THE PRACTICE OF THE DEBATE OF THE TIBETAN BUDDHISM AS A SPACE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Following the example of phenomenology, cognitive sciences and education science, reintroduce the body in the teachings and apply in understanding the interactions between the learner and the object of his learning. Following the example of Buddhism, knowledge doesn't separate from the experience of the body: It is a subtle infusion of intelligence and senses, imagination and reason combined.

In a first book (2009), I tried to say how the imagination of a designer of a project and those of the beneficiaries, cross over and harmonize to compose the engineering of a project of training. This project is set in Reunion Island, a French Island in the Indian Ocean where all the communities make every effort to live in good terms: European, African, Half-Blood, Indian communities, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Animistic confession or atheistic. This multicultural melting pot is ideal to think, together, about ethics of the globalization.

A second book (2013) synthetizes a PhD's thesis in education science, the object of which is the complexity of the apprenticeships of the practice of the debate in the Tibetan Buddhism. Through my intervention, I would like to present this practice of the debate as a space of Artificial Intelligence. At first briefly, in its cultural and functional aspects. Then as a Space of Artificial Intelligence. Finally, I shall propose new possibilities so that this singular practice can serve as an ethical model in a complex world.[1]

CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND FUNCTIONING OF THE PRACTICE OF THE DEBATE

Established in the XIVth century by Tsongkapa, the Gelugpa School, school of the yellow caps, is the most recent of the four great schools of the Tibetan Buddhism. It emphasizes the importance of a logical and rigorous debate and introduces, in monasteries, practice of regular debates as a substitute for tantric practices. The first one of the followers was the first Dalai-Lama, Gendrun Drub whose His Holiness the Dalaï-Lama is the reincarnation.

[1] This text was presented by the author at the international conference « Bounds of Ethics in a globalised world, January, 6-9, 2014, Christ University, Bangalore (India). Inaugural ceremony by his Holiness the Dalaï Lama.

4 noble truths of the Buddhism are: Suffering, the origin of this suffering shown by the ignorance due to a failing perception of the reality, the cessation of the suffering and the real path of the cessation of the suffering by the experiment of that would be the real nature of the phenomena.

As any Buddhist practice, the purpose of the practice of the debate is to overcome the first two pitfalls - suffering and the origin of suffering - by the intellectual search for the real nature of the phenomena. It suggests investing the bases of logics, The Indian texts, the Sutras and the Comments. The practice lasts on average 4 hours a day within monasteries: 2 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the evening. About fifteen classes over about twenty years are necessary to obtain the highest status of the community, these of Geshe.

HOW DO THE DEBATES BEGIN?

They are always public and take place in the monasteries. Two people face each other: the messenger of the tradition, defendant of a thesis, sits. The challenger, clarifier of the reasoning, defends no thesis and stands in front of him. To begin the debate, the challenger gets closer and stays a few steps away from the defendant, he makes a short clapping and pronounces a time-honored expression: "Dhih!" Expression referring to the Incarnation of the wisdom of all Buddhas, Manjusri, who is represented with the sword of intelligence and lively wit in the right hand and the book of doctrine in the left hand. The challenger reincarnates the weft of the debates of Manjusri. So, the apprenticeship of a rigourous logic serves the liberation of all human beings of the erroneous views and the suffering.
The first task of the followers is to establish a mutual agreement. The challenger raises a question to the defendant, this one exposes his thesis. The challenger can ask several questions. It is the approval of the defendant that allows to begin the debate itself. A single monk holds the defendant's role whereas the challenger can be joined by other co-challengers. The questions of the challenger contain a subject, a predicate and a reason.

For example, the question (think you that) the subject, Socrates, is mortal because he is a man, attributes a predicate: be mortal on the subject Socrates by virtue of a reason: be a man. The defendant has three possible answers:
He says : "I accept" ('dod) if the formulation of the challenger retranscribes carefully his thesis.
He says : "The reason is not established" (rtags ma grub) if the subject doesn't fit with the reason "Socrates is mortal because of being an elephant"
He says : "It does not pervade" (ma khyab). This possibility is a tibetan innovation: the reason does not allow the predicate, because there is uncertainty, contradiction or exclusion. "Socrates is a philosopher because he is a man": this is an uncertain formulation: All men are not philosopher, the reason, doesn't allow the predicate: be one philosopher. Socrates is a reptile because he is a man: this is contradictory because the terms man and reptile are exclusives, men are not reptiles.

How do the debates take place?

After the phases of common consensus, the followers establish the coherence of the Buddhist doctrine. The challenger has to repeat the formulation of the defendant even if he considers it inconsistent. The defendant defends the ideology of the text and embodies the unified doctrinal tradition by remaining serene and unflappable. The challenger tries to demonstrate two main types of incoherence: the non-concordance with the contents of being a recognized authority reference and the argumentation of the defendant.

The first example of the learning of the debate is the one of the color: the defendant asserts, in an absurd way, that all colors are inevitably red. The challenger doesn't try to establish the antithesis. On the contrary, he takes back the formulation of the defendant to demonstrate the irrationality. To introduce the incoherence of the reasoning, the challenger has to introduce another color than red and assert that it is red.

How do the debates end?

The challenger shouts: "finished", three times: The palm of the left hand strikes the right hand. The purpose of the practice of the debate is not to undo an opponent but to allow to overtake, together, the erroneous designs of the reality. In the disputatio of the European Middle Ages, a professor outside the debate, detains the truth and teachs it to his pupils. In the practice of the debate of Tibetan Buddhism, the truth is thing to do and experiment, it is a process of autotraining: the monk is a poet, in the etymological sense of creator of his phenomenological reality.

How can the practice of the debate be a space of artificial intelligence ?

By separating the intelligence of individuals physical history in an environment and by making a clean sweep of the imagination, the science found itself in an cleft stick. For both precursors of the Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, the philosopher of the Vth century Dignana and the logician of the VIIth, Dharmakarti, the words of the language are abstract constructions created by the imagination and the human intellect. Two researchers in cognitive science and artificial intelligence, Francesco Varela and Herbert Simon, reject the scientific speeches based exclusively on the logic because of their insufficiency to produce a speech of the truth.

Francisco VARELA, disappeared in 2001, is the co-creator with His Holiness the Dalai-Lama, of the Mind and Life Institute: association which explores the relation of the science and the Buddhism as the methodologies for the understanding of the nature of reality. As a biologist, he created at first the concept of autopoïesis to illustrate the property of a system to create itself. By analogy, Enaction or Embodied Cognition is a way of conceiving the spirit which emphasizes the way the

bodies and the human minds get organized themselves in interaction with the environment. The brain doesn't work as a computer, it builds its own world. The knowledge becomes creation of the reality. It arises from the action and requires a body to form. As for Buddhism, the man is a poet: He creates his world, his Gods, his truth by making them.

1- HOW THE BODY AND THE LANGUAGE INTERACT TO MAKE THE KNOWLEDGE IN THE PRACTICE OF THE DEBATE?

The Challenger claps with hands, stamps, shouts mockeries when he argues whereas the seated defendant, remains stoical and imperturbable. The left hand represents wisdom. The right hand represents the method and is the will to release all the human beings off the ignorance. The clapping represents the union of the wisdom and the method which helps to reach the state of the Buddha. To hold out the left hand after every clap, is to close the door of the revivals.

When the challenger raises a question, he holds out the right hand above the shoulder and above the head and the left hand is stretched out forward with the turned palm upward. At the end of his statement, the challenger claps with hands and stamps his left foot on the ground, in a synchronized way, a friendly gesture to stamp out any misplaced sense of pride. Then he removes the right hand, stretches out his palm forward and spreads the left hand with the turned palm downward. The kinaesthesic supports of the challenger wake up, refresh and update the dynamics and the lively wit of each of the actors. The attention is constantly required. The slightest absence can be fatal.

On the level of the language, both debaters use the rehearsal process to give itself time and look for the best answer to be brought to a formulation of the opponent. It is at first the rhythm which is looked for by monks and by the sound of which they recognize themselves, recognize their knowledge and have them to recognize as such by the public. So, both actors can claim to achieve knowledge: that of the text and the one which runs under the text. When a second challenger joins the first one, the rehearsals create musical chords. This synchronization is an embodied cognition, a thinking and making together.

These verbal and gestural synchronizations, the theatrically and the dramatization accompanying the argumentations of the opponents, make a choreography. The challenger, for example, stretches and tightens its rosary as a bow to propel its argument in the direction of the defendant, or he turns it three times around his head to point to an argument considered absurd.

2- HOW DOES THE PRACTICE OF THE DEBATE BECOMES A REPRESENTATION OF EMBODIED COGNITIONS?

The monk practising the debate is immersed, in his everyday life of Buddhist and as a tibetan, in a cultural universe filled with songs, music and dances crowned, in a singular relationship to gods whom he knows how he has invented to help him to represent itself and to live the logic of the contradictory which makes the phenomena. The practice of the debate is undoubtedly a propaedeutics: It doesn't stage a relationship fossilised with a supposed fossilised tradition. It makes emerging a kind of physical embodiment of the tradition. The body becomes a practical means, a functional one of the Tibetan Philosophy.

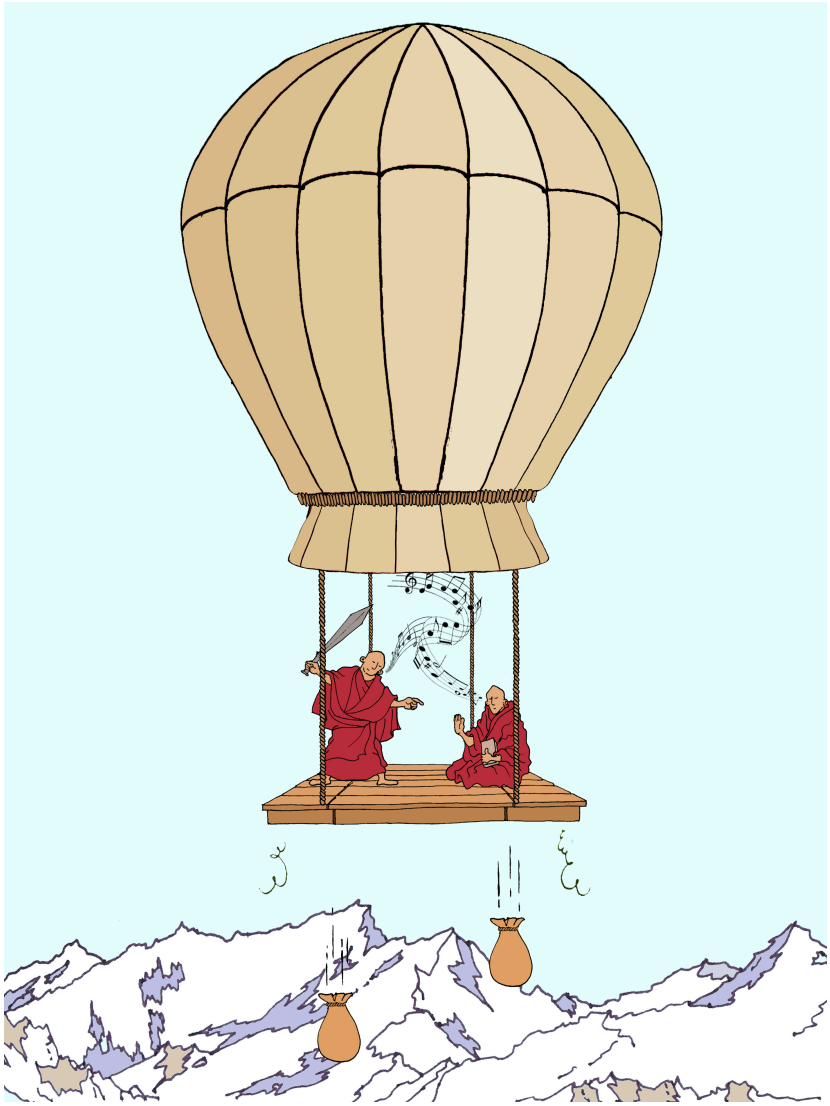
Where the mandala represents with sand, where the mantra represents on paper, the practice of the debate, seems to embody and display the rhythms of a relation between the man and his cosmological environment. It appears like a mantra removed from the thread that suspends it from a tree, words carried by the winds of the dialogue to present another level of reality than the only learning of logic. Metaphorically, debaters discover the fire, make internal combustion engines which bang and eventually act as two co-pilots of a plane : they switch on gases, engines begin to buzz, making together the synchronized operations allowing the take-off until the plane reaches its cruising speed: The rhythm and logic fueling each other.

Herbert SIMON, who died in 1996, is the designer of the Sciences of the Artificial. He co-invented, with Newell, in 1956, a programming language (IPL) which, according to him, is "capable of producing pearl necklaces without having to thread them one by one". His research in cognitive science is around the processes of decision, organization and auto-organization. The metaphor becomes the expression of an intelligent action because of interlinks and merge elements which are separated normally. This interconnection between imagination and reason allows the understanding of complex phenomena. It works by analogy, proposes a synthesis and acts sparingly. The practice of the debate seems to me to be an awesome machine to produce, to embody and to experiment metaphors. Metaphor of the drama play, Metaphor of the ballet, musicians or singers, appear easily: Everyone knows the cathartic power of the drama play since the Ancient Greece. A whole network of interconnections where imagination and reason make up, together, a representation of the reality of the apprentice-Buddhist, is represented on the theater stage of the practice of the debate. Both protagonists embody the polarities of the logic of the contradictory, as if they act in a metaphor embodied by the interpenetration of the phenomena.

The dialogues and the body languages mixed mime the dynamics of the complexity of the reality, Paul Valéry, in a magnificent text of 1936 (Philosophy of the dance) say it is an art deducted from life, an action of the whole human body transposed into a world, in a kind of space-time which is not any more completely

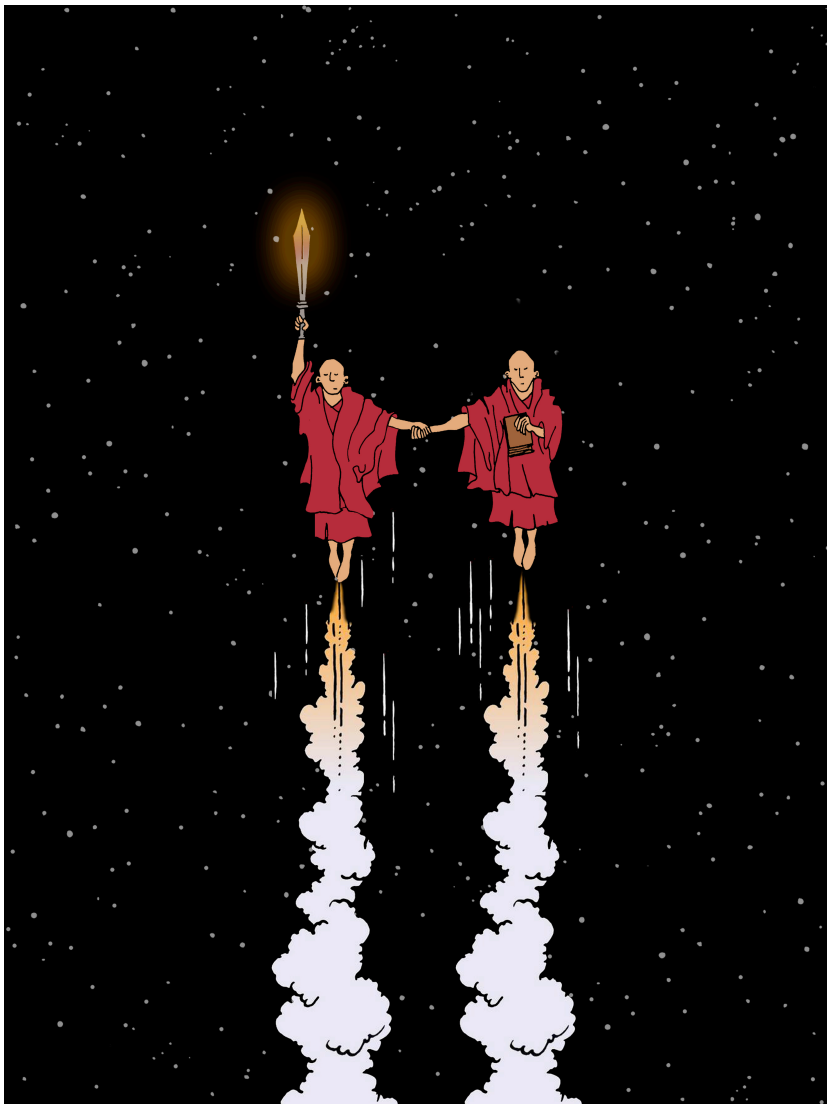
the same as the one in practical life. The dancer is in another world, the one that he weaves with his steps and his gestures. To dance allows to reach a level of reality which the reason, only, can't reach. I will suggest three drawn out metaphors to present the practice of the debate and a slight interpretation to leave other perceptions and other interpretations to emerge in front of these images.

The Metaphor of the Hot-Air Balloon

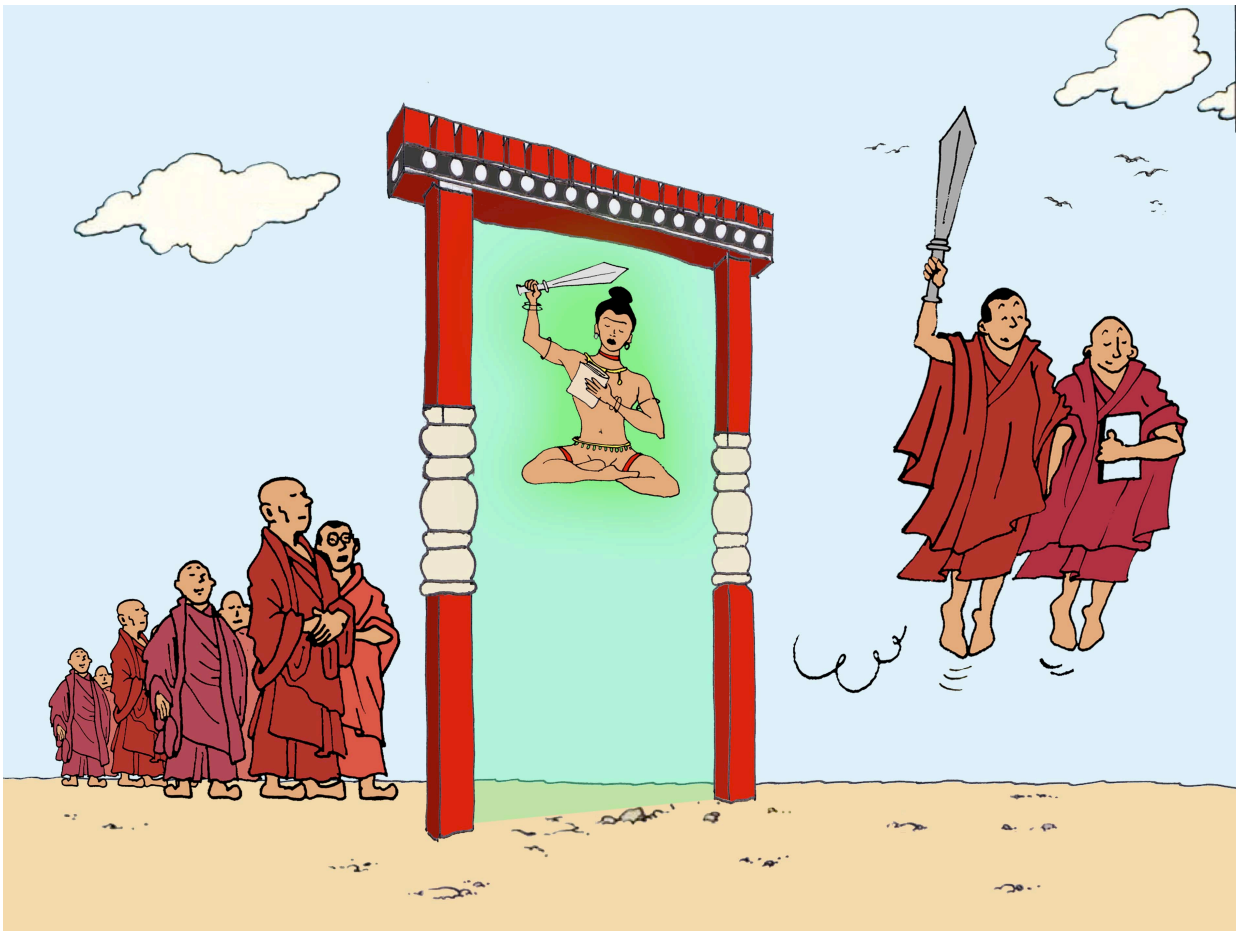


The hot-air balloon appears here as the phase of initiation of the debate: both debaters monks are in a basket. They share the attributes of the God Manjusri: The seated defendant, holds the book of the tradition, the challenger, the sword of the intelligence. It is the content and the mixture of their exchanges that makes the energy which is going to allow to lift and to propel the flying engine. The hot-air balloon can take off only when both will have agreed on the thing to be discussed. Both monks try to off-load the weights of the suffering and the ignorance to take off in another reality.

The Metaphor of the Conquest of Space



Both debaters have off-loaded their archaic hot-air balloon. They have synchronized their movements and their words act as autopropellers. Filled with their musical composition, they can claim to achieve the knowledge: Two cosmonauts in the Odyssey of the Space of the Buddhist Vacuity.



The metaphor of the Reincarnation seems to me to be the most convenient to bring out the bearns of links and all in the infused artificial intelligence and which spreads in the practice of the debate. I would not venture on the ground of the Buddhist faith in the reincarnation. I do present it in the continuous efforts of the Tibetan monks, over the centuries, to try to drill, to trace the origin and relighten, by the consciousness, the thread of a third party capable of weaving between them and in them, various levels of reality.

The debater, joins in the filiation of Manjusri. He is the last link of a long lineage of reincarnations. The Gelugpa School thinks that Manjusri is reincarnated in lamas. The Tibetan monk experiments his own phenomenological reality, through centuries of practice of the debate. The theater stage of the debate acts as a mirror, a screen where debaters are reflected, where they project, live, experiment, embody and reincarnate the concepts establishing the phenomenology of Buddhism.

By reconciling imagination and reason, separated since the famous Discourse on Method of Descartes, Varela and Simon refresh the analogical thinking so precious to Leonardo da Vinci who says to us: “As the bolt rises which we screw in

the nut, also will go up the helix which we screw in the air" The practice of the debate proposes a scenography of alive metaphors in a space of artificial intelligence. As the metaphor transports the sense, the practice of the debates, behind its rigorous logic, conveys and allows to see the last two noble truths of the Buddhism: the cessation of the suffering and the path of the liberation.
By embodying the metaphors of his design of the world, the Tibetan monk threads imagination and reason in the pearl necklace of an artificial language. The creation of keen intelligence made from time immemorial allows to face the complexity of the phenomena.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, I would like to suggest some tracks for a cross-cultural use of this complete practice of training:

In the first place, the modelling of the ethical practice totally misunderstood by the first westerner tibetologits of the XIXth century, analyzed briefly by the linguists, the practice of the debate is often perceived as a simple formal learning of the logic. We also blame it, sometimes, for the visible violence of the exchanges. One must not forget the dimension of myth in miniature, real-life and experimented mandala. One must not forget the substance, its deep nature of fabrication of the heart of the Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy. The practice of the debate offers a possible weft for a globalized, innovative and cross-cultural ethical education. Thanks to its metaphoric atmosphere of intranet network, skilfully woven Web, it is rich in promises for the cognitive sciences, for the artificial intelligence and for the digital adventure. What can be said about its potential for the creation of university works? What can be said about its capacity to potential neuroplasticity? What can be said about its capacity to gather universes separated in our often violently conflicting societies? As a suggestion, Mind and Life Institute could put it in perspective and explore the transdisciplinary resources of this practice, what would be paying tribute to Francesco Varela and to His Holiness the Dalaï-Lama, the co-creators of the Institute.

Secondly, register the Practice of the Debate on the Immaterial heritage of The Unesco and as educational model of the 21st century, it may be to offer a quite small media to the Tibetan people. So, if the initiative of international recognition of this practice allowes a single Tibetan not to sacrifice himself in the globalized indifference, because he would have this quite small ethical echo in his confusion, then I would also feel I have been of some use to something, to somebody: One small shy step on the paths of ethics.

Last Monday Morning, His Holiness said : The 20th century was the one of War, the 21st has to be the one of Dialogue. We may use the practice of the debate of the Tibetan Buddhism to reach this goal.