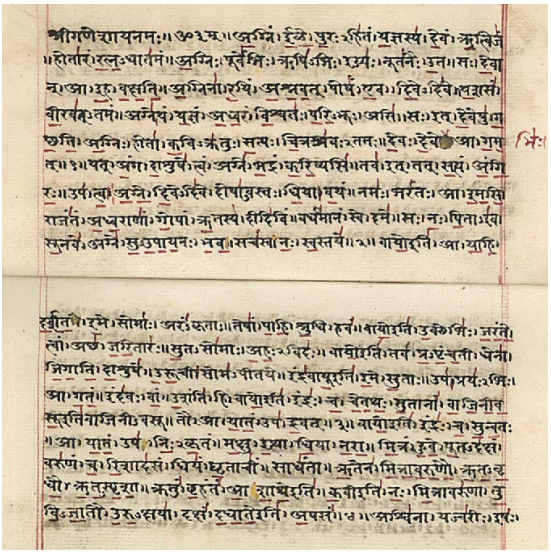
TRADITIONS

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

# Hinduism and Buddhism



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Ananda K. Coomaraswamy

# Hinduism and Buddhism

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# Publisher's Note

*Hinduism and Buddhism* was first published by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy in 1943, on the basis of two lectures delivered one year earlier at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. The book has had a complex bibliographic history, which has lead to the existence of editions and translations that differ in content. After the Author's death in 1947, a French version, translated by René Allar and Pierre Ponsoye, was published by Gallimard in 1949. An Italian translation by Ubaldo Zalino was published by Rusconi Editore in 1973; although it asserts to derive from the original English version, it is evidently based on the French translation. Finally, a new edition, "revised and enlarged in accordance with author's notes" by Keshavaram N. Iengar and Rama P. Coomaraswamy, was published by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in New Delhi in 1999.

The French translation of 1949 includes new materials compared to the original English version. Although the translators do not supply any information on those changes, it seems clear that the Author provided them with his own corrections and additions shortly before his death, and that his revisions were incorporated into the French translation.

The English edition of 1999 contains an even larger quantity of new or revised materials. A preface by Robert A. Strom reveals that the additional or modified portions derive from handwritten corrections and notes found on the Author's "desk copy." However, while the new English edition includes materials not found in the French translation, not all materials added to the French translation are included in the new English edition.

As remarked by Strom, "Coomaraswamy had almost all of his late published books rebound with blank pages to allow for an easy incorporation of handwritten addenda." The addenda contain valuable materials, and offer insights into the Author's working and writing methods, but it is unclear whether he intended to publish all of them in that form. A few addenda, for example, consists of mere lists of sources; others seem to contain notes taken for personal reference;

and others appear to be incomplete. The French translation seems, therefore, to reflect more faithfully the Author's intention in making his work available to a wide audience.

A definitive edition of *Hinduism and Buddhism*, which clearly distinguishes the original text from the additions published in French and the notes handwritten in English, would be highly welcome. This is beyond the purposes of the present edition, which are much more modest. This edition merely endeavors to incorporate the revisions that the Author definitely intended to publish, keeping the most important of them distinguished from the original edition. Additional or modified passages found in the French translation are reported in footnotes marked by an asterisk if they appear in the main text, and within square brackets if they appear in a footnote. Minor changes, as well as additional or modified bibliographic references, instead, are directly incorporated into the relevant paragraph or footnote.

# Abbreviations

RV, *Ṛg Veda Saṁhitā*
TS, *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* (Black Yajur Veda)
AV, *Atharva Veda Saṁhitā*
TB, PB, ŚB, AB, KB, JB, JUB, the *Brāhmaṇas*, respectively the *Taittirīya*, *Pañcaviṁśa*, *Śatapatha*, *Aitareya*, *Kauṣītaki*, *Jaiminīya*, *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad*
AA, TA, ŚA, the *Āraṇyakas*, respectively the *Aitareya*, *Taittirīya* and *Śāṅkhāyana*
BU, CU, TU, Ait., KU, MU, Praś., Muṇḍ., Iśā., the *Upaniṣads*, respectively the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chāndogya*, *Taittirīya*, *Aitareya*, *Kaṭha*, *Maitri*, *Praśna*, *Muṇḍaka* and *Iśāvāsya*
BD, *Bṛhad Devatā*
BG, *Bhagavad Gītā*
Vin, *Vinaya Piṭaka*
A, M, S, the *Nikāyas*, respectively the *Anguttara*, *Majjhima* and *Saṁyutta*
Sn, *Sutta Nipāta*
DA, *Sumaṅgala Vilāsinī*
Dh, *Dhammapada*
DhA, *Dhammapada Atthakathā*
Itiv., *Itivuttaka*
Vis., *Visuddhimagga*
Mil., *Milindapañha*
BC, *Buddhacarita*
HJAS, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*
JAOS, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
NIA, *New Indian Antiquary*
IHQ, *Indian Historical Quarterly*
SBB, *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*
HOS, *Harvard Oriental Series*

*Uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varān nibodhata* (KU.III.14)
*Ye suttā te pabbujjatha* (Itiv., p. 41)

# HINDUISM

Diu heilige schrift ruofet alzemâle dar ûf,
daz der mensche sîn selbes ledic werden sol.
Wan als vil dû dînes selbes ledic bist, als vil
bist dû dînes selbes gewaltic, und as vil dû
dînes selbes gewaltic bist, als vil dû dînes
selbes eigen, und als vil als dû dîn eigen bist,
als vil ist got dîn eigen und allez, daz got ie
geschuof.

[The sacred scriptures state everywhere that man
should be emptied of himself. When you are emptied
of yourself, you are the master of yourself; when you
are the master of yourself, you possess yourself;
when you possess yourself, you are possessed of God
and all that He has ever made.]

(Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer, p. 598)

# Introduction

Brahmanism or Hinduism is not only the oldest of the mystery religions, or rather metaphysical disciplines, of which we have a full and precise knowledge from literary sources, and as regards the last two thousand years also from iconographic documents, but also perhaps the only one of these that has survived with an unbroken tradition and that is lived and understood at the present day by many millions of men, of whom some are peasants and others learned men well able to explain their faith in European as well as in their own languages. Nevertheless, and although the ancient and modern scriptures and practises of Hinduism have been examined by European scholars for more than a century, it would be hardly an exaggeration to say that a faithful account of Hinduism might well be given in the form of a categorical denial of most of the statements that have been made about it, alike by European scholars and by Indians trained in our modern sceptical and evolutionary modes of thought.

One would begin, for example, by remarking that the Vedic doctrine is neither pantheistic nor polytheistic, nor a worship of the powers of Nature except in the sense that *Natura naturans est Deus* and all her powers but the names of God's acts; that *karma* is not "fate" except in the orthodox sense of the character and destiny that inhere in created things themselves, and rightly understood, determines their vocation; that *māyā* is not "illusion," but rather the maternal measure and means essential to the manifestation of a quantitative, and in this sense, "material," world of appearances, by which we may be either enlightened or deluded according to the degree of our

own maturity; that the notion of a "reincarnation" in the popular sense of the return of deceased individuals to rebirth on this earth represents only a misunderstanding of the doctrines of heredity, transmigration and regeneration; and that the six *darśanas* of the later Sanskrit "philosophy" are not so many mutually exclusive "systems" but, as their name implies, so many "points of view" which are no more mutually contradictory than are, let us say, botany and mathematics. We shall also deny in Hinduism the existence of anything unique and peculiar to itself, apart from the local coloring and social adaptations that must be expected under the sun where nothing can be known except in the mode of the knower. The Indian tradition is one of the forms of the Philosophia Perennis, and as such, embodies those universal truths to which no one people or age can make exclusive claim. The Hindu is therefore perfectly willing to have his own scriptures made use of by others as "extrinsic and probable proofs" of the truth as *they* also know it. The Hindu would argue, moreover, that it is upon these heights alone that any true agreement of differing cultures can be effected.

We shall try now to state the fundamentals positively: not, however, as this is usually done in accordance with the "historical method" by which the reality is more obscured than illuminated, but from a strictly orthodox point of view, both as to principles and their application; endeavouring to speak with mathematical precision, but never employing words of our own or making any affirmations for which authority could not be cited by chapter and verse; in this way making even our technique characteristically Indian.

We cannot attempt a survey of the religious literature, since this would amount to a literary history of India, where we cannot say where what is sacred ends and what is secular begins, and even the songs of bayadères and showmen are the hymns of the Fidèles de l'Amour. Our literary sources begin with the Rigveda (1200 or more B.C.), and only end with the most modern Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva and Tantric theological treatises. We must, however, especially mention the *Bhagavad Gītā* as

probably the most important single work ever produced in India; this book of eighteen chapters is not, as it has been sometimes called, a "sectarian" work, but one universally studied and often repeated daily from memory by millions of Indians of all persuasions; it may be described as a compendium of the whole Vedic doctrine to be found in the earlier Vedas, Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads, and being therefore the basis of all the later developments, it can be regarded as the focus of all Indian religion. To this we must add that the pseudo-historical Krishna and Arjuna are to be identified with the mythical Agni and Indra.

# The Myth

Like the Revelation (*śruti*) itself, we must begin with the Myth (*itihāsa*), the penultimate truth, of which all experience is the temporal reflection. The mythical narrative is of timeless and placeless validity, true nowever and everywhere: just as in Christianity, "In the beginning God created" and "Through him all things were made," regardless of the millennia that come between the dateable words, amount to saying that the creation took place at Christ's "eternal birth." "In the beginning" (*agre*), or rather "at the summit," means "in the first cause": just as in our still told myths, "once upon a time" does not mean "once" alone but "once for all." The Myth is not a "poetic invention" in the sense these words now bear: on the other hand, and just because of its universality, it can be told, and with equal authority, from many different points of view.

In this eternal beginning there is only the Supreme Identity of "That One" (*tad ekam*),[1] without differentiation of being from non-being, light from darkness, or separation of sky from earth. The All is for the present impounded in the first principle, which may be spoken of as the Person, Progenitor, Mountain, Tree, Dragon or endless Serpent. Related to this principle by filiation or younger brotherhood, and *alter ego* rather than another principle, is the Dragon-slayer, born to supplant the Father and take possession of the kingdom, distributing its treasures to his followers.[2] For if there is to be a world, the prison must be shattered and its potentialities liberated.

[1] RV.X.129.1–3; TS.VI.4.8.3; JB.III.359; ŚB.X.5.3.1, 2, etc.
[2] RV.X.124.4, etc.

This can be done either in accordance with the Father's will or against his will; he may "choose death for his children's sake,"[3] or it may be that the Gods impose the passion upon him, making him their sacrificial victim.[4] These are not contradictory doctrines, but different ways of telling one and the same story; in reality, Slayer and Dragon, sacrificer and victim are of one mind behind the scenes, where there is no incompatibility of contraries, but mortal enemies on the stage, where the everlasting war of the Gods[5] and the Titans is displayed. In any case, the Dragon-Father remains a Pleroma, no more diminished by what he exhales than he is increased by what he inhales. He is the Death, on whom our life depends;[6] and to the question "Is Death one, or many?" the answer is made that "He is one as he is there, but many as he is in his children

[3] RV.X.13.4: "They made Bṛhaspati the Sacrifice, Yama outpoured his own dear body."

[4] RV.X.90.6–8: "They made the first-born Person their sacrificial victim."

[5] The word *deva,* like its cognates θέος, *deus,* can be used in the singular to mean "God" or in the plural to mean "Gods" or sometimes "Angels" [ou "Demi-dieux"]; just as we can say "Spirit" meaning the Holy Ghost, and also speak of spirits, and amongst others even of "evil spirits." The "Gods" of Proclus are the "Angels" of Dionysius. What may be called the "high Gods" are the Persons of the Trinity, Agni, Indra-Vāyu, Āditya, or Brahmā, Śiva, Vishnu, to be distinguished only, and then not always sharply, from one another according to their functioning and spheres of operation. The *mixtae personae* of the dual Mitrāvaruṇau or Agnendrau are the form of the Sacerdotium and Regnum *in divinis*; their subjects, the "Many Gods," are the Maruts or Gales. The equivalents in ourselves are on the one hand the immanent median Breath, sometimes spoken of as Vāmadeva, sometimes as Inner Man and Immortal Self, and on the other its extensions and subjects the Breaths, or powers of seeing, hearing, thinking etc. of which our elemental "soul" is the unanimous composite, just as the body is a composite of functionally distinguishable parts that act in unison. The Maruts and the Breaths may act in obedience to their governing principle, or may rebel against it. All this is, of course, an over simplified statement. Cf. note 34, page 40.

[6] ŚB.X.5.2.13.

here."[7] The Dragon-slayer *is* our Friend; the Dragon must be pacified and *made* a friend of.[8]

The passion is both an exhaustion and a dismemberment. The endless Serpent, who for so long as he was one Abundance remained invincible,[9] is disjointed and dismembered as a tree is felled and cut up into logs.[10] For the Dragon, as we shall presently find, is also the World-Tree, and there is an allusion to the "wood" of which the world is made by the Carpenter.[11] The Fire of Life and Water of Life (Agni and Soma, the Dry and the Moist), all Gods, all beings, sciences and goods are constricted by the Python, who as "Holdfast" (Namuci) will not let them go until he is smitten and made to gape and pant:[12] and from this Great Being, as if from a damp fire smoking, are exhaled the Scriptures, the Sacrifice, these worlds and all beings;[13] leaving him exhausted of his contents and like an empty skin.[14] In the same way the Progenitor, when he has emanated his children, is emptied out of all his possibilities of finite manifestation, and falls down unstrung,[15] overcome by Death,[16] though he survives this

[7] ŚB.X.5.2.16.

[8] [Sur l'"amitié à susciter" entre le Varuṇa Agni et le Soma qui, autrement, pourraient détruire le sacrificateur, voir AB.III.4 et TS.V.1.5.6 et VI.1.11.]

[9] TA.V.1.3; MU.II.6 (a).

[10] RV.I.32, etc.

[11] RV.X.31.7, X.81.4; TB.II.8.9.6; cf. RV.X.89.7; TS.VI.4.7.3.

[12] RV.I.54.5: *śvasanasya . . . śuṣṇasya*; V.29.4: *śvasantaṁ dānavaṃ han*; TS.II.5.2.4: *jañjabhyamānād agnīṣomau nirakrāmatām*; cf. ŚB.I.6.3.13–15.

[13] BU.IV.5.11: *mahato bhūtasya . . . etāni sarvāṇi niḥśvasitāni*; MU.VI.32, etc. "For all things arise out of only one being" (Boehme, *Sig. Rer.* XIV, 74). As in RV.X.90.

[14] ŚB.I.6.3.15, 16.

[15] "Is unstrung," *vyasraṅsata*, i.e., is disjointed, so that having been jointless, he is articulated, having been one, is divided and overcome, like Makha (TA.V.1.3) and Vṛtra (originally jointless, RV.IV.19.3, but dissevered, I.32.7). For Prajāpati's fall and reconstitution see ŚB.I.6.3.35 and *passim*; PB.IV.10.1 and *passim*; TB.I.2.6.1; AA.III.2.6, etc. It is with reference to his "division" that in KU.V.4 the immanent deity (*dehin*) is

woe.[17] Now the positions are reversed, for the Fiery Dragon will not and cannot be destroyed, but would enter into the Hero, to whose question "What, wouldst thou consume me?" it replies "Rather to kindle (waken, quicken) thee, that *thou* mayst eat."[18] The Progenitor, whose emanated children are as it were sleeping and inanimate stones, reflects "Let me enter into them, to awaken them"; but so long as he is one, he cannot, and therefore divides himself into the powers of perception and consumption, extending these powers from his hidden lair in the "cave" of the heart through the doors of the senses to their objects, thinking "Let me eat of these objects"; in this way "our" bodies are set up in possession of consciousness, he being their mover.[19] And since the Several Gods or Measures of Fire into which he is thus divided are "our" energies and powers, it is the same to say that "the Gods entered into man, they made the mortal their house."[20] His passible nature has now become "ours": and from this predicament he cannot easily recollect or rebuild himself, whole and

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spoken of as "unstrung" (*visraṅsamāna*); for he is one in himself, but many as he is in his children (ŚB.X.5.2.16) from out of whom he cannot easily come together again (see note 21, p. 11).

[16] ŚB.X.4.4.1.

[17] PB.VI.5.1 (Prajāpati); cf. ŚB.IV.4.3.4 (Vṛtra).

[18] TS.II.4.12.6. [La nourriture est, d'une façon tout à fait littérale, consumée par le Feu digestif. Ainsi, quand on annonce un repas rituel, on dit: "Allume le Feu" . . . ou "Viens au festin," en manière de *benedicite*.] It is noteworthy that whereas the "Person in the right eye" is usually spoken of as the Sun or solar Indra, it can equally well be said that it is Śuṣṇa (the Scorcher) that is smitten and when he falls enters into the eye as its pupil, or that Vṛtra becomes the right eye (ŚB.III.1.3.11, 18). That is one of the many ways in which "Indra is now what Vṛtra was."

[19] MU.II.6, cf. ŚB.III.9.1.2; JUB.I.46.1–2. "Mover," as in *Paradiso*, I.116: *Questi ne' cor mortali è permotore* ["This is in mortal hearts the motive power."—*Ed*.]. Cf. *Laws*, 898C.

[20] AV.X.8.18; cf. ŚB.II.3.2.3; JUB.I.14.2: *mayy etās sarvā devatāh*. Cf. KB.VII.4: *ime puruṣe devatāḥ*; TS.VI.1.4.5: *prāṇā vai devā . . . teṣu parokṣaṁ juhoti* ("The Gods in this man . . . they are the Breaths . . . in them he sacrifices metaphysically").

complete.[21]

We are now the stone from which the spark can be struck, the mountain beneath which God lies buried, the scaly reptilian skin that conceals him, and the fuel for his kindling. That his lair is now a cave or house presupposes the mountain or walls by which he is enclosed, *verborgen* (*nihito guhāyām*) and *verbaut*. "You" and "I" are the psycho-physical prison and Constrictor in whom the First has been swallowed up that "we" might be at all. For as we are repeatedly told, the Dragon-slayer devours his victim, swallows him up and drinks him dry, and by this Eucharistic meal he takes possession of the first-born Dragon's treasure and powers and becomes what he was. We can cite, in fact, a remarkable text in which our composite soul is called the "mountain of God" and we are told that the Comprehensor of this doctrine shall in like manner swallow up his own evil, hateful adversary.[22] This "adver-

[21] TS.V.5.2.1: *Prajāpatiḥ prajā sṛṣṭvā preṇānu praviśat, tābhyām punar sambhavituṁ nāśaknot*; ŚB.I.6.3.36: *Sa visrastaiḥ parvabhiḥ na śaśāka saṁhātum*.

[22] AA.II.1.8. [Cf. Platon, *Phèdre*, 250C; Plotin, *Ennéades*, IV.8.3; Maître Eckhart (*hât gewonet in uns verborgenliche*, Pfeiffer, p. 593 ["has dwelt in us in a hidden manner"—*Ed*.]); Henry Constable ("Buryed in me, unto my sowle appeare").] St. Bonaventura likewise equated *mons* with *mens* (*De dec. praeceptis*, II: *ascendere in montem, id est, in eminentiam mentis* ["To ascend the mountain, that is, to eminence of mind" — *Ed*.); this traditional image which, like so many others, must be dated back to the time when "cave" and "home" were one and the same thing, underlies the familiar symbols of mining and seeking for buried treasure (MU.VI.29, etc.). The powers of the soul (*bhūtāni*, a word that also means "gnomes") at work in the mind-mountain, are the types of the dwarf miners who protect the "Snow-White" Psyche when she has bitten into the fruit of good and evil and fallen into her death-like sleep, in which she remains until the divine Eros awakens her and the fruit falls from her lips. Who ever has understood the scriptural Mythos will recognize its paraphrases in the universal fairy-tales that were not created by, but have been inherited and faithfully transmitted by the "folk" to whom they were originally communicated. It is one of the prime errors of historical and rational analysis to suppose that the "truth" and "original form" of a legend can be separated from its miraculous elements. It is in

sary" is, of course, none but our self. The meaning of the text will only be fully grasped if we explain that the word for "mountain," *giri*, derives from the root *gir*, to "swallow." Thus He in whom we were imprisoned is now our prisoner; as our Inner Man he is submerged in and hidden by our Outer Man. It is now his turn to become the Dragon-slayer; and in this war of the God with the Titan, now fought within you, where we are "at war with ourselves,"[23] his victory and resurrection will be also ours, *if* we have known Who we are. It is now for him to drink us dry, for us to be his wine.

We have realised that the deity is implicitly or explicitly a willing victim; and this is reflected in the human ritual, where the agreement of the victim, who must have been originally human, is always formally secured. In either case the death of the victim is also its birth, in accordance with the infallible rule that every birth must have been preceded by a death: in the first case, the deity is multiply born in living beings, in the second they are reborn in him. But even so it is recognized that the sacrifice and dismemberment of the victim are acts of cruelty and even treachery;[24] and this is the original sin (*kilbiṣa*) of the Gods, in which all men participate by the very fact of their separate existence and their manner of knowing in terms of subject and object, good and evil, because of which the Outer Man is excluded from a direct participation[25] in "what the Brāhmaṇas understand by Soma." The form of our

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the marvels themselves that the truth inheres: Τὸ Θαυμάζειν, οὐ γὰρ ἄλλη ἀρχὴ φιλοσοφίας ἢ αὕτη ("Wonder is the only beginning of philosophy"—*Ed.*), Plato, *Theaetetus*, 155D; and in the same way Aristotle, who adds: διὸ καὶ ὁ φιλόμυθος φιλόσοφός πώς ἐστιν ὁ γὰρ μῦθος σύγκειται ἐκ θαυμασίων, "So that the lover of myths, which are compounded of wonders, is by the same token a lover of wisdom" (*Metaphysics*, 982B). Myth embodies the nearest approach to absolute truth that can be stated in words.

[23] BG.VI.6; cf. S.I.57 = Dh.66; A.I.149; Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, I.267 f., etc.

[24] TS.II.5.1.2, II.5.3.6, cf. VI.4.8.1; ŚB.I.2.3.3, III.9.4.17, XII.6.1.39, 40; PB.XII.6.8, 9; Kauṣ.Up.III.1, etc.; cf. Bloomfield in JAOS, XV, 161.

[25] TS.II.4.12.1; AB.VII.28, etc.

"knowledge," or rather "ignorance" [*] (*avidyā*), dismembers him daily; and for this *ignorantia divisiva* an expiation is provided for in the Sacrifice, where by the sacrificer's surrender of himself and the building up again of the dismembered deity, whole and complete, the multiple selves are reduced to their single principle. There is thus an incessant multiplication of the inexhaustible One and unification of the indefinitely Many. Such are the beginnings and endings of worlds and of individual beings: expanded from a point without position or dimensions and a now without date or duration, accomplishing their destiny, and when their time is up returning "home" to the Sea in which their life originated [**].[26]

[*] [*The French translation replaces "*ignorance*" with "*opinion.*" For this translation of* avidyā*, see note 64, p. 96.*]

[**] [*The French translation adds*: . . . affranchis par là de toutes les limitations inhérentes à leur individualité temporelle.]

[26] [Pour le retour des "Fleuves" vers la "Mer" où leur individualité se perd, de sorte que l'on parle seulement de la mer: CU.VI.10.1; Praś.Up.VI.5, Muṇḍ.Up.III.2.8; A.IV.198; *Udāna*, 55, et de même Lao Tseu, *Tao Te King*, XXXII; Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, VI.4052; Maître Eckhart (dans Pfeiffer, p. 314); tout à l'effet que *Wenn du das Tröpflein wirst im grossen Meere nennen, Denn wirst du meine Seel im grossen Gott erkennen* (Angelus Silesius, *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, II.15 ["If thou canst designate a drop lost in the Sea's immensity, then wilt thou in the Sea of God divine my soul's identity"—*Ed.*]); *e la sua volontate è nostra pace; ella è quel mare, al qual tutto si move ciò ch'ella crea* (Dante, *Paradiso*, III, 85, 86 ["and his will is our peace: this is the sea to which is moving onward whatsoever it doth create"—*Ed.*]).

Pour le "retour" (en Agni) RV.I.66.5, V.2.6; (en Brahma) MU.VI.22; (dans la "Mer") Praś.Up.VI.5; (dans le Vent) RV.X.16.3; AV.X.8.16 (ainsi que KU.IV.9; BU.I.5.23); JUB.III.1.1,2, 3, 12; CU.IV.3.1–3; (vers le *summum bonum*, fin dernière de l'homme) S.IV.158; Sn.1074–76; Mil.73; (vers notre Père) Luc, XV.11 f.]

# BUDDHISM

Waz dunket dich, daz dich aller meist gefüeget habe zuo der êwigen wârheit? — Daz ist, daz ich mich gelâzen hân wâ ich mich vant.

[In your judgment, what has made it possible for you to reach the eternal truth? — It is because I have abandoned my self as soon as I have found it.]

(Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer p. 467)

. . . daz dem ungetribenen menschen ist ein griuse, daz ist dem getribenen ein herzenfröide. Ez is nieman gotes rîche wan der ze grunde tôt ist.

[. . . those who are not liberated are afraid of the deep joy of those who are liberated. No one is rich of God, unless he is entirely dead to himself.]

(Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer p. 600)

# Introduction

The more superficially one studies Buddhism, the more it seems to differ from the Brahmanism in which it originated; the more profound our study, the more difficult it becomes to distinguish Buddhism from Brahmanism, or to say in what respects, if any, Buddhism is really unorthodox. The outstanding distinction lies in the fact that Buddhist doctrine is propounded by an apparently historical founder, understood to have lived and taught in the sixth century B.C. Beyond this there are only broad distinctions of emphasis. It is taken almost for granted that one must have abandoned the world if the Way is to be followed and the doctrine understood. The teaching is addressed either to Brāhmaṇs who are forthwith converted, or to the congregation of monastic Wanderers (*pravrājaka*) who have already entered on the Path; others of whom are already perfected Arhats, and become in their turn the teachers of other disciples. There is an ethical teaching for laymen also, with injunctions and prohibitions as to what one should or should not do,[1] but nothing that can be described as a "social reform"

[1] Vin.I.235 and *passim*; D.I.52, 68 f.; S.III.208; A.I.62 (*Gradual Sayings*, p. 57, where Woodward's footnote 2 is completely mistaken). The Buddha teaches that there is an ought-to-be-done (*kiriya*) and an ought-not-to-be-done (*akiriya*); these two words *never* refer to "the doctrine of Karma (retribution) and its opposite." Cf. HJAS, IV, 1939, p. 119. That the Goal (as in Brahmanical doctrine) is one of liberation from good and evil both (see notes 54, p. 94, and 55, p. 94) is quite another matter; the doing of good and avoidance of evil are indispensable to Wayfaring. The view that there is no-ought-to-be-done (*a-*

or as a protest against the caste system. The repeated distinction of the "true Brāhmaṇ" from the mere Brāhmaṇ by birth is one that had already been drawn again and again in the Brahmanical books.

If we can speak of the Buddha as a reformer at all it is only in the strictly etymological sense of the word: it is not to establish a new order but to restore an older form that the Buddha descended from heaven. Although his teaching is "all just so and infallible,"[2] this is because he has fully penetrated the Eternal Law (*akālika dharma*)[3] and personally verified all things in heaven or earth;[4] he describes as a vile heresy the view that he is teaching a "philosophy of his own," thought out by himself.[5] No true philosopher ever

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*kiriya*), however argued, is heretical: responsibility cannot be evaded either (1) by the argument of a fatal determination by the causal efficacy of past acts or (2) by making God (*issaro*) responsible or (3) by a denial of causality and postulation of chance; ignorance is the root of all evil, and it is upon what we do now that our welfare depends (A.I.173 f.). Man is helpless only to the extent that he sees Self in what is not-Self; to the extent that he frees himself from the notion "This is I," his actions will be good and not evil; while for so long as he identifies himself with soul-and-body (*saviññāna-kāya*) his actions will be "self"-ish.

[2] D.III.135: *tath'eva hoti no aññathā*; A.II.23, D.III.133, Sn.357: *yathā vādī tathā kārī* (cf. RV.IV.33.6: *satyam ūcur nara evā hi cakruḥ*); hence Sn.430, Itiv., 122: *tathāvādin*. In this sense *tathāgato* can be applied to Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, Sn.236–38.

[3] The Dhamma taught by the Buddha, beautiful from first to last, is both of present application (*saṁdiṭṭhiko*) and timeless (*akāliko*).

It follows that the same applies to the Buddha himself, who identifies himself with the Dhamma.

[4] D.I.150: *sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā*; D.III.135: *sabbam . . . abhisambuddham*; Dh.353: *sabbavidū'ham asmi*; Sn.558: *abhiññeyaṃ abhiññātaṃ . . . tasmā buddho'smi*; D.III.28, etc.

[5] M.I.68 f., the Buddha "roars the Lion's roar" and having recounted his supernatural powers, continues: "Now if anyone says of me, Gotama the Pilgrim, knower and seer as aforesaid, that my eminent Aryan gnosis and insight have no superhuman quality, and that I teach a Law that has been beaten out by reasoning (*takkapariyāhatam*) experimentally thought out and self-expressed (*sayam-patibhānam*), if

came to destroy, but only to fulfill the Law. "I have seen," the Buddha says, "the ancient Way, the Old Road that was taken by the formerly All-Awakened, and that is the path I follow";[6] and since he elsewhere praises the Brāhmaṇs of old who remembered the Ancient Way that leads to Brahma,[7] there can be no doubt that the Buddha is alluding to "the ancient narrow path that stretches far away, whereby the contemplatives, knowers of Brahma, ascend, set free" (*vimuktāḥ*), mentioned in verses that were already old when Yajñavalkya cites them in the earliest Upaniṣad.[8]

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he will not recant, not repent (*cittam pajahati* = μετανοεῖν) and abandon this view, he falls into hell." "These profound truths (*ye dhammā gambhīrā*) which the Buddha teaches are inaccessible to reasoning (*atakkāvacarā*), he has verified them by his own superknowledge" (D.I.22); cf. KU.II: "it is not by reasoning that that idea can be reached" (*naiṣā tarkeṇa matir āpaneyā*). Mil.217 f. explains that it is an "ancient Way that had been lost that the Buddha opens up again." The reference is to the *brahmacariya*, "walking with God" (= θεῷ συνοπαδεῖν, *Phaedrus*, 248C) of RV.X.109.5, AV., Brahmāṇas, Upaniṣads and Pali texts, *passim*.

The "Lion's roar" is originally Bṛhaspati's, RV.X.67.9, i.e., Agni's.

[6] S.II.106: *purâṅam maggam purāṇañjasam anugacchīm*.

[7] S.IV.117: *te brāhmaṇā purāṇaṃ saranti . . . so maggo brahmapattiyā*. In Itiv., 28, 29 those who follow this (ancient) Way taught by the Buddhas are called Mahātmās. [Mais, Sn.284–315, maintenant que les Brāhmaṇs ont négligé depuis longtemps leur Loi ancienne, le Bouddha la prêche à nouveau.]

[8] BU.IV.4.8: *panthā . . . purāṇo . . . anuvitto mayaiva, tena dhīrā api yanti brahmavidaḥ svargaṁ lokam ita urdhvaṁ vimuktāḥ*. As Mrs. Rhys Davids has also pointed out, the Buddha is a critic of Brahmanism only in external matters; the "internal system of spiritual values" he "takes for granted" ("Relations between Early Buddhism and Brahmanism," IHQ, X, 1934, p. 282).

In view of the current impression that the Buddha came to destroy, not to fulfill an older Law, we have emphasized throughout the uninterrupted continuity of Brahmanical and Buddhist doctrine (e.g. in note 106, p. 107). Buddhist doctrine is original (*yoniso manasikāro*) indeed, but certainly not novel. [Le Bouddha ne fut pas un réformateur des institutions sociales, mais d'états d'esprit. Ainsi, pour citer un exemple, c'est l'oubli de la Loi éternelle qui est la cause des luttes de classes et des querelles de famille. Les Quatre Castes sont naturellement "protégées"

On the other hand it is expressly stated that the Brāhmaṇs of today—although there are exceptions—have fallen from the graces that pertained to their pure and selfless ancestors.[9] It is from this point of view, and in connection with the fact that Buddha is born in an age when the royal caste is more than the priestly caste in honour, that we can best understand the reason of the promulgation of the Upaniṣads and Buddhism at one and the same time. These two closely related and concordant bodies of doctrine, both of "forest" origin, are not opposed to one another, but to a common enemy. The intention is clearly to restore the truths of an ancient doctrine. Not that the continuity of transmission in the lineages of the forest hermitages had ever been interrupted, but that the Brāhmaṇs at court and in the world, preoccupied with the outward forms of the ritual and perhaps too much concerned for their emoluments, had now become rather "Brāhmaṇs by birth" (*brahmabandhu*) than Brāhmaṇs in the sense of the Upaniṣads and Buddhism, "knowers of Brahma" (*brahmavit*). There can be little doubt that the profound doctrine of the Self had hitherto been taught only in pupillary succession (*guruparamparā*) to qualified disciples; there is plenty of evidence for this on the one hand in the Upaniṣads themselves[10] (the word itself implies "sitting close to" a teacher) and on the other hand in the fact that the Buddha often speaks of "holding nothing back." The net result of these conditions would be that those to whom the Buddha so

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par leurs lignages, et c'est seulement quand la cupidité domine les hommes qu'on les voit discréditer la doctrine des castes (*jātivādaṃ nirańkatvā kāmānaṃ vasam upagamun*, Sn.314, 315).]

[9] Sn.284 f. (cf. RV.X.71.9); D.III.81, 82 and 94 f.; exceptions, S.II.13; Sn.1082.

[10] E.g. MU.VI.29 "This deepest mystery . . ."; BU.VI.3.12; BG.IV.3, XVIII.67. Yet the Upaniṣads were actually "published"; and just as the Buddha "holds nothing back," so we are told that "nothing whatever was omitted in what was told to Satyakāma, a man who cannot prove his ancestry, but is called a Brāhmaṇ because of his truth speaking" (CU.IV.4.9). There is no more secrecy, and now whoever is a Comprehensor can properly be called a Brāhmaṇ (ŚB.XII.6.1.41).

often refers as the "uninstructed multitude" must have entertained those mistaken "soul theories" and beliefs in the reincarnation of a "personality" against which the Buddha fulminates untiringly.

It may well be, too, that kings themselves, opposing their arrogant power to sacerdotal control, had ceased to choose their Brāhmaṇ ministers wisely.[11] For that situation Indra himself, king of the Gods, "blinded by his own might" and misled by the Asuras, provides the archetype *in divinis*.[12] On the other hand, for the "awakening" of a royalty in the Buddha's case we have likewise in Indra the paradigm; for being admonished by the spiritual adviser to whom his allegiance is due, Indra "awakens himself" (*buddhvā cātmānam*),[13] and praises himself, the awakened Self, in lauds in which we find the words, which the Buddha might have used, "Never at any time am I subject to Death" (*mṛtyu = māra*).[14] It will not be overlooked, too, that the Vedic Indra is more than once referred to as Arhat. And if it seems strange that the true doctrine should have been taught, in the Buddha's case, by a member of the royal caste, it is only the same situation that we sometimes meet with in the Upaniṣads themselves.[15] Was not Krishna also of royal blood, and yet a spiritual teacher? What all this amounts to is this, that when the salt of the "established church" has lost its savour, it is rather from without than from within that its life will be renewed.

The scriptures in which the traditions of the Buddha's life and teachings are preserved fall into two classes, those of the Narrow Way (Hīnayāna) and those of the Broad Way (Mahāyāna). It is with the former, and on the whole older texts that we shall be chiefly concerned. The books pertaining to the

[11] Cf. ŚB.IV.1.4.5.
[12] BD.VII.54.
[13] BD.VII.57.
[14] RV.X.48.5.
[15] BU.VI.2.8; CU.V.3–11; Kauṣ.Up.IV.9 (where the situation is called "abnormal," *pratiloma*).

"Narrow Way" are composed in Pali, a literary dialect closely related to Sanskrit. The Pali literature ranges in date from about the third century B.C. to the sixth A.D. The Canon consists of what are called the "Three Baskets," respectively of monastic regimen (Vinaya), Discourse (Sūtra) and Abstract Doctrine (Abhidhamma). We shall be chiefly concerned with the five classes of the "Discourse" literature in which are preserved what are taken to be the Buddha's actual words. Of the extra-canonical literature the most important of the early books are the Milindapañha and the Visuddhimagga. The great Jātaka book, largely composed of ancient mythological materials recast in a popular form and retold as stories of the former births, is relatively late, but very instructive both for the Buddhist point of view and as a detailed picture of life in ancient India. All these books are provided with elaborate commentaries in what now would be called the "scholastic" manner. We shall take this literature as it stands; for we have no faith in the emendation of texts by modern scholars whose critical methods are mainly based on their dislike of monastic institutions and their own view of what the Buddha ought to have said. It is in fact surprising that such a body of doctrine as the Buddhist, with its profoundly other-worldly and even anti-social emphasis, and in the Buddha's own words "hard to be understood by you who are of different views, another tolerance, other tastes, other allegiance and other training,"[16] can have become even as "popular" as it is in the modern Western environment. We should have supposed that modern minds would have found in Brahmanism, with its acceptance of life as a whole, a more congenial philosophy. We can only suppose that Buddhism has been so much admired mainly for what it is not. A well known modern writer on the subject has remarked that "Buddhism in its purity ignored the existence of a God; it denied the existence of a soul; it was not so much a religion as

[16] D.III.40, cf. S.I.136, D.I.12.

a code of ethics."[17] We can understand the appeal of this on the one hand to the rationalist and on the other to the sentimentalist. Unfortunately for these, all three statements are untrue, at least in the sense in which they are meant. It is with another Buddhism than this that we are in sympathy and are able to agree; and that is the Buddhism of the texts as they stand.

Of the texts of the Broad Way, composed in Sanskrit, few if any antedate the beginning of the Christian era. Amongst the most important of them are the Mahāvastu, the Lalita Vistara, the Divyāvadāna and the Saddharma Puṇḍarīka. The two main

[17] Winifred Stephens, *Legends of Indian Buddhism*, 1911, p. 7. Similarly M.V. Bhattacharya maintains that the Buddha taught that "there is no Self, or Ātman" (*Cultural Heritage of India*, p. 259). Even in 1925 a Buddhist scholar could write "The soul . . . is described in the Upaniṣads as a small creature in shape like a man . . . Buddhism repudiated all such theories" (PTS Dictionary, s.v. *attan*). It would be as reasonable to say that Christianity is materialistic because it speaks of an "inner man." Few scholars would write in this manner today, but ridiculous as such statements may appear (and it is as much an ignorance of Christian doctrine as it is of Brahmanism that is involved), they still survive in all popular accounts of "Buddhism."

It is of course, true that the Buddha denied the existence of a "soul" or "self" in the narrow sense of the word (one might say, in accordance with the command, *denegat seipsum*, Mark, VIII.34!) but this is not what our writers mean to say, or are understood by their readers to say; what they mean to say is that the Buddha denied the immortal, unborn and Supreme Self of the Upaniṣads. And that is palpably false. For he frequently speaks of this Self or Spirit, and nowhere more clearly than in the repeated formula *na me so attā*, "That is not my Self," excluding body and the components of empirical consciousness, a statement to which the words of Śaṅkara are peculiarly apposite, "Whenever we deny something unreal, it is with reference to something real" (*Br. Sūtra*, III.2.22); as remarked by Mrs. Rhys Davids, "*so*, 'this one', is used in the Suttas for utmost emphasis in questions of personal identity" (*Minor Anthologies*, I, p. 7, note 2). [*Na me so attā* n'est pas plus une négation du Soi que le τὸ σῶμα . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος de Socrate (*Axiochus*, 365) n'est une négation de "l'Homme."] It was not for the Buddha, but for the *natthika*, to deny this Self! And as to "ignoring God" (it is often pretended that Buddhism is "atheistic"), one might as well argue that Meister Eckhart "ignored God" in saying "niht daz ist gote gelîch, wande si beide niht sint" (Pfeiffer, p. 506)!

forms of Buddhism to which we have referred are often spoken of, rather loosely, as respectively Southern and Northern. It is the Southern school that now survives in Ceylon, Burma and Siam. The two schools originally flourished together in Burma, Siam, Cambodia, Java and Bali, side by side with a Hinduism with which they often combined. Buddhism of the Northern school passed over into Tibet, China and Japan, through the work of Indian teachers and native disciples who made translations from Sanskrit. In those days it was not considered that the mere knowledge of languages sufficed to make a man a "translator" in any serious sense of the words; no one would have undertaken to translate a text who had not studied it for long years at the feet of a traditional and authoritative exponent of its teachings, and much less would any one have thought himself qualified to translate a book in the teachings of which he did not believe. Few indeed are the translations of Indian books into European languages that can yet come up to the standards set for themselves by the Tibetan and Chinese Buddhists.[18]

It may be observed that while Brahmanism was at one time widely diffused in the "Greater India" of South East Asia, it never crossed the northern frontiers of India proper; Brahmanism was not, like Buddhism, what might be called a missionary faith. Indian culture reached and profoundly influenced the Far East through Buddhism, which sometimes fused with and sometimes existed side by side with Taoism, Confucianism and Shinto. The greatest influence was exerted by the contemplative forms of Buddhism; what had been Dhyāna (Pali: *jhāna*) in India became Ch'an in China and Zen in Japan.[19] We cannot, unfortunately, describe these forms of Buddhism here, but must affirm that although they often differ greatly in emphasis and detail from the Narrow Way, they represent anything but a degeneration of Buddhism; the Buddhisms of Tibet and the Far East are calculated to evoke our deepest sympathies, equally

[18] See Marco Pallis, *Peaks and Lamas*, 1939, pp. 79–81.
[19] See the various books of D.T. Suzuki.

by the profundity of their doctrines and the poignant beauty of the literature and art in which these teachings are communicated. We have only to add that Buddhism had died out in India proper by the end of the twelfth century. [*]

[*] [*The French translation adds*: Śaṅkarācārya, le plus éminent interprète doctrinal du Vedānta, a été souvent appelé un "bouddhiste déguisé." Le terme Vedānta ("Fin du Veda," dans le sens où le Nouveau Testament peut être appelé "la conclusion et l'accomplissement" de l'Ancien) se rencontre du reste déjà dans les Upaniṣads; et le fait est que le Vedānta et le Bouddhisme ont tant de points communs dès le début que tout exposé de l'un peut s'entendre comme un exposé de l'autre. C'est pourquoi une fusion de l'Hindouisme et du Bouddhisme s'est faite au moyen âge hindou, et c'est pourquoi le Bouddhisme a cessé d'exister comme doctrine distincte dans l'Inde même. Si le Bouddhisme à pu émigrer et survivre ailleurs plutôt que l'Hindouisme, c'est principalement pour la raison suivante: alors que l'Hindouisme s'accomplit à la fois dans la vie active et dans la vie contemplative, c'est la vie de contemplation qui importe d'abord au Bouddhisme, et, pour cette raison, il peut beaucoup plus aisément s'enseigner en tant que Voie d'évasion hors des liens formels de *n'importe quel* ordre social.]

# The Myth

In asking, What is Buddhism, we must begin, as before, with the Myth. This has now become the Founder's life of some eighty years, into which period the whole epic of the victory over death has now been condensed. But if we subtract from the pseudo-historical narrative all its mythical and miraculous features, the residual nucleus of historically plausible fact will be very small indeed: and all that we can say is that while there may have lived an individual teacher who gave the ancient wisdom its peculiarly "Buddhist" coloring, his personality is completely overshadowed, as he must have wished it should be,[1] by the eternal substance (*akālika dharma*) with which he identified himself. In other words, "the Buddha is only anthropomorphic, not a man."[2] It is true that a majority of modern scholars, euhemerist by temperament and training, suppose that this was not Man, but a man, subsequently deified; we take the contrary view, implied by the texts, that the Buddha is a solar deity descended from heaven to save both men and Gods from all the ill that is denoted by the word "mortality," the view that his birth and awakening are coeval with time.[3]

[1] Dh.74: *mam'eva kata . . . iti bālassa saṅkappo*, "'I did it,' an infantile idea." Cf. note 5, p. 58.

[2] Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p. 65. Cf. A.II.38, 39 where the Buddha says that he has destroyed all the causes by which he might become a God or a man, etc., and being uncontaminated by the world, "Therefore I am Buddha" (*tasmā buddho'smi*). Cf. Sn.558: *abhiññeyaṃ abhiññataṃ, bhāvetabbañ ca bhāvitaṃ, pahātabbaṃ pahīnam me, tasmā buddho'smi*.

[3] *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka*, XV.1, in reply to the bewilderment of his

Before proceeding to the narrative we must explain how a distinction is made between the epithets Bodhisattva and Buddha. The Bodhisattva is an "awakening being," or one of "wakeful nature"; the Buddha is "awake" or "The Wake." The Bodhisattva is, dogmatically, an originally mortal being, qualifying by the making-become of transcendental virtues and insights for the "total awakening" of a Buddha. Gautama Siddhārtha, the "historical Buddha," is thus himself a Bodhisattva until the moment of his "all-awakening." It is furthermore assumed that a Buddha is born in every successive aeon, and that Gautama Siddhārtha was the seventh in such a series of prophetic incarnations, and that he will be followed by Maitreya, now a Bodhisattva in heaven. There are other Bodhisattvas, notably Avalokiteśvara, who are virtually Buddhas, but are vowed never actually to enter into their Buddhahood until the last blade of grass has been first redeemed.

Previous to his last birth on earth, the Bodhisattva is resident in the Tuṣita heaven; and there being urged by the Gods to release the universe from its sorrows, he considers and decides upon the time and place of his birth and the family and mother of whom he will be born. A Buddha must be born of either a priestly or the royal caste, whichever is predominant at the time; and the royal caste being now predominant, he chooses to be born of Mahā Māyā, the queen of king Śuddhodana of the Śākya clan, at his capital city of Kapilavastu in the Middle Country; and that is to say, whatever else it may mean, in the "Middle Country" of the Ganges Valley. The Annunciation takes the form of "Mahā Māyā's dream," in which she sees a glorious white elephant descending from the skies to enter her womb. The king's interpreters of dreams explain that she has

audience, who cannot understand the Buddha's claim to have been the teacher of countless Bodhisattvas in bygone aeons. In just the same way Arjuna is bewildered by Krishna's eternal birth (BG.V.4), and the Jews could not understand the saying of Christ, "before Abraham was, I am." "The Son of God is older than all his creation" (*Shepherd of Hermas*, IX.12.1).

conceived a son who may be either a Universal Emperor or a Buddha. Both of these possibilities are actually realised in the spiritual sense, for while it is true that the Buddha's kingdom was not of this world, it is both as Teacher and as Lord of the universe that he "turns the wheel."

The child is visible in the mother's womb. When the time comes, Mahā Māyā sets out to visit her parents at Devahrada; on her way she pauses at the Lumbini Park, and feeling that her time has come, she stretches out her hand to support herself by the branch of a tree, which bends down of its own accord. Standing thus, she gives painless birth to the child. The child is born from her side. It is not explicit, but can be presumed that the birth was "virgin"; in any case it is interesting that the story was already known to Hieronymus who mentions it in a discussion of Virginity and in connection with the miraculous births of Plato and Christ.[4] The child is received by the Guardian Deities of the Four Quarters. He steps down onto the ground, takes seven strides, and proclaims himself the "Foremost in the World." The whole universe is transfigured and rejoices in light. On the same day are born the "seven connatural ones," amongst whom are the Bodhisattva's future wife, his horse, and the disciple Ānanda. These things take place, not uniquely, but "normally," that is to say that such is the course of events whenever a Buddha is born.

Mahā Māyā's dormition takes place a week after the child is born, and her sister Prajāpatī, and co-wife of Śuddhodana, takes her place. The child is taken back to Kapilavastu, and shown to the father; he is recognized and worshipped by the Brāhmaṇ soothsayers, who announce that he will be Emperor or Buddha, at the age of thirty-five. The child is presented in the temple, where the tutelary deity of the Śākyas bows down to him. Śuddhodana, desiring that his son may be an Emperor and not a Buddha, and learning that he will abandon the world only after he has seen an old man, a sick man, a corpse and a

[4] *Libri adv. Jovinianum*, I.42.

monk, brings him up in luxurious seclusion, ignorant of the very existence of suffering and death. The first miracle takes place on a day when the king, in accordance with custom, is taking part in the First Ploughing of the year; the child is laid in the shadow of a tree, which does not move although the shadows of other trees move naturally with the sun; in other words, the sun remains overhead. The child at school learns with supernatural facility. At the age of sixteen, by victory in an archery contest, in which his arrow pierces seven trees, he obtains his cousin Yaśodhara as wife; she becomes the mother of a boy, Rahula.

In the meantime, on four successive days, while driving through the city to the pleasure park, the Bodhisattva has seen the four signs; for although all such sights have been banned from the city by royal edict, the Gods assume the forms of the old man, sick man, corpse and monk, and the Prince is made acquainted with age, illness, death and the serenity of a man who has risen above these vicissitudes of existence. He goes to his father and announces his intention of leaving the world and becoming a monk, in order to find out the way of escape from subjection to this mortality. The father cannot dissuade him, but keeps the palace gates closed. That night the Bodhisattva takes silent leave of his wife and child and calling for his horse, departs by the palace gate, miraculously opened for him by the Gods; he is accompanied only by his charioteer.

Now Māra, Death, the Evil, offers him the empire of the whole world if he will return; failing in this temptation, he follows the Bodhisattva, to find another opportunity. Reaching the deep forests, the Bodhisattva cuts off his royal turban and long hair, unbecoming a pilgrim, and these are elevated by the Gods and enshrined in heaven. They provide him with a pilgrim's garments. He sends his charioteer back to the city with his horse; the latter dies of a broken heart.

The Bodhisattva now studies with Brāhmaṇ teachers and practises extreme mortifications. He finds five disciples, all of whom leave him when he abandons these ineffectual fastings. In the meantime Sujātā, the daughter of a farmer, who has been

making offerings to the spirit of a banyan tree, now brings her gift of milk-rice, into which the Gods have infused ambrosia; she finds the Bodhisattva seated beneath the tree, and gives him the rice in a golden bowl, and a golden ewer of water. She receives his blessings. He then goes down to the river to bathe, after which he eats the food, which is to last him for seven weeks. He casts the bowl into the river, and from the significant fact it floats upstream learns that he will succeed that very day. He returns to the Tree of the Awakening. At the same time Indra (the Dragon slayer, with Agni, of our former lecture, and the type of the sacrificer *in divinis*) assumes the shape of a grass-cutter and offers to the Bodhisattva the eight bundles of grass that are used in sacrificial ritual. The Bodhisattva circumambulates the tree, and finally standing facing East finds that the circles of the world about him stand fast. He spreads the strew, and there rises up a throne or altar at the foot of the tree; he takes his seat thereon, determined never to rise again until he has attained the knowledge of the causation and cure of the evil of mortality. It is there, at the navel of the earth, and at the foot of the tree of life, that all former Buddhas have awakened.

Now Māra appears again and lays claim to the throne. The Bodhisattva touches the Earth, calling her to witness to the virtues by right of which he takes it; and she appears and gives witness. Māra, assisted by his demon army, now assaults the Bodhisattva with fire and darkness, and with showers of burning sand and ashes; but all his weapons fall harmlessly at the Bodhisattva's feet. At the first sight of Māra the Gods have fled, leaving the Bodhisattva all alone, but for the powers of the soul, his retainers; now Māra gives up the contest and the Gods return.

It is now nightfall. In the course of the night the Bodhisattva passes through all the stages of realisation until at dawn, having perfectly grasped the cycle of "Causal Origination" (*pratītya samutpāda*) he becomes wholly awakened, and is a Buddha. The whole universe is transfigured and rejoices. The Buddha breaks into his famous song of victory:

*Seeking the builder of the house*
*I have run my course in the vortex*
*Of countless births, never escaping the hobble (of death)*;
*Ill is repeated birth after birth!*
*Householder, art seen!*
*Never again shalt thou build me a house*
*All of thy rigging is broken,*
*The peak of the roof is shattered:*[5]
*Its aggregations passed away,*
*Mind has reached the destruction of cravings*.

The Buddha remains for seven weeks within the circle of the Tree of the Awakening, enjoying the gladness of release. Of the events of these weeks two are significant, first the temptation by the daughters of Māra, who attempt to win by their charms what their father could not gain by his power: and secondly the hesitation to teach; the Buddha hesitates to put in motion the Wheel of the Law, thinking that it will not be understood and that this will be the occasion of needless anguish to himself; the Gods exclaim at this, "The world is lost," and led by Brahmā persuade the Buddha that some are ripe for understanding. The Buddha, accordingly, sets out for Benares and there in the "First Preaching" sets the Wheel of the Law in motion, and in the second preaches that there is no individual constant underlying the forms of our consciousness. In other words, in the doctrine of the un-self-ish-ness (*anātmya*) of all physical and mental operations he dismisses the popular *Cogito ergo sum* as a crude delusion and the root of all evil. By these sermons he converts the five disciples who had formerly deserted him; and there are now five Arhats, that is to say five "despirated" (*nirvāta*) beings in the world.

From Benares the Buddha went on to Uruvelā, near the modern Bodhgayā, and finds on the way a party of thirty young men picnicking, with their wives. One of them had no

[5] This is a technicality. See my "Symbolism of the Dome" (Part 3) in IHQ, XIV, 1938, and "*Svayamātṛṇṇā*: Janua Coeli" in *Zalmoxis*, II, 1939 (1941).

wife, and had brought a woman with him, who had just stolen their belongings and run away. All the young men ask the Buddha whether he has seen such a woman. The Buddha replies, "What now, young men, do you think? Which were the better for you, to go tracking the woman, or to go tracking the Self?" (*ātmānaṁ gaviṣ*).[6] They reply that it were better to seek the Self, and are converted. Here for the first time we meet with the Buddha's doctrine of a real Self. At Uruvelā he reaches the hermitage of a community of Brahmanical Fire-worshippers, and wishes to spend the night in their fire temple. They warn him that it is the haunt of a fierce Dragon that may hurt him. The Buddha thinks not, and retires for the night, seating himself cross-legged and vigilant. The Dragon is infuriated. The Buddha will not destroy it, but will overcome it; assuming his own fiery form, and becoming a "human Dragon," he fights fire with fire, and in the morning appears with the tamed Dragon in his alms-bowl.[7] Upon another day the fire-worshippers are unable to split their wood, or light or extinguish their fires until the Buddha permits it. In the end the Brāhmaṇs abandon their Burnt-offerings (*agnihotra*) and become disciples of the Buddha. In this connection we must cite the instance of another Brāhmaṇ fire-worshipper, to whom in the course of their dialogue the Buddha says,

> *I pile no wood for fires or altars*;
> *I kindle a flame within me . . .*
> *My heart the hearth, the flame the dompted self.*[8]

We perceive that the Buddha is here simply carrying on the teaching of the Brahmanical *Āraṇyaka* in which, as remarked by Keith, "the internal Agnihotra is minutely described as a

[6] Vin.I.23 (Mahāvagga I.14). Cf. Vis.393: *rājānaṁ gavesitum udāhu attānam?*; CU.VIII.7.1: *ya ātmā . . . so'nnveṣṭavyaḥ*.

[7] Vin.I.25 (Mahāvagga I.15). Cf. the similar story of Mogallāna's conflict with the Dragon Rāṣṭrapāla, Vis.399 f.

[8] S.I.169. See also my "Ātmayajña: Self-Sacrifice" in HJAS, VI, 1942.

substitute for the formal sacrifice."[9]

Time will not permit us to relate in detail the later events of the Buddha's life. He gradually builds up a large following of monastic wanderers like himself; somewhat against his will women were also allowed to be ordained as nuns; and by the end of his life there had developed an organised body of monks and nuns, many of whom lived in monasteries or nunneries, which had been donated to the community by pious laymen. The Buddha's life was spent in the care of the monastic community, and in preaching, either to assemblies of monks or to audiences of Brāhmaṇs, in disputations with whom he is invariably successful; he also performs many miracles. At last he announces his imminent death. When Ānanda protests, he reminds him that while there will be those who are still addicted to mundane ways of thinking and will weep and roll in anguish, crying out "Too soon will the Eye in the World pass away," there will be others, calm and self-possest, who will reflect that all component things are impermanent, and that whatever has been born contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution: "Those will honor my memory truly, who live in accordance with the Way I have taught." When a believer comes to visit him, before he dies, the Buddha says, "What good will it do you to see this unclean body? He who sees the *Law* sees me, he who sees *me*, sees the Law

[9] Cf. Keith, *Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka*, 1908, p. xi.

One must assume that it is in ignorance of the Brahmanical literature that Mrs. Rhys Davids finds something novel in the Buddha's Internal Agnihotra (*Gotama the Man*, p. 97). In just the same way I.B. Horner (*Early Buddhist Theory of Man Perfected*, ch. II, esp. p. 53) can discuss the history of the word *arahat* at great length without mentioning that in RV.X.63.4 we are told that the Gods (who, in their plurality, had never been thought of as originally immortal) "by their worth (*arhaṇā*) attained their immortality"! And in the same way the PTS Pali Dictionary knows of *arahant* "before Buddhism" only as an "honorific title of high officials." Buddhist exegesis by scholars who do not know their Vedas is never quite reliable.

(*dharma*)."[10] In announcing his forthcoming decease, the Buddha leaves this message, "Be such as have the Self (*ātman*) as your lamp, Self as only refuge, the Law as lamp and only refuge."[11]

He explains that what this means in practise is a life of incessant recollectedness (*smṛti*).[12] The Buddhist emphasis on mindfulness can hardly be exaggerated; nothing is to be done absent-mindedly; or with respect to which one could say "I did not mean to do it"; an inadvertent sin is worse than a deliberate

[10] S.III.120.

[11] D.II.101: *atta-dīpā viharatha atta-saraṇā . . . dhamma-dīpā dhamma-saraṇā*. Cf. Sn.501: *ye atta-dīpā vicaranti loke akiṁcanā sabbadhi vippamuttā*; Dh.146, 232: *andhakārena onaddhā padīpaṁ na gavessatha . . . so karohi dīpam attano*. The admonition "Make the Self your refuge" (*kareyya saraṇattano*, S.III.143) enjoins what the Buddha himself has done, who says "I have made the Self my refuge" (*katam me saraṇam attano*, D.II.120); for, indeed, "as he teaches, so he does" (*yathā vādi, tathā kāri*, A.II.23, III.135, Sn.357); which *tathā* is often made the basis of the epithet "Tathāgata."

The Buddhist "lamp" texts correspond to Śvet.Up.II.15: "When the bridled man by means of his own Self-suchness, as if by the light of a lamp (*ātma-tatvena . . . dīpopamena*), perceives the Brahma-suchness, unborn, steadfast, clean of all other suchnesses, then knowing God he is liberated from all ills." The Spirit (*ātman*) is our light when all other lights have gone out (BU.IV.3.6).

[12] On *sati* (*smṛti*) as "watching one's step," cf. I Cor., 10.31; D.I.70; SBB, III.233, etc. Thus an inadvertent sin is worse than a deliberate sin (Mil.84, cf. 158).

But like the Brahmanical *smṛti*, the Buddhist *sati* means more than this mere heedfulness, the *padasaññam* of J.VI.252. Recollection is practised with a view to omniscience or super-gnosis (*abbiññā*, *pajānanā*, προμήθεια, πρόνοια). The fullest account is given in Vis.407 f. In Mil.77–79, this is a matter either of intuitive, spontaneous and unaided super-gnosis, or occasioned (*kaṭumika = kṛtrima*); in the latter case we are merely reminded by external signs of what we already know potentially. Comparing this with Praś.Up.IV.5, CU.VII.3, VII.26.1 and MU.VI.7 ("The Self knows everything"), and taking account of the epithet Jātavedas = Pali *jātissaro*, it appears that the Indian doctrine of Memory coincides with the Platonic doctrine in *Meno*, 81 (μάθησις = ἀνάμνησις). Cf. my "Recollection, Indian and Platonic," JAOS, Supplement, 3, 1945.

sin. That means, that one must not simply "behave," instinctively; or as Plato expresses it, "Do nothing but in accordance with the leading of the immanent Principle, nothing against the common Law that rules the whole body, never yielding to the pulls of the affections, whether for good or evil; and this is what 'Self-mastery' means."[13] At the same time it must not be overlooked that behind this ethical application of mindfulness to conduct there lies a metaphysical doctrine; for Buddhism, like the Upaniṣads, regards all recognition not as an acquisition of new facts but as the recovery of a latent and ultimately unlimited omniscience; as in the Platonic doctrine, where all teaching and experience are to be thought of simply as reminders of what was already known but had been forgotten.[14]

Plato, again, continually reminds us that there are two in us, and that of these two souls or selves the immortal is our "real Self." This distinction of an immortal spirit from the mortal soul, which we have already recognized in Brahmanism, is in fact the fundamental doctrine of the Philosophia Perennis wherever we find it. The spirit returns to God who gave it when the dust returns to the dust. Γνῶθι σεαυτόν; *Si ignoras te*, *egredere* [*]. "Whither I go, *ye* cannot follow me now If any man would follow me, let him deny himself."[15] We must not delude ourselves by supposing that the words *denegat seipsum* are to be taken ethically (which would be to substitute means for ends); what they mean is understood by St. Bernard when he says that one ought *deficere a se tota . . . a semetipsa liquescere* [*], and by Meister Eckhart when he says that "The kingdom of God is for none but the thoroughly dead." "The

[13] *Laws*, 644, 645.

[14] *Meno*, 81, 82; *Republic*, 431A, B, 604B; *Laws*, 959B; *Phaedo*, 83B, etc.

[*] ["Know thyself"; "If thou knowest not thyself, begone" (*Song of Songs*, 1.8).—*Ed.*]

[15] John, XIII.36; Mark, VIII.34. Those who do follow him have "forsaken all," and this naturally includes "themselves."

[*] ["Lose oneself completely . . . and dissolve"; *De diligendo Deo*, 8. —*Ed.*]

word of God extends to the sundering of soul from spirit";[16] and it might well have been said by the Wake that "No man can be my disciple but and if he hate his own soul" (Καὶ οὐ μισεῖ . . . τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχήν).[17] "The soul must put itself to death" — "Lest the Last Judgment come and find me unannihilate, and I be siez'd and giv'n into the hands of my own selfhood."[18]

[16] Heb., IV.12.

[17] Luke, XIV.26: "who hateth not father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters"; cf. MU.VI.28: "If to son and wife and family he be attached, for such a one, no, never at all"; and Sn.60: "Alone I fare, forsaking wife and child, mother and father"; cf. 38. Cf. note 69, p. 30.

[18] Meister Eckhart and William Blake. Cf. Boehme, *Sex Puncta Theosophica*, VII.10: "Thus we see how a life perishes . . . namely, when it will be its own lord. . . . If it will not give itself up to death, then it cannot obtain any other world." Matth., XV.25; *Phaedo,* 67, 68. "No creature can attain a higher grade of nature without ceasing to exist" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol*., I.63.3). Cf. Schiller: "In error only there is life and knowledge must be death"; and what has been said above on Nirvāṇa as a being *finished*. What lies beyond such deaths cannot be defined in terms of our kind of living.

## Author's Note

The foregoing notes and references are far from exhaustive. They are intended to assist the reader to build up a meaning content for several terms that could not be fully explained in the lectures as delivered, and to enable the scholar to follow up some of the sources. In the lectures, Pali words are given in their Sanskrit forms, but in the Notes the Pali is quoted as such. I have taken pains to collate the Buddhist and Brahmanical sources throughout: it might have been even better to treat the whole subject as one, making no distinction of Buddhism from Brahmanism. Indeed, the time is coming when a Summa of the Philosophia Perennis will have to be written, impartially based on all orthodox sources whatever.

Some notable Platonic and Christian parallels have been cited (1) in order to bring out more clearly, because in more familiar contexts, the meaning of certain Indian doctrines and (2) to emphasize that the Philosophia Perennis, Sanātana Dharma, Akāliko Dhammo, is always and everywhere consistent with itself. These citations are not made as a contribution to literary history; we do not suggest that borrowings of doctrines or symbols have been made in either direction, nor that there has been an independent origination of similar ideas, but that there is a common inheritance from a time long antedating our texts, of what St. Augustine calls the "wisdom that was not made, but is at this present, as it hath ever been, and so shall ever be" (*Conf.*, IX.10). As Lord Chalmers truly says of the parallels between Christianity and Buddhism, "there is here no question of one creed borrowing from the other; the relationship goes deeper than that" (*Buddhist Teachings*, HOS 37, 1932, p.xx).

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