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SOME THOUGHTS ON EARLY BUDDHISM

**WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ITS
RELATION TO THE UPANIṢADS**

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PREFACE

It was actually eight years ago that Professor Dandekar did me the honour of inviting me to deliver these two lectures. For various reasons, this could not materialize. Recently, on two occasions when I visited him, he reminded me that I had to accomplish that task; and, the last time, I promised him that I would do it a few months later when I would have to return to India for another purpose. I am most grateful to him, indeed, for his kind attention, and for giving me the opportunity to take up for a while studies that I had long given up to concentrate on more technical matters.

I am also grateful for their kindness to Professor Ghatage, the present Honorary Secretary of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, all the scholars associated with the Institute, and the staff of the Institute.

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Acharya Dharmananda Kosambi was a pioneer of Pāli studies in India. His name is particularly associated with the *Visuddhimagga*, which he edited using the material left by the American scholar Henry Clarke Warren. Among other works on Pāli and Buddhism in general, he wrote a lucid commentary, in Pāli, on the *Visuddhimagga* as well as on the manual of Theravāda Abhidhamma, the *Abhidhammatthasāṅgaha*. I therefore thought, when Professor Dandekar kindly invited me to give these lectures in his memory, that I should talk on something related to Pāli. And I have brought in the Upaniṣads, because there is on-going debate on the question.¹

It is not, of course, today that scholars have become interested in the subject. For obvious reasons, — spatial and temporal contiguity between these two most significant moments of Indian thought, certain stylistic and structural affinities between the Upaniṣads and the Pāli Canon, certain doctrinal affinities too, the doctrine of *karman* of course, but also certain affinities between the Upaniṣadic *brahman* and the Buddhist Nirvāṇa / Nibbāna, — great scholars of the past generations took keen interest in it. Among them may be mentioned in particular T. W. Rhys Davids, Mrs. Rhys Davids, the great Vedic and Pāli scholar Hermann Oldenberg, F. O. Schrader, the great Pāli scholar Wilhelm Geiger, historians of philosophy such as Helmuth von Glasenapp and, nearer to us, Erich Frauwallner. Over the past thirty years or so,

¹ Unless otherwise specified, the editions of Pāli texts quoted are those of the Pāli Text Society. For the Upaniṣads with Śaṅkara's commentaries have been used the editions of the *Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series*, Poona, second edition, 1902.

there has been a renewal of interest in the subject.² But, if there seems to be a general agreement on the points just mentioned, it has not been possible to reach a consensus on the question of whether the Buddha accepted or rejected the basic metaphysical standpoint of the Upaniṣads.

The key Upaniṣadic term *brahman* is used in the Pāli Canon; and, as I have tried to show elsewhere, the authors of the commentaries and sub-commentaries (*Aṭṭhakathā*-s and *Tīkā*-s), very much disturbed by the occurrence of this term, had to concoct various devices to explain it away.³ Modern scholars in general, since T. W. Rhys Davids, have settled at the idea that by *brahman* is meant in the Pāli Canon the masculine Brahman, and in that they run into inconsistencies.⁴ Wilhelm Geiger, after an exhaustive study of the occurrences of the terms *dhmma* (Sanskrit *dharma*) and *brahman* in the Pāli Canon, in two fundamental works, *Pāli Dhamma* and *Dhamma und Brahman* (both of which are now available in the *Kleine Schriften*), showed that the neuter *brahman* is used in the Pāli Canon as a synonym for *dhmma* (e. g., *tathāgatassa h' etaṃ adbhivacanāṃ : dhammakāyo iti pi brahmakāyo iti pi, dhammabhūto iti pi brahmabhūto iti pi, Dīgha-Nikāya III, p. 84*), and that both the terms are borrowed from the Upaniṣads, where also *dharma* appears sometimes as a syno-

² Cf. P. Horsch, "Buddhismus und Upaniṣaden", in *Pratidānam : Indian, Iranian and Indo-European Studies presented to F. B. J. Kuiper on his Sixtieth Birthday* (The Hague-Paris: Mouton, 1968), pp. 462-477. I have not been particularly active in this field over the past twenty-five years or so; but, in the midst of other activities concerning more technical matters, I have tried to follow the developments.

³ See K. Bhattacharya, "Some Thoughts on Ātman-Brahman in Early Buddhism", in *Dr. B. M. Barua Birth Centenary Commemoration Volume* (Calcutta: Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha, 1989), pp. 63-83. An earlier version of this paper appeared in *Amalū Prajñā : Aspects of Buddhist Studies. Professor P. V. Bapat Felicitation Volume* (Delhi, 1989), pp. 15-31, under the title "Brahman in the Pāli Canon and in the Pāli Commentaries".

⁴ See n. 82 below.

nym for *brahman*. But even he was reluctant to admit that the term *brahman* has the same meaning in the Pāli Canon as in the Upaniṣads: on one side eternity; on the other, change. This objection can be easily disposed of, as it rests on a confusion. The Buddha does condemn "eternalism" (*saṁsatavāda / śāśvatavāda* or *sassatadiṭṭhi / śāśvatadrṣṭi*). But this eternity is not the real eternity. It is only a temporal eternity, let us say "time extended". On the other hand, the Buddha does admit the real, timeless eternity as much as the Upaniṣads do: the Nibbāna / Nirvāṇa is "eternal", *nicca*, *dhuva*, *sassuta*, and so on, in this sense. As Buddhaghosa says in the *Visuddhimagga*, *appabhavattā ajarāmarāṇaṃ, pabhavarājarāmarāṇāṃ abhāvato niccaṃ*.⁵

But what about *anattā*? By simple logic, if the doctrine of *anattā* implies also a negation of the Upaniṣadic *ātman*, identical with *brahman*, then the term *brahman* in the Pāli Canon cannot have the same meaning as in the Upaniṣads.

Now, the so called doctrine of *anattā* has more often been misunderstood than understood. A delicious example of misapprehension is furnished by a tenth-century Buddhist writer in Sanskrit from Greater India:

*Buddho bodhiṃ vidadhyād vo yena nairātmyadarśanam |
viruddhasyāpi sādḥuktam sādhanam paramātmanah ||*

Modern scholars, with a few exceptions, have only retained the idea of contradiction (*virodha*); they do not realize that

⁵ *Visuddhimagga* (ed. by H. C. Warren and D. Kosambi, *Harvard Oriental Series* 41, Cambridge, Mass., 1950) XVI, 71. See also K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (*Publications de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* XC, Paris, 1973), p. 14, n. 7. — On Etienne Lamotte's *n' atthi nicco dhuvo sassato aviparināmadhammo* see K. Bhattacharya, "A Note on Anātman in the Work of E. Lamotte", *Premier Colloque Etienne Lamotte* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1993), pp. 25-26.

nairātmya can be a “ means to *paramātmān*”,⁶ because they do not realize that there is a world of difference between the conceptions of *ātman* prevalent in the time of the Buddha and after him, in different philosophical systems of India, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā, Sāṃkhya and Jainism, on the one hand, and the Upaniṣadic conception of *ātman* on the other. A prestigious Buddhistologist of our time, the late Professor André Bareau, was fond of writing and saying that the *pudgala/puggala*, “individual”, whose ultimate reality is denied by Buddhism, is the same as the Upaniṣadic *ātman-brahman* !

A great deal of work has been done on the subject over the past years, by three British scholars, all contemporary but belonging to three different generations : the great Middle Indic specialist K. R. Norman, his pupil Richard Gombrich, the present Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, and his pupil Steven Collins. And it will be useful to take a critical look at this work, in order to have a clear idea of the situation.

Neither Norman nor Collins seems to be active in the field nowadays. But Gombrich is continuing his investigations and making discoveries of specific Upaniṣadic texts alluded to in the

⁶ See K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (n. 5 above). This misunderstanding has recently been clearly expressed by a devout Japanese scholar when he says, commenting upon my explanation of the compatibility of the ideas of *ātman* and *anātman*, that “ it is not clear and rather ambiguous”. He gives an English Translation of a passage of my book, which is not accurate. (Ryudo Yasui, *Theory of Soul Theravāda Buddhism*, Calcutta : Atisha Memorial Publishing Society, 1994, pp. 221-222.) Furthermore, Dr. Yasui is unfair when he writes (*ibid.*, p. 229) :

In this way the Anattā doctrine of the Buddha can be proved. So thanks to Professor Bhattacharya for his explanation of the Doctrine in a very simple way.

It was not my intention to deny *anattā* or explain it in every detail, but to explain its compatibility with *ātman* — a point to understand which a certain amount of Indological and philosophical culture is required !

Pāli Canon. I shall start with his latest contribution to the subject.

Just a few months back, at the World Sanskrit Conference held in Bangalore, Gombrich read a paper entitled “ Allusions to the Upaniṣads in the Sagātha Vagga of the Samyutta Nikāya ”.⁷ All the details of this paper are not available to me; but the summary contains enough elements for consideration.

Of the two Pāli texts cited by Professor Gombrich, the first reads as follows :

kuto sarā nivattanti kattha vaṭṭam na vaṭṭati |
kattha nāmañ ca rūpañ ca asesam uparujjhati ||
yattha āpo ca pathavī tejo vāyo na gādhati |
ato sarā nivattanti ettha vaṭṭam na vaṭṭati ||
*ettha nāmañ ca rūpañ ca asesam uparujjhati |*⁸

Professor Gombrich comments :

This recalls *yato vāco nivartante* at Taittirīya Up. II, 4, 1 and II, 9, 1. Moreover the answer to the riddle, which has parallels elsewhere in the Canon, recalls Muṇḍaka Up. III, 2, 8. This is not to say that the Buddhist answer to the question is the same as the Upaniṣadic one.

It is difficult for me to guess what exactly Professor Gombrich has in mind when he writes : “ This is not to say ...” Nonetheless, it can be safely affirmed that the Pāli text has nothing to do with the *Taittirīya* passage.

The Buddhist text is well known. It is also preserved in

⁷ Xth World Sanskrit Conference, International Association of Sanskrit Studies, January 3-9, 1997, Taralabalu Kendra, Bangalore. English Abstracts, New Delhi : Bharatiya Sanskrit Sansthan, pp. 42-43.

⁸ *Samyutta-Nikāya* I, p. 15.

Sanskrit versions, as far as Turfan in Central Asia. All these were studied, not long ago, by Professor Lambert Schmithausen of Hamburg.⁹ And neither the context nor the entire Buddhist tradition allows the interpretation suggested by Professor Gombrich, viz., *sara* = Sanskrit *svara*. The context suggests, and the commentary, the *Sāratthappakāsinī*, says, that *sarā* here means *samsārasarā*.¹⁰ It is Nibbāna / Niravāṇa that is being talked about; and it is said that the "streams of *samsāra*" turn back from it, whereas the *Taittirīya* passage says: *yato vāco nivartante, aprāpya manasā saha*, "Whence (the Absolute) words return along with the mind, not attaining it".

As a matter of fact, it is not the first time that this interpretation is being given. The well known Indian scholar Govind Chandra Pande gave it forty years ago.¹¹ I was aware of it some thirty years back but took no account of it; and certainly I would have taken no account of it today, had it not come from such an eminent authority as Richard Gombrich.

Philology is the mother of our science. But, if this kind of philology is justified, then certain interpretations coming from those who seek to find Upaniṣadic doctrines adopted everywhere in the Canon should be equally justified. Take for instance the following stanza that occurs more than once in the Canon :

*yo brāhmaṇo bāhitapāpadhammo
nihuṇiko nikasāvo yatatto |*

⁹ L. Schmithausen, *Beiträge zur Schulzugehörigkeit und Textgeschichte kanonischer und postkanonischer buddhistischer Materialien*, in H. Bechert (ed.), *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur II* (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse, dritte Folge, Nr. 154, Göttingen, 1987), pp. 307 ff.

¹⁰ *Sāratthappakāsinī* I, p. 52. (On *sara* in Jaina *Āyāraṅga* I, 5, 6, 3 — *sarve sarā niyaṭṭanti* — see W. Schubring, *Ācārāṅga-Sūtra* I, Leipzig, 1910. Glossar, s. v. *sara*.)

¹¹ G. C. Pande, *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism* (Allahabad, 1957), p. 479, n. 177.

vedantagū vusitabrahmacariyo

dhammena so brāhmaṇo brahmavādaṃ vadeyya ||

Here some respectable scholars, both Western and Indian, have found an allusion to the Vedānta doctrine and to *brahma-vidyā*. But, whatever the value of the traditional interpretation of the term *vedantagū*, given by the commentaries,¹² it is sure that it has nothing to do with the Vedānta doctrine. The term *vedānta* occurs in the *Mahābhārata* as well as elsewhere in the Brahmanical literature, and in *Mahābhārata* XIII, 25, 63 Nīlakaṇṭha glosses it by *jñātataṭṭva*. On the other hand, the context shows that the statement *dhammena so brāhmaṇo brahmavādaṃ vadeyya* cannot mean anything but : only a brāhmaṇa possessing the qualities mentioned can rightly (*dhammena* = *ñāyena*) say " I am a brāhmaṇa " — [*brāhmaṇo ahaṃ ti etaṃ vādaṃ vadeyya*, as the commentators put it.

The second text of Professor Gombrich is :

sabbā disā anuparigamma cetasā

n' ev' ajjhagā piyataram attanā kvaci |

evaṃ piyo puthu attā paresaṃ

*tasmā na himse param attakāmo ||*¹³

And he comments :

This alludes, I feel sure, to the conversation between Yājñavalkya and his wife Maitreyī at Brhadāra-

¹² K. Bhattacharya, *L' Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (n. 5 above), p. 86, n. 3, where will also be found other references.

¹³ *Saṃyutta-Nikāya* I, p. 75 (= *Udāna*, p. 47), quoted in *Visuddhimagga* (ed. Warren-Kosambi ; n. 5 above) IX, 10. For the idea cf. *Anguttara-Nikāya* IV, p. 97; *Suttanipāṭa* 368, 705; *Dhammapada* 129-130; and the parallels from the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the *Hitopadeśa*, quoted by Wilhelm Rau, "Bemerkungen und nicht-buddhistische Sanskrit-Parallelen zum Pāli-Dhammapada", in *Jñānamuktāvalī : Commemoration Volume in Honour of Johannes Nobel on the occasion of his 70th Birthday* (Saravati-Vihara Series 38, New Delhi ; International Academy of Indian Culture, 1963), p. 166.

nyaka Up. II, 4 and IV, 5. In this case the Buddha draws the conclusion opposite from the Upaniṣad : that one should care for others. More generally, the Buddha is (as so often) substituting for a philosophical speculation an ethical directive.

Here again, there is nothing novel. Other scholars had considered the Pāli text in relation to the famous words of Yājñavalkya to Maitreyī : *na vā are patyuḥ kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavati, ātmanas tu kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavati ... ātmanas tu kāmāya sarvaṃ priyaṃ bhavati*.¹⁴ Oldenberg had done so,¹⁵ but he was opposed by Carlo Formichi, who saw " no relation at all " between the two texts.¹⁶

I have read the Pāli text several times but have failed to see any relationship between it and the Upaniṣad.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* II, 4, 5 ; IV, 5, 6. For a discussion of this passage see K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (n. 5 above), p. 32, n. 2.

¹⁵ H. Oldenberg, *Die Lehre der Upanishaden und die Anfänge des Buddhismus* (second edition, Göttingen, 1923), Note 124.

¹⁶ C. Formichi, " On the Real Meaning of the Dialogue between Yājñavalkya and Maitreyī ", in *Indian Studies in honor of Charles Rockwell Lanman* (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), pp. 75-77.

¹⁷ Commenting on Mrs. Rhys Davids, M. Winternitz wrote in 1937 :

I do not see why the Buddhist saying should " stick in the gullet " any more than the " Love thy neighbour as thyself " of the Old and the New Testament, or the " golden rule " (so little followed) : " Do by others as you would be done by ". M. Winternitz, " Self and Non-Self in Early Buddhism ", in *Jhā Commemoration Volume* (Poona Oriental Series 39, Poona, 1937), p. 463.

For a reference to the New Testament see also T. Vetter's review of J. Pérez-Remón, *Self and Non-Self in Early Buddhism* (The Hague-Paris-New York : Mouton, 1980), in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasien und Archiv für indische Philosophie* 27 (1983), p. 215. I should like to emphasize once more, against an opinion commonly expressed, that, despite an apparently identical standpoint, there is a gulf of difference between Pérez-Remón's approach and mine. The Spanish scholar was, moreover, unaware of my book, published in 1973, so far as I can see from his bibliography.

Let us then consider something more serious.

In 1981, K. R. Norman published an article entitled " A Note on Attā in the Alagaddūpama-sutta ", which is now available in his *Collected Papers*.¹⁸ Chronologically this is the earliest of the publications mentioned above.

Norman's conclusion that in the *Alagaddūpama-sutta* of the *Majjhima-Nikāya* the Buddha's or the oldest Buddhism's rejection of views about the *ātman* implies a negation of *ātman* as such has been opposed by two eminent scholars, Professor Lambert Schmitthausen of Hamburg and Professor Ernst Steinkellner of Vienna.¹⁹ However, Steinkellner writes :

This paper is also important for its demonstration of the allusions to Upaniṣadic ideas in this Sutta.²⁰

Let us see how that stands.

In the *Alagaddūpama-sutta* six views relative to *ātman* are criticized.²¹ The first five views that identify the *ātman* with the five *khandha*-s which constitute the psycho-physical individual are mentioned for criticism almost on every page of the Canon. (To the terms in which the fifth view is expressed I shall come later.) The most important is the sixth view, which reads :

*so loko so attā so pecca bhavissāmi nicco dhuvo
sassato avipariṇāmadhammo, sassatisamaṃ tath' eva
ṭhassāmi.*

¹⁸ *Studies in Indian Philosophy ; A Memorial Volume in Honour of P'andit Sukhlalji Sanghvi* (L. D. Series 84, Ahmedabad, 1981), pp. 19-29 = *Collected Papers II* (Oxford : Pali Text Society, 1991), pp. 200-209.

¹⁹ E. Steinkellner, " Lamotte on the Concept of Anupalabdhi ", *Asiatische Studien/Études asiatiques* XLVI, 1/1992 (*Études bouddhiques offertes à Jacques May*), p. 406 and n. 35.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 34.

²¹ *Majjhima-Nikāya* I, pp. 135-136,

On this view, — which is also met with elsewhere in the Canon,²² — scholars such as Hermann Oldenberg and Helmuth von Glasenapp had commented, striving to find an exact Upaniṣadic parallel.²³ Norman, ignoring these scholars and quoting only E. J. Thomas, whom he finds “too cautious”, writes :

... it is possible to find actual verbal echoes of the Upaniṣads in this passage.

And he refers to *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* III, 14.²⁴

As a matter of fact, those “verbal echoes” were already pointed out, in 1973, in a work which Norman ignores as well.²⁵ Here is what we read in the Upaniṣad :

*eṣa ma ātmāntar hṛdaye, etad brahma, etam itaḥ
pretyābhisambhavitāmi* (*Chāndogya - Upaniṣad* 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 Śaṇḍilya, this doctrine already appears, almost in the same words, in the tenth Book of the *Satapatha-Brahmaṇa* (X, 6, 3), and bears the stamp of the period between the *Brahmaṇas* and the Upaniṣads. And this omission on Norman's part has had an interesting fate. In 1987, at the World

²² *Saṃyutta-Nikāya* III, pp. 98, 182-183, 204-205. See also K. Bhattacharya, “Once more on a passage of the *Alagaddūpama-sutta*”, in *Bauddhavidyāsudhākarah : Studies in Honour of Heinz Bechert on the occasion of his 65th Birthday* (*Indica et Tibetica* 30, Swisttal-Odendorf, 1997), pp. 25-28.

²³ See references in K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (n. 5 above), p. 10, n. 4 to p. 9.

²⁴ Norman, *loc cit.*, p. 20 (201).

²⁵ K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (n. 5 above), p. 10, n. 4 to p. 9.

Sanskrit Conference held in Leiden, his pupil Richard Gombrich declared :

It was Mr. Norman, my teacher and fellow-contributor to the panel, who first demonstrated that it (the passage of the *Alagaddūpama-sutta*) contains a deliberate refutation of Yājñavalkya's teaching in the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*.²⁶

However, this view has nothing to do with Yājñavalkya. As Paul Deussen observed long ago, the “attainment” of *ātman* it speaks of still appears, after of the analogy of the traditional (ritualistic) representations, as an access to heavenly regions, — as though the *ātman* were to be sought elsewhere than in ourselves. And Deussen asked : Who does not feel the inner contradiction of these words, and that, when the *ātman* is really myself,²⁷ there is no need to attain it !²⁸

In later Vedānta, this passage is supposed to speak of meditation on the “qualified *brahman*” (*saguṇa-brahman*); and Śaṅkara commenting on it says basically the same thing as Deussen :

... The word *ātman* [in this passage] does not mean 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]²⁹ ... It is without abandoning a little separation

²⁶ R. Gombrich, “Recovering the Buddha's Message”, in *Earliest Buddhism and Madhyamaka*, edited by David Seyfort Ruegg and Lambert Schmithausen (*Panels of the VIIth World Sanskrit Conference*, Kern Institute, Leiden : August 23-29, 1987 General Editor : Johannes Bronkhorst. Vol II, Leiden-New York-København-Köln ; E. J. Brill, 1990), p. 14 (cf. pp 15-16).

²⁷ “meine Seele” (my soul) in Deussen's text.

²⁸ P. Deussen, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie* I, 2. *Die Philosophie der Upanishad's*, dritte Auflage, Leipzig, 1919, p. 309.

²⁹ Cf. *Brahmasūtra* I, 2, 4, with Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya*.

that it is said : " I shall attain ' this ', i. e. the *ātman*, after having departed from ' here ', i. e. from this body ".³¹

What is meant by *loka* in the Pāli passage under consideration, *loka* which is identified with *ātman* (*so loko so attā*)? Without entering upon a polemic concerning the so-called Upaniṣadic " identification of the world and the self " ³² (everybody here knows what it means, and I have explained it elsewhere ³³), it can be said that similar expressions are found in the Upaniṣads. Thus, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* I, 4, 15 : *ātmānam eva lokam upāsita*; IV, 4, 22 : *kiṁ prajayā kariṣyāmo yeṣāṁ no 'yam ātmāyam lokam*. But, while in the Upaniṣads, this " world " is inner, and to be realized here and now by transcending the subject-object split, in our passage, as also in the doctrine of Śāṇḍilya, it is paradoxically conceived as the yonder world, to be attained after death.

This passage is perhaps the only one in the entire Pāli canon that can be pinpointed as containing a criticism of an Upaniṣadic doctrine; but, as we have seen, this doctrine is not yet the authentic Upaniṣadic doctrine.³⁴

Now, from all we know of the attitude of early Buddhism toward the Vedic lore and ritualism³⁴ — a strong opposition,

³⁰ *na tv ātmaśabdena pratyagātmaivocyate, mameti saṣṭhyāḥ sambandhūrthapratyāyakatvād etam abhisambhavitāsmīti ca karma-kartrtvānirdeśāt...antardhūnam iṣad aparijyayaivaitam ātmānam ito 'smāc charirūt preṣyābhisambhavitāsmīti uktam. Chāṇḍogyaopaniṣadbhāṣya* III, 14, 4, p. 174. (Sāyaṇa on *Satapatha-Bṛhmaṇa* X, 6, 3 repeats Śaṅkara.)

³¹ R. Gombrich, " Recovering the Buddha's Message ". *loc. cit.*, p. 15.

³² *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (n. 5 above), p. 36.

³³ Or, perhaps, there is in our passage no allusion to any Upaniṣad at all. Cf. *Taittiriya-Bṛhmaṇa* III, 10, 11, where the contrast with *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* I, 4, 15 (a brief reference to which has been made above) is as obvious as the parallel.

³⁴ See, e. g., K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme* (Continued on the next page)

sometimes expressed in the same terms as in the Upaniṣads, but more radical than in the Upaniṣads, the conception (which, again, Buddhism shares with the Upaniṣads) that the heaven obtained through sacrifice is only transitory — it is not at all surprising to find a criticism of such a doctrine in a text of the Pāli Canon. And it is not reasonable to use such texts as evidence of Buddhism's criticism of the Upaniṣadic doctrine of *ātman*.

I shall come later to Norman's interpretation of the five other views. But the fifth view is expressed in terms that have given rise to some discussion. Contrary to the practice usually met with in the Canon, the *ātman* is not here directly identified with the fifth *khandha*, the *viññāṇakkhandha*, but with the objects of the different *viññāṇa*-s : *yam p' idam diṭṭham sutam mutam viññātam pattam pariyesitam anuvicaritam manasā tam pi " etam mama, eso 'ham asmi, eso me attā " ti samanupassati*. Buddhaghosa notes here a variation in teaching, in which *viññāṇa* is indicated through its objects.³⁵

Be that as it may, some respectable scholars have found here a criticism of the famous words of Yājñavalkya in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* :

*ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nidi-dhyāsitavyaḥ. Maitreyi, ātmano vā are darśanena śravaṇena matyā vijñānenedam sarvaṁ viditam (ātmani khalv are drṣṭe śrute mate vijñāta idam sarvaṁ viditam).*³⁶

(Continued from p. 12)

ancien (n. 5 above), ch. III. On the question of orthodoxy and heterodoxy see K. Bhattacharya, " The Criterion of Orthodoxy in India and the Case of Jainism and Buddhism ", in *Śramaṇa-Vidyā, Studies in Buddhism* : Professor Jagannath Upadhyaya Commemoration Volume I (Sarnath, 1987), pp. 101-109.

³⁵ *desanāvīlāsena h' ettha diṭṭhādīdārammaṇavasena viññāṇam dassitam* : *Papañcasūdanī* II, p. 110.

³⁶ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* II, 4, 5; IV, 5, 6.

And Professor Gombrich, in 1987, wrote :

It remains only to remind readers of the most important and closest parallel of all. The fifth wrong view is to identify with what has been *ditṭham sutam matam* (sic) *viññātam*. What exactly is that ? The answer is at *BāU* 4, 5, 6 : *ātmani khalv are dṛṣṭe śrute mate vijñāte idam sarvam viditam...*³⁷

However, no sensible reader of the Upaniṣads will believe that in the Upaniṣads, and particularly with the great thinker Yājñavalkya,³⁸ 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 — as Śaṅkara expressively puts it while commenting upon the dialogue between Yājñavalkya and Uṣasta Cākṛāyana.³⁹ This interpretation — if it should be called an interpretation at all — is contradicted by all statements of Yājñavalkya :

*yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati ... tad itara itaram paśyati, tad itaram śṛṇoti ... tad itara itaram manute, tad itara itaram vijñāti. yatra vā asya sarvam ātmaivābhūt ... tat kena kam paśyet, tat kena kam śṛṇuyāt ... tat kena kam manvīta, tat kena kam vijānīyāt. vijñātāram are kena vijānīyāt.*⁴⁰

³⁷ "Recovering the Buddha's Message", *loc. cit.*, p. 15.

³⁸ Cf. Deussen, *op. cit.*, p. 73 :

Der-Quellpunkt des ganzen Gedankens von der Unerkennbarkeit des Ātman liegt in den Yājñavalkyareden des Brhadāranyakam, und die Kühnheit und Schroffheit, mit der er hier auftritt, so wie die originelle Art seiner Begründung scheinen für einen individuellen Genius als Urheber desselben zu sprechen.

³⁹ *Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad* III, 4. — *vispaṣṭam śṛṅge grhītvā yathā gām darśayati*, Śaṅkara *ad loc.*, p. 441.

⁴⁰ *Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad* II, 4, 14 (cf. IV, 5, 15). Cf. *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* VII, 24, 1. The passage has been discussed in K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (n. 5 above), p. 52.

*na dṛṣṭer draṣṭāram paśyer na śruteḥ śrotāram śṛṇuyā na mater mantāram manvīthā na vijñāter vijñātāram vijānīyāḥ.*⁴¹

*adṛṣṭo draṣṭāśrutah śrotāmato mantāvijñāto vijñātā.*⁴²

*adṛṣṭam draṣṭr aśrutam śror amatam mautr avi-jñātam vijñātṛ.*⁴³

The four empirical "ways of knowledge", *dṛṣṭi*, *śruti*, *mati*, *vijñāna* (*vijñāti*), are recognized in Buddhism as well as in the Upaniṣads.⁴⁴ But the Absolute is beyond them. The *dṛṣṭi* 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

⁴¹ *Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad* III, 4, 2.

⁴² *Ibid.*, III, 7, 23.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, III, 8, 11.

⁴⁴ See K. Bhattacharya, "Ditṭham Sutam Mutam Viññātam", in *Buddhist Studies in honour of Walpola Rahula* (London : Gordon Fraser, 1980), pp. 10-15. Cf. also Śaṅkara, *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* I, 3, 19 : *dṛṣṭiśrutimattivijñātayo hi jīvasya svarūpam ... sarvo hi jīvaḥ paśyañ śṛṇvan manvāno vijñānan vyavaharati* (*Brahmasūtraśāṅkara-bhāṣya*, with the Commentaries *Bhūmatī*, *Kalpataru* and *Parimala*, edited by Anantakṛṣṇa Śāstri, Bombay : Nirṇaya Sāgar Press, second edition, 1938, p. 304).

On the scholastic interpretations of the terms *dṛṣṭa* (*ditṭha*), *śruta* (*suta*), *matā* (*muta*) and *vijñāta* (*viññāta*) in Buddhism see my paper just referred to. The *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* (quoted in a note added to that paper, p. 15) gives an interpretation which follows that of the *pūrvacārya*-s mentioned by Vasubandhu in *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* IV, 75. According to Yaśomitra's *Vyākhyā*, these *pūrvacārya*-s are the Yogācāras. Haribhadra (n. 8 of my paper) and Ratnākaraśānti (*Sūratamā*, ed. Padmanabh S Jaini, Patna : K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1979 [Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series XVIII], p. 79), while commenting upon the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, follow however the interpretation of the Vaibhāsikas (which is the same as that of the Theravādins).

by Yājñavalkya⁴⁵ are also found in the Pāli Canon, for instance :

... dhammaṃ suṇāti, sutvā dhammaṃ dhāreti,
dhāritānaṃ dhammānaṃ atthaṃ upaparikkhati,
atthaṃ upaparikkhato dhammā nijjhānaṃ khamanti
dhammanijjhānakkhantiyā sati chando jāyati, chan-
dajāto ussahati, ussahitvā tuletī, tulayitvā padahati,
pahitatto samāno kāyena c' eva paramasaccam
sacchikaroti paññāya ca taṃ ativijja passati.⁴⁶

Among Gombrich's other observations, mention may be made of the following. Speaking of the different characterizations of *ātman* by Yājñavalkya in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, Professor Gombrich observes :

The third point of the *tilakkhaṇa*, *dukkha*, is not mentioned here, but is of course opposed to *ānanda* ...⁴⁷

But why should *dukkha* be mentioned as a characteristic of *ātman*? The Buddha only said : ' What in *dukkha* is *anattā* ' (*yaṃ dukkhaṃ tad anattā*), which is not the same thing as saying : ' The *ātman* is *dukkha* ' !

*

* *

⁴⁵ See K. Bhattacharya, " *Diṭṭham Sutam Mutam Vinūṭam* ", loc. cit., pp. 12-13 with the notes (n. 11, line 3 : read *ācāryataś* instead of *āga-mataś*). Śāṅkara's disciple Suresvara gives an interpretation of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* passage which differs from the Master's. See *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣyavārttika* with Ānandajñāna's *Śāstraprakāśikā* (*Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series* 16, Poona, 1892-1894), pp. 1068ff., vv. 212 ff. But that is a different matter.

⁴⁶ *Majjhima-Nikāya* II, p. 173. Cf. K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (n. 5 above), p. 120, n. 2 ; " *Diṭṭham Sutam Mutam Vinūṭam* ", loc. cit., p. 13 and n. 13.

⁴⁷ R. Gombrich, " *Recovering the Buddha's Message* ", loc. cit., p. 15.

We have seen so far how scholars have been prone to see criticisms of the Upaniṣads in the Pāli Canon, when the texts talk about different matters, or even when they say the same thing. Let us now take a closer look at the question of *anattā*.

The conceptions of *ātman* against which is taught the doctrine of *anattā* are clearly indicated in a passage of the *Samyutta-Nikāya* :

ye hi keci, bhikkhave, samaṇā vā brāhmaṇā vā
anekavihiṭṭam attānaṃ samanupassanānaṃ samanupa-
ssanti sabbe te pañcupādānakkhandhe samanupassa-
nti etesaṃ vā aññataram.⁴⁸

Is it not also against the background of such views, held by men, gods and demons, that is to be understood the Upaniṣadic doctrine of *ātman*? If Asura Virocana goes away satisfied with the conception of *ātman* as the body, Indra and Maitreyī see the *ātman* in the most precious element of the individual, consciousness, and in the cessation of their consciousness they see the destruction of themselves. People of the latter kind are styled in the Pāli Canon *ekacca-sassatikā ekacca-asassatikā* : all that is material in the individual is, they believe, perishable, while the spiritual element, consciousness, is eternal.⁴⁹

The *ātman* of the Upaniṣads, identical with the *brahman*, is not an individual substance, a "soul", but the Being itself, the universal, absolute Consciousness beyond the subject-object split — the transcendent Impersonality which man realizes through the negation of his individuality.

In these circumstances, it is absurd to think, as Professor Norman does, that the Buddha's rejection of the views identifying

⁴⁸ *Samyutta-Nikāya* III, p. 46.

⁴⁹ See K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (n. 5 above), p. 13 with the notes 2, 3 and 4.

There is, however, a difference of emphasis. While the Upaniṣadic thinkers talk more about *ātman* than about what is not *ātman*, the Buddha talks more about what is not *ātman* than about *ātman*; while the Upaniṣadic thinkers talk more about the beatitude (*ānanda*) of the Infinite than about the misery of the finite (*ato 'nyad ārtam*, "What is other than it [the *ātman*] is miserable"),⁵⁴ the Buddha talks more about the misery of the finite than about the beatitude of the Infinite (*Nibbāna : nibbānam paramam sukham*).⁵⁵

And this difference can be explained by the simple fact that more than by the Upaniṣadic thinkers emphasis is placed by the Buddha on Liberation. As the great ocean, says he, has one flavour, that of salt, so the doctrine and the discipline taught by him have one flavour, that of Liberation. *seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, mahāsamuddo ekaraso lonaraso evam eva kho, bhikkhave, ayam dhammavinayo ekaraso vimuttiraso*.⁵⁶ Now, when somebody attaches himself to what is painful, saying: "This is mine, I am this, this is my *ātman*", can he understand his misery and liberate himself from it? *yo nu kho dukkham allīno dukkham upagato dukkham ajjhosito dukkham "etaṃ mama, eso 'ham asmi, eso me attā" ti samanupassati, api nu kho so sāmam vā dukkham pari jāneyya dukkham vā parikkhepetvā vihareyya*.⁵⁷ The Buddha's purpose, therefore, is to liberate man from misery by leading him to the realization of the truth that what is painful is not the *ātman*.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* III, 4, 2; 5, 1; 7, 23. See also K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (n. 5 above), p. 48 and n. 4.

⁵⁵ K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (n. 5 above), p. 25.

⁵⁶ *Cullavagga* IX, 1, 4 (*Vinaya*, ed. Oldenberg, vol. II, p. 239).

⁵⁷ *Majjhima-Nikāya* I, p. 233. Saṅkara, commenting upon *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* IV, 4, 14 (*athetare duḥkham evāpiyanti*), says: *duḥkham eva hi ta ātmatvenopagacchanti*.

⁵⁸ See also K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (n. 5 above), pp. 74-75, 138-139.

There is one text that gives a somewhat different expression to the doctrine of *anattā*. This is a passage of the *Mahānidāna-sutta* of the *Dīgha-Nikāya*,⁵⁹ on which much has been written. Here is what the text says, in the words of one of its latest exponents:⁶⁰

... after a long exposition of the teaching of Dependent Origination, and a brusque dismissal of various ways in which men think to define a self, as 'having form' or 'formless', 'small' or 'infinitely large',⁶¹ the Buddha asks how many ways are there in which (a man can) regard self? His interlocutor, the monk Ānanda, answers that there are three: feeling is regarded as identical with self, in the words 'feeling is my self'; or the self is regarded as without feeling, 'my self is insentient'; or neither of these things is the case but 'my self feels, my self has the attribute of feeling'.

The Buddha declares that it is 'not fitting' (*na kkhamaṭi*) to regard the matter in any of these ways, for the following reasons. In the first case, where self and feeling are identical, he says that feeling is of three types, pleasant, painful, and neutral. With which is the self to be identified, since only one type can occur at any given time? All three types of feeling are impermanent, causally conditioned phenomena, so that in any case the self would have to be

⁵⁹ *Dīgha-Nikāya* II, pp. 66 ff.

⁶⁰ S. Collins, *Selfless persons* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 98-99.

⁶¹ According to the commentary, the different impressions as to the nature of the *ātman* are deductions from *jhāna* experience. See *Sumaṅgalavilāsini* II, p. 504 (cf. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha* II, p. 61, n. 3). Similarly *Sumaṅgalavilāsini* I, p. 119, on the *Brahmajāla-sutta* (*Dīgha-Nikāya* I, p. 31). We need not follow the learned author of the *Ṭīkā*, who brings in, in these connections, the Upaniṣads and other philosophical systems (*Dīghanikāyaṭṭhakathāṭīkā* I, p. 225; II, p. 141).

the same, subject to arising and decay. This is an idea so manifestly untenable for the Buddha as to receive no comment. In the second place, where the self was held to be insentient, the Buddha asks, 'where there is no feeling at all, is it possible that one might say "I am"?' Since this is not possible, the view is again 'not fitting'. In the third place, where the self is held to feel, or have the attribute of feeling, he asks a similar question: 'where feeling is completely absent ... might one be able to say "this (is what) I am"?' Here also, since this is not possible, the view is 'not fitting'.

In this text, too, the Buddha, while rejecting a theory concerning the self, shows what a self or the self should be: feeling (*vedanā*) cannot be a self because it is subject to the vicissitudes peculiar to all empirical things: we do not find there an *invariable* self.⁶² But all these theories relate to an *individual* self, to a self that is the "object of the notion of 'I'" (*ahamkāra*- or *aham-pratyaya-viśaya*) as will be said in later times. The third and last theory, namely that the *ātman* is not feeling, nor is it without feeling; it feels, because it has feeling for its attribute (*vedanā-dhamma*), is particularly interesting, as it recalls the later Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory — especially if we assume with Claus Oetke⁶³ that *vedanā* in this context does not designate the second *khandha* alone but refers to all states of consciousness, to all psychic events. We need not follow the commentary, which attempts to bring all the three alternatives into relation with the *khandha*-s somehow or other.⁶⁴

On the other hand, here is a good example of what is known as the "Humean attitude" of the Buddha. Thus compare the famous passage:

⁶² Cf., e. g., *Chachakka-sutta*: *Majjhima-Nikāya* III, pp. 282-283.

⁶³ *Op. cit.* (n. 51 above), p. 149.

⁶⁴ *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* II, pp. 505-506.

For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception. When my perceptions are remov'd for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of *myself*, and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions remov'd by death, and cou'd I neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate after the dissolution of my body, I shou'd be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is farther requisite to make me a perfect non-entity. If any one, upon serious and unprejudic'd reflection, thinks he has a different notion of himself, I must confess I can reason no longer with him. All I can allow him is, that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in this particular. He may, perhaps, perceive something simple and continu'd, which he calls *himself*; tho' I am certain there is no such principle in me.

But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement.⁶⁵

The Buddha says substantially the same, in his rejection of the second and third alternatives. However, this does not preclude the possibility that the Buddha went farther than Hume.

⁶⁵ David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, edited with preliminary dissertations and notes by T. H. Green and T. H. Grose, London, 1874, vol. I, p. 534.

And there are at least a couple of passages in the Pāli Canon which prove that he did. Both these passages have long been misunderstood by modern scholars.⁶⁶ I propose, therefore, to consider them in some detail.

In the *Brahmanimantanika-sutta* of the *Majjhima-Nikāya*, the following words are attributed to the Buddha :

*viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbatopabhaṃ,⁶⁷
taṃ paṭhaviyā paṭhavattena ananubhūtaṃ, āpassa
āpattena ananubhūtaṃ, tejassa tejattena ananubhū-
taṃ, vāyassa vāyattena ananubhūtaṃ, bhūtānaṃ
bhūtattena ananubhūtaṃ, devānaṃ devattena ananu-
bhūtaṃ ... sabbassa sabbattena ananubhūtaṃ.⁶⁸*

V. Trenckner, while editing the first volume of the *Majjhima-Nikāya* in 1888, was conscious of the fact that the idea expressed in this passage is Upaniṣadic ; so he attributed these words — at the risk of absurdity — not to the Buddha, but to his opponent, the Brahmā god Baka. In that he was followed by translators,⁶⁹ as well as by the Japanese scholar Hajime Nakamura, who, in 1955, gave the following picture — not too glorious for the Omniscient :

According to the *sūtra* ... the Buddha did not attack the concept of *viññāna* by polemics; he over-powered Brahmā in another way, namely by the use of supernatural powers.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ It appears to me strange that neither Pérez-Remón (n. 17 above) nor Oetke (n. 51 above) says a word about either of these passages. On Collins' treatment of one see below.

⁶⁷ On the reading *sabbatopabhaṃ* see K. R. Norman, "An Epithet of Nibbāna", in *Śramaṇa-Vidyā* (see n. 34 above), pp. 23-31 (= *Collected Papers* [see n. 18 above] III, 1992, pp. 183-189).

⁶⁸ *Majjhima-Nikāya* I, pp. 329-330.

⁶⁹ Including I. B. Horner.

⁷⁰ Hajime Nakamura, "Upaniṣadic Tradition and the Early School of Vedānta as noticed in Buddhist Scripture", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 18, p. 79.

Here is, however, what we actually read in the text :

Brahmā Baka claims that the condition of Brahmās is the highest reality, permanent (*nicca*), stable (*dhuva*), eternal (*sassata*), absolute (*kevala*). It is not born, does not grow old, does not die; it does not disappear and does not return to existence (*na jāyati na jīyati na mīyati na caviti na upapajjati*). There is no other issue beyond this (*ito pan' aññaṃ uttariṃ nissaraṇaṃ n' atthi*). To this pretention of Baka the Buddha replies : The condition of Brahmās is only a phenomenal reality, impermanent (*anicca*) and not permanent (*nicca*), unstable (*addhuva*) and not stable (*dhuva*) ... It is born, grows old and dies; it disappears and returns to existence (*jāyati jīyati mīyati cavati upapajjati*). There is another issue beyond this (*aññaṃ uttariṃ nissaraṇaṃ*), which surpasses the perception of all empirical realities whatsoever (*sabbassa sabbattena ananubhūtaṃ*). "If you do not perceive it by any means, sir", retorts Baka, "let it not be for you merely empty and vain" (*sace kho, mārisa, sabbattena ananubhūtaṃ, mā h' eva te rittakam eva ahosi tucchakam eva ahosi*). No, says the Buddha; for the Reality he is speaking of is the *viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ* ... At this point, the Brahmā, having no answer to offer, proposes to exercise his supernatural powers and disappear, but is not able to do so. The Buddha, however, does it. In other words, the Buddha proves his superiority both in knowledge and in the use of supernatural powers.

In the *Kevaddha* (*Kevaṭṭa*)-sutta of the *Dīgha-Nikāya* we read :

*viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbatopabhaṃ⁷¹
ettha āpo ca paṭhavī tejo vāyo na gādhati |*

*ettha dīghaṇ ca rassaṇ ca aṇuṃ-thūlaṃ subhāsudhaṃ
ettha nāmaṇ ca rūpaṇ ca asesam uparujjhati ||*

⁷¹ See n. 67 above.

viññāṇassa nirodheṇa etth' etam uparujjhati ⁷³

Here the occurrence of the word *viññāṇa* twice has posed a problem to modern interpreters. The great master of Buddhology in the 19th century, Eugène Burnouf, identified the two *viññāṇa*-s. ⁷⁴ In 1896, Henry Clarke Warren translated :

In consciousness invisible
And infinite, of radiance bright,
O there doth water, there doth earth,
And fire and wind no footing find.
And there doth long, and there doth short,
And fine and coarse and good and bad,
And there do name and form both cease,
And utter nothingness become.
And then, when consciousness hath ceased,
This all hath turned to nothingness. ⁷⁵

As we shall see later, there are still scholars who identify the two *viññāṇa*-s. But there have been scholars, since Burnouf's time, who have perceived their difference. ⁷⁶ Only they have not always grasped the meaning of the passage. Thus, in 1976, the most prestigious Buddhologist of our time, Etienne Lamotte, cited this passage to explain a view — recorded in the *Mahāprajñā-pāramitāśāstra* (*Upadeśa*), preserved only in Chinese — which is

⁷³ *Dīgha-Nikāya* I, p. 223.

⁷⁴ E. Burnouf, *Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi* (Paris, 1852), pp. 514-516.

⁷⁵ H. C. Warren, *Buddhism in Translations* (*Harvard Oriental Series* III Cambridge, Mass., 1896), pp. 312-313. Cf. H. Oldenberg, *Reden des Buddha* (München, 1922), pp. 144-145. In his famous book, *Buddha* (first edition, Berlin, 1881, p. 234), Oldenberg — after Burnouf (*loc. cit.*, n. 73 above) — found here a reference to the “element” (*dhātu*) of *viññāṇa* “ raised high above the other elements ”. See also B. Frauwallner, *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie* I (Salzburg, 1953), pp. 203, 236.

⁷⁶ Thus Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha* I (1899), pp. 283-284, and, more explicitly, F. L. Woodward, *Some Sayings of the Buddha* (1925 ; *The World's Classics* 483, London, 1939 ; several times reprinted), pp. 321-322 (cf. n. 3 on p. 321).

similar to one attributed to the *ekacca-sassatikā ekacca-asassatikā* (p. 17 above) in the *Brahmajāla-sutta* of the *Dīgha-Nikāya*. ⁷⁶

However, Buddhaghosa is quite explicit. As in the passage of the *Brahmanimantanika-sutta* he interprets *viññāṇa* as *Nibbāna*, so in the *Kevaddha* (*Kevaṭṭa*)-*sutta* passage, he interprets the first *viññāṇa* as a “ name for *Nibbāna* ” (*nibbānassa nāman*). The second *viññāṇa*, he says, is the phenomenal consciousness *carī-makaviññāṇam pi abhisamikhāraviññāṇam pi*). ⁷⁷

The late Professor Nalinaksha Dutt drew attention to these passages with Buddhaghosa's commentaries. ⁷⁸ But, contrary to what he believed, Buddhaghosa does not at all say that *Nibbāna* is “ infinite consciousness ”. Rather, aware of the fact that the doctrine set forth in the two passages is Upaniṣadic, Buddhaghosa seeks to isolate Buddhism from the Upaniṣadic tradition and thus gives the following interpretation of *viññāṇa* : *viññātabban ti viññāṇam*, or *viññāṇan ti vijānitabbam*. *Nibbāna* is named *viññāṇa* because it is “ to be pre-eminently known ”, or, as the *Tikā* on the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* puts it, it is “ to be known through a pre-eminently means ”, “ i. e. by direct perception through the best of all knowledges — the knowledge of the Noble Path ” (*visiṭṭhena*

⁷⁶ E. Lamotte, *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse* IV (Louvain, 1976), p. 2079. See my review of C. A. Scherrer-Schaub, *Yuktisāṣṭi-kāvṛtti*, in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (Dordrecht, Holland) 22 (1994), p. 392.

⁷⁷ *Papañcasūdanī* II, p. 413 ; *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* II, pp. 393-394.

⁷⁸ N. Dutt, *Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its Relation to Hīnayāna* (London, 1930), pp. 148-149. Unjust criticism, based on misapprehension, in Mrs Rhys Davids, *The Birth of Indian Psychology and its Development in Buddhism* (London, 1936), p. 246. Dutt, on the other hand, inspired Schayer for his “ precanonical ” Buddhism (see below), and was literally followed by H. Günther, *Der Buddha und seine Lehre nach der Überlieferung der Theravādins* (Zürich, 1956), pp. 451-452.

nātabbā, sabbañānuttamena ariyamaggañāṇena paccakkhato jānītabbā ti attho).⁷⁹

To an impartial reader, however, it will appear that the doctrine put forward, especially in the *Kevaddha* (*Kevaṭṭa*)-sutta, is the same as that of Yājñavalkya in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*. In the universal and absolute Consciousness, all the empirical realities, including individuality, cease to exist, and they cease when the empirical consciousness has ceased. One may recall the passages of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* where Yājñavalkya speaks of the *ātman* as a "homogeneous mass of consciousness without inside and outside" (*anantaro 'bāhyaḥ kṛtsnaḥ prajñā-naghana [vijñānaghana] eva*) and at the same time says that "after Liberation there is no consciousness" (*na pretya sanijñā-sti*).⁸⁰ By *sanijñā* here is to be understood, as Śāṅkara makes it clear, *viśeṣasaṃjñā* or *viśeṣavijñāna*, "particular (individual) consciousness".

I do not see why these passages of the Pāli Canon should be relegated to a hypothetical "precanonical" or "pre-Hīnayānistic" Buddhism, as St. Schayer did;⁸¹ for, so far as I can see, there is nothing in the Canon that contradicts the doctrine they set forth.

⁷⁹ *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* II, p. 393; *Paṇāscasūdanī* II, p. 413; *Dīghanikāyaṭṭhakathāṭṭhikā* I, p. 512. The *Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathāṭṭhikā* (edited in Burma and recently in India) is not available to me at this moment.

⁸⁰ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* IV, 5, 13; II, 4, 12. I find a great deal of confusion in K. R. Norman's paper "Aspects of early Buddhism", in *Earliest Buddhism and Madhyamaka* (see n. 26 above), p. 24 (= *Collected Papers* [see n. 18 above] IV, 1993, p. 124). See K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (n. 5 above), p. 45, n. 3; pp. 48 ff.

On *pretya* here — "after Liberation", and not "after death" — see K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien*, pp. 50–51. Also Sureśvara, *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhūṣyavārttika* (see n. 45 above), p. 1106, ch. 437; Pārthasārathimīśra on Kumāṛila's *Śloka-vārttika*, *Ātmavāda* 147 (ed. Tailanga, Chowkhamba, 1898–1899).

⁸¹ St. Schayer, "Precanonical Buddhism", *Archiv Orientalni* VII (1935), p. 131 (= *On Philosophizing of the Hindus, Selected Papers*, edited by M. Marek, Warsaw, 1988, p. 480).

Let us now see how the youngest of the British scholars mentioned above interprets the *Kevaddha* (*Kevaṭṭa*)-sutta passage. As in the case of the statement that occurs several times in the Canon: *so anattantapo aparantapo diṭṭhe va dhamme nicchāto nibbuto sītībhuto sukhapaṭisaṇvedī brahmabhūtena attanā viharati*,⁸² he interprets this passage in such a way as to exclude all connection with the Upaniṣads:

Although an enlightened man's consciousness is a karmic result, it is not limited by usual samsāric constraints. It is 'indescribable, infinite, radiant on every side'. We should not misinterpret this kind of consciousness as a 'cosmic consciousness', in the manner of the Vedānta picture of ultimate reality as

⁸² See references, e. g., in Magdalene und Wilhelm Geiger, *Pāli Dhamma' vornehmlich in der kanonischen Literatur* (*Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-philologische und historische Klasse*, XXXI, 1, München, 1920), p. 77 (= Wilhelm Geiger, *Kleine Schriften*, herausgegeben von Heinz Bechert, Wiesbaden, 1973 [*Glasenapp-Stiftung* 6], p. 176). Steven Collins (*op. cit.* [n. 60 above], p. 74) writes:

When an individual reaches *nirvāṇa*, for the rest of his lifetime he lives 'Without craving, quenched, become cool, experiencing bliss, having become himself like Brahman'. The Pāli of this last phrase is *brahmabhūtena attanā*, which could bear the literal translation 'with self become brahman', as if in Upaniṣadic style. In fact, in Pāli the prefix *brahma-* often simply means 'excellent'. If we wish to look for an interpretation which includes a reference to some 'divine' state, it is best here to see an analogy with the 'Divine Abidings' (*brahma-vihāra*), those meditative states where the monk suffuses himself and the rest of the universe imaginatively with loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. By doing this, the monk can become equal to the gods of the *Brahma*-heaven in happiness, for as long as the meditation lasts. When a liberated saint 'becomes himself like Brahman', he attains such happiness throughout the rest of his life, as a continuous state of personality rather than temporarily acquired 'experience'.

To me at least, the inconsistencies involved in this imaginative interpretation are glaring. See *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien* (n. 5 above), especially ch. II; "Some Thoughts on Ātman-Brahman in Early Buddhism" (n. 3 above).

sat-cit-ānanda, 'Being-Consciousness-Bliss'. Rather, like the 'widespread, far-reaching, immeasurable' mind with which the monk experiencing the Divine Abidings is endowed, and like the 'immeasurable mind' of a monk in the fourth meditative stage, and like the sphere of Infinite Consciousness attained at the seventh stage, this consciousness will cease, at final *nibbāna*. When final *nibbāna* is attained, everything ceases, even those states and virtues which Buddhism itself holds dear. The passage I quoted earlier which spoke of the destruction of construction-consciousness by a stream-winner, says in the case of the *Arhat*: 'through the cessation of the last consciousness of an *Arhat* who is dying into final *nibbāna*-without-substrate, wisdom, mindfulness, and (all) name-and-form cease'. This 'last consciousness' is said to be a *constructed*-consciousness, and it is through the 'cessation by non-arising, in virtue of the non-arising' of this *constructed*-consciousness that *nibbāna* becomes final ...⁸³

A similar interpretation had been given by the Sinhalese scholar O. H. de A. Wijesekera.⁸⁴ What is really novel here is that Collins appeals to the Tradition to support his interpretation. He quotes the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*:

Carimaka-viññāṇam pi abhisamkhāra-viññāṇam pi
(DA. II. 393, commenting on the 'indescribable, infinite, radiant consciousness' of D. I. 223 ...).⁸⁵

Under their apparent lucidity, these observations contain some gross confusions. For our present purpose, it should suffice

⁸³ Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

⁸⁴ O. H. de A. Wijesekera, "The Concept of Viññāṇa in Theravāda Buddhism", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 84 (1964), p. 258.

⁸⁵ Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 296, n. 22 to p. 207.

to state the following. For Buddhaghosa, the first word *viññāṇa* in the passage does not mean "consciousness" at all, "constructed" or not; it is a "name for Nibbāna" in a special sense, as we have seen. Buddhaghosa clearly distinguishes between the two *viññāṇa*-s, and he does not say *carimaka-viññāṇam pi abhisamkhāra-viññāṇam pi* to comment upon the first *viññāṇa*, which is *anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbatopabhami*. He says it to comment upon the second *viññāṇa*. It is when this phenomenal consciousness has ceased that all the empirical realities — the four elements, the antinomies, individuality — cease in Nibbāna:

... *tattha viññātabban ti viññāṇam. nibbānassa tam nāmaṃ ...*

ettha āpo cā 'ti ettha nibbāne. idam nibbānam āgamma sabbam etaṃ āpo tiādinā nayena vuttam upādinna-dhammajātam nirujjhati appavattam hoti.

*idāni tassa nirujjhanupāyam dassento viññāṇassa nirodhena etth' etaṃ uparujjhatīti āha. tattha viññāṇam ti carimaka-viññāṇam pi abhisamkhāra-viññāṇam pi ...*⁸⁶

An author may have the right to say what he wishes; but certainly he has no right to distort a text to found his own opinion (assuming that he has been able to understand the text).

For my part, I shall conclude these lectures with the canonical words:

*yassa n' atthi idam me ti paresam vāpī kiñcanam |
mamattaṃ so asamvindaṃ n' atthi me ti na socati ||*⁸⁷

⁸⁶ *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* II, pp. 393-394. At the end Buddhaghosa refers to the *Mahānidāsa*, which may be an error for *Cullaniiddesa*: see Collins, *op. cit.*, pp. 206, 207 with the notes 15 and 21 (pp. 295, 296); also my review of Scherrer-Schaub (n. 76 above). Note that, contrary to what Collins says, *abhisamkhāra-viññāṇa* is not a gloss of *carimaka-viññāṇa*, but refers to a different type of consciousness — "constructive-consciousness"!

⁸⁷ *Suttanipāta* 951.