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Propositions appended to the dissertation

The Devāsurasamgrāma Myth in Buddhist Context:

A Textual Study of the Deva-Asura War Narrative in the Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra

Xiaoqiang Meng

1. Buddhism has developed its own tradition of the Asura demon. Although emerging from the same pan-Indian cultural substratum, Buddhist Asuras are on a par with their Vedic/Brahmanical/Hindu counterparts in religious contexts, yet they remain underrepresented in modern scholarship.
2. The Deva-Asura war as a Buddhist meta-myth has persisted throughout the history of Buddhism and Buddhist literature, and it reflects Buddhist attitudes toward war and violence.
3. The Deva-Asura war narrative of the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*, a Buddhist scripture in urgent need of research, is a Dharma allegory serving for didactic, scholastic, and polemical purposes. Such mythopoeic operation constitutes a distinctively Indian Buddhist exemplar of negotiating the relationship between religion and mythmaking.
4. Buddhist demonology, cosmology, and mythology are also important aspects of serious academic study of Buddhism, and they should be researched based on a thorough study of primary sources, textual, pictorial, and so on.
5. Buddhist cosmological traditions should be studied anew. There is still no comprehensive philological analysis of all the textual materials at our disposal, even of the most important ones. Above all, their textual heterogeneity and sectarian diversity must be recognized: these are not merely variant or alternative translations of a single “Ur-text”, but rather distinct local traditions transmitted in different places, each articulating a shared yet variegated cosmovision.
6. In the age of AI and LLM, hardcore Buddhist philology and textual scholarship will likely endure in two ways: by adopting a thematic focus with interdisciplinary methodologies, or by engaging with the multilingual and multicultural sources of Buddhist texts. So, students of the tradition learn and use as many as possible of those “dead” languages!

7. Sanskrit manuscripts and Pāli texts are of course important for Indian Buddhist studies, but they should not be taken for granted and automatically assigned priority. Chinese and Tibetan translations are often chronologically earlier and likely preserve more original readings, though sometimes twisted. Hence, Schopen's theory of the "Chinese looking glass" is problematic and only tends to be an excuse for those who don't want to improve their Chinese.
8. Famous Buddhist scriptures are of course popular for scholars to study and therefore never lack fans. However, many more texts have been overlooked, the study of which could contribute substantially to the field. It is true, to study the *Dhammapada* can get you famous; but to study the *Dharmasamuccaya* can benefit academia and Buddhist society in general.
9. Enjoying a fantastic story can not only entertain but also spiritually cultivate and ultimately liberate its audiences from boredom (*vairāgya*).