When It Is Good To Be Bad

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dion. However, the situation may have been encompased Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilization. Not to mention that launch-
ing such an attack must rank highly as a cause for bringing attacked oneself. Perhaps violence, for example, is more normal or normalized in some traditions than others. Yet to call an act of this nature different from forms and acts that the paradox that the abnormal is nor-
mal. Discussing various aspects of acts is not the same as envisaging a system which makes it the rule to break the rules: antinomianism as a norm.

Antinomianism in comes in at least two forms: strong or weak. Weak antimo-
nomianism is normative: one is compelled to break the rules in order to be strong antinomianism: one is obliged to break the rules. From the beginnings of Buddhism, action has famously been defined as intension. It is not what you do, but the way that you do it, or why. That sounds like weak antinomianism. Provided one has this correct intension, slapping a child or ostracising an adult may be the best medicine. The corollary and, per-
haps, the point is that coveniente one's brother's wife is a crime, whether or not the seduction succeeds. When one has no choice but to act, what is one's own good and that of others, then that is strong antinomianism.

For a Buddhist monk or a nun, how-
ever, rules and regulations are non-pro-
blematic. They are equally binding for the laity: to refrain absolutely from killing, theft, sexual misbehaviour, lying, and intoxication by liquor. The single amendment for a monastic individual, or, tempora-
arily, for a householder, is that the third is, effectively, the vow of sexual abstinence, brahmacharya.

Such are the rules which it must be the rule to break for us to have found our paradox. Logically impossible maybe, but that is precisely what Tantric Buddhism uses as self-defini-
tion. One scriptural verse is quoted concerning what is called the tantras - non-Tantrics - is the means to free-
don from bondage for the wise - Tantric adepts. Tantric Buddhism is notorious for this claim. The shock of first acquain-
tance with its practices has repeatedly discouraged modern inquirers, while the lure of the forbidden has attracted many contemporary seekers to the reli-
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From medieval India and Tibet, between the eighth and sixteenth centuries, when the ideas under consi-
deration were undeniably gathering institutional acceptance, who was shocked? Were they the mores of Bud-
dhists? Were they different from the mores of the common people and those in the secular world? Before revealing one or two explicit examples of the normalized antinomi-
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