

Review of: "The Centrality of Sexual Abstinence in the Buddha's Teachings"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

There are several serious problems with this article, I'm sorry to say. The author repeatedly tells us that the Buddha emphasizes sexual abstinence throughout the "Buddha's canon," but he neglects to add that he's referring only to the Pali texts and that his paper doesn't apply to either the Mahayana or Tantryana texts, which offer quite different teachings.

Furthermore, note that when the author comments that he's sharing the Buddha's teaching on sexual abstinence in the "authentic words of the Buddha, Himself," he's contradicting the large body of scholarship disputing the Buddha's direct authorship of the Tripitaka. Note for instance that sections of the Mahasatipattana Sutta may have been drafted as late 20 BCE, centuries after the Buddha's passing. I also agree with another reviewer that the long passages from the various texts were unnecessary and should have been redacted, with more commentary. However, the primary weakness of the essay is that the author has no thesis and offers no addition to existing scholarship. He shares the Buddha's position on sexual abstinence but that position is already very well known. What is the author trying to convince us of that we don't already know? Sadly, nothing. Since there's nothing fresh in the essay, and it includes several misleading comments, I certainly can't recommend it.