

There is little redemptive in the way *Karumakkarayo* imagines the village or the individuals who people its social landscape. A similar dystopian vision can be found in *Yali Upannemi* (I Am Reborn) (1960), a story about a man who marries a prostitute to sublimate his oedipal desire for the mother. Both texts demonstrate a strong modernist influence in their exploration of sexuality and the inner subjectivities of their characters.

The nationalist turn in Amarasekara, Martin Wickramasinghe and the village

In the early 1960s Amarasekara broke away from the Peradeniya School – a break that marks an explicit ‘nationalist turn’ in his writing. The conditions under which this turn occurred speak to the politics of authenticity in independent Sri Lanka. One of the key influences in Amarasekara’s turn was Martin Wickramasinghe, who was central to the cultural articulation of an authentic imaginary in Sinhala literature from the 1940s to the early 1970s. Wickramasinghe is often considered Sri Lanka’s first truly ‘modern’ novelist (Amarakeerthi 2012). A literary polymath who was largely self-taught and educated, Wickramasinghe was a prolific writer and also a canny businessman who accumulated substantial wealth through his writing and publishing.

Wickramasinghe’s *Gamperaliya* (Uprooted) (1981 [1941]) is considered a masterpiece in the modern Sinhala literary tradition. It contains thematic concerns that pan out in different forms throughout the author’s literary career and cast a long and influential shadow upon Amarasekara and several generations of Sinhala writers. *Gamperaliya* is a novel about social change and the challenges faced by Sinhala subjectivity within the social and cultural changes wrought by colonial modernity, urbanisation and merchant capitalism. The protagonist of the novel, Piyal, a man from a rural lower middle-class background, migrates to the city, reinvents himself as a successful businessman and then returns to his village to challenge the declining rural feudal aristocracy. Although the novel depicts social change as inevitable, there is a sense of romantic nostalgia for the rural feudal order and the organicity that it represents.

Gamperaliya sets up a structural relationship between the country and city (Williams 1973), the rural being invested with a sense of organic authenticity. There was overlap between this imaginary and the political mobilisation of authenticity for developmental work in independent Sri Lanka – with the village in particular seen as a repository of Sinhala authenticity. The notion of village-based authenticity was

something Wickramasinghe kept returning to throughout his career. After *Gamperaliya*, he wrote *Kaliyugaya* (Age of Kali) (2001 [1957]) and *Yuganthaya* (End of an Era) (1965 [1949]). These novels form a three-part saga in which Sinhala society is depicted as becoming increasingly unmoored from traditional village life.

Anthropologists such as Jonathan Spencer (1990) and Stanley Tambiah (1992) have also argued that Wickramasinghe's writing was instrumental in the popular dissemination of the symbolic triad of the Sinhala cultural imagination of the *weva* (tank or lake), *dagoba* (Buddhist stupa) and *yaya* (paddy field) – three symbols that hark back to glorious Sinhala kingdoms of the past. However, Wickramasinghe's articulation of the village is not a simplistic romanticisation. It was an attempt to negotiate a sense of postcolonial identity which can reconcile modernity and tradition, much like in the work of R. K. Narayan in India, whose fictional Malgudi appears on the surface to be a simplistic and timeless pastoral village but in fact exhibits a complex negotiation between modernity, tradition and postcolonial identity.

One of Wickramasinghe's early semi-autobiographical works, *Kalu Nika Seveema* (In Search of the Kalu Nika) (1989 [1951]), begins with an account of the author's village, Koggala, in the south of the country. The narrative trope is that of an adult Wickramasinghe returning to the village of his childhood and rediscovering a pastoral ideal of village life, which he sees as sexually and morally liberating because the villagers seem unencumbered by bourgeois values; this contrasts with his current fallen educated middle-class self. The *kalu nika* of the title refers to an extremely rare plant that is virtually impossible to find and thus signals an introspective journey into something indefinable and intangible. This intangibility is found throughout the text in the form of pathos about a way of life that is no longer readily available. The village Wickramasinghe returns to is one heavily reshaped by British occupation during the Second World War, since the British maintained a large air-base in Koggala. At the beginning of the story Wickramasinghe literally peels away these external layers to enter the heart of Koggala, which he knew in childhood and in which he locates a sense of rustic simplicity unencumbered by the burdens of civilisation. These themes recur in his writing, as in *Sinhala Lakuna* (Sinhala Identity) (1995 [1947]) and *Upan Da Sita* (From the Day I Was Born) (1961).

Amarasekara's turn from his avant-garde beginnings to a more conventional trajectory was in part prompted by public criticism of

his work by Wickramasinghe (Dissanayake 2005). In the early 1960s Wickramasinghe accused Amarasekara of distorting Sinhala culture, particularly its village-based rural ethos. Amarasekara then abandoned his 'radical' trajectory. It is, however, a stretch to argue that Wickramasinghe's influence alone turned Amarasekara. It is more useful to characterise this turn as one in which Amarasekara submits to a larger nationalist cultural project. Such an understanding is supported by the aesthetics of decolonisation elsewhere – for instance, the ways that African writers saw a distinct political role for the writer.

An indication of how Amarasekara came to conceive his role as writer is evident in a seven-part series of novels he wrote beginning with *Gamanaka Mula* (The Beginning of a Journey) (1984). These works form an epic story of the Sinhala middle class, which is similar in some ways to Wickramasinghe's trilogy of the 1960s but with a trajectory that shows the Sinhala middle class losing contact with its rural ethos and then gradually rediscovering it. In essence this epic narrative is an indication that Amarasekara sees himself in the role of a didactic national allegorist or, as Achebe put it, 'The Novelist as Teacher' (1990 [1965]).

Along with his nationalist turn Amarasekara also began to write cultural criticism, where his socio-political vision and the role of the writer are articulated explicitly. In two texts – *Abuddassa Yugayak* (A Topsy-Turvy Time) (1976) and *Anagarika Dharmapala Maaksvaadeeda?* (Is Anagarika Dharmapala Marxist?) (1980) – Amarasekara attempts to construct a grand socio-political narrative of Sinhala identity and its historical evolution. Both texts argue that, despite numerous invasions and centuries of colonial occupation, an essential idea of Sinhalaeness survives. The task of postcolonial politicians and the intelligentsia is to discover this essence and rearticulate it in the contemporary context. As we shall see, it is in these two texts that Dharmapala and Bandaranaike emerge as key figures in Amarasekara's postcolonial narrative of Sinhala revival and resurgence. But this turn to authenticity is never complete. In all of Amarasekara's texts the very insistence on authenticity belies an insecurity that demonstrates that Sinhala authenticity cannot be taken for granted. There is an ongoing tension between authenticity as ontological fact and its reality as a constructed narrative. Some critics have argued that this obsessive concern with Sinhala authenticity has made Amarasekara's writing predictable and didactic, Amarasekara the 'ideologue' often overshadowing Amarasekara the 'novelist' (Amarakeerthi 2009).

Tradition, Buddhism and Marxism: *Anagarika Dharmapala Maaksvaadeeda?*

Part polemic, part socio-cultural criticism, *Anagarika Dharmapala Maaksvaadeeda?* (1980) maps out the ideological terrain on which Amarasekara constructs his teleological narrative of postcolonial Sinhala nationalist resurgence. This text, like its predecessor *Abuddasa Yugayak* (1976), came in the aftermath of a number of important socio-political changes. Though Bandaranaike's victory in 1956 was popularly seen as a victory of ordinary Sinhala people led by the 'intermediary elite' – sometimes referred to as the *pancha maha balawegaya* (five great forces) (Hennayake 2006, 84), or *sangha, govi, weda, guru, kamkaru* (the Buddhist *sangha*, farmers, indigenous doctors, teachers and workers) – there was discontent among many Sinhala and Buddhist groups that the pace and depth of change were insufficient (Manor 1989, 263–4). Following Bandaranaike's assassination in 1959, power in the country mainly remained with the party Bandaranaike had founded, the SLFP. His widow Sirimavo Bandaranaike emerged as a powerful successor and the world's first woman prime minister from 1960 to 1965. After an election defeat in 1965, she again regained power in 1970 and was prime minister till 1977 (de Silva 1981, 526–7). Mrs Bandaranaike was seen as more unapologetically Sinhala nationalist than her late husband (de Silva Wijeyratne 2014, 137–8) and it was under her premiership that the 1972 Republican Constitution was drafted and enacted, giving Buddhism pride of place. This move appalled many progressive forces in the country because it was seen as a betrayal of the secular principles of the left and also because the *Lanka Sama Samaja Party* (Lanka Equal Society Party), one of Sri Lanka's oldest leftist parties, was a major coalition partner of Mrs Bandaranaike's government, and one of the major figures of the 'old left', Colvin R. de Silva, was directly involved in drafting the new constitution (Wickramasinghe 2006, 183).

Although the post-Bandaranaike era can be seen as one of political institutionalisation of Sinhala nationalism, economically the promise of decolonisation had hardly materialised and there was frustration particularly among educated rural youth (de Silva 1981, 504–5). Parallel to the economic stagnation of the country was an emergent schism within the left movement: the old left and the established political elite were seen as a comprador class by vernacular educated rural youth who entered the political process in the decades after 1956 – sometimes referred to as the 'children of '56' (de Silva 2005; Wickramasinghe 2006, 230–7). In this context the radical 'new left' emerged in the form of the

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) (People's Liberation Front), led by the charismatic Rohana Wijeweera, a rural Sinhala youth from southern Sri Lanka who had attended the Patrice Lumumba University in Soviet Russia. The JVP built a highly effective village-level network, used a system called the *panthi paha* (five classes) for ideological indoctrination (Dewasiri 2010) and positioned itself explicitly as a radical alternative to the old left. In 1971 the JVP launched a failed military coup to capture state power and was bloodily suppressed in a brutal crackdown by Mrs Bandaranaike's government (Wickramasinghe 2006, 237).

Both *Abuddassa Yugayak* (1976) and *Anagarika Dharmapala Maaksvaadeeda?* (1980) were significantly shaped by this political context. *Anagarika Dharmapala Maaksvaadeeda?*, the text I shall consider in detail, can be seen as implicitly addressing the JVP. Amarasekara appears to be recognising the JVP as a radical progressive force in Sinhala society and inviting them to join history – history as a teleological narrative whose end point is the realisation of a Sinhala Buddhist state. The text explores the possibilities of bringing into dialogue a Buddhist vision of a righteous society and a Marxist vision of an egalitarian social order. Both Dharmapala and Bandaranaike are forerunners to this project because Amarasekara constructs them as figures who intuitively grasped the Sinhala Buddhist heritage of the nation and attempted to actualise it as a socio-political reality. For Amarasekara they were unable to define and articulate clearly the historical and intellectual framework in which tradition and modern reality can enter into negotiation, and so their versions of this national project are seen as only partially realised. In presenting this hypothesis, Amarasekara reinterprets the Sri Lankan past, 'rescuing' it, as it were, from perceived distortions in academic scholarship.

The 'historical' argument of *Anagarika Dharmapala Maaksvaadeeda?* may be summarised in the following way. A majority of Sri Lankan historians have failed to realise the importance of Dharmapala's significance in the country's history. Dharmapala is the single figure who recognised the potential of drawing upon a precolonial Buddhist concept of governance and sought to actualise it as an anti-colonial strategy. However, Dharmapala's legacy was soon appropriated by a comprador class who negated its radical potential and used it for their own ends. Nonetheless, this Sinhala Buddhist imaginary remained a subversive force among the rural middle-class intelligentsia consisting of indigenous doctors, vernacular schoolteachers and Buddhist priests – in essence the *panch maha balawegaya*. They emerged as a political movement in 1956 through Bandaranaike's victory. However, as in Dharmapala's time, the

1956 victory also failed to realise its radical potential because it was appropriated by comprador interests.

Amarasekara further argues that historians, sociologists and anthropologists have failed to realise the importance of this grassroots Sinhala Buddhist movement because of their limited understanding of both the contemporary and precolonial history of the country. In contemporary history they tend to equate nationalism to the politics of an elite comprador class. In precolonial history they fail to see the continued existence of a Buddhist form of governance inherited from ancient India. This failure arises because Buddhism is interpreted by many contemporary sociologists and anthropologists as an individualistic religion without a socio-political function. Such a perception is an ahistorical understanding of the religion. Amarasekara argues that Buddhism has had a socio-political function in both India and Sri Lanka and that this legacy has remained with the Sinhala people despite colonial influence. The text ends by positing the idea that the crucial intellectual and social challenge that confronts contemporary Sinhala society is to create an egalitarian society by combining Marxism's revolutionary potential and Buddhism's ethical social vision.

The idea of a Sinhala Buddhist subaltern movement

Amarasekara's historical narrative can be readily critiqued for its lack of historicity. It homogenises precolonial Sri Lankan society and erases the diverse socio-political forces that shaped the colonial and post-colonial periods of the country – most importantly the multiplicity of ethno-cultural identities. One of the strategies used in Amarasekara's text to make this hypothesis appear credible is to argue that most post-independence historians are unable to account for the emergence of Sinhala nationalism as a political force in 1956 and that this is in turn owes to their inability to understand the historical continuity of Sinhala nationalist thinking.

The main reason why those referred to above [pro-colonial historians and Marxist academics] are unable to understand the revolution that happened in 1956 is the ahistorical conclusion that it was a random and sudden occurrence ...

What happened in 1956 is not the sudden emergence of a minor political movement that engulfed a major one. It was the entry, into the political arena, of a current that gradually grew amidst the masses of the country and swept away all minor

currents that existed up to that time. This major current is none other than the struggle for anti-colonial national resurgence that emerged from the time that this country came under British colonial rule. This current – which entered the political arena in '56 and bewildered the colonialists of this country, worshippers of English and the Marxists – was brought to its highest pitch at the beginning of this century by Anagarika Dharmapala. This struggle, which was faltering at the beginning of the century, was completely revitalised by Dharmapala. He saw that such a national revitalisation programme allied to an anti-colonial struggle could be successfully mobilised in this country. He saw that, though a defeated race for centuries, the cultural basis for such a struggle was alive in this country. Dharmapala saw that the farmers, labourers, [indigenous] doctors, [vernacular] teachers and priests were all linked through a common cultural framework. Thus when Dharmapala toured the villages of this country and raised the anti-colonial cry – Sinhalese wake up, save Buddhism – the farmers, priests, doctors, teachers and other groups who lived in the villages of this country listened to it as one ... The idea of a 'major current' expressed by Dr. Mendis [a Sri Lankan academic historian of the mid twentieth century] is promoted by the comprador class of this country to negate this mass anti-colonial movement. Though the comprador class considered it a 'major current' the masses of this country did not consider it their legacy. In a very short period of time the masses saw the false nature of this 'major current' and turned towards the original anti-colonial movement. Bandaranaike grasped this reality intuitively. He realised that all he needed to do was to allow this movement to enter into the political arena ...

It is the existence, to some degree, of comprador thinking that has prevented our historians, intellectuals and Marxists from seeing this reality underlying '56. The same thinking operates subtly and unconsciously even in the Marxist who overtly challenges colonialism.

(Amarasekara 1980, 9–11)

The overall impression this passage gives is of a polemical argument that uses sweeping generalisations to promote its vision of Sri Lankan history and politics. However, the idea that a subaltern Sinhala Buddhist movement existed throughout the British colonial period and emerged as a political force in 1956 is made within a frame that it is ahistorical to view 1956 as a sudden and random occurrence. Amarasekara's argument

implies that the historiography of G. C. Mendis is symptomatic of a larger problem in Sri Lankan historiography – the lack of a subaltern focus. The specific lacuna identified by Amarasekara is Mendis's inability to move beyond an elite-biased outlook and grant agency to the subaltern masses of the country.

There is no great difference between a historian and a person in Colombo whose awareness of this country is limited to English newspapers which promote the idea that Bandaranaike attired in native dress and promising Sinhala Only in twenty four hours deluded the priests, indigenous doctors and vernacular teachers of this country and came to power. Both these individuals sub-consciously believe that the Sinhalese villager of this country is an uncivilised dupe.

(Amarasekara 1980, 9)

Though the account claims to be historically specific to Sri Lanka, Marxism speaks through it at many points. In specifically targeting an urban and Western (English)-educated elite, the class struggle dimension of Amarasekara's text is reproduced in classic terms as country versus city, the individual (*a* historian and *a* person in Colombo) versus the collective. The urban elite is an aggregate of individuals, unlike rural society, which is made up of all classes, from religious figures to indigenous and organic intellectuals to the ordinary 'Sinhalese villager'.

Though somewhat simplistically expressed, Amarasekara's critique does carry some validity in relation to Mendis's historiography. The Mendis text referred to here is *Ceylon Today and Yesterday: Main Currents of Ceylon History* (1963 [1957]). Writing in the immediate aftermath of the events of 1956, Mendis sees the rise of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism as a dead end, a regressive throwback to communalism. He holds to the progressivism inherent in colonial narratives about the modernisation of Sri Lanka and sees the future as one that should be firmly embedded within the secular modernising zeal expressed in various institutional reforms carried out by the colonial administration, most prominently the Colebrooke–Cameron reforms of 1833.

Colebrooke, after a study of two years, made a thorough analysis of the political, social and economic conditions of the Island and came to the conclusion that the river of life in Ceylon was practically stagnant ... He searched for the causes that obstructed this flow, and came to the conclusion that it was not British rule

but the continuity of the ancient system. Therefore, he made recommendations to liberate Ceylon from the burden of its past heritage.

(Mendis 1963 [1957], 139)

Amarasekara's critique was written almost two decades after Mendis's work, and Sri Lankan historiography by this time had looked at the events of 1956 differently. This is something that Amarasekara acknowledges by referencing the work of R. A. L. H. Gunawardana, who represents a later generation of historians. Amarasekara suggests that Gunawardana's work has been able to overcome the common view that 1956 represents the 'victory of a nationalist capitalist class' (Amarasekara 1980, 8) and shows how Bandaranaike's coalition won because it was able to secure the support of important rural Sinhala Buddhist groups. Nonetheless, Amarasekara perceives an essential commonality between Gunawardana and the historiography represented by Mendis because of its inability to trace a genealogy for what happened in 1956. This limitation, Amarasekara suggests, emerges from Gunawardana's failure, as with Mendis, to identify the historical emergence of a common Sinhala Buddhist cultural framework that animated a subaltern anti-colonial movement.

Amarasekara's argument can be placed in the wider context of the general lack of historical scholarship on subaltern movements in Sri Lanka. As Jonathan Spencer (1990, 217) observes, scholarship has had difficulty accounting for what Spencer calls the 'temporal lag in the development of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism' – or why the well-documented Sinhala and Buddhist cultural and nascent-nationalist resurgence in the late nineteenth century (Malalgoda 1976; Obeyesekere 1976; Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988) took almost a decade after formal independence in 1948 to achieve political expression. Spencer suggests this is possibly because scholarly historical sources have tended to be urban, English, Colombo-centric ones. Thus, the implicit void both Spencer and Amarasekara point towards is the lack of a subaltern focus in the historiography of Sri Lanka. Twentieth-century Sri Lankan historiography – especially in chronicling nationalism – has tended to focus on the largely visible and well-documented political movements represented by the national elite.

Amarasekara's critique of Sri Lankan historiography should be seen as a political rather than scholarly exercise. The narrative of an organic cultural consciousness that bonded different Sinhala social groups together, one could suggest, is not very different from the familiar idea

of a national cultural consciousness that was used by elite nationalism in general – and by figures like Dharmapala and Bandaranaike (Moore 1985; Rogers 1997). The vision I have explored in the previous chapters shaped Dharmapala's and Bandaranaike's characteristically tutelary or custodial attitudes towards subaltern groups. This is evident in Amarasekara's text when he attempts to rationalise Dharmapala's use of vitriolic language when he addressed peasantry:

If one reads Dharmapala's writing uncritically it is not surprising that someone would form the impression that he was a religious zealot. Yet we must remember that this zealotry was something Dharmapala deliberately invokes. These articles called 'facts people should know' were written for an uneducated rural Buddhists. In a manner they would understand.

(Amarasekara 1980, 17)

Though Amarasekara criticises academic historiography for not granting agency to the Sinhala villager, this passage reveals a remarkably similar attitude. The passage suggests that both Dharmapala and Amarasekara consider the rural populace to be unable to deal with complexity. They need to be addressed in a simplified polemical language because of their lack of education. Despite positioning itself as a critical intervention in nationalist discourse, Amarasekara's text replicates some of the very perceptions and attitudes it seeks to resist.

The story that Amarasekara builds fits a familiar pattern of authenticity. For both Dharmapala and Bandaranaike authenticity was not something readily available. They had to find it outside themselves. Similarly, for Amarasekara authenticity is something located in Buddhism, the village or the peasantry. This is a pattern visible in Sinhala intellectuals with rural origins who have migrated to the city but look back at the rural as a site of authenticity; the same vision is visible in Martin Wickramasinghe. Just as elite politicians like Bandaranaike sought to claim moral legitimacy by projecting an idea of authenticity, Amarasekara as a Sinhala-educated intellectual is attempting to claim greater knowledge of authenticity by virtue of his understanding Buddhism, the village and the peasantry. Wickramasinghe made similar claims immediately after the 1956 electoral victory when he wrote an essay called *Bamunu Kulaye Bindaweteema* (The Downfall of the Brahministic Class) (1956), which argued that 1956 marked the political displacement of a comprador class. One may usefully invoke here the metaphor of a series of historical escalators that Raymond Williams

uses in *The Country and the City* (1973): how successive generations of English writers have looked back to other times and places that were more authentic than their own.

The idea of a Buddhist state and Sri Lanka's precolonial history

Amarasekara makes procedurally similar arguments to those above: that scholarship has failed to recognise the role Buddhism played in the socio-political life of the nation in precolonial Sri Lanka. Although he challenges how Buddhism has been defined and interpreted by scholars, the alternative he proposes is a homogenising ahistorical vision that rationalises the idea of contemporary Sinhala Buddhist hegemony. Central to Amarasekara's seamless narrative is the idea of a Buddhist socio-political system that always existed in Sri Lanka in antiquity. Establishing this idea as historical fact is important for Amarasekara's argument. It allows him to defend Dharmapala against criticism of romanticising the past. It also allows him to argue that such a socio-political structure is practical in the present because it is based on a 'realistic' understanding of what has happened in history.

A system of governance accepted and protected by people over thousands of years cannot be just erased. It is an eternal legacy of ours. If this legacy in some way shapes our understanding of the present it is equally relevant to how we construct our future. In short, there is no present or future that can be constructed by forgetting the past. Thus, Dharmapala's exhortation that a Buddhist kingdom should be created in this country needs to be regarded as rational and realistic, and made with a proper historical consciousness. It was a project based on a correct perception of our history and of Buddhism.

(Amarasekara 1980, 38)

The argument made here is that consciousness of an indigenous form of governance remains in the collective memory of the Sinhala people and that they recognise it as part of their heritage. In order to make this argument, Amarasekara first challenges the idea, which became widespread in nineteenth-century global intellectual circles, that Buddhism is an individualistic religion. Amarasekara engages critically with this idea because it can be used to negate the socio-political function of Buddhism

and to suggest that ‘political Buddhism’ is a contradiction of the religion’s ethical principles.

Charles Hallisey (1995) has explored how nineteenth-century positivist European Buddhist scholars tended to abstract a text-based understanding of doctrine from popular practice, constructing the former as more original and authoritative than the latter. Ananda Abeysekara (2002) has suggested that this nineteenth-century framework of knowledge has influenced prominent contemporary scholars of Buddhism like Stanley Tambiah, Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere. Abeysekara (2002, 30–40) argues that the work of these scholars also reproduces a dichotomy between the idea of doctrinally accurate original Buddhism and impure versions of the religion that are practised by various societies. This dichotomy can be utilised as an ethical critique against what is seen as the political exploitation and manipulation of the religion. However, as Abeysekara (2002, 37) points out, the idea of an authentic Buddhism can create a conceptual reification. He suggests that Buddhism needs to be viewed as a discursive construct that has historically and contextually contingent multiple meanings. Amarasekara’s critique of the ‘individualistic’ hypothesis of Buddhism can be placed within this larger conceptual debate:

It is important to consider how the view held by many sociologists in this country that Buddhism is an ‘individual path for spiritual salvation’ or an ‘individualistic religion’ was formed. I believe the origin of this view is the social scientist Max Weber. There is no doubt that Max Weber was an important social scientist who lived during the first half of this century. We have to accept without reservation that insights expressed by him regarding Indian religious thinking are very important. But his views on Buddhism were expressed without knowledge of the origins of Buddhism or its core teachings. This is because he lumped Buddhism with other Indian religions like Hinduism. He viewed all these religions as concerned with individual spiritual salvation. Buddhism was considered similarly.

There is no doubt that the thinking of our social scientists is heavily influenced by Max Weber’s misconceptions. But what is surprising is how they uncritically reproduce these ideas when they have knowledge gained through the practical experience of Buddhism ...

It is not through the study of ancient Pali texts from within the perspectives of another culture that the real doctrine the Buddha preached could be comprehended. It is from a different approach.