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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 (Pāli Sutta-piṭakaḥ) 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 (ātman, jīva, pūdgala—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) Udânaṭi, 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” ya buddhānaṃ samukkânsikā 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.”

In whatever terms the Buddha-dhamma 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 sila-bbata-parāmāsa, whose widest meaning is extended, beyond any possibility of exegetical doubt, also to the purport of the moral precepts (silam) in the basic text of the Brahma-jāla-sutta (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-sutta* (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-taṇḍhā-saṅkhāyasutta* (“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 brāhmans’ 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 dharmma (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 Dhamma-padaṁ 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 controled, one obtains a refuge which is hard to gain.” (160)

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

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

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

—No, Master Gotamo.

But, Bhαradvαjо, is there even one teacher of brάhmans, 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 Āṭṭhako, Vāmako, Vāmadevo, Vessāmitto, Yamataggi, Aṅgiraso, Bhāradvājo, Vāsetṭho, 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 dhamma, that dhamma 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 dhamma; having heard dhamma 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 Buddho 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-suttaṁ, M. 10)

II

The salient feature of the Caṇki-suttaṁ, 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-suttaṁ, 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 mediative 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 *Caṇki-suttaṁ* 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 Buddha 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 Buddha 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 Buddha 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-suttaṁ* (M. 100), concerning the existence of gods, the stumbling point arises from a *wrong formulation of the question* by the interlocutor. The Buddha 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 *suttaṁ* teachers of religious life (*brahma-cariyā*) are divided in three types: Those who claim "perfection of knowledge in hearsay", the "masters of the three Vedas"; the teachers of *takka-mimāṁsā*, 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 brāhmans 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- *Veda*
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 Saṅgārāvο’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, viditam yadidaṁ atti devā (or: adhidevā) ti”] the Buddha 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 Buddha has remained misunderstood not only by Saṅgārāvο but still more by the successive generations of pious exegetes 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, Dhānaṇṭāni-suttaṁ (M. 97) is the inferiority of gods, a consequence from the acosmic standpoint of the Buddha 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 Buddha in a few additional texts (10-11).

Requested by the Buddha venerable Sāriputto visited the brāhmaṇ Dhānaṇṭāni who was gravely ill.—“...Then the venerable Sāriputto thought:—These brāhmans are devoted to the world of Brahmā. Let me show the brāhmaṇ Dhānaṇṭāni the way to Brahmā’s retinue.—He said:—Dhānaṇṭāni, 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 endowed 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 endowed with loving-kindness, far-reaching, wide-spread, immesurable, without enmity, without malevolence.... Again he abides in a state of mind endowed 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 brāhmaṇ Dhānaṇṭāni 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 brāhmaṇ Dhānaṇṭāni 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 brāhmaṇ Dhānaṇṭāni 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 brāhmaṇ Dhānaṇṭāni 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 brāhmaṇ Dhānaṇṭāni 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 brāhmans are devoted to the world of Brahmā. Let me show the brāhman Dhānaṇjaṇi the way to Brahma’s retinue.

— The brāhman Dhānaṇjaṇi 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-kōṭikaṁ (tetralemma) rule, applied regularly by the Buddha to the avyākatāni, or indeterminate questions, and to dialectical antinomies of speculative thought. "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).

The following text, Brahma-nimantaṇīka-suttaṁ (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 Bako, 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 brāhmans 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 brāhmans 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 Buddhho’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 airness 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 Dhammapadāth (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-nikāya, 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 Apanṇaka-suttaṁ (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 (apanṇako dhammo in the text) to be applied in such cases by the puthujjano, or worldly minded man, guided in his affairs by the avarage commonsense.

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

—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 brähmans 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 brâhmans 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 brâhmans whose theory is directly opposed to those...Now of those monks and brâhmans 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 brâhmans 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 brâhmans 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 brâhmans who maintain and teach the opinion that there is no integral cessation of being. But there are also some monks and brâhmans 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 brâhmans 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 brâhmans 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 brâhmans 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 (nibbānam). 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 Buddha, 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 Cāṇki-suttaṁ.

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 Buddha. 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-suttaṁ (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-torture; (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...

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 (ātta) 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-samuppannikā (2 theories on “spontaneous generation” analogous to the Christian dogma on a “created” soul), saññī-vādo (16 theories on a conscious soul), āsaññī-vādo (8 theories on an unconscious soul), neva-saññī-nāsaññī-vādo (8 theories on a neither conscious nor unconscious soul), and ucccheda-vādo (7 theories affirming the “destructibility of a substantially existing soul”).

(15) In the Sabbāsava-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 Pūtrahāda-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-samyuttam* of the *Sahyyutta-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) *Anurādha* (S. XXII, 86)

— What do you think, Anurādha: Do you regard the body as the *tathāgata*? (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 suttān where the whole argument is repeated is the Yamako-suttān in the same section of the Samyutta-nikāya, § 85.)

(19) Upāyā (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 heterogenous 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 encyclo-
paedic concept of “religion”.

The most unprejudiced judgment on this shortcoming, to my know-
ledge, was pronounced by Swami Vivekanananda, 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, Trimurti,
Trinity, pantheism, or atheism (like Buddhism)”, but “in the ques-
tion 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." 

(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." 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 conclusions drawn by Jaspers in his interpretation of Kant's Religion Within the Limits of Mere Reason. 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." Expressed in classical terms, the way of philosophy is not a way of cosmic knowledge (doxa, dídhmi) 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." 

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".

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." 18

(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-dhammo.

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." 18

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) overemphasizes the importance of “ecstasy” 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 Buddha 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 viśuddhi-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 jhānāh). 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 aesthetical 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 ephetic 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 paṭikkūlāḥ and nissaranām) 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 (epoche) 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 upakkhā 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 epoche, 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”, and not from an attitude to the world. The merely ecstatic conception of religion and of the “mystical” epoche (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.

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: silah — samādhi — paññā, or to the belief that no attainment of wisdom (paññā) is possible for the introvert seeker (sāvaka, “listener” becoming a muni, or “silent sage”) without the existential prerequisite of purification through moral virtue (silah) and mental discipline (samādhi). By this latter is meant the sati-patthānam 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 dīthi (Greek doxa),
consisting of "views", "opinions" or "beliefs" concerning extro-
vert ("extensional", āyatanam) objectified facts of scientific knowl-
dge-about-the-world (lokāyatanam). 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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Asceticism} & \\
& \text{moral discipline} \\
& \downarrow \\
& \text{intellectual discipline} \\
& \downarrow \\
& \text{Wisdom} \\
& \text{autonomous} \quad \text{heteronomous / Revelation} \\
& \text{acosmic} \quad \text{cosmic} \\
& \downarrow \\
& \text{Absolute} \\
& \text{pantheism} \quad \text{deism} \\
& \text{polytheism} \quad \text{monotheism} \\
& \downarrow \\
& \text{dichotomy of God and soul}
\end{align*}
\]

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" (yogāḥ) 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 Buddha 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 samanā, and then recedes, always again, to its primal stability in the hermitic diaspora of "Old Believers" (Pāli therī, Sanskrit sthavirā, Russian staret), 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-kṣetraṁ in the Bhagavad-gītā) of two antagonistic tendencies influencing the formation of religious mentality throughout historical processes.

1. Quotations of Pāḷi texts have been adapted prevalently from the Pāḷi Text Society Translations Series (London). For the Majjhimanikāya the unpublished translation by the late Nāgamoli therī (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-nikāya, D. for Dīgha-nikāya, S. for Saṁyutta-nikāya, A. for Anguttara-nikāya, Dhp. 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" (dīṭṭhi, cf. doxa) in the Brahma-jāla-suttaṁ (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 Aniccatth, 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.


11. Id. 351.
12. Id. 216.
13. Id. 45.
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 *Antiquités vivantes*, (with an English synopsis) in vol. I, 1961, pp. 78-81, and 94.
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).