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In June 2001 I was returning to Cambridge from a stint as a Visiting Researcher at Logic and Philosophy of Science at UC Irvine, David Lake was returning to Cambridge from a holiday in Thailand, and we met on the bus from Gatwick. The journey to Cambridge was a long one, and by its end we had started a collaboration some of the fruits of which you hold in your hand. Dr Lake founded the St. Luke's institute and invited me to be its conference director. In that capacity I was able to organise the *New Foundations* 70th anniversary meeting, and a meeting on Logic and Rhetoric. Both these meetings resulted in volumes which are in press as I write. The third meeting was BILAP—*Buddhism in Logic and Analytic Philosophy*.

The excuses for BILAP are twofold. Dr Lake had family connection in the Far East and spent many years there and was pleased to think that his philanthropy should improve appreciation in the Occident of ideas that had their genesis in the part of the world that had supplied his fortune.

My reason for wishing to organise a meeting of this kind were quite different, and I hope to explore them one day in greater detail than we have space for here. I hoped—and still hope—that what I can learn from Buddhism will help me in two particular problems that arise in Western Logic and which are usually hidden away like the first Mrs. Rochester. I refer to the problem of Incoherence and the problem of Equality

Philosophy students brought up in the Anglo-American tradition are likely, sooner or later, to encounter the *envoi* at the end of the *Tractatus* (and they may even attempt to sing it to the tune of *Tannenbaum*.)

“Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen”.

and will cherish Ramsey's summary:

... i.e., *the chief proposition of Philosophy is that Philosophy is nonsense. And again we must then take seriously that it is nonsense, and not pretend, as Wittgenstein does, that it is important nonsense!*

or, more colloquially

What you can't say you can't say, and you can't whistle it either!

Therein lies the problem. We cannot explain how the nonsense comes to be important without giving it some semantics, and once it has semantics it ceases to be nonsense.

Generally, the analytic tradition copes very poorly with the inexpressible and the incoherent. Can we expect better from a Buddhist tradition? Buddhism—with its emphasis on practical wisdom rather than learning—seems to point the way to (even if it does not espouse it) a kind of radical instrumentalism according to which there are no propositions. It is a commonplace among sailors in the postmodern sea of faith that the several religions (and Philosophies) have much in common despite their apparent disagreements. So what are they disagreeing about? If we cease to maintain that the various internal states that mystics have (and this point about general agreement is made particularly in connection with mystics) are to be construed as propositional attitudes then much of the apparent disagreement evaporates. If we jettison propositions then the temptation to represent a divergence of practice as a difference of opinion about propositions will cease to cause conflict. (See [?].)

Mediaeval Western Philosophy isolated for our attention the concept of the *hæcciet*. A *hæcciet* is a bit like a soul, except that mere objects can have them—and indeed all do. Modern quantificational logic seems to follow the mediaeval tradition in this, in that it presents us with a picture of the world as inhabited by objects which then are allocated properties. To read a formula like “ $\exists x.Fx$ ” one has to think something like “there is this chap x ” and then append the reflection that this chap has property F . The chap seems to exist independently of its properties. (That may not be the intended idea but it is one that tends to get conveyed). I always felt very uneasy about this, and the image I have always employed to parody it was that of objects-as-spikes on which—in offices in the days before information technology—one would impale pieces of paper. (Nowadays I suppose one would think of files in a directory existing independently of their contents, but that is a far less obviously silly idea!) I suspect that doing our thinking in terms of *hæccieties* in this way may be a dangerous error. And what has all this got to do with Buddhism? Only that according to Buddhism there are no souls and the self is unreal. Perhaps the insight that led to this particular aspect of Buddhist teaching could be profitably applied to, well!—Logic and Analytic Philosophy: hence the title of this conference.