

THE CONCEPTION  
OF  
BUDDHIST NIRVĀṆA

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## P R E F A C E.

The incentive to this work was given by Sir D. Ross, Director of the School of Oriental Studies in London, when I was asked by him to contribute for the Bulletin of the School a review of Professor L. de la Vallée Poussin's book upon Nirvāṇa. While considering some of the points there discussed I was led to reconsider the position of the Sautrāntika School and its supposed «denial» of Nirvāṇa. This school then disclosed itself as an intermediate step between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, and its attitude could not be understood without clearly realizing the Central Conception of the latter. I have thus been further induced to elicit the Mahāyāna Conception of a Buddha and his Nirvāṇa. The contrast between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna then appeared as an occasional confirmation of the views and explanations of technical terms contained in my «Central Conception of Buddhism» (published by the Royal Asiatic Society, London 1924). The present work can be regarded as a sister volume to it and could have also born the title of «The Central Conception of Mahāyāna».

I have appended a translation of the principal parts of those works of Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti which are the foundation stone of Mahāyāna.

In the process of this my work I derived great help from many valuable suggestions of my friend Prof. M. Tubiansky to whom I here express my gratitude. The preparation of the Indexes of proper names and Sanscrit words is due to the selfdenying industry of Miss Alexandra Schneider to whom my deepest thanks are due.

In the reading of proofs I have been assisted by my aged mother. Since an Englishman has become a *rara avis* in this country, we both are alone responsible for all the imperfections of english style that may be found in this book.

In the transliteration of sanscrit words I have abstained from the use of diacritics for guttural *n* since its value is always clear without it.

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## The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa.

### I. PRELIMINARY

**A**LTHOUGH a hundred years have elapsed since the scientific study of Buddhism has been initiated in Europe, we are nevertheless still in the dark about the fundamental teachings of this religion and its philosophy. Certainly no other religion has proved so refractory to clear formulation. We are confronted with an intricate terminology about whose meaning a variety of interpretation is current and which is often declared to be untranslatable or incomprehensible. In despair some scholars were led to the conclusion that a religion or a philosophical system in India is not what it is in Europe, it is not a clear cut construction of consistent speculation. It is always vaguely indefinite, a display of dreamy thoughts about whose meaning their authors themselves are not quite sure.<sup>1</sup> In a recent work M. de la Vallée Poussin<sup>2</sup> has undertaken to reconsider the question about the meaning of the Buddhist ideal of Nirvāṇa, and he warns us from the outset that we have not to expect something very illuminating from Indian sources.<sup>3</sup> Formerly, he confesses, the idea of Nirvāṇa seemed to him vague enough, but recently he has completely changed his opinion upon this subject, and thinks that even the hazy speculations which he was trying to disentangle are but later additions, that at the beginning Nirvāṇa

<sup>1</sup> The late professor G. Bühler gathered from a long intercourse with Indian pandits in their own country a quite different impression. He used to repeat to his pupils when perplexed by some difficult texts, «was ein Brahmane gemacht hat, das muss heraus!», for very often it is something simple and clear, but expressed in a technical scientific terminology.

<sup>2</sup> *Etudes sur l'histoire des Religions*, 5. Nirvāṇa par Louis de la Vallée Poussin, Paris, 1925.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. XI–XII.

meant a simple faith in Soul's immortality, its blissful survival in a paradise, a faith emerging from practices of obscure magic.

In the following pages we will try to test the arguments by which this new interpretation is supported, and append some considerations about the vicissitudes of this Buddhist conception of the Absolute and the changes which, in our opinion, it underwent during the first thousand years of its history.

## II. BUDDHISM AND YOGA

In the VI-V century B. C., at the time immediately preceding the rise of Buddhism, India was seething with philosophic speculation. A great variety of views and systems were springing up and actively propagated among the different classes of its population.<sup>1</sup> Materialistic doctrines, denying every survival of the individual after death and every retribution for his moral or immoral deeds were widely spread. The orthodox brahmanical community was also divided. A part of it stuck to the old sacrificial religion which promised to its votaries the reward of a blissful existence in a celestial paradise. Another part of it favoured, from an early date, a monistic view of the universe, and interpreted the reward of supreme bliss as the dissolution of the personality in an impersonal all-embracing Absolute. Later on some brahmanical circles developed the idea of an 'eternal individual Soul'<sup>2</sup> which after having been bound up in many existences would return to its genuine condition of a pure spirit as a reward for accumulated merit.

Between the Materialists who denied retribution and the Eternalists who imagined a return to a pure spiritual condition, Buddha took a middle course. From the Eternalists he borrowed the doctrine of a gradual accumulation of spiritual merit through a series of progressing existences, but he was averse to their doctrine of an eternal spiritual principle.

As far as we can understand his philosophic position, it seems that he was deeply impressed by the contradiction of assuming an eternal, pure, spiritual principle which, for incomprehensible reasons, must have been polluted by all the filth of mundane existence in order, later on, to revert to

<sup>1</sup> This period coincides with a period of philosophic activity in China and in Greece. cf. P. Masson Oursel, *La philosophie comparée*, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. H. Jacobi. *Die Ind. Philosophie in Das Licht des Ostens*, p. 150 f.

its original purity. He was thus led to a denial of every permanent principle. Matter and Mind appeared to him as split in an infinite process of evanescent elements (*dharmas*), the only ultimate realities, beside Space and Annihilation. The conception of an impersonal world-process was probably prepared by the idea of an impersonal unique substance of the world, as developed in the Upanishads. The analysis of the world into its elements of Matter and Mind was probably, to a certain extent, prepared by the work of the Sāṅkhya school. The originality of Buddha's position consisted in denying substantiality altogether, and converting the world-process in a concerted appearance of discrete evanescent elements. Forsaking the Monism of the Upanishads and the Dualism of the Sāṅkhyas, he established a system of the most radical Pluralism. That the essence and the starting point of Buddhism were speculative appears very clearly, if we give credit to the records about the other wandering teachers who were the contemporaries of Buddha and often engaged in controversies with him. The questions at issue between them were of a speculative nature. Ethical questions, the explanation of retribution, were predominant, but they always were narrowly linked together with some system of ontology and some doctrine of a Final Release.<sup>1</sup>

If we make an effort wholly to realise the position of a philosopher to whom the Universe presented itself as an infinite process of separate elements of Matter and Mind, appearing and disappearing, without any real personalities, nor any permanent substances, and if we bear in mind that this philosopher was eagerly seeking for a theoretical basis on which to establish morality, we must confess that, for our habits of thought, his position was not an easy one. Striving to escape the contradictions of Eternality, of Monism and of Materialism he was landed in what, from our standpoint, was a fresh contradiction, the contradiction of a moral law without a personality on whom this law would be binding, and of a Salvation without altogether the existence of somebody entitled to reach that goal which we, more or less generally, understand under Salvation.

We will better understand the Solution at which Buddha arrived, if we take into account a specific Indian habit of mind, its idea of Quiescence as the only real bliss which life can afford. The Buddhist Saint (*ārya*) regards

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the information about the wandering teachers collected by B. C. Law, *Historical Gleanings*, ch. II and III (Calcutta, 1922).

the life of the worldling as an unhappy existence of constant turmoil. His aim is to escape from the movement of phenomenal life into a state of absolute Quiescence, a condition in which all emotion and all concrete thought is stopped for ever. The means of attaining this Quiescence is profound meditation (*yoga*), the technique of which was developed in India at a very early date.

The picture of the universe which suggested itself to the mental eye of the Buddha, represented thus an infinite number of separate evanescent entities in a state of beginningless commotion, but gradually steering to Quiescence and to an absolute annihilation of all life, when all its elements have been, one after another, brought to a standstill. This ideal received a multitude of designations among whom the name of Nirvāṇa was the most appropriate to express annihilation. The term was probably prebuddhistic and was formerly applied to the brahmanical ideal of the dissolution of the individual in the universal whole (*brahma-nirvāṇa*).<sup>1</sup>

The reward for a virtuous life and a strict observance of all religious duties consisted for the orthodox brahmin in a blissful survival in heaven. For the brahmanical Monist it consisted in being merged in the impersonal absolute. The Buddhist could promise nothing else than Quiescence of life and its Final Annihilation, a result which, taken by itself, was not very remote from what was offered by simple materialism. The latter promised annihilation after every life. Buddha promised likewise annihilation but after a long series of efforts in virtue and concentrated meditation. This result could not but strike as strange, not European scholars alone. Although the denial of a Soul as a separate substance is quite familiar to them, but they were not prepared to find it clearly stated at so early a date, in so remote a country and not in a system of skepticism, but in a religion. Numerous were also the Indian voices which protested against such radical denial of personal identity.

In the Buddhist community itself it provoked opposition which grew ever stronger and resulted, 500 years after the demise of the Master, in what may be called a quite new religion, reposing on a quite different philosophic foundation.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the information collected by E. Senart in *Album Kern*, p. 104, and J. Dahlman, in *Nirvāṇa* (Berlin, 1896) and in *Die Sāṃkhya-Philosophie* (Berlin, 1902). Senart's characteristic «un simple équivalent de brahma» is right, as will be seen, in regard of the Mahāyānist Nirvāṇa only.

The apparent contradictions of Early Buddhism have been variously explained. It was assumed either that Buddha did not care for speculation or that he, like many other founders of religion, was incapable of clear logical thinking. We are now presented with an attempt to reconstruct a kind of Buddhism which had no speculative tendencies at all and to ascribe the philosophic part of it to a later date to which the final constitution of the Pali Kanon belongs.

It is thus assumed that there has been a primitive Buddhism, very much different, even, as it would seem, quite contrary, to what later on finds its expression in the Pali Kanon. Pessimism, nihilism, Soul-denial, psychology without a Soul, annihilation as ultimate end, all these features that mark out Buddhism among other religions, Indian as well as non-Indian, did not exist.<sup>1</sup> It was the Buddhism of Buddha himself which was so radically different from anything that appeared later, in historical times, as Buddhism. The consequence of this hypothesis of a simple creed preceding historical Buddhism, is an attempt to interpret the latter in the light of the former.

But if all, or almost all, the doctrines contained in our oldest documents are later inventions, what is it then that Buddha has taught and what in the III—II century B. C. — for this is probably the date which is assigned to the Pali Kanon in its final form — was superseded by another, invented, Buddhism? We have a definite answer. It is Yoga (p. 11). This only partly solves the difficulty, because if we are asked what Yoga is, we are told that one feels uneasy when asked such a question, *«rien de plus malaisé!»* (ibid.). Nevertheless, on the next page, we are informed that Yoga is nothing but vulgar magic and thaumaturgy coupled with hypnotic practices. This would mean that Buddha was not a follower of some philosophic system in the *genre* of Pātañjali's where the psychology of trance plays a conspicuous part for the solution of definite problems, but that he was an ordinary magician who certainly did not think of denying the existence of a Soul, or of establishing a psychology without a Soul, or of being a pessimist. Not only is it asserted that yoga practices existed in India previously to the rise of Buddhism—this, of course, is very probable—but it looks as though the author were prepared to maintain that Buddhism itself, the genuine Buddhism of Buddha, nay that even the Pali Kanon, contains nothing but obscure

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., pp. 17, 27, 32—34, 46, 52, 115—116, 125, 129, 132 etc.

thaumaturgy.<sup>1</sup> How else could one understand the following very explicit deliverances? «The yoga out of which Buddhism was produced had no speculative tendencies» (p. 53), i. e., it was «a technical routine in itself quite foreign to every moral, religious or philosophic view» (p. 12).<sup>2</sup> It was, in a word, magic and thaumaturgy. «In this condition», i. e., in the condition of a yoga without speculative tendencies, «has the Buddhism of the Hīnayāna remained, beginning from the Mahāvagga up to Buddhaghoṣa, viz. it was a yoga almost without any alloy» (p. 53).<sup>3</sup>

Here we beg leave to remark that the case of Indian philosophy would really be a desperate one if a conception so familiar in it, so fundamental, so thoroughly developed in every possible detail, a conception to which a whole system is specially devoted were something vague and undefinable. Yoga is defined as concentrated thought (*samādhi*) or fixing the attention on a single point (*ekāgratā*) and doing it persistently (*punaḥ punaḥ cetasi niveśanam*). It is synonymous with *dhyāna* and *samāpatti* which mean the same.<sup>4</sup> According to a peculiarity of the sanscrit language all these

<sup>1</sup> A similar tendency is displayed in another recent book, A. B. Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon* (Oxford, 1923). Buddhism is here represented as a product of a «barbarous age» (p. 26), Buddha as a «magician of a trivial and vulgar kind» (p. 29), Buddhist philosophical conceptions as lacking «both system and maturity, a fact historically reflected in the Negativism of the Mahāyāna» (p. 4).

<sup>2</sup> Similar opinions were emitted by H. Beck, «Der ganze Buddhismus ist durch und durch nichts als Yoga», (*Buddhismus*<sup>2</sup> II, p. 11), Ed. Lehman (*Buddhismus*, p. 49) N. Söderblom (*La vie future*, p. 397 f.), Fr. Heiler (*Die Buddhistische Versenkung*, p. 7 et passim). They are all more or less mystics. They imagine to have found in Buddhism something congenial with their own emotions. Buddhist mysticism is for them hardly distinguishable from christian devotion, (cp. Heiler, op. cit., p. 51 f., p. 61 f., p. 66). The identification of Buddhism and Yoga by M. de la V. P. seems to be inspired by quite different feelings, he therefore converts Buddhism into magic or sorcery.

<sup>3</sup> M. de la Vallée Poussin tries to impress on his readers that he finds himself in agreement with M. E. Senart, as far as I can see, with but little foundation. The origin of Buddhism was formerly sought in some kind of Upanishad ideology or some Sāṅkhya ideas. M. Senart has shown (*R. H. R.*, t. 42, p. 345) that the coincidences with the yoga of Pātañjali are much more numerous and striking. Although this work is now proved (by H. Jacobi, see *J. A. O. S.*, 31, 1 ff.) to be much later than M. Senart assumed and, in some points at least, had itself been influenced by Buddhism, nevertheless the coincidences pointed out by M. Senart are solid facts which nobody would be likely to deny. They can be now supplemented in that sense that yoga ideas have found their way into many other Indian systems as well. Senart's main result (*ibid.* p. 364) I understand to refer to pre-Buddhist conditions.

<sup>4</sup> The subtle difference between these terms assumed in *Y. S.* II. 29 and III. 2-4, 11, rendered by prof. J. H. Woods as «singleness of intent, contemplation and concentration», as well as the definition of Yoga as «the restriction of the fluctuations of the mind-stuff» *ibid.* I. 2 are a peculiarity of that system. Prof. M. Anesaki and prof. J. Takakusu, *ERE*

terms can be used in an objective sense (*karma-sādhana*), in an instrumental sense (*karana-sādhana*) or in a locative sense (*adhikaraṇa-sādhana*).<sup>1</sup> Yoga and *samādhi* thus mean either the concentrated thought itself, as a psychical condition, or this same thought, as the method through which the condition has been created, or as the place where it has been produced. It is usual to apply in the latter sense, as a designation of the mystic worlds, where the denizens are eternally merged in trance, the term *samāpatti*. It is applicable to all the eight planes of mystic existence, of whom the denizens are, so to say, born mystics. In this sense the term is contrasted with the worlds of gross bodies and carnal desire (*kāma-dhātu*) where the denizens possess thoughts non-concentrated, disturbed. This is its more general acceptation. In a more special sense it is applicable to the four highest planes of existence alone, the immaterial worlds (*arūpa-dhātu*). It then is contrasted with the four lower mystic worlds which are specially called the four *dhyānas*. The word *samādhi* has also a general and a special sense. It can mean the usual faculty of concentrated attention, or it may mean cultivated, developed concentration. It then becomes a mystical power which can transfer the meditator into higher worlds and change life altogether. Yoga is usually applied in the latter kind of connotation, but it would not be inconsistent with the spirit of the sanscrit language to use it in all the three senses (*yujyate etad iti yogah*, *yujyate anena iti yogah*, *yujyate tasminn iti yogah*).<sup>1</sup> A complaint, if any, can be only about the detailed and subtle precision with which this notion is analysed, not about its vagueness. For supernatural power the term *ṛddhi* is used. But, of course, when concentration is supposed to produce supernatural mystic powers, then, by a metaphore, the former may be mentioned instead of the latter.

s. v. *dhyāna*, assume that *samādhi* is the result, arhatship, and *dhyāna* one of the means. But that is against Ab. Kośabh. ad VIII. 1, where *samāpatti-dhyāna* «concentration» is distinguished from *upapatti-dhyāna* «existence in a mystic world». That *samādhi* has also a general meaning is clear from its position among the *citta-mahā-bhūmikas* where it is defined as *citta-ekāgratā*, cf. my Central Conception, p. 100. When concentrated meditation here on earth is contrasted with a birth in an imagined higher world of eternal trance the terms *samāpatti* and *upapatti* are respectively used, the first is explained as *sama-āpatti*=*sñoms-par-hjug-pa*, cf. below the opinion of *Srīlābha*, p. 14.

<sup>1</sup> Much of the confusion wrought by the inadequate translation of the term *saṃskāra* is likewise due to a failure of realising its double character, it either means a force, *saṃskriyate anena*=*saṃskāra*=*saṃ-bhūya-kāri*, or it means an element, *saṃskriyate etad*=*saṃskṛta-dharma*.

The context will always indicate to the advertised reader what is the meaning intended.

Very far from being vulgar magic and thaumaturgy, the Buddhist teaching about Yoga contains the following philosophic construction which, in my opinion, the historian of philosophy can neither disregard nor fail to appreciate.

Its fundamental idea consists in the fact that concentrated meditation induces a condition of Quiescence. The meditative man is the opposite of the active man. Life is then dissected in its active elements (*saṃskāras*) with a view to be one after the other reduced to final quiescence and extinction.

A personality (*pudgala*), in which other systems imagine the presence of a permanent spiritual principle, a Soul (*ātma*), is in reality a bundle of elements or forces (*saṃskāra-samūha*) and a stream of thought (*santāna*). It contains nothing permanent or substantial, it is *anātma*. This means that, according to the general idea of radical pluralism, the spiritual part of an individual consists of separate elements (*dharma*), just as its physical frame consists of atoms.<sup>1</sup> Although separate, these elements are linked together by causal laws (*hetu-pratyaya*). Some of them always appear simultaneously, they are satellites (*sahabhū*). Or they follow one another in consecutive moments, they are then homogeneous (*niṣyanda-phala*), they constitute chains of moments (*kṣaṇa-santāna*). The law of causation is therefore called the law of dependently-together-origination (*pratītya-sam-utpāda*). The number of psychical elements (*arūpiṇo dharmāḥ*) at every given moment of an individual life is variable. It may be very considerable, because undeveloped, dormant faculties are also reckoned as actually present. This circumstance has even provoked gibes from the side of Sautrāntikas in regard to the impossibility of an actual coexistence of so huge a quantity of separate elements at a single moment.<sup>2</sup> However some of them are constant, always present at every moment, others appear only under

<sup>1</sup> The theory of separate elements (*dharmas*) is exposed in detail by prof. O. Rosenberg, *Problems of Buddhist philosophy* (now translated from the Russian into German by his widow (Heidelberg 1924), and also by myself in my *Central Conception of Buddhism* (London 1923, R. A. S.).

<sup>2</sup> Yaśomitra, ad Ab. Kośa II. 40, computes that, if in the first moment 27 *dharmas* are present, there will be 486 elements in the sixth one, and so on, *ity ananta-dravyā (prāṇināḥ) pratisantāna-śarīra-kṣaṇe bhavanti*. If these elements were resistant stuff, says Vasubandhu, there would be not enough room for them in the whole universe.

certain conditions. Faculties of ten different kinds<sup>1</sup> are supposed always to be present. They are termed the general faculties (*citta-mahā-bhūmika*). Among them we find the faculty of concentration, *samādhi* or *yoga*. They are morally indifferent. To them are added either a certain number of faculties morally good, or a certain number of faculties morally bad. But not only do the elements which combine in one moment vary in number, they can vary also in intensity (*utkarṣa*). In a certain individual, at a certain time, a certain element may predominate, while in another individual, or at another time in the same individual, another element may reach prominence.<sup>2</sup>

Among the constantly present elements there are two exceedingly precious ones which, when given the proper opportunity of full development, become predominant and change the character of the individual and his moral value altogether. They are the faculty of appreciative analysis (*prajñā*) and the faculty of concentrating our thoughts upon a single point to the exclusion of all other disturbing considerations and occurrences, it is just *samādhi* or *yoga*. These elements may be quite undeveloped and insignificant. *Prajñā* is then called *matī*, but it is the same faculty. When fully developed it becomes transcendent wisdom (*prajñā amalā*). Life in ordinary men is controlled by ignorance (*avidyā*) which is the reverse of *prajñā*, but not its mere absence. It is a separate element which can be and, in every ordinary man really is, present at the same time with his dormant faculty of wisdom. But it is not a constant faculty, it can be suppressed (*prahīna*) and thrown out of the mental stream altogether which then becomes purified or saintly (*ārya*).

Now, the moral law or moral progress or moral education of mankind is conceived as a struggle within the stream (*santāna*) between the good (*kuśala*), the noble faculties of man and his bad (*akuśala*) or defiling inclinations. Since the elements are *ex hypothesi* separate and momentary they cannot really influence one another. Nevertheless the presence of defiling ignorance and other disturbing qualities makes the whole stream impure. All the elements are then impure, even the central element, bare

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the tables appended to my Central conception, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> We accordingly say «I remember», «I think», «I wish», but this does not mean that at the moment when I wish I do not think, or that in the moment when I remember I do not wish. All mind is regarded as consisting at every moment of an assemblage of mental atoms, faculties (*saṃskāra*) or elements (*dharma*).

consciousness, or pure sensation (*viññāna*), becomes affected (*kliṣṭa*, *sāsrava*). A special law of causation (*sarvatraḡa-hetu*) is imagined to account for the fact that the elements of the stream are either all of them pure in the Saint, or all impure (*kliṣṭa*) in the ordinary man.<sup>1</sup>

It is part of the system, it is also a deep belief in all Buddhist countries, that the noble and sublime faculties will finally, in the long run, triumph. The defiling faculties (*kleṣa*) are divided into two classes, so far as one class can be remedied by insight, so to say, by reason, and the other by concentrated attention only. The first are called *drṣṭi-heya*, the other *bhāvanā-heya*.<sup>2</sup> It is of course a natural, and even a trivial, fact that some of our shortcomings and vices can be eradicated by knowledge, and others by concentrated attention alone. But the faculty of concentration, if fully developed, has a greater force.<sup>3</sup> It then becomes a mystic power. It can stop life altogether. In the Path of Salvation it is the last and most decisive step. It can also transfer the individual into a higher plane of existence. He is then reborn or transferred into the realm of ethereal (*accha*, *bhāsvara*)<sup>4</sup> bodies, into the sphere of purified matter (*rūpa-dhātu*), or into the still higher regions of pure spirits (*arūpa-dhātu*).

Here we forsake the ground of reality and enter into the worlds of the mystic. From this point of view existence is divided into three different spheres. The division is in reality dipartite, into the mystic worlds (*sāmapatti*) and into the non-mystic ones, i. e. our gross worlds of carnal desire, (*kāma-dhātu*). The latter include the hells, earth and the lower heavens, where the gods are living and enjoying themselves in a very human way. The position which is assigned to the gods in this sphere is very characteristic for the Bhuddist, as well as for the Jaina, religions. These gods are not superior beings in a moral sense. For the sake of moral progress and salvation the condition of man is preferable. Speaking technically, the gods of the *kāma-dhātu* represent assemblages of elements of all the 18 cate-

<sup>1</sup> Ab. Koṣa, II. 54, 57; IV. 9; V. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. I. 40.

<sup>3</sup> When *samādhi* has reached full development it becomes the predominant element in that bundle of elements (*saṃskāra-samūha*) which make up an individual. The single term *samādhi* may then be used for this element together with its satellites, it then becomes synonymous with the individual or his 5 *skandhas*, cp. Ab. Koṣabh. ad VIII. 1. The same applies to the developed *prajñā*.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Ab. Koṣabh. ad II. 12.

gories (*dhātu*). Not a single of them is brought to a standstill by *yoga*. They are full of passions and are superior to man by their power, but not by their conduct.<sup>1</sup> The mystic worlds are further divided into two classes, those in whom the denizens possess ethereal bodies, and those in which they have no physical frame. The faculty of concentration (*samādhi*, *yoga*) has here attained predominance, it has become the central element, the others are then satellites. Imagination has built up above the heavens of the carnal gods a series of mystic worlds. They correspond exactly to the degrees of trance which are gradually reached, or supposed to be reached, by the mystic. The purely spiritual realms (*arūpa-dhātu*) are four. Their denizens are merged in contemplation (*samāpatti*) of some unique idea, either the idea of the infinity of space, or of the infinity of thought, or of the void, or in a dreamy semi-conscious state. Their condition is nearly catalepsy, a state where consciousness is quite arrested. The worlds of ethereal bodies are also four in number, exactly corresponding to the initial four degrees of trance (*dhyāna*), and are accordingly designated as the worlds of the first, the second, the third and the fourth *dhyāna*.

Whereas our material frame consists of elements of 18 kinds, four of them are in abeyance in the worlds of ethereal bodies. The sense-data of smell and taste and the corresponding two sets of sensations do not exist. It is because these beings do not want any hard food, no food which is taken piecemeal, chewed and swallowed.<sup>2</sup> Their nutrition is spiritual. Here imagination evidently is founded upon the fact that the mystic, when deeply engaged in meditation, forgets all about his meals. Therefore olfactory and gustatory sense-data lose their *raison d'être*. They are by the mystic power of *yoga* extinct altogether. But the physical organ, the nose and the tongue remain, because their absence would make the body ugly. All bodies are beautiful, none is mutilated. Their faculties of sight and audition are illimited, they possess *divya-cakṣuḥ* and *divya-śrotram*.<sup>3</sup> Their tactile sensations are the same as the characteristic agreeable feeling of bodily ease and lightness (*prasarabdhī*) which produces levitation in the mystic. Their movements are therefore extremely swift and dexterous. But the faculties of smelling and taste are absent altogether, because their food is immaterial. They have no need for clothes,<sup>4</sup> they are born with a light ethereal covering that lasts all their very long life through. Neither do they want any dwellings. Every new born finds a house provided for him by *karma*, i. e. by nature. The phenomenon of sex is spiritualised. The bodies are without the members of physical procreation. This does not make them mutilated. Gross sexual passion does not exist at all. But total indifference does neither exist. The feelings

<sup>1</sup> The higher planes of these carnal gods however are morally purer than the lower ones, they gradually approach to the still higher moral standard of the worlds of trance, cp. Ab. Kośa, III. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Ab. Kośa, I. 30, III. 39.

<sup>3</sup> They have, as a monk in Mongolia expressed himself in a conversation with me, telescopes and telephones.

<sup>4</sup> Ab. Kośa, III. 70.

are delicate. The birth of a new being is quite free from all pain and filth. The new born child does not come out of the matrix of a female, it is apparitional (*upapāduka*). Those who happen to be nearest to the place of his birth are his parents.<sup>1</sup> No government,<sup>2</sup> of course, is needed in such a community, because there are no crimes, no gross passions. Total absence of passion would mean total absence of volitions, and this, according to the Indian conception, would stop life altogether, it would be Nirvāṇa. But all feelings have a mild form. The feeling of hatred (*pratigha*) is totally absent. Other feelings are veiled indifference (*nivṛta-avyākṛta*).<sup>3</sup>

The imagination of the man who has drawn this picture, whether it be Buddha or another, seems to have been guided by the idea that manual work is the curse of humanity. Therefore a state is imagined where there is no need for it, because food, clothes and homes are naturally provided. The other debasing feature of mankind, the gross sexuality of love, is quite absent. Thus from the three incentives of human action on earth, wealth, love and duty (*artha-kāma-dharma*) the last alone continues its unimpeded sway in the mystic's worlds. However there is no absolute equality between the denizens. There are lofty and ordinary characters. The quality of being a «worldling» (*prthag-jana*) can occasionally appear in these regions. At least some of the schools are quarrelling about this question.<sup>4</sup> The details of this picture have given rise to a great deal of controversy, and even now we can come across Buddhist monks who will, with extraordinary vivacity, debate some of the moot points.

The Abhidharma discusses the question, whether in order to possess all the supernatural forces existing in the mystic worlds it is a necessary condition to be born in them or whether it is possible to possess them even while living here on earth, in the realm of gross bodies. We find the following answer.<sup>5</sup>

«There are beings living here on earth in the realm of gross bodies (*kāma-dhātu*), and there are others living in the first, second and higher worlds of ethereal bodies (*prathamā-dhyānādi*). They are all possessors of a body, of a faculty of vision and of corresponding visible

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. III. 71.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. III. 98.

<sup>3</sup> A full account of the Buddhist heavens and their denizens is given in prof. H. Kirfel, *Die Kosmographie der Inder* (Bonn, 1920), p. 190 ff, but their connection with the degrees of absorption in yoga meditation is mentioned only in regard to the 4 samāpattis on p. 198. Cp. also B. C. Law, *Heaven and Hell* (Calcutta, 1925).

<sup>4</sup> The Vātsīputriyas explained the fact that a person having reached in a higher world the condition of a Saint (*ārya*) could sometimes nevertheless fall back into ordinary humanity and become again a common worldling, by the circumstance that some element of this common worldliness (*prthagjanatva*) was left dormant in him, it had not been quite eradicated at the time when he became a Saint, cp. Ab. Kośabh. I. 40, II. 40.

<sup>5</sup> Condensed from Ab. Kośabh. pp. 88. 14—90. 7 (B. B. XX.), cp. M. de la V. P.'s transl. pp. 93. ff.

objects. Is it a necessary rule that body, sight and object should all belong to the same plane of existence or are such beings possible whose sight and objects are those of another world than their body? We answer, that different combinations of each element are possible.

If a being is born on earth and he contemplates the surrounding objects with his usual sense of vision, all the three elements will belong to the same sphere. But if this very man will acquire that mystical power of vision which is characteristic of the first world of trance, then the combination will change. The body and the surrounding objects will remain the same as before, but the faculty of vision and the corresponding sensations will be those which are characteristic of the first world of trance. If, in addition to that, he will attain a degree of mystic concentration where all objects are changed, then the body remaining on earth, his faculty of vision, his visual sensations and his external world will all be those of the mystic. . . . This being, still remaining in the plane of gross bodies, may acquire the faculty of vision characteristic of the second and higher worlds. Corresponding combinations will then arise which can easily be imagined by the analogy of what has been stated. . . . Further, if a denizen of the first mystic world contemplates the surrounding objects with his own faculty of vision, then all the elements will belong to his own plane of existence. But if he will look down upon the plane of existence below him, then his body, his sight and his sensations will remain his own, though his objects will belong to another plane. The denizen of the first mystic world may acquire the sight-power characteristic of the second mystic world, and so on. The corresponding combinations may easily be imagined.

However there is a limitation. The faculty of vision cannot be that of a lower plane than the body, (there can be no ethereal bodies with a gross faculty of vision), but there can be a gross body with a mystic power of vision. Ordinary men with an ordinary power of vision do not perceive the higher worlds, but the denizens of the higher worlds might perceive what is going on in the gross worlds, if they care to. The organ of vision, connected with a certain body, can appertain either to its own plane of existence, or to a higher one, it can never descend to a lower plane. But the visible objects and visual sensations either belong to the same plane as the body, or to a lower one, never to a higher one. The same refers to the faculty of audition. As to the faculties of touch, smell and taste, they always belong to the same plane of existence as that of their body.»

These speculations help us to understand the Buddhist denial of personal identity. The separate elements combining in a personality may even be such as normally belong to different planes of existence. Determined by actual observation these elements, by an effort of imagination, are transferred to a higher plane where they continue to combine under changed circumstances according to the same laws of evolution, *élan vital* or *karma*, which were settled by the analysis of actual facts. The work of philosophy here resembles a mathematical computation. Being given a certain change in the axioma of existence, e. g., the necessity of food, clothing and homes being in abeyance, what will be the consequent changes in all the formulas of personal existence? This is also clearly seen out of the following discussion in the *Abhidharma*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Condensed from Ab. Koša. bh. pp. 52. 2 — 53. 8 (B. B. XX.), cp. M. de la V. P.'s translation, p. 54 ff.

«It has been determined that 18 kinds (*dhātu*) of elements are cooperating in making up life in all the three spheres of existence.<sup>1</sup> It is then asked how many cooperate in the worlds of gross bodies, how many in the worlds of ethereal bodies, and how many in the spiritual worlds. It is answered — 18 in the first, 14 in the second and 3 in the last. All the 18 elements combine in creating life in the sphere of gross bodies. «They combine» means that they are inseparable from it, they constitute this world. In the plane of ethereal bodies, the fragrant and savoury stuff, as well as the corresponding sensations (*viññāna*) are excluded. They represent physical food (*kavati-kāra-āhāra*). But ethereal bodies belong to beings who can live without such food, they have no desire for it. The olfactory and gustatory sensations are thus absent, because their objects—that physical food which contains the fragrant and savoury stuff—do not exist.

Objection. But in this case neither the resistant stuff would exist in these worlds, since it is also (a part) of the nutriment stuff?

Answer. That part of it alone exists which is not nutriment.

Objection. The fragrant and the savoury stuffs are in the same condition, (a part of them is not nutriment)?

Answer. The resistant stuff is necessary as a support for the sense faculties, as a support for the bodies and as clothes for them. But for the fragrant and savoury stuffs there is no necessity, because there is no physical food. Therefore, since the instinct for such food is absent, neither do the corresponding stuffs exist, (i. e., they are not produced by *karma*). The case of the resistant stuff is different.

Opinion of Śrīlābha. If somebody here (on earth) by concentrated meditation reaches ecstasy, he continues to see colours, to hear sounds and his sense of touch is agreeably affected by some special tangible stuff which is produced simultaneously with the production in him of a high degree of levitation (*prasrabdhī*), but odours and tastes are in abeyance. For this reason, when beings are reborn in these worlds of trance, the first three sense data exist, but smells and tastes are absent.»

It is seen out of this passage that the conditions of life in the sphere of ethereal bodies are imagined by transferring personal mystic experiences into a separate plane of existence.

A very interesting discussion then follows about that driving force of nature called *karma* which, in this connection, corresponds to our conception of evolution, or *élan vital*.<sup>2</sup>

It produces, according to a regular plan and answering to necessities, all the varieties of life in the plane of gross bodies and *mutatis mutandis* in the imagined planes of existence constructed according to mystic experiences.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the tables in Central Conception, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> What confusion arises from a wrong translation of the term *karma* appears clearly from M. de la V. P.'s translation of this passage, Ab. Kośa II. 30, p. 56. «Quelle est la cause de la naissance d'un organe, sinon un certain acte commandé par un désir relatif à cet organe». This can only mean that there has been, once upon a time, a man who evidently did not possess this organ, or did possess no organs at all, but he manifested a desire to possess some and committed an action in consequence. After that all men, who peacefully existed without any organs at all, suddenly acquired them! No wonder that Indian philosophy, when presented in such a garb, ceases to be attractive. About Karma in Buddhism cp. O. Rosenberg, Problems, XVI.

Such is the theory of Yoga in Hinayāna. It is quite different in Mahāyāna where the philosophic foundation is different. All the devices which are employed for helping the mind to concentrate upon a single point are more or less the same in all philosophic systems. There is absolutely nothing Buddhistic in them.<sup>1</sup> The psychological fact of concentration which is at the bottom of them is a very simple one.<sup>2</sup> When carried on systematically they induce special mystic states of mind. Pātañjali has given their explanation according to the principles of Sāṅkhya philosophy. In Hinayāna Buddhism they are explained in a manner fitting the system of radical pluralism, i. e., that theory of separate elements (*dharma*) which has been established with a view to their gradual extinction in Nirvāṇa. Very characteristic for Buddhism is the system of heavens or paradises in which, at their middle and highest stages, imaginary beings are lodged, who are also called gods, but are nothing but born mystics, beings in whom the condition of trance is a natural one. This distinguishes Buddhism from all other religions and philosophical systems.<sup>3</sup> It is also inseparable from the conception of the Hmayānist Nirvāṇa, or the so called Nirvāṇa of the Śrāvakas. According to the teaching of some schools the highest cataleptic states of trance are eternal (*asaṃskṛta*), i. e., they do not differ from Nirvāṇa.<sup>4</sup> But, according to the majority of schools, Nirvāṇa is beyond even that. It is the absolute limit of life, the extinction even of this kind of the thinnest vestige of consciousness which is still left in the highest of all imaginable worlds of cataleptic trance.

<sup>1</sup> Fr. Heiler, op. cit. p. 47, following prof. Rhys Davids, thinks that (brahmanical) Yoga is predominantly physical and hypnotic, whereas the Buddhist method of meditation is intellectual and moral. I would not venture to endorse this opinion. In this respect the difference, if any, is negligible. Heiler evidently overlooks, in his Buddhist fervour, the devotion to God (*īśvara-praṇi-dhāna*) of the brahmanical Yogi. The process of moral purification of the latter is very vividly described by prof. S. N. Dasgupta, *The Study of Pātañjali*, p. 142 ff. (Calcutt, 1920) and his other works.

<sup>2</sup> The late prof. O. Rosenberg has himself practised some yoga-meditation in a Zen Monastery in Japan. He used to compare the agreeable feeling of ease which he then experienced to the effect produced by music, especially when executed personally. Attention is then fixed and a light feeling of ecstasy makes you forget all troubles of life. The warlike Samurai before going to war used to go through a course of yoga-exercises in some Zen monastery, and this had the most beneficial influence upon their moral condition, in strengthening their courage and endurance.

<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that the gods of Epicurus are also quiescent, inactive and also possess aethereal bodies of a special atomic structure.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. *Kathā-vatthu*, VI. 4. The Yogācāras likewise reckon catalepsy among the *asaṃskṛta* elements.

## III. MYSTIC INTUITION (YOGI-PRATYAKṢA)

Apart from the above described general function of Yoga, there is another special kind of it, the subjective counterpart of the first. It then appears as the mystic intuition of the true condition of the universe. The Buddhist Saint is supposed, in a moment of mystic illumination, suddenly to perceive the whole construction, with its gross and mystic worlds, as vividly as if it were a direct sense perception. As a psychological process it is equally taught in Hinayāna and in Mahāyāna, but its content, the picture which reveals itself at this moment, is quite different in both systems. It corresponds to their theoretical parts, to the system of pluralism which is taught in Hinayāna, and to the monist view which is the central conception of Mahāyāna, as will be seen later on. For, although a sudden illumination, it does not come without preparation. The future Saint has gone through a long course of moral training and he has carefully studied all the details of that philosophic construction, when in the moment of sudden illumination, what he had before tried to understand only theoretically, comes up before him with the vivacity of living reality. Beginning with this moment he is a Saint, all his habits of thought are changed. He directly views the universe as an infinite continuity of single moments in gradual evolution towards Final Extinction. In Mahāyāna the Bodhisattva sees directly, or feels inwardly, quite another picture, corresponding to the theoretical teaching of that religion. The Path towards Salvation is therefore divided in a preliminary path of accumulating merit (*sambhāra-mārga*), in a subsequent course of training (*pratyogya-mārga*) and in the path of illumination (*drṣṭi-mārga*).<sup>1</sup> The latter is momentary. It is technically called perception of the Four Truths, such perception being the exclusive property of the Saint (*ārya*). Therefore they are called the four truths of the Saint (*āryasya satyāni*). They express the general view that 1) there is a phenomenal existence (*duḥkha*), 2) its driving force (*saṃudaya*), 3) there will be final extinction (*nirodha*), and 4) there is a path towards it (*mārga*). In this general form the four truths are accepted

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. C. Rhys Davids (Dhamma-saṅgāṇi transl., p. 256, n. 2) calls it a «mental awakening», «intellectual conversion», «a certain vantage-point for mind and heart from which the Promised Land of Nirvāṇa was caught sight of, and the fact of impermanence first discerned». Under «the fact of impermanence» the theory of the impermanent *dharma*s must be evidently understood. A poetical description of *drṣṭi-mārga*, which is the same as *śrota-āpatti-phala*, is found in D. N. I. 76 ff.

### III. YOGI - PRATYAKṢA

by all Indian systems.<sup>1</sup> There is absolutely nothing Buddhistic in them. Their meaning changes according to the content which is put into them, according to what is understood under phenomenal life (*duḥkha*)<sup>2</sup> and under extinction (*nirvāṇa*). Within the pale of Buddhism these conceptions have, at a certain date, undergone a radical change. In early Buddhism they correspond to a pluralistic universe, in Mahāyāna to a monistic one.<sup>3</sup>

In Hīnayāna the process of illumination is described as a double moment, it consists in a moment of feeling and a moment of knowledge. The feeling is satisfaction (*ksānti=ruci*), after which in the next following moment comes intuition, the vision of the elements of existence (*dharma-jñāna*). The intuition refers at first to the surrounding gross world, and then, as is always the case, it is transferred to the imagined worlds of trance (*anvaya-jñāna*). Thus in sixteen consecutive moments<sup>4</sup> the intuition of the future Saint has run through the whole universe, its real and imaginary worlds, and has viewed them in the light of the four stages of their evolution towards quiescence. The supreme moment of illumination is the central point of the teaching about the Path to Salvation. An enormous literature, especially in Mahāyāna, is devoted to this conception of mystic intuition.<sup>5</sup>

When in later times the study of Abhidharma has been superseded by the study of logic and epistemology, the mystic perception of the Saint has retained its place among the different categories of direct cognition which were then established. Direct cognition was then defined as containing no synthetic thought (*kalpanāpodha*). It was pure sensation which could apprehend an indefinite moment of sensation only. The four truths, i.e. ontology, were at first studied and ascertained by sound logic (*pramāṇena viniścita*) and then suddenly perceived as vividly as a grain of corn on the

<sup>1</sup> About the «four truths» in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika see below p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> It is *samskāra-duḥkhatā* or *pariṇāma-duḥkhatā* the counterpart of *asaṃskṛta=nirodha*, cp. Ab. Kośabh. VI. 3. This kind of *duḥkha* is much nearer to our ordinary conception of joy, than of suffering.

<sup>3</sup> In Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika the yogi perceives at that moment of illumination the atoms and all categories directly, cp. Praśastp., p. 187. 7.

<sup>4</sup> About the 16 moments cp. Ab. Kośa, VI. 18, 25 ff. and M. de la V. P. in his edition of Madhy. vṛ, p. 479 n. 4.

<sup>5</sup> The textbook for the study of this part of Mahāyāna is the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* of Maitreya-Asaṅga, of which 21 Indian commentaries alone existed besides a huge indigenous Tibetan literature. Among the sect of the «yellow caps» the chief commentary studied is the *Lam-rim-chen-po* by the great Tsoṅ-kha-pa, partly translated into Russian by G. Tsibikoff.

palm of the hand.<sup>1</sup> The number of moments was then reduced to three. In the Mādhyamika system, where logic was denied altogether, the preparation consisted in a course of negative dialectic, after which the intuition of the transcendental truth springs up as an inward conviction (*pratyātma-vedya*).<sup>2</sup> In both the philosophic systems which are represented in Buddhism — the pluralism of the Hīnayāna and the monism of Mahāyāna — there is a course of preparation and meditation and a moment of sudden illumination.<sup>3</sup>

If we now try to answer the question about the age and the history of this Buddhist doctrine of Yoga, we must, first of all, wholly appreciate the fact that it is an inseparable, inherent part of the pluralistic universe of separate elements (*dharma*) gradually evolving towards extinction.<sup>4</sup> The possibility is not excluded, as we have stated elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> that the germ of this theory is older than Buddha himself. In any case there is no historically authenticated Buddhism without this theory, without the mystic worlds and, its inherent part, the philosophic explanation of Yoga. All yoga practices which had not this philosophic and moral aim, all sorcery and thaumaturgy, the brahmanical sacrifices not excepted, were strongly condemned by the Buddha. They were considered as one of the cardinal sins.<sup>6</sup> The details of the conditions in the worlds of the mystic and the degrees of mystic concentration have always given opportunities to much scholastic

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Nyāya-bindu and ṭīkā, p. 11 (B. B. VII).

<sup>2</sup> Mādhy. vṛ, p. 493. 11.

<sup>3</sup> According to H. Bergson (De l'intuition philosophique) every great philosopher has once had a vision of the Universe to which he then remains faithful the rest of his life in a series of attempts to formulate it ever clearer and clearer. This will then be the *drṣṭi-mārga* of that philosopher. In the life of Kant it will be the time when after years of literary activity and meditation the central conception of the Critique of Pure Reason revealed itself to him and he then wrote, «das Jahr 69 gab mir grosses Licht!». The rest of his life was indeed spent in repeated attempts at a clear formulation of that vision. The preceding study and meditation were, so to say, his *sambhāra*- and *prayoga-mārga*.

<sup>4</sup> It has been supposed that the four *dhyānas* are of an earlier date than the four *samāpattis*, cp. Heiler, op. cit. p. 43 f. The conception of ethereal existences in the Rūpa-dhātu as consisting of 14 *dhātus* only, because they did not want any physical food is evidently a rationalisation of the myth about the descent of man from one of the Buddhist mystic worlds where the denizens fed on *samādhi*, cp. D. N. III. 84 ff. The full theory probably existed already at the time of the formation of the Pali Kanon.

<sup>5</sup> Central Conception, p. 65 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. the article on Buddhist magic in ERE where mysticism, magic and popular superstition are not sufficiently distinguished. In the Brahmajālasutta, D. N. I. 9 ff., we have a long, list of superstitions and magical practices, all strongly condemned.

controversy between the schools. We can safely assert that within the pale of Hīnayāna Buddhism there is no place for trivial sorcery.<sup>1</sup>

The psychology of trance is indeed a characteristic feature of many Indian systems, not Buddhism alone. It appears almost inevitably in that part of every Indian system which is called «the Path» (*mārga*) in which the means of a transition out of the phenomenal world into the Absolute are considered. With the exception of the orthodox Mīmāṃsakās and the materialists, every system in this part, but not in others, contains a certain amount of mysticism. The Jains had their teaching about Yoga. Even the realistic and theistic Nāyāyikas, when feeling it difficult to explain the transition into the Absolute, i. e., from saṃsāra into nirvāṇa, have recourse not to God, but to Yoga.<sup>2</sup> However, just as the European mind is not altogether and always free from mysticism, so is the Indian mind not at all necessarily subject to it. Not to speak about numerous materialistic doctrines, the orthodox Mīmāṃsakas themselves held about Yoga an opinion which probably represents just what all of us, so far we are not mystics, think about it, viz. that Yoga is sheer imagination, just as any other ordinary fantasticism.<sup>3</sup> Considering that the Mīmāṃsakas are the oldest philosophical system in India whose roots go down into the Vedic age, we at once can measure the exact value of the «historical method» which finds it highly improbable that in India, at the time of Buddha, nothing but vulgar magic and thaumaturgy could exist.

It is the common lot of every philosophy or religion to reach a point where further explanation becomes impossible. A higher and mystical principle is then invoked, because the usual methods have failed to give satisfaction. With Descartes and Leibnitz it is God, with many Indian systems it is Yoga as a mystical power. An appeal to this power plays a considerable part in Buddhism, but not otherwise.

<sup>1</sup> If every supernatural world or power, imagined by the mystic is represented as magic, then of course Hīnayāna will be full of magic, but Christianity, especially that which believes in miracles, will neither escape a similar reproach. The *ṛddhis* and *abhijñās* should therefore be more properly characterised as mystical imagined powers, with the proviso that «of the reality or unreality of the mystic's world we know nothing» (B. Russel, *External World*, 1922, p. 20). Very interesting are the explanations, and a certain vindication, of the Buddhist supernatural cognitions and powers by Fr. Heiler, op. cit., p. 33 f.

<sup>2</sup> About the place Yoga occupies in the system of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika see below, p. 55 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Śloka-vārt., on *pratyakṣasūtra*, 32.

## IV. BUDDHA'S BELIEF IN PERSONAL IMMORTALITY

Additional arguments in favour of an unphilosophic primitive Buddhism are derived from 1) the occurrence in the Pali Kanon of the word «immortal» among the epithets of Nirvāṇa, 2) the interpretation of two passages where Buddha is reported to have given no answer at all when questioned about Nirvāṇa, 3) the occurrence in later literature of the term reality (*vastu*) in connection with Nirvāṇa.

A short examination of the value of these additional arguments will not be out of place.

The practical, as well as the theoretical, part of Buddhism converge towards the idea of an extinction of all the active forces of life in the Absolute. This Absolute, Nirvāṇa, accordingly receives in emotional passages an overwhelming mass of *epitheta ornantia* among which the term «place of immortality» occurs several times. But what is this immortality? Is it the immortality of Vedic times? The blissful existence among the forefathers in heaven?<sup>1</sup> Or is this hypothetical immortality something like the paradise of Amitābha? Or something like the paradise of later Vishnuism? Not the slightest indication! Because indeed the word occurs only as an epithet of Nirvāṇa — annihilation. There is no deficiency, as we have seen, of paradises in the Buddhist outlook. But Nirvāṇa is beyond all imaginable spheres, it is the absolute limit. The words «immortal place» simply mean changeless, lifeless and deathless, condition, for it is explained as meaning a place where there is neither birth (i. e. rebirth) nor death (i. e. repeated death).<sup>2</sup> People enter paradise by being reborn in it, they disappear for ever in Nirvāṇa by being extinct.

<sup>1</sup> M. de la V. P. evidently thinks that all religious development starts with an idea of a surviving immortal Soul, a theory that has been exploded as far as Indian religions are concerned. Dr. Poul Tuxen in the Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Hist.-phil. Meddelelser, II, 4, Forestillingen om Sjælen i Rigveda, has proved that such an idea is quite absent from the Rigveda. In the oldest Upanishads the surviving *homunculus* is represented as a congeries of 5 elements which dissolve at death and then a new combination of them springs into being. It is not impossible to see in them the forerunners of the Buddhist 5 skandhas. The idea of a Soul, in our acceptation of the term, appears in the metrical Upanishads and is contemporaneous with the rise of Sāṅkhya and Jainism, probably also with some kind of pre-Buddhaic Buddhism, cf. H. Jacobi, Gottesidee, p. 7 ff. and my Central Conception, p. 65 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The epithet «place of immortality» is also used in connection with Nirvāṇa in brahmanical systems which adopt a lifeless Nirvāṇa, cf. Vātsyāyana, (ed. Vizian.) p. 30. It means a place where there is no death, it does not mean a place where there is eternal life. It is like-

## V. WAS BUDDHA AN AGNOSTIC?

Another additional argument is drawn out of a new interpretation of very well known passages in the Kanon where Buddha is reported to have answered a series of metaphysical questions by sheer silence. It is literally an argument *a silentio*. Considering these questions more closely, we see that they are metaphysical questions, such as: is the world beginningless or has it a beginning, is it finite or infinite, what is the condition of the Saint after death, this last question meaning, what is the nature of the Absolute. When these questions were addressed to Buddha on a certain occasion by a certain interlocutor, it has once happened that either no answer at all was forthcoming, or it was declared that the questions were futile. Scholars, Indian and European, ancient and modern, did not find much difficulty in harmonizing this occasional «agnosticism» with the main lines of the teachings of the Pali Kanon. Some scholars went all the length of comparing these reserved questions with a series of topics declared insoluble in modern critical philosophy. There is indeed some similarity.<sup>1</sup>

However M. de la Vallée Poussin explains Buddha's silence by his incapacity in the philosophical field. He did not know what to answer!<sup>2</sup> He was prepared to answer the question of the existence of an eternal Soul in the affirmative, if his interlocutor preferred so, if not, he did not mind denying it (p. 119). This is confirmed by a reference to Kumāralābha who is quoted by Vasubandhu in the course of a very long discussion about the cardinal tenet of all Buddhists, the «personalists» (pudgalavādins) not excluded, i. e. the non-existence of a substantial Soul. This tenet is here masterly discussed with perfect clearness and every possible detail.<sup>3</sup> Buddha denies an eternal Soul as against the Eternalists, but maintains moral responsibility as against the Materialist. Both extremes are declared to be follies against which the doctrine of Buddha is directed.

wise called a place where there is no birth, «*na jāyati, na jīyati, na mīyati ti amatam ti vuccati*» (Comm. Khuddaka, p. 180). Just as birth always means rebirth, death means reiterated death, cf. Oldenberg, Buddha<sup>2</sup>, p. 46.

<sup>1</sup> They are questions which «human reason in its natural progress must necessarily encounter», (Kant, critique of Pure Reason, transl. by Max Müller, p. 340). Cp. O. Franke, Kant u. die altindische Philosophie, in «Zur Erinnerung an Emanuel Kant» (Halle, 1904), p. 137—8.

<sup>2</sup> The same explanation is given by B. Keith, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> Translated by M. de la V. P. in the last volume of his Abhidharmakośa, pp. 128 ff. and by me in the Bulletin de l'Académie des Sciences de Russie, 1919, pp. 823 ff.

He has sought and found a «middle path» which evades the dangers of both extremes. How then could such a categorical denial and emphatic protest against two extremes be turned into a connivence in them? This is as much a riddle as the conversion of the Pali Kanon into a manual of thaumaturgy. It would be interesting to know when did Buddha «teach to some persons the existence of Self» (p. 119), i. e., a full blown *ātmavāda* or *satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*?

In many systems, ancient and modern, eastern and western, the reality in itself, the pith of reality, is declared to be something incognisable. It is therefore quite natural to find in the sūtra literature, where the style of popular discourse is adopted, the device of impressing upon the audience the mystic character of the Absolute by silence. The Mahāyāna sūtras do not tarry in characterising it as «unspeakable», «unknowable», «undefinable» etc. A long discussion about the essence of the absolute is given in the Vimalakīrti-sūtra. The question is tackled from different sides, and when Vinnalakīrti is at length asked to summarise, he remains silent. Whereupon Bodhisattva Manjuśrī exclaims, «Well done! Well done! non-duality is truly above words!». <sup>1</sup>

Nor is this feature limited to Buddhist literature. The Vedāntins resorted to the same device when wishing to bring home the transcendental character of their *advaita-brahma*. Śankara reports a case when the question about the essence of brahma was reiterated three times, without eliciting any answer. <sup>2</sup> At last, when it was asked, «Why don't you answer?» the reply was, «I do answer (sc. by silence), but you do not understand me». Is it permissible to draw the conclusion that Vimalakīrti and those men to whom Śankarācārya refers had themselves no reasoned opinion about the Absolute or that they were quite indifferent and prepared to answer, just as the questioner preferred, in the affirmative or in the negative? <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Suzuki, Mahāyāna, p. 106—107.

<sup>2</sup> Ad V. S., III. 2, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Vasubandhu (Ab. Kośa, V. 22) reports that it was a rule of dialectics at the time of Buddha to answer by silence those questions which were wrongly formulated, e.g., all questions regarding the properties of a non-existing thing. Prof. H. Oldenberg rightly remarks on another occasion, Upanishaden p. 133, «Die eigenste Sprache dieser Mystik, wie aller Mystik, ist Schweigen».

## VI. THE POSITION OF THE LATER SCHOOLS OF THE HĪNAYĀNA

M. de la Vallée Poussin insists that in order to escape obscurity we must construct an outline (*«un schéma d'ensemble»*) of the history of Buddhism, that this outline must harmonize with the general conception we have about the history of ancient India,<sup>1</sup> and that questions of detail become at once settled, if they find their place in this historical outline (p. XX). This schema seems to be the following one. There was in the beginning a simple faith in Soul and immortality and a primitive teaching of an indefinite character, mainly of obscure magic. After that a mixed period supervened when this simple creed was contaminated with confused ideology, and this allows us to ask the question whether Buddhism at that period was not a gnosis. At last Buddhism received a superstructure of inane scholasticism and we have a scholastic period in Buddhism, just as we had one in mediaeval Europe.

Primitive faith, a period of gnosticism and a period of scholasticism,—we at once see wherefrom the scheme is borrowed. It is an attempt to construct the history of Buddhism on parallel lines with the history of the Western Church.

What the primitive faith and the supposed agnosticism represent we have already seen.

Now what is scholasticism? It is either 1) philosophy in the service of religion or 2) excessive subtlety and artificiality in philosophical constructions. Buddhism Early or Kanonic is contrasted with Buddhism later or scholastic (p. 46).<sup>2</sup> This leads to the supposition that the school, e. g., of the Vaibhāṣikas represented in its teaching something substantially different from the early kanonical schools. But, as a matter of fact, the Vaibhāṣikas are only the continuators of one of the oldest schools, the Sarvāstivādins. They derive their name from the title of a huge commentary upon the kanonical works of this school and follow in philosophy generally the same lines as did

<sup>1</sup> This general conception of the history of India is apparently mentioned as implying the opinion of the author about the social *milieu* (p. 10) in which nothing but obscure magic could possibly originate, an opinion fully shared by prof. B. Keith. It would be interesting to know the opinion of both these authors about the *milieu* in which the grammar of Pāṇini, this one of the greatest productions of the human mind, originated!

<sup>2</sup> But on p. 128 M. de la Vallée Poussin mentions the «nihilist scholasticism» as the scholasticism of the Kanon.

the original school. Quite different is the position of the second school, the Sautrāntikas. It is really a new school, a precursor or contemporary of that momentuous change which splits the history of Buddhism into two quite distinct periods. It is therefore preferable to keep to the broad lines of the old division of Buddhism into early or Hīnayāna, and later or Mahāyāna, and to admit the existence of a transitional school in the Sautrāntikas.<sup>1</sup>

We readily admit that there was a considerable growth of scholasticism in Early Buddhism, but it is scholasticism in the second sense. Since the simple faith in immortality never existed, it is impossible to speak of its being blurred or contaminated by scholasticism. Early Buddhism started from a sound philosophical idea of a pluralistic universe, it denied substance and established lists of ultimate realities (*dharma*s). Some of these elements are highly artificial constructions. Early Buddhists and their continuators the Vaibhāṣikas have paid a heavy tribute to that innate tendency of the human mind to infer difference of things from a difference of words. The Sautrāntikas most decidedly opposed this tendency, they sharply distinguished nominal realities (*prajñaptisat*) from ultimate data. They accordingly mercilessly cut down the lists of elements adopted in the schools of Early Buddhism and by the Vaibhāṣikas. They thus reduced them exclusively to a list comprising sense-data and the primitive data of Mind. It is therefore quite wrong to throw them into the same bag with the Vaibhāṣikas. They are, if anything, antischolastic. Their rôle may be usefully compared with that of Occam's Razor in European philosophy. They even can be more properly called a critical school, a name which their continuators, the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika school fully deserves. But these already belong to the Mahāyāna. If we roughly assign the beginning of Mahāyāna to the I century A. D. and the decline of Hīnayāna in the North to the V century, we shall have about five hundred years when both these tendencies kept the field. The Sautrāntikas apparently began by taking an intermediate position<sup>2</sup> between the extreme

<sup>1</sup> Another transitional school between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna is the so called *satya-siddhi* school of Harivarman known only from Chinese sources, cp. Yamakami Sogen, *Systems of Buddhist Thought*, p. 172 ff. (Calcutta 1912), O. Rosenberg, *Problems* p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> This Vasubandhu himself hints, cf. my *Soul Theory*, p. 852 and M. de la Vallée Poussin's transl. IX p. 273. Vasubandhu who himself favoured this school, as well as his pupil and continuator Dignāga, are already Mahāyānists and have partly adopted Vijñānavāda views. They call themselves Vijñānavādins although in the cardinal point of absolute reality they partly adhere to the Sautrāntika view (cf. Nyāyabinduṭīkāṭipp. ed. B. B. p. 19).

Mahāyānists and the «school men». When the battle that raged during 500 years was inclining to its end, they coalesced with the Mahāyānists who had won the battle and formed with them the hybrid school of Yogācāra-Sautrāntika. Among the ultimate realities of the earlier lists which were declared by the new movement, i. e., by both the Mahāyānists and the Sautrāntikas, to be nominal we find Nirvāṇa (*nīrodha*).

It was known long ago that the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika schools were engaged in a dispute regarding the nature of Nirvāṇa. The first maintained that it was something real (*vastu*), the second objected that it was nothing real by itself, that it was merely the cessation of all personal life. The exact meaning of this issue could, of course, be fully appreciated only if the complicated arguments of both contending schools would have been known. Our information about the Vaibhāṣikas is much more ample now, and we can represent in detail the argumentation which led to the tenet of Nirvāṇa as a reality. About the other school, the Sautrāntikas, our information is still indirect. The works of the early Sautrāntikas, Kumāralābha, Śrīlābha, Mahābhādanta, Vasumitra and others are still inaccessible. Vasubandhu can be taken as the exponent of the latest phase of this school, when it was about to coalesce with the Mahāyānists. However enough is known to allow a definite conclusion about their supposed «denial» of Nirvāṇa and the meaning of their answer to the Vaibhāṣikas.

M. de la Vallée Poussin thinks that his hypothesis about a pre-Kānonic Buddhism, consisting of a simple faith in Immortality and Yoga practices, as well as his interpretation of the passages where Buddha is reported to have answered some metaphysical questions by silence — that both these hypotheses are fully borne out by the position which the later schools take regarding Nirvāṇa (p. 132). When it is called a «reality» (*vastu*) he declares it to be a confirmation of the existence (some 500 years ago) of that simple faith in Immortality which, by a similar method, he has discovered in Early Buddhism. We find in his book (pp. 136—148) many interesting details about the battle that raged between the two schools in the V century A. D., but unfortunately the meaning of the controversy has entirely escaped his attention, since it is *exactly the reverse* of what he assumes it to be. The Vaibhāṣikas did not maintain that Nirvāṇa was a kind of paradise, but that the annihilation of all life (*nīrodha*), the essence of Nirvāṇa, was a reality (*nīrodha-satya*, *vastu*), i. e., a materialistic lifeless reality. The Sautrāntikas,

on the other hand, admit the existence of Buddha's Cosmical Body (*dharmakāya*), i. e., they adhere to the Mahāyāna conception which consists in identifying Nirvāṇa with the living world itself. Therefore, just as the Mahāyānists, they deny the reality of Nirvāṇa *as a separate element* which transcends the living world. It is a denial of the reality of that materialistic kind of annihilation which was favoured by the Vaibhāṣikas.

## VII. THE DOUBLE CHARACTER OF THE ABSOLUTE

With regard to Nirvāṇa or the Absolute, Indian philosophy, just as, in a broader sense, the philosophy of all mankind, is divided between two diametrically opposed solutions. The absolute end is either eternal death, or it is eternal life.<sup>1</sup> The first is materialism, the second some kind of idealism. Both theories are represented in India, in Buddhism as well as in Brahmanism. The theory of eternal death is represented on the Buddhist side by Early Buddhism and the Vaibhāṣikas, on the Brahmanical side, as will be seen later on, by the early Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. The theory of eternal life is represented on the Buddhist side by the Mahāyāna and its precursors, on the Brahmanical side by the Vedānta, Sāṅkhya, Yoga and the later Nāyāyikas. Nirvāṇa is a reality (*dharmavastu*) in the sense of a materialistic, lifeless (*yasmin sati cetaso vimokṣaḥ* = *acetanaḥ*)<sup>2</sup> reality in the majority of the schools of Early Buddhism and in the Vaibhāṣika school. They are also atheists and treat their Buddha as essentially human.<sup>3</sup> Such reality is denied by all those schools which adhere to the conception of a divine Buddha, i. e., by the Mahāyānists and their precursors in the Hīnayāna. The conception of Buddha's Cosmical Body (*dharmakāya*) is shared by all the schools of Mahāyāna and by the intermediate school of the Sautrāntikas. According to the modern Mongol's way of expressing it, in Hīnayāna the Supreme Buddha (*burhan-bagshi*) has no body, in the Mahāyāna and with the Sautrāntikas he has a Body, and a better one (than before becoming Buddha), a glorious, all-embracing Body.

<sup>1</sup> I find in modern popular works attaining to biology the conception of a lifeless Nirvāṇa and the term itself applied to describe that condition of the Universe which will obtain when all energies will be exhausted (entropy). There is assumed a biological «Lusttrieb» and a «Todestrieb», the first would correspond to *heyopādeya-hānopādāna*, the second to *sarvam heyam* or *sarvam duḥkham*, cp. Sigm. Freud, *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* (Vienna 1925), pp. 52, 80.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Madhy. vr., p. 525. 9, cp. transl. in the Appendix.

<sup>3</sup> This, of course, does not mean that exceptional, supernatural powers were not ascribed to him, but he belonged to the *manuṣya-loka*.

As regards the reality or ideality of Nirvāṇa the relative position of the contending schools may be roughly represented in the following schematic way.

Vaibhāṣika and early schools — both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa real.

Mādhyamika — both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa unreal (sc. separately unreal).

Sautrāntika — saṃsāra real, nirvāṇa unreal (sc. separately unreal).

Yogācāra or Vijñānavāda — saṃsāra unreal, nirvāṇa real.

The meaning of this schema will emerge from the arguments advanced by each of the schools.

### VIII. THE VAIBHĀSIKAS

As mentioned above, they are the continuators of the early school of the Sarvāstivādins and may be here treated as the representatives of Early Buddhism in general. Their tenets which concern us at this place are the following ones. Existence is of a double kind, either transient and phenomenal, or eternal and absolute. Both parts are then analyzed into their elements, classified as elements of Matter, Mind and Forces for the phenomenal part, and as Space and Nirvāṇa for the eternal one. The elements of phenomenal life are divided into past, present and future, and are all conceived as realities, the past and the future ones are as real as the present ones. This leads to the construction of two sets of elements, the one representing their everlasting nature (*dharma-svabhāva*), the other their momentary manifestation in actual life (*dharma-lakṣaṇa*).<sup>1</sup> It is clear that this theory brings the Sarvāstivādin very near to the Sāṅkhya system which assumes an eternal matter and its momentary manifestations. Therefore students are specially warned not to confound both doctrines, and not to overlook their difference.<sup>2</sup> When all manifestations are stopped, all forces extinct, remains the lifeless residue. It is impersonal, eternal death, and it is a separate element, a reality, the reality of the elements in their lifeless condition. This reality is very similar to the reality of the Sāṅkhya's undifferentiated

<sup>1</sup> This theory of the double set of elements is very clearly analysed by O. Rosenberg in his Problems, cf. IX and XVIII. Had M. de la V.-P. devoted to this book all the attention it deserves he never would have maintained that the Nirvāṇa of the Vaibhāṣikas is a paradise. Judging by his sweeping and unfair remark on p. XXI he has entirely misunderstood this remarkable book.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ab. Kośa, V. 25, and my Central Conception, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> When pressed to give details about this lifeless condition of *dharma-svabhāva* the Vaibhāṣikas confess their ignorance, *ibid.* p. 75 and 90.

matter (*prakṛti*), it is eternal, absolute death<sup>1</sup>. The Sāṅkhyas were dualists, and admitted besides eternal Matter eternal Souls, but the latter, as is well known, the Buddhists very energetically denied. Candrakīrti refers to the Vaibhāṣika view in the following way. «If nirvāṇa is a reality *per se* (*bhāva*), it cannot be a simple extinction. Of course, it has been declared that consciousness is extinct (*vimokṣa*) in nirvāṇa, just as a light becomes extinct (when fuel is exhausted), but for us extinct life is not an entity (*bhāva*)!» To this (the Vaibhāṣika) answers. «You must not understand nirvāṇa to be the extinction of passion (and of life), but you must say that the entity (*dharma*) called nirvāṇa is the thing *in which* passion (and life) are extinct. The extinction of light is a mere example, and it must be interpreted as pointing to that (inanimate) thing which remains when consciousness is extinct».<sup>2</sup>

We need not insist that the school was atheistic and genuinely denied the reality of a substantial Soul, whereas the Mahāsamghikas, Vātsīputrīyas, Sautrāntikas and Mahāyānistis denied it one way and admitted it in another. The state of Nirvāṇa, as imagined by the Vaibhāṣikas, affords some points of similarity with that state of the Universe which modern science imagines will exist when all energies will be worked out, they will exist, since energy itself (sc. *dharma - svabhāva*) is eternal, but they will not work. A condition in which all energies (*samskāras*) are extinct cannot be spiritual.<sup>3</sup> Of course simple materialism goes under the name of *uccheda - vāda*, against which Buddha is reported to have made an emphatic protest. But simple materialism in India, as elsewhere, is nirvāṇa at every death (*dehucchedo mokṣaḥ*)<sup>4</sup> without retribution for one's deeds in future life. The complicated system of worlds imagined by Buddha, through which the elements composing individual existences are gradually, one after the other, reduced to a state of quiescence and extinction, until in final nirvāṇa all are extinct — is nothing but the realisation of the moral law. The worlds are «produced» by *karma*, which corresponds to a conception of evolution going on under the influence

<sup>1</sup> Or something quite undefinable, *nīḥsattāsattam nīḥsadasad nīrasad avyaktam alīṅgam pradhānam*, Vyāsa ad Y. S. II. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Yasmin sati cetaso vimokṣo (= nirodho) bhavati*, ibid. 525. 9., cp. translation in the Append.

<sup>3</sup> European mystics, of course, put all the variety of the Indian speculations about Nirvāṇa into the same bag and declare that, although negative for our reason, it is emotionally very positive indeed, «dem Gefühl nach ein Positivum stärkster Form», cf. Heiler, op. cit. p. 41, following R. Otto, *Das Heilige*.

<sup>4</sup> *Sarvadarś.*, p. 3 (B. Ind.).

of an accumulation of moral merit.<sup>1</sup> Simple materialism leaves no room for the working of this law. But neither does, according to Buddha, an eternal spiritual principle leave room for it. The moral law conduces through a very long process of evolution the living world into a state of final quiescence where there is no life, but something lifeless, inanimate.<sup>2</sup> In this sense the Vaibhāṣika outlook resembles the materialism of modern science.<sup>3</sup>

#### IX. THE SAUTRĀNTIKAS

This school, as mentioned above, had quite different tendencies. They denied that the past and future elements really existed in the same sense as the present ones did. They took a much more natural view. The past is what did exist, and the future is what will exist after not having existed. They consequently rejected the double set of elements, the eternal essence and the manifestations, and admitted the reality of these manifestations alone. Nirvāṇa was the absolute end of the manifestations, the end of passion and life (*kleśa-janmanor kṣayah*), without any positive counterpart. It is decidedly insisted upon the fact that nirvāṇa means only the end of the process of life, without any lifeless substance (*dharma*) as the residue or the substratum *in which* life has been extinguished. Nirvāṇa thus loses its materialistic character. The denial of the Sautrāntikas is not a denial of Nirvāṇa in general, not a denial of an idealistic absolute. There is no Buddhism possible without Nirvāṇa, since without Nirvāṇa means without a Buddha. But the Sautrāntikas denied the materialistic Nirvāṇa, just as all the Mahāyānists did.

The original works of the Sautrāntika school, as mentioned above, are not yet accessible. The school probably contained a great variety of philosophical constructions. The later Sautrāntikas coalesced with the Mahā-

<sup>1</sup> Cp. O. Rosenberg, Problems, XVI.

<sup>2</sup> All the references adduced by M. de la V. P. from Sanghabhadra and Ab. Kośa II, 55 only assert that nirvāṇa, according to the Vaibhāṣikas, was a  *vastu*, but not that it was living or spiritual.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. M. Anesaki, Nichiren (Cambridge, 1916), p. 137 ff. evidently alludes to the Vaibhāṣikas when asserting that Buddhism includes a materialistic school, or a school which its opponents characterized as materialistic. As a curiosity it may be added that when the educational authorities of the newly founded republic of Buriats in Transbaikalia started an antireligious propaganda, they first of all assailed the doctrine of transmigration in its popular form and insisted on the fact that modern science favours a materialistic view of the universe. The Buddhist monks, who are Mahāyānists, retorted in a pamphlet in which they developed the view that materialism is not unknown to them, since the Vaibhāṣikas maintained that after Nirvāṇa every life ceases for ever.

yānists and formed the hybrid schools of the Sautrāntika - Yogācāras and Mādhyamika - Sautrāntikas.<sup>1</sup> This fact alone proves that in the vital question of Nirvāṇa and Buddha they closely adhered to later Buddhism and can be characterised as a transitional school. From Tibetan sources<sup>2</sup> we know that they admitted the doctrine of *dharmakāya*, i. e., of a divine Buddha, and this solves the question, because this dogma is the common characteristic of all the schools of the Mahāyāna. They differed from the latter in that they admitted the reality of the phenomenal world which with them included only sense data, consciousness and volition. The momentary flashes to which these entities were reduced were nevertheless conceived as real, not illusions, and their total extinction in Nirvāṇa was maintained. They neither admitted the monistic spiritual principle (*ālaya-vijñāna*) of the idealistic Mahāyānists, nor the principle of relativity (*śūnya-vāda*) of the Mādhyamikas. What their line of argument was we know from the work of Vasumitra upon the early schools.<sup>3</sup> The author was himself a Sautrāntika and closes his work with an enumeration of their principle tenets, such tenets that were shared by all the adherents of the school. We find here (under № 3) their tenet that there are two kinds of elements (*skandha*). Besides those which are subject to total extinction at the time of Nirvāṇa, there is a subtle consciousness which survives after Nirvāṇa and of which the former are but a manifestation.<sup>4</sup> We have here the germ of the *ālaya-vijñāna* of the Yogācāras. If later on the Sautrāntikas objected to this tenet, they probably did it only because, in the Yogācāra system, it involved the illusory character of the external world, whereas the Sautrāntikas stucked to its reality. Most probably they were in this point only the continuators of the Mahāsamghikas, i. e., they adhered to that tendency which at an early date manifested itself among the schools of the Hīnayāna and represented a protest against the treatment of Buddha as essentially human and against the theory of his total disappearance in a materialistic Nirvāṇa. Since every school of the Mahāyāna interpreted Dharmakāya according to their own

<sup>1</sup> Wassilief, Buddhism, pp. 321 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 286.

<sup>3</sup> Samaya-bheda-uparacana-cakra, trsl. for the first time by Wassilief in his Buddhism. A new english translation with copious and very instructive notes by J. Masuda appeared in Asia Major, II, 1, pp. 1—78 (Leipzig, 1925).

<sup>4</sup> This is also known from tibetan sources, cf. Wassilief op. cit., p. 273.

ideas in philosophy, the Sautrāntikas likewise interpreted it as a personification of their subtle consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

## X. THE YOGĀCĀRAS

This was an idealistic school founded by Āryāsanga in the IV-V century B. C.

Idealistic views (*viññāna-vāda*) have appeared in the history of Buddhist philosophy several times and at different places. We have, first of all, kanonical works like the Lankāvatāra-sūtra and others, which are written in imitation of the Upanishads, in a style intentionally averse to precision.<sup>2</sup> And then we have the three systems of Aśvaghoṣa, Āryāsaṅga and Dignāga. As Mahāyānists they are all monists and believers in the Cosmical Body of the Buddha. But in the process of realisation of this unique substance they all admit the existence of one initial or store consciousness (*ālaya-viññāna*) in addition to that indefinite<sup>3</sup> consciousness (*citta* = *manas* = *viññāna*) which was admitted in the Hīnayāna, and they all deny

<sup>1</sup> It thus appears that prof. H. Kern, Manual, p. 123, was right in maintaining that «among the old sects the Mahāsaṃghikas entertained views agreeing with the Mahāyāna». It is also clear that the Vātsīputriyas (Vajjiputtakas) established their *puṭḡalavāda* with no other aim than that of supporting the doctrine of a supernatural, surviving Buddha from the philosophical side. Indirectly this proves how philosophic the genuine primitive Buddhism must have been. The very character of the argument of the Vātsīputriyas in favour of the *puṭḡala* is suggestive. It was neither a *dharma* — this they could not maintain, so fresh was its categorical denial by the Master in memory — but neither was it something different from a *dharma*. It was already inexpressible at that time. Had not the denial of the *ātma* been so categorical, the Vātsīputriya would have certainly invented another, not so twisted an argument in support of their belief in a supernatural Buddha. Cf. Ab. Kośa, IX, and my Soul Theory, p. 830.

<sup>2</sup> In the Lankāvatāra, p. 182—6 (ed. Tokyo 1924) more than 20 different opinions about Nirvāṇa are mentioned. The first evidently alludes to the opinion of the Hīnayānists and the last looks like the opinion of the Yogācāras. All are rejected on the score that Nirvāṇa is undefinable. It is the Mādhyamika view. But the majority of the solutions there mentioned evidently never existed, and those that existed are so formulated that it is difficult to recognise them. It is a fanciful literary composition. Āryadeva's comment, transl. by G. Tucci, T'oung Pao XXV, p. 16 ff., looks like a forgery by some incompetent pandit. The Tibetan Bstan-hgyur, as already noticed by Wassilief, is also full of forged tracts ascribed to Aśvaghoṣa, Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva. The last solution, p. 184, l. 15 ff., which in the sūtra is evidently mentioned *pour la bonne bouche* is not to be discovered at all in the enumeration of the comment. It has not escaped the perspicacity of E. Burnouf, Introduction<sup>2</sup> p. 462, that this last solution, although seemingly rejected, was the one favoured by the author. I find no mention of E. Burnouf's translation and comment in the article of G. Tucci.

<sup>3</sup> That *viññāna-skandha* is nothing else than *nirvikalpakaṃ jñānam* and *saṃjñā-skandha* nothing else than *savikalpakaṃ jñānam*, as stated in my Central Conception, p. 18—19, is now corroborated by Udayana, Pariśuddhi, p. 213—214 (B. I.).

the reality of the external world. They thus reduce all the elements (*dharma*s) of Hīnayāna to modes of one single conscious principle. Aśvagoṣa's system<sup>1</sup> is in all essential points the same as the Mādhyamika's, but it accepts the theory of an «All conserving Mind» (*ālaya-vijñāna*), as a stage in the evolution of «Suchness» (*tathatā*) in which consciousness is awakened».<sup>2</sup>

The Yogācāra school is divided into the ancient one, or the followers of Āryāsaṅga, and the new one, or the followers of Dignāga. The first<sup>3</sup> established their idealistic views on a new interpretation of the old Abhidharma. Āryāsaṅga himself composed a Mahāyānist Abhidharma,<sup>4</sup> where the number of elements (*dharma*) is increased from 75 to 100. The *ālaya-vijñāna* is here a new element, a store house, a real granary, where the seeds (*bīja*) of all future ideas and the traces of all past deeds are stored up. However it is not the Absolute. It belongs to the phenomenal part of existence because all the results (*vipāka*)<sup>5</sup> of Karma are there stored up. This store-consciousness in this system occupies a position analogous to the Primitive Matter (*pradhāna*)<sup>6</sup> of the Sāṅkhya school. All individual objects and ideas are regarded as its modifications (*pariṇāma*) by the Sāṅkhya. The Yogācāras likewise regard all separate ideas as modifications of their store-consciousness. This represents a disguised return from the theory of a stream of thought to the doctrine of a substantial Soul.<sup>7</sup> In the stream of thought every preceding moment of consciousness is the cause of the next following one. This relation, called *samanantara-pratyaya*, is now replaced by the relation of the store consciousness (*ālaya*) to its modifications (*pariṇāma*).<sup>8</sup>

But in the Sāṅkhya system both the Primitive Matter and its modifications were realities. The Yogācāras regarded both as unreal. From their

<sup>1</sup> Whether this Aśvagoṣa, a Mahāyānist, is the same as the author of Buddhacarita has been doubted. About his system cp. Suzuki, Discourse on the awakening of the faith (Chicago, 1900), and Yamakami Sogen, Systems of Buddhist Thought, p. 252 ff. (Calcutta, 1912).

<sup>2</sup> Suzuki, Op. cit., p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> A clear exposition of Āryāsaṅga's system is to be found in the Triṃśikā of Vasubandhu with a comment by Sthiramati, ed. by Sylvain Lévi (Paris, 1925). Cp. Yamakami Sogen op. cit. 210 ff. Cp. B. Keith, Buddhist Phil., p. 242 ff. where all the literature is indicated. A still earlier (third) idealistic school of that name is mentioned, cf. Васильев, Дараната p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> Abhidharma-samuccaya, Bstan-hgyur, Mdo, vol. 32.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Triṃśikā, p. 18. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 86. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. my Central Conception, p. 35.

<sup>8</sup> Triṃśikā, p. 34. 5 ff. This is Sthiramati's view about *ālaya*. Other views were entertained by Nanda, Dignāga and Dharmapāla, cp. Schiefner, Tāranātha, p. 301.

predecessors, the Mādhyamikas, they adopted the theory of the relativity and consequent unreality (*śūnyatā* = *niḥsvabhāvatā*) of all individual existence,<sup>1</sup> of all plurality, with that difference that they introduced different degrees of this unreality. First of all, individual ideas were unreal because they were logical constructions (*parikalpita*) without any adequate reality corresponding to them in the external world. This was called their essential unreality (*lakṣaṇa-niḥsvabhāvatā*).<sup>2</sup> They were nevertheless contingently real (*paratantra*) in that sense that they obeyed to causal laws (*pratītya-samutpāda*).<sup>3</sup> This was called their causal unreality or relativity (*utpatti-niḥsvabhāvatā*). They were, at last, unreal individually as far as they were merged in the unique reality (*pariniṣpanna*) of the Absolute (*tathatā* = *dharma-matā*). This was called their absolute unreality (*paramārtha-niḥsvabhāvatā*)<sup>4</sup> as individual entities. It was the same as their reality in the Absolute, their reality, so to say, *sub specie aeternitatis*. The Absolute thus became immanent to the phenomenal world, it was neither different, nor undifferent (*nānya nānanya*).<sup>5</sup> As an assemblage of individual ideas it was different, but viewed as an organic whole it became identical. It was a spiritual Absolute (*citta-dharmatā*),<sup>6</sup> pure consciousness, undifferentiated into subject and object (*grāhya-grāhaka-rahita*).<sup>7</sup> It is the essence of Reality (*dharma-dhātu*) and it is therefore identified with the Cosmical Body (*dhama-kāya*) of the Buddha.<sup>8</sup> All the numerous synonyms which are used to characterise this conception in other schools can be applied to it.<sup>9</sup> The yogi in his mystic intuition is supposed to possess a direct cognition of this undifferentiated pure consciousness (*advaya-lakṣaṇam vijñapti-mātram*).<sup>10</sup>

In the closing chapter of his *Abhidharmakośa* Vasubandhu mentions the Mahāyānist view that all separate elements, the *dharmas* of the Hīnayāna, have no ultimate reality.<sup>11</sup> At that time he rejects this view, but later

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 41. 2,

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 41. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 41. 18, cp. p. 16. 16, *vijñānam pratītya-samutpannatvād dravyato'sti*.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 41. 23-24.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 40. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 42. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 40. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 43. 25.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 41. 26.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 42. 20.

<sup>11</sup> Cp. the transl. of M. de la V. P., IX, p. 273, and my *Soul Theory*, p. 858.

on, near to the close of his long life, he changes his stand point, and accepts the idealistic theory of his elder brother Asanga. Asanga himself seems also to have, at a certain period of his life, fluctuated between the two main lines in which Mahāyāna was split.<sup>1</sup> But at the end of their career both brothers definitely settled in the conviction, that the universe was a logical construction,<sup>2</sup> that all its separate elements were relative, not real in themselves, but that they possessed another reality, the *pariniṣpanna*, a reality in the Absolute, they were real when regarded *sub specie aeternitatis*. The theory of Salvation, of this transition from saṃsāra into nirvāṇa, out of the phenomenal world into the Absolute — this greatest puzzle of the Indian mind — underwent a complete change as a consequence of the change in the ontological view. In Hīnayāna where, as we have seen, both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa were considered as realities, the mystic power of yoga was called upon to achieve the transition out of the one into the other. Actual experience in transic meditation suggested to the Buddhist philosophers that yoga was capable of arresting some functions of the senses and of the intellect. And since the world was analysed in bits of senses and sense data, it seemed only logical to admit that yoga could achieve the task of arresting the life of the Universe for ever.

The great change produced by the Mahāyāna consisted in the view that the Absolute was immanent to the World. There was consequently no need of converting the elements of the phenomenal world into eternal elements, the *samskṛta-dharmas* into *asamskṛta-dharmas*, the saṃsāra into nirvāṇa. The change consisted in the change of aspect. The mystic power of yoga was now invoked not in order to produce a real change in the constitution of the Universe, but in order to replace the wrong views of unsophisticated humanity by an intuition of what was the absolutely real. To the yogi the world appeared in a quite different aspect, he viewed every separate object as unreal separately, but real *sub specie aeternitatis*. For him the elements (*dharmas*) of the Universe needed no conversion into eternal ones, they were themselves eternally «quiescent».

<sup>1</sup> According to the Tibetans, among the 5 works of Maitreya-Asanga some are written from the Yogācāra standpoint, some from Mādhyamika-svāntarika, and one from the Mādhyamika-prāsaṅgika view.

<sup>2</sup> *Triṃśikā*, XVII, *sarvam vijñaptimātrakam*, and *Sthiramati* remarks, p. 35, that *sarvam* includes both the phenomenal world and the Absolute, *sarvam iti traidhātukam asamskṛtam ca*.

The Hīnayānistic conception of separate elements (*dharma*) which were active in phenomenal life and quiescent (*śānta*) or extinct (*niruddha*) in Nirvāṇa was, according to the Yogācāras, contrary to reason. If they were real they could not disappear totally. They were, accordingly, declared to have been always quiescent, quiescent or extinct from the outset (*ādi-śānta*).<sup>1</sup> To regard them as active, in the transcendental sense, is an illusion. In that sense, it can be asserted, that nirvāṇa is real and saṃsāra unreal.

In the system of Dignāga the old Abhidharma is forsaken altogether and replaced by logic and epistemology. Dignāga started with the reform of the Brahmanical logic (*nyāya*) and adapted it to Buddhist ideas. His analysis of cognition resulted in the conception of an extreme concrete and individual (*svalakṣaṇa*), the root, or, so to say, the differential of cognition, a point-instant (*kṣaṇa*) in which existence and cognition, object and subject, coalesce.<sup>2</sup> The conception of this idealistic school regarding Nirvāṇa may be gathered from the closing words of Dharmakīrti in his «Examination of Solipsism».<sup>3</sup> The question is asked how is the omniscience of Buddhas to be understood, of the Buddhas which are the personification of pure consciousness undifferentiated into subject and object, and it is answered that «the penetration of the Buddhas into every existing object is something inconceivable, it is in every respect beyond what we may express in speech or cognise in concepts».

## XI. THE MĀDHYAMIKAS

This system of philosophy and dialectics is the foundation of the Mahāyāna religion. Although other systems — the realism of the Sarvāstivādins and the idealism of the Yogācāras — are also studied in the monastic schools of the countries where this religion flourishes, nevertheless the Mādhyamika system is generally regarded as the true background of the religious feelings

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mahāyāna-sūtrālamkāra, ed. Sylvain Lévi (Paris, 1907), XI, 51, trsl. *ibid.* (Paris, 1911) — «ils (les *dharma*s) sont originellement en Paix et en état de Pari-Nirvāṇa». Cf. St. Schayer. Die Erlösungslehren der Yogācāras nach dem Sūtrālamkāra des Asanga, Z. für Indologie, II, 1, p. 99 ff. The idea that all elements are originally quiescent (*śānta* = *nivṛtta*) sc. eternally extinct, an idea leading to the theory of everything being real *sub specie aeternitatis* is likewise expressed by Nāgārjuna, Madhy. ś., VII. 16 — *pratītya yad yad bhavati tat tac chāntam svabhāvataḥ*.

<sup>2</sup> A very interesting and rather subtle discussion between Candrakīrti and Dignāga about the point-instant in which existence and cognition are supposed to coalesce is found in M. vr., p. 59 ff., transl. in the Appendix. Cp. my Buddhist Logic and Epistemology, ch. VII.

<sup>3</sup> Saṃtānāntarasiddhi, edited by me in the B. B. and translated into Russian in the series Памятники индийской философии. I.

of its votaries. For it must be allowed that the Mahāyāna is a truly new religion, so radically different from Early Buddhism that it exhibits as many points of contact with later Brahmanical religions as with its own predecessor. Prof. O. Rosenberg calls it a separate «church» and compares its position with Roman Catholicism versus Protestantism.<sup>1</sup> The difference is even more radical, since the new religion was obliged to produce a new Kanon of Scriptures.

It never has been fully realised what a radical revolution had transformed the Buddhist church when the new spirit which however was for a long time lurking in it arrived at full eclosion in the first centuries A. D. When we see an atheistic, soul-denying philosophic teaching of a path to personal Final Deliverance, consisting in an absolute extinction of life, and a simple worship of the memory of its human founder, — when we see it superseded by a magnificent High Church with a Supreme God, surrounded by a numerous pantheon and a host of Saints, a religion highly devotional, highly ceremonious and clerical, with an ideal of Universal Salvation of all living creatures, a Salvation by the divine grace of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, a Salvation not in annihilation, but in eternal life, — we are fully justified in maintaining that the history of religions has scarcely witnessed such a break between new and old<sup>2</sup> within the pale of what nevertheless continues to claim common descent from the same religious founder.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O. Rosenberg, Probleme der B. Philosophie, XIX.

<sup>2</sup> Very characteristic is also the fact that Buddhist art of the ancient period represented Buddha by an empty place or a symbol which later on is replaced by a divine figure of the Apollo type. Notwithstanding prof. A. Grünwedel's contrary view (Buddhistische Kunst, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., p. 68) the only explanation seems to be that the total disappearance of Buddha in Nirvāṇa was thus given pictorial expression.

<sup>3</sup> The two churches coexisted peacefully in the same monasteries, because the Buddhists very wisely always made allowance for human nature which sometimes feels inclination towards a simple rationalistic Low Church and sometimes is attracted towards a devotional and magnificent High Church. They divided humanity in families (*gotra*) of which some by nature belonged to the low-church family (*hīnayāna* = *hīnādhimukti*) and others to the high-church family. We must imagine the process by which some originally Hīnayānistic monasteries gradually turned Mahāyānistic as a process of aggrandisement. The educational Buddhist monasteries, which are comparable to mediaeval universities, were aggrandised by the addition of a new college which received its own temple and body of monks studying a new special literature and conducting a special worship. In present days we can witness in Transbaikalia the addition to monasteries, which can afford it, of Kālacakra-colleges with a special temple, a special body of monks, a special literature and a special worship. The different types of Buddhist monasteries are described by B. Baradīn in a very instructive work now published at Verchne-Oudinsk, «О буддийских монастырях Монголии и Тибета», (it was accessible to me in MSS. during my visit to that town in 1925).

Yet the philosophical system which is the foundation of this new religion is usually represented as the extreme expression and the logical consequence of that pessimism and skepticism by which Early Buddhism is supposed to have been inspired. It is characterised as «complete and pure nihilism», as «the legitimate logical outcome of the principles underlying ancient Buddhism».<sup>1</sup> It is accused of teaching that «all our ideas are based upon a non-entity or upon the void».<sup>2</sup> It is represented as a «negativism which radically empties existence up to the last consequences of negation»,<sup>3</sup> a doctrine whose conception of reality was one of «absolute nothingness».<sup>4</sup> The Mādhyamikas are called the most radical Nihilists that ever existed.<sup>5</sup> When compared with Vedānta, it has been asserted that negation has a positive counterpart in that system, whereas there is none in the Mādhyamika. Negation in the latter is represented as its «exclusive ultimate end (Selbstzweck)».<sup>6</sup>

The opponents of Mahāyāna in India describe it much in the same manner. Thus Kumārila accuses the Mādhyamikas not only of denying the existence of external objects, but of denying the reality of our ideas as well.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Kern, *Manual*, p. 126; A. Barth, *Quarante ans*, I, p. 108; M. de la Vallée Poussin, *Bouddhisme*, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> H. Jacobi, *A. O. J.*, XXXI, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> M. Walleser, *Die B. Phil.*, II, p. III; *Der ältere Vedānta*, p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> B. Keith, *op. cit.*, pp. 237, 239, 247, 261 etc. Prof. B. Keith's exposition contains (p. 259) what, in my opinion, is the right view, viz. that Nāgārjuna's real object was to show that the intellect «condemns itself as inadequate just as it finds hopeless antinomies in the world of experience». As prof. B. Keith very well knows, Nāgārjuna is not the only philosopher who adhered to such a line of arguing, very celebrated men have done that. Why then should Nāgārjuna's main conception be «difficult and obscure» (*ibid.*)? He also hits the right mark when he points to a primitive, non-differentiated reality, identified with Buddha's Cosmical Body (*dharmakāya*), as the central conception of Mahāyāna. He even finds (*ibid.* p. 255) much more reality and activity in this conception than in the absolute of the Vedānta with which it is so strikingly similar. How are these views to harmonize with the conflicting opinions of the same author — e. g., p. 261 where it is asserted that for Nāgārjuna the world was «absolute nothingness», that it was «utterly unreal» — I am at a loss to explain. Or does prof. B. Keith suppose that Nāgārjuna did not admit the doctrine of Dharmakāya, or that, having admitted it, he did not fully realise its consequences, or that «the positive side of the Mahāyāna» (p. 257), is a later development out of its negative side?

<sup>5</sup> I. Wach, *Mahāyāna*, p. 58.

<sup>6</sup> M. Walleser, *Der ältere Vedānta*, p. 42. «Selbstzweck» is explicitly denied by Nāgārjuna, XXIV, 7 and many other places.

<sup>7</sup> *Śloka-vārtika*, Nirālambanavāda, 14. In fact the Mādhyamikas denied the validity of the *pramāṇas* and maintained that external and internal were correlative terms which are meaningless beyond this correlation, see below, p. 42.

Vācaspatimiśra is full of respect towards Buddhist logicians, but for the Mādhyamikas he has only remarks of extreme contempt, he calls them fools<sup>1</sup> and accuses them of reducing cognition to nothing.<sup>2</sup> Śāṅkara accuses them of disregarding all logic and refuses to enter in a controversy with them. The position of Śāṅkara is interesting because, at heart, he is in full agreement with the Mādhyamikas, at least in the main lines, since both maintain the reality of the One-without-a-Second, and the mirage of the manifold. But Śāṅkara, as an ardent hater of Buddhism, would never confess that. He therefore treats the Mādhyamika with great contempt, but not on the score of a «denial of the existence of our ideas», or of maintaining «absolute nothingness», but on the charge that the Mādhyamika denies the possibility of cognising the absolute by logical methods (*pramāṇa*). Vācaspatimiśra in the Bhamatī rightly interprets this point as referring to the opinion of the Mādhyamikas that logic is incapable to solve the question about what existence or non-existence really are. This opinion Śāṅkara himself, as is well known, shares. He does not accept the authority of logic as a means of cognising the Absolute, but he deems it a privilege of the Vedāntin to fare without logic, since he has Revelation to fall back upon. From all his opponents he requires strict logical methods.<sup>3</sup> It must be added that the Japanese

<sup>1</sup> *devānām-priya*, cf. Tātp.ṭikā, p. 341.23, 469.9.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. ad N. S., IV. 1. 18, *sarva-śūnyatve khyātur abhāvāt khyāter abhāvaḥ*. Vācaspati knows that they deny *abhāva* just as much, and in the same sense, as they deny *bhāva*, cf. Bhamatī ad V. S., II. 2. 32, *na ca nistattvataiva tattvam bhāvānām, tathā sati hi tattvābhāvaḥ syāt, so'pi ca vicāram na sahata ity uktam bhavadbhīḥ*. He also knows that to transform every thing into *abhāva* is tantamount to endow non-reality with reality, to have a *vigrahavān abhāvaḥ* ibid. 389.22. But this does not prevent him from repeating popular accusations.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Deussen, System des Vedānta, p. 99; Śāṅkara ad V. S., II. 2. 38. The Mādhyamika denies the validity of logic, i. e. of discursive conceptual thought, to establish ultimate truth. On the charge that in doing so he himself resorts to some logic, he replies that the logic of common life is sufficient for showing that all systems contradict one another and that our fundamental conceptions do not resist scrutiny, cf. Vācaspati, Tātparya-ṭikā, p. 249 — *avicārita-siddhaiḥ pramāṇair itareṣām prāmāṇyam pratiśidhyate*. This is exactly the standpoint which is developed with such infinite subtlety and ingenuity by Śrīharṣa in his Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa-khāḍya where he openly confesses that there is but little difference between Buddhism and Vedānta, a circumstance which Śāṅkara carefully conceals. But in later works, e. g., Vedānta-paribhāṣā, or Nyāyamakaranda, different *pramāṇas* are established as proofs for the existence of *brahman*. When commenting upon V. S., II. 2. 28, Śāṅkara, in combating Buddhist idealism, resorts to arguments of which he himself does not believe a word, since they are arguments which the most genuine realist would use. He thus argues not *sva-matena*, but *paramatam āśritya*, a method very much in vogue among Indian pandits. Deussen's interpretation of this point, op. cit. p. 260, as intended to vindicate *vyavahāra-satya* is a misunderstanding, since the Buddhists never denied

scholars, Suzuki, Anesaki, Yamakami Sogen and others who have a direct knowledge of what Mahāyāna is have never committed the mistake of regarding its philosophy as nihilism or pure negativism.

We will now shortly refer to the main lines of the philosophy of the Hīnayāna in order better to show the radical change produced by the spirit of Mahāyāna and thus to elicit the real aim of its philosophy.

## XII. THE DOCTRINE OF CAUSALITY IN THE HINAYĀNA

In a previous work<sup>1</sup> we have characterized Early Buddhism (Hīnayāna) as a system of metaphysics which contained an analysis of existence into its component elements, and established a certain number of ultimate data (*dharma*). Every combination of these data was then declared to represent a nominal, not an ultimate, reality. A substantial Soul was thus transformed into a stream of continuously flowing discreet moments of sensation or pure consciousness (*viññāna*), accompanied by moments of feeling, of ideation, volition (*vedanā-samjñā-saṃskāra*) etc. Matter (*rūpa*) was conceived on the same pattern, as a flow of momentary flashes without any continuant stuff, but characterised by impenetrability, and representing the senses (*āyatana* 1—5) and sense-data (*āyatana* 7—11). The world was thus transformed into a cinema. The categories of substance, quality and motion — for momentary flashes could possess no motion — were denied, but the reality of sense data and of the elements of mind, was admitted. All these elementary data were conceived as obeying causal laws. But the conception of causality was adapted to the character of these entities which could neither move nor change, but could only appear and disappear. Causation was called dependently-coordinated-origination (*pratitya-sam-utpāda*), or dependent existence. The meaning of it was that every momentary entity sprang into existence, or flashed up, in coordination with other moments. Its formula was «if there is this, there appears that».<sup>2</sup> Causality was thus assumed

the *vyavahāra* or *samvṛtti*. Against M. Walleser's, *Der ältere Vedānta* p. 43, opinion that the objectivity of our ideas themselves is meant, it must be pointed out that the Buddhists did not deny the *jñānākāra*, and Śāṅkara clearly states that external objects, not ideas, are meant — *tasmād artha-jñānayor bhedaḥ*.

<sup>1</sup> The Central Conception of Buddhism.

<sup>2</sup> The same formula in the Pali Kanon (Majjh. II. 32, Samy. II. 28 etc.), in the Ab. Kośa, III. 18 and 28 and Madhy. vṛ., p. 10. In the latter instance — *asmiṃ sati idam bhavati, hrasve dūrgham yathā sati*, the formula clearly refers to coordination, not to causation.

to exist between moments only, the appearance of every moment being coordinated with the appearance of a number of other moments. Strictly speaking it was no causality at all, no question of one thing *producing* the other. There could be neither a *causa materialis*, since there was no continuant substance, nor could there be any *causa efficiens*, since one momentary entity, disappearing as it did at once, could not influence any other entity. So the formula was supplemented by another one «not from itself (*causa materialis*), not from something foreign (*causa efficiens*), nor a combination of both does an entity spring up»,<sup>1</sup> «it is coordinated, it is not really produced».<sup>2</sup> Apart from these momentary entities<sup>3</sup> the system admitted eternal unchanging elements, Space and Nirvāna, the latter representing some indefinite essence (*dharmā-svabhāva*), of these forces which were active in phenomenal life, but are now extinct and converted into eternal death. Thus both the phenomenal world and this kind of an absolute, both *saṃsāra* and *nirvāna*, were conceived as realities, somehow interconnected, linked together in a whole (*sarvam*),<sup>4</sup> but in an ideal whole, having, as a combination of elements, only nominal existence.

### XIII. THIS DOCTRINE MODIFIED IN MAHĀYĀNA

Now, the Mādhyamika system started with an entirely different conception of reality. Real was what possessed a reality of its own (*sva-bhāva*), what was not produced by causes (*akṛtaka* = *asaṃskṛta*), what was not dependent upon anything else (*paratra nirapekṣa*).<sup>5</sup> In Hīnayāna the elements, although interdependent (*saṃskṛta* = *pratityasamutpanna*), were real (*vastu*).

<sup>1</sup> Saṃy. II. 113 and Madhy. Kār. I. 1, XII. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Madhy. vṛ., p. 7 — *tat tat prāpya yad utpannam notpannam tat svabhāvataḥ*; *ibid.* p. 375,6 — *paramārthato 'tyantānutpādatvāt sartaḍharmāṇām*.

<sup>3</sup> If I am not very much mistaken, this view of causality, viz. that there is, properly speaking, no real causality, that this notion should be cancelled altogether and replaced by a law of coordination between point-instants, is not quite a stranger to modern science and philosophy, cf. B. Russel, *On the Notion of Cause*, in *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 194. The Buddhist conception of causality would thus be something similar to the conception of a function in mathematics, «funktionelle Abhängigkeit», such a view of causality as was entertained in Europe by D'Alembert, Comte, Claude Bernard, Avenarius, E. Mach and others, cp. the references in Eisler, *Handwörterbuch der Philosophie*, p. 338. We hope to devote before long a special article to this question.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. *Central Conception*, p. 6 and below p. 54, n. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Madhy. Kār. XV, 2. In the sequel the references with roman figures will refer to chapter and kārikā of Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamika śāstra, and the references in Arabic figures to Candrakīrti's comment, ed. B. B. IV.

In Mahāyāna all elements, *because interdependent*, were unreal (*śūnya* = *svabhāva-śūnya*).<sup>1</sup> In Hīnayāna every whole (*rāśi* = *avayavin*) is regarded as a nominal existence (*prajñaptisat*) and only the parts or ultimate elements (*dharma*) are real (*vastu*). In Mahāyāna all parts or elements are unreal (*śūnya*), and only the whole, i. e., the Whole of the wholes (*dharma-tā* = *dharma-kāya*), is real. The definition of reality (*tattva*) in Mahāyāna is the following one — «uncognisable from without, quiescent, undifferentiated in words, unrealisable in concepts, non-plural — this is the essence of reality».<sup>2</sup> A dependent existence is no real existence, just as borrowed money is no real wealth.<sup>3</sup> The theory that all real existence can last only for one moment, since two moments implied already a synthesis, was abandoned, and the conception of a momentary entity (*kṣaṇa*), so characteristic for other schools of Buddhist thought, was given up,<sup>4</sup> as unwarranted (*asiddha*), not capable of resisting critique.<sup>5</sup> In Hīnayāna the individual (*pudgala*), the Self (*ātma*) was resolved in its component elements (*skandha-āyatana-dhātavaḥ* = *anātma*), there were no real personalities (*pudgala-nairātmya*), but a congeries of flashing forces (*samskāra-samūha*). In Mahāyāna we have, on the contrary, a denial of real elements (*dharma-nairātmya*), and an assertion of the whole, in the sense of the absolute Whole (*dharma-kāya*).<sup>6</sup> In Hīnayāna, in a word, we have a radical Pluralism, converted in Mahāyāna in as radical a Monism.

<sup>1</sup> It is clear that we have here that conception of a substance as something independently existing which is well known to the students of European philosophy, cp. Spinoza's definition of substance as «*quod in se est et per se concipitur*». This conception resulted either in establishing the theory of a *harmonia generaliter stabilita* in order to explain the interdependence of the monads, or to the view that there is only one unique substance. The latter view is taken in Mahāyāna, the former in Hīnayāna, where the harmony between the monads is established by *karma* as a special force (*samskāra*), the force *κατ'εξοχην*, the *πρωτον κινουον*.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. XVIII. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 263.3 — *kālīka-āyācitakam*.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 173.9, 545.18, 147.4.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 547.1.

<sup>6</sup> Although the Hīnayānist presses to the utmost the reality of the ultimate elements (*dharmas*) alone, nevertheless the importance of the whole is foreshadowed in the conception of *sarvaṃ* (cp. below p. 54), as well as in the conception of a general Causality. Under the name of *kāraṇa-hetu* a kind of causality is asserted through which every moment of reality is conditioned by nothing short of the state of the whole Universe. This is expressed in the following way, (Ab. Kośa, II. 50), *svato'nye (sarve dharmāḥ) kāraṇa-hetuḥ*, i. e., an element (or a moment) cannot be its own cause, but all the other elements, i. e., the whole Universe, are in some, direct or indirect, causal relation with it. Since the three times (*adhvaṇ*), i. e., all the future and all the

## XIV. THE DOCTRINE OF RELATIVITY

In Mahāyāna we are thus faced by a new interpretation of the old Buddhist principle of the dependently-coordinated-existence of the elements (*dharmāṇām pratītya-sam-utpāda*). It is now being declared that whatsoever is dependent or relative cannot be considered as an ultimate reality, and this feature is then pressed to its last extreme. In Hīnayāna existence was bifurcated in conditioned and unconditioned (*samskṛta* and *asamskṛta*), both being realities. Neither of them is now considered as ultimately real, and both are brought under the higher unity of Relativity. The central conception in Early Buddhism is the idea of a plurality of ultimate elements (*dharmas*). The central conception of Mahāyāna is their relativity (*śūnyatā*). The Buddhists themselves contended that the idea of ultimate elements (*skandhāyatana-dhātavaḥ*), of their interdependence (*pratītya-samutpāda*) and of the «Four Truths of the Saint» are admitted in both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. But in the first they are referred to the reality of separate elements, and in the second they are interpreted as meaning their relativity, or non-reality.<sup>1</sup> Since we use the term «relative» to describe the fact that a thing can be identified only by mentioning its relations to something else, and becomes meaningless without these relations, implying at the same time that the thing in question is unreal, we safely, for want of a better solution, can translate the word *śūnya* by relative or contingent, and the term *śūnyatā* by relativity or contingency.<sup>2</sup> This is in any case better than to translate it

past moments are included in the conception «all the elements», *sarve dharmāḥ*, it is clear that although the world appeared in Hīnayāna as validly analyzable into bits, the idea of it as a logical continuum was foreshadowed. In Mahāyāna it became definitely asserted.

<sup>1</sup> The germ of the idea that the elements of existence, because interdependent, are not real can be found in some passages of the Pali Kanon. This Candrakīrti himself admits (*Madhy. avat.* p. 22. 15 ff. B. B. IX). But it does not in the least interfere with the fact that Hīnayāna is a system of radical pluralism, all *dharmas*, and even *Nirvāṇa*, are  *vastu*, whereas Mahāyānism is a monistic system (*advaya, niṣprapañca*). It is quite impossible to maintain that Hīnayāna is an advaita-system. But if the Mādhyamika system is characterised as negativism, and everything negative is thrown into the same bag, then it is not difficult to discover in *Majjh. N. I.* 1 a full blown *prajñā-pāramitā*, and to maintain that «es ist ein Irrtum anzunehmen, im alten Buddhismus sei etwas anderes als Negativismus gelehrt worden», as prof. B. Otto Franke has done, cp. Ernst Kuhn Memorial Volume, p. 332 ff. (München 1916). It is also difficult to say what the contention of M. de la V. P. that «there is a great deal of Mādhyamika philosophy in the Pali Kanon» (*E R E VIII*, p. 334) exactly means.

<sup>2</sup> The notion of Relativity is thus taken in a generalised sense, just as Aristotle himself uses it in the *Metaphysica*, where he treats *Ad aliquid*, not as one among the distinct categories,

by «void» which signification the term has in common life, but not as a technical term in philosophy. That the term *śūnya* is in Mahāyāna a synonym of dependent existence (*pratītya-samutpāda*) and means not something void, but something «devoid» of independent reality (*svabhāva-śūnya*), with the implication that nothing short of the whole possesses independent reality, and with the further implication that the whole forbids every formulation by concept or speech (*niṣprapañca*), since they can only bifurcate (*vikalpa*) reality and never directly seize it — this is attested by an overwhelming mass of evidence in all the Mahāyāna literature.<sup>1</sup> That this term never meant a mathematical void or simple non-existence is most emphatically insisted upon. Those who suppose that *śūnya* means void are declared to have misunderstood the term, they have not understood the purpose for which the term has been introduced.<sup>2</sup> «We are Relativists, we are not Negativists!» insists Candrakīrti.<sup>3</sup> The text book of the Mādhyamika school opens by something like a hymn in honour of Dependent Origination, or Relativity. It can be rendered thus:

The perfect Buddha, the foremost of all Teachers I salute!  
 He has proclaimed the principle of Relativity,  
 The principle that nothing (in the Universe) can disappear,  
 Nor can (anything new) appear,  
 Nothing has an end,  
 Nor is there anything eternal,  
 Nothing is identical (with itself),  
 Nor is there anything differentiated,  
 Nothing moves, neither hither, nor thither.  
 It is (Nirvāṇa), the blissful Quiescence  
 Of every (possible) Plurality.<sup>4</sup>

but as implicated with all the categories (cp. G. Grote, Aristotle ed. Bain<sup>2</sup>, p. 88) and although he does not maintain that the relative is unreal, but he declares it to be *Ens* in the lowest degree (ibid. p. 85). The question whether *Ens* is itself relative he leaves unsolved.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. 491,1 — *niravaśeṣa-prapañca-upaśamārtham śūnyatā upadiśyate*; XXIV,18 — *yaḥ pratītya-samutpādaḥ śūnyatām tām pracakṣmahe*; p. 503,12 — *yo'yaṁ pratītya-samutpādo hetupratyayān apekṣya rūpa-vijñānādīnām prādur-bhāvaḥ sa svabhāvena anutpādaḥ... sā śūnyatā*; p. 504,3 — *yaḥ pratyaya-adhīnu sa śūnya ukto*; 403,1 — *aśūnyam... apratītya-samutpannam*; p. 591,6 — *iha sarva-bhāvānām pratītya-samutpannatvāc chūnyatvam sakalena śāstreṇa pratipāditam*, etc. etc.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. XXIV,7, p. 49011 — *na cāpi śūnyatāyām yat prayojanam tad vijñāsi*.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 368.7.

<sup>4</sup> M. vr., p. 11. 13.

## XV. THE REAL ETERNAL BUDDHA COGNISED IN MYSTIC INTUITION

Applying this method to the Hīnayānist conception of an extinct Buddha, representing nevertheless an eternal lifeless substance (*svabhāva* or *dharma*), Nāgārjuna flatly denies the reality of the latter, notwithstanding all the reverential feelings which the idea must have evoked. Buddha is conceived in the Hīnayāna as the ultimate goal of the world's progress, realised in a continuous stream of existences (*bhāva-saṃtati*).<sup>1</sup> He can really exist so far this progress really exists, but an independent existence of both is impossible, because, being interdependent, they are correlative and hence not absolutely real. Just as a man suffering from an eye-decease perceives a double moon<sup>2</sup> in the sky, just so does the inveterate ignorance of mankind dichotomise every reality. Only ignorance<sup>2</sup> can imagine that the Hīnayānistic Buddha has any real existence of his own.<sup>3</sup> Never did the Buddhas declare that either they themselves or their elements really did exist.<sup>4</sup> But, of course, it is not for the unsophisticated simple man that the Hīnayānistic Buddha is devoid of any existence. Not being able to withstand the lion's roar of Relativity,<sup>5</sup> the Hīnayānist, the man of a poorly religious enthusiasm,<sup>6</sup> runs away, like an antelope, into the dark forest of Realism. But the Mahāyānist's denial does not mean that every hope of salvation must be given up,<sup>7</sup> because that Buddha who is above every possible determination (*niṣprapañca*) is not denied.<sup>8</sup> The Mahāyānist, when maintaining that the Buddha, as conceived in Hīnayāna, is not absolutely real (*niḥsvabhāva*), if he wishes to state the whole truth (*aviparītārtha*),<sup>9</sup> must confess that he cannot even assert so much. Strictly speaking he can assert neither that the Buddha is relational, nor non-relational, nor both at once, nor neither.<sup>10</sup> Such characteristics are also conventional (*prajñapti*). They are imputed characteristics (*āropito vyavahārah*).<sup>11</sup> The real Buddha must be *perceived directly by intuition*. The reserved questions, the impossibility to answer whether the world is finite

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 432 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 432.10.

<sup>3</sup> The Hīnayānistic Buddha is not real, he has no *svabhāva*, cp. XXII. 2, 4, 16, but the Mahāyānistic one has a *svabhāva*. The synonym of *dharma-Kāya* is *svabhāva-Kāya*.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 443.2, cf. XXV.24.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 442.13.

<sup>6</sup> *Svādhimukti-daridra*, ibid. p. 443.1.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 442.8.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 443.11.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 443.13.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. XXII.11.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 444.4.

or infinite, and whether the Buddha survives after Nirvāṇa are referred just to this impossibility of whatsoever determination.<sup>1</sup> It you insist that there is a Buddha, you needs must concede that after Nirvāṇa there is none.<sup>2</sup> But if you realise the relativity of the conception, never will the question about his existence occur to you. Buddha is merged quiescent in nature and beyond every possible determination.<sup>3</sup> Those who proceed to dichotomise him as eternal or non-eternal, existent or non-existent, relative or non-relative, omniscient or non-omniscient, are all misled by words.<sup>4</sup> They have no direct intuition (*na paśyanti*) of the absolute Buddha.<sup>5</sup> Just as a man who is blind from birth cannot see the sun,<sup>6</sup> just so are men in the throes of conventional conceptions, they do not perceive the Buddha directly, but wish to detail (*prapañcayanti*) him conceptually. Only by them can He not be seen directly (*aparokṣa-vartin*).<sup>7</sup> Buddha must be regarded as the cosmical order (*dharmataḥ*), his Body is the Cosmos (*dharmatā*). The essence of the Cosmos is incognisable, it is impossible to know what it is conceptually.<sup>8</sup> The reality of Buddha is the reality of the Universe, and as far as the Buddha has no separate reality (*niḥsvabhāva*), neither the Universe has any, apart from him. All the elements of existence, when sifted through the principle of Relativity, become resplendent.<sup>9</sup> All the millions of existences (*bhūtakotī*) must be regarded as the Body of the Buddha manifested in them. This is Relativity, the climax of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*).<sup>10</sup>

#### XVI. THE NEW CONCEPTION OF NIRVĀṆA

Space and that kind of eternal death which was termed Nirvāṇa were entered in the list of ultimate realities by the schools of Early Buddhism and the Vaibhāṣikas, on the score that they possessed a character (*dharma*), a reality (*vastu*), an individuality (*svalakṣaṇa*), an existence (*bhāva*) of their own (*sva-bhāva*), since they fitted into the current definition of reality

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. XXII.12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. XXII.14.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 448.1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. XXII.15.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 448.10.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 448.10.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 448.9. Such a definition of sense perception, *pratyakṣam aparokṣam* (sc. *artha* not *jñāna*) is opposed by Candrakīrti to the definition of Dignāga *pratyakṣam kalpanāpodham*, cp. M. v. p. 71. 10. It has been later accepted by the Vedāntins (cp. Vedāntaparibhāṣā) and others; *brahma* the Absolute, is then declared to be cognised by sense-perception by *pratyakṣa*.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 448.14-15.

<sup>9</sup> *Prakṛti-prabhāscarāḥ sarvadharmāḥ prajñāpāramitā-pariśuddhyā*, ibid. 444.9.

<sup>10</sup> *Tathāgata-kāyo bhūta-kotī-prabhāvito draṣṭavyo yad uta prajñāpāramitā*, Aṣṭas., 94.14.

(*sva-bhāva-dhāraṇād dharmah*). They were cancelled by the Sautrāntika on the consideration that they did not possess any such separate reality. They also were cancelled by the Mādhyamikas in consequence of the new definition of reality (*anapekṣaḥ svabhāvaḥ*). This new weapon proved much more efficacious than the Occam Razor of the Sautrāntika, especially as it was wielded by the Mādhyamika with unflinching resolve. His conception of Relativity (*śūnyatā*) covered everything, all the conditional as well as the eternal elements of the Vaibhāṣika list. Indeed the idea of an absolute becomes meaningless, if there is nothing to set against it.<sup>1</sup> It then loses every individuality or reality (*sva-bhāva*). And *vice versa* the phenomenal ceases to be phenomenal if there is nothing non-phenomenal with which it is contrasted. With the new interpretation of the principle of Relativity (*pratītya-samutpāda* = *śūnya*) the Hīnayānic Absolute becomes just as relative as all other ultimates of this system.

Very far reaching consequences had inevitably arisen from this newly adopted principle. The whole edifice of Early Buddhism was undermined and smashed. The Nirvāṇa of the Hīnayānists, their Buddha, their ontology and moral philosophy, their conceptions of reality and causation were abandoned, together with the idea of the ultimate reality of the senses and sense data (*rūpa*), of the mind (*citta-caitta*), and of all their elements of Matter, Mind and Forces. «Nowhere and never» says Candrakīrti, «have Buddhas preached the reality of the soul or of these Hīnayānistic elements».<sup>2</sup> All the constructions so laboriously built up by the schools of Early Buddhism had to be relinquished with the only exception of the principle of dependently-coordinated-existence (*pratītya-sam-utpāda*) in its new interpretation as Relativity (*śūnyatā*). The textbook of the school devotes a chapter to every conspicuous item of the constructions of Early Buddhism, and destroys it by the same weapon, for whatsoever is relative is false, transient and illusory.

The fortunes of Mahāyāna were greatly assisted by the wonderful style in which Nāgārjuna couched his celebrated aphorisms. Notwithstanding the somewhat monotonous method by which he applies to all the conceptions of Hīnayāna the same destructive dialectics, he never ceases to be

<sup>1</sup> Ibid VII. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 443.2.

interesting, bold, baffling, sometimes seemingly arrogant. And this method of endless repetition of the same idea, although in different connections, impresses the student with the overwhelming, all-embracing importance of the principle of Relativity. In their Tibetan garb, owing to the monosyllabic cutting precision of this wonderful language, the aphorisms become, if possible, still more eloquent than in the original, and are, up to the present day, studied in the monastic schools, and repeated by the monks with rapturous admiration. Something like terror is inspired by this insisting and obstinate denial of all, even the most revered and cherished notions of the Hinayānist. «What are we to do», exclaims Āryadeva, the next best expounder of the doctrine, «nothing at all exists!»<sup>1</sup> «Even the name of the doctrine inspires terror!»<sup>2</sup>

However it is only the Hinayānist and all pluralists in general that need to be afraid of Nāgārjuna's dialectics.<sup>3</sup> He does not assail, but extols the idea of the Cosmical Body of Buddha. He extols the principle of Relativity, and destroys through it every Plurality, only in order to clear up the ground and establish on it the unique, undefinable (*anirvacanīya*) Essence of Being, the One-without-a-Second. According to the principle of monistic philosophy, consistently applied, all other entities have only a second hand, contingent reality, they are borrowed cash.

This unique reality, although declared to be uncharacterisable (*anirvacanīya*), has been variously characterised as the «element of the elements» (*dharmāṇām dharmatā* or *dharma-dhātu*), as their relativity (*śūnyatā*), as «thisness» (*idaṃtā*), as their «relation to thisness» (*idaṃpratyayatā*), as «suchness» (*tathatā*), as the «suchness of existence» (*bhūta-tathatā*), as the matrix of the Lord (*tathāgata-garbha*), and lastly as the «Cosmical Body of the Lord», as Buddha's Dharmakāya<sup>4</sup>. In this last attribution the Unique Essence of the universe becomes personified and worshiped under the names of Vairocana, Amitābha, the goddess Tārā and others, as a Supreme God. Bud-

<sup>1</sup> P. L. Vaidya, *Catuhṣataka* (Paris, 1923), Kār. 184.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Kār. 289.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. H. Kern, *Manual* p. 127, seems also to have been terror-stricken, he exclaims with what sounds like genuine solicitude, «there is no birth, there is no Nirvāṇa! etc.» and makes responsible for this disaster «the principles underlying ancient Buddhism».

<sup>4</sup> The terms *prajñā-pāramitā* and *abhisamaya*, when used in an objective sense (*karma-sādhana*), mean the same. The Yogācāras would add as synonymous *citta-dharmatā*, *viññapti-mātratā*, *pariniṣpannatā*, cp. *Triṃśikā*, p. 42.

dhism becomes at once pantheistic and theistic or, as prof. M. Anesaki prefers to put it, Cosmotheistic.<sup>1</sup>

Buddha and Nirvāṇa are different names for the same thing. But Nāgārjuna treats the same thing under four or five different headings, his object being to show that whatever be the verbal designation (*prapañca* = *vāk*),<sup>2</sup> from whatever side the problem of the absolute be tackled, the result is the same. If the phenomenal world is not real, neither can it have a real end.<sup>4</sup> To suppose that the phenomenal world really existed before Nirvāṇa, in order to be changed so as not to exist after Nirvāṇa, is an illusion which must be given up the sooner the better.<sup>5</sup> Whether we take the Vaibhāṣika view and maintain that Nirvāṇa is something real (*dharma*) in which consciousness and life are extinct for ever,<sup>6</sup> or if we, with the Sautrāntika, admit that it is the simple cessation of the world process,<sup>7</sup> in both cases something real is assumed to exist before Nirvāṇa and to disappear afterwards. This makes Nirvāṇa not only relative, but a product of causes (*samskrta*).<sup>8</sup> In full accordance with the idea of a monistic universe it is now asserted that there is not a shade of difference between the Absolute and the Phenomenal, between nirvāṇa and saṃsāra.<sup>9</sup> The universe viewed as a whole is the Absolute, viewed as a process it is the Phenomenal. Nāgārjuna declares,<sup>10</sup>

*«ya ājavamjavibhāva upādāya pratītya vā  
so 'pratītyānupādāya nirvāṇam upadiśyate».*

This may be rendered thus — «having regard to causes or conditions (constituting all phenomena, we call this world) a phenomenal world. This same world, when causes and conditions are disregarded, (i. e., the world as a whole, *sub specie aeternitatis*) is called the Absolute.»

<sup>1</sup> In a very interesting book prof. M. Anesaki, *Buddhist Art in its relation to Buddhist Ideals*, (Boston and New York, 1915) shows how the perfection of that Japanese art which has evoked the admiration of the world is due to the influence of Mahāyāna ideals, to this genuine feeling of communion with the eternal, all-pervading principle of life, the Dharmakāya, realised by the artist in mystic intuition in every flower, every plant and every living creature he was painting. Is it not strange that the philosophy which establishes these ideals has been so utterly misunderstood by European scholarship?

<sup>2</sup> M. vr. 373. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. XXV. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 225. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. XXV. 5, 13.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. XXV. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 175.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 522. 6.

<sup>7</sup> *Kleśa-janmanor abhāvaḥ*, *ibid.* p. 527. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. XXV. 20.

XVII. IS RELATIVITY ITSELF RELATIVE? CONDEMNATION OF ALL LOGIC  
FOR THE COGNITION OF THE ABSOLUTE

But the principle of Relativity (*śūnyatā*) did not prove an entirely safe foundation for the New Buddhism. A danger lurked in it which was likely to bring the whole construction in jeopardy. Just as the Absolute of Early Buddhism could not escape from the fate of being declared relative, just so was Relativity itself relative,<sup>1</sup> it clearly depended upon its opposite, the non-relative, and without this contrast it was likely to lose every meaning. Nāgārjuna did not shrink before this danger and faced it with the same audacious spirit as he was wont to do. This principle, the pivot of the system, is called upon in order to destroy all theories and to replace them, as we have seen above, by direct mystic intuition, not in order to replace it by a new theory. As a theory it is just as bad as the old ones, it is even much worse. «If something non-relative», says Nāgārjuna,<sup>2</sup> «did really exist, we would then likewise admit the existence of the relative, but there is absolutely nothing non-relative, how then can we admit the existence of the relative (or the truth of Relativity).» «Relativity», explains Candrakīrti, «is here the common characteristic of all the elements (*dharma*) of existence. That is our view. But since there is no element which would be non-relative, Relativity itself, for want of those objects with which it could be contrasted, (becomes as inane as a mirage), as a garland of flowers in the sky». Does this mean that Relativity should be rejected? No, «because the Buddhas have taught that to realise the relativity of all artificial conceptions is the only way to get rid of them. But if people then begin to cling to this very concept of Relativity, they must be called irreclaimable».<sup>3</sup> «It is», explains Candrakīrti,<sup>4</sup> «as if somebody said, „I have nothing to sell you,“ and would receive the answer, „All right, just sell me this your absence of goods for sale!“» We

<sup>1</sup> I find the question whether Relativity is itself relative mentioned by B. Russel (A B C of Relativity, p. 14) and declined with the remark that it is absurd. Nevertheless the question exists and cannot be dismissed on such grounds, the more so by an author from whom we learn that «whosoever wishes to become a philosopher must learn not to be frightened by absurdities». (The Problems of Philosophy, London 1921, p. 31).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. XIII. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. XIII. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 247.6

read in the Ratnakūṭa,<sup>1</sup> «I declare that those are rotten, and many times rotten who, having conceived relativity, cling to it (as a new theory). . . . . It is much better to cling to the false idea of a really existing personality (*pudgala*), notwithstanding it is a blunder of Himalayan dimensions, than to cling to this doctrine of relativity which (in this case would be) a doctrine of the void (*abhāva*). . . It is as if a doctor<sup>2</sup> administered a powerful remedy which would remove all the ailments of the patient, but could not afterwards be expelled from the abdomen. Do you think that the patient would be really cured? No, he would suffer even much more than he did suffer before!»

The characterisation of reality as Relativity is resorted to in extremis for want of any other expedient. It is a verbal characterisation, it takes into account the necessities of speech (*śabdān upādāya prajñaptih*).<sup>3</sup> The Sautrāntika made use of the conception of a nominal entity (*prajñaptisat*), as has been mentioned above, when combating the artificial constructions of Early Buddhism. This conception was extended by the Mahāyānists so as to cover all the elements without exception. Sense data, consciousness, feeling, volition were declared by the Sautrāntikas ultimate realities. But Nāgārjuna did not spare them. They became all relative and nominal, and relativity itself was but a nominal «middle path» of approaching reality. Middle path meant in Early Buddhism steering between materialism (*ucchedavāda*) and the doctrine of an eternal Soul (*śāsvatavāda*). Its positive content was the doctrine of separate elements (*dharma*). In Mahāyāna this term changes its meaning and becomes synonymous with Relativity (*śūnyatā*). Relativity is the Middle Path.<sup>4</sup>

#### XIX. PARALLEL DEVELOPMENTS IN BUDDHISM AND BRAHMANISM

That the evolution from Hīnayāna to Mahāyāna ran parallel with the movement which in other Indian religions at the same epoch led to the establishing of their pantheons and their supreme deities of Śiva and Vishnu, is quite obvious. The brahmanical religions were likewise founded on a background of pantheism, on radical monism with the Śaivists, and a somewhat mitigated

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 248.7

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 248.11.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. XXIV. 18, XXII.11, p. 215.1, 286.1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. XXIV. 18. Therefore Mādhyamika-śāstra must be translated «A Treatise on Relativity.»

one with the Vishnuites. Both tendencies represented old traditions, based on explicit, though contradictory, utterances of the Upanishads. That the Mahāyāna is indebted to some Aupaniṣada influence is most probable. That Gaudapāda and Śāṅkara have been, in their turn, influenced by the dialectic of Nāgārjuna can hardly be denied. But it is at present impossible to elicit something definite about the strength of these influences, their time and their place. A Mahāyānist tendency seems to have manifested itself very early in the Buddhist schools. Part of the community was not satisfied to see in Buddha an essentially human nature, and felt restive before the idea of his total disparition in Nirvāṇa. Some centuries later this tendency reaches full eclosion and a great man, Nāgārjuna, gives lustre and popularity to a new Church. Its philosophy made volte-face from Pluralism to Monism.

#### XIX. EUROPEAN PARALLELS

To assign to Nāgārjuna his place among the great philosophers of humanity is not so much the task of the Indianist, as of the general historian of philosophy. But until the texts are made accessible in translations intelligible to him we cannot expect him to guide us.<sup>1</sup> The Indianist finds himself obliged tentatively to do it himself in comparing the ideas he comes across in India with what may be found similar in the vast field of European philosophy. In characterizing an Indian philosopher as «nihilist», rationalist, pantheist or realist some comparison is already involved. If A. Barth, E. Senart and others have protested against premature and misleading comparisons it is only because they were inclined to find between the Indian philosopher and his European associate more points of divergence than of similarity, but to find divergence means already to compare. To characterise Nāgārjuna as a «nihilist» means to make a misleading comparison, since his condemnation of logic is only one part, and not the principal one, of his philosophy. In order to understand a philosopher there is no better method than the one proposed and so brilliantly applied by H. Bergson, i.e., to dissect him in different parts which by themselves will not be the philo-

<sup>1</sup> The two translations by prof. M. Walleser, *Die Mittlere Lehre*, (Heidelberg 1911 and 1912) are extremely useful for the study of the texts, they would have been still more useful if comparative indices were added to them. But being litteral we doubt whether they could convey any definite impression in the mind of a philosopher.

sopher in question, but which summarized will help us to understand him.<sup>1</sup>

Upon the Indian side we must first of all point to the almost absolute identity with Vedānta, as a probable consequence of his indebtedness to Aupanishada tradition. If prof. B. Keith and prof. M. Walleser suppose that Nāgārjuna stops at negation, or denies even the empirical reality of this world, it is only because his real aim, the positive counterpart of his negativism, the identity of *dharmakāya* and *brahma*, has escaped their attention. It follows from this identity that all the points of contact which prof. Deussen has really found, or imagined to have found, between Schopenhauer and Vedānta, will equally apply to Nāgārjuna. This philosophy was most decidedly opposed to rationalism, to those systems, modern or ancient, Indian or European, which asserted the capacity of human reason to cognise things as they really are. He even presses this incapacity to the utmost and challenges the claims of logic with greater emphasis than any philosopher ever has done. Other remarkable parallelisms may be pointed out which refer to the step taken by Nāgārjuna from Pluralism to Monism. Whether the systems operated with the conception of an independent substance and assumed the existence of separate, though harmonising, monads, or assumed a perpetual stream of passing events, the next step is to imagine one all-embracing indivisible substance. This, as we have seen, is the position of Mahāyāna versus Hīnayāna. It has been paralleled in Greece by the position of Parmenides versus Heraclitus. The step was repeated in modern German philosophy. Prof. H. Jacobi has already suggested<sup>2</sup> a comparison between Zeno of Eleia and Nāgārjuna. We may add that the similarity was not limited to their dialectics. Zeno, as is now known, devised the celebrated «sophisms» in order to prove the impossibility of motion, and in support of Parmenides's conception of the world as one motionless whole.<sup>3</sup>

Very remarkable are then the coincidences between Nāgārjuna's negativism and the condemnation by Mr. Bradley of almost every conception of the every day world: things and qualities, relations, space and time, change, causation, motion, the Self. From the Indian standpoint Bradley can be characterised as a genuine Mādhyamika. But above all these

<sup>1</sup> De l'intuition philosophique, Revue de Metaph., 1911.

<sup>2</sup> A. O. J. XXXI. 1, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Bertrand Russel, External World, p. 167 ff.

parallelisms we may perhaps find a still greater family likeness between the dialectical method of Hegel and Nāgārjuna's dialectics. Hegel in his *Phänomenologie des Geistes*<sup>1</sup> challenges common sense to point out some object which is certainly known for what, in our experience, it is, and solves the question by stating that all we really know of the object is its «thisness», all its remaining content is relation. This is the exact meaning of the *tathatā*, or of «suchness», of the Mahāyānist, and Relativity, as we have seen, is the exact meaning of the term *śūnyatā*. We further see the full application of the method which maintains that we can truly define an object only by taking explicit account of other objects, with whom it is contrasted, that debarring this contrast the object becomes «devoid» of any content, and that both the opposites coalesce in some higher unity which embraces them both. The facts are knowable only as interrelated, and the universal law of Relativity is all that is properly meant by reality. Both philosophers assure us that Negativity (*śūnyatā*) is the Soul of the Universe, «Negativität ist die Seele der Welt». Reducing the world of fact to a realm of universal relativity this implies that every thing cognisable is false, transient and illusory, but that the constitution of the real world depends upon this very fact. Even sensations and sense data (*rūpa*)<sup>2</sup> which first appeared as ultimate realities, we then gradually discover to stand in relations without which they prove to be meaningless. Relativity, or negativity, is really the Soul of the Universe.

Some more points of similarity will be easily detected between Nāgārjuna and every monistic philosophy, the more so between him and those philosophers who, like Nicolaus Cusanus, G. Bruno and others, insist upon the negative method of cognising the Absolute. It will hardly be denied that the Mahāyānist conception of Buddha's Cosmical Body as the unique substance is very similar to Spinoza's conception of God as the only substance, Deus sive substantia, Deus sive natura. Although Spinoza's *intuitus* of everything particular *sub specie aeternitatis* is supposed to be a rational capacity of the intellect and Nāgārjuna's intuition is mystic, nevertheless both lead to the same result.

These several points of similarity should, as a matter of course, be taken for what they are worth. For one thing, they might preclude the characte-

<sup>1</sup> For the English phrasing of Hegel's principles I am indebted to Baldwin's dictionary.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. IV. 1.

ristic of a «nihilist» to be applied to Nāgārjuna. The chief divergence between him and his European colleagues in Monism is that he did not believe in logic, at least for the ultimate aim of cognising what reality in itself is. Hegel and Bradley seem to believe in the efficiency of their logic. It did not occur to them that if applied to their own results their logic would sublate itself. Nāgārjuna was fully aware of this fact. Therefore abandoning logic altogether he betook himself to direct mystic intuition of the Absolute, the One-without-a-Second. This step, or jump, from a condemned logic to direct intuition, has been made by many philosophers and in our days it has a very eloquent exponent in the person of M. H. Bergson.

#### XX. THE POSITION OF NYĀYA-VAIŚEṢIKA

The estrangement which befell many scholars at the idea of annihilation as the ultimate goal of a religion would perhaps never have been so strong if it had been known that Buddhism was by no means the only Indian system which had arrived at such conclusions. Besides a series of systems of a decidedly materialistic tinge, the orthodox Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system adhered to the conception of an absolutely lifeless Nirvāṇa.<sup>1</sup> This annihilation of all life is here called Final Deliferance (*mokṣa*) or Absolute End (*apavarga*) and is characterized as a kind of «superbliss» (*nīḥsreyasa*).<sup>2</sup> «Is it possible», asks Vātsyāyana, «that an enlightened man should favour a Final Release in which there is neither bliss nor consciousness»? And he answers by another question — «Is it possible that an enlightened man should *not* favour the idea of a Final Release where all turmoil of life is stopped for ever and where there is no consciousness about it!». «This Release», he says, «is tranquility where everything is given up, everything has ceased to exist, and therefore a great deal of depression, horrors and sin are extinct».<sup>3</sup> Jayanta exclaims likewise, «is it possible that reasonable men should make efforts in order to reduce themselves to a stone-like (inanimate) condition?» and gives the same reply.<sup>4</sup>

All Indian philosophical systems professed to be doctrines of Salvation. They therefore start from the conception of a whole (*sarvam*)<sup>5</sup> which is then

<sup>1</sup> Cf. S. N. Dasgupta's History of Indian Philosophy, p. 362 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Nyāyasūtra, I, 1, 2 and 22.

<sup>3</sup> Nyāyabhāṣya, p. 9 (Vizian.).

<sup>4</sup> Nyāyamañjari, p. 509 (Vizian.).

<sup>5</sup> That *sarvam*, in its technical sense, does not include *nirvāṇa*, as M. de la Vallée Poussin asserts, op. cit. p. 139, is quite wrong. *Sarvam* means *sarvam jñeyam* which is but an

split in two halves, Phenomenal life and the Absolute (*saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*). The phenomenal part is further divided into an analysis of its actual condition (*duḥkha*), its driving forces (*duḥkha-samudaya*) and their gradual extinction (*mārga*). When this extinction (*nirodha*) is reached, life merges into the Absolute about whose essence a variety of constructions exist. These four topics, — the four «noble truths», as the term has been very inadequately translated and represented as a fundamental principle of Buddhism, — contain, in reality, no doctrine at all.<sup>1</sup> It is only a scheme for philosophical constructions and is accepted as such by all Indian systems without exception. They cover, indeed, the Indian conception of philosophy. Uddyotakara says, «these are the four topics which are investigated by every philosopher in every system of metaphysics».<sup>2</sup> Accordingly every philosophical system must contain an analysis of the elements of life, a doctrine about its driving forces, a doctrine of the Absolute and a doctrine about the method to be followed in order to escape out of phenomenal life and become merged in the Absolute. Phenomenal life receives in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system the designation of *duḥkha*, just as in Buddhism. It is very inadequate to translate this term by suffering, misery, pain etc., since it covers such items as inanimate matter, the five objects of sense, colours, sounds, tastes and tactile phenomena.<sup>3</sup> These are not the objects to which the term suffering can be

other name for the 12 āyatanas (corresponding to the 12 prameyas of Nyāyasūtra I, 1, 9), *nirvāṇa* is included in āyatana № 12 (*dharmā*), cf. my Central Conception, appendix II, p. 106, the elements E. 2—3. This is also clear from Saṃyutta IV, 15 where *sabba* is used in its technical sense, *sabba-vaggo, sabbam vo bhikkhave desissāmi*. The passage in Majjhima I, 3 contains no statement about this topic at all. The classification of the elements into 12 āyatanas and into 16 dhātus includes nirvāṇa, the one into *skandhas* (VI<sup>th</sup> classification) does not. Cp. also Triṃśikā, p. 36, *sarvam iti traidhātukam asaṃskṛtam ca*.

<sup>1</sup> This clearly appears from the fact that the «truths» are explicitly admitted in the Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems and implicitly in all the others. Within the pale of Buddhism they cover two opposite theories, the *dharma = pudgala-nairātmya* theory of the Hīnayāna and the *śūnyatā = dharma-nairātmya* theory of Mahāyāna, cf. above p. 41. They are a classification of the elements in four stages as viewed by the saint, the *ārya*, cf. Madh. vṛtti, p. 127, *āryāṇām eva tat satyam*, and Ab. Kośa, VI, 2, and the tables appended to my Central Conception. The editors of the P. T. S. Pali Dict. think that *ārya* has a «racial» meaning, *ārya-pudgala* would then mean, not the same as *anāsrava-dharmāḥ* or *mārga-satya*, but something like «a noble gentleman»; but T. W. Rhys Davids rightly translates it «Arhat» in D. N., I, 37, cf. Dialogues, I, 51.

<sup>2</sup> Nyāyavārt, ed. B. I., p. 13, *etāni catvāry arthapadāni sarvāṣv adhyātmaśāstrīyāsu sarvācāryair varṇyanta iti*.

<sup>3</sup> Vātsyāyana says that *duḥkha* means *janma* (ad N. S., I. 1. 22) and Vācaspati explains, *duḥkhaśabdena sarve śarīrādāya ucyante*, and warns against confounding it with suffering, *mukhyam eva duḥkham iti bhramo mā bhūt*; the same is pressed by Jayanta, *na ca mukhyam*

safely applied in our language, if we are to escape confusion. Bliss itself is entered into the classification of existence (*duḥkha*), as one of its 21 items. And this is quite natural because there is no eternal bliss neither in early Buddhism nor in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, if the «super-bliss» of disappearing into an eternal senseless condition be excepted. The classification into 21 items is but a slight modification of the Buddhist classification into 16 component parts of existence (*dhātu*).<sup>1</sup> The reason why this term has been chosen as a designation of phenomenal life is that philosophy seeks a way out of it. Philosophy is the science of the Absolute, of Nirvāṇa. For every philosopher all phenomenal life is something that must be shunned, it is *heya*. The analysis of existence into its elements, as has been stated above, is undertaken in order to determine the means by which all the forces of life must gradually, one after the other, be brought to a standstill.

It is likewise a general feature of all Indian systems that they assume the existence of a central force which keeps life going in this world, nay in all the imaginable worlds. This general force (*karma*) is resolved into the special ones, termed illusion, desire and aversion. They produce germs of future actions and until they are neutralized by corresponding methods, they will always produce a continuation of life. Illusion is neutralized by philosophic insight, but the decisive and final step which stops empirical life for ever and transfers the individual into the Absolute is achieved by Yoga, i. e., by that mystical power which is produced by absorption in intense concentrated meditation. These conceptions represent a characteristic Indian habit of thought. We meet them everywhere. Their origin is certainly not to be sought for in the Yoga system of Pātañjali which has been proved to be a very late production, about 800 years later than the origin of Buddhism. Their most primitive and crude form appears in the Jaina system. The defi-

*eva duḥkham bādhanāsvabhāvam avamṛśyate, kim tu tatsādhnam tadanuṣaktam ca sarvaṃ eva.* (Nyāyamañjarī, Vizian., p. 507). Cf. Ab. Koṣa, VI, 3, and Madhy. vṛtti, p. 127, *iha hi pañcōpādāna-skandhā duḥkham ity ucyate*. Exactly the same definition in Saṃyutta N., III, 47. It is a technical term, the equivalent of the first *ārya-satya* and of the *sāsrava-dharmāḥ*; «suffering» is *duḥkha-vedanā*, a quite different thing, it has an other place in the system under *vedanā-skandha*. To confound them is a mistake, just as to confound *rūpa-āyatana* with *rūpa-skandha* (the latter includes 10 *āyatana*s), or the 3 *dhātus* with the 18 *dhātus*, or the 6 *indriyas* with the 22 *indriyas*, or the 75 *dharma*s with the 64 *dharmāḥ*, etc. Cf. M. C. Rhys Davids, B. Psych., p. 83.

<sup>1</sup> Another classification of every thing cognizable into 12 *prameyas*, cf. Nyāyasūtra, I. 1. 9, corresponds, to a certain extent, to the Buddhist classification into 12 *āyatana*s.

ling elements of illusion, desire, aversion etc. are here represented as a kind of subtle matter which through the pores of the skin flows into the body and fills it up like absorbed medicine or like a bag is filled with sand.<sup>1</sup> By taking vows, by ascetic and meditative practices the entrance into the body is shut up, the inflow ceases, and the individual becomes purified. In all other systems this process is spiritualized, and instead of an «inflow» of defiling matter we have an «influence» (*āsrava*) of defiling psychical elements which is being stopped by insight and meditation. All elements of existence are in the Buddhist system, as mentioned above, divided in such that can be extinguished by philosophic knowledge, and such that can be extinguished by mystical absorption only. The first class includes wrong views, under which item the naïve realism of ordinary men is understood. Desire, passion and even the physical elements of matter can be extinguished for ever only by the force of absorption.<sup>2</sup> Although the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system favours a naively realistic view of the universe, it has no other means of reaching Nirvāṇa than the mystical power of Yoga. «The details about this matter», says Vātsyāyana, «will be found in special yoga manuals».<sup>3</sup> Any question about the efficiency of this method is answered by stating that the power of yoga is illimited. The Nyāya sūtras mention a characteristic objection from some skeptic mind.<sup>4</sup> A man, says he, may be intensely absorbed in meditation, so as to forget everything which exists about him. He may retire into a lonely place, a forest, a cave, a sandy beach, and there practice meditation until every perception of the external

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tattvārthadharmasūtra, VI. 2 ff., VIII. 2 (transl. by H. Jacobi, Z. D. M. G., LX). Cf. also the detailed and very clear exposition of the complicated Jaina theory in H. v. Glaser, Der Jainismus (Berlin, 1925), p. 158 f. The passions are imagined as a kind of tar by which the influent matter is glued with the Soul, *ibid.* VI. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Samudaya-satya* (= *heya-hetuḥ*) consists in Nyāya just as in Buddhism of *avidyā-tṣṛṇe*. cf. Nyāyavārt, p. 4, l. 13. It is specified that these elements are also included in *duḥkha* (i. e. in the *upādānaskandhas*) — *tad dhetuḥ ca duḥkham uktam*, *ibid.* Their respective antidotes (i. e. *mārga*) consist on both sides of *prajñā* and *samādhi*, cf. Vaiś. sūtra, V. 17—18. *Prajñā* is characterised as *dharma-praviveka* (cf. Vātsyāyana ad IV. 2, 41) which corresponds to the Buddhist *dharma-pravicaya* (Abh. Kośa, I, 2).

<sup>3</sup> Nyāyabhāṣya ad IV, 2, 46. Although the *prasankhyāna* is analogous to *prati-sankhyā-nirodha* of the Buddhists, its procedure is different. By the illimited mystic power of Yoga innumerable «magic bodies», *nirmāṇa-kāya*, must be created at once, to atone in them for endless former deeds and thus to reach Final Extinction. Cf. Tātparyatīkā, p. 6. This prof. B. Keith, Indian Logic and Atomism, p. 260, calls «vulgar thaumaturgy». According to such phrasing Dr. H. Beck, who interprets even the knowledge of *duḥkha-satya* as a vision of ethereal bodies (Buddhismus<sup>2</sup>, II, p. 89 f.), would be called a magician. Usually these men are called mystics.

<sup>4</sup> IV, 2, 39—44.

world has ceased. Nevertheless when external phenomena of exceptional force, as e. g., a thunderstorm, overcome him, he will awake out of the most intense meditation. Why could not the same happen to him in the moment he is about to attain Final Release, if this is to be attained by such meditation? The objection is answered by pointing to the mystical power of trance which stops all energies of life for ever. After that no living bodies, no feelings and no cognitions can exist.

We thus see that an appeal to the mystical power of yoga is a common feature of many Indian philosophical systems. It is needed to fill up the place of the four main subjects which are another general feature of the Indian systems. The originality of each system lies in its ontology, its theory of cognition, its conception of the Absolute, and the details of its construction of a path leading to Final Release. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system assumes a limited number of substances with their changing qualities. The Soul of the individual is here represented as an eternal substance, it is ubiquitous and conterminous with space. Knowledge is produced in it by a special contact with an internal organ of a physical nature. When the body is removed from one place to another, feelings and ideas are produced in a new part of this same motionless<sup>1</sup> substance by its occasional contact with the internal organ which follows the movement of the body. Soul is thus a semi-material ubiquitous substance similar to space and time which in this system are equally conceived as separate ubiquitous substances. This construction facilitates the transition out of phenomenal life with its feelings and cognitions into the Absolute, which is the absolutely senseless and lifeless state of this very substance. By the power of absorption the internal organ is kept back from all contact with the Soul and the senses. No consciousness is then produced, all life is annihilated, but the substance of the Soul reverts in Nirvāṇa to its original and natural condition (*svarūpāvasthā*).

The Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika were at an early date engaged in a controversy with the Vedāntins about the condition of the liberated Soul. The Vaiśeṣikas maintained that it was simply a cessation of all life, just as a cessation of fire when all fuel is exhausted.<sup>2</sup> What is this eternal bliss

<sup>1</sup> Faddegon, *Vaiśeṣika System*, p.272—3, thinks that this Soul was imagined «as really moving». This is quite impossible since it represents a unity (*Vaiś. S. III, 2, 19*) and is omnipresent (*vibhu, parama-mahat*, *ibid. VII. 1, 22*). Cf. also *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* ed. B. B., p. 65, *niṣkriyāś cātmā... sarvagataḥ*.

<sup>2</sup> In his vindication of a substantial Soul Faddegon, *op. cit.*, p. 276 ff., apparently

and what is this eternal consciousness, they ask, which constitutes the essence of the eternal spiritual principle according to the Vedāntins? Since all objects of knowledge have entirely disappeared for ever in Nirvāṇa, it is a joy without something to be enjoyed, and it is knowledge without knowing anything. Such feeling and such knowledge, even if they existed, would be as good as if they never existed at all (*sthitopy asthitān na viśiṣyate*).<sup>1</sup> «But then», asks an objector, «your Soul would be as lifeless as a stone?»<sup>2</sup> The Vaiśeṣika concedes the argument, although he seems to prefer, as a sort of *image médiatrice*, the comparison with space.<sup>3</sup> A question is next asked which gives expression to that feeling of estrangement which is so strong when we think of annihilation as an ultimate goal. «No wise men will ever strive to attain Final Deliverance (*mokṣa-nirvāṇa*) if, after all consciousness and life have been annihilated, it becomes similar to a piece of rock (*śilā-śakala-kalpa*),<sup>4</sup> if it is undistinguishable from a stone (*pāṣāṇa-nirviśeṣaḥ*), if it is inanimate (*jada*).» «But, says the author, wise men do not exert themselves for bliss alone. Experience shows that they also exert themselves to escape pain, like when they, e. g., «avoid being stung by thorns».<sup>5</sup> Phenomenal life being here comparable to pain, the result is that the annihilation of it alone is the ultimate aim of man on earth. This ultimate annihilation and this lifeless substance receive the epithet of the place of Immortality (*amṛtyu-padam*),<sup>6</sup> the same epithet which final annihilation receives in Early Buddhism. Its eternal unchanging character is thereby emphasized.

Nor was this analogy between the theories of the Buddhists and the Nāyāyikas ignored by the latter. We find in the Nyāyamañjarī of Jayanta (p. 512) the following very characteristic deliverance: «By nirvāṇa and

assumes that the Vaiśeṣikas imagined the Soul as a conscious substance, just as the Sāṅkhyas and the Vedāntins did. But consciousness (*buddhi*) is in that system only a *guṇa* of the *ātman*, it appears occasionally through a special contact. The Soul in itself (*svarūpāvacasthāyām*) has neither consciousness, nor feeling.

<sup>1</sup> Nyāyakandali, p. 286 (Vizian.), cf. Nyāyamañjarī, p. 510, l. 12–13.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. That the pure essence of a Soul, or of the substance that produces consciousness is itself as lifeless (*jada*) as a stone seems to be here an extreme consequence drawn by the objector, the comparison with space, as an ubiquitous substance, is more adequate.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vaiś. sūtra, VII. 1. 22; Bhāsarvajñas Nyāyasāra, p. 39 (B. Ind. 1910)

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Nyāyamañjarī, p. 508 f. and Nyāyatātparyadīpikā, p. 282 (Ibid). Cp. Naiṣadhiya, XVII. 75, *muktaye yaḥ śilātōyā śāstram ūce... Gotamam*.

<sup>5</sup> Nyāyasāra, p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Nyāyabhāṣya, p. 30, cf. likewise p. p. 31–34 where the controversy with Vedānta is already in full swing.

similar expressions the Buddhists mean an absolute end (*apavarga*) which is either (in Hīnayāna) the annihilation of the flow of consciousness, or (in Mahāyāna) a flow of pure (objectless) consciousness. (The first) solution — annihilation — is even more pitiful than (the condition to which Soul is reduced in nirvāṇa) according to the Nāyāyikas, since it does not leave to the Soul even a stonelike condition. But in one point we agree with the Buddhists, viz. that there is a difference between the essence of the Soul by itself and the form in which it appears in its reciprocal action with other objects. A constant change of (this substantial) Soul (as maintained by the Buddhists) is absolutely inconceivable, it must be rejected as impossible, just as (the converse theory of the Buddhist about the sound, viz. that) sound is a substance (sc. atomic).»

The Nirvāṇa of the old <sup>1</sup> Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school is thus lifeless and similar to the Nirvāṇa of the Vaibhāṣika-Buddhists. On the other hand the Nirvāṇa of the Mahāyānists, to which the Sautrāntikas adhered, has the same pantheistic character as the Nirvāṇa of the Vedāntists.

## XXI. CONCLUSION

The probable history of the Buddhist conception of the Absolute is, therefore, the following one.

1. In the VI century B. C. there was a great effervescence of philosophical thought among the non-brahmanical classes of India, and a way out of phenomenal life was ardently sought for, the majority of the solutions having a materialistic tinge. Buddha at that time proposed, or accepted, a system denying the existence of an eternal Soul, and reducing phenomenal existence to a congeries of separate elements evolving gradually towards final extinction.

2. To this ideal of a lifeless Nirvāṇa and an extinct Buddha some

<sup>1</sup> In later theistic Nyāya Final Deliverance is reached by the direct contemplation of God, and the condition of the liberated Soul is defined as blissful, cf. Nyāysāra, p. 40, and Nyāyatātparyadīpikā, p. 293. Both the Vaiśeṣika and the Nāyāyika systems were originally atheistic, cf. H. Jacobi, Die Gottesidee bei den Indern, (Bonn 1923) p. 47 ff. and Faddegón, op. cit. p. 165 and 354. That the idea of an eternal God could not easily tally with the system is seen from the embarrassment to decide whether it should be classed as a *muktātman* or not. The question is solved, in agreement with Yogasūtra I.24, by admitting that the quality of consciousness, which is only accidental in Souls, becomes eternal in God, cf. Nyāyakandali, p. 58 (Vizian) and Nyāyavārtika p. 469. Both theistic and atheistic Nāyāyikas existed at Śrīharsa's time, cp. Naiṣadhiya XVII, 75 and 77.

schools alone remained faithful. A tendency to convert Buddha into a superhuman, eternally living, principle manifested itself early among his followers and led to a schism.

3. This tendency gradually developed until in the I century A. D. it ended in the production of a luxuriant growth of a new kanonical literature. It then adopted, probably borrowing from some Aupaniṣada school, the brahmanical idea of a pantheistic Absolute, of a spiritual and monistic character. After this Buddhistic adaptation of the Vedānta the Buddha was converted into a full blown *brahman* and its personification worshipped under the names of a Cosmical Body (*dharmakāya*), Samantabhadra, Vairocana and others.

4. The philosophical doctrine of the old church stuck to the central conception of separate elements of Matter, Mind and Forces, composed lists of them with a view to investigate the method of their gradual extinction in the Absolute.

5. Among the early schools the Mahāsaṃghikas, Vātsīputrīyas and others already assumed a kind of consciousness surviving in Nirvāṇa.

6. They were followed by a school with critical tendencies, the Sautrāntikas, which cut down the list of artificially constructed elements, cut down Nirvāṇa itself as a separate entity and transferred the Absolute into the living world, thus constituting a transition to Mahāyāna.

7. The philosophy of the new religion is an adaptation of the Vedānta system. It forsook the pluralistic principle altogether and became emphatically monistic.

8. It then took a double course. It either assumed the existence of a store-consciousness of which all phenomenal life was but a manifestation. This school in the sequel cultivated logic. The other school denied the possibility of cognising the Absolute by logical methods, it declared all plurality to be an illusion, and nothing short of the whole to be the Reality directly cognised in mystic intuition.

9. The transitional school of the Sautrāntikas coalesced in the V century A. D. with the idealistic school of the Mahāyāna and produced India's greatest philosophers Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. With regard to Nirvāṇa it assumed the existence of a pure spiritual principle, in which object and subject coalesced, and, along with it, a force of transcendental illusion (*vāsanā*) producing the phenomenal world.

10. Contemporaneously with this highest development of Buddhist philosophy, in the VII century A. D., the relativist school of early Mahāyāna received a fresh impulse and a revival of popularity. This led to the formation of new hybrid schools.

11. The very high perfection to which philosophy was brought by both the idealistic and relativistic schools of Buddhism could not but influence all philosophical circles of India, and we see in the next period the old Vedānta remodelled and equipped with fresh arguments by an adaptation to it of the methods elaborated in the Vijñānavāda and Śūnyavāda schools of Buddhism.

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# ERRATA.

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>		
5	15	precedeing	preceding
9	12	developement	development
—	20	controled	controlled
10	26	Buddist	Buddhist
11	35	eist	exist
14	12	resistent	resistant
—	17	—	—
—	21	—	—
15	n. 3	meditatiou	meditation
—	—	Monastery	monastery
—	—	nonastery	monastery
15	n. 2	practised	practiced
18	n. 3	l'intuition	l'intuition
21	22	Vasubandu	Vasubandhu
22	16	Vinnalakīrti	Vimalakīrti
—	28	prefered	preferred
24	n. 1	sourses	sources
—	—	n. 3	n. 2
27	24	manifestations	manifestations <sup>2</sup>
30	9	consiousness	consciousness
31	13	substanse	substance
33	21	dhama-kāya	dharma-kāya
36	3	ts	its
39	13	discreet	discrete
42	7	samskr̥ta	samskr̥ta
—	—	asamskr̥ta	asamskr̥ta
43	n. 1	pratitya-samatpāda	pratitya-samutpāda
45	2	It	If
—	28	worshiped	worshipped
50	26	XIX	XVIII
51	34	litteral	literal
58	n. 1	Heihelberg	Heidelberg
65	n. 1	on	On
72	8	whatfore	whatfor
88	13	Budohapālita	Buddhapālita
89	8	disjunctive	conditioned
90	n. 3	samvṛtti	samvṛti
91	5	—	—
—	8	equalisation	equalization
—	9	realised	realized