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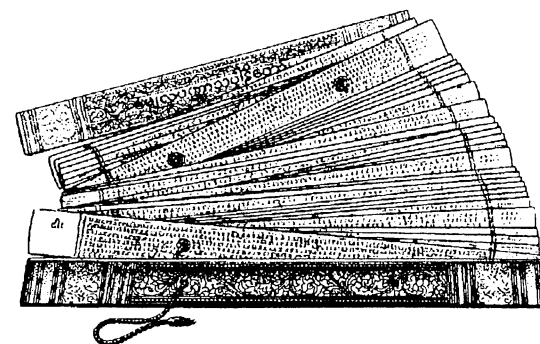
Studies in Honour of Heinz Bechert
on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday

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Abkürzungen

AAWG	Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Klasse, Dritte Folge
BEI	Bulletin d'Études Indiennes
BSR	Buddhist Studies Review
CAJ	Central Asiatic Journal
GGA	Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen
IAF	Internationales Asienforum
IJ	Indo-Iranian Journal
JIABS	Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies
OLZ	Orientalistische Literaturzeitung
SCEAR	Studies in Central and East Asian Religions
VOHD	Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland
WZKS	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens
ZAS	Zentralasiatische Studien

Once More on a Passage of the *Alagaddūpama-sutta*

KAMALESWAR BHATTACHARYA, Paris

Some years ago, I discussed a passage of the *Alagaddūpama-sutta* of the *Majjhima-Nikāya*, where six views relative to *ātman* are criticized.¹

After scholars such as Hermann OLDENBERG and Helmuth VON GLASENAPP had commented upon the last of these six views,² viz., *so loko so attā, so pecca bhavissāmi nicco dhuvo sassato avipariṇāmadhammo sassatisamaṃ tath' eva thassāmi*, K. R. NORMAN³ pointed out — though not for the first time⁴ — that it contained 'actual verbal echoes' of *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* III, 14. Here is what we read in the latter passage:

eṣa ma ātmāntar hṛdaye, etad brahma, etam itaḥ pretyābhisambhavitāsmi (*ChU* III, 14, 4).

Now, Professor NORMAN does not mention a most important fact, namely that the Upaniṣadic doctrine in question belongs to a stratum of thought which is earlier than that represented by the doctrines associated with such names as Yājñavalkya and Uddālaka Āruṇi. Attributed to Śaṅḍilya, this doctrine already appears, almost in the same words, in the tenth Book of the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (X, 6, 3), and bears the stamp of the period between the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads. The "attainment" of *ātman* it speaks of 'erscheint' — as DEUSSEN observed long ago — 'nach Analogie mit den hergebrachten Anschauungen noch als ein Emporsteigen zu himmlischen Regionen, — als wäre der Ātman anderswo zu suchen als in uns selbst.' Further on, DEUSSEN asked: 'Wer fühlt nicht den innern Widerspruch dieser Worte, und daß es, wenn der Ātman wirklich meine Seele ist, keines Hingehens mehr zu ihm bedarf!'⁵

Śaṅkara — for whom the subject of this passage is the meditation on "qualified brahman" (*saguṇa-brahman*) — says basically the same thing: '... The word

¹ "Ditthaṃ Sutaṃ Mutam Viññātaṃ", *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula*, London, 1980, pp. 10-15. The passage in question occurs at *Majjhima-Nikāya* I, pp. 135-136. The editions of Pali texts quoted here are those of the Pali Text Society.

² See references in K. BHATTACHARYA, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le bouddhisme ancien*, Paris, 1973 (Publications de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient, vol. XC), p. 10, n. 4 to p. 9.

³ "A Note on Attā in the *Alagaddūpama-sutta*", *Studies in Indian Philosophy: A Memorial Volume in Honour of Pandit Sukhlalji Sanghvi*, Ahmedabad, 1981 (LD Series, 84), pp. 19-29.

⁴ See *L'Ātman-Brahman*, *op. cit.*, p. 10, n. 4 to p. 9.

⁵ P. DEUSSEN, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie* I, 2. *Die Philosophie der Upaniṣad's*, dritte Auflage, Leipzig, 1919, p. 309.

ātman does not mean [in this passage] the inmost Self itself. For the genitive *mama* “my” conveys the meaning of a relation, and in “this I shall attain” is mentioned the relation of the object and the agent [of the action of attaining]⁶... It is without abandoning a little separation that it is stated: “I shall attain ‘this’, i.e. the *ātman*, after having departed from ‘here’, i.e. from this body.”⁷

From all we know of the attitude of early Buddhism toward Brahmanism,⁸ it is not at all surprising to find a criticism of such a doctrine in a text of the Pali Canon. And it is not reasonable to use such texts as evidence of Buddhism’s criticism of the Upaniṣadic doctrine of the *ātman*.

What is, however, meant by *loka* in the Pali passage under consideration, *loka* which is identified with *attan*? Without entering upon a polemic concerning the so-called Upaniṣadic “identification of the world and the self”,⁹ it can be said that similar expressions are found in the Upaniṣads. Thus, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* I, 4, 15: *ātmānam eva lokam upāsīta*; IV, 4, 22: *kiṃ prajāyā kariṣyāmo yeṣāṃ no ’yam ātmāyam lokah*. But, while in the Upaniṣads, this “world” is inner, and to be realized here and now, in our passage, as also in the doctrine of Śāṅḍilya, it is paradoxically conceived as the yonder world, to be attained after death.

This view does not take into account the *khandha*-s, all impermanent and hence painful, with which the common folk identify the *ātman*. In our text, it is mentioned after the five other views identifying the *ātman* with the five *khandha*-s have been enumerated. More explicitly still, we are told in the *Pārileyya-sutta* of the *Samyutta-Nikāya*, which presents the doctrine under discussion as an expression of “eternalism” (*sassatadiṭṭhi*):¹⁰

*na h’ eva kho rūpaṃ attato samanupassati, na vedanaṃ attato samanupassati, na saññāṃ ... na saṃkhāre ... na viññānaṃ attato samanupassati. api ca kho evaṃ-diṭṭhi hoti: so attā so loko, so pecca bhavissāmi nicco dhuvo sassato avipariṇāmadhammo ti.*¹¹

But can one who says: ‘After death, I shall become permanent ...’ do so without some attachment to the *khandha*-s, which constitute our individuality? We thus read in the (*e*)*soattā-sutta*:

rūpe kho, bhikkhave, sati, rūpaṃ upādāya rūpaṃ abhinivissa evaṃ diṭṭhi uppajjati: so attā so loko, so pecca bhavissāmi nicco dhuvo sassato avipariṇāmadhammo ti.

⁶ Cf. *Brahmasūtra* I, 2, 4, with Śaṅkara’s *bhāṣya*.

⁷ *na tv ātmaśabdena pratyagātmaivocya, mameti saṣṭhyāḥ sambandhārthapratyāyakatvād etam abhisambhavitāsmīti ca karmakartṛtvanirdeśāt ... antardhānam iṣad aparityajyaivaitam ātmānam ito ’smāc charīrāt pretyābhisambhavitāsmīty uktam. Chāndogyopaniṣadbhāṣya* III, 14, 4, p. 174. (The editions of the Upaniṣads, with Śaṅkara’s commentary, quoted here are those of the Anandāśrama Sanskrit Series, Poona, second edition, 1902.)

⁸ See, e.g., *L’Ātman-Brahman*, *op. cit.* (n. 2), ch. III.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14, n. 7.

¹¹ *Samyutta-Nikāya* III, p. 98.

*vedanāya ... saññāya ... saṃkhāresu ... viññāne sati, viññānaṃ upādāya viññānaṃ abhinivissa evaṃ diṭṭhi uppajjati ...*¹²

This view, as well as the “nihilism” (*ucchedadiṭṭhi*), which does not arise either without some attachment to the *khandha*-s, is condemned.

So much for this view. Professor NORMAN only touches upon the fifth view mentioned in our passage, viz. the one that identifies the *ātman* with the fifth *khandha*, the *viññāna*.¹³ But the terms in which this view is expressed — *yam p’ idam diṭṭhaṃ sutam mutam viññātam pattam pariyesitam anuvicaritam manasā tam pi ’etaṃ mama, eso ’ham asmi, eso me attā’ ti samanupassati* — have given rise to some discussion.

These words have been contrasted with those of Yājñavalkya in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*:

*ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ. Maitreyi, ātmano vā are darśanena śravaṇena matyā vijñānenedaṃ sarvaṃ viditam (ātmani khalv are drṣṭe śrute mate vijñāta idam sarvaṃ viditam).*¹⁴

However, no sensible reader of the Upaniṣads will believe that in the Upaniṣads, and particularly with the great thinker Yājñavalkya,¹⁵ the *ātman*, the Absolute (and not the psycho-physical being), can be seen, as you see, for instance, a cow, or shown as one shows a cow by holding it by its horns.¹⁶ This interpretation — if it can be called an interpretation at all — is contradicted by *all* statements of Yājñavalkya:

*yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati ... tad itara itaraṃ paśyati, tad itara itaraṃ śṛṇoti ... tad itara itaraṃ manute, tad itara itaraṃ vijānāti. yatra vā asya sarvaṃ ātmaivābhūt ... tat kena kaṃ paśyet, tat kena kaṃ śṛṇuyāt ... tat kena kaṃ manvīta, tat kena kaṃ vijāntīyāt.*¹⁷

*na drṣṭer draṣṭāraṃ paśyer na śruteḥ śrotāraṃ śṛṇuyāt na mater mantāraṃ manvīthā na vijñāter vijñātāraṃ vijāntīyāt.*¹⁸

*adrṣṭo draṣṭāśrutaḥ śrotāmato mantāvijñāto vijñātā.*¹⁹

*adrṣṭam draṣṭr aśrutam śrotar amatam mantr avijñātam vijñāt.*²⁰

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 182–183. See also the passage of the *Alagaddūpama-sutta* itself at *Majjhima-Nikāya* I, pp. 138–139.

¹³ See “*Diṭṭhaṃ Sutam Mutam Viññātam*”, *loc. cit.*, p. 11 and n. 3.

¹⁴ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* II, 4, 5; IV, 5, 6.

¹⁵ Cf. DEUSSEN, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

¹⁶ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* III, 4. — *vispaṣṭam śṛṅge gṛhīvā yathā gāṃ darśayati*, Śaṅkara *ad loc.*, p. 441.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* II, 4, 14 (cf. IV, 5, 15). Cf. *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* VII, 24. The passage has been discussed in *L’Ātman-Brahman*, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* III, 4, 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* III, 7, 23.

²⁰ *Ibid.* III, 8, 11.

The four empirical “ways of knowledge”, *dr̥ṣṭi*, *śr̥uṭi*, *mati*, *viññāna* (*viññāti*), are recognized in Buddhism as well as in the Upaniṣads.²¹ But the Absolute is beyond them. The *dr̥ṣṭi* that Yājñavalkya speaks of with reference to the *ātman* is a “seeing” of a different kind. It is the vision of the Absolute, which cannot even be properly called a vision, being beyond the subject-object split. Echoes of the four stages of spiritual knowledge mentioned by Yājñavalkya are also found in the Pali Canon.²²

Scholars have been prone to see polemics against the Upaniṣads in Buddhist texts when they actually talk about different matters, or even when they say the same thing.²³ The Buddha’s rejection of the views that identify the *ātman* with the *khandha*-s (*eso ’ham asmi*) cannot be interpreted as a rejection of the *tat tvam asi* of Uddālaka Āruṇi,²⁴ which, correctly understood, implies the negation expressed by the Buddha (*n’ eso ’ham asmi*).²⁵

²¹ Cf. also Śaṅkara, *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* I, 3, 19: *dr̥ṣṭiśr̥utimativijñātayo hi jīvasya svarūpam ... sarvo hi jīvaḥ paśyaṅ śr̥ṇvan manvāno vijñānan vyavaharati* (*Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya*, with the Commentaries *Bhāmatī*, *Kalpataru* and *Parimala*, ed. Anantaḥṛṣṇa ŚĀSTRĪ, Bombay: Nirmaya Sāgar Press, second edition, 1938, p. 304).

²² “*Diṭṭham Sutam Mutam Viññātam*”, *loc. cit.*, p. 12–13. Śaṅkara’s disciple Sureśvara gives an interpretation of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* passage which differs from the Master’s. See *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣyavārttika* with Ānandajñāna’s *Śāstraprakāśikā*, Poona, 1892–1894 (Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series, 16), pp. 1068 ff., vv. 212 ff. But that is a different matter, and it does not affect our standpoint here.

²³ In one instance, at least, the Buddha’s words have been attributed to his opponent — against the Tradition, and at the risk of absurdity — simply because the idea expressed by those words does not tally with the scholars’ own notion of Buddhism. See *L’Ātman-Brahman*, *op. cit.*, p. 54, n. 2; also my review of C. A. SCHERRER-SCHAUB, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti* in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 22 (1994), p. 392. Others have, more modestly, relegated the same words to a ‘precanonical’ or ‘pre-Hīnayānistic’ Buddhism.

²⁴ NORMAN, *loc. cit.*, p. 23.

²⁵ *L’Ātman-Brahman*, *op. cit.*, pp. 72–73.

Nāgārjuna’s Logic*

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Some years ago Claus OETKE published several articles¹ dealing with the arguments and teaching of Nāgārjuna’s Mūlamadhyamakakārikās (MMK) and Vīgrahavyāvartanī (VV). In these articles he corrected a number of mistaken notions that existed in connection with these texts, and analysed their most important arguments. He dedicated a whole article to one type of argument, which recurs frequently in Nāgārjuna’s work.² This article, the problem it studies and the solution it offers, is the subject of this paper. The type of argument concerned has the following structure: There can be no entities of a certain kind F that are G, and there can be no entities of the same kind F that are not-G. An argument of this type can only lead to the conclusion that there cannot be any entity of the kind F, provided, of course, that the premises are correct. It is here, however, that the difficulties begin.

Let us consider an example. It occurs in the first verse of chapter 21 of the MMK, where it is stated that there is no destruction without or together with production, and that there is also no production either without or together with destruction. OETKE draws in this connection attention to what he calls the “temporal-atemporal ambiguity” — there is no destruction while there is production, but there certainly is destruction later on — and observes: “the fallacious character of the argument, if based on the ‘temporal-atemporal ambiguity’, is so obvious that it seems quite improbable that the author of the MMK should not have noticed it”. Indeed, saying that there is no destruction without production means that there is no destruction that has not been preceded by production; the statement that there is no destruction together with production, on the other hand, means that the two do not occur simultaneously. OETKE then concludes: “we must either assume that Nāgārjuna being well aware of the unconvincingness of his reasoning intended for some reason to present such an argument here or assume that his argument was subject to tacit presuppositions which either strengthened the force of the reasoning or made the aim of the proof weaker than it appears to be”. The

* This article is the somewhat belated outcome of a seminar on Nāgārjuna organised by Prof. T. E. VETTER at Leiden University in 1979/1980. See in this connection VETTER, 1982; 1982a.

¹ See the bibliography at the end of this article.

² OETKE, 1990. See further OETKE, 1988: 53f.; 1989: 10f.; 1991: 320; 1992: 208 Anm. 21.