

**MEDITATION IN THE HINDU AND
BUDDHIST TRADITIONS**

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ABBREVIATIONS

A = Anguttara Nikāya

D = Dīgha Nikāya

K = Khuddaka Nikāya

M= Majjhima Nikāya

PTS = Pali Text Society. The PTS have kindly given me permission to quote from their copyrighted translations

S = Samyutta Nikāya

GLOSSARY

Please search using, for example, Ctrl+ f for the earliest mention of the term. Normally there will be a full explanation.

PREFACE

In the West, during the last thirty or forty years, there has been a greatly increased interest in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. However, those who feel attracted to investigate these in any depth are faced with a bewildering variety of different theories and meditative practices. Very often the reaction to being confronted with so many seemingly contradictory paths is, after a cursory search, to study one particular viewpoint and to ignore the rest.

It is my view that this approach, though understandable, is unnecessarily limiting. At best, it leads to the loss of many important insights and aids to greater self-knowledge. At worst, it can ultimately lead to dogmatism. It is the main thesis of this book that, beneath the many seemingly differing perspectives within these traditions, there is to a large extent an underlying unity. This can be found both at a theoretical and at a practical level. When this is realised, the aspiring meditator is able to benefit from a much wider range of approaches to meditation, unrestricted by artificial sectarian boundaries. I realise that this view may seem heretical to some. However, the intention is certainly not to offend. Instead, the aim is to try to help encourage tolerance and mutual understanding between those that adhere to what may appear on the surface to be different currents of thought.

As well as helping individual meditators with their own practice, I hope that this book can also be a useful resource for those working in the caring professions. Increasingly it is becoming recognised, especially in psychology and in health care, that there is a mass of valuable knowledge about the mind and body in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions.

Most of the theoretical frameworks and practical techniques discussed in this book will have originated in India, the birthplace of both Hinduism and Buddhism. Although *Sanātana-Dharma*, or 'Eternal Teaching', is the more traditional term for what has come to be called Hinduism in the West, the latter term will be used as it is more familiar. For the same reason, instead of using the terms *Dharma* or *Buddha-dharma*, which can roughly be translated as the 'Teaching of the Buddha', the term 'Buddhism' will usually be employed. While it has been

necessary to discuss the theoretical bases of these traditions, the aim of this book is to relate theory to practice. Therefore, the main emphasis is on examining the wide variety of approaches to meditation in both traditions.

The introduction will very briefly outline some basic reasons for following a spiritual path. Part One will examine the theoretical bases of the Hindu and Buddhist traditions in more detail. Part Two will be devoted to practical approaches to meditation.

INTRODUCTION - REASONS FOR FOLLOWING A MEDITATIVE PATH

INTUITION AND THE INTELLECT

Many are first drawn to follow a meditative path more by intuition¹ than by the exercise of reason. Indeed, making use of this faculty is extremely important. Some, however, go further and argue that meditative experience is too subtle to be open to any form of rational examination or understanding. While it can be argued that intellectual activity functions on a lower plane, it would be wrong to believe that the gross can never be used to help indicate the nature of the subtle. To adapt the Zen analogy, just as a finger can point at the light of the moon, so the intellect can be employed to point to effective methods of meditation and enhancing awareness

Although it may be possible, if one is highly evolved, to dispense with the use of the intellect altogether, most of those who first aspire to follow a meditative path have not yet reached this advanced stage of development. The majority of aspiring meditators will be dependent, to a large degree, on the use of this faculty in other areas of their lives. For this reason, it is unlikely that they will suddenly be able to make the leap to successfully relying on the intuition entirely when investigating methods of meditation and of enhancing awareness. Indeed, any attempt to do this can be fraught with peril. If the intellect is discarded, and if the intuitive sense is not developed enough, confusion is almost bound to arise. Such confusion can lead to an individual becoming very vulnerable and unable to discriminate between the genuine and the bogus. One only has to look at some of the cults that have arisen in the last thirty or forty years, and the effects that these have had on some of their members, to see what disastrous consequences can result. Therefore in the following pages, there will be an attempt to demonstrate intellectually that there are convincing reasons for following a meditative path. It is hoped that, having been persuaded of this, readers will then be more able to channel their energies into exploring those realms of experience that lie beyond the intellect.

REASONS FOR FOLLOWING A MEDITATIVE PATH

The discussion of this question will be largely based on the teachings of Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950). Ramana is widely regarded as one of the foremost spiritual teachers of the last century. Born into a Hindu family in Tamil Nadu, South India, he has influenced the practice of aspirants from a wide variety of traditions. His approach is given prominence here because it refers to everyday experience and is expressed in non-technical language. As we shall see later in the book, however, there are a number of other ways of approaching and expressing the questions discussed below. Reference is also made here to the teachings of the Buddha.

In *Who am I?*, written as a reply to the inquiries of one of his disciples, Ramana puts forward the basic premise that all beings desire to attain a perfect state of happiness that lasts forever.² Initially, it may seem that this proposition is untrue. One can observe people striving for a variety of different ends including money, sex, perfect relationships, power, physical health etc, but very rarely does anyone say they are striving towards a lasting state of happiness. Nevertheless, it can be argued that everyone who seeks money, perfect relationships, etc., feels consciously or unconsciously that the attainment of such goals will result in greater happiness, in whatever way this is conceived. Also, the hope is that this happiness will be long-lasting.

It would seem to follow, therefore, that, if all aim to achieve greater happiness that is long-lasting, ideally all would desire to attain a perfect state of happiness that lasts forever.³ Yet conventional methods cannot lead to the attainment of a lasting state of happiness. This is because what is achieved is essentially transitory. As the Buddha is reported to have said in relation to the objects of the senses:

"...forms are impermanent..." Sounds... Odours...
Tastes... Tactile objects... Mental phenomena are
impermanent. What is impermanent is suffering. What
is suffering is nonself.⁴

To look at some concrete examples, it is obvious that, even if one is able to gain great wealth and hold onto it during one's lifetime, a feat that is difficult to achieve,

one cannot take it with one after one dies. Even during one's lifetime, the enjoyment of such wealth may depend on other transitory conditions such as good health, etc. Moreover, there may be the continual fear of losing the wealth one has amassed, which will greatly diminish any pleasure gained from it. The same types of problem arise if one depends on relationships or power, etc, as sources of happiness. In addition, it is a common experience that even those who attain these goals without the accompanying difficulties just alluded to usually remain dissatisfied. While there may be an initial sense of well-being gained by achieving the goal, this soon dissipates.

The rich man may spend all his life amassing a great fortune but finds that, after all this effort, it means very little. The lover may be lucky enough to find his perfect partner but may discover, over time, that the relationship becomes less intense and that it settles down into a predictable routine. Similarly, a person may become Prime Minister or President but may soon find that the goal, which he has sacrificed so much for, leaves him questioning whether all the effort has been worth it.

So, if it exists, by what means could a lasting state of happiness be achieved?

It is obvious that what is lasting cannot be found in what is transitory. Yet everything that we experience appears to change: the mind, body and universe are in a perpetual state of flux. However, through all the different experiences that we undergo there is, in fact, one constant, one common denominator - that is the one who experiences.

As Ramana observes, throughout our lives we make continual references to ourselves. For example, we say 'I was walking', 'I was talking, sleeping, reading', etc.⁵ We consistently refer to this feeling that we have of an 'I' who is the initiator and observer of all our actions and experiences. This 'I'-feeling exists during each of the three major modes of consciousness that we usually experience in any twenty-four hour period. These are the waking, the dream sleep and the deep dreamless sleep states.⁶ Even when we examine the state of deep dreamless sleep, in which there is no awareness of the mind, body or universe, we feel that essentially the same subject that experienced the other two states experiences this one also. For example, when we wake up after having been in a deep sleep, we may remember that our sleep has been peaceful. This would not be possible unless the 'I' who remembers were essentially the same as the 'I' who slept.

In addition, a continuous sense of identity is experienced throughout the many changes that we undergo from childhood to old age. We feel that all the experiences that arise in our life-time pertain to the same subject, even though both our minds and bodies go through a radical transformation.

What may exist before birth and after death is, of course, more open to dispute. However, there have been a number of different studies that indicate that a sizeable proportion of the population have experienced an OBE (an out-of-the-body experience).⁷ While the results obtained are always open to different interpretations, such studies show that existence after death cannot be dismissed out of hand.

It would seem clear from all this that there is a continuous experience of the 'I'-feeling through each of the three major modes of consciousness and that this sense of 'I' continues at least throughout our lifetime. The 'I'-feeling seems to be the only constant while all else is transient. Therefore, it would seem that the only hope of realising the goal to which we aspire, that is a lasting state of happiness, is to find this within ourselves, from within a sense of the 'I'-feeling.

Is there, then, any evidence to suggest that happiness can be found within ourselves? To answer this question Ramana pointed to the state of dreamless sleep. As we have seen, in this state there is no awareness of the mind, body or universe. However, instead of this making us unhappy, we are quite happy.⁸ That this is the case is suggested by the fact that we all desire to sleep soundly. This does not mean, of course, that we will realise our ultimate goal by remaining in dreamless sleep. Apart from it being transient, there is only limited self-awareness. Nevertheless, it does provide an indication, though not a proof, that happiness may indeed lie within us.

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This discussion has purposely been very condensed in order to provide a point of departure for the wider ranging examination of Indian philosophy in Part One. The next chapter will focus on the origins of the theory of non-dualism in early Indian philosophy.

References

1. I.e the direct perception of truth without the need for reasoning or deduction.
2. See Arthur Osbourne, (ed.), 'Who Am I?' in *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Tiruvannamalai, S. India, pub. by Sri Ramanasramam, 1968, p. 38. (Although many of the editions of Ramana's teachings referred to are published in India, they are also widely available in the West). Often, the word 'happiness' is used to convey a slight elevation of mood gained from transitory pleasures. Here, however, it is used to mean a supreme state of blissful well-being.
3. Some may feel that this seems a rather 'self-centred' goal to aim for. However, it is evident that those who have not found some means of achieving a degree of peace and well-being themselves, will find it difficult to help others to do so. Moreover, as we shall see, many of the traditions that we will be examining put forward the view that, essentially, there is no difference between oneself and others. Therefore one's own well-being and that of others is synonymous.
4. Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, Oxford, Pali Text Soc, 2000, pp.1134-5.
5. See Arthur Osbourne (ed.), 'Self-Enquiry', in *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, op.cit., p.5.
6. See *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, Tiruvannamalai, S. India, pub. by Sri Ramanasramam, 1972, p.162 (section 197). With modern instrumentation it has been possible to measure more subtle variations in sleep patterns. However, it is still valid to categorise sleep into dream and deep dreamless sleep.
7. See Charles McCreery, *Schizotopy and out-of-the-body-experiences*, New College, Oxford, unpublished thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 1993.
8. See *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, 1972, p.1. (section 3)

PART ONE

Chapter One

The Origins of the Theory of Non-Dualism in Early Indian Philosophy

INTRODUCTION

The viewpoint, which has had the greatest influence within Hindu philosophy, is that of non-dualism. For this reason, this theory will take centre stage in the discussion of this tradition in Part One. The school of thought most closely identified with non-dualism is Advaita Vedānta ('Vedāntic Non-Dualism'),¹ which developed from about the sixth century CE onwards. Exponents of this school did not claim, however, to have originated these teachings. Instead, they believed they were merely a reflection of the quintessential philosophy of the *Upanishads* composed over a thousand years earlier.

In summary, the view of Advaita Vedānta is that the world of duality (that is the world of form) is an illusion; that there exists only one indivisible reality (the Self/Brahman) and that human beings are essentially non-different from this reality.

This and following chapters will compare the evolution of Hindu theories of non-dualism with the development of Buddhist philosophy. Reference will also be made to some other Hindu schools of thought. It will be argued that there are strong parallels between the main currents of both traditions.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There are a variety of difficulties in giving an exact description of the development of Indian philosophy. The most important teachings on meditation in the Hindu tradition, for example, were passed down orally or, indeed, non-verbally from guru to disciple.² When teachings were committed to the written word, they were often in the form of summaries, sometimes in a coded language, and frequently without many clues as to when they originated. The written

texts are, therefore, in many instances only a pale shadow of what was originally taught, filtered through the less developed minds of disciples, or disciples of disciples. Yet, often, works of this kind (or oral teachings based on these secondary sources) contain the only information we have of the teachings of the various sages that have contributed to the development of this tradition. Many of the same problems also apply to tracing the history of Buddhism.

Despite this, it is probable that the origins of Hindu culture as a whole are very early indeed. For example, archaeologists investigating sites belonging to the Indus Valley civilization have found a number of seals, which seem to depict deities sitting in the yogic posture *baddhakonasana*. Also found were objects reminiscent of the *linga* and *yoni* (the male and female organs), which later on became important icons in the Tantric tradition (see later chapters). The Indus civilization probably flourished from 2800 to 1800 BCE.³ However, the pre-urban roots of this culture go back to at least 3300 BCE.⁴

Similar settlements with a similar culture to those found along the Indus have been found over a very wide area. Indeed, some believe that a more important centre of this civilization existed along the now dried up river Sarasvati. This probably flowed through what is now present day Haryana in North Western India.⁵ There is still much uncertainty about the nature, age and geographical extent of this civilization. However, in many areas of its culture it probably rivalled or surpassed Ancient Egypt and Sumeria.

There has been considerable disagreement about the causes of the decline of this civilization in the first half of the second millennium BCE. Until relatively recently it was thought that 'Aryan tribes' from the West invaded and helped to destroy it. However, it is now widely believed that environmental factors were to blame. It is also thought that the Indus culture did not die but was absorbed into other currents of Indian culture.⁶

THE VEDAS

The first known verbal records of the Hindu tradition are recorded in Sanskrit in the *Vedas*. Some believe that some elements of these were composed 5,000 or more years ago.⁷ Others (often Western scholars) have suggested they

were composed much later, perhaps after 1500 BCE.⁸ It used to be thought that the Vedas were composed by the invading Aryans mentioned earlier. However, considerable doubt has been cast over this theory. Some still think they were written by migrating rather than conquering Aryan tribes. Others, on the other hand, believe that they come from indigenous sources.⁹

The *Rig-Veda* is the earliest of the Vedas.¹⁰ While many of the hymns contained in it are in praise of a variety of divinities, already there are some references that may point to a non-dualistic viewpoint. The following passages are examples of this:

Non-being then existed not nor being:
 There was no air, nor sky that is beyond it.....
 Death then existed not nor life immortal;
 Of neither night nor day was any token.
 By its inherent force the One breathed windless:
 No other thing than that beyond
 existed. (Rig.10.129)¹¹

What is the One who in the form of the unborn
 propped apart these six realms of space? (Rig. 1.
 164. 6)¹²

THE UPANISHADS

The hymns of the Vedas inspired exegeses called *Brāhmanas*, which were largely concerned with sacrificial ritual. Connected to these were supplementary treatises referred to as *Āranyakas* (Forest Treatises). As the name suggests, these were composed by hermits living in forests and wildernesses. They contain discussions of philosophy as well as of sacrifice. In turn, works called *Upanishads* grew out of the *Āranyakas*.¹³ The Upanishads were thought to have been composed from 800-600 BCE onwards. However, these dates may need to be amended if earlier dates for the Vedas are accepted

The main focus of these early Upanishads was on metaphysics rather than on ritual. They contain a number of strands of thought, which range from the still relatively primitive to the highly developed. However, throughout, there are references to the one all-pervading Self, also

called Brahman. The nature of this Self is described in the passages quoted below. The first series of passages is from the *Brihadāranyaka-Upanishad*, which is possibly the oldest, and from the *Chāndogya-* and *Kena-* Upanishads, which are almost as ancient:

He who inhabits all beings, yet is within all beings, whom no being knows, whose body all beings are and who controls all beings from within - He is your Self, the Inner Controller, the Immortal. (Bri. 111. vii. 15).¹⁴

. . . that which is the subtle essence - in it all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art
(Chānd.V1.xii.31)¹⁵

That great unborn Self. . . . It is the controller of all, the lord of all, the ruler of all. (Bri IV. iv. 22)¹⁶

The Self is free from taint, beyond the ākāsha [ether], birthless, infinite and unchanging.
(Bri IV. iv. 20)¹⁷

The Infinite is bliss. There is no bliss in anything finite. Only the Infinite is bliss.
(Chānd Ch. XXIII)¹⁸

This, indeed, is the supreme bliss. This is the state of Brahman. . . . (Bri. IV. iii. 33)¹⁹

Besides using affirmative methods of describing the Self, the *Brihadāranyaka-Upanishad* also uses the method of negating all that is non-self to indicate the Self's true nature. The logic behind this method is that, as the Self is infinite, the use of finite concepts to describe it is inadequate.

That, O Gargi, the knowers of Brahman call the Imperishable. It is neither gross nor subtle,

neither short nor long, neither red nor moist;
 It is neither shadow nor darkness, neither air
 nor ākāsha [ether]; It is unattached; It is
 without taste or smell, without eyes or ears,
 without tongue or mind; It is non-effulgent,
 without vital breath or mouth, without measure,
 and without exterior or interior. It does not
 eat anything nor is it eaten by anyone. (Bri.
 III. viii. 8)²⁰

In the following passage, the Brihadāranyaka-Upanishad
 advises that one should meditate on the Self described
 above. Indeed, this alone should be meditated upon. It is
 to be valued more than anything else:

He who meditates on one or another of Its
 [the Self's] aspects does not know, for It is
 then incomplete: the Self is separated from
 Its totality by being associated with a
 single characteristic. The Self alone is to
 be meditated upon, for in It all these become
 unified. . . .

This [Self] is dearer than a son, dearer than
 wealth, dearer than everything else,
 [because] It is innermost. (Bri. 1. iv. 7-
 8).²¹

In a passage in the Kena-Upanishad, a method is
 indicated by which the disciple can turn inward towards
 recognition of the Self. This is achieved by finding who is
 directing and controlling the functioning of the mind and
 body:

The disciple asked: "By whose will directed does
 the mind proceed to its object? At whose
 command does the prāna [life-energy], the
 foremost, do its duty? At whose will do men
 utter speech? Who is the god that directs the
 eyes and the ears?"

The teacher replied: "It is the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, the Speech of speech, the Life of life, and the Eye of the eye. Having detached the Self [from the sense-organs] and renounced the world, the wise attain to Immortality. "(Kena. 1. 1-2)²²

There are also some passages, both in the earlier and in the later Upanishads, that appear to imply that the world of form is an illusion and that there is only one reality:

To the seer, all things have verily become the Self: what delusion, what sorrow can there be for him who beholds that oneness? (Īshā 7)²³

What is here, the same is there; and what is there, the same is here. He goes from death to death who sees any difference here. By the mind alone is Brahman to be realised; then one does not see in It any multiplicity whatsoever. He goes from death to death who sees multiplicity in It. This, verily, is That. (Katha II(i) 10-11)²⁴

In the beginning, my dear, this [universe] was Being alone, one only without a second. (Chānd. VI. ii. 1)²⁵

It is clear, therefore, from an examination of the passages above, that, at the time of the early Upanishads, belief in the realisation of the one Self as the ultimate goal of humankind was well-established. In fact, we can be fairly certain that such a belief had developed much earlier. For example, the Brihadāranyaka-Upanishad (IV. iv. 22) refers to 'the knowers of Brahman of olden times'.

References

1. See Chapter Four for the derivation of the term *Vedānta*.

2. There is a strong belief in India that the most important contact between guru and disciple is mind to mind, by a subtle form of telepathy.
3. Shereen Ratnagar, *Understanding Harappa*, New Delhi, Tulika, 2006, p.9.
4. Ibid., p.128.
5. Sita Ram Dube (ed.), *Vedic Culture and Its Continuity*, Delhi, Pratibha Prakashan, 2006, p.29.
6. See *ibid.*, for discussion on these issues.
7. See , for example, N. Kazanas, 'A new date for the Rgveda', *Philosophy and Chronology*, (2000) ed. G C Pande and D Krishna, special issue of Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research (June, 2001)
8. See, for example, Michael Witzel, Vedas and Upanisads, in Gavin D. Flood, *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*, Chichester, Blackwell Publishing, 2003, p.68
9. See Dube, 2006, p.19f.
10. Besides the *Rig-Veda*, there are the *Yajur*, *Sāman* and *Atharva Vedas*.
11. E. Deutsch and J.A.B. van Buitenen, *A Source Book of Advaita Vedānta*, Hawaii, Honolulu, University Press of Hawaii, 1971, p.8.
12. From W. D O'Flaherty, (trans.), *The Rig Veda*, (Harmondsworth, England, Penguin, 1981, p.76.
13. Georg Feuerstein, *Yoga, The Technology of Ecstasy*, Crucible, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, 1990, p.115f. There has been some discussion as to how far the *Āranyakas* were different from the *Upanishads*. However, for the purposes of this chapter, it is not necessary to pursue this here.
14. Swami Nikhilananda, (trans.), *The Upanishads, A Third Selection*, London, Phoenix House, 1957), p. 226.
15. From Swami Nikhilananda, (trans.), *The Upanishads*, London, Phoenix House, 1959), vol.4 p. 316.
16. Nikhilananda, (trans.), *The Upanishads, A Third Selection*, p.302.
17. Ibid., p.301.
18. Nikhilananda, (trans.), *The Upanishads*, vol.4, p.352.
19. Swami Nikhilananda, (trans.), *The Upanishads, A Third Selection*, p. 283.
20. Ibid., p. 23.
21. Ibid., p. 119-121.
22. Swami Nikhilananda, (trans.), *The Upanishads*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1963, p.99.

23. Ibid.,. The *Īshā-Upanishad* was probably composed somewhat later than the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka-*, *Chāndogya* and *Kena- Upanishads*, perhaps between 600-300 BCE.
24. Ibid., p. 165-166. The *Katha-Upanishad* was probably composed during the same period as the *Īshā*.
25. Swami Nikhilananda, (trans.), *The Upanishads*, p. 294.

Chapter Two

The Development of Early Buddhist Philosophy

Section One

While few would dispute that the belief in Brahman, the universal Self, is at the heart of the teachings of the Upanishads, there is a lot more controversy as to the core philosophy of early Buddhism. For this reason, the following discussion will be necessarily at greater length than that in the last chapter.

RECORDS OF THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING

The exact chronology of the life of the historical Buddha, Siddārtha Gautama (also named Shākyamuni Buddha), is uncertain. Some modern scholars think that a very approximate date for his death can be found in the decades around 400 BCE.¹ However, many earlier dates have also been suggested.²

In the first few centuries after the Buddha's death, the Buddhist *Sangha* (Community) split into a large number of separate schools. These passed down accounts of the Buddha's teachings orally. While it is unclear as to which tongue, or tongues, the Buddha taught in originally, it is known that these early schools transmitted his teachings through the medium of a number of Middle Indo-Aryan (Middle Indic) languages.³ These languages have a strong relationship with Sanskrit and include Pāli and Māgadhi.

After several centuries of oral transmission, many schools began to commit their renditions of the Buddha's

discourses to writing. Texts in Sanskrit and in languages from the Middle Indo-Aryan language family were produced. Unfortunately, however, a large amount of this early literature has not survived. At present, therefore, our knowledge of the Buddha's philosophical thought depends mainly on two collections of discourses, one known as the *Nikāyas* and the other as the *Āgamas*. The *Nikāyas* are in Pāli. The *Āgamas* were translated from Sanskrit and Middle Indo-Aryan /Indic languages into Chinese and have been preserved in this form. According to some scholars, both these sets of scriptures were originally derived from prototypes in Māgadhī, however this is by no means certain.⁴ Although there are some differences between the *Nikāyas* and the *Āgamas*, their doctrinal basis is considered to be substantially the same.⁵

As the Pāli *Nikāyas* (referred to collectively as the *Suttapitaka*), are the best known and most easily accessible source in the West, it will be mainly to these that reference will be made.⁶ Some mention will also be made of the Pāli *Vinayapitaka* (a detailed exposition of rules for monks and nuns). These works, together with the *Abhidhammapitaka* (a later compilation of Buddhist philosophy and psychology) make up the *Tipitaka*, which is also known as the Pāli Canon. These are the core sacred writings of the Theravādins, the oldest school of Buddhism still existing today.

As we have seen, initially the teachings that were later to form the *Suttapitaka* were transmitted orally.⁷ The substantial quantity of material involved was preserved by separate schools of reciters which each specialised in memorising different sections. Versification and a large amount of repetition, as well as aids to memory such as numbered lists and stock formulae, appear frequently in the *Suttapitaka*. This would seem to indicate that it is often not - as sometimes depicted - a verbatim account of the Buddha's spontaneous replies to his disciples' questions.

Some believe that the *Suttapitaka* shows signs of later additions from other Indian teachings and have pointed to serious incompatibilities between different passages which, they argue, cannot be attributed to the development of the Buddha's own thought.⁸ For this reason, and the others mentioned above, although it is the best record we have of the Buddha's teachings, it is important to exercise some caution when examining it.

THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING ON SELF AND NON-SELF

Controversy, often bitter, has raged amongst Buddhist scholars as to whether the Buddha's teachings, as revealed in the *Suttapitaka*, affirm or deny the existence of some kind of self.⁹ This is not a new debate. According to Vetter, the idea that the *Suttapitaka* denies a Self similar to Brahman possibly has its origins in the discussions amongst early Buddhists of the Vātsīputrīya sect's belief in a *pudgala* or person.¹⁰ The Vātsīputrīyans were one of the many schools that were formed after the Buddha's death. Unfortunately, our knowledge of their description of the *pudgala* is limited but this probably differed from the description of Brahman in the *Upanishads*.

Although the exact form the theory of the *pudgala* took is unclear, it is known that it was rejected by many other Buddhists. However, in Vetter's view, having dismissed this theory of self, some may have gone on to reject all self-theories, including the view of the Self described in the *Upanishads*. It is possible this happened for terminological rather than for more substantive reasons. If this is the case, potentially ambiguous passages in the *Suttapitaka* may have been subsequently interpreted accordingly. It has also been suggested that the doctrine of no self was later used by some early Buddhist schools to help mould an identity that distinguished them from other non-Buddhist religious groups.

Other scholars, however, argue that there are a number of passages in the *Suttapitaka* that directly and unambiguously criticise the *Upanishadic* theory of the universal Self.¹¹ This is also the prevailing viewpoint amongst followers of the Theravāda.

THE SIMILE OF THE SNAKE

One passage that has been frequently quoted in support of this view is found at M.i.135-6 in 'The Discourse on the Snake Simile' (*Alagaddūpama Sutta*).¹² Here the Buddha is reported to have outlined six false views of an uninstructed person and then six correct views of an instructed person. In order to come to a better understanding of this question we will examine this passage in detail.

THE FIRST FIVE VIEWS

The first five correct views of an instructed person (we shall discuss the sixth later on) deny that certain elements of the psychophysical complex, the 'aggregates', are possessed by him or are his self.¹³ The instructed person regards:

"...material form thus: 'This is not mine (n'etam mama), this I am not (n'eso 'ham-asmi), this is not my self (na mêso attā).' He regards feeling perception....mental formations....what is heard, sensed, cognized, encountered, sought, mentally pondered¹⁴ thus: 'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.'"¹⁵

The five corresponding false views are that the uninstructed disciple *does* consider material form, etc., as "This is mine, this I am, this is my self. "

Examining the first five correct and the five corresponding false views, it is clear that belief in a self identified with the body, feeling and the other aggregates is being criticised. On the other hand, this criticism does not appear to extend to all theories of self. Instead, these passages seem to reject identification with what those in the Advaita Vedānta tradition would regard as the false, limited self (see Pt.1, Ch.1 and Ch.4).

IS THE EXISTENCE OF A SELF IMPLIED?

Some modern commentators go further and argue that in stating that certain elements of mind and body are not 'my self', the existence of some kind of Self is actually implied.¹⁶ A rough analogy may help to clarify this latter point. If, in the first five correct views, there was no implication that the instructed disciple had a self, it would be as though an intelligent person who was childless (analogous to the instructed disciple without a self) looked through a collection of photos (analogous to the aggregates of material form, etc.) saying as he did so: 'this one is not my daughter, that one is not my daughter. . . . 'etc. These would, of course, be misleading statements, a fruitless exercise, and hardly the conduct of an intelligent man. A sensible person would simply say: 'I do not have a daughter'.

In the same way, it would be highly misleading and a fruitless exercise for the 'instructed disciple' to say that the different aggregates were not his self, if he did not believe such a self existed in some form or other. If he disagreed that he had a self, surely he would simply say: 'I do not have a self'.

The view that a self is, in fact, implied at M.i.135-136 seems further supported by a passage at M. i. 138 in which the Buddha is reported to have asked:

"What do you think, monks; is material form permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, Lord."

"And what is impermanent, is it painful [dukkham] or pleasant?" "Painful, Lord."

"And what is impermanent, painful subject to change, is it fit to be considered thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self? "

"Certainly not, Lord."¹⁷

The Buddha is then reported to have asked the same questions about feeling, perception and the other aggregates. This passage seems to again imply that there is a self, this time one that is unchanging and non-suffering. This is different from the aggregates, which are impermanent and painful.¹⁸

In the *Upanishads*, Brahman is also characterised as unchanging and non-suffering. According to Vetter, the *Suttapitaka* may even be echoing a particular sentence at the end of Bri.3.7 in which Yājñavalkya states that what is different from the Self is painful (Sanskrit: *ārta*).¹⁹

THE SIXTH VIEW

Having examined the first five views (correct and false), we can now analyse the sixth, the significance of which is less easy to determine.

The sixth view, held by the instructed person, is described as follows:

'This the world, this the self; after death I shall be permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change; I shall endure as long as eternity' - this too he regards thus: 'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.'²⁰

The uninstructed disciple *does* believe, however, that: 'This is mine, this I am, this is myself'.

It has been suggested that the phrase: 'This the world, this the self', the literal translation of the Pāli: '*So loko, so attā*', reflects the Upanishadic teaching that, essentially, the world and the universe are the same. However, a large number of theories about the self and the world, which were held by the Buddha's contemporaries, are mentioned in the *Suttapitaka*. Examining some of these, Peter Harvey, in *The Selfless Mind*, argues that, in the Buddha's day, there seems to have been a clear conceptual link between the ideas of 'self' (*attā*) and 'world' (*loka*).²¹ Among passages to which Harvey refers are D.i.14-16 where the self and the world are talked of in the singular not in the plural, and D.i.29. In this latter passage, someone who disbelieves in the idea of past rebirths is reported to believe: '"Self and the world are arisen by chance. Why? Formerly I was not, but now I am. Having not been, I have come into existence. "' These, and other passages, lead Harvey to believe that 'self and the world' in the *Suttapitaka* meant 'self and my world', that is 'I and my world of experience'.

Further illustrations of the intimate connection between 'self' and 'world' can be found at M.ii.233-234 where a large number of theories are grouped together. Besides the theory that 'Eternal is self and the world', others included are 'Exclusively sorrowful is self and the world' and 'Not eternal is self and the world'.²²

We are given yet more clues as to the probable meaning of 'the world' in passages of this kind at S. xxxv, iii, 2. 116. Here *loka* is reportedly defined by Ānanda, a disciple of the Buddha, and by the Buddha himself:

'That by which one is conscious of the world, by which one has conceit of the world (*loka saññī, loka-mānī*)-that is called "world" in the Ariyan discipline.²³ And through what is one conscious of the world? Through what has one conceit of the world? Through the eye, friends, through the ear,

the nose, tongue, body, through the mind one is conscious of the world, has conceit of the world. That is called "world" in the Ariyan discipline.'²⁴

Similarly, at A.iv.429f the Buddha is reported to have said that though a man:

'...walked for a hundred years. . . . he would die or ever he reached the end of the world. . . . Not, brahmans, by such journeys do I say the world's end may be known. . . . '

but, the Buddha continues:

'without reaching the end of the world there is no ending of ill.

'Brahmans, these five strands of sense-desire are called the world in the code of the Ariyans, what five?

'Shapes cognised by the eye, longed for. . . . bound up with passion and desire '

The other strands of sense-desire are sounds, smells, tastes and contacts cognised by the other sense-organs.

Having meditated, it is the monk who:

'. . . enters and abides in the ending of perception and feeling and by wisdom sees that the cankers are completely destroyed; . . . '

who, according to this viewpoint,

'. . . is said to have come to the world's end. . . . '²⁵

Thus, the 'world', according to these passages, includes the mind, the senses and the sense objects. Therefore, the end of 'the world' in this sense is not found by a man traversing the physical world but by meditation, which

brings 'the end of perception and feeling'; that is an end to his world of mental and sensory experience.

.....

In the light of the passages quoted above, it would seem unlikely that '*so loka, so attā*' does, in fact, reflect the Upanishadic view of the Self and the world. In the theories of the 'self and the world' held by the Buddha's contemporaries and mentioned in the *Suttapitaka*, the 'self' always has the same qualities as the 'world' (for example, 'exclusively sorrowful,' etc); and the 'self' and the 'world' always coexist. In the Upanishadic tradition, however, while it is seen as the essential nature of the world, the Self, which is eternal and blissful, is qualitatively different from the world in its outward manifestation. This is characterised by impermanence and is experienced as a mixture of pleasure and pain. Moreover, the Self can exist without the appearance of the phenomenal world as 'one without a second.'²⁶

Finally it seems very unlikely that 'the world', in theories of the 'self and the world', could refer to something akin to 'a world of Brahman' (i.e. a 'world' synonymous with Brahman), even where the 'self and the world' are eternal. As we have already seen at S. iv. 97 and elsewhere, 'the world' is defined in terms of the mind and senses and is something to be ended by meditation and intuitive wisdom. It is not regarded as something non-phenomenal.

On balance, therefore, the two parts of the sixth correct view together would seem to put forward the idea that the instructed disciple does not believe in an eternal self which has the same qualities as its world of experience. The uninstructed disciple, of course, takes the opposite position.

DISCUSSION OF *ATTAVĀDA* IN THE SNAKE SIMILE

Before concluding this discussion of the 'Snake Simile' maybe a brief mention should be made of one other passage in the discourse, which occurs at M.i.137. This puts forward the view that clinging to 'self-theory' (*attavāda*) causes suffering and despair. While at first sight it might

be thought that this criticism could include the theory of Self found in the Upanishads, further analysis would seem to make this unlikely.

In the fifth part of the *Suttapitaka*, the *Khuddaka-Nikāya*, it is asked: 'In what twenty forms is there adherence to the wrong view connected with wrong theory on self?'²⁷ The answer to this question is that the unskilled person: '...sees materiality as self, or self possessed of materiality, or materiality in self, or self in materiality;....'²⁸ In the same way the unskilled person may regard the other aggregates - feeling, perception, mental formations or sensory consciousness²⁹ - as self, or believe that self is possessed of these, or that these are in self or that self is in these. Thus, according to the *Khuddaka-Nikāya*, in total there are twenty forms of *attavāda*.

Perhaps the only theories in this list that might be seen to have some connection with the description of Brahman in the Upanishads are those in which self is said to be in materiality and the other aggregates. However, later in the same passage the *Khuddaka-Nikāya* describes these theories in more detail. Here the self is said to be in material form and the other aggregates like a precious stone that is in a casket where 'the precious stone is one thing, the casket is another thing'.³⁰ This analogy does not seem to correspond with the Upanishadic description of Brahman as the subtle essence of the universe.

Taking all this into account, it would seem very unlikely that the criticism of self-theory in this discourse can be correctly seen to include a criticism of a belief in an all-pervading Self such as Brahman. Once again the intention appears to be to criticise the clinging to a belief in a limited self.

DISPUTE OVER THE MEANING OF *DHAMMĀ*

Yet another passage often quoted as rejecting the existence of a Self is found in the *Dhammapada*, verses 277-279:

'All conditioned things (*sankhārā*) are impermanent (*Sabbe sankhārā aniccā*)

'All conditioned things are *dukkha* (unsatisfactory) (*Sabbe sankhārā dukkhā*)

'All *dhammas* are without self' (*Sabbe dhammā anattā*).'³¹

The significance of these verses depends on what meaning is ascribed to the word *dhammā* (*dhammas*) in the third verse. This term is used in a variety of ways in the *Suttapitaka*. In this particular context, the main debate has been as to whether *dhammā* means conditioned or relative things alone or whether it includes the non-conditioned also.

Walpola Rahula, in *What the Buddha Taught*, states that the term *dhammā*:

includes not only the conditioned things and states but also the non-conditioned, the Absolute, Nirvāna There is nothing in the universe or outside . . . which is not included in this term.

,³²

He supports this interpretation of the meaning of *dhammā* in the quotation from the *Dhammapada* by pointing to the way this term is substituted for *sankhārā* (conditioned or composite things) in the third verse. Rahula argues that the substitution of a different term was deliberate and must indicate a different and wider meaning. Thus, *dhammā* refers not only to the conditioned but also to what is non-conditioned. He concludes, therefore, that this verse denies the existence of Brahman, the non-conditioned Self of the Upanishads.

Nirvāna (Pāli: *Nibbāna*), which as the passage from Walpola Rahula implies is non-conditioned, is generally perceived as the final goal to which Buddhist teachings lead (see below, where the description of *Nibbāna* is examined in greater detail). However, in a study of the Pāli Nikāyas, J. Pérez-Remón found evidence against the view that the term *dhammā* is often inclusive of *Nibbāna*, of what is non-conditioned. Instead, in almost all the passages that he looked at, this term exhibited the opposite connotation, referring exclusively to composite or conditioned things. Examples of passages of this kind are: *sabba-dhammesu... anattasaññam upatthāpetum ...hetusamuppānnā ca dhammā* ('to establish the awareness of non-self regarding all *dhammas*...[all] *dhammas* are dependent on conditions'); *sabbesu dhammesu samohatesu* ('when all *dhammas* have been swept away'); and similarly [*sabbamdhammam nālam abhinivesāya* ('no *dhamma* is worth adhering to').³³ In addition, as Pérez-Remón points

out, nowhere in the *Suttapitaka* is it said *explicitly* that Nibbāna is *anattā*

Pérez-Remón suggests that the explanation for the use of *dhammā* in the third verse is that:

. . . composite things can be either subjective or external to man. *Dhammā* in the dictum *sabbe dhammā anattā* seems to apply only to subjective factors like the senses etc, things that impel man to identify his self with them and which therefore need in a special way to be labelled *anattā* [non-self].³⁴

Thus, Pérez-Remón, by attributing a specialised meaning to *dhammā*, offers a plausible explanation as to why this word and not *sankhārā* is used in the third verse. If we also accept the other points that he makes, there would seem to be no reason to believe that the meaning of *dhammā*, in this context, includes Nibbāna, nor that the existence of the non-conditioned Self of the *Upanishads* is being denied. It was only later, when this term became of central importance to Buddhist philosophy, that *dhammā* became more frequently used to include the non-conditioned as well as the conditioned.

Of course, even if the meaning of *dhammā* had included *Nirvāna* it would not necessarily have meant that the term *anattā* was being used to convey the idea that *Nirvāna* was different from the type of Self described by the *Upanishads*. As we have already seen, *attā*, from which *anattā* is derived, often, though not always, seems to refer to a limited view of self, as in the theories about the self and the world.

A PASSAGE IN THE VINAYA

Before concluding, mention should perhaps also be made of a passage at Vin. vi. 86:

Impermanent are all constructs, painful, not self and constructed
And certainly Nibbāna also is a description meaning not-self.³⁵

As before, there could be differing opinions as to what kind of self is being referred to here. Nevertheless, it has been implied that this passage indicates that the Buddha taught that Nibbāna was different from Self-Realisation in the Upanishadic tradition. However, the part of the *Vinaya* that this passage comes from is not regarded, even by the most orthodox, as the word of the Buddha. In fact, it was composed in Sri Lanka a considerable time after his death.³⁶

SUMMARY

It is, of course, not possible to examine here every disputed passage. However, there is little or no evidence that the Buddha's teachings, as represented through the medium of the *Suttapitaka*, disagreed with the belief in a Universal Self. Instead, it would appear that what was being rejected was identification with a limited, phenomenal self. Moreover, there seems to be the implication that there is another type of Self, which is not impermanent and does not feel pain.

Section Two

NIBBĀNA AND BRAHMAN

In a literal sense, the Pāli word *Nibbāna* means 'extinction' and was the word employed to denote the extinction of a fire.³⁷ In the sense in which it is used in the *Suttapitaka*, Nibbāna has generally been understood to refer to the ultimate goal to which the teachings of the Buddha lead. However, this goal was also expressed in other ways. For example, it is often referred to in the *Suttapitaka* as the destruction of the *asāvas* or defilements. Other synonyms include the uninclined, the truth, the far shore, the subtle, the very difficult to see, the peaceful, the deathless, the sublime, purity, freedom and the refuge.³⁸

There seem to be many similarities between the description of Nibbana in the *Suttapitaka* and that of Brahman in the *Upanishads*. Nibbāna is regarded as the ultimate goal:

'Release, Rādha, means Nibbāna.'
 'But Nibbāna, lord,- what is the aim of that?'

 'Rooted in Nibbāna, Rādha, the holy life is lived.
 Nibbāna is its goal, Nibbāna is its end.' (S.xxiii.1)³⁹

"Some of my disciples, brahmin, on being exhorted and instructed thus by me, attain the unchanging goal - Nibbāna; . . ." (M.iii.4)⁴⁰

Like Brahman, Nibbāna is unborn, unageing, deathless, without sorrow and is undefiled:

Then I considered thus: 'Why being myself subject to birth, do I seek what is also subject to birth? Why, by myself being subject to ageing, sickness, death, sorrow, and defilement, do I seek what is also subject to ageing, sickness, death, sorrow, and defilement? Suppose that, being myself subject to birth, having understood the danger in what is subject to birth, I seek the unborn supreme security from bondage, Nibbāna. Suppose that, being myself subject to ageing, sickness, death, sorrow, and defilement, having understood the danger in what is subject to ageing, sickness, death, sorrow, and defilement, I seek the unageing, unailing, deathless, sorrowless, and undefiled supreme security from bondage, Nibbāna.'⁴¹

The next passage comes from the *Khuddaka-Nikāya*. While the authenticity of parts of all the Nikāyas is open to question, this is particularly the case with parts of this Nikāya, about which many doubts have been raised.⁴² Despite

this, this passage has been included because it seems to make explicit what seems to be implicit in the *Suttapitaka*.

"Just as, monks, whatsoever streams flow into the mighty ocean and whatsoever floods fall from the sky, there is no shrinkage nor overflow seen thereby in the mighty ocean, - even so, monks, though many monks pass finally away in that condition of nibbāna which has no remainder, yet is there no shrinkage nor overflow in that condition of nibbāna seen thereby.' (Udāna 5.5.8.5) ⁴³

Some have suggested that early Buddhism may have been influenced by Sāmkhyan or 'Proto-Sāmkhyan philosophy'.⁴⁴ Whether or not there was some influence of this kind, there is no suggestion in the above passage that this went as far as determining the Buddhist understanding of the nature of Nibbāna, or at least of Nibbāna 'which has no remainder'. This latter phrase refers to Nibbāna that continues after the death of the body.⁴⁵ In the Sāmkhyan tradition, each individual realises his own separate and individual self, which is believed to exist eternally. In this passage, however, there is, in the image of the ocean, the implication of an unconditioned oneness common to all. This view seems implicit in the way that Nibbāna is described in the rest of the *Suttapitaka*, where there is no hint that this accomplishment is regarded as a number of separate states each belonging to the individual who has attained it.

Finally, although usually the language of negation is used, there are some references in the *Suttapitaka* to Nibbāna as a state of great happiness. For example, in M.i.509, Nibbāna is described as 'the highest bliss'.

In summary, Nibbāna is the final goal. It is unborn, deathless, unageing, without sorrow, stainless, the supreme security from bondage, and the highest bliss. Moreover, if the passage quoted from the *Khuddaka-Nikāya* represents the Buddha's view correctly, as it appears to do, it is common to all who achieve it. There are, therefore, significant similarities to the description of Brahman.⁴⁶

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NIBBĀNA AND PHENOMENAL WORLD

In spite of these resemblances, some might argue that there is one major difference. This is that Brahman in the Upanishads is described as being *within* all beings. While there may be one or two passages in the *Suttapitaka* that, according to certain commentators, describe the Absolute as being all-pervasive, these are quite rare.⁴⁷ On the other hand, this, in itself, does not necessarily mean that the Buddha opposed the Upanishadic view of an all-pervading Self. Omission does not always mean disagreement.

The absence of any clear and definitive statement in the *Suttapitaka* as to the nature of the relationship, if any, between Nibbāna and the phenomenal world has led to endless debate amongst Buddhist scholars in both ancient and modern times. These discussions are not of merely academic interest. If, as some argued, the Buddha had taught that Nibbāna and the phenomenal world were completely separate, this would be tantamount to teaching annihilationism. This is because, if there is no common denominator or common element between the non-conditioned and the conditioned, and, specifically, no common element between Nibbāna and the aspirant (who is part of the phenomenal world), then, necessarily, the aspirant will be totally annihilated when s/he attains Nibbāna. Few would desire to strive toward such an end.

There are a number of reasons to believe, however, that the Buddha, whatever other interpretation might be placed on his teachings, was not a nihilist. Firstly, there are the origins of the term Nibbāna. As we have seen, this word literally means 'extinction' and was used to indicate the extinction of a fire. This might to modern minds imply some form of annihilationism. However, according to J. Pérez-Remón, the inhabitants of ancient India had a very different view of the nature of fire than we have today. It was believed that fire was not annihilated with the extinction of the flame. Instead, it merely became invisible by being reincorporated into the original cosmic element called fire.⁴⁸ If Nibbāna was used by the Buddha or early Buddhists with this in mind, it would seem to strongly indicate the view that there was a connection between the aspirant in the phenomenal world and the aspirant who has realised Nibbāna.

There are also a number of other passages in the *Suttapitaka* that show that the Buddha was not a nihilist. For example, at S.3.xxii ('Khandha Samyutta', 85) there is a long discussion between Sāriputta, a prominent disciple

of the Buddha, and Yamaka another disciple on this very subject. Yamaka claims that the Buddha taught that a monk whose *asāvas* (defilements) have been destroyed,⁴⁹ one who in other words has attained Nibbāna, is annihilated after death. Sāriputta, by some close questioning of Yamaka, helps him come to the conclusion that this is not the case. However, although the view of annihilationism is roundly condemned, the ontological status of Nibbāna is left undefined. Instead, Yamaka simply says, with the agreement of Sāriputta, that the aggregates of a person whose *asāvas* have been destroyed disappear after death.

Whatever the truth of the matter concerning this question, it may be worth bearing in mind the Buddha's view about the difficulty of others understanding his own attainment. For example, he tells Vacchagotta in 'The Discourse to Vacchagotta on Fire': 'I am deep, immeasurable, unfathomable as is the deep ocean'.⁵⁰

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Uncovering the Buddha's teachings on the self is a complex task. Even if, as is probable, the Nikāyas and the Āgamas are the most accurate surviving accounts of these teachings, for reasons already mentioned, they are unlikely to be exact records. Also, there are a variety of views on many crucial passages. In particular, there is considerable disagreement amongst scholars as to whether the *Suttapitaka* affirms or denies the existence of a self. However, while it is almost impossible to achieve absolute certainty about this question, the *Suttapitaka* as it has been handed down to us does not seem to reject a non-dual, universal Self. Instead, it appears to reject identification with the aggregates or psycho-physical elements and with a relative phenomenal self or soul that is eternal after death. Indeed, as we have seen, there seems to be the strong implication that there is an unchanging Self which does not feel pain.

Moreover, there are strong parallels between the description of Nibbāna in the *Suttapitaka* and that of Brahman, the universal Self portrayed in the Upanishads. Both are regarded as the final goal, unborn, deathless, unageing, without sorrow, stainless, the supreme security from bondage, and the highest bliss. Moreover, if the passage quoted from the *Khuddaka-Nikāya* represents the Buddha's view correctly, as it appears to do, it is common to all who achieve it. There is an absence of any clear and definitive statement as to the nature of the relationship,

if any, between Nibbāna and the phenomenal world. However, the Buddha did not subscribe to the view that enlightenment was a form of annihilation.

The Buddha indicates the nature of Nibbāna, and possibly of a Self, largely through negation. However, unlike the *Upanishads*, which use a similar method of negation, he does not also make positive direct references to the existence of a Self. Therefore, there is somewhat more emphasis on the ineffability of the highest truth than is found in the *Upanishads*.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER TWO THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

The Four Noble Truths are referred to in many different passages in the *Suttapitaka*. They outline the nature of human suffering (*dukkha*), its cause, its cessation and the way to achieve its cessation. The 'cessation of suffering' is Nibbāna by another name.

This formulation is of central importance in Buddhism as it is regarded as a summary of Buddhism's basic tenets. Along with a succinct analysis of the human condition, it provides an equally concise description of practical methods of alleviating it. As it combines both theory and references to practice and so does not fit neatly into either Part One or Part Two, the Four Noble Truths are included here in the form of an appendix.

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS⁵¹

- (1) *The Truth of Suffering*. This is the view that all existence is characterised by suffering or unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*). While pleasurable experiences may occur, they are only transient.
- (2) *The Truth of the Origin of Suffering*. This is the view that the cause of suffering is craving. Craving for objects or experiences in the phenomenal world causes an attachment or clinging to them. As the latter are ephemeral, suffering is bound to result.
- (3) *The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering*. This is the view that suffering can be ended by the elimination of craving.
- (4) *The Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering*. According to the Buddha, the practical method of

achieving the cessation of suffering is by following the Eightfold Path. The eight components of this path are:

- (i) *Right View* - understanding of the Four Noble Truths
- (ii) *Right Purpose* - the strong resolve to achieve renunciation, freedom from ill will, and the nonharming of other beings.
- (iii) *Right Speech* - abstaining from lying, slander and harsh or frivolous speech.
- (iv) *Right Action* - refraining from taking life, from taking what is not given and from misconduct in sensual pleasures.
- (v) *Right Livelihood* - avoidance of professions that are harmful to other beings or to oneself.
- (vi) *Right Effort* - the exertion of one's will and the use of one's energy to prevent the arising of unwholesome mental states, to rid oneself of those that have already arisen, and to develop and maintain wholesome mental states
- (vii) *Right Mindfulness* - the redirection of attention back to a wholesome object of meditation or experiential field.
- (viii) *Right Concentration* - one-pointed concentration on a wholesome object of meditation.

Thus, the emphasis in the formulation of the Four Noble Truths is on the outlining of a practical path to deliverance rather than on speculation about the final goal. Deliverance is to be achieved by means of the Eightfold Path. The main elements of this are the adherence to ethical guidelines and the practice of meditation. The latter will be discussed in more detail later.

References

- 1) L. S. Cousins, 'The Dating of the Historical Buddha: A Review Article', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Series 3, 6.1, 1996: p.57-63.
- 2) Ibid.
- 3) See E.Lamotte, *A History of Indian Buddhism*, Louvain-La-Neuve, Universit  Catholique de Louvain, Institut Orientaliste, 1988, p.572.
- 4) Ibid., p.587.
- 5) Ibid. p.156.
- 6) There are five Nikāyas: the *Dīgha*-(D), *Majjhima*-(M), *Samyutta*-(S), *Anguttara*-(A), and *Khuddaka*-(K). (Abbreviations for references in the text are in brackets).
- 7) The *Pāli Canon*, in its entirety, was not committed to writing before the first century BCE.
8. For example, see T.Vetter, in *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism*, Leiden, pub. E.J Brill, 1988, p.xxif, and p.64, in which the ideas of L.Schmithausen's and others are discussed.
9. See S. Collins', 'Self and Non-Self in Early Buddhism' *The International Review for the History of Religions (Numen)*, ed. M.H van Voss, E.J.Sharpe, R.J.Z. Werblowsky, Leiden, The Netherlands, E.J.Brill, 1982, fasc.2, vol. xxix, pp.250-271.
10. Vetter, *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism*, p.42.
11. See discussion in R.F.Gombrich's 'Recovering the Buddha's Message' in *The Buddhist Forum*, vol.1, ed.T.Skorupski, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.1990.
12. See note 6 for the explanation of letters used as abbreviations for the different Nikāyas. These plus the accompanying numbers refer to the Pāli Text Society's Pāli edition of the *Suttapitaka*.
13. See note 14.
14. In the *Suttapitaka*, the psychophysical elements of an individual are called *khandhas*, a term usually translated as 'aggregates'. There are five altogether: *rūpa* (material form); *vedanā* (sensation or feeling); *sañña* (perception); *sankhāra* (mental formations), and *viññāna* (sense consciousness). *Sankhāra* and *viññāna*, in particular, need some further explanation. As the Pāli Text Society's Pāli-English Dictionary makes clear, *sankhāra* is one of the most difficult terms in Buddhist metaphysics and has a variety of meanings. When it is used to signify one of the *khandhas*, the PTS Dictionary defines *sankhāra* 'as the

mental concomitants, or adjuncts which come, or tend to come, into consciousness at the uprising of a *citta*, or unit of cognition.'

In the passage discussing the correct views, the series 'seen', 'heard', 'sensed' etc., refers to *viññāna* or sensory consciousness (see Bhikkhu Ñānamoli and Bhikhu Bodhi, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, Boston, Wisdom Publications, 1995, p.1209, note 258.) *Viññāna* is often translated as 'consciousness' (e.g see I. B Horner, (trans.), *The Middle Length Sayings*, London, published for the Pāli Text Society by Luzac, 1954, p.232, M.i.186). However, this translation might be mistakenly thought to imply that *viññāna* means *undifferentiated* consciousness. As can be seen from the text, what is 'seen, heard', etc., could not be described in this way.

For this reason 'sense consciousness ' perhaps conveys the meaning of this term better, provided that it is remembered that in Buddhism the mind is regarded as one of the senses.

15. Bhikkhu Ñānamoli and Bhikhu Bodhi, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, Boston, Wisdom Publications, 1995, p.229-230. I have added the Pāli words in brackets and have substituted 'mental formations' for 'formations' in Ñānamoli and Bodhi's translation. Although *sankhāra* can have a more general meaning, in the context of this passage, it is one of the *khandhas* which is being referred to.

16. For example, J. Pérez-Remón in *Self and Non-Self in Early Buddhism*, The Hague, Mouton, 1980, p.301f.

17. See Nyanaponika Thera, (trans.), *The Discourse on the Snake Simile*, Kandy, Buddhist Publication Society, 1962, section 26, p.12-13. Similar passages are found elsewhere in the *Suttapitaka*. For the sake of consistency I have substituted 'material form' for 'corporeality' in Nyanaponika's translation. [Dukkham]- my square brackets. There is no exact one word equivalent for *dukkha* in English. It has been variously translated as 'pain', 'suffering', 'unsatisfactoriness', etc.

18. See Vetter, *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism*, p.37f. Refer to Pérez-Remón , *Self and Non-Self in Early Buddhism*, p.158f for a more detailed treatment of passages in the *Suttapitaka*, which discuss what is not the self.

19. Vetter, *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism* p.40.

20. See I.B. Horner, *The Middle Length Sayings*, London, Luzac, 1954, vol.1, p.174 and Ñānamoli and Bodhi, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, p.229-230. I have

used I. B Horner's translation of the first part of this passage ('This the world, this the self') as it is more literal.

21. See Peter Harvey's *The Selfless Mind: Personality, Consciousness and Nirvāna in Early Buddhism*, Routledge, 1995, p.78f for more discussion of the meaning of 'loka'.
22. See I. B. Horner, (trans.) *The Middle Length Sayings*, London, pub. by Luzac for the Pāli Text Society, 1959, vol.3, p.19f.
23. 'Ariyan discipline': i.e the sacred discipline or path taught by the Buddha.
24. See F. L Woodward (trans.) *The Book of Kindred Sayings*, London, pub. by Oxford University Press for the Pāli Text Society, 1929, part 4, p.59.
25. See E. M. Hare, (trans.), *The Book of Gradual Sayings*, London, pub. by Oxford University Press for the Pāli Text Society, 1935, vol.4, p.288f.
26. See Bri.IV.iii.23 and IV.iii.32.
27. See Pérez-Remón, *Self and Non-Self in Early Buddhism*, p.241.
28. Bhikkhu Ñānamoli (trans.), *The Path of Discrimination*, London, pub. by the Pāli Text Society, 1982, p.156, para. 573f. The passage has been quoted without the enumeration used by Ñānamoli
29. See note 14.
30. See Pérez-Remón, *Self and Non-Self in Early Buddhism*, p.24.
31. The translation from the Pāli is from Walpola Rahula in *What the Buddha Taught*, Bedford, pub. Gordon Fraser, 1967, p. 57. For the sake of consistency with other parts of this chapter, I have changed the transliteration of some of the Pāli words of the original text included by Rahula. I have also added some Pāli terms and English translations in brackets.
32. Ibid., p.58.
33. Pérez-Remón, *Self and Non-Self in Early Buddhism*, p.220
34. Ibid., p.221.
35. From I. B Horner, (trans.) *The Book of Discipline*, London, Luzac, 1966, vol.VI, p. 123.
36. See I. B. Horner, the translator's introduction in *The Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, London, Luzac, 1966, vol. 25, p.ix.
37. See, for example, Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism*, Cambridge, Cambridge university Press, 1990, p.61
38. See Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Connected Discourses*, Boston, Wisdom Books, 2000, Vol. 2, p. 1378 The number of defilements (āsavas) listed in the *Suttapitaka* varies.

According to some passages there are three āsavas - sense desire, becoming and ignorance. Here 'becoming' refers to the desire to remain in the never-ending cycle of life and death that is characteristic of ordinary human existence. A fourth āsava is also often mentioned - that of false views (ditthāsava)

39. From F. L Woodward, (trans.), *The Book of Kindred Sayings*, London, published for the Pāli Text Society, Oxford University Press, 1929, pt.3, p.156.
40. From I. B. Horner (trans.), *The Middle Length Sayings DE*, London, Luzac and Co., London, 1959, vol. 3, p. 55.
41. From Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (trans.), 'The 'Ariyapariyesanā Sutta' in *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*', Boston, Wisdom Publications, 1995, p. 256.
42. For more detail on this see e.g Sangharakshita, *The Eternal Legacy*, London, Tharpa Publications, 1985, p. 45f.
43. From F. L Woodward, *The Minor Anthologies of the Pāli Canon*, London, Oxford University Press, 1935. Pt.2, p.66.
44. See the discussion in M. Eliade, *Yoga Immortality and Freedom*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, p.377f.
- 45 See, for example, Noa Ronkin, *Early Buddhist Metaphysics*, London, Routledge, 2005 p.175.
46. See especially Bri.4.iv.20, quoted in Pt.2.Ch.1.
47. See the discussion of D. ix. 85 in E. Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1962, p. 196
48. See Pérez-Remón, *Self and Non-Self in Early Buddhism*, p.284.
49. See note 38.
50. See I. B Horner (trans.) *The Middle Length Sayings*, London, pub. for the Pāli Text Society by Luzac, 1957, vol. ii, p. 166, (M. i. 487).
51. For a full exposition of the Four Noble Truths, refer to the passage towards the end of Sutta 22 of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (The Long Sayings).

Chapter Three

Schism in the Sangha

Section One

THE EARLY SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM

Even during the Buddha's life-time there had been disagreements within the Buddhist *Sangha* (Community). Perhaps the most famous was the schism reported to have been caused by Devadatta, the Buddha's cousin, who had advocated a more rigorous form of asceticism.

In the centuries following the Buddha's death, there were a number of further conflicts of opinion concerning a range of doctrinal issues. The controversy, discussed in the last chapter, as to whether or not the Buddha taught that there was a self or *pudgala* is an example of this. Thus, according to some traditional accounts, by the first century BCE the *Sangha* had split into eighteen different schools of thought. Many modern scholars believe, however, that these were not always, as has sometimes been portrayed, separate sects with rigid dividing lines between them. Instead, it would appear that differences between doctrinal groupings were often blurred by the eclecticism of individual Buddhists who might adopt viewpoints from several different currents of thought.¹

The Theravādins are the only existing Buddhist school whose doctrines have substantially survived from the time of the early schools. However, elements of the philosophical writings or codes of conduct of other early schools can be found in some present day Mahāyāna traditions.² Besides believing that there was no self (*anattā*; see the previous chapter), the Theravādins pointed to the impermanent (*anicca*) nature of the phenomenal world. In addition, they put forward the view that life in the world was characterised by unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*). These three characteristics of existence came to be known collectively as the *tilakkhana* and are at the centre of Theravādin doctrine.

One of the main preoccupations of at least some of the early Buddhist schools was the reduction of reality to a number of ultimates or *dharmas* (Pāli: *dhammā*). This is a term which was discussed earlier but, as used by some of the early Buddhist schools, the meaning in this context is more inclusive. It was believed that all things could be understood as combinations of these basic building blocks. Both the Sarvāstivādins, one of the most important of the early Buddhist schools, and the Theravādins compiled voluminous lists of dharmas and their numerous permutations. They divided these into two main categories - the unconditioned (*asamskrta*) and the conditioned (*samskrta*). Altogether there are seventy-five dharmas according to the Sarvāstivādins and eighty-two according to the Theravādins. In their list the Sarvāstivādins counted

three as unconditioned, namely space and two types of Nirvāna. The Theravādins included only one unconditioned dharma - Nirvāna.

Examples of conditioned dharmas recognised by both schools are the five sense organs and objects, feelings, perceptions, mental formations (Sansk: *samskāra*; Pāli: *sankhara*), and consciousness.³ Although a few unconditioned dharmas were included in the lists compiled by these schools, much more time and energy was devoted to describing, in considerable detail, the conditioned dharmas. Nirvāna, once it was mentioned, was allowed to slip into the background.⁴

The division of reality into the unconditioned and the conditioned also influenced Buddhist thought in another way. As conditioned dharmas were regarded as existent, as ultimate realities, there was a tendency, though this may not always have been explicitly stated, for some members of the early Buddhist schools to comprehend the transcendental nature of Nirvāna in terms of non-existence. Moreover, as some believed that Nirvāna was to be reached by the extinction of the phenomenal, it and the phenomenal world were often seen to be mutually exclusive.⁵

On the other hand, as there appears to have been considerable eclecticism amongst early Buddhists, it is probable that not every person influenced by the Sarvāstivādin or Theravādin viewpoint will have subscribed to this belief. Even today amongst individual Theravādins there are to be found a large range of opinions on this issue. Moreover, while some schools may have tended to perceive Nirvāna and phenomena as mutually exclusive, it may be that others took a different position. For example, it is possible that the *Mahāsamghika* school may fall into this category, although our knowledge of their teachings is very scanty.⁶

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Section Two

THE BIRTH OF THE MAHĀYĀNA

From about the first century BCE onwards, a new form of Buddhist literature began to appear that was different from that found within the mainstream tradition of the Āgamas and Nikāyas.⁷ Examples of this new literature are the *Lotus Sutra* and the various phases of the *Prajñāpāramitā* (*Perfection of Wisdom*) *Sutras*, the composition of which finally extended over about a thousand years. In time, these, along with many other new teachings and viewpoints associated with them, came to be referred to as the *Mahāyāna* ('the Great Vehicle'). The doctrines of the early Buddhist schools now came to be known by some as the *Hīnayāna* ('the Small Vehicle').⁸

A variety of explanations were given for the late appearance of this new literature. For example, Nāgārjuna, regarded by many as one of the most influential philosophers of the Mahāyāna, was believed to have gone down to the Nether World to collect important texts stored in the palace of the Nāgas (serpents).⁹ Another explanation was that these later teachings were communicated by the Buddha through the medium of his supra-physical body. Others have suggested that the doctrines of the Mahāsamghikas, an early Buddhist school briefly referred to earlier, may have been one of the origins of the Mahāyāna. However, far too little is known of their teachings to come to a definitive conclusion about this.¹⁰

The truth is that with our present state of knowledge it is not possible to be certain how the Mahāyāna developed.¹¹ Perhaps, however, a very general and tentative statement can be made to the effect that what was eventually to be called the Mahāyāna evolved gradually over time as Buddhist philosophers strove to understand the implications of the Buddha's discourses as reported by the *Suttapitaka*, *Āgamas* and other sources.¹²

THE PERFECTION OF WISDOM

In the literature of the Mahāyāna, the *Prajñāpāramitā* ('Perfection of Wisdom') *Sutras* are of central importance. Interpreting this literature, like other written material in the Mahāyāna tradition, is complicated by the fact that individual works often developed over time, and therefore do not always teach a consistent doctrine.¹³ Perhaps partly as a consequence of this and certainly because of the inherent difficulty of the subject matter, scholars often express different shades of opinion on crucial elements of the teachings. For example, Paul Williams says the ontological message of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sutras* is an extension of the teaching of 'no-Self to equal no essence, and therefore no inherent existence, as applied to all things without exception. This is not some form of Monistic Absolutism, negating in order to uncover a True Ultimate Reality.'¹⁴ On the other hand, T.R.V Murti, in his seminal work *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, says that in the *Prajñāpāramitā Sutras* 'The Absolute in one sense transcends phenomena as it is devoid of empiricality, and in a vital sense is immanent or identical with it as their reality.'¹⁵

The following are quotations from the *Ashtasāhasrikā*, which was probably the first work of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sutras* to be compiled.¹⁶ The *Ashtasāhasrikā* makes it clear that, at the highest level, the nature of reality cannot be expressed through words:

Perfect Wisdom is perfectly pure because, like
space or an echo, it is unutterable,
incommunicable....¹⁷

At a different level, however, there is a detailed exposition of many of the philosophical insights that are of central importance to the Mahāyāna. One of the most important of these is the view that all phenomena are illusory, and empty of independent and inherent existence. This is the doctrine of *Shūnyatā* ('Emptiness' or 'Voidness')

All objective facts also are like a magical illusion,
like a dream.¹⁸

For one should bear in mind that the five grasping aggregates are like an illusory man. Because the Lord has said that form is like an illusion. And what is true of form, is true also of the six sense-organs, and of the five (grasping) aggregates.¹⁹

For just the very *skandhas* [aggregates], elements and sense-fields are empty, isolated, calmly quiet.²⁰

For the five skandhas have emptiness for own-being [*svabhāva*],²¹ and, as devoid of own-being, emptiness cannot crumble nor crumble away. . . . And as emptiness does not crumble, nor crumble away, so also the Signless, the Wishless, the Uneffected, the Unproduced, Non-existence, and the realm of dharma.²²

All phenomena are illusory and empty of inherent existence. However, adherence to the view of emptiness should not necessarily be seen as nihilism. This is clarified by the *Ashtasāhasrikā's* description of 'Suchness' (*Tathatā*):

Subhuti: 'What, then, is the supreme enlightenment?'
The Lord [Buddha]: 'It is Suchness.'²³

'In consequence all this Suchness - the Suchness of the Tathāgata [the Buddha], of the skandhas, of all dharmas, of all holy Disciples and Pratyeka-buddhas - is just one Single Suchness, is without any trace of the variety of positivity and negativity, as being one, nondifferent, inextinguishable, unaffected, non-dual, without cause for duality. That is this Suchness which the Tathāgata has, thanks to the perfection of wisdom, fully known.'²⁴

While it is important to keep an open mind, there seems to be considerable evidence for Murti's view. Suchness in the *Ashtasāhasrikā* is non-dual 'without any trace of the variety of positivity and negativity, as being one...' The description of this term seems to have major similarities to the description of the Absolute in other traditions. Moreover, in using the term Suchness, the *Ashtasāhasrikā* is pointing to things 'such as they really are'. The Suchness of the Buddha is the same as the Suchness of all phenomena.

Therefore an essential identity and underlying reality seems to be implied

The description of Suchness in the *Ashtasāhasrikā* is similar to that of Nibbāna in the *Suttapitaka* in that it is considered as unconditioned, eternal and the supreme enlightenment. Nevertheless, there is at least one apparent difference. This lies in the link that the *Ashtasāhasrikā* appears to make between the Absolute and phenomena. Thus, while it could be argued that the *Ashtasāhasrikā* claims that the Absolute is the true nature of phenomena, the *Suttapitaka* omits to mention such a view explicitly.

In spite of this, it may be that the origins of some of the ideas about illusion in the *Ashtasāhasrikā* can be found in certain passages in the *Suttapitaka*. For example, at S.xxii.95 the Buddha is reported to have said that the different psycho-physical elements of a human being were empty and unsubstantial and likened the body to foam, the feelings to bubbles in water, and perception to a mirage.

THE MADHYAMAKA

One of the most influential Buddhist philosophers at the beginning of the Common Era was Nāgārjuna (c.150-250 CE) who was mentioned earlier. Nāgārjuna founded what came to be known as the Madhyamaka school. This derived its name from the Sanskrit word *madhya* meaning 'middle'. Nāgārjuna's writings became so influential that he was regarded by some as a second Buddha. During a period of more than a thousand years after Nāgārjuna's death, the Madhyamaka developed into a number of different sub-schools. Some of these were influenced by the philosophical thought of the Yogāchārins, a subject which will be discussed later.

In his writings, Nāgārjuna seeks to demonstrate, through means of a dialectical approach, the ineffability of the highest truth. In Chapter Twenty-Five of the *Mūla-Madhyamaka Kārikās*, for example, he discusses the nature of Nirvāna, which he describes as:

What is never cast off, seized, interrupted, constant,
extinguished and produced. . . . (25.v.3).²⁵

According to Nāgārjuna, Nirvāna cannot be said to exist in the same way as the phenomenal world. If it did it would have the same characteristics. For example, it would succumb to old age and death. However, if it does not exist in this way it also cannot be said to be of the nature of

non-existence either. This is because, according to Nāgārjuna's view, if there is no existence there can be no non-existence either as these are relative concepts:

The teacher [Buddha] has taught the abandonment of the concepts of being and non-being. Therefore, nirvāna is properly neither (in the realm of) existence nor non-existence. (25.v.10)²⁶

This was regarded as the 'middle position' philosophically from which the Madhyamaka school derived its name. The two extremes were avoided by negating both. Having established this, Nāgārjuna put forward two further propositions. The first was that Nirvāna cannot be both existence and non-existence as these are contradictory concepts. The second was that the statement that Nirvāna is neither existence nor non-existence could only have meaning if existence and non-existence could be shown to have empirical validity.

Although Nāgārjuna says that Nirvāna does not exist in the way that the phenomenal world exists, he does not say that Nirvāna does not exist in some other way. His rejection of these four views of Nirvāna, helps to direct the attention of the aspirant towards its true nature.

Traditionally, Nāgārjuna has been regarded as an interpreter of the Mahāyāna Sutras, however more recently some doubts have been raised about this assertion.²⁷ The central feature of Nāgārjuna's approach is to point to the highest truth by means of negation. As this approach is found both in the Suttapitaka and the Mahāyāna Sutras some argue that it is difficult to know which of these traditions influenced Nāgārjuna the most.

THE YOGĀCHĀRA AND THE DOCTRINE OF MIND ONLY

Another major school to emerge around this time was the *Yogāchāra*. The name of this school has its origins in the belief, held by its followers, that its teachings were based on the experiences of advanced practitioners of 'yoga' (i.e. meditation), rather than resulting merely from intellectual investigation. Although precise dates are difficult to determine, literature expressing the Yogāchārin viewpoint mainly belongs to a period later than that of Nāgārjuna. The major founding fathers of the Yogāchāra are Asanga and Vasubandhu. However, it is

possible that Asanga may have been inspired by an earlier teacher, Maitreyanātha.²⁸

As in the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, there are references in Yogāchārin literature to Suchness or Tathatā. However, this school is most famous for the theory of *Chittamātra*, the doctrine of Mind Only. This theory is also referred to by the term *Vijñaptimātra* (Cognitive Representation Only).²⁹ In addition, the term *Vijñānamātra* (Consciousness Only) is found in later Yogāchārin literature. To avoid confusion, it should be noted that the translator of one of the passages quoted below has rendered *Vijñaptimātrata* as 'Mind Only'.

In this context, it should be understood that the Yogāchārin had their own particular view of what the mind encompassed. According to King, from the Yogāchārin perspective, the *chitta* (mind) of *Chittamātra* included the conscious apprehension of sensory objects, the organising faculty of the mind, the affective distortion of that process by the tainted mind (*klista manas*), as well as the karmic seeds (*samskāras*) and latent dispositions collectively known as the *ālaya-vijñāna* (storehouse consciousness).³⁰ Many of the *samskāras* in the *ālaya-vijñāna* of the average person are, according to the Yogāchārin, tainted resulting in a delusional, dualistic view of reality. It is the tainted mind that takes the *ālaya-vijñāna* as its object and regards it as a true self.³¹

Before discussing the different ways in which the philosophy of this school has been interpreted, here are some quotations from two Yogāchārin works. The first is the *Trimshikā* written by Vasubandhu who may have lived in the fourth or fifth centuries CE. The *Trimshikā* puts forward the view that:

The true nature of mind only (*vijñaptimātrata*) is the true nature (*paramārtha*) of all dharmas, because, remaining as it is at all times (*sarvakālam tathā-bhāvāt*), it is Suchness (*Tathatā*). (v.25)³²

As long as consciousness does not abide in mind only (*vijñaptimātratva*), the attachment of the subject-object distinction will not cease. (v.26)³³

When the mind no longer seizes on any object (*ālambana*) whatever, then the mind is

established in the nature of mind only
(*vijñaptimātratva*). When there is nothing that
is grasped, that is mind only, because there is
no grasping. (v, 28)

That is the supreme, world-transcending
knowledge (*jñāna*), without mind (*acitta*) and
without support or object (*anupalambha*). . . .
(v. 29)

That alone is the pure realm (*dhātu*),
unthinkable, good, unchanging, blissful. . . .
(v. 30)³⁴

The next quotations are two short extracts from
Dharmapāla's commentary on Dignāga's *Ālambanaparīksā*,
probably written some time in the sixth century CE.

The real object, however, does not exist
apart from consciousness.³⁵

It is clear that the external thing which
is an illusion, does not exist as an
object. The form of an object follows only
in conformity with our mental imagination;
and it is not real; for, if that which is
imagined is separated from consciousness
there is nothing left in the external.³⁶

There has been considerable debate amongst scholars
about the exact meaning of the theory of Mind Only.³⁷ Some
argue that this doctrine puts forward the view that there
is an Absolute Mind or Consciousness and that the external
world is a mere mental creation. Others have maintained
that instead of one doctrine there were really two strands
of Yogāchārin thought.³⁸ The first strand, it is suggested,
was propounded by Maitreyanātha , Asanga and Vasubandhu.
When these philosophers used the terms *Chittamātra* and
Vijñaptimātra, they were merely trying to convey the idea
that we perceive the world only through the distortions
created by our own limited minds. This did not imply that
Mind or Consciousness is the sole reality. It was only
later that a different strand of Yogāchāra developed which
posited this viewpoint.

Thus, while both schools of thought hold fairly similar opinions about the positions taken by later philosophers like Dharmapāla,³⁹ there is considerable disagreement about the correct interpretation of the *Trimshikā* and other early Yogāchārin works. To complicate the discussion still further Wood,⁴⁰ whose translation was quoted from earlier, puts forward yet another view. He discusses the notion that the *Trimshikā*, one of the most important texts of the early Yogāchāra, may not even express a coherent philosophy but instead puts forward conflicting ideas. He argues that in verse 25 Vasubandhu seems to be identifying the essence of 'mind only' with Tathatā, the Unconditioned Reality. On the other hand, Wood translates Verse 29, as stating that 'the supreme, world-transcending knowledge' (i.e the state of Buddhahood or Tathatā) is devoid of mind (*acitta*). He states that these two verses taken together seem to lead to the conclusion that the true nature of 'mind only' is that everything is devoid of mind. In Wood's view this is a violation of the rules of logic.

Although a variety of different explanations could be advanced for such apparent contradictions, it is unnecessary to pursue these here. Perhaps instead one can look for common ground. It would seem that there is general agreement that both early and later Yogāchārin at least believed that our perceptions are dependent on the mind, however that was conceived. Moreover, whatever the disagreements over the early teachings, many scholars agree that, in the later phase, the Yogāchārin taught that Mind or Consciousness is the sole reality and that the external world is merely a mental creation projected from it. One of the major implications of the views of both early and later Yogāchārin is that, as our perception of the world is dependent on the distortions of the mind, attachment to it is illogical

Those who disputed the view that the world, which looks so solid and substantial, could be a mental creation were often encouraged by Yogāchārin teachers to examine the dream experience. In this state, the mind projects what appear at the time to be real objects. For example, it is common experience that, during a nightmare, one may suffer many of the physiological symptoms of abject terror, including sweating, a pounding heart, etc. This would not occur if the dreamer did not feel that what was encountered in the dream was real. When the dreamer awakes he or she is able to dismiss what was experienced as an illusion. In the same way, although objects in the waking world may fill us with fear or desire, they are, according to at least one

part of the Yogāchārin tradition, ultimately just as unreal as what is experienced when dreaming.

Before ending this brief look at the Yogāchāra, it is worth remembering that both the early and later parts of this school, like the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, refer to Tathatā/Suchness in their literature.⁴¹ In doing so they would seem to be supporting the same view as that found in the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, which, according to many scholars, is the belief in the existence of a non-dual reality

THE TATHĀGATAGARBHA TRADITION

We have already seen how it was often difficult to find rigid dividing lines between the different currents of thought in early Buddhism. The same held true in the Mahāyāna. In particular, there has been much disagreement over the centuries about the allegiance of the Tathāgatagarbha ('Essence of the Buddha'⁴²) tradition.⁴³ Some Buddhist scholars believed that this tradition belonged to the Yogāchāra, others that it belonged to the Madhyamaka. The Chinese scholar Fa-tsang (643-712), however, believed this tradition to be different from both the Madhyamaka and the Yogāchāra. Whatever the truth of the matter, it does seem clear that, at the least, the Tathāgatagarbha tradition uses a significantly different form of expression to indicate the nature of the Absolute and its relationship with the phenomenal world.

This can be seen in the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (also known as the *Uttaratantra*). This is a major treatise on the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine, possibly composed as early as the third century CE:

The Body of the Supreme Buddha is all-pervading,
 The Absolute is [one] undifferentiated [Whole]
 And the Germ [Essence of Buddhahood] exists [in every
 living being],
 Therefore, for ever and anon, all that lives
 Is endowed with the Essence of the Buddha. (I. 27)
 The Spirit of the Buddha manifests itself in the
 multitudes of living beings,
 It is immaculate by nature and unique
 And Buddhahood is the fruit of the Germ.
 Therefore the whole animate world bears the Essence of
 the Buddha. (I. 28)⁴⁴

. . . all the things cognizable are essentially unreal,
Being like clouds, like visions in a dream and like an
illusion. (I. 154)⁴⁵

It [the state of the Buddha] is radiant and uncreated,
It manifests itself in its indivisible essence,
(II.5)⁴⁶

If the Germ of the Buddha did not exist, [in everyone]
The aversion to the suffering (of this world) would not
arise;
There would be no desire of Nirvāna,
And there would be no effort for attaining it. (I. 39)⁴⁷

In the Tathāgatagarbha tradition, therefore, there is a belief in an absolute, non-dual reality. However, there is one marked difference between the literature of this tradition and that of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* and the Yogāchārinś. This concerns the clarity of the description of the relationship between the phenomenal and non-phenomenal. The *Ratnagotravibhāga*, and other Tathāgatagarbha texts, make it quite clear that, while all phenomena are dreamlike and illusory as normally perceived, the 'essence' or 'spirit' of the Buddha, the non-dual reality, exists within all living beings. Moreover, one of the reasons for this view is clearly outlined. This is that there would be no desire for attaining this non-dual reality/Nirvāna if this were not the case (see earlier discussion on the relationship between Nibbāna and the phenomenal world in the *Suttapitaka*). The similarities with the Upanishadic viewpoint are obvious.

The view that the Buddha-essence or Buddha-nature pervades all living beings is also expressed in the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvānasūtra* where the Buddha is reported to have said:

I do not say that all sentient beings lack a Self. I always say that sentient beings have the Buddha-nature. Is not that very Buddha-nature a Self? So I do not teach a nihilistic doctrine.⁴⁸

Here, even the terminological taboo about using the word 'Self', the possible origins of which have already been discussed, has been transcended.

SUMMARY

It has been beyond the scope of this book to outline all the intricacies of the evolution of Buddhist philosophy. It is also true, as we have seen, that scholars frequently have different interpretations about even the main ontological themes of this tradition. However, despite this, there would appear to be a considerable amount of common ground. For example, it seems reasonable to argue, though some scholars may disagree, that the *Suttapitaka*, the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature as well as the Yogāchārin and the Tathāgatagarbha schools describe an eternal, non-phenomenal, unconditioned reality that is the supreme enlightenment and common to all who attain it

On the other hand, it would appear that the relationship between the phenomenal and the non-phenomenal is expressed somewhat differently by each. In the *Suttapitaka* this relationship is not defined explicitly. Nevertheless, it is clearly stated that the realisation of Nibbāna is not the same as annihilation. In their interpretations of the *Suttapitaka*, however, some members of the early Buddhist schools appear to have regarded Nibbāna / Nirvāna and phenomena as mutually exclusive.

It can be argued that most of the Mahāyāna schools that have been discussed in this chapter suggested that there was some link between the Absolute and the phenomenal world. In the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, phenomena are regarded as illusory when seen superficially but, according to the interpretations of a number of scholars at least, their real nature is said to be the Absolute. The latter is referred to, for example, as Suchness {Tathatā}. Although there is some disagreement about the nature of early Yogāchārin teaching, it is agreed that the later teachers of this tradition held that phenomena are the projection of an Absolute Mind or Consciousness. Many scholars would argue that both early and later Yogāchārin philosophers believed that there was an Absolute Reality that was the ultimate ground for all phenomena. The Tathāgatagarbha tradition held that the Buddha-essence or Buddha-nature is within all living beings.

Nāgārjuna, the founder of the Madhyamaka school, focussed on the use of negation in his writings. This is a method found both in the *Suttapitaka* and the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature. By this means he tried to point to the ineffable nature of Nirvāna. While the notion that ultimately the highest truth cannot be expressed in words and concepts was not a new one, Nāgārjuna was remarkable

for his uncompromising use of reasoned argument in an attempt to demonstrate this.

References

1. See E. Lamotte, *A History of Indian Buddhism*, Louvain-La-Neuve, Université Catholique de Louvain, Institut Orientaliste, 1988, p. 523.
- 2) For example, the Gelukpas within the Tibetan tradition follow a code of conduct originally belonging to a sub-school of the Sarvāstivādins .See Sangharakshita, *A Survey of Buddhism*, London, Tharpa Publications, 1987, p.169. See further on for a discussion of the Mahāyāna.
3. See E. Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1962, p.178f
4. See Sangharakshita, *A Survey of Buddhism*, p.252.
5. Ibid. p.253. See also Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, p. 58. and T.R.V Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1960, p.69f
6. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, p.80
7. See, for example, E. Cheetham, *The Second Turning of the Wheel of Dharma*, London, The Buddhist Society, 1991, p.15
8. According to Paul Williams in, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, London, Routledge, 1991, Routledge, p.33, even though different texts began to exhibit what later became to be named as Mahāyāna ideas, it was some centuries before followers of these ideas identified themselves as a separate school of thought and called themselves Mahāyānists
9. See, however, the discussion later in this section on whether Nāgārjuna can be regarded as a Mahāyānist
10. See John Powers, *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*, Ithaca, New York, Snow Lion, 1995, p.87-88 and p.113, and Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 1991, p.14.
11. See Gregory Schopen, *Figments and Fragments of Mahayana Buddhism*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2005, p.108f. Schopen makes the point that very little is known about early Hinayāna Buddhism. Therefore, it is difficult to distinguish it from early Mahāyāna. Schopen suggests that early adherents to the Mahāyāna may not have been innovating but instead encouraging others to return to the original doctrines of Buddhism.
12. See, for example, Cheetham 1991, p19f. David L. McMahan, *Empty Vision*, London, Routledge, 2002, p.9

- suggests the Mahāyāna was a plurality of traditions, many of which were lost to history.
13. See Williams in, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, p.38.
 14. Ibid., p.46.
 15. T.R.V Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London, Unwin, 1980 p.86. See also E. Conze, *Selected Sayings from the Perfection of Wisdom*, 1968, London, The Buddhist Society, p.18 who says that the subject matter of the *Prajñāpāramitā* 'is just the Unconditioned, nothing but the Absolute, over and over again,'
 16. See Cheetham, 1991.
 17. E. Conze, (trans.), 'Ashtasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā', in *Bibliotheca Indica*, Calcutta, pub. by the Asiatic Society, 1958, Vol.221, chapt. 9.1., p.71. Passages quoted are referred to according to the system of subdivision of chapters that is used in Conze's English translation.
 18. Ibid., chapt. 2.3, p.18.
 19. Ibid., chapt.1.2, p.6
 20. Ibid., chapt.7.5, p.57.
 21. In Sanskrit, svabhāva literally means 'self-nature'.
 22. Conze, 'Ashtasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā', chapt.12.2, p.94
 23. Ibid., chapt.18.5, p.133
 24. Ibid., chapt.12.3, p.98
 25. K. K. Inada, (trans.) in *Nāgārjuna*, Tokyo, Hokuseido Press, 1970, p.154.
 26. Ibid., p.156.
 27. See D.J. Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna*, Albany, SUNY Press, 1986
 28. Williams 1989 p.80-81.
 29. See Richard King, 'Early Yogācāra and its Relationship with the Madhyamaka School', *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Oct., 1994), pp. 659f
 30. Richard King, 'Vijnaptimatratā and the Abhidharma context of early Yogacara', *Asian Philosophy*, Vol.8. No. 1 Mar.1998, pp.5-18.
 31. Williams, 1989, p.90.
 32. Thomas E. Wood, (trans.), *Mind Only*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1991, p. 54.
 33. Ibid., p.55
 34. Ibid., p.55-56
 35. N. Aiyaswami Sastri (trans.), *Ālambanaparīksā*, The Adyar Library, 1942, p.81.
 36. Ibid., p.82-83.
 37. For example, see the differing views of P. Williams, J. D. Willis and Sangarakshita in *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, in *On Knowing Reality*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1979

- and in *A Survey of Buddhism*, London, Tharpa Publications, 1987 respectively. See also the ideas put forward by B.C. Hall in 'The Meaning of Vijñapti in Vasubandhu's Concept of Mind', *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 1986, vol.9 (i), pp. 7-23, and by D.T Suzuki in *The Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, London, Routledge, 1932.
38. See Willis in *On Knowing Reality*, 1979, mentioned in the last note.
39. Ibid., p.21.
40. In Wood, *Mind Only*, p.56.
41. Besides the *Trimshikā* see also the *Samdhinirmocana Sutra*, one of the most important Yogāchārin texts.
42. See E. Obermiller, (trans.), 'The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle of Salvation', *Acta Orientalia*, (ed.) Societates Orientales Batava Danica Norvegica, included in *Lugduni Batavorum*, pub. E. J Brill, 1931-2, vol. 9-10, p.89. See also Jikido Takasaki, *A Study of the Ratnagotravibhāga (Uttaratantra)*, (in Serie Orientale Roma, vol.xxxiii) Rome, Is. M.E.O, 1966, p.20f for a discussion of *Tathāgatagarbha* and other related terms
43. For example, this has been a source of dispute amongst Tibetan scholars.
44. Obermiller, (trans.), 'The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle of Salvation', 1931-2, pp.156-157.
45. Ibid., p.237.
46. Ibid., p. 243
47. Ibid., p.176, 1.39.
48. From Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, p. 99. This passage was translated from the quote in the *mDzes rygan* of the Tibetan Bu ston (1290-1364). [See Lokesh Chandra (ed.), *The Collected Works of Bu ston*, pt 20 (Va), folio sides 1-78, translated in D. S. Ruegg, *La traité du tathāgatagarbha de Bu ston Rin Chen grub*, École Française d'Extrême Orient, Paris, 1973.]

Chapter Four

The Emergence of Advaita Vedānta

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter there will be a brief description of the origins of Vedānta and of some of its more minor philosophical offshoots. However, attention will be directed mainly to what is by far the most influential branch of this school - Advaita.

THE ORIGINS OF VEDĀNTA

At about the same time that Buddhism was evolving through the different stages described in previous chapters, attempts were being made by philosophers in the mainstream of the Hindu tradition to systematise and interpret the teachings of the *Upanishads*. The *Vedānta Sūtra*¹, which was probably composed some time between 500 BCE and 200 CE and is attributed to Bādārayana, is an early example of such efforts.² This work is regarded as one of the 'three points of departure' (*prasthānatraya*) for the Vedāntic tradition (the other two being the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad-Gīta*).³ The term 'Vedānta' literally means the 'conclusion of the Veda'.⁴

Amongst other topics, the *Vedānta Sūtra* discusses the nature of Brahman, meditation, and some of the objections raised against Vedāntic philosophy. However, partly as a result of the condensed and cryptic style in which it is written, many of the subsequent commentaries on this work have tended to overshadow the original.

The commentaries, such as those of Shankara and Rāmānuja, differ greatly in their interpretations. There has also been a lack of detailed and impartial analyses of this work in modern times. However, according to a recent study by G. C Adams, Bādārayana posits a philosophy of 'Difference-in-Identity'.⁵ Thus, Brahman and the world are regarded as real and distinct entities. Yet, at the same time, they are intimately related so that the the latter

cannot exist apart from the former. According to Bādārayana, Brahman creates the world for no other purpose than mere sport.⁶

THE GAUDAPĀDĪYA-KĀRIKĀ

Although the *Vedānta Sūtra* is significant as one of the 'points of departure' in the evolution of the Vedāntic tradition, it is the teachings developed by the most famous branch of this school, Advaita, that have had the greatest impact on Hindu ontology.⁷ It is likely that the ideas that formed the core of this school's philosophy developed gradually over several centuries. The earliest existing record of an Advaitin text is probably the *Gaudapādīya-kārikā* (GK).⁸

According to tradition, the GK was written, as this title suggests, by a sage called Gaudapāda. However, recent scholarship has cast doubt on this belief. Instead of having been written by one person, this work, which is divided into four *prakaranas* (treatises, chapters), was probably composed by several authors in different centuries. According to King, the fourth *prakarana* could have been written in the mid to late 6th century CE at the earliest.⁹ He also suggests that the third *prakarana* may be earlier than the sixth century CE and that it is possible that the others can be assigned to this period.¹⁰ These dates, however, are extremely tentative.

Despite its varied authorship, the text displays a reasonably coherent philosophical position. But, while it seems clear that most of the authors of the GK belonged to, or were influenced by, the Vedāntic tradition, it is evident that the GK was also strongly influenced by Mahāyāna Buddhist ideas. Indeed, the Buddha is mentioned by name a number of times.

As in the case of the *Vedānta Sūtra*, the view of Brahman found in the GK appears to be based on that found in the Upanishads. However, according to the GK, the quintessential teaching is that only Brahman is real; the world of form is an illusion (*māyā*) and nothing (in reality) is born or originates

3.(46) When the mind is not in the state of sleep, nor is distracted again, and as such has no movement nor any sense-image, then it becomes Brahman.¹¹

(47) They say it rests in itself and is calm having nirvāna; it is

unspeakable and the highest bliss,
unborn. . . .¹²

3.(19) It [non-duality, i.e Brahman] becomes different only through illusion, as the unborn can in no other way become different, for if it becomes in reality different, the immortal could become mortal.¹³

2.(31) As dream and illusion are seen, and as is the town of Gandharvas, so is seen all this universe by those who are well-versed in the Vedāntas.

(32) There is no disappearance, nor origination; no one in bondage, no one who works for success; no one who is desirous of emancipation, no one who is emancipated. - This is the highest truth.¹⁴

When considering how far he was influenced by Buddhist teachings, it should be noted that in 2.(31) the author of the second prakarana explains our perception of the universe in terms comparable to those used by the Yogāchārin, that is as a mental creation. Interestingly, the 'town of the Gandharvas', meaning an illusion, is an image that was used by Yogāchārin philosophers in the same way that it is here.¹⁵ 2.(32) summarises the theory of *Ajātivāda* (Non-origination) which follows as a logical consequence of the viewpoint expressed in 2.(31).

The authors of the GK used a variety of analogies to illustrate the process by which the universe appears to us and obscures our experience of the Self. One of the most famous (though this was not original) is that of the rope and the snake:

2.(17) As a rope which is not clearly perceived is, in the dark, imagined to be a snake or a line of water, so the Self is imagined in different ways

18) As definite knowledge of the rope destroys all illusions about it and the conviction arises that it is nothing but a rope, so is the nature of the Self determined.¹⁶

Thus, it is faulty perception that allows us to misinterpret what we experience and which leads us to believe that the world of multiplicity is a reality.

In 3.3 - 3.7 the author of the third prakarana uses another analogy which, while it does not attempt to explain how the Self appears to become differentiated initially,

illustrates well the essential unity of existence and of all beings. Here, it is argued that the relationship between individual beings and Ātman [Brahman] is similar to that between the spaces contained within empty jars and unlimited space:

3.(3) Ātman has sprung up in the form of jīvas [individual beings], just like the springing up of the ākāsha [space] in the form of ghatākāshas [spaces occupied by jars]. . . .

(4) When the jars ... are destroyed, the spaces of the jars ...are completely merged into space. In the same way are [completely merged] the jīvas into Ātman,¹⁷

(6). . . forms, functions and names differ here and there, but there is no differentiation of space; similar is the conclusion with regard to jīvas.

(7) As the ghatākāsha is neither a transformation, nor a [separate] part of the ākāsha, so is always a jīva neither a transformation, nor a limb of Ātman.¹⁸

SHANKARA

The most famous of the Advaita Vedāntins is Shankara (also known as Shankarāchārya - 'Shankara the guide/teacher'). His exact dates are uncertain but he probably lived some time around the eighth century CE. In Shankara's teachings can be found many of the ideas discussed by the authors of the *Gaudapādiya-kārikā* but developed in greater detail.

In the *Upadesha-Sāhasrī* (Metrical Part), Shankara restates the Advaitin view of the Absolute

8. (2). . . . For I am ever the supreme Absolute, (ever) liberated, unborn, one without a second.

8. (3) I am ever the same in all beings, the sole existent, indestructible, auspicious, omnipresent like space, undivided, partless, actionless, transcendent.¹⁹

The Absolute is something of which we are all aware:

And the existence of the Absolute is evident because it is the Self of all. Everyone is aware of the existence of his own Self. No one thinks 'I am not'. If the experience of one's own Self were not evident, everyone would have the feeling 'I do not exist'. (B. S. Bh 1. i. 1)²⁰

The Self is eternally present:

It [the Self] is self-evident. . . . Moreover, we have the feeling 'It is I alone who know the objects about me at this moment, and it was the same I who knew past objects . . . and who will know future objects. . . .' Thus, while the objects change in the past, present and future, the knower does not change, for its very nature is to exist eternally in the present. (B. S. Bh. 2. 3. 7)²¹

In his writings, Shankara attempts to explain why it is that the Absolute is not fully realised by the average man. Like the authors of the *Gaudapādiya-kārikā*, he tries to illustrate how one thing is mistaken for another using, amongst other examples, that of the snake and the rope. This type of error arises because, in certain situations, memories of previous experiences are aroused and then superimposed on the experience of the real object of perception. In the introduction to the *Brahmasutrabhāṣya*, Shankara explains how, similarly, suffering from ignorance of the truth (*avidyā*), we mistakenly project or superimpose the ego-notion onto the Real Self:

It [superimposition] is the false appearance in one place of what has previously been seen at another place. . . . And worldly experience agrees with this. For nacre appears as silver and the one moon [in the case of timira eye-disease] appears to be accompanied by a second moon. . . . Thus, one first superimposes the ego-notion onto the inmost Self, the Witness of all. And then, having done that, one proceeds contrariwise and superimposes that inmost Self, the Witness of all, onto the inner organ [mind] and other [elements of the finite personality]. This

natural [i. e. uncaused] beginningless and endless superimposition which is of the nature of false supposition . . . is directly familiar to everybody. (B. S. Bh. 1. 1. 1)²²

Shankara uses a further analogy in another passage:

Just as, when a post is mistaken for a man, the attributes of the man are not really introduced into the post nor the attributes of the post into the man, so, in the same way, the attributes of consciousness are not really introduced into the body [when the body is mistaken for the Self] nor the attributes of the body into consciousness. (Bh. G. Bh. 13. 2)²³

Shankara suggests that one can overcome this confusion by meditating directly on the Self:

Meditation is the withdrawal of the outward-going perception of the senses into the mind and the one-pointed focussing of the mind on the source of its consciousness. (Bh. G. Bh. 13. 24)²⁴

RAMANA MAHARSHI AND ADVAITA

As was mentioned earlier, the school of Advaita developed to become the dominant force in Hindu philosophy. Many philosophers and commentators built on the ideas of the authors of the *Gaudapādiya-kārikā* and Shankara, a process of development that has continued to the present day. Ramana Maharshi, whose teachings have already been referred to, is regarded by many as the foremost exponent of Advaita in the last hundred years. Ramana himself preferred not to be categorised in this way, and said that the same truth should be communicated in different ways to suit the capacity of the aspirant. He was also aware of the dangers of entering into the intricate maze of philosophy, putting emphasis instead on the practice of meditation. However, it may not be out of place here to further examine his teachings which help to clarify some of the questions raised by the early Advaitins.

Ramana: The same truth has to be expressed in different ways to suit the capacity of the

hearer. The Ajāta doctrine says: Nothing exists except the one Reality. There is no birth or death, no projection or drawing in, no sādḥaka [spiritual aspirant], no mumukshu [one who aspires for liberation] no mukta, no bondage, no liberation. The one unity alone lasts forever. To such who find it difficult to grasp this truth and who ask: "How can we ignore this solid world we see around us?" the dream experience is pointed out and they are told, "All that you see depends on the seer. Apart from the seer there is no seen. "This is called drishti-srishti vāda or the argument that one first creates out of his mind and then sees what his mind has created. To such as cannot grasp even this and who further argue: "The dream experience is so short, while the world always exists. The dream experience was limited to me, but the world is felt and seen not only by me, but by so many, and we cannot call such a world non-existent," the argument called srishti-drishti vāda is addressed and they are told: "God first created such and such a thing, out of such and such an element, and then something else and so forth. "That alone will satisfy this class. Their mind is otherwise not satisfied and they ask themselves: "How can all geography, all maps, all sciences, stars, planets, and the rules governing or relating to them all to be untrue?" To such it is best to say: "Yes, God created all this and so you see it."

Questioner: But all these teachings cannot be true. Only one doctrine can be true.

Ramana: All these viewpoints are only to suit the capacity of the learner. The Absolute can only be one.²⁵

In the following passage, Ramana discusses, in greater detail, some of the different theories and analogies used by Advaitin philosophers and others to explain our perception of the world:

Ramana: Now they [philosophers] say that the world is unreal. Of what degree of unreality is it? Is it like that of a son of a barren mother or a flower in the sky: mere words

without any reference to facts? Whereas the world is a fact not a mere word. The answer is that it is a superimposition on the one Reality, like the appearance of a snake on a coiled rope seen in dim light.

But here too the wrong identity ceases as soon as the friend points out that it is a rope. Whereas in the matter of the world it persists even after it is known to be unreal. How is that? Again the appearance of water in a mirage persists even after the knowledge of the mirage is recognised. So it is with the world. Though knowing it to be unreal, it continues to manifest.

But the water of the mirage is not sought to satisfy one's thirst. As soon as one knows that it is a mirage, one gives it up as useless and does not run after it for procuring water.

Questioner: Not so with the appearance of the world. Even after it is repeatedly declared to be false one cannot avoid satisfying one's wants from the world. How can the world be false?

Ramana: It is like a man satisfying his dream wants by dream creations. There are objects, there are wants and there is satisfaction. The dream creation is as purposeful as the jagrat [waking] world and yet it is not considered real.

Thus we see that each of these illustrations serves a distinct purpose in establishing the stages of unreality. The realised sage finally declares that in the regenerate state the jagrat world is also found to be as unreal as the dream world is found to be in the jagrat state.

Each illustration should be understood in its proper context; it should not be studied as an isolated statement. It is a link in a chain. The purpose of all these is to direct the seeker's mind towards the one Reality underlying them all.²⁶

In the next passage, Ramana illustrates the relationship between the Self and phenomena using, as an analogy, the cinema screen and the images projected onto it:

You see various scenes passing on a cinema screen, fire seems to wreck ships, but the screen on which the pictures are projected remains unburnt and dry. Why? Because the pictures are unreal and the screen real. Similarly, reflections pass through a mirror but it is not affected at all by their number or quality.

In the same way, the world is a phenomenon upon the substratum of the Single Reality which is not affected by it in any way. Reality is only One.²⁷

In the following passage Ramana further clarifies the relationship between the Absolute and phenomena:

Ramana: Shankara has been criticised for his philosophy of Māyā[illusion] without understanding his meaning. He made three statements: that Brahman is real, that the universe is unreal, and that Brahman is the universe. He did not stop with the second. The third statement explains the first two; it signifies that when the universe is perceived apart from Brahman, that perception is false and illusory. What it amounts to is that phenomena are real when experienced as the Self and illusory when seen apart from the Self.²⁸

In *Who am I?*, Ramana examines the relationship between God (in this passage regarded as synonymous with the Self) and activity in the phenomenal world:

Without desire, resolve or effort, the sun rises; and in its mere presence the sun-stone emits fire, the lotus blooms, water evaporates; people perform their various functions and then rest. Just as in the presence of the magnet the needle moves, it is by virtue of the mere presence of God that the souls governed by the three (cosmic) functions or the five-fold divine activity perform their actions and then rest, in accordance with their respective karmas. God has no resolve; no karma

attaches itself to Him. This is like worldly actions not affecting the sun. . . .²⁹

Elsewhere, Ramana describes the experience of the Self-realised person:

The world is real to those who have realised [the Self] as well as to those who have not. To those who have not realised, the world is merely the world; to those who have, truth is formless and shines as the substratum of the world. Know that this is the difference between them.³⁰

It is immaterial to the Enlightened whether the world appears or not. In either case his attention is turned to the Self. It is like the letters and the paper on which they are printed. You are so engrossed in the letters that you forget about the paper, but the Enlightened sees the paper as the substratum, whether the letters appear on it or not.³¹

There is a strong ascetic tradition in India which often involves withdrawal from the world. However, the state of enlightenment or Self-realisation does not depend on inactivity:

Questioner: . . . they say that the highest state is withdrawal from all sense activities, thoughts and experiences, in fact cessation of activity. Ramana: Then how would it differ from deep sleep? Besides, it would be a state which, however exalted, comes and goes and would, therefore, not be the natural and normal state, so how could it represent the eternal presence of the Supreme Self, which persists through all states and survives them? It may be a temporary phase of the quest. . . but, in any case you cannot call it the highest state.³²

The experience of those that are Self-realised is one of unalloyed happiness:

Ramana: You can have, or rather you yourself will be, the highest imaginable kind of happiness. All other kinds of happiness which you have spoken of as 'pleasure', 'joy', 'happiness', 'bliss' are only reflections of the Ānanda [highest form of bliss] which, in your true nature, you are.³³

OTHER FORMS OF VEDĀNTA

The other schools of Vedānta have had considerably less impact on Indian thought than Advaita and are not, strictly speaking, non-dualistic. Therefore, only a brief mention of two of the more important schools will be made to conclude this chapter. These are *Vishishtādvaita*, a form of qualified non-dualism, and Dvaita-Vedānta ('Dualistic Vedānta').

Of the two schools, *Vishishtādvaita*, founded by Rāmānuja (c. 1055-1137), has been the more influential. Rāmānuja held that there was a plurality of souls that were distinct from God but not separable from Him. When a soul attains liberation it lives in the presence of God, enjoying omniscience and the highest bliss.

The Dvaita-Vedānta school, whose best known exponent is Madhva (c. 1199-1278), puts forward the view that the world and individual souls are real, although subordinate to and dependent upon God.

References

1. Another name for this work is the *Brahma-Sutra*
2. According to G. C Adams, in *The Structure and Meaning of Bādārayana's Brahma Sutras*, New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1993, the *Vedānta Sutra* is probably the oldest systematic theology to survive to our time from any tradition.
3. We have already discussed one of the other 'points of departure', the *Upanishads*. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* was probably composed some time between the fifth century BCE and the second century CE. It is part of a larger work called the *Mahābhārata* and is famous for its discussion of the classic paths of Yoga. It contains teachings not only from the Vedāntic tradition but also from the Sāṅkhya (see the next chapter).

4. The term ' Vedānta' can refer not only to the school of this name, but also specifically to the final portion of the Vedic scriptures. This includes the *Upanishads*.
5. See Adams, *The Structure and Meaning of Bādārayana's Brahma Sutras*, 1993
6. See the *Vedānta Sutra* - 2. 1. 32-33.
7. 'Advaita'='Non-duality'. 'Advaita Vedānta' therefore = ' the Vedāntic theory of Non-Dualism', see note 4.
- 8 Also known as the *Āgamashāstra* and the *Kārikā on the Māndūkya Upanishad*. Some scholars have suggested that the *Paramārtha Sāra* may be older. See brief discussion in R.King, *Early Advaita and Buddhism*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1995, p.260, note 1.
9. Richard King, *Early Advaita Vedanta and Buddhism*, Albany, SUNY 1995, p.46
10. Ibid., p.42.
11. V. Bhattacharya, (trans.), *The Āgamashāstra of Gaudapāda*, Calcutta, University of Calcutta Press, 1943, p.79.
- 12.Ibid., p.81.
- 13.Ibid., p. 60. My brackets.
- 14.Ibid., pp.38-39.
- 15.See D.T. Suzuki (trans.), *The Lankāvatāra Sutra*, London, Routledge, 1932, Chapt.2. 7, p.37.
16. Quotation from a translated passage in E. Deutsch and J. A. B. van Buitenen , *A Source Book of Advaita Vedanta*, Honolulu, University Press of Hawaii, 1971, p. 120.
17. Bhattacharya, *Āgamashāstra of Gaudapāda* , pp. 50-51. I have slightly modified the English in Bhattacharya's translation of this passage.
18. Ibid., pp.52-53. Again I have modified the English used here.
19. A. J Alston, (trans.), *The Thousand Teachings of Samkara*, London, pub. Shanti Sadan, 1990, chapt.8, pp. 123-4.
20. A.J Alston, (trans.) *Samkara on the Absolute*, Volume 1 of *A Samkara Source Book*, London, Shanti Sadan, 1980, p.120. An extract from the *Brahma Sutra Bhāṣya* (B.S.Bh.)
21. Ibid., pp.122-123.
22. Ibid., pp. 94-96.
23. Ibid., p. 71. An extract from the *Bhagavad-Gītā Bhāṣya*. (Bh. G. Bh.)
24. From A. J. Alston, (trans.), *Samkara on Enlightenment*, vol.6 of *A Samkara Source Book*, London, pub. Shanti Sadan, 1989, p.137.

25. See A. Devaraja Mudaliar (ed.), *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, Tiruvannamalai, pub. Sri Ramanasramam, 1968, p.189.
26. See *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, Tiruvannamalai, pub. by Sri Ramanasramam, 1972, p. 372.
27. See Arthur Osbourne (ed.) *The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words*, Tiruvannamalai, pub. Sri Ramanasramam, 1971, p.13.
28. Arthur Osbourne (ed.), *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, London, pub. Rider, 1973, p.82.
29. Arthur Osbourne (ed.), 'Who am I' in *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Tiruvannamalai, S. India, pub. Sri Ramanasramam, 1968, p.45.
30. See 'Reality in Forty Verses' in Osbourne, *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, v.18.
31. Osbourne (ed.), *The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words*, p.15.
32. Ibid., p.238.
33. Ibid., p.247. My interpolation in brackets.

Chapter Five

The Other Orthodox Schools

According to Hindu orthodoxy, besides Vedānta, there are five other schools that owe allegiance to the tradition of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*. These are *Sāmkhya*; *Yoga*; *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* and *Nyāya* and *Vaisheshika*. In order to place the Vedāntic tradition in context, these schools will be discussed briefly in this chapter.

SĀMKHYA

Sāmkhyan philosophy probably first started to develop in pre-Buddhist times.¹ However, the first systematic exposition of it as an independent school of thought that is available to us is found in the *Sāmkhya-Kārikā* of Īshvara Krishna (c.4th-5th centuries CE?).²

In contrast to the proponents of Advaita Vedānta, the Sāmkhyan school argued that reality was essentially dualistic in nature. On the one hand there are innumerable, transcendental, all-pervading selves (*purusha*), which are pure consciousness and eternal. On the other, there are the countless, mutable and unconscious forms of nature (*prakriti*). *Prakriti* is made up of three constituent *gunas* (strands/processes), namely: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These can roughly be described as harmoniousness and illumination, activity, and inertia respectively. The *gunas* are the basis of all physical and mental phenomena

According to the *Sāmkhya-Kārikā*, the *gunas* are in a state of balance in the transcendent or undeveloped aspect of *prakriti* (*prakriti-pradhāna*).³ However, this begins to evolve when the *purusha* shows interest in it.⁴ It first evolves into *mahat* (literally 'the great'). This universal principle is also referred to in its individual psychical aspect as *buddhi*. The latter term has been variously translated as 'intellect', 'intelligence', 'intuition', 'cognition', and 'the wisdom faculty.'⁵ Although *buddhi* has the appearance of consciousness, it is in fact made up of subtle matter.⁶ In later Sāmkhyan philosophy, the theory of reflection was put forward to explain why *buddhi* appears in this way. It was said that *buddhi* is like a mirror, reflecting the pure consciousness of the *purusha*.⁷

Therefore, as Feuerstein puts it, the 'light' of buddhi's intelligence comes from the purusha.⁸

Out of mahat, or buddhi, emerges the *ahamkāra*, the principle of individuation, which results in the distinction between subject and object. This principle, in turn, gives rise to the appearance of *manas* or the lower mind, which perceives ideas and organises sensory information.⁹ *Ahamkāra* also gives rise to the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell) and the five 'organs of action' (the *karmendriyas*: the functions of speech, grasping, movement, excretion and reproduction). In addition, *ahamkāra* causes the appearance of the five subtle elements (the five *tanmātras*). These are the essence of sound, touch, form, taste and odour, and they underlie the sensory capacities.¹⁰ The *tanmātras* in turn generate the five gross material elements (*bhūtas*) of ether; air; fire; water and earth.

According to Sāmkhyan philosophy, our true self (purusha) becomes mistakenly associated with the manifestations of prakriti, forgetting that it is in reality a transcendent witness. The goal of the system is to help individuals extricate themselves from the cycle of birth and death through the intellectual recognition of the fundamental principles of reality.¹¹

YOGA

In the context of the six orthodox schools, 'Yoga' refers specifically to the school that draws its teachings from the *Yoga-Sūtras* attributed to Patañjali. It is unclear when these *Sūtras* were finally assembled. Dates as early as the second century BCE and as late as the fifth century CE have been suggested.¹²

According to Larson, from an ontological perspective, the philosophy of the *Yoga-Sūtras* is almost the same as that of Īshvara Krishna, although there are a few important differences.¹³ For example, buddhi, *ahamkāra* (the principle of individuation), and *manas* (the lower mind), are brought together in a single all-pervasive cognitive faculty called 'awareness' (*chitta*). Also, the existence of God is admitted, although the Lord is not considered to be an additional principle of the system. Instead, He is a kind of purusha.¹⁴

Although most scholars accept that the *Yoga-Sūtras* are basically Sāmkhyan philosophically, there are also clear influences from other traditions. For example, in sūtra 1.33 there is a reference to the *brahmavihāras*, the

positive states of mind featured prominently in early Buddhism.

PŪRVA-MĪMĀMSĀ

The basic text of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā ('earlier discussion'), is the *Mīmāṃsā-Sūtra*, which is attributed to Jaimini. It is uncertain when this was written. Some suggest a date as early as 200BCE.¹⁵ Others suggest that it was written later, for example around 100CE.¹⁶ Central to the teaching of this school was the importance of virtuous action as indicated by the Vedas. Another key element was the performance of ritual activity.¹⁷

A number of somewhat different views were held about the self within this tradition. However, both Prabhākara and Kumārila, two of the most important theorists of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, taught that there was a plurality of souls and that these were omnipresent and eternal.¹⁸ Neither felt that consciousness could be regarded as the essence of the self.¹⁹

NYĀYA AND VAISHESHIKA

The Nyāya and Vaisheshika schools are closely allied to each other and, in the course of their development, came to be linked together. They are, therefore, often referred to in the hyphenated form - 'Nyāya-Vaisheshika'. Both schools believed in a plurality of souls or selves which were eternal, all-pervading, and non-material. Neither school felt that these individual selves had consciousness as their essence.²⁰ One argument that Nyāya philosophers put forward as an indication that there was a soul was that memory must depend on some permanent entity.²¹

The first records of the Vaisheshika system are in the *Vaisheshika Sūtra*, which is attributed to Kanāda.²² It is not known for certain how old some of the Vaisheshika aphorisms are but the composition of this work may have started around 200 BCE.²³ While the *Vaisheshika Sūtra* displays some awareness of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā and Sāṃkhyan ideas, it does not show any knowledge of Nyāya as a system of thought.²⁴ The origins of this latter school seem, therefore, to have been somewhat later than those of the Vaisheshika. It may be that the final version of the foundational Nyāya work, the *Nyāya Sūtra*, was finished some time in the second century CE.²⁵

The Vaisheshika school taught that there were seven primary categories of reality. These included substance;

quality; action; generality; uniqueness; and inherence. The latter is a permanent relationship between two entities that is not produced, for example the relationship between the whole and its parts.²⁶ The last category is non-existence, which was added by later Vaisheshikas.²⁷ In addition, this school taught about the importance of ethical action.²⁸ It also put forward an atomic theory of matter.²⁹

The Nyāya philosophers are best known for the contributions they made to the science of logic and epistemology.

Neither school has many adherents in the present day.

CONCLUSION

As will be apparent, the philosophies of the five schools described above are significantly different from Advaita Vedānta. Indeed, it can be argued that, although each is considered to be part of the orthodox Hindu tradition, there is a greater difference between Advaita and the other five schools than between Advaita and most Buddhist teachings. This is evident from the fact that, in Advaita and Buddhism, the final attainment is the realisation of the one, non-conditioned, eternal reality which is common to all. However, according to the five schools, it is not possible to progress beyond the identification of oneself as one among a large number of individual selves or souls. A similar position, as we have seen, is adhered to by some of the other schools of the Vedānta.

The six orthodox schools do not encompass all the philosophical systems that can be included in the Hindu tradition. Mention of others will be made as necessary in later chapters.

References

1. For example, there are references to Sāmkhyān ideas and categories in the Katha Upanishad. See Richard King, *Indian Philosophy*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999, p.63.

2. Ibid., p.63. As is often the case with texts and authors in Indian philosophy, the exact dates for the *Sāmkhya-Kārikā* and Īshvara Krishna are not clear.
3. Georg Feuerstein, *Yoga, The Technology of Ecstasy*, Wellingborough, Crucible, 1990, p.83.
4. King, *Indian Philosophy*, p.64
5. See, for example, Feuerstein, *Yoga, The Technology of Ecstasy*, p.83-4
- 6 .King, *Indian Philosophy*, p.176.
7. Ibid., p.176
8. Feuerstein, *Yoga*, p.84
9. King, *Indian Philosophy*, p.38
10. Theos Bernard, *Hindu Philosophy*, New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1999, p.79 and Feuerstein, *Yoga*, p.85
11. King, *Indian Philosophy*, p.66.
12. See, for example, S. Radhakrishnan and C.A Moore, *A Source Book of Indian Philosophy*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1989 for the earlier date suggested. Feuerstein, *Yoga*, p.169, suggests the Second Century CE and King, *Indian Philosophy*, p.68 suggests the Third to Fourth Century CE.
13. See G. J. Larson and R. S. Bhattacharya, (ed. s), (Gen. ed. K. Potter), *The Encyclopaedia of Indian Philosophies*, Delhi, pub. Motilal Banarsidass, vol. 4, p. 27.
14. Ibid., p.27.
15. Feuerstein, *Yoga*, p.79.
16. See, for example, Oliver Leaman (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Asian Philosophy*, London, Taylor and Francis, 2001, p.444
17. Feuerstein, *Yoga*, p.79 and *The Encyclopaedia of Asian Philosophy*, p.444.
18. J. Thachil, *An initiation to Indian Philosophy*, Aluva, India, Pontifical Institute Publications, 2001, p.299.
19. Ibid., p.300.
20. Chandradhar Sharma, *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 2000, p.189. and p.207
21. Rajmani Tigunait, *Seven Systems of Indian Philosophy*, Honesdale, PA, USA, Himalayan Institute Press, 1984, p.96-7.
22. King, *Indian Philosophy*, p.57.
- 23 Ibid., p.58
24. Ibid., p.58.
25. Ibid., p.60.
26. Sharma, *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, p.181.
27. Ibid., p.176.
28. Tigunait, *Seven Systems of Indian Philosophy*, p.116

29. King, *Indian Philosophy*, p.57.

CONCLUSION TO PART ONE

It has not been practicable in the space available to describe all the intricacies of the different theoretical positions underlying Hindu and Buddhist philosophy. Nevertheless, it is possible to arrive at certain conclusions based on what has been presented so far. These may be seen to be useful as a foundation for investigating the meditation practices within these traditions.

In particular, it is interesting to note the similarity of viewpoint between traditions. The most important area of agreement concerns the nature of the ultimate attainment. The higher Self, or Brahman, in the *Upanishads* and Nibbāna in the *Suttapitaka* are eternal, unconditioned, the highest bliss and the one supreme realisation that is shared by all who achieve it. A similar description is applied to Nirvāna, Tathatā and the Buddha Nature in most of the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition and to Brahman in Advaita Vedāntic philosophy.

In addition, Advaita Vedānta and most of the Mahāyāna schools put forward the view that there is only one reality and that the world of form is illusory. This is also implied in some passages in the *Upanishads*. Finally, the *Upanishads*, Advaita Vedānta, and probably¹ most of the Mahāyāna schools that we have discussed, posit a link of some kind between the ultimate attainment and the phenomenal world.

Even where there is clear doctrinal disagreement, as for example between Advaita and some of the other Hindu schools, from a practical perspective these divisions are often less important than they may seem. For instance, central to the *Yoga-Sūtras*, mentioned in the last chapter, is a series of physical and meditation techniques designed to lead the aspirant to enlightenment (see later chapters). Despite philosophical differences, techniques similar to these are used by Hindus of many different persuasions. Indeed, as we shall see, there is a common heritage of practical techniques that are used by Hindus and Buddhists alike, even though adherents to these traditions may not always be fully aware of this.

As has been discussed, usually only partial and inadequate records (either oral or written) are left of the teachings of many of the different sages that have contributed to the development of the Indian spiritual

tradition. Therefore it is difficult for any tradition or subtradition to claim to possess the whole truth. Moreover, it may be that in some instances teachings lost in one tradition may be found within another. So, considering that there is so much common ground occupied by the different schools of Hinduism and Buddhism, a more logical approach would seem to be one of eclecticism, taking what is most appropriate from each particular source. The remaining chapters of this book, therefore, will attempt to help the reader explore a wide variety of approaches from a large number of different schools and traditions. It is hoped that, in this way, the reader will be assisted in overcoming the many problems that occur in meditation and so come nearer to realising their true potential.

Notes

1) It may seem somewhat incongruous to use the word 'probably' in a conclusion. However, there has been so much disagreement over this issue that this is as definite a statement as I think can be made.

