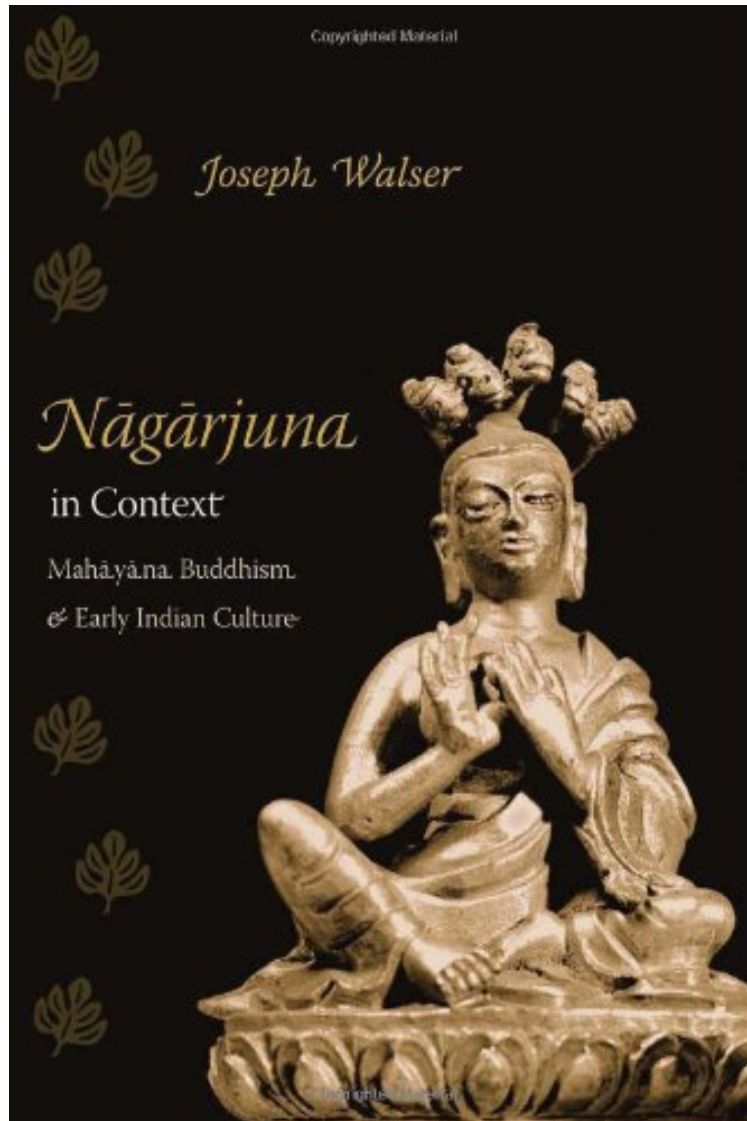


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# Nagarjuna in Context: Mahayana Buddhism and Early Indian Culture

Joseph Walser

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2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Nagarjuna out of contextBy CustomerThree meaningful conversations with monk-scholars would have yielded a totally different book. To name a few flaws: 1/ the

speculations about stupas have no bearing on the life of Nagarjuna, and they are speculations that have been corrected since.<sup>2/</sup> The Mahasanghika vinaya, one of the late Hinayana vinayas, does not stand in apposition to other Vinayas, i.e. it cannot be postulated that this Vinaya proves a Mahayana-Hinayana conflict.<sup>3/</sup> Only in dangerous environments such as the Westernmost Silk Road regions did several schools of thought co-habitate. Ordinarily a monk who decides to no longer follow the Dharma interpretation of his abbot leaves the monastery and starts his own lineage. As long as he does not revile his former teacher-abbot, and as long as his selection or expanding of Vinaya rules is not slanderous towards his former companions or the core of the Vinaya, this does not constitute a schism.<sup>4/</sup> New Mahayana scripture (sutras and shastras) were not sneakily introduced in a monasteries' library; the now independently established new "Mahayana" monk had his own library.<sup>5/</sup> Hence, postulating a "parasitic strategie of Mahayana", p 254 and beyond, does not hold. As from the start groups of monks who wished to call themselves Mahayana were independently established, and independently approached "the king" in order to ensure his protection and support.<sup>13</sup> of 16 people found the following review helpful. Excellent fresh scholarshipBy Two eyes and an earWalser provides a fine example of the much needed historical work so much Buddhist scholarship lacks: partly due to the ahistorical habits of classical Indian scholarship itself (as opposed to Chinese, for example) and the daunting problem of finding both a) a talented scholar willing to roll up his/her sleeves and do the hard work rather than rant about the theoretical aspects, and b) someone simultaneously genuinely interested in those same deeper theoretical problems of Buddhism.1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Just A. ReaderIt's the best book on Buddhism that I've ever read.

Joseph Walser provides the first examination of Nagarjuna's life and writings in the context of the religious and monastic debates of the second century CE. Walser explores how Nagarjuna secured the canonical authority of Mahayana teachings and considers his use of rhetoric to ensure the transmission of his writings by Buddhist monks. Drawing on close textual analysis of Nagarjuna's writings and other Buddhist and non-Buddhist sources, Walser offers an original contribution to the understanding of Nagarjuna and the early history of Buddhism.

Nagarjuna in Context: Mahayana Buddhism and Early Indian Culture offers a significant step towards clarifying the mysteries and myths that surround the name of Nagarjuna. (Benjamin Bogin BUDDHADHARMA)Walser's argument and mastery of scholarly materials ensure that this work will make an enduring contribution. Highly recommended. (E. Findly Choice: Current s for Academic Libraries)Rich and rewarding... Walser is to be congratulated for writing a text that will surely provoke productive debate. (Richard Nance H-Net Book review)Nagarjuna in Context reads as a heartfelt and intelligent search. (Tom Hannes Acta Comparanda>About the AuthorJoseph Walser is associate professor and department chair of comparative religion at Tufts University.