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Enchantment with 'the East': an individual response to the problem of being Western under conditions of reflexive modernization

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The marked presence of Eastern spiritual ideas in the religious imaginings of Western peoples is a significant feature of the faith landscapes of contemporary societies (King 1999). In particular, Confucius, Buddhism, meditation and yoga have attracted significant Western audiences (Pond 2003). A substantial body of writing has emerged to provide historical, biographical and instructional perspectives on the general phenomenon and divergent spiritual strands within it (Goldstein 2002; Prebish and Baumann 2002). Yet, to date there have been few dedicated sociological studies of the subject.

The study of Eastern religion is an established concern in sociological inquiry. However, extant work has been limited to treating Eastern spirituality as a distinguishing characteristic of traditional East Asian societies (e.g. India, China, Japan) or as an ideological creation manifest within Western writing about a mystical Orient. Less present within the discipline are approaches that consider Eastern religion as a potentially significant aspect of identity & lifestyle for many contemporary Western individuals. As a result, sociological knowledge of Eastern spirituality among Western constituents remains comparatively undeveloped. The current research responds to this absence,

identifying and examining some sociologically interesting features of the phenomenon.

Treatments of 'Eastern Religion' in Sociology

Eastern religions were a significant preoccupation within classical sociology. Weber (1958) examined the differences between Hinduism and Buddhism. Durkheim (1995) investigated the character of Buddhism as a religious form. Both studies were part of a wider concern in early disciplinary studies with comparative world religions. More recently, Sharot's (2001) synthetic analysis of formations of elite and popular religion across divergent societies suggests that studies contrasting different religious systems continue to maintain a significant presence on the contemporary sociological landscape. However, as disciplinary interest in the effects of processes of globalization on religious identities (Robertson 1992) and the nature of power relations between 'the West' and 'the Rest' (Hall 1992) has developed, studies of differences between world religious systems in general and Eastern spiritualities in particular are perhaps not as central to sociology as they once were.

Contemporary sociological scholarship tends to treat Eastern religion less as an essentialised social configuration and more as a problematised social construction. In this approach Eastern spirituality is regarded as an ideational product of Occidental Orientalism. A general ideological form associated with Western geographic imaginings, Occidental Orientalism sees the Orient as an 'object of colonial discourses of knowledge and power'

(Turner 1989:631) and is interested in how Westerners come to know *themselves* by constructing the Orient as cultural Other (Said 1985). Orientalism is viewed as having arisen in the early modern era out of the intersection between Enlightenment ideas and patterns of European imperialism (Said 1985), and is seen to be accelerating under modernity through processes of cultural globalization and postmodernization (Turner 1994). [1] Within this Orientalism perspective, Eastern religion has constituted a discursive site for examining the production, representation and use of Western concepts about Otherness, such as the idea of Asian cultures as inferior, exotic, etc. (Gregory 1994). [2]

Eastern religion has been studied widely in sociology as a feature of societies or discourses. It has also received some limited examination as a property of individuals. Two specific research areas bear some relevance in this regard. One body of work has investigated Eastern religions as an integral aspect of the ethnic identities that Asian immigrants carry upon relocation to Western societies. A key concern in these studies is with how diverse 'Easterners' adapt 'Eastern religions' to new Western settings (Bankston 1997; Numrich 1996). A second area of research has treated Eastern spiritualities as key elements of New Age belief systems. In these studies religious practices and ideas associated with the East are regarded as interchangeable elements within a larger set of globally derived spiritualities available for use by the contemporary Western seeker. Individuals consume Eastern spiritualities in the process of undertaking a fluid exploration of these different beliefs (Possami 2000; Heelas 1996).

However, what these studies leave under-addressed is the idea of individuals *choosing* involvement with Eastern religion *in particular*. Research on New Age religion highlights the notion of individuals selecting spirituality. In particular, the idea of the individual as a 'consumer' in a 'spiritual supermarket' conveys this perspective (Roof 2001). Yet, while focusing of religious style, there is little concern in these studies with the potential significance of spiritual content. By contrast, research on Asian migration exhibits more concern with substance, drawing attention to idea of dedicated involvement with Eastern spiritual systems in Western settings. However, there is less interest in these studies with how migrants choose new religious identities in Western contexts (e.g. Christian, secular) than adapt and maintain established ones. To reiterate, although it would appear to be a significant source of self-identity and lifestyle practices for individuals in contemporary societies, the idea of choosing Eastern spirituality has remained largely unexamined in sociological research and analysis. We aim now to outline what we believe to be some sociologically useful ways for thinking about the idea of choosing Eastern religion, and to use these as a basis for reporting and reflecting on the results of an exploratory quantitative study of individuals involved with Eastern religion.

Choosing Eastern Religion: some sociological reflections

Weber coined *Entzauberung der Welt* or disenchantment of the world to refer to the rationalization and *de-magification* of modern social life (Bocock 1992). The idea highlights the tendency within modernity for individuals to experience

a sense of meaninglessness as feelings of enchantment are discredited by the spread of a rationalized way of seeing the world (Besecke 2001). To escape such feelings of inner-emptiness, people may by various means seek to (re) enchant their everyday lives (Cohen and Taylor 1992). We would like here to proffer disenchantment as a useful sociological idea for thinking about the dispositional state that orients modern individuals towards engagement with Eastern religion. Yet, rather than mapping precisely onto Weber's general conception, we suggest that it might be suitable to instead think of involvement with Eastern spirituality as representing an individual response to a more particular form of disenchantment that has emerged to be a prevalent feature of modern societies in contemporary times: the problem of being Western under conditions of reflexive modernization.

We live in a climate in the West where the meaning of being Western has manifested as a key site at which modernity's givens are being reflected upon and questioned (Beck, Bonss and Lau 2003; Carroll 2002; Fevre 2000). For individual members of Western societies, a distinct problem that can develop alongside such large-scale processes of cultural scrutiny and appraisal is a felt-sense of despondency and doubt towards one's own sense of a civilization identity (Elias 1996; Freud 1963). The idea of oneself as 'Western' becomes potentially destabilized, taking on the status of a problematic aspect of the self (Goffman 1963).

Enchantment with Eastern spirituality might be plausibly seen as providing a readily available way for contemporary individuals to cope with the 'identity crisis' (Giddens 1991) that may emerge from the tension between being Western yet feeling detached from the West. It does this by offering a readily 'retrievable' (Schudson 1989) way of life into which individuals are able to 'escape' to imagine and experience themselves as 'Other' than Western (Cohen and Taylor 1992), and thereby hopefully ease the felt-burden of carrying a tarnished cultural identity. Within this lifestyle, 'the Orient' becomes routinely privileged as a source of knowledge about the world and oneself. A 'profound division between the Orient and the Occident' (Turner 1989:630) is established as 'The East' becomes 'the Other through which the Western Self comes to (re) know itself' (Gregory 1994:170). In this way individuals become equipped to undertake a particular process of internal critique and renewal centered on expunging 'the West' from and integrating 'the East' within their sense of self-identity.

Hypothesis 1: Individuals who are involved with Eastern religion will be more disenchanted with a Western self than individuals-in-general

Hypothesis 2: Greater involvement with Eastern religion will be associated with lower levels of disenchantment with a Western self

Our aim here is to examine these hypotheses using data from a quantitative study conducted in Australia during late 1990s of what has emerged to be perhaps one of the most popular forms of Western involvement with Eastern religious practices and beliefs in contemporary times: Buddhism (Coleman 2002).

Research Setting, Data and Methods

Official statistics indicate that Buddhism is one of the 10 most popular religions in Australia today (Bouma 1997). Increased involvement in Buddhism took place during the late part of 20th century within a wider national environment of expanding religious pluralism (Bouma 1995). Asian immigration played a key role in its development (McDonnell and Bucknell 1989), with Buddhism featuring as an integral part of the ethnic identities carried by diverse new arrivals (e.g. Vietnamese, Sri Lankans). However, the growth of Buddhism has also reflected rising interest among individual Australians who are unaffiliated with the new ethnic communities. Rather than being born into Buddhism, these people are distinguished by having developed an individual interest in it at some point during the life course. Their involvement with Buddhism is therefore more a matter of personal choice rather than inherited tradition. Yet, it is likely that in many cases engagement will take place against a background of involvement with a dedicated Western Buddhist religious center (Carey 1996).

The data for the current study is from a survey of individuals who hold links with one such organization, the Atisha Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies. Named after the Indian Guru Lama Atisha, the Center was established in the Australian regional city of Bendigo, Victoria in the early 1980s. The Center is dedicated to providing visitors with a devoted site for experiencing Buddhism. It aims to make available a supportive setting within which attendees can partake in designated key techniques of involvement (meditation, study, reflection) and learn how to augment their practice of these methods of engagement via spiritual instruction from teachers (Atisha Center 2003).

All persons on the Atisha Centre mailing list were sent a copy of the 'Experience of Tibetan Buddhism' survey for completion in mid-1997. The survey was designed to collect standardized individual-level data about spiritual practice and belief (in particular), social identifications (in general) and social background factors. Of the 333 questionnaires sent out, 169 were completed and returned, a response rate of just over half (50.8 per cent). This was considered to be a solid result, especially in light of no follow-up process being available for pursuing non-returned questionnaires (de Vaus 1995). In terms of sample composition, we noted the strong presence of females, 'baby-boomers', professional-managerial workers (all around two in three respondents) and the well educated (about two in five had university credentials). This profile fitted well with extant research on the social characteristics of 'seekers' in the wider 'spiritual supermarket' (Roof 2001). Respondents on average first developed an interest in Buddhism 11 years

ago. While some respondents had only just recently getting involved, some of the older participants reported having felt an initial curiosity over 30 years ago.

For the purposes of data analysis the independent variable is engagement with Buddhism. Participants were designated into four subgroups representing distinct modes of spiritual engagement. The process of allocating individuals to subgroups was based on two criteria (i) reported level of participation in key forms of practice such as meditation, study and initiation (more involved/less involved) (Hamilton 1995), and (ii) the degree of importance they personally ascribed to Buddhism as a term for describing themselves (important/not important) (Graetz and McAllister 1994). The dependent variable is felt-connection to Western identity. Respondents were presented with a subset of identity markers that have been seen to constitute key social features of the Western self: gender, ethnic group, age, social class, political party and nation (de Swaan 1995). Scores represented how much importance individuals accorded to the identity source in describing themselves. A series of variables that capture key aspects of social diversity among participants are used as statistical controls in the analysis (e.g. gender, age, education and politics). [3] The relationships among these variables are analyzed using crosstabular, factor analytic and regression techniques.[4]

Results

A Key issue for the study is to investigate the connection between disenchantment with a Western self and engagement with Buddhism. As a group, in absolute terms are individuals involved with Buddhism distinguished by heightened levels of disillusionment with Western identity? We commence our empirical investigation of this question by considering how Australians who use Buddhism compare with Australians-in-general with respect to the personal significance they attach to Western social identifications.

Table I shows that Buddhist engagers are clearly distinguished from other Australians by showing a consistently weaker sense of personal attachment to core Western sources of self-identity. This feeling of distance is most pronounced with respect to the nation (being Australian). Whereas nearly nine in ten people-in-general see Australia as an important source of self-identity (87 per cent), only about one in three consumers of Buddhism ascribe a similar level of personal significance to the nation (35 per cent). Consumers of Buddhism were further strongly delineated from other Australians with regard to their weaker sense of attachment to social class and political party. While a little under half of Australians saw both these identity sources as significant in their self-description (44 per cent and 45 per cent respectively), only around one in five of those involved in Buddhism accorded them a comparable level of importance (18 per cent and 21 percent in turn). The Buddhist clientele were also different from other Australians with respect to according less weight to ethnicity and gender as bases of their

sense of self-identity (32 per cent and 47 percent as against 47 per cent and 54 per cent). Yet, while the magnitude of these differences was less pronounced (15 per cent and 7 per cent respectively), they clearly confirmed the overall picture of a marked sense of disconnection and separateness from key Western social identities.

Table I about here

This initial pattern of weaker attachment to Western self-identity sources distinguished the participants in the study from other Australians in a consistent and systematic way. Yet, while as a group the participants stood apart from Australians-in-general in terms of the strength of their social identifications, they varied among themselves in terms of the ways in which they engaged with Buddhism. This is an important point because it directs us to the possibility of divergences between subgroups of Buddhist consumers in their disposition towards Western sources of self.

To reiterate, the people in our study were distinguished in terms of the established ties they shared with a Tibetan Buddhist study center. However, the nature of the links felt with Buddhist spirituality manifested in different ways. Table II displays the distribution of participants across a series of subgroups, each distinguished by a particular style of engagement with Buddhism. The modal group of participants can be seen as characterized by *high practice & strong identity*. They reported active levels of participation in key spiritual techniques (e.g. meditation, study, initiation) and saw Buddhism

as an important term for describing themselves. Just under half of participants exhibited this form of involvement (46 per cent). At the other end of the spectrum, the next most popular form of engagement was *low practice & weak identity*. Members of this category were distinguished by more minimal levels of use of the main spiritual methods and distanced themselves from the label 'Buddhist' as a way of depicting themselves. A little over a quarter of participants displayed this manner of engagement (28 per cent). The remaining participants, who comprised around one in four of those sampled, were evenly split between *high practice & weak identity* on the one hand, and *low practice & strong identity* on the other (13 per cent in each category).

Table II about here

Having delineated these four modalities of engagement with Buddhism, we now consider their association with different elements of Western social identity. In this way, we move beyond our initial depiction of Buddhist involvement as an invariable quality (as per Table I), by examining whether distinct subgroups of engagers diverge among themselves in terms of felt-distance from various Western concepts of self. In essence, we what to find out is whether within the user group, is more dedicated engagement with Buddhism associated with any alleviation of the sense of felt-disappointment with Occidental self that was revealed in the initial section of the analysis?

Turning to Table III, the results show evidence of quite marked subgroup differences along three elements of western social identities: nation,

political party and ethnic group. Respondents who exhibited *high practice & strong identity* showed the least propensity to feel disengaged from any of these identity sources. At the other end of the spectrum, respondents characterized by *high practice & weak identity* exhibited a more pronounced level of detachment than the other subgroups. In essence, what these findings show is a notable divergence among respondents who actively practice Buddhism with regard to their level of felt-detachment from three particular strands of Western identity. More precisely, those who embraced the label 'Buddhist' as a self-description were notably distinguished from those who rejected it.

Table III about here

The results of analysis reported thus far provide some initial insights into possible connections between styles of Buddhist engagement and disenchantment with Western self-identities. However, we need to ask harder questions of the data to develop greater certainty about any such relationship. In the first instance, we need to address possible doubts about the validity of our conception of Western social identity. This involves dealing with reservations about the legitimacy of treating social class, age, ethnicity, gender, political party and the nation as an integrated self-identity set. In other words, is it suitable to regard this cluster of identity markers as a unified and cohesive grouping? The principle components analysis presented in Table III was designed to address this issue. The results suggest that the statistical case for regarding this collection of identity signs as together comprising a

sole conceptual dimension is a solid one. All items can be seen to have loaded clearly onto a single interpretable factor.

Table IV about here.

On the basis of this result, we are now in a position to reflect on the research question with a dedicated measure of feelings towards Western self-identity. What happens to the initial relationships suggested in Table III when we introduce a valid and reliable measure of the dependent variable? Our answer to this question is reported in column 1 of Table V. Here our preliminary bivariate findings have been largely sustained. Respondents who practiced actively and welcomed a Buddhist label were distinguished from those who denied a Buddhist tag (especially those engaged in vigorous practice) in terms of being less likely to feel detached from a Western concept of self-identity.

Table V about here

Yet, it is appropriate to regard this relationship as potentially suspect in the absence of a suitable test for spuriousness. Therefore, we examined whether the association stood or fell when a discrete subset of key sociological variables was added into the analysis as statistical controls. Turning to Column 2, of the new variables introduced into the picture, age, education and politics were significant factors accounting for feeling towards Western self-identity. However, of primary interest here we highlight that

Buddhist engagement styles retained statistical significance under multivariate conditions. Among people who were dedicated users of Buddhist techniques, there continued to be a significant gap between those who welcomed Buddhism as a label for describing themselves and those who rejected it.

Discussion

Using data from a quantitative study of experiences of Buddhism, the research investigated feelings about Western sources of self-identity among individuals involved with Eastern religion. Hypothesis one was confirmed. Feelings of coolness towards Western bases of self-identity were much more pronounced among persons engaged with Buddhism than people-in-general. This gap was particularly marked with respect to ‘nation’ (being Australian). Hypothesis two was partly supported. Yet, rather than pointing to difference between the least involved (low practice & low identity) and the most involved (high practice & high identity) in disposition towards a Western self, the results highlighted the divergence between the two subgroups that shared an active use of spiritual signs, symbols and techniques but differed in their readiness to embrace a new spiritual identity.

The study was characterized by two limitations that unfortunately placed some constraints on the scope of the findings. The sample size was not sufficiently large to allow us to go beneath the general findings and explore for possibilities of more subtle patterns in the data. Yet, given the specialized nature of the participant group and the associated challenges

around gaining access, we would attest that a strength of the study was its attainment of a sample size sufficient to enable initial identification of a set of interesting social regularities (Durkheim 1958). The research was limited by the non-availability of a qualitative component for delving into the 'interpretative self-history' (Giddens 1991: 76) of participants. As such, the study was unable to examine the meanings and subjectivities participants ascribed to the general idea of a Western self-identity. Such detailed narrative accounts would have enhanced understanding of the reasons for many participants feeling disenchanted with Western selves and how Eastern spirituality and other related lifestyle choices worked to alleviate this sense of discontent. This would be a valuable direction for future study.

This research has treated choosing Eastern religion as a sociologically significant phenomenon in contemporary times. We have suggested it provides a useful site at which to examine popular manifestations of disenchantment with 'being Western' under conditions of reflexive modernization. A particularly notable finding was that subgroups of engagers varied in terms of the extent to which engagement with Eastern religion was able to assuage their feeling of disillusionment with a Western self-identity. Practitioners who embraced the label of 'Buddhist' were more likely than practitioners who resisted the tag to feel attached to Western vision of self. This result is important because it suggests that, rather than providing a means for coping with despondency towards a Western sense of self, engagement with Eastern religion may in fact lead to renewed feelings of disenchantment (Jenkins 2000). The lynchpin here is identity. Deep-level

practitioners were divided in terms of their propensity to accept this label. For those who took in on the Western sense of self was less problematic. Yet, for those who rejected it, the sense of despondency with Western identity was found to be at its most powerful. In this sense, it would seem that for engagement with Eastern religion to work optimally as an 'escape' from being Western, the experience needs in some sense to be felt to be 'real', rather than recognized as 'fictive' (albeit still legitimate) (Beck, Bonss and Lau 2003).

The study might be seen to suggest that understanding individual experiences of identity imbalance between being Western and feeling Western is an important sociological task in the current climate. In particular, we propose it would be useful to know more about other kinds of lifestyle 'escapes' from ontological problems with the Western self. Compared to the alternative possibilities of 'voice' and 'loyalty' (Alexander 2004) relatively little research has focused on such 'exit' types of response (Hirschman 1970) in either literal (e.g. living in an 'Eastern' country), or in the case of this study, symbolic form. This focus might be seen as useful as it draws attention to 'detachment from' as against 'involvement with' modes of reaction (Elias 1987). Furthermore, rather than seeing these different kinds of reactions as 'either/or' options, clarifying how they are used simultaneously will open up insights into new and complex ways in which contemporary individuals seek to cope with and reconcile disenchantment with Western selves.

The current study has suggested that the idea of Orientalism holds important promise for clarifying sociological understanding of the idea of

contemporary individuals ‘escaping’, ‘exiting’ or ‘detaching’ from Western identity into ‘difference’. However, for this potential to be properly realized, we suggest the development of sociological research that is distinguished methodologically from a post-colonial approach by treatment of Orientalism as empirically observable in the attitudes and actions of individuals. To reiterate, Orientalism is defined as a way of seeing Otherness that manifests as both *representation* and *perception* (Hall 1992). In postcolonial studies this distinction has few implications for methodology. Regardless of whether one studies images or views, the ideologically laden text constitutes the data that the lone scholar is invariably charged with reading, decoding and interpreting (Balfe 2004). Yet, in sociology the division might be seen to be of much greater consequence. In a similar way to postcolonial studies, representations are regularly approached in sociology as a quality of texts. However, a key line of difference is the routine treatment of perceptions as an empirically observable property of persons. Sociology brackets off individual attitudes and meanings as a discrete area of research and analysis. The discipline has an extensive coterie of quantitative and qualitative methodologies for their discovery. These approaches have been used to study Western attitudes to and understandings of various forms of Otherness. The conditions clearly exist for new connections to be made.

Notes

[1] Processes of cultural globalization make it more and more difficult to treat the cultural life of the Orient and the Occident as 'separate, autonomous or independent cultural regimes' (Turner 1994:9). The cultural attributes of nation-states comprising World society come to be 'increasingly determined from the outside' (110). Cultural globalization therefore not only results in Americanization, it also brings the 'Orientalisation of modern cultures' (9). This process accelerates as postmodernization brings the 'growth of consumer culture' (126) and the increasing effacement of the 'distinction between high and low culture' (126).

[2] Sociological studies of Orientalism have been distinguished by a strong concern with social critique and theoretical renewal. Extant research has illustrated large-scale social processes implicated in the construction of Orientalism, revealed the complex ways in which discourses of Orientalism have been mobilized for particular purposes, and distilled various meanings and uses of the concept in academic discourse (Bishop 2000; Hung 2003; Turner 2004).

[3] Due to modest sample size, all control variables were measured in binary form. While two-category variables can lead to an oversimplification of results, the advantage is enhanced reliability of findings. This was seen as important given the exploratory nature of the study. Race/ethnicity was treated as a constant in the research and excluded from analytic consideration.

[4] Further measurement information and descriptive statistics for all variables are reported in Appendix Table A1.

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Table I: Popularity of Social Identifications: a comparison of Western Buddhists and Australians

	Western Buddhists[1] (1997)	Australians[2] (1998)	Group Difference
	Important (%)	Important (%)	+/- (%)
How important is (…) in describing how you see yourself?: (% important)			
Australian	35	87	-52
social class	18	44	-26
political party	21	45	-24
ethnicity	32	47	-15
gender	47	54	-7
age	31	na[3]	na

[1] Source: Experiences of Tibetan Buddhism Survey, 1997, N=169
[2] Source: Phillips and Western (2004), N=1897
[3] na: not available

Table II: Engagement with Buddhism: frequency distribution

	(%)	(N)
High practice & strong identity	45.6	77
High practice & weak identity	13.0	22
Low practice & strong identity	13.0	22
Low practice & weak identity	28.4	48
Total	100	169

Source: Experiences of Tibetan Buddhism Survey, 1997, N=169

Table III: Relationships between Western Social Identifications and Engagement with Buddhism, bivariate analysis

Buddhist Engagement	*Western Social Identifications (% important)*					
	nation	social class	political party	ethnic group	gender	age
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
High practice & strong identity	**42**	22	**30**	**38**	47	30
High practice & weak identity	**14**	14	**9**	**18**	41	27
Low practice & strong identity	32	23	23	27	50	32
Low practice & weak identity	35	13	13	31	48	33
% (group difference)	28%	10%	21%	20%	9%	6%
X^2	6.7*	2.5	8.0**	3.5	0.4	0.3

Source: Experiences of Tibetan Buddhism Survey, 1997, n=169
* p<.10 ** p<.05 *** p<.01

Table IV: Structure of Social Identifications among Western Buddhists

	Western Buddhists[1] (1997)
	Factor Loadings[2] I
social class	**.76**
age	**.76**
ethnicity	**.75**
gender	**.68**
political party	**.65**
Australian	**.47**
Explained Variance	46.9%
Alpha[3]	.76

[1] Source: Experiences of Tibetan Buddhism Survey, 1997, n=169
[2] Generated using principal components analysis with orthogonal rotation
[3] Indicator of reliability

Table V: Multivariate Relationship between Western Social Identifications and Engagement with Buddhism, Controlling for Gender, Age, Education and Politics

	Importance of Western Social Identifications[1]	
	Model A	Model B
	(b)	(b)
high practice & weak identity[2]	**-.24*** **	**-.22*** **
low practice & strong identity	-.06	-.06
low practice & weak identity	**-.16***	-.12
female	-	.02
older	-	**-.17** **
higher education	-	**.14***
left	-	**.23*** **
R^2	.06	.18

Source: Experiences of Tibetan Buddhism Survey, 1997, n=169
p<.10 ** p<.05 *** p<.01
[1] Six item scale
[2] Excluded contrast category is high practice & strong identity

Appendix Table A1. Descriptive Statistics for Variables in Regression Analysis

Variable	*Measurement*	*Mean*	*SD*
western social identity	6 (not important) – 24 (important)	12.0	3.8
low practice & strong identity	1 (low practice & strong identity), 0 (high practice & strong identity)	.13	.34
high practice & weak identity	1 (high practice & weak identity), 0 (high practice & strong identity)	.13	.34
low practice & weak identity	1 (low practice & weak identity), 0 (high practice & strong identity)	.28	.45
gender: female	1 (female), 0 (male)	.63	.48
age: older	1 (41yrs & under), 0 (40yrs & under)	.66	.47
education: higher	1 (university/college degree), 0 (other)	.38	.49
politics: left	1 (identify as 'left' politically), 0 (other)	.46	.50

Source: Experiences of Tibetan Buddhism Survey, 1997, n=169

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