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edited by T.W. Rhys Davids under the title *The Yogāvacara's Manual of Indian Mysticism as Practised by Buddhists*. It was published by the Pali Text Society in 1896. This book has remained the only Sinhala work published in the series of the Pali Text Society. The text was discovered in 1892 or 1893 by the Anāgarika Dharmapāḷa in the Bambaragallavihāra in Teldeniya, and a copy of the manuscript in this *vihāra* was prepared for T.W. Rhys Davids whose edition was based on this copy. The discovery of the work was of the greatest importance for the modern revival of Buddhist meditation in Sri Lanka (see H. Bechert, *Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft*, vol. 1, Frankfurt 1966, pp. 49f.).

## Brahman in the Pali Canon and in the Pali Commentaries

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In a paper entitled 'On the Brahman in Buddhist Literature', published in *Sri Venkateswara University Oriental Journal* (Tirupati), 1975, I promised a study of the different interpretations of the term *brahman* - given in the Pali commentaries. I have not yet been able to fulfil that promise. Nor has this question been studied by anybody else, so far as I am aware. In this paper I propose to take up again the question of *brahman* - in Buddhist literature, particularly in the Pali Canon, - an important but highly controversial question which I studied in the article mentioned above as well as in other publications, especially in my book *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (1973) - and I wish to concentrate on the different interpretations given in the Pali commentaries.

The study of the traditional commentaries, however interesting it may be in itself, in Buddhism as elsewhere, does not at all imply a total commitment to the interpretations they give. Distortion of ancient thoughts by later interpreters is a fairly common phenomenon. But we, coming even later, run the risk of distorting even more; and experience has proved, in the field of the study of the Pali Canon, as in other branches of Buddhist studies and of Indian studies in general, that an intimate knowledge of the traditional interpretations would have saved scholars, and not the least ones, from some pitfalls. On the other hand, a blind reliance on the traditional commentaries procures, indeed, a sense of security, but often at the cost of truth. In these circumstances, one should know the commentaries, but make it a principle not to follow them blindly.

In the present instance, the very existence of divergent interpretations of a single point, within the same traditions, makes them suspect. Furthermore, one of these interpretations, as we shall see later, poses a serious problem of harmonization with the Canon itself. But it is important to know these very facts: they show, at least, that the original meaning was lost or obliterated by the Tradition. And it is the duty of the scholars to retrieve it.

After a discussion of the traditional interpretations, I shall in this paper consider the major interpretations of *brahman* - given by modern scholars and, finally, present my own interpretation. This interpretation is not really new, as I had already presented it in my earlier publications. But it will be presented here in a new light, after a more detailed study of the commentaries than I had been able to do before, - a study which, unfortunately, is not yet complete, however, but beyond which the circumstances in which I had to work did not permit me to go<sup>1</sup>.

The traditional view about *brahman* - is summarized, in identical terms, in Buddhaghosa's commentary on the *Majjhima-Nikāya*, the *Papañcasūdanī*<sup>2</sup>, as well as in Buddhaddatta's commentary on the *Buddhavaṃsa*, the *Madhurattavilāsini*<sup>3</sup>. It is also given, in the same words, in the twelfth-century Pali grammar by Aggavaṃsa, the *Saddanūti*<sup>4</sup>. Following the traditional etymology, current in the Brahmanical tradition<sup>5</sup>, the Pali commentators derive the word from the root *brūh-* (Sanskrit *brh-*), "to grow, increase". *Brahman* - let us say *Brahmā*, for our authors speak only of the masculine *Brahman* - means, according to these authorities, someone "who has been caused to grow (*brūhita-*) by such and such specific qualities" (*tehi tehi guṇavisesehi*), or someone "who grows (*brūhati*) through such and such qualities" (*tehi tehi guṇehi*)<sup>6</sup>. Different occurrences of the word in the Pali Canon are enumerated and its meanings in different instances defined. *Brahmā*, it is said, is used in the following meanings: "Great *Brahmā*" (*Mahābrahmā*), "Tathāgata", "brahmin" (*brāhmaṇa-*), "the parents" (*mātāpitāro*), "the highest" (*setṭha-*). In such instances as *sahasso Brahmā*, *dvisahasso Brahmā*<sup>7</sup>, *Brahmā* means "Great *Brahmā*" (*Mahābrahmā*). In such instances as *Brahmā ti*, *bhikkhave*, *tathāgatass' etam adhivacanam*<sup>8</sup>, *Brahmā* means "Tathāgata". In such instances as *Suttanipāta* 1133, *Brahmā* means "brahmin" (*brāhmaṇa-*)<sup>9</sup>. When it is said: *Brahmā ti mātāpitāro pubbacariyā ti vuccare*<sup>10</sup>, the word means "the parents" (*mātāpitāro*). Finally, when it is said: *brahmacakkaṃ pavatteti*<sup>11</sup>, *Brahmā* means "the highest" (*setṭha-*)<sup>12</sup>. The *Saddanūti*<sup>13</sup> in this connection has the following verse which gives in a nutshell all the meanings of *Brahman*-

*Mahābrahmani vippe ca atho mātāpitūsu ca /  
tathāgate ca setṭhe ca brahmasaddo pavattati //*

How uncertain this tradition was is, however, seen immediately after. The *Saddanūti*<sup>14</sup> records another interpretation, which is the same as that given by Dhammapāla in his commentary *Paramatthamañjūsā* (*Mahāṭīkā*) on Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*<sup>15</sup> - a fact which, so far as I am aware, was not noticed before. According to this second- and perhaps later -interpretation, there are three kinds of *Brahmās* (*tividhā Brahmāno*): *sammutibrahmāno* "Brahmās by convention", *upapattibrahmāno* "Brahmās by birth", *visuddhibrahmāno* "Brahmās by purity", to which is added a fourth, "the supreme *Brahmā*" (*uttamābrahmā*)<sup>16</sup>, namely the "Perfectly Enlightened One" (*sammāsambuddha*). The three kinds of "gods", *sammutidevā*, *upapattidevā* and *visuddhidevā*, are mentioned elsewhere in Pali literature. Here the word *brahma* - in the utterance *brahmacakkaṃ pavatteti* is considered to be a substantivized adjective<sup>17</sup>, referring to the "Noble Doctrine" (*brahman ti ariyadhammo vuccati*). And we are told that the "Noble Ones" (*ariyā*) who have sprung forth from this, - as personal manifestations as it were of this impersonal principle<sup>18</sup>, -are without discrimination called "Brahmās by purity", for they are "Brahmās in the true sense" (*paramatthabrahmatāya*). In particular, however, we are told, by virtue of such utterances as *Brahmā ti*, *bhikkhave*, *tathāgatass' etam adhivacanam*<sup>19</sup>, the "Perfectly Enlightened One" is called "the supreme *Brahmā*", because, by his qualities which are "the highest", he has attained the highest degree of excellence in the world including the gods<sup>20</sup>.

In another connection, too, the *Saddanūti* interprets *brahma*- as a substantivized adjective. While discussing the verbal root *bhū-*, Aggavaṃsa takes up the question of *brahmabhūta*- and similar expressions, and, following the interpretations given in the *Aṭṭhakathās* and in the *Tīkā*s, proposes to explain their meanings by referring to the two verbal roots *bhū-* belonging to two different groups and used, respectively, in the sense of "being" (*sattā-*) [etc. <sup>21</sup>], and in that of "attaining" (*patti-* = Sanskrit *prāpti-*)<sup>22</sup>. *Brahmabhūta*- is thus explained: "*Brahmā*, in the sense of 'the highest'" ; or *brahma*- (substantivized adjective) means "The Way" (*magga-*), and one is *brahmabhūta*- because one has attained it<sup>23</sup>.

Here again, it is clear that the tradition is not sure.

There is no doubt that by *brahmā* (whatever it may be), in the Pali Canon, *Nirvāna* is often meant. For instance, in several texts we find the formula: *so anattantapo aparantapo diṭṭhe vā dhamme nicchāto nibbuto sūtibhūto sukhapaṭisaṃveḍḍi brahmabhūtena attanā viharati*<sup>24</sup>. The *Samyutta-Nikāya* in one passage says of the Arahants: *loke anupalitā te brahmabhūtā anāsava*<sup>25</sup>. A Sanskrit text, Bhikṣu Vīryaśrīdatta's commentary on the *Arthaviniścaya-Sūtra*, clearly says: *nirvāṇaṃ brahmocyate, paramapradhānatvāt. kuta etat? 'ity api sa bhagavān śāntaḥ sūtibhūto brahmībhūta' iti Sūtrāt*<sup>26</sup>. The term *parama-*, used in this passage, recalls *setṭha-* of the Pali commentaries, and both Vīryaśrīdatta and the authors of these commentaries had perhaps the same thing in mind. Buddhaghosa, for instance, in his various comments, glosses *brahmabhūtena attanā* by *setṭhabhūtena attanā*. In numerous other instances, too, Buddhaghosa uses this term *setṭha-* to gloss *brahmā*, and the term *setṭha-*, as well as *parama-* in the commentary on the *Arthaviniścaya-Sūtra*, has led some scholars to think that these commentators had in the mind the neuter *brahman*-, which they interpreted in the sense of "the highest" in order to indicate that it designates the Absolute -- as it does in the Upaniṣadic tradition<sup>27</sup> (whatever may be, in the eyes of these scholars, the difference between the Upaniṣadic conception of the Absolute and the Buddhist conception of it). But, as we have already seen, with the Pali commentators, *setṭha*- "the highest" is one of the meanings of *Brahman*- (masculine), which neither in the Upaniṣads nor in Buddhism can designate the Absolute. It might be thought that, in the first interpretation noted earlier, "the highest" (*setṭha-*) is one of the conventional meanings of the word *Brahman* - having nothing to do with the *Brahmā* gods (Buddhism knows several of them). But it is not so; for the commentators - as we are going to see - do refer to the Brahmas by the term *setṭha-*. The *Brahmās*, it is true, hold an important place in the Pali Canon. But, as I have tried to show elsewhere<sup>28</sup>, this was merely a concession to the beliefs prevalent in the time when Buddhism originated. Sometimes the Buddha and the Arahants are called *Brahmās*. For the Brahmanical ritual practices Buddhism substituted ethical-meditational practices, the famous *Brahmavihāras*, as the means to attain to the world of the *Brahmās* (*Brahmaloka*) and to live in communion with them (*Brahmasahavyatā*, which is the same as the *Brahmasāyujya* of the ritualists, as the *Abhidharmadīpa* shows beyond all doubt<sup>29</sup>), to be equal to the *Brahmas* (*Brahmasama-*), to attain to the status of the Brahmas (*Brahmapatta-*): these practices, we are told, are typical of the Brahmas<sup>30</sup>. However, the *Brahmaloka*- is no longer "the highest" in the real sense as it used to be with the ritualists, nor have the *Brahmās* a claim any more to unconditionedness<sup>31</sup>. The

*Brahmavihāras*, like all other meditational practices, are considered to be impermanent because they are conditioned<sup>32</sup>. Nevertheless, Buddhaghosa uses the term *seṭṭha*- in relation to the *Brahmās* and the *Brahmavihāras*. Evidently, he cannot mean by “the highest”, in this context, what the *Brahmās* themselves mean when they claim to be so — the highest Reality<sup>33</sup>. What he means is purely ethical. He says, indeed, in the *Visuddhimagga*<sup>34</sup>, while explaining the expression *Brahmavihāra* :

*Seṭṭhatthena tāva niddosabhāvena c’ ettha brāhmavihārata veditabbā. sattesu sammāpaṭipattibhāvena hi seṭṭhā ete vihārā. yathā ca Brahmāno niddosacittā viharanti evam etehi sampayuttā yogino Brahasamā hutvā viharantīti seṭṭhatthena niddosabhāvena ca Brahmavihārā itī vuccanti.*

“It should be understood that the *Brahmavihāras* are so called in the sense of ‘the highest’ and because of their faultless nature. For these practices, in being the right mode of conduct toward beings, are the highest. And, as the *Brahmās* live with faultless thoughts, so do the *yogins*, who, being associated with these practices, become equal to the *Brahmas*. Thus these practices are called *Brahmavihāras* in the sense of ‘the highest’ and because of their faultless nature”<sup>35</sup>.

To the idea of “the highest” (*seṭṭha*-) Buddhaghosa adds here that of “faultlessness” (*niddosabhāva*). This occurs elsewhere too. Thus Buddhaghosa explains the expression *Brahmaputta*- in the *Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (II, p. 184) : *Brahmapattā ti niddosaṭṭhena Brahmabhāvasādhakam Brahmavihāram*...<sup>36</sup>. In the *Sāratthappakāsinī*, he explains *seṭṭha*- “the highest” itself by “faultlessness”, when he interprets the expression *brahmayāna*-<sup>37</sup>.

As we saw earlier, according to the conventions established by the commentators, one of the meanings of *Brahmā*, in the Canon, is “the parents” (*mātāpitāro*). This, of course, does not throw any light on the utterance that is cited to illustrate this “meaning” : *Brahmā ti mātāpitāro* .... In actual practice, however, the commentators say that the word *Brahmā* is used, here also, in the sense of “the highest” (*seṭṭha*-)<sup>38</sup>, and they compare the attitudes of the parents toward their children in different periods of their (the children’s) life to the four *Brahmavihāras* which characterize the *Brahmās*. Thus Buddhaghosa writes in the *Manorathapūraṇī*, while commenting upon *Āṅguttara-Nikāya*, I, p. 132: *Brahmā ti mātāpitāro ti seṭṭhādhivacanam. yathā Mahābrahmuno catasso bhāvanā avijahitā honti : mettā karuṇā muditā upekkhā ti, evam eva mātāpitunnam puttesu catasso bhāvanā avijahitā honti* ...<sup>39</sup>. (We need not go into the details here.) Dhammapāla, Buddhaghosa’s continuator, writes similarly when he comments on *Itivuttaka*, p. 110.<sup>40</sup>

All this seems irreproachable. But how can Nirvāṇa be called *Brahma*, even in this specific sense of “the highest”? As we are going to see, the commentators themselves do not seem to be quite at ease on this point. However, the instance cited earlier is not the only one where *brahmā*°, in relation to the highest Truth, is interpreted in this sense. There are many passages in the Canon where the Buddha is called *brahmabhūta*°, and the expression is often used along with *dhammanbhūta*°<sup>41</sup>. Undoubtedly *brahmā*°

and *dhamma* are considered to be synonyms. Thus in the *Aggañña-Sutta* of the *Dīgha-Nikāya*<sup>42</sup> we read: *tathāgatassa h’ etam adhivacanam : dhammakāyo itī pi brahmakāyo itī pi, dhammabhūto itī pi brahmabhūto itī pi*, “The Tathāgata is so called : *Dhammakāya*- ‘One whose body is *brahmā*°; *Dhammabhūta*- ‘One who is (or : has become) the *Dhamma*°, or *brahmabhūta* ‘One who is (or : has become) *brahmā*°’”. Here also, Buddhaghosa has nothing else to say than : *Dhammo hi seṭṭhatthena Brahmā ti vuccati*°<sup>43</sup>, “The *Dhamma* is called *Brahmā*, in the sense of ‘the highest’”. But, whatever the meaning of the term *dhamma*- in this and similar context, — the Doctrine, or the “ninefold supramundane *Dhamma*” (*navavidha lokuttaradhamma*-), or “the true nature” (*aviparītasabhāva*-), as the commentators say<sup>44</sup>, — in no way, it seems, is it possible to equate *Dhamma* with *Brahmā* — unless we have recourse to a figurative explanation similar to the one *Dhammapāla* seems to suggest when he elucidates the designation *Brahma* given to the Buddha in *Theragāthā* 182 : the Buddha is so called because he is “the highest” in the world including the gods (just as the *Brahmās* claim to be<sup>45</sup>)<sup>46</sup>.

The early commentators themselves, it seems, are not always at ease when they resort to this equation. Thus, while commenting upon *Theragāthā* 689, — a verse attributed to Udāyi-Thera, which occurs also in the *Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (III, p. 346), and where by *brahmā*° Nirvāṇa is clearly meant, since one of the manuscripts of the *Āṅguttara* adds to *brahmapathe* the gloss *amatapathe*<sup>47</sup>, — *Dhammapāla* first states that by *brahmapatha*- the four *Brahmavihāras* are meant ; but he then gives an alternative interpretation according to which the first member of the compound is *brahma*°, an adjective (= Sanskrit *brāhma*-), meaning “the highest” (*seṭṭha*-)<sup>48</sup>. In various other contexts, too, *brahmā*° is interpreted as an adjective. As we saw earlier, in the enumeration of the different “meanings” of *Brahmā* the sentence *brahmacakkaṃ pavatteti* — which often occurs in place of *dhammacakkaṃ pavatteti*, being one more illustration of the equivalence *brahmā*° = *dhamma*- — is cited to illustrate the meaning “the highest” (*seṭṭha*-). But, in actual practice, we find the first member of the compound *brahmacakka*- interpreted as the adjective *brahma*- “the highest” : *ettha brahman ti seṭṭham uttamam viṣiṭṭham*<sup>49</sup> ; *brahman ti seṭṭham viṣiṭṭham*<sup>50</sup> ; *ettha brahman ti seṭṭham uttamam, visuddhassa dhammacakkass’ etam adhivacanam*<sup>51</sup>. In *brahmacariya*- (= Sanskrit *brahmacarya*-), — an expression that in the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* designates the discipline that leads to the *brahman*, and which, according to the Buddhist tradition, designates the discipline — the “Noble Eightfold Path” (*ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo*) — that leads to Nirvāṇa, called *Brahmā*<sup>52</sup>, — *brahmā*° is sometimes interpreted in the same manner<sup>53</sup>. In the Canon itself, *brahma*- (as a simple word) is sometimes found used as an adjective, and the commentators gloss it by *seṭṭha*- “the highest” : thus in *Suttanipāta*<sup>54</sup> 151 and 285, in connection with the *Brahmavihāras* ; in the *Samyutta-Nikāya* in connection with *yāna*-<sup>55</sup>. On the other hand, there are in the old commentaries instances of interpretation where *brahma*- can be understood as a substantivized adjective. Thus, in one passage of the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, Buddhaghosa interprets *brahmacārī* (n)- as follows : *seṭṭhatthena brahman ariyamaggaṃ carantīti brahmacārī*<sup>56</sup>. It may be thought that, for Buddhaghosa, *brahma*- here is a substantivized adjective, meaning “the highest” (*seṭṭha*-) and designating the “Noble Path” (*ariyamagga*-) — an interpretation that we found recorded in the *Saddanīti*<sup>57</sup>. A doubt is cast upon this way of understanding by what *Dhammapāla* says in the *Itivuttaka-Aṭṭhakathā*<sup>58</sup>. He first interprets *brahmacārīn*- as *brahman seṭṭham carantīti brahmacārī*

— an interpretation where, again, *brahma*- can be understood as a substantivized adjective. But, immediately after, he gives an alternative interpretation which brings us back to *Brahmā* “the highest” : *Brahmā vā seṭṭho ācāro etassa atthūti brahmacārī*. According to this interpretation, therefore, *Brahmā*, in this context, means “the highest conduct” (*seṭṭho ācāro*) ; and, if this interpretation is to be taken seriously, in the *Sumaṅgalavilāsini* passage also we have to understand *brahman*, not as the Accusative singular of *brahma*-, substantivized adjective, but as the Accusative singular of *Brahma* (n)- (masculine), designating the “Noble Path”. In Dhammapala’s first interpretation, of course, we have to understand *brahman* similarly, and the word is explained there as meaning “the highest” (*seṭṭha*). And the same would be the case with *brahman*, in other interpretations of *brahmacārī*(n)- and *sabrahmacārī*(n)-<sup>59</sup>, as well as in the interpretation that Dhammapāla gives of *brahmabhūta*- in the *Itivuttaka-Atthakathā* <sup>60</sup> : (*brahmabhūtaṃ*) *brahman vā seṭṭham arahattaphalam pattam*, — an interpretation according to which this expression means “one who has attained the highest Fruit consisting in Arahantship”<sup>61</sup>. However, in the Sinhalese edition of the *Nettipakaraṇa-Atthakathā*<sup>62</sup>, we find the following interpretation of *sabrahmacārī*- : *brahman vuccati seṭṭhatthēna sakalam satthusāsanaṃ. samaṃ saha vā brahman carati paṭipajjati sabrahmacārī*. “The entire teaching of the Buddha is called *brahma*- in the sense of ‘the highest’ .... “Here there can be no question of *Brahmā*. And Buddhaghosa does use *brahma*- as a substantivized adjective, designating Omniscience (*sabbāññuāñña*-), “in the sense of ‘the highest’”, when he explains the expression *brahmajāla*- in the *Brahmajāla-Sutta* : *yasmā ca ettha seṭṭhatthēna brahman sabbāññuāññaṃ vibhattam tasmā Brahmajālan ti pi naṃ dhārehi* <sup>63</sup>. Beautifully, Mahānāma, in the *Saddhamappakāsini* (*Paṭisambhidāmagga-Atthakathā*), explains *brahmacariya*- as designating that conduct which leads to Nirvāṇa, called *brahma*- “in the sense of ‘the highest’” (*uttamatthēna*) : *uttamatthēna nibbāṇaṃ* <sup>64</sup> *brahman nāma. sikkhāttayaṃ nibbānatthāya pavattanato brahmatthāya cariyā ti brahmacariyan ti vuccati* <sup>65</sup>. And again : *ariyamaggo nibbāṇena samsandanato brahmatthāya cariyā ti brahmacariyan ti vuccati* <sup>66</sup>. The Sanskrit *Arthavinīśaya-Śūtra*, to which reference has already been made, uses the compound *brāhmacakra*- as well as the uncompounded expression *brāhman cakram* <sup>67</sup>, — where, evidently, *brāhma*- is an adjective <sup>68</sup>. But it also uses the compound *brāhmanvihāra*-, where the commentator, Bhikṣu Vīryasrīdatta, interprets *brāhma* as a substantivized adjective, meaning “the great” (*brhat*), — in accordance with the etymology that was noted earlier <sup>69</sup>, an etymology by virtue of which *brhat*- is often used as a synonym of *brahman*- in the Brahmanical tradition<sup>70</sup>, — : *brhad brāhman. maitryādibhāvanāyā brhatphalatvāt. ato brāhmanvihāra iti* <sup>71</sup>. According to this interpretation, the *brāhmanvihāras* are so called because they “procure great results”.

A question may now be asked : Why not take *brahman*, in the Pali commentaries just cited and in the passages of the *Paramatthamañjūsā* and the *Saddanūti* quoted earlier, as the Nominative-Accusative singular of the neuter noun *brahma* (n)-, rather than — as I have been doing — as the Nominative-Accusative singular of *brahma*-, substantivized adjective, which is also neuter ? Although I do not exclude this possibility, in the present state of my documentation I do not think it is so. Further light on this question may be thrown by the *Ṭīkā*s on the *Atthakathās* ; but these, with the exception of the *Dīghanikāyattakathāṭīkā* : *Līnatthavannanā*, which has been published by the Pali Text Society

and the Burmese edition of the *Vajirabuddhiṭīkā* on the *Samantapāsādikā*, which I was able to consult at the Library of Congress before writing this article, have not been available to me because they are available neither in Paris nor in Washington ; and neither in these two *Ṭīkā*s nor in the other works which I have consulted in the Siamese and Sinhalese editions<sup>72</sup>, have I found any information on this point<sup>73</sup>. Relying on my own light, therefore, I hold, for the present, that *brahman* in these commentaries does not represent the Upaniṣadic *brahman*-. The interpretation of *brahma* in the sense of the masculine *Brahmā*, in those compounds which refer to the highest Truth, is very odd indeed, as we have seen. I have the impression that it was to remove this oddness and to give the word a neutral character that *brahma* was later interpreted, first as an adjective and then as a substantivized adjective designating various concepts : the Noble Doctrine, the Noble Path, Nirvāṇa .... The neuter *brahman*- of the Upaniṣads was in the background, it seems ; but, in their eagerness to isolate Buddhism from the Brahmanical tradition, the Pali commentators refused to recognize it in those canonical passages where it could be easily recognized. In the *Atthakathās* I know of no clear instance of use of the neuter word *brahma* (n)- in the context with which we are concerned here. Buddhaghosa does use it, but in the sense of “Vedic text” and in that of “brahminhood”, in his fanciful etymologies<sup>74</sup>.

Whatever may be the verdict of the *Ṭīkā*s, which, I hope, I shall have an opportunity to see some day or other, one thing is clear : there were, within the Theravāda tradition, divergent interpretations of the prior member of various compounds, all relating to the highest Truth. In the midst of this confusion, a historical investigation into the problem seems required. The modern scholars are extremely divided on this issue. The divergence of their opinions runs parallel, as it were, to that of the opinions expressed by the Pali commentators. Some of these scholars -- and they seem to represent the majority -- hold that “the neuter Brahman is entirely unknown in the Nikāyas”. This is how T.W. Rhys Davids expressed himself long ago, and he seems to have many followers even nowadays<sup>75</sup>. Others -- not to take into account those who are not able to distinguish between the neuter *brahman*- and the masculine *Brahman*-, while admitting that the Pali Canon does use the Upaniṣadic term *brahman*- (neuter) in such compounds as *brahmabhūta*-, hold that it is given there a new signification. This was, especially, the opinion of Wilhelm Geiger, the scholar who made the most substantial contribution to the elucidation of this problem. Geiger clearly perceived that the Buddha was using the Upaniṣadic terminology. *Brahman*-, we have seen, is not seldom identified in the Pali Canon with *Dhamma*- : and Geiger showed that this fact has its antecedents in the Upaniṣadic tradition itself. Nevertheless, under the influence of the ideas generally received about the Buddha’s philosophical position, he believed that with the Buddha, the term *dhamma*- (=Sanskrit *dharma*-) was but a “venerable receptacle that he filled up with new content” (... *das ehrwürdige Gefäß, das er mit neuem Inhalt füllte*). The Buddha’s intention was, thought Geiger, to replace the idea of *brahman*- with that of *dhamma*-, i.e. to replace the idea of eternity with that of change, the idea of *ātman*- with that of non-*ātman*- (*anattā*). So the term *brahman*-, in Geiger’s view, acquired with the Buddha “a peculiar coloration, a new illumination” (*eine besondere Färbung, eine neue Beleuchtung*)<sup>76</sup>.

There is nothing in the Canon to substantiate these ideas.

The Buddha, steering between the two extreme standpoints, eternalism (*sassatavāda*-) on the one hand and nihilism (*ucchedavāda*-) on the other, did condemn eternalism. But what is meant by "eternity" in this context? As several canonical texts show, it is nothing but *time extended*, either in this world or in a higher world<sup>77</sup>. The Buddha did admit an Absolute that is eternal, in the sense that it is timeless, — an Absolute that is not born and which, consequently, neither decays nor dies. It is enough, for being convinced of this, to have a glance at the *Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*, p. 364, giving the various epithets of Nibbāna: *accutam padam, acalattānam, amatam, dhuvam, niccām, sassatam*. Buddhaghosa, in the *Visuddhimagga*, clearly explains: *appabhavattā ajarāmarāṇam; pabhavajarāmarāṇānam abhāvato niccām*<sup>78</sup>. He also refers to the epithets of Nibbāna: *sassata*-, etc.<sup>79</sup>. Similarly in the *Upaniṣads*, the *brahman*- is eternal only in this sense; they also reject the idea of a temporal eternity.

Thus it seems that Buddhism is both "eternalist" and "non-eternalist", just as the *Upaniṣads* are, — depending on how "eternity" is conceived of.

Similar is the case with *anattā*. If by *ātman*- (*Pali attan*-) is meant the psychophysical individual or any of the elements — however privileged it may be, particularly consciousness (*viññāna*-; *Pali viññāṇa*) — of which this individual is composed, then the *Upaniṣads* deny *ātman*- as much the Buddha does. But, if the equation *atman*- = *brahman*- means — as it really does — that the individual in its inmost essence is not an individual but the Being itself — an identity which it realizes in Liberation, through negation of its individuality — then the Buddha admits the *atman*- as much as the *Upaniṣads* do. The *pudgala*- / *puggala*- of Buddhism has nothing to do with the *ātman-brahman*- of the *Upaniṣads*. There is a great deal of difference between the *Upaniṣadic* conception of *ātman*- and the conceptions of *ātman*- as found in other Brahmanical systems, e.g. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, with whose *ātman*- the *pudgala*- of the *Pudgalavādins* has much in common<sup>80</sup>.

Considering all these facts, I do not see any insuperable difficulty in adopting a straightforward solution to the problem under discussion, namely that the concept of *brahman*- in the Pali Canon is the same as that with which the *Upaniṣads* have made us familiar. The cases where the Absolute is clearly meant should be carefully distinguished from others where *Brahmā* is referred to, e.g., the case of the *Brahmavihāras* and that of the utterance *Brahmā ti mātāpitāro* ....<sup>81</sup>. As for the fact that the Buddha is sometimes called *Brahma* in the Canon, we should not see there — as Geiger saw — a confusion between the neuter *brahman*- and the masculine *Brahman*- — a confusion which is sometimes noticed in the early *Upaniṣads* themselves<sup>82</sup>. As I have tried to show elsewhere<sup>83</sup>, in these cases — which, again, should be carefully distinguished from those where the Buddha and the Arahants are compared to *Brahmā*, as a concession to the belief prevalent in the time — *Brahmā* means *brāhmaṇa* -, as it also does in the Brahmanical tradition. And the Buddha and the Arahants are often called *brāhmaṇa*- in the Buddhist tradition; whether we should understand by this term *brahmavid* - "knower of the *brahman*-", i.e. "one who has become the *brahman*-" (*brahmabhūta*-), as in the *Upaniṣadic* tradition, also echoed by a Buddhist text in Sanskrit: *brahmavid brāhmaṇo Brahmā brahmanirvāṇam āptvān*<sup>84</sup>, or "one who has expelled evil" (*bāhitapāpa*), following the fanciful but pregnant etymology of the Buddhists<sup>85</sup>, is a different matter.

The specific expressions that are employed in the Pali Canon seem to suggest, however, a stage of

development later than the earliest *Upaniṣads*, although the ideas expressed can be traced there<sup>86</sup>. Thus the expression *brahmabhūta*- is found, e.g., in the *Bhagavadgītā*, which also uses the expression *brahmanirvāṇa*-. But the idea is as old as the *Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad* (IV, 4,6) : *brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti*. Attaining the *brahman*-, i.e. Liberation, is, indeed, nothing short of being it. The expression *brahmapatta*-, in the sense of "one who has attained the *brahman*-" (and not "the status of *Brahmā*", as it is the case sometimes<sup>87</sup>), occurs once in the *Majjhima-Nikāya*, and its Sanskrit equivalent, *brahmaprāpta*-, is found in the *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad*. The expression *brahmapatha* -<sup>88</sup>, in the specific sense of "the way that leads to the *brahman*-" (and not "to *Brahmā*", as in a passage of the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* as well as in a passage of the *Samyutta-Nikāya*), is found in the *Maitri-Upaniṣad*, and has its equivalent in the *Bhagavadgītā*: *brahmaṇaḥ pathi* (glossed by Śaṅkara as *brahmaprāptimārga*), which in its turn recalls the Pali expression *maggo brahmapattiyā*<sup>89</sup>. It is also significant that the simile of the extinction of fire, with which is explained the concept of *Nirvāṇa* in the Buddhist texts, appears in such texts as the *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad* and the *Maitreyī*- and *Maitri-Upaniṣads*<sup>90</sup>.

The descriptions of *Nirvāṇa* in the Pali Canon recall, in many respects, those of the *brahman*- in the *Upaniṣads*<sup>91</sup>. Particularly illuminating is the fact that in two passages at least, it is conceived as the infinite, universal Consciousness (*viññāṇamanidassanāmanānāṃ sabbatopabham*), which is distinct from the empirical consciousness, better, which is attained only when this empirical consciousness has ceased (*viññāṇassa nirodhena*) — an idea brilliantly exposed by Yājñavalkya in the *Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad*<sup>92</sup>.

However, it is equally instructive that Buddhaghosa, while he perceives that *viññāṇa*-, in these passages, is a "name for Nibbāna" (*nibbānassa nāma*), refuses to admit that Consciousness is being spoken of, and gives a fanciful etymology of the word *viññāṇa* : *viññātabban ti viññāṇam; viññāṇan ti vijānitabham*. *Viññāṇa*- (as an epithet of Nibbāna) means "something to be known"<sup>93</sup>!

The existence of similarities between two traditions does not, of course, imply a total identity. But the difference between the teachings of the Pali Canon and those of the *Upaniṣads* has too often been exaggerated<sup>94</sup>. The Buddha's Absolute is the same as that of *Upaniṣads*; the gulf was created later, by the scholastic interpretations.

#### Notes and References

1. See pp. 20-21 below.
2. Vol. I, pp. 34-35. Unless otherwise specified, all my references to the Pali texts are of the Pali Text Society's editions.
3. P. 11.
4. Edited by Helmer Smith (Lund, 1928-1966), II, p. 459.
5. Cf. J. Gonda, *Notes on Brahman* (Utrecht, 1950).
6. *brūhito tehi tehi gūṇavisesehīti Brahmā : Papañcasūdanī*, loc. cit.; *Madhuratthavilasīnī*, loc. cit.

- orūha vaddhane. uparūpari brūhatīti Brahṁā... Brahṁā ti tehi tehi guṇavisesehi brūhito ti Brahṁā: Saddanīti, loc. cit. (cf. III, p. 861 : tehi tehi guṇehi brūhati vaddhatīti Brahṁā).
7. *Majjhima-Nikāya*, III, p. 101.
  8. Untraced. Cf., however, n. 38 ; p. 19 ; pp. 22-23 below. - Vasubandhu, in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, quotes the *Sūtra* : eṣa hi bhagavān Brahṁā ity api, śāntaḥ śītiḥbhūta ity api. (Cf. also *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, quoted by L. de La Vallée Poussin in his translation of the *Abhidharmakośa*, VI, p. 245, n. 2). According to Yaśomitra, this sentence was uttered by Jīvaka. *Abhidharmakośa* and *Bhāṣya of Ācārya Vasubandhu with Sphuṭārthā Commentary of Ācārya Yaśomitra*, edited by Swami Dwarikadas Shastri, part III, Varanasi, 1972 (*Bauddha Bharati Series*, 7), p. 982 : VI, 54. If this is true, then the reference is to Brahṁā, with whom the Buddha is compared because he practises the *Brahmavihāras* (cf. p. 17 below): *Majjhima-Nikāya*, I, pp. 369-370; cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien*, Paris, 1973 (*Publication de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*, XC), pp. 150-151. This, however, does not seem to be the case. See also n. 68 below.
  9. Cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman*....., pp. 149-150.
  10. *Āṅguttara-Nikāya*, I, p. 132 ; II, p. 70 ; *Itivuttaka*, p. 110 ; *Jātaka*, V, p. 331, v. 182.
  11. See references in *L'Ātman-Brahman*....., p. 91, n. 3 ; "On the Brahman in Buddhist Literature", *Sri Venkateswara University Oriental Journal* (Tirupati), XVIII (1975), p. 5, n. 27.
  12. *Brahṁā ti Mahābrahmā pi vuccati, tathāgato pi, brāhmaṇo pi, mātāpitaro pi, seṭṭham pi*. "Sahasso Brahṁā, dvisahasso Brahṁā" ti ādisu hi Mahābrahmā Brahṁā ti vuccati. "Brahṁā ti, bhikkhave, tathāgatass' etam adhvācānan" ti ettha tathāgato. "tamonudo..." (*Suttanipāta*, 1133) ti ettha brāhmaṇo. "brahmā ti mātāpitaro pubbācariyā ti vuccare" ti ettha mātāpitaro. "brahmācakkam pavatteṭi" ti ettha seṭṭham : *Papañcasūdanī*, loc. cit. ; *Saddanīti*, p. 459 ; cf. *Madhurattavilāsinī*, loc. cit.
  13. P. 459.
  14. Pp. 459-460.
  15. Siamese edition, vol. II, pp. 128-129. Dhammapāla gives this interpretation while commenting upon the expression *Brahmuttama*- "the highest among the Brahṁās", applied to the Buddha in *Visuddhimagga*, IX, 91 (in the edition by Warren and Kosambi : *Harvard Oriental Series*, 41, Cambridge, Mass., 1950; cf. *Aṭṭhasālinī*, § 423). On the vexed question whether the Dhammapāla who is credited with the authorship of the *Ṭīkā*s is the same as the one who wrote the *Aṭṭhakathā*s, cf. A. Pieris, "The Colophon to the Paramatthamañjūsā and the Discussion on the Date of Ācariya Dhammapāla", in *Buddhism in Ceylon and Studies on Religious Syncretism in Buddhist Countries* (*Symposien zur Buddhismusforschung*, I), edited by H. Bechert, Göttingen, 1978 (*Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* : philologisch-historische Klasse, Dritte Folge, Nr. 108), pp. 61-77.
  16. *Brahmuttama*- in *Visuddhimagga*, IX, 91 (cf. preceding note).
  17. Cf. p. 20 below.
  18. One may think of the relationship between the neuter *brahman* and the masculine *Brahman*- in the Brahmanical tradition.

19. Cf. n. 8 above.
20. "brahmācakkam pavatteṭi" ti ādivācānato brahman ti ariyadhammo vuccati. tato nibbattā avisesena sabbe pi ariyā visuddhibrahmāno nāma, paramatthabrahmatāya. visesato pana "Brahṁā ti kho (particle omitted in the *Paramatthamañjūsā* : cf. n. 15 above), bhikkhave, tathāgatass' etam adhvācānan" ti (the *Paramatthamañjūsā* adds *ādī*) vacanto sammāsambuddho uttamabrahmā nāma, sadevake loke brahambhūtehi guṇehi ukkaṃsapāramippattito : *Saddanīti*, pp. 459-460. (In *brahambhūtehi guṇehi*, *brahmā* in *brahambhūta*- can be understood either as Brahṁā or as brahma-, adjective [cf. pp. 19-20 below], "in the sense of 'the highest'".)
21. Cf. *Kṣīratarāṅgiṇī* (ed. B. Liebhich, Breslau, 1930), p. 2.
22. "bhū sattāyam ; bhū pattiyaṃ" ti dvigaṇikānaṃ dvinnāṃ dhātūnaṃ vasena aṭṭhakathāṭīkā-nayanissitāṃ aṭṭham pakāsayissāma.... : *Saddanīti*, II, p. 555. — In connection with *bhū*- "to attain", reference is made (cf. also, e.g. *Kṣīratarāṅgiṇī*, p. 190) to the term used in Grammar: *itthambhūta*- (cf. Pāṇini, I, 4, 90 ; II, 3, 21 ; VI, 2, 149). *Itthambhūta*- is thus explained : *imam pakāram bhūto patto* (*Saddanīti*, II, p. 555 ; cf. III, p. 719 § 598 ; p. 805.27 : *imam pakāram bhūto patto āpanno ti itthambhūto*) — an interpretation that goes back to the *Kāśikāvṛtti*. Thus *Kāśikāvṛtti* on Pāṇini II, 3, 21 : *kamcit prakāram prāpta itthambhūtaḥ*, and on Pāṇini VI, 2, 149 : *imam prakāram āpanna itthambhūtaḥ*. — In the exegetical literature, both Sanskrit and Pali, this meaning of *bhū*- is often resorted to for explaining *bhūta*-. The *Saddanīti* (p. 555) cites Dhammapāla's explanation of *manussabhūta*- in the *Petavatthu-Aṭṭhakathā* (p. 71). Cf. also *Theragāthā-Aṭṭhakathā*, III, p. 9 (on *Theragāthā* 689) ; *ibid.*, II, p. 205 (explanation of *dhammabhūta*- in *Theragāthā* 491) ; and the explanation of *brahambhūta*- in the *Itivuttaka-Aṭṭhakathā*, quoted below, p. 20.
23. *seṭṭhatṭhena brahambhūto, aṭṭha vā brahman vuccati maggo ... tañ ca sayambhuññānena bhūto patto ti brahambhūto* : *Saddanīti*, p. 555. (*seṭṭhatṭhena brahambhūto* : cf. *Papañcasūdanī*, II, p. 76 ; *Sarathappakāsinī*, II, p. 389. Buddhaghosa gives two different interpretations of *brahambhūta*- and similar expressions : *seṭṭhasabhāvo*, etc. ["*bhū sattāyam*"], or *Brahṁā viya bhūto* [*jāto nibbatto*], i.e. "become like Brahṁā", etc. Cf. *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, III, p. 865 [*dhammabhūto* = *dhammasabhāvo*] ; *Manorathapūraṇī*, V, p. 72. See also Upasena, *Saddhammappajjītikā* [*Niddesa-Aṭṭhakathā*], II, p. 295 ; Mahānāma, *Saddhammappakāsinī* [*Paṭisambhidāmagga-Aṭṭhakathā*], III, p. 646, and cf. *Saddanīti*, p. 555.6 ff.)
24. *Dīgha-Nikāya*, III, pp. 232-233 ; *Majjhima*, I, pp. 341, 411-412 ; II, p. 159 ; *Āṅguttara*, II, p. 206 ; *Puggalapaññatti*, p. 56. Cf. *Āṅguttara*, I, p. 197.
25. *Samyutta-Nikāya*, III, p. 83.
26. *The Arthavinīścaya-Sūtra and its Commentary* (*Nibandhana*), edited by N.H. Samtani, Patna, K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1971 (*Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series*, XIII), p. 81. (The form *brahmībhūta*-, which is found in the Brahmanical tradition as well — cf. Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya*, I, 3, 15-, clearly expresses the idea of "becoming". Late grammarians- cf. Rāmacandra's *Prakriyākaumudī*, Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita's *Siddhāntakaumudī*— cite *brahmībhavati* in connection with Pāṇini V, 4, 50 and VII, 4, 32. Cf., however, Nāgeśa's observations in his various writings : e.g., *Brhacchabdenduśekhara* [ed. Sītārāma Śāstrī, Varanasi, 1960 : *Sarasvatībhavana-Granthamālā*, 87),

- vol. II, pp. 1544-5 ; *Laghuśabdenduśekhara* [Chowkhamba edition, 1903 ; no other edition of this text is available to me], p. 355 ; *Uddyota* on Kaiyaṭa's *Pradīpa* on Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* on Pāṇini V, 4, 50 ; *Vaiyākaraṇasiddhāntalaghumañjuṣā* [Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 44, Benares, 1925], p. 1567. See also n. 89 below).
27. M. & W. Geiger, *Pāli Dhamma*, München, 1920 (*Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* : philosophisch-philologische und historische Klass, XXXI. Band, 1. Abhandlung), p. 77, n. 3, and W. Geiger, *Dhamma und Brahman*, München-Neubiberg, 1921 (*Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Buddhismus*, II), p. 8 ; N.H. Samtani, Note 4 on p. 81 of his edition of the *Arthaviniścaya-Sūtra and its Commentary* (cf. preceding note).
28. *L'Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 150
29. Cf. "Notes bouddhiques", *Indologica Taurinensia* (Torino), VII (1979), pp. 108-109.
30. Cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman* ..., pp. 150-151.
31. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 55 (n. 2 to p. 54).
32. *Ibid.*, p. 81 (n. 5 to p. 80).
33. Cf. *Dīgha-Nikāya*, I, p. 18 ; *Majjhima*, I, p. 326.
34. IX, 106 in the edition by Warren and Kosambi. Cf. *Aṭṭhasālinī*, § 428.
35. While commenting on this passage in the *Paramatthamañjuṣā*, Dhammapāla (cf., n. 15 above): first interprets *Brahmā* in the sense of *upapattibrahmā* "Brahmā by birth" (cf. p. 16 above) : *Brahmāno ti upapattibrahmāno. te hi idha jhānabhāvanāya vinīvaraṇacitta hutvā Brahma-loke uppannā tattha yāvatāyukaṃ vinīvaraṇacittā va honti. tasmā niddosacittā viharantīti vadanti*. But he then gives an alternative interpretation according to which the word refers to the "great beings" (*mahāsattā*) – the Bodhisattvas, whose qualities have been "caused to grow" (*brūhita* : cf. p. 16 above) through the fulfilment of the perfections, "giving" (*dāna*-), etc., which make a Buddha and which are the source of all Buddha-qualities : *Brahmāno ti vā sakalabuddhagūṇahetubhūtanāṃ dānapāramitādīnaṃ buddhakaradhammānaṃ paripūraṇavasena brūhitagūṇā mahāsattā bodhisattā ... Paramatthamañjuṣā*, II, p. 138 (Siamese edition). [Cf. *Visuddhimagga*, IX, 124 (where Dhammapāla glosses *mahāsattā* by *mahābodhisattā* : *Paramatthamañjuṣā*, II, p. 147.)
36. *Manorathapūraṇī*, III, p. 169.
37. *Sāratthappakāsinī*, III, p. 121 (cf. p. 16 and n. 55 below). Cf. also *Paramatthajotikā*, I (Commentary on the *Khuddakapāṭha*), pp. 250-251 ; Dhammapāla's comment on *Theragāthā* 649 (quoted below, n. 54).
38. There is a divergence between the *Manorathapūraṇī* and the *Paramatthajotikā* (Commentary on the *Suttanipāta*) concerning the interpretation of the term *Brahmā*, when applied to the Buddha. According to the conventions mentioned earlier (p. 16 above), "Tathāgata" (or the "Perfectly Enlightened One," *sammāsambuddha*-) is one of the "meanings" of *Brahmā*, and Buddhaghosa says so when he comments on a passage of the *Āṅguttara-Nikāya* where the Buddha is called *Brahmā*: *Brahmā vuccati sammāsambuddho* (*Manorathapūraṇī*, II, p. 322). The *Paramatthajotikā* (II, 2, p. 592), however, says in its comment on *Suttanipāta* 1065, where also this term is applied to the Buddha, that it is a designation of "the highest" (*setṭha*-) : *Brahmā ti*

- setṭhādhivacanam etam* (cf. also Upasena, *Saddhammappajjotikā*, III, p. 29). See *L'Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 149 and n. 3. Dhammapāla also, in his comment on *Theragāthā* 182, where by *Brahmā* the Buddha is meant, interprets the term in the sense of "the highest". See n. 46 below.
39. *Manorathapūraṇī*, II, p. 204.
40. Dhammapāla, *Paramatthadīpanī* : *Itivuttaka-Aṭṭhakathā*, II, pp. 157-158. -- *Brahmā ti puttānaṃ Brahma-samā uttamā setṭhā* : *Jātaka* Commentary, V, p. 332.
41. See references in *L'Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 83, n. 1 ; "On the Brahman in Buddhist Literature", *loc. cit.*, p. 4, n. 22.
42. Vol. III, p. 84. Cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman*..., pp. 82-83.
43. *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, III, p. 865. (in place of *Brahma-bhūtattā eva Brahma-bhūto* read *Dhamma-bhūtattā eva Brahma-bhūto*. Cf. Sinhalese edition, II, Colombo, 1925 : *Simon Hewavitarne Bequest*, XIX, p. 627.)
44. See *L'Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 93 and n. 6. To the references given there add *Papañcasūdanī*, II, p. 76 ; *Sāratthappakāsinī*, II, p. 389 (cf. Upasena, *Saddhammappajjotikā*, II, p. 295 ; Mahānāma, *Saddhammappakāsinī*, III, p. 646 ; Aggavaṃsa, *Saddanīti*, II, p. 555) : *aviparītasabhāvatṭhena pariyaṭṭidhammapavattanato vā hadayena cintetvā vācāya nicchāritadhammamayo dhammabhūto*. (The *Sāratthappakāsinī* gives the reading *aviparītabhāvatṭhena* ; cf., however, Siamese edition, III, p. 41 and Sinhalese edition, III [Colombo, 1930] : *Simon Hewavitarne Bequest*, XXXI, p. 23 : *aviparītasabhāvatṭhena*.)
45. Cf. p. 18 and n. 33 above.
46. *sadevakassa lokassa aggabhūtattā setṭhatṭhena Brahmuno, Buddhassa bhagavato .... Paramatthadīpanī* : *Theragāthā-Aṭṭhakathā*, II, p. 54. (Cf. n. 38 above ; p. 22 below.)
47. Cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman*..., pp. 90-91.
48. *brahmapathe ti catubbidhe pi brahmavihārapathe, brahme vā setṭhe phalasamāpattipathe* : *Paramatthadīpanī* : *Theragāthā-Aṭṭhakathā*, III, p. 9 (corrected reading : cf. Sinhalese edition, II, Colombo 1925 [Simon Hewavitarne Bequest, XVIII], p. 9).
49. *Papañcasūdanī*, II, p. 27.
50. *Manorathapūraṇī*, V, p. 12.
51. *Sāratthappakāsinī*, II, p. 46. Cf. *Samṃmohavinodanī* (*Vibhanga-Aṭṭhakathā*), p. 399 ; Mahānāma, *Saddhammappakāsinī*, III, p. 626 ; Kassapa, *Mohavicchedanī* (*Abhidhammamātikatthavannanā*), p. 196.
52. Cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 90 and n. 7. The commentary on the *Arthaviniścaya-Sūtra* (p. 81) explains *brahmacarya*- as *nirvāṇaprāpako* 'nāsravo mārgaḥ', and then, in support of this explanation, says : *nirvāṇaṃ brahmocyate ...* (passage quoted above, p. 17). On the distinction made in the *Mahāgovinda-Sutta* of the *Dīgha-Nikāya* (cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 80 and n. 5) between *brahmacariya* = *Brahmavihāra*- and *brahmacariya* = *ariyamagga*-, cf. Buddhaghosa, *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, I, pp. 178-179 (with the necessary corrections) ; *Papañcasūdanī*, II, pp. 42-43 ; Dhammapāla, *Paramatthadīpanī* : *Itivuttaka-Aṭṭhakathā*, I, pp. 108-109 ; Aggavaṃsa, *Saddanīti*, II, p. 424.

53. *brahmacariyan ti brahman seṭṭham uttamam cariyam* : Dhammapāla, *Paramatthadīpanī* : *Udāna-Aṭṭhakathā*, p. 168 (corrected reading : cf. Siamese edition, p. 209, and Sinhalese edition [Colombo, 1920 : *Simon Hewavitarne Bequest*, VI], p. 111). Cf. *Paramatthajotikā*, I (Commentary on the *Khuddakapāṭha*), p. 151 : *brahman cariyam Brahmanam vā cariyam brahmacariyam, seṭṭhacariyan ti vuttam hoti*. — *Nettipakarana-Aṭṭhakathā* (Colombo, 1921 : *Simon Hewavitarne Bequest*, IX), p. 36 (cf. *Dīghanikāyaṭṭhakathāṭikā* : *Līnatthavaṇṇanā*, I, p. 310) : *brahman seṭṭham uttamam Brahmanam vā seṭṭhānam ariyanam cariyam .... brahmacariyam*. — *brahmacariyan ti seṭṭhatthena brahmabhūtam cariyam, brahmabhūtanam vā buddhādīnam cariyam ti vuttam hoti* : *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*, I, p. 179 ; *Papañcasūdanī*, II, p. 204 ; *Manorathapūraṇī*, II, p. 290. (*brahmabhūtehi seṭṭhehi caritabbato tesam cariyabhāvato brahmacariyam ... seṭṭhatthena brahmabhūtanam buddhapaccekabuddhabuddhasāvakanam cariyam brahmacariyan ti vuccati* : *Samantapāsādikā*, I, pp. 127-128 ; cf. Dhammapāla, *Paramatthadīpanī* : *Itivuttaka-Aṭṭhakathā*, II, p. 86 ; Upasena, *Saddhammapajjotikā*, III, p. 24.
54. *Suttanipāta* 151, with *Paramatthajotikā* I (Commentary on the *Khuddakapāṭha*), pp. 250-251, and *Suttanipāta* 285, with *Paramatthajotikā* II, 1, p. 315, -- In *Theragāthā* 649, Dhammapāla reads *brahman vihāram* (in place of *brahmavihāram*) *bhāvēmi*, and he comments : *brahman seṭṭham niddosaṃ* (so read) *mettādivihāram bhāvēmi vadḍhemūti attho*. Dhammapāla, *Paramatthadīpanī* : *Theragāthā-Aṭṭhakathā*, II, p. 274. (On the explanation of *Seṭṭha-* by *niddosa-* cf. p. 18 above.) The Sanskrit text also sometimes use the adjectives *brāhma-* and *brāhmya-* in this connection : cf. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, s.v. *brahma-vihāra*. Sumaṅgala, in his *Tīkā* on Anuruddha's *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, glosses *brahmavihāra-* alternatively by *uttama vihāra-* and by *uttamānam vihāra-* (cf. the interpretations of *brahmacariya-* quoted in the preceding note) : *uttamavihārabhāvato uttamānam vā vihārabhāvato brahmavihāro*. *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī*, Siamese edition, p. 260.
55. *Samyutta-Nikāya*, V, pp. 4-6, with *Sāratthappakāsinī*, III, pp. 120-121, 122 (cf. p. 18 above). Cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 91 and n. 4.
56. *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*, III, p. 737.
57. P. 17 above.
58. Dhammapāla, *Paramatthadīpanī* : *Itivuttakaṭṭhakathā*, I, p. 176.
59. *brahman seṭṭham paṭipadam paṭipajjantīti brahmacārī* : *Papañcasūdanī*, I, p. 188. *brahman seṭṭham ācāram caratīti brahmacārī* : *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*, I, p. 72 ; *Papañcasūdanī*, II, p. 206 ; *Manorathapūraṇī*, II, p. 326 ; *Puggalapaññatti-Aṭṭhakathā*, p. 236. -- ... *imaṃ brahman samānam caranti, tasmā sabrahmacārīti vuccanti* : *Papañcasūdanī*, I, p. 81. *sabrahmacārīsū 'ti samānam ekuddesatādīṃ brahman carantesu sahadhammikesu* : *Manorathapūraṇī*, II, p. 139. *samānam brahman sīlādīdhammam carantīti sabrahmacārino* : Dhammapāla, *Paramatthadīpanī* : *Theragāthā Aṭṭhakathā*, II, p. 166 (on *Theragāthā* 387). See also *Udāna-Aṭṭhakathā*, p. 97 (cf. Siamese edition, p. 123). *saha brahman uttamam paṭipadam carantīti sabrahmacārino* : Mahānāma, *Saddhammapakāsinī*, III, p. 544. It goes without saying that in Dhammapāla's *Udāna-Aṭṭhakathā* : *seṭṭhatthena brahmasaṃkhātā bhagavato sāsanam ariyamaggaṃ ca samānam caranti*

- paṭipajjantīti sabrahmacārayo* (printed : *sabrahmacāriyo*), *brahmā*, in the compound *brahmasaṃkhātā-*, can stand as well for *Brahman-* as for *brahma-*. Dhammapāla, *Paramatthadīpanī* : *Udānaṭṭhakathā*, p. 268 (cf. Sinhalese edition, [referred to above, n. 53], p. 180 and n. 1 ; Siamese edition, p. 338).
60. Dhammapāla, *Paramatthadīpanī* : *Itivuttakaṭṭhakathā*, II, pp. 36-37. Cf. Sinhalese edition, Colombo, 1928 : *Simon Hewavitarne Bequest*, XXIII, p. 170.
61. On the interpretation of *bhūta-* in the sense of *patta°* cf. n. 22 above.
62. P. 45 in the edition referred to above, n. 53. No other edition is available to me.
63. *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*, I, p. 129.
64. Thus spelled in the edition.
65. *Saddhammapakāsinī*, III, p. 580.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 582. — On the “merging” of the *ariyamagga-* and *Nibbāna*, cf. *Dīgha-Nikāya*, II, p. 223.
67. *Arthaviniścaya-Sūtra* (cf. n. 26 above), pp. 50, 51.
68. Cf. also *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (ed. U. Wogihara, Tokyo, 1930-1936), pp. 385-386 (*brāhman cakram, brāhmacakra-*) ; Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, VI, 54. These texts derive *brāhma-* from *Brahman-* (masculine) : *tasyedam cakram iti brāhman (Abhidharmakośabhāṣya)*. The “Wheel”, we are told, is so called because it was for the first time set in motion by the Buddha, called *Brahmā* (cf. n. 8 above). According to Vasubandhu, the Buddha is called *Brahmā* because of his “supreme brahminhood” (*anuttarabrāhmaṇayogād bhagavān Brahmā* : *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, loc. cit.). The term, therefore, is interpreted in the sense of *brāhmaṇa-* (cf. p. 22 below). The commentary on the *Arthaviniścaya-Sūtra* does not explain the meaning.
69. P. 16 above.
70. Cf. J. Gonda, op. cit., pp. 31 ff.
71. *Arthaviniścaya-Sūtra* Commentary, p. 195.
72. Cf. n. 15, and n. 54 above ; n. 74 below.
73. Neither the *Vajirabuddhiṭikā* nor the *Dīghanikāyaṭṭhakathāṭikā* explains the relevant passages, so far as I have been able to see. In one instance, the latter gives an interpretation which is different from that given in the *Sumaṅgalavilāsini* itself. Thus *brahmajāla-* (cf. p. 20 above) is explained as follows (I, p. 243) : *seṭṭhatthena ca brahmabhūtanam maggaphalanibbānanam vibhattattā brahmajālam*.
74. *Brāhmaṇa-*, in the sense of “brahmin by birth”, is thus explained : *brahman aṇatīti brāhmaṇo, mante sajjhāyati attho. idam eva hi jātibrāhmaṇānam niruttivacanam*. These brahmins are so called because they “recite Vedic texts”. As a designation of the “Noble Ones” however, adds Buddhaghosa, the word is derived differently : *ariyā pana bāhitapāpattā brāhmaṇā ti vuccanti*. These “Noble Ones” are called *brāhmaṇa-* because they have “expelled evil”. *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*, I, p. 244 (= *Papañcasūdanī*, I, p. 109). Cf. Dhammapāla, *Paramatthadīpanī* : *Udāna-Aṭṭhakathā*, pp. 58, 377-378 ; Aggavaṃsa, *Saddanūti*, II, p. 357. (On *bāhitapāpa-* cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 86 and n. 3.) In *Itivuttaka-Aṭṭhakathā*, II, p. 141, Dhammapāla combines the two interpretations to account for the fact that the Buddha calls himself *brāhmaṇa-*. The Buddha, says Dhammapāla, is called *brāhmaṇa-*

“in the true sense” (*paramatthato, paramatthena*), – he possesses “the highest brahminhood” (*anuttaram brahmanabhāvam*), – because, on the one hand, he has ‘expelled evil’ (*bāhitapāpattā*), and, on the other, he “expounds the *brahma (n)-*” (*brahmassa ca ananato = kathanato*) – “the supreme *brahma (n)-*, named the Noble Path” (*anuttarassa ariyamaggasaṅkhātassa brahmassa*). Here Dhammapāla uses the neuter word *brahma (n)-* in the sense of the “Noble Path” – as “Buddhist antithesis to the authority of the Veda” (for similar ideas, cf. *L’Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 87 [n. 3 to p. 86]).

In *Papañcasūdanī*, III, p. 443 (cf. *Paramatthajotikā*, II, 2, p. 472, on *Suttanipāta* 655), Buddhaghosa explains the variant reading *brahmāna-* in the sense of “(deed) that brings brahminhood”: *brahmānan ti pi pāṭho. ayam pan’ ettha vacanattho: brahman aṇeti brahmānam, brāhmaṇabhāvam āvahaṭṭi vuttam hoti.*

It may be noted in this connection that Moggallāna’s *Abhidhānappadīpikā* (812 in W. Subhūti’s edition, Colombo, 1865) records the meanings of *Brahman-* we saw earlier, namely “Brahmā”, “Buddha”, “the highest”, “brahmin”, “the parents”, and for neuter *brahma (n)-* (Nominative singular : *brahman*), the meanings of “Veda” and “religious austerity”:

*Pitāmahe jine setthe brāhmaṇe ca pitusv api /*

*Brahmā vutto tathā brahmaṇ vēde tapasi vuccate //*

(So far as I am aware, in the sense of “religious austerity”, *brahman* is not actually used in Pali ; but Moggallāna’s source here may have been, as elsewhere, the *Amarakośa*. Thus *Amarakośa*, III, 3, 114 [in the Nirṇaya-Sāgara Press edition with the commentary *Vyākhyāśudhā*, Bombay, 1944] : *vedās tattvaṃ tapo brahma Brahmā vipraḥ Prajāpatiḥ.*

75. T.W.Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, I, London, 1899 (reprint: 1956) [*Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, II], p. 298. Cf. *L’Ātman-Brahman* ..., p.79.
76. M. & W. Geiger, *Pāli Dhamma*, p. 7 ; W. Geiger, *Dhamma und Brahman*, p. 4. (Cf. n. 27 above).
77. *L’Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 14, n. 7.
78. *Visuddhimagga*, XVI, 71 (in the edition by Warren and Kosambi).
79. *Ibid.*, VII, 75.
80. Cf. *L’Ātman-Brahman*..., pp. 59 ff., 65-66.
81. P. 18 above.
82. Cf. *L’Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 151 and n. 2.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 149-151.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 88 and n. 7 ; p. 150 and n. 1. See also J.Gonda, *op. cit.*, p. 52 and p. 83, n. 13.
85. Cf. n. 74 above.
86. For details concerning the following, cf. *L’Ātman-Brahman*..., chapter II, and “On the Brahman in Buddhist Literature”, *loc. cit.*
87. Cf. p.18 above.
88. Cf. p. 19 above.
89. It should be clearly borne in mind that these expressions are not to be taken literally. There is no one who becomes the *brahman-(brahmabhūta)* ; or, whose self becomes the *brahman-*:

*brahmabhūtena attanā viharati*), no one who attains the *brahman-* (*brahmapatta-*), no way that leads to the *brahman-* (*brahmapatha-*)... But these expressions are employed in view of the state of ignorance in which we are, -- a state where we take ourselves for this and that individual. “Attaining the *brahman-*” or “becoming the *brahman-*” (the two expressions mean the same thing, as we have seen) is being what we really are, the Being itself, and this happens when the false sense of individuality is extinct and, consequently, all passions are calmed, – when there is no *ātman-*, if by this term is meant the empirical individuality. This is what is indicated by the passage of the Pali Canon quoted earlier : *so anattanatapo aparantapo*.... And this is also what we find indicated in a verse of the *Śāntiparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (XII, 192, 122 in the Critical edition of Poona), – a verse which emphasizes the “absence of *ātman-*”:

*amṛtāc cāmṛtaṃ prāptaḥ śūībhūto nirātmavān /*

*brahmabhūtaḥ sa nirdvaṃdvaḥ sukhīśānto nirāmayah //*

(On *ātman-* *nirātm-* cf. *L’Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 69 and n. 2 [where this verse is quoted, with a slightly different reading, according to G.C. Pande, *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*].)

90. Cf. *L’Ātman-Brahman*..., pp. 101-103.

91. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 101.

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-54.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 54 and n. 3.

94. Cf. also “*Diṭṭhaṃ, Sutaṃ, Mutam, Viññātaṃ*”, in *Buddhist Studies in honour of Walpola Rahula*, London, 1980, pp. 10-15.

#### Addendum

The *Aṭṭhasālinīmūlatikā* : *Līnatthapadavaṇṇanā*, of which a manuscript in the Burmese script is preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Pali 264), adds to the confusion noted in this paper. While commenting on *Aṭṭhasālinī*, p. 5 (so *h’ āvuso bhagavā jānaṃ jānāti passaṃ passati cakkhubhūto nāṇabhūto dhammabhūto brahmabhūto*....), it says something similar to *Saddanīti*, p. 555.9 ff. (cf. p. 17 above) ; but, instead of *brahman*, it gives *Brahmā* : *cakkhubhūto ti paññācakkhumayattā sattesu ca taduppādanato lokassa cakkhubhūto nāṇabhūto ti etassa ca evam eva attho daṭṭhabbo. dhammā bodhipakkhiyā Brahmā maggo. tehi uppannattā lokassa ca taduppādanato tabbhūto.*