HOLISTIC EDUCATION AT NAROPA AND DILA:
RELIGIOUS OR EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION?

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By
Aaron A. Leonardi

Thesis Committee:
Michel Mohr, Chairperson
Helen Baroni
Ramdas Lamb
Thao Le

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Holistic Education at Naropa and DILA: Religious or Educational Innovation?

Leonardi, Aaron A., M.A.
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A.A. Leonardi

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the educational orientations and innovations of two non-sectarian schools with charismatic Buddhist founders: the first is Naropa University in Boulder, CO, and the second is Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts (DILA), in Jinshan Taiwan. I hypothesize that the double identity of these schools provides insight into some of their pedagogical tools that, although Buddhist-inspired, could be transferred to other educational contexts. Ultimately, I propose that although the educational paths of Naropa and DILA differ in their points of departure from those of public education, they have the potential to converge on a goal. This convergent orientation is identified as holistic education. Finally, through the themes and innovations gathered from these schools, I examine holistic education as a pedagogy providing students with tools and insights that help them understand themselves in new and empowering ways.

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INTRODUCTION

The research presented here started as an inquiry into how modern humanistic forms of Buddhism are coping with globalization. I was interested in discovering the dimensions of religious organizations that were most susceptible to secularization amidst the stresses of contemporary society. The effect that the globalized economy, the Internet, and cultural diffusion have on religious observance is fascinating; in some places religion is flourishing, while in other countries, religious cultures are on the decline. I began by exploring the phenomenon of secularization within Taiwanese Buddhist schools, and was introduced to Fǎgǔ Shān 法鼓山, a Chan school founded in 2006. I was immediately intrigued by the school's entry into higher education with the 2015 opening of an Institute of Liberal Arts, so I followed this lead.[1] Then, to underscore the aspects of institutional secularization that are also pertinent to an American educational setting, I expanded my search for similar American instances of this phenomenon[2] (Taiwan is considered one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world, and their laws regarding public education are not identical with those of the U.S.)[3] and—I found some.

Religion and education form a curious institutional intersection because many scholars of religion have found religious behavior to be something basic to human social life, and likewise, many philosophers have argued that education is something basic to our humanity.[4] It follows, then, that the topics of study promoted by these "curious institutional intersections" could shed

[1] The establishment of DILA was approved in 2014, but incoming students were first admitted for the 2015-16 academic year.

[2] That is, the phenomenon of Buddhist teachers founding non-sectarian Liberal Arts Colleges.

[3] Cooperman, Alan and Michele Lipka, "U.S. doesn't rank high in religious diversity" The Pew Research Center, 4/4/2014. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/04/04/u-s-doesnt-rank-high-in-religious-diversity/# (accessed 1/23/2017).

[4] Although I am sure there are others, I refer to the school of thought set out by the American philosophers John Dewey and Ralph. W. Emerson. These two have argued that the growth that takes place in one's educational process is fundamental to human life. Whether it is called socialization or formal education, teaching and learning happen naturally with communication and continue throughout life. It is difficult to cleanly divide socialization and formal education, so for the purposes of this thesis, when I mention education I am referring to formalized, institutionalized education. For more on Dewey's philosophy of education see Dewey, 1916.

light on some characteristics deeply embedded in the human condition. As education and religion constitute pervasive aspects of human social activity, at the core of this study rests the question: where (if at all) do religious and educational goals meet?

The process of answering my research question brought the project beyond simply analyzing the orientation of two non-sectarian Graduate Institutes that were established by charismatic Buddhist leaders. In this thesis, I argue that examining the pedagogical focuses of schools such as these (schools that are culturally and religiously inspired, yet remain secularly structured and oriented) can highlight topics that are of parallel interest to both secular education and religious organizations. For example, institutions of religion and education typically have the self-attributed intention of providing paths for people to better themselves and society.[5] Thus, a working hypothesis is that these pedagogical orientations and topics of study could potentially point to an avenue of personal growth and societal benefit beyond the affiliations of secular and religious. Moreover, this thesis is an object lesson of Ann Taves' recommendation that the discipline of Religious Studies should conceive of itself as a location "for studying things people consider special and the ways people incorporate them into and perpetuate them within larger socio-cultural formations."[6] Accordingly, this project primarily investigates the "things people consider special," where two modern schools of Buddhism and non-sectarian higher education meet, and then, considers the practical implications of this intersection.

I admit at the outset that this thesis does not follow a strict disciplinary methodology. The first two chapters take a historical, descriptive approach, and the latter two chapters are a combination of what I take to be a theoretical and methodological analysis of the discipline, and of the pedagogical elements that these schools consider "special." Methodologically speaking, this thesis is a reflection of how I understand the discipline of Religious Studies to be an aggregate of many disciplines centered around a social phenomenon that is still not completely

[5] The concept of the path schema that will be used is a more generalized version of the mārga theory, which was first introduced by Buswell and Gimello. Their volume on "mārga studies" defined mārga theory as a means of describing certain methods of practice and prescribed patterns of behavior which "have transformative power and will lead, somehow necessarily, to specific religious goals." See Buswell and Gimello, 1992, 3. More recently, Ann Taves has further built upon Buswell and Gimello's mārga theory, which is a more general version not limited to religious goals. See Taves, 2010, 180-2.

[6] Taves, 2010, 186.

understood.[7] The history of defining religion has gone on much like a Socratic dialogue—if a criterion is proposed, a counter example can easily be made showing it to be unsatisfactory. For many of the world's cultures, the religious dimensions of life are non-separate from other aspects of daily life. Some scholars have even made the argument that there is no such thing as religion; that the concept of "religion" is a fairly new phenomenon that only began to exist once a culture bent on expansion sought to identify the elements of unfamiliar cultures it needed to replace.[8] Of course, if I thought religion did not exist, I would not have volunteered to study it, but I do concede that the possible focuses within the domain of Religious Studies are vast and fairly undefined. The vagueness of what qualifies as a "religious phenomenon" deeply complicates the subject of my research.

Both schools researched in this thesis share the notion that bringing together pedagogical techniques from the East and the West[9] can strengthen higher education.[10] However, some more conservative Religious Studies scholars might interpret what I identify in the following chapters as pedagogical innovations, as carelessly introducing religious practices into public schools, which is an obvious academic transgression in the United States of America. To preemptively assuage these criticisms, I offer a reminder that the discipline of Religious Studies is commonly considered "multidisciplinary or polymethodic."[11] The "conservative" impulse to avoid subjective and qualitative information that will be discussed is, I assume, a residual defense mechanism dating to the conception and development of the modern Religious Studies department in the 1960s.[12]

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[7] Orsi, Robert. "The "So-Called History" of the Study of Religion." *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 20, no. 2 (2008): 134-138, 135.

[8] Kwame A. Appiah makes a similar argument. He makes a claim that "religion" does not exist as a term that refers to something particular, like "personal computer" does, but the term is rather is a product of a confluence of colonial and scientific mindsets. How we define religion, according to Appiah's argument, can reflexively be applied to any socio-cultural formation, including social norms within academic or scientific circles. https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is_a_trick_question/transcript?language=en (accessed 3/6/2017).

[9] I understand that "East and West" are over-generalizations, and that neither the East nor West can be reduced to monolithic ideologies or worldviews. Nevertheless, these terms are used in the founder's own writings, and writings about the founding of these institutions. See Dederer, 11/4/2007.

[10] Wexler, Judie. "Toward a Model of Integral Education," 2005, 131.

[11] Smart, Ninian. "Religious Studies and Theology" *The Council of Societies for the Study of Religion Bulletin* 25, No. 3 (1997): 66-8.

[12] Ibid.

At that time, when the academic study of religion sought to distance itself from theology, it became normative to utilize scientific methods of inquiry as a reflexive device.[13] This popular sentiment of American academics in the 1960s and 1970s was still in tune with that of the Enlightenment, assuming that "reason and science would slowly eclipse the sense of the sacred and restore the sensibilities of the superstitious."[14] Actually, the idea that "religion" and the concepts affiliated with it fall under the category of things that can be studied scientifically is largely a product of Max Müller's 1870s lecure series later published as *Introduction to the Science of Religion* (although Herodotus was doing comparitive religion as far back as the 5th century BCE).[15] Müller imagined the science of religion as utilizing historical, anthropological and other scientific methods of research to catalog and examine universal features, patterns and principles of the worlds religions.[16] To this day, the acadademic study of religion in American universities function in much the same way.

As a polymethodic discipline, Religious Studies should be considerate and aware of methodological changes in other disciplines that are relevant to its own needs. It should also be noted that qualitative first-person research has been found to be invaluable to the scientific studies relating to the mind and consciousness, which is linked to an innovation discussed in chapters two and three.[17] The central "Eastern" addition utilized at Naropa University (the American school explored in this thesis) is contemplative education. Thus, as it is known that

[13] In Jonathan Z. Smith's article "Are Theological and Religious Studies Compatible?" he argues that the greatest irreconcilable difference between the two is how they approach the same information, stating that "the conflict, as I see it arises [with those who] propose a powerful, rival understanding of the necessarily plural interpretive and comparative ventures which characterize the study of religion. That is to say it is a conflict at the same generic level over (at least potentially) the same data." See Smith 1997, 61.

[14] Witte, John Jr. "The Study of Law and Religion in the United States: An Interim Report." *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 14 (2012): 327-354, 330.

[15] Müller, F. Max. *Introduction to the Science of Religion.* Varanasi: Bharata Manisha, 1972.

[16] Pals, Daniel L. *Seven Theories of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, 3-4.

[17] Desbordes, Gaëlle, and Lobsang T Negi. "A New Era for Mind Studies: Training Investigators in Both Scientific and Contemplative Methods of Inquiry." *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 7 (2013): 741; Levit Binnun, Nava, and Ricardo Tarrasch. "Relation between Contemplative Exercises and an Enriched Psychology Students' Experience in a Neuroscience Course." *Frontiers in Psychology* 5 (2014): 1296.

meditation is a common Buddhist practice, it is reasonable that one might initially wonder whether integrating contemplative practices in higher education is truly a pedagogical innovation, or if it is a clever way to spread Buddhist values into the public sphere. If I am not alone in this consideration, I have titled the thesis justly.[18]

The corpus of research on Contemplative Studies and Holistic Education is becoming more extensive every day. Yet, three themes discussed in this thesis distinguish it from the growing body of work on these subjects. The first is that it draws attention to a juncture of religious and secular worldviews by exploring the academic significance of the innovations of these Buddhist-inspired schools. Second, it examines a methodological soft spot in the Religious Studies due to its reflexive reluctance to engage in qualitative pedagogies. The third point, however, is a more open-ended inquiry into the teleology of higher education. As a person interested in the social benefits of education, I find the lack of overt social goals for American educational institutions quite troubling.[19] The two organizations discussed here, however, have mission statements describing their view of education's direct effect on the social sphere, and they share the idea that proper education fundamentally includes understanding the mind. Nevertheless, neither school supports this claim; so, I explore its logic in chapter four.[20]

I limited this project to the examination of two schools, but by no means are there only two Buddhist organizations that have established non-sectarian colleges or graduate institutes. It is important to note that I am not comparing these two schools, nor am I holding them to the same standards. It will also become clear throughout the course of this thesis that the different locations of the two schools, and the date of their establishment, allowed them certain

[18] As this is a case study of two specific schools, the conclusions drawn make no inferences regarding the orientations of other Buddhist institutions.

[19] I think this orientational absence in American universities may have something to do with an American preoccupation with individuality and the pre-eminence of individual goals.

[20] Whenever possible, academic sources were used to corroborate the claims of my primary sources, but overall, a large amount of the information regarding Naropa and Dharma Drum was gathered directly from the two schools' websites and publications. For this reason, one must consider that the claims may have institutional agendas.

pedagogical liberties.[21] Moreover, I chose to examine them precisely due to this variation, so that each school can be considered for separate, but convergent purposes. These contextual differences provide insight into the elements of education that the founders considered most important, or "special," when creating the schools.

The first is Naropa University in Boulder Colorado, which was founded by Chögyam Trungpa in 1974 and is the first accredited "Buddhist-Inspired University" in the United States. The second school is Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts (DILA), a newly established (2015) graduate institute inspired by Shengyen, and located on Dharma Drum Mountain (*Fǎgǔ Shān* 法鼓山) in Taiwan.[22] Throughout the thesis, Naropa University is presented before DILA, but only because Naropa was founded nearly forty years earlier.

[21] I also made sure, though, that both the schools I chose had founders who had earned Ph.D.s and spent a considerable amount of time in the West (America and England).

[22] I have decided to research this school for three reasons. First, the founder of this institution, Chan Master Shengyen (*Shèngyán Fǎshī* 聖嚴法师), is a widely-known public figure and has greatly contributed to the academic study of Buddhism. Shengyen has given talks at the United Nations and promoted interreligious dialogue by meeting with world-renowned religious figures like the fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Catholic Pope. Second, although this school is in Taiwan, Shengyen spent a lot of time in the United States (some of the first Chan centers he opened were even in the United States) and modeled DILA after "the North American tradition of liberal arts education." Thus, hypothetically, DILA's educational innovations can serve as a relevant source to compare with the pedagogies of U.S. schools. Third, unlike the other school in this study, DILA was in its second year of operation when this research was conducted. Thus, it was interesting to track the school's developments and changes as they happened.

CHAPTER 1. BUDDHIST-INSPIRED EDUCATION AT NAROPA AND DILA

This chapter provides a brief history of Naropa's and DILA's origins and founders, both of whom were well-known teachers in modern schools of Buddhism. The historical focus is not so much on the intricacies of their educational pedagogies, but rather on what inspired these Buddhist masters to found non-sectarian educational institutions, and some major events in their early histories. The nature of each school's introduction differs a bit, which seems natural considering the contrasting circumstances surrounding each school's formation. Because Naropa is in the United States, for instance, the narrative focuses more on the issues that apply to American schools, such as accreditation requirements, learning outcomes, and sectarian agendas in public institutions. Because Dharma Drum Mountain's Institute of Liberal Arts is in Taiwan, the focus is more on the founder's ideas of how to better higher education. Although his ideas were developed throughout his experience as a Chan Buddhist, he believed that they applied to education regardless of time, place, or religion.

1.1 Merging East and West at Naropa University

Naropa describes itself as an ecumenical and nonsectarian liberal arts University.[1] It is the first accredited Buddhist-inspired University in the United States,[2] and was founded by the Tibetan Buddhist teacher Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche (1939-1987). My coverage of Naropa in chapters one and two reveal how its Buddhist foundation colors its educational orientation and organization. Trungpa, for instance, had a conviction that bringing together ways of knowing from both the East and the West would strengthen higher education. Acting on this conviction he founded Naropa, modeling it after typical American universities "as a pedagogical strategy to transmit Buddhist values and practices."[3] One of its missions, as a school grounded in Buddhism, is to provide a learning environment that engages with Eastern and Western intellectual traditions and applies them to academia, so that the "standard approach to educational attainment

[1] From Naropa's 2008 Mission Statement on pp.2, downloaded at http://naropa.edu/documents/misc/pres-position-inst-profile-0112.pdf (accessed 12/4/2016).

[2] Atlas, James. "Buddhists' Delight," The New York Times Online, 6/16/2012 http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/17/opinion/sunday/buddhists-delight.html (accessed 11/20/2016).

[3] Goss, Robert. "Buddhist Studies at Naropa: Sectarian or Academic?" in *American Buddhism: Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship*, 1999, 215-237, 216.

can be complemented by an intuitive approach that grows out of a spiritual discipline."[4] Thus, it is absolutely clear that the "Eastern" influence Trungpa refers to is anchored in his Buddhist heritage. This portion of chapter one provides a general overview of Naropa's history, philosophical foundation, and development to date.

Chögyam Trungpa was the eleventh Tulku of the Surmang Monastery, and an influential teacher in the Kagyu[5] lineage of Tibetan Buddhism.[6] He was first educated as a Tulku in Tibet, but fled to India in 1959 to avoid the Chinese invasion.[7] While in India he learned English and, in 1963, he was awarded a Spaulding sponsorship to attend Oxford University in England.[8] Trungpa's education in England ended up being a transformational period for him. According to Marcia Usow in an interview with Ross Webster, "Trungpa's interest in education came from his time spent at Oxford University where he had conversed with great thinkers such as the American Trappist monk, Thomas Merton."[9] In his experience at Oxford, he also noticed a systemic inflexibility between notions of the past, the present, and the future, which he thought stifled society.[10] This criticism of Western education was likely the seed that grew into Naropa University's mission to integrate contemplative practices with academic studies. In 1970, after multiple setbacks (including a car accident that left him with a permanent physical handicap), Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche disrobed, married, and moved to the United States.[11] His new

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[4] Melton, J. Gordon. *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America*. 1992, 201-2.

[5] Lama Maupa of Lhabrag, who was succeeded by the great Tibetan teacher Milarepa, founded the Kagyu sect in the late 11th century.

[6] Melton, J. Gordon. *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America*. 1992, 200.

[7] Ibid., 201.

[8] Trungpa, Chögyam, and Chödzin, Sherab. *Illusion's Game: The Life and Teaching of Naropa*. Boston: Shambhala, 1994, 164.

[9] Webster, Ross R. "Tibetan Buddhists, Poetry Wars and the Naropa Institute in the People's Republic of Boulder, Colorado," 2012, 24.

[10] Ibid., 27.

[11] Chryssides, George D. "Trungpa, Chögyam. Aka Shambhala" in *Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements Series: Historical Dictionary of New Religious Movements*. Blue Ridge Summit, US: Scarecrow Press, 2011.

“secular” persona helped him gain acceptance in America.[12] When he settled down, it is said that he chose Colorado because the Rocky Mountains reminded him of home, and Boulder was a university town.[13] Only four years after he immigrated to the United States, in 1974, Naropa Institute was established.

The majority of Chögyam Trungpa’s work in the United States has been organized into two organizations that, for the sake of gaining Naropa’s accreditation, broke institutional ties in the mid-1980s.[14] The first, Vajradhatu, is the religious organization that recruits, trains, and perpetuates the lineage of Trungpa’s followers. The second is the Nalanda Foundation, which, primarily through Naropa University, seeks to bring Buddhist values into secular society. Naropa University is named after the eleventh-century abbot of the great Nalanda monastic center in Northeastern India. Trungpa was inspired to name the university after him due to a famous story about Naropa deciding to leave Nalanda after spending many years there. The abbot left because he recognized that his studies provided him with intellectual knowledge of Buddhist teachings, he still lacked an embodied understanding of the Dharma. With no meditative practice, Naropa thought one could achieve neither wisdom nor a true understanding of the world.[15] Thus, to accommodate this purpose, Naropa left his position at Nalanda to practice meditation. Accordingly, the idea of infusing contemplative practices with academic studies at Naropa University is an attempt to provide a place of learning that the historical Naropa would not have had to leave.

Gaining accreditation was not easy. In 1974 and 1975 Naropa was a summer institute that offered courses in meditation, Tai Chi, tea ceremony, Tibetan and Sanskrit Madhyamika philosophy, physics, psychology, and Thangka painting.[16] Two years later, Naropa became a year-round Institute in Boulder, Colorado. As the institution became more firmly established, the most important goal for Naropa became gaining accreditation. With accreditation, Naropa’s students could receive grants to further their education. Additionally, accreditation would

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[12] For more on Chögyam Trungpa’s “crazy wisdom” and controversial lifestyle, read: Midal, Fabrice. *Chögyam Trungpa: His Life and Vision*. Boston: Shambhala Press, 2004.

[13] Webster, Ross R. "Tibetan Buddhists, Poetry Wars and the Naropa Institute in the People's Republic of Boulder, Colorado." 2012, 24.

[14] This institutional split took place under the guidance of Naropa’s then Chair of the Board of Directors, Lucien Wulsin. See Goss, 1999, 220.

[15] Ibid., 216.

[16] Ibid., 217.

provide some validation for its ambitious academic goals. In 1977, only three years after the inaugural summer camp, Naropa initiated its first self-study to gain candidacy with the North Central Association, a regional accrediting body.[17] After years of working on the standardization of education, processes, and policies, Naropa was granted accreditation by the Commission for Institutes of Higher Education in 1986.[18]

At Naropa, Trungpa believed he could offer a solution to what he saw as the main issue with Western education. Rather than dogmatically studying and accepting what is studied, Trungpa insisted that his students embrace a concept called "newness."[19] This "newness" is at the heart of Naropa's contemplative focuses. It simply means that through inward contemplation, students are taught to approach topics of study with mindfulness and awareness. With this awareness, the wisdom of the subject matter can be received as fresh and alive, with an ability to adapt to present day experiences. The growth of Naropa has been somewhat organic in that programs have historically developed due to the pioneering work of faculty members.[20] One thing that has stayed constant in its forty-plus years is the school's emphasis on contemplation.

The mission statement of Naropa stresses the University's use of contemplative practices, and takes pride in being "America's leading institution of contemplative education."[21] In addition to fulfilling major-specific requirements, every student must participate in a contemplative practice of choice. There are a variety of traditions to choose from, including yoga, sitting meditation, Japanese flower arrangement, Tai Chi, Chinese calligraphy, and Aikido.[22] One service Naropa provides to ensure that all students have access to learning a contemplative practice outside of what is otherwise required, is to employ a Meditation Practice Coordinator. The coordinator provides all students with opportunities to practice with a meditation instructor

[17] Ibid., 220.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Webster, Ross R. "Tibetan Buddhists, Poetry Wars and the Naropa Institute," 2012, 27.
[20] Goss, Robert E., 1999, 223.
[21] Naropa University Mission Statement. http://naropa.edu/about-naropa/mission-and-values/ (accessed 12/14/2016).
[22] Dederer, Claire. "The Inner Scholar," The New York Times Online, 11/4/2007. http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/04/education/edlife/naropa.html (accessed 11/20/2016).

free of charge, or refers them to outside organizations that offer contemplative practices in the community.[23] Through these practices, students are thought to cultivate mindfulness and infuse the knowledge gained in their academic studies with the wisdom gained through active insight.[24]

The pluralistic, nonsectarian aspect of Naropa's openness to the contemplative practices from all "wisdom traditions" is found in nearly all Chögyam Trungpa's writings and, in fact, may derive from a Tibetan tradition Trungpa was familiar with. Goss ties Naropa's nonsectarian values to the nineteenth-century *Rimé* movement in Eastern Tibet. He cites (Buddhologist) David Seyfort Ruegg's studies of this movement and argues that although traditionally "rimé" means something along the lines of "unbounded, all-encompassing, or unlimited," Trungpa and his students use it to mean "nonsectarian."[25] Naropa's format is nonsectarian, but this does not automatically equate to a secular education. Rather, it more accurately refers to Naropa's openness to the world's various contemplative practices and arts that, Trungpa claims, foster healthy mental and spiritual development.[26]

Trungpa's Shambhala teachings[27] are also reflected in Naropa's mission statement, which stipulates that by "drawing on the vital insights of the world's wisdom traditions, the University is simultaneously Buddhist-inspired, ecumenical, and nonsectarian."[28] This statement is interesting, considering how it is through the Nalanda Foundation that Trungpa sought to make Buddhist values more socially available. In chapter two, I work to uncover what is meant by this aim, and whether it is compatible with the aims of public higher education. First, the following

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[23] Naropa University 2009-10 Self-study. Pp. 165-6. Downloaded from https://naropa.edu/documents/misc/about-naropa/self-study-final-2010.pdf (accessed 12/4/2016).

[24] Naropa University Mission Statement. http://naropa.edu/about-naropa/mission-and-values/ (accessed 12/14/2016).

[25] Goss, Robert E., 1999, 217.

[26] Ibid., 219.

[27] He often taught of a wisdom that runs through all religious traditions and is available to all people. See Trungpa, 1988.

[28] Naropa University Mission Statement. http://naropa.edu/about-naropa/mission-and-values/ (accessed 12/14/2016).

section introduces a school of Chan Buddhism that has just recently opened a liberal arts institute in Taiwan. DILA, much like Naropa, is modeled on the North American system of liberal arts higher education, and seeks to offer traditional Western academic studies with a Buddhist inspiration.[29]

1.2 Chan Master Shengyen and Dharma Drum Mountain

Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts (DILA) is an experimental graduate institute located on Dharma Drum Mountain (*Fǎgǔ Shān* 法鼓山) in Taiwan. This section provides a brief description of the philosophical and historical development of the school, and how Shengyen has, in a way, inherited the notion that Buddhism is fundamentally aimed at social improvement.

Much of Dharma Drum Mountain's identity has developed from the works of its founder, Master Shengyen (1930-2009). In 1930 he was born as Zhāng Bǎokāng 張寶康, in the Jiangsu Province of China, near Shanghai.[30] At age thirteen, he was ordained as a monk, and at eighteen, he fled to Taiwan and joined the Nationalist Army as a way to escape the social upheavals happening in mainland China.[31] After ten years of military service, he was re-ordained by Master Dōngchū 東初 (1908-1977) , who eventually encouraged Shengyen to apply to a master's program in Buddhist Studies at Rissho University in Tokyo.[32] Ultimately, Shengyen would go on to receive both his master's and doctoral degrees from Rissho University, becoming the first monk to earn a Ph.D. in the History of Chinese Buddhism.

Although he mainly practiced under the guidance of Dōngchū, Shengyen was heavily influenced by Chan Master Yìnshùn 印順 (1906-2005), another student of the Chinese Buddhist reformer Tàixū 太虛 (as was Dōngchū).[33] Of the two, Yìnshùn influenced Shengyen philosophically in that he criticized the tendency to worship Buddhas as if they were deities, calling his form of Chan a Buddhism of the world, or human domain (*rénjiān* 人間), as opposed

[29] Huimin Bhikshu, DILA Website. "Setting Sail: Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts," http://www.dila.edu.tw/en/about (accessed 4/24/2016).

[30] Cultural Center, Dharma Drum Mountain. *Master Sheng Yen* (Pocket Guide). "Biography of Master Sheng Yen." Sheng Yen Education Foundation, 2011, 5.

[31] Ibid., 7.

[32] Ibid., 9.

[33] Pittman, Don. A. *Toward a modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's reforms*, 2001, 263.

to Tàixū's "human life" (*rénshēng* 人生) Buddhism.[34] Both perspectives, however, emphasize Buddhism's focus on earthly matters, like engagement in society. The difference (between *rénjiān* and *rénshēng*) is one of focus; while the latter takes all human life to be the central focus of its Buddhism, the former widens the subject to consider the world inhabited by humans. Nonetheless, both orientations are intelectually derived from the early twentieth-century reformist teachings of Tàixū. Thus, in short, Shengyen claims to have "inherited" Tàixū's goal of using Buddhist methods to uplift the character of humanity and restore society's "moral center."[35]

In Tàixū's time (1890-1947), Chinese culture was undergoing profound changes, which led to a few social trends that troubled him. One troubling observation was the extent to which monastics were profiting from death rituals. Another was the secularization of the layperson's belief system. Due to Tàixū's perception of these problems, he decided to take on a personal commitment to prevent Buddhism from falling into cultural and religious marginality.[36] His book, *The Future of Buddhist Practice*, voiced concern about the intellectual and scientific community's failure to provide a foundation for morality.[37] Not only do the scientific and philosophical arguments for morality fail, he argued, but the scientific community also undermines the religious basis of moral authority. What people are left with, argued Tàixū, are the technological gifts that science has bestowed without the self-control or moral foundation to move forward safely.[38] Writing in the 1930s, Tàixū thought humanity "has completely lost the center-point for morality."[39] He found it necessary to locate and restore this center-point.

Tàixū's three-pronged restoration of Chinese Buddhist practice was defined in his *Aims of China's Buddhist Revolution*.[40] The first goal was to eradicate all superstitious elements, as they had no place in what Tàixū saw as the original Buddhist doctrines. The second was a

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[34] Wang, Hsuan-Li. "Gushan: The Formation of a Chan Lineage," 263.

[35] Pittman, Don. A., 2001, 283-4.

[36] Chu, William P. "A Buddha-Shaped Hole," 153-4.

[37] Taixu, *The Future of Buddhism (Fóxué de Jiānglái* 佛學的將來*)*. Hong Kong, 1935, 13-14. Translated in Pittman, Don. A., 2001, 160; Taixu, "Zongjiao duiyu xiandai renlei de gongxian" (The Contribution of Religion to Modern Human Beings), in *Taixu dashi quanshu* (Complete Works) Translated in Pittman, 2001, 178-9.

[38] Pittman, Don A., 2001, 161.

[39] Ibid., 162.

[40] "*Zhōngguó fójiào gémìng de zōngzhǐ* 中國佛教革命的宗旨," Translated in Chu, William P. "A Buddha-Shaped Hole," 157-8.

restatement of purpose: that Buddhism must hold faithful to the Mahayanist Bodhisattva ideals of edifying, guiding, and enlightening society while avoiding world escaping practices. The third prong detailed how he imagined the monastic and lay relations in this new program of Buddhism for human life. In his lifetime, Tàixū's failed to realize these proposed reforms. His task was great and his time was short, but he did inspire many to continue the "spirit" of his efforts posthumously.[41] Jimmy Yu, a former student of Shengyen, has speculated that Shengyen's drive to turn his "socially engaged educational vision into formal, teachable programs" is related to his critique of Tàixū's inability to put his ideas into practice.[42]

Founding a New Lineage

Shengyen became a Dharma inheritor of both Cáodòng 曹洞 and Línjì 臨濟 lineages, and nonetheless, created a separate lineage.[43] The creation of the Dharma Drum lineage in 2006 sought to solidify Shengyen's vision of Chinese Buddhism.[44] Although Shengyen was openly critical of sectarianism,[45] he created the lineage to safeguard what he thought to be essential for Chinese Buddhism.[46] Yu argued just this, stating that the Fagu (Dharma Drum) lineage is simply "a vehicle for the preservation, reformulation, and institutionalization of what [Shengyen] perceived as the most useful aspects of Chinese Buddhism for modern society."[47] Dharma Drum Mountain uses the slogan "inheriting the past and inspiring the future" to describe its stance as a future-oriented school, rather than one with a firm allegiance to the past. To symbolize that the utility of the teachings takes precedence over sectarianism in DDM, Shengyen has even remarked that he prefers the title of Dharma Master rather than Chan Master.[48]

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[41] Pittman quotes Shengyen as stating: "I am not one who espouses or implements in practice Tàixū's particular theories, yet I am one who reveres his spirit." See Pittman, 2001, 285.

[42] Yu, Jimmy, 2010, 28.

[43] Often in Chan, lineages are a means to create a link to the historical Buddha for political reasons. DDM's claim to the inheritance of both Cáodòng and Línjì lineages can be thought of as an object lesson of John McRae's argument in *Seeing Through Zen*. McRae has sketched Chan as a lineage building its own link to the original Buddha as a means of claiming superiority and distinction: "where other schools represented only interpretations of Buddhism, Chan constituted the real thing, Buddhism itself." See McRae, 2004, 5.

[44] Yu, Jimmy. "Revisiting the Notion of Zong," 2013, 115.

[45] Ibid., 122.

[46] Ibid., 129.

[47] Ibid., 144.

[48] Shengyen, *The Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism: Inheriting the Past and Inspiring the Future*, 74.

Shengyen thought that a mistake of past masters was the limiting of education's scope to Buddhist monastic education. This is one reason why Dharma Drum Mountain has diversified the "university education" it offers into three categories. Two of the three types of DDM's academic education are specifically Buddhist education.[49] The first of these programs is monastic education at Dharma Drum Sangha University, which is a seminary for incoming monks and nuns. The second type of program is the academic study of Buddhism, and DDM has two institutions for this: the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies, and the Department of Buddhist Studies at DILA, which was formerly the stand-alone Dharma Drum Buddhist College. The latter institution confers undergraduate and graduate degrees in Buddhist Studies, and the former is DDM's research institute responsible for publishing scholarly journals and hosting conferences devoted to Buddhist Studies. Also, Shengyen's refashioning of Chung-Hwa Institute into a research institute (*Zhōnghuá fóxué yánjiū suǒ* 中華佛学研究所) was a significant step for Chinese Buddhist studies.[50] Like Trungpa, Shengyen hoped that someday his colleges would be as influential as the ancient Nalanda University, where one could study all forms of Buddhism under one roof.[51] The third type of academic education is found at the newly formed Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts (DILA), which opened in 2015.

Non-sectarian Academics as a Social Investment

DILA was created by merging the new Dharma Drum College of Humanities and Social Sciences with the organization's Buddhist College. The new College of Humanities and Social Sciences is limited to master's programs in four specializations. Dharma Drum claims these programs aim to "help train global citizens capable of responding to the challenges of globalization with the values of compassion, wisdom, harmony, and respect."[52] It is this third form of university education that is uniquely formulated to stretch beyond the influence of sectarian religion. Overcoming DDM's sectarian limitations was a logical step for Shengyen, if he seriously intended his ideas to reach not only Chan Buddhists, but all the human community.

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[49] It has been argued that Shengyen's aim to improve the quality of both monastic and lay Buddhist education is due to his experience with the "woefully inadequate" training that he encountered as a young monk. See Pittman, 2001, 281.

[50] CHIBS English Website. http://www.chibs.edu.tw/eng_html/index_eng00.html (accessed 2/11/2017).

[51] Shengyen, *The Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism*, 54.

[52] Bhikshu, Huimin. "About DILA" http://www.dila.edu.tw/en/about (accessed 4/26/2016).

Shengyen taught that a revised paradigm of education is necessary, and he sought out globalized approaches to ethics through education reform. When speaking at the UN's world peace summit in 2000, he argued that if humankind seriously desires to work towards world peace, then we should review and examine our thinking on a large scale.[53] In 2004, when speaking at a global conference at the United Nations, he further spoke of the potential of education to provide a globally viable ethos, saying that if "global ethics is implemented through educational institutions…these aims can be broadly promoted in a sustainable fashion over the long term."[54] In the same speech, he grieved that "formal education today tends to emphasize the transmission of knowledge and skills, often neglecting areas facilitating the development of the sense of security or healthy personality within students."[55] Based on Shengyen's intellectual works and DDM's investment in academic institutions, it is clear that Dharma Drum sees the potential for social melioration in academic education. Specifically, its potential is sourced in academia's worldwide appeal, which can reach society to a degree on par with Shengyen's goals.

From the 1980s onward, Shengyen spent nearly half of his time in the United States. Through this experience abroad, he understood that socially and culturally, the world is swiftly becoming globalized. As a self-declared world citizen,[56] Shengyen has claimed his ideals are universal, and that cultivating the people's "minds and actions is a prerequisite to our purification of the larger realms of the world as a whole."[57] Thus, DILA's training of compassionate and respectful "global citizens" is an example of one pathway to a better world.[58] As Shengyen knew that religious doctrine is too narrow a scope to address the issues of our culturally diverse world, it has become secondary to secular disciplines in DILA's College of

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[53] Shengyen, "Eliminating Barriers, Enhancing Mutual Respect and Love" a Keynote Speech Presented on August 29, 2000 at the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders at World Peace Summit, United Nations, New York. Printed in *Establishing Global Ethics*, 11-2. Download available at http://chancenter.org/cmc/publications/free-literature/ (accessed 4/26/2016).

[54] Shengyen, "Establishing Global Ethics Through Education," (Presented on 1/28/2004 at a Conference entitled "Fighting and Preventing Terrorism: Education and Parenting for Peace and Global Ethics," United Nations Dag Hammarskjold Library Auditorium, New York). Printed in *Establishing Global Ethics*, 66. Download available at http://chancenter.org/cmc/publications/free-literature/ (accessed 4/26/2016).

[55] Ibid., 77.

[56] Denying nationalism, Shengyen called himself a world citizen. *Footprints in the Snow*, 198.

[57] Shengyen. *Meeting of Minds: A Dialogue on Tibetan and Chinese Buddhism.* Shengyen Education Foundation: Taipei, 2000, 35.

[58] Huimin Bhikshu, Setting Sail: Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts, http://www.dila.edu.tw/en/about (accessed 3/17/2016).

Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS). The Buddhist influence at CHSS is most apparent in its setting and its teleological orientation. Also, as will be discussed in the remaining chapters, a focus on consciousness and interdisciplinary approaches to topics of study are common themes at DILA.

This section has provided basic information on the development and philosophical aim of DILA. It is clear that Dharma Drum Mountain, home of DILA, has inherited the mission of social works and improvement from the Buddhist reformer Tàixū. Like Tàixū, Shengyen has emphasized the establishment of a pure land on earth,[59] a type of rhetoric that I investigate in the following chapter. Finally, I suggested that Dharma Drum expanded its educational scope beyond Buddhism to account for the diversity of belief systems in Taiwan, and because Shengyen understood it to be an invaluable tool for working towards DDM's humanistic goals. Now that this particular brand of university education is contextualized within DDM's organization, chapter two examines the relationship between the newly established College of Humanities and Social Sciences at DILA and Shengyen's social works.

Chapter two also considers whether the aims of education at Naropa and DILA have sectarian agendas. If the curriculum at these schools is serving to indoctrinate students, then it is a misuse of this secular academic medium. Additionally, chapter two uncovers the innovative aspects of these schools' Buddhist-inspired pedagogies, and begins to explore some of the main issues preventing Naropa's style of contemplative education from becoming commonplace in public higher education.

[59] Pittman, 2001, 283.

New religious movements…are more accurately regarded as adaptations of religion to new social circumstances… In their style and in their specific appeal they represent an accommodation to new conditions, and they incorporate many of the assumptions and facilities encouraged in the increasingly rationalized secular sphere.[1] –Bryan Wilson

CHAPTER 2. RELIGIOUS OR EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION?

Naropa and DILA's Buddhist backgrounds affect both their orientations and organization—but to what extent? How Trungpa and Shengyen have adapted their teaching methods to meet the needs of higher education is of interest for a few reasons. For one, both Naropa and DILA claim to approach higher education holistically; that is, by providing an education that promotes healthy maturation of the whole student, as opposed to solely academic knowledge and skills.[2] This must be done in a secular way, however, because in the United States preferential treatment of any religious doctrine in state-funded educational institutions is unconstitutional. Also, no "indoctrinated" topics of study are allowed, even if they are not given preferential treatment. This chapter investigates the orientation of these two schools by identifying the educational insights and innovations taking place in them, and assessing whether they are secular, or at least non-sectarian. The importance of this inquiry is in determining the feasibility of using aspects of their innovative pedagogies in public education.

2.1 Elements of Innovation at Naropa and DILA

Institutions like Naropa and DILA are interesting in that they provide the opportunity for research that clarifies the boundaries between the social goals of religious and secular institutions. The education offered at both schools uses secular academics and framework to organize a university from perspectives developed in Buddhist thought and practice. As I have mentioned, both schools' founders believed that bringing together ways of knowing from both the East and

[1] Wilson, Bryan. "'Secularisation': Religion in the Modern World," in *The World's Religions: The Study of Religion, Traditional and New Religion.* Peter Clarke, and Sutherland, Stewart, Eds. London, US: Routledge, 2002, 207.

[2] Recently, however, Americans has found some practices, like mindfulness meditation and yoga, to be very effective methods of personal development. Yet, the religious origins of these practices make them a problematic addition to public education. This will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

the West would promote a well-rounded higher education.[3] If there is value in bringing together the intellectual lineages of the East and West, then perhaps some of the pedagogies utilized at these schools can and should be considered in secular universities. Before leaning toward such a conclusion, however, I must examine the extent to which the innovations and orientation of these schools are legally acceptable in American public higher education.

There is a fine line between education and indoctrination. As previously noted, Shengyen was attracted to the fact that academia is a respected and authoritarian medium through which ideas are spread worldwide. Thus, because these schools are outgrowths of religious traditions, Shengyen and Trungpa's intentions for entering the domain of higher education must be considered. Also, it is important to ask whether the teaching methods and curriculum at these schools breach the code of methodological non-sectarianism, or if they are simply indoctrinating students into a religious paradigm. To determine whether the innovations at these schools are non-sectarian or secular, this chapter's analysis of these schools' educational orientation will take the following form.

The first task is to look for signs of an overtly religious agenda underlying their educational missions. First, I will examine the integral factors of Naropa and DILA's mission statements and how the institutions enforce them. If either school's central academic focuses advocate a particular religious tradition, then the orientation is, of course, sectarian and unusable in public institutions. If, for example, students are not required to partake in religious practice, learn from indoctrinating subject matter, or take a religious stance, the schools might be found to uphold the non-sectarian standard. Even better is if students can select from a variety of academic topics of study and engage critically with the curriculum. Yet, if the topics of study are based on sectarian beliefs, and extend beyond the scope of what is academically supported, the schools are no longer academically neutral. Should we find that Naropa or DILA dogmatically promote a specific worldview, then perhaps their intentions are more dubious than what the schools claim them to be. The latter portion of the inquiry seeks to identify what, if anything, differentiates these schools from traditional institutions, and whether it is feasible to bring any of these innovations into public universities. These considerations are raised in the following two sections: first for Naropa, then for DILA.

[3] Trungpa is not the only educator with this claim. See Wexler, 2005, 31.

Pressures of the Modern World and Secularization

To properly assess whether Naropa and DILA follow an established pattern of religious secularization, I need to identify a few concepts in the study of religion that are central to understanding how religions change throughout their lifespan in response to social pressures. Revisionism and secularization are two of the most relevant concepts when describing the phenomena wherein religious movements take on a new form to lessen the tension between their religious sect and the larger society.[4] Then, there is also religious innovation. An innovation can be something entirely new; it is not necessarily an internal or doctrinal change like secularization and revision are. However, what is produced as a solution to an issue in a religious tradition will typically either be an innovation (something new), or a revival, revitalizing the aspect that has been failing. What these concepts have in common is that they refer to ways in which religions impose change upon themselves to be less at odds with, and more acceptable to, society.

Eileen Barker's[5] account of a revision within a new religious movement is that there must be a noticeable shift from the original path or beliefs of the movement.[6] It is common for new religious movements to go through many changes within the first few decades of their establishment because they face and work through challenges that well-established religions have already resolved.[7] As Barker notes, the term "re-vision" entails a new way of seeing things for the religion. For a movement within a religion to be considered a revision, there must already be an established norm. Both Chögyam Trungpa and Shengyen were leaders of NRMs in the United States and separated their educational institutions from their Buddhist organizations.[8] Is there evidence suggesting that these institutions can be considered a re-envisioning of each founder's form of Buddhism for a secular audience?

Stark and Bainbridge propose that secularization is a constantly occurring element of all "religious economies," and not a unique attribute of the contemporary world.[9] In their view, secularization refers to a process where religious organizations focus less on other-worldly

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[4] Of course, there are some religious innovations that move in the other direction, increasing the tension between the group and society.

[5] Eileen Barker is Emeritus professor of Sociology of Religion at the London School of Economics.

[6] Barker, Eileen. Editor. *Revisionism and Diversification in New Religious Movements*. Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing, 2014, 2.

[7] Barker, 2014, 1.

[8] The separation of DILA from DDM is not as distinct, which I discuss in section 2.3.

[9] Stark, Rodney, and Bainbridge, William Sims. *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, 429-30.

compensators as the economic and social needs of those within group become fulfilled.[10] Thus, as upward social mobility causes the organizations to place less emphasis on the non-material, other-worldly elements, the less-privileged constituents will either seek to reform the group, or seek out other organizations. Consequently, Stark and Bainbridge theorize that this process leads to schisms of religious organizations as a consequence of becoming more worldly and accommodating to the non-religious aspects of their cultural contexts. The process of secularization, they say, is a primary and ubiquitous dynamic of religious economies that stimulates religious revival and innovation.[11] Although secularization is an ongoing process, Stark and Bainbridge also argue that, overall, religion will not become outmoded.[12] The reason why religion is bound to stand the test of time, they say, is that some of the things religion deals with are immaterial, like questions of ultimate value and meaning, or what happens to one's consciousness upon death. As long as people have questions that science cannot address, religion will continue to provide a social benefit.

The next two sections look at Naropa University and DILA as possible innovations emerging out of their founders' religious movements. The relevance of this inquiry is that each school is openly inspired by Buddhist principles and traditions. That this inspiration precludes the value of their educational methods, however, is in question. The following two sections consider the paths of Naropa and DILA as either educational innovations, or as religious innovations that support the goals of two Buddhist sects. If the paths of Naropa, DILA, and normative non-sectarian academia are compatible, then perhaps utilizing the medium of higher education can be considered as an appropriate strategy for working towards humanistic goals.

[10] A "compensator" refers to "the belief that a reward will be obtained in the distant future or some other context which can not be immedietly verified." See Stark and Bainbridge, 1985, 6.

[11] Ibid., 430-1.

[12] Ibid., 431.

2.2 Characterizing Naropa's Innovation

This section examines Naropa's religious affiliation, as well as its mission, values, and educational orientation. The first issue is that of Naropa's intellectual foundation in Buddhism. Trungpa placed a tremendous value on contemplative practices, and thusly, at Naropa University, pioneered the method of integrating contemplative practices into higher education. Even though some contemplative practices are shown to have positive psychological effects,[13] it must be established that this pedagogy is not forwarding a sectarian agenda if it is to be considered for use in the public sphere. Thus, we must clearly establish how Naropa articulates the integration of contemplative practices as an innovation benefiting the aims of education, not religion.

What Kind of Innovation is Naropa University?

There is no doubt that Naropa University is innovative, but it is unclear what this innovation intends to accomplish. Being a pioneer of "Contemplative Education" is the most notable pedagogical innovation that can be credited to Naropa University. This innovation was propelled by Trungpa Rinpoche's belief that the use of contemplative practices to enhance mindfulness and awareness would help students attain deeper personal understanding in their academic and artistic disciplines.[14] The concern, however, is that it cannot be a Buddhist plot to get religion into schools.

Louis Komjathy, for example, has noted that this is a common doubt in his list of "frequently asked questions" about Contemplative Studies.[15] Thus, it would be problematic for any school to adopt strictly Buddhist-derived meditation as normative, because it might be interpreted as promoting religion.[16] This chapter's study of Naropa is not the first of its kind. In 1999, Robert Goss, a professor of Comparative Religion at Webster University, studied Naropa

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[13] Mindfulness Schools "Benefits," http://www.mindfulschools.org/about-mindfulness/mindfulness-in-education/ (accessed 11/26/2016).

[14] Sigman, Stuart J. "Academic Plan 2009-2014" pp 3. http://naropa.edu/documents/departments/academic-affairs/academic-plan.pdf (accessed 1/1/2017).; Hunter, Ann. "The Legacy of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche at Naropa University: An Overview and Resource Guide." Allen Ginsberg Library, Naropa University, pp. 23-24.

[15] Professor Komjathy is founding co-chair of the Contemplative Studies Group of the American Academy of Religion. Komjathy, "General Information," http://home.sandiego.edu/~komjathy/Homepage_of_Louis_Komjathy/Information.html (accessed 3/17/2017).

[16] Komjathy, Louis. "Contemplative Studies: FAQ," pp. 2. Posted on the Contemplative Studies Website 10/10/2016, http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/documents/contemplative-studies/faq.pdf (accessed 1/29/2017).

University's orientation in "Buddhist Studies at Naropa: Sectarian or Academic?"[17] Ultimately, Goss found Naropa to be a practitioner-friendly institute that provided Buddhist education while upholding non-sectarian educational values.[18] Although no identifiable sectarian agendas are apparent at Naropa, its emphasis on the wisdom of religious traditions is not manifest in public universities.

The previous chapter explained how the religious and educational institutions founded by Trungpa broke legal ties in the mid-1980s for accreditation purposes.[19] As a separate entity from Trungpa's religious organization, the establishment of Naropa does not qualify as religious revision, according to Barker's definition cited in the previous section. Although it cannot be considered an internal revision, the origin of Naropa is a peculiar phenomenon; it was founded as a traditionally secular organization that emerged out of a religious movement (followers of Trungpa). Although Naropa is not affiliated with the Vajradhatu Society (Trungpa's religious institution), the two do share many of the same values (which is logical, given the fact that both had the same founder), and may be on parallel paths, one religious, and one secular.

Naropa's organizational split from the Vajradhatu Society allowed two aspects (sectarian and secular) of the initial group to take separate paths. The spontaneous formation of the secular institution allowed the group to bypass the collapse or schism that is associated with Stark and Bainbridge's model of secularization.[20] The typical reason for schisms, say Stark and Bainbridge, is that after the secularization of a religious movement has reached a certain point, it can no longer provide the other-worldly benefits that participants require of it.[21] Yet as a deliberately secular organization, Naropa University has no need to provide such compensators. It is held accountable to uphold the requirements it has taken on as an institution of higher learning.

Attempting to enter the secular sphere is something that different forms of Buddhism have been doing for quite a while, which is even reflected in Tàixū's effort to destruct the magisterial boundary[22] between the scientific and spiritual aspects of human experience with the

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[17] Goss, Robert E. "Buddhist Studies at Naropa: Sectarian or Academic?" in *American Buddhism: Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship,* 1999, 215-237.

[18] Ibid., 215.

[19] Ibid., 220-1.

[20] Stark and Bainbridge, 1985, 429-30.

[21] Ibid., 431.

[22] Chapter three makes more use of S.J. Gould's concept of religion and science as non-interfering magisterium.

creation of "Buddhism for human life" (*rénshēng fójiào* 人生佛教). Chapter one also mentioned that Naropa's format is non-sectarian, in line with Trungpa's ecumenical *Rimé* philosophy and Shambhala teachings, but this does not inevitably equate to a secular education. Rather, it more accurately refers to Naropa's openness to the world's various sources of contemplative practices and arts that foster healthy cognitive and moral development.[23] The school requires its students to participate in a contemplative practice, while allowing them to choose from various religious and non-religious options.[24] Highly valuing contemplative practices without promoting a specific sectarian practice represents both a departure from and a continuance of Buddhist culture. It could be argued, however, that one would expect to see phenomena like this in the "melting-pot" that American culture is sometimes described as.

Naropa's Mission and its Implementation

Naropa's 2009-2010 self-study listed seven underlying core themes that inform and guide its mission and course planning, while the list also parallels the current form of its online mission statement.[25] These seven core themes guiding Naropa's curriculum and development are:

1. Naropa University's preeminent role in contemplative education;
2. Our view of human beings as inherently good;
3. Our view of students as whole persons and lifelong learners;
4. The interplay of inner development and engagement with the world;
5. The simultaneous valuing of Naropa's Buddhist heritage and other religious traditions;
6. The value of diversity, justice, and equity;
7. The impact of a Naropa education not only on students but also on bettering the world's condition.[26]

Although Buddhist doctrines are not officially endorsed by Naropa, there is a tinge of Asian philosophy that comes through in these core themes and in the mission statement. For instance,

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[23] Goss, Robert E. "Buddhist Studies at Naropa: Sectarian or Academic?" 1999, 219.

[24] There is a three-credit requirement of "mind/body practice" as part of the core curriculum that all students must take. Courses that fulfill this requirement range from Aikido and Yoga to the centering prayer. See Naropa University, "Core Curriculum," http://catalog.naropa.edu/current/programs/undergraduate/core-curriculum/index.php (accessed 2/13/2017).

[25] Naropa University Mission Statement. https://www.naropa.edu/about-naropa/mission-and-values/ (accessed 1/17/2017).

[26] Naropa University 2009-10 Self-study, pp. 38. Downloaded at https://naropa.edu/documents/misc/about-naropa/self-study-final-2010.pdf (accessed 12/4/2016).

the understanding of inter-relatedness underlies various disciplines and topics of study at Naropa.[27] This is reflected in the multiple transpersonal focuses in Naropa's School of Clinical Mental Health Counseling,[28] as well as a program in Ecopsychology,[29] all of which have the basic assumption of self and other as co-influential. The theories found in transpersonal and eco-psychology also share a common understanding with Naropa's mission statement (see themes four and seven)—an understanding that, ultimately, no student is separate from, and without influence on, his or her environment and society. This philosophical likeness to the Mahayana notion of *pratītyasamutpāda* (interdependent arising), though, does not make it correct for scholars to pigeonhole Naropa into a category of adhering to a "Buddhist" or "process-theorist" brand of education.

The implementation of the seven core themes has been an ongoing institutional issue and, in 2009, the faculty at Naropa produced a set of six learning outcomes (or competencies) as a mechanism to enact its mission.[30] These six competencies, which are embedded in the curriculum of all its degree programs, are considered by the faculty to be the hallmark of a Naropa education. Teachers are instructed to use them as guideposts when designing and teaching their courses. The six learning outcomes are:

1) Competency in Contemplative Theory and Practice;
2) Skillfulness in Addressing Diversity and Ecological Sustainability;
3) Ability to Employ Multiple Modes of Inquiry, Knowing and Expression;
4) Embody Intra-and Inter-personal Capacities;
5) Demonstrate Knowledge and Skill in a Discipline or Area of Study;
6) Apply Learning in Real World Settings.[31]

There is no one-to-one correlation connecting each of the six learning outcomes to the seven core themes of Naropa's mission statement, as some of the learning outcomes feed into and play off

[27] Again, this is the topic discussed in chapter four.

[28] Naropa University "Clinical Mental Health Counseling MA." http://www.naropa.edu/academics/masters/clinical-mental-health-counseling/index.php (accessed 12/14/16).

[29] Naropa University, "Ecopsychology MA." http://www.naropa.edu/academics/masters/ecopsychology/index.php (accessed 12/14/16).

[30] Sigman, Stuart J. "Academic Plan 2009-2014," pp. 17.

[31] Here I only list the six learning outcomes, but I discuss the mutual dependence of these competencies in the following two chapters. See Sigman, Stuart J. "Academic Plan 2009-2014," 19-20.

of each other. Additionally, I find it significant that contemplative theory and practice is at the top of both lists. As I understand students' attainment of contemplative competency to be what Trungpa emphasized as special to Naropa, I will turn my focus to this outcome's implementation.

A portion of Naropa's educational vision includes the statement that the Eastern aspect of its educational heritage includes exposing students to a "range of mindfulness practices that cultivate presence, clarity and integrity. These practices spark the student's courageous inquiry into self, society and nature."[32] A 2009 undergraduate survey consisting of 357 students revealed that a majority (81.8%) were pleased with the contemplative aspects of their education,[33] while 88% of these same students considered the integration of contemplative studies with the rest of their education to be effective. Moreover, three-quarters of these undergraduates (75.2%) were satisfied with the handling of the diverse religious traditions on campus.[34] Similarly, in the same 2009 poll, 85% of 421 graduate students expressed satisfaction with the contemplative aspects of their degree program.[35] Yet, one might also argue that a poll of Naropa students is not a representative sample of the broader population, or even of students at any other public university.

A question raised by Robert Goss in the study cited earlier was whether the emphasis placed on practicing contemplative exercises weakens Naropa's academic standards.[36] Goss concluded that, at Naropa, the integration of contemplative practice "negates neither academic study nor scholarship; it exemplifies a traditional Buddhist approach to pedagogy which joins

[32] Sigman, Stuart J., "Academic Plan 2009-2014," pp. 18; As previously mentioned, the school offers a variety of practices for the student's choosing, including sitting meditation, compassion practices, Centering Prayer, T'ai Chi Chuan, Yoga, Chinese brushstroke, and Ikebana. See Naropa University. "Transform Yourself."

[33] Sigman, Stuart J., "Academic Plan," pp. 10.

[34] Ibid., 9-10.

[35] Ibid., 14.

[36] Goss, Robert E. "Buddhist Studies at Naropa: Sectarian or Academic?" 1999, 230-1.

personal experience with what is learned in study."[37] Although Naropa's educational methodology is unconventional, it appears that Naropa University does not provide sectarian or indoctrinating topics of study, but is rather a place where wisdom is available from a wide range of traditions.[38]

Chögyam Trungpa was skillful in navigating American legal standards and, by using the right language and mechanisms to implement his ideas, he did what was required for Naropa to earn accreditation and remain non-sectarian. However, if intentionality were as important in the American legal system as it is in Buddhist teachings, I might be unable to clearly determine whether Naropa's mission is sectarian.[39] Due to the parallel philosophies at the institutions founded by Chögyam Trungpa, one secular and one religious, the orientation of Naropa University is somewhat ambiguous. There are subtle signs that Naropa's values and mission, although using non-Buddhist terminology, align well with Trungpa's religious teachings.[40] On this note, chapter four discusses more how themes in Naropa's mission statement and psychology programs share conceptual similarities with the paradigm of interdependent arising. Even so, this does not undermine the basic concept of coupling academic and contemplative studies.

I suspect that a primary hindrance to the widespread study of contemplative practices in American public education is a lack of funding for the Humanities. Because Contemplative Studies programs are currently non-existent in many public universities, new positions would have to be created in the Humanities departments. This is a tall order considering steady declines in Humanities degrees conferred in recent years.[41] Typically, funding for higher education follows the basic economic rule of supply and demand—as the demand for the humanities declines, the resources allocated to these departments declines in kind. Also, until the benefits of

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[37] Ibid., 231.

[38] Ibid., 215; Sigman, Stuart J. "Academic Plan 2009-2014" pp. 4.; Midal, Fabrice. *Chögyam Trungpa: His Life and Vision.* Boston: Shambhala Press, 2004, 253.

[39] Furthermore, it is impossible to infer Trungpa's intentions in the past from assessing the current state of Naropa.

[40] Similarities, though, does not mean equivelence. Although not academically viable in many cases, I take Trungpa's oppenness to many sources of wisdom (secular and religious) as an opprotunity draw parrallels between concepts stemming from various sources.

[41] One study revealed a 8.7% decline in undergraduate, and 6.7% decline in graduate degrees in the humanities from 2012-2014. See Jaschik, March 14, 2016.; Lewin, October 30, 2013.

contemplative practices become more popularly understood and accepted, it is unreasonable to require that all students practice contemplative education as a general education requirement.

In order to parse out the reasons for making such an investment, chapter three begins to examine the academic benefits of the critical first-person study of contemplative practices. Because most of the contemplative practices originate in religious traditions, hypothetically, departments of Religious Studies could incorporate them as electives in collaboration with other departments. As electives, however, this type of implementation would not have the widespread application or use that Trungpa intended. Additionally, chapter three discusses the future of Contemplative Studies and how a handful of American universities (Brown, Emory, San Diego, Rice, University of Redlands, University of Virginia, and University of Michigan) have recently invested in creating interdisciplinary degree programs to study the effects of contemplative practices on practitioners.[42] Before moving to this discussion, the following section turns to the educational insights of Dharma Drum Mountain's Institute of Liberal Arts (DILA), and examines how they may straddle the border of religious and educational innovation.

2.3 DILA's Vision of Social Improvement through Education

This section takes a closer and more critical look at the Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts, Dharma Drum Mountain's (DDM) non-sectarian institution of higher learning. As we have observed, Shengyen's acceptance of cultural and intellectual pluralism motivated his drive to build DILA's College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS). My interest in DILA, which is reflected in this section, is its implementation of Shengyen's idea that curriculum developers and faculty members at institutions of higher learning have an enormous social responsibility—because these places have the power to uplift the moral character of humanity. Mainly, this section questions whether the ethical and humanitarian concerns Shengyen had when developing DILA reflect more general concerns that public education also shares. It is worth noting that

[42] University of San Diego. "Contemplative Studies: Interdisciplinary Programs." http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/contemplative-studies/ (accessed 1/24/2017).

almost all the activities (Buddhist or not) at DDM qualify as one of its three types of "education" mentioned in chapter one (university education, universal education, and extensive caring education).[43] Indeed, it appears that the boundary between education and religious practices is institutionally blurred at DDM.

Unlike Naropa, the role of meditation is not entirely transparent in DILAs pedagogy, as it is required in only two of the four CHSS programs. In the programs that require it, however, it is Chan (a Buddhist based) meditation that is practiced. As noted by one professor at DILA,[44] "there will be a meditation class included in the Life Education and Social Enterprise programs starting next year [2016-17]. The class will be for [students] to think about the meaning of life more inwardly, and what they're here for."[45] Because DDM is in Taiwan, it is more at liberty to integrate meditation practices in DILA's curriculum and admit that they are Chan—a term, which in Chinese, doubles as a generic word for meditation. As Naropa has done, schools in the United States must provide various options (secular and religious), or focus on psychological studies showing the effects of meditation and mindfulness if they want a program to include a contemplative practice learning requirement.

In the summer of 2016, I had the opportunity to visit Dharma Drum Mountain in Taiwan and interview several DILA faculty members.[46] Our conversations mostly focused on curriculum, although we did discuss how the position of public schools in the United States as "methodologically agnostic" complicates the discussion of a holistic orientation toward education.[47] In response to this, DILA's faculty members shared their opinions with me concerning the extent to which religious beliefs influence the College of Humanities and Social

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[43] The three types are: university education (大學院教育), universal education (大普化教育), and extensive caring education (大關懷教育). See Yu, 2010, 28-9.

[44] There are currently eleven teaching faculty members employed at DILA. Since I am obliged to keep the interviewee's names and positions at the university anonymous, I will henceforth refer to them as professors X, Y and Z, followed by the point of time in the interview the statement was recorded. See DILA, "Faculty Overview" http://www.dila.edu.tw/en/node/13120 (accessed 2/20/2017).

[45] Professor Y interview, July 20, 2016, 38' 40".

[46] A note on the interview quotations: While the interviews were largely in English, Chinese words were spoken from time to time. When they are used, I will provide both the Chinese character and its English translation. Also, I have made efforts to stay true to the exact words spoken, but in some cases, have corrected the grammar so that the sentences improve in clarity.

[47] The concept of Holistic Education is the central focus of chapter four. Briefly though, it is an orientation to education that aims to help students mature as whole-persons: academically, emotionally, and socially.

Sciences. Overall, they assured me that other than DILA's proximity to the monastic university and practicing Buddhists (besides the fact that it was also organized, developed, and created in the minds of practicing Buddhists) the CHSS is as non-sectarian an institution as most American universities.[48] Moreover, many of CHSS's professors were educated in the United States and are not openly members of DDM's religious organization, an observation that lends credence to this claim.[49] I asked one professor about the relationship between Shengyen's goals for DILA and his idealistic aims of "uplifting the character of humanity and building a pure land on earth." In response to the query, Professor X said:

> DDM tries to show Taiwanese society, or maybe the whole world, a different picture of the earth through Buddhist eyes. That is why Shengyen wanted to build a new university; he thought that education was the best way to change people. I think so too. When I was a graduate student, a professor said something that shocked me. He said, "You take a course, then you see a different world." The world is the same, but I do see a difference because I think about the world in a different way. When we can see people and society differently, then we can show others a different way, we can make a change. That is what DILA really wants to do.[50]

Shengyen's insight was that by its intrinsic nature, education is a transformative process for students, who are, in turn, active in the world in many ways. This constitutes the central theme that I explored when researching DILA's methodology and orientation. Because schools can influence people and produce change in the world, Shengyen saw it as a highly valuable tool, a tool that should have a clear, socially meliorative use. For him, the purpose was to raise the quality of human life—which depends on how each person experiences the world.

[48] Interviews: Professor X, 1hr 06' 50"; Professor Z, Recording 2, 14' 17"- 16' 40".
[49] Interviews: X, 5' 15"; Y, 50' 10"; Z, Recording 2, 24' 20".
[50] Professor X, 1hr 02'45".

The Rhetoric of Purifying the World through Education

Dharma Drum's educational orientation is focused on heightening the global ethos, which is also a necessary condition for the realization of its vision to build an "earthly pure land."[51] This rhetoric, which is found in much of the information on DDM, needs to be clarified. Shengyen taught that the "pure land" refers to a shift in perception.[52] The Chan pure land, says Shengyen, "is achievable here and now—it is primarily a state of mind."[53] Dharma Drum's notion of the pure land is closely linked to a line of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*.[54] In 2008, one year before his death, Shengyen delivered the keynote address at the World Buddhist Forum, in which he quoted the sūtra. He said that "if the mind is pure, the land is pure...if more people become pure in mind, the world in which we live will be turned into a pure land."[55] Elsewhere, in his writings on ethics, Shengyen said that a pure land in the human realm is only possible "when the qualities of human beings are raised,"[56] a claim echoing his 2008 use of the sūtra. The frequent use of this logic reflects Shengyen's theory that, ideally, an education oriented toward understanding the interplay between an individual's mental well-being and social sphere will affect her or his relationships and, ultimately, humankind.

One implication of this view is that Shengyen's greater hopes for humanity are predicated on moral cultivation at the level of individuals. Shengyen has described his view of DILA's educational path as similar to the traditional Confucian ethical scheme, which focuses on the relationships a practitioner has to his or her ever-changing field of influence. This path is influenced by a worldview that takes for granted the interactive nature of an individual with

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[51] The Common Ethos of Dharma Drum Mountain: Our vision: to uplift the character of humanity and build a pure land on earth; Our spirit: to give of ourselves for the benefit of all. Our direction: to return to the original intention of the Buddha and work for the purification of the world; Our approach: to promote comprehensive education and extend loving care to all. See "Common Ethos" http://www.puremindcenter.org/DDMBA.html (accessed 3/17/2016).

[52] Shengyen, *Footprints in the Snow: The Autobiography of a Chinese Buddhist Monk*, 196.

[53] Ibid.

[54] "If the bodhisattva wishes to acquire a pure land, he must purify his mind. When the mind is pure, the Buddha land will be pure." See Watson, 1997, 29. In addition to Shengyen personally citing the sūtra in multiple speeches, two of the professors I interviewed made references to the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*. See Professor X, 1hr 19' 45"; Professor Y, 42' 45".

[55] Shengyen, "Starting from the Mind," a Keynote Speech Presented on March 8, 2008 at the Second World Buddhist Forum, Jiangsu, printed in *Establishing Global Ethics*. Download available at http://chancenter.org/cmc/publications/free-literature/ (accessed 3/17/2016).

[56] Shengyen, *Six Ethics of the Mind, 73.*

society. In this view, the paths of individual transformation and world transformation are indistinct. This educational orientation is also found in Naropa University's mission statement, and is similar to the more general concept of holistic education, which is discussed further in chapter four.

Not all scholars give such charitable interpretations of Shengyen's ethical schema. D.R. Tuzzeo, for example, states that at DDM, "academia is actually integrated as a means ultimately to propagate Chinese Buddhism."[57] Tuzzeo's criticism is aimed at DDM's plan to transform humanity vis-à-vis individual moral cultivation, rather than directly copying the Christian missionary approach to proselytization. Tuzzeo claims that to propagate Chinese Buddhism, "DDM practitioners need simply to implement Buddhist practice and education in their own life, and the following stability and peace in that person will naturally radiate outwards to affect other relationships and, ultimately, humanity."[58] According to Tuzzeo, Dharma Drum's utilization of education is a means to prevent the extinction of Chinese Buddhism by way of promoting DDM, the last bastion of Chan. Thus, Tuzzeo's interpretation takes the stance that education at DDM is a religious revision as defined earlier by Eileen Barker.[59]

I argue against Tuzzeo's designation of DDM's academic establishments as serving strictly to indoctrinate its students. While it is true that the separation of religious and secular institutions are not as distinct at DILA as they are at Naropa, other than the single Chan option for the contemplative course, sectarian teachings do not seem to enter the curriculum.[60] This suggests that just because an academic institution is located within a religious institution,

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[57] Tuzzeo, Daniel Ryan. "Education, Invention of Orthodoxy, and the Construction of Modern Buddhism on Dharma Drum Mountain," 2012, 1.

[58] Ibid., 83.

[59] Barker, Eileen. Ed. *Revisionism and Diversification in New Religious Movements*. Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing, 2014, 2.

[60] In addition to the curriculum descriptions in faculty interviews, the course listings for the CHSS programs do not have any specifically Chan topics of study. When topics relating to Buddhism are studied, the topic is studied from the perspective of various schools of thought. See course listings at: DILA, Master of Life Education: Course List. http://le.dila.edu.tw/academics/sll/3490; Master of Community Empowerment: Degree Planning. http://cr.dila.edu.tw/?page_id=1501; Master of Social Enterprise and Innovation: Required Subject List. http://se.dila.edu.tw/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/104%E7%B4%9A%E5%BF%85%E9%81%B8%E4%BF%AE%E7%A7%91%E7%9B%AE%E7%B8%BD%E8%A1%A8.pdf; Master of Environment and Development: Required Subject List. http://ed.dila.edu.tw/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/104%E7%B4%9A%E7%92%B0%E5%A2%83%E5%AD%B8%E7%A8%8B%E7%A7%91%E7%9B%AE%E7%B8%BD%E8%A1%A8%E5%AE%9A%E7%A8%BF.pdf. (All accessed 2/20/2017).

students will not necessarily receive a religious education. Furthermore, Tuzzeo's argument that the underlying aim of DDM's academic institutions is to propagate Chinese Buddhism presupposes his conflation of indoctrination and education. Making a distinction between the two terms should contribute to dispelling this misunderstanding. At the time of Tuzzeo's research (2012), the only degrees conferred by Dharma Drum were in Buddhist studies. Even then, Dharma Drum Sangha University was the only institute explicitly training its students as members of Dharma Drum. It was at Dharma Drum Buddhist College, which has recently been absorbed into DILA, that Tuzzeo believed DDM was crossing the line between indoctrination and education.[61] Rather, my research has indicated that at DDM's academic institutions specializing in Buddhist Studies (other than the Sangha University), students are free to major in any number of Buddhist traditions, not only Chinese.[62]

Thus, to assume that attracting new followers is the chief purpose of DILA, is to make a narrow-sighted and uncharitable interpretation of Shengyen's aspirations for, and philosophy of, higher education. In a speech on global ethics and moral education, Shengyen said, "in a pluralistic world, the one sacred principle which all humanity should come to understand is seeking common ground while preserving differences."[63] Moreover, Shengyen argued that cultivation of the mind is relevant to people regardless of national and religious borders. Thus, the source of DILA's holistic orientation emanates from a Buddhist teacher, but the orientation itself is apparently aimed at social harmony rather than sectarian growth.

What is Innovative about DILA's Approach?

DILA, currently in its second academic year, is still developing its curriculum so that it can best fulfill Shengyen's goal of a graduate institute contributing to the education of well-rounded graduates who, as mentioned in the first chapter, are "capable of responding to the challenges of

[61] Tuzzeo, Daniel Ryan. 2012, 103.

[62] DILA's College of Buddhist Studies claims to maintain "an ecumenical spirit which encourages the study of all major Buddhist traditions (Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan) and celebrates the diversity of Buddhist traditions." See DILA, "Department of Buddhist Studies: About." https://en.bs.dila.edu.tw/ (accessed 2/20/2017).

[63] Shengyen. "The Sacred in a Pluralistic World." Presented on February 1, 2002 at the World Economic Forum, New York printed in *Establishing Global Ethics*. Pg. 41 Download available at http://chancenter.org/cmc/publications/free-literature/

globalization with the values of compassion, wisdom, harmony, and respect."[64] When asked about the distinguishing features of DILA's pedagogy, three aspects that the professors who were surveyed all mentioned were: the first-year seminar that is required of all new students, the school's interdisciplinary framing of each program, and the campus environment.[65]

First, the freshman forum is a core class that every freshman, whether an undergraduate, master's, or a Ph.D. student, must take. The title of the forum is "Mind, Life, and Environment."[66] It is transdisciplinary, offering lectures from professors in each program (Life Education, Community Empowerment, Social Enterprise, Environment and Development, and Buddhist Studies).[67] The goal of the course is to help students understand, starting from how an individual interacts with the world, the points of connection between the scopes of all four programs.[68] The culminating course project has students design service projects to engage with the local Jinshan community.[69] These projects range from working with a local retirement home, to economic and business related projects, to environmental projects, such as drawing up plans for an "eco-village."[70] Similarly, this actively engaged first-person element is found throughout all four of the programs at DILA's College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The second innovative aspect is DILA's interdisciplinary framing of each program. One DILA professor succinctly summarized the strengths and weaknesses of this approach, arguing that its unique formulation prepares students to engage with real-world issues:

> In the more old-fashioned universities, they have divided disciplines into sociology, economics, environmental engineering, and things like that. There are advantages and disadvantages to having the divisions like this. With the division of knowledge, you can pursue a specific expertise, but now the issues involve all kinds of other expertise, knowledge, and perspectives. For sociologists, they might see an issue from a sociological point of view; for an economist, they see from an economic market point of

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[64] Bhikshu, Huimin. "About DILA" http://www.dila.edu.tw/en/about (accessed 4/26/2016).

[65] Professor X, 14' 30", 35' 30", 1hr 10' 08"; Professor Y, 45' 11"; Professor Z, recording 2, 14' 17". A brief introduction (in Chinese) to this seminar is located at http://mindlife.dila.edu.tw/?page_id=369 (accessed 2/20/2017).

[66] Professor Z, Recording 1, 9' 25".

[67] Professor Z, Recording 2, 20' 40".

[68] Ibid; Also, one section of the course covers theories of the mind from different Buddhist traditions. (Ibid., 18' 27").

[69] Professor Z, Recording 1, 9' 25".

[70] Professor X, 44' 45".

> view. But here we try to break the lines between these disciplines; I think one of the ideal features of CHSS is the interdisciplinary nature of the programs.[71]

DILA's professors claim that this wider focus allows the students to comprehend issues on a more practical level.[72] It would be ideal to have both a theoretical and a practical understanding they say, but the time constraints of master's programs in traditional disciplines often require a narrowness and depth that does not always allow for both. Hence, although the interdisciplinary approach may leave DILA's graduates lacking the philosophical and theoretical knowledge of the various disciplines that make up each program, students graduate having (hypothetically) engaged with its pragmatic aspects.[73]

Finally, these faculty members claim the third distinguishing aspect of DILA's pedagogy is its learning environment.[74] There are multiple ways to interpret this statement. One way, is that the environment represents a living implementation of Buddhism, where students learn not only through texts, but also through observing the lifestyle of the monks who also live on the mountain. Naturally, as they live in the same vicinity and share a dining hall, students can interact with active practitioners. This is the most obvious way through which DILAs environment differs from American and secular universities. Another professor associated DILA's environmental effect on students to Shengyen's teachings on "spiritual environmentalism":

> That is why Shengyen's idea is very good. He emphasized *jìngjiào* 境教, environmental education. He said that you could learn something from the environment you are in, and he was very concerned about the environment. Just look at *Fǎgǔshān* (Dharma Drum Mountain 法鼓山), it is a beautiful place; quiet, peaceful—and this affects people. In environmental education, that is a big issue. When you are in a good place you may feel peaceful, but when you get back to Taipei City, or New York City, you're another person.[75]

This professor's interpretation points toward an observation about consciousness and personal identity that is discussed in the following chapters. From the perspective that "who you

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[71] Professor Y, 45'11".

[72] Professor Y, 50'10"; Professor X, 2'40".

[73] In addition to writing a thesis, a graduation requirement at DILA is two semesters of fieldwork (working in the community). See Professor Z, Recording 2, 39'30".

[74] Professor Z, Recording 2, 14'17"- 16'40"

[75] Professor X, 23'00"-25'00".

are" is partially conditioned by one's environment, it is easier to understand how both Chögyam Trungpa and Shengyen said that the paths of individual intellectual development and of societal development are related. Although having a beautiful location is not an educational innovation, the psychological reasoning that led to placing a school in such an environment is somewhat novel.

Overall, there is no obvious reason to conclude that DILA's liberal arts programs share a sectarian agenda with Dharma Drum Mountain. The most sectarian aspect of the institute is that two of its programs have a contemplative requirement, and the only practice available is of Buddhist origin. Otherwise, the pedagogical insights are potentially relevant to any university. As previously stated, the central theme to take away from DILA's study is that education is an intrinsically transformative process. Not only is education transformative for students, but because when they "take a course and see a different world," the way students interact with the world can change, transforming it as well.[76]

Conclusion

This chapter sought to investigate two topics. The first focused on arguments surrounding the authenticity of Naropa University and DILA's claims to provide non-sectarian education. I have found these claims to be compelling, other than the lack of options for contemplative practices at DILA. At Naropa, the school is ecumenical in its approach to include contemplative practices from various sources. Although both schools see the need for contemplative practice in the curriculum, Naropa goes far beyond DILA in its academic integration, and provides options of various contemplative studies for its students. A weakness of Naropa's requirement of contemplative practices as a portion of general education, though, is that some students fail to see the direct relationship between the contemplative practices and other facets in their academic studies.[77]At DILA's College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Shengyen placed his role as a teacher of the Dharma secondary to promoting non-sectarian education because he knew religious activism was too narrow a path to address many of the troubling issues that face our culturally diverse world.

[76] Professor X, 1hr 02'45".
[77] Sigman, Stuart J. "Academic Plan 2009-2014" 10.

Even though these two schools appear to provide non-sectarian education to students, I have nonetheless identified elements of their Buddhist backgrounds in the descriptions related to each of the school's pedagogies and mission statements. I might also note that the examples I've provided reflect how the founders' particular Buddhist traditions have influenced these schools' formations. For example, Naropa's openness to teachings and contemplative practices from any world religion has been linked to the nineteenth-century *Rimé* movement in Eastern Tibet and Trungpa's Shambhala teachings. At DILA, according to a few of its faculty members and Shengyen, the process of student education can be likened to a statement made in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, wherein purifying one's mind ultimately has implications for the society and environment that a student lives in. Both examples reveal how Trungpa's Tibetan Vajrayāna background has flavored Naropa's culture, and similarly DILA's obvious influence from Shengyen as a Chinese teacher of a Mahāyāna tradition. Also, the rhetoric of "purification" at DILA and "transformation" at Naropa are features that clearly distinguish how the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna backgrounds of their founders have influenced their interpretations of the educational process.

The second task of this chapter was to identify the educational insights and innovations taking place at these schools. At both Naropa and DILA, education is a path toward social improvement, which is not pursued by building anything, but by individuals cultivating their minds and influencing others and society through their daily interactions. Chapter four discusses how the themes at Naropa and DILA that point to the reciprocal nature of individual and social influence should not be thought of as Buddhist simply because they coincide with the founders' beliefs. But first, the following chapter examines Naropa's claim that the study of contemplative practices, which have been developed over centuries with the intention to cultivate healthy habits of mind, can provide benefits in higher education.

The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will… An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence. But it is easier to define this ideal than to give practical directions for bringing it about.

–William James[1]

CHAPTER 3. TEACHING CONTEMPLATIVE TRADITIONS WITH LEARNER-CENTERED METHODS

This chapter represents a departure from the format of the first two chapters. The first two chapters introduced two schools with innovative Buddhist-inspired pedagogies, providing the foundation for the topic examined in the remainder of the project. The following two chapters, however, focus on the innovations drawn from these schools, and consider their relevance to American higher education. The two innovations (Contemplative Studies and "Holistic Education")[2] although related, are examined separately. While the first is a topic of study, the second concerns the social implications and aims, or teleology, of public education. The current chapter considers how learner-centered pedagogies can be applied to the study of contemplative religious traditions, and why this methodological addition is complementary to the study of these traditions.

Thus, this chapter moves to the topic of pedagogical approaches in Religious Studies, first problematizing the use of first and third-person methods concerning contemplative religious traditions. The world's various contemplative traditions are laden with accounts of issues that arise in cognition and conscious experience and, as a topic of study, students are rarely able to qualitatively research these aspects of the traditions.[3] This chapter's arguments suggest that educators in the Religious Studies should consider engaging in this somewhat new and undeveloped approach to teaching contemplative traditions.

[1] James, William. *The Principles of Psychology*. Vol. 1. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1890, 424.

[2] "Holistic Education" is defined and evaluated in chapter four.

[3] I do not wish to confuse the activity of "academic research" with the research that accompanies student learning in college. So, where this chapter mentions and discusses research, it is done so considering the implications that research has on the information given attention to in the classroom.

3.1 Two Methods for Conducting a Critical Inquiry

The first task of this section is to explain how the use of pedagogies that value engaging with first and third-person information (objective and subjective) are related to what I call the "two lineages of inquiry."[4] The first lineage has produced external, third-person inquiry, which has a dominant position in secular and academic institutions. The second lineage investigates individual experience and personal awareness, and in some cultural and religious traditions has been developed into a legitimate method of obtaining knowledge. It is due to the distinct origins of the two developed methods that Trungpa referred to Naropa as a university incorporating both Western and Eastern pedagogies.

The contemplative orientation at Naropa University is the first of its kind. At Naropa, all programs have a contemplative aspect and, as mentioned in chapter two, programs are beginning to pop up in universities throughout the United States to study how different contemplative methods affect the practitioners' minds and bodies.[5] These transdisciplinary programs emphasize the value of maintaining a connection between the practices and their cultural, philosophical, and religious heritages while studying them in a university setting. By combining theoretical and third-person methods with direct experience of the subject matter, a more personal and meaningful understanding of the traditions can be offered to the students.

The second aim of this section is to examine the limitations of these alternative pedagogical methods (utilizing first and third-person information) when applying them to the study of contemplative traditions. The methodological limitations will be judged by their ability to provide students with the best possible understanding of the traditions while maintaining an academic standard of non-sectarian education. I propose that learner-centered and objective pedagogical methods are both successful tools, but that each's ability to provide students with a holistic understanding of contemplative traditions is fundamentally limited. Although both first and third-person modes of inquiry have foundations in philosophical and religious traditions, the academic interaction between the two is a relatively recent phenomenon.

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[4] A note on the usage of *lineage*: The term "lineage" captures the feel of how these two methods and standards of inquiry have been culturally and internally developed and maintained through to the modern day.

[5] Again, these programs are located at: Brown University, Emory University, San Diego University, Rice University, University of the Redlands, University of Virginia, and the University of Michigan. University of San Diego. See "Contemplative Studies: Interdisciplinary Programs." http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/contemplative-studies/ (accessed 1/24/2017).

The Two Lineages

European thinkers of the seventeenth century and the Age of Enlightenment have heavily influenced the scientific preference for external and quantitative analysis. In contrast, half a world away, various religious traditions have continued to practice methods that examine the subjective and incorporeal aspects of experience—like the qualities of conscious experience, the power of intention, and the will. The separation of these two methodological orientations (empirical/external verification, and introspective examination) has become fixed to the point where, today, some consider them mutually exclusive.

A notable attempt at solidifying the distinction between the two fields of knowledge was presented by Stephen J. Gould in *Rocks of Ages.* Gould argues that there is no conflict or interplay between the domains (or "magisteria") of scientific and spiritual knowledge because the types of information they lay claim to are so dissimilar.[6] Could it be possible that we inhabit both a spiritual and a physical world, although somehow never the twain shall meet? This separation is exactly what Gould offers through the two magisteria of scientific and religious knowledge. Gould interprets science as accounting for "the empirical constitution of the universe…" and religious knowledge as accounting for "proper ethical values and the spiritual meaning of our lives."[7] According to him, each type of knowledge is provincial, confined to its "domain where one form of teaching holds the appropriate tools for meaningful discourse and resolution."[8] However amicable his explanation intends to be, there are several reasons to find it unsatisfactory.

Although it may be convenient to divide the world and the experiences that people have in the world into categories, from the phenomenological perspective, (for any particular person's conscious experience) the contents of both magisteria are simply different aspects of the same picture. Although both spiritually minded and empirically minded people live in the same (material) world, their subjective perspectives and values vary. I argue that the two magisteria Gould has proposed are by no means exclusive; like Venn-diagrams,[9] both domains of

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[6] This concept was expounded by S.J. Gould in: *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life.* New York: Ballantine Books, 1999.

[7] Gould, *Rocks of Ages*, 1999, 193.

[8] Ibid.

[9] The concept of Venn-diagrams is used to provide a way to visualize the two magisteria or domains of knowledge. Given any experience, some phenomena will be objectively quantifiable (like the temperature of

knowledge have interacting and non-interacting aspects. French astrophysicist Bruno Guiderdoni is one among the throng of scientists and academics who oppose Gould's distinction, asserting, "the notion that fact can be cleanly separated from value is absurd. The notion that our understanding of the material world can be cleanly separated from our experience of the spiritual world is impossible. The magisteria [physical and spiritual] are mixed, shuffled, irremediably joined."[10] The argument for developing pedagogies and research methods that include both magesteria is simple. When the qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry are considered together, as is consistent with the example of the Venn-diagram, a new, more complex area emerges. Inside this center field of the Venn-diagram is a more comprehensive method of learning, one that combines both the objective information and the lived experience.

In the humanities, separation of the two methods (such as the descriptions of emic and etic) is a matter of disciplinary convention. This habit, however, defines the type of information accepted as valuable to our inquiries, and consequently limits the scope of educational perspectives presented to students. Ramdas Lamb, an advocate of using first-person pedagogies in the examination of religious and cultural traditions, argues that the context in which research paradigms originate,

> [embeds them] with preconceived notions about what should be studied and the framework in which it should occur. Some methodologies and assumptions are broader than others, but all of them place limits on the approach. As scholars, it should be our task to question every boundary, since each confines what can be perceived, learned, analyzed, and understood.[11]

Moreover, if students are only exposed to the products of a particular line of thinking, alternative frameworks are in danger of being interpreted as irrelevant, subversive, or inappropriate, and

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water in a pool, and the physical effects on a person's body from jumping in cold water), and some will be subjective (like the excitement one gets and rejuvenation one feels after jumping in a pool of frigid water). The center portion of the Venn-diagram would be describing how one personally experiences the physiological shock of jumping in the water.

[10] Guiderdoni quoted in *Science and Spirit*, 17, 3, (May-June 2006): 59.

[11] Lamb, Ramdas. "Using a Spiritual Research Paradigm for Research and Teaching," in *Toward a Spiritual Research Paradigm: Exploring New Ways of Knowing, Researching and Being*. Edited by Jing Lin, Rebecca L. Oxford, and Tom Culham. Charlotte: Information Age Publishing, 2016, 73.

dismissed along these lines—even if they are shown to have merit in other contexts. Therefore, if one methodology is limited in its ability to provide students with a holistic understanding of the matter, it is the duty of educators to reconsider the "whats" "whys," and "hows" of the material being presented to students.

It is somewhat paradoxical that the academic discipline of religion has taken an empirical research methodology as its primary model, because the subject matter is deeply rooted in each religious practitioner's personal experience. When Ninian Smart, a pioneer in the discipline of Religious Studies, argued for the secular examination of religious phenomenon in higher education, he argued for the examination of the metaphysical, historical and experiential aspects of religion, not only its historical and sociological aspects.[12] If educators avoid exposing students to a research method that contributes to holistic, intimate understanding of the material, one must examine the roots of the discipline of Religious Studies' methodological rigidity. Perhaps the primary reason that the discipline undervalues qualitative research and teaching methods is that the information resulting from these methods is not as objective as the conventional third-person research narrative. If so, I reason that current trends in research concerning contemplative traditions suggest that (although reflexivity is a trait of good research) first-person qualitative research can be carried out in ways that do not compromise methodological agnosticism. Whatever the reason for its absence, academics remain divided as to whether subjective research on these topics falls within the domain of public education.

Scientific Materialism (SM) and the Third-Person Narrative

The first lineage of thought that I examine values objectivity, and thus utilizes external verification as a source of knowledge. Limiting its domain to shared, objective values, the third-person research methodology only considers information available to the five physical senses. Harold Roth, professor of Religious Studies and the Director of the Contemplative Studies Initiative at Brown University,[13] cites Alan Wallace (and others scholars who have studied the misuse of scientific methodologies in the modern academy) in support of his claim that

[12] Trueman, R. "Secular Education and the Logic of Religion (Book Review)." *British Journal of Educational Studies* 17, (1), 1969: 86-87.

[13] Brown University. "Researchers at Brown," https://vivo.brown.edu/display/hroth (accessed 11/25/2016).

"scientific materialism" currently dominates Religious Studies and the Humanities.[14] Due to a perceived "occidental" bias in early sociological and anthropological works, the Humanities and Social Sciences have since adopted the hard sciences' aim of objectivity. In the early stages of the discipline of Religious Studies, it was closely tied to Theological Studies. Consequently, when Religious Studies scholars sought to distance the academic study of religion from Theology, they instinctively utilized scientific methods of inquiry.

There are, of course, arguments opposing the inflexible use of scientific standards in the studies of the social sphere. These arguments' point of contention is that a vital dimension of experience is not addressed or valued when an "objective" standpoint is pursued. In an article arguing just this, Michael Cantrell claims that methodological atheism entails a materialistic ontology, which reduces religious phenomena and values as something socially constructed and thus non-real.[15] To Cantrell, objectifying religious worldviews and phenomena trivializes the truths of the religious person to the point where academia cannot say anything about them at all.[16]

Although empiricism can be equated with the scientific method, scientific materialism is something different. Rather, it is a worldview influenced by a misunderstanding of the scientific method. Scientific materialism is the common perspective of scientism, which asserts that nature (what is real, or what exists in the cosmos) is entirely material. It is an extreme ontology that denies the status of "real" to all things that cannot be objectively and materially quantified. In a materialistic ontology, subjective experiences are brain states, measured through physiological makeup (chemical and electromagnetic). Psychological and emotional states must also be considered exclusively in terms of chemical and physical-biological systems. Qualitative mind states, values, and virtues, are all thought of merely as social constructions. From the mechanistic perspective that all reality is purely material processes, this reality must be objectively definable and subject to falsifiability. Therefore, one's qualitative personal experience is thought to be fallible.

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[14] Roth. Harold D., "Contemplative Studies: Prospects for a New Field." *Teachers College Record* 108, (9), September 2006: 1787–1815, 1792.

[15] Cantrell, "Must a Scholar of Religion Be Methodologically Atheistic or Agnostic?" 2015, 14.

[16] Ibid., 16.

Proper science, on the other hand, is only a method, and therefore claims no ultimate ideology. As a research methodology, it functions in a manner that requires repeatability and the possibility of hypotheses and theories to be falsified. Furthermore, the scientific method is obviously useful; the empirical schema and its pursuit have born the fruits of medical science and the advancement of technology. Therefore, arguing against using the scientific method and the development of technologies and medicine is nonsensical; humans have always developed new ways to be in the world. Thus, the aim of this chapter is not to discredit science. I do mean, however, to make the distinction between traditional science and scientific materialism clear, and argue that the study of religion would do well to critically study and report on the subjective and qualitative aspects of contemplative traditions. A drawback of favoring materialistic, third-person descriptions in the discipline of Religious Studies is that, when applied to contemplative traditions (which have an abundance to say about subjective experience), a reliance on impersonal information bypasses and belittles a central aspect the very topic studied.

Scientific materialism (SM) undermines the topics contemplative traditions are concerned with, because it dismisses the subjectivity of first-person experience in its methodological pursuit of objectivity. Both (inwardly and outwardly oriented) intellectual lineages, however, have observed and struggled with the faultiness of subjective perspectives. Yet, they have coped with this observation by creating divergent methodological paths. Like the concepts of *Māyā* in the Indian spiritual traditions and the *veil of perception* in Lockean philosophy, SM assumes that phenomenal experience is colored with illusion, and this illusion is something that must be overcome or seen through. Thus, critical examination of the claims that religious traditions make about how specific practices affect the mind is not typical of Religious Studies research—even though many religious traditions deal exclusively with these subjects.

Introspection and the First-Person Experience

Although consciousness is something shared by everyone, it is sensed by no one; it is a prerequisite for phenomenal experience, but not completely understood by the physical sciences. It is widely known, however, that practitioners of several Eastern religious traditions (Buddhism

and other Indic and Chinese traditions) have been studying conscious experience, the workings of the mind, and forms of mind-body cultivation, for several centuries. The introspective practices in these religious and cultural traditions have been developed for many, often tradition-specific, purposes.[17]

The American forms of these practices, however, typically divorce them from any understanding of the array of socio-cultural context in which they originated. Recently, various forms of these cultural and religious traditions have become popular in America. While transcultural diffusion is an expected occurrence in today's technologically globalized world, it does not account for the widespread appropriation of these cultural and religious practices. The initial framework for America's openness to contemplative practices was spearheaded nearly a century ago by early twentieth-century pioneers bringing over Eastern religious traditions.[18] Some of these pioneers were from Asia, and others were Americans and Europeans who had traveled to Asian countries and returned with new knowledge. With a century of expansion across the Unites States, it is conceivable that these early transplants smoothed the path that made the popularity of the recent "mindfulness movement" possible, and for institutions like Naropa University to thrive for as long as it has.[19]

Trungpa's inspiration to integrate contemplative practices into the most normative form of higher education undeniably stems from his background in Buddhism,[20] and most of (but not all) the contemplative practices Naropa offer originate in religious traditions. Nonetheless, given the Religious Studies' preference for third-person narratives, the vast majority of American universities do not provide a critical first-person examination of these practices. Harold Roth observes that academics in Religious Studies "have become the masters of third-person scientific investigation, but we are mere novices in the arts of critical first-person scientific investigation."[21] Perhaps, preventing first-person methods from becoming mainstream is a

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[17] In some practices originating in Indian ascetic traditions, for example, practitioners aim to turn their focus away from sensory experiences toward other things that they deem important.

[18] For a broad narrative on the history of Buddhism spreading to America, see Rick Fields' *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America*, 1981.

[19] Also, see Jeff Wilson's *Mindful America,* where he draws parallels with the current popularization of mindfulness practices and how practical benefits have always been cited as reason for the spread and patronage of Buddhist practices throughout Asia and history. See Wilson, 2014, 4-8.

[20] I support this claim with a reminder that the university's name is a reference to the story affiliated with Naropa, the abbot of Nalanda.

[21] Ibid., 1787.

concern found throughout Religious Studies, that engaging in practices developed within a religion promotes a biased perspective, which is an academically fatal risk (and illegal in public schools). This concern is evidenced in the academic compartmentalization of contemplative practices. For example, there is a lack of historical and religious context taught with first-person studies of meditation, and an absence of learner-centered methods where contemplative traditions are studied.[22] Additionally, in recent years a few of the imported practices have been marketed as self-help strategies, therapeutic practices, or physical exercise.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, who developed a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program at Massachusetts Medical School in 1979, popularized the psychological and medical study of mindfulness.[23] This MBSR training program has become popular in K-12 schools around the country. In 2013, over 18,000 students and 750 teachers in 53 schools engaged in this mindfulness program,[24] which has been demonstrated to improve participants' "attention, self-control, emotional resilience, recovery from addiction, memory, and immune response."[25] The growing popularity of mindfulness meditation is likely due to its ability to be used in secular contexts, although it is tacitly known that mindfulness practice is derived from a religious context. Thus, mindfulness stays out of departments of religion, and the religious roots of mindfulness meditation are at most a side-note in academic courses expounding its benefits.

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[22] Currently, the University of Hawaii at Mānoa offers a course (Family Resources 435) entitled "Mindfulness and Skillful Living" with a course description that completely lacks any reference to the Buddhist origins of the practices. Rather, the listing describes the course as including "Lecture, discussion, and experiential activities of principles and practice of an evidence-based contemplative science...including applications to daily life." See UHM Course Descriptions: FAMR 435 http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/courses/departments/famr.htm (accessed 3/10/2017).

[23] Hyland, Terry. "On the Contemporary Applications of Mindfulness: Some Implications for Education." *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 49, no. 2. (2015): 170-86, 170.

[24] Yeager, Alice, and Sharon Howle. "Teaching Peace and Wellness as the Wisdom Path," in *Re-envisioning Higher Education: Embodied Pathways to Wisdom and Social Transformation*, (2013): 125-141, 128.

[25] Mindfulness Schools "Benefits," http://www.mindfulschools.org/about-mindfulness/mindfulness-in-education/ (accessed 11/26/2016); Also, based on work done in American schools, "Schoeberlein and Sheth (2009) list a wide range of benefits of mindfulness for both teachers—improving focus and awareness, increasing responsiveness to student needs, enhancing classroom climate—and students, in supporting readiness to learn, strengthening attention and concentration, reducing anxiety and enhancing social and emotional learning." See Hyland, 2015, 179-80; Schoeberlein and Sheth, 2009.

Academically, interest in mindfulness practices has risen dramatically over the last decade. Only one or two scholarly articles were written on the subject in 1980, whereas over 400 were published on the subject in 2011.[26] Even with the spike in recent interest, hardly any Religious Studies departments (or public universities for that matter) provide opportunities to critically study the original techniques, which are largely treated as separate practices. Jeff Wilson's recent book *Mindful America* is one of the few works that have started to demystify and re-contextualize the "mindfulness" practices (that have grown from Kabat-Zinn's program) within the traditions they originated from.[27] Wilson specifically examines the many ways in which Buddhist-derived contemplative practices are currently applied in American culture.

As previously mentioned, there are a handful of American Universities with programs dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of contemplative practices.[28] Also, mindfulness programs are currently researched in the disciplines of psychology and human development, which explore how they can be utilized in the treatment of issues including addiction and anxiety.[29] The justification is lacking, however, for why Religious Studies departments are not involved in the first-person studies of these practices. The various tools available to Religious Studies make it an appropriate setting to examine the contemplative traditions' practices in a way that also, historically, contextualizes their development and function. The following section discusses some more practical thoughts on how the incorporation of first-person learning methods could be implemented in Religious Studies. It also addresses worries educators might have about this pedagogical approach, and precautions that must be taken to satisfy public education's non-sectarian requirement when using learner-centered methods to study contemplative practices.

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[26] Hyland, Terry. "On the Contemporary Applications of Mindfulness: Some Implications for Education." *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 49, no. 2 (2015): 170-86, 171.

[27] Wilson, Jeff. *Mindful America: The Mutual Transformation of Buddhist Meditation and American Culture*, 2014.

[28] Roth, 2006; University of San Diego. "Contemplative Studies: Interdisciplinary Programs." http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/contemplative-studies/ (accessed 1/24/2017).

[29] Hyland, 2015, 170.

3.2 Contemplative Studies: Benefits of Inward Learning

The previous section clarified both the weakest and most fruitful features of two types of inquiry. The introspective method is subjective, and thus tends not to provide an abundance of falsifiable and objective information, which are the perceived strengths of the empirical method. Likewise, the scientific research paradigm lacks qualitative means to understand intangible things, such as habits, values, and goals—which are available to its first-person alternative. Yet, the latter methodology is more acceptable when discussing truth claims, which is a large portion of the academic pursuit.

Exclusive use of the normative third-person research methodology when teaching students does not provide a holistic understanding of certain phenomena discussed in Religious Studies because it only considers information defined by a particular set of criteria. Thus, using solely third-person research methods, a course on religious ascetics or Chan masters is limited to descriptive information regarding the tradition's material, historical, and sociological aspects, while neglecting features of the phenomenon unavailable to objective research methods. Hence, pedagogies that utilize syncretic methods of research must be developed if the discipline intends to provide students with access to a holistic understanding of the phenomenon within contemplative traditions. The prospect of a more holistic understanding of the traditions is the reason why merging the two previously discussed pedagogies appears to be a natural addition to their coverage in Religious Studies.

Aside from the proposed addition to the study of contemplative religious traditions, various disciplines in higher education already utilize learner-centered methods in courses on public speaking, the arts, foreign languages, music, and practically all science laboratories. Many courses in the sciences, for example, adopted a format comparable to how a course focusing on contemplative traditions can be: integrating first and third-person research for students, so that objective knowledge is coupled with activities that provide learner-centered understanding. This section considers potential benefits of adding a critical first-person element to the study of contemplative traditions, and also some reasons one might oppose such integration.

Potential Issues Regarding the First-Person Study of Religiously Derived Exercises

Going forward with this methodology, educators must be thoughtful enough to anticipate and respond to possible problems and, of course, value the legal boundary that separates education from indoctrination.[30] In this vein, it is necessary to consider whether the integration of first-person research of religiously derived practices would be an unethical addition to secular education.

A possible criticism of a Religious Studies practicum including active engagement in any religious practice is that it appears too similar to monastic or theological training. This worry is reflected in Louis Komjathy's statement (Komjathy is founding co-chair of the Contemplative Studies Group of the American Academy of Religion) that the favoring of Buddhist-derived practices in extant contemplative studies programs is problematic.[31] A common misconception about Religious Studies departments is that they teach and take stances on religious truth claims. Yet this claim is unfounded and Religious Studies fundamentally differentiates itself from Theology in that it does not advocate any particular worldview or religious doctrine. Likewise, due to this methodological distinction between Religious Studies and Theology, promotion of any one contemplative tradition would render the proposed pedagogy untenable. It remains necessary, specifically in public universities (which are subsidized by public taxes), that no religious perspective or practice is favored. Therefore, if practices derived from multiple religious traditions are represented and offered, and none given preferential treatment, this objection loses its relevance.

Also, courses on contemplative traditions cannot assume the practices' efficacy to produce the mental and physical effects that the studied traditions claim, whether it be insight, presence, equanimity, clarity, wisdom, compassion, etc. Instead, critically engaging with elements of the practices simply adds a component of personal experience—to complement the literary resources for students to use in their reflections on the traditions. Ramdas Lamb, who

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[30] For an example where public schools did not value these boundaries, see the specifics of *Malnak v. Yogi*, 592 F.2d 197, 200-15 (3d Cir., 1979), where five New Jersey public high schools were offering courses in "Science of Creative Intelligence — Transcendental Meditation (SCI/TM)." For several reasons, (including content of the text that was used) the course was found to be religious in nature, as students were regularly scheduled to do things like provide deities with offerings and recite mantras that they were given in ceremony.

[31] Komjathy, Louis. "Contemplative Studies: FAQ," pp. 10. Posted on the Contemplative Studies Website 10/10/2016, http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/documents/contemplative-studies/faq.pdf (accessed 1/29/2017).

utilizes learner-centered techniques in a course on Indian ascetic traditions, provides an example of how this methodology can be implemented.[32] His course covers historical and current practices of numerous traditions, as well as various interpretations of the rituals' social functions. Each of these traditions' practices originated in a specific social and historical context, which cannot be reproduced in the classroom.

Nevertheless, because nearly all the ascetic traditions examined in his course share the element of commitment (whether to a daily ritual, practice, diet, style of clothing, etc.), he has students take a semester-long vow, or *vrat*, of their choosing.[33] Typically, Lamb encourages students to commit to abstaining from something they personally know is unhelpful to them at this point in their lives, or to begin doing something that they think they should be doing, but are not. The students are not required to reveal what they chose to do for the vow, but are required to write a short paper reflecting on the process of making and adhering to the commitment. They are also asked to include the reflections of how they perceive the commitment's effect on their minds, bodies, and emotions, as well as speculate on the relationship between their personal experience and the ascetics who are studied in the course, who undergo harsher and longer lasting commitments.[34] Using simple, easily integrable methods like this, the first-person research and teaching methodology offers students an alternative point of contact with the topic of study in addition to the traditionally studied philosophical, sociological, and historical narratives.

Another possible critique of applying first-person methodologies to the study of these contemplative topics is that the "recontextualization" of the practices through traditional historical and sociological narratives is superficial and inadequate. The problem, put another way, is that some of the practices were so socially situated that the personal experiences of American college students studying the practices would provide inaccurate understandings of the original practices. In some traditions, for example, only ordained monastics having undergone various stages of training could engage in the contemplative practices that are likely to be studied in an

[32] Lamb, Ramdas. "Using a Spiritual Research Paradigm for Research and Teaching," 2016, 71-2.
[33] Ibid., 72.
[34] Ibid.

upper division course. Thus, students who lack this previous training and have not been assessed by an elder of the tradition (who would typically determine if the learner was ready for the practice), might have a compromised experience of the practice.

On the contrary, as the example of students taking a semester-long *vrat* revealed, it is not necessary that the activities students engage in exactly reflect the practices of the people studied, be they ordained Buddhist monastics or Ramanandi Sampraday. What the activities must do, however, is cater to the demands and constraints of the university environment while exposing students to a simple, fundamental aspect of the phenomena studied. Thus, the recontextualization of yoga, or mindfulness meditation that I refer to is purely an intellectual recontextualization, not one of locale or culture. This is why the first-person practices and activities that are employed in classrooms, like the self-prescribed vows that Lamb's students choose, serve only to provide personalized insight to elements of the traditions focused on in their academic study. Accordingly, the pedagogy of courses that are exclusively taught in the discipline of Religious Studies would not be completely practice-centered like the courses at Naropa University. Instead, they would be structured much like they are now with third-person narratives, while adding relevant learner-centered elements to the course.

One final issue that may arise with this learner-centered methodology is related to negative psychological effects that some people have experienced when engaging in reflective and contemplative practices.[35] According to a 2009 article penned by psychologist Kathleen Lustyk's research team, adverse reactions to Buddhist-derived meditation have been shown to affect people with pre-existing psychological issues like PTSD. The article also notes some of the most commonly described undesirable side-effects, which include depersonalization (described as the perception of one's mind and body becoming disassociated), feelings of anxiety, and an increased risk of seizures.[36] Also, a journalist investigating meditation retreats reported

[35] Lustyk, M Kathleen B, Neharika Chawla, Roger S Nolan, and G Alan Marlatt. "Mindfulness Meditation Research: Issues of Participant Screening, Safety Procedures, and Researcher Training." *Advances in Mind-body Medicine* 24, no. 1 (2009): 20-30; Booth, Robert. "Dark Side of Enlightenment: Mindfulness Comes at a Price for Some, Experts Warn: Buddhism-based Therapy Brings Benefits for Many, but Can Have Side-effects." *The Guardian (London, England)*, August 26, 2014.

[36] Dholakia, Utpal. "The Little-Known Downsides of Mindfulness Practice: Some potentially serious pitfalls" *Psychology Today*. April 27, 2016. https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-science-behind-behavior/201604/the-little-known-downsides-mindfulness-practice (accessed 3/15/2017); Lustyk, M Kathleen B, Neharika Chawla, Roger S Nolan, and G Alan Marlatt. "Mindfulness Meditation Research: Issues of

that nearly 60% of the people who had been on a single retreat experienced at least one negative side effect.[37] Another study led by psychologist Brent Wilson found that individuals who had practiced mindful breathing were more likely to form false memories than people who allowed their mind to wander.[38] As previously explained, contemplative practices deriving from religious traditions are formulated in ways that intend to affect the mind and body of practitioners. Therefore, it should be understood that side effects are a genuine possibility, and such practices must be approached with caution.

The possibility of negative side effects, however, does not preclude the value of research and teaching methods implementing critical first-person techniques. Although professors cannot screen students for pre-existing mental health issues or traumatic experiences, they can articulate these possible risks to students. Moreover, nearly every American university has resources for mental health that educators can refer students to, and they only need to inform students to seek out these resources if students begin to feel uneasy. If academics can uphold these conditions and keep the well-being of their students in mind, integrating learner-centered pedagogies in Religious Studies warrants further consideration.

An Emerging Field

Several universities have already created programs that incorporate contemplative exercises alongside the study of their theoretical and philosophical origins. In the early 2000s, Harold Roth created Brown University's Contemplative Studies Initiative program to research "many of the ways that human beings, across cultures and across time, have found to concentrate, broaden, and deepen conscious awareness as the gateway to cultivating their full potential and to leading more meaningful and fulfilling lives."[39] Like Roth's groundbreaking program at Brown, and Trungpa's Contemplative Education at Naropa, private research universities are the venues

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Participant Screening, Safety Procedures, and Researcher Training." *Advances in Mind-body Medicine* 24, no. 1 (2009): 20-30.

[37] Crawford, Harriet. "The dark side of meditation and mindfulness: Treatment can trigger mania, depression and psychosis, new book claims." *The Daily Mail*, May 22, 2015. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-3092572/The-dark-meditation-mindfulness-Treatment-trigger-mania-depression-psychosis-new-book-claims.html (accessed 3/15/2017)

[38] Dholakia, Utpal. "The Little-Known Downsides of Mindfulness Practice: Some potentially serious pitfalls" *Psychology Today*. April 27, 2016. https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-science-behind-behavior/201604/the-little-known-downsides-mindfulness-practice (accessed 3/15/2017).

[39] Roth, 2006, 1788.

typically exploring these methods.[40] Yet, Religious Studies departments everywhere are fitting places to examine aspects of the religiously derived contemplative practices that have become progressively more popular in America. This emerging field of study is also a potential avenue towards trans-disciplinary collaboration in American universities, because the disciplines that currently engage in the field of Contemplative Studies tend to include philosophy, neuroscience, and psychology.[41]

The final issue to address regarding this learner-centered pedagogy is related to the aims of higher education. As previously stated, students cannot be required to believe in the efficacy of the practices ability to cultivate "good" traits, nor should they commit themselves to the worldviews and philosophies that have shaped the practices. Nevertheless, the practices that students will critically engage with have been developed to cultivate certain traits and one must be aware of the demonstrated psychological and physiological benefits cited earlier in the research on Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (the advantages are far more commonplace than the shortcomings).[42] Given these findings, even if including first-person research is solely added to the curriculum so that students may obtain a holistic understanding of the practices, research suggests that students can benefit from this methodology more than simply academically.

Thus, first-person examination of these practices has the potential to provide students with tools that they can use to mature in various beneficial ways. Brown University's Contemplative Studies program, for example, recognizes the potential for mental and physical effects on students, and asks its students to reflect on "the influence of contemplative experience on physical and mental well-being and on the cultivation of an ethical life."[43] Accordingly, with this holistic methodology, students have the potential to learn about themselves while engaging with the course material.

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[40] Except for two (University of Virginia and University of Michigan), all of the universities that currently have contemplative studies programs are private.

[41] Sub-fields within these that directly apply the study are focuses in consciousness and mysticism. See Komjathy, "Contemplative Studies: FAQ," 10/10/2016.

[42] Miller, J.P., "The Embodied Researcher: Meditation's Role in Spirituality Research" in *Toward a Spiritual Research Paradigm*, 2016, 128.

[43] Roth, 2006, 1794.

Despite the justifications for including critical first-person methods in the study of contemplative traditions, programs or courses that consider and account for phenomenal and objective aspects of contemplative traditions are almost nonexistent. The lack of this methodology, given its potential benefits, makes it appear as if Religious Studies is institutionally invested in maintaining a specific epistemological paradigm (materialistic/ quantitative/objective), even when that paradigm undercuts the very phenomenon being studied. Thomas Kuhn thought that a person in one paradigm would not be able to understand the ways people experience certain parts of the world in another, alternative paradigm.[44] This claim by Kuhn resonates with the complaints voiced earlier by Michael Cantrell and Harold Roth: that objectively studying religious phenomena divorces the subjective human element from these very personal topics; alienating the researcher from the researched (or the student from the content), to the point where one can almost say nothing of them at all.[45] This is one of the reasons why, by combining theoretical and third-person methods with direct experience of the subject matter, a more intimate and meaningful understanding of what is studied could emerge.

Using the classic gestalt picture of a rabbit's head changing to a duck's as an example, Kuhn wrote that "when paradigms change, the world itself changes with them."[46] Kuhn's insight reflects a truth that Shengyen and Trungpa understood, and it is why they taught that the clear and ethically aligned orientation of educational institutions is so important. Likewise, scholars associated with the field of Contemplative Studies see its potential to help students grow and mature, to improve education, and to reform society with respect to issues of social justice.[47]

Conclusion

This chapter argued that Trungpa and Shengyen's educational innovation of merging the two "Eastern and Western" lineages of thought proves useful, indeed, even if its current implementation in traditional American universities mirrors neither Naropa University nor DILA. Furthermore, the discipline of Religious Studies should consider incorporating this additional methodology for a few reasons. The primary reason is that, if done well, the merging of first and

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[44] Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
[45] Cantrell, Michael. "Must a Scholar of Religion Be…," 2015, 14; Roth, Harold D., 2006, 1792.
[46] Kuhn, 1996, 111.
[47] Komjathy, Louis. "Contemplative Studies: FAQ," 10/10/2016, pp. 3.

third-person research and teaching methods not only provides students with a meaningful understanding of religious practices, but also with tools they can potentially use to cultivate good habits. Additionally, if the extant Contemplative Studies programs conduct enough promising research, the future might see the growth of this field. Perhaps the development of Contemplative Studies will even result in the general education requirement of a contemplative practice, much like Naropa University.

Currently, however, it is largely at the discretion of individual educators to implement this pedagogy in courses that cover contemplative traditions. Consequently, there is no telling how many professors, in which universities, provide courses that utilize the integrated method discussed in this section. Yet, given the lack of literature on it, I assume its practice is not widespread. The modest growth of Contemplative Studies programs, though, is a preliminary sign that academia is beginning to acknowledge the value of subjective and empirical research methods promoting inward and outward learning.

The next chapter expands on the argument for an academic field of Contemplative Studies, by analyzing and making use of Naropa and DILA's claims of the pedagogy's social benefit. Both Buddhist-inspired schools stress the importance of individual student cultivation, and emphasize that it not only betters the students, but also the world's condition.[48] The current state of world affairs is complicated, while understanding it and navigating in it requires patience and compassion—features that are typically not learning objectives in public universities. Nevertheless, it is equally true that formal education should not require students to adopt new worldviews or values; but it should provide them with the tools to assess their own, while granting them access to understandings of the world through the many lenses of the subjects that they study.

With this in mind, the following chapter expands on the use of Contemplative Studies in higher education, but now as a means of equipping students with the skills to think calmly and critically about themselves and their relationship to the world. Obviously, Trungpa and Shengyen

[48] Naropa University 2009-10 Self-study, (Core Theme #7) pp. 38. Downloaded at https://naropa.edu/documents/misc/about-naropa/self-study-final-2010.pdf (accessed 12/4/2016).

argue that personal inquiry leads to socially ameliorative effects. Although it seems there should be a clear agenda of social harmony in public education, issues regarding ethics and values are, as S.J. Gould observed in his separation of scientific and religious knowledge,[49] commonly considered the domain of many of the world's religions. These parallel paths highlight an interesting phenomenon that the next chapter seeks to clarify.

[49] Again, see Gould, 1999, 193.

CHAPTER 4. HOLISTICALLY ORIENTED EDUCATION

An issue that I have referred to throughout the earlier chapters is the end goal, or teleology, of higher education. Obviously, it is difficult to say anything about "higher education" categorically, because the specialties and pedagogies within this category vary so widely. Yet I argued in chapter three that educators in the discipline of Religious Studies should consider using more learner-centered research methods in courses on contemplative traditions. This chapter summarizes and critically examines Naropa University and DILA's claims about the social benefits of higher education, and ties these goals back to Contemplative Studies. In short, if Contemplative Studies can potentially provide benefits that are coherent with what society requires of public higher education, perhaps this area of study should be more than just a fringe portion of public universities.

Naropa University and DILA's mission statements communicate two, almost inseparable, themes. In several places throughout this thesis I have mentioned the founders' emphasis on the interplay between individual student development and larger societal and world development.[1] Likewise, Naropa and DILA's Buddhist inspirations are demonstrated in their mutual goal of encouraging students to recognize their relationship with the greater world. Consequently, a portion of this chapter's investigation focuses on the underlying worldview that, I argue, influences this mission. If these schools' missions are motivated by a discrete worldview, does it preclude the tools of personal cultivation taught at in Naropa and DILA from being an educational innovation that should be given more attention? If not, then what disciplines, topics of study, and devices, are the most useful in promoting learning that benefits students both personally and socially?

There are two main issues at stake in this chapter. The first deals with what I am calling a "holistic orientation" to education, which is most clearly defined and represented at Naropa University. The second is an investigation of the claim that Holistic Education is conducive to social and environmental improvement. To illustrate this latter topic, I make use of Shengyen's

[1] Naropa University 2009-10 Self-study, pp. 38. Downloaded from https://naropa.edu/documents/misc/about-naropa/self-study-final-2010.pdf (accessed 12/4/2016); "Our vision: to uplift the character of humanity and build a pure land on earth," Dharma Drum Mountain, "The Common Ethos of Dharma Drum Mountain." http://www.dharmadrum.org/content/about/about.aspx?sn=110 (accessed 2/4/2017).

teachings. Thus, the first section of this chapter is primarily concerned with Naropa's contemplative pedagogy, which aims to engage each student as a whole being. Focusing on pedagogy, I draw from various academic sources to contextualize the current issues regarding similar orientations. The second section then goes on to examine the philosophical perspective that, I contend, underlies and motivates both Naropa and DILA's holistic orientations.

4.1 "Holistic" rather than "Spiritual" Education

Although Naropa has changed this terminology, until about a decade ago the term "spiritual education" at Naropa referred to providing its students with a learning experience that was intellectually and morally transformative. Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, previous Chair of World Wisdoms (Religious Studies Department) at Naropa, has openly voiced concern for the lack of spiritual values in higher education, and he sang Naropa's praises as a school that embeds values into the curriculum and provides students with the means to spiritual transformation.[2] Schachter-Shalomi is not an outlier at Naropa for sharing these opinions. On the contrary, his concerns are quite at home, considering the faculty members' many contributions in Naropa's 1997 Spirituality in Education conference.

At one point in Naropa's history, spirituality in education was such a common topic that in 1997 the University organized a conference on the theme. Steven Glazer, editor of *The Heart of Learning: Spirituality in Education*, and organizer of the 1997 conference bearing the same name, provides a phenomenological account of what he refers to as "spiritual education" (henceforth SE).[3] According to Glazer, "spirituality in education is about intimacy with experience: intimacy with our perceptions—the experience of having a body; our thoughts—the experience of having a mind; and our emotions—the experience of having a heart."[4] Glazer claims that inquiry into the wholeness of personal experience is the root that nurtures spiritual development.[5] If education is to nourish a student's needs, it must connect traditional disciplines

[2] Goss, 1999, 231.

[3] Glazer, Steven. *The Heart of Learning: Spirituality in Education*. New Consciousness Reader. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1999.

[4] Ibid., 2.

[5] Ibid., 250.

to the direct experiences of students rather than rely on provincial and impersonal information.[6] In short, Glazer's conception of SE points out the importance of educational attention to the heart as well as the mind. To him, this pedagogy values moral and emotional cultivation as much as the writing, reading, and critical thinking traditionally cultivated in higher education.

Approaches to education with personalized and moral dimensions are not unheard of. A nationwide precedent appeared in Britain's 1988 Education Reform Act, which states, "the curriculum of a maintained school must promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils."[7] But this is in Great Britain, not in the United States. In the U.S., the terms secular and spiritual are so often pitted against each other that it is easy to assume a reference to something spiritual has religious connotations. Contrarily, much of the secular educational literature referring to spirituality-affirming pedagogies rarely makes any connection with the concepts of God or religion.[8] Regardless of this fact, something about the polysemous nature of "spirit," and the separation of church and state in the U.S. tends to make spirituality in education an uneasy topic for educators. It is crucial, therefore, to define the orientation and secular status of "spiritual education."

Various scholars have expressed concern that the notion of SE does not clearly demarcate itself from religious and moral education. Therefore, the only place where SE is acceptable is in private religious institutions. Nigel Blake, for instance, writes that "outside the most specific religious traditions and religious institutional contexts, spiritual education is almost a contradiction in terms."[9] Blake's statement is true, depending on how one defines "spiritual" and understands how it qualifies "education." If, however, what is meant is simply a pedagogy that aims to further the students' mental aptitudes beyond what is deemed intellectual, it might not be as problematic.

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[6] By "provincial" information, I only mean discipline specific, while "impersonal" refers to objective third-person data.

[7] HMSO, Education Reform Act, London, HMSO, 1988.

[8] Crossman, Joanna. "Secular Spiritual Development in Education from International and Global Perspectives," 2003, 504-5; Marcic, D. "God, faith and management," *Journal of Management Education,* 24, 5 (2000): 628–649.

[9] Nigel Blake, "Against Spiritual Education," 1996, 444.

Demystifying "Spiritual," and replacing it with "Holistic"

The growing body of academic work on SE only vaguely defines its boundaries. Nevertheless, a systematized approach to defining the scope of SE is found in Michael Hand's article "The Meaning of 'Spiritual Education.'" In this essay, Hand describes its four possible meanings as: "(i) education based on spiritual principles; (ii) education of the human spirit; (iii) education in a spiritual activity; or (iv) education in a spiritual disposition."[10] Considering Naropa's use of the term, the most fitting of these options is the second—that spiritual education shall be defined as an education of the human spirit (a term which also, now, must be defined). The first and fourth options fail because they both concern a religious education of some sort. The third definition (*education in a spiritual activity*) casts too wide a net, encompassing anything from training in astrology, to Naropa's contemplative courses, to the field of Contemplative Studies. Thus, if spiritual education is indeed a call for an education of the human spirit, what is meant by "spirit"?

In its widest sense, "spiritual" can be used to signify all the attributes and experiences of a person not limited exclusively to the physical body.[11] In a much narrower sense, the term "spirit" is used in conjunction with other words to qualify a person's passions, temperament, willpower, virtues, vices, emotions, and desires.[12] Another use of "spiritual" is in the concept of being "spiritual but not religious." Research suggests that when people call themselves "spiritual but not religious," it is "a way of putting distance between oneself and religion while holding onto something regarded as good."[13] Together, these characterizations reveal that spirituality is related to values: as the latter characterization mentions holding on to something "good," and Hand's definition refers to qualitative first-person experiences like emotions.

Another insight into how spirituality is related to values and habits of character is developed in J. M. Greary III's dissertation *Questions of Spirituality in Education.* Greary argues that the intersections of "spirituality and education have to do with developing relationships; [developing how] one relates to oneself, to other humans, to the social world, to the natural

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[10] Hand, Michael. "The Meaning of 'Spiritual Education'." *Oxford Review of Education* 29, no. 3 (2003): 391-401, 397.

[11] Ibid., 399.

[12] Ibid.

[13] King, Michael B., and Harold G. Koenig, 2009, 2.

environment, and existence as a whole."[14] Greary's use of "spiritual," encompasses the previously discussed definitions, because the identification of virtuous traits and qualitative values like "good" are somewhat subjective. Specifically, it is by developing an understanding of the self in relation to the world that one cultivates these concepts characterized as "spiritual."[15] It is also notable that Greary's definition does not provide an explicit description of how one should understand and develop his or her relationship to the objects of experience, but instead sets this general inquiry as the defining factor of SE. Therefore, for Greary, and potentially Hand, SE is more of an open-ended task than a defined worldview. Although this sort of inquiry is not equivalent to advocating a sectarian or religious worldview, the term "spiritual" is nonetheless a source of confusion for many academics.

In a study conducted by the Higher Education Reseach Institute at UCLA, more than 40,000 faculty members (of various disciplines) at 421 U.S. colleges were surveyed on the topic of spirituality in education.[16] The study discovered that the majority of faculty members want colleges to promote the students' self-understanding and moral character, yet a minority of them believe that colleges should be concerned about the students' spiritual development.[17] The disparity in survey results is largely linked to the non-secular connotations instructors associate with the term "spiritual." This study reveals that there may be multiple non-interacting academic conversations simultaneously taking place on the same subject, namely, various pedagogies with aims similar to Greary's definition of SE. Yet, it is plausible that such conversations do not converge simply because they are using different terminology. Consider, for example, Naropa's

[14] Greary's characterization is relevant to the next section's topic, which covers the dependent nature of the individual and its environment. See Greary, 2013, 2.

[15] It is not clear, however, that concepts of personal identity and values must be grounded in a religious worldview. The OED defines *secular* as "belonging to the world and its affairs as distinguished from the church and religion; civil, lay, temporal." Because it is not the case that the *ethics, temperaments, and virtues* of people are necessarily tied to religion, on this account, these aspects of human experience fall within the boundaries of secular. See OED Online. "Secular, adj. and n."

[16] Jaschik, Scott. "Spiritual, But Not in the Classroom," *Inside Higher Ed*. March 1, 2006 https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2006/03/01/spiritual (accessed 11/19/2016).

[17] Ibid.

recent dropping of the term SE in favor of Contemplative Education, as well as the academic literature on similar methods labeled "Integral," "Student-Centered," and "Holistic" Education.[18] Therefore, using the term "Holistic" rather than "Spiritual" Education appears more practical, in that it may be conducive to a wider degree of acceptance.

Methods of Application

In sum, Holistic Education is described by its advocates as stimulating the development of students' self-understanding in a way that affects their personal values and interpersonal relationships. Naropa University's pedagogical approach to providing students with a Holistic Education is anchored in contemplative studies. It is through contemplative education, argues Naropa, that students make use of "experiential learning" in ways that help them "find the work of [their] heart."[19] The significance and utility of contemplative studies at Naropa define its holistic orientation. Recall, from chapter two, the schoolwide student learning objective that stipulates, "graduates should be able to engage the world through unbiased awareness and presence of self, insight and clarity of mind, and compassionate practice."[20] Although some of these techniques have only recently been shown to help students explore and cultivate their mental landscape,[21] for over forty years, students at Naropa have been trained in the use of contemplative exercises.

At the start of DILA's second year (2016 –17), two of its programs began requiring contemplative practices, although it is not clear why the other two programs still lack this requirement. Overall, DILA uses a different methodology in its implementation of holistic

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[18] Wexler, Judie. "Toward a Model of Integral Education," 2005, 30-1; Miller, John P. "Chapter 3: Worldviews, Educational Orientations, and Holistic Education" *in Renewal of meaning in education: responses to the cultural and ecological crisis of our times* (electronic edition) / edited by Ron Miller, 1998, 55-69.

[19] Naropa University, "What is Contemplative Education?" https://www.naropa.edu/the-naropa-experience/contemplative-education/ (accessed 2/6/2017).

[20] "1. Competency in Contemplative Theory and Practice." Sigman, Stuart J. "Academic Plan 2009-2014," 19-20.

[21] MSBR programs have been demonstrated to "improve attention, self-control, emotional resilience, recovery from addiction, memory and immune response." See Mindfulness Schools "Benefits," http://www.mindfulschools.org/about-mindfulness/mindfulness-in-education/ (accessed 11/26/2016).

education. As noted in chapter two, through its unique learning environment (location),[22] interdisciplinary approach, and project-oriented learning, students are encouraged to develop skills and outlooks that allow them to interact with others and the world more wisely and compassionately.[23] Other than DILA's use of interdisciplinary approaches toward pressing social issues, its methodology is not one that existing academic institutions can readily adopt. Yet, in terms of application, there is a somewhat new area of study that resembles DILA's interdisciplinary pedagogy. The developing academic field of Spiritual Ecology shares common ground with a central teaching of Shengyen.[24] As an interdisciplinary focus, Spiritual Ecology (religion and ecology), examines how the world's many cultural and religious worldviews influence peoples' interaction with the environment and engagement in environmental issues.[25] Course options on topics of this nature are just one pathway to provide an education that would qualify as "spiritual education" as defined by Greary: promoting the development of the students' relationship to other people, to the social world, and to the natural environment.[26]

Transitioning to the following and final section, I would like to demonstrate the similarity between Thomas Berry's words (Berry was a pioneer of religion and ecology), and those of Shengyen. As one of the most influential figures in the popularization of Spiritual Ecology, Berry's conviction that education should help students cultivate a sense of self in relation to the world pervades much of his academic work. In *The Universe Story*, he writes that:

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[22] Refer to chapter 2 section 3, wherein I describe DILA's learning environment as one of its three educational innovations. The following section (4.2) also explains how DILA's environment is also thought to be an influential aspect of students' overall experience.

[23] In 2012 a comprehensive study on the Taiwanese Buddhist rhetoric of "Protecting the Spiritual Environment" was done by Seth Clippard. In this study, Clippard identifies two campaigns which embody the practices most conducive to realizing Dharma Drum's mission of creating a pure land on earth and uplifting the character of humanity. These campaigns at DDM are a "five-fold spiritual renaissance" and "four kinds of environmental protection." Ultimately, Clippard compares the programs to the generic Mahāyāna notion of the eight-fold path, writing that what Shengyen portrays as protecting the spiritual environment "is simply the practice of Buddhist meditation and ethics, the Eightfold Path," with an emphasis on the Mahāyāna concepts of compassion (*Cíbēi* 慈悲) and wisdom (*Zhìhuì* 智慧). For an in depth exegesis of these two campaigns I recommend either exploring DDM's websites and publications, or reading chapter six of Clippard's dissertation, wherein he organizes the two side by side and explains them both at length. See Clippard, 2012, 304-312.

[24] Regarding Shengyen's advocacy of "four kinds of envirionmentalism." DDMBA, "Four Kinds of Environmentalism," http://ddmba.org/pages/about-us/values/environmentalism.php (accessed 2/6/2017).

[25] Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim developed the Religion and Ecology program at Yale, and others like it have been developed around the U.S. See Yale MA Program, "MA in Religion and Ecology at Yale," http://fore.yale.edu/yale-ma/ (accessed 2/6/2017); Gottlieb, 2006.

[26] Greary, James M. III, "Questions of Spirituality in Education," 2013, 2.

> Education might well be defined as knowing the story of the universe, of the planet Earth, of life systems, and of consciousness, all as a single story, and recognizing the human role in the story. The primary purpose of education should be to enable individual humans to fulfill their proper role in this larger pattern of meaning.[27]

Like Trungpa and Shengyen, Berry was adamant that teaching in both secular and religious institutions should be concerned with cultivating people's understanding of their place in and relationship with the world.[28] Compare Berry's words to a teaching by Shengyen on spiritual environmentalism:

> Human beings make pollutions...The pollution of material environments cannot be departed from our activities, and our activities cannot be departed from our mind…Therefore, when discussing environmental pollutions, we should begin with its root cause, that is, our mind.[29]

Both statements infer that it is common for people to be ignorant of their place, function, or impact, in relation to the world they are in. The next section expands on the concept of holistic learning in terms of its orientation towards having students develop an awareness of their relationships to the world "outside" of themselves.

4.2 Interplay of Students and Social Development

The first section of this chapter examined what exactly a "holistically" oriented education is, and what aspects of Naropa University and DILA share this orientation. In defining "holistic," I made use of the literature on "Spiritual Education," but gave preference to the term "holistic" because regardless of SE's merits, educators generally find the term "spiritual" unattractively loaded. At Naropa and DILA, Holistic Education takes the form of helping students cultivate their sense of self through contemplative education, and study of topics that illustrate interactions between an individual's ideas, actions, and actual events in the world. Also, as already

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[27] Swimme, Brian and Thomas Berry, *The Universe Story*, 256.

[28] Berry, 1999, 71.

[29] Shengyen, *Gates of Chan* (*Chan Men* 禪門), Taipei: Fagu Wenhua, 1999, 91. (Quoted in Wang diss., 266.)

established in this thesis, both schools utilize pedagogies that take the subjective, first-person experience of students into account in their development and exploration of personal identity. What the schools' founders say about the social and worldly effects of this exploration is the focus of this final section.

The founders of Naropa and DILA were religious authorities in their respective Buddhist traditions, which no doubt influenced the structure and academic focuses of these schools. Chapter two mentioned how Naropa and DILA's philosophical foundation, mission statements, and curriculum[30] allude to a worldview in which (mental) changes in a person's outlook marks (actual) changes in the world.[31] Respectively, this section examines the educational philosophy of both Naropa and DILA that describes a process of social melioration through education. This point is significant, in that these schools actually provide a schema to conceptualize the social benefits of holistic education. Naropa and DILA represent only a small sample from a growing variety of programs in public and private universities that have introduced "holistic," "first-person," "contemplative" or "inward" pedagogies. The universities with Contemplative Studies programs, however, do not go so far as to speculate on the discipline's social effects.

DDM's Common Ethos: to uplift the character of humanity and build a pure land on earth.[32]

In Shengyen's teachings that DILA has adopted, the self/other interplay implies that the improvement of our world depends on the bettering of our minds. What Shengyen taught derives from a worldview in which the paths of individual transformation and greater social change are indistinct. In a study tracing the development of Shengyen's teaching methods, Jimmy Yu argues that during the 1980s and 90s (DILA was established in 2015) Shengyen began presenting Chan meditation as a form of education, and more specifically, as a method of moral cultivation.[33] Focusing on the morally transformative benefits of Chan's contemplative practices, Yu claims

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[30] Naropa University "Clinical Mental Health Counseling MA." http://www.naropa.edu/academics/masters/clinical-mental-health-counseling/index.php (accessed 12/14/2016); Naropa University, "Ecopsychology MA." http://www.naropa.edu/academics/masters/ecopsychology/index.php (accessed 12/14/16).

[31] This issue was also briefly discussed when addressing Tuzzeo's criticism of Dharma Drum Mountain's pedagogy, but this schema was not the object of his criticism. The issue discussed there dealt with the information that students were taught and whether it could be sectarian indoctrination.

[32] Pure Mind Center, DDMBA St. Louis. http://www.puremindcenter.org/DDMBA.html (accessed on 3/17/2016).

[33] Yu, 2010, 31.

that Shengyen hoped to make Buddhism more appealing to the pre-existing Taiwanese and Chinese Confucian mindset.[34] In the Confucian value system, education cannot be separated from the moral improvement of the student as a social being. Thus, in this value system the ethical component of one's education is considered as important as intellectual training and the development of skills. The same logic was used to justify the focus on social engagement at DILA.

A premise of the DDM and Confucian methodologies is that an ameliorative development of the world is only possible through individual transformation. In this respect, it is difficult to pinpoint where the Buddhist reasoning ends and Confucian begins, or vice versa. I argue that both worldviews are best understood through the lens of the classical Chinese cosmology. Examining the cosmology, which is process oriented, might help clarify the reasoning behind Dharma Drum's (and Naropa's) model of transforming humanity through the individual cultivation of the mind. A textbook on complex systems dynamics describes the nature of the classical Chinese cosmology as being similar to a river:

> As the river flows waves, eddies, currents, rapids, pools, etc. emerge. We identify such features, but they do not have existence independent of the river. They exist only as the result of river flow yet they are entities in their own right. The river is the material and energetic substrate that enables the existence of such phenomena as waves and eddies... It can be compelling to view the riverbed as the permanent structure that gives form to these phenomena. However, whilst at any given time the riverbed plays a constraining, shaping role...over time, water flow gives rise to such processes as erosion that, reverse-wise, impact on the shape of the riverbed.[35]

The river just mentioned can be thought of as a microcosm or macrocosm of the complex play of forces at work in this cosmology. The energy of the individual, or feature of the river, transfers and interacts with the energy of countless other features of the river. Through enough orders of relation, individual features of the river have an effect on the river's flow and its bed, which together embody the overall character of the river. Similarly, Thomas Berry made the claim that the human being is not an addition to or intrusion into nature, but is "quintessentially integral

[34] Ibid., 27.
[35] Herfel, Gao and Rodrigues. 2011, 677.

with the universe."[36] Berry's statement elegantly illustrates the relationships conceived of in the classical Chinese schema. Within this schema, it is understandable why Shengyen would place such an emphasis on the student's comprehension of the relationship he or she has to the objects of experience. Unfortunately, reasoning based on assumptions derived from an ancient Chinese cosmology may be unhelpful when considering the benefits of innovative pedagogies in the American public education system.[37]

Although the pedagogical orientation supported by classical Chinese philosophy may be unusable for this thesis' purposes, it is nonetheless invaluable to understanding why some faculty members at DILA claim its beautiful and peaceful environment is an important element of their students' education.[38] Let us now examine more academically relevant sources in support of the claim that a Holistic Education may not only benefit the learner, but also the social environment of the learner.

"Knowing who we are"

At Naropa's 1997 conference on spirituality in education, Houston Smith was asked of his opinion about Spiritual Education. He responded that this type of education "must begin with knowing who we are."[39] According to Smith, Americans have many different notions of personal identity, most of which are informed by either science or religion. He goes on to explain that "according to the scientific view, we are the greater that has been derived from the lesser; whereas, according to the religious view, we are the lesser that has been derived from the

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[36] Berry, 1999, 32.

[37] As early as 1949, there are parallels of a "transpersonal" self throughout the writings of Mircea Eliade. In these parallels, Eliade uses variants of the term "anthropocosmos" to describe religious experiences in which an individual's identity extends to microcosmic and macrocosmic orders of being. See Eliade, 1970, 455; 1989a, 324; 1989b, 75; 1990, 15, 24, 108. After Eliade's use, the concept became widely known among Humanities scholars to indicate "that humanity and the cosmos are not mutually exclusive opposites, but are rather intimately interconnected in a dynamic and vital process." See Mickey, 2007, 238. Similarly, in *The Future of Religion,* Richard Rorty summarizes John Dewey's conclusions in *A Common Faith,* which was the only book Dewey ever wrote or religion. See Vattimo and Rorty, 78. According to Rorty, Dewey wrote the only "sense of dependence we need" as people, is to recognize that we are part of a larger whole. See Ibid. This sense of integration into a community of causes joins the human with the nonhuman universe.

[38] Recall the faculty's statement that Shengyen "said that you could learn something from the environment you are in, and he was very concerned about the environment. Just look at Fǎgǔshān (Dharma Drum Mountain 法鼓山), it is a beautiful place; quiet, peaceful—and this affects people." See Interviews: Professor X, 23:00-25:00.

[39] Schachter-Shalomi and Smith, 1999, 218.

greater."[40] In some respects, Smith is right; the sciences have traditionally reduced organisms to causally interacting physical parts, but this is changing. It is not changing in the sense that organisms are no longer thought of in terms of functioning parts, or their cellular, or chemical makeup—but changing due to the emerging popularity of complex systems dynamics.

Thinking in systems exemplifies a new paradigm of scientific thought that has only become academically relevant in the last fifty years. Its application in consciousness studies, economics, and environmental issues appears promising. Systems thinking merges the methods of science and philosophy "to study phenomena not in isolation or only in terms of their parts but as wholes standing in causal relationship to both their components and their environment."[41] Thus, contrary to Smith's division of scientific and religious notions of personal identity,[42] complex systems thinking and spiritual traditions both provide theories that complicate the simplistic causal position that posits whole, discreet objects directly deriving from other whole objects.[43] The theories that have implications for what it means to be a human, like the scientific living systems theory, suggest a processual view of a person as inseparable from the web of relationships that qualify it.

Likewise, the scientific consensus is that humans are a part of a larger system, and are made up of much smaller systems. As individual organisms, our existence is as equally dependent on what is outside of the skin as what lies beneath it. As Carl Sagan pointed out, the earth's atmosphere links all the land dwelling life-forms of the Earth.[44] The atmosphere permeates each organism's very being and keeps it alive. Hence, everyone's awareness of his or her relationship to and effect on the atmosphere is useful to all. Complex systems theories in general, not only living systems theory, theoretically support a holistic, as opposed to a

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Rousseau, David. "A Systems Model of Spirituality." *Zygon* 49, no. 2 (2014): 476-508.

[42] Schachter-Shalomi and Smith, 1999, 218.

[43] The theory of "things" as emergent phenomena is somewhat new and controversial. It applies to phenomena or objects that are not simply the sum of their material parts. Consciousness, for instance, is something that cannot easily reduce to the mere chemical and material substances constituting a life form. Even an example of an object as simple as a droplet of liquid water quickly becomes complicated when the many factors that must be present for it to exist are considered. Subjective values are also one of many emergent phenomena: they emerge out of complex scenarios and cannot be reduced to any individual or set of parts within the system. For understanding events in weather, economics, morality and even consciousness, one must look at context and the many different forces at play, as well as how the phenomena is conceived in peoples minds. See Abrams, 2015, 376-88.

[44] Sagan, Carl and Ann Druyan. *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark.* Ballantine Books, 1997, 29.

reductionistic, paradigm.[45] This paradigmatic alternative to reductionism looks at systems from various orders of magnitude and posits that there is no scientific or logical basis for any development within the system to be considered discrete or separate from the system. Consequently, this "holistic" perspective also has profound implications regarding the topic of personal identity, which can potentially impact people's formulation of subjective values.

Due to the lasting intellectual influence of 16th–17th century Enlightenment thinkers, there is a persistent popular sensibility in America that people are fundamentally separate from the Earth that they live on, and from the objects they interact with. This is evidenced in the current debates considering the human impact on atmospheric carbon levels. I consider an underlying source of this assumed separation a Cartesian tendency Americans have to see humans in a dualistic way, as matter infused with something special,[46] whereas the environment is simply composed of matter. Subsequently, it seems natural that for one reason or another, the context of the self is seldom considered as a vital aspect of personal identity. Thus, looking into a mirror it would be easy to forget the mirror, and to think very little of the room or home which one is situated. Oddly enough, the fact that anything which has conceivable existence must exist in relation to other things has, for the most part, slipped out from our consciousness. Thus, becoming mindful of these relationships is the hallmark of Holistic Education. Is this insight something that must be learned, or is it phenomenologically experienced in daily life? Naropa and DILA answer "both"—hence the use of both first and third-person teaching methods.[47]

This chapter has identified the use of learner-centered pedagogies as an effective device to provide a holistic education, which is more than simply a means of personal development. Holistic Education also includes topics of study that have the potential to help students realize

[45] Also, notable educators in the field of Spiritual Ecology make the claim that understanding this inconsistency is only a matter of perspective. Joanna Macy, for instance, is a highly influential figure in religion and ecology—she is an adjunct professor at California Institute of Integral Studies and has a center named in her honor at Naropa University. See Macy and Brown, 2014; Abrams, 2015, 384.

[46] That "something special" is thought of as a transcendent spirit to Descartes, and to the Christian American as well.

[47] Naropa's website, for instance, tells prospective students that "through contemplative practice you will learn to quiet your mind so you can see what makes you *you*—which will help you make better decisions about… everything." See Naropa University, "Transform Yourself."

how human ideas and actions affect the world, or vice versa. Some of these academic topics are supported by the coherent theories of complex systems dynamics and may also assist in the students' understanding of their relationship to, and place in, the cosmos as per Thomas Berry's insistence.[48] Of course, these topics of study and methods must be taught in relevant disciplines and departments, which may present potential difficulties because of their interdisciplinary nature.[49]

[48] Swimme and Berry, 1992, 256.

[49] In Hawaii, for example, the UPHA defines the roles and limits of faculty. See UPHA, 2015-2017. Article IV, "Faculty Professional Responsibilities and Workload," 4.

CONCLUSION

This thesis only made a single foray into the open door of culturally and religiously derived pedagogies that can supplement and benefit specific research areas in higher education. Interestingly enough, the schools examined in this example have yielded an alternative approach to a research topic relevant to the field of Religious Studies. Ultimately, I propose that educators who can competently integrate qualitative pedagogies in courses covering contemplative religious traditions, should, without fear of retribution, implement them. Enough evidence attesting to the positive outcomes of critical first-person teaching methods exist so that educators can now confidently defend their choice to use this methodology. Moreover, active, first-person learning in this field might provide students with a few tools to help them understand themselves in new and empowering ways. More cases like this exist that have yet to be researched, and there is much more investigative work to be done on the various issues presented in this thesis.[1]

Although this thesis includes four chapters, the overall project can succinctly be described as two-fold. In the first portion, I examined how two schools founded by Buddhist teachers have established unique pedagogical innovations. Then, in the second part of this project, I provided further analysis of Naropa and DILA's unique pedagogical features and, ultimately, supported the religious neutrality of the innovations by finding their equivalents in other non-Buddhist sources.

At the outset, I focused on arguments surrounding the authenticity of these schools' claims to provide non-sectarian education. For example, when Buddhist topics are available for students to study, the schools are ecumenical in their approaches. Also, neither school limits their education to Buddhist studies or even religion. At DILA, for instance, I found that Buddhist perspectives are primarily utilized in courses dealing with theories of mind.[2] I then identified the innovative pedagogical tools and perspectives employed by the two schools.

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[1] For instance, given the recent interest and growth of mindfulness meditation as an aspect of public education, it is clear that the exploration into the intricacies of Contemplative Studies has just begun.

[2] Unless studying at DILA's Buddhist College, or Chan meditation in one of the two programs that incorporate it, various theories of mind originating in Buddhist traditions are limited to a four-week section in DILA's "Mind, Life, and Environment" freshman seminar.

The guiding perspective of Naropa and DILA that I focused on is their view that a school's curriculum should reflect its aim of education as a path toward social improvement. Furthermore, to them, social improvement is not pursued by building anything or making physical changes in the world; it is achieved through individuals cultivating their minds to recognize and understand how they relate to the world. Then, in turn, when students go out into the world and interact with others and society, they will do so in ways that reflect their re-envisioned social relationships. For lack of a better word, I labeled the goal-oriented path that Naropa and DILA shared "holistic education."

The two schools, however, employ different methods of holistic learning. Naropa's strategy is straightforward. To set students along the path of holistic learning, Naropa simply requires contemplative studies as a portion of each student's general education requirements. Characterizing DILA's strategy, however, is not as simple. It appears unfeasible to replicate DILA's strategy in the United States because, institutionally, the school has taken a much more comprehensive approach to the holistic orientation than Naropa. Its implementation is comprehensive in the sense that the entire school is organized in a way that assumes the reciprocal natures of mind, life, and environment. From its architecture and location in-between mountains and streams, to its proximity to monastics and its praxis-oriented programs, the takeaway from DILA's innovation is more theoretical than practical in terms of applicability at American public universities. For instance, it is unlikely that schools will undergo architectural renovations based on DILA's insights or the theories of ecopsychology.[3] What can be drawn from DILA, elaborated on, and turned into a teachable course (or series of courses) is its "Mind, Life, and Environment" forum. This interdisciplinary forum examines concrete object lessons displaying the interrelated nature of topics like "mind," "society" and "environment."[4]

The exposition of this project's secondary goal began in chapter three. There, I started to examine the relevance of these two schools' orientations and pedagogical innovations in mainstream (not Buddhist-inspired) academia. Fundamentally, the final two chapters pointed to answers to a question that I asked at the outset of this investigation. In the introduction, I asked at what points (if at all) can religious and educational goals overlap? In other words, both religion

[3] Ecopsychology is a school of psychology exploring the co-influence of mind and environment. See Roszak, 1995, 3.

[4] Professor Z Interview. Recording 1, 9' 25".

and education provide paths of personal growth for participants, but what features of these paths are universal and objective enough to be shared by public education and the two forms of Buddhism that inspired Naropa and DILA? Furthermore, I asked whether the overlapping points reveal anything about an avenue of personal growth and social meliorism beyond the concepts of "secular and religious?" The answers to these questions came in the form of what I described as innovative pedagogies inspired by methods used in these schools and several themes that I drew from the schools' mission statements.

The first innovative pedagogy I examined gained inspiration from Naropa University's focus on contemplative education. Trungpa's inspiration to couple academic work with contemplative practice was a lesson he took from the story of Naropa, the abbot of Nalanda.[5] Although Naropa University offers contemplative focuses in various disciplines (psychology, art, martial arts, education, and religion programs),[6] the closest academic parallel I found in non-Buddhist organizations was the novel discipline of Contemplative Studies. Yet, I also reasoned that, due to the religious origins of many contemplative practices, it is within the scope of Religious Studies to utilize first-person, learner-centered methods concerning the study of contemplative traditions. Introducing qualitative first-person research can provide students with a more meaningful understanding of these traditions than the currently normative methods, which are typically historical and sociological accounts. There are, however, noted psychological changes in many participants engaging in qualitative research of contemplative practices.[7] These findings provide another reason why students should be engaging in contemplative studies, and suggest that Naropa correctly anticipated the multi-disciplinary appeal of contemplative studies. After chapter three's analysis of contemplative studies, the final chapter investigated how the holistic pathway of education relates to social and environmental improvement.

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[5] Recall that Naropa University is named after the eleventh-century abbot of the Nalanda monastic center in northeastern India. After spending many years there, the abbot left because he recognized that his studies provided him with intellectual knowledge of Buddhist teachings, but not with an embodied understanding the Dharma.

[6] Naropa University. "Academics," https://www.naropa.edu/academics/index.php (accessed 2/26/2017).

[7] Based on work done in American schools, "Schoeberlein and Sheth (2009) list a wide range of benefits of mindfulness for both teachers—improving focus and awareness, increasing responsiveness to student needs, enhancing classroom climate—and students, in supporting readiness to learn, strengthening attention and concentration, reducing anxiety and enhancing social and emotional learning." See Hyland, 2015, 179-80; Schoeberlein and Sheth, 2009.

Holistic Education should be learner-centered and, as insightfully observed by Houston Smith, it must start with helping students understand themselves.[8] From my research on Naropa and DILA, I have outlined their two methods of engaging in holistic education. I then discussed these two methods and their academic equivalents in the field of Contemplative Studies, and in interdisciplinary topics of study (like Spiritual Ecology) that examine the interactions between the minds of people and the physical world. The schemas discussed in chapter four (complex systems dynamics [biological and other], and transpersonal psychology) are some of the areas of study that can be used in the interdisciplinary courses aiding in this pedagogical goal of self-discovery.

I argue that the comparison of these modern scientific theories (complex systems) with the schemas that influenced Shengyen and Trungpa (Classical Chinese cosmology and the Buddhist notion of interdependent arising) is necessary for understanding why Naropa and DILA claim that their educational orientations are socially beneficial. When these schemas are applied to "who we are," one finds that people (and their minds) are, in fact, inseparable from the objects of experience (i.e. environmental objects and phenomena).[9] Although chapter four does not elaborate on the issue, it is also essential to point out that there are social and ethical implications that logically follow from an understanding of "the individual" as an emergent phenomenon and, more generally, complex systems theories.[10] Consequently, if contemplative education is an effective method for students to develop an understanding of self, it might be in the common interests of students, society, and the environment to investigate avenues of its application as a portion of public education.

On this note, a major criticism of DILA was directed at the idea that, due to an individual's influence in society, an education aligning with Buddhist values must be a form of proselytization. Does it follow, though, that the emergence of contemplative studies is the result of Buddhist figures trying to influence the general public? I have reasoned that the

[8] Schachter-Shalomi and Smith, 1999, 218.

[9] Therefore, it can be understood that one is not only what they eat, but also what they see, hear, speak, and do: to and with the objects in their environment.

[10] I am not promoting a particular theory of ethics, but do welcome others to build on these concepts, do further research, and come to their own conclusions.

aforementioned innovations do complement the goals of higher education. I also submit, however, that they correspond to the "this-worldly" soteriological goals of Trungpa and Shengyen's Buddhist values.[11] The logical conclusion is to typify this similarity as a peculiar phenomenon of parallel pathways.

By "parallel pathways," I mean that one path is sectarian, and the other (the one that has been presented here) is secular, yet both consist of teachings that aim to get students to think about their notion of self and help them find their place in society. The context, content, and origins of the paths are what separates them, but they have similarly oriented goals. Although this conceptual analysis seems tenable, it might be a point of contention when considering the public utilization of the cited innovations. Therefore, if educators plan on employing learner-centered methods in Religious Studies departments or offering the interdisciplinary courses discussed in chapters three and four, they must do so in a non-sectarian manner.

While the title and initial framing of this study accentuated the dual paths of these schools' holistic orientation, the latter two chapters suggested that the innovations of Naropa and DILA mark a point where the objective and subjective methods in scientific research are only beginning to converge.[12] Most notably, this convergence takes place in the study of mind and consciousness. Since the time of Tàixū, Buddhist teachers have made numerous attempts to reconcile Buddhist and scientific descriptions of consciousness and its contents. Today, a century later, these convergent research interests still lack extensive representation. On the other hand, the modest growth of contemplative studies programs over the past decade might be a sign that this is changing. If more public universities and Religious Studies departments do begin to incorporate qualitative research on contemplative traditions, it is likely that this research will result in collaboration with the cognitive sciences.

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[11] By "this-worldly soteriological goals" I refer to Shengyen's aim of "elevating the character of humanity and creating a pure land on earth," and Trungpa's Shambhala teachings of an enlightened society. For more on Shambhala see: Shambhala website. "Shambhala: A Global Community." http://shambhala.org/about-shambhala/shambhala-global-community/ (accessed 3/4/2017).

[12] Although qualitative research methods have a long history of use in Anthropology, Sociology, Medicine and Clinical Psychology, the use of phenomenological methods in Education, Contemplative Studies, and Cognitive Science is a fairly new phenomenon.

Clearly, public education and religion constitute socially relevant topics and, in the United States, it is constitutionally mandated that they not interfere with each other.[13] When initiating research on DILA and Naropa University I was attracted to the dual roles they attempt to hold. The schools are living examples of religious secularization, acting as representatives of Buddhist traditions and, simultaneously, as non-sectarian institutes of higher education. I have found that they manage to maintain both roles by focusing on select overlapping aspects of the two domains related to each role (Buddhist and academic studies). There are no programs, for example, that study astronomy, mathematics, chemistry or biology at these schools, because these academic disciplines share little with the teachings of Shengyen and Trungpa. Thus, one could potentially examine how the academic subjects and pedagogies observed at these schools reflect the aspects of academia that these modern Buddhist teachers deem valuable. One could then compare such observations to the religious traditions' current forms of practice, to look at the overlap of religion and educational paths with a focus on the school's religious path. Although such research was not within the scope of this project, it would be interesting to see the "other side of the coin," as it were.

In the introduction, I cited Ann Taves' article referring to the discipline of Religious Studies as a locus for studying things people regard as special, and the roles these special things have in larger socio-cultural formations.[14] As a visual example of how these "special" things are worked into socio-cultural formations, she outlined a path schema that I found useful in my parallel paths comparison.[15] In my opinion, Taves makes choice use of the term "special" here. The parallel paths analogy would have been untenable if pathways were limited to formations around the term "sacred," for example, because it is so nuanced. As noted in chapter four, it is

[13] The 1947 United States Supreme Court ruling in Everson v. Board of education mandates this. Namely, that as publicly subsidized government institutions, public schools must remain religiously neutral (neither favoring one religion over another, or religion over non-religion). See Everson v. Board of Education, 330 U.S. 1, 1947. For more on religious rights in public education see Lupu, Ira C., et al., "Religion in the Public Schools" *The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life*, May 2007. http://www.pewforum.org/files/2007/05/religion-public-schools.pdf (accessed 3/22/2017).

[14] Taves, Ann. "No Field Is an Island: Fostering Collaboration between the Academic Study of Religion and the Sciences." *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 22, no. 2 (2010): 170-88, 186.

[15] The "Path Schemata" is particularly useful for setting up comparisons of religious and non-religious goal oriented schemas that include a 'from here' 'to here' mentality with some sort of transformation in between. See Taves, 2010, 180-2.

acceptable for educators to have a high regard for pedagogies aimed at helping students develop an enhanced self-awareness, but unacceptable to identify this educational pathway as spiritual, and I assume "sacred education" would have produced similar poll results.[16]

This is why I infer that it might be equally difficult for some more conservative educators to accept the conclusion of this thesis because of the parallel path admission. Namely, from investigating the intersection of these parallel paths, I have concluded that if education is concerned with social and environmental harmony, the innovations discussed in this thesis have pointed to topics of study that require more research and consideration, regardless of their source of inspiration. I have also concluded that, perhaps, it might do students' minds, society, and nature well if students understood how all three (mind, society, nature) interact. Lastly, I have concluded that in addition to learning about various subjects and cultivating skills, a fundamental aspect of education should be geared toward understanding one's own subjective, conscious experience of living life.[17]

The task of outlining and implementing Holistic Education is far from complete. It was not my intention to provide a comprehensive course list detailing all the topics that would contribute to such an education, nor have I attempted to outline or propose a policy for implementing these conclusions. I have, however, provided various examples of programs (Religion and Ecology), disciplines (Contemplative Studies) and teaching methods (critical first-person or learner-centered in Religious Studies) that were relevant to the examination of Naropa and DILA's innovative institutions. Finally, I have confidence that Religious Studies departments will continue to act as loci for studying things that people consider special, and that research will continue to be conducted on topics and phenomenon that have the potential to shed light on values and practices that are deeply embedded in the human condition. Also, as is

[16] Recall the poll of 40,000 faculty members from 421 U.S. colleges that revealed distaste for the term "spiritual education." See Jaschik, March 1, 2006.

[17] Similar to William James' advice that is quoted in chapter three's epigram, that any premium education would include tactics to "voluntarily [bring] back a wandering attention, over and over again, [which] is the very root of judgment, character, and will." See James, 1890, 424.

reflected in this thesis, not only do I think that this type of research is important, but equally important is the persistent search for practical ways in which one's research can affect our own lives and the lives of others for the better. Ultimately, my hope is that this thesis is successful in its endeavor to provide even a meager contribution to work of this nature.

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