Theurgy, Divination and Theravadan Buddhism
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This paper is an expanded version of a talk given at the conference 'Seeing with Different Eyes' at the University of Canterbury 28th – 30th April 2006.

Introduction

Contemporary western discourse on theurgy and divination tends to focus on the gods as conceived in Greek thought. This paper attempts to outline a non-Greek perspective, that of Theravadan Buddhism, with the twin intentions of (a) introducing interesting material and (b) reflecting a little on what consequences it carries for the practice of divination.

The word 'theurgy' is associated particularly with Iamblichus.[1] Its inclusion in the title of this paper seems appropriate however, since so much of the terrain that is patrolled here overlaps with Iamblichus's areas of interest. However – reader be warned – whilst I will note one or two points of comparison between Buddhist and Iamblichean thought, my aim is not to do more than scratch that particular surface. So I will start out with a simple etymological interpretation of 'theurgy' – 'god-work'. Of course ambiguity lurks therein (who does this 'work' – humanity, gods, or both?) but this is a useful dilemma to hold in mind when approaching the subject from a Buddhist perspective.

When it comes to the position of *divination* in Buddhist thought, because of a lack of direct comment in the original sources, inference and conjecture necessarily play a part in what follows. So let me admit that the attempt made here is to initiate discussion, which – all being well – should render this initial foray obsolete before too long. I should also note that, whilst I have tried to substantiate what follows with textual references, elements of the interpretation derive from instruction I received during my years as a Buddhist monk.

Theurgy

At first sight, the place of theurgy in Buddhist thought may seem to be both straightforward and central. As we shall see presently, some of the higher gods in Buddhist cosmology are the Brahmas, and the Buddha often refers to the practice of his teaching as 'Brahma-faring': travelling towards divinity.[2] Further, a group of four meditations he taught are called the 'Brahma-Vihāras' – the dwellings of Brahma, or the 'divine abidings'.[3]

However, the Buddha's attitude towards rebirth amongst the Brahmas was ambiguous. He would teach someone the way to attain such a rebirth if he judged that they were not capable of anything more; but if the person was capable of developing the insight which would establish them on the path to *nibbāna*,[4] enlightenment, then he would judge rebirth amongst the gods an inadequate goal.[5] Further, when Richard Gombrich was researching Buddhism in modern Sri Lanka, a monk told him: "Gods are nothing to do with religion."[6] And that statement is entirely consonant with the Buddha's teaching. So there is an apparent contradiction here which I will try and resolve before the end of this paper.

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[1] See particularly: Shaw, Gregory, *Theurgy and the Soul – The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).
[2] E.g. at *Majjhima Nikāya* I.10. NB that this common phrase (*brahma-cariya*) is often rendered as 'holy life' or some equivalent phrase in translations. It is given as the more literal 'brahma-faring' at e.g. Horner, I.B., *Middle Length Sayings Vol.1* (London: Pali Text Society, 1976) p.13. See 'Note on Pali Source Material' at the end of this paper on Pali texts and translations.
[3] For a detailed account see *Visuddhi-Magga* Ch.IX.
[4] The Pali form of the Sanskrit *nirvana.*
[5] In *Majjhima Nikāya* Sta 99 the Buddha teaches Subha the way to attain rebirth as a Brahma and nothing more; in *Majjhima Nikāya* Sta 97 he reproves one of his most senior monks, Sāriputta , for doing exactly the same for Dhānañjāni (who was on his death-bed) and leaving him to die "while there was still more to be done".
[6] Gombrich, Richard, *Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon* (Oxford University Press, 1971) p.46.

Cosmology – 31 Realms

In the commentaries to the Pali Canon a system of thirty-one different planes of existence is set out.[7] These break down into three broad categories – three world-systems, or *Lokas*. The human realm belongs to the lowest of the three, Kāma-Loka.

Besides the human realm, Kāma Loka includes the "Woeful Way" – four states which involve more suffering than the human, and the Celestial Realms – states populated by *devas* (deities, or gods) where life is more pleasant than it is in this world.

Moving to the states below human, the lowest state in the Woeful Way is Niraya Hell. The other realms below human show similar levels of involvement with the senses: for example, *petas*, or hungry ghosts, are often depicted as having mouths the size of a pin-head, and stomachs the size of a mountain. They are continually driven to satisfy impossible desires.

The states 'above' human involve increasing levels of absorption in ever more refined pleasures. Above Kāma Loka stands the world system known as Rūpa-Loka - the realm of form, or as it is sometimes put, the 'fine material' realm. Out of the five physical senses known in Kāma Loka, only seeing and hearing are considered to exist at this level.[8]

The highest world-system is Arūpa-Loka - the formless realms, in which mind has temporarily left matter behind altogether. A parallel might be suggested between the experience of Arūpa-Loka and that of a mathematician, lost in equations; both are states of total absorption in purely abstract constructs.

The expectation might be that there would be a linear progression through the 31 worlds to *nibbāna*. This, however, is exactly what does not happen; there is, as it were, a glass ceiling in heaven. The highest realm of Arūpa-Loka is "The realm of neither-perception nor non-perception". The point here is that the being at this level has almost shaken off the limitations of individuality; the sense of separation from all-that-is has become attenuated. However, there lingers in mind a fragment of belief in separation so that the being at this level thinks something to the effect of, 'Wow, look at this, I'm almost at one with the cosmos' and thereby perpetuates their separateness. That is the meaning of "neither perception nor non-perception"; the dualistic perception of "me as a separate self, divided off from the universe" has not *quite* been shaken off. From the Buddhist point of view, this is a major problem.

For although life in the many of the 31 realms can go on for huge periods of time, a life in any realm is transient: sooner or later any being, in any realm, will die and take rebirth in some other realm, in accordance with their past *kamma*.[9] This is the nature of *samsara* – the word means "perpetual wandering". As if to underline the ultimately unsatisfactory nature of life as a god, the commentaries to the Pali Canon state that there are five signs of impending death in a *deva* (a god in Kāma Loka): their flower garland withers, their clothes get dirty, sweat comes from their armpits, their bodies become unsightly, and they get restless.[10]

God, Words, Scepticism

There is, as is well known, no such thing as an all-powerful God in Buddhism. The Buddha did, however, describe how the *idea* of God Almighty arises. Basically, he described a being who is reborn in a heaven realm, and is on his own for a few aeons, whereupon "there arises in him mental weariness and a longing for company thus: 'Would that some other beings come to this place!'" And it just so happens that some other beings do happen to be born there, at around that time.

Then, the Buddha said, the first god – believing that he has *created* these other beings - thinks to himself:

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[7] See e.g. Bhikkhu Bodhi, *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1993) p.186-7. A good, accessible analysis will be found in: Gethin, Rupert, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (Oxford University Press, 1998) Ch.5.

[8] See article 'Loka' in Nyānatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary 4th Edn.* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1980) p.108.

[9] The Pali form of the Sanskrit *karma.*

[10] Ñānamoli (tr.), *The Path of Purification* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1979), p.667 n.43.

> I am the Brahma, the great Brahma, the conqueror, the unconquered, the all-seeing, the subjector of all to his wishes, the omnipotent, the maker, the creator, the Supreme Being, the ordainer, the Almighty, the Father to all that have been and shall be.[11]

And the other beings there believe this too. Eventually, one of them dies and appears in the human realm, and – based on memories of this previous life – begins to preach of an almighty God.

This illustrates the familiar point that there is an element of scepticism running through the Buddha's teaching. This is not to say, however, that Buddhism is in any sense anti-religious. There is *nibbāna* - the soteriological goal of Buddhism. And it could well be argued that this is no different from what many mystics have used the word "God" to point toward. The problem with the G-word for Buddhist thought is that it can easily be understood to define the transcendent goal as something recognisable, something which can be approached by the conceptual mind. Whereas the Buddha characterised *nibbāna* as beyond the power of conceptual thought, capable only of being defined by what it is not:

> There is, monks, a domain where there is no earth, no water, no fire, no wind… there is not this world, there is not another world, there is no sun or moon. I do not call this coming or going, nor standing, nor dying, nor being reborn; it is without support, without occurrence, without object. Just this is the end of suffering.[12]

To characterise the absolute only with negatives is hardly unique to Buddhism. In the West, negative, or apophatic, theology extends back at least as far as Pseudo-Dionysius. Maimonides wrote: "… I do not merely declare that he who affirms attributes of God has not sufficient knowledge concerning the Creator… but I say that he unconsciously loses his belief in God."[13] The ancient Temple of Jerusalem had an empty chamber as its holiest shrine. And, in a similar spirit, the earliest sculptures of the Buddha are aniconic – not depicting him directly, and indeed using various devices to emphasise that he is *not* depicted.[14]

Although the connection may not be immediately apparent, this in fact brings us to the question, why should there be exactly *31* realms of existence? 32 was seen as a good, round number in the Buddha's day – for instance there are the 32 marks of the great man, 32 parts of the body, 32 kinds of kamma-resultant and so on. So perhaps the significance of there being 31 realms is that *nibbāna* is being implied, through the incompleteness of the number.

So far as I know, the Buddhist scholar Rupert Gethin is the first person in modern times to suggest this.[15] It is also well worth citing him on the broader significance of cosmology for the Buddha's teaching:

> The key to understanding the Buddhist cosmological scheme lies in the principle of *the equivalence of cosmology and psychology.* I mean by this that in the traditional understanding the various realms of existence relate rather closely to certain commonly (and not so commonly) experienced states of mind.[16]

The location of the human realm is crucial in this scheme. In *Samyutta Nikāya* the Buddha tells his monks that he has seen hell, where the experience of the six senses (the five physical senses and mind as the sixth) is exclusively painful; he has seen heaven, where the six-sensory experience is exclusively pleasant. And he just says, enigmatically, "Monks, it is a gain for you, it is well gained by you, that you have obtained the opportunity for living the holy life."[17]

The commentary to this volume offers amplification of this theme:

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[11] *Dīgha-Nikāya* i.18 (p.76).
[12] *Udāna* 80 – found at e.g. p.165 of Masefield, Peter, *The Udāna* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994) though the translation used here is from Gethin 1998, p.76.
[13] Maimonides, Moses, *Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Dover, 1956), p.89 [Cited in: Davie, Brian, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) p.146.]
[14] For examples see: Bechert, Heinz & Gombrich, Richard (eds), *The World of Buddhism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1984), pp.18-19.
[15] Gethin 1998, p.126.
[16] Gethin 1998, p.119-20.
[17] *Samyutta-Nikāya* IV.126 (p.1207).

> It isn't possible to live the holy life of the path either in hell, because of extreme suffering, or in heaven, because of extreme pleasure, on account of which negligence arises through continuous amusements and delights. But the human world is a combination of pleasure and pain, so this is the field of action for the holy life of the path.[18]

Leibniz famously said that we live in "the best of all possible worlds". Here, the Buddha suggests that this *is* the best of all possible worlds (from a soteriological perspective), precisely because it is *not* the best or worst of worlds (in terms of quotidian pleasure). It is seen as possible, in a human life, to experience the delights and agonies of all possible worlds – and, through so doing, to realise that even the highest gods have not found a lasting solution to life's problems.

Attaining Heavenly States

There are many descriptions, in the Pali Canon, of how to systematically cultivate states of concentration which correspond to the various heavenly states. This is theurgy in a most literal sense – working so as to become a god. Here, very briefly, is the course of practice as it is set out in the *Visuddhi Magga*.[19] The student should approach a teacher. They should then settle in to their new environment, and work with any corrective measures the teacher judges appropriate in order to balance their character. The analysis of six temperament types which is brought in at this point would make a study in itself.[20] The practice, when it begins, consists in taking a *kasina* – a coloured disk made of clay. (Many other meditation objects could be taken as the focus of concentration, e.g. the sensations which arise in the abdomen, or at the nostrils and upper lip, dependent upon breathing; in every case, the principle is the same.) The meditator puts the *kasina* on a wall, stares at it, then closes their eyes and tries to see an after-image of the disk.[21]

The common experience is that, the human mind being what it is, this is easier said than done. In order to progress, the meditator needs to become aware that their mind pours energy into one or more of a group of five mental actions called *nivarana* (hindrances). What is needed is to stop putting energy into these mental actions, and instead to develop five qualities called the '*jhāna* factors' – each of which needs to be present, and in balance, for the meditation to succeed. Each *jhāna* factor overcomes a specific hindrance, so:[22]

***Jhāna* Factor**	**Hindrance**
Initial Application of Mind	Sloth & Torpor
Sustained Application of Mind	Sceptical Doubt
Pleasurable Interest	Ill-will
Happiness	Restlessness
Concentration	Sensual Desire

Through repeated attempts, the ability gradually builds to keep the mind steady and to withdraw from involvement with the world. The meditation object starts to acquire a life of its own, and the meditator starts to be pulled deeper into a series of increasingly refined levels of concentration known as the 8 *jhānas*. These correspond to the levels of Rūpa and Arūpa Loka.

The teachings also include a description of how to develop various magical powers – the divine ear, penetration of minds, recollection of past lives, and knowledge of the arising and passing away of beings.[23] All these involve purifying the mind through attaining *jhāna*-level concentration, and then applying the mind thus purified in various specific ways.

It is human, all too human, to want to join the company of the very highest gods yet not address the underlying sense of separateness which, in the Buddha's analysis, is at the root of all our

[18] Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000, p.1419 (quoting the commentary to *Samyutta-Nikāya*).
[19] *Visuddhi-Magga* III.57 – 73 (p.98 – 102)
[20] *Visuddhi-Magga* III.74 – 102 (p.102 – 111)
[21] *Visuddhi-Magga* IV.21 – 34 (p.127 – 132)
[22] *Visuddhi-Magga* IV.86 [141] (p.147)
[23] *Visuddhi-Magga* Ch. XII

problems. When he described someone working through the *jhānas*, he said that – after attaining the highest meditative state possible – a true follower of his teachings would 'consider thus':

> Non-identification even with the attainment of the base of neither perception nor non-perception has been declared by the Buddha; for in whatever way they conceive, the fact is ever other than that.[24]

The following, in which a 20th century Buddhist monk, Kapilavaddho Bhikkhu, writes of his meditative experiences in Thailand may help make clear what is entailed by 'non-identification'. In the immediately preceding passage Kapilavaddho has attained various *jhāna* states and developed the ability to systematically explore his past lives.

> Quite suddenly… I knew for a certainty that going back into supposed past lives would never bring me to the beginning, the starting point of the something I called me. I had learned that the very nature of consciousness was to remain conscious, to grasp at anything that consciousness may remain… I then knew that the questions – 'Where have I come from? Where am I going? Who am I? Do I have a permanent soul?' – were but wrong questions. They could not be answered without definition…. I now knew – and with the knowing touched for the first time in my life peace and tranquillity – that the whole of sensible existence had not first beginning, that all things in the world and in that which observed it were dependently originated. Everything which existed came to be but momentarily dependent upon past causes and present supporting circumstances… I had… found the teaching of the Buddha to be true. Nothing of me had been annihilated in the process, for how can that be destroyed which one has never possessed? All that had happened was that I had lost a concept, a concept of *myself* or *soul* as permanent in opposition to a changing world. A concept which was itself but ignorance or blindness to the truth. I was part of my world and my world was part of me. We co-existed interdependently.[25]

It would surely not be controversial to characterise what Kapilavaddho was engaged in as theurgy – working to attain god-like states of consciousness and powers. The quotation illustrates, however, that so far as Buddhist thought is concerned, the ultimate purpose of theurgy is to serve as a platform from which to develop insight into the ultimate ground of being; the fact of being an inseparable part of all that is. At this point a central distinction in the Buddha's teaching comes into focus; this is the distinction between *samatha* (concentration meditation) and *vipassanā* (insight meditation). *Samatha* on its own is considered to lead to companionship with the gods but no further; *vipassanā* needs to be cultivated so as to break through the ignorance that perpetuates belief in separate self-hood, thereby to realise enlightenment. So when the Buddha spoke of his teaching as 'Brahma-faring', he was using a phrase which his contemporaries would recognise as signifying 'striving for the highest'. Although attaining companionship with the gods could be part of this programme, it was not the end-point. The 'highest' for which one could strive, *nibbāna*, was beyond even the highest gods. With this (necessarily compressed) perspective on the Buddha's overall strategy, let us turn to his cultural context.

Cultural Context

It is widely considered that the Achaemenid occupation of northern India under King Darius I of Persia, around 530BCE, brought a whole raft of Babylonian divinatory practices to the Buddha's neighbourhood.[26]

In the *Brahmajāla Sutta* the Buddha specifically mentions a huge number of these divinatory and theurgic practices, including:

> Prophesying long life, prosperity, etc or the reverse from the marks on a person's limbs, hands, feet etc; divining by means of omens and signs; making auguries on the basis of thunderbolts and celestial portents; interpreting ominous dreams… making auguries from the marks on cloth gnawed by mice… offering blood sacrifices to the gods… determining whether the site for a proposed house or garden is propitious or not… making predictions for officers of state; laying demons in a cemetery; laying ghosts; knowledge of charms to be pronounced by one living in an earthen house… reciting charms to give protection from arrows… interpreting the significance of the colour, shape, and other features of the following items to determine whether they portend fortune or misfortune for their owners: gems, garments, staffs, swords, spears, arrows, bows, other weapons, women, men, boys, girls, slaves, slave-women, elephants, horses, buffaloes,

[24] *Majjhima Nikāya* iii.45 (p.912)
[25] Randall, Richard, *Life as a Siamese Monk* (Bradford-on-Avon: Aukana, 1990) p.130-2.
[26] See e.g. Pingree, David, 'Astronomy and Astrology in India and Iran', *Isis,* June 1963, Vol.54 no.2, pp 229 – 246.

> bulls, cows, goats, rams, fowl, quails, iguanas, earrings (or house-gables), tortoises and other animals… making predictions to the effect that the king will march forth (etc etc)… predicting: there will be an eclipse (and various other celestial and terrestrial phenomena)… such will be the result of the moon's eclipse, such the result of the sun's eclipse… and so on for all the celestial phenomena… arranging auspicious dates for marriages (and so on)… reciting charms to make people lucky or unlucky… obtaining oracular answers to questions by means of a mirror, a girl, or a god; worshipping the sun; worshipping MahaBrahma… invoking the goddess of luck… giving ceremonial mouthwashes and ceremonial bathing; offering sacrificial fires…[27]

The context in which this list is presented is that (in brief) the Buddha is saying he abstains from these things, and that although this abstention is the right thing for him to do, if someone were to praise him for these abstentions they would be focussing on a relatively trivial matter. Whilst the fact of his abstaining is sometimes taken to show that he is opposed to all these things, the context doesn't justify so strong a reading. He goes on to list (for instance) "practising as a children's doctor" in the same way.[28] The point being made is that these are things which it is wrong for *a recluse* to practise. There was an established tradition, in the Buddha's day, of people renouncing all possessions in order to pursue a spiritual quest, relying on gifts of food from lay-people to sustain them. It would be considered wrong for the recluse to do anything to earn these gifts of food, because this would start to introduce a mercenary element into the relationship between the laity and the religious community.

As an aside – it can be no more given the scope of the present paper – it can be noted that some forms of divination not so different from the ones listed by the Buddha in the *Brahmajāla Sutta* can be found in contemporary Tibetan Buddhism.[29] A few instances of divinatory practices in a contemporary Theravadan context will also be mentioned in the second half of this paper.

In order to elucidate the approach of the Buddha, as presented in the Pali Canon, to divinatory and theurgical practices, we need to look in some detail at various episodes from the life of the Buddha. There are, for sure, plenty of supernatural goings-on. In one sutta Ānanda, the Buddha's attendant for many years, recites a list of 'wonderful and marvellous qualities' of the Buddha: when he entered his mother's womb, a great measureless light suffused all the worlds; four devas came to protect him from the four quarters (it would be interesting to explore the parallel here with the 'guardians of the four quarters' found in contemporary paganism[30]). At his birth there is again light, plus a quaking and trembling of all the worlds.[31]

Prophecy features after the Buddha's birth. The sage Asita, seeing that the devas are "wildly cheering", enquires why and is told about the birth of the Buddha. He goes to see the boy, and confidently predicts – as an "adept in construing signs and marks" – that the boy will "reach the summit of true knowledge". Though he then weeps, knowing that he himself will be dead before the Buddha begins teaching.[32]

In the commentaries there is an additional account, with a group of 8 astrologers. According to one version, five of these astrologers predict that he will definitely become a Buddha, whilst the other three say that he will either be a Buddha or a universal monarch. Other commentaries say that seven of the eight astrologers hedged their bets as to whether he would be a Buddha or a universal monarch, and only one made a definite prediction – that it would indeed be Buddhahood.[33]

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[27] *Dīgha-Nikāya* i.9-11. This translation is excerpted from Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The All-Embracing Net of Views* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1978) p.62 – 4, which incorporates some commentarial explanations to clarify the terms and practices under discussion.
[28] *Dīgha-Nikāya* i.12; Bodhi 1978, p.65.
[29] See: http://www.tibet.com/Buddhism/divination.html [checked 9th May 2006]
[30] E.g. Anon, 'The Four Quarters/Corners' at http://www.paganpath.com/cgi-bin/wit/ikonboard.cgi?act=ST;f=25;t=314;st=0 [accessed on 9th May 2006]
[31] *Majjhima-Nikāya* Sta.123 (pp.979 – 984). It is worth noting that the Buddha eventually intervenes and turns this recitation of supernatural occurrences back to the central theme of his teaching – that enlightenment is uncovered through the perception of transience.
[32] *Sutta-Nipāta* III.11 (pp116-117).
[33] Mahasi Sayadaw, '*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* – The Great Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma' at http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/damachak.pdf [accessed 9th May 2006]. This is a discourse delivered in 1962 about the eponymous sutta found at Samyutta Nikaya 56.11 (p.1843) and drawing upon the various commentaries thereon.

The night before the Buddha's enlightenment, he had five dreams, each of which presented, in symbols, an omen of what the future held for him.[34]

Immediately after his enlightenment, the Buddha was protected by the king of the *nāgas* – the *nāgas* being giant snake-like spirits.[35]

After enlightenment, the Buddha had some significant interactions with the Brahmā Sahampati (a Brahma god who had been a monk in a previous life and continued to take a keen interest in such matters). Crucially, it was Sahampati who – when the Buddha inclined towards not teaching – pleaded with him to teach.[36]

A number of other suttas make it clear that it was not the exclusive prerogative of the Buddha to interact with gods. For instance we hear of Bāhiya, who thinks that he must be enlightened, or nearly so. Whereupon a deva – a deceased relative, we are told – appears and advises him that this is certainly not the case.[37]

It would be possible to run up a considerably longer list of interactions with deities and supernatural forces. The Buddha was often described as 'teacher of gods and men', and such a list would need to reflect the many times in the Pali Canon where the Buddha is depicted as coming to the aid of, or teaching, deities such as Sakka (aka Indra), the gods of Sun and Moon, and so on. But let this suffice for now, to establish that such interactions are entirely taken for granted in the Buddha's teaching. A question raised by all of this is, how should we think of our relationship with all these gods? How should we interact with them? In order to begin addressing this question, let me quote another episode from the Pali Canon.

Sāriputta and Moggallāna were the two chief disciples of the Buddha. One day, just after their regular head-shaving, the two monks were meditating outside.

Two *yakkhas* happened to be passing by (a *yakkha* is a discarnate being – usually rather boisterous and troublesome, more demon than god). One said to the other, "Something tempts me, my friend, to give this recluse a blow on the head". The other replied, "Whoa my friend – do not lay hold of that recluse! Lofty is this recluse, my friend, one of great potency, one of great majesty." After further discussion, however, the first *yakkha* went ahead and gave Sāriputta a blow on the head. The text runs, "And so great was it, that with that blow one would not only cause a *nāga* of seven ratanas or one of seven and a half ratanas[38] to sink but also cleave a great mountain peak." Immediately thereon, the yakkha was reborn in hell, saying "I'm burning! I'm burning!"

Moggallāna – who was particularly gifted psychically, and saw celestial beings as a matter of course, saw what happened. He approached Sāriputta and said: "I trust, friend, that you are bearing up, I trust you are finding sustenance; I trust you are feeling no pain?" To which Sāriputta replied, "I am well, friend Moggallāna, I am bearing up. But I do have a slight headache." At this, Moggallāna described what he had seen, and expressed his admiration that Sāriputta was of such power and integrity as to withstand the blow. Sāriputta in turn expressed his admiration of Moggallāna's ability to see all these celestial beings in the first place, concluding that he had not seen "even a dust-heap pisācaka" (a sprite or goblin).[39]

The conclusion can be drawn from this episode that, in the Buddhist cosmos, we are interacting with beings from other worlds whether we know it or not; and that the quality of these interactions is not exclusively benevolent. If we place divinatory practices into this context, it is only a short step to Augustine's remark that: "when astrologers give replies that are often surprisingly true, they are inspired, in some mysterious way, by spirits, but spirits of evil…"[40]

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[34] Ñānamoli, *The Life of the Buddha* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1972), p.22. Original source is *Anguttara-Nikaya* V.196.
[35] *Udāna* 2.1 (p.19); Ñānamoli 1972 p.33.
[36] *Samyutta-Nikāya* 6.1 (p.231). For another interaction, which includes Brahmā Sahampati's previous life as a monk, see *Samyutta-Nikāya* 48.57 (p.1699).
[37] *Udāna* 1.10 (p.8).
[38] A ratana roughly = 1.5 kilometres.
[39] *Udāna* 4.4 (pp.68-70)
[40] Augustine (tr. H Bettenson), *The City of God* (London: Penguin, 1984) V.7, p.188,

In the commentary to the *Khuddakapātha* ('Minor Readings' of the Pali Canon), we have the following statement which might be seen as reinforcing this gloomy picture:

> …when deities come for any purpose to the human world, they do so like a man of clean habits coming to a privy. In fact the human world is naturally repulsive to them even at a hundred leagues' distance owing to its stench, and they find no delight in it.[41]

So the question to be asked might not be how to interact with beings from other realms at all, but how to exercise some quality control over the beings with whom the (apparently inevitable) interactions take place.

A Thai monk named Achaan Mun lived from 1870 to 1949. In his biography it is stated that he talked with devas regularly. He once asked them whether they found the smell of a human body repugnant. It is not stated whether he had the preceding quotation in mind, but it seems plausible. The response of the devas' leader was (we are told) as follows:

> A human being whose life is sustained by dharma is never repulsive to us… Such a person emits a fragrant odor inspiring a reverential respect which draws us to him at all times… The smell of an evil human being who shuns the Teachings and morality is sickening. Such people are blind to the value of the dharma which is supreme in all the Three Realms. Their bodies give out a most putrid and evil stench. No angel would ever think of associating with the likes of them.[42]

This discussion between Achaan Mun and the *deva*, together with the *yakkha*'s failure to harm Sāriputta , are illuminated by these verses from the *Dhammapāda:*

> Mind is the forerunner of (all evil) states. Mind is chief; mind-made are they. If one speaks or acts with wicked mind, because of that, suffering follows one, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox.
>
> Mind is the forerunner of (all good) states. Mind is chief; mind-made are they. If one speaks or acts with pure mind, because of that, happiness follows one, even as one's shadow that never leaves.[43]

This characterises the underlying principle of the law of *kamma* – that ethical actions have consonant resultants for their perpetrator. One way these resultants manifest is in the individual's relationship to the gods. *Kusala kamma* ("skilful action" – what would generally be recognised as 'good karma'; unselfish action) tends to protect one from malevolent influences from non-human realms and open the way for benevolent influence, whilst unskilful actions tend to keep one from the company of the gods, and make one susceptible to harmful influences from the lower realms.

This is made explicit in the commentarial description of *mettā* (loving-kindness) meditation, where it is stated that amongst the benefits to the practitioner of this kammically skilful practice are that:

> He is dear to non-human beings… Deities guard him… if unable to reach higher… and attain Arahantship, then when he falls from this life, he reappears in the Brahma World as one who wakes up from sleep.[44]

A little further enquiry into *mettā* will bring out some crucial points for an understanding of the Buddhist attitude(s) towards ritual. There exists in the Pali Canon a short text known as the *Mettā Sutta*. The following excerpt will convey its essential character:

> Joyful and safe let every creature's heart rejoice. Whatever breathing beings there are, no matter whether frail or firm, with none excepted…[45]

This sutta is one of several from the Pali Canon which have been used since the Buddha's day as *paritta* - a Pali word meaning 'protection'; the equivalent Sinhalese word is *pirit*.[46] As Gombrich[47]

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[41] Ñānamoli (tr.) *Paramatthajotikā* V.81 (117) (p.127)
[42] Maha Boowa, *The Venerable Phra Acharn Mun Bhuridatta Thera* (Bangkok: Funny Publishing, 1982) p.97 A different translation of this book is available for download from: http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/acariya-mun-bio.pdf (checked 10th May 2006). The passage cited appears on p.186 of this version.
[43] *Dhammapāda* verses 1 and 2 (p.1 and 5)
[44] *Visuddhi-Magga* IX.64 – 76 (pp.338-9)
[45] *Khuddakapātha* IX.4 (p.10); cf *Sutta-Nipāta* 1.8 (p.24)

and Spiro[48] attest, a significant feature of the laity's engagement with Buddhism (in Sri Lanka and Burma respectively) is to host a group of monks who will chant *paritta* for their benefit. Gombrich describes the divergent attitudes in contemporary Sri Lanka regarding how this 'benefit' accrues:

> Most people regard *pirit* simply as a means to bring luck and avert misfortune; it thus appears to them as an impeccably Buddhist ritual for this-worldly benefits. Sophisticated Buddhists will point out that some of the texts address potentially malevolent spirits and preach Buddhist compassion to them; for the sponsors and human audience, they will say, the ceremony only works in so far as their participation manifests their virtuous intentions. What to the sophisticated has a spiritual application can be interpreted by simple people as a form of white magic.[49]

At this point it will be useful to introduce a categorisation of Buddhism into three types, proposed by Spiro.[50]

Spiro's Category	**Orientation**	**Characteristic Activity/orientation**
Apotropaic Buddhism	Non-soteriological	Involvement in magical ritual so as to ward off danger
Kammatic Buddhism	Soteriological	Skilful kammic action so as to improve one's situation in samsara
Nibbanic Buddhism	Soteriological	Entire Buddhist path, so as to realise *nibbāna*.

Spiro's first category comprises all activities which are seen solely "as a means to bring luck and avert misfortune" as Gombrich puts it. He dubs this *apotropaic* Buddhism, from the Greek for 'turning away evil'.

Then he considers that there are two soteriological forms – two forms, that is, which are concerned with salvation from the *underlying* problems of life in samsara.

Of these, *kammatic* Buddhism is based on the principle of 'do good works and go to heaven'. One is aiming to improve one's standing on the wheel of birth and death; to avoid harming others and to do good where possible, thereby to win rebirth in heaven.

And finally, *nibbanic* Buddhism is directed towards the ultimate realisation which the Buddha strove to bring to people – that there is a beyond of conditioned existence, *nibbāna*.

Though I would not subscribe to some of the comments Spiro makes as he wields this 3-fold schema, it nonetheless seems a very sound and useful structure which would give interesting results if it was used as a matrix to look at the motivations people bring to theurgy and divination. Though of course the rider needs to be clearly stated that reality is always more messy than the conceptual schemes within which one seeks to contain it. As Spiro puts it:

> … I do not wish to suggest that living Buddhism presents itself as packaged into three neat bundles of belief and practice. On the contrary, when first encountered, living Buddhism appears as a bewildering hodgepodge of beliefs and practices…[51]

An example which might be counted as apotropaic Buddhism is found in Terzani's account of a Buddhist monk in Thailand who read horoscopes. Terzani's friend has her chart read by the monk, who tells her, amongst other things:

> Your husband has many other women, and you should sue for divorce… You must leave the house you share with your husband, and go and live elsewhere. If you move during the month of October all will be well with you.[52]

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[46] A translation of a Sinhalese 'Book of Protection' can be found at: http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/bkofprot.pdf&e=9797 (checked 13 May 06).
[47] Gombrich pp147 - 8
[48] Spiro pp143 - 153
[49] Gombrich p.148.
[50] Spiro p.12.
[51] Spiro p.12
[52] Terzani, Tiziano, *A Fortune-Teller Told Me* (London: Harper-Collins, 1998) p.88.

The justification the monk gave for reading horoscopes was that Moggallāna (one of the Buddha's chief disciples – we encountered him earlier) began "telling fortunes" immediately after the Buddha's death. Although historically problematic – in the Pali Canon Moggallāna dies *before* the Buddha – the perpetuation of this idea no doubt tells its own story about what people want from their religion and their gods. Apotropaic activities – aimed at averting danger and improving the person's worldly situation – are always in demand.

Spiro recounts a story where a snake entered a Burmese villager's house. This is traditionally seen as a very bad omen. In order to remedy the situation, the monk had told the villager to distribute a hundred snake-shaped cookies amongst the local children. Upon receiving their cookie, each child was to say "It's better!" "so that instead of being an omen of misfortune the serpent became an omen of good fortune." It is worth quoting Spiro on this at some length:

> This is an obvious case of sympathetic magic, in which external events are thought to be changed by a ritual simulating the change. It is interpreted in Buddhist terms, however, to render it compatible with the belief in merit and karma. Thus in response to my query, after admitting that the snake itself was not the cause but a sign of impending danger, the monk again affirmed, in response to my further query, that karma cannot be altered in this primitive magical manner (so reminiscent of the biblical story of Rachel and the mandrakes). Rather, he said, by distributing these cookies among the children, the villager had performed an act of *dāna* [generosity] whose merit importantly changed his karmic balance. This merit, he explained in an interesting metaphor, 'is like providing supports for a weak structure that is about to fall. Without the supports it would certainly fall; the supports prevent this from happening.' The metaphor, given the monk's belief in the neutralization of karma, is appropriate, but his use of the karmic idiom to legitimize a primitive magical rite is an obvious rationalization.[53]

It seems to me that, at this point, Spiro's idea of what Buddhism should be like prevents him from seeing how well the monk's approach actually fits with the Buddha's approach as we find it in the Pali Canon. This point is worth dwelling on, for it raises issues which are central to an understanding of how the Buddha viewed ritual.

The Buddha on Ritual

The Buddha taught that attachment to rite and ritual is a fetter which needs to be overcome on the spiritual path.[54] And he encouraged people to leave behind ritual actions whenever he encountered them. Thus for example when the Brahmin Sundarika Bharadvāvāja asked the Buddha about the efficacy of bathing in sacred rivers, the latter mentioned some of the leading sacred rivers of his time and remarked, "A fool may there forever bathe, yet will not purify dark deeds."[55]

The Buddha then, however, encouraged the Brahmin to negotiate a change from the ritual form as he understood it, to what is effectively kammatic Buddhism, whilst retaining the familiar 'bathing' imagery:

> It is here, Brahmin, that you should bathe
> To make yourself a refuge for all beings.
> And if you speak no falsehood
> Nor work harm for living beings,
> Nor take what is offered not,
> With faith and free from avarice,
> What need for you to go to Gayā?
> For any well will be your Gayā.[56]

Such examples could be multiplied, but one more will suffice for now. The Buddha found Sigālaka, early in the morning, paying homage to the six directions with wet hair and clothes and joined palms. When asked what he was doing, Sigālaka explained that this ritual was something his father, on his deathbed, asked him to perform regularly.

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[53] Spiro p.158.
[54] E.g. *Dīgha-Nikāya* Sta 33, iii.216 (p.484).
[55] *Majjhima-Nikāya* Sta 7, i.39 (p.121).
[56] *Majjhima-Nikāya* Sta 7, i.39 (p.121).

The Buddha said, "But, householder's son, that is not the right way to pay homage to the six directions according to the Ariyan discipline." Sigālaka naturally asked him what would be the right way, whereon the Buddha outlined a moral framework – full of commonsense advice such as save some money for a rainy day, beware of friends who are 'all take', and so on – all fitted into the framework of the six directions. For instance, Sigālaka was told that he should see his wife as the western direction, and pay homage to the west by honouring his wife, not disparaging her, not being unfaithful, giving authority to her, and sometimes buying her jewellery.[57]

The following points can be noted a propos the Buddha's attitude to ritual:

- Involvement with it is seen as a problem insofar as this involves a belief that the simple, mechanical actions (e.g. bathing in a river or genuflecting to the six directions) are helpful in themselves.
- The Buddha is happy to use the imagery of a ritual which is familiar to someone, but he will rework it so that what the practitioner is doing is actually some part (at least) of the Buddhist path, albeit packaged in the ritual form.
- Although the Buddha gave a number of verses which could be recited – such as the *Mettā Sutta* – these were not intended for simple repetition, but rather as an exhortation and basis for enquiry and work on oneself. Regarding the development of *mettā*, for instance, the Buddha once mentioned to his monks that, "…even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handled saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be carrying out my teaching."[58] The aim, then, was to be able to maintain a 'mind of friendliness' *in extremis*, which is unlikely to be accomplished by simple repetition of a text.

The point, then, is not that rituals are good or bad per se, but rather that they are of use only to the extent that they serve as a vehicle to engage the heart and mind of the practitioner. Attitude is all-important and, as it is put in a late Theravadan text, "it is through his own fault that (a man) makes barren a *parittā*".[59] A point of potential conflict with Iamblichus can be noted here. Iamblichus wrote that:

> …it is the accomplishment of acts not to be divulged and beyond all conception, and the power of the unutterable symbols, understood solely by the gods, which establishes theurgic union…. even when we are not engaged in intellection, the symbols themselves, by themselves, perform their appropriate work, and the ineffable power of the gods, to whom these symbols relate, itself recognises the proper images of itself, not through being aroused by our thought.[60]

Shaw, however, remarks here that "Iamblichus believed that the power of these symbols could not be tapped without the moral and intellectual preparation of the theurgist."[61] Which would make Iamblichus's position much more sympathetic to the Buddhist one. Were the current paper to be twice its actual length, it would have been interesting to consider the issues in play here; but this must be postponed for another occasion.

Skilful Means

It can be noted that the Buddha said nothing about the realisation of *nibbāna* to Sundarika Bharadvāja or Sigālaka, even though this is the entire focus and purpose of his teaching. He was, as remarked earlier, aware that most people would misunderstand his message – to the extent that he nearly decided not to teach in the first place. He therefore used what he called 'gradual training' – which is to say, only teaching people the things which would actually be comprehensible and useful to them at that particular time, and moving on to more abstruse aspects of the teaching when their minds were ready.[62] As already discussed, this pragmatic approach also extended to the Buddha's being prepared to use whatever came to hand – such as a pre-existing belief in the efficacy of some particular ritual – in order to make his teaching accessible to the hearer.

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[57] *Dīgha-Nikāya* Sta 31.
[58] *Majjhima-Nikāya* Sta 21, i.129 (p.223)
[59] Milindapañha Section IV, Division II, Sub-section 4 (p.217). NB that IB Horner translates '*paritta*' as 'safety rune' here.
[60] Iamblichus, tr. Clarke, Emma C et al, *On the Mysteries* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 97, p.115.
[61] Shaw p.85
[62] E.g. at *Majjhima-Nikāya* Sta.56, i.379 (p.485)

All of this illustrates the Buddha's use of what is known as 'skilful means'. Let me quote the Buddhist scholar Paul Williams on this:

> Broadly speaking, the doctrine of skilful means maintains that the Buddha himself adapted his teaching to the level of his hearers. Thus most, if not all, of the Buddha's teachings have a relative value and only a relative truth. They are to be used like ladders, or, to use an age-old Buddhist image, like a raft employed to cross a river. There is no point in carrying the raft once the journey has been completed and its function fulfilled. When used, such a teaching transcends itself.[63]

Although 'skilful means' is widely seen as a Mahayana development,[64] it is present in the earlier Theravadan texts too. The following episode from the Pali Canon illustrates how radical a form the means might assume:

Nanda was a cousin of the Buddha. He had ordained as a monk but soon after his ordination told the monks:

> I, friends, lead the *Brahmacariya* without finding delight (therein); I am unable to continue the *Brahmacariya* properly. I will disavow the training and revert to the lower life." don't enjoy leading the holy life, my friends. I can't endure the holy life. Giving up the training, I will return to the household life.

The Buddha asked him why this was. Nanda replied: "The Sakyan lady, to me, Lord, the loveliest in the land, looked on, with hair half-combed as I was coming out of the house and said this to me: 'May you come back swiftly, master'" (The commentary tells us that the stumbling language here reflects Nanda's confusion.[65])

The Buddha showed Nanda the Tavatimsa heaven realm, and in particular, 500 nymphs known as the 'dove-footed', who were waiting upon Sakka, king of the devas. He asked Nanda how the Sakyan girl who he was pining for compared to the nymphs, and Nanda told him,

> It is as if she were that mutilated monkey, Lord, with ears and nose cut off – just so, Lord, is that Sakyan lady, the loveliest in the land, when contrasted with these five hundred nymphs. She does not even come anywhere near enumeration, does not even come anywhere near a fractional part, does not even come anywhere near contrast (with them). Rather, it is these five hundred nymphs who are not only the more excessively beautiful and the more fair to behold but also the more to inspire serenity.[66]

The Buddha then guaranteed Nanda the five hundred nymphs, whereon Nanda said he would return to the order of monks and Brahma-faring, and even take delight therein. However his fellow monks came to hear of the reason for his new-found motivation, and taunted him. Ashamed, he resolved to show them that he was not such a lightweight as they thought, began pursuing the practice diligently, and became enlightened in no long time.

So 'skilful means' can extend to tactics which look very much like trickery, but always with the aim of bringing about whatever is the best outcome currently possible for a given person.[67] That this highly pragmatic, context-sensitive approach should be a viable, indeed unavoidable, part of the Buddhist approach can be seen to follow from Buddhist epistemology:

Buddhist Epistemology

The project of coming to know everything there is to know about the world is emphatically and repeatedly rejected by the Buddha as something which is impossible and in fact leads to madness.[68]

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[63] Williams, Paul, *Mahayana Buddhism – the Doctrinal Foundations* (London: Routledge, 1989) p.143.
[64] See e.g. Pye, Michael, *Skilful Means – A Concept in Mahayana Buddhism (2nd Ed.)* (London: Routledge, 2003). This is probably the primary text on the subject.
[65] See Masefield's translation of the *Udāna*, p.56 n.9.
[66] *Udāna* 3.2 (pp.40-41)
[67] Cf note 5 – the highest good possible might be to attain a heavenly rebirth, *if* the person is not capable of realising enlightenment or taking steps towards doing so.
[68] See the discussion of the term *avyākata* in Gethin (1998), pp.66 - 8.

In the formulation of condition-dependent origination, all things are defined as arising from ignorance.[69] To realise *nibbāna* is to have destroyed ignorance, but this does not imply omniscience – unless omniscience is defined as knowing everything that *needs* to be known.

Further, it can be noted that the intersection of the worlds of the gods with ours can yield epistemological anomalies:

> Bhikkhus, once in the past a certain man set out from Rājagaha and went to the Sumāgadhā Lotus Pond, thinking: 'I will reflect about the world'… Then, bhikkhus, the man saw a four-division army entering a lotus-stalk on the bank of the pond. Having seen this, he thought: 'I must be mad! I must be insane! I've seen something that doesn't exist in the world.' […] Nevertheless, bhikkhus, what that man saw was actually real, not unreal. Once in the past the devas and the asuras were arrayed for battle. In that battle the devas won and the asuras were defeated. In their defeat, the asuras were frightened and entered the asura city through the lotus stalk, to the bewilderment of the devas.[70]

Our world and the worlds of the gods work under different laws, and this may be taken to imply that we should not expect interventions in our lives by the gods to always take a straightforward form. For instance, it may be a mistake to expect information gained from divination to be simply factual. I am again thinking of a parallel with Iamblichus here:

> Whenever it is necessary for the soul to exercise virtue, and ignorance of the future contributes to this, the Gods conceal the things that will happen in order to make the soul better.[71]

If the gods use concealment in order to make souls exercise virtue, what is to say that they would not also use misdirection or even misinformation? The expectation often met with in, for instance, contemporary astrology, that readings should deliver straightforward and accurate information, may therefore rest on a wrong model of how our interactions with the gods work.

Patrick Curry makes a relevant point during a discussion of western philosophy's development. He suggests that divination is inevitably at odds with the philosophical tradition insofar as it is grounded in *metis* rather than *episteme* – that is to say, it deals with a truth which is "multiple, perspectival and particular" rather than "unitary, universal and abstract".[72] And – more than incidentally – he explicitly equates *metis* with skilful means at this point in his argument.

Ethics

The point has emerged that ethical action (skilful *kamma*) tends, all things being equal, to assist effective divination. The astrologer William Lilly wrote:

> …the more holy thou art; and more neer to God, the purer Judgment thou shalt give […] As thou daily conversest with the heavens, so instruct and form thy minde according to the image of Divinity[73]

Lilly describes spirituality as helpful, if not essential, for astrological work – by that token, incidentally, defining astrology as divination. In a recent paper Maggie Hyde has suggested that this connection also works in the opposite direction – that the practice of divination tends towards a more spiritual approach in life as a whole:

> Divination is concerned with being open to truth and the desire to do the right thing, and as such it seeks a moral pattern or principle.[74]

It might be objected here that I have conflated spirituality and "a moral pattern or principle". But I believe this can be resolved within the Buddhist framework. In the Buddha's 'Eightfold Path'[75] *Sīla* (Ethics or Discipline) forms the basis upon which *samādhi* (meditation) and *paññā* (wisdom) are

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[69] For discussion of condition-dependent origination see Gethin (1998) pp.141-3; he quotes the formulation of dependent origination from *Samyutta-Nikāya* II.20 (p.550).
[70] *Samyutta-Nikāya* 56.41 (p.1864).
[71] Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis* 289.17 – this translation from Shaw (1995) p.234.
[72] Curry in Willis & Curry (2004) p.105.
[73] Lilly, William, *Christian Astrology* (London: Regulus, 1985), p.9 ('To the Student in Astrology').
[74] Hyde, Maggie, *Pigs and Fishes – Inner Truth in Divination* (currently unpublished paper) p.3.
[75] See Gethin (1998) pp.81-3.

developed. Simply put, under the heading of *sīla* one develops unselfish behaviour; as this becomes established as a way of being in the world, so it becomes possible for *samādhi* (the practice of meditation) to deepen. This is because meditation – particularly insight practice – requires an ability to simply observe experience with equanimity – that is to say, without reacting to unusual experiences in a self-concerned way. Successful insight practice means that the meditator sees the transient, insubstantial nature of every aspect of experience, including their own mind and body. This is the ultimate development of wisdom (*paññā*). *Sīla, samādhi* and *paññā* are, therefore, three interlinked approaches which address the problem of self/selfishness in increasingly refined and subtle ways.

So although ethical conduct can be understood, and practised, as a way to get good things in the future (including rebirth amongst the gods), this is not the true import of the Buddha's path. Buddha-Dhamma sets ethical conduct in a context of reducing and weakening the 'self' one believes to exist – and it is, therefore, all of a piece with the ultimate insight which Kapilavaddho described:

> I [am] part of my world and my world [is] part of me. We co-exist[~~ed~~] interdependently[76]

When an act of divination yields a reading which is strikingly true, there is a sense of the uncanny; something is known, which it should not be possible to know. Specific information about a person's life, the whereabouts of inanimate objects, and so on, arrives whence, according to Western commonsense, it has no right to be. The moment of divination entails an experience of interdependence with the world, and can lead us to question how impermeable the boundaries of 'self' actually are; it can lead, in other words, to an experience of non-self.

To conclude, therefore: I have suggested that there is a great deal in common between 'theurgy' and 'brahma-faring'. Brahma-faring admits of two interpretations – striving to join the gods, and striving to realise enlightenment. These map onto Spiro's definitions of *kammatic* and *nibbanic* Buddhism, and are the objectives of *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditations, respectively. The clarity with which Buddhism distinguishes these two goals is one of that teaching's distinguishing features. Although divination is only discussed incidentally in the Pali Canon, there is plenty of evidence to show that it was assumed to be a genuine phenomenon. I suggest that divination, correctly understood, involves the practitioner in *kammatic* work; and that the experience of divination can give a *nibbanic* turn to the endeavour, by pointing towards the ultimate unreality of 'self' as something separate from the universe; and thence to Buddhism's summum bonum, *nibbāna.*

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My thanks to José Cabezón, Rupert Gethin and Martin Wood for helpful suggestions about material for this paper.

Note on Pāli Source Material

References to volumes of the Pāli Canon are given by Sutta number (in the form 'Sta xx'), and/or chapter and verse, as appropriate; finally a page number is given which refers to a translation of the text – unless noted, the translations referred to are as follows:

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Khuddakapātha: 'Minor Readings' in Ñānamoli, *Minor Readings and Illustrator* (London: Pali Text Society, 1960)

[76] See note 25.

Majjhima Nikāya: Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995)

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