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Confession of an accidental academic

Richard P. Hayes

One of my great grandmothers traveled to Asia at some point in her life, and while there she acquired a brass statue, which sat on the mantle in the home where my father lived. It was part of his childhood to see that statue every day. Eventually he inherited the brass statue, so I also grew up with it in my childhood home. It is one of the first objects I recall seeing as a toddler. My parents, who were steeped in secular humanism and had very little interest in or respect for any religion that the human race has yet devised, told me the statue was of a lama. A lama, they explained, is someone from a religion in Asia that worships some god called Buddha. (Much later in life, I came to realize that the statue was not of a lama at all, but of a Chinese Buddhist priest.) That statue, and the family story about it, was the full extent of my exposure to Buddhist studies until I was in my mid-twenties. When I was a freshman in college, I was assigned a book by Kushwant Singh entitled *Train to Pakistan* and was surprised to learn (I am now embarrassed to admit) that Pakistan is not in Africa, somewhere near Kenya. One of the English professors at my college was known to have studied Sanskrit, and one of my classmates earnestly told me that Sanskrit was an ancient Egyptian language that only six people in the world can read, and I (again admitting with embarrassment) believed him. All this is to say that there was nothing in my early life that indicated I would one day be the seventh person in the world to learn Sanskrit and to pursue a career learning about, and eventually teaching, Indian Buddhist philosophy. So how did that all come about? The short answer is “damned if I know.” A longer, and somewhat less accurate, answer follows.

In high school I was a mediocre student, far more interested in playing guitar in the school jazz band than in any of my classes, except for mathematics. In my senior year I took a competitive examination in math and to everyone’s amazement, including mine, got the highest score in my high school. I was awarded a book of logarithmic values and tables of sines and cosines. Remarkably few people envied me that book, but I treasured it. In my senior year, a well-meaning guidance counsellor gave me a multiple-choice interest test with such questions as “Would you rather go camping in the mountains or attend an operatic performance?” That test indicated that above all else, I would like to work outdoors studying nature,

preferably in some way that involved measurement and calculation—no doubt I was under the influence of the two strongest male role models in my youth, namely, my father, a field geologist, and my favorite uncle, an archaeologist specializing in ancient Pueblo cultures of the American Southwest. The guidance counsellor suggested I pursue a career in forestry. That struck me as an excellent suggestion at the time, but at the time I was seventeen years old and not much given to following suggestions, especially excellent ones.

In college—Beloit College, the only school to which I had applied—I continued being a mediocre student, although my musical tastes evolved from playing rock and jazz on electric guitars to playing blues and bluegrass on acoustic guitars. I mocked what I dismissed as “college knowledge” and hankered for something more like concrete, practical, hard-traveling, real-life experience of the sort that Woody Guthrie or Dave Van Ronk might approve of. Not really knowing why on earth I was at college at all, I initially fell back on what was relatively safe and comfortable and declared a major in mathematics. Before finishing my first year, however, I let an English professor convince me that I had potential as a writer of fiction that could be refined by majoring in English composition. Because I had enjoyed writing satires and parodies since elementary school, and because I loved the idea of writing fiction, mostly because I was too lazy to do the kind of research required for most academic subjects, I switched my major from math to English composition. For the next few years I took courses in writing poetry, dramas, and short stories. In my junior year I wrote an absurdist novel about a mathematics major who was determined to devise a theorem that had absolutely no practical application whatsoever. The main character, needless to say, was someone with whom I identified rather strongly, a shy, introverted, slightly contrarian, eccentric nerd, feeling born on the wrong planet, and entirely at odds with almost everything having to do with mainstream society.

In the autumn of 1966, the selective service administration formulated a rule that only students who had a solid C average could continue receiving student deferments from the draft. At registration that year, male students were given the opportunity to sign a statement giving their college permission to send the student’s grades to the student’s local draft board as proof of having at least a C average. Although by that time I had managed to get onto the Dean’s Honor Roll, I was outraged by the very idea that a student deferment was contingent on grades. In a fit of idealism, I refused to sign the permission statement. That decision changed my life.

Within a month of the time that I refused to let my draft board in Denver know how I was doing at a small liberal arts college in Wisconsin, I received a notice that I was to appear for a physical examination, the first step of induction into the military of the United States of America. I wrote my draft board and told them I was in the middle of the first semester of my final year; they wrote back and said I could complete the semester but must be prepared for induction in January. There would be no further deferments. That door was now closed. I finished the semester having completed all the requirements for a major in English composition and being just a few credits shy of what was needed for a BA degree. I moved back to my parents' home in the suburbs of Denver and waited to be drafted.

By January 1967 my parents had developed just enough interest in something approximating religion to join a Unitarian-Universalist church. The church to which they belonged happened to have some sort of partnership with a Reform Jewish synagogue and a Pure Land Buddhist church. It so happened that the UU church had decided that on every Sunday in January 1967 they would invite a Buddhist to inform the congregation about Buddhism. There was also an adult-education reading group that discussed a different book on Buddhism every week. Going to a Unitarian church seemed a painless way to learn more about the god that our brass "lama" worshipped, so I tagged along with my parents to church the first Sunday and heard a Sri Lankan Buddhist lay out the features of Theravada Buddhism. The speaker was a professional scientist, so naturally he emphasized all the ways in which Buddhism has no conflicts at all with modern science. I liked what I heard at that first talk so much that I decided to join the reading group. We read Walpola Rahula, of course, and Edward Conze's *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*. Being an enthusiast of the sciences of and scientific method, I was delighted to learn that the Buddha was not a god after all, which suited my aggressively atheistic temperament in those days. I loved the idea of a tradition that was not at odds with science. The seed was planted.

That discovery of Buddhism through the Unitarians came along by accident while I was looking for ways to distract myself from the unpleasant fact that I was about to be drafted. By the time I had taken the physical exam and the battery of cognitive tests provided by the military, I was feeling pretty much convinced that I was not suited for military service, but my draft board was convinced otherwise. Despite having poor eyesight and a bad attitude, which had manifested by my drawing hammers and sickles all over my IQ test answer pages, I was advised to stand by to await official notification of when I was to appear to begin basic training. While I was waiting, I happened to meet two former high school buddies and to spend an

evening with them. They had just finished basic training and were awaiting deployment to Vietnam, which they were looking forward to with alarming eagerness. I was shocked at how much they had changed, and it was obvious to me that most of the change was due to the indoctrination they had undergone in some seventy days of military training. Meeting them by chance made it absolutely clear to me that the military and I were not a good match. After considering a short list of options that were not much more appealing than military service, I decided the only palatable option was to leave the country. I went to the Greyhound bus terminal and asked for a one-way ticket to Canada. The ticket agent asked me which destination in Canada I wished to go to. I asked when the next bus for a Canadian destination was leaving. The reply: "A bus is leaving soon for Winnipeg." About an hour later I was on a bus heading for Winnipeg, a city about which I knew only that it was not a country in Africa, possibly somewhere near Kenya.

During my first year in Canada I worked in a sheet metal factory long enough to learn that I was not eager to continue doing dangerous work in poorly lighted conditions for low pay, and I worked on farms and ranches long enough to learn that I was not really cut out to be a cowboy either. What I still yearned to be was a writer, so in my off hours I churned out several short stories, another novel, a three-act play and even a bit of awful poetry, most of which (except for the poetry) I submitted for publication time and time again without getting any of it accepted. It occurred to me that my main problem as a fiction writer was that I was shallow and, aside from an abundance of political anger and bitterness, had nothing worthwhile to say. I had spent too much time writing and too little time reading. In a fit of despair, I literally threw almost everything I had written into a fire and headed for a good bookstore with a determination to read something that would, I could only hope, make me a little less shallow.

By the time it was clear to me I needed to read more, I was in Lethbridge, Alberta. On the way there I had spent six weeks living in a small community of Quakers in the eastern mountains of British Columbia. To this day it amazes me that I was there for only six weeks, because almost all the rest of my life has flowed out of that experience. It was in that tiny, rural, isolated community of Quakers who had left the United States for Canada during the McCarthy era that I saw that there is an alternative to being bitter in one's disappointment in the cultural climate of one's land of birth and upbringing. More important, I learned from them the value of sitting silently for an hour every week and for shorter periods of time every day. I was most deeply impressed by their ability to disagree, as the saying goes, without being disagreeable. Wherever I went after that time—Lethbridge, Ottawa, Toronto,

Montreal, and eventually back to my native New Mexico—I sought the company of Quakers, always hoping that some of their gentle persuasiveness might rub off on me at least a little bit.

It was with a hope of learning more about people who live contemplatively and are opposed to war that I browsed the selection of books on the shelves of the bookshop in Lethbridge, Alberta in the spring of 1968. One of the books I took home was Edward Conze's little book on Buddhist meditation. I read it carefully and often, not at all with an academic interest in Buddhism, but with a determination to learn how to use my periods of silence to become less angry, less agitated, more patient and even more loving. The list of tendencies in my mentality that were making me uncomfortable had grown much longer than my list of ways to improve that troubled mentality. Conze's little book on Buddhist contemplative practices convinced me that there might actually be steps to take to become a slightly less grumpy camper. Following the instructions in that book became as much a part of my daily routine as going to Quaker meeting for worship became a part of my weekly routine.

The aforementioned discovery that I was not destined to be a cowboy, a factory worker, or a publishable author led me to consider going back to school to finish a BA. I applied to Carleton University in Ottawa and was accepted. My hopes of getting a degree within a semester or two, however, were soon dashed. At that time, Carleton, like most other Canadian universities, offered courses that began in September and finished in the spring. A one-credit course at Carleton was equivalent to six semester hours at Beloit College. When my transcripts from Beloit were scrutinized, there was hardly anything I had done there that was considered equivalent to a one-credit course in a Canadian university. The registrar's office deemed my three and a half years at Beloit College to be worth one year at Carleton. None of the courses I had taken in English could be converted into Canadian credit, so if I wished to major in English again, I would have to start all over. If I was going to have to take three more years of coursework anyway, I thought I might as well take them in another field rather than retaking several English courses. Still hoping to become slightly less shallow, I decided to major in philosophy and to take a two-semester course in religions of the world as an elective.

Taking that elective course ended up being another decision that changed my life. By the time that year was over, it was clear to me that I wanted to know more about all the Asian religious traditions and that it might not hurt to even learn a little more about the Judeo-Christian roots of Quakerism. One more change of major was in order. By the end of 1969 I had declared Religious Studies as a major and

philosophy as a minor.

During my first year as a Religious Studies major, the academic year of 1969–70, it became increasingly clear that studying any religious or philosophical tradition that had originated in Asia without being able to read texts in the original language was unacceptably limiting. At that time I was most attracted to East Asian thoughts and practices, so what made the most sense was to learn Chinese. At that time there were no courses in Chinese being offered at Carleton University, so I set out to teach myself Chinese by buying and going through H.G. Creel's *Chinese by the Inductive Method* and pestering my Chinese friends and waiters in Chinese restaurants to explain Chinese grammar to me. What I learned from that experience was that friends and waiters in restaurants aren't necessarily the most reliable language teachers and that teaching oneself can be a significant distraction from the studies one is doing for academic credit. One of my professors, Nalini Devdas, saw how much time and effort I was giving to trying to learn Chinese on my own, and she suggested that I might be interested in taking a summer course in Sanskrit for credit. Although I was then much less interested in Indian Buddhism than in Chinese Buddhism, I saw that Professor Devdas had a point, so in the summer of 1970, by which time I was already twenty-five years old, I began to study Sanskrit. By August I was hooked. From that time on, Sanskrit became the focus of my life. The language satisfied me in many of the same ways mathematics had done in former years. I loved the precision of the language. I loved the way it sounded. I liked the way it looked. I even liked that fact that more than six people in the world could read it and that I would not have to look up that English professor from Beloit College if I wanted to talk to someone else who had studied the language.

The focus on Sanskrit as a language naturally led to a change in focus from East Asian authors to Indian authors, and during the next two years I became increasingly interested in Brahmanical and Buddhist thoughts and practices. By the time I was nearing completion of my BA Honours degree in Religious Studies, I knew that it was more the Sanskrit language than the study of religions that I wanted to pursue. It also occurred to me that specializing in Sanskrit was running the risk of being overly specialized and therefore limited in what I could eventually do for a livelihood. I had a long talk about this with my father, at the end of which he said, "Study what interests you most deeply. If you do that, other things will somehow fall into place." (Not bad advice, coming from a field geologist who had never heard Joseph Campbell's famous advice to "Follow your bliss.") And so with parental encouragement, I applied to enter the graduate program of the Sanskrit and Indian Studies department at University of Toronto. Nervously aware that I was five years

older than most of my friends who were entering graduate school right after completing their bachelor's degree, and that I was entering a graduate Sanskrit program with only two years of undergraduate Sanskrit study under my belt, and that I was married and had two young children, and that I was getting farther and farther away from a career working outdoors as a forester, I packed all our worldly possessions into a Volvo and headed to Toronto, a city bigger than any I had ever lived in before. This venture was as close as any in my life, with the possible exception of buying a one-way bus ticket to Winnipeg, to qualifying as a leap of faith. What was I *thinking*?

The Sanskrit and Indian Studies program offered four areas of concentration: History, Grammar and Literature, Indian Philosophy, and Buddhism. I arrived with the intention of specializing in Buddhism, but by the time I had attended seminars with Professor Venkatacharya on Pāṇini's grammar and with Bimal Matilal on Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, I was paralyzed with indecision. The classical system of linguistic analysis that Pāṇini, Patañjali and Bhartṛhari had developed appealed to me far more than I had expected it to, as did the logic and metaphysical analysis of the Naiyāyikas. To compound the indecision, I was taking courses in the philosophy department in logic, metalogic and philosophy of language, all of which were rekindling an earlier interest I had had in analytic philosophy. Meanwhile, Buddhism was appealing to me somewhat less than I had originally thought it would, despite the stimulating and inspired teaching of Shoryu Katsura, who at that time was a doctoral candidate teaching graduate-level courses while he was putting the finishing touches on his dissertation. It had been a personal interest in Buddhism as possibly being my own personal religion that had initially led me to religious studies, but my enthusiasm for it was waning as I began to identify more with my inner analytic philosopher, logician and Sanskrit grammarian. (At one point I had fantasies of following the example of Bertrand Russell, who was at that time Bimal Matilal's philosophical hero, and writing a book entitled *Why I am Not a Buddhist*.) Katsura taught me Tibetan, and we read some Buddhist texts together comparing the Sanskrit originals to their Tibetan translations. Perhaps predictably, I found myself far more interested in Tibetan as a language than in the content of anything we read in that language.

By the time I had completed my course work and all the other requirements of the doctoral program in Sanskrit and Indian Studies, I still had no clear idea of what I wished to pursue for a dissertation topic. Shoryu Katsura had completed his degree and moved back to Japan, and the last vestiges of my interest in Buddhist studies departed with him. As the time came to propose a topic and have it approved, I had

a talk with Professor Matilal and laid out for him my being torn between pursuing Indian logic or traditional Sanskrit grammar and linguistic analysis. It was suggested that instead of choosing between these options, I combine them by studying the Buddhist system of logic and theory of language that centered on the concept of *apoha*. I just barely knew what the *apoha* theory was, and what little I did know made very little sense to me. What on earth could one possibly make of the claim that the meaning of the word “cow” is *not non-cow*? Despite misgivings about that strange semantic theory, the suggestion of concentrating on Buddhist logic and semantic theory seemed reasonable enough. I wrote up an absurdly ambitious proposal to trace the theory of *apoha* all the way from Dignāga to Ratnakīrti, invited Professor Matilal to supervise it, got it approved and then decided I wanted to drive trucks for a living rather than have anything more to do with academia.

Writing up a proposal to do a research topic on the history of an idea in medieval Indian Buddhism had dramatically clarified my thinking, and the discovery of my temperament that came with the new-found clarity was that I had no business being an academic scholar. My heart was not in it. It never had been. I had just let myself drift along aimlessly pursuing one interest after another. I realized that I was a dilettante, not a serious scholar, certainly not a scholar of the calibre of all the excellent teachers who had enabled my dilettantism. It was perfectly obvious: I was meant to haul freight from coast to coast in a lonely tractor-trailer rig. My marriage having fallen apart, I dropped out of the Sanskrit and Indian Studies program, sold or gave away most of my books and enrolled in a course in tractor-trailer driving. Learning how to shift through eighteen gears and back a trailer into a narrow space from every conceivable angle proved to be an ill-considered move, I soon discovered, since an economic recession was underway. Every trucking company in Toronto was laying off drivers, even those with twenty years of seniority. Aside from temporary stints, there were no jobs to be had, especially for inexperienced drivers, even those who could (but refused) to read Sanskrit. For the next two years, I held a variety of mostly uninteresting jobs in Toronto, never setting foot on the campus of the University of Toronto.

The two-year non-academic interlude came to an unexpected end in the spring of 1977. Years later I heard a story from Jay Garfield about how it ended. According to that story, Shoryu Katsura visited Toronto. When he landed at the Toronto International Airport and hailed a taxi, he was astonished to find that the taxi that picked him up was driven by me. Wondering how on earth I had become a taxi driver, he then listened to the sad tale of my departure from the University of Toronto and subsequent time struggling to make ends meet by driving the mean

streets of Toronto. Feeling bodhisattvic compassion for me in my fallen state, he invited me to Japan to continue my studies with him, and the rest is history. That's an excellent legend, but like many a good story, it's not entirely true. (One must take stories told by Jay Garfield with a grain of salt.) What really happened was that when Katsura visited Toronto, he contacted me and suggested we get together for a meal. He told me he had heard from various people that I had discontinued my studies. He then gave me something not entirely unlike a scolding. He reminded me that he and many other people over the years had invested a lot of time and energy in teaching me, and that I was indebted to them for that investment, and that the only way I could pay that investment back was to finish my studies and pursue a career teaching others. That is how civilization works. I had an obligation to pass on what I had learned, and not to do so would be selfish and disrespectful of my teachers. It was an essentially Confucian argument, I think. Whatever it was, it succeeded in making me feel completely ashamed of myself. I promised to give serious thought to returning to my studies. He in turn encouraged me to consider applying for a Japanese Ministry of Education (Monbushō) scholarship for foreign students so that I could go to Japan to do research under his supervision. Some six months later, I was greeted at the Hiroshima airport by Professor Katsura. In the intervening period between our conversation in Toronto, I had gotten reinstated in the doctoral program in Sanskrit and Indian Studies, made arrangements with Professor Matilal to have him be my official doctoral advisor, applied for and was awarded the Japanese scholarship, bought back most of my books from the friends to whom I had sold them and who said they knew I would want them back someday, studied enough Japanese to formulate questions to which I could not understand the answer, and cursed myself for having become so rusty in Sanskrit and Tibetan while managing somehow to get more or less up to speed again in the various arts in which I had incurred an obligation by receiving training from my dedicated teachers. I had no idea how any of this would work out, but I was once again in the business of leaping faithfully into a new adventure.

When Professor Katsura looked over my absurdly ambitious thesis proposal, he said the project I had outlined would take at least a lifetime to complete. For the purpose of a doctoral dissertation, a study of the *apoha* theory as presented by Dignāga, who is usually given credit for introducing the theory, would suffice. I gathered up photocopies of all the editions of the two Tibetan translations of the fifth chapter of Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* and of Jinendrabuddhi's commentary and began making a diplomatic edition of the two Tibetan translations of Dignāga and of the commentary. Every day I devoted several hours to doing that, writing everything out

in pencil in notebooks, and then devoted another several hours every day to comparing the two Tibetan translations and trying to imagine what Sanskrit text might have been the basis for the two differently worded Tibetan translations, trying all the while to find passages quoting Dignāga's actual wording in extant Sanskrit texts by later authors. Once a week I met with Katsura and Hideyo Ogawa, who was at the time one of Katsura's graduate students, and presented my tentative translations to them. After intensely detailed discussions of every phrase of every sentence with Katsura and Ogawa, I would then go back and revise my translations. They had to be revised again and again as new materials came to light. Making sense of Dignāga's text was like solving a gigantic jigsaw puzzle in which about a third of the pieces were missing, or like trying to come up with all the possible solutions to a complex algebraic formula for which the values of only some of the variables were known. It was difficult beyond my wildest imagination. After working on it for two academic years in Japan, I returned to Toronto with a rough translation. I remember thinking, "That was fun. I never want to do anything like that ever again." All that work, incidentally, was rendered useless a couple of decades later by the discovery of the Sanskrit original of Jinendrabuddhi's commentary to Dignāga's, which made all the conjectures about the Sanskrit wording based on the evidence of Tibetan translations obsolete.

While living in Japan, it seemed a shame not to take advantage of the opportunity to learn something about Japanese Buddhism, about which I knew next to nothing. I purchased a copy of E. Dale Saunders's *Japanese Buddhism*, which begins with a brief account of the basic teachings of Buddhism in India. I read that chapter while waiting for my clothes to dry in a laundromat, and while reading about the four noble truths and the eightfold path, I had a feeling that I can only describe as being akin to having coffee with someone one has known for years and suddenly discovering that one is in love with that person. Aside from being relieved that I had never gotten around to writing *Why I am Not a Buddhist*, I walked home with a sack of neatly folded clean clothes and a feeling that I would like to know Buddhism much better. That feeling was accompanied by a realization that familiarity nearly always breeds contempt, and if I became too familiar with Buddhism, it would almost surely rekindle my urge to write *Why I am Not a Buddhist* after all. As it turned out, I was far too busy trying to make sense of Dignāga's insanely frustrating *apoha* theory to act on the feelings that had arisen in the laundromat. Besides, I once confided to Katsura that I thought I had undergone a kind of conversion experience to Buddhism in the laundromat, and he said there is quite a bit more to being a Buddhist than thinking the four noble truths make sense. I was afraid to ask what more was

required and decided to drop the topic for the remainder of my time in Japan.

The two years after returning to Toronto are a blur in my memory. I returned to the discovery that while I had been away, the Sanskrit and Indian Studies department had been closed down by the administration of the University of Toronto. The corridors that used to be the home of Sanskrit and Indian Studies had become the home of the graduate program for the Department of Religious Studies. I suddenly felt homeless. The Dean of Graduate Studies, however, assured me that if I managed to submit a dissertation someday, some way would be found to examine it, and if it was found worthy, a doctorate would be rewarded for it in the newly established Centre for South Asian Studies. I got a part-time job in the cataloguing department at the main library of the University of Toronto; my task was to transliterate the titles of popular books from India, mostly romances and detective stories written in the vernacular Indian languages, and to enter the data into the computerized data base that would eventually replace the card catalogues. It was tedious work, but it paid almost enough to keep me just barely alive on junk food while I wrote a doctoral dissertation. I submitted the dissertation in 1981 but had to wait until the early months of 1982 to defend it in Professor Matilal's presence; he had long since taken up a position at Oxford University but would be able to visit Toronto in the spring of 1982.

While waiting to defend my doctorate, it occurred to me that my father's sanguine advice that if I just pursued what I was interested in and then everything would work out was soon going to be put to the test. As I looked at the advertisements for academic positions, it seemed there were none for which I was really qualified. I did not have a graduate degree in Religious Studies. I had nothing like the kind of training that students got in programs of Buddhist Studies. I was certainly not an Indologist by training or inclination—I had never been to India and had no desire whatsoever to go there. I would at best have a doctorate nominally issued by a Centre whose location on the University of Toronto campus I did not even know. There was no academic position for which I was even a long shot, let alone an obvious candidate for a short list. It's not that I was over-specialized, but that I really had no specialization at all. The only thing I could think of doing at that point was to apply for a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities translation program to continue working on Dignāga, a task that I had earlier been sure I never wanted to do again. I applied for a grant to produce a critical edition of the Tibetan language versions of the unstudied chapters from Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* and Jinendrabuddhi's *ṭīkā* and an annotated English translation. I was quite confident that I had no chance of getting such a grant. I got

it. The grant was sufficient to keep me alive for two more years, by which time I would be no closer to having any employable skills. By sheer blind luck, I had landed on my feet, at least for a while. As soon as I submitted my dissertation, I purchased a new box of pencils and a pile of notebooks and began working on the new project.

In the spring of 1983, a friend from the philosophy department at the University of Toronto saw a flyer stapled on a telephone pole. It was advertising an open-house event in celebration of Buddha's birthday at a Zen Buddhist temple in Toronto. My friend was interested in going but did not want to go alone and so urged me to go with him. I protested that I really hate going to things like that, although I really had no basis for saying that, since I had never gone to anything like that before, mostly because I am terribly introverted and shy and find the prospect of being in a room full of strangers terrifying. My friend wore down my resistance, and I agreed to go with him. As we approached the temple, which was really a townhouse in a somewhat rundown area of Toronto, I had visions of being surrounded by all those strangers, having a panic attack, and running out onto the street screaming until someone put me in a strait jacket. It is not easy being an introvert.

Walking into the Zen Buddhist temple in a townhouse in a rundown area of Toronto turned out to be an experience akin to falling in love with the four noble truths in a laundromat in Hiroshima. The minute I walked in the door I had a strange feeling that for the first time in more than a decade, I was at home. Who knows how to account for such feelings? Although I had never met anyone in the room other than the friend who talked me into going there, I did not feel as though I was among strangers at all. I felt as though I was among family. I felt comfortable with everyone I talked to, which for me at that time was an almost unprecedented feeling. Before the evening was over, I had signed up to take a beginner's course in Korean Zen meditation. When that course came to an end, I applied to become a member of the Zen Buddhist Temple and to train under its founder, Samu Sunim. Not long thereafter, I had formally gone for refuge and been given a Korean Buddhist name: Mubul, meaning [Having] No Buddha. None of this happened as a result of my carefully thinking things through or even taking leaps. It just happened by itself and took me along for the ride.

It did not take Sunim long to discover that I enjoyed writing. He soon put me to work as one of the contributing editors of a quarterly Buddhist publication he had founded called *Spring Wind: Buddhist Cultural Forum*. For every issue he gave me several writing assignments, most of them unsigned but a few appearing under my Buddhist name. The writing assignments involved visiting other Buddhist centers in the

Toronto area, interviewing teachers, reporting on activities. It resulted in my getting to know the Toronto Buddhist scene fairly well; it also resulted in my unlearning the habit of writing sesquipedalian academic prose full of long sentences filled with semicolons and dashes—not that I mind that sort of writing once in a while. I found that I loved to write popular journalistic pieces that people actually read, and I found it considerably more satisfying than writing academic articles that hardly anyone read but the titles of which could be added to an academic curriculum vitae.

The years of being an independent academic Canadian researcher funded by the American government and a contributing editor for a popular Buddhist journal while maintaining a more-or-less serious zazen practice made it clear to me how alienated I had always felt in the academic world. Although I was not at that time aware of the terminology coined by the clinical psychologists Pauline R. Clance and Suzanne A. Imes, who described what they called “imposter syndrome,” a name they gave to the fear of being exposed as a fraud, I realized that ever since stepping foot on the campus of Beloit College in 1963 I had had a nagging feeling that I did not belong in an intellectual setting and that it was only a matter of time before everyone else agreed that I really should never be allowed anywhere near a campus, or even a library. Being comfortable in a Zen setting highlighted the feelings of being uncomfortable in an academic setting. I felt the time had come to face the fact that there was probably a good reason why I felt uncomfortable among academics and to take appropriate action by finishing the Dignāga project and then finding some kind of honest work, or at least some line of work that did not make me feel like a fraud.

Just as the feelings of alienation from academia were reaching their peak, I was offered an academic position on one of the suburban campuses of the University of Toronto, a position teaching comparative religions in the Religious Studies department. It was not difficult to notice that they were desperate because of a series of unexpected developments that had left them with courses to teach and very little time to find someone to teach them. Somehow word had gotten out that I was nearing the end of NEH funding and was probably also a little desperate, at least desperate enough to be available. I accepted the offer. I was told that one of the three courses I would teach would be a two-semester (one Canadian course credit) course in religions of the world, which I figured I could probably do reasonably well. Another course was called comparative religions. I had no idea what that was even supposed to be. A third course was called Christianity in the Context of World Religions. I also had no idea that that was supposed to be, except that I suspected it had something to do with Christianity, about which I knew next to nothing. I was deep into not only feeling like a fraud but actually being one. It was going to be

challenging to hold onto the illusion that I had any intellectual integrity left, but it was worth a try. Besides, it would keep me alive for another year while I gave serious thought to looking for honest work. By the time the academic year was finished I would be forty years old, a good age at which to begin thinking about what I wanted to be when I grew up.

Once again, things did not work out as I had assumed they would. Quite unexpectedly, I discovered that I enjoyed teaching. Some of the enjoyment was no doubt due to the adrenaline rush of stepping into a room full of students, telling them all about something I myself had learned only two hours earlier, and wondering whether I could make it all the way to the end of the three-hour class without running out of material. Yes, each of these three classes met once a week and ran for three hours. That meant nine adrenaline-filled hours every week for twenty-six weeks. It was fun. Adrenaline rushes aside, I was learning a lot of things I had never wanted to know anything about, and I enjoyed being around students of all ages, and I made friends with numerous amiable colleagues, many of whom, I discovered to my delight, were also afflicted with moderate to severe imposter syndrome. This way of making a livelihood complemented my Zen practice. I was going nowhere, but never having been a particularly ambitious fellow, I found nowhere a pleasant enough place to be, at least for a year.

One year led to another. As the 1984-85 academic year came to a close, I was offered another one-year contract to do the same thing a second time the following year. Deciding what to do with the rest of my life would have to wait until I was forty-one. Sometime during the 1985-86 academic year, it was decided that the contractually limited term appointment I was filling would be turned into a tenure-track position. I was encouraged to apply. The fact that I had been there for two years, and that I liked being on a suburban campus and had no ambitions to be transferred to the main campus in downtown Toronto, and that I got along with everyone else out there in the hinterland, all worked in my favor. Moreover, I had recently become a Canadian citizen, which also worked in my favor. I was given so much encouragement that I began to get used to the idea of having a secure academic position at a place in which I actually felt comfortable. Two years of teaching had been a factor in my making progress in getting over feelings of panic in rooms full of strangers. The Zen scene was going well. I was, at last, in my comfort zone.

If Buddhism teaches anything, it teaches that comfort zones tend not to last for long. Despite much encouragement and support from my colleagues on the suburban

campus, I was not hired for the tenure-track position in religious studies. When summer of 1986 came, I was once again unemployed, and not only unemployed but painfully aware that I had really wanted to be hired to fill that position and was now faced with not being able to continue doing what I had come to love doing. This was a bitter pill. As it happened, my father came to visit me in Toronto on the very day when I had to clear out my office. He helped me make the move. I reminded him of the advice he once had given me, and observed that at the moment things were not really working out all that well. He chuckled. Then he assured me that somehow things will work out, and even if they don't, I'll still have had several good years of studying what most interested me.

Most people have a few favorite books or authors to whom they turn again and again for inspiration. Among the authors to whom I repeatedly turn are Buddhaghosa, Śāntideva, Marcus Aurelius, Mengzi, Zhuangzi, Carl Jung and William James. Conspicuously absent from that list is Dharmakīrti. Ever since my first exposure to Dharmakīrti, I have found him annoying. For reasons it would probably require a psychoanalyst to unravel, I dislike almost everything about Dharmakīrti. Unfortunately, it is difficult to come to much of an understanding of any Indian Buddhist who came after Dharmakīrti without first reading Dharmakīrti. In much the same way that Kant was a watershed figure whose ideas had some influence, positive or negative, on every Western philosopher who came after him, Dharmakīrti is such a watershed figure in Indian Buddhism. Because he must be read, it occurred to me in 1985 that a good way to get reading him out of the way was to apply for another National Endowment for the Humanities translation grant. Unable to face the prospect of doing that project alone, I invited my friend Brendan Gillon to collaborate with me. Brendan and I had read several Sanskrit texts together when we were both students in Sanskrit and Indian Studies in Toronto, and our interests and skills complemented each other nicely. We got together for about a week and hammered out a grant proposal. It was accepted for funding, so in 1987 we began working together on a translation of what in some editions is the first chapter of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*, which is traditionally regarded (wrongly, I think) as making explicit ideas that had only been implicit in the Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. Since that funding was for three years, I had it to sustain me when I found myself no longer employed by the Religious Studies department at University of Toronto. Being no longer employed there in fact gave me the freedom to pursue research and writing full time. For the next two years I was able to work not only on the translation of Dharmakīrti but also to make extensive revisions of my doctoral thesis and to turn it into a book on Dignāga's theory of inferential reasoning

and his semantic theory, a book that was published in 1988 with the title *Dignāga on the interpretation of signs*.

1988 turned out to be a year of many changes, most of which centered around being offered a tenure-track position at McGill University. This would mean moving from Toronto, where my adolescent children lived and where the Zen community in which I felt so at home was situated, to Montreal, where I had only one casual acquaintance and which I had visited only a few times for brief stays and had not much liked. People who knew both Montreal and Toronto warned me that moving there would feel like moving to a foreign country in which there is always an undercurrent of hostility toward Toronto and the rest of Canada. It felt as though accepting that position would entail yet another move out of my comfort zone, and I was not entirely comfortable with the prospect of leaving my comfort zone. On the other hand, my research funding was coming to an end, and I had no other irons in the fire and wasn't even sure where to find a fire into which to put some irons. Quite sure I was about to find myself in yet another environment into which I would never find a place to fit, I accepted the offer.

That summer I also accepted another invitation, this one to lecture for a week at Bodhi Manda Zen Center in Jemez Springs, New Mexico in their annual summer seminar in Buddhism for which students could get academic credit through the University of New Mexico. I was to give five lectures on Nāgārjuna to the mixed audience of university students and disciples of Joshu Sasaki Roshi. This, I thought, would be operating solidly within my comfort zone, since I was a Zen practitioner and had been born and raised in New Mexico, a place that I called home even thirty years after my parents and I moved to a bizarre foreign country called Colorado.

The week at Bodhi Manda Zen Center was thoroughly enjoyable. The other professor lecturing there that week was William Powell from University of California at Santa Barbara, an excellent lecturer whose topic was the Chan master Dongshan, on whom he had recently published a book. The daily routine was pleasantly exhausting. We all got up late in the morning by Zen standards but alarmingly early by undergraduate student standards, went to the zendo and ritually drank tea, chanted something in Japanese, sat zazen, walked kinhin, sat some more zazen, and then went to the dining hall for breakfast before the day of lectures began, some by Powell and me, some by Sasaki Roshi. After lunch and before the afternoon lectures, we all did an hour of outdoor work in the gardens or indoor janitorial or kitchen work. It was to my mind a perfect way to spend a week. It also turned out to be a rather disturbing experience that forever altered my perception of Zen culture.

What I was witnessing there had many of the features of a personality cult built on the larger-than-life persona of the roshi, who was both figuratively and literally put on a pedestal. The amount of devotion his disciples had to him was far beyond mere respect and gratitude and seemed more like worship. That made me uncomfortable, and the discomfort was magnified by a creeping realization that the Zen community that I had been part of in Toronto for the past five years also bore many of the features of a personality cult. The authoritarian culture not only made me uncomfortable; it frightened me. My inner Quaker began to feel very uneasy with authoritarian Zen culture, and I began to feel as if my love affair with Zen had really been a protracted fling, an infatuation rather than true love. I had several long conversations with Bill Powell about all this, and he recommended that I read Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, a book arguing that both military culture and the modern penitentiary system owe a debt to the disciplinary structures of Christian monasticism. I traveled by bus rather than by airplane in those days, so on my long bus ride back to Toronto from New Mexico, I read the book Powell had recommended. By the time the bus pulled into the Greyhound station on Bay Street in Toronto, I was feeling deeply ambivalent about my situation in the Zen community. Under Foucault's influence, I was beginning to see the Zen community as a sort of military prison.

Shortly after arriving back in Toronto, I attended the annual meeting of the board of directors of the Zen Buddhist Temple, a board on which I had been serving since almost the beginning. By Canadian law, having a board of directors and a constitution was required of organizations seeking tax exemptions on religious grounds. One of the items on the agenda of the Board meeting that summer was to review our constitution, which stipulated that Samu Sunim was President for life and all other members of the board served at his pleasure. What needed to be clarified was what exactly the respective responsibilities of the President and the rest of the Board were. Sunim suggested that the constitution should make it clear that the President is responsible for all spiritual matters, while the board is responsible for all secular matters. It made no sense to me to have wording such as that unless it was also specified which matters were spiritual and which were secular. In the ensuing discussion, it became clear that whatever matter Sunim wished to decide was automatically spiritual, and details he did not have much interest in and wanted someone else to take care of were automatically secular. Never had the autocratic nature of this particular Zen community been more obvious to me, and I seriously began to question whether I could continue to be part of it. I lacked the courage, however, to say any of this out loud, and so it was that Sunim had no reason to

believe I should not purchase ten sets of zen mats and cushions to take to Montreal with me and in my spare time to begin a Zen center affiliated with the motherhouse in Toronto. I did purchase the ten sets of meditation mats and cushions. It was the only furniture I owned when I embarked for Montreal in a U Haul rental van, and the idea of turning one room of the small apartment I had rented into a meditation room to which I could invite people appealed to me. What did not appeal to me was Sunim's suggestion that when people began coming regularly to meditate, I should invite them to become members of a meditation center, ask them to pay \$30 per month for their membership, send half of the membership dues to the Zen Temple in Toronto and keep the other half for expanding the fledgling Montreal center. That is, after all, how a daughter Zen temple works. Once I was settled into my living quarters and into my office at the university, I wrote a letter to Sunim and tendered by resignation from the Zen community. As necessary as I felt it was to declare independence, I experienced considerable grief upon sending that letter, because I knew it meant no longer being part of a community of people that I loved like family. It felt as though I had just made myself an orphan.

Life is full of surprises. I had expected to feel like a stranger in a strange land in Montreal, but quite the opposite happened. Not only did I find Montreal an exciting city to live in, but the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University turned out to be the most congenial academic setting I had ever experienced. The students were intelligent and highly motivated and a joy to be around; the faculty worked harmoniously together and as individuals were without exception stimulating and inspiring colleagues; all the people on the support staff were friendly and efficient. Every one of the courses I had the responsibility of teaching was on a topic that I actually knew something about and was motivated to learn more about. It was a perfect marriage of research interests and teaching duties. Within a short time I had excellent graduate students to supervise from whom I was learning far more than I was teaching them. Life at the university was good as was life at home. Right way people began coming to my apartment to meditate in a setting that I had decided would not be affiliated with any particular religious tradition, as a result of which I found myself meditating regularly with Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists. I went to Quaker meetings from time to time. I could not imagine life being any better than that, but eventually it did get better. My good friend and collaborator Brendan Gillon was hired by the department of linguistics at McGill, which enabled us to meet every week in person to work on our translation of Dharmakīrti. Everything was perfect, which of course meant that unexpected changes were just around the corner.

The first change came in 1991 when Bimal Matilal wrote me to say he had been invited to be subject editor for the Indian philosophy section of the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, an enormous project scheduled to be finished within eight years. Because both Matilal and the editors at Routledge knew that he was very ill with cancer, they had advised him to invite someone to be an assistant subject editor who could take up the task in case he became too ill to complete it himself. He was writing to invite me to be his assistant. He had already given some thought to what articles might be included and had jotted down sixty or seventy-five Sanskrit words, which he sent to me. In what proved to be one of the strangest coincidences of my life, while I was in the act of composing a response to Matilal's invitation, I received a telephone call from Phyllis Granoff, who broke the news to me that Matilal had died. The news was devastating. I don't think I fully realized until he died how much I had come to love the man and how much he had influenced me, not only academically, but also personally. There was no point in finishing the letter I was in the process of writing to him. The intended recipient was no more.

Not long after the news came of Matilal's death, a communication arrived from Routledge, asking me whether I was ready to complete the task of designing and finding authors for the articles that would comprise the Indian philosophy section of the encyclopedia. I answered that I was much too junior to take on such a responsibility, but I would certainly help them identify a suitable replacement for the irreplaceable Matilal. They replied to me that Matilal had identified me as that suitable replacement and had said that he was fully confident that I could complete the task that he had just barely begun. I was being presented with a crisis, a time when a difficult and important decision must be made. The selfish side of my temperament wanted to devote all my academic energy to continuing with my own research projects and not being bothered with the administrative tasks of finding authors to write forty articles, nagging them as their deadlines approached, reading their entries when they were submitted, possibly suggesting changes in the content. In short, this was really not how I wanted to use my time. Countering that selfish side was a side that said this project had meant a great deal to Matilal and that its completion would be an important part of his lifelong mission of making Indian philosophy respectable within the all-too-often parochial field of philosophy as a whole. This was no time to be selfish. Selfishness would have to wait. I accepted the offer to be subject editor for the Indian philosophy section of the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, not realizing that that would eventually lead to being invited to be subject editor for the Buddhist philosophy section of the second edition of the Macmillan Encyclopedia of Philosophy, and subject editor of the Indian

Buddhist section of the Encyclopedia of Buddhism. My life as a scholar had taken a direction I had never expected and certainly had never aspired to.

About halfway through the Routledge encyclopedia project, I had a sabbatical leave. During the first six years of being at McGill, I had seen myself as a freelance Buddhist, a practitioner sans sangha. While freedom from the entanglements of religious community appealed to me, I also recognized that I had become stagnant and that part of that stagnation could be attributed to the absence of contact with fellow practitioners. I thought back to a ten-day conference that the Zen Buddhist Temple had sponsored in the summer of 1986 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, a conference on the topic of Buddhism in North America. Teachers and practitioners from all Buddhist traditions were invited, as were several professors of Buddhist studies who were also practicing Buddhists. Numerous themes were explored during that intense conference, but a general theme that tied all the others together was the question of what it means to be a Buddhist in North America. What has the experience of Western converts to Buddhism been, and what has the experience of Asian Buddhists who have made their home in North America been? What is the relationship between Western Buddhists and Asian Buddhists, and what do they have to learn from one another? For academics, what has the experience of teaching and researching Buddhism in secular universities while practicing Buddhism in their private lives been like?

It so happened that the bedroom to which I had been assigned to stay during that conference was also assigned to two men named Nagabodhi and Manjuvajra from what was then called Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (now called Triratna Buddhist Order). The three of us ended up spending a good deal of time together, often sitting together at presentations and meals, having conversations every day about Western Buddhism. I found their portrayal of the FWBO interesting and appealing, and after the conference we kept in touch by exchanging letters from time to time. Looking back at that 1986 conference in 1994, it occurred to me that I could begin my sabbatical year by attending a retreat being offered at an FWBO center called Aryaloka in the town of Newmarket, New Hampshire. It so happened that one of the leaders of that retreat was an old academic friend, Alan Sponberg, who had also been at that 1986 conference and been so impressed by the FWBO that he had been ordained in the Western Order and received the name Saramati. I went on that retreat and liked what I saw so much that a few months later I requested ordination and began the long process of training required of candidates for ordination as dharmachari, a non-monastic practitioner who has, in theory at least, made Dharma practice the primary focus of his or her life. My ordination ceremony,

incidentally, took place in January 2000 in India, the first and only time I have ever been to the land from which Sanskrit came. I was given the name Dayāmati.

Back at McGill, as the scholarly side of my career took a turn from a focus on writing to a focus on editing, the teaching side took a turn toward focusing on giving students the linguistic tools necessary to read texts in their original languages and to make an intelligent use of commentaries. In every year that I was at McGill I taught intermediate and advanced Sanskrit, and I began to put almost all my class-preparation time and energy into producing tools such as notes on how the classical Indian grammatical tradition talked about Sanskrit, notes on the conventions classical commentators used as they went about guiding readers through the meaning of a text, and heavily annotated teaching editions of Sanskrit poetry and philosophical literature. Most, but not all, my students were interested in Buddhism, and it occurred to me that the most useful contribution I could make to Buddhist studies was to help scholars in the making develop their textual skills. It was in imparting that knowledge that I partially fulfilled the obligation that Professor Katsura reminded me I had, the obligation of passing what I knew on to the next generation of practicing scholars. Mathieu Boisvert is now a full professor at Université du Québec à Montréal; Francis Brassard went on to teach in Japan and at Rochester Institute of Technology in Croatia; Noel Salmond is a professor at my alma mater, Carlton University; Barbra Clayton is at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick; Martin Adam went on to teach at University of Victoria in Canada; Vanessa Sasson teaches at Marianopolis College and McGill University in Montreal; Lara Braitstein is teaching at what is now called the School of Religious Studies at McGill; Stephen Harris is teaching in the department of philosophy at Leiden University in the Netherlands. All of these folks can thank Bimal Matilal for being their prācārya and Shoryu Katsura for shaming me into making a few payments on my debt of gratitude to my teachers.

In 2001 I had another sabbatical leave and was in the beginning of a relationship with the woman who eventually became my wife. Judy and I decided we would like to spend my sabbatical year in the American Southwest, perhaps in Flagstaff, Arizona. When word got out that we were looking for a place to live for a year somewhere in the southwestern states, Jim Peavler, one of the regular contributors to the online Buddhist discussion group called Buddha-L, sent an email informing me that he owned a furnished house in Albuquerque in which he was not living at the moment, and he would be happy to rent it to us. I had spent my childhood in Albuquerque and thought it might be interesting to return there for a year, so we accepted his kind and generous offer. We arrived in the last days of July, 2001. It

was the first time I had lived in the United States since 1967, and the place simultaneously felt like home and a foreign country. It was especially strange to be in the country on my daughter's birthday, which falls on September 11, a day few of us will forget as long as we live. For me personally, being in the country on that day made me think hard about what I thought about still having American citizenship but having lived for more than thirty years as an expatriate. I also was forced to think about what the appropriate response of a confirmed pacifist to an act of aggression should be. It was an intensely confusing time.

Shortly after arriving in New Mexico, I contacted John Taber, a specialist in Indian philosophy whom I had met through a mutual friend in Toronto years before. He made arrangements for me to be invited as a visiting professor at the University of New Mexico, which resulted in my sharing an office with someone whom I never met, and teaching a course in Buddhist philosophy. As it turned out, by the end of the second semester of that sabbatical leave, I had been offered a position in the philosophy department at the University of New Mexico. Accepting the offer would entail making one of the worst career moves in the history of academia. My salary would be about 60% of what it was at McGill. It would mean a demotion to assistant professor and having to undergo tenure review again at the age of sixty and probably never being promoted to full professor. It would mean being in a department dedicated to a discipline in which I had no more than an undergraduate minor. It would mean being afflicted once again with imposter syndrome. Accepting such an offer would serve as prima facie evidence that I had lost my wits. I accepted it. Having been on sabbatical leave from McGill, I was obligated to spend one more year there, and a most awkward year it was.

On July 1, 2003, Judy and I moved to New Mexico and a little less than two weeks later got married in a neighbor's garden. The only guests at the wedding were John Taber and his wife and a hummingbird. In August 2003, I began my position teaching Asian philosophies at University of New Mexico. A few years later Judy and I officially became members of the Albuquerque Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). I made it clear to the Quakers that I would continue to be part of the Triratna Buddhist Order, and I made it clear to the TBO that I would be a member of the Quaker meeting. No one on either side objected. Like Jim Pym, author of *Listening to the Light*, I do not regard myself as either a Quaker-Buddhist or a Buddhist-Quaker but as a Buddhist and a Quaker.

After serving briefly as chair of the Department of Philosophy at the University of New Mexico, I retired in 2013. While rewarding in many ways, the academic life

always sat in awkward juxtaposition with the more contemplative and reclusive side of my temperament. The academic world is one that invites almost incessant self-promotion. Universities expect their academic employees to keep expanding their curricula vitae with accomplishments—publications, presentations at professional conferences, invitations to speak at other universities, service on academic committees and in professional societies, accolades, honors, awards. While there is no doubt that education is a noble calling, it has also become a highly competitive one. From the perspective of most of the Buddhist traditions, it is a worldly pursuit, and in traditions that emphasize renunciation and selflessness, worldly pursuits, no matter how noble from a conventional point of view, are not very healthy. More than once I found myself wondering whether a career in the modern academic world qualifies, from a Buddhist point of view, as right livelihood.

Perhaps my own answer to that question lies in the fact that after retiring from the University of New Mexico, I have set foot on campus only a few times. When I retired, it was not only from a specific academic appointment, but from the academic life altogether. I still read Sanskrit and Pali every week, but for pleasure and inspiration, not for research purposes. There are no further publications in the works. There is nothing about the academic life that I miss, even the aspects of it that I once found fulfilling. Upon my retirement Judy and I moved to a house outside the small village of Jemez Springs, population around 250, about eighty minutes by automobile from Albuquerque, New Mexico. There, in a house with a beautiful view of the surrounding Jemez Mountains, I read. I fret about the direction the world is heading, which seems pathetic even by the low standards of Samsara. I feed the birds, chop firewood, shovel snow. It all feels as though this is what I should have been doing all along, except that if I had done this all along, I would not be able to afford to do it now. Once a week I drive to Santa Fe to do volunteer work in the headquarters of the Santa Fe National Forest, thus fulfilling the prophecy of my high school guidance counsellor that I was destined for a career in forestry. And I still have the brass statue of a Chinese Buddhist priest that my great grandmother acquired somewhere in Asia. It has a lovely smile.