

VEDĀNTA AND BUDDHISM

(Proceedings of the Third All-India Seminar held
at the Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy.
Banaras Hindu University)

and

OTHER PAPERS

E-245

★

Edited by

J. L. MEHTA

in collaboration with

A. K. CHATTERJEE

SANTOSH KUMAR

C. P. M. NAMBOODIRY

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Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy
Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, 1968



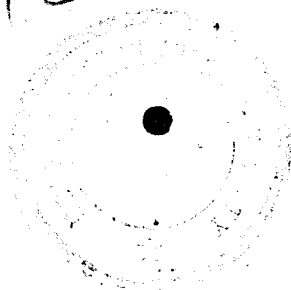
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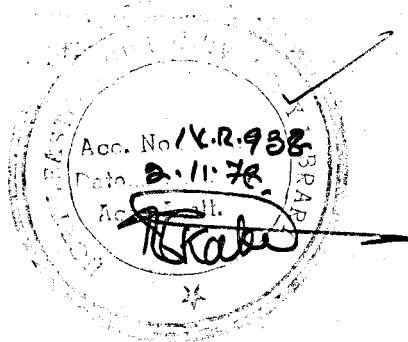
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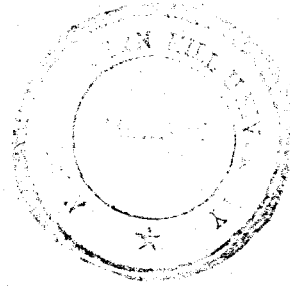
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FOREWORD

The papers on "Vedānta and Buddhism" contributed to the Third All-India Seminar held in March, 1966 at the Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, Banaras Hindu University, are being made available in the present volume. Brief notices of the Inaugural and Presidential Addresses delivered on the occasion are also included. Short accounts of discussions on the papers read follow them. Part Two of this volume consists of papers and articles contributed by members of the Department of Philosophy at this University; two papers read by Dr. John B. Carman, Visiting Professor at the Centre in 1967, are also included. On behalf of the Department and the Centre I thank Professor J. L. Mehta, Dr. A. K. Chatterjee, Dr. Santosh Kumar and Sri C. P. M. Namboodiry for their co-operation in the preparation and publication of this volume.

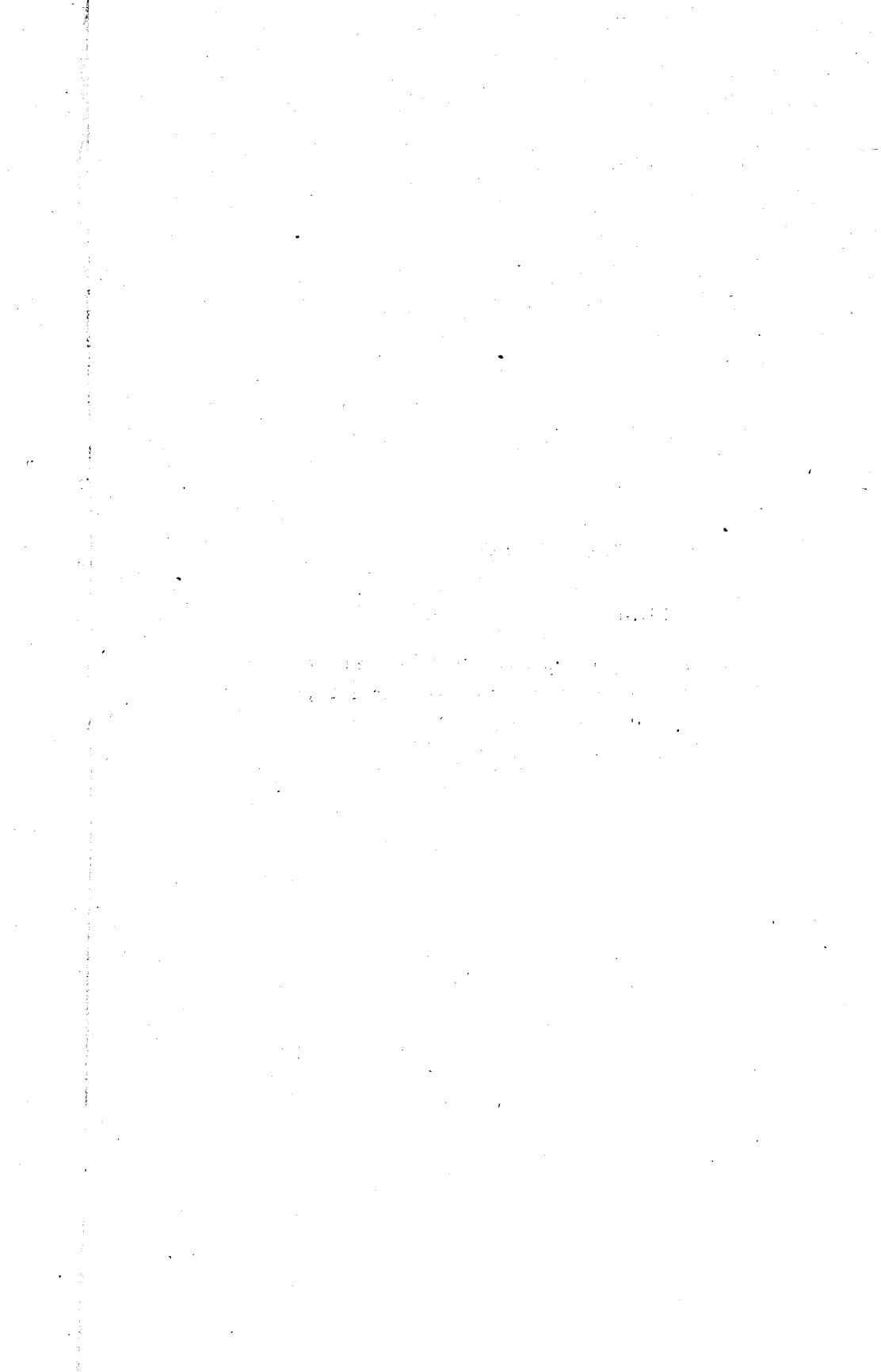
N. K. Devaraja
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PART ONE

VEDĀNTA AND BUDDHISM

**Proceedings of the All-India Seminar held at
the Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy,
Banaras Hindu University, on March 23, 24
and 25, 1966**



INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Kalidas Bhattacharya

I am thankful for the honour done to me in asking me to inaugurate this Seminar. Two years ago the University Grants Commission proposed raising three Departments of Philosophy to the status of first class Research Centres in Philosophy, for training persons to become excellent teachers in Philosophy and for imparting instruction of high quality to post-graduate students.

These three Centres established in Varanasi, Visva-Bharati and Madras must collaborate as far as possible. However, the status of Varanasi is unique, for Varanasi is amongst the oldest seats of learning in this country and a centre of renowned classical scholars.

In India students of Philosophy are faced with a stupendous task. A student of Philosophy should not be a mere scholar. A good student of Philosophy should learn to philosophize, to think for himself and should know as much of Western philosophy as Indian philosophy. There is a big gulf between Western and Indian philosophies. There are many basic concepts in Western philosophy which were unknown to Indian thinkers and *vice versa*, e.g., the concept of the *a priori* to which no parallel in Indian philosophy is to be found. Likewise, controversy between Rationalism and Empiricism was foreign to Indian thinking. On the other hand, the problems of Indian philosophy centre round the concepts of mokṣa or mukti, which would look absurd to a Western philosopher. Likewise, Indian and Western philosophies differ in regard to the nature of Ātman and Manas and their relationship. Similarly Western philosophy does not concern itself with Revelation or Śabda, Śruti, etc. We have, therefore, to undertake fundamental comparative studies in Philosophy.

I do not believe that there should be a universal Philosophy; rather, Philosophy should be local; that is to say, every people has a philosophy of its own. Basic concepts of Philosophy are culled out from a particular culture, people look at Reality from a particular perspective. In the West, Philosophy has largely been science-oriented, and Philosophy has played a subsidiary

role to science. For example, in modern Empiricism there has been stress on the clarification of the language of Science. But I doubt if Indian Philosophy has primarily been concerned with the task of analysing the structure of the world. Our immediate task should accordingly be to understand the basic concepts of both Indian and Western philosophies and to undertake detailed and carefully worked out comparative studies.

Coming now to the subject of the present Seminar, viz., Vedānta and Buddhism, I feel that Buddhism constitutes the same challenge to Hindu Philosophy as Western Philosophy does to Indian Philosophy. Buddhism is not just one of the many systems, but reflects a great diversity of Philosophic opinions. There is a remarkable consonance between Buddhism and some Philosophical systems in the West, e.g., present-day Existentialism. We have our moorings in our own tradition, but our challenges come from Western Philosophy, and more and more Western ideas are affecting and dominating us. We philosophers in India have to do something about it. There are many people present here, who are interested in Metaphysics, who can break the ice. The only way is to develop a comparative study: to think anew.

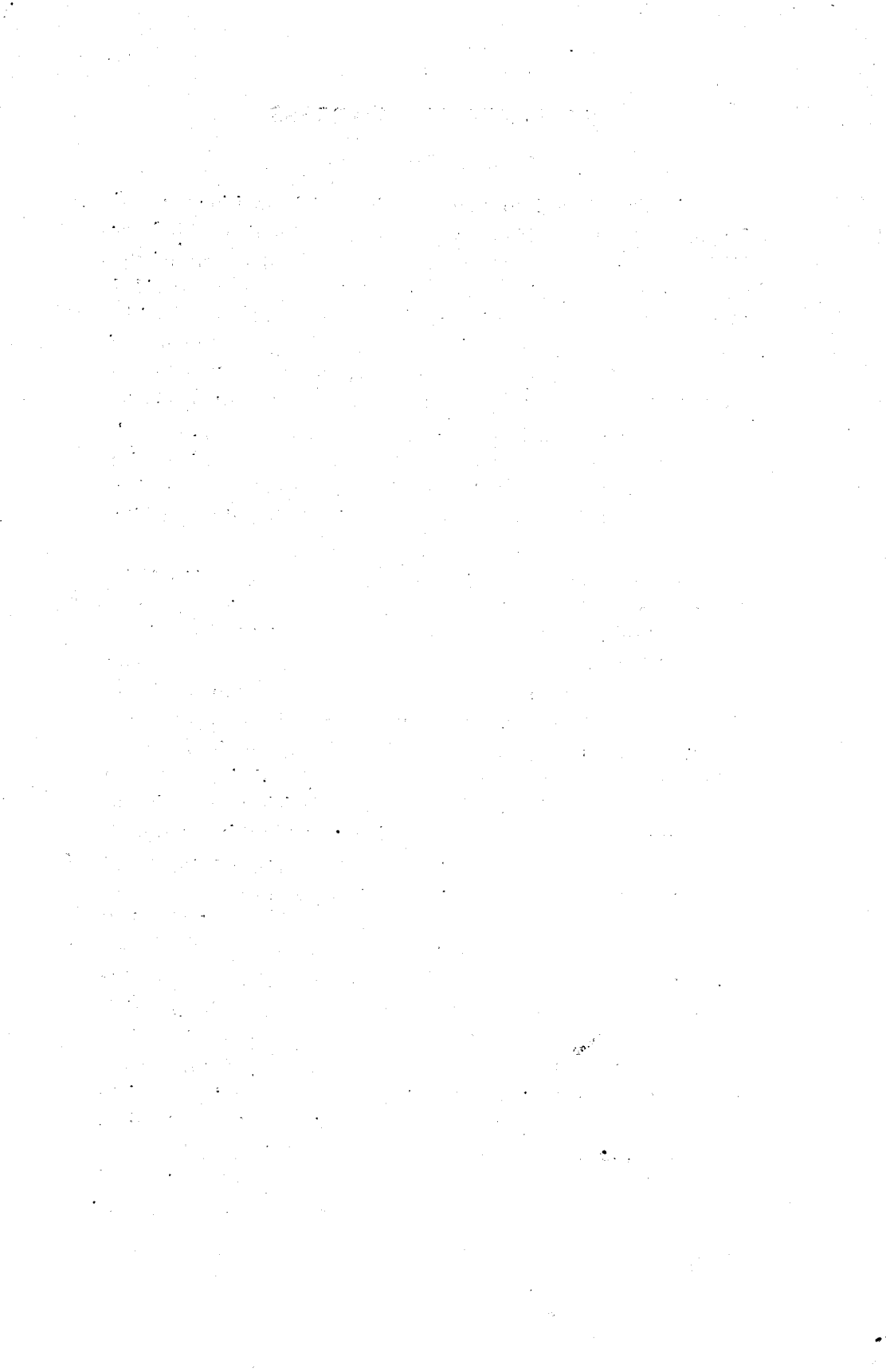
PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

T. M. P. Mahadevan

My first duty is to thank Prof. Murti for inviting me and for asking me to preside over the inaugural function. Professor Kalidas Bhattacharya has already told us about the aims of the three Centres. University Grants Commission has recently decided to call them as 'Centres of Advanced Study in Philosophy' without tying them to any particular subject or field. It is true, of course, that in each of these Centres certain lines of study are specialized. The particular specializations will depend upon the scholars available and subjects in which they are interested. These three Centres have been working in close co-operation with each other. We are glad that we have in these Centres scholars who have devoted themselves to their special fields and are making further research therein.

We are equally glad that the U. G. C. has recognized the importance of philosophical research. In course of time, I hope, more Universities will be recognized for the establishment of the Centres. It should, however, be realised that although only three Centres have so far been chosen, they are not to be regarded as confined to themselves, but they extend to larger areas, to certain *regions* and to cater to their need. These three Centres belong to the country as a whole. The U. G. C. desires that these Centres should function as all-India seats of higher research and contribute to the growth of Philosophic thought in this country.

So far as the subject of the Seminar, viz., 'Vedānta and Buddhism' is concerned, while Prof. K. D. Bhattacharya has stressed the need of rapport between the East and the West, I shall emphasize the need of an understanding between Vedānta and Buddhism. There are so many ill-informed views concerning them and what we need to do is to resolve them. It is the privilege of students to appreciate what these two great traditions stand for and to study the problems connected therewith. Today it is easier to underline similarities, but if we could appreciate the differences between Vedānta and Buddhism it will be of advantage to both to treat them as clusters of distinct problems. I hope that at this Seminar the scholars present will dispassionately apply themselves to the problems relating to a deeper study of these two glorious traditions.



DID NĀGĀRJUNA REALLY REFUTE ALL PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS ?

Richard H. Robinson

The treatment Mādhyamika has received from its ancient opponents and modern discussants is in one respect as peculiar as the way in which it handled the views against which its criticisms were directed. Far from admitting that they must either refute the Mādhyamika objections or concede defeat, most classical systems either ignored Nāgārjuna's incisive and forceful attacks, contented themselves with answering one or two specific objections, or tried rather ineptly to discredit the Mādhyamika method of refutation. Unsympathetic modern writers such as A. B. Keith have remarked briefly and categorically that this method is sophistic, but have not attempted to demonstrate their charge in detail. Sympathetic authorities such as T. R. V. Murti have shown clearly and concretely how this destructive dialectic works, but have not subjected to a searching examination its claim to demolish all constructive philosophical views (dṛṣṭi). If this claim is sound, it will be in order to examine the reasons why those philosophies to which it has been applied have not considered themselves refuted. Even if the Mādhyamika claim is false and its methods sophistic, philosophy stands to gain from discovering precisely how this form of sophistry works, and why it seems so formally convincing even while arousing suspicion in the observer.

In American country fairs there used to be a well-known game played with three walnut half-shells and one pea. The operator first held up all three shells for the audience to see. Then he turned all three upside down, placed the pea under one shell, and proceeded to shuffle the shells. When he stopped, a member of the audience would try to guess which shell the pea was under. Nāgārjuna's system resembles the shell game in several ways. Its elements are few and its operations are simple, though performed at lightening speed and with great dexterity. And the very fact that he cannot quite follow each move reinforces the observer's conviction that there is a trick somewhere. The objective

VEDĀNTA AND BUDDHISM

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan

One of the charges levelled against Advaita-Vedānta is that it is veiled Buddhism. The charge is usually made by the non-Advaita Vedic Schools—especially the theistic traditions in Vedānta. The implication is that in so far as Advaita regards the world as illusory appearance and the ultimate reality as distinctionless and devoid of characteristics, it is indistinguishable from the Buddhist Vijñānavāda and/or Śūnyavāda, and is much more dangerous than either of them in that it has chosen to put on the cloak of Vedānta.

The charge of 'hiding behind a veil'—disguisedness (*pracchannatā*) is not uncommon in the traditions of any philosophy. One of the weapons in the armoury of philosophical argumentation is to accuse the opponent of intellectual dishonesty, to make out that he is not what he seems or claims to be. On the ground of some similarity or other, it is not impossible to identify any philosophical position with any other. Even because they are philosophical positions there must be at least something in common. The affinities will be closer if the philosophical affiliations are nearer, e. g. between two realistic schools or between two idealistic standpoints. It is on the basis of such affinities that Viśiṣṭadvaita may be regarded as pseudo-Sāṅkhya, or pluralistic Vedānta as disguised Nyāya Vaiśeṣika. So, the charge of 'Veiled Buddhism' levelled against Advaita-Vedānta may not mean anything more than saying that there is some similarity between Advaita and Buddhist Idealism. But if it means, as it is obviously intended to mean, that Advaita teaches the *same* truths as are taught by Vijñānavāda and Śūnya-vada, that Advaita understands by the *Ātman* or *Brahman* of the Upaniṣads the same as what Buddhism means by Vijñāna or Śūnya, then the charge is unfair and untrue. How this is so, I now proceed to show.

The *locus classicus* of the Advaita refutation of Buddhism is to be found in Śaṅkaras *Brahma-sutra bhāṣya* (II, ii, 18-32). The refutation of the Buddhist schools comes immediately after the

ADVAITA VEDĀNTA AND BUDDHIST ABSOLUTISM.

S. S. ROY

I begin my paper with an apology for having introduced a change in the wordings of the original title of the subject of this symposium. I would wish it to be *Advaita Vedānta and Buddhist Absolutism*. This might help me in saving myself from wandering aimlessly. At any rate a modification of this nature does no violence to the original title; it has, I believe, an innocent plausibility about it, in view of the fact that the Advaita and the absolutistic points of view in Buddhism present themselves as the culminating rungs of the philosophical ladder in the 'two traditions' of Indian thought : the Ātmanic and the non-Ātmanic. They stand out in the manner of two Belvederes observing each other and observing the entire course of the development of thought in the two traditions.

In this paper I have maintained the following theses :

(a) That the Advaita Vedānta, among the systems of Indian philosophy as a whole, could be used and understood in the office of a keystone that gives to the varying points of view in Indian thought an architectonical unity, without divesting them of all the richness they have in a state of rhapsodistic isolation from each other. In this strain have I maintained that in the Advaita, by which I precisely understand the philosophical system of the Gauḍapāda-Śankara sampradāya, the extremes of our philosophical heritage have met. (b) That Ācārya Gauḍapāda, whose Āgamaśāstra is in a considerable sense the grammar of the Advaitic metaphysics, is not a Buddhist in disguise, in spite of the pronounced similarities of a doctrinal-cum-methodological nature between the Āgamaśāstra and some great philosophical classics of the Absolutistic tradition in Buddhism, comprising the Yogācāra and the Mādhyamika schools. (c) That there is an appreciable difference between the structure and behaviour of the Advaitic Absolute and the Buddhist Absolute, and that a difference of this nature is brought out in relief in how *Negation* stands in the two absolutistic

VEDĀNTA AND BUDDHISM

T. R. V. Murti

The title of the Seminar, "Vedānta and Buddhism" is posed as a kind of comparative or related study of these two basic philosophies. It would not do to consider either of them in isolation. The related study could possibly be historical, a chronological and sequential tracing of each (Vedānta and Buddhism) as they influenced each other's development. Such a study would really form part of cultural history and should be based on literary documents and historical evidence. It would also be largely conjectural and somewhat speculative. I surmise some participants would be concentrating on this aspect of the problem. They might be able to throw light on several points in this question : (1) Whether and to what extent early Buddhism was independent of Upaniṣadic thought, (2) how a philosophy and religion which was radically pluralistic and atheistic (rather antitheistic) could become as absolutistic and even theistic as in the Mahāyāna; (3) whether this was purely the development of an inner dynamism or was prompted, partly at least, by external influences and (4) lastly whether and in what measure the characteristic development of the classical Vedānta of Gauḍāpāda and Śaṅkara was not itself influenced by the Mahāyāna philosophy (Mādhyamika and Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda). Extreme loyalists, on either side, are prone to deny or belittle any such mutual influence. It may, however, be surmised that as Buddhism and Vedānta were not moving in closed compartments and as there is ample evidence of lively interchanges between them, mutual influence may legitimately be surmised. The precise nature of it, however, has to be determined. Influence is not necessarily borrowing or acceptance of doctrines from others. That too is influence which stimulates the systems to modify, revise or even to reaffirm their doctrines. Influence may be expressed as much through opposition as by acceptance. In this sense alone have the Brahmanical systems, Vedānta and Nyāya, been influenced by Buddhism and vice versa.

VEDĀNTA AND BUDDHISM*

Pandit V. S. Ramachandra Sastri

Even before Śākyasimha, son of Śuddhodana, absolute monism prevailed in India and had its influence in revolutionising the later Buddhist philosophy. According to the Indian thinkers Āstika and Nāstika theories co-exist since time immemorial contradicting each other and are promulgated by Ācāryas adding new interpretations to old theories and discovering new ones. In the 6th adhyāya of Chāndogya Upaniṣad Śūnyavāda of Mādhyamika is mentioned as तद् धैक आहुरसदेवेदमग्र आसीत् and contradicted कथमसतः सज्जायेतेति. Vedānta and Buddhism were influenced by one another and developed since last several thousands of years.

Knowledge and the known are accepted by all Dārśanikas, though they differ about their reality. If Naiyāyika and Vaiśeṣika agree as both absolutely real, Mādhyamika says both are not absolutely real. Yogācara and Vedāntin agree that knowledge is real whereas the known is not absolutely real but has a relative reality only. There is none among the Dārśanikas who claims knowledge as unreal and the known only as real. Reality which is also mentioned as सत्ता, none other than knowledge, is experienced even in the known as it is superimposed upon the knowledge. This is Vedāntin's view. In Yogācara's opinion known is only an ākāra or shape of knowledge which is also क्षणिक i.e. momentary. सत्ता also is an ākāra of knowledge. Connection between the knowledge and the known is भेदाभेदः difference-cum-identity. Vedāntin also is of same opinion, the difference being that knowledge is eternal and known, though not eternal, is not momentary. For Buddhists and Vedāntins knowledge is swyamprakāśa. What is this swyamprakāśatva? If for Vedāntin negation of not being known by others is swyamprakāśatva, objectivity of itself is swyamprakāśatva for Buddha.

There are certain dogmas common to Vedāntin and Mādhyamika as that the objects are प्रातिभासिक i. e. illusory, illusory objects are capable of producing objects having similar existence,

* This is the English version, by the author, of a paper originally read in Sanskrit.

PART TWO
Other Papers

PHENOMENOLOGY OF RELIGION*

John B. Carman

Lecture One

The Standpoint of Phenomenology of Religion according to van der Leeuw and Kristensen.

I

The first two of my four lectures in Comparative Religion will be devoted to presenting some of the principles of phenomenology of religion, as it has been developed in the Netherlands. I shall not attempt to give an exhaustive survey of this discipline, either in terms of its content or in terms of its historical development. I am selecting for discussion certain important principles and certain critical questions that have been raised about this approach. I undertook this analysis some years ago to help myself determine the approach that I should follow in writing my doctoral dissertation on the theology of Rāmānuja. In the third and fourth lectures, I shall try to present certain central portions of my dissertation. These latter lectures will, I hope, show a particular application of the methodological principles I shall be discussing in the first two lectures. They may also clarify some of the unresolved problems in the phenomenological approach to the study of religion.

The first scholar to give the name "phenomenology of religion" to a specific area within the study of religion seems to have been P.D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, Professor of the History of Religions at the University of Amsterdam. He used this term in a book published in Dutch in 1887 and later translated into English under the title, *Manual of the Science of Religion*. The brief "phenomenological section" in this book is intended as a connecting link between the history of religion and the philosophy of religion.

* These are the first two of a series of four lectures delivered by Dr. John B. Carman, Visiting Professor at the Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, Banaras Hindu University, during 1967-68.

EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY*

J. L. Mehta

II

Jean-Paul Sartre

As a philosopher and man of letters, Jean-Paul Sartre is "with those who want to change both man's social condition and the conception which he has of himself." Even though he takes as his point of departure the Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and is deeply indebted to the analyses of existence in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, he is very far from viewing it as the task of philosophy merely to disclose, intuit and contemplate what is as such already given in an implicit manner. The driving power behind all his work, philosophical no less than literary, is freedom, and action born of freedom and in the service of freedom. His writings are stations on the way to this sole quest and if his reader is not to miss the continuity and unity of his thought, he must not overlook the itinerary for the destination, as Sartre warns.

Sartre's earliest philosophical works exhibit a marked pre-occupation with the method and doctrines of Phenomenology. In them Sartre seeks not only to apply the phenomenological method to an investigation of such mental functions as Imagination¹ and Emotion², as ways in which man relates himself to his world, but also subjects Husserl's phenomenology to searching criticism.³ In doing so he at the same time foreshadows some of his later concerns, thus giving indications of the process by which Phenomenology became transformed, in his major work,⁴ into a phenomenological Ontology of human existence. The descriptive phenomenology of the work on imagination, the imaginary

1. *L'Imagination*, 1936; *L'Imaginaire*, 1940. (*The Psychology of Imagination*, 1949).

2. *Esquisse d'une Theorie des Emotions*, 1939. (*Outline of a Theory of the Emotions*, 1948)-

3. *La Transcendance de l'Ego*, 1936-37 (*The Transcendence of the Ego*, 1957).

4. *L'Être et le Neant*, 1943 (*Being and Nothingness*, 1956).

*This is a revised version of one of three lectures given at the University of Delhi in December, 1966.

THE ADVAITIC THEORY OF UNIVERSALS

R. R. Dravid

Indian philosophers, like their Western counterparts, have debated at great length over the question of the existence and the nature of universals. They were led to this question by their reflections upon the nature of experience, thought and language. Sensuous experience presents a thing in its concrete and particular aspect, while thought, or conceptual knowledge, presents the same thing without any note of particularity. In other words, the objects outside the mind, as presented by sensuous knowledge, are particulars, whereas our concepts of them are general or universal. The same is true of our language also. It is a significant fact that almost all words in our language, except proper names, are general, whereas objects existing in the outside world are particulars. The question, therefore, naturally arises : how does general conception and designation of things become possible ? Does such a generalisation have any foundation in outside reality ? That is to ask, does the universal concept in the mind, or the general word in our language, stand for a generality that is objectively real ? Are there universals just as there are particulars ? How are the universals, if any, related to particulars ? These and other related questions have formed the topic of fundamental importance in Indian philosophy. The question about universals, for Indian philosophers, is both ontological and epistemological; essentially it is the question of the relation of thought to reality.

The starting-point of the controversy over universals in Indian philosophy was provided by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika doctrine of *sāmānya* or *jāti*, which advocates a realism of the most extreme form. This doctrine was opposed by all the systems of Indian philosophy, except the Mīmāṃsā which agreed with it in fundamentals. The extreme realism of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is opposed by the rival theories of moderate realism, conceptualism and nominalism. We shall discuss here briefly the Advaitic criticism of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika doctrine and its own view on the question of universals.

ĀBHĀSAVĀDA

L. N. Sharma

The present paper aims at elucidating an important aspect of the idealistic epistemology of Kashmir Śaivism, viz. the doctrine called *ābhāsavāda*. The Śaiva Absolutism of Kashmir (also referred to as 'Śaivism' in the paper) represents a bold attempt of idealism to meet the challenge of materialism, atheism and skepticism at the same time. Taking advantage of the controversy between the Buddhist and Vedānta absolutisms, it rejects the absoluteness of both *becoming* and *being* and establishes the integrality of Being.

Nowadays the attempt to expound an idealistic system might be ridiculed as out-dated. But such an attitude reveals a lack of insight into the history of ideas. Any serious and sincere study of history of philosophy would show that no idea is refuted once-for-all. And it is obvious, as far as idealism is concerned, that the final word has not yet been uttered. Above all, a study in *ābhāsavāda* is not only justified but is also highly desirable. Unfortunately, even a long time after its origin, the richness and depth of the Śaiva absolutistic thought remains unnoticed by the scholarly world. Its important concepts are still unknown to the students of philosophy. It is, thus, of utmost importance to try to bring to light the basic concepts of the system and, as far as possible, present them in the form intelligible to the modern man.

I

Finding themselves unable to account for the phenomenon of knowledge, the Buddhists and the Vedāntins both ultimately arrive at the conclusion that knowledge is not possible or, that 'knowledge' is ultimately false. Of course, nobody denies that there are fruitful activities in practical life. What the skeptics and the fellow-travellers assert is that though knowledge appears to be possible, there is no valid explanation of it and hence it is not really possible. It is here, on this weak point of the skeptic, that the Śaiva Absolutist concentrates his attack. The Śaivite insists that there can be no dispute regarding the possibility of knowledge. Everybody admits that there are successful transactions in practical life, which are based upon unification of cognitions. Whether knowledge is possible or not is not the

ADVAITA AND INDIAN TRADITION

C. P. M. Namboodiry

Ever since the modern 'discovery' of Indian thought, certain stock charges have been levelled against it mostly, though not exclusively, by Western scholars. These well-known 'charges' refer to the overriding pessimism in Indian thought, its total lack of concern with ethics, its apathy towards social and humanitarian service, the phenomenal lack of any historical perspective and so on.¹ The Indian philosophers of the last generation, in their anxiety to answer these charges, were generally prone to represent the whole of Indian philosophy and religion as spiritually motivated, and to show how the values that inspired India were different from the rest of the world.² But since they conceived spirituality in a very peculiar way it actually resulted only in throwing the old charges into sharper focus. For instance, if spirituality is understood as necessarily implying a certain other-worldliness it also follows that the ethical ideal of humanitarian service would have only a relative importance. Or again, if the world has necessarily to remain evil the very concept of history turns out to be meaningless.

Such an interpretation of the spirit of Indian thought was facilitated only by the exclusive reliance on certain aspects of it. In putting forward such a 'myth' about Indian spirituality the Indian philosophers were judging the Indian philosophical and religious tradition from a particular standpoint; it was hence but natural that the inherent limitations of this standpoint were reflected in their account of it as well. This standpoint was that of Vedānta, more particularly that of Advaita Vedānta. They were convinced that Advaita represented the 'cream of Indian

1. Hegel's characterisation of the predominant feature of Indian thought as "the soul's drawing itself within itself, raising itself up into liberty or thought which constitutes itself for itself" can be taken to be the most reformed expression of this attitude. See *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (London, 1983) p. 144.
2. "Hindu religion, like all true religion, is essentially otherworldly. While religion is taken more seriously in the East humanism is the predominant feature of Western life". S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (Oxford, 1939) p. 75.

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