Cosmopolitan Hospitality:
When Buddhism Meets Cosmopolitanism

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Abstract

As a politico-philosophical term in the West, cosmopolitanism has re-emerged in the humanities and social sciences in recent decades, especially in the context of the recent refugee crisis in Europe. The philosophy of "hospitality," along with the Kantian notion of "a cosmopolitan right" has been enthusiastically embraced and critically re-explored in political and ethical discussions. In this paper, I will bring Buddhism into conversation with the contemporary discourse of cosmopolitanism, contending that there are elements of cosmopolitan sensibilities in Buddhism despite that the traditional Buddhist teaching is meant to be soteriological rather than political. In considering of the current debate on the concept of "hospitality" beyond existing national boundaries, I will explore the Buddhist argument of interconnectedness, compassion, and hospitality. I will show how Buddhism deals with the question concerning the relationship between universal humanity and cultural or religious particularity and ask if cosmopolitan hospitality based on the Buddhist teaching is an apt vehicle that can open up the ethical or political space necessary to negotiate between the universal and the particular in the age of global mobility and interaction.

Keywords: Cosmopolitanism, Buddhism, compassion, hospitality, suffering, global ethics

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I. Introduction

As a politico-philosophical term in the West, cosmopolitanism has re-emerged in the humanities and social sciences in recent decades, especially in the context of the recent refugee crisis in Europe. The philosophy of "hospitality," along with the Kantian notion of "a cosmopolitan right" has been enthusiastically embraced and critically re-explored in political and ethical discussions, as we see in the work of contemporary French philosophers such as Emmanuel Lévinas, Jacques Derrida (Derrida 2000; See also Shepherd and Clarke 2014), British sociologist Gerard Delanty, and American moral philosopher and legal scholar Martha Nussbaum. In his reworking of critical theory, Delanty argues that cosmopolitanism arises with the transformation of collectiveness in the light of "the encounter with the Other" in a global space (Delanty 2009, 253). Martha Nussbaum (1998) sees practicing hospitality as a basic civic and moral virtue in the process of cultivating humanity to attain world citizenship.[1] Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006), well-known for his research on African-American studies and global ethics, takes a similar position but with a much more critical mind when he elucidates a socially and culturally situated nature of cosmopolitan process and asks: What does it mean to be a citizen of the world? What do we owe strangers by virtue of our shared humanity?

In this paper, I will bring Buddhism into conversation with the contemporary discourse of cosmopolitanism, contending that there are elements of cosmopolitan sensibilities in Buddhism despite that the traditional Buddhist teaching is meant to be soteriological rather than political. In considering of the current debate on the concept of "hospitality" beyond existing national boundaries, I will explore the Buddhist argument of interconnectedness, compassion, and hospitality. I will show how Buddhism deals with the question concerning the relationship between universal humanity and cultural or religious par-

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[1] It should be noted that revival of cosmopolitanism in recent decades is due to the rise of an explicitly political conception of cosmopolitanism relating to citizenship and democracy.

ticularity and ask if cosmopolitan hospitality based on the Buddhist teaching is an apt vehicle that can open up the ethical or political space necessary to negotiate between the universal and the particular in the age of global mobility and interaction.

II. Cosmopolitanism: Defined and Debated

The concept of cosmopolitanism (from the Greek word *kosmopolíte*) has been widely explored in recent decades. The philosophical underpinnings of cosmopolitanism can be traced back to Immanuel Kant whose cosmopolitan ideal concerns humanity in general, with its emphasis on a universalistic orientation toward fulfilment of human capacities characterized by an emphasis on rational moral agency and moral duty.[2] The human being, according to Kant, is part of "the world of necessity" on the one hand and "the world of freedom" on the other. This necessity vs. freedom dichotomy had a significant impact on the later Marxist/Communist imagination of the cosmopolitan project exemplified by the "new world citizens" of proletarians.[3] Meanwhile, the communist conception of cosmopolitanism seems to be identified with another term, namely "internationalism" as Enzo Traverso and Michael Löwy have noted, "In a work such as *The Communist Manifesto*, cosmopolitanism and internationalism tend to fuse. There, the internationalization of the capitalist mode of production and the formation of the world market are seen as a process which has made cosmopolitan (*kosmopolitisch*) the production and consumption of all the countries" (Traverso and Löwy 1990, 136). In this regard, Kant associates his cosmopolitan ideal with "bourgeois republicanism" whereas Marx's internationalist dream attempts to transfer cosmopolitanism to the revolutionary/proletarian class.[4]

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[2] See Kant's philosophical writings from his early essay *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* (1784) to his popular essay *Toward Perpetual Peace* (1795).

[3] For more information, see Ray and Outhwaite (2016).

[4] In Stalin's Soviet Union, cosmopolitanism was viewed as a pejorative term whereas socialist internationalism was a positive one. For more about communist cosmopolitanism, see Ray and Outhwaite (2016).

Nonetheless, both cosmopolitanism and internationalism share the belief in universal principles, and a universal moral realm in particular. Despite the division of humanity into separate historically constituted communities with different belief systems, it remains possible to identify oneself with, and have a moral concern for, humanity. Critics of the Frankfurt School today, however, tend to use the term "global solidarity" instead of the old-fashioned idea of socialist/communist internationalism.

However, cosmopolitanism characterized by the Kantian ideal of the extension of the moral and political horizons of people has been criticized for its Eurocentricity, exclusivity, and a-historical tendencies, as well as for ignoring controversies and clashes in the process of globalization today with its lofty ideal of global governance based on the notions of shared ethical commitments, political visions, and economic agendas. The victory of the Western liberalism over the Soviet (Communist) system in the last century has led many optimists to believe that the gates to democracy as the dominant form of global government had opened the door to the Western liberal ideal. Yet today, quite a number of people ask if the hope for global cosmopolitanism is unrealistic when the global discourse is influenced by the self-interest of states/hyper-nationalism, the anarchical nature of international relations, and the lack of morality in relations beyond national boundaries. Therefore, instead of global cosmopolitanism, a principled cosmopolitanism by the forces of nationalism or ethnocentrism becomes a popular theme.

Obviously, cosmopolitanism (with its literal form as an "ism") is by no means a coherent theory or a well-defined concept. Gerard Delanty's "critical cosmopolitanism" points to a post-universalistic kind of cosmopolitanism, "which is not merely a condition of diversity but is articulated in cultural models of world openness through which societies undergo transformation" (Delanty 2006, 25, 27). For Delanty, critical cosmopolitanism "refers to the multiplicity" with manifold genealogies. As a sociologist, he criticizes the traditional understanding of cosmopolitanism since Kant to be the one that reflects "the revolt of the individual against the social world" by rejecting the given and the world of particularistic attachments. Appiah has a similar concern when

approaching cosmopolitan universalism. In his book *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006), Appiah calls for the necessity for universal concern on the one hand and respect for legitimate difference on the other. He insists that cosmopolitanism requires two ethical imperatives: "One is the idea that we have obligations to others.... The other is that we take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance (Appiah 2006, xv). To put it in a simple phrase, it is "universality plus difference (2006, 151), or what Appiah calls "rooted cosmopolitanism that takes seriously one's cultural particularities.[5]

The key concern raised by Delanty and Appiah points to a long-standing metaphysical question, namely the relationship between the one and the many, or the universal and the particular. In other words, how do we speak of a universal participation in a common logos in which all human beings participate while at the same time do not ignore different variants in terms of *logoi* of particularity? How should cosmopolitanism be understood as an integrated whole in a different or even divided world? Martha Nussbaum defines a cosmopolitan as someone "whose primary allegiance is to the community of human beings in the entire world." The notions of the right and the good are implied in this cosmopolitan unity, and thus Nussbaum claims that the cosmopolitan ethics asks us "to give our first allegiance to what is morally good and that which, being good, I can commend as such to all human beings" (Nussbaum 1994, 3). Yet cosmopolitanism so conceived as ethical universalism presents a clear and provocative challenge to ethical particularism. We run into the question concerning the definition of "common morality" [in a strong sense] and what the cosmopolitan good means among people who claim to be "moral strangers" rather than "moral friends." Does ubiquitous internet use in a digital world that has increased human mobility and new political configurations in terms of global governance help people to embrace

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5 Appiah traces idea of cosmopolitanism to the Greek Cynics and Stoics, Christian Universalists and Enlightenment thinkers and takes as a credo the "golden rule of cosmopolitanism" of Publius Terentius Afer, or Terence, a Carthaginian slave: "I am human: nothing human is alien to me" (2006, 111).

a cosmopolitan identity or cause more cosmopolitan entanglements? Appiah reminds us of the importance of acknowledging foreignness of foreigners, the strangeness of strangers" when we speak of the values of heterogeneity, interdependence, and interconnectedness. It should be noted that Appiah's call for diversity does not mean he agrees with moral relativity or the impossibility of universalism. On the contrary, he criticizes relativism as a rubric for dealing with ethical differences and how cosmopolitanism as a universal trait of humankind is a solution to the problem of the one and many. One of the approaches is to be engaged in the cosmopolitan ethics, as he puts it, ". . . in the name of the cosmopolitan ideal, that we have obligations to strangers" (Appiah 2006, 153). Likewise, Lévinas' cosmopolitan hospitality to strangers does not arise out of universal moral considerations grounded in the Kantian approach to cosmopolitanism, but in a sense of concrete relationality that requires a mode of non-totalizing and non-categorizing thinking characterized by the modern subject (Lévinas 1985).

Since globalization in recent decades has given rise to unprecedented levels of mobility of people and ideas across national borders, it has also drawn attention to the growing levels of cultural diversity (the local within the global, or the hybrid between the local and global), generating a plethora of questions regarding the possibilities of both cultural exchange and conflict. The anti-cosmopolitan stance from the point of view of ethical diversity attempts to show that cosmopolitanism is equated with the universalization of a particular account of moral principles (such as the right and the just) and is therefore problematic in a pluricultural and multipolar world. For example, directing their criticism against Nussbaum's cosmopolitanism, Benjamin Barber and Amy Gutmann argue that cosmopolitanism is an idea based purely on intellectual convictions/imaginations rather than cultural and political realities (See Robbins 1997) while Richard Rorty challenges cosmopolitanism's alleged dismissal one's parochial commitment to his/her own cultural heritage in terms of nationalism and patriotism (See Rorty 2020; McClean 2021). To an extent, Rorty shares Appiah's notion of "rooted cosmopolitanism," contending for a form of cosmopolitanism that understands a certain need of cultural

partialities. Therefore, the primary concern here is articulated from two related but different perspectives: (1) Values are defined and limited by cultural perceptions (Barber and Gutmann) and (2) The cosmopolitan oneness should not exclude a person's sense of attachment to particular places and communities (Appiah and Rorty).

III. The Universal Experience of Suffering and Human Vulnerability

Now, let me turn to Buddhism. At first glance, it would appear that the idea of "Buddhist cosmopolitanism" sounds odd because Buddhism is often seen as a religion that primarily centered on a soteriological concern (i.e., a personal or spiritual development that focuses on liberation from *duhkha* (usually translated as "suffering") rather than achieving a specific socio-political order by "acting globally." However, Buddhists would accept the claim that all human beings ultimately belong to a single community based on common humanity. William J. Long has observed, "Although the overriding goal of Buddha's teachings is the liberation of individuals from pervasive suffering, Buddha considered politics as important, not so much for its intrinsic value, but because it created an external environment that can facilitate or impede an individual's pursuit of happiness. . . ." (Long 2021, 35). During our conference at Georgetown University, Owen Flanagan asks, if we start with Buddhist concepts and values to talk about cosmopolitanism, which version of cosmopolitanism does the Buddhist tradition support? I think that Buddhism is a form of moral cosmopolitanism (with some political implications) which emphasizes the idea that "everyone flourishes no matter their temporal or spatial location on earth."[6] Although Buddhism speaks more of reducing suffering rather than human flourishing or well-being, the notion that all humans should be treated with dignity and care is implied. As such,

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[6] Flanagan speaks of cosmopolitanism in terms of four categories. That is, aesthetic cosmopolitanism, moral cosmopolitanism, political cosmopolitanism, and prudential cosmopolitanism.

improving the condition of all life is a Buddhist ideal.

Recently, several scholars (such as Andrew Linklater, Eilis Ward, and Pradeep K. Giri) argue that the commonality of "an emancipatory intent" is found in both Buddhism and current discourse on cosmopolitanism, so there are "basic considerations of humanity" in both the Buddhism and cosmopolitanism (Linklater 2007, 135). For Linklater, common humanity (such as human vulnerability to mental and physical suffering indicated in the Buddhist doctrine) is taken as the basis of harmonious unity that is crucial for the argument of cosmopolitan ethics. Unlike Appiah's emphasis on rooted cosmopolitanism, Buddhism tends to downplay cultural identities which, for Buddhists, are mere conventions and are meaningful only in certain cultural contexts. As we read in the early Buddhist scripture, "For what has been designated name and clan in the world is indeed a mere name. What has been designated here and there has arisen by a common assent" (*Suttanipāta*, V. 449–449, as translated in Anderson and Smith, 1997).

The cosmopolitan thinking in Buddhism starts with a universal claim, that is, human vulnerability and suffering. In fact, suffering is the central problem that Buddhism addresses, and recognizing our suffering is the first step to its solution. As Dalai Lama puts it, "The first step we must take as practicing Buddhists is to recognize our present state [of being, living] as *dukkha* or suffering, frustration and unsatisfactoriness" (Dalai Lama 2000). In Pali (the ancient language of Theravāda Buddhist scriptures), the word *dukkha* is often translated as suffering. However, it is more commonly understood to mean unsatisfactoriness, that is, "Life does not satisfy." According to Buddhism, suffering comes with many forms which include three main levels or types of suffering. Namely, the suffering of suffering (i.e., the inherent suffering of existence associated with birth, old age, sickness, and death), the suffering of change (i.e., the experience of suffering due to the transient and ever-changing nature of all things), and the suffering of conditioning (i.e., a kind of existential suffering as being human). Therefore, Buddhism speaks of an affective experience of suffering as a shared human experience and then argue for the possibility of common morality in terms of compassion, hospitality, and

ethical responsibility. Instead of a right-based approach as we often see in the West, Buddhism highlights the idea of human vulnerability and our mutual obligation to help each other. In this sense, the Buddhist argument of universal suffering offers a cosmopolitanism's desire to minimize the sufferings of everyone and to enhance the well-being of everyone.[7]

The term of "human vulnerability" has been widely employed today in conjunction with concepts such as human rights and social justice as shown in the UNESCO Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (HDBHR), Article 8.[8] The word "vulnerability" comes from Latin *vulnerabilis*, meaning "easily wounded," and thus it indicates the notion that a protection is needed for a vulnerable person. In the HDBHR, the concept of human vulnerability is added to the scene of global ethics already presented by the language of dignity, rights, justice, and beneficence. Unlike the other more tradition-constituted language such as autonomy, rights and justice, vulnerability often refers to a risk and a danger an individual or a group of people faces, either real or hypothetical as a universal phenomenon of the human condition, i.e., the experiences, characteristics, and limitations of life shared by humans. In other words, every human being is vulnerable by virtue of being a human like the situation of COVID-19 pandemic that each of us has experienced in past three years. Or special attention is needed for some vulnerable groups due to the negative policies that weaken the responses to human suffering in some specific contexts. Since Buddhism in general is a pragmatic teaching, its central

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[7] JeeLoo Liu raised a question during our earlier discussions if the universal idea of suffering in Buddhism neglects the fact that there are some specific sufferings to which we need to pay special attention. My understanding is that though Buddhism traditionally associates the root of all kinds of suffering with craving and attachment, it understands various kinds of suffering in a specific way as each actual instance of suffering is different and that compassion is an acknowledgement that when one living being suffers, we all suffer. The universal idea of suffering in Buddhism indicates an intense fellow feeling one should have for all living beings.

[8] The UNESCO Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005) has singled out four specific vulnerable groups (children, women, the elderly, and the disabled), stating in Article 8 that "human vulnerability should be taken into account. Individuals and groups of special vulnerable should be protected and personal integrity of such individuals respected."

philosophy starts from the human condition insofar as how we experience the world and how we act in it. Thus, suffering denotes an individual's profound sense of unease and anxiety, both physically and psychologically due to the existential condition of individual karma.

However, suffering is also understood as a socio-political problem today characterized by various kinds of social injustice. Therefore, apart from speaking of individual karmic behaviors and the struggles of the individual predicament, contemporary Buddhism also reiterates the influences of social and political institutions both locally and globally which condition individual and collective karmic behaviors. For example, In "Realizing the Human Experience: Vulnerability and Human Suffering," Amanda R. Beattie argues that because of the fragility of the human condition, "cosmopolitan discourses, regardless of their origin, represent the chief response to the problems of human suffering and inequality within the theatre of international politics" (Beattie 2010, 1). Such way of thinking leads to some scholars' argument about the concept of human dignity indicated in contemporary discourse on cosmopolitanism.[9] Pradeep K. Giri, a Buddhist scholar from Nepal, makes a claim that "Both Buddhism and cosmopolitanism assert the dignity of every human being; these ideals aim at improving the condition of life" and achieving the potential of universal human community that simultaneously encompasses difference (Giri 2020, 93). Uttamkumars Bagede, a Buddhist scholar from India, further argues that "modern Western notion of human rights are compatible with Buddhist elements of human rights, as Buddhist principles endorse principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). . . . Buddhist thought is in accord with Article 1 of the UDHR which states 'all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights'" (Bagede 2014, 32–38).[10] Despite that the language of rights is foreign to

[9] In the Western tradition, the ontological basis of human dignity in the sense that each person is "unique and unrepeatable" is argued either philosophically or theologically. The concept of dignity is also associated with the idea of "natural right" every individual has by virtue of being humans (See Nascimento and Lutz 2016).

[10] Perry Schmidt-Leukel holds a different point of view, contending that human dignity as well as human rights may have an "anthropocentric implication" (i.e., humans vs. non-humans) that might be problematic for some Buddhists. He further explains that "in

Buddhism, Buddhists would accept the modern notion of "dignity" as a general principle since the Buddhist doctrine (Māhayāna in particular) that all sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature and thus are able to choose the path of self-perfection provides a basis for the respect of the individual's inherent dignity. Cosmopolitan ethics as such aims at the idea that all people are deserving of respect and entitled to protection, regardless of citizenship status or other social and cultural characteristics. Despite that Buddhists do not necessarily use the language of "human rights and "human dignity," it does not mean that such ideas are totally absent from Buddhism. The starting point is the value and uniqueness of life, for each individual life is a manifestation of a universal life force. In the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra* (*Dabo niepanjing* 大般涅槃經), the Buddha told his disciples before his death, "It is rare to be born as a human being, The number of those endowed with human life is as small as the amount of earth one can place on a fingernail" (*Taisho Tripitaka,* vol. 12, no. 374, as translated in Yamamoto [1973] 2007).

Therefore, the respect for human dignity in Buddhism is understood in the context of acknowledging the universality of suffering as the fundamental condition of human life and releasement from suffering of all sentient beings is a common goal and irreducible ethical responsibility for humanity. As Anton Sevilla-Liu puts it, human rights and dignity "can be grounded in Buddhism as part of the freedom of human beings to liberate themselves from suffering" (Sevilla-Liu 2022). Jens Braarvig also points out, "Although in a strict sense there exists no 'self,' one could say that in classical Buddhism nonetheless we find a notion of dignity grounded precisely in the freedom of individuals to liberate themselves from the suffering which the circle of eternal birth causes them" (Braarvig 2014, 171). Ward has coined the phrase "the suffering solidarity complex" (the SSC) to examine the validity of "the solidaristic potential of suffering" as an important concept in the context of cosmopolitan ethics of solidarity. He further contends that the SSC rests on a radical account of the self in Buddhism, and that

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Buddhism human beings do not occupy an absolutely privileged position but are seen against the doctrine of rebirth as being continuous with all 'sentient beings,' that is, with all forms of existence in which rebirth can take place" (See Schmidt-Leukel, 2006).

it is "more radical than that currently advocated in cosmopolitanism thought" (Ward 2013,137).

IV. Mindful Compassion as a Cosmopolitan Ethic

While Buddhism accentuates the notion of suffering as a general shared human condition known to all sentient beings, it recognizes that each actual instance of suffering is different and unique. In this regard, the universal claim made by Buddhism about human suffering is situated rather than abstract. Therefore, when someone says, "I am suffering," and someone else responds by saying that "I know it," it does not mean he or she knows exactly the nature of the actual instance but has some idea through an analogical way of thinking. Compassion, in this regard, is similar to the idea of empathy (feel into) or sympathy (feel for), a kind of moral sentiment that enables one to feel for/into others and thus show love and care to distant others. Thus, compassion does not simply indicate a state of emotional identification characterized by a subjective feeling but points to a concrete relationship. Compassion lies in viewing someone in the best possible light, understanding his/her needs, and looking upon him/her with kindness. It is an objective understanding that the sufferings felt by others are in fact one's own. Pradeep K. Giri clearly points out, compassion for fellow human beings "is at the center for a cosmopolitan" (Giri 2020, 94). The universal capacity to extend sympathy to others exemplified by the Mahāyānic concepts of loving-kindness and (*mettā*; *ci* 慈) and compassion (*karunā*; *bei* 悲) according to Linklater and Ward, could help us to find a universal "emancipatory intent" that leads to the Kantian notion of the worldwide community of human beings.[11]

One may notice that the Buddhist word *karunā* or "compassion" seems to dwell on the "negative" aspect of human existence in the sense of sharing the suffering and pains of others or a willingness

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[11] It should be noted that a politicization of suffering via the concept of vulnerability is suggested here. In so doing, it somehow undermines the religious dimension of suffering caused by one's cravings and ignorance in the Buddhist teaching.

to bear the pain of others. This kind of compassion is sometimes translated as "pity," "mercy," or "sympathy" in English. But compassion also refers to "sympathetic joy" (*mudita*; *le* 樂), that is, sharing the happiness of others. In this case, compassion is not merely a feeling of mercy or sympathy but a form of "active sympathy" in that it requires one to do something with a helping hand. Yet the act of helping should not be the act of being condescending to someone being helped. For Buddhists, compassion for others is not a feeling of superiority; genuine compassion is about empowering others, helping them unlock strength and courage from within their lives in order to overcome their problems. In addition, Buddhism also speaks of "equanimity" (*upeksa*; *se* 捨) to balance the compassionate feeling to avoid "compassionate fatigue" or burnout.[12] Equanimity refers to a spiritual virtue that enables one to attain a balanced and evenness of mind. Thus, the practice of virtues of compassion and equanimity require training and cultivation. For example, the meditative practice of Buddhism often involves four states which are (1) boundless love, (2) compassion, (3) sympathetic joy, and (4) limitless equanimity. These four states demonstrate the way Buddhists cultivate their ethical life with respect to others. In addition, wisdom (*prajñai*; *hui* 慧), which enables a person to know the boundary in relationality, is equally important for exercise compassionate act. Therefore, empathy, boundaries, and the willingness to help are essential for compassion. In the process of cultivation, there is a transformation from partiality to impartiality.

For some scholars, however, it remains a question if a sympathetic or compassionate understanding is sufficient for establishing the cosmopolitan ethics of universal care and solidarity. Katherine Hallemeier has offered a historical genealogy of sympathy as a private virtue and public duty from historical studies, ranging from Adam Smith and Kant to Nussbaum and Appiah. She then questions whether the advancement of cosmopolitanism is best imagined through the lens of sympathy (Hallemeier 2013, 88–101). It is interesting to note

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12 "Compassionate fatigue" refers to a situation when a person lacks the energy and internal resources to pursue his or her motivation to care and love due to the experience of vicarious trauma or moral distress (See Passfield 2019).

that Adam Smith is mentioned and that he is the only one listed who rejects cosmopolitanism, since according to Smith, sympathies and duties ends with country (Smith 2006, 229). While Smith is skeptical about sympathy as a moral sentiment that disassociates sovereignty from local agents and histories, other thinkers see the connection between human sympathy and cosmopolitanism. Nussbaum defines cosmopolitanism as a moral project that requires the cultivation of sympathy beyond existing national boundaries.[13] Against Nussbaum's vision of a cosmopolitan community, Appiah defines cosmopolitanism in terms of an extant ontology that accounts for already existing sympathies that cross national boundaries. For Appiah, the exercise of the extant ontology is more important than the agreement of moral principle such as human dignity and rights (Appiah 2001, 225).[14]

Based on the arguments by Nussbaum and Appiah, Hallemeier shows the tension between a cosmopolitan commitment to the liberal conception of humanity and local loyalties felt by individuals, challenging if the cultivation of sympathy can resolve the tension. To address this problem, Appiah attempts to balance the two aspects by emphasizing local particularities. However, Hallemeier questions Appiah's assumption of humanity as inherently cosmopolitan, pointing out that "While Appiah's cosmopolitanism eschews the cognitivism that reduces humanity's effects to the sympathetic, it is yet problematic insofar as it defines humanity as quintessentially cosmopolitan in its sympathies" (Hallemeier 2012, 95). She further cites from Chris Bongie who holds that Appiah tends to conflate a "descriptive assessment of culture"—as cosmopolitan and hybrid—with "prescriptive political practices" (Bongie 2008, 58, as cited in Hallemeier 2013, 93). Therefore,

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[13] Similar to Buddhism, Nussbaum offers a socio-existential account of interconnectedness in contemporary world. For Nussbaum, the philosophical case for cosmopolitan education is based not only on a set of moral principles but also on a particular understanding of how the interests of all communities around the world are ultimately socially, economically, and politically connected.

[14] Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that in his discussion on "Ethics of Identity" Appiah recognizes the importance, for the sake of solidarity in a hostile world, of collective identities but also emphasizes the category of the individual, maintaining that the final responsibility for each life "is always the responsibility of the person whose life it is" (Appiah 2007).

critiques of Nussbaum and Appiah raise the issue concerning the plausibility of developing or identifying an efficacious cosmopolitan sympathy.

Hallemeier's question on cosmopolitan sympathy is applicable to Buddhism, especially the Mahāyānic concepts of "unconditional loving kindness" (*wuyuanci* 無緣慈) and "one body qua shared compassion" (*tongtibei* 同體悲). I think that the Buddhist response to Hallemeier's challenge can be seen in the Buddhist argument of interconnectedness. In Buddhism, the ethics of compassion is intrinsically associated with the ontological idea of interconnectedness of all things. In Chinese Huayan Buddhism (華嚴宗), the "Indra's jewel net" is a much-loved metaphor in the *Flower Garland Sutra* (*Avatamsaka Sūtra*) to illustrate the interpenetration, inter-causality, and interbeing of all things.[15] The Buddhist idea of interconnectedness or interdependent origination (*pratītyasamutpadā; yuanqi yuansheng* 緣起緣生) also accounts for the Buddhist argument on emptiness of everything, including the concept of self. Buddhists thus see human beings not as isolated beings but as patterns of relatedness.

Ethically, the conception of interdependent origination acknowledges that the self is located in a web of location and social interconnectedness which gives rise to an expanded notion of the virtue of great compassion and our moral duties to each other. The ethical ideal of treating the suffering of others like my own is best represented by images of Boddhisattvas (e.g., Avalokiteśvara or *Guanyin* 觀音 in China) in Māhayāna Buddhism, as we read in the Boddhisattva's vow: "All creatures are in pain, all suffer from bad and hindering karma. . . . All that mass of pain and bad karma I taker in my own body. . . . I take myself the burden of sorrow; I resolve to do so; I endure it all. . . . I must set them all free" (Strong 1955, 161). Śāntideva (寂天 in Chinese), an Indian philosopher-monk of the eighth century, in his *Bodhicāryāvatāra* (入菩薩行論) has a similar statement when he says, "The suffering of others should be eliminated by me, because it is suffering like my own suffering. I should help others because they are sentient beings, as

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[15] In the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, the existence of selves and the cosmos or suchness (*tathātā*) is described in terms of an infinite and multi-dimensional net extending in all possible directions (See Cleary 1984).

I am a sentient being" (Garfield, Jenkins, and Priest 2016, 59). Ward insists that the Buddhist understanding of non-self "refuses a world comprised of autonomous moral agents and abjures the idea of human nature with consequent implications for ethics and for the politics of solidarity" (Ward 2013, 137).[16] Linklater contends that Buddhism offers a "structure of consciousness" that is essentially cosmopolitan (Linklater 2011, 266).

In recent decades, the term "social responsibility" as "collective karma" has been widely used in Buddhist studies with the emergence of Socially Engaged Buddhism (SEB). Influenced by "Humanistic Buddhism" (人間佛教), as advocated by Chinese Buddhist masters Taixu (太虛) and Yin Shun (印順), SEB was brought to the West by the Vietnamese Buddhist master Thich Nhat Hahn. SEB intends to bring together the traditional principles of Buddhist practice and Western political action. It recapitulates four key aspects: (1) an emphasis on the mundane world through integrating Buddhist practices into everyday life; (2) a rationalization of the religious life by downplaying theistic devotionalism, supernaturalism, and ritualism; (3) a cultivation of mental awareness and moral development through virtuous living; and (4) a highlight on karmic collectivity and global justice. Nevertheless, rather than obliterating the particularities of cultural and religious identities, SEB insists that global solidarity also relies on them. In spite of religious particularity, the idea of responsive action towards the suffering of others is rooted in the Buddhist ethics of compassion and a genuine concern for the well-being of others, regardless of differences among people. Therefore, the Buddhist philosophy of interconnectedness of all things resembles the cosmopolitan spirit for shared humanity and need for solidarity. This is also the reason scholars like Delanty and Ward engaged in critical theory argue that cosmopolitanism today requires a re-conception of a cosmopolitan self and the transformation of collectivities in the light of "the encounter with the Other" (Delanty 2009, 253).

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[16] In fact, the Buddhist argument on self is understood in terms of (*rūpa*) and mind (*manas*) and related aggregations as a function of becoming rather than a proper state of being. What Ward intends to say is that the Buddhist idea of no persisting/permanent self or non-self (*anatman*) could offer an alternative perspective on cosmopolitan solidarity.

V. Cosmopolitan Hospitality[17]

The concept of "hospitality" is an old concept in the Western tradition. In fact, it is a ubiquitous theme of continental philosophy. In *Perpetual Peace* ([1795] 2006), for example, Kant points out,

> Hospitality (a host's conduct to his guest) means the right of a stranger not to be treated in a hostile manner by another upon his arrival on the other's territory . . . as long as the stranger behaves peacefully where he happens to be, his host may not treat him with hostility. It is not the right of a guest that the stranger has a claim to (which would require a special, charitable contract stipulating that he be made a member of the household for a certain period of time), but rather a right to visit, to which all human beings have a claim, to present oneself to society by virtue of the right common possession of the surface of the earth" (Kant 2006, 82).

For Kant, the definition of a "guest" is clearly defined: He/she must be a citizen of another country and he/she must behave in a peaceful manner. Meanwhile, Kant limits the meaning of "hospitality" to a guest's right to visit, not to stay. Upon these conditions, Kant contends that the condition of hospitality is the condition of perpetual peace. Noticeably, the concept of hospitality given by Kant is different from the account of contemporary French thinkers such as Emmanuel Lévinas and Jacques Derrida. For Lévinas, the ethico-political implications of hospitality (*hospitalité*) are closely associated with human vulnerability to suffering, and as such he addresses hospitality towards strangers (*etrangér*) in an opposite direction of Kant by calling for a return to the sources of humanity, that is, to what happens when people meet face to face, as Lévinas puts it, the face of the other "speaks to me and thereby invites me to a relation" (Lévinas 1969, 198).

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[17] Since my paper deals with moral cosmopolitanism, the discussion on cosmopolitan hospitality in this section focuses on hospitality of the host. Philip J. Ivanhoe in his paper "The Cosmopolitan Guest" explicates a type of cosmopolitanism as a view about oneself [as a special guest] and one's perspective or stance toward other cultures and people. See Ivanhoe (2024).

According to Lévinas, hospitality operates in the two related realms: the ethical and the political. In the ethical realm, the moral self is obligated to welcome the stranger into the private space of the home; in the political realm, the self is required to welcome the stranger into the public space of the homeland. The word "ethics" then becomes a question about the "wholly other" that challenges the self-qua-being, thus separating itself from the traditional ontological framework of Being in the West, that is, sameness or totality.

Maintaining that Lévinas' *Totality and Infinity* "bequeaths to us an immense treatise of hospitality" (Derrida 1999, 21), Derrida clarifies two kinds of hospitality: the conditional hospitality (based on law and right), and the unconditional hospitality (an absolute, indistinguishable other whose identity is not required). It is the unconditional hospitality in terms of welcoming strangers that Derrida calls attention to since it is beyond the conventional understanding of norms in terms of exchange and reciprocity (Derrida 1999, 65–83). For Derrida, only the unconditional hospitality can give meaning to the concept of hospitality (Derrida 2005, 84). In other words, hospitality is made possible through "de-territorialization" of the moral and political boundaries of community by being responsive to the needs of the other. Derrida speaks of hospitality to strangers in the context of the refugee crisis in Europe. Both Lévinas and Derrida contend for an implicit understanding of proximity in terms of identity, shared interests, and solidarity. Thus, hospitality redefined as "caring at a distance" revolves around the question of whether concerns for people in close relationships can be transformed into active concern for distant strangers. In *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (2001), Derrida intends to answer the question on the possibility to uphold cosmopolitan hospitality and justice in the face of increasing nationalism after decades of globalization by asking if hospitality as a moral duty should be grounded on a private or public ethics as suggested by Lévinas.[18] For Derrida, hospitality means a home that has

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[18] Derrida uses the term "globolatinization" as a way of criticizing the concept of globalization, since the term, according to Derrida, describes a system of thought "that promotes a universalism of pseudo or petit-valuations and punishes those resistant and inflexible to them" (Alvis 2017, 590).

"some kind of opening" and the host "must be hospitable to preserve his identity as a host."

The Buddhist term for "hospitality" is *atithisatkāra*, meaning doing (*kāra*) something good or virtuous (*sat*) for a guest (*atithi*). In this sense, then, hospitality is associated with performing a "good deed" (*satkāra*) for a guest. Since the Sanskrit root of the "guest" contains the letter sat which suggests the meaning of "wandering" or "going constantly" a guest means someone who is "on the move," and therefore, he or she lives at one's home as a temporary residence (See Rotman 2011). Therefore, hospitality means honorable treatment of a guest. Specific practice of hospitality includes four elements. They are (1) generosity (*dāna*), kind words (*peyyavajja*), beneficent conduct (*atthacariyā*), and impartiality or equanimity (*samānattatā*). These four elements are fundamental for treating others humanely and equally. In the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, one of the early Buddhist texts, there is a passage which describe of person with a spirit of hospitality as someone who "dwells at home with a mind devoid of the stain of miserliness, freely generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishment, devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*, II. 66, as translated in Morris and Hardy 1961). Hospitality points to a transregional affiliation, engaging with a particular way of living, a way of instantiating our common humanity. For Buddhists, the hospitable gesture transcends the contingencies of culture and religion. A home, in this sense, indicates a land of refuge, and an ultimate shelter of loving-kindness of humanity while at the same time it also represents the point of origin or root from which moral virtues are cultivated.

There are some other terms denoting the meaning of "giving" and "good deeds" such as *dāna* ("gift-giving" or "sharing") and *punya* ("doing good") as ethical responsibilities of humanity. Yet "hospitality" in Buddhism suggests a form of "unplanned giving" as the stranger arrives unexpectedly, and thus it is an act of "caring for those on the move." Hospitality entails three elements: (1) generosity, (2) loving kindness, and (3) wisdom. Wisdom is important since it enables one to know when and how to practice charity in a specific situation. More importantly, hospitality is a gesture of human generosity that entails the notion of unconditional compassion and love. By practicing

hospitality, one can transform oneself from self-regarding way of thinking to other-regarding way of thinking. Thus, the concept of hospitality in the context of the global world indicates the idea of building social bonds that connect peoples and communities across cultural or even ideological differences.

Meanwhile, there is another aspect of the Buddhist notion of hospitality. It refers to the deeds done with good intentions that can generate merits for the doer and benefit the guest as well in terms of accumulating good karma.[19] As it is stated by the Buddha, "When a virtuous person, with a trusting heart, gives a righteously obtained gift to a virtuous person, having confidence that the fruit of this action is great, this is gift with an abundant fruit, I say" (*Majjhima Nikaya* III, as translated in Treneckner and Chalmers 1887–1902, 257). In this view, the guests or gift receivers are considered as a "field of merit" (*punya-kṣetra*) where the hosts could plant the seeds of "good merits." In this sense, hospitality in Buddhism could also be understood as a wholesome act for it constitutes good karmic results.

The conception of hospitality ethic, as a cosmopolitan ethic, has a different connotation from the traditional understanding of cosmopolitanism that focuses on someone who becomes a world citizen voluntarily while hospitality today may refer to someone as a refugee who may become a world citizen involuntarily. Cosmopolitan hospitality, then, indicates that the other as a total stranger should be accepted and loved by those who claim to be cosmopolitans. Against the universality-particularity or identity-difference debate in the discourse of cosmopolitanism, Gideon Baker argues that "hospitality is not reducible to the universalizing power of the host. But neither is it reducible to the otherness of the guest, either. In other words, there are particularly good reasons for foregrounding hospitality when rethinking identity-difference in cosmopolitanism nondialectically" (Baker 2009, 108). Here Baker raises the long-debated questions again: should the cosmopolitanism imaginary itself as a totalizing account of

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[19] This is the reason why some Buddhists also see hospitality as a "meritorious" act that links to the concept of karma. In this sense, hospitality entails a consequentialist concern. As John Strong notes, "Any good (or bad) action directed toward (such a being) can have positive (or negative) karmic results beyond all expectations" (Strong 1989, 57).

universal humanity within which singularities are subordinate? Can we articulate a cosmopolitan ethic that denies neither universals nor singularities and which opens up a public space necessary to negotiate between them? Baker contends that cosmopolitanism-as-hospitality is good way to answer those questions, since the hospitality ethic brings about our awareness of the identity of the stranger as a fellow human being whose irreducible otherness should not be ignored. As Lévinas tells us, the gaze of the Other (the stranger) radically calls into question my possession of the world, my home; the stranger "disturbs the being at home with oneself" (Lévinas 1969, 39). "Unconditional hospitality" provides us a vision of hospitality infused with difference that goes beyond the traditional cosmopolitanism wherein the idea of inclusiveness or ethical responsibilities has always been limited.

The Buddhist ethic of hospitality does not end in reproduction of identity because it does not start with the self and follows with reciprocal obligations. Instead, the binary opposition of identity (host) and difference (guest), albeit being mutually constitutive in hospitality, is dissolved in cosmopolitanism. According to G. A. Somaratne, cultural identities for Buddhists are mere conventions and are meaningful only in certain cultural contexts (Somaratne 2019, 211). Buddhism focuses on the common core of humanity in terms of compassion and care that lies beneath all cultural and religious difference. This is the Buddhist version of "global citizen represented by what Buddhists consider the noble monastic community, i.e., sangha. Meanwhile, the Buddhist idea of "non-self" or self-emptiness corresponds to Derrida's critique of the conditional hospitality in that "I am the master of the home, the city, the nature" whereas the unconditional hospitality points to a pure and absolute form of hospitality in which the host is not to "ask the other, the newcomer, the guest, to give anything back or even identify himself or herself (Derrida 1999, 70). This non-self approach to hospitality is a form of "humble cosmopolitanism" that is badly needed in human interaction. The idea of cosmopolitan humility is further explicated by Lois Cabrera in his normative political theory (Cabrera 2020).

Yet the question remains: How can we translate the lofty vision of hospitality into a viable ethical and political order marked by recognition and acceptance of others without distinction? In contrast

to Buddhism, the Confucian idea of love or care is more family-oriented in that the cosmopolitan spirit is built on the question if "the other" can be transformed and viewed as a family member, and if the extension of loving-kindness from insiders to outsiders is possible, as Philip J. Ivanhoe has put it: "If we try to think about and feel for other people on the analogy of how we feel about our own siblings, we are called on to have much greater sympathy for those we do not know. . . . Confucians ask us to extend the love, generosity, patience, and understanding we naturally tend to have for our siblings to everyone in the world. This is a much better aim and method than seeking to extend a sense of city fellow-feeling, for the latter is not deep or committed enough to carry us through the difficulties that extension entails" (Ivanhoe 2014, 38).[20] If Ivanhoe's observation is correct, then we must ask if the Confucian ethic of humanness or *ren* 仁 (i.e., virtue of humanness-qua-relatedness) is truly cosmopolitan and universal insofar as it could include certain contested others within its worldview. Can we say that the Confucian notion of the "four seas" (*sihai* 四海) is not confined to a geographical location but indicates a commonplace of humanity wherein the insiders and the outsiders can be mutually transformed?

From a Confucian perspective, finite hospitality inherently implies sovereignty, as hospitality cannot exist without a home. If the guest is someone who is always on the move, can the host [as a world citizen] be a "homeless" person as well? This is, perhaps, the very reason that Appiah asks for "rooted cosmopolitanism and Rorty maintains the need of cultural partialities. Paradoxically, Buddhists leave their own biological homes and establish the monastic community as a new home that is more accessible to the stranger. In this regard, the Buddhist practice of hospitality reflects the "cosmopolitan dharma" of a shared humanity even though Buddhist doctrines, including the teaching of compassion, or what it means to reciprocate are influenced by its religious particularism.

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[20] For detailed discussion on Confucianism, see Ivanhoe (2014). For Confucian arguments on "graded love," see papers by Chenyang Li and Justin Tiwald, and also see the argument on "a partialist cosmopolitanism" grounded in Confucian moral sentimentalism by JeeLoo Liu, in this special issue of the *Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture*.

In view of the cosmopolitan ethic, Buddhist idea of a relational and causal self is helpful to see the limit of a self-constituting world order when the logic of exclusion becomes the ontological foundation of all modes of subjectivity. In *Cosmopolitan Liberalism: Expanding the Boundaries of the Individual,* Monica Sanchez-Flores initiates a form of cosmopolitanism that expands the self to overcome cosmopolitanism's negative identification with the project of modernity characterized by individualism and rationality (Sanchez-Flores 2010). Sanchez-Flores's exposition and argument, to an extent, echo the Buddhist position. Linklater's argument on solidarity qua "an emancipatory intent" to release suffering can be regarded as a moral cosmopolitanism due to its strong emphasis on the common cosmopolitan spirit, which could enhance the global public on the one hand and world openness on the other.

Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that there are inherent challenges in constructing a Buddhist theory of cosmopolitanism in the contemporary context. Specifically, even if Buddhist cosmopolitanism has the theoretical potential to foster a more inclusive and practical form of universal ethics and global citizenship, the key issue that remains is whether such a framework could resonate beyond those who already accept the Buddhist worldview and religious beliefs. The Buddhist ethic of compassion is based on the metaphysical assumptions of suffering as a fundamental condition of human existence and that all beings are interconnected and mutually condition each other through this suffering. Yet how about those who do not share these underlying beliefs. For example, a person holding a secular and existentialist worldview may accept the Buddhist view of the inherent suffering and limitations of existence but would reject the idea that we are all interconnected and thus able to share the pains of others despite that our lives can create meaningful connections with others to a certain extent. On that account, the Buddhist claim about the universality of *karunā* or compassion and hospitality as normative standards for all humanity has its own limitations.

How can Buddhist ethics transcend its own cultural and religious specificity? How can we translate the concepts of suffering and interconnectedness beyond the Buddhist worldview into a common

language of human experience that can be shared across different religious and philosophical traditions? I have to admit that these are not easy questions to answer. Nevertheless, we find some distinctive arguments in the Buddhist ideas of compassion and interconnectedness that can support or supplement the contemporary discourse on compassion. For example, for both Buddhism and Nussbaum, compassion indicates the thought of common humanity. Meanwhile, Buddhism intends to treat the ethic of compassion not only as the basic social emotion as we see in Nussbaum's concept of compassion but also as an action of active care accompanied by *prajñā* or wisdom that involves a cognitive and rational approach of compassion. For Buddhists, having a compassionate feeling itself would not guarantee a good and benevolent action without adequate wisdom to know how to practice compassion, that is, with which people should one be compassionate and how much. The rational approach is also implied in Nussbaum's concept of compassion when it is related to the idea of the eudaimonistic judgment in which a self that is constituted by its evaluative engagements with the world outside itself can expand its boundary with things outside itself.[21] In addition, Nussbaum's compassion suggests a kind of interdependence among individuals and societies to construct political and global institutions. But for Buddhists, the theory of interdependence is more an ontological argument than political.

VI. Conclusion

In the paper, I have explored the possibility of a meaningful dialogue between Buddhism and the contemporary discourse on cosmopolitanism. It is my contention that Buddhism entails a cosmopolitan ethic. Yet different from the Kantian notion of universalism based on rational moral agency, Buddhism emphasizes the universal experience of human suffering and the need for moral

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[21] For Nussbaum, the concept of compassion can bridge the dichotomy between care and justice (See Nussbaum 2001).

cultivation of compassion since Buddhism does not presuppose an autonomous agent freely willing to act. I have also pointed out the Buddhist ethics of hospitality reflects a form of cosmopolitan spirit, particularly the idea of unconditional hospitality that resembles the argument given by Lévinas and Derrida.

However, I would like to point out that the Buddhist notion "enlightenment" or "liberation" has its specific soteriological purpose which is not directly related to the political order or support the idea of "a single world" as it is usually understood today. Namely, there is a lack of the notion of "one world" in a sense of political sovereignty as a primary facet of Buddhist thought.[22] Nor does Buddhism, including the new politically minded SEB, has a clear notion of political order based on its ethics of compassion. No doubt, Buddhism, especially "Western Buddhism" is in many ways aligned with the cosmopolitan ethics in the West, explicitly its calling for an action-coordinated discourse.[23] For Western Buddhist cosmopolitans, cosmopolitanism is perceived as a way of the actualization of multiculturalism and pluralism, as well as the universal value of human rights, gender equality, and social justice. Different from traditional Buddhism in Asia, a Western Buddhist is meant to act as both a spiritual being seeking personal enlightenment and a political animal seeking to fulfill liberal values simultaneously.

Therefore, the Buddhist concept of compassion, as liberal as it may be in its ends, is nonetheless an explicitly religious doctrine embedded in specific concepts such as ignorance, suffering, rebirth, and libera-

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[22] Meanwhile, the Buddhist emphasis on interconnectedness does not lead to its role in the preservation of a unified territory and in the integration of the people identified with that territory, as the ancient Chinese term "all under heaven" or *tianxia* 天下 has suggested. As for the idea of *tianxia* in the light of cosmopolitanism, Chishen Chang and Kuan-Hsing Chen contend that "*tianxia* has its own genealogical trajectory and cannot be instrumentally deployed as a new political imaginary." They point out that the primary meaning of *tianxia* in its narrow sense "referred to the political geographical area," and then it was expanded later as the "world order." See Chang and Chen (2017).

[23] In the West there has been a growing interest in Buddhism among Western-trained philosophers. Western Buddhism refers to both the study and practice of Buddhism outside of Asia, predominantly in Europe and North America. It is predominantly white, and predominantly liberal in its politics. It is a form of liberal Buddhism that centers on the issues such as human rights, social justice, and gender equality (See Smith, Munt, and Yip 2016).

tion. As far as cosmopolitan ethics is concerned, it has not been articulated clearly insofar as how we can reshape the universality of *karunā* or compassion from within the framework of Buddhist thought to the world outside Buddhist practitioners so as to make the Buddhist teaching function as ethically and politically valid values in a secular and pluralistic society.

Another concern is that Buddhism has been viewed, by some Western scholars, as a system of thought that is "rational and empirical."[24] Yet when we use modern concepts to reinterpret Buddhism for the sake of bringing Buddhism into conversation of the contemporary discourse to see if Buddhism can provide some new ideas that make sense to a secular mind, we tend to downplay either the non-conceptuality of "enlightenment" or the specific account of "liberation" in the Buddhist tradition.[25] That being said, scholars like Evan Thompson does not reject the idea that Buddhism can contribute to modern cosmopolitan community. He points out, if Buddhism is best to play its part in this cosmopolitan conversation, that is, a conversation between contemporary science and various religious, philosophical, intellectual, and contemplative traditions, then it must examine the basic assumptions and commitments of Buddhism (Thompson 2020, 180). Here, Thompson adopts a Appiah-style commitment to universal truth in that universalism embraces diversity and difference (full particularity of the other).[26] Owen Flanagan also recognizes the limit when Buddhist metaphysics is appropriated by "21st-century scientifically informed secular thinkers," but insists that reconstruction rather than pure exegeses in a contemporary context is necessary (Flanagan 2011, xi). It is interesting to note that Flanagan calls his

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[24] In recent decades, some Western scholars are interested in studying Buddhism in the context of cognitive sciences and empirical analysis.

[25] In his book *Why I Am Not a Buddhist* (2020), Evan Thompson devotes one chapter to cosmopolitanism in which he is in favor of Kwame A. Appiah's conversational approach to cosmopolitanism.

[26] For Thompson, "Buddhist modernism" undermines Buddhism's potential contributions to a wider cosmopolitan culture (Thompson 2020, 172). To respond to Thompson's critique of Western Buddhism, Jane A. Gordon, a political theorist, argues for the possibilities of "creolized" Buddhist thought in the sense of incorporating a modernist method of engaging with an ancient religious tradition like Buddhism (Gordon 2014).

reconstructive approach to Buddhism "cosmopolitan."[27] I agree that the contemporary philosophical framework we are using to study Buddhism should not preclude an attempt to explore its thought and its possible connection to contemporary analogous issues within its own cultural context and form, but at the same time, a creative method (such as modernist/scientific method or hermeneutical-dialogical method) is needed as well for the sake of meaningful reconstruction. To a certain extent, Buddhism requires "hybridization" or genuinely new ways of engaging with the world in order to deal with the problems confronting us today. Only in this way we can show how Buddhism offers a different set of conceptual tools to facilitate effective dialogues or generate insightful inquiries for the current debate on cosmopolitanism.

In sum, recognizing the cosmopolitan need for compassion and care provides a framework to address the challenges faced by the global world today, particularly in relation to issues of armed conflicts and environmental crisis by emphasizing the importance for coexistence and collective responsibility within a web of mutual relations.

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[27] By using the term "cosmopolitan," Flanagan points to "the exercise of reading and living and speaking across different traditions" in a way that is "open, non-committal, and energized by an ironic or skeptical attitude about all the forms of life being expressed" (See Coseru 2012).

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