



Multiple Arms, Multiple Eyes, Multiple Heads, Multiple Rationalities

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Recent books by prominent Buddhist scholars aim to repudiate the misconception that Buddhism is compatible with Western science, philosophy, logic and modernity. The discussion usually proceeds by reference to written texts deemed to resemble in some way Western philosophy. This approach locates the debate in an arena dominated by Western pre-assumptions. It ignores the elements of Buddhism that many practising Buddhists consider primary: myth, ritual, faith, what happens after death. That is, this approach ignores the religious aspects of Buddhism. This presentation focuses on the 'Other' Buddhism, the embarrassing Buddhism. By analysing a single iconographic image, that of Avalokitesvara with a thousand hands and a thousand eyes, it attempts an anamnesia, a reminder that if we are to render Buddhism rational, the notion of 'different rationalities' needs to be stretched till it snaps.