

Naming the Gnostic Mary

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July 27, 2022

Stephen J. Shoemaker, 'Rethinking the "Gnostic Mary": Mary of Nazareth and Mary of Magdala in Early Christian Tradition', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 9:4 (2001), pp. 555-595.

Stephen J. Shoemaker, "A Case of Mistaken Identity? Naming the Gnostic Mary", in *Which Mary?: The Marys of Early Christian Tradition*, ed. by F. Stanley Jones (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 5-30.

I have taken as the title of my essay the *second* half of Stephen J. Shoemaker's *second* article's title, above, "A Case of Mistaken Identity? Naming the Gnostic Mary". His earlier article, "Rethinking the "Gnostic Mary"", opens with this summarizing paragraph:

Numerous early Christian apocrypha, including several so-called "gnostic" texts, include a character known as "Mary," whose identity is usually otherwise unspecified. Generally, this "Mary" appears as an associate or, sometimes, as a rival, of the apostles, who is filled with knowledge of the "gnostic" mysteries. Although scholars have persistently identified this Mary with Mary the Magdalene, rather than Mary of Nazareth, this interpretive dogma is based on evidence that it is at best inconclusive. This article reexamines the relevant apocrypha, as well as incorporating much previously overlooked evidence to argue that Mary of Nazareth is an equally important contributor to the "gnostic Mary's" identity. The gnostic Mary, it turns out, is a composite figure, who draws on the identities of both the Magdalene and the Virgin, rather than being the representation of a single historical individual. This new perspective will present both consequences and opportunities for feminist interpretations of early Christianity and the veneration of Mary of Nazareth.

I am challenging Shoemaker's argument that the "gnostic Mary turns out to be "a composite figure, who draws on the identities of both the Magdalene and the Virgin"[...]. But my challenge will not be within the paradigm of his various arguments. My paradigm takes issue at three levels.

Number One: Shoemaker's sentence which I have just truncated, above, ends with these words: "rather than being the representation of a single historical individual." Shoemaker and the 'Guild of Theologians & Historians of Christianity', I dare say, are fundamentally mistaken, believing that Jesus, Joseph, his mother Mary, the 12 disciples, and Mary of Magdala, are historical, first century CE persons.

Number Two: In the second century CE, all four canonical gospels, were, *on purpose*, written anonymously, in Alexandria Egypt, by *ethnic Indian Buddhist literary scholars*, who had access to the scrolls in the Royal Library! For the full range of the evidence, refer to my trilogy of books: *Buddhism's Relation to Christianity* (2010), *Mythicism* (2013), & *The Unknown Buddha of Christianity* (2019).

Number Three: Shoemaker and the Guild are unaware of the relation between Mary of Magdala and the prominent royal courtesan, Āmra-pālī (Sanskrit)/Amba-pālī (Prākṛit) of Buddhist scriptures.

What's in a name? The name of the renowned royal courtesan of Buddhist scriptures, Āmrapālī, has two segments, as I have hyphenated it, above. In Sanskrit, 'āmra-', means 'mango', and '-pālī', means 'protectress' – a quite fitting name for one who is famous for gifting her beautiful *mango grove* and magnificent mansion to the Buddhist brotherhood.

The shortened version of the courtesan's name is simply the initial segment, 'Āmrā'. Now, for those who are familiar with gematria as applied to the books of the New Testament, 'Āmrā' can be rearranged as 'Mārā', the feminized version of the Buddhist *Māra*, demon of *death, desire, & rebirth*. In Buddhist scriptures, Āmrapālī, later in life, gives up her profession of satisfying the *desires* of men to become a Buddhist nun! The "demoness" becomes a righteous woman!

XCII [92] **Ambapâli** [(Prâkrit)/Âmrâpâli (Sanskrit)]

1 Then the Blessed One proceeded with a great number of brethren to Vaishâlî, and he stayed at the grove of the courtesan Ambapâli. And he said to the brethren: “Let a brother, O bhikshus, be mindful and thoughtful. Let a brother, whilst in the world, overcome the grief which arises from bodily craving, from the lust of sensations, and from the errors of wrong reasoning. Whatever you do, act always in full presence of mind. Be thoughtful in eating and drinking, in walking or standing, in sleeping or waking, in talking or in being silent.”

2 Now the courtesan Ambapâli heard that the Blessed One was staying in her mango grove; and went in a carriage as far as the ground was passable for carriages, and there she alighted. Thence proceeding on foot to the place where the Blessed One was, she took her seat respectfully on one side. As a prudent woman goes forth to perform her religious duties, so she appeared in a simple dress without any ornaments, yet beautiful to look upon.

3 And the Blessed One thought to himself: “This woman moves in worldly circles and is a favorite of kings and princes; yet is her heart composed and quieted. Young in years, rich, surrounded by pleasures, she is thoughtful and steadfast. This, indeed, is rare in the world. Women, as a rule, are scant in wisdom and deeply immersed in vanity; but she, although living in luxury, has acquired the wisdom of a master, taking delight in piety, and able to receive the truth in its completeness.”

4 When she was seated, the Blessed One instructed, aroused, and gladdened her with religious discourse.

5 As she listened to the law, her face brightened with delight. Then she rose and said to the Blessed One: “May the Blessed One do me the honor of taking his meal, together with the brethren, at my house tomorrow?” And the Blessed One gave, by silence, his consent.

6 Now, the Licchavi, a wealthy family of princely descent, hearing that the Blessed One had arrived at Vaishâlî and was staying at Ambapâli’s grove, mounted their magnificent carriages, and proceeded with their retinue to the place where the Blessed One was. The Licchavi were gorgeously dressed in bright colors and decorated with costly jewels.

7 And Ambapâli drove up against the young Licchavi, axle to axle, wheel to wheel, and yoke to yoke, and the Licchavi said to Ambapâli, the courtesan: “How is it, Ambapâli, that you drive up against us thus?”

8 “My lords,” said she, “I have just invited the Blessed One and his brethren for their to-morrow’s meal.”

9 And the princes replied: “Ambapâli! give up this meal to us for a hundred thousand.”

10 “My lords, were you to offer all Vaishâlî with its subject territory, I would not give up so great an honor!”

11 Then the Licchavi went on to Ambapâli’s grove.

12 When the Blessed One saw the Licchavi approaching in the distance, he addressed the brethren, and said: “O brethren, let those of the brethren who have never seen the gods gaze upon this company of the Licchavi, for they are dressed gorgeously, like immortals.”

13 And when they had driven as far as the ground was passable for carriages, the Licchavi alighted and went on foot to the place where the Blessed One was, taking their seats respectfully by his side. And when they were thus seated, the Blessed One instructed, aroused, and gladdened them with religious discourse.

14 Then they addressed the Blessed One and said: “May the Blessed One do us the honor of taking his meal, together with the brethren, at our palace to-morrow?”

15 “O Licchavi,” said the Blessed One, I have promised to dine to-morrow with Ambapâli, the courtesan.”

¹⁶Then the Licchavi, expressing their approval of the words of the Blessed One, arose from their seats and bowed down before the Blessed One, and, keeping him on their right hand as they passed him, they departed thence; but when they came home, they cast up their hands, saying: “A worldly woman has outdone us; we have been left behind by a frivolous girl!”

¹⁷At the end of the night Ambapâli, the courtesan, made ready in her mansion sweet rice and cakes, and on the next day announced through a messenger the time to the Blessed One, saying, “The hour, Lord, has come, and the meal is ready!”

¹⁸And the Blessed One robed himself early in the morning, took his bowl, and went with the brethren to the place where Ambapâli’s dwelling-house was; and when they had come there they seated themselves on the seats prepared for them. Ambapâli, the courtesan, set the sweet rice and cakes before the order, with the Buddha at their head, and waited upon them till they refused to take more.

¹⁹And when the Blessed One had finished his meal, the courtesan had a low stool brought, and sat down at his side, and addressed the Blessed One, and said: “Lord, I present this mansion to the order of bhikkhus, of which the Buddha is the chief.” And the Blessed One accepted the gift; and after instructing, arousing, and gladdening her with religious edification, he rose from his seat and departed thence.*

*Paul Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha: According to Old Records* (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1915 [15th printing (1st printing, 1894)]), pp. 201-204.

Following the death of the Buddha there was a meeting (Council) of the monks to determine how best to preserve his teaching. During the deliberations, there was an incident in which the Buddha’s close attendant, Ānanda, was, at first, being excluded from the Council because he had, together with several other wrongful acts, allowed women to be the first to salute the body of the Master. This ‘salute’, as we shall see, involved wailing, beating of breasts, and shedding of tears on the feet of the Buddha! B. Jinananda has given the following account of this incident in the First Council:

Mahā-Kassapa [Skt. Mahā-Kāśyapa] took the initiative and chose four hundred and ninety-nine bhikkhus to form the Council. It is stated in the *Çullavagga* and confirmed in the *Dīpavaṃśa* that the number of monks was chosen in pursuance of a vote by the general congregation of monks assembled on the occasion and at the place of the parinibbāna [i.e., death] of the Master. There is general agreement that the [final] number of the monks selected was five hundred. [This addition of one more member of the Council was due to the] protest regarding the omission of Ānanda from the number chosen[...].

Ānanda was eventually accepted by Mahā-Kassapa as a result of the motion on the part of the monks. The procedure followed regarding Ānanda [had], however, given rise to a controversy. It will be observed that Ānanda was brought to trial in the course of the proceedings[...].¹

Jinananda reports that one of the five charges brought against Ānanda was this: “He permitted women to salute first the body of the Master, because he did not want to detain them. He also did this for their edification.”²

¹“Four Buddhist Councils”, by B. Jinananda, in *2500 Years of Buddhism*, ed. by P.V. Bapat (Delhi: Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1956), pp. 31-33.

²*Ibid.*, p. 33.

Arthur Lillie, a century ago – in 1909, in his *India in Primitive Christianity*, p. 216 – pointed out that, in the then ‘newly-discovered fragments’ of the *Gospel of Peter*, there is another incident of *women’s tears wetting the body of Jesus* – who is *now deceased* – thus paralleling the *women’s tears wetting the body of the deceased Buddha*:

The newly-discovered fragments of the Gospel of Peter give us a curious fact. They record that Mary Magdalene, “taking with her her [female] friends,” went to the sepulchre of Jesus to “place themselves beside him and perform the rites” of *wailing, beating breasts*, etc. Āmrapālī and other courtesans did the same rites to Buddha, and the [male] disciples were afterwards indignant that impure women should have “*washed his dead body with their tears.*”^{*} [*Emphasis added*]

In the Christian records are three passages, all due, I think, to the Buddhist narrative. In one, “a woman” anoints Jesus; in John (xii. 7), “Mary” anoints him; in Luke, a “sinner,” who kisses and washes His feet with her hair. Plainly these last passages are quite irrational. No woman could have performed the washing and other burial rites on a man alive and in health.

As the episode in *Mark* and *Matthew* takes place in the house of Simon the leper, Lillie has counted their duplicated narrative as ‘one’ passage, which is then added to the passages in *Luke* and *John* to total ‘three’.

In the passage from the *Gospel of Peter* about Mary Magdalene and her women companions, Mary is called a *disciple* of Jesus:

50 Now at the dawn of the Lord’s Day, Mary Magdalene, a disciple of the Lord (who, afraid because of the Jews since they were inflamed with anger, had not done at the tomb of the Lord what women were accustomed to do for the dead beloved by them), *51* having taken her women friends with her, came to the tomb where he had been laid. *52* And they were afraid lest the Jews should see them and were saying, ‘If indeed on that day on which he was crucified *we could not weep and beat ourselves*, yet now at his tomb we may do these things.’ [*Gospel of Peter* (12:50-52), after Raymond Brown’s translation; *emphasis added*]

Luke 23:50-54 & 24:1-2

Now there was a man called Joseph, [...] from Arimathæa[...]. This man now approached Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus[...]. It was Friday, and the Sabbath was about to begin. The women who had accompanied him from Galilee followed; they took note of the tomb and observed how his body was laid. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes; and on the Sabbath they rested in obedience to the commandment. But on the Sunday morning very early they came to the tomb bringing the spices they had prepared.

^{*}W. Woodville Rockhill (trans.), *The Life of the Buddha and the Early History of His Order: Derived from Tibetan Works in the Bksh-Hgyur and Bstan-Hgyur: Followed by Notices on the Early History of Tibet and Khoten* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1907), p. 154:

[Kāśyapa said: “T]hou didst show to corrupt women [prostitutes] the golden body of the Blessed One [i.e., the Buddha’s], which was then sullied by their tears.”^{***}

“I thought,” replied Ānanda, “that if they then but saw the Blessed One, many of them would conceive a longing to become like him.”

^{**}[Rockhill’s footnote:] This alludes to the woman who, worshipping the body of the Buddha after his death, let her tears fall on his feet. See Beal, *Four Lectures*, p. 75.^{***}

^{***}[Checked by ML, from Samuel Beal’s *Four Lectures on Buddhist Literature in China* (London, 1882), p. 75]: Kāśyapa said again, “Because you did not prevent the woman polluting the feet of Buddha you were guilty of a dukkata (offence), and you should now confess and repent of it.”

Ānanda replied, “A woman with a tender heart worshipping at Buddha’s feet, her tears falling fast upon her hands, soiled the (sacred) feet as she held them to her. In this I am conscious of no crime; nevertheless, venerable sir! in submission to your judgment, I now confess and repent.”

Mark 14:3-9

Jesus was at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper. As he sat at table, a woman came in carrying a small bottle of very costly perfume, pure oil of nard. She broke it open and poured the oil over his head. Some of those present said to one another angrily, ‘**Why this waste?**’ The perfume might have been sold for thirty pounds (literally 300 denarii) and the money given to the poor’; and they turned upon her with fury. But Jesus said, ‘Let her alone. **Why must you make trouble for her? It is a fine thing she has done for me. You have the poor among you always,** and you can help them whenever you like; **but you will not always have me.** She has done what lay in her power; she is beforehand with anointing my body for burial. **I tell you this: wherever in all the world the Gospel is proclaimed, what she has done will be told as her memorial.’** [Bolding added to indicate duplication with bolded passages, below, in *Matthew*. All four quotations on this page are from *The New English Bible*. – ML]

Matthew 26:6-13

Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, when a woman came to him with a small bottle of fragrant oil, very costly; and as he sat at table she began to pour it over his head. The disciples were indignant when they saw it. ‘**Why this waste?**’ they said; ‘it could have been sold for a good sum and the money given to the poor.’ Jesus was aware of this, and said to them, ‘**Why must you make trouble for the woman? It is a fine thing she has done for me. You have the poor among you always; but you will not always have me.** When she poured this oil on my body it was her way of preparing me for burial. **I tell you this: wherever in all the world this gospel is proclaimed, what she has done will be told as her memorial.’**

Luke 7:36-50

One of the Pharisees invited him to eat with him; he went to the Pharisee’s house and took his place at table. A woman who was living an immoral life in the town had learned that Jesus was at table in the Pharisee’s house and had brought oil of myrrh in a small flask. She took her place behind him, by his feet, weeping. His feet were wetted with her tears and she wiped them with her hair, kissing them and anointing them with the myrrh. When his host the Pharisee saw this he said to himself, ‘If this fellow were a real prophet, he would know who this woman is that touches him and what sort of woman she is, a sinner.’ Jesus took him up and said, ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’ ‘Speak on, Master’, said he. ‘Two men were in debt to a money-lender: one owed him five hundred silver pieces, the other fifty. As neither had anything to pay with he let them both off. Now, which will love him most?’ Simon replied, ‘I should think the one that was let off most.’ ‘You are right’, said Jesus. Then turning to the woman, he said to Simon, ‘You see this woman? I came to your house: you provided no water for my feet; but this woman has made my feet wet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss; but she has been kissing my feet ever since I came in. You did not anoint my head with oil; but she has anointed my feet with myrrh. And so, I tell you, her great love proves that her many sins have been forgiven; where little has been forgiven, little love is shown.’ Then he said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’ The other guests began to ask themselves, ‘Who is this, that he can forgive sins?’ But he said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace.’

John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover festival Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived whom he had raised from the dead. There a supper was given in his honour, at which Martha served, and Lazarus sat among the guests with Jesus. Then Mary brought a pound of very costly perfume, pure oil of nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped them with her hair, till the house was filled with the fragrance. At this, Judas Iscariot, a disciple of his – the one who was to betray him – said, ‘Why was this perfume not sold for thirty pounds [300 denarii] and given to the poor?’ He said this, not out of any care for the poor, but because he was a thief; he used to pilfer the money put into the common purse, which was in his charge. ‘Leave her alone’, said Jesus. ‘Let her keep it till the day when she prepares me for my burial; for you have the poor among you always, but you will not always have me.’

Mary, Martha, and Āmrā – Buddhist sources of Luke 10:38-42

Christian Lindtner

December 6, 2009

³⁸Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. ⁴⁰But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. ⁴¹And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: ⁴²But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

The many women called Miriam/Mary in the New Testament can be traced back to either Māyā, mother of Śākyamuni (the Buddha) or Āmra-pālī, Buddhism's most famous 'courtesan' ('gaṇikā' in Sanskrit). The main Buddhist source is the *Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-Vinaya (MSV)*, which includes the *Mahā-Parinirvāṇa-Sūtra (MPS)*.

Any reader familiar with the *MPS* will be able to trace the Lord's visit to Martha and Mary – reported only in *Luke 10:38-42* – back to *MPS* 10-12. In verse 10, Āmrapālī, the famous courtesan of the town, Vaiśālī, comes to pay her respect to the Tathāgata (the Buddha), who is surrounded by the usual group of monks. She, too, is surrounded by a group – *of attractive prostitutes*. The monks are unable to control their minds, and therefore they ask the Lord to teach them how to “pray”, so that they can avoid falling into temptation.¹

This accounts for the fact that Jesus, in *Luke 11:4*, teaches his disciples how to pray so as to avoid falling into temptation. Even today, pious Christians thus pray, unknowingly, that they may not be tempted by the beautiful Indian courtesan, Āmrapālī, and her companion prostitutes.

Forgive us our sins; as we have forgiven others indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from the evil one [the Devil/Desire = Māra/Āmrā]. – *Luke 11:4*

Let us now take a closer look at *Luke 10:38-42*! As always, there is *gematria*, or textual geometry, involved: verse 38 consists of 23 words, or 46 syllables, the ratio being thus nicely 1:2. Verse 39 consists of 18 words. Verses 40-42 add up to 57 words. The unit as a whole thus consists of 98 words, or 100 words, if *tê-de* in v. 38, and *hê-tis* in v. 42 be counted as two words. It will be seen that Martha utters 18 words, corresponding to the number of words in v. 39. Jesus utters 23 words, corresponding to the number of words in v. 38. Finally, the narrator is responsible for 57 words, corresponding to the number of words in verses 40-42. Verse 38 consists, as said, of 46 syllables. These 46 syllables, forming a unit, correspond to exactly 46 syllables, likewise, forming a unit in the original Sanskrit, which is *MPS* 10:3 = 11:1 = 15:4 (ed. Waldschmidt, Berlin 1953, p. 172; in my *Geheimnisse um Jesus Christus*, p. 111). By comparing the Greek with the Sanskrit, we can make these interesting observations:

- 1) Luke speaks of “a certain town”. The name of that town, we now know, is Vaiśālī. Vaiśālī, of course, is not mentioned in the New Testament or elsewhere in early Christian documents. Nevertheless, Vaiśālī is known to Christians as a holy place in France, namely Vézelay, still associated with the legend of Mary Magdalene. (See < <http://www.vezelay.cef.fr/> >.)
- 2) The woman called Mariam sits down at the feet of Jesus, and listens to his words, *logos*. This is exactly what Āmrapālī does. She sits down at the feet of the Bhagavān (the Buddha), and listens as he talks, as usual, about the Dharma.
- 3) When Jesus says that Mariam chose “the good part” (Greek: *tên agathên merida*), the author has made a typical pun on Tathāgatam (accusative form). She was the first to choose to invite

the Tathāgata for a meal and listen to him. When Luke then says that it cannot be taken from her, this refers to the incident in *MPS* 11:23-24, where the Licchavis of Vaiśālī invite Bhagavān to enjoy a meal with them. He declines their offer, for he has already accepted the invitation of Āmrāpālī, and that cannot be taken from her. At the same time it refers to certain dharmas that “cannot be taken away”.²

- 4) But who is this Martha? In v. 38, Luke describes her as “a certain woman”, ‘*gunê de tis*’, which is a near-homophone of the Sanskrit, ‘*gaṇikā*’ (‘courtesan’). The Sanskrit ‘-kā’ is treated (as is common in Rabbinical hermeneutics) as if it were an independent pronoun, which is not in the original Sanskrit. Still, the near-homophones are suggestive: ‘a certain prostitute’ (in Sanskrit) is *linked* with ‘a certain woman’ (in Greek)!

MPS 12:1 is introduced by ‘*Atha Āmra-pālīs ...*’ (‘Then Āmra ...’). The two Sanskrit words ‘*Atha*’ and ‘*Āmra*’ are contracted to ‘*Athāmra*’. This contraction gives us the three consonants **M-R-Th**. From these three consonants the name of a new woman is born through *gematria*: the sister of Āmrā – namely **MāRTha**!

In verse 39, Martha is said to have a sister CALLED Mariam. That is true – but it is only something she is called. To conclude: Mary/Mariam and Martha are both derived from ‘*Āmrā*’, the famous Buddhist *gaṇikā*. Before she finally sits down at the Buddha’s feet and listens to his sermon on the Dharma, Āmrā was busy *preparing* and *servicing food* to the Buddha and his monks. This aspect of Āmrā’s work is represented by Martha, in the *Gospel of Luke*. The *MPS*, in other words, presents Āmrā in two different roles. Āmrā, in the *Gospel of Luke*, becomes two different women, but still in the same **two roles** which Āmrā, herself, takes, in her magnificent Vaiśālī mansion, under the same circumstances, etc. The food which she was serving to the Lord is described as ‘*sucinā pranītena*’, that is, ‘fine [&] exquisite’, *MPS* 12:4 – and often elsewhere. Thus this stock phrase (seven syllables in the instrumental case) was also familiar to the Buddhists who wrote the Gospels:

If we turn to the Anointing at Bethany, *Matthew* 26:7, a woman brings an alabaster jar filled with ‘expensive perfume’ (Greek: ‘*murou barutimou*’). *Mark* 14:3 describes it as ‘*pistikês polutelous*’, (‘genuine’ [&] ‘expensive’). In *John* 12:3, it is said to be ‘*pistikês polutimou*’, where ‘*polutimou*’ = ‘*polutelous*’. We are thus quite obviously dealing with three different translations of one and the same Sanskrit phrase – an asyndeton – *sucinā pranītena*. The ‘and’ (Skt. ‘*ca*’, Grk. ‘*kai*’) is left out. This proves the common Buddhist source!

According to *John* 12:1, the episode took place at Bethany where Lazaros lived, and it is Mariam who takes the perfume described above. So the Buddhist food has become Christian perfume. Lazaros is said to be brother of Mariam & Martha, just as Mariam was said to be sister of Martha.

All this took place, as said, in Vaiśālī, the town of the Licchavis. There can, therefore, hardly be any doubt that Lazaros has derived his identity from Licchavis.

There are several other observations to be made – puns on Āmrā, etc. – but I think these examples do convincingly show how “Luke”, “Matthew”, “Mark”, and “John” used their Buddhist sources. They fabricated new persons and events by recycling words and phrases from Buddhist sūtras. They also counted words and syllables, as did the Buddhists before them.

Theologians often claim that the genre of the New Testament Gospels is “unique”. This would be true only if the Buddhist sūtra genre is left out of consideration. *Luke* 10:38 provides a short but excellent example of how the New Testament imitates the sūtra genre.

It is not just Jesus who proves to be the Buddha in disguise in the New Testament – the same goes for all those women called Miriam/Mary. They are Āmrā or Māyā in disguise. That the Buddha disguises himself in different ways is an old, well-established trope in Buddhism – see *MPS* 23:4. There is also a common Buddhist saying that all things are just names. All this must be kept in mind when we deal with names of persons and places in the New Testament. **END**

The Danish scholar, Dr. Christian Lindtner, died November 4th, 2020. He was a scholar of Buddhism, who, in the last 22 or so years of his life, focused his research on the relation of Buddhism to Christianity.

In Nov. 1998, Lindtner, for the first time, publicly presented to an international gathering in India, his revolutionary thesis that the New Testament gospels were deeply indebted to Buddhist scriptures. Three years after that pioneering event, in an article published in a distinguished South Indian journal, he recounted the significance of that occasion with these words:

My thesis is simply that there is not much in the New Testament Gospels that cannot be traced back to the *Mûla-Sarvâstivâda-Vinaya (MSV)*. The New Testament Gospels are translated – in a prima facie very strange fashion, to be sure – directly from the Sanskrit of the *MSV*. This novel thesis of mine was first presented to an international public in Sarnath, November 1998. My paper was subsequently expanded and published as a pamphlet by the Ananda Buddha Vihara Trust under the title *Buddhism in Relation to Science and World Religions*, Secunderabad 1999.

– Christian Lindtner, “Some Sanskritisms in the New Testament Gospels”,
The Adyar Library Bulletin 66 (Chennai 2001), pp.101-109.

Lindtner had an almost miraculous ability to sense parallelisms among Buddhist, Jewish, and Christian scriptural passages. These parallelisms, of course, exist in the very debatable realm of *allusion*. But I do believe that, cumulatively, the very great number of them has, indeed, succeeded in confirming the soundness of his thesis. The radical theory underlying all of Lindtner’s articles, is the claim that the four canonical gospels, “perhaps even the New Testament as a whole”, are, in large part, *imitations* [à la Dennis R. MacDonald’s ‘*Mimesis Criticism*’] of Buddhist stories.

But, back in the West, in 1999, the reception of Lindtner’s revolutionary thesis was extremely hostile. Lindtner’s theory of Buddhism underlying Christianity’s origin very quickly provoked strong reactions. The organizers of the XIIth Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, to be held in Switzerland, notified him in Feb., 1999, that his “presence would be unwelcome at the Conference”, later in the year. This would seem to be a stunning, unseemly academic distortion of the traditional Buddhist/Christian practice of ‘Shunning’!

I presume that Lindtner’s Sarnath address had been understood in the West as a brazen assertion of massive influence by Buddhist scriptures on Christian scriptures, thus depriving Christianity of any claim to genuine originality. It is, of course, true that, *throughout* the 19th century, Buddhist influence on Christianity had already been an issue vigorously debated in the West. However, Lindtner, in 1998, a recognized authority on Buddhism, raised the issue to an entirely new level, by his Sarnath address.

After 1998, theologians & historians of the origins of Christianity had simply ignored Lindtner and avoided any intellectual dialogue with him. Lindtner, in 1982, had earned his Ph.D. in Buddhist studies, at the University of Copenhagen (UCPH). **Note:** the UCPH, today, is no longer offering Buddhist studies, Sanskrit, or Pāli at the postgraduate level! Was not this removal a *direct reaction* to Lindtner’s ‘Thesis’? Danish professors of theology may have perceived Lindtner’s activism as a serious threat to *their* jobs.

In any case, the tremendous cognitive dissonance created by Lindtner’s thesis in the minds of theologians and the historians of the origins of Christianity, has caused them to have continually rebuffed or studiously ignored Lindtner’s many genuine insights.

Dennis R. MacDonald, ‘Mimesis Criticism’, and Mary Magdalene

Dennis MacDonald introduced a totally new dimension to the academic discussions of the identities and significance of the various Marys in the NT gospels and apocryphal works when he published his book, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (2000). This epoch-making book was soon reviewed online < <https://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2000/2000.09.16/> > by classics professor, Robert Rabel, for the ‘Bryn Mawr Classical Review’:

Prose authors and poets in the ancient world exploited and imitated the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* for a variety of motives. In this book, Dennis R. MacDonald advances the claim that Homer

exercised a pervasive influence over the composition of the Gospel of Mark and thus played a more significant role in the development of early Christianity than has yet been realized. According to Professor MacDonald, an extensive network of parallels between the Gospel of Mark and the Homeric poems reveals that the first of the Synoptic Gospels is “a prose epic modeled largely after the *Odyssey* and the ending of the *Iliad*”. Parallels are said to occur mostly in the form of borrowed motifs and plot elements. Only a few words from Homer were taken over and no lines repeated. MacDonald recognizes that the lack of more direct verbal signs of dependence might be troubling to “philological fundamentalists”. Nevertheless, he argues that for two thousand years scholars and readers have been blind to Homeric influence on Mark’s Gospel because the evangelist wrote in prose, altered Homeric vocabulary, rearranged episodes from the epics, and also borrowed at will from a number of Jewish sources.

In his book, MacDonald devoted Chapter 14, “Anointing Women”, to a discussion of how the episode of the anointing woman of *Mark 14:3-9*, as a hypertext, alludes to the episode in the *Odyssey* where the elderly woman-servant named Eurycleia (= ‘*Far-flung-fame*’, in English) is washing the legs of an apparent beggar, who is actually her master, Odysseus, in disguise. She suddenly recognizes Odysseus by the scar wound above his knee, received in his youth from a boar’s tusk, while hunting with his father.

Eurycleia, it must be noted, had been Odysseus’s wet nurse after his birth, suckling him as a baby. She was more closely associated with him, in his earliest youth, than was his own noblewoman mother – whose name, ironically, was – really! – Anticleia (= ‘*Anti-fame*’). Another translation of ‘Eurycleia’ is ‘*World-wide-fame*’, and she actually achieves that fame, the highlight of which, in the epic, is the scene where she washes and then anoints *Odysseus* with oil. Thus, Jesus’s declaration, in *Mark 14:9*, that the unnamed woman would earn ‘world-wide-renomn’ because of her anointment of him with fragrant oil, clearly alludes to the *Odyssey*’s Eurycleia episode.

The *Gospel of Matthew*’s ‘anointing woman’ episode is an almost verbatim copy of *Mark*’s passage. The unnamed woman pours costly oil over Jesus’s head! Not over his feet. (This is a very Jewish ritual; but absolutely unheard of in India.) In *Mark*’s and *Matthew*’s duplicated episode, there is no mention at all of any woman’s tears falling on Jesus’s feet or anointment of them by oil.

According to my view, *M & M*, have, in the NT, presented a shocking enactment of the actual anointment of Jesus as ‘Messiah’ – he is not anointed as a ruler of any earthly, time-bound kingdom, but as the source of everlasting spiritual rules (his *teaching*, ‘Dharma’), which have, so to speak, been brought down to earth from the ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ above. Jesus’s ministry was *completed* at the time of his sacrificial *death*. He was anointed with oil, becoming truly the ‘Messiah’, only near his life’s end. Not by any respected prophet – as David was anointed by the prophet Samuel – but rather by a *prostitute*!

The authors of the last two gospels, Luke & John, evidently did not like the possible implications of the ‘Anointing Woman’ story as told by Mark & Matthew. Instead, they completely cut out the ‘oil on Jesus’s *head*’ detail, and Luke introduces instead the sinful woman wetting Jesus’s *feet* with tears, wiping them with her hair, and then anointing them with the oil of myrrh. John does away with even the weeping and tears, and simply has the woman anointing the feet of Jesus with fragrant oil and wiping them with her hair. But John is the only evangelist to name her: Mary Magdalene.

The four gospels of the NT give us three quite different *imaginary* hypertext versions of a single individual (Mary Magdalene) alluding to a mixture of two different episodes in the life of Āmrpālī, the famous royal courtesan who had truly attained ‘far flung fame’ from the Indian city of Vaiśālī!

While re-reading MacDonald’s analysis of how episodes in all four gospels [second century, CE] about a woman anointing Jesus can be understood as related to a *somewhat similar* [ca. 8th century, BCE] episode in Homer’s epic, the *Odyssey*, in which an elderly slave-woman, Eurycleia, anoints Odysseus, it suddenly occurred to me that there are *mimetic* similarities between the most important family of the Hebrew Bible [written in early 3rd cent. BCE] and the most important Homeric family [ca. 8th cent. BCE].

I therefore present the main points of my vivid intuition in the following brief EXCURSUS:

EXCURSUS

Wet Nurse Hagar = Wet Nurse Eurycleia (Alexandrian Library Theorem No. 12)

Michael Lockwood
August 22, 2022

Alexandrian Library Theorem No. 12: *that the Hebrew Bible's family of Abraham, Sarah (his wife), Hagar (slave woman), Ishmael (Hagar's son by Abraham), and Isaac (Sarah's son by Abraham) are totally fictional characters, and imitate (à la Mimesis Criticism) the Homeric characters of Odysseus (= Abraham); Penelope (= Sarah); Eurycleia (= Hagar); child (= Ishmael) of Eurycleia (by Odysseus's father) not mentioned by Homer, but necessary for Eurycleia to have been able to wet-nurse Odysseus, after his birth; and Telemachus (= Isaac), Odysseus and Penelope's son.*

Hagar was a slave woman of Sarah's. Abraham begot Ishmael by Hagar. Likewise, Eurycleia was a young slave woman, sold to Odysseus's father by her father. Presumably, the father of Odysseus begot a child by Eurycleia, slightly earlier than his begetting Odysseus by Anticleia, thus enabling Eurycleia to wet-nurse the infant Odysseus! As others have hypothesized: it's very likely that the same arrangement was brought about by God for Hagar to be able to wet-nurse Isaac!

I list this insight as an 'Alexandrian Library Theorem', because I have, since 2010, authored three volumes demonstrating how the writings of the New Testament gospels can be sourced to that Library, in the second century CE. Recently, while re-reading Chap. 14 of Dennis R. MacDonald's epochal book, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (2000), about Eurycleia, there came to my mind, in a flash of intuition, additional *mimetic* relations between the members of Odysseus's family and the members of Abraham's family!

Russell E. Gmirkin, in his epoch-making books, locates both the *writing* of the Hebrew Bible's Pentateuch and its Greek *translation* at the Library of Alexandria, during the early third century BCE. We can thus clearly understand how the Hebrew Pentateuch came to *imitate* the Odyssey.

I consider that my 12th Alexandrian Library Theorem offers important support for Gmirkin's early Hellenistic Period dating of the composition of the Hebrew Pentateuch.

* * * * *

Am I the first person to see the real possibility that the author(s) of *Genesis*, in the 3rd century BCE, created the story of Abraham and his family by closely imitating the number of members of the family of Odysseus, and their relationships to each other, as recited in the ca. 8th-century-BCE poem of Homer? The *dating* of *Genesis* and the *writing* of it (in the Great Library of Alexandria) have been brilliantly established by Gmirkin in *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2006) and *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

Before I bring this article to a close with a final effort to show the extent to which theologians and historians of the origins of Christianity have gone to *ignore* Christianity's *genetic* relation to Buddhism, let me first give a brief synopsis of the paradigmatic framework I have established in a trinity of books. This synopsis is taken from the third book, *The Unknown Buddha of Christianity* (2019), p. 156:

(1) That in the third century BCE, the very first Buddhist scholars, along with other Indian scholars, arrived at the Library of Alexandria, Egypt, at the invitation of Ptolemy-I (Soter), r.y. 305-283 BCE, to learn Greek and to translate into that language their very numerous memorized Buddhist works. Ptolemy-II (Philadelphus), r.y. 283-246 BCE, continued his father's plan to acquire as many as possible of all the world's literary works in every language (written or oral; religious or secular), and then get them translated into Greek.

(2) I proposed that, within a short time after arriving in Alexandria, these Buddhist scholars associated themselves closely with their learned Jewish colleagues at the Great Library, and a mutually agreed fellowship was worked out, *for the first time in history*, between non-Jews and Jews, now referred to with such English terms as: '*semi*-proselytes' or 'God-fearers'. I also suggest that, at this same time at the Library, the Jewish scholars devised, *for the first time*, an intellectual and cultural process ('proselytization') by which non-Jews could be fully integrated with Jewish society.

(3) From the beginning of Ptolemaic rule, I suggest, Jews had been specifically exempted from having to take part in worshipping and sacrificing to Greek/Egyptian national deities.

(4) Thus, we may observe that the Buddhist contingent, in Alexandria, by forming such a close relationship with their Jewish colleagues at the Royal Library – by their being '*semi-proselytized*' – they were able to achieve two goals: the protection from being expected to join in the worship of the national Greek and Egyptian idols, entailing animal sacrifices, on the one hand; and, on the other, gaining a path of friendly dialogue with Jewish scholars about similarly held ideals, as a means of indirectly presenting the Dharma of the Buddha. *This* was the Buddhists' subtle way of selecting such shared ideals they could find in the wide-ranging Jewish thought of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible – which Bible was actually being composed, *at this very time*, by Jewish scholars at the Royal Library. This Buddhist scheme would thus allow for a safe, indirect method of bringing the 'Good News' of camouflaged 'crypto-Buddhism' to the Western world. This was a very different approach to missionary outreach as compared to the direct, straightforward introduction of Buddhism into Sri Lanka or China, for instance.

This Jewish '*semi-proselytization*' of Buddhist monks and nuns in Alexandria was, therefore, the beginning of their '*crypto*' form of existence in the West, and this fully explains the reason why, as Schopenhauer wrote, Buddhism resorted to the "necessity of grafting the doctrine of Buddha upon the mythological dogmas of Judaism." This camouflaged form of Buddhism – crypto-Buddhism – developed, over the years, into two varied forms of the so-called 'Essenes': the Therapeutæ, in Egypt, and the Qumranites and their 'camps', in Palestine.

(5) As we know from King Aśoka's mid-third century BCE 'Calcutta Bairāt Rock Inscription', he specifically addresses, therein, both Buddhist monks ('*bhi[k]khu-s*') and nuns ('*bhi[k]khunī-s*'). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that there would have been both Buddhist monks and nuns in Alexandria, during the reign of Aśoka. Such a presence of both Buddhist monks and nuns in Alexandria would provide an explanation of the crypto-Buddhist origin of the Therapeutæ – the otherwise puzzling 'first ever appearance' in the West of a "co-ed" monastic settlement – and this was on the shores of Lake Mareotis, just outside the city of Alexandria, for it was a longstanding rule, in India, for Buddhist monasteries to be located near – but always outside – towns or cities.

(6) For the crypto-Buddhists in Palestine, the conditions, there, led to the development of a form of the Buddhist missionary movement quite different from that existing in Egypt. The Buddhist forerunners of the Qumranites, when they first entered Palestine, had followed the usual Buddhist practice of adopting the local language(s) – Hebrew and Aramaic, in their case. They therefore lacked the broader intellectual environment of the Royal Library of Alexandria, and its major use of Greek, the language, then, of science and of the learned. (Of the "Dead Sea Scroll" documents, less than five percent were in the Greek language.) Thus, from the third century BCE to around the beginning of the first century CE, the Qumranites became more and more assimilated to Judaism, and less and less anchored in Buddhism. Understand that it was only the Greek crypto-Buddhists who initiated the transformation of both branches (Egyptian and Palestinian) of Essenism into "Christianity". This was brought about by four Buddhist literary scholars, in Alexandria, writing the four historical-fiction gospels which were to become canonical, and by a rather 'gnostic' ('Buddhist') "Paul" – certainly no real Pharisee! – who is credited with writing some of the epistles attributed to that name. All of these fictional works (gospels and Pauline epistles) belong to the second century CE.

OBITUARY FOR PROFESSOR J.D.M. DERRETT*

(By Prof. Werner Menski, SOAS, University of London)

Professor John Duncan Martin Derrett, DCL, PhD, LLD (30.8.1922 - 21.10.2012), a barrister and for a long time the major global expert in the Western world on Hindu law and the laws of India, passed away at the age of 90 in the idyllic village of Blockley in the Cotswolds. After a distinguished career as an academic in several related fields, prominently Hindu and Indian law and Christian theology, he enjoyed 30 years of research-active retirement, surrounded by books and papers collected over decades. His large family arranged a church ceremony in his memory on 1 November 2012. Jeremy Bourne described him on that occasion as a man of towering intellect and notes that the local residents knew that they had a scholar of international reputation living amongst them:

As a textual analyst and a student both of early Christian and Hebrew literature, and also of the Buddhist and ancient Hindu religious texts, he was working in a field known only to theologians and scholars of comparative religion. He published some forty-four books. He had a mastery not only of classical Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and hence a knowledge of Aramaic. He also had a fluent understanding of Sanskrit, and thus of early Hindi, Pali and no doubt of Tamil.

Duncan Derrett, as he was known locally, was an active President of the Antiquarian Society and even published several collections of local historical manuscripts, which can be found on the internet. After his retirement from SOAS, the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, where he was Professor of Oriental Laws from 1965-1982, he became engaged in intensive research on complex, often controversial questions of theology and comparative religion. His critical scholarly analysis upset quite a few scholars through his significant findings that Christian religious traditions were to some extent influenced by Buddhist and early Hindu concepts. [. . .]

[. . .] He continued to publish some further articles also on Hindu law, even in the early years of the new Millennium. However, after his retirement from SOAS, his attention clearly shifted to New Testament Studies and related topics.

His collected works in four volumes, *Essays in Classical and Modern Hindu Law* (Leiden: Brill 1976-78), are further testimony of towering achievements. *Religion, Law and the State in India* (London: Faber & Faber 1968) has probably most lasting relevance as a historical study and was reprinted in India in 1998. His early textbook on comparative law, *An Introduction to Legal Systems* (London: Sweet & Maxwell 1968) was also reprinted (New Delhi: Universal 1999). It allows insights into how much progress has been made in that field since the 1960s, when the comparative law programme at SOAS was beginning to be conceived. . . .

Having ended the long wait at the doors of the crematorium, as he once wrote to me, Professor Derrett will be remembered forever, also and maybe specifically in Kerala, as the major British scholar of Hindu law in the world. His legacy lives on in his innumerable publications, in my work, and in the many young people who are not too blinded by modernity to discover today that in bygone times there was a great scholar of Indian laws in London, a true *rishi* on the banks of the Thames, as it was once put. [. . .]

[. . .] An internet search under 'Duncan Derrett' yields enormous evidence of the continuing impact of this true polymath and his wide-ranging scholarship. His memory and his work live on. May his fine soul rest in peace.

*Obit. abridged by ML.

Theologians and Historians of Early Christianity Have Ignored the Evidence (Prof. Duncam Derrett's Ignored "Gold Mine" of Buddhist-Christian Comparative Studies)

List of his studies in, "Versatility, Angels and Space: The Meaning of Buddhist and Non-Buddhist Parallels",
Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Third Series, Vol. 16, No. 3 (2006), pp. 231-242.

Only the Derrett entries, from p. 241 – A select bibliography of his Buddhist-Christian studies:

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- Derrett, J.D.M. (2002c), "Early Buddhist use of two Western themes", *JRAS* 3rd ser. XII, 3, 2002, pp. 343-355.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2002d), "The teacher as physician: Mark 2, 17 and Milindapañha VI. 6", *Bibbia e Oriente* XLIV, 1, no. 211, 2002, pp. 43-55.
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The German philosopher, Schopenhauer, had already, in the nineteenth century, written (as translated below into English and quoted by Felix L. Oswald, in his book, *The Secret of the East, or, The Origin of the Christian Religion* . . . [Boston 1883], pp. 30-31) that:

The essence of the Christian religion is the centre dogma of Buddhism, – the doctrine of the worthlessness of terrestrial life. With this difference only, that Christianity dates that worthlessness from the transgression of our apple-eating forefathers. This modification implied the fiction of a *liberi arbitrii indifferentia*: but it was required by the necessity of grafting the doctrine of Buddha upon the mythological dogmas of Judaism. The myth of the Fall offered here the only basis for the insertion of the scion from the East Indian parent-tree.

– A. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille* [1844], Vol. II, p. 694.

It should not be readily assumed that this insight by Schopenhauer has long since been discredited by traditional theologians. On the contrary, Prof. Derrett, from 1977 to 1995, published a 6-volume series, *Studies in the New Testament*, a convenient collection of a large number of his peer-reviewed articles, otherwise scattered in multiple journals.

All of Derrett's articles in his 6-volume Series are exercises in comparative religion. Most of these articles include comparisons of Christian and Buddhist scriptures, and often discuss the question of direction of influence, thus, in effect, raising the question of whether Buddhist scriptures include some clearly identifiable sources of passages in Christian scriptures – and *vice versa*!

In addition to the articles of Derrett's 6-volume Series, he also wrote many more dealing with the relation of Buddhism to Christianity. Most of those are listed in the bibliography on the page above. Finally, his book, *The Bible and the Buddhists* (2000), deserves special mention.

It is thus disheartening to become aware of the fact that Derrett's numerous scholarly contributions have been largely ignored by Christian theological and historical circles.

I should, at this time, make it quite clear that during the debates, throughout the nineteenth century, concerning the question of whether or not Buddhism influenced Christianity, or *vice versa*, it was always assumed that Buddhism was Buddhism and Christianity, Christianity – two fundamentally different religions. It was only in 1998, that Christian Lindtner proposed that the two religions were, instead, closely related.

The great problem for Lindtner was to figure out how he could use his *literary insights* to persuade other scholars that there really was a genetic relation between Buddhism (which had developed centuries earlier, in north-east India), and Christianity (supposedly originating *ca.* early first century CE, in Palestine)! Lindtner's theory, however, which proposes that Christianity is a form of Buddhism, created such a massive case of cognitive dissonance in the minds of theologians and historians of primitive Christianity, that an academic society actually put in writing its unwillingness to have anything to do with him.

I entered the debate, in late 2013, supporting Lindtner with many arguments, in my second volume, *Mythicist: A Seven-Fold Revelation of the Buddhist 'Branch' Grafted onto Jesse's 'Lineage Tree'* (2013), when I suggested that the Royal Library provided the vital link between Buddhism and Christianity. If there had not been the Royal Library of Alexandria, there would never have been any Christianity! Its research center was located in the Sarapeum (the temple of the hybrid Greek-Egyptian god, Sarapis). It was the very *sanctum sanctorum* of that temple. A '*sanctum sanctorum*' of an Indian temple is called the '*garbha-griham*' ('womb-house'). Buddhist scholars, thus, first entered the Alexandrian 'womb-house' in the early third century BCE. Some four centuries later (the second quarter of the second century CE), four of their "descendants" – *ethnic Indian*, crypto-Buddhist (Therapeutæ) literary scholars – frequented the Sarapeum's library 'womb-house', conceiving and writing *in Greek* the four canonical gospels!

Duncan Derrett has established himself as the unrivaled authority on the range and complexity of Buddhist-Christian comparative studies. No one has come close to him! His greatest interest throughout his studies, however, had always been to try to determine the direction of influence: did Buddhism

influence Christianity or, instead, did Christianity influence Buddhism? Although Derrett's research is, and always will be, of incalculable value (for, it will certainly be forever capable of guiding future research in innumerable directions), his greatest interest, by far, of determining the *direction* of influence was fundamentally misguided – *if* Christianity *is* crypto-Buddhism! Here is *my* list B & C parallels:

Buddhist-Christian Parallels Discussed in *Buddhism's Relation to Christianity (BRC)*, pp. 184-188:

1. a) The Bōdhisattva (Buddha-to-be), from Heaven, takes birth on Earth, 'virginally' conceived – born to a royal family. (***BRC*, pp. 16-17**)
 b) Jesus in Heaven takes birth on Earth, 'virginally' conceived, of royal lineage. (***John 1:1-2***)
2. a) Angels (*dēvas*) announce to King Śuddhōdana the impending ('virginal') birth of the Bōdhisattva to his wife. (***BRC*, p. 22**)
 b) An angel announces to Joseph the impending virginal birth of Jesus to his wife. (***Matt 1:20-21***)
3. a) Queen Māyā gives birth to the Bōdhisattva in the Lumbinī Grove on the journey to *her* ancestral home. (***BRC*, p. 24**)
 b) Mary gave birth to Jesus on the journey to Bethlehem, Joseph's ancestral home. (***Luke 2:5-6***)
4. a) The elderly sage, Asita, in the royal palace, holds and praises the baby Bōdhisattva. (***BRC*, pp. 30-31**)
 b) At the Jerusalem Temple, the elderly Simeon holds and praises the baby Jesus. (***Luke 2:25-32***)
5. a) Royal genealogy given for the Bōdhisattva. (***BRC*, p. 29**)
 b) Royal genealogies given for Jesus. (***Matt 1:1-17 & Luke 3:23-38***)
6. a) The 29 year old Bōdhisattva leaves home for homeless wandering and is initiated by the ascetic Kālāma. (***BRC*, pp. 252-253**)
 b) The similarly aged Jesus is baptized and initiated by the ascetic John the Baptist. (***Mark 1:9***)
7. a) The Bōdhisattva is tempted by the devil, Māra, in the forest wilderness. (***BRC*, pp. 36-37**)
 b) Jesus is tempted in the wilderness by the devil. (***Luke 4:1-13***)
8. a) The Bōdhisattva fasts in the wilderness and is waited on by angels (*dēvas*). (***BRC*, p. 39**)
 b) Jesus fasts in the wilderness and is waited on by angels. (***Mark 1:12-13***)
9. a) The Buddha walks on water. (***BRC*, p. 40**)
 b) Jesus walks on water. (***Matt 14:25-27***)
10. a) The Buddha's disciple, Śāriputra, walks on water. (***BRC*, p. 41**)
 b) Jesus' disciple, Simon Peter, walks on water. (***Matt 14:28-31***)
11. a) The courtesan Āmrapālī (the Indian alter ego of Mary Magdalene) with her women companions *were the first* to salute the deceased Buddha; she then held the Buddha's feet, and her tears wet them. (***BRC*, pp. 43-46**)
 b) Mary Magdalene held Jesus' feet (when he was alive!) and her tears wet them – and later, after his crucifixion, she & her women companions *were the first* to see the resurrected Jesus. (***Matt 28:9***)
12. a) The Buddha's body, wrapped in 500 layers of cotton cloth, was entombed in an oil-filled casket. (***BRC*, p. 43**)
 b) Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus wrapped Jesus' body with about 100 pounds (!) of spices, in strips of linen cloth, and laid it in a new, unused rock-cut tomb // casket/womb. (***John 19:39-42***)
13. a) The Buddha's body was cremated, the smoke rising heavenward. (***BRC*, p. 47**)
 b) Jesus was resurrected and ascended into heaven. (***Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51***)
14. a) The relics of the Buddha were peacefully divided among eight contesting clans, after their soldiers had faced off to force the issue. (***BRC*, p. 48**)
 b) Jesus' clothes were divided (***Psalms 22:18***) peacefully among soldiers. (***Luke 23:34; John 19:23***)
 [Metaphorically, the body is the "clothing" of one's soul. – ML]

15. **a)** In the third century, BCE, the Indian king, Aśōka, sent Buddhist missionary monks to western countries around the Mediterranean as Conquistadors for ‘Righteousness’ (The Dharma) – a dramatic contrast to *military* conquest – it was the world’s first ‘Salvation Army’. (**BRC, pp. 50-51**)
b) Christianity has its own distinct version of this ‘Salvation Army’.
16. **a)** In his 10th Rock Edict inscription, engraved in the 3rd century, BCE, the Buddhist king, Aśōka, states (in verse six) that ‘it is more difficult for the rich than the poor to attain the happiness of heaven (in the “Other World”)’! (**BRC, p. 56**)
b) Jesus declares that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. (**Mark 10:25**)
17. **a)** King Aśōka’s 9th Rock Edict records his recommending and spreading abroad the Buddhist Dharma (the “Living Water” of the Buddha): Aśōka declares (v. xvii of this edict) that by practice of Dharma (Righteousness), one can attain “*endless* merit [...] in the Next World”. (**BRC, p. 60**)
b) Jesus: “the water that I shall give [...] will be an inner spring always welling up for *eternal* life.” (**John 4:14**) [*emphasis* added – ML]
18. **a)** The story of the early life of Prince Siddhārtha (the Buddha-to-be = the Bōdhisattva) was transmuted into the most widespread legend of Christian sainthood during medieval times, in which the young Indian prince – now called ‘Josaphat’ (from ‘Bōdhisattva’) – is converted to Christianity by the ascetic sage, Barlaam! (**BRC, pp. 61-64**)
b) Note: It was really the crypto-Buddhist Christians, probably in Alexandria, Egypt, who deliberately reversed the true direction of conversion in this story, thus hiding the fact that Christianity actually springs from Buddhism! (**BRC, pp. 61-64**)

PARALLEL PARABLES

19. **a)** The Buddhist Parable of the Prodigal Son. (**BRC, pp. 66-68**)
b) The Christian Parable of the Prodigal Son. (**Luke 15:11-32**)
20. **a)** Passages from the Buddhist *Lotus Sūtra*, in which it is pointed out that different people attain Nirvāṇa after different number of rebirths (different lengths of time). (**BRC, pp. 71-72**)
b) Jesus illustrates this idea by metaphor in the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. (**Matt 20:1-16**)
21. **a)** The Buddhist meta-Parable of the Outcaste Woman at the Well. (**BRC, pp. 74-77**)
b) The Christian meta-Parable of the Samaritan Woman at the Well. (**John 4:7-30**)
22. **a)** Buddhist passages which are prototypical – and therefore parallels – of the Christian Parable of the Good Samaritan. (**BRC, pp. 78-79**)
b) Jesus’ Parable of the Good Samaritan’. (**Luke 10:29-37**)

PARALLEL SAYINGS

23. **a)** The Buddha said: ‘Phagguno, if any one were to give thee a blow with hand, clod, staff or sword, thou should renounce all common feelings and train thyself in the thought: “I will not let evil speech escape, but continue kind and compassionate, with a loving heart instead of a hateful one.”’ (**BRC, p. 80**)
b) Jesus said: ‘Do not set yourself against the man who wrongs you. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn and offer him your left.’ (**Matt 5:39**)

The Buddha and Jesus were both asked, “Are you the Promised One?”

24. **a)** Pōkkharasati said, ‘Gautama is staying in the dense jungle. It is reported that this Blessed Lord is a fully enlightened Buddha. Now go and find out whether the report is correct or not.’ (**BRC, p. 82**)
b) The story of what [Jesus] had done ran through all parts of Judæa [...] . John [the Baptist] too was informed of all this by his disciples. Summoning two of their number he sent them to the Lord with this message ‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to expect some other?’ (**Luke 7:16-19**)

Both the Buddha and Jesus were born from Spirit:

25. **a)** [The Buddha said:] ‘There are these two gifts, the carnal and the spiritual. Of these two gifts the spiritual is preëminent. He who has made the spiritual offering – such a one, the best of mankind, is honored by all beings as one who has gone beyond.’ (*BRC, p. 82*)
- b)** Jesus answered, ‘In truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born from water and spirit. Flesh can give birth only to flesh.’ (*John 3:5-7*)

Both the Buddha and Jesus consorted with sinners:

26. **a)** The Bōdhisattva, to demonstrate the evils of desire, ‘even entered brothels – to establish drunkards in correct mindfulness, he entered the taverns.’ (*BRC, p. 82*)
- b)** ‘When Jesus was at table in the house, many bad characters – tax-gatherers and others – were seated with him and the disciples.’ (*Matt 9:10-13*)

Both promoted freedom from worldly attachments:

27. **a)** ‘Then the Lord [Buddha] addressed the monks, saying: “I am free from all snares. And you, monks, are free from all [worldly] snares.”’ (*BRC, p. 82*)
- b)** [Jesus] said to them, ‘When I sent you out barefoot without purse or pack, were you ever short of anything?’ ‘No’, they answered. (*Luke 22:35*)

Both had similar ideas about what defiled a person:

28. **a)** The Buddha held that ‘stealing, deceiving, adultery; this is defilement. Not the eating of meat.’ (*BRC, p. 83*)
- b)** [Jesus said to his disciples:] “I tell you this: anything you did for one of my brothers here, however humble, you did for me.” (*Matt 25:40*)

Both stressed compassion for the poor and sick:

29. **a)** [The Buddha said to his monks:] ‘If you do not tend one another, then who is there to tend you? Whoever would tend me, he should tend the sick.’ (*BRC, p. 83*)
- b)** Jesus answered, ‘In truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born from water and spirit. Flesh can give birth only to flesh.’ (*John 3:5-7*)

Both laid down similar commandments:

30. **a)** [The Buddha said:] ‘Abstain from killing and from taking what is not given. Abstain from unchastity and from speaking falsely. Do not accept gold and silver.’ (*BRC, p. 83*)
- b)** [Jesus said:] ‘You know the commandments: “Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not give false evidence; do not defraud; honor your father and mother.”’ (*Mark 10:19*)

Both preached freedom from worldly corruption:

31. **a)** [The Buddha said:] ‘Just as, brethren, a dark blue lotus or a white lotus, born in [muddy] water, rises [...] to the surface and stands unspotted by the water, even so, [...] the Buddha, having come to full growth in the world, passing beyond the world, abides unspotted by the world.’ (*BRC, p. 83*)
- b)** [Jesus prayed:] ‘I have delivered thy word to them, and the world hates them because they are strangers in the world, as I am.’ (*John 17:14-16*)

Both are credited with similar miracles:

32. **a)** ‘As soon as the Bōdhisattva was born, the sick were cured; the hungry and thirsty were no longer oppressed by hunger and thirst. Those maddened by drink lost their obsession. The mad recovered their senses, the blind regained their sight, and the deaf could once more hear.’ (*BRC, p. 83*)
- b)** Then [Jesus] gave them his answer: ‘Go’, he said, ‘and tell John what you have seen and heard: how the blind recover their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, the poor are hearing the good news[...].’ (*Luke 7:22-23*)

Both spoke of mega-miracles possible by those with great faith or concentration:

33. a) [The Buddha:] ‘A monk who is skilled in concentration can cut the Himālyas in two.’
(*BRC*, p. 84)
- b) [Jesus said:] ‘Your faith is too small. I tell you this: if you have faith no bigger even than a mustard- seed, you will say to the mountain, “Move from here to there!”, and it will move.’
(*Matt 17:20*)

Both criticized opposing religious leaders as the blind leading the blind:

34. a) [The Buddha:] ‘When these Brahmins teach a path that they do not know or see, saying, “This is the only straight path,” this cannot possibly be right. Just as a file of blind men go on, clinging to each other, and the first one sees nothing, the middle one sees nothing, and the last one sees nothing – so it is with the talk of these Brahmins.’ (*BRC*, p. 84)
- b) [Jesus told] them a parable: ‘Can one blind man be a guide to another? Will they not both fall into the ditch?’ (*Luke 6:39*)

Both are portrayed as though establishing a line of succession after their departure:

35. a) [The Buddha said:] ‘When it said of anyone: “He is the son of the Blessed One [the Buddha], born of his breast, an heir in the dharma, not an heir in material things,” it is of my follower Sāriputta that this should be said.’ (*BRC*, p. 84)
- b) Then Jesus said: ‘Simon son of Jonah, you are favored indeed! You did not learn that from mortal man; it was revealed to you by my heavenly Father. And I say this to you: You are Peter, the Rock; and on this rock I will build my church.’ (*Matt 16:17-18*)

Both advocated the forsaking of family ties in order to become their followers:

36. a) [The Buddha said:] ‘Just as the great rivers, on reaching the great ocean, lose their former names and identities and are reckoned simply as the great ocean, so do my followers lose their former names and clans and become sons of the Buddha’s clan.’ (*BRC*, p. 84)
- b) And looking round at those who were sitting in the circle about him [Jesus] said, ‘here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God is my brother, my sister, my mother.’
(*Mark 3:34-35*)

Both live on in their ‘Word’ (‘Logos’/‘Dharma’):

37. a) And the Lord [Buddha] said: ‘It may be that you will think: “The Teacher’s instruction has ceased, now we will have no teacher.” It should not be seen like this, for what I have taught and explained to you will, at my passing, be your teacher.’ (*BRC*, p. 84)
- b) [Jesus said:] ‘But when your Advocate [*Paraklêtos/Pratimōkšas* (‘Substitute Teacher’: the Four Noble Truths)] has come, whom I will send you from the Father – the Spirit of truth that issues from the Father – he will bear witness to me.’ (*John 15:26*)

Both warned of the Karmic ‘Wages of Sin’:

38. a) [The Buddha said:] ‘Some man is of an angry and irritable character; when criticized even a little, he is offended, becomes angry, hostile, and resentful, and displays anger, hate, and . . . after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, or even in hell.’
(*BRC*, p. 85)
- b) [Jesus:] ‘I tell you this: Anyone who nurses anger against his brother must be brought to judgment. If he abuses his brother he must answer for it to the court; if he sneers at him he will have to answer for it in the fires of hell.’ (*Matt 5:22*)

Both warned of future degeneration setting in because of misguiding leaders and false prophets:

39. a) [The Buddha:] ‘Monks who are untrained will give guidance to others, and they will not be able to lead them in the way of higher virtue. And those in turn who have not been trained will give guidance to others and will not be able to lead them.’ (*BRC*, p. 85)
- b) [Jesus:] ‘Many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many: and as lawlessness spreads, men’s love for one another will grow cold.’ (*Matt 24:11-12*)

BUDDHIST PRACTICES FOLLOWED LATER BY CHRISTIANS

40. **a) MISSIONARIES:** The Buddha, by the 5th cent. **BCE**, had sent monks to spread his teaching throughout India; and Aśōka, 3rd century **BCE**, sent missionary monks abroad in all directions. (**BRC, pp. 88-89**)
b) Christian missionary activity begins only in the early Common Era. (**BRC, p. 89**)
41. **a) MONASTICISM:** The Buddha had established, by the late 6th cent. **BCE**, a form of monasticism which prefigures the monasticism of the Qumranites, in Palestine, and the Therapeutæ community living near Alexandria, Egypt, described in detail by Philo in the mid-first cent. **CE**. (**BRC, p. 90**)
b) The earliest recorded evidence of Christian monasticism comes from Egypt: the communities of Saints Antony and Pachomius, in the 3rd to 4th centuries **CE**. (**BRC, p. 188**)
42. **a) NUNS' SUBJECTION TO MONKS:** In Buddhism, the most senior nun, according to their scriptures, was subordinate to the most junior monk. (**BRC, pp. 91-94**)
b) This Buddhist bias has been carried over into Christian monasticism. (**BRC, p. 94**)
43. **a) LINEAGES OF MASTERS:** Dharma lineages ("family trees" of Buddhist leaders) begin with the Buddha, extending upward through a line of Buddhist Masters to the present. (**BRC, pp. 96-99**)
b) Various Christian churches or sects trace their authority from "Jesus" and one or another of the "original Apostles" in 'Lineages of Patriarchs'. (**BRC, pp. 96-98**)
44. **a) BŌDHISATTVAS ("SAINTS")** are beings which are widely venerated in Buddhism. They are considered intermediate between ordinary folk and the Buddha, whom Mahāyānists, from the first century **BCE**, had raised up to the superhuman, abstract status of a god. (**BRC, p. 101**)
b) Christian saints have provided a similar function, especially in Roman Catholicism.
45. **a)** The **VENERATION OF RELICS** of the Buddha and Bōdhisattvas was present from the very beginning. (**BRC, pp. 103-106**)
b) Centuries later, a similar veneration of relics of saints is seen in Catholicism. (**BRC, pp. 106-109**)
46. **a)** "**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**", for Buddhism, was a *psychological* strategy realized by the Buddha (by the fifth century **BCE**) during his meditation and introduced by him into the communal fortnightly ceremonial recitation of the Buddhist rules of moral discipline, the *Prātimōkṣa*. No supernatural power or authority was involved! (**BRC, pp. 111-114**)
b) Christian 'Confession and Absolution' claims divine authority. (**BRC, pp. 114-115**)
47. **a)** The first 4 **BUDDHIST COUNCILS** were convened in order to prevent divisions in practice & doctrine. (**BRC, pp. 116-117**)
b) The first 7 Ecumenical Christian Councils were convened for similar reasons. (**BRC, pp. 118-119**)
48. **a)** Buddhism invented mechanical **PRINTING OF SCRIPTURES**, 2nd to 11th cent. **CE**. (**BRC, pp. 120-121**)
b) Christianity (Gutenberg) followed, only in the 15th century.
49. **a)** The **ALMS-ROUND** was practiced by Buddhism from the 6th cent. **BCE**. (**BRC, pp. 122 & 126-129**)
b) From its early days, **CE**, Christianity followed this Buddhist practice. (**BRC, pp. 122-125**)

* * * * *

Concluding Observations about ‘Naming the Gnostic Mary’

On the basis of the several arguments put forward, above, to show that the New Testament character, ‘Mary Magdalene of *Magdala*’, was modeled on the *widely-famed Indian royal courtesan*, Āmrapālī, featured in various Buddhist scriptures, & sometimes associated with the Mauryan capital city, *Magadha*, we can confidently conclude that Mary Magdalene is, indeed, the anointing woman in all four gospels.

In all four gospels (as Jesus, himself, clearly declares in *Mark 14:8*), the woman “*is beforehand anointing my body for burial*”! As Arthur Lillie so accurately observed (in 1909): “Plainly these last passages are quite irrational. No woman would have performed the washing and other burial rites on a man alive and in health.”

What we have in the 4 canonical gospels, therefore, are 3 very different versions of only 1 woman, Mary Magdalene, carrying out, beforehand (quite irrationally), burial rites on the presently *living* Jesus! And these three versions are clearly modeled on Buddhist scriptural passages which describe Ānanda, the close attendant of the Buddha, being censured because he permitted “sinful” women (the courtesan Āmrapālī and her followers) to be the very first to salute the deceased body of the Buddha. This ‘salute’, as we have seen, involved wailing, beating of breasts, and even Āmrapālī’s holding, and shedding tears on the feet of the Buddha!

My first observation is that such confusing contradictions are far more abundant and glaring within and among the canonical gospels than in the parallel Buddhist narratives! Think of the obvious example of the synoptic gospels reporting that Jesus’s cleansing of the Temple comes near the end of his career. Whereas, John’s gospel places the Temple’s cleansing at the beginning. Origen, brilliant 3rd century CE Christian scholar, first person known to have noted this apparently strange contradiction in the gospels, deflated the *significance* of the contradiction by simply acknowledging (*truthfully*) that the episode is *fictitious*, not historical! Its sacred meaning is only *metaphorical*. (Origen was a devoted student of the great Alexandrian teacher, Ammonios Sakkas, and was thus in a position to know the truth of what he was claiming. [See my May 18th, 2022 article, < [Ammonios Sakkas of Alexandria \(ca. 175-243 CE\)](#) >.]

Fictitious? Yes! And *purposely* confusing!

I have maintained (above p. 11) that the Egyptian Therapeutæ (*semi*-converted “Jewish-God”-fearers) trace their lineage back to the Indian Buddhist scholars (monks and nuns) invited by King Ptolemy-II to the Royal Library of Alexandria, in mid-third century BCE, to learn Greek, and to translate into that language, for the Library’s collection, the oral scriptures they rigorously memorize but never write down in India. I have, then, suggested the historical context which led to their self-transformation directly from Egyptian ‘Therapeutæ’ (*perfected monastics*), *semi*-converted, “Jewish-God”-fearers = *Indian* “Jews”, into Christian ‘Therapeutæ’ (*perfected monastics*), devotees of *’Iēsous*, the ‘only begotten Son’ of the ‘Jewish-God’, at whose trial under the Roman prefect, Pilate (according to *Matthew 27:24-25*), the Jews cried out: “His blood be on us, and on our children!” (Christian monks *were* called ‘Therapeutæ’!)

What is going on here? According to me, it was the cunning use of downright historical-fictitious literary narratives by the four evangelist in order to clearly disassociate the Therapeutæ from the Jewish rebels who had been slaughtering Romans and Greeks in Alexandria and throughout Egypt, in the third, most violent of Jewish revolts, during the reign of the Roman emperor, Trajan. Brent Landau refers to this violence in a review (*Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2007) of Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev’s book, *Diaspora Judaism in Turmoil, 116 / 117 CE: Ancient Sources and Modern Insights* (Leuven 2005):

For scholars of antiquity, the Jewish revolt during the reign [116-117 CE] of the Emperor Trajan is a tantalizing event, the causes and repercussions of which are shrouded in mystery. While the great Jewish war against the Romans of 66-72 CE and, to a lesser extent, the Bar Kochba revolt of 132-135 CE have received a great deal of scholarly attention, this conflict, commonly dated to 115-117 CE, is far less studied. Yet this situation is not due to its lack of importance. Among its grievous consequences, for example, is the virtual eradication of the thriving Jewish Diaspora communities in Egypt. It is quite clear that the revolt had serious effects, but the surviving historical evidence related to it is extremely sparse and difficult to interpret. As a result,

even though “the causes and course of the war are most obscure,”¹ this revolt “was, if anything, the most costly and violent of all.”²

¹S. J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, Philadelphia, PA, 1987, 17.

²J. G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism*, Oxford, 1983, 51.

My interpretation of the great ‘Parting of the Way’ between Judaism and Christianity is thus radically different from that of traditional theology. As an example of traditional views, I quote from the opening paragraphs of a recent article by Doosuk Kim, “The Parting of the Way: A Survey of the Relationship between Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries CE”, in *Themelios* 46.1 (2021), 79-98:

Abstract: People today clearly view Judaism and Christianity as different religions. Undisputedly, however, Jesus and his followers were Jews in the first century. When did the parting of the way between Jews and Christians take place? What are the decisive factors that made the two end up so far from each other? This essay examines this relationship in its social, theological, historical, and political context. The evidence suggests that though the exact time and impetus for the parting remain elusive, the parting of the way began in the first century and gradually became clearer in the second century.

To begin with undisputed matters: Jesus was a Jew; the disciples were Jews; Paul was a Jew; and most of the New Testament writers were Jews. In other words, the Jesus movement in the first century was initiated by Jews. The major Jesus-movement figures in the New Testament themselves testify that they were Jews and had not opposed Jewish traditions. For instance, Peter hesitated (multiple times!) to take unlawful foods which are banned in Torah and regarded having fellowship with the Gentile as prohibited by Jewish laws (*Acts 10:14, 28*). Also, Paul, seen in retrospect as one of the founders of Christianity, claims that he is a Jew, still believing in the same God (*Phil 3:5; 2 Cor 11:22*). Moreover, Paul circumcised Timothy (*Acts 16:3*), and when Paul came back to Jerusalem, in *Acts 21*, he committed himself to Jewish purifications.

Then, when did the parting of the way between the two beliefs initiate in the first place? What are the decisive factors that made the two end up so far from each other?

The traditional view of Judaism & Christianity as different religions *is* correct, but definitely isn’t ‘clear’! Scholars *do gravely dispute* Kim’s views, arguing that Jesus, his disciples, and Paul were *not* historical flesh and blood persons! Further, the authors of the four gospels (purposely anonymous) were ethnic *Indian Buddhists* (*semi*-proselytized, “God-fearing” Therapeutæ) of Alexandria. And whoever the author of the so-called Pauline epistles was, he certainly was no genuine Pharisee. And it is totally meaningless to appeal to the self-testified claims of characters in the historical-fiction gospels! Further, the report (*Acts 16:3*) of Paul circumcising Timothy flies in the face of the Paul of ‘*Philippians 3:2b*’ declaring, “Beware of those who insist on mutilation – ‘circumcision’ I will not call it”! – *The New English Bible*

Therefore, the traditional scholarly understanding of the ‘Parting of the Way’ between Judaism and Christianity is fatally flawed. It was actually the *two* territorially separated *hybrid* (Buddhist-Jewish) *organizations* of the Essenes/Jessæans which *parted ways* from “*regular*” Judaism: *first*, the *Egyptian Therapeutæ*, headquartered outside of Alexandria; *second*, the *Palestinian Qumranites*, with their several ‘camps throughout the territory’! The Alexandrian Therapeutæ were the sole agents of transforming themselves into Christians by writing, in the 2nd quarter of the 2nd century, four gospels as four different versions of their ‘Charter Myth’, the foundation of a new movement by a fictive first century ‘*Iêsous*’ (Joshua/Jesus), ‘Savior’, born in Nazareth/Bethlehem, shortly before/after Herod’s death. In creating these New Testament narratives, using the unparalleled resources of the Alexandrian Library, they were only following what the Jewish scholars had done, in the same place, almost 400 years earlier, when they composed the great ‘Charter Myth’ for Judaism – the Hebrew Pentateuch! It was at that same time (3rd century BCE) when the Indian Buddhist *forerunners* of the 2nd-century-CE Christianizing crypto-Buddhists first came to the Great Library and became *semi*-proselytes of their Jewish colleagues.

Second, in the second quarter of the second century, CE, the scattered followers of the once diehard, *ultra-Judaized* crypto-Buddhists leadership at Qumran, whose languages were Hebrew and Aramaic, were probably exceedingly reluctant to adopt the **Greek** (!) ‘Charter Myth’ of the messianic ‘Savior’, ‘*Iēsous*’ (Joshua/Jesus), purportedly born, a century earlier, in Nazareth/Bethlehem. But adopt, they did, in order to make perfectly clear to the Roman authorities their *disassociation* from the rebellious Jews.

The monastic leadership of the Essenes/Jessæans in Palestine, which in mid-3rd century BCE, would appear to have been headquartered in Jerusalem, and had access to the Temple, apparently exiled themselves to Qumran very soon after the Seleucids captured Palestine from the Ptolemies, in 198 BCE. As long as the Ptolemies had been ruling Palestine, the unusual system of Jewish ‘*semi-proselytization*’ of Buddhist monks and nuns – endorsed by Ptolemy-II – seems never to have been openly challenged by the Jewish Temple authorities. However, the bitter discontent of those authorities (so evident in *Ezekiel* 8:14-17) had likely been welling up for some time prior to the Seleucid take-over of Palestine. And, because of those mounting tensions, very soon after the Seleucid take-over, the crypto-Buddhist *male monastic leaders* of the Jessæans decided to leave Jerusalem for the isolating wilderness of Qumran. As for the many groups of their “lay-followers” (*upāsakas*) – men, women, and children – who were spread throughout Palestine, they remained in place.

It follows, on my paradigmatic framework, that in the historical-fiction of the *Acts of the Apostles*, the so-called leaders of the Jerusalem Church are only *imaginative* representatives of the real ones: the early-second-century, *ultra-Judaized*-crypto-Buddhist leaders of the Essenes/Jessæans. From the first century BCE, the historical membership of this group seems to have become restricted to male Jews who were circumcised. With the above information in mind, consider the opening statements in *Acts* 6:1:

During this period, when disciples were growing in number, there was disagreement between those of them who spoke Greek [*the crypto-Buddhists* (‘*Jewish*’ *semi-proselytes*) from Egypt] and those who spoke the language of the Jews [*the local crypto-Buddhists* (*Qumranic Jewish semi-proselytes*) of Jerusalem]. The former party complained that their widows [*monastics = nuns!*] were being overlooked in the daily distribution.^[1] – *The New English Bible*

^[1]This footnote and the square-bracketed clarifications, above, are by ML. Those ‘who spoke Greek’ (lit., the ‘Hellenists’) would have been an ethnically mixed group of Jews and non-Jews. Whereas those ‘who spoke the language of the Jews’, were, *at this time*, most likely, all ethnic Jews!

I have to admit that the most counter-intuitive of all my claims – and the one which takes to the limit my whole theoretical framework concerning the crypto-Buddhist nature of both the Egyptian Therapeutæ and the Palestinian Qumranites – is my claim that the four gospels of the New Testament were written by four Alexandrian Therapeutæ who were *ethnic Indian crypto-Buddhist literary scholars!*

How can anyone make such a shocking claim? The Danish scholar, Christian Lindtner (1949-2020), spent the last 24 years of his life providing a great deal of evidence, in the field of *gematria*, for making just such a claim, showing how Buddhist works, written in Pāli or Sanskrit, can be shown to have been various creative sources of Christian works, written in Greek. This study involves counting similarities in numerical patterns of words, syllables, or assigned values of even individual letters of the alphabet, especially when related here to the question of recognizing a mimetic relationship between the Buddhist and Christian works. Lindtner provided the literary links, with an almost miraculous ability to sense parallelism among passages mainly in the three most important languages, Pāli, Sanskrit, and Greek.

The Buddha’s mother, Māyā, is said to have died seven days after giving birth to him. Māyā’s sister, Mahāprajāpatī, who had an infant of her own, nursed him, and become his adoptive mother. Much later in her life, *she* became a disciple of his, as an ordained nun. She was no role model for Mary Magdalene.

I believe that the overwhelming ‘Buddhist’ evidence solidly confirms the conclusion reached by others that Mary the mother of Jesus is not to be identified with the ‘Gnostic Mary’.

* * * * *

Endnotes [See pp. 6 & 7]

(These discerning notes were contributed by Dr. M. Anthony Barry)

¹An excellent explanation by Lindtner of this passage (*Matthew 26:41 // Luke 22:46*) where the disciples are supposed to be keeping watch in a deserted garden, as Jesus is away praying. The scene in the Gospels seems to imply that the temptation is to sleep (!!), which is not at all commonly seen as any kind of temptation. It has always surprised me that sleep would be considered something to pray about avoiding. Here Lindtner provides the (prosaic) explanation – the tale has been lifted out of Buddhist literature, and plopped into this part of the story of Jesus; it sort of fits, but does not really fit; and this incongruity is a signature of the tale’s real origin – a “nod” to the Buddhist source from whence it came.

²Wow! Again, the pun (in the *Lucan* hypertext) is a serious giveaway, by revealing the evangelist’s Buddhist hypotext (which encodes everything for delivery in an auditory rather than a written matrix). This pun is a real standout: the Gospel’s expression, “Mary has chosen the better part” is a *peculiar phrasing* of what we might say, such as, “Mary has chosen a *better path*” or “a *better way*” or something that implies a vocational choice. The word “part” is indeed difficult to place into this context, but it perfectly flags the pun which splits the *dual roles* of *Āmrapālī* ([1] first serving food to the Buddha and his monks, and then [2] also sitting at the Buddha’s feet, listening to him attentively) into *two separate persons*, **Martha** and **Mary** (**Martha**, who is serving the food, and **Mary**, who is just sitting at Jesus’s feet listening attentively to what he is saying). This pun clearly shows the *priority* of the Buddhist story, as the source of *Luke’s* passage (verses 10:38-42)!

END