of this particularity among the textual traditions under study, with the Dharmaśāstra tending more toward an objectivist or normative reading of circumstances than the Jains and the Buddhists. But the ritual discourse of all three traditions makes use of the categories of time and place in a way that allows for situational or context-sensitive requirements. While there are generalizable factors that can be stated for all *dānas*, the authors are also interested in the specifics of each type of gift and recognize the shifting conditions of time and place as relevant to regulating it.

A further and quite different use of temporal categories found in Dharmaśāstra ritual discourse suggests another aspect of how time structures *dāna*. Using standard Mīmāṃsā terms for describing varieties of ritual action, Ballālasena says that there are four types of giving: constant, daily, optional, and occasional.[58]

> "Constant" would be a reservoir of water for travelers, a pleasure pond, and so on, whose rewards are constant pleasure. "Daily" is what is given daily, day after day. A gift is called "optional" when it is offered for the sake of offspring, victory, power, women and children, and is performed out of desire. The "occasional" [gift] either with or without fire offerings, is said to be threefold: connected to time, connected to ceremonies, or connected to a special purpose.[59]

The first type, "constant," indicates a continuous receiving of the gift suggesting that certain gifts keep on giving. The second suggests gifts given out of obligation as part of one's daily duties. The third, "optional" describes gifts not made as part of a routine, but as extra gestures, made solely out of desire to obtain something. Finally, the last category indicates gifts connected to festivals, rituals, and purposes that are not necessarily routinized.

This ritual taxonomy uses time to structure obligatory and voluntary religious acts. Mary McGee argues that this schema is the chief indigenous means of categorizing intentionality in the Dharmaśāstra *nibandhas* (McGee 1987:301). It recognizes various motives underlying ritual action: obligation and compulsion (daily, constant), celebration (occasional), and purely voluntary (optional) *dāna* given out of a desire to obtain something else.[60] In this view, the dictates of time and its particular requirements structure a moral agent and his or her dispositions. This is an ideology (or even psychology) of moral action that pays attention to how rules concerning the performance of certain rituals at certain times and places should generate valued and appropriate moral responses.

RITUAL AND SPONTANEITY, RITUAL AND SECRECY

Though the gift theoreticians found in ritual discourse a ready means to regulate the moral aspects of giving, it may be that such a formalized procedural approach eclipses another value, also temporal, which is often recognized in giving — spontaneity. A highly formalized procedure does seem to cut out the possibility of a spontaneous generosity which by its nature cannot be regulated or routinized. And indeed, such spontaneous giving is found and celebrated widely in the narrative literature in all three traditions, indicating once again a gap between narrative and systematic approaches to the gift.[61]

Often spontaneous giving is found in stories of children or animals who do not really know what they are doing or why, but are moved to acts of generosity in the presence of highly esteemed persons. One such story of a spontaneous gift is the well-known Jain story of Śālibhadra. Interestingly, though it is a spontaneous gift, it is recounted by Hemacandra right after his discussion of the rules of *dāna*.[62] Śālibhadra was a very indigent child who barely ever had enough to eat. Once he asked his mother if he could try some sweet milk-rice like the other children ate. She scrimped and saved and borrowed from neighbors to procure the ingredients for the milk-rice and gave it to the child to eat. Just before eating, however, the child saw a monk approach and spontaneously offered him some. That night Śālibhadra died (of indigestion, no less!) and was reborn as the rich man Dhanya as a result of this celebrated gift.

The story of Śālibhadra might be compared with Sanskrit Buddhist stories of King Aśoka's gift of dirt.[63] As a child in a previous birth, Aśoka (then called Jaya) was playing by the side of the road that the Buddha himself happened to traverse. The child spontaneously wanted to offer him something, and either because he had nothing else but dirt at hand, or because he fancied that the dirt was a kind of make-believe grain, he piled it up high in the Buddha's alms bowl. This act of generosity was the very act that rewarded him in a later birth with his mighty

sovereignty as the great King Aśoka. However, because the gift was impure and rough — what could be worse than dirt? — Aśoka was not reborn without some defects. He was ugly, with rough complexion and character as a result of this impure offering. While this story does not deny the importance of the rules of giving which do have real consequences when violated, it is mostly interested in the tremendous rewards for the spontaneous goodness of the child inspired to make an offering. In this way, it celebrates, as does the Śālibhadra story, simple and unregulated giving.

Another well known story from the Buddhist world celebrates the gift of a monkey, who in a clear case of "monkey see, monkey do" observes a gift being given to the Buddha, and wants also to give.[64] He spontaneously gives a gift of what he has, a honeycomb full of larvae. He is so excited about the gift that he begins to dance around and, sadly, falls and is impaled on a stake. Happily, though, because of his goodness he is reborn in heaven. This story suggests not only that spontaneous gifts are rewarded, but also that animals can have, at some level, a kind of intentionality or disposition that is morally praiseworthy. That the gift is flawed because it is full of insects is outweighed by the simple-minded good will he displayed.

Although the monkey story is not mentioned in the texts under study, the question of an animal's capacity to make merit is raised in the *Compendium of the Essence*. The text argues that while animals are ignorant, they are capable of good will and meritorious deeds: they "listen to the Dhamma, worship the *saṅgha*, worship *stūpas*, and for them, even though they are unknowing, it is good."[65] Animals and children may not have moral intentions that are fully developed and they may not be knowledgeable about rules and procedure, yet they are still capable of simple, spontaneous good will that is productive of merit.

However, the normative discourses generally stress a more calculated giving, or attempt to blend a sense of spontaneity with knowledge of correct procedure. The Jain story of Śreyāṁsa recounted by Hemacandra in his story collection the *Life Stories of the Sixty-three Great People (Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita)* describes one of the most important gifts in all Jain literature, for it was Śreyāṁsa who gave the gift that broke the first Tīrthaṅkara Ṛṣabha's long fast.[66] When no one else knew what or how to give, Śreyāṁsa spontaneously ran up to Ṛṣabha to pay him homage. Somehow he knew how to give properly due to distant memories of his former lives. He instinctively felt esteem and wanted to worship the Tīrthaṅkara, but his knowledge of how to offer a gift was also crucial.

The ceremonialism of *dāna* also tends to make a gift a public affair rather than a private matter. However, the idea of a "secret gift" (*guptadāna*) or a gift in which the giver's identity remains unknown sometimes appears in the Dharmaśāstra and the Jain sources under study. Such gifts may be celebrated because they suggest a

"true" generosity where the motivations of the donor are unalloyed by considerations of self-aggrandizement.[67] The Dharmaśāstra writer Lakṣmīdhara says, "unobserved gifts, knowledge without vanity, and austerities kept secret are endlessly fruitful."[68] Gifts boasted of or made solely out of conceit are sometimes frowned upon and thought to bear less fruit because of it: "One destroys what he has sacrificed, given, or learned by boasting; and one whose brilliance is shattered by pride or regret comes to naught."[69]

Aside from these cases, however, giving in secret is not widely discussed in any of the discourses under study. On the contrary, the valuing of fame from the gift is in fact acknowledged as a fruit of *dāna*, and generosity is often credited with bringing one friends, success, and respect in the social world in a manner that requires its public display. For example, a Theravāda verse:

> A donor knows the greatest joy,
> enjoys respect in the world,
> a donor acquires endless fame,
> and a donor is trusted.[70]

The social values of respect, fame, and trust are here celebrated features of gift giving and are impossible if giving is done in secret or anonymously. The act of giving is admired and praised in the world because it is a good and cultured practice, and therefore it is only natural that the generous gain reputation, status, and friendship by performing it.

And of course the beauty of *dāna* must be seen to be fully appreciated. As an ornament or embellishment, it beautifies a donor. Not only is *dāna* itself beautiful, but it results in future attractiveness. A reward of giving with *saddhā*, according to one of the Theravāda texts, is beauty: when a good person gives with esteem the reward is attractiveness to others.[71] A Jain text argues that "only *dāna* can cover up all the defects of a man."[72] *Dāna* can make up for other failings because it is popular among those it benefits and wins the respect of others. *Dāna* as etiquette is what makes a person socially acceptable and cultured. Its ornamental and aesthetic aspects suggest that the ritual etiquette of the gift is a social practice that is to be displayed to the world in order for it to truly shine.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has turned to the procedural aspects of gift giving to explore ways of conceptualizing the relationship of ritual and ethics. Ritual discourse formalizes ideal behavior in many of the same ways that normative ethics does, and there is sometimes no clear separation of the domains of "ritual" and "ethics" in South Asian intellectual history. In certain cases, the Indic authors saw correct ritual

behavior as itself generative of moral agency. When done according to ritual procedure, the valued dispositions and intentionality can occur in the donor. Perhaps most importantly, the correct procedure of venerating the recipient is regarded as instrumental in generating the donor's reverence and esteem for the recipient. These texts are not just theorizing about the "ethics of esteem" then, but are suggesting the conditions needed for making it possible.

I have also suggested in this chapter that the categories of time and place bring an important element of circumstance or particularity to the consideration of the gift. This choice in preference of what could be called "ethical particularism" has important implications for this project in terms of improving our understanding of the continuities and discontinuities of the three traditions. That is, we have been able to identify certain structural logics common to Dharmaśāstra, Theravāda, and Jain gift ideologies, such as the structural moral superiority of the recipient of religious alms. However, with the categories of time and place we can move to identifying rules that govern the particular concerns of each tradition: the astrological and geographical categories of Dharmaśāstric discourse, the concerns of non-violent proprieties in the Jain treatises, and a Theravādin effort to consider the needs and travails of the traveling monk. They all discuss the shared category of "time" but make different choices about how to construe the rules regarding the times for gifts. These differences allow us to chart discontinuities across the three traditions in a quite specific and concrete manner.

The rejection of universalist formulations has important implications for thinking about moral agency in ethics. Rules that are sensitive to context allow circumstance to structure moral agency to some degree. In other words, an appropriate moral response on the part of the donor depends not only upon who the recipient is, but also the circumstances of the encounter. Ritualized procedure governing those rules attempts to regulate circumstances to some degree, while at the same time never permitting the regulations to become de-contextualized. In this way, moral agency is shaped by both context and ritual procedure.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE GIFT

Until now, considerations of the dispositions of the donor and the recipient have tended to play down the importance of the actual gift object. The story of the monkey who gives an impure gift of larvae-ridden honeycomb to the Buddha, for example, concerned as it is with the simple goodness of the act itself, does not linger on the fact that the gift object is unsuitable. All the traditions also stress that donors should give within their means and that the merit from the gift should not be commensurate only with the quality or quantity of the gift, so as not to shun those of pious dispositions but modest means. When the focus is on the internal dispositions of the donor, the actual substance of the gift may seem relatively insignificant. If a gift is unsuitable or defective in some way, no matter, for as the English phrase puts it, "it's the thought that counts."

Such an approach might suggest that the gift theorists were uninterested or unconcerned with the material aspects of gift giving. In fact, nothing could be further from the evidence. Though the gift object seems secondary when the theorists discuss the nature of the donor and the recipient, it is in fact this element of the *dāna* process that attracts their most sustained scrutiny, especially in the Dharmaśāstra texts. Lists and categories of proper gifts, prohibitions against improper gifts, and censuring of other traditions' views about what constitutes a suitable gift occupy much of the *dāna* theorists' discursive treatment of the subject of *dāna*. Moreover, it is the criterion of the gift object that is most contested among the three traditions under study and it is here that we will see the greatest differences emerge among them.

That this is so should not perhaps be surprising in light of what we have learned from Mauss and Durkheim who, as Jane Bestor puts it, "were grappling with the ways in which persons and things reciprocally define each others' values" (Bestor 1999:15; see also Schwartz 1967). Preoccupied as they were with the worth and value of persons, it is in keeping with the rest of their discourses that the medieval authors used the gift object as a context for assessing the dignity of

the donor and the recipient, and the moral communities in which they come together. Material objects in quite tangible and visible terms display ideological and political commitments and define communities.

Attention to the gift object sometimes results in a nexus of shifting hierarchies in which different values emerge depending upon the element of gift giving under consideration. When the dispositions of the donor are under scrutiny, the elements of esteem and intentionality are of supreme importance. When the material gift is under scrutiny, these internal aspects may recede and other, previously hidden, values such as wealth, power, and prestige begin to surface. This model of shifting hierarchies can make sense of these gift theories as attentive to the quite different and sometimes competing values attached to gift giving.

This chapter considers how *dāna* discourses expound social and moral values by means of the material gift. This happens in a number of different ways. In the case of some gifts, such as royal gifts and ceremonial offerings, the gift itself carries great symbolic weight and becomes an emblem of prestige, power, and status. Alternatively, other kinds of gifts materialize culturally valued qualities. For example, the gifts of learning and fearlessness use the language of gift giving to describe types of social transactions or interrelations that do not necessarily entail the transference of an actual material object. Finally, the choices that the different traditions make about what is a suitable gift demonstrate the many ways that the material life was seen to define the moral life.

Here issues of classification and taxonomy move to the fore. The authors' decisions concerning which gifts should be included in their treatises are revealing for how they constructed their social and moral ideologies. Bruce Lincoln has argued that taxonomy is more than an epistemological instrument; it is also an instrument for the ideological construction of society (Lincoln 1989:7-8). In his view, taxonomic discourse is a mechanism of power, either by the dominant establishment to supplement or replace force by ideological persuasion, or by a marginal group to challenge the dominant hierarchical paradigm (Lincoln 1989:4). This is a useful model for understanding the differences among the three traditions' gift taxonomies. The Dharmaśāstra gift compendia reveal an entire social value system that can be seen as articulating and reaffirming brahmanical ideals regarding kingship, religious behavior, and certain social values attached to material culture. In contrast, the Buddhist and Jain texts orient the proper categories of gifts to center on face-to-face relations, and can be seen as implicit or explicit critiques of brahmanical ideology. What is central here is that it is through the *material* ordering of the world that religious, ethical, and social identities are articulated and contested.

This chapter makes the case that the best way to understand their choices in classification is not so much along epistemological lines concerning definitional

categories, but rather as ideological statements in a contested world of conflicting religious and social ideologies. That is, it is more useful to see them as deliberate decisions about ranking and ordering moral, social, and political value systems than as attempts to delineate epistemological or natural categories. The extensive lists and descriptions of the different kinds of suitable gifts are not so much a definitional or natural science of all of the varieties of gifts that are possible, but rather a form of ideological and political discourse. Regulations on the material gift, far more than the structural properties of the recipient and the donor, display the most distinctive values of each of the three traditions.

Much of the work that needs to be done first is descriptive. The Dharmaśāstra compendia are organized into chapters, which, after the first introductory chapter of general remarks on *dāna*, allot one chapter for each kind of gift. What gifts they include and omit, how much text they devote to each kind of gift, and their general choices of organization are of paramount importance for understanding the content and form of Dharmaśāstra gift discourse. Buddhist and Jain compendia are organized very differently, but their choices of classification can be seen both as a critique of the other traditions as well as an attempt to construct ethical and social visions of their own.

DHARMAŚĀSTRA *DĀNAS*

The Dharmaśāstra *nibandhas* devote most of their vast bulk to descriptions and lists of the varieties of gifts that can be given and the procedural specifications for each of them. For example, out of 722 pages of the edited volume, the *Sea of Giving* spends only the first sixty-nine pages describing the rules for the giver, the receiver, the procedures, the definition of *dāna*, and all general statements on *dāna* theory. The rest of the text consists of chapters on the specific gifts, ranging from the great royal *dānas* to ordinary gifts of food, from religious observances to acts of public service.

The *nibandhas* tend to be quite formulaic in how they outline their chapters on gifts. They all begin with long descriptions of the *mahādānas*, the magnificent gift ceremonies of kings; indeed, no other kind of gift is given more elaboration than the *mahādānas*. They then move on to other royal and ceremonial gifts made by kings. After descriptions of these ceremonies, the texts extol gifts of land, food, and requisites for brahmans, then gifts of various kinds of public works, the gifts of learning, of fearlessness, and the different kinds of religious and votive offerings. I shall consider each of these in turn.

The *mahādānas* are first and foremost about royal display and largesse, bestowed primarily by kings upon brahmans. In its narrowest sense the "great *dāna*" *(mahādāna)*, refers to a classic list of sixteen royal gifts. These sixteen have been

described in detail in Kane (1941:869-77). All of them are richly symbolic. Among the most prominent of the *mahādānas* are the "Weight of a Man Gift" in which the donor (usually the king, less often a minister) gives his body weight in gold or silver or camphor to his guru, brahmans, and then to the poor. Another fascinating *mahādāna* was the "Golden Embryo Gift" in which the donor provides a vast golden vessel, which he then enters into as a womb and assumes the posture of a fetus. He emerges, reborn, to a higher social status.[1] After a number of rites and mantras performed by the guru, the donor gives the vessel to the guru and other brahmans. These *mahādānas* suggest a symbolic offering of the king's body; he gives himself entirely.

Other *mahādānas*, such as the "Brahmā-Egg," the "Seven Oceans," the "Gift of the Earth," the "Universe Wheel," and the "Great Element Jar" involve symbolic equivalents of the earth or the cosmos that are then donated. The "Wish-Granting Tree," the "Wish-Granting Cow," and the "Wish-Granting Creeper" all represent gifts which continue to multiply the largesse by granting any desire their fortunate recipient may have. *Mahādānas* of golden horses, elephants, chariots, and jewel-studded cows involve small and precious replicas of the gift which are donated. The gift of a "Thousand Cows" and the gift of the "Five Ploughshares" seem to be the only *mahādānas* in which the actual, and not symbolic, goods, that is, cows and land, are donated. The aesthetic of all these gifts is one of overwhelming largesse.

That these *mahādānas* were actually ritually gifted by kings from all three religious affiliations is well attested in the epigraphic record. For example, King Govindacandra, for whose court Lakṣmīdhara wrote, performed the Weight of a Man Gift, and King Lakṣmanasena, son of our author Ballālasena, performed the Golden Horse Chariot *mahādāna* (Kane 1941:869-70). *Mahādānas* were inscribed in South India where it is mentioned that they were made "in keeping with the treatise of Hemādri" (Aiyangar 1941:105). There is also evidence of these *mahādānas* being performed in Sri Lanka, by the Buddhist king Parākramabāhu I, ruling from 1153, who performed the Weight of a Man *mahādāna* (Nicholas 1960:461; Paranavitana 1960:535). King Kharavela of Kalinga, who was probably Jain, is also said to have given a number of *mahādānas* in ancient times (Aiyangar 1941:101).

The texts also describe royal gifts which were not technically *mahādānas*, but which rivaled them in ostentation. The Mountain Gifts involved heaps of precious substances, gold, silver, jewels, sugar, grain, sesame, etc. that took the form of Mt. Meru, the central mountain of the cosmos. Cow Gifts were gifts of these and other substances either in jars or spread out over a black antelope skin. The ideological importance of a gift of a cow, either actual or symbolic, cannot be overestimated, as the texts dilate much on this subject.

That these gifts are primarily the privilege of the king and were given not so much to the public at large but specifically to brahmans and only secondarily to others, makes them different in important ways from the magnificent gifts granted by the Greek and Roman nobles to the public that Paul Veyne has described at length as "euergetism," though such gifts may share some of the same features of munificence (Veyne 1990). The Indic *mahādāna* was a political gift and as such had great symbolic power, like Greek and Roman euergetical gifts, but it differed from these in that it was made not so much out of an aristocratic duty to support civic projects but rather to perform and display religious ritual ceremony. Sumptuary expenditure was evident in both ideologies, but in the brahmanical system it was almost entirely directed toward religious and symbolic support for brahmans, not the civic body. Again, in the Indic material we see the importance of gifts flowing upwards — political, social, and religious acts involve a kind of homage or ritualized display of esteem. As such, unlike euergetism or indeed, potlatch, "which has as an essential aim the degradation of the recipient" (Schwartz 1996:73), the *mahādāna* is idealized to elevate the prestige of the donor without debasing the recipient.

The *mahādāna* as an act of munificence also reveals a sharp contrast with many of the descriptions of the largesse of divine kingship in European traditions that Jean Starobinski explores in his masterful inquiry into the gift based on a recent exhibit of paintings at the Louvre (Starobinski 1997). Starobinski describes how public gestures of distributing goods to the people as part of European royal or chivalrous ceremony were often connected to the notion of *sparsio*, the scattering of gifts to a scrambling and destitute public. Such displays were not without an element of darkness and disorder, in that such public giving "is a blind act of dispensation that always remains inadequate or disproportionate, never in keeping with popular expectations and greed" (Starobinski 1997:37). But in the *mahādāna* ceremony the gift is always described as complete and total, and many of the royal gifts (such as the wish-granting gifts) even continue to give in accordance with the increasing desires of the recipients. Here the ideal of kingship is one in which the supremacy of the king is based on his ability to endlessly satisfy the desires of the recipient, rather than on his ability to flaunt abundance haphazardly as a perverse pleasure of the rich and powerful.

Historically the lengthy tributes to the *mahādāna* in the *nibandha* literature may be understood in the context of the reassertion of kingly power in a period of competitive regional dynastic rivalry and the beginnings of Muslim conquest. The prolific attention to royal gifts demonstrates less interest in the simple face-to-face charity promoted in the Buddhist and Jain treatments of gifts because the Dharmaśāstra texts are closely connected to the values and context of statecraft and kingship (*rājādharma)*, and its attendant royal and religious duties.

As Nicholas Dirks has shown, the gift was a mode of statecraft, "a primary medium of rule" that had unique symbolic provenance (Dirks 1993:129). The royal gift is a conspicuous act of sovereignty as well as a transformative event wherein claims of power and status are asserted. Royal *mahādānas* are the means by which kings with imperial aspirations may attempt to rise to the top.

The political potency of the great royal gift is correlated with a religious and symbolic power based on service and worship. The ideology of the *mahādāna* suggests an "idealized moral order of the little kingdom, which constitutes an exemplary center through display, redistribution, and command not only over a military force but over an entire social order which has its fundamental hierarchical relations articulated and ordered by the king" (Dirks 1993:107). The king displays and centralizes his own power and glory by worshipping the brahmans and lavishing upon them prestigious gifts. Moreover, in devoting so much of their digests to describing the various *mahādānas*, the royal authors of the compendia were demonstrating their prestigious learning and command over the aesthetics of power and statecraft. In this regard, the texts themselves can be viewed as a kind of royal display.

The *mahādāna* advances religious claims and communities as well as political ones. Aiyangar argues that the *mahādānas* promoted traditional brahmanical values against new devotional religious movements that offered a critique of the religious hegemony of the brahmans.

> Though the *smṛtis* forbade gifts made for ostentation, yet to kings of new dynasties, often of dubious *varṇa*, the performance of the more expensive gifts, like that of the great *yāgas*, had a powerful attraction. The pageantry of splendid gifts, claiming to be made in accordance with the *śāstras*, had great value to the new dynasts. The voice of the philosopher and the passionate denunciations of the followers of *Bhakti-mārga* are powerless against the elaborated *Dāna-dharma*, which is elucidated in digests and special treatises of growing bulk (Aiyangar 1941:69-70).

The royal aesthetic of ostentatious wealth lavished on the bearers of religious culture, the brahmans, was the mark of a great sovereign. The gift compendia, written at the courts of such aspiring sovereigns, articulated, promoted, and constructed such an ideology.[2]

Ronald Inden has argued that the *mahādānas* were the "vegetarianized, simplified domestic forms of the Vedic sacrifice" that developed out of a response to Buddhist critiques of blood sacrifice and to the Buddhist state's emphasis on *dāna* and *pūjā* ceremonies (Inden 1979:132). According to Inden, the Buddhist imperial rulers from the period of Aśoka to the end of the seventh century made the *mahādāna* ceremony "the central ritual activity" of the state, marginalizing the Vedic *śrauta* ceremonies such as the Horse Sacrifice *(aśvamedha)*, to regional

Hindu kingdoms. Buddhism was replaced by Hinduism as the dominant imperial religion in the eighth century, but the new Hindu imperial orders, instead of reverting back to the Vedic ceremonies, retained the great gift ceremonies.

These *mahādāna* ceremonies continued certain features of the sacrificial cult even while usurping it. According to Inden,

> Gift giving, and along with it, the honoring of an image of the Cosmic Overlord, were here accorded a dominant, encompassing position, while sacrifice, muted and pushed below the surface, was accorded a subordinate, encompassed position.
> The Hindu *mahādāna*, with its ostentatious emphasis on concentrated cosmic power, nonviolence, and universal, hierarchic, and irenic order, was certainly more "consistent," from a cognitive standpoint, than the old horse sacrifice as a ceremony meant to wipe away the sins of combat and to make the establishment of a new (or restored) imperial order. Formulated before the rise of the Buddhist imperial state, the horse sacrifice, the combative rite par excellence of the ancient Kṣatriya, could do no more than evoke the very world of dispersed power and agonistic rivalries it was meant to overcome (Inden 1979:135).

The Vedic agonistic sacrifice was the state ceremony of regional kingdoms, the *mahādāna*, of great empires (or at least aspiring empires). The principles of the Vedic sacrifice rested on reciprocity, the *dehi me dadami te* (Latin*, do-ut-des*) of mutual obligations of exchange between the Vedic gods and humans, in which sacrifice was offered to insure the maintenance of the cosmic order. But the *mahādāna*, consistent with the other types of *dāna* under consideration, did not appeal to reciprocity or bargaining with the gods, but rather entailed worship or honoring them. One Bhagavan (Viṣṇu, Śiva, or even Buddha) emerged as the "Cosmic Overlord" in the imperial structure, and gifts and *pūjās* offered to him were made out respect and honor, rather than because he needed or desired them. In the Cosmic Overlord is a single alignment of temporal and sacred power appropriate for an empire, rather than the competitive rivalry and dispersal of power in the regional Hindu kingdoms.

The *nibandhas* repeatedly quote sources that make equivalencies in which the merit from gifts replaces the merit to be gained from Vedic sacrifices, which suggests support for Inden's thesis. It is standard procedure to either equate or calculate the number of Royal Consecration Ceremonies (*rājasūya)* or Royal Horse Sacrifices (*aśvamedha*) that the fruit of a given *dāna* reaps. For example, the fruit from performing the Wish-Granting Tree *mahādāna* is equivalent to that of a Horse Sacrifice,[3] and the donor of one of the *purāṇas* obtains the fruit of a thousand Royal Consecration Ceremonies.[4] Perhaps most suggestive is the equivalence that asserts that a bestower of the gift of fearlessness reaps the fruit of a Horse Sacrifice.[5] This claim reveals the full force of the transformation described

by Inden. Here an inherently non-violent gift of life and protection, often to animals, is declared equivalent to and permitted to supplant the old, inherently violent sacrifice which included war and, of course, killing an animal. The king earns merit and sovereignty not by violence and conquest but by protection of his subjects.

The effects of expanding Islamic imperialism from the eighth century up until our period of the eleventh and twelfth centuries saw the crystallization of indigenous power in five major dynasties, four of which were Hindu: the Pratihāra dynasty, the Rāṣṭrakūta, the Pāṇḍya, and the Pallava, while the fifth, the Pāla dynasty, remained Buddhist. After this period, in the eleventh century, these dynasties lost out to further regionalization and fragmentation. We can read the *nibandhas'* discussion of *mahādānas* in light of this political decentralization. The considerable attention paid to the great imperial *dānas* by the Sena court, the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty which patronized Lakṣmīdhara, and the Yādava court which patronized Hemādri, was perhaps a coupling of nostalgia for the imperial past and a rhetorical reinstantiation of Hindu largesse.

Since the topic of *dakṣiṇā* and its relationship to *dāna* has attracted significant scholarly attention, it merits some discussion here in its connection to residual Vedic ritualism lingering in medieval *dāna* theory. The *dakṣiṇā* of the Vedic sacrifice was the ceremonial gift, usually of cows or gold, to be given to the officiating priests for their roles in performing the sacrifice. It is an additional gift, along with the sacrifice, bestowed upon brahmans. J.C. Heesterman has argued that it should not be considered a fee or salary, but is very much a gift in the sense that "it should be given freely without bargaining" (Heesterman 1959:242). Like *dāna* in its ideal form, the *dakṣiṇā* is unreciprocated by return gifts, and is highly meritorious for the donor. Jan Gonda notes passages in the *Mahābhārata* connecting ideas about *dāna* to brahmans with the ancient *dakṣiṇā* (Gonda 1965:217; see also Tharpar 1978).

What role does the *dakṣiṇā* play in medieval *dāna* theory? The *nibandha* authors do not in fact give much attention to it as a separate topic of analysis. Where they do mention it they suggest that *dakṣiṇā* should be given along with *dānas* that are made to brahmans, on the old model of sacrifice, suggesting lingering affinities between the two. That is, a *dāna* should be accompanied by a *dakṣiṇā* as a sort of secondary gift, though it seems that this is only practiced in the more ritualized gifts. It is mentioned regularly in the standard ritual formulas for the *mahādānas.* Ballālasena and Lakṣmīdhara do not devote any separate space for consideration of this practice, and Hemādri discusses it in only a few pages. Ballālasena mentions the *dakṣiṇā* only in a discussion of substitutions that can be permitted for gifts when the prescribed substance is unavailable.

That Hemādri's discussion of *dakṣiṇā* begins by quoting the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (a Vedic ritual text) on the meaning of the term, suggests that he is reaching back to the ancient sources in an attempt to preserve some amount of Vedism in his gift theory. He starts off quite forcefully in quoting first from sources which say that gifts and vows (*vrata)* are fruitless unless accompanied by a *dakṣiṇā,* and that one who is pure and possesses esteem should give *dāna* with a *dakṣiṇā.*[6] Though he repeatedly mentions that gold is the best *dakṣiṇā*, he does consider an exception in the case of gifts such as clothing, where the *dakṣiṇā* of gold would be grander than the *dāna* itself. There he says that other, more mundane *dakṣiṇās* suitable to the needs of the person, such as rice, are appropriate.[7] He then devotes the remainder of this discussion to the *mahādānas* which suggests that *dakṣiṇā* may only be emphasized in the great royal *dāna*s. Indeed, most of the quotations chosen for his section on *dakṣiṇā* are filled with vocatives to kings, suggesting that *dakṣiṇā* is primarily considered a feature of royal giving. That royal gifts retained the ritual and symbolic functions of the sacrificial *dakṣiṇā* is entirely appropriate. The evidence suggests that *dakṣiṇā* was not particularly important for medieval *dāna* theory, but the notion was retained perhaps more for its symbolic overtones in making parallels with the Vedic sacrifice.

Though Ballālasena apportioned almost two hundred pages to the royal gifts it is clear from his attention to ordinary gifts attainable by the average person that the compendia were not meant to be purely descriptions of stately ceremonies to be performed by kings only. Ordinary gifts such as cows, land, water, foodstuffs, perfumes, incense, clothes, gold and silver ornaments, houses, beds, fuel, materials for lamps, and so forth were all highly encouraged in chapters devoted to each of them. Of foodstuffs the standard lists include grain, sesame, ghee, sugar, jaggery, curds, milk, sugarcane, fruit, and honey — all (save for grain, fruit, and perhaps milk products) more or less luxury items. The typical structure of the descriptions of these ordinary gifts is to praise each one in turn, name the patron deity of the substance, describe the benefits and merit to be had for the giver in giving it, catalog the various procedures and technicalities of measurement and transference of the substance, and generally list what the previous *smṛti* and *purāṇic* sources have said about it.

Yājñavalkya lists "land, lamps, food, clothes, water, sesame, ghee, shelter, household implements, gold, and a bullock" as gifts which are rewarded by heaven, while giving "a house, grain, fearlessness, shoes, an umbrella, a garland, an ointment, a conveyance, a tree, a desired thing, or a bed" make one happy for a long time.[8] For all of the importance attached to the gift of a milch cow, Yājñavalkya and his commentators insist that various kinds of service and hospitality to brahmans and the gods are equally fruitful as the gift of a cow. The *Mitākṣarā*:

> Removing the weariness of the exhausted by the gift of a seat, bed, etc. [is called] relieving the weary. Service to the sick [is done] with the gift of medicines, etc. according to one's means. Worshipping the gods means propitiating Hari, Hara, Hiraṇyagarbha, etc. by the offering of scents and garlands and so forth. Washing the feet of the twice-born, and of equals and superiors, etc. and sweeping the remnants (of food eaten by) them — these are said to be equal to the gift of a cow.[9]

Such gifts shift the focus from ritual or symbolic gifts (the cow with gilt-horns bearing much symbolic weight) to more ordinary acts of face-to-face hospitality and worship.

An important gift to which the Dharmaśāstra writers devoted much space is the gift of land, which was very common according to the epigraphic record. It was given mostly by kings to brahmans, and study of this important gift is of great value for understanding the social and economic history of this period. To make a land grant (*bhūmidāna*, *brahmadeya*) a king would give entire villages to brahmans, which meant that he no longer claimed taxes from the produce of the land and that the share went instead to the brahmans. Alternatively, merchants and others wishing to make merit could buy plots of uncultivated land to give to brahmans, which would grant the brahmans the right to cultivate it in perpetuity without taxes (Dirks 1993:122; Kosambi 1985:329). The gift of land also included the rights over the resources produced upon it, including the produce, wood, grass, and water (Gunawardana 1979:196). Some historians have argued that the increase of land grants during the medieval period was the genesis of Indian feudalism, which they see as the defining characteristic of medievalism.[10]

Here we have a considerable gap between text and context. The chapters on the gifts of land do not go into much detail about the economic functions of such gifts nor do they see any need to document the considerable economic and social implications that such transference of land to temples and brahmans entailed, as described by modern historians. To be sure, the texts extol the gift of land as highly meritorious for both the donor and the recipient, especially since its benefits quite literally increase exponentially in producing further wealth.[11] While the authors do idealize this gift highly, they do not credit it with the function it must have had in rendering many other gifts more or less economically unnecessary. That is, the increase of generous land grants to temples, monasteries, and brahmans, and their ensuing wealth, prestige, and power, must have obviated the recipients' financial dependence on the daily, face-to-face alms-giving of other commodities. This again underscores my thesis that the compendia's gift-giving rhetoric is not exclusively governed by a material rationality: the gift of land would usurp the importance of all other gifts if economic considerations alone governed the choices of their taxonomic hierarchies.

Although the texts often employ the standard phrase "according to one's means" (*yathāśakti*, *yathāvibhavam*) to suggest that the amount and the substance of the gift should be appropriate to the economic position of the giver, the quality and quantity of the gift are by no means irrelevant. Indeed, the texts rank the gift on the basis of the quality of the substance given. There is no universal agreement on substances, but one such ranking is as follows:

> Food, curd, honey, defense, cows, land, gold, horses and elephants are the highest gifts because they are the gifts of the best substances. Gifts are called middling gifts because they are gifts of ordinary things: learning, clothes, a dwelling, and medicinal herbs for eating, shoes, chariots, vehicles, parasols, jars, seats, lamps, wool, fruits, etc., and a long-lasting yaktail-whisk. Because of the vast number of goods, an enumeration of the rest is not desirable; hence all the remaining gifts are known as the lowest.[12]

Such rankings expose values not evident previously. It may be that from the point of view of the moral dispositions of the giver, as long as he gives according to his means, the importance of specifying the quality or quantity of the gift object recedes. However, attention to substances in other contexts shows that a quite different hierarchy of values is operative. We see an element of disinterest in the material object when the theorists are concentrating on the *moral* elements of the donor in a face-to-face encounter; this shifts dramatically when the texts turn to the material object. Then a value system that prizes gifts as luxury and prestigious commodities comes to the fore.

These classifications of objects also represent classifications of the persons interacting with them. Worshipping a brahman with fine substances rather than mediocre ones imposes certain identities on both the donor and the recipient. The donor projects her religious, political and class status by the gift she is able to offer, and she identifies and displays the worthiness of the recipient by her choice of offerings. The materiality of the gift is the very currency of social status.

Other gifts described by the Dharmaśāstra compendia are gifts to the public such as tanks, wells, pools, temples, distribution of food, and pleasure gardens. These are classified together in the texts by a distinction between *iṣṭa* and *pūrta* offerings. According to Aparārka, *iṣṭa* ("what is sacrificed") is what is offered in the Vedic fire sacrifices, within the altar, while *pūrta* ("what is filled") is made outside of the sacrificial enclosure to the public, as it were. Both are dharmic and can be made by the twice-born classes, and, although the *śūdra* has the right to perform *pūrta* offerings, he is barred from *iṣṭa* (or Vedic) performances.[13] There is thus an indigenous category for gifts given for and by the public at large as well as a distinction between ceremonial religious gifts and public ones.

The *nibandha* writers also include a number of gifts which, though not strictly called *pūrta*, also involve public or social goods. There are chapters on the gifts of

almshouses, the planting of trees, the gift of health, and the gift of fearlessness. Providing water facilities, establishing almshouses, and planting trees along roadsides were intended to provide shelter and necessities to weary travelers. The gift of health, as elaborated extensively by Aparārka, involved the founding of hospitals and the distribution of medicines.[14] These gifts denote a concern for public welfare.

The interest in common welfare suggested by these public gifts should not be too readily identified as charity. Again, Roman notions of the gift provide a useful comparative possibility. Paul Veyne argues that the ideologies of the euergetic gifts of the pagans and that of later Christian charity were not a part of the same continuum (Veyne 1990:30). For all their civic patrimony, Greek and Roman nobles would not have recognized Christian notions of charity, in which the very concept of "the poor," not to speak of the moral elevation of the poor, is singular to the vocabulary of Jews and Christians. One must be cautious here not to project a Judeo-Christian idea of charity (Latin *charitas*; Greek, *agape*), which is very closely connected to love, into the Indic context. Almshouses, public buildings, planting trees and the founding of hospitals are primarily enjoined as royal acts that display the righteous king's paternalism and protection of the people and hospitality to travelers, but do not carry the same ethical connotations as Christian charity.[15]

Among gifts aimed at the public, the gift of protection, or more, literally, of fearlessness (*abhayadāna,* or sometimes *trāṇa,* defense or protection), is perhaps the most curious. As we have seen this gift is considered one of the nine chief gifts: food, curd, honey, defense (*trāṇa*), cows, land, gold, horses, and elephants. Another list of gifts includes: a house, grain, fearlessness, shoes, an umbrella, a garland, an ointment, a conveyance, a tree, a desired thing, or a bed.[16] Here fearlessness is just one among other commodities such as housing, grain and shoes that can be given as a gift.

But what does it mean to give fearlessness? In their chapters on this gift the Dharmaśāstra authors treat it mostly from the point of view of the king. The king should practice the gift of fearlessness by protecting his subjects from all sorts of terror. He should offer amnesty to prisoners, grant his subjects protection from fear of mutilation, imprisonment, banishment, beatings, thievery, and dishonor, and should save anyone who comes to him for refuge.[17] The gift of fearlessness is not restricted to rescuing humans, but should be given to animals as well, by purchasing them from butchers. It should be extended even to plants, worms, and insects.[18]

However, it is not limited only to kings. The average person can offer security to insects, animals, and anyone in fact who has reason to fear. According to Ballālasena's commentary:

> Unprescribed violence to creatures should never be done. Those in fear of death, imprisonment, beating, banishment, loss of limb, theft, dishonor, etc. from others, should first be comforted with words and then rescued from these dangers as much as possible. Also, one should purchase birds and beasts, etc. from the hands of butchers and free them. Therefore, this *dāna* is not a mere ceremony. And so, fearlessness should be given, having fixed in the mind [the idea that]: "Fearlessness has all the gods [as its presiding deities] and great happiness as its purpose."[19]

This passage suggests that the gift of fearlessness can involve either restricting one's own violence or saving beings from harm threatened or inflicted by others. It is not a formality or ceremonial performance but an everyday practice, and one that can be followed by ordinary people.

Moreover, the gift of fearlessness is not limited to giving refuge to those who are in fear of others. It is also interpreted as abstaining from harming them oneself. That is, it involves restricting one's own violent activities, as for example, a king should never practice the heinous punishment of blinding.[20] This is a critical move. Here refraining from harming people, a significant check on the power of kings, is conceptualized as offering a gift to them. What is interesting about this gift is that nearly all of the Dharmaśāstra compilers were quite insistent that it be considered a gift, rather than just another variety of compassion or non-violence. As we have seen, the objection that fearlessness might be different from the other types of gifts is raised by only one digest writer, Govindānanda, who argues that in the case of *abhayadāna*, the word *dāna* is meant only in a secondary or metaphorical sense (*gauṇam eva*), since it only involves removing fear (Aiyangar 1941:96).[21] But the others all maintain that securing fearlessness in others is a type of gift.

We will have further opportunity to consider this unusual gift in light of the Buddhist and Jain interpretations of it, but for now it is enough to note how the gift of fearlessness extends the notion of *dāna* to compassion and nonviolence (see my article Hibbets 1999). It links the virtues of generosity and compassion to suggest that nonviolence is ultimately a gift, an act of generosity on the part of those who have power, who can both create and dispel fear. As the compendium writers perceived quite clearly, the power to frighten others is great, and granting self-imposed restrictions on it is perhaps one of the most important acts of kingly largesse and human generosity.

All of these gifts of social goods are elaborated in the Dharmaśāstra compendia as a way of stretching the concept of *dāna* to reach beyond purely ritualistic and formalized gift-giving procedure that we have considered in previous chapters. They belong to a class of gifts in which the recipient is not restricted, and the scrutiny to which the recipients are submitted in a relationship of esteem does not obtain. When one provides water reservoirs, endows temples, dams rivers,

plants trees, provides healthcare, and vows to protect others, the recipients of these public benefits are often anonymous. Such gifts are given outside the religious boundaries of the sacrificial altar, are given without the usual procedure of reciting mantras, and to recipients who are not considered on the basis of their eligibility or worth. Yet they are very important *dāna*s and attest to the inherent pliability of the concept. *Dāna* is both religious ritual and prudent statecraft as well as a gesture to public welfare.

A further gift given extensive treatment in the compendia is the gift of learning *(vidyādāna)* which encompassed a range of different things. Lakṣmīdhara and Ballālasena are very prolific on the subject. First of all it could mean the Vedic teaching of the brahman guru given to his pupil. Here the brahman is the donor of the gift, not its recipient. Alternatively it could denote the ritual gifting of a sacred text or a *nibandha,* which was traditionally the privilege of the king (Kane 1941:867). The study of this gift is invaluable from the point of view of the social history of the organization and transmission of knowledge and the culture of writing that it describes as well as what it suggests about the pliancy of the notion of *dāna*.

The *Mitākṣarā* makes an important remark about the nature of the gift of learning, or rather, more specifically the gift of the Veda. The author says that "in the case of the gift of the Veda there is the gift only [in the sense of] giving of one's property to another because of the impossibility of divesting oneself of one's proprietary right."[22] That is, unlike other gifts which are fully alienable from their donor, the gift of learning does not require the donor to give up ownership of the gift, and in that sense its status as a gift is somewhat qualified. None of the other writers comment on this secondary sense of the gift of learning, however, or suggest any such resistance to the idea that this gift is something that can be materialized. As in the case of the gift of fearlessness, the idea that this gift is somehow different from gifts of material commodities is generally not raised.

That knowledge should be presented as a gift is of course not restricted to South Asia. Scholarly and scientific contributions in journals in our own day are bestowed upon their communities without remuneration. Keeping the transmission of knowledge aloof from the market retains its prestige. Scholars rarely receive anything so coarse as cash payments for their invited lectures, but rather are granted an "honorarium," which retains a vestige of a notion of a free gift made to honor them. On both sides the gift is deemed gratuitous. Knowledge transferred as gift contributions creates communities, intellectual and scientific "guilds" of contributors who share what they know for the advancement of their fields (see Hyde 1983:77-84). One of the quickest ways to lose esteem among one's colleagues is for scholars to "sell out" by seeking cash payment for their work. To do so is to opt out of the elite community and invite its scorn. Selling one's intellec-

tual work is, at some level, to deny the communal nature of the advancement of human knowledge and the collaborative and cumulative aspects of knowledge that undergird even original insights.

While traditional South Asian approaches to knowledge also protect its prestige and the community in which it circulates by transmitting it via gifts rather than commerce, its communal aspects may be even more evident than in modern approaches to knowledge. In the traditional South Asian frameworks knowledge is understood as a shared inheritance from the past. It is not really one's own in the modern sense of an original contribution. One is merely a conduit for passing along knowledge received from the tradition. According to *Nandi Purāṇa*, on which most of the Dharmaśāstra compendia rely heavily for this topic, the gift of learning is defined and limited to the corpus of traditional lore. It includes all fourteen of the standard branches of knowledge, that is, the four Vedas and their six branches, as well as Dharmaśāstra, *purāṇa,* Mīmāṁsā, and logic. In addition, there are other sciences such as Āyurveda and the sciences of agriculture, war, and metaphysics (lit. knowledge of the Self, *ātmavidyā)*.[23] Traditionally, the gift of the Veda is thought to be best,[24] but Ballālasena's choice of quotations seems to level out the hierarchy of knowledges and praises each in its turn. If anything he seems to privilege the gift of *purāṇas*, by inexplicably devoting a separate chapter to the ritual gifting of them.[25]

Copied manuscripts are also considered *vidyādāna*. Ballālasena goes into great detail to describe the rules of writing a book in which the proper scribe is selected and honored, the manuscript pages and ink are prepared, the cover is illustrated, and the original book is copied into the new manuscript. Then there is specification on the "Rules for Correction," the "Rules for Thinking," and then the procedure for the book's dedication to a temple, its recitation, and its exposition. Ultimately it is presented to a brahman who in turn is enjoined to instruct his students. There is no question of authoring anything new here; rather this is a discussion concerned with the copying, worshipping, and recitation of books.

The gift of learning is highly ritualized and prescribed. Each step in the process of having the manuscript copied should be done at an auspicious time and in an auspicious place. Dedicating the new copy to a temple is described as a festival occasion in which the king provides "glorious singing, dancing and music in the cities with chariots and fairs for the pleasure of the subjects."[26] At the same time, the actual transference of the knowledge is highly restricted to brahmans.[27]

Aiyangar notes that the literature that was permitted to be written and presented in a book excluded the Vedas and their branches, since the oral transmission of knowledge was still regarded supreme in the case of sacred texts (Aiyangar 1941:110-1). The literature which could be given in the tangible form of a written manuscript was limited to the sciences, the arts, the *purāṇas* and the *nibandhas*.

But if written texts were regarded suspiciously or treated as inferior, there is no evidence of it in the *nibandhas*. Here the writing of a manuscript was treated as a holy and sacrosanct affair, the scribe was highly honored, the book itself regarded as an important ritual gift, and as an instantiation and visible sign of supporting the continuity of the values of the tradition.

A further variety of gifts includes a class of gifts that are closely related to worship *(pūjā)* and vows *(vrata)*. Giving at holy places, such as sacred rivers and mountains, is a type of *dāna*. Making vows to give for certain periods of time, for a month or a year, or during certain seasons or at particular astrological configurations are all classified as *dāna*. The holy place or auspicious moment is either itself the occasion for the gift or merely enhances the efficacy of a gift made for other purposes.

Gifts to gods, that is, *pūjā*, are entirely consistent with what we have seen so far of the *dāna* theorists' emphasis on gifts flowing to superiors out of a feeling of regard. But, also like *pūjā*, they are made out of desires to gain merit and worldly benefits and to ward off evils. Though there are separate *nibandhas* for propitiatory rites *(śāntikarma)*, there is some overlap in the *dāna* treatises. There is also considerable overlap in *nibandhas* on religious vows. Mary McGee's study of the *vrata-nibandhas* in her dissertation shows how *dāna* can be a type of vow, as well as how a vow can be conceived of as a type of *dāna* (McGee 1987:168). Additionally, *dāna* can be conceived as a type of metaphorical *tīrtha,* or pilgrimage (Salomon 1995:15).

Finally, certain gifts are either unmentioned or explicitly prohibited by the *nibandha* authors. It is noteworthy, for example, that in none of *nibandhas* under study is there a discussion of the category of the gift of a virgin as a bride, *kanyādāna,* though this is a very important concept elsewhere and is still invoked in Hindu marriage ceremonies today. Later *nibandha* authors did include it as a category, however (Nīlakaṇṭha 1909:170), Aiyangar suggests that the gift of a bride is more likely to be discussed in other books or *nibandhas* on *dharma*, covered by Lakṣmīdhara in his *Book on the Householder's Stage of Life (Gṛhastha-kāṇḍa)* rather than his treatise on *dāna* (Aiyangar 1941:106).

All of the *nibandhas* prohibit certain types of things from being given. One should not give old and worn out items or anything obtained by black money. The notion of evil wealth or black money *(kṛṣṇadhana)* pertains to money acquired by the following: what is acquired by being a commission agent, by gambling, thievery, pain, fraud, robbery, and impersonation.[28] Weapons, poison, and liquor should not be given to brahmans.[29] Some restraints take on a legal aspect, such that one should give not give joint or borrowed property, securities, mortgages, women, women's money, what is pledged to another, trusts, and one's

entire property.[30] A man is generally prohibited from giving away or selling his wives and children against their will, or their property except in times of distress.[31]

THERAVĀDA *DĀNAS*

The Theravādins and the Jains have much slimmer catalogs of gifts when compared to the Dharmaśāstra. The Buddhist texts describe either two or three main types of *dāna*s: material gifts to the *saṅgha* (*amisadāna*) and gifts of the Teaching (*dhammadāna*). Sometimes the gift of fearlessness is added.[32]

Material gifts to the *saṅgha* usually include stock lists of either four or eight or ten items. The four standard requisites are clothing, alms-food, a dwelling, and medicine, which are all considered basic necessities for supporting monks. Sometimes the texts refer to a list of eight requisites, which consists of the three robes of a monk, the alms-bowl, a razor, a needle, the waistband for tying the robes, and a water-strainer.[33] The list of ten is in fact the ordering structure for the collection of *dāna* stories, the *Service of the Ten Requisites*, which tells a tale for each one. They are: food, drink, clothes, vehicle, garland, perfumes, ointment, bed, shelter, and materials for lamps. Some of these, such as garlands, perfumes, and ointments, are clearly luxury items, and this list suggests that giving is meant not simply for the support of the recipients but also for their pleasure and comfort.

The *Compendium of the Essence* draws a distinction between good food and coarse food on the basis of their nutritive qualities.

> When coarse food is in the belly the blood dries and the flesh withers. Therefore, people who give coarse food become those for whom food and drink is scarce, like ghosts of men with little flesh and little blood, so people should know the [future] state of those giving coarse food for this reason. But when excellent food is in the belly the flesh and blood increases, [people] are comfortable with sound bodies, beautiful and lovely.[34]

One directly reaps the consequences of the kinds of food one gives. Food given nourishes not only the recipients of it in this life, but also the donor's own body in the next. In another place the text argues that one should respect the material gift, as well as the recipient, by not giving rice that is too grainy or otherwise defective.[35] Such discussions would seem to make the donor intensely interested in the quality of the gift.

Other discussions suggest a different sort of relationship of the donor to the gift in terms of the language of mastery and slavery, a language that renders explicit the hold that material things have on human beings.

> Givers are of three kinds in relation to the material gift: slaves to the gift, accomplices to the gift, and masters of the gift. In this context, whoever enjoys a sweet by himself and gives something bitter to another, gives having become

> a slave to the so-called gift. Whoever enjoys something himself and gives the same to another, gives having become an accomplice to the gift. But whoever has a sweet brought either by oneself or by someone else, and gives it to another, gives having become [its] master.[36]

One's relationship to the material gift is apparent in one's ability to give something good to another. Notice that mutual sharing or equality with the other is still a kind of control by the material object and is here articulated as still being taken in by the gift as its "friend" or "accomplice." One's full mastery over the material thing is evidenced by one's ability to give it away completely rather than simply sharing it with another.

A general rule regarding the nature of the material gift is prescribed by the *Gift-Offering of the True Dhamma*: it should "be obtained by proper conduct, without trading in wine and so on or indeed causing any distress to others" (Hazlewood 1988:103). Like the Dharmaśāstra view, money given as gifts should be righteously acquired. In addition, the texts sometimes list five gifts that should not be given, though they are generally considered auspicious by the world. One should not give gifts of alcohol, festivals, women, bulls (studs), and (sexually provocative) decorations.[37] As the commentary explains, these are all rejected on the basis of their stimulating nature.

From the point of view of the recipient, mendicants should not be overly preoccupied with either the quality or quantity of the gift offered. One can note a structural tension between the desire on the part of the donor to worship and honor the recipient with alms of good quality and even luxury items, and the need for the recipients to remain indifferent to material gifts as part of their religious practice of renunciation. The *Gift-Offering of the True Dhamma* urges that alms are necessities for supporting the body, rather than objects of attachment:

> Being watchful, one should always use with due regard whatever robe, alms-food, medicine, bed and seat one obtains. Lacking in due regard, enjoying the necessities of life given by others, fettered, one destroys one's own safe place. Therefore, abstaining from the craving for taste-sensation, one should enjoy the use of food knowing its purpose thoroughly, just like one wounded [should enjoy] ointment for the wound. One should make use of the robe as a protection from wind and heat, keeping off flies and so on, just as one would make use of cloth for dressing a wound. Avoiding attachment, one uses medicine for relief, sufficient only for warding off this or that illness. Being non-attached, one should resort to the dwelling saying, 'This body, like a lump of meat subject to endless misfortune and hard to guard, should be protected' (Hazlewood 1988:119-20).

In addition the recipient should not engage in trade or any sort of livelihood for his receipt of alms (Hazlewood 1988:119).

Thus we see that though the quality and quantity of the gift matter a great deal elsewhere, here the ideology surrounding the virtue of the recipient must claim that they matter not at all. From the dispassionate recipient's point of view, the quality of the material gift should be irrelevant except insofar as it fulfills his or her basic needs. The most virtuous recipient should not be eyeing the quality of the gift, even while the donor seeks to elevate his own status by giving as generously as possible. In other contexts, such as when the issue concerns a poor person who is unable to give a luxury item, we also see rhetoric to the effect that the actual substance of the gift does not matter, so long as the giver's mind is pure and the gift is made to a worthy recipient.[38] Again we see how multiple ideologies regarding the significance of the material gift are held simultaneously.[39]

The gift of the Teaching (*dhammadāna)* is analogous to the gift of learning (*vidyādāna*) described in the Dharmaśāstra treatises in that it involves the transmission of the knowledge sacred to the tradition. The *Compendium of the Meaning of the Essence* defines this gift as "teaching to those who long for welfare the Dhamma declared by the Perfectly Awakened Buddha which brings happiness and banishes sorrow in this world and the next."[40] Moreover, it is often represented as the best of all gifts, as mentioned in the first line of an oft-quoted verse: "the gift of the Teaching beats all gifts."[41] While this gift is generally given by monks in the form of preaching to lay people, it is never depicted in the texts as a reciprocal gift that monks give in return for their material support. When offered by monks this gift, like the gift of fearlessness, lacks the formal elements of *dāna* emphasized elsewhere: it is not a gift of esteem given to an admired other with all of the ritual components that fashion that particular relationship. Still unilateral, the gift of the Teaching is construed as offered out of motivations of compassion since it can destroy the sorrows of *saṁsāra*.

The gift of the Teaching may also be considered the gift of an actual text. For example, the very title of the *Saddhammopāyana*, "Gift-Offering of the True Dhamma," as indicative of the author's understanding of the text itself as a gift given to all beings. Like the *nibandha's* articulation of itself as a gift to be copied and worshipped, this text suggests that the author has earned great merit from "this gift of a commentary" (Hazlewood 1988:150). Buddhist kings would also give texts ritually, often having the *Tipiṭaka* copied once every year and ritually gifted to the *saṅgha*. Like other gifts, the transmission or giving of the Dharma is both an act of benefit to others as well as a means to make great merit.

The gift of fearlessness is the third of the triad of Buddhist *dānas*, though it is not made much of in the sources from the period considered here. This gift is sometimes creatively expanded in other Buddhist texts to make *dāna* encompass another essential element of the Buddhist path, that is, morality *(sīla).* Quoting from the *Dakkiṇāvibhaṅgasutta* commentary, the later text the *Maṅgalatthadīpanī*

describes the gift of fearlessness as "abstinence," that is, abstaining from evil action by taking the Five Precepts (*sīla*).[42] One gives an *abhayadāna* by refraining from threatening or harming beings at all times. This ensures that one gives security wherever one goes by refraining from evil. Here a common Buddhist device incorporates other virtues under one virtue: generosity or giving entails (or encompasses) morality.

The Buddhist treatment of the *mahādāna* is quite different than *nibandha* discussions of it. The category gets no direct didactic treatment but instead tends to be mentioned in passing in the context of stories of people who gave them. Although none of the Buddhist sources under study describes a single ritual formula for the *mahādāna,* it is usually a royal gift or ceremonial rite of lavishing requisites, luxuries and money on the *saṅgha* or to the populace at large. The *Cūlavaṁsa* mentions several "Weight of a Man" *mahādānas*, which involved giving the weight of the king in rice to the *saṅgha* or food to the populace (*Cūlavaṁsa* 51.132; 60.21; 73.11). Such largesse was usually performed by kings,[43] but could also be granted by millionaire merchants such as Anāthapiṇḍika and Velāma.[44] The *mahādāna* is thus not only restricted to a ceremony of kingship but is rather an act of worshiping the monastic order by the very wealthy, whether by kings, merchants or generals.

This is one area that underscores the differences between the Dharmaśāstra and Buddhist sources under study. The *nibandha* is in this sense of wider scope and application than the Buddhist compendium, which was never intended as a treatise on royal behavior. As if rejecting the elements of prestige and power that emerge in descriptions of the *mahādānas*, these authors chose not to give didactic treatments of royal *dānas*, preferring instead to stick to *dāna*'s face-to-face dimensions.[45] While in fact it may have been case that the medieval monasteries looked to such royal gifts to provide the bulk of their wealth, this is not a side of *dāna* that the theoreticians wish to treat systematically. This move in itself can be seen as a moral choice, that is, the use of a taxonomic decision to exclude elements of political status and kingly display that should not even register in a moral classificatory system concerned with face-to-face relations. Thus, these are not treatises on how a king could win imperial glory; rather they are handbooks on how to be a moral and pious lay Buddhist.[46] The exemplary donors of *mahādānas*, when they appear, are celebrated as extreme examples of attainable (or at least, admirable) virtue.

One exception to this tendency from our sources, however, does offer a quite humorous narrative that explores the themes of political power and tensions surrounding the gift in which the donor is not quite so admirable and the gift is a site for contestation and insurrection. The story tells of King Bandhumā, who was the father of a previous Buddha called Vipassī.[47] As the father of the Buddha, King

Bandhumā felt he enjoyed a privileged position to give alms to the Buddha and his followers, since he had cared for them from the time before they had even renounced the world. So he decided that, for the rest of his life, he alone would provide them with their requisites and would not allow others a chance to give them *dāna*.

To this end, he constructed a sort of tunnel with fences draped over with cloth, which extended from the gates of the monastery to the palace at Rājageha. He decorated this tunnel with garlands, flowers, fragrances, and carpets. When it was time for their almsround, the Teacher and his monks would pass through this tunnel to the king's palace and take their meal. They would then return to their monastery unseen and unapproached by others. This went on for more than seven years.

The townspeople eventually became angry that they had no access to the Buddha and began to complain:

> Now it has been more than seven years and seven days since the arrival of the Teacher among us, and we have not been allowed even to see him, much less to give alms, perform worship, or hear the *dhamma*. The king alone serves him. But a Teacher comes into the existence for the sake of benefiting the whole world, including the gods. Moreover, hell is not hot just for the king, nor is it exactly a blue-lotus pond for the rest of us. So let us tell the king that if he gives us the Teacher then it will be all right. But if he does not give [us the Buddha], then we are prepared to make war on the king, for we must perform meritorious deeds such as giving *dāna* to the *saṅgha*.[48]

The stakes are so high in *dāna* that they incite insurrection: without a chance to make merit, the townspeople fear they will wind up in hell. Realizing they could do little without the help of the army general, they approach him. He agrees to make war on the king if necessary, but insists that, when they wrest the Teacher from the king, the first opportunity to give *dāna* should go to him. They agree.

War is averted by a frank and quite humorous discussion between the king and the general. The king is made to realize that his very ability to give alms to the Buddha depends upon the people's support through taxation. Moreover, if the very people themselves declare war on a king he will be left with no army to defend himself. Tearfully, he agrees to hand over the Buddha. The general then prepares to make a great *dāna* ceremony (*mahādāna*).

Instead of a power struggle among rival kings for dominion, here we have competition to give centering around soteriological goods. The uprising of the townspeople is not presented as a grab for power, but rather is generated out of a desire to make merit. Nevertheless, in the story the moral elements of *dāna* recede — that the king refuses to give the Buddha to the people shows a lack of true

generosity on his part that all his merit-making cannot efface. It becomes a political struggle, and one that is made in entirely in the idiom of the *gift* and *giving*: the king insists he will not *give* (*dassati*) anyone else a chance, he alone *gives (dadāti)* to the Buddha, and the people eventually demand that he *give* (*dātum*) over the Buddha. While the verb "to give" has much the same idiomatic range in Pali as it does in English, it nevertheless seems that the language of giving is doing a lot of political work here.

The story goes on to describe how a girl named Sumanā outwits the army general and cleverly manages to slip alms of fine milk-rice to the Buddha before the general gets his chance to perform his *mahādāna*. Yet, because he admires her pluck she becomes his wife — once again the act of *dāna* promotes one socially — and she goes on to reap much merit from this and other acts of *dāna*. The trope of a woman or girl who wins the admiration of (and subsequent marriage to) a king or big man by her pious acts of *dāna* is frequent in the literature, suggesting perhaps one of the very few means women had to elevate their status. Sumanā had in fact been the daughter of a merchant's widow who had wept at the general's command that he give the first *dāna*, lamenting that they would have had a chance to give *dāna* first had her husband been alive. Sumanā had assured her that she would give the first *dāna* and through clever deception managed to do so. She is rewarded with a change of status and then with many future rebirths where she is called Sumanā (Jasmine) and where the heavens rain down jasmine blossoms whenever she is born.

One does not have to be overly cynical to sense that the axis of value here has shifted from reflecting on moral qualities to negotiating status. In this story, no less than for the Dharmaśāstra theorists, the *mahādāna* brings power, status, prestige, and the very moral virtues generated out of *dāna* as a face-to-face relationship that we saw extolled in previous chapters, retreat to the background. The difference, however, is that the Theravādin sources do not attempt to confront this in any systematic fashion in their didactic discussions or taxonomies of *dāna*. It emerges in narrative.

JAIN *DĀNAS*

Jain religious teachings have many restrictions on what can be given and mendicants have, as James Laidlaw puts it, "been much exercised over the years with attempts to analyze, classify, and tabulate various types of gift, and to establish the moral and religious importance of the transaction in which they themselves receive alms" (Laidlaw 1995:295). Jain preoccupations with classifying and restricting gifts are due primarily to their uncompromising adherence to the principle of non-violence (*ahiṁsā*). Much in the Jain classificatory systems of gifts then is

based around this central axis which introduces a quite different logic from the various schema we have been considering.

Like the Theravādins, the Jains suggest a standard three-fold division of *dānas*: gifts supporting the *saṅgha*, gifts of knowledge or the Teaching (*jñānadāna*), and gifts of fearlessness (Johnson 1931:22). The *Eight Stories on Giving,* a collection of *dāna* stories very similar to the Buddhist *Service of the Ten Requisites,* tells stories for each of eight standard requisites: residence, bed, chair, food, drink, medicine, clothes, and alms bowl. These stories, like the Buddhist tales, celebrate the generative quality of these gifts both for sustaining their recipient, but also for reaping reward for the donor. Unlike the Buddhist listing, however, they do not include luxury items. Another schema of gifts is found in the *Exposition Beginning with Gift Giving,* which is organized like a *nibandha* in that it is divided into chapters along the lines of specific gifts. The work treats the gifts of knowledge, fearlessness, food, and gifts to the seven fields (the fourfold *saṅgha*, temples, images, and the sacred texts).

The gifts that can be given to monks and nuns are much more limited than in the Theravāda. Gifts must conform to the strictness of their practice and must be justified on the grounds of absolute necessity. The standard four requisites given to guests (that is, to monks and nuns) — food, almsbowl, clothes and shelter[49] — are all highly restricted. Hemacandra has to defend even these basic necessities against the Digambaras, who deny that monks are to be given an alms-bowl and clothing.[50] The Digambaras argue that the monks should be like the Tīrthaṅkaras who wandered nude, homeless and could seal up their cupped hands so that a bowl was not necessary for receiving food. But the Śvetāmbaras took a more moderate line, justifying the monks' use of these things in that they are aides to the body necessary for religious practice and for protecting life. Monks and nuns have not reached the perfect state of knowledge that Tīrthaṅkaras have and so cannot practice exactly as they did. Hemacandra even stretches the basic requisites to include a blanket, a whisk (for brushing away insects), a bench, and indeed anything given by lay people to promote practice.[51] He provides a quotation to the effect that what is suitable and unsuitable is dependent upon circumstances, which applies the Jain rejection of one-sided truths (*anekāntavāda*) to how one can understand the suitability of objects given.[52]

Elaborate restrictions on food are enjoined in the *śrāvakācāra* texts.[53] Food should be for nourishment only and care is taken that the renouncers remain indifferent to the taste and pleasure of eating. In contrast to the Buddhist texts, here *both* the recipient and the donor have responsibilities to make the gift acceptable in this regard. The alms-seekers should see to it that the food is all mixed up in a single bowl (thus making it unpalatable), and that they do not visit only those houses known for providing rich food. The donors should avoid any of the

standard transgressions in giving alms and of course provide only pure and faultless food.[54] Unlike Buddhist monks, Jain monastics are not limited to eating before noon, although they do practice optionally many observances that limit food intake to once a day and to plain food which lacks oil, spice, and salt. Also unlike Buddhist monks, they retain the right to reject food if it is not appropriate either by being too rich or if they suspect undue violence was done to procure or prepare the food. Buddhist monks, on the other hand, interpret the injunction of being indifferent to the material gift to entail that they be willing to accept any offerings, even meat, provided it is understood that the animal was not slaughtered especially for them. This feature of Buddhist *dāna*, perhaps more than any other, invokes the censure and disdain of Jains for Buddhists.[55]

The parsimony of the gifts that nuns and monks can receive is sharply contrasted with the ostentation and munificence of gifts given in the name of Jain *dharma* to build and endow temples, support pilgrimages, and to celebrate initiation ceremonies and the religious holiday of Paryuṣan. The Jain community has traditionally been among the most well-to-do in India, and the wealthy laity has found munificent gifts to be one means of balancing their extensive wealth with the austere and plain living so idealized in the tradition. However, munificent gifts must also be tempered by a large measure of self-restraint when it comes to giving alms to monks and nuns, as the donor should not press them to accept luxurious food that would be deleterious for their practice.

Hemacandra and Sūrācārya manage to incorporate both restricted giving to monks and nuns and various forms of ostentatious giving in the doctrine of the seven fields. As we have seen, the seven fields are various areas or situations in which the pious Jain can support religion either by giving to monks and nuns in which the practice of *dāna* must be sustained by restricting one's generosity, or by giving to temples and idols in which religion is sustained by unrestricted largesse. *Pūjā* is a species of *dāna* that allows for the bestowing of luxury items. There are no limits on the quantity and fine quality of gifts that a Jain lay person can lavish on images of the Jinas in the Eight-fold worship of perfumes, flowers, incense, unbroken rice grains, lights, food oblations, fruits, and pots of water.[56]

Although the Jain texts, as do the Buddhists texts, advance the doctrine of the "widow's mite" in that even a small offering made with the right sentiments can be as efficacious as a grand one, they do not desist from describing the wealth of rewards to be had from making magnificent gifts. Indeed, such descriptions often appear as a great celebration of wealth. Temples and images made with the finest materials and jewels should be donated by wealthy lay people.[57]

The opposition suggested by Jainism's simultaneous patterns of asceticism and ostentation has created a fertile topic for recent scholarship in Jainism and has been widely commented upon (Cort 1991, 2001; Laidlaw 1995; Reynell 1985;

Carrithers 1991; Norman 1991). Śvetāmbara Jains have long been one of India's most affluent minority communities and have poured their wealth into religion and community. At the same time the ideal of renunciation remains crucial to Jain identity and religious life. However, as K.R. Norman points out, in one sense, the contrasting trajectories of ostentation and asceticism need not be seen entirely as a paradox or contradiction when we consider that excessive prodigality is one way to demonstrate a disregard for wealth and possessions (Norman 1991:37-8). The two simultaneous values of renunciation and magnificence are brought together in the "year gift" (*varṣīdāna*), the yearlong gift which precedes formal initiation into the monastic vows in which the initiate gives away all of his or her possessions. This gift is made in imitation of the Tīrthaṅkaras such as Ṛṣabha and Mahāvīra who gave all of their possessions away to anyone who would request them. Hemacandra describes Ṛṣabha's *varṣīdāna*: "the Lord, like a wishing-tree, commenced bestowing gifts on men for a year, in accordance with their unrestricted requests," to the tune of "three hundred eighty-eight crores and eighty lacs of gold" (Johnson 1931:162). This gift is at once renunciation and magnificence.

The gift of knowledge, in the case of the *Āgamas*, the Jain sacred texts, is one of the seven fields, and incorporates some of the same values of the gift of knowledge and the Teaching present in both the Dharmaśāstra and the Buddhist material. Sūrācārya considers it the best gift of all because through it one is able to engage what is good and avoid what is bad, and it is the basis for all human ends.[58] The Jain gift of knowledge includes copying manuscripts of the Jain scripture, reciting or sponsoring recitations, exposition, and listening to recitations.[59] This gift captures many activities that support the transmission of knowledge and the support of religious culture.

The Jains also share with the other two traditions the gift of fearlessness, and like the others, they interpret it as rescuing others from violence inflicted both by others and by oneself. The Jain texts use the topic to consider the range of different kinds of fear that beings can experience and to suggest that removing this fear is an act of generosity. Hemacandra says that the gift of fearlessness is "the avoidance of injury to (beings) in three ways: destruction of life, causing physical pain, and causing mental pain" (Johnson 1931:22). Discussions of the gift of fearlessness use the topic to elaborate the basic structure of Jain biology and its moral implications. In brief, there are two forms of life: moving and non-moving. Of the moving forms, there are beings with but a single sense, with two senses, with three senses, with four senses, and with five, and fear of death is the same for all of them. Sūrācārya, in his chapter on *abhayadāna* in the *Exposition Beginning with Gift Giving,* writes that "fear caused by loss of life is the same for a lowly worm living on a filthy Neem tree as it is for a high Indra in heaven."[60] When praising this gift, it becomes foundational to all other gifts, for "nothing is dearer than life."[61] The

gift of fearlessness is desired by all beings equally and should be practiced by refraining from harming any of them.[62] Other Jain writers used *abhayadāna* to explore the range of the different kinds of fear a person might experience. Traditionally there are seven: fear of violence in this world, fear of violence in the next world, fear of theft, of chance accident, of loss of livelihood, of death, and of calumny.[63] Haribhadra gives the epithet "givers of fearlessness" to Arhats, in that they grant security from these seven types of fear.[64] *Abhayadāna* involves an analysis of a psychology of fear and locates the remedy in generosity.

That all three traditions are insistent that the gift of fearlessness be treated as a kind of gift is critical. It does not get resolved into other words for compassion or *ahiṁsā,* but rather is consistently to be described as a species of *dāna*. This makes R. Williams' remark that *abhayadāna* "is only in name a form of *dāna* and belongs properly to the sphere of *ahiṁsā*" difficult to sustain (Williams 1991:158). There is nothing in the texts themselves that indicates that the authors saw *abhayadāna* as somehow only a nominal gift or a category error in any sense. Preserving the language of *dāna* is vital for understanding what *abhayadāna* is, but also for understanding how this variety of gift informs us about what *dāna* theory itself is — generosity can also be a type of self-restraint.

The Jain texts, unlike their Dharmaśāstra and Buddhist counterparts, are vociferously critical of the other traditions' gifts, and much of their gift theory is launched as a critique particularly against the dominant Hindu material culture. Hemacandra scorns brahmanical gifts of cows, land, iron, sesame, brides, gifts on holy days, gifts to dead ancestors *(śrāddha)*, and of animals of all sorts.[65] Most of his criticism is on the grounds that these gifts cause violence or arouse passions, or simply that they are vain and foolish. Land is inappropriate for *dāna* since the plowing of it destroys creatures,[66] iron is the material from which weapons are fashioned,[67] sesame is particularly teeming with microscopic life,[68] and brides generate passion.[69] Only idiots think they can satisfy the dead by gifts to them.[70] His critique displays a close acquaintance with the brahmanical gifts; for example, he denounces the cow gifts, that is, cows made of gold, silver, sesame, or ghee, as fruitless.[71]

Hemacandra's critique lends support to the argument, made by Raveau and others that he intended the *Yogaśāstra* to supplant the Dharmaśāstra texts as state treatises in the Caulukyan court. He is well-versed in Dharmaśāstra and offers his treatise as a viable alternative. The customs of the brahmanical tradition are scorned as ignorant and his verses are aimed at exposing their folly: "one should not give offerings contrived by the customs of others thinking this results in merit. Alas! Lacking merit, it is only in vain."[72]

Like the Theravādin sources, the Jain *śrāvakācāras* give no systematic treatment to the *mahādāna*. Given Hemacandra's critique of brahmanical gifts which

rejects vanity and power as values important for *dāna*, it is not difficult to see why. The Jain lay compendia seek to displace a dominant value system that posits prestige, power and worldly status as its aims, by asserting a morally superior system that recognizes chiefly the values of non-violence and renunciation.[73] The *mahādāna* cannot even register on such a scale. Thus, unlike the Buddhist narratives, the *mahādāna* does not appear in Jain stories even in a reinterpreted fashion.[74] We might say that the Jain *śrāvakācāras* preserved a morally dignified silence on the whole subject of *dāna*'s role in generating secular power and status.

CONCLUSIONS

Scholars of religion and ethics have not always adequately appreciated the moral significance of things and substances, and have tended to leave scrutiny of the material aspects of ethics to anthropologists and sociologists.[75] Yet it is principally along the lines of the material gift that these traditions distinguish themselves religiously and morally. This chapter has focused our attention on the ideological structuring of material culture as it is articulated in *dāna* theory and has centered on how the texts display their visions of the continuity (or discontinuity) between the moral and the material life.

It is vital to recognize that in these gift theories the most contested issues are often over material items. Chapters Two and Three, on the donor and the recipient, described basic structural similarities across the three traditions: *dāna* ideally flows upwards to the esteemed and it is the gift relationship that generates the appropriate religious and moral dispositions and sentiments in the agents. Chapter Four conveyed similar ritual aesthetics, though differences did emerge in consideration of the circumstances and occasions of giving. Yet, in this chapter the three traditions are seen to differ quite dramatically. The crucial issues are over *what* is given, because it is the actual material items that bear the weight of cultural and religious values. What one gives or receives is of supreme importance because it signals one's religious and social commitments and identities.

This is not to suggest that there are no areas of common ground. On the contrary, it is significant that three main types of gifts — namely the gifts of material support to the religious, of learning, and of fearlessness — emerge as essential to all of them. The shared interest in the more intangible gifts points again to cosmopolitan values about what it means to be civilized. This widespread taxonomy of the three categories of gifts suggests that in the cosmopolitan intellectual culture of medieval South Asia, rhetoricians found the idiom of the gift to be widely applicable for describing and espousing other social and religious values. Though they have their own ritual logics, and even lack the formal requirements espoused elsewhere in the *dāna* treatises (such as the normally crucial

element of esteem directed to a worthy class of recipients), the gift of fearlessness and the gift of learning are not somehow category errors when they find their ways into discussions of gift giving. Rather they are part of a well-known cultural terminology shared across the Indic world that was used to "materialize" social and religious values in the language of gifting.

Also notable are some of their shared omissions. Among these, the bloody gifts of the body (*dehadānas*), particularly acclaimed and memorable in Buddhist narrative literature and sometimes also in Hindu tales, are conspicuous in their absence.[76] The Buddhist cult of the *dehadāna* that celebrates the Bodhisattva's gifts in previous lives of his eyes, limbs, flesh from his body, and even his entire life does not register in these Buddhist compendia. These gifts are quite horrifying and sensational, and are recognized as such even in the narrative literatures that exalt them. That Jains should take no interest in them is hardly surprising given the violence such gifts entail, but given their popularity in many Buddhist circles it is noteworthy that these texts neglect them. Such an omission suggests again that the compendia authors were primarily interested in ordinary, face-to-face morality, and not with excessive and morally ambiguous religious acts.

On the other hand, the differences across the three are as illuminating as their similarities. Nowhere do the dissimilarities in the form and ideology across the three traditions become more marked than when we shift attention to their treatments and classifications of what should be given. The Dharmaśāstra *nibandhas* are more than simply treatises on religious and moral behavior, but are articulations of an entire social and political ideology. This articulation itself suggests that the kings sponsoring the writing of the *nibandhas* were interested in representing to themselves and others the splendors of their imperial glory through one of its chief instruments, the gift. In Lincoln's words, we could say that the Dharmaśāstra's taxonomic rhetoric ordering the material world had the effect of "rendering the social order visible" which in turn "opened it up for possible contestation" (Lincoln 1989:81). This indeed is precisely what happens when the Jain authors emerge as social critics against the very taxonomic structure of brahmanical gifts. Hemacandra's point-by-point refutation and mockery of Dharmaśāstra *dānas* show him using classificatory discourse as an instrument for constructing an alternative social order.

The material *dāna*, far from being a neutral object transmitted in a gift transaction, does a great deal of ideological work, work that does not get done in the other analytical categories of the gift. For the Dharmaśāstra, rankings of material gifts suggest that values of prestige, status, and power are operative in *dāna* theory, though these may remain invisible when the discussions are confined to the qualities of the donor and the recipient. The Jain authors cast this value system into relief and reject it completely by ridiculing Dharmaśāstra gifts and material

culture. Instead of subscribing to a hierarchy of goods based on class status and kingly power, they preferred to champion a hierarchy based upon the morally superior (in their eyes) values of non-violence and renunciation.

The Theravādins fall somewhere in the middle, acknowledging the political and prestigious dimensions of *dāna* from time to time in the narrative literature without elevating them to the dignity of warranting systematic treatment. Like the Jains they tend to be more preoccupied officially with the capacity of the material object to affect the moral and religious virtue of its participants rather than its capacity to negotiate status and power. And unlike the Jains, they were not surrounded in this period with the hegemony of brahmanical authority to put them on the offensive.

CONCLUSION

We are now in a position to recognize fully how valuable these learned reflections on mannered conduct can be for students of history, culture, and ethics. To receive from the past such carefully nuanced commentaries parsing even minute details of intentionality and comportment, allows us to examine the interchanges of social life that so often remain at the level of tacit or implicit knowledge. If culture and civilization are themselves made up of face-to-face encounters, exchanges, gestures to others, then close study of their inner logics can unlock some of the key workings of social life. More directly, such reflections reveal a civilization's lofty ideals and aspirations for one of its most foundational practices, giving us access to its ideological agendas. To have such reflections from different yet contemporaneous intellectual traditions is an added boon; comparison of them can help us glimpse some of the contours of broader civilizational formations, as well as better grasp religious and sectarian borders and identities.

Gifts, the texts tell us, are pleasurable. The theorists' insistence that pleasure should accompany a gift, that delight is part of the experience of *śraddhā,* resists a purely calculated rationality of the gift. But where does the delight come from? Much pleasure occurs through the experience of doing something good, benefiting others while planting the seeds for one's future karmic reward. A large part of the pleasure may come from expectations of meritorious reward; yet, while self-interest in future heavenly or soteriological rewards may comprise part of the gift's value, it does not necessarily exhaust it. *Dāna* is a coincidence of interests, securing in a single act both good effects in the world and an investment in one's future condition. That a gift spreads goodness in the world in multiple directions for oneself and others suggests a fruitfulness and bounty in good action that naturally accompany a karmic worldview. Gifts can be, even should be, simultaneously interested and other-regarding.

But why should it be pleasurable to benefit others? The texts recognize many reasons the pious and devout should enjoy supporting the symbols and institutions of their religion, from genuine religious feeling to enhancing one's social standing

through gifts. As the various kinds of gifts explored in the last chapter attest, giving also allows a certain pleasure in material things to occur in a legitimate way. Particularly in the Dharmaśāstra catalogues of the *mahādānas*, we see great delight taken in describing the grandiosity of surplus, of beautiful and wish-fulfilling gifts that never cease in their offerings. In them we detect a celebration of wealth, yet it is wealth experienced in a way that does not threaten the renunciatory values that the tradition also espouses. In the Jain and Theravāda discourses, which do not elaborate on *mahādānas*, the pleasure taken in things is more modest and comes from seeing that a monk does not go hungry, that his needs are anticipated and met, and that the ugliness of poverty and want is kept back.

It is also evident that *śraddhā* itself is a pleasurable experience. The texts tell us that it is delightful and purifying to stand before an esteemed other and make an offering. The uncomplicated trust and admiration in this encounter is an elevation of the other, a sensing of a gap between donor and recipient, and yet a connection is forged. Part of the pleasure may come from this generous receptivity to the other, to the marking of difference. No less significant is that the gift of esteem is a face-to-face encounter with a stranger that does not go wrong; it makes use of tacit rules and infrastructures of social life to invite smooth and harmonious relations.

And of course, the ritual aesthetics of the gift not only generate and express these internal dispositions, but they also bring beauty — and thus pleasure — to the gift encounter. Through the high art of the gift, social life, which can otherwise be quite coarse, is made not only tolerable but gracious. At the same time, certain emotions, including pleasure, are grounded in manners and ceremony. Ritual etiquette *occasions* emotions and intentions, prescribing formal behavior that paradoxically can allow for natural and spontaneous feelings to occur. Through the constraints and obligations imposed by ceremonious behavior good will and generosity are conditioned and cultivated.

It is significant that some features of the etiquette of the gift, such as considerations of time and place and ceremonial and transformative acts of reverence, are shared by all three traditions. As we have seen, certain enduring social and cultural aesthetics stretch across religious or sectarian identity into a domain of culture or civilization. We might suggest that the "Sanskrit Cosmopolis," — the elite literary, aesthetic, and political imagination of the Sanskrit culture that Sheldon Pollock has traced out across South and Southeast Asia beginning in the 2nd- 3rd centuries CE and vibrant for a millennium — also included mannered sensibilities about how certain face-to-face encounters should occur. In addition, Pali culture bears similarities to Sanskrit culture in its conservative approach to high culture in this period. Like Sanskrit in India, Pali in Sri Lanka is a medium for expressing idealized representations of custom; reflections on human motivations and ritual prac-

tices are preserved and reaffirmed in Pali as they are in Sanskrit. That these two elite religious and literary domains intersect in so many ways in their theorizations on the gift suggests an intriguing configuration of elite ideals in medieval South Asia.

The texts can tell us about their civilization because they are examining an essential element of it, one that for them illustrates what it is to be civilized. Thus this civilizational discourse ("civilizational" both in the sense of invoking this particular historical configuration of elite culture and in the sense of being a discourse about what civilization is) makes a space for attention to ethics. The translocal and global perspectives have, interestingly, focused attention on the particular, the idealized encounter of hospitality, as a site for sustained scrutiny and comparison, for ethical reflection. To speak of ethics is to be interested in intentions, motivations, and virtues, and to explore the ideal relations between people. The locus of the face-to-face gift encounter is particularly useful for these sorts of investigations.[1]

A critical area of significance for ethics raised by this study is the nature of moral agency. The texts reveal a conception of moral agency that is conditioned by multiple factors, including other persons, material things, and ritual etiquette. One's capacity for moral action is in part constrained by those with whom one has contact, in that one can only have the morally appropriate response of esteem when faced with an admired other; other-regard depends, in an essential way, upon the *other*. Encounters with others, timing, place, and ritual etiquette create moral agency by calling into being certain dispositions and motivations. The notion of selfhood often prevalent in the modern west, wherein an autonomous individual possesses all of the resources for ethical agency within him or herself and then mingles with the world, finds little resonance here. Instead we find moral agency embedded in dialogical and temporal contexts.

The South Asian theorists developed rich vocabularies for intention, disposition, moral virtue, and motivation. We have yet to understand fully their interpretations of the many cognitive and affective states and conditions that are related to moral action and character. Processes of intention and how they relate to action are not well understood even in contemporary western philosophy; a clear sense of how intentionality and motivation work in premodern South Asian ethical reflection requires further study. Yet we have seen an intriguing array of emotions, decisions, and virtues invoked in giving gifts. The texts' careful parsings of the feelings that occur in the act across time are particularly interesting because they depict a complex emotional involvement in moral action. A generous donor must be eager and motivated before giving, free of greed while giving, and happy and free of regret afterwards. The authors are quick to ward off any elements of greed, ill will, contempt, and remorse at any stage of giving, suggesting that they are close observers of human nature and its inner conflicts.

These considerations of moral agency avoid describing the gift in simplistic or dyadic terms. The authors generally do not depict the gift as *either* interested or disinterested, *either* pure or calculating, *either* free or obliged. Giving a gift, like other human actions, can be messy, and contain both prudence and benevolence, duty and pleasure, freedom and obligation. The ethics of esteem does not fall into debate about whether human beings are self-interested or altruistic, but instead considers the ways in which some moral thinkers have valued certain kinds of other-regard that are neither of these.

A related area of ethical concern is the nature of the relationship the gift fosters between the donor and the recipient. The ethics of esteem challenges the deeply entrenched conviction of a universally applicable principle of reciprocity. In some ways, the grip that this idea continues to have on anthropologists, economists, philosophers, and other scholars may be a product of distinctively modern and western notions of bounded and autonomous individuals. Where human beings are conceived to be autonomous agents interacting with one another on rational principles of mutual exchange, reciprocal gift giving practices are conceived to be the norm. Marcel Mauss articulated a western moral discourse that assigns privileged moral and aesthetic value to the mutual obligations to give, to receive, and to give back — a balanced, rational, and harmonious vision of human sociality. In societies where reciprocity is not in evidence, then the situation is regarded as one of domination and exploitation. Structuralist and universalist claims which insist that all human transactions are at bottom reciprocal make the ethics of esteem deviant, disguising a deeper and unacknowledged reciprocity or debt, or deploying religious rhetoric to subvert the natural relations between human beings. The "moral norm of reciprocity" does not allow us to consider why human beings might, in some instances, assign worth to unilateral, asymmetrical giving. Reducing all human interchange to exchange relationships precludes the possibility that humans might prefer to respond to certain others with reverence, a virtue that resists a logic of exchange.

The elite South Asian ideal for *dāna* does not theorize the gift as a site for self-interested individuals to make (and mask) exchanges. In all of the traditions under consideration, *dāna* has allowed the theorists the opportunity to consider the value of a one-way, unreciprocated gift, not because such an act is entirely selfless and pure, but because it makes possible valued human relationships based on esteem and admiration. The presence of indigenous scholastic literatures in which premodern South Asians have theorized their own gift giving practices should temper some of the stronger claims voiced by anthropologists about the logic of the gift, the universality of reciprocity, and the axiomatic superiority of the donor. Unlike many other cultures encountered by the anthropologist which have no literate, scholastic traditions theorizing their own practices, South Asia

has produced some of the most reflective literature theorizing practice of any civilization. These "native informants" should become hard to ignore or dismiss. That these indigenous discourses — the most systematic and extensive theories of the gift that we have from South Asia — produce an ideology of the gift so at odds with the conclusions of some contemporary ethnologists working in Hindu contexts is noteworthy. The differences may be due to contrasts between theory and practice, past and present, the ideal and the actual, and of course the nature of the data themselves. In any case, perhaps an important lesson is that scholars need not keep pressing for a single, totalizing explanation of "the gift," as though the tremendous varieties of gift giving practices and ideologies can be boiled down to a final logic either across cultures or within them (see Groebner 2002:7-10 and Silber 2002).

In addition to developing ideas about moral agency and dismantling a vision of civilization based on self-interested reciprocity, study of South Asian discourses on the gift provides a useful avenue for thinking about ethics in hierarchical cultures. As we noted early on, in post-Enlightenment western thinking, moral philosophy generally takes as its starting point an assumption of human equality and sameness as a prerequisite for justice and moral action. If morality is a matter of rationality, then ethics itself need not be concerned with the social conditions and circumstances that shape particular human lives, though the *application* of rational moral choice to one's particular context may need to be attentive to such circumstances. In this view, reflection on ethics need not, indeed must not, become mired in the messiness of social context, and instead must proceed on the basis of clean, abstract rational principles. In contrast, the discourses we have been looking at do not share this perspective, and instead from the start are highly attuned to matters of social location; moral discussions take place in context, wherein religious, social, economic, and political status can not be easily abstracted from moral thinking. They locate the gift moment in thick descriptions of social life, custom, and religion, which assume not sameness in human beings, but difference, and not equality, but hierarchy.

Gift giving, with its potential to maintain, create, or subvert relations of power through an economic act, illuminates hierarchies that modern perspectives may find oppressive and unjust. However morally repugnant such fixed hierarchy and inherent inequality may be from the perspective of today's judgments, such views were widely taken for granted in premodern cultures (and still are in many contemporary contexts). If we assume that ethics can only take place when modern assumptions about human equality are present, then we curtail opportunities to see moral reflection where it occurs in nonegalitarian settings where certain kinds of human differences are marked. The ethics of esteem begins to give us the resources with which we can comprehend how some kinds of moral values were articulated

within a hierarchical social order, and why they might have been regarded as compelling within such a framework.

To acknowledge hierarchy and a differentiated social order is not to return us to *Homo Hierarchichus*. This study has not been fixated upon the caste system, nor has it allowed brahmanical ideals of hierarchy to stand in for a unified and singular India, two features of Louis Dumont's vision of Indian sociology that have been so roundly critiqued in subsequent scholarship. Instead we have cut across religious traditions to suggest that relationships of esteem are constituted in certain encounters with some types of admired others. The presence of Jain and Buddhist thinkers in this study has not only militated against allowing a singular brahmanical ideology to carry the day, but it has avoided granting *religion* itself a privileged place in interpreting South Asian cultural values. Instead, the shift to ethics and etiquette allows us explore some of the same enduring humanistic aspirations of Dumont and Pocock's early Indian sociology. That is, some of the foundational questions that Dumont and Pocock were tackling, such as exploring the nature of the individual in society and tracing out widely held cultural values (Dumont and Pocock 1957:9), are still important questions for students of South Asia, but they might be more usefully framed in terms of convention, etiquette, aesthetics, and ethics. The attention the medieval theorists give to well-mannered, aesthetically pleasing, face-to-face encounters of other-regard offers a concrete place to think about the nature of hierarchy, the individual in society, and how cultural ideologies circulate.

It is very tempting for scholars from all quarters (historians, anthropologists, students of religion) to read the ethics of esteem as an apologia for brahmanical or clerical hegemony, or rhetoric trying to mystify or legitimize a social hierarchy from which these guardians of culture stand most to benefit. The texts may well reflect little more than the material and political interests of their authors and audiences. They are substantial planks of larger agendas and ideologies in which gift giving to religious elites buttresses a very conservative *status quo*. Of course, the texts may also be simply giving expression to clerical and brahmanical desires to be admired in a certain uncritical, unquestioning way.

We ought to keep such critiques ready at hand: it may be that power and economic interest (and their deployment of discursive tools to impose them) never go away. Yet the quite modern predisposition to see everything in terms of power forecloses on the possibility that certain discourses might actually be expressing coherent ethical deliberations. Viewing all intellectual discourse through the prisms of power and dominance eclipses the very space which South Asian intellectuals made for themselves to stand back from their own actions and moral codes, and to engage in what Michel Foucault has called "thought."[2] Even as Foucault has taught us to see the history of ideas and mentalities as determined by, and

determining of, power relations, he does not wish to erase the capacity of human beings to have this freedom of thought and reflection.

From the point of view of the medieval theorists, the inequality and social distinctions marked by the *dāna* relationship provide the occasion for religious and moral response. The exalted status of the recipient is the very condition for esteem and respect to occur in the donor. Admiration requires a textured social world, where certain figures stand apart because of their moral excellence or religious virtuosity. The hierarchical values of recognition of and esteem for religious distinction were viewed as some of the foundational elements of the moral and religious life. Indeed, a significant part of what it may mean to *be* moral or religious in South Asian religions is to esteem certain types of others. That such systems are very susceptible to ambivalence, tension, and corruption, especially when they lose sight of their moral underpinnings through institutionalization (as recognized by some of the texts), does not make them inherently corrupt.

An ethics of esteem is not a total or complete vision of the moral life, however, and it does not by any means exhaust the possibilities of moral encounters with the other. It does not even tell us anything about all gifts or "the gift." Again, it is critical to locate the ethics of esteem within a context-sensitive particularism and to acknowledge that the values that the South Asian gift theorists focus on in the face-to-face gift encounter are not meant to describe a complete moral system. They do not cover justice, compassion, and other values widely and cross-culturally held up as desired moral aspirations. Ethical particularism is a kind of intellectual and ethical modesty, at its best when circumscribing and offering guidance in certain types of moral encounters, but refusing to generalize beyond them. The ethics of esteem should not emerge as a single moral principle that can be easily applied to other contexts.

Lastly, it is also clear that the finer moral elements of *dāna* are, we might say, circumscribed by the theorists' interest in the material gift. As became evident in the last chapter, when turning to the actual physical gift some of the emphases on feeling, intention, and motivation recede into the background and other values emerge. For the Dharmaśāstra authors, prestige and magnificence, which can only be displayed through human appropriation and command over material and symbolic things, are part of the meanings of *dāna*. This tradition's minute attention to other sorts of gifts, however, also depicts an interest in the material supports of a range of human goods, from maintaining a livelihood to transmitting knowledge, from gestures toward public welfare to creating the conditions for security and peace. For Jains, prescriptions about appropriate gifts express their deepest concerns connected to other religious values, in particular their unyielding adherence to the principles of non-violence and renunciation. The Theravāda theorists generally think through the gift object in quite practical terms in view of its

appropriateness for the monastic life. For both Jains and Buddhists, a key part of lay religiosity is to be closely attentive to the lay role in preserving and supporting monastic culture. In all three traditions, we see in their descriptions of proper gifts deliberation on wealth — how one comes by it, how one directs and displays it, and how it can be put to the service of civilized ends.

NOTES

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 7.34. While the four categories in this verse cover the central preoccupations of all of three traditions, there are other such schemata in the literature such as a Dharmaśāstra classification that states that there are six elements of *dāna*: the donor, the recipient, the element of "esteem," the proper gift, and the time and place of making the gift (DK, p. 6; DS, p. 29, verse 11). A Buddhist source says that the excellence of the *dāna* is determined by three factors: the state of mind (of the donor), the object given, and the recipient (SDU, verse 264). There is considerable overlap among these frameworks in their choices of categories even while there are differences in emphasis, and all agree that *dāna* can be analyzed according to its constitutive parts.
2. Seneca's *On Benefits* is another example of a text on the gift that sees it as the bedrock of harmonious social life, wherein human beings create a decent sociality. For more recent readings of civilization through the gift see Hyde (1979), van Baal (1976), Simmel (1996), Schrift (1997), and Godbout and Caillé, (1998). No less utopian in their ideals about what a gift can mean for civilization, but also sensitive to its double-edges and ambiguities are Emerson (1884), Derrida (1992), and Starobinski (1997).
3. There are multiple and conflicting ways of inhabiting hierarchy (Parish 1996), to which the discourses considered in this book give very limited expression. Given the pervasive cultural and social power exercised for millennia by these civilizational discourses – brahmanical authority is particularly notable for its striking degree of elitist, conservative, and patriarchal authority over many aspects of social and religious life for at least 2500 years of Indian history – critique of their agendas by subaltern, Daḷit, feminist, and other authors is itself an important moral discourse (see, for example, Ambedkar 1970; Kishwar and Vanita 1984; Leslie 1989; Joshi 1986). Far from interpreting Dharmaśāstra discourse as ethical reflection, they see it as a pernicious apologetic providing religious and legal sanction to class and gender inequality and repression. While Jains and Buddhists may evade some of the charges against caste and class oppression, at least as official ideology, they are no more likely than the Dharmaśāstra to emerge unscathed from a feminist critique of their ideologies which find them shot through and through with patriarchy.
4. See Ramanujan 1989 on certain modes of moral thinking in South Asian literature that may be described as "context-sensitive" in which moral reasoning is highly attuned to circumstances and does not seek absolutist, universal maxims true for all times and all places. See Hallisey 1996, 1997 on how some styles of Theravāda moral discourse could be described as "ethical particularism," generating moral claims for certain specific contexts that are not necessarily applicable outside of them.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. The question of borrowing is somewhat tenuous in that since all of these anthologists were copying already from *purāṇas* and *smṛtis* and adding in fact very little commentary of their own, the exact extent to which they copied from each other is difficult to trace. Ballālasena nowhere mentions Lakṣmīdhara's work. However, in a Masters Thesis from the University of Texas at Austin, Donald Davis argues persuasively that Lakṣmīdhara's organization of topics and quotations of the *smṛti* material influenced Ballālasena's *Dānasāgara*, Hemādri's *Dānakhaṇḍa* of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*, Caṇḍeśvara's *Dānaratnakara*, and Mitra Miśra's *Dānaprakāśa*. The later writers tended to expand their books by adding more *purāṇic* and commentarial material to the basic core and framework that Lakṣmīdhara provided (Davis [1995], Introduction and Appendix).
2. These include the *Dānaratnakara* of Caṇḍeśvara (c. 1300 - 1370 CE), *Dānaratna* or *Dānavivekoddyota* of Madanasiṁha (c. 1425 CE), the *Dānasāra* of Dalapati (c. 1500 CE), the *Dānakriyākaumudī* of Govindānanda (c. 1500 CE), the *Dānamayūkha* of Bhaṭṭa Nīlakaṇṭha (c. 1625 CE), and the *Dānaprakāśa* of Mitra Miśra (c. 1625 CE). (For a complete listing of *dāna* treatises see "Note D" of Aiyangar's Introduction to the *Dānakāṇḍa*.)
3. A few comments about this bibliographical material are worth noting briefly here. Ballālasena quotes from nearly sixty sources, and refrains from any sort of ranking among the *purāṇas, upapurāṇas, saṁhitās*, and *smṛtis* that he is using. He also rejects a number of sources, either because they are redundant, because they lack portions on *dāna*, because they are "popular" and lacking textual authority, or because they are, in his view, tainted by heretics (*pāṣaṇḍa*), as in the case of the *Devī Purāṇa*, the *Agni Purāṇa*, one of the *Liṅga Purāṇas,* and several other *purāṇas* (DS, p. 7). See Granoff 2001:127-130 on Ballālasena's introduction; while the identity of the heretics invoking Ballālasena's disapproval is not entirely clear here, Granoff argues that he is rejecting certain Hindu ritual practices related to *dīkṣā* and *pratiṣṭhā* and what he calls "despicable rituals," referring to temple practices he deemed inappropriate for brahmans.
4. DS, p. 2, verse 8.
5. DS, p. 2, verse 9 [taking *vadhi* as a misprint for *vidhi*].
6. DS, p. 2, verse 7. Taking the manuscript variant reading *avasāda* over *avadāna*; read as *avadāna*, it would be "glorious act in the darkness of the Kali Yuga."
7. Intriguingly a Buddhist tradition also indicates that in the final era of the decline of the *dharma* in their own cosmology, the only practice remaining is *dāna* (Lingat 1962:12).
8. DS, p. 1.
9. From the preface of the *Brahmacāri-kāṇḍa* of the *Kṛtyakalpataru*, Aiyangar, 1941:49.
10. Aiyangar, 1941:49.
11. DS, p. 474, verse 15.
12. *Abhayadānasya tu bhayanivāraṇarūpatvāt sutarām eva tatra dānaśabdo gauṇam eva* (Aiyangar 1941:96).
13. R. Williams' *Jaina Yoga* (1963) is still the best survey of the *śrāvakācāra* literature, and I am relying on his dating here. For other discussions of the genre of *śrāvakācāra* see Cort 1991b, Lath 1991, and Norman 1991.
14. See Regine Raveau 1957 for her argument that the *Yogaśāstra* was written primarily as a repudiation of *Manusmṛti*, and Bühler 1889, for his account of the life of Hemacandra.
15. The *sūtras* are often in Prakrit and the commentary in Sanskrit. It may be that the choice to express the root text in Prakrit displayed a text's authenticity in terms of particularly *Jain* sources of authority, while the choice to write the commentary in Sanskrit opened up the text to the wider Sanskrit culture. I am grateful to John Cort for this observation.
16. YŚ ii. 35. Quoted in Williams, p. xxii.

17. One of the twelve "limbs" (*aṅga*) of the Śvetāmbara canon, the *Upāsaka-daśāḥ* is the earliest text devoted to lay practice and an exception to this general statement. This text is a collection of stories about pious lay people.
18. RKŚ, p. 26.
19. YŚ 3:87. Cf. TSC, p. 117; ŚDK, ii., p. 129.
20. RKŚ, p. 52.
21. Though their paradigmatic *dāna* is of course feeding monks and nuns, the Jains expanded the range of the term to include many of the same gifts we have already seen in the *nibandhas*, including gifts of learning, of protection, of temples, and to the poor.
22. However, *dāna* need not only involve positive activity; as I will discuss later on, sometimes *abhayadāna*, the gift of fearlessness, exemplifies a type of *dāna* that requires restraint on one's activity, a pulling back.
23. DAP, p. 40, verse 91.
24. This definition is from the *Caritra-sāra* of Cāmuṇḍarāya, a Digambara *śrāvakācāra* text, as cited in Williams 1963:34.
25. See Williams 1963:7 regarding Siddhasena Gaṇin's quite uncertain dates, where Williams suggests that he cannot have written earlier than the 9th Century.
26. There are later Jain didactic treatises devoted to *dāna* texts similar to *Dānādiprakaraṇa* such as the *Dānapradīpa* (1499 CE) of Cāritraratnagaṇi, and the *Dānadharma* of Puṇyakuśala (1547-1614 CE). But to my knowledge, the *Dānādiprakaraṇa* is the earliest of these *dāna* treatises, at least among those still extant.
27. Dundas 1987-8; on this debate see also Granoff 1993:174-78 and Babb 1996:114-15.
28. This suggestion was made to me by Paul Dundas, private communication.
29. DAP, p. 6, verse 12.
30. For translations of some of the most popular *dāna* narratives see Bloomfield 1913, 1923, Johnson 1931, and Balbir 1982.
31. These include the *Light on Giving* (*Dānapradīpa)* (1499 CE), authored by Cāritraratnagaṇi, including both didactic material and the same eight stories as DAK and the *Illumination of Giving* (*Dānaprakaśa)* (1656 CE) of Kanakakuśalagaṇi, which gives exactly the same stories as DAK (Balbir 1982:23-33).
32. *Dhamma* is Pali for *Dharma*. In Buddhism the *Dharma* or *Dhamma* is the Buddha's teaching, referring to both the truth in general and the Buddhist doctrine.
33. In addition to the texts I describe below there is also the *Paṭipattisaṅgaha* (unedited Pali manuscript), the *Upāsakasūtra* in the Chinese *vinaya*, and the *Upāsakasaṁvarṣṭaka* in Tibetan (Saddhatissa 1965:1f).
34. UJA, p. 285.
35. UJA, p. 123.
36. See Saddhatissa 1965:49-64 on his comparison of the *Upāsakajanālaṅkāra* and the *Saddhammopāyana* and discussion of their authorships.
37. On the *Saddhammopāyana*'s Abhayagiri origins see Malalasekera 1928:212; Saddhatissa 1965:60-3; Norman 1993:211-15; von Hinüber 1996:203.
38. Both this text and the *Suttasaṅgaha* tend to rely on the commentaries rather than the *suttas* themselves, suggesting that the authors are not so much interested in providing the "original" source material but are instead concerned with providing textual elaboration. This is less true of the UJA which cites nearly equally commentarial and *sutta* materials, and of the SDU which is in verse form.
39. See Hallisey 1995b on the *Maṅgala Sutta* and its importance for articulating lay practice. Another text discussing *dāna* which is a bit later than the period under discussion and written and used in Thailand rather than Sri Lanka is the "Lamp on the Meanings of Auspiciousness" *(Maṅgalatthadīpanī)* which is an enormous commentary on the *Maṅgala Sutta* and provides a thorough and lengthy chapter on *dāna*. This text is used as the core monastic education for monks in Thailand up to the present day.

40. It should be noted that a considerable number of lay anthologies were written in Sinhala at this time as well, and writing in the vernacular was a viable option.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. DK, p. 4.
2. See Gouldner 1960; Michaels 1997; Parry 1986, 1994; Raheja 1988; Trautmann 1981; Vatuk and Vatuk 1971. As some of these authors note, there are other kinds of gift giving in South Asia besides *dāna* that may include reciprocity and obligation.
3. Today a widespread South Asian custom regarding giving involves the expectation that the recipient not open a wrapped present in front of the donor and express glee and gratitude (as are generally anticipated in American custom). To exclaim over the receipt of a gift, rather than to accept it quietly and set it aside, is, I have been told, a sign of greediness. The gift is received as a token of honor and esteem, rather as something that one is compelled to be grateful for.
4. DS, p. 28, verse 5; Cf. DKh, p. 14 and DK, p. 5. Though all three compendia are quoting from the lost *smṛti* of Devala here, Lakṣmīdhara gives "*dharma*" here instead of "*tyāga,*" so that such gifts are given out of "duty" rather than "giving up." We should also note that one later *nibandha*, the *Dānamayūkha*, tempers *dharmadāna* with a certain realism, in arguing that such *dāna* is only the best kind of *dāna*, that is, *sāttvika,* and not *dāna* in general (Kane 1941:842).
5. DS, p. 44; DK, p. 11.
6. DK, p. 5.
7. DK, p. 4.
8. This wonderful discussion is from the Prakrit story collection the *Kathākoṣaprakaraṇa* of Jineśvara Sūri (see Dundas 2002 and 1999:34, n62).
9. Malinowski 1922; Mauss 1990; Sahlins 1965; Hyde 1979; Parry 1986, 1994. Following Marcel Mauss's suggestion that such a sharp delineation between the pure gift and market exchange is a relatively recent invention of the modern west, James Carrier has documented the history of the ideology of the pure gift, which he calls the "perfect gift," in modern American and British culture (Carrier 1990; 1995). Again, the pure gift is most easily recognized in contrast to modern capitalism and is seen to compensate for the deficiencies of it. The perfect gift is valued for its sentiment rather than its utility, and it is free in the sense of "unconstrained and unconstraining" (Carrier 1995:149). It is not meant to be reciprocated and should be spontaneous and without obligation. Such an ideology, according to Carrier, arose out of historical conditions of industrialization and British and American liberalism and utilitarianism.
10. YŚS, p. 507, verse 9.
11. DS, p. 32. Cf. the Jain text UDh which also categorizes the motivations of the giver with the terms *rājasa, tāmasa*, and *sāttvika* (pp. 307-8) and the *Bhagavad Gītā* 17:20-22.
12. DS, p. 22, verse 55.
13. Gombrich cites a passage from AN.iv.60-3, where it is said that the lowest motive for giving alms is with the thought of reward in the next life (Gombrich 1991:294f.). None of the medieval texts under study have included this passage, however.
14. SRS, p. 181.
15. *Nibbāna* is normally conceived as being unconditioned, and so merit-making activity and good karma cannot bring it about, as seems to be suggested here. See McDermott 1973.
16. See Cone and Gombrich (1977) for a translation of the story and a discussion of the moral ambiguities involved in the "perfect gift". See also Sizemore and Swearer (1990), especially the essay by Strong in this volume.
17. DS, p. 28; v. 5.

18. SRS, p. 182; the Pali equivalent to *tyāga* is *cāga* and here it is given in a general list of desired virtues and not explicitly defining *dāna*.
19. UJA, p. 296.
20. TSC, p. 117. He then goes on to define giving to the Tīrthaṅkaras as performing acts of worship, indicating an overlap of *dāna* and *pūjā* and the element of renunciation in both, particularly when directed to a recipient who cannot really accept due to his absence (see Babb 1988:79-81).
21. DS, p. 14; v. 28.
22. The Buddhist texts speak of the ten kinds of "wrong view" of which "almsgiving is useless" (*n'atthi dinnam*) is the first (SDU, verse 71), a view usually attributed to the heretic Makkhali Gosāla (Obeyesekere 1991:58).
23. The Digambara author Somadeva, on the other hand, ridicules the idea that like begets like, for we see that often the results are different, as in the case of cows who are given grass and water and return milk (UDh, p. 308, verse 832).
24. This verse is from A.iii.337, quoted in UJA, p. 294 and SAS, p. 84. In Buddhist sources sacrifice (*yañña*) is a synonym for giving, since *dāna* effectively replaced the brahmanical sacrifice (*yajña*).
25. We see this logic of attainments elsewhere, where what is normally thought of as a condition for giving is also seen as the fruit or attainment of it. For example, the *Sea of Giving* says one will be reborn in a human rebirth possessed of faith in *dāna (dānaśraddhā)* as the fruit of giving in this life (DS, p. 31, verse 36).
26. UJA, p. 286.
27. Balbir 1983:148f. The Jain narrative literature has joy in giving as a constant theme and it is formally built into the *dāna* encounter – it is pleasing to give and to watch others give. When a particularly meritorious gift is given in the Jain *dāna* stories *(dānakathā),* shouts are heard: "Wonderful! A gift! A gift!" (Balbir 1983:149).
28. TSC, p. 120.
29. DS, p. 28, verse 4; DS, p. 31, v. 33; DK, p. 8-9, DKh, p. 17.
30. DS page 33, verse 2.
31. DS, p. 32, verse 1.
32. DS, p. 29; DK, p. 6, DKh, p. 14.
33. DS, p. 28; DK, pp. 5-6; DKh, p. 14.
34. Another important Dharmaśāstra schema for describing the motivations for a religious act, and one that Mary McGee has emphasized in her study of the *vratanibandha* literature as the chief indigenous categories for getting at the intention of a ritual or religious act, is the classification according to whether an act is done constantly *(nitya, dhruvam),* occasionally *(naimittika),* or optionally out of desire for a specific result *(kāmya)* (McGee 1987:301). Ballālasena discusses these and adds the daily (*ājasrikam*) *dāna.* These can be seen as motivational categories because they define whether an act is done out of ritual duty (defined according to the specified time) or out of desire *(kāmya)* (DS, p. 30). I will discuss how these categories describe and shape the agent's intentions in Chapter Four, which gives special attention to time and place as part of the ritual of *dāna.*
35. TSC, p. 120.
36. UJA, p. 295-6; SSC, p. 11.
37. SSC, p. 11.
38. UJA, p. 295 from A.III.172.
39. UJA, p. 293; SSC, p. 11; from AA.III.249.
40. There has been considerable philological and scholarly attention to the concept of *śraddhā* (Pali, *saddhā*) in both brahmanical and Buddhist scholarship. See Ludowyk-Gyomroi 1947, Hacker 1963, Hara 1964, Köhler 1973, Benveniste 1973, Saddhātissa 1978, Smith 1979:53-68, Nanayakkara 1984, Dhammapala 1984, Carter 1993:105-14, and Jamison 1996:176-84.

41. DS, pp. 32-3; DKh, pp. 84-7.
42. DS, p. 28, verse 1; DK, p. 5 has *pratipāditam* for *pratipādanam*.
43. DS, p. 29, verse 15; DK, p. 6; DKh. p. 15.
44. DS, p. 33, verse 9; DKh, p. 85; DKh. p. 13.
45. DS, p. 28, verse 3, DK, p. 5; DKh, p. 13.
46. YŚS, p. 505.
47. TSC, p. 120.
48. TSC, p. 120.
49. Though there may be differences in general use between the Pali *saddhā* in Buddhist discussions and the Sanskrit *śraddhā*, I am arguing that in the particular context of *dāna*, the meaning is the same.
50. SRS, p. 178.
51. SSC, p. 5.
52. SSC, p. 11.
53. DS, p. 33, DKh, p. 85, TSC, p. 12 all link *śraddhā* with *anasūyā.*
54. DS, p. 30.
55. Both Lakṣmīdhara and Hemādri also quote this passage and interpret *bhāva* here as *sāttvik, rājasik* and *tāmasik* – these are the qualities of a person or of the gift itself.
56. DS, p. 33; DK, pp. 10-11; DKh, p. 17. These first three verses are Manu 2.227-28, 4.234, respectively.
57. DK, p. 19. Cf. the Jain TSC, p. 120 which also talks about the importance of not having contempt (*anādara*) in the context of *śraddhā.*
58. DKh, p. 85.
59. Yāj 198-216.
60. YŚS, p. 564.
61. A story from the *Vimāna-vatthu* states explicitly this distinction between gifts "directed to the *saṅgha*" and gifts given to individuals: "a gift directed to the *saṅgha* is fixed in the infinite, but what you give to individuals is not very fruitful for you" (*Vimāna-vatthu* III.15, as cited in Egge 2002:153, note 20).
62. SRS, p. 185.
63. SRS, p. 185-6.
64. SRS, p. 186.
65. While the medieval theorists never worried about the possibility of being *too* unquestioning toward the recipient a curious Jātaka story links *saddhā* with being overly and inappropriately charitable toward even unworthy recipients. It seems that Sakka had four daughters: Hope (Āsā), Faith *(*Saddhā*),* Glory (Siri) and Shame (Hiri), and the question is raised about which one of them is best. They are sent to the sage Kosiya with the idea that the one he gives hospitality to will be the most virtuous in his judgment. He rejects Glory because without her men never succeed and this is her evil deed. Hope leads men to disaster sometimes (merchants hoping for treasure on the high seas). Faith is rejected *because through her men freely give alms*, and they sometimes place trust in harlots and so she is responsible for adultery. She is inconstant and too trusting. Shame gets the gift [Jātaka 535, see Cowell v. 1990:214-7].
66. In this regard, *śraddhā* might be usefully compared with Georg Simmel's "faithfulness" which he defines as "a specific psychic state which is directed toward the continuance of the relation as such, independently of any particular affective or volitional elements that sustain the content of this relation" (Simmel 1996:40). In his formulation, faithfulness, in some respects like *śraddhā*, is a sociological feeling, which, as he puts it, is "the peculiar feeling which is not directed toward the possession of the other as the possessor's eudaemonistic good, nor toward the other's welfare as an extrinsic, objective value, but toward the preservation of the relationship to the other" (Simmel 1996:42).
67. DS, page 22, verse 27.

68. UDh, p. 305, verse 818.
69. DAP, p. 31, verses 5-8.
70. DAP, p. 32, verse 19.
71. DAP, p. 33, verse 40.
72. DAP, p. 33, verse 30.
73. DAP, p. 35, verses 43-4.
74. DAP, p. 35, verse 47.
75. DAP, p. 55, verses 111-12.
76. DAP, p. 32, verse 17. In Sanskrit poetry geese are said to have the ability to separate milk from water.
77. It is interesting to note, as W.C. Smith does, the compatibilities of Christian notions of charity and Indic notions of giving with *śraddhā.* To be related to a person in the older use of charity is to "recognize that person as of high intrinsic worth, and to treat him or her as of high worth. (Latin *caritas* is from *carus*, valued, cherished, dear in the sense of high-priced, literally precious)" (Smith 1979:231). Charity has since come to mean, more narrowly, acts of donation to the poor, but may preserve some of this original sense of recognizing high worth in that the Christian value of seeing intrinsic worth in the poor, regarded to be in the image of Christ, is still present. We still speak of being "charitable" towards someone in the sense of seeing virtues where there may actually be faults. Giving *dāna* with *śraddhā*, then, may be something like charity in the older sense of the term: recognizing only good qualities of the person, one is moved to generosity.
78. See Dundas, 1987-8:184ff. for an account of this debate and Sūrācārya's role in it as the *caityavāsin* apologist.
79. *Maṅgaladīpanī,* p. 1; A.iv.236.
80. Friendship is sometimes said to be based on mutual esteem. It may not be possible to suggest an exact English translation for *śraddhā*, and esteem may be a broader disposition than *śraddhā. Śraddhā* is not used, at least in these texts, for the kind of mutual regard we can find between friends.
81. A similar argument could be made for altruism in that altruism cannot be disinterested. The altruist's very concern for the other entails interest and an investment of one's self in the other's welfare.
82. Charles Taylor suggests a similar distinction between honor and dignity, where honor is intrinsically linked to inequalities, and dignity to modern ideas of a notion of the dignity of human beings in a universalist or egalitarian sense. Honor is tied to recognition, and dignity to identity (Taylor 1992:46).

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. The texts generally assume a male subject for both the donor and the recipient, although theoretically at least, nuns are structurally equivalent to monks. In practice, however, the status of nuns has generally not been as high as that of monks. The Jain author Hemacandra argues, over strenuous objections, that giving to women is merited equally as giving to men (YŚS, pp. 573-5). In the Theravāda, giving to fully ordained nuns would no longer be possible by the time most of these texts were written, as the female order died out in the 11th century in Sri Lanka. On the status of Jain and Theravāda female monastic orders see Jaini 1991 and Barnes 2000.
2. See Schopen 1997 for broader depictions, based on inscriptional records, of the worldly dealings of Buddhist monks and nuns.
3. This insistence upon the superiority of the recipient stands in marked contrast to many western gift ideologies in which the person in a position to give is superior to the dependent recipient. This view was articulated by Aristotle in describing Megalopsychos, "He is the

sort of man to confer benefits, but he is ashamed of receiving them; for the one is the mark of the superior, the other of an inferior" (cited in Camenisch 1981:4). Ralph Waldo Emerson also declared that it "is not the office of a man to receive gifts. How dare you give them" (Emerson 1883:155).

4. See also Jamison (1996:191-203), Shulman (1985), van der Veer (1992) and Davis (1995) on the same subject. C.J. Fuller, on the other hand, does not find any evidence for the inferiority of the brahman on the basis of acceptance of gifts in his study of brahman temple priests in South India, and thus draws a distinction between Tamilnadu and the Gangetic plain on this issue (Fuller 1984:65-71). It should also be kept in mind that Parry's study concerns a special class of untouchable brahmans, untouchable due to their involvement with death rituals. This fact should make us wary about generalizing his findings. Finally, C.A. Gregory has been critical of Raheja's failure to get the recipient's point of view on the gifts and inauspiciousness he is expected to absorb (Gregory 1992:96).
5. See the story in particular of Śarmiṣṭhā and Devayānī in the *Mahābhārata,* mentioned by Trautmann (1981:285) and Jamison (1996:196).
6. This may be considered in the context of the pervasive motif in the narrative literature in all three traditions of the rapacious brahman recipient. Brahmans stand in for the most difficult recipients to give to in the Buddhist and Jain material. Consider the Vessantara Jātaka and Sasa Jātaka in the Buddhist materials, and Lord Mahāvīra's gift of cloth to a brahman which functions in the Jain literature as the stock example that makes giving to unworthy recipients acceptable in certain circumstances. (It should be noted that even Mahāvīra's gift is not uncontroversial among Jain commentators in that some argue that Mahāvīra did not actually give him the cloth, it just fell off and the brahman picked it up.) Even in some Hindu narratives the greedy brahman is employed to demand the most difficult gifts to give, as in the well known story of King Hariścandra (Raheja 1988:21-22). When the gift is hardest to give, whether it be one's own life or one's loved ones, it is usually a brahman who is doing the asking.
7. Cf. Silber 1995a:233.
8. DK, p. 27. Consider also the *Mitākṣarā* which reads: "He who though fit for receiving does not accept the gift, obtains the [same] magnificent heavenly realms of the generous giver" (Yāj. 213). The commentary is: "Even one fit for receiving, that is, a worthy recipient, who does not accept cows, land, gold, etc., as gifts, attains the [same] magnificent and abundant heavenly realms of those who are generous with gifts such as cows, etc." (YSA, p. 806). Apārarka does not add further commentary. While the commentators do not say exactly why it is meritorious for a recipient to refuse such gifts, they do not mention poison or impurity. I think that since these gifts (cows, gold, land) are stock items of wealth, what is being admired in a recipient's refusal of them is his disregard for riches.
9. In addition to the textual material Trautmann and Heesterman supply for support to the danger of receiving there can be found additional passages in the *purāṇas* and epics that the compendia do not quote but which perhaps evince an ideology of the poison in the gift. For example, the *Skanda Purāṇa* I.ii.6.71-75 (quoting Hārīta): "Listen to the reason, O intelligent one, why there has been listlessness (in my heart). It was because I thought thus to myself, 'Alas, acceptance of gifts is a miserable thing. The Brahmanical splendor of Brāhmaṇas becomes diminished by accepting gifts. A Brāhmaṇa who accepts a Mahādāna ('great charitable gift') gives to the donor all his merits and auspiciousness and the donor gives him his inauspiciousness (and sins) too. A donor and a recipient may argue with each other. He whose hand is placed beneath (with the palm upwards for accepting gifts) is abandoned as one of less intellect.' It was because I was thinking thus that there was great listlessness in my heart, O Nārada" (trans. G.V. Tagare, 1993). But passages like this, intriguing as they may be, are rare, and the bulk of the epic material maintains, without ambivalence, the superior status of the brahmans as recipients. Even though the *Anuśāsana-aparvan* suggests that the purest brahman is the one that abstains from receiving (Roy

XI:192; 257) and that *kṣatriyas* should therefore be wary of his power (V: 176), and also that the giver can purify himself by giving gifts (XI:59; 64; 67), it nowhere says that a recipient accepts inauspiciousness or poison along with the gift.

10. The only place in the *nibandhas* in which the word poison is mentioned in relation to *dāna* is in the context of a kind of censured *dāna* in which a person gives to others while his relations are kept in poverty: such *dāna* tastes like honey at first but turns to poison (DS, p. 42; DK, p. 16). We should note here that Raheja is careful to distinguish between evil, impurity and inauspiciousness, and that what is actually transferred in the gift process has been seen in very different ways by Heesterman, Parry, Raheja, and Trautmann (see Davis 1995). What is important in the context of the digests is that the authors scrupulously avoided any notion of poison, however defined, as transferred to the recipient by a *dāna*.
11. See Yunxiang Yan's (1996) discussion of structuralist claims such as C.A. Gregory's assertion that the superiority of the donor is "a feature that is common to gift exchanges the world over" (Gregory 1982:47). Yan's data from the Chinese village of Xrajia presents the opposite relation; unilateral gifts flow upwards in the social hierarchy, and receiving gifts, not giving them, is the symbol of prestige (Yan 1996:147-148). Consider too other types of gifts which confer honor, such as the honorary degree, in which any attempt to degrade the recipient is entirely inappropriate.
12. *Āditta Jātaka*, No. 424. Cf. the *Dasabrāhmaṇa Jātaka*, No. 495.
13. SSC, p. 7
14. DK, p. 13.
15. DK, p. 21.
16. DK, p. 32.
17. DS, pp. 15-6.
18. SRS, p. 178.
19. SRS, p. 183; Cf. SSC, pp. 19-20 [MA.v.72.5-14]. These terms describe different levels of spiritual accomplishment. Stream-winners are those who have found the path and will eventually become awakened. Once-returners will have one more rebirth before attaining awakening (*nibbāna*), while Non-returners will not be reborn since they will obtain awakening by the end of this life. Arhats are awakened from learning of the Buddha's teaching. Solitary Buddhas attain awakening on their own, but they do not teach for the sake of awakening others. Perfectly Awakened Buddhas, the highest religious aspiration of all, attain awakening on their own and share their wisdom with the world.
20. YŚS, p. 505.
21. This is the *Mahāssaroha Jātaka*, No. 302.
22. YŚS, p. 572.
23. See Carman and Streng 1989. One of the Buddhist texts does mention requital (*patikāra*), but not in the context of gratitude for a *dāna*. Rather the Bhagavan says, "I do not say that there is easy requital, that is, I do not say that returning a favor is easy." But this is said in the context of his relationship to Mahāpajāpatī, his foster mother, for her taking him as a baby when his mother died and suckling him at her breast and raising him. He in turn was of great service to her by teaching her the Dhamma. The Buddha says such requital is not easy, nor is there easy requital of a student toward a teacher (SSC, p. 19).
24. Emerson also thought that an expectation of gratitude does damage to the worthy dispositions of generosity and he makes an intriguing reference to Buddhism on this note: "the expectation of gratitude is mean, and is continually punished by the insensibility of the obliged person . . . It is a very onerous business, this of being served, and the debtor naturally wishes to give you a slap. A golden text for these gentlemen is that which I so admire in the Buddhist, who never thanks, and who says, 'Do not flatter your benefactors'" (Emerson 1884:436-7).
25. SSC, p. 5.
26. SRS, p. 184; [MA.v.72.18-20].
27. MA.v.74

28. MA.v.75.
29. The next chapter on the ritual etiquette of *dāna* will examine this idea more thoroughly.
30. This issue is often posed in terms of the legal authority of Dharmaśāstra law (*vyavahāra*) and whether it ever represented the law of the land in premodern times (on this issue see Lariviere 1997); a separate question concerns the historical actuality of the great body Dharmaśāstra material that deals with *ācāra*, moral and religious custom.
31. Weber credits monastic landlordism with being the distinctive feature of Sri Lankan Buddhism (Weber 1958:257). See also Gunawardhana 1979 and Carrithers 1983 on domestication of the *saṅgha*.
32. Although, as Paul Dundas has pointed out, the extent to which medieval Jain monastic institutions were domesticated needs further study (personal communication).
33. Dirks 1993:122; Kosambi 1985:329.
34. DS, p. 28; DK, p. 48; DKh, p. 40.
35. DS, p. 28.
36. DS, p. 26, verse 68, quoting here from *Viṣṇudharmottara*.
37. For an account of the variety of medieval attitudes to the poor in Christian Europe see Freedman 1999.
38. DS, p. 24, verse 1; DK, p. 45. Cf. the Jain author Somadeva: "The wise say that where the Three Jewels are lacking, [gifts] sown on a non-recipient are in vain, like [seeds] on saline soil" (UDh, p. 301, verse 799).
39. DS, p. 28.
40. A later development among the Śvetāmbara Jains, the Terapanthi sect which split off in the 18th century, actually did discourage charitable giving. The Terapanthis argued that the only type of *dāna* is to worthy recipients, i.e. Jain renouncers, and that giving to beggars and the like is dangerous because the donor would be responsible for any wrong action toward which the gift was put, even after it left his hands. Their critique of charitable giving also centered around a rigid divide between social and religious spheres of action, and they considered such giving to be only worldly practice (see Dundas 1992:221; Laidlaw 1995:300-1).
41. UJA, p. 297
42. SSC, p. 11.
43. UDh, p. 301, verses 801-2.
44. Yaśovijaya, *Dvātriṁśaddvātriṁśikā*, with *Svopajña Tattvārthadīpika*, Part I. Dolaka: Divyodarshana Trust, 1995, p. 4.
45. ŚDK, I. p. 134.
46. ŚDK, I. p. 134.
47. Compare with Camenisch (1981), p. 14: If unworthiness is "the donor's assessment of the recipient, then the gift would seem to be an act of condescension, subjugation, even of humiliation, rather than a gift in the more positive sense."
48. Williams argues that Hemacandra initiated the idea of seven fields of *dāna* (1983:165), but they are also present in the *Dānādiprakaraṇa*, which if the editors' dating is correct, is at least a century before Hemacandra. See DAP p. 19, verse 17.
49. YŚS, p. 564.
50. YŚS, p. 564.
51. YŚS, p. 576. Hemacandra employs a variety of words for compassion or pity (*dayā, kṛpā*, and *karuṇā*) interchangeably.
52. A nonrecipient (*apātra*) is worse than a bad recipient (*kupātra*) in that a *kupātra* observes the moral laws but is devoid of religious insight (*samyagdarśana*), while an *apātra* does not even practice moral conduct (Bhargava 1968:137).
53. YŚS, p. 507, verse 45-6. See also Bhargava 1968:137 for mention of recipients of compassion (*karuṇāpātras*), such as children, the old, and the destitute (as mentioned in a *śrāvakācāra* not discussed in this study, the *Vasunandīśrāvakācāra*).

54. Of course not all, or even many, Jain lay people take or consistently maintain all twelve vows (Cort 1991b:398; Jaini 1979:160, 187-8; Norman 1991:37).
55. YŚS, p. 564.
56. It would be hard to imagine a more despicable character in Buddhist literature than Jūjako, the brahman who asks Vessantara for his two children for slaves, and the story does not let the reader forget his wickedness for a moment.
57. Shih Heng-ching 1994 and Chappell 1996 on this text. It should be noted that Chappell sees many of the views expressed in this text as representing a minority view, even within the Mahāyāna (370).
58. See Kyoko Tokuno, in Lopez 1995:257-71. The translator also acknowledges the uniqueness of the views expressed in the text.
59. DK, p. 38.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. In their study proposing a general theory of ritual, Caroline Humphrey and James Laidlaw (1994) argue, in ways suggestive of Fritz Staal (1990), that the very separability of intention and ritual action suggests that there is no "meaning" underlying ritual behavior. Since intentions and the meanings assigned to rituals vary while the ritual act remains the same there can be no necessary relationship between them, suggesting that the ritual acts themselves are meaningless. On the merits of this argument see Cort 1997:108. Its unfortunate that the authors did not follow up on the ideas of one of the most interesting figures discussed in their book, the 17th century Jain merchant Banarsidass, who, after a long life of rejecting religious rituals, comes himself to link explicitly the usefulness of performing rites for leading a moral life. In his fascinating autobiography, *Half A Tale* (Lath 1981) Banarsidass comes to believe that ritual forms can in fact shape a moral sensibility in the early stages of one's journey (Humphreys and Laidlaw 1994:53-4; Lath 1981:206-7). What Banarsidass's own narrative suggests is that searching for meaning or lack thereof may not be as useful as thinking about the instrumentality of certain forms of ritual behavior for cultivating moral virtue.
2. For example, a recent anthology of articles of ritual studies, with forty-three contributions and spanning well over 500 pages, has no serious treatment of how ritual might bear on morality, and does not recognize ethics as a field that might be in some way related to ritual studies (Grimes 1996).
3. Several of these will be discussed below. See also Sarah Buss (1999) for a philosophical treatment of the ethical significance of manners.
4. We still find alive a modern discourse on Buddhism that finds it rationalist, individualistic, egalitarian, and ethical (in short, "modern") against the backdrop of a Dumontian portrayal of Hinduism as ritualistic, communal, archaic, and hierarchical. Such a discourse tells us more, I believe, about the modern interpretators of Buddhism than about early Buddhism itself. For a critique of some of the colonial incarnations of this discourse see Lopez 1995:6. In the same volume, Charles Hallisey points out that Buddhism is too often treated as "a thing apart from the rest of the intellectual and cultural history of India," especially on matters such as ritual (Hallisey 1995:46).
5. DS, p. 47 (quoting from Manu 4.235).
6. DS, p. 48; Cf. DK, p. 14.
7. DS, p. 48, verses 2-3.
8. DS, p. 32.
9. DS, p. 48.
10. DS, p. 57, verses 9-10.
11. DS, p. 52.

12. TSC, p. 119.
13. TSC p. 119; Cf. ŚDK ii.129.
14. ŚDK ii.129.
15. ŚDK ii.129.
16. The five-fold salutation (*pañcanamaskāra*) is a mantra memorized by Jains praising religious figures. See Cort (1998:96-98) on differences between Śvetāmbara and Digambara contemporary practices of almsgiving, and Zydenbos 1999. Cort demonstrates that the Digambara practices of worshipping the mendicant as a deity lie much closer to Hindu styles of temple worship than to the Śvetāmbara offerings to the mendicant as honored guest. Zydenbos too suggests that the worship of Digambara *munis* is similar to that of divinity (1999:301).
17. YŚS, p. 503.
18. UJA, p. 295.
19. UJA, p. 296.
20. SRS, p. 177-8; SSC, p.12.
21. SRS, p. 179.
22. UJA, p. 288.
23. UJA, p. 289.
24. DS, p. 17, verse 20.
25. *Maṅgaladīpanī,* p. 17.
26. DAP, p. 54, verses 101-103.
27. TSC, p. 117.
28. UPA, p. 288.
29. *Śuddhi* was itself a topic of great interest in the medieval period and a number of digests were composed on it, in many cases by the same compilers of the *dānanibandhas*, including the *Śuddhi-kaumadī* of Govindānanda, a book on *śuddhi* as part of Lakṣmīdhara's *Kṛtyakalpataru*, the *Śuddhimayūkha* of Nīlakaṇṭha and the *Śuddhiprakāśa* of the Vīramitrodaya of Mitra Miśra. See Kane 1953 (vol. IV):272-3 for a more elaborate listing of these digests.
30. As quoted in Kane 1931:190-1.
31. Charles Hallisey has argued that this sense of *saṁskāra*, as preparation or impression on the mind through ritual action, is conceptually related to the more psychological sense of the Buddhist term *saṅkhāra*, and that we need not see a sharp disjunction here between the Hindu ritual term and the Buddhist psychological term (Hallisey 1995c). That is, the Buddhist *saṅkhāras*, the mental constituents or necessary conditions for thought and action, are the psychologized aspects of what is already implicit in the Hindu ritual *saṁskāras*. Ritual action transforms the individual at the psychological level by leaving traces or impressions, a transformation which in turn creates the conditions for further mental, verbal, and physical actions.
32. DS, p. 48, verse 4.
33. DS, p. 48, verse 6.
34. Indeed, Hemacandra says that to allow the almsfood to make contact with living creatures (interpreted as letting it touch earth, water, fire, jars, etc.) is the first of the *dāna* transgressions (*aticāra*) (YŚS, p. 562).
35. SSC, p. 14. The term translated here as "to purify" is the Pali *visujjhati*, which the PTS Dictionary (p. 640) translates as "to be cleaned, to be cleansed, to be pure."
36. The reader may remember from Chapter Two the various Jain metaphors of water (from DAP, p. 31, verses 5,7) on this very issue where the giving of gifts should be like throwing water into the sea where all individuality is absorbed into the collective mass of water.
37. SSC, p. 21; SRS, p. 185; this is MA.v.73. See also Collins 1998:246.
38. The context of this discussion is a fascinating story in which the Buddha is encouraging his foster mother, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, not to only worship him (she wants to give a cloth *only* to him), but to worship him by giving *dāna* to the *saṅgha*. He says, "Give, Gotamī, to

the *saṅgha*, when something is given to the *saṅgha*, I will be worshipped as well as the *saṅgha*" (SSC, p.18).

39. P.V. Kane suggests that water was also used in Vedic rituals as well to invoke Viṣṇu into an image (Kane, Vol. 2, p. 903).
40. Inden reminds us that we should not obscure the differences in ritual practices among Śaivas, Vaiṣṇavas, and Buddhists here. Clearly the ritual use of water in gift offerings is going to vary considerably historically and among different royal and religious traditions in ways that are far too complex than what is possible to treat here. For example, we can turn to Cort's discussion of an intriguing inversion of the water lustration, where a Jain king is consecrated with *vāsakṣepa* powder by his *ācārya*, and how this account differs from Inden's description of Vaiṣṇava kingship rituals (Cort 1998:95). While increased specialized knowledge of the different ritual practices of these traditions is indeed a desideratum, further specialization alone will not help us to comprehend the commonality that is often apparent across the traditions, or to find a reference point by which to draw contrasts.
41. Romila Thapar has argued that "an offering implies an existing asymmetrical relationship whereas a gift creates such a relationship" (Thapar 1994:312). In the ritual use of water we see one mechanism where the ritual gift is able to create the superior status of the recipient.
42. SRS, p. 186; SSC, p. 21; taken from MA.v.75.
43. SRS, p. 186; SSC, p. 21.
44. SSC, p. 21.
45. DS, p. 29, verse 11; DK, p. 6.
46. ŚDK, ii., p. 171.
47. UJA, p. 295 and SSC, p. 1, both quote from the *Kāladānasutta*, A.iii.41.
48. UJA, p. 295 and SSC, p. 1.
49. SSC, pp. 4-5.
50. DS, p. 30, verse 17.
51. On the term "auspiciousness" see Carman and Marglin 1985; Hallisey 1995a; Madan 1987; Jaini 1985.
52. DS, p. 35.
53. DS, p. 35, verse 1.
54. Yāj. 1.6; Manu 2.6, 10, 12.
55. MĀ. on Yāj. 201.
56. YŚS, p. 504, verse 13.
57. YŚS, p. 505, verse 17. That is, one would not have to apply water directly to the trees themselves.
58. DS, p. 30, verse 24. Often the standard Mīmāṁsā categorization is threefold, using the terms *nitya, naimittika*, and *kāmya*, conflating *dhruvam* and *ājasrikam* into *nityam*.
59. DS, pp. 30-31, verse 25-7.
60. It should be noted that in Vedic and Mīmāṁsā discussions of these three terms they are described as *adhikāra*s, one's eligibility, competence, right, or claim to perform a sacrifice (Smith 1987:122-3; 59ff.), an idea that is quite a bit different than intention. The *nibandhas* do not mention the word *adhikāra*, however, and the division of *dhruvam, ājasrikam, naimittikam* and *kāmya* may have had a wider, less technical sense in *śāstra*.
61. See Rotman 2003 for an intriguing account of *prasāda* as an automatic, spontaneous response prompting *dāna* in Buddhist *avadāna* literature.
62. YŚS, pp. 510-17. See Bloomfield 1923 on the Śālibhadra story.
63. See Strong 1983:56-69; Both 1993:213-19.
64. For a fuller telling of this story from the *Saddharma Ratnāvaliya*, see Obeyesekere 1991:116-7, and Hallisey 1988:282-4. The story is widely depicted in Buddhist art; see, for example, Huntington and Huntington 1990, plates 57 and 58 for the details from 12th century manuscript illustrations in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* from Pāla India, depicting this little monkey making his donation.

65. SRS, p. 179.
66. Johnson 1931:179-87; see also Jaini 1977.
67. Here we may see comparable notions from other traditions. For Maimonides there are eight degrees of charity, where the second highest is "the one who gives alms to the needy in such a manner that the giver knows not to whom he gives and the recipient knows not from whom it is that he takes. Such exemplifies performing the meritorious act for its own sake" (Twersky 1972:137). Compare also to Matthew 6:2-4: "When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your alms may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you."
68. DK, p. 15.
69. DS, p. 31, verse 33.
70. UJA, p. 302. A Jain example states that "a person cannot brighten [literally, "whiten" since the color of fame is thought to be white] the whole earth with fame without *dāna*, even if he be brave, beautiful, a fine orator, or a knower of weapons or scripture" (DAP, p. 17, verse 4).
71. SSC, p. 11, commenting on the *Sappurisadānasutta* (A.iii.172).
72. DAP, p. 17, verse 7.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. See Kosambi (1985:318) on how the *hiraṇyagarbha* ceremony functioned to elevate caste status for low-caste tribal chieftains who could perform it in order to be "reborn" into a higher caste: "The priest would insert the ambitious candidate into a golden pot, the 'womb.' The ritual for a pregnant woman was then recited, followed by the birth-*mantras*, after which the king stepped out from his contracted position to thank the priest for his new rebirth, in so many words. Thereby, he acquired a high caste, while the obliging brahmins acquired the vessel of gold as part of their fee. The new caste entitled him and his well-born descendents to instruction in brahmin lore from which the *śūdra* and the pre-caste tribesmen were equally barred." Dirks (1993) also discusses *dāna* as bringing about the transformations of chiefs into little kings and little kings into great kings. Another intriguing interpretation of this rite could be developed borrowing Nancy Jay's insights on sacrifice as "a remedy for having been born of woman" and a mechanism for establishing patrilineage (Jay 1992:40); here a man is reborn of himself or from a priest bypassing any female role in his re-production.
2. The *Mitākṣarā* stands alone among the medieval Dharmaśāstra texts under study in not discussing the royal *mahādānas*, though the commentator Aparārka, on the other hand, did not let the fact that they are unmentioned by *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* keep him from writing prolifically on the topic in his commentary on it. However, a later *dānanibandha*, Govindānanda's *Dānakriyākaumudī* (c. 1500), omits from his *nibandha* the *mahādānas*, the mountain *dānas* and the cow *dānas* since they were restricted to kings (and not in the province of ordinary people) (Aiyangar 1941:57).
3. DS, p. 111, verse 16.
4. DS, p. 469, verse 48-9.
5. DS, p. 564, verse 23.
6. DKh, p. 111.
7. DKh, p. 112.
8. Yāj. 210-11.
9. MĀ on Yāj. 209.

10. On land grants and Indian feudalism see Kosambi (1985, chpt. 9); Stein (1959-60); R.S. Sharma (1965); and Chattopadhyaya (1994). For descriptions of land grants in Buddhist sources and their use in Sri Lanka, see Gunawardana (1979, chpt. 5).
11. DS, p. 317, verse 10; DK, p. 188. Another verse compares the gift of land to a drop of oil in water which spreads out and increases as does wealth from land (DS, p. 316, verse 116; DK, p. 187).
12. DS, p. 31, verses 29-32; Cf. DK, p. 8.
13. YSA, p. 290. Cf. DS, p. 32; Dkh., p. 20.
14. YSA, p. 365-6.
15. On the Dharmaśāstra understanding of the king's function of protection of the subjects (*prajāṇāṃ paripālanam*) see Lingat 1973:222.
16. DS, p. 31, verse 29; DK, p. 8. *Trāṇa* here is not just a shelter or a dwelling, since this (as *āvāsa*) is covered in the next verse as one of the middling gifts; thus in the verse above it refers to protection in a more metaphorical sense. See footnote 8.
17. DS, p. 565-6.
18. DS, p. 566.
19. DS, pp. 566-7.
20. DS, p. 565, verse 30.
21. *Abhayadānasya tu bhayanivāraṇarūpatvāt sutarāmeva tatra dānaśabdo gauṇam eva* (Aiyangar 1941:96). Unlike the *Tristhalīsetu*, a digest on pilgrimage places (*tīrthanibandha*), which has a chapter on secondary or metaphorical pilgrimages (*gauṇatīrthas)*, where truthfulness, patience, compassion and even *dāna* can be considered a *tīrtha* or a religious "crossing over" in some sense (see Salomon 1985:206-9), the *dānanibandhas* do not provide a chapter on secondary or metaphorical *dānas.* With the exception of Govindānanda in this case, they do not suggest that *dāna* is meant in a metaphorical sense.
22. MĀ on Yāj. 212.
23. DS, p. 473
24. Yāj. 212.
25. His special attention to the *purāṇas* may be evidence of the "crystallization of Purāṇism" mentioned by Chattopadhyaya as a characteristic feature of the medieval period (Chattopadhyaya 1997:28f.).
26. DS, p. 489.
27. DS, p. 486, verse 20.
28. DS, p. 41, verse 12.
29. DS, p. 46, verse 10.
30. DS, p. 42; cf. DK p. 17.
31. DS, p. 42, verses 5-6; DK, pp. 17-8.
32. *Maṅgalatthadīpanī*, p. 1-2.
33. SRS, p. 180 citing DA i.206.
34. SRS, p. 181; DA.iii.927.10-16.
35. SRS, p. 177; SSC, p. 11.
36. SRS, p. 178; UJA, p. 293; SSC, p. 11; citing from AA.iii.249.7-11.
37. Both texts are referring to the story of the gifts of Velāma in which these five are prohibited. SRS, p. 176; SSC, p. 15 both citing AA.iv.185.2-6.
38. Egge 2002:91 cites *Vimāna-vatthu* (Vv.i.1; VvA.5-7) which states that "the Buddha proclaims that a gift will become more fruitful not by the excellence of the thing to be given (*deyyadhammasampattiyā*), but by the excellence of the (donor's) thought and of the field *(cittasampattiyā ca khettasampattiyā ca*)."
39. Gombrich also reports ambivalence about the quality of the material gift. In his terms, in an "ethic of intention" the value of the material gift should not matter. However his informants seem to suggest otherwise by envying the wealthy who can afford to make great gifts and by referring to a story of a poor ascetic who could give the Buddha nothing of value but

does his best so that he may be reborn rich and capable of giving liberally (Gombrich 1971:292). From Gombrich's perspective such views are "clearly inconsistent" with an ethic of intention. But moral dispositions and intentions of the giver need not be the single reigning axis of value. Why might not there be instead multiple and competing logics at work in the gift simultaneously?

40. SAS, p. 84.
41. SAS, p. 84. It may be that this gift is superior to material gifts to the *saṅgha* because it is the gift that monks give. The superiority of the gift of the Teaching would preserve the monks' superiority as well as the structural inequality of any conceivable transaction between the laity and the monastics.
42. *Maṅgalatthadīpanī*, p. 1-2: "'One gives fearlessness' means a *dāna* which is defined by abstinence wherever one goes. What this means here, is that [when] one makes a gift of fearlessness one undertakes abstinence, that is, the Five Precepts. Here it is explained that 'abstinence' is desisting from evil."
43. On this, see Strong's discussions of King Aśoka's great giving and how it relates to Buddhist ideas of kingship (Strong 1983; 1990). For more discussion on Buddhist royal patronage see Smith 1978, especially his article "The Ideal Social Order as Portrayed in the Chronicles of Ceylon" in this volume.
44. Anāthapiṇḍika purchased the Deer Park to build a monastery for the Buddha and the monks by covering the entire plot of land with gold coins. His story is told in SSC, pp. 3-4. See also Falk 1990. Velāma's *mahādāna,* which we discussed briefly in Chapter Four, is found in (AA.ii.802ff.) and also narrated in SSC, pp. 7-12.
45. James Egge discusses a story from the *Petavatthu* that tells of a man, named Aṅkura, who gave a great *mahādāna* that lasted for years and required 95,000 people to prepare the food. But when he is reborn as a god, he was "greatly outshone by one who in his previous life gave a spoonful of food to the elder Anuruddha" (Egge 2002:74). Although this is a dramatic case in which the worthiness of the recipient "trumps" even great material gifts, it also strikes a similar note with the medieval compendia in downplaying the religious value of royal ostentation.
46. This is not to say that Theravādins did not also engage in writing about statecraft and imperial glory. The chronicle (*vaṁsa*) literature is one genre where the values and aesthetics of Buddhist kingship and royal patronage are developed.
47. This story is the story of Sumanā as told in the *Suttasaṅgahaṭṭhakathā*, p. 6-11, taken from AA.ii.593f.
48. SSC, p. 7.
49. YŚS, p. 495, verse 3.87; Cf. ŚDK, pp, 300-1.
50. YŚS, p. 499.
51. YŚS, p. 497.
52. YŚS, p. 497.
53. On Jain food limitations see Sangave 1980:259-60; Jaini 1990; Cort, 1989; Dundas 1992:150-53; Laidlaw 1995.
54. As Devendra Sūri puts it, all gifts must be free from faults of violence. The idea here is that one should give to a monk only alms which will not cause him to accrue *karma*, but rather shed it (*nirjarā*). ŚDK, p. 299.
55. This point was repeatedly brought home to me by my teacher in Gujarat, the Jain *sādhu* Muni Jambuvijayaji. When asked about the differences between Jain and Buddhist forms of *dāna*, for him it always centered around the issue of Buddhist monks being willing to accept anything offered. As described by Granoff (1998), criticism of the lavishness of Buddhist alms was a central theme of medieval Jain narrative literature. One of the reasons for the vehemence of their critique seems to have been a very real anxiety that the perceived luxury of the Buddhist monastic life would attract and convert Jains.

56. YŚS, p. 565. See Babb 1988 and 1996, Humphrey 1984, and Cort 2001 for ethnographic discussions of the Eight-fold worship.
57. The modern practice of *boli* or auctioning the privileges of performing *pūjās* and lavishing wealth is one way to increase the magnificence of gifts and to honor the liberal donor with prestige. Such ritualized competition marks the very public nature of much Jain donative activity. See Laidlaw (1995:334-51) for an insightful account of the auctioning ceremonies.
58. DAP, p. 5, verses 3-4.
59. YŚS, p. 571-2. As Stephanie Jamison notes (personal communication), it is interesting that listening (*śravaṇa*) is here configured as a gift, rather than as receiving a gift. Elsewhere the gift of the Dharma or of the Teaching presumes that the one who hears it is receiving it. The significance of the term *śrāvaka* ("listener") for Jain lay people is relevant here: listening is not a passive activity, but is itself instructive for how Jains construe what it means to be religious (Carrithers and Humphrey 1991).
60. DAP, p. 15, verse 44.
61. DAP, p. 12, verse 16.
62. One Śvetambara Mūrtipūjaka Jain nun told me that when a person takes monastic initiation *(dīkṣā)* all the creatures rejoice, considering that they have been given an *abhayadāna,* in that the renouncer will hereafter refrain from harming any creature whatsoever. It is a term very much in use in contemporary Jain life.
63. Puṣkarmuni 1977:345; this list is in the canonical *Sthānāṅga Sūtra*, ed. Muni Jambuvijaya, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985), p. 260.
64. Haribhadra, p. 44.
65. YŚS, pp. 503-5.
66. YŚS, p. 504, verse 3.
67. YŚS, p. 504, verse 4.
68. YŚS, p. 504, verse 5.
69. YŚS, p. 504, verses 10-11.
70. YŚS, p. 508, verse 14.
71. YŚS, p. 504, verse 9.
72. YŚS, p. 505, verse 18.
73. This is not to suggest, however, that Jains were not preoccupied with status, power, and prestige. Other sources, such as medieval temple inscriptions and the *praśāsti* literature were highly developed Jain expressions of their aspirations to worldly power and glory. See Cort 1991b.
74. This may have to do as well with the ambivalence of Jain positions toward kingship (see Cort 1998). Unlike the Buddhists, Jains have only rarely enjoyed the rule of Jain kings or kings sympathetic to Jainism, and thus may have had only official disdain for the trappings of Hindu royalty as displayed in the *mahādāna* ceremonies.
75. See Schwartz 1996 for a discussion of the gift's capacity to impose an identity upon both the donor and the recipient.
76. See Ohnuma 1997 and 1998 on the popularity and multivalence of Buddhist *devadāna* tales and Heim 2003 on the horror and moral ambiguities such stories generate. The Hindu story of Śibi, the generous king who offered his flesh to redeem a dove, recounted in the *Mahābhārata* and elsewhere, is well known (see Anderson 1998:71-72).

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

1. The work of Emmanuel Levinas also centers ethical reflection on the face-to-face in ways that may offer suggestive parallels worth briefly (though inadequately) touching down on here. For Levinas, whose *Totality and Infinity* Jacques Derrida calls "an immense treatise *of hospitality,*" of "welcome" (Derrida 1997:21; his italics), "it is necessary to begin with

the concrete relationship between an I and a world" as a primordial moment to start with ethics, and thence metaphysics (Levinas 1991:37). In the encounter with the face of the other there is a desire, a pleasure in absolute difference, and "the essence of generosity and of goodness" is found in "a relationship whose positivity comes from remoteness, from separation" (34). There is an enjoyment in the complete supremacy and transcendence of the other. But the disjunctures between Levinas and the South Asian ideas are as illuminating as the similarities: for Levinas the other poses the idea of infinity, and one's encounter with the face is an epiphany of subjectivity that entails total freedom and transcendence and yet responsibility in "being for the Other" (304). This transcendent revelation that one finds in the face of the other resists all totalizing systems and categories, and celebrates the absolute uniqueness of the individual. This last move in particular is not in evidence in the religious systems considered here.

2. According to Foucault (1994:117): "What distinguishes thought is that it is something quite different from the set of representations that underlies a certain behavior; it is also something quite different from the domain of attitudes that can determine this behavior. Thought is not what inhabits a certain conduct and gives it its meaning; rather it is what allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and to question it as to its meaning, its conditions, and its goals. Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects upon it as a problem." I am grateful to Charles Hallisey for pointing me to this passage of Foucault here and for helping me develop many of the ideas in this discussion. Also helpful is Steven Collin's treatment of the ideological power of state religion (Collins 1998:19).

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