

## A BAROQUE CONCLUSION

I don't think you can hold anybody accountable for a situation that, maybe if you had done something different, maybe something would have occurred differently.

(Vice Admiral Albert T. Church, III, speaking at a  
United States Department of Defense Briefing on  
Detention Operations and Interrogation  
Techniques, March 10, 2005)

*Beyond Enlightenment* has explored the political dimension of discursive objects that are commonly served up as apolitical: extraordinary universal value, original intentions, scripture, dharma. But these investigations have not advanced a model for positive engagement in a world where the apolitical is political. I shall endeavor to do so now. This final chapter will seek a wisdom that responds to the secular facticity of political struggle, *not* by projecting a chiasm of politics transcended, but by articulating a politics compatible with irreducible pluralism; a wisdom that does not idealize the cessation of suffering, but idealizes the ability to take responsibility for suffering as a constitutive and productive dimension of life. And yes, it will be all the sweeter when we find a word for this wisdom in the Sanskrit of bauddha polemic—*icchantika*.

Ernesto Laclau has served as something of a *bête blanche* throughout this work. Here at the end, however, I take my lead from Chantal Mouffe, Laclau's longtime collaborator. If Laclau emphasizes hegemony and the structural contingency of power, Mouffe focuses more squarely upon the constructive potential opened up by contingency. If Laclau explains how identities, personal and collective, are formed in contingent assertions of power, structured through exclusion, entailing the potential for antagonism and conflict, Mouffe in turn explores how to manage these passions toward progressive political ends.

More to the point, Mouffe urges her readers "to discard the dangerous dream of perfect consensus, of harmonious collective will."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Chapter 5 ended with a sense that *danger* might really lurk in Richard Hayes' e/Enlightened musings about an original sangha. But does not Mouffe's injunction force us to

reach back into still earlier chapters, to weave their diverse threads into one simple question: If it is impossible to reach perfect consensus over the identification of an archaeological site—Ajanta is Buddhist—how much less likely is it that one set of personal values and daily needs can become the universal basis for a harmonious collective will? In more general terms, Mouffe argues that given the possibility of liberty, and the value placed on personal autonomy, along with the freedoms of conscience and thought, it is impossible for democratic unions to be free of strife. Any political theory that obviates or ignores the irreducible character of social antagonism, theorizing perfect reasonableness and/or neutrality as a viable foundation for perfect social concord, is necessarily anti-democratic:

For democracy to exist, no social agent should be able to claim any mastery of the *foundation* of society. This signifies that the relation between social agents becomes more democratic only as far as they accept the particularity and the limitation of their claims; that is, only in so far as they recognize their mutual relation as one from which power is ineradicable. The democratic society cannot be conceived any more as a society that would have realized the dream of perfect harmony in social relations.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, for Mouffe, “the main question of democratic politics becomes . . . not how to eliminate power, but how to constitute forms of power which are compatible with democratic values.”<sup>3</sup>

To translate Mouffe’s concern into terms introduced in *Beyond Enlightenment*, we need a politics that does not presuppose a scriptural anthropology: that does not expect it can resolve multiplicity at the “literal” level into a higher-order unity through appeal to an occult transcendental. The varied arguments throughout this book have known Mouffe’s call for a wise politics that does not reduce out the secular violence of social existence. The earlier chapters demonstrate why religious tropes (e.g., enlightenment; dharma) and religious institutions (e.g., Buddhism) deserve no special privilege in the modern social imaginary, since they, on the one hand, are incapable of eradicating the structural conditions that produce conflict, while, on the other hand, they are not suitable guides to managing conflict in a pluralistic world. The expectation that enlightenment or dharma or faith or secular wisdom or Buddhism or religion can resolve life’s challenges—for you and me and everybody—may well be the “poison arrow” of modern times. The first chapter cited the Dalai Lama’s affirmation, “there is every reason to appreciate and respect all forms of spiritual practice.”<sup>4</sup> The DL is just plain wrong.

Yet the DL’s affirmation of spiritual universalism also does point us forward. He used these words in 1996, when addressing a mixed audience of Christian and Buddhist monks. In the same year, speaking only to other Tibetans, however, the DL was less generous when he declared a spirit named Dorje Shugden to be a harmful spirit, and alleged that practices honoring this spirit threaten his own life and the cause of Tibetan political freedom more generally. The DL asked

Dorje Shugden’s Tibetan devotees to dissociate themselves, either from the spirit, or from himself.<sup>5</sup> In fact, one can riffle through the bauddha literature of any land and any time, and find, as did Xuanzang in seventh-century India, “various viewpoints [being debated] as vehemently as crashing waves.”<sup>6</sup> The bauddha always have been avid polemicists. This is hardly surprising since there is no Buddhism apart from the processes of hegemony. “Buddhist” is our name for people who treat enlightenment (dharma, etc.) as positive indices of meaningfulness, and who attempt to universalize and normalize their own particular values by filling these empty signifiers. The bauddha always have been avid polemicists, but in times past not all were loath to admit it.

So what I would like to do now is look back to the early centuries CE, to a polemic that provides extravagant allegorical possibilities for the present. I use *allegory* here in an elementary sense, as the trope of doubled reading. Allegory does not simply transfer value from one realm of meaning to another, as does metaphor. Allegory offers the opportunity to read a text simultaneously within two separate and distinct intertexts. My allegory is extravagant (recall Thoreau’s use of this word, cited at the beginning of Chapter 4) because it “leaps the cowyard fence” of its Indian bauddha origin to seek new pastures in the latitude of contemporary politics.

Beyond enlightenment stands the *icchantika*. Several Mahāyāna texts theorize that not all living beings are capable of enlightenment. *icchantika* is the name they give to someone who has not and will not become enlightened. Read in an allegorical mood, characterizations of the icchantika-figure allow us to reimagine e/Enlightenment as supporting a politics of irresolvable multiplicity, hybridity, and indeterminacy.

Traditionally, the icchantika played a minor role in the bauddha war of words. His interest lies now in the fact that he is a creature tied to polemic, the consummate outsider painted in shades of black. The *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (MNS) offers an open-ended condemnation: “An *icchantika* is one whose roots of goodness have been completely eradicated. His original mind is so devoid of any desire for good dharma that not a single thought of goodness will ever arise in him.”<sup>7</sup> The icchantika seeks his own gratification, unabashedly and wholeheartedly. Thus “icchantika” came to designate the person who lacks higher values. And in some descriptions, the icchantika was not only uninterested but also unable to become enlightened. Again the MNS: “All sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature. Due to this nature, they can . . . attain the most perfect enlightenment. The only exceptions are the *icchantikas*.”<sup>8</sup> On the path to perdition, in Robert Buswell’s words, the icchantika falls short of even “the lowest common denominator” . . . of the Buddhist spiritual equation.<sup>9</sup>

The icchantika will never escape saṃsāra, a condition *usually* explained by his moral, spiritual, and intellectual deficiencies. In most bauddha texts, that is the end of the matter. The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, however, adds a second explanation. The *Laṅkāvatāra*’s discussion begins with a pun: “How is it that the wanters do not want to be liberated?”<sup>10</sup> The answer then distinguishes two types of

icchāntikas. One type, like that of the MNS, is devoid of merit. Lacking goodness, he cannot attain nirvāṇa, and is thus doomed to remain in saṃsāra. By contrast, the *Laṅkāvatāra*'s second type of icchāntika is entirely good. This is evidenced by his vow: "As long as all beings have not attained nirvāṇa, I will not attain nirvāṇa." Fully capable of liberation, the good icchāntika nonetheless tries to emancipate beings who neither want nor value the emancipation he would proffer. He cuts a swath through the public sphere, speaking his truths, knowing that many of those to whom he speaks will not listen. Some might be moved at their very core by his words, and others will remain eternally unmoved. The good icchāntika has embarked on an impossible task and has no illusions: he too will remain in saṃsāra forever.<sup>11</sup>

One might whiff an air of religious zealotry here. But the good icchāntika of my allegory does not transmogrify into the Christian soldier or mujahideen or neoconservative, for he lacks recourse to an apolitical ground beyond contingency. He propounds an ideal that he himself has not experienced in the past and, by definition, will not experience in the future. Neither does he imagine an ultimate salvation; nor does he have faith in an invisible-but-beneficent hand. He does not expect and does not receive recompense for his struggles. There is no grace; no heaven; no bosom of Abraham; no 72 *houris*. No millennial land of milk and honey. No escape from Plato's cave. The good icchāntika, in short, articulates ideals and pursues their realization with his attention fully on *this* world. He must fail—indeed, his title *icchāntika* is eponymous with failure—yet he continues to strive. For all these reasons, the good icchāntika acts the part of an adversary but never the part of an imperator. It is the bad icchāntika who becomes so rapt in his own fervor for faith or truth or peace that he imagines that dharma/justice demands universal acceptance of his e/Enlightened ideal.

These two icchāntika-types have a lexical symbiosis, not because they share the same desire, but because they both do desire; not because they share the same ultimate end, but because for both this world serves as an end in itself—and that end is never ending. Mahāyāna philosophers delighted in the paradoxical equation of opposites: nirvāṇa is saṃsāra, saṃsāra is nirvāṇa; form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Icchāntika is icchāntika. Is it not far more satisfying when both sides of the opposition have the same name? The word creates a unit without a unity. It conjoins the most debased with the most exalted without homologizing or equating the two. They belong together because they are eternally opposed.

Now, it is clear why the good icchāntika is "good." But for this figure to serve allegorically within a progressive political imaginary we need also consider the quality of the bad icchāntika's "badness." Fortunately, Robert Buswell has studied the icchāntika in Pāli, Sanskrit, and Chinese sources, and gives us a firm starting point. At bottom, the bad icchāntika is bad because he lacks generosity: "the very bedrock of Buddhist soteriology" is "the simple practice of charity, of giving (*dāna*)."<sup>12</sup> This brooks a straightforward doctrinal explanation: charity, in Buddhist terms, expresses detachment. Someone who can let go of a flower or dollar can eventually let go of saṃsāra. Someone who cannot practice detachment

can never become a buddha. Buswell notes that this can be a matter of plain old avarice. But it is also possible the bad icchāntika is greedy for enlightenment. Someone who does not engage in rituals of worship and giving because he sees them as hollow distractions from the pursuit of wisdom is as "bad" as someone who spends his wealth solely on sensual self-indulgence. Sapiential hedonism is little better than material. To foreshadow: salvational hedonism belongs on this list as well.

*In nuce*, the icchāntika "worships his own desires" (per the MNS).<sup>13</sup> With this, now, let us shift this extravagant allegory's intertextual field, from the classical bauddha to the contemporary, in order to seek the bad icchāntikas of our world. Given the icchāntika-figure's doubling, insight into the bad should also reveal how now to be good. This will require a brief step away from the icchāntikas, to the *mise en scène* of our moment.

Consider Vice Admiral Albert T. Church, III, whose words begin this chapter. As Naval Inspector General, Church investigated allegations of torture performed by US military interrogators from 2001 through 2004 in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The unclassified version of the Church Report detailed 71 cases of abuse, involving 121 victims and six deaths.<sup>14</sup> The chapter's epigram comes, however, not from the report but from a press conference Church held upon its release. In both public fora, Church explained that although US interrogators abused Afghani and Iraqi prisoners, because the Department of Defense did not explicitly forbid such abuse, nobody could be held culpable for its occurrence.

Reread the quotation and consider Church's logic: A change of cause would have resulted in a change of effect. However, given that cause *X* inevitably produces effect *Y*, and given that *X* did occur, who can be blamed that *Y* followed? Church displaces the inevitability of a cause-and-effect chain from effect to cause. The cause itself becomes as if without origin. Where have we seen this before? This is how Leonard of the film *Memento*, a man without memory or scruples, experienced the world. And as Chapter 3 puzzled over Leonard's humanity, we must now wonder: what kind of man replaces the moral maxim that to act with choice is to act with responsibility, with the amoral principle that there is no responsibility *because* one's action is a matter of choice?

The MNS posits that bad icchāntikas worship their own desires; they make a religion of self-interest. One can understand how this rubric might fit *Memento*'s Leonard, who intentionally tricked himself into killing the "wrong" man for the "right" reasons. How about Church? Does the Vice Admiral also magnify his own self-serving amorality into a cosmic principle of life-and-death? The MNS speaks of worship: at whose altar does Church worship?

Blame Calvin! To find today's bad icchāntikas look first to Calvin! Yes, all gods are the objectification of human ideals; all theists worship their own desires. But it was Calvin who took this construction to the limit: magnifying god into the greatest absolute monstrosity by diminishing humanity into the weakest servile dot. It is Calvin who gives stark expression to Feuerbach's theological

dialectic: “that God may be all, man must be nothing.”<sup>15</sup> It is Calvin’s god who relieves men of the burden of responsibility for the consequences of their choices.

Chapter 4 cited Calvin: “It is the first business of an interpreter to let his author say what he does, instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say.”<sup>16</sup> In this spirit, let us follow a loose thread of citations from the *Institutes*.

What for us seems a contingency, faith recognizes to have been a secret impulse from God.<sup>17</sup>

What then? you will ask. Does nothing happen by chance, nothing by contingency? I reply . . . “fortune” and “chance” are pagan terms. . . . For if every success is God’s blessing, and calamity and adversity his curse, no place now remains in human affairs for fortune or chance.<sup>18</sup>

If politics entails contingent expressions of power, then for today’s bad *icchanta* nothing is political, even torture. Politics is not a matter of living, but of rhetoric: a word to stigmatize one’s opponents with ulterior motives and hypocrisy. Hypocrisy! Why would not the Grand Inquisitor himself be numbered among the men of faith?

Truly God claims, and would have us grant him, omnipotence—not the empty, idle, and almost unconscious sort . . . but a watchful, effective, active sort, engaged in ceaseless activity. Not, indeed, an omnipotence that is only a general principle of confused motion . . . but one that is directed towards individual and particular motions. . . . For when, in The Psalms, it is said that “he does whatever he wills” [Psalms 115:3], a certain and deliberate will is meant.<sup>19</sup>

Beyond politics, Calvin’s predication of god as absolutely autonomous and absolutely free requires human heteronomy and servitude. Moreover,

God’s will is so much the highest rule of righteousness that whatever he wills, by the very fact that he wills it, must be considered righteous. When, therefore, one asks why God has so done, we must reply: because he has willed it.<sup>20</sup>

How could torture be “wrong”? The abuse of Afghani and Iraqi prisoners, as a matter of “free choice” on the part of US soldiers, must be righteous. Indeed, there is little reason even to worry about whether individual Afghans and Iraqis merit abuse, since god himself parcels out retribution apart from considerations of individual merit. A man is evil just because god wills him to damnation; a man is guilty just because the US military wills his detention.

We call predestination God’s eternal decree, by which he compacted with himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not

created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others.<sup>21</sup>

He who here seeks a deeper cause than God’s secret and inscrutable plan will torment himself to no purpose.<sup>22</sup>

As the causeless cause of life and death, god’s reasons for electing some and damning others are wholly his own. God gives life and god takes it: this knowledge is sufficient. So why seek culpability in the case of prisoner abuse? Yes, Jesus said, “Render unto Caesar.” But here questions of legality merely confuse the issue. For the Church Report itself allows that “no specific guidance on interrogation techniques was provided to the commanders responsible for Afghanistan and Iraq.” How can one ask responsible commanders to be responsible for guidelines they were not given? What seems to us to have been a contingent, even immoral choice, faith recognizes to have been a secret impulse from god, and thus infinitely glorious.

The very inequality of his grace proves that it is free.<sup>23</sup>

The doctrine of salvation . . . is falsely debased when presented as effectually profitable for all.<sup>24</sup>

The Lord wills that in election we contemplate nothing but his mere goodness.<sup>25</sup>

We never truly glory him unless we have utterly put off our own glory.<sup>26</sup>

For Calvin’s god, the self-expression of autonomous freedom in the pursuit of his own unquestionable desires is the highest good. Anyone unwilling to worship at the altar of divine self-interest is thus damned. To doubt god’s plan, righteousness, omnipotence, and universal providence, is to demonstrate one’s own lack of election, for the only sure sign of election that god deigns to grant us is our ability to keep faith in faith itself.

God’s unchangeable plan, by which he predestined for himself those whom he willed, was in fact intrinsically effectual unto salvation for these spiritual offspring alone.<sup>27</sup>

God . . . to show forth his glory, withdraws the effectual working of his Spirit from them [the wicked]. This inner call, then, is a pledge of salvation that cannot deceive us.<sup>28</sup>

Blessed is a United States’ military that stands meekly before the Lord, for it shall inherit the earth.

*Faith in faith* is the core tenet of today’s bad *icchanta*. How could any god be less charitable than an omnipotent, autonomous creator who saves and damns gratuitously precisely so that his slaves will recognize his freedom and their enslavement; so that they will praise him and condemn themselves . . . and in that

self-abnegation hope for a sign of justification? Such a god relieves our world's bad icchantikas of the burden of generosity. Bad icchantikas, trusting providence, happily satisfy their own personal wants, no matter how terrible the consequence for others.

Where do we find these bad icchantikas? In 2005 we need not look far. Look for the scripturalization of selfishness: where even extreme expressions of self-interest are thought to serve a providential purpose, since an "invisible hand" will ensure that selfish intention functions as an instrument of the commonweal.

Look to the Christian Right, which opposes "Big Government" as a public source of financial assistance for those not blessed by providence, while it agitates for strict governmental regulations that compel citizens to be "moral" in their most intimate moments.

Look to Constitution in Exile: a libertarian movement dedicated to the elimination of all laws that impinge on property-ownership, from minimum-wage legislation, to laws protecting the environment, to measures that protect financial markets from fraud.<sup>29</sup>

Look to the conference, "Confronting the Judicial War on Faith," convened in Washington DC in April 2005. At this conference, US congressmen mingled with representatives of the Chalcedon Foundation.<sup>30</sup> This latter group's credo speaks the language of neoconservative liberty—"the role of the state is in essence to defend and protect, in the words of the early American Republic, life, liberty, and property"—which it then reframes in stringently Calvinist terms—

we believe that the Bible should apply to all of life, including the state; and... we believe that the Christian state should enforce Biblical civil law; and finally, ... we believe that the responsibility of Christians is to exercise dominion in the earth for God's glory.<sup>31</sup>

Is it any wonder that Tom DeLay was the conference's keynote speaker? Or that DeLay spoke thinly veiled words about the need to impeach judges who do not adhere to a Calvinist worldview? Or that other attendees stated this position explicitly?

Look to the main hive of bad icchantikas today: George W. Bush's White House. Its every piece of legislation is self-serving, yet who could doubt that the people working in the West Wing are convinced that their efforts at deregulation and privatization are fulfilling god's inscrutable plan? The bad icchantika worships his own desires. In our world, this describes the person who uses his faith in faith as an ultimate justification for self-serving behavior. Who does this describe more precisely than George W. Bush and Tom DeLay?

The chapter began with a promise: Bauddha speculation on enlightenment might yield a positive figure for contemporary progressivism. So, what is a good icchantika to do? Or to begin, what does he not do? First, definitively, the good icchantika does not take recourse to a rhetoric of apolitical ideals. If the good icchantika is "good," it is because he lacks faith in faith and thus does

not seek solutions outside the sphere of politics, that is, contingent human relations. Because he does not claim transcendental freedom he does not then have to imagine a still-higher objective source of order—god; dharma—in order to constrain that freedom; to prevent liberty from becoming libertine. Thus the good icchantika can be a moral agent without taking recourse to a scriptural anthropology. He does not know a creator god and does not claim a natural right to accumulate property or treat the earth as his personal domain. He does not anticipate a next world and does not prophesy a chiliastic vision of ultimate reconciliation and redemption, for anybody. As they say in Las Vegas: What happens here, stays here.

Because the good icchantika has no world other than this one, he gives fully of himself right here, right now. Exchanging his time for others' benefit, he cultivates interpersonal bonds. This is how one improves a world fraught with antagonism. Yet, because he is determined to give to people who will not take, he also participates in, and perpetuates, the antagonisms endemic to human relations. Indeed, if this allegory has any pragmatic force, this is it: There is no single correct or proper way to be a good icchantika. Remember, the good icchantika exists in opposition to the bad. Human beings are impossibly infinite. So if bad icchantikas worship their own desires there must then be an endless number of gods for good icchantikas to both embrace and challenge.

Moreover, the diversity of desires/gods entails a diversity of means for political action. The various divisions that can lead to the inhibition of political involvement—theory versus practice; organized versus personal forms of resistance; revolution versus incremental change; working for change from within the "system" versus from without—are mooted. The good icchantika allows that his progressive cause is not everybody's progressive cause; that his agenda, ideology, and discourse are not for everybody. He does what he can, as he can, without demanding that all so-called "right-minded people" value what he values, understand what he understands, or act as he acts. How could he do otherwise? For the good icchantika too is beyond enlightenment.

What does it take to be a good icchantika? See every social encounter as an opportunity for adversarial giving. How do you begin? To circle back to the preface, here is one option. The next time you meet somebody on the road (or, for that matter, in a book), who says,

Nobody is comparable to me.  
I am the only perfect buddha in the world.  
I have attained supreme enlightenment.  
I am conqueror over all.  
I am unrivaled in all realms, including those of the gods.

do not follow Upagu's lead and slink down another road. *Sapere aude!* You need not kill the buddha. Just slap him hard enough, so that he sees stars rather than enlightenment.

## 6 A BAROQUE CONCLUSION

- 1 Chantal Mouffe, “Radical Democracy or Liberal Democracy,” *Socialist Review* 20 (1990): 58–9.
- 2 Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000), 21.
- 3 Ibid., 22.
- 4 Dalai Lama, “Forward,” in Donald Mitchell and James Wiseman, eds, *The Gethsemani Encounter: A Dialogue on the Spiritual Life by Buddhist and Christian Monastics* (New York: Continuum, 1997), ix.

Hegemonic ecumenism is not just a contemporary phenomenon. Early medieval Sanskrit literature provides a wonderful example. King Harṣavardhana (r. 606–47 CE) was one of India’s preeminent rulers. Bāṇabhaṭṭa, a member of Harṣa’s court, wrote the *Deeds of Harṣa* in celebration of his patron’s youthful adventures. The scene that concerns us has Harṣa wandering through a jungle wilderness. He happens upon the hermitage of Divākaramitra, a brahmin who exchanged his Vedic garments for bauddha robes. In Divākaramitra’s jungly glade, Harṣa sees:

Among the trees were men from many nations sitting all over the place.... Free of passion, those men included: Digambara Jains, Pāśupatas, Śvetāmbara Jains, Ājīvakas, Bhāgavatas, Naiṣṭhika Brahmacārins, ascetics who pull their hair out, Sāṃkhyas, Lokāyatas, Bauddhas, Vaiṣeṣikas, Vedantins, Naiyāyikas, alchemists, scholars of the Dharmaśāstras, scholars of the Purāṇas, Mīmāṃsakas, Śaivas, grammarians, Pāñcarātras, and others. Each was diligently studying his own sectarian tenets (*sva-sva-siddhānta*)—pondering, urging objections, raising doubts, resolving them, giving etymologies, disputing, studying, and explaining. All were avowed students [of Divākaramitra].

(This passage needs a note of its own.  
See \* on page 214 for supporting details.)

Who are these men? Who is Divākaramitra? To answer the first: These are men one normally sees presented as philosophical and religious rivals. The assembly includes partisans of Śiva and of Viṣṇu, atheists and pantheists, materialists and fatalists, ritualists and people who ridicule ritual, scholars of the law and antinomians. Or, to update the image, there are neo-Marxists and neo-Straussians, Secular Humanists and Southern Baptists, Wiccans and Wahabis. This sylvan harmony is staggering. Moreover, Bāṇabhaṭṭa does not simply describe bitter rivals tolerating each other. Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas, Lokāyatas and Bauddhas follow their own truths while actively striving to “convert” the others. Note the term *siddhānta*, literally “established conclusion.” *Siddhāntas* are the doxa and dogmas that differentiate sects; the axiomatic truths without which there is no sectarian identity; the every-man’s-land of antagonism.

Note that *siddhānta* is prefixed by *sva*, “own”; doubled, *sva-sva* indicates plurality and particularity. Whatever it means for each man to avow himself as a student of Divākaramitra, it does not mean he has to stop worshipping his own deity, or to give up his own distinct sectarian identity, practices, or beliefs. Bāṇabhaṭṭa describes a kind of doctrinal state of nature—an intellectual war of all against all—civilized through Divākaramitra’s presence.

So who is Divākaramitra? Bānabhaṭṭa calls Divākaramitra a supreme follower of buddha; names him as the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara; describes him as somebody worthy of the buddha's reverence and of the dharma's worship. Now if one wonders how this divine man's disciples can hold such diverse sectarian views, Bānabhaṭṭa provides the answer. Divākaramitra's physical body has a unique atomic composition, namely it is comprised of the syllables of all sectarian treatises. In short, Divākaramitra embodies the *coincidentia oppositorum* of all theological truths as well as all theological disputes.

Divākaramitra is many and one: he embodies all sects at the same time that he is a supreme bauddha. Because of Divākaramitra's constitution, individual disciples may accept Divākaramitra as guru for diverse, idiosyncratic reasons, and yet remain unified as a group. Divākaramitra's followers happily pursue distinct sectarian aims precisely because that is the way to proceed toward a universal good. But Divākaramitra is also a brahmin who renounced the Vedas to become a bauddha. As the concrete embodiment of pure religious positivity, Divākaramitra hegemonically validates all truths as bauddha truths, all gods as bauddha gods, all "spiritual practices" as bauddha practices.

- \* The complete account of Divākaramitra's hermitage is found in Bānabhaṭṭa, *Bānabhaṭṭa's Biography of King Harshavardhana of Sthāṇīśvara with Śaṅkara's Commentary, Saṅketa* ed. A.A. Führer (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1909), 316–18; Bānabhaṭṭa, *The Harsa-carita of Bāna* trans. E.B. Cowell and F.W. Thomas (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1897), 236–7. The translation of Cowell and Thomas is unsatisfactory on several accounts. My text is less a literal translation than it is a gloss, which substitutes the better-known names of sects for those used by Bāna. For these identifications, I have taken the suggestions of Vasudeva Agrawala's *The Deeds of Harsha: Being a Cultural Study of Bāna's Harshacarita* (Varanasi: Prithivi Prakashan, 1969), 225–6. I do not want to belabor this point since the precise delineation of these sectarian identities is not important for my purposes, as long as we recognize the general fact of their theological and doctrinal diversity. The same cannot be said for the inclusion of *Bauddha* on this list, so let me discuss that point further. Bāna does not use "bauddha" in this passage, he uses "jaina." In classical Sanskrit, however, the word "jina," conqueror, was given to any spiritual teacher who had overcome ignorance and/or death—including Śākyamuni Buddha. A follower of any *jina* might be called a *jaina*. Unlike today, these terms had no special connection to the people we call Jains or their religion, Jainism. Bānabhaṭṭa uses *jaina* three times in the body of his text. In the first instance, the *Harṣacarita's* fourteenth-century commentary glosses *jaina* as *Śākya*. In the second instance, the commentary gives *bauddha* as the gloss. No gloss is given in the third instance, and no gloss is necessary, since Bānabhaṭṭa uses *jaina* in this third instance as a direct characterization of Śākyamuni Buddha's followers (Bānabhaṭṭa, *Bānabhaṭṭa's Biography*, 97, 316, 325).
- 5 To investigate this Dorje Shugden incident in greater depth, begin with the Tibetan government's official document: *The Worship of Shugden: Documents Related to a Tibetan Controversy* (Dharamsala, India: Department of Religion and Culture, Central Tibetan Administration, 1998).
  - 6 Xuanzang, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions* trans. Li Rongxi (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1996), 57.
  - 7 Cited in Ming-Wood Liu, "The Problem of the *Ichchantika* in the Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra\*," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 7 (1984): 64.
  - 8 Ibid.
  - 9 Robert E. Buswell, Jr., "The Path to Perdition: The Wholesome Roots and their Eradication," in Robert Buswell and Robert Gimello, eds., *Paths to Liberation: The*

- Marga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992), 108.
- 10 Bunyiu Nanjio, ed., *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (Kyoto: Otani University Press, 1956), 65–6; D.T. Suzuki, trans., *The Lankavatara Sutra* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956), 58–9. The pun works because the word *icchantika* derives from a present active participle *icchant*, "desiring." An *icchantika*, literally, is a wanter, desirer, or hedonist.
  - 11 Note, the *Laṅkāvatāra* does not draw these conclusions. After offering its *icchantika*-typology, the sūtra then invokes a *deus ex machina*. It explains that, although the good *icchantika* cannot liberate the bad, the buddha does have the power to compel a bad *icchantika* to seek enlightenment. Thus, for the *Laṅkāvatāra*, everybody eventually does become a buddha. My extravagant allegorization of the *icchantika* ignores this most unsatisfactory denouement.
  - 12 Buswell, "Perdition," 108.
  - 13 Cited in Liu, "Problem," 61.
  - 14 Albert T. Church, III, "Unclassified Executive summary," <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050310exe.pdf> (April 20, 2005).
  - 15 Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* trans. George Eliot (New York: Harper, 1957 [1841]), 26.
  - 16 Calvin, cited in Frederic Farrar, *History of Interpretation* (New York: Dutton, 1886), 347.
  - 17 Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* trans. Ford Battles (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960 [1535]), 210.
  - 18 Ibid., 207.
  - 19 Ibid., 200.
  - 20 Ibid., 949.
  - 21 Ibid., 926.
  - 22 Ibid., 978.
  - 23 Ibid., 929.
  - 24 Ibid., 944.
  - 25 Ibid., 943.
  - 26 Ibid., 764.
  - 27 Ibid., 931.
  - 28 Ibid., 967.
  - 29 Jeffery Rosen, "The Unregulated Offensive," *The New York Times Magazine* (Sunday, April 17, 2005): 42.
  - 30 For an account of the conference see, Michelle Goldberg, "In Theocracy They Trust," [http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2005/04/11/judicial\\_conference](http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2005/04/11/judicial_conference) (April 20, 2005). Thanks to Michele Greenstein for bringing this to my attention.
  - 31 "The Chalcedon Foundation—Faith For All Life," <http://www.chalcedon.edu/credo.php> (April 20, 2005).