

## BUDDHISM AS PHILOSOPHY AND AS RELIGION

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The chief distinction between philosophy and all other branches of knowledge is generally considered to be twofold, namely, a difference of method and a difference of scope. The method of philosophy is said to be different from the methods of the various sciences inasmuch as it begins its investigations without assumptions or preconceptions of any kind. The sciences, on the contrary, all assume the truth of the law of causation. In addition to this, each science makes certain assumptions within its own special field of enquiry. Classical Physics, for instance, assumes the existence of matter, Biology the existence of life, and Geometry the existence of space. But they do not consider what matter, life and space in themselves really are, or why they should exist at all. To consider that is the business of philosophy which, it is claimed, makes no assumptions whatsoever. But one assumption at least philosophy does in fact make: that knowledge is possible. Even the investigation into the possibility of knowledge implies that knowledge of whether knowledge is possible or not. Philosophy cannot avoid the assumption of the possibility of knowledge, since even the initial act of philosophizing presupposes it. Similarly, religion is based upon the assumption that it is possible to become good, which implies in the first place the freedom of the will and in the second the existence of a goal, whether proximate or ultimate, to be attained. Difference of method does not therefore, distinguish philosophy either from the sciences on the one hand or from religion on the other. But difference of scope, content or subject matter does in fact distinguish it from both of them. The various sciences are so obviously restricted to their respective fields of investigation that it is unnecessary to give examples in order to prove it. Religion restricts itself to the attainment of the Highest good and considers other things, only insofar as they help or hinder this supreme desideratum. But philosophy, on the contrary, is essentially synoptic, and endeavours to comprehend the whole of existence at a single glance, thereby justifying Plato's famous definition of the philosopher as the spectator of all time and all existence. Philosophy does not, however, simply view things as a mere aggregate of heterogeneous elements; but, just as the scientist and spiritualist do within their narrower spheres, it endeavours to trace the unity of law working in the midst of the diversity of events, and since its sphere is universal the law or laws which it seeks to trace are universal too.

The claim that the Buddha was a philosopher as well as a Saint, and that Original Buddhism was therefore a philosophy as well as a religion, must consequently rest upon the ability of the most ancient records to show statements attributed to Him about the nature of existence as a whole. The representatives of the Theravada tradition generally consider that the Buddha did in fact characterize the whole of existence as **dukkha**, **anicca** and **Anatta**, which means that it is either actually or potentially painful, transitory, and without any permanent, unchanging soul or self. The first and second signs or signata, namely, **dukkha** and **anicca**, obviously cannot be applied to **Nibbana**, which is characterized as **paramam sukham** and **nicca** or **dhuva**. This leaves us with **Anatta** only. But a purely negative characterization of existence as a whole is clearly not a very adequate foundation for a philosophical superstructure. The difficulty is, however, more apparent than real. An analysis of the implications of the doctrine of **Anatta** will eventually make it plain that it is merely a condensed and negative statement of what appears in an expanded and positive form in the doctrine of **Paticca Samuppada**. That this doctrine is nothing but the conceptualized formulation of the Buddha's supreme spiritual experience and that it may therefore be regarded as His view of existence as a whole becomes clear when we consider that it was just this doctrine that He debated within Himself whether to make known to the world or not immediately after His Enlightenment. The **Mahavagga** of the **Vinaya Pitaka** (Oldenburg's **Buddha**, page 120):

*"Into the mind of the Exalted One, while he tarried, retired in solitude, came this thought: 'I have penetrated this deep truth, which is difficult to perceive, and difficult to understand, peace-giving, sublime, which transcends all thought, deeply-significant, which only the wise can grasp. Man moves in an earthly sphere, in an earthly sphere he has his place and finds his enjoyment. For man, who moves in an earthly sphere, and has his place and finds his enjoyment in an earthly sphere, it will be very difficult to grasp this matter, the law of causality, the chain of causes and effects; and this also will be very difficult for him to grasp, the extinction of all conformations, the withdrawal from all that is earthly, the extinction of desire, the cessation of longing, the end, the Nirvana. Should I now preach*

*the Doctrine and mankind not understand me, it would bring me nothing but fatigue, it would cause me nothing but trouble!' And there passed unceasingly in the mind of the Exalted One, this voice, which no one had ever before heard.*

*'Why reveal to the world what I have won by a severe struggle?  
The truth remains hidden from him whom desire and hate absorb.  
It is difficult, mysterious, deep, hidden from the coarse mind;  
He cannot apprehend it, whose mind earthly vocations surround with might.'*

*"When the Exalted One thought thus, his heart was inclined to abide in quietude and not to proclaim the Doctrine." (Mahavagga, 1. 5. 2 seq.)*

This important text, embedded in what is undoubtedly one of the oldest strata of the Pali **Tipitaka**, makes it quite clear that the doctrine of **Paticca Samuppada** is the conceptualized formulation of the content of the Buddha's experience of Sambodhi and that it may therefore be considered as the philosophical foundation not only of Original Buddhism but of the subsequently-arising schools of Developed Buddhism also. It was this doctrine which the venerable Assaji skilfully summarized in a single verse when questioned by Sariputta (then a wandering mendicant of another sect) concerning the teaching of the Buddha, a verse which has since then been recognized as containing the pith and kernel of Buddhism: "Existences which flow from a cause, their cause the Perfect One teaches and how they end: this is the doctrine of the great Samana." The passage in the **Tipitaka** which relates this episode is in turn, as Oldenburg (**Buddha**, page 134, note) says "...one of those which king Asoka, in the Bhairat inscription (circa. 260 B.C.), commanded the monks and nuns, the lay-brothers and lay-sisters, intently to hear and learn." It is pointed out in later scholastic literature that the Four Aryan Truths can be divided into two parts,, each of which will comprise one cause and one effect, that is to say, **dukkha** (the First Truth) and it's cause, **tanha** (the Second Truth), and **Nibbana** (the Third Truth) and its cause, the Ariyan Eightfold Path (the Fourth Truth). It is hardly necessary to multiply examples of the prime importance of the doctrine of **Paticca Samuppada** from the Pali **Tipitaka**. The Madhyamikavada's doctrine of **Sunyata** is simply a dialectical version of the doctrine of **Anatta** or **Paticca Samuppada**. This will be clearly seen when we go a little more deeply into the meaning of the Buddha's fundamental philosophical doctrine. The importance of the tenet of Dependent Origination in the teaching of the Vijnanavada or Yogacara school of Buddhism is sufficiently attested by the fact that at the beginning of his encyclopedic philosophical treatise the Tattvasangraha Santarakshita (705 - 762 C. E.), the co-founder with Padmasambhava of Tantric Buddhism in Tibet and one of the most brilliant ornaments of the great University of Nalanda, not only salutes the Buddha as the Teacher of the Doctrine of Dependent Origination but makes it the vehicle both of his examination of all other schools of Indian philosophy and his exposition of the doctrines of the Vijnanavada school of Mahayana Buddhism to which he belonged. In thus announcing this doctrine as the basic principle of all Buddhist philosophy Santarakshita has simply adumbrated the view of all earlier Buddhist thinkers from the time of the Buddha Himself down to his own day.

The negative doctrine of **Anatta** teaches that all phenomena of existence whatsoever are without self-nature or substantiality and that they are, therefore, conditioned or contingent in character. Everything depends for its existence upon other things, and so on until all the threads of existence - physical, mental, moral and spiritual - are knit together into a single interrelated, interconnected, interdependent fabric. Nothing is aloof or single, - nothing isolated, nothing separate. A flower blooms in dependence on the whole universe, and the whole universe exists in dependence on the flower. In the words of Shelley:

*"Nothing in the world is single,  
All things by a law divine  
In one another's being mingle..."*

The transition from the doctrine of **Anatta**, which is the negative aspect of **Paticca Samuppada**, to the doctrine of universal Flux or Becoming, which is its positive expression, is perhaps best made by pointing out that it is impossible, in a universe wherein each part exists only in dependence on every other part, for one thing to be in a state of flux or becoming without every other thing being at the same time in such a state. If ever one phenomenon was static and unchanging all other phenomena would be

static and unchanging too. The assertion that the universe is unchanging, that it is what William James would call a 'block-universe', or the belief that Reality is a static somewhat, is therefore sufficiently disproved by the discovery of even one phenomenon in a state of flux or becoming. This discovery is of course one which is made daily in empirical experience.

The position that Reality is permanent and unchanging and that it only appears to change is logically indefensible, and ultimately results in a dualism between the world of appearance and the world of Reality which can be overcome only by denying the existence of the world of appearance altogether. This denial was actually made by Parmenides and the Eleatics in Greece, and by Gaudapada and Sankara in India. The logical consequence of such a position is the theory of Maya which, instead of solving the difficulty, helps to make it worse. For it is impossible to explain how the unreal originates from the real, the imperfect from the perfect, the dynamic from the static, Maya from Brahman, without admitting that the former was present potentially in the latter, which is tantamount to admitting that Reality is partially unreal, partially imperfect etc. Even to deny the origination of Maya from Brahman, as the Ajatavada of Gaudapada does, is not sufficient to solve the problem, since it fails to explain why, granting that Maya does not originate, it nevertheless even appears to originate. And if Maya is held to exist or to appear to exist, but not to originate from Brahman the result is simply a duplication of the old Sankhyan Purusha-Prakriti dualism with all its attendant perplexities. This and numerous other difficulties which are involved in such fallacious statements as 'It changes in appearance but not in Reality' can be avoided only by viewing the whole of Reality as one single grand Becoming, which is not simply the aggregate but the at-one-ment, the concrete unity, of all 'individual' becomings.

Just as the Buddha's doctrine of **Paticca Samuppada** is, historically speaking, a protest against the static Atman-Brahman conception of certain Upanishadic thinkers, Heraclitus' doctrine of 'everything flows' (panta rhei) is a protest against the abstract Being of the Eleatic philosophers. It is therefore hardly surprising to find the teaching of the great Ephesian philosopher can serve equally well as an exposition of at least a part of the teaching of his even greater Indian contemporary. Prof. W. T. Stace writes:

*"Not only do things change from moment to moment. Even in one and the same moment they are and are not the same. It is not merely that a thing first is, and then a moment afterwards, is not. It both is and is not at the same time. The at-onceness of "is" and "is-not" is the meaning of Becoming. We shall understand this better if we contrast it better with the Eleatic principle. The Eleatic described all things under two concepts, Being and not-being. Being has, for them, all truth, all reality. Not-being is wholly false and illusory. For Heraclitus both being and not-being are equally real. The one is as true as the other. Both are true, for both are identical. Becoming is the identity of being and notbeing. For becoming has only two forms, namely, the arising of things and their passing away, their beginning and their end, their origination and decease. Perhaps you may think that this is not correct, that there are other forms of change besides origination and decease. A man is born. That is his origination. He dies. That is his decease. Between his birth and his death there are intermediate changes. He grows larger, grows older, grows wiser or more foolish, his hair turns grey. So also the leaf of a tree does not merely come into being and pass out of being. It changes in shape, form, colour. From light green it becomes dark green, and from dark green, yellow. But there is after all nothing in all this except origination and decease, not of the thing itself, but of its qualities. The change from green to yellow is the decease of green colour, the origination of yellow color. Origination is the passage of not-being into Being. Decease is the passage of being into not-being. Becoming, then, has in it only the two factors of being and notbeing, and it means the passing of one into the other. But this passage does not mean, for Heraclitus, that at one moment there is Being, and at the next moment not-being. It means that Being and not-being are in everything at one and the same time. Being is not being. Being has not-being in it." (A Critical History of Greek Philosophy, London, 1946, pp.74-76.)*

Both Heraclitus and the Buddha are able, unlike the Eleatics and Advaitists, to view the whole of existence as governed by one principle, the principle of Becoming. And since they considered events to be intrinsically dynamic it was not necessary for them to violate the unity of their conception by introducing some secondary principle in order to account for the origin of motion, change or becoming. Existence and becoming are convertible terms. To exist means to become.

That the Buddha was not only a philosopher but even a critical philosopher is demonstrated by the masterly fashion in which He handled the various sophisms of His day. It is an easy matter to declare that one's opponents are wrong; but it is difficult to point out not only where but why they are wrong. It is still more difficult to make a scientific classification not only of all extant but indeed of all possible philosophical points of view in accordance with a single schematic principle. Most difficult of all is to deduce such a principle from one's own tenets. The Buddha has done all these things. In the **Brahmajala Sutta** of the **Digha Nikaya** He has classified sixty-two schools of philosophers into two groups, the first comprising those who maintain the doctrine of Eternalism (**Sassatavada**), the second those who maintain the doctrine of Annihilationism (**Ucchedavada**). A moment's reflection will show that the first group of doctrines identify Reality with abstract Being, while the second group identifies it with equally abstract not-being. The Buddha and Heracleitus, on the other hand, identify it with Becoming, which is the concrete unity or at-one-ment of Being and not-being. The sixty-two views so classified are consequently all one-sided, and therefore mutually antagonistic. They see only a portion of the Truth, thus their author's are not philosophers in the sense of Plato's definition of the term, or at least not successful philosophers. But the Buddha's doctrine of Reality as Becoming enabled Him to take a thoroughly synoptic view of existence and thus to propound a system of thought which is truly philosophical. The Madhyamika school of Developed Buddhism is so called by its adherents simply because their doctrine of **Sunyata** follows a Middle Path between the two extreme views of Eternalism and Annihilationism.

The Buddha's beautiful Parable of the Blind Men and the Elephant is intended to illustrate not the popular but indolent doctrine that all religions and philosophies mean the same thing, but the essentially synoptic character of the Buddha-thought in comparison with the one-sided and mutually contradictory statements of the unenlightened sectarians. (cf. B. M. Barua, **Prolegomena to a History of Buddhist Philosophy**, Calcutta; 1918, page 8.) Just as the king in the parable was not only able to see that the blind men were all partly right and partly wrong, but also why they were so, and to what extent, the Buddha was not only able to declare that the sectarian thinkers were partly correct in their conclusions and partly incorrect, but to indicate in addition the source and scope of their mistakes. He may therefore with justice be designated as the first critical philosopher in the history of human thought.

Since the philosophy of the Buddha equates Reality and Becoming we must conclude that whatever is real also becomes. This raises the problem of whether the Highest Good aimed at by religion is something which becomes or, more accurately, whether it is a becoming. The same problem is stated in terms of Buddhist thought as: Does **Paticca Samuppada** include **Nibbana**? The question is important, for upon the nature of the answer depends the status of Buddhism as a philosophy. Many people, even those who were brought up under the beneficent influence of the Buddhist traditions and who profess to follow it, will be found to hesitate before giving an answer to this question. Some may even think that the conception of **Nibbana** as becoming is a plain contradiction in terms. Yet the Buddha has undoubtedly identified Reality with Becoming, and the assertion that Becoming does not include **Nibbana** therefore means either that **Nibbana** is not real, which is impossible, or that Becoming does not exhaust the whole of Reality which implies that the Buddha was not a philosopher, since He did not view existence as a whole and was therefore unable to make any statement about it as such. The acceptance of the latter alternative would compel us to believe that the Buddha was like the one-sided sectarians of His own parable. Buddhism would then be without any philosophical foundation. The whole edifice of the religion would be in imminent danger of collapse. Fortunately the question has already been asked and answered by a great scholar who is at the same time undoubtedly the most brilliant Buddhist thinker of modern India, the late Dr. Beni Madhab Barua. In his Donna Alpine Ratnayake Trust lecture on Buddhism as Personal Religion Dr. Barua asks "*...whether or no, the abiding order of cosmic life which is expressed by Buddha's causal genesis is an all-inclusive reality? If so, does it or does it not include Nirvana in it? If it precludes Nirvana or any other element of experience, material, mental, moral or spiritual, it cannot be an all-inclusive reality. Further, if it is not all-inclusive, it does not deserve the name of reality at all. To be reality it must be not only the fact but the whole of the fact, known or knowable, actual or potential.*" (pp.7-8. ) Having stated the problem with such force and clarity the speaker goes on to point out that it created a puzzle and difficulty in the Buddha's personal religion, and divided the Buddhist teachers into two sharply antagonistic schools of opinion, one of which maintained that since **Nibbana** represented the counterprocess of cessation it was logically excluded from the **Paticca Samuppada** which represents the process of becoming. Dr. Barua adds that the great Theravada scholastic Buddhaghosa has discussed

the question and sought to maintain, on textual and other grounds, that both the process of becoming and the counter-process of cessation are comprehended in the law of **Paticca Samuppada** as formulated by the Buddha. But he observes that Buddhaghosa did not grasp the logical or metaphysical difficulty involved in the matter, and contends that in order to do justice to what he considers are the two central points in the Buddha's personal religion, namely **Paticca Samuppada** and **Nibbana**, we must be absolutely clear on the logical relation between them.

*"The most welcome light on this point comes from the intellectually gifted early Buddhist sister Dhammadinna whose views were fully approved and endorsed by the Buddha with the remark that he had nothing further to add to them. As interpreted by her, Buddha's Causal Genesis admits of two different trends of things in the whole of reality. In one of them the reaction (**patibhaga**) takes place in a cyclical order between two opposites (**paccanikas**), such as pleasure and pain (**sukha-dukkha**), virtue and vice (**punna-papa**), good and evil (**kusala-akusala**). This is aptly termed by Buddhaghosa as **visabhaga-patibhagas**. In the other, the reaction takes place in a progressive order between two counterparts or complements or between two things of the same genus the succeeding factor augmenting the effect of the preceding one. This is what Buddhaghosa terms **sadisa-patibhaga**. By the term "world", as distinguished from Nirvana, we are to understand the first trend in the Causal Genesis where we revolve within the cycle of reaction between the opposites. Nirvana represents the other trend in the Causal Genesis in which the course of reaction lies from strength to strength, good to further good, from that to still greater good, from pleasure to joy, from joy to gladness, from gladness to happiness, from happiness to bliss, from bliss to beatitude, from intuitional knowledge (**vijja**) to the feeling of emancipation (**vimutti**), from that to self-mastery (**vasibhava**, or selfconsciousness as to the acquisition of the free state), and from that to the fullest enjoyment of the bliss of Nirvana. In reply to the question as to what follows by way of reaction from Nirvana, Dhammadinna wisely said that Nirvana was generally regarded as the final step of the process in order to avoid an infinite regress, for the sake of **pariyantagahanam** in her own language. But she has not failed to indicate that even there be any further reaction, that also takes place in the line and whatever follows therefrom will also appertain to Nirvana and, therefore, will partake of its nature." (Ibid.: pp. 8-9.)*

This explanation appears to be the correct one. By tracing the logical connection between **Samsara** and **Nibbana** it vindicates the doctrine that Reality is Becoming and thus establishes Buddhism on a sound philosophical basis. Its correctness is moreover confirmed by the history of the development of the philosophical schools of Mahayana Buddhism. That all-comprehending Reality which appears in the Original Buddhism of the Founder as **Paticca Samuppada** is later on designated as **Sunyata** by Nagarjuna and the Madhyamikavadins, as **Vijnana** by Asanga, Vasubandhu and the Vijnanavadins, and as **Alayavijnana** by Ashvaghosha and his followers. This testifies to the continuity and fundamental unity of all schools of Buddhist philosophy. The differences between them are to a large extent differences of method and approach rather than differences of belief. Only in the light of this conviction is it possible to regard the development of Buddhist philosophy as an intelligible process of organic growth instead of as a bewildering succession of conflicting doctrines and mutually exclusive creeds. The continuity of Buddhist thought throughout the ages is further exemplified when we pass from the views of Nagarjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu and Ashvaghosha on the nature of Reality to their views on the logical connection between the two principal trends therein. For here, too, they follow faithfully, but intelligently, in the footsteps of the Buddha and Dhammadinna.

In the Madhyamika philosophy of Nagarjuna Reality = Becoming = **Pratitya-Samutpada** = **Sunyata**. The Madhyamika Sastra says (Chapter XXIV, Karika 14), according to Kumarajiva's interpretation, that "It is on account of **Sunyata** or unrestrictedness that everything becomes possible; without it, nothing in this world is possible." Aryadeva, commenting on this Karika, remarks "It is due to absolute unrestrictedness that the activity, in regular order (following the law of regularity, and of cause and effect), of all mundane and supermundane things (dharma) is possible. If it (noumenon) is otherwise, then such activity would become impossible." This is what the Madhyamika school calls **Asamskrita-Sunyata** (emptiness of the incomposite). It corresponds with what Buddhaghosa terms **Sadisa-patibhaga** or "reaction in a progressive order between two counterparts or complements or between two things of the same genus the succeeding factor augmenting the effect of the preceding one." The Madhyamika Sastra also says (Chapter XXIV, Karikas 18 and 19) "That which has been produced through causes and conditions we say to be 'ever-changing'; it is a conventional name, and may also be

called 'the middle path'. There is no dharma which is not produced by causes and condition. Therefore no dharma exists which can be called not ever-changing or asunya." Aryadeva explains this verse to mean "I say that whatever is produced by cause and condition is **Sunyata** or ever-changing, because whatever is the outcome of the union of various causes and conditions is limited by the law of causation. Hence those that are devoid of any particularity or **Svabhava** are **Sunyata**." This is what Nagarjuna and his disciples call **Sanskrita-Sunyata** (emptiness of the composite). It corresponds with what Buddhaghosa terms **visabhaga-patibhagas** or reaction in a cyclic order between opposites. Yamakami Sogen, from whose invaluable work *Systems of Buddhist Thought* (Calcutta, 1912, pp. 195-196) the above quotations have all been taken, observes that "The conception of **Sunyata** in the **Madhyamika** philosophy goes beyond the development from the **Sanskrita** and **Asanskrita** points of view; for, these are but relative terms, as the great Nagarjuna has pointed out in his **Dvadasa-nikaya-sastra**, an authoritative work on this school. "The two dharmas of **Sanskrita** and **Asanskrita** are of relative existence. The existence of the latter depends on that of the former, and on account of their relative existence, all things are **Sunyata**". Transcendental truth cannot be expressed by any of these terms, it is technically called **alamba sunyata**." (Ibid. p.197.) We may therefore say that Becoming = (**alambana**) **Sunyata**, 'cyclic becoming' = **Sanskrita** (equals not) **Sunyata** and progressive becoming = **Asanskrita** (equals not) **Sunyata**. This triple equation demonstrates the substantial unity of Nagarjuna's thought with that of the Buddha and Dhammadinna.

If the point of view of the Madhyamika philosophy is metaphysical and its method dialectical, the point of view of the Vijnanavada philosophy may be said to be epistemological and its method psychological (hence the alternative designation as Yogacara which attaches to this school). There is, however, no fundamental doctrinal divergence of any kind between them. That which from the special point of view adopted by Nagarjuna and his followers appears as **Sunyata** appears, from that adopted by the brothers Asanga and Vasubandhu and their followers, as **Mano, Citta** or **Vijnana** (each of which terms has, however, a particular as well as a universal extension in their system). The filiation of this pan-psyche approach is thought by some to be to the famous first verse of the Dhammapada (**manopubbangama dhamma** etc.) as well as to several other less well known passages of the Pali Canon. Concerning this **Mano, Citta** or **Vijnana**, the Chinese version of the Mahayana-sutra alankara-sastra says (Chapter XI, verse 34) "Cittam has a twofold reflection It is fond of greed and the like which are one set of reflections; similarly, it is fond of faith and the like which are the other set of reflections. The moral and immoral **dharma** does not exist apart from it (i.e. Cittam)." (**Systems of Buddhist Thought**, p 212.) Yamakami Sogen goes on to explain that pleasure and pain, good conduct and bad, ignorance and enlightenment, are merely the actualizations of potential seeds stored in the **Alaya Vijnana** or Storehouse-consciousness. These seeds are those of defilement (**sasrava-bija**) and those of purity (**anasrava-bija**). The former, he says, comprises the first two principles of the 'Four Noble Truths', that is to say, **Dukha-satya** and **Samudaya satya**; while the latter represents the last two truths, namely, **Nirodha-satya** and **Marga-satya**. These are in turn equated with **Pravritti** or outward-circling and **Nivritti** or inward-circling dharmas respectively. Yamakami Sogen sums up the position of this school in the words "Thus we see that, in the Alaya-Vijnana, there is stored a twofold seed from which springs up Samsara and Nirvana." (Ibid. p. 213). Similarly, Dr. Beni Madhab Barua says "If such be the correct interpretation of the philosophical position of Buddha's Causal Genesis both **Samsara** and **Nirvana** may be consistently shown to be possibilities in one and the same reality (**Buddhism as Personal Religion**, p. 9.)

The position of Asvaghosha and his school will be sufficiently indicated by the following two quotations. In both of them the word **Citta** has, unfortunately, been rendered by the misleading term 'soul', the connotation of which is thoroughly un-Buddhistic. Dr. S. N. Dasgupta says "He held that in the soul two aspects may be distinguished - the aspect as thatness (**bhutatahata**) and the aspect as the cycle of birth and death (**samsara**)". "The soul as birth and death (**samsara**) comes forth from the Tathagata womb (**tathagatagarbha**), the ultimate reality. But the immortal and the mortal coincide with each other. Though they are not identical they are not duality either. Thus when the absolute soul assumes a relative aspect by its self-affirmation it is called the all-conserving mind (**alayavijnana**). It embraces two principles, (1) enlightenment, (2) non-enlightenment." (**A History of Indian Philosophy**, Cambridge, 1922, Vol. I, pp. 130 and 131. See also **Systems of Buddhist Thought**, Chapter VII.) The equation of these terms with those used by the Buddha and Dhammadinna on the one hand, and with those employed by Nagarjuna, Asanga and Vasubandhu on the other, will easily be made by anyone

who has read the two previous paragraphs attentively. It is an additional illustration of the 'unity in diversity' of the sublimest Buddhist thought.

We are thus able to see the close logical connection which exists between philosophy and religion, not only in Original Buddhism of the Buddha and Dhammadinna but in the Developed Buddhism of Nagarjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu, and Asvaghosha as well. The religious doctrines and spiritual practices of Buddhism rest not on the stubble of blind belief or the shifting sands of idle speculation, but on the adamant foundation of philosophic truth. Buddhism as a religion stands firm-rooted in philosophy, and Buddhism as a philosophy stands bearing religion as its finest fruit. But it must be borne in mind that this view of Buddhism as simultaneously philosophy and religion would not have been possible had we agreed to exclude **Nibbana** from the process of Dependent Origination. For such an exclusion would necessarily have degraded **Paticca Samuppada** from the lofty status of an all-comprehending Reality to the comparatively mean position of a merely phenomenal law. This would be equivalent to admitting firstly that the Buddha was not a philosopher, that He did not have, or did not admit to His followers that He had, any synoptic view of existence as a whole, empirical and transcendental, phenomenal and noumenal, and secondly that Buddhism is not a philosophy but only a religion, and a religion without a foundation, too. If, on the other hand, we accept the explanation of **Nibbana** as representing merely the counter-process of cessation within **Paticca Samuppada** we are compelled to view the whole religious life and career as an exclusively negative process. This unmitigated negativism is not only out of harmony with our truest spiritual needs but stands in flat contradiction to several important passages in the Pali Canon, to say nothing of the innumerable Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese texts of Developed Buddhism. The only way out of both difficulties, the only ground we have for considering Buddhism as a philosophy as well as a religion, as a positive rather than as a negative gospel, is the view that Reality = Becoming = **Paticca Samuppada**, and that **Samsara** and **Nibbana** represent the trend of reaction between opposites and the trend of reaction between counterparts respectively therein.

*"If such be the correct interpretation of the philosophical position of Buddha's Causal Genesis both **Samsara** and **Nirvana** may be consistently shown to be included in it, both as possibilities in one and the same reality". That this was the exact position may be realized from the fact that the entire mode or method of religious training which was the outcome of the Buddha's personal religion was based upon the second trend, the second line of reaction implying the procession from good to greater good, from the wholesome to more wholesome. The rotatory play or strife between the opposites is restricted to the **Kama** or non-Jhanic, non-reflective spheres of consciousness. **Akusala**, the immoral or unwholesome reaction of mind, is given no place in the Jhanic or reflective spheres of consciousness and religious experience admitting of infinite gradations, though for convenience sake or scientific purpose these are reduced to sixteen or seventeen successive stages of progress in the life of an aspirant." (Buddhism as Personal Religion, Page 9.)*

This quotation enables us to see that just as the conception of becoming dominates Buddhism as a philosophy the conception of the Way dominates Buddhism as a religion. It is the chief merit of Mrs. Rhys Davids that she has rendered Original Buddhism not only intelligible but practicable by stressing this point, namely, that the Founder taught the spiritual life as essentially a willed process of becoming; not a process of becoming less, but of becoming more. She was fond of saying, in her own picturesque style, that the Buddha saw Man as faring in a More towards a Most. But, like so many who attack an extreme position, she was carried by her enthusiasm to the opposite extreme, and seems to have considered that the view of spiritual life as a becoming less was wholly false. The truth lies, as it so often does, between these two extremes. Adolescence, for example, is not only a process of becoming more adult, but also a process of becoming less a child. Similarly, the spiritual life comprises not only the waxing in of the **Nibbanic** trend of becoming but, over and above this, the waning out of the **Samsaric** trend of becoming. The two are in truth inextricably intertwined. They are as inseparable as the obverse and reverse of a coin, or the two ends of a stick. They may be distinguished in thought, but not separated in practice. But so strong was, and still is, the hold of the Negative on students of Pali texts that an exaggerated emphasis on the Affirmative was perhaps necessary in order to strike a just balance between them.

In the **Nidana-Vagga** of the **Samyutta-Nikaya** is found a Sutta which Mrs. Rhys Davids (Kindred Sayings, Vol, II, page viii) refers to as an "oasis" of Affirmation in the midst of an arid desert of

Negation. It clearly exhibits the **nibbanic** trend of becoming as a reaction in a progressive order between factors which complement each other, as essentially a process of positive growth in good, as a cumulative enrichment of the human life-continuum, rather than as a mere counter-process of cessation, a simple waning out of evil or a gradual impoverishment of the human life-continuum. In this important passage; perhaps the sole one of its kind in the Pali Canon, the Buddha declares that in dependence on suffering arises faith, in dependence on faith arises joy, in dependence on joy arises rapture, in dependence on rapture arises serenity, in dependence on serenity arises happiness, in dependence on happiness arises concentration, in dependence on concentration arises knowledge and vision into things as they really are, in dependence on knowledge and vision into things as they really are arises repulsion, in dependence on repulsion arises passionlessness, in dependence on passionlessness arises liberation, in dependence on liberation arises knowledge about the extinction of the intoxicants(**Kindred Sayings**, Vol. II, pp. 25 and 26).

The Buddha illustrates the process of dependent origination or causal association, in the Samsaric as well as the Nibbanic trend of becoming, by a graphic simile:

*"Just as when, brethren, on some hilltop when rain is falling in thick drops, that water, coursing according to slope, fills the hillside clefts and chasms and gullies, these being filled up fill the tarns, these being filled up fill the lakes, these being filled up fill the little rivers, these being filled up fill the great rivers, and the great rivers being filled up fill the sea, the ocean, even so brethren, there is causal association of activities with ignorance, of consciousness with activities, of name-and-shape with consciousness, of the sixfold sense-sphere with name-and-shape, of contact with the sixfold sense-sphere, of feeling with contact, of craving with feeling, of grasping with craving, of (renewed ) becoming with grasping, of birth with (renewed) becoming, of sorrow with birth, of faith with sorrow, of joy with faith, of rapture with joy, of serenity with rapture, of happiness with serenity, of concentration with happiness, of the knowledge and vision of things as they really are with concentration, of repulsion with the knowledge and vision of the things as they really are with; of passionlessness with repulsion, of liberation with passionlessness, of knowledge about extinction (of intoxicants) with liberation." (Ibid., page 27. )*

Dr. Barua says:

"Given these two trends within the order of becoming, as discovered by Buddha, and clearly held before us as such, it is up to us all to decide for ourselves which of them to seek and which not. And here lies the scope of the freedom of the Will. Had the Buddha's been simply the Heraclitean view of change, compelling us to rotate off and on with the cycle of the opposites, the grand conception of the progressive path of life as outlined by the **astamarga**, better the **Dasamarga**, which emanated out of **Buddha-jnana**, would have been logically impossible." (**Buddhism as Personal Religion**, Page 9.)

The above remarks are sufficient to indicate the inseparable connection between Buddhism as a philosophy and Buddhism as a religion, and to demonstrate the uninterrupted persistence of that connection in the Original Buddhism of the Buddha and the Developed Buddhism of the great Mahayana schools led by Nagarjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu and Asvaghosha. They have moreover shown that Buddhism as a religion is based upon the **Nibbanic** trend of becoming, and that it is therefore not a merely negative or life-denying creed but a positive, progressive gospel which is capable of satisfying the deepest spiritual needs of modern man.