II Introduction

This introduction sketches some rough ideas about the contents of the book, provides central definitions, and talks about the methodologies employed. The latter aspect mainly refers to modern economics on the one hand and to the comparative method on the other.

A What this book is (not) about

This book focuses on the Indian literature that is concerned with all sorts of giving and taking, in particular

- economically-motivated giving in the form of
  - buying and selling
  - auction
  - rescission
  - intertemporal buying and selling (debt)
- giving to the king in the form of
  - taxation
  - *bali* (tribute payment)
  - judicial wagers
  - property fines
- endowments granted by the patron king
- gifting in order to earn merit through
  - *śraddhā* (belief, spirit of generosity)
  - *śakti* (means available to the donor)
- gifting after death (inheritance)
- sacrificing
- etc. etc.

Following this introductory chapter, chapter III is primarily meant for people who are not indologists. It introduces basic Old Indian conceptions of religion, law, society, and economics.

The second part of the book provides the Indian viewpoints on giving and taking in different contexts without—as far as possible—letting modern ideas guide the presentation. It is certainly instructive to contrast Indian perspectives with premodern Western ideas or theories. In particular, the *beneficium* theory of the Roman philosopher Seneca can be fruitfully set against the Brahmanical *dharmadāna* theory. Some selected Christian quotations are also provided for comparative purposes.

While all these collections have some interest in and of themselves, they can also be considered as "data" to be interpreted from modern points of view. These modern perspectives are developed in part Three. Lastly, part Four discusses similarities, differences, and interconnections between the givings and takings analysed in this book.

While this book tries to address giving and taking in many ways, several topics are left out or dealt with only in passing:

- First of all, charitable giving and social solidarity[1] are only mentioned in passing. This also holds for institutions such as *sattra*, with the meanings "rest house, place for distribution of alms" as per the LaS.[2]
- Hospitality towards strangers seems to have been one way of gifting. MDh 4.30 warns against honouring unsuitable guests "even with a word of welcome"[3]. Gifting in the form of hospitality is disregarded in this book.
- The patterns of givings (who gives, who receives, what is given or obtained, etc.) are stressed in this book. In contrast, ritual details such as *sarvāṇy udakapūrvāṇi dānāni* ("He should pour water before giving any gift.")[4] are ignored. Rituals are similarly disregarded when carried out in connection to sacrificing.
- The gift givers in this book are mainly householders or kings. This should not blind us to the fact that Brahmins were also expected to donate (see ⟨15⟩ on p. 27) and that Buddhist monks, i.e., "ascetic, celibate men who were supposed to have renounced all wealth and social ties, left such largess in the archaeological record".[5]
- Kauṭilya teaches that *dāna* is a method which a *vijigīṣu* might successfully employ: "Those are the four kinds of strategy. Among them, each preceding one is simpler. Conciliation is singular. Giving gifts is twofold, being preceded by conciliation. Sowing dissension is threefold, being preceded by conciliation and giving gifts.

1 See Filliozat (1991) on "charity in Indian though". Of course, the general literature on gifts would put considerable focus on charity, see Komter (2005).

2 See KAŚ 2.35.3 and also KAŚ 7.15.22. More details are provided by the 12th century Rājataraṅgiṇī. In KRT 1.347, a king founds "a permanent endowment" (*akṣayiṇī*) which is glossed by *avicchinnam annadānam* (continual food giving). In KRT 2.58, a *cārucāritrā* ("charitable [queen]") establishes a *sattra* where "indigent people coming from all parts receive food" (translation by Stein (1892–1900)). A similar institution of a public kitchen is dealt with in the 15th century Jaina-Rājataraṅgiṇī (ŚRT 1.5.15–23). This footnote borrows heavily from Wiese & Das (2019, pp. 77–80).

3 Olivelle (2005)

4 ĀpDh 2.9.8, Olivelle (2000)

5 Schopen (2004, p. 19)

Military force is fourfold, being preceded by conciliation, giving gifts, and sowing dissension."[6] I address this specific sort of *dāna* only in passing.

- While judicial wagers and property fines are dealt with, I do not analyse the reasons and circumstances under which monetary and other fines were levied for diverse wrongdoings.[7]
- Furthermore, the following "givings" in the context of lawsuits are not covered:
  - court fees (payable by both the unsuccessful and the successful party),[8]
  - pledges (*ādhi*, valuable objects that serve to fulfil the other party's claim if that other party is successful),[9]
  - surety (*pratibhū*, where a person guarantees that the party which has nominated him fulfils its own obligations,[10] in particular: appearance[11] (*upasthāna*), payment (*dāna*), and honesty (*pratyaya*).[12]
- Deposits prevalent in the private sphere are not covered either. In the *dharma* texts, there are three near-synonyms for deposits: *nikṣepa* ("open" or "unsealed"), *upanidhi* ("sealed"), and *nyāsa* ("secret"), but the usage of these and similar words is quite inconsistent.[13]
- The manners of acquiring wealth are not treated in detail, neither for private agents through trade, husbandry, etc. nor for the ruling class through violence. The latter is Trautmann's "noble exchange". See section XII.A.
- The usual sort of sacrificers have a god or gods in their mind. They are sometimes called *devayājin*s. The opposing concept of *ātmayājin* (that occurs in some texts, in particular the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa) is unclear and disregarded in this book.[14]
- The evolution leading up to modern anonymous markets has at least two rival explanations. While economists tend to think that markets have evolved from barter, ethnologists claim that gifts or sacrifices may (also or alternatively?) belong to markets' prehistory.[15] The current author has nothing to contribute to this debate.

6 KAŚ 9.6.56–61, Olivelle (2013)
7 See Kane (1973, pp. 382–408) for an overview.
8 ViDh 6.20–21, Olivelle (2009)
9 NSmV 1.108–111, KātSm 516–529
10 MDh 8.158, NSmV 1.104–107, KātSm 530–540
11 Lariviere (2003) for this and the following two terms
12 BṛSm 1.10.73ab produces a similar list, with four elements.
13 See Sternbach (1945).
14 For a short discussion with references, see Bodewitz (1973, pp. 303–305).
15 See Trautmann (2017, p. 6) and Parry (1986, p. 457).

B Definitions: Reciprocity, gifts, and altruism

(1) Reciprocity and gifts

Dānagrahaṇa means giving and taking. In this realm, the reasons for giving are "economic" and based on "reciprocity". I propose the following definition:

⟨1⟩ Economic or social exchange is that manner of bilateral giving that fulfils the giver's (more or less binding) obligation to reciprocate or that aims at creating the receiver's (more or less binding) obligation to reciprocate. Gifting is a manner of unilateral giving without the receiver's (more or less binding) obligation to reciprocate.

This definition of how to distinguish between economically-motivated forms of giving on the one hand and gifts on the other hand has benefitted from Alain Testart's contributions.[16] This author rightly stresses the legal differences between exchanging and gifting. The use of "more or less" in the above definition implies that the distinction between gifting and other forms of giving is fuzzy.

The famous anthropologist Malinowski (1922, p. 176) assumes a continuum between a "pure gift" (unilateral gifting as in the definition above) and "real barter" (bilateral, economically-motivated giving in the definition above):

⟨2⟩ […] there will be at one end the extreme case of pure gift, that is an offering for which nothing is given in return. Then, through many customary forms of gift or payment, partially or conditionally returned, which shade into each other, there come forms of exchange, where more or less strict equivalence is observed, arriving finally at real barter.

In contrast to the Malinowski of 1922, the Malinowski of 1926 has taken a "reciprocal turn": "most if not all economic acts are found to belong to some chain of reciprocal gifts and counter-gifts, which in the long run balance, benefiting both sides equally".[17] Indeed, reciprocation seems a somewhat "natural" expectation. Planitz (1949, p. 152) notes that Old German Law did not regulate donations. In fact, as long as the receiver had not reciprocated in one way or other, the donor was allowed to take back the "gift" at any time. Planitz argues that reciprocity is fundamental to moral and legal reasoning,[18] while Gouldner (1960, p. 171) thinks that "a norm of reciprocity is […] no less universal and important an element of culture than the incest taboo".

The uneasy relationship between gifts and reciprocation is the subject-matter of the famous "Essai sur le don" by Marcel Mauss. He observed that in quite a few civilisations

16 See, for example, Testart (2007).

17 Malinowski (1926, p. 40).

18 According to Planitz (1949, p. 2), "[j]ede Annahme einer Leistung bewirkt die Gebundenheit zur Gegenleistung; denn sittliche wie Rechtsbegriffe können nur reziprok gedacht warden."

⟨3⟩ les échanges et les contrats se font sous la forme de cadeux, en théorie volontaires, en réalité obligatoirement faits et rendus[19]

exchanges and contracts are made in the form of a gift, in theory voluntary, in reality obligatorily given and received[20]

Or, in Heim's words, a Maussian gift (or a gift in the sense of sociology's later paradigm of "social exchange"[21]) is "curiously free yet obligated, appearing to be unilateral while yet forging ties of exchange and mutuality".[22]

Importantly, Mauss devoted several pages to Vedic and Brahmanical gifting.[23] Thus, Mauss wrote about the case of a moral, but not legal obligation to reciprocate. To my mind, Mauss seemed too eager to discover "potlatch"—the competitive manner of extravagant giving—in all the societies he looked at.[24] Of course, there is that famous (among indologists) footnote where Mauss acknowledged that Brahmins would not reciprocate.[25]

(2) Simultaneous exchange and specified exchange

Within the realm of definition ⟨1⟩, one may distinguish between simultaneous versus deferred exchange on the one hand and specified versus unspecified exchange on the other hand. In a simultaneous exchange, giving and taking occur at practically the same point in time, while there is a considerable time lag in deferred exchange. In the case of specified exchange, the goods or favours exchanged are agreed upon in more or less detail. In contrast, unspecified exchange refers to reciprocity where the terms are left open to future needs and possibilities.

Consider Table 1. The case of simultaneous and specified exchange (upper left matrix entry) occurs when one buys a newspaper in a shop and pays immdiately. Simultaneous, but unspecified exchange (upper right matrix entry) is rare.[26] One Indian example of deferred and specified social exchange (lower left matrix entry) is

19 Mauss (1923–1924, p. 32) or Mauss (2012, pp. 63–64)
20 Mauss & Maurer (2016, p. 57)
21 See Homans (1958) or Gouldner (1960).
22 Heim (2004, p. xviii)
23 Mauss (2012, pp. 189–202) or Mauss & Maurer (2016, pp. 158–169). See Trautmann (2017) on Mauss as an indologist and for an insightful critique of Mauss in relation to "the gift in India". In particular, Trautmann (2017, p. 6) stresses the evolutionary point of view that gift institutions might be precursors of modern markets, rather than barter. This is one of the starting points for Parry (1986), an article famous among anthropologists.
24 In particular, there is no good reason to subscribe to "The *Mahābhārata* is the story of a gigantic potlatch …" (see Mauss (2012, pp. 192–193) or Mauss & Maurer (2016, p. 161)). Trautmann (2017, pp. 8–9) summarises his criticism by noting that "every element of the potlatch ethos is present, except for the potlatch itself."
25 Mauss (2012, p. 193: fn. 3) or Mauss & Maurer (2016, pp. 161–162: fn. 61)
26 Perhaps, the bottle of wine or book given to the dinner host provides an example.

Table 1: Simultaneous and specified exchange

	specified exchange	unspecified exchange
simultaneous exchange	"payment on delivery" example: transaction of buying with money in a shop	
deferred exchange	"payment later" or "delivery later" examples: loan of money (section VII.E), recompense alliance (⟨4⟩)	"return favour later" according to circumstances examples: Seneca *beneficium* (chapter IX), united alliance (⟨117⟩)

described by Kāmandaki as one of the 16 kinds of alliance, namely the recompense alliance (*pratīkāra*):

⟨4⟩ *mayāsyopakṛtaṃ pūrvam ayaṃ pratikariṣyati |*
iti yaḥ kriyate sandhiḥ pratīkāraḥ sa ucyate ||
upakāraṃ karomy asya mamāpy eṣa kariṣyati |
ayaṃ cāpi pratīkāro rāmasugrīvayor iva ||[27]

The recompense alliance is formed based on the thought: "I did him a favor before, and he will do the same for me." Thinking, "I will do him a favor and he will do the same for me," Rama made the recompense alliance with Sugriva.[28]

Kāmandaki refers to the deal between Rāma and Sugrīva: Rāma presently kills Sugrīva's brother and Sugrīva offers Rāma his help in liberating Sītā.[29] An even clearer example of deferred and specified exchange is loan-giving, where repayment together with interest payment occurs at a later time.

Finally, turn to the case of deferred and unspecified exchange (lower right matrix entry). If somebody gives to a friend or relative with the hope of receiving something later (when the need or opportunity arises), he may well suffer a disappointment:

⟨5⟩ *suhṛd ayam iti durjane 'sti kāśā*
bahu kṛtam asya mayeti luptam etat |
svajana iti purāṇa eṣa śabdo
dhanalavamātranibandhano hi lokaḥ ||[30]

'He is my friend!' – is that any reason to trust a scoundrel?
'I have done him a great many favors!' – that counts for nothing!

27 KNS 9.10–11
28 Knutson (2021)
29 See, for example, MBh 3.264.14–15.
30 PT 2.52

> 'This man is my very own relative!' – that's an old folk tale!
> People are driven by money alone, no matter how small.[31]

(3) Altruism

I now present definitions of altruism and pure altruism:

⟨6⟩ Altruism of a person A towards a person B is defined as A's inclination to, or actual behaviour in, sharing wealth, food, or the like, with B, without the expectation on A's part to benefit from B's future reciprocity, or without A's having necessarily benefitted from B in the past. Pure altruism of a person A towards a person B is defined as A's interest in B's wellbeing in terms of wealth, food, or the like, irrespective of whether this wellbeing comes about by A giving to B or by a third party C giving to B.

Altruistic giving does not mean giving without any reasons. The altruistic inclination or behaviour may have diverse motivations that need to be spelled out. For example, chapter X quotes the Christian Church Fathers' manners of convincing believers to donate part of their inheritance to the church. Another motivation is merit earned through dharmic giving:

⟨7⟩ *pātrebhyo dīyate nityam anapekṣya prayojanam |*
kevalaṃ tyāgabuddhyā yad dharmadānaṃ tad ucyate ||[32]

When a person gives as a matter of routine obligation to worthy recipients independent of any specific purpose, but simply with the thought of relinquishing his possessions, it is called a Gift Based on Duty.[33]

The concept of pure versus impure altruism is taken from Andreoni (1990). Pure altruism means that the agent does not care about the specific amount donated by himself. He is only interested in the private consumption for himself and in the overall donation benefitting other (needy) people.

In contrast, impure altruism means that the agent himself derives some satisfaction from donating, over and above his interest in realising a large donation to other people. For example, many people give for the "warm glow"[34] that they feel from gifting. Similarly, the motivation for impure altruism may stem from the merit earned from *dharmadāna*. Appendix A spells out these definitions in a more formal manner and presents a simple model of pure altruism. The use of the word "altruism" in this book nearly always refers to "impure altruism".

31 Olivelle (2006b)
32 LDK 1.5
33 Brick (2015)
34 The extensive literature on warm-glow giving comprises the above-mentioned paper by Andreoni and many others such as Harbaugh (1998).

C Modern perspectives

One of the central topics of this book is dharmic giving. It is the subject-matter of the extensive chapters VI and XIX. Gifting is an interesting phenomenon not only for "historians, sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists, art historians, ethno-musicologists, psychologists"[35], but can also be analysed from the marketing, sociological, and economic points of view. Being an economist myself, I may be excused for concentrating on modern economic perspectives on premodern Indian gifting. In doing so, I follow the two editors of the "Handbook of the Economics of Giving, Altruism and Reciprocity", who argue that "the general concepts and methods of economic analysis can be very helpful for the study of altruism, giving, and reciprocity, provided that the relevant motives, sentiments, and types of relations are adequately considered."[36]

While gifting is of central importance to this book and provided the main initial impetus, the book goes far beyond in also looking at economically-motivated givings and takings, the king's involvement, and sacrifices. Summarily, the main idea of this book is to present and analyse premodern Indian theories of giving and gifting both in the context of the time they were conceived (this is the so-called emic perspective) and from the point of view of modern economics and other fields such as ethnology or marketing (etic perspective). The task of bringing Indian thought on giving and taking to the attention of people in the "West" is all the more important because Western economic thought has largely and unpardonably neglected Indian economic thought. Consider the famous Arthaśāstra, a 2000-year-old treatise on economics and politics.[37] It is conspicuously absent from major books on the history of economic thought.[38] It is also a pity that Western economic thought has disregarded the premodern Indian theories on gifting that are described and prescribed in detail in *dharma* texts. This is also the case for the Handbook just mentioned.

35 This list is from the series editors' foreword in Heim (2004, p. xi) with the addition "and others".

36 Kolm (2006, p. 5)

37 Aiyangar (1949) fruitfully compares Kauṭilya's thinking with that of the German cameralists of the 17th and 18th centuries CE. While I think that Aiyangar has made a valuable observation, I do not go into his idea any further. In any case, modern microeconomics, let alone cooperative game theory, were certainly not methods applied by Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff, Johann Joachim Becher, or Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi.

38 Sandmo (2011) has a chapter 2 entitled "Before Adam Smith". There, he mentions the Old Testament (Joseph in Egypt with the seven fat and the seven lean years) and makes a few remarks on Aristotle before skipping to the scholastics and to mercantilism. Similarly, Rothbard (1995) deals with "The first philosopher-economists: the Greeks" in chapter 1 and then turns to "The Christian Middle Ages" in chapter 2. Again, in his monumental collection of articles written on "economists" from Aristotle (vol. 2) and St Thomas Aquinas (vol. 3) up to Keynes (vol. 46/47), Blaug (1991) sees no need to deal with, or did not find serious articles on, Kauṭilya. (Vol. 1 is concerned with the how and the why of the history of economic thought as a subject.) Note, however, Sihag (2014) who tries to highlight Kauṭilya's achievements as an economist and a report on that book by Wiese (2016c).

With respect to dharmic gifts, this book is an engagement with the important works done by Heim (2004) and Brick (2015). The book by Nath (1987) might be described as an effort in *dāna*-related economic (and social) history. In contrast, Heim, Brick, and myself come closer to a history of economic and moral thought on *dāna*. It seems that we have picked an easier task than the one undertaken by Nath.[39] This is due to a common feature of indological studies: "Where little is known about historical personalities and events, the history of ideas can surreptitiously become history itself. This is a constant tendency in the historiography of ancient India, especially in cases when Brāhmaṇical theology or another ideational system gives a more or less coherent, if decidedly idealized, account of a topic on which reliable historical information is scarce."[40]

Ethnologists may expect a detailed discussion of, and comparison with, the results of ethnological field work and ethnological theorising on the topics of gifts and exchange. While ethnology is not the central focus of this book, I occasionally discuss the work done by Marcel Mauss, Jonathan Parry, and others[41].

D Comparison as a method

(1) Comparisons all over

I have already mentioned this book's main aim: it endeavours to shed new light on all sorts of giving, gifting, sacrificing, reciprocity, etc. in the context (but see below) of premodern India. A minor purpose is the application and "testing" of the comparative methodology recently put forward by Oliver Freiberger. When discussing gifts, fees, or other social exchanges, comparisons come about in different guises.

Firstly, one cannot help but resort to comparisons, which seem to lie at the very heart of human understanding of all sorts.[42] Comparisons are already implicit in seemingly-innocuous designations. See, for example, the German term, and misnomer, "Walfisch" (whale). Similarly, one may ask the question of whether a *kanyādāna* (the gifting of a bride to a groom by the bride's father) is a specific *dharmadāna*.

Secondly, some specific words may become a matter of (heated) debate. Consider these examples:

- All sorts of connotations are evoked by the word "gift" in Mauss' work. The author claims that in many societies "exchanges and contracts are made in the form of

39 In a history of economic and moral thought, one can refer to textual evidence in a more direct manner. Inferring economic history from textual sources is much more demanding and surely a much bolder exercise.

40 McClish (2019, p. 12)

41 "Others" referring to Lina Fruzzetti, Maurice Godelier, Henri Hubert, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Bronisław Malinowski, Gloria Goodwin Raheja, and Alain Testart.

42 See, for example, the sweeping and still true observation by Griffiths (2017, p. 473): "As humanist scholars, we use comparison all the time."

a gift (*cadeau*), in theory voluntary, in reality obligatorily given and received"[43]. What does this imply for dharmic gifts?

- Heesterman (1959, p. 242) considers the Vedic *dakṣiṇā* a gift rather than a salary, while others disagree.

Thirdly, comparisons are made for ideological reasons:

⟨8⟩ *śraddhayeṣṭaṃ ca pūrtaṃ ca nityaṃ kuryāt prayatnataḥ |*
śraddhākṛte hy akṣaye te bhavataḥ svāgatair dhanaiḥ ||[44]

One should as a matter of routine obligation painstakingly offer sacrifices and donate gifts with a spirit of generosity, for these two things, when performed with a spirit of generosity and with well-acquired wealth, become imperishable.[45]

Here, Manu tries to invoke Vedic credibility for gifts received by Brahmins in a much later period and given for quite "unvedic" reasons. A modern example is provided by Bloomfield (1908, p. 69) who irreverently translates Vedic *dakṣiṇā* as "baksheesh". Thus, both Manu and Bloomfield have an "agenda".

Fourthly, comparisons are involved when applying modern perspectives from sociology or economics to various givings and takings. Sociological and economic concepts may be applied across a broad range of topics and may in this manner produce a common thread between these topcics. If done carefully, one may discover differences and commonalities not obvious to the unsuspecting consumer of words, ill-fitting comparisons, or ideologies. However, this approach always carries the risk of allowing modern viewpoints and modern techniques to misconstrue premodern Indian thinking.

(2) Freiberger's twofold classifications

Elaborating on some of the comparisons mentioned above, it is helpful to discuss comparative methodology. Freiberger (2018) has recently proposed manners of classifying (i) the configuration of comparative studies and (ii) the comparative process.[46] It turns out that twofold classifications are fruitful for creating some methodological awareness of what is "going on" in comparative studies such as the present one.

Turning to Freiberger's first item in his configuration, the author insists that "responsible scholars"[47] should explain the "goals of comparison"[48], i.e., the discipline it originates from, the scholarly discourse it is embedded in, the intended audience, and

43 Mauss & Maurer (2016, p. 57). Hénaff (2010, part II) provides a sympathetic philosophical discussion of Mauss' insights. More critical is Godelier (1999).
44 LDK 1.39. MDh 4.226 differs slightly.
45 Brick (2015)
46 See also the book-length treatment Freiberger (2019), in particular chapter 4. For the purpose of this article, Freiberger's concise paper is sufficient.
47 Freiberger (2018, p. 3)
48 Freiberger (2018, pp. 3–4)

the like. The current study originates from (at least) the five disciplines of indology, economics, sociology, ethnology, and marketing, and should be of interest to scholars in these fields. Since the author is an economist (who tries to be an indologist at the same time), he is particularly interested in advancing his main thesis: Premodern Indian theories of giving and gifting can be fruitfully described, classified, and analysed[49] from the point of view of modern economics.

Freiberger calls his second item of configuration "modes of comparison". He contrasts the "illuminative mode" with the "taxonomic mode". The former is asymmetric in that it uses the illuminating item mainly for that purpose, but without describing in as much detail as the illuminated one. In contrast, the taxonomic mode is symmetric in describing two or more items that shed light on one another in similar detail. This book is basically written in the taxonomic mode, with a few exceptions.[50]

Third come the "scales of comparison". Here one is concerned with how a comparative study "zooms in on the comparands".[51] The comparants in this book are Vedic texts, classical Sanskrit texts, Buddhist texts, a (Roman) text by Seneca, and, to a much lesser extent, Christian sources on giving and taking. It seems that I cover them on a "meso" level (an inbetween level, above a micro and below a macro one). That is, very detailed studies of particular giftings (micro level) are rare, as are very sweeping generalisations about the character or essence of Brahmanical versus Buddhist versus Christian giving (that might be an endeavour on the macro level).

Finally come Freiberger's "scopes of comparisons". My study is cross-cultural with respect to the comparison of dharmic giving with Christian charity. Here we have an example of analogical comparison (without any historical link). The main part of this study seems contextual in focusing on premodern India. However, it should be a matter of dispute whether the comparison of Vedic sacrifices with dharmic giving is contextual. Do allusions in the *dānadharma* literature to Vedic sacrifices amount to more than lip service?[52]

Leaving the configuration of a comparative study, I turn to some items of the comparative process sketched by Freiberger (2018, pp. 8–11). A central term in that process concerns the "tertium comparationis", i.e., the common (the third) characteristic between two (or several) objects to be compared. In the general field of giving and taking (and with a view to Mauss), one obvious "tertium comparationis" might be "reciprocity". That is, different manners of giving, donating, or sacrificing might exhibit the common feature of involving reciprocity. However, in a complex study, there is no need to select a single *tertium comparationis*. It turns out that other candidates also prove useful: "thisworldly or otherworldly motives for giving", "altruism" and the like. Additionally, patterns of giving may also provide *tertia comparationis*.

49 Freiberger (2018, p. 4) stresses description and classification as (modest) goals and has "theory formation" as one (the final) step in the comparative process.

50 Christian sources are added mainly for illuminating purposes, but do not benefit from a detailed discussion.

51 Freiberger (2018, pp. 5–6)

52 See Halbfass (1991).

Following this "selection" step of the comparative process, Freiberger (2018, p. 9) addresses the "description" step which concerns the difference between emic and etic. "Emic" is concerned with "local significance"[53]. Indeed, the premodern Indian evidence reflects the emic conceptualisation, while the modern perspectives on the premodern ones are "etic". I take up the emic perspective in part Two while trying my hand at the etic one in part Three.

The third step is called "redescription". It is hoped that the current study approaches the ideal that Freiberger (2018, p. 10) describes in these words: "Studying an item through the lens of a different one, observing previously unnoticed features, discovering blind spots, etc. may result in a new description of the item that is more comprehensive or more refined." In that manner, the comparison of economic exchange, sacrifices, and dharmic giving may amount to a process of "reciprocal illumination", citing the subtitle of a book by Sharma (2005a).

53 Here, Freiberger (2018, p. 9) cites Smith (2000, p. 239).