The Two Traditions in Indian Philosophy[1]

I am deeply grateful to the University of Ceylon for asking me to be the first incumbent of the Chair of Philosophy. I deem it a great honour. I really consider it as a recognition of the importance attached to Indian Philosophy, especially to Buddhism. The special field of my own research has been with regard to the Schools of Buddhism.

The subject of my Inaugural Lecture is the Two Traditions in Indian Philosophy, and in my opinion it is of fundamental importance for the right understanding of Indian Philosophy as a whole.

I

The Two Traditions[2]—Their General Nature

There are two main currents of Indian philosophy—one having its source in the ātma-doctrine of the Upaniṣads and the other in the anātma-doctrine of Buddha. They conceive reality on two distinct and exclusive patterns. The Upaniṣads and the systems following the Brāhmanical tradition conceive reality on the pattern of an inner core or soul (ātman), immutable and identical amidst an outer region of impermanence and change to which it is unrelated or but loosely related. This may be termed the Substance-view of reality (ātmavāda). In its radical form, as in the Advaita Vedānta, it denied the reality of the apparent, the impermanent and the many ; and equated that with the false. The Sāṁkhya did not go so far ; still it inclined more towards the substantial, the permanent and the universal. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, with its empirical and pluralist bias, accords equal status to both substance and modes. Not only did these systems accept the ātman, but what is more, they conceived all other things also on the substance-pattern. The ātman is the very pivot of their metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. In epistemology, substance makes for unity and integration of experience ; it explains perception, memory and personal identity better than other theories. Bondage is ignorance of the self or the wrong identification of the non-self with the self (ātmany anātmādhyāsa). Freedom is the discrimination between the two.

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1. Inaugural Lecture delivered on the 8th November, 1951 in the King George's Hall, University of Ceylon.

2. The term ' tradition ' is used not in the sense of dogmatic authoritarianism, but to mean a fountain-source from which stems a continuous stream of thought and culture.

The other tradition is represented by the Buddhist denial of substance (ātman),[3] and all that it implies. There is no inner and immutable core in things ; everything is in flux. Existence for the Buddhist is momentary (kṣaṇika), unique (svalakṣaṇa) and unitary (dharmamātram). It is discontinuous, discrete and devoid of complexity. The substance (and this applies equally to the universal and the identical) was rejected as illusory ; it was but a thought-construction made under the influence of wrong belief (avidyā). This may be taken as the *Modal view of reality*. The Buddhists brought their epistemology and ethics in full accord with their metaphysics. Their peculiar conception of perception and inference and the complementary doctrine of mental construction (vikalpa) are necessary consequences of their denial of substance. Heroic attempts were made to fit this theory with the doctrine of Karma and rebirth. Avidyā (ignorance), which is the root-cause of suffering, is the wrong belief in the ātman ; and prajñā (wisdom) consists in the eradication of this belief and its attendant evils.

The terminology employed here is after the best Jaina epistemological treatises. Philosophical views, they say, are principally two—the dravyārthika naya (substance-view) and paryāyārthika naya (modal view).[4] Each view, carried to the extreme, denies the reality of the other. One emphasises the universal and the continuous to the exclusion of the changing and the different, and *vice versa*. The Vedānta is cited as the exponent of the extreme form of the *Substance-view*,[5] and Buddhism (Tathāgatamatam) represents the exclusive Modal view.[6]

The Jaina ostensibly reconciles these two opposed views by according equal reality to substance and its modes. There is no substance without modes nor modes without substance.[7] Reality is manifold (anekāntātmakam) ; it is not of one nature ; it is unity and difference, universal and particular, permanent

3. Śāntarakṣita explicitly states that Nairātmyavāda is that which distinguishes the teaching of Buddha from that of all others :

etac ca sugatasy eṣṭam ādau nairātmya-kīrtanāt ;
sarva-tirthakṛtāṁ tasmāt sthito murdhani Tathāgataḥ. *Tattva Saṁ*, 3340.
Again : ātmadṛṣṭau hi vinaṣṭāḥ sarvatīrthikāḥ. TS, 3325.

4. sāmānyatas tu dvibhedo, dravyārthikaḥ paryāyārthikaś ceti, *Pramāṇa Naya*, VII, 5 ; *Sanmati Tarka*, Gāthā 3 (pp. 271 ff.). tathāhi paraspara-vivikta-sāmānya viśeṣa viṣayatvād dravyārthika-paryāyārthikāv eva nayau, na ca tṛtīyam prakārāntaram asti. (p. 272).

5. sattādvaitaṁ svīkurvāṇaḥ sakala-viśeṣān nirācakṣāṇas tadābhāsaḥ, yathā *sattaiva tattvaṁ* tataḥ pṛthagbhūtānāṁ viśeṣāṇām adarśanāt, *Pramāṇa Naya*, VII. 17 and VII, 18.

6. ṛju vartamāna-kṣaṇasthāyi-paryāya-mātraṁ prādhānyataḥ sūtrayan nābhi-prāya ṛjusūtraḥ. sarvathā dravyā-palāpī tadābhāsaḥ. yathā tathāgatamatam, *Pramāṇa Naya*, VII, 28, 30-1.

7. dravyaṁ paryāyaviyutaṁ paryāyā dravyavarjitāḥ ; kva kadā kena kiṁrūpā dṛṣṭā mānena kena vā. *Sammatitarka* I.

yet changing.[8] The Jaina shaped his epistemology on this pattern and formulated the logic of the disjunction of the real (syādvāda). This view may be said to constitute the third stream of Indian philosophy—lying midway between the two extremes of the ātma and anātmavādas. Seemingly partaking of both, it was essentially un-Brāhmanical and un-Buddhistic. It was un-Brāhmanical, as it accepted a changing ātman[9] and even ascribed different sizes to it ; no Brāhmanical system could ever accept that.[10] It was un-Buddhistic too, as it accepted a permanent entity, ātman, besides change. As such, the Jaina found favour with neither. The synthesis of two views is a third view, and is no substitute for them. The Jaina system exercised comparatively little influence on the course of Indian philosophy, and was little affected by other systems. Jainism has remained practically stationary down the ages.

Indian philosophy must be interpreted as the flow of these two vital streams—one having its source in the ātma doctrine of the Upaniṣads and the other in the anātmavāda of Buddha. Each branched off into several substreams with a right and a left wing and several intermediary positions. There were lively sallies and skirmishes, but no commingling or synthesis of the two streams. Throughout the course of their development they remain true to their original inspirations. The Brāhmanical systems took the real as Being, Buddhism as Becoming ; the former espoused the universal, existential and static view of Reality ; the latter the particular, sequential and dynamic ; for one space, for the other time, is the archetype. The Brāhmanical systems are relatively more categorical and positive in their attitude (vidhimukhena), while the Buddhists were more negative (niṣedhamukhena). Again, the former are more dogmatic and speculative, the Buddhists empirical and critical. Subjectively minded, Buddhism is little interested in cosmological speculations and constructive explanations of the universe. The Brāhmanical systems were bound to an original tradition ; they all accepted the authoritarian character of the Veda. Buddhism derives its inspiration from a criticism of experience itself. The tempo of development was quicker and intenser in Buddhism than in the Upaniṣadic tradition. Absolutism came to be established in each tradition by an inner dynamism, by the necessity to be self-consistent.

8. cf. Umāsvāti's Sūtra : utpāda-vyaya-dhrauvya-yuktaṁ sat. *Tattvārthādhigama*, V, 30. also : *dravyaparyāyātmakaṁ vastu prameyam*, quoted in *Syādvādamañjarī* and other works.

9. A changing ātman is a veritable contradiction for the Brāhmanical systems : the ātman does not change and what changes is not ātman.

10. cf. *The Brahmasūtras* : II, ii, 34 ff. evaṁ cātmākārtsnyam. Some Brāhmanical systems (Sāṁkhya, Nyāya and the advaita Vedānta) conceived the ātman as all-pervasive (vibhu) in size, while others, especially the Vaiṣṇava schools of Rāmānuja, Madhva and others, conceived it as *atomic* (aṇu) in size. But neither of them could tolerate increase or decrease in the original size.

II

Upaniṣads and Buddhism

Since the opening of the Buddhist scriptures to the Western world, it has become almost a stereotyped opinion among orientalists to regard Buddha as carrying on the work of the Upaniṣadic seers. Indian philosophy is interpreted as having evolved out of one single tradition—the Upaniṣadic. Buddhism and Jainism are treated as deviations rather than as radical departures from the Upaniṣadic tradition (ātmavāda). Such interpretation is not fully alive to the vital differences and exclusive attitudes inherent in the Brāhmanical and the Buddhist systems. It tends towards *over-simplification.*

Likewise, the differences obtaining in Buddhism itself are overlooked or minimised, and an attempt is made to treat it as one system. This mistake, however, is not made in the case of the systems (Sāṁkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṁsā, Vedānta and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika) deriving their inspiration from the Vedas. Such an attempt engenders partisan spirit in writers ; they begin taking sides with one or the other school of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, and consider *that* as *the* teaching of Buddha. There is again the *fallacy of over-simplification.* This prevents a correct understanding of the development of Buddhist philosophy. The dialogues of Buddha, as preserved in the Pali Canons, are suggestive ; they are as little systematic as the Upaniṣadic texts. Buddhist systems grew out of them much in the way the Brāhmanical systems grew out of the Upaniṣads. Buddhism is a matrix of systems,[11] and not one unitary system. It does not exclude legitimately different formulations.[12] For a correct and fruitful understanding of the development of Indian philosophy, it is necessary to admit not only the difference between Buddhist and Brāhmanical systems of thought, but also internal differences within Buddhism itself. This would be evident if we consider the nature and development of the Upaniṣadic and Buddhist thought.

The entire Vedic teaching may be construed as knowledge of the deity (devatā vidyā). The Devatā (deity) is the super-natural personality or essence

11. cf. ' All the different shades of philosophic theory—realistic and idealistic—are found within Buddhism itself ; and we have, so to speak, philosophy repeated twice over in India—once in the several Hindu systems and again in the different schools of Buddhism ' (Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Ind. Phil.*, p. 198).

12. There were three principal turning points in the history of Buddhism. Buddhist historians such as Buston and Tāranātha call these the three Swingings of the Wheel of Law (Dharmacakra pravarttana). The earlier realistic and pluralistic phase comprised the Hīnayāna Schools : Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda (Vaibhāṣika) ; this can be called the Ābhidharmika philosophy. The Sautrāntika, as a critical realism, is a partial modification of this earlier dogmatic realism. The middle phase is the dialectical absolutism of the Mādhyamika system founded by Nāgārjuna and Ārya Deva (2nd cent. A.D.). The third phase is the idealism of the Yogācāra, systematised by Asanga and Vasubandhu (4th cent. A.D.) and continued by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti (5th and 7th cent. A.D.)

activating things from within. It is an unseen presence (parokṣa), not overtly perceived, but felt to be the guiding and controlling spirit within. Indra, Varuṇa, Agni and other Vedic gods are not mere natural forces personified, as interpreted by Western scholars. It would be truer to understand them as personalities. Each deity has a characteristic external manifestation, such as thunder and lightning in the case of Indra. Prayers for favour could be addressed to them as they are deities and had power over phenomena ; and as personalities they could be gracious. The devatā has both a cosmic (ādhidaivika) and a microcosmic (ādhyātmika) signification. In the Upaniṣads, deva and ātman are often used as interchangeable terms.[13] Impelled by its own dynamism, there was a two-fold movement in the deepening of the devatā-knowledge. As the deity is understood as the soul or inner essence of things,[14] the same logic led to the search for a deeper and innermost deity of deities. This is the movement towards monotheism which is an admitted feature of the Ṛg Vedic hymns. It may be truer to say that the insight into the innermost deity, variously called Virāṭ, Prajāpati or Hiraṇyagarbha,[15] was implicit from the beginning. The characterisation of each deity (Indra, Agni, Viṣṇu, etc.) as the highest God in turn, [illegible] and must therefore [illegible] evidence of the awareness of the unity [illegible]. The Vedic religion of devatās is not so much a polytheism as a pantheism.

Side by side with this, there was the movement to identify man and his spiritual functions with the deity. [In the Vidyās and Upāsanās, notably the Vaiśvānara-vidyā and the Oṁkāra Upāsanā, we can clearly see the process of identification of the aspects of the individual with the macro-cosmic divinities]. Here too was the same search for unifying the several psychic functions in a deeper principle underlying them all.[16] That principle is found in Vijñāna

13. adhyātmayogādhigamena devaṁ matvā dhīro harṣaśokau jahāti (*Kaṭha*, I, ii, 12) seyaṁ devataikṣata (*Chā.* Up. VI, iii, 2 ; devātmaśaktim (*Śvetāś.* Up. I, 3); cakṣuḥ śrotraṁ ka vu devo unakti (*Kena* Up. I, i) ; yadaitam anupaśyaty ātmānaṁ devam añjasā (*Bṛ. Up.* IV, iv, 15).

14. Compare the expressions : gūḍham anupraviṣṭam ; guhāhitaṁ gahvareṣṭham ; nihitaṁ guhāyām ; eṣa gūḍhotmā na prakāśate ; ya ātmā sarvāntaraḥ, etc.

15. tad yad idam āhur amuṁ yajāmuṁ yajety ekaikaṁ devam etasaiva sā visṛṣṭir eṣa u hy eva sarve devāḥ (*Bṛ.* Up. I, iv, 6). yasmād etasyaiva Prajāpateḥ sā visṛṣṭir devabhedaḥ, sarva eṣa u hyaiva Prajāpatir eva Prāṇaḥ sarve devāḥ. ' Indraṁ mitraṁ, varuṇaṁ, agnim āhuḥ ' iti śruteḥ. ' eṣa brahmaiṣa indra eṣa prajāpatir ete sarve devāh ' iti ca śruteḥ. smṛteś ca : ' etam eke vadanty agmiṁ manum anye prajāpatim ' iti. (Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya on the above, p. 109, Ānandāśrama Edn.).

16. As in the *Kena* where the Ātman is reached as the foundational principle behind all mental functions ; or as in the *Taittirīya* where the bodies (kośas) are shown to be the external trappings of the inner core (ātman) ; or as in the *Bṛ. Up.* where the self is established as the invariable light (svayaṁjyotiḥ) which illumines the changing states, to mention only a few characteristic modes of approach.

(Consciousness) and Ānanda (Bliss). The next step is to identify the essence of the subjective with the reality of the objective. This is expressed in the sentences like, ' I am Brahman ', ' That thou art '. Difference between the self and Brahman is looked down upon.[17] This could be done, for both are transcendent (devoid of empirical determinations), and yet are the basis of all. ' Tat tvam asi ' (That thou art) sums up the final teaching of the Vedas.

The mode of development in Vedic thought consists in accepting the ātman as an inner core in things, and then to deepen this insight till a logically stable position was reached. The true self is identical with the Absolute (Brahman).[18] Later systems try to synthesise this original intuition in their own way ; but they all take the ātman (Substance) as the basic reality.

In the dialogues of Buddha, we breathe a different atmosphere. There is a distinct spirit of opposition, if not one of hostility as well, to the ātmavāda of the Upaniṣads. Buddha and Buddhism can be understood only as a revolt not merely against the cant and hollowness of ritualism—the Upaniṣads themselves voice this unmistakably—but against the ātma-ideology, the metaphysics of the Substance-view. Buddha nowhere acknowledges his indebtedness to a correct understanding teacher for his characteristic philosophical standpoint. Although Brahma is preserved, referred to several times, Brahman (the Absolute) is never mentioned. Buddha always considers himself as initiating a new tradition, as opening up a path never trod before.[19] In the *Brahmajāla*, the *Sāmaññaphala Suttas* and elsewhere, current philosophical speculations are reviewed, and all of them are rejected as dogmatic (diṭṭhivāda) and as inconsistent with spiritual life. This is not the way of one who continues an older tradition. It is not correct to hold that the differences are religious and practical, though they are put up as philosophical.[20]

If the ātman had been a cardinal doctrine with Buddhism, why was it so securely hidden under a bushel that even the immediate followers of the Master had no inkling of it ? The Upaniṣads, on the other hand, blazen forth the reality of the ātman in every page, in every line almost. Buddha came to deny the soul, a permanent substantial entity, precisely because he took his stand on the reality of moral consciousness and the efficacy of Karma. An

17. cf. ātmā hy eṣāṁ sa bhavati, atha yo'nyāṁ devatām upāste' nyo' sāvanyo'ham asmīti na sa veda. *Bṛ. Up.* I, iv, 10, also, neha nānāsti kiṁcana.

18. The movement of thought can be expressed in the equation : Devatā = Ātman = Inner Essence = Sole Reality, Absolute (Brahman).

19. samudayo samudayo ti kho me, bhikkhave, pubbe *ananussutesu* dhammesu cakkhum udapādi, ñāṇam udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi. *Sam. N.* II, p. 105. See also *Mahāvagga* (*Vinaya Piṭaka*) I, 5. Na me ācariyo atthi sadiso me na vijjati ; sadevakasmiṁ lokasmiṁ na'tthi me paṭipuggalo. *Majjh. N.* I, p. 171 (Sutta, 26).

20. Radhakrishnan, *Ind. Phil.*, Vol. I, pp. 691 ff.

unchanging eternal soul, as impervious to change, would render spiritual life lose all meaning ; we would, in that case, be neither the better nor the worse for our efforts. This might lead to inaction (akriyāvāda). Nay more ; the ātman is the root-cause of all attachment, desire, aversion and pain. When we take anything as a self (substantial and permanent), we become attached to it and dislike other things that are oppposed to it. Sakkāyadiṭṭhi (Substance-view) is avidyā (ignorance) *par excellence*, and from it proceed all passions. Denial of Satkāya (ātman or Substance) is the very pivot of the Buddhist metaphysics and its doctrine of salvation.[21]

The oft-recurring strain in the Pali Canons is that things are transitory :

> How transient are all component things ;
> Growth is their nature and decay.
> They are produced ; they are dissolved again ;
> To bring them all into subjection that is bliss.[22]
>
> Decay is inherent in all component things ;
> Work out your salvation with diligence.[23]

This is the last speech of the Tathāgata, and must therefore be taken as summing up his life-teaching.

In his interesting monograph, *The Basic Conception of Buddhism*, Professor V. Bhattacharya concludes, after a searching analysis, that the denial of the self is the basic tenet of Buddhism. He says : ' Thus and in various other ways, too many to be mentioned, the existence of a permanent Self or ātman, as accepted in other systems, was utterly denied by the Buddha, thereby pulling down the very foundation of desire where it can rest '.[24] Another distinguished scholar, the late Professor Stcherbatsky, is equally emphatic about this.

> When Buddha calls the doctrine of an eternal self ' a doctrine of fools ' it is clear that he is fighting against an established doctrine. Whenever in his Sermons he comes to speak about Soullessness or Wrong Personalism (satkāyadṛṣṭi) a sense of opposition or even animosity is clearly felt in his words. This doctrine along with its positive counterpart—the separate elements that are active in life and whose activity must gradually be suppressed till Eternal Repose is attained—is the central

21. The Upaniṣadic verse : ' ātmānaṁ ced vijānīyād', etc. can, with a slight change, be made to express the Buddhistic formula : ātmānaṁ ced vijānīyān nāsty ayam iti pūrūṣaḥ ; kim icchan kasya kāmāya tv anusamjvared ātmānām.

22. aniccā vata saṅkhārā uppādavayadhammino ; uppajjitvā nirujjhanti, tesam vūpasamo sukho'ti. *Mahāsudassana Sutta*, ii, 17 ; *Mahā Pari Nib.*, VI, 10.

23. ' vayaḍhammā saṅkhāra, appamādena sampādethā'ti ' ; ayam tathāgatassa pacchimā vācā. *Mahā Pari Nibbāna*, VI, 7.

24. *Basic Conception*, p. 70 ; see also p. 95.

point of the whole bulk of Buddhist teaching and Mrs. Caroline Rhys Davids remarks, 'how carefully and conscientiously this anti-substantialist position had been cherished and upheld'. We may add that the whole of the history of Buddhist philosophy can be described as a series of attempts to penetrate more deeply into this original intuition of Buddha, what he himself believed to be his great discovery.[25]

We are now in a position correctly to indicate the relation between the Upaniṣads and Buddha. Both have the same problem, Pain (duḥkha), and they see it in all its intensity and universality. Phenomenal existence is imperfection and pain. Both again are one in placing before us the ideal of a state beyond all possibility of pain and bondage. The Upaniṣads speak of it more positively as a state of consciousness and bliss (vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma). Buddha emphasises the negative aspect of it: Nirvāṇa is the annihilation of sorrow. Both have to speak of the ultimate as devoid of empirical determinations, as incomparable to anything we know; silence is their most proper language. They also agree that no empirical means, organisational device, sacrifice or penance, can bring us to the goal. Only insight into the nature of the real can avail. For the Upaniṣads, the ātman is real; only its identification with the body (kośas), the states or any empirical object, is accidental. By negating the wrong identification, its unreal limitations, we can know its real nature. Ātman is Brahman; there is no other to it. No fear, aversion or attachment could afflict it.[26] To realise the self (ātmakāma) is to have all desires satisfied (āptakāma) and thus to transcend all desires (akāma).[27]

Buddha reaches this very goal of desirelessness, not by the universalisation of the I (ātman), but by denying it altogether. For, only when we consider anything as permanent and pleasant, as a Self, do we get attached to it and are averse to other things that are opposed to it; there is then bondage (saṁsāra). The attā is the root-cause of all passions, and this notion has to be rooted out completely to attain Nirvāṇa. For the Upaniṣads, the Self is a reality; for the Buddha it is a primordial wrong notion, not real. The highest experience, brahmānubhava, the Upaniṣads take not as the annihilation of the 'I', but of its particularity and finitude. In fact, we realise the plenitude of our being there as the whole (bhūmā). Buddha was impressed by the negative aspect of the highest trance-states as devoid (śūnya) of intellect, consciousness, etc. Both reach the same goal of utter desirelessness, but through different means. The spiritual genius of Buddha carved out a new path, the negative path.

25. *Soul Theory of the Buddhists*, pp. 824-25.

26. Compare the passages: tatra ko mohaḥ ka śoka ekatvam anupaśyataḥ; yatra sarvam ātmaivābhūt; abhayaṁ vai, Janaka, prāpto'si, etc.

27. athākāmayamāno yo'kāmo niṣkāma āptakāma ātmakāmo na tasya prāṇā utkrāmanti brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti (*Br. Up.* IV, iv, 6).

There are observations in Professor Radhakrishnan's writings which indicate the difference between Buddha and the Upaniṣads: 'If there is a difference between the teaching of the Upaniṣads and the Buddha, it is not in their views of the world of experience (saṁsāra) but in regard to their conception of reality (nirvāṇa)'.[28]

The fundamental difference between Buddhism and the Upaniṣads seems to be about the metaphysical reality of an immutable substance, which is the true self of man as well . . . It is true that Buddha finds no centre of reality or principle of permanence in the flux of life and the whirl of the world, but it does not follow that there is nothing real in the world at all except the agitation of forces.[29]

Is not a *fundamental metaphysical difference* the source of all other differences? If Buddhism is 'only a restatement of the thought of the Upaniṣads' with a new emphasis,[30] it is desirable to emphasise this 'emphasis', especially because it is of a fundamentally metaphysical nature. The Upaniṣads and Buddhism belong to the same spiritual genus; they differ as species; and the differentia are the acceptance or rejection of the ātman (permanent substance).

III

Was there a Primitive Buddhism affirming the Ātman?

Attempts have been made by not an inconsiderable section of orientalists to discover a primitive Buddhism—the actual teaching of the master as distinguished from later scholasticism and monkish elaboration. Some, like Poussin, Beck and others,[31] aver that Yoga and practice of virtues formed the original teaching of Buddha which scholasticism later on transformed into a soul-denying creed.

Mrs. Rhys Davids[32] holds, on the strength of a number of textual citations, that Buddha advocated the existence of soul and carried on the tradition of the Upaniṣads. She says:

You may find that genuine Sākya more in what the Piṭakas betray and have suffered to survive than in what they affirm as chief and fundamental.

28. *Gautama—the Buddha*, p. 33.

29. *Indian Phil.*, Vol. I, p. 375.

30. Ibid., 676.

31. See Stcherbatsky—*Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, pp. 6 and 23.

32. In her later works, *Gotama the Man* (1928), *Sākya or Buddhist Origins* (1931), *A Manual of Buddhism* (1932), *Outlines of Buddhism* (1934), *To Become or not to Become* (1937), *What was the Original Buddhism* (1938), and in many of her older works (e.g. *Birth of Ind. Psy. and its Development in Buddhism* (1936), *Buddhism* (1934), *Milinda Questions*, etc. which she has re-edited and revised with the 'ātma-bias', and in reviews and articles in the periodicals (*I.H.Q.*, *Visvabharati*, *Hibbert Journal*, *N.I.A.*, *J.R.A.S.*, etc.), Mrs. Rhys Davids elaborates her pet theme with tiresome repetition. She has gone back completely on her previous interpretation of Buddhism.

This happened because the piṭakas are the work of men removed from the Founder by centuries, not far short of five centuries when values were undergoing change.[33]

Buddha, according to Mrs. Rhys Davids, did not deny the soul or self outright, but only that the body, the sense-organs, etc. were the self.[34] 'Gotama was both teaching and expanding the Immanent cult of his day'.[35] Accepting the Upaniṣadic ideal of the self as the ultimate value, Buddha taught how to realise it, how to become that. He insisted on conduct (sīla), works, concentration (samādhi) and insight (paññā), and dependence on oneself than on ritual or knowledge. The Sākya religion

> at its birth was a new word of a certain 'More' to be recognised in man's nature and life, he was very real, not a 'being' but as one who becomes that, as becoming, he is capable at length of consummation as That (Most) the form which Deity had assumed in Indian religious teaching of the day.[36]

The utter denial of the self as a reality and its replacement by the Group (Skandha) theory is a later but unwarranted accretion.[37] Mrs. Rhys Davids calls it 'monkish gibberish'. She seeks and finds a primitive Buddhism free from the soulless creed, but with a simple faith in the immanent ātman. Her favourite literary method is to declare Suttas as the *Poṭṭapāda* and even portions of the same Sutta (e.g. the *Sāmaññaphala*) which speak of soullessness as later additions.[38] She takes out passages out of their context, and reads them arbitrarily as subscribing to her view.

Yoga and practice of morality are neutral. It is no doubt true that Buddha and the Buddhist schools paid the utmost attention to sīla (virtues) and samādhi (concentration of attention); they brought to light deeper and subtler distinctions, and gave us a minute map of the entire terrain of our inner life. However, there is nothing peculiarly Buddhistic about this. We have all the ingredients, if not the detailed prescriptions, of a moral code in the Śikṣāvallī of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* and similar texts. Yoga practice was much older than Buddhism. Buddha himself was taught Yoga, all our accounts agree, by two Sāṁkhya teachers, Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta. It is an accepted tenet of all Indian philosophical systems that an impure and

33. *Sākya or Buddhist Origins*, p. 5 and p. 339.
34. *Outlines of Buddhism*, p. 46.
35. *Outlines of Buddhism*, p. 20.
36. *Sākya or Buddh. Origins*, p. 419.
37. *Buddhist Psychology*, p. 201.
38. Ibid, pp. 194 ff.

distracted mind is incapable of perceiving the truth.[39] All systems enjoin, as a preliminary to ultimate insight, the practice of virtues and the training of the mind in concentration. Excepting the materialist and the Mīmāṁsā, every system accepted Yoga as part of its spiritual discipline, though the orientation of it in each system differs. Buddhism differs in this respect from the other systems only to the extent that it made a systematic and intense study of these spiritual aids. But to reduce Buddhism to a technique of mind-concentration or to a code of morals is failure to appreciate the individuality of Buddha's genius and his metaphysical insight. It is failure to discern that even a way of life implies a view of reality.[40] The so-called 'silence' of Buddha and his aversion to speculative theories cannot be adduced as evidence of his not having a philosophy. The true significance of his silence is that the Real is Transcendent to Thought.

Passages must not be counted, but weighed. We must consider the entire body of texts together and evolve a synthesis, weighing all considerations. We require a synoptic interpretation of the Buddhist scriptures. It is necessary to make a doctrinal analysis of the contents and assess philosophically their value.

Such syntheses of doctrines and texts have been made from time to time by the Buddhist schools themselves.[41] We need consider only three such important syntheses—one by the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika, the second by the Mādhyamika and the last by the Yogācāra. Each is an attempt to reconcile all the texts and doctrines from a definite point of view. In spite of the specific differences they exhibit, they have a generic affinity that is particularly Buddhistic. The Mādhyamika synthesis of the texts and doctrines is on the distinction of existence into paramārtha (Absolute) and saṁvṛti (empirical) and texts into nitārtha (primary) and neyārtha (secondary). According to Nāgārjuna, Buddha has affirmed the existence of the ātman against the materialist, for there is the continuity of karma and its result, act and its responsibility; he has denied it as against the eternalist who takes it as an immutable identical essence; he has also said that there is neither the self

39. cf. sa tasmai mṛdita-kaṣāyāya tamasaḥ pāraṁ darśayati bhagavān Sanat Kumāraḥ—*Chā. Up.* VII, 26, 2. tasmai sa vidvān upasannāya *samyakpraśānta-cittāya* śamānvitāya; yenākṣaram puruṣaṁ veda satyaṁ provāca tāṁ tattvato brahmavidyāṁ. *Muṇḍaka* Up. I, ii, 13. Brahmacarya is prescribed (as in *Ch. Up.* VIII) as a necessary condition for receiving the highest knowledge.

40. This point is dealt with later.

41. The *Kathāvatthu* is a sustained attempt, on the side of the Theravāda, to interpret all texts from its standpoint by rejecting other opposed interpretations. The appeal there is to the texts for deciding an issue.

nor no self.[42] Buddha, like a skilful physician, always graduated his teaching according to the need and the capacity of the taught.

Buddhist systems are the different ways in which the original vision of Buddha has been sought to be formulated in systematic form.

Nothing is gained by the theory of a soul-affirming primitive Buddhism followed by a soul-denying scholastic Buddhism. Even if, per impossible, it were proved that the historical person—Gautama the Buddha—did teach a soul-doctrine, fundamentally at variance with the doctrines we associate with classical Buddhism, we shall still have to explain Buddhism and to relate it with the Upaniṣadic tradition. Freeing Buddha from the charge of preaching the denial of the ātman may save *him* from any ' guilt '. The question is not a personal one. In attempting to bridge the difference between the Upaniṣads and Buddha, we would have immeasurably increased the distance between Buddha and Buddhism. We cannot find any sufficient and compelling motives for the falsification of the original teaching. Either the monks were too stupid to grasp the master's basic teaching or they were too clever and fabricated and foisted on him an opposite doctrine. Neither of the alternatives can be seriously entertained. Why and when precisely the falsification is supposed to have occurred is not specified.

Prima facie, those systems and schools of thought which owe allegiance to the founder of this religion have greater claim to represent and understand Buddhism than the moderns who are removed from him by centuries of time as well as distance of culture and outlook. The Buddhist schools have had an unbroken tradition of development, and most of the leaders of the schools had received their knowledge from some of the celebrated direct disciples of Buddha, like Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Kāśyapa, Ānanda and others. In the course of its progress, a great religion develops and emphasizes certain trends and tendencies implicit in the original inspiration of the founder. In the case of Buddhism too we must accept the law of evolution that the later phases are potentially contained in the earlier.

The entire development of Buddhist philosophy and religion is proof of the correctness of our nairātmya interpretation of Buddhism. There is no Buddhist school of thought which did not deny the ātman ; and it is equally true that there is no Brāhmanical or Jaina system which did not accept the ātman in some form or other. It may be objected that the ātman the Buddhists deny is the material self identified with the body or with the particular mental states, and that such denial does not touch the position of the Sāṃkhya or the Vedānta, etc. But Buddhism never accepted the reality of the ātman, of a

42. ātmety api prajñapitam anātmety api deśitam ; buddhair nātmā na cānātmā kaścid ity api deśitam. *Mādhyamika Karikās*, XVIII, 6. See the *Mādhyamika Vṛtti* (pp. 354 ff.) for the considered Mādhyamika standpoint on the subject.

permanent substantial entity impervious to change. The Real, for Buddhism, is Becoming. And any species of the ātma-view must take it as a changeless identical substance. The Buddhist schools differed among themselves to a great degree ; they have however one thing in common—the denial of substance (ātman). It is a mistake to think that the Mahāyāna schools reversed the denial of soul and re-affirmed its reality. If anything, they are more thorough in carrying out the nairātmya doctrine. They deny not only substance (pudgala-nairātmya), but extend the denial to the Elements too (dharma-nairātmya) which the Hīnayāna schools had uncritically accepted as real.

In that great compendium of early Buddhist philosophy—*Abhidharma Kośa*—Vasubandu devotes one whole chapter to the discussion and refutation of the ātma-doctrine (pudgala-viniścaya). It is principally a condemnation of the Pudgalātman-heresy in Buddhism, the special tenet of the Vātsīputrīya school,[43] which admitted a sort of quasi-permanent self, neither identical with nor different from the mental states (skandha). It also refutes the Sāṁkhya and Vaiśeṣika conceptions of the ātman. Vasubandu observes that of all teachers Buddha is unique in denying the self.[44] Denial of substance (ātman) is the foundation of Buddhism down the ages. Śāntarakṣita says that all heretical philosophers have made their position untenable by adhering to the ātman.[45] In later scholastic Buddhism the denial of the self is fully worked out with all its implications ; its metaphysics, epistemology and spiritual discipline were brought in full accord with this basic tenet. There was elaboration and deepening of the original teaching of Buddha and not distortion or falsification.

The Buddhists are not the only ones in taking their philosophy as nairātmyavāda. Jaina and Brāhmanical systems invariably characterise Buddhism as denial of the ātman, substance or soul. Mādhavācārya considers the Buddhist only slightly less objectionable than the materialist (Cārvāka) ; in the gradation of systems he makes in his *Sarvadarśanasaṅgraha*, Bauddha-darsana immediately follows the Cārvāka. For an ātmavādin nothing could be more pernicious than the denial of the self. Udayanācārya very significantly calls his *Refutation of Buddhistic Doctrines* (*Bauddha-dhikkāra*) Ātmatattva-viveka (Distinction of the Reality of self). The acceptance of the ātman is what divides the orthodox from the Buddhist systems. The Jainas agree with

43. This forms the first issue to be discussed in the *Kathāvatthu*.

44. cf. The stanza of a Stotrakāra referred to by Yaśomitra :
sāhaṁkāre manasi na śamaṁ yāti janmaprabandho,
nāhaṁkāraś calati hṛdayād ātmadṛṣṭau ca satyām ;
anyaḥ śāstā jagati ca yato nāsti nairātmya-vādī
nānyas tasmād upaśama-vīdhes tvan-mātad asti mārgaḥ.
Abhidharma Kośa Vyākhya, p. 697.

45. *Tattva Saṅgraha*, p. 867 and p. 866.

this characterisation, and sharply distinguish theirs from the purely modal view of the Buddhist.

The modern exponent may not feel committed to the estimate of Buddhism by Buddhists and others. But he is required to pause and explain the unanimity with which Buddhism has been taken as anātma-vāda. He is also required to consider the teachings of Buddha in relation to Buddhist schools of thought which, *prima facie*, have the right to be considered as embodying the founder's tenets.

There is another compelling reason for our nairātmya interpretation of Buddhism. If it had subscribed to the ātma-tradition like the Brāhmanical systems, the emergence of the Mādhyamika dialectic should prove an enigma. Dialectic is engendered by the total opposition between *two* points of view diametrically opposed to each other. And the required opposition could have been provided only by the ātma-view of the Brāhmanical systems and the anātma-vāda of earlier Buddhism. The *Ratna-Kūṭa-Sūtra* (Kāśyapa Parivarta)[46] makes this explicit:

'That everything is permanent' is one extreme; 'that everything is transitory' is another . . . 'that ātman is' (ātmeti) is one end (antaḥ); 'that the ātman is not' is another; but the middle between the ātma and nairātmya views is the Inexpressible . . . It is the reflective review of things (dharmāṇaṁ bhūta-pratyavekṣā)'. This is the Middle Path (madhyamā pratipad) of the Mādhyamika.

IV

Some Objections against the Nairātmya Interpretation of Buddhism Answered

1. It is sometimes suggested that Buddha could not have propounded the nairātmya doctrine as the India of that period was not ripe for receiving it; the Zeit-geist was against any radical departure from the Upaniṣadic tradition. Further, the success that attended Buddha even during his life-time could not have been achieved, had he preached the denial of the self.

It is wrong to suggest that the times were philosophically premature and unprepared to entertain revolutionary doctrines. If anything, the picture of India that is depicted in the contemporary Jaina and Buddhist scriptures is one which revelled in philosophic speculations of a very daring kind. The objection ignores the originality and genius of Buddha. And if it were accepted, no reform, no change, should be possible as that would mean going against the established order.

46. *Kāśyapaparivarta*, pp. 86-7.

The criticism further implies that only a particular type of philosophy or religion deserves to succeed or could succeed. Curiously enough, this is what might be and is actually said by the votaries of other systems. If Buddha succeeded, it was because the monks, following his path, could perceptibly advance towards freedom from all attachment. This is not to say that that could be achieved *only* by this path, but that it is *one* of the paths open to us.

If there is one lesson more than any other which the history of philosophy and religion teaches us, it is this: that differences of outlook are inherent and cannot be ruled out. There will always be advocates and votaries of particular systems. It would be nearer the truth to admit that there are some basic types of philosophy and religion, and that these are incommensurable. The refusal to accept this verdict of history is nothing short of intellectual myopia; it savours of intolerance.

2. It is also suggested that Buddha was a practical man; he rigorously eschewed all theoretical considerations as vain; as not conducive to the spiritual life. Support is apparently lent to this by Buddha's rebuke of Mālūnkyaputta and Vaccha Gotta.[47] It is concluded that Buddha inculcated a way of life, but did not care to enunciate a view of reality. He addressed himself exclusively to ethics and left metaphysics severely alone. Votaries of this contention might further say that it was left to the scholastic phase of Buddhism to spin metaphysical theories and distort the teachings of the Master. The Master himself did not preach them, even by implication.

Can we have a way of life which does not imply a view of reality as well? Is it possible to follow an ideal of conduct which claims allegiance of the entire man without raising, by implication at least, questions about the ultimate value, the nature and destiny of the individual undertaking the discipline, and his relation to the ideal? The Mīmāṁsā which is ostensibly concerned with dharma—performance of the sacrifices and rites—finds that the investigation of dharma involves metaphysical and epistemological issues about the self, nature of karma, etc. It is committed to a form of Realism.[48] Stoicism and Epicureanism which began apparently as ethical schools have always implied a metaphysic.

3. By far the most serious objection to the view that Buddha taught the nairātmya doctrine (denial of soul or substance) is that it is contradictory to his other doctrines accepted as basic, namely, the efficacy of karma, of the adoption of spiritual life and the doctrine of rebirth. Karma without a permanent agent who wills and reaps the fruit of his action is inconceivable. What is the value of spiritual life if there is none at the end of it? Buddha's doctrine would be the acceptance of pain without *any one who* feels the pain, a spiritual

47. See *Majjh. Nikāya;* Suttas, 63 and 72.
48. *Śloka Vārttika, (Nirālambanavāda,* 3-4).

discipline without any person who undergoes discipline and a final result (nirvāṇa) without any individual to enjoy it. Such an absurdity, it might be said, could not have been meant seriously by Buddha.

Buddha himself was aware of these alleged absurdities. In the Canons it is especially stated: ' There is action, but the agent does not exist '.[49] In the *Sermon of the Bearer of the Burden*, it is again stated that the Five Groups (pañcopādāna skandhāḥ) are the burden, attachment to them is carrying of the burden, and detachment from them is laying down of the burden.[50]

People entertain the fond belief that the rejection of the soul—the permanent substance—vitiates Buddhist metaphysics, and that the difficulties with which it is faced are insuperable. It is further believed that the ātma-metaphysics (substance-view) avoids these pitfalls and affords a more plausible explanation of things. All this, however, is evidence of confused thinking. The anātma doctrine is no more at variance with facts or logic than the ātma doctrine. How does the acceptance of the ātman—the unchanging permanent entity—explain karma, rebirth, memory, personal identity more plausibly? As the permanent is of one uniform immutable nature, it cannot have different volitions when different circumstances call for different actions. It is neither the worse nor the better for the actions performed. It is impervious to any reform or progress. Precisely to avoid this insuperable difficulty did Buddha, taking his stand on the efficacy of Karma (act) as the sole arbiter of an individual's destiny, refuse to accept the permanent soul. A changing ātman (soul) is a contradiction in terms. No ātma-view has accepted or can accept a changing self; for, once we accept change of the ātman, we have no valid argument to confine this change to definite periods, i.e. it remains unchanged for an appreciable stretch of time and then changes. This would mean two different ātmans. Nor can we admit that one *part* of the ātman changes while the other part is permanent. If the changing part does belong to the ātman as integrally as the other part, then we would be having a supposedly unitary entity which has two mutually opposed characteristics. This does violence to our conception of an entity.

Buddha *replaced* the soul by the theory of a mind-continuum, by a series of psychical states rigorously conditioned as to their nature by the causal law governing them (dharma-saṅketa). According to him this alone provides

49. iti hi bhikṣavo'sti karma asti karmaphalam;
kārakastu nopalabhyate ya imān skandhān vijahāti
anyāṁś ca skandhān upādatte, anyatra dharma-saṅketāt.
Quoted in BCAP., p. 474; TSP., p. 11; see also *Sam.* N.I., p. 135.

50. bhāraṁ vo, bhikṣavo deśayiṣyāmi bhārādānaṁ ca bhāranikṣepaṇaṁ ca bhārahāram ca; tatra bhāraḥ pañcopādānaskandhāḥ, bhārādānaṁ tṛṣṇā, bhāranikṣepo mokṣaḥ, bhārahāraḥ pudgala iti. Quoted in AKV., p. 106; BCAP., p. 474; TSP., p. 130. See *Sam. N.*, XXII, 22, for the Pali text.

for progress (change, efficacy) and continuity (responsibility), as each succeeding state (good or bad) is the result of the previous state. Thus it avoids the futility of karma which is an inescapable predicament of the acceptance of the permanent soul on the one hand and nihilism or materialism which follow from the non-acceptance of continuity on the other. Rebirth does not mean that the soul bodily, as an identical individual essence, transports itself from one place to another. It only means that a new series of states is generated conditioned by the previous states. Nothing is lost, and the new birth is a result of the previous. The *Śālistamba Sūtra* puts the matter definitely: ' There is no element which migrates from this world to the other; but there is recognition (realisation) of the fruition of karma as there is continuity of causes and conditions. It is not as it were that one, dropping out from this world, is born into another, but there is continuity of causes and conditions.'[51] When Buddha says that in a previous birth he was himself Sunetra, a venerable teacher, as he does in the *Saptasūryodaya Sūtra* and in many of the *Jātakas*, this only means that the Buddha-series (buddhasantāna) is one—that both Sunetra and Gautama belong to the same continuum.[52] The identity of the individual is affirmed by ignoring the differences (abhedopacāra) and emphasising only the causal connection.

Memory and recognition might be thought to present insuperable difficulties. ' If there is no soul how is it then that detached moments of consciousness can remember or recognise things which have been experienced a long time ago '. Remembrance, as Vasubandhu in his *Abhidharma Kośa*[53] says, ' is a new state of consciousness directed to the same object, conditioned as it is by the previous states '. That the experience of A is not remembered by B is because the series of states conventionally designated as A is different from the series designated as B. This explanation, however ingenious, does not explain memory fully. Memory or recognition is not merely a revival of the object of the previous state, but there is the added consciousness that ' I have experienced it before '. A mental state, being strictly momentary, individual and unitary in content, cannot, on the Buddhist hypothesis, take cognizance of any other state. *Consciousness of change is not change of*

51. atra na kaścid dharmo'smāt lokāt paralokaṁ saṁkrāmati asti ca karmaphalaprativijñaptir hetu-pratyayānām avaikalyāt. Quoted in MKV., p. 568; BCAP, pp. 481-2.

cf. also saṁtānasyaikatvam āśritya kartā bhokteti deśitam. BCA, IX, 73. (p. 471).

52. The AKV (p. 710) has: Sunetro nāma śāsteti—*Saptasūryodaya* Sūtre'yam eva Bhagavān ṛṣiḥ Sunetro nāma babhūveti—eka—saṁtānatām darśayatīti yasmāt Sunetro Buddha-saṁtāna eva āsīt. See also MKV. p. 574: yat tarhīdam paṭhyate *Sūtre* (probably *Divyāvadāna*, p. 228) ' aham eva sa tena kālena tena samayena Māndhātā nāma Rājā cakravartī abhūvam iti '. tat katham veditavyam iti. anyatvapratiṣedhaparaṁ tad vacanaṁ, naikatva-pratipādakam iti vijñeyam.

53. *Soul Theory*, pp. 452-3; AKV. pp. 711-2.

consciousness ; yet this is exactly how the Buddhist explains our consciousness change. The identity running through the different states is a false ascription, an illusion, according to them.

The opposite hypothesis of a permanent self does not fare much better either. How can an unchanging uniform being like the ātman remember anything at all ? Memory is not merely the continuity of consciousness, but the knowing of an object as having been experienced in the *past,* and relating it with the present experience. An unchanging uniform ātman might have existed in the past; but as it does *not lapse,* it cannot know anything *as past.* The devices to which the Sāṁkhya and the Vedānta resort for explaining this difficulty are well-known. They differentiate the function of the ātman as mere unchanging awareness (svarūpajñāna) from the function of the changing mind (buddhivṛtti) which alone knows, remembers, etc. As ātman and buddhi would then fall asunder and would not make for any coherent experience, both Sāṁkhya and Vedānta further assume a false identification (adhyāsa) between the two, by virtue of which what is true of the one is *mistakenly ascribed* to the other.[54] The Nyāya is oblivious to the difficulty. It posits a non-conscious substance (ātman) and conceives the states as produced *in* it through the co-operation of the inner sense (manas). How the states like knowledge, pain, pleasure, etc., which are transitory, can belong to the unchanging ātman is nowhere explained. The difficulty is not solved by simply asserting that the qualities are produced in the ātman from time to time. What prevents two states from being two different things altogether ? In the Sāṁkhya and Nyāya, both the changing and the unchanging substances are considered equally real ; there is no evaluation whether the changing is real or the unchanging. Vedānta (Advaita) accepts the unchanging alone as real and rejects the other as unreal. The Buddhists do the opposite.

The difficulty is not confined to memory and moral responsibility alone. Even in such rudimentary experiences as sensation or feeling and in higher forms of experience, such as judgement and inference, synthesis and interpretation are involved. The given data have to be classified, compared, related —apperceived—and synthesised into a unity ; and yet the distinction has to be maintained.

The problem of knowledge is part of the larger problem, namely, the nature of existence. Our interpretation of experience will be of a piece with our interpretation of the real. In every aspect of things we find two opposite standpoints. In causation, we may emphasise the emergence of the effect as something new and different or we may emphasise its necessary connection and continuity. In any presented object, we may attend to the particular and the changing, or to the universal and the abiding feature. The

54. cf. *The Sāṁkhya Kārikā,* 20.

latter may be termed the static or space-view of things, and the former the dynamic or the time-pattern. On the first, change and difference may be taken as appearance ; on the second, the permanent and the universal. One emphasises unity, the other difference. What is real for one is appearance for the other, and *vice versa.* Whatever be the nature of our bias, we have to work out a systematic explanation of things—objects and our knowledge of them—in terms of our view. The Buddhist schools and the Brāhmanical systems in the course of their development did eventually come to formulate a coherent metaphysic and epistemology in consonance with their respective standpoints. It is not contended that Buddha himself formulated this doctrine of anātma in its systematic form with all its implications fully drawn. It is however suggested that he gave the inspiration and the impetus to the nairātmya view which came to be formulated in such sharp contrast to the ātma view. That there are insuperable difficulties on either conception of reality, on any conceptual pattern, no one realised perhaps more strongly than Buddha. He was thus led to discredit all attempts at *conceiving* reality, and in consequence, to reject all speculative metaphysics. This is the sole meaning of his silence.

Buddha sets himself above all dogmatism. ' The Tathāgata is free from all theories '. To Kaccāyana he says : ' That every thing exists is one extreme, that it does not exist is another. The Tathāgata teaches the Truth from the Middle Position (majjhena dhammaṁ deseti)'.[55] This is the Mādhyamika Dialectic in essence, and Nāgārjuna, the founder of the Mādhyamika or the Central School of Buddhism, makes pointed reference to this passage.[56]

Dialectic is the consciousness of the antinomical conflict in Reason. It is engendered by at least two points of view (dṛṣṭis) diametrically opposed to each other as thesis and anti-thesis. The opposition is total, as affecting every aspect of things, and practically interminable, as the conflict cannot be settled by appeal to experience. The substance-view (ātmavāda) of the Brāhmanical systems and the modal view (anātmavāda) of the earlier Buddhism are the two ' moments ' of the Mādhyamika Dialectic. The Mādhyamika resolves the conflict by rejecting the alternative views taken singly or in combination ; he thereby rejects the competence of Thought or Reason to comprehend the Real. The Real is Transcendent—Śūnya. Though usually translated as Void or Negation, Śūnya or the Absolute is not void, but devoid of every kind of thought-determination. The Absolute is realised as Prajñā or Non-dual Intuition, free from the duality of ' is ' and ' is not ' (prajñāpāramitā jñānam advyam).

55. *Sam. Nikāya,* II, 17.
56. *Mādhyamika Kārikās,* XV, 7.

' Śūnyatā ' is thus the pivotal concept of Buddhism ; the entire Buddhist philosophy turned on this. The earlier realistic phase of Buddhism, with its rejection of substance but uncritical acceptance of a theory of Elements, was clearly a preparation for the fully critical and self-conscious dialectic of Nāgārjuna. And like the Kantian dialectic which was engendered by the conflict of Rationalism and Empiricism, the Mādhyamika is a critique of all philosophy.

The basic ideas of the Mādhyamika system—the Absolute as devoid of empirical determinations, the falsity of appearance and the distinction between the Unconditioned Noumenon and phenomena—were accepted. There was however a reaction against what appeared to some as its extreme and unqualified rejection of phenomena. The Idealism of the Yogācāra (Vijñānavāda) School is to be understood as a significant modification of the Mādhyamika negativism (śūnyatā). Vijñānavāda contends that the sole reality of Consciousness (Vijñāna) cannot be denied, while the duality of subject and object with which it is apparently infected must be considered non-existent (śūnya) : the duality is unreal, but *that*, where the negation of duality (dvaya-śūnyatā) obtains, *does exist*. That is not nothing. Vijñāna (Consciousness) is *real*, not apparent as the Mādhyamika holds ; Vijñāna *alone* is real, not the object too, as the Realist uncritically asserts.

The critical philosophy of Kant led to the Idealistic systems of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel in the West. Here too the Yogācāra Idealism follows as a direct outcome of the Mādhyamika. This is the third great phase of Buddhism. Tantricism (Vajrayāna and Mantrayāna) supervened on Vijñānavāda.

V

The Relation of the Two Traditions

It should be interesting to trace the influence of the two traditions on each other. As the Buddhist schools evolved alongside of the Jaina and the Brāhmanical systems, mutual influence may reasonably be assumed. It is not however easy, owing to the vastness and complication of the problem, to estimate with any measure of precision the nature and extent of the influence. Influence may be expressed not necessarily by imitation and acceptance of doctrines, but by opposition and rejection. This is eminently true of Buddhist and non-Buddhist thought.

Despite great diversity, the Sāṁkhya provides the prototype and the point of departure for the Ābhidharmika system. The conception of ' Dharma ' is closely modelled on that of Prakṛti. The problem of change is central to both the systems. Buddhism however refused to exempt any existent (like the Puruṣa of the Sāṁkhya) from the pale of universal change ; and change itself

is conceived as replacement, the emergence and cessation of durationless entities.

At a subsequent stage, we find direct and sustained conflict between Buddhism (the Sautrāntika especially) and the Realistic systems, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṁsā and Jainism. We have ample evidence of this in the works of Akṣapāda (*Nyāya Sūtras*), Vātsyāyana, Uddyotakara, Vācaspati Miśra, Kumārila, Udayana, Jayanta, etc. on the Brāhmanical side and Dignāga, Dharmakīrti and Dharmottara on the other. The influence was felt practically on every important problem—perception, inference, nominalism (apoha), whole (avayavī), universal (sāmānya), etc. The Nyāya and the Mīmāṁsā reformulated their realism with greater thoroughness and self-consciousness. The Buddhists stuck to their subjective and critical trends. Each system gained, owing to this impact, in clarity and depth. An interpretation of Indian philosophy in terms of this conflict should prove instructive.

The influence of the Vedānta on the development of the Mahāyāna and *vice versa* presents us with another problem, no less interesting. Earlier Buddhism was realistic and pluralistic. The absolutistic turn that it took in the Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra systems suggests the influence of the conception of Brahman as the unaffected reality underlying the appearances. Some scholars[57] hold that there has been direct borrowing. This is rather doubtful.

Gauḍapāda and Śaṁkara revolutionized Vedānta thought by establishing non-Dualism (advaita) dialectically ; they characterise phenomena as false appearance (māyā), and formulate the doctrine of three truths and two texts (para and apara). The non-advaitic schools of Vedānta have roundly taken all these as concealed Buddhism, and some modern scholars have fallen in line with this view.[58]

It must however be recognised that the ātmavāda of the Upaniṣads was, impelled by its inner dynamism, heading towards advaitism like the prior movement on the Buddhist side. The pre-Śaṁkara Vedānta establishes the reality of one substance by a criticism of the Sāṁkhya dualism ; Śaṁkara himself arrives at his non-dualism and transcendence of Brahman by a criticism of the ' unity-in-difference ' (bhedābheda) view of Bhartṛprapañca and others. There is no evidence of direct borrowing in Śaṁkara. Gauḍapāda's *Māṇḍūkya Kārikās* do however show in diction and doctrine the influence of the Mahāyāna.[59] The different parts of the work however are loosely connected ; they may be the work of different authors.[60] Only in the III and especially in

57. See Stcherbatsky ; *Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, p. 51.

58. Ibid, pp. 51 and 62.

59. Professor V. Bhattacharya has established this with his characteristic thoroughness in his *Āgama Śāstra of Gauḍapāda*.

60 See *Āgama Śāstra*, pp. cxliv, lv.

the IV Book of the *Māṇḍūkya Kārikās* are there unmistakable Buddhist influences. It is also difficult to conceive how the philosophers committed to the ātma-tradition could have borrowed doctrines from the nairātmya-tradition. It can therefore be suggested that there has been borrowing of technique rather than of tenets. The dialectic of Nāgārjuna and the Vijñānavāda analysis of illusion and their doctrine of two truths might have suggested to Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara the most consistent way of interpreting the Upaniṣadic teaching.

Compelled by the urge to be consistent and rigorous, both the Ātma and the Anātma Traditions headed towards Absolutism—the Absolutism of Pure Being or Brahman and the Absolutism of Śūnya or Prajñāpāramitā respectively. Though agreeing in their form, the two Absolutisms still differ in their modes of approach. The Mādhyamika approach is essentially logical, dialectical. Criticism itself is philosophy. The Vedānta approach may be taken as theological. The Ultimate Truth can initially be given to us only through revelation, by an extra-logical communication, although it is confirmed by dialectic and realised by intuitive experience. The Vedānta and the Mādhyamika systems represent the fullness and maturity of the two traditions.

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