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WHY IS BUDDHISM A RELIGION?

The purpose of the present paper is to single out from the discourses of the Buddha (Pāḷi *Sutta-piṭakam*) the texts which best represent his attitude to religion in general and in its specific aspects. This documentary material, with a short explanation of the criteria for its selection, represents only a preliminary work for an essay intended to proceed to the analysis of problems implicitly contained in the present *prima facie* documentation.

The selected texts are divided in three groups :

I. Texts indicating that the specific teaching of the Buddha abstracts from any belief in revealed truths beyond the reach of our direct knowledge and potential experience.

II. Texts abstracting from the belief in an eternal, omnipotent and transcendent Absolute Being or God, and rejecting, at least, his absolutist and eternalist attributes.

III. Texts basic for the teaching on *anattā*, or negation of a permanent Self or Soul (*ātaman*, *jīva*, *pudgala*—Sanskrit terms used in religious teachings of his time in India).

It can be seen already from this classificatory survey that a negative, or at least critical, attitude to the traditional understanding of religion is emphasized in the selected texts. If this *prima facie* documentation can be considered sufficient to justify the title of the paper, in demonstrating the fact that a primordial and essential religious character of the teaching of the Buddha is questionable, its necessary consequence will be the requirement, postulated in the second part of the essay, to revise the definition of religion, and, implicitly, to analyse its relation to philosophy, in order to eliminate, first of all, the tendentious and sophisticated dilemma : Is the *Buddha-dhammo* a religion OR a philosophy?

In the present documentary paper it will be possible only to draft the scope of this analytical task in shortest possible terms, resulting from the salient points of the selected texts.

Texts

I

(1) *Udānaṃ*, V, 3, contains the standard formulation of an often repeated statement by which the Buddha has most clearly marked the difference between the tenets of religiosity in general—as far as adopted also by him as a common cultural heritage—and his own teaching, or more correctly “the teaching specific to the *buddhas par excellence*” *yā buddhānaṃ samukkaṃsika dhammadesanā*: The Buddha “for the sake of Suppabuddho, leper, gave a gradual instruction dealing with almsgiving, virtue, heaven; with the danger, debasement and defilement inherent in sensual pleasures; and the advantage of renunciation. And when the Lord knew that the mind of Suppabuddho, the leper, was ready, softened, freed from obstructions, elated and clear, then he explained those *dhamma*—teachings which are essential to the *buddhas*: suffering, its arising, its ending, the way.”¹

In whatever terms the *Buddha-dhammo* may be defined, whether as philosophy or as religion, or else as victim of any other encyclopaedic classification, its proper understanding should remain both within the positive and the negative terms of this essential scope.

(2) This attitude towards, and not identification with, the standard requirements of religion and morality, even within the limits of his own teaching, is further specified by the Buddha in his restriction of moral and religious *heteronomy* (dependence), technically called *sīlabbata-parāmāsa*, whose widest meaning is extended, beyond any possibility of exegetic doubt, also to the purport of the moral precepts (*sīlam*) in the basic text of the *Brahma-jāla-suttaṃ* (D. 1) as follows: “It is in respect only of such less important and inferior things concerning injunctions of moral conduct that a worldly man, when praising the Tathāgato, would speak. And what are such less important and inferior things concerning injunctions of moral conduct that he would praise?—Giving up the killing of living beings *samaṇo* Gotamo abstains from the destruction of life...from taking what is not given...from unchastity...from lying words...from wrong means of livelihood... But there are other mental states, deep, difficult to perceive, difficult to understand, peaceful, subtle, not to be attained by means of mere logic, accomplished, to be comprehended only by the wise.....”

(3) Direct reference to the technical term *sīla-bbata-parāmāso* as a "fetter" on the way of spiritual liberation is contained in the following statement from *Sabbāsava-suttaṃ* (M. 2) (repeated in several other texts): "For him who has penetrated to the origin of suffering, to the origin of the arising of suffering, to the origin of the cessation of suffering, to the origin of the way leading to the cessation of suffering, three fetters are eliminated: the embodiment view, uncertainty, and moral and religious heteronomy (*sīla-bbata-parāmāso*)."

Some of the following texts will show it more extensively how the Buddha—while stressing the moral and religious prerequisites for the deeper understanding of his own teaching—intends to subordinate, in the traditional hierarchy of values, the purport of religious elements under the primacy of rationally evident moral precepts.

(4) While in the preceding text the stress was laid on the autonomy of *conscience* as prerequisite for understanding the specific teaching of the Buddha, in the following text—*Mahā-taṇhā-saṅkhasuttaṃ* ("Greater discourse on the destruction of craving", M. 38)—the same idea of autonomy finds a still wider explicit extension over the whole range of *consciousness*, in the formulation of the *autonomy of intellectual understanding*:

—Would you, bhikkhus, knowing and seeing thus, say: "The teacher is respected by us. We speak out of respect for the teacher"?

—No, venerable sir.

—...Or would you say: "A monk told us so, and other monks did too, but we do not speak thus"?

—No, venerable sir.

—...Or would you acknowledge another teacher?

—No, venerable sir.

—...Or would you return to the ordinary monks' and brāhmins' practices and festival exhibitions, and consider these to be the essence?

—No, venerable sir.

—Do you speak only of what you have yourself known, seen and experienced?

—Yes, venerable sir.

—Good, bhikkhus. So you have been guided by me with this *dhammo* (true teaching) with effect visible here and now, not delayed, inviting inspection, onward leading, to be understood individually by the wise.

(5) Among the best known expressions of the postulate of moral and intellectual autonomy the following statements from the *Dhammapadam* are quoted :

“Make an island for yourself, strive hard and be wise...(238)

“You yourself should make an effort; the Awakened Ones can only show the way...(276)

“A man defiles himself through his evil action. He purifies himself by avoiding evil. Purity and impurity depend on oneself. No one can purify another.” (165)

“One oneself is the guardian of oneself. What other guardian would there be? With oneself fully controlled, one obtains a refuge which is hard to gain.” (160)

(6) The most extensive analysis of the problem of “faith”, “belief”, “trust” or “confidence” — as the term *saddhā* uses to be translated in Pāḷi contexts, as a designation for “religion” — is given by the Buddha in the dialogue with the young brāhman Kāpaṭhiko, in the *Caṅkīsuttam* (M. 95): “...The brāhman youth Kāpaṭhiko spoke thus to the Lord :

— Master Gotamo, that which is an ancient *mantram* of the brāhmins, transmitted by oral tradition, like a basket handed over from one to the other, and with regard to which brāhmins are unanimous in drawing the conclusion: “This alone is the truth, all else is falsehood” — what does Master Gotamo say about this?

— But, Bhāradvājo, is there even one brāhman among them who speaks thus: “I know this, I see this; this only is the truth, all else is falsehood?”

— No, Master Gotamo.

But, Bhāradvājo, is there even one teacher of brāhmins, even one teacher of teachers back through seven generations of teachers who speaks thus: “I know this, I see this; this only is the truth, all else is falsehood”?

— No, Master Gotamo.

— But, Bhāradvājo, those who were formerly seers of the brāhmans, original makers and transmitters of *mantras*, whose ancient *mantras* as sung, taught and composed the brāhmans of today still sing, still speak ; they still speak what was spoken, they still teach what was taught by Aṭṭhako, Vāmako, Vāmadevo, Vessāmitto, Yamataggi, Aṅgiraso, Bhāradvājo, Vāseṭṭho, Kassapo, Bhagu. Do even these speak thus : “We know this, we see this ; this only is the truth, all else is falsehood ?”

— No, Master Gotamo.

— So it comes to this, Bhāradvājo, that there is not a single brāhman...not a single teacher of brāhmans, not a single teacher of teachers back through seven generations of teachers who speaks thus : “I know this, I see this...” And those who were formerly seers of the brāhmans, original makers of *mantras*..., not even these could affirm it ...Bhāradvājo, it is like a string of blind men holding one to another — neither does the foremost see, nor does the middle one see, nor does the hindmost one see...What do you think about this, Bhāradvājo ? This being so, does not the faith of the brāhmans turn out to be groundless ?

— But, Master Gotamo, brāhmans do not merely go by faith in this matter ; brāhmans also go by report.

— First you, Bhāradvājo, set off about faith, now you are speaking of report. These five things, Bhāradvājo, have a twofold maturing here and now. What four ? *Faith, inclination, report, consideration of reasons, reflection on and approval of an opinion*...Moreover, Bhāradvājo, even although something may be thoroughly believed in...thoroughly inclined toward...well reported...well considered...well reflected upon, it may be empty, void, false. On the other hand, something not thoroughly believed in,... not thoroughly inclined toward,...not well reported,...not well considered,...not well reflected upon, it may be fact, truth, not otherwise. Preserving a truth, Bhāradvājo, is not enough for an intelligent man inevitably to come to the conclusion : “This alone is truth, all else is falsehood.”

— But to what extent, Master Gotamo, is there *preservation of truth* ? To what extent does one preserve truth ? We are asking Master Gotamo about preservation of truth.

— Bhāradvājo, if a man has faith and says : “Such is my faith”, speaking thus he preserves truth, but not yet does he inevitably come

to the conclusion : “This alone is the truth, all else is falsehood.” To this extent, Bhāradvājo, is there preservation of truth..., but not yet is there awakening to truth ...

— But to what extent, Master Gotamo, is there *awakening to truth*?

— As to this, Bhāradvājo, suppose a monk is living depending on a village or market town. A householder or householder’s son, having approached him, examines him concerning three states : states of greed, states of aversion and states of confusion. He thinks : “Does the venerable one have such states of greed (of aversion, of confusion) that, his mind obsessed by such states..., although not knowing, he would say, “I know”, or although not seeing, he would say, “I see”, or would he incite another to such a course as for a long time would be for his harm and suffering?” While examining him, he recognizes : “This venerable one does not have such states of greed (of aversion, of confusion). As is that venerable one’s conduct of body, as is his conduct of speech, so is it not that of a greedy person (of a person with aversion, of a confused person). And when this venerable one teaches *dhhammo*, that *dhhammo* is deep, difficult to see, difficult to understand, peaceful, excellent, beyond dialectic, subtle, intelligible to the wise...” After examining him and beholding that he is purified of states of greed, aversion and confusion, then *he reposes faith in him*; with faith born *he draws close*; drawing close *he sits down near by*; sitting down near by *he lends ear*; lending ear *he hears dhhammo*; having heard *dhhammo he remembers it*; ... *he tests its meaning*, ... *he approves of it*; from approval *decision is born*; having decided *he makes an effort*; having made an effort *he weighs it up*; having weighed it up *he strives*; being resolute he realizes with his person the highest truth; and penetrating it by wisdom *he sees*. It is to this extent, Bhāradvājo, that there is awakening to truth.....but not yet is there attainment of truth.

—But to that extent, good Gotamo, is there *attainment of truth*?...

—There is attainment of truth, Bhāradvājo, by following, developing and continually practising these things.....”

Thus *faith* is reduced by the Buddhō to a *minimum of reasonable trust* for a limited period of training (instrumental like a “raft”), justified by previous “examination” or test of the teacher’s moral character and intellectual ability. It has no permanent value as a mood, in and for itself, since it is only the first step in a series of twelve (as enumerated in the underlined text above). It will remain vain and fruitless (like an empty basket) if it will not lead us to “see, by means of intuitive wisdom” “in this very life”, “here and now”, “bodily”. It is also

important to add that such religious training should not be understood as a "multipurpose" technique, as it is often misconstrued by the interpreters of the *yoga* "in general", but remains dependent on "the only way" (*ekāyano maggo* of *sati-paṭṭhānām* or mindfulness), starting from moral purification and leading to the "purification from suffering" and attainment of "extinction" (*nibbānaṃ*). (Cf. *Sati-paṭṭhāna-suttaṃ*, M. 10)

II

The salient feature of the *Caṅki-suttaṃ*, by which it overlaps into our second section, is the absence of any reference to gods in this discussion on the supreme *authority in religion*. The Buddha does not discuss here the problem of the belief in gods but the problem of a *teacher's trustworthiness* exclusively.

The very existence of gods is an open problem for itself in the discourses of the Buddha. As we shall see from the following texts, it is always dealt with by him as a problem of secondary importance only. On such occasions accusations have been raised against the Buddha of being a "destroyer" and disbeliever in gods and "the other world". The existence of a strictly materialistic disbelief in such "supra-mundane" (*lokuttaram*) entities was not exceptional among his contemporaries in India. Teachings of this kind by several well-known masters, on various grounds, are sufficiently documented in a number of basic discourses of the Buddha (the best known is the *Samaññaphala-suttaṃ*, D. 2.). In rejecting such accusations, however, the Buddha is not interested to affirm the opposite view as his own, viz. his *belief* in the existence of gods or of the "other world" (*para-loko*). He insists always, as we shall see from the following texts, on making a point of it that we neither should nor reasonably can *believe* in such entities, and that *existence* as such should not be considered either as a matter of belief or of reasoning, but can be grasped meaningfully and without contradiction only by immediate, pre-reflexive pure *experience*. Existence can only be *existed*. Where experience is not immediately present, you can believe only a trustworthy person. Thus the problem of belief is reduced to the problem of the trustworthiness of an *immediate witness*. Abstract beliefs in trans-human cosmic principles, necessarily based on rationally constructed ontological proofs, are but attempts to infiltrate mediate grounds into the immediate *moral* experience (then all existential experience is of a basically moral nature) and thus to subordinate ethics to a heteronomous metaphysical "point of view". It is well known that the Buddha, from his strictly and explicitly humanistic and acosmic standpoint, rejects all such "views" (*diṭṭhi*).

In the *Caṅki-suttaṃ* the relation of heteronomous and autonomous attitudes to religion is characterized by the distinction of the “preservation of truth” from the “awakening to truth”. By these terms the Buddho has expressed in this context the essential difference between the *sincerity* and the *facticity* of a belief. A faithful and reliable understanding of words or “propositions” about ..., is in no way an adequate correlate, or even a guarantee, either for the actual *existence* or for a correct *representation* of *facts*. Therefore statements of belief have to be very carefully distinguished and *very explicitly formulated* in a different manner than statements of, or on, facts. It is always with a view to this basic principle that the Buddho either rejects or tries to reformulate the wording of *epistemologically incorrect questions*, or refuses to answer questions considered by him to be inadequate to the meaningful subject of his discourse on the *dhammo*.

As to the problem of heteronomous belief (“preservation of truth”) the Buddho is far from ignoring its purport as a historical fact of social reality. The last two texts of this section will show how carefully he was able to evaluate both its negative and positive aspects.

(7) In the *Saṅgārava-suttaṃ* (M. 100), concerning the existence of gods, the stumbling point arises from a *wrong formulation of the question* by the interlocutor. The Buddho therefore tries to establish its proper scope by applying the criterion of disjoining the subjective element of sincerity in the “preservation” of a heteronomous belief from the facticity of an actual experience in autonomous “awakening to truth”—two incommensurable value-aspects which cannot be encompassed in *one* question and *one* answer without equivocation.

At the beginning of the *suttaṃ* teachers of religious life (*brahmacariyā*) are divided in three types: Those who claim “perfection of knowledge in hearsay”, the “masters of the three Vedas”; the teachers of *takka-mīmāṃsā*, or “logical analysis” of the same kind of texts, whose “perfection of knowledge”, based on “mere faith alone”, corresponds to the class of “preservers”. “Awakening to truth” is peculiar only to the third type of those “knowing directly by themselves *alone*”, “here and now”.

—Bhāradvājo, I say that there is a difference among those who claim to know the fundamentals of the religious discipline and to have attained here and now the integrity, the perfection of direct knowledge. (1) There are some monks and brāhmins who depend *on report*; these claim to know through report the fundamentals of the religious discipline and thus to have attained here and now the integrity, the perfection of direct knowledge. Such are the three-Vedā

brāhmans. (2) There are some monks and brāhmans who claim to have attained the same by *mere faith alone*...Such are the masters of logical analysis. (3) There are some monks and brāhmans who *by themselves alone* have attained direct knowledge of truth in matters that have not been heard before... I belong to the last of these (three groups)...

— Master Gotamo, are there gods?

[But the Master had just anticipated the reason why neither a question nor an answer on the existence of gods can be formulated adequately in identical terms from the first two standpoints and the third, since from this latter standpoint of “direct knowledge” the very idea of a belief in transmitted words has been excluded as an unacceptable criterion (*pramāṇam*). However, it is obvious from the context that just this epistemological distinction has created in Saṅgāravo’s head a bewilderment out of which his question arises rather as an astonished exclamation.]

—The statement that there are gods [or, “statements about gods” (*adhidevā*), according to some manuscripts], Bhāradvājo, is for me established by experience.

—But why do you, Master Gotamo, on being asked if there *are* gods say that for you *statements* about gods are established by experience? Even if this is so, is it not still empty and false *talk*?

—If on being asked, Bhāradvājo, whether there are gods one should say: “There are gods”, or: “The statement that there are gods is for me established by experience”—then, for certain, an intelligent person can *draw the conclusion* that there are gods.

—But why did not Master Gotamo answer me thus at the beginning?

—Bhāradvājo, it is *widely agreed* in the world that there are gods.

In his first, misunderstood, answer [*“Thānaso me tam, Bhāradvāja, viditaṃ yadidaṃ atthi devā (or: adhidevā) ti*] the Buddho attempts to *restrict the meaning of the question* to the reasonable limits of the questioner’s heteronomous, purely verbal, belief. This intention becomes clearly visible only from the second, unequivocal and concluding answer: “It is *widely agreed* in the world that there are gods.” Unfortunately, the first intention of the Buddho has remained misunderstood not only by Saṅgāravo but still more by the successive generations of pious exegets and commentators until our days, so that the text of this “critical” sentence has become a stumbling block, considered to be corrupted

beyond repair by copyists. This, however, does not affect at all the clear intention reaffirmed in the final answer.

(8) The argument in the following text, *Dhānañjāni-suttaṃ* (M. 97) is the *inferiority of gods*, a consequence from the *acosmic standpoint* of the Buddhō who considers the form of existence attributed to gods as temporary, intermediate in the cosmic process and therefore unimportant for the attainment of the ideal of “extinction” (*nibbānam*). We shall therefore have to define the acosmic position of the Buddhō in a few additional texts (10-11).

Requested by the Buddhō venerable Sāriputto visited the brāhman Dhānañjāni who was gravely ill.—“...Then the venerable Sāriputto thought:—These brāhmanas are devoted to the world of Brahmā. Let me show the brāhman Dhānañjāni the way to Brahmā’s retinue.—He said:—Dhānañjāni, I shall show you the way to Brahmā’s retinue. Listen and attend carefully to what I shall say...What is the way to Brahmā’s retinue? Here a bhikkhu abides in a state of mind endued with loving-kindness, pervading one quarter of the world, and so the second quarter, and the third, the fourth ..., and so the whole world everywhere in every way ... he continues to pervade in a state of mind endued with loving-kindness, far-reaching, wide-spread, immeasurable, without enmity, without malevolence.... Again he abides in a state of mind endued with compassion, with gladness, with equanimity...pervading the world...This is the way to Brahmā’s retinue.

— Then, Master Sāriputto, pay homage in my name with your head at the Blessed One’s feet, and say:—Venerable sir, the brāhman Dhānañjāni is afflicted, suffering and gravely ill, he pays homage with his head at the Blessed One’s feet.

Then the venerable Sāriputte having established the brāhman Dhānañjāni in the *low world of Brahmā*, although still more could have been done, rose from his seat and departed. And soon after he had left, the brāhman Dhānañjāni died and reappeared in the world of Brahmā.

The venerable Sāriputto went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, he sat down at one side and said :

— Venerable sir, the brāhman Dhānañjāni is afflicted, suffering and gravely ill the pays homage with his head at the Blessed One’s feet.....

— But why did you, Sāriputto, having established the brāhman Dhānañjāni in the low world of Brāhma, although still more could have been done, rise from your seat and depart?

— Venerable sir, I thought thus: These brāhmanas are devoted to the world of Brahmā. Let me show the brāhman Dhānañjāni the way to Brahma's retinue.

— The brāhman Dhānañjāni is dead, Sāriputto, and he has reappeared in the world of Brahmā...."

(9) The problem of gods in Buddhism is determined by the humanist attitude of the Buddha to religion. The following three texts will show how this attitude leads ultimately to an acosmic and consequently anti-ontological position, {formulated in the *cātu-koṭṭikāṃ* (tetralemma) rule, applied regularly by the Buddha to the *avyākataṇi*, or indeterminate questions, and to dialectical antinomies of speculative thought.² "Neither being, nor non-being, nor both being-and-non-being, nor neither-being-nor-non-being" can express the existential purport and content of our human-reality.

Buddhist humanism is not metaphorical like the equivocal *Christian humanitarianism* of the merciful God-Saviour. Buddhist humanism goes in a straight line down to the ultimate ontological consequences. The acosmic essence of these consequences and the final antiontological attitude resulting therefrom have been clearly elicited also by the existential humanism in the contemporary European philosophy (K. Jaspers, G. Marcel, J. Wahl, N. Berdyaev).³

The following text, *Brahma-nimantanika-suttaṃ* (M. 49) will be significant also for the Buddha's argument against a permanent soul-entity (*anattā*). In this discourse, whose title has been translated as "Challenge to Brahmā", the Buddha is described as visiting the celestial assembly of the god "creator" Brahmā Baka, who has conceived the false conviction that he himself is eternal (having forgotten the distant past when he came to his actual position), and that all other beings in his universe were his own creations — a subject often recurring in the *suttas*.—"...Then Māro, the Evil One, entered into a member of the Brahmā's assembly, and he told me (the Buddha):

— Bhikkhu, bhikkhu, do not offend him, for this Brahmā is the great Brahmā, conqueror, unconquerable allpervading overlord and creator endowed with highest power, chief, disposer, master and father of all that have become and ever will be. Bhikkhu, there were monks and brāhmanas in the world before you who condemned earth through *disgust with earth*, water through disgust with water, fire through disgust of fire, air through disgust of air, beings through disgust with beings, gods through *disgust with gods*—these at the breaking up of the body, when their breath was cut off, were established in an inferior body. Bhikkhu, there were monks and brāhmanas in the world before you who

praised earth through delight in earth,.....gods through delight in gods — these after breaking up of the body,...were established in a superior body. So, bhikkhu, I tell this: Be sure, good sir, to do only what Brahmā says to you, do not go beyond Brahma's word...

(To all this the Buddho's answer was:)

— Brahmā, having had from earth direct knowledge of earth, from water (fire, air, beings, gods) direct knowledge of water (fire, air, beings, gods), and having had direct knowledge also of what cannot be adequately experienced as the earthness of earth, the waterness of water, the fireness of fire, the airiness of air, the beingness of beings, the godliness of gods—I realized by the same direct knowledge that I was not earth,....., that I was not god, that I was neither in earth nor apart from earth, I did not claim earth to be mine, I did not affirm earth;..... that I was neither in gods nor apart from gods, I did not claim gods to be mine, I did not affirm gods.

— Brahmā, having had from *all* direct knowledge of all, and having had direct knowledge also of what cannot be adequately experienced as the allness of all — I realized by the same direct knowledge that I was not all, that I was neither in all nor apart from all, I did not claim all to be mine, I did not affirm all.—Thus, Brahmā I am not standing on the same level with you as regards direct knowledge, and it is not less that I know, but more than you."

At the end, the Buddho summarizes his attitude in the *gāthā* :

"I have seen anguish in being
and being in those who seek to disjoin from being;
I have nothing to state on being,
I don't enjoy being, I don't cling on being."

(10) The most impressive and explicit declaration of the Buddha's *acosmic attitude* is contained in his first utterance after the Awakening, included in the *Dhammapadam* (153-4):

"Through many births I wandered in the stream of
existence
seeking but not finding the builder of this house
(the world).
It is sorrowful to be born again and again.
But now, o House-builder, you have been seen.
You will not build the house any more (for me).

All your rafters are broken, your ridge-pole is shattered.

The mind is beyond doubt, attained is the end of craving."

(11) The best known statement of the same humanistic principle in the *Aṅguttara-nikāyo*, IV, 5, 5, is formulated in such a sober philosophical explicitness that it would be rather difficult for me *not* to presume that Schopenhauer was acquainted with it when he expressed the same basic idea using the same comparison in his "Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy"⁴.

—Indeed, friend, I declare there is no world wherein there is no birth, death, decay or repeated deaths and rebirths, the end whereof it is possible to know, see or reach by walking. But, friend, I do not declare that without reaching the end of the world one can make an end of sorrow. My friend, I do proclaim that in this very fathom-long body, with its feelings and mind, is the world, the world's arising, the world's ceasing and the path leading to the world's ceasing."

(12) The following *Apaṇṇaka-suttaṃ* (M.60) has not been selected here to serve as a further illustration of the same problem of gods, of their existence or the inferior position of their being in the universe, although Buddhist theologians use it regularly and with preference for that purpose. In this text and in the following one we shall concentrate our attention on the next problem of our inquiry—the *social facticity or moral and religious heteronomy* with regard to which the Buddha wished to establish a rational principle of *superiority of the moral criteria above religious injunctions* in cases of practical conflicts and *apories* arising within the socially and conventionally determined sphere of their applications.

The title has been translated as *correct* ("mature") *criterion* (*apaṇṇako dhammo* in the text) to be applied in such cases by the *puthujjano*, or worldly minded man, guided in his affairs by the average common-sense.

On the occasion of his visit to the brāhman village Sālā, in the country of Kosala, the Buddha asked those brāhmins:

—Householders, have you any dear and trustworthy teacher?

—No, venerable sir.

—If you have no such teacher, then you can take a correct criterion and apply it in the following manner: There are, householders, some monks and brāhmins who maintain and teach the following opinion: "There is nothing given, nothing offered,

nothing sacrificed, no fruit or ripening of good and bad action, *no this world, no other world*, no mother, no father, no spontaneously arising beings, no monks and brāhmans whose conduct and behaviour are correct and who have themselves realized by direct knowledge and made known this world and the other world.”—But there are some other monks and brāhmans whose theory is directly opposed to those...Now of those monks and brāhmans whose theory and opinion is that there is nothing given,...no fruit or ripening of good and bad action, no this world, no other world..., it is to be expected that they will avoid these three righteous criteria, namely, good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct, and good mental conduct, and they will adopt and apply these three wrongful criteria, namely, bodily bad conduct, verbal bad conduct, and mental bad conduct. What is the reason for it? It is that those reverend monks and brāhmans do not see the danger, the degradation and the defilement in doing wrong, nor the advantage and the purifying effect of renunciation for the sake of doing good...About this a wise man considers: “If there is not another world, then, on the dissolution of the body, this venerable person will be safe. But if there is another world, then, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he will reappear in a state of deprivation, on a sorrowful way, in perdition, in hell...But if it be granted that there is no other world, that the words of these monks and brāhmans are true, still this venerable person comes under wise men’s censure *here and now* as an unvirtuous person with wrong view and theory that there is *nothing given*. But if there is indeed another world then this venerable person has had an unlucky trow on both counts: since he has come under wise men’s censure here and now, and since on the dissolution of the body, after death, he will reappear in a state of deprivation...He has wrongfully taken and applied the correct criterion in such a way that while it extends only to one side it excludes the profitable count...

...There are some monks and brāhmans who maintain and teach the opinion that there is no *integral cessation of being*. But there are also some monks and brāhmans whose theory is directly opposed to those, and they say: “There is integral cessation of being.”... About this a wise man considers: “When these venerable monks and brāhmans maintain and teach the opinion that there is no integral cessation of being, *that has not been seen by me*. And when these other monks and brāhmans maintain and teach the opinion that there is integral cessation of being, *that has not been known by me*. If I, not knowing and not seeing, were to take one side and decide: ‘Only this is true, anything else is wrong’ that would not be correct. Now if the monks and brāhmans who maintain and teach the

opinion that there is no integral cessation of being are right, then there is a certain possibility that the state of gods consisting of formless perception may be attained by me. But if the monks and brāhmans who maintain and teach the opinion that there is integral cessation of being are right, then it is possible that I might *here and now attain complete extinction (nibbanam)*. Thus the opinion of those venerable monks and brāhmans who maintain and teach that there is no integral cessation of being is *tending to lust*, to bondage, to defilement, to cleaving, to grasping — while the opinion of those...who teach that there is integral cessation of being is tending to the absence of lust, of bondage, of defilement, of cleavage, of grasping. After reflecting thus, he practices *the way of aversion, dispassion and cessation of being*.

Granted that there are “blind” people in the world, the Buddho, in this discourse, tries to help with a seeing man’s advice, as far as he can, also that “string of blind men” referred to in the *Caṅki-suttaṃ*.

Another detail from the concluding part of the foregoing text is worthwhile being singled out from the standpoint of comparative religion: It is those who believe in the “cessation of being”, and not those who believe in its eternity, that behave in conformity with the ascetic teaching and criterion of the Buddho. From the viewpoint of any cosmically minded religion or maybe of any religion “in proper sense” in accordance with the classical western Bible-centered standard) just the opposite should appear obvious.

(13) The *Kandaraka-suttaṃ* (M. 51) contains an often repeated classification of human characters corresponding to *religious superstitions* as means of justification for man’s inborn cruelty — in its masochistic and sadistic forms, as we would term them today.

— ... These four kinds of persons are found in the world : (1) a person who is a *self-tormentor*, intent on the practice of self-torment; (2) a person who is a *tormentor of others*...; (3) a person who is *both a self-tormentor and a tormentor of others*; (4) a person who is *neither a self-tormentor nor a tormentor of others*...The neither self-tormentor nor tormentor of others is *here and now* allayed, extinguished, cooled; he abides experiencing pleasure as one become divine in himself ...

... And which, bhikkhus, is the self-tormentor ?... In this case some person comes to be unclothed ... He does not consent to accept food offered or specially prepared for him or to accept an invitation to a meal ... He comes to be a one-house man or a one piece man or a two-house man or a two-piece man ... or a seven-house man or a seven piece man. He subsists on one little offering...on seven little offerings.

He takes food only once a day, only once in two days...once in seven days. Then he lives intent on such a practice as eating rice at regular fortnightly intervals....He is one who subsists on forest roots or fruits, eating the fruits that have fallen...He is one who plucks out the hair of his head and beard; and he is one who stands upright, refusing a seat; and he is one who squats on his haunches....; he makes his bed on covered thorns...Thus in many a way does he live intent on the practice of mortifying and tormenting his body. Bhikkhus, this is the person who is a self-tormentor...⁵

And which is the person who is a tormentor of others...? In this case, bhikkhus, some person is a cattle-butcher, or pig-killer, fowler, deer-stalker, hunter, fisherman, thief, executioner, jailer, or one of those others who follow a bloody calling. This is a person who is called a tormentor of others...

And which is the person who is both self-tormentor, and also a tormentor of others?...In this case, bhikkhus, some person is a noble anointed king or a very rich brāhman. He, having had a new sacrificial hall built to the east of the town, having had his head and beard shaved, having put on as haggy skin, having smeared his body with ghee and oil, scratching his back with a deer-horn, enters the sacrificial hall together with his chief consort and a brāhman priest.... Then he says: "Let so many bulls be slain for the sacrifice, let so many steers, heifers, goats, rams be slain for the sacrifice, let so many trees be felled for the sacrificial posts, let so much *kusa*-grass be reaped for the sacrificial spot." Those who are his slaves or messengers or workpeople, they, scared of the stick, scared of danger, with tearful faces and crying, set about their preparations. This, bhikkhus, is called the person who is both a self-tormentor and a tormentor of others...

And which is the person who is neither a self-tormentor nor a tormentor of others..., and who is here and now allayed, extinguished, cooled; who abides experiencing pleasure as one become divine in himself?...(This is the follower of) a perfect one, fully awakened, endowed with right knowledge and conduct, well-farer, knower of the world,...teacher of gods and men—a *buddho*..."

III

(14) The *soul theory* under its Vedāntic designation of *ātma-vāda* (for the Pāli term *attā-vādo* see, e.g., S. 38,4,12) is discussed, analysed and rejected in all its aspects in a series of discourses. The best

known and most extensive is the *Brahma-jāla-suttaṃ* (D.1).—47 theories representing specific positive views on the nature of the self (*attā*) are classified in 7 groups dealing with “the Self and the World” (3 groups), with the self-conscious aspect (3 groups), and with the substance aspect of its being (1 group). Sub-classes of these main groups are: *sassata-vādo* (8 “eternalist theories”), *adhicca-samuḍḍhannikā* (2 theories on “spontaneous generation” analogous to the Christian dogma on a “created” soul), *saññi-vādo* (16 theories on a conscious soul), *āsaññi-vādo* (8 theories on an unconscious soul), *n’eva-saññi-nāsaññi-vādo* (8 theories on a neither conscious nor unconscious soul), and *uccheda-vādo* (7 theories affirming the “destructibility of a substantially existing soul”).

(15) In the *Sabbāsaṃvāsa-suttaṃ* (M.2) “six kinds of views”, concerning the permanence of soul or self-principle are specified and rejected as follows: In him whose mind does not penetrate to the origin, one of these six views arises: (1) the view, “For me there is a Self”, arises in him as true and established; or the view, “For me there is no Self”..., or the view, “I cognize the Self by the Self”...; or the view, “I cognize the Non-Self by the Self”...; or the view, “I cognize the Self by the Non-Self”...; or else he has some such view as, “It is this my Self that speaks, knows and experiences here and there the ripening of good and bad actions; this my Self is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change, and will endure as long as eternity”.—This is called pursuance of views, adherence to views, thicket of views, contortion of views, vacillation of views, fetter of views. No untaught ordinary man, bound by the fetter of views is freed from birth, aging and death, from sorrows and lamentation, from pains, griefs and despairs; he is not freed from suffering, I say.

(16) In the *Mahā-nidāna-suttaṃ* (D.15) four “statements on the Self” are reported with respect to its form and limits: “Either in the words, ‘My Self has form and is minute’...or in the words, ‘My Self has form and is boundless’..., or in the words, ‘My Self is formless and minute’..., or in the words, ‘My Self is formless and boundless’...”.—The refutation of these theories is indicated with the reference to other analogous cases: “We have said enough about the case of one who is given to (such speculative) theories...”

(17) The *Paṭṭhapaṇḍita-suttaṃ* (D.9) is one of the most remarkable texts for the critique of the soul theory, based on a fine and extensive analysis of the functional nature of consciousness. On one point in this connection the Buddha refers to “these three assumptions on the Self: that it has a material shape, or a mental one, or that it

is shapeless...Now I teach a doctrine that leads to the abandonment of (each of these three) assumptions on the Self.”

The Buddha's main argument against the soul theory has found its best explicit formulation in a number of texts in the *Khanda-saṃyuttaṃ* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (S.XXII). We shall conclude our survey with two quotations from that section whose typical argument, that there is no soul “*apart*” from the psycho-physical formations (*khandā*) either, is repeated in some more *suttas* of the same section.

(18) *Anurādho* (S. XXII, 86)

— What do you think, Anurādho: Do you regard the body as the *tathāgato*? (According to the generally applied commentarial explanation, the attribute *tathāgato* is understood in such connections as designating a human being in the widest sense.)

— Surely not, venerable sir.

— Do you regard the feeling, the perception, the activities, the consciousness as the *tathāgato*?

— Surely not, venerable sir.

— Do you regard the *tathāgato* as being in the body (or feeling, perception, activities, consciousness)?

— Surely not, venerable sir.

— Do you regard the *tathāgato* as being *apart* from the body (feeling perception, activities, consciousness)?

— Surely not, venerable sir.

— Do you regard the *tathāgato* as being *different* from the body (feeling, perception, activities, consciousness)?

— Surely not venerable sir.

— Do you regard the body, the feeling, the perception, the activities and the consciousness — taken together as a whole — as the *tathāgato*?

— Surely not, venerable sir.

— Do you regard the *tathāgato* as being *without* body, feeling, perception, activities and consciousness?

— Surely not, venerable sir.

— Then, Anurādho, since in this very life a *tathāgato* cannot be identified by you as existing in truth, in reality, is it proper for you to state that a *tathāgato* is the superman, the most excellent man who has attained the highest aim, and that a *tathāgato*, if he has to be designated, should be designated in other than these four terms: “The *tathāgato* exists after death”; or, “he does not exist after death”; or, “he both does and does not exist after death”; or, “he neither does nor does not exist after death”?

— Surely not, venerable sir.

— Good, Anurādho. Both formerly and now, it is just suffering that I proclaim, and the ceasing of suffering.

(The best known *suttam* where the whole argument is repeated is the *Yamako-suttam* in the same section of the *Saṃyutta-nikāyo*, § 85.)

(19) *Upāyo* (S. XXII, 53)

— Bhikkhus, should one say: “Apart from body, from feeling, from perception, from the activities, I shall explain how consciousness comes and goes, or how it disappears and emerges, or how it increases, unfolds and attains its full expansion”— he would not be able to do so.

— If desire for body is abandoned by a bhikkhu, as well as desire for (the mental formations of) feeling, perception, activities and consciousness, by the abandonment of desire its object is eliminated, too, and can no longer serve as a support of consciousness. Without that support consciousness cannot develop nor generate action and is freed.

Conclusions

All the texts selected for the documentary part of this essay can be used only for a further analysis concerning the *negative delimitation* of the *Buddha-dhammo* from the aspects of religious belief discussed in these texts, reflecting traditional religious ideas in India at that time. Thus the question formulated in the title of our essay has not yet been answered but only delimited by elimination of the traditional aspects of heterogeneous religious beliefs.

The negative effects of these arguments will appear still more salient if we try to determine Buddhism in contradistinction to modern standards of encyclopaedic definitions of religion. Universal as they may claim to be, their critical proceedings still remain inadequate in our case, both in essential and historical dimensions. A comparative examination could easily show to what extent such current definitions

of religion are prejudiced, still today, by the criteria of Biblical religions, assumed (though in a generalized form) as a fundamental standard. A comparative test could show, on one hand, to what extent analogous criteria could be formulated also in terms of our texts. But, on the other hand, it would demonstrate their incapacity to serve as predominant positive determinants for a general definition of religion. Within their limits religion remains restricted to the morphological varieties and possibilities of belief in God (or "gods") and immortality of the soul; in entities denoting the principles of transmundane and eternal life, or of Absolute Being, as the widest range of the encyclopaedic concept of "religion".

The most unprejudiced judgment on this shortcoming, to my knowledge, was pronounced by Swami Vivekananda, as a spontaneous reaction of religious feeling, at the Congress of Religious Unity in Chicago (1893): "Now, there are sects that do not admit of the existence of God — that is a Personal God. Unless we wish to leave these sects out in the cold,... we must have our platform broad enough to embrace all mankind ... I think we should love our brother whether we believe in the universal fatherhood of God or not, because every religion and every creed recognizes *man as divine*."*

If the *Buddha-dhammo* is to be defined as a religious teaching, it must be in entirely different terms of *religious experience* exclusively, leaving apart all premisses of *theological* speculation.

(1) *The problem of revising the definition of religion* was raised by Schopenhauer from a position influenced to a considerable extent by Buddhism.

"The fundamental difference in religions" is not to be found in the question "whether they are monotheism, polytheism, Trimurty, Trinity, pantheism, or atheism (like Buddhism)", but "in the question whether they are optimism or pessimism"—as Schopenhauer tries to define the whole problem of a new, better adequated, criterion in terms of his own system of philosophy.

"... The knowledge of God, as the personal ruler and creator of the world who made everything well, is found simply and solely in the religious doctrine of the Jews and in the two faiths derived therefrom (Christianity and Mohammedanism) which in the widest sense might be called Jewish sects, but it is not found in the religion of any other race, ancient and modern."—"Even the other two religions existing with Buddhism in China, those of Laotse and Confucius, are just as atheistic ... Incidentally it should be observed that the word

atheism contains a surreptitious assumption, in that it assumes in advance that theism is self-evident."⁷

(2) If we proceed to consider the results of the differential analysis contained in our documentation in the light of the contemporary philosophy of religion, the way of the "*philosophical belief*", indicated by *Karl Jaspers*, may facilitate our further approach to a positive solution of the initial question. The central conception of a contemporary philosophy of culture is based for Jaspers on the solution of the problem concerning the essential relation between religion and philosophy from the standpoint of an encompassing "*philosophical belief*".

"It is questionable whether *faith* is possible *without religion*. Philosophy originates in this question."⁸ Faith is "hope grounded in reason itself and not in some other guarantee coming from outside." Consequently, "religion is not an independent source of truth", and doctrinal belief remains always "insecure".—These are conclusions drawn by Jaspers in his interpretation of Kant's *Religion Within the Limits of Mere Reason*.⁹ Kant's philosophy as a whole has for Jaspers the value of a "revolution in man's way of thinking". "What we know is not the world but only our ways in the world". "Philosophy as a way" had to be "found by a turnabout". By following this way "we gain no knowledge of an object, but our consciousness of being is transformed. The *non-knowledge* of philosophical exploration transcends the understanding and transforms our awareness of being."¹⁰ Expressed in classical terms, the way of philosophy is not a way of *cosmic knowledge* (*doxa, diṭṭhi*) but a way to *human wisdom*. This is why, in terms of Kantian criticism as understood by Jaspers, even rational "dogmatism always leads ultimately to skepticism and unbelief, while critique leads to *science and faith*."¹¹

Already in his interpretation of the religious thought of St. Augustine, Jaspers defined philosophy as "a thinking that penetrates and makes for awareness", while "philosophical faith stands in the concreteness of its always unique, noncatholic, historical actuality, through which it is able to ascertain the true reality, for which there is no guarantee except in the freedom of man and its communicative realization *on the brink of the abyss* of failure in the reality of the world".¹²

The religion of the philosophical faith is thus a religion of continual risk, acceptable and bearable only for those who have already conquered the existential fear of failure and death.

Penetrating still deeper in the history of philosophical faith, in his interpretation of the fundamental religious wisdom of the Buddha, Jaspers formulates the well-known characteristic of this most aristocratic faith as follows: "By his inexorable either-or Buddha seized hold of the whole man.—But the *faith* required for this path of salvation is a *knowledge*...salvation itself is a knowledge, redemption is insight achieved simultaneously with it."¹³

(3) Expressions characteristic for the Buddhist attitude to these problems have been underlined by me in the preceding section. Within the limits of the present draft their comparative meaning has to remain implicit with reference to the *philosophical aspect of the philosophical faith* in the most consequent acosmic religion, the *Buddha-dhamma*.

What is the purely *religious aspect* of the same philosophical faith, understood as a *way of purification* (*catharsis*, Buddhist *visuddhi-maggo*)?

(a) As a *way of meditative reduction* of mental structures and of their contents (*noesis* and *noema*) it is a process which essentially is still not differentiated from the fundamental philosophical attitude of *Epoché* in its primal historical significance, as preached by Pyrrho of Elis and Timon, whose main concern was a moral and even religious attitude. Even as reinterpreted by Husserl, in its exclusively noetical significance, as method of phenomenological reduction, *epoché* is meant to serve the purpose of a "science of phenomena which lies far removed from our ordinary thinking...so extraordinarily difficult...a new way of looking at things, one that contrasts at every point with the *natural attitude* of experience and thought".¹⁴

Jaspers, in *The Great Philosophers*, in several references to ancient and mystical "experiences in meditation", insists on their essential difference from modern methods of "suspension" in transcendental analysis of the "subject-object relationship". The clearest formulation of the difference is given with reference to "Buddha's doctrine of redemption by insight": It "springs from experience in the transformation of consciousness and the stages of meditation". While modern "science and philosophical speculation remain within our given form of consciousness...this Indian philosophy may be said to take consciousness itself in hand, to raise it in higher forms by exercises in meditation."¹⁵

In whatever way the intrinsic connection between the presumed two aspects of *epoché* may be construed—as a philosophical method of transcendental analysis, or as the way for a transcending consciousness to attain to "ek-static" wisdom—its religious purport can be encompassed only from a still higher level of existential experience, to which

all "suspension" attained by *epoché* points out (already in the case of Pyrrho's original doctrine): It aims not—in either case—at a "mundane" transcendence; its essential attainments have always remained in the service of a *via negativa*. (Even Husserl was very consequent in stressing that his reductive method does not and ultimately cannot lead or even point to any further transcendence, beyond the "transcendence in the immanent". And Sartre was not less consequent in his critique of Husserl on this ground.)

It seems to me that Jaspers (as the whole existential trend in the contemporary philosophy) overemphasises the importance of "ecstasis" and of its "all-encompassing" aim. From a European bias, this remains a specifically ontological aim or ideal. From the Indian bias the same ideal seems to be peculiar just to the Advaita-Vedānta. Here I cannot enter any farther into its differential analysis. The anti-vedāntin standpoint of the Buddhists is also anti-ontological in equal measure: "Neither being, nor non-being, nor both being-and-non-being, nor neither-being-nor-non-being" can express the existential purport and content of our human-reality.

When utilized for religious aims of *catharsis* (Buddhist *visuddhi-maggo*) the method of *epoché* remains far from being exhausted in any "ecstatic" vision (not even in the meaning of Buddhist *vipassanā* in and for itself, whose proper primal significance cannot be successfully severed from its original location in the reductive structure of the way of *jhāna*). The deepest motivation of philosophical faith is *release*, not *only* as "suspension", and not even as "freedom!" The proper religious meaning of "suspension", has been elicited most adequately to our context in Schopenhauer's aesthetic approach to the problem of pure contemplation: "And we know that these moments, when, delivered from the fierce pressure of the will, we emerge, as it were, from the heavy atmosphere of the earth, are the most blissful that we experience. From this we can infer how blessed must be the life of a man whose will is silenced not for a few moments, as in the enjoyment of the beautiful, but for ever, indeed completely extinguished ..." ¹⁶

On the Indian side, *mokṣa* (Pāli *vimutti*) is not equivalent in its *ephectic* or *cathartic* meaning to a positive attainment of "freedom to...". It is a *release from* the "suspended" existential affirmation of being. It does not indicate any positive idea of "freedom to..." as its aim, but simply and purely abandonment of, leading to further realizations of revulsion and escape (Pāli *paṭikkūlaṃ* and *nissaraṇaṃ*) from any whatsoever "mundane" and "cosmical" intention.—To what purpose?—To *none*. Where *release-from* does no longer constitute a

freedom-to, “extinction” (*nibbānam*) can no longer serve any purpose either. Thus the process of release through *suspension* of existential judgment (*epochè*) contains its moral and spiritual value in itself. Why do we designate it—also in the Buddhist sense—merely as suspension? The reason has deep ontological implications. The same as Pyrrho’s *apatheia*, Buddha’s *upekkhā* cannot be considered as “annihilation” (*uccheda-vādo*).

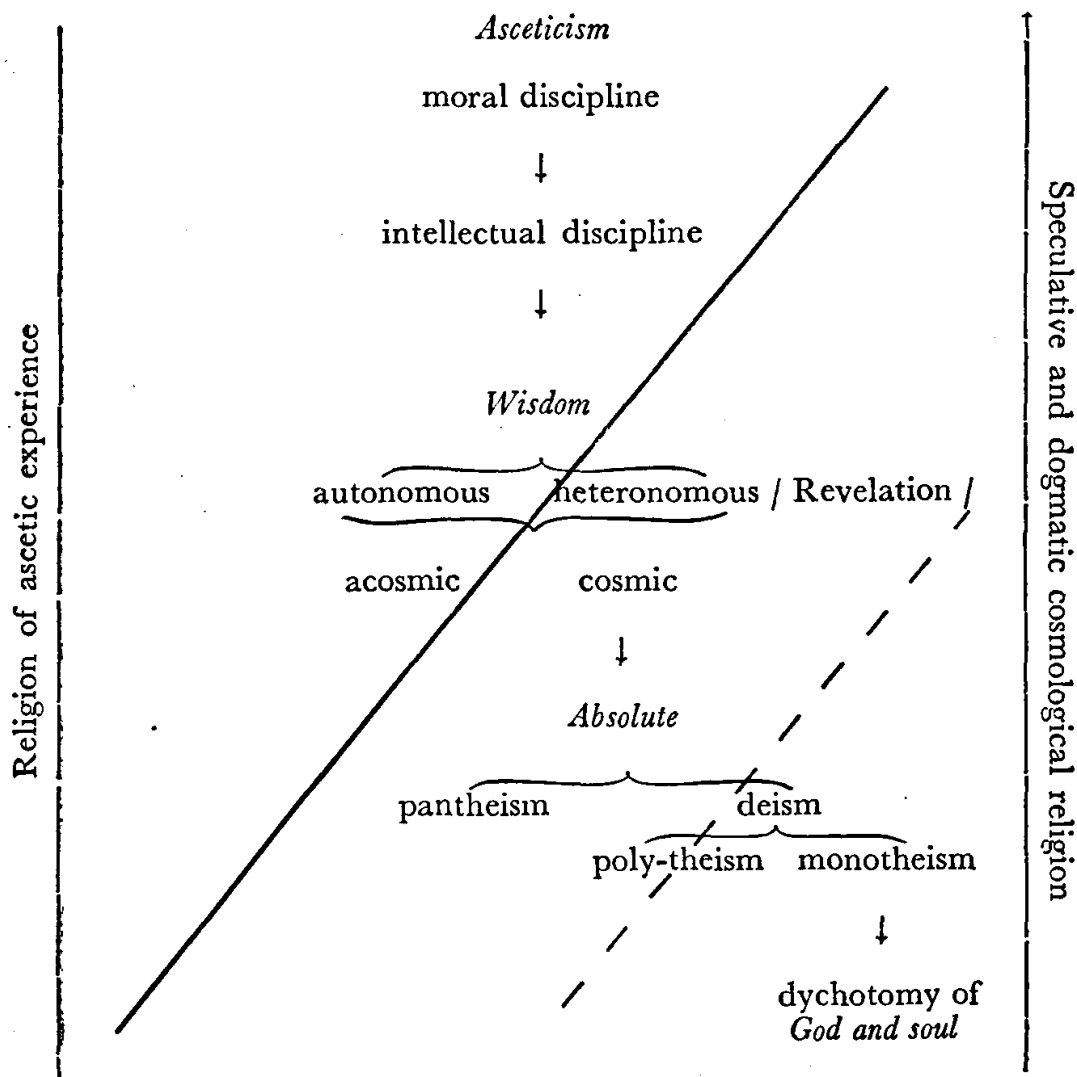
Thus meditative reduction on the *via negativa* of religious experience cannot admit of any structural limitation of its intention. There is a fundamental mistake, from the standpoint limiting the “higher religion” to the aspect of mystical ecstasy, in taking the distinction between “mundane” and “transmundane” “levels” as an ultimate differential criterion, since the *via negativa* proceeds originally, in *all* attitudes of *epoché*, irrespective of intentional differentiations in their noematic aims, from an *attitude to consciousness*, from the “*terminus a quo*” of “all theoretical, axiological or practical attitudes” of my “*Cogito*” or “*sum cogitans*”,¹⁷ and not from an *attitude to the world*. The merely ecstatic conception of religion and of the “mystical” *epoché* (as envisaged by Jaspers) disregards, besides that, the ultimate *acosmic intentness* of the *ascetic religion* on which I shall try to base my definition of religion from the Buddhist standpoint.

(b) Postulated by this *acosmic* attitude, the ideal of the ascetic practice, of hermitic life, is the *escape* from the world. Only as deeply irreligious times of “*idola fori*” as the twentieth century could so grossly misunderstand the highest religious ideal of escape for its social “unhealthiness” as it is brandmarked today.¹⁸

Regardless of any *consensus gentium* sanctioned by all “closed religions” (Bergson), understood as an integral social formation apart from our interest in philosophical faith, Buddhism can be considered a religion among other only in so far as a definition of religion can comprize the idea of *hermitic life* as a way to the ultimate attainment of its goal — beyond any transcending metaphysical justification. To this effect the philosophical aspect is limited in the *Buddha-dhammo* to the gnoseological scheme: *sīlāṃ* — *samādhi* — *paññā*, or to the belief that no attainment of wisdom (*paññā*) is possible for the introvert seeker (*sāvako*, “listener” becoming a *muni*, or “silent sage”) without the existential prerequisite of purification through moral virtue (*sīlāṃ*) and mental discipline (*samādhi*). By this latter is meant the *sati-paṭṭhānam* method which proceeds by the “contemplation of the body *in* the body, of feelings *in* feelings, of mental states and their contents *in* mental states and contents”, thus *strictly excluding* all ecstatic transcending in “transmundane” experiences. Without these preconditions all knowledge remains mere *diṭṭhi* (Greek *doxa*),

consisting of "views", "opinions" or "beliefs" concerning extrovert ("extensional", *āyatanam*) objectified facts of scientific knowledge-about-the-world (*lokāyatam*). Rationality or irrationality of knowledge have here no more bearing on the criteria of distinction between philosophical and religious knowledge.

(4) In the selection of elements for the *classification of religions*, with respect to the limits postulated in the specific case under discussion, careful consideration should be given to the following trends in religious experience :



Notes

(a) The diagonal line may serve to delimit Buddhism from any other type of Indian or European religions. (In this case I would like to leave open the problem of classification of Chinese religions.)

(b) When the definition of religions is elicited from the lowest specific difference, from the dichotomic belief in God and soul, it appears to be applicable only to the three Biblical religions: Judaism and its offshoots, Christianity and Mohammedanism. (In the primitive polytheism, but also in its extant forms of popular Indian religions, the dichotomy of God and soul is rendered doubtful.)

(c) Even European pantheism, as at least a potential trend of philosophical belief, and the Indian Vedāntic belief in the Absolute as "one without a second" (*advaita*) would obviously remain excluded and "left out in the cold", as Vivekānanda put it.—Thus the area between the main diagonal and the broken line parallel to it forms a disputed area for an adequate application of the pseudo-inductive method starting from the "surreptitious assumption that theism is self-evident" and taking theism as its basic *differentia specifica*.

(d) At the same time we can consider this middle area, less artificially, as a historically given field of transitional formations, mainly between the acosmic and the cosmic trend, resulting, as it seems, from a more or less consequent and explicit recognition of *the ideal of asceticism as the fundamental phenomenon of religious experience*. In the formation of genuine religious mentality cosmic orientation will consequently appear as a "natural" impediment. A permanent dialectical tension in the development of historical religions seems to confirm this estimate.

In the early cryptic stages of Graeco-Roman religions, arising from oriental backgrounds of magic and mystery cults, the selective principle of *individual religious vocation* was still confirmed. Yet the ascetic discipline had already been replaced during an "axial" epic period by a bond ("*religio*") whose "yoke" (*yogaḥ*) was originally not less rigorous, but whose ultimate aim had been expanded into epical attainments of magic powers (*siddhi*). (Here *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata* are considered as archetypes of "axial" history.) On the western soil the secularization of the sacerdotal office was a rapid process of emerging from the *decorum* of occult mysteries and abandoning them as unnecessary and even suspect to social morality.

A good deal of hymns in the extant collection of the *Rig-veda* are clearly marked by a fine irony of intellectual criticism denoting a not less rapid degeneration of the brāhmanic religion, down to the immoral conditions exposed by the Buddhō in the *Kandaraka-suttam* (our text 13 above).

On the other hand, the *ascetic religion* re-emerges first as an immediate social reaction of heterodox mendicant orders (*Sannyāsins*,

Buddhist *samaṇā*), and then recedes, always again, to its primal stability in the hermitic *diaspora* of "Old Believers" (Pāli *thero*, Sanskrit *sthaviraḥ*, Russian *starets*), where it continues to survive and to reaffirm itself morally invigorated by hardship and persecution. Approaching the recesses of any hermitic religion, the first ambiguous figure that we may meet is "*le prophète qui crie dans le désert et refuse d'en sortir*" (Camus).

Thus the area between the two lines on our scheme marks the epic "battlefield" (*dharma-kṣetraṃ* in the *Bhagavad-gītā*) of two antagonistic tendencies influencing the formation of religious mentality throughout historical processes.

1. Quotations of Pāli texts have been adapted prevalently from the Pāli Text Society Translations Series (London). For the *Majjhimanikāyo* the unpublished translation by the late Nāṇamoli *thero* (of the Island Hermitage, Ceylon) has often been consulted with advantage. For the collections of texts conventional abbreviations by initials are used (M. for *Majjhima-nikāyo*, D. for *Dīgha-nikāyo*, S. for *Saṃyutta-nikāyo*, A. for *Anguttara-nikāyo*, Dh. for *Dhammapadam*).

2. An astonishingly close analogy between the formulation of the four antinomies of the dialectical reason by Kant and the same basic structure of the four groups of "views" (*diṭṭhi*, cf. *doxa*) in the *Brahma-jāla-suttam* (D. 1) has been singled out in my papers, *Dependence of punar-bhava on karma in Buddhist philosophy*, and *My approach to Indian philosophy*, in *Indian Philosophical Annuals*, Vols. I and II (1965, 1966, University of Madras, under my lay name Chedomil Velyachich).

3. A parallel on this point is elicited in brief in my essay on *Aniccaṃ*, for a forthcoming publication of the Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Ceylon.

4. "We therefore compare all the dogmatists to people who imagine that, if only they go straight forward long enough, they will come to the end of the world, but Kant had then circumnavigated the globe, and has shown that, because it is round, we cannot get out of it by horizontal movement, but that by perpendicular movement it is perhaps not impossible to do so. It can also be said that Kant's teaching gives the insight that the beginning and the end of the world are to be sought not without us, but rather within." *The World as Will and Representation*, transl. by E. F. J. Payne, Dover Publications, New York, 1966; vol. I, pp. 420-1. Cf. My book, *Schopenhauer and Buddhism*, pp. 84-87, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Ceylon. 1970.

5. Practices singled out in our condensation of the above text are those most prominently characteristic, still to-day, for Jain *munis*.

6. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. VIII, p. 199. (Ed. Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 3rd ed. 1959.)

7. Cf. *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. II (P. Deussen's ed, *Arthur Schopenhauers Sämtliche Werke*, München, 1913), p. 422, § 181, and *Ueber den Satz vom Grunde* (2nd ed., Deussen, pp. 233, 237). Compare also my book, *Schopenhauer and Buddhism* pp. 11ff, 22, 31-33.

8. *Man in the Modern Age* (London, 1959), p. 142.

9. *The Great Philosophers* (London, 1962), pp. 313, 311.
10. Id., pp. 316, 279, 317, 316, 321.
11. Id. 351.
12. Id. 216.
13. Id. 45.
14. E. Husserl "*Ideas : General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (English transl. by W. R. Boyce Gibson, New York, Macmillan, 1931), pp. 41-3. In my article, *A Western Approach to Buddhist Meditation* published in *The Buddhist* (Colombo) Vesak 1959, under my lay name C. Veljacic, a parallel is drawn between E. Husserl's modern version of *epoché* as epistemological reduction of noetic and noematic structures to the pure "stream of consciousness", and the Buddhist method of meditative reduction in the spheres or *rūpa* - and *arūpa-jhāna* to the *bhavaṅga - sotāna*.— As to the obviously Indian provenience of Pyrrho's doctrine of *epoché*, the conjecture of a direct Jain influence, suggested both by doxographical and historiographical arguments, is proposed in my paper *Greek and Roman Sources of Information on India*, published in the Yugoslav journal *Antiquité vivante*, (with an English synopsis) in vol. I, 1961, pp. 78-81, and 94.
15. *The Great Philosophers*, p. 36.
16. *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. I, § 68 (Payne's transl., p. 390)
17. Cf. Husserl, *Ideen*, vol. II (M. Biemel's edition, Haag, Nijhoff, 1952), p. 105.
18. The protest against imposing imperatives of social subserviency to religion is becoming more and more acute as an issue of central importance also in the actual crisis of Christian dogmatism. Paul Tillich, in his book *The Eternal Now* (London, 1963), formulates this question in a sermon on St. Paul's Epistle, "Do not be conformed", and also with reference to the saying of Jesus, "I have come to set a man against his father...He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me...", as follows: "Why does Paul attack conformism? Why does he not call the Christian the perfectly adjusted man?...His thought is far from this, and certainly he could not have been called a good educator according to the criterion of 'adjustment'...Every Christian must be strong enough to risk non-conformity, even in the radical sense that Jesus describes with respect to one's family..." (pp. 115ff, 144).